

Cosmic Cops: Dark Ecstasy

B.J. McCall

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Chapter One

Off duty and dressed in civilian clothes, Captain Isabet Renard chose an unoccupied table to observe the action and feel the pulse of the galactic adult playground called Club Xs. Colorful lights flashed from the high dome ceiling of the vast entertainment arena and bounced off gyrating dancers. A series of hidden cameras caught the action and displayed the vacationers on a variety of screens. A band called Space Junk played on one of several suspended stages. Three naked female pleasure bots wallowed in a large vat of clear gel on one of the stages playing touch and lick. Directly opposite, a male and female bot copulated on another. Large male and female bots dressed in white served drinks amid the clothes-optional steamy chaos.

A statuesque bot with glowing blue eyes glided to Isa's table. Her sleeveless white gown clung to her lush curves. "Your pleasure, Miss?" The bot spoke in a pleasant female voice and displayed an eyeful of cleavage.

"I'll have a Relaxer, over ice."

"Thank you, Miss."

While Isa waited for her drink, her gaze was drawn to the male on stage. His golden-tanned skin glistened beneath the lights as he moved between the female bot's pale legs. His legs were long and muscular and his ass was firm. Club Xs was renowned for acquiring top-of-the-line pleasure bots.

Although the pleasure bots provided momentary satisfaction and eased the stress that came with being a cop, Isa longed for the complication of a human male. Her job made relationships difficult, if not impossible, but Isa missed the imperfections and the unpredictability of a real man.

Cuddling up with a bot at the end of a day-from-hell just didn't cut it. Stationed on Helos, Isa hoped her hellish days were over. She expected her new position would challenge her on entirely new levels.

The couple shifted positions. Facing the audience, the pale-skinned female rode the male. Her face contorted with pleasure as she slammed her electronically enhanced pussy against the male's thick cock.

She lifted her long, black hair and let it fall down her back in a dramatic display. Throwing her head back in mimicked ecstasy, the bot massaged her perfect breasts and tugged sensually on her elongated nipples.

How could a human female compete with programmed perfection? Beautiful in face and form, the pleasure bot would do anything requested and never ask a man where he was going when fastening his trousers.

Female bots never wanted to cuddle and were forever primed and ready for sexual activity.

The couple shifted again, the female now positioned on her hands and knees. When the male bot kneeled behind the female, Isa felt the air leave her lungs. The bot was mouth-wateringly gorgeous. His eyes were silver and framed with dark lashes. His straight, black hair fell to his shoulders, and his classic facial features were a sculptor's dream.

She gasped audibly, causing the occupants of the table next to her to turn. One of the four women spoke. "That's Kriz. He's modeled after Slade."

"The station commander?"

The woman brushed aside a strand of red hair and locked gazes with Isa. Her eyes were a brilliant green. "Slade's a real hunk."

"I'm surprised the commander allows Kriz to perform."

"I've heard Slade isn't all that pleased, but since Kriz isn't an exact replication, it's legal."

"What's different?"

The woman grinned then touched her fingertip to her left cheek. "Slade has a scar and a streak of white hair. Kriz is modeled after the youthful Slade. The way he looked when he first joined the Cosmic Cops."

Although the official title was Galactic Enforcement Agency, the public had nicknamed the off-planet police unit as the Cosmic Cops.

Isa recalled the stories she'd heard about Slade. He'd barely survived a mission that had left him visibly scarred and with a shock of white hair. Both physical blemishes were easily remedied. Apparently, Slade had chosen to live with both.

"Kriz must be expensive?"

"It's said that Slade struck a deal with Cynara, the owner of Club Xs. Kriz only fucks bots and Cynara."

Emphasizing each syllable, the woman pronounced the club owner's name as Cyn-a-ra. Owning a club like Xs, her name *should* begin with sin. "Too bad," Isa responded.

"I could wake up to that face and body, forever," the woman said before turning away to converse with her friends.

Watching the male bot take the female from behind, Isa was aware of a sudden, needy heat and crossed her legs.

Every cop in the galaxy had heard of Slade and speculated why he'd left the GEA. The commander of Space Station Helos had earned his reputation in the field, not behind a desk. At least she'd be prepared for tomorrow's scheduled meeting. Her initial reaction to seeing Slade shouldn't be a horny gasp.

Forcing her gaze away from Kriz, Isa scanned the room. Three tables away a female slid beneath a table and kneeled between a man's legs. From where Isa sat it was difficult to ascertain whether the female was a pleasure bot or human.

On Earth, entertainment arenas like Club Xs did not exist. A privately held corporation owned Helos and Club Xs legally provided any desired adult entertainment activity. Children were not allowed on the space station. Robots imaged after children were forbidden throughout the galaxy.

Every cop stationed off-planet wanted to work on Helos, and Isa had made the cut. The entertainment deck housing the club was her beat. Except for the police command post, Club Xs and its subsidiary pleasure functions consumed every square foot of the vast deck.

Although the space station was privately owned, the government insisted Helos hire real cops. Specialized police units handled station security, customs, commerce and resident workers. The unit captains reported to a chief at GEA central. The station commander was akin to the mayor of a city, except he wasn't an elected official and was subject to approval by the GEA. Although Isa had arrived on the station only a few hours ago, she wanted to see the place, absorb its energy as a woman and a civilian before assuming her official duties.

Excitement pounded in Isa's chest. The most famous entertainment lounge in the galaxy was a major step in her career.

The serving bot arrived with her drink. "Is this your first visit to Club Xs?"

"Yes."

"You will find available pleasures on your table screen. All the performers, except for Kriz, are available for special sessions. Your pleasure is our pleasure."

Kriz would make the club a fortune. Cynara must have a real thing for Slade. Scheduled to meet with the owner in three days, Isa anticipated an interesting session.

After the bot glided away, Isa placed her thumb against a smooth indentation at the side of the screen and scanned the pleasures list. At Club Xs, you could fuck or be fucked by man, woman, robot or beast.

Isa chose to view the male pleasure bots. She sipped her drink and scrolled through the list of available partners. Handsome, with perfectly formed bodies, each bot was programmed to follow any instruction or desire. Prices varied with the act.

Flicking back to the home page, Isa scanned the list again. A selection called *Dark Ecstasy* piqued her interest.

Experience ecstasy with a secret human partner who seeks a similar adventure. Revel in the mysteries of the flesh, enhance and satisfy your desires for only five hundred credits. Anonymity guaranteed.

After her promotion from the rank and file, Isa had chosen pleasure bots over human sex partners. Her focus firmly on her career, she hadn't made love to a man in five years.

Real sex, with a man!

Heat coiled in Isa's middle. Five hundred credits would make a serious dent in her account, but she'd grown weary of machines. She wanted the caress of human hands and lips upon her flesh. She needed to experience a real kiss. She ached for the feel of hot skin slick with perspiration sliding against hers. The thought of powerful hips thrusting, driving a human cock deep inside her hot flesh consumed her.

Her hand hovered above the accept button. *Real sex.* Isa pressed her palm against the screen. Within seconds her request had been processed.

A new screen asked for her preferences such as height, weight and age, but did not request eye or hair color. Another screen gave her a delicious list of pleasures.

Gulping down most of her drink, Isa chose kissing, oral and manual stimulation, and several positions she enjoyed. A male bot, dressed in a black skinsuit, approached her. Noticing the obvious bulge of his groin, Isa figured he must also work as a pleasure bot. His blond hair fell in waves down to his shoulders.

"My name is Dar," he said, focusing his sultry brown eyes upon her. He offered his arm. "I am your pleasure guide."

Wondering whom Dar was modeled after, Isa placed her hand on the bot's arm. He escorted her out of the main lounge and into a corridor. Stopping before an unmarked door, Dar placed his palm against a panel. The door slid to the right.

"This is the preparation room," Dar explained as the door slid closed. "Are you familiar with the process?"

"This is my first time."

He crossed the room and opened another door. "Please undress and step inside. A brief scan is required. The door will open automatically when the scan is completed."

Isa undressed and stepped inside the closet-like space. The door sealed with a hiss. A series of soft-green light bands encircled her from head to toe. As the light bands shifted from dull to bright, her whole body began to throb as if someone had waved a sensual wand over her. Her heart rate jumped. Just about the time she'd really started enjoying the scan, the door opened.

Dar held a white robe. "How do you feel?"

Her heart racing, Isa slipped into the robe. "Excited."

"Club Xs guarantees pleasure. As the light bands process your image, your body is given pleasure pulses. Please, join me at the bar."

Isa took a seat upon a lone stool before a small crescent-shaped bar. Dar stepped behind the bar and placed a tall, slender glass on the gleaming metal surface. Behind him the wall was filled with bottles in a dazzling array of colors.

"After drinking a luminous dye, you will join a pleasure partner. The dye allows you to see your partner's form and size, and for him to see you, but facial features, skin tone, hair color are obscured. What color would you like?"

"Color?"

"The luminous dye. Your skin will radiate the color of your choice. I like the color of your outfit. It complements your eyes."

Bots were programmed to flatter. Isa glanced at her loose purple blouse, black pants and slippers. Given her limited civilian wardrobe she'd chosen the bright blouse in an effort to blend in with the club's patrons.

"Purple is fine."

The shelves behind the bar shifted. Before her were bottles in the palest shade of amethyst to brilliant purple. "What shade do you prefer?"

Isa pointed to a bottle.

"Lilac." Plucking the bottle off the shelf, Dar filled her glass with clear liquid.

"The meeting chamber is devoid of light. You and your partner will --"

"Glow in the dark?"

Dar blinked and smiled. The more expensive bots were programmed to blink rather than stare. "Yes. Think of it as an aura. You will have full tactile sensations, but the aura distorts the features. You could walk past your partner tomorrow and never recognize him."

"What color will he be?"

"I do not know."

"Is my partner a random choice?"

"You are matched to a compatible partner. To ensure your health, you will be processed through a cleansing chamber before joining a partner requesting the service."

"What if no one had requested the service?"

Dar pushed the glass toward her. "Our client traffic is such that I've never encountered the problem."

"The service is popular?"

"All of Club Xs's services are highly regarded."

Isa picked up the glass. "No record will exist of my participation in the service?"

"Once the transaction is completed, the electronic trail is deleted."

"That should keep clients from asking for refunds."

"If a client is dissatisfied, we offer other means to fulfill desires. Your pleasure is our pleasure."

"What about your records?"

Dar smiled. "My records require a subpoena signed by a random three-judge panel on-planet."

Robot records were considered private unless the bot witnessed a crime. A GEA officer was permitted to interrogate a bot as part of a criminal investigation. Dar had given her the proper response.

Isa drank the tasteless liquid and set the glass upon the bar. When Dar walked from behind the bar, Isa swiveled around to face him.

"Would you like oral stimulation before you enter the cleansing chamber? It is part of the service."

Glow in the dark and mechanical tongue.

"Sure."

Dar parted her robe and placed his hands upon her thighs. "After your session, you'll exit the meeting chamber and re-enter the cleansing unit. I'll be here to assist you with the dissipation process."

Pressing his thumbs to her inner thighs, he slid his hands up to the apex of her legs and down to her knees several times. His gentle massage relaxed and stimulated.

"How does the process work?"

"You drink a solution to dissolve the dye. You must remain with me for fifteen minutes before leaving."

"What happens if I don't drink the solution?"

"You'll glow in the dark for another forty-six minutes, and the enhancers in the dye are detectable by the security sensors between decks. Your urine may have a purple tinge for up to two days."

Dar's gaze moved to her breasts. Although he was a bot, her nipples peaked.

"At Club Xs we are dedicated to giving you the ultimate pleasure."

He cupped her right breast and began a gentle massage. Tossing a thick strand of blond hair over his shoulder, he leaned down and captured the taut nipple of her left breast between his lips. Aching for more, Isa arched her back. Reading her physical signal, he drew deeply, teasing her sensitive flesh with his amazing tongue.

When she moaned, he released her breast and smiled. "Your body is responsive. Your partner will be pleased."

Pleasure bots had heat-measuring sensors that gave continual feedback and the ability to react to the client's physical actions. Maybe she should have bought a session with Dar and saved herself three hundred credits.

The bot kneeled before her. "Shall I order another Relaxer?"

Realizing she had a death grip on the stool, Isa shook her head and stood.

Grasping her by the thighs, he touched his lips to her pussy and kissed her. Hot and moist, his mouth moved over her in slow deliberation. A flush of searing heat moved through Isa's middle. He licked her, his strokes lush and tantalizing. A sweet ache throbbed between her legs. Dar slid his long tongue deep inside her, in and out, until her pussy was wet and ready. Isa pumped her hips.

Need came hard and fast. Heat seared her veins. Grinding her pussy against Dar's mouth, Isa came. A wave of molten heat flowed through her middle. For one exquisite moment, she considered canceling her real-man-sex and letting Dar work his magic until she lay limp and exhausted on the floor.

Dar removed his tongue and rose to his feet. "Are you ready to meet your partner?"

Her body still trembling from her climax, Isa opened her eyes and sanity returned. She'd paid well for real cock and she intended to use it until limp and exhausted. Besides, Dar's amazing tongue would be available for purchase tomorrow.

The bot crossed the room and touched his palm to the wall. A panel slid open revealing a small chamber aglow in amber light. "It's time to enter the cleansing chamber."

Her body still humming from Dar's expert manipulation, Isa stepped into the tiny chamber.

"When the process is finished the chamber will darken and the opposite panel will open. Your partner will be waiting for you."

"How long do I have?"

"Your session is for thirty minutes. When your time is up, the doors to the cleansing chambers will open. You must enter the chamber and be processed again. Pleasures are safe and healthy at Club Xs."

Five hundred credits for thirty minutes! This guy had better be good.

Dar smiled. "Are you ready?"

"Thank you, Dar."

The door slid closed. Heart pounding in anticipation, Isa waited for the chamber to darken. The amber light lasted for about two minutes and disappeared. A soft, purple glow surrounded her. Raising her hand, Isa wiggled her fingers. She could see the shape, but her nails were dark squares at the end of her fingers. Looking down, she saw her nipples were two dark circles of purple.

The door slid open. Several feet away stood a glowing male figure in varied shades of gray. His shoulders appeared broad and his legs long.

“Nice color.”

Chapter Two

His voice was distinctly male. She hadn't asked Dar about voices, but Isa doubted the creators of the service had let that trait slip past them. "What should I call you?"

"We address one another by color. I'm Smoke."

"Lilac."

He held out his hand. "Our time is short, Lilac."

She placed her hand in his. His hand was big and slightly callused. She'd drawn a man who worked with his hands.

He led her to the huge bed, sat on the edge and drew her onto his lap. "Tell me what you like."

The hair on his hard thighs tickled her skin. She touched his chest. Firm with muscles, his chest was smooth and devoid of chest hair. His skin was hot. He drew a deep breath. Beneath her palm, his chest swelled.

"I haven't made love with a man in a long time."

Why had she told him something so personal?

He cupped her face in his hands and kissed her. At the touch of his lips, Isa closed her eyes. Slow and tender, his mouth moved over hers. His tongue slid gently between her lips. His lush exploration tapped into her need of human contact.

The kiss ended slowly, his lips touching hers. "Nothing sweeter," he whispered.

Gathering her tight against him, he lifted her as if she weighed nothing and placed her onto the center of the bed. He climbed in beside her and stretched out. His long hair swayed as he moved, grazing his shoulders. His glowing erection bobbed, thick and promising.

Smoke lay on his side facing her.

Bots were programmed to respond to the client's prompting. If you wanted your ass touched, you placed your hand on its ass. The bot followed your lead or your verbal instruction.

Smoke needed no prompting. He touched, probed and explored, his hands moving from her shoulder to her breasts, ass and thighs while an impressive length of hard cock pressed against her belly. Cupping her breast, he caught her nipple between thumb and forefinger, plucking and rolling it until it peaked.

"You have magnificent nipples, Lilac."

Leaning down, he licked the aching peak. A surge of white-hot need raced down her middle. Gently, he suckled. A fierce heat flamed in her center. Moaning, Isa pressed her pussy to the thick root of his cock and rolled her hips.

Smoke groaned deep in his throat. He cupped her ass, holding her groin tight to his. Covering her breast with his mouth, he suckled deeply, teasing her aching flesh with lips and tongue.

His fingertips played along the crease between her buttocks down to her thigh. Rolling her onto her back, he slid a hand between her thighs. Using the pad of his fingers he caressed her pussy.

"Are you wet for me?" He pressed his hard, hot cock against her hip. "Tell me, Lilac."

"Yes."

He slid a finger inside her, burying it deep. He withdrew it and buried it again and again in long, leisurely strokes.

"Do you like my finger inside you?"

"Yes."

"Tell me what you want."

Isa gasped. "More."

He pushed another finger inside her and stroked her pussy. "You're hot," he said, his voice low and thick. "Lush. Wet."

Fingers still pumping her flesh, Smoke kneeled between her legs. He withdrew his fingers and sucked her juices from them.

"I love the taste of a woman," he said, stretching out until his shoulders were tucked beneath her open thighs. His face hovered over her pussy. "Especially after she climaxes."

Spreading her lips like wings between his fingers, he licked her slowly, lushly. When she lifted her hips, he plunged his tongue deep inside her heat.

His tongue wasn't as thick or as long as Dar's, but Smoke had mastered the art of oral sex.

He licked and kissed her pussy, acquainting his tongue with each curve and hollow until she throbbed in aching ecstasy. When he captured her clit between his lips and suckled, her hips lifted from the mattress. Exquisite pleasure, bordering on pain, slammed through her body, registered in her brain. The enhancers kicked in with a near mindless frenzy of need. Liquid fire flashed through her veins and heat poured from her skin.

Lifting his head, he blew gently on her heated flesh. Quivering on the brink of climax, she fisted his hair.

"Please."

He covered her pussy with his mouth. Sucking, licking and fucking her with his lips and tongue, he brought her to the edge again and again. She loved his masterful teasing, hated him when he'd ease back. She clenched her hands tighter.

"Now!"

Encircling her clit with his lips, he drew lustily on the taut bud. Her hips bucking, Isa flew over the edge.

After an amazing moment, Isa heard him say, "Lilac. Let go."

She opened her eyes and realized she still held two fistfuls of silky hair in a death grip. Unclenching her hands, she released his hair.

"Sorry." She sucked in a breath. *Wow!*

He shifted to a kneeling position and shoved his hands through his hair. His arms bulged with muscles. "Having you come like that was worth losing a little hair."

Isa wished she could see his eyes instead of two dark gray outlines. When he moved, she got a sense of his face. His features appeared strong, a defined chin and slightly prominent nose, but nothing that would distinguish him from a dozen other males.

She tried to figure out the color of his hair, but as he moved, the gray hue changed from light to dark.

"Don't try. Even if we come face-to-face, you'll never pick me out."

"I can't help but be curious."

Kneeling between her spread thighs, he slid his hands beneath her buttocks. "Don't think about who I am, concentrate on what I'm doing."

He slid his thighs beneath hers. Grasping her by the waist he lifted her until she straddled his hard-muscled thighs. As her arms encircled his neck, the broad crown of his cock slipped between her nether lips. She gasped as he slid inside.

"Bless the sun, but you're tight."

He groaned and pushed deeper. Her eager flesh stretched to accept all of his thick, hard length.

"You're not a bot, are you? I paid for a man."

He chuckled at her comment and buried his cock. Wrapping his big, rough hands around her ass, he lifted her slightly.

Squeezing him with each downstroke, Isa rode him with a slow, measured rhythm. Surrounded by the amazing heat and scent unique to males, she wallowed in the strength of his body, the feel of hot skin and solid muscle.

Her pussy slick with need, Isa caressed his cock with each hot stroke. He moaned when she flexed her muscles.

His fingers dug into her ass. "Fuck me."

She answered his anguished plea by increasing the tempo until her pussy pounded his cock and her breath came in short, harsh puffs.

His hips surged beneath her, lifting her, then stilled and settled back. His cock flexed in climax. He slid his right hand between their bodies and rolled the pad of his thumb over her clit. Isa arched her back and dug her fingers into his shoulders.

"You're right there, Lilac. Come."

He latched onto her breast and drew deeply. The forefinger of his left hand slid between the cheeks of her ass. The combination of his mouth, fingers and cock brought her home. Her body shuddered as she came. Smoke released her breast and eased the pressure on her clit slowly until her pussy ceased fluttering.

He lifted her off his thighs and stretched out on the bed. Taking her hand he drew her down to lie next to him.

She laid her head upon his chest and stroked his near flaccid cock. It was this moment in the sex act that separated men from bots. Pleasure bots maintained an erection until you ordered them to relax.

The pleasure of making Smoke hard again fueled Isa's desire. She wanted to feel him grow in her mouth. She wondered why Smoke, who was as well endowed as a pleasure bot, chose to pay for anonymous sex. If he dropped his pants in the lounge, women would come running.

"Lilac." He hooked a finger beneath her chin. She looked at him. His face was a shifting mix of gray shading. "I'd like to meet again. It can be arranged."

He wanted her, again. "I'd love to."

"Tomorrow?"

Isa thought about her bank account. She'd been saving for an on-planet vacation, but perhaps an anonymous escape would be far more beneficial. She'd have to transfer credits and tomorrow was her first day on the job. "How about Thursday? Same time?"

"It's a date."

She kissed him on the tip of his nose, then his lips, chin, chest and belly.

When she took a meandering wet trail with her tongue toward his cock, his belly clenched. His belly was flat and layered with muscle.

Isa teased the length of his cock with her tongue, pausing to lave the thick edge of the crown. Covering the broad tip with her mouth, she suckled, drawing on his velvety flesh. With each lush tug, his cock lengthened and stretched. She cupped his balls, squeezing the delicate orbs until he was rock hard.

"Our time is short. Ride me, Lilac."

She straddled his hips and positioned the thick tip of his cock to her pussy. Pumping her hips, she accepted the broad crown.

He sucked in a breath and clamped his hands on her thighs.

Slowly, she took him inch-by-inch, flexing her pussy around him with each stroke.

He gripped her ass.

"Fuck me, hard."

Isa needed no encouragement. Her wet pussy ached to move, to use his big cock until she screamed. Hips pounding and pussy flexing, she rode him. Her climax came hard and fast. She'd barely caught her breath before Smoke shifted their positions.

Maneuvering her onto her hands and knees, he grasped her hips, the broad tip of his cock brushed her wet center. The thick tip dipped inside eager, waiting flesh. He groaned as he thrust, filling her, stretching her to take him. Her pussy clenched and released as he moved deeper.

His fingers dug into her hips and his tempo increased. Skin slapped against skin as flesh pounded willing flesh. His stamina amazed her. Or was it the enhancers? Damn, she loved his cock.

He shuddered and stilled.

"You wear me out," he said, slumping against her. After a moment, he eased out of her and stretched out on the bed.

"Our time, it's almost up."

"Already?"

"Unfortunately, yes." He raised his arm and pointed. "The warnings lights have been activated."

Isa glanced over her shoulder. A red outline of a doorway glowed. She scrambled off the bed. Smoke followed.

"Lilac."

Isa turned. He drew her into his arms and held her tight. His palm cupped her ass. "Thursday?"

"I'll be here."

The doors to the cleansing chamber slid open. Both chambers were bathed in low light, one a grayish fog and the other in purple.

His lips touched hers in quick urgency. "Go."

Isa walked into the purplish glow and turned. Smoke stepped into the opposite chamber and disappeared in the fog. The door closed and the purple glow changed to amber.

Feeling beyond wonderful, Isa wanted to crawl into bed and sleep for hours. Within a few minutes, the door slid open. As promised, Dar waited in the processing room.

"Did you enjoy the service?"

"Yes. I'd like to arrange another session with Smoke on Thursday. Same time."

"Smoke has agreed to the meeting?"

"Yes."

"I'll make the appointment."

Dar guided her to the sitting area opposite the bar. Her clothes were neatly stacked upon a table. "While you dress, I'll prepare your drink."

Isa dressed while Dar mixed a clear solution and poured it into a glass cylinder. After capping the cylinder, he placed it inside a circular appliance. He pressed a lever and the cylinder began to spin.

By the time she was dressed and sitting upon a stool before the bar, Dar had removed the cylinder and poured the solution into a glass. On the other side of the meeting room, Smoke would be drinking his solution. Was he thinking of her?

* * *

Commander Ander Slade checked his schedule. Captain Renard's appointment would consume the next hour. He reacquainted himself with her résumé. She'd earned her promotions through performance rather than influence and her record was impressive.

Cynara hadn't been impressed. She'd fumed when Ander had informed her of Renard's appointment. Cyn's reaction was exactly why he'd thrown his weight behind Renard. The assignment committee rarely disputed Ander's choices, but several were reluctant to assign a woman to Club Xs. Corporate considered the club as a primarily male paradise. Women were offered the same services, but men sought the services more often than women and the average male spent three times more than a woman per visit.

The club thrived because Cyn understood men and all their weaknesses. Treated like a celebrity on-planet, her influence extended well beyond the space station.

Renard's male predecessor had fallen victim to Cyn's sensual charms and had left his post in disgrace. Ander had loftier expectations of Renard. Not a hint of misconduct or bribery shadowed the captain's record.

Commander, Captain Renard has arrived.

"Send the captain in and hold all communication."

As the door to his office opened, Ander stood. Her cap removed and tucked properly beneath her left armpit, her sidearm secured, the GEA officer walked into his office. Stopping before his desk, Captain Renard gave him a pleasant, professional smile and stuck out her hand.

"Commander."

Renard's black uniform fit her trim figure like a glove. Ander had expected a spit-and-polish appearance combined with physical fitness -- the GEA demanded nothing less of their officers -- but Ander wasn't prepared for midnight dark hair, eyes the color of violets and a face so utterly feminine in form and feature it belied a five-year stint in one of the GEA's toughest units.

Although her hair was pulled back into a conservative style, Ander speculated at its length.

“Commander?”

He realized he was still holding her hand. “Welcome to Helos, Captain.”

At his prompting, she took a seat and folded her hands in her lap.

“Commander, I assure you I can handle the job. Many have underestimated me.”

“I’m sure they have.”

Seated, he focused. Setting expectations at the beginning saved time later. “Our station is unique and Club Xs is the financial backbone. Visitors are screened on entry and as they move between levels. Your job is to maintain the peace without interfering with the operation. Pleasure services that are illegal on-planet are allowed here. You have studied and are familiar with the allowances?”

“I am.”

She paused and her lips parted slightly. *Focus*.

“I began my career as a street cop,” she said. “I served two years in outland apprehension, the last five on Charideni.”

“Your experience --”

She drew in a breath, causing her chest to rise. *Focus!*

“Factored into your selection, Captain. You’ve performed your duties while working in a challenging environment. Policing the club is a delicate balance.” Leaning back in his chair, Ander continued. “The club’s services contribute heavily to the tax base while providing a safe place for citizens to pursue their individual pleasures. The government needs the money and the public wants the services. Your job is to keep control, guarantee a safe environment without the public realizing the GEA is watching over them.”

“Protect and Serve.”

“Exactly. On-planet a citizen has the expectation that he can go about his daily business and be safe. While on-station and at the club, that same citizen has the

expectation he can purchase a myriad of services and return safely to his home and job with nothing more than an amazing experience and a sizable debit to his bank account."

"Control without interference."

Renard unfolded her hands. Her fingers were long and her nails short. "Yes." He lifted his gaze. Again, her beauty struck him.

"I'd like you to join me Friday night. Cynara is giving a reception for several dignitaries."

Bless the sun. He'd never made such a request of any female, especially a female in an executive position. Since coming to Helos, he'd managed to avoid personal entanglements. But then, he'd never met Renard.

Although he should, he couldn't embarrass her by taking back the invitation. A tingle of desire stirred his cock. Bless the sun, he wouldn't take it back.

"I'd like your assessment of the club's operations. An official report isn't necessary. We can discuss things over cocktails before we attend the reception. Friday at nineteen hundred in my quarters."

She squared her shoulders. "I'd be honored, sir."

"Glad to have you on-station, Captain."

She stood, tucked her cap beneath her arm and offered her hand. "Thank you, sir."

He rose. Their hands met briefly. "Tonight, when your staff officers invite you for a drink, accept."

"Sir?"

"Your officers have planned a short unofficial reception in the Fantasy Bar. Act surprised."

Renard smiled and her violet eyes sparkled. "Yes, sir."

When the captain turned and walked out of his office, Ander's gaze slid over her nicely rounded backside. He dropped back into his comfortable chair and admonished himself for ogling Captain Renard's ass.

He needed contact. Intimate female contact.

Lilac.

Ander recalled the feel of her soft skin, lush lips and amazing pussy. After years of relieving his physical needs with pleasure bots, his mind and heart had ached for something more.

No matter how well designed, a bot couldn't compare with a real woman. Lilac had responded to his wants and needs, and demanded he satisfy hers. A gasp, moan or tremble conveyed her desires and her subtle caresses guided him.

He rubbed his head. *What a climax!* He needed Lilac. Without her, he might well make a fool of himself with the captivating captain.

Chapter Three

After her last appointment on Wednesday, Isa asked Sergeant Danz, her assistant, to join her.

"Coffee, or perhaps something a little stronger?"

Com-unit in hand, the sergeant slid into a chair, but didn't respond.

Isa pulled a bottle of brandy out of a cupboard. "You're off the clock, Danz."

Smiling, the sergeant placed the com-unit on the desk and released the top two buttons of her uniform. "Something stronger."

Isa poured a shot glass for each of them. Blonde with big brown eyes and an easy smile, Danz thanked her and sipped the brandy. "Long day?" Isa asked.

"Yes, sir."

"How many years with GEA?"

"Five. I've been stationed on Helos for fourteen months."

Five years and already on Helos! Who did Danz know? "You've worked for two male captains," Isa began. She sipped her brandy.

"If you're wondering how I feel about working for a woman, I'm fine with it. My father and mother are police officers. In my baby photo I had a miniature badge pinned to my blanket. Mom's a precinct captain. Dad served with Commander Slade."

"Which unit?"

"Black Ops."

Black Ops was the name given to a special unit whose operations were so covert many believed they were nothing more than a myth. Nothing could be further from the truth. While working fugitive apprehension she'd crossed paths with an operative. Their affair had been short, but intense.

"May I speak freely?"

Isa nodded.

"Do you want to get to know me, sir, or do you have questions about Commander Slade?"

"Both. I depend on my personal assistant. Your position is vital to my success. And I am interested in understanding the commander."

Danz smiled. "At least you're honest. What do you want to know?"

"He asked me to attend a reception with him on Friday. Cynara is hosting the affair."

"He asked you, personally?"

"Yes."

At the time of the invitation, Isa hadn't questioned Slade's motives. She'd been far too mesmerized by his looks, his size and amazing reputation as an officer. The scar on his face only enhanced the man's appeal. He was everything she'd ever dreamed of in a man. Instead of a sip, she took a drink of brandy.

"Doesn't the new GEA officer-in-charge of the club usually receive an invitation?"

Danz shook her head. "Captain Hann never received one. Cynara's receptions are very exclusive and very elegant. What are you wearing?"

"My dress uniform."

Danz frowned.

"What?"

"You'll be the only woman in pants. I've seen Cynara's guests. The women are very chic."

"The commander mentioned he wanted an assessment of the club. He suggested a private meeting over cocktails at his quarters before the reception." When her assistant's mouth opened in an expression of surprise, Isa added, "I'm sure the commander considers the evening work related."

"He never asked Captain Hann to visit his private quarters."

"Surely, he met with Hann."

"The commander requested monthly reports from Captain Hann. I wrote them. Either the commander has changed his style or his interest isn't entirely professional."

"I thought the commander was involved with Cynara."

"That's the gossip, but except for formal functions, I've never seen the two of them together. But unlike the rest of us, they live on the executive deck. I've never seen their quarters, but I've heard it's like a metropolitan penthouse."

"The evening should be interesting."

"Will there be anything else, sir?"

"Yes." Although Isa would prefer to keep her meeting with Smoke private, her job demanded twenty-four-hour availability. "I'll be taking a private hour tonight at twenty-one hundred hours and will be out of communication. If you will monitor my calls for that hour."

"Of course, sir."

"If the necessity arises, contact Dar at this extension." Isa handed Danz the bot's card.

"He's fabulous. I visit him on occasion."

Since visiting pleasure bots was an accepted form of relaxation for officers and officials, Isa decided not to correct Danz's misconception. "Thanks."

Danz paused at the door. "Sir, I think you should reconsider the dress uniform. We have marvelous boutiques."

After Danz exited the office Isa leaned back in her comfortable executive chair and closed her eyes.

An image of Slade came to mind. Beneath that black commander's uniform he had an amazing physique. The form-fitting uniform outlined his wide shoulders and narrow hips. When Isa's thoughts drifted to the slight bulge between his legs, she opened her eyes.

When you'd been on the job only a few days, having erotic thoughts about the executive-in-charge wasn't the wisest course of action. Isa shook her head and glanced at her wrist unit.

In three hours she'd be with Smoke. She'd thought of him often in the past few days. When she crawled into bed at the end of the day, she'd recalled the delicious feel of his male body. She'd ached for the feel of his skin, the touch of his hands and his thick cock.

Whenever she dreamed of Smoke, Slade's handsome features replaced the gray image creating the perfect man.

Need, sharp and fierce, pulsed between her legs.

* * *

Hard as stone, Ander waited. Finally, the door slid open and Lilac stepped into the room.

Snaking an arm about her small waist, he clamped a hand on her sweetly rounded ass. Her soft body molded to his and sent a lick of fire through his tight balls. Her peaked nipples teased his chest, telling him she was as eager as he for this reunion. When she pressed her hips to his and rolled her mons against his hard cock, he moaned in sweet agony.

"I've thought of nothing but you."

"I dreamed about you," Lilac murmured.

Bless the sun! Dreams of Lilac invaded his sleep. He'd woken up hard and aching every night since they'd met, his cock stretched to a painful state.

He cupped her ass and lifted her. She wrapped her arms about his neck and her legs about his waist. Taking two long strides, he pressed her back against a padded section of the wall. "Above you there's a bar. Grab it."

She reached up. "Got it."

He positioned the tip of his cock to her center, the crown dipping into her hot pussy. "You're so wet."

Thrusting his hips, Ander drove deep. Lilac gasped, and her amazing pussy opened, taking him into her tight heat.

Her pussy flexed, grabbing and massaging his cock. With each lush stroke, his heart pounded faster and his heated breath burned his lungs. Her gasps of pleasure

mingled with the primal sounds of mating. Her hot skin slid sensuously against his. When she screamed and her wet pussy clamped down on him in a vice-like grip, Ander couldn't hold back.

After days of aching need, his climax wrenched free of his balls. The muscles of his arms and legs vibrated and his knees nearly buckled as his release came in hot, thick waves of pleasure.

His chest heaving, he placed his forehead against hers. "My balls have been humming for days," he said, his breath labored.

Her arms slid around his neck. "I've been wet for days."

Fucking Lilac was an amazing experience. She unwrapped her legs from his waist, separating their bodies. Placing an arm about her shoulders, Ander led Lilac to the bed, where they stretched out side by side. Not wanting to waste one precious moment, Ander kissed her. Her mouth was moist and hot, her lips soft and lush. She teased him with her tongue.

When she guided his hand to her breast, Ander was pleased that she craved his touch. Filling his palm with her soft flesh, he flicked his thumb over her nipple. It peaked immediately. Taking her responsive flesh between the pad of his thumb and forefinger, Ander rolled her nipple.

Lilac gasped and pushed her breast against his hand. Ander released her nipple and captured it between his lips. Drawing it deep into his mouth, he suckled until Lilac moaned. Sliding his hand down her hip to her pussy, he massaged her mons. Within seconds, her writhing hips communicating her desires.

He probed her hot flesh, pushing two fingers inside her slick channel. Her hips moved against his hand, seeking pleasure.

Eager to bring her to climax, Ander pumped his fingers, faster and faster, sliding them in and out of her wet pussy. When she clamped down on his fingers, he knew she was close to the edge.

Releasing her breast, he trailed a wet path with his tongue to her belly. When he withdrew his fingers from her pussy, she grabbed his wrist.

"I want to taste your hot climax." Rolling Lilac onto her back, Ander positioned his shoulders between her thighs. He loved her pussy. The feel of her quivering flesh beneath his tongue made his balls hum and his heart pound. No matter how well a pleasure bot was designed, nothing compared to the real thing. At his first taste, his cock responded.

He licked her swollen flesh and flicked her clit with the tip of his tongue.

She grabbed him by the hair. "You're driving me crazy. Fuck me."

Thrusting his tongue deep into her pussy, Ander fucked her primed flesh. Hips bucking wildly, Lilac released his hair and dug her fingers into his shoulders.

Capturing her nipples between his thumb and fingertips, he tugged on the erotic peaks. When a gentle flood of hot cream touched his tongue, Ander captured her plump clit between his lips and suckled deeply.

Her body arched violently and her breath came in harsh, labored puffs. Her pussy quivering, Ander licked her until she stilled.

"Smoke."

Ander lifted his head and looked up at the shades of purple outlining her hair and face. He wished he could see the real Lilac. The last several days, he'd caught himself looking at the women, both residents and visitors, and wondering if one of them might be Lilac.

"You're far more skilled with your tongue than any pleasure bot."

Grinning with pride, he rose to his knees and covered her body with his. He kissed her, slowly, thoroughly. Kissing a bot left him cold, but kissing Lilac reminded him that sex could be far more than just a climax. She made him feel good. She made him feel human. She made him want more than physical pleasure.

Although the warning lights hadn't turned on, Ander knew their time together was growing short. He broke the kiss. "Make love to me, Lilac."

Her arm slid about his neck as his cock probed her center. Slowly, he entered her. With each gentle thrust, she opened. Her hot, wet walls held him in a tight cocoon of pleasure.

"I love being inside you." She held him as their bodies moved together. Ander's heart rate increased with each measured stroke. He wanted her need to build until she joined him in that amazing moment of ecstasy.

Grasping her by the nape of the neck, Ander kissed her. He poured out his need as they made love. The wildness had eased into quiet intensity. When he lifted his head, her fingers caught in his hair. Her pussy clutched at his cock and she whimpered deep in her throat. Like building thunder, he climaxed. When the intensity eased, he slumped against her.

"I don't want this to end," she whispered.

"It doesn't have to end."

"Time passes so quickly."

"We could change that."

"How?"

Although no one could hear them, they whispered. Ander couldn't recall the last time he had so intimate a conversation with a lover. One didn't speak with a bot. You fucked them until you climaxed. "We could spend the whole night together."

Ander waited for her to respond. When she didn't answer he worried she might be a visitor on a short holiday. "Are you a visitor?"

"I work here."

Bless the sun. She lived and worked on Helos. "If you wish to keep our identities secret, I'll get adjoining rooms and order the lights off. We'll make love in the dark as often as it pleases us. Will you think about it?"

"How would I contact you?"

Ander eased his weight from Lilac and climbed out of bed. Lilac followed.

"I'll have the message delivered through our pleasure guide bots. They'll be our com-link."

Standing before him, Lilac wrapped her slender arms about his neck. "The dye has enhancers. What if the sex isn't as amazing?"

He grasped her by the waist and pulled her close. Her skin was soft and her body warm. His desire for this woman had moved beyond the physical. Although the sex was fantastic, he needed, wanted more. Eventually, Ander intended to convince her to drop the anonymity and try a real relationship. "I'm willing to take that chance. Do you think we need enhancers?"

She brushed her fingertips over his cheek. Ander had to resist the urge to flinch. The guide bot had hidden his scar beneath a thin layer of bot-skin applied before each session. No one on-station suspected he participated in any club services.

Lilac brushed her lips to his. "It's you I need."

Ander's heart lurched. After the execution of his family ten years ago, he'd closed his heart to love and mourned in silence. As station commander he'd found it easy to remain separate and aloof. Yet, in a short space of time everything had changed. He'd made love with Lilac, and met Captain Renard. Both women had stirred him in deep places he'd thought long dead. Both women fascinated him. They appeared in his dreams and he thought about fucking so often, his work had suffered.

Pursuing a relationship with Lilac seemed the wisest course. The last thing he wanted was gossip about himself and the sexy captain. The rumors about Cynara increased her allure and had a positive effect on her business. Rumors about Renard could negatively affect her job.

Besides, according to the station rumor mill, Renard preferred a certain male pleasure bot with long blond hair and a big cock. Lilac pleased him. He didn't need Renard.

The warning lights glowed. "I'll make arrangements with my guide bot for the day after tomorrow at twenty-three hundred. I'll wait for your decision."

He escorted her to the panel door and took her into his arms. Holding her tight, Ander kissed her. Her mouth melded to his. In his heart, Ander believed their relationship had shifted. Lilac would meet him and in the near future he'd learn her true identity.

Chapter Four

Anticipation throbbed through Isa's middle as she approached Slade's private quarters. At his door, she took a couple of deep, calming breaths. Had she made a mistake? Would he expect her to be in uniform? She'd spent two precious hours preparing for this reception. Would he appreciate the gown she'd chosen?

Isa had fallen in love with the dress the moment she'd laid eyes on it. A deep shade of lilac, the shimmering material clung to her body like a second skin. She'd been unable to resist the purchasing. The halter design was clasped at the back of her neck and two thin strands of amethysts dangled along her spine. The open back was as dramatic as the thigh-high slit along her left leg.

She wore silver heels with delicate straps crisscrossing her feet and wrapping about her ankles. Perhaps Slade considered the evening about business, but Isa wanted him to see her as a woman instead of a cop. She'd tucked her wrist com-unit into a tiny beaded purse. Hopefully, her evening would remain undisturbed.

Since she'd arrived on Helos, her libido had shifted into hyper-drive. She wanted Slade, but she wasn't ready to give up her sensual meetings with Smoke.

She wanted both men.

When she'd forgone underwear and walked out of her assigned quarters, Isa's thoughts centered on the handsome commander. Just the possibility that the evening might end in Slade's bed made her wet. A relationship with Slade would have consequences. Although he wasn't GEA, he was the station commander. Some might view her relationship in a negative light, especially Cynara.

Isa pressed her thumb to the guest announcement disc. Slade would know she was waiting. When Slade opened the door, he started to speak. Instead his gaze slid down to her feet and back again. He cleared his throat. "Captain."

Isa doubted he'd have given her so long a perusal if she'd worn a uniform. "Commander."

"Welcome," he said, stepping back so she could enter.

As she walked into his quarters, her shoes sank into dark gray carpet. Black and white photos of lakes, mountains and deserts lined walls so pale blue they bordered on gray. Before her a dove-gray sofa and chairs patterned in soft blues and grays were grouped about a glass table bearing a bottle of champagne in a silver bucket and two glass flutes.

He touched two fingertips to the small of her back and guided her to the sofa. As they walked, Isa felt the slight brush of his fingers against her skin. Seated, Isa crossed her legs. When her gown slipped open over her knee, Slade's gaze followed its path.

"Would you join me in a glass of champagne?"

A rare commodity, even on-planet. Isa was pleased by his generous offer. "Are we celebrating?"

"You've been on Helos a week," he said, lifting the champagne bottle and pouring a glass. "How do you like your new post?"

"Like everyone else in the galaxy, I'd read about it, but nothing can prepare you for this station. It's amazing."

He handed her the flute and filled his glass. "True. The combination of luxury and excess is unmatched. What do you think of Xs?"

"Exciting. Pulsing with energy. Sexy."

Whenever Kriz was performing onstage, Isa couldn't help but watch, and dream, and want. "I'm sure the day will come when I'll be able to ignore what's happening onstage."

A sudden heat penetrated her middle as Slade's gaze held hers for a long moment. "I've been on Helos for three years. I'm still not immune to the club's atmosphere."

"Feeling. Reacting. That's what makes us human."

He touched his glass to hers. "To being human."

As she sipped her champagne, Isa wondered if Slade ever used the club's services. When Slade lowered his glass, his gaze slid to her bare knee. Aware of a sudden dampness between her thighs, Isa rethought her lack of underwear. She'd wanted to feel sexy, but being this close to Slade she bordered on hot.

His gaze lifted. "Overall, what is your assessment of your unit?"

His question wrenched her thoughts back to the job. "I've discussed some changes with my officers. I think the bots should be inspected randomly for memory tampering."

"You suspect someone has been tampering with the bots?"

"I found no evidence of it, but the inspections should never be pre-scheduled. Since the bots record without bias and are not viewed as intruders by the guests, they are GEA's eyes and ears."

"Submit a request and I'll authorize random inspections."

"Is an official request necessary?"

"If I authorize the request, Cynara is less likely to challenge you."

Isa sipped the champagne. "I don't wish to create a personal problem for you, Commander. Or upset Cynara."

"You won't. Cynara would prefer programmable bot security, but the government has wisely given the responsibility to humans. Your meeting with her went well?"

"She's cancelled, twice."

"I'll introduce you at the soiree. I'm sure after meeting you she won't cancel again."

"Thank you for inviting me, Commander."

He drained the remaining champagne in his glass. "Call me Slade. After all, I once was GEA."

"If you'll call me Isa."

"Shall we refill our glasses and take a stroll along the observation deck?"

She'd heard about the clear tubes encircling the executive deck offering staggering views of the galaxy. "Thank you, Slade."

After refilling the flutes, Slade once again touched his fingers to the small of her back and guided her through a door at the far side of the room. She stepped into the observation tube. When the door closed, the tube was plunged into darkness and the galaxy of twinkling stars lay before her.

Her audible gasp drew a low chuckle from Slade. "Given your time with fugitive apprehension, I'd thought you'd be immune to a galactic view."

"I could look upon this every day and never tire of it."

He stood so close Isa felt the warmth of his body. They sipped their champagne in silent contemplation. "Shall we walk?" he asked, taking her empty glass. He set the glasses on a small shelf by the door to his quarters.

A band of blue appeared along the base of the walkway providing minimal illumination to guide one's steps, but not enough light to distract from the starry vista. Slade's fingers rested on the base of her spine as they strolled the deck, convincing Isa this private meeting had moved beyond the job. A sizzle of desire spiraled through her as his warm fingers moved up her spine a few inches then slid back to rest at the base.

Several minutes passed in silence as they walked. Slade paused and pointed to the far left. "Draysen's comet. There."

A fuzzy ball of light with a long tail marked the void like a sweeping check mark. "We won't see it again," he said. "Not for another thousand years."

"If I had this at my doorstep, I'd never get any work accomplished."

His hold tightened about her waist. "Every night, no matter how late the hour, I take a moment and look upon the heavens. But some things are better shared."

Isa turned toward him. In shadow, Slade's size and the width of his shoulders reminded her of Smoke. But if she were with Smoke, his hand would be firmly on her ass.

When Slade tilted his head and lowered his mouth to hers, Isa realized the moment she'd wanted since she'd walked into his office had come. Her heart racing, Isa closed her eyes and waited for the touch of Slade's lips.

"Ander."

Isa's eyes opened as Slade's hand dropped away. Following his lead, she turned toward the speaker.

A couple approached. The woman was blonde and wore a long white dress. The man at her side was in formal dress with a red sash draped across his chest. "Where have you been, darling? I've been waiting for you."

Taking the woman's hand, Slade kissed her on the cheek. "Cynara."

Slade turned toward Isa. "My guest, Captain Isabet Renard of GEA."

"Welcome, Captain." Cynara's sultry voice conveyed surprise rather than welcome. "May I introduce Ambassador Lasuw?"

Once the introductions were made, Cynara linked her arm in Slade's. When the ambassador offered his arm, Isa had little choice but to accept. Following Cynara and Slade along the observation deck to the club owner's reception, they joined the throng of guests.

The private deck linked Cynara's and Slade's quarters. Now Isa knew why the two were never seen together except for official functions.

The next two hours were a blur of introductions and small talk. Cynara, with Slade at her side, worked the reception. Isa hadn't done much more than lock gazes with him once or twice across a sea of guests, but she'd discovered Cynara looking her over on several occasions. The appraisal the woman gave Isa left little doubt the club owner liked women as well as men.

Although short in stature, a woman as beautiful as Cynara would have her choice of partners. Her hair was pale as the winter sun and piled high on her head. The white dress draped over her body like a second skin. Her breasts were generous and her waist tiny.

As if sensing Isa's observation, Cynara turned and blew her a kiss. Smiling, the club owner reached out and stroked Slade's back. The possessive gesture was meant as a message. Slade was taken.

Isa turned away and accepted a drink from a passing serving bot.

When her purse vibrated, alerting her to a message, Isa retrieved her wrist-unit. A potential problem between two groups of marines at the club allowed Isa an excuse to leave. Why stay when Cynara had demonstrated her determination to keep Slade at her side?

Without saying goodbye to her host, Isa left the reception and returned to her quarters. After leaving a message for Slade, she changed into uniform and hurried to the command center.

The moment she entered, the recently promoted Lieutenant Ridge, the evening watch-commander, stepped up to report. Ridge's posture was stiff, but his eyes were alert. "It's under control, Captain. Two ships docked this evening for crew pleasure leaves."

They stepped inside her office. "We sent several pleasure guide bots to the marines' tables," Ridge continued, closing the door. "Upon the bots' arrival, their attention was redirected to the club's service. The hotheads are all in pleasure chambers. These particular units were working in the Ladr sector."

"Well done, keep them occupied. Exhaust them. They've earned their leave."

"Yes, Captain. I'm sorry your evening was disturbed for so minor a matter."

"I asked to receive notice of any potential problems. That request is no reflection upon your abilities, Lieutenant. You did well. How long are the ships in dock?"

"The pleasure furlough is for twenty-four hours. These ships are headed back to Ladr."

"Send an alert to the shift watch-commanders and assign several bots to keep the marines separated and busy. Let them have a memorable furlough, but keep an eye on things."

Ridge smiled. "Consider it done, Captain."

Returning to her quarters, Isa decided to contact Dar and obtain the room number Smoke had rented for their rendezvous tomorrow night.

As soon as she disconnected from her call to Dar, her communication unit rang. "Captain Renard."

"You had an emergency?"

Slade. More than likely the commander knew exactly the nature of the call she'd received and the outcome. "Nothing to be concerned about, Commander."

"I was hoping we'd have more time, tonight."

She loved the rich texture of his voice. A shiver slid down her spine as she recalled those private moments on the observation deck. "I'm not very good at making small talk with politicians."

"Unfortunately, they come with my position. Are you free for dinner tomorrow night? Nothing official, I promise."

Isa thought of Smoke and the invitation she'd accepted. Need slid sensuously through her middle. Although she'd engaged in more sexual activity in the last week than in the last year, she ached for Smoke. "I'm sorry, I have plans."

"Perhaps another time."

After observing the beautiful club owner and Slade together, Isa knew Cynara considered Slade her property. But how did Slade feel about Cynara? Given Cynara's political connections, was an affair with Slade worth making the woman her enemy?

If Cynara hadn't interrupted the moment...

But she had.

Putting one's career on the line for a man -- even a very sexy man -- she barely knew was foolhardy. Perhaps the best course was to slow things down and get to know Slade a little better outside the bedroom. "Yes. Another time. Thank you for inviting me to the reception."

"Good night, Isa."

Although he'd asked her to address him by his name, Isa decided to redefine the boundaries. "Good night, Commander."

* * *

Conscious of unexpected movement behind him, Ander turned and reached for a weapon at his belt. His hand clutched empty air.

Cynara stood in the doorway of his bedroom. "After all these years, you're still a cop at heart."

Shifting his shoulders, he didn't address Cyn's observation. He wasn't a cop. That part of his life was finished.

"Party over already?" he asked, dropping the shirt he'd just removed into the laundry bin. "The ambassador must be disappointed."

He bet the ambassador wasn't half as disappointed with the evening's outcome as he was. Isa had wanted to kiss him. Holding her had felt so right. Only Lilac gave him the same wonderful feeling.

Pushing a lock of hair from her brow, Cyn entered the room. "He's convinced I've slipped off to spend the night with my lover."

The familiar scent of her perfume surrounded him. Her fingertips brushed his chest. "Kriz will see to my guests."

Guiding her back into the living area, Ander asked, "Would you like a drink?"

"I noticed you had champagne. Captain Renard?"

"Would you like champagne?"

She shook her head. "Actually, I'd love a coffee."

Stepping into the kitchen area, Ander prepared the coffee. When Jana was alive, he'd prepare coffee for the three of them, often. After he arrived on Helos, he and Cyn had revived the late night tradition -- except the evening never ended in the bedroom.

Cyn had something on her mind and over coffee she'd tell him. The beverage prepared, he handed a steaming cup to Cyn who had curled up on the corner of his sofa. He took a seat on the opposite end.

"Have you reactivated Jana?"

Years ago Cyn had given him the perfect pleasure replica. During the months of depression, despair and guilt following Jana's death, he'd vacillated between hating the

bot and needing it. Although he'd brought the replica with him to Helos, he hadn't activated the bot.

"No."

She sipped her coffee. "Do you want me to take her?"

"Some days yes. Some days no."

Although he'd cared deeply for Cyn, he'd loved Jana. When she'd conceived, they'd married. Then Jana and his infant son, Jadar, whom he'd only held in his arms once, had been abducted and died at the hands of his enemies. Ander had hunted those responsible down and exterminated them all. Upon his return home, Cyn had presented the replica of Jana, expecting the ménage to continue.

Perhaps if Jadar had survived...

He'd deactivated the bot and resigned from GEA. His decision had crushed Cynara.

"It's been years. It's time." Looking at him over the rim of her cup, Cyn smiled in that sultry way that was so familiar. How many times had he seen that look on Cyn's face before she dropped to her knees and suckled his cock?

Jana had enjoyed watching them fuck and had often directed Cyn's actions. In all the years they'd lived together, he'd never had sex with one, always both. When he was on assignment, Jana and Cyn indulged themselves. Although he suspected, he never knew whether Jana had other lovers.

"The captain is a beautiful woman." Cyn's words wrenched his thoughts back to the present. "I thought she'd be here."

"You were wrong."

"She wants you, Ander, and so do I."

"No," he said. "Never again."

Uncurling her long legs, she placed her empty cup on the table before the sofa. Dropping to the carpet, she leaned against his legs and pressed her soft breasts against his knees. When her hand slid over his thigh toward his groin, he set his cup aside.

"Please, Ander." She reached for the seam of his pants.

He caught her hand. "We can't go back."

"All these years I've waited for you. We could have it all again, with Renard."

"It's gone, Cyn," he said, rising to his feet. "My needs have changed."

"Changed? But Renard is so like Jana. I thought --"

He stepped away, forcing Cyn to release her hold on his legs. "She's nothing like Jana."

"That midnight black hair and pale skin. Her eyes are more violet, but if she wore blue..."

Slade shook his head. "Renard's all cop. She's strong. Jana was as defenseless as a kitten." *A sensual kitten with an insatiable appetite!* "That's why Jana needed us."

"And something inside us needed her. I thought you brought Renard so I could see how much she looked like our Jana," Cyn protested. "All evening I thought of the three of us naked, together, in your bed. I couldn't wait to join you. I wanted to take down her hair and see those glorious curls she works so hard to contain loose and wild."

"Renard's hair isn't curly."

"It is." Leveraging her weight on the glass table, Cyn stood. Reaching out, she brushed her fingertips across his chest. There was a time when so mere a touch would have them stripping out of their clothes.

"The thatch between her legs will be dark and silky. Remember Jana's pussy? Remember how she loved for me to lick her pussy then kiss you?"

"Don't."

"Don't tell me you haven't wanted to taste Renard's pussy."

When her fingertips trailed down his chest to the waistband of his pants, he grasped her wrist. "We can't go back, Cyn."

"Not back. We begin a new life. We've always needed a bond to bring us together. Renard could be that link."

"I'm sorry."

"Think of it, Ander. Each of us suckling Renard's breast, our entwined fingers inside her wet pussy, bringing her to climax. We could make her scream in pleasure. Just like Jana. You know we could."

How many times had he and Cyn brought Jana to climax together? Young and tough, and at the height of his physical abilities, he'd felt invincible. He'd loved having two beautiful women sharing his bed, his life. What man wouldn't?

He thought of Lilac and Renard. He wanted them both. Jana and Cyn were the past.

"Jana loved us," Cyn said. "She was the catalyst between us. Renard could love us."

Ander didn't want to share Isa with Cyn. He recalled the way Jana had manipulated the two of them. At the time, he'd wanted her so much he hadn't cared. The conflicts had intensified the sex. Now, he wanted something different. No way was Cyn holding the puppet strings the way Jana had done. "No."

"Why do you reject what you love? We loved each other."

"Jana's gone." *Jadar's gone.* "It's over."

"When are you going to stop blaming yourself for Jadar's death?"

Their gazes locked. *Never. Cyn could never understand. Jadar was his flesh and blood. His son.*

Without another word, Cyn turned and left his quarters.

When Ander finally slid beneath the soft sheets of his bed that night, his thoughts returned to Isa. When he'd seen her in that amazing dress, he'd wanted to scoop her into his arms and carry her to his bed.

She was magnificent. Her fit, sleek body matched her beauty. As they'd strolled along the observation deck he'd ached to slide his hands beneath the clinging material covering her breasts. The way her breasts had jiggled whenever she moved had sent heat straight to his balls.

Ander imagined cupping Isa's breasts, caressing her nipples until they were taut peaks eager for his mouth. The longer he thought about making love to Isa, the more restless and hot he became. He tossed the sheet aside.

Bless the sun! He was hard as stone.

Reaching down, he fisted his aching cock. With each necessary stroke his thoughts shifted between Isa and Lilac. Isa's exquisite beauty and Lilac's wet, hot pussy fueled his imagination. Furiously, feverishly, he worked his flesh, until his release spilled upon his belly.

Palm wet with his pleasure, Ander thought about bringing Isa and Lilac together, pleasuring them both.

With her dark hair and pale skin, Isa did resemble Jana. Her body was fit, yet slender. Like Jana, Isa had long legs.

Drying his skin with the soft sheet, Ander thought about his conversation with Cyn. Was Cyn correct in her assessment? Subconsciously, had he seen Isa as a replacement for Jana? Did he simply need another catalyst?

Still, when he'd met Isa, he hadn't thought of Jana.

Rolling out of bed, Ander crossed the room and opened the portal to a private section of the observation deck. Naked, he took the short, narrow stairs to the dark, empty dome and gazed upon the heavens.

He'd thought he was over Jana and had finally put the past behind him. He'd believed himself ready for love again. If Cyn was right, he'd been fooling himself.

What of Lilac? He hadn't selected Lilac because she resembled Jana. Never once when fucking Lilac had he thought of Jana. With Lilac, it wasn't just about the sex, although the sex was utterly amazing. Ander felt an inexplicable connection to his mystery woman. He wanted to bring their relationship into the light. He needed to look upon her face, see her smile, watch her as she climaxed.

He'd believed he'd turned away from his past and his need of two women, but perhaps Cyn was right. He hadn't changed at all.

Despite his satisfying sexual relationship with the mysterious Lilac, he wanted the intriguing and beautiful Captain Renard. If the opportunity had presented itself and Isa had been willing, he would have taken her to his bed and spent the night making love to her.

Bless the sun! He'd fallen for two women.

Chapter Five

"Captain."

Isa acknowledged her assistant, Sergeant Danz.

"Your appointment with Cynara, there's been a change."

"She's cancelled?" Slade had told her Cynara wouldn't cancel.

"Instead of her office, she's invited you to join her in her quarters for a meal."

"I'm supposed to be flattered, right?"

Danz nodded. "Most would be."

Why the change in location? Why so personal an invitation? Had Slade spoken to Cynara? Or did this meeting have something to do with her interruption of a very private moment on the observation deck?

"Excellent. This meeting is long overdue. I imagine Cynara has read the directive about random security checks for the pleasure bots. I hope she doesn't view my request to return to a standard directive as an interference to club business."

"In the past, Cynara has decided what is or is not a standard. Few have challenged her. The uniforms are impressed you're willing to stand your ground."

"Thanks for the reminder," Isa said, wondering why Danz chose to speak with her face-to-face rather than sending her a message. "Anything else, Sergeant?"

"Last night's party made the news."

"Given the guest list that's not surprising."

"All the on-planet celebrity watchers are speculating about you and the commander. You looked fabulous. That gown. The whole station is buzzing about your gown, and Commander Slade."

This isn't good. Not right before a meeting with Cynara. "But I wasn't near the commander all evening."

"The camera caught him, uh, looking. His gaze wasn't on Cynara."

"There were many beautiful women in attendance last night. That singer, Delphi, was there."

Danz shook her head. "Delphi was interviewed, but the buzz wasn't about her. You looked great."

"I should have worn my uniform."

"You should watch the Celebrity and the Shining Star broadcasts and think about preparing a statement. I've received several requests for interviews."

Not good. HQ liked news about apprehensions, decreasing crime ratios, not affairs. "No interviews. Respond with a polite refusal. I don't think a statement is necessary. If I deny it, I won't be believed. I'll let the commander and Cynara make statements."

Danz slipped into a chair. "You haven't seen the broadcasts."

"What did they say?"

"Is Cynara losing her man to a Cosmic Cop?"

Isa buried her head in her hands.

"Who's the femme fatale in Commander Slade's life?" Danz cleared her throat. "A ménage in the making?"

A huge knot formed in Isa's chest and her head snapped up. "Ménage in the making? Come again."

"Cynara and Slade and Jana."

"His wife?"

"Jana and Cynara were lovers long before the commander came into the picture. When Jana conceived, Slade married her. She and the baby --"

"I remember hearing about it. I was working fugitive apprehension in the out-boundaries. We didn't get much news, but that information reached us. I never heard about the threesome."

"It was a hot topic around my mom's precinct. Slade was often the topic of gossip. Living with two beautiful women added to his mystique. Especially two women he'd rescued. Remember the famous raid on Ithra?"

"I remember." Isa leaned back in her chair. "I didn't realize Cynara was one of the girls he'd saved."

"That's because she wasn't Cynara then. She and Jana met on Ithra. Both were abducted at a young age. They became entertainers performing sex acts onstage."

"Slade saves them and the three become lovers. Cynara transforms her experience into Club Xs. Brilliant. But why would the celebrity shows turn their attention on me? I'm a cop."

"I've taken the liberty of forwarding a few photos to your desk-unit. Will you take a look at them?"

Curious, Isa swiveled to her left and retrieved the photos. Each picture was of a woman with long, curly black hair and pale skin. The final photos were side-by-side shots -- one of the woman and one of herself taken at the reception. Although the similarity in the gowns was striking, the woman was beautiful. Isa didn't view herself as a beauty.

"You look like her, Captain."

"It's the dress. Who is she?"

"That's Jana."

An utter hollowness consumed Isa. "I remind him of his wife."

"Captain?"

Realizing she whispered her thoughts, Isa squared her shoulders. "Let's keep a low profile. No reaction. Let the focus remain on Slade. They'll rehash his missions and his wife's tragic death. In a couple of days, no one will remember me. Have you received HQ's response to the proposed budget increases?"

"I'm expecting an approval, with a few modifications, today, Captain."

"Thank you, Sergeant."

After Danz exited the office, Isa reviewed the side-by-side photos. In anticipation of Slade's possible desire, she'd forgone underwear last night.

Last night, Isa hadn't doubted his interest.

Why had he invited her to the reception? Had his purpose been to introduce her to Cynara as a replacement for the ill-fated Jana? Should she confront Slade?

What if he denied it?

Maybe the best action was to avoid Slade. If only she could avoid Cynara. Glancing at her desk clock, she was reminded of her meeting.

Perhaps the club owner had a reason for requesting the meeting take place in her private quarters.

* * *

Isa's breath caught when Kriz opened Cynara's door and greeted her. He smiled, and Isa's heart skipped a beat. Although pleasure bots were gorgeous and common around the club, Isa had only seen Kriz on stage. Up close, the bot was striking.

When he touched the small of her back and escorted her into the club owner's lavish quarters, a shiver of familiarity slid across her skin. Modeled after Slade, did the bot's program include nuances only an ex-lover would know?

"Cyn will meet you in her private parlor."

"Tell me, Kriz, is your voice patterned after Commander Slade's?"

"I am a Slade replica. My processing unit has analyzed all physical aspects of the commander."

All? Did Cynara want more of Slade than he was willing to give? Given the history between Cynara and Slade, would fucking Kriz satisfy when Slade was the prize? Isa doubted it, but if she were rich enough to own a pleasure bot, she'd choose Kriz.

He seated her on a plush sofa in a cozy room decorated in warm hues of deep reds and gold. Fresh flowers in complementary colors, a luxury anywhere off-planet, filled a vase on a side table. Instead of metal or glass, the coffee table and the side tables were made of real wood. Running her fingers along the smooth surface, Isa couldn't recall the last time she'd touched so rare a commodity.

"It's golden az from Regir," Kriz offered as he picked up an ornate cold container, shook it and filled two, tall slender glasses with bubbly, pale-green liquid.

Shipping alone would cost a fortune.

"Lime fizz," he said, handing her a glass. "No enhancers. I made it with real limes. Tell me if I mixed it correctly."

Isa loved lime fizzes. She sipped the drink, thankful that Kriz hadn't offered her something with an enhancer. All the club drinks were a mixture of synthetic flavors with various amounts of enhancers. Some got you high, some made you sensual, and others downright horny. While on duty, Isa never imbibed. "It's perfect. But how did you know?"

Smiling, Kriz sat next to her. "I took the liberty of calling your mother."

"You spoke to Mom?"

"She's delightful. She sends her love."

Isa wasn't sure whether she was complimented or annoyed by Cynara's use of her influence. Despite Isa's position, calling her parents on the distant planet of Otra, and getting connected, was a challenge. "Thank you."

Kriz must have ultra-sensors to have detected her reaction. His blue eyes narrowed. "Have I upset you? I meant no disrespect. I meant to please you."

"You have. The drink is superb."

Again, he smiled. Bots were programmed to please. All comments whether positive or negative were registered and stored in performance files. Isa would love to get a glimpse of Kriz's pleasure records.

His gaze moved over her face. "Cyn will join us momentarily."

The bot's presence was intentional. Cynara wanted to know how she reacted. This get-to-know-you session was set up so his sensors had sufficient time to gather data. "What are your duties, Kriz? Beyond mixing lime fizzes."

"I serve Cyn."

"She's interested in my taste in drinks?"

"Cyn prides herself on the club's hospitality. Xs caters to the client's needs."

"I'm not a client."

"You are a guest in her home. My job is to make her guests comfortable and at ease." He leaned slightly closer. "I wish to please you."

His voice had dropped, making the statement intimate. How far was Cynara willing to take this? According to Danz, she'd wrapped Isa's predecessors around her little finger. Captain Hann had been given free use of the club services. The man had spent more time fucking than working.

Was Kriz the carrot Cynara dangled to tempt Isa? She'd worked hard to do her job and leave the club to its business. Or did this have something to do with Slade?

The small talk interrogation continued. Kriz asked about her job and her short stay on Helos. Isa remained polite, but answered in generalities.

"Captain."

Dressed in a skin-tight, white jumpsuit that left little to the imagination, Cynara entered the room. Her straight, blonde hair was pulled back and clasped at the nape. She wore white high-heels. When Isa rose, they stood eye-to-eye.

Cynara slipped into a chair and crossed her long legs. Isa resumed her seat.

Kriz picked up another cold container, filled a glass with clear liquid and served it to Cynara. "Spring water, a gift from Ambassador Lasuw. I'll send you home with a bottle."

"Thank you, but no."

Kriz sat next to Isa on the sofa. "Nonsense. Water is great for the skin, and you, Captain Renard, have marvelous skin."

Dressed in uniform, very little skin was exposed. Was Cynara referring to the gown she'd worn to the reception? Isa had showed lots of skin, perhaps more than was appropriate. HQ was still abuzz about her short stint as a celebrity. "Thank you."

Isa set down her drink. When Kriz offered to refill her glass, she was tempted, but refused. "Shall we get down to business?"

"If you wish. My staff has no complaints. The club averages haven't changed since you arrived. In fact, sales are up by four percent."

"Disturbances are down by ninety."

The club owner smiled. "Slade was right about you. I'll admit I had my misgivings about a female captain, but Slade knows his business and insisted on you."

Isa's cool slipped. "Slade, the commander, requested me?"

"He did." Cynara leaned toward her. "After seeing you I understand why. May I call you Isa?"

Seeing her. The photos Danz had brought to her attention came to mind. Isa wasn't at all sure she wanted to get cozy with the club owner, but decided to play along. Cynara wanted something and the sooner she got to the point, the better. "Of course."

"Slade is quite taken with you."

The statement sliced through her. Isa reined in her reaction. "I am honored to have the commander's respect."

"That you have. Your record speaks for itself. I was speaking on a personal level. Slade's been alone for years. So have you, Isa. It's time we changed that."

We?

"You are perfect for us."

Us! Had she been hired for her ability or as a replacement for Jana?

"Slade wants you, and he wanted me to meet you. That's why he brought you to my reception."

Using an interrogation technique to draw out subjects, Isa remained silent and unresponsive. Since most people found silence uncomfortable, they filled the void, sometimes telling more than they intended.

Glancing at Kriz, Isa noticed his gaze was on her neck. Her pulse, if visible, would reveal her heart rate and reaction. Her body's responses were far more telling than her words. Reaching up, Isa pretended to rub her neck.

"Allow me," Kriz said. "I can relieve your stress."

"No, but thank you, Kriz."

"You want Slade. I watched the film of the reception. The two of you were aware of one another, sensually aware of one another. As you were upon the observation deck."

Cynara rose and approached the sofa. She sat to Isa's left. Once seated, the club owner slid her hands along her thighs as if to smooth the material of her jumpsuit.

Between the club owner, Kriz and the table, Isa was boxed in. She didn't appreciate being pressed. She turned toward Kriz. Given her position and authority on Helos, he couldn't refuse a direct order. "Kriz, move to the chair."

Without speaking, the bot rose and occupied the seat Cynara had vacated. Isa shifted, creating more space between herself and the club owner. As if approving of Isa's action, Cynara smiled. "Do you like women?"

Having little doubt of where this was going, Isa cut to the chase. "I don't sleep with women."

"But you have shared a man?"

Given Cynara's resources it shouldn't surprise Isa that her relationship with Briat and Hadr had surfaced. The mission had thrown the three of them together for months. Single and unattached, Hadr had slept with both women. Isa hadn't developed a taste for women, but Briat had definitely fallen for Hadr.

Eventually, the easy relationship between them had turned into one of anger and resentment directed at Isa by Briat. At the conclusion of the mission, Isa had requested reassignment and swore never to repeat the mistake.

"You know about Slade's wife, Jana?"

Isa nodded.

"Since her death, Slade hasn't been the same. But since you've arrived, I've seen a change. He needs us."

Perhaps Isa should be flattered by Cynara's request, but anger, and something she didn't want to acknowledge, cut through her. If her resemblance to Jana had moved Slade to hire her in order to recreate a ménage, Isa wasn't going to play. She'd worked

her ass off, taken the toughest assignments to earn this position of captain. He wasn't going to diminish her accomplishments because he and Cynara needed a playmate.

It was time to set the record straight. "Do you speak for Slade?"

"I want to share Slade, with you. He's a marvelous lover. I assure you, once you've shared with us, you'll never regret it."

Mindful of her position and Cynara's influence, Isa rose. "That's not possible. Thank you for your hospitality, but I'm on duty."

Cynara actually looked surprised. "You were invited to lunch, with me."

And I'm sure most would kiss your ass, literally, for the privilege. "Thank you, but I must decline. You'll convey my decision to the commander?"

"Of course. Kriz will show you out."

* * *

The meeting with Cynara left Isa feeling edgy and pissed off. She'd wanted to confront Slade, but her years in GEA had taught her to control her anger and frustration. Silence might bring Slade to her. Given the man's reputation, he'd come after what he wanted. A negative response never deterred a determined man, or woman.

Stepping into the sonic shower, Isa cleansed her body in anticipation of her night with Smoke. She needed Smoke, thrusting, pounding her pussy until all thoughts of Slade vanished.

Naked, she stood before a full-length mirror. Sitting at a desk wasn't good for the ass. Isa noticed she'd added a couple of pounds since her arrival in Helos. Burning a few dozen calories with Smoke should help.

She brushed her hair, leaving it loose. Choosing a comfortable jumpsuit, Isa dressed. Right on schedule, a guide bot arrived at her door.

"Good evening, my name is Razr. I'll escort you tonight." Razr was an easy six five with short dark hair and dusky skin. His eyes were a warm brown and his smile pleasing.

"Thank you, Razr."

As they walked along the corridor, Isa's thoughts returned to Slade and Cynara's invitation. If Slade had wanted her for herself, she wouldn't have cared about his relationship with Cynara. She wasn't ready to give up Smoke either.

Although she respected Slade's longing for his dead wife, Isa refused to act as a surrogate Jana. Nor was she willing to enter into a ménage with another woman. The only playmates she wanted were Smoke and Slade.

Just the idea made her hot. She wondered how Slade would react if she invited him to join her and Smoke for a night of pleasure. She easily envisioned Slade in a relationship with two females, but sharing a woman with another man didn't fit the commander's image.

Razr stopped before a door and slid his hand over a scan disc on the wall. The disc glowed yellow. "Place your hand to the lock, please."

Isa did as instructed and the disc glowed green.

"Other than the guides assigned to this section, you are the only person who may enter this room. As requested, the room will be unlit during your stay. This will serve as your safety illumination."

He placed a bracelet about her wrist. Dangling from the bracelet was a disc the size of her thumb pad.

"Thank you, Razr."

Isa stepped inside the windowless room. A large bed filled the far section. Only a few inches separated the side of the bed and the wall on either side. To her left was a door, and one armless chair that appeared to be metal, but was likely a super-strong plastic meant to last a thousand years. The ornate back reminded Isa of a thick forest of leafless trees. The branches culminated in two knobs that resembled swirling cones. Padded stirrups were attached to the legs.

"The chair was a special request by your lover." Razr crossed the room. Isa followed. "Please grasp the knobs."

When Isa closed her hands about the knobs, desire slid through her middle. The grooves in the knobs fit her hands perfectly.

"Your body was scanned before your first encounter. The hand holds and stirrups were made with your comfort in mind."

Razr walked to the opposite side of the room. "The facilities are here," Razr said, passing his hand over a scan disc identical to the one outside. A door slid open, revealing a toilet and shower. "The level of light on this disc and on your bracelet are so faint they are only visible when the lights are off. Once inside the facilities, you press your hand here," he said, indicating another scan disc. "You may only have illumination when the door is closed. This is the privacy you requested. Are you satisfied?"

"Yes."

Razr opened a sliding panel. "The cold storage for water and beverages."

Next, he opened a long cylindrical panel revealing an empty closet. "For your garments."

Isa took off her shoes and jumpsuit and handed them to Razr to place in the closet.

"Any questions? Special requests? At Club Xs our desire is your pleasure."

Although Razr was handsome and would provide her with stimulation upon request, Isa shook her head. Her gaze settled on the chair and her pussy flexed. Thankfully, she'd decided to meet Smoke and ease the sexual tension wrought by her evening with Slade and the residual anger from her meeting with Cynara.

A smiling Razr waited for her response.

"No thank you, Razr."

"Enjoy your evening," Razr said. He exited the room and stepped into the corridor and turned. "When I close the door, the lights will go off and cannot be turned on again. Are you comfortable?"

"Thank you, Razr. I'll be fine."

The door closed, plunging the room into darkness. Isa pressed her bracelet disc between her thumb and forefinger. The light was faint and purplish. Slowly, her eyes

adjusted until the bed and chair were barely outlined. The disc provided just enough illumination to prevent one from bumping into furniture and walls.

Naked, Isa used the toilet and slipped into bed to wait for Smoke. She wanted him, but she also needed him. Smoke took her to a magical place of pure sensation. Already she ached for the touch of his hands and the lush feel of his mouth on her flesh. While with Smoke, she left reality behind and entered a sensual world of sweet eroticism.

She shifted her legs, rubbing her thighs together. Already she was wet, creamy wet. If Smoke and Slade entered the room right now, was she ready to handle both men? What would it be like to suckle one while the other thrust deep inside her? She tried to imagine the sensation of an eager mouth at each breast, strong hands stroking her body and sensitive fingers teasing her pussy.

Although it would never happen, Isa enjoyed her fantasy.

Her imagination had moved to the part where she was to decide which partner to fuck and which to suckle when the door to the adjoining room slid open.

"Lilac."

She raised her arm so her disc glowed. "Smoke, join me in bed."

A faint circle of fuzzy light appeared and began to bob toward her. Isa scrambled to the end of the bed and reached out. Her hand connected with his bare belly. She slid her hand lower until she touched his full erection.

"The anticipation has been painful." His raspy voice and rock hard cock validated his words.

Beneath her hand, his skin was hot. She stroked him, moving her hand along his throbbing length, reacquainting herself with the thick veins and broad crown.

Holding him firmly, she whispered, "Step closer. Slowly, until you reach the bed."

When he was within reach, Isa guided the hot tip of him into her mouth.

A deep audible groan told her she'd given him what he needed. She suckled, drawing on his flesh as her hands worked his hard length. His thickness filled her mouth. Using lips and tongue, she pulled and tugged on his firm flesh.

Hips rocking, he thrust his fingers into her hair and fisted a handful. He pulled back her head, gently forcing her to release his cock. "I need to be inside you."

Releasing her hair, his hand moved to her waist. Holding her in a firm grip and taking her with him, he crawled onto the bed. Easing her onto her back, he positioned his hips between her thighs. The broad tip of his cock touched her damp, ready center. Again, he groaned. "I dream of this, of you."

Gripping his cock, she guided him. She shifted her hips until the thick head slid between her aching folds.

"Bless the sun. Your pussy's drenched."

"Anticipation."

Their bodies surged against one another, again and again. Flesh slid against flesh. Muscles bunched and relaxed. Wanting him closer, Isa wrapped her legs about his hips. Skin heated and their breath joined in ragged puffs as they moved in the most ancient rhythm known to man. With each lusty thrust, his cock pushed deeper, stretching and filling her.

His arm snaked about her waist, lifting her ass off the bed. His thighs slid beneath hers, forcing her pelvis up and arching her back. Gripping her by the waist, he fucked her slowly, erotically, patiently, sliding his length along the ridge of her pubic bone.

The pad of his finger settled gently on her clit, massaging, heating until she wanted to scream. Sensation tore through her body, making her shudder.

He increased the tempo, pushing his cock deeper as if keeping time with his furious finger.

When the heat, the sensation, bordered exquisite pain, she climaxed. Hot waves swelled, spreading from her clit and rippling through her body.

When her cries had settled into whimpers, Smoke removed his finger. Gripping her hips, he rammed his cock into her pussy, fucking her hard and fast. His fingers dug into her ass as flesh slapped flesh.

He surged against her, driving his cock deep inside her, and stilled. She held him tight, gripping his flexing cock as he peaked. Releasing his grip on her ass, he slumped forward.

His chest heaved as he gulped air. With each breath, his hair brushed her breasts. Reaching up in the darkness, Isa cupped his head. Stretching out, Smoke dropped his head onto her belly. His shoulders rested against her spread thighs.

Isa slid her fingers through his straight, silky hair. She wondered at the color. Moving her hand so the disc lay against his hair, she guessed Smoke's hair was dark in shade. "Smoke. Tell me something about yourself. Something insignificant if you wish, but truthful."

He lifted his head and kissed her belly. "Curious about your anonymous lover?"

She twined his hair between her fingers. "Curious. Fascinated."

"Satisfied?"

"Yes, more than I ever imagined was possible."

Again, he touched his lips to her belly. "Shall we meet again?"

"Yes."

He shifted his weight, levering his body over hers. His partially erect cock brushed her pussy. "On the nights we were apart, I had erotic dreams about you."

"Do you ever imagine what I might look like?"

Lowering his weight on one elbow, he cupped her breast and began a slow sensual massage. "Yes. I wonder," he said, plucking gently at her nipple, "are your nipples pink or dusky rose?"

"Dusky rose."

His hand slid down over her belly to the apex of her thighs and he brushed her curls with his fingers. "And these?"

"Black."

"I have a fondness for soft, black silk."

"Will you tell me the color of your hair?"

"Brown. And yours?"

"Black."

"Your skin, is it pale or dark?"

"Pale."

"Perfect," he said as he lowered his head and captured a nipple.

Between his deep, lush suckling of her breast and the delicate probing of her pussy with his fingers, Isa decided her questions could wait. She fisted his hair and moaned from the core of her being, letting him know she loved his touch and wanted more.

He removed his fingers only to wet her clit with her own juices. Using his thumb, he massaged her clit while sliding his long fingers, slick with cream, in and out of her pussy. Riding the edge of release, she lifted her hips against his active fingers.

A stream of liquid fire coursed from her breast to her pussy. With mouth, lips and tongue he tugged on her breast until she arched her back to let him know she wanted more. He pummeled her with his fingers, fucking her fast and hard, giving her as much as she needed, almost more than she could stand.

When she climaxed, Smoke thrust his fingers deep and pressed his thumb pad to her burning clit. Moving his thumb in a circular motion, he pushed her to the edge of sensation and beyond. Pleasure peaked and rolled through her.

"Lilac, baby, let go. You're pulling my hair out."

With a sigh, Isa released him. "Sorry, I did it again," she said. "But the last time your tongue was buried between my legs."

"I remember." He shifted his weight and his cock nudged her thigh. "Did you notice the chair?"

Isa licked her lips. "Hhmmm."

Smoke scrambled off the bed. As she moved toward the bobbing disk attached to his wrist, his hand touched her shoulder. His fingertips slid down her arm to grasp her hand.

Gently, he pulled her to her feet and guided her the short distance to the chair. "Straddle me." Catching her by the waist, Smoke drew her closer until her thighs straddled his and her breasts were flattened against his muscled chest.

Although the hard ridge of his cock was pressed to her pussy, Smoke cupped the back of her head and found her mouth. Her lips parted beneath his and his tongue slid over hers.

She rolled her hips and rubbed her body to his. Instead of lifting her ass and impaling her, Smoke stroked her mouth with his tongue in slow exploration. A low moan escaped his throat as he deepened the kiss. The taste of him filled her and the heat of his skin seared hers. She sensed he wanted more than sex. That he wanted to reach a deeper part of her.

In that moment, Isa realized she also wanted more. She returned his kiss, the passion of it shaking her to the core. In unspoken response, he held her closer, tighter until she struggled to draw air into her lungs. As she reached the edge of breathlessness, he fisted her hair and pulled back her head.

Her chest heaved as she sucked in a breath. "Love me," he said, his voice choked with emotion. He buried his face in her neck, suckling and kissing his way to her breast. The heat of his mouth seared her skin. Every place his lips touched heated and burned.

His splayed hand moved up and down her back, squeezing and caressing her, teasing the crease between her cheeks with his forefinger. When he grasped her ass with both hands and lifted her onto his cock, Isa grabbed the knobs of the chair for support. Hot and hard, he pushed inside with almost brutal force.

Her muscles tightened around him, welcoming him, wanting him, demanding every thick inch of his cock. Every cell focused on the heat of him, the need of him. Balancing her weight on the padded stirrups, Isa rode him hard and fast, pounding her pussy on his cock.

His grasp tightened on her moving hips and his breath exploded in ragged puffs. When she came, her climax ripped through her and she clamped down on him like a vice.

"Bless the sun!" As the words tore from his throat, his hips rose off the chair in a final deep thrust. His whole body shuddered in climax. Their weight fell back to the chair in a thud.

Utterly relaxed and satisfied, Isa slumped against his chest. She wanted to sleep forever. "I like the chair," she managed.

"I like us."

Chapter Six

Isa awoke and raised her head from Smoke's chest. Sometime during the night, he'd carried her to the bed. He shifted his weight and she rolled onto her back. "What time is it?"

"I don't know, but the discs on our wrist will flicker when our time is up."

She scooted to the edge of the bed. "I need to use the facilities."

His hand brushed her backside as she rose.

Holding her hand out in front of her, she moved cautiously toward the door. Once inside, she passed her hand before the scan disc. The door closed and the room was bathed in a soft golden light.

Realizing time was likely short, she relieved herself, washed her face and brushed her teeth in record time. Her hair was a mass of tangled curls, but brushing it could wait. She passed her hand over the scan disc. The lights went off, and the door opened. Allowing time for her eyes to adjust before crossing the room, she finally ventured into the darkness.

The moment she crawled into the bed, he pulled her into his arms. Their bodies touched, from breast to thigh. He was erect and ready. He anchored a hand about her thigh and positioned it over his. His cock nudged her, hot and searching. The broad crown slid between her folds, easing into her. Her pussy heated.

"I love the way you cream." His fingers caught in the tangled mass of her hair and his cock slid farther inside. She convulsed around him, her pussy fluttering as his cock probed deeper.

"I want to come inside you, then lick your cream until you come again on my tongue."

"Talk like that will get you laid."

A chuckle rumbled in his throat and in one hard thrust he buried his cock. Cupping her breast, he slid the pad of his thumb back and forth across her nipple. When it had tightened to a hard aching nub, he rolled it between his thumb and finger.

He pumped his hips in a slow, sensual rhythm as if they had all the time in the world. Her muscles clenched with each long thrust. Combined with his sensual twist-and-tug on her nipple, Smoke brought her to the brink of climax. He knew her body well: how to touch her in the right place, at the right moment with the exact amount of pressure.

She never wanted this to end, but succumbed to the pleasure. Shuddering, he joined her. When her pussy ceased convulsing, he separated his body from hers and positioned his shoulders between her thighs. She was wet and slick with cum.

He covered her still throbbing pussy with his mouth. He laved her with his hot tongue, caressing her sensitive clit until she writhed in sweet agony. Capturing her clit between his lips, he drew lustily. She came in sharp, achy waves with hips pumping and fingers digging deep into the mattress.

Her muscles relaxed and he lifted his head. "That's a good way to start the day," he said, kissing her on the belly.

She opened her eyes as he levered his body over hers.

He grasped her arm and slid his hand down to her wrist and lifted it. The disc was flickering. "It's time to go. Kiss me goodbye and tell me you want me again."

Although she knew he couldn't see her face, she smiled and wrapped her arms around his neck. "I want you again."

"When and where?"

"Anywhere. Anytime. Make sure you bring the chair."

"I need to know you, the real you. I want you, the real you. No secrets."

Her heart thumped, banging against her chest wall. Isa knew her thing with Smoke had moved beyond mere sex. She wanted to know him, but what if he were one of her officers? She was far too curious about him to continue secretly fucking him in the dark. If he worked for her, she'd find a way to deal with it. "No secrets."

His mouth sought hers. Firm and mobile, his lips moved over hers. The taste of their climax lingered on his tongue.

When he broke the kiss and started to move away, she clutched his arm. "Tell me your name."

"Not here." He left the bed. "I'll send you a message. We'll meet, introduce ourselves and make love beneath the stars."

She heard the door to the connecting room slide open. A second later it closed and Smoke was gone.

* * *

Ander left his office early. He needed some time alone to think. Nodding to several staff members as he walked through the command center, he caught himself scanning the room for a female with black hair.

Once inside his quarters and alone, he stripped out of his official uniform and slipped into a comfortable pair of loose pants and made his way to his private observation dome.

The chair Lilac had so enjoyed was the only furniture in the room. Sinking onto the chair, he leaned his head back and gazed up at the canopy of stars. He wanted to share this with Lilac. Soon, he would bring her to this special place and perhaps what had begun last night would blossom.

Something had happened between himself and Lilac, something more than casual, amazing sex. While he'd sat in that chair, holding her while she slept, he'd realized his heart had once again connected with his cock.

It had happened only once before -- with Jana. Now it had happened with Lilac. But if he was falling in love with Lilac, why did Isa Renard still continue to intrigue him so?

He'd spent his meal hour watching the tapes from Cyn's reception. Despite his growing feelings for Lilac, he wanted to strip that lovely gown off Renard and fuck her senseless. The fact that he was painfully hard was evidence he couldn't deny.

"I can help you with that."

With any other woman, he'd be embarrassed to be caught with his dick tenting his pants, but Cyn knew him far too intimately. He turned his head toward her, but didn't rise.

She stood at the top of the stairwell in a white, unadorned gown of soft fabric that clung to her generous breasts and shapely hips. Her hair spilled over her bare shoulders. He didn't want her, but he'd forever admire her beauty. "Not necessary. You should call, or should I start locking my doors?"

"After all these years, I require permission?"

Their conversation had an immediate effect on his erection. "After all these years, I'm entitled to my privacy."

"Nice chair. Recent acquisition?"

He had no intention of telling Cyn about Lilac. She was a delicious secret.

"You bought it for Renard?"

An image of Renard had come to mind when he'd selected the chair. In his dreams and in the frequent moments he thought about sex, the image of Renard and feel of Lilac were erotically entwined. "You must have something on your mind besides my décor?"

"Have you spoken to Renard today?"

His gut churned. Cyn was one of the most forthright people he knew, except when she was trying to tell him something he wouldn't like hearing. "No. Why?"

"Our meeting yesterday..."

He knew that tone. Ander stood and folded his arms before him as Cyn stepped into the dome. "What happened?"

"She turned us down."

His heart jumped in his chest. "Us?"

"After seeing her, what did you expect me to do? A little change of hairstyle and clothes -- I had to try."

"What possessed you to believe Renard would go for a threesome?"

"You should read something beyond the official files. Your research is wanting."

Cyn knew something. "I hired her for her skills as an officer."

"Then you know she served with Administrator Hadr while assigned to the Fugitive Apprehension Division. Of course, he was only a lowly lieutenant then."

"He recommended her."

"Long missions. Days of isolation."

Isa and Hadr? "Say it, Cyn."

"Renard, Hadr and another female officer were assigned to a six-month mission. The three of them were lovers."

Bless the sun!

"Perhaps you could approach her."

"Perhaps I should apologize for your behavior."

"As long as you get her in bed. You do want her, don't you?"

Ander remained silent. A threesome. Isa and Lilac? Was it possible? What would he say to Isa? He had no right to assume.

"Don't be coy. It doesn't suit you. You can't deny the resemblance. She's a gift. Don't ask why, accept it and take her. It would be like having Jana with us, again."

He didn't want Jana. He wanted Lilac and yes, he wanted Isa.

Reaching out, he gripped Cyn by the upper arms. "Jana's dead. I don't want a replacement. Let her rest."

"And us? What about us?"

"You loved Jana, not me. Don't live in the past, Cyn."

Every muscle in her body went rigid. Her small hands fisted. "You expect me to get rid of all her things like you did? Pretend she never existed?"

"I'll never forget her, or Jadar. I want a new life."

Cyn's body slumped as quickly as it had stiffened. She dropped her head forward to touch his chest. "I don't want to let go."

"You're better without her."

Her head snapped up. "Never."

Although she was the stronger of the two, Cyn had chosen to remain in Jana's shadow. Without Jana, Cyn had become rich and successful. She wasn't the frightened, dependent girl he'd saved on Ithra. The need for survival and the gratitude she'd felt had transferred to love. She'd needed Jana then. She didn't now. "You are. Look at you. Cynara, owner of Club Xs, the most influential female, most wanted female in the galaxy."

"Except by the one man I want."

He released her arms and caressed the area he'd held so tightly. "You're not in love with me, Cyn." Dropping his hands, he returned to the chair.

"I do love you, Ander. Just as Jana will always be in my heart, so will you."

He needed to move on with his life. "The man you love is a memory, not a fact."

"You break my heart, but as always, I forgive you."

"Friends?"

"Always." In a flash of white, she disappeared down the circular staircase.

Looking up at the heavens, Ander let his mind drift. Instead of the past, his thoughts turned to the future. To Lilac and Isa. Instantly, he was hard.

* * *

Unable to sleep, Isa set aside the activity logs submitted by her watch-commanders. Her units were running like a well-oiled machine. When her com-unit rang, she answered.

"Good evening, Captain. This is Dar. I have a message and an immediate request."

Heart pounding, Isa grabbed a fistful of sheet. "Yes."

"Smoke wishes to meet you beneath the stars, tonight. Are you ready?"

The mystery would end tonight. "Yes."

"Are you ready, now?"

She wanted to shower. "Give me thirty minutes. What do I wear? Where do I go?"

"I will bring your clothing and escort you to the meeting. Thirty minutes."

"Thank you."

Dropping the com-unit, Isa scrambled out of bed. She cleansed her body, washed her hair and brushed her teeth. After lathering her body with cream, she applied a touch of perfume behind her ears, along the column of her neck and between her breasts.

Although her hair was an unruly mass of soft curls, Isa left it loose. She loved the way Smoke fisted his hands in her hair as they made love. Turning before the full-length mirror in her bedroom, she inspected her body. She cupped her breasts. A lick of fire slid through her middle. Would he like what he saw?

What would Smoke look like?

Her doorbell rang. The time had come. Grabbing a towel, she wrapped it around her and rushed to the door. Dar stepped into her quarters carrying a package and closed the door. "Good evening, Captain. Are you prepared?"

Isa released the towel and let it drop to the floor. "Yes."

"Do you require any stimulation?"

Her breasts were achy and her pussy already burning in anticipation. Isa needed Smoke. None other would do, neither man nor pleasure bot, not tonight. Her stomach fluttered. Finally, she'd met her lover face-to-face. "No thank you, Dar."

The bot opened the package and removed a purple robe. "A gift from Smoke. He requested the robe match the color of the chair. I think I matched the color well."

The deep purple robe matched the seat of the exquisite chair from the meeting room. "Yes. As always, you have pleased me. I'm sure Smoke will be pleased."

Dar smiled and stepped behind her. "Smoke said both of you enjoyed the chair."

"Yes, we did. Thank you, Dar." She slid her arms into the sleeves. The silky soft material caressed her skin. Tiny silver beads were embroidered in a narrow, entwining pattern along the edge of the collar and sleeves.

"It's beautiful."

"The pattern matches the back of the chair." Stepping around to stand before her, Dar fastened the seam running from low between her breasts down to the top of her thighs. "You are beautiful, Captain. Smoke will be pleased. Are you ready?"

Instead of using the central elevators, Dar escorted her in the opposite direction. "For your privacy, we will use the service elevator."

Moving through the service areas and elevator, Isa noticed only bots. Dressed as she was, she didn't want to encounter her duty officers. On a floor below the executive level, she and Dar exited the elevator and walked down a narrow corridor. Dar stopped before a door marked "Private." He passed his palm before a scan lock and the door slid open. "I will leave you here. Once the door closes, the floor illumination will lead you to a circular stairwell. Take the stairs. Do not deviate from this course."

"Thank you, Dar," Isa said and stepped into the corridor.

Behind her the door slid closed. A ribbon of blue light glowed near her feet. She walked alongside the light ribbon until she reached the stairwell. A light ribbon ran along the bottom of each step and the handrail to guide her.

A ripple of excitement, perhaps a bit of fear slid through her middle as she grasped the handrail. Heart pounding, Isa started up the narrow, circular stairwell. Her breath caught as the dome was revealed and a canopy of stars appeared. A man stood with his back to her, his broad shoulders silhouetted against the heavens.

"Smoke."

He turned, took a step toward her and froze.

A shock wave moved through her. "Slade?"

He smiled. "Lilac?"

Where was Smoke? Fearing Slade and Cynara had manipulated her, Isa took a step back. "Is this a joke?"

Slade moved toward her and grasped her hand. "A joke? Never. Incredible? Yes."

"You can't be Smoke! He doesn't have a scar."

"I used bot skin to disguise my scar. The bots will attest to the veracity of my words." He touched his cheek. "No anonymity with this."

Her anonymous lover was Slade. But Slade and Cynara wanted a replacement for Jana. She'd been duped. "Cynara arranged this?"

"She has nothing to do with this."

"I'm not a replacement for your wife."

"You're nothing like Jana."

"Cynara, others," she said, thinking of Sergeant Danz and the celebrity shows. "Others think I am."

"Please, Isa." He pulled her toward him. "Please sit down. Listen. Please." He guided her to the one lone chair in the dome. His special pleasure chair was placed beneath the stars. Her fantasy of Smoke and Slade, could it be real?

She sat down and the robe parted, leaving her bare legs exposed. Slade kneeled at her feet, but didn't touch her. "I've wanted you from the moment you walked into my office. Inviting you to the reception had nothing to do with Jana."

"You never noticed the resemblance?"

"No. I noticed you. The first time you walked into my office was like being hit by a shockwave. When I'm with you, with Lilac, I never think of Jana."

"What about my hair and the gown?"

"Jana had dark curly hair. She loved sleek fitting gowns, like the one you wore to the reception. At times, she wore her hair pulled back. Her sophisticated look, as she called it. But Cynara wants the past. She wants you to be Jana. I don't."

"The ménage?"

He placed his hand on her knee and rubbed his thumb against her skin in a slow circular caress. Despite the seriousness of their conversation, desire slid through her.

"I'll admit, I've thought of it."

Isa's heart thumped hard against her chest wall. *Here it comes!*

"I dreamed of you, and of Lilac. At times, my feelings, my desire became so entwined, I thought about the two of you. After Jana, I never wanted a ménage, but you plagued my dreams and drove me near insane with want."

"What about Cynara?"

"I haven't been with Cyn since Jana's death. I care about Cyn, but I'm not in love with her. I never was. I'm in love with you."

"Isa or Lilac?"

"Both of you. Do you not care for Smoke? The night of Cyn's reception, you, Isa, wanted me."

Reaching out, she slid her fingers through his hair. Smoke's hair. "A captain and a commander, is it done?"

"You don't report to me."

"But you can fire me."

"I can request or recommend to corporate."

"And what Slade wants, Slade gets."

His hand slid slowly up her bare thigh. "Slade wants you."

"In his bed?"

"Marry me, Isa. I want you. I want us."

"I signed a contract. I'm bound to Helos for at least a year. I can't marry."

"Share my life, my quarters, my bed. At the end of your contract, marry me."

Marriage. Did he realize what he was asking of her? Even after her contract was fulfilled, she'd have to resign from GEA to remain on Helos. Despite the court challenges by the officers' union, GEA assigned to Helos could not marry. HQ's reasoning had made perfect sense, until now.

Was she ready to give up her career, all she'd worked for, to marry Slade? "Married officers can't be stationed on Helos. I'd have to resign."

"Not if we go home. GEA has made numerous offers trying to coax me back. The pay isn't as lucrative as on Helos, but together we'd earn enough to buy a house and support a family."

Home? "I've never lived on Earth. I visited HQ once."

"Our children will know the feel of grass beneath their feet. They will climb trees and wade in a forest stream. All the things I did as a boy."

Isa realized she knew so little about him. "How do we know there's more to us than ecstasy in the dark?"

He grasped a fistful of her hair and drew her face so close to his she could feel the soft caress of his breath. "I love you, Isa. I'll spend the next year proving it."

She swallowed hard. She'd never said the words to anyone, but she wanted to say them now, to this man. "I love you, Slade."

"You'll live with me, here." His grip eased. "And my name is Ander."

"No, Ander."

His eyes widened. "Bless the sun, you can't sneak up the service elevator every night."

"I don't intend to. If I move in with you, we'll make tabloid headlines for weeks. We'll do this the traditional way. We'll date. You'll take me to dinner. Buy me flowers."

"We'll still make the tabloids."

"True romance is so much classier than an affair. I do have HQ to worry about."

"You want to be romanced?"

She brushed her lips to his. "Yes, but right now, I want to be seduced."

THE END

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A multi-published author of contemporary and futuristic sensual romance, B.J. McCall is a West Virginia native now residing in Northern California. Thanks to an older sister who was a librarian, reading became B.J.'s favorite pastime. B.J.'s idea of the perfect way to spend a rainy afternoon or a day at the beach is reading a Romance novel.

The phrase "Do what you love," applies to B.J. -- she loves to write and each story is special. She hopes her readers will enjoy each and every one of them. Visit her website at www.BJMcCall.com.