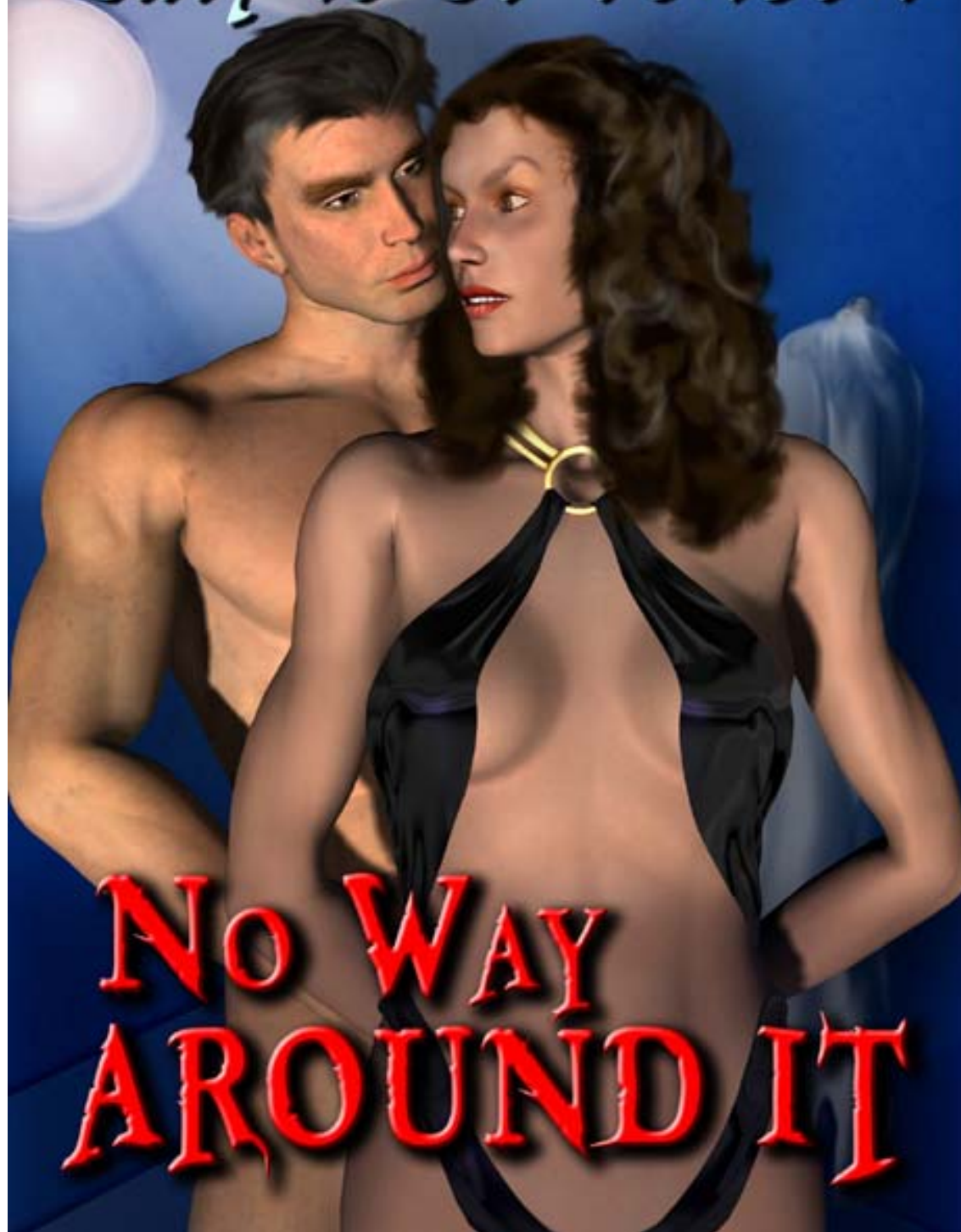


Changeling Press

Elayne S. Venton



# **No Way Around It**

## **Elayne S. Venton**

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## **No Way Around It**

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Captured on an unexplored planet and sold at auction to the head of a biomedical lab, Vonna King imagines her days are numbered. Chilling rumors surround her new “owner.” Meeting him with her wrists tied over her head, in a room filled with various restraints and sadistic devices, doesn’t ease her mind.

The male she comes to know in the lab is nothing like the person she expected him to be. She has a hard time reconciling the hard-edged dominant male she met on the first day with the compassionate man who works non-stop to find a cure for a degenerative disease. As much as she respects the scientist, Vonna is secretly drawn to his darker side. Dare she investigate her inexplicable desires to surrender to him?

Yale doesn’t have time to tame a fiery Earthling into a submissive partner, even if the challenge stirs his blood. The premature deaths on Alishontakawa are accelerating at a frightening rate. Even though mating with Vonna King would boost his immune system, he isn’t looking for a short-term fix. He must find a cure, not only to save his dying civilization, but to save himself.

## Chapter One

Vonna King slapped the forcefield surrounding her. "Let me out!" Waves of light rippled along the vertical surface, but the barrier held firm. A prickly tingle danced on her palms.

She'd been a fool to trust the two alien males who'd rushed to her aid after her shuttle exploded. They'd appeared out of nowhere, amidst attacking carnivores, no less. Heroes, she'd thought. *Ha!*

All the intel reports indicated this planet was unpopulated. Yet, here she was, imprisoned below a modern city that shouldn't even exist, with *rescuers* who planned to sell her to the highest bidder. In the five years she'd been investigating unexplored planets, this was the first time she'd encountered hostile inhabitants. It was bound to happen, but she'd been unprepared. They weren't supposed to be here!

One of the marble-skinned captors walked around the circular platform where Vonna was trapped. He was a good foot shorter than the other male in the room. Vonna towered over him. Not that it did her any good.

"She has a lot of muscle for a female," he complained.

Along with her laser pistol, communicator, med supplies, and the flight suit she'd worn, they'd taken her translator. Still, she understood what he said. The linguistic training required for Distinguished Scientist rank came in handy.

"Yeah, but it's her human cunt that will bring high bids," the other humanoid snickered. A scar below his eye creased into his cheek, giving him a pinched look. He stood behind a control panel mounted on a metal podium, doing who knows what. "Plus she looks a lot like us with her dark skin, hair, and eyes. The bidders will go wild!"

"Maybe we should've taken off all her clothes. No Alishon female covers her breasts." His friend completed the circle around her and stood in front again, studying her closely.

The one behind the podium looked her over too. "I like how the black cups push up her breasts and make them rounder. The thin strip she wears to cover her mound shows more than our loincloths." A leer spread across his face. "The skimpy coverings tease the viewer, don't you think?"

Vonna would've turned her back on the jerk, but then he'd probably comment how the g-string outlined her big butt.

His partner in crime grabbed the bulge in his loincloth. "She's got *my* cock hard."

Vonna looked up, wondering how high the forcefield rose. She turned aside from the gawking males and studied the smooth ceiling, trying to figure out a way to escape. The threat of rape aside, she'd abandoned her unit members. As team leader, it was her responsibility to keep them safe, and she'd failed. Two had died. In the mayhem of the explosion, she'd lost the other two. Guilt punched her in the gut.

Coiling the power in every inch of her six-foot frame, she jumped up, stretching an arm toward the upper rim of the forcefield where the invisible net might be thinner. *Sturdy. Damn.*

The two males standing outside the forcefield smiled at her antics. "Do you think Yalenfrapqui will be high bidder again?"

"Even if he isn't, his participation in the auction will drive up the price," Scarface said.

The smaller male rubbed his hands together. "I'd like to get a look at Yale's setup. I bet he keeps all the females he's bought from us in a harem, trained to service on command."

His friend looked at him with scorn. "Don't you think we would've heard about a harem? He's probably using the females for outlawed experiments. The Medical Council denounced him for malpractice."

The shorter one agreed with vigorous nods. "I hear he likes to watch them thrash in pain. He has a room where he ties them up and beats them. Killed his wife that way when he went too far."

"That I might believe. Nobody who goes into the compound ever comes out again."

With a shiver of dread, Vonna knelt down and felt for a space between the forcefield and the platform floor. If she could interrupt the energy flow...

"Hmm. Look at that ass poking up in the air. Too bad we can't use her for a bit of sport before we start the auction."

Static electricity shocked her fingers and shot tremors up her arm. "Ouch!" She jerked her arm back and shook the tingle away. A snicker floated over to her. Aggravated and discouraged, she stood up and scowled at the two males. The horny little one grinned at her.

"Better that we don't touch her," Scarface said, ignoring her. "Cylegg won't bid if she's been used, and he's almost as rich as Yale."

"If Cylegg gets her, she'll never have a flat belly again."

"He's a smart trader." He pressed something on the control panel and the room lighting dimmed to a soft pink. "Her human reproduction genes are worth a fortune." A bright white light filled the forcefield tube.

"So why don't we keep her and charge a fee for mating with her?"

A cold hard knot of dread twisted in Vonna's gut. Which could possibly be worse... torture and possible death, or her body sold over and over as a fertilization chamber? She had to get out of here!

Bracing her body for a major jolt, she lunged at the forcefield.

"Ooof!" Shockwaves sizzled through her brain. Her trembling body lashed backward, and then all went dark.

Vonna opened her eyes and blinked hard at the white ceiling far, far above her.

Scarface's calm voice filtered into her fuzzy brain. "The sooner we get off this lousy planet, the better. After this sale, we should have enough credits to fuel the old planet cruiser. Good riddance, Alishontakawa."

"I hope so."

God! She'd knocked herself out and they acted like nothing had happened.

"Let's get this show going. The bidding begins... now." With a flourish, Scarface hit a button on the control panel.

The gravity pull on the platform decreased. Vonna floated. With nothing to hold onto, she twisted and rolled in the forcefield tube. Lightheaded, she swam through the air to the top, hoping to lunge over the edge of the shield, but the invisible walls cut straight to the ceiling. Her stomach pitched. She needed to lie down. When her head bumped the top, she pushed off and sprung back down toward the platform, then slowly rose again.

A flat screen on the wall flashed with symbols, the number of symbols increasing at a rapid pace. Vonna tucked her knees to her chest.

"This is good," the smaller humanoid said with excitement.

The changing symbols began to slow. A rush of cold air spun Vonna upside down. She stifled her scream of surprise and instinctively groped with hands and feet for a secure hold. There wasn't one.

Inverted within the tube, the bun pinned at the back of her head loosened. Her nipples popped over the top of her demi-bra.

The symbols flashed faster again.

With her luck, they'd turn on the gravity feed again and she'd fall on her head. She rolled until she was right side up again. "Bastards!" she screamed, tugging on her bra until the tips of her breasts slipped back into place.

The symbols slowly clicked to a halt. A buzzer sounded. The two males congratulated one another with hard jabs to the other's chest.

Vonna fell to the platform floor in a heap.

\* \* \*



With her hands secured over her head in heavy cuffs and unable to see through the blindfold, Vonna kicked out blindly at her new captor. They'd used that damn stun gun on her again in order to transport her, so she had no idea where she'd ended up, or who her buyer had been.

The male in the room with her chuckled. "Feisty, aren't you?"

He was behind her. She spun, swinging her leg in a roundhouse kick.

The stranger grabbed her ankle and slapped a warm shackle around it. Panicked, Vonna struggled hard. Holding tight to the cable strung between her wrists, she whipped her free foot upward, hoping to connect with his head. Unfortunately, he caught that leg too, although her toes smashed into hard muscle somewhere on his upper body. His grunt gave her a modicum of satisfaction.

The muscles in her arms strained while he held both her calves hip-high. Another warm band secured her second ankle. He let go of her legs and they dropped fast, dragged down by a heavy weight between them, a stiff bar that held her legs apart. The balls of her feet slapped the smooth, cold floor.

"Oh!" With her arms pulled above her head and her spread legs shackled, she was unable to do more than stand on her tiptoes and ponder her fate. Courage failed her, so she relied on anger, aimed primarily at the lack of caution that landed her in this mess.

"Hmm." She felt his heat as he circled around her. "I wonder what Yale will think of you?"

Yale? God help her, she'd been sold to the sadistic killer. She swallowed the dryness in her throat. "This is a violation of the peace treaty in this sector," she shouted in his language.

After a few beats of silence, he replied. "Your familiarity with the Alishon language is impressive. Where did you learn it?"

"I have a good ear. Now release me!"

"Your uniform says D.S. Vonna King. What rank is D.S.? I am not familiar with it."

*Shit. Was he a military man? An interrogator?*

"It stands for Distinguished Scientist," she grumbled.

"Yes, they said you were a scientist. What is your specialty?"

Vonna clamped her lips tight. She wasn't going to give him any more information until he released her.

"No matter," he said calmly when she didn't answer. "Yale uses everyone. I'm more interested in your human DNA." He ran a finger over her lips.

She jerked her face aside. Her whole body wobbled within the constraints of her bindings.

"Settle down, D.S. King. I won't hurt you." He pulled the blindfold from her eyes. "That's Yale's fixation, not mine."

The change from total darkness to brilliance made her grimace. Large round mirrors dotted the walls, bouncing the brightness and her tethered image around the room. As her eyes adjusted to the light, her shock grew. In between the mirrors, tools of punishment -- whips, floggers, paddles, heavy coils of raw rope -- hung in a haphazard array.

In one angled mirror, she spied a padded examination table with built-in restraints. The lower portion contained several shiny inset drawers. The possible contents within those metal drawers made her shiver.

Above her head, erotic murals flowed in a vid stream across the ceiling. The scenes depicted females bound with rope or shackled to objects by thick, glowing laser rings like the ones locked around her wrists. She empathized with their strained expressions. Yet, their eyes glowed with sensual heat. They liked it, she realized, somewhat surprised.

An image of a female trussed spread eagle to an X, slowly turning within a giant circle, made her cheeks burn. A vibrator was strapped between the female's legs. Heavy clips hung from her taut nipples. Pink stripes crossed over her breasts and belly. The agonized pleasure on her face made Vonna clench her inner muscles. Could one enjoy torture like that?

Undoubtedly.

"Something appeals to you, D.S.?"

Vonna shifted her gaze to the male standing next to her. "No." Yet she felt hot all over.

Tall and leanly muscular, he possessed the same light brown skin as the other males who'd captured her, but he was marked with his own unique marble pattern running down his arms and legs, and framing his face. His straight black hair hung past his shoulders, not a style that usually appealed to her, but somehow it looked right on him. A loincloth must be the national attire because he wore one too.

His eyes, bright with curiosity, stared unerringly at her face. "I expected you to protest much more about being trussed up. Perhaps you like it?"

A heated flush crept up her neck. The shackles molded to her wrists weren't nearly as uncomfortable as she expected. With her arms pulled over her head, her breasts rose within the confines of her low-cut bra, showcasing her cleavage quite nicely. Not that she cared if she impressed her captor. She simply enjoyed showing off her best asset. Was that sick, or what?

The bar holding her ankles apart allowed air to waft around her limbs, cooling her overheated skin. The draft floated through her thin panties into her cunt, teasing the inner lips. Her pussy ached to be filled with a buzzing dildo, preferably a soft model she could grip with her hungry inner muscles.

"There's nothing I can do about it, is there?" she said, disgusted by her untimely arousal. At another time, in another place, with the right person...

He stood directly in front of her, leering at her with a mischievous gleam in his eyes. "I wonder what will make your pulse race." He gave her semi-naked body a lengthy appraisal. "The stinging sweep of a flogger?" A light brush of fingertips swept across her belly, making her shiver. "Clamps on your nipples?" He raised both hands toward her breasts.

She clenched her jaw and twisted her chest away. The thought of him plucking her breasts out of her bra and pinching her nipples made her stomach churn. It wasn't his touch she resented as much as his mocking attitude. "You're repulsive," she spat.

He dropped his arms with a snicker. "Sensitive about those lush melons, eh? A nice tight pinch will make you come like you've never come before. I bet you'd like it, D.S. King."

Vonna glared at him. She'd tweaked her nipples lots of times before a climax. She liked the fluid burn shooting to her pussy. Tightening a clamp on her nipple was another story. In the privacy of her quarters, she'd tried it once. It *hurt*. Who in their right mind enjoyed physical abuse?

Yet, she had several friends who loved a good spanking. She'd often wondered what it would be like to have a firm swat on the butt. Knowing her, she'd turn around and smack the guy. Typically, she dominated her sexual encounters, riding her partner in a fast frenzy. *Wham, bam, thank you, sir. Now get out of my quarters.*

Whenever she gave the male the upper hand, her partner usually demanded all the pleasure for himself. Where was the fun in that?

"What is happening here?" a deep voice boomed.

Vonna spun in the direction of the newcomer stomping toward them. Christ, she hadn't heard him enter the room. How could she not have? He was one big solid male. Arm muscles bulged out the sleeves of the lab coat he wore. The form-fitting powder-blue shirt beneath the coat clung to his flat belly and matching pants hugged his powerful thighs. He wore lab booties on his big feet.

And his face... *oh my*. Classic male beauty. A strong jaw line bracketed wide, sensual lips. His nose flared at her perusal and his eyes flashed, but he said nothing. He stopped a few feet away, his legs spread in a wide stance, fists balled at his sides, and he glared at the male who'd strung her up. Dark eyelashes flicked over eyes more hazel-green than brown.

Anger simmered around him like a hot wave, yet she didn't feel threatened. Of course, his attention wasn't focused on her right now.

Unlike the other males she'd seen so far, his skin color was a light tan and the markings on his face were less noticeable. He wore his dark hair short in a spiky, casual mess, revealing ears less pointed than the other males' ears. He looked almost human -- like an aggressive, extremely sexy male Earthling.

Now here was a male worth hanging in chains for. *Would you like to examine me, doctor?*

Her captor, the recipient of the newcomer's lethal stare, smiled like a boy caught playing with a starship's controls -- guilty and unrepentant. "I've brought back your latest acquisition, as you requested, Yale."

The heat flowing through her veins like lava instantly froze. She gawked at Yale, her heart in her throat. What those males had said about him couldn't be true. A sadistic killer should be an ugly, pockmarked, gaunt beast, not a gorgeous, come-take-me, fantasy male.

His hard gaze shifted to her face, then swooped down her body, his hazel eyes narrowing dangerously.

Although Vonna tried to remain calm, a tremor of alarm shuddered beneath her skin.

## Chapter Two

"Quade --" Yale's tone vibrated with a sharp warning. Why had his friend brought her to his private sanctuary? She belonged with the others.

"Is she not tempting?"

The human female arched away from Quade's flowing touch down her spine. The movement thrust out her full breasts which rested in a semi-circle of stiff black material. Her lips thinned with annoyance, but she didn't squeal or cry as he expected. The fine bones in her wrist stood out in relief as she clenched her fists above the shackles. She stared at Yale, her chin raised in defiance.

At first glance, he admired the courage in her set features. Looking closer, he picked out the shimmer of fear in her dark eyes. Both responses set his pulse racing. Most of the females he purchased at auction quivered with terror at the sight of him. He was bigger than most Alishons and abnormal, his skin markings almost indistinct. More than that, his murderous reputation preceded him. Yale liked passive females, but not meek souls afraid of their own shadows.

This Earthling wasn't like the other females at all. Her quiet tension vibrated with rebellion. Quade apparently considered the female a worthwhile playmate for Yale. So he'd brought her here to goad Yale, mock him, draw out the male he used to be -- before his wife died.

Quade had tried this trick before. It hadn't worked then, and it wouldn't work now. Yale had more important things to handle than taming a fiery female.

"Bumps rise on her skin at the slightest touch," his friend said, stroking two fingers along the inside of her raised arm.

She jerked away, her long body undulating in the process. Yale's breath caught in his throat. The thought of making her rock like that beneath him stirred his blood.

“Her breasts are especially sensitive,” his friend murmured.

The chill of the room mixed with her apprehension caused the bumps, Yale knew. Still, he liked the way her dark nipples puckered at the edge of the black covering when Quade skimmed his fingertips over the hills and valleys of her plump breasts.

Would she react that way to *his* touch?

The flash of fire in the human’s eyes made his heart skip a beat. Maybe the cool temperature didn’t attribute to those tight peaks as much as he thought.

Quade chuckled and stroked her neck. The female’s nose flared as she drew in a deep breath. Oh yes, she enjoyed Quade’s attention. Yet, her focus remained locked on Yale’s face, as if she sensed he was the more dangerous of the two.

He watched with bated breath as Quade drew a squiggly line down her side to the scrap of material at her hip. “What’s your pleasure, Yale?” With a sudden twist of her hips, he turned the female around and showed him her ass, bisected by a thin black strap between the cheeks and slung low across her back. “Would you like to redden her bottom with a few lashes of your flogger?”

She lifted her knees and swung her legs backward in an attempt to bash Quade’s shins with the spreader bar. He jumped back in the nick of time.

All the while, Yale admired the muscles bunching in her athletic thighs and calves. It required strength to raise the bar and swing it while hanging by one’s wrists. He watched her beautiful, round buttocks clench and release, and his throat went dry.

How he’d like to give her an ardent spanking on that ass. It would take a lot to make her rich bronze skin blush. Maybe a hard smack with the paddle would work better. Intuitively, he knew she’d take pleasure in every strike.

Yale knew her type well. In between her abrupt withdrawals and retaliations, she wrestled with herself. He could see it in the fierce concentration that drew her brows together. She questioned the erotic pull of being trussed up, fought the attraction of Quade’s sensual touch. Instinct drove her to fight, but deep inside she longed to surrender.

She wouldn't give in to Quade though. He was teasing her, nothing more, and the human was smart enough to realize it. At least, Yale hoped she saw through his friend because his gut tightened at the thought of her falling for a philanderer like Quade.

Yale, on the other hand, regarded bondage as a serious expression of his attraction. It required a special partner. The few times he'd brought a female here, usually at Quade's prodding, he'd been disappointed. So far, no one had come close to the bond he'd shared with his wife.

Yet, he found himself spellbound before this female. Speechless. Entranced by her. The second he'd seen the tall human standing calmly before Quade, vulnerable yet fearless, she'd roused his interest. With the right training, she'd make an excellent partner, as soon as she accepted her suppressed desires.

Well, he'd take care of that quickly enough. With soothing words and a firm hand, he'd settle her inner turmoil and draw her submissive nature to the surface. Wonder would replace confusion. He could smell the proof of her excitement. As he tenderly dragged the flogger's soft hide over her flesh, she'd quiver. The anticipation of the straps' bite on her buttocks would get her so worked up, cream would bead on her pussy lips. Only then would he give her a taste of his mastery. One slap and she'd be begging for more. When he had her tottering on the edge of orgasm, he'd slip his stiff cock between her legs and make her scream.

Quade released her and she swung back around to face Yale. The loathing in the Earthling's eyes cooled his ardor. She'd obviously heard the rumors about him. What horrors did she imagine he'd press upon her?

"Can't you see her adorned with large rings pierced through her nipples, Yale?"

*Bells*, he thought, so he could hear her coming. It might be a while before he trusted her not to sneak up behind him and thrust a knife in his back. Transforming her into a submissive lover would take time and patience.

The thought brought him back to his senses. "She wasn't brought to the compound for this, Quade."



"Why not?" Quade unclipped the female's dark hair. It fell over her shoulders in long curly waves. "This human will be more useful to you out of the lab than in it." He lifted a few strands of her hair and dipped them into her cleavage. The female stiffened and pressed her lips together. "See how she reacts? She's perfect."

His sentiments exactly, but he had other priorities. "Our people are dying younger every day. I have no time for play."

Quade's eyes flashed angrily. He stopped caressing her breasts with her hair and glared at Yale. "Stop being a martyr and take her!"

The female stared at Yale with wide, confused eyes.

A knot formed in his throat. Quade might be right. Sex with the Earthling would incorporate her disease-resistant DNA into his, boosting his energy so he could spend longer hours on research and experimentation.

Yet, unlike his contemporaries, he wasn't convinced that a fusion of Earthling and Alishon genes was the answer to the sickness that plagued his planet. Yale didn't want a temporary fix for himself. He wanted to find a cure.

"Release me and I'll help you."

The female's words stiffened his spine. She'd spoken quietly, urgently, her smooth sultry voice at odds with her tough exterior. The sound soaked into his skin, warming his blood, leaving him yearning for more.

He gave his head a mental shake. She was trying to bribe him! No one coerced him to do anything he didn't want to do. Yet, her offer to help piqued his curiosity. "What is your scientific profession?"

Cool self-assurance shone in the human's eyes. "I'll tell you as soon as you free me."

"Tell me now or I'll leave you hanging here until you do." *With a vibrator stuffed up your hot pussy.*

"From what I've heard, that would be a waste of precious time," she shot back. "You need me."

He narrowed his eyes at her. Quade should never have brought her here. All the new employees, purchased through auction or not, were sent directly to the lab. There was no other way to convince them Yale wasn't the ogre the rest of society made him out to be.

In this room, with this female, the sexual beast inside him rumbled to life. He had no time for it! "I will decide how to best use your talents, Earthling." His gaze roamed over her taut body and settled on her lush breasts. Desire raged through his veins. How he wished he had an hour to spare!

He was about to tell Quade to unshackle her when she looked down at the bulge at his groin.

Vonna swallowed hard. Would he force himself on her?

For a moment, she thought she'd seen compassion in his eyes -- for his people, not her. Something was killing the population here, and it wasn't necessarily the scary creatures on the planet's surface.

Yale ran a biomedical lab. According to her first captors, he conducted unapproved experiments. Was he searching for a cure? She'd hoped the promise to help might sway him from any torturous delights he'd find in this room, but it only seemed to anger him.

His eyes glittering with a hard edge, he closed the distance between them, stopping inches away. The warmth of his body seeped over her bare skin. She flinched a little when he gathered the hair lying over her breast and wrapped it around his fist. She braced for the hard tug on her scalp. Instead, he raised his hand to his nose and sniffed her hair.

"What is your name?"

She stared at him stupidly, lost in the brilliance of his green eyes. Within the steely dark edges lurked the gentleness she thought she'd imagined. The contradiction confused her. His gaze called to her, warm and inviting, yet his stare was fringed with red-hot steel.

"She is called Distinguished Scientist King," his friend offered.

She'd been so intent on Yale, she'd forgotten the other male. Apparently, so had Yale because the desire in his eyes suddenly disappeared.

"Vonna King," she said quietly, wanting to bring back that soft look.

"What is your scientific profession?" he asked her once again. This time his voice, mellower than before, caressed the very fiber of her being.

"Biogeneticist," she said without forethought.

He took a quick step backward and uttered a word she didn't understand. Hopefully, he wasn't calling her a demon or something.

He looked sharply at his friend. "Quade, get her out of here!"

Yale stormed off.

Behind her, Quade warned her not to struggle. The sound of a stun gun crackled near her back. The muscles in her shoulders tensed as she braced for an electrifying jolt. Instead of shooting her, Quade released the magnetic link around her wrists.

Just as she was thinking about a hand chop to Quade's neck to knock him out, Yale strode back in with a lab coat bunched in his hands. He threw it at her before Quade finished undoing the bar between her legs.

With quick reflexes, she caught the coat in her arms.

"Put that on and come with me."

## Chapter Three

Before Vonna had a chance to fasten the lab coat, Yale grabbed her arm and pulled her toward the secured door. The thin white coat flapped behind her. She didn't appreciate the forceful treatment but at least they were leaving the chamber of horrors. If she never saw that place again, it would suit her fine.

A fluttery feeling in her belly told her she hadn't seen the last of it. What exactly did Yale do to his captives in there? Was it a room for torture or agonizing pleasure?

"You don't have to drag me along. I have long legs."

The mad scientist slowed as they approached the door, and he gave her legs a once over with an arch of a brow, a slight smile, and no comment. The masculine look of appreciation gave her pause. It had been ages since anyone looked at her that way. Vonna's colleagues and friends viewed her as a scientist. Gender was irrelevant.

Of course, she didn't expose her body to them like this either.

She didn't know if she felt flattered or insulted by her captor's intense interest. Regardless, she pulled the lab coat closed and fastened it.

Yale keyed in a long sequence of numbers on the door keypad, which she memorized just in case she was trapped in this room again. The door slid open soundlessly, exposing a long hallway lit by blue phosphorous tubes.

"The lab is this way," he said, guiding her through the door with his large hand on the small of her back.

The warmth of his touch eased through the thin material of the lab coat and settled into her skin. He might have intended to steer her with a firm hand, but the contact gentled. Given the situation, it felt more intimate than it should have.

At the end of the hallway, they passed through another door into a large recreation area packed with rowdy males and females wearing nothing but loincloths.

She blinked at the sea of bare breasts. It was rather disconcerting, yet there wasn't anything overtly sexual going on.

The aliens played in small groups, concentrating on games of chance, mind-stretching games, and light aerobic sports. She caught sight of an occasional breast fondling, especially when a female leaned over a playing table to take her turn, but it was done in a tender or light-hearted manner that simply made the female grin. Based on the carefree noise, everyone was having a good time.

The smiles and laughter grew subdued as Yale pushed her through the throng. It wasn't fear that stilled them, but curiosity. Vonna heard the word "Earthling" bandied about the room as if it were a word of reverence.

No one said a word to Yale.

"The exit is to your left," he said from behind her.

She stopped at the closed door and waited for him to open it. "Who are all these individuals?"

"Scientists," he said, pushing the square that opened the door. "Technicians, researchers, data entry personnel, maintenance engineers."

As they stepped into another blue-lit hallway, she realized she could've opened the last door. It seemed the only *off limits* room was the bondage room. From here, several doors and smaller hallways led off the main tube.

"They're the day shift, off duty now," Yale finished explaining. He pointed down another long hallway. "Lodgings are down there. Private or communal, whichever you prefer."

She stopped at a window, admiring the soft pink colors of the approaching night. "We're in a canyon," she mused, marveling at the play of light on the sheer vertical walls. "Why can I see a city skyline and two quarter-phase moons but from space, we detected no civilization on your planet?"

"We have a camouflage field above us." She turned to look at him, surprised he bothered to explain. "Think of it as a two-way mirror. We can see out but no one can see in. It blocks all penetrating energy waves."

"So our shuttle pod disappeared when we landed?"

"You landed outside the city. The pod was clearly visible from space -- until it exploded."

Vonna shivered at the memory of the giant creature that wrapped its tentacles around their pod while they were out collecting samples. It had lifted the small craft, along with the navigator inside, and thrown it across the plain. The pod had erupted into a fiery ball.

Yale moved closer to her side, bringing warmth but no sympathy. "See that orange glow in the western sky?"

Vonna nodded, knowing what it was before he told her.

"That is your Earth ship, moving out of orbit." Out of the corner of her eye, she saw him turn his head to look at her. "They are leaving you behind."

"The captain is on a tight schedule. We knew he wouldn't wait for us if we ran into trouble. His job was to get us here, not babysit us." She turned her head and looked into his incredible eyes. "The exploration company will send another ship to retrieve us."

For a long moment, he studied her face. "Where are the others in your party?"

A knot filled her throat. Hopefully, Jake and Kelly had made out better than she had. "Two dead. Two unknown."

"They will not be missing long. Your landing on Alishon was an immense event." He took her elbow and led her down the hall once more. "As soon as I hear, I'll let you know their status."

Vonna glanced at him with a furrowed brow. Why would he bother updating her on her team? Did he hope to threaten their lives in order to gain something from her? Although that sounded plausible, he'd made the offer with a touch of compassion in his voice.

Psychopaths sometimes had a softer side, her common sense warned. Still, she refused to believe the worst until she witnessed his foul deeds in person. Perhaps that

was naïve, but she'd known a few colleagues who'd been ruined by false accusations. She preferred to give everyone the benefit of the doubt.

At the end of the corridor they walked through a series of doors, each one more secure than the previous. Finally, they entered a cavernous white room filled with a legion of workers manning lab equipment. In contrast to the rec room, the ambiance here was hushed. Serious.

"Come meet the night shift," he said quietly.

At least this group all wore lab coats. In the back, inside transparent walls, a few were dressed head to toe in clean-room suits.

It was surreal following Yale around the room, being introduced to intellectuals working on formulas and equipment far superior to anything she'd seen before. The technology was like comparing dials to keypads. The equipment produced familiar results but the process stymied her. On top of that, the personnel treated her as an equal rather than a captive. They obviously had no clue that Yale had bought her at auction -- or they turned a blind eye. She frowned, recalling her first captors' discussion about the numerous females Yale had bought in the past. Maybe *everyone* here had been bought like slaves on an open market, making her equal in that one respect.

"I must leave you for a while," Yale said to her. "Feel free to wander about the lab." He sounded rushed. "Ask anyone anything you wish. Everyone is free to speak here."

As he turned away, she called after him. "Is that the only freedom they have?"

He hesitated mid-step. "Ask them," he replied in a low hiss without turning around, and then continued on his way.

"I will," she muttered to herself.

A long time passed before Vonna had a chance to query anyone because the workers congregated around her, firing questions non-stop, predominantly about Earth and Earthlings. Evidently, the population here shared an ancient history with Earthlings.

With the exception of one trio who wanted to take a blood sample from her, everyone treated her with kindness and respect. From the ongoing discussions amidst the questions, she ascertained what she already suspected. They were trying to find a cure to their shortening lifespan, a cure that many believed lay hidden in human DNA.

Finally, Vonna held up her hand. "My turn."

The various discussions simmered down around her. She turned in a circle, scanning the collective group. "Is anyone else here a prisoner like me?"

Feet shuffled. Gazes shifted away. Lips firmed.

"Many of us started out that way." A petite female with shaggy black hair, big brown eyes and rosy cheeks stepped forward. Pointy ears ruffled through her fine strands of hair, completing the pixie look. "We thought we could escape our fate by leaving our planet. Instead of finding the legendary transport that would whisk us away, we were captured and sold. The lucky ones end up here."

Vonna raised her brows. "The lucky ones?"

With a grim expression, the female nodded. "Yale provides us with whatever we want as long as we help him in the fight to find a cure. It's a fair exchange. One we all benefit from."

"What about your families? Friends you've left behind?"

The pixie shrugged and glanced around at her co-workers. "These are my family and friends."

A gangly older male stepped forward. "When I invited my mate to join me here, and work with Yale, she shunned me and took another mate."

"Yale doesn't have the best reputation, I take it."

"All sorts of vile rumors surround his good name," the male said defensively. "The Medical Council disagrees with his methods, so they slander him."

A chill tensed her shoulders. The memory of his torture chamber rose fresh in her mind. "What exactly do they object to?"

"Cell cloning," he replied. "Tissue regeneration."



"Artificial insemination," the female added. "The Council is old school. They believe merging Earthling DNA with Alishon DNA through natural mating will eradicate the debilitating illness. After all, when more Earthlings mated with us we didn't have this problem."

"You don't believe there's some truth to their assumption then?"

"There's *some* truth," another scientist piped in. "When we mate with humans, we feel stronger, healthier. Human-Alishon offspring survive longer."

"But that's creating a new species, not curing the Alishons," Vonna said, trying to put the pieces of the puzzle together.

Quade popped out of the crowd by standing on a stool. Hands on his hips, he looked down at her. His sudden appearance unnerved her a bit. Had Yale sent him to guard her? To relay everything she said?

"If it were up to the Med Council," he said in a loud irritated voice, "all the females would be mated to the few Alishon males left with Earthling DNA in their systems. The rest of us could rot for all they cared."

The short, shaggy-haired female leaned close to Vonna. "Quade's mate dumped him for a male with Earthling DNA. He's never gotten over her."

From the look in the pixie's eyes, she'd take care of Quade anytime he wanted.

Vonna took a long look at the faces around the room. "Is anyone detained here against their will? Speak up!" Into the ensuing silence, she asked, "There's no one hidden away in a secret cell where you do obscene experiments?"

Some of the group scoffed. Others looked appalled.

Vonna looked directly at Quade as she spoke to the room at large. "Has Yale ever beaten anyone into submission? Or threatened them with physical violence until they agreed to do his bidding?"

The pixie put a gentle hand on Vonna's sleeve. "They have you brainwashed, don't they?"

"She's seen his private chambers," Quade said quietly.

A few gasps flitted around the room. In the back, someone giggled. Quade looked sharply toward the sound. "Hamnuqui, bring Fifa up here." The crowd shifted, letting the female through.

Like most, she wore a white lab coat, but around her neck she wore a black band adorned with a small silver loop in the front. A male, not much taller than she, followed closely behind her.

"This is Fifa. She's been in Yale's chambers and survived unscathed," Quade said in introduction.

"Yale doesn't leave marks," Fifa said stoically. "Not like Hamnuqui." She smiled at the male standing beside her with molten heat gleaming in her eyes.

Vonna stared at her, horrified.

Catching Vonna's look, Fifa sighed. "Yale's chambers are designed for fun, not cruelty. Even if he offered you an invitation..." Fifa raised her brows in doubt at that prospect. "You always have the option to refuse."

Well, that made her feel a little better.

"So I can walk away right now if I wanted to?" Vonna asked, scanning from one face to another.

"There's not a better place on Alishon than our compound," Quade said.

Loud murmurs of agreement resounded around the room.

"Stay and help us, D.S. King."

"Stay," the others called out.

"Until the next Earthbound ship comes?" she prompted.

Quade shrugged. No matter. She'd get Yale to agree to her terms, or she'd walk away now. No one said she couldn't.

\* \* \*

Yale lay on his bunk, holding his stomach and breathing hard. Beads of cold sweat dotted his face. As the medication seeped from the tiny pad on the inside of his wrist into his bloodstream, the pain slowly subsided.

He'd barely made it to his quarters and torn off his hot, constricting clothes before he'd collapsed. This attack struck sooner than he'd anticipated, and more severely. Plus, his body was adjusting to the pain medication. He'd had to double the med dosage before he felt a modicum of relief. Time was running out for him, just like it had run out for his wife.

He hoped the Earthling brought a new vision to their research that no one else had considered. She had cost him plenty, but he'd give everything he owned to save more Alishons from dying. He had a sister to worry about, nieces and nephews, even his stubborn father. Vonna King was a biogeneticist. A Distinguished Scientist. The best in her field. Would she find the miracle cure none of the other great minds under his care had yet found?

Could she save *him*?

His eyelids fluttered as the drug sped through his system.

He pictured Vonna in his lab, her eyes wide with interest as she toured the facility. She had pretty eyes. Deep brown. Large, doe eyes. Submissive eyes.

*No, don't think about that.*

The drug worked faster when the body relaxed, but it also had a hallucinogenic effect. He'd had chest and leg restraints that unlocked by a timer installed on his bed so he didn't harm himself while he was out of it. He engaged them now.

Quade thought the restraints were another toy for his "kinky sex craze." If his friend had any idea how sick he really was, he'd have Vonna King trussed up for a fucking faster than he could blink. She could heal him. For a little while, anyway.

He remembered her strung up in his sex chamber, her back arched, her legs spread, her breasts spilling out the top of those black cups, her hair falling over her shoulders. She was prime. And he wanted her.

Yale tossed his head. *No*. He needed her in the lab. That was where she could do the most good.

But the vision persisted. And he succumbed to the Earthling's allure...

Her chest lifted on an indrawn breath as he twirled the wand of silky *ghalia* feathers beneath her chin. Tiny crescents of dusky brown areolas peeked over the edge of the black undergarment molded beneath her breasts. Her nipples poked at the stiff fabric.

She glared at him with annoyance but her body trembled with excitement. With the spreader bar locked between her ankles, it was easy to see the damp spot spread on the crotch of her black panties.

"Surrender to me, Vonna," he said, sweeping the feather wand along the strong curves of her raised arms.

She closed her eyes.

"You cannot block me out. I am your master. I am with you always." He flicked the feathers across her belly.

She bit her quivering lip.

"Open your eyes and look at me."

She obeyed, her eyes widening as he swirled the soft feathers along her inner thighs.

"You want me to stroke your pussy, don't you?" The feathers dipped along her leg to her knees and then he swirled them back up again, brushing close to her panties without touching. "You want something long and thick to fill you, to fuck you?"

Her inner thigh muscles twitched. She swallowed hard.

"Speak when I ask you a question!"

Her whole body jerked in surprise. "Yes," she answered with downcast eyes.

"Yes, what?" He lifted the feathers away.

Vonna glanced up, her gaze shooting to the hand holding the feather wand aloft. "Yes, my pussy aches to be filled."

He smiled and brushed his mouth over her lips. She didn't resist.

His cock ached. He wound his arms around her back and rubbed his long shaft across her belly while he kissed her. All the while, he swept the feather wand back and forth over her buttocks until she pressed her hips forward. Then, he deepened the kiss.

Heat surged through his veins as she melted against him. Ah, sweet surrender.

He broke away, leaving her swinging slightly from her wrists. "Now, let's start from the beginning." The feathers floated across her neck.

Her resistance was going to kill him. He wanted her so badly. He wanted to kiss her breasts, lick her taut nipples. He swept the feathers over the full curves to hide the temptation from view.

The smell of her desire spiked his arousal.

He wanted to rip off the tiny black cloth covering her cunt and thrust his fingers inside her, feel her wetness, make her moan. Instead, he flung the wand between her legs and twirled it fast so the feathers whipped against her wet spot.

"Master..." she called breathlessly.

"Ah, that's better." He pressed the handle between her nether lips, pushing the stretchy black fabric of her panties inside a scant inch.

She inhaled sharply and rocked against it.

"Fuck it, Vonna." He pressed a little deeper.

Her thigh muscles flexed. Her buttocks clenched and unclenched. "More. Please."

"This is all you get because you took so long to surrender, my sweet."

The bar between her feet clanked against the ankle shackles as she tried to grasp more of the feather wand handle within her tight cunt. "Please, Master."

A clear drop of pre-cum dripped off the tip of his flushed cock. God, he wanted to fuck her. Shifting to her side, he straddled one spread leg, and rubbed his rock-hard cock against her hip.

He drew out the handle and threw the wand to the floor where it landed with a muted clatter. The instant he plucked the soaked crotch fabric to one side, he shoved two fingers inside her.

She cried out at the same time she clamped down on his thrusting digits.

He shouldn't have given in so easily, but she'd tied him in knots. He was as securely bound as she.

With a firm grip on her chin, he twisted her face toward him and his lips sought hers. He swept his mouth over hers in a soft caress, and then drew her bottom lip between his lips, teasing the passion from deep inside her.

Holding her chin with his left hand was awkward, so he moved his hand to the back of her head where he bunched her thick hair in his fist and tilted her head back. Her lips parted and he plunged his tongue into her mouth, swallowing her moans of ecstasy.

The kiss mimicked his plunging fingers, his tongue diving and retreating, wet, hot, and demanding. His hand smacked against the damp curls of her pussy as he drove his fingers in and out. He added his thumb to the dance, circling her swollen clit.

She groaned loudly into his mouth. Her cunt rippled around his slurping fingers, tighter and tighter.

He rubbed his thumb over the fat nub, testing her reaction.

Vonna bucked.

*Blazing pulsars*, she set him on fire!

Yale broke the kiss, releasing her harsh pants into the space between them. Holding his fingers deep, he stroked back and forth swiftly over her clit. "Come for me," he whispered in a husky plea.

A squeaky gasp rushed past his cheek.

He wiggled his fingers and pressed his thumb down hard on her tender bud.

Her body stiffened, shuddered, rocked, and finally... after several more hard contractions, relaxed. He kissed her damp neck and felt more tremors run through her cunt and beneath the skin. She squeezed him one last time before he slipped his fingers free.

She hung limply, her feet flat on the tile floor, knees slightly bent. Her spicy, sexy essence filled his nostrils. "Thank you, Master," she said between shallow breaths.

Flames licked his balls. He gripped his cock in his fist and stroked it hard and fast.

Yale came to, bucking against his restraints. The bars across his hips and thighs shook from the hard hits, leaving welts behind. Between the bars, his cock stood straight up, burning for release. His wrists smacked against the bands holding down his arms, the need to touch himself making the veins stand out in his neck.

One quick vision of Vonna's spent body hanging in his sex chamber, her creamy dew sliding down her inner thigh, and he came, spewing cum in long arcs.

His pulse beat triple time. It took a long while to slow his breathing. Sweat soaked his skin. The restraints slid back into the sockets beneath his bed and still he lay there, exhausted. He'd never come so hard in his life.

At first, he attributed it to the double dose of meds. Deep inside, he knew it was more. The dream of Vonna King had made him come like that.

Now he needed to know if the real female could live up to his fantasy.

## Chapter Four

"Is Yale all right?" Vonna whispered to her lab partner. She snuck another glance down the long metal counter at him while he studied a holographic DNA model slowly spiraling above the counter.

He looked paler than usual.

In the past few moon cycles, she'd covertly scrutinized his routine, his habits, his moods, and his endless dedication to the cause. So far, she hadn't detected any sinister behavior in him. In fact, his mild manner astounded her. For the most part, he kept to himself, working as diligently as everyone else. He didn't say much but he made a point of praising everyone for their daily contribution, no matter how small, including the slow, meticulous equipment sanitizer who couldn't spell his own name.

As promised, he'd told her he'd heard Jake and Kelly had survived. Their whereabouts were unknown, but he'd sent inquiries into the city. The effort he'd made on her behalf astounded her. The angry male who'd greeted her in the bondage room had receded deep inside the scientist she'd grown to respect.

Jaki, the shaggy-haired pixie immunologist who'd trained Vonna on the lab equipment, carefully set a sample in the DNA hybridization chamber and followed Vonna's glance. "He's tired. He works around the clock."

"I hear he's taking naps in his quarters more frequently," Vonna said quietly. Sometimes, she wondered if he was sleeping alone or sharing his bed without resting at all because he came back to the lab looking more worn out than when he'd left. "The naps don't seem to be helping."

"He needs to purge his demons."

Vonna wrenched her gaze to her lab partner. How wicked was his dark side? As far as she knew Yale hadn't been to the bondage room since her arrival. When the stress



became too much, did he pick a staff member and take her there to vent his frustrations? She swallowed her fear. "What demons?"

Sadness clouded Jaki's eyes. "Every day, someone dies because we can't find a cure. Yale takes it personally."

"Why? Did he cause the disease?"

"No, of course not. He thought he had the solution years ago, when he first left the council. He was wrong, and his father hasn't let him forget it."

Vonna furrowed her brow, her thoughts lingering on the bondage room. She'd *really* like to know what went on there.

Forcing her mind back to the conversation, she pondered the last comment Jaki had made. "His father?"

"Chief Medical Officer of the Alishon Medical Council. He keeps telling Yale to give up his useless experiments and return to the fold." Jaki slowly shook her head. "Yale refuses to give up. I fully support that decision. All I'm saying is he needs to stop brooding over his failure."

Vonna looked back at Yale, feeling his pain. She knew all about failure and regret. She'd had nightmares about losing her two team members when they'd landed on Alishontakawa. The list of "should have done this, shouldn't have done that" was a mile long. Maybe some evening she and Yale could sit down and commiserate together. Naked. On his bed.

His expression strained, Yale shut down the DNA hologram. Vonna wished she'd have an epiphany about the cure so she could make him smile. As a new staff member, she wanted to impress him. Please him. In many ways.

*Good grief!* Why did her mind keep wandering into sexual territory?

He cocked his head and caught her staring. *Shoot.* She quickly looked down at the equipment in front of her, wishing the burning in her cheeks would go away.

At least Vonna's curiosity in Yale was justified. The male who bought his employees at auction, maintained a place stocked with punishment devices, and worked tirelessly for the survival of his people was an enigma. The frequency of his

ponderous looks at *her* stymied her. More than once, she'd caught him staring at the black bra visible beneath her thin white lab coat. Nonetheless, he never touched her with anything but a heated gaze.

Without looking, she knew Yale was headed in her direction. He spoke quietly to each individual along the way. Her back muscles tensed. She had nothing positive to report. What would happen if she didn't prove her worth? Would Yale take her back to the bondage room and *whip her into shape*?

That place haunted her. In the privacy of her quarters, she dreamt of Yale tying her up and caressing sensitive spots, sometimes using his hands, sometimes tapping her with the long-handled rubber rectangle she'd seen hanging on the wall. He fondled her breasts and teased her nipples into hard peaks. He rubbed tingly vibrators over her belly and pussy lips. Sometimes he bent her over a spanking bench and paddled her rear end. Hard. Through it all, anxiety rippled through her, yet she savored every minute.

She'd never fantasized like that in the past. It was disconcerting. She wished she could talk to someone about it. The only person who might understand her unorthodox desires was Fifa, but the collared female's extreme tastes made Vonna uncomfortable. Plus she didn't like thinking about Fifa and Yale together in that room.

"I followed your advice, Vonna." Yale stood a hair's breadth away, the smooth sound of his voice and his warmth playing havoc with her senses.

"Which recommendation would that be?" she asked stiffly. He wasn't wearing a shirt beneath his open lab coat today. The sheer mass of his chest muscles was astounding. She itched to trace the hard curves beneath her fingertips.

It was cool in the lab yet perspiration shone in the hollow of his throat. His big body must crank some serious heat.

"The one that paired up Trippa and Salvi because their work overlapped." He gently squeezed her arm. "Good call."

His touch made her knees weak. The pride in his voice gave her butterflies. Good grief, she hadn't been this enamored, or wary, of a superior since her university days.

"Jaki and I are running enzyme tests on liver tissue. In sixty percent of all cases, the degenerative cells begin there. We're trying to find out why."

His hand slipped down her sleeve, lingered for a few seconds at her wrist, and fell away. "Keep me posted."

A tiny spasm near his eye caught her attention. For a moment, he looked unfocused.

"Yale?"

He jerked at his name. She'd never addressed him directly before, but she wasn't sure that's why he stared at her so hard.

"You need some sleep," she told him before she lost her nerve.

His eyes narrowed.

Jaki came to her rescue. "She's right. When was your last break?"

"I don't need caretakers in my lab," he said in a low rumble.

*Yes, you do. Someone needs to look out for you.* Curling up beside Yale's hard body, making sure he drifted off into a deep slumber, held great appeal. "You're not going to help us find a cure if you can't concentrate," Vonna insisted, feeling braver by the second. She was a Distinguished Scientist for heaven's sake, not an inexperienced intern. An exhausted staff member in a lab full of hazardous chemicals spelled disaster in the making. Someone could get hurt. At the very least, he might knock the calibration on a piece of equipment out of whack. Or... "You might miss something important."

Yale glared at Vonna, then Jaki, and back again, assessing her with a look so potent it unsettled her stomach. "If I'm not here, I might miss something important."

"I meant in your own findings," Vonna said, holding his stare without fear. "If you scheduled review meetings every shift, you wouldn't have to constantly check everyone's work."

"Meetings kill productivity," he stated brusquely.

"Lack of communication forces everyone to work twice as hard," she charged back, feeling like her old self for the first time since she'd arrived. "If you don't want to attend, fine. I'll run the meeting and send you the notes from the data stenographer."

The anger she'd seen when she first met him flared in his eyes. Good. At least he didn't look half dead. "You relate best one-on-one, anyway."

His brows lifted at that remark. "Damn right," he muttered, pinning her with a hard look. "This is my operation, D.S. King, and I'll run it as I see fit." A sheen of perspiration gleamed on his chest.

"You're going to run it into the ground if you don't step back, get some rest, and then take a hard look at the inefficiencies with clear eyes."

Jaki gasped at Vonna's effrontery. Even Vonna wondered if she'd said too much, but darn it, everyone seemed to be charging their thrusters and going nowhere.

Yale looked like he wanted to strangle her. "Go to your quarters, King."

"You can't send me to my room like --"

"Now!" he roared.

Reflexively, Vonna lowered her lashes to hide her shock, but a stronger will forced them up. She wouldn't let Yale intimidate her, especially in front of her friend.

Jaki had jumped at Yale's bellow. Now she stared at Vonna, not Yale, amazement parting her lips.

Yale leaned close to Vonna, nose to nose. "You insult everyone here with your accusations. I won't have it," he said in an angry tone. "Go."

The retort on the tip of her tongue sizzled into a sigh. She shouldn't have confronted him in front of everyone. For the past few weeks, she'd been compiling her frustrations and possible solutions, intending to request a private meeting with Yale in his office. It had all boiled over sooner than expected.

Head held high, Vonna walked out of the lab. Given a little time, he'd mull over her words and realize she was right.

As soon as she cleared the security door, she plucked the antistatic slippers off her feet. Damn his stubbornness! They were close to finding the cure. She could feel it in her bones. All they needed was some organization. A little brainstorming. She didn't have all the puzzle pieces yet, but Yale did. The answer would probably slap him right in the face if he wasn't so distracted by fatigue.

She turned the corner into the residence hallway. For some crazy reason, she'd become attached to Yale. Whatever he required in order to bounce back, she wanted to give it to him. She yearned to see the fire in his eyes, the passion and self-control she'd seen the day she'd met him. Something inside her had clicked into place the first time they'd faced off.

The trouble was, she hadn't seen that intensity in him since. Yale's flame was dying out.

The thud of heavy feet sounded in the main hallway she'd just left. She looked over her shoulder with vague interest, then stopped walking when she saw Yale stomp past the hallway junction, his fists bunched at his sides. Where was he going? The rec hall?

An inner devil told her to follow him, and she did. He blazed through the crowded rec hall to the exit on the other side. Vonna slowed. Now she knew where he was headed. Dare she follow? She milled around, chatting briefly with co-workers, slanting frequent sidelong glances at the solid door that led to the bondage room.

Why had he gone there alone? Despite everyone's claims to the contrary, she wouldn't be surprised if he had a secret lover he met instead of resting like he should. She crossed her arms and glared at the closed door. *Stupid male*. He was going to grind himself into the ground.

His personal affairs were none of her business, but his health affected them all. The collective brainpower at the lab might be off the IQ charts, but they were primarily introverts. They needed a leader. They needed Yale. If he wavered from his purpose, the operation would collapse. She was going to make sure that didn't happen.

As unobtrusively as possible, she squeezed through the sliding panel door and quickly closed it behind her. In the silence of the empty hallway, her bravado suddenly disappeared. What was she doing following Yale into his private sanctuary?

She stood with her back to the door, her palms flat against the cool metal, feeling the vibration of the noise on the other side. As long as she touched the door, she felt connected to the group in the rec hall. Safe.

She bit down on her lower lip. The blue-lit hallway seemed shorter than she remembered. It wouldn't take long to walk to the end, punch in the code she'd memorized, and face Yale.

Was she crazy? What if he was lashing someone? Or fucking?

The truth was, she had to know. Speculation about what he was doing, and with whom, drove her to distraction. It was maddening!

Maybe when she saw him with another female, she'd stop dreaming about him.

With a strong push off the rec hall door, Vonna strode down the carpeted hall.

## Chapter Five

Vonna pressed her ear to the door. Either it was too thick to hear through or nothing was happening inside -- yet. Taking a deep breath, she keyed the long number sequence into the door's security pad. As soon as the door began to slide aside, she heard the crack of a whip.

Every muscle in her body tightened. Intuition told her to leave. *Now*. But her leg bones had stiffened into titanium rods.

Yale, wearing only a loincloth, cracked the whip again. It arched high in the air and streaked outward toward... nothing. No one else appeared to be in the room. Over and over, he snapped the whip, over his shoulder, out to the side, the long tail swiftly undulating in snake-like curves. The sharp pops after each throw resonated in the empty room.

Well, that was one way to vent your aggravation. Vonna relaxed a fraction and stepped into the room. Whether the hiss of the closing door or her reflection in one of the mirrors alerted him of an intruder's presence, he spun, whip raised high. The tip bit the floor an inch from her bare toes.

Mouth agape, she froze.

"Vonna." He said her name like an accusation. "I sent you to your quarters."

She sealed her lips and swallowed.

He glanced at the closed door and looked back at her face. "How --"

Forcing the words past her tight throat, she answered his question before he asked it. "I watched you key in the number sequence."

He scrutinized her from head to toe. "Did you?" A hard intensity glittered in his eyes. "Take off your lab coat and turn in a circle."

"What?" She eyed the slithering whip as Yale gathered it back and left it pooled at his feet.

"Weapons check, my sweet." He twirled the whip at his side. "Do it."

Swallowing hard, she shrugged out of her lab coat. The thong and demi-bra she wore underneath left nowhere to hide a weapon of any size. Still, she leaned over to prove she hid nothing in her cleavage, not surprised when his interest lingered on her breasts after she stood up again. "I'm clean, Yale."

In a leisurely slide, his gaze lifted back to her face. "Turn."

Eye contact broke for a few seconds as she twirled for him, her arms in the air, and reconnected as soon as she faced him again. Warm satisfaction flowed through her veins at the heat building in his eyes. *Some* influence remained in her control.

"Why don't you drop your weapon, Yale?"

A small grin tilted his lips. He held tight to the whip handle. "Come here." The command resounded with authority -- and heat.

*Hell no.* Twenty feet was close enough to that long, menacing whip.

"I came to apologize." She twisted her fingers in front of her. "I spoke out of line. Yes, there's a lack of cohesion in our group, but my own insecurity triggered the outburst. There's so much information to absorb. So much to learn. Sometimes, I'm not certain what you expect from me. I'm used to more guidance from my superiors."

Given that he stared relentlessly at her body, he didn't seem to be paying much attention to her speech. Here she was, expressing her lack of confidence and his only interest lay in her feminine form. Disgusted, she bent down to retrieve her clothing from the floor.

"Leave them."

Her fingertips hovered a scant inch above the collar she'd been about to grab. What was it about his commands that made her hesitate?

He approached her with slow, measured steps, his gleaming eyes pinning her in place. The long whip trailed out behind him. "I can give you guidance, Vonna."



She straightened, leaving the coat on the tiled floor. So he had been listening. "Stewing over our differences isn't my style, Yale. I want to work with you, not against you. All the same, I don't hold back my opinions."

He stopped at least ten feet away and stood in a wide-legged stance, bracing the whip handle on his shoulder. "Just your feelings."

"My -- what?"

"You're not here about the work in the lab. It's about you and me."

"Don't twist this into something personal. It's not." Anxiety trickled down her arms to her fingertips. Why had she felt so compelled to follow him? What he did in this place, with whomever he chose to do it, had nothing to do with her or her desires.

"You want to see if I have what it takes to make you surrender."

"Surrender? That's crazy. This isn't a battle." Her voice wavered. She threw her shoulders back in defiance. "Look, if you can't accept an apology at face value, I'm not going to beg for your forgiveness." She eyed the lab coat at her feet, briefly wondering if she should leave without retrieving it.

The whip cracked and white fabric flew into the air. She stared in fascinated wonder as the coat floated to the floor behind him. *Oh, shit. I'm in trouble.*

"I said to leave it." Yale's arm swung out from his side. In the blink of an eye, the whip lashed out and curled around her middle, binding her arms to her sides.

A little yelp pushed past her tight throat. The lasso hadn't stung, though. The loud crack was more frightening than when the braided tail had wrapped around her.

Her mind screamed to bust out of the tight strapping, but her limbs felt heavy, as if she'd been immobilized by a freeze-gun. Except she wasn't cold. Heat spread from her chest into her breasts and downward, low into her belly. A squishy warmth moistened her cunt.

She clenched her jaw along with her fists, hiding her body's traitorous reaction.

Yale closed the distance between them in several long, quick strides and grasped the slipping top loop just above her breasts, pulling her close to him. While he looked

deeply into her eyes, he tucked the thin tail end of the whip through and around the thicker pieces with quick, blind precision.

He wore cologne, which she'd never noticed before. The sterile smell of bleach and alcohol in the lab must've overpowered it. She breathed in the woodsy fragrance, noting a hint of cinnamon, wondering what this unsmiling, sexy-smelling male planned to do next.

Apprehension sizzled the length of her nerve endings, along with something else, something raw and new, exciting, and unfathomable. She didn't want to move. Well, she couldn't move confined as she was, and that was okay. Arousing, in fact. The challenge of confronting a predator when the odds were stacked against her set her pulse racing. The fact that she didn't necessarily want to win, but simply come to a draw, made her wonder if she'd lost her mind.

"Do you know why you followed me here?" He spoke slowly, softly, as if he shared a dark secret.

"Curiosity," she said honestly.

A sinful smile tilted his lips. If she wasn't so nervous, she might have appreciated the striking transformation to his face.

"You want me to bind you to me," he said smoothly.

"No, I thought --"

"Yes." He dragged the heel of the whip handle along her jaw. "Get down on your knees."

Her knees wobbled. "Whatever games you play in here, I'm not interested."

A devilish light shimmered in his eyes. "Aren't you?"

He dropped the whip handle along with the extra fall of the whip over her shoulder and then bent down, drawing the handle between her legs. Just as she thought she should be kneeling him in the chin, he pulled the remaining braid up with a quick jerk, creasing it into her thong right between her pussy lips.

The sharp tug stole her breath away.

"I think you fantasize about being tied up." He brushed his lips along her cheekbone as he spoke. "By me."

She couldn't speak. How did he perceive things about her that no one else did?

This was crazy. Why was he doing this to her?

Yale trailed moist kisses along her temple. "Relinquish yourself to me, Vonna," he said, blowing softly into her ear. "Let me rule your body, satisfy your need for my mastery."

Is that what she wanted? To give up control?

He left her breathless. Confused. Despite that, her body burned for his touch.

He jiggled the whip handle, the motion traveling down the length so the fall rubbed back and forth over her clit.

Vonna tightened her thighs, giving her pussy a secret little squeeze, relishing the slick dampness licking her thong. Embarrassment singed her neck. Was this really how she wanted to climax, trussed up and taunted? Caution lights flashed. Fear thickened in her throat.

Her subconscious screamed, *Do it! Let him carry out his will.*

He dragged his mouth over her lips. The whip tightened, lifting her up onto her toes.

She gasped at the fire between her legs, and the graze of the braided leather beside her thong in the crack of her butt. Her pulse picked up. The urge to wriggle against her bonds refused suppression. She tried to be discreet, but each little shimmy spread pleasure through her limbs, making it hard to stand still. She fidgeted against the bindings, grinding down on the pressure between her legs.

"You want the burn," he whispered against her lips. "As much as I want to give it to you." One large hand gripped a butt cheek, drawing her tight against his body. The hard bulge beneath his loincloth rubbed between her hipbone and the whip running up her belly.

Instinct almost drove her to press back, but willpower won. *No, no, no.* Falling under his spell was dangerous, perhaps life threatening.

Oh, but she wanted it. Wanted him. Wanted to take whatever he had to give.

Yale nibbled at her lips, gently biting and sucking until she couldn't resist him anymore. Yearning flashed through her body from head to toe. She kissed him back, assailing his lips as much as he devoured hers, squirming against his body, frustrated by the whip's hold on her arms and yet excited by the restriction.

He drew back just enough to break the kiss. Satisfaction gleamed in his eyes when he studied her heated face. "I thought so." One finger rolled her lower lip down, bumped over her chin, and skimmed down her throat to the pulse beating hard in the dip at the base of her throat.

Mortification warmed her cheeks. She stilled. "Release me."

"Don't be afraid to show your inner self, Vonna."

She turned her face away from his consuming gaze. "I'm uncomfortable, that's all. You're hurting me."

"I'm not hurting you." He drifted his fingertips across the edge of her demi-bra.

Goosebumps rose on her chest and raced down her arms.

"Why do you insist on concealing your breasts when none of the females on Alishontakawa do? Is it simply to drive me to distraction?"

"No." She dropped her mouth open in protest when he circled a hidden nipple, his finger skimming over her skin and then sliding over the smooth fabric of the cup. His relentless caress around her nipple teased it into a tight bud.

"You like the confinement. The pressure against your skin." His finger slipped over the covered peak.

A spark shot straight to her core. She gave the whip between her legs a squeeze. "Stop."

He gave the taut nipple a quick pinch and moved over to the other one. "Your breasts are too beautiful to hide, Vonna."

She pressed her lips together at his scorching touch. Staring at her chest, he swirled his finger around and around the tip. Her breasts seemed to puff up each time

he brushed over the nipple. In a matter of moments, both nipples pressed hard against the black satin.

"I'd like to bind a rope around your bare breasts. Here and here." He pressed firm lines into her skin above and below her bra. "And here, to separate them." With a flourish, he drew a sweeping X over her breasts.

"No." Her voice came out in a squeak.

"Then clip dangling jewels onto your nipples."

"Yale, stop."

He looked at her with restrained hunger in his eyes. "Am I making you wet, Vonna?" When she didn't answer, his expression darkened. "I know I am. I can smell your lust."

"Let me go," she cried, suddenly afraid of what he might make her feel if he continued.

He flicked the back of his fingers against each taut peak.

She sucked in her breath in surprise, not only because of what he'd done but because she liked the sharp tingle he'd left behind.

"You're mine, Vonna. I suspected it the moment you first looked into my eyes and masked your fear. I sense your desire whenever I get near you. You give it away when you play with the top tie on your lab coat."

"That's a nervous habit..."

"And when you lower your eyelashes whenever I catch you staring."

She shifted her look away at that one. She'd thought he'd never really noticed.

"I want you, and you want me to make you submit to me."

"No. Please. Stop." The truth burned the back of her neck. "I'm not like that." She forced her eyes to meet his. "I'd rather tie you up. Make *you* do what I tell you."

"You're lying to yourself, Vonna." He forced the whip handle between her breasts and through the bottom band of her bra.

The whip fell slack from the handle down to where her thong-sheathed pussy lips clung to the braided leather. In a few quick movements, Yale wrapped the fall

around the handle until it pulled taut again. The short moment of ease made the sudden tightness in her cunt feel twice as forceful. Vonna grit her teeth, relishing the borderline pain.

"This is how it works, Vonna. 'No' and 'stop' mean nothing to me. If you truly want to end our play, you must say something that will tell me you mean it." His voice dropped to a low rumble. "A safe word that won't confuse me when I'm about to explode."

He didn't show a bit of unease when she stared at the bulge in his loincloth. As a matter of fact, his cock twitched beneath the flap, creating a bigger mound in the tanned hide. Her tongue slipped out to moisten her dry lips. She was so ready to be fucked.

"Pick a word," he said impatiently.

Vonna stared at him, her body trembling with nerves. After the lack of leadership she'd shown on this mission, maybe she deserved punishment. A good spanking might purge the guilt.

Yeah, that was a great excuse.

Imagining Yale's big hand smacking her butt practically made her drool. Heck, her pussy dripped with want. If only she possessed the courage...

She'd come too far to stop now. She wanted... no, needed, to find completion. Satisfaction. Whatever demons coiled inside her, she trusted Yale to bring them out. Did she trust him not to hurt her, though? Was this "safe word" just a scam?

She had no idea how well he could control a fit of violent passion. No, that wasn't entirely true. She'd seen him control his anger in front of Quade. Plus, his fatigue diminished his strength. She doubted he'd last long at whatever "play" he had in mind.

"Cure."

His eyes widened.

Oh yes, that word would certainly startle him back to his senses.

"That's your word?"

She nodded.

His lips thinned into a grim line. "Do you wish to use it now?"

There was no way around it. If she was going to find out anything about Yale's passions or about her own dark desires, it was now or never. After taking a deep breath, she sealed her fate with a slow shake of her head. "No, I don't want to use it now."

Maybe it was her imagination, but he looked relieved. Happy, even. Why she thought that, she didn't know. Yale wasn't smiling.

"You will call me 'Master' or 'Sir' when you speak to me."

She winced. That seemed a little extreme.

"You belong to me, therefore you will obey me. Agreed?"

After a moment's hesitation, she nodded. It was a game. She'd agree to play along with his rules as long as they caused no harm.

"Kneel."

Slowly, she knelt down on one knee and then the other, an awkward task since she couldn't use her restricted hands for balance. She should've known the first thing he'd demand would be a blowjob. A wisp of disappointment flowed through her. She'd hoped he'd be different than all the males before him and consider her pleasure before his own.

"Sit on your heels and turn your palms toward me. Eyes down." As she followed his instructions, he skimmed his fingers through her hair. "Good. This is the waiting position. Stay like this until I am ready for you."

A knot of dread formed in her throat as she watched his feet disappear from her sight. What? No oral sex? Where was he going?

The whirl of gears brought her chin up.

*Ohmigod.* What had she agreed to?

## Chapter Six

Vonna gaped at the silver pole as thick as Yale's thigh rising through the floor. It stopped a good foot above his head and ejected rods of various lengths in all directions. Yale fiddled with the rods, making adjustments, which she couldn't see clearly because he blocked her view. When he'd finished, he went over to the medical cot in the corner. From a storage drawer beneath the pad, he withdrew what looked like a miniature, old-fashioned, strawberry flavored, soft ice cream cone and... he glanced her way.

Fearful of the reprisal for disobeying an order, Vonna immediately dropped her gaze. A shiver danced across her shoulders. Gads, he held a butt plug. She squeezed her buttocks tight.

"You will see everything soon enough," he said. "Patience, my sweet."

Dread and anticipation crashed through her in a mix of hot and cold. What in the world was she doing, yielding mind and body to a male she barely knew? She snuck another peek while he straightened the two pads attached to rods in the lower third of the pole's length, one horizontally and one vertically. With the touch of a button on a remote control in his hand, a bar extended outward from the lowest rod on the pole. Another spreader bar for her ankles. *Good God.*

Giving him easy access to her pussy while bound to a pole cast another wave of unease over her, and yet, her nipples tightened. She wanted him to take her, ride her, use her, as long as he did it for her, not selfish reasons. Was that possible? Did a male exist who thought of others before himself?

Yes, Yale did. He proved it every day in the lab, burning himself out in the process. Did that consideration carry over to this room, or was this where he indulged his selfish nature?



"Are you nervous?" he asked, casting a sidelong look her way. He sat the butt plug in a niche cut into the pole.

"Yes." She looked down, determined to see this through. "Master," she added when she heard him walking toward her, remembering his rule about addressing him.

"Rise."

He didn't help her. Since her arms were bound by the whip, she wobbled like a top as she stood. Once she achieved balance, he was there, cupping her face and claiming her lips. She leaned into him, getting lost in the firm press of his mouth on hers.

Too soon, he broke free. "That was for good behavior." A warm smile lifted the corner of his mouth. He stroked her hair.

His gentleness reassured her, a little. "The pole is for my bad behavior?"

He blinked, the smile drooping a fraction. "Is that how you see it? As a tool for punishment?"

"Yes."

"Okay. What am I punishing you for?"

"For peeking?"

He raised a brow. "Fine." He pulled the whip handle out of her bra. As if by magic, the whip fell away and pooled at her feet, except for the bit that stuck between her pussy lips.

She split her legs a bit, jiggled her hips, and finally swiped at the braid with her hand, giving it a little nudge away from her body. Thank goodness she wasn't supposed to look at Yale because that little dance embarrassed her to no end.

"Go stand in front of the pole." Damn him, she could hear the laughter in his voice. "Face me, legs spread, hands above your head."

Since the rods stuck out from the pole about a foot, she stood away from the main column, lining her ankles up with the magnetic cuffs in the spreader bar. Once Yale closed the loops around her feet, he set one cushion lengthwise across the top of her buttocks and the other along her spine. Carefully, he bent her backwards until her

hands touched the pole. It wasn't a far stretch, just enough to feel the strain in her arms and back. The backward arched position with her legs spread left her open and extremely vulnerable. He locked her wrists in the rings in the pole slightly above her head.

"Are you ready for your punishment, Vonna?" He walked over to the wall and removed a flogger, its twenty or so half-inch wide, black and red tails flopping out from the braided handle like an old mop.

"Why do I feel like you're patronizing me?"

"This is what you expect of me, so this is what I'll give you."

Something didn't sit right. "I don't know what to expect, Yale," she said nervously.

"You have a preconceived notion of what I am, what I'll do to you. Let's get that out of the way, shall we?" He held the flogger out from his side.

"No! Wait."

He raised a brow. "Did you want to use the safe word?"

"I'm not ready yet, that's all."

"You're over-analyzing this," he said, swaying the leather strips over her calf. "Go with your gut."

Her pulse jumped in her throat. "Just fuck me. That's what you want, isn't it?" she asked breathlessly. "That's what I want, Yale. I want to see your cock slide inside me, feel your powerful thrusts, listen to your groans of pleasure while you take me."

A rumble of laughter burst from him. "That's good," he said, lowering the flogger until it hung by his side. The bulge beneath his loincloth shifted. "But a little premature. I'm not going to fuck you until you scream those words at me. Beg me for it."

"Give it your best shot," she taunted. "But beating me won't do it. I guarantee it."

The knowing grin that spread across his face made her *very* nervous.

"Back talk is unacceptable, Vonna," he said silkily, dragging the strips of soft leather up her leg. "Don't make me gag you."

She clenched her teeth. She'd bite his hand off before she let him stuff something in her mouth to shut her up. Still, goading him any further wasn't wise because she knew even with blood pouring from his hand, he'd prevail.

"By the time I am done with you, Vonna, you will not think of this room as a den of punishment, but of pleasure."

Ah, so that's what he took exception to -- her grisly impression of his room. Well, what did he expect? All the bondage equipment made it look like something from a gothic e-book.

The leather flogger trickled over her hipbone. She sucked in her stomach as he lightly swished the narrow pieces back and forth across her belly. It tickled, but she didn't let her guard down. She was no fool.

"We'll start with a warm up." The strokes moved down to the front of her thighs, the soft hide thumping with each mild slap and curling between her legs. The repetitive sweeps, neither too hard nor too soft, radiated prickly heat to the skin surface, like she'd come into the warm indoors after being out in the frigid cold. The tingle crept right up into her pussy.

"Enough," she huffed, trying to still the tremors in her legs.

He didn't stop. "Unless you say the safe word, I'll decide when it's enough."

She bit her lower lip. In a perverse way, the slaps turned her on. She didn't want him to stop completely, just redirect somewhere else. And wasn't that bewildering?

He swung the flogger at her ass. Hard.

"Oh!" She lifted up on her tiptoes. That surprised the hell out of her.

"Your body is mine, to do with as I please. Do you have a problem with that?"

Did she? It required a lot of trust. What he was doing now was the tip of the iceberg, she was sure. "Not yet. Master."

He grunted a reply. After rubbing his hand over the spot he'd hit, he stepped back and smacked her again. She bucked at the unexpected thump. *Holy laser fire, that hurt.* Her pussy clenched.

"That was very pretty, Vonna." He swung again, lightly, then harder, then lightly again.

*Ohmigod.* Her cunt clenched with every hit, growing wetter and wetter. Her thigh muscles jumped. The burning pain spread through her center, simmering into warm pleasure.

Yale stepped close straddling one thigh, switched the flogger into his left hand, and ran his right hand over her warmed cheeks. He dipped his hand between her legs and fondled the wet folds of her sex. His probing fingers cast a shiver up her spine and into her nipples.

He dragged his damp fingers back and circled her puckered hole. "Have you ever been fucked in the ass, Vonna?"

The heat in her face drained away in a flash. "N... no." Knowing it was useless, she said it anyway. "Please don't."

Anal sex always seemed too over-the-edge for her. Degrading. Animalistic.

His mouth hovered close to her ear, his tongue flicking out to trace the outer shell. "I'm going to push you to your limits, Vonna."

"No --"

He pressed a finger in, testing the tightening band of muscle. "Yes."

Vonna's pulse jumped in her throat. *No, no.*

As he wiggled his finger around her sphincter, his parted lips slid down her jaw and skipped to her neck. Hot moist breath fanned across her throat. "I'm going to make you so hot, you'll be begging for everything I've got."

After a few laborious heartbeats, his finger no longer felt so intrusive. She took a deep breath and relaxed a fraction.

"That's it, my sweet." He suckled her neck until she relaxed another notch, and then pressed a little deeper.

"O-oh." She trembled at the sensual thrill. Never in a million light years did she think this kind of play would make her pulse race like this. What easy prey she was! *Damn!* She refused to give in so easily to him. But, oh, how she wanted to surrender! *My pussy needs you, Yale. Fuck me. Please.*

She tilted her head as Yale nibbled a path to her collarbone. The flogger danced between her legs. She wasn't sure if Yale intended to tease her that way, but it was working! Reflexively, her hips shimmied.

With a loud groan, Yale plucked his finger free. His hands tugged at his loincloth and she felt it slide along her leg to the floor. A hard cock, warm and smooth, tapped the back of her hip.

*Yes! Yes!*

"Here's the prize, but you must earn it." He stepped back and resumed lashing her ass with soft strokes.

*Oh, God, no!* Closing her mind to the burn on her butt, Vonna glanced down at *the prize*. Oh yeah, that was worth playing for. Long and thick with a large head, she could almost feel it plunging into her cunt now. She wanted it, and she'd do anything to have it.

His hand smoothed over the warm, tingling skin on her ass. "You are so beautiful." If she wasn't mistaken, his voice wavered. A thick finger traced the crease all the way to the puckered hole. Even though she now knew what to expect, intuitively, she tightened up. Her pulse quickened.

"You're mine, Vonna. All of you." He hung the flogger handle on a hook, picked up the small pink butt plug from the built-in shelf and disconnected the remote from the plug's flared base. With the push of a button, a thick clear fluid leaked out the top and ran down the sides. Her breath hitched at the sight.

"Look at me." His voice was gravelly, seductive.

She dragged her eyelids up and stared at him with apprehension.

"This is not only for your pleasure, but for mine." He pressed another button and the plug reverberated with sound and energy. "I want to watch you come undone," Yale said in a velvety timbre. "Fly into pieces at my command."

*No, no...* She clenched her buttocks, afraid as well as enthralled.

"Do you wish to please me, Vonna?"

She eyed the plug, begging him with her eyes not to stuff it in her ass, but failed to voice her refusal. Why, she didn't know, although it might have something to do with the hunger in her pussy.

Yale waited for an answer. She parted her lips to speak but she couldn't tell him what he wanted to hear. Of course, she wanted to please him, but at her expense? "Yale... I..."

His expression didn't change but disappointment muted the glow in his eyes. "I am your master. Address me correctly or I'll bring Fifa in here and pleasure her instead. She'll show you how a submissive acts properly."

The command in his voice cut her to the bone. More provoking, the threat of the pretty, collared female standing spread eagle in Vonna's place made her fingers curl into claws. "Yes. Master. I..." She licked her lips nervously.

He dragged the quivering butt plug from her pussy back to her butt hole. The vibration rumbled deep into her cunt. Cool, thick liquid spurted at her sphincter.

Her breath hitched. "Sir!"

"Relax, my sweet." With a quick glance at the remote in his hand, he shut off the vibration. The reprieve was short-lived, though. He pressed forward, and she could feel the top ring of the "ice cream cone" slip inside.

"No, please."

Another squirt of lubricant spilled out the top, inside her, and the next ring eased in. It didn't hurt but it felt odd. She bit the inside of her cheek as the next two rings, each a little bigger than the last, slid inside, stretching her hole until it burned, and then at last, it was seated. The pressure astounded her.

A tide of emotions swept through her -- embarrassment, helplessness, depravity, wantonness, and finally, acceptance.

Yale turned the base so the extended flaps sat comfortably above and below the opening.

Vonna let out a ragged breath.

Yale brushed her hair from her cheek and gave her a brief kiss on the lips. "Another passage in your journey well done. You shall be rewarded." He nuzzled her cleavage, kissing the inner curve of her uplifted breasts. "And so shall I." With a quick tug, he flipped down her bra cups. "Oh, yes."

His mouth devoured her breasts, there was no other way to describe it. With wide-open kisses, he explored the curve of each globe, stopping occasionally to suckle an arbitrary spot. It didn't take him long to lick his way to a nipple. Just as he closed his hot mouth over the tip, he clicked on the butt plug's vibrator.

"Aaieeee!" Vonna nearly came on the spot.

He sucked harder and increased the vibration.

Vonna's nails bit into her palms. She curled her toes. Her cunt spasmed. She threw her head back and it clunked lightly on the pole, but she barely noticed.

The vibration decreased to a dull throb. Yale switched to the other breast, swirling his tongue around and around the areola at the same time he increased the vibration. Higher. Higher.

"Suck it!" she screamed, clenching her muscles tight.

With a low chuckle, Yale latched on, sucking hard.

The darting ache in her breast shot to her groin. The tightness swirling inside her cunt bordered on pain. She was going to come.

Yale suddenly let go. The vibrations stilled.

"No, no. Please, don't stop. Yale. *Master*. Please." She thrust her breasts up and her hips out.

He ignored her, pushing a sequence of buttons on the mini-remote, and then he traded it for the flogger he'd left on the hook.

"Do you want to come, my sweet?"

"Yes. Yes, please."

He stared at her, his gaze hot and hungry.

She felt cold, empty, without his touch.

Her body jerked as the butt plug slowly began to vibrate once more. He'd preprogrammed it. For how long? *Ohgod. Ohgod.* "Fuck me, Master. Now. Don't leave me hanging like this."

He smiled at her choice of words. "Come on now, you can beg better than that."

Vonna turned her face away. *Damn him.* How much groveling did he want? Vibrations rumbled into her cunt, redirecting her irritation into longing.

"Feels good, doesn't it?"

He asked the question while he brushed the flogger over her breasts so she wasn't sure if he referred to the soft hide strips or the butt plug. Regardless, she nodded.

"You will not speak again until I tell you. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Master." The light swats on her breasts pumped the blood through her veins faster.

The pulsation in her ass increased and Yale swung a little harder. She grunted, but said nothing more. Her breasts throbbed where the leather hit her. It was strangely pleasant.

Yale waited, watching her, his hard cock thrust upward.

As the vibration in her ass slowed, he slapped the flogger across her breasts again, and again.

She lifted her chin away from the flailing strips and closed her eyes. *Yes. The pain feels good.*

"Ah!" The last strike really hurt, but then settled into a tingly burn that made her nipples ache. She thrust out her hips. *Turn up the vibration! I need it. I want more. More!*

She inhaled harshly as a swing caught her in the ribs. Then her belly. Her cunt was weeping.



How did she get to this place where pain spiked her pulse? She panted as if she'd run for an hour.

Her hips rocked as she squeezed the butt plug tighter and tighter. The vibrations inside her climbed slowly but steadily now. Yale struck her thighs and she jerked with a spasm of pleasure-pain. The swats lightened as he worked his way back up to her breasts.

She wanted the slap of the leather strips now. She wanted to fuck the butt plug. She wanted Yale inside her. She wanted everything. A long loud soulful moan slipped through her lips.

"If you have something to say to me, say it now," Yale said, swinging the flogger hard at her hip.

Vonna inhaled sharply. "Please, Master. My pussy is yours."

"That's right. Now come. I want to see cream dripping from your cunt."

Nothing would please her more, except the feel of his cock plunging inside her. Why did he deny her? "Master!"

"Hush! I told you to come."

With each lash of the flogger, she floated higher, out of herself, into euphoria. The buzz of the butt plug shuddered up into her belly. She was strung tight and yet she felt totally relaxed.

She came. At first, she barely noticed the swift unraveling inside her cunt, and then it hit her in a powerful wave of sensual overload. With a loud gasp, desire burst from within. Her whole body shook.

His chest heaving as mightily as hers, Yale took a big step backward, as if he were afraid she might literally explode.

The vibration in her butt decreased, and yet she couldn't stop the quivering in her legs. Even when the buzzing stopped, her body trembled.

Her skin was on fire. Her nipples ached.

She never felt so good.

By force of will, she lifted her heavy eyelids and looked at Yale. He stared back, his eyes wide, his face pale. "Master," she whispered.

He collapsed to his knees.

## Chapter Seven

Hit by exhaustion and wonder, Yale's heartbeat thundered in his chest. He dropped the flogger clenched in his hand, sat back on his haunches, and stared at Vonna's heaving breasts in a daze. *Holy shit*. The sensual tease he'd planned on the spur of the moment had evolved into one hot session. Had this truly been her first bondage experience? Her intense reaction blew him away. And the way she called him *Master* hit him hard in the solar plexus.

From her neck to her calves, Vonna's skin glowed a light pink. The damp black curls on her pussy glistened with the proof of her orgasm, and still he couldn't believe it.

"Yale?" Worry laced her voice. "Are you all right?"

*Hell, no. I want to leave you bound to that pole forever, make you come over and over again. Fuck you at will. Lose myself in you.*

He rose stiffly, the pain in his gut intensifying with each ragged breath. The rigid hard-on Vonna gave him waned. Mentally, his desire still raged but too much time had passed without taking his meds, which reeked havoc on his system. Before he took care of himself, he had to untie Vonna, fast, in case he passed out.

"You're not supposed to talk," he rasped, stepping between her spread legs and gripping her shoulders. He needed her support, but he'd never ask for it.

She blew out a long breath, concern furrowing her brow. "You look exhausted. I was afraid --"

He kissed her. Not to shut her up but because he couldn't resist. He meant to release her tethered hands while he coaxed her lips open, but his hands fell to her hips instead. As his tongue slipped between her lips, he leaned into her, his overheated body

sizzling when it touched her hot skin. The rapid beating of her heart harmonized with his quick pulse.

*Oh, Vonna. My submissive beauty. My counterpart.*

*How am I supposed to concentrate on my work now? I will think of nothing but you.*

He swept his hands over her warm ass while his tongue leisurely stroked the soft contours of her mouth. His conscience nudged him to stop, to release her, hurry back to his quarters, but he was too wrapped up in Vonna to listen. He wanted to sink into her moist heat and feel her tighten around him.

A long soft moan traveled from her mouth to his. Her body tensed.

It took him a moment to realize the butt plug had started through its cycle again. He lifted away from her mouth, intending to grab the remote and shut it off, but just then she tilted her head back and her eyelids drooped over passion-glazed eyes. His heart skipped a beat when her lips parted and her tongue brushed the edges of her upper lip.

Despite the weariness in his bones, he couldn't resist watching her come one more time. The hand he rested on her ass slowly glided around to the front, teasing open the dewy lips of her pussy. She pressed against his fingers, making little mewling sounds when his fingers slid deep inside her silky hot flesh.

She was drenched.

The buzz of the plug tickled his fingers. He could only imagine how rousing it felt to Vonna. When her breathing escalated into breathy gulps, he swept his thumb over her clit and smiled when a tremor of ecstasy rippled through her. Slick interior muscles hugged his fingers in short spurts. The gripping tension traveled up his arm and shot straight to his groin, causing his shaft to twitch with excitement. Sadly, he was too tired to follow through on his sensual urges.

"Come for me, Vonna," he said softly. "Soak my fingers."

The vibrator in her ass pulsated faster. She inhaled great gulps of air.

"That's it, my sweet." He rubbed her clit harder, making it swell and peak beyond its pink hood.

The telltale trembling of her thighs and the tight clamp of her inner muscles around his fingers let him know she was about to burst. As a final passionate torment, he gently raked his teeth over one taut nipple and then slowly bit down.

The smoky haze in Vonna's half-closed eyes revealed how much his beautiful submissive relished the pain he bestowed on her. As before, her reaction made him burn for her.

Her back arched. She bucked against his hand in a frenzy of release. Harsh pants shot around the room but she didn't speak. Part of him wanted her to scream his name, but she obeyed his order not to speak and that thrilled him more. Faster than he ever imagined, Vonna was falling under his spell.

The butt plug continued to vibrate as she plunged down from her orgasmic high. She winced and wiggled in discomfort, looking at him with pleading eyes.

Slowly, he disengaged his cream doused fingers. "Easy, sweetheart. Relax," he said as he pulled the butt plug out a ring at a time. Aftershocks shook her body as each layer passed over her sphincter. When it finally cleared her pink hole, she hung her head, breathing fast and unsteadily.

Manually, he shut off the vibration and kissed her shoulder. "Incredible."

With labored steps, he walked over to the medical cot, pulled out the top drawer, and dropped the plug into a shallow bowl filled with sanitizing solution, running his damp fingers through the bacteria-fighting gel at the same time. The moisture on his hand dried almost instantly. Lying down on the cot appealed mightily but he had no meds here and Vonna's arms must be numb by now.

Black rings edged in on his vision as he trudged back to her. No more fooling around. He had to get back to his quarters and take his medication. A click of a button on the pole and the rings around her wrists and ankles opened.

"Go." He leaned his forehead on the cool pole and closed his eyes. He'd never felt so worn out. As much as he wanted to cherish her now, he couldn't afford the delay. He'd have to make it up to her later.

"Yale --" Vonna set a shaky hand on his arm.

“Go!” Simply looking at her drained his restraint, so he didn’t make eye contact. He’d taken care of her needs. Now, he needed to take care of himself.

Taking her time, Vonna adjusted her top and retrieved her lab coat from the floor. “I’ll be in my quarters,” she said softly. “If you need me.”

He waved a hand of dismissal, anxious for her to depart. The prospect of him making it back to his quarters on his own two feet slimmed by the second. As soon as she left, he’d take out the hover bench. He usually used it for more interesting pursuits but it would work well in getting him to his quarters quickly.

Fading fast, he didn’t have the strength to look up when the panel door hissed open and closed.

\* \* \*

Knees shaking, head held high, Vonna wrapped her arms around her waist and hurried toward her quarters. All she wanted to think about was a long steam shower. In reality, all she thought about was what a fool she’d been.

*Stupid, stupid, stupid!*

Why had she let Yale do that to her? *Master*. The word made her shiver with revulsion, and excitement.

She’d let him *beat* her.

Her body still hummed from the powerful orgasm. It was as if he’d reached his fist deep inside her and yanked out all her fears, her inhibitions, her secret desires, and left them dangling on the outside of her body where she couldn’t hide from them anymore. He forced her to submit to his dark desires and at the same time, face her true self. Damn him for making her bare her soul like that!

Damn him for being right. He’d given her the most erotic sexual experience in her life.

She halted mid-stride and covered her face.

There were moments when she thought they’d connected. Mutual longing strung between them. Her desire reflected in his eyes. His energy became hers.

She dropped her hands and slowly moved forward again. She'd given him the surrender he wanted, that she wanted, too. Yale was the lover she'd been waiting for her whole adult life.

And he'd cast her aside.

Tears welled in her eyes.

How could she ever face him again?

The door to the rec hall loomed directly in front of her. She couldn't go through it. The others would take one look at her flushed skin and know where she'd been, what she'd done. Most would be shocked, she was sure. Would they treat her with disdain?

She pressed her back against the hallway wall, tilted her head back and closed her eyes. A sob shuddered in her chest.

It was time to leave this place. First, she'd make an effort to find Jake and Kelly. Yale had said the Earthlings' arrival was big news. Hopefully, the other two members of her team were safe and could be easily located. Then she'd find a ride back to Earth where she'd mend her wounded pride, put this embarrassing episode behind her, and obtain a new assignment. She wasn't the docile female Yale made her out to be. She was strong!

She heard the rec hall door open and jerked away from the wall, standing tall, trying to look unaffected by Yale's machinations. A lump jammed in her throat as Quade strolled toward her, preoccupied with something in his hand. In the background, she caught sight of her friend, Jaki staring after Quade, mooning over him as usual. Great, the two people she didn't want to see her.

"Hey, Vonna! Have you seen Yale?" He stopped in front of her, looking down at a vial of pink fluid attached to a med injector. "We've got a new sample --" He looked up at her face and frowned deeply. "What's wrong?"

Her brave front wavered. *Yale rejected me.* She pulled herself together, angry at the whiner within. *Get over it!* "Nothing." The single word came out in a croak.

Quade pocketed the small vial. His gaze drifted down to the skin exposed by her lab coat's V-neck. She looked down, too, and noted the slight welts. Her marks of passage. With a slight lift of her chin, she stared at Quade.

A slight smile tugged at his lips and disappeared. "Did he fuck you?"

What nerve he had asking a question like that! She glared at him. "That's none of your business."

His nostrils flared and he looked her over impassively. "Making you come would've taken a lot out of him," he said, apparently to himself. The excited relief in his eyes faded. Alarm mushroomed in the dark depths. He grabbed her upper arms. "Did. He. Fuck you?"

"No!" She pushed him away.

"Did he ejaculate in your mouth?"

What the -- A fierce scowl pulled on her brows. "Stuff it, Quade."

"Answer the fucking question!"

Vonna jumped. Quade never lost his temper. What was wrong with him? "No. If you must know, he was more interested in --"

"Damn." He looked down the empty hallway, concern etched between his brows. "Where is he?"

Anger simmered to the surface. "Jerking off, I suppose."

"You left him there?" He gave her a reproachful glance. "He hasn't taken a break for five hours." He took a few long strides toward the bondage room.

Now he had her worried. "He kicked me out," she said quietly.

"Damn!" Quade took off at a run.

Without a heartbeat of hesitation, Vonna chased after him. Quade was not a man easily rattled, but the fear in his voice blasted away her self-pity, leaving a gaping hole in her heart.

Quade pounded the entry sequence into the keypad by the door. Apparently, Yale trusted him enough to allow him access to his secret room. When she reflected on it, that was exactly how she'd gotten into the room in the first place. If it wasn't for



Quade's bit of sport in bringing her here, she would've never seen the bondage room. Never felt the power of Yale's desire.

Heat surged through her veins. She'd never escape the memory of this room. The draw of submission was too strong. Already, she yearned to try something new, perhaps the spanking bar or the swing hanging from the ceiling. Preferably with someone she could trust to completely fulfill her needs.

How would she ever trust another male to take her down this road again?

It took her a second to realize Quade had rushed inside while she wavered on the threshold.

Yale lay on the floor in front of an open storage space, his body convulsing.

A sharp sting pricked her chest, and she discovered her heart hadn't atrophied after all. The sight of Yale writhing on the tiles released all the tender feelings she'd held inside for him. Her feet flew across the floor and she slid on her knees the last few feet to Yale's side.

"What's wrong with him?"

Quade removed the injector from his neck, the pink fluid gone. "He's dying."

"Wh-what? Dying?" A fist squeezed her heart.

The convulsions slowed. A sheen of perspiration covered Yale's body.

"Help me get him onto the exam bed." Quade reached beneath Yale's arms and lifted his torso.

Vonna slipped between his legs and grabbed him beneath his knees. Good thing she toned her muscles every day or she'd be useless. Yale's massive frame weighed a ton. They dropped him on the cot with grunts of relief.

Somehow the various restraints attached to the bed, and the drawers below full of sex toys and who knew what else, no longer frightened her. In fact, curiosity made her blush. Thankfully, the strain of carrying Yale covered the warmth radiating in her cheeks.

"What medication did you give him?" she asked breathlessly while she gripped Yale's hand and monitored the rapid pulse in his wrist.

"It's a new strain of the old drug used to slow down the body's deterioration." He shot her an unreadable look. "It wouldn't have been necessary if you'd let him fuck you."

"What does intercourse have to do with anything?" She gave him a resentful glare. "Not that it matters. I offered. Yale chose not to take me." Her voice rose. "If you must know, I *wanted* him to fuck me, but he was determined to prove a point."

One of Quade's brows quirked up. His lips twisted. "He made you submit to your inner self?"

She glanced away. "Yes," she choked out.

"Next time, he will fuck you."

"There will be no next time," she said doggedly, and miserably.

Quade gently squeezed her shoulder. "If this med doesn't work, Yale will *need* to make love to you in order to survive."

"I don't understand," she said, shaking her head. She squeezed Yale's hand, willing him to fight whatever ailed him, and prepared to do whatever it took to make him well.

"Exchanging sexual fluids with you will mend and strengthen Yale's DNA structure," Quade explained. "We've been analyzing the Human-Alishon mutation for years, but we can't find a common denominator because each fusion is unique. We're getting closer though."

"Why didn't you tell me this before?" She dug her nails into Yale's palm. "More to the point, why didn't *he* tell me I could help him? He had a chance to take what he needed from me and he didn't." The hurt of rejection slammed back into her chest.

"I'm guessing because that is the Medical Council's way, and Yale despises their methods." Quade shrugged. "I also think Yale respected you too much to use you for his own benefit."

Well, that made her feel better. Sort of. "He'd rather die than prolong an inevitable death?" She wanted to smack him for being so stubborn. He could accomplish so much if he felt better!

"With your help in the lab, his death will *not* be inevitable."

She blew out a long breath. "I've been doing research from scratch. Even with this new information, who knows how long it will take to find an answer?"

"We'd hoped new eyes would find something we missed, and you did. Just not as we expected."

Vonna heaved a breath of frustration -- and relief. Yale's pulse had slowed to a normal rate. She stroked his face and ran her palm down his chest. It was the first time she'd touched him intimately, and it sent a shiver down her arms that had nothing to do with his cooling body. "What are you talking about, Quade?"

"Working together. Sharing ideas. The glory of being *the* scientist to discover the cure outweighed the desire to collaborate. After Yale expelled you from the lab, we started talking to each other. *Listening*. We applied some of your methods to failed tests. In a matter of minutes, we concocted this new drug."

"You injected Yale without testing it?" Anxiety quivered in her belly.

Quade nodded toward Yale. "So far, so good."

"My God, Quade."

He looked a little sheepish, but confident. "Would you rather watch Yale die? It was worth the risk, Vonna."

Slowly, Yale's eyelids fluttered open. Vonna leaned over him, watching the irises of his eyes dilate, the black center taking over the brown ring of color.

A weak smile lit his face. "Vonna. You came."

She wasn't sure how he meant that.

While she mulled it over, Quade nudged her aside. "How do you feel, Yale?"

His bleary eyes locked on Vonna, his smile grew. "Fine."

The smile disappeared. Yale jerked to the side of the cot, and puked.

## Chapter Eight

Two moon cycles later, a burgeoning sense of hope and joy pervaded the lab group. If they hadn't perfected the cure yet, they were very close.

Finally, Vonna's expertise in biogenetics had paid off. All the test subjects, including Yale, improved daily. Every tweak to the drug Quade had given Yale yielded more positive results. It was time to take it public. Somehow, Quade had convinced Yale to visit the Medical Council to discuss their progress. A day turned into a week, and now Yale visited continuously for days at a time.

Damn, Vonna missed him.

She slapped her hand at the holographic ball and watched it zoom through the long, open-ended box atop the playing table toward Jaki, who smashed it back with equal venom.

"Stupid males," her friend jeered. "I practically threw myself at Quade last night and the big dope stared at me as if I'd lost my mind. When is he going to forget the past and live for today?"

Normally, Vonna would empathize with her pixie friend's long-suffering infatuation with Quade, but she fought her own frustrations. "Some relationships aren't meant to be."

Jaki huffed from hitting the ball and, perhaps, in exasperation. "Since when are you a quitter?"

"I'm a realist. Some fires are just a lot of smoke. Once my work here is done, I should concentrate on finding the scientists who came here with me and then hail a ride back to Earth." She slammed the ball back to Jaki. The notion of leaving her friends at the lab, leaving Yale, tore at her. Her formidable lover wasn't as cold-hearted as she'd thought.

The more she reflected on the illness Yale fought so hard to hide and his brusque dismissal in the bondage room, the more she was convinced he hadn't rejected her. A proud man, he simply hadn't wanted her to see his weakness. The proof lay in the long, meaningful looks he cast her way that simmered with sultry promise.

Anytime he ventured near, the urge to drop to her knees and ask his pleasure hummed through her. She longed for his possession. Dreamt of it, day and night.

To make matters worse, she'd ventured to the bondage room once when Yale was away, simply out of loneliness, and found Fifa and Hamnuqui engaged in dom-sub play. Before she could make a hasty exit, they spied her, and invited her to stay. Appallingly curious, she'd watched unobtrusively near the door.

Hamnuqui had attached a chain to the ring on Fifa's collar, bent her over the spanking bar, and connected the other end of the chain to a floor ring. The way Fifa deferred to him had been an eye-opening experience. The caning on her ass had been scorching. During the whole scene, Vonna had played with her clit, empathizing with the burn of every strike, eventually climaxing along with Fifa in tortured silence. She'd left twice as frustrated as before.

"If Quade didn't interfere every time Yale came near me, then I wouldn't be so sexually frustrated."

"He's afraid any physical contact between you will muddle Yale's test results," Jaki said in Quade's defense.

"I know. And he's probably right." Vonna smacked the ball so it ricocheted inside the box. "But Yale left me hanging."

"That's not what I heard," Jaki snickered.

Wide-eyed, she glanced up at her friend. Undoubtedly Yale had told Quade what happened in the bondage room. Had Quade told the whole lab? Heat flushed up her neck into her cheeks. "Shut up." In anticipation of the ball's approach, she lunged to the right, but the ball hit the corner of the box and changed trajectory. It disappeared behind her.

"Eight to six. My serve." A new ball bounced on the table in front of Jaki. She swung her hand and missed the lob.

Vonna laughed at the error.

Jaki paid her no attention. She stared past Vonna to the other side of the rec hall. Without turning, Vonna knew Quade had entered the room. When her friend's mouth dropped open, she raised a curious brow.

"He's coming over here."

Vonna hid her smile. About time Quade came around. When he strode past her, she caught Yale in her peripheral vision, and froze. Moist heat flowed from her scalp to her toes.

Neither male wore a lab coat, only the traditional loincloth, leaving plenty of hard muscle to admire. As Yale's health improved, the bulk in his arms had increased and new strength appeared in the hard curves of his chest. Ridges of muscle had formed on his abdomen, his calves had tightened, and she swore his loincloth must have shrunk because she caught glimpses of tight ass she'd never seen before. All that male virility made her mouth water. The devilish look in his eyes stole her breath.

A squeal from Jaki jerked her attention away.

Quade had grabbed her pixie friend beneath the arms, lifted her up, and pressed her to the wall. "You were right. I've been stupid." Pinning her with his body, he kissed Jaki with smoldering passion.

She was happy for Jaki, and jealous. Yale had kissed her like that once. Briefly.

She turned her head to look back at Yale and gasped. He stood right next to her.

"Come with me."

He'd said it so softly, so low, she thought she hadn't heard him correctly. "What?"

He looked intently at her. "I want you to come with me."

She swallowed, nervous energy zinging through her veins. "Where?"

He stared at her, primal need flaring in his eyes. She knew exactly where he meant to take her. With a predatory grin, he leaned close and whispered in her ear.

"Where you belong." His teeth raked her earlobe. His lips sketched a moist path down the column of her neck. "In my loving care."

Her legs wobbled. Cream coated her cunt.

She cut a worried glance at Quade's back. "We shouldn't."

"I'm done being a test subject, Vonna. Now that we're seeing positive results, Quade has plenty of other volunteers." His nostrils flared. His gaze crept down her flushed body. Satisfaction glowed in his face. "Now. Follow me." He turned and slowly walked away.

She could no more deny him than she could stop breathing. Her legs seemed to move of their own volition, as if he'd tethered her and drew her along. "Yes, Master," she said beneath her breath.

They walked in time with one another, Vonna keeping pace a few steps behind. Along the way, she admired the power in his broad shoulders and back, his slim waist, the taut curves of his ass peeking out the sides of the loincloth flap, the heavy muscles in his legs. He was perfection. She belonged to him. If she played her cards right, he'd be hers. By the time she entered the bondage room, her pussy was soaked.

Not far into the space, Yale stopped and turned to face her. "My sweet Vonna."

She gave him a slow affectionate smile. "I didn't think I'd ever be back here again."

"I never doubted it." Eyes smoldering with desire, he opened her lab coat and pushed it off her shoulders, smiling as he revealed her body. She'd taken to wearing the national uniform -- a loincloth and nothing else. "You don't know how much I want to take you right *now*," he said, untying the cloth at her hips. "But I will see your pussy weep for me first."

She checked him out, getting a very good idea of his arousal from the forward pitch of his loincloth. "I am yours, sir."

The spotted hide flap shifted over his stretching cock.

Hiding her delight, Vonna spread her legs, keeping her eyes hooded, and turned her palms toward him. "How may I serve you?"

A long pause ensued, but she dared not look up. This time, she would do everything right.

“Get down on your hands and knees.”

She did as he asked, throwing her ass high in the air, eager for his penetration. This time, he would join with her, even if she had to jump him to do it.

“Crawl over to the hover bench.”

She glanced around, quickly finding the long padded board lying flat on the floor. An easily stored extra seat, it was designed with the flexibility to rise to the perfect height for the sitter’s legs. When she was young, her parents owned a similar model which Vonna and her friends straddled and rode through the house as if it were a witch’s broom. She wondered if her parents ever used it the way Yale intended, whatever that was.

Moving forward on all fours, she sashayed her hips, making sure Yale had a good view of her slick sex as he walked behind her.

“Now lay your back on the bench, arms above your head.”

She stretched out as he instructed, waiting while he walked around her, drinking her in with his eyes. There was something exotic about lying on the floor while he inspected her. Crazy, but true. Molten heat crawled through her belly simply from his intense absorption in her.

He walked into the storage area and she felt the loss of his presence in every pore. When he returned, he held a clear box in his hands, most of the contents she couldn’t make out, but it didn’t take a neurosurgeon to figure out they were various sex toys and remotes. He reached into his box of tricks and the bench rose a foot off the ground.

Vonna held on for dear life. A foot wasn’t far to fall, but it would still be embarrassing.

Yale pulled out several long nylon cords and put down the box. For the next few minutes, he wrapped the cord around her body and the bench, creating a twirl of white from her ankles to her waist. When he got to her ribs, he tied a new cord above and



below her breasts, crisscrossing in between by looping it around her neck. Her tanned breasts mounded between the tight white lines. He finally tied the ends off.

"Place your hands beneath the bench, Vonna." He used the last cord to tie her wrists together. Finished, he tilted the top of the bench up slightly so Vonna faced him, floating at a forty-five degree angle.

"Do you feel secure, my love?"

"Yes, Master." Pah! She couldn't move a millimeter. It felt strangely arousing, having no control whatsoever.

"Good." He went back to the box and took out a handful of little rings, each one studded with rubies around a gold circle that didn't quite close. He stuck several on the rim of each ear, one on each earlobe, and one on her nostril. "These will enhance your experience." He placed one on the edge of her belly button, pinching the skin between the open blunt ends. Yale looked up for her reaction.

It didn't hurt *too* much. The area around each ring began to warm and tingle, which was a little odd, but not uncomfortable.

Yale gave her a brief kiss. With great care, he attached a ring to the side of her labia.

The skin there was a lot thicker than the ring opening, so the ring clamped on tight. Vonna gritted her teeth, but made no noise. That earned her a longer kiss, a play of open lips and flashing tongues. Vonna moaned with delight. Teasing her with more flicking kisses, Yale drew back at the same time he cautiously tipped the bench up higher so Vonna floated vertically in front of him. The open-mouth kisses never ended. The edges of her ears grew hotter.

Yale grasped her hair and deepened the kiss, driving her wild by grazing his smooth hard chest over her distended nipples. Eventually, he softened the kiss and drew away, leaving her with butterfly kisses on her parted lips. Down below, a burning sensation spread out from the ring in her labia, teasing her clit with streaks of heat.

He showed her the last two rings he held in his hand. "You know where these are going, don't you?"

Vonna's throat closed up. She nodded. Pain streaked through her nipples at the thought of the rings clamped on them. This was going to hurt. The nipple clamps she'd experimented with had rubber tips and were adjustable, and she hadn't liked that so much. But she'd do anything to please Yale.

"I admire your courage, Vonna." A mischievous glint flashed in his eyes. "I'll give you something to distract you."

He pulled a silver egg-shaped dildo from his goodie box. Even though her legs were bound together, there was enough room for Yale to push the egg between her thighs and nudge it into the folds of her pussy lips.

"There you go, my sweet. Enjoy."

A moment later, it began to vibrate. Vonna clenched her thighs against the penetrating buzz. The rocking egg tapped the edge of the labia ring that cast its own expanding circle of fire. In an instant, she was ready to fuck anything.

"You like that, Vonna?"

She squirmed against the shuddering egg. "Yes, Master."

"It makes your cunt cream?" He caressed her breasts, sweeping his palms over the curves, mashing the globes together, and rubbing his fingers over her nipples.

"Yes, sir." She rolled her hips within the limited flexibility of the binding, fucking him in her mind.

Yale slowly pinched her nipples.

"Oooh." She rocked harder. "Master, please."

Yale raised the hovering bench higher until her breasts were level with his mouth. "You look scrumptious."

The first scorching lick over her nipple rocketed to her core. His tongue swirled and flicked. He kissed and nibbled around the tight peak and laved it some more.

"Suck it! Please!" Her tightly bound pelvis pushed hard against the cord.

While one hand drifted over her bound ribs and belly, he moved onto the other nipple and repeated his lascivious licks.

She tried to arch her back, but she couldn't move.

"How's your pussy doing, honey?" He reached between her legs and rubbed her clit, bumping the vibrating egg and the ring in the process.

"Oh. Oh. Ooooh!" She expelled a rush of air, followed by sucking in a lungful of oxygen.

He chuckled. "That good, huh?" His mouth closed over a nipple, sucking gently.

The entire length of her body shuddered. She'd died and gone to heaven.

He stopped sucking to lick the elongated bud. "Are you ready for my cock now? Tell me, my sweet."

"Yes, Master! Fuck me. Please."

Yale played roughly with her clit, tapping and rubbing hard.

Heat sizzled up her neck to the rim of her ears. Sharp pants echoed in her ears -- hers.

He bent to her breast again, pulling the taut bud with his teeth. Suddenly, the egg lodged between her legs kicked up a notch.

"Ohgod, ohgod. Fuck meeee!"

Before she knew it, a ring pinched the nipple that moments before had been in Yale's mouth. A scream caught in her throat. The sharp pinch was like a spike driven into her chest, and just as quickly, the pain seeped away.

To distract her further, Yale tweaked her swollen clit in a steady rhythm that made her clench her buttocks in pleasurable agony. "I've wanted to fuck you every day, Vonna. Did you know that?" He gave the unadorned nipple a quick nip. "But I swore I wouldn't use your body for my own self-interest. I want to fuck you because I feel passion, not need."

He pushed the vibrating egg hard against her clit. It felt so good, tears leaked from the edges of her eyes and ran down the outside of her cheeks. She looked into his serious eyes with a silent plea. "Fuck me, Master. Please. Now."

"When I take you, Vonna, I'm going to make you come so hard, you'll see stars." He nudged the egg deeper between her legs, away from her overly sensitive clit.

Joy and relief swept over her.

This time, she saw him twist open the ring and snap it onto her other nipple. She clenched her jaw tight, squeezed her eyes closed, and turned her head away, riding out the pain.

Yale caressed her breasts and that seemed to take some of the sting away, leaving nothing but a pleasurable throb behind.

"Look at me, Vonna."

She opened her eyes just as he tossed away his loincloth. He stroked the smooth length from the base to the big head. "Is this what you want?"

She nodded vigorously.

"Beg me for it."

Vonna licked her dry lips. "Please sink your big cock into my pussy, Master. I need you to fuck me. I've got to have you. Please. Take me. I'm yours. I'll do anything you want. Master, I beg you."

A lascivious grin spread across his face. "I want you to suck my cock. Will you do that?"

Vonna licked her lips and nodded, hoping he didn't plan to shove all of his cock down her throat.

"Tell me."

"Yes, Master," she rasped. "I want to suck you."

He plucked the vibrating egg from her pussy, turned it off, and set it on the floor. "Here we go," he said as he slowly flipped the hovering bench Vonna was tied to upside down. Her long curly hair swung down, the ends brushing the floor. After a little tug, the ropes on her lower body fell away and for a moment, her long legs flailed in the air. Yale grabbed her knees, pulled them toward his chest, and set her thighs on his shoulder. Vonna automatically gripped his head with her knees for support.

"Mmm, you smell good." He pressed his face into her upper thigh and licked the joint between leg and crotch.

Hunger gnawed at her belly. Without the use of her hands, and little flexibility in her neck, she had a hard time catching his cock in her mouth. Yale helped by setting the

flared head on her lips. She'd just closed her mouth over him when Yale's tongue swept the length of her drenched pussy.

The feeding frenzy began. She sucked and licked and took him as deep as she was able while he held the hover bench steady and feasted on her pussy. She moaned around his hard length while he moaned into her cunt. When she sucked on his cock head, he sucked on her clit. Twice, she'd come close to exploding, but he'd stop whatever he was doing, and press kisses along her inner thighs, calming her thudding heart. In retaliation, she raked her teeth over his cock. The game continued until Yale eased his cock from her mouth and pushed the bench away with a roar.

She squealed as she buoyed across the room upside down, her body doubled over with her bent knees floating in front of her face. Yale chased after her, grabbed an ankle, and yanked her back across the room. The blood rushing to her head made her dizzy. The jostling rings in her nipples, belly, and labia shot sparks all through her contorted body.

With a loud smack at her feet, he pushed the bench flat, then untied her hands. Leaving her torso bound to the board, he pressed Vonna and the hovering bench down on top of the cot. The contact cut off the bench's flotation mode. Yale lifted her closest leg high, climbed up, and settled between her open thighs.

"Do you want me now, Vonna? Right now?"

"My God, Yale, take me! Slip your cock into my cunt and plunder me. Make me come." She wanted him so badly, she hovered on the edge of hysteria. "As your devoted slave, I'm begging you."

He shoved her hands over her head and locked them into restraints. "I'm going to make you mine, Vonna King." It sounded like a snarl. His narrowed eyes simmered with unbridled heat. With an expression of grim determination, he spread her ankles wide and eased the head of his cock into her juicy cunt.

"Yes! God, yes."

Her breath caught in her throat. Like the rest of him, the bulb at the tip of his cock was big, bigger than she remembered it being in her mouth. It stretched the tight

opening to the max, but Yale pushed through the resistance, hissing as he inched forward. "You're going to make me come too soon, Vonna," he said between clenched teeth. Control and perhaps a little impatience stretched the muscular cords in his neck. A drop of perspiration tumbled from his temple to her belly.

"Then you'll have to fuck me more than once. Three or four times," she exclaimed.

He growled and pressed deeper.

"Fuck your slave, Master. I am yours."

He jerked inside of her. "Fuck!" Like water rushing through a broken dam, his control snapped.

After a few rough strokes, he let go of her ankles and shifted forward until he lay on top of her, supporting himself on his forearms, his hips rocking, his slippery cock sliding in and out. Sweltering flesh pressed the rings on her nipples and labia into her sensitive skin. As soon as a peep of sound formed in her throat, he swallowed her complaint with a hungry kiss. His slick thrusts smoothed out, yet urgency remained. He rode her hard, driving deep and fast.

She was hot. She was shivering.

As her body surrendered to him, she slid her legs around his back.

His strokes slowed, and his kisses gentled. He lifted his weight off her and plunged in and out of her sopping pussy in long, even strokes. A blush crept into his cheeks as he slowed and strained deep inside.

They rocked against each other in a rhythm that fit them, as if they'd been making love forever.

Heat flashed around her nipple rings, crackled down her belly, and met the blaze rising from her clit. The orgasm swelled, twisting and sizzling, turning her inside out. The stars he'd promised she see, hovered on the edges of her vision.

Her heartbeat raced faster and faster, the pulse points in her neck thumping hard.

"Master," she whispered in a soft plea, gripping his cock in a stranglehold.

Fire leapt in his dark eyes. He pummeled into her, his long cock plunging through the cream lining her cunt. Damp skin slapped damp skin.

*God, he's big.* Even with all her natural lubrication, she felt every inch of him.

He drove hard, battering her body with every thrust. The ruby rings shook, stabbing her with pinpoints of painful pleasure.

*Yes, yes. That's it. Fuck me, Yale. Make me yours.*

She curled her fingers into her palms. The swirling tightness in her cunt heralded a delicious orgasm. "Please. Please. Make me come!"

Yale expelled his breath in harsh pants as he rocked into her. "Oh. Gods. Fuck. Yes." He tipped his head back, stretching the muscles in his neck. "You are mine!" he bellowed.

His possessiveness warmed her toes. "Yes, Master," she said firmly.

He shoved hard and deep, stuffing her full.

*Maaaster!* A long moan hummed up her throat as her clit puffed up, and then her voice cracked as the orgasm peaked in an explosion of heat and light. "Aaah! Oh!" Contractions pulsed around Yale's thick cock.

On a high-pitched scream, she shattered into a million points of bright white light.

The powerful shudder within her body echoed through his frame. He pushed and grunted and filled her with his warm seed. The smile on his face looked more like a grimace, but the joyful glow in his eyes radiated deep within her.

Boom!

The cot rocked. Throughout the room, metal clinked.

As much as she'd like to think her orgasm had gone off the charts, the sound of crumpling metal and shouting voices made the blood freeze in her veins.

## Chapter Nine

Yale collapsed on top of Vonna's heaving chest, protecting her naked body as two men holding long, wicked-looking knives rushed forward, followed by... Jake and Kelly!

"Get off her!" Kelly shouted, pointing her laser gun at Yale's side.

Exhilaration swept through Vonna at the sight of her two lost teammates. They'd found *her*! The deadly intent focused on Yale, however, gave her pause, especially coming from Kelly who was usually reserved. "Don't shoot!" Vonna cried.

"She's not a prisoner," Yale told Kelly, cautiously releasing the links around Vonna's wrists.

Kelly didn't look convinced. "That's not what we heard." She waved her gun at him. "Get up and move away."

"I, uh, can't." He looked down at Vonna's chest.

Kelly's gaze shifted to where Yale and Vonna were joined at the hip. A deep blush raced into her cheeks.

"It's all right," Vonna said, pushing at Yale's immobile shoulders, unmindful of her nudity. "They're my friends." Kelly, who looked healthy and well fed since her arrival on this planet, wore nothing but a loincloth, so Vonna's state of undress didn't bother her too much. Besides, her clothes lay on the floor not too far away.

"He's knotted," the Alishon closest to Kelly said, lowering his weapon. The other Alishon remained in attack formation in front of Jake, who was apparently weaponless.

"What?" Vonna furrowed her brows at Yale, seeking an explanation.

"Give me a minute, sweetheart, and I'll get off you," he said while concentrating on untying the bindings knot.



After a few strong tugs, he loosened the cord. Blood rushed back into her compressed flesh. *Oo-ee!* That stole her breath as much as being tied up. Involuntarily, she tightened all her muscles, including the tender ones surrounding Yale's stiff cock. She felt a ripple run through him in response.

A tiny suspicion nagged at her brain. She wiggled beneath Yale. Yup, he still stuffed her full. Her shimmy made him wince. "No," she said with sudden clarity. She glanced at the male next to Kelly. "Knotted like a canine?"

"Sort of." With a grimace, Yale pulled free. The ballooned head of his penis dripped with their mixed cream. She blinked as it shrank back to normal. "The tip expands a little to ensure insemination."

"A little?" she gasped. No wonder she'd felt so full.

Yale sat on the cot beside her, turning his back on the intruders, and took a few deep breaths. "She's free to go."

A heartbeat of silence met his declaration.

"You've *bonded* with her -- by force," Jake shouted in disgust. "You share DNA. And now you throw her away?"

A blush heated Vonna's cheeks. She unwrapped the remaining loose cord, sat up, crossed one leg over the other, and threw an arm across her lap.

Yale narrowed his eyes and swiveled around to face Jake, looking dangerously angry and yet she could see pain etched in the deep green orbs. "I am her Master in this room." He jumped off the cot and strode right up to the knifepoint held by the quiet Alishon standing in front of Jake.

"Far enough, Yalenfrapqui," Jake's protector snarled.

Yale held his ground. "Beyond that door -- the one you blew open, it's *her* choice to go or stay."

Kelly swept Vonna's lab coat up off the floor and brought it to her, her blonde ponytail swinging wildly. Vonna smiled gratefully, and stuck an arm through one sleeve. "Nice jewelry," Kelly said beneath her breath.

Vonna had forgotten she wore the rings. Kelly's reminder fueled erotic memories that warmed her all the way through. She quickly gathered her lab coat around her.

Kelly raised a brow at Vonna's reaction. Leaning close, she asked, "Did he say, *Master?*"

"Yes," Vonna replied softly, looking down at the tile floor. She raised her chin with pride and looked into Kelly's eyes. "Yes, he did."

She thought she heard Kelly say, "That's hot," but she wasn't sure. She did hear her next announcement loud and clear.

"There's a ship bound for our solar system less than a light year away." Kelly caressed her belly. "I'm not going, but --"

Vonna stared at her slightly rounded belly in disbelief. "You're pregnant?"

A slow, sweet smile lit Kelly's face. "Yes." She glanced over at the nearby Alishon. "Rye is a skillful negotiator."

"He coerced you? Is he sick? Sex isn't the answer. We've developed a drug --"

"Freeze!" Quade leapt through the shattered door opening shouldering a firearm with a large spray nozzle on the end. Spread out behind him, lab scientists, technicians, and clerks wielded anything that could be used as a weapon, including tiny hypodermic needles.

Yale raised his palm to them. "It's under control." He looked back at Vonna with pride glowing in his eyes. This untrained mini-army represented Yale's family.

"We heard the explosion," Jaki said, squeezing past Quade to the front of the crowd.

Quade shoved her back behind him. "What's going on here?"

Waving a hand at the intruders, Yale explained, "These are Vonna's misguided defenders."

"If anyone was coerced, it looked like it was you," Kelly said to Vonna as if the room wasn't crowded with a threatening mob.

"I'm here of my own free will," Vonna replied while scanning the faces of her co-workers, searching for censure in their expressions. "What Yale did..." Heat seared her

neck at the admission she was about to make. "I wanted him to do." She locked onto her lover's face. "I liked it."

God, that was hard to admit aloud.

Surprisingly, smiles broke out on their faces. Several broke from the ranks, rushed to Yale, and slapped him on the back. Jake's buddy grabbed Jake out of the way, drawing him back against the wall. As more workers moved into the room, the Alishon moved in front of Jake, refusing to lower his weapon. Vonna raised a brow when Jake set his hands on the muscular Alishon's hips and gave him a little caress. He whispered something into his protector's ear and ended it with a lick along the pointed rim. The male's pointed ears turned bright red as Jake's hand disappeared beneath the Alishon's loincloth.

*Jake and a male? Who knew?*

Pre-occupied with Jake and his lover, she'd missed seeing Yale walk over to her. "Are you staying or not, Vonna King?" he asked loud enough for all to hear.

She searched Yale's eyes, delighted with the apparent affection shining there, and perhaps a bit of vulnerability, too. Without realizing it, he was everything she'd been looking for -- confident, determined, intelligent, and commanding. How could she give him up?

"I'm just beginning to discover myself." She lowered her gaze out of respect for her teacher. "I'd like to stay, Master," she added softly, meaningfully. "If you'll have me."

"Yes," he said with a loud expulsion of air. "I want you like I've never wanted anything in my life." He crushed her to him and kissed her long and hard. The pressure against her nipple rings tore through her in a burning streak, leaving her hungry for much, much more. Yale broke the kiss with a loud smack and held her at arm's length. "You're staying?" he asked, as if he didn't quite believe it.

"I'll stay," she said with a huge smile.

"Good." He stuck his tongue through the ring on her earlobe and wiggled it. "Because I'm not done with you yet."

"Yes, sir," she said with a playful grin, watching his erection grow.

Kelly cleared her throat. "I'll send a communication to Earth, letting them know our latest status."

Closing the distance between herself and Yale, Vonna wrapped her arm around Yale's back, hiding that lovely erection from everyone's view. She tilted her head to the side and caught Jake's eye. "Are you staying, too?"

A devilish grin split Jake's rugged face. "I've discovered the wonder of having two mates. I can't leave them."

"Two?"

He threw his arm over the Alishon's shoulder and pounded him on the chest. "This is Drum. Suva is our mate. She is hoping for our swift return." He winked at Vonna.

*Whoa. And I thought my sex life was kinky?*

"I hope we can all get together soon and share stories," Vonna said.

"Later," Yale whispered in her ear. He raised an arm in the air and waved it at everyone lingering in the room. "Out! Out!"

He grabbed Quade's shoulder as he walked by. "Be our host to Vonna's friends, will you?" Lowering his voice, he added, "I knew Drum looked familiar. His mate, Suva, is the head of the Biology Department at the learning center. I want them to return to the city with positive feedback."

"No problem." Quade chuckled and shook his head. "Welcome back to life, Yale." He glanced over at Vonna. "Have fun."

"I will." He gave his friend a good-natured punch in the chest.

Without waiting for the last person to evacuate the room, he turned back to Vonna. He shoved her lab coat off her shoulders, leaving it bunched at her back so her arms were constricted. "Now, about those rings..."

## **Elayne S. Venton**

I've loved writing as long as I can remember. When I discovered e-publishing, I started on my way to fulfilling a life-long dream. Whether the characters of my stories are aliens from a distant galaxy, the couple next door, or creatures of the night, their passion will hurl them together and love will bind them throughout time.

There used to be a time when I'd start a book in the afternoon and stay up until the wee hours to finish it. Now those hours are spent researching, writing, re-writing, and occasionally making dinner! In my spare time, I volunteer at the local historical society.

Having lived on the east coast all my life, from New Hampshire to North Carolina, I've met characters -- oops -- people from all walks of life. Currently, I live in the inner coastal area of North Carolina with my wonderful, industrious husband, two teenagers, a lovable golden retriever, and a pet rabbit.

I hope you enjoy my stories as much as I enjoyed writing them. Feedback is always welcome at [elayne@esventon.com](mailto:elayne@esventon.com).