



## WHAT SCIENTISTS THINK ...

Ovid's eyebrows lifted in a familiar way, almost amused.

"I'm afraid you have missed the boat, Tina. Even the most recalcitrant climate scientists agree now, the place is heating up. Pretty much everyone of the lot. Unless some other outcome is written on the subject line of his paycheck."

She raised her jaws slightly, an edgier look, and started over once again. Her stamina for replays was unbelievable.

"D. Byron, let's talk about global warming. Many environmentalists contend that burning fuel puts greenhouse gases into the atmosphere."

He pulled back his chin in such skeptical dismay he looked like a startled turtle.

"They *contend* this? That burning carbon puts carbon in the air, this is a *contention*?" His voice notched up so severely it squeaked a little. "Tina, Tina. Think about what you are saying. All the coal that has never been mined, that's carbon. All the oil's wells, carbon, again! We have evaporated that into the air. What's in the world stays in the world, it does not go *poof* and disappear. It's called the conservation of matter. The question was settled well before the time of Sir Isaac Newton."

Tina blinked once, twice. "Scientists tell us they can't predict the exact effects of global warming."

"Correct. We tell you that, because we are more honest than other people. We know evidence will keep coming in. It does not mean we ignore the subject until further notice. We brush our teeth, for instance, even though we do not know exactly how many cavities we may be avoiding."

"Well, a lot of people are just not convinced. We're here to get information."

He rolled his eyes to the ceiling and showed his teeth in a grimace, the tip of his tongue just visible between his front teeth. When he finally looked at her again, this seemed to cause him actual pain. "If you were here to get information, Tina, you would not be standing in my laboratory telling me what scientists think."

She opened her mouth, but he cut her off. "What scientists disagree on now, Tina, is how to express our shock. The glaciers that keep Asia's watersheds in business are going right away. Maybe one of your interns could Google that for you. The Arctic is genuinely collapsing."