

A Visit to Venus Springs



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Summary: There's something mysterious in a picturesque Colorado mountain village where romance is rampant and the birthrate is astronomical. MSR, Mulder/Scully, mature. Romance/family/humor/drama/supernatural

1. Chapter 1

A Visit to Venus Springs

There's something mysterious in a picturesque Colorado mountain village where romance is rampant and the birthrate is astronomical. MSR, Mulder/Scully, mature. Romance/family/humor/drama

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Set before All Things.

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"Pack your suitcase, Scully!" Fox Mulder ordered cheerily as the petite redhead walked in their basement-office door.

"Good morning to you too, Mulder," Scully replied wryly to his enthusiastic greeting. Noting that her partner remained gleefully unapologetic, Scully sighed and inquired, "What's the case?" picking up the mottled brown file folder from his desk to examine its contents.

Seizing his opportunity to pique Scully's interest, Mulder launched into the details of the background information he had collected.

"A little town in Colorado—Venus Springs. It seems that there are certain...*aberrations* concerning pregnancies and births in the area."

"Aberrations?" Scully scanned the case file quizzically, "Tails? Horns? Snouts? An extra face?" she shrugged, nonplussed as she was by the bizarre litany of oddities that now seemed to pass for everyday occurrences in her world.

"No...no..., nothing like that," Mulder waved away Scully's cynical query. "It seems that Venus Springs has an annual pregnancy and childbirth rate fifteen times that of communities, similar in region, average age and economic status.

Scully chuckled a little at Mulder's insistence that a little enthusiastic procreation warranted an FBI investigation.

"Well...the name of the place is a bit suggestive," Scully grinned as she tossed the file flatly back onto the battered wood and walked round to lean against the edge of the lone desk as Mulder leaned back in his chair. "Maybe the town attracts a certain type of people just by that ...*virtue*... alone."

The corners of her mouth twitched upward at her tiny joke.

Her partner laughed at Scully's minor attempt at levity.

"Do you really think that many people paid attention in their high school humanities class? Come on—it was an elective, Scully," Mulder dismissed, unconvinced that the town's namesake and knowledge of her famed sexual proclivities would have been quite so widespread and influential.

Sapphire eyes narrowed as a fiery eyebrow rose, Scully's arms crossed in her typical response of stubborn disbelief.

"Mulder, the answer may be as simple as people moving to the area because of schools...housing...healthcare..." Scully listed the more obvious reasons for a town full of couples at their reproductive peak.

"But, Scully, this town has historically had abnormally high numbers of pregnancies—and...and unusual ones as well," Mulder rifled through the folder, "Last week a fifty-six year-old woman gave birth to a bouncing baby boy—eight pounds, twelve ounces," Mulder handed the page to Scully for her inspection.

"Unusual, but not completely without precedent," Scully made her requisite attempt to dissuade her partner that the case in question truly qualified as an X-file, handing the paper back dismissively.

"Come on, Scully—it could be an...an energy vortex...a...magnetic field anomaly..." Mulder's green eyes danced wildly with the possibilities. "Some sort of hormone-laden biological agent...or"

"What did you tell Skinner so he'd sign off on the requisitions?" the pragmatic Dana Scully asked bluntly.

"Polygamists and the child-brides who love them?" Mulder teased.

Grasping for a plausible excuse, Dana groaned, "But, Mulder, I haven't had a chance to pick up my dry cleaning...there's no time before we catch our plane," her plaintive blue eyes closed momentarily in resignation.

"You won't need it anyway," Mulder assured, standing to gather the X-file, Scully's handbag and her jacket in an attempt to hurry his partner along. "Just jeans...shorts...a bikini..." he was hoping to slip that one in unnoticed.

"A *bikini*?" Scully scoffed with a barely contained smile.

"There's a *spa* there—seaweed wraps, mud baths...couples massage..." the green-eyed agent added nervously.

"Couples massage?" the redhead questioned flatly.

"I thought that we ought to check out all possible leads...and that we'd have better luck if we posed as a happily married couple rather than FBI agents looking to tear the place apart with shovels and backhoes."

"Happily married couple, huh?" Scully shook her head and grinned knowingly. "Who are we this time—Howard and Marion Cunningham? Ralph and Alice Kramden? Lucy and Ricky Ricardo?" the practical agent asked wryly.

"Come on, Scully, I really don't think I could pass for Cuban," Mulder played along, smiling. "After your previous objections, I decided to just keep things simple—our reservations are under Mr. and Mrs. Fox Mulder...."

2. Chapter 2

Ch 2

"The Cupid's Bow Spa and Inn?" Scully grinned, the weighty case of her equipment in one hand and a small suitcase in the other.

Mulder grinned at her query, "It did receive four-and-a-half out of five stars." He paid the taxi driver and picked up his own luggage and their computer and camera cases, both agents then turning toward the lobby of the quaint mountain lodge.

Xxxxx

"You must be the Mulders!" a kindly middle-aged brunette, a little fleshy in the bosom and hips, greeted the undercover agents cheerfully.

"I guess we must...," Scully raised her eyebrows a little as she turned toward Mulder. He just smiled broadly at the manager.

"Well, I am so glad you're here. I'm Vivian," she introduced herself. "I just know you'll love your visit to Venus Springs," the bustling little woman moved from around the counter to escort the pair through the cozy lobby through to the spa.

"You have access to all the spa's amenities—your seaweed wraps and mud baths are scheduled for this afternoon with your couple's massage to follow," the hostess chimed.

"Sounds lovely," Scully replied, a little nervous at the impending intimacy.

Mulder flashed his partner a barely restrained grin. While, yes, he was intrigued by the anomalies that had long seemed to occur in the mountain community, there was part of him that secretly hoped that whatever influence or power that pervaded this little town might be more than just myth.

"Your cabin is right this way...," the three stepped out the door at the back of the lobby and through a lush grove of trees and spring flowers to a wooded cabin secluded by lush blossoms, ivy and leaves.

Vivian opened the door to reveal a comfy, sumptuous king-sized four poster bed intricately carved with flowers, fruit and birds. Sheer gossamer curtains billowed in the cool breeze of the opened window. An extra-large Jacuzzi tub rested at the far end of the room with fluffy towels folded beside.

"In the fridge there's spring water –from the Venus Springs, of course, and a couple of bottles of wine from some of our local wineries. A fruit and cheese plate is also available. There's a lovely little dairy in the valley just down the mountain and the fruit is all from the local orchards," Vivian said with pride.

"Sounds wonderful," Mulder beamed setting down his luggage with Scully then following suit. "Thank you so much, Vivian."

"Oh," the excitable brunette remembered, pulling a small white slip from her pocket, "Mr. Mulder, here's your credit card receipt."

"No problem," Mulder smiled and signed the paper, handing the carbon back to the manager. Scully couldn't help but glance at the receipt, wondering how much hell they would catch for their expense reports this month. Tiny lines formed between her brows when she noticed that the charge was not for their FBI issued Visas, but instead on Mulder's own American Express. When Mulder looked up, Scully's face smoothed into a pleasant smile, seemingly unaware that her partner was footing the bill for this little excursion.

Vivian's dark eyes twinkled with giddiness, as if she experienced a little vicarious thrill with every young couple that she met through her line of work.

"Well, I'll leave you to it then..." Vivian gushed. "Your reservations are for seven o'clock, don't forget."

"Oh, we won't," Scully smiled at the titillated brunette as the innkeeper waggled her fingers in a wave and closed the door behind her.

"So...only one bed, hmmm?" Scully smirked, running her fingers along the finely grained wood, tracing the intricate carvings.

"Um, I did check...but none of the hotels in town have double beds. Apparently there's not exactly a real demand for them," Mulder explained rather awkwardly.

"Uh-huh," Scully agreed with a smirk, reaching into the fridge. "Water, Mulder?"

"Yes, please," the stammering agent agreed, catching the bottle as Scully tossed it toward him.

Scully shrugged out of her jacket and slipped out of her pumps, flopping back against the lofty feather pillows and cushy bed with a sigh. When at first Scully was a little annoyed with Mulder's machinations, the delectable bed beneath her instantly garnered her forgiveness.

"I never want to leave this bed," the beleaguered redhead groaned.

Taking a swig of the bottled water, Mulder grinned and fell back against the bed, eliciting a small chuckle as Scully bounced up a little from the impact.

"You're right, Scully. I'm having dirty thoughts about this bed already," Mulder joked (though his dirty thoughts were likely spawned more by the proximity of his beautiful partner than the down duvet).

"I thought you were always more of a couch guy, Mulder," Scully smirked, unscrewing the cap from her bottled water as she studied its artistic label, graced with Botticelli's goddess on the half-shell.

"I can grow...I can evolve...," he laughed, making a show of snuggling down deeper into the fluffy, cool cotton.

"Sure you can, Mulder," Scully said off-handedly, taking a swig of the mineral water indigenous to the Colorado burg in question and swishing it around in her mouth, looking contemplatively at the ceiling before swallowing the mouthful of water and running her tongue over her teeth.

Though Mulder's eyes had closed in restful relaxation, they shot open again at Scully's sudden single word.

"Zinc."

"What?" green eyes narrowed at the pronouncement.

"Promotes motility," Scully explained matter-a-factly.

"Mo-?"

A quirked eyebrow and knowing blue eye met Mulder's stare and traveled down to the tenting that now waned under Scully's intense scrutiny.

"Ah—yes," Mulder understood, rolling over onto his stomach to avoid further inspection.

"Aids in proper tail formation," Scully explicated further before taking another drink, and taking her assignment seriously and clinically, as usual.

"A little iron, but not so much that it tastes rusty," the good doctor added, still determining the water's quality and mineral composition, "of course... iron being obviously essential to reproductive processes," Scully added unnecessarily, "...maybe a bit of selenium..." she continued, trying to discern what she could just from taste alone.

Mulder's suspicious tendencies suddenly kicked into gear, propping his head on his hand as he turned to face his partner, "Do you think the city's doctoring the water supply? Trying to artificially increase the birth rate?"

"No-," Scully answered, "The mineral content seems consistent with the geology of the area," Scully rationalized before taking a perfectly normal drink of her bottled water, "...I'm just saying it may be one factor in Venus Springs' reproductive rate anomalies. Of course, I'll send samples back to Quantico for a more accurate analysis...."

Suddenly nervous, Mulder broke into Scully's by-the-book plan of action, "Well, maybe we should hold off on that... gather a few more facts before we... show our hand." Looking for a swift change of subject, Mulder spied the fruit and cheese tray perched on the nightstand. Reaching behind, he brought the plate to rest on the bed between them, deftly removing the cellophane wrapper.

"Here, Scully, try a strawberry," though the redhead opened her mouth to respond, her words were quickly muted by the sudden appearance of the deep red fruit between her teeth.

"Muw—drr," Scully tried to protest, finally deciding that just biting off the end of the strawberry would be far less trouble. The berry was so laden with juice that little pink trails escaped her lips and proceeded to track the curve of her chin.

"I'll just get that..." Mulder's thumb swept across Scully's chin, slowing to gently graze the full lower lip he had kissed last New Year's Eve.

Lifting the thumb to his own mouth, Mulder extracted the juices he had just collected onto his tongue, his gaze never leaving Scully's wide blue eyes. His lips closed around the shared fruit, his eyes closing in obvious pleasure.

"Damn, but they do grow a good berry here, Scully," he groaned, eliciting a wry smile from his partner who stowed her water bottle beside her, and leaning on her propped hand, faced her partner. Scully determined that since this particular assignment (if it even proved to be an actual assignment) was fairly low on the 'are-we-likely-to- be-abducted, tortured, imprisoned, or otherwise made-to-suffer-forced-medical experimentation scale,' so therefore a little Mulder-agony would be in order.

Leaning toward the plate, certain that her cleavage would produce a tantalizing display, Scully was determined to one-up her partner in retaliation for his scheming.

"Here, try a grape," Scully lifted the pale green fruit to Mulder's parted lips, her fingertip grazing his tongue as she fed him. His lips couldn't help but suckle at the sweet skin as Scully pulled back her hand with a smirk.

Mulder shifted his hips a bit, trying to recover from that tiny taste of flesh. He could foresee the trouble he'd be in if he ever wrapped his lips around anything more than just a mere fingertip.

Trying to trump Scully's latest attempt at turning the tables on him, the wily agent dangled the next piece of fruit just a little out of Scully's reach, toying with her until she was on her back with her lips parted and tongue peeking from between her teeth.

Bumping the lush burgundy orb against Scully's lips and then pulling it slightly away, causing her back to arch and her creamy throat to lengthen, was doing little to alleviate Mulder's earlier difficulty, and once sufficiently distracted by her sensuous mouth and the lacy swell that threatened to escape the straining buttons on his partner's blouse, Mulder was too late to prevent Scully's teeth from snapping at the fruit and snatching the cherry cleanly from his fingers, stem and all.

Mulder's breathing grew shallow as he watched his partner work the fruit skillfully around her mouth. The tortured agent discovered he's stopped breathing all together once Scully had swallowed the ruby-colored flesh and her mouth continued its work, until between pursed lips, the ever-professional Dana Scully produced a perfectly knotted cherry stem, placing it in the middle of Mulder's now-sweating palm.

Nonplussed by Mulder's antics, Scully continued with her very business-like estimation of the locally-grown produce they had just sampled, "Clearly, the local soil is quite rich..." sitting up, Scully plucked a tidbit of Swiss and popped it into her mouth, "Calcium...folic acid...vitamin c—everything here loaded with vitamins and minerals that are conducive to reproduction. Here, try the cheese," Scully grinned, teasing Mulder with a nibble of cheddar that she tried to squeeze between tightly shut lips.

Turning his head away like a child avoiding a scorned lima bean, the otherwise-fearless agent dodged his partner's dairy-laden advances.

"Jeez, Scully, you know what that stuff does to my stomach," Mulder whined as he shoved his face into the pillow.

"Ah, ya wimp," Scully teased, tossing the bit of cheese into her own mouth instead.

"Hey, you're the one who has to sleep with me tonight," Mulder chided in warning, turning his head to face his partner.

"There's always the bathtub," Scully sing-songed, as she replaced the clear wrapping and moved the fruit plate from the bed to her nightstand.

"Oh no," Mulder chortled, "Miss-five-foot-two—there is no way I am sleeping in the tub or anywhere besides this incredible bed," he declared,

stretching out his long frame on the spacious mattress.

"Well," Scully slapped a hand down on Mulder's taut abdominals, eliciting a playfully wounded groan from her partner, "no one's sleeping anywhere until we check out this picturesque little village, Mulder." Scully pushed herself up and swung her legs to the floor, walking around the bed to offer a hand up to her partner.

"You're absolutely right, Scully," Mulder conceded, grumbling as his petite partner hoisted him to his feet. "Oh, I almost forgot," Mulder held up his index finger and moved to rummage through his carry-on. Pulling out a tiny black box from his bag, a glint of metal shone in the light reflected from the vanity mirror. "And for the Mrs. Mulder," green eyes twinkled as he slid the diamond and matching band onto Scully's ring finger.

"Ooh, we got an upgrade since the suburbs," Agent Scully grinned wickedly as she waggled her fingers in the dim light.

"Only the best for my little woman," Mulder pulled Scully toward his side, offering a playful peck to her cheek, Scully rolling her eyes in response.

Mulder shoved his wallet in his jeans pocket, eyeing Scully as she touched up her rose-colored lipgloss and ran fingers through the red locks that had curled a bit after the plane ride. Sliding on a pair of canvas slip-ons and topping her jeans and blouse with a cotton blazer, Scully grinned at Mulder when she caught him staring, forcing him to feign impatience by tapping at his watch and raising his eyebrows in order to save face.

Sighing as she shook her head slightly, wondering why the hell she ever agreed to this expedition, Scully could only smile at the mischievous green eyes that shone in the warmth of the slanting afternoon sun, and taking his hand to play her part (though not an unpleasant one), Mulder and Scully began to explore the secrets of Venus Springs.

3. Chapters 3 & 4

Ch 3

A long, disheartened sigh escaped Scully's lips as she stared at the sepia-toned photograph, "I'd be happy with just one..." she whispered to the beige plaster walls. Mulder was across the room, plying the graying docent with questions about Venus Springs. All the talk of founding families and their astronomically numerous offspring was beginning to pick away at Scully's good humor, so she had left her partner to his query and stepped across the worn wooden floor that echoed her every step.

Even though smiling was not a customary practice when sitting for a photograph in the late 1800's, the local families depicted in them smiled proudly from their moment in history—long before the threat of alien invasion, secret government conspiracies, the hybridization of the human race, or even virus-laden bees for that matter. Proud parents and their two dozen or so children stared back from each of the long, framed photographs that graced the walls of the modest museum.

Fearing that her forced distance would be noticed by the chatty volunteer, Scully slowly made her way back toward the information desk, passing photographs of historical mother-lodes and the rich fields and pasture land of the lower valley. She stopped and smiled a little at the photos of men and women in antiquated wool bathing suits and voluminous up-do's topped with floppy-brimmed bathing caps, taking the curative waters at one of Venus Spring's numerous spas and bath houses.

"How did Venus Springs keep from becoming another Denver?" Mulder joked, though he was certainly curious at how the exponential birthrate could be contained in such a tiny burg.

"Well, the geography of Venus Springs helps to keep the town small," the museum's hostess, Esther, described. The mountain roads aren't exactly built for heavy traffic, and the forests that surround us have been protected lands for several decades," the petite grandmother of fourteen explained. "Many families settled other towns further up the mountain while some others bought farm land in the valley. Sometimes young people would go to the big city to make their fortune, but very often they come back to Venus Springs to start a family," Miss Esther declared with a sing-songed knowing in her voice, as if her predictions to young locals filled with wanderlust had eventually come true.

"So how did this little Colorado town end up named for a Roman goddess?" Mulder questioned with a chuckle.

"Actually, our sister city is on the island of Cypress," Esther informed, referring to the island that, according to legend, first accepted the goddess that rose from the seafoam.

"But the founding fathers were more partial to Ovid than Homer?" Mulder teased, wondering at the choice of Roman versus Greek incarnations.

"Very good," Esther was impressed with her visitor's keen insight.

"A minor in literature," Mulder conceded, his grin spreading at the sight of amused, raised eyebrows that should be surprised but really weren't.

"I learned more about human behavior from Shakespeare than I ever did from Freud," Scully could nearly hear Mulder say in her head. She couldn't help but shake her head and chuckle. Fortunately, the museum guide was too engrossed in her tale to notice the silent communication.

"In fact, it was a tweedy, young professor from Princeton who gave the city its name," the historian indicated an antiquated photo of a thin, pale man with light eyes behind wire-rimmed glasses, moustache and bowler hat standing resolutely before one of the natural springs as she began the tale.

"Henry Renard," Esther began, "It's said that he left academic life when his parents and siblings were lost to a horrible strain of influenza. Heading west to start over, Renard stopped to rest his horses by the mineral springs, and after a few days of drinking and bathing with the water, he decided that he had never felt better in his entire life. With his family's inheritance, Renard built the first restorative health spa in the area," Esther nodded to the following photo in the series.

"Of course this was a time when health spa guests tended to stay for several months as opposed to just a few days, and Renard discovered that many of the previously childless couples staying at the spa were suddenly expecting."

"I guess a little rest and relaxation is good for that sort of thing," Mulder smiled, hazarding a glance at Scully who seemed immersed in studying the medical relics of the spa in question.

"According to Renard's guest records, their conditions tended to be a bit more serious than that. Many of those who came to the spa had received some rather dire diagnoses, but after some time, their symptoms improved markedly, according to the owner's journals. In fact with all the impending births, Renard had to advertise for a doctor to come and deliver all these babies."

"My wife delivered a baby during a hurricane once," Mulder prodded his aloof partner, coaxing her to come and join the conversation.

"Oh my, how exciting," the volunteer responded with wide eyes.

"She'd be even more impressed if she knew about battling the mutant sea creature..." the upturned corners of Scully's lips wryly spoke as she stepped close to Mulder's side, allowing him to wrap his arm around her waist.

"Obstetrics isn't my specialty though," Scully shook her head lightly in explanation.

"Just be glad you're practicing medicine today," Miss Esther warned unnecessarily, stepping forward to the next photograph. "Dr. Kathleen McCarty accepted the position here after reading Renard's advertisement in a New York newspaper. She couldn't get a job in New York—not too many hospitals willing to hire women as doctors back then..." Esther carried on, oblivious to Scully's tiny smile.

Scully's eye travelled from the studio picture of a lone young woman, determination shining fiercely out of her bright eyes, a cascade of rich, probably auburn or chestnut-colored wavy locks falling behind her trim, petite frame to the larger photo beside it, a multitude of children surrounding Kathleen and Henry, standing in front of the newly-christened Venus Springs Health Resort and Spa.

"It wasn't long before Henry and Kathleen married and began their own family—twelve children, forty-five grandchildren, well over a hundred great-grandchildren at the time of their passing.

"Jeez, everyone would need to wear nametags just to keep up," Mulder joked, hoping to alleviate any tension between Scully and himself at the mention of such a prodigious family.

She smiled at his little joke, comforted by the large hand resting at the small of her back. She didn't want her personal sorrows to completely spoil the entire trip, so she tried to play the part of the affectionate wife. She let her body relax into Mulder's shoulder, encouraging him to deliver a kiss to the top of her head.

"So...I was wondering...walking up here, we passed all sorts of little shops—selling herbs, stones, even this cute little lingerie shop we'll have to try.

The elbow to the ribs and the rolled eyes were so worth it.

"It seems that the more that Venus Springs became known for its unusually large families, the more it attracted business that catered toward those same interests. Most of the shopkeepers are long-time residents of the Springs," Esther continued, hoping to reassure this young couple of the town's good intentions.

The kindly grandmother smiled, "Venus Springs has drawn a wide variety of people over the decades, and they've brought with them their own traditions and skills—some may be truly helpful, some may just be plain fun," Esther winked.

"I guess a little fun couldn't hurt anything," Mulder grinned, earning him a surreptitious pinch from his partner in retaliation. Figuring he was already pushing his luck with the suspicious redhead by his side, Mulder thanked the talkative volunteer for the wealth of information she'd provided.

"Miss Esther, you have been a most gracious hostess," Mulder bid the docent adieu with his typical charm and flair, slipping a twenty from his wallet and fitting it through the slot in the top of large jar lid, "and I hope this helps keep the lights on here another day."

"It was nice to meet you," Scully departed with simple grace, even though she was internally criticizing herself for not being a very attentive guest.

"Have a lovely visit here in Venus Springs, you two. Enjoy yourselves!"

The muffled brass bell sounded through the closed glass as the museum's front doors closed behind.

Turning toward Scully, grinning wide with a mischievous twinkle in his eye as he clasped her hands in his, Mulder inquired, "So...are you ready to head to some of those little shops Esther suggested, honeybunch?"

"Anything you'd like..."

"*Wait for it...*," her brilliant blue eyes spoke.

"Poopyhead," she enunciated with a wicked grin, provoking Mulder's affectionate kiss to the top of her head.

She knew instinctively it was not part of their cover.

xxx

ch 4

"Genuine Irish lace, specially woven and blessed for successful romance," Mulder recited, reading the sign overhanging the curving sidewalk, slowing his pace to peruse the samples in the window.

"A lingerie shop—really Mulder?" a slightly cynical Scully argued, though she knew little good would come of her protest.

"It could very well be part of the puzzle, Scully. There might be some spell woven into the lace—some ancient Druid reproductive charm...."

"The Ancient Druids?" Scully was fighting the urge to roll her eyes once more that afternoon.

"Somehow I doubt the nuns and priests are behind it," Mulder opened the shop door for Scully, ushering her in.

Xxx

"Welcome to Miss Eileen's, what may I help you find today?" a freckled, willowy woman with long auburn curls greeted Mulder and Scully as they entered the boutique.

"We saw your sign," Mulder smiled congenially, "and my wife and I were wondering about the more *beneficial* properties of your lace.

Though slightly suspicious of Mulder's motives, Scully did allow herself the guilty pleasure of cozying up to her "husband," excursions like this one giving the by-the-book agent a moment to indulge in her partner's affectionate touch.

The proprietress looked around her shop and then studied Scully, trying to decide what might suit her best. Pulling a golden champagne-colored gown from a rack and discreetly slipping off the price tag, Eileen brought the luxurious piece of lingerie back to the counter with her.

"This particular piece really highlights some of our lace maker's best work," she began, slipping a black velvet board between the gown's layers, to highlight the patterning. "The luckenbooth—the intertwined hearts topped with a crown, symbolizes friendship, affection and betrothal. You would also see this symbol on a firstborn's baby blanket to bestow luck," the shopkeeper described the neckline detail that graced the gold silk before moving to the plunging inset that spread deeply into the midriff.

"Further down, you see the three connected spirals at each point in the delta," Eileen indicated the repeated swirls branching from a triangulated pattern. "In Celtic traditions, this figure symbolizes motherhood, with each of the spirals noting the three trimesters of pregnancy. Not only does it promote fertility, but also power and luck. The color gold also symbolizes good fortune," the clerk described in detail. "But, of course, you can't truly appreciate the gown's beauty unless you try it on," she tempted.

"Oh...no...I really don't need to...," Scully stammered, suddenly self-conscious.

"Come on, sweetheart...," Mulder cooed, playful suggestiveness coating his words with honey. "We came all this way...shouldn't we explore *all* our options?"

Mulder knew he was risking a retaliation of epic proportions, but Scully, with a knowing smile, accepted the challenge.

"Which way to the dressing room?"

Xxx

Mulder, who had followed Scully back toward the dressing room, was stopped short at the damask-covered door.

"You don't need any help then?" he asked with a grin.

"I think I've got under control," Scully assured with a wry turn of her lips, leaving Mulder in the secluded hallway.

After a few moments of Mulder's impatient fidgeting, wondering if it would be wholly inappropriate to dispose of sunflower seed shells in such an establishment, the dressing room door swung open, and a vision in golden silk and lace emerged from within.

"Oh my god," Mulder exhaled, rendered nearly speechless at the sight before him.

"At least we know the gown works on at least...*one-half*...of the equation," Scully smirked, her eyes travelling down to the noticeable tenting in her partner's jeans.

Squirming slightly, Mulder tried to make some discreet adjustments, much to Scully's amusement.

"Come here," Mulder, still blushing a bit from the scrutiny, held out his hand to direct Scully to the three-way mirror. Obliging with a smile, Scully accepted his hand and moved in front of Mulder whose hands couldn't help but trace the silky curve of Scully's waist as he stood behind her.

"You look absolutely breathtaking," he whispered as he bent to her ear, though their eyes never left each other's in the mirror.

"Thank you," Scully tried to maintain the upper hand, though her pulse raced from her partner's attentions. Trying to maintain some semblance of professionalism and practicality, Scully warned in low tones, out of the earshot of the shopkeeper, "But if you think you're going to turn over a gown like this to the squints in fibers and textiles, you're crazy. Just send them a pair of panties—you'll be their hero," Scully grinned then conceded her appreciation for the lingerie.

"I'll take some high-res photos of the lacework and send them to my great aunt in Ireland—see what she can find out about the patterns and

techniques," she smiled slyly before stepping out of Mulder's light embrace and back into the seclusion of the dressing room.

Seconds later, gold silk and lace was draped over the dressing room door, spilling into Mulder's hands. Making a speedy return to the sales desk, Mulder quickly handed over his credit card, so the total might escape Scully's notice, and he whispered to the clerk—

"Add a couple pair of panties, and...by the way...", Mulder questioned, checking to make sure Scully was still getting dressed and whispering even more quietly, "Do you also have this...*in black*?"

Xxx

"This is our red clover and raspberry leaf tea—it helps to nourish the uterus, calm the nervous system and restore hormonal balance," the wiry man with round glasses and curly, graying hair pulled into a low ponytail, held up the scoopful of loose tea so that both Mulder and Scully might smell the fruity combination.

"You might also be interested in our tinctures of false unicorn root and stinging nettle to help regulate ovulation," the herbalist suggested. "Now over here are our treatments for male infertility...", the gaunt man made his way to the opposite counter.

Under her breath Scully sarcastically muttered, "Huh, too bad they don't have a remedy for 'my ova were stolen by a shadow government conspiracy bent on enslaving the human race to save their own sorry asses from alien domination.'"

"Scully...", Mulder whispered in concerned warning, casting his normally reserved partner a worried glance.

The shopkeeper's brow furrowed for a moment, trying to make sense of the overheard comment. Shaking it off and smiling once again, he started, "Astralagus helps to promote sperm motility and concentration while the horny goat weed also aids with the firmness and length of an erection," the shopkeeper described with absolute seriousness.

Mulder nervously looked down and away, fighting the urge to suggest that firmness and length were really *not* the problem. Casting a glance at Scully, whom he figured would be getting a kick out of his current discomfort, was looking out the window at the schoolchildren piling out of the yellow bus and making their way up the crooked streets to their hillside homes or downtown to their parents' shops.

Scully had played along good-naturedly at the lingerie store, reveling in the power she held over her partner in the revealing gown, but the visit to the herbalist was trying her patience, thinking that her partner was

wasting his time on such a futile quest. Sure, Mulder thought he was being so damn sly, and she really did love his tenacity when trying to solve a problem or fix something he'd felt he'd broken, but all the scans and tests she'd endured after her abduction kept telling Dana Scully the same thing—she'd never bear children of her own.

Suddenly, a gangly teenager opened the door, the brass bell startling Scully out of her reverie. The tall young man with curly dark hair offered her a polite smile as he stowed his backpack behind the counter.

"Hey, Pops," the young man greeted, "Deliveries in the back?"

"Just put out the first three cases, son—leave the other for back stock," the older man directed.

Mulder tried to contain his surprise—the herbalist looked like he could've been the boy's grandfather.

"Curt—he's the youngest of nine," the graying man explained, "I guess when you specialize in fertility treatments, nine kids shouldn't exactly be a surprise."

"Guess not," Mulder mused. "Um, wrap up one of each for us," indicating the products the older man had described, all that rot about 'what was good for the goose being good for the gander' prickling at his conscience.

Quickly paying the tab, Mulder offered a sweet but guilty smile to Scully, his hand at the small of her back as he escorted her out of the store, afraid that he might have waited too long to tell his partner what he'd kept secret for several long months.

Xxx

"So...one more shop before we head back to our room?" Mulder queried, becoming a little concerned with his partner's impatience.

Trying to put forth her typically brave, stoic front, Scully smiled automatically, a quick, "Sure," indicating her unenthusiastic consent.

Xxx

"What very pretty diamonds," the blonde shopkeeper remarked, finishing up with another customer before approaching Mulder and Scully, noting the exemplary cut of the solitaire resting atop the wedding band her partner had placed on Scully's finger earlier that afternoon in their hotel room.

As Scully opened her mouth for a perfunctory 'thank you,' Mulder chimed in, his smile beaming with an odd touch of pride for someone who had

supposedly picked up the rings from the seized property warehouse.

"I thought so," he agreed, his green eyes twinkling as he studied the stones. Breaking his appreciative stare before the fiery redhead beside him began to grow suspicious, Mulder engaged the jeweler in his intended discussion.

"You have some very beautiful things here as well."

"Absolutely..." Scully added, trying to remain focused on the task at hand as she fought the urge to withdraw into herself and dwell on her losses.

"Many of our gems are regional while others are imported, but everything is crafted on the premises by local artists, some of whom specialize in the more traditional jeweler's cuts while others work in more organic forms." Seeing as the husband was studying one of the store's brochures on the health benefits of stones while the wife's attention seemed drawn to the unique garnet set in the case, the shopkeeper pulled the beaded set onto the counter.

"So...do these stones have some sort of medicinal properties?" Mulder inquired, trying to gauge the items in the case against the small photos in the brochure.

"Absolutely," the jeweler replied with certainty. "Though no stone is a cure-all, and I would not suggest that they replace traditional treatment," she warned, "I do believe that the earth can help heal us," she declared reasonably.

Taking a deep breath while keeping a wary eye on his partner, Mulder asked, "What would you recommend to help promote... conception?"

"There are several—agate...moonstone...rose quartz," the jeweler pulled a piece of each example from the case. "Carnelian has very beneficial properties," the shopkeeper brought out a red-orange pendant as well.

Abruptly the store's front door jingled to life, three tow-headed second graders bursting in.

"Mom! Can we go to the park with Shelly?" asked the first of the identical triplets.

"Yeah, Mom, please?" chimed the second.

"She said she'd watch us!" finished the third.

"First thing, please say 'excuse me' to this nice couple," their mother sighed, as if containing their exuberance was a constant battle.

"Excuse me....," the lively trio drawled, a little downcast at their chastisement.

"It's fine," Mulder waved away with Scully just offering a smile that did not reach her disheartened eyes. Her glance quickly moved away from the energetic boys to the wall behind the counter, nearly wallpapered with what she assumed were photos of satisfied customers and their miracle offspring. Scully's heart tightened in her chest as she tried to settle her frayed emotions.

"Be back at five thirty," the shopkeeper bargained, smiling as her bustling bunch exited as quickly as they came in, eager to meet their friends and the babysitter who had agreed to a play date.

"Sorry about that," the blonde apologized before returning to her task. "Of course, garnet also promotes fertility, and these stones," the proprietress lifted the chunky necklace from the velveteen display, "resemble pomegranate seeds which are also fertility symbols."

"Huh, I always thought that pomegranates were thought to symbolize winter, Persephone in the underworld and all that," Mulder questioned.

"True...but nevertheless, the ancient Greeks revered the fruit and its wealth of seeds contained within. There is good evidence that the pomegranate may have been the original forbidden fruit," the blonde continued, "and in fact, most ancient religious texts also make reference to the pomegranate and its life-giving properties."

As Mulder and the jeweler discussed the lore connected to the gems in question, Scully ran her fingers over the deep red stones, strung like tight, plentiful seeds along the golden wire, wishing for that lost time, when her body was still full like this, its life-giving potential not yet tapped.

Hoping to provide her obviously distraught customers with the best advice, the blonde inquired, "I might be able to suggest a more specific treatment," she suggested, "Um...how long have you been trying, if you don't mind my asking?" she asked cautiously.

Scully stiffened, hot breath trapped in her lungs suddenly even though she felt Mulder's arm tighten at her waist.

"I'm just going to step out for some air," Scully dodged her partner's grasp and made for the door, trying to contain her tears before she cried them in public.

"Dana?" Mulder called after her, his brow furrowed in concern.

"I'm fine....," was the only response he heard as the redhead ducked down the wooded path that ran alongside the row of shops.

"Oh shit," Mulder closed his eyes briefly in defeat, knowing that he'd pushed his partner too far that afternoon.

"Sir, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to...."

"No, it wasn't you—I promise," Mulder shook his head at his own short-sightedness. "Tell you what—let me go ahead and take the bracelet," he threw down enough cash to cover his purchase," and if you could wrap up the matching necklace that would be wonderful. Would you make sure the necklace and my other purchases are delivered to the Cupid's Bow? I would be forever grateful," Mulder nearly pleaded.

"Sure thing," she shopkeeper smiled. "I'll even have Miss Vivian place our fertility gem mix by the bedside just for good measure," the blonde held up a tumbled stone mixture in a deep red gossamer bag and placed it in Mulder's shopping bag containing the lingerie and herbal mixtures they'd already purchased.

"Thanks," Mulder called out behind him, muttering to himself as he followed Scully's trail, "I need all the help I can get...."

4. Chapter 5

Thanks so much to tiffanyuab, Green-Elphaba-Thropp, Madmoiselle Spooky for your kind reviews.

Ch 5

Mulder was panting after his trek through the wooded park. With the sounds of the playground chiming far off in the distance, the worried agent finally caught sight of the fiery halo of red glinting in the afternoon sun, Scully's petite figure dwarfed even further as she stood in the shelter of a grand oak that seemed to stand guard over an ancient fountain that ran clear in the otherwise secluded glen.

"Scully...", Mulder sighed, moving to take his partner in his arms, though she shrugged off his touch and paced a distance from her partner.

"Please, Mulder, just don't," she insisted through her tears.

"Scully, just let me explain...."

"Explain what, Mulder?" she questioned rhetorically. "Explain why we're in the fertility capital of the world? Why we've spent the entire day grilling the citizens of Venus Springs about their reproductive habits?" Scully was unleashing all her frustrations on Mulder in one blow. "And though I appreciate," Scully's blue eyes turned skyward as she tried to hold off a fresh batch of tears, "everything you're trying to do, Mulder, and though I've told you this over and over, my abduction and my infertility are not your fault, my ova are gone and nothing can bring them back."

No matter how hard she tried to fight them, the tears kept coming.

"That's not true, Scully," Mulder replied, steeling himself for what was coming.

"Yes, Mulder, it's basic biology—we're not like men who can just make more when the urge strikes them," she accused flippantly, no longer able to draw on any of that emotional reserve that typically dominated her persona.

"Dana, I *know* you will have a child," Mulder stated firmly, hoping that he might break through the emotional wall that was already cemented firmly in place.

"No, Mulder, I won't—the IVF was the last chance, that's it, the doctors said—," Scully's upset was at a fever pitch, and her normally reserved

tone was growing louder with each syllable, so knowing that he may live to regret his next course of action, Mulder reached around from behind his partner, pinning her so tightly to his body that her only movements were the shudder of her shoulders as she sobbed.

"I don't give a damn what the doctors told you. I *know* that you will give birth to our son because I have *seen* him."

5. Chapter 6

Thanks to Green & Luiza for your reviews. After today's chapter more fun stuff (and then the *really* fun stuff after that;)

Please review...

ch 6

Mulder took advantage of the moment of stunned silence to settle them beneath the large oak, loosening his grip just slightly as he nestled Scully's back to his chest, his long legs bracketing her shorter ones as they sat on the patch of grass.

"Please, Dana, just listen before you pass judgment, ok?" he felt her hesitant nod against his chest before he began. "Last year...when Smokey had taken me...he tried to feed me this bullshit version of what my life could be—house in the suburbs...wife and kids...even another phony version of Samantha...telling me that I would get you killed if I had stayed...."

Scully listened as Mulder asked, though her shuddering sobs could not be stifled.

"But that life...it wasn't real.... It was just a sham to make me docile... make me succumb." Mulder pulled Scully even closer to his body, his lips hovering close to her ear. "But then...there was this boy on the beach... he kept drawing me back...back to what my life was *supposed* to be...."

"But...how...?" Scully sniffed trying to control the emotion that threatened to overwhelm her. "How do you know...he was *mine*?" she asked in a voice that came out tight and small.

Scully was surprised, to say the least, by the deep chuckle that reverberated against her back.

"Because he is you all over again, Scully," Mulder smiled, the hold that he had earlier employed to keep Scully pinioned to him, softened to a caress, his fingers finding the pale flesh underneath the hem of her blouse. Mulder's shift from past to present tense did not escape Scully's notice.

"I mean...his hair and eyes are my color,...but the shape of his face....," Mulder gently touched Scully's chin, turning her to look at him, "big

saucer-eyes like yours," he smiled and laughed lightly, his eyes watery with tears as he kissed her forehead, eliciting a small chuckle from the tiny woman in his arms.

"Your nose," Mulder laughed, giving a short peck to Scully's nose in recognition, keeping her light laughter coming.

"But not just that..." Mulder's face contracted, tears streaming down his face at the memory, "He is so like you, Scully.... He pushed me...and... and...he fought me...he wouldn't let me give in. And even though Smokey knew about him...he couldn't take him away," Mulder's voice broke a little at the confession, soothed though by Scully's arms that wrapped around his shuddering body.

With a sniff and a choked chuckle, Mulder added, "Of course, then *you* showed up, calling me all sorts of ugly names, wild horses couldn't bring me to repeat," he laughed, trying to lighten the memory of such a dark time.

Scully smiled against Mulder's chest, chuckling lightly, too, soothed by the powerful rhythm of Mulder's heart underneath her ear.

She wanted so badly to believe, but she had seen the ultrasound, had seen her ovaries emptied and barren, and now struggled to reconcile Mulder's visions with the specialist's pronouncements that she would never conceive.

"But how...?" she whispered into Mulder's chest, her hand now covering his that lay against her flat belly.

"Close your eyes, Dana...just relax..." Mulder breathed deeply, trying to slow Scully's pulse to match his own. Her arms slipped back around his middle as she complied. This really was her favorite place in the world, though she rarely let herself admit it. She dearly loved lying in Mulder's arms, loved hearing that sure and steady beat pulse through his chest. How often had he lured her to sleep this way, coaxed the stress from her muscles...scattered the worry from her busy mind....

Breathing deeply, Mulder closed his eyes as well, concentrating on that moment after Scully had kissed his wounded head...that moment of clarity when he could see what their son had been trying to show him all along....

In his mind's eye, Mulder concentrated on the image, and bent down with closed eyes, offering a long, steady kiss to the fiery red hair that rested against his chest.

For a moment Mulder was afraid that Scully had slipped too far into unconsciousness, would think that what she saw was no more than a

wishful dream, but then, he felt her head lift from the her familiar spot on his chest.

"The ship—the two of you were building the ship," she said softly, her watery blue eyes seeking Mulder's for reassurance.

His happy tears and broad smile were all the reassurance she needed.

Dana Scully no longer tried to explain away that tie that bound her and Mulder across vast distances and other planes of existence.

He chuckled and nodded, knowing that she had given up trying to figure that out a long time ago.

Acceptance. Belief.

He could see it in her eyes now, eyes that glinted blue in the descending sun. Turning in Mulder's lap to face him, her legs spread across his hips, Scully seized Mulder's lips, letting go of the restraint she had once so prized and tangling her tongue with his.

Mulder's large hands gripped Scully's hips pulling her down as he thrust upward a bit, showing Scully just how much she affected him. The distant sounds of children at the playground reminded them of their public location, and they broke the kiss with a hopeful smile.

Scully's hands traced down Mulder's chest, wrapping around his waist once again, but in their path, Scully's hand rattled something hidden in Mulder's jacket pocket.

"What's that?" she questioned slyly, though she could venture a guess.

"That, my dear, is a very pretty bracelet for my very favorite girl," Mulder grinned as he pulled the garnet jewelry from his pocket and placed it on Scully's wrist. The deep red, seed-shaped beads glowed richly in the summer sun. "The necklace is waiting for you in our hotel room."

"Mulder, you've spent too much," she fussed.

"Nonsense," Mulder scoffed, picking up Scully from his lap before rising to join her, "Besides, I've got one more penny I need to spend before we go back." He took his partner's hand moving toward the open glade.

"A penny?" Scully questioned incredulously, "On what?"

Moving them closer to the ancient fountain with its curvy goddess, her flowing robes, and the permanently hardened nipple that long ago had slipped out of her ossified garments, Mulder fished through his pocket for the shiny copper-colored coin in question.

Nodding to the fountain's inscription, Mulder read,

"For those who seek their heart's desire

And give to Venus their coin so dear

Though you may go through flood and fire

Venus will answer within the year"

"Ready, Scully?" Mulder questioned with a grin, holding out the coin to her.

"You do realize the nuns would've smacked me across the knuckles for doing this," she teased with a smile.

"You let me worry about the nuns," Mulder chuckled, watching as his partner closed her eyes and tossed the coin, waiting for the sounding 'plop' before she opened them again.

"So do you think it worked?" Scully grinned.

"We'll have to wait and see, I guess," Mulder shrugged with a smile, putting his arm around Scully as they made their way back to the Cupid's Bow.

"Well, I certainly hope so...cause right now that false unicorn root is sounding just a *little* out there...."

Xxx

6. Chapter 7

Thanks to Tiffany and Green for your reviews;)

Now we have come to the mature portion of our tale so...don't say I didn't warn you.

Some comedy, a few wink/nods, delightfully sap-tastic, and...*you know....*

Ch 7

"You know...I was starting to think what a change this was from our usual assignments—no ghosts...no flukemen...no liver-eating mutants....

Mulder chimed in, "No teenaged Satanists, or crazed Arkansas cannibals."

"Not coated in some slimy, gooey, unidentified substance...," Scully said with a wicked grin before flicking a wet clod of mud right on Mulder's cheek, "But I was wrong," she giggled as he took his finger and swiped at the thrown mud.

"Oh, it is so on," Mulder picked up a handful of mud, chunking it straight at Scully, eliciting a squeal of protest from his partner. Wiping off the retaliatory wad, Scully moved in closer, slapping a handful of the brown viscous substance neatly on her partner's head.

"You are gonna get it," Mulder teased, wrapping his arms around her submerged, slippery waist, kissing her soundly as her legs wrapped around his hips, his cock growing hard as his hands found warm, slippery breasts in the dark depths of the pool.

"Hey watch it," Scully teased. "There are some places I do *not* want this mud to wind up."

"Awww...," Mulder whined playfully, his pouting broken by the sound of chimes, noting it was time for them to shower and move on to the seaweed wraps.

Holding Mulder's hand as the climbed out of the mudbath, looking startlingly like they tended to after pursuing one of their more heinous cases, Scully attempted to placate her partner by pointing out the more obvious features of the room.

"See, Mulder, we'll have to shower together again, except this time, you get to look," the muddy redhead teased, turning on the numerous water jets.

"Scully, I'll let you in on a little secret," he breathed into her ear, swiping at her mud-coated bottom with his hand, "I *always* looked...."

Xxx

45 minutes later...

"Mulder, I'm starting to feel a little like takeout sushi."

"Raw fish in the Rocky Mountains? I don't think so, Scully."

Dana Scully squirmed in the binding seaweed and silver insulating blanket, "That's not what I mean, Mulder."

"I know, Scully, but it's supposed to be detoxifying, and considering all the unidentified goo, mucus, and hazardous waste we're constantly exposed to...."

"Not to mention second-hand smoke," Scully sighed, conceding her partner's point.

"So, ten more minutes won't be *that* bad, now will it?"

"But still...I really hate not being able to move," Scully wriggled.

"So I take it handcuffs and silk ties are out of the question?" Mulder joked.

"Mulder, I'll chain you to the bed any time you want," Scully retorted smoothly.

Suddenly, it was *Mulder* who was fidgeting uncomfortably, "Ok...so now *my* seaweed wrap is getting a little too tight...."

Xxx

A half-hour later, in Mulder and Scully's hotel room

"Alright, Mr. and Mrs. Mulder, now we're going to start working on stimulating the blood flow to your core with abdominal massage, breaking up any adhesions...improving circulation...opening up all those reproductive channels," Susan, the masseuse and Miss Vivian's oldest daughter explained as she directed Mulder and Scully to turn over as they lay on the massage tables, comfortably relaxed since Susan and her husband Chris had thoroughly worked their backs and extremities, though not so much that the two agents would be puddles of jello. The goal of the couple's massage was *not* to put said couple to sleep, at least, not right away.

"How close are you planning to get to those 'reproductive channels'?" Mulder queried, suddenly a little nervous about the whole process.

"Not to worry, sir," Mulder's masseur, Chris, insisted. "Susan and I will be more than happy to leave you some literature describing some more 'intimate' massage techniques you and your wife might employ later.

"You hear that, wife?" Mulder chuckled, teasing his partner, lying on an identical massage table parallel to his.

"I heard," Scully responded smoothly, trying to remain relaxed as Susan massaged her abdomen, the increasing blood flow and Mulder's naked-except-for-the-sheet presence making it a bit difficult to wait for the end of their couple's massage session.

As Chris continued with Mulder's abdominal massage, the agent began to experience the sensation that generally follows the sort of 'improved circulation' that such attention generally brings about.

"Oh, man, there has *got* to be a word for that sort of phenomena," he said absently, though Scully giggled at his predicament.

Thankfully, Chris was not off-put by the comment.

"We'll be out of your way in just a few minutes. We often get lots of couples who have *ahem held off* for several days before they arrive.

"Held off? Man, you have *no* idea," Mulder groaned cryptically with Scully trying hard to restrain a wicked grin.

"Now don't be discouraged if you don't become pregnant this week," Susan instructed as she worked toward finishing Scully's abdominals. "It may take several weeks before this week's therapies show results, so just keep practicing."

"Practice does make perfect, I hear," he leered playfully at Scully.

"Then practice, it is," Scully retorted with a grin, making Mulder's not-so-little problem all the more apparent.

"I do recommend you pick up a manual on pregnancy massage, Mr. Mulder. Of course, it's helpful for all daddies-to-be, but there's a good chance that your rather petite wife may end up having a rather large baby," Susan suggested knowingly, noting the distinct difference in their sizes.

"Will do," Mulder conceded, grateful that the two therapists would soon be leaving him alone with the woman he'd waited so many years for. As the therapists adjusted the pair's sheets for discretion, Mulder secured his sheet and climbed off the bed, then helping Scully do the same.

"Could you guys do us a huge favor and have Miss Vivian order some dinner for us? I'm not certain we'll make our reservations tonight," Mulder asked Susan and Chris as they folded the portable tables and gathered their supplies.

"Of course, Mr. Mulder, although she will insist that you take your wife out for dinner and dancing tomorrow," Susan smiled, knowing that she had delivered the same message countless times.

"Tomorrow night, absolutely," Mulder assured, reaching into his wallet for a generous tip.

"Thank you, sir, and um," Chris's voice dropped quietly as he addressed Mulder, "good luck."

"Dinner in about an hour?" Susan guessed, stepping through the door just after her husband.

"Sounds fine," Scully agreed, closing the door behind the pair, smiling at the fact that she and Mulder were alone for the first time that day since their conversation in the park.

"So, Mrs. Mulder....," the hopeful agent teased, even though the locals were now well out of earshot.

Scully played along with her partner's presumption, "Yes, Mr. Mulder...?"

"You gonna' let me see what you got under that sheet?"

"You *have* seen it all before," Scully rolled her eyes with a grin.

"Yeah, but I never got to do *fun* stuff to it before," Mulder pouted, nibbling a little on Scully's earlobe to punctuate his point, eliciting a seductive giggle from his partner.

"How about I'll show you mine, if you show me yours," Scully whispered huskily.

"Done," Mulder dropped his sheet in a flash, wearing only a smile.

Scully grinned at her partner's unfailing enthusiasm, taking a moment to let her eyes rake over the Mulder's considerable *ahem* assets. Then taking a deep breath, knowing that this was the moment that would change things forever, Scully dropped the white cloth wound around her own body, allowing Mulder to look his fill.

"My god, Scully, but you are beautiful," Mulder's eyes and hands trailed slowly up the curves of his partner's body.

"You're not so bad yourself," Scully understated with a grin, her blue eyes twinkling up at his as her fingers toyed with the dark hair at the base of his neck. Looking into Mulder's warm eyes, Scully saw some of his earlier playfulness fade away, and allowed herself that vulnerability which she normally kept concealed.

His hands drawing long strokes down her back, Mulder swallowed the lump in his throat like a school boy and took a deep breath before beginning his confession.

"Scully, I want you to know...this isn't just about our friendship...or this x-file...or even to get you pregnant," Mulder began, his eyes shining in the moonlight slipping in through the edges of the curtained windows. "I love you, Dana Katherine Scully," he smiled as she blushed, "and I have for a very long time."

"I love you, too," Scully responded to the truth she had really known for so long, "and, baby or no, I wouldn't want to be any place else tonight. I wouldn't have wanted to spend the last seven years anywhere but right by your side," Scully reassured her partner, who always carried the guilt over Scully's many losses.

Mulder had never known a loyalty like this, never known someone who would fight for him so fiercely, so completely. For someone who hated an empty silence, who was always ready with a theory, quip or retort, Fox William Mulder had no words...

His lips had a much more important matter to attend to.

His mouth crashed down onto Scully's, lifting her body up to his, wrapping her legs around his hips as they made their way blindly to the bed.

Moonlight danced across porcelain skin, lighting the feast that lay before the man who had hungered for Dana Scully for so many years. The pale line of her jaw, the soft slope of her neck drew Mulder's lips to taste the tender places he found there.

Scully's kissed Mulder's temple, her fingers weaving through dark locks, holding her partner close to the skin that was suddenly alive with the electricity of his kisses. Her toes tickled up the length of Mulder's inner thighs to the cleft of his backside, making Mulder's muscles flex in anticipation.

His mouth trailed a path of kisses down the hollow of her throat, across the delicate bones below, until he finally arrived to the soft mound of flesh topped with its ruby-colored nipple.

A muffled whimper escaped Mulder's throat as his lips wrapped around the hardened peak and berried flesh surrounding it. He suckled at the

sweet orb, the heat of Scully's core and her slickened lips cradling his swollen flesh.

His left hand moved to cover the nipple left shining from the wet heat of his mouth as his lips found its peaked twin. How often had he seen those rosy buds harden underneath her buttoned-up blouses, how tempting when he would hold her through the night, and now her warm breast filled his hungry mouth, lavishing it with all the attention he had denied himself for so long. Scully's hand cradled his head against her breast, her hips straining to seek the friction of his hardened body.

"Mulderrrr...," Scully moaned, her body aching for his to fill her.

"Patience, Scully, I'm not finished with you yet," Mulder grinned, his eyes twinkling as he met her gaze, darkened with arousal.

Mulder offered a tender kiss to the glinting tip of Scully's breast before moving further down her belly, heaving with panting breaths. Reaching the flat of her abdomen, Mulder's kisses became almost reverent, a blessing whispered against the place where his son would soon be.

Mulder's reverie was broken by the grinding rise of his partner's mound seeking purchase against his chest.

"Impatient, are we...?" Mulder teased, looking up to Scully's face contracted in need.

"Please...," she pled as Mulder's hands moved down and his chin slid along the thin sliver of fiery curls below. At the sound of her plaintive whimper, Mulder latched onto Scully's swollen clit and sunk two fingers deep into her hungry channel.

The cries that came from her parted lips only spurred Mulder to take a deeper taste.

"You taste like I dreamt you would...," Mulder whispered against the tender folds, slickened with her honeyed juices. So many times, their bodies breathless and hearts pounding, either from chasing down a suspect or being trapped together in close quarters, Mulder could scent his partner's distinct essence, his cock growing hard and mouth yearning to taste, and now, here he was—tongue buried between her legs as his partner called out his name like a mantra.

"Mulderrr," Scully cried out over and over, years of repressed longing rebelled against as she ground down harder against the tongue that stroked her pillowed walls and invaded that dark, tight passage.

His tongue drew a firm path between the furrow of her tender nether lips, laving at the swollen pearl buried inside, fingers returning to the eager

channel that was now painfully ready for him.

Slipping in a third finger and sucking hard at the needy bud, Mulder could feel the pulsing and tightening surround his fingers, hear his name screamed out as loud as she had ever called for him in the shadowy dark, and felt fingernails dig into his shoulders to urge him up, Scully nearly clawing at his back to discourage any further teasing.

Scully groped for his cock, still hard, though she stroked in nonetheless, spreading the head with the clear, slick fluid at the tip and nestling him between her rosy, swollen lips.

Small but strong hands slipped to his backside, gripping at flexing flesh. Their eyes met with an unspoken understanding, and in one moment, Mulder buried himself deep inside the woman who had owned his heart for years.

Mulder grit his teeth and closed his eyes for a moment in order not to completely lose control as Scully's walls still pulsed around him. Breathing deeply, he finally slid back and pushed forward once again, his emotions nearly overwhelming him as his body and his heart were finally home in one place.

"I love you, Dana," he whispered below her ear to be answered with the bucking of slender hips as his partner drew him even deeper into her body.

"Love you...loved you for so long," Scully's blue eyes laying bare her feeling she'd buried for years.

"Dreamed of how you'd feel...how you'd taste," Mulder dipped down for a kiss, giving Scully a taste of herself on his tongue.

"Want to taste you too, you know," his partner playfully pouted, nipping at his bottom lip.

"All the time in the world for that, Scully," Mulder assured, sending his strokes deep as her legs clasped his body tightly.

"I want to do all the things to you that I'd never let myself do before," Scully breathed out cryptically, arching her back with abandon.

"God, woman, I'm having a hard enough time holding on as it is," he whimpered as his mind chased all the possibilities of her words.

Scully's face softened in compassion and her words were filled with love, "Just let go, Mulder, we've got all night."

"Not till I make you come again," he declared with a grin and sliding a pillow under Scully's bottom.

Mulder's fingers split that smiling furrow once again as Scully's ankles found their way to her partner's strong shoulders.

His strokes had grown hard, rapid and nearly frantic, and the way Scully's nails dug into his thighs, urging Mulder on, it was clear that Dana Scully was more than eager to take all her attentive partner could offer.

Feeling that now-familiar clamping down, those tiny tremors that would soon give way to her body shuddering from the inside out, Mulder ground down against Scully's eager mound, his thumbs opening those concealing lips to the deep friction of his rigid length, slamming deeply into her depths while Scully bucked harder to gain a greater purchase.

"Fill me up Mulder," Scully coaxed as the pulsing of her core thudded throughout her body. "Come in me....," she cried out, relieving Mulder of any control that might have remained.

"Scully...," he cried out as he emptied his seed into her waiting body, his partner collecting him back into her arms as Mulder lay panting against her breast, sprinkling her skin with eager kisses.

"Love you...love you," Scully breathed out, her fingers raking through his dampened hair.

"Love you back," Mulder smiled into the valley between Scully's breasts, placing a sweet kiss to the hollow there.

He remained buried deep in her channel until his body protested and he rolled to Scully's side, nestling in the crook of her neck and sliding his large hand to her belly and drawing soft circles there.

"Do you think he's in there yet?" Mulder contemplated the flat plane that still faintly pulsed beneath his touch.

"It's a little early to tell yet, Mulder," Scully chuckled, sliding her hand to cover his. "Don't be disappointed if it takes a while," she chided with a sympathetic smile.

"Hmmm...making love to the woman of my dreams, keeping her topped off with my little swimmers," Mulder teased, bending down to kiss Scully's belly once more, "Disappointed is *not* the word that comes to mind."

"No...it doesn't," Scully smiled, pulling Mulder back up to meet her smiling lips and hooded eyes.

Mulder settled himself again between the cradle of his partner's thighs, his body beginning to recover a bit from their recent lovemaking.

As their smiling kisses turned more heated, Mulder huskily inquired, "Too early for topping off?"

"Not at all...," Scully purred, lifting her hips in anticipation, enjoying the sweet slide of her partner's hardening length between her slickened lips and eager pearl.

"Mulderrr....," Scully groaned, her hips grinding against his, hands moving toward his firm ass.

"Scullyyy...," Mulder responded in kind, the swollen head of his cock nudging at her entrance.

Unfortunately, there was an insistent knocking at another entrance that halted their progress.

"Room service—your dinners have arrived," Vivian called out.

"Um...just a minute," Mulder called out, his voice cracking a little with nervousness.

"Bathrobes are in the closet," Vivian called out with a tinge of pleased amusement.

Mulder threw open the closet, tossing another deftly to Scully. Donning his robe and knotting the tie securely while noting Scully's progress in covering up, Mulder waited for her nod of approval before opening the door.

"Sorry about the wait," Fox Mulder apologized sheepishly as he opened the door to the bustling, excitable innkeeper.

"Oh, no need to fuss," Vivian waved off as she brought in the massive tray, "Trust me, in this business, there isn't much I haven't seen."

"I can just imagine," Mulder's eyebrows rose as he lifted a wine bottle and corkscrew from the tray, moving to open the bottle and pour two glasses as Vivian set the small dining table for them.

"Now...I wasn't quite sure, so I ordered one beef and one salmon dinner, figuring you two could decide amongst yourselves," Vivian sorted the plates and silverware.

"Sounds delicious," Scully smiled graciously as she moved toward the small dining table.

"Now I'm just going to brew a pot of the tea you bought today," the hostess scooped out the fruity mixture into a pot before filling it with hot water from a carafe. "and I brought you a little jar of our local honey as well."

Mulder and Scully gave each other a small surreptitious grin, smiling at the innkeeper's good-natured intrusion.

"For dessert, I ordered you the chocolate and raspberry tart to go with your tea," she added, placing the decadent dessert between the two place settings.

"It all looks wonderful," Mulder assured as he helped Scully to her chair. "You have really gone above and beyond for us, Miss Vivian."

"Oh, I enjoy it," she gregarious hostess acknowledged. "Mrs. Mulder...."

Mulder smiled over his wine glass at Scully's quick response, looking up at the attentive innkeeper.

"I hung your new gowns in the closet," Miss Vivian pointed toward the mirrored door, "*and put your new knickers in the drawer,*" she pretended to whisper, much to Mulder's amusement.

She lit the candles on the small dining table, continuing her advice, "Your new baubles are on the nightstand and the other items you bought are in the powder room." Vivian moved behind Mulder as she went to light the candles on the dining table.

"*Watch out for the horny goat weed,*" she mouthed to Scully, looking down at the seated Mulder with a warning seemingly born out of experience.

Scully nodded slightly and smiled, trying to school her grin. Mulder just raised an eyebrow, wondering what secret communication had passed.

"Remember, tomorrow night you take your pretty wife out on the town for dinner and dancing," Vivian playfully scolded Mulder.

"Yes, m'am," Mulder chuckled, amused at the lively hostess's interference.

"Just leave the tray outside when you're finished and I'll pick it up later. Breakfast at around nine-thirty?" Vivian double-checked as she made her way out the door.

"Perfect," Mulder assured, both agents smiling and waving at the charming busybody.

Taking his glass in hand and prompting Scully to do the same, Mulder proposed a toast, "To our new life together."

Scully returned the toast, but the glint in her eye told her partner that after all the day's surprises, she was expecting full disclosure from this point onward, stressing the word 'together' as she clinked her glass to Mulder's.

"So...", Mulder began, cutting half the steak and placing it on Scully's plate as she did the same with her salmon, "when you woke up this morning in D.C., would you have imagined that you'd be going to bed here?"

"No, but apparently *you* did," Scully shot Mulder a knowing eyebrow as her fork zinged through her teeth.

"Come on, Scully, if I had said 'Let's go away on a vacation and try to get you pregnant with our love child' would you have said 'yes'?" Mulder retorted, scooping a hearty bite of steak and potatoes into his mouth after his pointed query.

Scully thought as she chewed, then took a drink before responding, "Maybe...but then again, I might have admitted you to the psych ward at Bethesda," she smiled smugly.

"See," Mulder took a bite of Scully's fish, using his empty fork to make his point, "And for the record, I told you the truth...once we were already here," he added sheepishly as he hid behind his wine glass.

"Mulder...I was fairly suspicious at the airport, and I knew for certain when we checked in," Scully assured, taking a sip of her wine before trying a bite of her partner's steak.

"What gave me away?"

"Your choice of credit card," Scully said flatly.

"Ah," Mulder nodded, eating a bit of humble pie along with his steamed vegetables.

"So, where does Skinner think we are?"

"I told him we were on a working vacation—which we are," Mulder defended as he popped a piece of buttered roll into his mouth.

"Working?" Scully scoffed, poking at her salad.

"Hey, we collected samples...took readings," Mulder claimed. "I even managed to sneak a bit of mud out of the spa," he said proudly.

"And how exactly did you manage that?" Scully inquired with a grin.

"You don't want to know," he teased, refilling their wine glasses.

"And that needs to be the *last* thing you keep from me," Scully seized her moment, chewing a bite of steak while she awaited her partner's contrition.

"Point taken," Mulder nodded.

"Even when you think you are protecting me," Scully insisted.

Mulder sighed, "Yes, dear."

Scully's mouth turned up at the corners as she wadded up her napkin, tossing it at her smart-assed partner.

Mulder caught the napkin with one hand, smiling, then his expression turned thoughtful and more weighted.

"Dana, I wasn't trying to keep from telling you about our son," Mulder began. "After you brought me home, I was trying to get my strength back...trying to sort out so much in my head."

Scully studied her partner as he cast his eyes toward the open space of the room.

"I kept having the dreams...a few times a week. Then when you wanted to try the IVF, I thought that explained why I dreamt about our son, but then....," his voice trailed off, not wishing to rehash that painful time.

Scully poured and sweetened the tea, Mulder accepting it gratefully.

"I thought then that the dreams would've stopped, but they just became more frequent...more insistent," Mulder sighed, took a drink of his tea, and finally chanced a look up at his partner whose gaze had softened considerably since their conversation first began.

"He keeps asking for you...tells me I'm supposed to bring you with me....," Mulder's eyes shone, his expression lost and searching. "I guess little kids think their daddies can fix anything...."

Before the welling tear fell to his cheek, Mulder's lap was suddenly occupied, soft lips on his forehead as he breathed in Scully's sweet, warm flesh.

"Why didn't you tell me all this sooner?" Scully whispered without accusation against his dark locks.

Taking a deep breath, Mulder regretfully pulled his face up from his welcoming pillow.

"I didn't want to tell you in D.C. It was too dangerous—I didn't know who might be listening...or watching. That's why our tickets were so last minute—less time for someone to follow us or set up surveillance."

Scully's brow furrowed deeply as she studied her partner, knowing that his paranoia was probably well-founded, but then, her mind eased as she saw the familiar glint return to his eyes.

"And...frankly, I just wanted this to be about us," Mulder smiled softly. "We've waited so long, had to sacrifice so much...I'm really just selfish and wanted you all to myself for awhile," his grin returned and began peppering Scully's cleavage with kisses until she giggled and had to catch her breath.

"Ok...ok...," Scully tried to redirect in spite her laughter. With her left, Scully scooped a fingerful of the raspberry and chocolate tart, seductively slipping the finger into her partner's mouth who closed his eyes briefly in overwhelming pleasure. As the finger made its slow slide through Mulder's lips, Scully arched her hand into his line of sight.

A quirked eyebrow shot up as Scully pinned him with her gaze, "Care to explain this?" she cast her eyes to the diamonds shining in the candlelight.

Mulder's deer-in-the-headlights expression was rather amusing.

"This didn't come from seized property, did it?"

Mulder shook his head, finally releasing her fingertip with a small 'pop.'

"I was kind of hoping that you'd get used to wearing it while we were here," he said hopefully.

Scully grinned, blushing a little, "You could've just asked," she teased.

Mulder's expression was sweet but serious, "Scully, it won't be long before we have to leave D.C., change our names," Mulder's mind raced with the understanding of how different their lives would be in a few short weeks. "I've already put the bulk of my parents' estates into off-shore accounts, had the Gunmen working on new identities for us," Mulder breathed out and closed his eyes, knowing that he was bombarding Scully with so many revelations today, he knew her head must be spinning. "But the last thing I'd like for us to do as Dana Katherine Scully and Fox William Mulder...is to get married," Mulder looked into Scully's watery blue eyes and kissed the ring that he had put on her finger earlier that morning.

Scully slid her fingertips along her partner's cheek, lifting his chin from her hand as she smiled and pressed her lips to his.

"I'd like that, too..."

7. Chapter 8 & 9

Thanks to Luiza & Green. Enjoy!

Ch 8

After celebrating their engagement with the raspberry tart and another bottle of wine, Scully went to run a bath for them, seeing as all their naughty bits were quickly becoming covered in chocolate and raspberry sauce.

Bending over to adjust the water temperature, Scully squealed and giggled as the cool, creamy desert met her swollen, heated sex, quickly followed by her partner's highly agile tongue.

"Mulder, what are you doing back there?" Scully gasped, a curtain of red falling to the side as she turned to look behind her.

"Having my dessert," came the muffled, chuckling reply.

"Yes, well I haven't finished *my* dessert, either," Scully challenged, wrestling Mulder to the carpet and coating his prodigious member in the decadent mixture.

The heat of her mouth and skill of her tongue made Mulder groan in appreciation. This had been one of his go-to fantasies for a long time now—their bodies on the floor, her breathy, lurid words in his ear, and then....

Mulder slid Scully's still-sweet backside back to his mouth, grateful for the distraction of pleasuring his fiancé, because he knew he couldn't hold on for long without it. Tongues teased, lips suckled and teeth nibbled ever so lightly, but when Scully relaxed her throat and took Mulder's full length into her mouth, he grit his teeth and pulled away, his partner's head still spinning in the seconds it took for Mulder to get them in the tub with Scully straddling his lap.

Scully swore she could hear him humming Monty Python lyrics under his breath.

His nervousness did not abate until Scully had once again seated herself firmly on his straining cock, her hips making waves in the bubbly bath water. She was trying to contain her amusement, but her giggles lilted to the surface, regardless.

"What?" Mulder asked as his fingers gripped her rolling hips.

"I have one...maybe two good ova hiding in here somewhere," Scully glanced down at their joined bodies, "and you're counting the millions of

sperm you can produce in a day?" she inquired, faintly amused.

"You never know, *he* could be the *one*," Mulder defended with a pout.

Mulder did appreciate the jiggle of his partner's breasts when she laughed, even when she was laughing at *him*.

"Hey, lean back, you've got chocolate in your hair," Mulder directed as though he had just discovered the discolored strands.

Mulder held Scully's back as she arched back into the water, and with a mischievous smile, he thrust deeply, making his partner gasp at the sensation.

As she came back to center, Scully ground deeply against Mulder's cock, eliciting a pleased groan from her partner.

"Hey, you got a little chocolate right here," Scully teased as she leaned in, licking Mulder's bottom lip as she pressed her clit hard against the base of his cock as she contracted her heated sheathe around him.

"Jesus, Scully...", Mulder breathed out, quickly turning his partner so that her back was cradled against his chest.

Scully braced herself with knuckles white against the tub's rim, gasping at the fullness of her partner's body inside hers, at the change in angle of his prodigious length, sliding along the confines of her snug channel.

"Muldeerrr....Scully groaned as he pulled her to his body even closer, fingers slipping to her swollen clit, palms covering her heaving breast as his thumb and forefinger rolled the taut nipple between them, his lips suckling at the soft flesh in the curve of her neck.

Scully's mind slipped to the dirty-girl fantasy she'd so often indulged in at work...Mulder behind her as she braced herself against his desk...his hand reaching around to slip inside her panties...the sounding slide of his zipper as it came down...the anticipation of his hard cock....

"All you had to do was ask...", Mulder chuckled low into Scully's ear, driving his cock deeper and harder into her needy core as her fantasy flitted through his mind as well. While Mulder loved Scully heart and soul, he also enjoyed indulging in his lust for her, too—that unbridled, passionate, hungry desire they had repressed for so long.

With another hard stroke against Scully's clit, a urgent pull on her nipple and a deep thrust from behind, Scully's walls pulsed and clenched around Mulder's ready cock. As she called out his name and gripped the backs of his thighs, he emptied himself into her, their breaths exhaling in heavy, synchronous gasps.

He held her like this for several minutes, offering tender kisses to the back of her neck as he resumed his ministrations with the washcloth he'd earlier employed, letting warm water rain down from the thick cloth, gently wiping away evidence of their sticky play.

As he slipped out from inside her, Mulder's hand disappeared beneath the water, eliciting a hiss of indrawn breath from Scully as he touched her swollen nether-lips.

"Careful..." Scully gently warned, her body being unaccustomed to such vigorous activity.

"I am..." Mulder promised with a grin, making sure his touch was soft and light as he finished with her bath.

Scully took her own washcloth and finished cleaning her partner of all the edibles she hadn't managed to lick off earlier. She leaned Mulder back against her, smiling as he hummed happily while she washed his hair, dipping her empty wine glass into the water to rinse his dark locks. He groaned in appreciation as Scully scrubbed his back, reveling in how nice it felt, wondering briefly if he could somehow work promises of future bath time attentions into their wedding vows. He remembered the last shower they had shared, and the nervous, stolen glances that they'd allowed themselves. He thought of the times she'd let herself into his apartment... the hopeful fantasy he'd return to—how she'd start undressing as soon as she heard the shower running...how the door would snick open in the steamy shower...how her soapy hands would gently rake through his hair, scrub his back till it was tingly...and then....

Behind him, Mulder could feel Scully's lilting chuckle as her soapy hands moved to the cleft of his ass, sucking in a shuddering breath as her hands continued southward, "Remember, Mulder," she whispered huskily into his ear, "all you had to do was ask...."

xxx

All the physical and emotional exertions of the day had finally caught up with Mulder and Scully (not to mention the two-hour time difference), therefore their shared bath was followed by Scully donning her new nightgown and Mulder a fresh pair of boxers.

They sighed in exhausted pleasure as they nestled into the sumptuous bed, Mulder wrapping his arms around Scully as she was drawn to her favorite spot on his chest. They kissed goodnight and slipped into a much-needed sleep.

XXX

Ch 9

"Hey buddy," Mulder called out over the sound of the lapping waves. He could see the dark-haired little boy in the distance working diligently, trying to perfect his creation in the sand. Mulder picked up his pace as he jogged down the little stretch of beach, anxious to visit with his son once again.

"Dad?" the little boy called back against the wind and water. A look of frustrated exasperation crossed his face when he saw his father alone on the beach.

"Where's Mommy?" he questioned, his annoyance rather obvious. "Daaadd—you were supposed to bring Mommy..." he huffed and shook his head.

Mulder, not even certain as to how he was accomplishing such a feat in the first place, was a little taken aback. Running a hand through his hair and looking sheepishly toward his son, Mulder's brows rose, hoping that he could fulfill his boy's request.

"Hang tight, buddy, I'll be right back," Mulder called back as he turned to jog back the way he came.

XXX

Sometime during the night, Mulder began to snore as he lay on his back. The irregular noise had prompted a still-sleeping Scully to roll to her side to escape the sound.

Without waking, the unconscious Mulder rolled over to find Scully, wrapping his arms tightly around her as she snuggled back against him. His lips breathed a kiss against his partner's temple as he slept, his body cradling hers completely.

Xxx

Mulder's urgent search of the beach was stopped short as his son's voice called out excitedly over the waves.

"Mommy!"

A vision in golden silk appeared from behind a sand dune, moving ever closer into focus as she approached.

Mulder broke into a wide grin, relieved and pleased that he finally realized how to bring Scully into the dream.

Dana Scully smiled broadly at the sight of two excitable boys, one tall and one short, running to meet her on the beach.

"You're here, Mommy! You're here!" the young boy shouted gleefully as he jumped into Scully's arms with Mulder's strong body sliding behind hers, helping to support the sudden onslaught of boisterous boy.

Tears of relief and happiness welled in Scully's eyes as she clung to her son on the beach, his father behind her, embracing them both. Her eyes closed for a moment, reveling in the delicious heaviness against her chest and in her arms, breathing in the smell of salt air and little boy as she kissed the warm cheek.

"See, Daddy, I told you! I told you, you could do it!" the young boy laughed, Mulder stepping to Scully's side to receive his share of the hugs.

"Yes, you did, buddy," Mulder chuckled, his eyes also glistening at the sight of their son finally in his mother's arms.

"I told them! I told them, you could do it!" the little boy cheered as he clung to his parents.

Scully looked with silent but questioning eyes at her partner whose eyebrows rose as he shook his head slightly, noting that he didn't know any more than she did.

"Come on, Mommy, you gotta' see the ship Daddy and I built," big hazel eyes flashed excitedly as the excited boy squirmed down, dragging his mother down the stretch of beach, his father's hand resting at the small of her back.

"Wow, it's a really big ship," Scully acknowledged with astounded enthusiasm as she surveyed the circular construction built of sand.

"Course, it's a ship that flies in the air...not like Ahab's ship that goes in the water," the child pedantically explained as he shook his head, continuing to add sand to the already massive design.

"Ahab?" Scully's voice caught in her throat as she frantically scanned the horizon.

Mulder wrapped his arms around Scully from behind, whispering in her ear, "Shhh, I don't know...but just stay calm," Mulder breathed slowly and deeply against her back, trying to get Scully's racing pulse to slow, else she awaken and end the dream.

Scully nodded in understanding against Mulder's shoulder before she carefully worded her next question, "So...have you ever been on Ahab's ship?"

The little boy rolled his eyes, looking much like his father often did when Scully stubbornly refused to see what was right in front of her.

"His ship's too big to come here, Mommy," he sighed, shaking his head a little and pointing to the shallows of the beach before he suddenly remembered, "but we got a little boat...see," a small finger pointed to a distant cove. A small white rowboat with 'Pequod' emblazoned across the stern in faded blue letters rocked slightly with the tide, tethered to the dock with a sun-bleached rope.

Scully shielded her eyes with a hand flattened at her brow and looked up the hillside from the dock, spying a large white beach house with navy shutters and a long porch that wrapped around the front and sides.

"Whose house is that?" Scully asked hopefully, though trying to school the urgency in her voice, realizing that demanding too much information at once might be upsetting for their young son and end the dream prematurely.

Again, a pair of hazel eyes rolled heavenward, "It's my house, Mommy. It's where I'll be born...."

Scully and Mulder both squinted up toward the hillside, but in that same moment, the sun shone brightly down on the family as a bank of clouds drifted away, forcing Mulder and Scully to shut their eyes against the glare. When the blinding light passed and they opened their eyes again, Mulder and Scully found themselves tangled in their bed sheets, blinking against the sunbeam peeking through the slight opening of the curtains in their hotel room.

With hearts pounding and breath coming in ragged gasps, Scully turned to face Mulder, though never leaving the protective embrace of his arms. Mulder felt his chest hair grow damp from the tears that Scully finally let herself shed.

"He's so beautiful," Scully exhaled against her partner's chest, as his strong arms steadied her shaking shoulders.

"Just like his momma," Mulder smiled as he kissed the blazing hair that rested under his chin.

He was relieved to feel Scully lips smile against his chest and plant a kiss where her tears had fallen.

She gave a tiny gasp as she pulled back a bit to look up at her partner through damp eyelashes.

"My dad?" she questioned, confused at why Mulder wouldn't have mentioned his presence before.

"I don't know, Scully. I've never seen anyone else there. I'd never seen the rowboat or the house before today," Mulder shook his head, equally

as baffled as his partner was.

"Whenever I was there, we'd work on the ship, and he'd ask me to bring you with me the next time I came, but this was the first time he'd ever mentioned anyone else," Mulder explained, trying to piece the night's events together.

"Did you ever ask?" Scully queried, as if Mulder should've thought of it long ago.

"When I tried, he'd just say that I needed to bring you to the beach—that you needed to come with me," Mulder explained, wishing that he could provide his partner with more answers.

"I wonder why he wouldn't just have you tell me what I needed to know?" Scully mused, looking to the empty space beyond Mulder's bare shoulder.

Mulder thought for a minute and grinned, "I expect your father told him you would need to see for yourself—that you'd think I was in the throes of some crackpot fantasy if I tried to pass the message along."

"That sounds about right," Scully grinned, earning herself a good-natured tickling from her fiancé.

An energetic knock at the door and a bubbly voice calling out, "Breakfast," brought an end to Mulder's retaliation.

"Just a second, Miss Vivian," Mulder called out, pushing the sheets back and moving for his bathrobe. When he slid his feet across the sheets, his brow furrowed, "Huh, must've gotten crumbs in the bed," he wiggled his toes and slid his feet together to free them of any residual grit.

Scully sat up, not remembering them eating anything in bed that might have left crumbs behind, and threw back the covers to see what Mulder had encountered.

Brushing the tiny particles into her hand she brought her cupped palm closer in, picking up the bits with her other thumb and forefinger.

As her partner tied his robe and headed toward the door, Scully's pronouncement stopped Mulder in his tracks, "It's not crumbs, Mulder," she declared as her broad smile met his questioning eyes, "it's sand...."

8. Chapter 10

Thanks to Tiffany & Green. Hope you enjoy!

Ch 10

After a hearty breakfast, a romantic shower, and a short hike through the woods where the two agents filled tiny, plastic bags with samples of the local flora and fauna, Mulder and Scully found themselves perusing the town square once again, with Scully stopping into the jeweler's once again to buy a turquoise cross for her mother, the shopkeeper greatly heartened to see the couple's mood improved from the day before.

Continuing to the center of the square, a sly smile crossed Mulder's lips as he paused at an enormous set of stone steps.

"So, Scully, care to take a tour of Venus Springs' historic county courthouse, the seat of government for this tiny little burg?" Mulder questioned with a flourish.

Trying to contain her amused smile, Scully conceded, "Sure, Mulder, why not...."

Mulder held Scully's hand as they passed by dated paintings of Western expansion and busts of local leaders, they turned down a marble hall to see a row of doors with lights shining behind the frosted glass and names. With a playfully affected expression of surprise, Mulder stopped their progress short as they came to a particular door.

"Why look, the County Clerk, I wonder what one might procure in such an establishment?" Mulder said with a twinkle in his green eyes.

Scully sighed at her partner's antics, "Mulder...you have to have blood tests before you can get a marriage license."

With a waggle of his eyebrows, Mulder pulled from his jacket pocket, two thick folded packets of paperwork.

"Remember those surprise physicals last week?" Mulder rhetorically questioned, "Not such a surprise," he explained with a satisfied gleam. He hovered just outside the door, holding his breath as he waited for Scully's pronouncement.

Holding out her hand flat with a wry grin on her face as she shook her head at Mulder's machinations, Mulder slid off the wedding band from his left hand and placed it in Scully's palm. Chuckling to herself, Scully did the same as Mulder placed her rings in his pocket.

"Come on then," Scully opened the door with a grin, then paused to look at her future husband with a mischievous grin, "I guess what they've said all these years will be true."

"What's that?" Mulder asked as he held the heavy door.

"I really will be Mrs. Spooky after all...."

XXX

After thanking the county clerk for her congratulations and heading back toward the lobby with their marriage license in hand, Scully stopped at the lone elevator, punching the button to head to the third floor.

"Whatcha' doin'?" Mulder asked, as though he had no idea of his partner's intentions.

"Third floor—judge's chambers," Scully remarked, as if it should be obvious.

"But we're not getting married in the judge's chambers," Mulder hinted with a grin.

"We're not?" Scully furrowed her brow, rather befuddled.

Mulder gave his fiancé no clues other than, "Nope—come on," as he grabbed her hand and led her out of the courthouse.

Xxx

As the two agents made their way up the crooked, cobblestone path, Scully heard the peal of ancient bells before the church came into view around the corner.

"Mulder?" she questioned as Mulder watched the range of emotions cross her features—astonishment...gratitude...and then concern that his grand plans were all for naught.

Mulder chuckled as he could hear all her unasked questions in her blue eyes alone.

"Trust me, Scully," he led her up the steps and opened the heavy, wooden door.

Xxx

As Scully rose from her prayers, she and Mulder were approached by a kindly, graying man dressed in the traditional black robes and white priest's collar as befitting his office.

"Father Gannon?" Mulder offered his hand.

"You must be Mr. Mulder," the priest shook hands. "We spoke on the phone last week."

"That's right," Mulder concurred, risking a look at his partner who stared at him with an arched eyebrow, but who nevertheless had a smile on her face.

"So this must be Miss Scully," the aging man turned to the bride in greeting.

It seemed so surreal to be called 'Miss' again that Scully had to stifle a chuckle.

"Yes, Father," she grinned.

"Well, Mr. Mulder, if you'll wait at the front, Miss Scully and I will return shortly," the priest indicated, leading the red-head toward the confessional.

As Scully looked over her shoulder with a quirked eyebrow, Mulder tried to bite back a chuckle as he heard Scully's voice in his head—

*Before last night, I wouldn't have *nearly* so much to confess....*

Xxx

The four nuns in attendance tossed birdseed as the couple descended the front stairs with Sister Mary Francis, the most technologically savvy of the four, snapping one last picture on Mulder's camera before returning it to the groom.

"Thank you, Father, for all your help," Mulder graciously noted, slipping the priest a generous donation for the church's building fund.

"You're very welcome," Father Gannon nodded, "Have a safe journey and peace be with you."

"And also with you," Scully responded in kind as she and Mulder turned and made their way back down the tiny street.

Swinging by the courthouse to drop off their marriage license, the newlywed couple crossed the square to meander through the little park where yesterday's revelations had changed their lives so dramatically.

"Thank you, Mulder," Scully said softly, looking every bit the blushing bride in the warm afternoon sunset.

"For what?"

"What do you mean 'for what'? For everything—this trip...the ring...the *church wedding*," she emphasized.

"I'm just relieved you're not mad at me," Mulder blew out a held breath.

"Why would I be mad about that?"

"Well, after the whole 'not keeping secrets thing,' my plans might have backfired on me there," Mulder confessed.

Scully thought intently before making her pronouncement, "Maybe just this once we'll consider it a surprise and not a secret."

"Ok, so surprises are ok, but secrets are a no-no," Mulder defined as they continued past the large concrete fountain.

"As long as it's a good surprise," Scully limited with a grin.

Mulder pulled Scully into his arms for a long, intense kiss as his broad, warm hand grazed the bare skin exposed by his wife's sundress, the other, more mischievously snaked down to caress her bottom, pulling her close to feel his hardening body through his tented trousers.

Scully drew his hips toward her own, as well, also seeking to relive a bit of the ache building between her own legs. She smiled knowingly as her husband's hardening length began to strain at the confines of his zipper.

"Well, that's certainly not a surprise," she teased, grinding into his throbbing shaft.

"Sure as hell isn't a secret, either," Mulder grinned, squeezing the luscious backside he'd admired for years. "So...do you want to head back to our room?"

Blue eyes flashed mischievously in response as an insistent hand pulled him toward the secluded woods.

"Not just yet," the redhead suggested with a wicked wink.

"Why, Agent Scully!" Mulder teasingly exclaimed.

His partner shot him a raised eyebrow as she looked over her shoulder and smirked playfully, "That's Mrs. Mulder, to you."

9. Chapters 11 & 12

Thanks to Luiza & Green- Enjoy!

Ch 11

"Perfect ...," Scully sighed as they came to a cozy hidden grotto, where a stream had smoothed the surrounding stones, though the trees provided a screen to obscure them from any onlookers.

"Yes, you are," her husband added, pulling his adventurous wife toward him for a deep kiss. His pleased hum deepened to a groan as he felt her hands slip between them, first sliding along the tented length in his trousers, which would've been heavenly in itself, but then, he felt a slight pressure at his abdomen, and then the gratified release as she unfastened the buckle and button that stood in her way. The metal snick of the descending zipper jolted Mulder to further action, slipping his hand underneath the hem of his wife's sundress and grazing his fingers along the curve of her calf to the tender flesh behind her knee.

With a sly smile, Scully gently pushed Mulder to sit on the cool stone that made for a low seat. Lifting her knee to meet his hip, her husband's hand drew a path up the back of her thigh toward her hip, a little surprised at what he *didn't* find there.

"Mrs. Mulder...," her husband asked, his voice thick with desire and playful amazement, "Where are your panties?"

"In your pocket...," she whispered coyly, and Mulder smiled when he realized why his wife had visited the ladies room when they had returned to the courthouse. He was also a little embarrassed that he hadn't noticed the surreptitious addition to his jacket.

"My blushing bride...," Mulder teased as his remaining hand quickly moved underneath his wife's full skirt to the cleft of her thighs, watching her widening smile as he toyed with her slickened lips and then his own grin broadened as his fingers plunged deeply inside her, and her eyes closed and her head lolled back in pleasure.

She rode his hand for a few moments more, then opened her eyes once again, her fingers reaching for his rigid length...

"I want you...," Scully choked out hoarsely, her knees spread on either side of his hips as she hovered above Mulder's lap.

Her husband quickly slipped his soaking hand from between her legs to clutch her hip as she sheathed herself on his rock-hard flesh.

Murmured groans of relief escaped their lips as that aching incompleteness of their separate bodies was quelled. Mulder's eyes, having closed briefly in pleasure, opened halfway to the sight of his wife's breasts threatening to spill over the bodice of her sundress, her creamy flesh straining against the floral cotton with each panting breath she took.

"I've got to see you," Mulder huskily pleaded, reaching for the buttons that held together the constricting top, not waiting for an answer. Making quick work of the shell-colored fastenings, Mulder bared his wife's breasts to the dappled, golden sunshine.

"So beautiful...", he exhaled, watching as beautiful, rosy buds teased him in their circular orbit, grazing his heated skin before pulling back to match the path of Scully's hips as she rode his cock. As if choosing the perfect moment to broach a game of jump rope, Mulder seized a ruby-colored nipple with his lips as he pulled her closer to grind hard and deep against him.

"*Somebody could catch us...*," Scully whispered, a little self-conscious at the exposure, thinking when she'd pulled Mulder into the woods, her skirt would conceal their activities well enough from any random passersby.

"*Don't care...*," Mulder breathed out against the valley between her breasts, one hand pushing the voluminous skirt behind his wife's hips, revealing the trimmed, fiery curls below and slick nether-lips that surrounded his hard shaft as it surged over and again inside Scully's heated sex.

His forehead rested between those soft globes, watching the hypnotizing rhythm of their bodies as Scully clung to him, her fingers clutching his dark locks as she rode Mulder in the soft, afternoon sunlight.

Scully's twinge of self-consciousness waned when Mulder's thumb dropped to her dark furrow, stroking the swollen pearl between her legs that longed for his touch. She should have known better than to think that Mulder could have resisted seeing her bare flesh as they made love, that he could have suppressed the temptation to watch the afternoon light play across her porcelain skin, could have kept that iridescent, slick slip of their joined bodies from his gaze.

"Like what you see, Mulder?" Scully grinned as hazel met bright blue.

Mulder's eyes danced over the sight of his wife making love to him, "Very much so...."

"And what I taste...", Mulder's tongue swept across Scully's untended nipple, hardening it to a tight bud. Scully sighed dreamily at the contact while her hips rolled like waves against the shore.

"And what I smell..." Scully giggled lightly as her husband breathed in deeply, from the valley between her breasts to the length of her neck, placing tender kisses to the spot beneath her ear as he nuzzled there for a moment.

"What I touch..." he answered with a smile as his strokes between her nether lips grew stronger.

"Mulderrr..." Scully groaned as she closed her eyes in pleasure.

"Love the way you say my name when we're making love," Mulder confessed as he peppered her soft flesh with kisses while he buried himself in her warm, tight sheath again and again.

"You've said my name a thousand different ways, but I must say, this by far is the best," he declared, much preferring the long, slow drawl of his surname from her lustful mouth over it uttered in disbelief, annoyance or fear.

Scully smiled wickedly as her lips grazed the tender skin just below her husband's ear.

"Make me say it again...."

Tightening his hold around his wife's tiny waist and thrusting with firmer strokes between her soft nether lips, Fox Mulder drove deeply into his partner's slick channel, her characteristic reserve conquered by the pleasure poured into every thrust and touch from her husband's body.

Latching onto a ruby nipple glistening in the sunshine, the newlywed agent suckled intently as he filled her depths over and again. His mouth, fingers and cock all found their matched rhythm, and soon, Scully's body began to pulse with the same soundless beat.

"Mulderrr..." she groaned loudly, sending the nearby fauna scuttling for cover as she clutched her husband's head to her breast and her hips ground against his cock and his hand.

The pulsing, constricting sheath that surrounded Mulder and the low groan of pleasure that escaped his wife's throat was more than enough to send him over the edge with her, filling her body with his heated seed.

Panting hard, Mulder and Scully rested there for a moment, foreheads meeting as they filled their lungs with much-needed air. They might have remained in their picturesque hideaway all afternoon had not a rustling at the edge of the forest caught their attention.

"Somebody's coming," Scully whispered, her blue eyes going wide.

"A little late with that call, Scully," Mulder teased.

"I'm serious," his wife hissed, though she couldn't suppress her grin at his joke. "Help me with these buttons," she frantically ordered.

"What happened to my naughty vixen who dragged me into the woods?" Mulder chuckled as he fumbled with the tiny buttons on the corset of his wife's dress.

"She doesn't want to spend her wedding night in jail for public nudity," Scully insisted, their fingers managing to get at least some of the buttons in the correct holes.

"Scoot back a bit, so I can zip up."

"Be careful," Scully grimaced.

"Really unnecessary advice, Scully," Mulder grinned.

"I just didn't want you to hurt yourself," Scully insisted as she stood to smooth out her skirt.

"You could just kiss it and make it better if I did," Mulder suggested with a leer.

"Yes but wouldn't you rather me kiss it and it *not* be injured," Scully retorted.

"You have a very valid point, my brilliant wife," Mulder acknowledged, giving Scully a deep kiss as he rose. Straightening out his jacket, Mulder was reminded of the stealthy addition to his pocket.

"Almost forgot, you want your panties?" Mulder inquired.

Suddenly, his naughty vixen returned with a twinkle in her eye.

"Just think of them as a wedding present, Mulder...."

Pulling his mischievous wife into a tight embrace, Mulder responded with a leer, "Just think what we could do with a matching set...."

Ch 12

Xxx

After a relaxing dip in the heated pool and an evening of dinner and dancing (lest Miss Vivian read Mulder the riot act) the newlyweds returned to their room, and after securing their curtains to prevent another premature awakening, they made love once again before drifting into a deep sleep, Scully nestled into her favorite spot.

Xxx

"Mommy! Daddy! You're back!" a little dark-headed ball of energy ran down the length of beach toward his parents.

"Hey, buddy," Mulder picked up their little boy, swinging him around till he giggled uncontrollably. Scully brushed straight brown hair out of his eyes and kissed his cheek, their son scrunching his nose as most little boys did when their mothers kissed them.

With Mulder holding their son in one arm and the other wrapped around his wife, they made their way back to the familiar spot on the beach. Depositing themselves and their son on the shore, the youngest Mulder began smoothing out the damp sand.

"How ya been, kiddo?" Mulder asked, trying to sound casual though the circumstances were anything but.

"Well, I sure am glad you're here," their son looked up from the figures he was drawing on the packed dome. "The house was getting too noisy and confusing," he grumbled, working steadily as he groused.

"Who was noisy?" his mother questioned as she joined her son in his task, already familiar with the characters he was inscribing.

"Ahab and Grandpa," he sighed, "arguing about something called 'tack-ticks' and 'stra-tuh-gees,'" their son complained. "I liked it better when they just fussed over who I was named after."

His parents shot each other a knowing grin with his mother adding a quirked eyebrow for good measure. Though amused and relieved at finally learning their son's name (although, in retrospect, the choice should have been more obvious) William's revelations concerning current household discussions was certainly a cause for concern. Through Mulder's experience, he knew not to push their young son for too many answers too quickly, thereby risking an early end to the dream.

"So they've been arguing more?" Scully questioned gently, glossing over the surprise of William Mulder and her father sharing the same close, metaphysical quarters.

"Well...Grandma just calls it their 'lively debate' and tells them to 'pipe down before they interrupt her tea party,'" little William did a spot-on imitation of Teena Mulder at her most prim.

"Tea party?" Mulder queried with a grin, absently marking the ship with the glyphs that had once plagued him so profoundly.

"Yep—Grandma and Emmy—playing tea party...or dress-up...," William rolled his eyes before he started to giggle, "But then Aunt Missy'll put her in ripped jeans and a leather jacket an' play air-guitars on the bed," William laughed at his aunt's playful subterfuge.

Scully smiled through the tears welling in her eyes, flashing a grateful smile at her husband whose hand traced soothing circles on her back. As she sniffed back a tear, William's attention was drawn to his mother and her futile attempt to suppress the emotions that threatened to spill over.

"Don't worry, Mommy," William abandoned his designs and climbed into his mother's lap, wrapping his little arms around her middle with his father wrapping his arms around both of them from behind. "They take good care of us," he assured, resting his little cheek against her heartbeat.

"Yeah?" Scully said with a teary-eyed smile as she smoothed his windblown locks, reveling in the softness of his skin, the sand in his hair, the breath and heartbeat that moved against her caressing palm.

"Mmm-hmm," William nodded before he raised up to look at his parents once again, "I mean...I was by myself for a little while, but then Ahab showed up pretty soon—he's been here the longest," William explained, a little unsure as to why his parents didn't already understand that very obvious fact.

"He's been here since we first met, Scully," Mulder whispered in his wife's ear, her knowing smile and nod against his shoulder acknowledging her acceptance of what the fates had known all along.

"Grandma's only been here for a little while," William explained, returning to his task on the sand as his father tried to compose himself, his forehead resting against his wife's red curls before sucking in a deep breath and looking back up with a stoic smile.

"But she sure likes fussing over me and Emmy," William continued while he drew. "Says she didn't get much of a chance the first time around... whatever that means," William shrugged, unwilling to pick apart the motives of his grandmother's eccentric behavior.

But his father was keenly aware of the losses his own mother had suffered and the guilt over how she had distanced herself from her remaining child in his adolescence. Knowing that he risked breaking the tenuous hold he maintained in this ethereal space, Mulder couldn't help but ask—

"Have you seen your Aunt Samantha?"

Scully could feel the breath Mulder was holding at her back, and her sandy fingers gripped his hand in support.

But William seemed rather nonplussed by the question.

"Sometimes...when Grandma or Grandpa are thinkin' bout her a lot. But she's playin' with those other kids—not me and Emmy," William answered simply, though his father seemed satisfied with his answer.

Scully gave her husband a soft, sympathetic smile, but something their son said earlier in the dream still weighed on her mind.

"You said before that Grandpa and Ahab were arguing about tactics and strategies, how come?" she pressed gently.

William continued his drawing while he spoke, "Cause when I told them that Daddy finally brought you here," he met his mother's intense gaze, "Then they started talking about minerals...and chemicals...and battle plans," William rattled off, wide, glazed eyes thinking of the overwhelming tutorials.

"And then Grandpa was talkin' bout some old guy, but he said some words that I wasn't 'posed to say, and then he and Grandma wouldn't talk to each other for awhile," William informed, his parents grimacing at the report.

"Then Aunt Missy fussed at them, told 'em they'd have to be around each other for a loooong time, so they might as well get over it. I don't really know what she was talkin' bout, but at least Grandma and Grandpa started talkin' to each other again."

Scully had to chuckle at the thought of her sister as a spiritual intermediary.

"So could they just come to the beach and tell Mommy and me what we should know?" Mulder suggested.

"Mmm," William grimaced, "It's pretty hard, especially since Ahab and Grandpa have been here awhile, though Ahab's resting up so he can try to talk to Nana Maggie tonight," William stated casually as if the dead contacting the living were a regular occurrence, though Scully knew well that her father had made such contact with her shortly after his death.

"Well, I may give Nana Maggie a call and tell her to watch out for Ahab's visit tonight," Scully grinned as Mulder flashed his wife a look of surprise at the admission, "I've got some news to tell her anyway," Scully smiled secretly.

"What's that?" William looked up from his work, curious at his mother's words.

"Your Daddy and I got married," Scully explained as Mulder nuzzled at her neck, bared by the breeze on the shore.

"Ewww, that means you'll be all kissy-face and stuff," William scrunched his nose in distaste.

"That's right—I like being all kissy-face with your mom," Mulder offered a shower of kisses to the ticklish crook of Scully's neck which made her squeal and giggle.

Mulder had to laugh at his son's expression of disbelief.

"Well, one day you'll think that girls aren't so bad to kiss," Mulder gave his son the bit of age-old advice, then tried to push down the worry that his son may grow up in a world where teenage romance would be a luxury they could ill-afford.

"I don't think so," William denied, then yawned deeply with heavy eyes.

"Come here, William," Scully coaxed, holding out her hand to their young boy.

"But Mooom," he drawled in a whine, "I gotta' finish the ship."

"We'll work on it more tomorrow, buddy," Mulder assured, waving him over.

William crawled into his mother's lap, his eyes growing heavier by the moment. Mulder cradled them both from behind.

"Try to remember...", Scully's voiced cooed as she brushed sand from her son's hair, "Tell everyone we love them and miss them very much."

His head nodded slightly against where soft flesh met silk and lace, and for awhile, Scully held her son as his breathing steadied into sleep, closing her eyes to relish the blissful moment.

When she opened her eyes once again, she met the deep green of her husband, alone again in their Colorado cabin. No words were needed after the intensity of all the night's revelations, but instead, her hands pushed down her husband's boxers as her nightgown was gathered up over her hips. The only sounds made were the satisfied groans of completion as her husband filled her body over and again, ready to make their dreams a reality.

10. Chapter 13

Thanks Luiza!

Ch 13

11:27 am

The offices of *The Lone Gunmen*

Byers called out to Frohike and Langley as he puzzled over a text received on one of the disposable cells that lay waiting for just such an emergency.

"What the hell does this mean?" the primly-suited conspiracy theorist questioned as his compatriots gathered round to peruse the mystery text message.

To: LG Electronics

Needing an equipment upgrade. Can't possibly listen to my Rod Stewart 8-tracks on such an unreliable instrument. Throw in some headphones, so I won't be bothering the nosy neighbors. Don't forget the paperwork for the extended warranty in case I need to exchange it later. Just put it on my account and deliver by one today, if possible.

Sorry for the trouble,

Truman N. Owens

"Maybe this phone has a recycled number," Byers wondered, examining what he thought to be a brand new, untraceable phone.

"It's from Mulder, genius, look at the initials T-N-O, " Frohike sarcastically replied. "Trust no one," he pedantically explained. "He wants us to deliver this disposable phone to Maggie Scully this afternoon."

"Yeah, and make sure she calls them back when curious ears aren't listening," Langley added.

"Oh, and don't forget the camera—she'll need a new passport photo," Frohike called back to Byers as he grabbed the phone that had received the text and an assortment of debugging equipment.

"And you got all that from Mulder's text?" Byers replied, though still incredulous.

"You gotta' read between the lines kid," Frohike grumbled as they headed out, "Read between the lines...."

Xxx

"Dana?" Maggie Scully questioned into the phone, looking over her shoulder at the funny little men who had shown up on her doorstep that afternoon, finally giving her the go-ahead to make the call after their scanners assured them that no one was listening in for the moment.

"Hi, Mom," Scully gushed.

"Hi, Maggie," Mulder called out from behind her.

"Hi, you two. What's going on? And why is this odd little man measuring me and taking my picture," she questioned.

"Well, first off, that's Frohike, Langley and Byers—they're helping us out, so don't worry about them. Secondly...Mulder and I are married."

"Married?" Maggie questioned with a rousing, "Congratulations!" from Langley and Byers with a "Mazel Tov!" thrown in from Frohike for good measure.

Maggie turned and went into the kitchen for a little more privacy.

"I didn't even know you were dating," she scolded softly.

"Well, we had a church wedding and everything, the nuns even took pictures," Scully added, hoping to placate her mother with photos.

"Well, tell me all about it," Maggie prodded, completely befuddled by the recent turn of events.

"Later—when there's more time. But I need to tell you—tonight, make sure you have a pen and paper by your bed. Don't be surprised by whatever you dream. Just go with it, and try to remember everything you can, ok?"

"Sure, honey. But you need to tell me what's going on," Maggie insisted.

"I don't want to tell you too much ahead of time. Why don't you make plans to visit Bill and Charlie in the next few days, alright, Mom? I'll call you back this time tomorrow, but as soon as I hang up, take the battery out of that phone, OK?"

"Sure, sweetheart. Tell Fox 'congratulations' and that I always thought of him as a member of the family, anyway," Maggie grinned, glad to hear the good news even if it was surrounded with a veil of mystery.

"He knows," Scully smiled over her shoulder at her husband. "Love you... talk to you tomorrow, Mom."

"You, too, sweetheart," Maggie Scully smiled and heaved a deep breath as she slid open the battery pack and dislodged the power source.

Maggie Scully's attention was quickly returned to the odd little men in her kitchen, closely perusing her eye color and examining her roots to be sure she was a natural brunette.

Though she was trying hard to tolerate the strange line of questioning, she had to put her foot down when Byers finally asked—

"So, Mrs. Scully, do you know how much you weigh, or should we find the scales...?"

Xxx

The next day passed in general contentment for Scully and Mulder, happily feasting on the local fare, sneaking a skinny dip in one of the local springs and buying some second-hand hippie-era survivalist books at the local shop.

"Mulder, do you seriously think we'll have to resort to tanning hides and spinning our own wool?" Scully flashed her husband that look that simply questioned whether or not he had lost his mind.

"You never know, Scully. Better to be prepared," he flipped through another volume, recoiling a bit at the description of dressing a hog, though giving more attention to the details on blacksmithing and iron-making.

"Hey, I think I should get points for not buying the volume on snake handling and foot washing."

"Yes, points for you, Mulder," Scully bestowed on her thoughtful husband a generous kiss. "Oh, here, you'd better start reading up on the midwifery chapter," Scully tossed another worn volume to her husband.

"But I thought I'd been working pretty hard on my part in the process," Mulder said with a suggestive leer.

"Yes, you have," Scully conceded, but you need to learn how to get the baby *out* as well."

"But you're the doctor in the family," he whined.

"Yes, and I'll be otherwise occupied, so read-up Mulder," Scully gave her husband a satisfied smile. His pout was so amusing that Scully finally conceded, "Finish your chapter, and I'll let you try the horny goat weed you bought.

Mulder's eyes flashed mischievously, "Time to put that photographic memory to work... chapter one...."

Xxx

After the vigorous love-making, induced in no small part by the experimental herbal supplements Scully and Mulder finally deigned to try, they sought their delicious bed and each other's arms, hoping once again to see their little boy.

xxx

"Momma, guess who I got to see?" William ran down the beach to clamber into his mother's waiting arms.

"Who?" Scully's blue eyes glittered at her son's excitement.

"Nana Maggie, Ahab brought Nana Maggie here," William's saucer-shaped eyes grew even rounder with wonder.

"He did?" she bubbled with excitement.

"Yep, they couldn't stay very long, and he had to tell her a whole bunch of stuff that didn't make much sense to me. But he said to tell you, 'Starbuck, you did good.' Momma, are you Starbuck?" William asked in all seriousness.

Scully and Mulder both chuckled.

"Yeah, William, I am," she explained succinctly as they moved ever closer to the ship they'd been designing.

"Wow, buddy, you've been working hard," Mulder surveyed the intricate glyphs that covered the sanded dome.

"Gotta' hurry and get finished," William acknowledged, picking up again with his task. His parents helped with the bare spots, the glyphs still burned in their memories from that dark time when William had to fight so hard to keep his Daddy from giving up.

"William...", Scully began hating to press her young son for answers, but weighing that against the necessity of the information he might know. "Was there anything else that Ahab said I should know?"

William thought for a moment, trying hard to recall all the instructions that he'd been bombarded with in the last few days, "Something about a whale...following the whale?" he looked up with a confused expression toward his mother.

A knowing smile spread across Scully's face as she turned toward her husband with a twinkle in her eye, "I know where we're going...."

Xxx

After a few more moments of precise but industrious work, William stepped back from the ship with a satisfied grin, dusting the sand from his hands with finality.

"It's done," he declared, hands on hips and one final nod marking his certainty.

"It's amazing," Scully sighed with welling tears, knowing what it meant for young William, knowing the burden and responsibility he would eventually bear.

"Your mom is right, it is pretty amazing," Mulder concurred, as he wrapped his arms around his wife to steady her.

"William, time for breakfast," a voice called from the porch of the large white house on the hillside.

Scully had to find her breath again, looking up to see a young woman with wavy auburn locks holding a squirming preschooler in her arms.

Melissa held up a hand to wave to her sister, while Emily waved energetically before disappearing back inside.

Scully still held up her hand in greeting even long after they had disappeared from sight.

"I gotta' go," William sighed. "Love you, Mommy," he placed a sandy kiss to Scully's cheek. "Love you, Daddy," he gave a peck to Mulder's stubbly cheek.

"Love you, too, William," Scully sniffled back her tears.

"Love you, buddy, be good," Mulder ruffled his son's hair as he bounded up the mountainside.

Suddenly, Scully and Mulder were alone though still dreaming.

"Come on, Scully," Mulder led his wife by the hand down around the curve of the beach, obscured from the house by the small inlet and tall trees that grew not far from the water. She quirked an eyebrow as her husband stepped into the water.

"Might as well stick a toe in...test the waters?" he tempted.

She could only shake her head at his incorrigible behavior, her silk nightgown floating higher on the water with every step she took.

"Check out any great, white whales that could be lurking about?" Scully teased, her spirits once again buoyed by her husband's shenanigans.

"Flatterer," he accused playfully, shedding his soaked shorts and tossing them back to shore.

"You couldn't even wait till we woke up?" Scully questioned coolly, even as her husband lifted her dripping gown over her head, casting it back to shore as well.

"Took me nearly seven years to wake up, Scully," Mulder confessed as he wrapped his wife's legs around his hips. "Don't want to wait any more...."

"Neither do I...," Scully smiled, capturing his mouth, while beneath the blue water, Scully sheathed herself on her husband's ready length.

11. Chapter 14

Luiza- No worries—nothing tragic, I promise

Tiffany-Well...it's almost there! Thanks for the reviews!

Ch 14

The newlyweds awoke, damp and naked in their bed, wet clothes tossed haphazardly on the tub. Their tangle of limbs and conjoined sexes were of no surprise to the wakening pair. Without missing a beat, Mulder rolled on top of his wife, her legs wrapping around him once again as his fingers fisted through damp hair to bring her mouth to meet his own.

"Love you, Dana," Mulder panted frantically, thrusting hard and deep with every stroke.

"Love you, too," she smiled, just reveling in the pleasure, in the love that filled her—no need to question, no thought of debate—just basking in the joy she felt as the man who held her heart for so long made love to her.

Mulder slid his wife's legs between his own, bearing down so that his cock slid slow and hard against her clit with every pass.

He smiled to hear her breath catch at the intensity of sensation, then drove with deep strokes once again as her walls began to flutter around his length and her fingers gripped his ass so hard, he was sure there would appear ten tiny bruises later on.

"Mulderrrr," his wife groaned out as every muscle clenched and her tight passage constricted around his shaft.

"Scullyyyy," he responded in kind, as her orgasm pushed him over the edge, and his heated seed filled her body once more.

It was a long moment before Mulder could lift his weight from his wife's tiny body, though she didn't seem to mind, her arms and legs clutching his body to her own, nuzzling kisses into the curve of his neck.

When Mulder finally regained the presence of mind to roll over, he brought Scully with him, to rest in her long-claimed spot.

She fought to stay awake, as there was so much to discuss, so many decisions to make, but her husband just stroked her hair and soothed.

"Get some rest, honey...there's nothing that can't wait till breakfast..."

Xxx

After breakfast and the planned phone call to her mother, where after tears and laughter, Dana Scully and her mother squared away their more detailed plans, making certain her plans to visit Bill and Charlie while arranging to sell the house and furnishings and squirreling her money away in untraceable accounts just as her daughter and son-in-law suggested.

"And as soon as we get settled, we'll send for you," Dana promised her mother. "Just make sure you're out of D.C. as soon as possible. The gunmen will have your new passport and driver's license ready in a couple of days."

"I know sweetheart—I listened to your father when he told me last night," Maggie Scully smiled.

"It's beautiful there, isn't it?" Dana gushed, the picturesque scene firmly engraved in her mind.

"Yes it is. Your son showed me all around the beach, showed me his ship.... He looks like his daddy, but he acts just like you," Maggie teased.

"Except for all the eye-rolling—I think he picked that up from Missy," Scully defended.

"I think you're probably right about that," Maggie conceded. "I love you sweetheart. Call me tomorrow when your plane lands."

"I will. Love you, Mom."

"Love you, too."

Scully closed the phone and leaned back against her husband who was perusing a tattered copy of *Moby Dick* that he picked up on a return trip to the second-hand book store.

"Haven't you already read that?" Scully questioned as she breathed in the combined scents of salt, sex and Mulder, with the odd addition of old paperbacks thrown in to the mix.

"A long time ago, but I figure I'd better refresh my memory on the Pequod's journey, just for good measure."

"Don't worry...I'm an excellent navigator...," Scully smiled dreamily, as she nodded off for a much needed nap.

Xxx

One more night of excellent food, a light massage in the spa, and relaxing in the front-porch swing and gazing at the night sky capped off their last evening in Venus Springs. They did collect the requisite samples and sent

off their preliminary tests, though they didn't expect to remain at the Bureau long enough to draw any meaningful conclusions with their findings. They would make a veiled excuse to Skinner for their hasty departure, assuring him they'd be in contact when it was safe.

After meticulous packing and hand washing their soiled and sandy garments to slip into a laundry bag tomorrow, Scully and Mulder spent one more evening of luxury at the Cupid's Bow.

Xxx

Scully found herself once again at the now familiar beach, quiet except for the gentle breeze and the lapping of the tiny rowboat against the waves.

"William! William!" Scully called out against the lengthening expanse of beach. Even the white house with the blue shutters seemed to be shrouded by an obscuring fog.

Scully's sense of panic began to rise, running further, but seeming to gain no ground in the process, the dome of sand in the distance, seemingly abandoned.

"William!" she cried out again, her voice growing hoarse as she strained it.

She turned toward the oh-so-familiar voice that called out from the distance. Her husband came into view as he rounded the curve of beach, running toward his wife's cries of distress.

"Dana, what's wrong? " He studied her panicked face as she scanned the mountains and shore, her eyes welling with tears. "Baby, talk to me. Tell me what's wrong," he insisted.

"I can't find him...he won't answer me," she stammered. "I can't find William," Scully nearly shouted in her agitation, too upset to notice the light shining in her husband's warm green eyes or the broad smile that was spreading across his face.

Finally noting that her husband's expression did not match her own, Scully's face contracted into pained questioning, "Mulder?"

Cupping his wife's face in his hands, Mulder simply said, "Open your eyes, Dana...."

"What?" she tried piece together the meaning beneath Mulder's words.

"Open your eyes. It's time to wake up...."

12. Chapter 15

Luiza-I'm sure a town like this would have quite the booming business;)

Green-Thanks so much for your reviews—they are much appreciated.

Ch 15

Before Scully's eyes could open fully against the morning light, her husband already had her nightgown pushed up over her hips speaking sweetly to her flat belly between fits of excited kisses and silly nuzzling.

"Hey buddy, it's your Dad," Mulder cooed to Scully's tummy. "You're a lot smaller now than the last time I saw you," he teased, finally eliciting a chuckle from his wife.

"You sound a little nuts, you know," Scully mused.

"I don't care," he mumbled to her abdomen, making ticklish kisses in his wake.

"You're sure, Mulder?" Scully questioned, in awe at the possibility she could really be pregnant.

Closing his eyes as his lips dropped once more to his wife's porcelain skin, Mulder breathed deeply before raising his head to meet her gaze once more.

"Yeah," Mulder nodded his head with certainty, "I'm sure...."

Xxx

Four weeks later

Walter Skinner returned from vacation knowing full-well what to expect once he opened that basement-office door. The hinges squeaked from disuse as he pushed the door open into the darkened office. Opening the desk drawer, he found the badges and service revolvers he'd expected to find. Flicking open the catch on the file cabinets, he noted the files all in order and accounted for, though he knew damn well Mulder and Scully had copied everything that they might need. He had to chuckle at the bare spot on the wall where Mulder's UFO poster had once lived, and even as he stood there in the silence, a yellow pencil gave up its purchase on the ceiling tiles and tumbled down to land at his feet.

He knew at their last meeting before he took his annual leave that Mulder and Scully had been acting a bit more unusual, even for them. Mulder, more protective and territorial than normal; Scully looking at her partner with an open adoration that she rarely allowed herself in the past—the agents' last assignment had clearly wrought a great change in their relationship.

He hated losing the two agents most adept at dealing with the threats facing them just a few years down the road (though he would have never openly admitted that to another soul). Skinner knew that when the time came, Mulder and Scully would be the first to lead the charge and the last to succumb to defeat.

When he'd left a week ago Friday, he saw the shiny tears in Scully's eyes that threatened to fall as she hugged him; and the pleading uncertainty that shone in Mulder's face, wishing that he could tell Skinner of their plans, but in his saddened wisdom, Skinner just shook his head no, knowing the less he knew, the better for them all.

An insistent buzzing issued from his pocket. Skinner opened the disposable phone to read the text.

Sorry the Mrs. and I had to take off so quick. We jumped the first plane we could as soon as the vacation was over. Mom's on her way to help with the rug rat.

The Mrs. is talking about getting another dog... but I told her no lazy hounds or yappy dust mops—we need a dog that will let you know when the bad guys come creeping around, but will love your kid;)

Gotta start unpacking. I'm sure the Mrs. will have me move the sofa fifteen times before I get it right.

We'll phone home when we can, The Browns

Skinner chuckled at Mulder's convoluted message, though to the unwitting eye, it would just seem like an off-hand goodbye from a random friend or relation. Thank goodness for his 8th grade typing teacher.

He smiled his confirmed suspicions, Scully was indeed pregnant, and she and Mulder had married. He also gave a relieved sigh to know that Maggie would soon be joining them—she was far too easy a target to remain in D.C.

He wished the little family well as he erased the message, knowing that the phone would soon need to disappear in some unfortunate accident. Damn...and he had just figured that one out, too...

In a last thought, Skinner bent down to pick the lock on Mulder's bottom drawer, and, sure enough, below some random photos and forgotten files were a few of those magazines that didn't really belong to Mulder, anyway.

"Well, it's not like he'll be needing them," Skinner rationalized to no one, slipping the magazine into his coat and turning off the light behind him.

13. Epilogue

Thanks to everyone who read...hope you enjoyed it!

Green-Thanks so much!

Luiza-Skinner couldn't know too much as he was still at Krycek's mercy. I tried to indicate that Mulder and Scully would like to have told him where they were headed, but the less Skinner knew—the better.

epilogue

"We're here...this is it!" Scully beamed, looking off the bow of the boat, pulling into the snug harbor off the northern New Zealand coast.

Mulder smiled back in pleased success, his wife clearly excited at the sight of their familiar beach and white clapboard house tucked away in the trees.

"Now your furniture and things that arrived last week are in the house, and the next batch will be on the cargo ship next Tuesday," the captain noted.

"And don't forget, four weeks from today we'll need you to pick up my wife's mother, Mrs. Abrahms from port."

"Of course, Mr. Brown, it's already on our schedule," the captain replied though without the hard 'k' in his last word that always made Americans smile at the difference.

As the boat neared the dock, Scully had already jumped out to secure the boat's rope to the post.

"Careful there," Mulder called out after his excited wife.

"Oh, don't fuss," she scoffed, grabbing a small case before heading up the wooded hill.

Mulder handed the captain several folded bills with a nod, "You'll let me know if anyone starts asking about us...."

"Only too glad to do so, Mr. Brown," the captain smiled back setting off the last of the cases onto the dock. "Sure you won't need any help with those?"

"We'll be fine...thanks again," Mulder waved, releasing the rope that his wife had tied and tossing it back onto the bow. The boat's engine

sputtered as it reversed and then changed gears, heading out of the harbor once more.

Xxx

When Scully burst through the front door, she stopped short, wondering at the stillness of the place, not really knowing what she'd expected as she entered. Dropping the small bag to the wood floor below, her hand went to the tiny bump at her belly. But then she closed her eyes, and for a moment, she could see the hazy images of their family, could hear her father's familiar cadence, Emily's silvery laughter, and even her sister's frustrated scoff, utilized often to point out injustice, inequity or downright bullshit when needed.

She could see her prim mother-in-law pouring out tea and her father-in-law studying Sun Tzu by the lamplight. As she heard the screen door shut behind her husband who bore the bulk of their cases in his hands, Scully announced to the house and all its inhabitants-

"We're home...."