

# **On Corridian Wings: Mira's Deception**

## **Steven W. Boisean**

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## Chapter One

The bug-eyed Gaffi snorted through three moist nostrils.

Lars Dax gagged at the foul misty stench. His eyes watered and he cleared his throat before restating the demand. "Look at it."

His menacing tone cut through the cacophony of interspecies chatter that saturated the bar room of Bawdy Town's seediest brothel, the Hairy Knobb. The bartender raised his eyebrows making them stand a clear centimetre above his orange forehead. His oversized pea green orbs then dipped as he considered the holo-portrait being projected from the ring on Lars' forefinger.

Standing on the grimy bar top was a miniature female Corridiana of exceptional beauty. The bartender had seen a lot of hot females in his time but this one was way out of his experience. She was slim with a halo of blonde hair framing a delicate oval face. Above her fragile smile shone luminous grey eyes, which even in this low quality projection, were mesmerising. She had perfect breasts, round and pert within the tight bodice, and her wings, a pure virginal white, were folded behind her back so that the tips crossed above her head.

"Who is she? A holo-star?"

"Her name is Elenii Dax. Have you seen her?"

The Gaffi grunted in amusement. "Not in here."

Lars' patience began to drain away. "Have you seen her *anywhere*?"

The nostrils twitched and the slit of a mouth curled sarcastically. "Nooo."

"Have you heard of any Corridianas in Bawdy Town? She would have arrived within the last six months."

"What is she to you?" the Gaffi asked, glancing at Lars' impressive wings.

"That's only important if you've seen her," Lars said as his right hand shot out and grabbed the Gaffi by the shirt collar, pulling him half over the bar and sending a glass of flat cinder crashing to the floor. The Hairy Knobb went suddenly quiet as the bemused clientele stopped their parochial gossip to watch the unexpected drama being played out in front of them. "Do you know where she is?"

"I told you," the Gaffi said, his nostrils flaring and his eyebrows joining together in a threatening frown. "Now why don't you walk out of here while you still can?"

Gaffies were not usually so assertive and Lars regretted his impatience. In an establishment like this there were obviously toughs standing by.

A feminine voice came from his left. "I know her."

Lars released the Gaffi and turned to the human female who had come up silently to stand beside him. He quickly sized her up; a few centimetres shorter than himself with glossy black hair hoisted in a coil on top of her head which increased her height by a good ten centimetres. She was naked to the waist, with a tiny neon green loincloth covering her sex. Her brightly rouged and ringed nipples were erect and pointing at him.

"Where is she?"

She flicked glowing green eyes to the Gaffi. "I'll have a cinnamon cinder."

The Gaffi snorted and after straightening his shirt plucked a bottle from a shelf behind the bar and sloshed its fuming contents into a tumbler. The human picked it up, gave Lars a mercurial smile and, with swaying hips, sauntered suggestively to a vacant booth. Lars produced a coin between thumb and forefinger and as the Gaffi went to take it he closed his fist. Lars nodded at the half naked human. "Who is she?"

The Gaffi shrugged. "No name. Just a puss from Blow Row."

Lars closed his dark eyes. Blow Row was, as the name suggested, a dark alley in the ghetto where cheap anonymous mouths would suck whatever organs required pleasuring. Lars prayed to The Odin that Elenii was not anywhere near there. He dropped the coin onto the bar. "Keep the change."

The Gaffi snorted fragrantly. "Wonderful. I can retire at last."

\* \* \*

Mira watched the red-haired Corridian pay the bartender and walk gracefully toward her. She had never been so close to one of his breed before and he had literally taken her breath away.

This one was muscular with long slim legs encased in the thin grey film of his flight suit. His sturdy hips were girdled by a shiny black utility belt from which a holstered laser pistol hung casual and deadly. Her eyes took in his thin waist, flat stomach, deep chest and broad shoulders. She took a shallow breath to avoid inhaling his scent, which was, even from a distance, intoxicating. She had almost melted at the bar with her head awash in the syrupy thickness of his pheromones. Drawn in by his magnetic presence, her eyes had been locked onto the scalloped edges of his pure white wings. It had been all she could do not to reach out and touch his penna and feel for herself those feathers rumoured to be as soft as silk.

Her pussy had liquefied and she could feel the blood pumping through her veins as he approached. How she was going to stay on purpose and stop herself from grabbing him by the shoulders and planting a kiss on those firm lips she didn't know.

With a gentle sweep behind his back his right arm moved his wings to one side and he sat down. "You know Elenii?"

He had a deep, masculine voice and it seemed that it reverberated within her chest so that she felt that somehow he was inside her already. Here was a being of strength, she thought approvingly, with much power and determination. He was exactly what she was looking for.

Mira blew a cloud of vapour from her drink, pursed her full lips and took a dainty sip. She had to play this right. She needed him.

"Rooms are twenty-five clits. Fifty clits for an hour."

The Corridian's dark eyes raked her furiously and then something passed over his eyes, a broiling cloud of frustration, despair and exhaustion. He began to stand.

"An extra twenty-five clits for the gist."

He sat down again.

"You have to get a room or they'll beat me."

The Corridian dropped a pile of coins onto the table. Mira picked them up, took him by the hand. As she led him past the bar she flipped a coin at the Gaffi, who snorted a room code to her.

The room on the third floor was barely a cubicle with a single pallet on the floor and a UV shower in the corner. She sat on the pallet and started pulling off the most substantial part of her costume -- her black knee high boots.

Hands on hips, the Corridian stood watching her. The feathers of his wing coverts were bristling and within his flight suit she could see the outline of a significant cock. He dressed to the right, she noted. "Well," she prompted. "Are you going to undress?"

"Elenii," he said flatly.

"I've never had a Corridian before. What's your name?"

"What do you know of Elenii?"

Mira smiled as sweetly as she could and peeled away the loincloth that hid her shaven pussy. Spreading her legs, she ran her fingers over her dewy slit. She smiled with triumph as his cock swelled and pulsed. *It must be enormous*, she thought. *Come to me, my Pegasus, my winged horse.*

The Corridian stood motionless, staring down at her imperiously. Mira dropped to her knees before him and ran her fingers up his muscular thighs, careful not to touch that pulsing organ. Not yet, she cautioned. Let his excitement build.

She breathed deeply, letting his powerful scent wash over her. Within Mira, right down at the molecular level, his pheromones were initiating hormonal reactions that were making her as horny as she had ever felt in her life.

He reached down and, grasping her under her arms, lifted her effortlessly, suspending her in midair, eye to eye, her toes stretching to, but not reaching, the floor.

"Elenii," he pressed.

His breath was sweet and hot. She felt desire wash over her once again and feared her pussy was shamelessly dripping her desire onto the floor. His eyes were dark

pits, blacker than the ebonisian void and she felt she could fall forever into their mysterious depths.

Mira had an irrational sense that she was losing herself to him and if she didn't do something quick she'd be lost forever. She kissed him. His lips were warm and firm and they almost opened to her probing tongue, but he resisted and clamped them shut. He was certainly a determined one.

With her lips still firmly locked onto his she reached around the wide expanse of his chest and gently stroked the scapular feathers of his wings. Her fingers slid along their frictionless length and she luxuriated at their almost liquid texture, so soft, like the finest silk.

He shuddered and Mira sensed rather than heard his groan of pleasure. She trailed her fingers down along the leading edge of the primary wing until she came to the millimetre of clear space that separated their bodies. Reaching in she traced the length of his cock as it tented the material of his flight suit.

He groaned again. Then his lips opened and she knew she had him.

\* \* \*

Lars was at the end of his patience. He was tired and wanted nothing more than to go back to his ship *Mjolnir* and sleep for a cycle. He despaired of finding Elenii here on this shite of a planet and now knew that the garbled lead from that spice merchant suggesting a Corridian had been seen on Karacos was far more promising than the drunken pilot who'd said he'd glimpsed Elenii here.

But now this human said she knew Elenii. He could leave nothing untested, no matter how unreliable. There was little hope that this female would know anything useful, but he had to follow it up, just in case. He resolved he would get the gist from her and go straight home to *Mjolnir*, or as his crew called it, Thor's Hammer.

The warmth of the human's hand as she led him up the stairs to the room sent a pleasant sensation throughout his tired body. It had been such a long time since he had enjoyed a female. Not since Dara so many years before. A stab of pain coursed through his body -- poor sweet Dara.

This human certainly had a pleasing body -- muscular and fit with a tight stomach. Her biceps and thighs were well shaped. Most importantly, her scent was healthy. He appreciated women with healthy secretions, and this one differed from the other humans he had met who were, by and large, a most unhealthy people, despite their haughtiness and claim to be the original template for every race in the old empire.

Despite her stirring beauty this human could not be trusted. He doubted she knew of Elenii at all. Her lie had simply been a ploy to get his coin and a pallet to lie on for an hour, nothing else, except, perhaps, the novelty of bedding a Corridian.

He watched her performance -- the removal of the hideous loincloth and the almost ritualised unzipping of the boots -- with a sense of detachment that was quickly replaced with lust as she stroked her shaven pussy. She had the most delicate labial lips, which unfolded at her touch like an exotic flower. Her sex was truly remarkable and his swelling cock signalled that his fascination was no longer purely academic.

Her fingers slid along the outside of her slit and then dipped inside for a moment. She brought her finger to her lips, and a delicate pink tongue licked her juice. She smiled coyly and then slid to her knees before him, stroking his thigh.

He took a deep breath. He was here only for the gist. With a surprising display of willpower he bent and grasped her by the arms and hoisted her up into the air. Her celadon eyes were mesmerising, like a Corrisite's, with emerald swirls encircling the sable pupil that was wide and inviting. He had never seen anything so beautiful. He wondered if they were real.

"Elenii," he whispered, his sister's name catching in his throat.

The human's sudden kiss and her delicate caress of his wings sent waves of desire pulsing through him. Most breeds, when confronted with a Corridian, had a seeming irresistible urge to touch their feathers. Little did they know that a Corridian's wing was an enormous erogenous zone, that a touch initiated waves of lust that were all but uncontrollable. To his people, to fly and feel the rush of wind across their feathers was the most wonderful of all sensations and, for fledglings, an unbeatable



form of masturbation. To have his feathers stroked rhythmically, as this human female was doing, was quickly taking Lars to the edge of reason.

He let her fingers find his cock. Her tongue licked his closed mouth, tracing his lips to their corners, the sensual pressure subtly insistent. His desire and weariness combined to force his surrender and he opened his mouth to allow her tongue to snake inside and possess him.

\* \* \*

Somehow, in the flash of a moment, he impaled her on his cock. How he had opened his flight suit and released his horse cock one handed while holding her up she had no idea. The giant head of his penis seemed to have a mind of its own. She could feel it caressing her lips, gently sliding along the length of her slit, and when it was slick with her juices it gently, but determinedly, separated her labia and inched its way inside.

Mira shuddered. The head of his cock was hard yet surprisingly soft against her inner flesh. It spread her wide and she felt every millimetre of its length as he entered. It seemed to go on forever as it penetrated but she knew it had only taken a moment. Somehow time had slowed and a second had become like an hour as his glorious cock thrust inside her. Then, in an uncontrolled frenzy of lust, she wrapped her legs around his waist and started to ride his cock, taking it deep within her, deeper than any before.

He unfurled his wings and she felt herself being lifted through the air, great drafts of air washing around them, and she wanted to bury her face in his neck as the first orgasm rolled over her but his lips would not release her, and now his tongue was inside her mouth like his cock was inside her pussy and she came again.

She had a moment of cognizance, between orgasms, and willed herself to concentrate. She could feel the cock inside her probing her in its mindlessly bestial manner, its swollen length pulsing with desire. He was building up to orgasm, but she had to be centred when he came, otherwise she would miss it.

Mira remembered reading about the erogenous nature of a Corridian's feathers and in a calculated manner she reached behind to touch his rhythmically beating wings

and felt the delicate frond-like alula. He shivered immediately and, within her, his cock pulsed. She pushed her lips hard against his, her tongue wrestling with his and... like a flower... his mind opened for her.

Though definitely human in every respect, Mira was one of the few who possessed true psionic ability that allowed her to read minds. The mind of every humanoid race had its own natural defences, a psionic barrier that prevented neural leakage and maintained an individual's cerebral integrity. Mira could tap into the mind when that barrier was at its weakest, the moment of orgasm. This was when every fibre of the being was involved in experiencing the waves of sexual pleasure, a state that can only be achieved when all the barriers were down. At this moment the naked subconscious was exposed to whoever could see and read it.

As the Corridian's cock pumped his hot seed deep into her womb Mira's brain was being flooded with the very essence of Lars Dax. As the experiences of his life washed over her she searched for anything that would be helpful, information that she could remember for future use.

At the forefront of his mind she saw a beautiful young Corridian, the same one as in the holo-portrait. Elenii. Then Mira saw her as a child, a small Corridian learning to fly... falling into the arms of her older brother and the two tumbling to the ground... her injured foot... the broken hind claw. *Thor*, the young Corridian cried. *It hurts so bad*. She heard Lars soothing his sister, telling her that she would be all right, that his little *Gullveig* would be safe.

And then it was over, his cock ceased its fierce pumping, and she felt the warmth of his seed settling inside her. Her head ached with the onslaught of his psychic energy and her body simply wanted to meld itself, as her mind had, into his. Exhausted, she clung to him and cried.

\* \* \*

At the sound of her sobbing Lars opened his eyes. He slowed his wing beats and lowered them to the floor. Gently disengaging her arms from around his neck, he laid her down on the pallet. Tears were flowing freely down her cheeks and he felt a flush of

concern. Kneeling beside her he tenderly caressed her hair. She was beautiful, yet so fragile.

It was a pity she was condemned to such a life as this; the squalor, the danger, the unremitting degradation of existing in this shite hole. He could not imagine the pains and hurts she had felt during her short life. He closed his eyes at the nightmarish thought that Elenii was living such a life now.

"I am sorry," he whispered. "I did not intend this. I seek only the gist. Where is my sister?"

She opened her watery eyes and stared at him until he looked away in shame. "It was my fault," she said at last. "I did it to you. I know you only want to find your sister. But I could not resist you."

He nodded without looking at her and started to stand but she reached out and grasped his hand. "No. Don't go."

"There is nothing left for us," he whispered. "If you do not know Elenii..."

"But I do."

It was as if she had slapped him. Hope and suspicion welled up together. He searched her face trying to see into those green eyes to discern the truth. In all these months of looking for Elenii this unlikely human was the first to have said she actually knew her. "I don't believe you."

She lowered her eyes. "I am truly sorry for that," she whispered.

"Then give me proof," he demanded.

"We were on the same Rigellian slave ship," she said, meeting his gaze defiantly. "I'd been captured in a raid on Terdora and a few weeks later they threw a Corridian into the cell next to mine."

He searched her eyes for any sign that she was making this up, but he saw nothing, and that, more than anything, alerted him to her lie.

She returned his gaze steadily. "How can I convince you? She's alive and uninjured, scared, terrified..."

His heart broke at the words. "Stop it!"

"But I'm telling you the truth. Please believe me."

"This proves nothing."

"It was her. I recognised her in your holo-portrait. She told me her name was Elenii and that she was from Corris, captured in a raid that..."

"You are making this up." She had said nothing yet that showed that she knew anything more than the obvious. He stood up. "I don't know what you are doing..."

"No... wait. I know. You need an identifying mark, something that only someone who knew her would know about."

"Go on."

"Her foot. She said it was aching."

He stiffened. Hope sprang from his chest and he heard the desperation in his voice as he asked her to go on.

"She said she broke her claw as a child. I saw. The claw was missing."

She *had* seen Elenii. He closed his eyes recalling how her heel claw had been amputated after her fall. The fall he should have prevented. He opened his eyes and fixed the human with a hopeful, almost pleading, look. "Where is she?"

"They..."

At that moment there was a scrabbling at the door and before he had time to turn and face the potential danger the door shattered with a deafening explosion. Three members of the local Gaffi militia were at the smoking doorway, guns raised, shouting stridently and incoherently.

Lars reacted without thinking. With one powerful thrust of his wings he flew to the ceiling where he hovered for just a moment, his wings beating down the choking cloud of smoke the grenade had released. Then he swooped onto the lead trooper. His talons, which he'd unsheathed at the first sign of danger, ripped through the gas mask laying bare the creature's orange face. The Gaffi screamed as the claws ripped through his skin and he fell moaning to the floor.

Astounded, Lars saw the human tumble across the floor, bowling over the second trooper as he entered the room. The trooper cursed as he fell and in reflex fired

his laser pistol. The energy bolt ripped through the cubicle wall. The slimy bastards weren't using the stun setting. They were here to kill!

The third trooper jumped over the human's rolling body and took aim at her but before he could fire Lars had dropped onto him, his claws ripping the pistol from his hands. The creature screamed in alarm as Lars shifted his grip and lifted the hapless Gaffi by the head, intent on dashing him to the wall.

The second trooper had by this time regained his feet and charged toward the female. Lars had his hands full but watched in fascination as the human adopted a defensive Qui Chi pose and tossed the creature over her shoulder and in one movement pounced on him and snapped his neck.

"Come on," she yelled and scrambled into the corridor. Lars dropped his victim and joined her racing down the passage to the stairs -- she running naked and he flying a metre behind her.

The adrenaline was still pumping through Lars' veins but he was extraordinarily calm as he flew behind the human, watching her firm buttocks move delightfully as she ran. She really was in top condition, an athlete almost, and her martial skills were very impressive. She was anything but a helpless female.

She led him to the stairwell, holding the door for him as he flew past and landed on the stair. He waited for her and she led him down the fire escape into the alley beside the Hairy Knobb.

She stopped and leant against the grimy wall pretending to catch her breath. He saw through the act and grasped her by the wrist. "I don't know who you are but you better start explaining."

She stared wide-eyed at him and even in the darkness her eyes were ablaze with green fire. "What do you mean? You're the one they are after."

She was right about that. He had a bounty on his head and every time he showed himself in Confederation space he risked being turned in to the local law enforcement agencies -- or worse -- bounty hunters. But that wasn't what he meant, and he knew she knew that as well.

"Cut the shite. Who are you?"

She grimaced at the pressure on her wrist. Though every avian breed was, by necessity, lightly boned, they were, however, engineered for strength. And this one was very, very strong. "Okay, okay. But not here, there will be more militia any time now and I'm underdressed for almost every occasion."

He looked down to her breasts, no longer heaving in faked exhaustion, but standing firm and proud. He shook his head. "I have to leave this planet right now. Either you tell me where they sent Elenii or I take you with me."

She tilted her head to one side as if considering her options. "I'm wanted here myself," she replied, her lips curling cheekily. "I'd appreciate a lift."

Lars hawked and spat his disapproval. He was about to debate possibility when there were shouts from the bustling street outside the Hairy Knobb as more militia arrived in a humveh and piled out in attack formation.

"Follow me," he spat and raced off down the alley with the naked human female in hot pursuit.

## Chapter Two

"You risk war, Dantilus," Geena Triskelion said coolly.

The Ambassador of the Solaran Confederacy stood defiantly before the gilded throne of Dantilus Muss, Rigellian Warlord, ruler of the Velos Systems and recent claimant to the disputed Belkin Sector.

The warlord, a scaly, slit-eyed reptilian, was currently receiving the oral ministrations of one of his slaves, a six breasted beauty from Ophiuchi Minor, who knelt between his substantial thighs and sucked deeply on one of his two penises while she fisted the other. His eyes, however, never left the human, and he watched for any sign of weakness in the woman. So far there had been none, despite this staged slight to her official standing and personal dignity.

No matter. He was enjoying his slave's vigorous efforts.

"Ambassador," he said abruptly. "I fail to see how rescuing you from your disintegrated star ship could be construed as hostile. I wish only for you to enjoy my hospitality here on Velos while we wait for the conference and you can be reunited with your government."

"You know as well as I do that the pirate attack on my vessel was carried out on your orders."

"Tut, tut, my dear Ambassador. Geena. May I call you Geena?"

"I am Madam Ambassador, to you," she insisted.

"Certainly you are," Dantilus mocked. "But I will call you Geena anyway. Now, Geena. There is no evidence that I am involved. There are no witnesses. You were the only survivor and we found you unconscious in your life pod. You have absolutely no evidence of what occurred, nor do I, except that my patrol ship detected you floating about amidst a debris field. We did only what was right in rescuing you."

"The flight recorder in my pod?"

Dantilus sighed. "Unfortunately it was lost when your pod was accidentally ejected after your rescue. I'm so sorry. It seems we'll never know the identity of your attackers now."

"A very convenient accident, don't you think?"

"The officer responsible is being disciplined."

"Don't bother," she said cynically. "I wouldn't like him to be punished for simply following orders."

Dantilus laughed. "I'll pass on your concern for his welfare to his captain."

Triskelion bowed. "I would now like to contact my embassy on Helios IV and let them know I am safe."

"Unfortunately, a quite severe magnetic storm is playing havoc with our null space communications. We are, at the moment, quite isolated from the entire galaxy."

"Again, a very convenient occurrence, don't you think?"

"What else could it be?" Dantilus' slitted eyes became unfocused for a moment and he pushed the head of his slave deeper onto his penis. He looked back to the ambassador. "So, please, avail yourself of all the amenities of my palace. You may have the pick of any of the male... or female... slaves for your pleasure. I'll have a selection sent to your apartment."

"Please, don't bother."

"Oh, it's no bother," he grunted as he came, shooting a plume of yellow cum into the air from one of his penises and into the gagging throat of his slave with the other. He smiled silkily when he recovered his senses. "I can't have the limits of my hospitality doubted by the people of the Confederation, now can I?"

\* \* \*

The vessel he had brought her to was a modest scout ship, reasonably armed with laser cannon and conventional torpedo tubes and, Mira noted, in immaculate condition. He'd virtually dragged her up the loading ramp shouting instructions to his crew before dumping her into this empty compartment.



"So," Lars asked perfunctorily as he entered the cabin. "Who are you? And I want the truth. As soon as I think you are lying, you're out the airlock. Is that clear?"

Mira had dressed herself in a silver flight suit just like his, except she had left the front zipper undone to her navel so that as she sat on the bunk the front gaped open, exposing her perfect breasts. She had found the flight suit in a locker and in the fifteen minutes since Lars had boosted them off Elysium she'd showered and dressed.

Mira considered the Corridian standing before her with that characteristic hands on hips pose that came so naturally to him. She found it almost impossible not to stare at his crotch. The cock that had given her so much pleasure was nestled benignly within his flight suit and was huge even when flaccid. Her pussy liquefied again as she recalled how that horse cock had sent her to oblivion.

She also noticed something about him she'd failed to see back at the Hairy Knobb. He was barefoot, and the claws that he had used to such good effect in the fight were sheathed and quite unnoticeable.

"Where's Elenii?"

Honesty, she'd heard somewhere, was always the best policy. She wondered if whoever had first said it had ever been in a situation like this.

"She is on Velos."

"How do you know?"

"That's where they took her out of the holding cell. I asked a crewman who was raping me at the time where we were and he said Velos."

Mira watched him as he studied her face and she sensed he didn't believe her. Somehow, he knew she was lying. No doubt about it. But the fact that she knew about his sister's foot proved to him that she did know Elenii. He was clearly confused.

"Tell me about Elenii." The challenge in his voice was unmistakable.

"I'm very sorry about your sister. She looked like a very nice... Corridian."

"Corridiana is the term you are looking for."

"Oh. What a pretty name." She took a deep breath. "I didn't get to talk to her much. I was very popular with the crew, you see. They didn't leave me alone, as a

matter of fact." She saw the look of horror pass over his eyes. "But they didn't touch Elenii," she added hastily. "She was too precious a cargo, so pure looking and sweet. That's why she had a cell to herself. I'd say they intended to keep her well looked after and sell her to Dantilus Muss. He has a palace on Velos, and he only buys untouched merchandise." She reached out her hand and touched his arm gently. "So I think she'll be all right."

"With that monster? I swear I'll kill him, and the captain of the slaver. What was the ship called?"

She hesitated. "I don't know. I didn't ask." Then she added, "I was really busy, as I said."

He took a deep breath and placed his hand on top of hers. She smiled as she sensed that she had him back. Seeing her fight so effectively had obviously made him suspicious, but her story of woe seemed to have brought him back again. "What will you do?" she asked.

"Get her out of there. If it's the last thing I do."

\* \* \*

On Velos, Ambassador Triskelion paced her sumptuous apartment. Luxurious it might be, but it was a prison cell none the less. She was trapped and there was very little she could do about it. The fact that Muss had kept her alive meant that he had a use for her. She had become a bargaining chip in the Belkin negotiation.

Muss had no legitimate claim on the sector. It had been recognised as Solaran territory ever since the initial break-up of the old Terran Empire. She cursed the centralised government, which had been lax by not monitoring Muss's build up of naval forces and his methodical incursions into their space. Might was right, however, and Muss's navy was substantial enough to give the central government pause.

And now he had a prize; an ambassador and daughter of one of the Solaran leading families no less. What would be the reaction at the conference when he produced her? Geena Treskilion, once thought dead in a star ship disaster and now alive? What a coup!

Geena wondered if her father would give away ten whole star systems to get her back. Was she that valuable to him? She thought not.

There would be war. Whether she lived or died. But for the moment it seemed she lived at Muss's pleasure.

The door slid aside and one of Muss's Rigellian retainers stood there waiting for her to invite him in. She kept him waiting. She detested the reptilian form, the scaly skin, ridged eyebrows, tails and clawed feet, but most of all the obscene double penis that current fashion deemed to be left free and open to the air. They made her sick.

"Well, what do you want?"

He entered, the swish of his short tail giving him a rolling gait as it swung from side to side. She couldn't help but watch his penises scrape the carpet and she had a fleeting image of being fucked by them, one penis in her pussy and the other in her spinc both at the same time. She shuddered at the thought.

The retainer stopped in the middle of the room and motioned to the door. A line of despondent slaves entered. None were human, but all were from the old Terran Empire, the empire of her ancestors that had ruled a third of the galaxy before the Others came and spread anarchy throughout the civilised universe.

"His Highness Muss wished you to select whichever slave pleases you."

She recoiled at his offer. These young men and women were not human. How could they think she would touch any one of them let alone have sex? She shook her head firmly. "No. Send them away."

Even if she was inclined that way, and she knew plenty of humans that were, she could never compromise her diplomatic status by indulging in sexual relations with anyone. Muss obviously has sensors in the room recording her every action. She paled at the potential embarrassment of a holo-vid being shown at the conference; her father's daughter being shafted by a double headed cock?

"Tell His Highness that I thank him for his consideration," she said to the air rather than the retainer. "But I have thoughts only of returning to my home."

\* \* \*

"So, what's the plan, Captain?" Gyas Talon, the ship's Altairan navigator, asked. Talon's blue hued skin seemed to glow in the soft light of the control panel. He'd just evaded detection by a Gaffi cruiser by ducking behind a derelict space station and had now set course for Velos; estimated arrival time two days.

"We go in as a regular smuggler," Lars replied simply.

"Won't they think it strange that we have no cargo? We won't seem to be very good smugglers will we?"

"We could say our usual supplier was arrested by the Gaffi Navy," offered Epirus Neelan, the ship's medic. Neelan was from Tau Ceti and her forked tongue lent her voice a sizzling quality that everyone on board found sexually encouraging. So far no one had gotten past first base.

Draeg Acron, ship's engineer, scratched his ear with his third hand and shook his head. "We don't say anything. Why make it complicated? We just act pissed off with the universe and they'll believe it."

Lars nodded. "I like it simple."

"Caff, anyone?" Lidi Tibur, the ship's cook, offered a tray of steaming hot caff to the assembled crew. She made the best caff in this quarter of the galaxy and she always had a taker. Lidi was also a horny Sirian, and being equipped with three vaginas, she could accommodate all the crew at once and often did, except for Lars who, for reasons of maintaining discipline, had a policy of not fucking the crew.

"And once down there, what do we do then?" Talon asked, nervously. He loved being in open space and anything to do with planet fall made him jumpy.

"We need an *in* to the palace," Neelan said. "If that's where Elenii is being held, we need an excuse to get in there."

"And security there will be tighter than an Altairan's arsehole. No offence, Gyas," Acron chuckled.

"None taken, handy, but you're right. We can't just go in guns blazing. Muss is one bad..."

Lars stood abruptly. "No. I don't want any of you in danger. This is a personal matter. I cannot ask any of you to risk yourselves."

"I protest, Captain." Acron stood up in indignation. "You rescued each and every one of us from situations that meant our deaths or imprisonment and we have yet done nothing in return."

Everyone on the bridge nodded in agreement. They'd follow him willingly into the cold halls of Valhalla if he asked.

"You have been a fine crew and you have repaid me a hundred fold."

"Shite is what you are saying, Captain. We value our lives more highly than merely being a fine crew."

Lars blushed, his pale skin reddening, his feathers quivering with emotion. "I thank you for that," he replied softly. "I meant no disrespect. Give me time and I'll figure something out."

\* \* \*

"It is a fine ship," Mira said as she entered his cabin. "What have you named her?"

"I call him *Mjolnir*," he replied as he sat up. His lips curled in a slight smile. "But no one can pronounce it properly, so we call him Thor's Hammer."

Mira nodded in understanding. It made sense. 'Thor' was Elenii's pet name for her older brother and so this ship was his magic hammer. She almost giggled when it occurred to her that he should call his cock *Mjolnir* too; it certainly had magical properties and it certainly pounded like a hammer.

He motioned for her to sit beside him and she did so, her nostrils full of his scent. Mira's hormones stirred in response and her pussy burned as if it were full of molten lava.

"Lidj told me you were planning to rescue your sister. I'd like to help."

"I cannot ask you to do anything like that. It is far too dangerous."

"Lidj said no one could work out a plan to get into the palace."

"That is so. It is too heavily fortified for an armed attack. Besides, I don't want to risk Elenii being hurt in any crossfire."

"You love your sister deeply," she said reaching out for his hand, but he moved it away. "I've never had any family to speak of but your love for her is impressive."

"When our parents died I left her with my father's brother." Guilt crossed his face. She knew he felt that he should never have left her. "When I heard of his death and Elenii's abduction I left my post as a fighter pilot."

"And that's why the Confederation has a bounty on your head?" She knew that already from their mind meld but she couldn't let him know what she knew, let alone how.

He nodded, the shame evident on his face. "I am a deserter. Not by choice, but they refused my request for leave to look for my sister. They forced me to act dishonourably."

"I think you acted very honourably," she said and believed it too. "And your crew?"

"All good spirits. They allow me to be their captain, but we are all equal."

"Lidj told me that they almost mutinied when you wouldn't let them help you."

"Lidj talks too much."

Mira laughed lightly. "She is in love with you. As they all are, in their own ways."

He turned and faced her, his black eyes burning deep within her, setting her heart afire. "You have learnt all that in the short hours you have been onboard?"

"It is plain to see. So, I wish to help too."

He shook his head vigorously. "No. I have decided. I will sneak inside the palace under cover of darkness and find the slave quarters and release her. Acron will create a diversion to draw their troops away from the spaceport and I will bring her home."

She couldn't help but laugh and though she saw it hurt and angered him she couldn't stop herself. "Oh, Lars. Subtly is not in your vocabulary is it?"

His jaw set, his eyes flared and his wing tips bristled.

"Wait," she said as she fought for breath, her hand at her breast. "Have I got a plan for you."

## Chapter Three

Velos was a beautiful planet, blue oceans, green continents, incandescent polar ice caps and a benign ecology. That it belonged to a Rigellian tyrant whose favourite pastime was genocide was beyond comprehension. Dantilus Muss had his palace situated on a snow capped mountain peak fifty kilometres north of Terek, the main city of the largest continent.

After some vigorous negotiation Thor's Hammer received permission to land at Terek Spaceport. As a vessel originating from Confederation space, Lars and his crew would normally have been imprisoned and the ship impounded while their bona fides were checked. But after the promise of a substantial bribe, they were finally deemed to be licensed traders permitted to land on a planet officially open only to craft registered with the Rigellian Hegemony.

Lars brought the ship to a gentle landing in Docking Bay 14 of the utilitarian spaceport. A customs official, flanked by a heavily armed security squad, marched across the tarmac and waited impatiently as the loading ramp slid into place.

Lars and Talon met the official, a snooty Rigellian named Chunn, who checked their credentials on the registration disks Talon had given him. Lars also handed over ten thousand clits to cover any irregularities and to ensure deletion of their records when they left -- an essential precaution for any self respecting smuggler. The large purse, according to tradition, would be shared amongst all the customs staff on duty.

"May I ask a question of some delicacy, Dock Master Chunn?"

"What is it, Corridian?"

Lars lowered his voice conspiratorially. "I wish to speak with whoever supplies the palace with female slaves. I have a special piece of merchandise for His Highness Muss."



Chunn considered him suspiciously. Lars guessed that anything to do with His Highness had to be treated very carefully. Make a mistake and your balls could end up on a key chain.

Lars produced another purse of coin. "For you alone," he whispered. Chunn's ribbon-like tongue flickered across his lower lip. He took the purse and weighed it in his palm.

"I shall arrange Neala Ghotti to contact you."

"Quickly, I pray you, Dock Master Chunn. I have an appointment off planet that I must keep and I'd hate to deprive His Highness of my merchandise."

"I understand," Chunn replied. He returned the registration disks to Talon and, with military precision, marched away with his squad.

"Whew," Talon sighed in relief. "That's step one complete."

"Pray to The Odin that it all goes as smoothly."

\* \* \*

Mira adjusted the transparent bandanna that stretched across her breasts as Lidj brushed her long black hair. She had decided to wear her hair down as Muss was known to prefer it that way.

The ship's cook smiled at her new found friend. "I think you are very brave to do this."

Mira shrugged. "It's what I do best. I'm glad I can help Lars."

Lidj was still flushed from their bout of love making which had started while she helped Mira shave her pussy. One thing had led to another and as Lidj squirmed in orgasm, Mira had learned all she could about Lars and his crew's exploits, at least from Lidj's point of view. The knowledge of their loyalty to Lars and his love of them in return had shaken her resolve but the dice had been rolled and were now unstoppable.

"Lidj. I want you to do me a favour."

"Anything," she replied eagerly.

Mira handed her a disk. "Give this to Lars tomorrow night."

"What is it?"

"It's just a letter. A thank you for everything he has done for me. Promise you'll give it to him."

Lidj nodded in understanding. "Is this in case it all goes wrong?"

Mira kissed her on the lips. "Yes. But promise me. Give it to him late tomorrow night, no earlier."

"I promise," she said and, as she was practically naked, pushed the disk down the front of her lacy briefs.

Lars appeared at the cabin door. "Are you ready?"

"Yes. How do I look?" She gave a twirl and the diaphanous pantaloons billowed around her shapely legs.

She noted with pleasure the expression of sheer unadulterated lust that crossed his handsome face. That was followed by a shadow of doubt and she guessed he was having second thoughts. Mira could think of nothing to say that would allay both their fears.

"She looks divine," Lidj enthused. "She simply can't fail. She'll find Elenii for us."

\* \* \*

The establishment Neala Ghotti's message had directed them to, the Orion's Horn, was in the city's red light district. It was a bustling area filled mainly with Rigellian soldiers and traders who had supplanted the indigenous population with ruthless enthusiasm.

Lars screwed his nose at the body odour of the Rigellians, finding their reptilian musk particularly unpleasant. He also found their fashion sense remarkably curious. Leaving your penis and balls free and open to the elements seemed to be a particularly audacious statement to make, particularly when your undercarriage travelled so close to the ground.

Mira tried not to show her distaste for the Rigellians. Despite the obvious advantage of having two cocks they were a particularly brutal race and she'd have to be on her toes if she was to survive their vigorous sexual practices. She also hated wearing

shackles about her wrists, she felt so vulnerable. Lars hadn't wanted her to wear them, but she had insisted that if the charade was to be half way believable she had to look like a new and recalcitrant slave.

*Orion's Horn* was an up-market brothel with neon signs and clean windows which displayed holograms of an assortment of attractive males and females adopting seductive poses and blowing kisses to passing pedestrians. The prices of the services of the individuals depicted scrolled beneath them in flashing text and none were cheap.

Lars paused at the entrance and grasped Mira's elbow. "Are you sure you wish to continue?"

She avoided his eyes. "Yes, I am sure."

"I still do not know why you are doing this."

"You got me out of that shite hole in Bawdy Town for one thing."

He put his arm around her shoulders pulling her to him so that her breasts flattened against his chest. "And the other?"

She didn't have another reason, at least not one she could share with him. "Elenii," she whispered finally. "She's not meant for this kind of life."

Her heart almost broke when tears welled in his dark eyes. She had never hated herself before but at that moment she thought she was the most evil creature alive. "Come on." She gave him a half smile. "Before we make a spectacle of ourselves."

It took a moment for their eyes to adapt to the establishment's low lighting but what they saw was impressive. *Orion's Horn* was huge and the long bar area was backed by a mirrored stage where dancers from a half dozen worlds twisted and gyrated to exotic music. Facing the dancers were hundreds of tables at which hundreds of drinkers and waitresses in various stages of undress were watching or having their pleasure where they sat.

"How in Odin's name are we going to find him?" Lars asked.

"He'll find us," Mira said confidently. "How many people with wings would he be expecting to walk in here right about now?"

She was right. Thirty seconds later a large Rigellian sidled up to them and tapped Lars on the shoulder. The monster motioned him toward a flight of stairs that led to a mezzanine level where small private booths were situated.

Adopting the role of a seasoned slaver, Lars grasped Mira by the arm and unceremoniously pulled her along after him. They followed the hulk's balls up the stairs and along to a lavishly decorated booth in which a dwarf albino Rigellian reclined, smoking a karro stick. Incongruously, there was an Altairan female three times his size bobbing her head in his lap. He motioned them inside with a flamboyant wave of his hand and his minion closed the door of the booth behind them.

"Lars Dax, I presume," the little Rigellian said, puffing on his stick.

"And you are Neala Ghotti," Lars replied confidently as he sat down. Mira remained standing, her eyes cast down in submission.

Ghotti eyed Mira greedily. "You have a real beauty there."

"Is she up to Muss's standards?"

"Well now, I'll have to try her, won't I?"

Lars stood up. "Muss doesn't like used goods I hear. I'll take her to the palace myself."

"Slow down, my friend. Here, sit. Have a drink. You're new to this game, I can tell. Now, enlighten me, how did this little treasure fall into your lap?"

"How much?" Lars said bluntly.

"Not till I know her pedigree. She's human, that I can see. I don't get that many of her breed. Where is she from?"

Lars rattled her hand restraints. "Tell him."

Mira looked up. "I am Natu Gelasia. I am from Earth."

"Earth? Now that is a rarity. They don't travel much I hear. Where were you found?"

She shot Lars a rancorous glare. "This pirate destroyed my brother's ship. We were in Confederation space on vacation."

"Vacation? So you're from a rich family as well." He cast a suspicious glance at Lars. "Why didn't you ransom her?"

"Because he killed my whole family!" Mira spat before Lars had to think up a reason. Lars was surprised at the venom in her voice. She was truly a good actress and an excellent liar.

Ghotti laughed. "Were you married?"

"No. Why should I marry? I hate men!"

"Well, you won't find any human men here on Velos," Ghotti chuckled and tapped the Altairan on the head. "Trell, check her."

The Altairan stopped what she was doing and crawled over to her handbag and extracted a palmcom. She stood up and straightened the see-through slip that clung to her shapely breasts. With stately grace she went to Mira and ran the device up the left side of her body and then the right and then, without warning, between her legs into her pussy. "No explosive devices," Trell reported in a sing song voice. "She's in good health and has no pathogens dangerous to Rigellians."

"Okay," Ghotti said, extinguishing his karro stick in an ashtray. He abruptly clapped his hands twice, a signal that negotiations had begun. "Fifty thousand clits."

"One hundred thousand."

"Sixty-five, but only because she's relatively untouched."

"Eighty, and I'll be motivated to find you more."

Ghotti grinned. "I like you, Dax. You won't live long but I like you. Very well, you've bested me in your first shot at negotiation. Well done."

"The money?"

"My associate has it."

Lars shook his head and handed Ghotti a piece of paper. "Transfer the money to that account number. I don't wish to carry that amount down the streets of Terek. I intend to live a little longer than this afternoon."

Ghotti laughed heartily. "See? I knew there was a reason I liked you." He motioned to Trell and gave her the paper. "Seventy-five thousand clits to that number."

"Eighty thousand," Lars corrected.

The Altairan looked to the smiling Ghotti who nodded. She typed some numbers into her palmcom and looked to Ghotti, her expression unreadable.

Lars pulled out his communicator and adjusted the miniature earpiece and microphone. "Talon?"

"Yes, Captain, it's been deposited." Talon was at the spaceport bank where that morning he'd opened a temporary trader's account. He whistled with approval. "Eighty thousand clits! Good going! I'm withdrawing it now and taking it to the ship."

"Okay. Out." Lars snapped the communicator shut. Without warning he threw the keys to Mira's shackles into Ghotti's lap. "She's all yours."

"Pleasure doing business with you, Dax."

Without looking at Mira, Lars stood up, opened the door of the booth and left.

\* \* \*

Mira took a deep breath. *Now, if I am to fail, this is when it begins to go turd shaped.* She raised her eyes to look at Ghotti. He was staring at her intently, his slitted eyes twinkling.

"I know everything you and Dax have told me is a lie."

Mira's stomach dropped.

"Slaves and slavers always lie," Ghotti continued, lighting another karro stick. "I also know that anything you will tell me during the rest of our short association will also be a lie. So I won't waste my time on you. I'll sell you to Muss and forget all about you. So don't waste your energies on petty displays of wilfulness and disobedience. It will have no effect on me and it could have a painful effect on you. Though Muss likes his merchandise in pristine condition he does appreciate the importance of discipline. Do I make myself clear?"

Mira nodded.

"I'm glad we understand each other. Now, my accountant Trell here will take you to the palace. Trell, for all intents and purposes, as far as you are concerned at least, is me. Do everything she tells you and you'll have an easy time of it. Is that clear?"

Mira nodded.

"Good. Trell, you know the routine. Accept nothing less than two hundred thousand clits. And for all our sakes, find better clothes for her. Muss can't stand poor packaging. That rubbish just won't do."

Trell nodded, and looping her handbag over her shoulder, took the key of the shackles from Ghotti's hand and led Mira out of the booth.

The humveh ride to the palace took only thirty minutes. Trell refused to talk or answer Mira's few enquiries, which suited her fine. She was fully occupied beating down her despair at leaving Lars.

She was used to being able to put her emotions to one side while she did whatever had to be done. She had been trained well, back at the Solaran Intelligence Corps, where she'd been raised as an orphan in the Canberra Crèche. And she had excelled at it. Disturbingly, the skill seemed to desert her whenever she thought of Lars. She tried to analyse the effect he had on her but failed miserably. In her experience, albeit in an intelligence gathering context, the male of any species was easy to figure out. None had left any residual effect on her at all, despite the inherent intimacy of being inside their minds.

Yet Lars had left something of himself inside her, something important. If only she could tease out what it was so that she wouldn't feel so... naked. She only knew that the very thought of him made her mind soften, and the discipline of years would fall away leaving her vulnerable and, for the first time in her life, truly afraid.

At first she had felt terrified of this sense of nakedness, then angry and now, as she sped toward her mission, she was overwhelmingly sad at its loss.

Lars was truly concerned for her and that was a new experience. It wasn't sex, which for all the men she'd encountered, had been the driving force behind their words and actions. Nor was his motivation simply to find out about his sister, though that dominated his every thought. No, he genuinely felt distress for her situation. He truly empathised and though he knew nothing about her and was very confused by her, he

trusted her for her own sake. He was the first being in all her life to show her such unconditional affection.

Now that she would never see him again she felt a strange emptiness within her she never knew could have existed. But it wasn't the empty void of loneliness she sensed. She knew what that felt like only too well, had felt that all her life. No, this new place inside her was filled with something she'd not experienced before. Regret.

The castle-like palace was built on a plateau hewn from the peak of the picturesque snow capped mountain. There were no approaches by road and Trell expertly piloted the humveh into a cave-like entrance beneath the battlements, which bristled with all manner of armaments. Lars had been right. A frontal assault would have been disastrous.

Trell tossed her a figure hugging but elegant evening gown of the deepest crimson. Mira discarded Lidj's clothes and slipped into the dress. The matching stilettos were stylish and in her size and she had to admire Trell's taste. She bundled up her old clothes but Trell shook her head. Mira was to leave everything of her old life behind. She would have nothing to remind her.

Impulsively she put the bandanna that had held her breasts to her nose. She could still smell his scent where he had held her on the steps of Orion's Horn. She inhaled deeply. Her groin reacted and a ripple of melancholy pleasure radiated through her body. It would, she knew, be the last of him she would ever know.

A Rigellian guard met them and after a brisk ten-minute travelator ride into the bowels of the mountain they were led through a labyrinth of corridors and interconnected rooms. Mira didn't even try to remember the numberless twists and turns. She had no reason to. Even if escape were possible, she had no intention of trying, at least not so soon.

They eventually came to a large round antechamber with a dozen plain doors radiating from it. "These are the slave quarters," Trell explained. "Wait here."



The Altairan disappeared, leaving her with the guard who looked at her lasciviously while his hands massaged his exposed cocks. He licked his lower lip with a flickering tongue and winked.

"Oh please," Mira sighed and turned her back on him and pretended to look at the pink hued wall. Instead she pushed the image of Lars deeper into her mind: the blackness of his eyes, the taste of his lips, the feel of his feathers. She suppressed her aching pussy and wiped away a tear that trickled from her eye.

Thirty minutes later Trell returned with another female Altairan. "The transaction has been completed satisfactorily," she announced to no one in particular. "This is the doctor."

"Come with me," the new Altairan ordered and Mira followed her through another series of interconnected rooms. She noticed the guard had stopped following her and she figured that once the formalities were over she had become part of the furniture and of no particular importance to anyone. That was a hopeful sign as it made her job a little easier.

The physical examination was intrusive and surprisingly embarrassing. Mira had to go through all bodily functions in front of the good doctor to ensure that there were no communication or explosive devices hidden within her body or biological weapons in her secretions. It took two hours and she was raw both inside and out at the end of it but she passed without comment from the doctor.

After it was over she was taken naked to a small cubicle with a single pallet. "This is your room," the doctor explained. "You will be summoned in one hour. There is a dinner party this evening. You have been assigned to the lower tables and will dress accordingly. A slave will bring clothes."

Alone, Mira sat very still. Instead of feeling elated at successfully gaining access to Muss's harem, or even anxious about the trials to come -- Mira experienced an unaccustomed emotion; a need for someone to hold her, someone like Lars.

Instead of planning her next move, she spent her time silently weeping.

## Chapter Four

"Have you seen her?"

Lars was at the fifth bar since leaving Mira. He'd been showing Elenii's holoportrait to every bartender and doorman he met. He had to keep active otherwise his thoughts drifted back to Mira and the danger she faced at the palace. His mind had been in a whirlpool of conflicting emotions since abandoning her to that slimy little Rigellian, Ghotti.

*"Have I got a plan for you."* His memory of the night she'd come to his cabin sent a stab of pain through his heart. Though he regretted agreeing with her, he had to admit that her plan was a perfect way of getting into the palace and it was the way he liked it; simple, with a high certainty of success.

*"As soon as I find Elenii, I'll contact you," Mira assured him.*

*"But how? It is certain that you will not be able to take in any communication devices."*

*"Leave that to me. These places, palaces and fortresses, are made to keep people out, but once you are inside, part of the household staff, there are always ways of getting word out. I've been in places like this before and they leak like sieves."*

*"But how will you contact me," he insisted. "And when?"*

*She clasped his hands in hers. He thrilled at the warmth her touch brought him. "I can't report in every hour, if that's what you want. But I'll locate whoever has contact with the outside world and bribe him."*

*"Bribe him? What with? You'll be a slave. You won't have..." His voice trailed away as he realised what she meant.*

*"Don't worry. It's nothing."*

*She squeezed his hand at that and he had squeezed back.*

*"If you don't hear from me within a week, then that means I have failed. She is no longer in the palace and you can leave."*

*"I can't leave you."*

*"You must. Because you won't be able to get me out. Not without knowing where I am within the palace. That's the whole point of me going in, remember? To locate Elenii and arrange a place where you can come get us. If you don't know where I am you can't rescue me." She'd squeezed his hand tightly. "You have to promise that you won't come after me."*

*He promised. He didn't like it, but she was right. This whole scheme was getting out of his control and he didn't like it one bit. Something else troubled him too. "Why risk your freedom like this?"*

*"Hey, living in a palace won't be a hardship, especially after the Hairy Knobb. Besides, within six months I'll be running the joint."*

*"You can stay here," he offered and then added clumsily, "on Mjolnir."*

*Mira had laughed much too loudly. "Me? On a star ship? I don't belong here."*

*She kissed him then, to quell his fears. He kissed her back, not wanting to think about the danger she was exposing herself to. He would remember the taste of her lips, the feel of her tongue on his, the way her fingers caressed his wings and the way her pussy lips opened to his touch, the taste of her inner dew.*

*"I said no," the Rigellian barman repeated.*

Lars blinked his mind back into the present and deactivated the holo-portrait. "How would I find out if she was held at the palace?" Beneath his hand he discretely dropped a fat purse of coin onto the bar. The barman nodded and his tongue flicked his lips.

"You're in luck." His clawed hand reached out and quickly enveloped the purse and casually drew it to him, making it disappear beneath the bar. He tilted his head to one side. "See the third table along the back. The tall Altairan."

Lars casually scanned the back row of tables and spotted the blue figure. It wasn't Trell, thank The Odin. The Altairan was sitting alone, nursing a tall steaming tumbler of cinder. "Who is he?"

"Urith Cavell, head of the slave managers. He knows every slave in the palace. Lucky spinc! By his account, he's fucked every one of them too, male and female."

Lars' jaw set and he nodded his thanks to the Rigellian. "Give me one of whatever he's drinking."

The barman smiled and poured the drink. "Good luck, my friend."

Lars nodded his thanks. He weaved his way through the maze of tables and casually slipped into the seat beside the Altairan. "Urith. I'm pleased to make your acquaintance."

Cavell spluttered over his drink. "Who... who are you?"

"A friend." Lars activated the holo-portrait. "In your capacity of palace slave manager, look at this."

Cavell studied Elenii's portrait. His single eyebrow raised in surprise. "Is she for sale?" he asked. "If she is, you should see Neala Ghotti. He has the palace concession."

Lars was disappointed that there was no sign of recognition. "She'd be a perfect partner for the one you already have, don't you think?"

Cavell whistled in agreement and Lars' heart jumped in anticipation.

"That would be true. That is, if we had one."

"What do you mean?"

"His Highness would truly value a female such as this. She is a rare beauty."

"Have you ever had a winged Corridian at the palace?"

The Altairan shook his head. "Not in the twenty years I've been employed with His Highness. I'm certain he'd be interested. Talk to Ghotti. Trust me; you'll get a good price for this one."

Lars took a deep breath. "What about Velos? Has there ever been a Corridian on this planet at all?"

"Not to my knowledge, and I should know. I inspect new arrivals from all over the planet."

\* \* \*

Ambassador Triskelion was reclining on her bed when the door slid open and the retainer entered, this time without waiting for permission. Her heart started pounding with fear at the sudden intrusion. Her stocks were falling by the day. Every hour something happened that was calculated to chip away at her dignity and her station. Had Muss lost interest in his fly already? Was he about to start pulling off her wings?

She propped herself up on her elbows. "What is it?"

"His Highness is holding a dinner party tonight. He requests your presence."

She straightened her robe imperiously. "Tell His Highness I have a headache."

"His Highness regrets your medical condition and will send a physician. Dinner will commence at seven. I will send someone to escort you. You will find evening wear in the closet."

With that the retainer turned on his clawed heel and trailed his scaly balls out of her apartment.

Turd bag! Triskelion fell back onto the pillows. What was Muss playing at? More importantly, what was she going to do about it? Each day was becoming more intolerable. How much worse would her shame be on the day of the conference when she would be paraded as a prisoner in front of her father? She shuddered at the thought.

Should she take the honourable way out? Suicide in the name of the Confederation was considered an acceptable course of action in hopeless situations. But how?

And then another, more promising idea crossed her mind. How better would it be to die with honour? Killing Muss would be a grand gesture. How better could she serve the cause of the Confederation than by eliminating one of their archrivals? His death would set in motion a chain of events that would leave the Rigellian Hegemony

in disarray for decades. It would be a glorious blow to deliver to their traditional enemy and her name would go down in history as a true patriot, not a helpless female turned into a bargaining chip.

But how to get to Muss? He was guarded night and day. The only ones to get close to him were his staff and sex slaves. She grimaced at the obvious implication and then her body betrayed her in a surprising fashion. She felt a perverse flutter in her pussy as an image of those two cocks fucking both her holes flashed through her mind.

*How debased have I become?*

She took a deep breath as a plan formulated in her mind. It would take her best acting talents to accomplish, but she was a skilled negotiator after all, used to hiding her true intentions behind empty courtesies and duplicitous words. Her stomach turned at the prospect of what she would have to do to, but she resigned herself to the fact that it was the only way.

\* \* \*

The banquet hall was an immense open space filled with crescent shaped couches and low tables set facing the grand dais on which Muss and his favourites reclined. Mira estimated that at the lower tables there were at least two hundred people from dozens of races. Mostly there were Rigellians, quite a few Altairans, a splattering of Capellans and the odd Sagittarian. The oddest of all was a multi-tentacled Libran who shared the pride of his place next to Muss.

As the meal was served the assemblage was entertained by an acrobatic troupe of naked Pleideans who tumbled about in the most amazing fashion. One performer, to the drunken delight of the guests, set himself on fire and extinguished the flames by performing a triple somersault into a vat of golden jelly.

While the audience whooped and bellowed with enjoyment, inside her head, Mira had gone to that special place where her ego lay sheltered and protected while her body did what was necessary to open up the minds of her subjects and receive the gist.

At Mira's table there were six Rigellians and so far three had fucked her while she served their drinks and fed them unknown delicacies. They were minor

functionaries from outlying towns of Velos and of no strategic importance to the Confederation. But, as they pumped their yellow seed into her, their minds opened up and Mira learnt about Rigellian customs and something of how their brutal society was structured.

It wasn't bad for her first day on the job, she thought as she dropped an insect topped cracker onto the flickering tongue of Rigellian number four. She was sitting in his lap as one of his cocks probed her cunt lips. Her pussy was well lubricated by the deposits of his fellows and his cock easily slipped in. It was the posterior one so the front cock banged solidly against her naked belly. She reached down and, grasping it firmly by the shaft, started milking it. Recent experience taught her that Rigellians only came when both cocks were excited in tandem and she meant for this process to take as little time as possible.

The Rigellian grunted in pleasure and, as both cocks started pumping, she learnt something disturbing. This lizard was a clerk in the diplomatic corps and he had heard that Muss had actually gone out and captured a Solaran Ambassador. His plan, so the rumour said, was to hold her for ransom. The price, the Belkin Sector.

Mira quickly searched through the rest of the lizard's drunken thoughts but could find nothing else about the hapless ambassador. To the hilarious shouts of his friends she squatted over the Rigellian's legs and let his seed gush out onto his knee. As he rewarded her with what passed as a Rigellian kiss on the cheek, Mira hoped that the kidnapped ambassador wouldn't cause her too many problems.

\* \* \*

Ambassador Triskelion reluctantly mounted the dais and was shown to her couch. She shivered in horror to find she was seated next to the Libran, whose slimy tentacles dropped khaki mucous onto everything it touched.

"Ah, Geena," Muss shouted around the gastropod's pulsating bulk. "I'm glad you could make it."

"I wasn't aware I had a choice, Dantilus."

His Highness chuckled and popped a chirping insect of some kind into his mouth. Triskelion was determined to show no reaction as he crunched the poor thing into oblivion.

"Please, eat anything you wish, though the chirrups are a little spicy." He gave an enormous burp and the dais erupted into hysterical laughter and compliments on his mighty eructation.

Triskelion hadn't eaten for two days and was quite literally starving. On the low table in front of her all she could see were Rigellian delicacies, insects mostly, and raw meat, topped by a variety of sauces and dips. Her stomach rumbled and taking a deep breath of resolve, she reached down and selected a cracker with a thin sliver of meat and green sauce. The meat squirmed disturbingly as she brought it to her mouth.

Willing herself not to gag she swallowed the thing whole. Her esophagus and stomach warmed alarmingly as the thing wormed its way down her gullet. *Perhaps I will die of food poisoning*, she thought morosely.

"Now, Geena," Muss said good-naturedly. "We are all adults and I realise how sexually frustrating your visit here must be. What has it been now? Two weeks? And not once have you availed yourself of my fine stable of slaves. Surely one has captured your eye?"

"Dantilus. Must I remind you I am an Ambassador of the Confederation. We abolished slavery centuries ago. My principles and my station as an ambassador do not allow me to partake of the services you offer."

Muss chuckled. "Though I bet your little cunt is salivating at all the cocks on display here tonight?"

"Even so, I could not enjoy someone of lesser rank than myself, if you take my meaning."

She smiled demurely, pleased to see the possibilities flicker across Muss's face. His tongue wriggled across his lower lip as his eyes surveyed Triskelion's cleavage and exposed midriff. She had chosen this flimsy dress as it suggested much but left most to the imagination. An imagination, she guessed, that now pictured his two cocks



thrusting into his greatest prize. Taking its haughty ambassador willingly into his bed would make the humiliation of the Confederation complete. What a triumph!

"Geena," he said, drops of yellow saliva dripping from his mouth. "We should be friends, not enemies. After all, we were all of the same empire once. We are all children of the same stock."

"Solaran stock," she reminded him.

"That's debatable," he allowed. "But we are all sentient under the skin. We can still enjoy each other's company."

"I see no shame in a meeting of intellects."

He smiled triumphantly. "My thoughts exactly."

Triskelion fixed him with her most engaging smile and fluttered her long dark eyelashes. "I see this as an opportunity for bringing our two great cultures together, in the spirit of understanding and co-operation."

"Er... yes. My thoughts as well."

She nodded to the food in front of her. "Dantilus. Do you think the kitchen could create something more to my habit?"

Muss dropped his eyes down to her hand, which was seductively tracing the curve of her left breast. His tongue flicked as he clapped his hands and in an animated fashion ordered his confused retainer to cook something for the ambassador immediately or find his balls on tomorrow night's menu.

For the rest of the evening they traded double entendres, pleasant smiles and secret glances. The food became tolerable and the retainer was greatly relieved when she complimented him on the steak. She had won another friend.

When Muss began relieving his prodigious bladder into a bucket placed between his legs, Geena had a chance to scan the banquet hall. *Such an expanse of dross.* All the traitorous systems were represented here, cultures and societies that had abandoned the Empire at its most dire moment and given up civilisation for anarchy. How to bring them all back under the umbrella of civilisation? She despaired at the prospect. *But it is something best left to others. Especially since I'll be dead this time tomorrow.*

Then she saw something that made her heart jump. Down on one of the lower tables she was sure she spied a human female. Yes, there she was. On her knees, on the table being fucked from behind by a Rigellian, while she sucked and fisted another who sat in front of her.

Triskelion's pussy throbbed at the erotic tableaux and her nipples all but cut through the thin material of her gown. The Rigellian pumping the female's cunt and spinc bellowed in orgasm and collapsed over the human's back while the one she was sucking sent a plume of cum into the air splattering his comrade and surrounding diners with his seed.

Triskelion signalled to the retainer. "Is that slave human?"

The retainer followed her gaze, signalled to another servant who scurried away and returned a few moments later and whispered in his ear.

"She is new and only arrived this afternoon."

"Send her to my rooms after dinner," she said imperiously and the retainer curled his eyebrows in surprise at how quickly the prisoner had become the mistress. "And have her cleaned up before she comes to me."

\* \* \*

Lars' walk back to the spaceport had become a blur. Elenii was not here. She had never been here. Mira had, as he suspected, lied. What irritated him more than the enormity of what she had done was his surprise at his own surprise. Lars had known from the very beginning she lied to him. He could tell by the absence of anything in her eyes, those lustrous green orbs that became dead when she lied, like a variable star that shines with the strength of a thousand suns and then grows dim, all in the course of a day. He hadn't wanted to believe she was capable of deceiving him so badly. But she had.

But why had she done it?

What purpose could she possibly have for wanting to go to Muss's palace?

*I should never have trusted her.*

Even though he knew she lied, he had gone against his better judgement because he felt she was trying to help Elenii. But he'd been wrong. She didn't want to help Elenii at all. He had been manipulated most expertly. He'd become nothing but her cat's paw to do her bidding. Mira had wanted to come here, to this sphincter of a planet, and she had used him and Elenii to get here. And he had done the unthinkable. He had put his crew at risk. What a fool!

He squeezed his eyes until they hurt. There was no reason to stay on Velos now. Karacos was the next planet on his list. He should be there now searching for Elenii, not wasting time here. What abominations had been committed against Elenii while he wasted his time being Mira's pawn?

He cursed her.

He went to the Spaceport Administration office and filed a flight plan with Dock Master Chunn to lift off in three hours. The short notice cost him another ten thousand clits but it was worth it to get off this piece of shite and find his sister!

"I'm glad you're back," Talon said as Lars lurched through the main hatch. "There's been a development."

"What is it? Has she contacted us?"

"No. Almost as good. You've been invited to a banquet tomorrow night. By His Highness, Dantilus Muss, himself."

## Chapter Five

The night was drawing to a close. The organised entertainment had long since ended and now each table made its own fun. Slaves were traded between groups. One was even being bought by a besotted guest who had fallen in love with him. When the alcohol wore off in the morning it was bound to end tragically but while the drink still flowed it was a merry time.

Mira ached all over and her body was a mass of scratches from the Rigellians who were all in desperate need of a pedicure. She'd been traded to another table for a pretty blue Altairan and was busy making the acquaintance of a new set of horny Rigellians when a retainer came to her table and announced that she was to be sent away. The collective outrage of the table was only assuaged by the promise of two fresh slaves to make it up to them. This called for a great cheer from the table and a toast to His Highness for his generosity.

The retainer sent her back to her room with instructions to shower and dress and be ready for him in half an hour.

She followed the order without question, assuming she had been chosen by someone from the high tables who wanted to fuck a human. That suited her fine. The last six Rigellians had not yielded her any useful information and it was becoming a bit of a bore.

The UV shower refreshed her, warming her body and soothing her scratches. The sanitising bidet took care of her internal cleanliness and, given the experience she had just endured, she felt quite human again. A diaphanous robe had been placed on her pallet by an unseen slave, so she dressed and waited patiently, categorising in her mind all the gist she had obtained so far.

The Rigellians really were a brutal bunch and, through her orgasming subjects, she had witnessed dozens of random and ritualised acts of torture and murder perpetrated by relatively minor officials. What the senior members of the society were capable of she didn't really want to find out. As there was always some psychic leakage she already had the makings of a thousand nightmares, and she wondered what her first night's sleep would be like, that is if she ever got around to getting one.

The retainer arrived and led her through a maze of corridors and into an elevator. Up fifty-six floors and out again through even more corridors until finally he paused outside a plain wide door. He pressed a button, waited and then pressed another one. The door slid open on a luxurious apartment and he ushered her in.

"Thank you for buzzing, Greve," a woman's voice called from another room. "Leave her with me."

"As you wish, Madam Ambassador."

A moment after he left Geena Triskelion swept into the room. "I've finally got him trained to do things the right way," she said with a haughty laugh.

Mira had seen the ambassador sitting up on the dais with Muss but had been too busy with her own table to take much note of what was going on up there. Obviously, by the look of this apartment, the so-called kidnapped ambassador wasn't having too bad a time of her captivity.

"What is your name?"

"Natu Gelasia, Madam," Mira said, sticking with her cover story just in case the ambassador talked about her to Muss.

"How long have you been on this shite pile, Natu?"

"Only a short time, Madam. The pirate who captured me only sold me to the palace today."

Triskelion walked around her, studying her with an intense fascination that, if Mira wasn't mistaken, was blatant lust. "I watched you at your table."

Mira lowered her eyes. "Yes, Madam."

"Did you enjoy what they were doing to you?"

"No, Madam. But they'll kill me if I don't pretend."

"I understand completely."

"You are the only other human in the palace, Natu. I am being held captive too and I have been terribly lonely. I need a companion, someone of my own kind to talk to. A friend. Would you like that? Would you be my friend?"

Mira gazed unblinking in the face of the ambassador's maternal smile. *She's treating me like a child, so typical of the ruling class.* "I can't say, Madam."

"It's your choice, Natu. I won't force you to do anything you don't want to do. I don't believe in slavery. We'll be equals in this room." She paused, clearly perplexed by Mira's lack of enthusiasm. "It would be nice to be with another human, wouldn't it?"

It would look peculiar if she refused. In any case, Mira could see the possibilities. Being friendly with the ambassador would get her closer to Muss, perhaps even into his bed and then she'd be privy to *his* secrets. "Yes, Madam. I would be glad to be your companion."

Triskelion happily clapped her hands and Mira saw something in her eyes that betrayed a calculating mind. "Excellent. I'll have Greve bring your things to this apartment..."

"I don't have anything, Madam."

Triskelion's face froze in genuine shock and then, for a moment, collapsed into shame before that affected smile returned. "Oh, I'm so sorry. I forgot for a moment. Never mind, we'll make the best of a bad deal. I don't have anything either, you see. We are in quite the same boat."

*Not quite the same, Mira thought, but let it ride.*

"We will go to tomorrow's banquet together. We'll both sit at Muss's table and we'll protect each other, won't we?"

"If you wish, Madam."

"Please call me Geena. I want us so much to be friends. We have trying times ahead and we'll need to support each other."

*Speak for yourself.* "Yes, Geena."

An hour later Mira was brushing Madam's lustrous hair. Triskelion was busily nattering away in a peculiarly mindless way, which Mira had decided was an act. This was Geena Triskelion, a noted Solaran Ambassador who had negotiated a dozen interstellar trade deals with the outer systems. Not the brainless woman she was pretending to be. But why the act? Of course there were sensors watching their every move and Muss was probably at this moment jerking his cocks silly watching them but this was simply overkill. *Perhaps she thinks I am a spy.*

She let her hand slide to Triskelion's neck. The ambassador arched her back slightly to the touch. Mira increased the pressure and began a gentle rubbing motion.

"Oh, Natu. That is wonderful."

The ambassador had soft silky smooth skin, and the muscles beneath were warm and vibrant. As she considered her next move Mira felt a stirring in her aching pussy. Triskelion certainly had a good body. She'd glimpsed Geena's long slim legs, trim waist and ample breasts as she'd come out of the shower and had, despite her better judgement, entertained the thought of having some fun. After tonight's work she deserved some relaxation.

Perhaps it wasn't such a bad idea after all. She stopped brushing and, dropping the hairbrush, reached around with both hands and cupped Geena's breasts. She smiled at the pleasing weight. A surge of lust coursed through her body and she moved her hands inside the robe.

"Natu, what are you doing?" Triskelion purred softly.

"You are very beautiful, Geena. I'd like to kiss you."

Triskelion's skin shivered at each and every touch. Her breathing came short and raspy. She moaned her new friend's name and reached behind her, stroking Mira's legs. "I've never been with a woman," she murmured.

"Ssh," Mira hushed, not believing her for a moment. "I will look after you, Geena. Trust me."

"Oh, what the hell!" Geena twisted her head around and Mira claimed her mouth in a passionate kiss. She felt Geena surrender herself to her and, when she laid her down on the bed, Geena opened her legs.

Mira kissed Geena's inner thighs with light brushes of her lips and as she did she thought of Lars who had done the very same to her an eternity ago in his cabin. He too had given her soft butterfly kisses that ended at the salty lips of her swollen pussy with its promise of warm nectar within. She began to drink as he had.

As Geena cried out in orgasm her thoughts flowed into her new lover's mind. Mira had been right. It had been an act! Geena thought she was a spy, planted by Muss for some nefarious purpose, though that suspicion was wavering and she'd begun to trust Mira even before their lovemaking. Geena was not a silly woman at all, but a patriot in full command of her faculties and she had a plan that occupied her thoughts, a plan that both revolted and exhilarated. Fear stabbed at Mira's being, leaving her sweating body cold. What Geena planned would kill them both.

\* \* \*

The humveh that His Highness sent to collect him swooped down onto the palace's rooftop landing pad. A liveried Rigellian doorman opened the hatch and extended a white-gloved claw inside.

Lars waved it aside and stepped out into the brisk mountain air. Above them towered the peak of the snow-capped mountain and in the pale green sky beyond, the three moons of Velos shone with cold, dead light. Below them Lars could see the broad sweep of dark craggy cliffs and crevasses of the mountainside and the peaceful plain beyond. On the southern horizon there was the glow of city lights; Terek. There at the spaceport *Mjolnir* was powered up and waiting for his signal. As soon as he returned from the palace they would leave.

*I should be a quarter of the way to Karacos by now, not still here on Velos. Forgive me, Elenii.*

With grim determination Lars followed the lizard, whose balls scraped across the snow encrusted tarmac leaving a thin wobbly trail. He waited impatiently for him to



usher him past the two armed guards stationed at the double doors that led into the palace.

The countdown had been only a minute from lift off when Lars had angrily cancelled the launch sequence. He had tried to ignore Muss's invitation but his doubts about Mira had roiled inside his mind until he could no longer silence them. He couldn't leave Velos without knowing for sure. Mira had lied, that was certain, but there was one single piece of truth that he couldn't let go of.

She had seen Elenii. She had seen her foot.

Perhaps the slave master, Urith Cavell, had lied. Perhaps Elenii was here and it had been kept a secret. Lars couldn't leave without making sure.

The banquet hall was impressive, a large indoor amphitheatre in which Lars could have flown aerobatics with ease. He strode to the dais and was seated at the chair to the immediate left of the main throne. He was a privileged guest, it seemed. There were several others, Rigellians mostly, already seated at the main table. Lars was easily the most impressive figure in the room, with his pure white wings glowing with ethereal brightness and his grey dress uniform shimmering under the glare of the overhead lamps. He attracted undisguised attention if not admiration from the whole gallery.

A few minutes later there sounded a great fanfare of trumpets and drums and the assembled crowd of a thousand rose as one and began clapping as His Highness Dantilus Muss walked through the adoring crowd along a rich crimson carpet.

Lars had stood with the rest and his clapping had not been noticeably restrained. He had a purpose here and insulting the host in any way, regardless of how he felt about him, would not help.

After a pompous fifteen-minute oration about the grandeur of the Rigellian Empire and a vitriolic diatribe against the Confederation, His Highness took his seat to thunderous applause.

When the hubbub settled and the crowd sat to watch the entertainments, gladiators no less, Muss turned to Lars. "I'm pleased you attended. I understand you have delayed your departure to satisfy my invitation."

"I believed it to be an event too good to pass up, Your Highness," he replied smoothly.

Muss beamed. "I'm glad. I have a business proposition for you. We'll discuss it later."

"As you wish."

"Now, where is the ambassador?" Muss asked irritably. "These Solaran females. They have this irrepressible desire to be the centre of attention, so they arrive late. It is just plain rude, if you ask me."

Lars raised an eyebrow at this incongruous remark and then, as if on cue, an attractive human female who Lars guessed to be the tardy ambassador mounted the dais from a side entrance. She was extraordinarily beautiful in the classic sense, statuesque and her skin glowed as if it had a life of its own. Like the rest of the main table Lars stood as she took her place, gracing everyone with a radiant smile as she did so.

As the rest of the guests sat Lars was stunned to see Mira taking her place in the chair behind the ambassador. She too was dressed glamorously in a glittering transparent gown that showed her to be the most sensual being in the room. The ambassador leant back and whispered something in Mira's ear and the two smiled at the joke, giving each other an intimate touch on the arm. Jealousy lanced his heart. It was obvious to Lars that the two were lovers.

This could not be a mere coincidence! Was Mira's elaborate scheme to get into the palace just so she could be with her lover? Lars couldn't believe it.

Fury welled up within him and his face set in a tight grimace. At that moment Mira caught sight of him and blanched. She immediately looked at Muss who was in animated conversation with Geena and then back to him. Her expression was fluid, questioning, pleading. His was stone, certain, unremitting.

Muss was captivated by the human ambassador. They joked with each other, touched each other on the arm. They were destined for bed, Lars guessed. And what part would Mira play? What *was* going on?

The gladiatorial conflict on the stage before them ended in a bloody death -- a sword cut to the throat and a plume of arterial blood which splattered the guests at the closest table. This resulted in raucous laughter from all who witnessed it, even those covered in gore. The Velosian victim was dragged away to be butchered and served as after dinner snacks for the so inclined. A band of musicians took to the slippery stage and started playing light dinner music as the first course was served.

Lars ate sparingly, unfamiliar with the titbits on offer, but an insatiable Muss tore through them and talked throughout, scraps of delicacies squirming grotesquely on his lips.

"I understand you have a Confederation bounty on your head."

"That is correct."

"For desertion."

Lars nodded and chewed on a spicy chirrup.

"You are a marked man wherever you go, Confederation space or Rigellian. I have an offer for you. Place your ship in my service and I will rescind the bounty in my territory. That will give you a safe haven."

"Why me?"

"I've watched your career with interest, Corridian. You've earned a great reputation as a pilot for the Solarans. But I think a smuggler's life is not for you. You deserve honour and glory. Flying for me will earn you respect and unimaginable wealth."

"I thank you for the honour, but what service could I perform for you that your skilled pilots cannot already do with greater effect?"

Muss laughed. "I'll think of something. Don't you worry about that, deal?"

Lars really had no choice. Refusal would mean immediate arrest and imprisonment for him and his crew. He thought it best to agree now and see what

happened. "Deal," he said, and as she shook Muss's clawed hand he saw Mira's baleful stare.

"Good. Now that business is complete we can enjoy ourselves." He took a long draught of cinder and burped. With a grunt he rose unsteadily to his clawed feet and with a bellowing voice announced a toast. The banquet hall became hushed. In the expectant silence Muss picked up a fresh goblet and pointed to Lars. "My people. I present to you my new Chief Star Pilot. Lars Dax."

The crowd raised their drinks and in a thunderous roar chanted, "Lars Dax! Lars Dax!"

## Chapter Six

Mira faced a dilemma. Geena's plot to kill Muss was simply insane. She was on an ideological roller coaster, willing to die for her blessed Confederation even if it entailed a senseless act of violence that threatened to destroy more than a petty dictator.

Muss deserved to die, certainly. Though he was a fool, an imbecile really, he was more useful to the Confederation alive, especially if they could keep tabs on what he was planning. And if he were killed, who would replace him? Someone smarter? From what she had gleaned from the minds of the Rigellians she'd fucked already they were all capable of immense evil.

On the other hand, the damage done to the Confederation by having a member of one of their prime families, and an ambassador to boot, paraded about at the negotiations would be incalculable and would create untold problems right across the galaxy. Geena was right. *That* scenario had to be avoided.

As a citizen of the Confederation, Mira had to obey the ambassador; as an agent her duty was doubly so. Not that Geena knew who or what she was.

What complicated matters further for Mira was that the troubled ambassador had fallen in love with her. Though a formidable political figure, Geena's delicate psychological state; the fear of death, the isolation from her kind, all had made her susceptible to anyone who showed her compassion and gave her a modicum of pleasure.

Not that Mira didn't feel something for the beautiful diplomat in return. She was a brave and resolute woman who had the best interests of the people at heart. They both shared something as well, a loveless childhood. Mira in her Intelligence Corps crèche, and Geena in her rich isolated mansion, both alone, but in different ways.

In her environment Mira had grown up with people from races from across the galaxy and as a result she was comfortable, sexually speaking, with people no matter who they were. Geena, however, was a sexual chauvinist, the result of sheer ignorance and lack of experience, a state of mind easily rectified if given the opportunity.

But the dilemma remained. If Geena bedded Muss and killed him, as she planned, Mira's mission would fail and in all likelihood she'd be killed simply for being human. Mira had thought about revealing her identity to Geena and talking her out of her plan. But Mira had read enough to know she was implacable. She was determined to kill Muss and absolve this stain on her dignity.

Given that sort of determination, the best outcome, as far as Mira could see, would be killing Muss after she had first read his mind. At least they would know the current disposition of his forces and his immediate intentions, which his successor would probably follow.

But then how to escape? Originally, her mission had been to accrue as much gist as she could from whomever she could and wait for a palace sleeper, someone her handlers had planted years before, to contact her. He, or she, would get the information out of the palace and back to Earth. Mira, therefore, had no need of an escape plan. Her mission was to survive here as long as possible. Years if need be.

Now that had changed. They had to escape tonight, but how? Mira couldn't imagine anything that could possibly work, until she saw Lars sitting on the dais with Muss. What he was doing there she had no idea. Her heart leapt optimistically within her breast but the expression on his face turned her hope to ice. His look was of pure hatred.

The letter.

Lidj had given him the letter too early.

Mira had debated the wisdom of explaining to Lars what she had done and why. It breached security and threatened the integrity of her mission. But the risk was slight and well worth it. She couldn't leave without him knowing that he was the only being she had ever loved. She had to explain what she had done, and why, and that he should

leave Velos immediately and continue his search for his sister. She owed him, and Elenii, that much.

So, now he knew she had used him, knew that he had been a foolish and helpless pawn in her game of subterfuge. He had, she guessed, come to Muss directly to find Elenii and had found out she had never been here. *No wonder he hates me, I used his precious sister as bait.*

Her heart broke at the realisation that the only being she had ever loved hated her.

*Lars, forgive me, please.* But for this, she knew, there could be no forgiveness.

A wave of despair swept over her. Geena noticed and asked her what was wrong. Mira was amazed and touched to receive genuine compassion from a woman who expected to die within the hour.

"Natu," Geena said. "I need my shawl. It is in my room. Get it for me, please."

Mira frowned. *She's sending me away so I won't be implicated in the assassination.* She nodded and signalled to Greve and directed him to retrieve the shawl. A look of horror swept over Geena's face.

"I am here to serve you, Madam," Mira said firmly. "In every thing you do."

Geena shook her head in the negative and Mira nodded in return. Puzzlement etched itself across Geena's face as she tried to make sense of Mira's resolve and finally she nodded acceptance.

Mira tried to understand what Geena was feeling. She was knowingly walking to her death yet she was so concerned about Mira that she was trying to ensure her safety as best she could. Geena was truly a wonderful woman, the second person in her life to demonstrate genuine affection for her. Mira suddenly resolved that Geena, at least, wouldn't die. She had to be saved.

Lars was her only chance. Her mind worked furiously to find a way to convince him to help them but after the proclamation of Lars' appointment as Chief Star Pilot her hopes had completely dried up -- he'd hardly betray his new boss and expose his crew to harm.

Muss was ecstatic at the crowd's reaction to his announcement and that was when Geena made her move. She leant over and whispered into his hairy ear hole. Muss's tongue flickered and he all but leapt out of his throne in sheer eagerness.

"Come, Natu," Geena said and the three of them exited the hall through a door behind Muss's throne. Mira risked a glance at Lars and saw that he watched. She wished he could read *her* mind and learn that she was so, so sorry and that she needed him now. Not for herself, but for Geena.

Muss had his thick scaly arm around Geena's slim waist. "You don't know how much I have anticipated this moment," he rasped. Desire was working its magic on him. His twin cocks were standing firm and he had to walk on the tips of his claws to prevent their heads dragging on the floor.

Muss led them past a single guard to the bedroom he kept behind his throne so that he didn't have too far to crawl after a night of carousing.

"I'll send Natu away," Geena said with an edgy voice.

Muss glanced behind them and fixed Mira with his slitted eyes, and his tongue flicked out. "Let her join us," he slurred. "It is said that you haven't known pleasure until you have had two humans at the same time. I can taste her arousal already. She is a horny little human."

"As I am," Geena said through gritted teeth.

The thing about Rigellians, Mira knew, was that you'd never get bored with their foreplay because there wasn't any. As soon as the door closed behind them Muss stripped off his own regalia, tore Geena's dress away from her body, pushed her back on the bed and mounted her in one swift action.

Geena didn't have time to react before his thick cock was ploughing away in her pussy, which she'd liberally lubricated before coming to dinner. In a moment she was swept away on sheer physical sensation as his posterior cock prodded her more deeply than she'd ever been penetrated before. Mira didn't waste time. She inserted herself between their bodies and proceeded to take his raging fore cock in her mouth.



The combined action of mouth and pussy brought him to a swift and copious climax and as he grunted his mind emptied into Mira's mind just as his balls emptied into her mouth.

What Muss lacked in finesse he made up with staying power. As soon as he had finished he rolled over onto his back, grasping Geena so that she stayed impaled on his organ. "Ride me," he ordered as he lifted her up into the air and brought her down so that one cock went into her slit and the other into her spinc. Geena grunted at the unexpected insertion and was swept away on an overwhelming cascade of sensation and started the first of a long series of orgasms.

Mira quickly wiped her mouth on the bed cover. Her mind was awash with all manner of Muss's strategic plots and subterfuges but she had also been looking for something very particular and she had found it! What she had just learned from Muss's tortured mind meant the difference between life and death! She had to find Lars, and quickly.

She glanced at Geena who was riding herself to oblivion on Muss's twin cocks and figured she still had a minute or two to act. Mira straightened her clothes and backed out into the corridor. She returned to the door of the banquet hall and explained to the bored guard that Muss wanted a tray of food and a drink. He shrugged, his expression eloquent in its listlessness; what did he care? It wasn't his job.

She shouldered the heavy door and went to Lars who sat on the edge of his seat, impatiently surveying the drunken crowd below him with a disgusted scowl. She sat beside him and took his hand.

"I know you hate me, but you have to forgive me. *We* need you to forgive me."

"Where is Elenii?" he demanded. That was all he was interested in.

Fair enough. "She was taken to Karacos."

He glowered in frustration and stared into her eyes, his gaze unwavering. "How do you know?"

She looked at him oddly. "Muss," she said.

"Why should I believe you?"

"I have no reason to lie now. We are all dead unless you help Geena."

"What are you talking about?"

"Geena is assassinating Muss as we speak."

Surprise and then understanding passed over his face. "So, that's what all this was about?"

"What? I told you what this was about in my letter."

"What letter?"

He hadn't seen the letter! *Oh Lidj! I could kiss you! There is still a chance then, but if Geena is to live I have to lie to this wonderful man again.* "On the slave ship the sailor told me we were on Velos when Elenii was taken off board. We were on Velos, but Elenii wasn't sold to Muss, she was transferred to another ship and taken to Karacos as a gift to another warlord."

She withered as he stared intensely into her eyes and the hope that had momentarily lived on his face when he thought what she said was true faded. "You lie. Again you lie."

*How does he know me so well?*

When they last made love in his cabin, when she had given herself freely to him and he had surrendered himself to her, she had seen no evidence of a special skill, not that she had been specifically looking. She had been making love for the simple thrill of being with him. Yet he seemed to know with surprising accuracy when she lied. That last time, when his mind had blossomed into hers, she'd sought nothing else except to find out if he really loved her. She had discovered he was confused by her and couldn't trust her, yet he still cared for her in some strange unconditional way that was totally outside of her experience. If ever she got the chance to make love with him again she'd have to study this strange capacity he had for love. "Look at me, Lars. Elenii is on Karacos."

Confusion crossed his face. Mira's mind raced. She could see he believed her about Karacos. It was the truth, after all. But the story of the transfer from the ships

confused him because it was a lie. *However he reads me*, she decided, *he probably won't be able to sort the truth from a lie if they are mixed together.*

Time was running out. Now for the biggest lie of all. *Forgive me, Lars.* "Don't fail her now," she pleaded. "When Elenii cries herself to sleep every night in her cell, she prays to The Odin that her *Thor* will come."

His eyes widened. "You *do* know her."

"Yes!" she screamed at him and then took a chance and used Elenii's pet name for him a second time. "*Thor*, we don't have any time. Geena has to be rescued. Now!"

The bored guard smiled in amusement to see the Muss's new Chief Star Pilot carrying a tray of food to the bedchamber. He winked at him, his beady eyes conveying his envy. *Lucky spinc, two women, the favour of His Highness and rank and privilege all in one night. Some bastards get all the luck.*

Lars winked back.

Mira pushed open the chamber door and Lars shouldered past her. On the bed Dantilus Muss lay with a table knife protruding from his thick neck. Kneeling above him a blood splattered and naked ambassador looked up with an uninhibited expression of satisfaction. She wiped her blood-smeared face with the back of her hand. "What is he doing here?" she asked suspiciously.

"He's here to rescue us."

Hope fluttered across her face. "Really? I was just preparing to open my wrists."

Lars shook his head. He was surrounded by mad women. After gazing down at the still form of Muss, wishing that he had killed him himself, Lars quickly sized up the pair of humans, estimating their combined weight. "We need to get to the roof," was all he said.

Mira went to Geena and helped wipe off the blood from her hands, arms and face and then helped her put on her torn gown. She wrapped Muss's body in the bed cover and rolled him off the bed onto the floor so he could not be seen from the door. It might gain them a moment or two.

Lars escorted the dishevelled ambassador and her 'slave' past the guard. "His Highness was a bit too exuberant," he explained. "And now he's sleeping. He told me he didn't want to be disturbed. Understand?"

The guard nodded. Nothing about this was, in any way, out of the ordinary.

Lars got his bearings and led the pair of beautiful but obviously mad women along the corridor toward the stairwell that led to the roof. There they hit their first problem. The roof guard had not received orders from the banquet hall to let anyone out.

"You must return to the hall," the guard insisted, drawing his pistol.

"I must return to my ship."

"You must..." But the Rigellian didn't finish his order as Lars struck him viciously across his scaly neck, sending him unconscious to the floor.

Lars confiscated the fallen laser pistol. "Come on. Once we get to the roof turn immediately to the right. I want you both to run in front of me. There will be shooting but I need you not to stop. Is that clear?"

"Why? What do you have in mind?" Mira asked.

"When you get to the edge of the parapet climb to the top and stand close together. Don't look back at me, just look out over the valley. Is that clear?"

"And do what?" Geena asked.

"Wait for me."

"I don't think that's a good idea. We'll be exposed and..."

"Shut up, for Odin's sake!"

"Geena," Mira said firmly, taking the ambassador's arm and squeezing it tightly. "I trust Lars with my life. You can too."

Geena searched Mira's face for reassurance and after only a moment nodded her assent.

"We don't have time for this," Lars growled and pulled them both up the stairwell. As he did he extracted his communicator from his utility belt and in a single motion fitted it over his head so the microphone rested at his mouth. At the top of the

stairs he paused, listening at the door. Then, with a powerful kick, he crashed open the double doors, sending the two guards who had been quietly chatting on the other side flying across the tarmac. Lars pulled the two women after him and pushed them violently to the right as he started firing his laser pistol at the scattering of guards and valets wandering about the roof.

He watched as the two ran for their lives to the far parapet. The ambassador tripped and fell. Mira reached down and dragged her to her feet. A guard appeared by her side, but with a swift kick to the head Mira sent him flying. She picked up the guard's fallen pistol and pulled the ambassador behind her till they reached the metre high stone wall. While she helped the ambassador to climb up the parapet Mira shot another approaching guard. Then, as Lars had directed, she joined the ambassador upon the wall, so that they stood together, their pitifully thin clothes fluttering in the wind. They looked for all the world as if they were about to jump.

As they followed his instructions Lars had stood firm, firing his pistol, picking off several of the guards who had overcome their surprise and were now regrouping. The survivors yelped and ducked for cover.

It was now or never. He fired a last shot, dropped the weapon and sprinted toward the women. Now that he no longer had the guards pinned down they felt safe enough to start shooting and erratic laser beams sizzled the air around him.

Lars unfolded his great wings and as he neared the parapet took a giant leap, crashing between the two women and taking them under each arm. Had they been looking at him they would have reflexively flinched and he would have missed them. As it was they struggled for a moment before he plummeted toward the rocky valley below and then they clung in terror to his neck.

Swooping down the darkened valley seeking cover within the rocky crevasses, Lars called Talon. "I need *Mjolnir*, twenty clicks due north of the palace at 300 metres altitude and I need you *now*."

Laser beams aplenty were zipping past them now but they were all from small hand weapons which were inaccurate and lacked potency at distance. Luckily the anti-

aircraft weapons had not been manned, though that would change in a minute or two. He needed to get to the other side of the mountain before they were activated and able to lock onto him.

Flying with the two women under his arms was not, in itself, difficult, though their combined weight made it hard to maintain altitude and he knew he would tire quickly. The turbulent air buffeted them to and fro, but at least that made his flight even more erratic and difficult for the palace guards to aim at.

Mira's familiar form was under his right arm. He could feel the warmth of her body through his flight suit. It seemed to him that she belonged there. "Are you all right?"

"Yes." She held him tighter. "Thank you for saving Geena."

Lars' heart sank. If only she could love him as much as she loved Geena.

"I'm cold," the ambassador complained and snuggled closer into his body so as to absorb more of the heat that his exertions were creating. Beneath the stench of Muss's blood and cum and despite the icy mountain air he could detect her scent. She was clean and healthy and he predicted she would cause problems on the ship. No doubt Acron and Talon will lock horns over her, as both would appreciate the human's sensuality. But he feared her heart was already taken -- by Mira.

But those problems were in the future. First he had to get them to the ship. He was tiring. Lars had been hoping for a slight updraft but being late at night the upward movement of air was virtually nil and so he relied on wing power alone to keep aloft.

He was making good progress and noticed that the guards had ceased firing their ineffective hand weapons. An actinic flash from an anti-aircraft gun lit up the valley below and a corresponding explosion rocked the mountainside ahead of them. The gunners were taking random shots in their general direction and Lars knew that he was virtually invisible to the usual array of electromagnetic sensors. He dreaded a fighter making visual contact, but at night, against the backdrop of mountains, he hoped he was next to invisible.

The danger time would be when *Mjolnir* was close, waiting for him to fly into the loading bay. Any pursuers would be able to lock on and hit the ship with ease. That was why he had waited till he was in the air well below the palace walls before he contacted Talon so that his signal was shielded by the mountain and would have escaped interception.

By dead reckoning he closed in on the rendezvous point. If Talon had launched within five minutes of the call he should be fast approaching from the south.

He began circling using a rocky crag illuminated by the trio of moons as his reference point. He was steadily tiring, losing altitude, but he was sure he would have the energy when the time came. He kept his eyes on the south, waiting for the telltale shape of *Mjolnir*.

And there he was, a dark arrow moving slowly against the star field.

"Is that the ship?" Mira asked.

"Yes, my love," he whispered into the wind. "We are safe now."

He increased his workload and saw that Talon had correspondingly reduced speed, waiting for him to make his presence known. He flew toward *Mjolnir*, hoping that as he gained altitude and separated himself from the mountainous background the moonlight on his wings wouldn't make him too easy a target.

At that moment Geena screamed. A laser beam cut the air beside him. It was an energy flash from a fighter. It missed by mere centimetres. Luckily the Rigellian gunner's aim was not fast enough to compensate for his erratic flight. Lars banked, and banked again. They were now only a click distant from *Mjolnir* and climbing steadily.

And then he saw a laser flash from *Mjolnir* and the Rigellian fighter blossomed into incandescence. Acron, always a good shot, proved himself to be an excellent one.

With renewed vigour he pushed up to the open loading bay. Lidj and Neelan were waiting for them, silhouetted against the dimmed cabin lights. A laser beam from another fighter sliced between him and the ship but Lidj and Neelan stood firm to catch them as he crashed into the deck.

"We have them, Gyas," Lidj called to the bridge. "Get us out of here!"

## Chapter Seven

“So, you’re kidnapping me too?”

Lars considered Geena Triskelion with a mixture of annoyance and gratitude. By killing Muss she had made them a legitimate target of every Rigellian bounty hunter in the galaxy. That she promised, in her capacity as a Solaran Ambassador, to give them a full pardon for rescuing her was much appreciated by everyone. Her generosity was largely academic for the moment as they were light years from the Confederation border and on their way to Karacos, deep in Rigellian territory.

They were now, for the time being, safe in null space after Talon had done some fancy flying himself to avoid one of Muss’s battle cruisers and a flight of fighters.

“As soon as I have my sister I’ll drop you off on a Confederation planet.”

Geena eyed him and Mira coquettishly. “I didn’t mean I was upset about being kidnapped by you. In fact, I’d like to help you rescue your sister.”

“I couldn’t put you in danger, Madam Ambassador.”

“Call me Geena, please. If Mira is going to help you, then so am I. I think I can be an asset.” She paused, taking in Mira’s devoted expression as she looked up into Lars’ face and gave a nod of understanding. “And thank you, Lars,” she added huskily. “For allowing me to contact my family to let them know I am safe. I promise I won’t divulge our destination.”

Lars looked into Geena’s eyes and believed her.

Geena smiled at him and her face flushed beneath his gaze. She gave him an impulsive kiss on the cheek. “We’ll talk more but I can see you and Mira have much to discuss.” She turned to a very attentive Gyas Talon. “Mr. Talon. You offered to show me your null space communication centre.”



Embarrassed, Lars watched the ambassador, who wore one of Lidj's skimpy outfits, give Mira a passionate kiss on the lips and sashay out of the wardroom with Talon on one arm and Acron on the other.

He looked back to Mira. She couldn't meet his eyes.

"Thank you for saving Geena," she began. "She was innocent in all this."

He waved away her gratitude as a pulse of jealousy shot through him. "What else did Muss tell you about Elenii?"

Mira took a deep breath. "He gave her to Oran Raptor, a weapon manufacturer on Karacos, in gratitude for his support in the Rigellion War Council. Muss didn't actually see Elenii."

He held her face lightly by the chin and forced her to look into his eyes. "Is that all he told you?"

"That's all I learned."

"This letter you mentioned," he said, changing the subject, his dark eyes raking her face. "Lidj says she knows nothing about it. She has never lied to me before, yet she lies for you."

She shrugged innocently. "It was nothing. Just a thank you in case it all went wrong."

"You lie to me still." He released the grip on her face so he could stroke her cheek with the backs of his fingers. "I can't trust you, can I?" he whispered.

"Is that a rhetorical question?"

Her attempt to lighten the moment had no effect on him. "I want you to tell me who you are," he said. "The truth. A condition of staying on my ship is that you stop lying to me."

Her face brightened like the morning sun. "I can stay?"

"As long as you stop lying. Consider yourself on probation."

"I promise," she said and wrapped her arms around his neck and planted a kiss on his willing but uncertain lips.

As he returned her kiss he looked into her eyes.

She'd lied again.

**The End... of this mission.**

**Lars' Quest continues in *On Corridian Wings 2: Teche Reborn***

## **Steven W. Boisman**

Steve lives in New South Wales, Australia, with his favourite cat Jones (named after the Nostromo's cat in the Alien movie series) and at every opportunity scuba dives, walks and swims along the beautiful Australian coastline's many beaches. An amateur underwater photographer, Steve's diving forays have taken him to the U.S., Fiji, the Philippines, Malaysia and Vanuatu.

Steve grew up on a healthy diet of Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke and Robert Heinlein. Today, Steve is considered a rising star among short story writers. An avid romance reader as well as contributor, Steve is a member of Romance Writers of Australia, and has had his work selected for inclusion in several of the group's short story competition anthologies. Steve is also a Book Reviewer for a major Australian regional newspaper and is a regular contributor of stories for several adult magazines.