



Ishadarian Saga: Book 2

# Resurrection

By

Alexandra O'Hurley

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## Prologue

Millions of years ago, an alien race came to a new world filled with lush vegetation and animal life. The aliens that arrived were the best scientific minds of their race, albeit a little on the mad side. They came to experiment with new genetic material, which had been outlawed on their home world. Once they had settled and made a home base and laboratory, the scientists began using this material to mutate the animal life they had found on this distant world.

A new race was created by these madmen, and was nurtured through its infancy. Then a hundred year civil war broke out on the home world and the Great Empire forgot about the handful of scientists left on the fledgling world. Eventually, the scientists died from the ravages of the barbaric and untamed planet, or succumbed to the ravages of time. But the new race continued. Flourished, even.

Now closer to present day, an alien historian stumbles onto ancient documents detailing the plan on the distant world, the experiments they had planned and the man brought them to the attention of the new Emperor and regime. It is decided that a recon group is to be sent to the new world, to find out whatever happened to that fledgling race. Were they still there? Had they evolved?

Once there, the men and women on the mission were in for a great surprise...

## Chapter One

Fall 2005

Arid desert spread out before the cruiser as it landed onto the hard packed sands. Sensors had told the crew aboard the vessel that there were lifeforms in the area, and it seemed they would find it easy to scout out the new alien race as well as hide their presence within the plains of sand. Ten members made up the scouting party, and all were anxious to explore the new land. There were a lot of theories circulating about what they might find. Knowing that the truth may be even more interesting than the guesses they had formulated had the crewmen itching to seek the inhabitants out. There were so many what ifs that they didn't even know where to begin. Could they be as intelligent as all those who made up the Empire, or would they be a fledgling race, not capable of reasonable thought, similar to the primitive and highly volatile Cassadarians on Cessa 5?

Once the ship had settled, they confirmed the air was indeed breathable as their sensors had shown. Opening the hatch in the rear of the ship, they began off-loading some of the equipment and weapons they needed to begin their expedition, as several of the soldiers in the team began scouting the close vicinity for immediate dangers.

Of the ten-man party, five were research scientists who had approached the Emperor to initiate this trip in the first place, men and women who held science as tightly to their bosom as some held their religion, each ready to scan every available *parqua* and speck in their path. They readied their recorders and other pieces of equipment and prepared their life packs, fingers twitching with glee.

The wi' mia was also readying to explore, almost as excited as the scientists at the potential plant life that may yield yet new medical discoveries and prospective cures. Most wi' mia held mythical medicinal abilities, but fortunately for this crew, their doctor was a Boogdasharian. A unique breed of people, best explained as half doctor and half magician, their race wielded an amazing power of energy over any living organism.

Among the group there was also a council historian, ready to pen the tale of their exploits on this new planet. Many of the people of the Empire had been zealously clamoring for all knowledge of "The Great Unknown" as this new world had been called by their society. He alone would be the one to write the known history of this planet, and his name would forever go down in the Empire's history as well.

The only three men not thrilled with arriving were the soldiers, because it was their job to make sure the scouting party remained safe and unharmed, as well as make sure the invaluable information they collected returned to the home world. Right now, the only thing they all imagined was the myriad of ways for any one of the party to be hurt or killed. Two of the three strong, silent men quickly packed assorted weapons into *bagdoliars* to wear on the trek into the closest populated area, and the third eyed the area through binocular-like goggles, looking for lifeforms or other potential dangers.

"Dar, do you see anything on the horizon?" Regent Taroth, the superior officer of the three asked, while continuing to pack the weapons alongside his other warrior, Ta' Hall. Taroth

and Dar Jin had been best friends since the academy, and had fought side by side for years now. He trusted his friend to judge the environment, just as he trusted him with his life.

"Nothing but sand, and more sand, and a little more sand, and throw in a few cliffs and some small brush and, oh, did I say sand?" Taroth smiled at the dripping sarcasm from his friend, a side of Dar few people ever got to see. "Nothing moving. I don't think we were spotted."

"There are lifeforms bordering this entire desert, and according to our readings, there is a small grouping of lifeforms not far from here, maybe a *seca* or two to the north. I think we should head in that general direction and come up behind them. Once we approach, we will do an initial survey and see what we are dealing with."

"Good plan, but I think we need to leave the squealing children a little further from the border of the inhabitation. As excited as they are, their giggling may get us sighted."

Taroth snickered at his friend's remark. Not accustomed to being around a group of young, frenzied scientists for this long, all three of the warriors had nearly pulled their hair out on the long trip to this galaxy. They were glad to be out of the confines of the ship after being cramped with the group for nearly a *binear* waiting to arrive.

"You had better not let them hear you call them squealing children. My ears are ringing from their overactive and overloud mouths as it is. I don't need one of them to start getting belligerent and start really berating you, or me. My poor ears can't handle the pitch any longer."

All three men chuckled and turned to eye the rest of the group, hoping they had not been overheard. As he looked in their direction, Taroth eyed T' Neel, the science team leader, the worst one of the group in his opinion. He hated to admit the scenery wasn't half bad, and she had hinted to him the use of her body was within his reach repeatedly over the course of the trip. But she had also made it a point that everyone on the ship knew she was hunting him like prey. So instead of falling into her hands, as she expected, and he thought, as most men probably did, he had not pursued her in return, even at his body's behest during the lonely, late hours in space. Any woman who had acted a fool like she had, had no self-respect, and Taroth couldn't respect her in return. And he couldn't bring himself to bed her, knowing only more trouble could come of it.

She smiled as she noted Taroth gazing her way and began walking towards him. Taroth cringed inwardly, knowing what he was now in for, scolding himself for even lingering over her form for more than a moment. He did not need more of her overtures, as he was a taken man anyway. Dar's younger sister was his promised lifemate and he would be Joined with her as soon as they returned from this mission. Neither his upcoming Joining ceremony, nor her incredibly vulgar display she showed in her bid to bed him were the only reasons he had for avoiding the woman.

The main reason he avoided her was the thought of screwing this woman with his soon to be brother in law, and best friend, sleeping in the quarters right next door just did not set well with him. Something about Dar's sister, D' Na Jin, did not set well with him either, but he was a man of honor and he could not break the laws of Daya N'goul and refuse to Join with her. He also respected his friend too much to dishonor his family in such a way.

Daya N'goul was the way every man on his planet met and married his soulmate, and no man in several hundred thousand years had refused a mate. There was no alternative, even though something just didn't feel right to Taroth. The first time a man smelled the scent of his soulmate, he felt physically unwell, and yet extremely aroused at the same time, and a deep love

and attraction to the woman begins, to the point of obsession, and no other woman arouses his senses from that point forward.

An unruly erection also occurs, and the man maintains that erection at all times when in the presence of the woman until they are Joined. The first time he had met Dar Jin's much younger sister a little over a *quatrad* ago, he had the effects of Daya N'goul, but he had yet to feel love for D' Na Jin, and could care less if he ever set eyes on her again. Which was odd. Every man he had ever known had gone brainless in love and lust when they met their Daya N'goul. All Taroth could think about was escape. Was there something wrong with her? With him?

Shaking his head, he brushed his thoughts away, as he had dwelled on them much too long during the binear trying to reach this planet. He again focused on the erotic shape of T' Neel as she approached and thought how the feel of his cock entering her welcoming wet sex, and his ultimate release, would take away the stresses he had felt for many *nears*. Knowing that the moment he accepted the offer of her body it would be the beginning of the end for him, yet he still could not tell his body not to react to her. It sickened him. He used the excuse that he was unused to waiting so long between lovers. But why was he feeling this physical attraction with a Daya N'goul awaiting him back on Hara D'Noll?

The fiery redhead stopped in front of the men, wearing an overly tight jumpsuit, that was obviously too small for her body and left nothing to the imagination, as it outlined each and every curve of her body. Taroth felt his body stir, even when he willed his mind to ignore her overtures. He kept his eyes focused down into the packs he and Ta' Hall were finishing. After a few moments when Taroth had not made a motion to speak to her, her lush voice was heard. "We should be ready to go in the next ten minutes. Is there a plan?"

Taroth glowered up from his kneeling position beside his weapons pack into her inviting golden eyes, seeing her passion waving back at him and ignoring it as best he could. It amazed him that he could hold this woman in contempt, yet at the same time he could barely think of anything but availing himself to the desires she offered him. "We are going to head *ni'or* to the habitation we scanned just before we landed. It is small, only about 300 lifeforms, and within walking distance of the ship. We will keep you and your group several hundred feet away, allow us to scout for any possible dangers and then come back for your group to follow us if no immediate dangers are found."

"So you three will be the first people to see the lifeforms?" Her fake pout was annoying him more so than the lust in her eyes. He hated a woman who used false sentiment to get her way. "Can't I come along with you three to help scout?"

Taroth turned away, rolling his eyes, before turning back to her full of charm, finally rising to his full height. Placing one hand on her shoulder, with the other he used one finger under her chin, turning her face towards his, deciding that two could play her game. "You are too important to the scouting of this planet to put you into jeopardy. I could never forgive myself if something happened to you the first day. Let us do our jobs, and inspect for dangers. It won't take long, and we will come back for you as soon as we can."

She bought it, thankfully, and smiled dreamily up into his ice blue eyes. He pulled two fingers through a section of her bright red hair, and kissed her forehead, more brotherly than sexual, and released her, pushing her towards the others. "Let the rest of your group know what the plan is, and be ready in less than ten minutes."

T' Neel turned to look over her shoulder at the sexy man, with his short, chocolate brown hair blowing lightly in the warm breeze, smiling to herself. She would have him in her bed before they returned to Hara D'Noll if it was the last thing she did.

\* \* \* \*

Ten minutes later they were headed towards the habitation, about to encounter the first of the alien lifeforms on this planet. Even the three battle hardened warriors were becoming a little excited at the prospect of witnessing an alien lifeform and the chance for battle that came with it. Their bodies were pumped from endorphins, and each loved every second of it. Long powerful legs stretched to meet the ground, tight with a predatory grace. All three strode with a posture that showed their years of training, coupled with years of battle each had encountered.

But their excitement was short lived when the scientists began singing a little song, skipping along the sandy ground. Tarothe had to stifle a groan, the antics of this group were most unprincipled as well as unprofessional and he was almost embarrassed to be with the group.

Dar, having had enough, turned to the group, aimed his gun at a chubby little male Teninghian scientist and cocked the weapon. "If you don't stop with the singing, we will be having Teninghian stew tonight."

The whole group skidded to a halt squealing in utter disbelief, but seeing Tarothe's smirk, they realized Dar was not serious. Dar saw the group look over at Tarothe, and his eyes followed theirs. He whispered over his shoulder so the others could not hear "Dammit Tarothe, I needed your help to shut them the hell up."

"Sorry, I couldn't help it." He approached Dar's shoulder and whispered back into his ear, "You made the little guy piss his pants. I know it wasn't funny, but I couldn't help myself."

Dar looked over at the plump, round scientist and saw the telltale signs of the loss of bladder control and began snickering himself and whispered back to Tarothe, "I forgive you for that one. But the next time they start with the singing, I WILL shoot one of them."

Tarothe gave him the eye.

"Well, just in the leg. I won't kill them."

Tarothe looked again.

"Well, I might kill them if they don't listen after that."

Tarothe laughed at his friend and his lack of patience, even though his wasn't much better at that point. "Dar, we had better learn to ignore those fools. After this little fact finding mission, we have another bi'near to suffer them on the trip home."

It was Dar's turn to roll his eyes, and give Tarothe the evil eye. "We wont if I kill them all first."

Tarothe let out a hearty laugh and clasped his friend on the back, pulling him away from the anxious little group huddled together wide eyed on the sand.

\* \* \* \*

The three soldiers had left the rest of their team at an outcrop of rocks a few hundred feet from the border of the habitation ahead. Once they left them, they had separated to come up on three sides of the territory. Tarothe was to cover the lower, more populated sector, check for dangers and then meet back at the outcropping to review notes.

The scouting party had reached the outcropping as the solitary sun was setting and darkness was beginning to fall. Fortunately, all three of the soldiers were Ishadarian and had excellent night vision, so they all could see extremely well in the dark. Not only did Ishadarians have excellent sight, but also their senses of smell and hearing were advanced. And those senses helped make them superior warriors as well.

Once inside the parameters of the territory, Taroht was surprised to see a small village. There were houses, transport vehicles of some sort and what appeared to be commerce centers as well. He was impressed as the lifeforms that lived here must be somewhat advanced to have built such structures.

Taroht crept closer to the rear of a small, short building behind a long row of larger buildings that faced toward the center of the community. Looking inside the opening to the small shelter, he saw a small, four-legged creature that was growling up at him with evil intent. The creature was small, maybe just a *meer* high and had golden fur all over its tiny body.

But the deep, intense growling had Taroht on alert, as he had learned long ago that small stature did not necessarily mean the creature could not be dangerous. He slowly approached the creature with hands up, trying to show he was unarmed and was not intent on showing the creature any harm. But the closer he got, the more the creature growled at him, finally bearing sharp looking teeth. He tried to calmly talk to the creature, in hopes he could communicate in some way, but still the creature growled deeply.

As Taroht skirted to the other side of the small building he saw a bowl filled with looked like small pebbles. Bending down, he lowered to one knee to grasp a handful, hoping to use them as a small weapon against the furry creature, but to his dismay, the pebbles were soft. He opened his hand to look down at the strange substance, when to his surprise the creature jumped into his lap and started to eat the pebbles from his hand.

Taroht watched the animal eat everything in his hand and once the tiny alien finished his meal, he turned to lick Taroht in his face. "Well, you obviously are a pet. And here I was quaking in my boots over a pet." Taroht chuckled to himself as he held the animal slightly away, not caring too much for it licking his face. Upon inspecting the animal further, he ran his hands lightly over its fur, testing its shape and looking for possible dangers. "Oh, so you have a collar here, and a medallion, so you must be a favorite pet. And they give you your own house. You must be a prince among pets." Taroht rubbed the furry body of the animal after realizing there was no additional danger, thinking to himself that he could understand why any race would want this animal as a pet...it seemed to desire love and attention. He slowly placed the pet down on the ground so he could resume his recon work, only to have the creature roll over, turning on its back, as it spread its legs.

"I am almost afraid to ask what you might be waiting on. Maybe I need to find your master and see what kind of weird things they do to little favorites like you." Taroht chuckled under his breath as he rose to his full height with an arched brow and quickly passed the animal towards the row of larger buildings.

He peered into the building closest to the animal's shelter and saw a light emanating from inside. Getting as close as he could without threat of being seen, he noted a large table piled high with what looked like the ancient books that Eetu had made him read when he visited the library on Dsh' Attar. He had always hated the smelly old tomes and could not for the life of him understand why Eetu would not allow him to read the screens that were so much easier to handle.

Eetu was the librarian in the Village of Som De Noel on Dsh' Attar, the home planet of his mother, a planet he had loved as a boy and had spent many a *decimon* on. Each summer Taroht spent in Som De Noel had been more of an education than the previous year in the Academy, thanks to Eetu. Though Taroht loved his mother and father, he was inexplicably drawn to Eetu and was always amazed as to the wealth of information the man seemed to always hold within him.



The elder man had taught Taroht about everything, from the art of war to politics to history to art. Eetu had been as much of a father to him as his own had been, if not more, as his father was always busy with work for the Empire. Eetu had been instrumental in Taroht's growth into a strong, intelligent man. When the Emperor had made him Regent of the East, Taroht had chosen Dsh' Attar as his base of operation and had built a luxurious home in the center of the village, close to one of his most favorite people in the galaxy. Moving to Dsh' Attar had been a show of respect to the old man, because the man himself was as much a home to Taroht as the beautiful village he lived in.

Taroht focused back on the room before him, chastising himself for being so melancholy about home. He sounded like a schoolgirl, weeping about being homesick. What would Eetu say to him now? He could only laugh inwardly at what responses came to mind.

He walked to the rear of the next building he saw lights radiating from. Once he approached the opening, he saw a light, and a large table covered with what looked to him like steaming bowls of food. Hearing the first sounds of voices from within, he knew there were definitely lifeforms here.

"Keeyy idssss ... diiiinnnnnn nnerrrrrrrrrr!"

*What odd language.*

Suddenly, Taroht heard many footsteps approach and he ducked his head down below the opening. Movement of large items was heard and then quiet. Taroht waited a moment, and then slowly looked back through the opening and saw his first aliens, all seated around the large table covered with food. The aliens all held hands and murmured something together, in a foreign language. And then they all released hands and began heartily talking and digging into the bowls on the table.

Taroht watched the interaction of these people, and was shocked at how they looked. If he hadn't known better, he would think they were Ishadarian. And then the full impact of the dawning realization hit him fully. *These creatures look just like us! They ARE evolved.*

He watched the interaction for another few moments, and was struck with how much these people seemed to genuinely enjoy each other. And once he realized that fact; he felt as he was intruding into their space. Slowly backing away from the window, his thoughts again went to Eetu and how much he missed his old friend.

After spying the rest of the buildings in the row, he cautiously crossed the wide hard ground to the next row of buildings and encountered much of the same. He saw many creatures eating at tables and talking to each other over their meals. Nothing struck him as being outright dangerous. He saw no guards posted anywhere, or any surveillance equipment. So once he had scouted out his assigned area, he went back to the outcropping to share his findings with the others.

\* \* \* \*

Anxiously awaiting Taroht's return, T' Neel pulled him to the side before he could discuss with the group what he had witnessed.

"So, what was it like? What did you see?"

"They look nearly identical to an Ishadarian."

"WHAT? That's impossible."

"They look to be slightly smaller in size, but for the most part, they look exactly like us from what I can see. I was only able to see a few groups that seem to be clans. There is always a chance of other mutations out there, but the only aliens I saw looked exactly like Ishadarians."

T'Neel looked skeptically at him, but Taroth had more important things to do than worry about this woman and her incredulity. Moving from in front of her to report back to the rest of the group, T'Neel grabbed his arm, pulling him closer to her warm body.

"I was worried for you," she cooed. "I am glad you are back safely." The apparent lust was written all over her face, and laced her husky voice. "I was worried you would get hurt and not come back. And the thought of not getting a chance to ever show you how much I desire you upset me thoroughly." She placed her palm into the heat of his groin, and his traitorous body answered her touch. He inwardly groaned, hating that his body had given her what she had hoped for. He would never be able to push her away now.

"T'Neel, you are an incredibly attractive woman and I am aware how you feel for me. But you know I have found my Daya N'goul, and her brother, my best friend I might add, is on this scouting trip with us. I don't think it is a good idea for me to follow my baser instincts."

Her lust addled eyes suddenly were replaced with ones filled with rage. "A baser instinct? Is that all I would be to you? You rutting like a wild beast with any piece of ass you can get your hands on? I am so much better than that. How dare you?" She pushed him away and firmly planted her hands on her hips. "But if you had a soul mate you wouldn't want me at all, and I have seen the looks you have returned on occasion. So make up a better lie than that. You want me as much as I want you, so I don't know what the problem is."

Taroth had had enough of her. "Woman, you have been throwing yourself all over me since before we left for this forsaken world. What did you think I would assume of you? And you know full well that I can only mate with an Ishadarian woman, and you are not Ishadarian, so what *were* you expecting? The best you could have ever asked for was to be my temporary bed mate. And the only looks I have returned have been piteous." He inwardly cringed at himself for being such a jackass. He may have thought these things, but she did not deserve to hear them, no matter how annoying her chase had been.

"I *thought* we could enjoy a mutual pleasure, but I see you don't deserve any of *my* pleasure." With that she whipped her head around and stalked back to the rest of the group. Once there she stopped and turned, boring holes into him with her venomous eyes, arms crossed firmly over her ample bosom.

*Women.* Taroth wondered if he would ever figure them out, but at least he would not have to continue playing the seduction games she had been throwing his way these past few bi'neer on the return trip home. Although scorned female was not a fun thing to deal with either, but he deserved her anger and her glare for the dreadful things he had just said to her. He typically was not so mean, but her constant unwanted attention had finally pushed him past the brink of sanity. With an exasperated sigh, he walked back to the rest of the group.

Taroth noted his other warriors had just joined the group, and he asked for them to report first. "Dar, what did you find?"

"Sir, they look Ishadarian." Murmurs ran through the group assembled before them. "They even have set up a village with familial habitats and such. I found six groups, and they all look and even sound like us, even though they speak an alien tongue. I did not scout any dangers, other than a beast I think they keep as a pet, which makes a yipping sound when you approach and seem to drool quite a bit. The yowling seems to warn the household of impending danger. Not all homes seem to have the beast, and some of the creatures are quite large, coming almost to my knee, while others are small."

"I noted the same creatures at one of the habitations I scouted. They are easy to subdue, and the one I interacted with was on a long cord, which was attached to its neck, so I feel they are not a major threat either."

T'Neel spoke up, the hurt and anger still apparent in her voice. "When will we get an opportunity to investigate for ourselves instead of taking the word of a couple of soldiers?"

Dar looked at Taroath with a searching look, understanding that something had happened to cool the lust in T'Neel, but he said nothing, just raised an eyebrow.

Taroath quickly bit back, "How about we hear what Ta'Hall has to say before we assume all is safe. I wouldn't want *you* to get *hurt* out there. I couldn't have that on my *conscience*, now could I?"

T'Neel looked like she was ready to shoot venom straight at Taroath, refusing to answer him. An uncomfortable silence surrounded the group as they all felt the uneasiness between the two. After several seconds and much squirming around him, he decided to ignore her angry looks, and turned to his second warrior, Ta' Hall. "What did you find?"

"There seems to be a group of men that patrol the area in a vehicle of some sort. They wear uniforms, and journey around patrolling the village. The transport they were in was black and white. And I followed them for some distance back to a building where two more of the same vehicles were parked. There were two uniformed men in each vehicle I saw moving. They seem to keep the peace, so I doubt they would be too aggressive, but still, we will need to keep a distance from them. Other than that, I saw no other defenses to avoid."

"Good work Ta' Hall. Avoid the uniformed men in the black and white transports, and the small furry creatures that make noise and could alert the residents. Actually, the race looking like us may be a good thing as most of us will not stand out. I think if we broke into three groups, one warrior to a group, we could spread out through the village and investigate easily."

Dar began grouping the party into smaller factions. "Delas, you and your group, please head out with Ta' Hall. Bris and company, come with me, and T'Neel, why don't you and your group follow our Regent."

"No, I refuse to go anywhere with that frigulan-headed man."

Taroath just eyed Dar with a look of disgust. Dar looked back at him with a look of pure delight, a twinkle in his eyes, hoping to cause his good friend unease on purpose. Dar seemed to weigh the situation as he looked into his friend's eyes, and Taroath knew he was about to have fun at his expense, but he was surprised when Dar said, "Okay then T'Neel, you come with me and Bris can go with our Regent."

T'Neel, realizing that she had shown much too much of her hand, was blushing slightly, upset at her outburst. She nodded her head and grabbed her gear, joining Dar's group. Taroath turned to leave, but Dar stopped him, "Sir," he said with a light of amusement showing in his eyes, "Should I take my group back to the area I previously scouted?"

Taroath's patience was at an end, even for his best friend. He walked over to the man and placed both hands on either of his massive shoulders. "Yes, take them back. And if you want to go ahead with the shooting of the legs plan, start with the obstinate redhead in your group."

\* \* \* \*

The scouting party roamed over the small town for more than a week, noting the similarities and differences with the aliens and their own races. One of the scientists was also a linguist and was able to figure out their language within a few days, but once they explored more, they found that the creatures on the planet spoke several. But one was better than none, and at least they could start figuring out the world around them.

They had found that the gems they had brought allowed them to barter for items, such as clothing, which they purchased to fit in better with the creatures in the community. Initially, the group was eyed quite suspiciously, but once they started bartering more and more with the townsfolk, it seemed the inhabitants were less worried over them being strangers and more worried about acquiring more of the beautiful gems. The group had fun interacting with the populous, and the creatures there assumed that they were from another part of the planet, instead of another planet entirely, and called them “the tourists”. Most of the residents seemed to find humor at the group exploring the village. They spent hours roaming, taking readings and noting every aspect of the society.

By the second week, they had discovered that there were billions of lifeforms on the planet, and most were citizens of what were called countries and states. They learned that they had landed in a desert in the western part of one of the stronger nations on the planet. Depending heavily upon their photographic memories, by the end of the third week, each member of the scouting party had figured out the complex political and social structures of the planet, learned at least two of the languages, and were able to interact with most of the citizens of the town.

They decided then that it was time to explore more of this planet and to locate themselves into one of the larger cities that bordered the desert they had hidden their ship in. Their next location was decided, as it was the closest large city. It was time to go to Las Vegas, in the State of Nevada, in the United States of America on Planet Earth.

## Chapter Two

Taroth surveyed the bright city skyline as they approached, fear nipping at him that they were moving too fast into the larger populous. Everyone in the group felt he was wrong and that they were indeed ready, so he had submitted to their desire to learn more, and had allowed them to proceed against his better judgment. Fortunately, from the research he had done into this city, it seemed to be a vacation spot, where there were many tourists and many entertainers, which would hopefully continue to keep the group away from inquisitive eyes. Taroth assumed they could become lost in the crowds of humans.

Even though he was feeling cautious, he did have a location in mind to explore, and his wi' mia was as excited as he. The small village they had left had limited medical resources, and they had been lacking in data. Las Vegas had several medical facilities and he wanted to see how these people handled crisis medical care.

He had pulled his wi' mia, and several other members of the team to investigate Valley Hospital within the city limits. They watched outside the emergency room for several moments, viewing the ambulances and medical teams working, as well as seeing the less hurt walking into the crisis center themselves.

Taroth glanced through the window of the hospital trying to get a sense of what the group was about to walk into and examine. Unfamiliar with Earth medical facilities, he decided it was time to take his small band of investigators inside to get a closer look at how these beings took care of their wounded. The knowledge would be invaluable if the Emperor considered making this planet the last in a long line of new members of the Empire.

Not that the plan was to create warfare, but they had to know that these people could adequately manage their hurt if the need arose. A peaceful alliance was to the benefit of all, but if the Earthlings jumped to conclusions and let fear of the unknown rule their judgment when the Empire finally introduced themselves, and Earth attacked them, they would defend their own. He looked again through the glass lobby before calling over to his second in command.

"Dar, I am going to slice my blade along your arm, enough to injure you, but not seriously, and then let us see how their system works," Taroth said at a whisper as he grasped the knife from his booted ankle. He was worried that the staff inside would recognize that his officer was not human, but from all the intel they had already gathered and seeing the similarities that existed, he was confident that they would not be able to tell, especially if the wound was minor. "Ta' Hall, as soon as I cut his arm, I will escort him inside. I need you to then send our people in, 2 to 3 at a time, each complaining of various illnesses we have read about when we researched their history. Make sure they use the time wisely, be ever watchful, and make sure to notice everything around them and we will all meet again in this transport area when we are through to compare notes."

Ta' Hall nodded his assent and walked over to the bushes that covered the band of men and women who had come with him to research this foreign world. He then grabbed Dar by the wrist, and sliced his forearm with the blade of his knife. Dar winced in pain but said nothing, and Taroth placed a cloth over the bleeding cut and rushed them both into the doors of the emergency room. Taroth moved them to the desk where an employee was stationed to explain his need and got a faint whiff of a potent odor.

Not an unpleasant odor, actually, it was one that suddenly created a sense of pleasure. Taroth felt a warmth run through his body and pool in his groin. He suddenly felt lightheaded and wondered what kind of place would cause such a feeling by walking in the door. He glanced at Dar to see if he also felt the effects of the sweet, strong smell and other than concern for his cut, he did not see any other emotion running across the man's face. "Dar... do you smell that?"

"Smell what?" Dar whispered across to him. "I smell nothing but my own blood and your sweaty hide. So if you are done smelling the flowers, can we please get my arm some attention?"

"Sweaty hide? You are just as disgusting after a day in this infernal heat. I should let you bleed to death for that remark." Dar cocked an eyebrow up at him. "Since you are my best friend, I suppose I should help you live. Besides, I need you to help me make it back to Hara D'Noll in one piece. Without you to buffer between T'Neel and her cronies, I may choose to end my life." Dar growled at him under his breath as he continued, "And when did you become such a little girl? It is only a scratch."

"Scratch? SCRATCH? I'm gushing blood into this cloth. And don't get my heart pumping any faster or I WILL bleed to death. Come on."

The two men reached the desk and the assistant immediately rushed them through the door into the medical facility. Taroth watched all around him with fascination. He had to assume that the medical system was not exactly as they had shown on the American television he had watched to become acquainted with their medicine. He had tried to use television to help learn more about their society, only to find through his experience that the things they depicted were either complete lies or a glamorization of the truth. So he recently realized that the team would have to experience some things in person.

As they were being shown into a curtained area with a cot, Taroth again caught a whiff of the odor he smelled before, this time much stronger and much, much more pleasant. He felt the familiar heat coursing through his body again, and his cock became erect. A dizziness that nearly toppled him to the floor washed over him. The employee who had shown them into the area had to help level him into a chair. She chuckled under her breath, "You big strong men are such babies ... it's only a little blood. We'll have him stitched up in no time."

"STITCHED??" Came the worried response from Dar. "What is this 'stitched'?"

The petite brunette laughed again, "We will take a needle and close your wound so it can heal properly. You'll be just fine. We'll have someone come and close that up for you in a minute." She laughed again with a snort and closed the curtain, closing off the room.

Dar looked wide-eyed at Taroth. "They are going to STITCH me up with a needle? What barbarians are these? They don't even have a *pled gee* to just close the wound and heal it immediately? You owe me big for this one. I see where being your friend gets you. Stitched up like a piece of their clothing."

Taroth did not rise to the gibe, still having his senses assaulted by the sweet odor that had nearly overcome his body. Heat radiated through him and he felt the sweat start to finely cover his skin. The steamiest sexual thoughts ran through his mind, but they were dreamlike and unclear. Her hand caressing his bare shoulder, his thigh, his buttocks. His hand clasping a beautiful breast. But he saw no face, just felt her hands all over his body.

"Taroth? Are you alright?" A pause. "Taroth?"

"Something ... is wrong. I feel ... strange ... hot ... can't ... breathe ... the smell ... stronger ... I need to ...." And at that moment Taroth nearly roared the walls down as he ejaculated into his pants, just as the curtain pulled back. A physician came in prepared to clean

and suture Dar's wound. Tarothe took one look at her and the feeling came over him again, even stronger this time.

"Oh...are you all right? You look unwell." The doctor spoke to Tarothe, seeing the fear and desire warring with his self control all displayed on his face.

And then she touched his shoulder and they both froze in place. Tarothe then saw her face in his mind. It had been her hand on him in his vision. It was her scent he smelled that was driving him insane. She was his Daya N'goul...his life mate. Her pheromones were all he could smell and she would drive him insane with her scent until he could drive himself deep inside her and claim her body as his.

But it was impossible, he already had a soulmate, and she was awaiting him on his home world. And this was an Earth woman. No true Ishadarian had ever been paired with a woman from another world, and no male had ever had *two* Daya N'goul. It was impossible...it was wrong. And what the hell was he supposed to do?

As he looked back at the woman, everything he was here to do, the recon, the research, and his thoughts of D' Na Jin vanished as he wondered how he could have this woman. His head was filled with visions of her naked body wrapped around his...on top of his...under his. He could think of nothing else but conquering her mind, body, and soul and making her his as he gave himself over to her.

*Damn, he had to control himself.* He was like an animal, thinking about throwing her over Dar's lap and filling her with his hard cock right then and there. Thankfully his brain was starting to work a little as he faintly heard Dar saying his name over and over again.

"I think my *cousin* needs your assistance." He said to her to get her moving again. She blushed profusely, with a look of disbelief on her face like she was struggling to understand what had just happened to her, as if she had seen all the pornographic images that had sluiced through his brain as well. She shook her head as if trying to clear her mind and turned to the job at hand. Tarothe watched as her nimble fingers started to work over Dar's arm, amazed that he was actually jealous that he was not the one getting her touch and her attention.

He had to stay calm, but the smell was about to drive him insane. He had to know everything about her. "So, are you a doctor here?"

"Yes, I'm sorry, I neglected to introduce myself to either of you." She looked at Dar as she finished cleaning out the wound, "My name is Dr. Phillips."

"I am Dar Jin."

She glanced over her shoulder at Tarothe. "That is an interesting surname. What nationality are you if you don't mind me asking?"

"Nationality? We are..."

"Jewish?" Dar added before Tarothe could finish.

"Ah, well, that is definitely an interesting name, and living here, I hear many different nationalities. Millions of people visit this city each year from around the world." The doctor paused, her brows furling in thought, "So...um...are you here visiting or do you live locally?" She glanced over her shoulder at Tarothe as she spoke the words, hope lighting up her face.

"We are visiting your city." Dar spoke the words briskly, noting that her gaze had held Tarothe's a moment too long. "It is a bright, loud place and I am not oversure that I like it at all."

Her soft chuckle rumbled through Tarothe's body, making him hum in delight. He stepped a little closer, inhaling her scent deeply, making her turn to look into his eyes once more. She blushed again, before adding, "This is a city unlike any other. But there is more to the city

than the glitz and glamour. Give it another try, and you may like what you find," she again turned her head and glanced at Taroith.

Taroith was trying to keep himself in control, but the overlong looks she threw him with her beautiful blue eyes were driving him insane. She finished suturing Dar's arms and instructed him how to care for his stitches until the cut eventually healed. With a wistful look at both men and an awkward pause, she wished them well and a good evening. Dar practically had to pull Taroith away from the room and out of the building.

Once outside, "What the Jang N'Fell was that Taroith?"

"I haven't a clue Dar. It was if it was Daya N'goul, but that is impossible. Your sister is my intended and this woman is an Earthling. But I can't explain it any other way."

"You will marry my sister. So get it out of your head that this dirty alien with her barbaric medicine is your Daya N'goul. It is like you said. Impossible."

Taroith placed a level hand on Dar's shoulder to try and calm his friend. "Calm down Dar. I did not say I would not marry your sister. I was only trying to explain the feelings I had. Once Char Jewg exits the hospital, I will have him give me a thorough exam. It could have been a chemical in there; it could have been that I have not claimed your sister after the proper period of Si Ni mon. Who knows what could be the cause? But I will try to find out what has happened. But, dear friend, you know I would not hurt you or your sister in that way."

Dar growled again, ripped Taroith's arm away from his shoulder and stomped away. Taroith could only stand and watch his friend stalk away. Dar had become more and more combative over the months preceding their trip, and Taroith had chalked it up to the uneasiness of becoming family to him, after years of easy friendship. But now, after the anger he saw in Dar's face, he wondered if there was more to Dar's odd moods of late.

As he stood considering his friend's odd behavior, Char Jewg returned to the exterior of the building. Taroith approached him, hoping to find answers to his dilemma.

"So, Char, did you find anything valuable inside?"

"Yes, sir. They have primitive techniques, but some of their medicines are interesting. I will need to obtain samples to test, so we may need to liberate a few bottles." A glint sparkled in the older man's eyes.

"Liberate, ahh? Something tells me you will enjoy this liberation a bit too much." Taroith laughed.

"I haven't had the opportunity to liberate something since my days in the army. But I will conceive a plan and present it to you before long."

"Do what you must in order to research every aspect of their medical knowledge. Also, I need something."

"Anything, sir."

"I need you to do a full exam on me."

"Sir, we just did one just prior to landing, not to mention one just before we left. Has something happened?"

"Yes. I think I have found a second Daya N'goul."

\* \* \* \*

Char and Taroith left the group the middle of the next day and returned to the ship they had hidden in the desert using a concealing device. Not having let anyone know of their reason for return except for Dar, they quickly began a very thorough medical exam. After a long tense silence, Char finally broached the subject, trying to make sense of what his leader told him.



"So, sir, what makes you think you have found a second Daya N'goul?" The two had not shared any details prior to this moment due to the mixed company of the scouting party. The last thing Tarothe needed was gossip and speculation running rampant in the group and then that same gossip and speculation getting back to Hara D'Noll and hurting Dar and his family. D'Na may not be the object of his affection, but she and Dar did not deserve pain or humiliation either.

"I was inside the hospital and when the doctor came into the room, I immediately felt lightheaded and ill, and before I even touched her, I became erect and even ejaculated. I can't stop thinking of her, and how to win her. How to Join with her is at the forefront of my mind. My mind is telling me it is impossible, but that same mind, my heart, my body, and my soul desires her so badly I can barely contain myself. Yet, I feel none of this for D'Na Jin."

"You feel none of it for D'Na?" the older man asked incredulously.

"I felt the initial reaction of sickness and the erection. But I never felt the intense feelings of lust and love and desire for possession. With this woman, I know she is mine and I am hers. But again. How can that be?"

"I don't know sir, but let me check your system and see if we can come up with something."

Char Jewg began a lengthy exam and tested his body in every possible way, twice. At the completion, Char looked unnerved.

"Sir, I am at a loss to explain what is going on. You have nothing wrong with any of your internal organs, and I can find no other chemical cause for the feelings you have had. I do note that your male hormones are raised much, much higher than in the two previous exams, and your heart rate is much faster."

Char Jewg continued, "Maybe what you need to do is seek this woman out again. I know it will not be easy for you to do, but see if you can follow her to a point outside her work environment. Maybe it was something chemical inside the hospital, but my readings showed nothing out of the ordinary. If you still have the same reaction you did inside the building then, I hate to say it, but you may be right, this woman may be your Daya N'goul as well."

"And just what the Jang N'Fell will I do about that?"

"Sir, I am only a simple wi' mia ... that will have to be for you to decide."

\* \* \* \*

Tarothe arrived back into the city with the wi' mia in tow. The two men arrived back at the hotel where the group had been staying while examining the city. Dar caught Tarothe in the hall, barely controlled fury covering his face.

"Did the wi' mia find anything?"

"No, Dar, he did not."

"So what is his theory?"

"That I need to seek her out in a place other than her workplace, to see if I react the same as I did last night. If so, he thinks she is a second Daya N'goul."

The silence that ensued was deafening to Tarothe.

Finally a red faced Dar inquired, "And your plan?"

"I have no idea what I am supposed to do, Dar. No Ishadarian has ever had two Daya N'goul to my knowledge."

"Because it is wrong to have two, it is against our rites. She is not your Daya N'goul. My sister is. You cannot even contemplate Joining with an Earthling female!" Dar's voice had risen to nearly a scream by the end of the sentence.

"I am exhausted, so I do not plan on contemplating anything. Let me sleep on it and we will come up with a plan together old friend."

"There is nothing to plan. Forget the woman and move on!"

"It is against the law to ignore a Daya N'goul, so maybe it is meant for me to take her to Hara D'Noll and let men wiser than you and I make the decision for me."

"NO! Leave the beastly female here and forget about her."

"Dar, goodnight. My head already hurts from trying to figure this puzzle out. Don't make it worse." Taroth began to sidestep him and go to his room to rest and have a fresh mind to think over his problem. Dar did not let him get far.

Grasping his arm and yanking him to a stop, "How dare you disrespect my sister and my entire family? I should challenge you now for this contempt."

Roaring with derision, Taroth pulled his arm from the other man's grasp and pulled Dar to the wall, easily clutching his neck in one hand. "*You* forget your place. I am your superior officer and the Regent of the Ishadarian East. I could have your head for such insolence. I have made no disrespect in reviewing the situation and trying to determine what the best course of action is. Besides the wi'mia, no one knows of the incident save you and I. Lastly, you had better calm down before you ruin a friendship that has lasted many a year. I think you know me better than that, Dar. I have always given you my trust and my respect, as you have me. Until now. Because you are my dearest friend, I will overlook your audacity and allow us both to sleep off our anger. Hopefully in the morning, you will see I need your help to find a true solution to my problem."

Dar's face warred with several emotions, but he chose not to speak, holding back the torrent of hateful words Taroth could feel he wanted to spew. After a moment, he calmed himself and his control returned. When the calm reached his face and body, Taroth released the hold he had on the man's neck.

"No matter how much sleep I get, I will not change my mind about this creature. But I apologize if I went too far and insulted you, *Regent*." Taroth saw how difficult it was for Dar to speak those words. "And I will allow you time to consider this problem, knowing you will eventually see the truth in my words. I know you will disregard the Earth beast and leave her behind."

Taroth shook his head and placed his face in his hands. "Dar, let it be ... at least for now and let me rest. I can't think right now and I do not want to jeopardize our friendship further." With that he pushed past the angry man and walked into his room, locking the door behind him. He gazed at the bed with his back to the door he had just stepped through, but could only imagine the supple Earth woman waiting there for him, wanting him to plunge into her depths.

He walked to the lavatory and washed his face with cold water, and realized it wasn't enough. Turning on the shower to full cold, he jumped in, trying to slake his lust. After his skin had nearly turned blue from hypothermia, he turned off the water and stepped out of the shower. Toweling his large frame, he stalked into the bedroom and slipped into the cool clean sheets of the soft bed.

After several moments, his cock rose to full erection and he realized cold showers would never be enough until he had her. He grasped his huge member in his hand and began imagining her there with him, imagining her warm wet channel surrounding his cock. Then visions of her mouth enveloping the shaft assailed him. He closed his eyes, a soft, slow moan escaping his lips.

In his mind's eye he could see her as if she was truly there, naked and beautiful, her long blonde hair unbound and her dark blue eyes alight with desire. Her able hands roamed all over

his strong, muscular frame, and her lips tasted his heated flesh, while his hands explored every curve, every crevice of her body. He even imagined her taste on his lips, sweet like honey. Her smell invaded his nose, a faint vanilla and floral smell, which was neither too sweet nor too musky, but perfect. It fit her.

He continued to pull his pleasure from his own body, pre-come oozing from the tip of his shaft, wetting his hand and causing a wonderful sliding friction that would lead to the mighty explosion that he felt building. In his mind it was her hands, her mouth that was sliding up and down his hard tight pole, causing him to go insane from pleasure. The tempo increased as his orgasm approached, seeing her suckling mouth drawing his pleasure to the edge of pain.

Arching his back off the bed, he drove his cock into his fist, imagining driving his cock deeper into her throat. Faster and faster her mouth suckled him until at last he exploded into her, shooting his come deep into her throat, nearly choking her with the amount of his silver seed.

Opening his eyes, he saw the mess he had made of himself. Sighing, he cleaned up, jumped back into another cold shower, embarrassed that he had been reduced to masturbating, something he had not done since he was just past puberty, ten or more years before. Once into his late teens, he had never struggled to have any woman he wanted, his good looks, charismatic personality and wry humor coupled with his strong intelligence had set many an alien female swooning. And now, here he was, stuck alone, handing himself his own pleasure, with no possible woman in sight.

He chuckled to himself, dried off once again and slid back into the sheets. And growled when his thoughts of her made him grow hard again.

\* \* \* \*

Taroth awoke the following morning with an ache in his loins, and emptiness in his gut, unlike anything he had ever experienced. He could not get the Earth woman from his mind, and could only think of seeing her again and tasting her body with his lips and marking her as his by joining with her as one. He was becoming obsessed, and an obsessed man could not think clearly.

*Why had he never felt this way towards D' Na?* The Earth woman was a completely unknown entity, yet she filled his heart and mind and he craved her like a drug. *This is the way I should have felt for D'Na and did not.* Taroth knew then what he had to do. He would have to take the Earth woman back by any means possible and present her to the council as well as the Emperor. He needed other perspectives on the situation, someone outside himself and the Jin family.

Knowing that Dar would never knowingly go along with his plan, Taroth knew he would have to gain the aid of Ta' Hall. He rushed to the man's room so he could formulate a plan. The group was scheduled to remain for three more days and they would begin the return trip to Hara D'Noll and Taroth planned on having an additional passenger with him.

\* \* \* \*

T'Neel looked down the hall at the retreating back, watching him approach Ta Hall's door. Once the door had opened and Taroth had entered inside, she scurried down the hall, stopping beside the almost shut door. Hopefully, neither inside would see the door ajar or that she could hear what was happening.

Her instincts told her that there was something amiss between Taroth and Dar. Would Taroth confide in Ta' Hall what the issues were? Inside, she heard the low murmuring of the voices of the two men inside and could faintly make out what was being said.

She knew she should not chance standing out here in the hall, with the scouting party taking most of the rooms on this floor, any of them could walk out and catch her at any moment. But she had been wronged, and she would do anything to make this man pay for his deeds.

So she pushed her ear as close to the door so the two men could not see her and she listened in to the conversation. Unfortunately, she could not hear every word, but enough of it to have her eyes light up with glee. She was definitely on to something, possibly the makings of Tarothe's downfall.

## Chapter Three

Corrine stood just outside the hospital trying to collect her thoughts. Ever since she had spied the handsome stranger in the examining room, she had not been able to get him out of her thoughts. And even stranger still, the mere thought of him had a warming, aching feeling, a tightening of her breasts and nipples, and a pooling between her thighs.

Being a physician had always been the only thing she had wanted to do with her life, and she had started that dream at the age of seven. The pretend doctor kit her father had bought her on her birthday was the first step. She had doctored all her dolls and stuffed animals, and even had a surgery or two. But when her beloved father had suffered an aneurysm when she was ten, she realized then and there that her dream had to become a reality.

Being a female had only hindered her; she had to work twice as hard to achieve the same results. Professors had preferred her male counterparts and they often received better grades for equal work. And when it came time to seek spaces for her residency, almost all of her top choices were given to men. Corrine had decided then that the male species was an abomination and she would avoid personal relationships with them at all costs.

Fortunately, her profession made it easy to forgo those relationships, and she had been without a lover for nearly three years, not that the man she had met inside a club late one December could have necessarily been called a lover. His slam, bam, no thank you ma'am had been horrid and could hardly have counted for sex. She had hoped that he would have been better than her vibrator, but she had been woefully wrong. She sometimes felt lonely without a "someone special" to spend what little time she had free. So work had become her lover, and she put all her energy into it and forgot about her own needs, especially those of a sexual nature. There were times when she felt almost asexual; neither male nor female, just existing. It had never bothered her before, until the sexy stranger had looked up at her with his piercing blue eyes. He had made her want him with an ache she had never felt for anyone before.

For the first time in her twenty-six year existence she felt like a woman. His heated glaze had turned her body into molten sexuality and every time she closed her eyes she saw his beautifully handsome face and that mouth heaven had made for sinning. Usually her thoughts drifted to that mouth tasting a spot here or there on her anatomy. *Ugghh!! What am I doing?*

Moments ago she had been inside helping a burn victim clean a nasty blister and while cutting the dead skin away had let her mind drift and began cutting slightly into healthy skin. She had never let any thoughts preoccupy her mind like this, let alone thoughts so purely centered on a man. And especially one she doubted she would ever see again. The pair had said they were tourists and the likelihood of running into either man was highly unlikely.

No matter how much her brain said to stop, or said she was acting like a besotted teenager, she could not get him out of her thoughts. He was such a perfect specimen of a man and she smiled to herself, imagining playing doctor with him. He was well above average height; she had noticed that even as he sat. Once he had stood to leave she realized just how tall he actually was. She would have guessed both men to have been in the neighborhood of six foot ten to seven feet tall.

Usually very tall men tended to be lanky in her experience, but her man had not been that at all. Built like a football player, with a wide expansive chest and muscular frame, he had looked like a Greek God, with his massive body and chiseled good looks.

She couldn't imagine what it would have been like to have such a powerful looking man drive her over the edge of sexual desire. He had emanated a heat and desire that was almost enough to knock her off her feet and steal the breath from her lungs. And top it off with the sexiest ice blue eyes and she was lost forever. Too bad she would never see him again.

\* \* \* \*

Taroth looked out from the rental car parked in the lot of the hospital, watching his prey stalk in front of the emergency room doors. He had mastered the use of the Earth vehicles easily and found them quite comfortable. Used to the fast moving automated vehicles on Hara D'Noll, it was a treat to actually be able to master your own way.

As he watched, she looked as though something troubled her from the pained looks traveling her face. She had her arms wrapped around her body, and all he could imagine was wrapping his warmth to her and chasing away the demons that looked to be pursuing her.

He remained there for a long moment, watching the emotions spill over her face. One moment she was tired and forlorn, and then seconds later angry, and then only moments later she almost looked ... fiery, lustful, needy? He wanted to go to her, needed to go to her, but he had no idea how to approach her.

*I'm from another planet and you are my soulmate. Leap in my spaceship and I'll take you to my home world where I plan on spending the rest of my life jumping your bones.* He was sure she would love that advance. He had to think of something and fast; three days wasn't long to entice a perfect stranger to hop into outer space with you, especially considering the way he had noted this culture felt about life on other planets.

Deciding honesty was the best policy; he exited the car and walked towards her. He prayed for a good idea to pop into his head because all he had was absolutely zero. She had her back facing him as he approached and she did not seem to notice his quick advent.

"Doctor?"

She whipped around to meet the voice behind her and again their eyes locked. Standing there breathless as though the whole world had stopped at that very second, the two could not see anything but the face in front of them. After what seemed like an eternity, Corrine stepped one small step hesitantly towards him; feeling drawn to his body.

He sensed her advance and stepped towards her as well, and they both began a slow advance towards each other until they were a whisper apart from each other. All she could feel was the heat rolling off his body and she smelled his desire in the air. He smelled of musk, and clean linen, and she was intoxicated by it.

She slowly raised one hand into the air, putting it close to his chest, but just not touching it, allowing the heat from his body to spread through her fingers and palm and then lower into her whole being, pooling in her sex. Never once did she let her gaze slip away from the ice blue one locked on her.

Suddenly, as if a switch was flipped, they ground into each other's arms and Taroth pulled her off her feet to gain access to her mouth, which he devoured as if the only thing that allowed him to breathe was the oxygen in her body. Onlookers passed, watching the erotic embrace with disdain or yearning, or a little of both, but the lovers entwined saw nothing except the person each held within their arms.

Finally after long moments spent in each other's embrace, Corrine's brain began to work again and she realized what was happening, and how they must look to the outside world. She pulled her lips away from this beautiful stranger's sensually explosive mouth. The more she pulled away, the more he pulled her mouth back to him; he could not let her go. Struggling, she finally drew her lips away from his and gazed at his face and then at the many faces that were turned in their direction, watching the entertainment of the afternoon.

He followed her glance, realized the position he had her in, and released her, setting her back on the ground by sliding her down his hard body. A soft moan escaped her lips at the sensuous feeling of the body-to-body friction and he was immediately ready to pull her back up into his arms. But once he looked down into her frightened features, knowing he was partially to blame for the look there, he stepped back to give her space. He had gone too far, too fast and the look on her face proved it.

A deep blush had begun to steal over her face and neck, and she avoided his eyes, which hurt him like a physical blow. He never wanted her to be ashamed of the passion she felt for him; he knew he would never feel that way in return. The desire she had built in him was unlike any emotion he had ever felt, and he could not imagine anything feeling more like heaven itself.

He wanted to build that same feeling in her; to drive her crazy with desire. He wanted her to want him, want him so badly that she ignored than the inward cringe of shame. They had been well on the way, but the outside world had gotten back into her head. He needed to find a way to be her sole focus if he had any chance of taking back to Hara D'Noll without a fight.

He placed his forefinger on her chin and moved her face up to look at him, but she still averted her eyes. He lowered his stare to her abused lips that he had savored but seconds ago and could still taste on his own. She began to back away from his touch, but he grasped her forearms and pulled her back into his embrace.

"You belong right here."

The shock and fear, mixed with deep desire showed on her face. "I belong inside at work, my break is over. If you will excuse me, I need to return."

"I tasted your need with my own lips, so don't try to lie to me and say you did not feel it. And don't make it worse by saying you don't realize where you belong, right here with me."

She shivered as he pulled her even closer into his arms and held her tightly. He was so warm, so strong, so beautiful, and she could just melt into his embrace. She had been alone for so long that she could lose herself in this man without another thought. Feeling safer in this stranger's arms than any other person in her entire life, she leaned into his heat.

He growled deep at her concession, feeling it the moment she relaxed her body and pulled her back up to his hot, wet mouth, grounding her to his body, blocking out all the light and the rest of the world with his hard desire and the wanton lust he felt. A lust she reciprocated and poured back into him as well.

Again, her mind began to work and she realized what she was doing.

*This isn't me; I of all people do not stand in front of a hospital in the arms of a sexy stranger, trying to suck his tonsils out of his mouth. My God, what the hell am I doing?*

She tore her mouth away, hearing him growl again at the loss of the heady heat of the kiss. She pushed against him violently until he released her and she ran back into the doors of the hospital on shaking legs, afraid what would happen if she stayed right where she had stood in front of him. Her legs buckled as she entered the doors and she fell into one of the patient's waiting room chairs, unable to walk another step.

She leaned her head in between her legs, trying to ward off the dizziness that had begun, and hoped to God that she would not make the whole scene ten times worse by being the silliest girl in the world by fainting.

\* \* \* \*

After sitting for almost fifteen minutes catching her breath and trying to regain some semblance of control, Corrine stood up and made her way to the ER. She had not worked this hard to get to where she needed to be for some handsome stranger to come in and ruin all her hard work. She blushed deeply again when she realized she had heatedly made out with a man she did not know the first name of. Good lord.

Once she swiped her card, the entrance to the ER galley opened and she walked in and headed towards the nurse's station to let them know she was back. As she approached she saw the knowing glances the other residents and the nurses were throwing her way as well as heard the whispered remarks being shushed just out of her hearing. Someone had seen, and that someone had told. She knew better than display her personal life here, too many office romances had gone south and nearly exploded within these walls. She ignored the catcalls and the snickers and headed for the duty nurse.

"What's up?"

"Evidentially you and the hunk of a man that was here yesterday is what's up." The woman raised one eyebrow and looked her up and down, apparently wondering what that hunk of a man wanted with her.

Corrine rolled her eyes, not feeling like being judged and looked down at the seated woman. "I meant with the patients. Who's up next?"

"Ahhh ... Miss High and Mighty who walks around here thinking she is better than everybody else. We all thought you were probably a lesbo, but'cha proved us wrong, making out with some fine, hot stud in the eyesight of everyone in this room like you actually have feelin's or somethin'. Then *you* come marching in here like nothin' happened and *you* hadn't just made a *complete* ass of yourself in front of this very building. You got nerve. Maybe if *you* hadn't acted like the biggest Ice Bitch in the world we wouldn't be laughin' our asses off at you right now, but since we actually do have work ta do, go check out room 12, kid with jaundice and a fever."

Corrine stood open mouthed, staring at the petite woman who had never uttered more than two words in passing to her when she needed to know who was up next, knowing she had never said or done anything to her to rate this kind of abuse.

"*What* have I ever done to you to make you speak to me like that?"

"Blondie, it ain't whatcha did, more like whatcha didn't do. You act like none of us exist, like we aren't good enough for you to say hello or good mornin', or hell, even fuck you, to. And then after nearly four years of haunting these halls, you finally show you are alive in there somewhere. So don' go walking in here like nothin' jus' happened, cuz we all saw."

"You are completely out of line, and none of you have any business in my personal life. And for the record, I don't think I am better than any of you, and I never meant disrespect. I just have a lot of work to do and I try to stay focused."

"Like we all don' have a ton to do. You ain't special. And for the record, you displayed your entire personal life right out there on the pavement, so get over it." The woman paused and looked her over again, trying to see what that man had seen in her that no one ever had. "So was it good?"

"Good?"



"The fine, hot stud? He could have his wicked way with me anytime he wanted. He your man?"

Corrine wasn't sure what to say, stunned by the total reverse in the conversation. Since she had killed off all of her personal relationships with everyone over the years because of her career and the demands she placed on herself, actually having a woman talk to her like a friend surprised her. Not knowing one thing about the man she had kissed only added to her dumbfounded-ness.

"He was ... ahh ... good."

"Oh, come on, that man was latched on to you like he needed you to breathe for him, so good jus' don't cut it. And big, my God, if he is that big all over, no wonder you are so quiet around here. I know I couldn't get *that* outta my mind."

Corrine's blush rose again, and she couldn't help the stupid grin that swelled over her face. Even though she knew this conversation was so inappropriate, she hadn't felt this alive in years. "Jealous?"

"You know it. So you be nice to me or I'm gonna steal your man, okay?" The dark haired woman winked at her, and turned to look at the board. "That little yellow boy in 12 is still waiting on your butt, so wipe that stupid grin off your face, get your crap together and get in there."

Corrine smiled to herself and headed towards twelve.

\* \* \* \*

Four hours later, Corrine exited the front of the hospital, subconsciously hoping to see Sexy standing there waiting for her. Of course he wasn't, and she scolded herself, knowing that it was for the best that he wasn't. But the inner sex goddess inside her couldn't but help sobbing that the hottest guy on the planet wasn't waiting to drag her into bed with him.

She quickly made her way to her car, and slipped inside. The sun was just setting and the sky around was magnificent on an early fall day like this one. Being in Las Vegas, the days were still hotter than Hades, but the nights were cooler and extremely pleasant. These were the kind of nights she wished she were still at work; going home to an empty house was the most depressing action she could think of. She actually had this evening and the next day off and she had absolutely nothing to do, and of course no one to do it with.

She drove through the faux glamour of the city, not really looking at any of it, and drove towards her neighborhood, The Fountains in Green Valley, through the gates and into her own development and pulled into her drive, sitting in the car for a few moments to collect her thoughts. Corrine had been through a hell of a day and the thought of a shower and bed sounded like heaven. Maybe she could sleep through her downtime.

Once she entered the door into the dark, unwelcoming house, she closed the door and leaned back against it, looking around her at the foyer. There were no pictures, nothing on the walls, just a big blank slate. There as nothing in this house that showed she even lived here. She walked through the rest of the downstairs, looking at the utilitarian furniture and the bare walls.

Tears formed in her eyes, "I am the Ice Bitch. And I evidentially have no personality." With that, she dropped to the floor, sitting on her rump, and began to cry. Crying was not something she submitted to often, having not shed a tear since her mother had passed four years prior and the time before that had been at her father's funeral. She sobbed harder this time than the last two combined. At her father's funeral, she had felt true heartbreak. At her mother's death, she had cried more because it was expected of her as the dutiful daughter. No one who sat

in the nearly empty funeral, murmuring their respects had realized that Georgette Phillips had died years ago when her battle with alcoholism had finally broken her spirit and body.

Her mother had never been able to get over the loss of her father, and had remained in a constant drunken state. She could have cared less about Corrine, something Corinne could never forgive. It was also the reason she pushed away the men who had made advances. She never wanted to rely on man so desperately that she lost herself in him. Fierce independence was the cornerstone of her existence. Sexy had almost driven her over the edge, and he was dangerous because of that. If she ever saw him again, which she did not think was likely after she had ran from him like he had the plague, she would have to avoid allowing her tightly reigned control to slip.

Seconds after her final thought, warm arms slipped around her back and pulled her into a warm inviting chest. She screamed and a hand was slipped over her mouth and the other arm banded her arms and chest closer to him.

"Ssshh. Don't scream, it is only me. I came for you and saw you upset through the window and knew you needed me. So here I am. Calm down."

Corrine fought the arms that held her down and finally contacted ribs with her newly freed elbow. When she heard the soft oomph, she pulled with all her might to free herself from the man's huge arms. She jumped off the floor and turned to look at her attacker, hoping she could remember all the tactics she had learned in her woman's self defense classes. Damn, why hadn't she gotten a dog?

She nearly fell over with shock when she realized that Sexy was standing in front of her.

"What the hell are you doing here?" Raw anger and raw fear bit out of her mouth, and her tone was extremely menacing. The fine hairs on the back of his neck told him he had made a mistake.

"Calm down, I followed you home from work because we need to talk. When I saw you through the window, I saw you were upset, and I came in here just to comfort you."

"There is a thing called knocking. You aren't welcome in my home. You have five seconds to leave my house or I will call the police. There are laws for stalking, you know?"

"Stalking?"

"Following a girl home and breaking into her home is against the law."

"I meant no harm, but I need to talk to you. It is important."

"Are you dense? You show up at my job and force yourself on me and then you follow me home and break into my house. You have broken at least three laws here, so I suggest that you just leave."

"I need to talk to you. Five minutes. Please."

"GO!" She pushed him out the door and slammed it home, locking the deadbolts for added security. *Should I call the police just in case?* Something inside her told her he was safe and would never hurt her; she had felt safe with him even while accusing him of breaking various laws and tossing him out on the street. She watched through the front window, watched him get into his rented car and drive away. As the brake lights faded into nothing, she wondered if she had made the worst decision in her life.

\* \* \* \*

Taroth felt like an ass driving away from her house. Nothing he did seemed to be right in her eyes. He had collected data on the Earth societies, but was definitely not a master of them yet. On his world, when a woman was a Daya N'goul, she openly welcomed her soulmate into

her heart and arms. This woman was a challenge, even more so since he refused to leave the planet without her. It was time for him and Ta Hall to take matters into their own hands.

\* \* \* \*

Awaiting word from his Regent, Ta Hall stalked the small room, barely able to confine his large frame. Like the other soldiers on this mission, his height was near giant and his frame was heavily muscled from years of fighting the Bel Tak. He was fiercely loyal to the Empire, and his Regent, but what he had been asked to do by Lord Fatel was troubling him. He found difficulty in harming a woman, especially abduction against their will.

He was trained to follow orders, and if his Regent asked him to help, he would; hoping that his leader would have good reasoning behind it. It still did not make the job at hand any easier.

Continuing to pace the room, he jerked when he heard a light knocking at the door, and was surprised to see the hellion T'Neel standing there looking at him with blatant perusal. She looked down his length, trailing two fingers across his broad chest, and her gaze traveled back up to his face.

"Are you going to invite me in?" He was reluctant to allow her, knowing she was not to be trusted, but his sense of respect abided him to allow her inside. He motioned for her to enter with a nod of his head and a step back from the door to allow her by.

"I have a little proposition for you Ta Hall."

"And just what would that be?"

"The way I see it is this. You have not been with a woman since we left Hara D'Noll at least. I have not been with a man in as long. And we are both young, sexy people. I think we should use each other tonight. What do you think?"

Unfortunately, his body said oh yes, but his mind warred and reminded him that this woman had been chasing Lord Fatel the entire trip to Earth. He would be a fool to use and abuse her body, as tempting as it was.

"I don't think that would be a good idea for either of us."

Ta Neel looked up into his face, closing the distance between their bodies until she was hairs breath from his body. She saw the self control he was using, sensed that he was having a difficult time fighting the lust that was pooling into his loins, but also knew that Ishadarian Warriors were the toughest physically and mentally. If she wanted answers, she would have to cheat. Pulling the tiny needle from behind her back, she pierced the skin on his firm rump as she lowered her other palm to rest on the enlarging swell of his groin. Hearing a low moan escape his lips, she knew he had barely noticed the tiny puncture on his tight ass.

She slipped to her knees in front of him with a grace and speed learned from being in the position often. Ta Neel was a woman who loved sex, but more so for the power it gave her. She would have all the information she needed, everything she could not hear the night before between Tarothe and this man, and all she had to do was take control of his body and allow the drug she had slipped into his body to take effect. The lust in his eyes as he looked down at her was enough for her to make her next move.

Quickly pulling his pants open and grasping his penis in her warm hands before he could object, she licked the underside of his massive cock, and she felt a shudder in his legs. Bringing the spongy head into her mouth, she licked and nibbled the end, while massaging his length with one hand and his full sac with the other.

The moment that his fingers threaded through her hair and he pulled her mouth closer to his sex, she knew she had won, and if she gave him enough pleasure, he would tell her

everything she wanted to know. She sucked as much of his length into her mouth as she could and began sucking furiously, glorying in the moans and growls exploding from his mouth.

Before long, he had begun to pump himself harder into her mouth, pulling harder on the back of her head as she sensed his climax approaching quickly. Slowly, she slipped a single finger into his nether hole, and sucked even harder on his warm cock and seconds later he erupted into her mouth, filling it with a monumental amount of his seed.

Glowing from her victory, she rose from the floor, wiping a small amount of his seed that had escaped her ravenous mouth and smiled up at him. He stepped back from the spot and landed on his back on the bed, his cock still hard and springing up from its nest of dark curls. He was still ready for more play and T'Neel couldn't have been happier.

Straddling his waist, she rubbed the curling hairs that lightly dusted his muscled chest. His breathing had finally come back to normal, so she knew he was ready for round two. She leaned back and felt the hard length of him slide in between her thighs and the head rested between the damp lips of her sex.

Slowly pivoting her hips, she slid her juices all over his erection, causing him to groan. He grasped her hips in his strong hands and immediately guided himself into her wanting pussy, filling her completely with his straining cock. He slowly pumped inside her, coating himself in the proof of her lust and began working faster as soon as he slid into her with ease.

T'Neel rode his cock with utter abandon, realizing in the midst that she had almost lost her agenda to the mastery he had on her body. He was as good as she at the art of lovemaking. Sex was a tool, a weapon in her eyes, and no man had ever made her forget what she was about. Until now. He felt so good, she almost allowed herself to forget why she was here.

A fire built inside her, unlike anything she had ever felt. She had never orgasmed with a man before, only bringing herself to completion with her own hand or her array of toys. This fire was unlike those, was ten times brighter and hotter. Streams of sweat began to slide down her forehead and across her body as she ran her fingers across her chest and stomach, reveling in the feeling he was building in her.

Suddenly, he flipped her under his weight, and instead of suffocating her like other men had, he held himself above her, still pumping his hot cock into her sex the entire time. His lips were on her neck and his fingers worked towards her clit, rubbing her hard but not painfully.

No man had ever wanted her pleasure and she stiffened slightly, wondering if he had his own agenda besides his gratification.

He whispered into her ear, "Why are you fighting me? I need to feel your pussy clamping around my cock in your orgasm. Give me your pleasure."

"No, it is not yours to have."

"You will give me your pleasure or else."

"Or else what?"

He began to pull away from her, and she squealed in dismay, pulling him back to her with her arms and her legs, not wanting him to fully exit from her body. "Don't leave me."

"You know what I want."

"I have never given that to any man, why should I you?"

"Who loses in that scenario?" He pumped deep and hard into her sex, while pinching her clit with equal vigor.

She screamed moments later, overcome by her orgasm. Once recovered, she rolled herself back on top of him, straddling him and began pumping wildly. "Your turn."

Grasping both his hands and leading them to her full breasts, she led him to squeeze her tender flesh. Sensing his orgasm was again close, T'Neel stopped, squeezing his sac tightly, preventing him from erupting. His wild bucking nearly threw her off him, but she hung on.

"What are you doing?"

"Making it better for you."

"Better? It would be better if I could explode into you ... now."

"Just wait. Be patient my love. You are going to come so hard, you will explode. Believe me."

He sniffed in response, obviously needing release. She smiled as he settled and his body relaxed. She began her movements again, bringing him closer and closer, and then stopping again. Again. And again.

By the time she had nearly brought him to release six times, he was writhing in agony, barely able to think. She smiled down at him, knowing the final victory was at hand. "I saw Tarothe come to your room last night. You both seem to be in close confidences as of late. What was on his mind last night?"

\* \* \* \*

*Lying in her bed, trying to forget the day's occurrences, Corrine slept fitfully. She tossed and turned, trying to find peace, but it avoided her grasp. All she could see behind her closed eyes was the face of the most handsome man she had ever laid eyes on.*

*As soon as she thought of him, he was there beside her; naked in all his glory. The feel of his heat against her bare body was almost enough to make her orgasm, being so long for her to be without a sexual partner, coupled with the fact that this man was pure, synthesized sexual prowess. She let out a soft moan and pushed her body closer to his, drowning in the warmth and his masculine scent. She deeply inhaled and put her lips to his chest to taste his heated flesh.*

*"You even taste good in my dreams."*

*"You kick me out of your house only to pull me back in your dreams. You don't play fair at all."*

*"Here I can control the situation. You do as I say, because this is my world. I am the Queen of Fantasy land here. Ready to fulfill my every whim and make me come like crazy?"*

*"I have been ready to fulfill your every whim from the moment I set eyes on you. But you have one thing wrong."*

*"What's that?"*

*He shifted her body so he was pinning her to the bed and brought his face mere inches from her own. "Yes, you will come like crazy, but ... I will be in control."*

## Chapter Four

*Smiling into her eyes, Taroth slid down her body, laying kisses all along her bare skin as he went. She shivered in anticipation to what would happen next. Always in control in her fantasy world, this was a new wrinkle. He stopped at her feet, which looked dainty compared to his massive hands. He clasped one tender foot in his hand and began kneading the soft tissue there. Moving his hands to her ankle, he began dropping feather soft kisses to her toes before moving to kiss the ankle as well. Stopping he grasped the other foot and copied the movements he had done to its twin.*

*She moaned in delight, especially since she stood on her feet hours a day in the ER and they could definitely use the care he gave them. He grasped one foot in each huge hand and gently squeezed the muscles there, and slid his hands up to her calves. He rubbed the tight muscles there and pulled one leg up, massaging it with both hands and trailing light licks and kisses in his hand's wake.*

*He moved to her thighs, rubbing the muscles there, and missing her mound by inches, kissing a new trail up one thigh and moving to the other. She was wet with desire, awaiting the kisses she needed most on her most sensitive spot. Torturing her, he skipped the wet heat at her center and slid his mouth up her abdomen and tasted her fiery skin there.*

*Sitting up within her parted thighs, he grasped one hand and pulled it towards him, lightly kissing and then suckling each finger, massaging her open palm with both his massive hands while he tasted each delicate finger. He then pressed his mouth to her palm and massaged his hands down the length of her arm to her shoulder. His mouth then followed his roaming fingers, licking and nibbling his way towards her breasts.*

*He faced one gorgeous full globe with the pale pink bud tight and ready for his tongue, and then he sat back up and grasped her other hand, massaging this one the same as the first. He moved one hand to each shoulder blade, massaging them as well as her neck, which he spent a long moment tasting with his tongue.*

*Grasping a cheek in each hand, he pulled her face to his and plundered her mouth with a savage, claiming kiss. He pushed his tongue through the barrier of her teeth, tasting her the same way he planned on tasting her sex. Leaving her moaning in dismay, Sexy pulled away from her mouth and began trailing kisses back down her neck to her chest. He stopped when he was eye level with her firm breasts. He sat back to survey her beauty.*

*Gasping in pleasure; her body arched from the bed, aching to have him touch her body where she desperately needed and taste every crevice she had. Moaning and pulling him down towards her, begging him to end her torture, she clasped his waist with her hands, trying to pull his hard body towards her. He grasped both wrists and pulled her hands from his body, pushing her lightly back to the bed.*

*He pulled his hands from hers and slowly raised them to cup and weigh one breast in each. Gently massaging them, he rolled the aching tips in between his two forefingers before lowering his head to sample the first. A slow moan escaped her lips and her body instinctively pushed towards his pulling mouth. He seized her nipple with his tongue, suckling it deep into his mouth, while his arms eased around her back and waist, deepening her body into his own.*



him in the desert, beaten up pretty good. Medavac is airliftin' him here. Dr. Banks and Dr. Ramirez just left. You up for one more?

Corrine slumped lower, if that was possible and took a deep breath.

"I suppose I have no choice. I'll be out in a minute."

"Take your time Doc, helicopter is still about fifteen minutes out."

\* \* \* \*

Taroth awoke in the early morning following the dream feeling like he had been robbed. The vision of his Earth woman the night before had been highly realistic, and his aching cock reminded him of the unspent passion when she mysteriously vanished from the bed and from his arms.

He got out of bed, unable to rest with his body at full attention. Stepping into the bathroom, he looked at his reflection in the mirror.

"You look like something pulled out from under a rock. How in the world are you going to get this woman back to Hara D'Noll without abducting her like a primitive? Damn, Damn, Damn. My brain won't function and my body has turned enemy, and I have two more days in which to figure out how I am going to get her on the ship."

A knock on the door interrupted his reverie. Who the Jang N'Fell would be knocking on his door this early in the morning unless something was very wrong? He pulled on a pair of pants and opened the door, seeing T'Neel standing on the other side.

"What is it?" He asked, his voice dripping with sarcasm.

T'Neel sauntered in, flipping her bright red locks over her shoulder as she passed, a challenging smile on her lips. She saw him looking and blew him a kiss. Something was wrong, very wrong. The small hairs stood up on the back of his neck, instinct telling him to tread carefully.

"Dar asked me to have you return to the ship immediately. There is a problem."

"What is the problem at this hour?"

"He wouldn't tell me. He was rather insistent that I ask you to come immediately and for me to come with you."

"If this is one of your little games, T'Neel, I am not interested."

"No game. Go see for yourself."

Taroth sighed, scared that his friend did indeed need his help, so he could not ignore her words. He gathered a shirt to cover his naked chest and strode from the room with T'Neel fast on his heel.

They both jumped into the Earth car and were back at the ship's hiding place in less than an hour. Taroth leapt from the car and ran towards the cliff edge that lined the spot where they left the ship. There was no sign of Dar, so he swung to T'Neel with a questioning look on his face.

"I have heard an interesting rumor recently, *Regent*."

"And just what was that?" His anger was barely contained. The woman tried his patience like no other.

"I hear that we will be having another guest on our trip back to Hara D'Noll."

"And just where did you hear that?"

"None of your concern. I hear also that you plan to abduct our new guest and take her back as your Daya N'goul"

"You *are* planning on bringing the Earth trash back to Hara D'Noll?" Taroth turned slightly to see Dar walking from behind an outcropping of rock, tools and more gear in his



hands. Tarothen then remembered that Dar had in fact planned to come back to the shuttle for a few items. He had obviously overheard everything T'Neel had said. And obviously that had been her intent all along.

Dar paused, eyeing his superior officer. "Regent, please tell me that you would not disrespect your Daya N'goul, your true Daya N'goul, in this way."

Dar walked toward the pair, ending up near T'Neel. Tarothen stood facing them both, seeing the rage in his friend's eyes and maliciousness in the red headed woman's smile and he realized that his back was to the cliffs leading into the valley below. He eyed the rest of the area, trying to determine the best escape if the situation turned ugly, like he knew it would. He did not want to hurt his friend, no matter his anger, because he knew that Dar would eventually understand that he had no choice but to bring the beautiful doctor back to the home world.

"Dar, calm down. T'Neel, please leave us to discuss the problem."

"She is unimportant. But without her, I would not have found out about your treachery. I refuse to allow you to hurt my family like this. D'Na does not deserve to be hurt in this fashion."

"What do you suggest then? That I leave behind a woman that according to the laws of our world I am supposed to take as my soulmate?"

"MY SISTER IS YOUR MATE."

"AND YET I DON'T LOVE HER." Tarothen paused, trying to control his anger, hating himself for being the cause of the pain in his best friend's eyes, but knowing he had to tell him the truth. "I feel nothing but agony at the thought of settling myself into her body and death sounds better than spending the rest of my life with that woman."

"That can be arranged." With that, Dar pulled out a weapon used to subdue an enemy and blasted Tarothen squarely in the chest. "you can't take her if I knock you out and wisp us all back to Hara D'Noll." After a blinding flash of energy, Tarothen fell backwards towards the cliff's edge.

Too late, Dar realized that his friend was in danger and he reached out to pull him back onto solid ground. He was too far away, and with Tarothen being unconscious, Dar could not reach him fast enough. Dar grasped his friend by one wrist, an unconscious Tarothen dangling over the edge like a dead weight.

"Wake up!" Dar screamed everything he could think of in hopes of awakening his friend. "T'Neel ... HELP ME!!!"

Dar continued to hold on to the wrist of the one person who had always been there for him and he refused to let go. He twisted around to see T'Neel just standing there smiling, holding a vid screen.

"Bitch, get over here and help me. I may have been mad but I don't want him dead. Do you really want that on your hands as well by not helping."

T'Neel rolled her eyes, put down the vid screen, and walked over to the pair. Putting the sharp heel of her boot on top of Dar's hand, she stepped down with all her might. Dar screamed in agony, grabbing Tarothen's wrist with his other hand, but everything happened too fast, and Dar lost his grip.

Tarothen fell from the edge, floating through the air as he descended hundreds of feet to the valley floor below. Dar laid along the edge, staring down at the battered body of his best friend for what seemed like an eternity. Never in a thousand years would he have ever wanted death for this man he treated like a brother, and his anger had gotten the best of him, causing him to do the unthinkable. A sob escaped his throat and he wept for the man who had stood beside him for many a year, when no one else would.

"What have you done?"

T'Neel had kneeled beside him, and wrapped a cold, unfeeling arm over his shoulders. "You saved the Empire from an embarrassment and your family from another scandal, one it may not have recovered from in a long, long time. I'm not the one who blasted him firmly in the chest to send him tottering over the edge." She stood up, squared her shoulders and turned to look at the man lying behind her.

"Why did you call me here T'Neel? Was it vengeance?"

"Of course not," she cooed. "I am loyal to the Empire, and I respect you too much to allow him to hurt your entire family." Batting her eyelashes at him, trying to give her most seductive pose, she added, "But he *was* an ass to me, and I think he deserved what he got."

"And you feel no remorse for not aiding in his rescue? You feel no remorse for stepping on my hand?" Dar rose to his feet staring at this vile female.

"Oh, Dar, that was an unforeseen accident. But, as we both know, you were the one who shot him, so if not for that he would still be alive, now wouldn't he?"

Dar stood staring at her, and dropped his head into a hand, running his hands along his face before turning back to face her. "You are such a vicious slut."

She surprised him by smiling up at him, his barb not making its intended mark. "I may be a vicious slut, but *I* did not just murder my best friend to save my own family."

Dar had visibly blanched at her words. "It was an accident."

"Do you really think the council will believe you? The entire story will come out about his second Daya N'goul and everyone will see you as protecting your family's honor. The council will not believe one word, especially with the cloud already surrounding your family. They will see you as a carbon copy of your father, Dar. And you know it."

"So what are you suggesting here?"

"Either way, you did what you needed to do, whether you wanted to or not. Either scandal would have ruined your family, be it the Second Daya N'goul or your murder of the Regent."

"And?"

"Too bad there was a transport accident that decimated the entire crew. Well, besides you and me of course."

"Well, I could just lay at the council and the Emperor's feet and beg for mercy."

"After they see this vid of you shooting Tarothe? I think not."

Dar grasped the vid screen from her fingers and threw it viciously to the ground, stomping on it. "There, that is what I think of your vid."

T'Neel just laughed. "Do what you want with that piece of junk. You think I would be so stupid as to not send the image back to myself on Hara D'Noll? By the time we return, there will be a copy of that in my personal vid bank. I mean, knowing you are now just a ruthless murderer, I knew my life and my vid would be in jeopardy. And don't think about killing me now, because once I die, my personal vids would be the first thing my family would check for my will."

*What else can I do?* His best friend lay hundreds of feet down in the valley, broken and battered, and he was about to do the unthinkable. He had never been the type of child to make easy friendships. And when he entered the military academy when he was thirteen, Tarothe had befriended him. Both boys had been surrounded with contempt, Tarothe because he was the untouchable son of the Emperor and Dar because of his father's history with the Ga Hall warriors and their mysterious massacre many years past.

Even though no proof was ever found that his father had been in any way responsible for the deaths, rumor and innuendo had followed the family. Nearly every Ga Hall warrior had died that fateful night, and the fact that only Dak Jin and one other warrior had emerged unscathed made many assume that his father had been the guilty party.

It had taken years of his parents and his siblings showing their duty to the Empire for the clouds of innuendo to part and their loyalty to be trusted again. Dar refused to allow this man to bring more shame upon his weary family after all they had been through. No matter that he was his best friend, his only real friend.

He thought back to the moment when Taroht had met D'Na for the first time a few months before. Dar had rarely brought Taroht home to meet his family, and never on the major holiday as his family was quite private. But after a close encounter with a Bel Tak fighter, Taroht had saved Dar's life and Dar wanted to repay him. Bringing him home during sacred Het Na Fulle showed his family that he saw Taroht as a brother, and was his way of giving Taroht his respect. His father had even suggested the invitation to Taroht, knowing how much he respected his friend.

D'Na had been home as well, for the first time in many years, after spending time in university and later traveling the Empire in search of her curious plants. D'Na was a master at the growth and mutation of plant life found all over the universe, and had spent eons researching and cultivating new breeds of vegetation. When D'Na had first stepped into the room, Taroht caught a whiff of her scent, nearly toppled over and had grown erect in front of his entire family. Dar could not have been happier, knowing that his battle brother would now become his brother in fact.

Until today. When the man he saw as his brother had come close to destroying D'Na and the rest of his family. If Taroht had truly loved them, if he had been a true friend, he would have turned his back on the Earth beast. If Taroht had brought the beast back to Hara D'Noll, his father would have been absolutely livid, and Dar would probably have been severely beaten.

So he knelt down, knowing in his head what he had to do. He had to cover what had happened and get back to Hara D'Noll as quickly as possible. But his heart was breaking for the one true friend he had ever known, one that he now knew he had never deserved.

\* \* \* \*

Corrine walked down the hall back towards the ER, guzzling a large cup of coffee, trying to wake herself up. She had been awake now for over twenty-four hours and she felt like hell. *Get this last patient stitched up and back on the road to recovery and you can sleep.* She laughed to herself. She had already worked her entire day off and she didn't have another coming up for another ten, so she wasn't sure when she would ever get any rest.

Mouthy the duty nurse caught up with her and matched her stride, which was difficult considering that Corrine was nearly six feet tall. The little Latino was lucky if she was five-foot nothing, yet she worked her short legs to keep up with Corrine's long strides.

"Hikers found him in a ravine, all bloody an' beat up. Looks like he was thrown over da edge and left for dead. Multiple contusions, possible broken ribs and extremities and lots o' blood according to the medics. Medivac should be here in less than five."

The two women dashed for the stairwell to rush to meet the incoming copter. Corrine's long legs took two steps at a time, leaving the smaller woman running and nearly out of breath to keep up at the top of the stairs.

"Trying ta kill me? Take pity on the short-legged." The smaller woman yelled out as Corrine pushed open the door to the roof.

"Ahhhh, just seeing if you could keep up. I never expected you to accept pity. By the way, what is your name?" Corrine smiled over her shoulder at the petite brunette.

"I can keep up any day, Miss High and Mighty, don' you worry." The angry look fell into a smile as the copter came into view. "And it is about damn time you asked what my name is. My friends call me Gizzy."

"Gizzy?"

"Yeah, short for Giselle. Never was the type to be all girly and I was a *major* tomboy back in the day. The boys in the neighborhood started it, and it just took."

With that, two nurse's assistants came out of the stairwell onto the roof to assist getting the injured man off the helicopter. Corrine looked over at the unfamiliar faces walking towards her and realized she had probably worked beside these people on and off for the past two years and could not name any of them. Gizzy was definitely right, she was an Ice Bitch. She needed to start paying attention to the people around her a little more.

The copter touched down and they leaned forward to escape the swinging blades and made their way towards the side door, where they found a huge, very bloodied man in the stretcher. The four of them along with the two medics rushed him to the elevator that reached the roof and pushed him inside, many of them checking vitals as they moved.

"Two hikers found him in a crevice in between two deep ravines about two hours ago. Looks like he was there several hours. Right femur broken, three ribs possibly broken, BP is 80 and falling, and he's lost a good amount of blood on the cut to this right thigh. Cops on the scene suggest a struggle at the top of the ledge, so our boy here was beaten and pushed."

Corrine checked both of the man's eyes to see he was totally unresponsive. Cuts and scratches along his bloodied face were either from the fight or falling down the cliffside. His breathing was shallow and she wasn't sure if this one was going to make it. Hopefully the huge man was a fighter, because he was going to need it.

Once in the elevator taking them down to the ER, Gizzy looked the man over. "Damn, Doc, I hate ta see the guy who kicked his ass. I wouldn't want ta meet this one here in an alleyway, let alone anyone bigger and badder than he is and can hurt him this bad."

Corrine looked over at her and then back again at her patient. There was something familiar about the man, but she just couldn't place it. She couldn't stop the sense of dread, but didn't know why.

\* \* \* \*

After working on the man's injuries to his face and body, Corrine was able to stabilize his vitals. A detective from the Clark County Sheriff's office had questioned her later about his injuries, and she had found they indeed suspect foul play. There wasn't much she could tell the officer other than his long list of injuries. The officer wasn't much help for her since the man had not one bit of identification on him. No vehicle had been found near the location the hiker's found him and he matched no missing person's reports, so they were coming up with a blank, in hopes that the man would be able to provide all the details once he awakened.

An hour later, the nurse's assistants were cleaning him up to get him ready to ship up to the fourth floor ICU, while she finished making notes in his chart at the nurse's station.

She was exhausted and the words started floating over the page, so she set them down and rubbed her aching temples. She had to get sleep tonight or she was going to die tomorrow. A shocked gasp sounded from the room with her patient. Corrine inched closer to the door to listen in on the two women to see what was going on.

"Damn, Jen, do you see that?"

“Woo-hoo, the boy is packing some *serious* heat. And if you can get past all the scars and stitches on his face, he might actually be good looking to boot. I would actually volunteer to sponge bathe this one. *Where* do I sign up?”

“I don’t think I have ever seen a guy with one that big before in my entire life, and Robbie loves to watch porno, actually thinks it gets me in the mood, poor schmuck. So girl, I have seen some big ones. I am scared of that; it looks like it would hurt. And it isn’t even hard yet.”

“Well, Becca, you always were a pansy. That is a whole lotta man and I am all for it.”

“I’m curious to see how big it really is, dare you to touch it.”

“Are you in the third grade, girl?”

“You gonna tell me you aren’t curious?”

“Maybe a little.” Quiet. More quiet.

“Oh. My. God.” Was said in unison.

“Jen, there is no way he can be that big. It is unnatural.”

“Unnatural or not, damn that is hot.”

Corrine’s curiosity got the better of her and she walked into the room. A deep red blush swept the faces of both women, as they realized she may have overheard part of their conversation. She nodded at both of them, walked towards the bed, and lifted his hospital gown, looking at what had the two women fascinated in here, enough to possibly get them fired for assaulting a patient.

Her eyes nearly bugged out of her head. She had no doubt there was no humanly way possible for that man to fit his cock inside a woman. She quickly dropped the edge of the gown and turned to eye the other two women.

“Oh. My. God is right. Let’s keep this between us, you don’t tell and neither will I. Okay?”

“Cool with us, Doc. But is that like swollen or something? There can’t be a man that big can there?”

Corrine thought about how to comfortably answer that question. “I don’t think there is any swelling going on here besides the erectile state, ladies, and no, I have never seen a male member quite so large, and doubt I will ever see one this large ever again in my lifetime. But ladies, he is very, very tall, and has a thick, firm build, so maybe that has something to do with his unusual size.”

Both women looked at each other and back to Corrine and giggled before leaving the room. Corrine turned back to her patient, stepped close to the right side of the bed and searched his face, but between the scars, stitches and swelling, it was near to impossible to recognize anything about him at all.

“Well, Mr. Doe, you sleep well and we will hopefully get a few answers out of you tomorrow about who did this to you.”

She screamed as his hand came out to grab her wrist. Instead of fear, desire rippled through her entire being, and wetness pooled in between her thighs. She looked down at his face, realizing his eyes were open, looking at her. The ice blue gaze that met hers made her knees tremble. Sexy was staring up at her, his expression pained, and then he passed back into the blackness of unconsciousness.

## Chapter Five

Corrine went about her day, trying not to think about the man on the fourth floor. She had her hands full as it was with patients, and now he was under another doctor's care. He was fine, and she didn't need to check in on him. So why did she want to so badly?

After finishing up with her last patient on the board, she asked one of the other residents to do a couple of follow-ups so she could take a small break. The pull to the fourth floor was just too great. There were so many unknowns that she needed answered. Like why he had this magnetic pull on her body and mind. Or why he seemed to show up at her every turn. Or why she didn't know his damned name.

She scuttled into the elevator and hit four, and braced her hands together, more nervous than she could remember being. The trip seemed to last an eternity, but finally the bell pinged at four and the doors opened. She braced herself, not able to walk out into the hallway. *Am I nuts?*

Just as the doors were about to close she pushed her hand in between them and pushed them back apart. Exiting the elevator, she walked down the long hall to ICU. Once inside, she stopped by the nurse's station to double check the room number. Four nineteen. Corrine took a deep breath. And then another. And then she pulled all her courage together to find four nineteen.

She paused at the door, and then slowly walked inside, gazing at the large sleeping form in front of her, shocked that many of his scars had already healed. There was no way he should have healed that quickly. He should still be swollen and bruised. Grasping his chart to check it over, she saw the doctor had noted the same thing, *abnormally quick healing*.

She walked closer to the bed to look over his face and body. There was almost no sign of the swelling from the day before, and the scarring was at a minimum, completely closed, only long white streaks on his flesh. She ran a long finger over the longest one that ran from his temple to his neck and he stirred under her touch, causing her to jump; scared he would awaken to the wrong impression.

*And what impression would that be? That you couldn't keep your hands to yourself and you wanted him so badly that you came all the way up to the fourth floor to fondle him?* She let out a disgusted sigh and looked back over his chart. *Patient unresponsive and comatose* jumped out to her off the page. She would have to wait to get her answers.

\* \* \* \*

*Settling into bed after a long shift at work, Corrine sighed into the cool sheets. Her head was not where it needed to be and a good night's rest was exactly what she needed. She snuggled into a comfortable position and drifted off to sleep.*

*"Where am I?"*

*The words made her jump from the bed and look around her room. There was Sexy in all his naked glory. She looked down and saw she was as well, firmly remembering wearing her pajamas to bed.*

*"What are you doing here? You shouldn't be out of the hospital? You are in ICU. We need to get you back. Where are your clothes?"*

*"Clothes, lady I don't even know where I am or how I got here, let alone where my clothes are. Who are you?"*

*"I am Doctor Phillips and you are a patient at the hospital where I work. We need to get you back, immediately."*

*"Did you bring me here?"*

*"No, and I have no idea how you got here either."*

*She got up to find her robe, and could not find where she left it, so she walked over to the closet and wrenched it open, but there was no closet. Just an empty darkness. Scared out of her wits, she stalked over to the bedroom door, wrenched it open and again found the same empty darkness of nothingness. Heart beating in her ears, she walked over to one of the windows that showed the clean crisp evening outside, and once opened, nothing.*

*She whipped to face him. "What have you done to me?"*

*"I have done nothing."*

*"Who are you?"*

*With that, he opened his mouth and nothing came out. He looked perplexed and then uttered, "I don't know who I am."*

*"What do you mean you don't know who you are? What kind of bullshit is that?"*

*"I don't know who I am, dammit. I just opened my eyes and I am here. I don't know what to tell you." The absolute fear in his eyes made her realize he told the truth.*

*"Then this must be a dream. There is not nothingness outside my doors and windows and since I don't know your name, that must be why you don't know it here. Makes sense. A dream. Of course."*

*He eyed her warily. "So what do we do now?"*

*Remembering the last time he had invaded her dreams, she smiled knowingly and decided that if he was going to be here all sexy and naked, she was going to take advantage of the situation, especially considering that last time was interrupted.*

*She walked seductively towards him, eyeing him like a piece of candy she wanted to lick, and he began to step back, unsure of the situation.*

*"You seem awful unsure of yourself considering the aggressiveness you have showed me in the past."*

*"Aggressiveness? You have seen me before?"*

*She rolled her eyes. "Of course, you mauled me in front of the hospital, don't you remember? I know I can't."*

*"No, actually I don't remember. I don't remember anything before this moment."*

*"Then I guess I better make this moment awfully damned memorable." She grasped his penis as much as she could considering its huge girth and began to stroke from base to tip. He had been erect through most of their conversation, and he hardened even more from her touch. Pre-come oozed from the tip and she used it to lubricate her hand, allowing her to glide over his hardness.*

*He shuddered and his head fell back, aroused beyond belief at her aggressive passion. Placing one hand on top of hers, he glided her hand, showing her what felt good. She continued the motions he had shown and soon had him growling in lust. Pumping his hard dick, he swayed his hips to beat of her hand, increasing the pace as she felt his passion build. His cock tensed, and knowing he was about to come, she stopped her motions, wanting him to lose himself in the passion she provided.*

*He tried to push her hand back to his manhood, but she pulled her hand from his, instead sliding her lean body down his frame until her face was eye level with his beautiful cock. It was larger than any phallus she had seen before and she took a moment to look over the length. She grabbed the base with two hands and began to swirl her tongue all over the heated skin, which pulsed with life. She grasped his scrotum and massaged it while she licked, nibbled and suckled his huge member.*

*Twining his hands in her hair, he began to push himself deeper into her mouth, not too far to hurt her, but enough to give him the most pleasure possible. Guiding her head, they were able to set up a rhythm of her taking in most of the head in her mouth. Howling and growling his pleasure, she knew he was enjoying her ministrations. After several moments of her suckling his cock, she felt his entire body tense as his hot seed pumped into her mouth and out her lips. It was the most incredible tasting come, sweet like a candy bar. Then she knew it was definitely a dream.*

*Licking her lips of the spent seed, he pulled her to stand in front of him. He pulled at the back of her head until their lips met, electricity arching from her lips to her mound. He tasted his own come on her lips and licked her mouth to clean every drop from her lips. Grasping her ass, he pulled her off the floor and ground his renewed erection into her wet mound.*

*Moaning her delight at his renewed vigor, she deepened the kiss he began, then pulling back to lick his lips and nibble them with her teeth. As she wrapped her legs around his waist to hold herself steadier, he began walking closer to the bed, never taking his lips from hers. He dropped her to the coverlet and pushed her down onto her back, grasping her ankles and pushing her legs apart. He looked at her sex, desire darkening his pupils, and he lowered himself to his knees. Parting her labia with his fingers, he took in the sight of her gorgeous sex, wet and ready for him. He fingered the aching flesh with his fingers before lowering his head to lick her vaginal lips, tasting a bit of her juices.*

*Holding herself upper body up by the elbows so she could watch him pleasure her, she moaned and let her head fall back in delight. His tender kisses were going to drive her mad. She pushed her sex into his face, wanting him to aggressively take her into his mouth, but he continued to ignore her subtle demands and laid tender kisses all along her labia.*

*Finally, after torturing her for long moments, he slid a finger, then two, and then three into her wet sex. The invasion lifted her up off the bed and she came instantly. He gave her no succor and continued to slide his fingers in and out, stretching her sex. Lowering his head to continue her sweet torture, he grasped her clit in his lips and began suckling. She felt another climax begin to brew and she moved her hips in time with his massive hands and fingers, building the tempo that would bring her to orgasm.*

*Several strokes later she felt her body tense and she exploded over his fingers, screaming out her passion into the room. Bringing his fingers to his mouth, he began licking each one, suckling it to wipe them clean, tasting her essence. The sight was more erotic than she could ever have imagined, and she felt the throb between her legs awaken again.*

*He stood and then knelt in between her splayed legs, grasping her calves to pull her sex closer to his rock hard erection. Placing the head of his enormous cock at her entrance, she sat up, instantly afraid of his size filling her.*

*"Stop, you are too big. There is no way you will fit inside me without hurting me."*

*"After two orgasms and my three huge fingers, plus the fact you are a sopping mess, I think I will have no problem sliding in."*



*She blushed at her "mess" but gave it no care. This was a dream, albeit a very realistic one, but she had no reason to feel ashamed in her own dream. Seeing her still worry, he brushed one hand over her face and pulled her attention to his own.*

*"If it begins to hurt, tell me. I don't make a habit of hurting women."*

*"You don't know who you are, but you know you wouldn't hurt a woman?"*

*He started for a moment, then a frown passed his handsome face. "No, I don't know who I am, but I have the feeling I am not the type of man to hurt someone smaller than myself. I don't know how I know, I just do."*

*"Okay, big boy, I don't need all the psychoanalyzation of yourself. This is a dream, so dream boy, give it to me good." She chuckled to herself, thinking about the porn starlette that had said the very thing to a big lusty man in one of the sex tapes she had watched with her college boyfriend. Maybe the pervert hadn't been all bad, she learned a lot about sex watching those tapes, things her mother never would have told her.*

*As any man would have done in the situation, having a lusty beautiful naked woman laying legs splayed and demanding him to enter her, he slipped the head into her, letting her get accustomed to the girth. Slowly, inch, by inch, he slid his hard length into her. She felt slight pain, he was incredibly large, but true to his word, he was slow and gentle, trying for it not to hurt her so. She did not tell him he was hurting her, because the mild pain rode the edge of pleasure. Feeling him stretch her beyond anything that had ever filled her before, beyond what she thought she could accept, she cried out in pleasure, an orgasm racking through her body as he finally seated himself fully into her pussy.*

*The sensation of having his cock inside her was overwhelming. The pain, the pleasure, and the satisfaction of being stretched beyond compare was something she had never in her life experienced, and when he began moving inside her slowly, she orgasmed again. He waited patiently for her to regain her composure as the orgasm was strong, and then he began the slippery friction that would bring him to completion.*

*His cock was so big there was no spot inside her sex not massaged and stimulated. It was like having every erogenous zone and g-spot rubbed at the same moment. She again felt an orgasm build, knowing there was no way she would feel another so soon after having already had four. But it is a dream; of course she would find extreme pleasure.*

*Growling and tensing as she sensed he was nearing completion himself, and knowing his pleasure was approaching, her body quickly built herself up to the brink. She wrapped her legs around his waist as he sped up his tempo, kissing the top of her head and pulling her close as they both exploded at the same time. He looked down at her and noticed tears filling her eyes.*

*"I have hurt you?"*

*"No, no. That was just the most intense experience I had ever felt, and it was overwhelming."*

*"Enough to cause tears?" The worried look in his eyes showed her that he still feared he had hurt her.*

*"Enough for tears. Yes." She smiled at him. "You should be excited that you were that good."*

*"I am glad you found your pleasure. And so often." He smiled at her slight blush.*

*"Well, you were good. No. Great. No. Spectacular. And I hope I dream about you every night."*

*He laughed and looked into her eyes. And then the laughter was gone, even from his eyes. "So this is just some dream, hmm? I am not real? Why do I feel so real?"*

*Seriousness filled her face. "It is just a dream."*

*"Then I had better hold you close until morning." He pulled her into his arms, turned off the light and lay back with her, cuddling her close. She hated to admit how good it felt to be there with him. A sudden sense of loneliness filled her, and a true tear slipped down her cheek. She had forgotten how good it felt to be in a man's arms.*

\* \* \* \*

Awakening, feeling sluggish and sore, she slapped the snooze bar to give her a few more minutes to finish waking up. She stretched, and noticed she was nude, her pajamas nowhere in sight. And then she noticed her vagina was extremely sore and extremely wet. She reached down to touch herself and she felt a sticky substance that looked amazingly like semen when she brought her fingers to her face.

\* \* \* \*

Corrine squealed tires into the hospital parking lot, slammed her car into the first empty spot she could come to. Damn the chief of staff, he could walk a little further today, but she had to see if Sexy was still there. She ran to the doors, disheveled. Not feeling there was time to waste, she had not bothered showering, nor brushing her hair, and barely gave enough time to dress. Her shirt was not buttoned properly and half of the shirt stuck out from her pants, which unfortunately did not match the shirt she had on. Anyone who passed her would have thought her a mental patient versus a doctor.

She sped to the elevator, ignoring the questioning looks from those around her. Looking down, she realized her state of dress and even took note that she had on one navy blue shoe and one black. Waiting for the elevator to get to the fourth floor, she took a moment to attempt to fix her clothing as best she could, but some things would just not be fixed.

It took a millennia for the elevator car to reach the fourth floor, and she bolted, nearly knocking down two visitors trying to get into the hallway. She nearly ran to ICU and then slipped in with another visitor as she realized she did not have her employee id card to swipe the doors open.

She grabbed one of the doctor's white lab coats from inside the linen room, and threw it over her mismatching clothing, and rushed to room four nineteen to see if Sexy was still there. Looking around to see if she had been spotted, she slipped into the room, only to see him still lying asleep. Just as she grabbed his chart, she overheard, "Can I help you?"

The ICU nurse looked over at her, "Oh, Dr. Philips, it is just you. I didn't recognize you with her hair ... um ... ah ... down."

She cringed, realizing she must look a sight. "I was checking on this patient. He came through the ER a couple of days ago and I was just wondering about his progress. He took quite a tumble."

The older woman just smiled. "You too, hmm? I thought of anyone in this hospital you wouldn't be suckered by his charms. I have got half the nursing staff trying to peek in on this one at least twice a day each."

She cringed again. "No, it isn't like that. He was my patient and I am truly interested in his recovery."

"Sure you are. So when was the last time you came up here to check up on any other patients?" Corrine's blush was all the other woman needed as an answer. "If you must know, he is still unresponsive, but his wounds have healed faster than any person I have ever seen."

"That's impossible," she whispered to herself. Corrine knew the semen she had found was his.

"What was that?"

"You are sure he has not awakened?"

"Well, I suppose there is no way to know if he has not regained some consciousness."

"I knew it was him."

"Pardon?"

"Nothing. Who was on duty last night?"

"I was, my shift is almost over, as was Emely Reilly."

"Is it possible he could have left last night?"

"Doctor, he is hooked up to enough bells and whistles that if he left, I would know. Plus, my chair faces this room, and if he had left, I am sure I would have seen something. And I wasn't alone last night, so when I took a break, Emely was there to watch. This is the ICU, people just don't get up and leave the ICU."

Corrine thought over her words, but was unsure of what to ask next. "Who is his attending?"

"Dr. Cannella. He should be here any moment. He wanted to check on his wounds again this morning, and he will probably be suggesting he be sent to the Head Trauma Unit for observation. He healed so fast that he doesn't need to be in ICU any longer."

"Thank you for the information." She walked unsteadily out the door and down the hallway to the elevator. Her head hurt trying to solve the puzzle. *Who's semen was on her legs if it wasn't his? Was I raped last night while I lay there dreaming? What the hell is going on?*

\* \* \* \*

She was numb. What was she supposed to do? Police? No, what would she tell them? Some guy fucked her in a dream and she woke up with semen? She supposed all they could do was test the DNA and she could make that happen. And she had the likely candidate sitting up on the fourth floor. She took a rape kit and found a quiet bathroom on the third floor lobby and did a collection,

Then she found her way up to the fourth floor and plucked a hair from Sexy's head. He didn't move an inch or even flinch. She plucked another. Nothing. And then a few at one time. Nothing. Then she seized her cold stethoscope from around her neck and put it on his chest, hoping to see him jump. Nothing. Determined to prove he was faking and had been in the room with her last night, she yanked open one of the medical kits and grabbed a needle. She grasped a hank of skin on his thigh and shot it in as fast as she could. Nothing. He was totally unresponsive.

*I am going completely crazy.* Knowing the only way she could prove that she was not a total lunatic was to get the semen and hair sample to the lab, she rushed from the room. Racing down the stairs to the basement lab, she burst in looking for Michelle, the lab assistant that had always been somewhat pleasant with her.

No where to be found, Corrine looked in some of the alcoves where some testing was done, and as she walked to the last one, Michelle popped up from behind a table, having evidently been on the floor. Looking surprised and a little fearful, Michelle's wide eyed look confirmed she had been up to something she shouldn't have been.

Corrine smiled at her. "Michelle, I have a huge favor for you. Can you handle a DNA test for me?"

Looking out of sorts, and blushing for some odd reason, "Sure, I can take care of that, just give me the samples."

"Okay. But here is the deal, this needs to be on the downlow, if you get my drift."

"Total downlow, gotcha, just give me the samples." Michelle looked down below her.

Feeling like she was trying to get rid of her, she smiled petulantly and said again, "I am serious, I don't need anyone to know about this test. Do I have your word?"

"Yes, Doc. You have my word, total downlow, mum is the word." Michelle looked to the floor once more.

Not being able to control her curiosity, Corrine began walking to the other side of the lab table.

"No, no Doc, you don't want to come over here. There's a ... ah ... a ... mess, yeah a mess. I dropped some chemicals and I don't want you to get hurt."

Corrine knew it was a lie, so she came around to see pictures lying on the floor. She bent down to grasp one as Michelle tried to collect them before she could look, and when Corrine got a look at the photo in her hand she nearly doubled over in laughter. It was Sexy and his awesome cock.

"Doc, please, don't tell anyone, but my lord, I had to take pictures, no one would believe me that it was actually that big."

"Okay, here is the deal. I won't tell anyone about your little camera shoot if you don't tell a soul about the DNA test."

With a sigh, "Okay. You got it. So what is it I am sampling?"

"Hair versus semen, see if it is a match?"

"Paternity or rape?"

The question unhinged Corrine for a second. "Rape."

\* \* \* \*

The next few days were a blur, work lasted hours on end, with short breaks to sleep. She had tons of cases and she let the patients take her mind from the man upstairs.

He had been moved to a room in the Head Trauma Unit on the fifth floor, room five thirty two. She had found that much out through the records department when she had been there to check on the address his friend in the ER had given when he had come in to have his arm stitched. The next day was her day off and she hoped to try and dig up this friend, since according to the visitor's logs, no one had come to see the man.

She had been feeling sluggish all day, and was between patients, so she went into the employee lounge to try and rest for a minute. As she had just sat down, the Chief Attending walked in and called for her.

"Corrine, you gotta minute? Can you come to my office for a sec?"

"Sure thing."

Corrine knew what this was about. She had not been herself in over a week. And it showed. She followed her boss into his office.

"Sit down, Corrine." He smiled at her and sat himself, looking her over for a moment before continuing. "Is there something troubling you?"

"Yes, actually there is something going on personally right now."

"It shows. My best, most focused resident suddenly is another person. Should I be concerned?"

"No, this something is sure to pass. I just need a little time."

"Time off?"

Corrine looked down. She had never taken a break. Never. She had gone to med school and worked a full time job. She hadn't had a vacation in nearly ten years. Maybe she could use a break to deal with this, whatever it was.

"Actually sir, that may be a good idea. Can it be arranged?"

"Considering your recent work, I think it is best for you to take a week and get your head straight, deal with whatever it is you need to deal with and get back to us. I don't want to lose my most promising doctor."

She cringed openly, angry at herself for allowing this man to affect not only her, but the one good thing that she had in her life, her career. This is exactly why she had sworn off all personal relationships. This is what a man did to your life. But in the same token, she also understood this was life and death. Not being at her most focused could risk someone's life.

"Corrine, don't worry. We all get run down sometimes. We all need a break here and there. You are one of the brightest I have seen in a long time, so don't imagine I think any less of you for needing some time. Med school, residency, the demands of this job, it can all come crashing down once in a blue moon."

Tears stung her eyes, but she refused to let him see them. "But that doesn't happen to me. This job is my life, and now that is going to hell too."

"Corrine, I know there isn't time for much outside the hospital, but you do need to take time for yourself. How many times have I seen you work your days off, sometimes being here days straight without leaving? To be honest, I am almost glad to see something is bothering you outside the job. It means you may actually have a life out there somewhere."

Corrine sucked in her breath, trying not to cry. She steeled herself to his comments and stood.

"You are a great doctor. And I will see you in seven days. Rest. Do whatever you need. Come back ready to come in swinging."

She exited the room, as a single tear slid down her cheek. She swiped at it before anyone could see. Finding the locker room empty, she let the rest of her tears fall as she undressed and went to a shower. Standing under the hot steaming water, she soaked her whole body, letting the warmth massage her neck and shoulders. She continued to cry, letting the water hide them away.

Suddenly, she heard her name, and she turned off the water, trying to hear if she was right.

"Dr. Phillips? Are you in here?"

"Yeah, over here, in the showers." She wrapped a towel around her and walked out. Michelle stood by the lockers, with paperwork in her hands.

"I got that stuff for you. Dr. Sinclair was getting really antsy, looking for some results he couldn't find, so I thought it best to get these out of the lab."

"Thanks, I appreciate that. So what did we get?"

"Positive match. Hair and semen from same candidate."

## Chapter Six

A match? Proof he had been in her house and proof he was not as unresponsive as he seemed. She marched straight to the fifth floor. Her goal in life right now was to prove him the fake that he was.

Stopping inside the room, she plopped down in a chair beside his bed and decided she was not going to leave until he stirred. And if he were faking, eventually he would get restless and move.

Three days later, stiff and sore, exhausted from sitting in a hospital chair and only catnapping so she would not miss his exit from the room, she admitted defeat. But the only problem then was what was happening. Was there some supernatural thing going on here or was she crazy? Maybe Michelle was an accomplice to some sort of elaborate scheme to make her insane, with her matching DNA results. Hell, that made her sound crazy to think that.

She grabbed her minimal belongings and walked from the room defeated, not knowing what to do next. So she just went home, took a long hot shower and jumped into bed. Soon after she was sound asleep.

\* \* \* \*

*She awoke to the sound of her name.*

*"Doctor Phillips?"*

*Groggily she raised her head from her pillow and turned towards the voice. She was naked in her room again with a naked Sexy in front of her. Not again. She could not handle this.*

*"What the hell are you doing here?"*

*"I don't know. I feel like I have been in some kind of limbo waiting for you. Maybe all I am is a dream. But all the time I felt trapped in the void, I constantly heard your voice. What am I?"*

*"I wish I knew the answer to that. But it seems as though I may be losing my mind, so my opinion of who you are is not something you can rely on."*

*"You don't seem crazy to me. A little lost, and a little lonely, but not crazy."*

*She smiled, but contrary to the smile, tears formed in her eyes. Big fat tears rolled down her cheeks, and a sob escaped her lips. He immediately slid under the covers to hold her. She pushed away at first, and then relenting, she pulled him back and slid her arms around his powerful torso, reveling in the warmth that emanated from his being. Tracing large circles on her back with his hands, he held her while she wept, holding her close to him and laying kisses on her scalp. Then he pulled her down to the bed and held her to his chest, continuing to rub her back until she drifted back to sleep.*

\* \* \* \*

She awoke with a start, realizing her bed was empty, yet still able to smell the scent of him on her sheets and her body. The phone rang shrill, causing her to jump from her reverie. It was Gizzy on the phone.

"Doctor Phillips, you need to come down here to tha hospital. John Doe on tha fifth floor jus' woke up."

Excitement rushed through her, but she pulled at her control. "That's good news, but he isn't my patient anymore."

"Yeah, well, here's tha thing. He's asking for you."

\* \* \* \*

Corrine rushed to the hospital, sliding into a visitor spot out front. She would have serious trouble if she was caught sneaking in this way, but she was in a hurry. She hurried into the lobby and caught the elevator just as it was closing, slipping in quickly with the other passengers.

She hit the five button and tried to stand still while awaiting the elevator to reach the fifth floor. She trembled with unease, afraid of what was about to happen. *Why was he asking for me?* Finally the car pinged on fifth floor and she escaped the confines of the elevator and headed towards the Head Trauma Unit.

Finding room five thirty two, she stopped short of the door, unsure of herself. She wished she were back in the safety of the dream world where she was certain of herself, aggressive and full of ego. She was not good with situations like this.

Taking a deep breath and walking into the room, she hardened herself and walked inside. Sitting on the bed, propped up was Sexy himself. He had nurses working all over him, checking this and that and when he noticed her arrival, he smiled deeply and beckoned her over. She slowly walked over to his bedside and he took her hand in his, looking up into her eyes.

"I guess now I am made flesh."

She looked at him and gasped. "What?"

"I'm a dream no more. Looks like I am as real as you are."

No. Freaking. Way. There was absolutely no way he knew about the dreams. Were they dreams at all? Was she absolutely fucking crazy?

"What are you talking about?"

"Our nights together. What do you think I was talking about?"

The staff members all stopped in their tracks and looked from him to her and then back again to him. She saw the varied looks on all their faces, and inwardly cringed. Again, there goes any respect these people had for her in this hospital. She blushed, not knowing how to respond.

"I think this conversation is best held in private. Will you all be done soon?"

The staff worked feverishly to finish their tests and walked hurriedly from the room. Corrine turned from his bed to peer out the window as they hurried around him, not wanting the employees to see any glances the pair gave each other. The few minutes felt like hours. Once they were all gone she turned and looked at him searchingly.

"What is your name?"

"I don't know. There seems to be a lot of blanks in my memory. The only thing I seem to remember is you."

"Why me?"

"I remember the passionate love we made, and then holding you in my arms last night while you cried. Those are the only memories I have."

*WHAT?!* She stiffened in fear. "How could you know about those? They were my dreams."

"Dreams? I don't know about that, but what I can tell you is I remember every moment. Every delicious minute of you in my arms and you were the first thing I thought about when my eyes opened today. The police were here and they told me that I had been here just before my

accident and also that my accident may not have been an accident. They were pretty upset that I could not remember anything, they have a lot of unanswered questions that they hoped I could fill in the blanks of."

"I have blanks I'd like you to fill too."

"As my only link to my past, you are important to my memory's return."

"What do you mean?"

"If I indeed was in your dreams, and you are the only person I know of who met me before the accident, you may hold the key."

Her mouth went dry at his insinuation. "What are you asking of me?"

"I need you. In so many ways. You are all I can think about. My body responds to you. I feel raw desire whenever you are near. You are the key to my past, and possibly to my future."

"I so can't handle this right now." She stood up to leave, hearing him calling her name as she shuffled down the hall. She pushed the elevator button, still hearing him call for her to return. Closing her eyes to push the urgency from his voice out of her head, the car reached her floor with a ping, and she stepped on. The doors closed and he was silent.

Halfway down the building, her head warred with her heart. He wasn't her responsibility, yet she felt guilty for walking away from him like that. And he did things to her that no other person on Earth had ever done ... he actually made her feel alive. Didn't that count for anything? But those were just dreams ... or were they?

Taking a deep breath and hitting the five button again, she hoped she wasn't making the biggest mistake in her life.

\* \* \* \*

Almost a week later, Corrine awoke to John Doe standing half nude in her kitchen, making breakfast. She was still not used to the sight of his beautiful body, but she had used every ounce of her self control not to pounce on him and see if everything she had seen in her dreams had been reality between them. Embarrassment warred inside her and she felt compelled to try and prove that she was not the wanton slut she had proved herself to be in those dreams.

Because of that embarrassment, she had not brought up the question of how he had been in her dreams, and luckily for her, he had not seemed compelled to bring them up either. Eventually, they would have to discuss this unearthly connection, but for now, they focused on his past and the search for answers.

Pouring herself a cup of the coffee he had so thoughtfully prepared, she turned to ask him, "What are your plans for today?"

"I want to stop in the police department, see if they have any new information, and then go into more of the resorts, see if any of the hotel staff remembers my face. I'm hoping a maid or a front desk person may recall me, it's not like someone can forget seeing a guy who is seven feet tall."

"I know I wouldn't forget you after seeing you." She blushed as soon as the words were out of her mouth.

He turned to look at her, and his eyes burned with the fire that lit them every time he gazed at her for any length of time. That look melted her every single time he leveled it at her and made wetness pool in between her thighs. *Fight it, dammit. Don't let him dominate you. You are in control.* She turned away from his heated gaze; still feeling him bore a hole straight into her back.

"Why do you turn from me each time I look at you?"

"I don't"



"No offense, but you make a horrible liar."

She turned to face him with that, anger finally bubbling to the surface. "I have upset my entire life trying to help you find out what the hell happened to you and you have the nerve to call me a liar in my own home? I let you stay here against my better judgment, and I have spent my free time trying to help you. And this is the thanks I get?" She stepped towards him and punched a fist in his broad chest, and then another, "Damn you, I won't be called a liar in my own home."

He grasped both her wrists and pulled her close to his chest, close enough to pull her breath from her lungs. "Have you ever wondered why you offered to let me stay? Have you wondered why you chose to help me? Have you wondered why you can't seem to stay away from me?"

She looked up into his eyes, rage filling her body along with another emotion she couldn't quite put her finger on. Desire? Passion? Lust?

"You do all those things because you want me with a desire you have never felt before. The only thing that runs through your mind is tasting my body, holding me in your arms. Feeling me against your naked body, feeling my hard cock pound deep into your hot pussy. I block out the whole world when I am near you, don't I?"

John had pulled Corrine from the floor and straddled her hips and legs around his waist, pressing his monster erection against her mound, and she wrapped her arms around his shoulders holding his torso against her, and she felt his heat through the thin silk of her robe. Damn him for reading her mind. Was that another of his tricks? He slipped into dreams and read minds as well?

"You are awfully sure of yourself. I don't think I have ever seen an ego quite as large." She continued to stroke his body with her own, lessening the severity of her statement.

"No, it isn't ego."

"No?"

"It's just how I feel about you. And when I look in your eyes, it's like I'm looking into a mirror. I see the same desire reflected back at me. I see the same passion in your eyes as I feel in my body and soul." With that he finally took her mouth into his own, kissing her with all the passion and desire he had been feeling for her all this time.

She continued to run her hands over his body and up his neck into his hair, pulling his mouth closer to her, allowing him to conquer her lips and tongue with his own. He slipped his tongue deep into her mouth, dancing alongside her own, probing her as she hoped he would probe her sex, and hopefully that would be soon before she exploded from his kiss and the stroking of her sex through the thin cotton of her panties.

He pushed her against the wall and pulled the silk robe halfway down her arms, pinning them alongside her body and freeing her neck for his pillaging. Slowly he dipped to her cheek and her neck, licking a fiery path along the way. Melting under his touch, he pulled the robe further down until her breasts were exposed. He stood back slightly to admire them, weighing them with his eyes, before grasping a globe in each hand.

He fondled her breasts, rolling the tight nipples in between his fingers before taking one into his mouth, suckling it hard in between his teeth. The rough edge of his teeth causing a pleasure that bordered on pain, and arced hot sensations straight to her cunt. Wetness had pooled and small rivulets of her cream had begun to slide down the inside of her thighs, and then across his thighs, which were strong and helping to hold her up high against the wall so his mouth could continue to torture her breasts.

“And do you now admit you lied? Now that I feel your desire dripping down my legs?”

“Never. I admit to nothing.”

With that he slid one hand down into the nest of curls between her thighs and began to rub his fingers along the slick folds of her sex, making her moan and writhe against his hand and body. His mouth hovered over her lips as he gazed into her lust filled eyes. Her moaning continued, getting louder as her climax at his fingers was coming closer and closer to explosion.

And then he stopped, just before she exploded in her orgasm, and he pulled away from her heaving body, lowering her back to the floor. She looked up at him with a pout on her lips, not understanding why he had stopped his amazingly sweet torture of her body.

“Sorry, I guess I was wrong then.” He winked at her as he walked away, leaving her a mess, unsatisfied, and pouting against the kitchen wall. She was completely humiliated by him. Damned that man. She had two choices. She could pull her robe back over her shoulders as well as her pride that lay ripped to shreds on the floor and pretend that nothing had happened, or she could run to him and admit she wanted him with a passion she had never felt for any man in her entire life and maybe, just maybe, he would continue the amazingly sweet torture again.

Standing against the wall for several moments before deciding which humiliation would be harder to bear, she finally grasped the edges of her robe and nearly ran down the hall to the door of the room she had let him use while staying in her home. She stopped just before the door, afraid to knock. Noticing that it was slightly ajar, she pushed on it faintly and it fell open in silence giving her the view of John's naked back.

He was an exquisite specimen of man, muscled and firm in all the right places. His taut, firm and slightly rounded ass stood atop deeply muscled thighs and calves that looked as if they were stolen from a marble figure of Adonis she had seen in a museum once. His back was also muscled and came down in a trim, firm waist just above that beautiful ass.

His head was held back, and she noticed his arm was moving. He was stroking his penis, she was sure of it. She quietly walked towards him, wanting to witness this man pleasuring himself; wanting to see his huge cock slide in and out of his own hand.

As she approached, he must have sensed her because he stopped his motions before she could reach him, and turned to look at her over his shoulder.

“Don't stop.”

He looked deep into her eyes and slowly turned towards her, his cock still in his hand. After a few seconds, he began to pump the organ again, slowly while she watched. He threw his head back again as the pleasure he gave himself rocked through his body. Hypnotized by the sight of him touching his beautiful cock, and she stepped forward, and replaced his hand with her own.

Drawing the huge length and girth into her own hands, she was amazed by the heat of his erection, as well as her own wantonness for having taken over his pleasure. She slowly leaned down onto her knees in front of him and slowly began exploring his sex with her hands and eyes, marveling over the perfection of his tool.

She looked up to see he was enjoying her exploration and then back to the wondrous cock in front of her. She slid a hand up and down its length, although it was impossible to grasp the whole width in her one hand. With her other hand, she weighed the sack that sprang from the base, and slowly massaged his balls, feeling them heavy with his seed. Pressing her lips to his sac, she licked them with the tip of her tongue, testing their taste. He growled deep in his chest, loving her ministrations.

Sliding her tongue around the base of his cock and then up the entire length, she rested the bulbous head on her tongue, and gazed up at him. Fiery desire looked back at her, and she engulfed as much of the tip as she could in her mouth and began to suckle him, while moving both hands over the length below.

Moving his hips in the rhythm she set, he placed one large hand on her head, pushing another inch or so into her mouth. Sweat sheeted his skin and when she looked up at him, she saw the control that was warring in him and she realized at that moment he was a caged animal, trying desperately to be tamed. She knew he wanted to plunge into her mouth, but knew he would hurt her in doing so, so he was reigning in his passion and it touched her. He would not hurt her purposely.

Unable to control himself further, he pulled her until she stood before him. The desire in his eyes almost scared her, but she knew this was right, he was right. They would make love this day and it would change everything in her world.

Grasping her under her knees, he pulled her off her feet and into his arms. He lovingly placed her on the bed in his small room and opened the short silk robe that hid her body from his view. Carefully pulling it away, he crouched on top of her on the bed, just staring at her body, as if he were trying to memorize each inch. She had always been shy with her few lovers, and had tried to hide herself away, but with John, she opened up and let him have his fill of her.

He drew a lazy finger over her belly, swirling circles on her flesh. Moving up her body, he drew more circles over her breasts and nipples, and then back down until he drew a tight circle just above her mound. He moved his knees in between her thighs and opened her legs for him to view her sex, which was weeping for him, wet with her desire.

Drawing more lazy circles over her clit, he then slid a finger down the front of her slit, and slowly slid it inside her, testing her to see if she was ready. Tightness wrapped his finger and he frowned.

“What is wrong?”

“My sweet, nothing is wrong, but you are very tight. I’m scared I may hurt you. I need to spend some time preparing you.”

“And what does this preparing entail?”

He smiled up to her and instead of telling her, he showed her. Leaning down into her sex, he suckled the swollen clit just above her sex, as she sucked in a breath that just seemed not to come. His fiery mouth wrapped around her bud was almost too much for her to handle, but once he slid his big, long finger inside her, it was too much and she exploded in orgasm as he continued to suckle her, pulling her as high as she would go.

Not stopping his ministrations, she nearly pulled out of his arms, the feeling too intense for her, but he only tightened his grip and pulled her back to his mouth. Continuing to slide his finger in and out of her, he then added another finger, sliding them in and out, building another fire inside her womb. Once he added a third finger inside her, she splintered into another Earth shattering climax. No man had ever brought out the kind of passion he was rending from her body and she feared no man ever would again.

John sat up from between her legs, and leaned across her body, kissing her and allowing her to taste herself on his lips. He settled himself in between her thighs and pressed the head of his rock hard cock in between the petals of her sex.

“Are you ready?”

“Yes,” she let out on a moan, pushing herself on him, wanting him deeper. “If you don’t fill me soon I just may die.”

"I wouldn't want to be the cause of your death, so I suppose I should give you what you want." He smiled at her and placed the head of his cock at her entrance. Slowly pushing his huge cock inside her pussy, he growled deep in his throat.

The pleasure/pain she felt was the most exquisite thing she had felt in her entire life. He was huge, almost unnaturally so, and he stretched her vagina beyond its limits. Filling her like no man would ever again, he pushed until he was fully seated inside her. He rested, gathering the control he needed to not hurt her, and to give her a moment to become accustomed to his size.

She writhed below him, and there was no room for thought. Her senses were on overload, and all she could do was what came naturally, she could only feel and move to make the sensations heightened. The world around her vanished and it was just him planted deep into her body.

Swirls of light moved in and out of her line of vision, and she faintly heard a murmur come from him. He seemed to be in some kind of trance as the whispered words came from his lips.

"Ni hiza e toba ... Ge ta nom de hiza. Yobe ne hiza e fuire ..." He held her close and refused to move inside her.

"Ni suit e toba ... Ge ta nom de suit. Yobe ne suit e fuire ..." She struggled to move, but he weighted her down, making it impossible for her to do more than writhe below him.

"Ni suit e hiza ge ta nom d'hiza suit. Yobe cooh ta fiure." Her mind was clouded with lust and she had no time to wonder about the strange words coming from his lips, she could only move against him, praying he would move and bring her to the orgasm she so desperately needed.

"Qi sig. Fiure pas, fuire yue. Suit d' hiza." John rubbed his thumb over her forehead, and added, "Corrine e Sihal , Sihal Et Fatel. Ni suit de Sihal." With that, he pumped deeply into her, and began a breakneck rhythm to their release. Kissing her deeply, he felt her climax begin as he erupted, bathing her womb in his seed and dropping onto her.

She loved the feeling of his weight on top of her, loving the feeling of his semi erect cock still deep in her sex, and they fell asleep in that position, holding each other, still connected. Little did she know they were connected even more.

## Chapter Seven

Hara D'Noll

Dar stood in front of the Ishadarian Council as well as the Emperor and Empress, with T'Neel at his side. They all gazed at him with scrutiny, trying to understand what had happened on Earth.

"So, you lost an entire crew on Earth? How does this happen, Lieutenant?" Ferengian Councilwoman Mewsawi was no pushover, and Dar knew it. This was the same woman who had raked his own father over the coals during the Ga Hall inquiries and if it had been up to her, his father would have faced charges and possibly death. "Were these creatures so violent that they *massacred* your whole group?"

Dar did not miss the way she had used the word massacred. "No, they are not violent, Councilwoman. They simply had too many dangerous toys with which our group could not avoid. They had transport vehicles similar to our own, but instead of being piloted by computer navigation, the beings operated them on instinct and knowledge alone."

Murmurs surrounded Dar and he began again, "Taroth, being the explorer he is, could not help himself and took control of one of these vehicles, and drove himself as well as most of the crew in one of these vehicles. He lost control and the vehicle crashed. No one survived."

More murmurs and cries echoed in the large space. "And you did not think of bringing the dead home? To where they belonged?"

"Councilwoman Mewsawi, they have what they call Emergency Teams, Police, Firemen, and Hospitals. As soon as the crash happened, teams were sent out to try to save them. Once they realized they were all dead, they wrapped them in bags and took them to a place called the morgue where they store their dead. And how would the two of us carry out eight dead bodies?"

Councilwoman Mewsawi leveled a glare at him that showed she was wary of his story. "Did you bring back any information about the planet? Did you bring back any proof of their deaths?"

"We brought back all of the recordings of the planet, all of the information we had obtained up to the point of the accident. After that, I don't think I was analyzing the situation clearly. Taroth was my best friend, and he was all I really ever had." Tears formed in Dar's eyes, but they were not there as an act, even though they were helping his situation in the council. Over the course of the trip home, he had been devastated by what he had done to his only friend, and he could not forgive himself.

Part of him wanted to admit to what he had done, that he had killed the one person who had shown him friendship and brotherly love. He wanted to scream that the evil T'Neel had orchestrated the event and had also subdued the rest of the crew, unbeknownst to him, poisoning them and gaining the transport back to Hara D'Noll.

And the worst part was, T'Neel was blackmailing him into lying. She had taken vid of Taroth accidentally being pushed over the edge by the blast and into the deep jagged ravine and unfortunately, she had also edited it to look as though Dar had done it with evil intent. She knew as well as he did, that if anyone saw that vid they would believe Dar had killed his friend on

purpose especially after his father was rumored to have played a large role in the killing of the Ga Hall. He would have to lie to everyone around him.

Or he could own up to what he did, now, in front of this council. Which would be worse? A hellish life with T'Neel plaguing him at every turn, forcing him to do her bidding, dying inside everyday over what he did to Taroth, or a prison term and possibly death, which may end his torture. He wasn't sure which one sounded better, and he only had himself to blame for his predicament. If he had put his friend over the embarrassment of his family and sister, and his own feelings of rejection, he would not be in this hell.

"Lieutenant? I asked you a question. Are you listening to me?"

A tear slipped down Dar's cheek, as he looked up at the councilwoman. "I'm sorry, ma'am, but my thoughts shifted. What was the question?"

Something softened in the councilwoman's gaze, she sighed deep and asked her question again, "So you have no proof of their deaths?"

"No, I'm sorry, I do not. I only have this woman as a witness." He turned to look into T'Neel's somber face, her sympathetic gaze hiding the evil beast within.

"Councilwoman, it happened as he said. It was horrible. I begged our Regent not to take the transport, but he was too excited about a new toy to test out and took the vehicle. The Lieutenant and I were the only two who refused to go along."

The Empress let out a sobbing moan and rushed from the room, but the grim look on the Emperor's face belied nothing. Councilwoman Mewsawi looked up at the Emperor, and each nodded, not having to speak a word.

"Lieutenant Jin, please leave the collected information with us and you are free to go."

Dar nodded at the Emperor and then the rest of the council and turned to go, with T'Neel close on his heel. As soon as they exited the large carved doors and they were sealed behind them, T'Neel let out a whoop of glee and jumped into his arms, wrapping her legs around his waist and planting a kiss on his mouth. He pushed her off him and into the floor.

"Are you suicidal? We just left the council that could have brought us both to our deaths and you jump on me with glee not steps from them? I knew you were insane, but this tops everything you have done thus far."

All she could do was smile, with a crazy glint in her eye. "You are the one who killed Taroth."

"Shut up, woman, unless you want me to die as well."

"Maybe later." She said sincerely. "But for now, you will do as I say. I am ready to meet your father now; I understand he is quite a unique character. I want to see if he was worth all you did."

"And if I refuse?"

"I can go back and recant my story right now, the whole council is within my reach. You will be dead before the end of the week."

"And that is worse than spending the rest of my life with you looking over my shoulder?"

She smiled at him again. "No it isn't worse than spending the rest of your life with me looking over your shoulder. I will make your life a nightmare, no doubt about it. But you are too big a coward to admit to the entire Empire that you killed your best friend just to save your precious Daddy's reputation. And think how Daddy will react?"

She pressed on, "The scandal from you killing Taroth will be ten times worse than the scandal would have been of Taroth marrying another. You have made everything worse. So go ahead, Dar Jin, go run and tell the council everything, tell them how you pushed your best friend

over a cliff. Tell them how you abandoned the dead bodies on Earth, all just to hide the fact Taroht didn't want your boring little sister."

Dar stood there, knowing she was right, knowing he had ruined all the lives around him, and that the woman beside him held the key to keeping the fragments glued together. She was the one he should have killed.

\* \* \* \*

Dar told his father everything he had told the council, explained the death of the expedition team and added one more thing. "Father, I want you to meet T'Neel da Grell. She was one of the science officers on the ship to Earth and the only other survivor."

Dak's eyebrows raised, but no other emotion covered his face as he peered over T'Neel, who stood wantonly jutting out her breasts and hips in front of the man all the Empire knew as either the hero or the most evil man in existence. She glanced over Dar's father, knowing this was a man who could make her come over and over again, every night again and again, could see it in his eyes. Here sat a real man, not the weakling beside her.

"Why do you present this woman to me? Have you brought her to me as a play toy? Or is she more your accomplice?"

Dar looked surprised at his father, for being so shrewd that he instantly saw the truth and for the fact that he was man enough to admit it and call her for what she was. Seeing the rage in T'Neel's eyes, he knew he had to make this work, or his father would soon know the truth of what he was.

"Dak Jin, I am not one's accomplice, they are mine." T'Neel's eyes glimmered while staring straight into his father's eyes. No one ever stood their ground to Dak Jin, he inspired true fear and loathing in most around him. "And if you want a play toy, I suppose you look elsewhere. But if you want a woman who will exhaust you every night, then I am your woman."

Dak never took his gaze from T'Neel as she spoke. Nor did his visage change in any way, belying any emotions. "Woman, make sure you can back up your claims. So I only have one thing to say to you now. Prove it."

Dar stood frozen, not understanding how his father could want to lie with this malevolent creature beside him. He always felt his father walked a thin line, but his proof was in the woman he wanted. His father had had a long line of lovers since Dar's mother had died, but he never flaunted them around the family. It made Dar ill thinking of his father and this vile woman in each other's arms.

A voice traveled down the hall into this room. "Did I hear my brother in there? Dar, I have missed you so much!" D'Na strode into the room on those last words, hugging her brother tightly. "Where is Taroht? I cannot wait any longer!"

"Died on Earth according to your brother here."

D'Na stood frozen, silent, with no emotion on her face. Leave it to their uncaring father to just throw such a statement into her lap as if it would mean nothing to her, to the whole family. After several moments D'Na composed herself to ask, "Dead?"

Dar slipped his arms back around her shoulders, trying to comfort her. She simply pushed him away.

"What do you mean, dead? He can't be dead. He was to return so I could Join with him and become a part of his world. I was to move beyond the means of this family, and be a Regent's wife, and one day possibly Empress. He cannot be dead, and my dreams of a life of luxury dead with him. This ruins everything, absolutely everything," she had begun to shriek as

her grief overtook her, "it ruins all my plans for the future, ruins all I was to be. And the babe. I carry a child. I carry *his* child."

With those words, it seemed the world stopped spinning for a millisecond.

"His child?" Dar and Dak asked simultaneously.

D'Na stood silent for several seconds, her eyes darting around the room as she turned her back to them. "His love and desire were so great for me that he could not hold back, he could not wait for the exploration to be over, and he made love to me twice before he left for that heathen planet. We loved each other so much that we could not abide the law, we had to break Si ni mon. Because of our passion, he filled me with his seed. I found out last week that I was pregnant. I am pregnant with his child."

Dak snickered coldly, "And you are sure it is his?"

D'Na swirled around, fire burning from her eyes, "Yes, father, dear. I am not the slut you seem to think I am. I have lain with one and only one, so I know it is *his* child."

Dar stood silent, knowing Taroth had cared nothing for his sister, of his own admission, but refused to call her a liar at this point, knowing that lies filled this house. He also knew that the lies would eventually be their downfall.

Dak stared intently at his daughter, rubbing a hand over his chin, deep in thought before smiling. "Then dear child, with Taroth's child swelling in your womb, you will be a member of his family after all."

\* \* \* \*

Dar took D'Na aside moments later into a smaller room in the family home later that afternoon. He had many questions to ask of his sister.

"D'Na, how could you be pregnant?"

She smiled at him, with a look in her eyes that reminded him of T'Neel, and he shuddered, feeling a deep cold steel over his body. "Brother dear, I thought you of anyone would know how a woman gets with child. Or have you not sampled the pleasures a woman can give before?"

He gazed at his laughing sister, immediately realizing what she was, and wondering why he had committed murder to save her reputation. "Sister dear, I know how a babe is made. What I don't know is how a man who did not love, nor like, you and did not want to marry you and had even found a soulmate from among the creatures on Earth had been so 'in love' that he could not bare leaving without washing your womb with his seed."

D'Na visibly blanched, proving his words had made their mark on her. "Dar, I think you had better watch what you say, we would not want to smear your dear friend's memory with a scandal. This *is* his child, and I myself will go to his grieving mother and let her know her son lives again through me, and through our child. She will accept me into her family, needing a link to her dead son, and there, once there seated in the midst of the most powerful family in the universe, I will be able to earn the respect this family has lost due to our father."

"You did not love him either, did you? No, don't bother answering, I know you did not, because if you did, you would not try to insinuate yourself into his family just to bring yourself up higher in society."

"Brother, this child deserves to live as well as his father did. He is an heir to their fortunes. Having carried this seed, I deserve to live in that manor as well."

"But it isn't his seed!"



"If he is dead, what does it matter? If he had returned, he would have thought it his from our Joining ceremony. But now, the babe makes things even better. I don't have to lie with him every night to get where I want to be."

"Whose child is it that aids in your deceit?"

"Does it matter?"

"D'Na, of anyone here, I thought you were sweet and loving, above the iniquity of this house, virginal and without treachery, only to find you are as conniving as anyone in this family. We live well in this house, never wanting for anything. Our father has done well in his investments and we live better than most. Why must you go even further, they don't have much more than we."

D'Na laughed bitterly, "They have power Brother, they have *all* the power. They have every luxury imaginable, and we live in the shadow of our father's sins. I am tired of living like we have done something wrong. I acted the role of the sweet daughter in hopes that the people around us would stop treating me like a leper whenever I am around."

She moved towards the large window that occupied a wall of the room, looking down on the people walking about their day and continued, "I am tired of people looking down at us because of something our father may or may not have done. Maybe he helped massacre every Ga Hall warrior, maybe he had nothing to do with it and it was Eetu who was the traitor. We will probably never know, but I am sick of the looks, the whispers, the rumors and the snobbery. I want to be respected and feared, and to live in the wealth they can provide. "

"I wish I had known who you really were before my trip to Earth. I wish I had known you weren't worth protecting."

"Protecting? Just what did you protect me from, dear Brother?"

Dar turned from her, tears forming on his eyes once more. He had never considered himself a weak man, but the gravity of what he had done was more than he could handle. And then to learn that what he had protected wasn't worth protecting, made the situation even worse. D'Na, came to him, whipped him around and saw the shimmering of pent up tears.

"Dar, tears? What in the world could bring the most unfeeling man I know besides our precious father to tears?" She circled him twice thinking; hand on her chin, a finger pressed to her nose, deep in thought.

"The only person you have ever cared about enough that could bring you to tears would be that worthless man you called your best friend. So you cry over the death of Taroht, but how does that connect to your claim of protecting me? Were you protecting me from Taroht?" The look on Dar's face spoke volumes. "You killed Taroht, didn't you? You killed him to protect me?"

"He was planning on bringing his Earth woman back and asking the council if he could Join with her and not you. I didn't think our family could survive another scandal. I acted on instinct, trying to please a man who can never be pleased and for the love of my sister. Now to learn you were not worth protecting ...." He trailed off, not knowing what else to say, anger burning deep in his chest.

"Dar, darling," she circled him once more pressing her chest into his back and pulling him into her arms, "you are *my* hero. You absolutely did the right thing; you saved me and the future of this family. Father will be thrilled when he finds out what you have done for us, or did you already tell him? No, no, you obviously have not or he would have been in a better mood."

Dar swirled around, "Do not tell our father, he does not need to know."

"If you did this to save our family, then why not tell him and have him pleased? He would be for sure. He would give you the respect you deserve."

"D'Na, I wish I could go back in time and change what I did, but I cannot. Tarothe was my friend, and I did what I did out of an act of despair and misplaced loyalty. I wish I had not done it, and to have that man out there congratulate me would break my already shattered spirit. He would see my pain and exploit it as he has done to all of us. Do not give him this weapon. If you have ever loved me, do not give him this weapon."

"For what you have done for me, I will not tell father. But you will not tell anyone that Tarothe never fucked me. These will be our little secrets. Promise?"

Dar sighed deeply, the web of lies nearly strangling him. "Admit to me how you snagged Tarothe into believing you were his Daya N'goul and then I will promise."

"Fine. Artgart Root. It causes nausea. Trebellian Worsel Root causes an erection when it is ingested. I just made sure to either brew them in his tea or food anytime he was around me."

"I knew it. He was right, I fought him for no good reason. You had lied to all of us. After this moment, I will not lay eyes on you again. So you have my promise, and from this moment, I no longer exist for you."

He stalked from the room, scowled at T'Neel after seeing her seated in his father's lap stroking his hair and turned to all in the room. "I hope you are all happy, my life is Jang N'Fell because of you all. You are all dead to me." With that, he turned his back on his family forever.

\* \* \* \*

Back on Earth, John Doe continued to be frustrated as he hit roadblock after roadblock. At least he had Corrine's support, and her body every night in his arms, which he couldn't seem to get enough of. She took a leave of absence, trying to help him find his past, but nothing seemed to work. They had little to go on, a few names they found to be fake, weird dreams they both remembered, and the odd ranting he made the first night they made love. John could not understand where the words had come from or even why he had said them.

Eventually, she went back to work, and upon completing her residency a few months later, she was offered a job in a small family practice that served about two thousand residents in a small town and the surrounding county. She was also offered many fast-paced, high stress positions through her hard work and effort, but after John had come into her life, she realized that she must find a balance in her life and actually live. Her new town was close to the Mohave Desert, but was so green. It was a beautiful oasis in the middle of the desert.

After nearly a year of not being able to remember who he was, John continued to search for leads to his past, but always, his home seemed to be with Corrine. Even after she made the move to the small town of Alameda, he continued to come back to her time and time again. She was the only link he had with who he really was.

After being away again for nearly a month, John was riding back into town, back to find the calm he felt once in Corrine's arms. He pulled the vehicle up in front of the small building which housed the family practice she worked in and he jumped out of the car, breathless to see her.

Once through the doors, the rush of cold air hit him in the face and he breathed in the clinical smell that always seemed to follow her home at night, that was until he could get her into bed and make her dirty. He had begun to love the smell of antiseptic, which made him smile to himself. The receptionist behind the counter looked up and smiled at him in her breezy way. Almost every woman in the building fawned over him every time he came to town, and he was

nearly used to it, but it still bothered him. There was something about fawning females that really seem to creep under his skin.

"Hi, John," came the sign-song greeting that grated his nerves. His shoulders hiked up a bit. "Back again? You weren't gone so long this time. Doc Phillips is round back with Matty Parker. Poor kid broke his arm again riding that stupid minibike he has. It's a wonder he hasn't been run over yet, considering how he runs out in the road like a bat out of hell. I swear, one of these days we'll be putting that child into a body bag instead of a cast if his parent's don't do something about him. I was just telling Doc that she needed to put a cast all over him and maybe it'll save his sorry neck ...."

Taroth rolled his eyes inwardly, never being good at listening to this woman prattle on. That was one of the reasons he loved Corrine so much. She said what was necessary and never talked his ear off unless it was important for him to know. He looked over the counter towards the back as he half-heard the receptionist go on more about the stupid kid and whether or not she should call child protective services or something or other. He was tall enough that if he leaned over he could see Corrine in the middle island when she was done with a patient. Thankfully, she was just walking out behind a boy of twelve with a huge cast on his arm, from shoulder to hand.

She was speaking firmly to the boy and his mother, obviously telling them the dangers of mini-bikes when she looked up and saw him staring at her. Her eyes lit up as she escorted her patient and his mother out, and sidled up to the counter.

"That was a quick trip."

"Not happy to see me?" He pouted, loving to see her roll her eyes and try to act indignant.

"I'm going to ignore that. How was it?"

"Same thing. A lead on the names given at the hotel, and it comes out to nothing. This time I found a little old lady who had no idea who I was. I am getting tired of the searching."

"Maybe it's time to stop."

John looked up at Corrine, knowing deep down that she was right and that he wanted to stop searching, but he didn't know what else to do. "And then what? I have no past, so what will be my future?"

"Right here?"

"What, and leech off you forever? Not my style."

"You don't know what your style is. You know you are welcome here with me."

He looked into her face, feeling the familiar heat pool in his loins every time he looked at her. She was his magnet and he could not stay away from her, regardless of the fact she was all he had. He was a big boy, he could make it on his own, one way or another, but her heat, her body, her soul would call to him before long and he would crave being wrapped in her arms, within her thighs.

"How about we go home and discuss this?"

Corrine looked beside her at the eagerly attentive receptionist. "I think that is a good idea. Let me wrap up with my last patient and I will be home."

"I'll go shower so I don't smell like road and grime."

Giving Corrine a quick kiss and giving the receptionist a quick wink before turning towards the door, he made his way to his car and climbed in. Moments later he was standing in the cool water of the shower, washing away the last two days he spent trying to get back home.

Once he dried off and threw on a pair of pajama pants, he straightened up and started a quick dinner.

Cooking seemed to relax him; there was order in cooking, yet at the same time, there was an art to it. Since reawakening, he had learned to be a fairly good cook, and he also liked to pamper Corrine on his trips back to her. Sautéing mushrooms and shallots in butter to cover the herbed chicken he was baking, he thought about what Corrine had said earlier.

Exhausted from the constant traveling he had been doing for the past year or so, he was ready to stop moving so much. He craved normalcy, and wanted that normalcy to be with Corrine. She obviously would have him from the comments she made earlier, but what would he do to contribute around the house? He wouldn't be a househusband, regardless if he loved to cook or not.

Once the mushrooms were nearly done, he knew Corrine would be home soon, so he slipped into the bathroom and started the warm water to fill the tub, throwing in a few drops of scented oil. He then opened the windows allowing the Indian summer evening breeze waft into the room. A few lit candles littered here and there around the bathroom finished off the effect he wanted to create.

He wanted her so badly that he needed to put her first for the evening, her pleasure was at the forefront of his mind. Slipping back into the kitchen once the tub was filled, he pulled the chicken out of the oven to rest and awaited her car to pull up the drive. Tinkering around the house, barely able to contain himself, he slipped on the stereo, popping in a jazz CD that he knew she loved to listen to when relaxing. Waiting was not easy for him, and he skulked around a few more minutes before he finally heard her car enter the drive.

He stood in the doorway, propped open the door with his best come hither look on his face. "Welcome home, honey."

She chuckled when he grabbed her face and pulled her into a deep kiss. After leaving her breathless, she gathered her wits and added, "Let's get inside before the neighbors start talking."

"Let them talk." He laughed, tugging them back into the house. "Get naked and jump into the tub while I open up the wine. I'll be in there in a minute to help you wash your back."

"Mmmm[....][ ... ] I have some other things I'd like you to wash."

"Well, you point those out when I get in there and I will be sure to wash them all." He kissed her forehead as she exited to her bedroom to disrobe.

Once the wine was open to breathe, he wandered into the bathroom just as Corrine was stepping into the warm, soapy water. She sat back and let out a long sigh, the water instantly relaxing her whole body. He kneeled beside the old clawfoot tub and grabbed the soft washcloth from the edge, wetting it in the warm suds.

He leaned down and grasped one of her feet that peeked out the end of the bubbles and began soaping up each toe, then covering each foot, massaging the muscles there. Moving to her ankle, then up into her calf, massaging her tight muscles as he washed her soft skin.

Her soft moans made him smile, knowing she was thoroughly enjoying the treatment. Lowering her foot back into the water, he grabbed the other foot, giving it the same attention as the first. Once done, he dipped his hands into the water, and began to wash the cloth over her knees, working his way up to her thighs.

Ignoring the spots she wanted attention given to, he grasped her right hand, reaching across her body to get it, barely grazing her hard nipples as he reached. A moan escaped her throat, the sensation of his roughened hands against her tender flesh pure torture.

Holding her hand in his, he looked down at how fragile it looked engulfed in his huge palms. Yet these hands gave life, and were the furthest thing from fragile. He kissed the inside of her palm and began soaping up the long elegant fingers that graced her hands. Working the muscles of her hand in his strong fingers, he felt her relax more and more to his touch. He slowly moved down her arms, massaging the forearm and then moving towards her shoulder. Repeating with the other arm, he finished by moving slightly behind her to massage her neck, shoulders, and upper back.

She sat up slightly to allow him access to her back, and he rubbed her entire back, loving the way she was softening and relaxing, loved that he could make her feel such pleasure at his touch. Kissing her neck as she sat back against the tub, he reached over her shoulders to wash the front of her neck and the rest of her upper body.

When he grasped one pert breast in one hand, massaging it, she arched into his touch, moaning loudly in pure pleasure. He gathered the washcloth into the warm water with his other hand, and brought it up to the hard peak of her nipple, washing the sensitive skin there and then washing the whole breast. Once completed, he cared lovingly for the twin and then began to wash her stomach as he laid kisses on her neck.

He reached down under the water to wash her belly, and then began to dip his hand into the nest of her curls, washing the begging borders of her sex. Asking her to turn to rest on her knees so he could more easily reach her sex, she leaned against the back edge of the tub, while he returned to the side.

Soaping and washing her lower back, he then moved to her softly rounded ass, washing each cheek thoroughly before moving to her exposed sex pouting out between her slightly opened thighs. He rinsed the cloth again, and then covered his hand with it, bringing it up to the pink lips of her sex, washing them painstakingly, her soft cries and moans music to his ears.

After making her wait more than enough, he ended her torture by rubbing the soft cloth against her clitoris, loving the feeling of the hard nub against his hand. She moved into his hand, pushing against him in need of more pressure to reach the heights she needed. He slowly began to rub against her bud, using his other hand to rub the swell of her buttocks, helping to guide her, so she would not rush to completion.

Pushing against him, her need demanding a harder and faster rhythm, he refused to let her rush it. She deserved a slowly built fire within her after not seeing him for a month. He continued to hold his hand on her ass, setting the pace for her instead of her driving herself.

She cried out a spoiled moan, mad that he would not pick up the pace, needing him to take her hard and fast after his absence. Knowing he would not give into her demands, she finally let him continue to lead, too overcome to think for herself any longer.

He smiled inwardly the moment she gave up her highly coveted control, and he smacked her ass once hard, letting her know who was in charge. He continued his slow assault on her puss, fondling the pouting lips as well as her clit, rubbing her with enough pressure to have her wanting more.

Moaning her need, she continued to press back against his hand, and her punishment was another hard smack on her tender bottom. Softening the blow, he bent down to kiss the tender skin he had smacked, lathing it with his tongue, tasting her. Once he felt her legs tremble, he knew she was almost to the brink of exploding, so he picked up the pace of his hands, one rubbing the tender flesh of her sex, the other pulling around the front to rub her clit, all the while, laying kisses on her face, neck and shoulders.

Corrine pushed against his hands, loving the flood he was building in her. Her cries of pleasure echoed through the small room until she locked her lips onto his mouth and tasted him with her lips and tongue. Seconds later she tensed and exploded into his hands, screaming her release against his slightly parted lips.

Breathing heavily, she slid from him and slipped into the swell of the antique tub, the cooling waters soothing her aching skin. She rested her head against his arms lying against the rim of the tub, and she turned once she caught her breath and began laying tiny kisses along his arm.

"After dinner."

She pouted, sitting up on her knees to face him.

"After dinner."

Crossing her arms over her chest and pouting even more, he laughed. "I didn't spend the last hour making a romantic dinner for you to have it not eaten. Plus you may need your strength for later, so we need to get you out of this tub, wrap you in your robe and deposit you on the dining room chair.

She sighed, spent, but wanting to return the favor of unimaginable pleasure. His first priority in their lovemaking had always been her, and she felt guilty because she had let him take command once again and give her an orgasm while leaving him bereft. She decided then and there she would make it up to him ten fold over the course of the next few days, or however long he was back home.

He raised her over the edge of the tub and lowered her onto the soft rug on the floor and grabbed a fluffy towel, drying her tenderly from head to toe. Once done, he pulled her silk robe from the hook on the door and pulled it around her and closed the ties. Before she could take one step, he pulled her into his arms, his arm under her knees, and walked her into the dining room, where she could smell the most divine food.

Dropping her into the seat in the dining room, she looked over the table. Tall taper candles flanked fresh rolls and tossed salad, and she could smell his herbed baked chicken in the distance. He walked into the kitchen, grabbing the final items for dinner.

"Can I help with anything?"

"Everything is done, I just need to bring it in. You sit back and enjoy, tonight is all about you."

"Why?"

"Why what?"

"Why is everything all about me tonight?"

John stopped in the doorway of the kitchen that led to the dining room, focused on her, not knowing how to answer her question. *Why was it always all about her? Why was his first concern always her and her needs? He didn't want it any other way, but why did he feel such desire for this woman? Was it because she was the only anchor he had in this world?*

"Because I missed you on this trip, more so than usual. I'm happy to be home and I ... I ... care for you. You know that."

Corrine felt delight down to the tips of her toes. Plus the uncharacteristic blush that fell over his face was worth everything. She knew his admission had not been easy for him, which made it that much more sweet. He was definitely getting pleasure ten fold after that response.

They ate their dinner comparing what had occurred in each other's life in the past month, with comments here and there from Corrine about how wonderful his cooking was. Finally the conversation turned back to the one previously started at the MedFam Clinic.

"So, you seem to think once I was done with my search that I belong here ... with you?"

"Of course you do, where else would you be?"

"Corrine, I don't know anything about who I am. Without a past, it is hard to have a future."

"But are you going to spend the rest of your life in limbo? You haven't remembered anything in over a year, and at this point, I don't know if anything will come back, unfortunately. You are still a young man and you have an entire life ahead of you, as well as a blank slate. What are you going to do with it?"

"That's my other concern. My few odd jobs here and there to fund my search are not enough to help. Nothing seems familiar, I don't know what kind of work I could do, because I sure as hell am not going to let you foot the bill."

"Like I said, you have your entire life ahead of you, and we can figure out where you are going next together. You keep cooking this way and I'll pay you to be my butler."

John rolled his eyes, not finding her funny at all. Butler was just about as bad as househusband. "You know I can't stay caged in this house. I will cook all you want me to, but I will work. Somewhere."

"So be it, as long as you stop roaming the country. I worry about you each time you go out on your *quests*."

He eyed her, emotion filling his chest. In all his travels, searching for his past, nothing had ever seemed familiar. No street, no corner, no building, no person, except for her. She was the only thing that ever seemed safe and right in this world. And that was one of the reasons he had searched long and far for clues to who he was. He knew he could get lost in her, and he was afraid he would never remember who he was.

Standing up across from her, he rounded the table, dropping down to his knees in front of her. He slid the chair close to him, causing her to open her thighs to give his body room. Scooping one hand under the nape of her neck, he plunged into her mouth with a violence and demand for her lust he rarely showed her.

The edgy control he had on his lust had finally snapped when he realized he *wanted* to get lost in her. Dragging her ass towards the edge of the chair with his other hand, he ground his swelling cock into the apex of her thighs; delighting in the heat he felt swirling around his sex. He ripped the light robe she wore away from her body, hearing it snag and tear as he fought to get the cloth away from their joined bodies.

Reaching a trembling hand between them, Corrine tugged at the edges of his pajama pants. John leaned back a bit to allow her to pull them down his narrow, muscled hips. Once the pants slipped low enough, his erection sprang free and the head wedged itself inside the lips of her sex. Not able to wait, he plunged into her in one quick thrust, bringing both her legs over his shoulder and holding onto the back of the chair so he could pummel into her as quickly as physically possible.

He was so close to the brink of release that within a few pumps inside her warm flesh, he released his seed deep within her, warming her womb, holding her close to him while he screamed her name in pleasure. Corrine could feel his heartbeat nearly pumping out of his chest, and she soothed her hands over his shoulders and back, lying kisses over his face and neck until his breathing returned to normal.

Once he felt more himself, he slipped to the floor to his back and pulled her with him, arranging her body on top of him. She rested her head on his chest and held still near the beat

strong and fast. She drew circles on his skin with her forefinger, compelled to touch him as much as possible.

“Do you deny it now?”

“Remind me, Corrine, what was I denying?”

“That this is your home. That *I* am your home.”

“Yes, my love, *you* are my home. And I belong here with you.”

\* \* \* \*

John finally accepted his new life and settled into the small town. They lived a comfortable life in Alameda, a town that welcomed the handsome young couple with open arms. They both worked hard, participated in the community, helped in any way they could, and looked to be a couple so much in love. The older residents gossiped about them not being properly married, but seeing how enamored they were, most turned a blind eye.

Days filled with hard work, nights filled with love and steamy sex, the pair spent a year learning about each other before all hell broke loose.



## Chapter Eight

Ishadarian Battleship approaching Earth  
2008

General Besh Fatel looked out the window of the Class Five Destroyer that held the bulk of the Ishadarian armies within. They would arrive in Earth's galaxy in a few hours and Besh continued to play out the plan for attack over and over in his head, making sure he and the Regent had covered all of the what ifs.

This should be my brother at my side, not the traitor Jin. He barely respected his new Regent; and coming to the world that had claimed his brother's life brought back the pain of his loss had him at his wits end.

Dak Jin had been appointed the position of Regent after the death of his brother. He knew D'Na had manipulated his parents into getting her father the position and he still fumed that this man was in charge of such a serious campaign, and that his family felt him unready to take the lead. Taroth had been the youngest Regent in the history of the Empire, dying at only twenty-six, Besh was that age now and more than ready to engage this new world.

His big brother had been everything to him, and these past two years had been hard on Besh. They had been the two eldest boys, and his transition into the oldest brother had been hard to adjust to. He had learned to shoulder familial responsibilities that he had not been used to in the past, being only the second son, now the new heir. He did not want to be the family heir; he had wanted his brother back.

It was hard to not find anger with this world, even though they were not ultimately responsible for the death of his brother; but the vehicle he had died in was of their production. Taroth had always been too adventurous for his own good, and it ultimately brought him to his death in the vehicle.

Besh had learned everything he could about the world he was ready to invade, wanting to know every danger, every piece of every puzzle. He had spent the past two years learning everything about Earth, everything about their politics, their society, most of their languages, particularly English. He was ready.

The plan involved a peaceful offensive, with hopes of minimal loss of life for either side. Unfortunately, the Bel Tak, the Empire's enemy, had found out about this planet and its connection to Ishadarians, which opened Earth up to many horrific possibilities for torture. The Emperor decided the only way to save Earth was to take control of it.

Dak had decided to materialize generals and lieutenants to each world leader along with several warriors through the Brox Catha transporter, forcing each leader to listen to the dangers that Earth was in and that they wanted to aid them. If diplomacy did not work, then they would take them by force. But only as the last resort. Besh knew the Regent was playing a game, showing he was not the man everyone believed him to be. He was showing peaceful concern for the planet, when every atom in Besh's body screamed the man was a fraud. The Jin family would never truly escape the Ga Hall rumors, no matter how well Dak played his game.

There was an entity on Earth that called to Besh, but he was not sure what it was. Something, drawing him, screamed through every fiber of his being. He would hunt it down, whatever it was, and he would find what it was that drew him here. He could feel the invisible strings pulling him and tearing at his soul the closer they got. His destiny was on this planet, and he hoped that destiny did not mean his end.

His Lieutenant, Dar Jin stepped beside him on the deck. "Sir, all the troops are ready. The Brox Catha are all ready as well. How close are we going to get to the planet before we transport?"

"Dar, we will be making the jump in about an hour. Anxious?"

"Sir, you know the history I have with this planet, so no, I am not excited about being here, but I have committed myself to the Empire, as it is all I have left."

Dar, looked ahead at the planet that was just beginning to appear in the window. "Sir, if I may?"

"Yes, Dar?"

"I loved your brother as if he were my brother. I just thought you should know that."

Besh turned and looked at his lieutenant. "I know, and that is why I wanted you here. If anyone would understand the mixed emotions this planet causes in our family, it would be you."

"Yes sir." With that, Dar turned and left Besh to his musings at the window. *What is out there? What or who is calling out to me? Taroth?*

\* \* \* \*

Dar stood at the doorway looking over at his best friend's little brother. He had grown close to Besh after returning to Hara D'Noll, partially to ease his pain at the loss of his friend, partially to torture himself for what he had done to Taroth.

The years had not been kind to Dar. He had turned his back on his family, but they had not done so to him. His father had continued to push at him and try to bend him to his will. Fear of Dar telling the truth to the whole Empire about D'Na's child was what prompted most of it. Unfortunately, his father had grown in power once the two families had aligned. Coupled with the fact that Dak liked to throw his weight around, Dak had only made Dar's life more of a hell.

And then when D'Na had used her connections to get their father the position of Regent, Taroth's position as Regent, it had only added more salt to the wounds he felt. His father was now one of his commanding officers, and he had to show the man respect if he wanted to hold on to the one thing he had left in his life. He loved being a soldier, and by being a good soldier, a good member of the Empire, he could atone for what he had done on Earth.

He still could not sleep at night, nightmares filled his head every time his head hit the pillow. He thought he saw Taroth around every corner. And now he was headed to Earth, where he had abandoned eight people, including his friend Ta Hall. He had lied to the entire Empire. If information was found, Dar would suffer for his lies.

And once one lie was found, the council would question everything else that had happened. And his hell may be over. He almost wished for death, the torture he had put himself through was too much to bear, and the torture his family wrought was even worse.

Dak used D'Na, she being the mother of Taroth's only child; she had the ear of the Empress. And Dak had thought of oh so many wonderful expeditions that Dar could lead. Dar had faced battle after battle after battle, many of which he had barely escaped. He knew that no one would miss him, as he was an empty shell of a man.

He got to the point that he hoped that he would die in battle and at least the thronging crowds of Hara D'Noll would trumpet him a war hero. In death he could be more than in life. Another part of him wished he had thrown himself behind Taroht over that cliff.

\* \* \* \*

John got home Wednesday evening, humming, not able to wait until the ring was ready. Two more days and he could pick it up from the shop. He had been living with Corrine for nearly two years, practically man and wife, but there was something special about making that commitment and professing his faithful love for her in front of people who cared about them. And after a year in this town, they both had acquired many people who loved and cared for them.

When he walked into the living room, Corrine was plastered to the television, which was odd for her. He was the couch potato of the household, she rarely even looked at it. Sitting on the edge of the couch, lost in the breaking news on the screen, he watched her enthralled with what she saw, wondering what had her so fascinated.

"Whatcha watching?"

"Shhhhhh ...!" She waved her hands at him to hush and then waved him to sit beside her, patting the seat next to her on the couch. He parked his rump right next to hers and began trying to pick up on the story on the screen.

"Is this a movie?"

"Ahh ... no. It isn't. This is CNN."

"Yeah, right. We are in the midst of an *alien invasion*. Good one. Isn't it a little late for April Fools?"

Corrine turned to look at him, fear palpable in her eyes. "No, John, this is no joke. It's on all the news channels." She quickly used the remote to blink on ABC. Then NBC. Then CBS. Headline News. MSNBC. It was all over every channel. They all said that aliens had invaded the planet.

\* \* \* \*

In the weeks that followed, panic reigned. The world governments submitted to the alien conquerors. The technology the alien race brought was too great for the world leaders to consider sending their sons to massacre. Humans rushed from the cities, scared they would be the first to be destroyed and many created small camps here and there, hoping to be small enough to not be noticed by the aliens.

In the months that followed, peace prevailed. The invaders, while intimidating in full black battle gear, did not destroy cities, and even rarely used force in any situation. The aliens had peace meetings with world leaders, explaining they had called martial law to save the planet from another deadly alien race. Things quieted down some, and settled into a more regular pace, yet a tremor of tension coiled under the surface.

Other than roaming bands of troops combing the planet and setting up check-points, there was little that was different than before the invasion. Eventually, life got back to normal, if it could ever be normal, with aliens walking amongst them. It had seemed that the aliens had been truthful in their claims, but most humans still held some skepticism in the invaders' motivation.

## Chapter Nine

John had put off his question for months, fear for the future and whether they had one or not. Deciding finally that it was finally time to pop the question, since life had settled again, he went to pick up the small velvet box that held the key to their futures. He and Corrine walked into town one warm summer evening so he could finally go pick up the ring he had ordered months before.

"Corrine, why don't you go check in on Mrs. Morris over at the hardware store. She has a cut on her hand that looks bad and won't heal. I've been begging her to go see you, but she refuses. I'm worried, so can you slip over there? I have a quick errand to run real quick."

Corrine looked him over curiously, "Am I being dumped for Mrs. Morris?"

"Oh yeah, baby. You know I have a hard-on for seventy year old ladies. That is my downfall."

"Yeah, well, I've seen the way you two look at each other, so I knew something was up. I'm a smart cookie, you know."

John kissed her and smacked her on the butt. "You are the only smart cookie I want to nibble on."

"Is that a promise?"

"Absolutely, if you promise to go check out my girlfriend's hand." He winked as they finally stopped in front of Morris & Morris Hardware, a store that had sat in the center of town for nearly 150 years. Corrine winked back as she entered the building and waved as he walked away. He had a ring to pick up.

Rounding the corner and slipping into Hauser's Jewelers, he sidled up to the counter, nearly jumping up and down in his anxiousness. Mr. Hauser stepped into the front of the store from his jeweler's bench in the back.

"About time you came back for that ring. If you didn't come soon I was going to put it back in the window."

"I know, Mr. Hauser, with all of the craziness of the past few months, asking her to marry me was not on the top of the agenda."

"Yeah, yeah. That's why I didn't put it back in the window. Plus, Mrs. Hauser and I had a bet on how long the two of you were going to live in sin before you made a decent woman of her."

John rolled his eyes at the back of Mr. Hauser's head, having heard the living in sin speech several times in the year and a half they had lived in the small town. He knew Mr. Hauser didn't mean harm in his statement, but it still irked John to hear it.

"So when are ya asking her?" Mr. Hauser turned with the ring in his hand cleaning it with a soft cloth before placing it the small black velvet box.

"Tonight's the night, Mr. Hauser, I am taking her to dinner as soon as I get back to her and at the perfect moment, I will drop down on one knee. I will make an honest woman of her soon."

"Wait until the winter and I will win my bet, boy-o."

"Don't think I can wait that long, Mr. Hauser." John said on a smile.

"All this time and you can't wait a couple more months? Ah, young love, you have to have it right now or you'll just die." Hauser smiled and handed him the box. "I guess Mrs. Hauser wins. But that isn't necessarily a bad thing either. Maybe I'll get a little nookie tonight."

John grimaced while handing over the money for the ring, knowing that the Hausers had to both be in their eighties if not their ninties. "Oh, Mr. Hauser, I *really* didn't need to know that. But thanks for the ring." He tipped his head, waved and exited the building.

Walking down the street back to Morris & Morris, he laughed at himself, recalling what Mr. Hauser had said. Even though the thought of the elderly Hausers doing anything sexual together was quite repellent, he knew that he would still crave Corrine until the day he died. He then imagined seeing he and Corrine both graying, wrinkled and sagging, sweating and rolling around in bed, and he laughed out loud.

Turning the corner to Main Street, he glimpsed Corrine standing with a couple and realized she was speaking to Kaya, the owner of the local café that had been one of their favorite spots for dinner. She had closed the doors a few months before, after a group of Ishadarian warriors had stopped in. Rumors had abounded, and abduction stories had circulated. As he approached, John noted a very tall man standing beside Kaya and his heart began to beat furiously. The man took notice of him too, and stared openly at his approach.

As he reached them, Corrine added, "This is my boyfriend, John." John stuck his hand out to them, unsure of why he felt so odd, but the man and Kaya both just stared at his face with horror. The other man, clearly pained, looked John up and down.

"Taroth?"

John's head began to swim, images flooded his mind, and he suffered a pain so intense in his skull that he nearly toppled over. Corrine rushed to his side to help hold him up and then half walked, half dragged him to a small bench on the street. His sudden illness scaring her more than anything ever before, and in her gut, she knew the other man was the cause.

"John, John? Are you alright? Look at me. Sweetie, just look into my eyes. Tell me you are alright. John!"

Image after image swirled through John's mind's eye. Everything fell into place, his whole life, his past, his family, his *world*. He was Ishadarian. John turned to the man still standing near him.

"Besh?" he ground out, still not completely sure of the images that had swirled around his mind.

The other man grasped John about the shoulders, dragging him up from his seat and hugged him, as tears openly flowed down his face. Corrine watched, half in relief, half in horror. This man knew John, and could unlock the doors to his past. But would he still have room for her in his life once his past filled back into his heart and mind?

After a few moments, John pulled back and looked into the man's face smiling. Then he turned, searching for Corrine, who had backed away, suddenly feeling as if she were intruding in a moment she was not meant to, terrified of what lay next.

"Corrine, come, meet my brother."

Besh turned to the woman, smiling at her, but still looking bemused and bewildered. Corrine was sure that running into a brother he had not seen in nearly three years could do that to someone. He shook Corrine's hand, as John told him, "She helped save my life, she has helped me all these years," and Besh pulled her into his arms, hugging her with almost the same fervor he had just shown his brother.

"Blessed be that you were here to save him and allow him safe passage until he could be reunited with his family. I have no way of showing you my gratitude. We were told he had died on the trip all those years ago." John's brother gripped her again inside a tight bear hug.

"She is also the woman I love, my Daya N'goul."

Besh stopped and looked down at the woman, letting her step back onto the pavement he had pulled her from and into the hug. Besh then looked to his brother, visibly unnerved.

"Taroath, what about D'Na? You know the law."

"Who is D'Na?" All in attendance could hear the quiver in Corrine's voice as she gazed at the love of her life with tears glistening on her lower lashes. And when he did not answer right away, "Damnit, John, who is D'Na?"

"John? Who is John?" Besh looked between the two.

"We did not know what his name was, so we have called him John for the past few years."

"Why did you not tell her your name Taroath?"

"Because I did not know it myself. I lost my memory in the fall."

"Fall? Dar told us the crew was lost in a transport accident."

"So that was his story, hmm? Well, my best friend was angry that I had found my true Daya N'goul on Earth and pushed me off a cliff and left me for dead."

"Dar? Are you sure it was Dar? He has mourned you almost more than your family has, which is no small amount, be assured."

Kaya interjected, "Your mother will be thrilled to find you alive. She still cries when your name is brought up."

Besh blushed, realizing he had neglected introducing Taroath to his new wife and soulmate. "This is Princess D'Hanna Et Fatel, or as she was called here on Earth, Kaya, she is my Daya N'goul. She is from Earth as well."

Kaya stepped forward, embracing Taroath's hand. "I was wondering when I would get to say hello, since my rude husband seemed to forget I was here."

"How could I forget, when there is so much of you to remember?" He looked at his wife with love in his eyes, stroking her stretched belly, full with his child.

Kaya gazed lovingly at Besh and gave him a playful punch in the arm. "I realized as soon as I looked at you, Taroath, that you were related, you look like a mirror image of the Emperor."

Taroath smiled at Kaya, shaking her hand and then pulling her into a hug. "To think we had eaten at your café all this time and you end up married to my brother."

"When I saw your images in the Empress's quarters, I knew the face looked familiar, but not until you walked this way did I realize *why* the face looked so familiar. I remember you both coming into the café from time to time, and I wish I had put two and two together sooner. I know the Empress will be overjoyed at your return home."

"Mother and Father are both well? And what about the rest of the family? Oh, Besh," Taroath gripped his brother into another hug, "there are just so many questions I have for you, so much we need to discuss ...."

The sounds of the happy reunion started blurring together in Corrine's ears. Who was D'Na, and why had Besh looked at her so disapprovingly at her once John had told him that he loved her? Was she his wife? Did they have children? There were so many what ifs to the situation, and as she watched the three people before her, her chest began to tighten. It was

almost impossible to breathe. Her heart was being ripped from her chest and the searing pain was almost too much for her to bear.

She began to step back away from them again, and then she turned, walking back to the small cottage she had shared with John ... Tarothe, she amended ... for what seemed like a lifetime. She could not imagine a future without the man she loved, but now it seemed she would have to start learning.

Hot tears slid down her face as she walked. She passed townsfolk here and there on the darkening streets. Loved as she was by the community, all asked to aid her in her despair, but she did not hear one word. Focused on the trip home and into her bed, she was oblivious to the world around her, including the loving, comforting hearts around her.

A few steps from the front gate of the little cottage, a strong arm turned her around. Tarothe stood glaring down at her, panting a little, obviously from running to catch up to her.

"What are you doing? Why did you leave me?"

"Who is D'Na?"

"She isn't important. Why did you leave?"

"Evidently she is important in the eyes of your brother. Is she your wife?"

"No, she is not my wife. She was going to be, but that was a lifetime ago. I love you, not her. In fact, I never loved her."

"Then what happens now? You are from another world, and we had made a life here. What happens now? Oh, God, I can't believe I am being this selfish. Here you stand, just seconds after learning who you are and I am here wondering about myself and what we will do."

"I don't know what we will do. But I love you and I hope you and I can figure out what happens next together. I know this may not be the best time for this, but ...." Tarothe bent down on one knee in front of Corrine, pulling a small box from his pant's pocket. "I planned on asking you tonight at dinner to be my wife, and knowing my past does not change how I feel about you. I still want you as my wife. But I also understand this is a lot for you to take in right now, so I don't expect an answer."

"All I ask, Corrine, is that you hold this ring, wear it on your finger, if you aren't ready to answer me now. But wear it knowing that I lay my heart in your lap and that I love you with my entire being, before knowing the truth and now after. Know that you are everything to me, on this world or any other. Know that I can't envision my future without you in it."

"Promise me you will walk with me into the future and that we will decide together what that future is. Promise me you will not make a decision to walk away from me again without at least telling me of your concerns. Walking away from me tonight was enough to tear my heart to shreds. I was afraid you walked away because you couldn't handle who I was, that I wasn't human. That isn't the case is it?"

"John ... Tarothe ... damned, that is going to take some time to get used to after all this time. I don't care if you are from across the planet or across the universe, I love you. I was scared your new life didn't have room for me."

"You fill my heart, and you own it completely. Not room for you in my life? No matter what, you are my life, woman." Tarothe growled and pulled her down into his lap and kissed her with all the passion he felt for her. He only pulled back for a moment to place the beautiful antique diamond and sapphire ring onto her finger, and then turning his head towards yelling they heard from down the street, he stood, pulling Corrine with him.

"Damnit, man. Don't do that. I finally find you after a lifetime and you run away? You scared the jang na fell out of me!" Besh walked into the circle of light from the overhead street light and glanced at the two embracing in front of him.

"Sorry, brother, I needed to find Corrine and assure her she was still a part of my life."

Besh looked quizzically at his brother. "But D'Na?"

"I never loved D'Na, never. And Corrine here also caused feelings of Daya N'goul, but I actually desired Corrine, something I never did with D'Na. I am sorry, but I will not Join with D'Na. And I am sure she went on with her life, it has been years that she thought me dead."

"But she was Joined with you after your death."

"What?"

"The council felt it proper. You two broke the rules of Si ni mon, and she ended up pregnant with your child, a boy. The council decided to bend the rules so your son could be acknowledged by the family and raised in a place of honor."

"Besh, my memory may have just returned, but I never touched that woman, besides to shake her hand. I never broke the rules of Si ni mon, I never made love to her, it is not my child. The council will have to reverse it, because I love Corrine and I refuse to be with D'Na, especially now knowing she passed a bastard off as my seed."

"The council has never reversed a Joining. I don't know if they will." Besh looked overwrought, deep in thought.

"No one has ever asked for a Joining to be reversed. They will allow it, I will make them. I was not part of the Joining ceremony, it was enforced after my supposed death. They cannot make me abide by a ceremony not of my choosing."

"I can't believe I have spent these years with this child, codling him, loving him, thinking he was a little part of you. And to know he is another's son?"

Corrine interrupted, "It can't be the child's fault, it is the mother's. And if she would stoop to do such an act, your love and codling may be the only thing to prevent him from following in his mother's footsteps."

Besh looked up at Corrine, smiling after several seconds. "You are right, of course, but the lies still sting." Turning to look at his brother. "It stings less knowing I have my brother back, though." He smiled, rising from the spot on the wet grass. "So, where are you headed? I have a big waddling pregnant lady waiting for me alone on a street corner."

"You left her?"

"Well, I couldn't lose you again, and in her state, she can barely walk, let alone run. So point out to me where you are headed so I can go collect her and come back."

"Besh, it is so good to have you back." Taroth smiled at his little brother. "We are coming right here, this house. Go get your wife and come meet us here. And then you and I are going to plan how I am going to marry my love and get our happily ever after."



## Chapter Ten

Besh, Taroht and the women they loved sat up all night, discussing the past, the future, and everything else under the sun. There were still a few blank spots in Taroht's memory, but after hours with Besh, he was able to fill in most of his gaps. Both women had finally gone on to bed hours before, Kaya in a guest room of the lovely cottage. They were all family now, and it felt right for the couple to stay there instead of the local inn.

The brothers still sat on the floor around the large wooden coffee table covered with photographs of Corrine and Taroht's life together, intermingled with glasses of wine and trays of fruit and cheese.

"Taroht, I know I have probably said this one hundred times tonight, but I have missed you so much. I feel like this is some kind of dream and I will awaken in a moment to find this really did not happen."

"Dreams are powerful things too. I have found from past experience that dreams can be almost as real as reality."

Besh's quizzical stare rolled over Taroht's face. "What makes you say that?"

Taroht blushed a bit, embarrassed of what he was about to share. "I had several dreams of Corrine when I was in the coma, very intense, sexual dreams. When I awoke, I found out she had remembered the dreams as well, like they had actually happened."

Besh's eyes were as big as saucers.

"I know, I sound as if I am insane. Forget I said anything."

"No, no ... not insane. Definitely not ... insane. I don't know what to say ... not ... insane."

Taroht felt immediately embarrassed for sharing his and Corrine's secret and began to pull himself onto the couch behind him. A hand on his arm stopped him. "No Taroht, I am sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you. Kaya and I had similar dreams, during Si Ni Mon. We made love almost every night during our wait, in our dreams. Hell, even a flower I put into her hair one night in a dream made its way into her hair the following morning when she awoke."

Taroht looked at his brother. "Are you serious?"

"Absolutely! I thought we were crazy, so I never pursued a reason why. I just left it up to the magic of loving this woman that it had nearly made me insane."

Taroht laughed, clapping a hand on his brother's shoulder. "Maybe it has something to do with the Ishadarian and Earth connection. Interesting. And at least knowing it happened to us both that maybe it isn't insanity. Although insanity tends to run in families."

Both men laughed. Besh's face turned somber, and he turned to his brother. "What do you remember of Dar?"

Taroht visibly flinched. His mind raced back to the day three years ago when his best friend had shot him. The next thing he remembered was awakening in pain in the gorge, shattered and broken. The day he awoke, he did not remember how he had got there, but now suddenly it all flew back to him. His best friend, a man he considered his brother, had shot him and left him for dead. Taroht recounted what he remembered of the incident. Once done, he felt empty and sick inside.

"If it means anything to you, he admitted to me what he had done. He said it was an accident, and even though I hate to admit it, he seemed sincere in his pain. Dak somehow found out what he had done and used it against him to try and rip Kaya and I apart. Eventually, Dar spelled out the whole story of what happened to you, in front of his father, in hopes of some kind of redemption. I know that nothing he could say would make what he has done to this family hurt less. But somewhere deep inside, I think he feels real remorse for what he did."

"Where are they now?"

"Dak is imprisoned, awaiting trial. Dar escaped the shuttle, never having been seen since. Our men are searching for him now, to make him stand accountable for all his crimes."

\* \* \* \*

D'Na gazed around the opulent rooms from where she lounged in her massive bed in the Palace D'Noll. After spending the last five years of her life there, luxuriating in lazy splendor, she was growing more and more restless. Having to play the grieving widow had stretched far, far too long, and no amount of luxury would compensate for wasted time in her life. She had hoped that after a few years of playing her part; and that the memory of Tarothe would eventually fade into history and she could begin to live again, making her own way.

Damn the man for having been practically made into a saint. Everywhere she turned she saw monuments erected in his behalf, gardens planted in his honor, and people reaching out to her for support, even after all this time. It was exhausting playing the part, and each day her impatience grew. She wanted to remarry, taking Tarothe's wealth with her instead of being tucked deep into the bosom of Tarothe's mother Mata.

The news of the other prodigal son had saved her for a bit. Once news of General Besh's death circulated, Mata had rushed to the side of his Daya N'goul, Kaya, holding her and hugging her and being all ... well ... motherly. The brief respite had allowed her to enjoy a new lover, but then even Besh could not aid her, as he unfortunately came back from the dead, bringing Mata back to her. Stupid Mata had even thought she would be overwrought with anguish, knowing that one son had come back from the dead but not her Tarothe.

If only Mata really knew that she harbored no love, no caring, no anything for her precious Tarothe. D'Na was so sick of hearing that name that she could barely stomach the thought of hearing it but one more time. She just may have to go into a fit of hysterics the next time she did, and tell those around her that the devastation of his death still lingered and she could no longer hear his name in her presence. *That just may work.*

Just as she had settled on her plan, her two maids walked in. She had recently hired one of the maids, a male, claiming to all those in the Palace that he was a eunuch. Fortunately for her, he was fully operational.

"Des Talin, you may leave. I require only one maid this morning." The quiet woman who had worked for her from the moment she moved into the Palace knew full well that Fuir Pat was no eunuch, but she glared at the woman, daring her to say one word. The glare had its intended effect and the woman scurried out the doors of the suite.

D'Na settled on the overstuffed chaise lounge and looked over the gorgeous but incredibly dense maid. "Now, Fuir, I have work for you to do. I need a bath. And my skin is ever so sensitive. I think that you will have to clean me thoroughly ... with your ... tongue." She guided the man standing in front of her down to his knees and opened up the front of her sheer gown to allow the man to lave her mound. "Yes, Fuir, I knew you were the one to do this job."

Strong hands clasped her waist and glided to her hips as he pulled her sex closer to his hot mouth, circling her clit with his tongue and dipping the tip into the mouth of her sex. She clasped both her hands into the thick shoulder length amber hair and held on tight as he continued to assault her sex with his mouth. Moans rumbled through her body as both doors flew open, T,Neel rushing through the doors.

Fuir pulled to standing, trying to cover them both from the wise eyes of T,Neel. "It is no point in trying to hide, she probably already knows you are my love slave. And I do not recall telling you that you could stop your task. Back down on your knees."

The bewildered man sunk back to his knees and continued his bath of her sex while she stood standing uncaring in front of her near step-mother, trying as she might to jar the woman into actually showing emotion of some sort towards her.

T'Neel disappointed her, showing her usual composed exterior. Her anger at T'Neel's unemotional response was thrown on the head of her poor servant as she grasped his hair even harder and yanked him closer to her sex, eyeing the woman before her.

"You look unwell, T'Neel. I am sure that father's incarceration has been a large stress on your system. But it was eventually going to happen. I'm amazed that it took this long for father to go insane."

"Stop with your nonsense. And, for the record, your little love slave is known to everyone in the Palace, except your mother and father-in-law for some odd reason. I think the servants keep it a secret because it would break the Royal Couple's hearts, so no, it does not surprise me that you have a man forced to lick that cold cunt of yours."

Having gained some of her father's cold exterior, she was able to deflect T'Neel's comment without an apparent nick in her armor, but T'Neel's slice had cut her nonetheless. "So, as you see I am busy, and would like to enjoy the interlude you have interrupted, why not get down to business and tell me the cause for you to have slammed into my rooms so early in the morning."

"I have news from Earth. Interesting news."

After several excruciating moments of silence and T'Neel staring at her in hopes of making her uncomfortable, seemingly not willing to tell her the news, she finally ground out, "And?"

"It seems the prodigal son is very much alive and on his way back to Hara D'Noll."

"That is old news. Besh has come and gone. What games are you playing with me now?"

"Oh, darling, not *that* brother. I mean the eldest brother. You know, *your husband*." T'Neel turned to smile her most ruthless smile.

All color left D'Na's face and her knees would have buckled under her, if she had not been seated. Regaining her stance, and realizing her slave was below her, she rose, grasped his hair again and led him to the doors on all fours, kicking him in the ass as he exited. "I will call you when I need my bath continued. Stay here beside the door, on all fours awaiting me."

D'Na slammed the doors behind her and gazed at the only woman she knew that was as evil as she was. And she was laughing at her from across the room.

"Laugh all you want, you beast." Tears in earnest began to fall from D'Na's eyes.

"Shut your shrieking wail up, it hurts my ears. Maybe now would be a good time to tell me who Tar's actual father is."

"Taroth is the father!"

“We both know that he went no where near you. I have suspected this for years, but now, the truth will finally be let free and you my dear will be free to leave this place and never come back.”

“I don't know why you think such things. As soon as Tarothe is back, all will be righted in this house.”

“So, right, so right. I will leave you to it then. As you got yourself into this situation, I am sure you need time to plot the next move.”

“And what exactly do you mean by that?”

“If you had not gone and gotten yourself pregnant, you would not have had to use Tarothe as the lump you claim to be the father. You chose to not declare the true father. Your lies and deception got you right here, and now you will need more lies and deception to keep you here. Good luck.”

## Chapter Eleven

Taroth ushered Corrine off the transport ship into the bailey of the Palace D'Noll. He thought his home world to be one of the most beautiful places in the universe, second only to Planet Dsh' Attar in the Inoc Galaxy, where he had built his home. He could not wait to show her his favorite spots on Hara D'Noll. But first, they would meet with his parents, and make sure his mother knew her favorite son was alive and well with her own eyes.

Heavily armed guards escorted the couple into a large space just off the bailey, and Corrine was wide eyed in amazement. Not only was she on a planet light years from Earth, but she was being guided into the most beautiful place she had ever seen in her life. She took in ever detail, every work of art on the walls, each beautiful carpet or chandelier, the opulent carvings in the walls and ceilings, as well as the flowing water that seemed to spout all over the place.

"You live here?"

"I grew up here, yes, but my home is actually on a planet closer to Earth. I was Regent of the Ishadarian East, as I told you on our trip, and the Eastern segment of our Empire is the largest and closet area to your planet."

"So basically you were the president of the East?"

"I suppose you could relate it that way. I led the General, which in turn lead the army in that region. Basically, we were the peacekeepers. When trouble came to our part of the universe, we took care of it. But I was answerable to the Emperor. He leads 157 planets, 87 of which were in the East."

"Emperor? Sounds so Green Hornet. I am expecting a villain in a long shiny robe with a fu man chew moustache, twirling it around his finger, laughing, maw-ha-haw."

"He isn't that bad, believe me. You will find out soon."

"I'll be meeting the Emperor as well?"

"Absolutely."

The couple continued their trek into the Palace, ending in another cavernous space filled with many people, ending at the opposite wall with two people seated above the crowd on a large raised dais, which Corrine assumed to be the Emperor and Empress.

"I thought we were going to meet your parents first?"

"We are, they are here."

Taroth walked through the parted crowd, pulling a dazed Corrine slightly behind him in his race to the front. He stood just short of the dais, kneeling on one knee in front of the seated pair. Corrine, unsure of what she should be doing, dropped to one knee as well beside Taroth, in hopes she would not disrespect these people in her ignorance. Taroth looked over at her and winked, before rising.

"Emperor and Empress Fatel, I am happy to see you both after so much time away. I am sorry for my delay in returning home."

Tears glistened in the Emperesses eyes as she asked, "Why did it take you so long to come home?"

"I was hurt on Earth and left for dead. My memory left me, but my brother recently found me and set me back on my course for home."

"You have been missed deeply by your family," the Emperor added.

"As I have them, once my memory returned. It haunts me that they have grieved me so long."

"But they grieve no longer do they?" The Empress smiled through her tears, now falling quickly down both cheeks. "It seems a time for celebration."

"Yes, Your Highness, it most certainly does." Taroth smiled up at her, and without warning the Empress stood and raced into the open arms of Taroth, hugging him tightly and kissing his face. Corrine stepped back, wondering if this was the evil D'Na she had been warned about, but realized that D'Na could not be such a good actress. No, the tears this woman had were definitely the real thing.

Taroth turned to Corrine, holding out his hand to her. "Mother, meet Corrine, the woman who saved me. The woman I love."

*Mother?*

"Your...Highness ... excuse me, I did not realize Taroth was the son of the Emperor and Empress." Fear sunk in as the Empress took her by the arms to look her over, as the Emperor had moved to stand behind his wife, perusing her as well. The fear soon drifted a bit when she realized he had claimed his love for her to his mother and father, possibly their biggest allies in the fight ahead.

Uncertainty pooled into the Empress's eyes as she turned toward her son. "And what of D'Na and your son? Besh did tell you of the boy, did he not?"

"Yes, mother, he told me." Taroth lowered his voice so only the four of them could hear what he said next. "The boy is not mine. I never touched D'Na. And I plan on availing the council to break the bonds they unjustly placed on me in my absence. I love this woman, she is my Daya N'goul."

"Your Daya N'goul? But D'Na? You said she was your soulmate."

"I think D'Na did something to force herself on me. I never felt love for her, I never felt the obsession take hold. Corrine *is* my obsession."

The Empress still held Corrine's wrists in her hands, and she turned to face her. "If you in fact saved my son, and you love him as much as he seems to love you, I will support his claim to the council. Thank you for bringing my son back to me." With that, she pulled Corrine into a warm embrace, nearly hugging the life from her.

\* \* \* \*

Later, Corrine was safely ensconced in a suite on the third floor of the beautiful palace to rest for dinner. Taroth had left her to her slumber to meet with his parents and tell them the entire story of his journeys on Earth. The rest would have done her well; unfortunately she was unable to drift away. Tossing in the silken sheets, thoughts and uncertainties assailed her mind.

She had come to terms with the fact Taroth was from another planet, even as mind numbing as that fact was. She overcame the shock by the fact that he was so much like an Earthling and that she had never sensed much out of the ordinary in the years they had been together. No matter what, he was the man she loved. Heck, there were worse things he could have been. And since she had not spent her days with an axe murderer, she had conceded to his birthplace.

The most troubling thing she had before learning this new dimension was that she did not want to leave her life behind and there was a good chance now that she would have to leave behind everything she had come to know. Being a doctor was the only things she had ever

wanted to be, and her relationship with John Doe had never endangered her career. A relationship with Taroth Fatel, eldest son of the Emperor, could mean the end of who she was.

Did his love mean more to her than losing her whole self?

The fact that she now learned that he was royalty took her breath away, mainly because it meant she would have to make a choice now. Would it be him or her life and career on Earth. How many times had she treated the victims of abuse, the women who had come to the ER beaten and broken, both in body and spirit, at the hands of men who had been their whole lives? Seeing the despair, the shame, and the pure loss of selves that was tattooed in bruises all over the woman's body was enough for Corrine to promise herself she would never lose herself in a man, ever. She had never seen any good in it.

And now here she was, on the precipice, almost unable to breathe. This man was everything to her, and she could not envision her life without him, but she also could not envision her future without the life she had built and led for so long. She defined herself as doctor, then lover, then all else. Would lover be enough? She wasn't so sure it would be.

She lay for what seemed like an eternity, until a small head slipped through the door of her suite.

"Ma'am, Her Excellency has asked if you are ready to dine?"

Corrine glanced at the shy woman at the door and sleepily nodded her head. Evidently, she had actually been close to slumber after all. "This place is huge, can you help me find my way?"

"Of course, ma'am, but first I will have to prepare you for dinner."

"Prepare me?"

Preparing her meant a full bath of glistening, scented oils in the adjoining bath. The maid helped her in, and aided in washing her hair in an adjoining bowl near the bathtub. The maid then helped her out and dried her hair, then brushing it until it gleamed. She then affixed it above her head in a riot of beautiful curls, and as another maid brought in a gown for her to wear. Corrine noted that it looked sheer, but realized that she most certainly would not be wearing such a thing as that if it indeed were see-through.

As the two aided her into the gown, Corrine looked down to see that the swell of her breast and her pink nipples were absolutely visible through the pale peach silk of the gown.

"I cannot go down in this! I am exposed!"

"Ma'am, don't be alarmed, all of our women wear gowns such as these. You surely noticed when you came into the palace?"

"Of course I noticed, but, I am not of this world, and I can't do this. I just can't"

"But you will look more beautiful than I can ever remember." A deep baritone filled the space, and Corrine looked to the doorway to see Taroth leaning against the frame. His eyes were filled with a lust she had not seen in a very long time.

"Taroth, I can't." Then adding with a glimmer to her eyes, "Maybe for you later tonight, but there is no way I can go downstairs in this gown. I am sure there is something else I can wear?" She looked hopefully at the two maids.

"Ma'am, all our women wear these gowns, so these are the only available."

"Then my own clothing. I have bags on the transport."

"They were not of the quality a woman of your stature should wear, so we discarded them."

"You threw them away? You *threw* all my clothes away?"

The poor maid in front of her cringed, "We received your measurements from Lord Fatel and had gowns made for you of the highest quality. We did not know you would have need of your old clothing. These are gowns any woman on our planet would die to have. Ma'am we meant no disrespect."

Taroth approached Corrine and took her into his arms.

"I know that this is all overwhelming, but you are a magnificent woman, inside and out. Our women wear these clothes to show off their beauty, and yours outshines them all. You will not stand out, as every woman there tonight will be dressed the same. Actually, they will not be dressed as fine as you. Darling, give it a try."

"You think to sway me with words of beauty and that I will be amongst others, but they are evidently sheep following the lead of a male Shepard, as I did not see any males showing off their bodies in such a way. How could an Empire that over a million years old persuade their women to display themselves as such?"

"We are not on Earth, and do not judge what you do not know." For the first time in the entire time she had known this man, anger flared in his eyes. "We respect our women, and they stand at our sides, not behind us. Our women know that their beauty comes from the simple fact of being a female and that they hold power over men because of it. They have never had to fight for simple rights like the women on Earth have and still continue to fight for today, they have simply always had them."

"So, Corrine, please accept the graciousness of my people and don the gowns they made sure to have available to you so that you could feel a part of us instead of different. Accept the gift and show everyone downstairs the beautiful woman I have come to know myself."

"But ...."

"No buts. You will hurt their feelings if you don't graciously accept these gifts." This was not the same man she had known for the last few years. This was a man used to getting what he wanted. Where was the giving, warm lover she had come to know?

Angered by his words, but understanding that he was right about not wearing the gowns, she donned the presented piece with the help of the two maids as Taroth made his exit.

The beautiful peach colored silk that shimmered in the light and as she twirled in front of the mirror that graced almost one wall of the bath, she noticed that the color complemented her well and she looked lovelier than she could ever recall. The high neckline circled her narrow throat and floated over her body like a cloud, yet embraced her body all at the same time. The fabric felt like it had a mind of its own, flowing and hugging its way over her ripe curves.

Afterwards, the first maid brought in another smaller box, and once she opened it, she saw the most incredible jeweled pieces. She gasped as she slid her fingers over what could only be crown jewels.

They raised a necklace up to her chin and rested it against her bosom, and she was thankful to see the piece was large enough that it almost covered her breasts. Heavily beaded and jeweled, it consisted of several large ropes of what looked like gold and each rope was intertwined with the beads and jewels.

A matching set of bracelets and anklets were added, and a minimal amount of makeup was added, and the two women turned her into the mirror again and she stood there breathless, unsure if the woman she gazed in the mirror was even her. The other faces in the mirror smiled down at her, both with admiring glimmers in their eyes.

"His Excellency will be more than pleased with what he sees tonight. You *are* magnificent."



Corrine gazed at herself, never being vain, but tonight finding vanity impossible as she could not pull her eyes from her own image. She had never considered herself a beautiful woman, yet she never thought of herself as ugly either. Plain, simple, average, all those adjectives seemed to fit very well. John had told her over the years how beautiful he thought she was, but she had never put much confidence in his words. She had always thought him sweet for trying to make her feel better.

Tonight she lived up to his words, for she was more beautiful than she ever hoped to be. And she would make him pay for guilting her into wearing the magnificent gown. She would woo and charm every male in the room, make them take notice of her, until he wished he had covered every available ounce of skin. Tonight, she would definitely make him pay.

\* \* \* \*

Taroth sat in the reception room that adjoined the dining room speaking in quiet tones to his brother, Naro. Naro had been but eighteen when Taroth had left for earth, and now a man sat beside him. How he wished he would have been there to see his brothers and sisters grow. He gazed around the room at the family members who had gathered there waiting for dinner to begin. His twin sisters Mina and Mien sat along the edge of the waterfall that graced one wall; speaking to each other in the low tones they had employed all their lives. Being twins they had a special bond that even the family members seemed unnerved at.

Kaya stood staring out the large wall of windows that graced the other side of the space, with his brother Besh cradling her back into his chest, his lips moving across her slender neck. Taroth was happier beyond means that his closest brother had found the love of a woman as special as he. And he was even happier at the sight of Besh's hand stroking her extended belly, full with his child. She was due any day and the family was on tenterhooks waiting for the delivery of the next generation of royal family. Hopefully he and Corrine would usher the next babe into the world, if he had his way with things. His eldest sister, Sigh, came into the room followed by his youngest three brothers, Zain, Mak, and Kain.

Taroth smiled to himself, finally in the bosom of the family he loved so much. Once his memories had returned, he realized how special all these people were to him and that he had missed their presence, even when he could not recall them. The emptiness he felt was for them. Fortunately, he had had someone special to fill part of that void in his soul. If it had not been for Corrine, he was not sure he would have survived the years on Earth. She had been his rock, and he loved her for it immensely.

As if his thoughts had willed her into the room, she entered the room and a hush filled around her. Everyone stopped talking to gaze at the most stunning female to ever grace the space. Taroth could barely recognize the woman he loved, not that she looked that much different, but she oozed a confidence in her appearance he had never seen before. And he liked it. Very much. His groin stirred and heated, imagining the strong woman he saw before him writhing under him in his bed.

Feeling the heat of his stare, she turned to face him, with an evil smile on her lips and a twinkle in her eye. She was up to something, he saw it in the depths of her eyes, and somehow he didn't think he was going to be happy about it. He shook his head as the woman he loved floated towards his younger brothers and introduced herself, flirting heavily.

And to Taroth's dismay, all three of his brothers took the bait and actively flirted back with her. Seeing his woman confidently standing among three obviously aroused males did something to him that he didn't understand. Jealousy? He had never felt that particular emotion

a day in his life. Tarothe continued to watch her, heat filling his loins, both excitement and anger filling him as he watched his brothers all fight for her attentions.

Was she looking his way? He at once realized that she was baiting him. She was trying to make him jealous and was gauging his reaction as he stood there watching the foursome. Deciding then and there he would not rise to her bait, he walked over to his parents and began discussing some trivial affairs with his back to her, showing her that he cared not if she flirted or not.

\* \* \* \*

Corrine gazed over her shoulder one last time and saw that Tarothe was ignoring her. *Maybe I am not as beautiful tonight as I thought I am. Maybe now as Tarothe he will not find me lovely at all. Maybe he won't even love me anymore.*

Just then, an exquisite beauty entered the room, looking around wildly. Once she gazed locked on Tarothe, she let out an anguished scream and ran into his arms, laying kisses all over his face and neck, tears streaming down her face the entire time.

"I have missed you so much husband. I thank the heavens you have returned to me."

Corrine felt as though the last of the air left in her sails had escaped, and tears began to flow down her face. She had sunk into the deep despair of her own self consciousness and seeing the beauty she was up against made her feel even worse. He had ignored her, turned his back on her even. She needed to find a way back to Earth, back to reality.

She bolted from the room and took the stairs as quickly as she could in the unfamiliar gown she wore. The heavy jewelry did not help, weighing her down, causing her to lose her footing here and there. She tried to control the sobs that threatened to escape her body as she flew as fast as she could to her suite so she could release each and every one.

Hearing voices from behind her, she did not even stop to hear what they said. The solitude of her suite was the only thing she could focus on, and once there she would contemplate getting back to Earth. She had been a fool to think this would work, not in a million years.

Once she made the third floor, she rushed down the hallway and jerked open the door to her rooms. She flung herself inside and slammed the door home, using the bolts to lock herself in, where no one could come and invade her pain. Sliding across the floor to the bed, she dropped down like a leaded weight and snuggled into the soft cloth of the bed. And she let every sob out that she had held on her escape from her nightmare downstairs.

Not allowing her one moment of peace to release her pain, she heard slamming on the door and Tarothe's angry voice demanding she let him inside. She did not want him to see her like this.

"Go away Tarothe, go to your wife. She needs you more than I do. Let me be."

"Woman, you have ten seconds to open this door and let me inside or else."

"Or else what? You'll huff and you'll puff and you'll blow my door in? Get real, Tarothe. Just let me have some time and we can make arrangements for me to go home in the morning."

"Home?" A catch sounded in his voice. "Home?" he said again, sounding bewildered.

"Yes, so you can be with your wife and I can be free of all this."

"Ten."

"What was that?" She screamed as something heavy hit the other side of her door, and she backed away in fear. Tarothe was trying to break the door down. He slammed repeatedly into the door until finally, the door split from the frame and he dislodged it, striding victoriously into the room.

"You will not go back to Earth yet, nor will you continue to cry over a woman who means less to me than that poor forsaken door over there. She is not my wife, I never Joined with her. I explained that on the way here."

"Taroth, you have changed since you have had your memories back, you are a new man. You have a whole lifetime of experiences and knowledge back in the matter of a few weeks. I do not wish for you to hold me to you out of some sort of guilt or responsibility. I can see you are not the same man I have spent the last few years of my life with. Don't keep me out of pity. I have my work; I have a life on Earth. And I can go back to it."

"You could go back so easily? You could forget me so easily?"

"I never said it would be easy nor did I say I could forget you."

Taroth took her into his arms, holding her warm body close to his. "Corrine, I love you with all my heart. Regardless of my past and old responsibilities. You are my future. And yes I have changed these past few weeks, mostly because I finally found myself and know my path now. You are my path, don't leave me now."

Just then, D'Na stormed into the room, eyeing both of them and their embrace.

"You are mine, get your hands off the beast."

Indignation filled Corrine, and as quickly as her confidence had fled, it returned ten fold.

"If he is yours why does he choose to fill my bed now that he has his memory back?"

"Watch what you say, wench, because I hold the key to everything. Taroth's son."

Color faded from Corrine's face. Tears formed on her lashes, but she willed herself into not allowing them to fall in the presence of this woman. How could she bring hell into the innocent child's life? What if Taroth's memory had not been clear and it truly was his son? And what if the council didn't believe he had never touched her, and enforced the Joining because of that alone?

Taroth eyed the evil beauty standing in front of him. "Interesting how I never fucked that vile body of yours, yet you claim to have bore my heir." Corrine let out part of the breath she had not realized she was holding.

"Your memories must be clouded, because we made love twice before you left for Earth."

"I remember everything perfectly clear, D'Na. I never touched you, as you repulsed me."

"Irregardless of what you seem to recall, the council married us once the news of your death arrived here."

"A decision I hope to have reversed when I approach council tomorrow."

Shock and despair crossed D'Na's face and quickly dissolved. "You wouldn't! It is against our laws. You cannot be released from the bonds of mating."

"But that's just it. We never Joined in a ceremony and I never touched you physically. The council made a commitment to you, not I. And I am sure the council will see the error of their ways."

"And you would see our son be labeled a bastard?"

"D'Na, you are psychotic, I never touched you, hence he is not my child, hence he *is* a bastard."

The sound of the slap that crossed Taroth's face echoed through the entire floor of the palace. D'Na exited the room, kicking pieces of broken door from her path as she moved.

## Chapter Twelve

"What if the Council does not believe you? What if they refuse your request because of the child?"

"They won't believe her."

"And you know this how?"

"Because the lies this family has told for the years I have gone. Her brother tried to kill me and left me for dead on your planet. Her father has had rumors swirling around him for decades regarding the deaths of many. This family will not win this time."

"And what of the boy?"

"What do I care about this bastard she has tried to pawn off as my own?"

"He is innocent in this. He did not ask to be thrust into the center of this catastrophe."

Taroth sighed deeply, resting on the edge of her bed. "So you would have me send you away, and live my life with a woman I despise for the sake of a child that is not mine? And what of future true heirs. I never even imagined having babies with that foul woman. There is only one woman I want to have babies with."

"What?"

"You heard me."

"You want babies? With me?"

"Yes you silly. As many as we can, as soon as possible. I figure if the council annuls the marriage tomorrow, then we can marry a day or two after that and I can start trying to beget my heir on you."

"Oh, you sound sooo romantic. I've always wanted a marriage proposal that ended with beget my heir on you." Corrine rolled her eyes and turned from him.

Taroth strode up behind her and embraced her back to his chest, tightening his arms around her belly. "I am sorry. I was angry and keyed up from the bitch. I was insensitive. Corrine, I love you with all of my heart and can think of no other wonder than for you to marry me and gift me with lots of little babies running around us."

"Taroth, it sounds lovely, but there is just so much here and I do not know if I can handle it all. There is this woman who claims you, an innocent child caught in the middle, and a life I have built through hard work sitting waiting for me on Earth. You know my career is important to me."

"And I have the perfect solution. My father wants to reappoint me. As the ambassador to Earth. We would build a large compound and employ hundreds of people on the grounds. Those hundreds of people would need medical care from time to time."

"Helping the sick and injured is more fulfilling than being the house doctor to a bunch of workers. If we were on Earth, why couldn't we live near our old home and I could continue to work in the family practice?"

"Because you know as well as I do that no matter how complacent most Earthlings have become about our presence there, there are still factions here and there that have tried to rebel against the Empire. As my wife, you will be a considerable target. Corrine, I am trying to find a compromise here. I don't want to lose you, yet I know how important your career is."

He paused a second before continuing. "And unfortunately, if you decided not to marry me, and we both know how big a mistake that would be, you may even remain a target for some time. So you wouldn't be able to work in a public hospital or medical center for some time. You could still do medicine, but for our people. And I have spoken to the brother of my old physician who died on Earth. He is willing to come and train you in the medical arts of our people, to update your training. That has to interest you some?"

She smiled, thinking of the great knowledge she could gain in training with a doctor of their world. "Okay, Mr. Compromise, add in there that I could hold lectures inside the complex with Earth physicians attending so I can share what I learn and you have a deal."

"As long as they can pass a security check, I don't see why that would be an issue."

Her smile could have lit the entire universe. She knew that he was right in guarding her safety, but if she could learn advances in medicine and then share them with her fellow medical society, she could save more lives than working in any medical facility anywhere across the planet.

She also smiled because she realized that he was willing to compromise with her to keep her in his arms. And she was sure that being the son of the Emperor he was not used to compromising much. She then realized what it was about him that was different. He knew what he wanted, and he reached out and grabbed it, not accepting no for an answer. Maybe there was something to his new personality traits.

\* \* \* \*

Rubbing the cold from her skin with her fingers, Corrine stood outside the massive doors that would lead her to the Ishadarian Council. The people inside held her fate in their hands. Taroth had gone in ahead to make his claim as she was not allowed to enter until he presented her as his true Daya N'goul. And that could only happen if the council relinquished him from the marriage vow they had placed on him in his absence.

Taroth's sister Sigh had remained outside with her for company, but even she had little to say, nerves showed in the way she fidgeted with her gown as she sat in a chair facing the doors.

Corrine stalked up and down the hall outside, waiting for word that she could enter, or any news at all. Each noise that echoed through the doors made both women jump and turn, hoping to see someone open up and usher them inside.

It was taking longer than she could possibly stand it to, and she was getting a bad feeling about the whole situation as the noise level inside the room began to escalate. Knowing that the hateful D'Na was inside with him, only made a bad situation even worse.

Finally, a loud crash sounded and both women jumped, Sigh jumping to her feet, and both of the massive doors creaked open. Taroth stood, a hand on each door, red faced, looking as though he could commit violence. All breath was stolen from Corrine's body and the pair just stood staring at each other, both knowing that to utter the words would break each of them in two.

Tears slid down the curves of Corrine's cheeks, and after a moment of seeing her anguish, Taroth stepped towards her and pulled her into his embrace. As limp as a rag doll, she let him crush her to him, and then felt as his body gave way to sobbing. In five years, she had never seen this man cry and her heart broke even further, if it were possible.

Suddenly, anger swept over her and she pulled away. "Why? Why? Why?" Her screams of anguish could be heard through the massive structure.

He pulled her face to him, cupping both cheeks in his warm fingers, leveling his gaze to hers. "Darling, they refuse to break the vows of marriage because of the child. I have no way in which to prove it is not my child."

As soon as he uttered the words, D'Na came strolling out of the courtroom. Corrine looked in her direction, instantly feeling hatred towards this woman, especially after seeing the smugness written all over her face.

"Well, well, well. It seems as though I got my husband back and you need to release him at once."

"D'Na ... stop. Hurt her further and I will make your life a living hell."

"Oh, as the Earthlings seem to be fond of saying, been there, done that. My life has always been hell, and I doubt you could ever make it worse. But darling, make sure your lovie there knows what the council has ordered for us to do."

Corrine looked searchingly into Tarothe's eyes, but he quickly averted his gaze, unable to look at her.

"What are they to have you do, Tarothe?"

He looked into her eyes, this time pleadingly, as if asking her not to ask the question.

"What? What, Tarothe?"

"We are to Join by the next moon. Six days from now."

Suddenly, Corrine's back straightened. "Then you will officially and completely be hers in six days."

"Yes, harlot, he will be fully mine in six days, but he is mine now, irregardless. So, as I asked politely a moment ago, take your hands off of him."

Corrine turned to D'Na, beginning to respond to her nastiness, when a thought entered her head. She looked at Tarothe, and suddenly began to smile.

"We need privacy. Now."

\* \* \* \*

"Here, will this room do?"

The pair strode into a small chamber off the hallway that was empty. Corrine walked in, almost bouncing on her toes. She turned to face her love.

"Do you mean to tell me that with all of the technology that this Empire has, that there is no such thing as a DNA test?"

Tarothe looked at her and his face went blank.

"Come on, Tarothe. Your people were playing God over a million years ago, mutating monkeys and Ishadarians, splitting DNA, yet you don't have a way to test blood to tell if it matches?"

Realization came to Tarothe's face, but then he frowned. "I thought you did not want to hurt an innocent child?"

"He stands between the man I love and our true happiness together. I know it is not his fault, but if he truly is not yours, then I will not throw away our happiness for him. But concessions will be made for him if I do this. I cannot allow this child to be thrown to the wolves for our future."

Smiling, Tarothe thought for a moment. "Corrine, you may have saved our asses. No, we don't have a test as such, mostly due to the fact that males mate for life and there are no such things as paternity tests in our society. I need to get back into the council before they leave ... request more time to test his DNA ... more time to prove he isn't mine. Maybe then they would allow the dissolution of the vows."

Taroth grabbed Corrine under her arms in a bear hug and lifted her off the ground. "How did I get such a wonderful woman?"

"Luck."

\* \* \* \*

Taroth strode back down the hallway, passing D'Na, and pushed open the doors of the council, with Corrine in tow.

"I request the council hears one more item for their consideration"

Councilwoman Mewsawi stood from her seat. "I think we all have heard quite enough about this situation, Lord Fatel."

"One more thing, please."

"Who is this woman you bring?" Another councilman bellowed.

"She is my Daya N'goul."

Outraged cries arose from the entire council.

"Stop it!" All turned to see the Emperor on the dais above standing, demanding quiet. "Let the boy speak. You all have forced him to suffer, as it is, not giving him a choice. At least give him your ear for one last word."

Mewsawi turned to the Emperor, "We have not made him suffer at all. He had a Daya N'goul and we paired them in his absence for the sake of their child. They ARE his responsibility, and he is charged by the law to accept it."

"But councilwoman, she is not my Daya N'goul. This woman is. And I can prove that the child is not mine."

Mewsawi turned, speculative. "How can you prove it?"

"The same genetic manipulation that created the Earthlings is in use on Earth. They use a test to determine paternity. We can take a sample of blood from both the boy and his mother and me as well, and test it to see if I am in fact his father."

Corrine, hoping to not be out of place felt compelled to add, "I am a doctor on Earth, and these tests are accurate."

Mewsawi looked at them, thoughtfully. "You would not be the one to administer the tests would you?"

Corrine felt relief flood through her. "Of course not, it would be unethical for me to administer the tests."

"Can these tests be done here?"

Taroth looked at Corrine, and back to Mewsawi. "I am not sure if we are equipped to do them here, but we could get back to Earth and do the tests there. You can even have a wi mia from our world accompany and oversee the testing, if that would make you more comfortable."

"How long?"

"We would need time to get to Earth, the tests take a few days. We may need more than the six days before the Joining ceremony."

"Leave us, we will call you back momentarily."

The pair exited the chamber and walked into the hallway, to meet D'Na standing sentry by the doors.

D'Na had fury pouring from her eyes directly into Corrine. "What have you done?"

"I reminded your husband that there are tests to prove who the father of your child is on Earth."

D'Na turned as white as a sheet, and immediately fainted.

\* \* \* \*

The heavy doors creaked open and all parties were asked inside. Mewsawi stood and announced that the Joining ceremony was to be delayed until DNA tests could be conducted on Earth and the results reviewed by the council.

D'Na made a speech, imploring the council to stop the course of action, but luckily for the loving couple, her words fell on deaf ears. The four were to go directly to Earth with the council wi' mia and two councilmen to conduct the tests.

Using the Brox Catha, a device that would allow the group to travel to Earth with their essence traveling through space witnessing the glory of the cosmos, they arrived on Earth a scant few hours later. Upon arrival, Corrine had tears in her eyes, after seeing the grandeur of the heavens and Earth. She was not able to see everything, having to focus on Taroht so her essence would couple with his and she would not be lost in the universe. But she had witnessed enough to know that she would give anything to be trained to use it properly so she could experience the beauty first hand.

Corrine had suggested traveling to the medical school in which she attended, as it was connected to one of the largest and most prominent medical facilities in the world. Upon entering, the councilmen explained the situation and demanded immediate testing of the three.

Blood was taken and the tests rushed. Most of the group were sent back to Hara D'Noll, with the two councilmen and the wi' mia remaining to oversee the testing and await to return the results.



## Chapter Thirteen

Corrine and Taroht had spent two agonizing days awaiting the word from the Council. The wi' mia and councilmen had arrived back and immediately went behind closed doors in the chambers, so the pair still did not know of the results. Taroht was clear-headed and knew it not to be his child, but Corrine was not quite so confident. She knew that many head trauma sufferers had blank spots in their memories, and what if his coupling with D'Na was just that?

Even so, the two prepared for the eventual decision and Taroht held council with his brother Besh, coming up with a plan for the innocent boy entangled in the web of deceit his family had created.

The Emperor and Empress were tied up in the Council meetings and could not speak to Taroht when they exited, until a decision was made. The Emperor sat gravely at the head of the dinner feast each night, not looking at either Corrine or Taroht, and barely speaking a word to anyone. The man looked a decade older in just the past few days. The return of his eldest son should have brought him much joy, but as of now, it had only brought him more pain and anguish.

Finally, the Council opened its doors three days later, after many discussions and arguments. Taroht and Corrine were called before them. Corrine felt stronger that she had been called in unlike the time before. She was recognized as something in this man's life finally. Unfortunately, D'Na was there as well.

Councilwoman Mewsawi stood from her chair on the high dais, looking down at the pair, with grief in her eyes.

"As both of you are now well aware, a Joining has never been undone in the millions of years of our history. We are well aware that the Joining was not consummated, and that you were not a part of the decision to Join. We are now also aware through this testing that the boy is NOT your son. But we have the problem of Daya N'goul. There has never been an instance, ever, that has given one man two Daya N'goul. And our laws firmly state that once you find your Daya N'goul, you are to Join with her after the appropriate time period."

The Councilwoman went on. "If you had returned to Hara D'Noll, you would have Joined with D'Na Jin. So regardless of this new evidence, we are siding with D'Na Jin. She was your first Daya N'goul, so we must find in her favor."

"Even if she used herbal remedies to create the effects of Daya N'goul in Taroht?"

All eyes turned to see Dar Jin enter the center of the chamber. D'Na stood shocked, as many thought Dar to have been dead, unable to answer his claims.

Councilwoman Mewsawi turned to him. "You have proof of this Dar Jin?"

"I have the words of my own sister, spoken to me after the alleged death of her mate. She told me that she had fabricated the symptoms of Daya N'goul in order for her to be elevated in society and aid our family in gaining the respect we lost from our father's unfortunate actions."

D'Na rushed to Dar, hitting him with her feet, her fists, anything she could reach him with until a guard pulled her away. She screamed, seemingly turned mad, shouting obscenities

and garbled speech. Until one last clear thought came from her lips. "And do not forget to tell them how you left him for dead."

Dar turned to Tarothe, tears in his eyes. "Yes, it is true. I left him for dead, as I thought he was. When he admitted to me he thought he had found his true Daya N'goul, I was crushed. I had always wanted to be from his family and not my own. In one way I was finally going to be his true brother, and he was pulling it away from me. I didn't want my family to suffer more, so I stunned him, hoping to smuggle him back aboard the shuttle before he embarrassed us all by bringing the Earth woman back with him."

A sob escaped Dar's lips. "I was not thinking straight, and didn't realize there was little ground behind him. The force of the stunner pushed him back to the edge of the cliff, and he fell over. I tried to grasp his wrist, to pull him up, but I could not. He was stunned, he was not conscious to help me, and I could not pull his weight back up and over the cliff." A tear slipped down Dar's face. "I looked down at your battered and broken body, thinking I had killed my best friend. And I was afraid. I let that fear rule me. I left you and for that alone, I never deserved your friendship or brotherhood."

Tarothe stepped closer to Dar. "If only you had realized that you did not need me to Join with your sister to have been my brother. I would have still been there for you through thick and thin even if I had not Joined her. I would have done my best to avoid more rumor and speculation for your family by keeping you at my side. You were my brother. Yet you left me for dead. You destroyed our friendship more in that one moment than anything I could have done."

"I know what I did was wrong. I have tortured myself these years past thinking I had ended your life. I stand here today, giving you and this Council the truth in hopes I can in some small way give you something back of the life I took from you. If it causes my death or my incarceration, so be it. You were the best thing in my life, and I walked away when you needed me most. You will never know how sorry I am for that."

Tarothe looked into Dar's eyes. He saw he spoke the truth. "Dar, if you had not done what you had done, I would not have had these past happy years with the woman I loved. I will never forget what you did against me, but I ... I forgive you."

Dar looked into his friend's eyes. He saw regret and sadness in Tarothe. But his forgiveness was something he was not expecting and did not feel he deserved. Dropping to his knees, Dar wept openly. Corrine watched this huge fierce looking man, and felt sorry for him. The Council had been quiet through the whole of the conversation, watching and waiting for all of the truth to finally be revealed.

Suddenly, a scream could be heard from the opened Council doors. D'Na ran into the room, a deadly dagger aimed straight for Corrine's chest. Shots rang from behind D'Na, and her limp form fell atop Corrine. All turned to see Dar Jin with a blaster in his hands. He had shot his own sister.

Bodies ran around the chamber, guards pounced on D'Na, loud screaming and discussion heard through the cavernous room. Pure chaos unfolded in the moments after D'Na attacked, and Tarothe did his best to pull the bodies apart. A limp D'Na was pulled from Corrine's quiet form. Her eyes were closed and blood pooled on her chest.

Tarothe pulled her to him, tears welling in his eyes. He had gone through all this Hell for nothing?

"Tarothe?"

Tarothe leaned back to glimpse her face. She was alive, eyes fluttering.

"You are hurt?"

"No." She looked down to her chest and the blood lying there. She touched her chest seeking a wound. "It must be her blood, I am unhurt. Except when the cow fell on me. I think she bruised my entire body."

Laughing, he pulled her into his arms.

"Taroth Fatel?" The loud booming voice of Councilwoman Mewsawi could be heard over the din of the riotous voices in the chamber.

Taroth rose, bringing Corrine up with him, and strode to the front of the group.

"Ah, are you both unhurt?"

"Yes Councilwoman. We are fine."

"Unfortunately for D'Na, we cannot say the same." Came the retort from her brother, blaster still in his hand, as he walked up to the couple. A look of remorse seemed to sweep his face. A guard came forward and took the weapon from his hands and bound those hands behind his back.

"Considering the accusations of her brother, even though he killed her before we could investigate further." Mewsawi turned to stare at Dar, who looked even more broken, before turning back to the couple. "As well as the fact that she bore a son she claimed as yours when we know in fact that he was not, I think I can speak for the Council and release you from the bonds of the Joining we inflicted upon you. You are hereby free to wed your true Daya N'goul."

Again turning to Dar, the Councilwoman continued. "For your actions on Earth, an investigation will be forthcoming as to what truly happened. Although Lord Taroth Et Fatel may have forgiven you, it does not mean you will not face judgment for your crimes. Also, claims have been leveled against you for your actions against Lord Besh Fatel and Princess D'Hanna. As far as the actions today, I believe all in attendance will admit that you prevented the attempted murder of Lord Taroth Et Fatel's mate, and those actions were of course in defense of an innocent female. You will be incarcerated for your crimes pending the outcome of said investigation."

Another Council guard rushed to the other side of Dar, and turning him in chains, he faced Taroth and Corrine.

"I truly am sorry for what has happened. I have wished to go back in time to change what I did. But for now the truth is out, and I am free from those bonds. I will get whatever punishment I deserve. The only thing I ask for is for you to be happy."

Taroth looked him in the eye as he spoke, hearing the sincerity of his words. He ached for the loss of his best friend, knowing that this man in front of him was a good man deep inside who had just lost his way. But even so, they would never be friends again, and that tore Taroth's soul apart.

He continued to watch as the guards pulled Dar through the heavy wooden doors on their way to the prisons below.

\* \* \* \*

"So, they finally caught up with you, did they boy?"

Dar had finally settled in, finding a resting spot on the small cot in which to consider the events of the day. Deep in thought it took him a moment to realize the words for him, and that they were the voice of his father.

*Would he never be rid of the vicious old man?*

"Father, leave me be. Haven't you done enough to me over the years?" Dar closed his eyes and thought a moment before adding. "No, nevermind, I take that back. There isn't

anything else for you to do to me to hurt me. I have spoken the truth, and I am free from the strings you have used to pull me in the directions you chose. I am done listening to you."

"But what about me?" T'Neel walked past his father's cell to stand in front of his own. "Your truth may have set you free, but it may imprison me. I refuse to go to prison just because you were too weak to hold your tongue. I witnessed you crying in the center of the Council chamber and it nearly made me vomit."

"He cried?" Dar heard his father chuckle. "I knew that boy was weak. I at times had wished that D'Na had been a son instead. She had all the balls between them."

"Evidently not enough balls since you would go to her room in the middle of the night when you were drunk. I wonder *father*, were you too drunk to recall your actions or did you come up with some great reason why it was okay to fuck your own daughter? You incestuous leech, you actually had the nerve to ask her who the damned father of her brat was, when you had to know it was the seed of your own loins. I am truly amazed the boy isn't retarded considering the in-breeding. I mean come on *daddy*, I know you don't think anyone is good enough for the damned Jin line, but incest is a bit over the top."

Dar wished he could see the look on his father's face, but if half the horror he saw reflected in T'Neel's face was apparent on Dak's visage, he was happy enough. Silence permeated the area like a thick fog, thick enough to choke them all.

Once T'Neel recovered, she turned to smile at Dak.

"How did you get in here, T'Neel?" Dar spit out.

"I have been working on your father's defense for some time now. I am allowed to visit once a week to inform him of the work I am doing on his behalf. And just another little truth, Dak, I haven't been working on a defense, but a way to bury you in all the deceptions you have created. This couldn't be anymore perfect. Dak, I knew you to be a sick twisted fuck who enjoyed hitting his women in bed, but I never knew just how sick and twisted you really were. I took the beatings, knowing full well that one day I would kill you in your sleep. Of course once I had reached the level of power I desired and deserved. Now I have another way. D'Na is dead and gone, you are both imprisoned, so now who will care for the boy? The last of the Jin line, the only other family that could legally take the throne. All I have to do is get the boy and I won't let either of you get in my way."

T'Neel raised her hand out of her jacket, a blaster in her hand.

"How did you smuggle that in here?"

"I've got my ways. Prison guards don't seem to get out much. A little blowjob will do wonders. Now who should I kill first?"

Dar stepped to the back of his cell as he watched the woman turn toward his father. She aimed the blaster at what should have been his father's chest and fired two shots. Smiling and turning towards Dar, she leveled the blaster a second time, aiming straight for him.

"You should thank me for ending his life. Something you would have never had the balls to do. And kudos on shooting your sister in the back, takes a real man to shoot a woman in the back. As you can see, I faced your father down, as I am doing for you."

"Oh, you are so much more of a than I am, T'Neel. Two unarmed men, bound and chained in a cell, that takes real guts."

"Maybe I should make you turn, so you know how D'Na felt?"

"You really are a bitch."

"Yes, I am." She charged the blaster and checked her aim. "Wanna see how big of a bitch?"

As she depressed the switch, voices came through the door to the hall. She got off one shot before she had to run to escape.

## Chapter Fourteen

Taroth held his new wife in his arms in the large bed within his palace at Dsh'Attar. This truly was his favorite place in the Empire. The quiet was perfect for a "honeymoon" as the Earthlings called the time right after their Joining ceremony. He also wanted to introduce his new mate to his second father, Eetu, who lived on this world. Eetu was also to thank for the safety of his brother Besh and his Princess D'Hanna. There was much for the two men to talk about.

But before all that, he wanted to shower his new bride with attention, as he knew taking the new Ambassadorship on Earth would take much of his time, especially in its infancy. For now, he would live in the moment and give Corrine as much of himself as he could.

He held her sleeping form in his arms, looking down at the serenity he saw in her face. Knowing that she was finally his and they were safe from the Jin threat made him all that much more complete. He was not sure how his father would handle the two Jin men, but now was not the time to consider that. Now was time for him to love his woman.

Leaning down to kiss her nose, she stretched in her sleep. He knew that she had been worn out last night as she drifted off into slumber after several hours of slow love-making. She was so strong, and always seemed to have this desire to be in control. Yes, she was fiercely independent, and that did make him love her so much more. But there were times for her to put all her faith in him, that he would protect her. She was almost there, but he still sensed a slight fear of completely letting go.

He had to make her completely open up to him, completely relax, and let him take charge if she wanted to know pure unadulterated pleasure. Spying her silk robe laying over the chair gave him a few ideas. He slowly pulled his arm from under her shoulders and lifted from the bed enough to grasp the belt from her robe. Lying back down in bed, he grasped both wrists, softly tying each with a length of her belt before tying the opposite end to the headboard affixed to the wall. After tying her hands tightly, but not so tight as to hurt her, he trailed a path of kisses down the sensitive inner arm areas of both..teasing and tickling her to entice her to awaken.

Eyes fluttered open, she smiled as she spied his light kisses trailing along her neckline and chest. She moved her hands to twine in his hair, only to find her hands bound.

"Umm ... what's this," she asked, not wanting to sound too afraid, but the quiver in her voice belying the truth.

"This is how I make you give up your precious control for one hour. Or two. I haven't yet decided how long I will make you suffer."

"Suffer?"

"My sweet, you know full well I would rather die than hurt you. But you refuse to give in to me completely. Until you do, until you relinquish all control to me, you will never really know true satisfaction. I want you to feel my heart, my soul without you controlling the situation."

"Control is all I have. Without it, I would never have gotten to where I am today. After everything I went through in my youth, I had to protect myself."

"That is what I am for. I am your protector. You are no longer that scared little girl. You are my strong woman. But for today, let me be the strong one. Let me love you completely."

With that, he went back to the trail of fire he was leaving down her body. Moving back to her neck, he trailed kisses down to the middle of her stomach, licking inside her belly button, while his hands reached her mid calf and drew his fingertips up her thighs, gliding up further to her hips. He continued to nibble further south, over her mons and he nuzzled the nearly hairless mound.

Rotating his fingers to her inner thighs, he pushed her legs apart and rested on his stomach between her opened legs. "How beautiful you are."

"I have seen everything there is down there, and there is nothing beautiful about it."

"You are so wrong. You looked at it from a clinical standpoint. It was something that needed fixing. I am looking at it from the lover's standpoint. This is the spot I can give you the most pleasure. I can enjoy its taste, feel, and smell. I can fill it and join you in that pleasure. And I can fill it with my seed and watch my children come to life from it. So, to me, this is one of the most beautiful spots on your entire body."

The quiet release of breath was all the answer he needed from her. She accepted his words without argument. It was a start.

He slowly trailed circles over the skin of her sex as he spoke to her, igniting her senses with both sound and touch. She so wanted to run her fingers through his hair and persuade him to taste her. Now, before she died of longing.

As if he knew what she needed, he brought his mouth close to her sex, but instead of tasting of her as she needed; he blew warm air over her sensitive skin. He continued to draw lazy circles over her labia, close, but not close enough for what she needed from him. He rubbed further up her labia, closer to her clit, where she would die if he did not touch soon.

More warm air whistled around her already heated sex, and the circling finger came close to her clit, but then circled further south. She felt the bed tip, not even realizing she had shut her eyes in pleased torture. As she opened her eyes, scared he would leave her in this predicament, she saw him grasp a bottle of massage oil that he often used to make her passage slick to ensure she felt no pain from his enormous size. She had come very used to his presence, but he was still much larger than any man she had ever seen.

A glint in his eye scared her as he turned to look at her. "What will you be doing with that?"

"Just close your eyes and feel."

"I can't do that."

"Yes you can, or I can make you."

"How do you intend on doing that?"

He opened a drawer beside the bed and pulled out a sleep mask and pulled it over her head. "That's how. I just want you to feel. Focus on your body, and my fingers ... my lips ... my teeth ... my cock..., whatever it is that touches you and makes you feel good."

"And what if I want you to stop?"

"Do you want me to stop, Corrine?"

Corrine wanted to let the fear win, to just tell him yes, she wanted him to stop. But she really didn't want him to. The slight edge of fear, of not knowing what he would do to her, warred with her inner knowledge that he would never harm her in any way. That this man had

made her feel more than any other person ever had. And if she told him yes, that she wanted to stop, she knew she would truly be missing out on the heights of pleasure.

Weakly, a whisper so low that he could barely hear her, she answered him. "No."

"What was that darling? I need to know I am not going against your wishes here. Do you want me to stop touching you?" He dipped his finger in the oil and lazily stroked the nipple closest to him while awaiting her answer.

She could barely think, let alone come up with words to answer him. Lightening arced through her body at his touch, as it was magnified by 100 due to the blindfold and binds on her wrists.

"No, I don't want you to stop."

"Then I won't." He lowered his head to the oiled nipple, sucking it into his mouth and clamping down with his teeth, not hard enough to cause her true pain, but for her to feel to her core. He released the nipple with a pop, and was quiet for several moments. It seemed like a lifetime to her as she awaited him to touch her ... anywhere.

Finally, the lazy circles were back on her labia and the silkiness of the oil made the touch so much more erotic. The light touch of the finger glided down until it was beside her puckered hole and then it was gone. Then oil was drizzled lightly on her, and the finger returned, slowly ringing the tight hole on her bottom. Her breathing became shallow and she tensed, never having known this sensation, she knew not what to expect.

Slowly a tip of the finger tested the entrance, and pushed carefully inside. The stretching feel of just one finger enflamed her. He could seem to do no wrong to her body. She had never thought that this kind of stimulation would heat her blood, had shied away from it with other partners, but she could not say no to this man. Innately knowing what her body needed, he took her to the edge and pushed each time they made love.

A weight fell across her chest as he leaned in to take a nipple into his mouth. Suckling her deep, his other hand moved to find her clit and both hands created a rhythm, slowly sliding the oiled finger in and out of her while rubbing circles over her hard bead in time with each other. Sensations heightened and threatened to bubble over, as she felt her climax near. Her back arched, feeding her breast to him as she moved her sex to make him go faster, to build the sensation to a fever pitch.

One more moment, she rushed towards her peak, only to have him stop. Releasing her nipple from his mouth, he stopped the motions of his fingers and then cooed into her ear. "You can go higher than that."

He carefully pulled his finger from her, as she moaned in protest. He lifted from the bed for a moment, leaving her alone, which she hoped would not be for long. After an eternity it seemed, she felt his weight back on the bed, and he carefully helped her roll over to her knees, blindfold and binds intact. She grasped the headboard to steady herself, as she felt the oil drizzled over her ass.

Large palms rubbed the oil into her cheeks and finally began massaging it into her sex. More attention was given to her puckered hole, and the finger was returned. Kisses lined her spine as the finger continued its movements, pumping in and out of her tender flesh. Wetness dripped from her overripe sex, and drizzled down the inside of her thighs.

Her orgasm was quickly approaching again, and she would not allow him to stop her this time. His other hand slipped over her hip to find her clit once more and the hands found a rhythm again, bringing her so near her climax. Only to stop once more.

"Damn you."



A chuckle rushed from his lips. "What was that darling?"

"Don't do that again."

"Don't do what? Touch you?"

"Don't stop."

"Ask me nicely and maybe I won't next time."

The blasted man wanted her to beg! She had never begged a man and refused to, regardless of the blindfold and the binds. He paused in his actions, awaiting her response. She said nothing, so he pulled away from her body, lifted his weight from the bed and left her there in the center of the bed, bound and blindfolded, and very, very angry.

"I can wait as long, if not longer, than you can to ask me nicely."

She growled at him. "I don't beg."

"Maybe you should learn how. Because I won't lay one finger on you until ask me nicely to make you come."

"Release me."

"Not on your life. You will lay there, your body near completion and you will beg me to make you come. It is about submission, and giving up your control. By begging me, you are admitting I am in control of your body. So you will lie there until you submit."

"I can't do that."

"Yes you can. And you will."

Growling low in her throat, her anger apparent in her face, he saw her clenched jaw. He knew she was warring with herself, trying to decide what to do, and if she would submit to him.

"Darling, remember that submission works both ways. I don't demand anything I am not freely willing to offer back to you."

She had turned her head towards him, and he saw her jaw unclench at his words. The sway of her bottom also told him how ready she was for him to slide his cock deep into her sex. He could smell her cream from where he stood several feet away from her. His cock was so hard at this point, he feared he would explode before he could even get two inches inside her.

"Please." Her whispered word was almost too low for him to hear.

"Please what?"

"Please let me come. Please fuck me. Please, before I die from the need."

A smile lit his face as he watched her writhing in need for him. He reigned in his pleasure, knowing he needed to hold back for her pleasure. This was all about her. He sidled back onto the bed behind her, lifting her ass back up into the air. He palmed a small amount of oil again, rubbing it around his fingers and then smearing it onto her cunt and her ass. The heat alone coming from her sex was enough to make him shoot his load.

He palmed one cheek into his hand, and slowly slid his thumb into the puckered bud facing him. He braced the base of his cock with his fist and rubbed his cock along the opening of her slit, her juices wetting the tip and dripping down his length. Slowly he entered her, inch by agonizing inch, as his thumb rotated inside her rear, giving her over sensitized flesh exactly what she needed. Once he was fully seated inside her, she released an earthy sob of appreciation, and needed her ass into his groin, demanding he take action.

He just sat there, unmoving, trying to control himself. She felt so good; he knew he could not last long inside her. Her rotating hips demanded he move inside her, and he refused she take flight without him. He grasped her hip to steady her motions, and after another moment of gathering himself, he slid the hand around to palm her mound and find her beaded clit. His

mouth clamped onto her neck, biting and nibbling, trailing little kisses as he began his symphony on her body.

As soon as his fingers found her clit, she exploded, screaming his name for the entire palace to hear. He knew she had more within her, so he continued his ministrations, pumping ferociously into her pussy while touching every inch of skin he could lay his hands and lips on. When he nibbled her neck at the base of her hairline, along her spine she came undone again, her juices covering his cock. It was the last straw and he howled his release while bathing her womb with his seed.

Once he regained conscious thought, he released her hands from the silken trap and pulled the mask from her face. He then pulled her limp form across his chest, neither having regained full use of their lungs. Sweat glistened from their bodies and the combination of their release filled the air. He had never felt so complete. He then looked down into her sweet face and saw a tear escape down her cheek.

"What's this?" He asked as he wiped away the tear.

"It was all just a tad overwhelming."

"Did I push too far?" He would never hurt her, and it pained him to see her upset.

"No. You didn't. I have never in my life felt what I just felt. I need you to push me. Make me do what I am too afraid to admit I need."

He warmed at her praise, and pulled her tightly to him, kissing her brow. She had finally given up her control, and she had liked it.

"I love you Corrine."

"And I love you, Taroht."

The End