



KILLER CROSSOVER:

Hot up in the Capture

Jeanie Johnson and Jayha Leigh



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Killer Crossover: *Hot up in the Capture*

by Jeanie Johnson and Jayha Leigh

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CAVEAT

This work of erotica contains adult language and sexually-explicit scenes, which are smoking hot. This book is intended only for adults, as it is defined by the laws of the country in which the purchase is made. Keep this book out of the hands of under-aged readers.

Shout Outs

As always to our Mr. Me's. To the Nyx's and Ferro's out there ... true love is beautiful regardless of what package it comes in. To our moderators Rolanda and the Von-glorious. All you authors out there, y'all should be giving them free books for life because they've promo'd y'all better than any billboard ever could. To our sister, Dréa (many thanks for allowing Grandmommy Grace to use that classic line). Ah, chica, you make our hearts smile.

This book we're shouting out **Zetta Brown** - author/publisher extraordinaire. Zetta who lives in the land of men who know how to rock kilts (Scotland) has a wicked sense of humor, a fine-azz husband (hi Jim) and a hottie for a stepson (hey James). In spite of the warnings, they have made themselves at home amongst the MFP Posse having no idea that in a few years we'll be rocking up to Scotland expecting to be entertained©. Seeing how talented she is, we've already started sucking up to her so we can secure our places in her entourage when she becomes famous for heading up one of the most kickazz publishing companies out there. What? You don't know about Zetta? Well, besides being a native Texan, she is the editor-in-chief for LL-Publications and Logical Lust Publications, which she co-owns with her husband, Jim who is a technical and financial genius (and more importantly looks damn good rocking his kilt). Check them out when you get a chance.

Her empire:

LL-Publications (genre and literary fiction): <http://www.ll-publications.com>

Logical-Lust Publications (romance and erotica): <http://www.logical-lust.com>

Her blogs:

The Full-Bodied Book Blog (<http://fullbodiedbooks.blogspot.com>)

Sistah in Scotland (<http://sistahinScotland.blogspot.com>)

Her books:

Messalina - *Devourer of Men* available now at:

<http://www.logicallustbooks.com/messalina.html>

Malice - coming out in 2009

Other places you can reach her:

<http://messalina.zettabrown.com>

<http://www.myspace.com/zettabrown>

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Chapter One: Famous Last Words

A long, long fucking time ago in a totally different galaxy

Abaddon Brava casually strolled in eating what humans called chocolate. Though he was on his way to see the emperor, he was surprised to see his friends sitting outside of the castle proper. Right now they resembled whipped servants instead of the powerful males that they were. Hiding his smile, Abaddon merely shook his head and joined his two cousins on the steps.

“Auntie Nika and Uncle Zlogonje are at it again, huh?”

“Yeah,” they both answered.

Abaddon couldn’t hold back his chuckle then. Though Zjxadrâzqué and Zoran weren’t twins, right now they wore identical ‘why me’ expressions.

“Is it too much to ask them to go to one of the hundred rooms in the castle rather than using the foyer?” Zjxadrâzqué bemoaned. “And the door. They were on the door.”

“Hey, I’m still trying to get over the trauma,” Zoran moaned as if in pain.

“Are you alright, Zoran?” Abaddon asked when he noticed the queasy look about him.

“I just need a moment,” Zoran remarked.

“Ah, how long have they been in there this time?” Abaddon asked.

“Four hours.”

“Damnnnnnnnnnn,” Abaddon said.

“Stop acting like Auntie Sobeska and Uncle Samuel aren’t exactly the same,” Zjxadrâzqué spat.

“They’re not. My mother’s practically a vestibule virgin,” Abaddon answered.

“Yeah, that’s why there are eighteen of you,” Zjxadrâzqué threw back.

“What’s wrong with having children? They’re our future, you know,” Abaddon replied.

“There’s nothing wrong with having children, but there’s no reason for your parents to attempt to single-handedly see to populating the empire,” Zjxadrâzqué said.

“That’s just more warriors for the empire,” Abaddon answered.

“That may be, but it would do you well to remember exactly *whose* mother was swinging from the chandelier,” Zoran added.

“Mother was changing a light bulb, dammit,” Abaddon argued.

“And Uncle Samuel was simply ‘helping’ her right?” Zoran asked.

“Look, I don’t know what you saw, but dad didn’t want her to fall, so shut up,” Abaddon said.

“They were naked,” Zoran threw in. “At least your dad was.”

“Shut up, dick. He was probably coming from the shower,” Abaddon said. “And what the hell were you doing looking?”

“Hey, you act like I wanted to look. I was simply minding my own business and the screaming and thumping and such triggered my internal alarms. Believe me, I could’ve done without seeing Uncle’s cock,” Zoran replied.

“Whatever. While you’re all concerned about my mother, perhaps you care to explain why there’s a swing in *your* parent’s room,” Abaddon challenged.

“Our mother simply likes to swing and our father doesn’t want her to be out in the elements and stuff,” Zjxadrâzqué said.

“Explain ‘stuff’,” Abaddon insisted.

“Danger and the like,” Zjxadrâzqué said.

“Danger? Danger? Do you dare sit here and say ‘danger’ with a straight face? If you were talking about a lesser emperor I might be able to buy that line of bullshit, but this is Emperor Zlogonje we’re talking about. Nothing dangerous comes near his Empress, much less his empire,” Abaddon said.

“Fine, you have a point, but that doesn’t change the fact that father doesn’t want her to be out,” Zjxadrâzqué said.

“Your parents are...” he started.

“The Emperor and the Empress,” Zoran warned, “so show some respect.”

“Yeah, especially considering your own parents,” Zjxadrâzqué threw in.

“I assure you that unlike your parents, the Sergeant-at-arms of the Empire and the Lt. Empress are quite sane. And before you start, remember that the Lt. Empress is the Empress’s favorite sister so watch it,” Abaddon interjected.

“When did we get the title ‘Lieutenant Empress?’” Zoran asked.

“Hey, it’s the title my mother gave to herself and being that she can lay waste to a contingent of warriors without breaking a sweat – not that she’ll be doing anything like that again - that makes it legal so shut up,” Abaddon said.

“Your mother is crazy on her best day,” Zjxadrâzqué remarked.

“Just because your parents are the rulers doesn’t mean that I won’t whip your ass. Say one more thing about my mother and you’ll be choking

on your own spleen!” Abaddon said. “You’ve got some nerve intimating that your mother is the paradigm for sanity.”

“And just because you’re our cousin doesn’t mean that you can speak of our mother with anything less than the utmost respect. And though my brother is more than ready for any puny challenge that you might offer, don’t think that I will ever allow him to fight any battle on his own,” Zoran growled ready to do battle.

Rising to his feet Abaddon was in the process of issuing his challenge to both brothers when the voice of the Empress rang out.

“You boys settle down. I guarantee you that you do not want to make me come out there and make you settle down,” she gasped.

Before any of them could answer the voice of the Emperor cut in.

“And I guarantee you that if my pleasure is interrupted further than none of you will enjoy the next century!” he thundered.

All of them jumped back. Gone was the loving voice of their uncle and father. Right now, he was dangerous Zlogonje’ian male issuing a warning. Abaddon knew that it was only the fact that they were his sons and nephew that they even received a warning. Usually, that tone meant that someone’s empire and dignity was about to be decimated. Taking a deep breath, he regained his seat as did his two cousins.

“I know one thing. I’m never going to be like that over a woman,” Zjxadrâzqué said.

“Same,” Zoran said.

“Well at least there’s one thing we can agree on,” Abaddon said.

Chapter Two: Let the Battles Begin

“We’ve located them,” Nyx informed the Emperor.

“Are they harmed?”

“With your blood, they heal as we speak,” Ferro stated.

“So strong, such heart ... so fragile,” the emperor whispered, sorrow lacing his words and rivers pouring from his eyes.

Feeling their ruler’s pain Nyx and Ferro looked at each other before averting their eyes in an effort to give their ruler a measure of privacy. Though the emperor was legendary for his battle prowess, right now it wasn’t his prowess that caused them to respect him. It was the love that he held for his family, for love made one vulnerable and if there was one thing that the emperor could scarce afford it was to show vulnerability. They’d both witnessed him decimate an entire fleet and bring a ring of galaxies to their knees whilst on the brink of death. No one had known how close he was to dying except for him, but he’d persevered and let none know his status until well after the battle. As a result of his decision, he’d lain in a healing chamber for close to a human year trusting his second-in-command to see to the Empire.

As fierce as he was, as battle-tested as he was, as determined as he was, love had done what no army, what no injury, what no betrayal had ever succeeded in doing. Love had allowed him to expose himself and seek assistance. Nyx and Ferro had been honored to gain their emperor’s trust and right now they were humbled to be allowed to witness his pain. In spite of all that the emperor had accomplished, it was those tears that had impressed them most.

“We shall await your orders, emperor.”

“Are you injured?” he asked surprising them.

“We are well,” they both responded in spite of their still-healing scars.

“Thank you, Nyx and Ferro.”

“Though we are not warriors, we thank you for the honor of allowing us to go on this mission.”

“Regardless of the capacity in which you serve the empire, you will always be warriors. And more than being warriors you are my brothers. Your intelligence is coveted throughout the empire, yet it is your honor that shines even brighter. Nyx and Ferro, will you remain as their shield until I can send reinforcements?”

“We shall remain until you yourself come to claim them, emperor.”

“I am in your debt,” he said before shutting off communication.

Death, betrayal, and madness swirled all around him. The multi-galactic war demanded his best: the fastest and deadliest ships in his fleet, his most-skilled warriors, and his most cunning spies. And beyond that, this war required his complete and total focus, yet in the midst of the vicious war that encompassed his empire, Zjxadrâzqué’s focus wasn’t on crushing the galaxies one by one and bringing peace to his empire. His focus was on his woman and daughter and the fact that neither was aware of his existence didn’t change a thing.

As Emperor, it was his duty to protect the empire that was named for him. As a male, it was also his duty to protect his woman and child. True, it would be easier if they were in the same galaxy instead of huddled on a planet that was separated from his by hundreds of light years and thrice as many planets. Earth barely registered. In fact, few knew of its existence and he planned to keep it that way. In fact, the small planet was part of the

reason that he fought this war. Zjxadrâzqué planned to bring his family home but first he had to insure that there was no danger and the only way to insure that was to bring every galaxy in his path to heel. He'd conquered hundreds and now he only had a few left to bring into his Empire. As humans were known to say, no rock would be left unturned, no *t*'s left uncrossed, no *i*'s left un-dotted for his woman and child meant everything to him.

They were everything, everything, everything and he hadn't even been within ten galaxies of them. Still, the last twenty human years had been all for them. Ever since that first night when some force in the vast universe had connected them, not a day went by that he didn't see feel her. He had no idea what she looked like, he could simply feel her pain and the pain of the daughter that she'd acquired somewhere along the way. It'd taken him the space of a heartbeat to admit what he'd felt. It'd taken him two years of conquering and coming up empty to reach out for help. He'd meant only to find them but it seemed that everywhere he went he saw injustices that had to be righted. Acts that would demand torturous death happened so frequently that in some places there simply weren't enough prisons to hold the perpetrators of their heinous crimes against each other. So in searching, he'd also battled trusting Nyx and Ferro to do what he could not. And they had. It'd taken his best spies a mere eight human years to find them in the whole of the universe.

Though he had the utmost confidence in his army, he could not leave his warriors. What he needed was to be in two places at once but even with the great power in his hands, the most-feared army at his command, and the best technology at the ready, there were some things that were impossible for even him. As much as he wished it different, he couldn't be

in two places at one time. No, he couldn't be both here and on earth but he could send a delegation of his best warriors to Earth. On second thought, why send an entire delegation when he could send the most badass warrior he knew: Zoran.

Single-handedly, the warrior had conquered entire galaxies and had gone on to subdue others without pause. His second-in-command, Zoran was the one male that gave him pause. Of course, little brothers would do that. Regardless of him being the younger brother, Zoran was always, always ready for battle. That is why it was Zoran that headed the army and he headed the Empire. He was given every privilege due a son of Emperor Zlogonje and Empress Nika (now the Emperors Emeritus), but Zoran had eschewed them in favor of the roughness of battle. The only softness that Zoran had allowed to touch him was their Mother and their Aunt.

Zoran was all rough edges. He trained for pleasure; he relaxed by seeking battle; for rest he strategized and went to sleep with battle plans in his head. It wasn't that he was a war-monger; it was that he hated injustice so much; he hated violence against the weak so much.

He would send Zoran and though he knew that Zoran would protest, he knew that Zoran wouldn't let him down because Zoran could do no less. No one did uncompromising, relentless bastard the way Zoran did ... except for him. Though he was the big brother there had never been a time when Zoran had failed to have his back. And that's why they were a team and always would be.

Zoran was a warrior, and not just any warrior but one of the best. He was second-in-command in the Zjxadrâzqué'an Army for a reason. And that reason was because he was badass. Only his brother Zjxadrâzqué

outranked him yet right now he was close to committing mutiny. Close, but he knew that he wouldn't. Even though war raged in the Empire, he found himself hurtling to the planet that held virtually everything dear to his brother's heart and all because of one sentence uttered with the rawest emotion he'd ever experienced. *"There is no empire without them."*

That hadn't been just a ploy to get to him; his brother had been telling him the God's honest truth. If anything was to happen to his mate and child not only would there be no empire; there would be no Zjxadrâzqué. He didn't understand these feelings that his brother felt, nevertheless, he would do all within his power to insure their safety. And when this war was over and his brother had secured his family it was on between them – just like when they were toddlers.

Chapter Three: The Good, the Bad, and the OMG, these MF's are Hotttttttt!

Ten years later

"Son of a motherfucking bitch shit in hell!" Naomi Webber-Jones cursed under her breath as yet another person smacked into the back of her. *'Don't cuss out children or old people,'* she said over and over in an attempt to calm down. It might be wrong to call an old lady a motherfucker or a toddler an asshole, but dammit, she'd been in the store for less than ten minutes and already her heels were scraped raw. She'd been struck with every device in old people's arsenal: walkers, canes, grandkids, and her favorite - the fucking powered chair or scooter. And if the full-on assault by old people wasn't bad enough, the badass kids that continued to test the limits of her eardrums wouldn't get the hell away from her. When she'd bent down to snatch up two boxes of her favorite type of cereal, one kid had decided that her ass was some sort of giant cushion. Not only did he announce that her ass was big to hell and half of Georgia, some of his light-up sneakers-wearing cronies had decided to use it like a cushiony retaining wall. Oh, she was so close to killing some people – *so, so close*.

If she could've done without her boxes of Captain Crunch, Fruit Loops, and Lucky Charms cereal, she could've completely avoided that aisle altogether, but she needed her cereal. Some people couldn't start the day without caffeine; she couldn't start it without cereal, which was part of the reason she was in such a shitty mood right now. She'd run out of cereal this morning and thus had to settle for half a bowl of cereal and a quarter of a bowl of crumbs. Damn, she couldn't wait until she got back home to the south. If she left this afternoon and drove like a bat out of hell, she could be

in the ATL well before the sun came up. Providence was nice town, but it wasn't home. Still, it did have the prestigious Rhode Island School of Design, which was only THE best school of design in the universe. RISD's reputation was the only reason that she was in north of the Mason-Dixon Line. It'd been hard being away from her beloved south but her shiny, new MFA in Jewelry and Metalsmithing had made it worth it.

Sure, she already had a BS and MS in Materials Science and Engineering from Georgia Tech, but a handful of years of working at a 'real' job had been enough to let her know that in spite of the money, she'd never be a nine-to-five kind of chick. She didn't want to build concept lives; she wanted to be the blacksmith and jewelry maker that her diploma said she could be. Graduating *magna cum laude* from RISD was flash but what was really flash was her portfolio. She'd interned with one of the most badass blacksmiths and jewelry makers she'd ever stumbled across - Jaylee Sorenson. Usually calling someone a cunt right before letting them know that a misunderstanding was about to jump off if they continued talking to you like good sense hadn't been invented wasn't the best way to go about getting an internship, but apparently Jaylee was some sort of lunatic. Normally, she was the epitome of grace, but it'd been one of those days when she'd been low on cereal and there was nary a drop of iced tea in sight so the last thing she needed was some fucking attitude regardless of how talented and fine chick was. Jaylee was the most badass chicks in the world of metalsmithing and it would fucking rock to work under her (hell it'd probably rock to be under her in bed) but she sure as shit wasn't about to be anybody's bitch for either pleasure.

She'd gotten an internship she hadn't even known she was applying for, in a state that was even further away from the ATL than Rhode Island.

And like Rhode Island, the backwoods of the Northwest Territory and the Front Range weren't exactly flowing with iced tea and gravy, but it did have Mrs. Carolina Roberts and Mrs. Zamira Cane-Holden. Sisters could straight throw down then again they were both good southern women. They threw down so hard that she was tempted to make off with both of them and add them to her harem of chefs. Tempted – *sorely tempted* – but not stupid. Between 'little' David (if you could call a boy close to seven feet in height little), Mackenzie and Gage, there was no way in anybody's version of hell that anyone was getting too close to their beloved women, much less making off with them.

And if those three fellows weren't protection enough then there were the townspeople in the close-knit cities of Brickey, Caves, de Vires, and Ville de Mann Ridge, Colorado. Cities squeezed in so close together they had no business being separate cities, she'd simply dubbed them GTFO (Get The Fuck Out). The GTFO Consortium reminded her of the HBCU Consortium in her beloved Atlanta. They were a tight-knit bunch that didn't hesitate to loan out their skills, equipment, and time to each other. There wasn't anything that the townspeople wouldn't do for each other ... and there wasn't anything they wouldn't do to protect their own. And they took protection damn serious. No one in GTFO had to lock their doors ... ever. Security was so tight that the bank didn't even lock their doors half the time because no one was stupid enough to fuck with anybody or anything in GTFO.

Though beautiful territory, GTFO was strange (in all capitals and flashing neon letters that one could see from space) territory. She might just be a jewelry and weapons maker, but she knew strange like she knew the menu at her favorite chicken and waffle joint in the ATL. At one time

she'd thought that nowhere on God's Green Earth could rival No Trespassing, Georgia for complete fucking weirdness, but that was before she'd trekked to GTFO, Colorado, which had leapt right past weird and gone directly to strange. Overrun with crazy ass women and fine ass men, it was a place that under normal circumstances, she would've steered clear of, but a) nothing in her life remotely resembled normal so GTFO was almost par for the course; b) she was southern and as such knew how to mind her own fucking business, cuss a motherfucker slam out, and give her food her full attention; and, c) she discovered that the peeps in GTFO kicked it with the peeps who lived in No Trespassing, GA. And No Trespassing was like the '*don't start nothing, won't be nothing*' places of all places and Patrale was right there with them.

The residents of GTFO rivaled the jaw-dropping scenery of the area, which was probably why few outsiders ventured further than the main dirt road of Brickey. Brickey was by far the biggest of the cities in the GTFO consortium. Despite the aura of strangeness, Brickey was a high-traffic area for three reasons and three reasons only.

First, it had the bank. Though located in a small city, de Vires-Mann National Bank was no fucking joke. It had assets in the tens of billions, and seemed to have an endless supply of cash on hand, which it loaned out to the bigger banks for a pretty penny. Never had anyone defaulted on a loan which in itself was amazing being that they loaned money to individuals who otherwise would never have received a loan. The loans they gave often at a ridiculously low interest rate. De Vires-Mann National had financed the education and businesses of most of the residents in the upper half of the state. And on top of that, their bank had never ever in its lengthy history been robbed and that was saying something considering the history

of the wild, Wild West. Then again, after seeing the families who owned the bank, someone would have to have a death wish to even consider such foolishness.

The second thing that brought outsiders to Brickey was Mean Older Brother Bar, which was the undisputed right of passage for anyone calling themselves a biker. It was also a paradox. A bar that could put the fictional Road House to shame (if it had anyone other than Gage Holden as its owner); it was a den of fighting, cussing and drinking Monday through Saturday nights. On Sunday, it was the place the residents of the area brought their families to for good conversation, good food, and better company.

The third thing that brought outsiders to the city was Cascade's Cycles. A burly man who had arms that resembled his first name yet didn't seem to have any shirts that had sleeves; Cannon Cascade was straight badazz when it came to bikes. Having learned his craft under the tutelage of one Sean Lodi of Vegas Adventure Cycles, Cannon was now a master in his own right. He was to bike-building what chocolate was to desserts, what cooking grease was to southern cuisine, and what those two parts of Hydrogen was to water. If you could dream it; Cannon could build it. If it was broken; he could fix it.

Though she was initially weary of GTFO when she first arrived, she'd quickly grown to love it ... well as much as she could love any place that wasn't her beloved ATL. The internship had lasted far longer than the summer, but she didn't mind because Jaylee's tutelage had been worth four semesters of classroom learning. When she got her first bit of praise from the ornery woman she'd almost creamed her panties being that Jaylee was stingy when it came to niceties. For some damn reason she liked her

anyway. She'd left GTFO with a stockpile of knowledge, a lust for a Cannon Cascade cycle, a shitload of friends, and an open invitation to visit.

As always memories of GTFO left her smiling and horny for a Cannon Cascade cycle. Her extended internship had added a whole year to her education but it'd been worth it. Rocking her honors cords and a chain-metal shirt with her cap and gown, she couldn't help but revel in accomplishing her goal. She'd grinned like an idiot through the entire commencement. Her family had cheered her mightily when she walked across the stage and as soon as they'd snapped some pictures, they hightailed it to T F Green International Airport in Warwick so they could return to the south. As soon as she finished cleaning her apartment she'd be following them. *Who knew how much mess hot glue guns and metal shavings left?*

The vigorous scrubbing she'd given her apartment was the reason she'd gotten so low on cereal. So here she was, a few months away from the big 3-0, in a crowded grocery store too far north of the south getting run over and run down. She really could've picked a better time to shop, but oh no, as usual she left everything to the last minute, which is why she was getting run down by old people, crashed into by toddlers, and shoved to the side by impatient mothers toting even more impatient kids. Gritting her teeth, she repeated her mantra once more as she still had to chance the dairy area. *'Don't cuss out children or old people' ... 'don't cuss out children or old people.'* She repeated it all the way down the breakfast foods aisle and all the way to the dairy area with great success so when she got to the freezers bearing ice cream she was feeling hopeful.

That hope lasted right up until she went to the popsicles section and didn't see her firecracker popsicles. Hoping that perhaps the boxes had

gotten intermingled with some lesser type of popsicles, she rummaged through that entire popsicles section. Not finding firecracker popsicles, she scanned the entire frozen treats section hoping that perhaps there was some kind of special display. Still not finding any - *but finding five kinds of ice cream for dogs and cats* - she summoned a clerk and asked if perhaps they had some in the back. *No*, was not the answer that she wanted to hear, nor did she care to hear about the umpteen other kinds of imposter popsicles available. She didn't have anything against creamsicles, orange-sicles, tricycles, hell even Ivan and Nakita Koloff's wrestling move - the Russian sickle - *per se*; she just wanted, needed, and had to have her firecracker popsicles. Some people relaxed with a cigarette; she relaxed with firecracker popsicles.

Considering the mood that she was in, she so didn't need to hear that they were plum out of firecracker popsicles and would be until sometime that wasn't right that very instant. And what she needed to hear even less than that was the rude fucking comments uttered by the group of twenty-somethings. Being advised that she should redirect her pent up energy to some kind of exercise program was the wrong fucking thing to say to her ... ever. Those motherfuckers didn't know her like that. Hell, they didn't know her at all because if they had they would've kicked their own ass as a preemptive measure for getting out of the ass whipping that she was thinking about putting on them.

She knew that she wasn't even close to being a single digit size but dammit that didn't give peeps *carte blanche* to make rude comments. She could forgive the toddler for remarking that she had a big ass because well, he was a toddler and she did have a big ass ... but it was a nice ass and it

matched her body. She had big everything. If she was a chicken dinner, oh a motherfucker could've eaten all day and had some leftovers.

Standing over 6'3" in her bare feet, she had big thighs, big titties, and when she forgot to tie her hair down before she went to sleep she woke up with big hair. Still, she thought that she cut a fine figure. Wearing some stone-washed denim Capri pants, a Morehouse t-shirt, and some tennis shoes, she wasn't exactly dressed to take a strut down a catwalk, but then she wasn't on a catwalk. She was in the grocery store – a grocery store filled with an overabundance of smart-mouthed punks who were just begging to be busted in the mouth. It was bad enough to be getting mouth from those little punks but she definitely didn't need the snickering of the peanut gallery. Obviously, none of these people had been reared by Grandmommy Grace else they wouldn't be straight showing their asses. You'd think older peeps would have more sense, then again they didn't sweeten their iced tea so yeah, she should've known better. Oh, she needed to get back home. If this had been home there would've been a mad rush to straight cuss them little fuckers out, but this wasn't home so it was just her there to lead the cussing.

She might have a problem cussing out old people and kids but she didn't have any problem with punching a twenty-something dead in his voice box. Giving them a quick but thorough glance, she knew none of them were armed. Squaring her shoulders, she marched over to those fuckers fully intending to give them a piece of her mind. Even though there were eight of them, she was confident that she could give them a piece of her mind and have plenty left to spare. She was about to let the first 'motherfucker' out of her mouth but was stunned stupid by the sight of two of the finest motherfuckers she'd ever laid eyes on.

Oh my damn. She was pretty sure that time stood still, which was a good thing because she needed time to ogle these fine motherfuckers. Not only were fine and finer too beautiful for words, they were taller than her. Unless she was kicking it with the males in her community, it was unusual for her to find herself surrounded by men taller than her. And it was even more unusual for her to find herself in the presence of men that made her want to drop to her knees and beg to be pleased. Yet, here she was having to bite her lip in order to stop herself from outright drooling and having to clench her fists in order to stop herself from beating those fine motherfuckers to the ground and making a dessert with White Cake on the bottom and Butter Pecan Cake on the top and some, sweet, hot chocolate Naomi as the filling. Though similar in height and skin tone, one had hair so light that it appeared white and the other had hair that it rivaled complete darkness in color. And then there was their hair. Both had blue streaks in their hair. She didn't know the why nor did she care because the blue was working for both of those fine motherfuckers.

Damn, why did they have to witness those jerk offs talking smack to her and hear the snickering of the entire aisle? Why couldn't she meet them while she was looking all hot rocking some ass-hugging jeans, some *'watch my ass jiggle'* pumps and a *'let me introduce you to my titties'* top. Why? Oh yeah, probably because she'd pissed off the universe by talking bad about old people and kids. Oh well, as fine as those specimens were, she still had some jerk offs to cuss the fuck out but her cusses turned into sighs. Why? Because Butter Pecan Cake kissed it away. Oh fuck. It was a light kiss, a mere brushing of his lips against hers but her pussy set a new land-speed record for getting wet. That last time she'd been this wet, she

was swimming in the Gulf of Mexico ... during the onset of a tropical depression.

Before she could pass out from a combination of shock and pleasure, he pulled her against that rock, hard chest. Involuntarily, she inhaled and got a lungful of erotica. The man was simply too fucking hot to be let loose around the female population – except for her. She was pretending that she was strong enough to handle all of that fineness when she made the mistake of looking into his eyes. His body was slamming but his eyes were fucking mesmerizing. If those eyes weren't set in such a spectacular male, she'd expect to see them lying on a velvet cloth under a glass case guarded by all manner of high-tech sensors and a contingent of bodyguards.

Being a jewelry maker, she knew her gemstones and being a woman she knew fine men. She'd been on the earth for over thirty years and travelled all over the world but nothing, nothing prepared her for those eyes. He had eyes that resembled Alexandrite. Most people wouldn't get past the magnificent teal-blue, but as a jewelry maker she knew to look deeper as one of the properties of Alexandrite was that it changed color depending upon light. The brilliance of the teal-blue spanned the gamut of all the colors in the blue family.

Sighing, she turned in his arms giving her an unobstructed view of White Cake ... and his matching eyes. Two motherfuckers with eyes like that. Damn. She'd never seen anyone with eyes that rivaled such magnificent gems, but she knew one thing for sure: nothing on these fine motherfuckers was fake.

White Cake might be light to Butter Pecan Cake's dark but his Alexandrite eyes were flashing pure fire. The look that he gave the little

troupe of jerk offs was so scathing that she shivered. She hadn't seen a look that scary since that time she *thought* about back talking her momma.

Having spent eight years searching the universe for the emperor's family and then the last ten protecting their emperor's woman and child, Nyx and Ferro were simply vacationing. Of all of the planets they'd trekked to, Earth had intrigued them the most. Well, actually the south had. Humans were odd creatures. Like the opening of Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities*, they were interesting dichotomies. They were vicious and gentle; strong yet fragile; passionate yet often self-made islands. True, they were basing their assumptions upon Xiloxoch and her cronies, but ah what an example. Having poured through human history they'd seen infinite examples of the best that humanity had to offer but alas, their best was often necessitated by the worst acts that one could perpetrate against one another. The very things meant to protect them were often the things that hurt them – including the law, the Church, and the nation-state.

In spite of all of the bad things it was the good things that kept them on the planet. And the good things included the food, and the music, and the sun. Ah, the sun. They'd just returned from an extended cruise on the Mediterranean compliments of their friend Yonder Austin Din Eidyn and her husband Aonghus. Though the one hundred ninety-four foot mega yacht *The Wild, Blue Yonder* was a beautiful ship, it didn't match the beauty of the Mediterranean, the South Pacific or the Galápagos Islands. And though they'd had loads of fun, like a beacon, America had called them back. Presently, they were doing the road trip thing. Having decided to work their way down from Maine to Miami was what had led them to Rhode Island.

Rhode Island was nice but it wasn't singing to them the same way the tropical regions did. Accustomed to the acceptance of their sexuality that they'd received on their home planet, overseas, and even in Atlanta, they were sometimes caught off guard with the vehemence their relationship had been met with in other places. Still, they'd been together for well over a century and neither prejudice nor ignorance was going to change that.

Not having any real working plan for their road trip, they'd mutually decided that it was time to move on. But before they hit I-95, first they needed provisions, which is why they were in the store at this ridiculous hour. *Who knew so many people hit the grocery stores at nine in the morning, Nyx wondered?* Apparently, he wasn't the only one wondering that from the look on the dark Amazon's face a few meters ahead. Having enhanced hearing he was clearly able to hear her muttering about not cussing out old people and kids.

"Now that looks like a fun woman," Nyx breathed excitedly to Ferro who was busy scanning the packaged cheeses.

"Who?" Ferro asked without looking away from the cheese.

"*Her*," he stressed whilst nodding in the woman's direction.

"That she is. If I wasn't already mated, I'd be tempted by her," Ferro said.

"And if I wasn't your mate and didn't feel the same way about her, I might have to take issue with that," Nyx frowned.

"But I am your mate so you don't need to take issue. Besides you were the one who noticed her first so maybe I should be the one who's upset."

“Well how can I not notice her? She has an amazing body. Her height and voluptuousness hints that she could handle the passions and pleasures of males from our home world,” he pointed out.

“Coupled with her feistiness, she’d be knee deep in warriors vying for her attention,” Ferro stated.

“What makes you think that she’s feisty?”

“For one, that walk. She walks like she owns the place. Second, all of the cussing that she’s doing under her breath. If she isn’t made to be a warrior’s woman then what female is?”

“She’s like the emperor’s woman in ways,” Nyx said.

“Hopefully, a lot less dangerous though. Damn, I’ve met seasoned warriors who weren’t as perceptive, cautious or dangerous as Jack,” Ferro said.

“I know. Makes me glad that I’m simply a spy and not a warrior.”

“You say *‘simply a spy’* like a southerner would say *‘football is simply a game’*, *‘sweet tea is just a drink’*, and *‘Jesus was just a man,’*” Ferro laughed. A moment later that beautiful laugh came to a screeching halt.

Without looking at each other, and without even bothering with their cart, both he and Ferro hurried around the corner to find the idiot who’d made that nasty and uncalled for remark. Though they could tune out many things, it wasn’t difficult to remain attuned to a subject and the beautiful African-American woman was definitely a subject that they didn’t mind being attuned to.

Though he was possessed with more diplomatic tendencies, Ferro was loaded up with *‘beat the living shit out of people’* tendencies. That’s why he wasn’t surprised when Ferro made the first move. Walking past the

laughing patrons, Ferro walked right up to the woman and kissed the cusses from her mouth. Knowing that she was in good hands left him free to sweep the entire aisle with a chilling look. He didn't often grow angry but all bets were off anytime he witnessed any male degrading any female. He was a Zjxadrâzqué'an male and they simply didn't tolerate that kind of shit. Though not a warrior in the technical sense, like all warriors, he'd matriculated through the Zjxadrâzqué'an warrior academy. So although he'd made his living as a spy, few could match his strength and even fewer could match his wits. He made sure that the group of human males saw the threats in his eyes before speaking.

"I believe you owe her an apology," he said.

Though his voice was low, it carried a chill that hinted of all manners of unpleasantness that he wouldn't hesitate to deliver should his wishes not be obeyed and obeyed with the quickness. Hearing the apologies might've been enough on any other day, but for some reason it wasn't enough today.

"Get on your knees and deliver your apologies and look in her eyes as you do so," he demanded.

Pleased that they did as he bid, he still wasn't through.

"I advise you never to look upon her again, especially in my presence. Do we understand each other?"

Hearing their agreement, he then turned to the older humans who should know better.

"You should be ashamed but then it is obvious from your silence that you have no shame," he said before he presented his back and walked over to the voluptuous woman. Gently taking her hips in his hands, he tugged her to him and kissed her lips offering his own apology.

"I apologize on behalf of all males," Nyx whispered.

“Oh my damn,” she breathed.

Her breath smelled like peppermint and she smelled like ... sugar. Fitting. Before he could say another word, she smiled and fired off words that hit him point blank in the soft spots. She mentioned one of his favorite movies and food – one of his absolute favorite things.

“That was the fucking hotness. That is so my *Pretty Woman* moment and since y’all did that you have to let me take you to lunch.”

“You said ‘y’all.’ You are from the south?”

“Damn skippy and being that you are familiar with the term *y’all* I’m guessing you’ve spent some time there,” she said right before grabbing their arms and walking them out of the store.

Oh my damn. Did this motherfucker just make these plebes apologize? On their fucking knees? Yes, he did. But before she could get over the shock of it all, White Cake approached her and placed those big, strong beautiful hands on her waist ... right before kissing her and apologizing for males everywhere. And it wasn’t a line. White Cake meant it. *Oh fuck.*

Before she knew what she was doing, she’d invited them to lunch. Being southern and all, when she said ‘invited’ it didn’t mean that they had the chance to refuse. Just when she thought the day couldn’t get any better, White Cake commented on her use of the term *y’all*. It damn near brought a tear to her eye. Linking her arms in theirs, they walked out of the store leaving everything behind including the bitterness that had taken place inside.

Stepping outside in the sunshine, she took a moment and exhaled and then inhaled once again getting a nose full of smoking hot, fine ass male

times two. Being sturdy fellows and all, she didn't hesitate to do what she always did when she was with males taller than her. Picking up her feet, she demanded. "Swing me, you guys." And to her surprise, they didn't hesitate to do so.

They'd gone to lunch at some overpriced restaurant but they'd had a great conversation. She'd learned they were a couple. They'd learned that she didn't give a fuck – if they gave her half a chance, she'd beat them to the floor and fuck them into a coma, hit them with the maximum voltage from a defibrillator and fuck them again. They also learned that she'd be calling them by their cake names instead of their given names.

One hour turned to two, and two turned into three. They'd stayed so long that they went ahead and ordered dinner. Being that her apartment was now empty of everything except a few boxes, she'd spent the night with them at their hotel. Walking in with the two men who were walking billboards for hotness, she knew good and damn well what everyone thought and instead of proffering explanations or being ashamed, she tossed back her head, threw back her shoulders and played it up to the hilt.

After showering, she'd slipped into one of their t-shirts and slid into bed with them. She'd attempted to take the edge so they could cuddle with each other but neither of them were having that. A highly-offended White Cake had told her that even though he was gay, but he was a man first and she was sleeping in the middle where she'd be safest. An equally-offended Butter Pecan Cake had raised a single brow and backed up Nyx's assertion right before grabbing her up and tossing her in the middle of the bed.

Though she was sharing a bed with two hot men, she'd never felt more at ease. With her head resting on White Cake's massive chest and her feet entangled with Butter Pecan Cake's heavily-muscled thighs, they'd

spent the night watching cable television and passing around a box of Teuscher champagne truffles back and forth. And a funny thing happened whilst flipping between B movies and bad porn: she fell in love with them.

If someone had given her this scenario on paper, there was no way in anybody's summers in Georgia that she would've seen herself doing something so risky, but that's because she'd never met anyone like White Cake and Butter Pecan Cake. They were simply two of the most beautiful individuals that she'd ever had the privilege to know. In her thirty-some years she'd seen eye candy that looked just as good, but she'd never been touched so deeply, treated so respectfully, or befriended so wonderfully. Snuggling deeper into White Cake and pulling Butter Pecan Cake closer to her, she closed her eyes and exhaled. And in that moment, she decided that she was keeping White Cake and Butter Pecan Cake. Yep, they were hers and she wasn't giving them back. If they weren't meant to be hers God wouldn't have dropped them in her lap. Feeling justified with her decision, she drifted off to sleep, forgetting about her tendency to reveal important things in her sleep.

Nyx and Ferro had been having a grand old time. Having over a century to practice their telepathy, they were easily able to hold a conversation with each other while still speaking with anyone else other than Naomi Webber-Jones. Naomi didn't do light conversation or light lunches for that matter. Her conversation was meaty and her silences - when they happened - were comfortable and much needed respites. They had to work to keep up with her but it was worth it. She'd already laid out her plans to fix the economy, the environment, and the collegiate bowl

series, whatever the hell that was. Though she proclaimed herself a blacksmith, Naomi would make a fine officer in the Zjxadrâzqué'an Army.

Enjoying watching her fight sleep, they'd gently pried her fingers from around the box of champagne truffles. Though they'd spent almost two decades on this planet, and spent ten of them watching over the emperor's woman and daughter, they'd never had the chance to see a human female sleep normally. Xiloxoch didn't really sleep; she just sort of closed her eyes for a bit and though her daughter did sleep, they knew better than to let their eyes linger too long on her precious daughter. Humans intrigued them, especially the human that went by the name of Naomi Webber-Jones, which is why they both took the time to admire her in repose.

She is so beautiful, how can she not know?

Because no one has told her, Ferro.

We should beat the shit out of every human male here and then go back in time and rewrite their constitution and make it a decree that males tell her and all women how absolutely beautiful they are.

Isn't that a bit extreme? Nyx laughed.

Hmph.

I think you care for her very much.

I do not. I'm a Zjxadrâzqué'an warrior; it is decreed by law for us to protect females and even if it wasn't it beats in my blood to do so.

Hmm mmm.

Admit it Ferro; she got to you.

Nope, nothing penetrates my heart ... except for you.

Thank you, Ferro, but I think Naomi Webber-Jones has snuck right in there. Reaching over her and placing his hand on Ferro's chest, he continued. *Yep, there she is, right next to me.*

They both went silent for a bit and continued admiring the beauty that lay between them.

I'm not going to like leaving her, Ferro admitted.

Before he could respond in kind, Naomi woke from her slumber and pulled them closer to her like blankets and mumbled something that made both of their hearts beat faster.

"I love you guys, and I'm keeping you," she said clearly before drifting back off to sleep.

What?!

What the hell?!

What do you think she means by that? Ferro asked.

I don't know; maybe it was just random thoughts, Nyx answered.

Naomi woke from the best sleep she'd ever had. Seeing that the fine ass White Cake and Butter Pecan Cake were still sleeping like it was going out of style, she slid down the bed and crawled out of the covers. Though her getting out of bed had roused them a bit, she noted that Butter Pecan Cake immediately searched out White Cake. Awed by their blatant love for each other she took a few moments to watch them. Even in sleep, Butter Pecan Cake and White Cake loved, cherished, and honored each other. Having witnessed some good loving from the couples in her family, she knew love when she saw it. And those two hotties shared an amazing, amazing love. She was humbled that they'd allowed her to share in their love. Even though neither was her man (but they could be if they wanted

to), having spent time in their presence, she felt as if some of their love had seeped out and wrapped her up in it.

Sending up a prayer of thanksgiving, she went to the adjoining room and called for breakfast before heading to the shower. Unbeknownst to the cakes in there, they had a busy day ahead. They didn't know it but they were going to have to reroute their little road trip as they were coming home to the ATL with her. She didn't even consider that they might not want to come, because seriously when it came down to a choice of trekking to the ATL and having some of her momma's and aunts and uncles down home cooking and warmer weather, was there really a choice? They were going and they were going to like it. They belonged to her and that was that.

He didn't know what had hit him. Just yesterday, he and Nyx were buying food for the next leg of their road trip, and then they'd met Naomi. And now, here he was sitting in the roomy Ford F-350 Super Duty Lariat on their way back to Atlanta. She'd given them a choice: kind of.

You can get your fine asses into the truck and enjoy the trip to Atlanta or I can simply drag you to the truck by your ridiculously great hair, duct tape you to the seat and drive you to the ATL like that. And by the way, if I don't find a man in the next five years, I'll be having your babies.

Though she drove like all the bats out of hell, the trip was long enough to give him a lot of time to think. Never having been as spontaneous as Nyx, Ferro was surprised when he found himself caught up in the spontaneity of the moment. Naomi Webber-Jones was a whole lot of woman and a beautiful woman. Lunch with her taught him that she was

also a good woman, which is why he hadn't hesitated to bring her back to the hotel room that he shared with his mate. Though she may be wary of them, she'd probably be amused to know that he was more wary of her. Hell, he was wary of anyone that was in close proximity to his mate. It didn't matter that Nyx was over seven feet in height and two hundred eighty pounds of muscle. It didn't matter that Nyx was a graduate of the Zjxadrâzqué'an Warrior Academy and could take down beings twice his weight without breaking a sweat. For all of his stamina, strength, and cunning, for all his battle credentials, Nyx was first and foremost his mate. One thing he wouldn't do was ever allow danger to come near the one being that held his heart.

Normally, he was slow to trust. It usually took him decades to let someone in. In fact, in all of his centuries, only one being had gained his trust so quickly and he'd mated him. Yet, after being in Naomi's presence a mere hour, he'd already made room for her in his heart. Dammit. It was all her fault. She'd snuck in and carved out a little space for her and the bad thing about it was that she had no idea.

Naomi Webber-Jones was unlike any being he'd ever met. She reacted to things in ways he didn't expect. His WTF gene had been tripped by her. Hell, it simply hadn't been tripped; she'd gone in, flipped the switch and used brute force and duct tape to keep the mechanism permanently in the 'on' position. It probably was a good thing because never had he met a being who cared less about who he was, what he had, or what he could do for them. True, she did not yet know the half of it but he suspected that when she discovered who and what they were, she wouldn't give a shit.

Naomi didn't seem to care about what people could do for her; she only cared how they treated people. He'd almost spit up a lung when she'd

blithely informed him and Nyx that she didn't really give a flying fuck what their names were she was calling them cake names because she liked cake. And before he could get over that little tidbit of information, she'd grabbed his hand and placed it on her shoulders and demanded that he give her a shoulder massage since it was their fault that her neck hurt. Apparently, she'd gotten a crick in her neck looking up so far to ogle their fineness. While he'd given her that shoulder massage he'd gotten to know her.

Naomi possessed so many good things but what had most impressed him was her guilelessness ... and her strength. Damn, his arm still hurt where she'd punched him in it because she thought he'd been ogling another man. He hadn't been; he'd actually been staring the man down for looking at her one too many times but he didn't tell her that. There was no need to tell Nyx because Nyx's laughter was ringing in his head. *Yeah, don't be looking at some other man, Ferro because I'll tell Naomi who is all protective over me.*

Naomi was protective of his mate and he couldn't help but like her for it. Of course, she was also protective of him. He couldn't help but laugh recalling that tense moment at the gas station where some guys thought they were going to hassle him and Nyx. She delivered a hellfire and brimstone crash course in biblical exegesis, told them in no uncertain terms exactly what kind of sorry motherfuckers they were and ended with a rant against whatever pseudo-church they attended and the imposter god (small g) that they worshipped.

"And don't think I'm just going to stand by and let y'all jump on them. Oh hell no. You want to fight them; you'll also be fighting the pissed off southern woman they're rolling with, so if you're feeling froggy ... jump."

Before anyone could even think about jumping, both he and Nyx had hit them with a look that chilled all of them to the bone. The mob had walked off but that hadn't been good enough for Naomi, which is why he'd had to throw her over his shoulder and carry her to the truck where she'd climbed in and cussed them out for allowing anyone to treat them like shit. Naomi Webber-Jones was one hella woman.

Despite the strength that ran through her like the Andes Mountain chain ran through South America, Naomi Webber-Jones was first and foremost a giver – one that made outrageous demands such as swinging her – but a giver nonetheless. Neither her beauty nor sass could conceal that. He couldn't wait to get to know her more sure that getting to know Naomi Webber-Jones would be an adventure that neither he nor Nyx would ever forget.

For the first time in his life Nyx wished he had some extra eyes because he didn't want to miss anything. Naomi was a riot – a dangerous, feisty, and beautiful riot – but a riot nonetheless. Though he was leagues more sensitive than Ferro, not even he could've guessed at the multitude of treasures that lay beneath the beauty that she had no idea that she possessed. Naomi was like a free super deluxe spa package: that is she rejuvenated you and made you leave her presence feeling better than you ever had and it didn't cost you a thing but taking a chance.

Naomi didn't try to be cute or coy. She didn't even try to conceal her character flaws under a subtle foundation of politeness. Nope, she didn't hold back the *'oh no you didn'ts'*, or the *'kiss my asses'* that peppered her speech. Neither did she act like she wasn't ogling his man or him for that matter. He wasn't prepared for the *'fuck them both into a coma'* answer

she gave them in response to their informing her that they were a couple. For that matter, he wasn't prepared for ninety percent of her answers. After this morning, he was pretty sure that he wasn't in anyway, form or fashion prepared for Naomi Webber-Jones, but he knew that he wasn't going anywhere for a while ... nor did he want to.

Chapter Four: And so it Begins

Seven months later

Walking into their house, she went right to the kitchen knowing that her cakes would be there. With the way they stayed in there, you'd think that they didn't have a bedroom. She couldn't blame them though because the women in her family had taken a personal interest in making sure that her cakes ate well.

As always she smiled when thinking about their first visit to Patrale. Having called ahead and told her momma she was bringing friends, the grownups had got together and showed out in the kitchen. Then again, they used any and every damn excuse to have a cookout. It didn't matter if there was snow on the ground, an F5 tornado or anything else. The residents of Patrale were southern, which meant that eating ranked second only to Jesus and was probably tied with football.

Patrale was one of those magical places full of crazy people who loved and played hard and didn't hesitate to beat the shit out of anyone who threatened to fuck with their groove. Regardless of where in the world they went, eventually, they all came back to Patrale. But the cakes hadn't known that about Patrale, which is probably why they'd tensed the closer they'd gotten to it and really tensed upon noting the ratio of pickup trucks to cars. Still, they'd girded their loins and swung her all the way up to her aunt and uncle's cobblestoned driveway without complaint. As they did for all big time get- their-eat-ons they celebrated at the Harper-MacCadáin place being that they not only had a pimped out kitchen and outdoor grilling area, they had the largest eating area with a dining room that would

comfortably sit fifty. Hey, when quadruplets ran through your family you need that kind of space.

Walking them into the massive living room she'd whistled for silence and introduced them as the hot duo who'd take turns fathering her babies if she failed to score a man by the time she was forty-five. Of course her family had to totally take her comment out of context.

"You mean you're not a lesbian?" a heavily-pregnant Karlo had asked.

"Only during the last week of February during full moons on leap years that end in zero. And get your eyeballs off of *my* men before I tell Dario and you know how crazy that man gets when you're eyeballing anything with a penis," she'd replied as she shouted down the house for Dario.

"Dario! Dario! Karlo is ogling some fine hotties who aren't you," she screamed as she wrapped her arms around her cakes.

"Why did you do that," Karlo had huffed.

"Because when Dario gets here I will have three fine men to ogle while you won't be able to look at anything with a penis over the age of embryo," she emitted her evil laugh.

"You are such a witch," Karlo huffed.

"Yep, and your ankles are fat," she countered.

"I hate you."

"You can't. Auntie Avie said you're not allowed. Do I need to tell her you're being all mean to me?"

"Ohh, you just wait 'til after I have this baby."

"Yeah, you'll be pregnant again two seconds after your six weeks are finished," she said.

Taking time to squabble with her favorite big-time marketing director cousin had given the sharks time to assemble because when she turned around she had a wall full of women ogling the potential fathers of the babies she was planning on having one day in the future. Oh fuck that. It was a good thing she had a good hold on them.

“Back off ladies. They’re not about to be the catalyst for the American equivalent of the Trojan War being that they’re a couple. I love you but I’ll kick some ass if y’all try and break up White Cake and Butter Pecan Cake. And then I’ll tell your men.”

Apparently the mention of hot men was like yelling ‘*fire!*’ in a crowded movie theater because every male not in the room came a runnin’. Though she was accustomed to the strapping, tractor-fed (not corn-fed, but tractor-fed) males who made up her crazy ass family, she’d never been given the stink eye from all of them at once. She didn’t pay attention to them but her cakes hadn’t taken her eyes off of them. In fact, they’d both gotten into what she later learned was their battle-ready stance.

Her cakes were fine-ass, but first and foremost they were warriors. And being warriors themselves, they’d easily recognize that many of the occupants were trained killers (the other half were just ornery bastards who’d kick ass on the drop of a dime ... and that included the women in their midst). She smiled noting the way that Butter Pecan Cake automatically stepped in front of White Cake and the way White Cake stepped in front of her. Of course, their protectiveness around her had been noted and appreciated by all, which scored them some major points.

Looking back, that probably hadn’t been the smoothest way to introduce her cakes to her family, but she wasn’t exactly known for being

smooth. Plus, she hadn't wanted them to hide who and what they were especially when what they were was so beautiful.

At first, they were timid and tried to fade into the background but obviously they didn't know southern women. The women in her family weren't having that being a wallflower shit and before their asses had even hit the cushion of the seat that she'd pushed them on, her momma had made her way over to them and pulled them right back up. Once she'd practically felt them up (not that she could blame them), she'd pretty much hugged them damn near to death before being elbowed out of the way by all the aunts and grandmoms who demanded hugs.

They'd been shell-shocked from all of the hugging, hell she was used to it and sometimes it shell-shocked her. Though they'd hugged back and all, they'd been reserved ... that is until it got time for the eating. When they'd been dragged into the dining room and plied with a mountain of mouthwatering southern fare any and all vestiges of politeness and timidity had gone all to hell. The cakes took the business of eating good food damn seriously and if the way they treated her all gentle like didn't give them an instant in, the way they threw down when it came to eating put them over the top.

The men in her family could eat but damn if the cakes didn't eat those men under the table ... and then some. Apparently being able to knock back the same amount of food as a mid-size dinosaur gave them entrance into some kind of man club because the men had gathered round and started chatting like they were old friends. Although they didn't know jack about football or barbequing, when it became clear that they appreciated a good battle and were well-versed in the art of fighting the conversation turned to ass-kicking.

Leave it to the grandmoms and aunts to say something totally politically incorrect.

“I thought y’all were gay?” Nanny Harper had asked the first impertinent question.

“We are, ma’am,” Butter Pecan Cake had said around a mouthful of banana pudding.

“Well y’all don’t eat like any gay men I’ve ever seen. I thought y’all were all vegetarians.”

“Goodness, just because they don’t eat pussy doesn’t mean that they have to be vegetarian,” Grandmommy Grace had thrown back.

“You have a point there. I don’t have nothing against gays but I don’t trust them damn vegetarians. There’s just something unnatural about that,” Snap’s momma had said.

Picking up a lock of each of her cake’s hair Grandmommy Grace had asked. “I thought the rainbow was your symbol. Aren’t you missing about five colors?”

“It is a mark of our house, ma’am,” White Cake had replied.

“Your whole family is gay?” Nanny Harper asked.

“No ma’am. All of the members of our family are warriors. The blue symbolizes that.”

“What about the women?” Grandmommy Grace asked.

“Especially the women,” White Cake said.

That got the approval of all of the women in the room – especially her Grandmommy Grace.

“Though we tend to kill anything that even attempts to harm our women,” Butter Pecan Cake added.

And that got the approval of all of the men in the room.

“You sure you’re gay?” Nanny Harper inquired.

“Yes ma’am,” her cakes answered.

“And don’t be trying to change them,” Grandmommy Grace threw in. “Besides these good-looking boys are only gay because they don’t have me full time.”

“Pointedly ignoring that, Grace,” Nanny Harper said.

Yeah, so was she.

Grandmommy Grace addressed Nanny Harper first. “Stop being a hater. Just because you can’t handle.”

Turning to her cakes she said. “Y’all might have an aversion to pussy, but being that you don’t have one to fighting to protect your women, you’re going to fit right on in.”

Hearing her most favoritest grandmommy say the word ‘pussy’ threw her for a loop. For a moment she thought that she was going to die, but then she just shrugged and apologized to her cakes.

“They’re always like that, so don’t waste your time being offended ... and while we’re going over the rules don’t even think of trying to steal my grandmommy being that I already have to share her with those menaces that Uncle Andronikas calls children. If you try that, it’s going to be so on. And second, don’t even think about calling my mamma Dr. Ruth unless you’re in the mood to have your asses kicked.”

“Will they still cook for us?” Butter Pecan Cake had asked.

“Boy, you’re family. Of course, we’ll cook for you,” Nannie Harper had said as she smacked the backs of their heads.

“And being that you’re family, we’ll also switch your hind parts if you act up ... not that we need a reason,” Grandmommy Grace threw in.

“Okay, then they can offend us all they want to,” he acquiesced and went right back to inhaling the banana pudding.

“I like him,” Nanny Harper had said.

“You already have a whole mess of kids and great grands and such, so you back off. Don’t try and bogard these boys. They’re mine,” her momma had huffed.

“Well since we share everything here, you have to share them too, Ruth so stop being stingy.”

“If anybody’s going to bogard these boys it’s going to be me being that as Ruth’s momma I trump her claim,” Grandmommy Grace said in her nonsense voice.

They’d spent two months in Patrale even though she’d had a perfectly good house to rent. The former house of one of the co-owners of Evil Twins, she’d gotten a sweet deal on the roomy ranch style house. It had everything some young, hot somethings could ever need. Still, so that her cakes could get a decent supply of spoiling and her momma could get in some decent spoiling time, she’d stayed home for two months. Every night they had dinner at someone else’s house and every night they came home loaded down with enough food to feed a family of four.

Her momma had blossomed. Dr. Ruth Webber-Jones may have had all the trappings of success including the Ph. D. in archaeology, tenure at the prestigious Emory University, and a daughter with a wall full of degrees, but she and Grandmommy Grace were the only husbandless women. Though Grandmommy Grace enjoyed her husbandless state way more than people appreciated, she knew that her momma had wanted a husband. And whereas Grandmommy Grace had her three nutty ass

cousins along with Uncle Andronikos to momma to death, her momma only had her to momma. The cakes might not be her brothers (*and they couldn't be being that they were her standby baby daddys*) but that didn't stop her momma from treating them like they were her children. As such, they got many hugs and kisses and enough food to see a small family of bears through hibernation.

Making her presence known, she walked into the kitchen and dropped kisses on the tops of the both of their heads. Normally, she'd kiss their cheeks but they were busy straight grubbing. She couldn't blame him. The food smelled good. Grabbing a plate, she helped herself to a little bit of everything. It was a good half hour before any of them slowed down enough to even attempt speech.

"So what has you smiling so big?" White Cake asked.

"After putting in two week's worth of twelve-hour days I've finished up all of my projects early so I have a five-day weekend."

"You look like you have big plans."

"Yep, I'm going to lounge around in my jammies and not do a damn thing."

"Like you've ever lounged around doing absolutely nothing," Butter Pecan Cake scoffed.

"I have to so shut up," she smiled at them. "Oh by the way, I got y'all something."

"What is it?" White Cake asked.

"Something you'll like," she said as she rubbed her hands together knowing that although they were intimidating, Zjxadrâzqué'an males, they loved surprises as much as earthling children.

“But it’s not our birthdays or anything,” Butter Pecan Cake commented.

“It doesn’t have to be your birthday. I love you so shut up,” she said as she walked into the living room and grabbed the brown-papered package.

Presenting it to them, she sat down with her camera at the ready so she could capture their reaction. Her cakes went silent when she handed them the package and sat there for a moment before unwrapping it. She smiled noting that they un-wrapped the package as carefully as one would unwrap the swaddling from a newborn. Holding her camera at the ready she awaited the moment that they glimpsed the contents before snapping photos. She stopped snapping after two shots when it became clear that they were overwhelmed. *Excellent*. She hoped their silence meant that they liked it.

Inside was a painting of them taken from one of her favorite photos depicting a sleeping Butter Pecan Cake holding a sleeping White Cake. After falling in love with that photo, she’d begged and finally threatened her cousin Zoysia, who was the most badass artist she knew, to paint it. Zoysia not only expertly captured their beauty; she also captured the love that flowed between them.

Though she was prepared for them to like it, she wasn’t prepared for the tears in their eyes.

“Y’all don’t like it?” she asked worriedly. “I hope you don’t think that I violated your privacy. You guys just looked so beautiful that I couldn’t help myself. No one but Zoysia saw the photo,” she explained. Dropping the camera, she rushed to them holding her hands out in a placating manner. “Please don’t be mad.”

Her words were cut off by Butter Pecan Cake's finger against her lips. She remained silent as they carefully placed the painting on the counter. Biting her lip, she waited as they approached her. She didn't know what to expect but when they drew her into their arms she sighed in relief.

"How could you ever think that we'd be mad at such a gift? It's beautiful, Naomi," Butter Pecan Cake whispered.

"So you like it?"

"We love it," White Cake answered.

After the tender scene in the kitchen, Naomi trekked to her room and ran a bubble bath. Lounging in the opulent tub she closed her eyes and officially began her weekend completely not giving a damn that it was Wednesday evening. After her lengthy soak, she did what she said she would. That is, she threw on some jammies and crawled into bed. Cutting the television on, she decreased the volume and went to sleep to the sounds of ESPN.

The next evening found her cuddled up on a couch with a steaming cup of hot chocolate and a pile of erotic romances. She'd spent the bulk of the morning and afternoon making her way through her 'to be read' pile. She'd just finished the debut novels of Yazmin Taylor and Reid Randolph, and could do nothing more than emit a well-satisfied sigh. New to the scene her ass. Those might be Yazmin and Reid's first books but those divas wrote like they invented the art of storytelling. Clearly, she needed to email them and call dibs on the characters Allesandro Strozzi and Sean Lodi. Damn, those were some straight bringing-it alphas.

She was busy deciding who she'd do first (*Allesandro or Sean*) when her phone rang. Picking it up, she smiled upon hearing Vin's rumbling

baritone on the other end. As always, his voice made her go all girl on the inside. Then again, just looking at him did the same thing. A Ph.D. candidate at Emory University, he taught part time whilst working on his dissertation. Between his studies and her work schedule they never had as much time together as either wanted, but they'd managed to weekly appointment to do 'kick back and relax' date. They'd spent the last few months catching movies, ballgames, and bowling. They were cheap dates but fun dates filled with laughter that left each of them smiling at the end. Though greatly tempted, she'd yet to consummate their relationship. Though a fine man, she felt it best to wait until his future was settled before engaging in activity that could result in a baby. It wasn't that she wouldn't welcome a child; it was that she wanted the optimal situation for herself and any children she might have. And the fact of the matter was that right now Vin didn't know where his career would take him and she was already where she wanted to be.

She may be a modern woman but that didn't mean that she didn't want a traditional family. By traditional, she didn't simply mean having a husband, 2.5 kids and the white picket fence in the suburbs, because that simply wasn't her. She could compromise on the number of children and everything else that came in the American Dream package, but she wouldn't compromise on the husband. She deserved that and so did any children she'd have. Though her momma had broken her back and given her all of the love she had and provided well for her, and though she'd been well-loved by her men in the Patrale community, she was painfully aware of the absence of her own father. Her assortment of uncles and grandfathers always showed up for all of her events led by the lead uncle – her Uncle

Daddy - yet as much as they loved and spoiled her she'd always felt like she was renting a daddy ... especially when they had children of their own.

Perhaps it would've been different if her father had been dead, but he wasn't. He was alive and kicking it with his 'real' family in a cushy gated community somewhere up north where he found all of the time in the world to attend to his 'real' kids. She hadn't been his real child. Though he knew where she lived, she'd never received any kind of acknowledgement from the good doctor because she wasn't worth his time. Hell, she hadn't been anything to him not even worth the price of a birthday card and the postage which with to mail it.

When she'd reached her majority, she'd gone up to see him. He'd looked right into her eyes - *which was easy being that they were the same height*- that were mirror images of his and hadn't even known who she was. In that moment all of her dreams of any kind of relationship with him had shattered. Instead of making a scene, she'd quietly introduced herself and thanked him for having the decency to leave her with her momma. Saying her piece, she'd walked out of his well-appointed office and never looked back. And then she'd gone home to Patrale and hugged her momma damn near to death realizing how truly strong her momma was to withstand not only the rejection of her own femininity and beauty but also the rejection of her child. Her momma may have hurt but she hadn't withered under his rejection. No, she'd put her on her hip and worked her way through high school, undergrad, grad school and kept working even after she'd earned her doctorate.

After she hugged her momma, she made it a point to hug all the mommas and dads in Patrale who'd helped her momma, saving the biggest hug for Grandmommy Grace. Though everyone had helped raise her, it was

Grandmommy Grace who'd smacked her momma upside the head and told her to get her shit together. Her Grandmommy Grace had known what her momma was going through having had a child out of wedlock. Twenty years later, it was obvious that she'd done the damn thing being that her only son had graduated with honors from the Naval Academy and her only daughter had earned a doctorate degree.

As always thinking of Grandmommy Grace brought a smile to her lips. Grandmommy Grace was a straight up pistol. She'd been on a perpetual road trip ever since her momma had graduated from Emory. Her momma had wanted to be an archaeologist and Grandmommy Grace had encouraged it. She'd packed up her house and when her momma had gone to grad school and did her doctorate; Grandmommy Grace had been right there caring for them both so that her momma could make her dream come true. And it wasn't just Grandmommy Grace, but the rest of Patrale. When they weren't in Patrale, parts of Patrale came to them. Damn, she had a great family ... and Grandmommy Grace was one of the leaders of it.

Although she'd never stepped foot in a college classroom, damn if she wasn't one of the smartest people she knew. Not only did she fly helicopters and race speedboats, she spoke Norwegian, Italian, and Mandarin Chinese. She wasn't sure why Grandmommy Grace spoke Norwegian but she spoke Italian so she could converse with hot Italian studs and she spoke Chinese because she'd trotted off to China and learned kung-fu.

"Naomi?" Vin called.

Hearing Vin call her name pulled her from her walk down memory lane. "Yes, I'm here. How are you, Vin?"

“I’m good. I know you said that you were planning on a long weekend but I wanted to know if you were up for dinner.”

“You know that I’m always up for food. What are you in the mood for?”

“Soul food.”

Naomi laughed. Regardless of his fancy education, his exotic name and the fact that he was from someplace that wasn’t the south, Vin had a southern heart. That man was always in the mood for soul food.

“Well then, you know we need to go to Dréa’s. Want to meet in an hour?”

“That’s fine. See you there.”

Stretching, she rose from her perch on the couch and headed to her room already thinking about the cabbage and neck bones she planned on ordering. If Dréa hadn’t been married to an ornery, possessive cowboy, she would’ve contemplated adding her to her harem of chefs.

Chapter Five: Acceptance, Sigh

Sitting back from her plate, Naomi closed her eyes and licked her lips. Damn, Dréa could cook her ass off. She always put her foot in it, but today she put both feet in all the way up to her thighs. Her stomach was doing ‘*we’re not worthy*’ gestures and the –itis was slowly creeping up on her. Obviously she was going to have to reconsider fighting Dréa’s man because she could use her in the harem of chefs.

“Good?” Vin asked after he’d finally put down his own fork.

“Is sweet iced tea the default drink in the south?” she smiled back.

Laughing Vin held out his hand to her. “You know that I admire you, right?” he asked.

“You know you better because I have a shitload of brothers who’d have something to say to you if you didn’t,” she returned before placing her hand in his. Vin had beautiful hands. Hell, he had a beautiful everything.

Looking into her eyes he called her name softly. “Naomi.”

“Yes,” she replied.

“Don’t hate me,” he began.

And that’s when she knew that her long weekend was about thirty seconds from being shot all to hell. Still, she asked the question that needed to be asked. “Why would I ever hate you?”

“Because I’m about to do you wrong,” he whispered. “I met a woman.”

She hadn’t even had time to process the first bit of his sentence when he hit her with that last bit. *He met a woman? Wait a minute. Ain’t I a woman?* She wondered feeling sisterhood with the late Sojourner Truth.

Despite her inner turmoil, she didn't allow the words she felt in her heart to come tumbling out of her mouth. Instead of reciting the refrain of Sojourner's poem she simply swallowed the lump in her throat and nodded. Regardless of how unpleasant his words, at least Vin was being straight up with her ... before they became intimate.

"Tell me about her," she said.

For the next fifteen minutes she listened as Vin gushed about this woman. This woman who was petite, gentle, feminine ... all of the things she was not. Oh, he didn't say as much ... but he hadn't needed to. From the detailed picture that he painted, she *knew*.

"She sounds lovely, Vin. I wish you the best of luck with her. I'll miss you though," She said as she gathered her stuff.

"I know that you don't believe me but I'll miss you too. I guess that I don't need to ask if we can still be friends," he said a little sadly.

Can we still be friends? Fuck no! her mind screamed. But she didn't say that. Instead she said, "If she's comfortable with it, but I have to tell you, as the new woman, I wouldn't be comfortable with us still being friends. Then again, I'm possessive about my stuff," she smiled.

They'd hugged and parted ways. She watched him climb into his ancient Chevy Silverado and drive off before going inside and ordering two entire banana puddings to go. One for her and one for her cakes. Her heart might ache but at least her stomach would be satisfied.

Once home, she'd spelled out '*enjoy the pudding*' with refrigerator magnets before heading off to her room. She'd meant to take a bubble bath and read another romance novel but she'd ended up curling up in bed berating herself for even thinking that a man like Vin would contemplate a happily-ever-after with a woman like her. It wasn't that she'd had her heart

broken by Vin; she'd simply had her femininity challenged ... albeit with a polite sincerity that had broken little pieces off of her self esteem. She was always the woman when it came to a job, a good time, or a challenge but she was never the woman when it came to being one man's woman. When was it going to be her turn? When was she going to be the right woman for a man who wanted more than a one night stand or pussy on standby?

She knew what she was and what she wasn't and didn't dare pretend to be anyone different. At 185 pounds and a solid, muscular size eighteen, she wasn't a supermodel despite being 6'3 1/2" tall. Even though she had a graduate degree from a prestigious college, she wasn't one of those high-powered, coveted CEO-type jobs that would've made her more desirable to the important people of the world or to the opposite sex. She may've been a good woman ... but men didn't want good women. They wanted beautiful women, feminine women ... women who were the exact opposite of her.

She didn't mean to start crying but once that first tear escaped, she couldn't recall the river that poured forth. Breathing in deep, she attempted to counter the tears with words of encouragement. Fuck anybody who couldn't accept her for who she was. *But what about yourself?* Her mind inquired. *Can you accept who you are?* I have to because I can be no one else she answered sincerely ... but it's certainly be nice to at least once feel what it was like to be loved and appreciated as is.

Nyx and Ferro immediately knew something was remiss as soon as they walked into the house. Going into their battle ready mode they made a beeline straight for Naomi's room. Hearts beating fast, they somehow managed to gently open the door rather than kicking it in like they wanted to. As soon as they opened the door they knew that she'd been crying even

before they saw her tear-streaked face. And being that she was still sleeping instead of gearing up for a night out with the young man that took her out on occasion, they knew that he was the reason for her tears. Later, they'd break him but right now they needed to see to their Naomi.

"I'm going to kill him," Ferro said.

"Aren't you going to at least ask what happened?" Nyx asked. "I don't need to know what happened; she's been crying and that is enough," Ferro thundered. "I'm going to show him what happens when you fuck with a Zjxadrâzqué'an female."

"And I'm going to help you but first we need to see to Naomi and find out *exactly* what happened before we embark on that killing spree you're planning."

"How do you know that I'm planning any such thing?" Ferro asked.

"Because I'm thinking the same damn thing, but we're partly to blame. We should've exercised our claim long ago and such a situation could've been avoided," Nyx said.

"Yes, we should've. Why didn't we?"

"Because we were trying to be noble instead of the overbearing warlords we are."

"Ah yes. From now on, I'm going back to being a badass warlord. It works for me," Ferro said.

"You say *'from now on'* like you were ever anything else. You snarled at any man who got close and you barely tolerated Vin. Now try and look a little less intimidating and let's focus on Naomi. She has the next three days off so let's take her out and show her the best time."

"Isn't the phrase *'show her a good time'*?" Ferro asked.

“Yes, but right now good is not good enough. For that matter neither is best but it’ll have to do for now,” Nyx answered as he gently placed the coverlet over Naomi and hustled Ferro out of the room.

They spent the next hour making plans. They spent the half hour after that devouring the banana pudding she’d left in the fridge.

“Even amidst her pain she thinks of us,” Ferro marveled.

“She’s a good woman,” Nyx agreed.

“And tomorrow we’re going to show her how good,” Ferro snarled.

Nyx bowed his head and smiled. Ferro could do all of the snarling he wanted but he never came close to hiding his love for Naomi. Reaching out to hug his mate, he kissed him gently before pulling back. “Let’s shower and share her bed with her. She’s sure to wake up before the morning and I don’t want her to be alone.”

Naomi woke when she felt the bed dip and the cakes softly call her name. Despite her misery she couldn’t help but smile. Her cakes were nothing if not playful.

“Naomi. Naomi, love wake up.”

“Cakes?” she whispered sleepily.

“Expecting someone else?” Ferro playfully growled.

“Of course not, Butter Pecan Cake. What’s going on?”

“We want to play,” Nyx answered before Ferro could say the outrageous answer flittering through his mind.

“Okay, what are we playing?” she asked as she snuggled against Ferro’s back and pulled Nyx closer to her.

“Movie theater. We’ve got the first two seasons of *The Boondocks* and *The Dave Chappelle Show*,” he tempted.

“And someone’s favorite champagne truffles,” Butter Pecan Cake whispered from behind her.

“Well then, it’s on. Turn on the television and lay back so I can lean my head against you,” she demanded.

They’d spent the next six hours laughing their asses off and indulging on those champagne truffles before calling it a night.

“You’re already here and I’m comfortable so stay,” she said not even bothering to open her eyes. She was asleep before either could respond.

The next morning she was surprised to discover that her cakes were already up. Padding into the kitchen she was all set to grab some food when White Cake waved an envelope in front of her.

“Open it,” he demanded with a shit-eating grin as he easily hefted her and sat her atop the granite counter.

Opening the envelope she gasped upon finding a gift certificate to Yvonne Rolanda’s. Yvonne Rolanda’s was the google-plex of spas. Besides boasting the obligatory spa essentials, they also had a clothes boutique, a pet spa and a five-star restaurant on the premises. The employees were the best in the fields. Gaining the top ratings in every category, they had a six-month waiting list the day that they opened. That was impressive but what really made it impressive was that it catered to all types of women and men. Not only did they have some momma mack weaveologists and braiders, their robes came in sizes up to 10X.

“Oh damn.”

“You like?” White Cake asked.

“Yeah, but it’s too much,” she began.

“It’s not enough so hush,” Butter Pecan Cake interrupted.

She bit her lip to stop her smile from escaping. Butter Pecan Cake might be walking danger to everyone else but he was a puppy when it came to her.

“You’re already beautiful, but a spa day will do you good. You aren’t pampered nearly enough,” White Cake interjected.

Naomi smiled even as she rolled her eyes. Between White Cake and Butter Pecan Cake she was almost rotten they spoiled her so much. It wasn’t the stuff they gave her; it was the consideration with which they treated her. Although both were protective, Butter Pecan Cake took great exception to anyone (including herself) daring to think that she wasn’t the most beautiful woman in the entirety of the world. She loved him for that and so many other things.

“You’re so biased, but I love you for it,” she smiled.

“I only speak the truth, Naomi.”

The fact that he’d actually stopped throwing down on his food long enough to get a whole sentence out let her know just how serious he was.

“Okay, Butter Pecan Cake. I concede the point to you. You’re right; I’m beautiful.”

“I don’t believe I care for your tone. You don’t sound as if you believe it, but one day you will as will these stupid ass males that litter the planet.”

“One man’s treasure...” she began.

“Don’t even contemplate finishing that sentence. You are a treasure. I can help these earth males see it if you’d just give me the green light.”

She smiled at his words. “I don’t know if I am more amazed that you’ve picked up American colloquialisms or the fact that you are so casual about disclosing the fact that you aren’t from earth.”

“I can’t believe that you didn’t wild out when we told you,” White Cake said.

“Well if you recall the circumstances, y’all kind of dropped it on me when my brain was busy. There was no way I could fully appreciate the import of your disclosure when my eyes were busy taking in all of your hotness. Hmm, mmm, mmm. Okay, have to think about something that’s going to make me stop lusting after you. Big swords, fast cars, endless desserts, stock in a company that makes all of my favorite foods ... okay, not working. Not working at all,” she laughed.

“We’re not that handsome. Virtually all men on our planet look the same,” White Cake said.

“And the males there would fight each other to have a woman like you,” Butter Pecan Cake threw in.

“Ooh, would they strip down and let me rub some baby oil on them first? Oh yeah, that’d rock. So when are you going to take me to your home world?” she joked.

“You can go when we assemble a proper contingent of warriors to protect you,” Butter Pecan Cake answered.

“Can’t you just wrangle up a group of hot Zjxadrâzqué’an males so I can get my freak on?”

“Absolutely not. Although the Zjxadrâzqué’an Empire is mighty and the decrees about the treatment of females are strictly enforced, there is no way that we’d risk your protection to just any contingent of Zjxadrâzqué’an males. You will have the best warriors guarding you and that is that,” Butter Pecan Cake said. “No inferior males should ever be near you including these males you attend games with. Speaking of the little man, where is he?”

“Probably enjoying the day with his new woman.”

“Good, I never liked him anyway. He isn’t nearly good enough to have you as a woman,” Butter Pecan Cake huffed. “I can toss him into a black hole if you like.”

“That’s what we call overkill.”

“No overkill was whatever the hell your uncles gave us to drink the first time we met,” Butter Pecan Cake said.

She couldn’t help but smile at the look on his handsome face. “Stop pouting. You said that your esophagus had healed up. I warned you not to drink anything that my grandfathers tried to give you. Next time you’ll listen to me.”

“Well at least we can hear you after regaining most of our hearing after drinking that stuff,” White Cake said.

“Oh it wasn’t all bad. At least you know where your liver is now,” she smiled.

“That’s because it tried to claw its way out through our chest after the first drop hit our tongues,” White Cake growled.

“Speaking of ‘clawing its way out through your chest’ perhaps we can give Vin some of that before we toss him into a black hole,” Butter Pecan Cake grumbled.

Naomi had a hard time not smiling. Butter Pecan Cake was hell on any male around her. You came correct to her or you didn’t come at all. Though he didn’t particularly like any male, he’d tolerated Vin – who it turned out wasn’t her man even though he’d stepped to her correctly and stepped away with dignity and honor. She didn’t like it but she’d appreciated the way he did things.

Although in theory she knew what went on at a spa she'd never understood why people crushed on it so hard. But that's because she'd never been to Yvonne Rolanda's. Oh my damn was the only thing that she could come up with. Everything on her felt like silk she thought as she looked in her mirror in the posh dressing room and felt herself up. Her skin practically glowed. Her hair which was already fly was even flyer done up in Chinese locks in the front and ringlet curls cascading down her back with purple highlights. And then there was her outfit. Never would she have attempted such a thing but her cakes had insisted, which is why she rocked the leather skirt and the *'lick your way from my ankles to my coochie'* pumps and the indigo and black corset. It had taken three women to lace her into that corset and a whole lot of steal to hold her girls up but the impromptu mammogram from the attendants had been worth it because her cleavage looked like temptation on a platter.

Even though it was February she wasn't worried about the shortness of the skirt or the skimpiness of the corset because she had a fly ass leather trench that went with it. With the corset and leather mini she looked like a dominatrix but as soon as she put on that trench coat she looked like a dominatrix heading to a gun fight. Yep, no doubt about it, she looked good. Scratch that, she looked fucking amazing. If she wasn't fiending cock so hard she would've dated herself.

She smiled looking at the new racks of clothes that the cakes had insisted that she try on. Even though she had a thing or two to say about their bossiness, she had to admit that they had good taste. Looking around at the multitude of outfits, she couldn't help but smile. There wasn't a practical outfit in the bunch. Every single item screamed *'you know you want me'*, which wasn't exactly lounging around the house wear.

Though she'd planned on a quiet night at home, her cakes had quickly nixed that idea. As Butter Pecan Cake had said, since asshole was no longer something he had to consider, they were going to take her out and she was going to like it. White Cake –the more diplomatic of the two – had winked at her and said that it would be unfair to deprive them of the chance to show off such a stunning woman as herself. Well damn. How could she say no to that? It might not be true but it certainly did wonders for her damaged ego.

She was thinking of her cakes when a knock sounded at the door of her dressing room. Smiling she bade them to enter. She was about to say something when she caught the first glimpse of the cakes. *Mercy. Oh mercy.* They always looked good but tonight ... tonight they looked downright edible. Ain't no man on a motorcycle, no man in a strip club, no man anywhere ever looked this good.

Wearing all black from their black leather boots, black leather pants and black button-up shirts (that didn't have the first button buttoned), it was all she could do to tear her eyes off of their bodies. But she did ... reluctantly. Biting her lip, she looked into their eyes and had to swallow her moans. Damn, damn, damn, no man had the right to look so tempting, much less two, but there they were looking all hot. They might be on the lighter shade of tan but they had some straight out black man lips that hid dentist ad teeth and long tongues she was sure could bring a woman to multiple orgasms. And then there was their hair. If her own hair didn't look so good, she'd have to sabotage them being that their glossy waist-length hair looked like the perfect place to hold onto as she was having her way with them.

"Are you through ogling us?" Butter Pecan Cake asked.

“Are you two through looking fine?” she returned.

“Well we wanted to look our best for you,” White Cake responded.

“Let me be the first to say you totally outdid yourselves.”

“That was our goal,” White Cake replied as they both smiled smiles that caused her to involuntarily cream her panties.

“And our other goal awaits you, now come beautiful one,” Butter Pecan Cake said.

The chauffeured Hummer that had ferried them to the spa was waiting on them when they exited. She thought the limo was a bit over the top but her cakes weren’t listening to her. They insisted that she was going in the limo and she was going to like it. When they settled her in between them and fed her the chocolate dipped strawberries and quenched her thirst with some Bojangles sweet iced tea she decided then and there that she liked it. When they took the remote and turned on the television and NFL Network popped on, she decided that she freaking loved it. *What wasn’t to love?* She had football, food and fine ass men.

“Where are we going?” she asked after finishing off the last strawberry.

“Out. Now hush and let us take care of you,” Butter Pecan Cake said.

She had a retort for his high-handedness but decided not to waste her breath upon seeing the stubborn set of his jaw. Instead she sat back in the supple leather seats and allowed her cakes to take care of her – just like they’d been doing since she met them. Oh she loved these men.

Her musings were interrupted by White Cake’s sultry voice. “What are you cooking up in that mind of yours?”

“Oh, nothing much. I was just thinking that if I wasn’t sure that you and Butter Pecan Cake were madly in love and totally committed to each other that I’d pack up our home and move to Utah whereupon I’d make both of you my wives.”

Though White Cake burst out in laughter, Butter Pecan Cake simply shook his head.

“That is wrong on so many levels.”

“Is not,” she sing-songed.

“Is too,” he whispered in her ear making her pussy sigh. “Now come.”

“Do you mean that literally?” she challenged.

“Not at the moment but the next time I mutter it I will. Now be good. We’re here,” he said as he helped her out of the vehicle.

Here turned out to be one of her all-time favorite spots: Evil Twins. Evil Twins was the hottest sports bar on the entirety of the east coast. Only one other place could touch it and that was Mean Older Brother Bar out in Brickey, Colorado. And the only reason Mean Older Brother Bar came close to being as hot as Evil Twins was because it was the sister sports bar to Evil Twins in a kind of wild, wild west way. Whereas Evil Twins served a wide variety of food and boasted a multitude of flat-screens that showed a multitude of sports, Mean Older Brother had only three things on the menu: whisky, beer, and ass whippings and it showed only three things on their one TV: football in fall; baseball in spring; and static the rest of the time.

“I love this place,” Naomi smiled as she walked between them with her hand in the crooks of their muscular arms.

“We know. That’s why we brought you,” Butter Pecan Cake said with a smile.

Though Evil Twins didn't take reservations, they'd walked through the crowd and sat at a table reserved for them. A man dripping of money and put off that he had to calm his balls (translation: wait) or get the fuck out as Evil Twins' infamous sign said made a comment but she couldn't quite make it out. From the stiffening of her cakes she knew that she hadn't needed to hear it. She did, however hear what her cakes said to him and she was glad she wasn't their enemy.

"Be nice. I like the owners," she said.

"We like them too which is why we're only going to maim that rude man a little bit," White Cake said.

"No, you're not. You're going to finish spoiling me like you guys planned," she said as she took off her jacket totally oblivious to the fact that her cleavage was the main attraction for section A of the sports bar. That is she was oblivious until she heard her cakes growl.

Not even sparing them a glance she asked their problem. "What?"

"I sincerely hope that it was a female that laced you into that, Naomi," Butter Pecan Cake said.

"Being that you personally saw to the removal of all male attendants from the boutique, yeah I only had female attendants."

"And just how did they get all of you into that?" White Cake grumbled.

"The circus strongman they brought in."

"Not funny," Butter Pecan Cake said. "No male should be touching you."

"Since when. I'm –," she began.

"Since we decided to exercise our right of claim in regards to you," Butter Pecan Cake said.

“You already claimed me just like I claimed you.”

“Yes, but when we exercised claimed you became a Zjxadrâzqué'an female,” White Cake offered.

“Yeah and y'all became southern so don't even try and act like being Zjxadrâzqué'an trumps being southern,” she huffed.

“It doesn't trump, but when you become Zjxadrâzqué'an female, certain benefits come attached with that,” Butter Pecan Cake said.

“Ooh, like what? More spoiling from you guys?” she asked.

“Exactly like that. Now eat. We still have things to do,” White Cake said.

They grumbled a bit (translation: more than people in hell wanting ice water) but eventually they settled down. They enjoyed their meal immensely and the college basketball game that was playing.

Among the things that they *had* to do was visit one of the cake's choice party spots. Though she'd been to many a strip club, she'd never quite made it to a gay bar. And even if she had, she wouldn't have guessed that there were gay bars like this. By like this she didn't mean that it had fabulous window dressings; she meant that it had more alphas per square inch than she'd ever seen outside of a family gathering. These men might be gay but they were men just like her uncles – dangerous motherfuckers. They were also hawwwwwwwwt.

“Is everyone in here just fine for no damn reason?” she asked her cakes who were in the process of dragging her to the dance floor before she even had a chance to check her coat.

“Well, I'm sure there is a reason but I really hadn't paid much attention to the males here being that I have Nyx.”

“Same,” White Cake said as they found a spot on the floor and set her between them.

“You guys are the best. I hope I find a man like y’all one day,” she said. She would’ve said more but her jam came on. And you just couldn’t listen to *‘In the Club’* without getting your groove on.

Zoran was tired. He’d spent the last four months watching over the emperor’s woman and child and frankly he was beyond tired. He was fucking exhausted. Dammit, he was a warrior – a seasoned warrior at that – who’d graduated at the top of his class in the Zjxadrâzqué'an Warrior Academy. Though he was only second-in-command of the whole of the Zjxadrâzqué'an Empire, beings feared him just as much as they feared the emperor. Well that rule applied to everyone except for Xiloxoch and Reign. Damn, they wore him out. Never had he met a more battle-ready anybody than the emperor’s woman. Poor Nyx and Ferro. He saw why the emperor invited them into their royal house and elevated them in rank. They’d been babysitting her for over ten years. As soon as the emperor had put a toe onto his planet he and half his crew had begged to be relieved of their duties as they’d boarded their ship.

He needed to unwind. It wasn’t that he was scared of Xiloxoch; it was that he had a healthy respect for her. In spite of the fact that he was Zjxadrâzqué'an male and Zjxadrâzqué'an males feared few things, he wasn’t trying to fuck with that human woman. When it became obvious that she’d killed a man, he looked for him out of curiosity. It wasn’t what he’d found that had put fear in him; it was what he hadn’t found. What he hadn’t found was the victim. And he knew that there was a victim because he’d located minute traces of it – in a beautifully decorated container in her

curio cabinet. Yeah, he wasn't scared of her but he wasn't fucking with her either. Damn, he was thankful that God had seen fit to make her an ally of the empire instead of an enemy.

As soon as he'd boarded his ship he'd called Nyx and Ferro to find out what earth offered for them. With their usual efficiency, they'd spat out the information. Though he could be anywhere on earth within minutes he'd decided to stay in the city at least for another day. Nyx and Ferro had supplied him with a list of establishments exclusive to the otherworldies and it just so happened that Atlanta had one.

Showering and putting on the standard outfit of leather pants, black t-shirt, platinum armbands and hooded leather duster, he shook out his hair wearing his hair loose of his standard battle braid for the first time in years. He was surprised to see that his normally shoulder-length hair fell to the middle of his back. Oh well, he'd attend to it once he returned home. Right now, he was going to go to this bar and do something he hadn't done in over a decade: relax. Walking into the establishment he was scoping out potential bed partners when he sensed the presence of his two friends. Protocol demanded that he show his face even if it was only for a few seconds.

Nyx? Ferro? He called telepathically.

Zoran?

Where are you? I wish to deliver my gratitude in person.

Far corner of the dance floor.

Making his way over, he couldn't help but smile at the two. They were an eclectic couple but they clearly loved each other. And beyond that they were some of the finest warriors that he'd ever had the privilege of fighting beside. Reaching them he was about to speak when he glimpsed the female

with them. Though he could only see her eyes as she was practically sandwiched between the warriors, he knew that she was breathtaking ... and he also knew that she was his mate. He knew because her essence filled his nostrils and his ears picked up on her body's song. He steadied himself waiting for a proper glimpse of this woman who in that moment became his entire world.

She didn't know it but she owned him and not simply his body but his heart, his dreams and all of the breaths granted to him. She owned his past because every breath he'd drawn was so that he could become a male that was worthy of her. She owned his present and right now he lived for her. She owned his future for everything he did from this moment on, he would do to prove that he was worthy of her. Everything belonged to her and he could do naught but draw in a deep breath and thank the one God.

When the warriors separated briefly, he was treated to a glimpse of everything that was right in the world. She was glorious and her beauty robbed him of all reasonable thought. A masterpiece of curves and temptation, he was in the midst of losing his composure over her. That is why he could only stand still when she slid out from between the warriors, vamped her way up to him and poked him in the chest. The combination of her hands upon his body and her stunning beauty caused a ruckus within him. He felt everything all at once and yet still he wanted more. He wanted everything.

Before he could inform her that she was his mate, he was blindsided with her anger.

"I know you didn't just waltz up in here and ogle Butter Pecan Cake's man. White Cake doesn't belong to you and he ain't never going to belong

to you so you can just take your eyeballs and put them back in your damn head and then get the fuck out.”

What the hell? What cake?

He watched in disbelief as she turned to the warriors and cussed them out. “You don’t let some other man take your man. White Cake is yours. And Butter Pecan is yours!” she shouted before whirling around and shooting accusations at him once more.

“Get away from them you wannabe home wrecker. There’s an entire club full of gay men here who are all fine as all get out so you should be feeling like a gay man let loose in a feather boa factory at the moment. Now go get your own man or I’ll kick your ass all over the metro area and when I’m done I’ll kick your ass some more. Neither one of the cakes belong to you, pal. If anyone’s going to have the cakes it’s me because I dibsed them.”

Turning back to the warriors, she grabbed them by the arms and strutted her stunning beauty out of the club. There was nothing he could do but stand in complete fucking awe of her. She was beautiful. She was his.

The first chorus of her jam hadn’t even finished when a man who broke all of the barriers to fineness came into view. Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhh damnnnnnnnnnnnnnn. Fuck. Shit. Damn some more. She didn’t know who the fuck he was but she knew that he was from the same place her cakes called home because he had that same fineness. Actually, he superceded the fineness of her cakes by just the tiniest margin. This motherfucker was the fucking blueprint for males.

Even taller than her cakes and more ripped than her cakes, he wore arrogance almost as well as he wore those leather pants. With eyes a color

she couldn't discern, hair that was an invitation for a woman to run her hands through it, and a jaw so strong it looked as if it was carved from stone, he was two steps away from being accosted by her. She was busy inserting him on her list of things she wanted to do before she died when she caught him ogling her cakes. Oh, no he didn't. He might be one of three men she'd have a four-some with but dammit the cakes were a couple and no one messed with that.

Stepping to him and poking him in his chest, she told him off good and proper. Of course that was after she got herself together. She had to get herself together because as soon as she'd touched his hard chest she had to call upon all of her will power to stop herself from using him like the stripper pole in her bedroom. Damn, she'd wanted to jump up on him, sink her nails into his heavily-muscled arms and climb him like Mt. Kilimanjaro until her thighs rested on his shoulders and her pussy was right in his face ... right where he could suck her to orgasm. Yeah, dammit, she knew that he was gay but fuck it like Dréa had told her one day over lunch if a man could suck dick then he could eat pussy. It was wisdom like that that made Dréa one of her favorite people. Well, that and the slamming ass food at her restaurant. She bet Mr. Hotness would go well with some chocolate chip pie. Shaking her head of both her sexual and culinary fantasies she told off her cakes, grabbed them up and marched out of the club.

Ferro and Nyx looked at each other and smiled. Things were getting ready to get interesting ... *real* interesting. Their Naomi had just cussed out one of the most-feared males in otherworldly realms. Had she been a little less pissed off she would've noticed how the music had been swallowed up by the chorus of collective indrawn breaths. Had she been a little less

pissed off she would've noticed that everyone cleared the area from around her. But their Naomi was a southerner born and bred and therefore didn't do lesser degrees of pissed off. There was simply cussed-out pissed off with an ass whipping pending and there was ass whipping with a side of cussed out.

Naomi didn't notice anything but every other being in the room noticed Zoran. It was hard not to notice him and not simply because he was second in command of an empire that was spread over most of known space. Zoran was noticed because he emanated power. Standing 8'1 1/2" tall and weighing 345 pounds with shoulder-length midnight black hair with royal blue streaks that signified their royal house, Zoran was a sight to behold. He intimidated without trying, which wasn't difficult when your stature took up so much space and your eyes blazed challenges. Yeah, everyone present had noticed Zoran and more importantly they'd noticed Zoran looking at Naomi. When Naomi had had her word of prayer with him those present backed away not because they feared for her but because they feared for themselves.

Just as it was it was general knowledge that Zjxadrâzqué'an males did not harm females, it was general knowledge that one did not trifle with the mate of a Zjxadrâzqué'an male unless one was ready to die. Naomi didn't know this being that she wasn't otherworldly but they had a feeling that even if she did know it she wouldn't have given a shit. Nope, she was good and pissed off on their behalf. They could only smile at her fierceness. If she'd been less outraged on their behalves, perhaps she would've been more concerned about the way that Zoran looked at her. And maybe, if her favorite song hadn't been playing, she hadn't been caught up in her anger she would've realized that this wasn't a gay club. But she was pissed off and

her song was playing and normally it wouldn't have been a problem but Zoran had seen her ... and unlike them, Zoran wasn't gay.

Having exercised their claim on her Naomi had unknowingly become theirs. And they protected, cherished and loved what was theirs. That meant that if anyone wanted to step to her they could only step to her one way. Naomi was now a Zjxadrâzqué'an female of the highest royal house with all of the rights and privileges due to her. They had to come bearing everything because they'd accept nothing less ... not even from Zoran, second in command of the massive and fierce Zjxadrâzqué'an empire. Zoran may have been in a state of shock but soon he'd realize that his woman had escaped him. And then ... then he'd come hunting. And though they liked and respected him, they weren't going to make it easy for him. Shutting off their telepathic link, they shielded themselves knowing that it'd take time for him to locate them. And by that time, they'd have Naomi prepared.

It's a good thing she had that trench coat on because if Zoran had glimpsed her in that corset he would've torn all of Atlanta up to get to her, Nyx said.

And she would've torn the neighboring communities all to pieces telling him no. Ferro returned.

They are going to be a good match, Nyx said.

He better come with his proclamations, or we'll tear the rest of Georgia all to pieces and a lot of the southeastern corridor whipping his ass, Ferro replied.

That goes without saying, Nyx replied. *Let's prepare her.*

Chapter Six: The Claiming

Though she'd cussed the whole limo ride home, she still hadn't run out of motherfuckers and sons of bitches. How dare that hot, fine, advertisement to ride him like Harley during at a motorcycle rally in Sturgis eyeball her cakes?

"You're my cakes, dammit," she started.

"...And if he doesn't like it he can get the fuck out," Nyx supplied.

"Hey, you took the words out of my mouth," she complained. "How did you know what I was going to say?"

"Uh, because we've only watched *Delirious* a thousand times since meeting you, White Cake supplied.

She couldn't help but smile. She loved that DVD and though he acted like he didn't like it, White Cake loved it too. Every time they went to Patrale and barbequed he did the entire skit about barbequing. White Cake might sound all proper but he knew the *Delirious* soundtrack like her right hand knew her clitoris.

"Oh hush," she scolded. "You want to watch it or did Mr. Needs His Ass Whipped - *whilst he's fucking me her mind supplied* - get you and Butter Pecan Cake all worked up?" she asked.

"Oh he got us all worked up all right," Butter Pecan Cake said as he chucked off his boots and carelessly tossed them on the floor.

"Hey, watch how you treat the boots," she admonished. Her admonitions were lost in the thunks of White Cake's boots joining them.

"Unlike your boots our boots are prime Zjxadràzqué'an footwear and thus don't have to be coddled like your footwear," Butter Pecan Cake said.

“There are three things you can’t talk about. The first one is Jesus; the second thing is my momma; the third thing is my shoe collection. My boots may not be made for two Zjxadrâzqué'an prima donnas such as yourselves but they look good whether I’m dropping it like it’s hot or hauling back and kicking the shit out of someone, so there,” she said.

“We are *not* prima donnas,” Butter Pecan Cake said as he shrugged out of his shirt.

She didn’t even have to look at White Cake to know that he was doing the same. Her cakes were always running on hot. Even though the cool air required her to wear a coat, the forty degree weather wasn’t even enough to make them close up their shirts. Really shirt buttons were so wasted on them – not that she was complaining because her cakes were the hotness. They didn’t mind showing off their hotness and she didn’t mind ogling it.

“How is it that you guys can walk around tempting two-thirds the men and seven-eighths of the women in Atlanta yet you throw a fit when I take off my coat?” she asked.

“Are you saying that we’re not hot enough to tempt the other eighth of women?” White Cake asked totally ignoring her own question.

“You can’t answer my question with a question,” she sassed knowing that neither of them was going to answer her question. They tended to not answer when they were getting ready to be on the losing end of the argument – which happened pretty much any time they had conversation.

“Yeah, but what about those other women?” he persisted as he unbuttoned the top button on his pants.

“Those are the ones that I’m going to leave alive to tell the story about what I did to the other peeps who tried to move in on my cakes,” she said.

Noticing that they were both down to just their leather pants and knowing that all they wore beneath them was a silken boxer brief-styled undergarment if indeed they wore anything at all, she figured now was a good time to get one of them to unlace her. The corset was one of the most kickass garments in her wardrobe but she didn't relish the idea of sleeping in anything where there was a chance of her suffocating in her own cleavage.

"Seeing that y'all are but a few moments away from having your hands all over each other can one of you unlace me before White Cake has you screaming out his name?" she teased.

"Ha! It is I who has Nyx screaming out my name, Naomi," Butter Pecan Cake said whilst approaching.

"Whatever," she said as she started to shimmy out of her coat. She couldn't help but smile as she did so. After seeing her in her corset – which they had selected – they'd raised so much ruckus that she had to keep the coat on unless she was crushed on both sides by their hot bodies – not that she was complaining. Being treated to touches of their bodies was even better than eyeing them.

She was surprised when Butter Pecan Cake placed his hands on her forearms preventing her from taking off the coat.

"Don't tell me I have to wear the coat in the house too," she teased.

"Depends on who is present," White Cake growled.

"You guys are so bad," she teased. She was about to say more but Butter Pecan Cake leaned down and whispered in her ear.

"Yes, we are and ironically we are equally as good. Some would even say that we're the best," he said as he pulled her against that massive, ripped chest.

Before she could even fully emit the gasp that his touch elicited, Butter Pecan Cake had her earlobe between his strong teeth and his big hand in her hair pulling her head back and enticing her up on her tip toes. Oh damn, he felt so good. She didn't want to but she couldn't help leaning into his delicious body. Feeling his smooth skin on the skin of her back she realized that he'd stripped her of her coat. She felt that she should protest the manhandling of her prized coat that made her feel like she was about to go out and fight some crime, but right now she couldn't be bothered because he was oh, damn. It felt so good to be wrapped up in his strength. But as good as it felt, she couldn't do this. Butter Pecan Cake was White Cake's man.

"Butter Pecan," she trembled as he pulled her tighter into his erection and covered her lips with his soft, succulent ones. The rest of her plea was lost in the recesses of his sweet-tasting mouth. Butter Pecan Cake's kiss tore her up inside. It wasn't simply the kiss; it was the closeness. Her knees had been useless the moment he'd touched her but she didn't worry about falling because he held her so securely. His chest was her pillow; his body was her mattress; his presence was her security. Butter Pecan Cake would not allow her to fall to the ground but if he kept touching her so good and tempting her so perfectly, she would assuredly fall into bed with him. She was tempted. Goodness knows that she was tempted, but she had a conscience. Butter Pecan Cake didn't belong to her.

Reluctantly dragging her lips from his, she dragged in a lungful of air and exhaled his name. "Butter Pecan Cake."

"Yes, Naomi?" he whispered as he drew her back to him and leisurely sipped from her lips.

“Oh, mercy,” she sighed before once again pulling away. “We can’t. We can’t. I want you so bad but you’re married and I might be all kinds of bitches and motherfuckers but I’m not going to help you commit adultery.”

Turning to White Cake, she took his hands into hers and spoke. “White Cake, forgive me. I should’ve stopped sooner but he felt so good. Still, that’s no excuse. Please don’t hate me even though I understand if you do.”

Waiting for White Cake’s recriminations, she was surprised when he closed the distance between them ... and then kept walking forward. There was no where for her to go except further into Butter Pecan Cake’s embrace. Her hands still in White Cake’s, she was surprised when he kissed the backs of her hands, turned them over and kissed her palms before placing them on his chest.

“Do you think that I’d mate with one who would betray me? More importantly, do you think that I would allow any male – including my mate – to dishonor you by such a proposition?”

“Um,” she answered. She answered thusly because that was the only word that her mind could come up with being that he was busy playing puppet master with her hands. His hands atop hers, he led them on an erotic perusal of his ripped chest beginning with his flat nipples and ending over the granite that posed as his abs.

“Um,” she tried again before her protest collapsed into a sigh. It collapsed into a sigh because whilst White Cake was tempting her from the front, Butter Pecan Cake had gone back to tempting her from the back. Though he no longer had his hand fisted in her hair, he’d settled his hands on her hips and busied himself by grinding his cock into her. Heedless of her moans, he kissed his way across her shoulders. Tucking her into his

side, he used his free hand to cup her breasts through her corset, which was getting looser by the second.

Oh damn. Oh damn. Oh damn. She had to speak up – now ... right now before she accidentally found herself straddling White Cake's face and demanding that Butter Pecan Cake fuck her.

"White Cake," she began again hoping to draw reason from the universe itself before pleasure overtook her. "White Cake, please," she begged tears filling her eyes and threatening to rain down her face.

"Please what?" he asked as he raised her arms and placed them around Butter Pecan Cake's neck.

"Please, oh, what are you doing? I'm trying so hard, baby not to do this," she said.

"And we're trying so hard to explain to you that what we're doing is not wrong, Naomi. This is what any Zjxadrâzqué'an male would do for a woman such as yourself."

"It's adultery," she explained with some of the last vestiges of her morality.

"No, Naomi. This is love. Let us love you. Let us show you what human males should've spent the whole of their existence showing you. This is not adultery; this is us giving homage to the most beautiful woman we know. This is us sharing our love with a woman whose heart knows no boundaries, yet sits so empty because no male you've come across has been up to the task of filling it. Let us love you. This is not wrong. In Zjxadrâzqué'an culture caring for woman is a sacred event. Loving a woman is the highest honor and having a woman love you back is God's gift to males. This love that we want to gift you with is not wrong. It is not a violation of our mating vows. It is a gift that will only enhance the love that

we have for each other. Let us love you, Naomi. Let us love you,” he whispered as he gently pulled away her corset that was now completely unlaced.

Looking into his eyes, she saw his sincerity and the tears that had threatened to fall now fell unchecked down her face.

“Only if you let me love you back,” she said.

“That won’t be a problem at all, Naomi,” White Cake whispered before bending and taking a nipple into his mouth.

Pleasure exploded through Naomi. Just when she thought that it couldn’t get any better he reached out and palmed its twin while Butter Pecan Cake unbuttoned her pants and slid his questing fingers inside of her panties. He had big hands, strong hands, and right now his hand was cupping her mound with nothing short of possession. He let her go only to graze her slit with his big fingers. Up and down his fingers danced intermittently teasing her clit. Involuntarily, she arched up into his hand yet he pulled back, leaving her sensitized clit begging for his touch.

“Please,” she moaned. “Please.”

“At our leisure, Naomi. You are a treat that we crave and we will not allow you to rush us through this,” Butter Pecan Cake growled.

“Ah,” she gasped before Butter Pecan Cake flicked her clit causing a shockwave of pleasure to zip through her body. Her knees shook and her head dropped back on its own accord.

“Heed Ferro’s words, Naomi. We won’t be convinced to do ought but take the long-way around your enticing body,” he said as he trailed kisses from her breast to throat.

“But,” she began.

“The only butt that we’re interested in is this one that is so beautifully encased in these leather pants,” Butter Pecan Cake rasped as he took her lips once more.

He kissed her long and deep. When he pulled back her chest heaved and she dragged in deep breaths. Her choppy breathing soon turned to moans of pleasure when Butter Pecan Cake kissed his way across her shoulders before kissing a trail down her spine to the small of her back.

Whilst Butter Pecan Cake was making her tremble from the back; White Cake was busy making her tremble from the front. Pulling her flush against him, he ground his hard cock into her while sipping from her lips. When her hips were secured in Butter Pecan Cake’s capable hands, White Cake made his way down her body taking her pants and underwear with him. Butter Pecan Cake’s hot mouth against her cool skin had her shivering; White Cake’s intensity as he looked at her only increased it. Before she could draw in a breath and take in the moment, White Cake lifted her in his arms and walked her to the dais that held the stripper’s pole.

The stripper’s pole came with the house and so far had remained unused by her ... and that’s how she intended for it to remain. Her cakes might be fine as all get out but they weren’t fine enough to make her chance hopping her 185 lbs on that pole. Pulling back, she went to give White Cake a piece of her mind but was stopped by his tongue down her throat. White Cake continued to kiss her all the way over to the pole.

“Don’t even think about it,” she warned when he sat her on the platform.

“We wouldn’t dream of it,” he said.

“But we would dream of this. Just sit there and watch us, Naomi,” Butter Pecan Cake said.

“Watch you what?” she breathed.

“Watch how a male is supposed to approach you,” Butter Pecan Cake said.

“All hot like,” she sassed.

“All humble like,” he countered.

“But you’re so beautiful ... so powerful ... so damn near perfect. You don’t need to humble yourselves to me,” she whispered.

“Thank you for your compliments. Knowing you, we know that you mean each word, but knowing us know that we mean these words that we say. Despite how you see us, know that we see you as so much more. Look at us, Naomi. Look at us and see the truth of your beauty and goodness. Let our eyes, passion and touch be your mirror. Let our bodies be your bringers of pleasure,” White Cake said as he stepped out of his leather pants.

“Look into our eyes and know how honored we are to be here in this moment with you. Watch us and then decide if we are worthy enough to be in your presence, Naomi,” Butter Pecan Cake whispered as he too removed his leather pants.

Naomi could only watch as these two hot ass males stroked their cocks into full hardness. She could only watch as their eyes flashed with desire. She could only watch as their nostrils flared and their hands gripped harder. *Were they kidding?* She didn’t need to decide if they were worthy. They were worthy from the moment that they swung her between them as they marched away from that supermarket, yet here they were humbling themselves to her.

“Oh cakes,” she sighed seeing the truth in their eyes.

Silently, she watched as they walked to the dais ... and knelt at her feet. “Naomi, will you accept us? Butter Pecan Cake asked.

“I already have.”

“You humble and honor us with your acceptance but will you also allow us to prepare you?” White Cake asked.

“Yes,” she whispered. And though she didn’t know what they were preparing her for, since it was her cakes doing the asking, she could not answer any other way. “Yes,” she said again through the veil of her tears.

Ferro could not help but be humbled by Naomi’s tears for he knew that those tears represented depths of emotion. He also knew that Naomi was modest when it came to exposing her deepest self. In fact, she was so modest with her deepest self, that there were times when he wondered if she looked upon it herself. She was beautiful but she could not see past the opinions of her society; she was passionate yet she often turned it off to protect herself from the small (but not inconsequential) rejections she experienced on a daily basis and the great rejections that had only lasted seconds but hurt her all of her life.

Oh, but if he could shield her from ever feeling pain. If only he could be her shield and protect her from these hurts. If only he could be her mirror so that she could see her glory reflected back at her. Her hurts hurt him but maybe his and Nyx’s love could heal some of those hurts while their bodies prepared her for her destiny.

Nyx loved Ferro. He loved him and never had he loved him more than in these moments when Ferro’s heart was consumed with the care for

Naomi. He knew that Ferro was consumed with love for Naomi. He was not jealous of these feelings that his mate felt for this female because he too felt them. Even if he hadn't been able to feel it, their soul link allowed him to feel that which burned within him. He understood this burning. Right now he felt Naomi deep in his soul. This female was beauty, power, and passion and he couldn't help but be amazed by her.

She's amazing. Ferro telepathed.

She is. If I wasn't already mated to you I would fight all males to have her.

And I would understand that.

We have made a good decision to pledge ourselves to her. Serving as her personal warriors is yet another privilege the universe has granted us, Nyx said. *I wonder if her mate will be jealous.*

I don't care if he is. We have exercised claim and by Zjxadrâzqué'an law and that makes us her shields against all things, Ferro said.

Yes, but when she's mated her mate will become her shield.

Her mate is not yet here.

But he is coming, Nyx said.

And when he gets here he better approach her with the respect due a woman of the Zjxadrâzqué'an Royal House.

Her mate is the second-in-command of all of the Zjxadrâzqué'an Empire, Nyx reasoned.

And if he offers Naomi anything less than the title of Vice Empress; if he offers anything less than all he has; if he offers anything less than his very life than the second in command will be extincted as our good friend Yonder likes to threaten.

Careful, Ferro. You sound like you love her.

I do. You are the only being I love more.

Reaching for her, Ferro set her on her feet before slipping his hands inside of her panties and slowly sliding them down her muscular legs. Setting the panties on the platform, he took her in his arms.

“Look at Nyx. Look how he strokes himself and stroke yourself in time to his strokes,” he demanded.

Hearing her answering gasp at his request, he took her hand and placed it over her sex. Keeping his big hand atop her smaller one he guided her hand over her slit before taking her finger and grazing her clit. He could smell her arousal; he could taste her passion. Leaning down, he whispered in her ear as he exerted the tiniest bit of pressure with his hand.

“Slip your fingers inside, Naomi. Play with your beautiful sex for us. Show us how you like to be touched,” he encouraged.

When she finally slipped her fingers inside, she literally shuddered at the pleasure. He felt the tremor that passed through her body and in turn his cock got harder. Gritting his teeth he held her tighter to him and spoke to his mate telepathically.

Nyx, sit on the bed. I’m going to settle her atop you. Be careful with her. Though she is wrapped in muscle and strength, her softness is overwhelming.

Ferro, perhaps you should be the one to hold her.

No, Nyx, you are far gentler than I am. I don’t trust myself to hold her with the gentleness that she requires. Right now she is temptation in many forms and her passion is intoxicating. I cannot touch her the way that I touch you; I cannot let go with her the way that I let go with you for not only is she woman; she is human woman who has been handled much

too roughly. Though your strength is equal to mine and few males can match our strength, you have a gentleness that is equal to your strength so you should be the one to hold her. Hold her and show Naomi how a male is meant to touch her, he said as he picked a startled Naomi up and draped her over Nyx.

As always your sense of observation amaze me; your honesty humbles me; and the integrity that you demonstrate in everything that you do makes me fall deeper in love with you every moment of every day.

And you humble me Nyx. For you to state your love when you have a female like that straddling you makes me realize how lucky I am to be mated to you.

We must thank the universe for allowing us the pleasure of having such a beautiful, sexy, passionate female in our lives. Never has she looked more tempting.

I agree. She's some kind of female, Nyx said.

Yes, and the male that is holding this treasure is some kind of male. Do you realize how fucking hot the two of you look? Search the photo album in my head Nyx and look at the snapshot of you and Naomi. You are living passion.

I see it Ferro, now join us and be part of this collage of passion. Join us so that we may set her body aflame with want. Let us both touch her so that she floods this room with the sounds and scent of her pleasure. Come help me prepare the next Vice Empress. Though we are among the strongest males in the Zjxadrâzqué'an Empire, it will take our combined strength to break through the armor that protects her heart. It will take many hours but we cannot fail at this for this armor protects but it also

retains memory that pain her, words that have hurt her, experience that has left her feeling like nothing.

Let us begin then and let us love her so well that she is liberated from her feelings of inadequacy.

Nyx couldn't help but love his mate. Ferro was hot, handsome, his. And then there was Naomi who was as beautiful as Ferro was handsome and just as hot. Though she wasn't their mate he was attracted to her. Even though he was gay, Naomi got to him. Her beauty stunned him; her passion ignited him; her goodness humbled him. When Ferro placed her voluptuous form over him he had to put his body on lockdown for it immediately reacted to her. Though he was already hard, he went even harder. Though he was already aroused, his passion skyrocketed. Sure they shared an intimacy but it had always been a platonic intimacy for though she flirted shamelessly with them, Naomi was always respectful of his and Ferro's relationship. So though they were intimate, they'd never been sexual ... until now.

And even though by her standards what they were doing could be classified as sexual; by Zjxadrâzqué'an law this was an honor, a privilege, a duty. It was an honor to be a presence in this woman's life. It was their privilege to liberate her from the indoctrination that had her believing that she was lacking. It was their duty to prepare her for her mate and it was her mate's duty to make her feel her beauty.

Without a doubt Zoran was her mate. Not just any Zjxadrâzqué'an male, but the brother to the Emperor, he was demanding in all of his passions. He was large, powerful, intimidating ... even by Zjxadrâzqué'an standards. Though Naomi was a good-sized female, she would not be able

to take him without hours of preparation. Zoran was a good leader, a good Zjxadrâzqué'an, but he'd only glimpsed a little of Naomi and was already gone.

Normally, Zjxadrâzqué'an females would prepare her but they were running low on Zjxadrâzqué'an females being that they were on Earth. When females weren't around to prepare the woman, close unmated friends of the male would help prepare the female but this was Naomi and Zoran that they were dealing with. Naomi was particular about who touched her and Zoran was just particular full stop. The second-in-command was just like the rest of the males in his lineage when it came to most things and nothing he'd done made him think that Zoran would be any different when it came to his mate.

Those males didn't tolerate subterfuge, treason, or anyone interfering with their woman. A young unmated male in the presence of Naomi was a civil war just waiting to happen. They would prepare Naomi and though he was sure that there would be a fight, he was sure of three things: 1) he and Ferro could hold their own; 2) they would both enjoy the battle; and 3) After Naomi got over being turned on by three Zjxadrâzqué'an males in battle, she'd jump in Zoran's shit about trying to hurt her cakes. Oh, he couldn't wait for the battles to begin.

Turning his attention to the woman straddling him, he opened his senses.

Straddling him, her sex was nestled against his cock. He felt her juices soak him. Her breasts rubbed against his chest. Her arousal screamed at him.

Hold her hips, Ferro instructed.

Automatically, his hands went to her hips pushing her sex deeper into him, pushing her breasts tighter to his chest, pushing the scent of her

further into his nostrils. And through it all, Naomi was entrenched deeper into his heart.

“Naomi,” he rasped against her mouth before he took her lips in a slow, lingering kiss. Peppering her mouth with soft kisses he sucked her bottom and used his teeth to tease her mouth open. When she sighed out her pleasure he delved into the cavern of her mouth and reveled in its sweetness.

Oh, Naomi. Naomi, Naomi, Naomi, he chanted.

She cannot hear you, Nyx.

I cannot be bothered with speech at this moment, Ferro.

Then speak in her head.

Ask her permission. I'm too busy convincing my cock to stay put and the rest of me is busy feasting on her delectable mouth, he said before giving his full attention back to the pleasuring of Naomi.

Ferro looked on at the picture of the beautiful Naomi in his mate's arms. They were too beautiful for words. Naomi was never more beautiful than she was now and he could see why his mate was so far gone.

“Naomi,” he said to her as he knelt behind her.

“Hmm,” was all she said.

“Naomi,” he tried again. This time he whispered her name in her ear.

“Why the fuck are you talking to me?” I can't kiss White Cake if you're fucking asking me shit.”

“I have to know something. We want to speak to you telepathically,” he began.

“Well, I'm not telepathic and why are you still fucking talking?”

“We can establish a telepathic link but it is necessary to have your permission to do so.”

“Is it permanent?”

“Yes, but before you get all riled up, we cannot enter your mind without you knowing. You will feel us enter and depart.”

“Okay then, hurry up ... and keep touching me.”

Naomi was feeling so damn good. Oh damn. She'd felt all girl-like and shit when Butter Pecan Cake picked her up. When he draped her over White Cake her body went into overdrive. When her coochie came into contact with White Cake's hard cock, she felt like a wanton whore ... and she loved every, fucking millisecond of it. She didn't think that anything could get better until Butter Pecan Cake encircled her from behind with that big, hard body and ran his fingers along her spine.

Her mind was busy trying to take in all of the sensations; her body broke out in shivers anticipating what was going to come next. And then for some reason Butter Pecan Cake started talking. Something about telepathy. She must've growled out a yes, because she felt a fluttering, almost as if someone were knocking, asking for entrance. *'Come in'* poured from her soul and the next thing she knew she was swamped with the thoughts of her cakes. And what beautiful, sexy, enticing thoughts they were. Never had she been the recipient of such adulation. Never had she felt so fucking hot. Never had she believed it when males had told her that she was beautiful ... until now. She could feel their love in their purposeful caresses which set her body afire; in their beautiful thoughts which made her femininity respond.

Though their touch elicited waves of undiluted pleasure, their touch couldn't hold a candle to their words. Delivered in their orgasm-inducing voices, they filled her mind with praise from all walks of English class. They told her she was beautiful in iambic pentameter; they told her how much she was wanted in haiku; they used sedoka to pay tribute to her courage; and whispered in free verse as they bowed at the altar of her femininity. Every word resonated within her and though provocative she'd never felt truth this hard.

Her cakes touched her with their words as well as their bodies. She felt as if she was traveling through space at superluminal speed. Her eyes were busy trying to catalog all of the beauty that she was being privileged to glimpse. There were stretches of brown, and peach; there were valleys and peaks; there were stars and chasms overflowing with love, acceptance, and grace. And the sounds. There were rhythms so compelling that she wanted her heart to beat to them.

Finally, the dizzying ride slowed ... but it did not end. Only after exhaling did she realize that the beauty that she was looking at was her through the eyes of her cakes. The song that she was listening to was the symphony of their coming together.

For the first time in the whole of her life words failed Naomi. No, that wasn't right. Words didn't fail her; language did. She needed more words, more letters, more languages for the feelings that swamped her. What words she had were all synonyms for wonder. She was amazed, awed, swept up like the shore by high tide. These feelings, these feelings, these feelings ... even if she had the words she'd need more spaces to put them for every space within her was overflowing with the goodness that her cakes had breathed there. She was about to insert a thank you in between the

notes of love her cakes were singing when her thank you was kissed from her mouth.

“Don’t you dare thank us,” her cakes said in unison.

“The only sounds that should be spilling from those tempting lips are moans and since you aren’t moaning perhaps we need to redouble our efforts,” White Cake said as he nibbled on her bottom lip.

He was so beautiful. Right now his hair almost seemed golden framed by the sunlight pouring through the window. As soon as the thought had left her head, the words sunk in. *‘Sunlight pouring through the window’*. Just a few minutes ago it was last night and from the amount of sun pouring through the window it was well into today. *What the fuck?!*

“We are Zjxadrâzqué’an males, Naomi. We know how to properly pleasure a woman,” Butter Pecan Cake whispered in her ear. “But don’t worry about anything as we are loaning you our strength.”

“And why would I need your strength?” she asked as she arched into White Cake.

She was on the verge of falling apart from pleasure when the very air in the room changed.

“Because I intend to mate you,” a voice that sounded like raw sex cut in.

What the fuck? A) how the fuck did he get in the house; and b) oh my goodness where did he get that badass metal kilt from and why the fuck did he have to look so fucking fine rocking it and pretty much nothing else; and, c) ... point c was interrupted by her cakes attempting to disentangle themselves from her. Oh she so wasn’t having that. Oh hell no. Not when she was so close to pleasure. Grabbing a handful of White Cake’s hair she pulled his full body weight atop her pressing Butter Pecan Cake into the

bed. Despite her maneuverings her cakes had not only gently disentangled themselves from her – dammit – they had somehow re-dressed in everything except for their shirts and were presently all up in fine motherfucker’s shit.

“You better be coming correct,” White Cake roared.

Where the fuck had her gentle, loving, and teasing White Cake gone? And what had he been watching on television to pick up that particular slang?

“I’m a Zjxadrâzqué’an male. I know no other way,” fine MF answered.

Before she could wonder anything else Butter Pecan Cake added his voice to the argument. “Then get on your fucking knees and approach Naomi Webber-Jones, female of the Zjxadrâzqué’an Royal House, with the proper respect!”

“I have no problem getting on my knees for this female but I do have a problem with you touching what is mine!” Fine MF thundered.

“Really? And what do you plan to do about it?” White Cake asked in a cold voice.

“Why, battle you of course,” Fine MF replied.

Butter Pecan Cake emitted a laugh that could be described no other way besides mocking. “Let us begin then.”

Naomi watched as a medley of blows was exchanged. She was sure human males would’ve been felled by the first blow. For that matter she was sure that most males regardless of their whereabouts would’ve fallen, but she knew without being told that these three Zjxadrâzqué’an males were nothing close to ordinary.

Though one part of her was all turned on and wanted to rub them down in baby oil and sit back and watch this (*and who wouldn't?*), the other part of her was outraged on behalf of her cakes. Fine MF was one persistent male. Her cakes were also fine but that didn't give Fine MF the right to bust in their house and try and take the cakes for himself. Oblivious to her nudity she rose from her perch on the bed and stalked up to the fight. Intent on stopping this nonsense before her cakes got hurt, she didn't even get anywhere near them before the battle came to a complete halt. Taking advantage of the cessation of action, she grabbed her cakes and pulled them back. She would deal with them later but right now she had a motherfucker to deal with.

"Look bitch, the cakes don't belong to you. How dare you bust in here and interrupt my pending orgasm. And when the fuck did 'battle' become code word for sex? They are not yours asshole."

"Female, as my mate your loyalty belongs to me. Now go take your seat so that I can get back to the battle. We will discuss proper behavior later. Warriors, let us continue this battle. I have a mate to tend to."

"Did you just try and tell me what to do. Oh hell no," she said as she squeezed out from between her cakes and stepped in front of Fine MF. Damn, he had freaky eyes – not that they detracted from his fineness. Swirling as if the colors were still being mixed, they bored into her. Reminding herself that it would be hard for her to win this fight if she dropped to her knees and begged Fine MF to fuck her, she reached way up and grabbed his intricate plait and jerked his head forward. He dwarfed her and she couldn't help but get wet at that thought, but she had to stay strong.

“First, you don’t tell me shit. Second, the cakes are mine and as such they alone have my loyalty so you can just get over yourself. Third, if you touch my cakes one more fucking time I will end you ... and don’t think that I can’t because you’re all big bad motherfucker and you’re probably rolling with a posse of other big bad motherfuckers. You don’t know the motherfuckers that I roll with. We will fuck you up and send you back to the empire crying like the bitches you are. And last, get the fuck out of our house.”

Zoran felt the force field surround him but at the moment he could not appreciate Zjxadrâzqué'an physical defense mechanisms. Right now all that he could do was stare at the female who was busy being angry with him. She was magnificent; she was his; and she was walking away from him with Nyx and Ferro in tow. Dammit, she couldn’t walk away from him. She was his mate. Of course she didn’t know that but dammit those two spies sure as hell did. They had to know as they were Zjxadrâzqué'an born and bred.

Three things happened when a Zjxadrâzqué'an stumbled across his mate. First, an invisible yet impenetrable force field surrounded them. Second, their body came to an immediate halt. Lastly, their eyes changed.

The force field was necessary to protect them. One never knew when they would stumble across their mate. Though his brother Zjxadrâzqué had sensed his mate in his dreams, many a Zjxadrâzqué'an male had sensed their mate whilst in the process of doing dangerous work. Without the force field, the sensing of one’s mate would be a leading cause of death.

The next thing that happened is that their brain seized control of their body while it recalibrated itself. Recalibration was necessary as a mate was

a major shock to the system. Without this measure of protection there was risk of cardiac arrest, a sudden and dangerous change in body temperature and asphyxiation because the body literally would forget to breathe.

Lastly, their eyes changed. Whereas human eye color didn't set until sometime after birth; the eye color of Zjxadrâzqué'an males did not change until after they sensed their mate. The standard eye color for unmated males was dark blue. Once they met their mate their eyes went supernova before settling on a color and/or pattern.

These changes usually only took a few seconds of human time. Normally, that wasn't a problem but it was proving to be a problem for Zoran for it was more than enough time for Nyx and Ferro to make off with his mate. Though third in the chain of command and beloved members of the Zjxadrâzqué'an Royal House, Nyx and Ferro were suddenly on what his sister-in-law referred to as a 'shit list'.

Once a Zjxadrâzqué'an male's body recalibrated itself, the male's mind was pretty much *tabula rasa*. Images of one's mate flooded their mind causing their body to relentlessly reach out for its mate. Right now, Zoran didn't give a damn about the laws of the land, the laws of nature or the laws of physics. All he cared about was finding his mate and claiming her.

But before he claimed her he had to contact the Empire. He needed additional warriors. Logging in to the Empire Directory, he placed a call.

"Guardian Commander Brava," the voice answered.

"Abaddon, I have found my mate."

"I will dispatch five hundred warriors immediately," he said before disconnecting.

Zoran couldn't help but smile. Zjxadrâzqué'ians were nothing if not prudent. Though he knew that his cousin had a thousand questions that he wanted answered, he held them and got straight to the business of helping him secure his mate's safety. He knew that once he had his mate aboard his ship, Abaddon would start pestering him for answers. He would give them, but first he had to get his mate.

Stripping off everything except for his platinum arm bands, he dressed for the occasion. Entering the code that unlocked his weapons stash, he reached inside and gently pulled out the one item of clothing that every Zjxadrâzqué'an male kept with him but only wore once – the claiming garment. Made of platinum, it resembled a chain metal kilt. Intricately detailed, the claiming garment was a priceless work of art. Remarkably lightweight despite the sheer amount of metal that went into it, it was easy to get out of and that was key being that a male ready to mate didn't have the wherewithal to get out of their complicated battle gear.

Though it was a simple in style its simplicity in no way detracted from its beauty. It was tailored to highlight the fine points of the wearer. In no way vain, Zoran knew that he was all fine points. Like most Zjxadrâzqué'an males he was impressive. Still, he did not simply take his great genetics for granted; he worked hard to keep his body in top battle shape. His body was a weapon ... and a work of art. All angles and hard places, it was primed for two things: battle and sex. He could do both for extended periods of time. As devastating as he was in battle, he was even more so in the bedroom.

The thought of bedrooms caused a fresh sheen of anger to wash over him. Damn those two spies for making off with his mate. Being that they were the two best spies in the entirety of the empire, he knew that he would not find them unless they wanted him too. Damn spies. He knew what

they were about. They knew that the female was his mate but they were making him work for her and if he guessed correctly, once he found them they'd make him prove that he was worthy of her. If he had a female under his protection, he would've done the same thing ... but that would've been understandable being that the male would've been someone other than him.

He could not believe that they were making *him* of all beings prove that he was worthy. A son of the Zjxadrâzqué'an Royal House, second pillar of the entire empire, leader of the most-respected known army, he was a paradigm for male. The female must hold a piece of their hearts for them to risk his wrath. Looking down at the erection that threatened to break the titanium links in his claiming garment, he felt his anger rise closer to the surface. Brushing through his hair, he fashioned it in his familiar braid that he wore in battle. Though he was going to claim his mate, he was definitely going to battle. From what he'd seen of her she was feisty. After he thrashed the spies he would get straight to taming her ... and enjoy every second.

Though they shared a telepathic link with Naomi, Nyx and Ferro had been together so long that they had several direct paths to each other. Skilled enough to hold multiple conversations telepathically, it was easy to continue their conversation with Naomi whilst speaking to each other privately.

Should we feed Zoran another crumb? Nyx asked.

If we must, Ferro answered. *I still think we should make him work harder for her.*

Would you have appreciated someone keeping us apart?

You cannot go there, Nyx.

Why not? I'm just giving you an example, Ferro.

And I hate your examples, Ferro grumbled.

You only hate them because they demonstrate how right I am. You would think that after the first century you would realize this.

I will give Zoran another crumb but ... he began.

I know. I know. You will battle him.

Naomi is worth ten thousand battles, Ferro shouted.

And then some but until Zoran gets here to claim her she won't fully believe it.

Feeding Zoran the last crumb that should get him here, Nyx kissed a sated Naomi and simply waited. He didn't have long. Almost immediately he felt the air change and before he could blink, Zoran was upon them.

Zoran had been fucking following bread crumbs for far too long. He was furious and hungry. Furious at any and everything that kept him from his mate; hungry for her. The hunger swept over his body beating at him, clawing at him. No sooner than he'd entered the dwelling then his vision was filled with the sight of those two spies touching her. Emitting a roar, he informed her of her duty and his intentions before responding to Ferro and Nyx's challenge. He liked both males but if they wanted a fight then he could do no less than give it to them. He was in the midst of delivering blows when he felt her approach. Calling a halt to the battle lest she accidentally be harmed, he turned his attention to her. His eyes were busy feasting on her when she once again got all up in his personal space.

Though she was telling him off, all he could do was breathe in her scent and revel in her touch. Again, why the hell was she talking about

cake? And why was she threatening him? Her threats gave him pause – not because he feared her – but because he sensed that she truly felt that she and her friends could take him in a battle. Comical. Straight comical. *Wait, did she just call him and his crew bitches?* He was still pondering that when she told him to get the fuck out. He could do a lot of things including allowing her to use him as her sounding board and her bed and her pleasure giver but he was not going anywhere.

Looking at Nyx and Ferro he nodded to them right before he reached down and gently lifted her into his arms. Careful so as not to mar her skin with the metal of his garment, he took his time feasting upon her.

“Be still,” he whispered to her as he held her securely in his embrace.

“Make me, motherfucker,” she replied. “And who the fuck told you that you could touch me?” she moaned as she wrapped her voluptuous thighs around him.

“Your protectors said that I could,” he answered as he familiarized himself with the softness and beauty in her arms.

“What?” she demanded.

If he’d been a lesser male then she would’ve been able to get out of his arms. But he wasn’t a lesser ... anything. Walking towards the bed, he gently placed her upon it.

Before he could utter another word, Nyx spoke.

“Naomi, this is Zoran.”

“And? He cannot have you,” she began.

“He does not want us, Naomi,” Nyx whispered.

“Yeah, then why is he here? He was ogling you in the club and now he stalked you down here.”

“He didn’t follow us to the club. The club is a local hangout for otherworldly beings. Nor did he follow us here, Naomi. He followed you.”

“Why, do you want to fight me?” she asked.

“I want you full stop, Naomi,” he said. Naomi was a strong name as befits a strong female.

She looked confused as if she simply couldn’t fathom that he wanted her.

That’s because she is confused. She doesn’t understand that you want her, Nyx muttered in his head.

Surprised that Nyx had entered without him noticing, he turned to him.

I didn’t enter; the confusion is there on your face. She doesn’t understand. Besides preparing her for you, we’ve been attempting to chip away the barriers around her heart. Open your mind to us so that we may relay the information.

Not even considering saying no, he was surprised at the images that Nyx shared with him ... and he was humbled. And he knew that as much as he hungered for her that he would have to put his own needs aside ... and his jealousy. He needed the spies and it helped knowing that they didn’t have designs on his mate.

Do you trust us with Naomi? Do you trust us to help you prepare her? Nyx asked.

Yes, he said as he refocused his gaze on his mate.

And do you trust that we’ll destroy you if you hurt her ... in any way? Ferro threatened.

You are Zjxadrâzqué'an warriors ... third in the chain of command of the Empire. I know that you would exhaust everything, give everything

to defend those under your protection. And I thank you for placing my mate under your protection.

“Naomi, do you trust us? Nyx asked her.

“Absolutely, White Cake.”

“Would you like Zoran to touch you?”

“White Cake don’t ask me that,” she said as she bit her luscious bottom lip.

“Why not?”

“Because the truth will make me sound like a wanton slut.”

“Naomi, have we not told you that in our society this is not wrong?”

“Yes, but...” she began.

“And haven’t we told you that we won’t allow *anyone* to dishonor you?” Ferro cut in. “Do you doubt us, Naomi?”

“I don’t doubt you, Butter Pecan Cake,” she sighed.

“Do you doubt that we’d tear someone apart for such a transgression?”

“No, Butter Pecan Cake,” she conceded.

“Good, remember that Naomi. You aren’t simply any female; you are a Zjxadrâzqué’an female. And whenever your mate is not in your presence, we are your shields.”

“Okay, got it. Roger copy that and so forth.”

“I don’t believe you quite believe it, but your acquiescence will do ... for now. Later, you will see what we Zjxadrâzqué’an males mean when we give our word,” Ferro said.

“Naomi, would you like for Zoran to touch you?” Nyx asked.

“Yes,” she whispered.

Nodding his thanks at Nyx and Ferro he looked in her eyes.

“Accept me,” he whispered with all of the sincerity in his soul.

“Yes,” she said in a strong voice.

Removing one of his platinum armbands he slipped it over her fist and pushed it up on her arm knowing that it would adjust to fit her.

“You are mine,” he whispered.

“And that means you belong to me to then,” she threw back as she arched up into him and plundered his lips.

Was his feisty female trying to take the lead in their lovemaking? Though he was glad that she found him desirable, it was his job to pleasure her. Reluctantly drawing back from her beauty, he gently took hold of her hands.

“Shh, lay back Naomi. Lay back and allow me to do my duty,” he rasped.

Naomi’s heart thundered in her chest at the prospect of having all three of these fine men touching her. Though she couldn’t help but wonder what it’d be like to be pleased by all three men, there was still a part of her that rebuked her for being a ‘bad girl’. She’d heard them when they said that they viewed sexuality different on their home world, but she hadn’t had the benefit of living there. She lived on earth – specifically the south where good girls were honored with marriage and respectability and bad girls were called dirty names like slut and whore and really bad girls were tossed away like trash.

Those memories were painful – almost too painful to bear. She was about to close the door on her memories ... and her cakes (and her fantasies) when she felt Butter Pecan Cake stick his foot in the door and wrap her in his love, acceptance and honesty. His words broke down the

last of her resistance. He might work her last nerve; he might eat the entire dessert her momma made; he might be all kinds of bossy, but he'd never treat her with anything less than honor ... then again he didn't know how to act dishonorably. He wasn't her daddy and though she was almost a duplicate of her momma; she wasn't her momma.

Exhaling, she looked into the eyes of her cakes and the eyes of the fine MF kneeling at her feet. Wrenching herself from the clutches of the fears that had kept her in check, she looked him in the eye and said the yes that her soul had been holding in. And then she'd said yes again when he'd opened his soul to her and asked, no pleaded, with her to accept him.

She could only watch in rapt fascination as he removed one of his meticulously-designed platinum armbands and slip it onto her arm. It was way too large for her arm, yet somehow it ended up being a perfect fit. A chill went through her. Somehow, she felt claimed. For as long as she could remember she'd dreamt of the day a man would slip a wedding ring on her finger. That'd been her favorite fantasy, yet her number one ranked dream somehow paled in comparison of this moment where a man she didn't know – and was pretty sure she didn't even like – placed a too-big armband around her bicep.

And then he'd pushed into her mind and declared that she was his. Her heart had released sonatas and her pussy released a load of cream. And though she was overwhelmed, she was still southern and as such she simply couldn't let that response go unchallenged. Letting him know that he belonged to her, she arched up into his hard body and took her fill of his mouth.

He felt delicious – chiseled temptation that melded against her softness so well. Before she could think another thought he dragged

himself away. Before she could get in a proper protest, he gently pushed her back ... and her cakes were there to catch her.

Though she was lying on the bed, it was a good thing that they were there for as soon as Fine MF's tongue touched her clit, the little bit of strength she had, fled. She couldn't even moan he ate her coochie so good. And since it was her cake asking she did. The moment Zoran's tongue touched her clit, she emitted a keening sound that she was sure had every dog in a ten-mile radius in agony. All she could do was lay back and sigh, gasp, and try and catch her breath.

She saw stars, and not the kind cartoon characters saw when a cartoon anvil fell on their heads, but the whole of the solar system stars. And they were so beautiful. As his tongue touched places in her that had never been breached, her mind zoomed to her favorite places. She was floating on her back in the warm, caressing waters of Bora, Bora being wowed by the blues and greens; she was at Yavapai Observation Point in Grand Canyon National Park being humbled by the sepias, magentas and pinks of sunrise and sunset; and she was on the middle of the Mile High Swinging Bridge on Grandfather Mountain reveling at the yellows, oranges, and reds of Autumn.

She was so engrossed in the ministrations of Fine MF that she'd totally forgotten about her cakes until they spoke.

"Open, Naomi. Open for Zoran," White Cake whispered.

Digging her nails into the bedspread, she arched her lower body into his mouth so that he could have a better angle for eating. *Oh goodness, goodness, goodness.*

Yes, yes, yes.

Please, please, please.

More, more, more.

Naomi didn't think that she could possibly enjoy this more but that was before her cakes started talking to her.

"Hold on to him, Naomi. Hold on to him as he pleasures you. Do you like what he's doing?"

Did she like what Fine MF was doing? Fuck yeah.

Hearing her cakes chuckle, she realized that they could hear her thoughts.

"Open your legs wider, Naomi. Arch your voluptuous hips into Zoran's mouth. Harder, Naomi. Don't hold back any of your amazing self. Zoran is a Zjxadrâzqué'an male in his fighting prime. Single-handedly, he has humbled entire galaxies; he can take your passion. Use your softness to tame his hardness. Rain down your pleasure upon his authoritative mouth. Wrap him within your integrity and use your strong thighs to hold him to you. Embrace him with your strength and bring him to heal with you love. Make love to his mouth; make love to his body; make love to the very thing that keeps him alive. Gift him with the privilege of your presence and make him thank you with his body," Butter Pecan Cake said as he gently bit her ear.

She did as Butter Pecan Cake bid. She let go. Grabbing his plait, she tested the limits of her agility as she arched into him. Rocking her cunt into him she reveled in the feeling of his mouth on her, his big hands on her thighs, his big presence on her person.

White Cake played field general and instructed the Fine MF.

"Use your fingers, Zoran. Spread her open and slowly stroke into her. She's come all over your face; now begin the journey so that before this day is over she'll come all over the entirety of your body. Coax her orgasms

from her slowly at first and then increase their frequency so that they tumble over her so quickly she does not know where one leaves off and the next begins. Emerge yourself in her and cleanse yourself in her nectar.”

“Prove to her that Zjxadrâzqué'an males are the most advanced model of male. Show her why the other otherworldlies fear us. Show her that as fearsome as you are; she never has to fear you.”

Yes, show me. Show me, show me, you beautiful piece of art. Show me.

Zoran touched his tongue to her sex and his taste buds exploded in joy. His mate was the best dessert that he'd ever tasted. Her skin was the softest thing he'd ever felt. She was the most beautiful, amazing female he'd ever seen, ever felt, ever imagined.

She was a stretch of dark chocolate ... only her flavor was more intoxicating. The sounds of her pleasure was the score to battle victories, yeses to things he'd only hoped for, consensus to everything that warred within him. Her scent was pure aphrodisiac and called to him like the smells of dinner called to one who was starving, like the possibility of liberation called to one who was enslaved, like justice and righteousness to the revolutionary. Her eyes sparkled with the passions that coursed through her veins. Though resembling the darkest part of night, to him they were the brightest of stars. A collage of muscle and silk, delicacy and determination, she was the sun. And despite his rank, privilege, and strength, he was simply a planet in the universe that was Naomi Webber-Jones.

How could he not want her? For that matter how could every male not want her? She was. She was ... and he existed to please her. And he

would. Zjxadrâzqué'an males loved their females even harder than they battled and no one in all of the galaxies that they'd conquered had come close to battling like they did.

Drunk off of her scent, beauty and taste, his body urged him to conquer her, but his overwhelming love for her demanded that he go slowly. Though he didn't know the whole of it, his mate had been involved in too many battles. It didn't matter that most of her battles weren't physical. The fact that she battled was enough. Angry that she'd ever known hurt; he didn't realize that his fury was evident until Nyx spoke.

Easy, Zoran. Right now Naomi needs your love; not your fury.

So deep into loving her, he'd forgotten the presence of the two spies. Hearing Nyx's voice brought all of his dominant instincts to the surface. He could not conceal the fact that he was territorial nor would he.

She's knows what it's like to be let down now show her what it's like to be loved, Nyx offered.

Nyx was right. His mate needed his love more than she needed his fury or his jealousy. Breathing deeply, Zoran slowly released his breath letting it flow over his mate's clit. Her gasp and subsequent moan settled him.

Do you think she can take more? He asked Nyx.

Would she be your mate if she could not? Naomi is strength. There is no challenge from which she would back down ... even if that challenge is you, Ferro growled out. *The question isn't whether Naomi can take more; the question is whether you are Zjxadrâzqué'an enough to give her more.*

You challenge me?

Don't you think that she's worth the challenge, Ferro taunted.

Ferro, be still, Nyx cajoled.

I will not. When we claimed Naomi it wasn't so that we could allow a lesser male to fraternize with her.

I am not a lesser male. I am Zjxadrâzqué'an, Zoran growled.

Then act like it. Your female deserves the best that you have now give it to her.

And what makes you think that I haven't?

The fact that she is still coherent enough to form recognizable words.

Zoran knew that Ferro was simply taunting him in an effort to heighten Naomi's pleasure but it still rankled.

Less thinking and more loving, Ferro growled.

You do your part and I'll do mine, Zoran growled as he curled his tongue around her clit and worked his fingers in her.

Hearing Naomi's screams caused him to redouble his efforts. He heard Nyx and Ferro pour praise and encouragement into her ears and heart in an effort to ease his claiming.

Give her more, he ordered them.

And they did. Her screams came in staccato bursts because they were giving her orgasms faster than her mind could process them. Knocking on the door of her mind he requested entrance.

Let me in Naomi. Let me in.

And she did and what he saw caused him to have a repeat reaction to his mate. It was as if he'd seen her for the first time. Carefully, he traversed the wonderland that was the unveiled Naomi. He'd been in the minds of only a few but they were some of the greatest Zjxadrâzqué'ans that he knew ... and all of them together could not prepare him for Naomi. Naomi was

brilliance. Brilliant color, brilliant cadence, brilliant courage and determination.

He heard a song thundering through her. He didn't know the song but being that her whole body thrummed to it, he locked in on it. Tuning his ear to it, he let the song course through him. Once his body picked up on the rhythm, it took over and he made love to her in time to it.

He was thankful that his body took over as the magnificence of the woman that lay beneath the woman distracted him. He'd witnessed galaxies colliding, Aurora Borealis, glaciers so pristine that they radiated rainbows, supernovas light entire regions of the universe aglow ... but all of that paled to his mate. Already awed by her, now he was moved in a way that he didn't know was capable. He wasn't the only one awed for he'd picked up the surprised gasps of Nyx and Ferro, who politely slid out of their space.

Zoran could have existed in that place forever and no telling how long he would've remained there if not for the battle cry that rent the air. Too ensnared to do more than stare at his mate, it was the reflexes of Nyx and Ferro that saved him from many days in the healing bay. Later, he'd thank them but right now he simply couldn't move from the beauty that lay before him.

Nyx and Ferro literally felt when Naomi truly let go and dropped her last shield. And they fell back from the brilliance that lay within. Already impressed with what they knew, they were outdone with what they'd glimpsed. Zoran was literally entranced by her ... as well he should be. Knowing that this was a sacred space that belonged to Naomi and Zoran,

they slipped out of her mind. That is what allowed them to save Zoran from almost-death.

Ruth Webber-Jones should've been tired. Indeed before last year, she was. Now however, she was invigorated. She was in good health. Though she was forty-five years old, she didn't feel old. No, she'd just been lonely. It didn't matter that as a renowned archaeologist that she spent a quarter of the year traipsing into places and glimpsing treasures that would've made *Tomb Raider* envious. She'd missed her momma – who spent three-quarters of the year wreaking havoc internationally. She also missed her baby. It didn't matter that Naomi was a full grown woman. She missed her and dammit she was allowed.

As much as she enjoyed her work, neither ancient civilizations nor her adventures came close to measuring up to the absolute rush of having a family. She enjoyed being referred to as 'Dr.', 'Professor', and being described as a preeminent archaeologist, but she loved referred to as momma, daughter, granddaughter, sister, and an aunt. Her heart smiled whenever she was acknowledged or addressed by her familial titles, but her whole body bloomed like springtime whenever she heard Naomi call her 'Momma'.

Ruth categorically loved being a momma and the fact that she had the honor of being a momma to Naomi made the honor that much sweeter. She loved the sacredness of motherhood. Second only to salvation and mercy, she'd treasured it and treated it like the gift it was. Nourishing, protecting, instructing, holding, and guiding Naomi into womanhood (*which had consisted of a whole lot of telling her off*), had been her absolute pleasure.

She'd reveled in the quiet times (*rare*), in the sound of Naomi's chatter and the reassuring cadence of her breathing when she slept. She reveled in her embraces. An affectionate child, it was the standard procedure for Naomi to throw herself into her arms. Many days, Naomi'd walked into the room and snuggled into her lap and sat quietly while she'd read some tome. Even when Naomi grew into her impressive Amazonian stature, she simply grabbed a pillow, threw it in her lap and stretched out over her. She'd simply smiled at her baby. Pausing to drop a kiss on her forehead, she used every inch of her own 5'9" and 165 pounds to wrap her up in her love. She was glad that Naomi never grew out of her demonstrating her love for her. Naomi might be all grown up, but she was still her baby.

As always, whenever she thought of Naomi she had to think of the rest of her family. How could she not? She was blessed to have such a loving, giving family. Though her teenage years had been rough (*but whose hadn't been?*) and she'd had to bust her ass extra hard all through school being that she had a baby, she'd treasured those times. Though her momma and grandparents were demanding, they were equally loving. Never had she wondered if she was loved and considering her circumstances she knew that many a girl would've wondered such a thing. Her momma, and Nanny Harper and them didn't give her a chance to wonder though. Just as she knew that the sky was blue, she knew that she was loved so good, so good, so good.

She could've lived in those moments forever. It was a beautiful thing to be able to look to her momma to right what was wrong in her world. And even though her big brother liked to stress that he was in charge because he was older, she'd appreciated the security of having an older brother

watching out for her and threatening to end anyone who messed with her in any way, shape or form.

As much as she'd wanted to hold on to the past, as an archaeologist, she knew that she couldn't. Her momma had given up so much to raise her and Andronikos and even after that was done she'd helped raise the grandbabies. Grace deserved to do her thing especially when she'd put her own needs on lay-a-way for so long. Andronikos had babied her good and proper as had his best friend Aodhfionn MacCadáin. They had families of their own. And though she now had an army of neices and nephews that she spoiled, those children were off carving out their own legacies. She'd missed them though.

Naomi was right there with them giving the world hell, but last year her baby had come home. Not only had she brought back another graduate degree, she'd brought back two of the nicest boys she'd ever met. Big like all of the males in her family, Nyx and Ferro didn't mind her momma'ing. In fact, they actively sought it – not that either had had a choice. She'd overheard Naomi yelling at them that they were going to let her momma them and they were going to like it or she'd whip their asses until they did. Yep, that was her daughter – *Ms. Subtle*.

She loved those boys like they were her own. Now she had three babies to spoil and they spoiled her in return. Though she gave them plenty of space and respected their privacy, she did invade their kitchen much to all of their delights.

Cooking was the reason that she was making the trip to the other side of Atlanta. Loaded down with groceries, she flipped through her keyring so that she could let herself in. Finding three identical keys, she smiled as she let herself in. All three of her babies had given her a key and told her to

come over anytime (*translation: cook for us, mommy*). Well, today was anytime and being that it was brisk outside (*translation: under sixty degrees Fahrenheit, which was cold for southerners*), she bet that they'd enjoy a homemade beef stew.

She was digging through the cabinets for the crockpots when she heard the unmistakable sound of her baby screaming. Without thinking, she pulled all of the knives from the butcher block, vaulted over the counter, and kicked in the door of her baby's room. Seeing a naked man laying over her only child, she let loose the first two knives before hesitation even got a chance to kick in.

She might've hesitated if someone other than Grace Ellen Jones had raised her. Having Grace as a momma meant that she had Andronikos as a brother. Having Andronikos as a brother meant that by default she had his best friend Aodhfionn MacCadaín as a brother also. Between the three of them, there weren't many weapons that she couldn't handle or many men she couldn't take down.

So she hurled her knives with all of her strength and though she was amped up on a heady mix of fury and fear, her aim was true. She didn't go for the kill blow because a) she was going to make this motherfucker suffer if he was doing anything to her baby that her baby didn't want; b) she'd spotted Nyx and Ferro at the last second. Those boys were going to have some serious 'splaining to do but barring that she knew that nothing that intended Naomi harm would get past the city limits of Atlanta, much less breech their home while they drew breath. That is the only thing that saved the impressive specimen from immediate death. Still, they had betrayed her trust and they had to suffer her wrath too, which is why a split second

after she'd tossed the first set of knives at the man between Naomi's thighs, she tossed the second set at the men on either side of Naomi.

Before she could utter the first 'fuck you' Nyx grabbed one hand and Ferro the other. Stunned at their quickness, she didn't fail to notice that they each held two of the knives that she'd thrown. She didn't know what the fuck was going on, for that matter she didn't know why Nyx and Ferro were naked ... in Naomi's bed ... with some strange man. She didn't know but she was going to find out.

Without even looking at them she turned and walked out of the room. She tossed her words over her shoulder knowing that they would come.

"I'll be in the living room."

Naomi was ensnared by this Zoran. He was beautiful and arrogant and domineering and could play her body like Bo Diddley played the guitar; like Hank Aaron played left field; like black college bands played halftime. And this motherfucker ate pussy like it was an Olympic sport. He'd been working her body, straight working it and then he'd kicked it into overdrive and her cakes had been right there with him. An orgasm had washed over her body from the tips of her toes to the ends of her hair. It'd been so powerful that all she could do was emit a surprised gasp because speech was beyond her. For that matter sound was almost beyond her. But he didn't stop. That orgasm was followed by a succession of orgasms that broke through all of her barriers and settled in her heart.

He made love to her in time to her favorite song - Pavarotti's rendition of *Nessun Dorma*. He started off slow – just the like the aria – and whispered words that made her heart and pussy stutter before kissing his way up her thighs. *Mine, Naomi. Mine, Naomi*, he chanted right into

her heart. And then he lapsed into silence as he used that talented tongue and hummed the musical alphabet onto her clit. He licked her in tenor and she responded in soprano. He sucked her along with the subtle woodwinds and she shivered in time to the whole string section. He demanded her surrender with the boldness of the percussions and she could do naught but give it to him ... especially when he stroked and tongued her so expertly that she came to the chorus. He was good, so good, so good, so good that it was no longer the tenor's voice that she heard but his.

She floated in time to the beauty of the song. And he held her as the choir's clear voice lobbed easy verses to him so that he could love the roof off of the coliseum that housed her heart. When he heard her reticence give, he loved her relentlessly until she screamed in time with the final notes of the aria. Her release was so powerful she drowned out the orchestra in its entirety. His loving was so well-conducted that the power of her release didn't detract from the aria.

Never had her voice reached those octaves. Never had her body peaked so hard. Never had she seen eyes more beautiful than those of the male who looked at her like she was his universe. She wanted to say all of the words that spilled from her soul but in that moment she couldn't manage speech. All she could do was ride out the crescendo of the aria and her orgasm. Looking into his eyes she was transfixed by the Aurora Australis that his eyes resembled. The swirling blues, greens, purples, and reds shot across the dark horizon of his irises like firecrackers shot across the Fourth of July sky. In that moment she knew that he was her conductor and she his orchestra. And then she knew only sleep.

Escaping to their room, Nyx and Ferro quickly showered and dressed in their warring outfits. The living room may not have been a rogue galaxy, but it was a battlefield in wait. Though they would not throw a single blow, they knew that Ruth would not hold back. Their only defense would be their honesty. Seasoned warriors and spies without equal, they knew that this was a battle that they could not lose. It wasn't simply because Zoran couldn't exist without Naomi and Naomi wouldn't fare well without her family. It was because they'd grown to love Ruth so much that they couldn't exist without her.

If seeing the inner Naomi had made them gasp in surprise, seeing the inner Ruth caused them to lose their breath altogether. Ruth was always the very picture of serenity ... until a few moments ago. The Ruth that had burst into that room was living fury, fear, and danger. That Ruth would give battle-hardened Zjxadrâzqué'an warriors pause because that Ruth didn't want justice; that Ruth wanted vengeance.

Though the knives she hurled wouldn't have landed killing blows, they knew that Ruth hadn't meant to kill. Knowing the women in Naomi's family they did not doubt their will. Knowing Ruth, they didn't doubt her skill ... in anything. After they cleared up this matter with Ruth, they were exercising claim over her. The Empire could use more women like her.

Crossing the living room, they didn't speak. They simply kneeled at her feet and held out their swords to her. Not surprisingly, she took them. Surprisingly, she simply tossed them to the side and stared them down.

"Explain yourselves."

And they did.

Ruth was not surprised when Nyx and Ferro both kneeled at her feet. She was however surprised that they would hand her any more sharp objects after the events in the bedroom. Tossing their swords to the side (they were impressive but nowhere near as impressive as the ones her baby made); she turned her mean mommy eyes on them and demanded that they explain themselves.

It wasn't that she could fault her baby for having three fine men pleasure her (damn!); she faulted them for lying. They'd said that they were married. And dammit, regardless of the fact that they were gay, cheating was cheating. That was the one thing that she couldn't tolerate.

Though she'd demanded that they explain themselves, before they got the first syllable out of their mouths, she told them off.

"I have a problem with adultery, boys. And I have a real problem when you involve my daughter. Marriage is sacred yet you run around here and treat it like it's nothing and in doing so you treat each other like nothing, you treat yourselves like you're nothing, and when you involved Naomi in your adultery, you treated her like she was nothing. She does not exist for your amusement!"

"No ma'am; she doesn't. Zoran exists for Naomi's pleasure."

"Who the hell is Zoran?"

"Naomi's mate," they whispered in unison.

"Her mate? What the hell kind of man allows two other men any intimacies with his woman? I was only going to maim him but now I think I'll just go in there and finish his ass!" she said as she rose from the sofa.

Before she could take the first step, Nyx and Ferro stopped her cold with their words.

"We're not from this planet."

“So you finally admit it,” she said.

“You *knew*?” they asked in amazement.

“I didn’t know the particulars but I knew that there was something hinky about you. Y’all have that air about you that the men in No Trespassing have about them. You know that too fine for your own good/all weird thing that you have going.”

“You’re not scared? Intrigued?” Nyx asked.

“Scared? I’m a black southern woman and I have way more things to fear than two good-looking boys who can be felled with some of my momma’s banana pudding. Intrigued? Hell yes, I’m an archaeologist. How can I not be intrigued? But barring any of that, first and foremost, I am a momma. Specifically, Naomi’s momma. And y’all got some explaining to do because I’m not satisfied with that as an answer.”

She watched as they made themselves comfortable on the floor and then she used her momma voice and told them to get up. It was too damn cold for them to be down there. Pointing to the v of the leather sectional, she waited for them to sit. Granted, it was all cute the way they wanted to prostrate themselves to her and all but she didn’t need it.

Ruth needed answers and she got them ... in spades. Being that she’d held their eyes for the entirety of their conversation, she knew in her heart that they did not lie. Now that she knew that they hadn’t committed adultery or dragged her baby into it, she could like them again. She was glad about that for she truly loved those boys. After hearing how they’d exercised claim, she loved them even more. Her baby needed to be loved like they loved her.

“Thank you,” she said when they’d finished speaking.

“Before you thank us Ruth Webber-Jones you need to know something,” they said.

“And what is that?” she asked.

“It is true that we exercised claim for Naomi Webber-Jones but we’re also exercising claim over you.”

“Didn’t you ask her?” she asked.

“No, and we’re not going to ask you either because like your daughter you’re stubborn and would try and say no.”

“You may be all alien and everything but I’m the momma here so I hope you don’t think that you’re going to be bossing me around.”

“No Momma Ruth, we would never dream of bossing you around,” Nyx said.

“But we won’t hesitate to boss around any male that steps to you incorrectly,” Ferro said.

“I appreciate y’all being all protective over me but it isn’t necessary.”

“Yes, it is,” they chimed as a third voice joined them.

“They speak the truth. It is necessary for all Zjxadrâzqué'an males to protect you for you are the mother of my mate.”

Looking around at the baritone that joined them, Ruth didn’t even have a chance to cuss him out before he too kneeled before her.

“Mother of my mate, I vow to serve as Naomi’s shield from any and all danger; to act as her army when she needs justice; to serve as her pillow when she rests.”

She was going to make it tough on him but baby boy was bringing the greeting card prose.

“I will kill you, you know that right?”

“Yes ma’am.”

“I really mean that,” she said. “You might be all hot and alien but I will decimate you.”

“And if I ever behaved in a way that would prompt you to do such a thing, I would decree that the Zjxadrâzqué'an Army stand aside so that you could do just that.”

“I’m a momma, young man. I wouldn’t wait for you to utter a single syllable. I’d destroy you no matter what the cost to myself and you need to understand that.”

“Believe me Ruth Webber-Jones, I do.”

“Hmm. You talk a good game but tell me, what are your plans?” she asked as she leaned forward and slid her dagger right up under his manhood.

“I plan to make her Vice Empress,” he said with only the slightest bit of hesitation.

“And if she doesn’t want to be Vice Empress?”

“I will not stop asking until she does.”

“And where do you plan on living?”

“Anywhere she wants to although there will be times that I must be in Zjxadrâzqué Prime.”

“Well then, I guess you will escape unmaimed ... for now,” she said as she retracted her dagger. Later, she’d have to be sure to thank both Teijana and her daughter for it. Her daughter for the design and Teijana for the science behind it.

Zoran pulled his mate into his arms and watched her sleep. She was amazing. He wanted nothing more than to join her in sleep but apparently

he had an angry mother to impress. Though he didn't know much about humans, being around his brother's mate had taught him one thing: while it was normal for mothers to love their daughters, mommas really loved their daughters. Xiloxoch was damn fierce when it came to everyday things but when it came to Reign, she was death just waiting to happen. His gut told him that Ruth Webber-Jones would be just as fierce as Xiloxoch.

Gently kissing his mate's lips, he rose and quickly dressed. He was about to contact his crew when Nyx spoke to him.

The additional warriors you requested have arrived and are on board. Your crew and ship await your orders, Vice Emperor.

And your future mother-in-law awaits your presence, Ferro added.

Thank you ... for all that you've done Generals. Being that I'm about to meet my mate's mother, I feel that I should dress for the occasion. I'll be gone but moments. Watch over my mate in my brief absence.

It is done.

On the orders of Nyx and Ferro, his ship waited in a holding pattern just above the atmosphere and his crew was at the ready. All of his warriors wore their battle gear. Armed to the teeth, they looked like galactic coup just waiting to happen. He wasn't expecting any trouble from anyone except for his mate. Still, he would take no chances with her ... ever and it was best she accustom herself to that fact. Hurrying through his shower, he was dressed in his own battle gear and back in his mate's home in minutes.

He was just walking into the living room when he heard Nyx and Ferro tell his mate's mother that it was necessary to protect her. Ah, earth females. They continued to amaze him even as earth males continued to make him wonder why they existed in the first place.

Kneeling before her, he presented his case. Any other being would be swayed by his Zjxadrâzqué'an blood, by his title, by the campaigns that he'd successfully waged, by the power that he wielded and the respect that he commanded. Any other being except for the one whose feet he kneeled at. Instead of being impressed, she was simply suspicious, than annoyed, than suspicious some more, before finally, she was threatening.

He saw her move her hand but he was not expecting to feel a blade pressed up against his cock. He was not expecting that at all. Forcing himself to remain still, he poured out honesty. He'd already poured out his soul into his mates where it combined with hers so that she carried a piece of him with her and he carried a piece of her within him. Holding his breath, he hoped his honesty was enough to persuade his mate's mother. When she removed the blade he released the breath that he held and stood.

He'd just made it to his feet when Ruth Webber-Jones pointed to a spot on the other side of Ferro and demanded that he sit. Anyone else attempting to give him such an order would've already been lying at his feet awaiting the *coup de grâce* but this was Ruth Webber-Jones – momma to his mate – so he did as she bid. Ferro's taunting laughter flitted through his mind. Later, he'd repay him but for now he sat quietly and listened to Ruth's instructions on how her baby was going to be treated.

Naomi woke refreshed ... and sore. Damn, her cakes and Fine MF had worked her body. She felt delicious and overwhelmed. Hearing the faint sound of voices she decided that she best get up and get dressed.

Finishing her toilet, she was considering what to wear when she spotted the rack of her new outfits. She couldn't help but smile at her cakes. They definitely knew how to pick an outfit. Slipping on some

Caribbean blue lingerie, she put on her favorite stone-washed jeans (*because they encased her ass so beautifully*) and paired it with a black t-shirt that showed off her biceps and her cleavage. She pulled on her tennis shoes and skipped out of her room only to stop dead in her tracks. It wasn't the sight of her cakes and Fine MF sitting on the sectional; it was the sight of her momma sitting across from them. *Oh shit.*

"Momma!" she said as she threw herself in her arms as was customary.

"My baby," her momma said as she stroked her hair and hugged her almost to death.

"You're not going to kill them are you?" she asked.

"Not if they make you happy. In that case, I'll simply rough them up a bit."

"Momma, I know you. You've probably already roughed them up more than just a bit."

"You forget how delicate I can be," her momma said.

"No, momma. It's your delicacy that scares me. I remember how you delicately pushed one of my colleagues into a ravine. I remember how you delicately knocked one of my associates unconscious with a snowball to the ear."

"A- You need to put that in the Land of '*Let it Go*'; 2- your colleague was an asshole and your associate needs a few more millenia of evolution to aspire to the rank of asshole. Roman numeral III - I'm allowed."

"And d – ha ha," her cakes chimed in.

Shooting her cakes a look of disgust, she turned back to her momma. "Not arguing, Momma. I'm just saying."

"And yet that still remains such an unsatisfying answer."

“Momma,” she began.

“No need to explain, Naomi. Nyx, Ferro, and Zoran already have.”

“Then why are they sitting there looking like whipped puppies?”

“Because now I’m doing some explaining of my own.”

“Well, since I’m not the one in trouble this time, I’m going to go get some cereal and laugh at them while you tell them off,” she said as she went to the kitchen.

“You want anything, Momma?”

“A whole heap of grandkids would be nice, but I’ll take some iced-tea in the interim. I guess I’ll simply have to wait a month or so to find out if Zoran’s sperm is as strong as he thinks.”

“Momma!” If Naomi was wondering exactly what her momma knew, that comment made her stop. Her momma, ninja that she was, knew everything.

“Naomi!”

“I’m just going to eat my cereal and pretend that I didn’t hear that comment.”

“And I’ll just drink my iced tea and pretend that I didn’t see my daughter being pleased by three fine ass men,” she laughed.

Chapter Seven: Naomi Meet the Empire; Empire Naomi ... btw Watch Out!

Though he made sure to look his mate's mother in the eye, he kept his body tuned to the door of Naomi's bedroom. As soon as she stepped across the threshold his eyes went directly to her. She was beautiful and he had to admit that he liked seeing his platinum band snaking around her forearm from wrist to elbow. It didn't matter what she was doing his eyes were drawn to her. Mine, his mind screamed. Mine, his body and heart joined in.

Before he got through looking at her they were hustled into the kitchen by his mate's mother. Who was he kidding? He could spend the entirety of Zjxadrâzqué'an existence looking at her and he still wouldn't be through looking at Naomi.

Though the food was among the best he'd ever sampled, Zoran couldn't help but watch his mate as she ate. She'd waved off the buttery yeast rolls, the airy scrambled eggs, the selection of savory meats, but she damn near prostrated herself to her mother over something she referred to as cheesy grits. He didn't care for the grits but he was going to make sure that they were always available because he damn sure enjoyed watching his mate consume them. It was one of the most erotic things that he'd ever seen. She closed her eyes and swallowed ... slowly. Even the way that her throat moved turned him on ... as did the way she turned the spoon upright and licked the remaining grits off of it when she finished.

He watched her ... he couldn't help it. His body jumped in anticipation every time she darted closer. He wanted her ... so, fucking bad.

She was over there killing him and she hadn't even set out to tempt him. In fact, she'd pointedly ignored him once she stepped out of the bedroom.

She hadn't whispered one word to him; hadn't blessed him with a single caress, yet she was driving him insane by her very existence. It took everything in him to restrain himself from pinning her against the nearest flat surface and sliding his throbbing cock into her core. His body was cursing him for not completing the lovemaking act, but he knew that she needed more time to adjust to him for when he finally joined them he would not hold back. She pushed him past all of his pre-set limits.

Knowing that he had to do something with himself or risk tearing her house to pieces as he loved her, he was about to excuse himself when her voice caught his attention.

"Cakes, if y'all take care of the trash and sweeping the floor, Fine MF and I will get the rest."

The last few hours had taught him that 'the cakes' was how his mate referred to Nyx and Ferro. He heard Nyx and Ferro grunt their agreement around their mounds of food. Damn, they ate like it was going out of existence. Shaking his head at the spies he wondered who Fine MF was. No sooner did the thought leave his mind when she slid her tempting body right up to his and spoke.

"Here," she said as she handed him a towel. "I'll wash; you dry." And just like that she went back to ignoring him.

He was about to inform her that he did not do this type of work but Nyx's voice stopped his protests.

The sooner we get this done, the sooner we can leave.

Dammit, he had a point. So instead of going outside to cool off he stood beside her as she washed dishes. Swallowing his sigh of frustration

he took the dishes she passed him and dried them. He was waiting on her to finish scrubbing the black, cast iron skillet when he found himself ducking to prevent himself from being brained with the heavy skillet. Okay, it was obvious that his woman was as dangerous as she was beautiful. Taking the skillet he dried it and set it on the stove.

“Rub some grease in the bottom of it and around the sides,” his mate instructed as she handed him a paper towel and a bottle of oil.

Attending to that task with all due haste, he glanced over at his mate’s mother. Ruth Webber-Jones was giving him a look that didn’t bode well for someone. He only hoped that he wasn’t that someone. *That* was a dangerous female.

While he couldn’t decipher her look, he had no problem with the gesture she made. He might be Zjxadrâzqué’an but the thumb and pointer finger forming an ‘o’ with the pointer finger from the opposite hand being poked through it was universal. As was the next gesture she made using the two spies to relay her message. He didn’t know what amused him more: the fact that she used the two spies as props or the fact that she was as frustrated as he was with the slowness of the pace.

He was about to press himself up against Naomi when Ruth’s voice cut in. “Okay dammit, pick up the pace. Go ahead and grind on her like you want to and like she wants you to. Do whatever it is that you must, but hurry the fuck up. I might specialize in unearthing ancient cultures but dammit, I want to see your spaceship and I want to see it now! Naomi, Zoran, if I have to wait one more moment than necessary I am going to be real unhappy. You feel me? Now hurry it along. I’m going to run to my SUV and grab my gear. Let’s get a move on people!” she shouted before entering the garage.

Note to self: Ruth Webber-Jones was dangerous, impatient, and crazy. She was also helpful to his cause so he owed her. He owed her big he thought as he did as she suggested and touched his mate. Swallowing her gasp of surprise, he picked her up and pressed her against the wall. Grateful for the ten foot ceilings and solid construction of the domicile, he ground his hard body into his mate's luscious body and to his surprise she ground right back. They were going at it so hard that he worried if they'd rub the blue off of her jeans and the black off of his leather.

Spreading her legs wider, he stepped closer invading every bit of space around her. Thrusting his hands under her shirt, he cupped her incredible breasts with one hand then opened her jeans with the other. Snaking his fingers into her panties he felt her wetness and drove his fingers home. Her scream of completion was music to his ears. He didn't stop though as he wanted his scent all over her. Even though she wore his jewelry, he wanted no doubt about whose female she was. Growling he was about to bring her to another devastating climax when he felt her hands on him. And that was when he completely fucking lost what little bit of mind he had left.

Naomi thought that she'd long outgrown being embarrassed by the females in her family ... until this morning ... and most recently, ten seconds ago. Oh. My. Goodness. No her professional, renowned archaeologist momma did not just threaten Zoran to practically dry hump her – *and with the quickness* – so she could see his spaceship. If she didn't know that her mother had a deep, deep interest in cultures, she'd think that spaceship was a metaphor for Zoran's cock.

Before she could express her outrage or even put up a token protest, Fine MF had her in his arms and then against the wall. Oh goodness his embrace felt so fucking good. Oh goodness, oh goodness, oh ... good-ness.

Naomi's mind was spinning. Fine MF stirred up maelstroms within her body. She understood the mechanics of having a large male embrace her; she was aware of what constituted a good bump and grind; she knew all of that but nothing prepared her for being slammed up against a wall (albeit gently) and macked so thoroughly and so quickly. She was coming before she knew what she was about and she was on the brink of coming again when she finally got the chance to draw in a whole breath. He was bringing it and bringing it with more mack than she'd ever seen and that was really saying something considering the males in her family.

Not only was Fine MF bringing it; from the arrogance that illuminated his intriguing eyes ... he knew it. He might be fine, hot, and the most devastating male she'd ever encountered, but dammit, he was still a male. That meant that he could be brought to his knees. And though he was making her feel all kinds of good, she needed to bring him to his knees. Fine MF needed to know that just because he could play her body so damn good that he was running things.

Locking a leg around him, she thrust her hips up at him and used her pussy to stroke them both to the brink of orgasm. Without ceasing the motion of her hips, she untangled one of her hands from his hair. With a smoothness that would make the jazz genre envious, she unzipped his pants and slid her hand inside. Circling as much of his impressive cock as she could get her hand around, she stroked him ... and he trembled. She worked her way up his cock, caressing the warm steel with feathery touches ... and his knees buckled. She cupped his balls then made her way back up

and squeezed the base of his cock ... and he punched two holes in the walls as he roared her name. She smiled knowing that she had brought him to the brink.

“I win,” she breathed as she tried to slide out from beneath him.

Her escape was halted by his strong arms caging her in and his delicious voice in her ear.

“You do win ... you have me as a mate,” he said as he pulled her other leg around him and fitted them so perfectly together air didn’t even have a chance to slip between them.

“Enjoy this moment, because I assure you that when I finally mate you properly, I will enjoy hearing my name echo throughout the whole of the universe as you sing my name during climax. Or should I amend that to say climaxes because with me as a mate you will never know a solo climax.”

She could only gasp at his words and before she could form a reply, she felt the tip of his tongue touch her ear.

“I will also enjoy the sting of every mark that you put on my body as you are riding out your climax. I know that you will mark me well because I will love you well. Perhaps I will get your marks tattooed over so that I can carry them as advertisements to my prowess.”

Did that motherfucker just intimate that he was the better partner in bed? No, he didn’t intimate; he surpassed intimating two climaxes ago. Though her coochie wept in anticipation of finally having his cock in its grip, the southern bit of her just couldn’t let his challenge go unanswered.

“I like your sexy talk. I like it so much that I’ll be all discreet when I make you my bitch,” she threw back.

His chuckle resounded through her body and went straight to her coochie.

“Is that a challenge, mate?”

“No, Fine MF, it’s a goal. I’ll *try* to be discreet when I leave you begging for mercy, begging for more, begging for me period ... but I cannot promise that. I might just throw an empire-wide victory celebration.

She smiled thinking of the party that she’d throw to celebrate bringing this male to his knees. Her imaginings were interrupted by her momma returning to the room. Ruth took one look at both of them and her face broke out into the biggest smile Naomi had ever seen her smile.

“We don’t have all day people. We’re burning daylight,” she said as she grabbed her cakes and tapped her foot waiting for her and Zoran.

Zoran couldn’t help but be pleased that his mate was so feisty. It would make his sexual domination of her that much sweeter. He’d never imagined anyone like her and now that he had her he was damn sure going to let everyone know that she was his. Looking down at his ripped shirt and her beauty, he smiled. Capturing her attention, he brought his fingers to his lips and slowly licked off her essence.

“Delicious,” he said.

Summoning his warriors, he grabbed his overcoat and covered her with it. That body was for him to ogle. Seeing that his mate’s mother was in good hands – or should he rephrase that to say that Nyx and Ferro were in good hands – he went to embrace Naomi.

“Wait. I need to get my own gear,” she said and was out of his arms and the room before he could protest.

Following her, he watched as she threw some stuff into a backpack and grabbed a large duffel bag. Taking her backpack he reached for the other cases and almost lost a hand.

“No one but me or my momma touches this bag,” she said as she took his hand.

Having her take his hand startled him into silence but he slowly released the breath that he’d been holding and thought them onto his ship.

As soon as his feet touched the solid ground of his ship, he checked to see that his mate and her mother fared well. He was about to ask when both mother and daughter looked at him. Immediately, he knew that whatever they were about to say or do would not bode well for him.

“Right now it would be so perfect if your last name was Scott,” they said before bursting into laughter.

Biting back a grimace, he shook his head and barked out introductions.

“Warriors, this is my mate, Naomi – the new Vice Empress of the Zjxadrâzqué’an Empire. Beside her is her mother – Ruth Webber-Jones. Naomi, Dr. Webber-Jones, these warriors are the finest in the whole of the Empire.

“Nice to meet you, boys,” she said before turning to Naomi. “This is my daughter – my only daughter – and if anything happens to her I’m going to destroy you and your little empire. Hope we’re clear about that.”

Turning back to him, she tapped her sneakered foot. “I’m ready to see the ship.”

He couldn’t help but smile at the way she addressed the most dangerous warriors in the Empire as ‘boys’ ... and then threatened to kill them. Under normal circumstances they would correct her about them being boys and then educate her about the folly of making threats against the Empire, but these were not normal circumstances. And neither Naomi nor her mother could be accused of being a normal female.

“As you wish,” he said as he led them deeper into his ship stopping by the suites so that they could drop off their gear.

Naomi couldn't help but be impressed at the size of Fine MF's ship. By the size of the corridor, she surmised that about five Georgia Domes could easily fit inside. If she was one of those peeps who kept their televisions locked on the Sci-Fi channel, she'd be creaming herself from pure, fucking glee. She was tempted to act all nonchalant but what was the point. This ship fucking rocked ... *and so did the man who owned it her pussy chimed in* ... and if she had any questions about it totally rocking then all she needed to do was look at the radiant expression on her momma's face. Her momma looked like a kid at Christmas. For that alone, she loved Zoran ... a little bit anyway.

He was an arrogant bastard ... and damn if he didn't have a whole lot of reasons to be arrogant. Rolling her shoulders in his overcoat that was way too fucking big, she realized that he was also possessive ... but then again, so was she. She would've thrown something of hers around his massive shoulders but she doubted that he could pull off Capri pants or a corset in spite of all of that fineness.

She was thinking about taking the overcoat off but she was reveling in the experience of being able to wear her man's anything. Though she tended to date big men, she had too many titties to be able to actually wear their clothes comfortably. Not so with Fine MF she thought as she pulled his coat tighter around her and inhaled his fragrance. Damn, if he got a big old capital letter 'Z' on it, she could pretend that she was wearing his letter jacket. She smiled imagining the sports that a man like Fine MF would

letter in. Let's see, there'd be obliterating things from existence team, the arrogant fine bastard team, and the chess club.

It wasn't often that a man had felt possessive over her. Okay, fine it was never. And she knew that he was possessive not simply because he'd covered her up, but because he hadn't yet let her out of his embrace. He acted like someone was going to swoop in and steal her from him. Obviously, he didn't know her or her momma if he thought that anyone was just going to take her without a fight.

Speaking of fight she couldn't help but notice and be impressed by the men flanking them. There were a thousand of them if there was one. Describing them as warriors had been an understatement. From the looks on their faces and the readiness that hummed through their impressive, impressive bodies, calling them mercenaries might be an understatement. They had that *'start the morning off by obliterating something just to make your point'* kind of men. She liked that. She liked that a lot, although she did have to wonder why in the hell Fine MF was this deep in warrior.

Turning to him, she asked. "Why are there so many warriors on board?"

"There are so many warriors on board because you and your mother are on board," he answered.

Oh damn. Her pussy got wet upon hearing that answer. "Oh, okay then."

"You thought they were on board for some nefarious reason didn't you?" he asked.

"Yes. For a minute there I thought you might be trying to invade the ATL," she admitted.

“Not that anyone could stop us if we wanted to do such a thing, but why would we want to invade such a paltry city on such a paltry planet?” he asked.

“Dude, I’m going to say this one time. Do NOT talk junk about the ATL. It will not go well for you if you do. Talking shit about the ATL is like talking shit about someone’s momma.”

“In that case, I’ll simply confine my comments to your planet in general. Humans are funny creatures. Even after your so-called Industrial Revolution you haven’t progressed that far,” Fine MF said.

“Okay, again with the people skills. Unlike you I wasn’t actually alive to experience the Industrial Revolution but I did experience Prince and the Revolution and let me tell you right now you haven’t lived until you’ve waved a lit lighter back and forth to the sounds of *Purple Rain*.”

“What prince?”

“Are. You. Kidding. Me?”

“About what?”

“You don’t know who Prince is?”

“No.”

“You disgust me.”

“And yet my mere presence causes your body to react. I don’t even have to touch you and yet you tremble,” he purred in her ear as he tugged the lobe with his teeth and ground his cock into her back.

Turning in his arms, she grinded him right back. “And according to you, I simply had to exist and your whole world trembled. Once again, I win. Now let’s go my momma wants to see your ship, which technically is half mine now being that I’m your mate and all.”

She was about to say more but he lifted her in his arms ... and every warrior dropped to their knee, bowed their heads and extended their swords. For a moment she felt like she was a lion pup being lifted before the Animal Kingdom. And as much as she didn't want to admit it ... it fucking rocked.

"What is that about?" she asked.

"They are paying proper respect to the Vice Empress and her mother."

"They're not going to do that every time we walk by are they?"

"Only if you request it," he answered.

"Wow. Are you going to carry me around the whole time?" she asked.

"Do you want me to?"

Yes! Her pussy screamed. "Not this time. I want you to conserve your strength. You'll need it."

"Promise?" he rasped as he gently took her mouth in a kiss.

Zoran allowed her to walk on her own power, which required that she remove the overcoat. She sensed its loss immediately but didn't have long to be sad about it as he quickly replaced the coat with his body. His arms were constantly around her; his hands were everywhere as were his lips. He felt so good. Though she was sure Zoran was a wonderful guide, he didn't really get a chance to guide because her momma had questions and lots of them. *'What's this? What does it do? Why is it here?'*

Zoran had answered all – and she meant all – of her momma's question with the patience reserved for a small child and the respect due a head of state. She'd appreciated that. Having gone on a dig once with her momma, she'd decided that was an experience she wasn't trying to repeat

anytime soon. Ruth Webber-Jones might be all soft, loving momma most of the time but when she was at work, Ruth Webber-Jones was the kind of taskmaster that would've sent Attila, Genghis, and even Yoda himself, home in tears.

Still, Zoran had answered all of her questions, which was a feat in itself being that his lips seemed to always be occupied with hers. It seemed as if he'd dry-humped her against every hard surface in his ship. And it was a huge fucking ship. It was a good thing she was wearing good footwear because she was pretty sure that she'd walked a fucking marathon.

While she was straight tired her momma was probably running some unfortunate warrior into the ground. Even after four hours she hadn't shown any signs of being close to quitting. After entrusting her momma to the cakes and issuing her own threats to the guard, she begged off.

After being pleased all night by three Zjxadrâzqué'an males it was a miracle she had the strength to stand much less traipse all over the ship. Though this was the first space ship that she'd seen, she bet if there was a show called *Pimp My Ship*, this would've been the paradigm that other ships aspired to. Though intrigued, she'd have to see the rest of the ship another time. Right now, a sister was tired. That's why she was tucked up in Zoran's bed ... right next to him. Zoran's ship was beautiful. And it was half hers, she thought as she drifted off to sleep.

Zoran had been turned on from the moment that he sensed her. Naomi was incredible. It wasn't simply her physical beauty that moved him. It was her intellect, her sense of loyalty, her sense of humor, and her feistiness. She didn't hold back her opinion. She didn't simply argue to argue; she argued because she felt that she was right. Though her words

could be sharp, she softened them with her smiles and backed them up with sound arguments.

He loved to watch her argue, which is why he always said something to get a rise out of her. Inevitably, her feistiness got a rise out of him. She was too much woman for him to ignore. That is why he spent every moment touching her, teasing her, tasting her. He would've liked nothing more than to penetrate her but he needed to make her want him as much as he wanted her ... with an all-consuming need that burned within his very soul. So he'd tease her, and see how long it took her to break ... to beg him to make her his in every way.

He'd waited many centuries for her and until he'd sensed her he hadn't even known that he'd been waiting for her. Now that he'd found her, he couldn't stand to be apart from her. Looking down at her sleeping form, he smiled. There was no question that she was a worthy mate for him. The question was whether or not he was worthy of her.

Though he knew that she was his mate, by law, if a Zjxadrâzqué'an male did not please his female, then she could seek another male that could. Every male grumbled at the law, but it insured that males did all within their power to keep their mates happy. There were only a few instances of a Zjxadrâzqué'an female exercising this option. Then again, if any male attempted to take a female from him, he'd simply eliminate him. It was illegal to do so, but he knew that there were probably a whole lot of laws that he was willing to break in order to keep this woman by his side.

Chapter Eight: You'll be Sorry ... at first

Thanks to their advanced science, the trip from Earth to Zjxadrâzqué Prime took less than a day. Although Ruth never quit, surviving on something she referred to as a 'cat nap' and sandwiches, his mate didn't rise from his bed. She slept soundly and he let her. It wasn't unusual for a woman to sleep so long after experiencing her first Zjxadrâzqué'an orgasms.

He wanted to talk with her but he also wanted her to be fresh so she'd have a chance (*a miniscule chance but a chance nonetheless*) to withstand his sensual assault. He'd given her a never-ending stream of orgasms only to back off. Time after time he brought her to the brink before backing off. The look in her eyes alerted him that she might attempt to kill him, but it was a chance that he had to take. She'd challenged his prowess and he just couldn't have that.

Waking her with light caresses, he whispered her name in her ear until he felt her body come to life beside his.

"Naomi, we have arrived."

She grumbled something and made her way to the adjoining bath where she remained for some time. His female was not a morning person. When she finally returned dressed in much the same way as she was the day before, he followed her lush body and swallowed back a moan.

"My momma wants to explore your planet and I want to explore some food. Do you have cheesy grits in this little area of the universe?"

"After breakfast, I will arrange a contingent of warriors to escort your mother wherever she wishes to go," he said as he arranged her (and her precious duffel bag) onto a PFC- *personal flying craft* - that would take

them to the grouping of palaces that housed the Zjxadrâzqué'an Royal Family.

“Cool. And while you’re arranging things, I’m going to need some jeans –size 16, 34” inseam, a flying high-tech hovercraft, some t-shirts – size 3XL, and a leather coat like yours but one that fits me.”

“What is it with human females and hovercrafts?” he asked the spies who wore amused grins.

“Don’t know but we advise you let it go,” Nyx replied.

“Yeah, let it go, Zoran. If you’re going to be an ass about it I can simply amend my request and ask for a flying Ducati. See, I didn’t want my first request to be over-the-top.”

“Who says you get to make requests?” he asked.

“Dude, you drag me halfway across the universe and at the very least I should get like a flying 4x4.”

“No,” he said.

“You’re not the only one who can say ‘*no*’ Fine MF.”

“But I’m the only one who can say ‘*yes*’ to your ridiculous idea,” he countered.

“And I’m the only one who can say ‘*yes*’ to your little mating thing,” she threw back.

“And you will but before you forget who the male in this relationship is, ask yourself if you can get back home without me.”

“You’re not the only male on this planet. Perhaps I’ll simply get vamped up and find another Zjxadrâzqué'an male to take me where I want to go. And being that you’ve been stingy with the orgasms for the last twenty-four hours, maybe he can take me to see the big giant O!” she yelled.

“Try that and I will waste the vicinity,” he said in a low voice devoid of emotion.

“And what do you mean by that?” she asked.

“I mean,” he said as he got right up into her space. “That I will eliminate every male between the ages of eighteen and eighty within a hundred mile radius if I even think that one has attempted to take you from me.”

“And what about me?”

“I will keep you regardless of who I have to fight.”

“Well being that I know that you won’t fight a woman, perhaps I’ll get a woman and fuck her so good that she takes me back home! How you like them apples?” she finished.

He couldn’t think clearly at the moment. All he could do was stare at his mate. How dare she look so tempting when threatening to find another male? Did she not know her effect on him? Did she not know how much of a challenge her words were?

Pulling her into his lap he grabbed handfuls of her luscious breasts and kissed her silent.

You’ll be sorry, Ferro warned softly.

Zoran heard Ferro’s warnings but he paid it no mind. He was too far gone.

“I like these apples just fine,” he said as he gave them another squeeze and grinded his hips into her.

When he felt her hands slip through his hair he pulled back a bit and enjoyed the kiss. Hearing the string of moans that she emitted, it took him a moment to realize that she’d straddled his lap and was on the verge of grinding him into the seat. He saw stars. He literally saw stars and that’s

when he realized that she'd hit him in the face with her fist ... and it hurt like hell. And so did the matching one her mother gave him. *Did his mother-in-law just punch him in the throat?*

One moment Naomi was asking for a hovercraft and the next Zoran was acting like he'd lost what little bit of mind he had left. And if that wasn't bad enough he threatened to leave her stranded here. *Oh fuck that.* Before she could stop herself she intimated that she'd get another man and that's when he'd responded with his death threats against the male population within the immediate and not-so-immediate area.

But that wasn't the worst of his sins. No, the worst was when he kissed her. How dare he? He'd been amping her up for the last day and then backing off like her having an orgasm violated some kind of law.

The worst part of it was that he knew what his touch did to her. He knew ... and he touched her anyway. He used sex as a weapon and recruited her own body in an offense against her. That was unacceptable. So she'd turned the tables and kissed him, grinded on him, worked him up into a right, proper frenzy and then punched him in the fucking jaw. Bastard. Fine, arrogant, hotass, hot, fucking hot, real hot, too hot for his own good bastard, she thought.

She had to duck because her momma had jumped over the seat and was in the process of getting her own licks in. Damn, she loved her momma. Preparing herself for a battle she mentally flipped through the card catalog of fighting styles in her repertoire and selected Holden-Cascade mode for the upcoming battle. She'd have to drop Uncle Gage and Uncle Cannon a postcard thanking them once again for teaching her how to drop a trio of three-hundred pound guys with the quickness. One tended to

need that sort of thing when one made a living (*or in Cannon's case a hobby*) out of breaking up bar fights.

Though she wasn't in a bar, she was surrounded by big ass men. *When in Rome, right?* Her next punch was stopped by the raucous laughter of a man who could only be Fine MF's father. Shit. This was so not the way that she planned on meeting her in-laws.

"Ah, son, you do have a way with females," distinguished older version of Fine MF said. "The suns have just risen and already you have not one, but two women ready to do what no enemy has done ... slay you," he laughed as he held his arms up to presumably assist her from the vehicle.

"Are you holding your arms up to assist me or are you planning something that will involve a dungeon and me having to fight a dragon to the death? She asked.

"Oh, daughter, like I would ever harm the mate of my son or any female for that matter. I am here to assist of course."

"Okay then," she said as she grabbed her duffel bag. "But for the record, I wasn't going to slay him exactly. Just maim him a little bit," she said as she allowed him to help her down. Of course he handled her as if her weight wasn't shit.

"And that would be perfectly understandable. I grew up wanting to maim him on a daily basis," almost twin version of Fine MF said as he walked up. *Apparently being a fucking stud was mandatory on this planet.*

"Naomi might not have been in a mind to kill him but I was about to take him for a little country ride." Her momma turned back and got all up in Zoran's face. "I thought I'd made myself perfectly clear about the manner in which I expect my baby to be treated. She is delicate and needs

to be handled gently. Adhere to that or I will be more than unhappy to learn it to you, boy,” her momma said. Perhaps if she’d yelled it instead of issuing her threats in that monotone crazy momma voice, her momma’s threats wouldn’t have sounded so menacing.

“Momma, calm down,” she pleaded. It was bad enough that her new in-laws had witnessed her and her momma straight jacking Zoran; it would so not help matters if her momma killed him. She was going to reach for her momma but another distinguished good-looking male stepped up.

“Allow me, ma’am,” he said as he stepped up and held his massive arms out to her momma.

Ruth couldn’t believe that Zoran was about to make her whip his ass this early in the morning. If she hadn’t decided that he would indeed make her some beautiful grandbabies and treat her own baby like the Vice Empress that she was about to be, she would’ve punched him in the throat more than once. Then again, seeing the contingent of alpha males walk up, she might not have gotten the chance.

She watched as Zoran’s father helped her daughter down. Seeing that her baby was okay she was about to give Zoran another piece of her mind when the finest specimen of maleness that she’d ever glimpsed approached and held out his arms.

“Who might you be?” she asked. She needed to know if she was going to have to pull off some Indiana Jones shit to get her and her baby out of here alive.

“Sentinel Raimo Marik – trainer of the Zjxadrâzqué'an Army and sometimes bodyguard to the Emprincess,” he drawled.

Eyeing him with suspicion despite his fineness, she didn't move until Zoran's father spoke up.

"In consideration to your arrival, he's been assigned to act as your bodyguard as we've been told that you wish to explore our planet."

"That's considerate but if he's guarding me, who then will guard the Emprincess?"

"Right now she is in the capable hands of two battle dragons," Sentinel Marik said.

"Well then, let's get the introductions out of the way so we can get going," she said as she jumped into his arms and slid down his person.

Seeing that no one was moving fast enough to suit her, she swept them all with a look. "Let's put it into high gear people. We're burning daylight."

He was a peaceful male – *well as far as Zjxadrâzqué'an males could be* – until he'd met Emprincess Reign. Momentarily closing his eyes he thought of the sheer number of Zjxadrâzqué'ans that he'd had to threaten; the multitude of times that he'd had to tell Reign off; the procedures and fail safes that he'd had to put in place to keep her alive.

He'd never met a more reckless being in his life ... or one he liked so well ... not that he was admitting to anything. He was a warrior; feelings never came into play when it pertained to his job. The beings that he'd put into the healing bay because they'd allowed the Emprincess to get a paper cut would've been there regardless.

Emprincess Reign had given him that one grey hair that he had. Still, he'd had a few months to get used to her and her mother. He was only given a few hours to ready himself for Naomi and Ruth Webber-Jones. Though

Nyx and Ferro had clued him in about Naomi; nothing that they'd said in any way prepared him for her mother.

Ruth Webber-Jones was a beautiful, feisty female ... and a dangerous one he reckoned as soon as he witnessed her punch the Vice Emperor in the throat. *That had to hurt and the fact that she'd addressed him as 'boy' had to hurt even more.* That last bit had him hiding a smile. Oh, the Vice Emperor was in for it ... and recalling his vociferous assertions that he'd never act love struck over a female he couldn't wait to watch his downfall.

Despite her unassuming air, she exuded the same type of danger as did the Empress. They were not playing when it came to their daughters ... and he didn't blame them. He was contemplating what it was that she'd want to do when Ruth literally threw herself into his arms. Only his fast reflexes allowed him to save his male parts from being caved in by her steal-toed boots. He was sending up a prayer for the safety for him and all of the Zjxadrâzqué'an Empire when his brain registered the feel of Ruth sliding her surprisingly voluptuous body down his. Biting back a groan and ignoring the stirring in his body he concentrated on the words spilling from her sensuous mouth.

Hearing her decree, he bowed to the Royal family and left with a chattering Ruth Webber-Jones giving him instructions. She may have been some kind of doctor, but she had the presence of a field general. Damn, he felt the beginnings of another grey hair just waiting to spring from his scalp.

Zoran caught his breath and forced his jealousy aside. He did not like any male handling his mate – even if that male was his father. A Zjxadrâzqué'an male who was damn possessive about his own mate, his father should've known better. Glimpsing the mocking smile in his father's

eyes he knew that the wily bastard knew exactly what he was feeling. Unleashing his wrath upon his father wouldn't be a particularly good way to welcome his mate and her mother into his family so he held off ... for now. Later, he'd meet his father in the training arena and show him his displeasure.

But first things first. He had to introduce his mate and her mother to his family. Embracing her from behind (where it was safe), he brought her body fully into his. That was a mistake. Naomi smelled like temptation. Closing his eyes he lowered his head and slowly inhaled her scent. He'd been hard from the moment he'd sensed her and even her anger couldn't lessen his need for her. Feeling her relax in his embrace and hearing the soft moan that escaped her immediately calmed him even as it turned him on.

"Zoran," she sighed.

"Yes, Naomi?" he breathed into her ear.

"Um, your parents are watching."

"Aye, and we're taking notes so that we may give you pointers later," his father laughed.

Zoran ignored his father. That wasn't a difficult thing considering the treasure in his arms. "Your mother's also watching ... and tapping her foot."

"Are her arms also crossed?" she asked as she sank deeper into his body.

"Yes," he answered as he gently thrust his groin against her.

"That means that she's growing impatient so unless you want to taste her wrath some more you best hurry up."

Taking another moment to savor her, he dropped a soft kiss on her temple and reluctantly pulled back – a little. Looking at her mother, he held out his hand to her. He couldn't help but smile upon hearing the impatient breath she released. Hiding his smile, he waited for her to walk to his side. Taking her hand, he bowed over it and placed his free arm around her.

Looking at his mate and her mother, he introduced them to his family. "Naomi, Dr. Webber-Jones, allow me to introduce you to the Zjxadrâzqué'an Empire. These are my parents – the Emperor Emeritus Zlogonje and Empress Emeritus Nika; my brother Zjxadrâzqué - the Emperor - and his wife, the Empress Xiloxoch; my Uncle Samuel, the Sergeant-at-arms of the Empire and my Aunt Sobeska, retired Lt. Empress; my cousin Abaddon Brava - Guardian Commander; and the Sentinel of all of the Empire, Raimo Marik. You already know Nyx and Ferro."

Next, he addressed his family. "Mother, Father, Aunt, Uncle, Zjxadrâzqué, Jack, Abaddon, Sentinel Marik, I present my mate, Naomi Webber-Jones, and her mother, Dr. Ruth Webber-Jones."

"Pleased to meet you," Naomi addressed them all. "Thank you for allowing us to visit and please accept these gifts for the kindness that you've bestowed upon my mother," she said as she handed his mother, his aunt and the Empress a steel case from her duffel bag.

"Don't you think that we'll bestow the same kindness upon you?" his mother asked.

"I would hope so but my primary concern is not how you treat me, but how you treat my momma, ma'am."

"Spoken like a daughter who is well-loved," his aunt said.

“How could she not be with Ruth as her momma?” the Empress said.
“Hello, Ruth.”

“Hello, Jack. Small world.”

“And getting smaller everyday. I’m so glad that you’re here.”

“And I’m glad to be here,” Ruth said.

“You know each other?” Zoran asked.

“Boy, Atlanta is big but it ain’t that big, and Patrale is even smaller. Jack lives up the road a piece. Now hush while grown folks are talking,” she admonished.

He ignored the mocking grins of his family and waited while they opened their gifts. Hearing the indrawn gasp of the Zjxadrâzqué’an females, everyone stepped forward ... and then stopped in their tracks as the females withdrew the most beautiful swords that he’d ever beheld.

“Beautiful,” his mother exclaimed.

“Lass, where did you come across such a find? I’ve traveled the universe and have seen few things that rival this,” his father said.

“She made them,” the Empress whispered. Ruth told me about her daughter’s passion, but I’ve never had the pleasure of holding one of her pieces. “Thank you, Naomi.”

“You’re welcome,” his mate said shyly.

It was clear that though Naomi took pride in her work, she wasn’t accustomed to praise. He watched as she turned and addressed his cousin and Sentinel Marik. “If it would please you, I would be honored to make the weapon of your choice for you Guardian Commander Brava and Sentinel Marik.”

The spies simply stood back and looked proud. His cousin, for once was speechless. Sentinel Marik, though overcome with emotion answered his mate.

“Lass it is I who am honored that you would even consider making me a weapon,” he said a moment before his mate’s mother grabbed his arm and dragged him off.

After carrying his mate over the threshold of his private home within the Zjxadrâzqué'an Estate, he didn't even make it two steps into the house before he had her against the wall. Stripping her jeans from her, he dropped to his knees and pushed his face into her sex. Naomi's smell was turning him on so good. Gently opening her folds with his finger, he curled his tongue around her clit and drank from her. She tasted sweet and it was all that he could do to restrain himself from taking her like his body demanded.

Forcing himself to slow down, he caught her climax on his tongue and savored it like he would a battle victory. Holding her legs as she came, he slowed his licks but he did not cease. He continued pleasuring her until she'd screamed out her voice from coming so many times. Ignoring his body's demands, he kept at it. He stopped only when she fainted from the force of her last climax.

Easily catching his love, he carried her to the master suite and settled her on the massive bed. He spent several minutes watching her before finally leaving the room. Changing his clothing, he dismissed his personal attendants knowing that she wouldn't be comfortable amidst the company of so many strangers. He arranged for a tutor whilst waiting for the arrival

of the two spies. As soon as they walked in the door, he left for the training field before he could talk himself out of it.

The look on the spies' faces told him he was stupid. Of course, Ferro couldn't leave it at a look.

"You're going to be sorry," he spat before turning his back on him and walking into the house.

His cock berated him. Actually, it outright cursed him out. He was sure that Naomi would hate him too but he convinced himself that her surrender would be worth the inconvenience of walking around with a hard cock.

Zoran has no idea who he is messing with," Nyx said. "I almost feel sorry for him when Naomi comes to unsatisfied and finds him gone."

"It is a dangerous game that he plays. Naomi isn't exactly the paradigm of patience," Ferro growled.

"Ah, but she is the paradigm for female. Did he tell you that he arranged for tutors for her?"

"He didn't?" Ferro said scandalized.

"Unfortunately for them, he did."

"Should we arrange for medical?"

"Already seen to and on standby. All we can do is wait for Naomi to waken and hope that we can contain her anger."

"Are you sure that Zoran isn't part human because his stupidity is rivaling that of human males," Ferro said.

"I'm sure, which is a good thing for him because he's going to need every bit of his Zjxadrâzqué'an blood to keep him alive."

Naomi awoke naked ... and alone. All she remembered was Fine MF carrying her over the threshold and attacking her pussy with his tongue. She'd grabbed onto his hair and held on for dear life. She remembered falling but she hadn't feared hitting the ground ... not with Zoran there to catch her. He was a bossy, annoying bastard but she knew that he would throw himself and the entire Zjxadrâzqué'an Empire into a black hole before he harmed her.

He hadn't harmed her, but he was pissing her off with his clit-teasing ways. She knew what he was about. His ego was bruised and he wanted some back. Well, he could just get the fuck over that. Getting up, she dressed and went downstairs. Spotting her cakes she broke into a smile and called out their names.

"Cakes!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" she screamed as she jumped into their arms. "What are y'all doing here and where the fuck is Zoran? I got a bone to pick with him. Actually two hundred six of them unless you Zjxadrâzqué'ans have more bones than us humans."

"We're here because Zoran asked us to keep you company while he's out training," Butter Pecan Cake said.

"*Training?* He left to go training?"

"He is a warrior; it is what he does," White Cake said gently.

"He can do that but he cannot do me?" she said sulkily. Her pity party was interrupted by a knock on the door.

"I'll get that," Butter Pecan Cake said as he rose from the couch.

A few moments later he returned with a handful of the most beautiful women she'd ever seen. Every single one of those chicks looked like they were Ms. The Whole Wide World clones. They had perfect hair, perfect teeth, perfect hourglass figures, perfectly bronzed skin, perfect every damn

thing. They could've been in the business of caring for orphans and walking old people across busy intersections and it wouldn't have mattered. She needed to know why they were here – in her house. Yeah, *her* house. What was Zoran's was hers including the man himself.

Regardless of her anger she forced herself to be pleasant. Looking at Butter Pecan Cake she let her eyes ask the question that she refused to let her mouth ask.

White Cake answered her before Butter Pecan Cake could.

"Vice Empress," he began.

Naomi lifted a brow. When the fuck did he start addressing her so formally? And furthermore why was he doing it? Tabling her internal questions she returned her attention to White Cake.

"These females are tutors."

"And what do I need tutoring on?" she asked even though everything in her rebelled at doing so.

"How to make love to Zoran," the clone closest to her said.

Did that chick just say what she thought she did? Da hell? "I'm sorry. Could you repeat that," she said.

"We are here to teach you how to make love to Zoran," she repeated with absolutely no fear at all.

"And what makes you qualified to teach me that?" she asked calmly.

"We-," she began.

It wasn't what she said; it was that fucking smirk. She didn't need to hear the words that the supermodel was about to say; just as she didn't need to understand the Zjxadrâzqué'an language to understand what she meant. Their looks said it all. It said that she was somehow inferior, unworthy of a man like Zoran.

On her best day and their worst day, Naomi would never be able to match them on beauty. But she didn't need to. *She* was the one whom Zoran loved. *Her*. He was going to get his ass chewed on right good when she got a hold of him, but she knew that he loved her just as she knew that on the seventh day God rested.

The arrogant bastard showed it in his actions. Jealous of her cakes being too close to her, he'd still brought them to his home to keep her company. Assuredly insulted by the way her momma treated him just like she would any other snot-nosed kid instead of Vice Emperor of one of the most badass empires in existence; he still accorded her momma the highest respect. Despite him losing every single verbal battle they had; he still touched her like he was afraid to let go.

Zoran might be a powerful Zjxadrâzqué'an male; but he was still a male. Apparently stupidity was attached to that y-chromosome. Zoran might be another stupid male, but he was *her* stupid male. And she didn't want nor need any fucking woman to show her how to make love to him.

Standing, she marched to the door and threw it wide open. Turning to the clones she said in her calmest voice. "Get out."

"But you need to be taught," one said with way too much attitude.

"I know how sex works. Cock goes in pussy; tongue goes in pussy; a good time is had by all. While you're over there trying to convince me that I need you to teach me how to fuck my man, you need to find a good English instructor because 'get out' wasn't a question. It was a direct order. And while you're procuring an English instructor, you might want to find a cultural anthropologist who specializes in the habits of southern black women. See, if you knew anything about southern black women, you'd

know a little something about the fine arts of wrastlin', which is different from wrestling and bar room brawls."

And with that she picked up the first clone and cold-cocked her ass out of the front door. Making her way over to the rest of them she broke off a kick to the gut then DDT'd the nearest one into the front door. She didn't even turn to watch her hit the ground before she was on the next one. Picking her up, she suplexed her into the remaining two broads. Yeah, calling them broads wasn't politically correct but when you came to her talking how to fuck her man, you got busted down to broad with the quickness. Too annoyed to do anything fancy, she busted her fist into one face after another until everyone was on the ground writhing in pain. Not even bothering to pick them up, she hauled back her size thirteen steal-booted feet and literally kicked all three of them bitches out of the door. When each of them lay on the ground outside of her house, she hit them all with the double middle finger salute and slammed the door.

Turning to look at her cakes who were looking at her with complete fucking surprise, she went all Vice Empress to be on them.

"I need my hair done, I need my nails done, I need an outfit and then I need a venue to bring that motherfucker to his knees."

"Naomi," Butter Pecan Cake called.

"Yes?" she said with a whole lot of impatience.

"There's a Chinese proverb that might interest you. *'When you plot revenge always dig two graves.'*"

"I appreciate your concern but I'm not plotting revenge, Butter Pecan Cake. I'm arranging payback. And I'm sending a message."

"And what message might that be, Naomi?" White Cake asked.

“Don’t fuck with my shit,” she said. “Now are y’all going to help me or do I need to call the Empress who is apparently bff with my momma?”

“We are at your service, Vice Empress,” they both said.

Shooting them a look she let them have it. “I don’t need you in my service; I need you on my side. Stop calling me Vice Empress or I’ll see to it that you don’t get anymore of my momma’s or my grandmomma’s cooking.”

Picking up her duffel bag, which was right where she’d dropped it when Zoran had oral sexed her into unconsciousness, she opened the front door. Ignoring the chorus of moans that greeted her, she turned to her cakes. “Let’s go if you’re coming. We’re burning daylight.”

If she’d bothered to turn around she would’ve noticed the smug smiles on the handsome faces of her cakes.

Invoking the name of the Empress was like invoking the name of Bear Bryant in the state of Alabama. It got things done. That, and that bit of platinum on her arm. Flashing that was like flashing titties at *Mardi Gras*. Rocking up to the Zjxadrâzqué’an equivalent of Yvonne Rolanda’s, she stomped in looking like a woman who’d just come from a brawl, but she strutted out a whole new woman. She didn’t even bother looking in the mirror: her cakes faces said it all. She looked fuck-tabulous.

Her hair was braided in the front and the rest tumbled down her back in loose curls. On her ass she wore black lacy boyshort panties. On her freshly-exfoliated body she wore a black leather corset. And over all of that, she wore a custom-tailored buttery soft leather trench that was accented with platinum jewelry at the wrists. And in each hand was the masterpiece of her collection: her personal his and her swords. If Zoran wanted to train;

she'd give him a good fight. Not that she thought for one moment that she could best him in any kind of physical battle, but hopefully all those hours of training will have worn him down a little bit to tip the odds in her favor.

As soon as her cakes helped her from the vehicle, she marched into the Palace Proper like she owned it. She didn't look to the left or to the right; she didn't have to because White Cake was on her left and Butter Pecan Cake was on her right. Apparently, some stupid males tried to halt her progress but her cakes took care of them in an efficient and somewhat painful manner from the groans that they left in their wake. She hoped they were eyeballing this good because later she wanted to read their memories and see how fucking good they kicked ass.

The doors to the grand room were pushed open by her cakes before she had a chance to even consider opening them. She easily spotted Zoran who was in a circle that consisted of important-looking peeps. Squaring her shoulders, she picked up her pace and cut a swath across the room. Someone stepped in her way and she didn't even pause as she swung her fist right into his nuts. When he went down on his knees she kicked him in the back to help him to the floor faster.

Finally reaching Zoran, she pushed someone out of the way so she could have an unobstructed view of the object of her attention. Transferring both swords to her left hand, she pulled a stunned Zoran to her.

Poking him in his massive chest, she told him off good and proper.

"I know you didn't. How dare you send some tramps to *my* house to instruct me how to fuck you," she said.

Poking him again, the warrior part of her grunted in satisfaction seeing him stumble back. Poking him in his massive chest, she gave him

a piece of her mind. Stalking him she got right back in his face, kicked her leg up like she was auditioning for a dance troupe, and placed it on his shoulder so that she was doing a vertical split. Grabbing his braid, she wrapped it around her fist and used it to pull him closer.

“You belong to me, Zoran,” she whispered into his ear as she pushed him to his knees and thrust her titties in his face. “And you know what? I know that you *want* to belong to me. You *need* me to belong to me.”

She was in the process of smothering him with her cleavage whilst unraveling his braid when she noticed the commotion behind her increase in volume. Being so close to Zoran had made her forget all about pretty much everything else. Turning her head ever so slightly, she realized that while one contingent of warriors stood sentinel in front of the Emperors, another contingent was rushing her. *Da hell?* She wasn’t sure what was going on until they thundered at her to step away from Zoran or...

She was a reasonable woman but it was their ‘or’ that rankled her last nerve.

“Or *what?*” She asked. *Was everyone on this planet trying to interfere with her getting her man on his back ... where he belonged?*

“Or you won’t like it,” the warrior closest to her said.

It wasn’t the way that he said it; it was the fucking weapon that he pointed at her as he said it.

No this motherfucker didn’t. Just having recently suffered through some ‘*want to be Zoran’s baby momma*’ drama, and dealing with the female equivalent of blue balls, the gun being pointed at her was so the last fucking straw. And she really, truly meant the last. Fucking. Straw. It was so much the last straw that there could be a painting of it hanging over the tables of millions of households.

Loosening her grip on Zoran's hair without fully letting it go, she gently placed her swords on the ground, grabbed Zoran's sidepiece from its holster and shot the weapons out of the hands of the motherfucker threatening her with 'or elses' and the two warriors standing next to him.

"Besides being flexible boys, I'm also southern, which means that I know how to use any weapon that I pick up." She was about to pump off a few more informative bits about southern culture when she suddenly found herself on her back with Fine MF's body completely covering her.

Though she couldn't see his face, she knew that he was angry. No, he was past angry; he was fury incarnate.

"This is my mate. Can you not see my mark on her? Do you not see my platinum on her? Stand down, warriors ... and die," he thundered.

Stand down *and* die? What kind of fucking choice was that she wondered as she heard weapons being lowered to the floor and warriors lowering themselves to their knees?

"Our apologies, Vice Emperor. We thought that she meant you harm."

Fine MF was nothing if not efficient and intimidating she thought as she arched her body into him. Damn, what did this man do to her to make her so needy?

Before she could finish that thought, he rose to his feet and looked as if he was about to destroy every fucking thing his eyes passed over. This was a Zoran that she never wanted to have coming at her. Being that he wasn't mad at her, she didn't care that he was giving every one else the '*just wait 'til we get home*' look. What she did care about was the man under that look. He knew that he was angry for her. The stiffness in his stance

told her that just as the hard cock tenting it told her that he wanted her as desperately as she wanted him.

Knowing that she was safe (and when wasn't she when she had him as a mate?), she rose and stood before him. Placing her hands on his corded forearms, she inserted her leg between his muscular thighs and gently toppled him to the floor. Ripping his shirt open, she licked her way from his navel to his mouth and when she got to his mouth she took time to properly kiss him. She enjoyed the feel of his full lips under hers as much as she enjoyed the feel of his hard body beneath hers.

"Open for me, Zoran. Open for me," she whispered as she inserted her tongue into the cavern of his mouth and leisurely tasted her mate.

"I will once I kill these warriors," he said.

She could taste his anger but it didn't turn her off. "Don't be mad, Zoran."

"How can I not be mad? Warriors pointed a weapon at my mate! They should've been dead the second after they thought to do such a thing," he declared.

"They thought you were in danger from me," she whispered.

"I don't care. If you beat me bloody no warrior, no male, no one is to threaten you with harm ... even if it means my death."

Zoran's confession pulled her up short. Damn. Oh, damn. What could you say to such beautiful honesty? There was nothing that she could say, but there was something that she could give him. Straddling him, she tugged him up. Laying her head against his heart, she whispered.

"Come in, Zoran," and fully opened her mind to him.

She let him see her desire, her vulnerability, and most importantly, she let him see her love for him. She loved this man. How could she not?

He didn't simply say that he'd die for her; he'd proclaimed that he'd die for no good reason for her. He'd die simply to preserve her from all threats.

Zoran was milling about the room. Though he was engaged in conversation, his mind was on his mate. He wondered what she was doing. Was she enjoying the tutelage of the Zjxadrâzqué'an females that he'd sent to her? Was she comfortable? Did she like their home? Did she like him?

Naomi was virtually impossible to read. Though she was human and they'd shared their minds, she kept an impenetrable shield of distrust around it. One did not get into Naomi's head or heart unless she wanted you there. He wanted her to want him in her mind with the same intensity that she wanted him in her body. He knew that she wanted him to make love to her but he didn't know if she wanted him to love her.

After being inside of her heart, he had to have her love. Her body without her love was worthless. Her presence without her trust was a mirage.

He loved her so much, more than he thought possible; more than what was probably good. Still, he could not help how he loved her, nor would he wish to change it. She was everything to him. Everything ... and then some.

He was lost in his thoughts when he sensed her. His eyes quickly located her and when they did, his whole body shut down. She was fucking stunning. And she was way underdressed. Every male in the room was attuned to her. Had his eyes made it off of her body, he might have noticed that she was angry before she jumped in his face and pushed his cock into overdrive by doing that split. He could smell her creaming and seeing that glorious expanse of leg was making his balls tight. Inhaling her scent, he

was thinking of ways to get her on back when she pushed him to his knees and pushed his face into her breasts.

Goodness, he thought. Goodness. His mate was everything he could ever want; she was everything that he didn't know that he needed. She was his.

And then he was on the floor, disarmed and his mate was being threatened. Oh fuck that. Rolling her beneath him, he thundered at those who dared threaten his mate. He did not care the reason; they'd threatened his mate and that was unacceptable.

He was considering the most efficient way to decimate a contingent of warriors when his mate slid in front of him. Knowing that the danger had disappeared, he allowed this just as he allowed her to trip him to the floor. He was busy enjoying her touch when her words penetrated the lust consuming his mind. Was she really attempting to talk him out of being angry? *For real?* It wasn't going to happen. Scared for her, he wanted, needed vengeance. And then she licked her way up his body and started putting out the flames of his anger with her healing touch. Her hands felt so good but he was still going to kill the whole contingent of warriors. That was his plan until she did the one thing that he'd been praying for: she opened her mind to him.

Don't kill them, Zoran, she said.

He wanted to dammit.

I know you do baby, but don't do that. Mass murder is not the way to begin our marriage.

Marriage? He asked.

Damn right, marriage, Fine MF, she said as she brought his lips down to hers.

I thought that you were going to be difficult and make me wait, he said as he grabbed her hips and pressed their groins tighter together.

Actually, I was going to maim you pretty bad after you sent those bitches to my house. And please note the emphasis on my in the sentence, she said as she rubbed her breasts against his chest.

I didn't mean it as an insult; he admitted as he slipped his hand inside her corset and pinched her nipple.

I know you didn't so when I send some guys over to your training fields – in the presence of your best friends no less – to instruct you how to make me come, don't take it the wrong way, she said as she moved her mouth from his lips to his nipple.

I was wrong, he gasped as he moved his hand from her nipple and slipped them into her panties. *And by the way, don't think that I failed to notice how little you're wearing*, he said as he stroked her clit.

You're going to have to do better than that half ass apology, she gasped and arched into his fingers. *And I'm glad that you actually noticed what I'm wearing*, she whispered as she rode his fingers.

How could I not notice my mate prancing about with hardly a thing on? He asked as he increased the pressure on her clit. That outfit is nothing but an invitation to look at your well-developed thighs, your tempting ass, and your amazing breasts, he said as she came all over his fingers.

But what about my intellect? Does it make you wonder how high my IQ is she asked as she purred out her climax?

It makes me want to do nothing more than to bend you over something and bury my cock into your tight channel, he growled even as he caught the sounds of her release in his mouth.

But what if I want to simply indulge in quiet time? She asked as she pushed him to his back.

Then you best learn how to be quiet when you come, he said as he helped her unbutton his pants

Funny, I don't recall you making me come, she said as she stroked his already hard cock.

That's because you fainted every time, he said as he swallowed a gasp.

Well, there is that. Oh and by the way, you're going to need some lemon juice to take care of the blood stains on the carpet, she said as she squeezed his cock.

What did you do? He choked out not really caring what it was as long as she didn't stop touching him.

What any good warrior would do. I left them alive so they could go back and warn others not to fuck with my man.

So you're possessive of me, hmm.

Oh, yes so you best not be forgetting that, especially since I can also do this, she said as she threw her legs over her head without missing a stroke.

Oh fuck, he growled seeing the outline of her sex. Waiting for her to bring her legs back to their proper position, he held himself still and then flipped her beneath him and grinded into her.

Zjxadrâzqué was busy eyeballing his mate who was looking entirely too tempting for her own good. Obviously, he was going to have to show Xiloxoch what happened when she wore such revealing jeans and t-shirts. His cock got hard thinking of what he'd show her. He was contemplating

escaping to their private quarters when he heard the ruckus. Automatically, shielding his mate, he stopped cold when he spotted Naomi strutting through the room with Nyx and Ferro clearing the way for her. She strutted, but how could she not when she was wearing boots like those ... and very little else under that leather overcoat.

It wasn't what she was wearing ... or more appropriately, what she wasn't wearing that drew his attention; it was the sense of indignation that he sensed under the outright anger. Oh hell. *What did his brother do?*

Before he could consider the situation she'd damn near lifted his brother off of his feet and started giving him what Xiloxoch called 'what for'. And then she pushed him to his knees and gave him some more 'what for' along with a whole lot of cleavage. This was going to go bad he thought ... moments before it did.

The warriors that followed them in thought that Naomi was threatening Zoran, which he could understand being that she held two swords and a handful of his braid. But when they dared threaten her, he knew that he was going to have to interfere in order to prevent copious bloodshed. Too late, he thought as he saw Zoran roll his mate beneath him. Knowing what Zoran was feeling after having gone through it with Xiloxoch, he attempted to calm him.

Brother, I am your sentinel.

Thank you, I... Zoran began.

Concentrate on your mate; I will handle the warriors.

Despite assuring his brother that he was personally attending to the safety of his mate; he was considering if they had enough healing chambers available. Zoran was a relentless bastard. He did not take prisoners; he simply eliminated his enemies. The warriors that had threatened his mate

were in danger – *great danger* – and all who had the smallest drop of Zjxadrâzqué'an blood in their veins knew it.

He stopped counting when he watched Naomi talk Zoran down. Okay, perhaps *'talk'* wasn't the right word. *'Made-out'* might be a better word ... at first, but five minutes into their make-out session *'fuck'* was turning out to be the most appropriate word for the situation. If his baby was present he'd have to slap a hand over her eyes. As it was, he wanted to slap his hands over his mate's eyes. Xiloxoch wasn't even pretending not to look at the goings on. Instead, she'd seated herself upon a table and was snacking on her favorite confection as she watched. He'd have something to say about this later, but right now he had to reiterate to his brother that his mate was safe.

It was clear that neither Naomi nor Zoran had any idea of where they were. Naomi's mother, however, who had just walked in dragging a tired-looking group of warriors behind her, did. And from her expression, she was not happy with the latest developments. Oh, this was going to be good. Zoran was about to be dressed-down, southern black woman style.

"What the hell?" Ruth yelled before marching over to her child. "Get a room. If you think that you're going to have your wicked way with my innocent baby, you got another think coming. Take my baby somewhere proper and make love to her or you won't be seeing anymore of her until you come to in the ER."

Zjxadrâzqué smiled watching Naomi's mother's foot start tapping. In the short time that he knew her, he knew that foot-tapping was the only warning one got before getting something unpleasant. And apparently, his little brother knew that too because he covered his mate up, got to his feet

and practically sprinted from the room. Oh, he was so going to tease him about this later.

Ruth was tired – *not sleepy tired* - but good tired. She'd spent the better part of a day traipsing over Zjxadrâzqué Prime. There was so much to see; so many mysteries to solve, and she couldn't wait to begin. But she knew her limitations and ten hours of prelim work was about her limit. Plus, she was hungry and her warriors were starting to look a bit like lettuce did when you left it in the crisper drawer for too long.

She'd just walked into what Raimo called the Palace Proper when she noticed the hinky aura. The crowd was parted like they were splitting the room into sides to break off a Soul Train dance line. She might be older, but she couldn't imagine anyone here doing the running man, the cabbage patch, the bus stop or even the electric slide anywhere – much less a Soul Train line.

Sweeping the rest of the room with a glance, her eyes came to a screeching halt when they spied that boy and her baby in the throes of way too much PDA. Marching over to them, she used the toe of her boot to get Zoran's attention. Once she had it she nicely informed him that it would be better for him to take that somewhere private. She better not plan any digs because she was definitely going to be a grandmommy sooner rather than later with the way those two went at it. Having settled that, she called for Nyx and Ferro and wandered off to the kitchen for sustenance and some good, old-fashioned planning.

Chapter Nine: Down Home Loving

Naomi heard the tapping of her momma's foot long before she heard anything else. It wasn't that her momma's foot-tapping was particularly loud; it was just that it was particularly annoying. As annoying as it was, it was a top notch warning device. A slow, steady cadence meant that her momma was at threat level *'working my nerves'*; a more staccato cadence meant that her momma was at threat level *'hide the women and children'*; the staccato cadence combined with the crossed arms was no longer a warning. It was straight up threat level *'about to put a foot so far up in your ass that you'll be burping up phalanges.'*

Naomi had only seen that level one time and though she had youth, a couple of extra degrees decorating her black belt, twenty pounds, and 6 ½" on her momma, she wasn't chancing pissing Ruth Webber-Jones off. Nope, no way, and it didn't matter how good Zoran's fingers, tongue, and body felt. It was good but not *'help you recover from an ass whipping'* good.

Once she saw the toe of her momma's Tims make contact with Zoran's rib cage, she made her move. Grabbing his hair, she forced his eyes on her.

"Whatever my momma said, do it now and don't talk back."

The words had barely left her lips when she suddenly found herself in his arms. His strides purposeful, his eyes full of promise, he wasn't even breathing hard as he ran with her. She became wetter with every step that he took because every step took her closer to completion. Laughing, she nipped Zoran's ear.

"In a hurry?" she teased.

A growl was all that she received in response.

“Leave us,” Zoran impatiently ordered whoever stood sentry. She couldn’t bother looking as she busied herself by burying her face in his throat.

“Zoran,” Naomi whispered his name against his mouth. “Zoran,” she breathed. His name was an entreaty and he answered it by wrapping her tighter in his arms.

So lost in the love he wrapped her in, she didn’t see the grandness of the rooms they sped past, the suns setting the sky aflame and being reflected in the stained glass of the oversized windows. No, she didn’t see any of that; she only saw him. Her eyes and heart were filled by the man who held her so perfectly.

“Where are we going?” she asked absently as she ran her fingers through his decadent hair.

“Bed,” was his grunted response as he sprinted up the stairs. Zoran ran in the room so fast that she was sure that he’d run the tread off of the luxurious carpet. The door wasn’t even closed before Zoran had her bent over the bed. Feeling his hard body behind her she released a slow, sultry moan.

“Zoran,” she breathed as he palmed her breasts and drank the moan from her mouth.

“Please,” she begged. “Please.”

“Please what, Naomi? Please pinch your nipples like this?” he said as he pulled her breasts from the corset and roughly pinched her nipples.

“Yessssssssss,” she moaned.

“Yes what,” he breathed his question right into her ear. “Yes, stroke your clit like this?”

Feeling his thick fingers probe her folds, her breath caught in her throat.

“Release the breath that you’re holding, Naomi so that I might hear your every response. I’m a male who appreciates sound with his picture,” he said as he tugged her head back.

“Look at how good I look with you in my arms. Look,” he demanded as he forced her to look at their image in the mirror. “Look at the courage that forms you,” he said as he traced her less-than-perfect curves.

“Look at the strength that defines you,” he said as he kneaded the muscles in her shoulders.

Look at how your beauty adorns me. Your beauty adorns me like honor adorns the Empire.”

Naomi trembled at his words and the honesty behind them. His praise stroked her ego, but it was the gift of his allegiance, respect, and honor that moved her. Her pussy may have throbbed from his touch; but ever since that first moment, her everything throbbed from his love. He loved her, he loved her, he loved her. The beauty of it was that he didn’t have to love her due to genetic similarity; he loved her because he wanted to. And despite not wanting to ... she loved him. It was a thrilling admission; it was a liberating truth. Everything had changed when she’d witnessed his fury ... and the biggest change had been within her.

Zoran was in a category all by himself. She’d made love to men, but she’d never given them herself. She hadn’t loved any of them – not because she was mean, but because she wasn’t able to. That was then and this was now and right now she needed Zoran to challenge her. He’d claimed her; now he had to earn the right to keep her.

Meeting his eyes in the mirror she smiled. Thrusting her ass against his groin, she let the first challenge fall from her lips.

“I know that you love me, Zoran now fuck me. Fuck me like you mean it or find a male that can.”

Seeing his eyes blaze with defiance she felt his answering growl. She smiled. How could she not?

Zoran was so hot for his mate that he'd lost all of his bearings. He could do that because his brother had his back. And there was simply no sturdier shield; no anything more steadfast than his loyalty.

Naomi had completely ensnared him ... and he enjoyed every moment of it. Simply too beautiful for words, too lush for her own good, too everything, he fell into her passion with reckless abandon. She gave as good as she got and he knew that he was giving her a whole lot of male.

He stroked her, grinded her, caressed her, gripped her. She thrust, arched, rubbed, and grabbed. He gave her all that he had, and she gave him everything except for the one thing he needed. Not feeling what it was that he needed to feel he tempered his actions and amped up his words. He treasured her with his body and stroked her with his words. Word by word, stroke by stroke he loved her. He loved her as hard as he could and hoped it was enough to get her to see him.

Ceaselessly, he worked her body and her mind. Tirelessly, he honored her form and her intellect. Lovingly, he chanted the only word that he needed. *Naomi*. And then he felt it: her acceptance.

She'd invited him into her heart ... and let him have the run of the place. He'd already seen her insecurities but for the first time he saw her

dreams, her hopes, her fears. He saw all of that in her heart and then he saw something else: he saw himself.

Loosing his control, he took control of their love-making. He used his weight to hold her in place. He used his knowledge to make it the best for her. Deep in the throes of passion, he hadn't even felt the presence of her mother until both mother and daughter spoke.

Heeding both of their words, he picked up his universe and ran the short distance to his own palace. Kicking the five-inch oak door off of its frame he sprinted up the stairs three at a time and headed for his bedroom. It was only after entering the bedroom that he was able to release the breath that he hadn't realized that he'd been holding.

Placing her on her feet at the foot of their bed, he took a moment to study their reflection in the mirror. Naomi overwhelmed him with her beauty. She overwhelmed him with everything. She was his whole world and thus he took great care touching his universe; he used hushed tones to praise her. He could've touched her like that forever but she looked at their reflection and tossed out a challenge.

The passion within him ignited. Removing her overcoat, he allowed his beast to growl at its mate. How dare she wear so little? Didn't she know how much temptation she was? For that matter, didn't she know how Zjxadrâzqué'an he was?

Ripping her panties off of her, he arranged her on the bed. Stepping back, he removed his own clothes as he pinned her with his glare. Stroking his cock he climbed behind her on the bed noticing how she bit her lip and stuck out her ass.

"Naomi, you need to cease being so careless with your challenges, especially when the being that you challenge is me. Unlike your little earth

men, who can at best fight and fuck for hours; I am Zjxadrâzqué'an and can therefore do both ... for days without ceasing."

"Well then bring it on because ain't nothing between us but air and opportunity," she said.

Smirking at her courage, he covered her with his body letting her feel his heaviness, letting her sense his power, and letting her smell his determination.

"Naomi," he whispered her name reverently.

"Zoran," she whispered right back.

The sheer size of his body amazed her. Big every damn where, with an arrogance that outshined his bigness, she trembled anticipating all of his bigness within her. Hanging onto her control by the barest of all threads, Naomi forced herself to be still as she waited for Zoran's domination.

"Later, I'll take you from behind," he rasped against her ear, "but right now I need to be able to look into your eyes as I join us."

Naomi watched as Zoran brought his big hands up and gently cupped her face.

"I love you, Naomi."

"And I love you, Zoran."

"I'm glad to hear that, especially as I plan to give you no quarter," he said.

"Being the more civilized being, I just might show you some mercy when you start begging me to stop," she said as she wrapped her fingers around his thick cock.

Shuddering at the realization that she couldn't wrap her hands around him, she arched into him.

"You can take me," Zoran's deep voice was made even deeper by the blazing inferno between them.

Naomi licked her lips and gave him a sassy look.

"As if there was any doubt that I could," she said regardless of the fact that he was going to be a tight fit.

"Never any doubt, Vice Empress" he murmured as his thumbs gently brushed over her lips. "No doubt at all," he shook his head causing his hair to cascade around them.

Feeling the head of his hard cock tease the swollen lips of her creaming pussy, she gasped.

"Open your legs wider," he instructed.

She argued even as she followed his instructions. "I'm only doing this because I want to."

"And I know that you really, really want to. Now open wider," he ordered as his hard cock slid against her exposed clit.

Naomi whimpered at the sensation of his hot flesh teasing hers. Of their own will, her hips jerked upwards seeking the hard flesh of her man. His teasing was exquisite. Every caress made her want him more. She grew needier and more impatient with every passing second.

"If you continue to tease me, I can't guarantee your safety."

Zoran didn't answer. Instead he gripped her leg at the back of her knee. Placing her calves on his broad shoulders opened her body up even more. Turning his head, he kissed the insides of both of her ankles. The tenderness of the action caused her heart to stutter.

"Oh," she moaned.

"So beautiful," he said as he tightened his grip on her ankles and slammed into her.

Oh. Fuck. Damn. Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!” Naomi screamed.
“Fuckkkkkkkkkkkkkk.”

She’d spent the last two days imagining him filling her and now that he was in her (and still fucking filling her), she knew that nothing she’d ever experienced, nothing she’d ever dreamed had prepared her for this much pleasure. As good as she felt, as full as she felt, as complete as she felt, she knew that Zoran was holding back. And though she knew that her pussy was going to be sore, she spurred him on. Right now, more than anything, she needed for him to let go and give her everything.

She knew without a doubt that he didn’t want to ever cause her pain, but she really didn’t have the patience for his holding back. Naomi needed to know that her man was as committed to their joining as she was.

You do not know what you ask of me.

But I know what I need. I need all of you Zoran. I know that I already have your love but I also need your passion. I need your lust. I need for you to be with me in a way that is nothing like your other women, she began.

You, my Universe, are not other women. You are my mate. Slowly withdrawing his cock, he continued. *There is no comparison.*

You damn skippy, she said. *Now fuck me or if you can’t finish the deal, I can flip you over and fuck you.*

Apparently those words were spurs in the side of Zjxadrâzqué'an males because Zoran slammed his cock back into her so hard that she lost her breath. Letting her feel his weight, he grinded his pelvis against hers on every down stroke. He powered into her over and over. He held nothing back. Every stroke seemed harder; every orgasm more intense. Digging a

hand hold into his biceps, she arched into every thrust even as she attempted to catch her breath.

But he didn't give her a chance to catch her breath. Grabbing a fistful of her hair, he yanked her to him and ravaged her mouth as thoroughly as he was ravaging her pussy. Only when she was growing light-headed from lack of oxygen did he pull his arrogant mouth away from hers. Ripping his mouth away from hers, his mouth travelled over her jaw, her chin and finally to her exposed throat.

He kissed his way from her throat to her ear leaving a trail of love bites in case he forgot his route.

Tell me your wants, Naomi.

Discover them on your own, she countered.

I already have discovered them, but it would turn me on so good to hear you tell me how you want me to tame you with my cock. It would make me so hard to hear you admit how you want me to fill you with my come. That's what you want isn't it? You want me to fill you with my come. You want me to arrange you on your hands and knees and then fill your tight pussy from behind. You want me to pin you to the bed as I spank your ass and ride you to completion.

Don't you, Naomi? He asked as he rolled onto his back and thrust up into her and spanked her ass.

Da hell? "You spank me one more time and I'll," she started.

"Thrust out your ass and beg me to spank you harder?" he finished as he gripped her hips and pushed her deeper onto his cock.

"Yes, you fine, arrogant bastard! Yes!" She screamed as she gripped his muscular shoulders, threw back her head and rolled her hips.

“That’s what I thought,” he finished as he grabbed handfuls of her ass and powered into her.

He was relentless. He showed her no mercy, but she didn’t want any. All she wanted was the man that held her so possessively. All she needed was the release that she felt working her way through her body starting at the tips of her toes.

Her body trembled in anticipation. Her heart boomed in time to his thrusts. Her lungs worked overtime to keep her breathing. Feeling the orgasm creep closer to her center, she gripped Zoran so hard that she drew blood. When her orgasm finally crashed over her, it robbed her of breath rendering the first moments of orgasm mute. When the second wave of it hit her, she rode it out with a scream that nearly blew out her eardrums. She saw stars ... and planets ... and entire solar systems. Most importantly, she saw his love.

“You are my universe,” he whispered right before they both fell into oblivion.

Chapter Ten: The Mmm, Hmm, I Told You So

Ruth felt so much better after indulging in a hot meal, some iced cold sweet tea, and a power nap. Going with Nyx and Ferro, she was able to score a decent outfit with relative ease. And when she said ‘going with’, she didn’t mean going with them to a boutique; she meant going with them to a sitting room because the store came to her. Now that was the straight out business. She selected a smart-looking pantsuit with some off-white boots and a rather dashing hat for herself. For Naomi, she selected nothing but a daring lingerie set figuring that it was best if she wear whatever it was that she was wearing that got that boy so worked up in the first place.

It wasn’t that she didn’t care what they wore; it was that she knew that regardless of what they wore neither one of them would be wearing it for long. She was definitely going to get some grandbabies, but as much as she wanted some grandbabies, she wanted her daughter properly married first. And as much as she wanted to see her daughter married, she wanted to see her daughter happy. That is why she’d sent those two somewhere private and gave them time to do stuff.

Now there time was up and it was her job to inform them. Marching to their house, she stepped over the broken door and marched upstairs. Stopping at the open bedroom door, she smiled seeing how possessively the big Zjxadrâzqué'an held her baby. He held her like any moment someone was going to come and snatch her away from him. Surely, no one would be that stupid. Zoran was so in love with her daughter he couldn’t see past her. And that’s the way that it should be, else she would’ve spanked Naomi’s ass for wasting her beauty on someone not worthy of her.

Zoran was worthy of her, which is why she was about to set her plan into motion.

Clearing her throat, she roared Zoran's name. "Zoran!"

Just as she expected, the big man immediately sprang into action. And just as she suspected, her daughter didn't even stir. Naomi had always been a hard sleeper.

"Ma'am?" he said, not even bothering to cover himself.

And why should he bother to cover himself with a body like that? If she looked half as good, she'd move somewhere where it was permanently hot so she could justify wearing scraps of cloth as clothing.

Tossing the bag holding Naomi's fresh change of lingerie, she let loose on him. "You and my daughter have ten minutes to present yourselves."

"Present ourselves for what?" he slurred.

Ruth held back her smile seeing how love drunk her soon-to-be son-in-law was.

"For your wedding of course," she said as she looked brushed a non-existent piece of lint off of her pristine suit.

"And if I were you, I'd get Naomi up and dressed because in nine minutes and forty seconds an armed contingent of warriors will be here to ensure that you get yourselves to the palace," she said as she turned and waltzed down the stairs.

Calling upon the strength of the ancestors, she worked up some fake tears. By the time she got to the bottom of the stairs, her eyes were filled with unshed tears. A few sat precariously on the end of her lashes, waiting ... waiting ... waiting for the right audience. Seeing Sentinel Raimo step over the threshold, she watched as he picked up the wrecked door and set it aside. Damn the man was freaky strong *and* hella fine.

As soon as he turned towards her she let the tears fall. Just as she figured, he and the group of warriors with him practically bowled each other over in an effort to get to her.

Of course Raimo reached her first. He was a strong and spry bastard to be so damn old. Not that he looked a day over forty.

“Why do you cry?” he thundered.

“No reason,” she whispered playing her role for all it was worth.

“These tears are for no reason?” he asked.

“I ... I just don’t. I hope I’m doing the right thing. I’ve done the best that I could but, I guess ... I guess I feel like I’m cheating my daughter. If I hadn’t been so hard, she’d have a father who would be here to do the daddy things.”

“What daddy things?”

“You know, like walk her down the aisle and give her young man the *‘fuck with my daughter at your own peril talk,’* she whispered.

She was going to say more but the sounds of an impatient man half-dragging/half-carrying a sleepy Naomi down the stairs interrupted the little drama that she was putting on. When they finally stepped into view, Ruth couldn’t help the smile that crossed her face. Clearly, neither wanted to be anyplace other than in bed with each other, but the mommy tone had scared them out of it. And it was a good thing the mommy tone had worked because on cue the hundred armed warriors that she’d requested arrived to “escort” them to their wedding.

While everyone else watched the ceremony, Raimo watched the earth woman Ruth as she watched her daughter marry Vice Emperor Zoran. The

radiance on her face was palpable and smoothed out the few lines in her almost flawless face. Her smile caught him right in the chest.

Although Ruth Webber-Jones was a warrior and used the vestiges of her strength to hold Naomi up, he saw her fatigue. She was as tired as her daughter albeit for much different reasons. Being that he'd exercised claim and was by law Naomi's father, he approached them and held both of them within his strength. He looked over at the Vice Emperor who was still mopping up his bloody nose that he'd given him as a '*welcome to the family*' present.

In the end, it was he who walked Naomi down the aisle and presented her to Zoran. Though he didn't appreciate him putting his filthy hands on his innocent baby angel, he decided to let him keep his hands after seeing how he forgot about his own pain and focused the entirety of his attention on Naomi. His eyes never strayed from Naomi. That's right asshole. That's the way you better always treat my daughter if you want to keep living.

Seeing that his daughter was in good hands, he once again turned his attention to Ruth. Ruth looked at her daughter with such love that it nearly radiated off of her. The look on her face when she watched Naomi was the epitome of love. It was a look that Raimo found so arresting that it literally ensnared him. Under penalty of torture, he couldn't have informed anyone any details about the ceremony although from the quiet snickers this was going to be a ceremony talked about throughout the ages.

Only years of training stopped Zjxadrâzqué from falling to his knees from laughter. Although his brother and his mate were properly-dressed and physically present, it was clear to anyone with eyes that Zoran wasn't interested in anything beyond sleep. Standing beside his brother at the

Altar, he called for fresh tissue for the bloody nose that Zoran was nursing. The reason that he was sporting a broken nose was because Sentinel Marik had stepped in and claimed the role of Naomi's father. And though he'd only had that role for all of five minutes, he'd already taken fault with how Zoran had comported himself around "his" innocent baby angel daughter.

While it was Zoran's actions that were the cause of his bloody nose, it was Sentinel Marik's innocent baby angel daughter that was the cause of his black eye. When questioned about Zoran's treatment of her, she'd turned those big eyes on Sentinel Marik and claimed in a small voice, "He touched me, Daddy." And that'd been all that Sentinel Marik needed to hear. Stalking up to Zoran, he'd sent his brother flying twenty feet across the room without even breaking his stride.

And of course his innocent baby angel daughter capped off the moment beautifully with her plea: "Careful of his penis, please. I'm going to need that later."

Speaking of Naomi, he didn't recall ever seeing a more interesting bride. Wearing that leather coat with who knows what under it, she was primarily asleep through the ceremony. She hadn't even bothered to open her eyes all the way. In fact, one eye was completely closed and the other was only half open – if that. The only reason that she remained upright is because she was draped all over Zoran to the right and her mother and Sentinel Marik to the left. And the only reason that Zoran was upright was because Sentinel Marik had decided to delay wasting him until he was better prepared to fight.

One moment Zoran was enjoying the best sleep he'd ever experienced and the next moment he was being informed that an armed battalion of

warriors was going to escort him to his wedding. Dammit, as far as he was concerned he was already wedded. Still, he went along with it because he might be a badass warrior, but he didn't want Ruth Webber-Jones as an enemy ... ever.

Grabbing his mate, he pushed them both in the shower. That was the scene of his second cussing out. Not only did his woman not appreciate being woken up abruptly, apparently, black women had a thing about their hair being wet.

He'd gotten them dressed and downstairs with only seconds to spare ... just as Ruth had demanded ... but something happened en route to the Palace Proper, which was all of a hundred paces from his own palace. He got the shit beat out of him by his mate's new father. And being that Sentinel Marik had exercised proper claim, all he could do was stand there and take it.

He couldn't remember much of the ceremony other than exchanging bloody tissues for clean ones and trying to see out of his eye that was rapidly swelling shut. But then, Sentinel Marik had placed Naomi in his arms and after then he remembered only her. Of course she slept through most of the ceremony only fully waking to present him with a sword.

From the circle of his arms, his Universe had taken the matching sword to hers and presented it to him. "I'll always have your back, Zoran. Not right now, because I'm tired, but being that my daddy is here, you'll be okay if something jumps off. But once I'm fully awake, I have your back. Now say something kickass to me and take me to bed. I'm sleepy," she said.

What did you say to that? Not knowing if what he was about to say qualified as kickass or not, he said what was in his heart.

“And I will always take the utmost care in guarding my Universe,” he said as he kissed her softly and took her to bed.

Epilogue

Raimo was watching that boy promise to take care of his daughter when Ruth suddenly grabbed his hand between both of hers. Squeezing his hand tightly, she turned to him and the look on her face floored him. *Was it just his imagination or did Ruth Webber-Jones grow more beautiful every damn time he saw her?* He was contemplating the answer to this question when he suddenly forgot how to breathe. His entire body went completely still. His heart stopped, the blood in his veins froze in place and in that nanosecond of time Raimo knew: Ruth was the one.

J&J

This concludes Book 1 in the Killer X-Over series.

Thank you for reading. We hope that you enjoyed the tale as much as we enjoyed writing it.

Jeanie & Jayha

Praises, compliments, adulation and the like for Jeanie and Jayha can be left at:

jeanieandjayha@gmail.com

Jeanie Johnson and Jayha Leigh

Besides being intelligent divas who pen kickass prose, Jeanie (the shagalicious wordslinger) and her momma, Jayha (the ninja master of prose), are dessert-eating, take-no-shit, tell-it-like-they-feel instead of tell-it-like-people-want-to-hear-it women. They are women who have brains and aren't afraid to use them; feelings and aren't afraid to express them; and, middle fingers which they'll happily use to salute out of line peeps. Independently, both are forces of nature that leave you begging for mercy or begging for more.

A kickass tag team duo bound together by the pen, they plan on ruling the world side-by-side. Jeanie will be ruling in her favorite hoodie and her Chuck Taylors; Jayha will be wearing her Crocs, a blue t-shirt along with her halo. Of course, all ruling will be done swiftly as Jeanie is always out getting into sh*t and Jayha is busy indulging in her torrid affair with ESPN.

See people, this is the kind of praise you get when you have Yvonne as your MMFIC and Rolanda as MNWIC. Thanks Von and Rolanda.