

CONTROL



through neon eyes

Michael Barnette

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THROUGH NEON EYES:

CONTROL

By

MICHAEL BARNETTE

CONTROL

The soft murmur of the air conditioning whispering through the vents was the only sound in the dimly lit room. Jessman opened his eyes to a view of the ceiling expecting to see a web work of wrought iron.

What he saw was the plain white ceiling of his own bedroom.

Disappointing, and completely mundane, unlike the incredible events he remembered.

Had it been a dream? Was any of it real?

Jessman moved and felt the sting of whip-raw skin down his back and thighs, across the flat plane of his abdomen.

Real then, not a dream.

His ass hurt but the pain made him smile.

Yes, very real.

As real as the warmth he felt in the bed beside him.

Jessman turned his head and was met with the vision of his lover's sleeping face. Beautiful as a simvid star, perfection, the living example of the highest surgical skill available. At least that's what Jessman believed. No human was that perfect, that attractive without enhancement. At least he'd never met anyone who could say they were born with such looks. His own face was no exception.

Cornsilk hair twisted into a tangle of braids studded with blue beads, a myriad of bright feathers and tiny silver bells. Beneath the gold fringe of the blond's eyelashes were eyes that matched the cobalt blue beads. Bright as neon. Cybereyes. Expensive ones that spoke of affluence or a wealthy patron.

Jessman resisted the urge to pull the smaller man close, to wake him up for another round of mind-melt level fucking before he had to leave. Much as he wanted another bout of such intense passion, he had to work and thinking about what they'd done last night would be enough of a distraction to his boring routine, without adding another even fresher memory. Instead Jessman just lay there, watching the blond sleep.

He looked so young and he wasn't.

He looked so innocent, and he certainly wasn't.

He looked so harmless, and that he damned well wasn't.

High price gunwhore from the Liberty City Freezone, Jessman had paid for the blond to entertain him.

Entertain.

What a laugh.

More like fuck him into complete oblivion, reinvent reality, and bring him back from the brink of madness; changed forever.

The man looking at the pretty blond wasn't the same man that had admitted him into the apartment the night before.

No, David Jessman had been an innocent. A fool. A victim.

Megalli-Loran had hired a zonewarrior to kill him.
His gunwhore, their killer, one and the same man.
Bells.

Jessman watched the sleeping gunwhore, the sleeping zonewarrior, with a mixture of awe and fear and something much deeper than either emotion. Respect, lust, the fragile blossom of love? It could have been any of those things. Might be all of them just as easily, his mind and heart a mass of confusion, desire, passion and compassion.

He would have died last night but for the man lying next to him.

The man that should have been his killer.

He didn't understand it. Twenty thousand, even in zonescript was a lot of money for a murder, even the murder of a well placed researcher. And Bells, this boy-man lying in his bed, had let him live instead of collecting on the money. The why of it defied reason and logic—at least the logic of finances as done Freezone style. Jessman had never dealt with people in the Free directly, but he'd linked enough simvids to know that a zonewarrior made a living dealing death. So did most gunwhores. Though their primary trade was sex for money, they gained extra cash if they had to kill to protect their client. They could get even better money if they killed the client for a competitor of the client's corporation, though such a reputation might limit the number of people who'd accept them as their protector after that.

Bells had turned down good money in favor of what? The sex? The idea, that having him as a living client, would net him more money in the long haul

than killing him once? It was the only thing that made sense to the corporate researcher.

You could make more money off a live client than you could a cooling corpse. It was the practical answer. It was the answer that Jessman knew had to be behind the blond's decision to let him live. But he wanted the reason to be more personal.

Stupid thought.

Gunwhores didn't get attached to their clients. Not even ones that let them do the things Bells had done to him. Teach him about the Sweet Sisters, Pleasure and Pain and the exhilarating feeling of being fucked, body to body, mind to mind, riding on a wave of pleasure together in a way not even simvid had ever approached.

Just remembering it made David hard.

But there wasn't any time for fun and games. He had to be at work in two hours. Highly paid and well respected or not, he didn't dare arrive late simply because he wanted more time with Bells. Not yet. It would be a different story if his research for NeuroTech proved fruitful. If his project had the expected results—which he fully believed could be a very real possibility—then it would give his new employer an edge on the competition. Competition that included not only his prior employer but the big dog on the block: Polycyber, the number one polymer gel technology corporation in the world.

No, he couldn't think of it as an *if* he had to believe and say, *when* it was successful. The alternative would lose him what little prestige he had, maybe even assure he lost everything. NeuroTech certainly hadn't

taken him on to be a failure.

And dwelling on such an outcome was a sure way to a nervous collapse. Unlike his predecessor on the project David wasn't going to let that kind of self-created pressure ruin his chances.

Not when success held the potential for serious rewards.

A reward like the one sleeping so peacefully at his side.

Yes, if he could make the breakthrough he'd not only advance his career and standing with NeuroTech, he'd be able to ask for certain considerations.

Like his own personal protector.

The thought brought a wistful smile to his face.

He had a plan now. Make the project work—at least to expectation, though if it was better than anticipated, he could ask for an even more lucrative reward—and then ask his bosses to buy out the blond's contract as a bonus.

It was a wonderful dream. But until he could actually show some results there was no point in continuing such speculation, and the project was far from a point where it would show any tangible progress.

A lot could happen before it did, so raising his expectations at so early a stage in the research was pointless.

Sighing he finally touched the blond's face.

The cobalt eyes opened instantly, the relaxed angel vanishing behind the emotionless chill of the gunwhore gaze.

Sleeping angel or icy killer, the man was painfully beautiful.

"Good morning," Jessman murmured, moving in to take a kiss from the smaller man. The kiss was returned, a hand moving to splay on Jessman's ribs, the touch firm with a possessive hint that made the taller man shiver. Slender fingers slid over Jessman's torso and down his hip in a questing caress that ended in a grip around the man's cock that sent a flare of heat through his lower body.

Jessman broke the kiss. "I have to leave for work in about two hours."

The bed was empty before Jessman's eyes caught up with the motion of the blond leaving his side, the slender man vanishing into the bathroom amid a carillon of sweet tones.

Jessman sighed. It was hard for him to predict anything the younger man would do. Impossible, actually. Deep down he'd hoped for a bit of fun before he had to leave, but that apparently wasn't going to happen. Not since he'd opened his mouth and spoiled the impulsive sex play Bells had begun. It was just as well really. Sex with the blond took time. Time he didn't have this morning.

Bells would leave and he'd go back to work.

Back to the dull routine of his prior life.

Life before he'd known the Sweet Sisters.

Pain and Pleasure. The exquisite point where one became the other and the lines blurred into a purity of sensation beyond anything he'd ever known. Beyond anything he knew existed.

Life before he'd known what it was to really be

alive, to really live.

The sound of running water told him that the blond was going to shower before he left.

He didn't want Bells to leave.

Not now.

Not ever.

A knot of emotional turmoil formed in the dark-haired man's chest, choking him, making it hard to breathe. Anxiety. He needed the blond. Not just for the incredible sex, but because he couldn't believe Megalli-Loran was done trying to kill him. Of course he could inform his bosses of the threat, but since he'd found out about the threat from the man hired to kill him—the man he'd spent the night with—chances were they'd ban Bells from the tower.

And that was a possibility he couldn't bear the thought of. Never seeing the blond again would be tantamount to pure torture.

No, what he wanted was for the gunwhore to stay. Not just for another night, but permanently. But what he wanted wasn't possible. Buying out a contract from a fuckbroker for someone like Bells would be very costly, and he hadn't been with NeuroTech long enough to build up that kind of money in his personal accounts.

A sound like storm caressed chimes pulled Jessman out of his reverie to look at the bathroom door.

Bells was standing there watching him from the doorway wearing nothing but a Mona Lisa smile. Jessman felt his chest constrict and his cock throbbed with the rush of lust invading his body, from a mind

that knew only too well what the blond could do with, and to him.

"Two hours is a lot of time, David," the dulcet voice murmured over the sound of pattering water. "I can think of a lot of things we can do in two hours, can't you?" Bells asked as he stalked toward the researcher. He paused at the side of the bed, reaching out to brush his fingers along Jessman's stubbled jaw, the caress light, teasing. He leaned down to kiss where his fingers had been, "Even one hour is a lot of time, don't you think?"

"Yes, it is," Jessman agreed and smiled, eyes closing at the caress, the kiss of the skilled blond. In all his adult years Jessman had never been with anyone that could fire his blood as fast as the blond could, with nothing but a look, or a light touch. The man was amazing.

"Have you thought of anything we could do?"

"Oh, I can think of a few things. Having breakfast, drinking coffee..." the blond's warm mouth ghosted along his neck, strong, slender hands moved down his body, touching, awakening his desire to a feverish pitch. A thumb and forefinger captured a nipple and squeezed. Pain's sweet spice. He groaned and gripped the sheets. He wanted to pull Bells closer, but wasn't certain if he was allowed to move or not. There were rules to this game, his experiences last night had taught him that. But he wasn't sure what he was allowed, if he could touch the other man or not.

"What about getting fucked?" the warm breath ghosted across his throat.

"Yeah, that too," David agreed, his cock twitching

at the teasing, at the memories surfacing in his mind with every touch of the blond's hands or mouth.

The fingers stopped teasing his nipple, and the blond's hand closed in his hair, the grip tight, adding a new flavor of pain to the mix, a new touch of spice. A spice Jessman found that he craved as badly as a drowning man craved air.

"Do you want me," the sultry voice asked, whispering the question into his ear right before the warm dampness of a tongue swept along the curve of flesh.

"Yes, God yes," David groaned as the belled man's hand explored the dark curls of hair at the base of his belly. So close to the center of his desire, the touch made his cock jump, and he couldn't control the gasp when Bells teeth closed on the muscle of his shoulder, just above the collarbone, while the teasing hand grasped his cock.

A shudder of passion rocked the dark-haired man as the blond played his body like a fine instrument, mouth and hands doing their part to drive Jessman toward the edge.

Gasping, moaning, David threw his arms around Bells and tried to drag the smaller man into bed, realizing almost immediately how futile the act was. Bells, smaller though he was, had enhancements that were more than Jessman could overcome. Instead of tumbling onto his lover's lap the blond broke away from him completely, leaving his side in a blurring of movement and a cessation of sensation that left Jessman bereft of what he most wanted: release from the torment of desire burning in his flesh.

He'd broken the unspoken rule not to touch, and this was the result.

Dark lust-lit eyes in a passion flushed face stared up at the slender blond who favored Jessman with a cool stare before his lips – far too sensual and kissable lips – twitched into a knowing smile. He beckoned to the older man, fingers telling him, 'follow me if you dare' giving a wordless invitation that Jessman was only too willing to accept.

Willing hell, he was eager and more than ready to do whatever the gunwhore had in mind.

Jessman leapt out of bed, almost tripping on the trailing edge of a sheet in his enthusiasm. He walked toward the illusive Bells, the blond backing away toward the bathroom. Bells reached the billowing clouds of steam, the swirling mist obscuring him partially until he looked like some sort of mythical being, an elfin prince come to life.

Jessman groaned at the picture his paid lover made as he vanished into the roiling steam. Like an ethereal dream, something not quite human.

But Bells was flesh and blood as much as any man.

One with desires that Jessman knew they'd barely tapped.

And the dark-haired researcher wanted more. So much more of those untapped desires, even if it meant slipping into the darkness lurking inside the recesses of his own mind. A darkness he was only too ready to embrace if it meant keeping the blond. If it would mean Bells would keep coming back to him he'd gladly suffer any agony, any torment.

Bells was everything he wanted and needed.

An addict, Jessman already craved the drug of the other man's touch, his kiss, his cock more than he'd ever wanted or needed anyone or anything in his entire life.

Stepping into the steam shrouded bathroom, Jessman searched for any sign of his lover. He was just reaching for the closed doors of the shower stall when he felt something strike his legs, taking him off his feet.

He was falling, the hard tiles of the floor rushing up at him.

Panic seized his heart and Jessman waited for the fatal blow, sure the gunwhore had changed his mind and decided to carry out the contract for his murder, waiting for the impact of a bullet, knife or even just the hard floor. Instead hands grasped him and he was spun face up, steel-strong arms embracing him, keeping him from a painful impact with the cold tiles of the floor. The slender blond held him as easily as Jessman himself would have cradled a child, and he was no lightweight. He kept himself in shape and had a nicely muscled physique to prove it, but there was no sign of strain, no real effort evident in the face that was so close to his.

The blond kissed him, holding him there and exploring his mouth almost savagely until they were both panting for breath, hearts racing in the rhythm of lust. Just as easily as he'd taken control of Jessman's body, Bells returned the taller to his feet and stepped back.

Jessman caught a handful of braids and drew the blond to him, pleased to hear a soft gasp that changed

to a shuddering moan. Pain or pleasure it didn't matter, he knew the gunwhore would enjoy what he'd done with the certainty of someone who'd shared mental contact with him, someone who'd taught David how to dance to the music of the Sweet Sisters. Bells had led him across the threshold where Pain became Pleasure. While Jessman only had the barest glimmer of insight into the gunwhore's real desires, his deep seated needs, it was enough to show Jessman what would incite desire in Bells. He put his free arm around the smaller man and held him tightly, very aware that if the blond wanted his freedom there wasn't a damned thing Jessman could do to prevent his escape.

He leaned down and kissed Bells, making no effort to hide his own pleased reaction when the blond responded to the forceful kiss by pressing closer to him, his erection grinding into Jessman's thigh with enough force he knew it was feeding the kiss of pain to Bells.

Bells broke the kiss but he didn't pull away. "Tell me what you want," he said, his voice raw with desire.

The tone in Bells' voice brought a sparkle to Jessman's eyes, but he carefully schooled the smile from his lips. Struggling to keep from grinning like a fool as he said, "You."

He didn't get a chance to say anything else. Strong hands, steel-cable solid arms manhandled David into the shower, pinning his body to the water slicked tiles. A cock teased his ass, the head penetrating the crack between his ass cheeks. Warm water sheeted

over his sensitive skin, burning across the welts on his back and thighs, the scattering of the whip's caresses that sprinkled his belly. They stung. The warm heat of renewed pain fanned Jessman's lust to a feverish pitch. Shuddering, he spread his legs slightly in invitation, feeling the gunwhore's hands on his hips, caressing their way upward over his waist to his lower ribs. The hands moved, one to his back, the other to his belly, the teasing caresses brushing across the welts lightly, teasing, hurting.

Jessman moaned, the heady mix of pain and the gentle touches driving him back to the place he'd gone last night. A place where there wasn't any pain, only the unrestrained ache of need, of desire so powerful nothing could equal it. Jessman was already anticipating the things the blond would do to him. The man's touch as intoxicating as the kiss of the whip had become, or perhaps it was partially the memories of what they'd done last night that fueled David's reactions.

It didn't matter. He wanted the blond. Wanted to feel a hard cock up his ass.

"No feedback loop. You don't have time for extended games. Not this morning," the gunwhore murmured, and Jessman heard an unspoken promise regarding the coming evening. A promise unspoken but implied, one that sent a thrill of anticipation through the researcher.

The gunwhore was planning to stay. Planning to await his return.

At least for today and tonight.

One more day of the blond. A day when he'd be at

work, unable to enjoy the wondrous realm of paradise that the gunwhore had shown him. Transcendent kismet wrapped up in a cobalt-eyed zoner from Liberty City's hellish streets, they'd been brought together by chance, and Jessman could only pray that they wouldn't be torn apart by the unpredictable hand of Fate.

One more night with Bells. Wrapped in the Sweet Sister's arms, feeling the kiss of a riding crop, taking him to his own private Shangri-La of ecstasy. A place only the blond could take him, had ever taken him in fact. A night when he could submit to everything the man demanded, and in doing so achieve the perfect bliss he'd known just once in his entire life.

Bliss that was right before him even now.

Jessman felt a hard knot in his chest. Anticipation. Lust. The fragile hope that the blond intended to stay, not just for one more day, another mind-altering night, but permanently. But no, that was too much to hope for. Too much to expect of someone he'd paid for the pleasure he'd been shown.

Breath even warmer than the water cascading over their bodies slid across Jessman's skin. A tongue lapped along his spine, touching the stripes of heated skin as it slid downward toward his ass.

Teeth grazed one firm buttock and David cried out when the teeth bit, bearing down harder, hard enough to mark him and he didn't care. No one else would know. Not about that or the marks of the whip that crisscrossed his skin, burning under the lash of the warm water.

"Talk to me, Jessman. What do you want?" Bells

asked.

"Fuck me! Please fuck me!" He was begging shamelessly, his inhibitions where this man was concerned had been stripped away forever by the sexual acts done to him and with him the night before.

The tongue slid lower, riding along the crack of his ass. He spread his legs even farther apart, showing what he wanted.

But it wasn't what he got.

Water muted, the chimes rang as the blond moved, fast as lightning, too fast for the researcher to react until it was too late.

Hands gripped his thighs and a mouth closed on his scrotum, taking his balls into the lust-heated warmth, a tongue stroking them. Jessman felt his cock jump eagerly, the rigid flesh aching for the blond's touch, precum washed away by the spray of water.

"God..." he moaned, "you're as much a bastard as you were last night."

"Ummhmmm..." the vibration through his ball sack brought a sharp cry from Jessman, the pleasure almost more than he could bear, his cock twitching, the researcher on the verge of loosing his load.

Fingers clamped down on a spot just behind his balls and Jessman felt the urgency of his approaching orgasm fade slightly. Maybe it was the tiny pain in such an intimate area, or perhaps it was something physiological, he didn't know, didn't really care, beyond being frustrated that he hadn't cum. But he was equally grateful that he'd be given more pleasure at the gunwhore's hands. He did wonder how the

blond knew about something like that. Was there nothing the blond didn't know regarding sex? Nothing he couldn't do? On consideration Jessman decided that it was probably just part of what a gunwhore—male or female—needed to know to be as highly sought after as Bells.

Bells resumed his assault on Jessman's balls, his tongue thrusting gently and David had to brace himself with the wall or risk falling, the pleasure was so intense. Nothing, certainly not vid, could compare with the very addictive abilities of the slender man.

There wasn't any warning, just the abrupt sting of a hand on his hip, the pain flaring outward from the slap, to send a bolt of pure electric lust right to his dick.

A slap on the opposite hip had him gasping and it took him two breaths before he even realized that the mouth that had been savaging his balls was now wrapped around his cock, sucking mercilessly.

The groan of pleasure Jessman gave at the newest assault brought a satisfied smile to Bells' lips. He was enjoying himself, pleased with the control he had over the older man. No matter what he demanded of Jessman, the researcher was only too willing to accept it. Bells had never experienced a lover—paid or otherwise—that would submit to whatever he wanted to do as readily as David had, and he found himself wondering what it would be like to have this man, not just for another night, but always.

Bells wanted more of David. He wanted to stay

here in the haven he'd found, safe from the dangers of the streets, but he had obligations out in the LCFree, and he couldn't totally shirk those. Not when people relied on him for the protection his presence on their square of the Zone afforded.

And there was his fuckbroker, Katarina to consider. She'd try and charge Jessman for the extra time he was spending in corpland. Normally he might have just walked away from Katarina, ignored her demands that he work as agreed. But his reputation was the most valuable thing he had—other than certain obvious skills—and without his rep, he was worth nothing on the streets.

The temptation was real, but so was the understanding that corp and zone didn't mix long term.

He couldn't stay. Much as he felt the allure of simply remaining, living easy in the luxury of Jessman's bed, he couldn't walk away from the people who needed him. Loreli, one time highend fucktoy of a corporate master, now owner of the *Fractured Mirror* and her daughter Jayzee. Jayzee the preteen wannabe gunbitch who thought of him as her 'daddy' and hated that he was a gunwhore. And there were others, good friends, nodding acquaintances, people who derived safety simply from living in his shadow.

No, there was no staying here. Not when they needed him so desperately at the *Mirror*. It was the threat of his guns, his skill as a zonewarrior that kept the gangers out, kept the whores of the *Mirror* safe from the hands of Death, the touch of the Dark Lady.

But he could come back to Jessman any time he felt like getting away from the Zone and his responsibilities. He'd have a haven of sorts, if Jessman was willing to permit it.

Hard cock in his mouth, a hand in his braids, the grip hard, pulling, a display of need, the researcher's moans, unrestrained cries... No, he didn't think Jessman would object to a little free fun and games with him and the Sweet Sisters in exchange for a few nights when he didn't have to live on the edge danger.

"Please... oh, God, Bells please fuck me... Please..."

The blond's smile became a grin, his own cock twitching at the sound of the man begging for what he really wanted.

No, Jessman probably wouldn't mind it in the least if he came back a couple of times a week. An even trade, a contract deal. He'd get really good food, a soft bed and a break from his own life amid the Zone, in exchange for sex.

Sex the blond was actually enjoying, rather than making a show of it for the benefit of a client. For him sex was usually hollow and meaningless. Unfulfilling. Sure it was substantially less dangerous on the whole than his alternate career as a zonewarrior, carrying out killjobs, but it was emotionally numbing to be little more than a living sexual fantasy. And, as a few gunwhores had discovered, a client's fantasies could be as deadly as a flying lead dance on the streets of the Free. Sometimes clients turned out to be that rare breed of creature found in the corporate world, a

brilliant mind connected to the warped need to kill.

And no one in corpland gave a rat's ass if one of those brilliant minds murdered a string of paid whores from the Zone.

But this was very different, a new sector in the realm of possibility, a glint of hope in the dismal fog of reality, as Bells lived it every single day.

The feel of Jessman's cock in his mouth, the moans of pleasure, the way the man accepted everything he wanted to do, everything he did... It was too good to resist, to pass up.

And Bells wanted so much more of what Jessman had to give. The only question was: How much was Jessman willing to provide?

Jessman knew he was going to cum and there wasn't going to be anything to prevent it this time. It felt so good, that warm mouth on his prick, the way the slick tongue swept across the head, the tip darting into the slit, the mouth engulfing him to the root again, swallowing him down, drowning him in a sea of sensation. Pleasure so bright that the nails biting into his welted thighs became sparkling motes amid the brilliance filling his mind.

Yes, he was going to cum. At least that's what Jessman thought—as much as he was still capable of thought—until the hard edge of the blond's teeth grazed the head of his cock. It hurt enough to bring tears to his eyes, but the pain was fleeting, the pleasure returning immediately. Tender kiss of the Sisters, sweet agony. But at least he was no longer on

the brink of losing control and spilling his cum into the blond's mouth.

Just as quickly as it had started, the hot grip of the mouth on his cock was gone. He felt bereft, but only for an instant, the pressure of a cock at his anus sending a jolt of anticipation through him. The touch was teasing, spiking his heart rate upward, bringing a pleading note to his voice as he pushed himself backward seeking the contact he wanted. Bells' cock in his ass, the pure pleasure of that hard rod stroking him deep inside. That hard flesh was denied him, the zoner evading his efforts to get what he wanted.

"Still want this?" the blond queried in the maddeningly calm, velvet soft tone. Just the sound of the gunwhore's voice was like a caress along Jessman's overheated flesh, the power of the mind just as potent a sexual tool as any other part of the blond.

"Yes..." Jessman hissed, making another effort to impale himself on the steel and satin contrasts of the prick that was tormenting him.

An object just as hard as a cock invaded him gently and he felt something cooler than his own lust-hot flesh fill the interior of his ass. The contrast shocked a gasp out of him, and a shiver passed through his body, goose bumps raising on his skin. Hot outside, cold inside, and a hand cracking on his hip at the same time, blended into a new mind bending experience for the researcher.

No, simvid certainly couldn't compare to this.

He didn't think anything could compare to the blond.

Bells.

He wondered what the man's name was, since the one he'd given Jessman had to be a street name. A hard cock slipping inside him dispelled the thought, and the hands caressing his water slick skin drove away any considerations beyond the sensations that overrode all attempts at thought. The hands deftly found the heated stripes on his back reawakening them to screaming life with something hard and faintly sharp. It took the overwhelmed man a moment to realize what he was feeling. Bells' fingernails unerringly finding the center of the welts teasing the damaged skin back to painful life from the dulled state the hot water had left them in.

Vid. Sim. And being dominated in reality was so much better than doing the dominating in a simvid.

Heart hammering in his chest, David closed his eyes and waited for whatever Bells had in store for him this time.

The cock inside him almost slipped completely free, a firm hand pressing him even harder to the wall so that his own cock made contact with the water heated tiles. He pushed with both hands, trying to get some distance between himself and the hard surface, discovering that he couldn't budge himself, he was pinned. One hand was all it took for the smaller man to do it. The realization of exactly how powerful the deceptively slender man was sent a new thrill through the researcher. Lust and fear merging, as he finally comprehended exactly how dangerous his lover might truly be, along with the knowledge that, dangerous or not, what the blond chose to do with

him was fuck, not kill.

He went still with anticipation, waiting for the gunwhore's next move.

Jessman's hips were yanked backward, hard, the cock ramming into him like lightning cracking across his nervous system, his vision gone foggy, groin filling with white heat. A startled cry echoed off the tiles, one he knew had been wrenched from his own throat.

"I think you liked that," Bells voice purred in his ear, and he only then realized there was a hand gripping his dark hair, twisting his head around to the point of discomfort, creating a cramping pain between his shoulders that distracted him from the prick resting deep in his body.

Pleasure and pain. The gunwhore blended them with the precision of a chef using spices and like spice, the sensations seasoned every act between the pair of men.

Jessman couldn't imagine having sex without that blend ever again.

Worse, he couldn't imagine having sex with anyone but Bells.

"Please... let me cum," Jessman pleaded. From the corner of his eye he could see the blond's face, see the cool intensity of his cobalt stare. He closed his eyes, found he was unable to lower his head because of the grip in his hair. The urge was there though, strong, demanding he surrender to the other man, make some show of submitting to his will. Jessman had never shown such deference to any of his prior lovers. Nor had he ever taken the role of submissive in the

simvids he'd linked with. But with this man, zonewarrior and gunwhore, there was no other role he could take.

Despite the fact he was quite a bit shorter than Jessman, and appeared far younger, Bells wasn't someone he could think of as being anything other than what he was now--in control.

Lips touched a welt on his back, a tongue tip glided across the torn skin, gentle, soothing.

"Having fun?" the shivery voice asked.

He tried to nod, couldn't because of the hand in his hair. "Yes," he choked out, struggling to swallow, opening his mouth to catch a few more drops of the water splashing off the wall.

"So am I," Bells murmured, the pressure of his body against Jessman holding him tightly to the wall, the cock nudging in a fraction deeper and wrenching another groan of frustrated need from the dark-haired man.

In and out, fast and hard. But again it was a single stroke meant to enflame, not relieve the need that was making him feel as if his lower body were wreathed in fire.

So good. So wonderfully, unbelievably good. Every touch, each kiss, every caress he was granted by the blond felt like nothing anyone had ever done to him before.

Yes, he was addicted. No question about it, no turning back. No desire to escape.

And at this point, pride was of no use to him. What he wanted was the blond's cock slipping in and out, making him burn until the fire consumed him totally.

"Please," Jessman groaned, "Please fuck me. I want to cum."

"Do you?" The voice was coldly emotionless despite the fact Bells had his cock up Jessman's very willing ass. The researcher opened his own eyes, twisting his body just enough to be able to see the cool expression on the gunwhore's face. There was no visible sign that Jessman could see that the blond even felt anything. Cock-deep in another man and he was as calm appearing as if he were doing nothing more exciting than chatting with a colleague.

For a moment Jessman found himself wondering if Bells *was* human. He was too cool, too distant, as if he didn't feel a thing.

Maybe he didn't.

That thought chilled Jessman's blood and he felt his cock flag at the thought that the other man didn't really want him, was just using him as a means to an end. Money, the great motivator. But he also remembered he was still breathing because the man had let him live when he could just as easily have killed him.

Living client, or corpse. Which would offer a more lucrative result?

And he called himself seven kinds of fool because wasn't he the one that had paid for Bells to be there? Wasn't he the one that had started this whole thing?

Yes. He'd hired the man to be his sexual partner for a night.

Only in his own mind, his own thoughts and deepest desires was there more than a client/gunwhore relationship and it was stupid to

think there could be anything beyond that between them. Stupid and childish to even pretend that anything permanent could come of this.

It was as if Bells somehow sensed Jessman's change of mood. Perhaps it was another talent developed for his job, just another part of being a highend gunwhore. Whatever the reason, fast as the flick of a light switch, the blond's expression changed. Gone was the cold zonewarrior exterior, the icy regard replaced in an eye blink. Compassion and desire coming to the fore, a pale gold eyebrow raising in silent inquiry, the hand in his hair relinquish its grip, fingers stroking down the nape of his neck to follow the line of his spine. Then both hands were moving over Jessman's body, the caresses gentle, soothing, a mouth pressing a tentative kiss to his lips.

The illusion of a lover.

Nothing more.

And so much less than his empty heart needed.

"Do you still want me?" Bells questioned.

Jessman was quiet for a moment, forcing himself not to give the answer he wanted to give, keeping the words, *I want you forever*, behind his tightly closed lips.

"Yes," he finally managed to reply.

The blond's gaze and face were questioning, the gunwhore very obviously wondering what had happened, what he'd done to destroy his client's mood.

But all he'd really done was be who he was.

It wasn't Bells' fault that Jessman was falling in love, that he was a complete fool, and he found

himself wondering if the blond had that effect on all his clients. He even found himself wondering if he'd been the only client to be that much of an idiot. The light touches on his body, the tenderness of those caresses made him doubt it. The man was too good, had to be streetwise enough to use his client's emotions in his favor.

Like now. He'd read the change in Jessman's own mood somehow.

And it occurred to him that Bells had top of the line cybernetic enhancements that probably included more than just the easily viewable things like his eyes, or his strength and speed. His hearing was probably altered, so he'd be able to hear David's heartbeat, a subtle change in his breathing; might even be able to smell fear in his sweat, though the water and steam would probably be enough to obliterate that ability for the time being.

The pressure holding him to the wall eased, the cock in his ass sliding free as he was gently turned around to face the blond. Arms encircled his neck, fingers lacing through his hair before lips, firm, warm, sweet, kissed him.

David closed his eyes, losing himself in what the other man was doing, putting aside his own irrational thoughts, knowing that they were just a byproduct of too many warring emotions.

Jessman reached down and gripped his lover's slick cock, stroking it, feeling the reaction as it twitched in his hand, throbbing with the same kind of desire he felt.

He let it go and turned around to face the wall,

bracing both hands on the tiles, legs spreading, presenting his ass.

"You're sure you still want this?" Bells questioned as he slid his cock slowly into Jessman, his lips brushing David's shoulder he gave a thrust inward, the movement slow, tentative.

"Yes," was Jessman's whispered reply, but he wouldn't turn his head or make any attempt to meet the man's gaze. He didn't want to see the compassionate, almost loving expression for the lie it had to be. Didn't want to know that every emotion Bells showed to him was nothing more than a face put on for the benefit of his client.

He wanted the blond, and not just as a client.

He wanted him as a lover with all the emotion and commitment that the word implied.

Permanently and to the point it was fast gaining the intensity of an obsession, he wanted to keep the slender gunwhore.

David remembered the direct link they'd shared last night. Being linked mind and body to the blond. No secrets. Only passion, hot as the surface of a sun, ready to burn him to ash.

And he had burned, but not to ash. No he'd gone to the heart of the sun, been reshaped in the crucible of the Sweet Sisters and come out changed but whole.

That had been real.

This was flesh and blood real, too. The blond's hands touching him, the lips pressing tenderly to his welted skin, just as real as last night's memories.

But it wasn't permanent. The blond wasn't going to be part of his life except in the relationship they

already had: gunwhore and client. Paying customer with a willing ass for a professional cock to fuck.

He swallowed the hard knot in his throat, closed his eyes, made a wish he knew could never come true. Bells. His. Permanently. Then Jessman put aside the pleasant delusion that he could actually have what he most desired and settled for what he had at the moment.

"Fuck me, Bells," he urged, going past the thoughts that had dampened his desire, his cock going stiff, the head bumping the warmed tile as he shifted his hips forward, then back to encourage Bells to do what he wanted.

"You're sure?" the blond asked, pressing a feather light kiss to David's shoulder.

And this time Jessman did look at the smaller man, twisting around to see the concern plainly visible on the gunwhore's face.

Maybe it was a lie, that look. Maybe there was a grain of truth in it.

"I'm sure."

The cock inside him slid out, drove in with the force of a jackhammer, the movement slamming Jessman's shoulder into the tile wall, his vision gone instantly to white-haze. Electric sparks danced through his lower body and up his spine where they exploded in his brain as sharp and brilliant as they'd been when they were linked.

He didn't see the smile of satisfaction that crossed Bells face at the sharp cry that left him. Didn't hear the blond's sigh of pleasure.

It was as though they'd never stopped, Jessman's

body rocketing back to full arousal in the span of several deliciously deep, sure thrusts. He groaned, pressed against the wall, warm water cascading over him, a hard cock inside him.

Nothing mattered but the moment. The future, whatever it would hold, could take care of itself.

If no other option presented itself he could save money, pay for another night of this in a few weeks. He could easily afford it if he refrained from spending money on anything else.

And considering how this made him feel, what it gave him, nothing else mattered. Not fine gourmet meals, not wine or a night of fun on the lower levels, the nightclubs, dance clubs, bars and recreation all paled in comparison.

Two weeks, and he could have this again.

"Fuck me," Jessman demanded, all reservation, all hesitation gone.

"Is that what you want?" the blond asked, his fingers once more locked tightly in Jessman's hair, his thrusts gone slow, languid.

"Yes. Please fuck me." Jessman almost didn't recognize his own voice, the timbre full of pleading, begging the gunwhore for pleasure. It brought a flush of embarrassment to his face, but even that didn't silence him. He'd long since put aside any pretenses with this man and there was no pretending he hadn't given himself fully to the Sisters and to Bells. "Please, Bells, fuck me."

"Hmm.... I don't know if I should," the blond's tone was teasing. "You do beg nicely, but not with full conviction."

Jessman groaned in frustration and rocked backward, trying to encourage his paid lover to give him what he needed. He braced a hand firmly on the wall and took advantage of the position the blond's grip in his hair had forced him into by reaching behind him to caress the smaller man, touching him anywhere and everywhere he could reach. He was desperate with pent up desire, the sound coming from him throaty, but still so close to a whine. It was a sound he remembered from vid, a submissive's begging whimper. He wasn't sure how he would face his colleagues at work later in the day without remembering this moment, and the control the blond had over him.

Submissive.

Dominant.

The Sweet Sisters leading him down yet another path he'd only dabbled with in simvid, and this wasn't a sim, wasn't a programmed semi-dream piped in across his thoughtlink.

It was real world experience.

He came to the abrupt understanding of what it was that the blond wanted from him. Could he go that far? Did he dare surrender that much control?

"Please, Master," he choked out. But he wasn't choking on pride, he was having trouble speaking from the intense emotions, the knowledge he'd just given Bells his total surrender.

"I suppose I can oblige you, since you've paid for it."

Jessman felt the cock inside him move inward a fraction, before it withdrew slowly, torturously from

his needy ass. He closed his eyes, a shudder passing through his entire body.

"Jessman, look at me."

The man's dark eyes opened obediently, his head turned so that he felt twinges of pain from his neck. He could see that the Mona Lisa smile was back, tugging almost imperceptively at the blond's mouth. The smile gave away little, but there was something in the gunwhore's expression that told Jessman that Bells was pleased with what they were doing, pleased with Jessman's use of the word he'd wanted to hear. Like last night, the blond seemed to be enjoying himself, not simply fucking as part of his job.

Direct link didn't lie and Jessman had to believe what he was seeing now.

"Fuck me, Master."

"Much better," Bells said, his hips surging forward, bumping Jessman's shoulder into the wall.

Feeling a little more bold, Jessman reached back and gripped the end of some of the blond's braids. This time he pulled hard, pleased when he heard a sharp gasp from Bells and felt the cock inside him buck with the sudden movement of the blond's slim hips.

"Now you're being wicked," the gunwhore stated. His voice had become a low growl that the researcher recognized as being a sign the gunwhore *was* feeling the pleasure they were sharing.

"I'm a quick learner," Jessman gasped out, tugging the braids even harder, watching Bells, seeing the cobalt eyes narrow, hearing the soft gasp that slipped from those oh so sexy lips. His back and shoulders

wouldn't take the strain anymore and Jessman turned to face the wall, but his hand didn't relinquish its grip on the blond's long braids.

"So I see," Bells remarked as he drove his cock forward, making Jessman groan and tug sharply on the sodden braids in his fist which in turn brought another appreciative moan from the blond.

"You're asking for it in a major way," Bells warned, his voice tight with passion as he began to really fuck Jessman in earnest, an act which elicited a pleased moan from the taller man.

"You... caught on to my plan...." Jessman panted out, grinning at the gunwhore.

"Sounds like you want to be punished," Bells commented, bringing his hand down on the dark-haired man's hip in a stinging slap made more acute by the water coating his skin.

Jessman's whole body jumped, a sharp cry wrenched from him at the bite of pain, the white glow that suffused him.

Bells gripped Jessman's hip with his free hand to steady himself as he increased his pace even more, hammering his cock into the man, gaze focused on the rippling muscles of the back he was facing. Jessman was quickly becoming more than just another job, a quick way to make money. He hadn't expected the man's acceptance of what he'd demanded last night, nor had he expected Jessman to enjoy what he'd done.

No, he'd expected to take Jessman into the realm of

the Sweet Sisters on a direct link, mind to mind, and then kill him with an overload of sensation on the feedback loop he'd created.

Bells had done the first, and on discovering that the man was willing to take, that he'd been able to enjoy the kiss of the Sweet Sisters to the same degree he himself did – well he'd let Jessman live.

He felt no regret in his decision. Something like this was too good to waste. A client that liked being on the receiving side of the Sisters was worth more to him alive than dead. At least that's what Bells kept telling himself, trying to deny any sort of emotional attachment to a man that had let him do what he wanted, even begged for it in the end the way Jessman had done. The way he was doing now, so submissive and accepting. No, not just accepting, he was genuinely enjoying what they were doing. Even better, Jessman wanted more of it.

He's just a client with a kink. Nothing more.

No, his desire to remain with David wasn't because he cared about the man. That would mean he might lose his professional distance which was not something he could afford to do. Not ever.

Being able to focus so clearly on a task, be it fucking, killing, or whatever job he was doing at any given moment was part of the reason he was so good at the things he did. Zonewarrior and gunwhore. His determination and mental control set him apart from the majority of people in or out of the Liberty City Freezone.

And if he lost that...

To push the disturbing thoughts aside Bells

blanked out his mind and focused solely on what he was doing to the willing ass that gripped his cock so willingly.

Jessman was moaning out encouragement, urging him to greater speed, a harder pace. The idea suited him and he let go of Jessman's hair, gripping both the man's hips, his cock pistoning into the hot flesh, encasing it. He could tell the man wouldn't need much to send him over the edge. A grip on his aching cock, a few fast strokes in time with his thrusting would finish the man off.

But he wasn't ready. Not quite.

He reached up and took the hand that was tangled in his braids, urging Jessman on. He wanted the bite of pain to speed him on his way toward orgasm.

Taking the clue he was given, Jessman yanked on the gunwhore's braids, making the bells at the ends give a muted chime, their music strangled by the water inside them.

The hand on Jessman's wrist dropped away and Bells pressed himself tightly to Jessman's back, reaching around to grip the man's straining cock. He couldn't keep from smiling when he heard the choked moan David gave as his hand closed around the rigid flesh. He placed a kiss on the man's shoulder as he started to pump the researcher's cock, a whimper, a begging plea for release coming from David.

"Master, please let me cum."

"Have you been good?" he asked as he slid his tongue along Jessman's back, tasting water, the faint tang of a man's skin.

"Yesssss..." the answer was hissed out between

clenched teeth, the man's eyes closed, face flushed from more than the heat of the shower.

It would be so easy to just surrender to the little voice in his head that kept whispering, *Jessman can give you a safe haven. He can give you so much more. This is who you want. This is the only person you need.* But he'd never been someone that took the easy road through life and there were people in the Free who needed him as much as he was starting to realize he needed David.

But wants and needs had to take a back seat to the reality of obligations.

Rocking hard, the taller man's body bumping into the wall with the power of the blond's thrusting, Jessman held tightly to the braids in his fist, pulling, giving Bells what he needed. They were racing toward the goal now, the semi-madness of orgasm approaching, Jessman's gaze unfocused when he managed to open his eyes at all. With them closed he could see the white flickers, flashes of light that shot through him with every thrust of the stiff dick inside him.

A slap sent a red flare across the glow of the event horizon of impending orgasm. So close. So very close.

Jessman held tightly to the braids, pulling, feeling soggy feathers wrapping around his fingers, the bite of the metal bells into his skin adding to the sensations that were saturating his mind. His breath was ragged, when he could draw in a breath, his lungs locking each inhalation inside for a few heartbeats before it rushed out, another gasping

breath filling him.

Fingers dug painfully into his flanks and he moaned, Sister Pain adding her voice to that of Sister Pleasure, forming a mind-melting blaze across his mind. Each stroke of Bells' cock across his prostate added to the tension in his balls.

Almost completely lost in the pleasure, Jessman barely had enough conscious volition to keep his grip on the braids in his hand or to stay on his feet until another stinging slap on his left thigh snapped across the pleasure, adding its own glow while it sharpened his awareness of the man who was giving him such mind-numbing fuck.

He'd barely had time to register the fact that the cock had slid out of him before he discovered he was on the floor of the shower, the spray pattering his face, his long legs in the air, pelvis tilted up, the sweet intrusion of the rock hard cock where it belonged, plunging deep inside him.

He could open his eyes now, blink away the water and watch the face of the gunwhore, his *lover* as he thrust into him.

He reached up, caressed the blond's chest, his face, shoulders, anywhere he could manage to reach without compromising the flesh linking them in passion.

"You were getting too close again," Bells explained huskily. "So I decided a change of position was in order."

Jessman nodded. It was true. He was still very close, ready to fall over the edge into the shatter-mind pleasure of climax.

But what about him? Is he even getting close? he wondered. The blond had a lot of stamina, probably another part of his job as a gunwhore that ability to withstand more than a couple of minutes of intense fucking.

But the researcher didn't have that stamina.

"Please... Master..." he groaned as he took hold of the man's braids.

"Shhhh...." Bells soothed as he picked up the pace, saw Jessman's awareness slipping away, dropping into the fuck haze of impending release. He watched the sex-blush rise on David's face, watched the other man's gaze go distant and unfocused as the pleasure spiked sharply toward orgasm.

It was exhilarating and frightening at the same time, having so much control, realizing he could easily become involved, attached.

Fall in love...

Dangerous to both of them. He was a gunwhore, a zonewarrior living in the Liberty City Freezone. Jessman lived in corpland, high in the tower of NeuroTech where he lived in the illusion of safety. Illusion. If his enemies in the L. C. found out he was attached, involved with a certain researcher at NeuroTech.... Jessman would be in danger, corpland or not, NeuroTech security or not.

He'd breeched their systems all too easily. So could other zonewarriors if they had the help of a netrider, someone like his sometime partner Sierra.

But it was a risk Bells was becoming more and

more willing to take.

The real question was, would Jessman agree to take the same risk, knowing that Bells wouldn't always be around to protect him?

He was torn. Jayzee and her mother needed him too and he couldn't walk away from them. Bells also knew with certainty that he could walk away from what he had right now.

He had a commitment to Loreli, loved Jayzee as if she were his flesh and blood child.

But there was something between him and David, something that went beyond mere lust, the desire for a good fuck, a client and a gunwhore.

Something he hadn't felt for anyone in a very long time.

The man's hand in Bells' braids pulled harder, bringing his thoughts back to what he was doing, giving him an out so that he didn't have to examine his own feelings for the dark-haired man too closely. The tight ass around his cock, the tinge of pain from his braids, the fact that Jessman was so willing, that was what mattered at the moment. The rightness of where he was, what he was doing, what he was feeling--he could consider those things later when he was alone.

Or--more likely--he could simply choose to shove it all into a mental box as he'd done with the memories of his past. Those few he could remember. A box in his mind, wrapped with the unbreakable chains of his will. One that he just wouldn't open. Not ever.

He leaned in, kissed the panting lips, felt the hand in his braids pull harder, the demand clear.

"Have I told you how beautiful you are?" Bells asked, his voice like living velvet to caress the older man's awareness. Jessman shuddered, groaned a wordless reply.

"Cum for me, David," he murmured, slapping the man's hip as he felt the long legs over his shoulders tense.

The researcher drew in a gasping breath, "Not yet.." he choked out as he gripped the blond's forearms in his left hand, the right hand still tangled in some of the braids. He pulled, forcing Bells head down until their lips were pressed as tightly together as their bodies, their tongues engaged as feverishly.

Jessman groaned, sucked in a breath, the cock inside him a glory of pleasure he wished could last forever. And he was struggling almost mindlessly to hold on longer. To give Bells what the gunwhore needed, too. Just a little longer. A bit more pain.

He bit the blond's lip and heard a soft gasp, felt a harder thrust, a response to the pain that was answered by a hand making contact with his hip.

He cried out at the severity of the smack. It had hurt this time with almost the same depth of pain as the whip had delivered last night.

"Don't bite me," Bells snarled out the order, then kissed him.

He set his teeth on Bells' lip and bit a second time. Not hard enough to draw blood, just hard enough to elicit the punishment he desired.

And he got it, a hand cracking down on his hip,

reigniting the blaze of the old welts, adding the fire of freshly abused skin to the melody of pleasure already singing along his nerves.

A harsh cry was torn from Jessman as the white-light blaze of orgasm seared through him, his cum spattering his belly to be instantly washed away by the spray of the shower. He was dimly aware of another cry, a voice gone from honeyed tones to a harsh passion-darkened growl. The flesh inside him jerked hard and the fingers on his thighs clamped with bruising force. The pain sent another flash of fire through him and he shuddered, body shaking as he fell through the pleasure that filled him, dropping into a shimmering place that quickly faded into fog.

Jessman didn't even feel it when the blond came inside him, lost to the inferno that raged through his own body.

His hair still damp from the shower, hands shaking, Jessman sipped the nutritional drink which was the only breakfast he had time for, as the blond, still streaming water from his soaked braids followed him toward the door. He was smiling, grinning really, as he got ready to leave for work.

"Will you be here when I get back tonight?" Jessman asked, wanting confirmation of the blond's earlier almost-promise.

Slim fingers straightened his tie, the gunwhore so close Jessman could feel the heat of his body.

Bells looked up from what he was doing, cobalt gaze inscrutable. "That depends."

"On?"

"Do you really want me to be here?"

"Yes. Hell yes," Jessman replied, kissing the warm mouth, hands stroking down the blond's spine, wet braids draping over his hands. He drew the smaller man into an embrace, heedless of what the water would do to the suit he wore, his cock going hard as their bodies made contact. He felt Bells shiver, felt the answering hardness of the blond's prick and smiled into the kiss.

Maybe Bells didn't have *all* the control.

When the kiss ended, Jessman waited for the gunwhore's reply.

"I'll be here, if that's what you want."

"I'll phone your agent and tell her you're going to be here."

"No. Don't. She'll charge you for my time."

Jessman stared at Bells. "Well I thought you'd want to be paid for your time with me. I mean, you've let me live, the least I can do is try and make up some of the money you lost."

Bells shrugged, "Don't worry about it." Firmly muscled arms encircled Jessman's neck as the blond pulled the taller man's head down for another kiss which Jessman resisted long enough to ask, "You need some kind of compensation, don't you?"

"What makes you think I'm not getting compensation?" Bells murmured against the man's lips.

"Sex with me? That's hardly compensation," Jessman objected.

The blond's lips moved over his gently, "Yeah.

And a warm bed to sleep in, liquor and food, no one shooting at me. Nice arrangement."

"Well since you put it like that," Jessman said as they traded tender kisses like lovers, rather than two men with a bargained arrangement.

"Hmmm... I thought you'd see it my way once it was explained."

"Won't your broker get angry?"

"Do I care?"

Jessman chuckled, "No, I don't think you do."

"Clever man." Bells tongue darted into Jessman's mouth to dance over teeth, sparring with the taller man's tongue until he broke the kiss, "You taste like chocolate," Bells said and pulled out of Jessman's embrace. "Now go to work. I'll be here waiting for you when you get back."

"Promise?"

"Promise."

The dark-haired man gave the blond one final, lingering kiss before he left the apartment, hurrying for the elevator. A broad smile curved Jessman's mouth, the nutritional drink in his hand all but forgotten, briefcase left behind on the table by the door. His ass burned, his anus stretched, sore, and he knew nothing was going to wipe the silly smile off his face. Not today. Not after last night and this morning.

Not when he knew Bells was waiting for him to come home.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Barnette once lived in the wilds of Miami, but moved to a quiet town in Northeast Georgia where he'd be able to concentrate on his writing rather than the sound of gunfire which he prefers to leave in his fiction.