

Loose Id *Fling*



TIME
TRACKER

SAMANTHA
WINSTON

Praise for the writing of Samantha Winston

Ice Man

Author Samantha Winston never ceases to amaze me with her ability to create believable, loveable characters, intense situations and blend them together with profound emotion and searing sensuality... I wholeheartedly enjoyed every moment of *Ice Man* and can only hope Ms. Winston is planning a sequel, especially with the surprise ending. Don't miss this spectacular novel.

-- Sharyn McGinty, *In the Library Reviews*

The genre of this book is paranormal/science fiction, but *Ice Man* also accommodates adventure, suspense, humor, and sensual passion. With the myriad elements contained within the pages, this book is an absolute winner.

-- Ashley, *Romance Reviews Today*

Ice Man is an intriguing and sizzling book. Throw in a hint of adventure, some suspense and loads of hot romance and you have a marvelous story. *Ice Man* has a very stylish, twist-in-the-tale ending that will simply have you applauding this author's ingenuity. I highly recommend this story.

-- Aggie Tsirikas, *Just Erotic Romance Reviews*

Filled with passion, suspense and humor, *Ice Man* was a great read. For me, these were characters that I cared about. I was anxious and pulling for them until the end. I could not put this story down and I'm sure most readers will feel the same. I will be looking for more of Ms. Winston's work in the future.

-- Tanya, reviewer for *Fallen Angel Reviews*

Ice Man is now available from Loose Id.

TIME TRACKER

Samantha Winston

Loose Id

Warning

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This book is rated:



Contains explicit sexual content and graphic language.

Time Tracker

Samantha Winston

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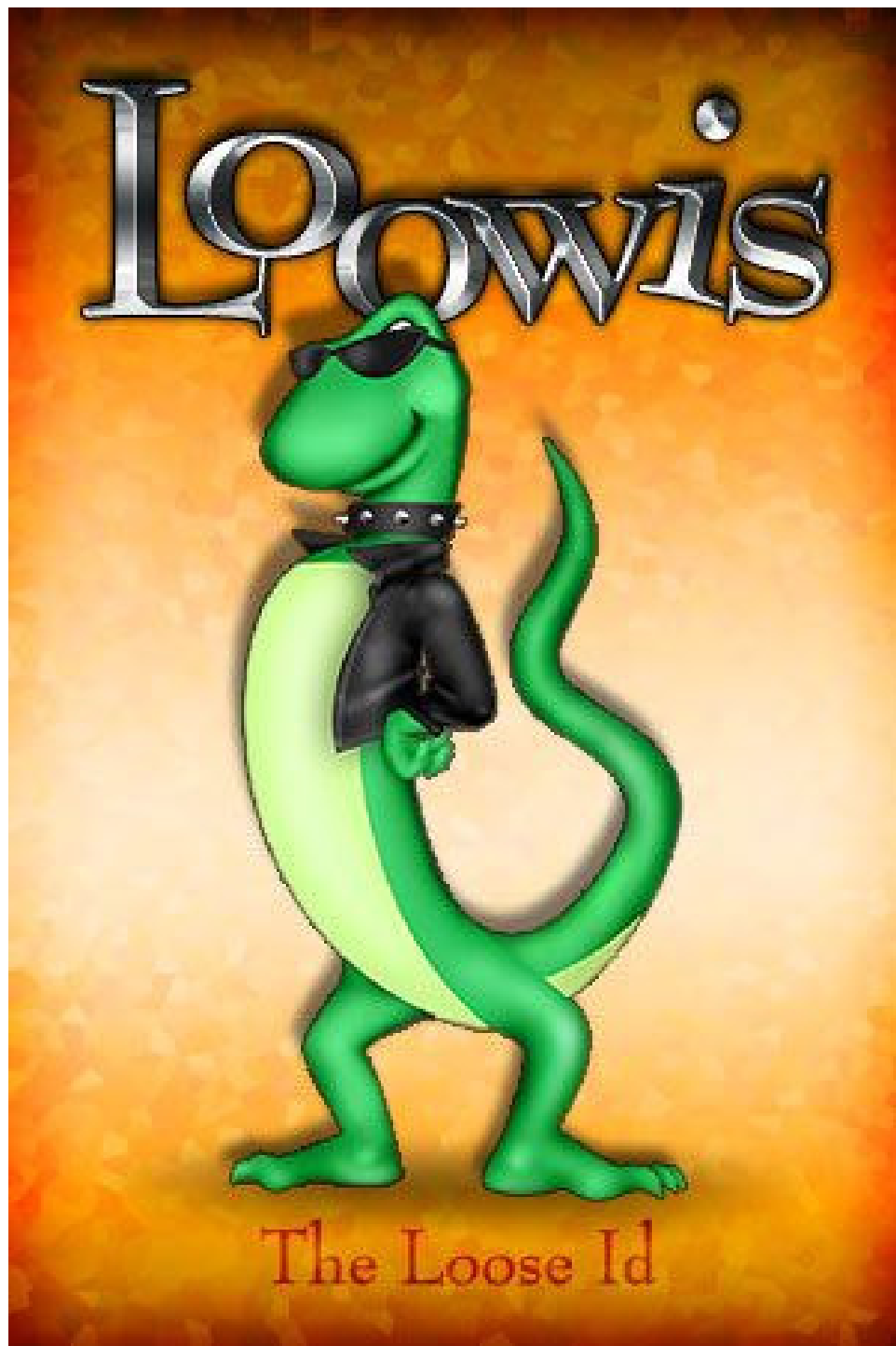
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Chapter One

Steele heard a steady thumping first. Softly, then louder, until he suddenly realized that the sound was his own heartbeat and his eyes flew open. His whole body twitched and he had the sudden sensation of falling. Too much light hurt his eyes, his chest hurt, and when he gasped and dragged a gulp of air into his lungs, he had the impression he breathed fire. The pain wrenched a cry from his throat, and each movement sent stabbing knives of agony through his body.

Voices sounded above and all around him. He tried to fix his attention upon them to hear what they said. Before he could make sense out of the noises, at first far too loud for his ears, they quieted. Silence. The voices had vanished. Or more likely, he became accustomed to the noise the same way his eyes slowly became accustomed to the light. What at first dazzled him revealed itself to be soft, halogen lights above his head. What he had taken for a buzz of voices turned into the steady hum of what looked like an air conditioner affixed to the wall.

He looked around. White walls, large windows, floods of light and chrome machines he'd never seen glittering beneath the lamps. A hospital? He tried to think. He'd never been

sick a day in his life. But what life? Who was he? He closed his eyes and tried to gather his thoughts.

Nothing. Everything was blank. Or wait...a campfire. A cheerful fire, steaks grilling on the coals, and taking a drink of something cold and delicious...beer. A beer! He knew those words. Beer, steaks, campfire... Okay, he had made some progress.

He opened his eyes again. He lay in a bed, and for some reason, his arms and legs had been fastened to the bed so that he couldn't move. He pulled gently, then harder, trying to tug himself free. The effort caused him pain and sweat broke out on his brow.

"Is anyone here?" he called out. His voice sounded rusty and cracked. He cleared his throat and tried again. "Hello? Is anyone here?"

Footsteps sounded in the hallway and the door slid upwards. He blinked. Then someone stepped in the doorway and his breath caught in his throat. A woman with long, flame-red hair and delicate sea-shell coloring walked up to him. She looked down at him, and her dark blue eyes filled with gentle compassion.

"You are awake. That's good. Don't panic, please, nothing will hurt you here." She spoke in a soft murmur.

"Where am I?" He wanted to get up and move around. His body felt as stiff as a wooden board.

"You are on Tazi Prime. We brought you here when your heart started to beat again on its own. The doctors were quite thrilled." She cocked her head. "Shall I take your restraints off?"

"Please." Relief flooded through him, although he hadn't understood half of what she'd said. Had he had a heart attack? Was that why his heart stopped beating? Why couldn't he remember that? What hospital was Tazi Prime? He'd never heard of it. She touched his

fetters and they disappeared. Neat trick that. He swallowed hard. The thought he might be dreaming occurred to him.

“You are free to walk around this room. Please do not leave, as you will need a great deal of education before you can integrate our society.”

He rubbed his head. “Look, uh...I’m sorry, what is your name?”

She smiled gravely. “My name is F-69. I am your companion and teacher.”

“Eff-sixty nine?” he faltered. “That’s not a name, it’s a number. Is this the army? Is that your...” The word escaped him.

“Serial number. That is correct. My organic parts are the same as yours but my brain is a Deca-myria III, the best you can buy at this time. Of course, in another Rev. I will probably be obsolete.” She tossed her long hair back and smiled ruefully, her blue eyes twinkling.

Deca-myria? Organic parts? Nothing she said made sense, and his memories seemed locked in a small room with a can of beer. Something had to give him the key to his memories. His name! Maybe that would help. “Do you know my name?”

“Your name is Bruce Steele. You are thirty-two years old and you are in peak physical condition, thanks to the amazing properties of cryogenics and our technology.” Her smile widened. “Does that help you?”

Bruce Steele. Steele. He nodded. Steele, he went by that name. The door to his recollections cracked open, letting a thin slice of bright light through.

Without warning the door was flung wide as a flood of memories assailed him, knocking him back on the bed. His head slammed into the pillow as visions flashed in his mind. Visions and sounds battered him. Bruce Steele. Born in 1972 to Ed and Janet Steele. Growing. Playing. A shy boy who loved camping. Fishing with his father. School. Graduation and getting his car. The army. War in a faraway land. Coming home. Tracking. Working as a game warden and then as a detective. His parents’ death in a car crash. Tracking. Working

for the army and tracking people lost in the mountains. Getting married. Getting divorced. Tracking. The last image took place in a helicopter. The snow, the landing, the jolt and sudden fear...the deep darkness and then nothing.

Steele lay on his bed, his heart pounding as if he'd just run the mile. He'd been a professional tracker. He'd died. No, he'd been frozen in that deep lake. He knew what the word cryogenics meant. Deep, ice-induced sleep. How long had he slept? He searched his brain for something to give him a clue. Nothing. He squeezed his eyes shut, then opened them.

"How long have I been asleep?"

She smiled broadly. "Excellent question! Your first test has been passed with flying colors. You didn't fall apart and turn into a blithering..."

Steele caught her wrist in his hand. "Just answer the question."

A flash of hurt surprise crossed her face, then she sighed and said, "You have been 'asleep' as you call it, for six thousand and thirteen years, five months, six days and..." she glanced at her watch, "twelve hours and fifteen seconds."

Steele let go of her and slumped back in his bed. "Such a long time," he whispered. He chewed that over for a few minutes, then looked at the beautiful android. "Are you always so precise?"

Her expression cleared and she beamed. "Yes. Second test passed with flying colors. You didn't fall to pieces and run screaming around the room when you heard how much time had passed. You are by far our most accommodating patient..."

"Excuse me." Steele held his hand up. "There are others like myself?"

"Of course. We get some from all over the galaxy. Tazi Prime is a space station specializing in the art of cryogenics. It was specifically built for long-distance space travel. We send bodies to sleep for centuries while they are sent to another destination. Cryogenics

is a very important business and area of study. You have been asleep for six thousand years, long enough to travel the whole length of the known galaxy. You arrived here a few days ago, and I have been monitoring you closely ever since.” She beamed. “You are our star patient.”

Steele tried not to panic. He’d never panicked before in his life, but right now, he thought that a good scream and a run around the room would do him good. Instead, he ran his hand through his hair while his thoughts whirled.

Six thousand years. Six thousand... He grabbed a handful of hair and yanked. “Ouch!” That hurt. This was not a dream.

“Are you all right?” The woman peered at him, her expression worried.

He needed a stiff drink. No, that would be a mistake. He’d used alcohol once before as a crutch and he would never start that again. But he needed something. His throat felt dry and scratchy, and his head hurt. “I don’t suppose you have anything to drink? Something non-alcoholic.”

F-69 nodded happily. “You are amazing, Mr. Steele. No hysterics at all. I didn’t have to use my tranquilizer dart once.” She beamed and held up a gadget that looked like a tiny, plastic water pistol.

Tranquilizer dart? Well, he supposed some people might get upset after waking up sixty centuries after they fell asleep. Right now he just felt dazed, and only half believed this wasn’t some sort of a dream. Upset would come later. When he had the energy to scream. Or when he could stop shaking.

“Mr. Steele, here, let me rub your head a little. I find it relaxes people.” Her fingers were soothing as she gently rubbed his temples. She massaged his head and neck until he felt peaceful. When he stopped trembling, he felt immediately better.

“Thank you.”

She beamed at him. "If you'd like, I have some iced frinton tea. How does that sound?"

"Er, frinton?"

"It's a bit like mint. You'll love it."

"Fine." Anything would help straighten out his thoughts. He hoped. He looked at the tranquilizer gun again and winced. "Can I have some now, please?"

"Yes, of course. I will get you a glass of frinton tea right now. Why don't you watch some holo-vision and get acquainted with this era. We have tapes made to show our patients when they wake up that explain how their world differs from ours, to get you used to society."

F-69 was starting to get on his nerves; she was like a perky Barbie doll come to life. "Sure, good idea."

He looked around for the television or the remote control. But F-69 simply said, "Holo-vision tape one for Mr. Steele, please." And instantly a cloud materialized at the foot of his bed and took the form of a large, transparent cube. Inside, a man's head appeared and he started to talk.

Steele jumped about a foot off the bed. He'd heard of holograms, but this one had them all beat.

"Normally they are as big as the wall, but we made this one smaller so that you wouldn't be afraid." F-69 then went to the wall and pushed a small button. "One frinton tea," she said.

"Er, won't you join me?" Steele glanced at the hologram, where a man pointed at what looked like a 1960's room in a house, and then showed how all the furniture had changed throughout the centuries. As he watched, a refrigerator morphed into a tiny button on the wall that connected to the kitchen. Anywhere in the house, one could push the button, order a cold drink, and be served.

He watched as a small opening appeared in the wall in front of F-69, and she reached in and took out a glass of pale blue liquid. Cool. He could get used to that. She handed it to him and he took a sip. Refreshing. Light. Strange. A mix between mint tea and something that smelled like roses. Steele sniffed at the drink and shrugged. It was quite nice, actually.

On the holo-vision the man had just finished talking about the vacuum cleaner. He walked out of the house and pointed.

Next, the car...

Whoa! It flew! He wanted one of those babies.

Chapter Two

After three days Steele started to get cabin fever. He was used to being outdoors most of the time, and this enforced confinement annoyed him. Plus, he was horny. One side effect of being thawed out was an enhanced sensory perception in the extremities. His hands and feet tingled constantly and his body felt as if a low electrical charge ran through it.

F-69 explained it was simply the body's way of readapting to his circulation, and he didn't mind, except that his cock tingled all day long and it got hard at the slightest touch.

He felt like a school kid with a hormone problem. To make things worse, F-69 trotted around in a skimpy suit that showed her curves to perfection. Not only did she have a cleavage that seemed to beg him to dip his tongue or finger into its creamy cleft, but her skirt sometimes rode high enough on her thighs so that he caught glimpses of her rounded buttocks.

For the third time that day he had to excuse himself from his 'future' lessons and go into the bathroom to jerk off.

She knocked on the door. "Are you all right? Did something disagree with you?"

Steele gritted his teeth. "No. I'm fine."

“Well, I have to go out for a while. I’ll try to be back in time for lesson number thirty-six C. You’ll enjoy it. It’s all about our electoral system and how we choose our delegates to the Federation.”

How thrilling. “Take your time.” He waited until he heard the door shut, and he peered out. No one. Alone at last. With his hard-on. His cock felt like a marble rod. His balls contracted, and he closed his eyes and leaned against the refrigerator. Or at least, he leaned against the small button.

A voice sounded from the wall. “HEL-LO. I am the REFRIGOR-ATOR.”

“I know that.” Steele had no idea why he always started talking to the machine. He sighed.

“Would you LIKE A BEER?”

“Actually.” Steele cleared his throat. “I’d like a melon.”

“Water? Musk? CANT-ALOUPE...”

“Um, anything would be fine.”

“DO YOU want it SLICED or...”

“No! No thank you. Um, whole, please. Just leave it whole. Um, could you drill a hole in it, about so big?”

“I cannot SEE. I am A REFRIGOR-ATOR. What are you going to DO with the melon?”

“You don’t want to know.” Steele leaned his forehead against the wall and groaned.

“Do you want ANY-THING ELSE with that?”

“No. Thank you.”

The wall hummed and a little door slid open, revealing a plate with a small watermelon on it. Steele took the plate and looked around. Dinner usually came when F-69 ordered it,

and he had no idea where the knives and forks were kept. No matter. He hurried into the bathroom and, using his toothbrush, dug a hole in the melon.

Not exactly a pussy sleeve, but close enough. He took his cock out of his pants and, holding the melon, slid his cock into it. Seedless, thank God. He'd forgotten to check, he'd been in such a hurry. The melon made a sucking sound as he thrust in and out. It tugged at his cock, and he pushed the melon harder. Then he pulled out. To his consternation, the melon had made a sort of vacuum around his cock and it stuck.

Nervously, he twisted it. Ouch. His cock stayed hard though. He was so horny he thought he'd go cross-eyed, but what would happen if he came? Would the melon blow up? Would the vacuum get so strong it gave his cock a huge hickey? Holding the melon on his cock, he went into the living room to look for something to pry it off or cut it with. Or he'd break it open by banging it on something hard. Well, if that worked his cock should have split it asunder by now.

He hesitated, his cock throbbing, and then the door opened and F-69 walked in. She stopped, and her beautiful blue eyes widened. A flush spread over her cheeks, and to his consternation, she burst into tears and fled into his bathroom, slamming the door behind her.

He ran after her, awkwardly holding the melon, and pounded on the door. "Hey, I'm sorry. I was just...Hell. I just...I know it looks like I'm...but I'm not." He leaned his forehead on the door. "Okay. I am. But I got stuck, and now I can't get it off. Can you tell me where the knives are kept?"

The door swung inwards and he pitched forward. F-69 caught him. His face pressed right into her cleavage and he felt a surge of desire shoot through his body. His cock throbbed in time to his heartbeat.

"It's not worth killing yourself about!" she cried.

"What are you talking about?" He spoke with his mouth on her soft skin.

“You said something about knives.” Her voice took on a strange tone and she cleared her throat. “You’re tickling me.”

He blinked. His hand had slipped up her skirt and cupped her buttocks. And his mouth had nudged her blouse down and had somehow found her nipple. It hardened as he sucked on it. His other hand still held the melon.

“Sorry.” Steele managed to unglue his mouth from her nipple and stepped backwards. He cleared his throat. “I just wanted the knife to get my melon off.”

F-69 stood with her back propped against the wall, her eyes opened wide. “Is that what you did with melons in your time?”

“Only when you were so horny you couldn’t think straight,” admitted Steele.

“Your face is all red. Are you embarrassed?”

“Yes, and I’m so horny I can’t think straight. Help me get this off my cock.”

“Help you what?”

Steele wondered if this was a new record for levels of embarrassment. “It’s stuck.”

“Oh, a vacuum created by...”

“I know that.” Steele tried to keep the edge of hysteria out of his voice. In a minute he would explode and he wasn’t sure what that would do to his hard-on stuck inside the melon. F-69 still hadn’t tucked her breast back in her blouse, giving him high blood pressure. His cock gave another massive twinge.

“You poor thing.” Her voice dropped to a purr and before he could react, she took the melon in her hands and pulled it apart with a loud cracking sound.

He took a step backwards but she caught his belt buckle. “Not so fast, Steele.” The tip of her tongue touched her upper lip and she sighed. “I love melons.”

Before he could formulate a reply, she'd gotten to her knees and pulled his pants down to his ankles. Melon juice covered his cock and balls, and she licked it off, running her hot, velvety tongue over his skin. Sliding her mouth slowly and tightly over his cock, she gave a low, contented hum that vibrated from the tip of his penis to the top of his skull.

Steele closed his eyes and grabbed the door. Her mouth sucked him from the root to the top and back down again. Her lips held him firmly and her fingers tickled his balls and the insides of his thighs, and he knew that in precisely two point...argh, not even! His balls contracted and a huge jet of come shot out of his cock. He groaned and held tightly to the door, incapable of holding off a second longer.

When he finished, he slumped in the doorway, wondering what F-69 would think of him now.

"Your turn to make me feel happy," she said, getting off her knees and tugging his arm.

He stared at her, comprehension dawning in his fogged brain. "My turn?" His cock stirred as tingles ran through his body.

F-69's sultry gaze didn't leave his as she slowly unbuttoned her blouse and took it off, then slid out of her skirt. Her underwear and bra seemed to be made of some sort of lacy, silken, second skin, and he could see no straps, hooks or elastic bands. Her bra hugged her breasts like his hands longed to.

"Take it off," he said hoarsely.

She snapped her fingers, and the bra and panties slid to the floor. "Better?"

"Much." He could hardly breathe. He pointed to the bed. "Lie down."

"As you wish." Her mouth curved in a grin and she licked her lips.

Steele waited until she'd settled on the bed, then he pointed to her legs. "Wide open, please."

Her eyebrow lifted. "As my master commands. What else should I do?"

"Your master would like you to touch yourself." He watched as she slid her hand between her legs and parted her silky, tight curls, baring her sex. The tip of her finger found her clit and stroked it, and she tilted her head back, baring her long, pale throat. Slick and pink, her labia seemed to beg him to kiss them and he didn't resist.

Climbing on the bed with her, he dipped his head between her legs and lapped at her pussy. Her sweet flesh swelled gently beneath his touch, and he found her clit and nibbled it with his lips. She uttered a little cry and raised her hips, pressing his mouth harder to her slippery cunt. Little tremors swept over her, and wetness flooded her passage, exciting him with its heady taste. His cock stiffened even more.

"That feels so good," she gasped.

"You taste so good," Steele moaned, diving his tongue into her flesh and swirling it in circles around her hard little clit. He slid one, then two fingers into her tight passage and gently fluttered them, eliciting a loud gasp and another hot flood of liquid from F-69.

Steele drew back a bit to get a glimpse of his fingers working into her cunt. He loved the way her flesh hugged him. Her short curls tickled his fingers and chin, and he lowered his head once more to nudge her clit with his tongue.

"Oh yes, oh yes," she sang.

"Tell me what you like," Steele ordered.

She stopped moving her hips and thought for a minute. "I like when you lick my clit, and your fingers moving inside me felt good." A little tremor ran through her and she said, "Don't stop now, please."

"Are you on birth control?" Steele raised himself on his forearms and looked down at her. "I don't want you to worry, so I have to tell you that..."

"I'm an android," she blurted, suddenly looking embarrassed. Then he saw a tear in the corner of her eye.

Realization struck him. Androids were half machine. Of course she couldn't get pregnant -- they were made, not born. "I'm sorry. Hey, why are you crying?"

"Just shut up and make love to me," she said in an uncharacteristic outburst of emotion.

She trembled in his arms, her body as tense as a violin string. He felt as if he held a half-wild creature, and instinctively he pressed his lips to hers, soothing her with a kiss.

Her mouth opened to his, deepening the kiss, her tongue doing things to his that sent sparks shooting from his head to the tip of his cock. He reached down and guided his stiff cock into her passage.

As soon as her tight cunt clamped over his cock, she wrapped her long legs around his waist and drummed his buttocks with her heels. He thrust, letting the full length of his cock slide into her.

"Harder!" she begged.

"I don't know if I can hold off much longer." Damn the thawing out -- he was so highly sensitized he couldn't control his cock one bit. It was about to blow its top off; his balls had contracted to two hard, quivering nuts. His cockhead pounded against her womb, and he felt a sudden hard pulsing rush through her cunt, sucking at him like her mouth.

"I can't stop it," he cried harshly.

"Don't stop! I'm coming," she screamed, grabbing him with her legs and arms and bucking beneath him.

He hung on, jets of seed shooting from his cock until he thought he'd pass out. Rolling off her, he rested his head on her shoulder and closed his eyes.

"How do you feel?" she asked, stroking his cheek.

“Like a deflated balloon,” he admitted. He cleared his throat. “Don’t you have another name than F-69? I feel funny calling you a serial number all the time.”

“I’m just an android,” she said. Her voice sounded funny so he opened his eyes and propped himself on his elbow.

She smiled at him, but he saw the sadness in her eyes. “What’s so bad about being an android? I think you’re terrific,” he added.

“It’s not bad, but you see, in a few months, or weeks, or even days I can be obsolete. When that happens, all the androids who don’t have a permanent job and home are taken back and refurbished.” She tried to keep her smile in place but it wobbled.

“What does refurbished mean?”

“It means they...scrap me and make a new and better model.” Bravely she hung on to the remains of her cheerful grin.

A splinter of ice lodged in Steele’s heart. “Take you away? They can’t do that. I...I need you.” He swallowed. He’d never, ever said that to anyone and he’d always sworn never to get tied down. But this was different...F-69 was different, and he realized with a start that he truly did need her, perky voice, bright smile and all.

She leaned over and kissed him on the lips, her mouth brushing against his as lightly as a butterfly’s wings. “We learn to live day by day, and not think too far into the future.”

“I can’t accept that. Besides, I’ve been propelled into the future whether I liked it or not.” Steele sat up and looked down at her. Her hair spread out on the pillow in a bright, fiery cloud and her eyes stared up at him, twin sapphires that sparkled with myriad of emotions. How could they think of scrapping such a treasure? “I think it’s time I talked to someone.”

He got out of the bed and pulled on his clothes.

“What are you doing?” F-69 asked.

Steeled grinned. “Take me to your leader.”

Her eyebrows rose. “Are you sure?”

“It’s time I took control of my life again. I wasn’t made to lie in bed all day, no matter how agreeable,” he added.

“All right.” F-69 looked dubious, but dressed and led him to the doorway. “Put your hand on this pad,” she instructed, “and say your name aloud so that your identity will be carried throughout the station and you will be able to enter any doors.”

He did, and felt a faint tingle as a light played up and down his arm. Then the door in front of him slid up with a whisper. He found himself staring at a long corridor. On one side were doors, and the other side was made up of windows, overlooking the vastness of outer space. For a minute he stood still, getting used to the feeling of standing in the middle of a gigantic spaceship. It was one thing to know something, and another to actually see it.

“Are you all right? I can make the windows opaque if you like.”

“No, I’m fine. It’s...beautiful,” he managed. The hall curved gently around to the left, beige walls, white tiled floor, white doors...the color scheme was designed to soothe and yet interest the mind -- huge windows gave breathtaking views. There were even planters embedded in the walls. Ferns and ivy and plants he could not identify trailed to the floor, adding dashes of color.

“This is the living wing, where all the non-crew members of the spaceship have their quarters. The crew is on the other side of the ship. If we go to the right, we will arrive at the gym, and past that is the laboratory. Here is a map; there are maps on every floor and in the hallways. Look for this icon and you will...”

“Just take me to the person in charge of me,” Steele said. “We can learn about maps and icons and the ships layout another time. All right?”

“Sorry, I’m just a little...despondent,” she said.

“Why?”

She stared at him, her expression resolutely cheerful despite her unhappy eyes. “Because you are going to ask for your independence and you will no longer need a nanny-teacher android.”

“Is that what you are?” He felt a smile quirk at the corner of his mouth.

“Yes.” She turned suddenly and walked off to the left. “Follow me.”

At the end of the hallway was an elevator. Its door slid up as they approached, and as Steele entered he remarked on several sets of commands. “They still use letters and numbers I recognize.”

F-69 pushed the number 8 and said, “Yes, the Federation uses five official alphabets and numerical systems. And...”

“Tell me about the person we’re going to see.” He wanted to head off her lecture about the Federation. His brain would explode if he learned one thing more.

She pouted, obviously disappointed not to be giving a lecture. “You’ll be seeing Executive Marchon. She is the liaison in charge of your dossier. Any decisions about you will go through her. The real decisions are taken far from here on Main Planet. Main Planet is the center for the Federation where --”

“And decisions are made quickly?” Steele interjected, not wanting to hear about the principal exports, demography, and climate of Main Planet.

She sighed. “They are made instantly.”

The elevator stopped and let them out at a new hallway, where the walls were dark blue and the floor had been done in beautiful dark, polished wood set in a chevron pattern. This

hallway had the same huge windows and followed the same curve, so Steele supposed the station must be built along the lines of a cruise liner.

Curious, he went to the window and looked out. Dizziness swept over him as he stared into emptiness. Below, the space station dropped out of sight, like a huge city floating upside-down. It gave him vertigo. He glanced upwards, and saw the same thing in the other direction. Like a hundred skyscrapers melded together and floating in outer space. Nothing he'd ever seen compared to this, and as he watched, a small spaceship appeared and then swung around to dock at a special area on the space station near the tip.

He pointed. "Is that a little space scooter?"

F-69 glanced up and shook her head. "No, that's a transport vessel. It looks small from here, but it's three hundred feet long."

Steele gulped. The station was huge!

"Come on, Executive Marchon is waiting for you." F-69 opened a door and stepped back, motioning him inside. "I will wait for you here." The door whispered shut behind him.

Chapter Three

A stout, middle-aged woman sat at a huge desk, a stack of black disks in front of her. The computer terminal had been reduced to voice commands, a folding keyboard, a floating screen and tiny disks that held as much information as a super-terminal had in his time. He'd learned all that from his holo. Technology had become practically invisible, so Executive Marchon's desk looked bare.

She motioned him to the chair in front of her desk and said, "How are you, Mr. Steele?"

"Fine, thank you."

"I hear from F-69 that you have acclimated and are ready to take your place in our society."

Steele nodded. "If there is such a place, yes."

She cocked an eyebrow. "Do you have any doubts?"

"I'd be a fool not to doubt."

"Tell me, Mr. Steele --" She called up a floating screen and consulted it. "What were you doing when you landed in that frozen lake?"

The question came out of left field and startled him. "I...I was searching for two people. That was my job. I was a tracker."

"And did you find them?" She propped her chin on her hands and studied him intently.

Steele had to think for a minute. "I think so. I remember seeing the woman, she waved, and we set the helicopter down. After that, nothing." He frowned, then shook his head.

"What is it?"

"You're not going to believe me."

"Try me." The eyebrow shot upwards again.

"One of the people I was tracking supposedly came from another time. He'd been trapped in the ice and had woken up after, hell, I don't know, a thousand years. The government hired me to find him for them. The man had gone missing along with a woman, and they needed him for some experiments. You wouldn't have anything in your files about him, would you?"

Executive Marchon smiled. "You're not going to believe me."

"Try me." He grinned.

"Here is an old holo, it's a copy of a copy of a copy of a...copy." She waved her hand. "Six thousand years is a long time."

The floating screen appeared and Steele's eyes widened. The picture was faint and trembled a bit, but there on the screen was the man he'd been seeking. He sat on a snowmobile. Standing next to him was a short, stocky woman with a round face, a mass of coppery curls and bright, intelligent eyes. She held a small child in her arms, and all three wore Eskimo garb.

The man looked out of the screen and said something. The red-haired woman translated. She said, "There are many people interested in how our ancestors lived. My husband,

Kellorin, is busy most all the year organizing special camping trips and giving talks, but he always take time off to spend time with his family.”

Steele watched, fascinated, as the man from the past spoke of his life in the past, and then the interview ended and a commercial came on telling about a camping trip to the great north with the man from the past as a guide.

“What do you think?” Executive Marchon leaned forward over her desk.

“Incredible. A man from the past...” Steele winced. That described him.

“I showed that to you for several reasons. One reason is to show you that there is a place for you in this time, just as Kellorin found a place in your time. But the most important is this: thanks to that man, cryogenics was perfected and space travel became possible. Many things became possible, actually. It was a huge step forward for science. You found him, or rather, because of you Kellorin was found. He agreed to take part in several important experiments, and cryogenics was perfected.”

Steele nodded, bemused. “So is there a camp ground reserved for me too?”

“What do you think?”

“It’s what I do best. Tracking lost tourists in the wilderness.” He scratched his head. “Is there still wilderness on planet Earth?”

“Earth? That would be a waste of your talent. The only wilderness left there are tiny parks. No, I was thinking more along the lines of a forest planet -- Amazonia. It’s in a protected zone, and has been declared a galactic park and treasure. There are a lot of hotels and camping grounds there, all carefully ecologically controlled. But people will wander off the trails and get lost. If you agree, you’ll be put in charge there. You’ll be head ranger and have a couple thousand people working for you. It’s not a park, it’s a planet. You’ll be in charge of it as the warden.”

Steele shook his head, struck speechless. Finally he managed to say, "It sounds perfect, thank you. But..."

"But?"

He hesitated then blurted, "I'm not sure how your protocol works for this, but I want to keep F-69 with me."

"Really? She's almost obsolete. We can get you a newer, more efficient model, and besides, you won't be needing her pedantic lecturing all the time."

Steele grimaced. "I've grown accustomed to her lectures. Actually, I've gotten quite fond of her."

"Are you sure? Once you give her a permanent home, she will be bound to you. It's like marriage."

The thought had occurred to him. The word marriage though...he hated that word. "But it's not exactly like marriage."

Executive Marchon shook her head. "No. Androids are forbidden to marry. They cannot have children and they cannot vote or hold positions in the government."

Shocked, Steele said, "You treat them like slaves."

"In a way they are. They are built, not born, and they cannot reproduce. They are made for certain functions."

Steele looked at Executive Marchon. In a low voice he said, "My first wife left me after we tried to have kids and the fault turned out to be mine. I never wanted to marry again. I made that mistake once. I'm sterile. I can't have children, and neither can F-69, so in a way we're perfect for each other." He held her gaze. "So if you send me away to this planet, send F-69 with me. Please."

She sighed. "I'll put in the request, but I can't guarantee anything. The decision is not mine to make. Besides, you might want to think of F-69's preferences. She is a city-bot, and has never to my knowledge been off this space station to go anywhere. At any rate, I'd ask her if I were you." Executive Marchon stood and shook his hand. "You may leave now. I'll get in touch with you as soon as everything is ready."

Steele left the office, and F-69 took him on a guided tour of the space station. Except for the mind-boggling views of outer space, the station looked just like a combination high-class hotel and university. Instead of classrooms, there were stations where beings in various stages of cryonic sleep were tended to by groups of scientists.

After seeing twenty or more such stations, Steele turned to F-69. "This is very interesting." She beamed. "But is there a place we can go to..." He struggled to put words to his thoughts. "A park or something?"

"A park?" She nibbled her lower lip. "I noticed how you paused almost every time we passed a window or a potted plant," she said. "Our records show you were used to living outdoors, so this must be hard for you."

"I don't like being closed in," he admitted. "What about you, F-69? What do you think of the wilderness?"

"I grew up in a space station and the city. I don't know anything about the wilderness."

Foreboding troubled Steele. "Would you like to learn more?"

She didn't answer at first, further worrying him, then she said, "I know a place we can go that you might like. Follow me." She led to another elevator and pressed her hand on the palm lock. Then she pushed the bottom button.

"The basement? Is that where your greenhouse is?"

Her eyes twinkled. "Exactly."

They stepped out into an all black hallway. It had no windows and led for what seemed a long time in a straight line. Then Steele noticed something.

“We’re going downhill.”

“It’s very subtle. I’m surprised you noticed.” She motioned to a black steel door set in the black wall. “After you.”

He opened the door, and stepped into space.

For a moment his body tensed and he grabbed instinctively at the doorway, but he wasn’t falling. He stood on a platform, and all around him was glass, and all around them space stretched to infinity.

“The space station is above us now,” said F-69. “But don’t look up. It will ruin the effect. This is an observation deck, a view port, and a meditation center. Come. Let me show you.” She walked out, and since the platform had been made of glass, it looked like she floated in space.

Steele let his breath out. He’d never been stunned by beauty before, but this amazed him. Space was not empty, it glittered with diamond frostings of stars. Green, red and blue nebulae hung like fireworks frozen in time, along with swaths of softly scintillating clouds.

Planets orbited nearby. One had five moons, and one was so close it took up nearly a fifth of the view.

“We are in orbit around that planet,” said F-69, pointing at the reddish giant. “The darker marks you see on the surface are cities. On the other side of the planet there is an ocean. As it revolves we will see it. Come, lie down here. This is called a Zen-couch.”

Steele, still dumbfounded by the view, lay on a reclining couch made of soft, warm, transparent material. As he lay down, the couch seemed to adjust to his body, cuddling him in a relaxing embrace. He patted the couch. “Come next to me,” he said.

She lay next to him, her head on his shoulder. “Did Executive Marchon say anything about when you would be leaving?”

He couldn’t tell what she was thinking from her voice. She was back in her ‘nanny-teacher’ mode.

“She said she’d contact me.”

“Oh.”

“F-69, can I...do you have, I mean, it’s your name. Isn’t there anything else I can call you?”

Instead she pointed to a faint white smudge in the distance. In the vastness of space it was hard to tell how far it was but it looked very far away. “There is the Milky Way Galaxy. Where you’re from.”

He caught her slender wrist in his hand. “Fiona.”

“What is that?”

“A name. Your name is Fiona.”

In the soft light cast from the stars he saw shock on her face. “You can’t give me a name. It’s not right.”

“I can give you my name. Steele. Your name will be Fiona Steele when we’re married.”

To his consternation her face twisted and tears spilled from her eyes. “Stop it,” she whispered. “You can’t. It’s not allowed.”

“I don’t know if it’s the view, or if it’s the couch, but I feel as if I can do anything, even fly from here to the Milky Way Galaxy in a heartbeat. This place is magic.” He pulled her to him and kissed her full lips. “It’s magic, and I love you.”

“I love you too,” she sobbed even louder. “But I can’t marry you”

“Is it me? Knowing that I can’t live in a city or place like this?” Steele asked. He feared her answer. Maybe she hated the idea of living in the wilderness.

But her answer was even worse than he imagined. “I’m obsolete. In two days I’m going to be refurbished and given a new memory.”

“What?” Steele cradled her in his arms and swore. “No, I won’t let that happen.”

“You can’t do much about it, I’m afraid.” She grew still and took a deep breath. “We just have to enjoy the time we have left.”

“Stop it. I told you I won’t let that happen.”

“Besides, I can never have children. It’s not fair for a human to marry an android.” Her eyes were still filled with tears.

“I can’t have children either. See? We’re more alike than you think.” Steele kissed her softly on the lips, his tongue tracing their contours before dipping between them and touching the tip of her sweet tongue. “Can we go back to the room?”

Slipping her hand into his pants, she fondled his cock. “Making love on a Zen-couch is something everyone has to try.”

Here? “But anyone can come in and find us.” He thought his blood had suddenly caught on fire. The couch vibrated subtly.

“It matters not. Take off your clothes,” said Fiona, unbuttoning his shirt.

He did, and lay on the couch. What material made up the Zen-couch? As soft as satin, elastic yet firm. It seemed almost alive. And when his naked skin touched it, a thrill ran through his body. A small part of his brain wondered if anyone would open the door and come in. What if they were seen? Incredibly, the thought made his cock stiffen even more.

Fiona stripped off her dress and slid onto the couch next to him. The stars, the planets, the impression of being nude in the infinity of space, made his head spin. His cock hardened as Fiona stroked it, her hand moving slowly.

“Don’t move,” she said. “Lie here and let me give you pleasure. Watch the dance of the stars and the planets. Feel the song of space in your bones.” Her mouth bruised his in a hard kiss, then she pulled back and raked her fingernails lightly over his chest, down to the wiry hair on his groin.

Her mouth found his cock and a tight heat surrounded it. A wave of desire shot through him and he lifted his hips, thrusting his cock further into her mouth. Then her finger found his anus and tickled him, and an electric shock zinged from her touch to the tip of his head.

His mouth suddenly dry, he focused his eyes on the slowly revolving planet as his body went into overdrive. He didn’t want to move, but how to control the urge to thrust his hips upwards?

To resist or not to resist? Not to resist. He reached down and took Fiona’s shoulders in his hands and pulled her up so that she straddled his lap, her knees on either side of his hips.

“Sit,” he ordered.

She looked so lovely, with her long red hair tousled around her shoulders. “Yes, master,” she purred.

She sat, and when her sex touched the tip of his cock she hesitated, then pushed herself down, impaling her body on his. Her cunt slid over his cock as if he’d been greased in hot butter. Holding his breath, he stared at her, thinking that he’d never seen such a beautiful woman in his life. Such a beautiful, sexy woman. She grinned, then twisted her hips. The friction as her cunt rubbed up and down his cock made him gasp.

“Shall I stop?”

“No!” Grabbing her thighs, he raised his hips so that her knees barely touched the couch and her full weight rested on him. The tip of his cock touched her womb as he thrust.

She uttered a low cry and leaned forward, and her nipples brushed against his chest. He wanted to cup her soft breasts in his hands, he wanted to take them in his mouth and suck her nipples. Those thoughts made his cock even stiffer, and a rush of come surged from him. His balls tightened and he braced his legs against the couch, thrusting faster and faster until he felt Fiona’s body start to convulse. The tip of his cock tingled, then he came, pouring himself into her, holding her with his arms wrapped around her waist and shoulders, wrapping his legs even around her, and all around them the majesty of space took what was left of his breath away.

And then he heard the sound of the door opening.

Steele leapt off the Zen-couch, snatched the first thing he saw and flung it around his waist. It was Fiona’s dress. She raised herself on her elbows and smiled at him.

“We have no taboos about sex or nudity. But a big strong man in a skimpy yellow dress might raise a few eyebrows.” She handed him his pants. “If it makes you feel better, take these. They suit your coloring better.”

* * * * *

The contract arrived the next day in his mail. A real letter, written on fine paper that, when he unfolded it, lost all signs of the fold. For a minute he didn’t even read the letter, he was too busy trying to figure out what kind of paper it was. Then two words caught his attention.

“Amazonia” and “F-69.”

He read, his heart pounding against his ribcage.

Mr. Steele, your job will start immediately. Please go to flight deck fifteen at seven p.m. and board the Kingly Liner bound for Amazonia. Your request to keep F-69 with you has been accepted. She will accompany you to Amazonia. Her ownership papers will be sent to you.

Best wishes,

Executive Marchon

Steele carefully tucked the paper in his pocket and looked at the woman standing at his side.

"It says you can come with me," he said.

A wash of red infused her cheeks. "I was afraid to ask," she said. Then she grinned. "You're going to love Amazonia, and I can't wait to start telling you all about it. Did you know that at the equator..."

He put his hand over her lips. "Fiona Steele, I am only going to say this once," he said sternly.

"Be quiet?" she said, her lips brushing the palm of his hand.

"No, I love you," he said, and he kissed her. "Actually, I think I will say that once a day, or once an hour." He laughed at the look of relief in her blue eyes. "And you know what I think?"

"What are you thinking?" she asked.

"I am looking forward to my new life," he said. "With you."

 THE END 

Samantha Winston

Samantha Winston also writes books under the name of Jennifer Macaire. She has always been an iconoclast of sorts, willing to break everything and start anew. Rules are no exception. For her, rules in art and literature are limits, and limits can't be set on things like love, passion and imagination. Leonardo daVinci knew the human body perfectly, yet he would change the shape, and even the number of muscles in a torso or arms, to make his paintings seem more lifelike and vital.

She uses the rules of writing in order to break them, stretching the boundaries of imagination to create characters and worlds that don't fit into any mold. She takes preconceived notions about genres and shatters them. She hopes that her books will be part of your life, good friends you reach for when you need a smile, a sigh, or even a tear.

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* * * * *

Read on for a tantalizing glimpse of

Ice Man

by Samantha Winston

Available at Loose Id

Ice Man

The door opened in the wall, and a man poked his head in and whispered agitatedly, “Do not, I repeat, do not try to contact us. Pretend you are in a primitive land and just do what you have to do. We will not come in unless your life is in danger. And Dr. Paula says to put the necklace back on.” He glared at her and shut the door.

She sighed and looked down at the man.

Dark brown eyes stared back at her. He looked puzzled, but not frightened. He studied her for a long moment, his eyes going from her hair to her feet. Then they settled on her breasts. His eyebrows lifted a fraction.

Allie felt hot blood burn her cheeks, and then she remembered. She’d forgotten to take off the silver crescent moon necklace she always wore. It lay between her breasts, probably a glaring anachronism that would send the man into hysterics.

He cleared his throat and a few guttural sounds came out. Nothing she recognized as speech. Great, she wouldn’t be of any help at all.

Then he lifted himself on one elbow and said, in a halting, broken voice, “I have great thirst.”

She understood! Granted, the accent didn’t sound like anything she’d ever heard, but she’d understood what he’d meant. He spoke Latin, but hesitantly, in a strange dialect. Who was he and where did he come from? So many questions jumbled in her head!

He coughed and pointed to his throat. “Do you have anything to drink?”

“A thousand pardons,” she said. A pitcher of water stood nearby, and she poured him a cup. Everything was made of glazed pottery. She wondered if it looked odd to him.

He sat up and drank, the water moving in knots down his throat. He wiped his arm across his mouth and nodded. "Thank ye."

"You speak Latin. Are you Roman?" She read he'd been found in northern Scandinavia. Could he be a Roman soldier?

He rubbed his hands over his face. "Nay. I am Celt from the kingdom of Gaul."

"You speak Latin well." She couldn't take her eyes off him. Never had she seen such a handsome man. He seemed as unaware of his nudity as a wild animal, and like a wild animal he stretched and flexed his muscles, testing his arms and legs as he spoke.

"I also speak Greek, Goth, Pict and Celt." He broke off and looked at her thoughtfully. "I know not who you are, nor where I am. 'Tis strange. I can recall the tongues of man, but not my own name." He looked around the room. "This place calls not to my memory. Where am I?"

Perhaps he would be more comfortable speaking his own language, although his Latin was passable. In Celtic she said, "You have been ill for a long time. We brought you here to heal your wounds. My name is Allie."

His eyes widened. "You speak Celt?"

She hadn't considered what to tell him about herself. "My father was Celt." Well, close enough. He was Irish. "Can you remember your name?"

He closed his eyes, then opened them. "I seem to hear the name 'Kell,' but whether it is mine or not, I cannot be sure."

"I'll call you Kell, then; perhaps it will help you remember."

"You wear the pendant of the crescent moon. Are you an adept of the moon goddess?" His fingertip nearly touched her skin, stopping a hairsbreadth from the pendant. She could have sworn she felt the heat emanating from his body, and a shiver ran through her.

"No. This belonged to my mother."

“Ah.” The man drew back slightly and looked around the room, his eyes taking in every detail. “You said ‘we’ brought me to this place. Where are the others?”

“They have gone... er... hunting.” That sounded right. She smiled. “Can you remember your name now?”

He shook his head, his eyes still scanning the room. “In my bones, I feel a strangeness. Is this the land of the dead? I have died, haven’t I, and you are the goddess come to carry me to paradise.” He chuckled and before she could react, reached out and touched her breast. “Such a beauty you are. My life on earth must have been exemplary if the gods sent you to me.”

The touch of his hand on her breast sent a delicious tingle through her body, but Allie drew back, her heart pounding. “You are mistaken. You are very much alive. Here, let me get you something to eat.”

“I feel no hunger.” He shook his head as if to clear it and rubbed a hand over his face. His hand lingered, and he frowned. “Who shaved me?”

“Uh, the healer.” Allie gulped. Had he worn a beard when he’d fallen into the icy water? Would he go crazy on her now and attack her, ripping her from limb to limb? She peered at him. No, he looked perfectly civilized, despite the aura of raw energy that surrounded him.

“A healer?” He cocked an eyebrow at her and she saw a spark of humor in the depths of his dark brown eyes. “Are you a healer too? Is that why you watch over me like a mother hawk with her young?”

Had she been staring at him? She lowered her eyes. Would he take offense if she stared at him? She had no idea. “Excuse me. I’m just a foolish woman.”

“Why do you beg my pardon?” He reached out and touched her chin, lifting it so that her eyes met his again. “Don’t tell me you’re a Greek. The women there are downtrodden, but in my land they are equals.”

His gentle touch reassured her. Whatever apprehension she’d had about him vanished. He was no savage. “No, I’m not Greek.”

"I didn't think so. Your accent is strange but definitely not Greek. I have traveled far, but I've yet to hear someone with your accent." He let go of her chin and sat back, examining her from head to toe. "There is something very strange going on. I cannot recall my own name, and I have no idea where I am or who you are, but I can recall certain things like the sight of white swans on a small pond and the smell of fresh lavender. Can you tell me who and where I am?" For the first time his voice wavered slightly, as if from fear.

"Do you trust me?" she asked.

He hesitated a long time before he spoke, and when he did, his voice was soft. "Yes, for some reason, I do. I think I must be in the land between the living and the dead. My memories have fled, but my body is still intact. Perhaps I have to accomplish some feat before I can go join my ancestors." He looked at her, his gaze smoldering. "You must be the goddess who will lead me to the land of the dead. I am glad it is you, for you please me, Allie."

Her cheeks burned. "I am not a goddess and you are not dead, I promise. Let me get you some more to drink. You must be thirsty."

"No." He knelt and took her wrist, pressing it to his lips. "You please me, Allie, handmaiden to the gods. Come warm my body with your caresses."

She pulled back, but his grip tightened like a steel trap. "Let go!"

"Are you married?" The question surprised her.

"No."

"Then I will be gentle." He flashed a grin, surprising her. Still kneeling, he pulled her close and, without letting go of her arm, he stroked her hair. "I think I will claim you for my own, maiden Allie." He chuckled. "Your heart races like a hare in flight. I feel your desire like a firebrand; do you deny it? Come, refuse me no longer." He reached down and stroked his cock, which swelled and hardened.

Allie's mouth went dry. A flood of hot wetness dampened her inner thighs, and she realized she hadn't any panties. Underpants didn't exist until the twentieth century.

She glanced beseechingly at the camera in the wall. *Please, someone come in here quickly.* But she knew no one would unless he started to hurt her, and he wasn't hurting her at all. Perversely, she wanted him to continue stroking her breast. Her mind grew curiously numb even while her body seemed to come almost painfully alive.

"Kell, please let go of me." She managed to get the words past her lips, all the while wondering what it would be like to feel those strong arms wrapped around her... *No! That is enough!* 'Easy Allie' -- that's what the boys in school called her. She'd sworn to stop saying 'yes' on the first date. As that thought flitted through her mind she almost laughed.

"Why do you smile?" Kell let go of her wrist and stood, stretching languorously. "I have let go of you, but I will have you, Allie, don't doubt it for a minute."