

GrimJustin 1: DeBriefed

Fiona Jayde

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ISBN: 978-1-59596-650-6
Formats Available:
HTML, Adobe PDF,
MobiPocket, Microsoft Reader

Publisher:
Changeling Press LLC
PO Box 1046
Martinsburg, WV 25402-1046
www.ChangelingPress.com

Editor: Chrissie Henderson
Cover Artist: Sahara Kelly



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When Intel Agent Dinah Burns is captured after obtaining a top-secret key sequence to a competitor's MainFrame system, the man committed to extracting her intel is Jack Brenner -- the man abandoned by the InterPlanetary corporation they both worked for back then. The man Dinah helped escape. The same man who later seduced her in virtual reality.

Dinah won't give up the key sequence. Even when Brenner uses his own special kind of orgasmic torture.

As conspiracies around them thicken and an experimental chip in Dinah's spine starts to malfunction, they race through a tangle of politics to find the one thread that connects it all.

Chapter One

Her eyes snapped open to darkness.

Immediately, Dinah catalogued the surrounding conditions: warm, dark, no visible exits. Some sort of padded pallet was under her; she was facing up, her hands resting at her center, cuffed in cool slick metal. Her feet hung off the pallet, touching the floor. She didn't panic, not yet anyway. She tested her eyes -- looked up, then down. The drug was wearing off. *Think.*

Her feet weren't bound. They were solid on the floor, which was at least something. The tremors under her toes told her she was on a ship. For how long, which one, she had no idea. She tried to identify the mix of metal and musk in the air when she heard a door swish open.

Her own pulse pounded in her ears. She willed herself not to move and forced fear down where it didn't bother her throat.

"Agent Burns." His voice was behind her, the warm whisper of it sending shivers from her neck down. A male voice, somehow familiar. "You're awake."

She didn't respond on a chance he might come around so she could see his face -- and gasped as a large male hand gently squeezed her breast.

"You are awake," he repeated and withdrew his hand.

She moved, lightning-fast, swinging her feet to stand up and clasping her hands to deliver a blow where his head should have been. Instead, she connected with nothing, staggered from the force of it and stumbled right into a hard male body.

Her foot stamped on his instep and she heard him grunt even as he dragged her backward, muscled her arms up and hooked her cuffs to something above her before moving away, leaving her exposed, vulnerable, helpless. She fought to calm her pulse, gulped for air -- harsh breaths that ripped at her throat as she forced them out.

"Now that you're awake..." he was behind her now, and the bastard wasn't even breathing hard, "...let's discuss the keySeq to the MicroSel main-frame."

Okay, now she knew why she had been captured. Her heart was beating so hard she wondered if he could hear it. Underneath the fear was a sick sort of excitement.

"What key?" She didn't think it would work, but it might stall some unpleasantness. She expelled a breath.

"Do you really want to play this game?" That warm whisper was tickling her nerves. She sucked air in and stalled for time, trying to calm her breathing, slow the pounding in her chest.

"What game?" She knew what was about to happen, she'd been trained for it. Somehow, the sims didn't anticipate an almost erotic reaction. Stupid.

He chuckled, the sound somehow sexy. He must have stepped forward, because she felt a hard male body press against her back in a sick parody of a hug. Strong masculine arms wrapped around her, and he shifted, moving her forward so her head fell back against his chest and her rear pressed against his cock. His hard bulging cock.

This was *definitely* not part of the sims.

"We can do this real easy, Agent Burns," he said, whispering directly into her ear and, damn it, sending another shiver down her spine. "I need that sequence."

She was pretty sure debriefing didn't happen like this, but it was better than broken bones. *Breathe in.*

"Your training has been accounted for."

A new truth drug? She'd been exposed to most of them anyway, a new one wouldn't make a difference. What then?

She shifted slightly, trying to gain a fraction of space between his cock and her ass muscles, clenching in some sort of sick anticipation. In response he rolled his hips a bit to emphasize the contact. And chuckled -- the bastard -- when she gulped in a breath. "Aren't you interested, Agent?"

She figured he would tell her anyway.

"Newest trend in intel extract." He paused for a moment, as if to see if he would get a response. Nothing.

His hands skimmed her stomach. "Let's call it the Pleasure Principle."

She snorted, couldn't help herself.

"Ridiculous name, I know." Those long-fingered hands moved upward, maddeningly slow. "While the mind can train to escape pain, it's nearly impossible for the body to ignore pleasure. So, if the pleasure is layered to the peak of... shall we say tension, information can be extracted by increasing said tension through withholding relief."

That was just insane. "Are you fucking kidding me?"

"Agent Burns." He said it as almost a sigh, and those hands finally reached and cupped her breasts.

She struggled, but the cuffs held her hands. She couldn't kick at him as he was still too close behind her. An attempt to knock her head back to clock him in the chin was snuffed. The back of her head hit against a hard male chest and her punishment was a squeeze on each breast, not painful, not really, but with just enough promise to get there.

She went limp in his arms.

"You aren't going to give up already?"

His voice was mocking, tenderly cruel. His arms were still around her, his hands massaging her breasts gently now, almost lovingly. She forced herself to relax, leaned fully against him, and felt that hard body tense. He wasn't immune to this. A potential advantage.

She was small, almost tiny against him. The thought of some bastard torturing the keySeq out of her had Brenner tightening his arms around her. The delicate oval of her face -- toughened by a stubborn chin, made sensual by those full lush lips -- was burned into his memory. He couldn't see her eyes from this angle, but he knew they were a strange molten gold color.

He remembered her body being softer in VR, but in reality her arms were sleekly muscled, her torso solid under his hands. Her breasts were high, firm, and to his eternal gratitude, fuller than the wispy model she'd thought would entice him. Her hair was longer, darker, the silken locks gathered in at the nape of her neck. The top of her head was level with his mouth. He could smell the cleanser she used, something light, fresh. No cloying florals, thank God. Under it was her own scent.

He hadn't been able to smell her in VR. He could see her, touch her, almost taste her, but scent was not something virtual tech could reproduce. He inhaled again, closing his eyes for a moment to savor it. Having her close, in the flesh, her scent tickling his senses, finally, *finally*, after all these months, was making his eyes cross with arousal -- an arousal which she could probably feel, as it was announcing itself against her lush ass.

He concentrated on the task at hand -- so to speak.

"Now, Agent." He squeezed her breasts again, the sweet, firm curves fitting perfectly in his hands. The doubt that had been nagging him was silenced by the ache in his balls. He needed the keySeq. She was experienced with the drugs that would ease the process. He wasn't an expert in intel extraction -- his resident hacker had added that bit to their skills list to snag the contract -- but he was fairly sure any other method would require pain as an incentive. *No way in hell.*

"I need to remove your outer suit." He whispered into the delicate curve of her ear, noting her shiver. "It will give you the opportunity to get used to my hands." *And my hands the opportunity to get used to you.*

Dinah clenched her teeth, struggling wildly when she saw the glint of a laser in front of her. She fought against her restraints as it lowered, piercing the top layer of her suit.

"Relax, Agent." His voice was firm now, a command. "I won't hurt you." Somehow, the firmness in his voice reassured her.

She saw the laser tear through the top of her suit, flashing down the front of her torso before carefully slashing over her arms, hearing a soft sound as her suit slithered

onto the floor. She stood clad simply in a thin black undershirt and pants as cool air brushed against the exposed skin of her arms. Involuntarily, her nipples tightened.

"Very nice." His hands were on her -- neck, shoulders, torso -- the warm rough palms gentle on her skin. "Very nice indeed." He fitted himself against her once more, running his hands down the sides of her breasts.

"Now." Slowly, maddeningly, his hands circled her breasts, lifting them, massaging them. "Your full name."

Was he serious with this?

He traced a finger over the tip of each breast before going back to stroking her arms, her torso, waiting for her to answer. "Your name."

Over the pounding in her ears, she could hear the sound he made as his hands smoothed over her skin, the warm contact relaxing and deliciously erotic.

This was the most ridiculous thing she'd ever dealt with. Her skin heated up under his touch, as nerves and ribbons of lust fought for space deep in her belly.

His fingers lightly flicked her nipples, the shock sending sparks of pleasure through her. He returned to massaging the underside of her breasts. "Your name, Agent."

"You already know my name." Her voice was a whisper, somehow loud in a space where each harsh breath was booming. She arched up, hoping to get more of his touch even as her mind was screaming this was insane, ridiculous. Sick.

She felt a soft caress right where she wanted, just enough to tease. Then, to her annoyance, his hands went back to stroking everywhere but there.

"Your full name."

Oh, fine. "Dinah. Dinah Burns."

His hands returned to her breasts, stroking gently, then firmly, fingers flicking the beaded nipples.

"Excellent." He rolled her stiff nipples between his fingers, sliding the ridge of his thumb over the smooth material of her undershirt. She felt him press his erection firmly against her.

“See, that wasn’t too hard. Rank and title?” His fingers left her nipples and massaged the flesh just under her breasts. She bit her lip to keep from moaning.

“Rank and title?”

She stood silent for a moment, but as his hands slowly drifted down she blurted, “Mid-level Courier.”

“And Intel Agent. Recent, as I understand it.” Again, his hands went back to kneading her breasts, fingers and palms rubbing against her nipples, leaving them, then returning once more. Her skin grew hotter with each touch. She wanted her shirt gone. She wanted to feel his hands on her bare breasts.

“Dinah. Pretty name for an intel junkie.”

That was ridiculous coming out of a man who had her tied up and was currently playing with her tits. But it snapped her back.

“What’s your name?”

He laughed, lightly pinched first one nipple then the other. She barely, barely contained a moan.

“Ballsy. I always liked that about you.” He went back to kneading her breasts, rubbing the sting away, before rolling the pebbled nipples between his fingers.

Had she heard that husky voice before? The heat at her breasts, the tightening of her belly wouldn’t let her concentrate.

She hadn’t noticed how it happened, but she found herself leaning back onto him, supported by his body as his hands roamed freely over her torso, playing with her breasts, her nipples, her shoulders, sensitizing her skin with each touch. The heat pumping from him was tangible.

She hadn’t seen his face yet.

“It’s really simple, Dinah.” He stopped kneading and she didn’t move, not wanting to break the contact. He breathed again in her ear and gooseflesh rose over her arms. “I need the keySeq. Tell me the sequence and I’ll make you feel good.”

She straightened then, ramrod straight. *Think, damn it!* Either he wanted it himself, which would make him a data spy, or MicroSel wanted it, so it would identify her contact. Meaning she was already in their files. *Shit.* “Go fuck yourself.”

He chuckled. “I doubt I’ll have to resort to that.” His hands returned to her nipples, teasing now, light gentle touches. “Not when *you’ll* be begging me to fuck you instead.”

Dinah really didn’t like how he emphasized the “you” part. She trembled under his hands, shivering again when warm lips pressed at the spot where neck met shoulder.

He trailed soft openmouthed kisses on her heated skin, simply holding her breasts, just cradling them in his palms. The gesture was somehow loving.

Which was of course ridiculous. She gulped another breath in.

Her skin was hot silk under his hands. Jack Brenner ignored it, just as he ignored her hitched breaths, the soft moans that urged, begged for more. He knew she could feel the bulging ridge of his cock as he pressed it against her buttocks. She hadn’t been grinding against him, but it was early yet. He just hoped she would break before he did.

Thinking of fucking her like this, moving her restraints to force her to bend forward, entering her tight heat, made his cock throb. He bit, lightly, just at the spot beneath her ear and chuckled when she shuddered.

“Would you like me to kiss you here?” he whispered into her ear.

“Gosh,” her voice was sweet with sarcasm, “do you treat all captured Intel Agents like this?”

His response was to lightly flick two fingers at a pointed peak of her breast, first one then the other. He didn’t rub away the sting. He felt her shudder.

“Would you like me to kiss you?”

Silence.

His response was another quick nip under her ear.

"Keep this up and I'm going to think you like being spanked." He lifted her breasts, rolled her nipples between his fingers. And smiled when he heard a moan she couldn't quite suppress.

"Well?"

Again, silence.

"I'm thinking you like what I'm doing to you. So with that in mind --"

He didn't have to finish.

"Yes."

He felt his balls tighten. "Yes what?" He brushed his lips against the exposed skin of her neck.

"Yes, kiss me." Dinah's face burned from it, but she couldn't stand the contrasting onslaught of pain and pleasure.

"I would be happy to." His arms left her and she missed the warmth of his body. She didn't allow herself to sag against the bonds, so she stood straight, her eyes shut -- and nearly screamed at the warm breath that tickled first one nipple then the other through the thin material of her shirt. She stood still, afraid to move, afraid to even breathe as he gently kissed each tip, just brushing his lips over them.

Thinking, breathing, became thick and liquid. She couldn't see him -- when she found the strength to open her eyes she could see the top of his head, but keeping a coherent thought was difficult as his lips brushed against sensitive skin, his fingers molding her flesh until finally, *finally*, he took a tip into his mouth and lightly sucked through her shirt.

The pleasure of it was almost unbearable. She bucked, arching against her restraints, pushing herself toward him, toward more of the feeling. She gasped at the cool air that rushed onto the fevered tip as his mouth left her nipple, but the sensation was buried as he assaulted the other one.

She lost track of time, of space, simply gathered her body into the pleasure, fully moaning now, almost screaming with need. And then he stopped.

"Did you like that?" He massaged her breasts, his mouth hovering inches from hers. Her eyes widened as they held his.

"You do like to play rough."

She didn't answer. She knew his face. Couldn't figure out where from, but she knew it, the harsh planes of it, the straight line of his nose, the stubborn jaw, the mocking twist of that sensual mouth.

She could feel his breath, warm, ragged. And he moved in, rubbing his lips over hers, keeping the pace frustratingly slow and she tried to hold on to thought and simply couldn't. His hands moved to her ass now, squeezed, pressed her closer. The hot bulge of his cock pressed against her, and she felt her pussy cream in response. She moaned into his mouth and he pulled away.

His hands continued to massage her ass cheeks. "The key?"

"Huh?" Damn it, she'd forgotten all about it.

With his lips above hers, their breaths mingled as he spoke. "The sequence." He kissed her again, lightly this time.

"I..." *Think, damn it. "I don't have it." "Lame, but it will have to do."*

"Try again." A kiss followed, hotter, more brutal. A hand slipped under her pants, caressed her naked ass, the heat of it delicious against her flesh.

She struggled to place his face, those harsh high cheekbones, that firm mouth with its full lower lip. She'd seen him, touched him. Her sick lust-crazed mind simply wouldn't compute.

Chapter Two

He pressed a finger under her chin, forcing her eyes to meet his. They were a dusky gold, a strange color caught between brown and hazel. "You don't want to play games with me."

Before she could answer he cupped her pussy through the material of her pants... just held her there.

"I can smell how wet you are," he whispered into her ear, his voice harsh. Decency and lust battled inside him. If he didn't fuck her right now, he would explode.

He kissed her again, had to force her not to grind herself against his palm, had to force himself not to press his aching cock against her. "The sequence?"

"Fuck you."

"Oh no." Despite himself, he laughed, stepped away from her. "I will fuck *you*." He could smell her, wanted to bury himself inside her heat and fuck her brains out. *God, just finish it.*

He owed her. If this was the only way to protect her, he'd have to deal with it. They both would.

"The key, Agent."

"At the risk of repeating myself..." Her voice was breathless, husky. She was ready to beg. At least he fucking hoped so.

"You like to push, don't you." It wasn't a question. He walked behind her again, the vulnerability of her position arousing him further.

His arms tightened around her as Dinah dropped her head back on his shoulder. He stroked a warm hand over her rear again, under the thin material of her pants.

"Lift your leg for me." She obeyed, blindly. Long, blunt fingers wrapped gently around her ankle and guided it to the side, setting her foot down on some kind of a

support on her right. A table? She hadn't even been aware of it. Then it was too late, as some kind of shackle held her leg and wouldn't let go.

Dinah was aware of nothing but her spread legs, her juices trickling down onto her thigh. The bastard made no move to touch it; instead, he returned to caressing her arms, her shoulders, her breasts, torturing her with gentle touches.

"The key."

"Go fuck yourself."

He tweaked her nipple gently, sending a shock of pleasure through her system. Her loud moan had him laughing warmly in her ear and pressing his cock into her ass. "Must I repeat myself?"

She almost screamed as he trailed a finger down, lower, into her pants, lower still, over the bare smooth skin of her mons, along the length of her pussy lips, stirring her juices before dipping inside, once, twice, agonizingly slow, then withdrawing. Blood roaring in her head, she felt his arm move up, heard a light sucking sound. He must have brought his finger to his mouth.

"Delicious, Agent Burns. If you could just tell me the sequence I will be happy to continue."

"Motherfucking..."

He twisted her nipples, harder this time, both of them. Twin prongs of pain and pleasure shot through her, spiraling down through her sex. Her pussy clenched, pulsed, more cream trickling onto her skin.

"Such language." A long, torturous finger slipped past her pants, into her slick heat. He rubbed her clit now, slowly, ran his finger down one side of her pussy and up the other, pausing to dip inside her before returning. He made a few circles and... stopped.

"The key."

She bit the inside of her cheek and said nothing but moaned loudly when he tapped a gentle finger against her clit, once, twice, three times.

"I think you like it." He circled around her clit again, returning to her slick opening to stroke it before inserting two long fingers inside her, torturously slow, delicious. "The key, Agent Burns."

"I... don't... have it." The words were accompanied by small rubs at her clit.

His other hand, the one wrapped around her waist, moved lower now into her pants and spread the lips of her sex, causing her clit to swell. She felt the leg she stood on tremble, ready to give out. She had no choice but to let herself be fully supported by him.

He touched her again softly, ran his finger on the outside of her sex, then thrust in.

"Your clit is hard," he whispered, and she heard genuine longing in his voice. The rock-hard cock he pressed against her ass was certainly testament to that.

"The key." Again, his murmured words caused her to quiver.

Her only reply was silence, and then a moan as he took her pussy lips between long fingers, and kneaded.

"You do like it. Are you going to come?" A soft rub at her clit punctuated each word and she felt herself building toward orgasm.

He slid his fingers along the slick knot of nerves, harder now, faster.

She tensed, and didn't care if he could feel it. He was fully supporting her body, her one balancing leg trembling against his thigh. He was going to stop. He was going to get her right to the edge and stop. The frustration of it was almost as sharp as the pleasure throbbing through her pussy.

He rubbed her harder. "Don't come, Agent Burns," he growled in her ear. Again, a tap on her swollen clit.

And she went taut as a wire. Jack told himself to stop, willed his hands to stop moving. Except he couldn't, he kept rubbing at that hot center of pleasure as an orgasm shattered through her and she screamed from it, screamed for him and still he couldn't stop, driving her harder, stronger, until she simply collapsed against him, sweaty, limp.

Chapter Three

The silence in the room was punctuated by ragged breathing. It broke with a soft sound as he released whatever was holding her ankle and guided her leg to the ground. Boneless from pleasure she let herself lean against him, savoring the warm strength of his arms. Her mind simply refused to click into gear.

"You know, this really isn't in the script." The new voice, a mocking drawl, snapped Dinah out of it. Behind her, her captor cursed and turned around.

"What the hell are you doing here?"

"Obviously not enough." The other man's voice was mocking. "Med sent me down to check on... this... Remind me to thank him."

Heat flooded Dinah's skin, this time from sheer embarrassment.

"I've got it under control." Her captor didn't let go of her, partly shielding her from the other's gaze.

"This is your version of intel extraction?"

"Better than beating her."

"Fine." The man sighed it in such a way that any idiot could see that it wasn't. He walked around, and mortified, Dinah met his gaze.

"So..." he drawled, looking at the display in front of him, "vXoe in the flesh."

Behind her, her captor cursed.

Dinah simply couldn't believe it. "What did you just say?" Only one man could know that particular VR handle. It was the name she'd used to smuggle in documents that freed... Jack Brenner and crew.

Shit.

Her captor stepped away. "You're such a fucker."

Dinah twisted, trying to see his face, fury bubbling in from muscles that moments ago were lax with pleasure.

"Jack Brenner?" She ground it out between her teeth.

"Yeah." His voice was whisper soft.

"I'm aboard *GrimJustin*?"

"Yeah."

Finally it clicked. His own VR model hadn't done him justice. The harsh cheekbones, the dark blond hair cropped short. The hot, chiseled body, disciplined in the arts of combat, clad simply in black. If she didn't die from embarrassment she'd kill him. Both of them.

"You... you..."

"Halloway Duke." The dark-haired man, clearly enjoying this, stepped closer. "May I say, what a pleasure it is to meet you in person."

With his dark eyes and tall rangy body, he was handsome enough. For a bastard. Dinah shot him a glare but otherwise ignored him. "I should have let you rot in NeoSoviet Prison." Her voice was bitter now.

"Now, let's not be mean." Duke snickered, shooting Brenner an amused look. "If Brenner here wasn't so obsessed with you, he wouldn't be rescuing you from some really nasty characters."

"Rescuing? This..." She was panting now, fully pissed. "This orgasm torture thing is your way of rescuing me?"

Duke snorted. Jack threw him a look to shut him up. "This," he ground out, "is the only safe alternative."

"To what? Pain? Drugs?" She bit it out, enraged. "I trained for it. Fucking eighty-five percent immunity. This shit," she used her chin to point at the bonds above, "this is insane. Not to mention illegal."

"I'm a contractor, darlin'. Legal isn't exactly my biggest concern."

"How about decency? Is that your concern?" She could see she hit home with that one and pressed on. "If I were a guy --"

Duke laughed. "If you were a guy, he would have a serious problem."

"Shut up." Brenner turned to Dinah, his voice a study in calmness. "If you were a guy, I would still rescue you. We would be even."

She laughed at that, a bitter sound. "Even, my ass. I don't see you tying up a guy here."

Brenner threw Duke a look to keep him zipped. "If you were a man, I would fight you."

"I would prefer that."

He shook his head at her now. "Not your call. I need the key, Dinah."

"I need to get out of here... Jack." She'd bared her fucking soul to the man. Hell, she fucked him in VR.

"The contract is out on you." He stepped closer to her again, and she recoiled because, even now, she wanted him to touch her again. "I don't want to hurt you... but I still need the key."

"And what, you're too chickenshit to extract intel using regular methods?"

Duke snorted again.

"I prefer this to beating you, yes," Brenner said.

"That's big of you." The heat radiating off her skin was pure fury. "Must be so hard to intimidate a poor little tied up woman. You motherfucking --" His hand cupped her mouth and cut off the rest.

"Enough foreplay."

Duke watched, clearly fascinated.

"I owe you," Jack whispered into her ear, his voice silky soft, his body so tense sweat pearled on his skin. He moved behind her again and reached up to unhook the cuffs that stretched her arms upward, then wrapped one arm around her while his other hand pressed firmly over her mouth. "And I want you." With her struggling in his arms, he muscled her toward Duke and shoved her to him. "So when the contract went out," he hissed in her ear, "I figured better me than someone else."

Duke's arms closed around her.

"And since you object to being tied up," Brenner continued, growling it into her ear as his hand muffled the curses she was screaming at him. "Duke here will hold you while we play."

Her eyes burned as they locked with Duke's. Fucker owed her. So much for gratitude.

Duke smiled at her. "Hello, sweetheart."

"I'm going to kill you," she retorted as soon as Brenner's hand lifted from her mouth.

Apparently unimpressed, Duke turned her around, pressing her back against his chest as Brenner released the cuffs that held her hands.

Wrists free, seizing the chance, Dinah exhaled loudly, shot out a fist and connected solidly against Brenner's chin. He only smiled -- a feral smile that, God help her, was sexy -- and grabbed both her hands. She struggled, acutely aware of the male body behind her, strong hands grasping her wrists, Brenner's body too close for her to get a kick in.

His eyes locked with hers, Brenner slowly brought her arms down and in an unspoken command, Duke took hold of them, pulling both her wrists behind her, arching her breasts forward.

Again, the room was silent, save for harsh breathing.

The man holding her was strong, his grip biting into her arms. She tried to wiggle free, but at the twitch of his cock against her backside she felt the full impact of her position. Fear mixed with arousal, and she stilled.

Jack held down her shoulders, pressing her into Duke's body. "The key, Dinah."

"Fuck... off."

"We'll get to the fucking in a moment." He said it softly, his voice whipping over her like silk. He glanced at Duke. "There's a chair behind you."

They moved backward, the three of them, like one body. Dinah wore herself out fighting the grip on her. She didn't cuss, didn't scream -- not so much for dignity but for energy conservation. Arousal coursed through her and she hated herself for it.

Duke sat, pulling her body down on top of him. She was sprawled on his lap, her arms still held tight behind her back, leaning back onto his chest, his calves now holding down her feet. Trapped.

"You know, this could be fun," Duke whispered silkily into her ear. "Never thought I'd have vXoe give me a lap dance."

Above her, Brenner chuckled.

"You were there, in the Kremlin." Her voice was quiet.

"Yeah," he whispered. "I was." Was that guilt in his voice? "You changed our status just before interrogation."

"Bet they didn't interrogate like this."

Brenner threw a look at Duke and stepped forward to kneel between her spread legs. At this height, he was eye to eye with her.

"You can bet your sweet ass it wasn't this way. I need the key, Dinah." A gentle finger trailed a path from her throat to the tip of her left breast.

She looked at him. Helpless, aroused. "Don't. Not like this."

Behind her, Duke drew in a sharp breath.

Brenner's eyes softened. "You fantasized about it. Just like this. You told me."

She shook her head. "That was different."

"Was it?" He kept his finger on the tip of her breast, just looked at her as she lay helpless, with another man's arms holding her in place. He liked having another man hold her down? She somehow imagined he'd be possessive... in VR at least.

"The key, Dinah."

"I can't." If she did, her career was over.

Brenner nodded. "She likes her breasts touched."

She felt Duke's chest rise and fall. "I don't believe I'm saying it, but I'm not liking this."

"But Dinah does..." he leaned forward, "...don't you, darlin'?" He barely brushed her lips with his.

Dinah moaned, hating herself, hating the feelings that pooled in her belly. The feel of a rock-solid body under her, the tough body between her thighs, was more erotic than any VR fantasy. She felt her arms being let go, but with Brenner's hands now on her shoulder she couldn't do anything about it. Duke gently massaged her breasts through the thin material of her undershirt and she gasped from the pleasure of it.

"The key."

Her hands were free now. She could fight them. Instead, she clutched at the muscular forearm above her, helpless, wanting.

Seemingly reassured, and more than willing to play now, Duke touched the tips of her breasts, rolling her nipples between long fingers. Her moan of pleasure had his cock throbbing against her ass, growing larger.

Her eyes locked on Brenner's as he touched her cunt softly through the soaked material clinging to it, watching his partner draw moans of pleasure from her. She was dripping cream.

Brenner drew down her suit pants.

"What the fuck are you doing?" Duke's voice was loud in Dinah's ear.

"I'm going to finish it."

"You're going to add rape to this?" The ugliness of the word didn't match Dinah's breathy tone.

"Not unless you ask for it." He plunged three fingers inside her.

She sucked in air through her teeth, not from pain, but from the incredible fullness that probed at her cunt. She was slick with her own juices, Duke's hands sending pleasure to her nipples, Brenner's fingers slowly, *slowly*, torturously pulling out. Then just as slowly, pushing in.

"The key, Agent Burns."

The long fingers inside her rasped her delicate inner walls, but as much as she tried to force them deeper, as much as she squirmed toward them, he didn't allow it. The frustration of it was almost enough to make her cry.

"The key, Agent!" Jack gritted it through his teeth, every cell in his body screaming to push forward, Duke's glittering "you are an asshole" look the only thing keeping him from unzipping his own pants and plunging home.

She squirmed forward, and Brenner forced himself to still, his fingers teasing, just there, not quite where she needed...

Duke squeezed her nipples and her head rolled back against his shoulder. He tormented her with delicate touches, rougher strokes.

She forced air through her teeth. He could see the pleasure building inside her.

"Give me the sequence," Brenner ground out.

"Fuck you!" she screamed at him, energy and dignity forgotten.

And Brenner pulled out.

"No!" Tears spilled; he refused to care.

He forced air into his lungs. Duke molded her breasts, but his eyes narrowed. "I can't stand much more of this."

Hating himself, Jack touched a fingertip to her cheek, smoothed away the moisture where a tear had dropped. He leaned forward. "The key, Agent Burns," he whispered against her lips before touching them with his. She kissed him back desperately, as if giving him everything she had, anything to make him fill her.

He aimed again at her entrance, stopping just short, circled her clit, her groans of pleasure now desperate, her hips lifting, seeking.

"Give me the key." He fucking hated himself.

"Please..." She was crying now, fully crying, the pleasure and the ache mixing inside her unbearably. "Please, I can't."

"Brenner..." Duke's hands fell away from her breasts, held her loosely, almost for comfort. And...

The world went red. Pain slammed her, red sickening waves of it. She heard someone scream, a hoarse cry that somehow ripped at her own throat. Her insides rolled with nausea and she tasted something metallic, bitter. Blood.

She felt her body lifted, cradled. Her hands, now free, pressed against her head, as pain beat at her with thick, greedy waves. And the red claimed her.

Chapter Four

Consciousness returned in stages. Warm. Dizzy. No pain. She registered something buzzing above her, tried to see, but the lights were too bright.

"She's coming back."

A man's voice, hollow somehow. Dinah felt herself being lifted, her limbs hanging. No restraints. She was set down. Her feet touched the floor, her back supported by a gentle male hand. She opened her eyes and met Brenner's green gaze.

Bastard.

Something beeped faster as fury set in. She relished the sweet bitterness of it. One quick motion released the small blade in her ring and she turned into him, knee pressed against his groin, blade pressed at the point under his jaw, where his pulse beat.

She grinned at him, a showing of teeth. "Fucking bastard," she gritted, her throat raw. "You're dead."

His hand wrapped around her wrist almost gently. His cock twitched under her knee. "Fucking bastard," she repeated. And breathed in the musk of an aroused male.

She lifted her knee higher, heard him grunt just a bit. "Payback's a bitch," she muttered, and leaned in, intending to bite the hard muscle on his chest... and found herself kissing him, a brutal fusing of lips and tongues and breath.

Her thighs turned to gel. His hands clamped on her ass, bringing her closer. She bit down on his lower lip. Someone moaned. Someone coughed.

And he pulled away. "You're bleeding again."

Someone coughed again. "You really shouldn't stimulate the chip so soon."

"What?" Dazed, she brought her hand to her lips where something wet trickled. It came away with blood on it.

The roar in her head deafened her. A vision screamed through her mind -- Brenner holding her as machines beeped over her head, lines of light scanning over her. And another one, a deeper one -- her strapped to a table, unable to move, to speak...

"Here."

Dinah focused on the man as he approached with a small piece of cloth. Dark, ugly splotches covered it. Blood, dried. Wordlessly, she pressed the cloth against her nose. She moved away from Brenner's touch and studied the stranger.

He was tall, gangly. Familiar somehow. She tried to keep from staring at the deep scars on his face, on his bare scalp. He studied her with calm eyes of pale, pale blue. She'd seen a similar shade before, but where?

"Ian Frank," he said. "You can call me Med."

"Your implant malfunctioned." Brenner's voice was cool, impersonal -- as if he hadn't been pressing his twitching cock against her a second ago.

Her brow furrowed in confusion. "What the fuck are you talking about?"

"Your implant --"

"Yeah, I got that part. What implant?"

"Put the blade away."

Dinah realized her blade was a centimeter away from her eye. She snapped it shut, lowered the cloth. Raised an eyebrow at him. "Happy now?"

The other man, Ian/Med, turned away, and walked toward a diagram displayed on one of the screens ringing the walls. They were in a gym of sorts, probably the same room where that fucker cuffed her. Workout equipment, manual and computerized, took up most of the wall space. The punching bag looked well worn. The place smelled of musk, men and leather.

Somehow, it was comforting.

"You have a vTech implant at the top of your spinal cord." The diagram zoomed out to display an x-ray of a skull. Hers, she supposed.

Involuntarily, her hand reached to the base of her neck, massaging it. "How do you know it's vTech?"

He zoomed in again, and the tiny letters grew bigger. "Patent. You were not aware of it?"

She shook her head. "No. If I knew vTech had put a chip in my brain I would have asked for more money."

Brenner moved closer. "Dinah --"

"Don't," she bit out. "Don't touch me."

He dropped his hand.

She turned away, met Med's eyes. "Can you tell how long?"

"It was in you?"

Dinah nodded.

"It's hard to tell. Post scarring was removed." Med touched a fingertip to a scar on his own face, the short one that ran from cheekbone to jaw. "But at least six Terran months."

"And its purpose?"

"Blocks impulses to the cerebral cortex. You probably have a high pain tolerance already." He didn't meet her eyes. She had a feeling he knew more about the damned chip than he was letting on. "After a while, you will come to a point where you won't feel anything at all."

"Anything?" As if against her will, her gaze was drawn to Brenner.

"I honestly can't tell. If you didn't know about it, I doubt it can hurt you."

She nodded, tearing her gaze away from Brenner's green eyes.

Med cleared his throat again, shrugged, as if indicating this wasn't his business.

"You may need to alert MicroSel."

"Not just yet," Brenner answered and Dinah released a quick breath.

"Try to get some rest," Med said as he walked out.

Brenner hadn't moved.

"I want to fight you." She tried to keep her tone calm. Control had to be reestablished, even if just over her voice.

"What?"

"I could have killed you just now. I didn't." She wasn't sure where the blood lust was pumping from, but she craved it.

"Come on." He couldn't tear away from looking at her, her cheekbones flushed now, her hair a dark contrast against the cream of her skin.

"What's the matter?" She stood now, stepped closer to him. "Can't get it up without handcuffs?"

"You're fucked up." He turned away.

She laughed, a mocking sound devoid of humor. "I'm fucked up? You cuffed me. You *used* my own fucking body against me. Did I give you the damn key?"

He turned back but didn't look at her. "No."

"That's something then." She inhaled, letting it out slowly. "I want to fight, Brenner." Her voice was calm, deceptively so, and the sensors above her didn't have to tell him her heart rate was spiking. The fluttering pulse at the base of her throat was enough. "A little hand to hand to even the score."

He shoved a hand over his hair. "You'll bleed on me again." He had to get out of here -- before he gave her his own version of hand to hand.

"Pussy." She laughed. "You need the key?"

"Yes."

"I'm willing to fight you for it."

"No."

"Why not?" She started circling him. "If I were a man you would fight me. Let's pretend I'm a man."

"Don't think so." Watching her move, her cheeks flooded with delicate color, her eyes a molten heated gold, made his cock throb painfully. "Not with your nipples poking through your shirt." He wondered if her eyes would turn that same color during sex.

She struck him hard, the flat of her palm cracking against his cheek. His head snapped back, but he stood still.

The smile she threw him was pure sunshine. "Put your guard up, asshole. I'll be disappointed if it's too easy. Again, I might add."

There was only so much goading a man could stand. He brought his hands up, elbows bent, forearms protecting his torso.

"Ground rules --" he began, but she shook her head.

"Nope. No rules."

He really hated being cut off mid-word. "I'm not hitting you."

"Now he's a gentleman." She feinted, jabbed once, missed, and sidestepped. "But don't you worry. Apparently, I don't feel anything."

"I'm still not hitting you."

"Fine." A kick flew out, fast and furious, aimed high into his nose.

The surprise of it had him raising his guard and she took immediate advantage, managing to land two solid blows into his exposed ribs -- which moved him right into seriously pissed.

"Sounded like you felt something when you begged me to fuck you," he growled, advancing forward, now stalking.

"Asshole." She panted it, circled with him. "You didn't exactly live up to expectation." She feinted again, and as he made a move to block, connected solidly with his chin. Bone cracked as it met bone.

"You'll pay for that." He ground it out, the sharp burst of pain shooting sparks over his resolve to fight clean.

She laughed. "Sure I will." Another jab, followed by a hooked kick to his chest, and a roundhouse with the other leg to his head, which he evaded by centimeters.

Her body warmed. Blood sang through her muscles -- and froze in shock as he simply jumped on her, landing heavily and tumbling her down. She sprawled face first, her body trapped under his.

Her breaths came in quick bursts through her teeth.

"You didn't believe me?" Holding her struggling body down, he extended her arms forward, cuffed them together in his hand, simply lay on top of her and let her cuss.

"You know," he said calmly, and she could feel his dick was already twitching against her ass, "we never finished."

Dinah grew still at that, the lust for blood churning into arousal. His breath tickled her ear and involuntary shivers raced down her back.

Anchoring himself on his knees, Brenner turned her so she faced him, keeping one hand around her wrists as the other traced the line of her lips.

"You are a bastard." She whispered now, because her throat had gone dry.

"Yeah." He leaned in, brushed her mouth softly with his. "I know."

And he was kissing her, gloriously, as if he wanted to devour her whole. Helpless, blood pounding in her ears, Dinah reveled in the sensation of his mouth on her, of his hard body pressing hers into the mat. When he slid his thigh between hers, she moaned into his mouth -- and he tore away.

"Yes or no, Dinah."

"Let go of my hands." She couldn't breathe. Air was liquid. If she didn't have his cock inside her she would die.

"Yes or no?"

And then it didn't matter because he wouldn't stop kissing her. With his free hand he stripped off the ring she wore, tossed it aside and pulled her wrists down, to loop around his neck.

She clenched his shoulders as he trailed hot open-mouthed kisses down her cheek, her neck, lightly biting the small fluttering pulse at the base of her throat.

She arched upward, desperate to feel skin, desperate for contact. He obliged, stripping off his black T-shirt, then hers, before attacking her flesh with lips, teeth and tongue.

He rolled with her, bringing her above him.

Her voice was breathless. "What are you doing?"

"Evening the score."

She leaned over him, her breath fanning his face. "I can be a real bitch." Plastering herself against him, she looped her hands under his neck, lifting his head for a brutal kiss. His hands gripped her ass roughly and he lifted her, tugging her pants off.

"Uh-uh." She bit his lip. "This time I call the shots."

She slithered lower, tugged open his pants, and his cock sprang forward, fully engorged. She wrapped both hands around him.

"I've always wondered what you'd taste like." She slid her hands along his skin to lift up his balls and leaned down. Breathed in deep. Nuzzled his flesh with her lips, and slowly, torturously, slid the tip of her tongue up his shaft, right over the clear liquid that glistened on the smooth head of his cock.

His hands cupped her head, fisted in her hair. His eyes were open wide, deep green, locked with hers.

"Take me in your mouth."

She laughed, a harsh sound. Her tongue swirled around his cockhead and he lifted his hips off the floor. "My way." She licked her lips and softly closed them around him, scraping her teeth lightly against his sensitive flesh before engulfing him with her hot wet mouth.

His groan filled her with dark pleasure. "You like that?" she asked as his cock popped out of her mouth and she stroked him, two hands wrapping tightly around it, spreading saliva along his length.

"Dinah --"

"Would you rather fuck?" She gave his cockhead a final lick and lifted herself, guiding his cock inside her wet opening, slowly settling herself onto it, the feeling of fullness causing sparks along her nerve endings. Slowly, her eyes closed, she lifted herself, slammed down on him hard.

The wet slap of it almost made him come.

She leaned down, brushed his lips with hers as she braced herself on the hard ridges of his chest and, with his hands guiding her, rode him.

Soft glides alternated with rough strokes. She pleased herself on his cock, devoured his mouth. His palms were damp on her hips, his grip biting as he worked her, fighting her for control, lifting his hips to meet each thrust. Her sleek, tight wetness enveloped his cock and the slurping noise of her pussy fucking him was the most erotic sound he'd ever heard.

He fought himself, feeling his control slipping. She watched him, those golden eyes almost molten as she pumped herself down and up his rigid cock. "You gonna come, Brenner?" she panted against his mouth.

His fingers molded her ass. "Not until you do."

Another brutal kiss. "You really think you can hold out much longer?" She rolled her hips in a circular motion around his cock.

"Sure. We'll just change the parameters." With a death grip on her ass he rolled with her, trapped her under his body, his cock buried deep inside her cunt.

She didn't fight him.

He pulled out almost all the way, tortured them both by going back in centimeter by maddening centimeter. Her legs wrapped around his hips when he tried to pull out again.

"Finish."

He compensated by a short creamy stroke, grinding his pelvis against her clit. He thought he felt his circuits frying.

"You first."

"I can't. The chip --"

He cut her off. "You did before. Loudly, as I remember." To remind her he snuck a hand between their bodies and lightly rolled her clit between two fingers as he lengthened his strokes.

"Fuck you." The slow rubs of his cock were primal, his fingers on her clit sending sparks of sharp pleasure through her.

"Darlin'..." his voice was breathless, his muscles taut, "...I *am* fucking you."

His tongue flickered over the firm bud of a nipple. She was close now, her muscles stretched and tensing, her thighs and calves gripping him. "Don't do me any favors," she managed between breaths.

He licked her other nipple. "I assure you --" he lifted her ass higher so that her clit rubbed against the base of his cock, "-- the pleasure is all mine." He plunged deep.

She exploded. Shattered. Someone screamed. She thought it might be her, but she had no breath left. Her body shuddered under him, her taut inner muscles milking him, squeezing tighter until he followed her over the edge, moaning his release into her mouth.

Boneless, she felt him collapse on top of her, dropping his head next to hers.

"Well..." her mind was slowly ticking into gear, "...we haven't done that before." Her arms were wrapped around him. The intimacy of it was somehow uncomfortable.

He lifted his head, smiled at her. The tenderness of it made her heart stop for a second before beating wildly. Mentally she smirked at her own idiocy. "So what now, Brenner?"

He rolled off, got up in one smooth motion. "Up." He extended a hand to help her.

She clasped his hand with both of hers. If her pulse picked up a bit at the feel of his large warm hand on her small one, it was strictly because those hands were just on her. In her. Whatever. "Well?"

"I need the sequence."

"Again with that?"

"Did you expect otherwise?" His tone was matter-of-fact -- as if he hadn't just fucked them both into oblivion.

"You didn't mention it earlier."

"You were riding my cock at the time." He caught her fist a moment before it would have cracked against his chin, squeezed it in warning. "No more foreplay."

"Bastard," she hissed, perilously close to tears. She'd be damned if she'd let him see them.

His chuckle was devoid of humor. "We've already established that." He let go of her, lightly shoving her back. Tossed her clothes at her. "Get dressed. You'll be locked in the brig until you give me the sequence."

"And what, you'll be fucking it out of me until I do?"

As he shrugged into his own clothes, his gaze roamed over her body, deliberately insulting. "The prospect doesn't interest you?"

"You really are an asshole." She struggled into her pants, pulled her top over her head.

"Again with the creative swearing. You could use more training in that department."

If he said it just to goad her, she was happy to oblige. She leapt on him, but he simply pivoted, used her wrists as leverage to swing her forward and pressed her against the wall, his big body crowding, overpowering hers. Even as heat rose again, she fought against it.

"I need that sequence, Dinah." She could smell sex on him. She didn't know how he could switch off and on like that but was too damn tired to care.

"I can't."

"I'll have to turn you over to MicroSel authorities."

Her shoulders slumped. She gritted her teeth against tears. "Do what you have to do."

Jaw set, he grabbed her wrist and dragged her out to the hall, into a small enclosure where he deposited her. She could feel the heat of him dissipating as he stepped away from her and keyed in the forceShield to active. She refused to meet his eyes, just sat there, head bowed, her hands on her lap.

And though she wasn't supposed to feel pain, it curled in her belly as she sank to her knees and pressed her hands to her eyes to hold back tears.

Chapter Five

"She still hasn't eaten."

Med didn't turn away from the stars dancing by the window as Duke sat down next to him, taking a swig from the bottle dangling from his fingers. *Nasty shit, but what can you expect from an Organics colony?*

"Getting soft, Med?"

The other man chuckled. "You know me."

For a moment, they shared the silence.

"You know Brenner will hate himself."

Duke nodded. "Yeah." He sighed, already dreading what he was going to do. "I know."

"EmShuttle 2 is stocked." Med kept looking straight ahead, even as Duke got up to leave.

"Figures."

* * *

Dinah finally slept, dreamlessly, as if in a dark hollow pit. When a hand clamped on her arm, she reacted before even waking up. One hand grabbed hold while the other clenched in a fist, and she opened her eyes to male irritation.

"Good morning to you too." Duke pried her hand off his suit and knelt down to pick up the box he had dropped. "Serves me right for trying to be nice." He shoved the box at her. "Eat."

"Yeah, you're a regular angel of mercy," she muttered. The smell coming from the box made her mouth water. *To hell with it.* She opened it, tore off a piece of the still warm bread. Shoved it into her mouth.

He hadn't moved. The force screen behind him was off.

"What, you want a tip?" Casually, she sat up, tore off another piece.

He pushed a hand through his hair, clearly embarrassed. As if *he* had something to be embarrassed about. "I just... I wanted... I found your ring in the gym," he finally spat out, digging into a pocket of his pants to extract it. His dataUnit came out first, and he put it into his back pocket before digging out the ring. She closed her fist around it when he dropped it into her hand. "Look... I'm sorry."

"You're sorry?" She slipped the ring on slowly, and calculated distance.

"Yeah." Clearly regretful he'd said it in the first place, Duke continued. "Look, I shouldn't have helped Brenner when he... you know."

She chewed, pretended to think it over. "With his little game?"

He nodded.

"Well..." she tore off another piece, put the box down, "...here's a tip for you." Lightning-swift, her elbow connected sharply with his ribs, and the blade in her ring dug at the point just under his jaw. "You're gonna be a lot more than sorry," she gritted between her teeth, and rammed her elbow up.

His jaw cracked, her elbow sang. He folded at her feet.

Nerves pumping, she stepped over him, bending to retrieve the keypad from his pocket, and went through the forceShield. And ran.

If his jaw hadn't ached so much, Duke would have smiled.

* * *

In the commandPoint, the emShuttle monitor dinged... and went black.

"What the fuck?" Trent tapped furiously at his keypad, just as emergency generators indicators lit up. "We're down. Minimum power, air, grav. Weapons. Unauthorized shuttle launch attempt just before."

Well, it made sense then. Brenner clenched his jaw. *What, you stupid fuck? Turn her over to MicroSel for interrogation?*

Just at that moment, the commPad beeped incoming.

"emShuttle to Brenner." The voice was unmistakable, still husky. His hands, his balls, tightened at the thought.

"Brenner here. Restore power immediately."

She laughed, a bitter sound he was beginning to hate. "Yes, sir. As soon as you open the airLock."

"That's not something you can do? Imagine my surprise."

Beside him, Trent typed furiously. "She's gotta new passLock on the system. It will take me a minute to get around it," he said softly.

"I *could* power this thing through and see what happens," Dinah returned hotly. "But I'd prefer not to put your crew in danger. Release the lock --" her voice became calm again, "-- and I'll restore power."

"Brenner --" Trent was hitting keys double time.

"Release it."

"What?"

"You heard me."

Without another word, another set of keys was tapped. A metallic groan, an adjustment of the grav field, and they could see the shuttle in one of the monitors. Seconds later, power winked back.

* * *

Curled up in the pilot seat, Dinah watched the ship in front of her. She almost felt Brenner's eyes on her. Bastard. She made a mental note to erase all records of their vContacts. Shit, would he sue her for stealing his property?

Fingers typing furiously, she pounded out a char-message. *I will compensate GrimJustin for the shuttle's full value adding twenty-five percent for possible damages.*

The response came almost immediately. *Understood.*

That was it. He'd let her go.

Dinah pressed the heels of her hands to her eyes, leaned into them, not letting the tears come. *Just do your thing.*

She set course for the nearest vTech affiliate-port -- she had to do it manually since the stupid thing wouldn't accept voice commands -- then accessed her private communication relay. *In possession.* She didn't get a reply back, or a recipient

notification -- probably because her secureEncrypt didn't match the outgoing of the shuttle. Oh well. They'd be expecting her. And she intended to find out what exactly that thing in her head was.

Her stuff was still on Origins -- she'd left everything in the hotel while she wandered the retroBazar. How Brenner had managed to snatch her she had no idea. But there was no way she'd risk going back there. Thanks again, Bastard Brenner.

She dimmed the lights in the cabin and lay back in the seat. The stars swam in front her, but if it was the ship's motion or her own tears, she couldn't say.

* * *

Aboard *GrimJustin*, Brenner watched the shuttle get farther away. His hands tightened into fists and deliberately he relaxed them. *Fuck it.*

He heard the door swish open, watched Duke walked in, a grin on his face, a purpling bruise on his jaw.

His eyes cool, Brenner studied him. Ignored the tightness in his chest. "You could have let Med take care of it."

"I could have." Gingerly Duke traced a fingertip over the bruise. "It hurts like a bitch but looks more legit this way."

Brenner's gaze returned out into space. "She's gone."

Duke nodded. "MicroSel will need an update."

"Take care of it." Tearing his gaze away from the rapidly disappearing shuttle, Brenner strode toward the exit, stopping right at the doors. "And change the codes, will you? I'll be at the gym."

* * *

The gym was a bad idea.

He pounded on the bag, the pain from his muscles pulling at the bruises on his ribs. The bruises from her fists. Right before he took her.

His own fists stung as he punched the bag, gloveless, as if the slight pain from torn skin could deaden the empty pain somewhere inside his chest, under the bruises she'd left. Breath pumping, he concentrated on technique. Jab. Jab. Upper. Hook.

Dinah's hook could use more work. Her uppercuts were strong, her hook she telegraphed. Her fakes were great, her eyes revealing nothing -- until she was arching under him, then her eyes were a molten gold... *Damn it.*

A punch set the bag reeling.

* * *

By the end of the second day, the team stopped joking about his black mood.

"I'm telling you --" Trent was performing the usual ship-wide diagScan, "-- he should have just fucked her out of his system. It works every time." He smirked now, a man arrogant in his skill, pretty boy handsome, his vivid good looks hiding a cool mind of a brilliant hacker -- the main reason Brenner had hired him.

"Speaking from experience?" Duke's expression was mild, his eyes calculating. The weapons backup wasn't as good as it should have been when the power went out.

"Shit." Trent pounded something on the keyboard. "Works every time. Women aren't that great a mystery."

Duke snorted at that one, but kept his opinion to himself.

Undaunted, Trent continued. "The best thing for him now is to find himself a couple of nice little bimbos on Bachhus --" he didn't stop as Duke coughed once, twice, "-- and screw for a couple of days. He'll forget this one in no time." He stopped for a breath just as a heavy hand rested on his shoulder.

"Gossiping, ladies?" Brenner's voice was mild but his eyes were shooting sparks.

"Potential theory. The best way to get over a women is to get under another." Duke's voice was mocking, designed to switch the heat onto himself. Trent shot him a grateful look.

"What about a theory of encrypting your own dataUnit so unfriendly means can't be exerted on it?" Brenner's voice was silky.

"Yeah, yeah." Duke shrugged, refusing to be pulled into it again. He'd already been ribbed more than once for it. "Heard it all before. *You* should have made sure she didn't have any weapons on her." He'd thought of that one just recently and considered it brilliant even though he'd omitted the fact that he'd handed her the ring himself. His

report had the blade at his dick rather than his neck. Somehow it seemed more believable. If they thought one little girl could drop him, hell, why not.

Just then, incoming beeped. "Brenner." Trent's voice was tense. "AIC Franklin, vTech."

Brenner deliberately rolled his shoulders, sat down at the mainCommand station. Nodded.

Asshole-in-Charge filled the screen -- pale eyes, receding hairline, glare of glasses. Idly, Brenner wondered why the man made himself look even more bookish, instead of having his vision fixed. Must be going for the whole Admin-in-Power thing. Intentionally, not caring about being rude, Brenner waited for the man to speak first.

"Commander Brenner." Assistant Information Chairman Ivan Franklin was nervous, Brenner saw it in the telltale flutter of his eyelashes. "I trust you are well?"

"Chairman." Below the screen, Brenner's hands were clenched. Deliberately, he kept his voice soft, his tone mocking.

Those pale eyes blinked at him behind the glare of glasses. "I have a matter of extreme delicacy, and more importantly, extreme caution."

Sure. "Chairman, as I'm sure your research indicated, *GrimJustin* has a history of rejecting vTech's offers." The fact that this bastard had the nerve to even contact them made Brenner clench his teeth.

"Yes, of course." Franklin almost squirmed in his chair. "I do offer my apologies for the Kremlin incident. I wasn't involved personally of course."

"Of course." Sarcasm dripped.

"In fact, I believe this particular contract will be of interest to you. vTech is prepared to compensate you by tripling your current rates, plus whatever expenses you incur."

Brenner pretended to consider it. "We will require seventy-five percent as a deposit, with the remainder paid on delivery."

"Understandable."

Too easy, Brenner thought. He pushed further. "I will need to know the extent of the project before I can give you an estimate."

The reptilian face leaned closer to the screen, his dull, pale eyes intense. "I will need your full disclosure --"

"Let me send you our privacy contract." He threw a quick look at Trent, who pounded away on the keyboard.

The door behind him swooshed open. In one of the monitors, he saw a reflection of Med before the man hastily stepped back out.

Franklin's incoming beeped. He bent over, reading it intently before looping off a signature and shooting it back. "It's satisfactory."

As it came back, Trent nodded.

"Now..." looking more sure of himself, Franklin steeped his fingers, "...again, this is a delicate situation." He paused for a moment as if gathering his thoughts. "We've received a transmission from a rogue Data Agent. The transmission originated from your ship."

"Chairman, we do not have a Data Agent onboard." Brenner was so fucking polite, he thought he should be teaching charm school.

"Commander." Franklin smiled, leaning in closer again. Brenner hoped he would zoom out or something. "I have intel that you were hired by MicroSel to apprehend a data leak. I also have a transmission sent specifically to our headquarters with the *GrimJustin* secureEncrypt identification." Franklin paused, as if to give Brenner a chance to confirm or deny. When Brenner did neither, the man continued. "The agent you apprehended is threatening to undermine several vTech/MicroSel anti-compete contracts. Our admin agents should not be put into a position to compromise their integrity when she offers them this information. I regret that I must ask you to discharge her."

Stunned, Brenner stayed silent.

Franklin continued on. "I realize it puts you in a somewhat difficult position with your current employer. However, this is not a conflict of interest as I am looking to protect both MicroSel and vTech, and, again, I am prepared to triple your rates."

Duke typed furiously beside him. A char-msg popped up on the console superimposed on Franklin's face. *Her data is wiped. No results on search.*

Why the hell did they want to discharge her?

"We don't accept discharge projects as a rule, Chairman. But," he held up a hand before Franklin could sputter, "I will consider it. If you could transmit your current contractor policy?"

Franklin nodded and disconnected.

"You are considering it?" Duke had his arms crossed at his chest. Trent was staring at him.

Brenner leaned back in his chair. "I *am* considering it. They want her dead -- it's something big."

"Her order to retrieve the keySeq was sent from Franklin's personal unit." This from Trent.

"Yeah," Brenner nodded, "I remember that."

"He is in such a hurry to 'discharge' her," Duke mimicked quotes with his fingers, "all of a sudden. With us, vTech denied any association. Why discharge? Unless he knows MicroSel wants something."

They stared at each other as realization hit. "Shit."

Brenner turned back to the keypad, furiously typing in commands. "Shuttle is twenty hours from here at top speed." The engine on that thing was a piece of shit.

Trent ran a series of commands. "Same coordinates were relayed to two MicroSel cruisers just before vTech comm."

It took Brenner less than a second to make a decision. "Trent, see if you can make twenty hours fit into fifteen." He glanced at Duke. "Inform AIC Franklin we accept the terms."

He adjusted course, and saw the stars blur as the ship picked up speed.

Chapter Six

She was doing fine. Just fine.

This bucket of chips was a pain in the ass to deal with, but she dealt with it. It had to be re-taught voice commands so she'd spent hours programming in vocals, and reprogramming them when the stupid thing lost them. Dinah pored over command manuals and tried to keep her mind on specs. And not Brenner. Damned bastard.

She still hadn't heard from vTech, which concerned her. It was against procedure to contact agents with less than Security 5 clearance, but Sec 5 and above weren't transmitting. Public or otherwise.

She had to stop his face from popping into her head. The lust had dried up, leaving anger, and under it was the raw pain from betrayal. Wasn't she supposed to not feel pain? *Idiot*. Who fell for someone they fucked more in VR than in real life?

Her knuckles still smarted a bit -- the scabs pulling every time she closed her hands. She stared out into space, thinking about fighting him, riding him. God, it was good. Both combat and sex. And wasn't it just dandy she would never see that bastard, much less allow herself to touch him again?

The shuttle lost the last command she fed it and she barely restrained herself from pounding on the keypad. The damn thing would probably lose the last hour of work just to piss her off further. She really needed to run a diagnostic on it, but the latest one registered was about six months old and she sure as hell wasn't going to pay for new diagWare for Brenner's shuttle.

She glanced out, absently noting two stars glowing brighter. When they blinked at her, she snapped out of it. *Here we go*.

Her contact at MicroSel, the one she hadn't revealed in interrogation -- *orgasm torture*, her inner voice snickered at her -- obviously hadn't returned the favor. Two

MicroSel sec units were rushing toward her in full branded glory, the cheerful red and blue logo already visible and somehow mocking.

They probably had orders to kill her. She thought that calmly. *So what can you offer them of value to keep your sweet ass in one main piece?* Her contact at MicroSel? Discard -- they obviously already knew who he was. Brenner's shuttle... Discard, no one put good data on escape hatches anyway. The chip in her head? Potentially. It was brand new tech. Granted the shuttle wasn't as equipped as her own unit -- or a unit suited for a ten-year-old -- but she found zero data on it. She'd have to research it. For now, it was Plan B.

Incoming beeped. At least that was vocal. "*GrimJustin shuttle.*"

Oh great.

"Our data indicate a vTech agent aboard. A warrant ID T324 has been issued to apprehend one identified as Dinah Burns. Please comply."

Great, security-type warrant.

She hit reply, text only -- maybe it was a good thing vocals weren't working on this thing so they couldn't ID her voice. *MicroSel Security Unit, this is GrimJustin shuttle. Currently undergoing data cleanup. Your scans will verify.* With so much shit on this thing's drive and the memory constantly failing, that could pass as a logical explanation.

"We regret to interrupt, *GrimJustin shuttle*. Prepare to be taken onboard."

Okay, they didn't fall for it. *The shuttle is infected with virus ID M94ji837. The virus has not been contained, and may compromise your own security.* She made up the number, but gave it a pattern of one of the viruses vTech's viral lab issued every couple of weeks. Of course, she wasn't supposed to know about it, but hey, life or death here. If they didn't blast her into space, she'd have to take one of the viral geeks out as a thank you.

"*GrimJustin shuttle*. Our scan does indicate a virus on your ship. Probability shows the virus will not affect our security. Engage docking thrusters."

Shit. There was a virus on this thing? Hell, she didn't have time to think about it. She put in a command to back up, slowly. The weapons scan beeped a warning -- targeted engine systems.

Another incoming. "MicroSel Security Unit. This is *GrimJustin*."

"Oh, no way in hell," Dinah muttered, watching the other ship get closer. Dwarfed by them, she felt like a sitting duck. In a tin can.

"How can we be of assistance?" Brenner's voice was cool through the comm.

"A warrant ID T324 has been issued to apprehend vTech agent identified as Dinah Burns. We have data indicating she is on the shuttle."

"Agent Burns is in custody aboard *GrimJustin*, and en route to MicroSel security headquarters after intel extraction."

Extraction my ass, Dinah thought.

"We are unable to transfer custody at this time," Brenner continued. "Transmitting contract for your verification."

There was a short pause.

"Contract appears to be in order. MicroSel Security headquarters will expect you."

She watched the security ships starting to move away to allow *GrimJustin* better access. Just like that? Well, two out, one to go. "No way in hell, motherfucker."

She leaned over the console and muttered to herself.

"Prepare to be boarded." It was as if Brenner was speaking directly to her.

"Boarded my ass," she repeated, again and again, almost like a litany. "No fucking way. I should just fire on that bastard."

And to her horror -- to her endless, fascinated horror -- the damned shuttle complied, firing its entire arsenal at its mother ship, a single orange beam that ended before it even reached port where it drained into its force shield, depleting the shuttle of power and leaving Dinah in mute shock and dread.

* * *

On *GrimJustin*, there was silence.

"Ooooooh, shit," was heard whispered once, and that was before Brenner strode out without saying a single word.

Then shock settled in. Duke was first to dig up a hundred-credit coin. "Six hours before he shows up for food," he said, and betting began in earnest.

Unaware of his stamina being bet on, Brenner waited for the shuttle to dock. He waited until the door *swooshed* open, waited until she bounced out, sweating and gasping for cool air since the laser took out most of the shuttle's power and therefore lowered air filter quality. Her mouth was moving, but he didn't hear whatever she was saying; it didn't really matter, nor could it spill over the roar in his own head. He let her come closer, still talking, still saying something about payment -- *fucking payment* -- until he simply reached out, grabbed both her wrists and slapped the handcuffs on her. Again.

That didn't shut her up. "Look, I told you I'm very sorry. It was an accident --"

He just grabbed her wrist and pulled, stalked out of the docking bay, dragging her behind him. She had to run lightly to keep up. He strode toward his quarters and when she halted, realizing where he was going, he simply dragged her in. She was cussing at him now, panting and screaming and cursing, until he locked the doors behind him, grabbed her by the shoulders, pressed her against the door and, just to stop the profanities streaming from her mouth, brutally claimed it with his own.

She staggered between him and the door when he finally tore his mouth away from her.

"What --" she had to clear her throat, "-- what the hell are you doing?"

He dragged her forward, pushed her onto the bed and stripped off his shirt.

"You mentioned payment?" His voice was calm even though the muscle in his jaw twitched.

Nerves fluttered around arousal. "Sure, I told you --"

He cut her off. "You are going to pay my way."

She lifted her chin, daring him. "I don't feel pain."

"Good. You'll last longer." The small smile he shot her was positively evil.

Chills, hot, cold, she couldn't tell which, raced down her back.

He stood in front of her, naked now, his magnificent cock jutting out toward her.

"Strip." The single word was full of heat.

"I can't." She brought her arms out to indicate the cuffs.

"Your pants."

She scooted on the bed, worked the snug pants off her waist, past her thighs. She muffled a scream as he simply lifted her and arranged her face down over his lap as he sat.

With all the dignity she could muster she turned around to look at his face. His jaw was still clenched. His hands now molded her ass, squeezing it, spreading it, squeezing it again. She sighed, willing her body to relax. Then yowled at the sting, more in shock than pain, when his palm made a resounding smack on her exposed flesh.

"Bastard!"

He laughed at that -- that fucker actually laughed! -- and brought his palm down again, this time on her left cheek. She yelped again, couldn't help it really.

"Fucker!" The sound of the slap, the light sting of his palm, the *heat* that accompanied it all made her juices stir restlessly.

"What's that?" Another smack, this one reverberating all the way to her clit.

"Fucker!" She screamed it louder, excitement making her shiver under the restraining hand on her back, craving more.

"Was that an apology?" He lifted his palm again, brought it down on her stinging skin. Then cupped it, squeezing her flesh.

"No way in hell!"

"You know," he said, his tone calm even though his cock was huge and twitching under her, "last time I did this you came pretty hard. Didn't they train you to control yourself?"

"Bastard!" she screamed at him, writhing now, the heat from her ass kindling fire in her sex.

"We already established that." He smacked her ass once more before sliding a finger into the slicked folds of her pussy. Her wetness gripped him as he withdrew to circle a finger around her clit, causing her to gasp.

"Almost time for round two." With that, he lifted her effortlessly and deposited her between his spread legs.

Eye level with his magnificent cock.

"Wet it," he ordered hoarsely. "You'll need it."

Her eyes widened even as her mouth opened to take him in. His hands fisted in her hair, guiding her down and up his shaft. Her mouth stretched around it and she brought her cuffed hands up to cup his balls. She looked up to see him watching her, the heat in his eyes so intense she almost felt it.

Her tongue swirled around the sensitive skin of his cockhead as she took him deep. She should bite him. She should really bite him and show that fucker what she was capable of. But he groaned, the sound of it sending more shivers down her spine, and she couldn't bring herself to do it. She just sucked his cock and tore grunts of pleasure from him.

She felt him tremble as she worked his cockhead deep into her mouth. Suddenly, with a growl he pulled away and, cupping his hands under her arms, lifted her.

"Round three," he whispered in her ear, and she shuddered in his arms as he carried her to the leather bench by the comp center. Depositing her so she straddled it, he knelt in front of her.

Dinah watched him take out a few shiny virtaStraps and her brow wrinkled in confusion. They were both here, why did he need virtual reality? Didn't he want to fuck her?

She was about to ask when he claimed her mouth again, pushed her tank top down so it bunched under her breasts, and plastered the first virtaStrap over her lips. Her nipples were next and he laved them with his tongue before gently placing the straps on each peak. Finally, he spread her thighs and went to work on her pussy, lazily tonguing her clit, bringing her to the very edge before placing a strap over her vagina,

covering both her clit and her opening, smoothing it into place with long delicious strokes of his finger.

Standing, he surveyed the results. Mute, she stared back at him. He brought out the vGoggles. *Wait*, she shook her head, *what are you doing?*

He trailed a fingertip over the strap on her lips before shoving the goggles on her.

There were two Brenners. Both of them naked, cocks ready. Both of them grinning.

“Ready, darlin’?”

The one to the left made a gesture as if putting something on his face. His own goggles, she realized, as the holographic Brenner came forward. Instinctively she backed away, giving him room on the bench. He sat in front of her, grin on his face, cock on alert. The other Brenner walked behind her.

“Now you’ll get fucked.”

She wasn’t sure which one of them said it, but she felt a warm hand urging her forward. Virtual Brenner lifted her, positioning her so her pussy gripped the tip of his cock. Slowly, he lowered her, seating himself deep within her. Dinah gasped at the fullness, somehow insanely real -- hard and thick and huge -- and she clenched around him, squeezing him. He kissed her mouth and leaned back, taking her with him, so she arched over him, her cuffed hands looping around his neck, her breasts brushing against the hard muscles of his chest.

And she felt his hands on her ass.

She tensed now, feeling another cock pressed against her asshole, as warm male hands stroked her body.

“Easy, darlin’,” virtual Brenner said.

She felt something cool and slick drip on her skin, fingers spreading it around and into her puckered opening.

“You’ll get the ass fucking you deserve,” the real Brenner growled behind her and pressed the head of his cock against the tight hole of her anus.

He was huge, impossibly thick, the lubrication slippery smooth, and as her body opened to the onslaught, virtual Brenner under her lifted his hips, just a bit, and the base of his cock brushed against her clit. The sensation of it, combined with a feeling of two cocks inside her, made her moan.

"You like that?" Behind her, Brenner worked his cock into her incredibly tight passage. The edge of pain made the pleasure sharper, as she forced her ass to relax, to take him in fully. "You like that?" he asked again, and lightly slapped her ass.

"Better answer him." This was from the virtual Brenner, the one busy caressing and twisting her nipples with his long clever fingers.

She could only moan, so she moaned loudly as behind her, Brenner slowly pulled out and just as slowly worked himself back in, the fiery sensation deliciously, erotically dark. Under her, Brenner lifted his hips, stroked her pussy deeper. Behind her, Brenner again pulled out and plunged back in.

Fingers teased her nipples. Hard hands gripped her ass. One pulled out. One dug in. She couldn't tell where one started and where the other ended, but the pleasure was so intense she screamed from it. They moved faster, each doing the reverse of the other, one pulling out as one worked in -- faster now, deeper, harder -- as she kept screaming from the sheer intensity of two cocks rubbing the delicate walls of her passages until she finally exploded, shuddering around them both, her muscles spasming, milking, sucking, until Brenner pounded himself into her with a roar as his own orgasm hit.

* * *

She must have blacked out.

Dinah opened her eyes to find herself sprawled face up on the bench, the straps off her body now, the cuffs gone, her muscles feeling like pools of melted wax.

Brenner was above her, concern in his eyes. "Okay?"

She had to clear her throat before she could answer. Her voice was hoarse. "Yeah. Yeah, I'm fine."

There was something under her. She looked down to find the cuffs between her spread thighs. Inside the ring of the cuffs rose up a thick pink dildo.

Well, that would explain how real it felt.

"Pink?" She raised a brow at him.

He smiled, shrugged. "I think you're a pink kind of woman. Underneath it all."

He brushed a lock of hair off her face, the gesture so tender she averted her eyes. *Don't read anything into it, for God's sake.*

"Come on." He lifted her again. Damn if she wasn't starting to like the effortless way he could cart her around. She resisted snuggling into the curve of his neck.

"I can't take more punishment."

His arms tightened around her and she felt his lips brush the top of her head. "I think you can take what I have in mind."

She found herself deposited in a tub with warm water swirling around her calves. She balanced herself by bracing a hand on his wide shoulders as Brenner dipped a cloth into the water and with soothing circular motions, bathed her back, breasts, stomach, between the cheeks of her ass, before finally, he dropped the cloth and washed her sex with gentle fingertips, dipping inside her for a quick moment before lightly grazing her clit.

Arousal stirred lazily. She parted her legs for him as his large warm palm splayed against her buttocks while his other hand parted the folds of her sex. He leaned in, gently and thoroughly using his mouth on her, softly caressing around and over her clit until it hardened under his tongue, and sucked it lightly. Her hands kneaded his shoulders and her soft moans of pleasure filled the room.

The orgasm that rippled through her was gentle and slow, like his lips, and she would have staggered if he hadn't caught her. Lifting her out of the tub, he carried her to bed. She blinked at him as he settled her in, covering her body with a silver blanket. When he got in next to her, she scooted over, curled around him, and slept.

Chapter Seven

She was all but sprawled on top of him when she woke. His arms were wrapped around her, loosely anchoring her to a warm, solid male body. The heat of him, the musky scent pumping off his skin made her want to burrow. She nuzzled her cheek against his chest and his arms tightened around her. She looked up into the face of a sated male.

“Hey.” His voice was a rumble under her.

“Hey yourself.” Dinah offered him a tentative smile. She wasn’t sure how to play it now. This casual closeness was somehow more intimate than anything else.

She scooted out of his arms and sat on the edge of the bed, holding the sheet to her breasts. Idiotic, but she couldn’t help herself.

“So now what?”

Jack turned, supported himself on his elbow. Somehow she got a feeling she wasn’t going to like this.

“AIC Franklin contracted me. To discharge you.”

Her shoulders slumped. “MicroSel obviously has me on file now.” Just like they had Brenner on file and vTech disavowed any knowledge of him and Duke. Surprise, surprise, vTech pulled the exact same shit. She exhaled, braced herself. “Are you going to?”

“What the hell kind of question is that?”

She felt anger bubble, at him, at vTech, at the whole fucking galaxy. Anger and... dread. “A reasonable one.” She forced her voice soft. The tingling in the back of her head was ignored.

Battling a strong desire to lift her up and shake her until her teeth rattled, Brenner got out of bed. "I don't kill women I have relationships with." He was starting to consider it though. Just this once.

"You just capture and fuck them, is that it?"

He clenched his jaw. "I bid and accepted the debriefing contract because I figured better me than someone else. Which I may add, you seemed to agree to."

"Moot point," she tossed at him, also standing now, the bed between them. "I trained for the possibility of being captured."

"Of course." His voice was clipped. "You did. Forgive my insensitive urge for not wanting my lover exposed to pain."

"Your... your *lover*?" It came out as a shocked whisper.

"What the hell else do you call it?"

"We fucked in VR!" The shouted words reverberated obscenely in the room. "It wasn't real!"

"Fine." He was done with this shit. "Let's try it another way. vTech left us to fend for ourselves at Kremlin. You got us out. Consider it a payment for a long overdue debt."

She was glaring at him now. "Let's just rest this whole debt payment issue. I was contracted. So relax, you don't owe me shit. I was offered a nice sum to change your data."

Brenner physically felt the impact. "You... were contracted." It wasn't a question.

"We all have our freelance jobs. Intel trainees don't get paid well." She shrugged. "No idea who you should thank. Payment was anonymous through eCred. You want someone to thank, you can start with them." She kept rubbing at the back of her neck, right where the chip was. He was too damn pissed to care at that particular moment.

He stared at her for a long tense moment. Then without another word, he strode out.

* * *

Med walked into the conference room to find Brenner staring at the monitor.

At the sound of his footsteps, Brenner straightened in his chair, as if he hadn't just been sitting brooding for the past ten minutes. "New request coming in."

"Cut that shit out." Med sat down next to him. "You've been at it for forty-eight hours." With a quick motion he snapped the monitor closed, cutting off Jack's excuse to stare at something. "You've been so quiet I want to put my fist in your face just to get you to cuss."

Brenner snorted at that, a chuckle without humor. "That bad?"

"And she is the same. I liked her better when she was cursing you at the top of her lungs."

"Look, Dinah and I --"

Med didn't let him finish. "Go talk to her. Go make love to her. I don't care which. Just get it out of your system. You're driving me insane." He pulled the monitor over to face him and, opening it, studied the potential contract. "She's in the gym." He didn't look at the door as it opened and closed quietly behind him. Instead, he ran a fingertip down the scar that stretch from the corner of his mouth to his jaw. And wondered at the possibilities.

* * *

In the gym, Dinah beat on the bag. She used gloves this time -- mostly because she'd skinned her knuckles so badly the day before that they'd bled onto the simulated leather. And instead of lecturing her on it, Med gave her some kind of wiping cloth and told her to get the blood off before someone else used the bag. Her fists stung a bit, her legs were taut and she was breathing heavily. She beat the bag, and didn't feel it. Her skin was breaking, her muscles singing, but the impact of flesh was minimal, dull, dissatisfying. Still, she beat the bag. It was better than crying.

She'd fucked it up, royally. All of it.

The tingling in her head was loud now, not really painful, but somehow cold, sharp. She pummeled out a series of jabs, hissed a breath...

And there he was... leaning on the wall, tall, big and gorgeous.

Weary now, she crossed her arms in front of her. He just stood there, those green eyes hot.

Her nerves stretched thin. "What." She snapped it out, more of a command than a question.

"You're fucking beautiful, you know that?" He stalked forward.

Dinah stood her ground, though her mind urged her to back away. Her arms fell to her sides. Her throat closed. "I'm not playing this game anymore."

"What game?"

He was close enough that the heat from him was tangible. "Not interested." Damn it, she wasn't going to back down.

His hands glided on her shoulders, slid down over her arms. Gripped. "I can make you interested."

She felt his touch. Mildly. It was minimal, like warm water on skin. Pleasant. Nice. No heat. Med said after a while she wouldn't feel anything at all. Looks like it had started. She had to get away from him. The touch of his hands had sent her up in flames just days ago. Now -- nothing. Why the thought terrified her, she had no idea. "No. You get pissed, I get fucked. I'm sick of rough sex."

"You want slow?" Somehow, he was closer, his mouth a breath away from hers. "You want tender?" And his lips were on her, hot, light and soft, and she lost herself in the green of his eyes... and felt close to nothing.

"Just... stop." God, she wanted to cry.

"I want you." His lips cruised the corners of her mouth, her cheeks, her eyes. "I can't stop thinking about you."

She couldn't answer, the thoughts, the words, tangling on her tongue.

His lips hovered millimeters from hers. "Slow this time." His mouth closed on her again, painfully gentle.

And the floor rocked under them as heat rose and flung them down.

She thought the shrilling was in her head, that the noise that had been there had gotten louder. But it was the alarms. The lights dimmed, and yellow alarm signals flickered eerily. She lifted her head just as Brenner crawled toward her.

"Are you hurt?" he shouted over the noise.

I don't feel anything. Now wasn't the time. "No." She stood up in tandem with him. "What the hell happened?"

He dug for his dataUnit just as it beeped. "Status!" he barked.

"Explosion in the shuttle dock." Duke's voice was hollow. "Attempting to contain."

Brenner threw her a look she really didn't like and rushed out.

She followed, having to run to keep up with his long-legged stride. "I swear, I didn't..."

He wasn't listening, keying something into his dataUnit. She gave up shouting. The noise in her head increased to match the alarms. Around them, yellow and red emergency indicators were bathing the hall in an eerie glow.

"Can you shut off the damn alarms?" Brenner shouted into his dataUnit as he sped toward the shuttle dock.

The silence was sudden and deafening.

They rushed through the open doors of the dock, surveying the damage. Duke was hauling away blackened pieces of metal. Trent, his face smudged with soot, was busy scanning. "Wasn't a mechanical malfunction," he said as soon as he lifted his head and saw Brenner through the black smoke.

His gaze moved away, lingered on Dinah's face before he focused back on his pad. His face tightened. "Processor overclocked. Virus with vTech pattern."

The tingling in her head was pounding now. No pain. Just dull throbbing. Loud.

She blinked, trying to bring the room back into focus just as Brenner's hand gripped her upper arm. "Take her back to guest quarters." He didn't look at her, just spoke coldly to Duke. "No data access."

He turned away, walked toward Trent and the smoking mess of twisted metal. Dinah started after him, his shape blurring in and out of focus, the throb in her head rhythmic with the blur. When Duke's hand closed over her shoulder she didn't even fight it. She let him lead her out, back to the quarters where she'd been staying for the past two days.

The throbbing was faster now. She winced at it, not pain, not really, just a dull ache of some sort. Pressure. She stopped for a moment, pressed her hand against her forehead -- and found a firm palm gripping her wrist. She looked up into cool, gray eyes.

"Not this time, sweetheart." With that, Duke shoved her along the corridor and when they reached her quarters he simply muscled her in.

Inside, Dinah curled into a ball on the bed, and tried to smother the throbbing. The dull ache had her stomach rolling with nausea. Too bad nausea wasn't considered pain. The damned thing inside her certainly didn't bother with that.

She pressed her palm against her forehead again, the slight relief from the pressure making her moan. Fingertips dug into her forehead and she waited for... something.

* * *

She must have fallen asleep.

The firm taps on her cheek urged her out of it. Dinah opened her eyes to a grim face. Brenner.

"Get up," he ordered through gritted teeth.

Gingerly, like an old woman, she rolled on her side, swung her legs over the bed and finally stood. No throbs, no noise. Not yet, anyway.

Brenner watched her through flat, narrowed eyes. There was a slight distaste in his expression as if he were looking at something unpleasant. As if she cared what he thought.

Beside him, his face equally impassive, was Duke. His expression was different though, his eyes questioning, accessing. Hell, she didn't care anymore.

Dinah clutched her belly and laughed. A raw ugly sound. "Both of you again? Too bad I'm not in the mood." Nausea rolled back in, greasy in her stomach.

"Shut up." Brenner's eyes, cold as ice, seared through her. "MicroSel Sec units are en route again, demanding custody. Seems like your threat status was upgraded. Your Asshole-in-Charge, Franklin, is demanding your body. Preferably dead."

The pressure in her head was back again. She hoped he didn't notice her wince.

"I would love for them to fight it out," Brenner continued, "but being in the middle without my forceShields doesn't put me in the mood to play."

"And you expect me to do..."

"You can tell me what the hell they want from you."

"And if I don't?" Like she knew what the hell they wanted. Right now, she was more concerned with not throwing up. She would not throw up.

"We can do a repeat of before." He motioned Duke to come closer and did so himself, gripping her wrist, towering over her. At the feel of his hands on her skin the pounding in her head doubled. She blinked at him, willing him to come into focus. "I guarantee you won't enjoy it nearly as much as last time." His voice was dangerously soft.

As threats went, that was a good one. "Do your best." Maybe it was time to trash pride and tell him she had no idea what anyone wanted from her and all she wanted to do was go throw up.

Brenner squeezed her wrist none too gently and she winced, not from the contact, but from the fact that it seemed to make the pressure in her skull vibrate.

"You're about to find out one small significant detail." She didn't struggle. All her energy went to keeping still, trying to quiet the beast in her head. "I can't feel... anything." She did feel moisture pearl on her forehead though. "Let go for a moment, would you?"

He kept his grip. "I thought you didn't feel pain."

"I don't." She fought the urge to wrench her hand from his, just concentrated on breathing small shallow breaths. "I need to puke. Bathroom or your feet, your choice."

Chapter Eight

He waited as she retched, loudly, miserably, in the bathroom. Beside him, Duke was softly talking into his dataUnit, informing Med of the situation.

When the sound ceased, Brenner went in to find her flat on the floor, her cheek pressed against the cool metallic-based tiles.

"Go away." Her voice was weak. He felt like a clumsy gorilla from old Earth. He felt like an idiot. He didn't know what he felt. "Med is on his way." He started to kneel next to her.

"Just... don't touch me."

He scowled at that, but couldn't really blame her. Her skin was pale as death. He slipped his hands under her limp form, turned her, lifted her, and carried her out.

"Is that a new interrogation technique?"

Her voice was breathy, weak. It made his eyes burn. He pushed back the urge to brush a kiss on that white cheek. "I prefer the other one," he said instead.

Duke materialized with something cool that he pressed against her forehead. It must have helped, because she gave them both a slight smile as Brenner gently laid her on the bed. Where the hell was Med?

"What are you feeling?"

"Must be the chip." Probably dizzy now, she closed her eyes. "Look, I'm sorry about the shuttle. I didn't --" As if a sudden thought occurred to her, she sat up in bed, causing the cloth to fall onto the floor. "Did you monitor the communiqué with MicroSel from the shuttle?"

He didn't give a fuck about the shuttle now. He picked up the now warm cloth. "Lie back down."

"Did you?"

Duke answered from the bathroom. "Yeah. It was pretty impressive how fast you loaded the virus in."

"That's just it, I didn't. I made up the number."

"Sounded legit." Duke came toward the bed with another wet, cold towel. Brenner plucked it from his hand, causing a dark eyebrow to arch up. It was ignored. Instead, in a gentle movement, Brenner pushed her back down, and smoothed the cloth over her forehead.

"I made it up." She slowly inhaled a small breath, as if testing whether she could take it or not. "If you monitored the communiqué, you would have heard MicroSel confirm a virus. *Not* a new virus, which they wouldn't have in their dataBanks, and would question. They didn't bother checking a made up number as their scans had already verified something there." She didn't see Duke look up from his dataUnit and frown thoughtfully. "That piece of shit shuttle kept losing voice commands until it..."

Until it fired, she was going to say, and Brenner thought of the delicious way she paid for it. Could she not feel anything now? His touch? Nothing?

"You said MicroSel was on their way? You were taking me to their Sec. All of a sudden they need the keySeq immediately?"

"When I touch you, do you feel me?" He didn't make a move to make contact, afraid it would set off whatever it was that made her puke.

She was quiet for a moment. "I feel it. But... the way you feel a blanket... or clothes. No pain, no pleasure."

"My dataScanner is complaining from too much input," Duke said. "Your chip must be sending out all sorts of fun things."

Exasperated, Brenner ran a hand over his head, getting up to pace the room. Back to the other problem. "Franklin knows I didn't kill you, he wouldn't be puffing his way over here otherwise. MicroSel seems in a hurry. Both seem to be getting real time intel." He stepped back toward her. "Is your chip transmitting?"

"How the hell would I know?"

Just then, Med walked in carting equipment. In an ageless gesture he pressed his hand against Dinah's forehead. His scars seemed dark against the pale blue of his eyes, and Brenner frowned again, trying to figure out where he'd seen eyes that color before.

"What seems to be the problem?"

"I can't feel pain." She chuckled weakly. "Or pleasure. But I can feel a wonderful sense of nausea, and someone is hammering my skull." She pressed a hand to her belly. The nausea was probably gathering again. Brenner ignored the urge to go over there and gently rub her stomach. Med would take care of it for her. There was also the small problem of keeping her ass in one piece.

"You're obviously feeling something." Med kept his voice conversational, matter-of-fact. Brenner wanted to kick something. Duke, a study of calm, was busily plucking at his dataUnit.

"Well, looks like we know why vTech and MicroSel are joining this party." Duke paused, as if to add drama. "A pain blocker chip patented by MicroSel happens to be a main contender in an antiCompete agreement between our friends."

Brenner focused on Dinah as Med fumbled the sensor, nearly dropping it.

"Why put it in without me knowing?" Her voice was stronger, thank God. Maybe this thing was subsiding.

"A test of some sort?" Unable to help himself, Brenner pounded a fist into the wall. "That would explain why Franklin wants to cremate you and MicroSel wants custody."

"Great." She winced as if the buzzing of the sensor was bothering her.

Incoming beeped. "MicroSel security units directly in front." Trent's voice barely suppressed excitement. Brenner looked down at her, torn.

"It's fine," she said. "Go."

"I'll take care of her," Med said, and something in his pale blue eyes flashed. Did he have the hots for her? Brenner chased away the thought. No time to care.

He cupped her chin in his palm. *To hell with it.* He brushed a light kiss on her lips. Smiled. Then walked out, with Duke silent beside him.

"You know --" Med dug for another instrument just as nausea was rolling back, "-- I know exactly how you feel."

Dinah clutched a hand to her belly, determined not to embarrass herself again. "Do you?"

Med smiled, a gentle smile that rendered the pink scar on his cheek almost invisible. "Yes. An experiment. A lab rat." He shrugged, competent fingers adjusting the sensor. "I was one too."

Incoming beeped before she could answer. "I'm letting MicroSel dock us." Brenner's voice was taut. "vTech is close. Med, is there a way to get the chip safely out?"

"I'll see what I can do." Med put back the sensor, just as a loud groan of metal sliding against metal came through. "You up for a walk? We need to get to the MediLab."

* * *

At the commandPost, Franklin's face on screen was furious. "You took the contract to discharge her." He was speaking softly, visibly fighting for control.

"Actually, I requested the specs. The contract wasn't signed." Brenner had bigger things to worry about. The ship was protected by MicroSel shields so Franklin couldn't blow *GrimJustin* into space. Keeping Dinah out of MicroSel's interrogation unit was the next step. "The money is still in the mutualAccount," he said, scanning the other screen for chatter, instructions, or any other intel that could keep Dinah's head intact. "You can retract it at your convenience."

"I... I will have you arrested! I will --" His image froze.

"Virus scan." Trent kept monitoring the status on screen 5. "No outgoing or incoming."

"Another satisfied customer." Duke nodded to the face on screen. "You know, it's crude, but we may just keep our asses this time."

Brenner looked up from his own monitor. "What have you got?"

Not answering, Duke looked at Trent.

"Dinah's virus." Trent played with something on his keypad. "It's fucking brilliant."

"She said she didn't --"

"Just listen to the man." Duke's voice was mild.

"Definitely vTech. Forced the explosion by looping back into the eM processor until overload. New on the market."

Brenner wasn't excited. "Except they neutered it when the shuttle was scanned."

"Yeah." Trent finally turned to face them. "Except I found a blinker. Bring back the signal, it will knock out anything within pulse." He shrugged, grinned. "In theory, anyway."

Brenner felt his blood humming. "So if they scan again..."

It was Duke that grinned this time. "It's in my dataUnit. They won't find it until we're ready." His face was a study of arrogant competence. "I modified the effect a bit. Anything with *GrimJustin* readout should get less juice."

"It will touch everything though." Trent looked uncomfortable now. Brenner waited. "Everything," Trent repeated. "Her... chip, whatever it is, could flash fry."

"So let's hope Med gets it out of her by then." Brenner narrowed his eyes, stared at the frozen face before him, those pale blue eyes so familiar.

Duke leaned in. "What?"

"Look at his eyes."

"What about them?"

"Remind you of anyone?"

Duke looked at him as if he'd lost his last marble. "What the hell are you talking about?"

Brenner ignored him, pressed on Comm. "Brenner to Med."

No response.

Duke leaned in closer now.

"Brenner to Med." Brenner controlled the urge to shout.

No response.

Duke breathed out. "Ian Frank," he muttered. "Ivan Franklin." They hit the floor running at the same time.

Chapter Nine

In the MediLab, Dinah sat on the padded table, holding her head in both hands. The throbbing was constant now, deep rhythmic waves of it. Nausea was a greasy pit in her belly.

Behind her, Med was rummaging for necessary sensors. She hoped he'd get to it before she needed to throw up again.

"You know," he said, his tone conversational, "you and I are a lot alike."

"How so?" She pressed her hands closer to her temples, the brief increase and release of pressure like a breath of fresh air.

"Both vTech lab rats." He put a sensor on the table close to her and dug out a laser unit. Probably a scalpel. The thought of that made her shudder a bit.

"Think we should start a club?" She was really not in a mood for small talk.

He smiled at her, those pale blue eyes twinkling. Where had she seen him before?

"That's a great idea. We can start --"

He was interrupted by the doors swishing open as Brenner and Duke ran in.

"Gentlemen." There was a faint hint of irritation in his voice.

"Med." Brenner's voice was quiet. "I need you to remove the chip. Now."

"I see." Seemingly composed, he arranged instruments. "Did you run in here to tell me that?"

Casually, Duke walked toward Brenner, taking position behind him.

"Yeah." Brenner stood still. "I also have a few questions for you. But we can discuss them later."

Med smiled. A sad smile.

And in a move lightning-fast had the laser unit pressed against Dinah's skull. "I'm afraid I must disobey your orders." His voice was calm, his eyes strangely empty. "Why don't we discuss your questions instead?"

Brenner didn't move, afraid to even breathe for fear of spooking him. The laser unit could sever her head before Dinah could blink. He looked into her eyes, those wide-open gold eyes, and saw some kind of... acceptance. He wasn't going to let it happen.

"Your relationship to AIC Franklin?" He saw Dinah's eyes widen.

Med chuckled. "Father? Brother? Cell donor? I'm not really sure." The blue of his eyes was paler now, eerily so.

Dinah's knuckles whitened as she squeezed her hands into fists. "You're experiment I.A.N?" Her voice was hoarse now. "I thought it was a rumor."

Med's voice was bitter. "Flesh and blood, dearest. Flesh and blood."

Behind Brenner, Duke shifted.

"Put the blaster away, Halloway. I'll sever her neck before you can even fire." Med chuckled again. "Besides, I can't afford you to miss me and hit her. Her head is of primary importance to me."

"What the hell for?" Brenner watched Duke slowly reach toward his side, get out his dataUnit. His eyes spoke volumes. *One quick command.* Did he risk her death or did he risk her brain frying? She watched him, her eyes calm now as if she somehow understood.

Brenner kept his face impassive and willed her not to freak. Of course she wouldn't freak. It was Dinah.

"You need the chip?" Her voice was soft. "Why?"

"The chip is Franklin's hell." Med stroked her hair with his free hand, and she sat still. "I hope you can understand. You," he looked at Brenner, "were left to fend for yourself at Kremlin. Did Dinah tell you I hired her?" Brenner's eyes flickered. "I see she didn't. Don't blame her, she couldn't have known. I hired her as soon as I found out the chip was implanted." He chuckled now. "I still have my ways of reading between the

lines during 'standard' personnel reviews. I also knew she needed some extra money while in training. When NeoSoviets captured you, it was the perfect op to test her skills and get you interested. She refused to accept payment." He stroked his free hand on her hair almost tenderly. "Why didn't you?"

Dinah cleared her throat. "By the time eCred verified the funds, we'd met. In VR. I... couldn't."

Something swelled in Brenner's chest. "I care about her, Med."

"You *care*?" He waved the laser in the air now, breathed heavier. Brenner shot Duke a quick look. "You *care* because of me." His face flushed, the scars obscenely light against red skin. "I put you two together. I made sure you found out who Franklin sent for the keySeq when some idiot was ready to sell it to the highest bidder. I alerted MicroSel. They had her on a silver platter, and if you *cared*, you would have left her to them as soon as you discovered the chip, so they could get it out, nice, calm and shiny. Franklin would be ruined, you two would be happy. And instead, because you cared, she throws up at every touch, Franklin wants her dead and MicroSel isn't in the mood to coddle her."

Dinah shifted. Brenner saw her adjust the ring on her finger. Her eyes were dark now. "You sabotaged the shuttle." It was a whisper.

"Dinah --"

Med shrugged. "I hoped they would find you quicker."

"You killed my career."

"Your lovely boss did that when he put that thing inside you. Would you care to watch? I have the videoFeed. You look lovely naked."

The sound she made was between a growl and a hiss.

"Dinah --" Brenner warned again.

"No." She was past feeling now. Hot angry waves slammed into her body. She gritted her teeth. "You used me... like a lab rat. Just as Franklin did with you."

Med sighed. "Theatrics aren't becoming." He looked at Brenner now. "You see the logic in this?"

She moved. She didn't care anymore, she just moved, her blade aimed up, just as she heard Brenner shout something and her world sparked. And shattered.

* * *

She woke to noise. Loud clanging. After a moment of panic Dinah realized it was the sensors.

"Well, her brain didn't fry." The voice, the mild amusement, belonged to Duke. Immediately she felt a warm palm engulf her hand.

"Hey."

She turned to find Brenner's face inches above her. "Hey." Her throat was raw. "What happened?"

"eM pulse. Fried the power, fried your chip. Fried Med -- bonus." He shrugged, cleared his throat. Duke was playing with the sensors above Med's still form on the floor.

"No readings. He's alive, but... looks like he had something in his head as well. Wasn't lucky as you." He shrugged, adjusted the sensor. He looked like he was breathing fast.

"What will you do with him?" She looked back at Brenner, tired, empty. The throbbing in her head gone, she felt calmer somehow.

"Turn him over to MicroSel -- as soon as they have power. Pursuing cloning is frowned upon by both companies. He should have known that." His hand tightened briefly on hers. "He didn't have to do this... any of it." He looked away, as if unable to look at her. If she didn't know better, she'd swear his hand was shaking.

"I..." He paused, stepped back. "I'll be at the commandPost. After this mess is cleaned up, you'll need to find someone to remove the chip."

Dinah watched him stalk away, actually feeling the emptiness. She looked at Duke.

"You're on your own, sweetheart."

* * *

At the commandPost, they watched MicroSel -- finally at half power -- limp away, towing Franklin's personal ship behind them. As a courtesy, Trent helped in restoring some functionality to the larger ship. Client relationships were a good thing to maintain.

"Listen..." Dinah cleared her throat and tried again. "What you said, earlier, about caring..." She paused under his green stare, before stubbornly continuing on. "Well, is it true?"

"No," he said, and she felt blood drain from her face. "I had Duke fire the eM knowing it could be your execution. I still did it." He paced now, as if unable to look her in the face. Stopped. Right in front of her. "If you never want to see me again, I'll understand."

So that's what crawled up his ass. "It all worked out." She paused for a moment, but refused to be sidetracked. "Well?"

He raised an eyebrow in question.

God, the man was dense. "About you caring?"

"About that." Brenner kept his voice somber, but he looked like he wanted to laugh. "I underbid on a contract, tortured you with orgasms, let you steal my shuttle and fire on my own damn ship. I dealt with a prime example of corporate shit because you are a good virtual fuck. Sorry -- great virtual fuck."

Her head came up. She narrowed her eyes at him. "You are such --"

He didn't let her finish, shutting her up using the only method that had worked before. "Don't say it." His lips claimed hers.

She couldn't get enough of him. "Really?" She wrapped her legs around him -- not knowing how she ended up plastered between the wall and the equally hard length of his body, but she didn't care. "I love you." It came out in a rush and she clapped her hand over her mouth to stem the words, but it was too late. He went still against her.

"Look, just don't worry about it." Shit, she was going to fuck it up after all. "It's not a big deal, it doesn't mean anything --"

"You really are an idiot." The tone was tender. "Haven't you heard what I said?"

She tried her best to untangle herself. "You didn't say anything. In fact, I was the one --" He bit her. The thrill of it sent shivers of pleasure up her spine. It felt pretty damn amazing.

"I love you too." He kissed her again, sweetly. "I love you," he murmured against her lips. "Can you... feel me?"

She looked down at him and grinned. "Every centimeter," she said and hugged him tight. "And yes, I love you too. Asshole."

He grinned at her and bit her ear. "You know what happens when you call me names?"

She grinned right back. "Ass --"

The doors swooshed open and Duke burst in, staring at his dataUnit. "So MicroSel is feeling very kindly toward us. There's talk of an exclusive contract."

He finally looked up and stopped.

Brenner didn't even turn around. "Do me a favor and lock the door after you leave." He pressed nibbling kisses on the corners of her mouth.

Dinah snorted. "Not in the mood for a threesome?"

"Oh, you'll get your threesome," Brenner murmured between kisses.

Duke rolled his eyes. "You're both sick."

"Get your own woman."

Dinah wondered at the sudden shuttered expression in Duke's eyes. He shrugged. "Break anything in here, I don't want to know about it."

"Get out already." Brenner accentuated that with a long slow sweep of tongue under her jaw.

Duke snorted, walked out.

"Now." Brenner closed his lips over the pulse fluttering in her neck. "Where were we?"

"You were promising me a threesome."

"You are a sex maniac."

"Me?" She bit his lip.

"Admit it."

She pretended to glare. "I admit nothing."

"I'll make you. You don't want to play games with me, Agent Burns." He rolled his hips, and his cock -- already hard -- rubbed against her.

The pleasure that streaked through her made her breath catch. "Do your worst, Commander."

"I don't think you can take my worst." His hands were kneading her ass as he claimed her mouth in a brutal kiss. She felt herself being spun, ending up with her butt on the cool smooth conference table. A moment later, her pants were gone. Her legs were spread, her thighs resting on his shoulders.

He nibbled his way across the smooth skin around her labia, gently licking a path just along her pussy lips.

"Admit it. You're a sex maniac."

Dinah lay back on her elbows, prepared to thoroughly enjoy herself. "Don't know what you're talking about."

He trailed soft kisses along her nether lips, finally planted one right on her clit. She moaned at the pleasure of it.

"Come on. Admit it." He accented his words by flicking a tongue at the junction where the lips of her labia met, just above her clit. She arched, wanting more.

"Admit it."

"Fuck me and I'll admit it." She half moaned the words.

"Admit it and I'll fuck you."

"Come on, Commander." It was hard to be seductive when he was tracing wicked circles around the knotted center of her, maddening her with the need for more. "You know you want to."

He was breathing fast now, his skin shiny with perspiration. With a final lick at her pussy -- again, not directly on her clit, the bastard -- he got up, lowered his pants and impaled her in one swift movement.

She screamed from the wild pleasure of it, crossed her ankles around him, anchoring him to her.

Jack withdrew slightly, plunged in again. With his hands under her shoulders he lifted her so she was sitting on the table, her legs around his hips, unable to do anything but accept his thrusts.

He kissed her, entering her mouth with his tongue at the same time as he stroked deeper inside her cunt. Then he stopped. Tore his lips away. "Tell me you want me."

She could barely breathe. "I want you," she managed. If he didn't keep fucking her she would implode.

"Tell me you love me." He rolled his hips and the base of his cock brushed against her clit. Just a few more strokes and...

"I love you."

He plunged in deep, deeper than ever before, and thrust harder. She was almost there, she could feel the orgasm building, and tried to lift her hips, use her calves to try to bring him closer.

"Tell me you're a sex maniac."

She tried to grind herself against him. "Fuck you."

"I am fucking you. Tell me you're a sex maniac."

His big hands clenched her ass. He rolled his hips again, rubbed her clit again, and she gave up. "I'm a sex maniac," she said, and he withdrew, pushed in, fucked her hard.

"Louder!"

"I'm a sex maniac," she said against his mouth, trying to kiss him to shut him up so he would just keep fucking her.

"Louder!"

"I'm a sex maniac!"

At that he fucked her furiously. With the sound of flesh slapping against flesh drumming in her ears, she arched against him, tensed, shouted, splintered, and he rode

her through it mercilessly until she was hoarse from screaming, limp from pleasure. He threw his head back, roared and emptied himself into her.

She wasn't sure how she ended up on the floor. Well, more on top of Brenner, who was on the floor.

"See. You admitted it. You're a sex maniac." His eyes were closed, a smug smile playing on his lips.

Dinah snorted. "And you?"

He stroked a warm palm over her bare ass. "I am a sex machine."

She snorted again. "Keep dreaming."

"I'll have to prove it to you."

GrimJustin 2: DisArmed

Kara Dillon is a weapon.

Captured by ransom seekers during a routine transport job, she is infected with the chemicals she was to deliver. The result is an explosive -- in her blood.

Halloway Duke is contracted to bring back a rogue pilot. Finding her isn't a problem. Finding her to be Kara Dillon -- his lover who had betrayed him into enemy hands -- is unpleasant. Finding that he still wants her was not in his plans.

Except their blood mixed. And now Kara needs a steady influx of his body fluids. Whether she likes it or not.

Fiona Jayde

Fiona Jayde is an author, a pilot, a ninth degree black belt in three styles of martial arts, a computer hacker, a mountain climber, a jazz singer, a weight lifter, a superspy with a talent for languages, and an evil genius. All in her own head, of course.

In real life, she really is an author, insists she is a good driver even though various loved ones refuse to let her drive, possesses a brown belt in Tae Kwon Do and blue belt in Aikido, a web developer, scared to death of heights, loves jazz piano, can bench-press about twenty pounds -- with effort, speaks English and Russian fluently, and when not plotting murder and mayhem enjoys steamy romance novels, sexy spy thrillers, murky mysteries and violent movies where things frequently blow up.

Contact Fiona Jayde through her website at www.fionajayde.com