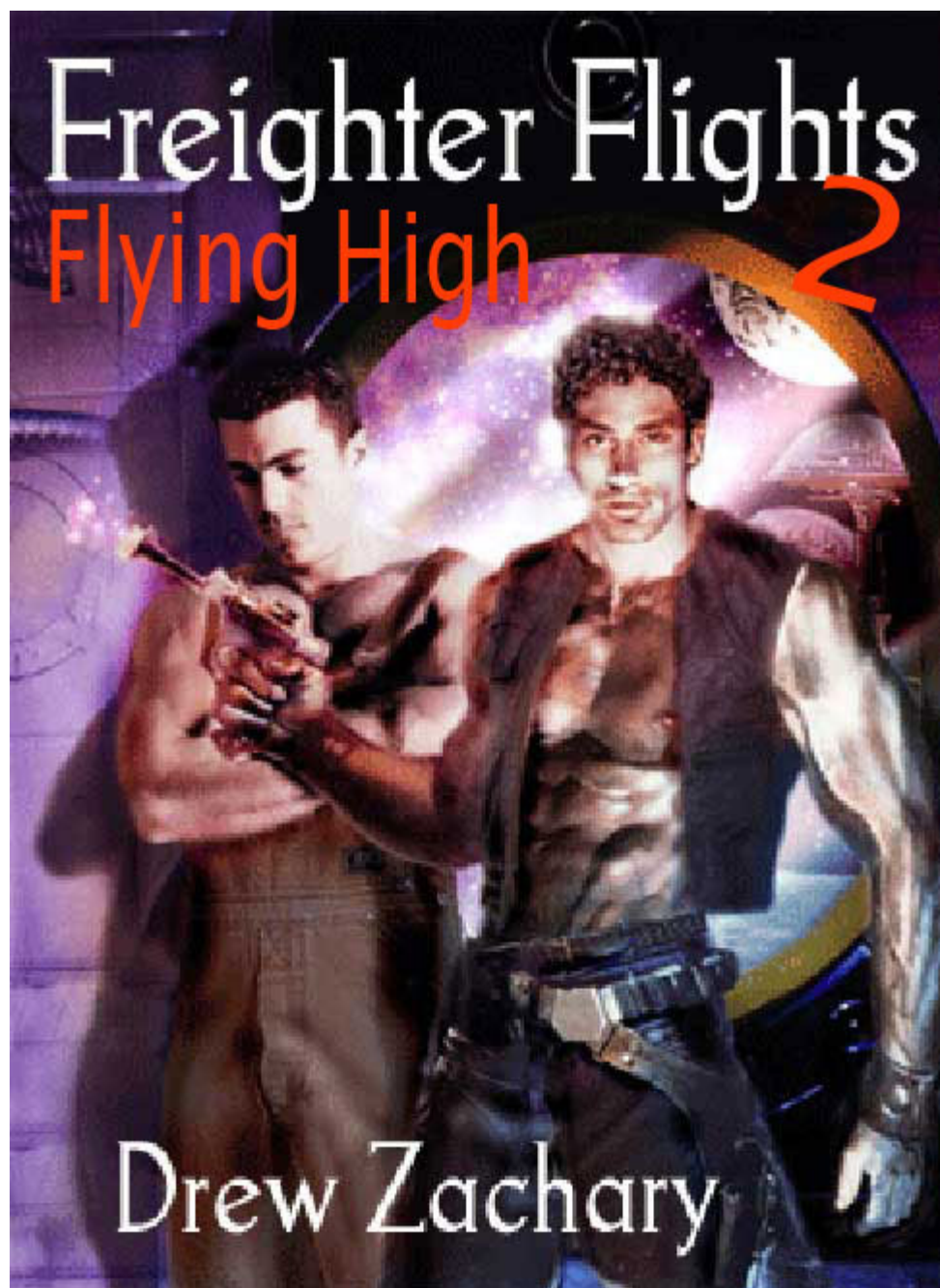


Freighter Flights Flying High 2

Drew Zachary



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Freighter Flights 2: Flying High
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By Drew Zachary

Chapter 1

Tab rolled through the spaceport fairly quickly, happy that the Arillia had docked somewhere decent for a change. It wasn't as great as some of the ports in the center of the system, but it was better than the dives farther out. This one had more than one place to buy parts, anyway, and he even knew some of the dealers.

That knowledge came in handy when it came time to make deals. He turned his nose up at the first couple of jokers trying to sell him couplings and ignored the third, knowing his reputation for selling refurbished goods as new. But the fourth stall was a direct hit and he grinned as he wandered closer.

"Tab!" the man behind the crates said, smiling. "Long time, man. Where the hell have you been?"

Tab's grin grew wider as he held out his hand to shake. "Been on the Arillia," he said to Kenva. "Shipped out with her a few months back. She's a nice bird." Had a damn fine captain, too, in Tab's opinion. "Got those engines singing."

Kenva gave him a long look. "Heard Bane had trouble."

Tab nodded. "Bane's dead. Pirates." That had been moderately awful, and a time Tab didn't want to revisit at all. "She's Will Pilot's now. We fly her faster now, better."

Kenva nodded, suddenly all business. "How fast?" he asked, stepping back.

Tab outlined some of the modifications he'd made and listed the parts he needed to make sure they stayed that fast; Kenva had a couple of ideas for more, but Tab wasn't too sure Will would give him that many credits to spend. "We'll have to see," he said finally, signing off on what he did need. "Deliver? We're in bay three until the day after tomorrow."

"Delivered," Kenva confirmed. "Watch yourself with these mods, though, Tab. You're going to up the flying class if you're not careful, and then there'll be a fucking ton of paperwork to do."

"Will's good with a pencil," Tab said with a wink as he moved off. Man was good with more than a pencil, too, and Tab had ideas about that.

He took his time as he walked through the port, wondering if he really should buy what he wanted. Might be hard to explain what he wanted old fashioned rope and leather strips

for. Hell, he wasn't even sure if Will would go for it. And then he saw a stall near the pay showers offering... tubes. That's all they were, he thought, until he walked closer.

Some slender and some thick, the tubes were clear and looked utterly bland, varying in length from four inches to almost a foot long. "What are they?" he asked the woman standing with them.

She smirked at him and picked one up, seemingly at random. "Give me your hand."

Tab looked at the tube and then at the woman, dressed in tight leather and what had to be paint. She looked more exotic than most he'd seen around the rest of the port. Finally, he held out his hand, palm up.

She put the tube flat on his hand and curled his fingers around it. "What do you feel?" she asked with a sly smile.

Heat. The tube warmed, the smooth surface getting almost hot. He raised an eyebrow.

"There are others that get cold. Ones that shock. Ones that burn, cut, tingle, vibrate... whatever your tastes are."

Tab looked at the tube in his hand and started to smile. "How much?" he asked. "For... something that will..." He shrugged.

She gave him a long look. "Depends. Do you want to hurt or does your partner?"

Tab shrugged again and she smiled. "I see." She gathered three tubes and held them out to him. "Thirty creds, and you'll have some surprises."

Tab looked at the tubes and nodded slowly. "All right," he said, reaching for his wallet. He still had ten creds for a shower, and a few more in case he saw something else he wanted. "I gotta go."

She laughed and took his creds, passing the tubes over with a wicked smile. "I'll bet you do."

Tab shoved the tubes into his pockets and adjusted his cock. He really did have to go. He had to find Will.

He caught sight of Will, brown curls shaved down almost to the skull -- that was new -- as he passed one of the Golden Cup Cafes, shaking hands with a short, portly fellow. Both men were nodding, smiling, so maybe Will had found some cargo for the other half of the hold. The man hated traveling light.

Mr. Portly left and Will turned back to the bar, sipping at a glass of amber liquid and

making a face -- the busier ports might be better for business, but they never had the best booze.

Will was wearing his customary leathers -- pants tight, outlining the sweetest ass Tab knew, and the leather jacket was over a tight black t-shirt. Will wore the leathers to look tough, but Tab knew better; Will walked and talked a good game, but there was a sweet kid under all that bluster.

Tab walked up to the bar and signaled for a drink before he looked at Will. "What the hell did you do to you hair?" he asked.

Will gave him a grin and took another sip, resulting in another grimace. "It'd been too long for too long."

Tab snorted. "You just got tired of me yanking it."

"Maybe." Will tossed back the rest of his drink like a shot. "Damn, we should buy a bottle of that to use as acid."

Tab grinned. "Yeah, if you want. Or we could just drink acid. So, you get us cargo, Captain?" He looked at Will's head again, not sure if he was too thrilled to have the curls gone. He did look more like a grownup, though, and they'd grow back.

"I did. I mean, the Parson's Alley load was paying enough to go with just that, but we had more than half the hold empty. I hate traveling that light." Will grinned, the wide smile making him look younger again. "Tuso's paying standard and it's on the way. He was having trouble placing his load anywhere but the big commercial freighters and they charge three times what we do."

"What is it?" Tab asked. "Hard to place means... well, is it going to get us in shit again, baby?" Trouble was something Tab made it his personal mission to avoid these days.

"Nah, he just doesn't have a full load but for the little jumpers who won't go as far as Parson's Alley and didn't want to get hit up for commercial freighters rates. Things are going too good for me to pick up illegal goods, Tab. We're just getting on our feet again - I'm not going to jeopardize that."

Will was more cautious than Bane, their former boss and the Arillia's former captain, had ever been, Tab had to give him that. Of course Bane had paid with his life and Will had paid for Bane's mistakes with his ass, so that made sense.

Tab nodded. "Okay," he said. With one hand he lifted his glass; the other he passed over Will's butt, more or less possessively. "Holy shit, this is disgusting!" He almost choked after he swallowed. "Fuck."

"Hey! There's nothing wrong with my ass!" Will gave him a glare, but those grey eyes were twinkling.

Tab's cough turned into a snort. "Not a thing," he agreed. "Except it's in those pants and we're out in public. Let's go, flyboy. Drink somewhere more private."

"You showered yet?" Will asked him, eyes dropping down his body, settling somewhere south of his waist.

"Not yet." Tab grinned and shifted his hips a little. "Got ten creds left... think it'll buy us some privacy?"

"It might with my twenty." Will gave him another look and then took off, headed for the lower level showers.

That was a lot of money for privacy. Tab grinned as he followed along, watching Will's ass. He loved it when Will was eager, just fucking loved it. "Gonna let me fuck you in the water again?" he asked in a low voice. "Up against the wall?"

A shudder went through Will and when those eyes were turned on him they were hot. Will passed his creds over. "You can get us the time alone, yeah."

Tab nodded, his grin growing. "Could do it the other way round," he said, walking away to buy the time.

He couldn't hear Will's boots following him, knew he'd caught Will off guard, and could just imagine the look on the kid's face. He wasn't going to give Will the satisfaction of turning around, though and by the time he'd bought them fifteen uninterrupted minutes of hot, Will was next to him, looking casual.

"Down on the end," Tab said with a grin, pointing the way. "Better hurry, that's a lot of washing we have to do." He smirked and started walking, peeling off his coat as he went and tugging his shirt out of his pants.

"You just want me to take my own pants off," Will accused, strolling casually like he had all the time in the damned universe.

"I'm getting better at that!" Tab protested. He was. It just really helped if he'd already gotten off before he tried to figure out the complicated locking system Will used to keep his cock out of the general view. "Damn things."

Will just laughed and pushed him up against the far wall of their shower stall. Six or eight could typically fit into these things at a time, but that's what they paid the extra creds for - privacy. Will backed off before the water started and began to strip, grinning at him the whole time. Oh, he was in a *good* mood.

Tab pulled off his own clothes, not wasting time actually untying his boots, just kicking them aside. He heard a growl as he shoved his pants off his hips, his prick filling rapidly, and realized it was himself. He winked at Will and changed the growl to a purr as he stepped into the shower just as the water started. "Come and get me, baby."

Will launched himself at Tab again, mouth attaching as arms went around his neck, and Tab grinned, his mouth opening wide, letting Will kiss him. He grabbed that sweet ass and gave it a squeeze, rubbing up against all that smooth skin. Will's moans filled his mouth, and one leg was hooked around the back of his, Will just going to town.

Tab pulled back, laughing. "So... you don't want to fuck me?" he asked, dragging a finger between Will's butt cheeks and pressing at his hole. "Gonna take it?" Not that Tab cared - he'd happily fuck Will into the wall again. And again.

"Like doing you lying down," Will told him, legs spreading for him.

"Like doing you anyway I can," Tab growled, pushing his finger into Will's ass. "Standing, bending, lying down... handcuffed to my wall..." His cock throbbed at the thought and he fingered Will a little more roughly.

Will cried out, rubbing against him. "Come on, Tab. Fuck me."

"Hang on," Tab instructed, lifting Will's other leg. He guided his cock to Will's tight little hole with one hand and started pushing in. "God, yeah. Christ--" He looked around for lube, sinking into Will anyway. Man was going to kill him, after.

"Fuck, Tab." Will whacked Tab's back, eyes closing up, but he was letting gravity pull him down, wincing once before settling and moving a bit. "Asshole."

"Yours," Tab pointed out. "Want me to stop?"

"Fuck, no." Will's eyes popped open to glare at him. "Just... take it easy the first few."

"That's my slut," Tab groaned, pushing in a little more. He turned Will's back to the wall and bent his own legs, starting to slide and thrust. "Tight," he grunted.

Will just groaned, fingers hard on Tab's back, head thrown back against the wall exposing his throat. It was too tempting to pass up, and Tab leaned in, sucking up a mark and biting down as he fucked Will's ass. He surrounded himself with Will's body, with Will's scent and taste.

Will soon started meeting his thrusts, sweet little grunts coming from him that made Tab that much harder. Tight and hot and so fucking responsive, Will was definitely the best fuck of his life. Tab pushed a hand between them, reaching for Will's cock. "Good," he gasped, pushing harder.

"Fuck. Yes." Will nodded and whimpered and rode him like a wild man. The hot water streamed down onto them, adding that exotic twist to the whole thing.

"Come on," Tab moaned, pounding into him, tugging hard on Will's cock. "Gonna pop," he warned. "Too fucking tight to last." He pushed in hard a few more times, a growl building in his chest.

Will whimpered and brought their mouths together, pushing a hard, needy kiss onto him. Then his ass went tight as tight could be and Will was pushing noise into his mouth and coming hard.

Tab couldn't even wait for Will to finish, just went off right after the first squeeze, shooting deep. "Fuck, baby," he grunted, trying like hell to thrust right through their orgasms but not making it. "God damn." He was grateful for the water spilling over them, washing away the sweat and come, easing them down. Thankful for the heat on his leg, too; stupid thing to do, fucking Will like that. Funny how he knew he'd do it again, though.

Will moaned softly, holding tightly to him, face buried in his neck. Tab kissed him, licked his shoulder and neck until Will let him kiss his mouth. He moved and eased out of Will's ass with groan. "Got to put you down, baby."

Will nodded, helping with that, using the wall to lean against. "Fuck. That was nice."

Smiling, Tab nodded. "Hell, yeah. And there's even time to wash this time. Something to be said for a fast fuck."

Will laughed, eyes dancing and happy. "You'd have been happy as long as we fucked."

"Well, yeah," Tab said, too satiated to fight about it. Besides, it was true. "You, too," he pointed out, reaching for the soap.

"Oh, I'm a little pickier," Will pointed out, letting Tab soap his smooth body up.

Tab snorted. "Baby, you're so picky you crawled right up me and begged. Please."

"Don't be an asshole, we were having a moment here."

"Oh, sorry." Tab grinned as he lathered up. "I must have missed it. Yes, you're picky about your fucking, baby. Just so long as it's me in your ass, you can be as picky as you like."

Will grinned lazily. "Looks like you're picky about my fucking, too."

"Guess I am." Tab leaned forward and took a long, slow kiss. "Get clean. So we can go back to the ship and get dirty again."

"Sounds like a plan." Will took the soap and lathered himself up, making his skin all slippery.

Tab eyed him. There wasn't really enough time... "Want some help?" he offered anyway. "Wash your back? What little hair you have left?"

Will laughed. "We're gonna lose the water soon, Tab." Still, he was handed the soap and Will turned his back.

"So we'll be quick," Tab promised, gliding slippery hands over Will's back and around to his chest. He brushed over Will's nipples and went right down to cup his cock and balls. "And then we'll go right back to the ship."

Will groaned, leaning back against him, hands coming up to wrap around his neck. Such a sensual fucker once he let you in.

"That's it," Tab purred, playing with Will's cock. He tugged gently and rolled the man's balls. "Love touching you."

Will groaned and rubbed that ass against him. "Get me rinsed, Tab."

It was an order, but Tab knew it was more because Will didn't want to get caught naked and soapy when their time was up and the water quit and their privacy was no longer guaranteed. He urged them under the water, leaning back just enough that water slipped between them as well as over Will's chest. He didn't let go of Will's cock though, just kept stroking with a loose fist. "Better? All clean?"

"Uh-huh." Not that Will had to say it, he could feel it in the way Will relaxed back against him, hips starting to push his cock through Tab's fingers.

Tab smirked and tightened his hand, speeding up a little and thumbing the tip. "Gonna shoot for me again, flyboy? Come on, give it up for me. Want to see." He dragged his teeth over Will's neck again, teasing.

Will whimpered, moving faster, head tilted back again. "Fuck. Tab."

"Uh huh. Fuck. Tab. Both very important words, especially when used together." He pumped Will's cock and gave his balls another squeeze. "I got you presents," he said softly. "Stuff to play with later..."

"Shit." Will shuddered, cock spraying out over his hand. Then he had an armful of limp, naked man.

"Good boy," Tab laughed. "Such a hot little slut." He chuckled and turned Will in the water to rinse him off and then kissed him again. "Are you all melted now?"

"You're going to have to carry me home," Will threatened, doing some serious leaning and appearing very mellow.

"Last time I did that, I fucked up my leg," Tab pointed out. "But I can try." He ran his hands over Will again and nuzzled him, willing to cuddle for as long as there was hot water.

"Nah. You're only allowed to carry me when I'm drunk and recalcitrant. Otherwise I'll shoot your ass."

"You haven't been recalcitrant in ages," Tab observed. "Down right malleable, actually. And you wouldn't shoot my ass, you like it too much."

"Don't make any bets on that." Of course it was hard to believe Will when he was busy nuzzling back.

Tab grinned. "If you say so, Captain. Say, does the water go cold before it shuts off, or does it just go off?"

"It just-" The water ran out and Will chuckled. "Goes off."

"Like you."

Will slugged him in the arm. "Asshole."

"And again..." Tab laughed and kissed Will's nose. "Come on, before I get any more girly. Let's go fuck on a bed, yeah? Maybe even have something to eat."

"You could eat me," Will suggested, tugging on his clothes with a quick efficiency.

"Or you could eat my ass," Tab shot back, reaching for his shirt. "You already got off twice. Christ."

"Yeah and you had just a terrible time while that was going on." Will snorted and gave him a look that asked why he wasn't dressed yet, they had places to go.

"Didn't say I didn't have fun," Tab said mildly as he dressed. "Just saying it might be time to expand your horizons a bit more. That's all."

Will gave him a look. "You complaining about what we do in the sack, Tab?"

"Nope." Like Tab hadn't seen that coming. "Just asking for what I want for once, instead of just... wanting."

"All right, I'll put it on my to do list."

Tab raised an eyebrow. "What else is on that list?"

Will snorted. "Paperwork, make sure everyone gets paid. Keep your ass in line... should I go on?"

"Only if there's nakedness." Tab did up his pants and shoved his feet into his boots. "You're working too hard again."

Will rolled his eyes and started down the hall. "The Arillia doesn't run herself, Tab."

"I know," Tab said. "Just saying it sucks that sex has to go on a list or happen in a fifteen minute time frame." He shrugged. "Whatever. Did you tell Jinx to order the rations for the next trip?"

"Yeah, I took care of it. And you *are* complaining about what we do in the sack." Will shot him a glare and sped up as they went round a bend and the Arillia came into sight.

"I am not!" Tab stared and charged right after him. "Jesus Christ, I got you off twice, opened up enough to tell you what I want to try, bought you toys, and *you* get all defensive. What the flying fuck am I supposed to do to make you happy, Will?"

"Nothing, okay? If it's such a hardship fucking with me then just don't do it, okay?"

Tab growled and grabbed Will's arm, spinning him around and pulling him close. "Now, I was just up your ass, so I'm pretty fucking sure there isn't an actual stick there. What the hell is the problem now, Will? You want to have a temper tantrum, you go right ahead, but you sure as hell don't put words in my mouth and make it my fault, you hear?"

"You're the one complaining about how often we do it, Tab. Bitchin' about my work. You knew the deal when you signed on. And excuse me, but do I or do I not show up at least once every twenty four hour cycle? Now let go of me -- I've got stuff to do on the bridge."

"I am not!" Tab yelled. "Do you *ever* listen to me?" He let go of Will's arm and stepped back. "Fine, go," he said waving to the ramp. "Don't bother coming looking for me later, either, I'll be busy working on your fucking engines."

Fuck.

Just... fuck.

"That's just fine -- won't be the first time I sleep on the bridge." He got another glare and then Will was banging his way up the gangplank.

Tab swore and resisted the urge to punch a wall. Fuck. He had no idea what had just happened or how it was his fault; worse, he had no idea how to fix it. He glared at the ship and turned on his heel, heading back into the port. He needed a drink.

Chapter Two

Will eased the Arillia into autopilot, made sure the proximity alarm was set as high as it would go and relaxed back into the pilot's chair.

His back was stiff and sore from sleeping on the stupid hard as nuts and bolts bench that passed for a couch in the captain's office. He should have replaced it by now, because this certainly wasn't the first time he'd slept there, but most of the time he slept with Tab, so he figured it could wait until he had a few more creds floating around.

He should have known that he and Tab would wind up growling at each other sooner than later, leaving him back on that stupid bench.

Things had been going so well, too.

He wasn't even sure what had gone wrong this time. They'd been showering and fucking and feeling just fine and then Tab had started in on how he didn't give enough in bed, how he should be rimming Tab more and stuff. Well excuse the fuck out of him.

Maybe he did know what had gone wrong after all and maybe he was still more than a little upset about it.

And Tab saying how he never opened up and told Will what he wanted -- the man did exactly what he wanted all the time in bed, Will didn't know what his problem was. The more he thought about it, the madder he was getting and when Jinx came in for his shift a half hour later, Will growled.

"Now wait a minute, Will. You're clearly pissed off, but I don't think it's with me. Go find Tab and have it out with him."

Will glared. "What makes you think this has anything to do with Tab?"

Jinx rolled his eyes. "Because I'm not stupid and he's in about as bad a mood as you are. Not to mention you've been holed up here since we left space dock. Not to mention --"

"All right, all right." Will cut Jinx off. "Page me if you need me."

"Will do, Boss."

Jinx gave him a wink and Will grumbled and took off for engineering. Jinx was right, he needed to talk to Tab, or growl at Tab and screw Tab to the wall instead of taking it out on everyone else.

He found Tab sitting on his bed with papers spread all around him that looked like engine specs. Tab made a change on one and, without even looking up, said, "What do you want?"

Oh, this wasn't a good idea. Tab's whole attitude was dismissive and it just made him see red. Will figured he didn't want to sock the man in the head, so he just ground out, "Nothing," and turned on his heel, heading back the way he'd come, muttering and growling as he went.

He heard the squeak of springs as Tab climbed off the bed, snarling and grumbling just as loud as he was. "Will," Tab called, stepping out of his quarters and into the passage.

He froze, glaring at the wall a moment before crossing his arms and turning.

"What did you want?" Tab asked again, his voice quieter. Softer. He stood still, not coming any closer, and it appeared that he was trying not to look so pissed off. He still did, of course, but the effort was visible.

It made Will make an effort of his own. He took a step forward. "I've been growling and angry at everyone since... well, lately."

Tab nodded stiffly. "I've heard the same. About you and me, both."

"Yeah. Well, I figured instead of taking it out on everyone I'd go right to the source." Man, this was hard, not just lashing out and calling Tab onto the carpet like he wanted to.

One of Tab's eyebrows went up. "Just so we're clear, does that mean you're here to take it out on me or try to straighten out this mess?"

His hands curled into fists and he glared. "If I was here to take it out on you, you'd already be flat on your ass."

Tab blinked and then started to laugh. "Sure, Will," he said with a grin. And then the bastard turned around and went back into his quarters.

"What the? Hey, asshole, what the fuck is so funny?" Will went after Tab, his resolve to straighten stuff out and not take it out on Tab fading fast.

Tab was gathering up the specs and still laughing. "You couldn't take me down with help, Will. Might as well stop thinking you could."

Growling, just pissed right off, he leapt at Tab, intent on knocking him down onto the bed.

The laughing stopped and Tab turned, his arm swinging around to grab a shelf for balance and his hip twisting suddenly. Will landed on the bed, but just as fast Tab was on him, pinning him down by the shoulders. Tab's face was maybe an inch from his, eyes flashing. "See? Now, let's try this again, flyboy. You want to fight or do you want to fuck? Both?"

Dammit, how did Tab *do* that? "Asshole!" he accused, bucking up hard with his body, arms trying to get out of Tab's grip.

"You need to expand your vocabulary," Tab pointed out, keeping him in place and pushing a knee between Will's legs. "So, what's it going to be, *Captain*?"

"Fuck off," he muttered. He wanted to fight, wanted to lash out at Tab for being such a jerk sometimes, but now that he was caught under the man's strength... well, he wanted to fuck, didn't he?

"Fuck off and let go, get off my ship and get out of my life, or fuck off and fuck me?" Tab asked, his knee moving up to rub at Will's balls.

He closed his eyes tight. "Fuck me," he ground out between clenched teeth. Damn Tab to hell anyway.

"No."

His eyes flew open. "What?" He bucked, angrier than ever. "Get the fuck off me!"

"Not until you hear why, Will. Not until I know you hear *me*."

He fought for another moment and then lay still, panting, glaring, just ready to plow Tab the minute the man let him go.

"Listening yet, or are you busy being pissed off? Because I can wait." Tab looked down at him. "This stops right now, Will. I won't let you keep playing me like this. You listen or I leave next time we hit a port. Period."

"Playing you? I'm not fucking playing you!" What the hell was this?

Tab sighed and rolled off him. "You like me well enough to get off with, Will, but you don't like me well enough to bother trying to understand the rest. And I won't just fuck around with someone who doesn't even like me. You can go now, if you want."

"I'm mad at you so I automatically don't like you?" Will was almost sputtering. "I know I've got issues, but buddy, so do you." Will struggled up and got off the bed, walking out without looking back. What a jerk. Dammit why did he even like Tab anyway? Because for some fucked up reason he did. He hauled off and hit the wall, about as hard as he could and oh, shit, that had not been bright, because he thought maybe he'd broken something in his hand.

"Nice shot," Tab said from his doorway. His eyes looked kind of dead and his shoulders were slumped. "You should get someone to look at that for you."

"What do you care?"

Tab shrugged. "I care," he said simply. "But I don't think I can live like this anymore. You're getting pale; go get Jinx or someone you trust to check for broken bones."

"You're the only person I trust," he pointed out, sinking down against the wall, eyes filling from the pain of his hand or the hurt inside, he wasn't sure which, but it didn't really matter anyway.

He heard Tab walk toward him, felt the man settle next to him. "Then how come it feels like I'm the only one trying here, Will? I... I suck at this stuff. But at least I tell you shit. Try to show you parts of me no one else gets to see. And you... if we're not fucking, you're pissed as hell at me. This ain't fun, baby. It just hurts."

"That's not true, Tab. I'm not pissed at you all the time. We have good times together. I thought we did, anyway." He didn't know what he was doing wrong, what exactly Tab wanted from him. And the pain in his hand was starting to make him feel woozy, it was taking over. "What do you want from me?"

"I want you to..." Tab sighed. "When I suck it up enough to ask for something from you, I want you not to get defensive and assume I'm saying I'm not happy with what we do. Because I am. I really, really am. But right then I wanted something specific, bad enough that I asked. At which point you got pissed off over nothing and stormed off, and here we are. Is your hand broken?"

Will nodded. "Might be," he answered, cradling it. He looked across at the engines, noting they were swimming pretty good and he really didn't want to cry in front of Tab. "It wasn't nothing to me, Tab. How am I supposed to just open up, if when I do show emotions they're dismissed?"

"When did I dismiss you?" Tab asked softly. "When I took care of you after you were raped? When I held you and let you cry? When I give you what you need? Because I sure as fuck spend a lot of my time *not* dismissing you."

"You just said I got upset over nothing -- it wasn't nothing to me, Tab. It wasn't." He started crying for real now, and it was because his hand hurt so fucking much, not because he was scared Tab was going to go away, scared he wasn't, not sure which one terrified him more.

Tab didn't say anything for a long moment, and when he did, he sounded honestly baffled. "What was it then? I didn't mean I wasn't getting enough out of what we do in bed, and I said so. I told you that wasn't what I meant, and you were still pissed off, didn't believe me. I'm lost here, Will."

"Yeah, well, I guess I could have let it go after you said you didn't mean it," he admitted.

"It's not easy though, Tab. I'm supposed to be your Captain and the things I let you do to me..." He shook his head. He didn't know how to explain this, wasn't sure he was willing to try, not even for Tab, not even for himself. And especially now when who knew what the pain would have coming out of his mouth.

Tab shook his head. "We're not talking about that right now, we're talking about..." Tab stopped and peered at him, his head tilted to the side. "Are we? Is that what it's all about? Not if we're fucking or not, but *how* we do it?"

Will shrugged. He was on shaky ground and his hand was just throbbing and he thought maybe he was going to pass out or throw up. Or both.

Tab sighed. "All right. This is entirely fucked up. Come on, let's go to the galley and get you drunk enough that I can look at your hand. Jinx is going to have to pull a double shift."

"Forget the drinking, just look at it. I can't start missing shifts. People will talk."

Tab snorted. "They talk now. And you can't fly if it really is broken, Will. Besides, getting pissed at me and hitting a wall is something they'd believe." But Tab turned around to sit against the opposite wall and held out his hand expectantly.

He put his hand in Tab's, whimpering at the pain.

"Shhh," Tab soothed, the fingers of his other hand carefully feeling around Will's wrist and then making their slow way down the back of his hand toward his fingers. "Just scream if it hurts," he said, gaze locked on what he was doing.

"It hurts," Will said through clenched teeth. "But nothing sharp. Fuck! There."

Tab nodded. "Hold your breath or something," he said, working his way around the spot. It was near a knuckle and already swollen up, hot and too large. "Going to press harder now," Tab warned. "See if it's a break or not."

"Am I allowed to call you an asshole now?" he asked, gritting his teeth.

"Nope. Fucking hate that," Tab said absently, pressing down with the tips of his fingers. "Good news, can't feel a fracture. But at a guess I'd say you cracked a bone, though."

He nodded, leaning his head back against the wall. He could feel the tears leaking out and down his cheeks. "Scared," he admitted quietly, feeling safe enough to say it in the haze the pain had him in. Damn it.

"Of what?" Tab whispered, leaning closer. He cradled Will's hand carefully in his own, making sure it didn't get bumped.

He was quiet a long moment, kind of floating in and out of the pain from his hand.
"Getting hurt."

"Everyone is," Tab said, his voice still quiet. "I am."

"You? No way."

Tab nodded. "Of course. Why do you think I suck so much at this? Ran the other way any time anyone got close, Will. I'm probably more scared than you are -- I'm the one threatening to leave. But I... I'm hurting the way things are now."

Will sniffed. "I don't know what to do, Tab."

"I don't either, baby." Tab admitted. He looked serious and sad and more tired than he had in a long time. "I just know... I *want* it to work. Want to know you and feel like you know me."

Will nodded. "Me, too. I never." He took a deep breath. "I never cared about anyone before, Tab."

Tab nodded, apparently unsurprised. "New ground," he said softly. "So what do we do first?"

"I think I want that drink now." Or a handful of painkillers. He might even go for that letting Jinx work a double thing.

"Sure. I think I'll have a couple myself." Tab let his hand go, making sure Will had it braced, then stood up. "Come on," he said, bending over to help Will stand. "Let's get drunk. Um, the ladder won't be fun; you're going to have to let me help."

"You think I should do that? I could just stand at the bottom here, looking manly and independent."

Tab snorted. "Funny. Jackass."

"It was a joke, you know. I make a lot of them that you seem to not get and wind up taking offense at." If Tab was allowed to say what bugged him, he was, too. It was only fair.

"I knew it was a joke," Tab said patiently. "I just didn't think it was funny. *I* was being sarcastic. So there." He stuck his tongue out at Will.

Will stuck his out in return. Asshole.

He took a few steps and closed his eyes, good hand reaching out to the wall. "Okay. Drinks or painkillers. Either way I need something. Now."

Tab sighed. "All right. Stay here. And I swear to fuck if I wind up in the brig I'll kill your ass, understand?"

He raised an eyebrow. "Well *I* won't put you there."

"Good enough." Tab turned on his heel and went back to his quarters, not wasting time. He was in there for a good long time, though, and when he came back he had one tiny pill on the palm of his hand. "Might as well come back," he said. "You take this and you'll be flying for a few hours."

"What is it?" he asked, not really caring, he'd had just about all he could take today.

"Wizdom," Tab admitted. "Which is why you're only getting one."

He nodded. "Someone slipped me some once." He gave Tab a look. "I know you aren't going to take advantage of me. Not that I'm asking you not to or hoping you won't, I *know*. Okay?" It was a big admission, he thought.

"Okay," Tab said, nodding once. "Take it, I'll tuck you in, tell Jinx he's got a double, and then... well, I'll watch over you. Make sure you don't fly too high."

"Thanks." He sat on Tab's bed and made another admission. "It's not that I don't want to fuck you, but I want to be able to remember it tomorrow."

Tab grinned. "Can always do it again tomorrow," he said. He got serious again and urged Will to lay back on the pillows. "It'll be okay, flyboy. Promise. Do you want to stay dressed or not, though? Once you go up, it'll be a production if you change your mind."

"Naked. I seem to remember feeling like my clothes were strangling me." He shuddered. It hadn't been a pleasant experience. He was halfway tempted to tell Tab now that he wanted to make love while he was high, but he was worried that once he was, he would flash back to the last time and it would not be good.

Tab gave him a long look, his eyes softened with understanding. "I promise not to hurt you," he whispered, leaning over Will to unbutton his shirt. "No matter what happens, I won't hurt you when you're up."

Will nodded and leaned against Tab, burying his face in the man's shoulder. "I know." And he did. He knew.

Tab slipped a warm hand into his shirt and across his belly. "Promise," he whispered again, petting Will gently.

Will just leaned, eyes closed, focus shifting from his throbbing hand to the soft touches.

Slowly, Tab undressed him, the usual fight with Will's pants only a blip on the radar as Tab soothed him with touches everywhere. Across his belly, brushing a nipple, even rubbing across his cock as he was stripped naked; it was all designed to distract him until sliding the shirt past his hand couldn't be avoided. "Time, baby," Tab murmured. "Hang on. You can take the pill right after."

He nodded and gritted his teeth again, staring at the gunmetal grey of the bulkhead beyond Tab's shoulder. "Just do it."

Tab held his breath; Will could feel it, the utter stillness of everything but the man's hands as he eased the fabric to Will's wrist then lifted his forearm carefully. Tab exhaled as he removed the shirt, doing it fast but managing not to jerk Will's hand or arm. "Okay?" he asked, almost sounding anxious.

"Uh-huh." He closed his eyes. "Pill, Tab. Please."

"Open," Tab said immediately, and then the pill was on Will's tongue. "We have about ten minutes; five if you haven't eaten in a while. I'm going to go use the comm, tell Jinx the basics and that he's got a double at least. I'll be back before you fly."

He swallowed the pill down and grabbed onto Tab's arm with his good hand. "Thanks," he said, meeting Tab's eyes.

Tab met his look and held it. "You're welcome," he said, and Will got the idea that Tab meant it, that the thank you itself meant a lot. "I'll be right back," Tab said softly, pulling away.

He nodded and sat down on Tab's bed, lay back onto the mattress and stared at the ceiling.

Waiting for the pill to take away the pain, the fear, everything.

Tab left Will on the bed and ran to the comm over in engineering so he didn't disturb Will, as fuck only knew what the sound would do to the man as he started to fly, intending to just let Jinx know what had happened and then get back to his quarters to lock them in. As he reached the comm, however, he realized he really should have iced Will's hand so he made a quick turn and headed to the galley, looking for a coldpak. He was going just about as fast as he could, and he figured he maybe looked like he was panicking, the way the others kind of stared at him as he flew in.

"Captain got pissed and hit a wall," he said shortly, going to the cabinets. "Cracked a

bone. Someone tell Jinx, yeah? Will's got a tab of Wizdom in him and I'm babysitting until he lands." He found a coldpack and broke it to make it active, then turned to face them. "Not one fucking word about it." He assumed they knew he meant the drugs -- the teasing for making Will so mad he cracked his hand would go on for weeks.

"Okay," Teller said slowly. "But if we're gonna catch shit because you have it--"

"Four pills," Tab said. "I break 'em, take parts for my leg. That's why I lock myself in when it's bad and vanish for my full off time." And wound up stroking off about a dozen times, too; sometimes it just hit that way. He had no idea if Will was going to be silly, pissy, horny, or what. "Later," Tab said, heading out. "I gotta go. Tell Jinx!"

He heard someone getting on the comm, laughing as he went, and hurried back down the ladder. He was at a near run when he got to his quarters, hoping Will hadn't gotten too high by then. He wasn't really sure what a full pill would do to Will.

Will was lying on his bed, blinking up at the ceiling. "Tab? It still hurts -- how long is this supposed to take?"

"Few more minutes," Tab said, relieved he'd gotten there before they really kicked in. "I got cold stuff for your hand," he offered, climbing on the bed and carefully resting Will's hand against the coldpack. "It'll help with the swelling." He glanced back at the door and got up to lock it.

Will hissed a little. "Cold!" Then he got a grin. "Just keep it away from anything important, k?"

Tab grinned. "Like your head? Your foot?" He sat on the edge of the bed and looked Will over. "Feel sick at all?"

Will shook his head and then went "Oh... Oh, that was... strange."

Tab nodded. "Can be kind of weird. Strange good or strange bad?" He found himself oddly interested in Will's reactions -- he'd never really witnessed anyone on Wizdom and didn't have anything but his own experiences to go by.

"Kind of dizzy strange. I'm not sure I like it..."

"Okay, don't do that again," Tab suggested with a grin. "Close your eyes, maybe. Want me to hold onto you?"

Will nodded and gasped, good hand reaching out for him. "Tab. Fuck. Don't let anyone touch me, okay? Just you. Please."

Tab nodded and jerked his shirts off over his head. "No one. Promise. I locked the door,

and you're safe," he said, stretching out next to Will. He toed off his boots and let them thump on the floor. "No one is going to hurt you, baby."

"Nobody but you," muttered Will, eyes kind of rolling in his head a little.

Tab slipped an arm around Will's waist. "Flying?" he asked softly. "What's it feel like? Loose and free?" He always felt that way, like he could do anything, for hours and hours.

"Feels like sex with you."

Tab had no idea what to say to that. He glanced down at Will's dick and watched it fill for a moment. "I'll take that to mean it feels okay," he said.

Will giggled. "Uh-huh."

"Oh great. Silly *and* horny," Tab sighed. "Let go, Will. I got a feeling I'm wearing too many clothes."

Will nodded. "Any's too many. Gonna make a new rule. No clothes for you."

"Well, it's a nice thought," Tab said as he stood up and undid his pants. "Little impractical, though. Can't work on an engine without pants."

"Why not?" Will asked, hand reaching for his cock as soon as he pushed down his pants.

"Easy," Tab squeaked, dodging him. "Just play with your own prick for a while -- I'm not going to keep up, anyway. And pants have pockets, which are very useful things."

Will seemed to consider that, hand sliding down along his own body. "You could stick stuff up your ass."

Tab stared at him. "Christ. I might need back-up."

Will blinked up at him. "Something's wrong with your back? Let me see."

Tab rolled his eyes. "My back is fine, thank you. I meant I don't know if I'm going to be able to... ah, the hell with it." He crawled onto the bed and sucked Will's cock into his mouth. Maybe if Will got off nice and fast he'd make more sense until he got hard again.

Will cried out and bucked, driving his cock deep. "Tab. Fuck. Yes. Oh, God."

Tab was ready for that, pretty sure that if Will was suggesting that Tab stick things up his own ass -- and not being an asshole about it -- his inhibitions were shot to shit. He sucked harder and ran his tongue over the head of Will's cock, not bothering to play. He was pretty sure he'd be sucking Will off again soon. His jaw was going to hate him.

Will's hands dropped to his head and then Will was crying out in pain this time, curling up over his hurt hand.

Tab came off Will's cock and started whispering, reaching for the elbow of the hurt hand. "Sorry, baby. Shhh, it's going to be okay. Shhh." He dropped a few kisses on Will's mouth as he held the arm still. "You're not going to remember to keep this on ice, are you?"

Will just moaned and bit his lip, soft whimpers sounding. "*Hurts.*"

"Uh huh. You have to keep it still, and the coldpak will help..." Tab looked around the room and sighed. "Will?"

"That's my name. You can call me Captain in bed though." Will was back to giggling, hurt seeming forgotten again.

"I *do* call you Captain in bed," Tab said evenly. "I just won't when you've got your cock up my ass. Now pay attention. I'm going to tie your arm down, baby. Keep it still."

"Oh, we're playing games, are we?" Will asked, laughing. "You going to tie me up and fuck me raw?"

"Nope." Well, maybe. "Just keep you from hurting." He rolled away from Will as best he could, looking for something to tie up Will's arm with. He had a length of cord, but he wasn't sure it would work.

Will leaned over and grabbed his ass, cold fingers sliding along his crease.

"Gotcha."

"Will!" Tab turned around and decided that the cord was going to have to do. "We do *nothing* until that hand is safe, you hear me?"

Will stuck out his tongue. "Worrywart."

Tab ignored that. He wasn't a worrywart. "Just want to suck you off without you screaming in pain," he said, grabbing the cord. "Hold still and keep your hands to yourself."

"Spoilsport," Will offered instead, pouting at him.

"You're down to one word sentences, you know." Tab straddled Will's belly and leaned forward, holding onto his elbow again. "Stay still," he ordered, securing the cord to the frame and winding it around Will's forearm. "Should get those cuffs for the other one."

Will blew him a raspberry and then giggled and did it again, eyes crossing as he tried to look down at his mouth.

"Cute," Tab commented, trying to make sure Will's skin wasn't pinched by the cord or that he wasn't cutting off his circulation. "How's this feel?" He kicked himself mentally. Like Will would know how anything felt at the moment.

Will sort of bucked up against him. "More."

"More what?" Tab asked. He wasn't doing anything.

"Touching!" Will said it like it was crazy that Tab hadn't figured it out himself.

Tab looked down at his hands and then at Will. "Um. Just let me finish tying you down, 'kay? Then I'll touch you." He hoped to hell that the cord wasn't too tight and set to work knotting it off.

"Perv," Will accused this time, though there was no heat in his voice, just giggling satisfaction.

"You need more words," Tab informed him. "And who's more perverse -- the man who ties or the one who's near coming from being tied?" He grinned and moved off Will's body. "Going to try this again, okay?"

"Hurry," muttered Will, writhing on the bed, rubbing against the sheets. "Need."

"Words," Tab said again. But he shifted on the bed and lowered his head once more, taking Will right into his mouth and starting where he'd stopped.

Will shouted out and started humping again, free hand coming down to keep his head in place.

That was better. Not words, but actions Tab didn't have to think about to understand. He opened his mouth wide, let Will fuck his face, and just rode it out. He figured it would be quick, then they could regroup and he could decide what his conscience would or wouldn't allow.

It wasn't long before Will was crying out, hot spunk shooting down the back of his throat. Tab swallowed, mostly out of reflex, but noting he loved the feel of it. He licked Will's cock and looked up at him with a grin. "Better?"

Will's hips still moved lazily and he was given a shit eating, happy grin. "Love you," said Will, eyes glazed over, voice soft.

Tab nodded to himself. Silly, horny and sex-stupid. He hoped. "That's better," he said wiggling up next to Will. "Two words."

Will rubbed against him, free hand sliding on him, pinching his nipples almost absently.

"Baby..." Tab warned. "How am I supposed to keep an eye on you when you're doing that?" He couldn't quite make himself stop pushing into the touches, though, couldn't stop his cock from sliding on Will's hip.

"Eye? No, want hands." Will's pupils had gone huge, almost swallowing up the grey of his eyes and there was a permanent grin on his face.

Tab laughed and ran his hand over Will's chest, then down to his cock. "Where should I touch?" he teased. "Here? Your ass? Your thighs? Maybe a nice foot massage?" He didn't think that last one was going to be picked.

"Yes." Will nodded enthusiastically, eyes widening at the motion. "Oh, wow. Cool." Will nodded again, eyes unfocussed, cock filling.

"You're tripping," Tab pointed out, stroking Will's cock slowly. "What do you see?"

Will's hips found his rhythm. "Spinning. Spinning."

"Close your eyes," Tab said again, without any real hope that Will would. "You'll make yourself sick. Just... feel, instead of look, okay?"

"But 's pretty," complained Will.

"Just don't puke on me, then." Tab sat up a bit and ran his thumb over the head of Will's cock. Vaguely, he realized he hadn't grabbed the lube yet.

"Puke? Ewww." Will was laughing again, body arching and stretching, pushing that long cock through his fingers.

"Yeah, ew," Tab agreed. "Come on, Will. Gonna shoot for me again or play for a bit this time?"

"Gonna fuck me?" Oh, that was begging if he ever heard it.

Tab had that brief struggle with his conscience and managed to wait all of about three seconds before he said, "Yeah. Nice and slow."

"Okay. Now." Will's legs spread open for him, smooth and easy.

Tab grinned. "Slut," he said affectionately, reaching for the lube. It was under the bed

again, and he had to lean way over Will to get to it, so he sucked on the man's nipple while he felt around for the tube.

Will didn't argue, just rolled up into him, moaning and pushing into his mouth.

The lube finally located, Tab dragged his teeth over Will's nipple again and lifted his head. "Slow," he said again. "I won't hurt you."

"Like it when *you* do. Sometimes."

Tab raised an eyebrow. "Not now, though. Won't hurt you when you're not in your right mind, Will." He so didn't want to talk about hurting Will. Ever. It was one of those things they did when it felt good and then pretended it hadn't made them both come so hard they felt faint.

"Don't want you to fuck my mind, Tab. Just my ass." Will was giggling again and the sound broke off into a gasp, hips pushing harder against his hand.

"Right," Tab said to himself. "We're back to that." He let go of Will completely and knelt between his spread legs, popping the top on the lube. "Relax, Captain. You're going to take off before me if you're not careful."

"Already did. Flying, Tab. It's cool."

Tab shook his head. "All right, if you say so." He slid a slick finger into Will's ass. "I'll just do my own thing, then." He grinned down and watched Will's body take him in, easy as anything.

Will moaned and kept moving, fucking himself on Tab's finger. Shit, the man was loose like this. Tab slipped another two fingers into Will, making sure he was open. "Soft," he said, mostly to himself. "God, it's nice, baby."

Will just grunted, kept moving. His eyes were closed now, a look of concentration on his face.

Curious, Tab started stroking him with his other hand, playing loosely with Will's cock as he began to massage Will's gland. He pushed his fingers in, rubbed Will's prostate, and then pulled out to do it again and again.

"Oh, fuck," whispered Will, moving more wildly between his hands.

Tab smiled. "Oh yeah," he said, working Will a little faster. "Bet you could take more, too. One day when you don't have a broken hand we'll get you all nice and loose with some toys, baby. Bet you could take my hand." The words were deliberate, timed with his fingers pressing against Will's hot spot.

Will shouted, entire body bucking as he shot, come splashing onto his belly.

Tab pulled his fingers out and shoved his cock in, riding Will's orgasm. "Like that idea?" he said, panting and staring down at Will's face.

Will's eyes opened, the grey a bare ring around the black pupil. "Tab... fuck. Need you." Will's hips bucked, sending him deeper inside the tight heat of Will's body.

"Got me," Tab managed, feeling like all the air had been sucked from the room as he began to thrust. "Oh fuck, Will. Feel good."

"Uh-huh. Uh-huh." Will panted and nodded, moving like a dream beneath him.

Tab had to remind himself that Will was flying high, on another plane. He made sure he was thrusting deep, but he kept it slow, until his own legs started to shake. "I'm gonna come," he said softly, his breath coming in gasps. "Sorry. I'll do it again soon." His eyes drifted closed and he felt his cock getting harder, filling Will up and sliding deep.

Will just purred, free hand moving to stroke his own cock, hot body squeezing him tight.

Tab watched, trying to detach himself, to make it last, but he couldn't. His hips sped and he could feel his balls, tight and hot as they got ready to spill. "Will," he panted. "I'm--" He lost words as he started to come, his blood surging and roaring as he came in Will's ass, spunk just exploding out of him.

"Oh, shit, I feel you, feel it all."

Will's hand sped and sped and in moments he shot again, just a trickle of come this time, but his cock didn't go down, the lean body moving, muscles flexing, releasing.

It was going to be a long night.

Someone was pounding Will's head with a hammer. They were doing a pretty good number on his hand, too, and he tried to pull it toward him, but he couldn't.

He couldn't. It was tied up above his head. Jerking at it, he managed to get his eyes open, groaning at the pain in his head, his stomach rolling a little. Fuck. Fuck, he'd been drugged.

He was naked too, struggling to sit, shivering as the covers slid off him.

"Shhh, baby." A hand landed on his belly stroking softly. "Shh, you're okay. Be calm, let

me get your arm free, 'kay?" And there was Tab, large and sleepy next to him, sitting up and looking at him with worried eyes. "Hang on."

"Oh. Oh, fuck. Okay." He nodded, letting his eyes close as he slumped back to the bed. It was okay, he was with Tab. He'd hurt his hand. He'd taken the drugs on purpose this time. "You tied me up?" He wasn't sure how he felt about that. Probably more pissed off that he couldn't remember it than that it had happened.

"Just to keep you from banging your hand around," Tab said softly, his fingers tugging at the knot. "Need you to keep still for a second... there. Okay. How does it feel this morning?"

"Not as bad as my head," Will admitted, bringing his hand down and cradling it on his belly.

"Yeah," Tab said with a fair amount of sympathy. "Maybe that's why I'm always so cranky. The pain relief is better than booze, but fuck, what a hangover." Tab settled down next to him, lying back on the bed and stretching. "The swelling is down, that's good."

"You got something I could wrap it up with?" He shifted almost without thinking, drawn to Tab's warmth. "And water. Fuck, it feels like something crawled into my mouth and died."

Tab nodded and yawned. "Yeah. Okay." He rolled away and stumbled off the bed, looking like a sleepwalking thug. But he found a water bottle and passed it over after taking off the cap and started rummaging around, apparently looking for something to wrap Will's hand with. "Save some of the water," he said absently. "Wash up with it."

"Wash up?" Will looked down at himself, dried come everywhere. He didn't say a word, just looked at Tab, one eyebrow going up.

"Yeah. Um. See, you were really tripping and you kinda got both horny *and* silly, and I swear I didn't let you do anything you wouldn't have done if you'd been straight." Tab looked vaguely uncomfortable, his weight shifting from side to side. "I didn't hurt you. Like I promised."

"Did you do anything kinky?" Will asked. He hated that he couldn't remember what they'd done. Fucking hated it. But this wasn't some asshole stranger, it was Tab.

That seemed to make it okay.

"Um. No?" Tab looked at him, one eyebrow up. "Other than tying up your arm, I supposed. Sucked you off, fucked you, gave you about three hand jobs. You were kinda het up."

"That's one of the reasons people take Wizdom, isn't it?" He shrugged and tried not to get

pissed off about the whole thing. Tab had been trying to help him. "Just wish I could remember," he admitted, trying not to growl too hard.

Tab tilted his head and made his way back to the bed, a long strip of cotton in his hand. "Well, I could tell you about it," he offered. "Or you can babysit me next time my leg is acting up. Or you can take real care of your hand until you're better and we can skip the drugs and move onto the kinky stuff."

"You just want to be allowed to tie me up so you can do what you want to me. Probably want to gag me so I don't complain about it, too." There wasn't much heat in his words though. He was just tired and hurting. With a sigh he let his eyes close again and lay back, letting Tab deal with his hand. "Just how many shifts have I been out?"

"Just Jinx's and yours," Tab said, growling a little. "Can you lift your hand about an inch? Thanks." The cotton went on and on and then finally Tab was done. "Okay?" he asked, falling back onto the bed with a thump.

Will lifted his arm and moved it around a little, the wrap helping to keep the hand immobile. "Yeah. Yeah, I think so. Thanks." He lay there for another moment, trying to resist the lure of curling back up around Tab and sleeping the hangover off. But he'd already missed one shift. He wasn't going to make Jinx work more than he had to.

Grunting, he wriggled to the edge of the bed and pushed himself up with his good hand. "Where are my clothes?"

"On the floor." Tab sighed and sat up. "Need help?"

He bit back his automatic 'no', because frankly, it wouldn't have been true. "Please."

Tab nodded and clambered back off the bed, wordlessly gathering the scattered clothing and separating out his own. "Shirt first, 'cause it'll be the worst," he said, holding it out and open by the shoulders. "I'll help with the cuff. Might need you to talk me through the fucking pants, though -- I can barely get them open, never tried doing them back up."

"Well, you're going to learn, because I'm not going to the bridge with my pants undone." He'd use both hands if he had to.

"Yeah, yeah," Tab breathed, easing his shirt on. "Can we at least declare it a useless skill and agree that I'll usually be fighting to get the damn things off?"

Will winced and bit his lip to keep from whimpering as the shirt cuff went up over his hand. "Whatever. There'd better be some low level pain killers on the bridge." He stepped into his pants, grunting and sucking in his belly as Tab pulled them up.

Tab stared at him for a long moment. "Yeah. Whatever," he said, his face getting hard. "Maybe next time you're pissed at me you won't fuck up your hand then." He dropped to

his knees and tugged to the leather harder than he had to, almost throwing off Will's balance.

He grabbed onto Tab's shoulder with his good hand before he toppled over. "Fuck off, Tab -- I'm too tired to fight with you today."

"Right. At least you got some fucking sleep," Tab growled. "Your own damn fault, punching a fucking bulkhead." He stood up. "There. You're dressed. Go to work, have a nice day, you're welcome and all that other shit. I'm taking a nap."

"You can't," he ground out, *hating* that he needed Tab's help just a little bit longer. "I'm going to need a hand getting up the fucking ladder."

Tab stared at him for a long moment. "Fine," he said finally. "Fine. But we're gonna talk later, Will. We're right back where we were, and I hate feeling like this."

"I'm not exactly having a picnic here, Tab." He had a hard feeling in the pit of his stomach. He was doing something wrong and he didn't know what. He didn't know how to *do* this, but he didn't want to stop doing it either. "I have to get to my bridge."

"Okay," Tab said. He seemed less angry all of a sudden, and more tired. "Okay. Work. Can you come back after shift, though?" He watched Tab swallow, then swallow again. "Please?"

He nodded. "I'm going to have to work a long one though. It's not fair to Jinx, to expect him back in eight hours. I'll do one and a half."

Tab nodded. "Makes sense." He opened the room and headed out to the ladder, naked as the day he was born and obviously not caring. "If I'm not in my bunk, I'll be with the engines."

"I think I know where to find you," Will noted, good hand sliding across Tab's ass. Fuck, even hung over and hurting, Tab turned him on, made him want.

He hated that as much as he loved it.

Goosebumps popped up all over Tab's back and his steps turned into a bit of stumble. "Work," he said softly, pointing to the ladder. But when he turned a bit, Will could see his cock filling slowly.

At least he wasn't alone in the wanting. He leaned in and gave Tab a quick, hard kiss. "I really do need to get to the bridge. But I'll be back." He'd even try not to come back growling at that.

"I'll be here," Tab said, his tone dry but his hands sliding possessively over Will's back

and waist. "Brace yourself, I'll boost you up. And you might want to hurry before I change my mind."

Will put his foot on the second from the bottom rung and grabbed up the ladder as high as he could with his good hand. "Go for it."

Tab's hand landed on his ass and shoved and Will let go of the rung he was holding onto and grabbed one right near the top, using the momentum from the push to get himself up the rest of the way.

"Thanks." He looked back down, met Tab's eyes. "I mean it."

Tab looked startled for a long moment and then grinned, damn near beaming at him. "You're welcome," he said. "See you later, flyboy." He winked and turned back to his room, one hand going to his cock as he walked. "Cool."

Will rolled his eyes and headed in up toward the bridge. He didn't get what Tab wanted from him, but he supposed he pretty much had twelve hours to think about it. As long as they didn't run into any problems.

Chapter Three

Tab was staring at his engine room and debating the pros and cons of tearing down the secondary propulsion systems when he noticed that his leg was aching. He'd been ignoring it and everything else for about five hours by that point, sitting in one position as he made some adjustments, and with a groan he realized he'd just fucked up his next few hours of downtime. If he was smart, he'd get himself back in shape in time for his next shift. If he was stupid, he'd stay where he was.

He checked the time and found it to be later than he'd thought. Between the nap he'd had and putting in almost a full shift, he'd just have time to get things settled for the night and grab some chow before his leg really started to yell at him.

With a grunt, he heaved himself off the floor and started limping his way around the engine room, putting tools away and trying not to sound too pathetic with every step. And at the back of his mind, he was steeling himself for Will, hoping they could move forward this time and not take two steps back.

Tab liked the Arillia. He liked Will. He really didn't want to leave.

Speak of the devil... there was Will now, shouting at him from the top of the ladder. "Hey, Tab. Get your ass over here and grab our dinner before I drop it."

"Dropping my dinner is a killing offense," Tab yelled back, limping a little faster but stopping the sounds that were like moans and gritting his teeth instead. "Need help coming down?"

"No, turns out Bellam's got some doctoring experience and he wrapped it so good I almost don't feel it. Just grab the tray, okay?" Will was sitting on the deck, legs hanging over, tray on his lap. As Tab came up, he passed it down.

"No shit?" Tab asked, glancing at his leg. There wasn't anything that could be done for that, though, and he knew it, but it would be nice not to have to waste his drugs on broken bones and such. He took the tray and stepped back a bit, letting Will have room to come down. "Smells good. What is it?"

"Package said Ginger Chicken with rice." Will maneuvered a little and got himself turned and kind of slid down the ladder, using his good hand to keep himself from going too fast. He landed at the bottom with a thump. "Fuck, I'm tired. And hungry. And grumpy."

Tab nodded. "I'm tired. And hungry." He took a couple of steps toward his bunk and decided he was a strong enough man to take the flack, and added, "And my leg hurts. C'mon, let's eat. Then we'll just be tired and grumpy and sore."

"I could massage it a bit. Well one-handed. After we eat." Will had done that more than once and it was one of the few things that really worked.

Tab glanced back at Will and nodded. "That'd be good," he said, hoping he sounded grateful. He was. He led the way into his tiny room and stepped to the side so Will could get in, and then nudged the door shut with his foot. "Shift go okay?" he asked, setting the tray down carefully on the bed.

"It went. And nobody shot at us, so I guess you could say it was okay." Will stretched and shook his head before settling on the bed and grabbing a fork. "It was quiet." That last was added almost casually.

Tab took his meal and his fork and sat himself down with care, minding his leg. "Quiet can be good," he said just as casually.

Will shrugged. "Nothing to do but think when it's quiet."

"Thinking can be good," Tab said slowly. "Hard, but good. Want to tell me about it?"

"No." Will gave him a wry grin and shrugged again. "I'm not good at it, Tab. I'm not good at all this relationship shit. I think I'm bending over backwards for you -- literally -- giving you more than I've ever given anyone, but it turns out I'm hurting you." Will sighed, picking at his food. "I've let you do anything you wanted to me, haven't said no on the tying me up and kinky stuff and it's not enough. I don't know what you want from me."

Tab shrugged one shoulder and set his plate to the side, his appetite gone. "I just... I want you to stop getting mad at everything. And for fuck's sake, if you want to say no, say it. You take offense at everything, like I'm out to hurt you all the time, and I'm just not. It's like you look for things to get mad at, sometimes." He hadn't been sure he'd actually say it, that he'd be able to get the words out, but Tab had hit a wall somewhere. If they couldn't work this out, find a way to be together without fighting after fucking for no good reason, he'd have to leave. And the thought of leaving hurt as much as the fighting.

"I." Will's face screwed up and he bit his lip. "It's what I've always done. Keeps..." Will looked away, looked at the wall like there was something really important there. "*Kept* me sane before. When it was something I did because I had to." Each word was sharp, crisp, like Will didn't want them in his mouth.

Tab wasn't exactly sure where to go with that. He'd never been in that place, didn't know how it felt. "You don't have to now," he finally said. "You can say no. You can say what you want, do *only* what you want."

"I know. I *do*. You've never. I want *you*. I want the things we do. And I..." Will picked at the edge of the bandage with the fingers of his good hand. "I like it when you're rough, when you push me to do... things. But then, after, I."

Tab waited, but that seemed as far as Will was going to go -- as far as he could go. "You. You... feel dirty?" Tab guessed, half horrified.

"What? No." Will shook his head. Will still wasn't looking at him, looked like he wanted to be pretty much anywhere else than here, talking about it. "It's like. Like. I want it but maybe I shouldn't. I don't know." Will stood up suddenly. "I guess I'm pretty fucked up. Maybe you *should* just go."

Tab shook his head slowly. "Do you *want* me to? 'Cause it's not like I'm not fucked up either." He growled in frustration and closed his eyes. "Look. If you think it's wrong to want it, there's nothing I can do to convince you. Least, I don't think so. If there is, then tell me what -- I'll do it."

"I *know* it's not wrong. I *know* you're different from the others. I *know* you'd never force me. I *know* you'd stop if I told you to. I *know* that, okay? I *know* it. I just. My head's not always in charge, okay? Just 'cause I know something doesn't mean I really know it. Ah, fuck it, now I sound like I'm crazy. Maybe I am." Will kicked his door, though with considerably less force than he'd hit the wall earlier.

Tab stood up, his leg twinging only a little. "Baby, come here," he said softly. "Just... come here a minute, okay?"

Will's back got even stiffer than it was and for a long minute Tab thought he was going to storm off. Then, all of a sudden, Will turned and nearly knocked him over, arms going around his middle, head buried in his neck. "Don't make me talk about it anymore, Tab. Please."

"Okay. No talking. No pushing." Tab held onto him and tried to pull him even closer, soaking up the warmth of his body. "Can... how about I say something and you just listen. And then it'll be out and over and we can move on." He closed his eyes again, not sure that was going to make it worse or better.

"I'm listening," Will muttered against his neck after a long pause.

Part of Tab wanted to curse, because he'd stepped in it this time; now he had to talk, because he said he would. But he wasn't good with words, and if he messed up, well... he'd just have to go. "I don't want to go," he whispered. "I want to be here, on this bird. I want to be with you. I want to... to know you. I want to stop yelling all the time. I want to make you happy, not angry. That's all. I want you to be here in my room after shifts, I want to fuck you, I want to say stuff and do stuff and not have it turn into a big mess. And I don't know how to get there, other than by trying. Over and over. Just trying."

"Isn't that what we're doing?"

"Yeah," Tab admitted, his hands still on Will's back. "And it's not working. So I don't

know where to go from here. This is new. It's not just a fuck or two, it's more and it's scary and I just don't have a clue, baby."

Will didn't seem to have anything to say to that, just held on tight with his good hand, breath hot against Tab's neck.

Tab held him close and lost track of how long they were standing there. Finally though, his leg twinged and he realized he was getting lost in the way Will's hair smelled. "Want you to stay here," he said softly. "In my bunk. Want you to ask me what I mean when I say something that pisses you off. Want you to tell me when you're getting freaked out by what you want. And then I want to try again. One more time. And I've never said this to anyone, Will, so I hope you hear me."

"I can try, but I can't make you promises that I don't know I can keep or not."

"Shit," Tab breathed. "I never make promises at all. But I need something here, Will. You saying you'll try is good enough for now. I can't promise it'll be good enough next month, though. I can tell you I won't walk out without saying anything if you can tell me you won't kick me off the ship."

"If you leave it won't be because I kicked you off," Will growled.

"Good enough," Tab said, his hands sliding down to Will's butt. "I think I'm done now. Be happy not to talk about it again, to tell the truth."

"About fucking time."

Will's ass pushed back against his hand, but then Will slid away. "Lie down, Tab, before you fall down."

"Think falling down is the only way I'm gonna hit the sheets," Tab admitted, making sure he wasn't going to land on a fork or a plate. The way clear, he let himself go, wincing and trying not to yell. "Damn."

Will shook his head, but didn't say anything. The food and tray were moved to the floor and then Will sat, good hand working at his zipper. "Come on, take them off."

"Thought you'd never ask," Tab said with a tight grin. "Oh, man." He shoved his pants down and got his good leg out without trouble, but had to wriggle a little to get the bad leg out without straining the muscle any more than it was. Then he peeled off his shirt as well, not seeing the point in being naked from only his waist down. "It's not terrible yet," he said. "But I appreciate the help." It didn't even make him growl to say it. Much.

"*You're welcome.*" Will gave him a look, hand starting to work his leg as soon as he'd settled, fingers digging in hard.

Tab grinned. "Am I, now?" he said, the tease ruined by a long groan as Will's fingers dug deep. "Oh God, that's good."

"That's me. God. And I'm good." Will gave him a cocky grin, obviously on more comfortable footing now that they'd finished "talking".

Tab rolled his eyes and let himself lean back, eyes drifting closed as Will's hands undid another knot. The friction of Will's hand was warming him, too, and Tab knew darn well that he'd be sporting wood in a few minutes. He intended to enjoy it as best he could.

Sure enough, there it was right on cue as the last of the pain gave way beneath Will's insistent fingers. To his surprise, Will's mouth wrapped around the head of his cock, lips tightening on the head, tongue playing the slit.

"Fuck," Tab blurted, surprised. He put a hand down to tangle in Will's hair, but it was too short, so he just pet. His hips flexed and he pushed a little deeper, nerve endings happier than they'd been in days and days.

Will pulled off his cock and bit at his wrist before going back to his cock, licking down one side and up the other. Then Will sucked him in again, cheeks hollowed.

Tab rumbled, watching his cock sliding in and out of Will's mouth. This was possibly going to be over embarrassingly fast. "Fucking sexy," he murmured, pulling back his good leg for some leverage. "Love your mouth."

Will grunted around his cock, sucking harder, head bobbing fast.

Tab's breath caught and the tingle in his balls started moving. He pushed up the next time Will came down on him, and the head of his cock hit the back of Will's throat. "Oh, shit," he whispered. "Gonna come, baby." He thrust again, trying not to choke Will, but not really able to stop. So close.

Will hesitated a moment and then pulled off, hand sliding around Tab's prick to jack him off.

Tab squashed the momentary flicker of disappointment and went with it, his hips lifting up and his hand going down to tangle with Will's. With a fast jerk and long groan, he came, his cock pulsing against Will's palm. "Jesus," he panted, his stomach still tight. "Good."

"Yeah?" Will stretched out next to him, staring up at the ceiling. "Good."

Tab raised an eyebrow and weighed his options, finally just doing what he wanted. He rolled toward Will, dropped a hand over the man's cock and squeezed. "Your turn."

"You going to be able to figure out the pants?" Will asked, the shit-eating grin only a little bit forced.

"Probably not," Tab admitted. "But I'm hoping that if I ask real nice you'll help me out with them." He kept his tone light, hoping to make that smile real.

"I think I can manage that. Just." Will laughed, waving his bandaged hand around. "You know I'd have been screwed getting these off and on if you'd decided you were still pissed off at me."

Tab grinned. "One," he said with a wink, "I keep telling you these pants will be the death of you. And two, does this mean you haven't taken a leak at all since before you hurt your hand?"

"I didn't drink anything."

"Oh for..." Tab rolled his eyes. "Okay, help me get you out of these things. Then, may I suggest Captain, you borrow a pair of sweatpants until your hand heals up?"

"I'll take it under advisement." Will used his one hand to help Tab get the damned fastenings undone.

And then as soon as they'd worked the pants down and off, Will jumped up. "I'll be back in a minute."

Tab fell back on the bed, laughing. "I'll be here," he promised, waving a hand. "Lord, baby." He watched Will's butt as he dashed out the door and laughed again, one hand curling around his cock. More than one way to wait, he supposed.

Will was back soon enough, shaking his head. "You already had a turn."

"I know," Tab grinned. "But I got bored."

Will snorted. "I wasn't gone that long. Of course, now I know what you do in your free time."

Tab's grin grew and he stroked his cock again. "Not all of us are all about work," he said. "Come here. It's still your turn."

"That's right, it is." Will grinned and came over, cock pointing the way. "You gonna show me what I can't remember from last night?"

"Could do," Tab said, reaching for him. "You'll need your hand tied again for that. And I'm not sure you're that flexible when you're not high." He winked and buried his head in Will's neck, biting down a little.

Will jerked and pressed close. "Flexible? What *did* we do?"

"I'm teasing," Tab said, licking where he'd bitten. "Well, mostly. Like I said, I got you off a bunch of times. When I fucked you, you opened right up, legs over my shoulders, yelling your head off. Was hot."

"Are you saying it's not usually hot?" Will seemed more interested in the conversation than what Tab was doing, and that just wasn't right.

Tab licked him again and reached down for Will's cock, fingering the tip. "Always hot, baby," he said, stopping himself from saying anything more. Will was in an odd mood, and Tab figured the best way to head it off was to shut up. They had a way of misunderstanding each other.

Will's breath caught in his throat as Tab's touch, and he pressed close again. "Good." It might have been a response to what he'd said, or maybe just to what he was doing, but Tab figured either way worked.

"Uh huh," Tab agreed. He did it again, sliding his palm over the head and wrapping his fingers around the shaft. "How do you want it?" he asked, working his mouth over Will's jaw. "Hand? Fuck? Want me to suck you?"

"Yes," murmured Will, body moving into Tab's touches like the sensual slut he was.

Tab laughed and kissed him, forcing Will's mouth wide. When he pulled back, he laughed again. "Which?" He played with Will's cock a little, pretty sure he wasn't going to get a coherent answer.

Will's eyes half focused on him, sweet tongue licking at Will's lips. "Which what?"

Rolling his eyes, Tab pushed Will onto his back. "Watch your hand," he warned, then slid down Will's body to lick at his nuts. "Spread your legs, Captain. Gonna take you on a ride."

Groaning, Will did as he'd been told, opening his legs, making himself vulnerable. "Like your rides." Will's good hand slid into his hair, over his shoulder and then wrapped in the sheets.

"Glad to hear it," Tab said almost absently, licking his way down the crease between leg and balls. He loved the way Will tasted, like sex and sweat. By the time he licked over Will's hole, just teasing it, he was moaning and starting to hump the sheets a bit himself.

Will had his bandaged hand up over his head, eyes closed. One heel dug into the mattress for leverage as he tried to push his body against Tab's face. Tab groaned and grabbed at

Will's hips with one hand to keep him steady, the other curling around Will's cock again. He tugged a little as he licked, wanting Will's voice again.

"Oh, fuck. Tab. Don't stop." A whimper ended the breathless words, Will's hole clenching and opening a little, like it was trying to get his attention.

Like he was going to stop.

Tab shifted a little on the bed, his dick rubbing on the sheet and sending sparks up his spine. With a groan he pointed his tongue and pushed, backing off almost immediately. "That what you want?" he mumbled against Will's butt before he did it again, starting to fuck him with quick jabs and long licks.

"Tab!" Will's shout was a sweet reward, the moans and whimpers that followed even better. Will was hot and tight around his tongue, body squeezing, trying to keep him in. That was it. Tab sped up, moaning louder as Will moved, as the sheets grew damp under his dick. He jacked Will's cock and brought his other hand down, shoving a finger into Will's hole and licking around it.

Oh, yeah, Will liked that. Will gave a hoarse scream, hips jerking, trying to take his finger in farther. The cock in his hand grew harder; Will was close. Tab shoved with his finger and licked Will's hole again, then lifted up enough to guide Will's cock into his mouth. He sucked hard, the head already slick with pre-come, the taste of Will strong and wild. Will went nuts, shouting, humping up into his mouth and down onto his finger, spunk flying almost immediately.

Swallowing quickly, Tab licked and sucked and made a grab for his own cock, stroking twice before coming on the sheets. Again. His bunk was starting to permanently reek of sex; he had no idea if that was good or bad, really.

Will groaned softly and kind of melted against the sheets, panting. That hand was back in Tab's hair, petting randomly.

Tab let himself fall to the bed, curling around Will a little, one arm draped over him. "Damn, Will," he said, trying to catch his breath. "Didn't think I had another go in me."

"You've always got another go for me." Will gave him a half-hearted wink, shifting to bring their bodies slightly closer. "I'm tired," Will admitted, eyelids heavy.

"Sleep," Tab said, curling a little more and tugging him close. "You've got time." He closed his eyes, too, and made a half-hearted effort to pull the sheet around to cover them.

"Someone's gotta run..." Will's voice drifting off, came back a moment later to finish the thought. "Ship."

"Off duty, Captain," Tab said softly. "Jinx has it. He'll call down if he needs you."

Will didn't answer, just sighed. A few minutes later soft snores started, Will's face young and vulnerable as he slept.

Really, Tab thought, it was nice to see him like that. But he'd hardly be stupid enough to say so. With a smile and sigh, he closed his eyes again and settled in to sleep as well.

Chapter Four

Will turned the bridge over to Jinx and headed down to engineering.

Things for the Arillia were going great. They'd made a handful of deliveries, bigger payoffs on each one and now he was able to pay his crew up front, plus bonuses, bring in the best food and charge top dollar for their services.

He grinned as he jumped down the ladder to the engine room. Things were going pretty good with Tab, too. The fucking was awesome, as always. They'd only had a couple little arguments and he hadn't had to examine or talk about his feelings and what they were doing since he'd hurt his hand. Thank goodness for that.

And he had to admit, having a real bed he could count on to sleep on improved his mood greatly. Especially if he was pretty much guaranteed to come once or twice while on that bed, too.

"Hey," he called out, heading for the little room at the end of the hall, but willing to change direction if it turned out that Tab was still working.

"Hey." Tab's voice came from his bunk. "In here. Are you early, or did I lose track of time?"

"You lost track of time. Busy jacking off, I assume. I hope you saved some for me." He let himself in, already starting to strip.

Tab was sitting on the edge of his bed, fully dressed. He had a cloth laid out beside him, with three clear tubes on it, and he looked vaguely guilty. "Nope, not yet, anyway. But we can get to that part easy enough."

Will froze for a moment and then pulled his T-shirt the rest of the way off. He nodded toward the bed. "So what's this?" He gave himself points for not assuming the worst. Or at least for not accusing Tab of it.

"Um. Presents. I kind of forgot about them." Tab stood up and started undoing his pants, his erection more obvious than when he was sitting. "Got them last time we were in port."

"Presents?" Will split his focus between Tab's cock as it came into view and the three clear tubes on the bed. "What kind of presents?"

"Kinky presents. At least, I think so. Dunno." Tab's face flushed a little and he sat down to shove his pants off, his shirt following almost immediately. "Haven't tried 'em yet."

Will was kind of intrigued now. "So they're for you?" He reached over and picked one up. It was smooth, simple. "This is the weirdest looking dildo I've ever seen."

"For me?" Tab blinked. "Wrap your hand around it. It's supposed to... do something. Get hot or cold or hurt or... something."

"Well, you said you hadn't tried 'em yet so I assumed you meant they were for you." He started to close his hand and then stopped and glared at Tab. "Hurt?"

"Not *hurt* hurt," Tab said hastily. "At least, I don't think so. The one I held was hot. And I just haven't held these ones yet -- she gave me kind of a surprise package." He licked his lower lip, his eyes fixed on Will's hand. "What's it feel like?"

Will gave Tab a look and closed his hand around the tube. "Warming up. Oh!" He nearly dropped the thing in surprise as it started pulsing in his hand.

Tab blinked again and wordlessly handed him one of the other two, his free hand straying to his cock.

Will grinned. "What, you're getting off just on watching me hold it? Is that what it's for? Or does it... you know." He held the other one in his hand. "This one just gets hot. The first one kind of... pulses." The look in Tab's eyes was hot.

Tab's tongue darted out to lick the corner of his mouth. "It ain't for holdin'." Oh, there was a growl in there.

"So who'd you imagine getting the tubes shoved up their ass, Tab?" He was pretty sure he knew the answer to that, the way Tab was looking at him and basically drooling.

"Bought 'em for you," Tab said, his glance darting from Will's hand up to his face and back. "But if you don't want to, we can put them away. I guess." He looked like it took a certain amount of effort to get the words out, and his hand was speeding on his cock. Not quite jerking off, but getting there.

Will licked his lips. He wasn't entirely sure he did want to, but looked like the thought was making Tab feel really good. And so far everything they'd done was pretty hot. This just felt so... planned. "If you want," he said casually, putting the tubes down and working his pants open. "So one's hot, the other's warm and throbbing, what's the last one do?"

"No idea," Tab said, his voice raspy. "But we can find out." He shifted on the bed, moving back and grabbing the slick from under the pillow. "Come here. Please."

Will shucked off his pants and climbed up over Tab, taking that growly mouth and plunging his tongue in deep. Tab's hand went right to the back of his neck, keeping him there. Tab's kiss was just as fierce as the growl, all teeth and tongue, and the rough hand on Will's ass was hardly a surprise, grabbing and kneading. Will pushed down, sliding their pricks together, letting Tab take the lead on the kiss.

"Want," Tab said into his mouth, his hips pushing up. "Want bad." Will felt teeth again, and Tab sucking on his tongue, and then the hand on his ass was gone for a moment, slick when it came back. A finger pushed into him, but became two on the next thrust.

Groaning, Will pushed back on Tab's fingers, body opening up. He thought maybe he'd prefer to just get fucked, but Tab was so turned on by it, he just went with it.

"Where is it?" Tab asked, pulling his head back and looking around with wild eyes. "Which one do you want?"

He pushed Tab's hands to the three tubes. "They all look the same. Just put one in." He gave Tab a kiss and then shifted, lying on his back, watching.

Tab's chest was rising and falling rapidly as he handled the tubes. "I... oh fuck." He took a deep breath and moaned soft, stroking one of them. "Hands over your head, baby."

Will's belly was tight, his cock hard, balls aching. He slowly crossed his hands, lying them up above his head, eyes on Tab's face as his legs spread. "You gonna tell me what it's going to do?" he asked, biting his lower lip.

Tab shook his head slowly. "Nope." He stroked the tube again, slicking it up. "Won't hurt you." His eyes were dark, almost fevered, and a drop of fluid formed at the head of his cock. "And if you say stop, I will. Trust me?"

He nodded, spreading his legs wider. "Wouldn't be here if I didn't."

Tab's nod was serious, a contradiction with the way his fingers were probing at Will's ass again. "Just take it, Will," he whispered. "Let me know how it feels." His fingers slid away and the end of the tube nudged at him, cool, but not cold. Tab moaned and started easing it in, nice and slow.

Will groaned, shifting slightly, adjusting to the feeling of something solid and hard, unmalleable going into him. He felt a moment of panic. He'd been fucked with things before and it hadn't been pleasant, wasn't supposed to be, he guessed. He was going to tell Tab to stop when it nudged past his gland, making him gasp. "Fuck." The tube was warming and then cooling, the temperature changes slow, almost maddening.

"'Bad' fuck or 'don't stop' fuck?" Tab asked, his breath catching and his hand freezing, the tube not moving at all. Just... getting warm and then cool, the changes still slow but a little more intense.

"As in fuck me with it!" Damn, he was a slut, but it was weird and amazing at the same time, making his hips move, trying to get Tab to *do* something. His hands clenched into fists.

"Oh, yeah," Tab rasped. "I can do that." The tube pressed into him again, deeper, and slid away, dragging at his hole with an utterly strange sensation of cold, pushing back with warm; the changes weren't right with Tab's rhythm, but that just made it odder, more bizarre. Kinky.

He couldn't catch his breath, just gasped, his hips undulating, moving with Tab, with the hot and cold and he had to stop himself from grabbing his cock. "Touch me," he growled.

"How many hands do you think I have?" Tab growled back. But he let go of his own prick and laid his palm on Will's, rubbing instead of jerking. "God damn."

Whimpering, Will pushed into the touch, eyes on Tab as he writhed. He was going to lose his mind and he loved it.

Jinx's voice came over the comm. "Captain? We've got problems, boss."

"Ah, fuck!" Tab yelled. "Stay there," he said to Will, getting off the bed and leaving Will with the tube in his ass. He threw open the door to his room and hit the button on the comm unit in the hall. "Busy!"

"Tough, need the Captain," Jinx shot back.

Tab snarled and came back, his face tight. "Easy, let me get this out of you," he said, a little more calmly. He might actually have been pouting, but Will wasn't taking the time to make sure.

"Get it out," he muttered, pissed as hell. He wasn't sure what had him more angry, that he was needed and wasn't on the bridge, or that they'd been interrupted. He shuddered when the tube was out, but managed to get up and start pulling up his pants.

He hit the comm with his palm. "What?"

"Law's here, Captain. They want permission to board. Something about Arillia going faster than she's registered for."

"Fuck. Send them to the starboard airlock. I'll meet them there." He pushed his feet into his boots and pulled on his T-shirt, shooting Tab a glare. "You hear that?"

"I hear." Tab reached for his pants. "They're wrong."

"You sure about that?" He ran his hand over his head, grateful for the short hair -- nothing to be mussed up. He just hoped he didn't feel as half-fucked as he felt.

Tab rolled his shoulders. "Sure as I can be. I mean, the mods are pretty extreme, but there's no way this bird can be going fast enough to be in the next class. She's fast enough

to run that hot, but not for general cruising; the extra push to run from trouble, not to fly in the shipping lanes."

"Give me a minute or two to get up there and then come join us." No way he was showing up there with Tab in tow. The crew might know, but the rest of the world didn't need to. He headed for the airlock, grumbling. He had a hunch this was going to cost him a lot of money.

"Do I have time to -- never mind." Tab sighed and reached for his shirt. Will distinctly heard him kick his wall, too. At least he wasn't the only one pissed off.

Tab made himself wait in his bunk for a few minutes, almost tempted to stay until Will called for him. But that would only piss Will off, and frankly with the whole not getting off thing, they were both cranky anyway. So when Tab was pretty sure that he didn't look like he'd rather have something up his Captain's ass than spend time chatting about the engines, he went up to the flight deck.

Will didn't look happy, but that was nothing against the thin-lipped expression on the lawman. Tab hadn't ever seen a uniform that neatly pressed, and he'd seen a lot of uniforms. He glanced at Jinx but didn't get any help there, the man looking away and avoiding his eyes.

Tab sighed to himself and nodded to the law. "Captain?" he said to Will, hoping he sounded respectful and not horny.

"This is Officer Delani."

"*Captain* Delani," interrupted the man in a tight voice.

"Sorry. Captain Delani. He says we're running too fast for our class. I told him we've done upgrades, but not enough to bump us up."

Tab nodded. "That's right, sir," he said to Will, hoping that being mindful of Will's rank would help in some way. He turned to face Delani and added, "I did the mods myself, and I'm happy to answer any questions you have. Show you the engines, if you'd like, Captain."

"I don't care what you've done to them. You were clocked at 4.1 and you're registered as a light bird. You go faster than four, you need to be registered as Spinner class. Plain and simple."

Will swallowed. "Is it possible you made a mistake?"

Oh, that wasn't the right thing to say, Delani's back went even stiffer than it already was. "A mistake?"

Tab held up his hand. "Sir, I really don't think this bird can fly over 4 under normal circumstances. Do you have a mechanic on your ship?"

"I clocked you at 4.1 for the last hour. And if I hear one more slur against my ability or my veracity, I will ground and pound this bird."

"No. No, that won't be necessary, Captain. Just tell us what we need to do. I'm assuming there's some paperwork and a fee to upgrade the class of the ship?"

The Captain snorted. "There is a *fine*. And the next time you hit port you need to get your classification updated. If you're caught again, you will be grounded."

"How much is the fine?" Will asked, voice tight.

"Fifty thousand."

"Credits?" Will squeaked.

"Yes."

"Oh, sh--" Will closed his mouth, not looking at anyone. "How long do we have to pay?"

"You won't be able to leave your next port of call unless you have paid." Delani made a few notes on a datapad and then held it out to Will. "Thumbprint at the bottom."

Tab couldn't quite breathe as he watched Will press his thumb on the pad. There had to be a mistake. There was no way he'd done enough to make the Arillia go that fast; he'd known what would happen if they broke their class. He had to get to the engine room. "Sir, can I go?" he said quietly. "I want to..." He stopped short of saying he'd prove this bastard patrol officer wrong, mindful of what Will would do if the bird got grounded.

"Stay right there. You too, Jinx." Will's voice was a low growl, his teeth grinding.

"I suggest you keep it under four until you've reclassified," Delani told them.

"Yes, sir," Tab murmured, both to Will and to Delani. "Under 4. No problem." Oh fuck, he was in trouble. Will was going to kill him.

"It won't happen again, Captain."

"See that it doesn't." Delani gave Will a stern look and took his leave, back still the entire

time. Man had something up his ass, that was for sure, and not something fun like those tubes, either.

Will watched the airlock door close, watched Jinx seal it up, jaw clenched tight.

Tab waited, his stomach in knots. "We don't run that fast," he finally said, his voice low.

Jinx winced and tried to disappear into a wall.

"Jinx? You happen to be paying attention to the speedometer?"

"No, Sir. I push her until she starts to barely vibrate and then back off until she settles in nice and smooth, just like you want."

Will nodded. "Tab? You saying that lawman's tagging machine is ramped up?"

"Could be," Tab said. Then he sighed. "But I doubt it. The stick up his ass wouldn't let him do that, I expect."

Will turned a glare on him, voice very, very quiet and even. "So you're telling me we have been running that fast. That we should have classed up."

Tab grit his teeth. "No. I'm telling you, I made sure when I bought the parts that we wouldn't need to class up. I know my job, Will. I made your bird fly as fast as you wanted, using parts I bought from people I trust. Why the *fuck* would I screw myself this hard on purpose? And why the *fuck* wouldn't the pilot pay attention to the speed?" He tossed Jinx a glare, seriously not willing to take all the heat himself.

Jinx glared back. "I never knew we *could* go that fast."

"I want an alarm on the engines," Will interrupted their blamefest. He was looking a little pale. "The minute they go over 3.8 I want a klaxon sounding loud enough to wake the dead. And I want it done now. You're off-duty, Jinx. I'll be on the bridge."

"Yes, sir," Tab said, looking at the floor. "Be done in an hour. Want me to strip out some of the mods while I'm at it?" He could probably do that with the free time he'd have between packing his shit up and making sure the engine was smooth and beating Jinx into a bloody pulp. Fuck.

"No. I'll be able to get more for her with the mods. Make sure everything in top sale condition." Will's voice was bleak, his gaze somewhere in the distance.

Tab's head shot up. "No. No fucking way, Will. You're not selling her." That just wasn't going to happen.

Will rounded on him, calm cracking, breaking. "No? You've maybe got fifty thousand credits tucked away somewhere you'd like to give me?"

Jinx was looking from him to Will and back again, slowly inching away.

"I can get it," Tab shot back. Hell, if he knew how, but he would. "Go... do whatever you do on the bridge. Shut down main power for half an hour for me while I start this. And don't you ever fucking say you're selling her while I'm around again." He headed for the door, walking too heavy but needing to stomp a little. No way he was letting Will give up his ship.

He could hear Will mumbling, doing some stomping of his own, heading in the other direction. Jinx had taken off like a bat out of hell as soon as they'd headed for engine room and bridge.

By the time Tab was at the top of the ladder and ready to slide down, he had a list of names starting in his head. If his luck turned, he might even be able to find some of the people on it. He'd get Will's money.

And then he'd pray that Will wouldn't find out how.

Will went to the bridge and closed the door behind him, locking it. He powered down the engines, leaving life support and the proximity alarms on. Then he went up to his office and pushed into the head, throwing up until he almost passed out. He wiped his mouth and flushed the waste and then sat there, back against the wall, staring at nothing.

He was so fucked.

He didn't have fifty thousand credits. Not even close. He had about five thousand, half of what they'd need to reclassify the Arillia -- he'd been pinching creds here and there, saving up for the reclassification, knowing Tab was working miracles with the engines. He hadn't known just how big Tab's engine miracles had been.

The payout on the cargo he was carrying would be close to fifteen thousand, but about eight of that was earmarked for expenses, salaries, docking fees for the week it would take them to spruce up and find new cargo. That gave him twelve thousand altogether. Hell, even if he used the entire payout on the fine, he was still thirty thousand short. Thirty fucking thousand credits.

He didn't see how he had any choice *but* to sell the Arillia. They'd sit in space dock until they could pay the fine, only that would eat away at the money and he couldn't make any *more* money with his bird on the ground. There was no way for him to deliver the goods in his cargo *without* landing.

Now there were some planets that weren't part of the Accord, that would let him land without holding him there. But they charged three times as much and he'd have to make arrangements for the cargo to be delivered back to Argus for the client, and this had been a potential repeat customer, too. He supposed he could do that though. Keep the Arillia and stick to jobs that kept him off planets where he'd get dinged with the fine until he'd saved enough to pay it.

Mind you, those jobs would be few and far in between and mostly dodging on the wrong side of legal.

If he sold the Arillia, he could get enough to pay her outstanding fine and pick up a little one-man bird, do shorter trips. It wouldn't be the same, but at least he'd still be his own man, still be able to fly.

It had all been going so well, too.

He felt the tears starting to fall and wiped angrily at his face. He wasn't going to cry over this. He wasn't. Worse came to worst and he'd hire himself out again. He'd been lucky enough with Arillia, becoming her captain had been a fluke.

Easy come, easy go.

If he thought it would help, he'd go down and beat first Tab and then Jinx to death. But he figured he wasn't quite ready to become that kind of fugitive.

Will rested his head on his knees and concentrated on breathing.

Tab didn't have any trouble getting the alarm on, and he fiddled with the settings enough that the ship just wouldn't go above 4. Mind, if they hit pirates again, they were fucked.

More fucked.

He cleaned up the engine room some, basically just staying out of the way while he turned over a few ideas in his head and tried to figure out who would be best to find first. Kenva, who'd sold him his last parts, would know what he needed, but Kenva was a mostly above the board kind of guy, and wouldn't hesitate to turn him in. On the other hand, he was upright enough to get his hands on the legitimate money without hassles.

He wandered to the comm unit and buzzed the galley. "Jinx?"

In a moment he got a voice back, flat and more than a little annoyed. "What?"

"How close to port do we need to be before you can send a message to someone on a secure line?"

There was a brief pause. "Can do it anytime, but secure lines are only as good as the receiver. Can't it go on an open line?"

Tab closed his eyes. "One can. The others, not so much."

"I'll see what I can do. Cap know?"

"Fuck no, and don't you tell him."

The pause was longer. "Are you going to get us arrested?"

"Nope." Not all of them, and hopefully not even himself. "Do we have to do it from the bridge?"

"Yeah. But I don't think Will's going to leave for my shift. Where's he gonna go?"

He had a point. Tab didn't hold out much hope for Will coming to see him, unless he had a gun in his hand. "Okay. I'll give the message for the open line and figure out the rest later. Might have to wait until we hit port."

"Right. Let me know. And Tab?"

"What?"

"You lose us this ship, you might want to make sure you ship out fast."

Tab closed the comm without replying. He knew that.

He went to his bunk and dug out the one data chip he owned, turning it over in his hand a few times. He had just under ten thousand credits to his name, scattered all over the system, and he was pretty sure that Kenva could round it up for him. He also had a unique set of skills, which he wasn't above using to make top dollar. There were ships out there that wanted to run fast; he'd proven he could do that. All he had to do was find them. Smugglers, drug and gunrunners, ships that needed an extra punch.

But the big money was in slavers. He'd never seen one, but he was pretty sure he could do what they needed. Even if it took most of his soul to do it. But that would get Will his money, and that made it worth it.

Will stayed locked in the cockpit the rest of the trip. He didn't let Jinx take any shifts, didn't talk to anyone more than he had to.

He just wasn't in the mood.

He still felt like he'd been punched in the gut, was scared as hell he was about to lose everything good that had happened to him, but he had a few options that he hadn't thought of before.

Now that they were a few hours out from docking, he needed to gather the crew and let them in on what he was thinking. He put the Arillia in a holding pattern, there was the possibility they weren't going to dock here, and put a general call out on the comm. "This is the Captain. I want everyone in the galley in five minutes."

He cleaned himself up, changed into a fresh shirt and headed down a minute after the five were up. He wanted them all there when he arrived. And they were. All five of them. A good crew. Tab and Jinx and Bellam had been on the Arillia with him under Bane, and Swan and Teller were on since his second flight as Captain.

"All right, here's the situation. There's a fine on the Arillia. Fifty thousand credits. The minute we enter orbit on Argus we're there until we pay it. I figure after we unload the cargo, get paid and clear our debts, I've got twelve thousand credits to my name. Which leaves me thirty eight thousand short. I'm giving you guys a chance to buy a piece of the Arillia. She's worth about four hundred thousand credits and I'm willing to sell shares at two thousand credits, up to nine percent per person. That's a hell of a deal. Have I got any takers?"

Tab held up a hand. "Can I say something first? Before you start running a collective?"

He steeled himself to look right at Tab; he hadn't seen the man since they'd been stopped, fined. Since his world had crashed down around his ears. "What?" It was a good deal. A fair deal. It let him keep the majority share of the ship, while giving the guys a chance to have a say, to be working for more than just a salary.

"I can get my hands on ten thousand, no problem," Tab said meeting his eye. "It's yours, no questions, no shares bought. But give me four days in port and I'll come up with the rest. Give me four days before you start selling." His voice was even, matter of fact, and his gaze was steady.

Goddamn, that was tempting. All his problems solved, right there.

"Now hold on a minute." Jinx sat forward. "I've got eight thousand credits saved up, I'd like to buy four shares worth. This is a good bird, and I don't want to see her sold, I wouldn't mind a say in where she goes. I also don't want to see her hocked up to some

sleazy low-life moneylender." Jinx shot that last at Tab and Will turned his attention back to his engineer.

"Is that how you're going to get the money, Tab? Sell your soul and possibly the Arillia's future to the devil?"

"Nope." Tab shook his head. "Just going to earn it the old-fashioned way. Four days work and I'll have the money." He gave Jinx a look Will couldn't quite decipher, but there was a warning in there.

"What kind of work earns a man thirty thousand creds in four days?" Will asked. "And how high will the price on your head be if you do it? I'm not taking on wanted men as crew." He already knew he was going to turn Tab down. Unless the crew couldn't come up with the money. And maybe even still then. He couldn't let Tab bail his bird out like that. He just couldn't. Tab might say the Arillia was his free and clear, but he'd always know where it had come from, always know she wasn't honestly all his.

But Tab shook his head. "Nothing illegal, I like my life too much for that. I'm damn good at what I do, and there's some who'll pay for it -- and it was my fuck up that got us here, yeah?" He stood a little straighter, his arms crossed over his chest. "Four days, Will. You'll have the money and then you can fly free."

"Free aside from owing you, you mean." It might have been Tab's screw up, and Will was plenty mad about that still, but he was also man enough to know that as captain, it was his responsibility, no matter which of his crew fucked up.

"Won't owe me anything," Tab growled. "Jesus. Stop being so stubborn and let me do this! If I don't have it in four days, let us buy in. You've got nothing to lose, Will. It's already fucked up."

Will's lips firmed and he looked at the rest of the crew. "Jinx is in for eight thousand. Tab's in for ten thousand. That leaves me twenty short. Are any of you interested?"

Bellam nodded. "I've got four thousand stashed away. I'll take my share."

"I'm not interested in buying shares, but I'd like to stay on as crew if you manage to keep her, Captain."

Will nodded to Swan. "Fair enough. Teller?"

"We still get paid regular? Even if we buy in?"

"Yes. Regular pay plus a percentage of the net take to match your shares after every job."

"I've got three thousand creds. I can take a share and a half."

He nodded and sighed. That still left him eleven thousand short. He chewed on his lower lip and nodded. "That leaves eleven thousand for you to cough up, Tab. And we'll be making the next run without refurbishing, possibly the next two as we'll have to pick up cargo quick to keep docking fees to a minimum." Tab would have more shares than he'd wanted any one person to have, but far short of Will's majority. "The shares contract will specify that you can't sell them to anyone but me or whoever owns the majority of the Arillia."

Tab's lips had thinned. "You'll get it. And if I bring you more, I want it put on the ship's books for refurbishing and up keep." He shifted his weight and finally dropped his hand. "Can I go? I have shit to do before we dock."

Will nodded. "I'm going to radio ahead and get the share contracts drawn up. We'll unload the cargo and then take care of business. Thank you everyone. I appreciate your commitment to this bird."

The crew came one by one to shake his hand, Swan apologizing for not buying in. Will shook his head. "No hard feelings, Swan."

For all that Tab had asked to leave, he hung around until every one else had filed out. "I could have gotten it all for you," he said quietly. "And you wouldn't owe me anything at all, Will. She's your bird."

"I won't be your bought and paid for toy, Tab. I won't have that between us." It would change everything, put him on a footing he'd been on before and sworn he'd never let happen again.

Tab stared at him. "The fuck?" He took a full step backward, his face draining of color. "You seriously think I'd... that you're... Jesus."

"I'm *not*. That's the point. I won't go there." He shook his head, jaw clenched. "Not again."

Tab nodded stiffly. "Right. Got it. I'll..." He shook his head and headed for the door. "Four days. I'll hand over your money, as much as I can get. Then you better find yourself a new mechanic."

"No." He waited to make sure Tab stopped. "You'll own twelve shares in the Arillia and will fly with us because I'm not having anyone not on this ship owning a part of her. The alternative is I don't take a penny from you. I'm willing to buy back your shares as quickly as I can, but I won't fly with owners not on board."

"Then I'll talk to Jinx. List them as his, I'll give him the money as a gift. Because there's no *fucking* way I'll fly with a man who thinks I'd try to buy him like that. No *fucking* way, not when I was willing to work on goddamn slavers to save his ship for him. You think

I'm that kind of person, I don't want to be anywhere near you." Tab was still pale, starting to vibrate. "Go to hell, Will. Just... go to hell."

He paled himself. "You were going to work for *slavers*?" He couldn't believe that. And he thought he was fucked up. "No bird is worth *that*, Tab."

"No bird. But I thought you were."

He felt like he'd been punched in the gut. Again. "Me? Why would you do something like *that* for *me*?"

"Because I love you, you asshole. Or something." Tab looked at him, his eyes full of pain, the anger and hurt radiating off him. "I'm going to work. You just... write up your fucking contracts."

Will felt his jaw drop and he just stared as Tab turned and walked away. By the time he'd managed to close his mouth and swallow, by the time he'd figured maybe he should say something to keep Tab from walking out, it was too late.

Will turned and headed slowly back to the cockpit in a daze.

Chapter Five

Kenva shook his head at him ruefully. "Told you to be careful."

Tab sighed and nodded. "I was. Fucking pilot didn't pay attention to his speeds." He shook it off; it wasn't Jinx's fault. "Point is, I need to come up with cash to cover as much of the fine as I can." He held up his data chip and then passed it over. "I need you to drain those accounts for me, right into the Arillia's system. All the authorizations have gone through, I just don't have the time to deal with the system. I need work, fast."

Kenva nodded and took the chip. "I'm taking two percent."

"Whatever. Do it soon, though, okay?" Tab looked around, his eyes going from stall to stall, hoping to see someone he knew, someone with connections. He wanted to make as much money as he could as soon as possible, and then find Jinx. "Know who needs to fly fast and tight these days?"

Kenva shrugged one shoulder. "Yep. But they've got people who can do it."

"Not like me."

Kenva grinned. "Obviously." He sobered up at Tab's flat look and asked, "How much time do you have?"

"Four days. Need to clear fifteen thousand, more if I can find it."

"That much?" Kenva's look grew guarded. "How badly do you need it?"

Tab met his eyes and forced himself to swallow back rising bile. "Enough that I'll work a slaver, if I can get it in one go."

"Christ." Kenva looked disgusted but he didn't shake his head. "How about smugglers? Less money, but you'll be able to use a mirror."

"As long as it's fifteen or up, I don't care." Tab shook his head. "Look, I'm going to shower. I'll be back in an hour and you let me know, okay? Even if it's just a name, someone else to ask. I really need to get this money together."

"I can see that." Kenva slipped Tab's chip into his pocket. "C'mon back when you don't stink and I'll tell you where to go. But Tab -- keep your desperation under control. You'll get yourself killed."

Tab nodded and turned around, heading to the pay showers. Getting killed might be a bit of relief after finding out how little Will really thought of him.

Will had everyone's money but the last eleven thousand from Tab and he was prowling the halls of the space port, looking for cargo and for an engineer. He didn't expect to find one, not one who was any good who he could afford, anyway. It was a good thing he knew how to cobble together a few parts himself. Hopefully it would be enough to get them through a few runs, let them get back on his feet so he could pay someone decent up front. Bane had been lucky when he'd found Tab.

Tab. Fuck.

He couldn't believe the man was going to abandon the Arillia like that. And to say something like what Tab had said...

Will shook his head. He hadn't seen Tab since the argument in the galley. Tab had been avoiding him and to be honest, he hadn't made much of an effort to search Tab out.

Nobody'd ever loved him before and he didn't know what it meant. Not really.

Owning and owing and taking what you wanted over asking for it or offering it, all that Will got. He and Tab, they'd had fun together. It had been mutual. He'd wanted, Tab had wanted. He'd never realized how fucking good sex could feel.

He passed the showers, feeling a fist in his belly at the sight. Any other time and he would have been headed right here, looking for a private shower with Tab. Well fuck it. Fuck Tab and the whole thing. Just because he was on his own, didn't mean he couldn't take a shower. He couldn't afford for it to be private, but he could get his head under the water and wash his upper body with real water for a change.

He went in and bought himself ten minutes, grabbing the towel and soap from the attendant and heading to the stalls in back. The room was full of steam, two men already there and standing as far apart as they could. One had his head under the spray, soap everywhere. The other was Tab. Naked and wet and standing there with his eyes closed, water running down his back.

Then the eyes opened and Tab pushed his wet hair out of the way, flicking the last of the soap off along with the water. He stared at Will for a long moment and then nodded stiffly.

He nodded back, trying to ignore the way his cock had gone hard at the sight of the man. He just stood there watching, long enough the other guy rinsed himself off, gave him a look and shot a "perv" at him before grabbing his towel and heading back up the hall, leaving him and Tab alone.

"Gonna shower?" Tab finally asked. "You're wasting time already bought." He turned his body away, facing the wall again, but Will had seen enough to know that Tab wasn't unaffected, either.

"If you care so fucking much, why are you leaving?" Will snapped his mouth shut. It wasn't what he'd meant to say, but now he'd said it, he couldn't take it back.

Tab didn't look at him. "Because I have some pride and I won't stay with a man who thinks I'm a piece of shit who'd buy people. Can't stay where you are, Will. Not if you think that."

"I never said that about you. I never said I thought that about you. That's just how it would feel to me. You can say it was free and clear and a gift as much as you like, but I'd always know you'd paid all that money and gotten nothing in return. And so would the crew. And I... Tab, things weren't always good for me. I've lived that life and I can't do it again, even if it's only in my mind."

Tab turned his head to look at him, but there wasn't much friendly about his smile. "You're utterly fucked up, you know that? It doesn't matter what I do, or say, or anything. You're not even trying to get past anything. You just stuck your issues in the ground and said, 'That's it. This is the way it is,' and... that is it. That's the way it is. I can't make you see any different, and I'm not going to try anymore. You want to think that way, go ahead. I'm not staying around to watch it, be a part of it. It's killing me."

Will felt tears prickle at his eyes and he blinked them back, swallowed around the lump in his throat. Tab was the best thing that had happened to him aside from the Arillia. Maybe including the Arillia. He wasn't sure -- they were both so tangled up in his mind together. "I can't change what happened to me, Tab. I can't just suddenly be different because you aren't like the others."

"Not asking you to suddenly be different. Just asking you not to assume so fucking much. You don't even look at the other side of things, Will. You don't even try." Tab growled and moved away from the wall, walking toward him with measured steps. "I know you can't change the past. But stop living in it."

"How? How do I do that, Tab?"

"Believe in something. Anything. Just... for one minute, let yourself think that there's some good in people around you, that we're not trying to hurt you. That *I'm* not trying to hurt you. Do you have the faintest idea what I've been doing the last two days?"

He felt his belly clench. He didn't know what he'd do if he found out that Tab had been working for slavers after all. "I can guess." And he could hope it wasn't that.

"No, you can't. Because I've showered three times and the stink is off me. I hope. I've been doing repairs on a fleet of livestock scows. Dirtiest fucking job there is, and I've got burns in places you don't want to know about. And when I'm done there, I have three more ships to get to. Pay's good--better than good. When I'm done I'll have almost twenty-five thousand for you. And I'm doing it not because I want you to owe me

anything, but because I fucked up and I want you to have the Arillia. Don't matter where I go next, long as you have your bird. That's all there is to it, Will. If you're happy, I am. It's that easy."

"How am I supposed to be happy if you're not staying on the Arillia?" And oh, fuck, he'd said that out loud.

Tab stared at him for a long moment then gave him a small smile, just a flicker before it faded away. "That's the kicker, isn't it?"

"So stay. Take the shares you've earned with your work and stay." He took a breath and took a chance, wanting Tab to stay badly enough he could try to offer something he thought Tab wanted from him, maybe needed. "Not because I need an engineer. Because I want you to."

For a moment he was sure Tab was going to refuse, was going to make some other impossible demand, but just when he thought Tab would turn away, he nodded. "Okay. Because you want me to," he said simply.

"Yeah? For real?" Will could feel some of the tight knots in his belly loosening.

"For real." There was a ton of meaning in those two words. "And because I want to."

"Okay. Good." He nodded and then frowned as the water turned off. "Aw, shit."

"S'okay. I paid for five. I really stank." Tab grinned at him and nodded to the shower head as it started up again. "C'mon. Get clean."

"Thanks." He stripped off his vest and his T-Shirt, moving to get his head under the hot water, groaning at the feeling of it.

"Gonna ruin your pants," Tab said mildly.

"Wasn't planning on getting them wet."

"Good luck with that. The spray in here is a little unpredictable." Tab moved to the side and leaned on the wall, watching him, as unconcerned as ever with his own nakedness.

Will shrugged. "You know how I feel about being naked in public places."

Tab nodded. "I can guard the door, if you want. Let you know if anyone's coming."

"Yeah, okay." The fall of water over his skin was too good to pass up getting it all over.

He made quick work of his pants, and stepped under the spray, putting his head back and letting his eyes close, trusting Tab wouldn't let anyone in while he was vulnerable.

For a few moments there was just water, and when he glanced to the door, unable not to, he saw Tab with his back to him, looking out at the hallway. "Nobody coming," Tab said, not even looking back. "Don't stress. Do what you want, Will. I'll keep you safe."

His breath caught a little at the words, at the fact that he believed them, somewhere deep down inside himself. "I know."

"Good." He heard the smile in Tab's voice and saw the way his shoulder's relaxed a fraction.

He soaped up and rinsed off quickly after that, not wanting to get caught still soapy when the water ran out. Then he just stood there, letting the water hit the muscles of his shoulders and neck, massaging and heating, making them less tight.

"Still clear," Tab said. "If you want to... if you want to enjoy the water." He still had his back turned, but his voice had dropped a couple of notes. "I won't even look. Can't watch the door and you, both."

He bit his lip to keep his groan quiet, his cock throbbing and growing back to full life. He wanted to, but it felt... odd after all the times they'd fucked in the showers whenever they were docked.

"Maybe next time," he murmured, stepping out of the water and grabbing his towel, drying off quickly.

"Sure." Tab waited until he reached for his pants before pushing off from the door, and when he turned around he had one hand wrapped around his erection. "Me, I'm taking care of this. Got one more shower left, and then I'm back to work."

Will licked his lips, unable to take his eyes off the thick cock, Tab's hand wrapped around it, tugging. "Yeah. I've got to get to work, too. Gotta find us a cargo."

"You do that. Make it something that doesn't stink, if you can." Tab moved under the spray and leaned back, his eyes closed as water poured over him. "Oh, that's nice," he said, though if he meant the water or the way he was fingering the head of his cock, Will wasn't sure.

"We're leaving tomorrow at three," he told Tab shortly, tugging his shirt. If he didn't get out of there, he was going to stay and watch and he didn't feel like that would be any more right than jacking off with Tab just over there right now. "Later." He took off, wondering how long it would be, how *hard* it would be until they got themselves sorted back out. If they ever would.

At the end of his four-day window, Tab was in the showers again, trying to get the grease and grit out of his hair. He was exhausted, burned, sore and cranky. But he had just under twenty-five thousand credits, one data transfer away from being in the Arillia's accounts. Then he could go back to the ship and fall asleep for a day or so while Will and Jinx got them underway.

It was the thought of sleep that got him moving, as much as being able to give Will the data chip. He wasn't sure he could really even enjoy the relief on Will's face, he was so tired. He dressed, though, and made his way to the bay, ignoring the throb in his leg. Sleep. Sleep would fix everything.

At the ship he got his thumb scanned and headed up to the bridge, the ship quiet around him. Like it was sleeping.

"Will?" he called, dragging his butt down the corridor. "You here?"

"Up here," Will called from the office.

"Hey, Tab," murmured Jinx from the pilot's seat. "You made it in under the wire, we're only paid up until three, but we're grounded until we've paid the balance of that fine."

"Got it," Tab said, holding up the chip. "And more. Get ready to fly." He kept going, right into Will's office. "Got the accounts open, Cap?"

"Yep. I haven't transferred any of it yet. Wasn't gonna pay any of it if I couldn't pay it all. Would have needed it for docking fees." Will nodded toward the chip. "So that's it?"

"Twenty-four thousand, seven hundred and fifty," Tab said, passing him the chip. "Signed over to the ship accounts. And I'm sorry."

"I know you didn't mean for it to happen." Will put the chip in his databank, breathing a long sigh as the transfer was made, typing in the information to pay the fine. "I want you to take the shares you're owed for this, Tab. Please. It's not fair you paid the most and get nothing in return for it."

"It's not nothing," Tab said quietly. He didn't really hold out hope that Will would get it, but he'd try one more time. "It's... I get you, on your ship. I get you not looking defeated and starting over. That's a lot."

"All right." Will nodded, though he didn't think Will actually *got* it, but he could see Will was trying. "But I want you to have more. Jinx paid eight thousand and got four shares for it. You paid thirty-five thousand all told, I want you to take at least fifteen shares."

Tab shook his head. "I can't do the math, too tired. But that's too much, baby." The word slipped out without permission and he felt himself flush. "I gotta go sleep."

"Two thousand a share. Fifteen would be thirty thousand. You gave me ten when we landed and just added twenty-five, that's well over the going price for fifteen shares. But we can argue about it later. Just put your thumbprint here." Will passed over a datapad.

Tab obediently pushed his thumb on the square he had to. "Does that leave you with control?" he asked.

Will nodded. "I still own over seventy-five percent of her. And I'm willing to buy your shares back from you as I can."

"All right." Tab rubbed his eyes with a hand that bore a lot more scratches and marks than it had a week ago. "Whatever you think is best. I'm going to bed; we all right to fly now?"

"We are. We're out of here, belly full. Oh. Tab? Did you do anything to slow us down when you put the alarm on the system? I don't want to go over 3.8 under normal circumstances, but fifty thousand seems like a small price to pay if we're trying to outrun pirates."

Tab nodded. "Yeah. Yeah, I did. We can't go over 4 right now. I'll... it'll take me a couple of hours to rig her back up." He felt his eye twitch. "But then I'm sleeping. Do your best to avoid trouble, yeah?"

"If it wasn't important I'd say let it wait, Tab, but we need that speed if we come across trouble."

Tab nodded. "I know," he said, trying his best not to growl. "Did you happen to pick up heat packs? I didn't have time to get any, barely had time to shower."

Will shook his head. "We didn't even get the good food, this time out. Call me when you're done with the engines and I'll take care of your leg."

"Yeah," Tab sighed. God, the weight of this was just going to knock him over. "I'll be down in the hole if you need me. Just... shout loud or something." He turned to go back to work, praying nothing broke this run out. "How long are we going for?" he asked, suddenly worried about just that.

"About ten days if we don't run into any trouble." Will spared him a glance and then went back to his screen, working on pre-flight business. "If that's a problem you'd better let me know before we take off."

"I don't *know* if it's a problem," Tab snapped. "I haven't been here. I have to look at the engine -- I haven't even done basic upkeep since we got in."

Will sighed. "Jinx, radio control and find out how much it'll cost us to stay here another couple hours."

"Problems, Captain?"

"I don't know."

Will fixed him with a look. "Go. Make sure we're good to go before it eats up too much of the extra you gave me."

"Yes, sir." Tab hoped he didn't sound as messed up as he felt. And he hoped to hell that there wasn't anything wrong down below, because he'd be damned if he could fix anything more complicated than a blown fuse without sleep.

He made his way down the corridor, holding onto the wall and nodding to Swan as he slid past the galley. The ladder was the easy part, months of sliding down it taking the edge off the pain in his leg, and then he spent half an hour going through the engine, bit by bit. At a glance, there wasn't any trouble; Will had been good to him when the money was coming in and there had been good parts. The rigging for the speed boost would be the time eater.

At the comm, Tab hit the button and said, "Cap, we're good down here, soon as I fix up the speed jump. About an hour, I think. Still want the alarm on at 3.8?"

"Yes. If we need to outrun anyone we can ignore the alarm, but if we're not, I want to know the second we're approaching too fast. If we're good to go except for the jump, we'll head out, save the fucking extortion prices for staying longer than we said we would."

"Right. Go then, I'll buzz you when the jump's fixed." He leaned on the wall and sighed again. It would be nice to just lie down and nap, but the floor was hard and Will would kick his ass if he did. So he went back to work, telling himself that it was a good thing no one had touched his baby while he was gone. Wasn't until he had the modifications almost done that he realized he'd meant Will as much as the engine.

It was two shifts later before Will managed to escape the bridge and head down to engineering. He'd taken the first two, letting Jinx relax, sleep, get back into the routine of the ship.

Avoiding Tab, if he was honest.

He wasn't sure what kind of welcome he was going to get, wasn't sure where exactly they stood. In fact he'd been considering working a third shift when he remembered Tab's leg

and he cursed himself out for being a selfish bastard. "Tab?" he called out as he hopped down the ladder. "You around?"

The gentle hum of the ship's engine was his only reply for a long moment, then Tab rumbled, "Bed."

He headed for the small room, hesitating at the door for a moment before knocking and then letting himself in.

Tab was sprawled on the bed, his sheets a tangled mess and his eyes bleary. "Time is it?" he asked, scrubbing his face.

"Six bells. You okay? I thought maybe you could use some help with your leg."

"Six?" Tab tried to sit up in a rush, wincing as he fell back on the bed. "Fuck. Missed... God, what *day* is it? Did I sleep the day 'round?"

"Nah. You let me know the speed boost was available around seven last night. I worked a double. Then came down to help." He sat on the edge of the bed, noticing that Tab was naked underneath the sheets.

"Oh." Tab blinked at him a couple of times and relaxed a little. "Okay. Damn, sorry. I'm... not really awake." He yawned hugely and winced again as he tried to move. "Um. You serious about helping my leg? Because you don't have to."

"What, I'm just supposed to leave you lying there without even a heat pack? When it's bad because you were working your ass off to save the Arillia? Yeah, that'd be real good of me." He shot Tab a half glare, tugging at the sheet.

"I'd bitch right back, but I don't have it in me," Tab said, the start of a grin crossing his face. "Okay then, do your thing. You know what's going to happen, though, so don't get grumpy at me."

He frowned just as he got Tab naked. "What do you mean?"

"Mean I'm going to get harder than fuck, and if you don't want to deal with that, you don't have to -- it's not like I can control it, you know."

"Oh. Oh, right." He felt the color trying to flood his cheeks and he fought it, concentrated on working on Tab's legs.

As he worked at the knots, he played what Tab had said back in his head. "Would you *want* me to deal with it?" He still wasn't exactly sure where they stood. Hadn't really thought about it beyond that he needed Tab on the Arillia.

"Depends why," Tab said after a moment. "If you were doing it because you felt obliged, then no. If you touched me 'cause you wanted me, then yes."

It was a long time before Will had an answer to that and even then, it was easier to just reach over and stroke his fingers along Tab's heat than to actually say anything.

He could actually see the shudder that rolled through Tab's body, his stomach flexing as he curled up. "Thank god," Tab whispered. "Will. Please."

A sound got caught in his throat, coming out as a strangled moan and he pounced, meeting Tab's mouth in a hard, harsh kiss. Tab grabbed him, fingers digging into his arms and teeth almost splitting his lip. He was dragged, almost right on top of Tab's body, and he could feel Tab shaking with another rolling shudder.

He had on too many fucking clothes, but he couldn't quite bring himself to care. He just humped against Tab, his hand working the hard, hot prick.

He could hear Tab groaning under him, his hips pushing up as much as his hands were holding Will in place. "Mine," Tab grunted in his mouth. "Tell me you are. Mine, Will?"

"Don't want nobody else touching me. Ever."

Tab cried out, his head falling back on the sheets as he came over Will's hand, his cock jerking against Will's palm. Will hadn't heard him yell quite like that; heard him holler as he came, yes, but never with so much joy and triumph in his voice.

It was a simple enough truth, too. One he'd known ever since Tab had showed him how good fucking could be. Maybe he could have said something sooner. But right now he needed and damn it, he couldn't seem to care he was going to come in his pants, his hips working just as hard as could be on rubbing his cock against Tab's hip.

Tab growled for him, one hand landing on his ass and holding him closer. "Come on, baby, want to hear you come. Yours, too. You know that, right?"

He shuddered, close, not even aware he'd cared so much, that that was important. "Mine," he murmured, testing the word on his lips.

"Uh huh. And you really need new pants." Tab worked a hand between them but didn't even attempt to undo them, just started rubbing all along his cock, fingers curling to press his balls.

"I like," he gasped, finding a new rhythm, moving faster. "These pants." With a shudder and a cry, he came, heat spreading out from the tip of his cock as the pleasure slammed through him.

"I like 'em, too," Tab whispered into his ear, still rubbing. "But only when they're not on you."

He half laughed, half moaned, hips still moving, cock not going down at all. "Is that a hint?"

"God, you're smart," Tab told him. "Get 'em off. Want you." Tab's fingers were already fumbling at the fastenings, but he really didn't have a chance of getting them undone. And he knew it, if the look of frustration was anything to go by.

Will laughed, feeling horny and good, better than he had in days. He batted Tab's hands away, opening the pants with a flick of his fingers and a twist of his wrists. "See? It never changes, always the same thing."

"And I'm always too wanting to pay attention," Tab said, his hand pushing right in and curling around Will's cock. "Sticky. Fuck me?"

Will's eyes widened and he nodded, pushing the pants down off his legs and cursing his boots.

"See, you should always be naked," Tab said, rolling to the side and reaching under the bed. "It's much easier."

"Where are you going?" he demanded as he kicked off the boots and pulled off his T-shirt. "And the only way I'm staying naked forever is if you tie me to your bed and leave me here." He ignored the way his cock throbbed at that, grabbing at Tab and trying to get him to roll back.

"Just getting the slick, and I heard that, and don't think I won't!" Tab grinned at him and waved the tube of lubricant at him. "Want this?"

"Yeah. Not planning on hurting you." He grabbed the tube. "Wanna see your face though. While I do you."

He heard Tab's breath hitch and then Tab nodded. "Oh, yeah. Face to face, only way to go. Hurry up a bit?" His legs spread a bit, the good one coming up to slide over Will's thigh, bracketing him.

Will could do that. He so could. He got lube all over his hand, way more than he needed, and then he was pushing a finger into Tab's heat, a low moan coming from him.

"More, baby. I ain't gonna break." Tab's hips shifted, pushing down, and one large hand went to Tab's cock, gathering his balls up and rolling them. "C'mon. Want you in me. Want to feel you, deep inside."

He pushed in another finger and then another, stretching them wide, pushing them deep as he tried to find Tab's gland. Shit, the man made him want.

"Oh, fuck," Tab groaned. "There, baby. Right there." He heaved on Will's fingers, his whole body undulating. "Do it again."

Wow, that was something else. "This?" he asked, going for teasing, but it came out as a ragged groan, his cock throbbing, wanting in there.

"Uh huh." Tab's eyes rolled a bit, his breath coming in pants. "Now get your cock in there and hit that spot. A lot."

He laughed. "I always knew you were a pushy fuck." He did as he was told though, fingers sliding away so he could line his cock up and push right in. Oh, fuck, Tab was tight and Will moaned, jerking as he tried to snug up closer and get in deeper.

"That's it," Tab hissed. Then he humped up, and then down, forcing Will right in. "Oh, fuck, yes."

Will pushed up until his hips were tight against Tab's ass. Then he drew them back and pushed them forward again, moaning as Tab's body let him go and then closed tight around him again.

Tab stared up at him with wide eyes. "Yeah," he said softly. "Just... yeah."

He nodded, trying to find his breath, hands on either side of Tab's face as he held himself up. "Gotta move." And he did, repeating the slow, hard out and back in again and again, each thrust feeling more intense than the last. Under him, he could feel Tab pushing back, working with him. Hips rolling up, hands sliding on his hips and then grabbing the sheets, Tab opened up for him and met him, thrust for thrust. A flush had started spreading across his chest, and a light sweat made his skin shine. Will groaned, the rhythm they'd found making his balls ache. It was so damned good and he didn't want it ever to stop.

Tab groaned, his eyes closing tight and one hand going down to stroke his cock. "Come on," he said roughly. "Come on, baby. 'M close."

Nodding, Will sped up, slamming into Tab, just giving him everything he had.

"Oh, fuck!" Tab's eyes opened and his shoulders lifted off the bed. He looked a little wild, his breathing harsh and his chest heaving as his hand sped up to match Will's pounding. "Fuck, fuck, fuck--" He jerked hard and started to come, his ass clamping down around Will and spunk streaking over his belly, the smell rising fast and thick.

Will knew he was close, too, and he rode Tab's climax and then started back up again; soon, his hips were jerking and he was coming hard. He shuddered and collapsed down,

breathing heavily. Tab's arms wrapped around him, keeping him there against Tab's chest. He could hear Tab's heart racing, feel it in the way the man was panting.

"Good," Tab murmured. "Stay. Just... stay for a bit."

"Gonna fall asleep," Will muttered. He'd been up for eighteen hours. Felt like days. And now he was melted and exhausted and feeling pretty damned good.

"Nothin' wrong with that," Tab said, hands rubbing at Will's back. "Sleep. Then eat, and we can get back to work. Just relax with me for a bit."

"Uh-huh." He could do that. He let his eyes close and held on to Tab as he fell asleep.

Chapter Six

Tab finished up his shift the same way he always did, taking a tour of his engine and making sure everything was put away, just listening to the engine hum. It had been a good week or so, the run going nice and easy with no need to use the extra speed he'd put in. That had put everyone in a pretty good mood, despite the crappy food they were back on.

He had hope that with the payout there would be enough for better rations the next run, but he didn't blame Will for being cautious; it had been far too close for comfort, almost losing the bird. Unless they got a steady contract they'd be stuck going from port to port, looking for cargo, and it was hard to justify extras when there wasn't a promise of work.

Still, the flight had been good and there hadn't been any trouble. They were warm and fed and on time, and the engine was running smoothly. He and Will hadn't had a fight in days. It was all good. Kind of left him feeling damn close to content, really.

He grinned and leaned on a bulkhead, just watching his baby run. He'd never have thought he'd be this close to feeling good; even his leg wasn't troubling him. It kind of made him want to watch his back, though, waiting for the other shoe to drop. He pushed the thought away and snorted. If he didn't have trouble, he obviously went looking for it. Pathetic.

He stood up and shook his head. "Need a distraction," he said out loud. "Getting buggy." Good thing he knew where he could find one. He made his way up the ladder and looked into the galley, which was empty, and kept going to the bridge. "Will?" he called, listening for voices. "You up here?"

"Bridge."

When he got there, Will was standing over Jinx in the pilot's seat -- their heads close as Will pointed at something on the monitors.

"Trouble?" Tab asked, stepping in and resting a hand on Will's back.

Will shook his head and straightened, stretching. "Nah. Just making sure we keep avoiding it. The short cut is tempting, Jinx, but I think we'd better run safe this time out. Cut it as close as you can, but stick to patrolled space. And comm me if there's any trouble."

"You heading down?" Jinx asked, a bit of a smirk on his face and Will stiffened just a little. Tab might not have caught it if his hand hadn't still been on Will's back.

"Gonna eat," he said smoothly. "Gotta keep the Captain fed, you know." Damn. It wasn't like what he and Will did was any secret -- damn hard to keep secrets on a bird that small, and it was pretty clear where Will slept. But Will was pretty wound up about

appearances, and Jinx's teasing could very well mean that Tab wasn't going to get any for days. "C'mon, Cap. Yummy food."

Jinx chuckled. "Go on, Captain. I'd hate to get between a man and his... food."

Will rolled his eyes and shrugged off Tab's hand, heading out and calling back to Jinx. "I mean it -- you comm at the slightest hint of trouble."

Tab looked at his hand and sighed. Great, there went the good mood. He should have known. "He will," he said, turning for the door. "He always does." He walked toward the galley; if he wasn't getting laid he might as well eat.

Will shot him a surprised look. "Oh. You really did mean food. Sorry. I thought. I." Will shook his head. "I could eat."

Tab blinked and then sighed, debating what to say. "I did mean fucking, but you went all stiff and proper and I figured you didn't want to." He started opening lockers, pulling out ration packs and reading the labels. "When are you going to relax, baby?"

"What do you mean? I am relaxed. Just because I don't want everyone knowing I'm going down to get my brains fucked out..."

"Uh, you do know that it's pretty obvious every time, right?" Tab raised an eyebrow at him. "They all know, Will."

Will flushed and looked away, nodding. "I know. I just... If they're laughing at me behind my back I don't really want to know about it. You know?"

"Why would they laugh?" Tab asked, honestly baffled. "You're getting laid. I'm getting laid. And well, at that. You don't see them having sex, do you? Christ, they have to wait for port and girls. They're probably dying of envy and stroking off listening to us."

The look Will turned on him was horrified. "You think they can *hear* us?"

Tab snorted a laugh and tossed a couple of rations at the counter. "Oh, yeah. We're not exactly quiet in there, Cap."

"Oh, fuck." Will buried his face in his hands. "Maybe that gag isn't such a bad idea after all..."

Tab perked up. "We can do that," he said immediately. "Really. No trouble at all."

Will shot him a look and checked out the rations he'd grabbed, making a face. "Let's just warm this goop up and go to your room, okay?"

"We can skip the food," Tab countered. "It's not that good."

"Fine by me." Will turned and headed back down the hall, making a beeline for engineering.

Tab looked at the rations and put them away, shaking his head. He took his time heading to his bunk, too. "So, let me get this right," he said, finally walking into his bunk. Will was already working on his fastenings, and Tab leaned back to watch. "You don't care if they know, you just don't want them listening or laughing?"

Will shrugged. "I'd rather they didn't all know, too, but I guess the cat's out of the bag on that. But yeah, I'd rather not get laughed at. And yeah, I'd rather they weren't listening. Don't you care? I mean what, should we sell tickets?"

Tab grinned and peeled off his shirt. "Think they'd buy 'em? And seriously -- even if they're laughing, it's not 'cause they're being uppity. It's 'cause sex is funny."

Will had stopped undressing while they talked and crossed his arms over his chest. "Well, I don't want to be the butt of anyone's joke. And I've been the show before and didn't find it particularly sexy. Or fun. At all."

"I'm not putting you on show, and I know that. Hell, *they* know that, Will. No one is making fun of you." Christ. Tab wondered if there was any point in taking off his pants; Will's changeable mood was getting harder to read. "It's good natured."

Will nodded, fingers curling and uncurling. "I know my crew isn't like... that. Still don't like thinking of anyone listening. Or laughing, and I know I don't take teasing right. Lock the door, Tab, and get over here already."

Tab eyed him and reached back to lock the door without looking away. "You sure?" he asked, trying not to sound like he was going to pout if Will changed his mind.

Will rolled his eyes. "I said so, didn't I?"

"Okay, then," Tab said, his hands going to his fly again. "Get naked. I'll find something to use to keep you quiet." And didn't that send a flash of heat to his groin? Oh, this could be fun.

"That turns you on, doesn't it? Gagging me. Tying me up." Will pulled his T-shirt off.

"Hell, yes," Tab said emphatically. He shoved his pants down and tried to get his boots off. "Enough that I'm damn near tripping here. You saying it doesn't get you going just the same?"

"Maybe a little," murmured Will, pushing his pants down and getting them and his boots off before Tab managed to untangle himself. "I like it when you take charge and get

possessive and growly and do things to me." Tab barely heard the words and Will wasn't looking at him, but they'd been said.

Tab grinned, looking down to finally get his boots off. That was a huge admission, and one he really liked hearing. "Like it, too," he said, only slightly louder. "I'll take care of you, baby. Give you what you need."

"I know." Will looked over at him, eyes hot and needy, cock hard, reaching up for Will's belly.

"Good," Tab growled. He pushed Will to the bed and pinned him there, kissing him hard. "Stay here. I'll get some stuff." He rolled away, not looking to make sure Will did as he was told. A torn strip off a towel later and he was back, holding it stretched between his hands. "This keep you quiet?"

Will licked his lips, cock twitching. "I." Then he nodded. "Okay."

"Not gonna ask you again," Tab said, straddling his hips. "Be sure, baby. I'll pay attention, not going to hurt you, but if you don't want to, tell me now."

"Want to. Just don't want to think about it. Or talk about it. Trust you." Will's breath had gone short, needy little panting noises coming from him.

"Good enough," Tab growled. God, Will was hot like that, fighting and wanting. He bent over and kissed Will hard again, pushing his tongue deep and licking over Will's teeth. Then he pulled back, Will trying to follow, and shoved the towel between his teeth. "That's it," Tab said softly, holding Will's head and tying the gag on. "Pretty baby. Like that?"

Will didn't nod, but he didn't shake his head either and his eyes were burning hot, body pushing up toward Tab.

"Yeah, you do." Tab shifted, gave Will something to rub against, and dipped his head to whisper in Will's ear. "You look so hot like this, baby. Makes me want to do those things. Makes me want to hold you down and bite, suck up some nice marks." He dragged his teeth over Will's neck to make his point.

Will bucked, a muffled groan coming from him, those grey eyes so full of need. Men had wet dreams over having someone look at them like that.

"You can come if you want," Tab said, licking his lips. "I'm not going to stop, doesn't matter to me."

Whimpering, Will bucked up against him like a wild man, cock rubbing on his thigh, hard and hot and leaking like crazy.

Tab grinned, showing all his teeth and moved lower to torture a nipple. He moved his legs until Will was painting his belly instead, hot and wet, and started sucking, pushing against Will's prick until he could almost feel Will's pulse.

Will's hands grabbed at his head, holding him in place as Will humped up a couple more times and came, heat spreading between them.

"That's it," Tab praised. "Keep going, baby. Give it up." Tab licked his way through the mess, tasting Will and smearing his come all over, right down to Will's balls. He left a trail of sucking kisses, little tiny red marks that would fade if he left them alone. He had no intention of leaving them alone, though. He spread Will's legs and started licking at his balls, growling the entire time, hungry and getting hungrier.

Will writhed beneath him, pulling away from bites and then pushing back into him, hands grabbing at his shoulders, his hair.

Tab went lower, his tongue dragging over Will's hole, hands parting his cheeks wide. He wanted in there, in the worst way. Will bucked, hands grabbed at his ears and tugging him closer.

He would have taken care of those hands if he could have, but instead he just drove his tongue into Will's ass and started to fuck him, fast and as deep as he could. His own cock was rigid, ready; as soon as Will was insensible, he was going to drive right in, pin his man down and take him hard.

Will's legs wrapped around his head, body closing around his tongue every time he pushed in. Almost, Tab thought, one hand snaking down to grab his cock. Almost. When Will started to shudder, his thighs trembling, he pulled back. It was work, breaking away from Will, but he did it through brute force, leaving bruises on Will's thighs and likely making more as he shoved Will's hands up beside his head. "Behave," he snarled. "You're not the Captain right now, baby." He nudged Will's hole with his cock and waited for Will to acknowledge him.

Will fought for his hands for a moment, body bucking and pulling, and then he went quiet, breathing heavily around the gag, only his hips moving as he tried to get Tab to fuck him.

"That's it," Tab soothed, pushing in just a tiny bit. He glanced around for the lube, not wanting to hurt Will, just give him a little taste of rough. When he finally spotted it, he grinned and reached, his cock pushing in just a bit more. "Take it. Feel it? Bare and dry, baby."

Will moaned around the gag, eyes closed, body bucking for more.

Tab laughed darkly, and grabbed the lube, taking a moment to smooth some on his dick

and around Will's hole. Then he plunged in, not bothering to go slow, trusting Will's need to have him relaxed and wanting enough that the stretch would be sharp but not agony.

Will's wrists jerked in his hand, body pushing to meet his thrust. Will was telling him without words how much he wanted, that he wanted more. He could give more. He could give everything, as much as Will needed -- as much as *he* needed. Tab pulled out and slammed back in, setting up a hard, fast pace, aiming as much as he could for Will's gland. With a grunt he grabbed for Will's wrists and pinned him down again. Will's body responded to every thrust, sweat sheening his skin, cock hard again, slapping against his belly as they moved.

"Want me to touch you?" Tab growled, bending lower to nip at Will's skin. "Want me to mark you? Bite and suck and fist your dick until you pass out? Want to scream? Go ahead, no one will hear you." He actually doubted that, but it sounded good, and Will looked so fucking hot with the gag around his mouth it was a shame to ignore it.

Will made a muffled noise and bucked, eyes so hot.

Tab bit at him again, harder, and started to suck up a mark just to the left of one nipple. He gathered Will's wrists together in one hand and braced himself, hips still working, and reached for Will's cock, gently caressing the hot skin in contrast to the edge of his teeth. Oh yeah, those screams were still fairly loud, but fucking sexy all muffled by the gag.

He tugged a little harder, pressing into the slit with one finger and then sliding his hand down the now slick length. He could still find streaks of come on Will's skin, and the taste of him seemed to drive Tab's hips even harder. He was getting close, but he wasn't going to go without Will going first.

Will was wild beneath him, screaming and bucking, meeting each and every thrust, every taste and bite. The cock in his hand got harder, head seeming to swell. Will was damned close, too. "Come on," Tab growled. "Make me come. Make me shoot in your ass, Will." He shoved himself as deep as he could and stayed there, waiting.

Will's hips jerked as Will fucked himself on Tab's cock, rocking between cock and hand. A long scream sounded as Will's ass went tight around his cock, milking it as come shot over his hand.

Tab watched, and felt, and finally had to give over to it, stabbing into Will in a handful of quick jabs that sent him over the edge. He managed to stay upright as long as he was coming, but couldn't balance for much longer than that. He landed on Will with a gasp, lifting his sticky hand to Will's face to tug the gag off. "Damn, baby."

Will made a soft noise, arms coming around him, holding on tight.

"All right?" Tab murmured, turning his head a little so he could burrow into Will's neck. He was warm and sweet and Tab was suddenly very, very glad that he was there.

Will nodded, managing somehow to curl into him, curl closer. "Could do it again later."

Tab rumbled a laugh. "Could do," he said easily. "After a nap and some goopy food. Need to find a way to take care of your hands, too."

"What's wrong with them?" Will asked in a puzzled tone.

"They look better tied to the bed. And you can't grab my ears when I'm tongue fucking you if they're tied back."

He felt Will's cock twitch between them. "Perv."

"You're the one getting hard thinking about it," Tab grinned. "What else gets you goin', baby? Tell me your deepest secrets." He laughed quietly, not really expecting an answer.

"Fuck off." Will shoved him, but cuddled back in as soon as he'd rolled to the side.

"Did." Tab tugged Will tight against him and made a noise that could have been a purr. "I love watching you get off," he said absently. "You're totally into it. Sexy as hell."

Will buried his face in Tab's chest. "You make it good. Make it okay."

"I'm pretty sure that was better than okay," Tab said lightly, running a firm hand over Will's back. "Hey. You know it's good, yeah? We're good?"

"That's what I meant." Will cuddled in closer. "That you make it all okay, not... weird or bad."

Tab nodded, but kind of wondered if fucking gags and restraints and tubes that did *things* wasn't weird, what was? It wasn't bad, that was for sure, and he tried hard to make sure Will knew it was something more than fucking, but... He fidgeted, confusion making him restless. "I try," he said carefully. "I don't want you to feel dirty."

"Don't with you. Not while we're doing it, yeah? Trying to get better about the other times." Will stopped a minute and then continued. "Wanna do the tubes thing again. We got interrupted."

Tab forced himself not to get stiff about that. The interruption hadn't been fun at all, but the aftermath had been worse. He was actually surprised Will wanted to try them again. "Could do," he agreed, hoping he hadn't hesitated. "Did I tell you she had some that felt like they were cutting? People do some weird shit, baby."

"You didn't get any of those did you?"

"I didn't know, to tell you the truth. She handed me three at random."

Will shivered and moved restlessly. "I don't want you to hurt me, Tab. I might like it okay when you get a little rough, but I don't wanna hurt."

"No, no, we touched them all, remember? They just did that hot and cold thing, and the one got hot and vibrated." He rubbed at Will's spine again and dropped a kiss on his forehead. "No way I would have put anything like that in you."

"I know. Just wanted it said." Will sighed. "Hate talking about -- just wanna do."

"Works short term," Tab said. "Doing is fine, and don't think I'm not going to do... but this other stuff will keep coming up until you get rid of it, baby." It wasn't that he was unsympathetic; he really did feel badly for Will. But he also didn't want to see Will carrying this kind of crap around for years. Between wanting what he called 'stuff' done to him and having some lingering shame and anger over the past, Will was going to keep being unpredictable. In a not fun way, which was different from the 'fuck all over the place' way that Tab liked.

"Don't you think I'm *trying*?"

Tab blinked. Oops. "Sorry," he said softly. "I do. I do think so. I didn't mean to say otherwise."

Will sighed again and rolled onto his back, staring up at the ceiling. "I just want to enjoy things, Tab. Flying. Sex with you. Hot showers."

"Well, yeah," Tab said reasonably. He propped up his head on one hand and looked down into Will's face. "And you do enjoy those things. It's when you're not doing them that you get twisted. There should be a way that you can enjoy the other times, too, you know?"

Will shrugged. "I mostly do. I mostly don't think about things that are upsetting. I can't do anything to change them. Hell, I was *fine* 'til we started all this sharing and talking and shit." There was no heat in the words.

"Were you really?" Tab asked, genuinely curious. Then, of course, he wanted to bite his own tongue off because he knew full well that Will hadn't been.

Will glared at him. "Do we have to talk about this?"

"Nope," Tab said. Then he shrugged. "Maybe? Look, I know you don't want to, but it might help."

"What do you want me to say, Tab? Do you want to hear how I was passed around like candy? How the guy I thought gave a shit about me basically sold tickets so people could watch him be the stud? How exactly does talking about that *help*?" Will got up and grabbed his pants, jerking them on. "You know what? I *don't* want to talk about this. I

don't want to think about it. I lived through it once, I'm not sharing all the fucking gory details for your entertainment."

Tab sighed. "Right. And not talking about it just keeps you thinking like that. Come off it, Will. You know damn well it's not entertainment for me. But if you're going to keep saying it, that I'm the kind of man who would treat it like that, you're welcome to leave. Right now. You can come back when you get your head out of your butt."

"Well, I can't figure out why the hell anyone would want to hear about it, Tab. But you keep fucking asking." Will shook his head and pulled on his T-shirt. "I'll be on the fucking bridge." His voice was thick with tears, eyes wet and blinking hard.

"Will. If you keep it in, it's going to eat away at you." God, didn't he know that? "Let it go, is what I'm saying. Your life isn't like that anymore." He didn't know if he should get off the bed or not. Fuck. Everything always got messed up. Maybe he should just take Will's attitude and not talk. Ever.

Will pressed his face against the door, back curled. "I don't know how. I try and talk about it like you want and I just get all caught up in it."

"So what do you want me to do?" Tab asked. "I let you ignore it, and you hold on to it. I ask you to talk about it, and you accuse me of enjoying your pain. What's the right thing here, Will?"

"If I knew, we wouldn't be having this conversation." Will sounded rather bleak and he stayed where he was, body curled in on itself, face pressed against the door. "I thought he cared about me. I thought I'd been hired for my hotshot piloting skills. I was wrong on all accounts, Tab. A stupid, young kid who thought people gave a damn about something aside from themselves."

Tab nodded slowly, trying to understand what Will was talking about and how it made him feel. "Okay," he said, pretty sure he didn't quite get it. "And he used you? I... okay, I hear you. I'm saying you're still letting him have power over you, 'cause you can't let it go." He frowned, suddenly wanting nothing more than to pound the shit out of whoever that asshole was. "Can I kill him a little for you?"

Will shook his head. "I gotta fight my own battles. Especially with him." A shudder went through Will. "I think. Sometimes. I hate myself more for being so stupid. So happy those first weeks. It hurt like hell when he penetrated me, but he told me that's how... that's how it was supposed to feel. Mostly he just used my mouth. I thought I was so lucky. Fuck. Who's that stupid?"

"People who haven't had the luck to find someone decent before the shit came down, is all," Tab said. "It's not your fault." He sat on the edge of the bed, looking up at Will, and had to force himself to make his hands uncurl. "Tell me you don't run into this guy anymore. That he's gone."

"Haven't seen him since the day he kicked me off his bird for being damaged goods."

"He what?" Tab roared, coming to his feet so fast he got a little dizzy. He grabbed at Will and turned him around so he could look into Will's eyes. "Jesus Christ." It wasn't like he didn't know that kind of thing happened, he did. But he'd never had to deal with the aftermath like this. Control was slipping, he could feel it, leaving him feeling angry and vengeful. "I swear, Will," he said, not sure exactly what he was promising.

Will's eyes were swimming and they closed, a shiver going through the man. "I don't want to talk about this anymore, Tab."

"Okay." The word was meant to be a whisper, but Tab had choked it out, shoving his anger down deep where it wasn't really used to being. "Come lie down with me," he said, turning to look at the bed. His voice was still hoarse, but he wasn't shouting, the effort of not hitting the bulkhead taking most of his attention. "C'mon. Please."

Will nodded and pulled out of his hold, lying down on the bed without taking his clothes back off. He took a deep breath and looked up at the ceiling. "Make me feel good, Tab?"

"Anything you need," Tab said with a sharp nod. He got onto the bed carefully, stretching out beside Will and resting his hand on Will's belly. "What do you want, baby?"

"No more talk," muttered Will, grabbing him around the neck and pulling him down for a hard, needy kiss.

Tab could do that. He was actually very good at shutting up, when he had to, and he was a master at distraction. He kissed Will back, forcing his tongue into Will's mouth and grabbing at his hips with strong hands, rolling him into the mattress. Will moaned softly, body pushing up into his, hands starting to work those stupid pants open again. Not really able to help with that, but unable to stay still, Tab shoved his hand against Will's balls, over his pants, and started rubbing; if nothing else, it would hurry Will up a bit.

Groaning, Will did hurry, pushing his pants off his hips and then fighting with them and his boots around his ankles. Will growled, the sound full of frustration.

"Leave 'em, doesn't matter," Tab ordered. He bit at Will's jaw and then moved down the bed, his mouth open. Tab licked over the head of Will's cock, one hand jacking him, and then took him in with a moan. Desperation made everything better; added an edge almost like pain.

Will whimpered, legs trying to spread for him. When that didn't work, Will just growled, hips pushing the thick cock deeper into his mouth. Tab let him, welcomed it, and sucked hard, his tongue pressing up and dragging over the soft skin. He growled softly and hooked a leg over Will's legs, pinning him down, and opened his throat as his head dropped.

Will shouted, hands landing in his hair, holding on hard. "Tab! Shit! God, don't stop."

There was not much chance of Tab stopping as there was of Will changing his mind. He bobbed his head, grunting every time the head of Will's cock hit the back of his throat. And there was nothing Will could do but take it, feel it, enjoy it. It wasn't long before Will was gasping, cock throbbing in Tab's mouth, warning him Will was close. Tab took him as deep as he could and swallowed hard, pulling with his throat, waiting for it.

Will shouted out his name, hips bucking as best they could as he shot hard down Tab's throat.

He didn't get the taste with Will so far down his throat, but it didn't matter. He kept sucking, lighter and lighter, finishing with long licks to Will's cock before pressing a kiss on the head. "Better?"

Will made a noise, hands petting his head with lazy strokes before Will's hands kind of fell away, his whole body lax.

Smiling a little at the change a decent orgasm could make, Tab kissed his way up Will's body and curled around him, holding him close. "It'll be okay," he whispered. "We'll make it okay."

Will just kind of melted into him, not answering, but not pulling away or getting upset either.

Tab figured it was a start.

Will woke up with his legs immobile and he panicked until he realized it was Tab's weight that half on him, and his own pants that had his legs all tangled up. He breathed a sigh, nightmares fading. He never had those anymore, but he guessed stirring all that shit up had done it. Grunting, he kicked off his boots and managed to get his pants off, feeling his tension ease further once he was free.

He had a headache. And his legs were a bit pins and needles, but all in all, he felt okay.

Which was good because he had his bird, even if she wasn't entirely his own anymore. He had a man, someone he cared about as well as liked fucking with. The past had no place here and he hated it getting dragged up, hated that it could still touch him.

He closed his eyes and tried to convince himself to just not think and to go back to sleep.

It wasn't working.

"Stop thinkin'," Tab rumbled at him. "I can't sleep when you get all tense and shit."

"Fuck you," he muttered back, though there wasn't a lot of heat in it.

"Only if you really want to," Tab said, twisting so he could bury his head in Will's neck.

He punched Tab in the arm. "I can't get back to sleep," he admitted. "I suppose I should go up to the bridge and see if I'm needed."

"Could do," Tab agreed. "Or you could stay right here. You're warm." A hand snaked down Will's belly and between his legs, cupping his balls.

"So I'm your personal hot water bottle?" He'd been worse.

"Nah, you're my captain. The body heat thing is a fringe benefit." The hand teased a little, squeezing a bit and rolling his balls gently.

It felt good and he spread his legs a little, trying not to stiffen at the niggling Tab's words brought up. "I'm your lover, right?" He tried to keep the words light, he really did.

"Yep," Tab said easily. Teeth scraped over the skin under his ear. "Said so. Don't recall ever saying that to anyone else, either. Whole new thing here, Will."

He shuddered at the touch of Tab's teeth, the words not hurting anything either. "Just checking. You know?" He swallowed and rolled his eyes, moved away a little. He hated that he needed to check.

Tab lifted his head, the hand between Will's thighs going up to his cock. "Check if you need to. Answer's not going to change. You might piss me off, might drive me crazy, might make me want to have fits... but I love you. Of course, you also make me want to shove you into walls and lick you all over, so it evens out."

His prick jerked in Tab's hand. "You want to shove me into walls and lick me all over?" He could live with that. He really could.

"Sure," Tab said with a grin. "Usually when you're yelling at someone -- most often me. And when you've worked too hard, and when you're walking down the hall." He stroked Will firmly, two long tugs that ended with his palm sliding over the head of Will's dick.

Will groaned, pushing up, trying for more sensation. "Well, don't let me stop you now. Could yell at you if it'll move things along."

Tab's eyes darkened. "I think I can handle this without yelling." He stroked again, but loosened his grip so it really was more a tease than anything else.

"Well, so far you're doing a piss-poor job at licking me all over." He was pushing. He knew he was. But he liked what happened when he pushed Tab.

"So, you're saying you want to be licked?" Tab asked with apparent curiosity. "I got that right? And I am hearing complaints?"

"Yeah, I'm complaining. I'm complaining you haven't started yet. I'm complaining all you're doing is *talking*. Come on, Tab. I'm here and you can do anything you want to me," he added quietly.

He watched Tab's eyes flash, his hand suddenly tighter, moving fast. "Shit," Tab growled. Then he kissed Will hard, all sharp teeth and open mouth.

Will moaned, loving it when Tab got like this, when the passion made him rough and needy.

"Want to make you scream," Tab said into his mouth. "Want you to forget everything but me."

"So shut up and do it already," he muttered, grabbing Tab's bottom lip with his teeth and biting.

Tab snarled and shoved his legs apart with a foot and a knee, letting go of Will's cock to lift a knee instead, opening him up. Thick fingers probed at him and Tab loomed over him. "Pushy bastard."

He didn't answer, just dug his heels into the mattress and pushed himself against Tab's fingers, trying to get them inside him.

"Demanding," Tab continued, shoving two in roughly. "Bossy."

"Yeah," he groaned. "Well, I am captain."

Tab's fingers pushed deeper, stretching him. "Well, Captain. You're just along for the ride this time. I'm driving."

He nodded. Loved it when Tab drove. Loved having Tab do him and that it was what he wanted, not what he had to do.

Tab's eyes flicked around for a moment, his fingers still working in Will's ass. "Where's the slick?"

"Under the pillow?" He didn't know. He just wanted Tab to fuck him.

Tab shook his head, his eyes dark and wide. "Don't think so." He leaned forward and bit

at Will's neck again, and Will could feel fingers in his ass and Tab's cock leaving a damp streak on the inside of his thigh. "Doesn't matter," Tab growled. He leaned up and spit in his hand, then stroked his cock to spread it.

Will nodded, his own cock jerking, his ass spasming around Tab's fingers. "Hurry," he ordered.

"Bossy." Tab's fingers pulled away and then the slick head of Tab's cock was nudging at him, pushing in insistently.

He started to laugh at the accusation, but the burn of Tab's cock spreading him took his breath away, made him moan and want more. He grabbed Tab's hips. "Come on. In me. In me."

"Don't want to fucking *hurt* you," Tab said, pushing a little more. "Just want you to ache. And screaming would be good."

"So *make* me scream." He groaned, head tossing as the stretch got bigger, the burn harsher, and then suddenly Tab was in him, prick bumping his gland, making him scream.

"That's it," Tab said with a fierce grin. "Let me hear it." He rocked his hips, not so much thrusting into Will's body as rubbing over his gland again and again.

Will bucked and met the movements, cries and whimpers coming from him, pulled out of him by Tab's cock. Tab was huge in him, hard like rock, the friction around his hole almost like a blade. It was sharp and bright, and when Tab started jerking him off and swearing in his ear, it got that much more intense.

Everything else disappeared, everything. It was him and Tab and the heat of Tab's cock, the tight grip of Tab's hand. Will let go, undulating and keening, giving it all up for Tab.

"Fuck, fuck, fuck," Tab chanted, his voice almost lost in Will's cries. "That's it, come on, baby. Oh fuck, yes." Tab froze in him, in deep, and Will could feel the twitch of his cock as Tab came, filling him up.

Will whimpered, bucking up, so fucking close.

"Want to come?" Tab whispered, biting at his ear. "Want me to get you off?"

"Yes! Dammit!" Stupid, stupid question.

"Sure?" Tab panted, a long shudder rolling down his back. But his hand was tugging at Will's cock again, and his hips were going in a slow circle that sparked nerve endings and set off lights behind Will's eyes.

He just shouted, made a noise that meant yes and fuck, more and I'm coming, his body bucking as spunk shot out of him.

"Knew you could do it, Captain," Tab said with a lazy grin. "Nice mess, too. Love seeing you covered in come."

"Perv." He grinned back, stretching out his muscles before shifting and pressing against Tab, rubbing his come between them.

"Uh huh. That's the part you *really* like, though."

He grinned. "Yeah, probably. I guess that makes me one, too, huh?" Somehow, with Tab, that was more than all right.

"Yep." Tab gave him a long wet kiss, sucking on his tongue as he carefully pulled out. "Couple of bossy perverts. Lucky us."

He thought about that, because when Tab was making him look at his feelings and face the past he didn't feel very lucky. But the rest of it? Oh yeah. He was. He nodded. "Yeah, Tab. I guess we are."

Chapter Seven

Tab spent his shift poking at things that didn't really need poking, and running systems checks on things that didn't really need it. The only trouble with having the Arillia flying her best was that there wasn't a lot for him to do. Other than poke at things and think, anyway.

He thought about knocking off a little early and then stayed in the engine room a bit past his shift, not really avoiding Will, but making himself scarce. He didn't want to start in at Will again, and he wasn't sure if he could keep his mouth shut. He took about ten minutes of lecturing himself, decided that he wasn't going to get a grip on it any time soon, and went looking for supper.

In the galley he rummaged through the cupboards and bitched to himself about the kind of food they had, and then made up two trays. Maybe if he was on the bridge with Will he'd hold his tongue. He walked carefully with the trays, balancing them against the jostle they got due to his limp, and made his way to the front. "Dinner," he called, stepping through the door. "Get it while it's lukewarm."

Will was in the pilot seat, relaxed, looking happy. Man did love flying.

Jinx cheered as Tab walked in. "All right. 'Bout time you showed up to drag him away. It's *my* turn to fly, Will. Um. Captain."

Will sighed and hit a few switches before standing and stretching, then moving away from the pilot's seat. "Be good to my baby."

"*Our* baby," corrected Jinx.

"Mostly mine," Will shot back. He gave Jinx' shoulder a squeeze and came over, nose wrinkling. "Is that the best there was?"

"I didn't do the shopping, so I can't swear to it. But unless someone's hiding the good stuff, this is it." They both looked at the unappetizing meals and frowned. "We hit port, I'm going out for steak."

Will groaned. "Oh, yeah. Although maybe I should save my money and put my take into getting decent food back on board. This cheap crap sucks."

"Won't argue with you," Tab nodded. Really, as the next largest shareholder he should, too. But the thought of steak had made his mouth water and he was having trouble getting past that to make any promises. "C'mon, let's eat," he said, sneering at the food. "Before it gets worse."

"It can get worse?" Will led the way up to his tiny office, clearing off the hard bench and

straddling it, grabbing a fork as soon as Tab put the tray down. He took a mouthful and shook his head. "I don't think so."

"Don't tempt fate." Tab winked at him and sat as well, mirroring his posture so they faced each other. "We got, what, another five days until port? We'll live until then. And at least it's just the food -- the engine's purring."

"Yeah, I noticed that." Will ate a few more bites and then grinned. "That's because *I* found this great mechanic."

"See, you're very smart," Tab said with a grin. He took a bite and waved his fork around. "You know genius when you see it."

"Oh, I don't know if I'd say *genius*. But he knows his way around engines. On ships. And other stuff." Will gave him a wink and wriggled a little.

"So, this mechanic of yours, he's good for more than just work?" Tab grinned, liking the teasing. He liked the way Will was restless in his skin, too, the good mood an added bonus.

"Eh." Will shrugged, lips twitching before he shoved another forkful of so called food into his mouth.

"*Eh?* See when you get your next scheduled maintenance check, then." Tab shoveled more food in his mouth and tried to look put out.

Will bit back a laugh. "You think you can hold out on me? I think you'd get pretty damned antsy not performing that scheduled maintenance check."

"Oh, I bet I could hold off longer than you!" Tab smirked. "I'd just jerk off more."

"Oh, I can go a long, long time." Will was putting on a good show, but there was a look in his eyes that said he wasn't as confident about that as he was putting on.

"You think? Want to test that out a little, Captain?" Tab teased. He was reasonably sure that Will wouldn't push it; there wasn't a lot of entertainment on the bird other than fucking. Tab wondered how the others managed not to go insane.

Will tilted his head, really looked like he was considering it. "Nah. It's enough that I know I could do it."

Tab bit his tongue. Hard. "You better shut me up, baby," he said finally. "That tendency of mine not to shut up almost got us sleeping apart until we hit port."

Will laughed. "You saying you'd rather not sleep together until one of us can't stand it anymore than concede the point to me?"

"No, I'm saying I *almost* said that. But it ain't true." He grinned and finished his dinner. "I'm a little competitive."

"You? Never..." Will winked at him and finished up his food, tossing his fork at the plate. "Man. I definitely have to put some extra money into meals next ride. Wanna go compete with me?"

"Yep. Got a game in mind, or are we just going to make it up as we go along?" Tab pulled Will to him by simply gathering a handful of his shirt and yanking. "Can we get desserts for the next trip?"

"That depends. Are you kicking in for them?" Will glanced down at the bridge and then brought their mouths together, the kiss hard, needy.

Tab's fist tightened in Will's shirt and he kept him there, even after the kiss had ended with a nip to his lower lip. "If we find fresh berries, yeah. The things I could do to you with crushed berries..."

Will laughed. "Perv."

Jinx made a noise and Will pulled away some. "Lets find somewhere private, Tab."

"It's a small ship. Think we're stuck with our bunk again." Tab let him go and stepped back a bit, reaching for his discarded tray.

"Yeah, that's where I meant." Will rolled his eyes and headed down, giving Tab a fine view of his ass as he went.

Tab shook his head and followed, collecting a wink and nod from Jinx on his way past. "Mind your manners," he hissed. "You act up, I don't get any."

"And this is my issue because?"

"I can flatten you."

"Have a good night, Tab," Jinx said with a grin.

Tab grinned back and hurried after Will, tossing his tray into the galley on the way past. "In a rush, Cap?"

"We aren't racing to see who gets there first?" Will asked, turning long enough to grin cheekily at him.

"First one there has to find the lube." Tab had no idea where it had gone, and it was

starting to annoy him. "And has to undo your pants." Which means he was willing to let Will win.

Of course as soon as he said that, Will slowed way down. "Oh, this I want to see."

"I've done it before," Tab said indignantly. He just didn't want to have to do it again any time soon.

Will laughed. "Yeah, but you still haven't got it down right and there's something about all that fumbling at my crotch..."

Tab tried not to grin at him. "Like you need anything more to get you going." He pointed in the direction they were supposed to be heading. "Get."

Will snorted. "Seems you're the one in an awful hurry to get to bed." Will was getting though, moving quickly in the right direction.

Tab shrugged and followed, close enough by the time they got to the door that he had a hand firmly on Will's ass. "I'm pretty sure you're not troubled by that," he said, aiming for a reasonable tone of voice but knowing full well he was sounding more husky than anything else. "You got here first." Okay, so he'd kind of pushed, but that was fair.

Will stuck his tongue out. "Okay, I'll do the pants, but I expect you to make it worth my while and make up for the loss of you fumbling with it." Will's fingers were already flying through the fastenings, opening the damned things.

Tab grinned and tugged his own T-shirt off. "I'm open to suggestions," he said, hooking his thumbs in his waistband.

"Well... we never did get a real good chance to play with those tube things." Will spoke really casually, and wasn't looking at him, but Will's cock was speaking volumes, curved right up to Will's belly already, light catching just a bit of liquid at the tip.

Tab's eyebrows went up. "True," he said slowly, still watching Will's cock as he eased his own pants off. "You seemed to be enjoying yourself..."

Will lost his shirt and toed off his boots and stood there, naked and ready, fucking gorgeous. "You didn't look like you were hating it."

"So not hating it," Tab admitted. He got his pants off, kicked everything under his bunk and went to his locker. "Find the lube, baby."

"Uh-huh." Will stripped the covers off the bed and then threw them back on again before bending and looking under the bed, naked ass up in the air, just begging for attention.

"Oh for..." Tab felt his breath catch a bit, his eyes watching as his hands rummaged on

the top shelf, finally closing around a cylinder. He didn't pay any attention to which of the three it was, just grabbed it and dropped to his knees behind Will, one hand stroking over a round cheek and his tongue licking the other.

Will jerked and then moaned, pushing back against him with a small gasp. "Warn a guy!"

"Okay, I'm going to lick your ass," Tab said. Then he licked Will again, over the curve and up to his spine. "And I'm gonna do it again." This time he licked down, lapping his way to Will's hole.

Will kind of whimpered, hands moving to grab the edge of the mattress, knees locking.

"Find that lube?" Tab asked, dragging his tongue over Will's ass. He set the tube down, using both hands to hold Will open for him. The floor was cold under his knees, but he didn't care; his cock was hot, eager, and he fully intended to take Will wherever he was. If they wound up fucking next to the bed instead of on it, that was all right by him.

"Yeah." Will's voice was thick, wanton. The battered tube was passed back at him. "Gonna need more soon."

"Four days to port, at least. Might have to resort to plain old blow jobs for a few days," Tab told Will. He only lifted his head long enough to take the lube, then he dove back in, licking and sucking. He didn't have anything at all against blow jobs, and he was pretty sure that if he licked Will's ass enough he could fuck him dry a couple of times between then and shopping.

Will's only answer was another whimper, body pushing back against him, begging wordlessly for more. Tab knew Will was getting close when his legs started to tremble, knees locking tightly.

He debated letting Will come for about half a second before stopping. The bitching could be fun, sometimes, and he had every intention of blowing Will's mind anyway. He grabbed Will's cock and squeezed hard, just under the head. "Hold it," he growled.

"What?" Will grabbed his hand, tried to tug it away.

"I said, hold it," Tab growled again. "You're not coming yet."

"Why the hell not?"

"Because I said so." He didn't miss the shudder that rolled down Will's back. "That's it," he purred. "You just wait for me, yeah?" He let go of Will carefully and reached for the lube and the tube on the floor. "I'll take care of you."

"You'd better." He figured Will'd meant it to be all growly, like an order or something, but it came out sounding like Will was begging.

"Have I let you down lately?" he teased, slipping a slick finger into Will's ass. "Spread out a bit."

Without hesitation Will shifted, legs spreading for him, exposing that sweet hole. "Not lately."

"Then shut up." Tab grinned and pulled back a bit, giving his cock a firm tug before slicking the tube and nudging at Will with it. "Got no idea which one this is," he warned as he started to slide it in.

Will's body went tight for a moment and he could see Will breathe and make a conscious effort to stop and relax, letting him slide the tube right in.

"So hot," Tab said almost to himself, watching the tube sink in. He sat back on his heels, one hand playing the tube and the other going to his cock to fondle himself a little. "Fucking sexy."

"Oh, fuck, Tab! It's getting cold." A shudder moved through Will and he whimpered, ass pushing back toward Tab.

"Yeah?" He didn't really care, so long as it got Will off. He pulled the tube out a little, teasing, and then pushed it in at a different angle.

Will gasped, ass squeezing around the tube and then pushing back again. "M...more."

"Like this?" Tab pushed a little harder on the next thrust, but didn't speed up. Absently, he stroked himself in time, sweeping his thumb over the head of his cock and getting it slick.

Will groaned, back arching. "Uh-huh." His legs spread a little wider, body rocking with the slow rhythm Tab set up.

"Talk to me, baby. Want to hear you -- gets me hot when you tell me what it's like." Tab edged the tube in deep and left it there, not giving Will anything to work against for a few seconds.

Will whimpered. "You're a tease, Tab. I like it when you *fuck* me. With the tube, with your tongue, with your cock."

Tab's cock jerked, hard. He groaned a little and pushed the tube, then starting fucking Will with it in short, shallow thrusts. "Still cold?"

"Uh-huh. It's... it's weird because it's not getting warm."

Tab thought about that for a moment and decided that it would be too weird for him,

distracting. So he changed the angle again and fucked Will a little harder, admiring the arch of Will's back.

Will groaned and writhed, meeting each thrust, working to get them to come faster. "More, Tab. I need more."

Tab snarled, the neediness in Will's voice going right through him like an electrical charge. He pulled the tube out of Will's ass and tossed it on the bed, then grabbed Will's hips tight. "On me," he ordered, pushing in, fast and hard. "You come on me."

Will shouted, hips slamming back to meet his thrusts. "Yes! Fuck!"

Tab grunted and fucked him harder, the sudden tightness around his cock almost making him come. He gritted his teeth and moved, holding off and trying to make it last. "Uh huh," he agreed, bending over Will's back and biting his shoulder. "Feel me? Better than some tricky tube in your ass."

"Yes. Tab." Will moaned, his body shuddering, going impossibly tight around Tab's prick as Will came without a touch to his cock.

"Ah, fuck." Tab tried to breathe through it, tried to hang on, but Will's ass was tight and tighter and he could feel every ripple, every spasm, and he couldn't do it. He jerked roughly into Will a couple more times and shot hard, his teeth sinking into Will's skin as he groaned.

Will collapsed against the bed with a groan, bringing him down, too. He could feel Will breathing hard beneath him, back rising and falling.

"Damn, baby," Tab panted, kissing where he'd bitten. "Nice." He tried to find the energy to pull out, but couldn't quite, although he was pretty sure Will would be gasping for air in a moment or two. His cock twitched again, just as a reminder, and he moaned softly. He fucking loved being in Will's ass.

Will was okay for a minute or two and then slowly went stiff beneath him. "Gotta move."

Tab sighed and nodded. "Should probably have aimed for the bed after all," he said as he pulled away and rolled to the side. "Floor's cold."

"It was my fault. You can't resist my hot bod." Will grinned and stretched out on the bed, looking damned sexy.

"Nope, can't," Tab agreed, hauling himself up and stretching out. "You gonna get a swelled head, now?"

Will looked down, grinning at his cock, which was starting to look interested again. "Yep."

Tab rolled his eyes. "You're spoiled." He watched as Will's cock twitched a little, rolling as it filled a little more. "Hope to fuck you don't expect me to keep up," he teased.

"Are you kidding? I expect you to push me to new heights." Will reached out and grabbed Tab's cock, fingers sliding on it.

Tab snorted but shifted his hips to give Will as much access as he wanted. "You fly too high and I'll never get you back down," he said without any conviction.

"Oh, you're not *that* good, Tab." There was a definite challenge in Will's voice, the hand on his cock tugging, insisting he get hard.

"Bullshit. I'm the best there is," Tab insisted with a grin. He spread his legs a bit and pushed into Will's grip, firming up nicely.

Will's thumb played with the tip of his cock and then his balls were cupped, played with. "I think you're the one with the swelled head."

He couldn't really argue with that, not the way he'd been teasing. "Ain't bragging if it's true," he said, pushing just a little more and grinning broadly.

Will laughed and tugged him by his cock, pulling him so he landed on Will. "So prove you're not bragging."

"How 'bout you give me a treat for being such a fucking sex god on your ass?" Tab countered, laughing as he rubbed up on Will's body.

"I let you *be* a fucking sex god on my ass -- that not treat enough for you?" Will's hand found his ass and squeezed hard.

"It *was*, five minutes ago," Tab explained patiently. "I've had that treat. Now I want another one."

"Greedy. What do you want *now*?" Will was trying to keep it light, he could see the effort of that.

"Kisses?" Tab suggested. "Lots and lots of kisses. And maybe a hand job."

Will looked surprised. "I can do that."

Tab laughed. "I know you can. Christ, what did you think I was going to ask for?"

Will shrugged. "I didn't know. Something wild."

"Baby, me asking you to do something for me *is* wild." He nuzzled into Will's neck for a

second and added, "Know you don't like pressure. But I'd sure like it, you know? Your hand on me, your mouth on mine..." It was simple and dangerously close to sweet, but it was what he wanted.

"I *said* I could do that." Will's hand slid around his neck and pulled him down so their mouths met, the other hand starting to drift down toward his cock.

"So do it," Tab said, smiling against Will's lips. "Show me what wonderful hands you've got from flying this bird all day." He licked at Will's lips and tried to angle his hips just right, his prick getting harder every second.

"And you call me pushy." Will's mouth closed over his, the kiss starting off hard and aggressive, but slowly softening. Will's hand played over his belly, still not touching his cock.

Tab's eyes drifted closed and he concentrated on the kiss for a few moments, just feeling Will's mouth on his, but it wasn't quite enough. Will's hand was warm, a tease that wasn't doing what he wanted, and while he knew he was being an impatient prick, he couldn't help himself from shifting again, trying to give directions. He really was pushy, he figured.

Will's laughter filled his mouth and that damned hand slid around to cup his ass, stroking his skin and not going where he wanted it.

"Will," Tab growled. "That is my ass. Which, okay, nice. But you're going to make me crazy." He did kind of like Will's hand there, though, so he didn't move, other than to brush up against Will a little.

Will just laughed some more, teeth grabbing Tab's lower lip and nibbling on it, hand beginning to tease its way around his hip.

Tab wasn't really one to be passive at all, so he licked at Will's mouth again until he was let in, and let his own hands go wandering. He had to shift around on the bed to make it work, but when he was settled he had a hand on Will's hip and the other teasing at one tight nipple. Will still hadn't gotten down to business though, he noted.

Will snorted. "Pushy, pushy, pushy." Will's hand finally slid around and grabbed his cock, began stroking nice and slowly as Will added quietly. "Like it."

"Know you do," Tab whispered back, then moaned as Will's fingers did a really nice rolling thing all along his shaft. "Good."

Humming, Will kept exploring his cock, their tongues tangling in a long, lazy kiss.

Tab tried not to move into Will's touches, loving the almost gentle way Will was handling him. He could almost float on it, the switch from rough and fast to this easy

pace, heady in and of itself. His fingers brushed back and forth over Will's nipple, then up to cup his jaw, holding him at just the right angle to make the kiss perfect.

Will's humming turned into soft gasps and gentle moans, the lazy explorations slowly finding purpose, Will's hand wrapping around his prick and sliding. Better. It just got better, and Tab moaned quietly into the kiss, his hips straining from the effort of not pushing into Will's grip.

"S'okay," Will whispered. "Show me how you want it."

Tab groaned again and let go, pushing through Will's fingers in a first ragged thrust before smoothing out and going a little slower. "God," he said. "Good, Will. Feel good."

"Yeah, it does." Will's grip tightened, thumb pushing in just under his glans.

The noise Tab made was close to a whimper, his nerve endings all sitting up to beg. "More," he said tightly, his hips jerking again. He kissed Will again, tasting his mouth and feeling the stubble on Will's jaw rasp on his own. Will's hand slid, his thumb dragged, and Will's tongue pushed into his mouth, the kiss picking up heat, starting to steam between them.

Tab shifted a leg and braced himself, fucking Will's hand in earnest. With the hand he'd had on Will's hip, he reached for the hard cock waiting for him and palmed it, gave Will something to move against; they were damn near rocking the bed, and Tab gasped as his cock throbbed a warning. "Too soon," he said into Will's mouth. "Not yet."

"Fuck off, Tab. You set the pace last time. It's my turn this time. Just fucking let go."

"Not used to it," Tab said, knowing Will was right and trying anyway. He concentrated on his dick, his balls, and the fire racing up and down his spine. His leg started to shake and he groaned, deep in his chest. "Ah, fuck, gonna go," he said, his head falling back. Everything was tight and hot and he could fucking *see* his orgasm there, right in front of him.

Will bit at his lip and squeezed him hard, thumb pressing against his slit. "Gimme, Tab."

Tab gave, not really having any choice left in the matter. The tight got tighter and the hot hotter, and then he was crying out, spilling over Will's hand in a sticky mess that felt like silk.

Will chuckled, grinning, looking fucking smug. "Look what I did."

"Look what you did," Tab panted at him. "Now you do it, too." He stroked Will's cock and then smoothed some of his own come onto it and tugged again.

Will undulated, hips pushing his hard prick through Tab's hand. "You gonna make me?"

"What do you think?" Tab asked, pressing harder on the head of Will's cock.

Will arched and moaned. "Uh-huh."

"That's right." Tab did it again, his fingers squeezing as he stroked, trying for as much friction as he could get. "Give it up for me, Will."

Will growled a little, hand wrapping around the back of his neck and tugging him close for a kiss. Tab went with it, kissing him hard and fucking Will's mouth with his tongue, pulling at his cock in time. He growled a little, his palm skating and dragging over the sensitive skin.

Will's kiss got desperate, his hips speeding Tab's pace and then he arched again, heat spilling out over Tab's hand. Will collapsed, going lax, panting hard.

Tab kept kissing him, softer, all along his jaw until he could nuzzle into Will's neck and breathe in the scent of him. "Nice, baby," he purred, his hand smoothing come onto Will's belly.

Will nodded, arm wrapping around him. "Yeah. It was." He sighed, body staying relaxed and quiet. It was kinda peaceful.

"Gonna sleep?" Tab asked, his eyes already closing. "Nap? Rest up? Recharge? See a theme here?"

Will poked him in the side. "Hush. Some of us are trying to sleep."

"Then stop talking at me." Tab grinned and nuzzled a little closer. "Noisy."

"Me?" Will sounded outraged and he poked Tab again. "You're the one going on and on and on and on."

"Shhh, you're still talking." Tab curled his arms around Will and tugged him up against his side. "Shut up and go to sleep like a good captain. Wake me up when you're ready for more."

Will snorted. "I can take anything you have to dish out, Tab. We don't need to nap for *my* sake."

"Oh, shut up." Tab would be damned if he would actually say that he *did* need a nap. He wasn't that old. Really.

Will chuckled and left a kiss on his shoulder.

Tab grunted at him and gave him a squeeze, feeling warm and relaxed. It was a good way

to sleep, messy and tangled together. He wondered vaguely where the lube had gone and figured he'd just ask Will. Later. After a nap. If Will wanted it bad enough, he'd find it.

Chapter Eight

Will sat back in the pilot's seat, one leg hooked over the arm, idly watching the consoles. Things were going well.

Almost a little too well.

Well enough he was just waiting for the other shoe to drop.

The Arillia was on her fourth run since the fine, they had supplies, spare parts, the good grub in, and he had a few creds for upgrading her squirreled away. He and Tab hadn't had a fight in weeks, he was trading off eight-hour shifts with Jinx, getting plenty of rest, lots and lots of sex.

Things didn't go this well this long for him. They just didn't.

It made him twitchy, waiting for that next thing that would knock him back into last week, or further. All he had to do was remember the last time it was going so well and how that had turned out, getting fined for running Arillia too fast for her class.

Will hit the switch on the comm. "Tab? How are my girl's engines?"

He had to wait almost two minutes before he got a reply, just long enough to twitch. "Hey, Cap. Smooth going down here, was just replacing a coil. Normal wear and tear, floating at 3.8."

He glanced at his speedometer. 3.8. "Good. You got the alarm on if we even sniff 4?"

"Yes, Will," Tab said patiently. "Are you bored, baby?"

He shifted at the nickname over the comm. "No, your *Captain* isn't bored, Tab." He nudged the Arillia a little faster until the alarm went off and then backed her down again. "Just testing systems."

"Bored," Tab said firmly. "And feeling a little domineering."

"Fuck off."

"Excuse *me* for living." Jinx's voice startled him and he jumped up.

"Shit, I didn't know you were there, man."

Jinx laughed. "Shift's over, Captain. Go show Tab who's boss."

Will fought his blush and gave Jinx the finger.

"Cap?" Tab's voice was vaguely amused through the comm. "You pouting?"

"Fuck off," he repeated, hitting the switch to turn off the connection. "Keep her steady as she goes, Jinx. I'm going to go find some of that chocolate thing we picked up last stop."

"Um... it's all gone."

"What?"

Jinx shrugged. "It was good -- we've all been eating it pretty steady."

"Well, I haven't. Dammit." He stomped his way down to the galley. He'd been savoring the thought of that chocolate for days, waiting to have one because the anticipation was almost as good as the tasting, likely not *as* good, but still pretty damned good. And now there wasn't any left and he'd missed his chance.

He kicked the cooler when he got to the galley, letting himself get good and worked up about it -- he *knew* things had been going too well. He heard the steady, slow sound of boots coming, knew from the slight shuffle that it was Tab.

"You *are* pouting," Tab said from the door. "What's up?"

He glared. *He* was not pouting -- he was glaring. He glared some more, just to be sure Tab could *see* the difference. "The fucking ingrates ate all the chocolate stuff."

Tab blinked. "Already? Where's your stash?"

"My *what*?" He glared some more. "I haven't had *any* and now it's all gone and I'm fucking pissed about it."

Tab chuckled and leaned on the doorframe, his arms crossed across his chest. "Too bad you don't know anyone who grabbed some as soon as it was aboard and stuck it in his locker."

"Oh, that's it! I'm searching lockers until I... wait a minute." He went back over what Tab had said. "You?"

"I can't believe you're this worked up over *candy*," Tab said, not moving an inch, but starting to grin.

"Don't you *dare* laugh at me." He shook his head and pushed past Tab, heading down for engineering, muttering away. "And I knew something was going to go wrong -- I just knew it. Been running too fucking smooth for too long. Candy, he calls it. Candy. Fucking *chocolate* and it was real, the guy promised, and I'm not even gonna buy anymore if I can't get a taste and know he wasn't selling me a bill of goods."

"Oh, for..." Tab thumped after him and Will could hear him laughing. "You call this something going wrong? Wait until you get to my locker and find out it's actually locked. You're beyond bored, baby. You're going nuts."

"I said don't laugh at me, Tab, and I am not going nuts. I'm perfectly sane." He tried Tab's locker and growled. It *was* fucking locked. He kicked it. Hard. "Open it up, Tab. I want my chocolate."

Tab laughed. Harder. "The world is ending. Will didn't get chocolate and now he's going to steal mine."

"Fuck *off*."

"Make me."

Oh, that was it.

He'd known it was going too well. Just *known*. And first the chocolate and now this and he pushed Tab into the wall. Hard.

Tab grinned at him, but did give up a very satisfactory 'oof'. "I like you het up," he said, testing how hard Will was holding him there.

"Oh, you do, do you? Let's see how you like these apples." He pulled Tab away from the wall and then pushed him back up against it again, grinning a little wildly as he got another grunt. Then he just had to wipe that smirk off Tab's face. Growling, he slammed his mouth against Tab's.

Tab growled right back at him, his kiss mostly teeth and his hands clutching at Will's ass, pulling him in as much as Will was holding Tab to the wall. Tab's cock was hard, a bar pushing into Will's hipbone. Will just ground against Tab, letting all his worry and frustration pour out into Tab. His own cock was hard as rock, need starting to ride him.

Tab bit at his lips, fingers digging into his ass. "You pout better than anyone," he said roughly.

"Not pouting," he growled. He aimed yet another glare at Tab. "See?"

"Sure, if you say so." Tab grinned at him, his eyes flashing. "Cute."

He grabbed Tab's shoulders and hauled him around, shoving him down onto the bed. "I'll show you cute." He yanked open his pants. "Pouting. Cute. Just you wait, Tab. I'll show you."

"Waiting," Tab said, hiccupping in the middle of the word. He looked like he was going to laugh again.

"Strip unless you want those coveralls torn." And if Tab laughed at him again he was going to... to... to pull his pants right back on and go pout in his office.

"Well, now. These are my best coveralls," Tab said, one side of his mouth definitely trying to grin. He tugged the zipper down and sat up enough to free his arms but stopped, the jumpsuit pooled around his waist. "Mind you, I don't know how easy they are to tear."

"Shut up and get naked." Will was already there himself, yanking his shirt off over his head, clothes flung in a pile by Tab's fucking *locked* locker.

Tab tilted his head. "You sure?" he asked, kicking off his boots. "You seem a little upset."

Will stared at Tab in disbelief. "Are we doing this or not?"

"I don't know, you keep stopping and ranting," Tab said in a reasonable tone. He shoved his overalls down past his hips and kicked them off, too. "Something about chocolate."

Will licked his lips, trying to decide whether he wanted the chocolate, or Tab. And then he blinked at himself because there wasn't even a choice there, not with Tab naked in his bed. Of course, the man *was* talking. "Well, now. You wanna fuck or you wanna open that locker for me so I can eat?"

Tab grinned and shifted back on the bed. "You can eat. But I'm not opening that locker."

Will grinned back at Tab. The man's mistake had been to stop and try to goad him further, 'cause it had calmed him down and now he was *thinking*. He grabbed Tab's overalls, searching the pockets for Tab's key.

"It's not in there."

He glared. "Where is it?"

"You actually expect an answer?"

He pounced, grabbing Tab's hands and putting them up on top of his head as he straddled the man's waist. "Where. Is. It?"

Tab shrugged, or tried to, his eyes suddenly glittering. "I'm open to bribery," he said, tugging a little on his arms. "Do something for me, I'll tell you."

Will considered. "I'll let you tie me up and." He swallowed. "And blindfold me."

Tab blinked at him and went utterly still. Then he blinked again. "For *chocolate*? Christ, baby, I'm not gonna do something you don't really want. Unless... *do* you want it?"

He wriggled, letting Tab's arms go to cross them over his own chest. "You want it."

"Not the same thing. I *also* wanted you to rim me, but that ain't happening either." Tab grinned at him and grabbed his waist, edging him back so the tip of Tab's cock poked at him. "I don't care what we do, s'long as you like it and it's fun."

He groaned, moving his ass so Tab's cock slid along his crack, rubbing against him. "Where's the lube? And if you tell me it's in your locker you're a dead man."

Tab shoved his hand under the pillows and brought out the latest battered tube. "Right where you left it. Going to ride me, baby? Sit on my cock?"

"Only if I get chocolate after." Right. Like he wasn't going to even if Tab said no way.

Tab opened the tube and slicked his fingers. "We'll see," he said absently. "Lift up."

"We'll see?" Will glared. Again. But he went up on his knees, eager to have Tab's fingers up his ass.

"What?" Tab said, not looking up. Nope, his eyes were fixed to where his hand was going, calloused fingers circling once or twice before pushing in. "Oh, yeah. Chocolate. Got some."

"Want it," Will moaned, pushing back, riding them.

Tab shoved a little harder, turning his hand so he could brush Will's gland. "Never would have guessed."

He whimpered, pushing back harder. "You're gonna feed it to me after you fuck me."

"You have high goals in life, don't you, Cap?" Tab pulled his fingers out, not terribly gently. "Get on."

He ignored Tab's question, following the gruff order instead and pushing back, groaning at the stretch as he took in Tab's prick.

Hissing, Tab was patient enough to wait until Will sank down on him to grab his hips. "That's it. Comfy?" His hips rocked up and he pushed that extra little bit into Will's ass.

Will arched, sensation shooting up his spine. "Oh, fuck."

Tab grunted and thrust again, using his hands to pull Will down hard. "Uh huh."

"Shut up, Tab." He started rising and falling, letting Tab help pull him down, their bodies coming together hard.

"You're the one who's talking," Tab pointed out. Then he groaned and rotated his hips again. "More."

Will didn't argue the point, but only because Tab's cock slid against his gland, shooting pleasure through him. He started riding harder, groaning. Tab's legs drew up behind him as he planted his feet on the bed, thrusting up harder and faster. The head of his cock slammed into Will's gland, the fingers on his hips digging in hard enough to hurt.

Will just went with it, hands on Tab's chest to give himself some extra leverage. They came together again and again, the pleasure slamming through him.

"You first," Tab growled at him. "Come on. Want you to shoot on me."

"Make me," he growled back, fingers curling on Tab's chest.

"Fuck!" Tab rammed him, fast and shallow, hitting his prostate rapidly. "Fuck. Come on."

His eyes rolled in his head, the pleasure making him almost black out as he came hard.

Tab yelled, still thrusting into him, finally freezing with his twitching cock deep inside. Groaning, Will collapsed down, body twitching as Tab's cock shifted inside him. Tab muttered something Will missed, his chest heaving and sticky with come and sweat. Arms wrapped tight around him and Tab mumbled again.

"What?"

"Said that was worth chocolate."

"Oh, chocolate." Will wriggled off of Tab's cock and rolled over onto his back. "Gimme."

Tab laughed. "Can't move yet, baby."

He poked Tab. "Can make you move."

"You already did. Stop poking me."

"I'll stop poking you when you get me chocolate." He poked Tab again.

"Pushy. Bossy. Demanding." Tab moved his arm to cover where Will had been poking, but otherwise didn't move.

"I gave you sex. Give me my chocolate." He stretched and poked Tab's other side.

"Please, you climbed all over me after you shoved me on the bed. That's hardly giving, more like... okay, it's giving. I'll grant you that. But it was damn fine sex, and you can wait until my legs want to work."

Will sighed and nodded. "I knew it. Knew the other shoe was going to drop. I've just been waiting. And here it is."

Tab snorted. "What now?"

"You won't get me chocolate. I mean, you saved me the chocolate, but now you won't fork it over."

"You're a kid, you know that?" Tab rolled to the side and grabbed for his overalls. "Key's in the pocket. I lied."

"You lied!" Will smacked Tab on the ass. "You lied to me!"

"Yeah, about a key to my locker, which you were going to ransack for my chocolate." Tab rolled his eyes. "I wanted the sex first. It's cool when you're pissy."

He slapped Tab's ass again, just because he liked the way it felt. "Perv."

"Me? I'm not the one who just slammed a guy for chocolate. I'm just the guy who demanded sex for chocolate." Tab glanced back at his ass and wiggled it. "You gonna do that again?"

"You want me to?" He snorted and did it again. "I was right. Perv." Of course it wasn't just for Tab's benefit that he did it once more, now was it?

"That's..." Tab looked faintly surprised. "Huh."

"What?" He climbed over Tab, grabbing the man's overalls and finding the damned key. Chocolate. And then more sex.

"Hey!" Tab grabbed at him but missed. "Come back here!"

"I was promised chocolate. I'm having chocolate."

He got the locker open and started rummaging through Tab's stuff, looking for the little ration packs.

"Jeez. Top shelf, behind the books," Tab grumbled. "And give me some, too."

"I thought you saved this for me?" Oh, look, there were a half dozen little ration packs there. He grabbed two and tossed one at Tab.

"I saved them. I assumed everyone did -- man, that shit doesn't last on a ship, you know that." Tab opened his packet and popped the chocolate into his mouth.

"It's been long enough since we had something this special." He opened his own bag slowly, letting the scent hit him first. He wasn't a huge chocolate fan, but they hadn't had decent dessert rations in what felt like a million years. He took a small bite, letting the bittersweet melt on his tongue.

"Hurry up," Tab said with a grin. "Want to get back to that other thing."

"Fuck off -- I'm *savoring* here." He sat on the edge of the bed and took another small bite.

"What am I supposed to do while you savor?" Tab pouted at him then looked hopefully at his chocolate.

Will gave Tab a warning look. "Mine." Then he shrugged. "I'm sure you can come up with something to do."

"I don't want to. I was fine the way I was," Tab whined.

"Now who's pouting?" He popped the last bit of chocolate in his mouth and sighed. Now that was good. Worth growling over. Well, the growling had been entertaining on its own.

As has the pouncing.

And the sex.

He eyed Tab.

"I'm not pouting, I'm sulking. And if you're done scarfing the chocolate, can you please do what you were doing again? Because I can -- and will -- pout."

"You want me to slap your ass? For real?"

Tab shrugged and looked faintly embarrassed. "It was... interesting."

"Yeah?" He rolled Tab onto his stomach and smacked him again. "I feel a bit silly. I mean it was one thing doing it on the spur of the moment, you know?"

"You feel silly? You're not the one getting hard from being fucking *spanked*." Tab was, in fact, blushing. Or possibly flushing. And his cock was, in fact, getting hard.

Oh, now that felt less silly. Will rubbed his hand along Tab's ass, caressed it. Then he let his hand fly, his own cock twitching hard at the sound and the way Tab jumped.

"Oh, God," Tab muttered. "This... this is so fucked." His back arched a bit though, and his ass was right there, up for Will's hand.

"Yep. You're a class A perv, Tab." He smacked Tab's ass again, his palm really feeling that one.

"Guess so," Tab agreed. His hands curled into the sheets. "Um. Can you do it, maybe. Faster?"

Will laughed and shifted Tab so he was properly face down on the bed, then he straddled Tab's thighs and ran his hands down along Tab's back, checking out the man's ass. It was a nice ass, pale and turning rosy, a handprint fading on it. He licked his lips and slapped Tab again, hard enough to make his hand really sting and leave a bright handprint on Tab's ass, one that wasn't so quick to fade.

Tab gasped and the hand in the sheet tightened. "God," he breathed. "No one finds out about this. And do it again."

"Who am I going to tell?" Will asked. Like he didn't have secrets of his own. Like the fact he was starting to get off on this wasn't enough to keep his mouth shut. Besides, he wouldn't do that to Tab. Which Tab fucking knew. He smacked the man harder.

Tab made a rough noise and buried his head in the blankets, his body jerking forward and then back. Will could hardly miss the way his legs parted, too, knees sliding just a little more apart.

He decided hitting Tab wasn't doing anything for him, but Tab's reaction to it was making him hard and Will let his cock sliding along Tab's crack, pushed it against the exposed little hole and then smacked Tab a few more times, making that ass get pinker and pinker.

"Oh, shit." Tab arched again, rocking back to meet his hand or his dick, he wasn't sure. "Please, Will."

"Please what?" he asked, smacking Tab again and then squeezing a red cheek in each hand.

"I don't know!" Tab groaned and rubbed his face on the sheets. "Fuck me. Hit me. Something."

Will shook his head and laughed. And here he'd thought he was the kinky one because he liked it when Tab tied him down and fucked him hard.

He was hard, though, and wanting, so he grabbed the lube and slicked up before pushing two fingers into Tab's ass. And just to prove he could do what Tab asked without it turning into an argument, he used his free hand to give Tab another smack.

Tab jerked again and yelled something that might have been yet another curse. Then he lifted his head and growled, "Stop laughing and do it."

Will twisted his fingers, pushing them deeper as he smacked Tab's ass again. "I *am* doing it."

"Do it faster. And harder. Oh, God." Tab's groan was a little pitiful. He spread his legs and pushed back against Will's fingers. "More. Please."

"Gimme a sec." Will slicked up his cock and then eased it into Tab's ass, waiting for Tab to start pushing back against him before sinking in deep. Then he stayed there, hands smacking Tab's ass again and again. Tab didn't even seem able to form words. He pushed himself back, meeting the slaps and impaling himself, grunting and almost snarling, his back arched and his ass high.

Will felt the pleasure tighten in his belly as he watched Tab move, taking the fuck, begging for the slaps. Fuck, it was something else to watch, something even better to have gripping and sliding along his cock.

Bracing himself on one arm, Tab whimpered and made a grab for his cock. He only tugged once, though, before dropping his hand again and throwing himself back hard. "There!" he yelled.

Oh, yeah, right there. Fuck, Tab's body had clamped down on him for a moment like Tab's ass was going to rip his cock right off. Will stopped hitting and grabbed Tab's cock with one hand, hips starting to move, thrusting hard.

Tab babbled a stream of profanities and froze, taking everything Will gave him, his ass getting tighter and tighter and his cock swelling. His head snapped back and he cried out, his prick throbbing in Will's hand as he came, his body clamping down on Will like a vise.

Will squeezed Tab's cock tight until the man eased up a bit and then he thrust a few more times, coming inside Tab. "Yeah. Fuck. Damn, Tab. You're not going to be able to sit all day." Man's ass was *red*.

"Not gonna fucking move," Tab croaked out, falling forward. Well, carefully falling forward. "Not for days."

"Oh, no. You've got an engine to baby." He pulled out, groaning and collapsing next to

Tab. Reaching out, he rubbed Tab's ass, not hard or anything, just feeling the heat of Tab's skin.

"Engine's fine. Mechanic's broke." Tab shivered, goosebumps coming up on his ass. "God."

Will chuckled. "Man, and I thought I was a slut."

"You are a slut. Well, with me." Tab turned his head. "Chocolate?"

"It's in your locker." He'd had to go get his own, he wasn't stepping and fetching for Tab.

"Uh huh. And I'm not moving. Ever. Give me back my key if you're not going to fetch it for me." There was no heat and virtually no strength in Tab's voice, but there was a smile.

"I left it over there. Damn, it doesn't lock automatically when you close it, does it?" He was pretty sure he'd left the key on the top shelf *in* Tab's locker.

"Um." Tab lifted his head. "Yeah. Why?"

"I'm sorry?"

Tab raised an eyebrow at him. "You locked my chocolate in there? With the key?"

"No. Well, yeah. Maybe." He gave Tab an apologetic look. "You can take it out in trade?"

Tab nodded slowly. "Yup. That you can. But I'll have to make you wait to pay it off -- still broke." He didn't seem overly upset about the closed locker.

Will grinned and relaxed. "We've got a crowbar somewhere, I'm sure. For the locker," he specified.

"Don't you dare!" Tab sounded horrified, but he didn't move. "I can open it. Just takes a light touch. Unlike certain Captains, that locker doesn't like it rough."

He resorted to poking Tab again. "Fuck off."

"You fuck off. You locked the chocolate in there. And don't poke me." Tab rolled a little and winced.

Will frowned. "I didn't poke you *that* hard!" He leaned up over Tab. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing," Tab said dryly. "Just that I had my ass hit a bunch of times and then fucked rather hard. Not really used to being on this side of the ow. Shut up."

"Oh, yeah." Will winced. "Sorry, I forgot it would still be sore." He slid his hand over Tab's ass, the heat incredible. "You really liked it though, eh?"

Tab growled a little and mumbled, "Seemed to. It was... unexpected."

Will snorted. "I'll say." He spooned up along Tab's back, pushing carefully to cradle that hot ass against his middle. "You were pretty wild during it, though."

Tab laughed a little. "Was I? It was kind of a rush, lots of sensation. Not a lot of thinking."

"Yeah. Thinking about it is... weird." Will wrapped his arm around Tab and settled in. He could live without thinking about it at all.

Tab nodded. "Yeah. But doing it's fun." He was sounding a little sleepy and Will wasn't surprised when he yawned. "Could have done with some chocolate, though."

"You *had* chocolate," Will pointed out evenly. He was not going to get up and try and work open Tab's locker. He was comfy and he'd come twice and was more than sleepy himself.

Still, they were gonna have to get in more of that chocolate next time they found it.

"Wanted more," Tab slurred. "Least I know where to find it. Go sleep."

"I would if you'd shut up," he teased.

He got a snort that seemed to be threatening to turn into a snore. "Not talking. You're talking. Shut up."

"Am not. You are." He laughed softly. "So you shut up."

"Will, you keep yapping." Tab yawn again. "Go to sleep." This time the snore sounded real, and Tab's breathing got deeper, even.

"Bossy," Will muttered, letting his eyes close and his body relax completely against Tab.

He could live with that in bed, long as Tab remembered who was boss everywhere else.

Chapter Nine

Tab pushed his way through the crowd and tried to get his bearings. He'd spent more than four hours there, going from one vendor to the next and ordering things he needed for the engine, wishing for the things that would be nice but weren't in the budget this run. He'd said hello to a few people, caught up on some news, and avoided one or two people he didn't really want to talk to.

Now, he was thirsty. Business was taken care of, parts were going to be delivered, and he wanted a drink. Well, he wanted a drink, a shower, some food and Will, but the order wasn't important. Other than the drink. The drink he wanted worse than anything.

He broke through the group of people currently in his way and dove into the next, making steady progress in what he hoped was the right direction to get him to the bar. It took him another ten minutes, but eventually there it was, doors wide open and sound pouring out, the smell of stale beer strong. He breathed deeply and grinned. There was booze in there, and he was getting some.

It was dark inside and kind of grimy, but that didn't really matter to him. He went up to the bar and leaned on the rail, waving to the barkeep. "Whatever's on tap," he said, pointing to the large cups.

He got a grunt, a nod and finally a cup of beer that had a thick layer of foam on the top. "Three creds."

Tab nodded and paid the man, not bothering to curse at the cost. If ten would get him a shower, he'd pay three for a buzz.

Two loud mouths were next to him, arguing with each other about the merits of this or that team currently playing No Rules Ball on the vidscreen. He mostly ignored them until they started poking each other in the ribs with their elbows and making rude remarks. Following their gaze, he caught Will coming in, hair trimmed neatly, but not shaved back down again, looking clean and happy and young.

One eye on the jokers next to him, Tab raised his hand and waved. He suddenly wished he'd stopped to have a shower before looking for beer. Will looked damn fine. Be a shame to get him all messy. Oh well, he'd wash off again. "Hey, Cap," he said as Will got close enough to hear him.

Will gave him a grin, but was waylaid by one of the jerks beside him stepping between them. "What's a pretty little thing like you doing in a place like this? I know. You're looking for me."

Will snorted. "Fuck off, asshole."

Tab almost waited to see what would happen next, but decided he didn't care. Will would

be pissed if Tab actually fought his battle for him, but Tab figured a little back up would be okay. So he stood up to wait and see, knowing he'd look kind of big next to Will. And he glared. What he didn't do was smash his fist into the asshole who was so clearly in need of a lesson.

Yet.

Asshole number one's friend got up and stood next to Asshole and glared right back at him. Will was glaring at him, too, but then swung his gaze back to the asshole. "You're in my way."

"I'm just trying to start a little get-to-know-you conversation here. You don't need to get all rude."

Will snorted again. "Somehow I don't think it's conversation you're after."

"No, you're right. It's that ass. I'm gonna have it, too."

"No, actually. You're not," Tab said evenly. "The man isn't interested and he said so."

Will gave him a look that told him to just shut the fuck up and stay out of it.

"Oh, little boy needs his daddy to fight his battles, does he?"

Asshole number one laughed at Asshole number two's comment. Will's fist hit the guy right in the mouth, sending his head snapping back.

"Nice shot," Tab said. "You might want to duck though. I like your mouth with all its teeth." He figured he'd step in and take his own shots when Will was all nicely distracted; no way were they getting out of this without him making a fist-sized dent in these two jokers.

Will wasn't looking to get distracted, though, and in seconds there was a free for all, the assholes trying to go two on one with Will, but finding he had a little something to say about that. And it didn't take long before it was more than just the four of them, people throwing punches indiscriminately.

Tab was all for inflicting damage on the two assholes who didn't take a no when it was said, but when a random fist got a bit too close to Will, Tab had enough. He pounded hard on the guy he had by the shirt front and dropped him, then reached for Will. "C'mon," he said, wiping blood from his chin. "Get out before the law comes in."

Will nodded, put his head down and just pushed his way through fighting bodies. They got across the bar and started down the hall at a quick walk, just making it around a corner before a security van screamed to a stop in front of the bar.

"Close," Tab said, grinning. "Nice work back there, baby. Had no idea you could hit that fast." He tugged Will closer to him and tried to get a good look at Will's face so he could assess the damage.

Will shook him off. "Come on. If I can't get a drink, I at least want a shower. And I'm fine. Stop fussing." He got a bloody grin. "I can take care of myself, Tab. Told you that."

"I believe you," Tab said, pulling him back. "Don't mean I won't try to destroy anyone who gives you trouble, though." He growled and yanked Will harder, kissing him roughly and tasting blood.

Will curled his fingers around Tab's shoulders for a moment, kissing back hard, and then shoved him. "I've got money for a private shower."

"Good." Tab didn't really care about the shower right then, but the way his cock was trying to get at Will, the private would be needed. Soon. "Let's go." He started off in the right direction, practically dragging Will with him.

Will got his arm out of Tab's grip. "I can walk on my own, too, you know." Will sounded more amused than anything else.

Tab growled and grabbed for him again. "Hurry up, then." He didn't actually push people out of the way, but he came close. He wanted and he wanted as soon as possible. "Got slick stuff?" he asked Will, not bothering to lower his voice much.

"Oh, I see how it is. You wanted him for yourself." A big hand grabbed him by the back of his shirt, Asshole number one stopping them.

Will turned and pushed the guy back. "No. How it is, is I said I wasn't interested and you didn't back off. Do it now or I'll make sure you never want to ask anyone ever again."

Tab snarled. The first time was bad enough, but this was crossing a line. You just don't stop people on their way to get laid, and he doubted they'd take no for an answer this time either. "Cap," he said in a low voice. "I'm not waiting on your say so this time." Tab had pride, too, and no one was going to hurt Will. He'd promised.

"Yes, you are, because this asshole is leaving." Will shoved the man again. "Right?"

"Not without a shot at your tight little ass I'm not." The guy moved to wrap Will in one beefy arm.

Tab grabbed the asshole's arm at the wrist and squeezed. "You want to live, you take off. Now." He squeezed harder, feeling the bones grind a little.

The guy looked from him to Will and jerked his arm away. "You better just watch

yourself -- you walk around looking like that and you are gonna get jumped." The guy started backing up.

"Only by those with a deathwish," Tab said evenly. "Man says 'no', he means it." It took almost everything in him not to hit the asshole anyway.

Will was practically vibrating next to him and once the asshole got far enough away, Will growled and turned on his heel, heading back toward the docks, not the showers.

Fuck. "Will." Tab went after him, reaching for his shoulder. "Hey."

"Don't, Tab. I. Just don't." Will kept moving, hands curled into fists.

"Don't what? Don't keep my promises? I can't..." He growled and moved faster to keep up. "He wasn't going to stop. I said no one was going to hurt you again, and I meant it. I can't just step back and let things happen, Will. Not to you."

"I'm pissed off, Tab, but not at you, but if you keep pushing right now I'm gonna say something I'll regret."

"So what am I supposed to do? Just let you storm off?" Tab demanded. "Fine. But I'm following and I'm watching your back, and I'm not going anywhere you aren't." God, he sounded pathetic.

Will nodded tightly. "You can find something I can beat the shit out of."

Tab raised an eyebrow. Maybe there was a gym or something, but he doubted it. "Me?" he suggested, not really sure how that would go over.

That stopped Will in his tracks. "What? You want me to beat the shit out of you? I. You. What?"

"If you need something to hit, go ahead," Tab said, meaning it. "If that's what it'll take. I'll survive."

Will shook his head and started moving again. "I'm not hitting you, Tab. Not unless it's you I'm pissed at."

"Well, I'm not about to make you pissed at me," Tab said, trying to keep up. "But I'm not going to let you look for a fight, either. How about we set something up in the engine room? Maybe we got something you can beat on?"

"There's a wall with my name on it," Will muttered, nearly careening into someone as they hit the docks.

"Oh, you want to break your hand again? You liked it so much the last time, I could tell."

Seriously, if it's the painkillers you're after, I can spare you half of one." Tab shook his head, paying more attention to where they were going.

"Fuck you." Will headed up the Arillia's ramp and slammed his hand on the lock. The door opened for them and Will kept moving.

"Well, I was aiming for that sort of thing, yes," Tab said, following along and glancing back to make sure the door had shut. "But it seems to have fallen off the agenda."

Will whirled and grabbed him, pushing him up against the wall. "I'm *pissed off*, Tab. And I'm not taking it out on you. What the fuck do you want from me?"

Tab blinked. "Not really sure, actually," he admitted. "Mostly, I just wanted you to get to the ship in one piece. But now we're here, and I don't know. Try not to break your hand, though. Please."

Will just stared at him, growled a little and then slammed their lips together.

Tab tasted blood but wasn't sure if it was fresh or left over from the bar fight. He didn't really care, though, so he just kissed Will back, shoving his tongue in and grabbing at Will's ass, pulling him up tight.

Will ground against him, the kiss wild and hard, full of moans and growls. That was better than hitting wall, Tab figured, so he let Will do as he wanted and growled right back. He was hard again, they both were, and he made an attempt to brace himself on the wall and spread his legs enough that Will could move against him.

Will just kept kissing, kept shoving, movements hard and urgent. Tab didn't figure it would take him long to give it up. He dug into Will's ass, fingers pushing along his crack and dragging on the leathers, down to between Will's legs where he pushed up, hard.

"Fuck!" Will jerked and shuddered, and Tab could smell the come, even through the leathers.

With a moan he stopped himself from turning to slam Will into the wall and held on. His cock throbbed but he ignored it for the moment and concentrated on keeping Will upright. "Okay?" he asked when he was sure Will's legs would hold him up.

Will nodded, panting and leaning against him. "Yeah. I guess I am." He got a sudden grin. "I *really* need that shower now. Wanna?"

Tab sighed. The power of a good orgasm was an amazing thing. "Yep," he said. "S'long as you know that I'm going to fuck you in it."

Will reached into his pocket and tugged out a tube of lube and a cred chip. Both were tossed at him. "Come on. Want you to do me."

"So not going to be a problem," Tab promised. He followed along -- again -- and adjusted himself so he could walk a little easier. "Should be mostly empty this time of day," he said as they once more left the ship.

Will nodded, but was paying more attention to looking around and trying to look tough. That was good, really, because Tab didn't doubt that there would be trouble if they didn't leave port soon. He kind of hoped it waited until *after* he got off, though. He looked around, too, making sure they stayed out in the open.

They got to the showers and Will looked to him, eyes hot, waiting for him to pay and get them their time, their privacy. And their hot water.

The guy at the desk barely looked at them, just took the money and said, "Last one on the left. Twenty minutes. Extra for towels."

Tab sighed and paid for two towels, and then tugged Will down the corridor. "Gets more expensive every time. You know, we should look at putting a real shower on the bird. Can't be that hard."

Will shook his head. "We'd need a shitload of water, Tab. We need the room we have for paying customers. Speaking of which, I got us a full load from one client this run out. We leave tonight as long as Jinx can get the supplies delivered in by then."

Oh, now that was good news. Leaving soon was just not a bad thing after the day they'd had. "Okay," he said, tugging off his shirt. "Take off those damn pants, will you?"

Will laughed at him, closing the door firmly before stripping down.

"If I bought you new pants, would you wear them?" Tab teased, kicking off his boots and watching Will get naked for him.

"Nope. I like these."

"I like the way they look," Tab said, as if that weren't perfectly well known. "I think I'll have to practice taking them off you, though. But not when we've only got twenty minutes." He grinned and tossed the last of his clothes aside just as the water came on. "Come here."

Will had stripped down just as fast and was eager to get his soggy, sticky crotch into the water, pushing Tab out of the way long enough to get rinsed off before pushing into his arms.

Tab kissed him fiercely, all his need coming back full force. Flashes of Will with that asshole's hands on him, Will rubbing on him and coming in his pants... it made Tab growl

deep in his throat. "Turn around," he said, shoving Will toward the wall, one hand going down to stroke his own cock.

Will held on for a minute, kissing him hard, lip splitting again, the taste of copper sudden and strong and reinforcing his need. Then Will turned, hands on the tile, legs spreading for him. Will looked back, eyes hot. "Hurry."

Tab nodded and had a hand on Will's ass before he remembered the lube. Cursing, he went back to his pants for it, not caring that his clothes were getting soaked as he went through the pockets. It felt like forever, but it could only have been a few seconds before he was pushing slick fingers into Will's ass, the other hand curled around Will's hip.

Will rode his fingers like he knew the same need Tab did, moaning and begging for more, for Tab.

"You want it," Tab said, just to say something, just to growl. He pushed in with his fingers once more before leaving Will empty as he smeared lube on his cock.

"Just shut up and fuck me, Tab." Will's ass pushed back at him, Will practically whimpering.

Tab didn't bother replying, just squeezed Will's hip and shoved his cock in deep. Gentle wasn't on his list of things to do, and the tight grip of Will's ass just made him go in harder, faster. One short, rough thrust and he was gasping, his mouth fixed on Will's shoulder.

Will's ass squeezed hard around him. "*Fuck me.*"

"Demanding," Tab growled at him. But the man had a point, and Tab needed it as much as Will did, so he pulled back and slammed in again, picking up a fast rhythm, his heart racing and his breath coming in grunts every time he pushed in.

Will didn't answer, just pushed back to meet his thrusts, shouting and moaning.

"That's it," Tab whispered in his ear. "Take it." Tab slid a hand around Will's body and twisted a nipple before going lower to grip his cock, stroking Will quickly as he ground in deep.

Will jerked and then started to saw back and forth, pushing into his hand, shoving back onto his cock. Fuck, Will moved like a wild thing, sexy and needy and wanting it so bad.

Tab groaned and tried to stay still, let Will fuck himself on him, but he couldn't. His stomach was tight and his legs were starting to shake, thighs tight. It was too good to let Will run the show, and Tab fucked him harder, played him. "You first," he said, biting down on Will's shoulder.

"Pushy bastard," muttered Will, moving faster, riding him hard.

"You love it," Tab said, his voice rough. "Come on, now. Make me come in your ass."

Will screamed, his ass going tight as he sprayed the shower wall.

That was it, that was everything, and Tab's head fell back as he rode it out, Will's orgasm spurring his own. It welled up in him, huge and churning, and he had to slam a hand flat on the wall as he came, his whole body strung tight as it raced through him.

Will panted, sounding like a steam engine, elbows and knees locked.

"Damn, baby," Tab said, nuzzling into his neck. "Damn."

Will nodded, ass squeezing around him. Then one shoulder twitched. "I'm mostly out of the water," Will complained.

Tab laughed, the sound startled out of him. "You're insane, you know that?" he said, pulling out and turning to lean on the wall. He wasn't about to let Will know that he couldn't really stand on his own yet.

Will shifted back into the water. "You're standing there wasting wet time and I'm the insane one? I just want what we paid for." Will's head tilted back, eyes closing as he put his face in the water with a groan. One hand reached out, casually, touching him.

"I was hardly wasting wet time," Tab said softly. He caught Will's hand and stroked a finger over the palm gently.

Will stayed quiet, stayed under the spray with his eyes closed, but his hand wrapped around Tab's finger, holding on.

"Hey," Tab whispered. "Look at me. I promise you can stay in the water."

Will sighed and straightened a little, eyes opening to look right at him.

"If you really need me to back off and let you fight, I will. But you need to know – understand -- that it's not something I'll do easily. Hate to see you hurting, baby. Mine." Tab swallowed and made himself stop talking, knowing full well that Will was likely to go off on him. But he'd had to say it anyway, had to make sure Will knew that he was just that important to him.

"I gotta fight my own battles, Tab. Doesn't matter if I win or lose, and if the odds are bad, I'd like the back up. But I gotta fight my own battles." Will bit his lip and let go of his hand, started soaping up. "I moved your bed into the general crew's quarters."

Tab stared at him. "You what? Why?" He took a step back, confused. "What?" he repeated.

"Don't go jumping to conclusions before I finish. I moved your bed into the general crew's quarter with a new fucking mattress because that one was shitty and reeked. Had a double moved into yours to replace it. Won't be much room for anything else in that little hole mind you." Will wasn't looking at him, back stiff, tense.

Tab knew he was standing with his mouth open, but he couldn't get past the obvious as the dots got connected. "Didn't reek that bad," he finally said, reaching for Will. "When's it going in? Today?"

Will nodded and let himself be pulled close. "Should already be there. Jinx knew it was coming, knew where it was supposed to go. Ribbed the fuck out of me."

"Did you threaten to fire him?" Tab teased, one hand smoothing down Will's spine.

"Told him to get it out of his fucking system in one shot because I'd throw him out an airlock if I heard it again." Will relaxed into him.

Tab laughed and held Will to him in the falling water. "Thanks, baby," he said softly. "When are you on the bridge? Got time to test the mattress before we leave port?"

"Technically my shift starts in an hour. And I have to be on the bridge when we leave..." Could he believe his ears, was Will actually leaving the door open for not going straight to the bridge after they got back, for letting Jinx take a little extra time?

"But if we hurry..." Tab said slowly, already moving them toward their clothes.

Will laughed. "I never thought I'd see the day you were rushing to leave the water before our time was up."

"It's almost done," Tab said with a grin. What he didn't say was how he was damn near floating on Will taking this step, moving forward with him, doing something as decisive to be with him. He didn't want to sound all girly and shit, but he couldn't help grinning broadly.

Will punched him in the arm. "Fuck off." Of course, he was grinning, too, pulling on those sexy leather pants.

The water shut off and Tab winked. "Told you." He grabbed his own trousers and pulled them on without bothering to towel off. They were wet anyway. "C'mon, if we hurry no one will even know we're onboard until they check the logs for our thumb prints."

Will nodded and prowled ahead of him, not running, but taking long, quick strides. Just

like a bit ago, only now he was eager instead of angry. Tab had to hurry to keep up, but that wasn't a problem; he was just as eager and his legs were almost as long. He kept a mindful eye out for trouble, but the way they were moving, people were actually getting out of the way, which was nice for change.

Will shared a grin with him as they let themselves in. Will glanced up the hall toward the bridge, but took the turn at engineering and headed down the ladder. The forward rush stopped at the door to his -- their -- room, which was shut. It had been painted dark blue and there was a plaque on it that said "Captain's Quarters."

"What the fuck?" Will looked at the door, then at him, then back at the door.

Tab shook his head. "I didn't do it. But it's... kinda nice, yeah? I mean... it is the Captain's quarters now." A chill raced up his spine. "Ours." Suddenly he wanted very, very badly to be in there.

Will stared for a moment longer and then he nodded and opened the door. Someone had painted in here, too, the room the same dark blue that kind of made it like they were out in the sky. His old locker was gone, one triple the length, but slightly thinner in its place, managing to be bigger without taking up more room. The bed wasn't huge or anything, but it was more than big enough for two and there was a shelf with a console so Will could keep an eye on things at the head of the bed.

"Wow. I. I just ordered the bed." Will sounded stunned.

Tab looked around the room and carefully opened the locker. All their stuff was neatly in place. He almost winced when he saw the lube on the top shelf, but let it go; not like everyone didn't know, obviously. "Guess when you sell shares to the crew they feel like they can take liberties," he said mildly. "Pretty cool, huh?"

Will was quiet for a while and then he nodded. "Actually, yeah, it is." He sat on the bed, bouncing a little. "Feels like home."

"Yeah?" Tab tossed the lube on the bed. "Can we be naked at home? Like, all the time?" He kind of liked the idea of Will sharing space with him for real. Liked it a lot. He liked the color of the walls, too, which was good. He thought he'd bitch at Jinx about it anyway, just to keep some normalcy going.

Will snorted. "Perv." He lay back on the bed. "Wow. This is like... really comfortable."

"Yeah?" Tab looked at his wet pants and shrugged. He really was all for naked. He peeled them off with a little bit of trouble and tossed himself on the bed next to Will. "Oh!" he said as he bounced and then settled on the soft mattress. "Oh, wow."

Will laughed and turned toward him, hands reaching. "Yeah. Wanna fuck me through it?"

"I fucked you in the shower," Tab pointed out, but he gathered Will to him and started nibbling on his neck. "You're greedy."

"You're just trying to distract me 'cause you can't get it up again," Will teased, fingers warm on his skin.

"Fuck off, I can so!" Tab tried to glare but couldn't quite manage it. "You can help," he added generously.

"Hey, I bought you a great big bed, I'd think that would be inspiration enough." Will stood and tugged off his shirt, worked open his pants. He stopped suddenly and gave Tab a serious look. "So this is okay, right?"

Tab nodded slowly. "Yeah, it's okay. Better than. This is... this is like hearing you say it, but better, almost. It's tangible and what I want."

Will nodded. "K. Good." Then Will pounced him, mouth finding his. The time for talking was over, but that was okay.

It was more than okay.

Chapter Ten

Life was good.

Too good.

The kind of good Will never trusted.

But maybe... no, he wouldn't think it, but it hovered there at the back of his mind, how it had been pretty good for a while now and maybe it wasn't borrowing trouble to enjoy it.

He checked the clock. Almost time for Jinx to show up and take over. Then he could head down to his room and... he grinned.

His room.

Their room.

Not just Tab's.

Oh, man, he was a sap.

And pretty sure something was going to come along and stomp on this run of amazing luck they were having.

He shook his head as Jinx came in. It was time to haul ass and get Tab to distract the fuck out of him -- he was finding there was nothing like getting tied up and fucked through the mattress to keep him from thinking too hard.

Or spanking the shit out of Tab's ass and then sinking into it. He wasn't feeling particularly picky, he just wanted the jitters to go away.

He and Jinx spent a bit of time going over the log and their route and then he was making good his escape, high-tailing it down to engineering.

He could hear Tab banging on something, muttering under his breath. "Come on, you stubborn bitch, a little more..." Then there was a clang, a pause and a muted, "Ow."

"She bite you back? That'll teach you to call my baby a bitch."

"Damn, how long have you been there?" Tab said. He walked out from behind the unit he'd been working on, his ears turning pink. "My relationship with your baby is a little more tough love."

"Everything okay?" Will asked. Tab kept things running damned smoothly, but Will had

a recurring nightmare where everything suddenly fell apart and they were dead in the air, just waiting to be taken to pieces by pirates.

"Yeah," Tab sighed. "Everything. And I mean everything, which means I'm bored as hell. Can't we put in something fun? Take her past light speed or something? Play with quantum physics and invent a time machine?"

Will snorted. "We're almost ready to move her up a class. That'll keep you plenty busy. Come on. You can take your frustration out on my ass."

"Really?" Tab perked up, almost grinning. "Up a class? Cool."

Will nodded. "I thought that would get you all worked up."

Tab nodded the grin actually breaking through. "It's working," he said, gesturing to his crotch. "You know me so well. Any idea how many runs before we can pay the fees?"

"Should have the cred at the end of this one, but we'll want to turn out fast this time 'round. Sora 7 is no place to dock for longer than you have to." Fees were outrageous, too many stories of parts being pirated if you stuck around too long. He was planning to be in and then out again. "So next stop after this one." He groped Tab and then headed down to their room.

"Fanfuckingtastic," Tab crowed. "And if we don't need much on Sora, I think everyone who doesn't have to leave should stay on board. But we can talk about that after I do you. Hands and knees? Gag? What's your pleasure?"

He shivered and turned on Tab as soon as the door closed behind them. "Whatever you want." Once that door closed, he wasn't Tab's captain anymore and anything went.

"Damn right," Tab purred at him. "Whatever I want." Strong hands closed around Will's wrists and pushed them up, over his head as his back hit the wall with a thump.

He moaned, cock going hard in his pants. Arching, he pushed up against Tab, tried to rub against him.

"Still," Tab barked at him. "You wait until I say." The two hands on his wrists became one, Tab using his free hand to undo his own coveralls.

He moaned softly at the order, but didn't follow it, kept humping up, searching for stimulation.

Tab slapped him lightly, not even enough to make a red mark. "Still, I said." Then he pulled his cock out of his coveralls and squeezed Will's wrists, hard. "Going to be good?"

Will licked his lips, his own cock throbbing at the sight of Tab's pushing out, hard and red. "Depends on your definition of good."

"In this case, it means you do as you're told," Tab said. "No touching yourself, got it?"

"Yeah, I got it. Long as you're gonna touch me."

"Maybe later," Tab said with a grin. He stroked himself and his hand tightened around Will's wrists again. "Down you go, baby. On your knees."

Will whimpered. It wasn't that he didn't want to do that for Tab, it was just that his own body wanted, needed. "Tab... I *need*."

"Yeah, me, too," Tab said, raising an eyebrow. "Down. You can come in your pants if you want, doesn't bother me."

Will blinked, growled. He was more turned on than pissed off, but it felt good to push, to grumble. He tugged at his hands. "Asshole."

"Uh huh." Tab's hand gripped him harder. "Down," he said again, his voice harder and his hand angling Will's arms so he didn't have a choice but to go down, other than real pain.

He let Tab push him down, but shoved up against Tab so that he got some stimulation along the way. Once he was faced with Tab's cock, he couldn't help but lick his lips, and his own cock throbbed hard.

"That's it," Tab purred at him. "Open up, baby. Use that tongue on me." Tab held his cock right in front of Will's face, not stroking, really, just fondling himself.

Will felt a shiver go through him for a moment, but he looked up and met Tab's eyes.

Tab looked back, his eyes dark and sharp. "Suck me," he ordered, tracing Will's lips with the tip of his cock. "Do it."

Will kept his mouth closed, and talked himself through it. This was *Tab*, not any of the assholes who'd shoved him down in the past. Tab wasn't like that, would stop if he said no.

"Come on, Will," Tab said, his voice still low, but oddly gentle. He didn't do anything else either, just held Will where he was and waited, not backing off but not pushing any harder than he had.

He could smell Tab, smell the salt and bitter of his need, the maleness of him. Will wanted that cock in front of him, no doubt about it. He just... He closed his eyes and rubbed his cheek over the silky hot skin.

Tab hissed. "That's it," he said, keeping himself still even though Will could feel the shudder that ran through him making his legs tremble. "That's good, baby." The hand on his wrists loosened a bit.

He whimpered at the endearment, a shudder moving through him, and wrapped his lips around Tab's cock. The flavor exploded in his mouth, good and strong and Tab.

"Oh, shit." Tab's voice floated over him, soft and low, and the hand not holding his wrists stroked over his hair. "Like that. Good."

Yeah, it was good. Tab was hot on his tongue, sliding in and out of his mouth. Will played his tongue over Tab's cock, took it all the way in and swallowed around the tip. Tab groaned and let him go entirely, both hands suddenly on his head, his shoulders. He was petted and touched gently, Tab's rough fingers tracing the hollow of his cheeks as Tab's legs shook again.

Soon as his hands were free, he reached for Tab's hips, fingers curling around them -- Tab never said Will couldn't touch *him*.

Above him, he could hear Tab's breath catch and start to come in fast puffs, the groans more frequent with every pull on Tab's cock. "Will," Tab said again, his name like a plea.

He tugged on Tab's hips, telling Tab to let go, to fuck his mouth.

There wasn't really any hesitation. Tab moved, at first with Will's hands, in and back out, and then in his own rhythm, quicker and harder. "Christ," he growled. "Shit. Soon, baby. Ah, fuck, too soon."

Will sucked harder, hands sliding to squeeze Tab's ass, wanting Tab to shoot, wanting to make him do it.

Tab jerked and pushed into him again, twice more, before freezing. He didn't say anything at all, but with a long groan his cock swelled and started throbbing, come spilling over Will's tongue as Tab's finger's tangled in his hair.

Will swallowed and swallowed, the taste bitter and good. He kept sucking long after Tab had come, moaning around the flesh in his mouth.

Tab finally pulled away, still hard. "Up," he growled, yanking Will to his feet. He plunged his tongue into Will's mouth, and for the first time managed to tug Will's pants open without a fuss, grabbing at his cock as it sprang free.

Will moaned, opening wide for Tab's kiss, hips pushing his prick into Tab's hand.

Tab's kiss was hard and wild, almost biting, but his hand was gentle. "Bed," he said into

the kiss, turning them abruptly and pushing Will flat on his back. He kissed Will again, his hand rolling Will's balls for a moment before Tab seized the waistband of his pants and pulled them down below his hips. "Wait for me."

"Bossy," Will accused, grinning, hands working to take off his shirt.

"Just do as you're told," Tab said with a grin right back. "Be a good boy and I'll make you fly." His head dipped and Tab attacked a newly bared nipple with his teeth.

The pain zinged through him and Will cried out, back arching to push his nipple into Tab's mouth. His hand slid into Tab's hair, tugging on it.

"Wait, I said." He could feel Tab smile against his chest, then there was wet heat as Tab licked and bit his way down to his belly, scraping teeth over the tender skin of his right side.

"Didn't say I couldn't touch you," he pointed out.

"Shut up," Tab mumbled, sticking his tongue in Will's belly button. "Get your pants off. Want at your ass." He didn't move out of the way though, just breathed on Will's dick.

Will wiggled and pushed, shoving his cock against Tab's face as he got his pants down the rest of the way and then kicked them off his ankles. "Just pointing out I was being good, doing what you told me."

"I noticed," Tab said, sounding distracted. "Want a reward?" His tongue dabbed at the head of Will's cock.

"Yes!" His hips pushed again, trying to get his cock into Tab's mouth.

"Just need to ask," Tab teased, then his mouth opened a tiny bit and he licked over the tip of Will's cock, almost distracting him from the way Tab was parting his legs for him, draping one over Tab's shoulder.

"Please," he begged, his cock so hard, his balls aching. "Suck me."

"You sure?" A finger teased over his hole, circling around and pressing gently.

"Asshole!" The word was nearly a whimper though.

Tab laughed, then sucked him in, the finger starting to push in at the same time, dry and rough. He shouted, hips bucking, come pouring out of him down Tab's throat. Tab swallowed, his tongue dragging over Will's cock again and again, and the sounds Tab made vibrating right up into his spine.

He didn't go soft, how could he with Tab doing that? He just rode the sensations, bearing

down on the finger inside him and pushing up into Tab's mouth. His hands grabbed for Tab's ears, tugging.

Tab lifted his head, letting him go. "What? I'm busy here. Find the fucking lube."

"It's up on the shelf somewhere." He grabbed hold of Tab's ears again, trying to tug him back down onto his cock.

Tab shook him off. "Get it. And leave my ears alone, they're not fucking handles."

He glared. "They're *there*."

"That doesn't mean you can use 'em that way!" Tab glared up at him. "You have four seconds to get the lube or I'm using spit."

"Hey!" He shifted, trying to pull out from under Tab, wondering when they'd gone from growling because it felt good to snarling.

"What?" Tab suddenly looked confused. "Just... reach up and get it, yeah?"

Will sat up and grabbed the lube, tossing it at Tab, frowning. "You got testy," he pointed out.

"You pulled my ears!" Tab blinked at him and suddenly grinned. "Weirdo. *Bossy* weirdo." He grabbed the lube, still grinning.

"You're the one giving orders." He reached out and stroked Tab's ears. "I was just trying to get you where I wanted you."

Tab tilted his head at him, looking at him even as he opened the lube. "Okay," he said with a nod. "Can you pull my hair instead?"

Will grinned. "Ears make a better handle."

Tab rolled his eyes and slicked his fingers. "You want me to suck you off again, or do you want to be fucked?"

"Fuck me," he told Tab, hips curling, legs spreading.

"That's better," Tab said, climbing on top of him. Two fingers pushed into him, wet and slippery, and Tab leaned over him, braced on one arm. "Make some noise for me, baby."

He gasped, riding Tab's fingers, meeting his lover's eyes as his hips rolled. "Bossy," he murmured.

"You love it," Tab said in a low voice, his fingers twisting.

Will snorted, but he couldn't deny it. Then Tab's fingers found his gland and the pleasure shot through him and the rest of it didn't matter.

Tab's fingers twisted back the other way and he loomed over Will, hanging above him. "You love it when I do this. When I take you, when I make you wait, make you want it so bad you can't think." The fingers dragged out of him and Tab's thick cock pressed in.

He didn't deny it, just spread wider, taking Tab in, hands reaching for Tab. Tab felt huge in him, wide and hard and smooth. He pushed in until Will could feel Tab's balls against his ass, and then Tab bent low, his mouth next to Will's ear. "You love it. You love me."

A shudder rocked through him and he wet his lips. "You love me."

"I do." Tab rocked his hips, his cock sliding out and back in. "You know that. Same as I know."

He nodded, groaning at the feeling of being stretched, spread, the burn, the pleasure. "More," he ordered, begged, it didn't matter as long as Tab gave it to him.

"Always more," Tab said. Teeth closed around his earlobe as Tab thrust into him, a little faster and a lot harder.

Whimpering softly, he wrapped his legs around Tab's waist, holding on, riding the sensations as Tab fucked him.

"Always," Tab said again. He lifted off Will's chest, his hips rolling and snapping, his weight held on both arms next to Will's shoulders.

They moved together, Will gasping and moaning as Tab's thrusts thundered through him. His fingers grasped at Tab, digging into the man's back.

"Shit, baby," Tab moaned, looking down their bodies. His eyes flicked back to meet Will's gaze briefly, but then he watched again, grunting as his cock pushed in.

Will grinned, feeling wild and sexy. "Pervert," he accused, laughing as he said it, back arching to meet Tab's thrusts.

"You look," Tab said, not looking anywhere but where they were joined. "Fucking hot."

"You make me hot," Will told him. Then he wasn't talking anymore, because it felt too damned good to have to worry about how to make his mouth work.

"You're already hot," Tab informed him. "But this... your hole stretched around me, the way you move." Tab broke off with a grunt, his thrust suddenly erratic. "Oh, shit." He stopped moving altogether, his eyes shut tight. "Hang on."

Will whimpered, grabbing hold of Tab's shoulders and fucking himself. "My cock. Tab. Please."

"Stop moving!" Tab almost yelled, his hand wrapping around Will's prick and stroking him hard.

That was all Will needed and he cried out, ass squeezing Tab tight as he came, spunk flying out of his cock and over his chest.

"Fuck!" Tab slammed into him again, fucking him through it. When he stopped again Will could feel him come, his cock twitching and leaping, filling him up. His own body was shaking from all the stimulation, almost but not quite painful. He held on, just held on with arms and legs, holding Tab through it.

Tab finally relaxed a little, the tension in his back and arms easing away as he finished coming. "Oh, God," he moaned, his head in Will's neck. "Gonna fall." He pulled out of Will's ass slowly, then sank down on top of him, a heavy, sweaty blanket.

Will relaxed back into the mattress, content with Tab's weight on him because it was Tab. He pet Tab and then let his hands fall away.

"Hey," Tab said softly, not lifting his head.

He grunted a reply and pet Tab again. "Wanna go get something to eat?" They actually had decent food in and eating was starting to be enjoyable again instead of just a necessity. "Later," he added, just so Tab didn't think he wanted to jump up just yet -- he wasn't sure his legs would work.

"Later," Tab mumbled. "Can do that later." A hand smoothed over his hair. "Feel better now? Less twitchy?"

"Wasn't twitchy."

Tab laughed against his skin. "And I wasn't bored."

"Okay, so maybe I was a little twitchy. Things are going *good*." It was always dangerous when he was this happy. Always.

"They are," Tab agreed. "Maybe it'll stay this way. I think we're owed some good, Cap."

He nodded. Yeah, maybe he could live with dangerous -- with happy and good to go along with it.

Especially if Tab went along with the deal.

Epilogue

Tab finished testing the connections on the new thrusters and tried really hard not to bounce. He'd spent a solid week working on the engines, both in dock and out in a low orbit, making adjustments and tweaking. He'd made both Jinx and Will crazy with tiny little test flights, but he thought he had it all settled now. He hoped. Will would fucking beat him if he didn't.

He left the engine room as it was and headed to the bridge. He could have used the comm, but he wanted to see the readings, see the stars. Hell, he wanted to see Will's face when they hit 4.5 and went past it.

He stomped down the corridor and onto the bridge, not paying any attention to the conversation Will and Jinx were having. "Punch it," he said, interrupting without any shame at all.

Will gave him a look and went back to talking to Jinx.

Tab blinked and then frowned. "Fast?" he tried. "Make ship go quick? Any of this getting through?"

Will nodded and clapped Jinx on the shoulder and then turned to him. "Does that mean you're done?" Despite the fact that Will *still* hadn't made them go, he was bouncing on his heels, a grin breaking through on his face.

Tab nodded and leaned back. "Done. Ready. Go, go, go! C'mon, let's fly."

Will was definitely bouncing and then he pushed Jinx out of the pilot's seat and got settled. One finger flipped the comm. "Everyone hold onto something. We're going to see if this bird'll make us go faster than hell."

Will counted to ten and then put on the speed.

"Go like stink'?" Tab mouthed to Jinx, who just shrugged.

They went. Fast. Tab leaned forward to watch the readings, his fingers curling around Will's chair as they hit 4.2.

Will glanced up at him, grin wild, eyes shinning. "Let's see how good an engineer you really are." Will pushed it and the speedometer crept up.

Tab snorted. "I'm the best, and you know it," he said. 4.4 and then 4.5. "Here we go." His fingers tightened again and the numbers flipped again. 4.6. "We're good to 4.8, I think. Should shake a bit after that."

"Can we make it to 5 though?" Will asked, something like awe in his voice.

"Yeah. Don't suggest you do it for anything other than saving our skins, but yeah. Just over, even. You hit 5.1, though, and we'll kind of explode."

"I'm gonna push her to 5 just this once. See if we can. You got an alarm on when we hit that? I'd hate to explode accidentally."

"Hell, yes. Loud as fuck -- it'll make the crew piss themselves." Tab grinned. He was getting hard watching Will play.

Will laughed and kept pushing. Sure enough, they hit 4.9 and the engines started working overtime, the bird just beginning to shake. Will kept pushing. "You sure she can take this?"

"I swear to fuck, Will. Just do it." Tab tried not to growl, but he was pretty sure he was going to go a little nuts if Will kept playing games.

His growling earned him another wild laugh from Will and then the Arillia pushed to 5, Will's eyes glued to the stars outside. "Fucking amazing."

Tab leaned a little more, enough to check and see that Will was hard, too. Grinning, he nodded. "Alarm," he said, just as it went off, loud and jarring.

Will still jumped, the laughter that followed just as wild, as happy as earlier, and then he started easing off, slowly taking her down to 4.6.

Tab jerked his head at Jinx, who rolled his eyes and nodded. "Come on, Cap," Tab said. "You can play later. I need about ten minutes of your time."

Will whimpered a little, hands wrapping around the controls.

Jinx snorted. "Come on, Captain. Share the love. I want a try. Besides, the man just gave you 5. Deserves his reward."

Tab smirked but knew better than to say anything at all. He nodded, though, and moved a little closer to the door.

Will flipped Jinx off but relinquished the controls and strolled toward him. Tab couldn't help but notice the bulge in those sexy leather pants, though, and knew Will wanted as badly as he did.

"We're not making it down the ladder, are we?" Tab whispered, grinning. Maybe the galley was empty.

"I don't know *what* you're talking about." Will headed down the hall. "Aren't we going to get you some celebratory cake?" he threw back over his shoulder.

"Is that what we're calling it now?" Tab grinned and followed, eyes on Will's ass. The man wasn't wasting time, which was nice.

"What? You don't want cake?" Will took a right into the galley.

"I'll have cake if we have some. After." Tab followed him in, one hand reaching out to cop a feel, curving right around Will's ass.

Will pressed back into his hand. "We're in the galley, Tab."

"So we are." Tab slid his hand around Will's to the front and groped his erection instead, pulling Will to his chest.

Groaning, Will leaned back against him, head turning to latch onto his neck, sucking hard.

"Told you I'd make her fast," Tab whispered, fighting one handed with Will's fly. He rubbed his cock against Will's ass and felt it throb in time with Will's sucking.

"You did," murmured Will, turning in his arms and bringing their mouths together in a hard kiss. Will sawed his hips against Tab, wild and wanton.

Tab held him there, rocked with him and followed the pace, touching as much of Will as he could. He'd made the bird soar, he'd made a place for himself, both aboard ship and with Will. There wasn't anything about his life that he wasn't grateful for, and making out in the galley was a bonus he was going to accept. Tab pulled Will even closer and tasted his mouth, wanting more of him.

Will pushed and they stumbled until his back hit a wall. Eager fingers tore at the zipper on his coveralls, pulling it all the way down.

God, Will was going to kill him when he came back to his right mind, Tab figured. But that was later, right now they were busy. "How?" he asked, working on Will's fly. "Gotta tell you, baby, I'm not gonna be long." He'd make up for it later.

"Better not be," grunted Will. "Anyone could fucking walk in."

That wasn't stopping Will today, though. Will finally pushed his hand away and got himself out of his pants, shoving their bodies together again, rubbing hard against him.

Tab almost gasped at the feel of him, his cock jumping. Hot as fuck, rubbing off in the damn galley. He kissed Will again, fucked his mouth with his tongue, and grabbed his ass, guiding him. They were going to be messy and he was loving every second of it.

Will's tongue pushed into his mouth over and over, echoing the way Will's hips humped up against his. Will was just on fire, hot as anything.

A growl rose up, unstoppable, and Tab dug his fingers into Will's ass. They were getting slippery between them, precome and a slick of sweat making the glide a little easier. His cock jumped again and he moaned into Will's mouth. Almost there.

"Fuck. Tab." Will's fingers dug into his shoulders, the movements growing wilder, more urgent.

"Uh huh. Fuck Tab." Tab grinned and it turned to a grimace as his orgasm rose up. "Will. God, now, baby." His cock started to spurt and he ground Will against him, trying to drag him along.

Will shouted as the first splash left Tab's cock, an answering heat spraying up his belly.

That was it. It was right and messy and they were flying the only way they really knew how. Together, locked tight, just the two of them, there on their bird. Tab had no intention of ever letting that change. "Love you, Will," he whispered, shaking slightly.

Will held on, panting, nodding. Their eyes met for a minute and Will said, "I know. You, too."

Tab grinned. "I know. And I know you well enough to know you're gonna wipe off and go back to the bridge to play with speed, aren't you?"

Will's eyes had dropped, his hands already busy at his pants, but he looked back up at Tab's words. "Tab. *Fucking 5!*"

"Only in emergencies!" Tab said, beaming. He didn't bother doing anything more than tugging his clothes closed. "Go play. Then come to bed, yeah? I like it when you're wound up."

Will laughed and planted a hard kiss on his lips. "Thanks, Tab." Then he was gone, all but running back up to the bridge.

Tab shook his head. Flying high. Every way. He turned and headed back to the engine room, idly wondering what would happen if he ever managed to get the bird to 6.

He might not survive it, but it would sure to be fun to find out.

END