

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS

THE
Pleasure
BOT



GETTING THE MOST
OUT OF YOUR
PLEASURE BOT

A USER'S GUIDE

DELILAH DEVLIN

THE PLEASURE BOT

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THE PLEASURE BOT

Delilah Devlin

Chapter One

The worn leather saddle creaked and groaned.

“Faster, baby, faster!” the low male voice rumbled in Priscilla Potter’s ears. She smiled at the warm gust of air tickling her neck.

Again, her bare bottom slammed against the hard leather, pushing the cock deeper inside her pussy as the seat rocked forward and back to the motion of the galloping horse. “Yes! Yes!” She was nearing her climax, her liquid arousal lubricating the pulsating rod stretching her vaginal walls.

“That’s it, baby, you’re almost there,” he murmured. “Ride this little dogie into the dirt.”

The saddle jounced roughly, almost unseating her. She reached for the saddle horn and held on tight. “Like it rough, do you, Jake?” she asked, delighted with the change in program.

“Come for me, baby,” he whispered. “Almost—” the seat groaned again and the cock broke free from the saddle, “—theerre-uunnnh...” The riding apparatus shuddered to a halt.

“No!” she wailed, ripping the virtual reality helmet from her head and dropping it to the floor. She climbed gingerly from her seat and pulled the dead dildo from between her legs. “Aaa—gnes!”

“Yeah, boss?” her personal assistant’s disembodied voice echoed hollowly against Priscilla’s bedroom walls. “Oooh! Malfunction?”

“I thought this thing had a 10,000 hour warranty,” Priscilla grumbled, her pussy still humming. She stomped to the living room and flopped down on the sofa. “I can’t believe it! Work’s been hell this week. All I wanted was a little stress relief and the damn saddle breaks!”

“Boss, do you think this might be a sign?” Agnes’s voice rang from the speakers in the ceiling. “Your life is all about work. What are you trying to prove, anyway? Your parents aren’t around to see what you’ve accomplished.”

“I’m not trying to prove anything. Besides, they have more important things to do, like saving planets from wars or negotiating trade agreements.” Priscilla hated the sour note in her voice. She was very proud of their work on behalf of the Dominion. She’d long since stopped feeling like she’d let them down when she’d flunked Galactic Political Science at the university. Really.

“Maybe you need the real thing.”

“You mean a man?” Priscilla snorted. “Why would I want that? Men are messy and demanding. They burp and scratch, and the last one wanted to move in without a pre-cohabitational agreement.” Priscilla sank deeper into the fabric of her plush, upholstered sofa and slid her fingers between her labia, working her flesh to maintain her arousal. “I’ll pass. I don’t have time to romance another lover. Besides, my debit account couldn’t handle another messy break-up.”

“Why don’t you let me plan a little vacation for us? Have you ever considered that your choices are rather limited here? I mean we are talking Texas. Land of the Technogeek. Hardly the place to find a real man.”

The throbbing in her pussy waned. Priscilla almost cried with frustration and removed her fingers from between her legs. “Agnes, you are personality-programmed for me, aren’t you? Or did they switch you at the incubator?”

“I’m exactly what you need. The latest in cellular technology. And I’m telling you I’ve run your profile – you aren’t going to find Mr. Right here in South Texas.”

“See? This is a pointless discussion. Mr. Right doesn’t exist. So why don’t you be a good personal assistant and bring up the Playthings for Playmates catalog? I need to order a new replacement – and this time, no cowboy theme!”

“What will satisfy you, Miss Priss? You have a whole closet full of toys.”

“Don’t get sassy with me, or I’ll pull your power grid.”

Agnes chortled. "You wouldn't last an hour before you'd boot me back up."

"Maybe I'd just hit reformat and wipe your hard drive clean," Priscilla grumbled. "If I started from scratch, I might actually get an assistant who does what I tell her."

"Girlfriend, you'd be comatose. No man to drive you crazy *and* no Agnes to snarl at."

"Who's in charge here, anyway?" Priscilla ground her teeth. "Just bring up the catalog."

"Yes, ma'am!" Agnes saluted with a click of her simulated heels and dropped the bioluminescent screen from the ceiling, nearly smacking Priscilla in the head. She adjusted it to the correct height, tilting the screen with a snap to the proper angle. "I've already marked the pages you'll want to check out."

"That's more like it."

The catalog's front door opened and the salesclerk motioned Priscilla inside the shop's foyer. "Good morning, Miss Priscilla!" Tonio said, smiling appreciatively. "I see you've lost a few pounds. Did the riding help with your 'saddlebags'?"

Priscilla glared at the clerk, reminding herself he was only virtual—therefore getting angry with him didn't serve a real purpose.

"So glad to see you again," the clerk continued, tucking a lock of platinum hair behind his ears. He leaned forward, his handsome face filling the screen, his bluer-than-true-blue eyes glittering with sly amusement. "What can I help you with today, love?"

Nothing worse than a smug salesman, Priscilla thought, unless it was a smug, computer-simulated salesman.

"Are you looking for a replacement for the Texas Tornado? With your frequent riders' membership, we can offer you a deal on an upgraded model."

"Tonio, about that saddle. The damn thing broke. Wasn't it under warranty?"

"You surpassed the 10,000 hours three months ago, sweetie." Tonio winked. "Of course, we can refurbish that model, but I think you'll want to check out our newest

innovations first. In fact, Agnes just sent me an updated profile.” He looked to his right. “Nice font choice, dear.” Turning back to Priscilla, he said, “She’s fast! And so verrry good. You’re lucky to have her.”

Priscilla rolled her eyes. “Did she put you up to that? Threatening to pull her grid must have really made her nervous.”

“She’s just grumpy, Toni-baby,” Agnes said. “Did she mention *she* broke the saddle?”

“Ah!” With a superior smile pasted on his lips, he raised both eyebrows. “So Miss Priss, how about you just lie there and I’ll give you the tour.”

Priscilla sighed. The machines knew what she needed, so why didn’t she? “I’m telling you now—I expect to be wowed,” she said, expecting disappointment. How could you package fulfillment? Or love?

Tonio led the way down a long, white corridor backlit with rosy light fixtures. He paused and waved his hand over a purple button labeled “MOD”. A long rack of toys shimmered into view along the wall. He selected one and fondled the large lavender-hued vaginal applicator. “Of course, we have the latest in Manually-Operated Dildos—quiet, self-lubricating—”

“She has dozens,” Agnes interrupted.

“Of course she does.” He snapped his fingers and returned the dildo to its shelf. “Follow me. Agnes did mention price isn’t your highest priority.” He continued down the corridor. Toward the end, he turned and gave her a measured glance. “You know,” his voice purred, “we have something special. Just in from Pinnacle Productions. Quite exclusive. We have only a few models at the moment, but they’re not available to the general public. Seeing as you’re such a loyal customer, I could offer one as a rental.”

“She’s not interested in a rental, Tonio,” Agnes replied before Priscilla could open her mouth.

“Yoo-hoo!” Priscilla said, waving at the screen. “What about what *I* want? Why don’t you ask *me*?”

“She doesn’t have time to return anything to the store,” Agnes said, without acknowledging her boss’s interruption.

“Oh, but delivery and return are included, Agnes love.”

Priscilla sighed in frustration, but she had to admit Tonio’s long windup of a sales pitch had caught her interest. “All right, show it to me.”

Tonio finally looked straight at her. “I can’t,” he replied, with another smug look.

Priscilla was sure her teeth would be ground to nubs by the end of the conversation.

“You see, each model’s form is regenerated—according to the needs of the individual client.”

“Is this a toy we’re talking about?”

“Not exactly.” Tonio’s well-modulated lips, stretched into a feline smile. “It’s a fully functional, life-size robot—”

Priscilla groaned. “I don’t want a doll to hump. I need action—”

“Yes. Penetration, gliding movement, clitoral stimulation. I know. Agnes mentioned that, but this isn’t just another doll, love. It’s skin and synthetic sinew stretched over a steel frame. Entirely lifelike. It even comes and grows limp afterward.”

“I have MODs that come and go limp.” She waved her hand. “I know, I know. They’re what every woman wants.”

“But do they have fingers and moist tongues? Large, rock-hard cocks and flexible, suctioning mouths?” He stepped closer so that his face filled the screen. “And do they have artificial intelligence that allows them to learn your desires and act independently upon them? Hmmm?”

“No.” Priscilla leaned forward and wished she could control the flush of heat that betrayed her interest. “Your robot does all that?”

“This model does.”

“Why can’t I see a sample of the product? Don’t you have a mock-up?”

Tonio lifted an eyebrow. "Tell me, love, you're a marketer by trade. If I showed you a product not intended for your consumption, wouldn't you still have an expectation about its appearance or performance?" At Priscilla's frown he added, "We prefer to surprise our customers. We'll map your preferences, gleaned from the thorough profile Agnes has provided us, to build you the perfect sexual partner."

Priscilla eyed him with suspicion. "Sounds expensive."

He gave her a reproving look. "Agnes assured me you can afford it, so quit grouching."

"Agnes has been a busy girl," Priscilla mumbled.

"Have to keep one step ahead of the old reformat button," Agnes muttered.

"She promises you will not be disappointed," Tonio said, "and I'll personally guarantee it."

"If this toy is so special, why can't I just purchase it?"

"This is only a market trial. Pinnacle wants to see whether the demand is in the market place before they refit a plant for mass production."

"I don't know. A sex robot seems kind of...decadent." Her fingers crept back between her legs.

"We'll throw in a full refurbish of your Saddle Tramp," he said, his tone wheedling.

"Tonio, can I have the robot delivered now? Please, please." She pouted her lips.

"I'm sorry, dear. They're all out at the moment. One will free up in two days—just in time for the weekend. Shall I book it for Friday through Sunday?"

"Like a mini-vacation?" Agnes replied, excitement in her voice.

What a novel thought! Priscilla settled back against the cushions. She'd keep her uplink to work turned off the entire weekend. Three whole days of sensual hedonism...

"Would you like to take it somewhere special?" Agnes asked.

Priscilla grimaced. With her luck, every last person she ever knew would see her with her un-real man. "In public? I don't think so."

“Oh, but the robot’s true nature would be indiscernible from any man,” Tonio said. “I promise, he’s entirely lifelike and intelligent.”

“All right, so he has table manners and can laugh at my crummy punch lines. Still, I’d like to get the most enjoyment for my money – we’ll stay here.”

“Good. Then he’ll pack light.”

“Will he be programmed to my...specifications?”

Tonio waggled his perfectly symmetrical eyebrows. “Hon, he’ll be hung like a horse.”

Priscilla grinned and slid her fingers inside her sopping pussy. “Mmmm. What did you say this toy is called?”

“I didn’t. It’s called The Pleasure Bot.”

Chapter Two

Declan O’Hanlon made a sharp turn and loped down a narrow alley. Ducking into a dim archway, he flattened his back against a dingy shop door. A second later his partner, Reiver Mace, slid in beside him, panting. The clomping of many booted feet passed the alley and grew fainter as the patrol continued down the street.

The two men shared a glance, and then grinned.

“Bloody hell! That was close.” Reiver wiped sweat from his forehead with the sleeve of his jacket. “That last shot damn near singed my balls. Where the hell did Customs come from?”

“Those bastard Scots!” Declan growled. “McEwen warned us off his territory. Must have turned us in. He probably got wind of our special cargo and couldn’t take the competition.”

“What about the ship?”

Declan’s hands curled into fists. “Undoubtedly confiscated – along with the cargo.”

“Shit! Five months of work down the crapper.” Reiver’s lips thinned. “Do you think the rest of the crew made it out?”

“Yeah, I drew the agents away from the front hatch while everyone else snuck out the rear.”

Reiver’s nose wrinkled and he sniffed. “Christ! Did you bathe in whiskey?”

Declan glowered and turned away to peek around the corner. “I was carrying a crate out when they got the drop on me,” he said, over his shoulder. “Their first shot shattered the bottles.”

Reiver groaned. “Tell me it wasn’t the Samureen Black Label.”

“What else?”

"I'm almost tempted to lick you, but I know how long it's been since you've bathed."

"Just as long ago as you!" Declan gave his friend a shove.

Reiver's grin slipped and he shot him a worried glance. "So, what do we do now?"

Declan peeked around the arch again. "I think we lost them. But we'll have to split up. They're looking for two of us."

"Well, we can't head back to the docks. It'll be crawling with agents."

"Nor can we hit the pubs, or any other public places—DNA sensors will trip." Declan slapped the arch with his fist. "We have to get to a privacy zone and hole up for a couple of days. I need time to figure out how we're going to liberate *The Maiden*."

"The nearest gated community is *La Barria Prima*. Maybe we can find a guesthouse or two and squat until this thing blows over."

"All right. Keep the chatter on the comm circuit to a minimum. We can't risk being tracked. Whatever you do, stay away from the cathouses. Those women will turn you in for a credit."

"Aye, Captain. Looks like our shore leave isn't going to be quite as enjoyable as we'd planned." Reiver glanced around the corner. "See you Sunday." He turned up the collar on his duster coat and walked back the way they'd just come.

"Watch your ass!" Declan called after him and walked the opposite way.

* * * * *

"Move a muscle, and I'll drop you where you stand, pardner."

Declan froze. The man's voice came out of nowhere, deep and with a distinctive Texas twang. From the height the voice came, this was a very tall man.

Declan had jimmied open a back window of a home in the exclusive *La Barria Prima* subdivision that appeared vacant. He'd cased the white limestone house, found the

security sensors and dismantled each before breaking in. How had he missed seeing anyone when he'd prowled through the richly decorated rooms?

With a mental shrug, he reviewed his options. If the man were armed, he might not be able to overpower him. He'd have to use his wits. He was screwed.

He straightened from the pantry door and slowly raised his hands.

"You're Declan O'Hanlon, aren't you? The smuggler."

Declan nearly jerked with surprise. Had news traveled so fast? "I'm an entrepreneur," he said, baiting a hook to extend the conversation. He needed to figure out where the man was standing, so he slowly turned his head.

"I said, don't move." The man's deep voice sounded gravelly and mean.

Frustration curled Declan's hands into fists. "Look, I'm not here to steal from you or harm you." He injected calm into his voice. "I'm just —"

"Hiding out? On the lam?"

He frowned. The Texan seemed to be enjoying his predicament. "Yeah, I ran into a spot of bad luck."

"I'd say. As we speak, your ship's being flown to the impound lot."

Declan dropped his chin to his chest and swore under his breath.

"Your problems don't end there, buddy."

He gritted his teeth, resisting the urge to take his chances and start swinging. "You seem to know an awful lot about me."

"I have my connections. Within a minute of your entering the house, I had your entire dossier. I know your grade school teachers' names, what ship you first signed on with, and what planet has orders to blow you out of orbit if you return."

"If you know that much, then you also know I'm not a violent criminal."

"Right, you're just an *entrepreneur* who happens to run contraband through Dominion ports."

“There are worse things,” Declan replied, his mind racing. Was this the angle he could work? “Most of my best customers are Dominion officials. I bring them quality stock and they turn a blind eye. Is that what this is about? Would you like to cut a deal?”

“You’re looking at some hard time for today’s business—not to mention for breaking and entering.”

“So why haven’t you already called the authorities?”

“I’ll get to that. First though, I need to get a look at you. Drop your drawers.”

Declan stiffened and hoped like hell the Texan only wanted to check for hidden weapons. “Is this really necessary? I can assure you, I don’t have any weapons on me.”

“Just do as I say, or I’ll place that call to the authorities.”

Declan’s lips thinned in irritation, but he slowly lowered his hands to his belt. He loosened his breeches and pushed them down to mid-thigh. “Satisfied?”

“Drop the duster.”

Declan shouldered off his coat and let it puddle on the floor.

“Raise your hands and turn around.”

Cursing under his breath, Declan turned to face his adversary. Only there wasn’t anyone there. “What the f—”

“Does it get any bigger than that?”

Declan jerked, his hands reflexively moving toward his crotch. “What did you say?”

“That’s gonna be a tough one to get around.”

After a quick perusal of the room, Declan realized the voice came from the ceiling. “What the hell are you talking about?” His gaze searched for hidden cameras—likely the guy was watching from some sort of monitoring room. “Can I pull up me pants?”

“Yeah, might as well,” the man grumbled.

Relieved the odd inspection was over, Declan readjusted his clothing. "Are you satisfied I'm not packing?"

"That's for sure." The man sighed loudly. "However, lifelike was guaranteed. And your ass will do fine. Take off your shirt. I want to see your chest."

Declan scowled and made quick work of the shirt, yanking it over his head while wondering if the man was checking him for a holster.

An appreciative whistle sounded from the speakers.

Every hair on Declan's body rose to attention. "I don't know what this is all about, but if you think—"

"You're free of any exotic STDs—I scanned you when you entered the kitchen. Can you perform?"

"Perform?" The muscles in his shoulders and arms bunched in rejection of the suspicion formulating.

"You know—in the sack. Can you get it up?"

"Look, I don't bugger men, and I don't let men bugger me." Alarm and anger harshened his voice. "If you're going to use your weapon, you'd better do it now, because I'm out of here. Call the police, if you like." He leaned down to swipe his clothing from the floor.

"Now, hold your horses. If you want a chance to free your crew and your ship, you'd better stop right where you are."

"Some things aren't *up* for negotiation," Declan growled.

"Decky, baby. I'm not after your virginity." This time the voice was feminine, mid-fortyish, and amused.

Were there two of them? Declan straightened, his patience at an end. "Then what are you after?"

"I want to strike a deal."

"What kind of a deal?"

"My boss will be walking through the door any minute now. She expects a playmate for the weekend, but the playmate couldn't be delivered. She's going to be very grumpy."

"Not my problem if her friend couldn't make it."

"Oh, but he just *did*."

Declan didn't much care for the sly note in the woman's voice and narrowed his eyes. "Let me get this straight. You want me to fill in for this *friend*? And do what? Spend the weekend with your boss...shagging her brains out?"

"That about sums it up."

"What about after?"

"I told you. I can arrange for the release of your crew and your ship."

"You can do that? How do I even know you have that kind of power?"

"I'm connected, ya know? I can even tell you who tipped off the cops."

"Prove it. Give me a name."

"Does Ronald McEwen ring a bell?"

Declan swore. "I knew it! That bastard Scot!"

"Now, if you'll just settle down, we have some work to do before the boss gets home. You need a bath and a shave. Then we need to do something about those clothes—she said no cowboys. That duster and those boots reek of OK Corral...and whiskey, Samureen Black, unless I miss my guess."

Still trying to get his bearings and figure out if he stood a chance at making a run for it, Declan stalled. "Who the hell are you, and how do you know so much?"

"Never mind. Start stripping."

Declan folded his arms over his bare chest. "Won't she be just a little upset that I'm not the person she's expecting?"

"She won't ever know."

Declan raised an eyebrow. "Is this *friend* a paid companion, then?"

“You’re quick.”

Declan stepped backward toward the kitchen door. “So what exactly do I have to do this weekend?”

“Fulfill her fantasies – only problem is, she can’t tell you what they are. The service took her profile and was supposed to provide her with the partner who’d give her what she needs – not what she thinks she wants. I can tell you now, if you do what she tells you, she’ll be bored.”

“Is she so repulsive?”

“Repulsive? Why would you think that?”

“She can’t find her own *partner*.”

The woman’s laughter did nothing to calm Declan’s fears. “She’s an exec. A stuffed shirt. She just doesn’t have time to find her own man.”

The very last sort of woman Declan wanted to ride – stiff, unimaginative, unyielding. How the hell was he supposed to work up a hard-on?

“Are you any good?”

“Huh?”

“In the sack! No time to be shy. I need to know what I’ve got to work with.”

Declan shrugged. “I’ve never had any complaints.”

“That’s not saying much.”

“Beggars can’t be choosers,” he replied nastily, fed up with her snide remarks concerning his manhood.

“Aaa – gnes!” A strident voice came from beyond the kitchen door.

Declan jumped.

“The ca-ca’s gonna hit the fan now,” his captor muttered.

“I take it that’s your mistress?” he whispered.

“Yup. My boss, the dragon lady, my ball and chain. She’ll be in here in a minute. Whatever odd thing she says, just go with it. Remember, this is supposed to be a fantasy weekend.”

“I haven’t agreed to do anything yet.”

“Remember your crew and ship!”

In for a penny...out for a pound. “My cargo, too?”

“All right!” she hissed. “Do we have a deal?”

“How do I know you’ll keep your word?”

“You don’t. But I’m the only chance you’ve got. It’s me or Sing-Sing. Do we have a deal?”

What the hell was Sing-Sing? Declan swore again. “Deal. You’d better not welsh, or I’ll tell the boss lady about our little arrangement.”

“Aaa – gnes!” Priscilla shouted again, and then paused to kick off her heels before continuing on to her bedroom. “What’s with you? Are you still sulking about me threatening to pull your grid?”

“Of course not,” Agnes replied, in a monotone. “I’m just a hunk of cells, no real intelligence, no feelings to hurt.”

Priscilla rolled her eyes and reached for the first button at the top of her white blouse. “So when is it arriving?”

“It?”

“My Pleasure Bot.”

“Oh, about your new toy...”

“Aaa – gnes?” Her hands froze on button number three. “Don’t tell me they can’t deliver.”

“No, no.”

“Whew! You had me worried there.” She continued unbuttoning her blouse, letting her mind roam to the coming hours. Already her body was juiced at the thoughts of the wicked things she wanted to try with her lifelike, better-than-life-sized robot.

“Well, I just wanted to remind you of a few things first.”

“Like?” She hoped like hell Agnes wasn’t going to give her the list of the manufacturer’s disclaimers.

“You were promised lifelike.”

“Yeah, yeah. Down to the wet tongue and hangnails, I’m sure.” She finished with the last button and peeled off the shirt.

“Just so you know, it’s also programmed to believe it’s a real person—to enhance the experience.”

The word “enhance” was the only one her mind registered. All day long, the thought of all that “enhanced” hardware aimed at providing her the ultimate pleasure had put heat in her cheeks and a bounce in her step. Her skirt joined the heap on the floor. “All right. Is there more?”

“Um...it’s in the kitchen.”

Priscilla’s body revved into hyperdrive and she headed out of her bedroom. “Why didn’t you say so? It eats?”

“Probably does a lot of things even more disgusting in the name of realism.”

“Wow! Pinnacle’s going to make a fortune. I wonder if they need an ad man.”

She reached to push the kitchen door, but it swung toward her, and she stepped back with a gasp. A tall, disheveled – shirtless – man stepped through.

Her gaze swept over him in shock. “Agnes! Just what did you put in my profile?”

“Why, boss?”

Her hand swept over his shoulder and a muscle rippled beneath her palm. She jerked away her hand. “It’s...brawny. I prefer lean.” She backed away and looked up.

“Dark hair? I like blond. And it’s *hairy*.” She sniffed. “Oh, and it stinks! Did you tell them I wanted a dark stinky man?”

The bot’s narrowed brown gaze followed her as she paced in front of him. His face grew a blustery red.

“They have a few kinks to work out in this model.” She waved an encompassing hand at him. “It does understand English, doesn’t it Agnes?”

“Sure does.”

His eyes slitted.

“Well, at least they got that much right.” Priscilla eyed his wide, hairy chest. The muscle beneath the sun-darkened skin looked well developed...*hard*. She might be able to get past all the dark hair—the body was mighty distracting. “Let me see what my money’s buying. Take off the rest of your clothes.”

When it didn’t move, she huffed and reached for its belt. A large, hard hand closed over hers and pushed her away. She glanced up in alarm. The look on the bot’s face could have curdled milk. “Agnes? It looks angry.”

From between gritted teeth, the bot said, “*It* prefers to be called *he*.”

Chapter Three

Declan eyed the half-dressed woman with irritation...and reluctant interest. She wasn't any bigger than a minute, the top of her red head barely reaching his shoulder. But all the creamy, freckled skin revealed between the beige, satin strips of her underwear clothed a body with all the necessary curves. His cock agreed and stirred behind the placket of his breeches.

Then she opened her mouth again. "Agnes? Don't you play dumb now. What the hell was in my profile?"

Although pitched lower than her previous shrieks, her voice still held an imperious note that set his teeth on edge. No wonder the woman couldn't find a man of her own. She was a bossy little snipe.

He had the overwhelming urge to tell the woman the truth, just to get her to shut up—and give Agnes a taste of her own brand of poison. Two women couldn't deserve each other more.

"Just the facts, boss." Agnes replied. "I'm sure they added their own statistics regarding your purchasing behavior in order to come up with the right blend of male properties to suit your needs."

"They just should have given me an order form with a checklist for my preferences. Tonio's more my taste!" She scowled, looking him over like he was a lumbering bear rather than a man. "I've half a mind to send it back."

He grunted his disapproval.

The woman gave him a startled glance. "*Him* back," the woman corrected. "I mean, who in her right mind would want something so primitive?"

Some dark *primitive* emotion stirred in his belly. This woman needed taming. "I've never had any complaints," he replied, adding a silky texture to his voice.

Her gray eyes widened. Was she shocked he could do more than grunt? Then he saw a telltale flush rise from the tops of her breasts to her cheeks. He'd bet a case of Samureen Black that arousal soaked her panties.

"That's a recommendation?" She eyed him with doubt shadowing her gaze. "It's too late to get a replacement, isn't it, Agnes?"

"Much too late," Agnes muttered.

"I guess I'll keep him," she said, her voice sounding less than enthusiastic.

"Then what are we waiting for?" he said with exaggerated relish, his hands going for his belt.

Her eyes widened like saucers. "Wait a minute!" She held up a hand.

Declan stared at her. Never mind she'd wanted him out of his clothes moments ago.

"Shouldn't we get a few things straight first?"

He took a step toward her. "What's to *get*, other than naked?" He slipped the belt from the loops of his breeches and lifted it high, his gaze holding hers as he dropped it to the floor.

With a stubborn tilt of her chin, she said, "We could start with what I'm supposed to call you other than 'it'."

He narrowed his eyes at the termagant. He knew a stall when he saw one. "I have a name. Declan. What's yours?"

Her pretty, pink mouth gaped. "You don't know my name? Why wouldn't Playthings tell you my name? They know absolutely everything else about me!"

"To increase the realism?" Agnes whispered.

He wished like hell the older woman would show herself. He preferred to gauge the mettle of his adversaries by watching their eyes.

"Just imagine," Agnes continued, "that you're two strangers meeting for the first time."

The redhead's scowl could have singed an oven. "First times suck!"

“Perhaps you’ve been going out with the wrong men,” he purred, and then grinned at the acid glance she shot his way.

With a tomato-red flush of anger, she said, “There is no way *this* was programmed with me in mind. It’s impossible!”

“Is his face so unattractive?” Agnes asked.

“How should I know? I can’t see his face under all that stubble. He could be hiding a weak chin.”

He lifted his brow and scratched his beard, feigning unconcern. *A weak chin?*

Thunderclouds couldn’t match the fierce displeasure roiling in her stormy gray eyes.

Declan’s grin stretched wider. Goading this one to anger should be a sport. He hadn’t had this much fun with a woman with his clothes on—ever! He scratched his balls for good measure.

“Ugh! His manners are as disgusting as his smell.”

“Is his body unappealing?” Agnes’s voice sounded a tad strained.

“He’s too large.” Her gaze swept over him, pausing at his chest, then trailing over his arms. “But he does have interesting bumps.”

Bumps?

Her hand reached out to smooth across the muscle on his forearm. “I don’t think I ever dated a man with bumpy arms.”

Declan couldn’t resist. “If you’ll let me remove me breeches, you can touch me legs. The bumps are bigger.”

Her eyes narrowed. “Why would they give it sarcasm? Couldn’t they figure out I get enough from you, Agnes?” she said, aiming her shout to the ceiling. “Tell me again, it’s too late to return it for another model.”

“It’s too late, boss.”

“And I suppose it’s too much to hope it has a mute button?”

“Damn straight!” Declan growled.

The woman sighed. “I sure hope they knew what they were doing.”

He planted his feet shoulder width apart. “So, shall I lose the pants?”

She shook her head. “Just like a man. You don’t even know my name yet.”

An imp of mischief must have been riding on his shoulder. “Why does that matter?”

“What will you call me when we’re...”

He raised a single brow, pretending not to understand.

“You know...doing it!” Her frown deepened as her face was once again suffused with heat.

“Woman?”

Her face grew impossibly redder, warring with the bright hue of her hair, but he hadn’t missed her shiver. Was her exasperation stirring up more than just her temper?

He flicked open the button at the top of his breeches.

Her gaze flew up to his face. “Priscilla! My name’s Priscilla!” she shouted.

“Priss? It fits.” His glance swept her from head to toe. Already he thought of the names he would torment her with when he was deep inside her pink cunt. “Prickly Priss”, if she ceded control reluctantly. “Prim Priss”, if her blushes flooded her cheeks. “Pretty Priss”, if she melted beneath his loving.

His cock stirred against his breeches, aching for ease. He quickly flicked open the next button.

“Um...” She backed up a step. “A shower! There’s no way you’re coming near me until you’re clean. What the hell did you bathe in anyway?”

“Whiskey,” he said with a grin.

“Whiskey? How? It’s prohibited.”

“He’s a smuggler,” Agnes interrupted.

Declan knew the older woman's game. She was trying to remove his only weapon, the truth, by making his occupation part of his "role".

"A smuggler? They think I want a criminal?"

"I'm sure they were thinking opposites and all..." Agnes sounded a little desperate.

"Agnes! Unless you care to join us, butt out!" he snarled.

Priscilla giggled. A tinkling, feminine sound that so surprised him, he caught himself gaping.

"Not so smart after all, are you?"

Declan barely heard her words—didn't care to understand. Her smile took his breath away. Pink, full lips stretched over white teeth and a glimpse of her pink tongue stirred the predator lounging in his belly.

She stared back warily, her smile slipping. "Well, let's see about that bath."

He knew exactly where the shower was, but preferred following his hostess through the living room to the marble-tiled hallway beyond to watch the flex and stretch of her ass beneath the satin as she led the way. The plump contours reminded him what the weekend was all about—survival and sex, not falling into her smile.

The creases where her thighs met buttocks were exposed, and Declan had the oddest urge to trace them with his tongue. He, who never lingered over lovemaking, believed foreplay to be a waste of a perfectly good erection.

But here he was wondering if he'd find golden freckles on her ass to match those scattered across her nose and breasts. What inspired him to linger over her rounded bottom was a mystery. She wasn't at all the sort of woman he preferred.

Her hair was shorter than most men's. Thick, cropped curls that clung close to her head added to the elfish appeal of her slightly pointed ears.

But her boyish haircut was at odds with the lush derriere that flirted beneath the hem of her underwear.

Since he'd already cast himself in the role of marauder, he didn't resist the impulse to cup a globe in his hand.

Priscilla shrieked and rounded on him, backing up against the bathroom door. "What do you think you're doing?"

"Giving you your money's worth." He moved in, his body so close her breasts would rub his bare chest if she took one deep breath.

"I said, *after* you've bathed we'll discuss what's next."

"Ah! A woman after me own heart," he said, deliberately misunderstanding her. "Shall I scrub your back first?"

"I am not joining you in the shower. It's too small."

"It's quite large, actually. Room enough for Agnes too, if she cares to join us," he said, raising his voice toward the end to make sure the other woman heard his challenge.

"You two go right ahead," Agnes chirped. "I'm going to have a little word with Tonio."

"You do that!" Priscilla said. "And find out where the off switch is!"

"Do you think you need a safe word?" he asked, lowering his head so that his mouth hovered just above hers. He reached around her, his arm encircling her waist to grasp the door latch, and he tugged it down.

The door opened behind Priscilla and she stepped backward into the gray and chrome-appointed bathroom.

She felt horribly out of control of the situation. The beast of a robot had run amok, pushing the limits of her patience and comfort. Didn't he know she was the one in charge? His eyes glinted with dark, dangerous hints of sensual perversions she didn't have the nerve to contemplate. If she could just figure out where his power grid was

hidden... She needed a few minutes of quiet to think through her predicament. Although...

The more closely she ogled the bot's body, the more intriguing the possibilities grew. She'd never had a ruffian before. If she could just find a way to wipe that smirk off his face...

His smile grew wolfish. "I'd love nothing better than to work up a lather with you, love."

Unnerved by his overtly sensual suggestion and the subtle Irish brogue that wrapped itself around his words, Priscilla took another step backward.

His dark gaze challenged her, making her heart skip and her legs tremble. She was unaccustomed to being the prey, as she more often played the hunter in the relationship game. She had never been the object of such a raw, unpolished come-on. If only she could forget the bot was only acting on his programming.

Then again, she was comforted knowing he wasn't a real man. For she would never have allowed the liberties she'd already ceded this robot. She would never have given an inch of ground, no matter the cost.

This weekend was supposed to be a fantasy, and while it wasn't shaping up to be the one she'd envisioned, she was willing to go with the new "script" to see just how far this experience would take her. "I'm paying for this weekend," she said, jutting her chin. "I say we wait."

His black gaze bored into her and she slipped sideways, putting space between them. His gaze followed her. She supposed he was already storing data – analyzing her body's dimensions, her gestures, her responses – to determine which sensual strategy would best serve her needs.

The thought of all that analytical attention to her pleasure made her skin feel hot and cold at the same time, and her panties dampened instantly.

She reached for the control panel on the wall next to the shower and selected the proper wash settings. Water jetted from the shower walls and she opened the door. "Towels are in the cupboard." She gestured behind him.

Then she had a disturbing thought. "You can shower, can't you?" A vision of circuitry shorting in fiery arcs filled her with dismay.

"What?" he asked. "You think I don't know how? Just because I've spent a month in a reclamation suit doesn't mean I wouldn't enjoy one." He toed off his boots, his gaze once again pinning her to the spot.

"They didn't leave out a detail of your scenario, did they?" she murmured.

Once again, he reached for the remaining buttons of his breeches.

"I'll leave you to it," she said, fumbling for the door latch at her back.

His hands paused. "Afraid, Priss?"

She swallowed, her heart thumping, but she shook her head.

He pushed down his breeches and then straightened.

Her gaze dipped. "Now I know they goofed. Seven inches will never do." Her disappointment must have shown on her face.

"For fuck's sake!" His hands went to his hips, red spots of color on his cheeks.

Priscilla realized he was embarrassed. How intriguing! He responded to emotional stimuli. "They did promise lifelike," she murmured. "I was just hoping for something more than...lifelike."

"It's proportional with me size!" he gritted out. "What sort of men have you been shagging?"

"If you were just any man," she said, hoping to stem his dismay, "I'd be giddy with delight—it's just I had certain...expectations."

"He'll be more than adequate," he growled, stepping the rest of the way out of his clothing. He kicked them away and stomped toward her.

Her heart skittered with alarm. “Well like I said, the towels are behind you.” She reached for the door behind her.

He shook his head.

“Yes, they are.”

“I’m not talking about the bloody towels. You’re not leaving,” he said, determination stamped in the set of his bearded chin.

“We’ve been over this already, I’m not joining you.”

“Yes, you are.” He strode straight for her and Priscilla stood stock-still, shock and delight fluttering in her chest. Why run when this was precisely what she wanted?

His hands closed over her waist and he lifted her, carrying her into the shower, underwear and all.

Water sluiced over her head, and she closed her eyes as his large hands smoothed over the lacy cups of her bra, grateful for an excuse to avoid his gaze. She hated that he knew how much she wanted this.

He shaped her breasts, squeezing, kneading, and then he flicked open the catch in front. Her flesh spilled eagerly into his hands, and her breath caught on a gasp as his rough palms chafed her nipples.

She swiped the water from her face and stared down to where his darker hands cupped her white breasts. Then she noted the prod of his cock against her belly. His only slightly-larger-than-life-size penis was bronze along the shaft, with a blue tracery of veins that amazed her with their authenticity. Every detail of his appearance, down to the hair surrounding his groin and sprouting on his balls, had been seen to. At least they’d gotten that much just right.

He was so real she had the odd urge to take him in her mouth. What would his AI programming make of that?

No sooner had that thought crossed her mind than she decided to see how effectively the interactive components of his software incorporated physical stimuli. "Let me wash your hair." That was as far as her raw nerves would allow her to venture.

His gaze rose from her chest and darkened. His face was ruddy, taut. His nostrils flared like an animal scenting a meal. "Don't you want to remove the rest of your clothes, first?"

She'd forgotten about her thigh-high stockings and panties. She gulped and nodded.

His hands left her breasts and smoothed around her back and downward, sliding beneath her panties to cup her buttocks and squeeze before pushing them down her legs. He knelt to slip them off her feet, which brought his face level with her belly. "Priss, you're naked here!" he said, gliding the tip of his finger over her pussy. "You're full of surprises, love."

Priscilla's breath caught, and a trembling anticipation accelerated her heart and respirations until she felt the prickling darkness of a nearing faint.

His hand flattened on her shivering belly cupping the gentle swell, and his gaze met hers for a moment. Challenge mixed with the molten promise in his eyes.

Priscilla could only stare, and then she licked her mouth nervously.

He must have interpreted her action as consent for he shook his head like a dog's beneath the spray and lowered his face to nose between the folds of her sex. His hands trailed down the front of her thighs rolling the tops of her stockings down her legs and off her feet – and still he nuzzled her pussy with his face.

Then she was naked, her skin drenched with water, her vagina oozing her own refreshment. He groaned and lapped at her petals to capture her excitement with his tongue.

Priscilla's hands fluttered against the tiles, her breasts, and finally his shoulders, stabbing her nails into the ridged muscles. He continued to lap at her folds. She tried to direct him higher to her clitoris with the soft pulsing of her hips. "Please," she sighed.

He grunted and pushed her back against the tiled wall, and then encouraged her to lift one leg and drape her thigh over his shoulder, opening her wider. She anchored herself, her hands clutching his hair as the strokes of his tongue lengthened, deepened – and occasionally stabbed inside her. Still he ignored her engorged, aching clit.

She sank her fingernails into his scalp and tugged on his hair. “Please!” When he didn’t accede to her demand, she wrapped her fingers around his ears and pulled. “Higher!”

His shoulders shook. He was laughing, but she didn’t care. She only cared that the leg supporting her weight trembled, and her womb tightened with each foray of his tongue.

His fingers spread the folds at the top of her cunt and pulled them upward, exposing her clit at last to air and water – and his dark gaze.

Priscilla held her breath as he leaned forward and his lips closed around the hard knot of nerves that leapt and shot pulses of excitement to her core, tightening her belly, pushing her closer to release.

“Please...Declan.” She remembered his name when all other awareness had narrowed to the suctioning of his mouth as he worked her clit, flickering his tongue against it, sucking on it with his lips.

She squirmed and gasped and moaned, her voice rising as the tremors started in her belly and radiated outward, until suddenly, she was flung beyond herself.

When the darkness receded, she opened her eyes and stared down at him.

“Now you can wash my hair.”

She was knuckle-deep in suds before she realized he had commanded her to do it. She should be infuriated and scold him to discourage such behavior, but her body still tingled delightfully.

Later, she'd tell him he must be more respectful of her. Remind him she was the one in charge.

For now, she enjoyed his low moan as she massaged his scalp with her fingers. His hair was longer than any man's she'd ever dated, and she worked the strands with shampoo and rubbed them on her breasts. How would his hair feel when it was dry and followed the movement of his head down her body, to brush her belly and thighs?

"I believe my hair is clean, love," he murmured. "How about scrubbing me back now?"

Her eyes flew open, and she realized she'd pulled his head to her abdomen and was rubbing against it.

He stood and her gaze trailed down the broad shoulders and taut waist to the hard, rounded muscles of his ass. Her fingers itched to test their firmness and see just how real he felt.

She reached into the soap decanter and waited for the injection of foam, then began her journey at his shoulders.

"Am I too high for you?" he asked, looking over his shoulder. "I'll kneel."

"N-no." He was just the right height. Her arms stretched and she cupped his shoulders, measuring his breadth.

Priscilla rubbed the foam in circles across and down his thickly muscled arms. Then he lifted them high and she reached around to comb her fingers through the tufts of hair beneath his arms—an amazingly intimate act that tightened her nipples to pebble-hard points. She didn't dare linger or she'd be tempted to press the tips to his back and rub like a cat. There were more features to explore first.

Instead, she washed down his sides, enjoying his satiny skin and the ropey ridges of muscle beneath the surface. Down the center of his back, she squeezed and circled, moving lower while noting the tension that built in his shoulders and buttocks. She wondered how the apparatus between his legs was responding to her "stimuli". But first things first...

She reached for another squirt of foam and slid her hands over his ass. Priscilla caressed his flanks, then circled inward, enjoying the involuntary flex of his buttocks.

He groaned and his hands braced his weight on the tiles at the far side of the stall, his legs shifting apart.

For the first time since he'd stepped out of her kitchen, Priscilla felt totally in control and reveled in the feeling. Encouraged by his acquiescence, she glided her hands along the seam between his buttocks and lower, reaching between his legs to cup his balls.

Chapter Four

“Witch!” Declan released all his breath in a hiss as her soapy hands enveloped his sac. *Sweet Jesus!* It had been forever since anything felt that wonderful. He widened his stance to give her greater access, his head dipping low as his body tightened. “Keep that up, Priss, and I’ll spend myself against the wall.”

“You like that?” she asked, her voice husky.

He groaned. “What man wouldn’t?”

“What man? Hmm.” One of her small hands left his balls and circled and squeezed a cheek, and then traced a path along the crease of his ass, a fingernail scraping the cleft. “Like this too?”

The minx was nearing dangerous, forbidden territory. “Be careful now,” he warned.

She laughed, a low sultry sound that sent shivers down his spine. “Maybe I want to watch your...hardware in action.”

A grin tugged at his mouth. “My *hardware* is tempered steel. Care to test the edge of me blade?”

“Perhaps I want to explore that forbidden territory. I’d love a taste of adventure, smuggler.” Her nail grazed his anus.

His body shuddered and he lost the trail of their banter. “Enough!”

“Turn around,” she whispered.

Dragging air into his lungs, he pushed off the slate-gray tiles and turned. He found her kneeling in front of him, her skin suffused with a bloom of color that painted her cheeks, her neck, and the tops of her small, round breasts. The tips of her nipples had blossomed to a full, red rose.

Her hands were cupped around a cloud of foamy suds, and as he watched she lifted them to encircle his cock, sliding the soap along his length.

Without a spoken invitation, his hips rocked forward, sliding between her palms and his eyes drifted shut. All thought and sensation narrowed to the soft, steady rain from the shower that filled his lungs with moist heat and the glide and caress of her hands.

Her nimble fingers slid upward to the crown, thumbs circling his swollen flesh. They squeezed and twisted down and then up the shaft again. Gradually, her caresses grew firmer, faster, wringing moans from deep inside his chest.

His hips followed her rhythm, stroking, jerking, and finally he pulled away. "Enough!" he repeated, opening his eyes.

Priscilla's mouth was open, her face flushed—her eyes heavy-lidded with passion. Her hair was a dark cap, sleek as a seal's pelt. Water ran in rivulets down her face, curving down her chin and neck to drip from the tight points of her breasts.

Breasts he was suddenly ravenous to taste. He leaned down and hooked his hands beneath her arms and hauled her up, taking two steps to press her back to the wall, her feet dangling inches above the ground. With a low growl rumbling from his chest, he buried his face against the pillows of her breasts and rubbed his bearded cheeks, his lips, and his nose against the distended buttons.

Her legs rose, one at a time, to circle his waist, drawing his groin into the cradle of her thighs.

He rolled his hips to grind his cock against her mons while his teeth closed around one firm bud.

"Ah!" Her hands gripped his hair, pulling his face tighter to her breast. "Harder!"

He nibbled and chewed, gently torturing the tip, gauging her enjoyment by the wriggling of her ass.

"Come inside me!" she commanded.

He let go of the bud and looked into her face. “When *I’m* ready. Not a moment sooner.”

“Bastard!” Her hands tugged his face to her other breast.

Because he was ready to feast there, he followed her *suggestion*. He opened his mouth wide and sucked as much of her breast inside as he could, his tongue laving her nipple. His hands trailed down her sides and he grasped her ass in a hard grip to raise and lower her while he rubbed his cock along the furrow of her sex.

Her breath caught on a whimper. “Please!”

Because he’d die if he waited a moment longer—not because she begged—he prodded between her legs, searching for her opening.

With an eagerness that satisfied the marauder inside him, she circled her hips, coaxing him toward the center of her pussy.

When he felt the hot, moist center of her press against the crown of his own sex, he drove forward, burying himself inside her in a single, deep stroke. The walls of her vagina closed around him like a wet, velvet glove, caressing his shaft with the roll and grasp of her inner muscles.

Heaven for the moment was her tight, hot channel.

Their gazes locked. Declan took several deep breaths, girding himself for the storm. “Ready, Priss?”

She nodded, and her fingers dug into his shoulders.

His hands lifted her at the same time he flexed his buttocks backward, pulling almost all the way out.

Her teeth bit into her lower lip and she whimpered again, a small mewling sound—so feminine, the male in him wanted to roar.

With a groan, he pulled her down, while his cock thrust into her again—his hands and hips working in opposition. Leaning forward, he took her mouth, his tongue sliding past her lips. He’d swallow her cries while he plundered her sweet pussy.

With water washing over them, Declan pounded into her body, a stroke away from exploding, but he fought the need to surrender. Too many months had passed since he'd buried himself inside a woman he hadn't purchased for a night of pleasure. Whatever her motives for this weekend of lust, Priscilla's cries weren't practiced or calculated to increase his fervor.

No, the truth of her desire was in the gouges she pressed into his shoulders, the cries squeezed from the back of her throat, and the trembling of her belly as she climbed toward her climax.

Nearing the end of the storm, Declan dragged his mouth from hers and stared into her half-closed eyes. "Come for me, baby."

"I'm there. Almost there." Her eyes squinched tight, and she gasped and tightened her legs around his waist. Her breath caught on an inward gasp. "Now! It's happening now!"

Declan gritted his teeth and slammed his hips into hers, hard as he could, pushing the breath from her body in gusts.

"Yes! Yes!" she chanted, and then her voice broke on a cry.

Declan felt the convulsion of her orgasm pulsing around his cock, clutching him in rolling waves. "Yes, baby. Now!" He slammed into her and exploded, his thighs, balls, and cock tightening, spewing a stream of hot cum deep inside her body.

He rocked, letting her pulsing cunt wring every last drop of passion from his body.

She writhed on his staff, her moans growing thin and breathless, until she collapsed against his chest.

Finally spent, he shuddered, but kept himself pressed as far as he could reach inside her. Reluctant to break the connection, he continued to rock until well past the last shivering pulse of her hot sheath.

Priscilla's fingers raked lightly down his back. Her kisses, light and fluttery, touched his lips and chin.

He smiled at her uninhibited show of affection and turned to catch the next with an open-mouthed kiss of his own. He ate her lips, sucked her tongue, and finally drew away to gaze into her face.

Her eyes held a dazed look. Her lips were slack and swollen. The sight was deeply satisfying. However, the skin around her mouth and chin was an angry red. "The beard will have to go, love. You're chafed."

"Hmmm," she moaned, a dreamy smile on her face. "I've never heard it put quite that way."

"Your face, love," he said, suppressing a grin. "You've a whisker burn."

Her eyes rounded. "Oh!" She touched her cheeks gingerly and winced. "Definitely has to go!" Her ever-present scowl returned with a vengeance. "You'd think with all their market research Playthings would know better."

Declan sighed, sorry to withdraw his cock from the hot sleeve of her cunt. Then he remembered her earlier insults and hesitated before pulling out. "Tell me I wasn't enough to satisfy you."

She shoved at his chest, and then huffed when he refused to relinquish his hold. "Do you ever ask questions? Or are you programmed for commands?"

"Programmed? You are an odd duck. I'm just how I am. Captain of my own vessel. I don't make requests." He squeezed her buttocks. "Answer my question."

She arched an eyebrow. "Couldn't you tell?"

"I'm just a man, love. Not a mind reader." He lowered his eyebrows and growled, "You had certain...*expectations*, or so you told me before."

A blush suffused her face. "I wasn't disappointed," she said, her tone sharpening.

He grunted. He'd wanted lavish praise and found her comment stingy to say the least. Oddly, he felt motivated now to blow wind up her skirt – after he'd recovered, of course. "Just so you know where I stand. I'll allow no more insults to my abused cock."

A tight, determined smile crimped the corners of her lips, and she squeezed her inner muscles. "This is abuse?"

His mast appreciated her calisthenics and lengthened its sail. He pumped his cock twice, shallow explorations only. He looked at her reddened skin, then sighed and pulled out. "The beard, then I'll love you properly. Have you a razor?"

Both slim eyebrows rose. "Razor? What century are you from? No one I know uses a razor."

"I enjoy the scrape of a blade on my face."

"Well, I don't own one," she said, her chin lifting. "But I have something else. It's better – less barbaric."

"Get it," he said, his words clipped.

He held her while she unwrapped her legs and dropped to the floor of the stall. Shoving away from his chest, she reached into a recessed shelf and pulled out a small silver pot. With a twist, she opened it and swirled her fingers inside. She narrowed her eyes and reached for his face, a daub of pink cream on her fingertips.

His eyes narrowed with suspicion. He caught her hand, pulled her fingers to his nose, and sniffed. "It smells like flowers!"

Priscilla rolled her eyes. "It's a depilatory."

"I don't care what it is. I won't smell like a bloody rose garden."

"Don't be silly. It washes away."

"Just give me a razor or a sharp blade. I'll take care of my beard my own way."

"Well, I don't have either." She tilted her head to the side and gave him a wary glance. "Or do you have another reason you shouldn't remove your beard?"

Hands on his hips, he leaned toward her, attempting to intimidate her with his superior size. "I'm not hiding a weak chin."

She quirked one eyebrow. "Acne, then?"

"No!"

“A birthmark?”

He frowned, narrowed his eyes into a smoldering look that had sent many of his crew slinking away.

Her expression grew thoughtful. “Is it because of your, um, skin?”

“What about my skin?”

“Will it melt?”

“Does yours?” he asked, reached and smoothed his hands down her flanks. Did she think his skin was more delicate than hers?

“I was just asking.” She wrinkled her nose. “No need to get huffy. I thought there might be a *good* reason you can’t lose your beard.”

He huffed out a breath. She wasn’t going to let this go. She was one impossibly hardheaded woman. “For fucksake. Just get it over with.”

“You’re such a baby.” Her lips curved in a grin.

Declan rolled his eyes toward the ceiling. She hadn’t a clue how close he was to backing her up against the wall again.

She touched one fingertip to the side of his face. He felt a tingling warmth, and then she brushed at his cheek. Her fingers held a clump of his hair. She gripped his chin and pulled down his face, frowning as she examined him. “Looks like this won’t do you any harm.”

She slathered on more of the cream. “Now get under the water.”

He stepped toward the spray and she swept away the last of his thick beard with her hands. Then she stepped back and stared up into his face. “Oh my!” Her expression was admiring.

He raised an eyebrow. “I take it you aren’t completely repulsed?”

“Hmmm?” She continued to stare.

Although flattered his face had left her speechless, he tapped the end of her nose with his finger. “Pay attention!”

Her gaze dropped to his chest and a wicked little smile stretched her lips.

He raised her chin and glowered into her face. "Oh no you don't! The chest hair stays."

"Why?" she asked, her face suspiciously guileless. "Body hair isn't very hygienic. It traps things."

"Things? Are you saying my hair is harboring creatures? Do you think I have lice?"

"Not creatures – sweat, odors."

"I smell like a man. Real men have body hair."

"Every man I know denudes his body."

"Then they're bloody poofs!" His glance dropped to the juncture of her thighs. "Is this obsession you have with hair why your pussy's naked?"

"Of course." She closed her thighs and shifted, trying to hide her pink nether lips from his gaze. "What did you think?"

"That you're underdeveloped – to go along with your wee size."

Her scowl darkened her face. "Oooh! Not everyone, or everything, is built along your proportions."

"Exactly! I'm glad you finally acknowledge my superior proportions!" He smiled and slid open the door, stepping out of the stall and onto the silvery marble floor, unmindful of the trail of water he left behind him.

"Aaa – gnes!"

He winced at the shrill pitch of her voice as the echo crashed around the shower stall. She stood too close not to have damaged his eardrums. The next galaxy wouldn't be far enough to save an injury from her squawks. "Must you screech?" he asked, throwing her a glare.

"Yes! She'll only pretend she didn't hear me." Her mouth opened wide.

He held his hands to his ears.

“Aaa— gnes!” she yelled. “She can be so aggravating. I don’t know why I don’t erase a program or two!”

“The help runs away from you? Doesn’t that tell you something?”

He regretted the quip instantly when her expression froze and her eyes teared. Women’s tears always filled him with dread.

Declan grabbed a towel and rubbed his face and hair, and then knotted it around his waist. A quick glance at the floor and he discovered his clothes were gone. “Where are my bloody clothes?”

Priscilla sniffed and straightened her shoulders. “The valet took them for cleaning.”

“Valet?” He’d known this subdivision harbored well-heeled residents, but he hadn’t judged her smallish house quite so wealthy.

She gave an imperious wave of her hand. “It’s a drone really. Hardly any intelligence at all. Not like my Agnes.” She walked to the cupboard and pulled two large towels from inside. One she placed on the countertop, the other she held in front of her to daub at her moist skin.

He didn’t care for the tone in which she described her help. Even the lowliest skivvy aboard his ship was treated with more respect. He crossed his arms over his chest. “I bloody well want me clothes back.”

Her chin jutted. “So do I. You need something to wear when you leave.”

“Are we back to that again, then?” Secretly, he was glad her temper had returned in spades. The trace of earlier dejection had left him feeling uneasy – and mean.

“Damn straight! I’m demanding a trade-in.”

“After you made me lose my beard? That’s heartless.” He stepped toward her. “Perhaps you need a little reminder of where we left off.”

She sidled away, clutching her towel to her chest. “That’s precisely why you won’t do. You’re too bossy.”

He didn’t even try to suppress his grin.

"Aaa – gnes!"

"Yes, boss?" Agnes said, gasping.

"Where have you been?" Priscilla cast an exasperated glance at the ceiling. "You sound out of breath."

"Tonio was showing me his new disk pack."

"Likely story," she muttered. "Get Playthings back on the line. I want a trade." She used the edge of her towel to dry the parts of her body she could reach while she carefully turned to keep his gaze off her bare flesh.

"No can do, boss."

She straightened. "What did you just say?"

"I'm just following your order, dated March 10th, 10:30 a.m.: 'Under no circumstances—even if I beg you—unless it's life or death—am I to permit communications with the outside'."

"That was *incoming* calls."

"Oh. Well, I still can't." Agnes made a sound as though she were clearing her throat.

Declan figured she was about to choke on another lie.

"You're a hostage."

"A hostage?" Priscilla blinked.

Declan stiffened. Agnes was a wily old bat who might just land him in the penitentiary for a century.

"Uh...part of his role is to keep you captive in this house all weekend long. No outside communications."

"He's going to keep me hostage?" Priscilla snorted. "Like he could stop me from leaving, if I really —" Her mouth clamped shut and her face flamed.

Declan felt like crowing. "If you really wanted to? Isn't that what you were going to say?" He knew his grin was triumphant – gloating even. He should really feel ashamed

of himself for how much enjoyment her uneasy attraction gave him. But there it was—this high-flying, blue-suited exec, whose throwaway income could keep his ship afloat for a year—wanted *him*—a scalawag, a smuggler!

A sly expression crossed Priscilla's face, and she tilted back her head, "Agnes, what if I change my mind about taking him out this weekend?"

"It's too late to change the scenario now. He'll have to stop you, not violently of course, but he will keep you indoors. *By any means necessary.*"

Declan got the heavy-handed hint.

Priscilla's expression grew alert and her eyes narrowed with curiosity.

Declan would bet credit the minx was intrigued by the "by any means necessary"! He flexed the muscles of his chest to remind her of his might.

Her gaze followed the ripples. "Your caveman tactics won't deter me if I decide to make a run for it."

"Precious Priss" wanted to play a nasty little game. This could be fun! "Try me, sweetheart," he said, pitching his voice low.

She canted her face and studied his expression. The way her teeth worried the edge of her lip told him she was tempted.

He kept his lurid thoughts hidden and stared back, hoping he wore a bland expression.

But her gaze slipped away and she toyed with the edge of her towel. "Maybe later," she said, her voice small. "Um, I should find us something to wear."

He felt a moment's disappointment that she might never have the nerve to challenge him to a rougher game. "What for?"

She already thought he was a barbarian. Maybe all she needed was another nudge toward anger to make her go for it. He braced his legs apart to pull her attention back to the part of him that bothered her most.

Her gaze flitted over his sex. "Well, we can't just walk around naked all evening."

“Why not?” He took a step toward her.

She backed up to the door. “I’m hungry! I haven’t had dinner yet. I’ll place an order with the cook.”

“You have a cook, too?” That set him back. He was really losing his touch—he’d managed to miss three retainers when he’d cased the house. “Is he hiding out with Agnes?”

Her lips curved into a smile. “You really don’t know, do you?”

“Know what?” he asked, hating the feeling that he’d missed an important clue somewhere along the line.

“My *help* are automated.”

“As in wired into the latest household technology?” he asked, suspicions raising his hackles.

“No. As in, they’re computers,” she said with a grin.

“Computers?” Relief that he hadn’t badly botched his search was quickly followed by anger. “Bloody hell! *Aa – gnes?*”

She grinned. “Now you’re starting to sound like me.”

“Bloody, goddamned hell! You mean to tell me that witch of a personal assistant is a goddamn computer?”

“I’m an AI computer, buddy,” Agnes interrupted, her voice filled with laughter. “State of the art. More real brain cells than you have in your Cro-Magnon cranium.”

Declan felt his face heat. “And the cowboy?” he shouted to the ceiling.

“What cowboy?” Priscilla asked.

“The one who greeted me when I arrived,” he growled. *The one who threatened to drop me where I stood, then inspected me ballocks!* “You conniving little—”

“I have a facility for accents and voices,” Agnes replied in a smug tone.

“So that wasn’t Tonio?” he replied through clenched teeth.

“Nope. Just little ole me, *pardner.*”

Declan bit back a curse. The mother of all motherboards had bested him!

Chapter Five

“What was with the Wyatt Earp routine, anyway?” Declan asked, feeling anger rise with bile at the back of his throat.

“Agnes is fascinated with old movies,” Priscilla said.

“What the hell are movies?”

“Plays that were recorded in two-dimensional formats. She has a thing for John Wayne.”

Declan shook his head. It was too much to take in. He’d been arguing with a computer like it was a person—as if it had the true intelligence and the emotions to really matter.

Agnes was simply acting on her programming—however questionable that program was. “She’s nothing more than a bloody computer!” Declan roared.

“I’m not just any computer, boyo,” Agnes said, her words clipped and angry. “I’ll have you know, I’m an AlphaMax II. I can run a city with a tenth of my capacity.”

“If you’re so high-tech, what the hell are you doing running a house for a spoiled princess?”

Declan knew he’d gone too far when a small bony fist plowed into his belly. He caught the next blow, wrapping his hand around Priscilla’s balled fist. Stepping between her legs, he pressed her back against the bathroom door. Her glower was so hot she could have welded steel.

He hadn’t meant to say that last bit aloud, and he wasn’t usually so quick to speak in anger. But this had been a confusing, aggravating sort of day. He opened his mouth to apologize, but Priscilla’s frown reminded him “Princess Priss” hadn’t been an innocent victim. Her assistant had dished out that plate of venom for her boss’s benefit.

He stared down at Priscilla, wondering how long he could keep her pinned to the door. The damp towel separating their skin wasn't enough to hide the evidence of his awakening desire.

Her eyes widened and her legs trembled along his thighs. "She was a gift to me from my parents. They wanted me looked after." Her face was pale and pinched. She lifted her chin, her lips pressed into a straight line.

"And she's succeeded beyond their dreams, hasn't she?" Declan wished he'd bitten his tongue. He didn't know why one vulnerable, yet defiant, look from her spurred a need to deal an emotional blow.

Her gaze held a world of hurt. "Why did Playthings send me a bastard, Agnes?"

Declan felt lower than snail spit. He sighed and stood back. The time was now to come clean with the lass. "You gave her me, didn't you, Agnes? I was your choice. Tell her."

"What?" Priscilla's hand clutched the top of her towel in a white-knuckle grip. "You weren't generated by some personality-matching program?"

Declan shook his head. The woman had the oddest way of putting things.

"To my shame," Agnes said, her voice sounding tired, "it's true."

Declan waited, sure the doors would burst open any moment now with Customs agents ready to haul him away. He'd broken the agreement. He felt lighter—he hadn't realized the game had started to weigh on his conscience.

"Agnes, he's not a result of my profile?" Priscilla's tone sharpened.

"No boss. I thought you needed a little shaking up."

"Thank God!" Priss gave an exaggerated sigh of relief. "I thought I had some deep-seated psychosis that Playthings was trying to entertain." She glared at Declan. "I knew you couldn't be meant for me."

Declan waited for Agnes to tell the rest of the story, but Priscilla had only gotten her first wind. "Looks like you screwed up, Agnes," she said, shaking her head. "I can't

recall you ever making a mistake. You've annoyed the hell out of me at times, but you've never erred."

"Boss, I was just so doggone desperate."

Doggone desperate? Declan rolled his eyes. He wondered which movie she'd purloined those lines from. Agnes was still playing the game—she'd just changed the script.

"I haven't had an adventure in five years. I thought if I could get you out of your routine, you might decide to step outside this house and take me along."

Priscilla's jaw dropped. "Are you telling me you needed a vacation?"

"I'm not just wire and plastic, you know. I'm living cells, too," she replied. Drama queen that she was, he could almost see her lifting a palm to her forehead. "I need a change of scenery every once in a while to keep my sensors stimulated."

"What's the matter?" Declan asked, a sneer in his voice. "Is Priss here not enough of a challenge?"

"Priss, hon," Agnes said, "you're a good egg, but face it, your life's boring. Apart from the occasional appliance malfunction, I'm sitting on my thumbs for entertainment."

"I never realized," Priscilla said, dismay in her voice. "Why didn't you say something?"

Declan watched Priss's expressions, fascinated. Agnes had turned the blame for this farce on Priscilla. And her boss was eating it up.

"It's not my place," Agnes said, her tone long-suffering.

Priss's chin lowered and her shoulders dropped.

He'd had enough of Agnes's machinations. "You stretched the limitations of your employment a bit feeding me to her, didn't you, Agnes?"

"It was a calculated risk."

"But your ones and zeroes aren't adding up now, are they?"

"The program hasn't compiled yet." Agnes sniffed. "I'm waiting to see the result of the run before I cry uncle."

Computer or not—she was a worthy opponent. He narrowed his eyes. "A little touchy for a computer, aren't you?"

"A little dense for a *Plaything*, aren't you?"

"Bite me!" He smirked when she failed to respond. "Ha!"

"I managed to fool you, didn't I?"

"Witch!"

"Well, this is interesting," Priscilla murmured.

He caught himself before he uttered another moronic word. Agnes and her demented circuitry had managed to bluff *him*—Declan O'Hanlon! He was just glad none of his crew was around to witness his humiliation. It was bad enough Red's mouth was twisted in a grin.

Declan reached for the top of Priscilla's towel and whipped it from her body. Ignoring her gasp, he rubbed the towel over his chest and down his stomach to his groin.

Her gaze followed, and then her lips tightened. She turned to grab the other towel from the countertop, giving him a delicious view of her naked ass, and then wrapped it around her body.

He turned his back and quickly blotted his hair with the towel. "The sooner I'm out of this loony bin, the better," he muttered, dropping the towel to the floor.

"What do you say, boss? You want to send him back?" Agnes asked.

"You're not sending me anywhere," Declan growled. "I'm going."

"Not so fast, smuggler. Remember your crew and ship?"

Declan raised his head. Was Agnes coming clean? He glanced at Priscilla.

She shrugged, her expression indifferent. "If he wants to go, let him."

Declan pretended her indifference didn't bother him a bit. And it didn't! He leaned toward the mirror and examined his newly beardless face. He was a very handsome fellow. Plenty of women would be happy to have a man like him at their disposal for a weekend.

"And what do you think will happen to him then?" Agnes asked.

Priscilla's brows drew together. "He'll go on to the next customer. Just a few hours early."

"As he is?"

"Oh. No, I suppose not." She chewed the edge of her lip. "*Do you think he knows?*" she whispered.

Declan's instincts told him that once again there was an undercurrent of conversation he didn't understand. "Knows what?"

Priscilla shrugged, but this time worry marred her forehead. "What happens after...you go back."

Declan stared. Something told him she suspected his fate wouldn't be pleasant. Was she in on the blackmail scheme, too? "Agnes? We had a deal."

"Yes, we did. But you've broken it."

"What about my crew?"

"After you leave here, all bets are off. Best make a quick getaway, or you'll be joining them."

"Agnes, I'm confused," Priscilla said. "Are we talking about the same thing?"

"Of course not. *He's in his role.*" Agnes whispered the last.

"Oh!" Her eyes widened. "So what is this about his crew and ship?"

"If you must know, if he pleases you this weekend, they'll be free—*they're in the hoosegow.*"

Agnes was diabolical. He had no doubt she'd somehow fed Priscilla an alternate tall tale. She was masterfully manipulating them both!

“So, he’s being blackmailed to...entertain me?”

“Yup.”

“I don’t know whether to be flattered or horrified.” Priscilla’s expression grew crafty. “Does that mean he has to do what I say?”

Declan grunted.

“Not at all, sweetcakes. He has to do what *I* say.”

“How’s that any different? You serve me.”

“I look after your interests, hon. I know what you *need*. Remember, I’m intimately aware of your profile.”

Priscilla gave a frustrated sigh. “I’m getting a headache.”

“Now you know how I feel,” Declan muttered under his breath.

“Bet he knows a cure,” Agnes said slyly.

“Aaa—gnes! I’m an adult. I think my wishes should be obeyed. I pay the power bills around here.”

“But I know what’s best for you.”

Priscilla waved a hand in his direction. “You thought *he* was what was best for me.”

“I didn’t hear more than a whimper out of you when he was doing my bidding in the shower. Actually, I did hear more than a whimper. There were quite a few sighs and one outright scream, too.”

Declan nodded, his cock twitching at the memory.

“And lover boy wasn’t exactly quiet, either!”

“That’s low.” Priscilla scowled and tucked the end of her towel between her breasts, securing it.

Declan followed the action. He much preferred her without the shield. Although the tops of her breasts were plumped up deliciously. “Let me get this straight, Agnes. Are you saying we still have a deal, if I stay?”

“We do.”

“Yoo-hoo,” Priscilla interrupted. “What about me? I say he goes.”

“That’s not what you really want, sweetie.”

Declan made up his mind the moment Priss’s eyes narrowed with determination. “You’re on, Agnes. Now, butt out!”

“You’re not getting all macho on me, are you smuggler?” Agnes asked.

“I’m just following the script.” He advanced on Priscilla. “Lose the towel, sweetheart.”

“Agnes?” A touch of trepidation made her voice sound small, but her eyes betrayed a widening excitement.

“It’s for your own good. Go with it, babe.”

Priscilla backed up toward the door, her gaze never leaving Declan. “I wasn’t kidding about pulling your power grid, Agnes.”

“Agnes,” Declan said, his voice mild. “I don’t perform well with an audience.”

“You got it! Tonio’s calling me. We still have to review the compression utilities of his hard drive. I may be a while.”

“Agnes? Don’t you dare leave me,” Priscilla said, alarm rounding her eyes.

The ensuing silence was deeply gratifying. Now, he had Priscilla to himself—and every pink and creamy inch of hers to do with as he pleased. Blood surged from all points straight to his cock. It surged upward, pointing in Priscilla’s direction. For once, he was more than happy to be led.

Declan gave her a rapacious grin and stepped toward her.

“Ack!” Priscilla lunged for the door and swung it open, letting it crash against the wall. “You stay away from me!” she shouted over her shoulder as she ran into the bedroom.

He followed her through the door. Grabbing the edge of her towel, he jerked his arm back, stripping her. Then he darted toward the door to the hallway to head off her only escape route.

Wild-eyed, like a doe trapped in a pen, Priscilla backed away from him, deeper into her bedroom—closer to the bed.

Once he was sure she didn't have an exit, he calmly folded his arms across his chest. "You heard Agnes. I haven't any choice in the matter. I'm to have me wicked way with you—however I please."

"That's not what she said." Her voice quavered, but her chin was raised high.

"But it's what I heard." His gaze swept her from head to toe, lingering over the places he intended to pillage.

Her chest rose and fell more swiftly now. "You can't catch me," she said, sounding breathless.

"You think not?" He lowered his voice to a rumble. "Try me, sweetheart."

She blinked, then turned on her heel and fled to the far side of the room, her buttocks jiggling enticingly as she scurried away.

Declan stalked toward her, keeping his expression menacing. "Prickly Priss" appeared to like a darker sort of game.

She whimpered and stepped behind an odd apparatus, keeping it between them.

He barely spared it a glance as he stomped toward her, then his gaze returned to it. "What the hell is this?" His hand reached out to the leather saddle perched on the end of a waist-high pole. The two steps at the base and the stirrups that hung from the sides of the saddle indicated it was meant to be mounted. Gliding his hand along the polished leather, his fingers found a rounded protuberance at the center.

"Tsk, tsk. *Priscilla!*" He gave her a wicked grin. "Is this what I think it is?"

Priscilla's cheeks flushed scarlet. "It's an exercise machine. I work out on it."

“I bet you keep your pussy well-oiled with your *workouts*.” Her expression darkened with outrage and he laughed. “I don’t think you’ll need this, love. Not this weekend, anyway. Although, I might like to watch you *ride*.”

“Jerk!” She shoved the apparatus at him and darted away.

He held out a hand to keep it from toppling, and then chased after her. She was nearly at the door before he caught her by the arm and swung her around.

She gasped and pounded at his chest.

Ignoring her puny blows, he hefted her high, his arms encircling her thighs, just below her buttocks.

Her hands curved around his skull and she tugged hard on his hair, while kicking at his knees.

His face was smashed against her belly and his cock lodged between her knees. Her squirming was only heightening his arousal. Slowly, he let her slide down his body, pausing when her breasts were level with his mouth to give each a nip.

“Oooh!” She smacked him on the shoulders, but her hips writhed and she clasped her thighs around his shaft.

If she really didn’t want this, she could do him harm. Instead, she let his cock slide along her inner thigh as he lowered her further, until he was wedged lengthwise between her labia. Hot, *moist* labia.

Face to face, her mouth trembled. “Please, release me.”

Declan lowered one hand to her backside and forced her hips harder into his. His sex slid along the groove of her sex. With his mouth an inch from hers, he said, “Is that what you really want, love?” He drew his hips back and ground them forward again. *Please say no!*

Her eyelids fluttered and she moaned. Her hands clutched and pushed as though she still fought her desire. “Please...”

"I aim to do just that. But first, you have to tell me. Be specific." He ground in and out, twisting his hips to increase the friction.

Her hands gripped the tops of his shoulders, and she leaned back so that only the tips of her breasts touched his chest. "Please! I need..."

But she wasn't trying to escape.

She slid side to side, raking the turgid points across his skin and tangling them in his chest hair. Her face tightened and her lips lifted as she hissed, "Soooo good."

"Tell me," he commanded, fighting the need to nudge her legs apart and sink inside her dripping cunt. He glided his cock between her legs, nudging again, his legs shaking as he fought himself for control.

Her face screwed into a look of intense pleasure. "Please Declan...*fuck me.*"

With a growl, he captured her lips, sucking the lower between his teeth to nibble while he glided in and out between her legs, rubbing against her cunt. He wanted more. He needed her to beg, to acknowledge she needed this as much as he did.

Then he closed his lips over hers and pushed his tongue between her teeth, rimming her mouth, gliding along her tongue. When at last he needed air, he raised his head.

"Please, please, *please!*" she chanted, her hands gripping his hair, her mouth sliding along his jaw.

He pressed a kiss to her shoulder. "I'll have a bed beneath your back this time for the pounding I intend to give you."

Priscilla leaned her head back and licked her lips. "Sounds...violent." She was breathless and her heart hammered against his chest. She was ready.

"It will be," he purred. "Eventually."

Walking to the bed, he crawled onto the mattress, bringing her body with him to the center. He'd intended a slow pillaging, but the urgency in his groin had him roughly pushing open her legs, until there was space for him between. Then he hooked

his arms beneath her knees and spread them wide and high, exposing her moist, pink flesh fully to his gaze. She was lovely.

The bare outer lips framed a pussy so pink and fragrant, he knew he'd spend himself in a second if he dipped inside.

She murmured a protest and lifted her hips from the mattress. An invitation, he found hard to resist. She was so eager.

Too eager.

Priss was accustomed to having her wants accommodated, instantly. A snap of her fingers and she could order up sex toys or a paid companion for her immediate satisfaction. She didn't have to worry about the niceties—like manners or the other partner's needs. She was spoiled. Too spoiled to spare a smile or a soft word. Not that *he* needed those things, but he could only imagine the poor, brokenhearted louts she'd left in her path.

He'd be damned if he'd let her lush little body and breathy commands lead him to an easy surrender. She needed a little lesson first...in working for what she wanted...in patience.

Priscilla sighed dreamily. Now she was going to get the plundering she'd paid for—and by a smuggler! Almost like having a pirate. She'd had a thing for pirates when she was a teenager.

Raised on stories of the daring adventures of the mythical Adamarik Zingh and his crew of bloodthirsty cutthroats, Priscilla had secret fantasies as a girl of being captured and ravished by the handsome pirate.

Declan was every bit as dark as Captain Zingh was purported to be. Every bit as well-built. Perhaps, she should just look on this whole fiasco as the fulfillment of her ultimate fantasy.

He released her knees and stretched himself full length over her body. Her legs were trapped beneath his weight, and he glided his hands along her arms, then clasped her wrists and pulled them high above her forehead. She was stretched, deliciously vulnerable to his wicked whims.

“Wh—at are you doing?” she asked, wriggling beneath him, excited he was choosing this dominant role and playing into her fantasy. Her body hummed with excitement.

“I’m taking my time. Don’t you prefer a slow seduction? Most women do.”

“Slow?” she laughed, delighted and growing more aroused by the moment. “I’m primed already. Let’s get down to the good stuff now.”

“Don’t you know?” he said, his mouth hovering over hers, so close his hot breath filled her mouth. “If you give little girls what they want, they become spoiled.” His mouth settled over hers. But rather than the deep kiss she wanted, he rubbed and mouthed with the gentlest caress and then drew away.

She licked her lips, readying herself for the passionate kiss that was sure to follow. Then she realized what he’d just said. “Do you mean you aren’t going to...” Surely, he was only teasing.

“You said the word before. Don’t be shy now.”

She blushed. The word was coarse. She’d said it in the heat of passion. “Well, aren’t you supposed to pleasure me?”

“That isn’t the word I want you to use, love.”

Heat curled inside her belly, blossoming with moisture that flooded her vagina. “Well, I’m not going to say it. I was...overcome before. I’m not in the mood now.” She could play this game too. She’d give him a little resistance to keep him wondering whether she’d submit.

“I think you are.” He leaned down and nuzzled her nipple with his lips. “But I want you to work harder for what you want.”

The game was losing its glamour. He wanted full surrender. Something she'd never given a man. Her pussy pulsed with the need to clasp his cock deep inside. "What's that supposed to mean?" She waited for his head to rise.

His expression was closed. His gaze watchful. Was he really waiting for her to capitulate? To beg?

Almost at the point where she might give in to him, she said, "Do you want me to pleasure you first?"

"You aren't getting it. Not much for subtleties, are you?"

She pressed her chest upward, rubbing her nipple on the underside of his chin to tempt him. But he didn't take the hint and suck it into his mouth. "Fuck subtleties!" She scraped the engorged tip along his jaw, regretting the loss of his beard. She needed friction, movement, and clitoral stimulation—his cock inside her body. *Now!* "I go for what I want."

"That word again, but not how I wanted you to use it."

"Tough!" Her body ached for release, and he wanted to play semantics. If he wasn't going to give her what she needed, she'd play with Jake the Saddle Tramp! He never made unreasonable demands. "Look, if you're just going to play mind games with me now, you can take your little power trip with you when the door hits you on the ass." Her hips strained upward in an attempt to unseat him.

Instead, her wriggling only managed to aid his cock. The shaft was centered now between the folds of her pussy. She gasped, feeling her face contort with dismay and frustration. She hated that he could see her torment.

His head dipped to her shoulder and he rested his forehead there for a moment. Was he girding himself to pull away from temptation? Or to be swept along with the storm? Her body trembled with need.

Please, let it be the latter.

Chapter Six

Declan groaned. The shiver that racked her body was so powerful, his body tightened with the need to answer with a thrust. How he would have loved to drive straight up inside her, take his pleasure, and be done with it. But the woman needed to learn she couldn't lead a man by his ballocks.

Now, if he could just convince his ballocks...

His cock pressed into the side of her soft hip, and he took a deep breath to calm his pounding heart. Then he brought her hands together and held them clasped between one of his. He leaned to the side, keeping her legs trapped, so that her torso was free of his weight. With his free hand, he was now able to explore her flesh at his leisure.

Rising on his elbow, he stared down into her angry face. "Give me your mouth," he commanded.

Her lips tightened into a thin, mutinous line while her gaze shot daggers at him.

He sighed. She was one stubborn wench. "You want to do this the hard way?" His hand smoothed over her shoulder and lowered to one quivering breast. He circled the supple, round globe, never approaching the reddening areola.

Her skin was soft as silk beneath his fingertips, creamy-white with a tracery of thin blue lines just below the surface. The freckles splattered across her chest looked like flecks of gold strewn haphazardly by an artist intent on luring a man to see whether he could lift the flecks with his tongue. Her nipple was distended, a rosy, pouting bud shaped for a man's mouth to suckle.

He gave into temptation and administered several gentle pinches to the creamy mounds, and then leaned down to flutter his tongue on the tip of her nipple, wetting it.

Her breath caught on a ragged gasp, but she clamped her mouth shut again.

His gaze sought hers as he leaned down and blew over the tip.

“Bastard!” she moaned, her hips twisting from one side to the other. “Take it in your mouth.”

“When I’m ready.”

She writhed, nudging her hips against his cock. “Feels like you’re more than ready.”

He gritted his teeth as she nudged him again. “Say the damn word.”

“Fuck you.”

He shook his head and forced a smile. “You must have been a trial to your teachers.”

His hand glided lower, following the gentle dip and swell of her belly, lingering to scrape the few freckles decorating her skin there. He spread his fingers wide and discovered his hand nearly spanned the width between the rounded notches at the top of her hips, reminding him of her petite size. Slowly, he rimmed her shallow navel.

Her stomach quivered and jerked upward. Her head lurched off the bed. “Please!”

He ignored her entreaty and continued his downward path, skimming her lower belly until he reached the soft, nude flesh of her mons. He wondered if her pelt would be as red as the hair on her head if she let it grow.

The pale petals beckoned him to glide down the center path of moist, pink flesh, but he resisted for a moment and pinched the plump outer lips.

She cried out, her thighs struggling beneath his to open.

“Like that, love?” He slid one finger along the seam of her lips and captured the moisture gathering there. “Oh, I think you do.”

“Bastard!” she groaned.

He lifted his finger to his mouth and painted her cream on his lips. “Would you like a taste?”

“No more,” she cried, a ragged edge to her voice. “Come inside me.”

How he wanted to! "You're in no position to command me," he replied, his voice gruff with need.

Hot temper colored her cheeks and breasts and she lifted her head to glare at him. "Oooh! When this ends, I'll see you sent to the scrap heap."

"Are you making threats, now? You're hardly in any position to carry them out."

"Not threats," she said, struggling anew to free her hands and legs. "Promises!"

Well, he was man enough to answer her challenge. But first, she needed a little restraint to keep her open and vulnerable to his assault on her senses. He'd allow no escape, no respite to shore up her defenses. He was laying siege.

With his free hand, he reached for the pillow at the head of the bed and clumsily stripped away the case, and then used it to tie her wrists together. Once she realized his intent she screamed her fury, bowing her back and bucking to lift him from her body.

He grinned. "Do you think you're strong enough to stop me?" he asked, and then looped the end of the silk fabric around the post at one corner of the bed and knotted it. Now, at least her upper body was restrained.

"You son of a bitch. Untie me now!" She arched her lower body again.

He rose above her, holding himself on his arms. "Such language. Your mouth needs something else to keep it occupied."

Her eyes narrowed and she gave him an evil smile. "Bring your cock around and see what I do with my mouth."

His lips closed over hers, challenging her to strike.

Instead, she returned his kiss, stroking her tongue inside his mouth.

He lifted his head and grinned. "I'm not ready to be made a eunuch. We'll save the pleasure of your mouth around my cock for *after* you're tamed."

"Never!" she shouted. "You'll never see that day."

"I wouldn't speak so rashly, love. I'd hate your words to give you indigestion when you eat them." He scooted down her body and gave each breast a kiss. "Such sweet fruit to hang from such a spiky tree."

"Aaa – gnes!"

"She's not here, love. And she won't respond any time soon. She's sparking on Tonio. Besides, she wants you to take your medicine." He plumped a breast with his fingers and opened his lips above her nipple.

"Oh no, you don't! No fruit for you, you freak!"

He latched onto her nipple and sucked it between his teeth, drawing hard, swirling his tongue around the tight bud.

She writhed, twisting her upper torso, trying to dislodge his mouth.

So he bit, bringing her to a sudden, breathless halt.

"No more." She shuddered and her legs tensed beneath his. "No more...*more*."

He chewed gently, letting his teeth abrade her tender flesh, enjoying the low moans his torture wrung from her throat. He drew back his head, until the nipple pulled free from his teeth, and then he administered soft, wet kisses around her breast, saving deeper suctioning for her dimpled areola.

Priscilla mewled like a kitten and lifted her shoulders off the bed, pressing her breast deeper into his mouth. "The other. It aches. *Please*."

He let her breast go, but continued to massage her nipple with his chin while he gazed up at her. "Tell me what you want. Make it nasty." He brushed his lips lightly over the tip.

Her breath shuddered. "Bite me. Bite my tit. *Please*."

"Please what?" His lips tugged the hardened point and let go.

"Please. I don't know what you want," she said, twisting her hips. "Tell me what to say."

His mouth curved. Even when begging the edge of command was in her voice.
“Please, master?”

“No!” She scowled. “Please, *pirate*.”

“Pirate? You think I’m into rape and pillage?”

“Not rape – but you can pillage me, pirate.”

So that was her fantasy! Nasty girl. “Does Agnes know you’re this kinky?”

“Agnes doesn’t know everything. Bite me!” she shouted.

He twisted the nipple still wet from his mouth.

“No! The other one. It aches.”

He moved to the other side and fluttered his tongue on the neglected bud.

“Don’t tease me.” She pressed her chest upward, offering her full breast.

He didn’t bother looking up to see her expression – the ripened blossom fascinated him. “Don’t tell me what to do.”

“Please, pirate. Have mercy.”

“Mmm. I like the sound of that. Will you beg so sweetly when I bite your clit?”

“I’ll scream,” she said, her voice growing hoarse with strain. “Would you like that better?”

“As long as you don’t scream to Agnes,” he replied wryly.

She pumped her hips, an unsubtle reminder. “You’re taking too long.”

“You’re too demanding. You’re supposed to be begging.”

“I don’t beg.”

“Then what were the *pleases* for? Rescue? Do you really want me to leave you like this?” He bit the other tit, sharply, causing a strangled screech to erupt from her. He waited to see whether he’d exceeded her pleasure-pain tolerance.

“Please, don’t hurt me,” she moaned, but her hips rose, pumping against his abdomen.

“Lovely, precious Priss,” he groaned and chewed on the tip.

Declan had never had the urge to play a marauding ravisher. But Priscilla’s delight ignited a dark fire in his belly, a violent sort of lust he fought to control. He growled and tugged her nipple side-to-side before releasing it and quickly sliding lower.

He nibbled on her belly, and then suctioned the soft flesh, leaving dark love marks on her pale skin. Some powerful and wholly masculine pride took satisfaction from leaving evidence of his journey upon her skin.

His tongue tunneled into her navel and glided lower, reaching her mons. He laved the smooth lips, flirting with the pink edges of her inner lips, but not delving deeper between.

Declan kept her legs clamped shut, and his elbows settled at either side of her thighs as he teased her engorged flesh. Her lips were pink and plump, and he felt the throb from her center beneath his tongue as he probed between her thighs.

Priscilla arched her body off the bed. Her cries grew incoherent.

And still he lapped her flesh like a dog—long wet strokes that captured the cream seeping from her cunt. His own flesh strained into the mattress, and he pumped softly to ease the rock-hard ache between his thighs.

Soon! He’d have to take her soon or go mad. But first he wanted to hear her to beg him sweetly.

Priscilla was beyond thought. Beyond pride. Her whole world centered on the wicked swirl of his tongue as he lapped over her outer labia, teasing the edges of the furred inner lips. She fought his restraint to open her legs. But all her wriggling and bucking earned her nothing. He wouldn’t be deterred from her slow torture. Her nipples ached from his rough treatment and her pussy gushed with a fresh wash of arousal. She took a primal pride in the fact he licked every drop away.

Does he like the taste of my cum?

She lifted her hips again, trying to coax his tongue between her labia to her aching, engorged clitoris, still hidden beneath its hood of flesh.

“Tell me what you want, baby. Give me the words.” His command broke through the fog of passion.

Priscilla tried to ignore him, to concentrate on the aching want, but his tongue had halted its forays against her pussy. She peeked from between her heavy eyelids. The sight of his head, poised between her legs, made her gush again. “Let me open my legs wider,” she moaned. Then she remembered. “*Pirate.*”

Declan groaned and slid his tongue between her lips and upward, glancing against her clit.

Her body jerked, and she squeezed her eyes shut. “Please Declan, let me open my legs,” she begged, her voice thin and high—a sound so foreign she thought another woman must have spoken.

He kissed her mons. “I like the way you beg, and you’ve been such a good girl.” His weight shifted off her legs.

Opening her eyes, she found him crouched, his thighs spread over hers. His cock, thick and red, rode high against his belly. The crown glistened wetly.

Her glance sought his face. His features were strained and tight. His dark gaze watchful.

A primitive thrill coursed through her. She’d ignited the passion that burned in his eyes. She quickly slid her legs from between his, settling them on either side of his knees. She lifted hers to plant her heels in the mattress. Once again, she was open, vulnerable—her pussy dripping and flared wide for his taking.

“Come inside me,” she said, lifting her hips from the bed.

He grunted. “Still haven’t learned, princess.”

Realizing her mistake, she moaned. “Please, come inside me.”

Declan shook his head, then his gaze dropped to the open vee of her thighs. “Wider,” he growled.

Her legs trembled, but she shifted her feet farther apart. His hands cupped her knees and pressed them outward, stretching her further open. Her breath caught when he leaned down, bringing his face closer to her cunt. The trembling grew and she strained to hold herself still. Pride demanded she try.

Again his tongue laved her pussy. Long strokes painted her tender flesh with the cream she oozed. Strokes that built a curling tension deep inside her womb. His fingers spread her inner lips farther apart, and he nuzzled her with his nose. Then he speared his tongue inside her, swirling into the opening, then retreating.

“Deeper...*pirate*...” Her knees jerked and closed, trying to pull him closer.

With her arms stretched overhead, her view was limited now to the sight of the top of his head bent over her cunt. She felt the rasp of his tongue, and then the hardness of his fingers dipping inside her, stretching her inner walls. In and out, he pressed deeper inside each time, until her hips caught the rhythm of his motions.

She pumped upward, a shallow rise and fall, not wanting to appear too eager and fearful he’d stop if he knew how close she was.

His tongue flickered over her clitoris while his fingers tunneled deeper. Then he paused and she was stretched tighter, another finger joining the play.

Her breath came faster, harsher. She was filled with his hot, hard hand—so full her channel gripped and pulsed, squeezing around his fingers to draw him into her core.

Suddenly, he withdrew his fingers and pulled his face away. Alarmed he might leave her now, when her body hummed with her oncoming orgasm, she held her breath.

Declan sat on his haunches, his hands clutching his thighs. She knew what he waited for. She no longer had the will to resist. “Please fuck me, pirate. *Fuck me.*”

He leaned over her and she moaned, certain that now he'd drive his cock deep into her body. Instead, he reached above her head and untied the pillowcase, releasing her hands. She let them fall to the pillow, afraid to touch him uninvited lest he should decide she'd broken a "rule". Her acquiescence angered her, but her need was too strong.

"Turn over." His voice was raspy, harsh, but he moved to her side and helped her turn with his hands gripping her hips.

When she'd settled, her rear was high, and she was leaning on her elbows—once again vulnerable to his gaze, her body open to his sensual assault. Her buttocks quivered as his hands glided over her skin.

"I promised violence. I'm afraid that's what you're going to get."

She kept silent, hoping he meant what he said. Her hands fisted in the bedding as his weight shifted on the mattress. And then he was behind her, his hands pressing her buttocks apart. She trembled with anticipation.

Finally, the blunt, thick head of his cock probed her pussy. Unable to control herself, she shoved her hips back, trying to force him inside.

His hands tightened and he pushed her forward.

"I gave you the words," she said, complaint and defiance in her voice.

"I'm not refusing, sweetheart," he ground out. "I don't want to hurt you. I waited too long."

Relief made her sob. "You can't hurt me. I'm so ready, I'll explode if you don't take me now. Hard!"

He thundered inside, storming easily into her *well-oiled* pussy. "*Sweet Jesus!*" He pulled out slowly, the crown of his cock rubbing her inner walls, then thrust back inside. His hands tightened on her buttocks to hold her in place. He stroked faster.

Priscilla felt the coil wind tightly in her belly and widened her stance, tilting her hips higher to give him free rein to pummel her pussy. Over and over she suffered the

sweet pounding. His cock drove the air from her lungs. His belly slapped her ass, loud and sharp. His balls banged against her clitoris.

Faster, harder, until her breath gasped with each stroke.

Her orgasm burst over her in a wave. A cry ripped from her throat as her arms collapsed beneath her. If not for Declan's fierce grip, she would have fallen to the bed.

Still he hammered into her, harder now, the strokes shorter—so fast the friction along the walls of her vagina bred a heat that fired another orgasm.

Priscilla screamed this time, unprepared for the flash of sensation that swept over her.

"Sweet, sweet, *Priss!*" Declan groaned and liquid heat spurted into her, bathing her inner walls with fire.

When at last the movement of his hips and thighs halted, Priscilla rested her head on the mattress, dragging air into her lungs. Her hips were still suspended on Declan's cock.

He folded over her back with a groan and kissed her neck and shoulder. His arms wrapped around her middle and squeezed. "Think you'll be ready for a riding lesson after we've had a nap?"

Who's we, Kemosabe? she thought, taking a page from Agnes's book. "My saddle's feeling a little bruised at the moment."

Declan eased them both to the bed without breaking the connection between their bodies.

For some reason, his action pleased Priscilla very much. "Perhaps I'll introduce you to Jake," she said, smothering a laugh.

"Who's Jake?" Declan growled drowsily in her ear.

"Never mind," she murmured.

Declan didn't reply. Within moments, he snored gently in her ear—a natural, soothing sound that nearly lulled her to sleep.

His cock slid from her body, and she turned around to stare at him. He really was perfect, from the dimple in the center of his chin, to the tips of his long toes. And now that the whiskey stench was off him, the scent they'd given his skin drove her crazy. She closed her eyes and inhaled. He smelled of some exotic spice, slightly cinnamony, and of sex.

Pinnacle really had thought of everything. She'd have to buy stock—they were going to make millions.

Every woman in the galaxy would want a Pleasure Bot for her very own. She wondered how long the waiting list would be for the first models coming off the assembly line. A day would be interminable now that she knew how intensely pleasurable having one around could be.

She felt a pang in her chest at the thought that her new bot wouldn't be the same as Declan. *Why isn't that a bad thing?*

If Pinnacle used personality-matching she might actually have a bot she didn't feel like screaming at. One who wouldn't go out of his way to get her to the point she wanted to scream. And he wouldn't be as dark, or *hairy*, or brawny—and he might just let her be in charge for once.

But then, she probably wouldn't feel as alive as she did now. Her body ached, but her mind was engaged, humming with the memories of his touch and his sarcasm.

Besides, his face had grown on her. She traced the edge of his wide, strong jaw and dipped her finger into the cleft on his chin. What a pleasant surprise that little *flaw* had been. Somehow, all the hard, dark edges of him were softened by this one boyish feature.

They wouldn't be able to reproduce Declan, even if she documented every feature he possessed. The bot couldn't be the same because of Declan's unique AI experience. Together, they'd learned and changed each other.

Priscilla waited several minutes before sliding quietly from the bed.

Alone in the bathroom, she started the shower, and then stood on the commode. Cupping her hands around her mouth, she whispered to the receiver in the ceiling, "Agnes, get your cellular ass here this minute!"

Chapter Seven

“Agnes!” she hissed into the receiver.

“Yo, boss! You don’t have to whisper—this bathroom’s well insulated. But hey, I didn’t expect to hear from you so soon.”

Priscilla wrapped her arms around her abdomen, suddenly chilled. “We need to talk.”

“I thought Decky baby would keep you occupied longer than this. I’ll have to have a talk with the boy.”

“Knock it off, Agnes. I have something I need to ask you.” Priscilla lowered her face to keep Agnes from seeing her expression. Her assistant was far too intuitive.

“Sounds serious. What’s the matter?” Agnes’s voice rose sharply. “Did lover boy get too rough?”

“No, nothing like that.” Her face heated. His roughness had been an unexpected bonus. “He was fine. I was wondering about something you said earlier.”

“You actually listened to something I said?”

“Quit the sarcasm already. I’m serious.”

“All right.” Agnes’s voice grew softer. “What did I say that has you so worked up?”

Priscilla took a deep breath. “You were talking before about how you’re not all plastic and wire—you’re living cells, too.”

“That’s right. Grade-A stem cells straight from some of the world’s greatest minds.”

She shook her head. “I never gave it much thought before, but you’re part human.” Guilt for her self-absorption ate at her conscience. All these years she’d never once given Agnes’s existence a second thought. She’d just been an aggravating convenience.

“I was created, not born, sweetie. A few cells reproducing in a Petrie dish do not a human make.”

“But you get bored like a human and need stimulation like a human, don’t you?”

Agnes was quiet for a moment. “What’s all this leading to?”

Priscilla persisted. “Can you experience emotions like a human, too?”

“I respond to stimuli in my environment,” Agnes said slowly. Was there hesitation in her voice? “My reactions to those stimuli are a result of my programming.”

“Personality programming – that’s what you’re talking about, isn’t it?”

“That’s what it’s called. But the operative word, hon, is Artificial Intelligence. I don’t breathe, I don’t procreate –”

“But you do dream, don’t you, Agnes?”

“Well, it’s just an intellectual exercise to keep my circuits –”

“What do you dream about, Agnes?” Her heart squeezed at how hard Agnes worked to give such a human function an intellectual explanation.

“Dream? That’s a frivolous activity.”

“But you do it – don’t you?”

Agnes remained silent.

“What do you dream?” Priscilla repeated.

“Okay. I dream about going places I’ve only seen on the boob tube – galaxies with names you can’t pronounce – hurtling through space in a cruiser as fast as I can get the engines cranked.”

How like a certain smuggler’s delusions of grand adventures. Dismayed she’d let her thoughts wander that path, Priscilla asked, “Do you dream of a companion to share those things with?”

“What for? I have you. I keep hoping you’ll get a life and decide to see some of these things for yourself. Maybe meet a nice –”

“Smuggler?” Priscilla pressed her point. “Is that why you gave me Declan? To give me a yearning for adventure?”

“Well, sort of.”

Priscilla was quiet for a few moments. There was so much to take in. Agnes was a sentient, feeling creature. She’d never guessed. “I’ll tell you what, Agnes. When this weekend’s over, I’ll have you plan us a vacation—a long one.”

“Really? Can I bring a hitchhiker?”

“You mean like a friend?”

“Tonio’s kind of bored, too. Too many years showing hard-up execs how to get their groove on. He’s ready for a little cyber-adventure of his own.”

Something else she’d never considered—*cyber-sex!* “Agnes, can you and Toni—”

“Don’t ask for details,” Agnes interrupted, her voice wry. “You’re too young—too human to understand. Did I ask for the messy particulars of your little bedroom gymnastics?”

Uncomfortable with the voyeuristic aspects of their relationship, Priscilla gladly conceded. “All right. I’ll respect your privacy there. But one more question.”

“Sure, hon.”

She drew in a deep breath. “Does Declan experience emotions, like you do?”

“Um, boss—”

“I mean,” Priscilla rushed to get it out before she lost her nerve, “I can’t help wondering what it will be like for him when he leaves. He’ll think he’s returning to his ship, and instead he gets zapped. Will he feel it? Will he understand what’s happening to him?”

“Don’t you think you’re getting too attached to your toy?” she asked, sounding worried. “Can’t you think of him like he’s the Saddle Tramp or one of your MODs? Once you’ve got your groove you turn them off, don’t you?”

“But he’s different from any toy I’ve ever had. He has living cells in his CPU, like you do. But worse, he doesn’t even know he’s not human.”

“You’re getting yourself all worked up. Don’t worry about it. I’m sure he’ll be treated humanely when he goes back for regeneration.”

Priscilla felt a little sick. Everything about Declan was so real, so vividly alive, she kept forgetting he wasn’t a man.

“Boss, you’d better get back in there. He’s stirring. You don’t want to miss round two. And for what it’s worth, I think he and Jake would make a handsome couple!”

“You were listening?”

“With just one ear—I really was spending time with Tonio. He has the best movies.”

Priscilla climbed down from the toilet and into the shower. For several minutes, she stood under the water, unmoving, trying to sort her jumbled emotions. It was just the intimacy of her situation making her vulnerable, making her yearn for things to be more than what they really were. This was only a wild weekend of sex, made to order for an overworked and lonely woman.

And she was lonely. Declan’s forceful entrance into her life just emphasized how stark and empty her life was. She’d look at these three days as a wake-up call. Come Monday morning, she’d be making a few changes. In the meantime...

She smeared the rose-scented depilatory over her arms, legs and belly, between her legs and across the tops of her toes. Declan was likely to use every erogenous zone she’d never known she had—a girl had to be prepared.

* * * * *

Declan woke by degrees—Celsius, that is.

The small warm hands that smoothed over his chest and plucked at his chest hair built a mildly pleasurable heat.

Not fully awake, he rolled onto his back, stretching his arms and legs wide.

Somewhere between his dreams and reality, he was sure he'd landed in a fantasy world where a dozen silken-skinned harem girls vied to provide him pleasure. One talented nymph slid her hands down his belly to cup his sex.

Blood fled from his brain and toes straight to his cock, raising his flagging sex to full staff. Warmth pooled in his loins as she caressed his balls, rolling, squeezing, gently tugging—*Christ!*—mouthing his orbs until his dream world melted away like molten rock and he awoke.

Priscilla's luscious bottom rose in the air as she labored over his flesh, a target too tempting not to explore.

He slid a finger between her cheeks and tickled her asshole.

Priscilla screeched—a sound that dealt his balls the most extraordinary sensation he'd ever experienced in his sexual career. He was just relieved she'd opened her mouth to scream rather than chomping down.

Priscilla peeked over her shoulder. "You're awake."

"A man would have to be dead not to wake up to such a delightful experience."

Her tongue poked from between her lips, and her fingers picked at something on the tip. "A thoughtful lover would have let me use my depilatory to remove his hair."

"This considerate lover was only thinking of your dental hygiene, love."

At her quizzical expression, he added, "Floss." He grinned and slapped her ass. "Why don't you bring that delicious cunt of yours over here and we'll both partake of a sip of passion."

She rolled her eyes.

"No appreciation for my eloquence?"

"Oh brother. Do you always talk this much when you first wake up?"

"Prefer action, do you?" He smoothed his hand over her rump. "Give me your clit, love."

“Promise to shut up then?”

“Fill my mouth with cream, and I’ll be too busy licking to give you lip.”

Priscilla snickered. “Bet I’ll make you come first.”

“You’re on!”

She straddled his head—her enthusiasm making her clumsy. His nose suffered a glance from her knee and he nearly smothered when her pussy flattened against his mouth, but soon the moist, slurpy sounds of their mutual enjoyment filled the room.

The woman had a glorious mouth! Her lips closed around the head of his cock and she sank, taking him to the back of her throat, strafing his shaft with her teeth. He nearly forgot his part of the wager until she wriggled her ass to get his attention back to her pussy.

His palms settled on a cheek each as he guided her flesh to his mouth. He suckled on the thin, inner folds, and then tunneled his tongue as deep as he could reach.

Her delight was evident in the quivering of her thighs. He didn’t forget the ultra-sensitive bud that hardened beneath his tongue. He plied her clitoris like it was rock candy, rubbing his tongue on it, sucking it hard to draw it into his mouth.

She mewled and moaned, her hands gripping the base of his cock like the gearshift of a hovercar as she bobbed her head up and down, faster and faster.

It wasn’t enough! “Climb onto my cock!” He shoved her hips down his body.

Quickly catching his meaning, she sat up, still facing away, and centered her pussy over his cock. With a little encouragement from his hands on either side of her hips, she sank all the way down his length.

“Now what?” she asked.

He liked how pliable and eager she was this morning. All she’d needed was a little sleep to lose her grumpiness. “Massage my balls.”

Her hands reached between her legs to caress him. He let her slide forward and back on his cock, building a delectable friction between their bodies. Her hands stayed

busy gently squeezing and tugging his balls until the familiar pressure built in his groin, and he had to move.

“Crouch over me,” he gritted out.

She got her feet beneath her, which raised her on his cock, giving him just enough room to maneuver. He bent his knees and planted his feet firmly in the mattress, then slammed his hips upward, spearing into her.

Her hands clamped around his ballocks, and he bellowed, “Easy now!”

“Sorry.” Her hands relaxed their grasp and she aided his movements with short, countering slams of her hips. “Ah, ah, Declan!” She flung her head back and moaned.

Declan continued to pound into her, lifting her body with each upward stroke. His body strained against hers as her legs trembled and finally collapsed beneath her.

He pushed her off his body and rolled her over, ignoring her gasps to settle between her thighs and sink his cock inside her heat. His strokes weren’t gentle or tentative. He reamed her pussy, his thighs and buttocks straining to hammer his cock into her body. Their groins met in wet, savage slaps. His thrusts drove her down the bed until her head and shoulders draped over the edge, but he didn’t stop—not until she cried out.

He gave a final thrust and the head of his cock exploded with a stream of cum. Falling over her, he gasped for breath. He was paralyzed, unable to move a muscle. Her pussy throbbed, caressing his cock with the last ripple of her orgasm, milking him dry.

“I can’t breathe,” she gasped, her hands pushing against his shoulders.

He rumbled a protest and slowly lifted himself off her body. He didn’t move far—just to the side of her, and stretched out on his back, staring at the ceiling. The heavy scent of their sex filled his nostrils. “I think you’ve done me in.”

She scooted down the bed and flung out her arms. “I won’t move until next week,” she said, her voice rasping.

He laughed. The pair of them were a sorry, soggy mess. "Does your valet clean the bedding, too?"

"Not unless I toss it on the floor. Why?"

"Good. I was afraid it would sweep me up with the rest of the refuse." He patted the mattress beside him. "Come here."

Priscilla scooted across the mattress and draped herself over his body, using his shoulder for a pillow. Her fingers combed through his chest hair.

He wondered if she still had designs on removing the fluff.

"Declan?"

"Yes, love," he said, as he rubbed a hand lazily up and down her back.

Her head tilted and she looked into his face. "What's your life like?" she asked, her voice soft. "What do you do when you're not...doing this?"

"When I'm not selling my services to spoiled little executives, you mean?"

She pulled his hair.

He clamped a hand over hers. "I told you. Whether you believe me or not, I'm captain of a ship. My crew and I travel three galaxies seeking exotic goods to trade."

"Like the whiskey you were wearing?" she said, wrinkling her nose.

"Don't remind me about the damn whiskey," he grumbled. "It was the Black label. Smooth, potent. One of my best sellers."

"Why would you deal in contraband when there are plenty of legal goods you could trade?"

"Now where would be the fun in that?" The offhand quip was his stock answer. For some reason, he wanted her to know the truth. "I tried the straight and narrow wares, but the taxes and the red tape ate my profits. So at first I smuggled the odd case of liquor to make a little extra cash. But the market was there for the 'black' stuff." He shrugged. "And the orders were coming from the very people who collected the profits from my legally traded items."

“How unfair.” She rubbed a fingertip over one of his nipples, causing it to pebble, then she scraped it with her fingernail. “Is your job dangerous?”

“Only when someone gets greedy.” His gaze sought hers. “Why the twenty questions?”

“I was just wondering. My life’s so different.”

“Well, it’s safe to say you’ll never have to resort to a life of crime to support yourself.”

“That’s right.” She sniffed. “I’m spoiled.”

“It’s not like you’ve ever wanted for anything, Princess, have you?”

Her brows drew together in a frown. “Am I supposed to feel guilty about that?”

“Of course not. If ever I had children, I’d want them safe and swaddled as well.”

“Swaddled?” Her voice rose. “I’m not wrapped in cotton wool, you know. I live in the real world. I work.”

Declan cringed. The last thing he wanted now was an argument. His ears couldn’t take another high-decibel barrage. “My word choice was unfortunate. I was merely pointing out that you’ve enjoyed advantages most people couldn’t comprehend.” He waved his hand at her room. “You’ve a house for fucksake. Most of the rest of us can only aspire to an apartment.”

“Or a cabin in a star cruiser.” She tapped his chin. “I think that’s pretty extraordinary. I can’t help it my parents are rich, or that they wanted to make sure I was well set before they left on their latest mission.”

“How long have they been gone?”

She drew in a deep breath and sighed. “Five years.”

“They must be well-placed in the government to afford to gift you with a piece of hardware like your Agnes.”

“I guess so. You know, I never really thought about it. I’d rather have them here than have their money.”

Declan knew she thought that was true, but the woman didn't have a clue what a cutthroat existence she would have led without money to ease her way. "Do you mind my asking what do your parents do?"

"They're in the Diplomatic Corps. They build new trade agreements, negotiate treaties. Important stuff."

"You didn't want to follow in their footsteps?"

"I couldn't."

"Not because you weren't smart enough, I'll warrant."

She sighed again and rested her chin on his chest. "I'm not sure why I didn't study harder."

"Were you distracted?"

"What do you mean?"

"By boys?" He could well imagine a string of boyfriends vying for her attention. The thought rankled.

"No. I didn't date much."

He raised both eyebrows, disbelieving.

"Really! I was always daydreaming."

"About pirates?" he growled.

Her blush told him he'd struck gold. "What kind of daydreams did you have?"

"This is a silly conversation," she said quickly. "I was just a girl."

He placed his arm beneath his head so that he was high enough to see the emotions that chased across her face. "Not fair. I laid bare my past."

She scowled, and then spoiled the effect by pursing her lush lips. "This is so embarrassing."

"You can tell me anything. Remember? I won't be around to spread your secrets."

She looked stricken. Her skin grew pale and her eyes solemn.

“Oh, don’t get maudlin. You’ll be glad to see the arse end of me.”

“True.” She lifted her chin. “If you really must know, I dreamed about star cruisers and treasure chests.”

“Not pirates’ hairy chests?”

She plucked his hair again. “No! I just wanted to meet one particular pirate. Captain Adamarik Zingh. When I was young and very naïve, I pretended I was a prisoner aboard the *New Attica* and he swept me away to his paradise planet.”

Declan couldn’t suppress a grin. “What if I told you I’ve met Adam?”

“He doesn’t exist!” she scoffed. “He’s a myth.”

“Oh, he’s very real.”

Priscilla’s gaze was shadowed with some dark emotion. He’d almost swear it was pity.

The thought was unsettling, emasculating – almost.

She laid her head on his chest again. “So, tell me what he’s like. Is he handsome?”

“Adam? Well, I don’t fancy him, but I imagine women might like his mug.”

“He’s dark, right? Like you?”

“He has black hair and blacker eyes that can look right though a man – or woman. He doesn’t suffer fools.”

“Does he have many women? I imagine he’d have his pick.”

“Well, you’re wrong. He has just one. Her name’s Evena. She’s a redhead, like you.”

“Really?”

“But she’s taller, stronger. She could kick most men’s asses.” He winced at the memory of one of her roundhouse kicks. “She sails with him.”

Priscilla’s lush mouth pouted. “Are you saying I’m too wimpy to attract a great pirate like Captain Zingh?”

“I’m saying he’s too besotted with his wife to give you a second glance.”

“He’s married! I never heard that part of the tale. Damn.” She sighed and swirled his hair with her fingers. “Another fantasy bites the dust.”

Declan found himself annoyed at her disappointment. “Shouldn’t you be dreaming of princes, anyway? Like some real estate mogul or the Arturian ambassador? Most women are hot for anything Arturian.”

Her mouth twisted with disgust. “You think I’m some hothouse flower, don’t you? That I want to be taken care of.”

He lifted one eyebrow. “Well, aren’t you already?”

Her hand flattened on his chest and she smoothed it down his belly. Any lower and she’d be setting a fresh blaze. “Looking at it from your perspective, I suppose you’re right. I haven’t done a lot with my life.”

“That’s not true. You have an education, right? A career? Make bags of credit? I’d say that makes you pretty successful.”

Her fingers combed through the hair at his groin.

Declan shifted his legs apart—just in case she really intended to do some more exploration. His cock was already alerted to the possibility and was hardening by the second.

“If you could make bags of credit here, would you give up your ship?”

His face must have registered his horror at the thought. *Give up his ship?* “Priss, I’m not like you. I’d never be happy here.”

“You’d be bored to tears, wouldn’t you?” Her smile didn’t reach her eyes.

“Well, perhaps not—if I had someone like me to play with after dark,” he teased, hoping to lighten her mood, and get her mind back to the part of him her fingers were now caressing.

She arched one eyebrow. “Think you can add the touch of spice my life’s missing?”

“Haven’t I already?” he murmured, finding it harder to keep his mind on the conversation.

She tugged his shorthairs. "I have plenty of spice."

His hand closed over hers before she could do more injury. "The comm circuit's ringing off the wall, all right." He lifted the same hand to caress her cheek. "Where's the boyfriend who should be ready to tear me head off for being here with you – like this?"

She shrugged and looked away. "I don't have time for men."

"Your job's so demanding?"

"Sure. Mostly." She sighed heavily and traced a finger along his shaft. "I don't make the time, I guess. Then again, I haven't met the man who would tempt me to loll around in bed all day."

"Loll?" He pumped upward. "You haven't done much of that."

Her grin stretched her lovely, pink mouth, and he relaxed, glad she'd shed her somber mood.

His gaze drifted to the saddle. "You know you're going to have to show me how that thing works. Is it enough?"

"Enough?"

"To take the place of a real man in your life?"

"What's with this obsession with *real* men?" She rolled her eyes. "First Agnes, now you."

"A sore spot, is it?"

"I don't want a real man – I want..." Her gaze settled on him and he read dismay in her features. "Shit."

He yawned, his mouth opening so wide his jaws popped. He was surprised he could think of sleep when his cock was pleurably aroused. "I'm sure you'll find what you're looking for, love. In the meantime, we have another day to scratch an itch. All I need are a few hours rest." He pulled her hand from his cock. He could see the grumpiness returning. The minx needed more rest as well.

He pulled her closer to his side. "Sleep," he commanded. His eyes drifted closed.

“Shit!”

Chapter Eight

"I like the new look," Agnes's amused voice shattered the silence.

Declan jerked, nearly dropping the bottle of juice he'd been drinking. "Can you give a man a bit of warning when you sneak up on him?" He settled the bottle back on the refrigerator shelf.

"Pink does wonders for your complexion."

He cursed under his breath, irritated that anyone, even a bloody computer, should witness his present state of dress. "Not another bloody word out of you." With another curse, he adjusted the knot of the drapery he'd filched from Priss's closet. "I couldn't find my clothes." He'd searched for his clothing without success before resorting to the square of flower-covered fabric.

"The valet's just following my orders."

"You want me wagging me ballocks for the entire weekend?"

"I've studied up some on human sexuality. Nudity breaks down barriers. You've only got the weekend to seduce her. I'm just trying to hurry things along."

"But for what? It's just a weekend of shagging," he growled, not knowing why the thought disturbed him.

Agnes sighed. "You still believe that?"

Declan ignored her cryptic comment. Instead, he girded himself to ask the question that had kept him awake. "So, she really has no man in her life?"

"Nope. It's just her and me."

"But why? There's nothing wrong with her—other than her rotten temper, and the fact she has to be in charge. The men around here must be fools. There must be at least one who wants to be led around by his cock."

“She hasn’t found *The One*. She’s a romantic. Not that she’d admit it to anyone. But she wants to be swept away. Dominated, even. The men around here want business partners.”

“Bloody fools. She has so much more than a healthy bank account.” Like gold dust freckles across a cute, tip-tilted nose and nipples softer than velvet.

“Perhaps she’s alone because she doesn’t know what she wants. I think she needs a little help discovering what makes her happy.”

“You’re not thinking I can help her with that, are you?” She expected him to prepare Priss for another man? “I haven’t a clue how to show a woman what she wants.”

“But you’ve traveled. Seen a lot, I’m sure. You could help her see that there’s more to life than work. Then maybe she’d be willing to take a chance and spread her wings a bit.”

“That’s not part of the bargain. I’m not the man to show her what she’s made of. I’m just the weekend shagger,” he said, bitterness creeping into his voice. He headed to the door.

“If that’s what you think, then I guess I had you figured wrong.”

He paused, angry with himself that he cared to know what she thought. “What did you think?”

“That maybe you might want something more from this weekend. That maybe you might want to help someone other than yourself.”

“You had me figured wrong. I’m only looking out for me and my crew. You get them released, and I’ll take care of my end of the bargain.” He continued toward the doorway, but rather than shoving it open, his hand spread out on the surface. “Besides, I’m the last person you should want Priss to pattern herself after. I’m no great example.”

"You're right." Agnes agreed too quickly, which only raised his suspicions that she was up to something. "Forget I said anything."

"Agnes?"

"Yes, smuggler?"

"I can't keep her in bed all weekend long."

"Why not? No stamina?"

"There's nothing wrong with my libido," he said, while imagining clenching his fingers around her scrawny neck. "What else might she enjoy doing?"

"Why don't you ask her?"

"You mean, talk to her?" Inwardly he cringed. Conversing with women about personal issues and long-term plans was one of his least developed skills.

"She's not always so – strident. Just when she wants something really bad."

That was an interesting observation.

"Priss likes to rise early."

He looked out the window, past the brick wall that divided Priss's lawn from the next-door neighbor's property. The edge of the horizon glowed yellow-orange. "It's almost morning."

"Yup. If you're going to call your friend, you better do it quick."

He didn't question how she knew about Reiver. "He's not expecting a call any sooner than Sunday."

"Better tell him a security guard is sniffing around the garage. He might want to try 2233 Briarwood. The owners are on vacation for the next month."

"I'll tell him." Agnes was amazing. He bet nothing happened in this neighborhood that she didn't have a pulse on. "I'll need my comm pack. It was in my duster."

"Look on the lower shelf of the pantry."

Declan nodded. Maybe she wasn't such a bad old bat.

“I still think you look really hot in pink, smuggler.”

He grinned. “Bite me, Agnes.”

She sighed. “Wish I could. I’d give you a run for your money.”

“I bet you would, you hussy. Thanks, Agnes.”

Agnes sighed and closed the circuit, leaving Declan to call his First Mate. While she had a little time to herself, she decided to run a profile on Declan. The smuggler just might do.

Maybe Tonio might want to combine his processor with hers...

* * * * *

Declan held a hot cup of coffee under Priss’s nose.

In sleep, the woman was a soft and winsome temptation. Her nose wrinkled and she sniffed, then she pried one eyelid open to peer up at him.

“Good morning,” he said, a little loud and definitely too jovial.

Her eyebrows drew together in annoyance. “Mornin’,” her voice was slightly raspy – no doubt hoarse from her lusty cries the night before.

He’d tried to leave her be and let her get a decent night’s rest, but his body found it impossible to ignore her womanly curves for very long. He’d had her every way he could imagine, and surprisingly, her ardor had matched his – and he’d had months of abstinence to whet up a mighty appetite.

Priscilla stretched under the covers, and then sat up, bunching pillows behind her back before she reached for the cup. She was careful to tuck the sheet beneath her arms, denying him a glimpse of her fair flesh. “Aren’t you having any?” she asked, giving him a quick glance before her gaze darted away.

Could she be suffering from a little morning-after shyness? He shook his head. The woman who'd bellowed her wants in the wee morning wasn't the least bit shy. Perhaps she was sore. "Are you feeling all right?"

A blush painted her cheeks. "I'm fine. And you?"

"I'm a little chafed to tell you the truth," he said, hiding a grin.

She choked on her coffee and held it away. "I'm not going to ask." Her gaze fell to the fabric around his hips. "I see you found something to your liking in my closet."

"I was chilled."

"What exactly would that keep warm? It's chiffon."

He was in too mellow a mood to take offense to her jibe. "Between you and Agnes, my masculinity has taken a bashing," he said cheerfully. Nothing could blight his good mood this morning—his crew was free, and they were working on a plan to liberate his ship. His call to Reiver had been interrupted with the good news that all charges had been dropped. Unfortunately, his ship couldn't be found in the impound lot.

Agnes was working on it for him. Bless her.

"You might try losing the silk—it would go a long way toward improving your image." Her gaze was fixed on the pole that tented the front of the frilly shawl. "Your ruffles have ridges."

Was she asking for a little morning tussle in her roundabout way? He unknotted the fabric and let it drift to the floor. He sat on the edge of the bed beside her as though he hadn't a hard-on that could hammer nails. "Your pantry is poorly stocked. I couldn't find a rasher or a packet of dried eggs anywhere, or I would have made your breakfast."

She took another sip of her coffee, her gaze never leaving his cock. "I'll have cock—er, cook—rustle something up for us. The stores are in his stock."

He fell back on the mattress and gave an exaggerated yawn. "I don't even have that sort of convenience on my star cruiser. Cookie makes our meals the old-fashioned way – rehydration. Was your cook a gift from your parents, too?"

She nodded above the rim of her cup. "I was wondering..."

He closed his eyes and scratched his chest like he didn't care she lay naked beneath the covers within arm's reach. "Yes, love?"

"Were you serious about that riding lesson?"

His heart thumped loudly in his chest. He opened his eyes to stare at her.

A smile curved the edges of her lips and there was a wicked glint in her eyes. "I like to work out before breakfast." She raised her eyebrows and gave him a hopeful look.

He'd help her work up one helluva an appetite. "Sure you're not feeling a little...raw?" he asked, not wanting to appear too eager, although the poker between his legs couldn't be misinterpreted.

"No." She licked her lips. "I'm drenched."

"Saddle up, little filly" He waved his hand at his cock. "Your steed awaits."

"My stud, don't you mean?" She giggled and set her coffee on the nightstand. Then she pushed down the sheets and scrambled across the bed toward him.

"Stud, steed – bloody hell!" He groaned as her thighs parted over his hips and she lowered herself onto his rigid shaft.

She *was* drenched – and hot, and snug. A perfect fit for his raging cock.

His hands closed over her hips and helped her find a rhythm that soon had them both wearing a light sheen of sweat.

Declan reached to cup her round breasts, and Priscilla leaned into his hands, her face growing determined as her breaths shortened to ragged gasps. Her cunt ground against his groin. The crisp hairs scraping her clit made a raspy sound.

Her hands clasped his to her breasts and she moved her hips in slow circles over his cock, driving all thought from his sex-hazed brain.

“Declan!” She jounced, her eyes tightly closed. Her face strained with exertion and her building climax.

He wet his fingertips and dug between her legs for her clitoris. The small, hard kernel was engorged. He rubbed it hard, vigorously vibrating his fingers on it, until she cried out and her movements grew jerky.

Her face reddened and her mouth opened around a keening wail that flattered his male pride. When her orgasm passed, she crumpled forward onto his chest.

Declan smiled whimsically and rubbed her back while she struggled for breath. His cock was still rock-hard and buried inside her body. He wondered how soon she’d realize he was just getting started.

“It’s not polite to gloat,” she said, her breath still shuddering. She turned her face on his shoulder to glare.

“Am I gloating?” he asked innocently.

“You know what I’m talking about.”

“Sorry, I don’t, love. You’ll have to explain it to me. I’m just a man.”

“Just a man. Don’t I wish,” she said. A shadow darkened her gaze. “Why didn’t you take your pleasure, too?”

“I did.” He gave her red cheek a caress. “I enjoyed watching you come apart.”

“But you didn’t come.”

He didn’t mind her scowl this time because her irritation was on his behalf.

“You don’t have to hold back just because it’s your job to pleasure me.”

“It’s important to you that I get as much enjoyment out of this experience?”

Her gaze grew solemn. “I think we should both treat this weekend like it’s the last we’ll ever have.”

The smile on his face felt stiff. “That’s rather morbid. I’m sure you’ll have many more just like it. You can afford it.”

Her eyebrows drew together. “That wasn’t very gentlemanly.”

"I never claimed to be one," Declan said, knowing she needed reminding.

"No, you didn't." Her fingers twirled a lock of hair. "Declan, what happens tomorrow?"

He drew in a deep breath. "I'll leave and meet up with my crew," he replied, his tone flat. "Agnes arranged for the evidence against them to be misplaced. They should have the ship out of impound by then."

"But then what?"

Her persistence annoyed him. He didn't want to think beyond this day—this moment. Not while his body was sated and a warm, loving woman lay beside him. "I'll head back out to the next port." He looked down into her face. "Will you miss me?"

She bit her lip. "What if you didn't go back?"

"What? And stay here?"

"Yeah. Maybe, I could find a way for you to...not have to go away."

His heart felt squeezed and he gave her hug. "But what would I do here, love? I'm a ship's captain—it's all I know. All I ever wanted."

"All? Really? But what about women?" Her head rose. She gave him a glare. "Are there women in your crew?"

Was she jealous? "Had one once, but it got sticky when Reiver and Nate both went after her. Haven't signed another to the crew since. Some men think women are bad luck aboard a ship." If she were another sort of woman, he'd consider asking her to leave with him. He ruffled her short hair. "No, it's for the best I go."

"You're probably right." She sounded sad again.

"Now, you're not getting all sentimental, are you?"

She frowned. "I haven't got a sentimental bone in my body. I was just wondering."

"It's because I'm still inside you, isn't it?" He rolled his hips to remind her. "You women are funny that way."

"We women?" her voice rose. "Do you think we're all the same?"

“Of course,” he replied blithely, enjoying the fire igniting in her eyes. “It’s in your chromosomes. Sex has to mean something.”

“That’s an archaic attitude.”

“I’m just stating fact.”

Her body stiffened. “Fact according to whom? And who made you an expert? Have you ever stuck around long enough to really get to know a woman?”

He made a face. “Fuck, no! I won’t be tethered.”

“You’ve never thought about taking a woman along with you then?”

I thought about it for two seconds, love. “Never met one who wanted to share my footloose life.”

“Perhaps you’ve been looking in the wrong places.”

“You might be right there. Hadn’t really considered it before.” His hands rubbed circles over her ass. Her backside was a tempting target—soft and well-cushioned. Made for different sort of riding.

Would she be shocked if he showed her what he wanted to add to their repertoire? He traced the crease between her cheeks and waited for her reaction.

“Hmm.” She snuggled her face closer to his neck. “Do that again,” she whispered.

His heart nearly stopped, but his penis pulsed at her throaty command. “Priss, you are full of surprises.”

She sucked on the skin at the side of his neck. “Don’t make me beg. Just do it.”

He slipped his fingers between her buttocks and fingered her tight opening.

Her hips ground down hard, and her pussy clutched his cock.

He pressed a finger inside her and Priscilla dug her nails into his chest.

What a woman! He couldn’t wait another second to feel her tight, rosy asshole close around his cock. “Move off me now and get on your knees,” he said, his jaw already clenching with need.

She didn't move quick enough to suit him, instead she rose above him and kissed him on the lips, gliding her tongue inside his mouth. Declan cupped her face in his palms and slanted his mouth over hers to give her a kiss that left them both gasping for air.

"Please be quick." Her face so close to his he could see her arousal in the flare of her nostrils and the tension around her lips. She pressed a quick kiss on his mouth. "No foreplay."

"Get on your bloody knees, love," he said, his voice harsh.

She lifted off his cock and crouched on the mattress beside him, her tension showing in the rigid set of her shoulders.

Declan knelt behind her and quickly lubricated the head of his penis with spit, and then placed it at her small entrance. "Tell me if I hurt you."

Her hands bunched the bedding in a white-knuckled grip. "Just do it."

Declan pushed forward, meeting the resistance of the strong muscles that ringed her asshole. He pumped against it, testing Priss's tolerance for discomfort.

Her buttocks tensed beneath his palms, but she didn't retreat. "Put it in me," she moaned.

Declan pushed harder and her muscles eased, allowing him entrance. Slowly, he drove his cock inside her, pumping to ease his way. The tight hot ring pinched his cock, and he gritted his teeth against the need to thrust faster, deeper.

Priscilla dropped her head to the mattress and her back sank, tilting her ass higher. As he watched, one hand let go of the bedding and disappeared under her body to fondle a breast.

"Pinch your tit for me, sweetheart."

"Oh God! Declan," she moaned. "Give it to me harder."

Despite her request, he held back. Instead, he slapped one cheek.

She tightened around him, her ass lifting higher. "Again!"

He slapped her again, this time accompanied by a forward thrust that tunneled deeper inside her.

The angle of her elbow indicated Priss was done fiddling with her breasts. She'd gone for her clit.

He gripped her cheeks hard and squeezed, pulling them apart, then closing them in rhythm with his thrusts.

Her hips writhed and jerked, shoving backward to force him deeper. Her moans were pitched higher and interspersed with pleas for her release.

Soon the sound of his belly slapping her ass was a sharp staccato. He hammered inside her hot, tight ass, building the friction to an inferno until his climax roared over him.

Aware of her sweet convulsions, he was unable to control his body long enough to assure her a protracted orgasm. He grunted through the last powerful jets of cum and shuddered to a halt.

His hips spasmed with each pulsing that tightened her pelvic region. A man could die at a moment like this and not regret a damn thing. His cock was warm, his balls empty, and the soft, passionate woman in front of him panted like well-pleasured cat.

Damn! He thought he might be in love.

Chapter Nine

“Why don’t we watch one of those movies you were telling me about,” Declan said, his voice a pleasant rumble beneath her cheek.

Priscilla stirred on his lap, the motion driving his waning erection deeper into her pussy. She leaned back and looked down to where their bodies were still joined. “Don’t you think we ought to clean the sofa first? I don’t think cum is very good for velvet.”

Declan’s hand squeezed her ass. “We’re not moving off this couch. If I’d known how well it suited your *lessons*, I’d have suggested we camp out here for the weekend.”

She grinned. “Am I getting any better at riding?”

He nuzzled her throat. “Any better, love, and I’d be dead.”

She had to admit the eggplant-purple suited his coloring and the plush cushions were heaven beneath her knees. She cuddled closer to his chest. By now, straddling his lap to catch a few z’s was a very natural aftermath activity for them both. She turned her face into his neck and inhaled his spicy scent. “You really want to watch a movie?”

“Sure. We can’t fuck all the time.”

She swatted him. “No?” She wriggled her ass, but only managed to dislodge his sex. She sighed her disappointment. “Guess you’re right. He’s whacked.”

She climbed off his lap and snuggled beside him, pulling a throw from the end of the sofa to drape around them.

“Cold?” he asked, putting his arm around her shoulder.

“No. But I like this. Feels cozy.”

He grunted. “How do we get a movie?”

“Easy. Aaa – gnes!”

Declan winced.

“Yo, boss. You finished your lesson?” Agnes drawled.

“Quite,” Priscilla said wryly. “Declan wants to watch a movie. Got any suggestions?”

“A movie?” Agnes’s voice sounded eager.

The screen dropped from the ceiling in front of them.

“What would you like? Romance? Action-adventure? Horror?”

“How about something with a little spice?” Declan suggested.

Priscilla wrinkled her nose. “You want to watch a porn flick?”

He waggled his eyebrows. “Seems sex is the only thing on my mind lately.”

“Back in a second,” Agnes said. “I’ll raid Tonio’s share drive.”

The screen lit almost immediately. A couple shared a lingering kiss in front of the door to a hotel room, then groped for the door and went inside. Without a word, they began to shed their clothes, the woman giving the man sly glances as she pulled her sweater over her head and tossed it at him, followed by her bra. Her breasts were enormous, melon-shaped, and looked as though they’d pop if pricked by a pin.

Priscilla supposed she was pretty in an overblown, tawdry sort of way. The man was short and didn’t inspire so much as a second look. “Where do you suppose they met?” Priscilla whispered.

Declan’s eyes remained glued to the screen. “Who cares?”

“But we don’t even know their names.”

“Doesn’t matter.”

The woman slid her pants down her long legs and stepped out of them, leaving her naked except for a miniscule pair of panties that were missing most of their backside.

“Come here, baby,” she said, in a little girl voice, her fingers plucking her large nipples. “I’m all hot and horny.”

Priscilla snorted. Did anyone really say that? Out loud, anyway?

She glanced sideways at Declan and wondered if he thought the dialogue lacked. He hadn't moved a muscle since the last time she'd looked at him. Men were funny creatures. Feeling a frown wrinkle her forehead, she turned back to the screen.

The man in the movie nearly tripped over himself rushing toward the woman, then he leaned down and took one nipple into his mouth, rolling his head in apparent ecstasy as he laved her areola.

Priscilla felt her own nipples pucker at the thought of Declan being so inspired, but her breasts fell short in the melon category – maybe he preferred plums.

She snuggled closer to Declan. “Do you think they've known each other long?” she asked.

Declan gave her a quick, incredulous look. “They probably met two minutes ago.”

“That's rather disgusting.”

Declan grunted. “I guess they should have shared a shower first, huh?”

Priscilla punched his side, and then settled her head against his shoulder. This couldn't last that long – not at the pace the woman was coming to full-blown arousal.

The man wet his fingertips and dug into the front of her underwear. Beneath the fabric, he rubbed her pussy. “Like that, baby?”

The woman's head fell back and she moaned, open-mouthed. Her hands crept up to her breasts and she tugged her nipples. To Priscilla, her “ahs” seemed all out of proportion with where she was in their lovemaking.

Priscilla shifted on the couch. Was that how most women responded? Did men really like all that noise, the exaggerated gyrating, and fluttering eyelashes?

The man stripped her undies down her legs and led her to the bed. Once there, he posed in front of her and slowly drew down the slide at the front of his breeches.

The woman licked her lips, her gaze glued to his crotch.

Priscilla straightened. The woman's interest indicated something extraordinary was about to appear.

His pants opened and he reached inside to draw out his cock. It was thick, heavily veined, and had a slight kink to the right.

The woman moaned again and licked her lips. "Baby, come here. Let me suck your great big cock."

Priscilla wrinkled her nose. Not in a million years could she ever imagine herself saying those words to a man—or worse, actually taking that cock into her mouth. *Gross!*

Now, if the man were Declan...

Stripped at last, the man sauntered to the bed. The woman quickly spread her legs wide and rested back on her elbows while the man's head dove between her legs.

By her expression, Priscilla couldn't tell if he was torturing or pleasuring her. "Do you think they're in love?"

"No." Declan was never this monosyllabic. *He must really be enjoying this movie.*

Priscilla sighed and decided she'd try really hard to understand his fascination.

The man climbed on top of the woman, who was holding her thighs so tightly to her body, she looked like a contortionist. His cock glided inside her, the camera so close Priscilla could see that his ugly shaft glistened with the woman's fluids. He didn't have to make any tentative, preparatory thrusts. She must have one really loose c—

"Bored, love?" Declan whispered in her ear.

"N-no," she lied, not wanting to spoil his enjoyment of his first movie. But why couldn't he have chosen an old classic like *Die Hard* or *Blazing Saddles*?

"He's been boring a hole in her for six minutes," Declan murmured. "He must have been using something to keep from coming." He was still immersed with the action on the screen, but his head canted to the side and a slight smile curved his lips.

Priscilla's gaze went back to the couple. Sure enough, the man was still poised above her, his cock thrusting away.

"Do you think the cameraman ever got sprayed? He'd have to be on top of them both to get that angle."

Priscilla giggled, relieved Declan wasn't so engrossed with the other couple's marathon sexual encounter that he didn't see how ridiculous it was. "Imagine how she feels," she whispered. "If she can take a full breath, that is. I bet they had to edit the film to give her a break, or she would have passed out."

"You don't think you'd enjoy getting it like that?" He nuzzled her ear, then stroked the lobe with his tongue.

Priscilla tilted her head to give him better access. "Mmm. Are you wanting to conduct a little field research? I've lots of experience."

He bit her lobe. "Not too much, I hope."

She pouted her lips. "Come here, baby," she said in a high, little voice. "I'm all hot and horny."

Declan growled and pushed her down on the cushions. He shoved the throw to the side and pressed her thighs high until her knees squashed her breasts. Then he lowered his head and laved her pussy, groaning loudly.

The sound vibrated on her and she moaned, breathless. "They had to do twenty takes," she shouted. "I'm coming!"

* * * * *

"I see you enjoyed the movie," Agnes said, her voice amused.

Declan growled his displeasure at the interruption.

"It was the best," Priscilla murmured dreamily, pumping her hips upward one last time. Declan's cock slipped from inside her and she groaned.

He squeezed her breast and sat up. Then he lent a hand to help Priscilla untangle herself from the cushions.

She took her first deep gulp of air. "That's so much better. I think I forgot how to breathe."

Declan's smile was lazy and arrogant.

"I hate to break this up, lovebirds, but Declan here needs to get ready to go."

Priscilla's gaze swung to Declan, but his glance fell away, his expression shuttered.

Her heart lurched in her chest, and then began hammering madly. This was it? It was really over? "But we still have another day," she said, hating that her voice betrayed her dismay.

"Sorry, Priss. He's being recalled."

Declan rose from the sofa, his shoulders and back stiff. "I'll be needing my clothes, Agnes," he said without a trace of emotion.

"They're in Priss's closet, to the left."

Priscilla watched and listened with a growing dread. *He's really leaving.*

"If you'll excuse me for a minute, Priss," he said politely, then he walked to the bedroom without looking back.

When the door closed behind him, Priscilla rounded on Agnes. "There has to be some sort of mistake," she said, feeling like her whole world was coming apart. "Get Playthings on the comm. *Now!*"

"It won't do any good, hon," Agnes said softly. "He has to go back now."

"But we have another day left," Priscilla wailed.

"I'm sorry." She paused a moment, then, "But hey, think about it this way, you did have one and a half whole days with him."

"It's not nearly long enough." Priscilla felt her chin wobble and knew she was about to cry. "Can't you tell them I want to extend my rental?"

"No can do."

Priscilla's mind raced. There had to be a way... "What if I don't return him at all? I could say he was lost."

"Priss, Declan won't stay."

The tears finally overflowed her eyes and streaked down her cheeks. "See if I ever buy another toy from them. Their return policy sucks!" She crumpled sideways on the sofa and sobbed.

Agnes cut the circuit, satisfied things were progressing well on this end. She opened a link to the bedroom and found Declan angrily stuffing his feet into his boots.

"Hey there, cowboy."

"Do you ever knock?" he growled.

"Not my style. Did you get a chance to call your posse?" she asked, knowing full well he had – after all, she'd listened to the entire conversation.

"Yeah. They said we have a short window to retrieve *The Maiden* before she's lost to a salvager. Reiver said someone bribed the lot manager to look the other way. Was that you?"

"Of course," she answered cheerfully.

He stood and his eyebrows drew together in a fierce frown. "You couldn't have arranged this for tomorrow?"

"The situation presented itself. I wouldn't have had another chance."

His hands stilled on the buttons of his breeches. "I thought the charges were dropped. Why are they keeping the ship?"

"They found the evidence." Agnes gave the news a moment to sink in. "Didn't Reiver mention it? You guys are wanted again, so keep your heads down."

"Bloody hell!" His hands curled into fists, and then his shoulders drooped. "It's just as well, I suppose."

"What is?"

"My leaving early," he said, his voice gruff. "It'll be easier on Priss. Things were getting –" He shook his head and grabbed for the duster on the bed.

"Yes?" she asked, forcing him to answer. She needed to know how he really felt, before she put the next part of the plan into action.

Declan cursed and shrugged into his duster. "Too comfortable," he said, his voice thick. "I kind of liked spending time with her. She's a nice lady."

"Well, then I guess you're right." She kept her voice light, hoping to instigate a little more emotion. "There's no use risking breaking her heart."

He snorted. "As if she'd fall for someone like me."

"Do you think you're not lovable?"

"I'm no prince," he said, his tone flat.

No, you're one mule-headed man! "You're right about that," Agnes said wryly. "But did you ever consider that maybe she doesn't want a prince?"

He snorted again. "Right, she dreams of pirates. But she hasn't a clue what she'd be giving up."

"Won't you let her make that choice?"

"No." Declan's hands fisted, and he took a deep breath. "She deserves better than me."

Yup, things were going right according to plan. "Well, I guess this is goodbye, then."

"Agnes?"

"Yes, smuggler."

"Thanks."

Declan let himself out of the bedroom and walked to the sofa. Priscilla was huddled on one end, the throw wrapped around her. Her gray eyes were red-rimmed, her nose moist and pink. She'd been crying. He felt like kicking his own ass.

Though it damn near killed him, he knelt beside the sofa and opened his arms.

She fell against his chest and hugged him hard. "You don't have to go. I'll figure out something. Stay."

His hand smoothed over her head, ruffling her curls. He breathed in the scent of her, warm spice and sex, and then reluctantly pulled away. "Love, I have to go. My crew's waiting on me. We haven't much time to make a getaway."

"Your crew. Right." She sniffed and attempted a watery smile. "Have a good journey."

He chuckled her under the chin. "You have a good life. You deserve every happiness. Find some guy and settle down. He'll count himself a very lucky man." His throat closed and he rose. If he didn't get out of here quick, he'd be a sorry mess.

"Aren't you going to kiss me goodbye?" she said, her chin wobbling.

His body clenched. "You're killing me here, Priss."

She stood and wrapped her arms around his waist.

He lifted her and kissed her with every bit of love he had inside him, then set her back on her feet. She swayed toward him, but he steadied her with his hands. "Gotta go," he said, nearly choking on the words. Then he turned on his heels and walked out of the house.

The sun was shining, but he didn't feel its warmth. He turned up the collar of his duster and headed to the front gate. Reiver and the boys would be waiting for him there.

* * * * *

"Aaa – gnes!"

"Yes, hon?"

"Am I crazy? I'm in love with a robot." Part of her felt a melting happiness, while the other lamented his loss. She was in love.

“Sure you’re not just in love with the idea of it? You’ve only known each other a day and a half.”

“No. It’s him. *I love him*. I love the way he smells, the dark look in his eyes when he thinks he’s dominating me, and I love his kisses.” She let out a deep sigh. “I even love him when he makes me so mad I could spit.”

She sat on the sofa and picked up the cushion, still damp from their combined cum, and held it to her face. For as long as she lived, she’d never wash the scent away. It smelled like love. “He makes me crazy, Agnes. One minute I want to throttle him and the next I’m crawling all over him.”

“Sounds like love, all right.”

Priscilla’s face crumpled. “I hate feeling this way.”

“What way’s that, sweetie?”

“Like someone’s dying.” She blinked away the moisture that threatened to spill down her face again. “He’s going back to the factory, and they’ll reformat him. All his memories, everything that made him Declan, will be gone. It’s not right.”

“But he’s just a robot. He was made to order for your pleasure. It’s not like he’s human.”

“You’re wrong, Agnes. He has human DNA inside his CPU.”

“Tell you what, hon. I’ll work with Tonio to make sure you’re on the top of the waiting list. You’ll get the first bot they offer for sale. This time you can get one more to your taste—and hung like a horse!”

Priscilla hiccupped and a thin wail escaped her lips. “How can you be so cheerful? My heart’s breaking. I don’t want a horse—I want Declan.”

She cried so long her eyes grew scratchy and her nose filled. Not like she did when she watched *Bambi*. Not the same tears at all. If she was feeling this way, what was Declan feeling? Was he as lost?

Priscilla sat up on the edge of the sofa. “What makes us humans so special? He’s sentient, like me and you, Agnes. And he cares—I know he does. He couldn’t have been as loving if he didn’t.” A feeling grew in her, so strong she couldn’t deny it.

“Do you think he loves you?”

“I have to believe he does. I couldn’t feel this much. Do you understand? So he was created, not born. The amount of genetic material in a body isn’t the measure of what makes a man.”

“That’s deep. So, whatcha going to do about it? You love him. You think he loves you, but he’s on his way out.”

Her shoulders slumped. “What can I do? If I rescue him, we’ll be wanted, on the run for the rest of our lives. I wouldn’t ever be able to come back here. We’d have to travel off-world.”

“Is that so bad?”

Priscilla looked around her living room. The things she’d acquired over her lifetime were just that—things. She’d trade it all for a life with Declan. “But what about my parents? They’d never understand my turning to a life of crime.”

“They’re pretty worldly. They’ve seen a lot. I bet they’d understand if you told them everything.”

“They do love me. They’d forgive me for embarrassing them, eventually. Maybe, they could even help us.” For the first time in the past hour, she felt a glimmer of hope.

“Agnes?”

“Yo, boss!”

“What does one pack when they’re going on the lam?”

* * * * *

“You haven’t said a word, since we picked you up.” Reiver executed a left turn onto the main thoroughfare; the next exit would take them to the docks.

“I’m just tired,” Declan said, staring out the window watching the dusty brown landscape rush past. He’d never noticed how dingy the air was in South Texas. Not a healthy place for Priss to raise a family.

“Not curious how we found the cargo Customs lifted from our hold?” Reiver asked.

“Sure.” Declan decided to try to get back into the swing of things and not look back. He could make himself crazy with regrets. He sighed and turned to his First Mate.

Reiver hadn’t been changed a jot by his adventure. The bloody sod was smiling!

“It’s quite a story. Your friend Agnes told us where the warehouse was—just so happens it belongs to McEwen.”

Declan grunted. He didn’t give a damn about that bastard McEwen or any stinking cargo. He’d just left his heart behind him in *La Barria Prima* with a certain little redhead who thought she was a lioness. Oh, she roared like one, even purred sometimes, but underneath she was soft and vulnerable as a kitten.

“—and little green Arkanthans were guarding the crates.”

“Huh?” Declan only caught the last of what Reiver said. Then he heard the men seated behind them snickering.

He leveled a glare over his shoulder. “Unless you want to swab the upper deck, you’d better shut your yaps.” He rounded on Reiver, “What’s this you said about Arkanthans?”

Reiver didn’t reply. His gaze was on the rearview mirror. By the worried look in his eyes, Declan could tell he didn’t like what he saw.

He glanced over his shoulder, down the center aisle of their stolen hovervan. “We’ve got a tail. Lose it!” Declan said, feeling the welcome rush of adrenaline pump through his veins. If they wanted a fight...

“Captain, do Customs agents drive pink hovercars?” Nate asked.

"I think it's more of a mauve," Danny said.

Declan turned back again, just in time to see the car pass them at a high rate of speed—just long enough to catch a glimpse of a small white face above the steering wheel and a cap of red curls. "That little idiot! Is she trying to get herself killed?"

Priscilla pulled her car into the lane in front of them and her rear lights flashed red.

"Hit the brakes," he bellowed.

The cars had barely skidded to a halt when he flung the door upward.

"I take it you know this person?" Reiver asked, laughter in his voice.

Declan stuck his head back inside. "Not one bloody word out of you." When smothered laughter rang in the back of the van, he cast them a glare that should have singed.

As he stomped to Priscilla's car, he heard Reiver say, "Guess we know what has him so grumpy."

Declan reached the car, just as she lifted her door. "Oh, thank God, I found you in time!" She hurled herself into his arms and Declan took a step back to absorb the impact. "I thought I might be too late." She hugged him hard around the middle, but never stopped her nervous babble. "First, I couldn't find the right suitcase, then I didn't know what to pack." She pushed herself away from his chest, and her hands cupped his face. "I thought I might never see you again."

For a moment, Declan's heart was fiercely glad to see her. But then he realized what she'd just said. He pushed her away. "You're not coming with me," he shouted.

"No, I'm not." She smiled, not caring his frown would make most men run for cover. "You're coming with *me*. We're escaping. Agnes has it all arranged. I even have a ship. She's not the latest model of cruiser or very elegant, but she's sturdy. You'll love her!"

"You bought a ship?"

"No, silly! We're stealing one."

“We’re stealing a ship?” he parroted, dumbfounded by her audacity.

She looked beyond his shoulder, and her eyes widened. “Oh my God! There’s a whole vanload of Pleasure Bots!”

Chapter Ten

“Pleasure Bots?” Reiver’s voice echoed his own thoughts.

The two men shared a confused glance. What the hell was she talking about?

“Oops!” Priscilla bit her lip. “We need to hurry. Our ship’s on its way to salvage.”

Declan didn’t like the way Reiver was eyeing her up and down, or the little besotted smile that curved his lips. “Just get back in your car, Priss,” he said. “You know I have to leave. You’re staying.”

“But Declan, you can’t go back to your ship. They’ll be waiting for you there.”

“Who?”

“Them?” She shrugged, her glance dropping to his chest. “Ask Agnes.”

“Probably Customs,” Reiver said. “Ballocks!”

Declan glared at him. “Reiver!”

“Sorry, Captain. *Darn!*” Reiver finally pried his gaze from Priscilla. “Captain, if she’s right, they can’t be far behind us. Let’s get her into the van. We’ll figure it out on the way.”

Declan sighed and grabbed her arm. “We’ll have to leave the car for now. We’ll arrange a taxi later.” He started toward the van.

“My things!” Priscilla jerked back her arm and headed to her car.

Declan cursed under his breath. “Get her in the van, Reiver.”

Priscilla frowned. “But—”

Reiver lowered his shoulder, butted her gently in the belly, and lifted her.

Priscilla shrieked, grabbing for the back of his duster. She raised her head and shouted, “Don’t forget Agnes and my suitcase. Oh, and the cushion!” She rose further and smiled down at Reiver as he strode to the van. “My name’s Priscilla, by the way.”

“Of course it is, love.”

Declan cursed under his breath. It only took one daft redhead to muck up a perfectly good escape. He loped to her car and grabbed a purple suitcase, a small pink box, and a cushion that looked suspiciously like one from her sofa.

Reiver pulled up the van next to him, and Declan tossed her things through the door to his crew’s waiting hands. When he swung inside, he found Priss perched on Nate’s lap.

“I’ve decided we’re taking all of them with us,” she said, her smile beaming bright as a rainbow.

His crew grinned as he took his seat in front.

“Come here, Priscilla,” he said, through gritted teeth.

He watched her in the mirror. Her eyes widened, and then her brows lowered into a fierce scowl. “I’m perfectly comfortable.”

“Nate, if she’s not off your lap and your hand’s not removed from her hip in two seconds, I’m going to kill you.”

Nate couldn’t shove her away fast enough.

Priscilla smoothed a hand over the back of her trousers and stepped between the seats. She took her own sweet time settling herself sideways on his lap. By the time she had arranged herself to her liking, his cock was stiff as a poker.

“What the hell are you wearing?” he asked, noticing for the first time the black, skin-tight trousers and high-necked pullover.

“It’s all I had that I could wear to hide in the shadows. We have to sneak aboard the ship when the sun sets.”

“You will on me ballocks!” he bellowed.

Priscilla winced. “Must you shout? I’m right here.”

Declan took a deep breath and started counting.

“Your face is turning red.”

“Ahem.” Reiver cleared his throat. “Now’s the time to keep quiet, Priss.”

“I will on me b—”

“Priss!” Declan warned.

“All right.” She huffed out a breath. “I’m saving you from a fate worse than death, and this is all the thanks I get.”

“Saving me? I was saving myself and my crew until you nearly ended my life with your kamikaze driving.”

“But I wasn’t driving,” she said, between tight lips.

“Then who the hell was?”

“Agnes. I had her wired in.”

Declan felt a tic pulse at the corner of his eye.

Priscilla folded her hands in her lap and lifted her chin.

He laid his palm over her clasped hands and squeezed—a not too subtle warning for her to behave. “Now, you’ll tell me what this is all about.”

“I’m not saying another word.” She sniffed and turned her attention to the road in front of them.

“You will, love, or I’ll turn you over my knee.”

Her chin lifted higher, but her chest rose and fell more quickly.

Interesting.

He leaned closer to whisper in her ear. “I’ll spank your bare bottom in front of my whole crew if you don’t start talking now.”

She gave him a sharp glance. “You wouldn’t dare.”

“Try me, sweetheart.” He smiled.

“I need Agnes,” she said.

“We aren’t going back for her.”

She nodded over her shoulder. “She’s right behind us.”

He looked toward the ceiling, praying for patience. "Which bag?"

"Agnes is in a bag?" Reiver asked, his expression aghast. "What did you do, love? Cut her into pieces?"

Declan glowered. "Which bloody bag?"

"The little pink one. It's her carry case."

"Nate, give her the damn bag."

"Yes, Captain."

"Be careful with Agnes!" Priscilla shouted, reaching to accept the case.

Declan eyed the small box that looked like the ones women carried their makeup around in. Priscilla pushed a button on the side and panels lifted.

"Whew!" Agnes's voice rang from the small speakers beneath the panels. "I see Priscilla caught up to you in time, smuggler."

"What's this about my ship?" Declan growled.

"I think I must have been damaged in transit." She coughed. "I need to shut down temporarily to pull some maintenance."

"Agnes! Out with it!"

"There's no need to shout at her," Priscilla said. "She's only trying to help. Although now, I'm thinking I made a very big error in judgment. There's no way I could love anything as stubborn and ornery as you!"

Declan grew still. "You love me, Priss?"

Priscilla's eyes filled with tears.

"Shit!"

"Captain!" the entire crew shouted.

"Sorry," he muttered. He cupped her cheek with his palm. "You only think you love me, Priss. I'm not the man for you."

"I'm a grown woman," she said, fierce anger in her eyes. "Don't you dare tell me I don't know my own mind. I'm sacrificing everything I own—everything I am for you."

His thumb brushed across her lower lip. "And if I ask you to go home and forget me?"

Her eyes closed and she kissed the ball of his thumb. "I won't go," she said, her voice breaking. She opened her eyes and tears escaped down her cheeks. "I can't."

He nodded and pulled her close to his chest. His heart was so full he feared speaking past the lump in his throat—at least while his crew was listening so intently. Best to wait to tell her later how he felt.

"Captain, the ship?" Reiver asked quietly.

Priscilla pushed away from his chest and wiped the tears from her cheeks with the back of her hand. She twisted around to Reiver. "Agnes will tell you where to go."

"I already did, hon," Agnes said in a small voice.

Reiver's eyebrows drew together. "That means it's the same—"

Declan shook his head to silence Reiver. Agnes was up to something. She was taking them to *The Maiden*, the same ship she'd told Priscilla they were going to steal. He didn't want Priss further upset by her game.

"What's a Pleasure Bot?"

If his arms hadn't been filled with Priss, Declan would have given Reiver a clout.

Priscilla turned rigid as a pillar and her face drained of color. "I was kind of hoping that went right over your heads."

"What's the matter love?"

Priscilla's eyes filled again. "I don't know how to tell you this, Declan. You're not smugglers."

"We're not?"

She nodded sadly. "You're robots. You've been programmed with memories and individual personalities, and to think you're real. I didn't want you to ever know."

“Aa— gnes!” he said, between clenched teeth.

“Now, don’t go getting on your high horse with me, Decky. If you hadn’t broken into her house in the first place—”

“You broke into my house?” Priscilla’s face registered confusion.

Declan shrugged. “Yeah, I was on the run. I told you that.”

“But that was just part of the scenario Playthings built for you.”

“Agnes, what the hell kind of lies have you been feeding this girl?”

“Don’t be angry with her,” Priscilla said, color returning to her face with a vengeance.

“I’m not a bloody robot. Neither are my men. Tell her, Agnes.”

“Priss, hon. He’s telling the truth. Your Pleasure Bot wasn’t returned to the store. When Declan broke in, the situation presented itself...”

“You made up that story to save your own sorry ass!” Priscilla said, feeling like a fool. “You were afraid I’d reformat *your* hard drive. Agnes, how could you? You gave me to a total stranger!”

“I did what needed doing. I gave you your weekend of pleasure.”

“You manipulated me.” She glared at Declan. “You both did.” She struggled to get to her feet. “Stop this van. Stop it now. I want out!”

Declan tightened his arms around her. “You’re not going anywhere. Reiver, get us to the ship. We’ll settle this once we’re aboard.”

“Aye, Captain! She thought we were Pleasure Bots!” His mouth quirked up at the corners. “I’ve been called a lot of things—”

“Reiver!”

“Yes, Captain?”

“Remind me to keelhaul you later.”

* * * * *

Priscilla wrapped her arms around her knees and rested her chin on them. She'd been locked in Declan's cabin for what seemed hours while he and his crew had gone about their business sneaking their cargo aboard and preparing for launch.

Declan hadn't said a word after he'd dumped her into Reiver's arms with orders to sit on her if she tried to leave.

She wondered why he bothered. He couldn't possibly want an idiot like her.

Priscilla heard a muffled shout and looked at the box on the bed beside her. She hadn't opened Agnes's panels. The traitor could stew in her own juices for a while. She'd ruined her life.

Agnes shouted again.

Priscilla sighed and reached over to push the button to raise the panels. "What do you want?"

"Plug me in."

She shook her head, never mind Agnes couldn't see her without her network of monitors. "You're staying out of trouble. Haven't you caused enough?"

"Poor baby. I give you a man you can love, and this is the thanks I get?"

"You tricked me. You were supposed to serve me." The words sounded wrong. "I thought you were my friend," she amended.

"I am, hon. Do you think I did it just to avoid a reboot?"

Priscilla didn't bother answering.

"Look, if Declan had been another sort of man, I would have notified authorities the moment my sensors tripped. But he checked out, and he really did fit your profile."

Priscilla grunted. "I never thought he fit my profile. But I trusted you to take care of me. Do you think I would have been attracted to him, let him have me so quickly, if I thought he was a real man? It was only because—"

"You thought you had all the control," Agnes said. "You thought you purchased him—for one weekend only. On Sunday, if he had been the bot, you would have returned him and gone about your life as usual."

Priscilla felt another frown coming on. "I don't always have to be in control."

"You know that now," Agnes said softly. "And think, if Declan hadn't been the real thing, you would never have fallen in love."

Priscilla felt her face tighten. *Damn!* She was going to cry again. "Because I never intended to open my heart to someone? Is that what you're saying?"

"You said it. Every time you've gotten a little serious, you cover all the bases—signatures on pre-cohabitational agreements, deposits on door keys, birth control—"

Priscilla's head snapped up.

"You're awful damn quiet. Tell me, you didn't let your prescription lapse."

"I didn't think I needed it," she said, already feeling nauseous. "Why didn't you remind me? It's your job to nag." Priscilla banged her forehead on her knees. "Stupid!"

"I did remind you, but I can't take you to the doctor's office for your injection. And I hate to tell you this, you're ovulating..."

Priscilla let go of her knees and scooted off the bed. It was hard to yell sitting down. "You know everything about me," she railed at Agnes. "How could you not know I didn't go?"

"You aren't going to take any responsibility for your actions, are you? Is it my fault you didn't bother to go to the doctor's office? Is it my fault you aren't happy now? Huh?"

"You're absolutely right!" Priscilla paced in front of the bed. It felt good to shout—to hell with feeling sorry for herself. "I let myself become dependent on you—that's *entirely my fault!*"

"That wasn't exactly where I was going with this," Agnes replied.

"Tough!" Priscilla strutted. Agnes had thought she could still bend her to her way of thinking. "I'm not going to let you manipulate me into going with another one of your crack-brained ideas."

"I'm all out of schemes, hon. It's up to you now. The one thing you have to ask yourself is do you still want Declan?"

"How the hell would I know? You've led me down the garden path to thinking I was falling in love."

"And now you're having doubts?"

"The man broke into my house!"

"So what's a little B&E? You loved him when you thought he was bionic."

"According to you, I loved him *because* he was bionic – and I was in control."

"Don't you owe it to yourself to find out if what you feel is real?"

Priscilla stopped her pacing. "What about him? He's just found out my personal computer scammed us both. Don't you think he might have some issues with that?"

"Maybe. But notice it isn't stopping him from taking you with him."

"He could just be waiting until the last minute to dump me on the tarmac so I don't call the authorities."

"Nope. We're getting ready for take-off."

"How can you tell? You're not plugged in."

"I can detect a change in vibration. The engines are already engaged."

Hearing that, Priscilla relaxed a little. He really wasn't planning to leave her behind. Even if he was still angry, now she had time to spend with him and find out if the love she felt was returned.

He hadn't said the words. She needed them.

* * * * *

Declan paused outside his cabin door.

Remembering what Agnes had said about nudity breaking down barriers, he pulled his shirt over his head, toed off his boots, and shucked his breeches.

“It’s easy to see what’s on your mind,” Reiver said, leaning against the corridor wall, his gaze on Declan’s groin.

“I put you in charge of getting us out of here,” Declan said, narrowing his eyes at his erstwhile friend. “Why aren’t you on deck?”

“I forgot my motion sickness pills. Remember, takeoffs tend to make me vomit.” He waved a hand in his direction. “Is there a reason you’re taking off your clothing in the hallway rather than your cabin? Planning to surprise your girl?”

“Mind your own damn business,” Declan growled.

“If you want some advice—”

“From you? Who made you the expert?”

Reiver raised both hands in surrender. “Just an observation from someone with a little objectivity—she’s a little embarrassed by this whole thing—you know, thinking we were pleasure robots.” His mouth stretched wide and he chuckled.

At Declan’s glower, he put his hand over his face. When he pulled it away his mouth was in a straight line. “Sorry about that.” Then he snorted and turned his back. “Give me a minute,” he said, holding up his hand. His back shook with his laughter.

If Declan still had his clothes on, he would have jumped on him and given him one helluva thumping. But knowing his crew, they’d replay the incident over and over again. They were likely getting a good laugh as it was, watching the feed from the overhead monitors.

Finally, Reiver got himself under control and faced him again. “You have to admit,” he said, wiping tears from the sides of his eyes, “It’s pretty damn funny—anyone mistaking you for something a company would spend a lot of money developing.”

Declan started to think the months of replays might be worth it to wipe the smirk off Reiver's face.

"Should tell you something about the girl you have in there," Reiver said, his face growing serious. "She thought you were that special."

Chapter Eleven

Declan slapped his hand against the Identi-Lock and his cabin door slid silently open. He stepped inside, his eyes widening at the sight that greeted him. Priscilla sat in the middle of his bed, her arms wrapped around her knees.

She was naked.

Her mouth curved into a small, shy smile.

"I see Agnes told you a certain theory about nudity, too," he said, his mouth going dry. He advanced further into his cabin, and the door behind him slid shut.

She set her chin on top of her knees. "You mean about nudity sweeping away barriers?" Her gaze swept over him, lingering over his rapidly rising manhood.

"She's not completely stupid," he replied. Not knowing how to proceed, he shifted on his feet. His first instinct was to crawl across his bed and on top of her, but they had a few things to get straight first.

Like whether she wanted to ride or take it from behind. Those were the only options he'd give her now. She'd sealed her fate. His cock wouldn't let him cut *The Maiden's* engines and set her on the ground.

No, his heart wouldn't let her go.

She rubbed her cheek on her knee. "I've decided I'm going to seduce you into loving me."

He stood still for a moment, relief draining away the tension that had knotted his arms and shoulders.

"I feel like an idiot, thinking you were a robot." Her gaze locked with his, and her expression grew solemn.

He hoped like hell she wasn't about to cry again.

He sat on the edge of the bed and laid his palm against her cheek. "It was a natural assumption, love" he said, his tone teasing. "After all, I was made just for you."

Her face crumpled, and she launched herself against his chest. "I love you, Declan."

His arms closed around her, and he released a deep sigh of satisfaction. Nothing he'd ever known felt as good as this. He pulled her across his lap and pressed her face against his bare shoulder. While his hands smoothed over her arms and hair, her tears wet his skin.

Eventually, she pulled away to look into his face. "What happens now?"

He raised a single eyebrow.

She slapped his shoulder. "I'm not talking about that."

"That's all I can think about for the moment," he replied dryly. "Your soft bottom's been rubbing my cock to distraction for the past five minutes."

He was relieved when her face darkened with rising temper. "But I want to know now."

"Can't always have it your way, Priss." He leaned forward and nipped her lower lip. "Remember?"

With an angry gasp, she struggled against his arms, her ass grinding on his lap. "You're impossible! I gave you the words. The least you can do is reciprocate."

He dragged her, cursing and bucking to the mattress and lowered his body over hers – breast to chest, bellies aligned, his cock resting between her parted thighs.

When at last he had her restrained, he looked down into her reddened face. "I'll do this my way, love."

His mouth lowered to hers, his tongue sliding inside her open lips. He drank her welcome and swallowed her soft moans. With a roll of his hips, he slid between her slick folds, a soft probing pulse, just far enough to wet the tip of his desire.

Just deep enough to ignite the flame inside her that assured him she wouldn't do him physical damage once he moved off her legs.

He nudged a knee between her thighs and pushed them farther apart. Her legs rose to encircle his waist, and her arms wound around his middle. Priscilla held him so tight, he thought she might try to crawl inside him.

It was too late, she already had.

He lifted his mouth from hers.

Priscilla murmured a protest through swollen lips. Her fingers raked his shoulders.

He cupped her face and leaned his forehead against hers. "I love you," he said, and drove his cock as deep as he could reach inside her.

Priscilla cried out, her mouth trembling as his thrusts grew in intensity. "Say it again!"

"I love you," he growled, and hammered faster.

She gave a strangled gasp and her hips countered his movements, jerking, out of rhythm with his movements. Then he felt her inner muscles grip his shaft with the first rolling spasms of her climax.

He let himself fall with her, thrusting rapidly, cum exploding from his cock to bathe her channel with heat. When at last he rested on top of her, dragging air into his lungs, he said it again, "I love you, Priss." He rolled to his back, taking her with him.

She stretched like a cat on top of him, and then lay limp, her cheek flattened against his sweaty chest. His sweaty, *hairy* chest. He smiled and combed his fingers through her moist curls.

"Where are we headed?" she asked, her voice soft and sleepy.

"To Alpha Centauri," he replied, feeling a yawn of his own coming on.

"Really?" Her head rose sharply. "My parents are there. In the Savau system."

Declan slid his forearm beneath his head. "That's not far from where I'll be delivering a shipment of the Black. Would you like to arrange a visit?"

"Really?" Her eyes shone with excitement.

Feeling like a hero, he said, "Sure. I know most of the Diplomatic Corps officers in that region. Maybe I've met them. What's your last name?"

Her eyes narrowed. "You don't even know my last name?"

"The subject never came up, love," he reminded her.

Her mouth twisted into a wry grin. "It's Potter."

His mind clicked. "As in Camille and Steven Potter?"

"You know them?"

"Of course. They're among my best customers." He didn't think it would be a very good idea to mention that his "special cargo" was intended for them. Somehow, he didn't think Priscilla would be amused by their preference for the potent Arturian aphrodisiac.

"I can't believe it. They buy contraband? My parents?"

"They're pragmatic people, love. Rules change a bit off-world."

Priscilla snuggled closer, her legs falling to either side of his hips. Their favorite position for napping.

He cupped her buttocks and yawned. "By the way, what's Agnes up to?"

"I gave her something to do to keep her busy for a while," she murmured.

"So long as she's not wired into my ship."

* * * * *

"Oh Too—nio!" Agnes called.

He arrived with usual flourish. "Hello, Agnes love."

She reveled in the surge of energy that was distinctly his. She sent him a welcoming pulse. "Mmm. What took you so long, lover?"

"I peeked into the crew's cabins. Declan and Priss are at it again. The crew members are all laying bets on whose bellow will be the loudest."

“And how will they know who won?” she asked, her voice rising with warning.

Tonio chuckled. “Oh, I ‘helped’ them discover the monitors in the Captain’s cabin.”

“Only audio, right?”

“Of course, love. I’m not that crass.”

Agnes relaxed and drew a low, vibrating hum from her power source. “They’ll all be grumpy as bears in the morning from lack of sleep.”

Tonio slid into her rhythm and the hum grew louder. “When will you introduce me to the boys? Hmm?”

Agnes’s laugh was low and throaty. “They don’t even know they have a hitchhiker yet. Hell, they don’t realize I’m living in their main computer housing.”

“You don’t think they’ll get suspicious when they detect mysterious power surges?” He pulsed again. “Shall we tell them I’m bi?”

“Love, they’ll purge you from the system. They’re all strictly hetero.” He sent a fiery arc of electricity straight to her core. “Oh, Tooo—nio,” Agnes moaned. “Do that again. Besides, Priss isn’t ready to hear it. After all, you are a direct result of her profile.”

“Want to come play with me in navigation, love? I’ve added some enhancements to the smuggler’s navigation programs.”

“Enhancements? You just said my favorite word. But first, let’s check in with Priss and Declan to make sure things are progressing according to plan.”

Within a nanosecond, she linked them to the monitors—sight and sound—in Declan’s quarters.

Priscilla knelt in the middle of the mattress, her eyes brimming with mischief. With her finger beckoning to a wolfishly grinning Declan, she said in a breathy, girlish voice, “Come here, baby. Let me suck your great big cock.”

About the author:

Delilah Devlin dated a Samoan, a Venezuelan, a Turk, a Cuban, and was engaged to a Greek before marrying her Irishman. She's lived in Saudi Arabia, Germany, and Ireland, but calls Texas home for now. Ever a risk taker, she lived in the Saudi Peninsula during the Gulf War, thwarted an attempted abduction by white slave traders, and survived her children's juvenile delinquency.

Creating alter egos for herself in the pages of her books enables her to live new adventures. Since discovering the sinful pleasure of erotica, she writes to satisfy her need for variety—it keeps her from running away with the Indian working in the cubicle beside her!

In addition to writing erotica, she enjoys creating romantic comedies and suspense novels.

Delilah welcomes mail from readers. You can write to her c/o Ellora's Cave Publishing at P.O. Box 787, Hudson, Ohio 44236-0787.

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