

The Matriarch

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"We're told men nearly destroyed the world. That's why The Matriarchy took over. To make a safer world, a better future for everyone. Everyone, that is, except men."

Gen prepares herself to start at the university as a Matriarchy Geneticist under the watchful eye of her grandmother. When her best friend Wesley is selected as a Noble, she begins questioning her allegiance to her family and the Matriarchy. Secrets begin surfacing and Gen can not ignore them any longer.

Gen must choose between the future the Matriarchy has promised her and sympathizing with the very people who would destroy it.

Over one century ago, the United States of America entered into what was known as “The Conflict” after a planned terrorist attack against their largest military bases. Following in their footsteps, the Allied nations from past wars entered to assist the crippled U.S. military. “The Conflict” formed into World War III after enemies of the Allies joined together to assist the now outnumbered enemy forces.

Much to the dismay of the American people, the government reinstated a draft to boost its numbers. Fathers, sons, and brothers were actively pulled into the fight, leaving women and daughters to keep the country going. The war raged for eight years, until in an effort to end it the Axis countries sent nuclear warheads to the Allied posts and to the United States, nearly decimating the entire population of the military and killing many civilians. In retaliation, the Allied nations threatened complete destruction of the Axis countries unless a surrender was announced. By the end of the war, populations were less than fifty-percent of what they had been prior to the war.

The Matriarchy, a feminist political party that had been gaining popularity while the World War raged, took this opportunity of an endangered male population to step into the light. America was a war ravished country that needed to rebuild itself or face a depression that would leave them susceptible to being overtaken. The Matriarchy blamed the short tempers and pride of men. They preached that women would not be so quick to turn to war, that women had been managing household budgets for years and would do well to be in control of the money. Women of the country stood behind The Matriarchy’s ideals and beliefs. Elizabeth Cleese, their front running candidate and face of The Matriarchy won by a landslide. She spoke to the women of the nation, telling them they had been second class citizens for too long.

The Matriarchy slowly began implementing new policies in place, claiming it was for the best of the country, the best of the people. Women controlled businesses, hospitals, the military. What few men were left were to stay at home and tend to the household and children. Men began to take their wives last names. All Americans had their D.N.A. entered into a database that the Matriarchy said, “would help us grow our male population.”

The Noble program was soon implemented. Males who possessed healthy genes that could be passed on to offspring were brought to different bases and kept there. The Matriarchy called it the highest purpose a male could have. Those who were not selected were forced to. Undergo a vasectomy and placed into meaningless jobs. Those who chose to start families would be able to choose from The Noble database and undergo fertilization.

Genevieve Wilde is a seventeen-year-old young woman who is the daughter of Dr. Victoria Wilde, a Matriarchy Geneticist, and the granddaughter of Corryn Wilde, the local leader of the Matriarchy Political Party. Gen has been raised to believe the best of The Matriarchy and often volunteers her time to assist her grandmother during political events. She is very intelligent, though a bit naïve about the history of the world and what goes on around her.

She holds a very close relationship with her grandfather Douglas, who raised her most of her childhood, though is guilty of viewing him as “only a man” when it comes to serious conversations. They enjoy cooking and baking together, and it is still one of her hobbies on weekends that she isn’t busy with school and social or political events.

As she finishes her last year of High School and prepares to enter The University, she begins an internship with Matriarchy Genetics, wanting nothing more than to work alongside her mother for The Matriarchy.

Gen has light brown skin, often affectionately called “cinnamon skin” by her grandfather, dark brown eyes, and a thick, curly afro. She is extremely well groomed and dressed nicely, due to often being in the limelight of her grandmother’s political campaigns.

Though she is not willing to admit it to her friends or family, Gen has always held a deep fondness for her best friend Wesley Pratt and assumes that they will one enter into a marriage agreement together after she finishes school and becomes a geneticist. As with her grandfather, Gen has a hard time taking Wesley seriously when he speaks about serious topics and holds it against him that his father was a Patriarchy Sympathizer. Her other two very close friends Penelope Grady and Lillian Watts are also very pro-Matriarchy to the best of her knowledge.

Gen is very caring and affectionate with her friends and aside from breaking the rules of The Matriarchy, would do anything for them.

Gen is outgoing, who believes her greatest strength is her ability to empathize with those around her. She strongly believes that women are better leaders than men and that no man should ever be in a position of power again. Widely known to her friends and family, Gen's greatest weakness is standing up to her grandmother whenever she believes her grandmother is wrong.

Corryn Wilde is the Wilde family Matriarch. She is an extremely polished and well-spoken woman with an overreaching personality. She currently leads the local Matriarch political party and enjoys flaunting her connections. Corryn is very overbearing on her daughter and granddaughter and treats her husband much like one would treat a pet. She wears her white blonde hair pulled back into a chignon and would never be caught dead in anything but a pantsuit. While leading the local government she has been known to place extremely harsh punishments on male infractions and Patriarchy Sympathizers. Her favorite thing to do is host parties for the well-to-do women of the town and speak for The Matriarchy events.

Victoria Wilde is the lead geneticist for the local Matriarchy Genetics lab. She is knowledgeable of the Matriarchy's plan to keep the male population low in the United States, despite their continued promise to rise it. She rarely has time for her daughter Gen, only deciding to get pregnant with her at her mother's request to carry on the Wilde family name. Using her research, she had Wesley entered into the pool of names to join The Nobles despite genetics that would deem him rather lackluster in the Matriarchy's eyes. Victoria, like her mother is considered a beauty, though she finds herself uninterested in relationships outside of work, much to her mother's dismay.

Douglas Wilde is a graying, slightly overweight man who does the bidding of his wife without question. He was married to Corryn at a young age so never worked outside of the home. He supports his wife's ideas about the Matriarchy and is extremely proud of the intelligence of his daughter and granddaughter. Though he is not close with Victoria, he and Genevieve have always had a close bond. More of a behind-the-scenes man, he is loyal to his family. With a pleasant outlook on his life, the only time he is disappointed is when he is brushed aside by the women he loves, as if he isn't an equal.

Wesley Pratt is a good-looking young man with a charismatic personality. He has always looked up to the Wilde family and enjoys the company of Gen. His father was put to death when he was five for being a Patriarchy Sympathizer and for harboring Patriarchy criminals. Wesley was raised alongside Gen for much of his toddlerhood by Gen's grandfather. He has dreams of having a job and family one day, but secretly wishes he could attend The University. When he is selected to join The Nobles, he begins questioning the motives of Gen's family and The Matriarchy.

Oyster City, North Carolina is the main location for my story. A Matriarchy stronghold, Oyster City is a beach lined metropolitan on the southern coast of North Carolina that formed post World War III, connecting many smaller cities and a pre-war military base. Aside from Matriarchy Genetics, it is known for its sea food industry and forestry work. Many of the women of the city work on the old base that resides Matriarchy Genetics and other Matriarchy businesses. In the summer, the town is flooded with people on vacation as it is known as. The “it” place to be for The Matriarchy Annual Celebration.

Washing D.C. is the government home of The Matriarchy and one of the largest holds for males selected to become Nobles. Many former statues and monuments from pre-World War III were destroyed by the Matriarchy as they were viewed as celebrations of males who had almost ruined the world. Most of the city that had been destroyed by air raids during the war have been abandoned and the city is only one quarter of the size it had been. Not the busy district it had been pre-war, it is mainly used as a government center, Noble holding, and is home to the United States largest and most feared prison.

The Rocky Top sits in the mountainous range of Eastern Tennessee and is said to hold the largest group of Patriarchy Sympathizers and Matriarchy Defectors. As roads through the mountain range were destroyed during the war and never rebuilt, the mountain range and thick forest provide cover and concealment for the groups hidden there. Though the Matriarchy publicly claims it is nothing more than Patriarchy lies, they know the stronghold is large and leave the area alone, believing their hold on the country is strong enough to deter any uprising.

Males not chosen for Noble work are given a vasectomy at the age of 18. They can choose to work menial jobs until they are married, then they are forced to be HomeHusbands. LGBTQ relationships are highly normalized, Male/Male couples may adopt children born to women who choose to not raise them. All children are conceived through InVitro Fertilization from Noble sperm.

Most citizens consider themselves agnostic, but a form of Christianity that involves a female God is still widely popular throughout the United States. Fourth of July and Christmas, though it is more about family and giving than a religious holiday, are still celebrated as national holidays, as well as World Peace Day that marked the end of World War III and Matriarchy Day that celebrates the day The Matriarchy took control of the U.S.

Matriarchy chooses males for Nobles who pass psychological, physical, and intellectual tests. While they say they are attempting to repopulate the world, through secrecy they are creating more females than males in hopes that the Patriarchy will be dissolved. The database used to “take care” of the people is used to control the population of males and females in the States as well as to track family lines of Patriarchy Sympathizers. Versions of The Matriarchy are also popular in Allied countries and most have already elected Matriarchy leaders as head of their countries. Those who have male leaders are viewed by the Allied countries as underdeveloped and dangerous. Most will not work or ally themselves with these countries or their militaries.

Gen is preparing to start school at The University to become a geneticist. During her final year of High School she begins her internship in one of the genetics labs of The Matriarchy. Her best friend Wesley is selected as a Noble and she questions the decisions made by the political party. At a function for The Matriarchy party, one of their leaders is killed by a Patriarchy Sympathizer and Gen's fears of men is more cemented in her mind. Fearful of her grandmother, mother, and being deemed a Patriarchy Sympathizer, Gen remains quiet of her past questions and attempts to live with the fact that her life will not play out the way she had imagined. When Wesley is taken to be a Noble prior to graduation, Gen fears her mother played a part in his selection and begins investigating the studies of The Matriarchy. Gen discovers the Matriarchy's plot to keep the population imbalance permanent and that her mother had Wesley chosen, despite what The Matriarchy would consider "poor genes." After a discussion with her grandfather, Gen decides to find the underground group of Patriarchy Sympathizers despite her fears and sets out to The Rocky Top under the guise of wanting to visit The University she will be attending. Despite the trouble, she finds the group and hands over her knowledge of the inside workings of The Matriarchy that she had collected in a deal that they would assist her in rescuing Wesley from his Noble duties.

“Papaw, where did you learn how to do all this?” Gen asked. Her hands, like his were covered in flour. Though she could hear the thunderstorm brewing outside in the night sky, the warmth of the oven and the smell of the bread baking made her feel at ease.

“My father taught me when I was a boy. Told me I would need to know for when I got married and had a family.” He spoke the words slowly, as if remembering a far away time. Gen felt silly, of course he would have learned at home, Papaw and Gramma had been married young so he hadn’t entered the workforce like so many young males do today.

“Did you?” Gen started, “What I mean is, did you ever regret not going into the workforce after school? You and Gramma didn’t have Mama for a few years, you wouldn’t have had to come home until then.”

“No,” he said in a hushed tone. Even though they were alone in the house, he still looked over his shoulder towards the entry room. Her eyes followed his. Gramma wouldn’t like this conversation. Genevieve felt tense, she could see that Papaw felt uncomfortable, but something inside told her to keep going.

“Why?” Her voice was barely above a whisper, but she could have been screaming for the silence in the room. Her fingers were trembling upon the bread dough.

“I was afraid I might enjoy the work too much. I was offered a job in bakery once, but your Gramma was already in the process to select a Noble for your mother.”

Gen felt as if she was seeing him for the first time. Without the lenses of The Matriarchy to paint a picturesque scene of happiness. Papaw wasn’t the brightest man, but of course he was still a person who had wants and dreams. Did other men wish they had more opportunities? Of course they did, that’s why there were groups of Patriarchy Sympathizers who wanted to

overthrow The Matriarchy. Those men who wanted more opportunities, who resorted to violence to try to get what they wanted. It was exactly the reason why men did not have those opportunities anymore. When men were granted power, they did evil, unspeakable things with it.

Gen stood in silence with him, as they kneaded the dough. She wondered if she should say something, to make Papaw feel better about the conversation, but the words wouldn't come to her. She thought about what they learned in school about life before the War, before The Matriarchy stepped in. Sexism, Racism, and so much violence. The Matriarchy had ended all of that, by normalizing differences in families, by keeping men out of power.

“Well, I think you made the right decision then,” she said with finality. One man's wants, even Papaw's, was not worth all of the great things that The Matriarchy had done.

