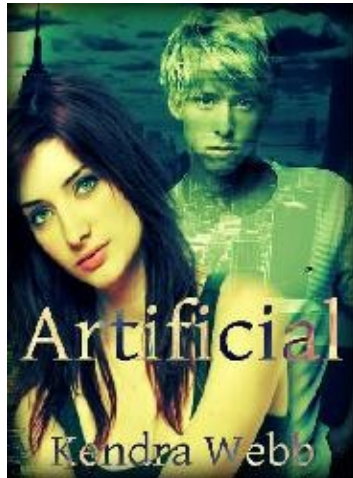


# Artificial

By : **Kendra Webb**

In the year 2047, the modern day United States has become a utopia. After the war ended in 2015, the U.S. controlled the majority of the Middle East, using the oil to pay off their enormous debts. The U.S. was back on its feet, with more money and power to rebuild the struggling economy. To be sure that the country never fell to its knees again, the government went to extraordinary measures to keep the nation thriving. Rights were lost and laws became even more strict, but citizens were content . . . or at least they went along with things. In the year 2047, the modern day New York City has been transformed into a utopia. Recently, the city has had trouble with a new gang known as Chasm. The members of this gang was not thought to be hostile or dangerous, until the mayor's son goes missing. Mayor Jonathan Kimber wants to get his son back safely and have Chasm brought to justice. To do this, he requests the best scientists in NYC to create technology's greatest accomplishment: an artificial human.



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## Chapter 1: Birth

The very beginning of life is the most important part of someone's existence. The ironic, yet unfortunate thing is that not one single person can recall that first moment. The first breath that fills their lungs, those strange first sounds, the blurry sights that their eyes first see. I knew that this was a fact for quite some time before that moment was my own.

I was created in what people call a test tube with top quality egg and sperm donations. From there, I was placed into an artificial womb to develop into the body of an eighteen year old female human. All that I know has been transmitted to me via intelligent computers connected to my brain. I know calculus, I can speak English and French, I know five hundred years of world history, and I have enough knowledge of martial arts techniques to fight ten black belts at the same time. There is still plenty of room left for learning new things. This was how I was designed. I am an artificial human, made for one distinct purpose, but before that, I needed to be born.

The moment I became conscious is one that I will always remember. Everything was black, but I could hear the muffled sounds of voices. Cold air filled my lungs as I inhaled oxygen for the first time. My body was also chilled and wet, lying on a cool, metallic surface.

My hearing gradually changed, sounds soon became clearer. I know heard something beeping and the sound repeated itself every few seconds. I also made out the breathing and voices of humans.

"AH2408, open your eyes." I heard a male voice say. I automatically responded to my identity and the command that was given.

My body responded as if I already knew what to do. The lids of my eyes twitched and fluttered, allowing me to catch glimpses of a bright light. At first, sight hurt. I had not yet adjusted to the brightness of my surroundings. I continued to blink until the harshness of light dulled until I could fully open my eyes.

The first thing I saw was a blurry image of two male faces looking down at me. I could not tell them apart, they looked identical. Soon enough, my vision cleared as my hearing did, and I could see the distinct differences in the men's facial features. One had short, dark brown hair specked with grey and wrinkles surrounding his forehead and the corner of his green eyes. The other did not seem as aged, his hair was also short and brown but of a lighter shade.

"AH2408, I want you to follow the light with only your eyes." The older man instructed carefully, taking a small penlight and moving it from one side of my view to the other several times. I obeyed, watching the small light as it went from the left to the right, and to the left again.

"She's responsive. That's good." The younger man said to the other as he began to write on a clipboard.

"AH2408, can you try to sit up?" The older man said, putting penlight into the pocket of his white coat.

Again, my body automatically started to do as was asked of it, though I found the task to be a challenge. I had to pull my new, weak body forward. I felt the weight of my head and arms now. I also had to remind myself to inhale for oxygen. The upper half of my body rose up from the metal surface slowly, my shoulders and arms trembled as I tried to find control of them. Moving had proven to be more difficult than I expected.

Finally, I had done it. I was sitting up. My eyes could now see new things. I could see walls that surrounded me, the full and clothed bodies of the two men on each side of me. I could see my body as well, or at least my

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arms and legs. The rest of me was covered by a thin, white paper-like gown.

"AH2408, my name is Doctor Morris." The older male said to me, his hands pressed to his chest. I quickly memorized his identity, connecting the image of his face with his name.

"And I am Doctor Larson." The younger man added. I matched his name with his face as I had Doctor Morris.

My eyes were eager to wonder, to explore the room I was in. The walls were of a light blue, the metal surface of which I was now sitting on was a table. My left arm had a small clear tube running from it to a small computer standing at my side. I wasn't sure what the monitor was saying, it was all numbers. There was another wire running from my chest to another computer, one that was making the beeping sound. I watched the screen as a thin, green line made spiked up. When it would leave one side of the screen, it would return back to the other.

"AH2408." I heard Doctor Morris call to me, turning all of my attention back to him. "Can you say "hello" and tell us your name?" He said to me. I knew that now I had to speak.

My lips parted and I waited for my voice to form words, but I heard nothing. There was only silence except for the repeated beeping of the computer. I did not understand why I could not speak, why my voice was not working. I felt confused and what you would call ashamed.

"It's all right, it's all right." Doctor Morris told me patiently. "Use your throat, like this." He took my hand. I could instantly feel the warmth of his skin, it was strange. He brought my palm to his neck and began to make a sort of humming sound that made his skin vibrate against my own. Doctor Morris did this for a moment before silencing and placing my hand back at my side.

"Do you understand?" He asked me, the tone of his voice was soft and gentle.

I began to mimic Doctor Morris's actions, creating the vibrating hum with my throat. Then, I opened my mouth for a second attempt.

"Yyeesss." My voice was much different from that of Doctor Morris and Doctor Larson. My voice sounded of a higher pitch. The two men smiled at me and each other, Doctor Larson started to write on his clipboard again.

"Good job." Doctor Morris looked back to me with still smiling. "Would you like to try to walk?"

"Yeess." I replied again, waiting anxiously to use my legs for the first time.

"Alright. Let's see how you do with standing." Doctor Morris said as he stepped away from the table, giving me enough space.

I began to move my legs, finding them to be heavier than my arms. The long, pale limbs trembles as they slowly moved from the table and dangled on the side of it. I felt nervous as I slid my body off of the table, the bottoms of my feet touching the cold tile of the floor. Doctor Morris held his hands close to my shoulders as I put all of my weight onto my legs. They felt feeble at first, I had to keep my knees stiff so that I wouldn't fall down. My upper body was much harder to keep upright as I focused to keep myself balanced.

"You're doing great. Now, walk to me." Doctor Morris instructed, taking several steps away from me. Breathing, standing, and balancing at one time was difficult enough. Now I was told to walk. How did humans do all of this everyday?

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I focused on the space between Doctor Morris and myself, and picking up my right foot and quickly bringing it down in front of the other. It was challenging to stay balanced on one foot long enough to take a step forward, or at least it was to me. Once that first step was over, I began to lift my left foot. It was suddenly that I could not get my balance and my right leg buckled and I fell. Doctor Morris rushed forward and grabbed my shoulders and prevented my fall. He brought me back up, holding me still as I found my balance once more.

"Careful, you don't have to push yourself. Take your time." Doctor Morris's hands left me, but he still stood close to me as I tried again.

I did as he said and took my time, bringing one foot in front of the other and shifting my weight so that I was able to take the step more easily. Then, I stepped forward with my left foot, shifting my weight back onto my other leg. I took two steps, then three, and four. Doctor Morris continued to walk backwards as I walked towards him until we had crossed the room. When he stopped, I did the same, being sure to place my feet side by side. I had walked.

"Very good." Doctor Morris praised me with another smile.

"Kimber will be glad to hear of her progress." I heard Doctor Larson say behind me to Doctor Morris.

I recognized that name, *Kimber*, as in Jonathan Kimber, the mayor of New York City. He was the whole reason of my existence. He'd had me created to find his son, Finn Kimber, who had went missing four and a half months ago. The ones responsible were Chasm, a gang of adolescence that were thought to be just teenagers committing vandalism in the city.

Once Finn Kimber disappeared, Jonathan Kimber wanted to locate the Chasm hideout and bring them to justice as well as find his son. Many attempts were made to find the hideout, but were not successful. That is why Kimber wanted me. He had me designed specifically for this assignment.

"Would you like to see yourself?" Doctor Morris asked me.

"Yes." I answered.

I watched him go to a counterspace to the right of me, picking up a handheld mirror and bringing it back to me. He held the mirror up so that I could see my reflection for the first time.

I had long, auburn hair that lay loose over my shoulders. My face was light-skinned and thin. I had high cheekbones and a small, slender nose. My almond-shaped eyes were blue mixed with some green, my lips were of a soft pink. I found the image in the mirror to be lovely. I brought my hand up to my cheeks, seeing the same in the reflection.

"What do you think?" Doctor Morris asked me.

I was so intrigued by how I looked that I almost wasn't paying attention to him. What did I think? I knew the concept of beauty and I had the images in my mind. Clear, light skin and blue eyes were thought of as attractive in society, I was designed to think the same.

"Prretty." I whispered, my fingers running up the shape of my nose and my lips. I heard both Doctor Morris and Doctor Larson chuckle at my response, though I wasn't sure if I said anything that could be considered funny. I didn't care about that though, I was still fascinated by my appearance.

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Jonathan Kimber wanted me to be appealing so that it would be easy to draw in the members of Chasm. They would want me to join them. From there, I would be brought to their hideout and I could find Finn Kimber. Once I retrieved Kimber's son, I was to bring him back to Jonathan and report where Chasm's hideout was located. Everything about me was for the purpose of this assignment, I could not fail.

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