

# **All Wrapped Up: Blood Service**

## **Angela Knight**

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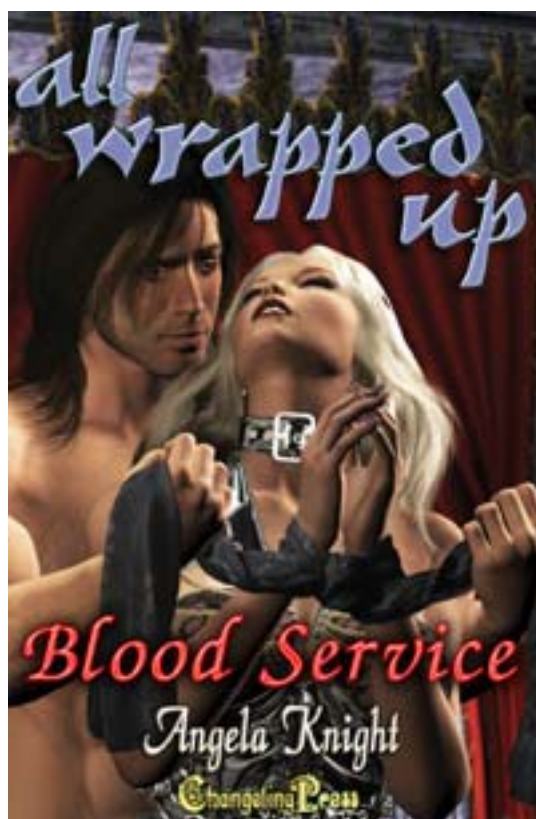
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**Editor: Margaret Riley**

**Cover Artist: Bryan Keller**



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## Chapter One

Close. She was so damn close. Eyes burning, Adiva stared at the airlock, willing it to open. She was fifth in line to board the warship, and her heart was pounding. If only she had five more minutes, she'd be in the clear. Beyond the bounty hunter's reach.

The Vigilante himself had come to Adorev to collect the reward of two million credits General Borian Tang had put on Adiva's head. If she didn't get offworld before he found her, she was finished.

The Vigilante. If he had another name, she'd been unable to find it. The legendary bounty hunter specialized in capturing the most wanted criminals in human stellar territory. He went wherever his prey was, kidnapped them, and brought them back to whoever offered the bounty. Not always in one piece, either. There were very ugly stories of what he'd done to captives who pissed him off.

It was so fucking unfair. Adiva was nothing like his usual prey -- rapists, pedophiles, and murderers of every stripe. She was on the side of the angels. The rebel Alliance had been locked in battle with Tang and his gang of thugs for the past five years, and they were winning. In a few more months at most, Tang's government would collapse and the people of Adorev would finally be free.

She regretted nothing she'd done. It was infuriating to find herself somehow classed with the kind of psychopath Vigilante normally hunted. What the hell was his problem, anyway? Tang deserved to be overthrown -- the man was psychotic, a racist megalomaniac who had terrorized his people for decades, murdering thousands because he didn't find their bloodlines acceptable. That was why she and Jorge had come to Adorev to begin with. It had never been about a mercenary's paycheck to either of them. Otherwise she wouldn't have stayed and fought on after Jorge's death.

With a huff of impatience, Adiva swung her duffle onto the opposite shoulder and shifted from foot to foot. "Hurry it up, damn it," she murmured under her breath. "I feel like I've got a great big target printed on my back." If the Vigilante caught up to her, she was dead. Even if he didn't kill her, Tang would. Probably after days of torture.

She'd fight to the death to avoid a trip to Tang's Red Palace. Unfortunately, she doubted the battle would do her much good. Despite her well-developed combat skills, she was no match for a vampire. Particularly one with Vigilante's reputation.

If the bounty hunter caught her, Adiva figured her only chance was to goad him into killing her quickly. Better that than entertaining Tang's torturers. Her will was strong, but everyone had a breaking point. And Adiva was damned if she'd betray the Allies.

The hair rose on the back of her neck. For a moment she thought it was merely her imagination reacting to the memory of the Vigilante's dossier. Then finely honed instincts began to hum so insistently, she threw a quick glance over her shoulder. Her heart stopped beating for one long, endless instant.

A tall, broad-shouldered man stood a bare twenty meters away, his hair a dark gold under the harsh spaceport lights, his vivid green eyes stabbing into hers. She knew that face. She'd spent the morning staring at his dossier as her stomach twisted itself in knots.

It was him. The Vigilante.

Adiva didn't think twice. She threw aside her heavy duffle and ran. Ducking around the ship's massive gray bulk, she sprinted for the nearest corridor, pouring on the speed. If she didn't get away from him now, he'd run her down like a rabbit.

A deep voice shouted, "Adiva Mayhew! Stop!" Boots rang on the deck as he pounded after her.

Spotting a branching corridor off to the left, Adiva shot down it, then took another, then a third, choosing turns at random. Fear filled her mouth with a bitter, metallic taste.

The ring of boot steps grew louder.

Her heart lunged in her chest so hard it literally hurt, but Adiva ignored both the pain and the cold bloom of fear. She had to keep moving, keep thinking. Keep fighting. She rounded a corner and shot down a darkened corridor... And skidded to a halt, sick with terror and despair. In front of her loomed a blank wall.

Dead end.

Frantic, Adiva spun. The vampire stood ten meters away, watching her, his expression dispassionate. Sucking in a breath, she looked for another door, another corridor, a way out.

Nothing. There was nothing there but him.

As all the blood drained from her face, her gaze returned helplessly to his. The Vigilante was almost two meters tall, as broad-shouldered and brawny as any genetically engineered Space Marine. The gleaming black battlesuit he wore emphasized every ridge and hollow. She bit back a moan of fear, imagining how strong he must be, with all that sheer muscle amplified by a vampire's powers.

Under other circumstances, Adiva might have found him handsome. There was a sculpted beauty to his face, with its knife-blade cheekbones and square jaw. His nose was narrow, widening to flared nostrils that gave him a wolfish expression, an effect enhanced when he inhaled as if trying to catch her scent. There was a certain cruel sensuality about his mouth, even held in that tight, grim line. His thick blond hair gleamed like a coin in the muted light.

"You played this well, at least until now." Vigilante's voice was deep, almost hypnotic, with a note of sensuality in its rumble. "You almost lost me completely in Charon."

Adiva had boarded a shuttle in that flea speck of a town this morning and flown up to the orbital space port here, intent on catching the first outbound ship she could find. She'd hated to leave the fight on Adorev, but she had no choice. Allied Command agreed -- she knew too much they didn't want Tang's torturers to discover.

"Unfortunately, 'almost' losing you isn't good enough," Adiva said bitterly, falling into a crouch. She bared her teeth at him. "But I'm still not going to let you hand me over to the Red Palace."

"Do you seriously think you can stop me?" He stalked toward her, his gaze unblinking, his big body gliding like oil over glass. "If that's what I decide to do."

For just a moment, Adiva felt the warm breath of hope before common sense kicked in. "You saying I could buy you off? Offer you money, or maybe just pussy?" She curled a contemptuous lip. "Don't try to play me. I've seen your dossier. You don't bribe."

"I don't lie either." He was only three meters away now. Much, much too close.

Adiva backed away, eyes flicking as she scanned for an escape route. "Let me guess -- this is where I offer you anything and let you fuck me, after which you take me in anyway. Sorry, I'm not that big an..."

With a low growl, he lunged for her.

She blocked a grab from one of his big hands with a thrust of her palm. Pivoting, Adiva drove a punch at his face, but he ducked aside, grabbed her wrist, and whirled her around. A brawny arm snapped across her waist like a trap springing closed. She drove an elbow back into the vampire's muscled gut, but he didn't even flinch as he pinned her against his rock hard body. "Now, you'll..."

She didn't let him get the rest out of his mouth. Desperate and terrified, Adiva went wild, punching, kicking, clawing any part of him she could reach. Her nails drew blood from his wrist as her booted heels drummed his shins.

"That's enough, vixen." He caught one flailing wrist with that infuriating vampire strength and twisted, cranking her double. The hot pain ripped a gasp from her mouth. Before she could even think about trying to wrench away, he smoothly shifted his grip.

Suddenly Adiva was unable to move at all. Frantic, she wrenched, trying to pull free, but she was caught fast, one arm twisted behind her, the other dragged up into a

half nelson over his arm, held in place by the fist he had buried in her hair. She flung her weight forward, fighting to throw him...

Vigilante turned and smashed her into the bulkhead so hard she saw stars. For a minute she couldn't even breathe. The vampire used the opportunity to pin her between the unyielding steel and his equally unyielding body.

"As I was saying, we have two alternatives." He didn't even sound winded, the bastard -- just icily pissed off. Shifting his grip, he caught her beneath the chin, wrapping his long, blunt fingers around her jaw. "I can put you in restraints and cart you off to the Red Palace, where they'll no doubt torture you for every scrap of information you ever had. Or..."

Involuntary tears stung her eyes, and she blinked them fiercely away. She had to make him lose his temper and kill her. "Quit playing with me, you son of a bitch. How does it feel, playing hunting hound for a psycho like Tang?" She tried to kick back at him again, but he had her pinned too well. All she could do was curse him in every language she knew.

Fingers tightened around her jaw with such force, she broke off, gasping. "That's no way to talk to a man who's about to offer you a deal."

Another sickly burst of hope. It was probably a trick, but... "What kind of deal?"

"I've decided to acquire a bloodthrall." He rolled his hips against her backside in a slow, suggestive grind. "I'm considering you for the position."

"And right after I fuck you, you'll deliver me to the Red Palace."

"Only if you disappoint me."

She fell silent, breathing hard. Despite her common sense, that flicker of hope strengthened, mixed with calculation. "What exactly are you proposing?"

"It strikes me that it would be a waste to hand a high-level bloodthrall over to an ignorant thug like Tang." The vampire lowered his head next to her ear. His breath felt seductively warm. "On the other hand, I could always use two million credits. Convince me to keep you."

Adiva swallowed. Before coming to this world with Jorge, she'd undergone the surgical procedure that had made her a "bloodthrall" -- a perfect donor for her new vampire partner. Vamps coveted relationships with willing bloodthralls, preferring them over drinking synthetic blood. Still... "You'd violate a contract with General Tang?"

"I have no contract with Tang. He put a bounty out on you, but I don't have to collect it. If, that is, you prove sufficiently convincing."

"What guarantee do I have that you won't turn me in anyway?"

"None, of course." His tone was blandly matter-of-fact. "May I remind you, I don't have to give you any guarantees, Adiva. You're the one who has to convince me."

She licked her dry lips. "How do you propose I do that?"

A long silence ticked by as he let her sweat. "According to your dossier, you're a seventeenth level submissive. Quite high, and relatively rare. I'm a twenty-first level dominant. That means I've got a nasty streak I rarely have the opportunity to indulge -- sexually, at least."

"Meaning that those you pursue are fair game for whatever sadism you care to practice." And he cared to practice quite a bit, according to his file.

She felt him shrug against her. "Given that my typical prey runs toward pedophiles and serial murderers, I don't lose much sleep over what I do to them."

"Yeah, well, I'm neither of those things. So why the fuck are you tormenting me?"

"Darling, you managed to piss the wrong people off during a war. What did you expect?"

"Tang is psychotic! The Adorevians have a right to overthrow..." She broke off, reining in her outrage and reaching for calm. "Never mind. Spell it out for me, Vigilante, or whatever the hell you call yourself. How do I 'convince' you?"

His smile was slow and dark. "Why, by submitting, darling."

"To what?"

"Isn't it obvious? Whatever I want."



She swallowed, all too aware of him -- his hard, hot body crowding her much smaller one. He was just so damn big. So damn male. With every breath, her senses filled with his scent, masculine and dark and more than a little wild. "So what *do* you want?"

The Vigilante laughed softly. "That's the question, isn't it?" He leaned into her. She realized that the thick ridge pressing against her ass was an impressive erection. "Choose, Adiva. Convince me. Or don't."

She licked her dry lips, intrigued despite herself by that promising cock. Jorge had not been a small man by any means, but Vigilante felt massive. How would he feel thrusting hard into her cunt, stretching her, tormenting her? She'd dreamed of a lover like that. And she didn't want to die without experiencing one.

"I think you'll find me very convincing..." Adiva had to swallow before she could give him the title she knew he'd demand. "... Master."

He laughed. The sound was rich with satisfaction and triumph. "Then why don't we get started?" He released her throat and found the seal on her jacket. "Let's see what you have to offer."

"Here?" she protested instinctively. "But anybody could come along!"

"And you assume that matters to me?" His tone was coolly pleasant, but she heard the steel beneath.

Adiva swallowed. "No, I imagine you'd strip me naked in front of half the station if it suited you."

He laughed softly. "You assume right. In fact..."

Breath caught, she looked down as he started sliding open the seal of her armored jacket, baring the mounds of her cleavage.

"Very promising." Big hands caught the edges of her jacket and jerked. Her breasts sprang free, naked and pale in the dim light, their tips a blushing pink. And tightly erect. Adiva wasn't surprised. She could already feel herself starting to cream.

"Mmm," he rumbled. "I was right -- you *were* hiding a bloodthra'll's tits beneath all that leather. Very pretty."

His big, long-fingered hands closed over the full globes to gently pluck both taut nipples. The hot bloom of pleasure made her close her eyes and swallow.

"Sensitive?" the vampire purred.

"Yeah." She tried to moderate her rough breathing.

"Good." He tugged both tips, twisting them until she gasped at the hot pleasure. "I look forward to putting them in clamps. Just until the circulation starts to go. Then I'll take them off." He leaned down and traced his tongue over her earlobe in a wet, seductive swirl. "When the blood comes rushing back, that's when I like to bite."

Adiva couldn't help it. She gasped.

Vigilante laughed, a deep masculine rumble. "Oh, come on! You mean Jorge never sank his fangs in these?" He gave her nipples another teasing tug.

"No." She closed her eyes, feeling the hot trickle of wetness between her thighs. Her voice rasped when she spoke. "Only my neck."

"But they're so pink and perfect." Another seductive tug. She didn't quite suppress the groan. "You know what we call nipples like these?" He grinned again, flashing fang. "Vampire candy."

*Five minutes ago, I wanted to beat his head in, Adiva thought wildly. How the hell did he get me this hot, this fast?*

She knew the answer, of course. Her captor was the kind of dominant she'd secretly dreamed of. Unfortunately, Jorge had been an innately kind man who couldn't bring himself to hurt her, even knowing what she instinctively craved.

"I'm nothing like that," the Vigilante said.

"What?" She'd lost the thread of the conversation.

"You were thinking that Jorge couldn't bring himself to hurt you even though it's what you wanted."

Adiva felt her face heat. "Shit."

"You know vampires are telepaths." He laughed and raked a ruthless thumbnail across her nipple. She inhaled at the tiny pain. "Among other things." There was a universe of velvet threat in that last sentence.

She moaned, unable to help herself. God help her, he really did know exactly how to get to her.

"Yes, as a matter of fact -- I do. Exactly." The vampire released her breasts and caught her by the back of the neck, turning her toward the back wall of the corridor. "Brace your hands on the wall." His cold bark contrasted starkly with the warm, seductive whisper of a moment ago.

Helplessly turned on, Adiva obeyed. Her arms shook.

"Spread your legs and lean in." He kicked her booted feet apart, almost knocking her into the wall. "I want a look at that ass."

Quivering, she obeyed and waited. She was so wet, she could literally smell it. And his senses were even more acute than hers...

Reaching around her hip, he found the seal on her pants and opened it, pushing them out of the way, then tugged her snugs down to her thighs. Adiva felt the cool touch of air on her bare butt as he stepped back, appraising. *Anybody could come along and see me like this.* She closed her eyes again, shuddering with the force of her arousal.

"Very pretty. Like a ripe peach." One warm palm came to rest on her left cheek, big and arousing. "I'm going to enjoy taking a stimwhip to this ass."

The swat he gave her bounced her up on her toes. Startled by the sharp pain, Adiva let her tongue get the better of her. "Fucker!"

"That," Vigilante said, "is not the way a bloodthrall talks to her master." Grabbing her hair, he shoved her into the wall. She grunted as he leaned his weight into her back, mashing her against the cool metal bulkhead. From the corner of her eye, she saw him step away and lift his free hand. Closing her eyes, she braced herself.

## Chapter Two

The ten blazing swats that followed heated her ass until Adiva yelped, "I'm sorry, Master!"

The vampire grinned, cool and just slightly vicious. "I seriously doubt that. I smell wet pussy."

He leaned in until she could feel his erection against her naked hip. Adiva caught her breath in anticipation as he slid a hand over her belly and between her thighs. The first thrust of his big finger into her cunt made her shudder.

"You are wet, aren't you?" Dark male anticipation put a rumble in his voice. "Tight, slick, ready to be fucked. Eager for your new master's dick?"

Her mouth was so dry, she couldn't answer.

Another swat jolted her forward onto his impaling finger. "I asked you a question!"

"Yes!" she gasped. "God, yes!"

"Well, you're not going to get it. Not yet. I'm not through exploring my new acquisition." He withdrew the finger from her twat and stepped back. "Bend over and spread your cheeks. I want a look at your asshole."

Helpless blood heated her face. "Here?"

He lifted a brow. "You're on thin ice, Adiva."

Shit. "Yes, Master."

Her heart hammering, she bent over and grabbed her cheeks in both hands, spreading them apart. *God, what if someone walks by?*

"They'll see your master exploring your anus." But as he moved in behind her, she realized he was so damn big, he'd block the view of anyone who happened by. She wondered if he did it on purpose...

Probably not.

Then the blunt finger tracing the seam of her ass made her forget everything else.

Jorge had fingered her butt before, but his hands were smaller than Vigilante's. The sensation of that big fingertip working its way up her anus was both painful and deliciously arousing.

"God, you're tight. I'm going to enjoy grinding my..." He broke off. When he spoke again, there was surprise in his voice. "Jorge never took you here?"

She didn't want to talk about Jorge. His finger felt delicious. "He was... umm... well endowed. He didn't want to hurt me."

"I don't give a shit." Vigilante's voice was icy with disapproval. "If he accepted the responsibility of being your master, it was his duty to give you what you needed, regardless of his own tastes."

Startled, she frowned at him over her shoulder. Why did he care? "Jorge was a good man."

"What he was," the vampire growled, withdrawing his hand, "is lucky I didn't run into you two. I'd have called him out and taken you."

"He didn't neglect me badly enough to..." She broke off, realizing suddenly that if they *had* encountered Vigilante, Jorge probably would have simply handed her over.

Vivid green eyes scanned her face. "He knew he wasn't enough, didn't he? And it bothered him."

Adiva frowned, not comfortable with this conversation. "He was a good friend." He just hadn't been dominant enough for her. Not that she had any intention of telling her captor that.

The Vigilante's sensual mouth curled into a sneer. "Well, I have no interest in being your *friend*." He dragged her backward, thrusting two fingers ruthlessly deep up her ass. She groaned at the fiery sensation. "I'm going to fuck this little hole the way you've always wanted it fucked. After, that is, I whip your sweet ass until I'm rock hard." He wrapped the fingers of his other hand into her dark hair, pulling her away

from the wall and onto those impaling fingers. "It's going to be a delicious ride, Adiva. You're going to love every minute of it, even when you're begging for mercy."

Still screwing her asshole with his fingers, he used the hand in her hair to pull her head back. Panting, impossibly aroused, she saw his fangs flash as he bent toward her hammering pulse. The sensation of those sharp teeth sinking into the vein made her cry out in pain and startled hunger. She shuddered as she heard him swallow the first deep mouthful.

Jorge had drunk from her too many times to count, but it had never been like this -- a stark, ruthless possession. The Vigilante's fingers pumped her ass, stretching and tormenting the delicate flesh as he drank her blood. Pleasure and pain twined up Adiva's spine in a bright, breathtaking braid. She shivered, feeling stunned and helpless.

And she loved every hot, pulsing moment of it.

This. This was why she'd become a bloodthrall. It had nothing to do with gaining fantastic strength and near immortality, and everything to do with a man like this -- predatory in his dominance, willing to give her exactly what she hungered for. Even though she hated to admit it, she craved this edgy, ruthless sex, the sensation of being at the mercy of a man who had no mercy at all.

And yet, though the Vigilante stepped right to the edge of brutality, somehow she sensed he wouldn't really hurt her.

At least, not sexually.

Yes. The thought pierced her consciousness, driven by his telepathy. *That's exactly how it's going to be. See what I'll do to you...*

Images flashed through her mind: herself, bound on her back across some kind of restraint device as he tormented her nipples. Tied hand and foot in a helpless ball, jerking under the stimwhip he laid across her ass in ruthless strokes. Cuffed spread eagle as he pumped his thick cock into her wet cunt, driving her to yowling orgasm. Kneeling at his feet, submissively sucking him despite the clamps biting into her

nipples. His fangs sinking into her -- neck, breasts, inner thighs. Providing a hot, willing feast for his lust, moaning as he took her.

*Mine*, his mind growled into hers, as his fingers stabbed deep in her asshole, fucking it in long digs that pleased and punished. *Every inch of you is mine now. I could fuck you right here... But I think I'll make you wait for it.*

The climax took her by surprise, a sudden jet of burning delight that streamed from her violated ass to her violated throat and back again. She screamed hoarsely, arching against him. "Vigilante!"

Through the hot, white fire, she heard his thought: *I own you, Adiva.*

And then she was aware of nothing except the pulsing pleasure of his pumping fingers. And his mouth, working against her flesh as he fed in those long, deep swallows.

\* \* \*

At last Vigilante released her throat and looked down at her. She felt weak, lightheaded from more than blood loss, but she forced her legs to stiffen and gave him a cheeky smile. "Enjoy yourself?"

He lifted a blond brow. "Not bad -- for an appetizer." Reaching into a back pocket of his battlesuit, he pulled out a pair of gold wrist restraints. Her cocky mood instantly fled as she felt the blood draining from her face.

His face went cool, professionally blank, as though he hadn't driven her to a savage orgasm a moment ago. "Give me your wrists."

She licked her lips as her heart began to pound again. "You don't need those."

Green eyes narrowed in silent warning. "No, but I'm going to use them anyway."

"As a vampire binding his bloodthrall, or a bounty hunter restraining a captive?"

"What do you think?"

*I think my life would be a lot simpler if I were telepathic.* She stared at him, unmoving, as her palms began to sweat.

He gave her a long, assessing look. "Just how submissive are you, Adiva?"

Snarling a mental curse she didn't dare voice, she thrust her hands out in front of her. With an offhand skill that suggested just how many times he'd done this, the Vigilante snapped the restraints onto each wrist, grabbed her shoulders, and turned her around. Positioning her bound wrists across one another, he pulled them down against her ass. A flick of his thumb activated the cuffs, paralyzing her muscles so they no longer responded to her brain's commands.

Glancing down, she realized her jacket was still open. The pose thrust her bare breasts out in a brazen offering. The station air blew cool across her naked nipples. They tightened, drawing into tight little pink peaks.

"Mmmmm," Vigilante purred, as he stepped around in front of her. His eyes were no longer cold, but hot and hungry as they stared down at the hard tips. "Like I said, vampire candy. And me with a sweet tooth..." He crouched and leaned in to take one stiff nipple into his mouth. Adiva caught her breath, wondering if he was going to sink those fangs into her tender flesh.

Instead, he swirled his tongue across the puckered tip. Pleasure spilled through her in warm streamers that intensified as he suckled her with surprising tenderness. She let her head fall back with a moan of arousal.

"Sweet," he rumbled. "And sensitive. I'm going to have a lot of fun with these."

Sitting back on his heels, he grabbed the waistband of her pants and drew them back up over her hips, then sealed the closure. Hooking an arm around her hips, he stood, spilling her across his shoulder to hang head down.

"My jacket!" Adiva protested. "You left my jacket open!"

He chuckled and gave one cheek a light slap. "So I did."

Cheeks burning in humiliation, Adiva could only hang there as he carried her down the corridor.

\* \* \*

Galen Vordire steadied Adiva's warm weight on his shoulder, enjoying his euphoric triumph. His dick was hard as a tachyon cannon behind his fly, and his balls were tight with anticipation.



She was his at last.

He'd been making do with synthetic blood for months now, just as he'd made do with the women he'd picked up in bars. Both had barely taken the edge off his considerable hungers. But pretty little Adiva was an erotic feast, with those long legs, full, luscious breasts, and big, anxious honey eyes.

And he intended to enjoy every bite.

As soon as Galen had downloaded her bounty file, he'd known he'd have to move fast before some other hunter got to her. Two million credits was a reward tempting enough to attract even Melusinde's attention. He'd have hated to fight his bloodmother over Adiva -- he owed his vampire creator far too much. On the other hand, he had no intention of letting the bloodthrall fall into Tang's vicious hands either. The thought of what the bastard would do to her fragile beauty was enough to turn his stomach.

Luckily, Galen had gotten to the girl first. All he had to do now was reinforce her impression that he was a stone-hearted killer who'd do damn near anything.

In other words, the dominant of her submissive dreams.

Far from being the doormats the public believed, most submissives were actually adrenaline junkies who craved the excitement of sexual risk. For them, the epitome of that risk was an affair with a sadistic dominant skilled in inflicting both pleasure and pain -- the kind of man who would stop at nothing to achieve his own erotic satisfaction.

In reality, someone like that was too carelessly brutal to see to his sub's needs. A good Dom had to be utterly focused on his partner's well-being and sexual gratification, even to the exclusion of his own. He might play at being a sadist, but he had to do so very, very carefully.

Galen was an extremely good dominant.

His cock twitched behind his fly at the thought of everything he intended to do to Adiva. Judging by what he'd seen so far, her reaction should be delicious.

He turned down the next passageway with his captive, planning the next step in her sexual conquest. The corridor was virtually empty at this point in the station's day cycle, except for one grim-faced cyborg Space Marine striding toward him.

The man's gray eyes fell on Adiva's shapely backside and widened with interest. His gaze flicking to meet Galen's, he sent a silent com message: *Lucky bastard.*

Galen grinned as his internal computer relayed the message. The grin broadened as he got a very wicked idea.

He gave the firm curve of Adiva's ass a vicious pinch just as the Marine started to step around them. She kicked out with a startled curse of pain, catching the cyborg right in the face with the toe of her boot. The Marine yelped in outraged pain, grabbing his nose. "What the fuck?"

"Adiva!" Dumping his captive off his shoulder and onto her feet, Galen gestured at the Marine in mock rage. "Look what you did!"

"What are you -- oh." Meeting the cyborg's glare as he clutched his injured nose, she flushed. "I'm sorry, but he..."

The Marine snarled, two meters of pissed-off muscle. "You little..."

"Don't worry, Lieutenant, I'm going to punish her for that." Galen pulled his stimwhip from his belt pouch and activated it with a flick of his thumb. Instantly, the long glowing lash uncoiled with a sibilant hiss. The sound was pure effect, since the lash wasn't physical, though programmed to act as if it was. A tightly focused neuro-stimulant field, it could inflict either pain or pleasure at the whim of its user.

Adiva knew exactly what it was capable of, because her eyes widened and she took a wary step back. Catching sight of her naked breasts, the Marine lost his angry glower and lifted an intrigued dark brow.

Galen sent a quick mental order to Adiva's cuffs, and her wrists sprang free. "Take down your pants and assume the position," he growled.

"What?" Honey brown eyes widened even more. "No!"

He flicked his wrist. The whip responded with the threatening pop he'd programmed into it. "You heard me. Or maybe you'd rather I collect that bounty?"

Adiva hesitated, glancing from him to the towering Marine. Galen didn't blame her for looking intimidated; the cyborg was almost half a meter taller than she was, a brawny blond who looked strong enough to juggle tachyon cannons. Given the cybernetic enhancements Galen sensed, he could probably do just that. Which, considering Adiva's obvious taste for big men, made him perfect for the role of voyeur.

"You heard me," Galen growled, and flicked the whip again. It cracked threateningly.

Reluctantly, Adiva's delicate hands dropped to the closure of her pants. A flick of her fingers opened the seal, exposing an arrow of skin-tight white snugs beneath. A glower of defiance on her face, she pushed the pants down her long thighs.

"The snugs too," Galen growled.

"This is ridiculous!" Adiva glowered, her full lower lip drawing into an adorable pout. A combination of anger, embarrassment, and excitement lit those big brown eyes.

"Hey, you kicked me in the nose, lady," the Marine said, folding his massive arms and rocking back on his heels. The attempt at self-righteousness was marred by the huge erection growing behind his fly.

Adiva's gaze flicked down to it. She swallowed.

"The man wants his pound of flesh, Adiva," Galen said. "And we're going to give it to him. Take off the pants." He gave her his best tone of icy menace. "I won't tell you again." The whip popped so loudly she jumped.

Snarling something uncomplimentary, she kicked off her boots, whirled around and jerked her snugs and pants down to her ankles, then stepped clear from them.

"About time," Galen said in his best sadistic dominant snarl. "Brace your hands on the wall. You're getting fifteen for insubordination."

She obeyed, simultaneously spreading her feet apart without having to be told. Galen and the Marine exchanged a significant glance at that telling gesture.

Apparently, she wasn't all that averse to being whipped.

With a flick of his wrist, Galen laid the glowing stimwhip across her ass. Adiva bounced onto her toes with a startled yelp. The pretty muscles of her cheeks flexed at the sharp pain.

From the corner of his eye, Galen saw the Marine swallow. The bulge behind the cyborg's fly swelled even more.

Galen didn't blame him. Adiva had one of the most gorgeous asses he'd ever seen -- round and firm as a peach, with a tuft of toffee curls showing between her spread legs.

He sent the lash cracking across her butt again, making her bounce on her toes. Another flick, this one cutting from the other direction. Another delicious yelp and jiggle.

Then he sent a mental command to the whip, changing its settings before sending the tip popping right at the joining of her spread legs. Adiva threw back her head with a startled shout.

It wasn't a cry of pain. He'd set the whip to stimulate her pleasure receptors.

The next crack caught her between the cheeks, right on her asshole. She tossed her head, sending dark curls dancing along her spine. "Shit!"

"Oh, yeah," the Marine rumbled. "Do that again."

Galen grinned and obliged him, cracking the tiny pink rosebud twice in succession until she writhed deliciously.

"She's got a pretty little asshole," the Marine said, licking his lips.

"Yeah," Galen said, giving it another ruthless whip-crack, this time with a bit more sting. "And I'm looking forward to stretching it with my dick."

The Marine shook his head. "I was right -- you *are* a lucky bastard."

Adiva looked back at them, wild-eyed. Meeting her gaze, the cyborg opened his fly and pulled out his massive cock. "I hope you don't mind," he said to Galen. "This isn't the kind of sight I get to enjoy very often."

"Go right ahead." Galen sent another order to the whip and laid it hard across her cheek.

She yelped. "Dammit, that hurt!"

He grinned. "That's the idea."

"New slave?" The Marine stroked his cock in long pulls.

"That asshole wouldn't be virgin otherwise." The next flick landed right between her vaginal lips, delivering a burst of pleasure so strong, Galen felt it through his telepathy. She gasped.

The Marine echoed the sound, yanking his prick hard and rising on his toes. "Oh, shit, I hope you fuck it hard."

"I'm going to grind my dick in until she begs for mercy."

"She loves it." The cyborg was gasping now as he worked his cock with one hand and his balls with the other. "Smell that wet pussy."

"Yeah." Galen gave her another stinging crack across the cheeks. "She knows what we want to do to her. And she knows where my cock is going the minute I get her back to the ship."

Another crack. Adiva whimpered.

Galen smiled.

She didn't think she'd ever been so hot in her life.

Each snap of the whip alternated unpredictably between liquid pleasure and stinging pain until the blended sensation set her nervous system ablaze like a torch.

Meanwhile the two big men stood watching her as she writhed and danced, their eyes glittering with hot excitement. The Marine's cock was huge, and he jacked off without shame, his gaze locked on her ass. Vigilante's erection was every bit as big behind his fly as he plied his whip in a searing assault on her self-control.

Anybody could come around the corner, she thought helplessly, shuddering as blow after blow rained across her ass. *This shouldn't be turning me on this way.*

But it was. God help her, it was.

Suddenly the Marine's back arched. He bellowed as come shot from his cock in a long white stream.

The next time the whip struck her, the pain it inflicted almost tipped her over into her own orgasm. She leaned into the wall, groaning helplessly.

And the whip stopped flying.

*What? Don't stop now!*

The Marine sagged against the nearest wall as if unable to stand. "Shit. My comp is picking up the boarding call for my ship. Doesn't that just figure?"

Vigilante gave him a crooked smile. "Hey, at least you got a good show out of it."

"That's putting it mildly." He tucked himself away and gave them both a taunting salute. "Fuck her hard, you lucky bastard."

With a sigh, he sealed his pants and walked off.

Adiva wanted to scream. She'd been so close. Another stroke or two, and...

"Get over here."

Her eyes widened as she met Vigilante's narrow stare. His hand dropped to the seal of his ship suit and slowly opened it, revealing his muscled chest and liberating his cock. It jutted at her, a thick length of rosy meat.

"You heard me," he rumbled. "Get over here and suck."

Adiva hesitated only a moment before hurrying over and dropping to her knees so that the flushed head bobbed demandingly before her eyes.

"Take it in your mouth."

Licking her lips, Adiva wrapped one hand around the thick shaft and obeyed.

He tasted salty and clean, flavored with the tang she'd learned to associate with vampires. Eagerly, she swirled her tongue over his cock, exploring the big, smooth head. At the same time, she stroked the shaft, enjoying the silken skin and the thick vein she could feel running up its length. With her other hand, she cupped his furry balls, teasing and stroking.

"More," he rasped. "Take it all. Right down that pretty throat."

Widening her jaws, she swallowed, sucking him deep in one long swoop. To her satisfaction, she felt him dip against her, as if his knees had gone weak for an instant.

*Oh, yeah, Adiva thought. I've got you now.*

And then she started to suck.

It was hardly the first time Galen had received a blow job, but Adiva was stunningly good even by his standards. Her cheeks hollowed as she suckled, bobbing her head up and down the length of his shaft. With every bob, her lips and tongue caressed his aching cock, milking him in long, luscious pulls.

Feeling heat gathering in a demanding knot between his thighs, he knew he couldn't take much more of this. As if sensing how close he was, she slowed her oral worship, pulling him back from the brink, teasing and suckling in a sweet, mind-blowing assault on his self-control.

Until she suddenly swooped down over him, taking him right to the root in a breath-stealing wet satin rush. His balls seemed to detonate, blowing hot pulse after pulse of come up his shaft. He locked his fists in her hair and threw his head back. "Drink it!" Galen gritted. "Drink it all!"

He felt the muscles of her throat ripple as she did just that.

That was when he realized there might be more to his new slave than he'd anticipated.

## Chapter Three

Vigilante's vessel was no luxury star yacht, but it wasn't a tub either. By its long, graceful lines, it was a decommissioned military Raider Class warp ship -- gleaming black and one hundred meters long, bristling with tachyon cannons and sensor arrays. The painted image of a chained, naked blonde was stretched across its bow, languidly draped over the name *Vigilante's Pet*.

"Tacky, Vigilante," Adiva said.

"Not as tacky as sucking your master off in a space station corridor. That Marine really loved watching you get your ass whipped, didn't he?" Their boots clattered on the metal ramp as he hauled her after him toward the *Pet's* airlock. Though Galen had been tempted to force her to go naked, he'd reluctantly allowed her to dress after she'd given him that stunning blow job.

And she was still fretting about it, too. "What if there had been kids around?"

"This part of the station's strictly for military, law enforcement or paramilitary. And it was late in the cycle. Anybody who saw you either had the same equipment or enjoyed the view. That cyborg certainly did."

She gave him a honey-eyed pout. "You enjoy humiliating me, don't you?"

"Don't lie to the telepath, Adiva. You loved watching that Marine jerk off while he watched you get your ass whipped. I could smell you creaming."

"I know," she snapped back. "Why do you think I was humiliated?"

He shouted in laughter as the airlock doors slid open.

Adiva followed him down a long corridor and into the master's cabin. While he went to work unlocking her cuffs, she scanned the room. Most of the area was taken up by a sprawling bed. Off to one side stood a sensory chair -- among other things, he'd be



able to interface with the ship's computer from it in an emergency. The walls were lined with the usual drawers and compartments for his clothing and equipment.

There were also a couple of wall niches. She wasn't surprised that they held figurines of women, bound in suggestive positions.

"Bed," Vigilante said, "bondage configuration D-4." The mattress instantly drew into a long, narrow ridge.

She turned to stare at him. "You programmed it for bondage?"

"Of course. Strip." He stepped back and leaned a broad shoulder against the wall.

Curious, Adiva eyed him. "Just how many configurations did you program it with, anyway?" She shrugged off her jacket and handed it to him, then sat down to drag off her boots.

"Enough." Vigilante watched her with the intent hunger of a cat staring at a mouse hole. His eyes kindled to a green blaze as she started wiggling out of her tight trousers. "I add new ones as I go along."

Naked, she folded her pants and underwear, mostly for something to do with her hands. "My duffle," she said, remembering it. "I threw it down back at the *Star Tripper*."

"I know. They passed it off to station security before they took off. I've made arrangements to have it delivered."

Adiva looked up at him, startled. "When did you do that? I didn't hear you use a com unit."

Vigilante shrugged. "I have a computer implant."

"A battlefield model?"

"Yeah. A Cybercore 5000."

Which was a top of the line unit. Great. On top of everything else, he was a cyborg. If he ever shot at her, she was dead; with the targeting capability the implant gave him, he'd never miss.

His eyes glittered. "So don't give me a reason to shoot you. Lie back on the bed, arms spread. On top of the hump."

Licking her lips, Adiva obeyed. The bed shifted beneath her as she lay down, supporting and lifting her as if in offering as she positioned herself.

The Vigilante pulled another set of cuffs from a pocket. She felt the warm brush of his fingers, then the cool metal slapping around first one ankle, then the other. He spread her legs wide and arranged her arms to his satisfaction. As he stepped back from the bed, she felt the field click in, locking her limbs helplessly in place. She could move her torso, but the rest of her body was paralyzed. Available for anything he wanted to do to her.

"You're creaming again." His voice was a low, dark rumble as he reached for the seal of his suit. Mouth dry, she watched as he stripped.

She'd assumed at least some of his size was due to the armor he wore, but it was pure Vigilante. The chest he bared for her was broad and sculpted with slabs and ridges of muscle. A neat cloud of golden hair stretched from one nipple to the other, then snaked down over his abdomen to his waistband. As Adiva watched in fascination, he pulled off the suit. When he finally stripped it down his brawny thighs, she caught her breath.

Despite the blow job she'd just given him, his cock was hard again, massive and ruddy above a pair of thickly furred balls. Jorge hadn't exactly been under-endowed, but Vigilante made him look tiny.

"God," he rumbled as he put his suit down the cleaning shaft, "I love the look on your face. Your eyes are the size of dinner plates." He took his rod in hand and gave it a slow, taunting stroke. "And yes, this *is* going in every orifice you've got, just as deep as I can stuff it."

She grinned despite the common sense that warned her not to taunt the vampire. "You don't do subtle well, do you?"

Vigilante snorted. "I've never been a subtle man." He studied her sprawled nudity, and his eyes kindled. "Especially not when I'm hungry."

Her heart kicked into high gear as he moved around the bed with a long, lazy stride, a dark smile growing on his face as he studied her. Adiva's gaze slid helplessly from the anticipation in those green eyes to the lustful jut of his cock. It jerked upward under her stare, lengthening as she watched.

"You're even more exquisite than I expected," he said in that low, masculine rumble that made her inner muscles clench. "Those long pretty legs, those absolutely delicious breasts. And the way your dark hair curls around your anxious little face..." He gave his cock a slow stroke, as if unable to resist his own hunger. "Not that I blame you for being worried." Another teasing stroke as he licked his fangs. "Maybe you should be grateful you're not telepathic, sweet. I don't think you'd find my thoughts particularly reassuring."

Adiva swallowed. "You're good at that."

Vigilante lifted a brow in wordless question.

"The whole menacing dominant routine."

"Oh, darling, it's not a routine. As you're about to discover." He walked to one of the wall panels beside the bed, which slid silently open at his approach. Adiva watched with a combination of fear and anticipation as he contemplated its contents. After a nerve-wracking pause, he collected several objects and arranged them on the bed.

Her heart pounded as he sat down beside her bound body. Selecting a small tube from the collection, he popped the top off it and started smearing the contents of it over a short, stubby object. Shaped something like an elongated top, the object was studded with dozens of soft little projections. After a moment, she realized it was a butt plug.

"I'd tell you that you need the stretching," he said, slicking the gel more thickly over the plug, "but we'd both know that would be a lie. Bloodthralls retain their tightness no matter how many times you fuck them -- even with a dick like mine." His grin suggested he intended to enjoy that fact on a regular basis.

Adiva swallowed, watching nervously as the Vigilante rose and moved around between her widespread legs. When she inhaled sharply in fearful anticipation, she could smell her own musk.

But instead of simply driving the plug home, he thumbed her clit and slipped a long forefinger into her sex. Adiva moaned at the delicious sensation.

"You are wet, aren't you?" His hooded gaze watched her face. "I'm tempted to forget about the games and just shove my cock in here for a good, hard fuck. But..." He shrugged. "I don't want this session over that fast, so I'll just have to control myself." He added a second finger in a slow pump. She rolled her hips upward with a helpless groan.

Which promptly became a gasp as he inserted the plug in the mouth of her anus and forced it home. "God, Vigilante!" She clenched her teeth as he rotated his wrist, screwing it in. "That hurts!"

"I'm not surprised, as tight as you are." His smile was downright nasty. "I'll have to remember to gag you before I use your ass. Virgins tend to get so noisy when I settle in for a good, hard reaming."

He drew the plug out a bit and pushed it back in. To Adiva's surprise, it started to vibrate, the soft little studs tormenting and pleasuring by turns. She whimpered. His smile broadened.

Still easing the butt plug in, Vigilante settled down between her thighs and lowered his head. The first pass of his tongue over her wet and aching flesh tore a desperate gasp from her mouth.

The gasp became a startled shout as he twisted the plug hard and swirled his tongue over her clit. The combination of sensations was so savage, she instinctively tried to pull back. But bound as she was, there was no escape.

He went right on licking and suckling as he fingered her cunt and plunged the butt plug in and out of her ass. Plug and finger rubbed past each other through the thin flesh between her channels, creating a maddening friction.

The ecstasy he created with his tongue was just as ferocious. As the long, hot moments spun past, she realized the pain of his anal probing actually enhanced her enjoyment. Her inner muscles drew tighter and tighter as each thrust built her burning pleasure.

Climax!

Adiva screamed, her orgasm tearing up her spine like a fountain of fire as he worked ass, cunt, and clit simultaneously. Despite the probing plug, she found herself grinding into his thrusts as she yowled.

She'd never felt so fucked. So taken. And she loved it.

Endless burning moments past before she collapsed at last, panting and dazed.

"Mmmm," he purred, pushing himself off the bed. "I'm definitely looking forward to reaming that sensitive little ass. Your reaction should be interesting, to say the least."

Breathing hard, Adiva looked down her bound body at him, taking in the massive jut of his cock. It was a hell of a lot bigger than the plug. "You're going to kill me."

He laughed. "Not quite, but you'll definitely need that gag."

Adiva eyed him. "You're not a nice man, are you?"

Another flash of fang. "No." His attention fell on her nipples, and the dark smile widened. "But since you seem in some doubt, why don't I provide another demonstration?"

Her eyes widened. "That's not necessary!" To her embarrassment, her voice actually squeaked.

"I think it is." He picked up one of the remaining objects he'd left beside her hip. She recognized it with a little thrill of fear and anticipation.

It was a nipple clamp.

## Chapter Four

The Vigilante dropped the tiny device on Adiva's chest, then stretched out on the bed beside her. As he rolled onto his elbow, she stared at the clamp with burning eyes. To her relief, it didn't have teeth -- its jaws seemed to be padded. And the clamp wasn't all that big, so maybe it didn't have much of a...

"Oh, don't worry," he murmured in her ear, "it's going to hurt."

One big, warm hand settled on her right breast for a slow squeeze. "You do have the prettiest tits." His thumb brushed over her nipple, stroking it to aching hardness. "No wonder that Marine was drooling."

"Ummm -- thanks." Despite her anxiety, she had to admit he knew what to do with his hands. His fingers felt delicious, kneading and flicking, each tiny caress sending sweet jolts of pleasure through her body.

Her captor grinned. "Don't thank me. I have a feeling you won't consider my admiration a compliment once I get started." He lowered his head toward her nipple.

She tensed, anticipating the sting of his fangs.

Green eyes flicked up toward her face. "Don't worry, darling. I'm not going to bite you." He swirled his tongue over the peak. "Yet."

Adiva groaned. "You *are* a sadist."

"They didn't give me that twenty-first level rating because of my sunny personality." Another delicate lick.

"Guess not. Jesus, Vigilante!"

"I like to make sure they're nice and hard first." Brushing his hand across her chest, he found her left breast and started gently teasing it as he tenderly licked her right.

*This is going to hurt.* Adiva swallowed the saliva that flooded her mouth, just like the cream she could feel pooling inside her. *Why the hell is it turning me on?*

"Because you're a seventeenth level submissive, darling." Vigilante scooped up one of the clamps.

Before she could brace herself, he closed its tiny jaws over her left nipple. The sharp pain made Adiva yelp. "Bastard!"

"Yep." He tauntingly swirled his tongue over her other nip. The luscious sensation contrasted sharply against the sting of the clamp. Her pleasure-pain intensified even more as he started suckling, simultaneously flicking the clamp with his thumb.

Adiva writhed against the mattress, tried to pull in her arms, but her cuffed hands wouldn't obey. It was maddening.

She'd never been more turned on in her life.

"Because you've always been in control," Vigilante murmured, apparently reading her mind again. "As a spy, you had to stay one jump ahead of everyone else, or you were dead." He gave her nipple another delicious swirl of his tongue. "But now, I'm in control. I can do anything I want to you."

He picked up the second clamp and let it close on her nipple. Pain bit into the little peak, as intense as the pleasure had been.

"Shit!" Adiva tried to jerk free of her bonds, but her muscles refused to obey.

"You're mine now. All mine. Utterly mine." Vigilante rolled on top of her, bracing his muscled forearms on either side of her chest. "Go ahead -- lie to yourself. Tell yourself I won't really hurt you."

She felt the thick, hard knob of his cockhead brush her wet pubic hair. He reached down, aimed himself, and entered her.

Wet as she was, it should have been an easy stroke, but he was thick, and she hadn't had a man since Jorge died. The vampire had to bear down, forcing his massive cock deeper and deeper yet, stretching her inner walls. Stuffing her one luscious centimeter at a time.

God, it felt good. So good she was barely even aware of the dull throb from the clamps.

"Mmmm," he purred. "Oh, yeah, you are wet." Shoving another inch, he added, "And tight."

Dazed, she stared up into his handsome face as he kept working his way inside her. Centimeter by centimeter, every one of them making her body blaze with heat and need. Until he was finally in up to the balls.

"Jesus," the Vigilante growled. "I've been looking forward to this moment since I read your file." He drew out slightly and pumped in. "I took one look at your picture and knew you were going to be..." deeper thrust "... just like this."

Abruptly the bed began to move under her, lifting her hips upward, dropping her chest, apparently reacting to some command he sent through his computer implant. Dazed, she stirred. "What?"

"Just getting you into position." He kept pumping, lengthening his strokes.

"God, you feel so good!" Adiva tossed her head on the pillow.

"So do you." He plucked one of the clamps off her nipples. She gasped at the burn of returning blood.

Vigilante lowered his head.

Adiva stiffened, expecting him to bite. Instead his mouth closed over the aching peak, suckling her sweetly as he ground his cock in and out of her sex. She shuddered, mindless with the pleasure storming through her body. Pleasure that grew stronger with every hard thrust of cock into helpless cunt.

He flicked the clamp off the other nipple, then transferred his mouth to it. The sharp rake of his fangs jerked her into a startled bow. "Shit! Vigilante, that hurts!"

His only response was a growl as he sucked hard, drinking from the cuts he'd inflicted. Feeding as he fucked her.

"Ohhhhhhh!" Adiva yelped, writhing against his grinding hips, his cock pumping deep, feeling so damned incredible every time it teased and twisted her slick inner walls. At the same time, he suckled her aching nipple, drinking her blood in



hungry swallows. Pleasure competing with hot throbs of pain until it became impossible to tell where one ended and the other began. As, somehow, each intensified the other in a fiery feedback loop.

Which abruptly snapped, flinging her into her orgasm with a scream. She bucked, mindless in the grip of his hard, muscled body as he rode her, still feeding, milking pleasure and blood from her tormented breast.

“Vigilante!” she screamed. She’d never felt so utterly possessed.

He released her nipple to roar his climax at the ceiling. “Adiva!”

Deep inside her, she could feel his cock jerking, pumping her full of his come.

## Chapter Five

When Adiva woke the next morning, her body stung and ached in a dozen places. She stretched, suspecting her smile was more than a little smug. The dream of nights like last night was the reason she'd become a bloodthrall to begin with, but reality had never quite measured up.

Until the Vigilante. Her vampire captor did a very thorough job of measuring up, in every conceivable dimension.

Where was he, anyway? She lifted her head, frowning.

"You fuck." His voice came from the next compartment, low and vicious with such rage, every hair stood on the back of her neck. "You're a dead man." She knew by his tone he meant every word.

Alarmed, Adiva rolled out of bed. Were they being attacked?

Ignoring her nakedness -- she didn't want to take the time to get dressed -- she made for the door. It slid open at her approach, and she darted a glance around the corner, ready to attack if he needed help.

Instead he sat rigidly at a computer console, his face a mask of rage, a set of trid images floating in the air in front of him. Images so horrific that even combat veteran Adiva wasn't entirely sure what she was seeing.

For a moment, she thought the women had been the victims of some kind of bomb blast, but as she stepped into the room, she saw their injuries were more surgical than that.

"What the hell is this?" Revolted, she covered her mouth with her hand and swallowed against her rising gorge.

"Richard Corvile at work. Erstwhile duke of Eron Three and sadistic serial murderer. You can see why they want him dead or alive." A muscle flexed in his jaw. "It's going to be dead."

"My God." She couldn't stand seeing the images any more, so she looked at the Vigilante instead. His face was pale, almost gray, except for two flags of rage burning on his high cheekbones and the hectic green glitter of his eyes. "You're hunting him now?"

"Yeah." The word was flat. He slapped a hand on the console, and the images blessedly winked out, to be replaced by a shot of a man's face. Considering how horrific his crimes were, the killer looked almost shockingly ordinary, with pleasantly handsome features and a muscular build. Yet there was something flat and reptilian in his eyes that belied his cheerful smile. Looking into those eyes, she could believe he was responsible for the atrocities she'd just seen.

The Vigilante's expression as he stared at the image was so nakedly murderous, a chill skated Adiva's spine. She was suddenly very, very glad he hadn't thought she deserved killing.

She cleared her throat with a rasp. "So this Corvile kills women."

"At least twenty-five that we know of. Fifteen of them back on Eron Three by the time they caught him." A muscle flexed in the vampire's strong jaw. "A jury found him not guilty on all counts. The fact that the jury foreman was shot down the day before the verdict might have had something to do with it. The judge should have declared a mistrial, but..."

"Mysteriously, he didn't."

The vampire leaned back in his seat, his expression brooding. "Exactly. Corvile then emigrated to Saris Eight, taking his fortune with him. Of course, he proceeded to start killing again. Unfortunately, he'd gotten better at it, and the planetary authorities couldn't tie him to any of the deaths. At least, until he killed the pretty young wife of a man even richer than he."

Adiva eased into a seat next to Vigilante, hypnotized by his feral intensity. "And that's the man who hired you," she guessed.

The Vigilante nodded. "Unfortunately, Corvile has gotten wind that there's a bounty on his head. He's disappeared." Burning green eyes narrowed. "Fortunately, it's very, very hard to hide from a telepath who can pull the truth from the mind of anyone who might know anything about where you went." He bared his fangs. "I'm going to find him. And when I do, he'll be as dead as his victims."

The Vigilante was as good as his word. They left the station an hour later, shortly after a runner dropped off Adiva's duffle and got a generous tip for his pains.

Once they were into C-space -- underway at faster-than-light speeds -- Adiva found herself naked on her knees in front of his pilot's chair, suckling her new master's cock. Afterward, he hauled her into his lap and fed from her throat while driving her to orgasm with skillful fingers.

\* \* \*

The hunt for Corvile took more than a month as the Vigilante tracked his new prey to planet after planet. At every stop, he left her wearing the force restraints while he was gone. Though he didn't activate them, she was well aware the *Pet's* computer would use them to stop her if she tried to leave the ship.

Each night, the vampire returned to her for another mind-blowing sexual encounter. At times she suspected he was taking his frustration out on her with his whips and clamps, but she found she didn't mind.

Adiva had known she was a submissive, of course, but she'd had no idea exactly how much she would love submitting to a man like the Vigilante. Sometimes he could be brutal in his demands, while on other occasions he was almost tender. Whichever mood he was in, it always precisely matched hers, as if he sensed when she wasn't up to satisfying his more ferocious tastes. Telepath that he was, he probably did sense exactly what she needed, but she was surprised he'd care enough to let her needs affect his behavior.

The only thing he didn't do was take her ass. He told her he was saving her backside for after he captured Corvile. Adiva had to admit, she was beginning to look forward to his victory celebration.

She probably wouldn't be able to walk for a week.

Finally the Vigilante got the lead he was looking for when he learned Corvile had taken a transport to Sebasia, a true backwater of a planet on the edge of human stellar space. Better yet, the bastard had left for the colony barely the week before.

"I've got the son of a bitch," the Vigilante told Adiva as he charted a course for Sebasia on the *Pet's* bridge. "He's a dead man."

She fidgeted, frowning. It had become harder and harder to cool her heels on the *Pet* while Vigilante went off to hunt the killer. "Why don't you let me go with you this time? You could use some backup."

The vampire's green eyes flickered. "I think not."

Adiva contemplated him, one brow lifted. "You don't trust me."

"I have many positive characteristics --"

"You do?" She gave him a mock-astonished blink.

"-- but a trusting nature is not one of them." He shrugged. "Besides, considering Corvile's tastes, I'd prefer you stayed as far from him as possible."

"Why, Vigilante, I didn't know you cared."

His eyes cooled. "I don't. But considering all the trouble I went to in acquiring you, it would be a waste to lose you to that vile little prick."

\* \* \*

They docked at Sebasia's one space station port. The Vigilante donned his body armor and armed himself with his usual assortment of beamers, jammers, and neural-stun poppers, then disappeared out the *Pet's* airlock.

Exhausted from another of his dominance fucks, Adiva tried to sleep. Unfortunately, a nagging sense of worry wouldn't permit it. She dressed in one of the filmy gowns he'd bought her, ignoring the restraints he'd again left deactivated around her wrists and ankles, then headed for the galley to get something to eat.

Like the rest of the ship, the galley was roomy enough to keep a spacer from going nuts from cabin fever. There was also a wall-length viddie screen for use with games and all manner of entertainments; at the moment it showed only Sebasa, shimmering blue and green in the glow of its sun.

Adiva ordered up a meal from the synther -- Vigilante had stocked his ship with food in the correct assumption that she'd accept his deal -- and sat down to eat. She was just ripping the cover off a plate of m'shili noodles when she heard the hiss of the airlock. She rose from her galley chair and walked into the corridor. "Vigilante? I didn't expect you back this..."

Richard Corvile stepped out of the airlock, a beamblade in his hand and a vicious grin on his face. "Well, well! Hello, there. When I heard Vigilante had been seen with a woman, I hoped it was a lover. And here you are."

Adiva eyed the blade warily. "How the fuck did you get past the ship's security locks?"

He lifted his left hand, displaying the electronic overrider he held. Adiva had used similar lockpicks herself during her espionage career. "All things are possible to a man with enough money. But I doubt we have much time, so let's get busy." Corvile took a menacing step forward. "I want to have you nicely gutted by the time the vampire gets..."

He lunged with a long vicious slash aimed right at Adiva's throat. She sidestepped with a bloodthral's speed, settling into a combat crouch.

Corvile smirked, eyeing her nipples through the filmy gown. "Oh, so you want to play? I'm very good at playing."

She sneered. "I seriously doubt that."

Just as she'd intended, her taunt ignited his fury. He leaped at her, the blade lifted for a vicious downward slash. Coolly, Adiva stepped in, grabbed his knife wrist, and pivoted around behind him, cranking his arm up and back. "I'm not your average helpless victim, you stupid shit. I'm a *bloodthral*." She twisted his wrist brutally until she heard something crack with a wet snap. "That means I'm as strong as a vampire my

size." The killer roared in startled agony. "Which makes me more than a match for psychopathic little fucks like you." Grabbing him by the back of the head, she slammed him face-first into the bulkhead. His howl cut off with a crunch as his skull shattered.

Stepping back, she let the body fall and contemplated it with a grim smile. "God, I love being underestimated."

Behind her, the airlock thumped into its cycle. She turned as Vigilante barreled through, white-faced. "Adiva!"

"It's okay, I've already killed him." She gestured at the corpse as the vampire stopped short in astonishment. "Son of a bitch used an override to get past..."

The Vigilante jerked her into his arms before she could get the rest of the sentence out of her mouth. "I sensed him," he said, his voice gruff. "I sensed what he meant to do. I was afraid I wouldn't make it back in time."

Oddly touched, she slid her arms up his shoulders and met his relieved gaze. "He was just a human. A really nasty human, but still, I've got five times his strength. And since he assumed I'd be as easy to kill as all those other women, I was in no real danger."

"Of course not." Blond lashes veiled Vigilante's eyes, and the concern vanished from his face, leaving him coolly expressionless. He dropped his arms from around her and stepped back. "I should have realized you were more than capable of defending yourself." Looking down at the body, he grimaced. "You made quite a mess here, didn't you? Go clean up while I get the body into stasis for the trip back to Saris Eight. I want to collect that bounty."

Adiva eyed him, feeling strangely cheated by his mood shift. "Whatever you say -- Master."

He grunted as she started down the corridor toward the ship's head.

Adiva had done a very thorough job on Corvile. Galen's only regret was that he hadn't had a chance to give the bastard the kind of slow death he so richly deserved.

Still, it was a good thing she'd been able to take the killer out so fast. She was obviously every bit as good as her enemies insisted.

Galen frowned as he loaded the corpse into its stasis crate for the trip to Saris Eight, remembering all too clearly the icy terror that had seized him when he'd realized the killer's intentions. He'd have been concerned for anyone in Corvile's sadistic hands, but this fear had been far more intense than that, something perilously close to panic.

And he knew exactly what it meant.

He'd only known Adiva a month, but she was already getting to him. He wasn't really surprised, given her intelligence, cheeky sense of humor, and lush sensuality. Add in that truly outrageous beauty and the sweet taste of her blood, and any vampire would find himself falling for her. Particularly considering the gnawing loneliness that had driven Galen to hunt her to begin with.

The trouble was, he couldn't afford to let Adiva realize he was starting to care. She wanted an ice-cold dream dominant, not another lovesick vampire like that wretched Jorge. Which meant he'd damn well better convince her she'd imagined any weakness she'd seen.

And he knew just how to do it.

Adiva stood under the pulsing spray of the *Pet's* real-water shower -- a bit of sybaritic luxury if ever she'd encountered one. Even as the spray sluiced over her skin, she kept seeing the fear and rage on Vigilante's face when he'd burst out of that airlock, all set to kill Corvile. True, he'd been intent on doing away with the prick all along, but what she'd seen in his eyes had been more than that. He'd been terrified.

For her.

She'd never have expected that kind of protectiveness from her big, stone-hearted vampire master. It also made her feel a little better about her nagging suspicion she was beginning to fall for him. The Vigilante was so damned sexy, so skilled, so intelligent and darkly seductive, it was impossible to resist him.



But he was also such a bastard ninety percent of the time, she felt like an idiot for feeling anything for him at all. What kind of moronic dishrag would fall in love with a man who considered her a combination sex object and blood supply?

But if he saw her as more than that...

"Get out of there, Adiva." His growl rumbled over the hiss of the shower.

She whirled to peer through the shower tube's frosted shield. An unmistakable broad-shouldered silhouette loomed on the other side, arms crossed, blatantly naked. And from the sound of his voice, in one of his Big Bad Dom moods.

Her nipples hardened in anticipation.

"Adiva!" he barked.

"I'm coming!" She ordered the water off.

The shield slid open. The vampire stood waiting, every inch of that brawny body on glorious display, his green eyes glittering with hot lust, his cock a ruddy, hungry jut. He grinned, flashing his fangs. "Brace yourself, darling. It's time for my victory celebration."

Adiva hung helplessly in mid-air, bent over a thick, cylindrical field generator. A set of force fields held her hands up and back over her head as her hips lay across the cylinder. Her legs were spread wide, toes not even touching the floor, held apart by yet another set of fields. She was stretched almost upright, but her ass was thrust out. It stung savagely. The Vigilante had already given her a good working over with his stimwhip.

And that, she knew, was only the appetizer for the night's entertainment, because her anus was precisely at the height of Vigilante's dick. He'd greased it generously and inserted a thick butt plug that made the tight little opening ache.

Now, as she watched, panting, the vampire paced in front of her, a wicked grin on his face, his cock bobbing with every stride. In one hand he held the stimwhip he'd been using, this one in the form of a cat-o'-nine-tails. Its nine short glowing lashes hissed as he eyed her.

Suddenly he sent the whip flicking out to strike right across her bare breasts, thrust outward by her position across the cylinder. Some of the lashes stung, but others, perversely, stimulated her pleasure centers. The combined effect was enough to make her writhe, torn between begging him to stop and pleading with him to keep going.

Gasping, Adiva watched the thick muscles of his torso ripple as he snapped the whip again. This time the lashes felt as if phantom mouths licked and suckled her while clamps simultaneously bit into her flesh.

"God," he growled, "I adore those nipples. They're flushed as fat and red as cherries." Stepping up to her, he set the whip on the shelf and dropped to one knee. "I always did love cherries."

She caught her breath in anticipation as he sucked one of the tight crowns into his mouth. His tongue stroked and swirled around it. Eyes shuttered in helpless lust, she could only hang there. Even as he suckled her, she was intently aware of the plug burning her ass.

Soon he was going to replace it with that massive cock of his. And God help her, she couldn't wait. By the time he rose from her aching nipples, she was panting, on the verge of begging for anything he wanted to do to her. "Vigilante, God, please..."

"Give me that mouth." He grabbed the back of her head and swooped in, sucking and licking at her lips until she opened for him. His tongue swirled inside her mouth in long mating thrusts. His free hand cupped one breast, thumbing the swollen point until she gasped. Unable to do anything else, she kissed him back, chasing his tongue with hers, silently begging for mercy -- or perhaps for more. She wasn't sure which.

Finally he drew back a bare fraction and breathed against her mouth, "How's your ass, Adiva? Ready for my cock?"

She had to pant for breath before she could speak. "You don't care whether I'm ready or not."

His fingers tightened on her nipple, tugging it deliciously. "Not really, no." His lips quirked up. "Let's have a look at that little hole, shall we?"

She shuddered as he released her and walked around behind her helpless backside. When one of those big, warm hands landed on her butt, she flinched with a combination of dread and desire. He'd spent ten minutes flogging her ass with that damn cat before starting work on her tits.

"Lovely color," Vigilante purred. "Nice and rosy." A finger traced between her spread cheeks right down to her labia, then slid smoothly through them to circle her clit. She jerked and moaned. "You're wet too. Enjoying yourself, dove?"

She laughed, unable to help herself. "Yes, you bastard."

One broad palm landed on her cheek in a stinging slap. "That's Master Bastard to you, darling."

Something cool and cylindrical touched her labia, then began to slowly work its way inside her cunt. "Is that the... Oh God!... whip?"

"The butt makes a nice dildo, don't you think?" He forced another inch deep, rotating his wrist to screw it inside.

Then the fingers of his other hand brushed her ass and caught the butt plug, easing it out of her stinging, violated rectum. She caught her breath, then moaned as he flicked on the whip. Its lashes began broadcasting a pleasure field that seemed to wrap around her clit in burning pulses. Maddened by growing lust, Adiva rolled her hips, fucking the whip.

"Feels good, doesn't it?" He slid the butt in deep. The lashes swayed between her thighs, sending waves of ecstasy into her sex.

"Yessss," she groaned. "Oh, yes!"

"Yes, what?" Something hit the deck with a rattle. She suspected it was the butt plug.

"Yes, Master!"

He slid a forefinger deep into her ass as he simultaneously withdrew the whip. "You've got a really tight little asshole, slave. You know what I want to do with it?"

The muscles of her thighs were twitching. "Fuck it." She licked her dry lips and shuttered her lids. "Grind your big cock into it."

"That's right." The whip butt clattered to the floor. She groaned in disappointment, wanting more of that hot, wicked ecstasy. "And how's it going to feel when I grind my cock up this tight little ass?" A second finger joined the one stretching her rectum.

"It's going to hurt." She was panting.

"But you want it anyway."

"God, yes!"

"That's what I thought." He pulled his fingers from her and stepped in close. Something broad and smooth brushed her sensitive anus. Adiva caught her breath in a combination of fear and consuming lust.

Slowly, he leaned into her, forcing the massive crown into her ass. She felt herself stretching painfully around the knob and whimpered.

"Push out," he gritted.

With a helpless moan, she obeyed. Centimeter by centimeter, the big shaft sank deep. "Shit, that hurts!" she gasped.

He laughed, a short, savage bark. "Funny, it feels delicious to me." Another burning fraction. And another.

Vigilante reached around her hip and found her clit with a forefinger, circling it. And kept impaling her in a slow, relentless drive until finally she felt his hips plastered against hers, the entire flaming length of his cock buried deep.

He leaned in until he could breathe in her ear. "How does it feel to have your master's cock jammed up your virgin ass?"

She'd never felt so helpless, so utterly *taken* in her entire life. "Hotter than hell."

Vigilante laughed, a deep rumble. "That's my bloodthrall. Hold on, sweet. You're about to get reamed."

He started pulling out. In contrast to the pain of entry, there was a dark, perverse pleasure in the sensation of that thick rod sliding endlessly out of her ass. He enhanced it with a finger circling her clit, making her writhe again.

Then he pushed deep in another long, agonizing thrust, followed by a sweet, kinky withdrawal. Adiva felt the climax she'd been chasing all night begin to gather and pulse. She whimpered in helpless ecstasy.

With a rumble of satisfaction, Vigilante began fucking her ass. "God," he growled, "I love breaking in a virgin."

She felt incredibly tight, the muscled ring of her rectum gripping his cock fiercely as he sawed in and out. Galen had to fight to keep his pace slow. He wanted to take his time conquering Adiva's ass.

But it wasn't easy, not with her sheath milking his dick as she hung helplessly in her bonds. He cupped her breast in one hand and fingered her clit with the other, all the while slowly working his cock in and out of that snug anus. With his telepathy, he could feel her orgasm gathering with every ruthless stroke. All he had to do was hang on a little longer...

In. Slick and tight. Out, muscles massaging his shaft. In again, silken heat rippling around him, his balls tightening between his thighs. The tight knot of pleasure swelling in her belly. In. And out. In and out...

And...

She screamed, bucking against him as she climaxed. With a triumphant growl, he let go, fucking hard, grinding deep until his hips slapped hers, her anus milking his dick in sweet pulses with every thrust.

His own climax detonated in a shower of psychic sparks, long rolling pulses of it. He stiffened, feeling his come jet up that tight ass. Releasing her breast, he grabbed her hair, pulled her head back, and buried his fangs into her straining neck. Her blood filled his mouth as his seed filled her violated rectum.

*Mine*, he thought. *Mine!*

She wouldn't forget that now.

## Chapter Six

*One Month Later*

Adiva ghosted along behind the woman, staying far enough back to keep her from realizing she was being followed. Somewhere up ahead, Vigilante strolled along as though he didn't have a care in the world. With any luck the woman's lover, an escaped pirate, would soon show his face. The minute he did, they'd have him.

After Adiva had dealt so successfully with Corvile, Vigilante decided to let her assist on his missions. Despite the vampire's powers, there were times it was useful to have backup, and he had to admit her espionage experience had given her the skills for the job.

Of course, as soon as they took care of whatever prey they hunted, she always ended up bound in some deliciously erotic position while he fucked and fed on her, with a little flogging and nipple torture thrown in for spice.

She didn't think she'd ever been happier, though she was still haunted by the nagging question of whether she was anything more than a meal to him.

Up ahead, the pirate's woman turned down an alley between a nightclub and a triddie palace. Adiva's heart began to beat faster. *Heading for a little rendezvous, dear?* She lengthened her stride, wary of losing her prey, and rounded the corner just short of a run...

Light exploded in her skull with a burst of blinding pain. She dropped to one knee, stunned, blood rolling hot down her chin. Hard hands grabbed her by her collar and hauled her to her feet.

A cold female voice snapped, "Adiva Mayhew, you are under arrest by order of General Borian Tang for espionage against the Tangian government." Her captor slammed her face first against the plastocrete wall so hard, she swallowed blood.

*What the fuck?*

With a snarl, Adiva twisted and slammed her elbow into her attacker's face. The woman staggered back, cursing, and she tore free, falling into a battle crouch. "Are you insane? Tang's going to fall to the Allies any day now!"

The woman wiped the blood from her split lip and sneered. "Well, he's not down yet, and the bounty on your head is up to three million."

She had fangs.

Oh, great -- just what Adiva needed, another vampire bounty hunter. Luckily, the woman was a head shorter than she was, a petite redheaded doll. With her bloodthral strength, Adiva should be able to...

A hand wrapped in her hair and jerked her off her feet, dragging her into a big, rock hard body. Before she could even think of twisting free, a muscular forearm snapped around her throat, threatening to choke her into submission. "Don't give us any trouble, and you won't get hurt -- any more than you have to be," the man growled.

Inhaling, she realized his wasn't a human's scent. Bloody hell, yet another vamp -- and from the feel of him, one almost as big as the Vigilante. There was no way she'd be able to fight off both of them.

Unfortunately, she had no choice except to try. She sure as hell wasn't going back to the Red Palace.

Adiva raked her sharp nails across the vamp's bare hand, simultaneously stomping her booted foot on his instep. His grip loosened, but before she could slip free, the redhead stepped in and punched her so hard, her legs gave and her vision grayed.

Distantly, Adiva heard a male voice roar in fury. The arms around her vanished, and she hit the ground on her knees. Something slammed into her back and she fell on her face.

Stunned, she lay there a moment, distantly aware of male curses and grunts over the thud of blows and the scrape of boots. A woman shouted in fury.

Then, quite clearly, she heard Vigilante's snarl. "She's *mine*, Melusinde. And by God, I'm keeping her."

Blinking, Adiva lifted her throbbing head. Her lover stood over the dark-haired male vampire, who was shaking his head as if trying to recover from a blow. The redheaded female vamp faced him, obviously boiling with fury.

"Are you insane?" she raged. "That little bitch is worth three million creds. I'm turning her in!"

Vigilante balled his big fists. "Tang is a psychotic murderer who'd torture her to death! Assuming he even pays you, since he's going to need every credivo he's got to flee his own fucking planet when his government collapses!"

"He'll pay me, or I'll kill him myself. The bitch goes back, Galen."

Galen?

He curled his lip, and Adiva's eyes widened. It was a deadly insult to show fangs to another vampire. "Over my dead body."

"How dare you?" The redhead's face was bright with fury. "I'm your bloodmother, you ungrateful bastard. I freed you!"

"And I paid back every credivo you spent," the Vigilante growled. "As to your siring me, my gratitude does not extend to letting you deliver my woman to Borian Tang."

The redhead had made the Vigilante a vampire?

Adiva's heart sank. Traditionally, vamps owed complicated debts of gratitude and honor to their creators. If this Melusinde insisted, he'd have to surrender Adiva whether he liked it or not.

"*Your* woman?" Melusinde's ice blue eyes narrowed in what looked a lot like jealousy to Adiva. "She's just a bloodthrall, Galen. You speak as if you're in..." The redhead broke off, her jaw dropping. "You *are*! You're in love with the little slut! I can feel it there in your mind!"

"*You're not taking her!*"

"You fickle prick!"

Adiva barely heard the venom that followed.



She was far too stunned by the revelation that Vigilante loved her to care about anything else.

An incredulous joy welled in her mind, so intense she forgot her throbbing skull and rose to her feet. She took a step toward him...

Melusine whirled and grabbed her, iron fingers closing over her shoulder. Wild eyes glared into hers. "He's not who you think, girl. Your 'Master' was a slave and a whore when I found him. He specialized in playing the dominant in a gigolo bordello on Gaow. I thought he was the master I wanted, so I freed him and made him a vampire." The vampire curled a lip. "I found out too late how weak he is."

Adiva blinked in stunned surprise. The redhead was a submissive? And the Vigilante had been a *slave*?

Obviously reading her mind, Melusine shot Galen a vicious, triumphant look. "He's very good at pretending to be cold and merciless, but I knew his thoughts. He fell in love with me. Underneath that icy shell, he's *soft*. So I threw him out." She turned that nasty sneer on Adiva. "He'll never be the master you want. *He's a pussy*."

"Lady, you're a fucking moron." Adiva drove her fist right into Melusine's face with every ounce of her strength. The redhead hit the ferrocrete on her back, stunned. "One, because you think Vi... Galen is weak, and two, because he *loved* you and you threw it away."

Melusine glared up at her, rage and jealousy in her eyes. "I see now. You think you're in love with him too!"

"No shit, genius." Adiva looked around to meet Galen's wary emerald gaze. "What did you ever see in this twit?"

Relief flooded his eyes. She realized he'd expected Melusine's revelations to matter. "I thought she was something she wasn't."

With a screech of fury, the redhead sprang at her throat. As she ducked the vamp's wild lunge, Adiva saw the dark-haired male climb to his feet, sigh, and go after Galen.

Then she lost track of her lover, too busy dodging punches and kicks while getting in her own. Galen was more than a match for the other vamp anyway.

It took ten minutes of sweaty effort, but she finally managed to land a kick to the jaw that put Melusinde down and out. As the vampire slumped to the ground, Adiva looked around, bleeding and exhausted.

The two men circled one another further up the alley, each obviously searching for an opening. The dark man glanced past Galen's shoulder and saw that Melusinde was down. Straightening, he threw up his hands. "This is stupid. I'm done."

Galen arrested the punch he was about to throw and eyed him. "What about the three million?"

He shrugged. "You're right -- Tang's government will fall long before we get a chance to collect it. Not that Melusinde will admit it." He sighed in resignation and started toward his mistress, Galen following warily at his heels. "I'd better get her back to the ship. She'll probably kick me out when she comes to."

Galen shrugged and wiped the blood from his mouth. "You won't be the first. Come to think of it, neither was I. She's looking for somebody who'll give her what she thinks she deserves, and she's not going to be happy until she finds him."

The vamp bent and picked Melusinde up, then slung her across his shoulder. "You were right," he told Adiva with a faint, dry smile. "She is an idiot." He hesitated a moment, staring at her as if arrested by something he saw in her mind. Then he grinned at Galen. "And *you* are a lucky bastard. Don't screw it up."

Galen stepped protectively close to her, as if silently warning off the other vampire. "I don't plan to."

"Jesus." Adiva blew out a breath and winced, suddenly aware of every scrape and bruise she'd collected in the fight. "I feel as if I've been worked through a grinder. Damn, that little bitch fights like a rabid rat."

"Tell me about it." Turning her to face him, he cupped her chin, lifting her head until their eyes met. "My name is Galen Vordire."

Then his lips covered hers. She kissed him back hungrily in a fierce mating of lips and tongues, joy swelling in her mind. *He loves me.*

He lifted his head. "Yeah, I do."

For a moment, her heart seemed to just stop. She'd hoped, but somehow she hadn't expected him to admit it. "Why didn't you tell me?"

Green eyes searched hers, the love in them now undisguised. "After meeting Melusinde, you have to ask?"

Adiva punched him lightly in the shoulder. "Idiot. You read minds. You should have known I'm nothing like her."

"You didn't seem to be," he admitted, cupping her face. "But I couldn't be sure how you'd react when you found out how I felt. It seemed safer to hide it."

She gave him a look. "Since when have you ever played it safe, Galen Vordire?"

He let her see the vulnerability in his green eyes. "Since I started loving you this much."

"I love you too. Idiot."

Then Adiva was in his arms again in another kiss just as sweet and hot and luscious as the one that had gone before.

\* \* \*

They decided hunting the pirate could wait a few hours, so they returned to the orbital station where the *Pet* was docked. On the way, Galen explained he'd been barely sixteen when his mother died and left him homeless.

At the time, he'd been a bit too pretty for his own good, and a Gaowian slaver spotted him. The man kidnapped him and took him to Gaow, where sexual slavery was legal.

Galen hadn't made a good slave -- "No kidding," Adiva drawled -- and he'd changed masters six times over the next two years. Though he glossed over most of it, she got the impression he'd suffered horrendous abuse at the hands of his owners before he was bought by a woman who ran a submissives' brothel. Recognizing his temperament, she trained him to be a professional dominant.

"I loved it," Galen told Adiva as they walked through the station's winding corridors toward the *Pet's* dock. "I was still a slave, but the submissives, who were free women, treated me as if I were master. I learned how to please them even as I played at dominating them." His gaze turned brooding. "It was the first time I ever knew pleasure."

"And then you met Melusinde, and she thought you were the Dom of her dreams," Adiva guessed.

He nodded. "I didn't care for her at first --"

"I wonder why." Adiva curled her lip.

"She was always a little difficult," Galen continued, ignoring the quip, "so at first it was easy to be the hardass she wanted. But she'd freed me, and when she made me a vampire, she gave me the power I'd always dreamed of. I was grateful, and I mistook that for love."

And given his life since his mother's death, he'd desperately needed to love someone, Adiva realized. What's more, Galen had needed someone to love him. But something had damaged Melusinde a bit too much, and she thought the last thing she needed was anyone's love.

"You're a bit too perceptive," Galen told her, lifting a brow.

"Yeah, I'm annoying like that. If you don't want to hear it, don't read my mind."

"You're getting cocky. Maybe you need another session with the whip to put you in your place."

Adiva snorted, trying to ignore the little thrill that crept up her spine at the chill menace in his tone. "I know exactly where my place is."

He dropped his voice to a deadly whisper that carried no further than her bloodthrall ears. "Yes -- bent over, taking my dick up your ass."

She swallowed. "That -- sounds about right."

Galen boomed out a laugh. Adiva found herself joining in, amused at her own reaction to his extravagant sexuality. They continued the length of the corridor before she took up the story again. "So you two became bounty hunters?"

"Melusinde was always a bounty hunter. I learned the job from her. I created the Vigilante identity because I thought if people knew my name, they'd connect me with my past as a slave." He bared his teeth. "I didn't want the scum I was hunting to think they'd found a weakness."

She nodded thoughtfully, realizing there was probably an element of crusade to his hunts too, since he was no stranger to abusive bastards from his life on Gaow. Being a bounty hunter allowed him to take revenge on men like his former masters.

"You're assuming I didn't take *direct* revenge." He bared his fangs. "Don't underestimate me."

Adiva glowered at him. "You really need to stop reading my mind."

"Not likely. I need every advantage I can get with you."

"Don't you have enough advantages as it is? I mean, really."

His smile was slow and sensual. "But I like having you at my mercy."

"I wasn't aware you *had* any."

Galen pretended to consider the question. "You know, you're right. I don't." As she laughed, he caught her by the waist and swung her into his arms for another of those long, delicious kisses.

Adiva was panting by the time she came up for air, only to squeal in surprise as he ducked, scooped her over his shoulder, and carried her around the corner and into the cavernous space dock where the *Pet* stood waiting.

"You've got to quit doing this," she told him, thumping him on the back of the head. "Let me have a little dignity!"

"What dignity?" He gave her backside a stinging slap that made her laugh and kick at him.

Then those long fingers began tracing the seam of her leather pants, pressing between her labia. Adiva caught her breath, knowing she was starting to cream.

Galen teased her all the way across the dock, through the *Pet's* airlock, and down the corridor to their quarters before tossing her on the bed. She landed, laughing and

flushed, and watched as he promptly began stripping off the civvies he'd worn on their pirate hunt.

"You're overdressed," he growled, peeling off his skin-tight synthleather vest and tossing it onto a chair.

"Can't have that." Heart pounding, Adiva went to work on her own clothing, watching breathlessly as he revealed that tall, powerful body in all its splendid nudity.

She paused to admire his muscular ass as he strolled toward the panel that concealed his extensive collection of toys. But as he started to pull out a set of restraints, she said, "I don't have to be bound to make love to you, Galen."

He stopped and gave her a long look. "You're a seventeenth level bloodthrall..."

"And you're a twenty-first level vampire dominant. But that doesn't mean we can't make love." Adiva smiled slightly. "Sweet love."

Leaving the restraints where they were and closing the panel, Galen turned to face her. "You think we're ready for sweet?"

"Why not?" Her smile became a grin. "I'm in the mood for something kinky."

He grinned back. "Meaning that for us, sweet *is* kinky."

Suddenly unsure, Adiva studied Galen, feeling abruptly vulnerable. Maybe he wouldn't be comfortable showing how he really felt.

"Hey, I can do sweet." He moved toward her in a slow, delicious stalk. His thick cock bobbed, eliminating any worry that he didn't find the idea arousing.

"You certainly can. That looks yummy." She crawled to the edge of the bed to watch him and his impressive erection approach. "Let me have a bite."

Galen laughed and stopped in front of her. "Oh, darling, I have every intention of giving you a bite."

"I'm sure you do, you wicked vampire." Adiva wrapped her fingers around the long shaft and leaned in to lick away the drop of pre-come beading on its head. With a moan, she swirled her tongue over it, then sucked him into her mouth for a slow, gentle pull. He groaned and threaded his fingers through her hair, letting his head fall back as she suckled him. Several luxuriant moments ticked by as she stroked and tasted.

Finally big hands came to rest on her shoulders, tipping her gently backward. Galen moved onto the bed, covering her body with his, letting his warm weight settle over her. His mouth found one nipple, and it was her turn to groan as he licked. Softly, slowly, he raked his teeth over the tight bud, teasing it until it was almost as hard as the cock she could feel against her thigh.

Adiva sighed and caressed his shoulders, loving the feeling of his skin, so like velvet over the cabled steel of his muscles. One hand came to rest on the tight rise of his ass and gave it a gentle squeeze. He responded with a mock growl and kneaded the breast he wasn't suckling. Her need rose in a long, lazy spiral. "You feel so damn good," she whispered.

Galen lifted his head. "So do you." Shifting his weight, he reached between her spread legs with his free hand, teasing his fingers between her labia. She caught her breath as he entered in a long, luscious glide. "You're wet." His green gaze searched hers, oddly surprised.

"You have that effect on me." She grinned impishly. "Even without the whips and the chains."

Heat flared in his eyes, and he reared off her, grabbed her under the hips, and tossed her lightly up the bed. Then he spread her knees wide, flung himself between her thighs, and lowered his head. Adiva gasped and fisted her hands in his blond hair as he lapped his tongue through the seam of her labia. A skillful flick and swirl circled her clit, making her moan.

The moan became a strangled shout as an index finger found her vagina and slid deep, followed by a middle finger up her ass. She spread herself wider as he gently forked his fingers in and out, teasing her with deep thrusts while licking her wet button.

Lifting his head at last, Galen rested it on her inner thigh and met her dazed gaze. "Like that?"

"God, yes." She rolled her hips desperately. "More!"

He withdrew his fingers until they were barely in her openings, then paused. "Are you sure? Could be too much for you..."

Adiva threw her head back and ground her teeth in frustration. "Sadist!"

"And don't you ever forget it." Galen plunged his fingers deep and attacked her clit with ruthless strokes of his tongue. She writhed, on the verge of an orgasm so intense, she suspected it would blow the top off her skull.

Suddenly he snatched his fingers from her and sat up between her legs.

"Galen!" she wailed.

"Patience." He aimed his cock for her creamy core, grabbed her knees, lifted them high, and thrust, driving to her depths in one ruthless plunge.

The sensation of all that massive cock spearing her was enough to kick Adiva right over the edge. She yowled, blinded by her own ferocious climax. He growled and started lunging, each pumping penetration adding another sweet pulse to her orgasm. The long ripples went on and on as he fucked her, a rolling sexual blaze fiercer than anything she'd ever felt.

Until he abruptly drove to the balls and stiffened, coming with a passionate roar. "Adiva! I love you!" Deep within her, she could feel the hot, wet pulses.

At last he collapsed over her, sweat-damp and shaken. Still quivering with the force of her climax, she wrapped her arms and legs around him and whispered in his ear, "I love you too, Galen Vordire."

"Marry me."

She froze at his hoarse whisper as astonished joy added itself to the emotion flooding her mind. "God, yes!"

With a growl of triumph, he pulled back her head and sank his fangs into her pulse. Adiva jolted at the startling pleasure-pain, then moaned helplessly as he began to feed.

Claiming her.

She wrapped her fingers in his hair and tightened her grip on his strong body.

Claiming him.

\* \* \*



They were lying together, mutually drained and deliciously sated, when Galen suddenly broke into deep-throated laughter. Adiva opened one annoyed eye. She'd almost dropped off to sleep. "What?"

He rose on one elbow to grin down at her in satisfaction. "I told my comp to monitor news broadcasts from Adorev. It just notified me that Tang's government has fallen. Seems one of his bodyguards put a beamer blast through his skull."

Adiva grinned. "Bye-bye, bounty."

Galen pulled her into his arms. "Too bad, too."

She lifted her head, outraged. "I beg your pardon? Were you planning to collect?"

He raised a brow and drawled, "Actually, I intended to go to Adorev and kill him myself."

"You don't have time." Adiva grinned wickedly. "We've got a wedding to plan. So, are we inviting Melusinde?"

He snatched up his pillow and hit her across the head. She collapsed, giggling, and grabbed her own to defend herself.

"Wench!" Galen fended her pillow off. "You do realize I'm going to tie you up and ream that little ass?"

Adiva smiled smugly. "Darling, I'm looking forward to it."

**The End**

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## **All Wrapped Up**

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## Angela Knight

Angela Knight's career as a professional writer has taken many turns. She's been a comic book writer, a newspaper reporter, and a novelist. Her work has won several awards, including a number of South Carolina Press Association awards for her newspaper reporting.

Still, her first writing love has always been romance. In 1996, her first romance novella, "Roarke's Prisoner," was published in Red Sage's *Secrets 2* anthology.

Angela is now multi-published, as both an author and a cover artist, and her titles have held spots on the *USA Today* and the *New York Times* Best Seller's Lists. But her success would be hollow without the love and support of her friends and family.

You're welcome to visit her website at [www.angelasknights.com](http://www.angelasknights.com) or contact her through her blog at <http://angelasknights.blogspot.com>.