

Paladin's Pride 1: Out of Sight

Angelina Evans

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Chapter 1

Unexpected Rescue

Laser fire blasted the tail drive of her small interplanetary transport. Metal shrieked as it tore. Her heart pounding in her throat, Genae's fingers flew over the control panel in front of her.

"Critical damage to hull integrity. Life support systems at 80% and falling."

The metallic voice echoed through the control deck as the lights wavered and died. The tiny vessel shook, fighting her every effort to keep it on course.

"Critical damage to hull integrity. Life support systems at 79% and falling." Genae gritted her teeth and concentrated on the readings in front of her. There was only one planet in the immediate vicinity that supported life. She had to reach it.

"Critical dam --"

"Shut up!" She stabbed the shut-off icon on the internal communications grid and immediately turned her attention back to keeping her vessel from disintegrating around her.

Laser fire flashed past her starboard side making her flinch. The hairs on her arms rose, the blast so close to the ship it created static electricity. Another hit would destroy her vessel. She didn't have the luxury of trying to outmaneuver the destroyer class battle ship behind her. She had to get to ground.

She wasn't going to let them kill her. Not yet. Not that easily. With new resolve she concentrated even harder on the controls. Her fingers blurred as she input coordinates for the habitable planet. She needed a perfect trajectory or she'd burn up as she entered the planet's atmosphere.

A light flashed a millisecond before a laser charred the aft port thruster. The ship started spinning. Genae didn't think, she reacted. She fired the starboard thruster to full power, fueling the spin.

The battle ship behind her veered to starboard. She cut the aft thruster and powered the forward braking thrusters. Her heart pounding the air from her lungs, she reversed the entry sequence and locked in the coordinates. Grabbing the mouth-vent, she pulled the tubing from its housing shaft and clamped her mouth around the end. She took a deep breath testing oxygen flow as she wrenched the cover from the emergency panel on the left armrest of the command seat. Her heart raced, one beat indistinguishable from another as she hit the foam release.

Almost clear, gelatinous material rolled out of the vents to flood the deck. Genae closed her eyes and fought to breathe. She'd done everything she could. If the battle ship blasted her from existence, if she burned up in the atmosphere, if the ship disintegrated on impact, there was nothing she could do. Even if she survived there was probably no way off the planet.

None of it mattered. She could die in peace knowing she'd done her best to make up for the horror she'd helped create.

The foam swallowed her and all rational thought fled. It pinned her to her seat, sealed her mouth around the vent, filled her nose, glued her eyes shut and enveloped her head. It was like being entombed.

Genae tried to scream but no sound emerged.

She fought to claw her way free but couldn't.

A rushing roar filled her ears. Heat slammed into her, wave after singeing wave. Her heart felt like it would explode. Her lungs fought for air. Silent screams filled her mind.

Everything went black.

* * *

A hand closed around her throat.

Genae regained consciousness fighting. She swung one fist as she ripped the vent from her mouth with the other.

The hand released her throat.

Blinking to clear her vision, she fought free of the fast-disintegrating foam. She wouldn't give up without a fight -- would fight with every breath left in her body. She'd survived the crash. She'd find a way to deliver the information.

A hand closed around her left calf. Adrenaline surged through her veins. Almost blind from the gel sticking to eyelids and lashes, she started punching.

Genae almost smiled as she heard a grunt. She didn't know what she'd hit but she hoped it hurt.

"I'm helping you." The low, gruff words didn't register except as a target to strike at. She swung, her fist connecting with flesh and bone, jarring her shoulder. She bit back a curse and swung again.

Genae cried out as her fist hit something that felt like stone. Tears filled her eyes and streamed down her face.

Fingers closed around her hand, the grip unbreakable.

"Release me," she demanded, fighting to free herself.

"No. You hit me once. You won't do it again." There wasn't just anger in the gravelly male voice. There was rage.

Genae couldn't help herself, she flinched. Her fist felt tiny trapped in the big paw holding it. He had to be huge. "If you're going to kill me, get it over with," she goaded. "I'm not going to tell you anything."

"If I'd wanted you dead you'd never have woken up."

She opened her mouth to argue but never got the chance. The giant threw her over his shoulder. Her hands slapped into his broad back, barely keeping her head from cracking against him. He was all muscle and a lot of it... And he was naked.

Blinking hard she reached up and wiped streaming eyes. That couldn't be right. He wouldn't be naked, but dammit that had felt like skin.

Her legs dangled well above the debris-strewn ground. Her flight suit was singed in spots, her left thigh red. The gel saved her life but hadn't been able to completely insulate her from the heat her weakened shields let through on entering the atmosphere.

"Look. If you put me down I can..." Her voice trailed off as what she saw sank in.

"I'll carry you. I'm not chasing you when you try and run." Genae barely heard what he said. All that mattered was what she'd just noticed. Or more to the point what she couldn't see. "My left thigh is burned."

A grunt was his only answer.

"You're carrying me over your shoulder. My head is bouncing against your back and my legs are dangling against your chest, right?"

"So?" His tone was impatient.

Well, tough shit. She wasn't happy about it either. "Either I've lost my wits in the crash or you're invisible." She'd obviously scrambled her brain. The stress of trying to escape with the information and being trapped in the safety-gel had been too much for her.

"I'm invisible."

She closed her eyes and nodded. *Sure, whatever.* Her brain would say that to trick her. She sighed and relaxed. There was no sense fighting her own mind. If it wanted to conjure up muscle-bound invisible men that was much better than being trapped and helpless.

"Are you all right? Where do you hurt?" The big, invisible man stopped, lifted her off his shoulder and stood her on the ground in front of him. His hands easily circled her waist. *Damn, he was big.*

"I'd say I'm doing very well for someone who's crazy." She smiled up at where a face should be and patted a forearm roped with high tensile-strength muscle.

"You aren't insane," he growled.

Genae patted his arm again. "Of course I am. How else do you explain being rescued by huge, invisible, naked men on a deserted planet?"

"Not men. Man. One man."

She glowered up at him. "Don't talk to me like I'm brainless."

"Why shouldn't I? You're the one who said you'd lost your mind."

"I hope that's not humor I hear in your voice." She made her own voice as menacing as she could.

"Or what?"

"Or poof, smartass! I'll destroy you, you figment of my imagination. I'll..."

Light streaked from the sky, blinding her. The impact split the earth flinging her into the air. A clap of sound like a thousand thunder booms layered over one another deafened her as she hit the ground with bone jarring force. Another laser blast hit throwing her yards from where she'd landed. Dazed, she felt heat building under her left hip, thigh and arm where they touched the ground. A burning odor filled her nostrils. Huge hands gripped the neckline of her flight suit ripping it apart. Genae couldn't understand what he was saying as he stripped the material from her arms and down her legs, but she had no doubt it wasn't pretty.

"Who the hell's after you?" he demanded.

"President Galaran's soldiers." Saying the name snapped her back to reality. She started pushing at the hands stripping her as she silently cursed herself. "What are you doing? Leave me alone."

Trying to stop him was like trying to move a mountain by blowing on it. Totally useless. In seconds she was naked, her clothes flying through the air and landing on the ground.

She took a step toward them, intent on picking them up when big hands clamped around her waist.

His skin against hers was hot and intimate. Any thought that he was a figment of her imagination had disappeared with the first laser blast. And now she was naked.

"I want my clothes." She tried to step forward as she pushed his hands away.

"Watch." His rough, low voice was harsh, his grip unbreakable. She watched and even though there was nothing to see, heard the sound of sizzling. Her clothes started to bubble and smoke. Flames leapt into the air and seconds later a pile of white ash lay where her clothes had been.

Her mouth open, all she could do was stare. "What happened?"

"The chemicals in the dirt are highly reactive with almost every synthetic product manufactured."

Incredulous, she shook her head. She'd never heard of anything like it.

"I... th --"

"Quiet!" He swung her into his arms and started running.

"Wh --"

He squeezed her hard, cutting her off.

He dropped her to the ground as he stopped in front of a tree. A split in the trunk started to widen. She heard him grunt as the bark started to pop and groan as it splintered. She couldn't see him, but she didn't have to. She'd seen huge muscles before and his would bulge under the strain of ripping apart a tree trunk.

"Get in." The words were gritted.

She squeezed through the narrow opening in the bark. He'd saved her twice. She wasn't going to argue... yet. Bark scraped her breast, hip, thigh and buttocks leaving a sharp sting behind. She winced but didn't make a sound. She reached out, testing the boundaries of the hollow trunk as he squeezed in behind her. What hadn't been spacious to start with suddenly became very close quarters. His front, every oversized square inch was pressed tight to her backside.

"What do you --"

"Look." A huge hand clamped over her mouth and she found herself turned until she was looking through a tiny crack in the bark. The air above the debris of her ship had a hazy, heat wave look to it. As she watched seven people materialized on the blast site.

Her breath caught and she shrank back against the big man behind her. Five men and two women dressed in League military uniforms fanned out and began searching the area. Her heart started beating fast and hard. If they were caught neither of them would get the immediate death they begged for.

"Shhh." His breath teased her ear as his arms wrapped around her waist. "They can't find us here. This planet, everything about it, hates modern technology. Their instruments won't work and chances are --"

A scream sounded from somewhere out of sight. All seven crewmembers raced back to the blast site. One of them tore at the sleeve of his flight suit swearing.

"Chances are they'll get hurt looking for you." His voice sounded very satisfied. Unaware she did it, Genae clutched the arms wrapped around her. She'd never wanted anything as much as she wanted the soldiers to transport back to their ship. There had to be a way off this planet and the man behind her would know where it was. There was still a chance. She raised one hand to her heart. It was still beating and as long as it was there was hope.

Outside, the soldiers milled for a moment before one of the women shouted a command. They formed up in a loose triangle. Seconds later the air around them seemed to thicken and they disappeared.

Relief made Genae weak. She slumped back against the giant holding her. His heartbeat was a strong reassuring rhythm under her head. She turned her head until her cheek was pressed against his chest and savored his warmth. They were alive.

Chapter 2

Pleasure in the Strangest Places

She was alive, but she still had a goal to accomplish. Time was fast running out if she wanted to keep millions of lives from being lost. The man holding her had saved her from serious burns. He'd saved her life when he'd hidden her from the League soldiers. He had to help her get off the planet. But if he didn't want to help beyond that, fine. She could find her own way where she needed to go.

"I thought you said the planet was reactive with synthetic material. Why didn't all the soldiers have trouble?"

"They must not have come into physical contact with the vegetation or dirt."

"What about their boots?" If he'd stripped her for no reason she was going to kill him.

"Their boots, just like yours, are made of a resin. Not completely a natural product, but not completely synthetic either. Their hand-held lasers wouldn't have any effect against the vegetation either."

Not sure she believed him, but not willing to stay and argue, she turned and studied the section of the trunk they'd slipped through. Determined to do what she'd set out to do, she straightened away from him and tried to lean forward, ready to squeeze back through the bark.

"My ship's computer said this was an uninhabited planet. What are you doing here? And how did you know the tree was hollow?" It was an ingenious hiding place. She was surprised the soldiers' instruments hadn't picked them up instantly. What he'd said must be true. Modern technology wouldn't work on this planet.

"All Tortauna trees are hollow. As the outer ring grows the inner ring is absorbed." His voice was a low rumble of sound.

She filed the information away in her head. It could be useful later. If the soldiers figured out she hadn't died in the crash they'd turn the planet upside down looking for her. He hadn't answered her question about what he was doing on the planet, but at the moment it really didn't matter.

She reached for the crack in the bark. It was time to get moving.

"You're not going anywhere yet."

"Of course I am. I have to get off this planet. I have inf --" She stopped herself. She didn't know anything about the man behind her. If he supported the League's current President and found out what she was trying to do he'd turn her over without a qualm or kill her himself.

"I don't care what you have or don't have. Those are professional soldiers. They won't stop until they're sure their mission was accomplished. You're not leaving this tree until I'm sure it's safe."

She looked over her shoulder and glared up at where his voice came from. "Who appointed you leader?" she demanded. Who did he think he was dictating to her? She was grateful for his help but wouldn't let him order her around. The soldiers were gone and she had her own mission to accomplish.

"I did." His arms tightened around her and pulled her against his chest. "Relax, *vaiya*. You're not going anywhere until I say so."

"My name is *Genae*," she said from between her teeth. His arms were like titanium around her. He was right. Until he was ready to release her she wouldn't be going anywhere.

"I'm Kai." His arms around her loosened their hold. One big hand flattened low over her abdomen. The other slid up her torso to envelop her right breast. He grunted with satisfaction as he kneaded her soft flesh.

She froze. A strange man she couldn't even see was playing with her breast, his other hand massaging lower and lower on her abdomen and she wasn't screaming in terror?

She bit her lip, fighting not to writhe against him as fire raced through her veins. His skin was hot, his cock growing, a hard huge ridge against her lower back.

"What are you doing?" She tried to make the question scathing. Instead her voice was breathless and husky.

"Having fun." His head brushed against hers a second before his lips started nuzzling her neck.

Heart racing for a whole new reason, she tried to push his hands away. Her attempts, though, were half-hearted, her body a traitor to her mind. And her mind wasn't all that sure she wanted him to quit as sparks of pure pleasure flashed through her. *What was happening? How was he making her feel this way?* It had to be the overflow of adrenaline left from a narrow escape.

His hand found its way between her thighs. His fingers delved between her delicate folds. He found the swollen knot of nerves at the apex of her sex and played it like a master musician.

Genae grabbed the forearm attached to the hand at her breast and held on. *Lord, who was this woman reacting to him like this?* He rubbed and flicked her clit with alternating pressure and speed.

One second she was racing toward climax, her hips rocking to the rhythm of his finger. The next moment she was grinding herself back against his cock as he rubbed her with slow, deft strokes.

He tested the weight of her breast, plucked her nipple.

His mouth grazed her neck and sucked. He nipped -- small stinging bites -- then stroked the sting away, his tongue warm, moist and slightly rough.

She shuddered as his fingers stroked farther between her legs. He pressed against her entrance, tested the resistance of the small ring of muscle guarding her depths.

Genae moaned, on the brink of orgasm. She'd never been so ready so fast. She wanted his finger on her clit again.

"You're wet and hot," he whispered, his tongue swirling around her ear.

No shit. She shivered, unaware until that moment that her ear was an erotic organ.

"Your species is so receptive, and you're no exception, are you?" His low voice was almost taunting.

A chill passed through her. Before her thoughts could clear, though, his finger entered her vagina in a fast, almost savage thrust.

Her mouth opened but no sound emerged. She was surrounded by him, filled by him. He withdrew his finger, spread her own liquid heat to her clit and flicked. Only it wasn't his finger. It felt more like a... claw?

She tried to clear her mind, needed to know who -- what -- he was. She'd thought him a man, albeit an invisible one. She needed --

His claw, hard and sharp, tormented her clit. It was pleasure, the threat of pain spine tingling. His fingers stroked down and circled her entrance.

"How tight are you?" he whispered.

She couldn't answer, could only move her head back and forth against his shoulder, a quivering mass of tormented nerves. Two fingers plunged deep at the same time he pinched her nipple and bit her neck. The triple assault was too much. She screamed as her whole being clenched.

An orgasm thundered through her, more powerful than anything she'd ever felt. Her body shook. Her vagina clenched around the fingers lodged there. Her nipple, caught by his fingers, ached to the point of pain.

He sucked the skin of her neck trapped between his teeth. His teeth released her at the same time he released her nipple. But her torment had just begun.

Instead of decreasing, her orgasm swelled. Wave after wave slammed into her as his fingers slid in and out of her. His other hand moved between her legs. One second a finger strummed her clit, the next a claw flicked, toying with her, adding the spice of a threat to the already heady experience.

Genae gasped for breath. She moaned and cried out. There was a fire between her legs, deep in her belly. Tremors shook her as he forced her higher. She was going to die and she didn't care.

Hard fingers squeezed her clit, forged deep.

Every muscle tightened and her world exploded. She arched like a bow pulled too tight. Her heart stopped and she went limp in his arms.

* * *

One moment Kai was invisible, the next he wasn't. His lean, sharp features were drawn tight with need. The unconscious woman lying limp in his arms was a surprise. He'd fought to free her from the wreckage of her ship only to find her already struggling to free herself. She'd been ready to take him on when she hadn't been able to see him. He wasn't used to humans being so fierce. He'd wanted her, and decided at that moment he would have her.

He turned her to face him. Holding her easily with one arm he brushed the short mop of black curls off her forehead. She was tiny, something he'd never liked, but with her he did. He wanted to hold and protect her. He also wanted to ram his straining cock into her until they both exploded.

He traced her small straight nose, her soft, full lips, and brushed the dark fan of her lashes where they lay against her cheeks. Unconscious, she looked very young and very sweet.

A hint of a smile touched his lips at that thought. She might have moments when she was sweet, but he hadn't seen them yet.

His gaze trailed down to her breasts and his eyes narrowed. Her right nipple was puffier and redder than the left due to his manipulations. The scrape on her left breast, though, was from something else. Probably from when he'd pushed her into the trunk before the League soldiers arrived planet-side.

He cursed, the low guttural language of his people adding emphasis to the words. He looked lower, the curses flowing freely when he saw the scrapes on her left

hip and thigh. The soldiers would pay for every mark on her body. He would see to it personally.

Leaning forward, he ran his tongue over the abraded flesh of her left breast. A low purr rumbled in his throat when her nipple hardened and lengthened as he licked her.

He lifted her until he could reach her hip and the purr became a growl. He licked the abused skin before moving to her thigh. He started to lick her but the scent of her arousal, sea-sweet and musky, had the growl in his throat threatening to become a roar.

He resisted the urge to turn his attention to the soft, hidden folds of flesh between her legs. He was VanDai, and he lived by the code of his people. He had saved her life and therefore she belonged to him. She'd accepted his invasion of her body by his fingers, giving tacit permission for him to fuck her. She hadn't opened herself to his mouth. She would, but he wouldn't take advantage while she couldn't say no.

He licked her thigh.

Straightening to his full height, his broad shoulders wedged into the small space provided inside the tree's hollow interior, he lifted Genae and propped her against the smooth inner bark. He lifted her left leg and wedged his hips between her thighs. He'd pushed her to the point of losing consciousness on purpose. The first time he entered her wouldn't be comfortable. The males of his species were built big in every way. And the knobby flesh of his penis, though it would soon drive her wild, would provide too much stimulation for her the first time he penetrated her.

His huge muscles tensed as he held her, his hands supporting her buttocks and hips, her back braced against the tree. His penis quivered and jerked. Anticipation tightened his muscles even more. The human women he'd been with before had been good, so tight it had almost been painful entering them. And with this woman there was the added element of ownership. She belonged to him.

He thrust his hips forward until the head of his penis touched the soft, moist folds of her sex. His breath hissed out from between clenched teeth. It felt like a torch was being held to his cock it was so sensitive to her heat. He had to have her now.

He lifted her higher and pulled her hips forward. The head of his cock skimmed through her dew and lodged at the opening of her vagina.

Taking a deep breath he fought for control when every instinct urged him to ram his cock into her cunt and claim her. He had to use more care than that. Even unconscious, he could still hurt her.

Slowly, pressing her down against his shaft, he began to penetrate her. The pressure had sweat popping out on his forehead and upper lip. She'd been tight around his fingers but he hadn't realized how tight.

Breathing hard, his fingers biting into her hips and buttocks, he forced her down. The bulbous head of his cock pushed through her guardian muscles and he started cursing. She was tighter than any woman he'd ever been in. So tight it bordered on pain. Good pain. Pleasure pain. A wet velvet vise squeezing him.

He pushed forward an inch. Throwing his head back he fought the need raging through him. He never wanted another male to know the ecstasy of her tight sheath. She was his by right of life. His hips surged forward before he could stop himself, sinking his cock another two inches in her depths. His litany of curses narrowed to his people's version of "fuck, fuck, fuck."

He became aware of the low whimpers coming from Genae when her head began to rock back and forth. Her hands fluttered in the air before settling on his forearms. Her breasts heaved as she took one gulp of breath after another.

He had to be inside her before she roused. He wanted her filled with his length and girth. She might or might not recognize the bonds he was forging through sex. It would work to his benefit if she didn't.

Slowly, inexorably, grunting and sweating, he pulled her down, impaling her on his rampant cock. She burned him, her fiery essence bathing him. Her silken walls resisted his invasion but he wouldn't let her stop him. Not until every inch she could take was inside her.

Through half-closed lids he watched her lashes flutter. She blinked, a questioning, almost bewildered expression flitted across her face. Fear flickered in the depths of her blue eyes as they opened.

* * *

She glanced down, saw his cock where it disappeared between her thighs, felt the burning slide of his flesh into hers, and jerked, trying to get away. The motion sank her fully onto his shaft.

Her eyes flew up to meet his. Her mouth opened. Her fingers dug into his arms. Her vagina clamped down on his cock. Her hips jerked, trying to relieve the burning, pinching pressure.

"Remember, I tried to go slow." His voice was a guttural rumble. His eyes glittered pure golden fire. There was no more time to talk. He pulled back, plunged forward. His cock was abrasive against her tender inner tissue.

She grabbed his shoulders, raked her nails down his chest. Teeth gritted, she tried to twist away from him. The motion increased the pressure inside. His cock unerringly found every pressure point and she screamed.

"It hurts," she panted, holding his upper arms. She tried not to move as her whole body shook and shuddered with each powerful surge of his hips.

"Is the hurt good or bad?" he demanded.

Hurt good? She opened her mouth ready to flay him with words. He plunged deep but rotated his hips before pulling back. The motion worked her clit with fierce pressure. Lightning shot from the small knot of nerves to every pleasure point in her body. She shook as he repeated the motion. Pressure built, great waves threatening to drown her. His cock rode in and out of her. Tormenting. Torturing. Good?

His penis grew.

Her chest heaved as she fought for air. Her whole being centered around his penis as it surged in and out of her, moist sucking sounds accompanying the hard rhythm he set.

She fought the pressure, the growing, expanding sensation.

He thrust against her without pulling out.

She moaned and shook her head.

His cock vibrated inside her, his pelvic bone riding her clit.

He stared at her, wanted to see her face as she orgasmed. Her cunt clenched around his cock, not releasing but getting tighter and tighter.

"Come for me," he growled. His hips pistoned against her. If she didn't come soon he wouldn't be able to watch her. He'd be riding the wave of his own release.

"No." She glared up at him. Fear made her eyes almost black. If she let go, if the power making her muscles tight found release she wouldn't survive. No one could survive the storm raging through her. "Stop," she begged, almost sobbing.

"Never." His eyes were narrowed, his voice guttural. "You will come for me." It was a threat and a promise. He pulled back and hammered into her.

His was the power of lightning striking, his cock fire as the rough texture of head and shaft flashed in and out of her. There was no rhythm to his thrusts. Fast, faster, slow, fast. He stroked shallow, deep, shallow. He plunged *deep*.

She screamed. Her body arched and her muscles corded. Her nipples flushed darker, distended. Her eyes started to close.

"No! You won't faint," he ordered. "You'll experience every moment while I watch."

Something in his voice held her. Low, mewling sounds broke from her throat as her orgasm ravaged her. And it went on, peak after peak, as his cock pounded into her, a relentless machine.

"Yes." His voice was a hoarse whisper as he felt the pressure of release starting in his balls. Her expression, eyes half-closed, lips parted, teeth clenched, could have been pleasure or pain. A flush stained her breasts, chest, neck and face. Her nipples were longer, more pointed.

He wanted it to never end. The fierce clenching of her muscles around him, the pressure. Head thrown back, the veins in his neck standing out, he roared his release.

Genae felt the hot jets of fluid pumping into her, bathing her in his essence. It was too much sensation. Her mind couldn't fathom that such extremes of pleasure existed and a person survived.

He kept thrusting into her, his come still spurting. Unable to respond any more, her conscious fled. Her body went limp, tremors shaking it.

His head thrown back, eyes closed, Kai savored being one with her. His cock twitched inside her as tremors tightened her around him. He'd been well milked. There was nothing more in him to give.

He leaned against her, loathe to pull free. He didn't want to be separated from her. Not yet. If he'd ever thought about forming a life bond it wouldn't have been with a human woman. His right to her after saving her life was too ephemeral. He wanted something universally recognized. He wanted no one doubting that she belonged to him. And he didn't want time limits or conditions. He wanted her always.

He breathed deep, satisfaction curling through him at their combined scents. She was potent, her scent the most sexual he'd ever encountered in a human or any other female. But there was something else. Eyes narrowed, he frowned. His breathing stilled as he focused on listening. The only sounds that reached him were the sounds he'd become familiar with during his month on the planet.

There was something else bothering him. Something else was making the hair on his arms and the back of his neck stand up.

He peered through the crack in the bark, searching the darkening landscape for something out of place.

He inhaled and the truth hit him. He smelled sex. His smell combined with hers. But he smelled another being, too. Human. Male. And close.

Chapter 3

Surviving to Run

Had the male heard them? Their lovemaking hadn't been quiet. If he had heard them he would have attacked.

Genae shifted in his arms and groaned.

Kai lifted her off him, furious he had to leave her welcoming sheath before he was ready.

She started to cry out. Kai clamped his hand over her mouth. He lowered his head until his mouth brushed her ear. "Someone is out there. Be silent." His voice was a mere suggestion of sound. He pulled back to look at her. If she didn't understand he would knock her out to keep them safe.

Her eyes were so wide they dominated her face, but she nodded.

His mouth set in a grim straight line, he nodded once before releasing her.

Her legs wouldn't hold her. She slumped to the base of the trunk. Her thighs where they connected to her hips felt stretched. Her muscles felt as though she'd run around a spaceport about a million times.

Kai spared her a frown before turning his attention back to the crack in the bark.

Genae knew she should be worried and she was. Just not to the extent the situation called for. If there was someone outside, their intentions weren't good. A death sentence had been issued against her and every crewmember aboard the destroyer was more than ready to carry it out if she was found.

That's what she needed to concentrate on. If she wasn't careful she would be killed. Everything she'd done, everything she'd given up would be for nothing. But all she could think about was Kai. She couldn't stop looking at him or wanting him.

A shiver skipped down her spine. She bit her lip to keep from moaning aloud. The man -- no, not man. Well, it didn't matter what he was. He knew how to have sex.

He was beautiful. His hair was thick and full, a dark golden brown. It grew down his neck to a point. It reminded her of pictures she'd seen of Terran lions. She wanted to touch it. *Was it as soft as it looked?*

She wouldn't touch him, even though she wanted to. One of them had to be vigilant and since the only thing holding her attention was Kai, she elected him for the job.

He really was a giant. Head and shoulders taller than she was. She wasn't sure how he'd squeezed his broad shoulders into the cramped space. He was lean and powerfully muscled, and yet he looked sleek.

Dark gold hair grew across his chest and arched down his abdomen to his sex. Her breath caught as she looked at him. Awe, fear and fascination warred inside her. He was huge. Even limp he was long and thick. But that wasn't the surprise.

She realized she was reaching for him when she saw her hand readying to close around him. She snatched her arm back and clasped her hands together.

He was knubby. She didn't know how else to describe it. No wonder she felt abraded. She was. And she wanted him to do it again. There was only one reason she could think of to explain the texture of his cock. Nature had made him that way to increase sexual stimulation.

She shivered, a smile of pure sensual enjoyment lighting her face as she stretched. Yes, she would very much like him to do it again. She'd never been in a situation like this before. Did she ask? If she didn't --

Laser fire hit the tree with a thunderous boom.

Genae hit the opposite side of the inner trunk. Before she could move it happened again. Her heart pounding in her chest, she lay unmoving. Strike after strike hit the tree. Kai flattened himself against the inner trunk, half-standing over her, his body contorted to stay clear of the crack in the trunk's bark.

As suddenly as it started the laser fire stopped.

Genae couldn't hear anything over the sound of her own heartbeat. Her ears rang with the sound of the detonations.

"... ineffective. Search each tree. We all heard something. Find out what it was. If the woman escapes we all pay."

Kai crouched down and folded himself around Genae. She had no idea what he was doing but she wasn't going to protest. His life was as much at risk as hers and he had to know it. He folded her almost into a fetal position, wrapped his arms around her and disappeared.

She blinked. Her heart stuttered. She could still feel him but he was invisible. If the soldiers searched the tree and looked through the crack they would only see her, wouldn't they?

Biting her lip she buried her face against his warm, hard chest. She didn't want to die. She'd thought she'd resigned herself to dying when she'd started the whole chain of events that was unfolding. But Kai had changed that. He'd made her feel more alive than she ever had before. She wanted to learn if there were higher levels of pleasure she could ascend too.

She didn't want to die.

She closed her eyes against the sudden tears burning in them. What was she thinking? She had risked everything to get the information hidden in her heart. Just because Kai had suddenly appeared in her life she couldn't let it change anything. She had to get the information to the TaYair if she could. If they got through this search without being discovered she would ask Kai to help her get off the planet. After that she would have to go on alone. He was too much of a liability. He made her want to forget everything but him and what he did to her body.

She burrowed as close to his body as she could get, savoring the delicious aches he had created in her.

Kai held Genae tight, using his body's reflective camouflage to hide them both this time. He checked and rechecked ensuring nothing of her would be visible around

him. It wasn't comfortable -- he felt like he'd been shoved into a tight box -- but it would keep her safe and that was what mattered.

He listened, picking up the footfalls of someone as they paced close to the tree. The Tortauna trees would stand against anything the soldiers could fire at them, he knew. And they would never find him with their instruments or eyes. If they fired blindly into the trunk of the tree, though, he and Genae would die.

Silently he cursed himself. He'd kept them hidden because he was sure the soldiers would return once they were equipped with organic rather than synthetic suits to withstand YelAsta's unique environment of reactionary chemicals and poisonous plants. And while the vegetation was impervious to hand-held laser fire, he and Genae weren't.

When he was sure they were safe for a time, he'd let the sexual fire he always felt when coming out of a dangerous situation flare and burn them both. He'd counted too much on his superior abilities of sight, sound and sensory perception. He hadn't counted on how fully Genae would engage his attention. He'd never lost all sense of his surroundings before. She was a dangerous woman.

The steps circled the tree, stopped outside the crack. Light flashed into the trunk illuminating the hollow space.

Genae flinched.

Kai tightened his arms around her and froze. His breathing and even his heart rate slowed. Move on, he silently urged. He could feel Genae's heartbeat hammering her chest until she was almost vibrating against him. He wanted to reach through the crack, grab the soldier's throat and crush it for frightening her like this. He wanted to stroke her and soothe her with words of reassurance and he couldn't do that either.

Rage burned through him as he listened to the soldier walk away. He wanted to slip from his hiding place and dispose of each and every soldier who had threatened her life. But he wouldn't leave her alone and unprotected. He wouldn't risk his bond mate's life.

Listening to every night sound, he waited, ignoring cramped muscles and claustrophobic quarters. The night creatures alerted him to the location of their enemies. Sudden silences and screeches told him how many soldiers searched and where they searched.

He willed Genae to go to sleep, not wanting her to endure each torturous moment but she remained awake. Her body shivered, no doubt shock setting in from all the extremes of the day. Their first sexual experience hadn't helped but he didn't regret it. He'd started something he fully intended to continue.

The animal sounds around the blast site stilled. His senses tingled with an awareness of danger closing in. He listened hard, caught scattered words as the leader of the group talked to the soldiers with her.

"... weapons are ineffective. We'll... destroyer... trees won't be... laser blast. No one... survive the hell fire we'll rain down on them."

Fresh rage rolled through Kai, building on the feelings already roiling through him. Military forces were the same everywhere. Rather than expend more time they would decimate areas of the planet to ensure their success.

He waited, felt the sudden absence of their presence.

Ignoring screaming muscles he began unfolding himself from around Genae. Cursing, fighting for freedom from his cramped position, he bent and contorted until he was standing.

He reached down with one hand, caught Genae's right arm and pulled her up against him. She gasped but it was the only sound she made. He was sure her body was as uncomfortable as his, pain shooting through muscles held in one position for far too long.

His shoulders scraping the inside of the trunk, he turned until he could look outside through the crack in the bark. He could feel Genae pressed against his back, her skin cooler than it should have been in the warm night air.

Muscles straining he shoved against the bark until the opening was wide enough for him to squeeze through. Teeth clenched he fought to hold the bark apart so Genae

could slip free. He released the bark and it snapped back together with a loud popping sound.

Grabbing her hand he yanked her after him as he started running.

Behind him, Genae stumbled and swore.

He released her hand, spun, caught her around the waist and flipped her over his shoulder. He finished a three hundred and sixty degree turn and kept running.

Blinding light flashed from the sky as laser fire hit the ground. The earth under his feet shook then rolled as the pulse of energy moved out from the point of impact. Genae slipped from his shoulder as he lost his balance and fell to his knees.

A second pulse threw him to the ground before he could get up. The ground next to him cracked.

"Genae!" He shouted her name, looked around and saw her on the other side of the crack. She was on her hands and knees trying to stand up.

Another laser bolt blasted the earth.

The ground rolled throwing them both down. The crack widened into a chasm, rock and earth splitting with sharp pops and cracks and a low, ominous rumble.

* * *

Genae watched as Kai lunged to his feet. His expression savage, he started running. Her heart stopped then started racing. She fought to her feet, barely kept her balance as another wave of energy rocked the world.

She ran, stumbled, crawled, got up and ran again. He was going to jump the chasm. She wanted to scream at him not to but saved her breath. She wouldn't let him fall. And if he did he wouldn't go alone.

* * *

Kai saw Genae fighting gravity and unstable ground to reach the edge of the growing crevice. Fear slammed into his gut. If she was close to the edge when a pulse ripped the earth again she could go over. *What did she think she was doing?*

Fueled by fury, he raced to the edge of the crevice and leaped into the air. Another wave rippled the earth and ripped the gaping tear wider.

His heart slammed into his chest. Dread settled like a weight in his gut. He didn't have enough momentum. He wasn't going to make it.

He reached out as the ground rushed toward him. If he could catch the lip he might --

Something slammed into his side. The earth spun in a dizzying arc. He hit the side of the chasm with stunning force. Legs dangling, fighting for breath, he clawed for purchase as he started to slide over the edge.

Genae dropped the limb she'd used to knock Kai closer to the chasm's edge and threw herself on the ground. Stretching full length she caught his hands as the next wave rolled under them.

Kai's eyes met hers, pure gold and burning with anger.

"Let go," he ordered his voice breathless but harsh.

She clutched his wrists as tight as she could, dug her toes into the dirt and held on. She wanted to pull him up but couldn't. Her muscles shook. Adrenaline couldn't hold out against too many hours without sleep, constant fear, his size and a sexual encounter the likes of which she'd never known before. Tears clouded her eyes and she didn't care. She wanted to cry. More than that, she wanted to just all out wail. She didn't want to lose Kai. She didn't want to lose her own life.

Letting her head drop to the ground she fought back the laughter welling up from deep inside. She wouldn't give into it and she wouldn't give in to the weakness stalking through her. She'd hold Kai forever if she had to, or until they both went over the edge.

His weight dragged her forward as the ground shook.

Kai couldn't believe what he was seeing and experiencing. She wasn't letting go. He could feel the quiver of overexerted, overextended muscles, knew her arms must feel like they were on fire. But she didn't once loosen her grip.

Light flashed, blindingly bright. The thunderclap of exploding earth and vegetation was almost simultaneous. He felt the ground tremble and knew he had only one chance. If what he was thinking worked they would live to run. If it didn't work it

wouldn't matter if they fell. The laser strikes were getting systematically closer. If they couldn't run the soldiers had won.

Breathing hard, watching as the swell started rolling toward them, he tensed his muscles, ready to move. He'd have only a split second.

The leading edge lifted Genae's feet.

They both slipped.

Surprise flickered through his mind. He hadn't realized how much of his weight she was supporting. He watched her body undulate as the earth moved under her. Bracing his elbows, he caught the leading edge as it lifted, dug in hard and lunged forward.

As the ground split wide open with a roar of tumbling boulders and dirt he threw his leg over the lip and rolled. When he stopped Genae was twisted at an odd angle, her hands still locked around his wrists.

He didn't know whether to pick her up and hold her tight or shake her. Instead he picked her up and ran.

Another blast hit. He stumbled but didn't go down. His eyes never wavered from the point in front of him he was running toward. The tectonic plate under them was unstable, already fractured in places. If he could make it through the one fissure running through the mountain of stone before them they would be on stable ground. The blasts wouldn't be able to touch them.

He didn't let thoughts of tumbled boulders slow him. If the path he was following was blocked he would find another. He would never give up, would never let the League soldiers win.

* * *

Genae wanted to help but knew she couldn't. She held as still as she could, kept her body from swaying as much as possible. It was a nightmare of light flashes followed by moments of blindness -- deafening blast after blast. The earth rolling in tortured waves.

She wanted to be furious but only felt numb. So many people had already died. Now a planet was being destroyed. How much more death and destruction would occur before it ended?

Kai ran straight toward the wall of stone. With an unerring sense of direction he picked his way through strewn rocks and boulders and over fissures and rivulets of water that shone like living silver in the moon's light.

The ship orbiting overhead was ominously silent.

Genae wanted to breathe a sigh of relief but couldn't.

Kai didn't slow down. If anything he ran faster. Did he sense something she didn't? The shadow of the mountain swallowed them. There was no hint of light. It was as if the world around them ceased to exist. After constant rumbles and booms all Genae could hear was the sound of Kai's ragged breathing. There wasn't even the sound of his running footsteps.

"Keep your head tucked in close to my back. This will be tight."

Genae didn't have time to ask what he meant. Rock scraped her back. She felt as much as heard him grunt as he wedged them through a tight, jagged corridor of stone.

"I can walk." It was as much an offer as a statement of fact.

Kai didn't respond. If something happened and slabs of rock sheered off the steep walls above them he wanted them together. He wasn't going to tell Genae that so he kept quiet. If they could reach the side tunnel he'd discovered the week before they would be safe.

He ran his hand along the wall, even his exceptional night vision limited by the absence of light. He almost missed the tiny opening. Only the jagged unevenness of shattered rock in a unique L shape alerted him that they were there.

Carefully he slid Genae from his shoulder. He held her close as she regained her equilibrium.

"Let's not ever do that again," she grumbled, but wrapped her arms round him and held tight. How did she thank someone for risking their life to save hers?

"Run from your enemies?" he asked, frowning.

"Carry me upside down," she clarified.

He just kept frowning. "We have to keep moving." His heart raced at the feel of her breasts pressed against him.

"You think they'll do something else?" She felt sick to her stomach at the thought.

"I would if it was me." His tone was grim, his meaning chilling in its ruthlessness.

"What would you do?" She barely recognized the hoarse whisper as her own voice. She felt chilled to her soul.

"I'd destroy the planet if that's what I thought it would take."

"To kill one person you would destroy a planet?" She couldn't believe it. Didn't want to. She pulled back and looked up at him but there was nothing to see. Even if there had been light he would have been invisible.

"If the person in question was that much of a danger to me or my people? I wouldn't hesitate."

Genae's legs felt boneless. The bottom dropped out of her stomach. "If that's true you saved us for nothing."

* * *

A tall, powerfully muscled man strode onto the command deck of the destroyer orbiting YelAsta. His hair was a thick, wild black mane around his sensual face.

"You're ready?" a squat, coarse featured man barked. He turned to glare at the taller man.

The taller man's smile was slow. "Of course."

"Your suggestion?"

"I'll find her. If she's alive there is no way she can hide from me."

"You're overconfident."

"No." The taller man's handsome features hardened into fierce lines. "I know what I'm capable of."

The shorter man nodded after only a moment's hesitation. "Go."

With a sweeping bow made mockingly low the taller man strode off the command deck.

"You should have destroyed the planet."

With casual strength the captain backhanded his second-in-command and sent him sprawling to the floor.

* * *

On the planet's surface Kai helped Genae into the tunnel. When she had a good start he squeezed himself in behind her. For the first time he wished for clothes. There were some parts of his anatomy he didn't want scraped.

Once they were safely in the underground cavern he would seal the tunnel behind them. If the League soldiers detonated a fusion charge on the planet surface there was a slight chance they would survive. Anything else he could deal with.

He crawled after Genae, reaching out to touch her when the tunnel widened enough to allow it. His thoughts turned to what he would do with and to her when they reached the safety of the underground cavern.

Chapter 4

Pleasure Revisited

The tunnel in places was so tight Genae felt stone scraping her from above, below and from either side. When it started to widen she felt as if a weight had been lifted off her chest.

Light shimmered and wavered along the ceiling. It was a mesmerizing blue with flashes of every other color imaginable. She wanted to stop and stare at it but Kai touched her left calf urging her on.

She kept looking up, fascinated by the light. It seemed to be alive. But what made it?

The ground dropped from under her. She fell three feet and hit the cavern floor with a loud thump and a muffled cry.

"Are you hurt?" Big hands ran over her arms and legs before moving to her torso.

"No more than I already was." Genae lay unmoving. There was no sense looking at Kai so she watched the lights instead. She'd never been so tired in her life. She felt like she'd been run through a League academy training class for a week with no sleep. Her arms and legs trembled, her muscles ached. All she wanted to do was stay right where she was and sleep for a week.

Big hands clamped around her upper arms. She glared upward, ready to fight if she had to. There was no way she was going to move again. Not anytime soon.

Instead of urging her on, Kai settled to the ground beside her and shifted her around until they were spooned together, his front to her back.

Genae breathed a sigh of relief as she wriggled against him to get more comfortable. It wasn't ideal but she wasn't going to complain. Hard arms closed around her. She could have sworn she felt the brush of lips against her temple.

"You don't think we should keep moving?" Even as the words left her mouth she wanted to bite her tongue.

"If we wake up we'll know they didn't set a fusion charge. If we don't wake up it won't matter."

Genae was horrified. A moment later she had to smile. It was actually a very prosaic way to look at the situation. And it was true. If they didn't wake up it wouldn't matter. Nothing would.

* * *

Some time later, Kai woke, his cock so hard it ached. He'd slept soundly and woke instantly. It had been a long time since he'd slept so well. Knowing he would either wake up or he wouldn't made it easy. He hadn't had to stay vigilant, more awake than asleep.

He glanced down at Genae. She was facing him, her arms around his waist, her face pressed against his chest. He hadn't even noticed when she'd turned. He'd never slept so deeply in his life.

He lowered his head until he could press his lips against her forehead. Her breasts were flattened against his chest, her nipples barely nubs against him. They were lax with sleep. Her legs were caught between his, the vee of her thighs pressed tight against his straining cock.

He needed her. He'd woken hard and ready for sex before. This was different. He wanted to mate. He wanted to sink into her moist heat and ride her hard until they both exploded. He wanted to feel his seed spurt into her, filling her, possibly taking root to grow inside her. He wanted to see her stomach round with his child, her breasts and nipples swollen and ready to feed their child.

His eyes narrowed and he almost groaned at the thought of her breasts engorged with milk. He wanted to feast on her. And he didn't want to wait. He wanted to do it now.

Careful not to wake her, he rolled her onto her back. Her arms fell to her sides and her head rolled to one side. Her eyelids didn't even flicker. He spread her legs making room before settling himself between her thighs.

He knew she was exhausted. Not once had she protested or complained the day before. She'd been amazing.

Leaning down, keeping his weight propped off her, he brushed her lips with his. A soft sigh feathered across his mouth like gentle wings.

He groaned as he lifted his head. His expression regretful, he studied her face, looked down at her breasts and shook his head. He wanted to plunder the depths of her mouth, to feast on her breasts. But he couldn't wait.

Propped on one forearm, he grasped his cock with his other hand. Pre-come bubbled up from the head of his cock. He leaned forward and rubbed his cock along her labial folds.

He cursed at the feel of her, soft and moist against the sensitive end of his cock. She wasn't ready for him and he was almost past caring. He wanted to thrust his cock into her. One fast lunge that would bury him in her.

Fighting the urge, swearing to himself, he studied her breasts. They were pale and tipped with pink nipples. He glanced down to where he still held his cock pressed against her and licked his lips. He wanted to taste her. She'd been receptive to his fingers on her clit. She'd gone wild when he'd flicked it with an unsheathed claw. *How much more sensitive would she be to his tongue and teeth? Would she lose control if he suckled her there?*

His hips thrust forward. His cock slid between her folds seeking entrance to her secret passage.

Teeth clenched, head thrown back, he struggled with the most primitive drive of all. The drive to mate. He knew himself well. He wouldn't be able to hold back long. Already the animal in him, never far below the surface, was straining for release.

Would she be able to handle his full passion?

He released his cock and, crouched over her, stared down at her. He wanted to ignore everything he believed and taste her now. It would be the fastest way to bring her to full arousal. Exploring her secret folds and crevices, toying with her sensitive clit, thrusting his tongue into her sweet passage. But he'd been taught and believed that such acts were the most intimate two people could share. He would have those intimacies with her but with her consent.

A low rumble issued from his throat as he forced his gaze away from the tangle of black curls around the petals of her exposed sex. He wouldn't do what he wanted but there were other ways to arouse her and he would use every one if he had to.

His gaze moved to her breasts. Mmm. Yes. He would start there.

His eyes narrowed and his lips curved up in a smile that would have had Genae squirming where she lay if she'd been awake to see it.

He lowered himself enough so that his chest rubbed against the tips of her breasts as he moved. He studied her mouth, her full lips slightly parted in sleep.

* * *

Genae smiled and wriggled just a little, still caught deep in sleep. Her mind conjured images of a big, powerfully muscled, golden-eyed man. She wanted to run her fingers through his hair and find out for herself if the long, full-bodied strands were soft or coarse.

Sharp teeth tugged at her bottom lip. The hint of danger made her shiver, but she didn't move away. Instead she lifted into his touch. A tongue, warm and moist, slightly raspy, licked her lip. It didn't feel quite scratchy but there was definite roughness to it.

The image of her dream lover grew. She shivered as he looked up and met her wide-eyed stare. His expression was predatory. He reminded her of a wild animal

intent on its prey. He looked at her mouth and her lips tingled. Without conscious thought she licked her lips.

A low growl vibrated his chest against her breasts. Her breasts felt full, her nipples tight. She had a heavy, aching feeling low in her abdomen, could feel the gathering heat between her legs.

"Take me," she whispered, not aware she'd spoken aloud. She pulled up her knees, locked his lean hips between her thighs and lifted her pelvis searching for the hard length of his cock. He'd taken her once, surged into her with powerful strokes until she'd flown apart. She wanted that again. The heat, the smell, the power. Even the sound of it. She wanted it all again.

"Soon." His voice was almost threatening it was so low and harsh. "Lie still."

She froze.

That rough, wet tongue stroked down her throat from below her left ear to the vee at the base of her neck.

Her nipples tightened, her breasts grew heavier, the ache between her legs intensified. She bit her lip to hold back a moan. Until that moment she'd never thought of her neck as an erogenous zone.

"Do that again," she ordered, arching her neck.

"You liked that."

It wasn't a question but she answered anyway. "Yes."

He stroked up from the vee of her neck to her right ear, caught her earlobe in his teeth and nipped.

"Ahh." She shuddered at the unexpected feel of his teeth. She tried to press her legs together wanting to ease the pressure building there. His hips were in the way. He lowered himself onto her. His pelvis pressed her into the ground. His turgid penis was trapped against her abdomen.

She reached up and tangled her fingers in his hair. "It's so soft," she whispered, surprised. She ran her fingers through the thick strands, her fingertips massaging his head.

A low purr rumbled from him.

She arched into him, her nipples pressing against his hairy chest. She rocked from side to side enjoying the pinched, dragging sensation as her tight nipples rubbed against him.

He pulled her arms to her sides and held her down. She could feel his chest heaving against hers, could feel his hot breath against her neck.

"Take me." It was an order and a plea. She wanted to feel his sex buried inside her, long and hard, made to pleasure her. She wanted to feel his flesh drag against hers as he pulled out, rasping hers as he pushed back inside.

He didn't answer as his head lowered to her breast.

She closed her eyes. Her body tensed for the feel of his mouth closing over her breast, sucking her nipple. He licked around her right nipple, careful not to touch the hard nub.

Her eyes flew open. She tried to fight the powerful hands holding her arms down but couldn't budge them.

"You're teasing me," she accused, glaring up at him. Her nipples throbbed, her sex burned. She needed to feel him pounding into her, against her.

He didn't respond. Turning to her left breast he repeated the rasping caress, again careful not to touch her nipple.

"Suck my nipples." Even as she shouted the order she couldn't believe she was doing it. She tried to buck against him, determined to get away. He was torturing her with his tongue.

Using his body to trap hers, he started licking her breasts. Fast flicks. Long lazy strokes. He polished each full mound until they were pink from his rough attention. Her nipples, distended and red, crowned her breasts.

Breathing fast, she endured the torment of his tongue on her breasts. He would pass close to her nipple and she would tense. He was going to take her into his mouth this time. She knew it.

But he didn't.

Her body trembled as he stroked down the center of her chest. He licked up her sides and she quivered. She didn't know when she'd woken to find her dream reality. But this was more real than she could stand.

He licked around her belly button, delved into it.

A wave of heat rolled over her, through her. Her pelvis jerked against his, searching for relief, hurting she needed him so much. Low broken moans kept escaping.

His mouth closed over her left nipple. He sucked her pebbled flesh deep into his mouth, pressed it hard against the roof of his mouth, released and pressed again.

She cried out, her nipple so tight, the external pressure of his sucking was a pain that was pure pleasure.

He turned to her right breast, nipped and suckled the tip, repeating the sequence again and again.

Genae's hands clenched into fists at her sides. She opened her eyes, not sure when she'd closed them. Kai was gone. She could feel his mouth at her breast, could feel his rough tongue rasping over her nipple as he sucked it, but she couldn't see him. She could see her nipple pulled long, crushed flat. She moaned and gasped. It was the most erotic thing she'd ever seen and it was happening to her.

Before she could say anything he caught her legs behind the knees, lifted and spread them, opening her wide.

"Ye --"

He thrust so deep so fast the air rushed from her lungs. No one had ever made her feel so helpless, penetrated her so deep. She felt invaded, stretched, too full. She arched against him, intending to throw him off. It only forced him deeper.

"It's going to be a hard ride. I can't be gentle."

Between one blink and the next he appeared. His eyes gleamed gold as he stared down at her. His face was set in grim lines. His nostrils flared with each breath he took and his teeth were bared.

His penis, huge and throbbing inside her, only fed the fire of lust he'd sparked in her. "The harder, the faster, the better," she murmured, a smile of pure temptation

lifting her lips. She'd loved what he'd done to her before and she wanted to find out if they could go farther this time.

Kai's eyelids lowered so only slits of gold showed. Color darkened his face. She felt his penis grow and lengthen inside her. For a moment he held perfectly still. The animal in him ripped free of all civilized bonds. He surged over her, against her, in her. From chest to thighs he rubbed against her as he pounded into her.

Fast.

Hard.

Her breasts shook more than bounced to the speed of his thrusts.

He forced her toward the peak, reached between them and rubbed her clitoris with one extended claw and sent her soaring.

She screamed.

He didn't let her come down.

Teeth bared, his face twisted in a ferocious mask, he refused to find his own release in her. He wanted to ride her forever. Her sheath was so tight, got tighter with each climax she experienced. She quivered under him, in response to his powerful, lightning thrusts and her own thunderous orgasms.

He started to come.

"Not yet," he growled. But he couldn't stop what was happening. He arched into her, bucked against her. He thrust deeper, pulled out and pounded back into her. Great ropes of hot, thick come jetted from him and filled her.

Spent, he collapsed on top of her.

Genae stared at the dancing lights on the ceiling. She wanted to reach up and stroke his broad back but she didn't have the strength. He'd done it again, sent her spiraling completely out of control.

He rolled them until he was on his back, his penis still a heavy presence inside her.

"Try to sleep."

"First, tell me how you become invisible."

"You need a bedtime story?"

She pinched his side. "Just tell me."

"I'm from a planet of predators. In order to survive we had to blend completely with our surroundings. Not only do we become invisible, we reflect the temperature of our surroundings."

"You're not going to tell me how you do it, are you?" She still didn't know what he was doing on the planet, either.

"No. Now sleep."

She'd get answers to her questions eventually. He didn't know how determined she could be. Burrowing her head against his chest she didn't bother to answer. Sleep was definitely not going to be a problem.

Waking without him was.

Chapter 5

Dangers, Wonders and Sex

Genae woke slowly, a smile curving her lips as she stretched. Her muscles, inside and out, ached in delicious ways. Proper by the standards of her class or not, she wanted to make love with him again.

“You didn’t wake me, Kai. I’m disappointed.”

He didn’t answer.

Squinting, blinking her eyes to focus, she looked around. What good it did, though, she didn’t know. If he was invisible she wasn’t going to see him.

“Kai!” Her voice echoed but he still didn’t respond.

She sat up and for the first time really looked around the huge cavern she’d tumbled into. The lights reflected on the stalactite studded ceiling came from a large pool of water in the center of the cavern. There was a constant, repetitive plopping sound as water dripped off the stalactites into the pool.

The pool was a mesmerizing blue. Getting to her feet she walked to the edge. It was rimmed by a small ridge of white. It was almost chalky. She poked the section in front of her with her toes. It stuck.

Grimacing, she lifted her foot. Once she rinsed it off she’d go looking for Kai. And when she found him she’d explain to him that he was to tell her before he was leaving, not just disappear.

She lifted her foot over the pool. The water came alive. What looked like tiny fish, bright red and green, darted back and forth through the water. Waving her arms to keep her balance she lowered her foot toward the pool.

Hard hands clamped around her waist. Her heart stopped for one brief moment before it started to race. He lifted, turned and set her down in one continuous motion.

"What are you doing?" she demanded, clutching at his arms.

"Saving your life." His voice was harsh. His hands tightened around her waist before he released her.

"Saving my life? From what? Finger length fish?" She didn't even try to keep the bite out of her voice. He'd scared her and she didn't like it. She'd been running on adrenaline for weeks and had enjoyed the few moments when her heart was beating at a normal rate. She'd felt like she was actually getting enough oxygen. And he'd ruined it.

A rock floated up from the ground, arced through the air and hit the water. There was a sizzling sound. Green and red fish no longer than her thumb darted toward the splash from all directions. The rock quickly sank out of sight.

"All right. You can throw rocks into water." Was she supposed to be impressed? "Could you show yourself? It's a bit disconcerting talking to empty air."

The air in front of her seemed to thicken and he appeared, his expression dark. Without a word he stalked away, picked up what looked like a protein ration, spun and threw it into the pool. She had a hard time pulling her eyes from him to follow the arc of the bar. He was truly a beautiful man. Tall, powerful, his penis mouth-wateringly erect.

The bar hit the water with a hissing sizzle. It started to dissolve but before it could disappear a cloud of green and red converged on it. White sparks flashed as the tiny creatures rubbed against each other as they tore the bar apart and consumed it.

She sank to the ground, holding her stomach. If she'd put her foot in that pool of acid, pain and her own lack of balance would have toppled her in head first. And those carnivorous creatures would have eaten her alive.

"Come with me."

She didn't care for his tone but didn't complain about it as she stood up. Her legs felt shaky as she followed him deeper into the cavern.

The blue iridescence of the acid pool faded as they walked around an outcropping of stone and the cavern took a sharp right turn. A soft roaring sound grew as they walked.

Genae stayed close to Kai. The cavern wasn't black but the light emanating from a substance veining the walls was weak at best. She followed him around a sharp left bend, gasped and stopped when the cavern opened up before her like a huge natural cathedral.

The only light was still the lines of luminescent material crisscrossing walls, ceiling and floor. Here it was brighter, the light reflecting off the surface of what looked like a small lake that filled the center of the huge cave. A waterfall rushed from the far wall churning the water below it into white foam. A constant plume of water droplets sprayed into the air. Small waves rolled across the surface and lapped with a soft, ceaseless whisper against the shore.

But was it water?

"Is it safe to swim?"

"Yes, but you'll enjoy something else first." She looked up, her expression questioning.

Kai took her hand and led her up the side of a fifteen foot cone-shaped rise. The surface crackled underfoot. When they stepped on a part where the crust had bubbled up it made a soft crinkly sound. In the strange, almost ephemeral light the whole dome had a yellowish cast to it.

At the top white mud bubbled.

Kai started to step into it but she dragged back on his arm.

He looked at her over his shoulder. His eyebrows lifted questioningly.

"That beautiful pool out there is deadly but this bubbly white muck isn't?" Her nose wrinkled as she eyed the boiling pot with distaste.

He tugged her with him, easily overcoming her resistance. "Trust me."

Frowning, still reluctant, she stepped into the mud with him. "Is everything here the opposite of what it appears? Trees that look solid are hollow. Beautiful blue pools are acid. Pretty little fish are carnivorous. Boiling white mud is okay to step into."

"It's not boiling. The chemicals in it make it bubble."

As the mud closed over her foot her eyes widened and her mouth formed a perfect O. The mud was warm. The bubbles tickled, almost massaged her foot.

"Lay down, Genae. You need this as much as I do."

Fighting her fear of the unknown, hoping there were no little critters hiding in the bubbly white mess, she did as he said. When she was sitting down he pulled her close and cradled her head on his shoulder.

The sensation was relaxing and stimulating all at once. Her muscles loosened under the constant massaging action the popping bubbles made. At the same time her skin was innervated by the constant stimulation. Her nipples hardened. The bubbles against her sex stimulated her labia and clitoris. Desire rose quickly to a low level hum in her blood.

"You could make a fortune if you opened this as a spa." She wriggled and gasped as a bubble burst against a particularly sensitive spot between her legs.

"The liability would be prohibitive. Someone would decide that blue pool out there was too pretty to resist. When they died their family would want everything."

Genae lifted her head to scowl at him. He'd ruined the whole picture she'd been building in her head.

He didn't see it. His eyes were closed as he enjoyed himself. She settled her head back against his shoulder and missed his eyes opening, amusement gleaming in the golden depths.

Eyes closed, she concentrated on keeping her mind blank and enjoying the effects of the little mud pot. She wasn't sure how long it took but slowly the stimulation increased. She moaned, her body undulating as her skin caught fire. Her nipples pinched into tight points. Her thighs clamped together as the constant press, pop, tickle

against her labia and clitoris became too much. Almost immediately she spread her legs again opening herself to the delicious torment.

* * *

Kai lifted himself enough to watch her through slitted eyes. Her face, so openly expressive it was a window to her every thought and emotion, went from slight frown to sensual smile in time with her shifting legs. When her hips started to undulate he couldn't wait any longer.

Sitting up he lifted her in his arms before surging to his feet.

"What --"

He stopped, lowered his mouth to hers and invaded the warm cavern with his tongue. He stroked in and out, dueled with and conquered her tongue, stroking it with his before lifting his head and licking his lips. He strode down the cone, across the cavern and into the lake.

"Rinse off," he ordered as he released her into the water. He needed her again. With a small, wicked smile she did as he said but not as he meant. She slipped beneath the surface and swam away from him. When she was sure she was well out of his reach she surfaced just enough to catch her breath and look back. He stood where she'd left him but even as she watched he disappeared.

"Ooohhh. That's not fair," she muttered. In a game of hide and seek he had her beat. Not that she wanted to get away. She didn't.

Treading water she looked around then started swimming toward the waterfall. Two strokes were all she managed. He caught her around the waist, lifted her from the water and turned her to face him.

"Wrap your legs around my waist." She drew her knees up and locked her ankles in the small of his back. The position left her open and vulnerable to him and she loved it.

"What are you going to do now?" she taunted rocking her hips against his straining cock. Not being able to see him added to the erotic moment.

"What do you want me to do?" His tone was innocent but the hand sliding over her buttocks and between her legs to stroke her soft folds was anything but innocent.

"Mmm." She undulated against his stroking fingers. "You're putting those fingers to good use." Her eyes started to close and her head fell back. She could happily spend the rest of her life right where she was.

He started walking toward the shore. When he reached it he lowered her to the powdery surface. He settled himself beside her. His huge hands grasped her thighs and spread them apart. His heat enveloped her.

"I can put them to better use."

His words were her only warning. Two fingers thrust into her. His thumb rubbed her clit. Already stimulated to the point of climax, her body arched in response to his hard thrust and tormenting thumb. She cried out as her muscles tightened and released in a fast, hard climax.

He flipped her onto her stomach, raised her hips and tucked her knees under her. "Cross your arms and rest your head on them," he ordered in a seductive whisper.

He groaned as he caressed the exposed flesh of her sex. He played with the folds, rimmed the opening of her sheath and teased her clit.

"Do you know how beautiful you are?"

"That would mean more if you were looking at my face." She grimaced and closed her eyes as the words came out of her mouth. Why had she said that?

Kai laughed a low rumble of sound. "Your face is beautiful, too, but I'm a man and I do have my priorities. And you," he cupped his hand over her, "are beautiful."

He stroked her as he pulled his hand away. He caught his straining cock in his hand and rubbed the head along her wet folds.

"Arch your back," he instructed, his teeth gritted as he lodged his penis against the entrance to her vagina.

Shivering, she did as he asked. "How many times can you have sex in an hour?"

"I'd rather make it last an hour than race through it and try for numbers." He pushed against her testing her resistance. Forcing his cock through it, making it dilate to accept him was an act of dominance he more than enjoyed.

"You feel so big." Her voice was breathless.

"Rock back against me." He wanted her to help with his penetration. He wanted her actively involved.

Biting her lip to keep from screaming at the burning pressure, she pushed back against him. "Why don't you just push your cock into me?" she demanded, impatient to feel the rush of power as he slammed into her.

He leaned over her increasing the pressure against her opening. Sweat beaded his forehead and upper lip. It took every ounce of willpower he had not to ram into her and just keep pumping.

"Are you torturing me for a reason?" She thrust her hips back at him wanting him inside her, not pressing against her.

Kai eased back keeping the pressure against her steady and constant. He wouldn't let her take the control away from him.

"We're going to make it last an hour."

"No." She wanted the fast climb and sharp drop she'd experienced before. She wanted the wild sense of free falling as he pushed her beyond control even as her body, mind and soul resisted the loss of control. She'd never known the power of orgasm before. Now she craved it.

"Yes." He sank slowly, slowly through the ring of muscle as it opened to him. He smiled as she gasped. Her body had opened for him just as he'd known it would.

He pulsed his hips forward, short sharp movements that forced his cock deeper into her sheath and back out by microns.

"Take me," she demanded. She wriggled her hips from side to side, trying to rock back on the huge pole of his cock.

"Patience will bring you more pleasure than you can imagine," he whispered. He grasped her hips, controlling her and steadying himself.

"I want the pleasure I've already known." She tried to push up from the ground. If she couldn't have him the way she wanted then he couldn't have her at all.

A large hand closed over the back of her neck holding her down. "This time we do it my way. Next time you can have whatever you want."

Her eyes narrowed as she tried to consider what he'd said. The huge head of his cock lodged at the entrance of her channel, though, was about to drive her insane.

"Anything I want?"

"Anything."

She relaxed back into the position he'd directed her to take. "This time is yours," she conceded grumpily.

He didn't respond, just started the thrust-withdrawal in her sheath again.

Genae panted for breath as his cock slid back and forth inside her in unbelievably tiny increments, making her burn. She couldn't help but rock back against him.

She lost all track of time as he rubbed deeper in, pulled slightly back. She could hear him breathing, could feel the puffs of hot breath on her back. Sweat dripped from him down onto her but he didn't increase the maddening in-and-back slide.

"Please," she begged. "Fuck me."

"I am," he grunted.

"Faster. Harder. As deep as you can go."

"Trust me."

She buried her head against her arms and bit her lip. Her nipples felt like someone was pinching them, they were so hard and tight. She was so wet his movements in her, tiny as they were, made a wet sucking sound.

When he was fully embedded in her he stopped. Hanging over her, his muscles corded with the strain of restraining himself, he fought for breath and control. He wanted her to fly so high with him no other male of any species could pose a threat. He wanted her addicted to sex with him. Until emotional bonds could be forged he wanted her chained to him through sex.

He slowly pulled back until only the head of his cock was in her.

Her hips bucked up against him.

"Now." Her demand sounded ragged.

He slid back into her just as slowly.

Her inner flesh was swollen from the constant friction of his penetration. His cock felt huge. The sensation of him pushing into her made her sheath clench. Uncontrollable tremors shook her.

He pulled out, pushed back in, the motion slightly faster.

"Yes. Faster." She rocked back as he thrust forward, rocked forward as he pulled back. She needed him fast and hard. Now.

He didn't say anything but kept his invasion-retreat at a moderate pace. The pressure building in him was like nothing he'd ever felt before.

Genae hung at the edge of the precipice. Her body quaked with pre-orgasmic tremors. Each breath was a gasp for air. She shuddered with each slide of his flesh in hers. Her whole body throbbed with the need for release.

"Please," she begged, tears streaming from her eyes. "Please just fuck me."

Kai's control broke. He surged into her, his hips a wild piston ramming him deeper and deeper, faster with each thrust.

Genae screamed as he slammed into her, her orgasm cresting and breaking over a peak she'd never thought to climb. Each hard thrust impacted through her whole body, sent her spiraling farther and farther out of control until she was pure sensation. A living ember created for him, shaped by him.

* * *

Kai wanted it to last forever. The milking, almost sucking sensation as her sheath, already tight, clenched around him. He fought the building pressure of his own release. He wanted to push her higher, to steal every thought not centered on him and this.

As he thrust forward his body took control.

"No," he yelled the protest as he came, a volcanic eruption he couldn't control.

She froze as he jerked and bucked against her, into her. His hot seed burned against abraded flesh. White heat enveloped her. Caught in the heart of lightning's strike she touched the heavens and shattered.

Kai emptied himself into her. The ferocity of his release was stunning. He'd thought he was binding her to him, but the opposite was true as well. He collapsed on top of her, too spent to move. If he hadn't felt her breathing he would have feared he killed her, she was so still.

They both dozed. When Kai woke he lifted Genae into his arms and carried her into the gently lapping water.

"Did it last an hour?" she asked, her voice dazed.

"A millennium at least." He lowered her into the water.

She winced as her sex came into contact with the gentle waves. Her arms wrapped around his neck, she tried to lift herself out of the warm waves.

"You need to soak for a few minutes." He sank into the water, taking her with him. He wanted her soothed, not sore.

"It hurts," she growled, trying to push away from him. He was the one who had caused the problem in the first place.

One arm wrapped around her waist, he reached between her legs with the other. He rubbed the petals of her sex, soothing and washing her. She writhed and fought to get free, pushed against his chest and kicked at him.

"Blast you, that hurts." She glared up at him. She felt raw. His touch stung. She started hitting his chest. He didn't release her, seemed impervious to her blows. She wanted to see him, wanted to know if she had any effect on him at all.

"Let me go," she demanded.

He didn't respond, just kept stroking the flesh between her legs until the stinging eased and she settled against him.

"Better?"

"Yes," she responded reluctantly, wanting to yell no.

Warm lips pressed against her forehead. "We need to sleep. We'll have to travel fast when we leave the cavern. Since the soldiers haven't destroyed this part of the planet they must have sent hunters to track us. The sooner we get to my ship the better it will be for us."

"You don't think they left?" She knew they hadn't but she wanted to hear that they had. She wanted to be safe.

"I know they haven't."

She sobered as reality crashed into the dream she'd been living. She let her head drop against his broad shoulder and just hung on as he strode out of the water. "Next time, lie to me."

With infinite care he laid her on the powdery earth. He brushed her hair back from her face, kissed her eyes, nose and finally her lips. It was a gentle sharing, his lips soothing rather than arousing. When he lifted his head her eyes were bright with tears. "There will be truth between us, always." His tone was hard, demanded her agreement.

She nodded but inside she knew it was a lie. She had secrets she would never share. And once they left the planet she would do everything in her power to complete the mission she'd set for herself. And if that meant using him that's what she would do.

Her mind understood what she had to do but her heart didn't. She buried her face against his chest and let the tears fall as she savored the security of his arms around her. She hadn't felt safe and protected in a long, *long* time.

Kai held her, felt her body shake as she cried. He didn't question her, just held her until the storm was over and she slept in his arms. When they reached his ship would be soon enough to find out what she was hiding and why League soldiers were chasing her.

He was sure she was thinking of running from him but she wouldn't get very far. He had claimed her and he would never let her go. When she realized that it would be easier for both of them. Whatever she faced he would face with her. He fell asleep, certain in his ability to keep her safe.

* * *

The transport pod, barely big enough for one man, settled on the surface of YelAsta. The man inside shoved the capsule door open and squeezed out of the tiny enclosure. He looked around, shedding his clothes as the pod started to smoke and burn. As he strode away from the transport he disappeared.

Chapter 6

Exploring Him

Genae woke slowly, stretched languidly. She felt wonderfully achy, deliciously tender. She arched her back and smiled as the big hand over her right breast tightened. She looked down and saw the imprint of individual fingers on her breast as it was squeezed, the hand doing it invisible.

Her womb clenched, and moisture started to flow. Her nipples tightened and their color darkened from pink to rose.

They needed to leave for his ship. She knew that better than anyone. What she was doing was more important than any two people's lives. It had the potential to affect every planet in the universe for generations.

Her heart thumped hard in her chest at the thought. There were generations of different species who would never be born if the current League President had his way.

What about Kai? Was his race one of those slated for annihilation?

She swallowed hard as bile burned the back of her throat. She could count how long she'd known him in hours but she couldn't imagine a universe where he and other spectacular beings like him didn't exist.

She didn't even know what his species was, their name or their characteristics. Were they all like Kai?

She shivered. A whole planet of men like Kai. She could sell flights to the planet and make more credits than she and all her descendents could spend. There wasn't a woman alive who wouldn't want sex with Kai if they knew what it was like.

A wave of heat washed over her body. Already aware of everywhere her body touched Kai's, she was suddenly hyperaware. It felt like his heat burned into her.

Lying against him she felt tiny, her shoulders and back pressed against his chest. His arm lying over her side was heavy with muscle. His hand flexed around her breast again. She felt the prick of claws, like a cat when it kneaded a cushion.

Her breath caught and her heart started to race. Her lips thinned as new resolve settled like a weight in her stomach. She wouldn't let the President do it. She *would* stop him.

She closed her eyes and dragged in a deep breath. She'd given up any hope of succeeding when laser fire had downed her ship.

Until Kai showed up.

She rubbed herself back against him, smiled when his penis rose to her lure. He kneaded her breast with his claws.

He didn't know the meaning of the words give up. He'd jumped the growing chasm when she'd been on the other side. He'd carried her when it would have been hard enough to run and save himself. He was sure the League soldiers would follow them and he was still determined to help her, determined to get off the planet. Determined to win.

Slowly, carefully, hoping he didn't wake up, she turned in his arms. His arms tightened around her. The one her head rested on came up around her, too. He dragged her to his chest, held her tight. She stilled, waited until he relaxed and tried again. She didn't want him to wake up before she started.

It took three attempts before she was facing him. Each time his arms tightened around her tingles coursed through her. She knew he was asleep but it felt like he wanted her close. It felt like he cared.

His chest was like granite against her breasts, the hair covering it coarse against her skin. His stomach felt ridged the muscles were so tight and prominent. He was made for her softer curves to mold to.

She was sure she looked smug. And why shouldn't she? She rubbed her toes against his legs. They stretched out farther than she could touch. Everything about the man was hard. At the moment even his cock.

A dreamy smile lit her face as she undulated her hips against his straining penis. She'd enjoyed sex before but she'd never experienced anything like him. He took pleasure to a whole new realm. If they made it off the planet alive, if she survived delivering the information and wasn't sentenced to death for her part in what had happened, the only mate she would want was Kai. He'd ruined her for anyone else.

Her smile grew and she shook her head. There were a whole lot of ifs between where she was and the end of the whole League President issue. What was amazing was that she could even consider being alive and allowed to remain that way at the end of it. If there was a way, she would find it.

She pressed closer to Kai, savored the hard ridge of his cock against her abdomen. When they got off the planet she would have to get away from him. She couldn't allow him to finish the journey with her. The end was too uncertain. He'd already risked his life time and again for her. She wouldn't let him keep doing it. She wouldn't tell him why it was happening. If his sympathies lay with the President, she wouldn't make him choose between them.

A low grumble rumbled from deep in his chest. He rolled to his back, half rolling her with him. Against her hip, his morning hard-on was a blatant invitation.

Her mouth watered as she stared at where he lay, wishing with everything in her that she could see him, asleep yet aroused and ready. She'd never wanted oral sex before. Either to perform it or have it performed on her. It had always seemed too... personal. Too... intimate.

But now, she wanted everything she could have with him.

Her heart in her throat, her blood racing through her veins, she moved down his body. They needed to leave, to get to his ship before whoever was looking for them found them. But he'd said the next time was hers and this could well be their last time together. Wise or not, she was going to take it.

She bumped into his cock with her chin. Her eyes closed as she rubbed the soft underside of her chin against the velvety head of his penis. It had a knobby quality to it

that was different and exciting. She wanted to explore every nuance and texture with her tongue.

* * *

Kai woke to the feel of something soft rubbing against his straining cock. He opened his eyes to see Genae caressing him with her chin, her eyes closed, a half smile lifting her lips.

The need to grab her and devour her whole was instantaneous. Only his own indomitable will kept him from acting on overwhelming instinct. What would she do next?

Barely breathing, he waited and watched. She seemed lost in what she was doing. She held her breasts together, his cock caught between them as she moved slowly up and down. The head of his cock disappeared between her breasts only to re-emerge below her chin. Her head was thrown back, her lips slightly parted.

Take me, he silently urged. Open your mouth and take me inside.

His hips moved of their own volition, his cock riding along her jaw. The most intimate act two beings could share, something he'd never experienced with anyone else. He'd never thought she would be the one to initiate it. Would she take him inside?

* * *

Genae jumped when his cock thrust against her. *Was he awake? Why wasn't he visible? She wanted to see him.*

He didn't move again.

Slowly, hesitantly, she knelt over him. She ran one hand over his penis. It was so tight it was almost upright against his abdomen. She grasped him in one hand and lifted the great stalk out from his body. It somehow urged her to stroke and squeeze and pull and she didn't resist.

Heat grew between her legs. She was wet and ready. She wanted to settle herself over him, to ride him. Before she did that, though, she wanted to taste him.

* * *

Kai felt like he was going to explode. Her hand squeezed and pumped his cock to perfection. Where had she learned to manipulate a cock so expertly?

Rage boiled through him. He pushed the thought away and concentrated on her small hand moving up and down his cock. *Suck me!* he silently shouted. *Take me in your mouth, now!*

Her tongue slipped out of her mouth and stroked over her lips, leaving them wet and shiny. He bit back a violent curse, couldn't stop the evidence of his response from bubbling up from the root of his cock. It shone white and wet, seemingly suspended in midair. Would it disgust her?

She leaned forward, her breasts swaying with the move. Her mouth opened.

His breath stopped. *Yes*, he urged. *Take me.*

Her tongue poked out, small and pink.

His heart slammed into his chest shaking him. *Come on, Genae. Take me.* She lowered her head a fraction of an inch.

"Take me." His voice was hoarse, his cock straining against her hold. He wanted to feel her tongue on him.

"All you had to do was ask," she whispered. She could see the evidence of his arousal floating above her hand. But she could feel him, his pulse throbbing in the rampant flesh she held. She would never have guessed how much exciting him would make her burn.

She lowered her head the last centimeter. She wanted to taste life, to taste him. Her tongue swirled over the head of his cock. She curled it around the throbbing end, lapped at the pulsing vein running the length of the underside.

"Yes. Fucking, yes." His hips arched off the ground. His pulse thundered in his ears.

"You like that." She licked his shaft between each word, wanted to drive him as wild as she was driving herself. His hips leapt up with each touch of her tongue. He wanted her to take him into the dark cavern of her mouth. He wanted to feel her suck

him, to hear the wet slurping sound as she did it. But he wouldn't force her. It had to be her choice.

"Show me how much you want me," he entreated.

Lifting her head from the carnal feast of his flesh, she gasped in a breath. He wasn't begging, but it wasn't an order either. It was a statement of need. Tenderness welled inside her, leaving her weak, making her feel strong. He was the most physically able man she'd ever met, yet he needed her.

She looked at her hand suspended in mid-air. Fresh evidence of his need, milky-white, bubbled up. He tasted salty and if it was possible to taste a musky scent, he tasted of that, too.

"I want you," she murmured, wishing all over again that she could see him. She wanted to see his expression. Would his eyes be heavy-lidded? Was his face flushed?

She cupped his balls in one hand, testing their weight as she ran her other hand up and down his engorged length. He was so big, so alive in her hand. And in every way a woman could want a man, she wanted him.

"Tell me what you like." She opened her mouth wide and lowered it toward the visible evidence of his need. Her womb clenched. Her own desire left her wet and aching.

His teeth gritted, Kai kept his hips down as her mouth lowered over him.

Her tongue stroked the end of his cock.

He closed his eyes, swore from between clenched teeth and shook where he lay. He wouldn't thrust his cock into her mouth, but he wanted to. And when she was done exploring him it would be his turn to explore her.

Her breath skimmed the length of his cock.

He looked up, gasped as her lips surrounded his left ball, her tongue playing with it.

He swore. His hands clenched into fists.

She moved to the other side. Her tongue vibrating against him as she hummed low in her throat.

"Fuck!" His muscles locked tight. He wanted to grab her hair, pull her mouth over him and shove his cock deep. She was killing him.

Her mouth closed over him, barely contained the head and first two inches of his shaft.

His hips bucked against her. Come erupted from him. In moments it was over. His expression grim, Kai surged to his feet, lifted Genae in his arms and strode into the water. He submerged them both, erasing the evidence of his loss of control.

Genae struggled in his arms. She broke the surface of the water choking and swiping at him.

"What the hell was that all about?" she demanded. Whatever she'd done wrong it wasn't worth drowning her for it.

"I didn't control myself." His tone was pure self-disgust.

"So this," she waved her hand at the water, "was all because you were frustrated because you couldn't stop yourself from coming?" She stared up at where she thought he was. She wasn't sure whether to be incredulous or absolutely furious.

Hard arms wrapped around her from behind. "I'm sorry."

How had he moved without even a ripple? She shook her head and pushed the thought away. She laid her hands over his arms where they circled her waist and dug her nails in.

He jerked away. "Why did you do that?"

She sloshed through the water angry enough she wanted to hit him or kick him or bite him.

"What did you think I was trying to do?" she demanded, for the first time missing her clothes in a big way. It was hard to be taken seriously when your chest was heaving with each breath you took. "Do you think I started that whole thing thinking -- if I take his penis in my mouth will he show me just how much control he has? I wonder if he can resist me?"

She shook her head and turned back to glare at him. "I wanted you to lose control. I wanted you to respond to me and what I was doing. I wanted to feel like I was

irresistible, even for a minute." She swallowed hard, furious that tears were so near the surface. He'd managed to completely ruin everything. "Don't we have to get moving?"

He caught her up from behind, held her against his chest. "Lose control. Respond. Irresistible." He repeated the important parts of her ranting.

She tried to pry his arms loose but it was like fighting the destroyer with her transport, impossible. She kicked back at his legs but he seemed impervious to her blows. "Fighting while you're invisible is the coward's way out," she taunted wanting him as angry and frustrated as she was.

Suddenly, his arms were visible around her. "You accomplished your goals."

She jerked her head away from the voice in her right ear. "What are you talking about?"

His warm lips sipped at her neck. "I responded." He nipped the base of her throat, swirled his tongue over the sting. "I lost control." He let her feet settle on the ground. His hands stroked up until he held both her breasts. He squeezed and kneaded the full globes. He caught her nipples between thumb and forefingers and squeezed, rolled and tugged.

Genae straightened against him. She wrapped her hands around his wrists but couldn't force herself to push him away. Need arrowed from her nipples to between her legs and set fire to desire that had never been satisfied.

"You're irresistible." One breast was freed. He caught her chin in his hand and turned her head until his mouth could close over hers.

He didn't give her a chance to do anything but respond. His tongue pushed between her lips, found hers and initiated a fast thrust, parry, retreat. He repeated the sequence, mating with her mouth, stealing her breath and making her heart race.

When he lifted his head all she could do was gape up at him.

His expression was intent, yet there was a tenderness there she'd never seen before. A warm weight settled in her chest. She felt like the center of the universe when he looked at her like that.

He turned her in his arms, leaned down to rest his forehead against hers. "I'm sorry."

Her heart swelled. Tears rose in her eyes. She blinked to keep them back, tried to smile as she looked into his golden eyes. "If I had forever I just might want to spend it with you," she whispered. He was strong and fierce yet tender and gentle. He was perfect.

"I don't know about forever but I'll take the rest of your life."

She smiled but couldn't keep the tears from falling. "You'll have to settle for today."

"You don't believe we can have forever, do you?" He sounded more intrigued than upset.

She closed her eyes and shook her head.

"Open your eyes and look at me."

She did as he said, refused to be a coward and hide from him or herself.

"We made it this far against incredible odds, didn't we?"

She nodded and swallowed hard.

"Why can't you believe we would survive anything the League soldiers could send at us? Can't you trust me?"

Feeling his arms around her, so strong and supportive, looking into his eyes, being enveloped in his confidence, she knew he believed everything he said. "How can you be so certain?" She wanted to believe. She wanted to be able to plan a future with him even if they turned out to be only daydreams.

"I have abilities and resources your League soldiers have no knowledge of. Secrets known only to my own people. Trust me."

She dragged in a deep, shuddering breath. "I do trust you." And she did. If there was a way off YelAsta, a way to get away from the destroyer and reach the people she needed to talk to, Kai was the one who would find it.

A smile, slow and sweet, lit his face. "I can see the doubts in your eyes, but I see your belief in me, too. It's not misplaced."

She threw her arms around his neck and held tight. Emotions swirled inside her, huge and multihued. Hope. Tingles of fear.

"It's my turn." He set her a little away from him, let his gaze travel over her from her feet, up her long legs to the dark triangle of hair that hid her sex. He studied her tiny waist, her full breasts, her red lips. She was feminine perfection and he was going to sample every inch of her.

"Your turn to what?" She shifted, half nervous yet fully aroused. Just his look made her nipples pucker and wet heat gather between her legs.

"To make you respond." His hands circled her waist. He pulled her close, lowered his mouth to hers and licked her full lips.

"To make you lose control." He took one red nipple between his teeth and tugged.

She gasped and arched up to him.

He rewarded her by laving the swollen tip with his tongue.

She shook with an instant, overwhelming need. Her body was already so attuned to his she craved him.

"I want you to find me irresistible."

She opened her mouth, but never got to say she already did. His mouth closed over hers. His tongue dove into and retreated from the dark cavern of her mouth. He lifted her against him, carried her to the shore and laid her down. He settled on top of her, rubbed himself against her as he continued to stroke in and out of her mouth.

He raised his head, still rubbing against her. Her nipples against his chest. His cock against her abdomen. His expression was fierce, almost frightening.

"I claim you as my own." His voice was deep and resonant. "You don't understand yet what that means, but you will."

She opened her mouth, but all that emerged was a broken moan as he latched on to her right nipple and sucked her deep.

Her eyes closed and she arched up, pulled by the incredible pressure of his mouth. Later would be soon enough to find out what he meant.

He crushed the tight nub against the roof of his mouth with his agile tongue, rolled and sucked it deeper all at once.

She cried out. Her hips jerked. *Much later*. The words spiraled through her mind, but she had no idea what they meant.

Chapter 7

The Race is On

Kai lifted his head and studied the tip of her breast. It was swollen, redder and puffier than its twin. He licked his lips and flexed his fingers, his claws distending just enough to make indentations in her skin.

She flinched. Her breath broke. Her eyes, already half-lidded, closed.

He loved the sound. Loved the flush of desire that mantled her cheeks, chest and breasts. A low rumble, almost a growl, vibrated his chest. His muscles tensed and bulged. The beast broke free of its bonds.

He caught her left nipple in his teeth, nipped and tugged, worrying the small nub until Genae's fingers tangled in his hair and pulled.

"Enough," she cried.

He looked up, something savage staring at her from the golden eyes.

"Kai?" Fear and excitement mixed like wine in her blood. It was intoxicating. He growled. His claws bit into her hips, a warning to be still.

Her chest heaved, drawing his eyes.

He licked his lips, lunged and enveloped her right breast with his mouth. He sucked hard, crushed the already tender flesh of her nipple to the roof of his mouth, rasped and rolled it with his tongue.

Her scent, hot and feminine, was a musk that stole the last vestiges of civility from him. He lifted his head from her breast, reluctant to give up his prize but wanting to taste her more. He lifted his head, breathed deep, drawing the perfume of her desire into his lungs. The hint of fear was a spice that touched off explosions in his already heated blood.

Genae didn't move, tried not to breathe. Kai crouched over her, a wild animal claiming his prey. His eyes shone gold, his nostrils flared. She had wanted him since he'd taken her when they'd hidden in the tree. She wanted him more, now. She was wet with her need.

"Kai." She said his name quietly. She wanted to catch his attention, not incite a riot. He ignored her. His gaze moved from her breasts down her abdomen to the juncture at the top of her thighs. He pulled her legs up, bending her knees then pushed them apart, then farther apart.

Genae lay before him, completely exposed, completely open. She wriggled a little, a moan choked in her throat. Every moment with him created a memory she would treasure.

Kai saw her move. His primitive instincts saw an attempted escape. He caught her thighs in his powerful hands. Eyes narrowed, he flexed his claws and bared his teeth.

Genae stilled, fine tremors shaking her.

Finally, satisfied he'd quelled her bid for freedom, Kai looked back at the treasure he'd exposed. Raking his claws lightly over her inner thighs, he extended his right index claw completely. Carefully, his expression intent, he flicked the shiny folds.

Her breath caught and he smiled.

He ran the blunt curve of his claw between her folds to the top of her sex. The tiny nub of flesh peeked out at him. He circled it with the point of his claw before lightly, gently, raking the nub itself.

Genae's muscles clenched. As if she were being tortured her whole body jerked and trembled. She had no control. She didn't want it to stop.

It had to stop.

She was flying.

She wouldn't survive.

Kai attacked, driven wild by the scent of the sexual dew spilling from her. He was on her, licking and laving, his tongue pushing into her as he searched out her

essence. His tongue rough, he lapped at the soft petals of her sex. His tongue swirled around her slit. He growled and licked faster as her body arched off the ground, choked cries breaking from her.

Even if the thought had entered his mind he couldn't have stopped himself. He had to have her, had to taste her, had to make her his. He closed his mouth over her vulva and sucked. She tasted like nectar. Sweet and wet. He pushed his tongue into her cunt and groaned when she cried out. He'd never had such intimacy with a woman. He would never be happy to have anything less again.

He licked the swollen folds of her sex. She shivered and undulated in time to his strokes. *She was perfect. Would she react as strongly to his tongue on her clit as she did to his finger?*

Savoring her taste, her secret scent, he teased her with his stiffened tongue. He stroked upward until he reached the apex of her sex. He touched her clit with just the tip of his tongue.

Genae quivered, her body shaking. She liked it. And so did he.

A secret smile lifted his lips as he pulled back just enough to see the perfect pearl of her clit. It was swollen, peeking from the folds that usually hid it. He lowered his head, closed his lips around the small knot of flesh and sucked.

Genae screamed. Her body shook. Her eyes rolled back but she didn't lose consciousness. She couldn't breathe. Only one thought echoed in her head. She was going to die at his mouth and love it.

Growling, almost snarling, his cock thumping against his abdomen, Kai could no longer ignore his own powerful need. He had to be inside her now. He groaned at the thought of shoving his engorged manhood through her small entrance, her tight sheath gloving him, squeezing him until he was mad.

He pulled back and flipped her onto her stomach. He lifted her to her hands and knees, biting her neck in warning when her shaking limbs started to buckle. All he knew was she was trying to get away and he would never allow that. Never.

He lifted her, spreading her legs. She wouldn't block his entrance. She was his. Kneeling behind her, he positioned his cock against the opening of her vagina.

He dropped over her. His frame dwarfed hers. Using his whole body he surged forward, speared into her. His thighs and pelvis slapped against her, sent her body rocking forward with the powerful thrust.

He groaned as her channel squeezed him from head to root. He was lodged in her tight sheath, the head of his cock reaching to her womb.

His woman.

"Mine," he growled, the sound almost a roar against her exposed neck. He plunged in and out of her. Wild. Uncontrollable.

Her breath gone, she couldn't respond. She braced her arms against the power of his body slamming into hers.

He was so big, plundered so deep, pulled almost out. The rough texture of his cock rasped her inner walls, the stimulation constant. She gasped in a breath only to have it forced from her lungs as he surged into her, deep into her belly.

His teeth closed on the cord of muscle joining her shoulder and neck. His hips pistoned against her, rocked her.

Heat flushed her rocking body. Her breasts swung, almost vibrated to the furious motion of his flesh moving in her. Her vagina clenched, trying to hold him inside. He surged upright, kneeling behind her. His fingers bit into her hips, holding her as his cock slid in and out of her, a blur of motion.

He sank deep, his hips bucking against her as he ejaculated, his seed filling her. Head thrown back, teeth bared, he roared. The primitive sound echoed through the cavern.

Finally spent, he dropped over her again, swaying back and forth, rubbing himself against her as the motion tugged his spent penis where it was still lodged in her swollen tissue.

Genae didn't know what was holding her up. Her elbows were locked and she wasn't sure they would ever bend again. Her body trembled, her final climax still quaking through her.

"If I don't lie down I'm going to fall down," she whispered hoarsely as she started to crawl forward.

One of Kai's arms circled her waist holding her where she was. His teeth closed over her neck once more, a clear warning not to move.

"Kai. I'm going to lie down." She made her tone sharp. If she didn't lie down she was going to end up on her face.

"No." The low rumble was barely recognizable as a word. The arm around her waist tightened. His rough tongue licked the nape of her neck.

She shivered. Her nipples hardened as she tightened around his flaccid cock lying heavy inside her. Her arms gave out. She collapsed onto the sand, winced as his cock was tugged free of her swollen channel.

Kai threw himself down beside her. He pulled her legs up around his hips and lodged his pelvis tight against her sex. He wrapped his arms around her and tucked her head under his chin.

Something nagged at the back of his mind. He felt the need to move, to drag her with him to his ship, but the primitive side of his brain was still in control. The thought wouldn't surface.

As Genae's breath teased his chest he started to calm, though his senses remained hyper-alert. He'd found his mate and would defend her against anyone and anything.

He shifted until her upper leg was caught between his. Then, with his arms locked around her he finally succumbed to much needed sleep.

* * *

The tracker studied the decimated landscape. Charred earth obscured any scent he might have picked up. Invisible to any watching eyes he lifted his head and studied the terrain. A wall of stone rose toward the sky to the east. In every other direction as

far as the eye could see there was nothing but blackened craters. The earth had splintered under the ferocious attack of the destroyer circling above.

He turned his gaze back toward the mountain of stone. If the woman and whoever had helped her were alive that was where they would be. All his senses attuned, he loped toward the mountain. Soon he would have his prey.

His smile would have made anyone who saw it cringe.

* * *

Kai woke instantly, remembered everything. He eased his hold on the small, slender woman in his arms. Careful not to wake her, he rolled her onto her back.

There were dark circles under her eyes. Her cheeks looked hollow. The left side of her neck at the base was bruised where he'd bitten her. He studied her breasts, her nipples soft but still puffy. There were pinprick marks on both her hips where his claws had pierced her flesh.

His touch gentle, he pushed her legs apart until he could see her sex. She was swollen and red. His lips thinned and his jaw clenched. He wanted to taste her again, to fuck her hard, harder than he already had.

Closing his eyes he shook his head. If he didn't keep a clear head neither of them would survive the trip to his ship. YelAsta was not a planet that would allow the unwary or unfocused to survive.

And there would be someone on their trail. They were lucky they hadn't already been discovered. He opened his eyes and focused on her swollen sex. They were going to have to move fast and as swollen and tender as she looked and no doubt was she wouldn't find moving, let alone moving fast and silent, easy.

Every instinct in his being screamed at him to pick her up and run. But it was his fault she was in the condition she was. The cool water would soothe her.

"Genae." He smoothed her hair back from her face, kept his tone quiet.

Her lashes fluttered against her cheeks before rising. "Do you sell tickets to your planet?"

He frowned, her husky words making no sense. "Tickets?"

"If the other males of your world have sex like you do you could make your whole planet rich selling tickets."

Kai frowned, not amused by her words. "We are not performers or sex-workers for sale. We are a race of warriors."

Genae grinned unrepentantly. She stretched, wincing as different body parts protested the move. Before she could blink she found herself swept up in Kai's arms. As he strode into the water and set her on her feet she blinked.

"I think we've done this before."

He insinuated a hand between her thighs and started stroking her sex. She winced at the sting but didn't try to get away. She held on to his biceps, looked up and met his intent golden stare. "I think we've done this before, too."

He didn't respond, just kept stroking her under the water until she relaxed and her muscles loosened.

"We have to leave. We'll be traveling fast and the terrain is rough in spots, dangerous in many. You have to do what I say the moment I tell you."

She nodded and shrugged. "Okay."

"No." He framed her face with his hands and stared into her eyes. "This is nothing to be flippant about. Your life and mine depend on how well you follow my orders."

Genae wrapped her hands around his wrists and smiled up at him. It felt like her heart was swelling in her chest there was so much emotion growing inside her.

"Kai, I'll do exactly what you say the moment you say it, I swear. I wouldn't be alive if it wasn't for you. I wouldn't have experienced the best sex of my life if it wasn't for you."

"When I crashed on this planet I was ready to give up. You changed that. You gave me hope that I could escape and accomplish what I need to. I'm not going to quit trusting you now."

A muscle jumped in Kai's jaw. He knew she meant what she said. Only time would prove how much she trusted him and how much he could trust her. "Are you ready?"

She nodded. He leaned down, pressed his lips to hers in a hard kiss. When he straightened his gaze was still sharp but desire was a fire in the depths of his eyes.

"When we reach my ship I want an explanation. I'll fight these soldiers for you but I want to know why. In order to keep you safe I have to know the reason you're in danger."

Genae took a deep breath. He had a right to know everything. Slowly, she nodded. "When we reach your ship I'll tell you the whole story."

He nodded, caught her hand and tugged her out of the water behind him. They had a long distance to travel and there was nothing he could do to make it easier for her. He led the way around the pool and through a maze of stalagmites. The exit was a long, narrow tunnel. He had to stoop in spots and in others squeeze through sideways but none of it was as small and closed in as the entrance had been.

Genae started blinking before they ever reached the outside. Sunlight filtered into the tunnel, blindingly bright after the near dark of the cavern.

Kai stopped at the entrance and pulled her close before pushing her against the stone wall behind his back. His eyes narrowed against the brilliant morning sun, he studied the terrain before them. Loose stone tumbled from the entrance of the tunnel to a narrow valley. On the other side virgin timber stretched as far as the eye could see. Trees with ghostly gray-white bark and leaves of silver-green.

He stepped out of the cavern far enough to study the small valley with its ribbon of shining water. Turning he looked up the sheer cliff above them before studying the walls to either side.

Stepping back into the tunnel he took Genae's hand and led her out. "Watch your step," he cautioned. "The rock is loose and slides easily."

Genae didn't waste breath answering, just nodded and held tight to his hand. She really wanted clothes but knew she wasn't getting any. He moved silently and

steadily down the loose rubble. Her foot came down hard on a pointed rock. She bit her lip to keep from crying out and kept following. She wasn't as surefooted or as quiet as he was, but she wasn't going to slow him down. It seemed forever before they reached the bottom. At the base he turned and looked at Genae, pride shining in his eyes.

"Not a bad start, *avaiya*."

"*Avaiya*?"

"My woman. My mate." He brushed his lips over her forehead, never once releasing her hand. She felt a warm glow envelop her as her hand caught in his. She followed him into the forest. She wasn't going to let him go when they got back to civilization. He wasn't the only one who could stake a claim.

* * *

From atop the cliff the hunter watched with a savage mix of satisfaction and disappointment as the two disappeared into the trees. He would win, but he'd hoped for more of a challenge. He leapt from boulder to boulder down the cliff, not making a sound. An invisible predator on the trail of easy prey.

* * *

Eyes narrowed, Kai looked over his shoulder as he led Genae into the forest. He couldn't see the man who pursued them, but he didn't have to. He sensed him. It was one of his own kind.

Hopefully the other VanDai was a worthy opponent. It would add pleasure to the satisfaction he would feel when he brought the swift, final justice of their people to the traitor who had sold himself to the League.

He would win, but the stakes were more interesting.

A feral smile spread across his face as he laid a trail their pursuer wouldn't be able to miss.

To be continued...

Coming Soon: Paladin's Pride 2

Genae thought she was alone in her fight against the President of the Unified League of Planets. Now, with Kai on her side, she believes she just might make it out of this alive.

But trust is a nebulous thing. When she finds out Kai is a liaison for the League, she's afraid she trusted too soon...

Angelina Evans

Romance. Who can live without it? Certainly not Angelina Evans.

Born, raised and still living close to the Canadian border, she enjoys visiting her neighbors to the north when she's not busy writing. Writing has been a part of Angelina's life since she could first string words together. Seeing her books in print is a dream come true. Her sincerest wish is that readers will enjoy reading her stories as much as she enjoys writing them.

Angelina loves to hear from her readers -- you can contact her at angelinaevans1@yahoo.com