

## Operation Noah's Ark

### Starting Over

The call came in the middle of the night.

"The car leaves in an hour. Be ready. Don't tell anyone, don't leave any notes, don't bring anything with you. We're watching."

Jenny rose in a fog. *This is what you wanted, isn't it? What you planned for all these months. Why you had surgery on your brain*, she reminded herself. But now that the call had come, while her mind was saying one thing her body seemed to be telling her something else. She found herself crying; her heart pounding; her stomach hurt, sending her to the toilet with diarrhea.

How could she just leave like this? Disappear in the night with no trace, leave everything behind—her family, friends, colleagues, her beloved pet. But the implant in her brain had been put there for this very reason: so that she and the others would not balk at the last minute.

In spite of herself, Jenny was compelled to follow the instructions being transmitted to her manipulated brain. Jenny left her apartment as neat as possible, closed the door behind her, and stepped into the vehicle that had been sent for her.

The first call had come nine months before. She was summoned to the Central Command Post for an interview. Intrigued and flattered to be chosen by the computer that sounded like a human, for the adventure of her life, she had agreed to come for an initial interview. She was so impressed by what she learned there that she didn't think to probe for further details. Recruits were being gathered to leave Earth and resettle on one of the Cinderella planets that could sustain life, such as Kepler-186f or even Mars.