

ELLORA'S CAVE **AEON**



A movie poster featuring a woman in a shiny red catsuit in the foreground, crouching and looking intensely at the viewer. In the background, a muscular man in a black belt and pants stands with his hands on his hips. The background is a dramatic, cloudy sky with a large, glowing planet or moon in the upper right. The title 'AMON BIESTE LATHARIAN HEAT' is written in large, stylized, orange and yellow letters at the bottom.

AMON
BIESTE
LATHARIAN HEAT

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Latharian Heat

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LATHARIAN HEAT

Amon Bieste

Chapter One

Hasdaer was my family estate on the planet Latharia, and while I'd entertained dreams of it becoming an institution for learning, I'd assumed it would happen later in my life. But I had reached my thirty-eighth year when I received Ambassador Melhen's agenda for a new program that would allow humans to be educated on Latharian culture by Latharians. It was an opportunity of a lifetime and could be one of the biggest leaps in the history of Earth and Latharia unity.

Standing at the small second-story bay window of the room at Hasdaer Estate I'd transformed into a space for learning, I watched the students below file one by one from the small mobile unit. Three males. One female. I grasped the techbook that contained their files as Stai Stran, my assistant professor, anxiously rearranged the objects on the desk yet again.

"I missed Latharia these months I've been gone." Below me the priest from Earth greeted the students. Father Frances Martinez. I'd been informed by the ambassador that the priest was one of the few who had tried to appeal the decision to provide a program that allowed the education of Latharian culture to humans. Thankfully, he would not be staying. He'd been sent only to greet the students, to turn them over to me.

"It is good that you are home again, Oberon," Stai answered and I looked back at her. Stai's hair was black like all Latharians, but she kept hers cropped short just above her ears. Her female form was more slender than some, her hips not widened by childbirth, her soft green scales smaller and flat against her body. Females changed after giving birth, their hips became rounder, their scales rougher like those of males, their breasts larger. Most Latharians preferred females after their change and I myself would

have preferred a more experienced female to work with, but Stai proved herself with her dedication to work and research. She was accommodating.

I needn't tell her that it was the beauty of Latharia I had missed most. Many of us had feelings of emptiness when we were long from our home. We often reflected on the warmth of Latharia's double suns as their lights played on the purple and orange leaves of our Casia woods, or the coolness of the blue rings of our moons shimmering across the green waters of our oceans. Even a month away from Latharia could seem like an eternity. I'd been gone years.

Walking to the desk, I sat in the cushioned chair and flipped open the techbook to study the photos of each of the students on the screen. I knew their backgrounds, had memorized the details of their records. Stai and I had done additional research on each of the program volunteers. All of them had training at an academy and had excelled in their studies. Three of them had received additional combat training. Three had actually been involved in situations where they'd been forced to kill another—two in training ops, one in self-defense. The female, while her physical training was far more extensive, was the one who had no blood on her hands. I was as familiar with their lives as I was my own.

"The students have arrived," Father Martinez announced from the doorway as if neither Stai nor I had sensed the five of them approaching. I didn't look up as Stai stepped forward to greet them.

"Welcome to Hasdaer," she offered as they stepped into my classroom. I could feel their gazes as they analyzed their Latharian teachers. I could sense their curiosities, anxieties and excitement. Their human energies were strong. Well, the male students and the priest had strong energies. I lifted my gaze momentarily to the female.

She walked spine-straight past my desk, chin lifted. Not a strand of her black hair was out of place. Her features were feminine but defined, her cheekbones high and her lips full. She looked fearless, confident. But she felt empty. As a Latharian, I can always sense the feelings and emotions of humans. I couldn't detect even a sliver of emotion

and that was unheard of with human females. Most humans exerted energy and emotions without even realizing it. Most human females could make a Latharian man want to mate her without even realizing she was doing so. This one did not.

My attention dropped to the burgundy jumpsuit. It stretched across every curve as if it were painted onto her toned body. Phison, I realized. The jumpsuit was made of a material called Phison, a highly concentrated latex material that could successfully shield the natural heat of a human body from a Latharian's senses. That and a bit of trained self-control and this female had armed herself for her stay in Latharia.

"They are all yours, Hasdaer," Father Martinez growled from the doorway. "I will be returning to Earth immediately.

"Travel well, Father," Stai answered as I merely inclined my head. I almost smiled when the priest's anger flared in response to lack of interest. The priest had amused me and while I would have liked for him to remain, if for no other reason than for me to irritate, it was best that he did not.

The door sounded behind him and the pupils chose their seats and sat in silence. They were waiting for me to address them but I wanted to give them a few moments to observe Stai and myself. Most of them had very little experience with Latharians. Our physical appearances alone piqued their curiosities.

When away from our planet, Latharians normally wear skin suits to cover our bodies, appearing almost human. We control ourselves to remain unshifted and in calm states of appearance. When at home we don't wear the skin suits, allowing our heightened senses the freedom to explore those around us and remaining in our native forms, our scales exposed.

Lifting the techbook in one hand, I rose from my chair without looking up and moved toward the window, giving them full view of my scaled Latharian body. While our basic forms are similar to that of humans, we are taller, our bone structure larger and more distinct. The biggest differences are that Latharians have no anus as we do not digest anything that cannot be turned into energy or muscle, and our genitalia do

not hang limply from our bodies. The male root extends from within our bodies when we become aroused, and can become much larger than the human penis.

I could feel their scrutiny and allowed my scales to ripple slightly before speaking. The color of Latharian scales varies from soft green to dark brown. Mine are a muddy green. The students could easily see the two distinct colors between Stai and I.

“Welcome to Hasdaer. I am Master Professor Oberon Hasdaer. My assistant professor is Stai. My program consists of five major studies.” I waited for Stai to move forward and retrieve the writing tool so she could physically write my words onto a large screen. “Physical Combat and Defense. Energy Bonding. Intellectual Study. Latharian History. And Latharian Culture.”

I slapped the techbook closed as I listened to them enter the data into their own techbooks and gazed outside at the mobile unit that carried Father Martinez back to the transport that would take him to Earth. “I am here to teach you. If you have questions, you will ask as they are formed. You may speak and move about freely. I expect you to learn, to use this experience to become the best in your fields.”

I returned to the desk and set my techbook on the surface before I finally looked up. To my surprise it was the female who met my gaze first. Her dark brown eyes looked right into mine fearlessly.

“You wear no skin suit.” Her thin brow arched perfectly above her right eye as her strong but feminine voice broke the silence of the students. “You don’t fear you will frighten the humans?” Those dark eyes glittered and I almost laughed at her sarcasm.

“On Latharia there is no need. You don’t appear frightened and I find the suits uncomfortable and constricting.”

“I just bet you do.”

I blinked. The intonation in her voice was clear. She was actually making reference to our sexual natures. I watched her stand and walk to the window. “Nothing frightens me.”

Nothing? Now I was intrigued. I could feel Stai's curiosity of the woman as well. When I said nothing, she turned her head and looked back at me, that brow arching again.

"You don't believe me?"

I half leaned, half sat on the edge of the desk. "Everyone fears something."

She faced the window again. "Do you?"

"Latharian fears are different than those of humans."

When she turned, her full lips curled on one side in a lopsided smirk. "You wish me to fear you then as many humans on Earth do?" As she moved forward, my attention drew to the swell of her hips as they swayed with each step. My focus lifted across her flat stomach to her full breasts. When my gaze returned to her face she seemed unfazed with my scrutiny of her physique. Interesting.

"I do not require your fear." When she didn't attempt to move from in front of me and her gaze did not slide away, but met and held mine, I crossed my arms and regarded her with interest. To my surprise, her lids dropped and she conducted her own appraisal of me, starting at my feet and working slowly back up to my face. Her gaze locked with mine and she exhaled a long breath that carried a whisper of her energy. Strong. Feminine. Controlled. Assertive. Confident. And unmistakably sexual. Even more interesting was that she purposely had allowed me a sense of her.

As she returned to her seat, I glanced at Stai. Her curiosity piqued, it glittered in her almond-shaped black eyes and a small smile of amusement curled on her lips. She was definitely not like any other human woman either of us had ever encountered.

"Would each of you like to introduce yourself to the class?" Stai looked at the female student. "Let us know why you volunteered and what your goals are by the time you finish the program."

"Anjessica Aves. Specializing in physical training." Her full lips curled. "I want to be able to kick *his* ass by the time I leave here." She nodded in my direction.

One of the human males, the one with dark blond hair, laughed before speaking. "Lieutenant Luke Bordeaux, Sir. Hand to hand combat and field training. I'm not as ambitious as Aves. I just want to kick the asses of my platoon. None of them are Latharian."

Even if I'd not read his records, I would have guessed him a soldier. He was a twenty-six-year-old body of rippled muscle and, while his smile was quick and easy, he did have an air of command and some control. His blue eyes were those of a born leader. My gaze drifted to the next student as the young man stood.

"James Martin the Third, political graduate."

"The Third," Luke echoed and James grinned.

I studied James' short-cropped brown hair. While his features were not as strong as Luke's, they were not weak either. They were sharp, and his green eyes were deep set, fringed with thick, dark lashes. His confidence wasn't that of a young man accustomed to leading, as Luke's was, but rather it seemed to be the result of having more experience with the opposite sex.

"Rich kid with nothing to do but get into trouble. So I volunteered to buy myself a few months before my father tries to push me into his business or have me shipped off to another academy." James shrugged. "This program is something to do." He sat down and my attention turned to the fourth student, the youngest in my class.

He stood, running a hand nervously through his blond hair before pushing his glasses up higher on the narrow bridge of his nose. "Noah Abercrombie, data analysis and tactical warfare. I volunteered to gain access to the Latharian Libraries."

"A think tank. If there's a test, I'm sitting next to him," Luke piped up and a quick smile crossed Noah's thin face before he sat down. I could sense his relief at being accepted by the others, see it in his large blue eyes.

"I'll pick the girl." James winked at Anjessica but Luke laughed.

"That *girl* can most likely beat the shit out of you, Third."

Anjessica smiled sweetly, revealing her perfect white teeth. "You bet your ass I can."

These were my pupils, my students. I felt a calm settle in my chest as if for the first time in my life I was doing exactly what I was born to do. I glanced at Stai to find her smiling at me, aware of my thoughts. She gave me a little nod.

"What about you, Sir?" Luke asked.

Of course they would be curious about me. They'd not had the privilege of a detailed background. Their energies became alert.

"I'm just a teacher."

Stai grunted and shook her head. "He graduated with honors and specialized in cultural research and political exploration. He's trained some of the finest soldiers to come out of Latharia and has traveled more than most are privileged in our entire lifetimes. When this program was introduced, his name was the first on the list of candidates to contact from both your planet and ours. He is the reason I applied for the assistant professor position. He makes any resume look perfect." Stai slanted a glance at me, her thin lips twisting with a slight grin. "And he's not as modest as he might have you believe."

"It sounds more impressive in someone else's voice." I faced the students, felt their respect for me grow. "I accepted the chance to head up this program because I've always thought Hasdaer would make a fine learning institution and because I support any opportunity to strengthen the bond between Latharia and Earth."

"Latharians are all about peace." Anjessica snorted.

"Yes." I watched her shake her head.

"If Latharians are so peaceful, why is your planet always at war with someone?"

I studied Anjessica Aves. Anyone with her accomplished training would know the answer to that. "Latharia offers an abundance of resources that threaten other civilizations. The Latharian belief is that everyone deserves quality of life and the

opportunity to succeed. While we desire peace, we do not allow others to attempt to destroy us or our quality of life."

"Which is a nice way of saying they think they are better than everyone else," Anjessica said, addressing the other students.

"Not better. Different," I corrected. "Peace can be found despite differences."

"Can it?" Anjessica laughed and stood. "Tell them more of this quality of life. It's a great sell."

I felt Stai stiffen with offense but watched Anjessica move between the desks. "We are what we are. There is nothing to sell," I responded.

"What he won't tell you is that the Latharian quality of life includes the enslavement of humans for the sole purpose of indulging their own sexual impulses. That their whole lifestyle is based on dominance and intimidation."

Chapter Two

"That just isn't true," Stai argued but Anjessica didn't look at her, kept her gaze locked with mine. The realization hit me. She was attempting to challenge me, purposely trying to push buttons.

"Is this theory based on personal experience or what you've been told to believe by those who would sever the treaties between our civilizations?" I watched her eyes narrow slightly. Yes, I knew her history; I'd read the files on each of my new students. She was more familiar with Latharian culture than any of her fellow classmates. She'd been a connubial mate to a Latharian for three years.

"Let us just examine the factual data. Latharia has not experienced peace time in over a hundred years." She paced back and forth in front of me, holding up a slender finger for every point she made. "Latharians have human sex slaves. They conduct peace treaties with Earth, who they claim are allies, but only offer their protection against enemies if Earth provides them with *our* natural resources. You know, the very thing you claim you will not allow another civilization to destroy you for."

I was fascinated by her. I couldn't help myself. She was purposely playing devil's advocate by twisting the facts just enough to make her accusations seem valid, accusations that she most likely did not even believe.

"Please feel free to stop me when I say something that isn't true." She glanced at me and paused before continuing with a nod of her head. "You dominate your sex slaves and when you're not indulging in your sexual desires, you entertain yourselves with combative-type sports. And then you preach to other civilizations of a quality of life as if your way is somehow better than another, and if you are honest with yourself and us, *do* think yourself better. Would you agree that all of those are facts and not theories?"

"I don't preach," I said once she grew quiet. "I teach that every civilization is different and that no people need to rule over another."

"A very political answer." Anjessica stood directly in front of me. "But a deceiving one."

"Your observance of Latharia, our people and our culture is textbook. As with Earth's history and culture, a flat reading could make us look barbaric and primitive."

"Do you have, or have you ever had, a human slave?" She settled her hands on her hips and stood with her feet parted. She was very clever. She was taking up as much space as she could while remaining in a comfortable stance.

"I have."

"And what did you do with this human slave?"

She was baiting me. "I mated with her, of course."

"Did you dominate her?"

"Most definitely." I didn't look past her at the others but sensed their surprise.

"Did you violate her?"

"In every possible way she desired." I heard Stai's soft chuckle but kept my gaze locked with Anjessica.

"Were you violent?"

I lifted a finger and tapped my temple. "You are a clever young woman, Anjessica Aves. Very cunning. You may consider legal training because you know how to pose a fascinating and convincing argument."

"You didn't answer the question." She took the last step between us, clearly indicating she was not afraid of me in the least and establishing herself as an equal to the male students in the class. For the first time in my entire life I wanted to kiss a woman without being prompted to do so by any energy. No, I corrected as soon as the thought found me. I didn't want to kiss her. I wanted to leap on her.

"I believe your question was, when I mate, do I do so violently." I leaned forward and smiled. "The answer is yes."

She smiled smugly at me. "You see? This evolved people who only want quality of life and galactic peace practice violent domination and violation, controlling and breaking human *slaves* for their own pleasure."

"I thought that Latharians didn't believe in enslavement. That an individual could only choose to become a slave and was able to choose the master they desired?" It was Noah who spoke.

"That is good, Noah. Do you know why someone chooses to become a slave to a Latharian?" My gaze never left Anjessica.

Noah cleared his throat nervously. "Because they like the experience?"

"The sexual experience." I nodded and finally stepped around her to face the rest of the class. "Can you explain the differences between the dynamics of slavery in our civilizations?"

"The history of slavery on Earth has of course been more of labor-type slavery," Noah said. "While there are some parts of our early history that included sex slaves, most of the time the slaves had no choice. In Latharia, the term 'slave' is just that, a word. It merely indicates the relationship between two or more individuals. That relationship is personal and, otherwise, the slave lives a normal life as a regular civilian." Noah glanced apologetically at Anjessica when she turned but continued. "While the Latharian male is dominant, it's not very different from the roles of dominant and submissive in our own culture. But in Latharia, sexuality is not riddled with insecurity and judgment."

"You've read the works of Professor Jaes." Stai pinpointed the author of Noah's studies.

Noah nodded. "I find his are the most accurate depictions of Latharians and others. Most write of their own experiences but his works are as an observer of cultures."

"Did your slave choose you?" James asked.

"She did, though the situation was different than most. It was a temporary arrangement for the sake of research." I clasped my hands behind me and watched Anjessica return quietly to her seat. "I was conducting my study of Latharian impulse control to human energy. As you may know, Latharians do respond to human energy, specifically that of females. My study was to see what kind of control could be built up against the impulse to mate."

"And just why would you need that kind of study if all you want is galactic peace?" Anjessica asked sarcastically.

"It would come in handy if I'd a student today who challenged me but hadn't the cleverness to wear a Phison jumpsuit. A little control could prevent an actual demonstration of primitive, violent Latharian sex." She did not wince at my jab. Instead, a small smile played in the corners of her mouth.

"The woman was a classmate and volunteered to act as my slave for the rest of the school term. The arrangement provided me with a consensual, unafraid human female with strong sexual energy. The experiment was a success and, by the end of the term, the two of us received invitations to attend lectures at many Latharian universities."

"As you said, that is not the way of most slaves," Anjessica pointed out. "It is the Latharian instinct to dominate. To dominate, you must make someone submit. A submissive does as she's told. She does not defy what her master wants. If she does so, she is punished."

"Latharians do not rape. Latharians do not force," Stai snapped.

"Calm yourself, Stai." I'd felt her anger building since Anjessica began her assessment of Latharia.

"Yes, Stai, calm yourself." Anjessica leaned back and stretched her legs forward. "God forbid you don't do what he says. I wonder what he would do if you didn't?" She was baiting Stai and, to my dismay, my assistant jumped.

"He would physically restrain me from ripping out your tongue for your disrespect not only of our culture and our people, but of an individual who has more experience in

Latharian and human life than your twenty-six-year-old mind could comprehend! Certainly humans are not so different that they do not acknowledge those who have earned recognition and respect?"

"Stai," I murmured and she turned to glare at me with her black eyes.

"You would have me stand here and allow someone to berate you in such a manner? I will not, Oberon. I *cannot*."

"Then remove yourself from this classroom until you can."

Her jaw clenched. "May I speak with you in private?"

Some of the students shifted uncomfortably when she marched from the room and I grunted as I glanced back at Anjessica. "Perhaps Noah could take the time to educate you all on the violent history of our females. And if I come back with a black eye, you, young lady, will owe me a twenty page report on why it is wise not to anger a Latharian woman." Laughter followed me from the room and I closed the door and faced Stai.

"You could lose the respect and trust of the other students." She fisted both hands. "She was goading you into a fight and her blatant lack of respect was meant to infuriate."

"I have not lost any of their respect because I have not lost my temper." I shook my head. "The damage that has been done is because of your lack of control. Go somewhere and calm yourself. Do not return until after midday break." Stai blinked and I sensed her surprise in my authoritative tone. My way was negotiation but this program was too important for me to allow Stai to lose her temper on a human woman.

She pivoted on her heel and marched down the corridor toward the stairs, her scales rippling with anger. I felt her heat and stilled my own temper before returning to the classroom.

"You got lucky this time." I addressed Anjessica and she merely smiled. "We all did."

"She's kinda pretty," James commented and Noah turned in his seat.

"What kind of thing is that to say? How would you feel if she had said that, for a human, you're not completely ugly?"

"I wouldn't care if she thought me the ugliest man in the universe if she still wanted to fuck," James retorted with a shrug.

"That was terrible." Luke spoke between chuckles as Noah faced forward again.

"I have a question about slaves, Master Professor." James ignored Luke. "How does a Latharian know he wants the female who has chosen him?"

Anjessica laughed. "Men are men, no matter what species they are. A submissive nature and a great body." James grinned but turned his attention to me.

"A human's appearance is of no consequence. Her physical endurance, her consent and the strength of her energy are the main determining factors of accepting a human slave."

James leaned forward and glanced at Anjessica before looking back at me and jerking his head toward his female classmate. "That's why she wears the suit you talked about? She has a strong energy?"

"I've yet to meet a human who could argue that effectively and *not* have a strong energy." I slanted my gaze at Anjessica. "Though if she were inclined to wear clothing not made of that material, I have enough control over myself not to leap upon her and indulge any bothersome sexual impulses."

A soft chuckle drifted from Noah. "Forgive me, Master Professor, but both of you looked ready to leap at each other just moments ago without any energy exchange."

"A different impulse," I corrected. "But a good observance. As Ms. Aves mentioned before, Latharians enjoy a good combative match. While I'm inclined to observe, as you witnessed, my assistant professor was willing to take up Ms. Aves' challenge. We call this 'evoking clash' and it is more popular between females, as well as slaves and masters."

"Why is that?" Luke questioned.

"Because the rush of excitement can often cause a sexual reaction," I explained and when they became quiet I took the opportunity to dismiss them for midmorning break. They filed out one by one and, before she could follow, I called for Anjessica to remain. As the door closed, sealing us off from the others, I exhaled a deep breath and reached for my techbook.

"Anjessica Aves, age twenty-six. Mother died when you were a child. Father held rank as a counselor for a good twenty years before being dismissed for disorderly and treasonous conduct. At age eighteen, you left the academy and resurfaced three years later to complete your education and train for the next two years, specializing in physical training."

She walked forward, standing directly in front of me. "Yes? I also had a dog name Spork when I was nine. I am not impressed with information that could be found by a child with a techbook."

I grunted, slapping the techbook closed. "Your father is paying for your participation in this program."

"So is James'. What's your point?"

"James' father does not hate Latharia or the Latharian people. Yours does." I set the techbook on my desk. "So explain to me why a man like your father would send his only daughter to be trained in Latharian culture, in a program instituted by the very woman who caused him to hate Latharians."

She lifted her chin. "Because I wanted to do this. He doesn't have to like it. Just pay for it."

"And would he pay for it if he knew you were attempting to seduce your Latharian professor?"

Laughter rolled up from her throat. "That's what this is about? You are angry that I disturbed your classroom?"

"I am trying to understand why you are in my program." I turned so that she could walk around me and perch on the end of my desk, her finger tracing the edges of my techbook.

"I told you. I want the physical training." She licked her lips. My admiration for her tactics soared. She'd been aggressive before, now she took on a submissive role.

"You understand my suspicion that there might be more to that." I clasped my hands behind my back. "Your father has held a grudge against the Latharian people since he was dismissed from the human counsel on Earth. It is no secret that he harbors resentment toward our Captain Sleece and his two crewmen for rescuing Ambassador Melhen from his cruelty. He also resents the fact that she chose to become Sleece's slave. He's been very public regarding how he feels about the Latharian people. One might be inclined to believe that his daughter, a powerhouse of special training, might have been sent on a mission to seek revenge — one that she would most definitely fail to complete."

"I owe you no explanation for my actions or for my father's." She lifted her chin.

"You should have thought of that before disrupting my classroom." I met her gaze evenly. "One would think from the way you challenged me today that you might have a few issues with the Latharian people as well."

She rose and advanced, discarding the façade of submission. She lifted a finger and poked it into my chest. "Don't think you will make me quit the program. I was approved by the board."

"Your father bought their approval," I corrected. "Though I imagine, given your training, he wasted his money. You are a perfect candidate for the program."

"You bet your ass I am." She started to turn but I caught her arm and her head snapped around to stare at me. "Release me."

"It is rumored that your father is involved with a collective that means to sever the treaties between Earth and Latharia. If my suspicions of revenge are correct, you must realize that such a mission is impossible. You, no matter your training, are no match for three Latharian men. Captain Sleece and his crewmen would defeat you in a matter of

minutes. A human female killed on Latharia would be a hard rift to mend and could be the first of several attempts to damage the peace between us."

Slowly her gaze dropped for a moment to my hand before rising back to my face. "This is the last time I warn you, Hasdaer." Her voice dropped, dangerously quiet. "Release me."

Stupid human. I tightened my fingers. She had to be made to understand, to see the truth I offered her. Instantly her eyes hardened and glittered moments before she reacted. She turned, her elbow slamming into my throat.

While our exteriors are tough, an unexpected blow could cause a Latharian to step back. Hers did. Her movement was one graceful dance, completing her spin and bending back.

In seconds she produced a jagged blade from her boot and leapt at me, her knees hitting my chest full force so that I fell backward atop my desk, her atop me. She straddled my chest and the blade tore through the scales beneath my chin, the cool metal resting against the human-like skin beneath.

"Do not underestimate me, Hasdaer. I'm quite capable of killing the Sleece *and* his two Latharian brothers *if* that were my mission." She leaned close. "You as well, if you ever touch me again."

Latharians appreciate a good fight and my respect for her soared for her fearlessness. I *had* underestimated her. Her training had been more extensive than her history records indicated. Grasping her wrist, I jerked the blade away from her and threw it across the room. I pushed her from atop me and stood, my blood pounding through my veins in excitement, and I took a breath to control myself. No energy. I was attracted to *her*.

"Good." I nodded for her to attack again. For a moment she hesitated, then threw a punch that I dodged but, as if expecting my reaction, she jerked her arm back and her elbow connected with my jaw. I shook my head then stared at her as she took a defensive stance, readying for me to react. Still no energy.

“You’re quick.” I waved for her to attack again. It was what she’d been wanting since she’d stepped into the classroom. This time she tried to swipe my legs with hers, then kicked and missed before delivering a blow to my side. Her movements were practiced and precise. Without waiting for me to indicate for her to continue, she leapt forward but I blocked every blow. At last she stepped back and waited, breasts rising with every heavy breath. Her essence found me in those quick exhales from her lungs.

As before, her energy was strong and determined. More than that, she was physically affected. Dark arousal curled out of her with every breath—and a desire for more.

“Your training is impressive. You are fast. These are good attributes. But you haven’t the strength to deliver an effective enough blow to a Latharian to defeat him. Unless I am wrong, your father is willing to sacrifice your life in order to obtain that first rift of unrest between our civilizations.”

She shouted frustration and a blast of fire hit me, directly in my chest. Hot, burning energy that pushed into me with such force that I gasped for breath. My body reacted instantly and I shuddered beneath the force and drank in that energy with a growl.

Chapter Three

I stared at Anjessica Aves. She'd learned to guard her energy, store it and use it as a weapon. Only the finest Latharian slaves and soldiers had been trained in such a manner. She'd been in control, flirting with me with her challenges. That blast had told me there was fire beneath her surface. And I wanted it.

"That might buy me a few minutes to kill someone if it were my intention to do so." She sneered as I stood there struggling for control.

"But Sleece has two crewmen who would not stand —"

Another ball of heat hurled into me, followed instantly by a third. This time I doubled over. Grasping for control would have been futile. My tongue forked and flicked out from between my lips as my scales stood straight out from my body. Her gaze swept downward when I stood and stalked forward as my root dropped from within my body to swell with arousal.

She didn't even flinch when I grasped her shoulders and hauled her forward. This was what she'd been after all along. While I had no access to her energy, her eyes did not hide her desire. Three strides backward and Anjessica's bottom was pressed against the stone ledge of the bay window.

"You have a dangerous skill," I said from between clenched teeth as I released her shoulders and grasped the window frame on either side of her. "It will get you into more trouble than you realize." I stood towering over her, my breath ragged, and closed my eyes.

"I withdrew my energy. You should no longer feel it," she argued.

"Certainly you, a woman who has been in a connubial union with a Latharian for three years, would know that the damage is already done." My struggle to keep from

leaping on her made me ill. But when I looked at her, I could tell she was in no more control than I was. Her lips were parted and her whole body shook.

"I am but moments from making your every accusation of a Latharian male true," I warned.

"Good." She grasped either side of my face and pulled me roughly to her lips. Her tongue pushed into my mouth, coaxing mine to comply. Dropping her hands to my shoulders, she pressed her palms to my scales as she slid her arms around my neck, pulling me to her. I could taste her heat as I wrapped my tongue around hers and sucked. It wasn't enough. I needed more.

I tore free from her kiss. "Remove your clothes or I will rip them from your body." Her glassy eyes never left mine as she reached beneath her arm and parted the seam so the garment could slip over her head and she could pull her arms free. I rocked forward as her female energy surrounded me. Without the Phison obstruction, my senses filled with her essence. My tongue flicked out to taste her heat in the air.

Her hands shook as she pushed the suit down, removed her boots and then kicked the material away. "On the sill," I commanded, my voice hissing around the word.

She obeyed, lifting herself to sit on the deep stone ledge of the bay window. When I didn't move, she parted her knees. A mixture of musky arousal and tangy femininity threaded up from her cunt and I inhaled deeply, my scales shuddering down my body.

"What are you waiting for?" she asked when I didn't advance, and the laugh that rumbled from my chest sounded more like a growl.

"I'm trying to maintain a bit of control so you do not crawl away from this feeling dominated."

"Crawl?"

"Walking will not be an option." I saw the lift in her lips, felt her anticipation. Her natural energy was strong but, in contrast to how she was before she'd removed her clothes, devastating to my determination.

"Come here, Master Professor Oberon Hasdaer. I'm a big girl. I can take it." Her fingers pulled at my waist, urging me to step between her knees. She slid forward and angled her hips, using her arms to brace herself inside the window. When she nodded for me to continue, my root jerked, thumping against her sex.

"Give," I murmured and her energy opened to me. I could feel her thoughts, sense her emotions. I shuddered at her intensity.

"Fuck me, Hasdaer." She didn't need to verbalize her desire. I heard it in her thoughts. My root thumped faster against her and I rocked to the rhythm of her pulsating energy. I pushed my energy into her and then pulled it back again, groaning when she did the same. I leaned forward, close enough that I could wrap my tongue around her dark nipple. When I tugged, she responded with a cry that echoed through the room and sent a new wave of heat into me.

I felt her warm secretions on the swollen crown of my root as I positioned against her cunt. My tongue darted out to taste the salty scent on the air. My whole body shook as I fought to calm my need, to temper the desire to rip into her.

"Gonslaught!" I cursed between my teeth when she wrapped her legs around my waist.

"Stop fighting it, Hasdaer," she said violently. "I want your cock inside me!" She shouldn't have. Not with that violence that mimicked the urgency of a female Latharian. Her fingers curled beneath the scales at my waist, nails scratching at the green-colored skin beneath.

I thrust with a grunt, pushing my cock deep into her. Deeper. Until she couldn't take any more. I swelled within her, my root conforming to her natural shape and pressing against that spot just inside her, the very core of her pleasure. When my cock began to reach and retract within, she groaned like a woman who'd been waiting for that very moment.

She held on to me with her hands and legs and I held on to the window frame in an effort to keep from folding over her and crushing her. Our bodies moved in unison, back and forth, rocking as one with the hot desire that flowed from one to the other.

Tension built. I could taste it between us, mounting, promising to feed my hunger. My root pumped inside her, pushing deeper. Talons tore through my fingertips and curled into the wood of the frame. Most Latharians wouldn't shift unless they were filled with blood thirst on the battlefield. My body threatened to transform into full beast just from this woman I fought not to dominate.

"Give me what I need, Anjessica." My voice had thickened, seeming more like the grunts of a beast than actual words. Her name hissed from my lips and I felt her tension break moments before a blast of white-hot electricity bolted from her body through my own, exploding and expanding in my chest. She'd collected her energy until the moment she orgasmed and then shoved it at me.

I shouted beneath its strength, my body shifting further, my talons scraping around the corners of the frame and down the stone walls on the outside of the bay window. I bared my teeth as I released, scales extended to the point of pain. It wasn't until she screamed from her own pleasure and catapulted herself forward and against me that I released inside her the second time.

It took several moments of me gasping for breath for my body to transform back to normal. I pulled from within her and stepped back so that I could roll my back against the stone wall next to the window. I tilted my head to stare up at the ceiling, listening to her breathing slowly start to steady.

When she finally moved, hopping down from the sill and picking up her jumpsuit, I closed my eyes. I'd been stupid. She was human and I'd almost mated with her as if she were Latharian. I'd lost the control I had spent years accomplishing.

And I could feel the underlying anger in her energy. Anger at herself.

By the time she was clothed and had pulled on her boots, the heat in my body had stilled as well. I stood watching her as she rose and smoothed her hands over the material at her hips.

"You were clever to wear the suit."

She reached up, removed a clasp and for a moment the long, silky strands of her dark hair swept over her thin shoulders. Then she quickly smoothed it all back and twisted it into a knot before sliding the clasp back into place.

She reached the door just as it opened and Stai stepped inside. Anjessica stepped around Stai and then, right before she pulled the door closed behind her, she looked over her shoulder and smiled.

"I'm gonna *walk* down to the main hall and join the others. See ya later, Master Professor."

Stai's head snapped around to stare at me. Her gaze darted to the window and the evidence of splinter marks that my talons had left.

"You mated her."

"If that's what you want to call it." I reached forward and pushed open the panes. It was a mistake. The breeze lifted the lingering scent of our joining and washed it over me. I heard Stai inhale behind me.

"You shifted."

"I had little control to do otherwise," I growled, irritated with myself. "The woman is a walking ball of energy."

"Oberon." Stai shook her head.

"Gonslaught! I know! I had no control! She attacked me and then leapt on me like a Latharian woman!" I leaned out the window and my gaze lowered to Anjessica as she exited the building and made her way toward the other students. Halfway to them, she glanced up at my window. I saw her little smile before she faced forward. Smug, satisfied, as if she'd won some battle between us. Perhaps she had.

Chapter Four

Anjessica wore a top that stretched across her breast and around her neck, holding her feminine curves in place. The shorts she wore were made of the same skin-tight material. But it was not Phison and her natural heat only irritated me. I hungered for what I'd tasted the day before.

My foot connected with the side of Luke's protective helmet, snapping his head to the side. It wasn't as forceful a kick as I could have delivered. I could have snapped his neck with one blow.

He grunted and staggered backward, fighting to keep his balance until he finally toppled to the ground. I could not help feeling admiration when he hit the ground and forced himself to his feet with a shout.

"When you do not protect yourself, you fail as a soldier. A strike like that would lose the leader of your platoon." I shook my head. "You are not Latharian. You have a disadvantage in strength and speed."

"Then I'll grow stronger, Sir. I'll get faster," he gritted. "Come on!" The cords of his muscles tightened as he waited for my attack. Luke was the kind of fighter anyone who had ever trained soldiers hoped for. He would never give up. He would die before he failed. In moments he hit the ground again.

"You'll never be as strong or fast as a Latharian." I started to reach forward and offer a hand of assistance when a small orb of fire hit my back. It did not hold the strength of the bombardment I'd received from her before.

I whirled and stared at Anjessica to find her standing, legs parted, feet planted firmly, knuckles curled against her hips. "You're bullying him."

"I am *training* him," I gritted. "And *you* are interfering."

"He's done. It's my turn."

I glanced down at Luke as he looked up at her. The other students were looking at her also, curious about her interference. My gaze returned to Luke as he gasped for breath but pushed himself to his feet. She was right. I was pushing him too much. He would never give up the fight but he was finished for the day.

"You did well, Luke. You have stamina and endurance that make you a worthy opponent." I offered him the praise he'd earned. He nodded, retreating to the bench with the others.

She'd interfered but only to save the others. She'd reacted like a member of a pack. I respected her for that.

"Your attack, despite your training, is a powerful tool but you must know that your energy will only arouse a Latharian and he will tear through the males to get to you. You weaken the whole group with your ignorance and carelessness."

"What did she do?" James asked.

"Ms. Aves has already learned of energy bonding and has used it to develop a skill that could, with the right guidance, become an amazing weapon in combat." I didn't look back at the others. "She has a stubborn streak, however, that weakens her."

"I am not weak." She glared at me fearlessly.

I glanced over my shoulder. "Luke, what are you trained to do when your plan of attack is not working?"

"Retreat, recoup and attack again, Sir," Luke answered.

"I don't retreat." Anjessica advanced forward. Her eyes glittered in anticipation of the fight. No, she did not retreat. She was a predator and stalked her prey. She struck at it quickly again and again until she found a weakness, until she delivered an effective blow.

Her energy hit me like a pelt of bullets, small bursts that burned as they hit their marks. I grunted but remained standing, taking the attack without moving. Each burn of fire ignited my hunger, coursed lust through my veins.

Stai intervened. "You are not doing what you mean to do." She placed a hand on Anjessica's shoulder, stilling her from coming closer. "Your energy is hot and sexual. It is only arousing him, challenging him to clash and mate."

"Clash? He has not struck me yet as he did the others," Anjessica argued, rolling her shoulder from beneath Stai's fingers. "He is slighting me the training I deserve because I am female, yet I should not use my woman's weapon to weaken him?"

"It shall weaken *you*!" I bellowed as I moved at lightning speed to stand before her, sensing the male students rising to their feet, suddenly ready to jump forward and protect her. "When you have three Latharian males to conquer and you use these tactics as your attack, it will not matter if they can strike you or not. When they are ready to mate you —"

"I thought Latharians didn't rape. They didn't force." She arched a brow.

"When you attack, you become the enemy. You don't get it both ways, Ms. Aves. You are either a female who has been trained or you're a killer who happens to be female. And they *will* kill you if you attack in this manner."

Another burst of her energy hit me and I rocked into it, grunting at its strength. Then I lunged, knocking her to the ground. My scales stood on end and my nose flared with every ragged breath I tried to control.

My fingers curled around her throat. "I've no problems hurting you, Anjessica Aves. Do not think your sex offers you any kind of advantage over your enemy."

"Get off her!" Luke grasped at my shoulders but I ignored him.

"Your sex is an advantage for me. I can use you against *them*." I wanted her to understand.

She spat at me, angry that she had been bested, her energy shoving at my chest. I released her throat but did not rise from atop her. My whole body shook and I felt ill in my stomach. I wanted to mate her.

"Come, Oberon. We can demonstrate." Stai touched my shoulder and when I looked at her, her eyes blacked out completely. She was aroused too. I rose to my feet and Anjessica scrambled to stand but I turned my back to her, attention now focused on Stai.

I would clash with Stai. She would relieve me of the tension that had coiled tight in my body. As her tongue parted and flicked between her lips, I allowed my body to transform completely, aware of my students when they stepped back.

While some humans were intimidated by a Latharian's natural form, most had accepted our differences. However, when we shift to full beasts, no humans can deny the waves of fear. I felt it in my students. They didn't expect the talons that grew from fingers and toes, the shift in my bone structure from that of man to hulking beast, the coarse hair that pushed straight out, razor sharp, mixing with my natural black hair.

"No you don't!" Anjessica suddenly stepped between us, her breath heaving. "You don't get what I started." She bent her knees, positioned herself in readied stance for attack.

"Get out of there, Anji," Luke called and stepped forward when she didn't move. "Move your ass or I'll move it for you." Again Luke proved himself a leader when he would step into danger, no matter how great the danger might be.

"Fuck off. I can take it," Anjessica argued. Her energy charged the air between us but the interruption had offered me enough time to transform back to normal. I closed my eyes and took several breaths, grunting when her foot struck my side.

"Luke's instincts are better than yours. He would be in charge of your group because of that and you would obey his orders," I told her. Stai and I both could feel her energy, it pulsed with every possessive emotion she had thundering through her. She was claiming me as her own as a Latharian woman would do. Her intensity caused me to clench my teeth.

"I don't follow orders," Anjessica argued as I opened my eyes, straightening. "I work alone and act on my instincts. I would not be in his group. My training should fit the scenario I would find myself in."

I stared at her. No, she wasn't one of them. She would involve herself and give them time to escape. Clever. I turned and looked at the others.

"You all did well today. Break for midday and we will begin again in an hour and a half." My approval affected them all and calmed the nervousness that had built between them. They dispersed and when I turned back to Anjessica, she remained, waiting, as if she knew I had more for her.

"You will not interfere with my training like that again or you will find yourself on the first craft back to Earth." I saw her eyes widen.

"Don't think—"

"I do, and I do not make idle threats. Whatever your ulterior motives are, I will not allow you to cheat the others of their training and that's what you've accomplished this morning."

"And what of me? Am I to be slighted my own training?"

"You were not after training. You want me to mate you again."

"I wanted to fight. You fought them all but not me," she argued.

"And I would have allowed you your turn had you not interfered." I crossed my arms. "When you come back after your break, you will wait as the others do until I call for you. You will train. You will not use your energy as you did today. The only harm you do with it is make me want to dominate you. If that is something you do not desire then you will not use it on me as you did this morning."

"Dominate me if you must but I want to be trained." She turned and marched angrily away.

"She is attracted to you," Stai spoke quietly. "She didn't expect to be and hates herself for it."

"She fights against herself constantly," I agreed. "I thought it was a fight against being dominated. I was wrong. It is something else. Something that has nothing at all to do with mating."

"I like her," Stai admitted and I looked at her. "She knows of our ways, enough to know how to lay claim to you. It didn't seem to matter to her that she could have been killed."

"She doesn't fear death." I exhaled heavily.

"She fears herself."

I nodded. "I want you to conduct a deeper investigation. I fear we only scratched the surface before in what we'd discovered." I grinned. "Have Noah work on it with you. He seems a useful human." That, and every time the young scholar looked at Stai, he burned hot for her.

"Maybe I will since I've been given the clear message that you are now off limits," Stai retorted.

* * * * *

Anjessica stopped just inside the doorway of her unit. "What are you doing in here?"

"Waiting for you." I rose from the chair and walked forward. "I would like to talk to you."

"I've done what you've wanted. I've caused no problems at all for the others. The perfect, quiet little pupil." She stepped forward so the door could slide closed behind her. "You've absolutely nothing to complain about."

It was true. Throughout the whole week she'd worn her Phison, didn't use her energy during training and gave me no more trouble. But I wasn't there to discuss her training.

"I was wrong about you."

She gave a startled cry when I grasped her shoulders and hauled her against the wall. "What are you doing?"

"I said I was wrong. You are not afraid to be dominated." I pinned her with my body. "You are afraid of failure, that your pleasure will jeopardize what you are here to accomplish."

"You don't know anything about it," she snapped.

I hated the Phison suit she wore. I'd controlled my urges during training despite my knowledge of her desire because I'd been trying to spare her discomfort. It wasn't until Stai brought me her research that I realized it had been in vain. And there was much more riding on her time on Latharia than I'd first guessed.

"I am attracted to you too...to your fire and your instincts," I purred, lowering my lips to her ear. "I look at you and I see a woman who takes life with both hands, who does not cower like most human females."

"You don't know me."

"I know more than you think," I argued, reaching forward to grasp the blue collar of her outfit. I ripped it to her navel in seconds and pushed the material over her shoulders, trapping her arms at her sides. Leaning forward, I breathed that hot energy into my lungs with a growl.

"You would act the same no matter what human female had come to your classroom."

I grinned as I looked up at her. "You think me so weak?" My tongue darted out and circled one of her nipples, pulling at it until she moaned.

"You said it yourself the first day. Latharians are sexual creatures."

I released her breast. "And what is your excuse?"

"I loved a Latharian once." She grinned. "You *are* kinda my type."

"Am I?"

"You are not all brute unless pushed. You don't mind opening your mouth and speaking what you think. Some Latharians are more internal." Her smile slanted. "And despite what you say, you still haven't hit me. In training you let me attack you and only block my blows. You never initiated an attack. I think you have a soft spot for human women. Maybe your little slave girl did that to you."

I almost laughed at the edge in her voice. "You are jealous of Stai and now a woman from my past?" I licked at her throat, savoring the rush of energy that was her response. "You claimed me as your male the other day. I misread your battle with yourself. My misery since is my own fault. I'm rarely wrong when I am calculating human motivations."

"And what is my motivation now?"

I almost told her. But I knew what her reaction would be. It was best if I didn't mention her daughter or the fact that I found out her father was using her daughter to manipulate her into doing as he wished. Nor would I reveal my call to Ambassador Melhen. Discovering that Anjessica's daughter was half Latharian changed everything. It explained why she would go along with her father's plan. If the wrong people learned of the halfling, the first mix of Latharian and human genes, the child would be in more danger than she was now. Anjessica would not risk the life of her daughter.

"I don't care. Whatever it is, it is separate from this." I licked at her again.

"And what is *this*?"

"This is me about to do what I want with you." I pushed her clothes down farther, freeing her arms. When I pushed the material to her legs, she stepped out of the ruined outfit without argument.

"And what do you want to do?"

"Dominate you," I growled through gritted teeth, rocking forward. When I pulled back, her energy followed, filling me. I sucked it deep, my tongue flicking out to taste her arousal on the air. Her desire curled up from between the apex of her thighs, reached out with salty fingers, beckoning.

"You will bind me?" she asked.

"Not this time." I didn't want to take the time. I just wanted her, her strong energy. And part of me wanted to feel her hands grasping at me, pulling for more. It was a purely physical desire, irrational, that had nothing to do with my hunger for her energy. Greed was a human emotion but when she'd claimed me as her own, I felt a possessiveness of my own bloom inside me.

"You were not this intense before." She leaned back against the wall as I continued to rock, pushing and pulling her energy. My root dropped and lengthened as I stepped forward so it could thump against the inside of her thigh.

"I thought I was saving you, allowing you pleasure without fear. As I said, I was wrong about you."

"I told you that I did not fear you."

"You did." I placed my hands on the wall on either side of her head as my body jerked with force from her energy. My breathing grew ragged as my cock slapped forward against her cunt. She moaned in response.

"I shouldn't want this. Not now," she whispered.

"Forget everything else for now," I growled. "Give me your wrists." She held her arms out and I caught her wrists in one hand and pushed them above her head against the wall.

"Spread your legs."

She obeyed as a new bloom of desire swept over me.

"Wider."

She shifted her stance again. I placed my feet just inside hers. Slipping an arm around her waist, I pulled her body forward, arching her so that her hipbones met mine. My cock thumped against her sex, stimulating her clit in a steady rhythm.

"Oh Jesus," she whispered.

"Give me your tongue."

When she parted her lips, I leaned forward and wrapped my tongue around hers. I'd not bound her, but like this, she was completely mine. I sucked at her, growling into her mouth when she gave her energy with no resistance. She was mine. Mine. I pushed and pulled my energy with every thought.

Mine. Push. Mine. Pull. Mine. In. Mine. Out.

She whimpered with need and I released her tongue and licked at her lips as I dipped and pressed the head of my cock against her cunt. When I entered, I clamped my mouth over her lips, drinking the groan that carried her pleasure. I pushed deeper until her breath caught.

"Too much?" I leaned back to stare at her darkened eyes. She shook her head. I watched her face as I swelled, filling her completely, stretching her just enough to make her suck in her breath.

"I won't be gentle, Anjessica," I hissed.

"Thank God."

I slammed her flat against the wall as my cock began jerking inside her, pumping into her as I pulled at her energy. My scales extended, scratching at her skin as I allowed my tongue to flick out against her throat.

"Oh God, yes...Master —"

I grasped her jaw and stared into her brown eyes. "I am not your professor. I am not your master. Oberon."

"Oberon," she repeated as her body quivered, threatening release. I pumped faster, pushing and pulling wildly. I wanted her orgasm to be filled with the same hot pleasure she would give me. My fingers bit into her wrists as I continued to hold them above her head. She tried to pull free but I did not release her. Her body tried to buck against mine but I remained solid, pinning her flat to the wall, my cock working within her until she was screaming my name, her head thrashing back and forth.

She reached orgasm in one hot burst that filled me. *Yes!* Her thoughts reached out to me and my root expelled the first time, never losing its rhythm as it raged inside her. Her cunt clenched around me, her whole body jerking with her own release of pleasure. She filled me and I drank in her hot pleasure with every gulp of breath. Tension dragged through me and while I wanted to prolong it, to continue to savor the energy pouring from her body, I released a second time.

Dragging several deep breaths into my chest, I loosened my hands from around her wrists and carefully removed myself from within her. Tears streamed down from her closed eyes but a smile curled her mouth. She would not faint. This was not her first time being dominated by a Latharian. She'd known how intense it would be.

"Stai would like you."

"Not a chance. I don't care how normal it is for Latharians or what kind of bond you have with your assistant. I'm not sharing you." She stood on shaky legs and walked carefully to the bed.

I chuckled as I watched her stretch out flat on the bed and tuck her arms behind her head. "You would enjoy it."

"Yes, until it came time for you to stick your cock inside her instead of me." Anjessica shook her head. "And then I would claw her pretty black eyes out."

I shouldn't have felt satisfaction in her words. It made me as selfish as she. But I did. I turned quickly and went into the bathing chamber to wash up. I returned with a warm towel and washed her gently too.

"More?" Her brow arched.

"Much more." I nodded.

"What about what I want?"

I grunted as I settled beside her. "What do you want?"

"To suck you."

I groaned. Latharians did not require that kind of joining. It did little to arouse or excite. Oral stimulation of males was a human behavior.

"Trust me." She grinned as she rose and leaned over me. "I've learned how to make it good for you. But..."

"But?"

"I want you bound." Her eyes glittered when I laughed.

"It's ridiculous."

She shrugged. "It's what I want."

I stared at her. Humans liked playing games, switching roles. I just wanted to mate. But she had no guard up now. She was completely open. Her cheeks were flushed, her gaze revealing, her body responding. I shook my head but held out my arms, palms together.

Her full lips parted with a smile and she jumped from the bed to retrieve two magnet cuffs from her bag. My stomach clenched at the realization that she carried such things with her.

"Arms above your head." She straddled my chest so that her sex pressed flush against me. I could feel the warmth radiating from her core. My scales rippled just enough to cause a flutter against her clit.

"I'd rather grab you and mate...fuck you again." I could tell she liked the human word. Her body warmed and that heat drifted down into my chest. "Hard." Another wave of warmth pushed into me.

"You do what I want and I'll submit," she bartered in a voice that was too soft and sweet. I grunted and put my hands above my head, allowing her to clamp the cuffs around my wrists and then set the magnets against her headboard.

"Your ankles too." She held up the second set of cuffs.

"Just do it," I laughed. She flipped around and leaned forward, exposing her cunt to me as she cuffed my ankles and set the magnets. I could smell her tangy scent, taste

her energy when my tongue flicked out between my lips. Surely she did not think those cuffs could truly hold me. If she was familiar with Latharians she knew how strong we were. But I lay still, waiting.

She slid farther up my chest so that her cunt was right in front of me. My root dropped and expanded as her scent filled my nose. Her hand grasped my cock, squeezing as she ran it through her fingers. While I could tell she knew it had a better effect than just licking it, there was no comparison to being inside her.

Her velvet tongue touched the tip of my cock. Then slowly she slid her lips over its end. I stiffened. As she pushed me into her wet mouth, raw desire channeled from her mouth into my root and traveled through me and up into my abdomen. She retracted the energy as she slid back up my root.

“Gonslaught! Where did you learn to do that?” I groaned when she slid me into her mouth again, pushing her energy into me. In and out. My cock extended a bit when she rocked back and then forward again.

With the way she was pushing that thick stalk of concentrated passion into me, I wouldn’t last. My whole body shook as the scent of her cunt grew stronger. With every thrust of her mouth, she pushed arousal deeper into me then pulled with the draw of her lips. My heart pounded and need burned through my veins. It was too much. Flexing the muscles of my arms, I pulled against the magnets until they broke free and then grabbed her hips. She straightened when my ankles broke free.

“That’s cheating.” She looked back at me when I sat up, my scales sliding against her cunt. She moaned in response as I took position behind her. Spreading the crescents of her ass, I nudged and then pushed my cock into her tight anus. Her body tensed and a strangled cry that was half surprise, half pleasure escaped her throat.

Folding over her, I wrapped my arms around her and filled her. I cupped my hand over her sex, palm resting against her clit and then pushed my middle finger into her. Then a second finger. And a third. I rocked my hand against her and she pushed back, a wave of white electricity shooting through me. She’d given so much energy before that I

felt ready to spill almost immediately. She bucked as my fingers found the sensitive swollen spot just inside her channel. With my palm stimulating her clit with every thrust, I began moving my hand to the same rhythm as my cock inside her ass.

She arched back against me, her head pressing against my shoulder. I grunted as I licked at her neck, pushing mounting passion back into her. When she screamed, her hot juices coating my fingers, I spilled. And then almost immediately, I released again.

Minutes later she turned and laid her head on my chest. "Why do you like me? You don't even know me."

"You made me want you before I ever tasted your energy." I smiled when she looked up in surprise. "That first day. You stood right in front of me and told me you were not scared of me. I wanted you right then."

"I meant to tease you," she admitted.

"I know."

"I wanted to mate with you."

"I know."

She poked my side. "Well, you just know everything don't you?"

I exhaled. "I know you have a daughter."

I felt her stiffen but wrapped my arm around her, holding her so she couldn't pull away. "I know that she is only half human, the offspring of you and your Latharian man. I know he died in battle, that he was a good soldier and it was a tragic loss for both you and Latharia."

"Stop." She tried to push away but I didn't let her. Not yet.

"I know that your father manipulates you to do what he wants. He uses your daughter against you. It's why you are here." I finally let my arm slide away from her and she sat up, glaring at me.

"Leave my daughter out of it."

“He wants you to kill Captain Sleece and his two crewmen as I first suspected. You joined my program to learn how to defeat a Latharian.” I reached up and touched her face. “I also know that you are the only one of my students that is not a killer.”

“You’ve contacted the authorities?”

“I have not.”

“What do you want?”

I frowned. She was used to being manipulated. She expected it.

She stood, closing herself off to me completely.

“Anything I might have wanted, you’ve already given.”

“If you aren’t going to report me or my mission, will you at least continue to train me until you decide what you want from me?” I watched her quickly begin to get dressed.

“Of course.”

“Thank you.” She headed for the bathing chamber.

Chapter Five

"Oh wow," James murmured as his energy connected with Luke's. "It's like I can tell what he's thinking."

Luke suddenly laughed, glancing at Stai before looking back at James. "You and me both."

"There are two Latharians in the room who can read your energies well," I reminded and James grinned sheepishly as Noah's energy reached out timidly and connected with the others.

"This is called energy bonding. You must practice this as much as possible. You must become accustomed to sensing one another, to reaching out and finding others. Anjessica, will you join them?"

She'd avoided being alone with me for two weeks. Her participation during my training was limited and she always wore Phison. She was angry at my discovery of her mission. Now she allowed only a strand of energy to interact with Luke's.

"Whoa, Anji. Yours is burning hot." Luke suddenly laughed. "No wonder Master Professor was ready to clash when you were attacking him. The poor fella probably had no other way to defend himself."

"Indeed," I murmured and Noah snickered. I'd noticed he'd opened up more since spending time with Stai, doing their research. It was obvious they'd mated during their time together. I was thankful. Noah had needed the interaction to open himself. I would have to work harder with Anjessica. I would have to make her angry.

"When you become comfortable with this, I will show you how to use your energies as weapons, something Anjessica sadly has not mastered yet." I braced myself, anticipating the angry heat that was hurled at me.

"Damn. I felt that," James murmured. "Do it again."

"Do not," I warned, knowing I would be ignored. This time I reached out and grasped her energy with my own. When I pulled, she sucked air between her teeth. The other students' energies heightened, aware of the sexual tension that suddenly roped between Anjessica and myself.

"You think you are the only one who knows how to manipulate with sex?" I looked at her and smiled when she lifted her chin, pulling back at me. "I do not teach what I do not know." I released her but she pushed and then pulled.

I tried to turn back to the others. "When you can channel your energy into a strike, you become a powerful opponent, even against one who might be stronger or faster. Stop it." My gaze slanted at her.

"You deserve it. This is what happens when you try to manipulate me into—"

"I did no such thing." I met her gaze. "I have asked you for nothing. The research into your background was done because I *felt* your pain, Anjessica. I cannot help what I do not understand."

"I don't want your help." She shot another strand of her essence at me.

"She wants what all women want." It was James who spoke. "Tell her you're sorry and that she was right."

"I apologize if I hurt you," I conceded.

"And she was right," James repeated.

"She is not right. I would never attempt to manipulate her for my own gain. It is a selfish, human attribute. If a Latharian wants something, he takes it." I pushed my energy at her and smiled when she gasped. "Dominate and violate." She released me and drew her heat back behind her jumpsuit.

"Can we continue now?" I shook my head.

"Of course. Please proceed." Anjessica inclined her head.

I looked down and failed miserably in not smiling. With no energy bombarding my senses, I wanted her. Her defiance and arrogance tantalized me.

After a moment, Stai chuckled. "Your lack of self control would make you a very poor slave, Oberon."

"I seem to be failing as a teacher in much the same manner," I growled.

"We just won't tell anyone it was a human who knocked you from your pedestal."

When I looked at Stai, she laughed. I pointed. "*You* are not a student and I do believe I could make an example out of you." I smiled and then sucked in my breath when Anjessica sent a wave of violent heat into my chest. I grunted.

"Stop."

"And if I don't?" I heard it. Even the students had to have recognized her jealousy.

"Class is dismissed," I gritted but none of them moved.

"They are here to learn, Master Professor," Anjessica purred. I met her gaze. Was she suggesting that I mate her in front of the others?

I glanced at Stai when her thoughts found me. *She wishes to show me that you belong to her.* My head snapped back around.

"Don't do this. If I begin, I will not stop. I have no insecurities that would prevent me from mating you in front of the entire population of Latharia or your classmates." Her eyes glittered. She enjoyed my reaction to her. The thought of a public mating had some appeal, for she responded by raising a brow. The heightened energies of the others did nothing to calm either of our arousals. Even Stai's energy buzzed behind me in anticipation.

"Shit. He's not bluffing, Anji," Luke finally said as I stalked forward.

"Stand," I growled and she rose to her feet. My fingers wrapped around her arm and I jerked her forward.

"Tell them. They have to know I would not force you." She snaked her free arm around my neck and pulled me forward so she could kiss me. I heard the released breaths and the tension eased around us.

"You've nothing to feel jealousy over." I spoke against her mouth and she leaned back to stare at me. "Stai and I have not mated since you arrived. She respects you too much to do it even if I were inclined." I lifted a hand to her cheek. "And I am not."

"Oberon," she whispered. It was that moment, without her energy and with my name on her lips, that I knew. Latharians have no word for the bond. It is just something we accept without naming it. The human word is love.

I lowered my hand to the seam beneath her arm and she laughed. "You won't threaten to rip it off me this time?"

"Don't tempt me."

"I thought a big, bad Latharian male took what he wanted?" She grinned when my gaze flicked up to her face. "Stop battling for so much control, Oberon. I can take it." My nose flared as talons extended from my fingertips. As before, I ripped the suit from collar to navel and roughly pushed it over her shoulders, baring her breasts.

"Holy shit." Luke stood when our energies collided. They all felt it. There was no way they couldn't have. Stai shuddered behind us, sending out a ripple of her own heat.

I closed my eyes and released myself into Anjessica. I let the control seep away, opened myself completely, accepting her energy and allowing her the brunt of mine. She gasped and I opened my eyes as she shuddered.

"You've been holding out on me." Her voice wavered.

"Yes?"

"You bet your Latharian ass, yes." Her arm tightened. I rocked into her and her knees bent. She might have collapsed if I had not held her to me.

"I do not teach what I do not know," I reminded.

"All this time you could have broken me if you had wanted." She stared up at me, body trembling. "More." The desk slid forward beneath the force of Stai's foot and I reached behind me and stopped it before it slammed into my legs.

"I can hold you if you need me," Stai offered. I heard tenderness in her voice. She felt my emotions and offered assistance to Anjessica.

"His cock is mine." Anjessica said the last word from between her teeth and my pulse hammered with need. I lifted her and turned, setting her on the surface of the desk. In moments I'd shredded the rest of the jumpsuit. I jerked her boots off and tossed them behind me.

Her cunt glinted as her body secreted her wet arousal and my tongue forked as it flicked out to taste the salty scent on the air. I rocked and she responded in kind. My root extended and began thumping against the underside of the desk with anticipation as I began pushing my energy into her. I heard Stai's breath hiss through her teeth but it was Anjessica's reaction that consumed me. She was as filled with need and desire as I was as she pushed back at me frantically.

"Oberon, more."

Stai was wrong. I would make Anjessica a very good slave. I craved her desire and wanted to please her. This woman, with a will as strong as a Latharian army's, gripped my heart. She was unashamed of her sexuality and challenged me as much as a Latharian female would, but she had the human energy that I craved. And she gave it without hesitation. I'd do anything for her.

Stai stepped forward and hooked her arms under Anjessica's, offering her support.

I leapt onto the desk in front of her, straddling Anjessica's thighs. "Release her, Stai."

"You want me to —"

"Release her," I repeated and Stai stepped back.

"I don't mind her touching me," Anjessica offered, her teeth chattering with excitement.

"I do." My cock rested against her sex and then I thrust into her. Her breasts arched forward, rubbing against my extended scales as I swelled inside her. Her fingers curled

between the scales, biting into the skin beneath. She bared her teeth, not in pain but in pleasure.

"You wanted this. Now tell them," I commanded. "Tell them what you feel."

"I can barely breathe much less give a lesson." Her hands grasped my arms. Her whole body quivered beneath mine.

"Tell them," I repeated. I didn't need her to verbalize what she felt. I felt it as if it were my own pleasure. Humans respond to the spoken word. It would increase her own excitement.

"Jesus Christ, it's good," she panted as I pumped inside her cunt. "Intense. I'd forgotten how intense it could be." She wouldn't forget again, I vowed silently. A moment later a burst of pulsating fire encompassed the room. She'd heard my thoughts.

"Give me your tongue." I waited for her to open her mouth. My tongue wrapped around the extended velvet and I leaned forward so that our lips met. When I sucked, she channeled energy through her mouth as she had done before when she'd stimulated me orally.

My body jerked as my cock raged inside her. She closed the walls of her channel around me, her body milking my energy. I released her from my kiss with a growl and pushed her flat against the desk, my hands pinning her at her shoulders.

Her breasts rose and fell with every heavy breath and she grasped my forearms as her body heated. Her limbs went rigid as tension pulled tight. I leaned forward and nipped at her neck. Her response was so violent that I had to release her shoulders to keep from hurting her. I reached forward to grasp the edge of the desk behind her, grasping so tightly that the scales of my knuckles whitened.

"Again." Her voice was thick.

I obliged, this time holding the pressure of my teeth for several seconds. She bucked beneath me. Stai stepped forward, her own energy reaching out.

"No!" Anjessica sounded more beast than I was. "He's *mine*." The growl started in my chest and exploded across her skin as I licked at her throat. Her energy opened to me completely. When she pleaded silently for more, my rhythm quickened.

Flexing, I pressed myself down completely flush, touching every part of her as she peaked and screamed out in pleasure. Her heat hit me, wave after frenzied wave. Tension drew from my toes, raced through every nerve, pulsating until I could stand no more. I straightened as my scales extended to the point of prickling pain. *Please!* Her plea rushed at me and I released into her with a shout that matched her own and then released again.

At first it seemed as if we were plunged into silence but as the haze of mating parted, I became aware of Stai's heavy breathing. It had been cruel to allow her to witness the mating when she could not join. I knew that she would give the others their own demonstration. Her energy was already pulsating out toward all three males. And they were receiving hungrily, aroused themselves by our mating.

I looked down at Anjessica, her energy still burning hot. My cock jerked within her and she gasped, her eyes widening as she stared up at me.

"I don't think I can take it again."

"Of course you can," I murmured. My root pushed, retracted and then pushed deeper, causing her to groan.

"Take me to your sleeping unit," she whispered.

"Wrap your legs around me." She obeyed, slipping her arms around my neck. I eased off the desk and stood with her still latched onto me.

"Do not break them, Stai. I will expect them ready for their lessons tomorrow," I said as I stepped around my Latharian sister toward the door. Her answer was but a growl.

I kicked the door closed. We both knew we wouldn't make it to the sleeping unit. Pressing her against the wall of the corridor, I dropped one hand to her breast and squeezed.

"I can't get enough of you." I licked at her jaw.

"Then fuck me until you are sated. Until neither of us can move," she rasped.

I shifted without pulling from inside her. Lowering to my knees, I leaned her back, fingers splayed at the top and small of her back, swiveling back so her ass rested on my knees. She gripped my arms, trusting me to hold her weight as my cock began pumping within her. I bared my teeth, scales extended, and rocked everything I had into her. She met my assault with one equally as violent. It took only moments for both of us to find pleasure again.

Chapter Six

"You cannot follow through with what your father expects of you." I opened my eyes as Anjessica sat up and swung her feet over the side of the bed. "You cannot save your daughter from your father by killing three Latharians."

"What do you know of it?" She walked across the room and retrieved a Phison robe, pulling it over her body, shutting her energy out.

"Is everything you own made of Phison?"

"Almost everything I brought with me is."

"Your father sends you on a mission he knows you will fail at. Even if you succeed, he is not the kind who would just give up the power he has over you." I sat up as she whirled.

"What am I supposed to do, Oberon? I should do nothing and watch him hurt her? She is only six years old! He will make her into a monster if I don't try to save her."

"You can go to the Assembly. Tell them of her heritage. They will protect her. We can bring her back here if you want. She would be safe here." I stood and walked forward, grasping her shoulders.

"She would be dead before we could get to her."

"He would not kill a child."

She snorted. "Of course he would. She's half Latharian." She shook her head.

"He did not harm you in that manner."

"There are worse things than death." She shook her head again. "I know you mean well but I have no choice."

Anger flared in my chest. As I suspected, Aves had misused his own daughter. I wouldn't ask how. She didn't deserve to relive her pain. She would share it with me when she was ready.

"You received training, Anjessica, but that does not make you a killer."

"I will be soon enough."

"We can think of a way —"

"There is no other way." She walked to her bathing chamber. "Leave it alone. There is nothing to be done about it." I watched her disappear through the door.

* * * * *

Captain Ihjon Sleeve stood in front of his two crewmen silently as I told him what Stai and I had discovered about Anjessica's mission. While Sleeve showed no reaction, Jaru, the larger of his crew, crossed his thick arms and I could see his muscles flexing. The younger Latharian beside him was more expressive with his features and did not hide his anger at learning that the woman had been sent to kill the three of them.

"Gonslaught!" Jaru swore when I grew silent.

"She would agree to do this just because her father wants her to do it?" Karo, the younger crewman, shook his head in disbelief.

"Aves has her daughter," I explained. "Her daughter is half Latharian."

Jaru stepped forward. "What did you say?"

I nodded. "Aves keeps that fact a secret. He manipulates his own daughter by threatening to kill hers."

"I should have killed him when I had the chance," Sleeve finally said.

"But he is obligated to report the halfling to the counsel. This child is the first to have ever been born of a Latharian and human. It's monumental," Karo argued. "Both people will do what we can to protect her."

"That means little to this woman when a man like Aves has his hands on her daughter." Sleece met my gaze when I nodded. "You've developed feelings for this human female."

I winced. It must have been obvious. "Yes."

"You've mated with her?"

"I have."

"If she attempts to take our lives, she may be killed," Sleece pointed out.

"That's why I sent for you. Perhaps it won't have to come to that."

"You want us to try to persuade her to save herself?" Jaru asked.

"She is strong-willed." I smiled as I looked at my desk. "And she is no weakling. She would put up a good fight against you."

Jaru snorted. "One human against three Latharians?"

My smile widened. "I underestimated her myself and was knocked off my feet."

Sleece's gaze narrowed. "You've been training her?"

"I have."

"To kill us."

I shook my head. "To survive." When Sleece looked disbelieving, I laughed. "If I had trained her to kill you, Sleece, you would already be dead. I've been training her on how to defend herself against Latharians. While I do not want her to succeed on her mission, I also don't want to see her die because she is too stubborn to listen to my reason."

"She is to be your slave?" Jaru asked.

"If anyone is to be a slave, I shall end up being one to her." I stood and walked to the window, looking down at the arena where my pupils defended themselves against Stai's attacks. "She is rather dominant herself, even when she submits."

Sleece stepped to my side and looked down just as Anjessica dodged a blow and struck with her own energy. I smiled. Anjessica was learning to channel her energy into

the strikes from her hands. Stai staggered backward and I looked at Sleece when he leaned forward.

"She is no weakling." I did not bother hiding the admiration I had for her.

"I imagine you did not bring us here without a plan."

I released a heavy breath. "As long as Aves has her daughter, she will not deter from the mission."

"You want us to go to Earth and get her daughter?"

"Aves is not on Earth. He is here on Latharia. He awaits her to complete her training and finish her mission." I looked back down at Anjessica. She would forgive me my deception if I reunited her with her daughter, if I freed her from her father's hold. "She is not a killer. Her father is stupid to think that just because he has her trained, he can change what is inside her."

"You don't know that for sure," Jaru argued from behind me.

I recalled the way she'd placed herself in danger to save her other classmates. "Yes I do. She would not stop and on the chance she succeeded in killing only one of you, it would break her emotionally. She would be empty. I can't let that happen."

"What is your plan?"

"I kill you instead."

"What did you say?" I felt Jaru step forward. His energy burned with instant anger.

"She will resent me but the deed would be done. She would bring your bodies back to Aves and demand her daughter be released to her. Of course, he is not the kind who would give up any weapon he has to use against someone, even his own daughter."

"An ambush."

"Exactly." I faced Sleece. "It is a boy's trick but one Aves or his daughter would not expect. A dose of bordu for each of you. And when it wears off, you get up and get Anjessica and her daughter to safety."

"I like this plan," Jaru agreed.

"We would not get out of there without bloodshed," Sleece warned.

"I've already contacted Ambassador Melhen, Captain. She will make certain there is no blame on Latharians. It shouldn't be too difficult given Aves' record." I walked back to my desk and sat. "After I'd talked with Melhen, she ordered a security sweep of the entire planet and located the small craft where Aves waits for his daughter. If it were not for the Halfling, she would have ordered a capture."

"When the child is free, what do we do about Aves?" Sleece asked.

"Kill the bastard if you get the chance." I met Sleece's gaze.

"A little blood thirsty for a professor, aren't you?" Jaru laughed.

"If I thought Anjessica would forgive me, I would kill him myself."

"When do we make this happen?"

"At the end of my program. It must appear as if she has completed her training. You will be dead in the hovercraft that will be waiting for her."

"We will be ready." Sleece inclined his head.

* * * * *

"Does Herche look more Latharian or more human?" I traced a circle around Anjessica's navel.

"What?"

I grinned. "It just occurred to me to wonder what your daughter looks like."

"She wears a skin suit but she looks like both." Anjessica hesitated then reached for a small techbook. She brought up a photo on the screen and handed it to me.

Herche's scales were the pale Caucasian color of her skin and her eyes were larger and almond-shaped, like a Latharian female. But her bone structure was that of a human and her features were softer and feminine like Anjessica's.

"She is pretty. She looks like you."

Anjessica smiled. "She's fast like a Latharian but hasn't the same Latharian strength." She turned off the hand held when I gave it back to her and tossed it to the surface next to the bed.

"You will have to report her existence to the counsel on Earth and to our authorities at some point."

"I already have a report written. I have not sent it already because I don't know what my father would do to her if he found out." Anjessica closed her eyes but I felt her fear and anger.

"I could do it for you."

Her eyes opened and she stared at me. "Do what?"

"You are not a killer, Anjessica."

"What? And you are?" She laughed. "You won't kill your own."

"A man will sacrifice for a woman," I argued. I hated myself for lying. She trusted me. She'd opened to me enough that she hadn't run when I'd mentioned her daughter.

"Sacrifice." She rose up on her elbows. "Oberon Hasdaer. You love me."

I laughed. "If that is what you want to call it."

"What else should I call it?"

"I've been thinking that you could stay here with me. You and your daughter."

"And Stai."

I laughed before I could stop myself. "My cock belongs to you. I remember."

"You bet your ass it does." She slid atop me, straddling my stomach. "You want my daughter here too?"

"I am a professor, Anjessica. I cannot help liking the idea of teaching one of my own."

"Yours." She grew quiet, looking down at my chest. When she looked up, her large eyes brimmed with tears. Her emotion was fierce and struck me full on.

"My father tells her over and over how much he hates her. He tells her she is tainted and filthy." She took a breath, attempting to shove her emotions away from the surface. "She deserves a man who would love her without judgment."

"So do you."

I didn't expect the sobs that erupted from her lips. She slid from atop me and tried to move away but I sat up and pulled her back, wrapping my arms around her.

"He's had nothing to do with me since I was eighteen. He shoved me into school and then into the academy. It wasn't until Melhen chose her Latharian over him and Sleece left his hand crippled that he even spoke to me again, and that's when he found out about Fare."

"Fare was your husband." I already knew from her history file.

She nodded. "My father hated that I'd married a Latharian but I didn't care. Fare was a good man. I loved him. I was pregnant with Herche when he was killed in combat. My father told me I could come home then and I did. It was the biggest mistake of my life."

My arms tightened around her. "He was cruel to you when you were a child."

"Yes, abusive."

"He is abusive to Herche?"

"Not how he was with me. With Herche it is verbal." She winced. "I need to get her away from him."

"Why don't you just take her?"

She shook her head. "My father is no weakling and has many who follow him. If it were just him, I would kick his ass and take my daughter. But he always has others around him, protecting him, helping him to keep my daughter from me."

It took everything I was made of to keep from shouting in anger. Her father was using the person Anjessica loved most to continue to control her. I suddenly understood.

"So you built up this tough outer shell and learned to use your energy to protect yourself." I leaned her away from me so she had to look up. "I think you could most likely fight him and win now. Not many humans can manage to kick me in the head, and certainly not forceful enough to make me see stars." She giggled.

"Fare taught me how to fight. He taught me how to use my energy too, though I think it was more for his own benefit." She reached up and touched my face. "I come with a lot of baggage, Oberon."

"Are you trying to talk me out of my own desires?" I grunted. "Perhaps I should enslave you and force you to wear a gag."

"Latharians do not enslave anyone." She pushed at my shoulder, laughing.

"That's well enough. You are too selfish to be a slave."

She gasped. "I am not selfish."

"Then my cock does not belong to you?" I smiled when she laughed.

"Well, maybe a little selfish," she amended. "You may not want me when I do what I must do."

"I cannot convince you to allow me to help?" I frowned when she pulled away from me. She was shutting down again.

"No."

"Then we've nothing else to talk about." I pulled her back to me. "We might as well mate."

"When you can think of nothing nice to say, fuck?" She laughed and I felt her relax when I did not press the subject.

"Exactly." I cupped her breast, pinching at her nipple with my fingers. "It's a philosophy to live by."

"Maybe I feel like fighting instead." She pushed at my hand.

"Sometimes I think you may be more Latharian than I am." I licked at the spot below her earlobe.

"Does a Latharian woman do to you what I do?" She sent heat spiraling into me. No. Latharian females could not compare with human energy. I groaned into her ear, inhaling her scent deeply.

"When I leave, you may decide I'm too screwed up to love." She turned her head when I licked at her, offering more of her neck.

"I understand you a lot better than you think I do, Anjessica," I murmured against her skin.

"Yeah, it's a little unnerving." She moaned when I slid a hand between her thighs and pressed against her clit. When she lifted her hips, I stilled and allowed her to move against my hand, to use me to bring herself pleasure.

I kissed her as she thrust against my fingers, feeding off the frenzied passion that she exuded. I gave her nothing in return, keeping my own energy inside until her body tensed and her body readied to orgasm.

I rocked forward, sending her my own blast. Her orgasm was a violent explosion that nearly knocked me backward. My root dropped and swelled and my scales stood on end as her essence consumed me, filled me. For the first time in my life I released without being inside a female.

Groaning, I shook my head, clearing it of the dizziness that circled me in flickering pinpoints of light. She slumped, gasping for breath, but I tossed her to the bed beside me and crawled atop her. I nudged her cunt with my swollen cock and pushed deep into her. Her body clenched instinctively around me and I released the second time.

My heart pounded as I hovered above her, resting my weight on my hands at either side of her head. The aftermath of my release burned through every vein. Closing my eyes, slowly I dragged a deep breath but only filled my lungs with her. I wanted more. And more. I would never get enough of her.

"Yes, Anjessica Hasdaer, I love you," I whispered, giving her my own name as I opened my eyes. "You are my mine and I am most definitely yours."

Chapter Seven

"Oberon!" Anjessica lifted a shaking hand to her lips and stared at the bodies of Sleece and his crewmen. "What have you done?" They were lined up side by side in the back of the mobile unit.

"I am saving you from yourself." I shifted nervously, hoping she didn't look too closely. Bordu slowed the breathing but if one was looking they would see the shallow inhale and exhale every ten minutes or so.

"You shouldn't have done this. You shouldn't have. They are your own people." Her voice wavered as she looked up at me with large eyes. I winced inwardly. She was completely open to me right now, vulnerable to my betrayal.

"It's done. You can forgive me later...once this is all finished." I touched her cheek. I knew she would forgive me my deceit also when she had her daughter safely out of her father's grasp. But it might be the last time I ever saw her.

"*I will* come back." She rubbed her cheek affectionately against my fingers, seeming to sense my forlorn emotions. "Trust me." Another stab of regret pierced my chest. I said nothing.

She turned and slipped into the mobile unit, behind the controls, and I bent down to peer through the window at her. "You trained well, Anjessica."

She sent me a brilliant smile and I stepped back as her mobile unit lifted from the ground, hovered, before taking her away from me. I stood there watching until the unit was but a speck, aware of Luke, James and Noah when they approached behind me.

"Sir." Luke was the one to speak. "Stai told us what is to happen. You may need us." I smiled. They were loyal to me but I was only their teacher. They were bonded to Anjessica and I knew I could not stop them from getting involved.

"Take my mobile unit. Follow her. Her father's craft is located near the Froad Mountains. There are boulders everywhere in that area so it should be easy enough for you to conceal the unit once you are there. ." They hurried to do as I'd told them but I called Luke back.

"Take care when you arrive at the craft. I will be travelling ahead of you. Because of my Latharian speed, I can get there first. Aves will have guards and if I've not already cleared them, it will be up to the three of you to do so. You are a leader to the others. Keep them outside of Aves' craft and if I've not returned from inside after five minutes, you will have to lead them to storm the craft."

Luke's shoulders squared and I felt his pride at being given the extra responsibility. "Yes, Sir."

"If something happens to me, your first priority is Anjessica's daughter. She is a halfling." I met his gaze. "You understand the importance of her safety?"

He swallowed and nodded.

"If you can save Anjessica, do so, but the child must be protected at all costs. Get her out of there. If I am dead, you take her to the Latharian Assembly." I put my hand on his shoulder. "The peace of our world rests with that child. There are those who would use her to start a war."

"I do understand, Sir."

"And if Anjessica dies..." My voice cracked but I forced my words to continue. "Kill her father. Relay that order to the others."

He inclined his head and I let my hand slide away from him. He turned instantly and jogged toward the unit, waving for James to allow him the control. My gaze darted to the onlookers who stood at the entrance of Hasdaer Estate, noting their expressions of confusion. Luke's and James' parents would want explanations for why their sons were not readying to return to Earth.

"They've all passed the program but as a celebration and final lesson, they will complete a mission," I said, loud enough for them to hear me as I walked forward. "They will not appreciate it without the test. It is nothing they cannot accomplish."

My lies satisfied their curiosities.

"Stai will make you comfortable. I will return your sons to you by the end of the day but you are welcome to remain overnight." I offered a smile. "You have not lived until you've mated under the Latharian moons." It embarrassed both sets of parents, but I felt a little stirring of excitement between them also.

"Oberon," Stai called but I waved my hand.

"Keep them here and contact Melhen. Tell her it's time." I turned as soon as the humans were inside, shifting and crouching on all fours. I bolted with Latharian speed, covering the landscape much quicker than the mobile unit would have. *I've lied more in the last few months than I have in my entire life*, I thought as blood pumped hot in my veins. My muscles stretched and burned, charging me as my hands and feet swept through tall amber grasses and then across rocky terrain.

I did not like all the deception, but after I'd contacted the ambassador and told her of the halfling, we both agreed that we could leave no room for mistakes. Melhen had been sent a copy the findings of Stai's and Noah's research. She had my official report on the situation and that would be enough to dismiss any blame that might be placed on Anjessica.

As Aves' craft rose ahead of me on the horizon, I took a deep breath. Without slowing down, I hit the three guards who stood at the opened hatch at full force. It crushed them instantly on impact. Dragging the guards behind the rocks nearest the craft, I waited in silence. But no one came. I'd not been detected yet. In the distance I could hear the soft hum of a mobile unit. I would have to move quickly before Anjessica arrived.

In seconds, my feet thumped up the metal steps of the craft's open hatch, into its belly. The guard in the corridor saw me seconds too late, just before I snapped his neck.

My tongue darted out between my lips and I searched the scents in the air until I found the one that could only belong to Anjessica's daughter.

There were not as many guards as I suspected there might be. Aves was a cocky bastard and was obviously unprepared. Or at least those were my initial thoughts—until I found the archway leading onto the brig of the craft. Crouching, I peered around the corner and counted twenty guards, and then my attention rested on the child. She sat in the far corner, head down. Her energy was turned inward as if she was trying to make herself as small as possible. I felt the damage to her psyche. Aves had berated her so often she was starting to believe him. Anger welled in my chest.

Suddenly the child's head snapped up and her large, almond-shaped eyes met mine. She'd sensed me, perhaps my anger. I lifted my finger to my lips and smiled at her. *I'm a friend to your mother. I sent my thoughts to her, hoping she could sense them also. She'll be here soon. Don't let the others know.*

The child's gaze narrowed suspiciously and I felt her reach out and search me. Her energy was strong and probed into me with such force that it was nearly painful. Finally she withdrew, seeming to decide she could trust me. She glanced at Aves, who sat in the Captain's chair, and then back at me.

He is going to hurt Mama. I heard them talking.

I shook my head. I won't let them hurt her.

You will save us. It wasn't a question or a doubt. It was relief. She stood, back flat against the wall. She took a tentative step forward and I nodded, waving her to come to me. She took another. Then, to my surprise, she ran forward with Latharian speed, so quickly that she'd been undetected. I reached forward and jerked her around the wall, then lifted her and started back the way I came.

"Where is the brat?" someone asked on the other side of the wall.

Herche gasped and I felt the fear that rose from within her. Her fingers tightened on my arm as she looked over my shoulder. I didn't slow, heading around the corner into the corridor that led to the hatch and came face-to-face with Anjessica.

"Oberon!" She stared at me and then her gaze dropped to her daughter. "What the hell are you doing?"

"Stop him! He's kidnapped the girl!"

I turned and looked back as Aves advanced, his guards in place around him. My gut coiled with disgust for his fleshy body and my gaze dropped to the mechanical hand that fisted at his side.

Instantly, I sent a mental image into Herche's thoughts. *When this man gets here, you go with him. He is a friend. He will take you away from here. He will keep you safe until I bring your mother to you.* She nodded as I set her on the floor and pushed her behind me before turning to face Aves fully. Herche was between me and her mother as more guards filed in from another doorway behind Anjessica. We were now trapped and there was nowhere to run.

"Oberon," Anjessica whispered. "What have you done?"

"You know this *Latharian*?" Aves peered past me.

"He is the Master Professor Oberon Hasdaer. He is the one who runs the program." Anjessica stepped forward and I glanced down to see her hand wrapped around Herche's.

"Where is Sleece?"

"Dead. So are Jaru and Karo. They are in the back of my mobile unit." Anjessica looked at me. "What are you doing here?"

"He was attempting to kidnap your daughter." Aves spoke before I could answer. "What have you told him?"

Anjessica pulled her daughter against her legs. "Is that true?"

"I'm doing what needs to be done. Take her *out* of here." I grasped her arm and shoved her back. "He has what he wanted. Take your daughter and go."

"No, you just stay right there, Jessi." Aves moved forward and I instinctively stepped in front of the two of them, shielding them with my body. Aves' mouth pressed into a thin line.

"You told him but that's not all." Aves' eyes glittered angrily. "You became his whore." I took a step forward and every guard lifted a weapon.

Aves lifted his mechanical hand and waved a finger. "Don't be misled by their appearance. These weapons carry special bullets." He smiled slowly. "Made to kill Latharians."

"He is the one who killed Sleece and the crewmen," Anjessica said suddenly. "He did it last night while I slept and had their bodies ready for me this morning."

"What?" Aves scrutinized me with beady eyes. "You must know the coalition I work for. But why would a Latharian help me? Your 'help' caused me to fail this mission. She was supposed to fail. The child would be mine to —"

"Your mission?" Anjessica echoed from behind me.

"I didn't do it for you. I did it for her," I told him.

"It doesn't matter. I can make this work for me." Aves waved his hand as if dismissing my words.

"You were right." Anjessica voiced her realization. "He wanted me to fail so he could use Herche to start a war."

"How long until Corral arrives?" Aves asked.

"Ambassador Melhen and her guards will be here any moment. Have you enough bullets in those weapons to take out an entire Latharian army?" I smiled smugly. "My suspicion is no. If you release the child now, you might have a chance at escape but you will not leave this planet with her on this ship."

"She's a pretty good bargaining chip, Professor, a mighty weapon." Aves laughed. "I doubt they'll shoot me down with her on board."

"Yeah, but I have mighty weapon of my own."

“Do you?” Aves folded his arms over his chest. “And what’s that?”

“Your daughter. And you’ve pissed her off.” I rolled to the side as the blast of heat rushed through the air. As I rose, I stared as Luke, James and Noah moved on the guards behind us. I lunged at the first row, knocking them to their backs as my students took out the back row. Herche darted past me, reaching for Luke as I’d told her to do. He leaned down and scooped her up and as he turned and strode toward the hatch, James and Noah stood shoulder to shoulder and advanced.

I whirled and leapt forward, grasping Anjessica around the waist. A blast of air swept past us as I shielded Anjessica’s body with my own. The blast of air carried a scent I knew and I shouted as the guards opened fire.

“Stai!” I dropped to the floor, pushing Anjessica down flat and turned to watch those Latharian-killing bullets rip through Stai as if her scales were no more than a flimsy skin suit. Those seconds seemed to last forever. Her screams pierced my chest and I shouted as I felt her pain. The firing silenced and I watched her fall lifeless to the floor.

Rage welled inside me. I leapt to my feet and bared my teeth, roaring with bloodlust. I saw Aves take a step back as the guards lifted their weapons again. But every gaze around him widened with fear. I lunged, ignoring the burning sting in my side as a single guard fired at me. I hit him at full speed then lifted him, using him as a shield against the bullets as I tore through the rest of them.

Halting in front of Aves, I tossed the tattered human corpse to the side. His gun clattered to the floor and he raised his hands, signaling surrender.

“Oberon, don’t!” Anjessica yelled from behind me. I felt James’ energy wrap around her as he held her back.

My body shook and blood pounded through me. “He abused you, Anjessica. He was willing to let you be killed today. He would have abused your daughter also.”

“I wouldn’t have touched her.” Aves shook his head. “She’s half—”

"Latharian?" I leaned forward so I was but an inch from his face, ignoring the energies that advanced from behind along with their solid steps.

"Step away from him, Hasdaer," Ambassador Melhen commanded. I saw Aves' eyes widen when he looked behind me.

"Not even a small victory today, Aves. As you can see, Sleece lives," I hissed.

"They were dead," Anjessica whispered.

"Just resting," Sleece corrected. "A little longer than we'd been led to believe we would."

"I say we break his other hand just for fun," Jaru suggested.

"Or his neck." I reached forward and grasped him, my fingers curling into his flesh, my talons breaking the skin.

"No." Melhen called. I closed my eyes as Aves struggled against the pressure I applied.

"He's not worth the risk." Sleece stepped to my side. "I know this from experience." I growled but released the human into a gasping heap on the floor. Turning, I knelt at Stai's side.

"Bullets made to kill Latharians." I shook with emotion.

"Hey, Noah, what are you doing?" The panic in James' voice caused me to look up and then behind me. Noah stood holding the gun that Aves had discarded earlier. His gaze swept over Stai and then lifted to Aves as the man stood.

"Noah, don't!" James called but Noah's eyes were empty, his energy unresponsive and cold as he lifted his arm. Sleece leapt toward him but he managed one pull of the trigger and it delivered a bullet that hit its mark. Aves tipped backward and slammed into the floor, one trickle of blood seeping from the hole between his eyes.

* * * * *

Eight months later

Again, I thought of her dark eyes and her full mouth. I imagined her smile as I lifted the pen and wrote on the screen. "Physical Combat and Defense. Energy Bonding. Intellectual Study. Latharian History. And Latharian Culture. This is what I shall teach in this program." I took a deep breath, remembering the intensity of her scent, without turning. "You will not seek permission to learn by raising your hand. You will just address me with your questions as you develop them. Humans are often curious of Latharians as the interaction between our civilizations is limited. Your education will be an advantage and make you the best in your fields."

"Will you tell them how Latharians enslave humans, Master Professor? How you bind them and share them with other Latharians? How you dominate and violate them?"

I froze. Her voice. But it had not been my imagination. I whirled to find Anjessica standing in the middle of the classroom, all nine of my new pupils staring up at her. She wore a Phison jumpsuit that had prevented me from sensing her. My first instinct was to go to her. I'd thought of nothing else in the months that had passed since her father had been killed. More than once I'd thought of seeking her out. But I'd kept my distance. Now she stood before me and all I wanted to do was leap forward and bury myself in her. I remained still however, waiting.

"Is that true?" one of the female pupils asked and the corner of Anjessica's lips lifted.

"He shall try to convince you that Latharians are somehow more evolved than humans. He will speak of quality of life and peace treaties. But all that really means is that Latharians are purely sexual beasts and he wants to mate you. Isn't that so, Master Professor?"

"Still trying to turn my pupils against me?"

"Still refusing to answer my questions?"

"I have answered these questions before."

"I have more."

"Then ask them."

"Do all Latharians betray the women who love them?"

My heart clenched and I winced. "Sometimes a man must sacrifice for his woman. The circumstance may call for him to lose her forever to save her."

"What if she didn't ask to be saved? What if she could have survived without his intrusion into her life? Is that the Latharian way? To do as the Latharian wants regardless of the wants of others."

"No."

"What does that make the Latharian who goes against his people's ways?"

"A man in love."

Her dark eyes narrowed. "Love is a human word."

"It is an everyone emotion."

"Where was the love when a Latharian's woman was betrayed?"

I clenched my fists at my sides. "I did what I had to. You had a daughter who needed you, all of you, not the empty shell that would have been left if I'd allowed you to complete your mission. My intentions were not to hurt you or for Noah to... The plan was to make sure you and Herche escaped him, to get your daughter as far away from those who meant to harm her as possible."

"Well, you did that, didn't you?"

"If you had listened to me before," I growled as I turned and stalked back to my desk. "Stubborn and determined—you wouldn't listen to reason, to consider there might be another way. This is your only downfall as a student. You would never accept what I told you. You fought against me."

"So it's my fault?" She advanced as I faced her again.

"That's not what I am saying." I slammed my hand onto the desk and every student jumped. "I am not the enemy!"

"I don't like to be lied to." She stared up at me when she halted in front of me.

She rested her hands on her hips. For several seconds we stood there in silence.

"Is this part of the program?" one of the students asked.

"Don't be an idiot," another answered.

"What happens now?" I waited.

"What do you want to happen?"

I didn't want to hope. "I think you know what I want." She said nothing. "I want you and Herche to live here with me. I want to teach your daughter, to raise her as my own. I want to fall asleep each night with you at my side and wake each morning the same."

"That's a lot of wanting. Is there anything else?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"You."

"Me?"

"To rip that jumpsuit off you so I can smell you." I ignored the gasps that echoed through the classroom.

She glanced around the classroom. "There are a few other young women here to choose from. There is some appeal to mating with your wise, learned professor. Some might not mind sharing you." Her gaze slanted back at me and I felt my heart leap into my throat. She had come back to me.

I shook my head as I reached for her. "I belong to you."

She stepped into my embrace, punching at my shoulder. "You bet your ass you do."

About the Author

Author of erotic fiction, Amon Bieste has always enjoyed feeding the darker corners of his creative mind. He is drawn to science fiction, fantasy and horror, and finds inspiration for his writing from erotic and gothic art. He believes the key to success is originality and constantly strives to better his craft.

“Everybody can write the story, but no one can write it like me.”

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