



Freighter Flights

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By Drew Zachary

Will headed down to the kaffe on the lower level of the spaceport, taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Habit of avoiding closed in spaces, he supposed, ingrained enough he hardly even thought about it except to wonder when mistrust had become second nature.

He had his time on the Arillia to thank for that. As pilot on the profiteering ship, he knew they weren't doing anything actually illegal, but they sort of skirted the edges of legality and that meant running into people who did far more than skirt. You lived longer if you didn't trust.

So he took the stairs.

Everything was gunmetal grey, signs painted in dayglow orange with black print. It was functional and plain, and lent an air of desperation to the place. Not every space port was like this, but the further away from civilization you were, the more functional and austere the places got. The more dangerous they got, too. Nice folks didn't live out here. And they certainly didn't live in the spaceports.

There was a low murmur of voices in the kaffe, people hanging out, waiting for their next ride, crew taking a break for something to eat in between unloading and loading or repairs.

Will went over to the bar in the corner. The bartender was short and thick, all muscle beneath his leather pants and tight t-shirt. His nose was pierced and there was a fierce tattoo on his neck, coming up onto his face. Will didn't have any tattoos himself; he'd never found anything worth permanently marking himself with. The scar on his left hip was more than enough, thank you very much.

He nodded at Mr. Noserling and passed a tencred chip over to the guy. "I'm looking for a guts doctor." The bartender acted as a bulletin board. The creds were just the standard fee for doing his thing. It was the same everywhere.

"Anyone in particular, or are you shopping?" the man asked, his voice so rough and accented it took Will a moment to work out what he'd said.

"Shopping. I need someone who can keep my wings flapping. Nothing fancy."

Mr. Noserling nodded. "Got a few. They're in the back, drinking carro and fighting about power coils. You want Tabbinsla...Tabboslan...you want Tab. Tall guy with weird eyes." The tencred chip vanished and the man turned away.

Will headed over to the back. The lights were lower there, the sound different -- less the dull roar of a hundred different conversations and more the voices of two or three in an argument. It looked good-natured enough though, so Will took a chance and broke in. "I'm looking for Tab."

A man held up his hand, palm out. "But if you do that on a Switchback, it's taking power from the other systems. Like life support, you dumb fuck. There's a flaw in the design; do it and you die." The hand went down and the man looked up, one green eye catching the light. The other was a deep brown. "I'm Tab. Who're you?"

Will crossed his arms and leaned casually against the table, his reinforced leather creaking. "Will Pilot. Off the Arillia. My girl needs a guts doctor. I hear you're the man to talk to."

He got a long look. "Heard the Arillia got stuck in the middle of a fire fight, trying to sneak in under the Kilburn's wake and got tagged. She in rough shape?"

"She's not pretty, but she's a hard-plated bitch. And she's still running, but only an idiot flies without a doc, just in case."

"I'll assume that means you're not an idiot about the boats then." Tab stood up and pointed to another table. "Can talk, anyway." He looked down at the two men he'd been arguing with and said, "Stay off Switchbacks until you know what you're doing. Stick to cargo."

One of the men snorted, the other just glared, but Tab waved it off and moved to the empty table.

"So, tell me about your lady. If she's running on salvaged parts I'm not interested. Too much work, too little pay off."

"Nope, she's a converted marine boat. Hard as nails and maneuverable. And you can still get the parts that fit right." He was proud of the Arillia. He wasn't captain, but he'd been with Bane the longest of all the crew and he was her pilot. A man got close to his bird, came to care for her when he flew her day in and day out. "And I nearly made that wake run. In anyone else's hands, she'd have been blown to smithereens."

"Heard that, too," Tab allowed. He leaned back in his chair and looked Will over, his eyes strange and hard to read. "Got a contract or are you just setting out to surf, see what turns up? Steady work is nice. Mind, I'm not unreasonable, know how it is out there -- just want to know what things look like. I don't fancy starving."

"Captain will give you a three month contract at the standard rate. You work out and want to stay, you negotiate your fees and percentage of the hold take with him. You can't do the job or don't want to stay, we leave you at the nearest port." It was a fair deal, and how Tab reacted to it would tell Will if they wanted him on board or not. Of course, it didn't look like he had a hell of a lot of bodies to choose from.

Tab looked thoughtful for a moment, staring at the table top before nodding. "That's all right. How soon are you planning to ship out?"

"We're filling the hold today. We're ready to go anytime after fifteen standard. If you can be ready before nightfall we'll save the extra night's docking fees and that'll dispose the captain nicely toward you."

He pulled out a datapad. "I'll need your fingerprints to check against the criminal sheet." Bane would take on a murderer if he thought it would get him a better profit margin, but Will liked being able to sleep with his eyes closed.

Tab looked at the datapad with distaste. "Warrants or records?"

He raised an eyebrow. "What am I going to find?"

"No warrants. Two arrests for disrupting the peace -- which was bar brawls with some fuckhead who sold me bad compression coils and a bad injector for a 305. Do you have any idea what a bad injector will do?" The man seemed more indignant than anything else, pissed off about bad parts.

"Yeah, I do." He handed over the pad for Tab to give him a thumbprint. If that was all he found, the man was hired. He appreciated the honesty, and having a temper? Well, that was almost mandatory on a profiteering ship.

Tab took the datapad and practically stabbed it with his thumb, waiting until the pad flashed at him to pass it back. "Stupid things," he growled, though Will wasn't sure if he meant the datapad or the arrests. "Where are you docked? I've got to get my shit together and take care of some stuff, but I'll be there long before night."

The only thing on Tab's sheet was the two disruptings he'd been up front about. Will saved the info to download into the Arillia's database. "6D. I'll let the old girl know you're coming. Use the thumbpad and once you're on board report to the bridge."

Nodding, Tab looked back at the other table where the two men were watching. "Out of here, boys. See you in a few months." Without waiting for any replies he brushed past Will and left the room, his left leg thumping a little heavier than the right as he walked, the limp just noticeable.

Will watched him all the way out, wondering idly about the limp. Man didn't need to be quick-footed to make the engines go, though, and they'd managed a few runs already without a proper engine doc, which was likely one or two too many. He knew how to baby his girl along when he had to, but his babying could only go so far.

He didn't bother checking Tab's engineering credentials. Either the man could do the job or he couldn't, and you didn't last long out in space if you lied about your abilities. Will nodded at the two men left at the other table and headed out, eager to get back to his girl and for them to get back into space.

Tab didn't waste a lot of time getting his bag from the quarters he'd rented at the port. He didn't have much, just his clothes and a few necessary things like his weapon. While in port he'd had to take it apart -- they didn't really like having armed and out-of-work men wandering around -- but he'd get the gun put back together first thing.

He stopped by the guild room and left a couple of messages for people who'd want to know where he was, and talked shop for a couple of minutes, then settled his accounts and headed to 6D to take a look at the Arillia in peace before he boarded. If he was going to take care of the boat he should at least get a picture of her in his mind; wouldn't get to see the outside as often as he'd see her guts.

He wandered around for a bit, looking her over. She was a pretty thing, really. Sleek lines, good for sneaking; he knew her capacity would be good for salvaging and scavenging -- so long they didn't take on too many people, he'd bet she'd make a fine smuggler, too.

He watched a few men going aboard, ignoring them as they stared at him; he'd meet them soon enough. So long as they stayed out of his engine room unless they were told to be there, they'd get along fine.

When he'd finally looked his fill he shouldered his pack and headed up the ramp, stopping to press his thumb on the locking mechanism. It flashed green, and he went in, kind of happy that he didn't have to dick around to get clearance. Maybe the pilot knew his shit after all.

He headed up to the bridge, not stopping to look around, and found the door standing open, voices coming to him in a low rumble. Tab stepped through the door and to the side so he didn't block it, and waited to be noticed. They knew he was coming, had known it since he used the thumbpad.

The pilot was sitting in the cockpit, waving his hands as he made some point or other to the big man leaning over him looking at the instrument panel.

Neither man looked happy but they ended their conversation quickly and both men turned to him. The pilot -- Will -- gave him a grin. "Hey, you made it. Cap, this is Tab, our new guts doctor. Tab, this here is Captain Bane."

The captain, a tall man with silver grey hair and sharp, blue eyes on a square, muscled body, looked him over and grunted. "You know your stuff?"

"Yes, sir," Tab said, trying not to sound sour. It was a hard thing; even when he was being friendly people thought he was in a bad mood. "Looks like a nice boat."

"She's a great boat," Will piped up, stroking the console in front of him.

Captain Bane sneered. Tab supposed it could have been a smile. "Will'll show you around. We're leaving in forty-five." With that the Captain dismissed them both, going up to what Tab could only assume was his office.

Will gave him a grin. "Don't mind the Captain. He's like that with everyone. Come on, you've got quarters in the engine room."

Tab nodded. Noisy, but he'd be able to keep an eye on things. "Don't have to share, do I?" he asked, following Will as they made their way down.

"Nope. You and the Captain have your own quarters. I usually bunk down in the cockpit." Will shrugged.

"That's gotta suck," Tab said, raising an eyebrow. "Nowhere better? Galley?"

"Eh. I've got a spot. It's warm, quiet and private, and I can hear if anything goes wrong right away." Will stroked the wall. "She's my baby." He led Tab into the engine room, a small area partitioned off with a cot, a bookcase and a locker taking up all the room.

Tab ran a hand over the bookcase, wondering what the hell he'd put in it, and nodded. "Good enough," he said, dropping his pack onto the floor and kicking it under the cot. "Show me my engine. *My* baby."

Will chuckled and went over the engine with him, going over the specs, showing him where the tools and spare parts were, explaining a couple of jury-rigged items Will himself had come up with. "We've been without anyone to look after her properly the last couple of runs and it makes me nervous. I can do a patch job here and there, but I'm a pilot, you know? I fly, I don't mend."

"Works out," Tab said absently, most of his attention on the coolant system. "I mend, don't fly. Well, I can, but you don't want to put me through debris field. Nice job here, by the way."

Will gave him a grin, the friendliest look he'd gotten in days even if it did make Will suddenly look like a kid playing dress-up in his father's uniform. "Thanks. I try."

Tab found himself smiling back. "Well, hopefully you won't have to mess around down here too often. But it's good to know you can tell your butt from a teapot, anyway -- lots of pilots can't tell a piston from a coupling."

"Oh, I think I know the difference between my butt and a teapot at least. Hell, I know the difference between my ass and yours." And with that Will gave him a wink and headed out.

Tab watched him go, head tilted to the side as he thought about that. "So does that mean he's not going to waste time looking at me if I tell him to watch his ass?" he asked out loud. With a shrug he turned back to the engine, deciding that playing with the power coils was probably wiser than playing with the pilot.

Chapter Two

Will was used to occasionally flying by the seat of his pants, but they'd run into a convoy of smugglers -- and since when had the fuckers gotten so bold as to travel in packs? -- and he'd had to fly like he'd never flown before.

Thank god they had a guts doctor now, because he'd pushed Arillia about as far as she could go and if the engines hadn't been fine-tuned, she'd have crapped out on him. As it was, he'd enticed some pretty spectacular noises from her, noises he was pretty sure a ship's engine were not supposed to make. Ever.

He'd barely had time to sound the alarm either, and he hoped the crew hadn't been too badly tossed around as he'd zigged and zagged and done whatever it took to get the gunships off Arillia's ass. They'd only taken one hit and that seemed to have been absorbed by the far hold bay. As soon as he found a nice little moon to hide behind, Bane had clapped him on the shoulder and headed off to assess the damage, see how much cargo they'd lost.

Will was jittering, adrenaline just pumping through him as he ran through some tests to make sure he still had helm control and maneuverability.

"You stupid son of a bitch!"

Will turned to see Tab barreling through the door, looking pretty unhappy. Very unhappy. His cheeks were flushed and dirty and there was a cut high on one cheek; his eyes looked dangerous, flashing in the bright overhead light. "Do you have one fucking clue what's going on down there? I've got leaks everywhere and popped cylinders -- almost lost a fucking eye when I lost a fluid line while trying to keep us together!"

He stood up to meet Tab head-on, even if the man's head was a good deal higher than his own. "Do you have one fucking clue what's been going on up here? We nearly lost the whole fucking ship and the only reason we're in one piece is because I know how to fly this baby."

"The only reason we're in one piece is 'cause I know how to stop explosions," Tab said, walking right into his space and staring down at him. "Doesn't matter how good you fly if the engine explodes."

He glared right on up, not in the least bit intimidated by the man's extra height and girth, not now with the rush still filling him. "Well, then what the fuck are you doing up here instead of down in the belly of the beast working on that engine?"

"More important to tell you you're an idiot!" Tab growled at him. "She'll hold together that long." Tab took another step forward.

Oh, Will wasn't going to be backed up, not in *his* goddamned cockpit. Hands curling into fists he stepped forward too and they were toe to toe. "You don't get to tell me how to fly, asshole. That's not how it works around here. Now get the fuck off my bridge."

"Not a chance. Not until we understand each other," Tab said, his voice dropping low. Intense. "That engine only works so long as you don't get wound up in your ego, flyboy. Push her too hard, she pushes back. Push me too hard, and I shove."

"Oh yeah?" Of all the moronic things he'd heard, that took the cake. "You think I'm just out here grandstanding?" He gave Tab a shove. "Playing?" He pushed again.

Tab pushed him back. Hard. One hand on the middle of his chest and then Will was taking a step back to keep from falling over. Tab's hand curled into a fist, gathering up Will's shirt and pulling him back again. "Think you're showing off, yeah. Think you expect more out of me and those engines than you have any right to."

He grabbed hold of Tab's shirt in both hands, holding on, wishing he had an extra few inches. "I. Don't. Show. Off. I keep our fucking ass from being little pieces of debris all over fucking space. And. I. Don't. Answer. To. You."

He shoved again, hard as he could. Tab didn't let go and they collided with the far wall, Tab's back hitting with a jarring thud even Will felt.

"You'll answer when you break something I can't fix!" Tab lifted his free hand, open, and brought it down hard. But he didn't hit; he grabbed the back of Will's head and pulled him even closer. "Asshole," the big man growled.

And then Will's mouth was covered, Tab thrusting his tongue inside.

Oh. Oh, that big, overbearing, testosterone-laden *dickhead*. Will pushed at Tab's tongue with his own, fighting for dominance of the hard, angry kiss.

Tab fought back, fingers tight and tangled in Will's hair as he forced Will's mouth to open wider. The sound the man made was harsh and deep, the kiss growing more intense with every push of their tongues.

Will tasted blood and Tab pulled away, panting. "Got work to do," he said, shoving Will away. "Got an engine to fix." He turned and headed for the door.

"Make sure you do it right -- I may need to push them again before the day's out!" Will shouted after Tab's back, wiping the back of his hand across his split lip. Asshole.

Pushy, loud-mouthed jerk of an asshole.

Will curled his hand into a fist and hit the bulkhead, ignoring the resulting pain just like he was ignoring the hard push of his cock against his leathers. It was just adrenaline, relief at being alive after a close fucking call.

Yeah. That's all it was.

There wasn't anyway around it, Tab finally admitted to himself. The end run Will-I'm-a-fucking-flying-god had done had left the engines in piss poor condition, patched and rigged up until Tab thought a good hard sneeze would send them to hell again. He needed parts and he needed a hand. The parts he figured he could cobble together until they got to a port, but the help...well.

He'd spent the better part of two days in the engine room, slamming things together and stopping leaks. Two days of listening to every bit of that engine, looking for trouble, and two days of

praying they were flying in the clear and wouldn't have to run hot. His nerves were still good, thank whatever god was watching over them, but he needed sleep and some sort of promise that they were going to stay out of trouble until he had the bird ready to soar again.

He hauled himself up off the floor and rubbed at his leg, not really paying attention. No time for aches and pains just yet, he thought as he pulled himself up the ladder. Just time to get a drink and sit down for ten minutes before he fell over. He made his way to the galley, hoping there was juice of some sort, or even something stronger.

Just his luck, Will was the only one there, poking through the fridge and finally pulling out a plate of fried chicken and putting it into the heater. Catching sight of him, Will grunted something that might have been hello. Of course it might also have been 'go fuck yourself'.

"Hey," Tab said evenly. "Anything to drink?" He walked to the fridge, making sure to give Will space; a repeat of what had happened on the bridge wasn't on Tab's list of things to do. No fighting, no yelling, and certainly no...whatever the hell that other thing was. Pilots were never a smart move, especially when they were kind of the boss.

"Yeah, there's brew and juice. Reconstituted." The last word was added like a warning, though he knew it well enough. Damned near choked on it the first day.

He made a face and pulled out the brew. "Don't suppose we're going to hit a port any time soon?" he asked, grabbing a cup. "I'm going to need some things."

"You'll have to talk to the Captain. I don't make the schedule." Will's back was stiff as he stood and watched the heater warm up his food.

Tab sighed. Pilots. Got their panties in a bunch over anything. "Yeah, okay," he said. He sat down at the table and rubbed his leg, finally giving in and saying, "Look. I'm going to...I'm gonna need a hand down there. Maybe only a couple of hours, but I need someone that's got a clue what I'm talking about."

Will did turn at that, one eyebrow going up. Damn, that was fucking annoying and he wanted to take the request back. "Are you saying you need *my* help?"

"Got anyone else on this barge who can do it?" Tab growled before he could stop himself. Ah, damn. He glared at his cup and shifted his bad leg. He'd need heat on it soon. "Forget it."

"No, no, my girl needs the help, I'll help her. If *you* can't handle it on your own, I'm your man." Oh, those grey eyes were just dancing.

"I can handle it," Tab said. "And you're not my man. Trust me."

Will snorted. "So if we need to go flat out to run away from fire, we're all set?"

"Sure. Live fast, die fast." Tab stood up and headed to the door, hating his leg, the limp and Will. "Look. You want to run, come help me. You want to give me another two days of cruise, that works, too. Just don't get all antsy when you burn her out again, and I wind up dead from the fires you'll start and the huge fucking hole in the hull when we lose the power grid."

"Oh, I'll help." Will got up and hit the door at the same time he did. "Because there are times I need everything she can give me and I'm not going to let some growly asshole slow her down."

"I'm not growly, and I'm not the one who hurt her in the first place!" Oh, this was going well. Tab rubbed his head and resisted the urge to bang his head on the hull. "Look. Just help me get her fixed so I can get some fucking sleep, okay? Don't even have to talk to me, just do as you're told, if you can."

"Look here, asshole -- I only pushed her because we had four ships trying to blow us to bits. You think I was grandstanding? Fucking playing? Hell, no. If you can't respect my choices as her pilot I'm not going to give you one fucking minute of my time, because you're just going to go over whatever I do and tell me I did it wrong. I know your type." Will was vibrating, glaring, those eyes just flashing.

"You don't know anything about me, flyboy," Tab said softly. "Next time just stay out of trouble instead of running from it. Want to talk about types? I've got your card." He turned and crowded Will a bit, happy enough to use his physical advantage. "Things just kind of happen to you, right? Wind up in messes you didn't see coming. Ships chasing you, guns shooting you. Men kissing you. And you never see it first."

Will tried to push him, but he was ready for it this time and didn't budge. "Go to hell."

"Already there," Tab whispered, staring into Will's grey eyes. He leaned in closer, pinning Will in place with a hand on either side of Will's shoulders. "Going to help me fix the engines or are we going to stand here fighting?"

Will licked his lips, eyes holding his. "She's all I've got. I'll help."

"All you've got?" Tab asked, his voice still soft. "Or all you want?" He knew about having little. Knew about wanting less, too.

"I know she's not really mine, you don't have to rub it in." Will pushed again. "But I'm the one who flies her."

"Not what I meant," Tab said, rolling his eyes. He was starting to see how things just kind of happened to the man. "Fine. Let's get this done." He leaned back and let Will go with a sigh. "I need to lie the fuck down soon."

Will frowned. "What's wrong? Something with your leg?"

Tab rolled his eyes again. "How do you think I've been spending the last two days? You think this boat's still flying 'cause I've been putting in eight hours a cycle?"

Will rolled his eyes right on back this time. "Well, you're a stubborn fuck, then. Should have asked for help sooner."

"Didn't need it before now. Got to do two things at the same time or the timing on the...ah, hell. If you're going to help, come on. If not, fuck off. I don't need someone fucking around in my engine room if they don't know what they're doing." Tab turned and started off, ready to punch a hole in the side of the ship himself. Pilots. Thought they were the be-all and the end-all, never mind who's mending their messes and making sure their birds were flying tight.

He could hear Will following him, low, indistinct murmurs coming down the hall with him.

"Yeah, yeah," he grumbled right back. "You're an ass and I'm a prick. We got that sorted now? Just do what I tell you and maybe we'll make out okay until we can hit port."

Will snorted, but left it at that, standing with his arms folded across his chest, all but pouting as he waited to be told what to do.

They worked well enough together once they started working and stopped worrying about who was in charge of what and who'd been responsible for the damage. And it didn't take long either, with someone helping him.

"That's got it," Tab said finally, leaning on the bulkhead and closing his eyes. He felt disgusting, filthy and sweaty. "Thanks," he said, not bothering to open his eyes long enough to look at Will. God, he wanted a shower.

"You're welcome." Oh, now, Will even sounded like he meant it.

Then the pilot was right next to him, bumping their hips together gently. "I wasn't grandstanding, you know. The route the captain plotted should have seen us free and clear all the way to the drop off. Nobody told the smugglers that. And I *did* save our asses from certain death."

Tab nodded. He knew that. He did. It was just hard to see when there were coils glowing white and lines snapping all over the place. Not to mention the big ass electrical charges shooting around. "I know," he said, finally opening his eyes. "Just don't make me go through this again. Please. Or warm me or something."

Will shook his head. "I hit the alarm as soon as I knew, Tab. I didn't even get my own belt on until we were nearly out of it. I'm going to get back up and make sure everything's still working at the helm. You should get some sleep -- you look like hell."

"I feel like hell. Oh, any heating pads around?" He hated to ask, but if he didn't get something hot on his leg he wasn't going to be able to get up after he slept.

Will just looked at him. "Any what?"

Tab rolled his eyes. "Something hot. Usually, a pad one heats up. Thus, heating pad."

Will shook his head. "This is a no-frills boat, Tab. This about your leg?"

"Yeah," Tab said shortly. He tossed his wrench into the tool box and shook his head. "Don't worry about it, it'll be fine." He hoped. Maybe he could find a way to keep a wet towel hot for a while.

"Would a massage help?" Will asked.

Tab tilted his head and tried to find the joke in that, the insult waiting to come at him, but Will was just waiting for an answer. "Yeah, actually," he finally said. "But I stink to high heaven and I wouldn't want to spend all this time working on the engine only to kill you with the air around me."

Will snorted. "I doubt I'm any better -- you want the help for your leg or you want to smell like hearts and flowers?"

"Both would be good," Tab said, letting himself grin in the first time in about forever. "But I'd settle for my leg not aching when I wake up." He walked out of the engine room and down the short passage to his room, stripping off his filthy shirt and tossing it onto the 'burn as soon as possible' pile.

Will just followed him, standing at the door and waiting for him to get settled, or something. Those grey eyes were checking him out, too. He smirked to himself and faced the wall, undoing his pants. All right then, let the flyboy get a good look. He kicked off his boots and dropped his pants, bending down to take off his socks. Tab had always thought underwear was a waste of packing space. Naked, he lay down on the bed and stretched for a moment. "Well?" he said, sitting up and rubbing at his left thigh. "Want to see?"

Oh, those grey eyes were seeing all right. Will swallowed and came to the edge of the bed, eyes very firmly on his thigh. *Very* firmly.

"Bullet went in here," Tab said, pointing to a spot about four inches above his knee. "And kind of exploded a bit. Came out here, here, and here." He pointed to three marks on the inside of his thigh, one about two inches below his balls. "So it kind of messed up the muscle a bit."

"Wow. Any higher and..." Will met his eyes, giving him a wolfish grin. "Soprano."

"Yeah, that, too," Tab said with a grin. "I paid a lot of creds to the temple in thanks, trust me."

"So you need me to massage the thigh?" Will was sounding like he wasn't sure this was such a good idea anymore.

Tab smirked. "You offered, flyboy. Or you can try to find me something hot to put on it. Or you can be all sympathetic when I try to get up in ten hours." He lay back on the bed and threw an arm over his eyes. "I don't really care, too tired."

Will's weight hit the bed. "Did I say I wasn't going to?" Warm hands slid over his thigh, just touching him to start with, but soon Will's fingers were digging in, working the abused muscles.

Tab would have happily shot himself the first time he groaned, but he was too busy melting to be bothered reaching for his weapon. The pilot had a good touch, working out the knots and getting the blood flowing. A lot of blood. Going every which way down there, and Tab couldn't really bring himself to care much about that either, not with Will's fingers working so close to what was rapidly becoming a prize winning boner.

Hopefully, the man would get scared and run off, leaving him to jerk off in peace. It was the only decent thing he could do, really. By the time he felt the bed shift as Will got up, his leg was melted and his cock was hard as nails.

"I guess I was doing something right," said Will, voice cocky as hell and when Tab opened his eyes, the pilot was gone.

"Could have kept doing it," Tab muttered, wrapping one hand around his dick and starting to stroke off. "But better you ran, flyboy." He tried to sneer but it wound up as a throaty groan as he pulled himself to his orgasm. He sprayed come over his stomach, gasping with the release and the utter horror of saying Will's name as he shot.

Chapter Three

Will pretty much stayed out of Tab's way after the massage.

The man had been unconcerned by his nudity and his erection and Will figured next time he'd jump Tab's bones. And Will was pretty sure the man thought he was an irresponsible kid, and nice as a good hard fuck would be, he wasn't going to give in to it with a man who didn't respect him.

So he kept to himself, ate at odd hours and hung out in the cockpit. He wasn't exactly going out of his way to avoid, Tab, but he wasn't trying to meet up with the man either.

They'd put in to port about a week ago, picking up supplies, offloading their shipment and picking up a new one. Will knew Tab had picked up the parts he needed because Arillia was just purring.

A little bit of devil made him want to put her through her paces, but he figured Tab wouldn't be the only one to hand him his ass on a platter if he tried it, and while he could face down Tab with more or less success, the bossman was another matter altogether.

Still, he put on a little speed, enjoying the power his Arillia demonstrated.

"She's all right, then?" Tab's voice came from the door. He sounded interested, not like he was looking for a fight. For a change.

Will glanced back. "Well, I haven't really opened her up or put her through any maneuvers, but she's feeling good."

"I've been thinking about a modification for the thrusters," Tab said. "Something that'll boost the initial thrust. Could be jerky though -- but smoother longer, if you take my meaning."

"Yeah? And you're telling me because?" Oh, he hadn't meant that to come out quite so belligerently, he could plainly see Tab was trying. Man put his back up, though.

"Because you fly this -- oh, forget it. You don't want some speed on your spectacular getaways, then fine. Just don't get me killed. Asshole." Tab glared at him and turned to go, stomping down hard with his good leg.

"Tab...look, I'm sorry, okay? Of course I want some speed. Especially if I can get it without you going all ape on me anytime I tap into it."

"Then stop being such an ass, okay?" Tab shot back. "Jesus, if this is what you're like when I'm trying to help, you deserve what you get."

Will popped up out of his seat and rounded on Tab. "I just said I was sorry. Which makes you the ass."

"Yeah, but I know it. You seem to be in denial."

He sputtered a moment and then laughed. "You really are an asshole, Tab."

Tab suddenly grinned at him, his eyes dancing, and winked the green one at him. "Yep. And you have no idea what to do with me, do you?"

He blinked, fighting the color he could feel coming into his face. "I might have an idea or two."

"Oh yeah?" Tab asked, taking a step closer. The man was laughing at him. Maybe not out loud, but Will could see it in Tab's eyes. "Want to share?"

He crossed his arms over his chest, glaring up at Tab. "Well, right this minute, they're a little violent."

"Aw, come on," Tab grinned at him. "Don't be so cold. Pisses you off, doesn't it? That I'm me and not about to change just to impress a pretty flyboy."

"No, what pisses me off is you thinking I'm just some stupid kid. I'm *good* at what I do." Damn it, he was not cold -- he was hot, so hot around the collar he was just going to explode.

"Never said you weren't. Just called you an idiot for trying it." Tab stood in front of him, just a handspan away and looked at him. "But you do know how to fly, I'll give you that. And you're not a moron in the engine room, so that's two points up. Know how to take care of a bad leg, too." And then the jerk winked at him.

Fuck, Tab had to be just about the most annoying man they'd ever had on board, and they'd had some winners. Didn't help that he'd brought the man on himself and that Tab was damned good at what he did. Will didn't know whether to hit the man or kiss him and he just kind of stood there, glaring and sputtering and damn it, proving himself to be the idiot Tab believed him to be.

"Sure you don't want to share?" Tab said, leaning down. "I bet I can guess a couple of things."

"Do you have any idea how maddening that smug attitude of yours is, Tab? Makes me want to just slug that smirk right off your face."

"You want to hit me?" Tab asked, looking amused. "Oddly, that wasn't on my list." A hand slid around Will's waist and Tab gave him a tug closer.

"No? Well it's on mine. And why is that funny?" He put his hands on Tab's chest, pushing, trying to put more space between them, 'cause this was just getting him hard.

"Who said it was funny?" Tab asked, grinning. "Stop struggling, I'm beginning to think you're serious."

"You're laughing at me!" He was going to slug Tab, he so was.

"Nah, this is just me being friendly." Tab pulled hard and Will found himself pressed all down the man's length. His very hard length.

Oh. Maybe not slug. At least not yet. He tilted his head, leaned in, just a little.

"See? Knew you weren't serious," Tab said, leaning in, too.

"About what?" Will was more than a little fucking confused.

"Just shut up," Tab said, sounding amused again. He leaned in and licked Will's lips, then pressed their mouths together. He tasted like mint and honey, like he'd done something to the juice or the brew. Probably the brew.

Will moaned and opened up, tongue pushing into Tab's mouth, licking at that strange taste.

The hand at his waist moved down to his ass, and Tab was well and truly feeling him up, grinding on him and kissing him hard. Backing them up to lean on the console. "God," Tab groaned.

"Uh-huh." Figuring Tab was a pretty fucking big guy, and strong, Will wrapped his legs around Tab's waist, trusting the man to support him against the console.

"Ah, shit." Tab rubbed on him, diving into the kiss. The man was panting, hips pushing them both, and the hand on Will's ass slid around to the front, fighting with his fly.

He pushed Tab's hand away and took care of the job himself, the leather pants having a cover over the fly that had to be opened first. He tugged it open and pulled down his fly and then started working on Tab's.

Tab made an approving noise and stopped thrusting against him for a moment. "Come on," he said into the kiss, his hand wrapping around Will's prick and starting to stroke. "Touch me."

"Bossy," Will muttered, but his hand took a hold of Tab's thick heat, mimicking Tab's motions.

"God, yes." Will was reasonably certain that Tab meant about finally getting a hand job, and not so much about him being bossy, but really...who could tell? And who cared, the way Tab was sucking on his neck and pulling on his cock. The man was going at it like he'd not been touched in years.

Which suited Will just fine as it had been a long time since he had anything more than his own hand.

Tab made another sound, this one more desperate, rough and loud, and teeth scraped along Will's neck. "Harder," Tab growled. "Tight and fast."

"Yeah. Bossy." He did as he was told though, tightening his hand.

"Shut up," Tab said with a grin. He moaned then, and rubbed the head of Will's cock with his thumb. "Oh fuck, yeah, like that. Good."

"You shut up," began Will, but he felt too good to keep arguing the point, his orgasm barreling down on him.

"You want to fight now?" Tab rubbed again, smoothing fluid over him and adding a squeeze. "God, you're infuriating."

"Me?" he asked, squeaking, pushing into Tab's touch. God, he was going to come soon. Now. Shit, he didn't want to go first. He tugged harder on Tab's cock.

"Ah. Oh fuck!" Tab pushed into his hand, so hard they moved back on the console an inch or two. "Again," he demanded, the hand on Will's cock speeding, growing tighter.

Harder and harder, Will tugged and squeezed and then his eyes went wide as pleasure shot through him, making him come.

"Oh yeah, that's it," Tab said, still stroking him with a slippery fist. "Hotter than a full burn, flyboy."

The cock in his hand throbbed, swelling even harder, then Tab grunted, wet heat soaking over Will's hand.

He grinned up at Tab. "You went off pretty hot and quick yourself."

"Shut up," Tab said with a grin. "So, you want me to start those modifications?"

"Right this minute?"

Tab looked at him, looking a little confused. "Uh, yeah? Well, maybe I'll clean up first.... What, you want me to take you to dinner or something?"

He pushed Tab away and got back onto his feet, tucking himself away. "Fuck, no. Go on, make my baby faster."

"All right then." Tab gave him a long look. "You're odd. Hot, but odd. Just thought you should know." He did up his pants and wiped his hand on the leg. "See you later, Will."

Asshole. Jerk.

He threw himself into his chair, muttering and grumbling.

No, he didn't fucking need dinner.

Another kiss might have been nice.

Well. That had gone well. One idea, one hand-job, and one vanishing pilot. Odd had been an understatement.

It took Tab almost four days of round-the-clock work to make the modifications without fucking up the rest of the systems, and as it was he'd caused one power failure that he'd fixed under extreme conditions. The captain was not an easy man.

Flyboy had proved even less easy.

Will had, if Tab wasn't utterly blind, taken to actively avoiding him. Leaving the galley when he walked in. Being busy when Tab went up to the bridge. Never, ever stepping foot in the engine room.

Sadly for Will, that was the perfect way to keep Tab interested.

When he'd gotten the damn thrusters to max out he spent an hour checking it over and finally went to clean up. He cleaned up as nice as he could too, putting on an almost new shirt, and pants that weren't wrecked. Then he called himself an idiot and changed into normal clothes.

Satisfied he wasn't trying too hard -- he had, after all, just gifted the man with speed -- he went looking for Will to share the good news. And maybe get laid.

He tried the bridge first, getting lucky. Will was slouched in the pilot's chair, watching the stars go by. Damn, that leather bit Will wore was sexy.

"Hey," he said, leaning on the door frame, after he'd ogled for a bit. "What are you doing?"

Will started and glanced back at him. "Flying."

"And a lovely job you're doing of it, too. Watching the stars, staring off into...well, space." Really, it was too fun to poke the man.

Sure enough, Will bristled. "You got a reason to be here, Tab?"

"Uh huh, I do. Open her up."

Will's ire turned to eagerness. "Yeah? Really?" A wide grin broke across his face, and damn if Will didn't look just like a kid again. "Cool."

Will hit a switch and spoke into the ship's communication unit. "Grab onto something, we might be hitting a bumpy patch."

Then with a wink at him, Will started to push the engines.

It was bumpy, but no worse than they'd had before, and it was over quick. Then they were zipping along, better than top speed. Tab moved over to Will and leaned over, studying the console. "Not bad," he said, pleased as fuck with himself.

Will laughed. "Yeah, not bad at all!"

"And that's why I'm paid the big money. Well, crap money, but I get fringe benefits like reconstituted juice." He pulled a face and slapped Will on the back. He wanted to play, wanted to fuck...and Will was glued to the console. Damn. Should have just told him, gotten him happy, fucked him and then let him fly. "Have fun. I'm going to go jerk off."

"Yeah, okay," murmured Will in a voice that told Tab Will hadn't even heard him.

Oh, that was just too much.

Tab stared at him. "I'd do it in your bunk, but you sleep here," he said slowly, going to close the door. "So, you don't mind if I just start, right?"

"Huh? What?" Will blinked and glanced back at him again. "What?"

"Jerking off. You said I could." Tab pointed to his dick, making its break for freedom.

"I what?" Oh, he had Will's full attention now.

"I said I was going to go jerk off. You said fine." Tab undid the button on his pants and leaned back on the bulkhead. "I said here. You said...well, nothing really. Up to speed, flyboy?" He pulled out his cock and started stroking, watching Will watch.

"I did not say you could jerk off up here!"

Will hit a few buttons, slowing them down, and then hit the autopilot before coming over to him. "What the hell is your problem?"

"Not enough sex. What's your problem?"

Will snorted. "You." Will was coming closer, eyes hot.

"Ah, is that how you thank the man who made your bird go faster than...well, faster than she has any right to?" he frowned and stroked himself again. "Shame, really. Just when we were really hitting it off, too."

Will shook his head, eyes on Tab's hand, his cock. "I...I don't get you, Tab. You want me to do that for you as thanks? Why not just say so?"

Tab snorted. "I don't fix engines for sex, asshole. I fix engines and get wound up. And I did say so, you were too wound up in flying to even hear me."

Will growled and opened his mouth. "Ah, fuck it."

The next thing he knew, that leather-clad body was pressed up against him, Will's tongue pushing into his mouth.

Oh, that was better. Tab grabbed Will's ass and held on, rubbing against that leather and just growling into the kiss, sucking hard on Will's tongue. Will rubbed back, hands sliding into his hair, turning his head slightly, tongue pushing in deeper.

Oh, man. This was the way it was supposed to work. Hands everywhere, noises, tastes.... Tab groaned and pushed Will away a little. "Want you," he said. "More than a fucking hand job."

"Not here."

"My room," Tab suggested, running his hands over Will's ass. Oh god, yeah. Bed. Sort of. Enough.

Will nodded and came back in for another kiss, tongue fucking him. Tab sucked on his tongue again, then pushed back, fighting for the kiss. They didn't seem to be getting any closer to the engine room, but he was getting closer to Nirvana.

Will's hand wrapped around his prick, tugging as that tongue just kept moving, pushing in his mouth.

Tab tore his mouth away. "Stop," he said, his hand grabbing Will's wrist. "Want to fuck you."

He got that raised eyebrow. "You only good for one shot, Tab?"

That little shit. Tab stared at him, trying to remember why he wanted in the man's ass. Then Will pulled on him again and he decided he'd thump him later. "Go for it," he invited. "Make me blow. Though why you object to me jerking off and you giving me a -- oh hell, yeah!" His breath caught as Will tightened up on him, and his balls pulled up tight.

"Wasn't planning to," Will told him, biting at his lower lip and squeezing hard again. "Fuck, you're hot."

Tab tried to order his quickly scattering thoughts, but all he could manage was a nod and a moan as Will played with him. "Ah hell," he groaned, burying his head in Will's neck. "Just...yeah. Like that. Soon."

"What's the problem, Will? We hit a -- what the fuck?" The captain's voice boomed over them and Will let go and backed off like he'd been scalded.

Tab squeezed his eyes shut and turned away for the sake of decency -- and blind panic had a way of moving a man fast. He shoved his cock back into his pants and leaned his hands on a console, his head hanging down between his shoulders. "Fuck," he said under his breath.

Will cleared his throat. "Sorry, Captain. I, uh. We. Well. I thought you'd turned in."

Captain Bane snorted. "Obviously. I don't care what you do on your down time, but don't do it on my bridge. Ever."

"Yes, sir." Will said quietly.

Tab waited, but there was dead silence behind him, Will not saying anything more and the captain not leaving. "Yes, sir," he finally said, "Won't happen again, sir."

"*Was* there a problem?" The captain finally asked.

"Not exactly a problem, sir. Tab's made some modifications to the engines, made them run faster and smoother once they've hit high speed. I was doing a test run and didn't want to send anyone flying into walls."

"And?"

"Worked like a dream, sir. There was just a bit of turbulence at the beginning and we were running *fast*." The embarrassment faded from Will's voice as he enthused about the ship's engines.

It was cute, really. Tab turned around and looked at him, almost grinning when he saw the way the man's eyes had lit up. "It'll help get us out of scrapes, sir," he said to the captain. "Um. If you'll excuse me, I'll just go make sure everything went through that test okay."

"Good job," the captain told him. "Dismissed."

As he headed off, he heard Bane chuckle. "Well, Will? Aren't you going with him?"

Will mumbled something and boot steps followed him.

Tab glanced back just as he hit the ladders to go down. "You're coming?" he asked Will, more than a little surprised. More than a little pleased, too, and since when was this more than just a fuck?

Will shrugged. "We were kind of interrupted."

"I noticed." He'd noticed. He'd gone down so fast he was half expecting to pass out from his blood pressure fluctuating. "Come on, then. Pretty sure no one's going to walk in on us in my quarters." He gave Will a long look. "And you don't care that the captain knows what we're going to do?"

Will snorted. "He caught us right in the middle of doing it, didn't he?" Will shook his head. "Doesn't matter now if we do or not, he's going to assume we'll pick back up where we left off, tonight, tomorrow, whenever. If he's going to be thinking I'm doing something, I might as well at least be doing it."

"Good point," Tab allowed. "Okay, then." He jumped down the ladder and headed to his room, undoing his shirt as he went. It felt a little weird not having to chase Will all over the ship to get so much as a look, let alone a sure thing, but Tab really wasn't one to pass up a gift like that man's ass.

He heard Will close behind him and grinned to himself, stopping short as he got to his quarters. Stopping real fast, just to get the man against him. "Eager?" he teased, pushing the lock off.

Will backed off and slapped his ass. "You did that on purpose, asshole."

"Yep." Tab grinned at him. "Problem?"

"Fuck, you're a jerk. I don't even know what I'm doing here."

Oh no. No way was Will getting snitty now. Tab grabbed Will's shirt and pulled him into the tiny room. "You're here because you want my cock rammed up your ass," he growled, pushing Will against the wall and kissing him hard.

Will struggled for a moment, hands pushing at him, palms hot against his chest and then suddenly he was being kissed back, those hands tearing his shirt open, Will's tongue fighting his to get into his mouth.

Tab growled again, his hands roaming from Will's shirt to his ass, feeling those fine leather pants move and fill against him. He pushed his tongue against Will's, made the man back off for a second before the idiot started fighting for the kiss again. With a moan Tab pushed a hand between them and squeezed Will's balls. "Got a power issue, huh?" he asked with what he knew was a cocky grin. He wanted to see what the man did when he was well and truly pissed.

"Fuck you," Will told him, shoving him hard enough he wound up with his back against the other wall of the little room, Will pushed up tight against him.

"Oh, spirit," Tab crowed. "Let's see where that takes us." He rubbed his palm along Will's cock, his other hand yanking Will's shirt up.

Will let him pull his shirt off and then pushed up against him again, kiss biting, hard, hips grinding that leather covered cock against his hand.

"That's it," Tab whispered. "Give it up for me. Show me what you've got, flyboy." He dipped his head and dragged his teeth across one dark nipple, then sucked it up, nice and tight.

"Shit!" Will bucked hard, fingers back to tugging open his shirt and pushing it off his shoulders.

Tab would have laughed if he wasn't busy licking and nipping. He squeezed Will's cock and rocked their hips together, his own cock finally far enough back in the game to start being insistent. The shirt was an issue too -- in the way and tangling up his arms.

With a growl he let go of Will entirely, ripping his shirt as he peeled it off. "You owe me a new one," he said, reaching for Will again. "And for fuck's sake, lose these pants."

"I didn't rip the stupid thing!" Will glared, backing off, fingers working on the fastener of his leather pants.

"Whatever. Why do your pants have to be so complicated?" Tab complained, undoing his own and shoving them down in what felt like a fraction of the time Will was spending.

Will just laughed at him. "Impatient asshole."

"Well, I was the one about to blow, right?" Tab pointed out. He threw himself down on the cot and cupped his own balls, his cock standing up straight and proud. "Sit there," he said pointing to it and grinning.

"And what makes you think I'm not doing you?" Will asked, finally getting his pants off.

Tab laughed, he couldn't help it. "As if."

Will stood beside the bed, crossing his arms over his chest, cock high and hard. "What do you mean, 'as if'?"

"I mean there is no fucking way that's going to happen," Tab said, sitting up. Not a chance. No way in hell. Nope. He wasn't spreading for anyone, not even.... He slammed the breaks on, refusing to think about why Will rated a 'not even'. "Don't bottom," he said simply and very firmly.

"But you expect me to -- just like that."

Tab stared up at him. "Uh-huh."

Will shook his head. "No fucking way. You won't put out, I won't." He turned and started gathering his clothes, just like that.

"What the fuck?" Tab stood up and blocked the door. "I *said* I wanted to fuck you. I *said* I wanted in your ass. *You* came down here. When the hell did this turn into you doing me? What the hell is wrong with you?"

"I want to fuck, I just didn't know it was going to be a one-way street. You can't expect a man you won't trust to trust you. Life doesn't work like that, asshole." Will was clutching his clothes to him, glaring, eyes full of sparks.

"Who says I don't trust you?" Tab asked, starting to get confused.

Will snorted. "You just did."

"When? Just because I like to drive? That means I don't trust you? Trust you to fly me out of just about anything. Trust you around my engine. Trust you to be a grade A asshole."

"Yeah, well it takes one to know one." Will found the doorknob he'd been feeling around for behind his back and opened it. Tab had the funniest feeling that Will was going to stick his tongue out, but he didn't, before going out and slamming it shut behind him.

"Jesus, he's...like, nine or something," Tab said to the empty room. He looked down at his dick and sighed. "Ah fuck." With a grunt of pure disgust at life he threw himself onto the cot and faced the wall, trying to decide if there was any way he could undo the modifications without looking like more of an asshole than Mister Too Good To Take It up there.

Chapter Four

God, it was good to get off the ship.

Will shook his head. He loved his girl, but lately he'd been hiding out in the cockpit and was starting to feel a little cabin-feverish. So when they got to port, he was more than happy to be able to get out and wander. The place wasn't huge, but big enough he could get lost and not run into Tab. He hoped.

He hadn't counted on having one too many in a bar full of questionable characters.

But all of a sudden, he realized he'd had too much to drink and he was being checked out by a couple of pretty fucking scary-looking guys. He tucked himself into the corner and ordered another drink, deciding to sip it nice and slowly. Maybe they'd go before he had to try to wobble his way out.

They kept looking at him. They leaned in to each other, whispering and looking at him, and their smiles grew nasty. Well, maybe they thought they were looking friendly, but to Will, they were just scary.

"Trying to prove a point?" Tab asked, appearing out of nowhere and sitting down. "I mean, I know you don't trust me and all, but I don't think you'd enjoy them half as much." He had a drink in his hand and a sneer on his face, but he was sitting close. He smelled funny...kind of clean.

Will was immediately pissed off, at the wave of relief that went through him when Tab showed up as much as at anything else, and he glared. "What do *you* want?"

Tab looked at him and raised an eyebrow. "Nothing from you, flyboy, other than a pilot to make that ship sail. You get dead, I'm stuck here for far longer than I want. Can leave you to it, if you want." Tab tossed back his drink and started to stand up. The guys at the bar smiled.

Will left his own drink on the bar as he stood up. "Just so happens I'm heading back to the ship." And whoa, the thumping of the music in the bar seemed to make the whole room kind of shake a little with each beat.

Tab looked him up and down and sighed. "You need a fucking keeper. Come on, then." And Tab put a big hand on the small of his back, trying to guide him out of the bar.

"As long as you're not volunteering for the job," he managed. What he didn't manage was to extricate himself from Tab, a step to the left sending him into a table and back against Tab's body.

"No, it's been forced on me. God, tell me you drank far too much and you're not like this from that girly drink you just had." Tab wrapped an arm around him, apparently thinking the hand wasn't enough. "Lightweight. Come on, let's get out of here."

He frowned. "I'm not going home with you," he informed Tab tartly. The man really was an asshole. A pushy, annoying, sexy, stud of an asshole.

"Oh yes, you are. And stop pouting, I promise your virtue is safe with me." Oh, and there was a pissy look. Sour grapes. Or balls. Or something. Tab wasn't happy. What a surprise.

"It's not my virtue I'm worried about," he pointed out, ruining his clear enunciation by tripping over the threshold as they left the bar.

Tab caught him, growling until he got his feet back under him. "You don't have to worry about the rest of you either, unless you get yourself killed by stray dust particles. You're a mess, flyboy."

"Just wanted a quiet drink." He wasn't sure where he'd gone wrong, but it was obvious he had.

"Yeah, yeah. And I just wanted a nice hard fuck. Now look at us." Tab yanked on him and they staggered a few more feet. "You're a little pathetic, you know?" Tab said, almost conversationally. "And don't bitch at me about your headache tomorrow."

"Pathetic?" He pulled himself out of Tab's hold, standing there not quite steadily and glaring. "Fuck you, Tab."

"We talked about that, didn't we?" Tab asked, giving him a long look. "You want to go over it again?"

"Go over what?" He was losing track of the conversation. In fact he thought maybe he was going to lose his lunch. Though he hadn't had any. Which might explain a few things.

"You look green," Tab said, looking unhappier. "Come on, if you're gonna puke you're not doing it on my boots." Tab dragged him down the corridor and around a corner, going far too fast.

"Shit, move." He pushed Tab out of the way and leaned over, throwing up all over the floor.

"That is so unattractive," Tab said from behind him.

Another voice, rough and slurred ever so slightly to Will's -- admittedly drunken -- ear chimed in. "But his ass is fine."

Will heard Tab snort. "Good luck getting to it. Most complicated pants in the known universe."

He would have protested, or at least tried to slug Tab, but then there was the sound of something going crunch and Tab was growling, "He's not to be messed with, got it? Now run along and let the man puke like a girl in peace."

"Not a girl," he muttered, wiping at his mouth.

And he didn't need his virtue defending either.

Much.

"Oh right. Sorry. Big manly man with a big dick." Tab handed him a flask. "Here, rinse out before you hurl again. And promise me I won't have to witness that again."

He took a swig of the flask, spitting the contents out with a gasp. "Shit! That's like 200 proof!"

"Oh. Um. Oops?" Tab didn't sound at all sorry.

Goddamn it, the man was an asshole. Every time Will started to change his mind about that, Tab would do something that had his back up again.

He handed the flask back and straightened, feeling a lot more sober than he'd been. "I'm going back to the ship."

"Correct. You are," Tab agreed. "And I'm making sure you get there."

He stopped and turned to glare at Tab. "I beg your pardon?"

"Which word didn't you get?"

"I'm going back to the ship under my own power, asshole. Because *I* want to."

"Oh, and what the vermin around here want doesn't matter? You think that guy I hit was the only one?" Tab stepped closer to him, green eye flashing and brown one so dark it was almost black. "I am seeing you back to the ship."

He took a step, going nose to nose with Tab. Well. Nose to chin. "I'm not a kid, Tab. I said I can get there on my own."

"Look. I'm going that way anyway. I can walk with you and make sure you get there in one piece, or I can walk five feet behind you and do a running commentary on your ass and those pants. Which do you want?"

"My ass looks damned fine in these pants!"

"I know! That's what I'm saying!" Tab looked down at him, almost snarling. "That's what everyone is saying. God, are you trying to kill me?"

"I haven't touched you!" Fuck, he was getting a headache and Tab wasn't making any sense whatsoever.

"That's my point!" And then Tab did snarl, shoving him down the hall. "Ship. Now. And don't talk to anyone or they die, got it?"

Will giggled, though he'd meant it to be a less girly sounding chuckle. "I'm talking to you."

"And I'm about to die. Smarten up." Tab gave him another shove, though it wasn't so hard this time. "Are you always like this when you drink?"

"Don't usually," he admitted. Especially not on an empty stomach. "Aside from the brew they serve on board."

"That's water," Tab said. There was an arm around him again, he noticed. "You sure you're not a girl?"

"Fuck off," he muttered. He didn't try to shrug Tab off this time though. Even though he could see the Arillia and was feeling more confident he actually was going to get there under his own power.

"Ah, right. Nice dick, not a girl. Just can't drink and won't fuck. Lucky me." Tab pulled him a little closer, bumping their hips together. "Sure you don't want more from my flask?"

"Did you not see me puking my guts up?"

"Don't remind me. Killed my stiffy."

"Then you should know my answer." He shrugged Tab's arm off his shoulders as he got to the ship. "I think I can manage the rest of the way on my own."

"Not a chance," Tab said firmly, grabbing his arm. "Look, I don't know what the fuck your problem is, but I'm sick of this shit. Stop acting like a spoiled child and grow the hell up."

"A spoiled child?" He sputtered a few times, growled and then pulled back his arm and decked Tab in the chin.

Tab's head rocked back and then those mismatched eyes were staring at him, very wide and very pissed off. Scary pissed off.

"That's it," Tab said, and then Will found the port lurching as he was suddenly airborne and settling with a thump as he found himself draped over Tab's shoulder. "Time for a lesson," Tab grunted as he started storming his way to the Arillia.

"Hey!" He beat on Tab's back with closed fists. "Put me down, you...you...beast!" Oh, god. He *was* a girl.

Tab snorted and kept on marching, even waving to someone they passed. "Yeah, I'm a beast. You just don't know the half of it yet, flyboy. But you will," Tab said, with a promise in his voice.

"You put me down, asshole." He wasn't terribly serious about it though -- he had to admit this was easier than walking. Besides, he was still pouting about the girl thing.

"Nope. Well, not yet. Have to at some point. Might tie your hands up though while I figure out those fucking pants of yours."

"Tie up my...." He started wriggling, which rubbed his cock against Tab's shoulder, making it perk right on up. Great, just what needed. "Down. Now."

"Did you go deaf?" Tab demanded, walking up the Arillia's ramp. "I said not yet. And you like the idea of being tied up. Noted." Will assumed Tab had used the thumbpad as he heard the doors hiss open; he didn't hear anything when Tab's hand started massaging his ass, though. Just felt it; hot and big, and pushing between his legs.

"I do not! I don't! Stop that!" He kept wriggling. The more he wriggled, the harder his cock got and yeah, that was because of the friction of Tab's shoulder against his cock, not that hand on his ass or the thought of being at Tab's mercy, his hands tied up above his head....

"Uh huh." Tab walked through the bay, turning right to the engine room instead of left to go up. "Keep telling yourself that. And keep rubbing on me, I like it."

Well, that made him freeze and he growled and beat Tab's back in frustration. What was it about this man that just made him want to scream and hit things. Hit Tab. Hard. A lot.

Tab finally set him down, right by the ladder to the lower level. "Okay, look," he said, eyes more serious than Will could remember seeing them. "You hate me, I get that, but we're both hard as fuck, and you're driving me insane. You can come down with me, or we can just stop this right now. Finish my contract and get off this fucking barge, because you're...doing things that I can't fucking deal with anymore."

He blinked up at Tab. "I'm doing things? What have *I* done?" Frustrated and confused, that's what Tab did to him.

"You're...you're running hot and cold and getting into scrapes with guys who want to hurt you or worse and you're sitting up there all hotshot, and you're avoiding me." Tab took a breath and backed away a step. "You watch me when you see me and then you run away. You fight right back, but you dress like that, and you like me coming around like a begging dog. I won't do it anymore."

Tab stood there, staring at him, chest heaving and out of breath, but not leaving. Not doing anything at all other than watching him. "I didn't get into any scrapes! And I dress like this because I like it. And I don't remember you begging once!" God. Frustrating and annoying and a jerk and still fucking sexy.

The asshole.

"Fine." Tab took another step back and turned to face the ladder. "See you around, flyboy."

"Not if I see you first," he muttered.

"Fuck off," Tab yelled over his shoulder, jumping down and away.

"I would but you keep driving everyone off!" He could shout, too, damnit.

Oh, that brought Tab back up the ladder. Shit, he could move fast. "Fine. Next time you're set to get your ass fucking raped I'll leave you there. You want that?" Tab was in his space, right in his face, Tab's voice low and hard. "You liked that? Want to know what could have happened to you, asshole?"

"What? I could have gotten manhandled? Oh, wait. I *did*."

"Lot worse than that, pretty boy." Tab leaned in harder, pressing right against him. "You think it sucks taking it up the ass from someone who doesn't trust you? Try it from a stranger." Tab stepped back and shook his head. "The hell with this. Do what you want. If you get killed, don't come crying to me."

"As if I would. Asshole!" As if he didn't know what any of that was like. He turned around and stomped off, heading toward the fucking cockpit. Again.

"Will!"

He kept stomping off.

He could hear Tab coming up behind him, steps heavy, uneven, and fast. "Will, for God's sake. Listen to me."

He stopped, but didn't turn around.

"How long you been flying out here?" Tab asked, his voice low. "You know I'm right. You know what they would have done. So stop being pissed at me for being right, just 'cause I'm me."

"I didn't go looking for it." It was important. That Tab didn't think he was some stupid kid who went looking for trouble. He didn't want to think why.

"Okay," Tab said quietly. "But it found you, and you gotta know how fucking close that was. Just...try not to get caught next time, either. Don't want to find you messed up."

He snorted, but his heart wasn't in it. "You saying you give a shit?"

There was a long silence behind him and then Tab's hands settled on his waist. "Yeah. That's what I'm saying."

Oh. Yeah, okay. He relaxed a little, leaning into Tab's hands. His head was spinning a little, but he wasn't drunk anymore.

"So, can we try this again without all the yelling?" Tab asked, his hands sliding around to the front of Will's waist, but -- surprisingly enough -- not dropping lower.

He reached down, hands covering Tab's. "Yeah. Maybe we can."

"So, how do we do that?" Tab asked, his voice just above a whisper. Will felt him move closer, the man's breath on his neck.

He grinned, leaning back into Tab, trusting Tab not to let him fall. "We could tape your mouth shut."

"Ah, but then I couldn't do stuff like this." Tab licked his neck and started kissing along the damp path up to his ear. "Could tape yours, though. See if you like gags along with being tied down."

"I thought you wanted to get through this without any yelling," he growled, stiffening.

Tab paused and then said, "Fuck it." He latched onto Will's neck and started sucking, his hands pushing down to rub and squeeze along Will's cock.

Moaning, Will leaned back into Tab, a soft shudder going through him. God. Fuck.

Tab played with him, rubbing and stroking and pushing until he was hard, all the while sucking and biting. "Nice," Tab muttered, finally letting go of his neck. "Come to my quarters? Don't fancy seeing the captain like this. Again."

He nodded. "Yeah. It would probably end badly." Hell, it still might, but he was willing to go with it, to chance it.

Slowly, Tab let him go. "You're not going to run off on me before we get there?"

"If you shut up already, I won't." He gave Tab a glare just to let the man know he wasn't necessarily not serious. Then he started off toward the engine room. He heard Tab sigh, but the man was right behind him. Or maybe a few feet back. When he glanced back to check, sure enough Tab was following along, gaze glued to Will's ass.

Tab caught him looking and just shrugged. "It's a nice ass," Tab said evenly.

He grinned and started working it, letting his ass move. He knew his leather pants showed it off to good effect.

"Tease," Tab growled, suddenly a lot closer, close enough to have his hands plastered all over Will's ass. "Down the ladder. Now. Then teach me about these pants -- it's a goal in my life to get them open one handed, in the dark, with you begging."

He laughed, wiggled his ass into Tab's hand and then got himself down the ladder. "You wish."

"I do!" Tab jumped down after him and hustled him along to his quarters. "I really, really do."

"Well, let's just see how good you are before anyone starts begging." He let Tab hustle him, tired of the playing and the starting and stopping and hiding and just wanting to fuck.

Tab got the door open and both of them through it in record time, turning Will into the now familiar position of being pressed against the wall with Tab all over him, the man's tongue pushing into his mouth. Moaning, he shoved back with his own tongue, fingers sliding over Tab's shoulders.

Tab's hips were pressing against him, cock rubbing on his abs. "Yeah," Tab whispered. "That's better. No yelling." He took Will's mouth again, sucking on his tongue.

He slapped Tab's shoulder, but only pushed into Tab. Fuck, he wanted it. He was lifted, Tab's hands sliding down his ass to his legs, lifting him right up to wrap around Tab's waist.

"Wanna do you against the fucking wall sometime," Tab groaned. "Just like this."

"Oh, fuck." He bucked, rubbing his trapped cock against Tab. Skies, the man was strong.

"Want to see you spread out for me," Tab went on. "Naked and hard and wanting. Want to taste you, flyboy. Hear you."

"Yeah, yeah, okay. Now." He dug his fingers into Tab's shoulders. "In other words, less talk, more action, asshole."

"See? Knew you'd beg," Tab grinned at him. He turned and dumped Will on the cot, getting down there with him, head at Will's cock. "Now, show me the trick to these," he said, nuzzling Will's balls.

"That was not a beg! And you want to know how they come off? You can start begging."

Tab licked him. Right over his balls and up his cock, the man licked his leathers. Over and over; and then he moaned. That was hardly fair play.

"Cheater," Will accused, hands fisting into the sheets.

Laughing, Tab licked him again, pushing at his cock with the flat of his tongue. "Such a nice cock," Tab said, smiling up at him before going back down to...well, to go down on him. Sort of. Groaning, he pushed his hands down and pulled off the fly's cover on his pants, tugging it open so Tab could get to the zipper.

"That's it," Tab encouraged. "Just what I want." His fingers slid with Will's for a moment and then tugged at the zipper, opening it up and letting Will's cock stretch. "Want," Tab said again, licking along the shaft and trying to get the leather down Will's hips.

Will wasn't fighting the man anymore, not for a second. He helped push the leather down, moaning as they only got as far as the bottom of his hips, leaving his legs trapped in them.

Tab didn't seem to care, big hands wrapped around his butt and lifting him a bit, Will's cock sliding into Tab's mouth and going deep.

"Fuck!" His whole body went tight, hips trying to buck.

Sucking and moaning, Tab went at his dick like it was a feast. Slurping, licking, sucking and playing, the man sucked cock like he enjoyed it, hands pulling and pushing and finally joining in, stroking over Will's balls and belly.

Will just lay back -- not like he had much choice in that -- closed his eyes and went with it, letting Tab pull the pleasure right out of him.

Tab groaned and went down to his balls, tugging at the leather again. "Let me hear you," Tab said, licking and nuzzling. "Want to hear." Tab groaned again, the sound full of need, and swallowed Will right down, taking him all in.

He shouted, coming hard, shooting right down Tab's throat.

Humming and swallowing, Tab licked him clean, then rolled away to stand at the end of the cot. "These, off," Tab said, jerking the leathers off and tossing them away. He crawled back up Will, between his legs, and kissed him, sharing a taste. "Nice," Tab purred against Will's lips. "Sweet."

"Yeah, not bad." Will's lips twitched.

"Oh, fuck you," Tab said, grinning. "You haven't had your cock sucked like that in...ever. I'd bet creds on it."

He laughed. "I'll never tell." Then he started tugging on Tab's shirt. "Too many clothes."

"Uh huh." Tab rolled again, stripping with stunning efficiency. "Your shirt?" Tab asked pointedly, shoving his pants down and off.

"Yeah? You like it?" He grinned, just watching Tab's body coming into view.

"Like it better if it was on my floor," Tab growled, stroking his cock.

"So put it there." He'd come, he was still feeling loose and good -- it was easy to tease the bear.

Tab leaned over him, climbed on him, straddled his hips, and tore the shirt off in front. "That's better," he said, tugging at Will's nipple.

"Hey!" Then he repeated the word, body moving into Tab's touch.

"Hey hey," Tab mimicked. "Like that?" Tab tugged again, pinching and twisting.

"Asshole," Will accused. But he couldn't hide his reaction, the way the touches made his cock jerk and push against Tab's ass.

"Yours," Tab moaned, rubbing along his inner thigh. "Want your ass, I mean," Tab added hastily.

"I heard that."

"Which part?" Tab asked, dipping his head to add his mouth to the nipple play.

Will moaned, bucking up again. "Both."

"Lovely," Tab grumbled, moving down and pushing his legs apart with a knee. "Going to let me, then?"

"Whoa, hold up, hot shot -- you got stuff?"

Tab gave him a withering look. "Of course. Do I look like -- don't say a word. Not one."

He laughed, still feeling pretty fucking good.

"Oh, shut up." Tab reached under the cot, almost falling off, but found the slick stuff easy enough. "Spread 'em, flyboy. I've been wanting this for a long time."

"And the romance is dead, it seems." He spread his legs, though. He wanted.

"I'll send you some...well, maybe I'll make sure you get breakfast," Tab said, wetting his fingers and sliding them over Will's hole. He teased, going round and round and then popping a fingertip in.

Will swallowed, legs spreading wider. Shit, it had been long enough since this had happened.

"Tight," Tab said softly, his eyes flicking up to Will's face and back down. "Don't worry, I'm a pussy cat. Sort of." He slid his finger in, going slow, slow, fast, and pulling out again. "Ready to play?"

"Give it your best shot," Will challenged, taking a breath. He saw Tab grin and then a bit more than one finger was pushing in, stretching him, sliding and thrusting and moving. Tab's hand turned, Will could see his wrist, and sparks went off. He bucked. "Oh fuck. Do it again."

"What? This?" Tab asked, doing it again. "Don't you dare get off on that -- you're coming on my cock next time."

"Asshole," he muttered, body jerking as Tab did it, cock hard again already.

"And again...." Tab rolled his eyes and pulled his fingers out. "Going to fuck you right through to the floor," he said, lifting one of Will's legs up and draping it over his shoulder.

Will moaned, wanting it, not sure he was ready for it.

Tab slicked his cock, fingers teasing at Will again. "Breathe," he said softly, starting to push in. "Just breathe for me."

He nodded, taking in one deep breath and then another. Reaching out, he grabbed hold of Tab's arms.

"Easy," Tab said, filling him. "Nice and easy. I'll pound you when you can take it." He grinned and winked. "Against the wall."

He moaned again, Tab's cock, and words, just sliding through him.

"Tight," Tab groaned, finally all the way in -- he hoped. "Kiss me."

He sort of blew a kiss up at Tab -- no fucking way he was leaning up with that cock splitting him open, the pressure almost pain.

Tab rolled his eyes. "Fuck," he grunted. "You sure you've done this before?" he asked, pulling back a little. Not quite gliding out, just easing off a bit.

"Did I say I had?"

Tab froze in place and stared at him. "What?"

"Relax, asshole, it's just been awhile." And the first time it was by his choice and the guy wasn't just fucking taking what he wanted. He blinked away sudden tears and half bucked. "Do something before I start to think all that crap about pounding me through the floor was just talk."

Giving him a long and searching look, not to mention eyeing him with more than a little suspicion, Tab pulled out a little more then eased his way back in. Tab petted Will's belly, stroking up him to brush over a nipple, the other hand holding Will's hip steady. "Okay," Tab said, sounding slightly breathless. "We'll do this slow."

"What the fuck ever." He gritted his teeth and tried to relax, waiting for it to get easier. Hell, it was already better than the other times. And it wasn't like Tab hadn't already made him come like a fucking rocket.

Tab clicked his tongue. "Now, now. You just breathe and relax like a good boy, and let me do the work." Tab changed his angle a little and started a slow shallow thrust, not pushing too hard. His face looked like he was concentrating hard, his eyes growing distant, like he was trying to think about something.

Will wasn't sure he didn't just prefer the wham bam slam over in a few quick minutes, and he was about to say something to that effect when the pressure suddenly eased. Oh. He took a breath, his teeth unclenching.

"There you go," Tab said with a grin. "Now...." Tab sped up a little, his cock moving more, deeper. Faster. "Oh god, yeah."

Will just rode it, barely noticing how not hurting was slowly turning to warm when suddenly Tab's cock hit the gland inside him and his whole body lit up. "Fuck!"

"Uh huh." Tab groaned and hit the spot again. "That's what it's all about, flyboy. Shit, too tight, baby. You better hurry up."

He whimpered, his whole body jerking every time Tab nailed his gland. Tab was getting faster, his thick cock stabbing into him in a smooth rhythm, punctuated by grunts and moans. The man was starting to sweat, his fingers grasping and tugging, petting and stroking, and finally wrapping around Will's prick and starting to stroke.

Oh, Fuck!

Will's eyes rolled back in his head, his whole body bucking as he came, ass clamping down hard on Tab's cock.

Tab cried out something that wasn't a word and slammed into him a few times, driving deep. "Fuck, yes!" he gasped, and Will could feel the dick in his ass throb as Tab came, his hips still making small thrusts as Tab apparently tried to get as deep as possible.

Shit.

Will was gasping and blinking, body still kind of shivering from the sensations.

That had been.

Damn.

If Tab got all cocky and obnoxious about this, Will was going to slug him.

"Damn," Tab whispered, leaning down a bit. He stopped, shifted Will's leg off his shoulder and leaned down again, panting. "Good." He brushed his mouth over Will's and kind of whimpered. "Next time, through the floor. Promise."

"I don't know. The mattress was likely more comfortable."

Tab snorted. "Shut up. Against the wall, then. Over your fucking console. Over the table in the galley. Wherever. Hard and deep and I'll make you scream. Or something."

"Screaming's overrated. That was nice -- good even -- and I wasn't expecting that." Damn, all this loose-bodied satisfaction was making him stupid.

"You thought I'd suck?" Tab gave him a long look. "Or," Tab said slowly, "it's always been bad before." It wasn't really a question.

"You did suck," he pointed out, trying to deflect the conversation. "And that was pretty good, too."

"Uh huh. I like cock -- fact. And stop that. What happened?" Tab shifted a little, slipping out of Will, and moving to the side. Tab didn't let go though, left an arm and a leg draped over him, one hand absently petting and moving over Will's skin.

"What are you -- my mother all of a sudden?" He wasn't having this conversation with Tab of all people. Well, he wasn't going to have it with anyone, but Tab was definitely at the top of the not having it list.

"I sincerely hope your mother doesn't do this," Tab said evenly, then shuddered. "Okay, that was an unfortunate thought. Where was I? Oh, right. Not your mother. No one but a mechanic. Whatever. Take a nap, will you? Get your strength back -- you'll need it."

Will snorted, retreating happily to the more familiar territory of trading barbs. "Why? You telling me an old guy like you's got another go-round in him?"

"Hell, yes! You got off twice, baby -- I'm just waiting long enough that I don't drive you into unconsciousness. And you didn't win, by the way -- I'd just rather fuck than talk for now."

"Then bring it on, Stud, show me what you've got -- I can keep up with you any day of the week." He leaned up onto his elbows and glared down at Tab.

Tab stared at him for a moment, weird eyes glittering. Then he pounced, rolling them over on the bed until he had Will pinned down. "Wanna play?" he demanded, grabbing for Will's wrists.

A shot of adrenaline went through him, cock throbbing, and he fought Tab, bucking, keeping his wrists away from Tab for as long as he could -- making Tab work for it.

"That's it," Tab growled, wrestling him. "Rub on me, flyboy." Tab got one wrist and slammed it to the bed above Will's head. He lunged for the other one, dragging his cock along Will's belly.

Will got distracted by the way Tab's cock was making his belly slick, the way his own prick felt squished between their bodies, and before he knew it, both hands were being held down over his head by Tab. He bucked with his hips, testing Tab's balance.

Tab grinned down at him, looking wicked. "You want it," Tab purred, pushing back. He wiggled a little, legs shifting to straddle one thigh as he lined up their cocks. "Go ahead. Move," he invited, squeezing Will's wrists a little.

"Asshole," muttered Will, bucking again, panting as the movement slid their cocks together.

"You keep saying that," Tab said with a grin. "I can't figure out why, though." He lowered his head and kissed Will hard, pushing his tongue in deep before Will could stop him.

Will went wild beneath Tab, body bucking and wriggling, their skin rubbing together so good, so hot. He kept it up, the kiss going on and on, and fuck, Tab was strong, keeping him down with just enough room to feel fucking awesome.

Tab started humping him, cock sliding, matching the way his tongue was fucking Will's mouth. Tab was hard again, and getting harder, hot and slick against Will. The fingers around Will's wrists tightened a little more, keeping him pinned down.

He relaxed back into the mattress, letting Tab do the work, moaning into the kiss as the friction made his balls achy and tight. Fuck, he was ready again, if Tab just kept on...

"Ask me for it." Tab looked down at him, suddenly still except for the way his chest heaved and his cock twitched next to Will's. "Ask me."

"Fuck you!" he grated, bucking up against Tab.

"Nope, not until you ask."

"Hey, if you aren't going to play -- get the fuck off me!" He bucked again, pushing and wriggling, trying to get the rubbing back.

"I'm going to play," Tab promised, squeezing his wrists and lying down flat on him. "And you're going to ask. Want me? Want to come?"

"You got another reason for why I'm lying here naked?"

Tab raised an eyebrow at him. "Why are you so stubborn?" he asked, apparently serious about it.

"What? You want to talk? Now?" Fuck, Tab was an asshole. "Just fuck me already."

"Thank you!" Tab lifted one of his legs and was suddenly between Will's, his dick nudging at Will's hole. "That's all it takes." He pushed in, one hand still holding Will's arms back, the other guiding his cock in.

Will whimpered and then bit his lip against more noises. It wasn't as hard this time though, his body already stretched, and he knew the good stuff was coming. "Move," he ordered, trying and failing to buck.

Tab laughed. "Such a change," he said, sounding smug. "One good fuck and you're all about it." He moved though, not bothering with slow and steady, just fucking Will hard and fast.

Will closed his eyes, moving with Tab, starting to breathe as it eased from almost pain to warm pressure to pleasure. Fuck yeah, just like that, right there. He licked his lips, hands flexing in Tab's hold, soft sounds coming from him as Tab moved in him.

"Like that?" Tab asked breathlessly. "Like me in you? My cock filling you, pushing you...such a sweet ass, flyboy. Come on, ride me. Move for me, baby."

"Can't," he muttered, tugging at his wrists. He was all stretched out, one leg over Tab's shoulder, just fucking nailed to the mattress.

"Yes, you can," Tab insisted. "Work your ass, come on. Roll your hips -- oh yeah. Good." Tab sped up again, pulling out and shoving back in, skating over his gland.

That touch just ignited him and he started rolling just like Tab wanted, meeting the thrusts, moaning and grunting from them.

Tab wasn't any more coherent, sounds spilling from him with every thrust, his body moving steadily. He was slick with sweat again, his chest flushed and his breathing harsh and heavy. "Fuck, yeah," he finally gasped, letting go of Will's wrists in favor of grabbing his hips. Tab held Will down and just slammed into him, again and again.

One of Will's hands dropped to his cock, and all it took was that one touch to himself and he was coming again, balls emptying hard.

Tab growled, a scary, long rumbling sound that ended in a near roar as the man's head went back and he strained against Will's ass, stretching him wide as Tab came. "Yeah, yeah...oh fuck yeah!" he cried out -- just before he fell forward and almost squished Will, bending his leg back in a way it didn't want to go.

Will grunted and shoved. "Get off me, you big lug!"

"That's gratitude," Tab bitched as he moved. "God, what makes you happy? Next time, I'm gagging you."

"Breathing makes me happy, asshole." Jesus fuck, the man was impossible. He stretched his poor bent knee and considered getting up and finding his own bed, but it seemed like a hell of a lot of effort when he already had a mattress beneath his back.

His eyes closed and yeah. Definitely staying right where he was.

"Stop calling me that. And you're welcome. Mind if I stay?" Oh, even newly laid the man was sarcastic.

Will snorted, already half asleep. "Like you'd go if I said no."

"There is that. I doubt the captain would like to see me sleeping on the bridge." Tab moved closer...snuggling? Oh, he was definitely snuggling.

Too bad Will was too out of it to needle the guy. He'd have to remember in the morning.

Chapter Five

In the future, Tab told himself sternly, it would be a damn good idea not to be a show-off. Sure, picking Will up and carrying him to the ship had made a point -- several if one counted the boners it had created -- but sometimes the aftermath was a bad idea.

Not the fucking -- that had been all right, once he'd realized the arrogant twit was nearly a virgin. No, the problem was what happened the next morning. Waking up with company and in near agony.

Pride wouldn't let him allow Will to see the pain, but the alternative was just as bad. His leg was killing him and he needed heat. Growly and aching, he made a half-hearted attempt to get gentle heat by shoving his thigh between Will's, trying to siphon off the man's body heat to where he needed it most.

Will's legs spread for him and then tried to close up again, Will moaning and shifting.

Oh lovely. Now the man wanted to get off. Typical. All fight when they were both hard, easy and willing when Tab couldn't manage to get hard if his life depended on it. Maybe. Carefully, he twitched his hip and rubbed a little, a bolt of pain rewarding him. He grunted and stopped moving.

Will moved again, the motions more frantic now, and Tab realized Will wasn't trying to get off, just to get him off Will.

The moan was a little panicked now and Will shoved hard. "Get off me!" The kid shot up, eyes wide as he looked around wildly. "Oh."

"Yeah, oh," Tab growled. "Just settle down, okay?" He tried to move away without wincing, but wasn't sure he managed it. Maybe Will would just be too busy freaking out to notice. Even better, maybe he'd just leave.

Will blinked. "Shit, sorry. Bad dream." Frowning, Will reached for him. "Did I hurt you? Sorry."

"I'm fine," Tab said shortly. "You? Hurting? What was the dream about?" He tried to roll over and gave up, settling for staying on his back.

Will shifted, wincing a bit as he settled on his ass. "I'm fine. Hey -- is it your leg?"

Tab glared. "My leg is fine," he lied. "My head is fine -- oh, how's the hangover?"

Will shook his head. "I don't get them." The kid looked too damned cheerful for words. "Wanna do it again?"

Tab stared. "You don't get them?" he asked, ignoring the second part. He wished he *could* do it again. He wished he could nail the brat just to prove he could.

Will laughed. "Nope. Never have. Got a low tolerance for the stuff, but I usually just barf, go to bed and wake up fine." Will poked his side. "So you gonna show me what you've got again?"

Tab smirked at him but didn't move. "Told you you'd be begging for me."

Will snorted. "You call that begging? You must be hard up." He stood and stretched, that sweet ass and long back giving him a nice show. "I don't have to stick around though -- it's not like I can't find something to do."

Tab growled before he could stop it. Will'd said something, not someone. He growled again, this time at himself. He didn't care what the pilot did. Nope. "Yeah, whatever," he said breezily. "I got work to do. Being in port means it's time for repairs. See you later." And it meant nursing his fucking leg so he could take Will on again.

"Fuck, you're an even bigger asshole the morning after. Hard to believe you're the same asshole who was *snuggling* up to me last night." Will bent over and picked up his pants.

"I don't snuggle. It's a small bed. And you're the one who was saying no, no, no, fuck me harder." Tab tilted his head and looked at Will's butt. "Nice tight ass, though. Worth the trouble it's attached to." He bit his tongue, that last part sneaking out without permission.

Will wiggled his ass. "You do too snuggle, asshole. And you don't want to fuck? Fine, we don't have to fuck. I thought that's what you wanted, but I guess all you wanted was a hole to put your dick into. You'll excuse me if I don't stick around to be convenient once again." Will gathered up the rest of his shit and slammed open the door, storming out through it.

Ah, shit.

Tab stared at the ceiling, trying to figure out how he could possibly fix this, short of leaping off the bed and following Will, stark naked. Fact was, he couldn't leap, probably couldn't even limp. Chasing after Will would be humiliating at best, horribly painful for sure, and down right impossible at worst.

With a snarl he turned into the warm spot on the bed and fought back tears of pain as he tried to warm up his leg.

Hours later Tab was sitting on the floor grid, staring at the guts of his engine. It was fine. It was running smoothly, and he'd managed to get some stuff done. He hadn't moved much, and the cup of hot brew he had was only there to rest on his leg. He was pretty sure he could walk now.

With a sigh he pulled himself up and went to the galley to dump the cup. Then he moved forward, heading to the bridge to try and fix the mess he'd made in the morning. With any luck Will would be over his fit of pique. Not likely though.

The music on the bridge was blaring and loud, Will nodding his head along to it, running simulations.

Tab stood in the doorway for a moment, watching. He tried not to grin, something made easier as he stepped in and his leg ached. He stopped walking and cleared his throat, far too low to be heard over the music. "Will," he said, louder.

Will jumped out of his skin and turned to glare at him as the music was lowered. "You always sneak up on people?"

Tab sighed. "I didn't sneak up on you. Hell, a band of hijackers could have wandered in here and started shooting before you even heard a thing."

"I'd have felt it if you clunked your boots as you came in." Will was checking him out, subtle, mind, but there.

"You want me to stomp around?" Tab asked, not moving at all. Let him look. Nothing to see but a fit and able man...if Tab projected really hard, anyway.

Will shrugged. "That's not what I said. Ah, hell. What do you want, Tab? I'm busy."

"Wanted to know if you're still pissed at me, I guess," Tab said with a shrug. "Just for future reference, what's your typical cool-down time?"

"Pissed? What makes you think I'm pissed at you?"

"Well, maybe the way you accused me of using you and then stormed out of my quarters without even stopping to pull on your pants?" Tab moved forward a couple of steps, trying damn hard not to limp more than normal.

"You have to care to be pissed at someone." Will's expression was neutral.

Oh. Well, now that was interesting, because Tab knew what pissed was and he knew what he'd seen that morning. He leaned back on a handy console and thought about that for a moment. "Okay," he said finally. "Seeing as how I might have admitted to giving a shit if you got yourself in trouble or not last night, you could be a man right now and admit that you're pissed at me. And then I'll go and wait until you're not, or until you want to tell me exactly why you're mad this time."

Will's lips twisted. "You have a funny way of giving a shit come morning."

Tab tried not to wince. Usually, he was all about mornings. He loved fucking in the morning. He loved rubbing and exploring and sleepy kisses that turned to panting gasps. Just not when he'd been an idiot about his leg the night before. He pinched the bridge of his nose. "I'm sorry I didn't fuck you stupid," he ground out. "Can you tell me who was using who, then? 'Cause you took off pretty fast when I didn't crawl all over you."

"Are you kidding me? You couldn't have made it plainer you wanted me out of your bed. All that grunting and refusing to look at me."

Tab stared at him. "I don't grunt."

"Yeah, whatever." Will turned back to face the console, arms crossed over his chest, fucking pouting.

Tab moved closer to him, stepping carefully. "What was the nightmare about?" he asked quietly. "You didn't rest easy and I had a bad morning. Can we let it go?" he asked, not holding out much hope. Really, he wasn't sure why he was even bothering with the cranky bastard.

"Let it go and do what exactly? A repeat? You want to fuck me through the mattress and then grouch me out of bed again the next morning? Because I'm so not up for another round of that."

Okay, that was it. He was far too old to play games with a snotty pilot like this. He could get laid somewhere else -- hell, they were in port. He could get laid in twenty minutes, if he took a shower. "Fine," he snapped. "Don't get drunk tonight, 'cause I'll be too busy to save your sorry ass." He turned and started stomping out, but wound up hissing, one hand slapped on his thigh. Fuck.

Will's warmth was suddenly behind him, one hand on his back. "What's wrong with you?"

"Why do you care?" Tab growled, trying to make his leg work enough to hold his weight.

"It's your leg, isn't it? Is this why you were such an ass this morning?" Will still sounded angry. In fact he maybe sounded more angry.

Tab sighed. "It'll be fine," he said softly. "Forget about it." If only the twit would just go back to his fucking console, Tab could drag his sorry ass down to his quarters in peace.

"You pompous asshole." Will hit him in the arm. Hard. "God forbid anyone -- hell not anyone, me -- god forbid I should know you're hurting. What, you think it would make me think you're less of a man? God, what an asshole."

"Ow." Tab glared at Will, his chest swelling as he squared his shoulders. "Why did you hit me?" he asked as quietly as he could. "You think that'll help in some way? Thank you so much."

"You know all you have to do is ask for help. I'm right fucking here. I was in the goddamned bed with you this morning." Will poked him this time, moving to glare up at him.

There wasn't much he could say to that, aside from admitting that Will was right -- Tab hated to ask for help, and hated more to admit it was his own showing off that made him hurt. He glared right back, but didn't say anything for a long moment. Finally, he had to say something, so he sighed. "Yeah," he muttered. "I hurt. Then and now. Okay?"

"Yeah, that's okay. You need something from me?"

Tab gritted his teeth, the admission almost as painful as his leg. He shifted his weight and reassessed. Nope, leg hurt a hell of a lot more. "Wouldn't say no if you rubbed it again. Like last time," he said through a moan.

"Hooyeah. The big man asks for help. Come on, let's go back to your room." Will turned and took a few steps before looking back at him. "Unless you need help getting there, too."

"Gloating is not a turn on," Tab said, reaching for Will's arm. "Just...don't go too fast, hotshot."

Will grinned. "Not gloating. Much." He took off at an easy pace.

"Gloating is gloating," Tab insisted. "And it's a little...rude." Oh, that was it. Accuse him of being rude of all things. Really, it was best if they just not talk at all. He closed his mouth firmly.

Will maybe thought so, too, because he was glaring over but not saying anything. Then the kid snorted. "Imagine, *you* telling me about what's rude."

"Well, your mother obviously never taught you," Tab shot back before his brain kicked in.

"At least I had a mother."

"Oh, ouch," Tab said with a snort. "I had one, too. Obviously. Seeing as how I'm here. How long she was around after is none of your business, and therefore - " He stopped limping along and looked down at Will with another glare. "I have an excuse. You're just being rude to be rude."

Will stopped too and crossed his arms, glaring. "You want my help with your leg or you want to limp back to your room and take care of it by yourself, asshole?"

Tab was ready to do just that, but his leg had other ideas, almost giving out on him. He winced and grabbed for the wall. "Just don't...stop baiting me," he said through gritted teeth. "Please."

"Don't stop baiting you?" Will shook his head and went under his arm. "You are a strange one."

"And you are seriously trying to wind me up, aren't you?" Tab accused him. "You like it when I get all pissy and aggressive? I'm pretty sure I can do that without being mad."

"You keep accusing me of things I'm not doing, Tab and it's annoying as hell." Will glared at him, helped him hobble along, too, but glared all the while.

"And you do the same thing," Tab insisted as they got to the ladder. "Any idea why? I mean, why we just...push and push and push each other? I'm a nice guy, really. Swear."

"You started it." Will went down the ladder first, looking up at him expectantly.

"Are you six?" Tab asked mildly. "Catch me!" He grabbed the ladder and more or less slid down, arms braced.

"Jesus fuck." Will was braced for him though, stopping him before he hit the bottom, keeping him from jarring the leg. "You're the one who's fucking six!"

"Only way I could get down," Tab assured him. "Now, let's get to my quarters, yeah? I promise I won't even talk." He braced himself on the wall and started limping his way down the narrow passage, wincing with every step.

"Stubborn asshole," muttered Will, coming up behind him.

"True," Tab agreed. "I am. Kept me alive more than once."

"Yeah, well, it's going to keep you lonely if you don't back off now and then." Will looked him up and down. "Strip and lie down."

He could do that. The shirt came off easy and he lay down, feeling better as soon as he got off the leg. He undid his pants and started easing them off his hips. "Um. Can you tug from the bottom so I don't have to bend my knee?" he asked, reaching for his pillow.

Will snorted, did as he asked. "You really are a stubborn asshole, aren't you?"

"What now?" Tab asked, staring at the ceiling. "I asked for help. What do you want from me? Flowers? Poetry?"

"I meant for letting it get this far before you asked for help in the first place, jerk. God, I'm amazed you ever get laid."

Tab snorted. "You do remember what it felt like, yeah? The way I sucked your dick? What it felt like coming around me? Twice? The second time complete with 'oh fuck me, Tab' noises."

"Yeah, but how long did it take us to get there?" Will sat next to him and started working on his thigh, fingers digging into his muscles.

Tab was about to point out how freaking stubborn Will had been, but then he groaned and just let the man work. Will might be a show-off-can't-drink-at-all pilot with a tight ass, but he was also damn good at working Tab's muscles and melting his spine.

"God, how did you learn to do this?" he managed to ask, when he was about half melted.

Will just shrugged and kept working his leg. "Next time you should ask before it gets this bad."

"Okay," Tab agreed. He was about to agree to anything. His leg had gone past 'oh, that's not bad' right into 'ohhh more, baby'. "Little higher, please," he said, his eyes just about rolling back in his head. Damn, that felt good.

Will chuckled, did as he asked. "I bet now's the time to hit you up for stuff."

"I haven't got any stuff," Tab said around a groan. "Oh god yeah. There. More. Please."

"You know what I mean." Will grinned, eyes sparkling, teasing. Those fingers weren't teasing though, working him just like he needed.

"No, I don't," he insisted, his mind taking a short vacation as his blood surged south.

Will snorted. "No? Tell you what. How about after I've done this, I'll do you nice and sweet."

"Yeah, whatever," Tab sighed. "Wait, what?"

Will laughed. "Your ass is mine, Tab."

Tab tried to think, but there were fingers doing...things to him. "Huh?" he asked, not bothering with trying to sound intelligent. Part of his brain pointed out that Will had spread for him not even a day earlier, and he'd obviously not done that often.

"Gonna fuck you through the mattress. Maybe now I get why you don't ask for help with this." Will was laughing at him, just grinning away, eyes twinkling.

Tab blinked at him. A lot. "Oh shut up," he finally said. He stared at the ceiling for a moment. "Okay," he said quietly. "You want to, then....okay." Oh, he was never letting his leg get this bad again. Ever.

Will's fingers stopped. "Really? Not just because, you know, I melted your brain through your leg?"

Tab nodded slowly. "Really. And not just 'cause you...well. Am I hard?" He lifted his head and looked down his body. Oh yeah, hard. He'd thought so, but apparently his brain was playing funny tricks on him and it was best to check these things out.

Will laughed. "Oh man -- have you been drinking?"

"Not a bit. Which should tell you something." He reached down and started jacking himself, more to stop the talking than anything else.

Will slapped his hand away. "Oh, no you don't. Your ass is mine."

"That, flyboy, is a cock. Not an ass. The ass is the back part."

Will rolled his eyes. "You know what I meant."

Tab blinked at him. "Will, look at me. Do you seriously think I'm in my right mind at the moment? I can't even figure out what I mean, let alone you. Are you going to fuck me or not?"

Will's face had shut up again. "Not if you're not in your right mind, I'm not -- last thing I need is you yelling rape tomorrow."

Ah, damn.

Tab pulled away and sat himself up, happy that his leg was working right. Then he grabbed Will by the shoulders, pulled him as close as he could, and kissed him. Hard. With a lot of tongue. "Want you," he growled. "And I promise I won't do anything that shitty."

Will looked at him for one hard moment and then pushed him back down, tongue pushing into his mouth. Oh yeah. That was better; less chance of saying something stupid.

Tab sucked at Will's tongue and tugged at his clothes, trying to find skin. "Fucking pants," he mumbled into the kiss.

Will laughed and wriggled on top of him. "Just tell me if your legs goes bad again, k? I don't want a repeat of this morning, thinking you're a huge fucking asshole, when all you are is a little bit of one." Will winked and rubbed against him, body hot even through the leather.

"Fucking didn't do it," Tab admitted, curling his good leg around Will's hip, rubbing back just as hard. "It was carrying you and stomping around."

Will laughed. "Oh. Oh, that's classic."

Tab felt his color rise. There was a reason he didn't open up. With a grunt he pushed hard, trying to get Will off him, which would have worked better if he'd thought to untangle their legs. "Shut up," he snarled.

Will pushed their lips together, laughter sliding into his mouth as Will worked open those stupid pants.

"It's not funny," Tab tried to say. He gave Will another half-hearted shove. Bastard. Sexy as hell, contrary, stubborn bastard. Nice pants, though.

"Sure it is," Will insisted. "You just have a poorly-developed sense of humor." Will was grinning down at him, pants suddenly open, hard cock spilling from them.

"Whatever," Tab said, deciding to ignore the argument in favor of playing with Will's dick. Fat and long, hot and heavy, he stroked it and teased a finger over the head. "Pretty," he said, staring down at it.

"Yeah...it's going to look great going into you."

Tab nodded. As an observation, it was probably true. However.... "Um, you've done that more than you've taken it, I hope?"

Will looked up at him, eyes wide. "What?"

"What?" Tab asked back. "Oh no. No games, flyboy. Tell me you know what you're doing and make me believe it, or this goes nowhere."

Will glared down at him. "I know what to do!"

"That's not what I'm asking!" For the love of.... Tab tried to push Will off him again, not kidding this time.

Will got the message, climbing up off the bed, glaring down at him. "Just because I've never done it before, you're calling the whole thing off?"

"Hell, yes!" Tab stared at him. "Are you insane or only slightly brain-damaged?"

Will's face closed up and he closed his pants back up. "Insane, obviously. I think I'm cured though."

Tab threw himself across the bed, pissed off beyond all reason. He grabbed Will's wrist tight and pulled the man back, hard. "You aren't going anywhere. Not until you tell me what the fuck you're on about. You don't like me much, but you let me fuck you last night, didn't even mention you were almost a virgin. I got a clue about that nightmare, too. So you tell me, Will. Why me? Why do you want to fuck me, why are you even here? Because I just don't get it."

"Fuck off!" Will yanked his hand away and pushed back. "You burn hot and cold -- fuck me, don't fuck me. Frankly, I don't know why I'm here anymore. That's why I'm going."

"No way." Tab stared at him, more serious than he'd felt in a long time, even about engines and the parts they needed to make them go. "You leave now without talking to me, you're not coming back. And I'm not chasing anymore. I need to know what the hell's going on here, Will."

"I thought we were going to fuck. I thought we were both enjoying ourselves."

"And I thought you had a hell of a lot more experience than you do. I could have hurt you last night, Will. Seriously, how many guys have you been with?" Tab was willing to bet, right at that very moment, that there hadn't been anyone when Will was willing. And that scared the living hell out of him.

Will crossed his arms and stood stiffly, glaring. "What, you want a resume suddenly?"

"No, I want to know why you're suddenly willing to switch teams. With someone you yell at a lot." He didn't mention the obvious things like just how hot he was, limp and weird eyes and all -- that was a given.

"Switch teams? What the hell? I've never been into women, Tab."

Okay, now the whole thing was just confusing. Tab rubbed his eyes. "You're into guys. But have next to no experience. How the hell is that possible? I mean, have you looked in a fucking mirror? Like, ever?"

"I have experience! I've sucked and given hand jobs and gotten fucked. Just because I've never fucked anyone before, doesn't make me inexperienced and I don't know what the hell a mirror's got to do with it." Will just glared. "You really are the most annoying man I've ever met, did you know that?"

Tab just shook his head. "You're really fucking hot, is what a mirror has to do with it. You haven't been fucked often. And not nicely, or you wouldn't have been so tense last night. Which means you know what not to do, but maybe not what to do, and I don't bottom enough to be comfortable with that yet. And yes, I'm annoying, but so are you, which brings me back to the point -- what do you want with me, Will?" God, he was tired all of a sudden. But he didn't want Will to leave. He was just as fucked as Will was.

"You turn me on." The words were grudgingly offered.

Well, that was flattering. Almost.

"Okay," Tab said, shifting on the bed so he wasn't so much trapping Will into staying as encouraging him not to leave. "That's...what it is. We get turned on, we want to fuck, but we've got this personality thing going on that keeps messing it up. Am I right, or do we like angry sex? Because I can do that, if that's all it is. I think." Maybe. A gag would help, he was pretty sure.

Will shrugged. "Is there any other kind?"

Ah, shit. Tab sighed. "Yes."

"So? What's your point then?"

All right. Time to clear something up, for good or bad. At least they'd both get off.

"Come here," Tab said, softly. "Promise it won't hurt. Just lie down with me."

Will looked down at himself. "Naked?"

"Whatever. Sure. Up to you." Tab rolled over and lay on the bed, one arm out for Will. "Just, come here. I'm going to show you something."

"Well are you showing me a need to be naked something, or an it doesn't matter something? Because if you start in again on how hard it is to get my pants undone...."

"Fine, lose the pants," Tab said, trying to keep the growl out of his voice. Impatience before they started wasn't a good thing. Not in the plan; the new and improved plan to get laid. Nice guy version.

Will raised an eyebrow, but he undid his fastenings and got naked, sliding cautiously onto the bed.

"Okay, good," Tab encouraged him. "Now, go slow. Just...let's just kiss for a bit, okay? And none of this 'kiss to dominate' crap." He pulled Will a little closer, one hand on the man's hip, and brushed their mouths together, licking lightly at his lips. "Just...taste."

Will looked skeptical but he shrugged. "Okay."

Tab kissed Will softly, his eyes drifting closed, and he just enjoyed it. He stroked his hand over Will's hip, but didn't wander, didn't grope him, just touched. Will's mouth opened for him, but Will was good, not trying to take over the kiss or anything, letting Tab lead.

"That's it," Tab whispered, tongue flicking into the man's mouth and back again. Playing. Tasting. Just saying a friendly hello. With his free hand he started touching Will's hair, his cheek, the line of his jaw, getting to know him a little.

Will was pliant and still beneath him, tongue sliding against his for a moment.

"Nice," Tab said softly. "Just...nice, baby." He deepened the kiss only slightly, letting the hand on Will's hip start to move across the man's belly. "Tell me what feels good, let me hear you. Want to know what you like," he said, brushing a thumb across Will's nipple.

Will jerked as his thumb hit that nipple. "That," gasped Will.

"Yeah?" Tab did it again, slower, scattering kisses along Will's jaw. "Light or heavy? Want more or less?"

Will tensed up a little. "I...I don't know."

"Okay, so we play...." Tab kissed his way to Will's neck and nuzzled there, lightly rubbing around Will's nipple, flicking it now and again. "Like that?"

Will nodded. "Oh, yeah."

"Good." Tab moved a little closer, stroking his thumb over the tightening peak. "This?" he asked, keeping the touch constant.

"Oh fuck! Don't stop." Will's eyes rolled into his head.

"That's a big yes," Tab said with a grin. "Okay, baby. How about this?" He moved down a little and replaced his thumb with his tongue, licking and nibbling happily.

Will bucked, hands reaching for him.

"Oh yeah." Tab took the hard nipple into his mouth and sucked, his hands soothing the rest of Will's body, moving slowly over him and touching a whole lot of soft skin.

Will's fingers curled around his arms, a soft moan sounding. He could see Will's cock, hard and needy, hell, he could smell it. He bit down lightly, his hands avoiding Will's cock, and then let the man's nipple go in favor of taking another kiss.

Will moaned, hand sliding up into his hair, mouth opening eagerly for him. Oh yeah. This was better. Not angry, just sex. Nice sex. Sex that was more about giving and hunger than power.

Tab kissed Will, petted him, played with him. His hands went to Will's thighs, his back and his sides, seeking out sensitive spots to kiss and nibble on, spots that would turn the man into a puddle. He'd kind of forgotten how fun it could be. He had Will writhing soon enough, pushing into the touches, moaning and whimpering. "Tell me what you like," Tab whispered, pulling Will closer, letting him rub. "Tell me where to touch you, baby. Want you to feel good."

"You're doing good so far," murmured Will. "I mean...I never knew."

"There's lots to know," Tab said, burying his head in Will's neck and kissing the soft skin there. His hand smoothed over Will's butt, nice and gentle, then rubbed a slow circle on his lower back. "It can be so nice. Let me make it nice for you."

Will nodded. "It's always just been cock and ass."

"Not this time," Tab promised. He kissed Will again, moving over him and lining up their erections. He started to rock against Will gently. "Just feel."

"I can do that."

Tab moaned softly and rocked again, kissing every bit of Will he could. "God, you feel good," he whispered. "Hot and smooth...make me so hard."

Will whimpered. "You, too. Make me hard, I mean."

Tab laughed softly. "And I feel good. Come on, compliments are nice...." He pushed against Will's cock with his own and licked at Will's nipple, still a little swollen.

"Sorry. Can't think with you doing that."

Tab laughed again. "All right. Don't think, then." He licked and nuzzled and rocked, doing everything he could think of to make the man melt. It seemed to be working, too; Will just moaned and whimpered, pushing into each and every touch.

"That's it, baby," Tab purred. "Just ride it. Go wherever it takes you. Just let it feel good." He thrust a little faster, pushed a little harder, his own heart beginning to pound.

Will's fingers slid over his back, just rubbing randomly as the lean body in his arms moved, pushed and rocked and slid against him.

God, it felt good. It felt light and fun and far too much like something it shouldn't, but Tab wasn't about to stop then. He pushed a hand between them and gathered both of their cocks up, squeezing tight as he started to stroke.

Will gasped, head dropping back. A long, low moan sounded. "Fuck. Tab. Oh."

"Uh huh." He really couldn't say much more than that. He tugged a little faster, his hips starting to snap rather than rock. He was going to shoot and he wanted Will there with him.

Will's eyelids fluttered, his moaning getting loud and then suddenly Will was crying out, hips pumping as heat poured over Tab's hand.

"Fuck, yeah," Tab grunted, pulling hard with a slick fist, grunting as he thrust. "Yes. Now, oh god, now." He pushed hard, cock throbbing as he shot ribbons of come across Will's belly. "That's it."

Panting, he leaned down and kissed Will's mouth gently, smoothing come into his skin. "That's it, baby."

Will kissed him back, eyes more than a little stunned. "Wow."

Tab tried to grin, but it was probably a wobbly smile. "Yeah," he said, still breathing hard. "Wow. Liked that?"

Will snorted. "Oh, no, I hated it, couldn't you tell?" Will punched him gently in the arm. "Yeah, I liked it."

Tab rolled his eyes. "And yet, you hit me and talk back," he teased. "Sheee." He rolled over onto his back and sighed. "Needed that."

Will sort of hesitated a moment and then curled up into him. "It was nice, Tab. Thank you."

Tab's smile softened. "You're welcome," he said softly, wrapping his arms around Will. "Take a nap, okay? Get some rest."

"I could sleep," murmured Will, already sounding more than halfway there.

"Me too," Tab yawned. "And then I'll see what else I can show you."

"There's more?"

"Oh yeah. Lots more," Tab promised, closing his eyes.

"More of the good stuff? Huh." Will shifted and settled again, breath soft.

More of the good stuff. Then the rough stuff, the naughty stuff, the really unspeakable stuff...this could turn into a long series of lessons, Tab thought. He was pretty sure he didn't hate the idea.

Will was warm and cozy and he had to piss in the worst way.

Which sucked because then he wouldn't be warm and cozy anymore and he kind of wanted to hang onto the feeling good for as long as he could. He and Tab usually danced warily around each other and it was kind of nice not doing that.

His bladder insisted though, when Tab shifted and put a hand on Will's tummy. He shot out of bed like a bird out of space dock on the run and hit the engine room head, relieving himself with a sigh.

He made his way back to Tab's little room at a much more sedate pace.

"You okay?" Tab said, sitting up and looking a little wild-eyed. Wilder. His hair was sticking up, too.

"Yeah. Had to piss."

"Oh. Okay." Tab fell back on the bed and sighed. "Um. Getting back in, or you going to stand there?"

He stiffened. "Which do you want?"

Tab rolled his eyes. "For fuck's sake, stop shying away like I'm evil or something. Get in the bed and warm me up some more. We can fight in here, if you really want to. Personally, I'm thinking the sex is more fun."

He stuck his tongue out at Tab, God, the man just brought it out in him, and climbed back into the bed. "The sex was fun," he offered. More fun than he'd known sex to ever be. Usually he was just happy if there was no actual fucking involved. Sucking people off and hard hand jobs in dark corners were usually enough to relieve the tension. Hardly what he'd call fun.

Tab grinned. "It was. And the nap was good, and I can actually move. Thanks for that, by the way."

"Well, all you have to do is ask." Stubborn fool'd nearly crippled himself yesterday from what Will could see. Of course, he didn't know that he wouldn't have done the same thing himself if circumstances had been reversed. "You got plans for today?" he asked casually.

"Oh yeah. Mostly involve only leaving this bed for food. And eventually I have to do some shopping for parts." Tab's hand found Will's thigh, moving slowly up and down.

"You haven't got the parts you need yet? We leave day after tomorrow, first thing." He cleared his throat and made himself relax. "Sorry. Kind of automatic."

"Work on that." Tab stuck his tongue out. "They're ordered and boxed, I just have to pick them up and get the captain to sign off on the forms." His hand slid higher. "And maybe see if I can find a few little things that could come in handy."

"Yeah?" He was going to ask like what, but Tab had told him to work on the automatic 'work takes precedence' thing and that hand was all but tickling his balls, so he let his words go and just moaned softly, shifting to try to get Tab's hand on his bits.

"Uh huh." The hand slid away, curling around his hip to brush his ass before going to the small of his back. "But not right now," Tab added, snuggling in closer and starting to kiss his neck again.

Will dropped his head back, enjoying the lazy touches of hands and mouth. He reached out himself, figuring it was only fair if he touched back. Tab would tell him if he stepped wrong, of that he had no doubt.

Tab made a soft sound and wiggled a bit, the kisses starting to trail up to Will's ear. He shivered and laughed, the kisses soft enough to tickle.

"Oh, somewhere to tease," Tab whispered, starting to lick as well. He shook slightly, like he was laughing.

"Asshole," he accused, though more from habit than heat. Fingers sliding to Tab's ribs, he looked for ticklish spots on the other man.

"Hey!" Tab jumped and laughed, wiggling harder. "Stop that or I won't...heh. You'll never know, will you?" He looked very smug.

He glared at Tab. "Like I said -- asshole."

"Oh come on, you love it," Tab grinned at him. Suddenly a warm hand slid up the inside of his thigh.

"I like what you *do*...maybe you should have a gag on." He spread his legs, giving that warm hand access.

"Brat," Tab said mildly, his thumb brushing over Will's balls.

Will snorted, but pushed his hips down, his balls sliding against Tab's hand.

"Eager brat," Tab amended, grinning. "Want me to suck your cock?"

"Yes." Damn, yes.

He wouldn't tell Tab, but the man was the first ever to suck him. Usually, he was the one doing the sucking. "You don't have to if you don't want to though," he added.

"Wouldn't offer if I didn't want to," Tab said, meeting his eyes. "I like it." He certainly seemed to like using his mouth, anyway. Fight, bicker, lick, kiss and suck. Still, it was the more pleasant ones the big jerk was focused on, so Will let him. Oh yeah, he let him. Tab's hand was playing with his balls, and the man's mouth was making a trail right down his belly.

He rolled onto his back, more comfortable than his side, and spread his legs with a whimper of anticipation.

"Like it a lot," Tab said to Will's cock. "And you like it, too." He licked up one side and down the other. "Don't you?"

"Getting sucked? Shit, yeah. It's something else." He looked down, watching Tab's face. The man really did like doing it.

"Uh huh. Beautiful thing," Tab said, licking him again. His hands were gentle, but his mouth was hungry as he opened wide and took Will in.

Will cried out and bucked, pushing deep without even thinking about it. Tab didn't seem to mind, making a noise deep in his chest and sucking harder, fingers sliding back and starting to tease at his hole. Oh, he was really hungry. That was okay with Will though, because Tab made it feel so good, so hot.

Will was making all these small noises -- grunts and moans and whimpers -- and his heels dug into the mattress, hips pushing up and down.

With a slurp Tab came off his cock, his fingers still circling Will's hole. "Gimme," he growled. "Fuck my mouth." He opened wide again and took Will deep, a dry finger pushing into his ass.

Will cried out, pushing into Tab's mouth. Shit, it felt good and if that's what Tab wanted...well, who was he to deny the man? He started pushing in over and over again.

Tab was making sounds, the vibrations teasing and going right through him, and the finger in his ass was pushing hard. Tab's tongue slid and, with a long moan, Tab took him deeper, pulling Will into his throat. Will's whole body shook, his cock just throbbing. When Tab swallowed around him, he shot hard.

Tab took it all, humming as he licked him clean, his finger slipping free when he was all done. "Good morning," Tab said, licking his balls.

He grinned. "Yeah. Yeah, it is."

"Uh huh. Just wait." Tab kept licking him, bathing his balls and stroking his thighs.

He raised his head to look down at Tab. "Just wait for what?" he asked, suspicious. Now was when the other shoe was going to drop, for sure.

"This...." Tab said, getting a shoulder under one of Will's thighs and spreading him wide. A hot tongue dragged over his hole.

He screamed -- an honest-to-god scream. Holy fucking shit.

That was.

Jesus Fuck.

Tab did it again. Will could feel the man laughing at him, shaking the bed. But Tab didn't stop. Will figured he could put up with being laughed at for this. Oh yes, he could.

His hips started moving of their own accord, just kind of pushing up into Tab's licks and he tossed his head from side to side, the sensation just out of this world and too big for him to contain.

Fingers came into it, holding him open and then Tab was fucking him with his tongue, licking and kissing and pushing in. "Fuck, yes," Tab moaned, the sound of his voice muffled. The tone was clear though; he was getting off on eating Will's ass.

Unbelievable.

Except it was happening.

Will shuddered, the pleasure just shooting through his body, making his cock hard again already, making his balls ache.

A finger pushed in beside Tab's tongue, then another one, slick and wet. "Tell me what you want," Tab said. He licked around his fingers, fucking and playing, but ignoring Will's cock.

"I don't want you to stop," he whispered, his fingers twisting in the sheets.

"Okay." Tab fingered him for a little longer then went back to just fucking him with that tongue. Just. God. A growl vibrated around him, in him, and he could feel the bed move as Tab started jerking off.

Shit. God.

He reached and grabbed his cock with one hand, tugging as Tab kept it up, stars just shooting behind his eyes, making everything sparkle as he came hard.

Again.

Skies.

Fuck.

Tab climbed to his knees, wiping his mouth with one hand, the other one stroking his cock fast and tight as he beat off over Will. "God, yeah. Good," he said roughly, gaze glued to Will's cock. "That's it, gonna -- oh yeah!" He shot in an arc, come landing on Will's chest in a white thread. And again.

Will groaned, just lying there and watching, too melted to do more than that.

Tab fell down next to him. "More sleep? Or food? 'Cause I think we're gonna need to clean up soon, before we move on."

"They've got showers cheap on the second sublevel. There's a decent kaffe there, too."

It would be nice to get a hot water shower.

"Sounds like a plan. Water, real food...." Tab sounded like the idea of a real shower could get him hard again. "Come on then, flyboy. Wipe off and let's go. Time's slipping by -- oh, we can get those parts at the same time."

"Gee, just wipe off and go? You think I've got any bones in me after that?"

Tab grinned smugly. "Pretty cool, huh? Fuck, you were into it, too."

God, that smug look just made him want to smack Tab upside his head. "Not as into is as you seemed to be."

Tab's grin grew. "I like it. Nothing wrong with that. You might like it, too."

"And if I don't?" Here it came, that other shoe. Tab had done something for him and now it was payback time. Though he didn't know what Tab was going to make him do after something like that. Because that was seriously wow.

Tab shrugged. "Then we find something you do like."

His eyes narrowed. "You have something specific in mind, Tab?"

Tab rolled his eyes. "No, idiot. My point -- the one I've been making since last night -- is that sex should feel good. If it doesn't? Something's wrong. So if you don't like sucking or rimming or bottoming....you don't do it. That's all. Got it?"

"If you say so." It was his experience that guys always wanted something in return for jacking you off and Tab had gone way farther than that, but if the man wanted to play it like this, Will could go along with that.

Tab stood up and started tossing clothes around, giving him a soft cloth to wipe off with. "Look," he said. "You had fun, right? Got a hand job, lots of kisses, sucked off, rimmed.... And I'm hungry. I'm not about to lock you to the bed and demand you put out. I got off, too, and I'm feeling all mellow. That's all there is to it. Seriously."

He nodded. He'd take it as offered for now. Hell, even if Tab did expect something off him, he figured he was getting a pretty good deal and the sex was better than any he'd ever had.

His Gran used to say 'don't look a gift horse in the mouth'. Apparently horses were animals that would bite if you got too near their mouths. What it basically meant was don't complain over what you've got or look at it too closely.

He cleaned off and stood, started getting dressed.

"So, we're good for now?" Tab asked, pulling a clean shirt on.

He nodded and gave Tab a grin. "Yeah. We're good. For now."

With a wink, he did up his last button and sauntered on out ahead of Tab.

Chapter Six

When the first jolt rocked the ship Tab thought it was Will fucking around. The man had been slightly off kilter since they'd left port, sometimes looking thoughtful, sometimes looking like he thought he should be pissed off but couldn't quite figure out why.

The second jolt had him lunging for the com switch, one hand already reaching for a popped circuit. "What the hell's going on up there?" he called out, almost falling over as the ship rocked and shook.

"We're being shot at," came the growled response before the com was cut off and another jolt rocked the ship.

Oh damn.

This really wasn't going to put Will in a good mood.

Tab started tying things down, listening to the sounds of impact and trying to judge what was going on. He knew they'd lost systems on the top deck before the alarm sounded, and was already rerouting power; only took a minute, and he was damn pleased with that.

He hit the com again. "Fly, damn it!" he yelled. "Wide open, she'll take it!"

His only answer was the sound of the engines opening up. Before they could get to full speed, something exploded in the engine and the ship shuddered to a stop.

"All hands to arms," came the captain's voice over the intercom. "All hands to arms!"

"Fuck!" he yelled. The captain might want all hands to arms, but he'd be damned if he left the engines to die like that. They might stand a chance if he could get her going again.

There was a loud thump that jarred them again, something hitting them, or maybe attaching to the hull.

Oh. That didn't sound good at all.

Tab raced down the corridor to the catwalk, swearing all the way. The engines, his baby...well, there wasn't much chance of a quick fix, not with the way the power couplings had exploded. He grabbed the fire extinguisher and put out a few hot spots, praying he got them all.

Tab was still standing there when he heard another thump and the sound of metal tearing. They were being boarded. He ran to his quarters and grabbed his gun, his leg starting to twinge. He didn't have time to think about it, though, and he didn't hesitate as he climbed the ladder and headed to the bridge. He didn't have much firepower, but he'd be damned if anyone was going to take the bird when he had a bullet to spare.

The corridor was full of smoke and he could hear gunfire. Then came Captain Bane's low voice shouting what sounded an awful lot like 'cowabunga babies'.

Coughing, and adding the worry about the captain's mental stability to his list, Tab moved forward. There wasn't really anywhere to hide, other than one side hall which only led to a

catwalk between levels; he'd use it if he had to, but his goal was to reach the bridge and take on all comers.

The bastards had blown his engines.

The gunfire didn't last long and the way to the bridge seemed eerily silent and strange with the smoke obstructing his view. He could hear noise as he got closer though, grunts and the sound of flesh hitting flesh.

He moved as quickly as he could, hating every thump his bad leg made, his body simply unable to be silent. He got to the door and sped up, just knowing Will was in that brawl. Hopefully, he was connecting more than he was catching punches.

He took it all in quickly as he got there. The Captain was on the floor, bloody and unmoving, while Will and Jackson, one of their three other crew members, were back to back, surrounded by five guys who had the air of cats playing with their kill.

Tab took about three seconds to shove his gun up above a monitor, hoping the smoke would obscure the gleam off the barrel. And in case the guy closest to him saw where he'd stashed it, he dove right in and kicked him in the balls. If you didn't fight dirty, chances were you'd fight dead.

His guy went down just as Jackson did, the crunch of hand on bone loud. One of the pirates laughed and Will was grabbed up into a fireman's carry. "I've got me a pretty one!"

The fuck he did.

Tab roared and took out one of the others with a solid punch and headed for the bastard holding Will. One of the pirates caught him in the leg though, and he went down, helpless as he watched Will's backside disappear down the corridor, legs kicking up a storm.

He could barely move. Even before he tried to move, the pain was slicing through him. But there was no way they were taking Will from him without a fight.

Cursing, he rolled over and tried to push himself up, hoping adrenaline and fury would be enough. It might have been, except he'd forgotten he wasn't alone. Another kick to his leg, a punch to the side of his head, and he had to admit he wasn't going anywhere for a few minutes.

He kicked out with his good leg, grabbed what he could with his hands. He looked up into a laughing face and wished he'd had his gun; he'd have gambled on hitting Jackson just for a chance to shoot the bastard stepping on him.

"Leave him," a voice said as Tab's world started to gray out. "He's not going anywhere and we have work to do."

Will faded in and out of consciousness.

When he opened his eyes, everything seemed smoky and hazy and he wasn't sure if it really was or if there was something wrong with his eyes.

And he hurt all over. His head was just pounding, his cheek throbbed, his ass ached in a way it hadn't for a long time. And when he tried moving, something inside hurt bad enough he froze. All he could do was hope he wasn't bleeding in there.

He didn't know if anyone else had come through the attack. He didn't know if his Arillia still flew. And Will found it too hard to care too much, so he just closed his eyes and drifted off again into the blessed grey.

The next time he regained consciousness he wasn't alone. At least he didn't think so -- he could hear his name, and he was moving, jostled slightly by a hand on his shoulder.

"Come on, baby. Time to wake up." He shifted again, the hand on his face, gentle, but not. "Will. Come on! Wake up!"

He opened his eyes, struggling to focus. "Tab?" God, everything hurt. He couldn't even localize it anymore -- he just hurt.

"Thank god." Tab sounded relieved. "Right here, try to look at me, baby. God, you're a mess. Where does it hurt most, can you tell me?"

He managed to focus on Tab's face. Oh. He couldn't be in very good shape because Tab looked worried.

He tried to focus on the pain, but his whole body was just kind of throbbing. "Belly?"

Tab nodded. He looked a bit of a mess, too. Bruised cheek, swollen eye, and a cut high on his forehead. "Let me see," Tab said gently, fingers tugging at Will's torn shirt to expose his stomach and chest. "I gotta find you a blanket," he said, carefully moving his hand over Will's ribs. "They didn't leave you with much on. Cold?"

"Now that you mention it." He shivered and winced as that kind of hurt. "How's...everyone else?"

Tab shook his head. "You don't have any broken ribs that I can find," he said calmly. "Bruised all to hell, though. The captain and Jackson are dead. Jinx is trying to seal off where the bastards came through so we don't have a hull breach. Thomas is working on the engine. If I help you stand, can you walk to my quarters? I can't carry you."

He frowned. "Why aren't you working on the engine, Tab?" He was going to put off the standing and moving question as long as possible.

"I had to find you," Tab said gruffly. "And I can't move too well yet." Tab looked at him with serious eyes. "Thought they killed you, flyboy."

"Nah, they just used my ass as a punching bag and left me for dead. I'm a lot harder to kill than that."

Tab winced. "Figured. Can you tell if they...damaged you? I can check when we get you to my quarters."

He shrugged and then winced. Okay, no shrugs, casual or otherwise, he got it. "Doesn't hurt much worse than it usually does. Well. Until you."

Tab stared at him. "Okay, I didn't want to hear that. Let's go, baby. I want to see, and I want to see soon. And then I'm making sure you heal up right, 'cause I've got a lot to teach you yet." Tab pushed himself against the wall, inching his way up until he was standing, then held out a hand to Will. "Up, if you can. If not, I'll get Jinx to help."

Yeah, sure, let what was left of the crew know he was injured. No way. He was the only one who knew how to fly this bird -- if there was anything left of her? She was his. As long as they all thought he was strong. He reached out and took Tab's hand, helping the man haul him up as best he could. "Oh, fuck."

Tab nodded. "I bet. And maybe an 'Oh hell', too. Can you walk? Shit, you've got blood on your leg, hang onto the wall."

Tab got him turned so he could brace himself and then the big man fought his way back down. "Cut," he said. "Looks pretty shallow, but it'll scar -- too late to stitch, anyway."

"Look, not to hurry you or anything, but I don't think I can stand for all that long, so can we get to wherever we're going? Please?" Shit, he didn't mean to whine, but he was panting just from standing.

"Oh, this is going to be a fun walk," Tab said under his breath. "Hang on. Be right with you, Master." He struggled to his feet and Will could see the pain of the effort etched into his face.

"Fuck you," growled Will. "I don't have to move you know. I was quite happy where I was."

"You were freezing and out cold," Tab pointed out. "You've been out for hours. You were raped and beaten. Now, if you'd like to stay here, as opposed to my bed, fine. I can limp off and try to get some work done."

"You're the one bitching and calling me fucking Master. Asshole. Right here is just fine." He glared at Tab.

"And you're the ungrateful fuck who's yelling at me for trying to help!"

Will felt the tears prick up in his eyes and he blinked furiously. He was not going to cry. Especially not in front of Tab. He *wasn't*.

Tab sighed. "Come on," he said, his voice quiet. "I can't think of anything I want more right now than to just lie down on my bed and know you're okay. We can fight later."

He bit his tongue to keep his mouth shut and just nodded. He hurt and just wanted to lie back down and pass out again. Like, really badly.

"Okay. Now, just take it slow," Tab said. "It's a bit of a walk, but we can stop and rest if we have to." He pointed to the door. "If I lean on the wall, you can lean on me. Ready?"

"As I'll ever be." He took a breath and gritted his teeth, trying to ignore the pain as best he could.

Tab gasped as he took part of Will's weight. "They did a number on my leg," he said roughly as they started walking. "Knocked me out cold. When I came to, they were gone. I tried to help you, Will. I swear, I tried."

"Hey, I'm not dead. And we've still got the bird. I figure I'm going to be grateful for that."

"Your girl is currently floating, baby," Tab said, looking straight ahead. "No power, no navigation, no nothing. Everything we have is routed to life support at the moment."

"You'll get her fixed up, Tab. I have faith." Because if Tab didn't they were prey to every other pirate out there. In fact, if they were permanently dead in the air they'd be lucky for that; a second blaze of gunfire would sure beat starving to death.

"Yeah, well. First of all, we get the injuries taken care of. A couple hours of sleep. Then we get to work." Tab leaned on the wall a little harder, looking gray. "Can you hear Jinx yet?"

"No." He could barely hear Tab through the pain. "I don't want anyone else helping though."

"Sure thing," Tab said. "Don't really want anyone helping either. Enough people have had a good look at you, don't want anyone else seeing what's--" He stopped suddenly and closed his eyes, grimacing. "Come on. Let's move."

"You almost look like you're in worse shape than I feel." And if that was true, then Tab was hurting pretty fucking badly.

"Better off. At least I know what hurts like fuck," Tab said shortly. They walked a ways in relative silence, the occasional moan and bitten-off groan all they had. The ship was silent in an eerie way, silent the way it shouldn't be, and when they heard Jinx swear and a muffled thump, Tab nodded. "Almost there. Get you lying down in no time."

"Good." It was all he could find breath to say and he knew the ladder was just going to kill him.

They rested before they tried it, and he might have blacked out a bit. Oddly, Tab managed it with only a curse, his usual trick of sliding down facing out helping him. "Hang on," Tab said from the bottom. He braced himself on the opposite wall with his good leg. "Okay. I'll catch you," he promised.

Will snorted, but just kind of got himself over the edge and let himself more or less fall down it, managing to wrench his arm pretty good. "Fuck. Fuck."

"Fuck," Tab agreed breathlessly. "Oh fuck. Wait a minute, 'kay?"

"Yeah, whatever. I'm not moving."

"No, me neither. Oh fuck. I could have sworn they didn't break it..." Tab gasped, one arm locked around Will's waist, holding him up.

"Your leg?" Will asked, heart sinking. Fuck. They needed Tab able-bodied to get the Arillia back in flying condition. Shit. He couldn't think like this though, he needed to pass out really badly. "We gotta move, Tab. I'm not going to make it much further."

Tab nodded and ground his teeth together. "Here we go, then." Tab pointed and moved at the same time, almost dragging him down the hall. The door to his quarters stood open, and they all but fell in.

He'd never been so happy to find a bed in his life and he let himself drop onto it with a groan, the world going all grey at the edges.

Tab fell next to him, grunting. "Will? Baby? Still with me?"

"Not your baby," he muttered between panting breaths.

"Whatever," Tab said. "Rest. When I can move without screaming I'll take another look at you." A blanket settled over him, warm and scratchy. It smelled like Tab.

"I'm fine. Just need to sleep." For about a million years.

He gave in to the quiet and the warm and the promise of relief from pain, sliding into sleep.

Tab watched Will sleep and tried not to move too much. His leg had calmed to a dull roar, sort of an insidious ache. Chances were he shouldn't have run all over the fucking ship like a madman looking for Will, but the panic he'd felt at the time had overruled good sense. He'd found Thomas and Jinx, set them to work, growing more and more sure that Will was dead.

He wasn't dead. He wasn't.

He was beaten and abused and raped, but he wasn't dead.

Tab kept looking at Will, watching for signs of shock, for any sign Will was bleeding inside. For any clue the man was worse off than he was showing. He was pretty sure that if Will up and died on him now he'd...well. It wouldn't be fun.

He looked away again, not wanting Will to wake up and find him staring. Tab'd have to wake Will up soon. He had to get to work and he'd need any help Will could give him. But until then he'd let the pilot sleep as much as he could.

Will shifted, moaning softly. His eyes blinked open, looking bloodshot and glazed.

"Hey, you," Tab said quietly. "How bad is it now?"

"Pretty bad. But I can tell you where it hurts now."

"That's a step forward." He hoped. "Where?"

"Think it's my left kidney and ribs. Not hurting enough to be broken, but fuck. Not happy-making, I can tell you that. Various other aches."

Tab nodded. He knew all about things not being broken but hurting a lot. "Can tape you up," he said, pushing himself to sit upright. "Arms okay? Legs?"

"I think I sprained my right arm coming down that ladder."

Tab winced. Fuck. "I'll rig a sling, get it braced." He took a breath. "How's your ass? Are you bleeding?"

"How the fuck should I know if my ass is bleeding? It's not like I've got eyes back there." Will grouched. "I'm fine."

Tab snorted. "Right." He propped himself up, got braced, then reached under the bed for the slick. He tossed the tube on the bed and sighed. "Bandages first. Ribs, then arm, then I'll clean you up some."

"What the fuck is the lube for? Neither of us are in any condition for fucking!"

Tab blinked. "You want me shoving a dry finger in your ass looking for cuts? Don't be an idiot, I'm not going to fuck you -- I'm going to make sure you don't rupture something or need medicine." Fuck? God, fucking was the last thing on his mind. Well, almost. Things like living were taking priority.

"I was kind of hoping you'd just let my ass be, if you want the truth."

Tab looked at Will and nodded slowly. "I bet. But that's pretty much all the more reason for me to check, baby. Be reasonable."

Will's eyes got wet and he blinked hard. "Fine. Do what you gotta do."

"Okay." Tab leaned forward and kissed Will, hard and fast. "Ribs first. And as someone wise pointed out to me earlier -- you're alive."

Will laughed humorlessly. "Is that your way of saying this is going to hurt like hell?"

"I hope not," Tab said, not looking at Will. "I hope that you're just raw and in need of a shower." He started looking around for something to bind Will's ribs with.

"A shower? Look, Tab, I might stink, but I'm not getting out of this bed for a shower."

Snorting, Tab started to rip up a shirt. "Not what I meant, flyboy. What I meant was that I hope the pain you have is just dried come on raw skin and not something...else. Any more questions?" God, he didn't want to think about this. Didn't want to talk about it, picture someone doing that to Will, anyone else ever touching Will. His stomach rolled.

"No. Just...just do it, okay?"

Unhappily, Tab wrapped Will's ribs, ignoring the gasps and moans. It had to be tight if it was going to work. Then he sacrificed part of his sheet to make a sling, tying Will's arm down tight. "Okay," he said finally. "See if you can make yourself...not uncomfortable." He turned his back and tugged open his locker, going right for the single bottle of water he had. A damp cloth wasn't going to be enough, but it was all he had.

Will turned onto his side, grunting, top leg moving forward a little. Will was tight, tense.

Tab braced himself. "I'll be quick," he promised. "I'm trying not to hurt you -- remember?"

"I know." Will's fingers balled into fists in the sheets.

Tab doused a mostly clean scrap of cloth with a bit of water and gently dabbed at Will's ass, not wiping. The cloth came off grungy, revealing red and swollen skin, the man's puckered hole looking horribly irritated. "No blood," he said softly, trying to be fast and gentle at the same time.

"I suppose I should be happy about that."

"Well, yeah," Tab agreed absently, starting to swipe at the inside of Will's thigh and then just behind his balls. "Almost done this part. Keep breathing."

"Never before had first aid after and I've lived, so I imagine I'll manage this time."

Tab's hand froze for a moment before he finished up. It wasn't right that a man should be thinking like that; that something like that could be so matter-of-fact. He reached for the lube. "This won't be pleasant," he said honestly. "I'll make it up to you when we're feeling better." He would. He so would. And he'd break anyone who ever tried to do anything like this again.

Will took a deep breath and Tab could see him steeling himself. "Just do it."

Tab stifled a sigh and hoped for the best, whatever that was. He slicked his fingers mechanically and gently touched the tip of his index finger to Will's hole. Will's whole body tightened up and then he made a soft noise and relaxed, letting Tab in.

Oh, thank god. He didn't have to force it; Tab wasn't sure Will would ever really forgive him if he'd had to push hard. Slowly, Tab turned his finger, trying not to irritate, trying to feel if the skin was torn anywhere.

Will just lay there, breath slow and even, if loud.

Tab concentrated. Will was swollen and tight, but he didn't feel like he was cut. Experimentally, Tab slid his finger in a little deeper, carefully searching. So far, so good.

"Make it fast," muttered Will, knuckles going white on the sheets.

Tab nodded. "Is there any shooting pain? Anything feel really, really bad?"

"No. Just aches."

Tab eased his finger out. "Done," he said, wiping the lube off his hand. "I think you're just badly used, at the moment. You'll live."

Will snorted. "Isn't that what I said?"

"Yeah, you're psychic, blah blah blah, and wouldn't you just want to shoot out my knees if you had been bleeding and I didn't bother checking?" Tab growled and tossed the rag away. "Look, what the fuck do you want from me? I'm trying to help here, and all I'm getting back is bullshit attitude. I don't need it." He grabbed yet another shirt and tugged it on. "When you're up to helping out, come to the engine room."

"Excuse me for not being overjoyed at having you poke me in the ass just now."

Tab limped to the door. "And excuse me for bothering to find you in the first place," he snarled. "Should have fucking left you there. I'm going to go fight with the damn engine; at least I understand that."

"You should have!" Will's shout followed him out.

Tab stopped in the hall. "Why?"

"If I was so much fucking trouble, you should have just left me to die."

"Finding you wasn't the trouble -- the utter fucking lack of anything remotely approaching thanks is! I've done nothing but be kind to you, Will. I'm not the bastard that did that to you -- stop treating me like something you'd scrape off your fucking boot!" Tab rubbed at his chest and closed his eyes, stunned at how hurt and angry he was. "I tried to stop them," he whispered to the wall.

"I'm lying here barely able to move and you want me to thank you? Excuse me for being an ungrateful bastard, Tab. Maybe when I can move without hurting I'll be able to lick your boots long enough for you to be happy."

Tab sighed. "Whatever, Will," he said quietly. "I'm going to work. If you need anything, yell loud. I'll send someone." He turned and took a few steps, leaning on the wall for support.

"I won't need anyone," whispered Will, voice thick with tears.

"If you say so," Tab said. He stood in the corridor, not able to go, unwilling to go back where he was less than welcome. He really didn't need this. Didn't need to give a shit. Didn't need to ache and hurt and just stand there, stuck like a fool.

Will's tears were quiet, barely audible, but punctuated by harsh breaths.

Tab gave in, going back to the room with slow steps, the best he could manage. He convinced his leg to hold him long enough to ease down on the bed instead of falling, and then he stroked his hand over Will's hair, not saying anything. There wasn't anything to say.

Will didn't acknowledge his presence, but he didn't stiffen or pull away either and Tab figured that was good enough.

Will spent a day or so in bed, sniffed a lot -- men didn't cry and that wasn't what he was doing, nope, not him. Tab was there some of the time, just quiet and warm sitting next to him. Will was grateful not to be entirely alone and even more grateful Tab didn't seem inclined to talk.

When he woke up and was alone and not hurting too badly, he hauled himself up and made his way, silent as a ghost past the noise of repairs on the engines, to the head for a quick shower. Then he managed to make it to his locker and got his back-up pants, a t-shirt and his spare gun. He wasn't taking any chances.

Feeling more human, he went back to the engine room. Time to find out how long before his baby was flightworthy again and get them moving before someone decided they were salvage and made off with what was left of them.

There was plenty of busy-as-hell noise in the engine room and if he remembered correctly, there were four of them left. It was better than it could have been -- they'd gotten lucky. "Hey guys, take a break. We need to assess."

Tab glanced up at him. "Nothing to assess. Another three hours and you'll have engines. Navigation is spotty, but we're working on it. Then we head for the nearest port." He looked back down at his lap, full of a tangle of wires. "Minimum power."

"How're the guns?" The bastards had disabled those with their first shot.

"None," Tab said shortly.

Jinx looked at him apologetically. "Working on moving first. Sorry."

He grimaced. "So we're limping and vulnerable. And we've been drifting for how long?" He'd been sleeping on and off in Tab's bed for the last day; he wasn't sure how long he'd been out before that.

"Just under three days." Tab looked up at him again and sighed. "Any way you can tell where we are? I haven't even been up to the bridge since I went looking for you."

He nodded. "I'll go get our bearings, see how things are running up there. Then I'll see if I can figure out the guns. Let me know the second we're ready to shift off." His eyes lingered on Tab, sadness filling him. That had been going somewhere, maybe even somewhere good. He nodded again, blinking hard and turning to head back up the ladder.

"Will," Tab said from behind him.

He stopped, swallowed, and slowly turned. "Yeah?" He didn't quite meet Tab's eyes.

"Glad you're feeling better," Tab said softly. He cleared his throat. "I'll get your engines up as soon as I can. Promise."

"Thanks," he answered, voice thick. He stared at Tab's nose a moment longer and then met the man's odd eyes briefly before turning and heading up the ladder, overly aware of Tab watching him.

"All right, boys," Tab said loudly. "Get to it. We're running out of time here."

He snorted as he headed down the hall. They'd run out of time the moment they'd first been shot at. They'd flown right into it, too, right in the middle of an ambush. He knew they were all lucky to be alive, lucky the pirates had been more interested in their cargo than completely gutting the ship, or just outright taking it. Maybe they only had one pilot; maybe they had someone on their tail. Will figured it didn't matter much -- what mattered was they were alive and so was Arillia.

He had to remind himself of that when he got to the bridge, and even so, he was pissed off through and through, growling as he started cleaning up the mess.

Chapter Seven

Tab was pretty sure he'd never been so fucking happy to see a crappy space port.

It was dirty and noisy and full of people, but it was port and they'd made it. They'd limped in, been boarded long enough to confirm they were without a captain and in pretty bad shape, and then left more or less alone. There wasn't anyone much interested in chasing down pirates out here.

The first thing Tab had done was gone looking for a wet shower. Then he'd headed to the nearest bar and started drinking. Shopping for parts was going to have to wait until he figured out if his contract was still valid and where the money was going to come from.

He sat at the bar and just kept ordering brew, the stronger the better, and snarling at anyone who came near. After about two hours, people stopped coming near.

Well, almost everyone stopped coming near. One stupid thick headed idiot came and sat right next to him and Tab opened his mouth, ready to snarl when he realized it was Will, looking far less worse for wear.

"Hey, Tab."

"Will," Tab said carefully, making sure the word came out with the sounds in the right order. He waived the bartender over. "Give him what he wants."

Will shook his head. "I can't -- I have to go back to the magistrates and sign the paperwork on the Arillia in a few. It's all arranged -- she's mine now."

Tab stared at him. "Fucking hell! That's...that's great, Will." He grinned, feeling more than a little goofy. Something horrid niggled at the back of his mind. "You aren't gonna make me call you Captain when I fuck you, are you?" he asked, vaguely aware that he was touching on something he'd promised himself to let go. He wasn't quite sober enough to stop the words, though.

Will looked at him a moment and then looked away. "Wasn't sure you still wanted to."

Tab kept staring. "Want to what?" He tilted his head, trying to work it out, pretty sure Will didn't mean he'd thought Tab didn't want to fuck him, because that was just stupid. "Stay on the ship?" he ventured. "Now I know she's back in business I'm willing enough."

Will's face closed up. "Yeah, okay. Cool. I've found a load for us to take out once the repairs are complete. I want to leave as soon as we can so maybe you should sober up and get the parts we need."

Tab snorted. "Could take a while, I've been here a long time, baby. And when are we fitting in the fucking? I'm not waiting until we're underway -- you get all focused and shit and it's frustrating."

"I didn't think you were serious about the fucking thing," Will murmured quietly. "Look, I'll talk to you when you get back to the ship." Will got up and started off.

"Wait, wait, wait!" Tab slid off the stool and then hauled himself back up to standing. "I'll come with you." He grinned. "Bunch of times."

Will rolled his eyes. "I imagine you'll pass out on me, anyway." One of Will's arms looped around his waist, steadying him. "Come on."

"Oh, good start. Touching is good. Where are going? Wanna rent a shower?" Tab was much more cheerful than he'd been ten minutes before. "Can you buy more leather pants?" he asked, firmly taking a handful of Will's ass.

"Thought you didn't like my pants." Will half led, half dragged him off, definitely not toward the showers.

"I don't like trying to undo your pants," Tab corrected him. "I like them on you and I like them off you -- it's the middle part I don't care for. Where are we going? The fun is the other way."

"I'm not sure what fun you're talking about, but I'm getting you back to the Arillia before you get into trouble. Or puke your guts up or something."

"I don't puke, you do, and I still wanted to fuck you after that." Tab stopped walking. "I'm beginning to think you don't want to have sex," he said accusingly.

"I just didn't think you were serious about being interested in doing that still," Will answered stiffly.

Tab looked at him, trying to gauge Will's mood. Bad and getting worse, he figured. He wished he was less drunk. "Oh." He felt a little stupid. "Yes, I still want to do that," he said slowly. "Do you?" Maybe he should have asked that first.

"Yes. Maybe." Will shot him a quick glance before looking away again. "Maybe not while you're drunk."

"Can still get it up!" Tab insisted, looking down at himself. "See?"

"Yeah, yeah, I wasn't saying I didn't think you could. Now come on, we're growing a crowd."

Tab looked around and glared at anyone who so much as glanced at them. "Where are we going?" he asked yet again. "Your ship? If there's no naked, I'll probably fall asleep, and that's no fun."

"Yes, we're going to the Arillia so you can sleep it off. Maybe we'll do naked when you wake up."

Tab perked up. A lot. "Okay," he grinned. "Just a short nap, then. You come to my quarters after you sign those papers -- if I have to hunt for you I'll probably make the crew nervous. They're a little skittish, you know? Wimps." Really, they didn't have to shy away from him like they did, just because he got a little loud. And growly. And maybe snarled a bit.

Will snorted. "A short nap. Right. I'll see you in the morning, Tab."

Tab growled. "I think you underestimate how much I want to fuck, flyboy."

"Fine. Let's go get it over with then." Will sped up, practically dragging him toward the ship.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa," Tab yelled, digging in his heels. He glared again at onlookers. "Get it over with? Christ, I'd hoped for a little more enthusiasm. I'm not going to hurt you. Remember what I did the last time?" Shit, anyone would think the man expected to be shoved down and...oh. Oh fuck. He shook his head. "Sorry. I'm drunk. Go sign your papers, Will."

"I'll get you to your quarters and then I'll go sign," Will insisted quietly, face closed.

Fuck, fuck, fuck, to go with the series of whoas. Tab had no idea how to fix this, not one single clue. His erection faded, though. "I can get there on my own," Tab said, just as quietly. "Come find me later, though? Not for...I'd like to talk to you. Or just kiss you. Or something."

It was the best he could do in his current state.

Will nodded. "Go sleep it off, Tab. I'll come see you in the morning." Will gave him a small smile, made sure he was standing steadily on his own and took off toward the magistrate offices.

Watching him go, Tab wasn't so sure that Will would come find him. He wasn't even sure he should go back to the ship; he only seemed to fuck up and make things bad for Will. But his shit was on board, so he was going to wind up there sometime. Might as well be now, when he was about ready to pass out. Maybe he'd take off when he woke up.

Maybe.

Will was done signing all his papers and paying up the crew's backpay out of the insurance money for the load they'd lost, and fuck if that didn't mean they couldn't get qualified for their next load. Which meant if they lost the load he was screwed. Especially as the only people who would trust an uninsured bird weren't exactly good people.

Well that all left him feeling more than a little worried and god, he was just so tired.

He got on board and debated for a few moments and then headed on down to Tab's bunk. He'd said he would and maybe if Tab had slept it off they could make out a little.

Tab was still asleep when he got there so he took off his boots, but left on his clothes and climbed in with Tab, curling up against the man's heat. Surprisingly, he fell asleep.

When he woke up there was a hand clamped on his ass and he'd been turned around to face the big man, though he didn't know if he'd rolled in his sleep or if Tab had done it for him. Their legs were tangled up and he had his head buried in Tab's neck. The hand on his ass moved down to his thigh and Tab groaned.

He shivered a little and pressed closer, breathing in the smell of Tab.

Tab shifted against him and sighed, his cock sliding along Will's thigh. "Oh yeah," Tab whispered, his voice rough with sleep or something else. "Warm."

Will nodded. Yeah, warm and hot and nice. Tab was the only person who'd ever fucked him who wanted to sleep with him, too. He liked it. Liked it a lot. That had him sighing. He wasn't sure that liking it as much as he did was a good idea.

Tab slid again and moaned softly. Once more and he shuddered, his hand drifting back up to Will's butt. "You're here," he said, sounding more alert, and more than a little surprised.

"I said I would be." And maybe it was the only reason he was there, but he'd said he would be so he was.

"Okay." It seemed enough for Tab, who just ran his hand up and down, from thigh to butt and back. "Glad you are," he said softly. "Bird yours now? All the way?"

He nodded. "And I signed on Jinx and Thomas on a cargo by cargo basis. I can't promise there's going to be a next load, you know? I hope you'll be willing to take the same deal. Oh, and I've got your pay owed to you by Captain Bane." Best to get business out of the way, make sure Tab knew he'd been paid and was free to go if he wanted.

"Cool," Tab murmured, rocking again. "Congratulations, baby."

He grinned. "Yeah, thanks. It doesn't quite seem real yet. It will do I'll bet when there's bills I can't pay."

"Shh, worry later," Tab said, sliding again. "It'll work out. The lady will fly and we'll keep her going." He kissed the side of Will's face, near his ear and moaned softly. "Want me to stop?" he whispered.

Will shook his head. No, he didn't want Tab to stop. Not these almost sweet, soft touches. He turned his face, meeting Tab's lips with his own. Tab moaned into the kiss, his cock rubbing a little harder, but not faster. Will could feel slickness start, the movement a little more free and easy as Tab's prick leaked a few drops of pre-come.

It felt safe like this, with his leathers still on, like Tab would have to take his time, take care. Like last time. Will let himself relax into the kisses, let himself enjoy them.

Slowly, Tab moved against him, moaning softly and whispering to him. "Feel so good, baby," he said. "Smell good. Make me hard." He thrust again, one leg moving so he could straddle Will's thigh. "Oh god." Tab was starting to sound throaty and needy, his hips beginning to twitch. Will could feel Tab's balls pressed against him, hot and tight.

He reached down, fingers sliding on Tab's heat, pushing down along the softer-than-silk covered steel to the sensitive balls below. They felt good in his hands.

Tab hissed and started to move faster, riding Will's thigh. "Gonna come if you do that, baby."

"Not a baby," he whispered, sliding his fingers behind Tab's balls, stroking the soft skin beyond them as he held the sacs in his palm.

"Sure," Tab agreed, panting. "Fuck. So nice."

He licked at Tab's neck, tasting sweat and a hint of alcohol there, and the taste he identified as Tab himself. His fingers kept stroking, his palm pushing a bit.

Tab grunted, his cock swelling even harder. "Soon," he warned. "Oh fuck, yes. More, please. Just a...give me a little squeeze, baby. Going to blow."

He squeezed Tab's balls and pressed his leg harder against the hot cock, pulling his head back to watch Tab's face.

The man's eyes were glazed, his mouth open a little as he groaned. "Yeah," he whispered. "Now." Tab's head tipped back and his eyes closed as his hips jerked. Come spread between them, warm and fragrant as Tab's balls emptied, cock pulsing against Will's leg.

Will breathed in deep, smelling it and that, that Tab could take pleasure like that, turned him on more than anything else they'd done yet this morning.

Tab sighed and dipped his head, kissing him lazily. "Good," he said into the kiss. "God." He wiggled a little, rubbing against Will. "What can I do for you, baby? Suck you off? Hand job, nice and easy?"

"Nice and easy sounds good, Tab."

"Sure does," Tab said, kissing him again, rolling to the side a bit and palming his cock through the slick leather. "This is that in-between part I hate." He scooted a little lower and studied Will's crotch. "Oh!" Tab undid the fly cover and beamed up at Will. "Just needed to get off first, I guess."

Will giggled, tickled at that. "See? Not so bad."

"Not bad at all," Tab agreed, though he was easing Will's cock out of his pants when he said it. Tab's hand was warm, caressing Will slowly all down his length.

Will moaned, eyes dropping half-closed at the sensation.

"Such a nice cock," Tab said softly, his fingers closing around it and starting to jerk him off. Slow and easy, nice and tight; right from the base up to the head, the man made sure Will felt it all.

His head dropped against Tab's shoulder, a sobbing moan coming from him.

"That's it," Tab purred at him. "Nice and easy." Tab didn't speed up, but the fingers tightened, almost rolling over Will in waves. With his other hand, Tab started playing with his balls.

Will reached out, hands curling around Tab's shoulders, his hips starting to move.

Tab kissed him, his tongue licking at Will's lips. "Fuck my hand. Want to watch you come, flyboy." Tab's hands worked together, squeezing and stroking, the pace slow but intense, Tab's fingers spreading slickness with every stroke.

Whimpering, Will moved faster, pushing his cock through Tab's hand and god, he was going to give it up just like that.

"So sexy," Tab purred. "Close, aren't you, baby? You're so hard, so fucking hot. Come on, shoot for me. Give me something to see."

"Tab!" With that cry he came, shooting over Tab's hand, shudders moving through him as the pleasure made him twist.

Tab rumbled, stroking him through it and kissing him hard. Tab smoothed come into Will's skin and finally pulled away to lick his fingers clean. "God, you're something," he said with a smile, coming back for another kiss.

Will grinned. "Yeah?"

"Uh huh. Sexy and hot as hell. Sweet cock, fucking attitude to drive me insane, and you're nice and warm." Tab smiled at him and curled around him, touching him softly. "Nice pants. And you look good with my come all over you."

Will blushed hard at that. "I've never met anyone like you, Tab."

Tab winked at him. "I'm one in several thousand, that's for sure."

"I thought it was one in a million."

"I'm not that unique," Tab said, snuggling in more. "Although if you think so, I'll go with that."

Will snorted. "Gee, thanks."

"No problem. Want to sleep some more, or is it time to get parts? Make out a bit?"

"That last one sounds good, but I can't afford to have us sitting here so maybe we should go get the parts." He didn't really want to move, but every day in port was costing him money he didn't have.

"Aye, aye, Captain," Tab said, his hand brushing over Will's cock. "You're the boss."

Will grinned suddenly. "I am, aren't I?"

"You are," Tab nodded. "So, if you suddenly decided to wander down here for a little while, no one can stop us." He squeezed Will's cock gently and tucked it away. "But I'm not calling you Captain when you've got your cock up my ass. Ever."

Will giggled and then gasped, Tab's words sinking in. "You mean it? You'll let me do you?"

Tab nodded slowly. "Yeah. If you'll let me tell you exactly what to do and not get all mad at me for giving you orders."

"Well as long as you don't make them orders. It's your attitude, Tab -- it puts my back up sometimes."

That got him a snort. "Like yours does mine?"

"I have been a consummate gentleman."

"You have been -- " He could see Tab grit his teeth. "A consummate gentleman. Let's go get parts."

Chuckling, he climbed out of bed and tucked himself back into his pants, doing up the zipper and then the zipper cover. "Come on then. I should let you know, I won't scrimp where the engine's concerned, but I can't afford anything we don't strictly need. Not at the moment, 'k?"

"Got it." Tab stood up and grabbed his clothes, not looking at him.

It gave him a chance to check Tab out without being observed. The man was nicely built and in good shape, aside from the nasty business of his leg. Not bad, not bad at all.

Tab pulled his shirt on and yanked up his pants with quick, jerky movements. "Ready?" he asked, heading for the door.

"I was born ready." Asshole, he added under his breath. Man had no fucking sense of humor. He followed, wondering if, as Tab's captain, he was allowed to order the man to get one.

"We need a lot of stuff," Tab said over his shoulder. "And there's a longer wish list. But to get us going and keep us from trouble, I have a bare minimum list in mind." He was moving pretty fast, his leg obviously feeling a lot better. His hair was sticking up and messy from sleep still.

Made Will run his hand over his own head, figuring he'd get taken more seriously if he didn't look freshly fucked. Tab was growly enough it likely didn't matter how the man looked.

"You ever deal with the sharks before?" Tab asked, eyeing him. "Maybe I should do the talking."

He gave Tab a look, but nodded. "Fine. This time."

Tab smiled, sort of. "Yes, sir."

"And don't you forget it," he muttered, following Tab out of the bird, trying not to notice the man's fine ass.

It had taken Tab about two hours to realize that Will had been kidding with the 'consummate gentleman' crack, and about three days to stop being growly with embarrassment. He hated looking like a fool almost as much as he hated being one.

He hid in the engine room, making repairs like a fiend and only going up to the galley to grab food and stuff to drink as he worked. He slept hard each night, for about six hours, then he woke up each morning, beat off, and went back to work.

He told himself that he was just trying to get the Arillia back into the game, maybe impress Will a little, but really...he was hiding.

When his temper finally cooled enough that he felt like he could be human around other people, he went up to the galley at meal time, said hello to the new faces. The Arillia wasn't running smooth as silk yet, but it wasn't a wreck either; they'd all been working damn hard.

Will wasn't there, and Tab surprised himself by going looking for him, taking himself right up to the bridge with slow steps, unsure of his reception.

The bridge had been cleaned, repainted, repaired and Will was doing something on the control board, wires hanging out of the panel. That leather-clad ass was up in the air.

Tab swallowed. Hard. He wondered if it was absolutely necessary for the man to wear those pants on the bridge; it hardly made him feel like a lowly crew member, willing to take orders. Well, maybe some orders. Specific orders. Tab shook his head to clear it. Clearly, he was going insane.

Tab cleared his throat. "Need any help with that?" he asked, willing himself not to just reach out and grab a handful of leather.

Will stood up with a jerk, banging his head on the open panel. "Fuck!"

Wincing, Tab took a step back. "Are you okay?"

Will rubbed his head, glaring. "I'll live. What do you want?"

Tab blinked. "To say hello is all. Hello. See you later." He turned on his heel and made to leave.

Will snorted. "Not done avoiding me after all then?"

Tab sighed, still facing the other way. "I thought I was. Didn't expect to get blamed for a head injury, though."

"Goddamn, you're a touchy bastard, you know that? Who said I was blaming you?"

"Aren't you?" Tab shot back, turning around. "Are you always so pissy? Christ, the only time you're ever not yelling at me is just after you've shot your load!"

"Well, fuck you -- I just hit my head, it hurt. Excuse me for not being all smiles and giggles. And you want to talk about pissy? I'm a walk in the park next to you."

"So I didn't know it was a joke! That says more about you than me, asshole. Can't ever admit you're being unreasonable, can you? Can't ever be fucking nice for a change." Tab walked forward, every attempt at keeping his temper at bay going out the airlock. "At least I try. I fucking try to help you, help you with the ship, help you see that things aren't always rough and tumble and all I get is lame-ass jokes and yelled at. Well fuck you, Captain. I'm done."

Will stood there, just gaping at him

"What, nothing to say? No sharp comeback?" Tab taunted. "Why don't you just fall back on your fists and hit me again?"

"God, you're an asshole, you know that? You want to go? I'm not stopping you. Your thumbprint will be wiped out the minute your heels hit the port."

Tab saw white. He leaned forward, took another step closer, until he was only inches away from Will's nose. "If you tell me that's what you really want, I will. If I'm not fighting for something I'm just fighting, and I have very little interest in that, *Captain*. So you tell me. Look me in the eye and tell me you want me to leave."

Will didn't back up, not at all. "No, as a matter of fact, I don't. But if you're going to be nothing but an angry asshole if you stay you might as well just go."

"And when, exactly, are you going to stop treating me like the biggest mistake of your life?"

"When you stop acting like it!"

Tab snarled and took the one needed step forward, pinning Will to the console. "Tell me what you want," he whispered. He looked at Will's mouth, at his eyes, and then back at his mouth. "I just don't get you, you know. You confuse me."

"I confuse you? Well you confuse me, buddy. You confuse the shit out of me."

"I wonder why?" Tab asked him, honestly wondering. "I just want to be with you; don't like yelling and being pissy, but it happens...you're always barking at me when I'm not trying to be an ass. Hell, you bark at me when I'm trying to be nice."

"You fly off the handle at the littlest thing!" Will shook his head. "I can't seem to do anything right and god knows why, but I keep trying, want to keep trying."

Tab shook his head as well. "It's not little things to me, Will. It's shots at my competence. It's you being defensive and reading an insult into everything I say. It's me being defensive because you honestly think I'm a jerk. Why do you want to try if you don't even like me?" He backed up and gave Will room to move, trying to sort it out in his head. Nothing was fitting right.

"The thing is, I do like you, Tab. It's just...well, you put my back up." Will turned to his console, fingers moving over it. "You talk about shots at your competence, but you're constantly acting like I'm some kid who's hotshotting around playing at being a grownup."

"I...." Tab stopped his instant denial and thought. "I thought you were messing around when we got hit that first time, yeah. And I was wrong. I haven't thought that since, Will." He hadn't. He'd been impressed with the man's skill, and turned on by his enthusiasm. "You never take anything I say at face value," he countered. "You expect me to be trying to hurt you, like I have a master plan to undermine you." He leaned back and shoved his hands in his pockets.

"Maybe I have, at that. Maybe that's been my experience with tough guys like you."

Tab sighed. "Your experiences have sucked, honestly," he said. "And I'm sorry about that. I can't change what's happened to you; I would if I could." The fact that he hadn't been able to stop the last one would haunt him for a long, long time, Tab knew. Even being on the bridge made him antsy, like he wanted to hit the pirates who were long gone.

"I don't need your pity." Will said softly. "Just because my 'experiences have sucked' it doesn't make me any less of a man."

"And here we are again," Tab said just as softly. "What did I say to make you think that was what I meant?"

Will shrugged. "Maybe you didn't, but you saw what they did to me. You know what they did to me. I mean, hell, there was no question in your mind you were doing me and I wasn't doing you at the start."

"That doesn't have anything to do with you being a man or not, Will," Tab said. "That's about me. And what they did wasn't anything like me. If you think it was, we have a bigger problem than just fast tempers." He blinked rapidly and turned away, scrubbing at his face with one hand.

"I know what they did wasn't like you. Jesus, fuck, Tab, I know that."

"Then why would you say I think you're less of a man because they raped you? Are we talking in circles?" Tab growled at himself and said firmly, "Look. The fact that I don't like to bottom doesn't mean I think less of you. The fact that I wasn't going to let you do me doesn't say anything about you, it's about me. I don't pity you because of what they did, I just hate that I couldn't stop it. That's as plain as I can talk; I've got nothing else, no words to break it down into smaller bits."

Will whirled around. "Look, every guy who's ever fucked me has just wanted to use my ass or my mouth and hasn't bothered to stick around long enough to even say goodbye. So excuse the fuck out of me if I'm not good at this," Will waved his hand in a circle, "relationship crap."

Tab's jaw dropped open. He had no idea if he should jump on the word 'relationship', run like hell, or point out that he was hardly an expert. He worked his jaw for a moment and then just closed his mouth, fairly sure that anything he said would come out wrong, and at least silence would give Will a real reason to yell at him.

"Look. I like you, but I'm a bad bet. Hell, Tab, I'm a bad bet as a berth for an engineer of your skills and I can't promise you I'm not going to keep screwing up, so if you want to go, go. No hard feelings."

"I don't expect you not to screw up," Tab said, finally finding his voice. "Hell, I'll match you there. I just...fuck, Will. I can't go, easy as that. I'll spend the next six months kicking myself and trying to kill innocent people with my foul mood. There's got to be a way we can be in the same room without either fighting or fucking. There's middle ground somewhere." There had to be.

"Maybe. I can't make you any promises, Tab. But if you stay until we hit port again, maybe." Will shrugged. "You know. Maybe."

"Yeah. Maybe." Hell, he had no idea. But 'maybe' wasn't a no, and Tab was pretty sure he didn't want to say a flat no. He sure as hell didn't want to hear one.

"All right then." Will gave him a look. "So what did you want?"

"To say hello." Tab almost smiled. "Seriously. I've done about as much as I can down there, so I wanted to see if there was anything else. And say hi."

"So we're good to go? I can fly this bucket out of here?"

"Yeah. Not able to race, but we can go. I'll have to redo those modifications for you, but you have standard power, and navigation's set." Tab stood straighter and looked around. "What's with the console? Anything I can do?"

"Nah, I'm just tweaking. Go tell the guys we're out of here in a couple hours, I'll call the tower and let them know." Will went back to his work, ass going up in the air. "Oh, and Tab? Hi."

Tab chuckled. "Hi. I'll tell 'em." He headed out, not quite ready to whistle, but ready to spend another few weeks on the Arillia, trying to find out what 'maybe' meant.

Chapter Eight

Four days into their first cargo run with the Arillia under Will's command and things seemed to be going okay.

The engines, while not purring, were running well. They had yet to run into any trouble and the crew seemed to respect him enough to let him command. It probably helped that two of the four who weren't Tab were new and the other two had joined Bane's original crew long enough after he had that he'd always been second in command anyway.

Things with Tab...well, Will hadn't seen much of him, really.

Being captain and the pilot meant that Will was spending pretty much all his time up in the cockpit, tracking their route, working on his non-existent budget, trying to decide what the Arillia had to have and what was just on a wishlist.

Frankly, he was exhausted and cranky and starting to hate the sight of the little office just off the bridge. To start with, the bench in there was barely comfortable to sit on, let alone sleep. He'd taken to spending most of his time in his favorite seat -- the pilot's chair. Dozing off in fifteen-minute chunks whenever the tired really got to him.

He wouldn't admit it out loud, but he was paranoid and needing to be awake all the time in case they ran into more pirates. As it was, he was taking the most common and busy routes -- it was going to take a little longer, but they weren't likely to run into trouble.

Will poked at his reconstituted meal and finally just put it in the recycler. He was going to have to invest in a decent upgrade to the kitchen and real meals soon. Even he wasn't willing to live on this swill for too long.

With a sigh he checked his instruments again and then sat back. He'd just let his eyes close for a minute or two....

"Hey," a soft voice said, close to his ear. "Will. Wake up a bit, okay? Come on, I can't carry you."

He jerked up with a yell, arms pummeling outward. Tab was well out of the way, obviously expecting that kind of reaction. Tab made a soothing noise and stood there, just waiting for Will to wake all the way up and check for danger.

"Shit!" His eyes went automatically to the console, but they were fine. The bridge was clear except for Tab himself and Will relaxed back into his seat. "Fuck. Sorry."

"Not a problem." Tab looked down at him, face worried. "I have a suggestion," Tab said calmly. "Not an order."

Will scrubbed at his face, wondering how long he'd been out. "What's that?" he asked, trying not to growl. He could be reasonable. He could. He was just a little tired.

"I suggest you put the boat on auto pilot and come to bed. Get Jinx or Thomas up here to just look at the sensors, not to fly. Even Banes slept once in a while."

"Banes and I used to spell each other off. Hell, it wasn't my bird back then." God. Sleep would be good. Maybe other things, too, but he had to admit at the moment it was the sleep that was tempting him. "Can't say that the bed in the captain's office is worth lying on, though. Uncomfortable fucker. And I don't want them to think I can't handle it, you know? I need them to respect me as the captain, not just see me as a glorified flyboy." He sighed and rubbed his face, head just jumping from one thing to the next.

"They'll respect a man who knows when to get some sleep," Tab said, his voice just as calm as before. "Someone who knows he's human. Can I make another suggestion?"

He gave Tab a look. The man had a point about him needing sleep, but he was still cranky enough that these 'suggestions' weren't exactly making him the king of happy. "Spit it out."

"I think you might want to think about actually appointing a second officer. So you can spell off and still be in charge." Tab looked at him expectantly. "That's it."

He nodded slowly. It was a good idea. "Not this run, though. I need one or two under my belt with the crew before I know who can do the job. But I suppose I'd get that figured out better if I actually let people work the bridge a few hours now and then...okay." He hit the ship's communicator. "Jinx to the bridge, please."

Tab smiled at him, a wide, pleased grin. "Cool. Wanna come to my quarters?"

Oh, he was tempted. That bench was really uncomfortable and he couldn't very well sleep in his chair if Jinx was supposed to be running the show for a few hours. "I do...I just. All right."

Tab chuckled. "I promise not to play with your body until after you've rested, how's that?"

He found himself blushing. "It's not that. It's that the office is closer to the bridge if something goes wrong. But I'm going to think positive here, so -- Jinx! Hey. Come on up. I want you to keep an eye on things for me while I get some shut eye." He gave the tall black man a tired smile. "All you have to do is watch the instruments -- the autopilot's on and will make the small corrections in course that are needed to keep us from hitting anyone or anything."

Jinx nodded. "Sure, Captain. Go get a few hours, have something to eat. I'll holler if we need you."

"Just shout out on the intercom if you need anything." He gave Jinx what he hoped was an 'I have confidence in you' smile and left the bridge with Tab. "Jesus, I hope nothing goes wrong." He'd never forgive himself if it did.

Tab nodded. "I'm sure it'll be okay. We'll know if there's trouble, and I'll make sure you get there fast if Jinx calls down." He grinned at Will and added in a sing song voice, "There's clean sheets on the bed."

"Oh, man, I should hit the shower then. I haven't cleaned up in days."

Tab nodded. "If you want. I'll meet you down there?"

"Okay, thanks."

He made his way to the shower and stripped, turning on the sonics and getting the dirt blasted off him. He used a tiny bit of water from the bottle by the sink for an all-over rinse when he was done -- he just never quite felt clean if there was no water involved -- and then slipped his pants back on, not bothering with his shirt or to do the leathers up.

He was grateful he didn't meet anyone as he made his way to Tab's room.

When he got there Tab was in bed, on the side farthest from the door. "Feel better?" Tab asked, rubbing at his bare chest and rolling onto his side. He was under the sheet, but Will assumed he was naked; he certainly wasn't wearing pants, anyway.

Will nodded. "Marginally." He supposed he should strip -- he didn't want to get Tab's clean sheets messy from the pants he'd been wearing for weeks.

He stripped down quickly and climbed in, back to Tab. "This okay?" he asked. He felt kind of exposed without the pants -- the heat of Tab at his back helped.

"Sure," Tab said, wrapping strong arms around him. "Go to sleep, Will. I'll wake you in six, okay?"

"Six!" God, six hours, that was...well. Reasonable, he supposed. He relaxed again with a sigh. "Yeah, okay."

"Good man," Tab said happily, wiggling against him and pulling him closer. "I was going say eight, but I didn't think you'd go for it."

"Good call," he murmured. And wow. They'd managed a whole...five, ten minutes without taking each other's heads off and he was surly and cranky to start with. Go them.

"Sleep," Tab whispered again, dropping a kiss on his shoulder. "Any time now."

He nodded, and found that once he closed his eyes and relaxed against Tab's warmth that it wasn't very hard to go to sleep at all.

Tab dozed. He had an ear out for the com, an ear out for the engine noise, and his eyes on Will.

The man seemed to be sleeping well; he'd crashed hard and Tab was worried about the shit he'd catch if he let Will sleep too long. He checked the time and wondered if waking the man half an hour early was a good idea or not. Waking him up just to mess around would likely fall under the 'selfish' category, though, so Tab made himself wait.

But when those six hours were up, he didn't waste much time. He scattered a few kisses across Will's shoulders and said, "Time to wake up, flyboy."

Will jerked and grunted. "That's Captain now."

Tab kissed him again and added a lick. "Time to wake up, Captain. Sleep well?"

Will shifted, turning onto his back and rolling his shoulders. "Yeah actually. I think I needed that."

"You did," Tab agreed. Lord, had he. "And you need to eat. What else do you need?" Okay, that last bit was not only obvious, it bordered on begging. He'd have to work on that.

"I have eaten. The food on this bird *sucks*. And I know I'm the one who bought it. That learned me. A crew works on its stomach, even more than it does on the promised fees coming down the pipe. I'm almost tempted to veer off and pick something up. Almost, because that would add days to our trip and I just can't afford that." Will groaned, rubbing his eyes with his fingers.

"Next time," Tab said, moving a little closer. He still had one arm around Will, the hand conveniently near a nipple, which he started to stroke absently. "Wouldn't hurt to let the word out that you're aiming to get better grub."

Will's body jumped a little, that small nipple going hard under his finger. "Yeah. You can let it drop for me," Will suggested, voice a little husky.

"Can do," Tab agreed, licking Will again and brushing his nipple again. Tab wondered if the other one was tight too, and moved his hand to investigate.

It was and Will moaned, body pushing up into his touch. "I should get back to the bridge. Make sure everything is okay."

"Yeah," Tab said, tugging gently on the nipple. "Or you could take another few minutes."

"You're not helping me be a good and responsible Captain," Will pointed out, shivering.

"Want me to stop?" Tab asked, pushing his cock against Will's hip and playing with his nipple some more.

"No, not really." Will gave him a grin and turned to face him, hard cock rubbing up against his. "Not really at all."

"Oh good." Tab more or less fell into a kiss, his body relaxing against Will's. He'd been waiting for this, for the heat of Will's skin against his own. "Very good," he said with a smile.

Will didn't answer, not with words anyway. Tab got kissed back enthusiastically, Will's body rubbing against his.

Oh, that was nice. Tab moaned and rolled on his back, pulling Will on top of him. Easier to feel the man's butt that way, and it was well worth feeling. Will gasped into his mouth, hips working to move their cocks together, tongue starting to fuck his mouth.

Tab let him, let Will dictate the pace, just happy to be under Will's weight. He liked the feel of Will's prick pressing along his, liked the way Will just got into it and went for it. He moaned again and squeezed those gorgeous ass cheeks, pulling Will tight against him and he pushed up.

One of Will's hands slid into his hair, tilting his head a bit as Will deepened the kiss. The other was wrapped around his shoulder, hot, holding on tightly. Tab spread his legs, hooking one around Will's thighs, and rocked harder, a little faster. Friction was his friend, and if he could

manage it, he was going to get Will to come with him and make a huge mess. He was pretty sure his plan was working, too; the way Will was moaning into his mouth it wasn't going to be long at all. The hand in his hair tightened, Will's hips beginning to move frantically.

Oh yeah. That was it. Tab bucked up against him, grunting and groaning as his balls got tight. He could hardly breathe he was so close, trying to hold on and feel Will come for him. Will's mouth suddenly broke away from his, Will crying out as heat pulsed between them, Will's ass going hard beneath his hands.

"Fuck, yes!" Tab arched, his cock throbbing as he came even before Will had finished, roaring with the release. "Oh damn, baby, yes." He plunged his tongue back into Will's mouth as soon as he could. Will's tongue slid along his, lazy, not really fighting him for dominance of the kiss.

Tab kept rocking, his cock not really softening as he pushed against Will's slick skin. He was too sensitive, too jazzed up, but he tried to keep it in check as best he could, not biting Will's tongue like he wanted to. Will really wasn't ready for that.

Will broke off the kiss, grinning down at him. "That was nice, Tab."

"Glad you liked it," he smiled back. "Got off on it myself." He leaned up and kissed Will again. "You going to work now?"

Will nodded. "Yeah. Been long enough."

He sighed, but let Will go, patting his ass one more time. "All right then, Captain. Off you go. I'll be in the engine room if you need me."

Will nodded and stood, started getting dressed. "You working on that fix to get my baby purring at high speeds again?"

Tab nodded and stretched. "Yeah. Different parts, but that's the general idea. I'll let you know how it goes, baby."

Will rolled his eyes. "All right, keep me apprised." Will was at the door when he turned back and gave Tab a shy smile. "Thanks."

Then Will was gone.

Tab smiled at the ceiling. That had gone rather well. He hoped next time was as smooth.

Sleep, coming, a couple of those disgusting freeze-dried plates reconstituted, and Will was feeling fine. For eighteen hours or so, and then he started dragging again, so he called Jinx to come and do bridge duty for a few hours.

He went and worked on his paperwork for a bit, checking over the money and how they were doing, and the numbers just didn't change, things were damned tight. He sighed. He needed sleep, Tab had been right about that. He'd probably been right about choosing a first mate, too, someone he could count on to spell him off and take care of things right.

It was all chasing around in his head now though, thoughts rabbiting from one thing to the next without anything being resolved or even really looked at properly. He looked over at the bitch of a bed the captain's office boasted, and packed up his papers. He tossed them into the safe and killed the lights before heading on down to Tab's quarters. He was presuming, but he thought he was pretty safe doing so.

He nodded at Wallack as they passed in the hall and slid down the ladder. Down the hall, and a knock on the door, and he braced himself for anything.

"Yeah?" Tab's voice called.

"It's Will." Shit, he felt like an idiot.

There was a brief pause and then the door opened, Tab standing back to let him in. "Hey, come on in," he said, waving a hand toward the bed. "Was just going to catch some rest." Tab was naked and looked a little ruffled, his hair every which way. And his cock was hard, standing out from his body and almost pointing up.

Will looked him over and let the door close behind him. "Doesn't look like it was rest you were aiming to catch."

Tab shrugged, apparently unconcerned. "Well, eventually." He got on the bed and shifted over to the far side, one hand roaming over his chest. "Tired?" he asked, stretching his legs out.

"Yeah." Will licked his lips, cock starting to push at his leathers. "I could handle 'eventually' though."

Tab grinned and the hand on his chest drifted down to his prick, tugging slowly. "Yeah? Cool. Take off those pants, then, and come over here."

He laughed. "You have a thing against my pants." He pulled off his t-shirt first.

"Not at the moment," Tab said, his grin growing. "Gonna have a thing against your skin."

He snorted. "You also have a thing against funny." He grinned and undid the hidden buttons to the zipper cover, taking his time.

"I will if you hurry up," Tab laughed. His hand worked his cock nice and slow, and his gaze was leveled right at Will's groin.

Will groaned and carefully undid his zipper, his cock springing out, making him moan as the air hit it. Fuck, Tab made him horny.

"Oh yeah," Tab breathed, and then the man rolled right across the bed and propped himself up, his tongue snaking out to lick at Will's dick. "That's it. Gimme."

Well, fuck.

Will didn't have to be told twice and he sure didn't need to worry about messing with boots and tugging his pants right off, not with Tab's mouth right there and wanting. He stepped closer to the bed, hands sliding over Tab's head before settling on his shoulders.

Tab made a rough noise that was part laugh and mostly lust, the sound cut off as Will's cock was surrounded in tight, wet heat. Tab didn't waste a lot of time, just sucked him hungrily. Will's fingers curled around Tab's shoulders, digging in as the pleasure just went right through him like a damned shot. He started humping Tab's face, hips moving and moving, though he tried not to do it too hard or too fast, but it was so good and he just couldn't help himself.

Tab was growling in his chest, the sound sort of rumbling through him and into Will's cock. Tab looked up at him, weird eyes flashing, and Tab's throat opened, took him in deeper, right down.

"Fuck, Tab!" All coherent thought just abandoning him, he thrust hard and deep, just the once, his come pouring down Tab's throat.

Tab humped the bed while he swallowed, one hand petting Will's thigh until he was done. "Oh man," Tab groaned when he finally let Will go and flipped over. "Taste good, flyboy." His cock was pointing right up, and the man's eyes were drifting shut as both of his hands went to it, playing with himself.

Will blinked for a moment or two, licking his lips and watching, just trying to stay upright long enough to pull his pants down to his ankles.

He sat then, landing hard. "Want some help?" he asked, working off his boots.

"Uh huh." Tab shuddered and pulled both of his hands off of himself, folding them under his head. "Can't promise to last very long."

Finally naked, Will spread out next to Tab and slid his fingers along the man's mouth. Tab's lips were swollen and red from sucking him off and damn, wasn't that sexy?

His fingers moved on down and he tweaked each of Tab's nipples, loving the way doing that made Tab's cock jerk. He did it again, one and then the other, the little bits of flesh good and hard between his fingers.

"Tease," Tab accused breathlessly. "God, Will. Come on, touch me. Need you."

"Not teasing -- exploring." He was good though, he let his hand slide down along Tab's belly, admiring the six-pack. Tab really was pretty damned hot. Speaking of hot, when he finally got there and wrapped his hand around Tab's cock...god, it was like a brand in his hand, like something had overheated, just burning.

"Oh fuck," Tab groaned, the sound like it was being ripped out of him. His hips flexed, pushing up hard, and his abdominal muscles rippled. "Think...oh god. Think I should have taken my time earlier. Didn't know if you were gonna come down. Would have...oh...saved it." He was panting, fucking Will's fist in short controlled bursts.

"Why? This is good, isn't it?" Will got his hand moving, jerking Tab off.

"Uh huh. Good." Tab's eyes squeezed shut and he moved with Will's hand, his chest rising and falling rapidly. "Just...fast. Oh fuck!" Tab's eyes flew open and his arms moved down so he could grip the sheets, his hips pushing into the air as he moved faster, his movements getting wild. "Now!" he yelled, come spurting from his cock in an arc and splattering on his chest.

Will stroked Tab a couple more times and then he let Tab's cock go in favor of rubbing the come into Tab's skin, fingers fascinated by the slickness disappearing into those muscles.

Tab looked up at him with a hazy smile. "Woo, that was nice," Tab said. "Thanks. Gonna sleep here a bit? Warm and cozy...."

Will nodded. "Yeah. I can't do more than four hours; Jinx's already been doing bridge duty for two." He settled in next to Tab, curling toward the warmth of Tab's body.

"Not enough, baby," Tab whispered, pulling him even closer. "Can you try to get a few more tomorrow night?" An arm rested heavy and solid around him, Tab's voice quiet in his ear.

"I'm fine," he insisted. He wasn't a baby and didn't need to be treated like one. Besides, he deserved points for coming to bed on his own this time, for arranging to get Jinx on the bridge and not spending the whole time doing paperwork.

"Okay," Tab said sleepily. "If you say so. Just sleep better when I know you're all right." Tab wiggled a little closer and sighed softly. "Go to sleep, 'kay? I'll wake you up."

"Okay."

And here in Tab's bed, with warm breath on his neck, it was.

Chapter Nine

Tab was proud him himself. Very proud, in fact. He'd gone on a buying tour for the parts he needed on their first day in port, and by the afternoon had worked enough deals that he had all the parts, some of them delivered, and a bit of money left in the budget he'd been allowed.

And he didn't even beat anyone up to do it.

He whistled to himself as he unpacked a box and moved a little faster, hoping to find a shower and a drink before it was time to be back on the Arillia for the night. He had no idea where Will was, but he had a mind to go looking -- and with any luck, they'd both be sober.

He hadn't spent nearly enough time with the man, this trip. Will was working too hard, not taking time enough to sleep even, let alone have a long stretch of naked fun, but every time he brought it up the man got pissy, so Tab had let it be. It was either that or yell, and Tab was trying too hard to keep the fights at bay to shout over something like that.

Now, if Will didn't settle down for some of that naked time while they were in port, that would be worth yelling about. Grinning to himself and his cock half hard, Tab headed out to find that shower and a little drink. Just one. And then he was going to hunt up some Captain ass.

Well, it turned out he wasn't going to have to go hunting after all. Will was at the showers, arguing with the man behind the counter.

"Hey, Captain," Tab said, stepping beside him. "What's going on?"

"This guy won't sell me shower time."

The guy behind the counter snorted, crossed his beefy arms over his chest. "What I won't sell him is a private fucking room. You want to jack off, do it somewhere else."

Will was pretty red, from anger or embarrassment, Tab couldn't be sure. "I just want a little privacy."

Tab glared at the asshole behind the counter. "If he wants to pay for it, what the hell's your problem?" He glanced at Will and shrugged. "Shoot him," he suggested.

"I'll close the place down for twenty minutes for four hundred creds. I told him that already."

Will glared. "And I told you -- all I want is a room to myself, not the whole damned place!"

"Everything or you share just like everyone else." The guy behind the counter took out a gun and laid it in front of himself. "And if there's going to be any shooting in here it'll be me putting lead in both your asses."

Tab sighed. "Okay. We can take our money somewhere else." He glanced at Will. "Unless you're willing to share a room with me, maybe?"

"That works for me."

"I'm not selling a room out as private to just two either. I can get six guys in one shower room, eight if I'm busy and --"

"That's fine," interrupted Will. "Two for ten minutes."

"Ten cred," the guy told them grudgingly.

Will passed across the chip and growled, "Come on," to Tab, preceding him down the hall.

Tab watched Will's ass swaying in front of him. He strongly suspected there would be no jacking off -- but he fully intended that there would be orgasms. "Hey," he said, as they walked. "Got something that might improve your mood."

"Nothing wrong with my mood -- I just didn't want to be naked with a bunch of assholes ogling my ass."

"Makes sense," Tab said easily. "I'm going to ogle anyway. Just so you know."

"Yeah, well I guess I don't mind being naked with just one asshole ogling my ass."

"Oh, funny." Tab reached out and smacked said ass. "Hurry up. I like the pants, but I'm tired of seeing them."

Will gave him a look. "We only have ten minutes and I'm not getting caught by an audience. Just so you know. I am however, open to heading straight back to the ship after. Now what's this good news of yours?"

Tab frowned. "Water. Kissing. Sex. Water. And I saved you a small pile of creds. Water, Will." Sometimes he wished he could pout.

"Public fucking water, Tab. We're sharing a shower. That's it." Will gave him a grin suddenly. "And just how small of a pile?"

"Can I get wet, naked kisses if I tell you?"

Will looked down the hall before starting to strip, leaving his stuff on the bench out of the spray of water. "One kiss. As long as no one else shows."

Tab grinned and stripped off as fast as he could, moving into the water. "Oh god, that feels good," he sighed. "Come here."

Will moved into the shower area proper, putting Tab between him and the door and only then relaxing, letting his eyes close as he tipped his head back into the water. "Damn, I forget how good the water feels."

"God, yeah," Tab sighed, running his hands through his hair. The water ran over him and down his chest, heat sinking in. He turned around, letting it flow all over him, his cock starting to wake up. He looked over and ogled Will's ass. "A couple hundred creds," he said, reaching for the soap.

"What?" Will's eyes popped open.

Tab shrugged and started lathering up. "I cut a deal or two. Yelled really loudly. Scared one guy into a steep discount. And I'm ahead of the budget you gave me by about two hundred and seven creds." He started rinsing off, running his hands over his stomach. "Can I have a kiss now?"

"Oh. I thought you were making an offer." Will blushed hard. "That's great. We can get the better food now. And sure." Will leaned over and planted a kiss on his lips before pulling away and grabbing the soap.

Tab stared at him. "You thought I'd...that...." He blinked hard. "Would it work?"

Will stopped mid-soaping and stared back at him. "You're not paying me for sex."

"I'm not even having sex," Tab blurted. "And no, I'm not. I don't have that kind of money, for one thing."

Will snorted. "And that's the main thing holding you back, is it?"

"Nope." Tab ogled him some more. "Only thing holding me back is the ten minute time limit and the fact you promised a rush back to the ship." Well, that and Will's skittish nerves about people watching. Couldn't blame the man for that.

"More like seven minutes now. Maybe not even that." Will went back to soaping up, working quickly so the water didn't turn off while he was still slick.

"Doesn't mean we can't have a little bit of fun," Tab said hopefully, watching a line of suds slip down Will's leg. He moved a little closer. "Steam, hot water, soap...kind of slippery fun."

"We've only got about five minutes left," Will pointed out, head tipping as he leaned back to get his hair wet all through.

"Long enough," Tab insisted, moving closer and chasing soap bubbles with his hand. Will's skin was warm from the water, tempting.

Will gasped, his eyes going to the door. "Tab...."

"Shh," Tab whispered. "Just listen, okay?" He leaned close and licked the water from Will's neck. "It's good. Feels good."

"It does, Tab, but someone could walk in any minute now." Despite his words, Will's hands wrapped around his sides, holding on.

"Keep an ear open," Tab said softly, kissing his way along Will's jaw. "And even if they do -- I'm not going to let anyone touch you. You have my word on that."

Will's hands tightened, fingernails digging into his skin. He could hear Will's soft moan over the sound of the water, could see the effect he was having, Will's cock going hard for him.

"Never again," Tab promised, sucking up a mark on Will's neck and dropping a hand to roll Will's balls. "Fuck, you taste nice."

A shudder went through Will. "Sure. Now that I'm clean."

Tab laughed. "Yeah. But I like the way you taste when you're sweaty and reeking of sex, too." He licked the spot he'd been sucking on and moved his hand up to stroke Will's cock, his own rubbing on Will's thigh. "Time's almost up. Want you, Will. Real bad."

Will groaned and hit him hard in the arm. "See? Wait, I say. No, you say. And here we are, all hot and bothered and about to run out of water."

"Not leaving until the water's gone," Tab groaned, tugging at his cock. "Kiss me like you mean it, flyboy."

"Tab!" Will whacked him again and then pressed their lips together, the kiss hard, tongue pushing deep, and then Will's eyes flew back over his shoulder again.

Groaning, Tab sucked on Will's tongue and worked the tip of Will's cock, his own hips jerking. God, just another minute and he'd be flying, just a little more time. He shoved a thigh between Will's and jerked faster, rubbing hard. Lights were starting to flash behind his eyes.

Will whimpered and pushed close, hips working now, hands going tighter on his skin and they were just about there and -- fuck! The water stopped, and Will pulled back with a jerk and a gasp, breathing hard, staring at him with wide eyes.

Tab gasped and swore. "Ah, shit!" He eyed Will. "Don't suppose you're willing?"

"To what? Come on, let's get dressed, it'll keep until we're safely back on board." Will pushed passed him and grabbed one of the towels they'd been given, drying himself roughly.

Tab sighed. Still, at least on the ship they could make some noise, move around...not worry about anyone walking in. Lie down. He grabbed his own towel, suddenly more than ready to leave. Well, aside from his boner, which was still pretty insistent about touching and rubbing and getting somewhere tight.

Growling to himself, Tab yanked on his pants and shirt. "Ready?"

Will was two steps ahead of him, tugging his t-shirt on over his head and shrugging on his vest. "Yeah, let's get back to the old bird. You've got me horny."

"Woo!" Tab rushed along behind Will, one hand on the small of his back. "Just don't lose the mood, please. I got plans."

"Well as long as we don't run into any pirates on the way, your plans are safe with me."

Tab gave him a careful look. "No pirates. And to tell you the truth, my plans are pretty much 'get naked and get off'. I'll refine them a bit as we walk."

Will laughed and damn, that sounded good. "Get naked and get off sounds pretty good, Tab. Some of my favorite words there."

"Good to know," Tab grinned, relief washing over him. He was never really sure how he was supposed to react to Will's nerves. He understood them perfectly, sympathized even. He just had no idea how to be anything other than what he was, and too often he was rough and dumb and

said the wrong things. But getting laid he could concentrate on, if Will was willing to play. He put on a burst of speed. "So, you think part of that two hundred creds can buy some dessert rations?"

"Oh, now you're getting pushy," Will accused, moving to keep up with him.

"Horny. And thinking cherry pie would be a good thing after sex. But that could just be me." Tab grinned at him. "Really horny, flyboy."

Walt snorted. "Can't be too horny if you're working out ways to get cherry pie."

"Just trying to keep my brain above waist level. What are you thinking about?" He was actually kind of curious.

"I was wondering if you'd changed your sheets or not and how that mouth was made for something better than talking. Or eating."

"Sheets are changed and I'll suck your brains out your cock, if you want." Tab glanced at Will and winked. "Or are you thinking more about my tongue up your ass? I can do that, too." Oh yeah, he could do that. Soon.

Will's eyes went hot, but he swallowed and bit his lip, too. "Yeah, maybe."

Tab licked his lips and nodded. "Okay," he said, his voice suddenly husky. "Um. Let's hurry, yeah? I want you on my bed. Now."

Will nodded and they clattered up the gangway together, already getting noisy.

They hadn't been in port long and it was a safe bet that everyone else was out getting supplies or getting drunk, with one of the old crew up on the bridge to keep out anyone who didn't belong. The lack of audience didn't make Tab slow down any though; he needed Will on his bed, ass high. "Come on," he said, tugging Will toward his quarters. "And for fuck's sake don't make me fight your pants."

Will's laughter echoed through the ship, but when they got to his little room, those pants were undone faster than he'd ever seen.

"That's it," Tab encouraged, stripping himself off so fast he ripped his shirt. He gave Will a shove onto the bed and flipped him over, fingers parting those sweet cheeks real easy so he could lick at Will's balls. "Naked," he said, letting go. "Right the fuck now, Will."

"Hey! Slow down, man, we aren't in a race." Will pulled away and flipped back over, glaring at him.

Tab backed away, his jaw clenching as he tried to get a small grip. He was panting, his chest heaving and his cock just throbbing, but he made himself step back. Will needed him to. "Okay," he said. "I just...okay."

"Sorry," murmured Will, leaning up on his elbows. "I just...I. A guy likes to be asked, you know?"

Tab nodded. He nodded again, not sure what to say. "Sorry," he finally managed. "Um. Can we...?"

Will nodded, face a little tight. "If you want. If...I just. Tab, it was good with you before, and if it's quick and fast now it's going to ruin what we've got going."

Tab took a deep breath, and moved to the bed. "Okay," he said, trying to keep his voice low and calm. "Slow. We can do slow again. Let's...how about if we just make out for a bit? Touch, maybe take the edge off. I don't know if I can do real slow in the state I'm in."

Will smiled. "Yeah, that sounds good. I like making out. Touching."

Tab grinned and sprawled on the bed. "Yeah. Me, too. Are you planning to stay dressed for the making out?" he asked with exaggerated politeness. "Because I'd really prefer a bit of skin, Captain."

"Well I was in the middle of getting undressed when *someone* got grabby."

Tab nodded. "Uh huh. And that someone is now minding his manners. So, if you'd be so kind as to strip off, that someone would appreciate it. Really."

Will snorted, but his leathers came the rest of the way off, as did his boots and his t-shirt and then he was in bed and lying on Tab, kissing him like Will was really hot for it.

Oh, that was better. Tab grinned into the kiss and wrapped an arm around Will, stroking his back as Tab tried to suck the man's tongue out of his mouth. He rubbed on Will and rolled to the side, letting his hands wander. It wasn't really slow, but it wasn't climbing all over the man, either. It would have to do; his cock didn't have any interest in slowing down. Will seemed okay with the pace, with what they were doing, hips going ninety to nothing, rubbing back against him eagerly.

Tab moaned and rocked a little harder, one hand on Will's hip, keeping them tight together. After a moment it wasn't quite enough and he lifted a leg, hooked it around Will's so he could ride the man's thigh. "Oh god," he said roughly. "Better."

Will whimpered and moved faster, harder, pressing close as his hands clutched at Tab. Burying his face in Will's neck and just breathing, Tab forced a hand between them to reach Will's cock. He slipped his fingers over the head, picking up moisture, and started stroking the man from root to tip, his own balls tight on Will's leg.

"Tab!" Will rocked into his hand a few times and then came, heat splashing all over his hand and on their bellies.

"Fuck," Tab mumbled, his hips snapping. "Fuck, fuck, fuck, yes!" He jerked a few times, swiping the head of his cock with his sticky, wet hand. That did it, the feel of Will's come between them, the smell of it, and he shot like a geyser, pumping come up between them. "Oh yeah," he sighed, rocking his way through the aftershocks, and chasing Will's mouth for a kiss.

Will's lips fastened onto his, the kiss long and lazy, deep. Tab met it just as lazily, licking and tasting and humming with it, enjoying every moment. Will's fingers slid over him, just kind of exploring, nothing urgent, but it felt nice.

His humming settling into a purr, Tab let his own hands wander. He mapped Will's back and shoulders, tracing the line of his spine and then over to glide over his hip. Tab pulled back from the kiss and smiled. "Nice," he said, then went back for another long kiss.

Will didn't say anything, just kept kissing and licking, touching. He pushed a little closer, rubbing slowly against Tab. Tab touched Will's thigh, rubbed and teased at the soft skin up near Will's ass, getting a thrill from the touching. That edge was nicely off and the slow build was starting again. Carefully he ran a hand over Will's ass, just caressing him, feeling him a little. Not pushing. Decidedly not pushing.

Will didn't seem to be tensing up at all; in fact, if he wasn't mistaken, Will was rocking back against his touch. Tab steeled himself to roll fast, just in case Will had a violent change of heart, and gave the man's ass a squeeze, a little friendly 'hi, I'm thinking about fucking you' grope.

Will hit his arm. "I'm not gonna break, you know. I just wanted...well, for it not to be all 'flip you over and fuck you like you're just a convenient hole'."

"Stop hitting me," Tab bitched. Then he grinned and squeezed Will's ass again, letting his fingers trail down to tease Will's hole. "Not that you're a convenient hole, but would you mind flipping over so I can lick your ass?"

Will shivered and he pushed closer. "Do I have to be on my stomach for it?"

Tab shook his head. "No, I guess not. How do you want it?"

Will rolled onto his back and spread his legs wide.

"Oh, baby, yeah," Tab groaned, settling between them. "Gonna make this nice." He licked at the inside of Will's thigh and nuzzled his balls. "Fuck, you smell good," he said. Musk and come and clean skin...nothing like it.

Will moaned softly and slipped his hands behind his legs, tugging them up, back, exposing that hole to him.

Tab took his time -- well, as much as his need would let him. He licked Will's balls and sucked them for a moment, then the soft skin behind them. He moaned, his cock swelling as he tasted Will, and flicked his tongue lower, teasing the puckered skin around Will's hole before dragging his tongue over it.

A shudder moved through Will. "Tab. Fuck. It's never been like this with anyone."

"Good." Tab wasn't sure what he meant, exactly. He wasn't thrilled that Will's past had been unpleasant, but he loved that he was the one to make this good for Will, the one who did it right. He licked Will again, a little harder, getting into it. He loved the feeling of Will under his mouth, the taste of Will, the way Will's hole twitched and flexed. He moaned again and pressed against it, wanting in.

Will moaned too, pushing against him, inviting him where he wanted to go. Tab pushed in, rubbing his cock along the sheets. Every time he stabbed his tongue into Will, he grunted with it, his prick wanting in there. Tab ignored it and concentrated on driving Will insane, on opening him and making him so hungry he wanted more. More tongue, more finger...cock. Tab loved

rimming, but he loved fucking, too, and it had been a while since he'd even gotten this far. Not since before the pirates, and he needed Will to need it.

Will began to pant, to whimper, hole squeezing at his tongue rhythmically. Tab was getting there; he could feel the need building. Growling, Tab licked Will fiercely, eating him. Tab sucked and kissed and licked, left biting kisses all around Will's hole, wanting to hear him.

"Fuck. Tab." More whimpers sounded and Will rolled his head side to side. "Please. God, I need more."

Tab gave Will more, shoving his tongue in deep and then sliding a wet finger in, too. He moved the finger, wiggled it and stroked, licking all around it and generally just making a pig of himself on Will's ass. He sucked the man's balls again, soaking them, and went back down for more, his free hand spreading Will wide. Will hands let go of his legs, fingers fisting into the sheets as his hips pushed, humped against Tab's face.

"Come *on*," Tab growled, diving back in. He added another finger to Will's ass and started pumping slowly, licking like mad. His hips were going with every thrust, and the bed was getting a nice slow fuck. He pulled his fingers out and jammed his tongue back in, stabbing in and out rapidly, moaning almost constantly.

He had to grab his own balls to keep from coming.

"Shit, Tab. Gonna come."

Tab made an encouraging noise and kept tongue-fucking Will, finally reaching up to stroke Will's cock, rubbing it hard.

"Fuck!" Will screamed and came, body bucking as heat poured over Tab's hand.

Tab groaned and finally stilled his hips, licking Will through his orgasm and waiting until he stopped shaking to slip two fingers back into him. Tab forced himself to his knees, and looked down at his...captain. His...Will. "Beautiful," he said hoarsely. "Fucking gorgeous." Will was.

Will's eyes were a little glazed, well-fucked and that smile on his face was relaxed and sweet. "You're looking a little studly yourself there, Tab."

Tab looked down his body to his erection. He shrugged. "Want to fuck you, Will. Won't unless you say you want it, too." It was the best he could do, and there wasn't any sense in being coy about it. Not with his dick doing what it was, aiming right for where it wanted to be.

"I want it. I do, Tab. Want to be able to see your face though. Need to know it's you."

Tab nodded and leaned down to kiss him. "Soon?" he asked, trying not to sound like he was begging.

"Well, I don't expect you to wait until next week."

"Thank fuck." Tab kissed him hard and then rolled away, reaching under the bed for the slick stuff. He held it up triumphantly and said, "Slow." He said it more to remind himself, as he was already squirting it onto his hand and stroking it onto his cock.

"Not too slow," Will suggested, eyes on Tab's prick, hands sliding down over his own torso.

Tab felt his eyebrow go up and he grinned. "Right. Not too slow." He stroked his cock again and gasped, moving forward to tease at Will's hole with a slippery finger. "God," he sighed, bending low to lick Will's chest as he eased two fingers back in. "Good."

Will moaned and pushed onto his fingers, cock twitching, his fingers breathing a bit of life back into it.

"That's it," Tab said, more to himself than to Will. He twisted his fingers, added a third, and tried not to rush. It wasn't easy, with the way his dick was screaming at him, but he did it. For a moment or two, anyway.

Will was into it, too, just riding his fingers now and making sweet little whimpering noises. Will's hands dropped onto Tab's head, guiding his mouth to one nipple.

Tab groaned. He licked and sucked and dragged his teeth over it, his fingers pushing harder, a little faster. "Now?" he asked, his voice desperate. "God, want in you so bad, Will."

"Uh-huh." Will bucked beneath him, voice cracking as his teeth scraped over Will's nipple again.

Tab took that for a definite yes and pulled his hand away, just enough to guide his cock in. "Ah, fuck," he moaned, sliding in past the tight muscle, all the way to his balls. He stopped, just as far into Will as he could get in one long thrust, and blinked down at the man. "Damn."

Will moaned, watching him, body rippling around his cock.

"See me?" Tab asked, his hips making him pull out a little, just enough for a bit of friction on his way back in. "Feel me."

"Fuck, yes." Will's back arched a little on the next thrust and on the next one, Will's body pushed to meet his. Fists wrapping in the sheets, hips moving with him, Will never looked away, never stopped watching him.

Tab stared back, trying to meet the man's eyes, but as his hips and cock sped up he had to look down. "God," he said, watching his prick sliding in and out of Will's ass. "So hot." It was, it was stunning. Will was tight, and clung to him, his body just the most perfect, wonderful place in the universe. Tab was panting, his thrusts getting harder and deeper, and he couldn't stop watching himself fuck that perfect ass.

One of Will's hands managed to let go of the sheets in order to curl around his cock. Will's ass squeezed him tight.

Tab groaned and made himself look up, made himself watch as Will stroked his cock. He looked up to Will's face and tried to grin, but he was too damn near flying to pull it off. "Soon," he grunted, slamming in. "Trying to make it last, but don't know if I can."

A shiver went through Will and his mouth opened, a soft gasp the only sound. Will nodded, hand tugging faster on his prick.

Grunting again, Tab watched and tried to breathe, tried to hold off. It was a sad fight, really. He was fucking Will, watching him, and it was just too good. His breath was coming in harsh gasps and moans and he could feel his cock getting even harder, that last rush of blood before his balls emptied. "Oh god, I'm gonna come," he rasped, his entire body tight.

"Do it," muttered Will.

"Don't want to," Tab insisted, but his body had other ideas, pushing hard into Will's ass. "Oh fuck!" He stared at Will for as long as he could, but when he started shooting, his gut clenching, he let his eyes close and just went with it, trying to keep his hips moving.

He could feel Will's ass clenching around his prick, could feel the hard tugs Will gave his own cock and then there was a shout, Will's voice ragged as he came.

Tab panted and eased himself down, still buried in Will's ass. "Oh god," he whispered. "Best ever, I swear to everything, baby."

Will was panting, catching his breath and his arms slid around Tab, fingers splayed over Tab's spine. "It's good with you. You make me want it."

Tab didn't say anything for a moment, just tried to breathe. He licked bits of Will's skin and made his way up to take a kiss. "I'm glad," he said finally. "I want it good. Want to be the one who makes it good."

"You do," Will told him, coming in for another kiss, fucking lazy and sweet. "I never expected to want to get fucked, but with you...yeah, it's good."

Tab just purred, moving enough that he could hold onto Will and kiss him nice and slow. He was utterly content right then, felt like nothing could ruin the moment. He didn't even let himself get freaked by that, just kept kissing Will until the feeling went away and he had his balance again.

"Could get used to this," he said, running a hand over Will's hip.

Will grunted and might have nodded. In any case Will turned slightly toward him and pushed close, settling in, and for now that was good enough.

Tab held on and let his eyes drift closed. Warm and clean and relaxed...it was just right. A nap would make it better, and after that, who knew what was next? He just knew he was going to need his strength for it.

Chapter Ten

The Arillia's second run with Will as captain was going much better than the first.

Not that the first had been a disaster by any means; they'd delivered the goods, hadn't been attacked, had only lost one crew member thanks to the god-awful cheap crap food he'd taken on, and had enough cash at the end of the run to buy better food, more engine parts and pay everyone.

But this time out they had decent food.

Oh, nothing fancy or really tasty, but it was edible and there was dessert thanks to Tab's magic with the parts. And thanks to more of the man's magic, the Arillia's engines were back to running nice and smooth again, just purring for him. And they could get smoking, too. They were almost back to pre-attack condition.

Will had named Jinx his official first mate and they took alternating six hour shifts. Jinx was even turning out to be a pretty quick study when it came to flying and Will taught him enough of the basics that if they had to switch off auto-pilot during Jinx's shift, it wouldn't be a disaster.

They had a smaller load this time, but one that was worth more, so they were running light, which meant they saved on fuel.

Will worked the books backwards and forwards, but couldn't find any holes in his math. They might be able to bring on the high-quality food rations next time out.

Jinx came on fifteen minutes before his shift started and they went over position and speed and anything new Jinx needed to know since his last shift, and then Will was headed down the corridor, steps eager. He'd spent his last six hours of down time sleeping; he had plans with Tab's ass for this stretch.

He passed by the boys in the room they'd set up with a vidplayer and a table, some chairs. They were sitting around playing cards and they all gave him salutes and "hey, Captain's" as he passed. He smiled and nodded at them, glad to see they were enjoying the set-up and all happy enough to see him. Respect and being liked was important on a small ship like this; he needed to be able to trust the people who worked for him, needed the same guys to sign on every outing, especially as he could only sign them on trip by trip until he had some creds stacked up behind him.

He tried not to hurry, but he was eager to get to Tab's quarters off the engine room.

Will found the man flat on his back on his bed, the door wide open, and Tab snoring up a storm. He had an arm flung back over his head, one leg out straight, and the bad one bent up and splayed with a heavy hand right on his scars. He might have been dead asleep with the door open, but he was naked and half hard. Seemed that modesty really was a concept Tab had never picked up on.

Shaking his head, Will decided to strip before waking the man -- Tab was always complaining about unfastening his leather pants. Which would be why he'd bought three more exactly like them. Something about that man just brought out the devil in him.

Grinning, naked, he climbed onto the bed and decided shaking Tab awake might be the best way to go -- he didn't figure Tab was as jumpy getting woken up as he was, but it paid a man to be careful and he didn't want to sneak up on him.

He shook Tab's arm. "Hey, rise and shine time."

Tab sat right up, one arm swinging out to the side, reaching for the wall. "I'm up!" He blinked a couple of times and shook his head. "What's wrong?"

Will chuckled. "I don't know -- you're naked, I'm naked, we're not touching. You tell me."

That got him a blank stare for a moment and then a grin. "Wanting something, Captain?"

"Yeah, actually, I was thinking it was about time I had your ass." He figured there wasn't any reason to be coy about it.

Tab's grin froze for just a moment and then softened into more of a smile. "Yeah?" He lay back down and reached for his cock. "Slow, okay? To start, anyway."

And just like that, Tab was spreading for him, one hand stroking over his arm.

Will laughed and pounced Tab, kissing him hard. "I'm the king of slow."

Tab held him there and kissed him again, toying with his tongue for a long moment. "I'll try to break you of that at some other point. Right now, slow is the way to go, baby. Been a long, long time."

"If you really don't want to we don't have to, Tab. But I'd like a chance to do the fucking for a change. I really would." He wanted to know what all the fuss was about, why everyone seemed so hot to plow him.

Tab shook his head. "No, it's good. Want it. Just saying, it's been a long time, it'll take me a bit of work to loosen up so you can get to where you need to be, is all." He stroked his cock again and looked Will over with a bit of a leer. "Find the lube, Will."

Will grinned, his own cock pointing nicely upward, feeling good. He found the lube under the bunk and put it on the mattress next to Tab and then ran his hands along Tab's chest, just touching the man. His fingers found Tab's nipples, the dark little points going all hard as he touched them.

Tab's sigh sounded like it came from somewhere deep in him, and his back flexed a bit. "Nice way to wake up," he growled, both of his hands starting to roam over Will in random patterns. "Come here; kiss me."

Will grinned and moved between Tab's legs, settling down on him before bringing their mouths together. The kiss started slow, but soon grew teeth and heat and need. Tab sucked hard on his tongue, the rhythm unmistakable, and fingers found his nipples, plucking and twisting them.

He groaned, hips already humping happily against Tab. "Not going to be able to go slow if you keep that up." It wasn't really a complaint.

Tab grinned and eased up a little. "Right." He tweaked Will's nipple again and licked his jaw, moaning a little. "Okay, baby. Let's go then." His hips rubbed and Tab's legs spread a little more.

Will picked up the lube and carefully spread it on a couple fingers. He was nervous now that he was here and doing it. He'd never done this part before and while he now knew that getting fucked could be damned good, he also knew it could hurt and be unpleasant and worse. He wanted it to be good for Tab.

Tab kissed him slowly and tangled their fingers together, getting lube all over his own hand, too. "It's easy," Tab whispered. "Just...play for a bit and ease one in." He brought their hands down between his legs, his hips tilting and rocking slowly.

Nodding, Will let his fingers slide along the hot, hot flesh, finding the wrinkled skin around Tab's hole and pushing gently against it.

"Uh huh," Tab breathed, nodding. "That's it." He took a deeper breath and nodded again. "Little harder is fine."

"Yeah, okay. Shit!" His finger slipped in just like that and fuck, it was tight and hot and not like anything ever.

"Oh yeah," Tab groaned. "Good." He was breathing a little heavier and his hips had stopped. "Just one for a minute, okay? Fuck me with it, just...God. Move."

"Yeah? You sure?" He was moving though, sliding his finger in and out of Tab's body, moaning every time he breached the tight muscles.

"Sure. Oh yeah, I'm sure." Tab started rocking his hips again. "See if you can get another one in, and then kiss me." There was a growl in Tab's voice.

Will laughed and pushed another finger in, the sound turning into a groan. "Even getting fucked you're barking out orders."

Tab rolled his eyes, but it could have been because he had fingers stretching his hole. "Not barking," he protested, licking his lips. "Oh god, that feels good. Hey, try shoving up toward my bellybutton. Not too hard, just -- Yes! There! " Tab's eyes rolled again.

Will giggled and did it again. Not giving orders. Right. If the man wanted to believe that.... He pushed against that spot again, watching Tab's face.

Tab panted and tried to glare at him, but it turned into a grin. "At least you're doing what you're told. Feels so good, Will."

"The only reason I'm following orders is because I don't want to hurt you." Ass.

"Good reason," Tab grinned. He shifted one of his legs, pulling it up and opening himself a little. "Not hurting. Not at all. More would be good, I think. And more kissing."

Will shook his head, but went ahead and followed orders. He pushed another finger in, groaning at the heat, the tightness, and started moving them in and out, fucking Tab with his fingers. Then he brought their mouths together, the movement pushing his fingers deeper.

Tab groaned into the kiss, his hips twitching and his hole clenching. "Easy," he said softly, his eyes closing tight for a moment. He took another deep breath and let it out slowly, wiggling his

ass a little, and then he suddenly relaxed. "Yeah. Yeah, that's...." He looked up at Will, his eyes dark. "Fuck me, baby."

"You mean me? I mean my cock?"

Tab laughed. Sort of. He was gasping and there was a grunt, and his hips moved. "Yeah. Your cock. In my ass. Thought that's what you were here for, flyboy," Tab teased.

"Watch it. I've got my fingers up your ass." Will pushed them a little deeper, not trying to hurt at all, just kind of teasing back.

Tab gasped and tightened around him, his stomach curling. "Christ. Good." Tab fell back on the bed again, one hand going to his cock and then down to rub at his balls. "Please."

"Yeah, yeah, I'm not going to make you beg." Will grinned down at Tab as he pulled his fingers out. "Though I'd like to point out that you *are* begging for me to take your ass."

"Don't get used to it." Tab's words were gruff, but his cock was hard and angled nicely, and the man was pulling his leg up to give Will access. Tab might not have been begging with words after it was pointed out to him, but he was surely begging with his body.

It was enough to have Will grinning instead of nervous as he lined his cock up with Tab's asshole and started pushing in. Oh. Oh, fuck, Tab was tight. So fucking tight.

Tab's eyes closed for a moment and his hands fisted in the sheets. "God."

Will decided that was a good thing and kept pushing in. Tab wasn't just tight, he was hot. It was like fire surrounding Will's cock. He whimpered, panted, hips finally pushing against Tab's ass.

Tab looked up at him, his eyes wide, the weird colors looking deeper. "Oh shit. This is...wow. Been a long, long time, baby. Full." Tab took a breath and blinked slowly. "Good?"

Will nodded and groaned. "Shit, Tab. I gotta move. I've got to."

"Do it," Tab moaned, his hand flexing on the bed. "Fuck me."

With a moan, Will did. He pulled out and then pushed back in again, shivering at the sensations, at how damned good it felt. "Oh, god, Tab. Fuck. I never."

"Uh huh. Are now." Tab's fingers finally let go of the sheets and one of them clamped onto Will's ass, pulling him in close. "Oh god, are you."

"Fuck, yeah." Will nodded and kept moving, whimpering at how amazing it felt. Shit, no wonder guys kept wanting to fuck him, this was...sheer heaven.

Tab was looking right at him, his eyes still wide, but they looked kind of glassy, like he was concentrating really hard on something. He moaned and kind of shuddered, his free hand going to his cock and starting to pump it in time to Will's thrusts, and his moan turned into a gasp. "There. Oh fuck, right there, baby." Tab's eyes suddenly closed and his back arched, his hips rocking up, faster.

Will shuddered and moved harder, faster, listening to the demands of his own body, of Tab's body. He was soon groaning, making noise as he fucked Tab, hoping it was as good for Tab as Tab had always made it for him.

Gasping and grunting, Tab moved under him, meeting him thrust for thrust, muttering half-words that made almost no sense, other than being encouraging, demanding, insistent. "Yeah," he cried out finally, his eyes flying open again. "Oh fuck, yeah, Will. Fuck me."

"Oh fuck!" Will went wild at that, the pleasure going tight and hard at the base of his spine, in his balls and he cried out, coming hard.

Tab jerked with him, panting and arching. "Oh Christ, yes. That's it, fill me up, baby." His hand worked faster and then Tab's ass clamped around Will's cock as Tab started to shoot, spunk flying between them. Tab's ass going tighter made Will's whole body shudder again and he collapsed onto Tab with a whimper, panting hard.

Tab didn't say anything for a long time, just panted with him and kissed Will's shoulder, the hand on Will's ass still squeezing. "God, flyboy. That was a hell of a ride," he finally said.

Will nodded. "I liked it. I wouldn't mind doing it again." He chuckled. "And maybe again and again."

Tab snorted. "I've created a monster," he deadpanned. With another kiss to Will's shoulder he added, "We'll take turns."

Will shrugged. "I like getting fucked by you, Tab, but I liked this, too. I like...well, knowing it doesn't always have to be me." And if Tab said something asshole-y he was going to hit the man.

But Tab just nodded. "Doesn't always have to be you," he said softly. "And it doesn't always have to be slow. Doesn't always have to be lying down. Hell, we can do whatever we want, you know? So long as we're both into it, anything goes."

Will grinned, cock throbbing inside Tab's body. "Like rough and tumble and ropes and shit?" Tab had mentioned a blindfold once, too, and despite the fact that if he thought about it too much it was scary as hell, it also turned him on. Like a lot.

Tab nodded, scraping his chin along Will's cheek. Man needed a shave. "Yeah," Tab agreed, his voice dropping a little lower. "Like...tied hands and a bit of kinky shit and maybe a gag. Blindfold." Oh, his voice was like gravel all of a sudden.

Will squirmed, gasping a little at the way his cock moved inside Tab's ass. "For you?" he teased.

Tab growled. "After you. How's that?"

"Maybe. I'm more into gagging you than blindfolding you or tying you up. Like what you do with your hands and eyes too much."

"You don't like my mouth? I seem to recall you coming like a fountain with my tongue up your ass." He sounded smug. "Hey, I'll let you blindfold me if you do that."

"Oh, I like your mouth. What I could do without is what comes out of it. And I might do that. We'll have to negotiate." Will grinned suddenly. Negotiating for sexual favors. Sick and perverted and somehow, perfectly Tab.

"Sure. You let me tie you up and fuck you, I'll let you rim me. Fair trade." He was almost sure Tab was kidding.

Will snorted. "You need to look up fair in the dictionary."

"Fair," Tab said seriously. "A word meaning I get what I want and you get off." He rocked his hips a little. "Often."

Will groaned, cock throbbing, thinking seriously about going hard again.

"Over and over," Tab mumbled, his mouth moving over Will. "Riding me, fucking me. Your cock down my throat, my hand on your cock.... And your hands tied above your head." Tab's fingers slid over Will's belly, going up to tug at his nipples again.

Will's eyes rolled and he whimpered, cock most definitely going hard, just firming right up inside the sheath of Tab's body.

"Like that," Tab said, his tongue gliding. "You want it, baby. Make it good, make it hotter than hell. Think about it." He tugged Will's nipple again. "Get something nice and tight on these too, biting in."

Groaning, Will pulled out of Tab and then pushed back home again. "Do it again," he ordered.

Tab grunted and did it again, pinching and twisting. "That?"

"Fuck!" Will's back arched and he thrust again, hard.

"Fuck!" Tab echoed. Tab pushed himself up on one elbow and latched onto the other nipple with his mouth, sucking hard and dragging his teeth over it, still pinching the first one.

Will started fucking Tab again, thrusts hard and urgent, his nipples on fire, pushing him. Tab grunted and bit down a little each time Will slammed into him, his sounds more grunts than anything else. But he was panting again, and his cock had gone just rigid. Will had never felt so wild, so hot like there were live wires running through his body. He just went with it, humping Tab hard, gasping and crying out.

With a growl that was reaching a roar Tab reared up and flipped them, coming off Will's cock and swearing. "Lie down," he ordered, straddling Will's hips and looking down on him with wild eyes. Tab lifted up and sat back down, just slamming back down on Will's cock. "Fuck me," he demanded, bending at the waist and attacking Will's nipples again, his hips grinding back.

Gasping Will stared up for a moment and then bucked as Tab's teeth sunk into his nipple again. Then he kept on bucking, pushing up into Tab over and over again.

Tab growled and pawed at him, his cock trapped against Will's belly. He sucked hard for a moment then licked his way to the other one, his hands grabbing for Will's wrists. "Like that?" he asked, his voice tight.

"Uh-huh." Oh yeah. Fuck yeah. He kept bucking up, trying to crawl into Tab, cock first.

Tab got a hold of his wrists and pushed them up above his head, pinning him down. "Oh fuck!" Tab yelled, damn near snarling as he pushed back to meet Will's hips. "Harder!"

Wild, fighting against Tab's hold, he pushed harder, hard as he could. Tab's hold on his wrists spurred him on, sent everything just soaring.

"Will!" Tab yelled, and then he began to spasm, coming hard. Tab's cock throbbed without a touch and his asshole clamped down, the room filled with the sounds of his orgasm. The hands on Will's wrists tightened for a moment before easing up, but Tab didn't let him go.

Whimpering, tugging, finding Tab holding him tight hotter than hell and somehow reassuring, Will let go, bucked and bucked and then came, everything kind of graying around the edges as the pleasure pushed out of him.

"Fucking hell," Tab groaned, falling forward, mostly on to him. He sounded a little stunned and a lot winded, his breathing irregular and harsh. "God damn, Will. That was.... God."

Will just lay there, panting, wrists still trapped, and as long as it was Tab, he found that was okay.

It was long minutes before Tab let him go, and even then it was just his wrists. The man's arms slid down and around him, holding him close, Tab's weight still over his body. "Will," he said softly, then stopped.

Will patted Tab's back, mouth opening to say something, anything, but only a satisfied sigh came out.

"Damn, baby," Tab said with a laugh. "I'm going to take that as a compliment." He shifted a little, wincing as Will's cock slid out of him. "Not doing that again for a couple of days, though."

Will snorted. "That? No, not moving."

"Right," Tab agreed cuddling in. "Moving bad. Sleeping good. Stay?"

He nodded. "'Til my shift." God, he couldn't even talk in full sentences. Tab was never going to let him live it down.

"You're pudding," Tab said smugly. "I am so buying cuffs."

He'd have hit the man, hard, but he was pudding and couldn't find the strength.

He'd do it later.

Chapter Eleven

Tab listened to the hum of the engine and smiled. His baby was doing just fine, finally. He'd redone the modifications for speed and had refined them to the point where the jerky jump off was as smooth as it was going to get, without putting the ship in another flight class. And as well as Will was doing, they were a long way from making the kind of money that particular upgrade would need.

Didn't matter, though; Tab was happy to just putter on his baby and then play with the baby's Captain. All in all, things were going pretty well. Certainly less fighting, anyway, and that meant less headaches and more sex. Not much to complain about.

He put his tools away and thought about going to the galley for something to eat; maybe going up to the bridge to see if Will was ready to take a break. That thought made his cock stir and he grinned to himself. Yeah, things were going just fine.

He headed that way, but the happy thoughts were smashed when he heard a loud bang reverberate through the hull, the ship shaking around him. He hit the bulkhead and bounced off, completely off kilter, and started to swear. He turned and ran back to the engine room, waiting for some kind of signal about what was up, when there was another bang and he went sprawling again.

"Hang on tight," Will's voice came over the com.

The engines powered up and Tab ran for the com. "What the hell's going on?" he yelled over the engine's whine.

"Pirates!" yelled Jinx over the com.

He could hear Will growling in the background, voice strained. "We're going to outrun the fuckers this time."

"Shit," Tab spat, letting go of the com. He looked around the engine room and swore again. There wasn't much he could do unless something went wrong. With another curse he headed for his quarters for his gun. No fucking way was anything happening this time. People would die first.

It felt like forever before he made it up to the bridge. There weren't anymore jolts along the way, but he could tell from the way the deck vibrated under his feet that they were running hard and fast, and he kept getting bounced into walls as Will zigged or zagged and they wound up losing gravity for a second or two. When he got to the bridge, Will was in the pilot's chair, flying by the seat of his pants while Jinx monitored the instruments.

"They're still on our ass, Will, but they haven't been able to get a shot since those first two."

Tab felt his growl in his chest. No fucking way were they going to be boarded again. "Are you wide open?" he asked, trying to stay out of the way.

"Not quite. But we'll hit the shipping route in about two minutes and there should be traffic along it. If we can find it, they'll back off."

Will's knuckles were white on the stick, but he was flying steady and sure, dodging space junk and keeping their path random enough the pirates just couldn't get a shot.

Tab could hear the engines begin to whine as Will pushed them all out. "Come on, sweet lady, just a couple minutes, you can hold it together that long, I know you can."

"She can," Tab agreed. He knew his engines. He still held his gun in his hand, the other braced on the doorframe. "She'll get us there." He tried to get a look at the monitors, hoping like hell there was going to be a big-ass freighter on the shipping route -- or better, a patrol ship.

The next couple minutes were tense, the ship starting to shake as they passed the four minute mark, the Arillia now on the shipping route, running like crazy to find another ship.

The proximity alarm suddenly went off. "Patrol ship and two freighters!" shouted Jinx, and Will backed off on the speed so they wouldn't overshoot the ships.

"Where's that pirate?" Will asked.

"Turning tail!" Jinx grinned over at them. "We outran her!"

Will nodded and grabbed the radio. "Arillia to patrol ship. Arillia to patrol ship. Come back."

"Patrol 7 here. We have you Arillia. You came up in an awful hurry. Come back."

"Pirates. In a frigate with a speed-bird's engines. They caught us by Zion's moon. Come back."

"We'll relay the information back to base, Arillia, but we can't leave these freighters. You're welcome to travel with us. Come back."

"Thanks, Patrol. We'll take that offer. Arillia out."

Will thumbed off the radio and slumped back in the chair. "Oh my god. We made it."

Jinx laughed and clapped Will on the shoulder. "We sure as hell did. And what's more, we've given Patrol something to check out. They sure snuck out from behind that moon like they'd been sitting there a good long time. If that's their base of operations...."

Will nodded. "I'd feel a whole lot better knowing they're not still out there."

Tab let out the breath he hadn't even known he was holding. His legs felt a little shaky and he was glad for the doorframe as adrenaline started moving through him, making his body tight and twitchy. "Damn good flying," he said, looking at Will.

Will gave him a grin; his hands were shaking just a little, and his eyes were wild.

"Hey, Cap, it's still my shift, you gonna let me take back over?"

Will looked like he was going to say no, but then he nodded. "Yeah, okay. Seeing as we're running with a Patrol ship now."

Tab nodded and made himself let go of the wall. His other hand was still wrapped around the grip on his weapon, his knuckles white. "Guess I don't need this," he said, trying to sound calm. "I gotta take a look at the engine."

He got a hot look from Will. "I'll give you a hand."

Oh, he was hoping for far more than a hand. He nodded and took a step back. "Sure thing," he said, his voice starting to rasp. "Better hurry. God knows what's going on down there."

The grin Will gave him was knowing, but he wasn't the only one feeling the need to prove he was alive, to prove Will was alive. Not the only one at all, by the way Will was hightailing it down the corridor.

Tab forced himself to take the ladder like a human instead of just jumping down; last thing he wanted was to damage his leg, not when it looked like he was about to get physical. He headed right to his quarters, shoving the gun into his locker and turning fast, reaching for Will. "Ah, fuck," he breathed, leaning in for a kiss. "Damn."

Will's arms wrapped around his neck and the kiss grew teeth, Will rubbing up against him and opening wide.

Moaning, desperate, Tab pushed Will against the wall and rubbed right back, his hands on Will's ass. He tasted blood and kissed harder, tongue fucking Will's mouth. "Need," he growled when he came up for air.

"Fuck me," muttered Will, fingers digging into his skin. "Now. Do it, Tab. Fuck."

"Yeah." Tab nodded his head and pulled Will closer. "Yeah." He lifted Will up and turned them, then laid them both down on the bed, none too gently. Leaning up to yank his pants open he looked around the lube. "Front or back?" he asked, one hand massaging Will's cock through his leathers, the other reaching for the slick.

"Just fuck me," Will demanded, pushing up into his touch, writhing on the bed like a wild thing.

"Good enough," Tab said, mostly to himself. His cock was just rigid, aching. Will's pants, for once, opened for him with only one false start, and Tab yanked them down, nudging Will with his knee as he slicked his hands. "Over," he growled, sliding one hand over his own prick. "Now."

Will turned over for him just like that, ass in the air, pushing up toward him. Oh, fuck. If he hadn't been desperate for it already, that would have done it.

With a groan he sank two fingers into Will's ass, spreading lube. He had to let go of his own cock; he was far too needy to take his time with this, too close to just blowing across Will's back. So he stabbed in, started working Will's hole and getting him as ready as he could.

Will rode his fingers like a madman, humping back onto them. "More. Fuck, Tab. I need it."

"Fuck." Tab bit the word off. "You're not ready!" But Tab was. God, was he, his cock just pointing right where it wanted to be, his hips already moving forward. Will's hands dug into the sheets and he pushed back with a whimper.

Tab spread his fingers a little, stretching Will, then added the third. He met Will's whimper with one of his own, his balls starting to ache along with his cock. "Ain't going to be slow and easy," he warned.

"I know! Just fucking do it already!" Will's hand reached back and grabbed his cock, tugging it toward that hot little hole his fingers were working.

Tab gave in, gave up, and just did it, his fingers sliding away and his prick pushing in, far too fast. "Oh fuck, yes," he snarled, not stopping until he was balls deep in Will's ass.

Will was panting, ass clenching and unclenching around his prick. When he didn't move, Will growled and shoved back against him. "Do it!"

"Can't, I'll fucking come," Tab said. He took a deep breath and moaned. "Fuck it." He pulled back and slammed back in, hard.

Will's scream was muffled by the pillow, ass pushing back against him, rippling around him. Tab did it again, faintly surprised he hadn't come, and damn thrilled by it. He fucked Will again, aiming for the man's gland and his fingers digging into Will's hips as he sped up.

Will pushed back against the thrust, the screams getting louder soon as he found that little gland. Will's fingers were wrapped in the sheets, knuckles as white as they'd been while he was outrunning the pirates.

"That's it," Tab grunted. "Ride me, flyboy. Feel it." He pounded into Will, shoving his cock into the tightest hole he'd had the pleasure to fuck. Will just screamed and moaned and rode him like a wild thing, like they'd just had a close call.

Tab drove into him, clung to him, not willing to think about just how close it had been. The pirates hadn't won, not this time, and Will was there with him, not hurting, not abused. Just taking it, needing it -- living and breathing and fucking him just as hard as they both wanted. There.

With a roar Tab felt his balls pull up and he reached for Will's cock, needing to bring the man with him. All it took that touch and Will's ass was clamping down hard around him, Will's cry maybe loud enough the whole ship heard them. Heat splashed over his hand.

"Fuck, yeah," Tab grunted, leaning forward as he started to come, filling Will up. He groaned again and pressed his mouth to Will's back, almost biting him as he shot, legs shaking. "Yeah, baby."

Will whimpered, body milking every last drop out of him and then Will collapsed beneath him, the two of them going down hard.

They panted for a few moments before Tab could move, and even then it was just to kiss the nearest bit of skin. "Didn't get us," he said softly. "Not this time."

Will nodded, head turning to bring their mouths together, breath still panting out of him. "I want more speed out of her, though. If we hadn't run into those ships we'd have been toast -- we couldn't have kept that speed up much longer."

"I'll do what I can," Tab promised, completely unsure what that would be. "After a nap." Maybe something would come to him in a dream.

Will grunted. "Yeah, sorry. It just...it's on my mind."

Tab snorted. "After that? I can't even think. Must have done something wrong...."

Will shrugged. "It's all still rabbiting in my head. I feel better though." Will's ass squeezed around his softening cock. "Lots better."

Tab snorted again and kissed him. "Good. You're going to be walking funny, though." He pushed his hips a little. "Damn, you feel good. Tight."

Will groaned and squeezed him again, ass snuggling up tight into his hips.

"Again?" Tab whispered, sliding a hand up to tug at one of Will's nipples. "Don't know if it'll work, flyboy."

"You're still hard enough," muttered Will, gasping as Tab tugged that nipple again, ass moving back against him nice and slow.

Tab slid a bit and nodded. "Suppose you're right," he allowed, thrusting back in just as slow as Will was moving. He played with Will's nipple and started sucking up a mark on the man's shoulder, dragging his teeth over the wet skin. Oh, that felt nice. Tight and wet with his own spunk, the smell of Will all around him.

Will moaned softly and shivered in his arms and they just kind of kept moving, kept the pace slow. It had been wild and necessary before and now...well, it was still necessary, but now they could enjoy it, take their time and remember they were alive.

Tab licked and kissed at Will's back, propping himself up on one arm as he moved. He looked down for a moment, watching his cock slide in and out of Will's ass, sinking into that tight hole, and moaned. "So fucking sexy," he whispered. "You make me so hot, Will."

Will whimpered and reached back, hand resting on Tab's hip. "Don't stop, Tab."

"Not for a long, long time," Tab said quietly, pushing in yet again.

Will didn't reply, just kept moving with those long, slow pushes, riding his cock like he was never going to stop.

Tab took it easy, just gliding on the heat, meeting Will's hips again and again. He was hard as hell again, could feel Will's body clinging to him with every press. Heart starting to beat faster, he shifted, aiming for Will's gland again, wanting to make Will gasp. Wanting to hear his need.

And gasp Will did, the sound surprised and hot. The second thrust against that spot brought a moan and Will got them moving just a little bit faster.

"That's it," Tab whispered, meeting him a little harder. "Feels...well, fucking amazing." His prick throbbed, getting just that much harder.

"Uh-huh. Oh, fuck, Tab." Will's ass rippled around his cock and their movements sped again, became more forceful, need almost tangible between them.

"Uh-huh," was about all Tab could manage himself. He levered himself a little higher and spread Will's legs more, opening the man right up. "Oh fuck, yes." He started fucking in earnest, everything spiraling a little out of control.

Will's hand went tight on his hip, just holding on, maybe helping tug him in a little. Sweet sounds filled the air, Will panting for breath again, the smell of need strong. Tab ground against Will's hips, working in a circle as he tried to get deeper. "Come on," he said. "Take it, baby. Just...take it."

Whimpering, Will's hands both dug into the mattress again, giving Will leverage to push back against his thrusts.

Tab started to pant, chasing down euphoria. His spine was tingling, his heart racing as he moved harder and faster. "Getting there," he told Will. "Want you with me." He reached down and traced Will's hole with a finger, feeling the stretched skin.

"Fuck! I will be." Will nodded and his body rippled again, ass going tight around Tab's hole. "Give it to me."

Tab tried to breathe evenly, but it was a lost cause as he pounded into Will, still teasing him with a finger. He pulled almost all the way out, and as he drove back in he pushed one finger in as well, just for the one stroke. "Oh fuck!" he yelled, sparks zinging up his spine. "Will?"

A wordless shout was his reply, Will's ass clamping down around him again, the scent of Will's come suddenly sharp on the air. Tab threw his head back and thrust a few more times, just riding the feeling of Will's orgasm rippling around him, listening to Will's cry until he had to let go. He shouted Will's name, his body curling over Will's back as he came.

Will moaned, lax and quiet beneath him, breath shallow and quick, but slowing.

"God," Tab said with a groan. Carefully, he pulled out and fell onto the bed next to Will, still panting himself. "Good."

Will nodded and cuddled into him, fingers petting his skin.

Tab's arm sort of went around Will, nice and easy, and he did a little snuggling of his own, dropping kisses onto Will's skin and mouth. "Nap," he said softly. "Then...stuff."

Will nodded, eyes closed, breath already soft and slow. Safe and asleep in Tab's arms.

Tab refused to think about how else it could have turned out. No point in looking at what might have been, not when what did happen was good. Right. He curled around Will a little tighter and closed his eyes, hoping the man's warmth would keep the nightmares away.

Chapter Twelve

Life was good.

Four successful runs under his belt as Captain.

Number five was a big money maker and they were running fast and quiet, all the money he could spare having gone into improvements on the Arillia. They were almost there, too, having just slipped into the shipping route for the rest of their run. Will handed the bridge over to Jinx and made his way down to Tab's little room next to the engines.

That was good, too. He and Tab still fought; hell, sometimes it was more so they could fuck each other through the wall with all that passion than being angry at each other, but even when it was serious, they eventually sorted it out.

The man was still a stubborn asshole, but they understood each other more these days.

He climbed down the ladder and called out for Tab, heading for Tab's room even though he could have been anywhere in the engine room. There wasn't any reply, but the man's door was open as usual and Will looked in. The room was small enough that nothing bigger than a beetle could hide in there, and Tab wasn't in sight.

"There you are," Tab said from behind him, one hand slipping around Will's waist. "Got a surprise for you."

He leaned into Tab a bit, feeling the man's heat. "A surprise?" This wasn't necessarily a good thing.

"Uh huh." Tab nuzzled his neck for a moment and he could feel Tab's grin. "Close your eyes."

"Um...are you sure this is a good idea?" God only knew what Tab was up to. Still, he closed his eyes.

"Of course it's a good idea," Tab said, urging him to walk forward a bit. "It's my idea. Therefore, good." Tab turned him around and kissed him quickly. "Keep 'em closed," he said, pushing Will down to sit on the bed.

Will snorted. "You've got five seconds, idea man."

"Only need three --" Tab gave him a hard shove, climbed on top of him, and grabbed Will's wrists. Before Will could do more than call out he heard a snick, and then he was stuck. Cuffed to the fucking wall at the head of Tab's bed.

His eyes flew open and he glared up at Tab. "What the hell?" He tugged at the cuffs, but they were solid, holding him fast. His cock was a fucking traitor, too, just hard as anything and throbbing every time he yanked on the cuffs.

Tab beamed at him and closed the door to his quarters. "Hush now, flyboy. Just relax." He tugged his shirt off and grinned down at Will. "It'll be fun."

"Yeah, for you." He wriggled and arched and glared.

"Oh, I'll make sure you have a good time," Tab promised as he dropped his pants and kicked them off. Man wasn't wearing boots -- that's how he'd snuck up, damn him. Tab's cock was hard, more than ready for whatever Tab had in mind.

Will shifted, breathing hard. He wasn't scared but a shiver of something close to fear went through him, making him tight. God, he wanted Tab to touch him. Right now.

"You want it, don't you?" Tab purred. He moved to the bed and straddled Will's hips, rubbing on the leather. "Got another surprise for you," he said, leaning over to the side. Will kind of whimpered, hips pushing up, rubbing against Tab.

Tab righted himself, still grinning. He had a strip of black cloth in his hand. "Time to play, flyboy."

Will froze, swallowing hard. "What's that?" he asked softly.

Tab shrugged. "My first thought was to gag you, but I like your mouth a lot. So now I'm thinking blindfold. You don't need to see to fuck, and this way I can really have fun."

Will bit his lip. It was...disconcerting, but his cock was harder than ever, now wasn't it? And it was Tab. "If I say take it off, you do. Right away. No question."

Tab looked at the blindfold and then back at him. The blindfold again. "Yeah, sure." Oh, that sounded reassuring.

"Yeah, sure, because if I say take it off and you don't, I'm never fucking you again." He was serious about this.

Tab sighed. "All right, fine. You yell, I'll take it off." He winked and rubbed on Will again. "But I'll make sure you don't yell."

"Yeah, you do that." He glared up at Tab again for good measure, twisting in the cuffs.

He didn't miss the way Tab's cock leapt as he struggled. "Oh, very nice," Tab praised him, one hand skimming over Will's chest. "Hold still while I tie this over your eyes. Please."

He struggled a moment more before stilling. "You're getting off on this."

"Hell, yes!" Tab wiggled on top of him and leaned forward with the blindfold. "That's the point, isn't it?"

"Point is that we both get off," he reminded Tab as the world went dark, the blindfold cutting his sight off completely.

"That's what I said," Tab whispered. "Tell me you're not hard for this. Can feel you, Will." A heavy hand settled over his cock, warm through the leather.

Moaning, he pushed up into Tab's hand. He had to admit there was something about being helpless like this with a person you knew wasn't going to hurt you...not that he was going to tell Tab that.

"So hard," Tab crooned at him. He could feel Tab moving, shifting down as fingers plucked at his fly. "Ha! Got these things damn near figured out," Tab said triumphantly, and then Will's zipper was going down. Will laughed softly, the sound going into a moan as Tab's fingers brushed across his cock.

"Such a pretty cock," Tab said, and then there was a swipe of wet heat as Tab licked him.

Will's hips bucked, a soft whimper pulling from him. His hands jerked automatically, trying to get to Tab's head.

Tab laughed softly and his mouth was gone. "Not yet, Will," Tab said, sounding far too happy. "Still so much to do." Warm hands slid over Will's hips and then up his belly, unbuttoning his shirt. He could feel Tab's legs and cock sliding over him restlessly. Will pushed into the touches - they and Tab's voice, his breathing, were points to focus on.

"Look so hot," Tab whispered as fingers brushed over his nipples. "Can't touch, metal around your wrists...you're a fucking wet dream."

Will moaned, body bucking at the contact on his nipples. "Tab. Fuck."

"At some point, yeah. Not quite yet, though." Tab moved over him again; he could feel the soft heat of the man's cock along his hip, and then lips and teeth were tugging at his nipple, Tab moaning into his skin.

Will jerked, hands tugging on the metal as Tab's touches had their usual effect, only multiplied because he was cuffed and blindfolded.

Tab bit him, dragged his teeth over wet and swollen skin and left it. He was moving again, his hands rubbing Will's shoulders and then up his arms right to Will's wrists. Will could feel the tip of Tab's cock leaving a trail on his belly, his chest. "Open your mouth," Tab said softly. "Won't hurt you."

He took a breath and opened his mouth, fingers curling to touch Tab's hands.

"Jesus fuck," Tab whispered. "You have no idea...." The blunt head of Tab's cock teased at his lips, slick and hot.

He tongue snaked out to lick at the tip, the flavor of precome exploding in his mouth.

Tab hissed at him. "God, Will. You should see yourself." Tab's fingers moved a bit and Will could feel the man tracing the cuffs. "Suck my cock, baby. Just a bit, now."

He whimpered, feeling...sexy. Tab did this to him, cuffed him, blindfolded him, made him so fucking vulnerable, pushed that cock at his mouth like so many cocks he'd been made to suck, and instead of feeling dirty and only half enjoying it, he felt sexy and was so turned on he hurt.

God, what was it about Tab?

And then the head of Tab's cock was pushing into his mouth and it was hot and hard and leaking like crazy and he just turned off his mind because he wanted to feel it while it happened, and wrapped his lips around it, sucking hard.

"Shit," Tab moaned, staying still and just letting him suck. Not pushing in. Not taking, not forcing. Just leaking like crazy and starting to swear a blue streak. "God damn it, Will! Too much, too fucking hot -- " Tab pulled away and let go of Will's fingers, pushing his tongue into Will's mouth instead. Moaning, Will wrapped his lips around Tab's tongue, sucking hard.

Tab's hands were all over him, his chest, his belly, down to his ass, shoving the leather out of the way. One hand finally wrapped around his cock and Tab started to jerk him off, his hand tight and low. Will moaned, eyes squeezed tight behind the blindfold, hips moving, trying to make Tab go faster, find that rhythm that would get him off.

"This way?" Tab whispered, his voice near Will's ear. "Or on me? Want me to fuck you like this? Suck you off? Want me to ride your cock when you can't see, can't touch?" He licked Will's face, his hand still moving. By the tremors of the bed, Tab was likely tugging himself as well.

Will bucked into Tab's hand, moaning hard. "Yes. Fuck, yes." He wanted. So badly.

Tab laughed in his ear. "Which, baby? How do you want it?"

He shook his head and said, "Yes," again. How was he supposed to decide? All he knew was Tab's words had him wanting, shaking with it.

Laughing again, Tab squeezed his cock. "Right. How about we do a couple of things then?" he said, and then his hand was gone, replaced by Tab's mouth, sucking him hard. Will cried out, bucking into Tab's mouth now. He whimpered and moaned, each suck felt in his balls.

Tab's love of sucking cock was, if anything, more obvious when Will couldn't see. His mouth was hotter, his tongue faster, and the *sounds* the man made...wet and hungry, like he was starving. Will kept forgetting he was cuffed to the wall and he kept trying to bring his hands down to wrap in Tab's hair and hold on. And that just made his cock throb each time and fuck, it wasn't going to be long at all.

Tab sucked and played, his tongue pressing into Will's slit and then rubbing over the head. Fingers played with his balls, and vibrations from Tab's moans rolled through him; and then those fingers were holding his hips down and making him be still, Tab swallowing around his cock and not letting him thrust.

"Fuck!" He tried thrusting, body wanting to buck, wanting to push into that incredible heat, but he couldn't and fuck. Fuck.

He thought Tab might be laughing at him. The man sucked him harder though, gliding up and down his cock and finally just taking him in, balls-deep, and sucking hard, humming the whole time.

His feet pounded against the mattress, harsh cries coming from his mouth. "Tab. Please. Oh, fuck, please."

Tab let his hips go, his fingers immediately going to Will's hole, one pressing in. Will cried out and started moving, pushing into Tab's mouth and then down onto Tab's finger. His fingers wrapped around the cuffs and he used them for leverage, riding hard.

Tab shoved his finger deeper and let Will's cock slide free. "Come on, baby. Want to taste you," he said, his voice rough. Will moaned, hips pushing up, searching for Tab's lips again, wanton, wanting.

"That's it," Tab praised. "Come in my mouth." The heat and the tongue and the mouth came back, slick and wet and so, so good.

He cried out, pushing deep and coming hard, his balls emptying as his ass clenched down around Tab's fingers. He could feel Tab swallowing, drinking him down. There were long licks as he came down, his prick bathed and cleaned, and then Tab was kissing him, struggling to get the blindfold off.

He blinked up into Tab's eyes as it was removed, breathless and dazed.

"Hey," Tab said, grinning at him. His eyes were hot, a little wild. "Still with me?"

He nodded, swallowing. "That was...really good."

"Uh huh." Tab licked his lips and looked at Will's wrists, a shudder rolling through him as he reached for his own cock. "God. Just...damn."

A shiver went through Will. "It makes you really hot, doesn't it? Seeing me like this?"

"Yeah. You're too hot for words, Will," Tab said. His hand rubbed the head of his cock and he shuddered again, starting to pull himself off with long, hard strokes. "Like it."

Will watched Tab stroking himself off. "Why?"

"Just...power, I guess. You can't touch, can only feel and fuck, baby -- leather and steel is a damn fine look on you." Tab grunted, his hand speeding up as he pushed himself to his knees next to Will, stroking off over him. "Spread out for me, wanting it... You can be rougher, I can, and it's still...oh fuck...still safe." Tab's eyes rolled up and his hips froze for a long moment.

Will groaned, raising his leg to rub his thigh against Tab's cock.

"Shit!" Tab stared down at him, his chest heaving. "Gonna blow, Will. Close your eyes."

"What? Wanna watch!" Tab might think he had all the power, but Will knew he had some, had a lot if just lying there made Tab so fucking hot.

Tab growled and turned his hips. "Hurts like fuck in the eyes," he said then gasped as he started shoot, come arcing up and streaking over Will's chest and landing on his face. "Fuck, yes!"

Will's eyes closed before he got sprayed, his mouth opening on a gasp, come splashing into it. It made his whole body shudder, his cock jerking. He blinked his eyes open again and watched Tab's face as he licked his lips and the side of his mouth, moaning at the taste of Tab's come.

Tab was staring at him, one hand still wrapped around his cock, stroking slowly. "God damn, you're enough to make a man come twice." Tab leaned over and flipped the release on Will's cuffs, then growled. "These are staying."

Will moaned softly, bringing his hands down, feeling them tingle, rubbing them. "Perv," he accused, biting his lip to keep from grinning.

"Problem?" Tab asked, lying down next to him and pulling him close. "Wrists okay?"

He let go of his lip and did grin then. "Not a problem. And yeah. Just a bit sore. It's a good thing I have some long-sleeved shirts -- there's marks."

Tab's breath caught. He knew it did, he felt the man's chest hitch and his cock twitch. "Really?"

He showed his wrists. The skin wasn't broken, but it was rubbed slightly raw. Didn't hurt too badly, not enough to be really bad, just enough to turn him on.

"Oh man," Tab breathed. "Nice."

"You want to touch them?" He was suddenly breathless again, heat moving through him.

Tab didn't say a word, just reached out and traced the mark around his right wrist with a shaking finger. "Oh fuck," he said softly. "That's...wow."

He nodded, pushing against Tab. "Touch it with your mouth. Lick it."

Tab growled and pulled Will's wrist to him, his tongue dragging over the scrapes. His eyes flashed, the green one almost as dark as the brown, and then he added teeth, just a little bit of bite.

"Fuck." Will shuddered and pushed closer, eyes narrowed as he watched, arm trembling in Tab's hold.

Tab nodded and did it again. "Getting me hard again," Tab said, his voice low and dangerous. He dragged his teeth over the mark again and followed it with a lick which failed to soothe anything at all.

"God. God, Tab. Want you to do that while you fuck me." He didn't know what it was about Tab, but the man just made him want to roll over and beg sometimes.

"Bite? Hurt you?" Tab asked, his mouth working over the mark. He reached for the other wrist and pressed against the mark there, rubbing it hard. "Want to ache, baby?"

Another shudder went through him and he whimpered, nodded reluctantly. "For you," he whispered.

"Don't have to," Tab told him, still rubbing his marks. "Can stick with regular fucks. But I want to." He lifted his gaze to meet Will's. "Don't know what that means. Just want to...make you burn."

It was suddenly too much and he buried his face in Tab's neck, pushing his hands behind Tab, out of reach. All he knew was Tab made him want things he never had before.

Tab let go of his wrists and just held on to him, arms loose around him and warm body pressed tight against him. Solid and real and there. "It's okay," Tab whispered, one hand stroking Will's back. "We can figure it all out later." He pet Will again, his arms getting heavier, tighter. "Stay?"

Will nodded. "I'm not going anywhere. And the Arillia needs an engine doc she can count on." As an offer it wasn't romantic or even particularly enthusiastic. But it was an offer.

Tab smiled and kissed him again. "Guess I'll stick around then. Make sure you both fly."

Will smiled against Tab's shoulder. God, Tab was a cocky asshole.

And somehow that was just Will's type.

Epilogue

Tab glared at the power coil in his hand and at the spot where it was supposed to fit. Damn thing didn't fit. It had to fit. It had to fit because Will had paid twenty-three creds for the damn thing, and it had to fit because Tab was due to meet Will in less than twenty minutes.

It had to fit because Tab had promised Will it would.

He glared at it again, part of his brain pointing out that he was going to be late for a shower. With water. With Will. And another part of his brain pointed out that he was already hard at the thought of it. Really, very little of his brain was working on making the coil fit.

"Um," Thomas said beside him. The man reached out and turned the coil around, and Tab glared at it.

It fit.

"Thanks," Tab growled, standing up.

"No problem," Thomas said with a grin. "Get out of here before you scare all the parts. And? You stink. Take a shower."

Oh yeah. He was going to take a shower. He didn't even bother saying goodbye, just took off, looking for Will.

Will was lounging casually outside the showers, looking fine in his leather pants and a brand new matching leather jacket. There were a lot of guys checking him out, but Will was totally oblivious.

Tab grinned and slowed down, just watching Will as he walked closer. "Hey," he said as he got near enough to talk. "Power coils are in, Captain."

Will looked up, grinning back at him. "There's one power coil that's not in yet."

"Captain! Are you flirting with me?" he asked, his voice dropping and his cock getting stiff.

"Well I'm certainly not talking about engines." Will gave him another grin, eyes going to the front of his pants and then Will turned and headed in to the front desk.

"Shower. Hot water. Ten minutes. Two." The look Will was giving him now was challenging.

Tab just stood back and grinned. He was practically willing to make the bastard behind the desk fight Will on it, just to see Will get insistent. But then...ten minutes meant pretty damn fast fucking, and the way Will was already wound...oh. Oh man. Tab glared at the man taking the money, ready to kill him himself if he put up a fuss.

There wasn't any fuss though and then Will was sauntering down the hall, ass just swaying in those tight leather pants.

Well, he wasn't about to be left behind, even if walking behind Will was one of his favorite places to be. Tab grinned and hustled along, sliding a hand over the leather. "Going to be a quick shower, baby?" he asked. "Fast and hard?"

"Uh-huh." Will's ass rubbed back into his hand.

The steam was coming up on them and Tab tugged at his shirt. "Hurry up," he growled. "Want."

"Pushy bastard," Will accused, making the words sound like a compliment.

"You know it," Tab agreed, peeling his clothes off. "Come on! Naked! Now!"

"You never have liked my leather pants," Will teased, moving slowly.

"Ten minutes," Tab said very clearly. "Want wet. Want naked. Want to get laid. Now."

Will laughed and shook his ass in Tab's face, bending to undo his boots.

Growling and naked, Tab reached for Will, pinching his butt hard. "Will. You're killing me here."

Will laughed and toed off the boots and pulled off his new jacket. "I imagine you'll live, Tab."

"Yes, but I won't be happy." He backed up into the spray of hot water, watching Will get undressed. Way better than watching the man get his clothes back on, that was for sure.

Will opened up his leather pants, undid the zipper and bent again to pull them off.

Tab shook his head and just stared at that fine ass, one hand going to his cock, then dropping to roll his balls. "Will. Teasing isn't nice, baby."

"I'm getting undressed, asshole." With that Will stood again and turned, moving to push right up against him.

"Better," Tab said with a grin, his hands going right to Will's ass and starting to play down the crease. "Kiss me."

"See? Pushy." Will's mouth moved against his, tongue sliding right into his mouth.

Tab pushed him right into the wall. He'd show Will pushy. He slid one hand down Will's leg, tugging it at the knee so Will would lift up. Wrap his leg around Tab's hip. Let Tab's fingers into the hot little hole. "Come on, baby. Wanna fuck," he growled.

Will's eyes widened -- this was obviously not quite what he'd planned -- and then they flicked toward the door and then Will was pushing onto his fingers.

Tab's cock jumped. "That's it. Quick and hard, and it's just me, yeah?" He pushed his fingers in a little more, trying to open Will fast without hurting him. "God, you're something," he moaned into Will's neck, wanting so much.

Will whimpered, body rocking against him. "Hurry. I want."

Tab nodded. "Yeah. Want." He looked around and growled. "Where's the -- okay, there." He crushed Will to him and leaned, getting a handful of slippery shit that was probably cheap soap. Still, it was slicker than water, and he coated his cock just as fast as he could. "Ready?" he asked, lifting Will by his hips and nudging at his hole.

"As ready as you're gonna get me," Will growled, head going back as he pushed down against Tab's cock.

Tab would have laughed as he shoved in, but he was too busy trying to breathe. "Fuck," he muttered, his hips forcing Will against the wall. "Fast and hard? Or just hard?" He could do this only the two ways; gentle was right out and Will was going to get fucked through the wall no matter what.

"Just fucking do me, Tab." Will leaned in to bite at his lips before pressing a hard kiss on him.

And the man called *him* pushy? Tab decided the fight wasn't worth it and just started humping his man, hands making sure Will's legs were wrapped around him. Water was pouring down on them and his cock was in the best place ever...life couldn't get much better, really.

Will's arms wrapped around his shoulders and they started moving together, Will coming down hard as he shoved up into that tight little hole.

"Fuck," Tab grunted, his hips rolling. "Good, Will." The man wasn't even heavy, just working with him, riding his cock. "Could do this forever." Before he could say anything more, anything stupid, he took Will's mouth in a hard kiss.

Will rode him like a wild man, just bouncing on his cock, adding his own heat to their kiss. Tab flexed his knees, driving up into Will and praying his legs wouldn't give out as he got close to shooting.

"Yes! Yes, Tab! God! Fuck! Now!" At the end of his litany, Will came, ass clamping down hard.

Tab threw back his head and cried out as Will shot over their bellies. Fuck it was good. Too good, and with another thrust he let it happen, let his control just go and came with another cry, pumping into Will's ass. Will just held on, panting, close, head on his shoulder.

"Oh fuck," Tab groaned, his heart racing. "God, baby." He felt the water run between them, washing come away, and sighed. "Good."

"Uh-huh." His cock slipped out of Will and those legs tight around his waist loosened, dropped.

The water ran out as they kissed, teeth clicking.

"Oops," Tab whispered, his hands sliding over Will's back. "Forgot to wash my hair. Next time, I guess."

"I'll go pay for another five minutes on my way out." Will gave him a hard kiss. "But don't be longer than that. I've got plans."

Tab blinked. "Plans?" he asked faintly.

"Yep." Will dressed a lot quicker than he'd undressed and then he was given a wink. "Big plans."

"Okay," Tab said, nodding. He had no idea what he was in for, but he'd do it. He was starting to think he'd do just about anything Will asked him to. With a grin and mental kick to his ass, he turned back to the shower, reaching for the shampoo. There were worse things than being at the beck and call of the Arillia's Captain. With any luck and some good hard work, he'd never have to deal with any of them. He was happy just the way things were.

End.