

THE MISSION

by

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Dedication

To LB

Prologue

*Kingdom of AEssyria, 2107 A.D.
a planet millions of miles from earth*

The brothel was stuffy, hot and filled with the smell of cheap perfume. Sargon pushed past the crowd obscuring the entrance. A young AEssyrian soldier glared at him, but once he noticed Sargon's admiral insignia, he bowed his head in respect.

Breaking through the crowd, the madam rushed up to the admiral. She knew a big payday when she saw one and was eager to impress this important guest. She was showing her years and the thick makeup she wore only served to make her look clownish. She wore a long patterned dress and a thick bunch of necklaces around her throat. Smiling broadly, she said, "What is your pleasure, Lord? What can I get for you after such a long journey in space?"

Sargon looked past her to the many whores hanging around the bar. There were all types of women, from the very short to the startlingly tall. None of them held any interest for him.

"I was looking for something a little different. What do you have that's alien?"

The madam placed her hand on his back and rubbed it in a slow circle. She was close to a profit and she knew it. “I have something very special, Lord. A human woman. She’s no young thing now, but she’s experienced and willing to do anything your heart desires.”

Sargon was intrigued. “Human you say?”

“That’s right. If you’ll come right this way, I’ll introduce you to her.”

The admiral followed the madam up a flight of stairs and down a narrow hallway. She came to a door with a large blue planet painted on it. The crude writing beneath it said *Earth Woman*. The picture resembled a child’s drawing. The madam knocked hard.

The door opened slowly, revealing a candlelit room and a large bare mattress beyond. There was one bedside table and faded red curtains pulled closed against the night. The woman was attractive enough, but had the weathered look of someone who’d lived this life much too long. She smiled at him, but her eyes were dead. Stepping back from the door, she said, “Come in.”

Sargon paid the madam and came into the room. He hated himself for being here a moment after he’d entered. A life in the fleet was a hard and lonely one. In his six hundred years, he’d been married a few times, but none of them lasted. A relationship required proper tending to stay healthy, and he was never home. Well, at least now that he was retired, perhaps he could find someone to build a life with.

The prostitute waited for him by the bed, looking slightly impatient. “How do you want it?” she asked.

“What’s your name?”

“What do you want it to be?”

Sargon thought back to the childish scrawl on her bedroom door. He wondered if the woman had painted it herself.

The woman opened the collar of her dress to reveal the tops of her breasts. “Why don’t you just call me Nina?” she suggested.

He moved toward her and she unbuttoned the rest of her dress.

“Don’t take it off,” he said, knowing this wouldn’t last long. “Just lift up your dress.”

The woman shrugged, bent over the bed and pulled her dress up, revealing her naked hips. Sargon came up behind her and pushed his cock deep inside her. She grunted and pumped her body back, eager for him to come and be done with it.

“What are you doing here?” he asked.

“I wanted to see the universe. I didn’t realize I wouldn’t be able to find a job, and wound up doing this. Guess it doesn’t really matter now, right?”

“You could go back to Earth.”

“Don’t have the money,” she said, looking back at him. “Is there anything I can do to help you get off?”

Sargon pulled out without an orgasm. This was the most unfulfilling sexual encounter he’d ever had. His erection was already beginning to fade.

The woman turned around, looking concerned. “Maybe if I sucked you off?”

“No,” he said, grabbing her hands as she reached for his groin. “No, thank you.” He took out a roll of bills and handed them to her. “Take this and buy yourself a ticket home.”

The woman fell into a shocked silence. Gone was the brazen confidence she’d shown a few minutes ago. She glanced at

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the money, then stared at him with glassy eyes. “I don’t need your pity,” she said with a voice on the verge of tears.

“Don’t consider it an act of pity,” he said, opening the door to leave. “Consider it an act of mercy.”

* * * *

Mystic Palm Apartments

Republic of California, 2107 A.D.

9:22 P.M.

Captain Tara Scott sat on the couch in her apartment flipping the gold porno disk through her fingers. She stared at the blank screen ahead of her, steadying her nerves for what she was about to watch. Finally taking a deep, nervous breath, she placed the disk in the player and pushed the start button on the remote.

For a moment, there was nothing—just a blank screen. Then the images began.

The human woman was in a well-lit bedroom completely naked. She had medium length dark hair and a thin body with large breasts. Her pubic area was completely shaved. She was the kind of woman who looked as though she done this a million times and was completely comfortable with it. As Tara watched her, she got the feeling she’d seen the woman before in other adult films. She seemed very familiar, with her enormous round breasts and that air of generic sexuality that worked well in all porno flicks. The woman moved over to the bed and opened her legs for the camera, playing with her sex and smiling at someone who’d just entered the room.

A large, heavily muscled green back blocked the camera for a moment. When the shot finally captured him, Tara could see he was a young AEssyrian male. He stood somewhere around six foot four, and had the bulk of a bodybuilder. His entire body was a sculpture of

thick, detailed veins and muscles. His face was cool and hard with a classic handsome edge, and when he smiled, she noticed his mouth was filled with sharp, predatory teeth. His eyes were a beautiful metallic green, with catlike vertical pupils. Between his legs was the most impressive thing about him, a massive fourteen-inch penis, erect and ready, its fleshy mating spine displayed prominently down the underside of its length.

The woman lay back on the bed and opened her legs to welcome him. He moved over her, his long forked tongue stroking her pale flesh. She squirmed, groaning under his touch. As he moved up alongside her, it became clearer how much larger the AEssyrian was. His long fingers caressed down her body, finding her wet little secret. He toyed with her gently, separating the outer lips and exposing the swollen button of her clit. Tara noticed his nails, normally long and sharp on this alien species, were cut down to nubs. He obviously was a professional sex performer like the woman.

Tara glanced away from the screen and sipped her cola. Her skin felt hot and flushed, and her heart was speeding up. Could she make love to one of these aggressive alien males? She swallowed a few sips, she'd do what she had to for this mission, and if she had to fuck an alien, then that's what she was going to do.

When she looked back at the screen, the couple was having sex. The woman was on her side with her back to the AEssyrian and her left leg resting on his thigh. The position gave the camera a clear view of the penetration and Tara felt her mouth fall open. The alien had completely filled the woman's pussy and was slowly pumping in and out of her slick sex. Tara examined the woman's face for any sign of discomfort, but all she found there was a look of complete bliss. The AEssyrian growled out something in his native tongue and the woman began to come, her cries taking on a feverish pitch.

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Tara turned off the disk. She sat there in the dark quiet of her living room listening to the echoes of lust still bouncing around in her head. *I can do this*. She tried to talk herself out of her apprehension. Finishing her soda, she got up and walked into the bathroom to take a nice cold shower.

* * * *

*The Federal Space Exploration Committee
Conference Room A
8:00 A.M.*

Five years.

The contract called for five years to set up the U.S. Embassy on AEssyria, no callbacks. That's all she had to do to be rich for the rest of her life, five years on the most violent planet in the sector. Heck, she could do five years. It'd be easy and when she thought about it, five years wasn't very long at all.

The interview room was gray and more depressing than Tara had envisioned. In front of her was a long metal folding table where two *Federal Space Exploration Committee* officials sat, Mister Miles Stanton and Miss Emily Johnson. No pictures hung on the walls nor was there other furniture in the room, except for the folding chair she sat on. The floor was tiled in a drab black and white checkered pattern, and smelled like fresh wax. Mr. Stanton was a balding man who chose to comb his few remaining locks lengthwise over his dome skull. He looked to be somewhere in his mid-fifties. Miss Johnson had gray hair curled in a style not seen since the 1950s and appeared closer to seventy. They both wore the severe expression of people making a decision neither liked very much.

After a long deliberation, Mr. Stanton stopped flipping through Tara's file, cleared his throat and placed it in front of Miss Johnson to his left. She looked at it like it was a dead rat. Then she looked up at Tara with watery blue eyes.

"You've never been on an exploration mission before," she said, her voice crackling like brittle paper. "Why don't you take an assignment less challenging? Why choose something this dangerous?"

Tara rubbed the sweat of her palms off on her pant legs. She couldn't tell them the truth. That she needed the money desperately. They'd never give her the assignment if they knew. She shrugged and leaned back in her chair, hoping she looked relaxed. "I love a good challenge and I need the experience."

Mr. Stanton leaned forward with his elbows on the table. He bared his teeth in a sinister smile. He looked like he wanted to bite her. "This is more than just a challenge, Captain Scott. Some people would consider this suicide."

Tara tried to smile, but failed. "Mr. Stanton I think you're being a little overdramatic—"

"On the contrary, I don't think I'm being dramatic enough," he said.

"Listen," Tara said. "I know it's risky, I know the tour is five years, I've read all the reports, but I feel I'm up for this. Please don't count me out."

Mr. Stanton leaned back in his chair. The harsh overhead light made his bald spot glow like a small moon. He glanced over at Miss Johnson. Her face was frozen in a brooding frown. For a fleeting moment, Tara thought they might be right. Maybe she *was* making a mistake. *What if I get there and it's as bad as they say?*

After a few long moments, Miss Johnson shook her head like a cat getting a bad taste out of its mouth. “I can’t condone this, but it’s your call, Mr. Stanton.”

As if on cue, he stood up and paced with his hands behind his back. “You understand that once you’re on your way there is no turning back. This is a Sector Four assignment. There will be minimal help on this God-forsaken planet, and the two crew members assigned to help you won’t have any experience with the AEssyrians either.”

Tara suppressed her excitement. *He’s going to let me go! I can’t believe it. I’ll be so fucking rich by the time I get back, I’ll never have to work again!* She met his iron gaze. “I understand, sir.”

“I’ll be monitoring your logs to make sure you’re practicing at the range every day until you leave. I want two hours minimum, do you understand? If I don’t see that, you’re going to be scrapped.”

Tara nodded. “Two hours every day until I ship out, no problem.”

He stopped pacing and his mouth moved into a grim line. “You will need to have sex with them, you know.”

“Yes sir, I know.”

“I’m not doing you any favors here, Captain Scott. You’d better prepare yourself for this mission because when and *if* you come back, you’ll never be the same.”

“I assure you, Mr. Stanton, I’ll be ready and I know exactly what I’m getting myself into,” Tara reassured him.

Miss Johnson coughed a harsh laugh. “Oh no you don’t, young lady. If you had any idea what was waiting for you on AEssyria, you’d tear that rank off your chest and never set foot in a *Federal Exploration* building again. I was on that planet a

few years ago when they arranged all this with their king and, I'll be very frank with you, it's no place for a human woman."

Tara sat there feeling her guts turn to ice. These people were so full of crap. *How many hours had either of them logged off Earth since the Stone Age?* She watched Miss Johnson and frowned. *How did these crazy old coots get in charge of the selection committee anyway?* All she wanted to do was get the hell out of here and start packing for her trip.

She flashed Miss Johnson her most confident smile. "Don't worry about me, ma'am. I appreciate your concern but I'll be fine, really."

Mr. Stanton picked up Tara's file, tucked it under his arm and made his way toward the sliding door. "With an attitude like that, Captain Scott, I know you won't be. But life is its own teacher, isn't it? I wish you the best of luck."

Miss Johnson got up, her chair scraped metallic against the floor. She walked with slow measured steps toward the exit. She paused at the door. Without turning around, she said, "I guess Mr. Stanton doesn't like you very much." She gingerly touched the doorframe with her fingertips. Her delay in passing through made the yellow obstruction light blink angrily above. "If he did, he would never have allowed you to set foot on that hellhole."

She disappeared down the hall and the light above the door turned green.

Chapter 1

Tara waited all morning for her orders to go through and her advance to post into her bank account. She sat in the Third National Bank lobby for over two hours, waiting. The security staff, suspicious of her behavior, had dedicated one camera just to her and her vigil. She must have looked pathetic, sitting there by herself, jumping up every five minutes to scan her retina and look up her balance. The frequent scans had given her a nasty headache that was just starting to fade as she collected her money. After counting it out twice, it was time to go shopping.

Her first stop was Blade's World of Weapons. Blade's was famous for having everything she could wish for, legal or not. They supplied everyone from cops to crooks, no questions asked. A shady Army vet who called himself Ammo owned the place. No one ever asked why he didn't change the name of the place to Ammo's World of Weapons when he'd bought it four years ago. Tara just figured he had a lot of enemies and didn't like advertising this was his place.

She came in and spotted Ammo where he usually was, working behind the counter. Despite his battle credits, Ammo never looked like much. He was a skinny old guy with a weathered face and ever-present razor stubble. But there wasn't anyone who knew more about weapons than he did.

“Hey, Captain,” he said, sliding off his stool and smiling with a mouthful of broken teeth. “Haven’t seen you in a while. You come in to check out the latest pulse rifle?”

“Nope. This is a serious shopping trip. I got an assignment,” she said.

His smile faded a little. “Really? That was fast. Didn’t you just put in for one last week?”

“Monday,” Tara corrected.

“So what is this new gig the *Federation* gave you?”

“I got *AEssyria*.”

All the muscles in Ammo’s face went slack. He squinted at her. “*AEssyria*?”

Tara didn’t consider herself the jumpy kind, but his reaction was giving her the creeps. She broke eye contact and began studying the guns in the case. “It pays a mint,” she said, feeling the need to explain herself.

Ammo worked his jaw. “Did you ever stop to wonder *why*?”

“It’s a tough job; I get it. I’ll need to have sex with them,” she said with a shrug. “I don’t care, I’m not a virgin. The deployment is five years. I think I can handle that.”

“Did they tell you what the first year survival rate is?”

Tara leaned her hip against the counter. “I’m guessing around fifty percent.”

“No way man, try one percent! Anytime on world beyond that is practically nil,” he said. “That’s why they pay so much. They’re counting on you never collecting that money.”

Tara didn’t want another gloom and doom lecture. The one she’d gotten from the fossils was quite enough. She knew what she was doing. “I’m grateful for the warning, but I’m not worried,” she said, wishing they could get back to talking

about guns. She decided to try and steer the conversation back to the real subject of why she was here. “Will you help me pick out some good weapons for the tour?”

Without hesitation, Ammo opened the glass case and pulled out two autoloaders—a Kimber and a Ruger. Then he turned around to the rack behind him and took down a Bushmaster rifle. Tara studied the guns, then met Ammo’s harsh stare.

“What, no blasters?”

“The planet’s too far from its suns to get a decent charge for blasters.”

“But the data files I’ve read said that blasters were—”

“Don’t believe that shit. The files are lies written by the *Federation* to keep the brass happy.”

Tara stared down at the weapons, a tight knot forming in her throat. Well, he wasn’t going to make a lot of money selling her caliber weapons so why would he lie? “So you think these are the best choices for where I’m going?”

He rubbed his right arm. “It’s up for debate, but they’d be my choice. I’m sure the *Federation* will stow other weapons, maybe some state-of-the-art stuff.”

Tara bought the guns and all the ammunition she’d be able to take onboard. She’d have to come back in the morning, when her clearance finished processing, to collect everything and that would be it. She sighed and smiled at the old vet. “I really appreciate your help, Ammo.”

Ammo came around the counter and placed one hand on her shoulder. “Listen, Captain, I know you’re itching for a fast payday, but this tour is a mistake. Better, more experienced soldiers than you have gone out there, and I haven’t met one yet who has come back. Take my word for it, stop and think.

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Is that big paycheck really worth it if you don't live to collect?"

Tara shrugged his hand off. An annoying nervous sweat started collecting between her breasts. "The others who went out there weren't women, Ammo. And the *A*Essyrians aren't known to kill females—of any race. I'll live to collect that money, buddy. And I can guarantee you another thing too, I will be coming back."

Ammo shook his head slowly as Tara made her way to the door. "I hope you're right, Captain. I sure hope you're right."

Chapter 2

Tara spent the next couple of days going to the range and packing up her apartment. She separated her stuff from the things she'd put in storage versus the things she'd throw out. When she'd finished, there was only one thing left to get rid of, Peter.

Peter Norse had been Tara's boyfriend since her first year at the Academy. He was a smart guy, always quick with a joke and not half bad in bed, but as with most men in her life so far, there was just no chemistry. He was more like a best friend to her than a lover. Still, she wasn't looking forward to breaking up with him. They had become a security blanket for each other, neither one wanting to put the fatal shot in the relationship. This was going to be very hard and she wasn't sure how he was going to take it.

Tara went to her comm monitor and sat down, touching her fingers to the *call* button. *Come on. You have to do this. You can't just leave without saying anything to him.* She pushed the button and waited for his familiar face to fill her screen. After the fifth ring, the screen went blue and the words 'stand by' flashed before her. Tara waited. It was cowardly to leave him a message, but maybe this was a blessing in disguise.

Suddenly, the words 'Recording' rolled across her line of vision. Tara told Peter about her new assignment and how

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long she'd be gone. She ended it with a hasty farewell and quickly logged off. She was terrified he might be there after all and pick up.

Just as she was getting up from the monitor, a caller flashed across the screen. Tara jumped, thinking it was Peter, but it was Mr. Stanton. She accepted the transmission and gave him a wary smile.

Before she could say a word, he said, "Pack your things, Captain Scott. The ship has just received clearance for take off. They leave in an hour, with or without you."

Tara jumped up. "I'll be there, sir."

"Just make sure you are. I'd hate for you to have to pay all that advance money back."

Chapter 3

The docking bay was one of the older ones on the east side of the space center. Tara rushed into the launch area, surprised at the lack of security. Standing by the eastern security gate, she paused to look around. The center was deserted. Deciding everyone had assumed all the passengers were on-board, she rushed up to the launch pad and took the elevator to the entry bay.

A man with long white hair and a short beard greeted her at the hatch. He wore a security uniform marked with the *Federal Exploration* logo. “We were starting to think you weren’t going to make it.”

Tara flashed him her ID. “Yeah,” she said breathless. “Me too.”

“I’m Richard Mark, Director of Safety,” he said. “Why don’t you take a seat and we’ll prep this thing for launch.”

She nodded and made her way down the narrow passageway to the launch seats. Stowing her gear in the cargo box, she squirmed into a seat and strapped herself in. She hoped no one noticed her heart trying to jump out of her chest. She’d never been on a launch before, and she was feeling a little edgy.

Richard secured the door and signaled the crew they were ready for takeoff. He took the empty seat next to her and strapped himself in. “This your first launch?” he asked.

“Yes,” she said, suddenly feeling like she needed to void her bladder. It was just a nervous reaction to being confined. She took deep breaths to try and keep herself calm.

“I assume you familiarized yourself with the separation procedures? You know we will be launching you from deep space while you’re in cryo-sleep. When you wake up it will just be you, your small ship and the two other crew members.”

“I understand,” she said. “How many launches does this make for you?”

He gave her a paternal wink. “This is my fifth.”

Tara was so edgy, she wanted to whirl on him and ask him if he wanted a medal, but she held her tongue. Few things made her as mad as people who should be afraid but weren’t. Didn’t he realize that it would only take a minor accident for them to be blown into a million tiny pieces?

The thrusters rumbled and shook the ship as the power built. “That’s great,” she managed.

Richard let out a good-natured chuckle. “Don’t be scared. If something goes wrong, you won’t be alive long enough to worry about it.”

Tara glared at him. “Are you trying to make me feel better? Because if you are, it isn’t working.”

He said something, but the roar of the thrusters drowned it out. Tara gripped the armrest and clenched her jaw so hard it ached. A sensation of intense speed and lift made her stomach drop. *I’ll be glad when this is over and we get to the damn planet.* At least she wouldn’t have to fly again any time soon.

Chapter 4

Once they were in space, things got better. Tara and the other passengers and crew were able to get up and walk around. But the best bonus was the ship's cantina and bar. Tara had never been much of a drinker, but when Richard had offered to buy her a few drinks, she practically mowed him down getting there.

The cantina and bar were small, tight quarters, but it beat being strapped into a seat for hours at a time. The décor was 1950s science fiction, which made her grin. The walls were curved and held three small windows each. Stars of every imaginable brightness and size drifted past as if they were only going a few miles an hour and not light-speed plus.

Richard sipped his drink and studied her. "Your name's Tara Scott, right?"

"Yeah, Captain Tara Scott, that's right."

"Aren't you a little old for an assignment like this? What are you anyway, forty?"

Tara sighed. "No, I'm thirty-six. The *Federal* staff doesn't care how old you are, as long as you can do the job. And I can do the job."

Richard gave her a skeptic's smile. "I'm sure you can." He finished his drink and got up to get another. She watched him

at the bar. He glanced back at her and gestured to her half-empty glass as if to ask if she wanted another one.

She nodded and he returned a moment later with two more drinks. He set hers down in front of her. "You have any family back on Earth?"

She slumped in the chair and nursed her drink. It burned a slow trail of fire down her throat. "No, both my parents are dead."

"That makes it easier."

"What about you? You leave any family behind?"

"Wife and two kids," he said.

Tara stared at him. "You mind if I ask you why you're doing this? I mean, it must be hard with a family waiting for you."

His eyes swept the room watching everyone engrossed in their various conversations. "I'm doing it for the same reason you are. I need the money."

Tara stared into her drink and swirled the ice with her finger. Needing money was something everyone could understand. Earth had become one of the most expensive planets in the galaxy to live. Most people lived in small tenement housing and eked out a meager living in service or sales. That was about all that was open to anyone without specialized training. Tara had gotten lucky and been awarded an apartment when she'd joined the Academy. Food was scarce and expensive, and it wasn't unheard of for middle class women to sell their bodies just to put food on the table. Tara vowed long ago that that wasn't going to happen to her. No, she had a plan to live the good life, and that plan included *AEssyria*.

She stared at the deep lines around Richard's eyes and guessed his age at early fifties. "I didn't just do it for the mon-

ey,” she lied, trying not to sound as desperate as she felt. “I wanted the experience, too.”

Richard barked out a harsh laugh. “No, you didn’t.”

She glared at him. “I’m glad you know so much about me.”

“I know no one takes this kind of job without the promise of being handsomely rewarded. There are few comforts of home and you’ll be working long...” he paused and grinned, “punishing hours. You took this for the money, plain and simple. Don’t feel you have to lie to me.”

Tara felt a muscle by her eye twitch. *Oh, you’re so smart and so wise.* “When do they put us in cryo-sleep?” she asked, trying to change the subject.

Richard looked at the digital clock on the wall. “Few more hours. Why?”

“I just want to get this tour done and over with.”

He downed his drink and scowled. “Me too, honey. Me too.”

Chapter 5

After a brief information video on *AEssyria* and the other destinations, everyone was ordered to their pods where they'd spend the next twenty years in cryo-sleep. Tara stood in her berthing watching people undress and climb into their glass coffins. She waited until she was the last one. Finally, a technician came over. "Got the jitters?" he asked.

"Yeah," she said, giving him an anemic smile. She felt like everything in her life was moving way too fast. Just this morning she'd been in her apartment packing, now they were asking her to go unconscious for the next two decades. It was all becoming a little overwhelming.

"Don't worry," the technician said. "The moment you inhale the gas you'll be out. Next thing you know, you'll have landed and it will all be over."

"I take it you've done this before."

"Lots of times. Now just relax and get in."

She glanced around at the other people. "Where are the other passengers going?"

"Oh," the tech said smiling, "different places all over the sector. You and the other two women in section C are the only ones going to *AEssyria* though."

Wonderful.

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Tara climbed into the pod as she'd been instructed. She tried to relax as the lid came over her, but her neck muscles felt as tight as guitar strings. The gas hissed into her pod like a venomous snake and panic sped her heart up. *Try to calm down. You don't need to have a heart attack before you even get there.* Closing her eyes, she took a deep breath and the world's rough edges faded away into a rich indigo blue.

* * * *

The USS Valliant
Kingdom of AEssyria territorial space
December 2127 A.D.

Somewhere in the back of her mind, alarms were sounding. Where was she? Earth? No, that beautiful blue planet was faraway and long ago. No, this was someplace else. This was a cold, empty place—a ship...a ship in space. This ship had been her home for a very long time...and now something was terribly wrong with it.

Tara woke from deep hibernation to the ear-splitting sound of the ship's alarms. Her awakening was an emergency, much faster than it should have been, and it was excruciating. Every cell in her body screamed in protest as she was dragged to consciousness. Opening her eyes, she was harshly blinded by the bright cabin lights above. She groaned and closed her eyes, wishing she was anywhere but here. A horrifying wave of nausea rolled over her. Her mouth watered and her stomach withered. A shudder moved through her. Taking a deep breath through her nose, she fought back the urge to vomit.

Not wanting to get sick inside her small hibernation chamber, she slammed her fist into the red release button on her left. The clear lid flew up, letting a rush of cold air inside.

Tara gasped at the shock when the outside air filled her lungs. Her chest burned and she fell into a short coughing fit. When she could breathe, she rolled out of her chamber and fell onto the steel floor.

She hit hard. Every bone in her ached sharply, like they were made of shattered glass. After a few seconds, she rolled onto her belly and tried to push herself up, but her arms were still too rubbery and weak. The alarms continued to sound throughout the ship. It amplified off the metal walls until Tara thought she was going insane. The noise was deafening. *Will somebody turn that blasted thing off!* Then she remembered she could use a voice command.

“Silence!” she croaked. Her voice sounded like it had come from a corpse. It hurt even to utter that simple word. Blinking back the pain, she rubbed her neck.

The ship suddenly fell silent. Only a few flashing red lights continued to let her know something was wrong.

Tara finally managed to roll over onto her back. She placed a hand over her eyes and squinted against the harsh white light above. “Dim the *lights*,” she commanded.

The lights dropped to a more tolerable half-power.

Tara took a deep breath and let it out slowly. A powerful wave of nausea climbed through her body and she rolled onto her side to retch. Her mouth gaped open and her stomach twisted several times, as if it had desperately wanted to escape her gut. Then, as suddenly as it had come on, it faded.

Despite the violence of her sickness, nothing came of it. She knew nothing would. She hadn’t had anything in her belly for twenty years.

When the illness passed she crawled across the floor, pulled on a shirt and pants, and climbed into a navigation

chair. She closed her eyes and waited a moment as her head spun. When she could see straight, she punched in her code and the overhead screens came to life. The deep blackness of space filled the screens along with a huge metallic object. It was an alien frigate. *That's why the alarms were going crazy.*

The frigate was pacing them on their port side. A further scan of her ship revealed they were being maneuvered along by the frigate's tractor beam.

"What's going on?" Tara heard a woman croak from her hibernation chamber.

Tara didn't look back. She took a few minutes to study the frigate on the monitors. When she was sure what it was, she said, "Looks like we've made contact with the AEssyrians." She twisted in her seat and glanced back at the woman. "What's your name?"

"Alexis," the woman managed. She staggered over and stared at the screens like a child seeing rides at her first carnival. "*Amazing,*" Alexis whispered, then she doubled over and grabbed a trash can to be ill.

Tara ran a scan of the other remaining chamber. An ID flashed across the screen with the name Mia Martinez. Mia was the third and only other member of her crew. Mia was waking slowly, probably just as sick as she and Alexis had been.

Turning her attention back on the aliens, Tara scanned the loading dock and frowned. The aliens had boarded. A tingling fear moved over her skin as she watched them. *Who knew what this first encounter would bring? They're onboard already. They must be very curious about us to throw caution to the wind like that. But then, they are a warrior race. She doubted much frightened them. I sure hope I can remember my AEssyrian.*

Tara turned to Alexis. She was very pale and trembling. Her auburn hair looked dry and brittle, and her cheekbones looked pronounced. “Will you check on Mia?”

Alexis looked nervous and confused. The hibernation sickness was holding on to her hard. “Why?” Alexis asked in a shaky voice. “Where are you going?”

Tara glanced back at the video screens and stood up. She thought about bringing a weapon with her, but then decided not to. She’d been trained for this encounter. “We’ve been boarded and I have to go and greet our guests. You and Mia wait here until I tell you it’s safe to come down. Got it?”

Alexis nodded and pushed the trashcan back under the table. “Yes, Captain. We’ll be waiting to hear from you.”

“If something bad happens or I don’t contact you in half an hour, initiate the self-destruct sequence. We can’t afford to let the *A*Essyrians get hold of our navigation equipment. Earth wouldn’t stand a chance against an invading army of alien soldiers.”

Chapter 6

Tara walked onto the loading dock rubbing her sweating palms along her pant legs. She stopped by the bay doors and wished she had a drink to steady her nerves.

The *A*Essyrian warriors were massive. There were two of them; both identically dressed in armored spacesuits and fierce looking helmets. They'd gained entry to the landing bay and the adjoining loading dock without tripping any of the defense systems—an impressive feat. They stalked along with blasters drawn. When they spotted Tara, they froze but didn't raise their weapons.

Tara approached them cautiously, her hands at her sides, careful not to make any sudden moves. She stopped and smiled. She hoped that was the universal gesture for friendliness. Then she said in the best *A*Essyrian she could muster, "We are ambassadors from Earth. We have come many miles and twenty years to get here. You invited us long ago. Your king should be expecting us."

The warriors looked at each other. The taller of the two unfastened his helmet and pulled it off. It came away from his head with a loud hissing sound.

Although his collar had the insignia of captain, Tara could tell he was young for his rank. Looking at his unmarked face, she guessed him at somewhere around three hundred, the

human equivalent of mid-twenties. Few AEssyrian males got to a captain's rank without sustaining some facial scars. The captain was an attractive man with long auburn hair, light green skin and metallic green eyes. The only thing marring his appearance was a small scar on the right side of his jaw.

"Where is your captain?" he asked in a rough dialect.

"I am the captain."

The alien's eyes narrowed. AEssyria was a male-dominated society; they didn't have female soldiers. Placing his helmet under his arm, he advanced toward her until he was only a few feet away. He stopped, his gaze brazenly sweeping down her body. "The king," he said in halting English, "will be pleased."

Chapter 7

The royal throne room was like something out of a dream. The floors were covered in a dull, earthy red that set off the gold of the large candelabras on each side of the bronze throne. The king, an older *AEssyrian* man in long silver robes that matched the color of his hair, sat perfectly still, watching as they were led up to him. Suddenly, their guard indicated that they should stop and kneel. They all did.

Tara knew better than to speak until the king decided to address them. To stress his power over them, he made them stay kneeling just longer than was considered polite. Then they were allowed to stand.

Tara glanced at the *AEssyrian* guard next to her to see if it was all right to talk. He met her gaze and nodded. Taking a deep breath, she said, "Your Highness, we are from..."

The king raised one hand and interrupted her. "I have consulted the archives. I know who you are and why you're here," he said in perfect *AEssyrian*. "Why is there no male human with you on your mission?"

"My superiors felt it was better for the safety of the mission if we traveled without one. We hoped to be under your protection during our time here."

The king squinted at her and frowned. “Your *A*Essyrian is horrible,” he complained. He turned to one of the nearby guards. “Fetch Admiral Sargon.”

The guard rushed out.

The king turned his attention back to Tara. He rose from his throne and walked toward her. Tara could hear Alexis next to her shifting uncomfortably. She understood how Alexis felt. Being at the mercy of a race of misogynists wasn’t exactly her idea of a bright future either. Unfortunately, her crew had known the risks when they’d signed up.

She heard the admiral coming before she saw him. The throne room filled with the heavy footfalls of his boots. Tara turned around and watched as a huge *A*Essyrian male came into the room.

The admiral was a soaring six-foot plus man with scarred gray battle armor and heavy leather riding boots. His long black hair hung over his broad shoulders and he sported two small braids at each temple. His eyes were the color of dark copper and burned with fierce intelligence.

His attractive face was his most striking feature. He gave off a powerful air of confidence and strength, and Tara could see he was accustomed to being the captor of many women’s hearts. He was the perfect alpha male—possessing both size and strength.

As he approached, he fixed his dark eyes on her and Tara found it impossible to look away. Her mouth went dry and a weakness came over her legs. She would have done anything he told her to, no matter what it was.

He stopped next to Tara and knelt before the king. The king indicated he could rise.

“I need you to interpret for this human woman,” the king said. “I can barely understand her.”

The admiral bowed his head in deference. “As is your pleasure, Highness.” He turned to Tara and said in crisp English, “My name is Admiral Sargon Varin. May I have your name please?”

Tara opened her mouth to speak but the words wouldn’t come. “Where did you learn to speak English like that?”

Sargon laughed. It was a smooth, sexy sound. “A lover taught me.”

“Oh. My name is Captain Tara Scott. I am here because of an agreement our planets made over two hundred years ago. I have been sent to establish an embassy and report back whenever I can.”

Sargon turned to the king and repeated what she’d just said so quickly, Tara wondered if he’d interpreted it correctly.

After a few pleasantries were exchanged back and forth, Sargon finally said, “The king appears satisfied. He has given you a villa where you and your crew can stay while you establish the embassy.” He gestured to the double doors to the rear of the throne room. “Won’t you ladies follow me?”

With a respectful bow to the king, Tara, Alexis and Mia picked up their things and followed the admiral out into the stifling hot suns.

Chapter 8

Tara always knew what she'd have to do to ensure their safety here on *AEssyria*. Sex. Sex on this planet was a simple matter of survival. Neither her, nor her two crew members were any match for an *AEssyrian* male. It would be foolish of them to even try and defend themselves with violence. But the truth remained that they would need protection to ensure the success of their mission, or they could become slaves here very quickly. To ensure their protection, they'd need to give the dominant males anything they wanted. It was just that simple. Her willingness to do what was necessary was one of the reasons she'd been chosen for this assignment. Now all she needed was to zero in on the right man and the right time to act.

She was delighted she'd found a dominant male so fast. Sargon would be a perfect protector for her and her crew while they worked on the embassy, the only problem was seducing him and keeping him interested enough so he'd keep coming around. She'd have to work hard to keep him; no doubt he had his choice of women on this planet.

At least it wouldn't be an unpleasant task like she'd originally feared. Watching him as he rode ahead of them, she could see the huge span of his back and the thick-knotted

muscles of his arms. He was truly magnificent. He was a textbook bull-male AEssyrian.

The king had been right to wonder why Earth had only sent females. It certainly wasn't an accident. They had done their research. A male crewmember or captain, for that matter, wouldn't have stood a chance here among these aggressive territorial males.

It was hard enough for them as women. As it stood, she and her female crew didn't have status in this society at all. They were curiosities to the aliens and that made them vulnerable to slavery, abduction and rape. If she couldn't get Sargon interested in having sex with her for protection, she'd have to find another male who would.

Fast.

Sargon reigned up his lizard horse in front of a small, rundown villa on the edge of the city. Tara and her crew dismounted their animals and gathered their belongings.

Sargon didn't dismount. He studied them with mild curiosity. "Will this be satisfactory?"

Tara racked her thoughts for something to say that might keep him a little longer. "This is wonderful," she said. "But would you mind checking it out for us? Just to be safe."

He hesitated. Then with a grunt, he dismounted. Readjusting his saber on his hip, he went inside ahead of them. She knew he was annoyed with her. She was sure he'd rather be anywhere else than checking out some old villa for a bunch of foreign women.

Tara followed close behind. "I really appreciate it."

Sargon's search took only a few minutes. He came into the central room and folded his arms across his chest. "There's nothing here that could harm you."

Tara's mouth was annoyingly dry. She glanced around the central room and took it in. It was attractively furnished with a brown leather couch, decorative throw rugs on the floor, and a scattering of heavy, wooden chairs. There were three small bedrooms, all off the central room. Through an open archway to the rear was a stone courtyard surrounded by a high wall.

"There's no lock on this door," Mia said, opening and closing the front door, unable to believe her eyes.

Sargon grinned. "Most of the public residences don't have locks on the doors. There isn't a need for them since technically you are the property of the king."

Mia shot a panicked look at Tara. *Great, he's already freak-
ing them out.* "Don't worry, Mia. I'm sure we'll be fine."

Sargon met Tara's gaze. There was dark amusement in him, like a bully who was planning to torment her the entire school year. "Is there anything else I can do for you?"

"No...no, I think we're good. Um...are you planning to come back again tomorrow to check on us?" Tara asked.

The admiral frowned. "I wasn't."

Tara gave him her most dazzling smile. "Oh, that's too bad. I was hoping we could make you a meal to thank you for bringing us out here."

Sargon watched her, then cast his gaze on Mia and Alexis. His mood softened. "Very well then. I'll stop by tomorrow night."

"Thank you, Admiral," Tara said as she followed him to the door.

When he was gone, Alexis let out a huge sigh. "What a complete asshole! What the hell did you invite him back here for?"

“Because we need him. The more he hangs around, the less other AEssyrian men will think we’re unprotected. This isn’t Earth, Alex. These alien men can do anything they want to us and there isn’t a whole lot we can do about it.”

“Well, there’s something I can do about it,” Alexis said with a wink. She pulled a blaster out of her bag.

Mia gasped. “Are you *crazy*? If they catch you with that, they’ll kill us all. Don’t you remember your protocol? No blast weapons on the planet.”

Tara walked over to Alexis and held her hand out. “Give me that.”

Alexis looked as if she was going to put up an argument, then reconsidered. She gave the weapon to Tara and made a face. “This is crap.”

Tara hid the weapon in her bag. “Mia’s right. It was stupid bringing that here.”

“We should have some kind of protection against these aliens,” Alexis grumbled.

“And we will. But tempting fate with that blaster is just plain stupid,” Tara said.

Alexis folded her arms and leaned against the wall. “You planning to seduce Mister Personality there?” she said, tossing her head in the direction Sargon had left in.

Tara gave her an icy look. “I’ll do whatever I have to do to ensure the success of this mission. And when the time comes, so will you. Now I suggest you all get settled in, you might be in for a long, exhausting night.”

Chapter 9

Sargon rode up to the old villa the next night wondering if the human captain would remember inviting him. He lit a cigar and dismounted. Before he'd even begun ascending the stairs, the front door opened for him.

Captain Tara Scott was dressed in a lovely black dress that hugged her curvy frame. He had to admit he hadn't thought much of her when they'd first met, but standing before him with the light behind her, she looked like a goddess. He felt a stirring within him, a nagging hunger to be buried deep inside her. He couldn't wait to see how this evening played out.

Tara smiled at him. "Welcome."

Sargon stuck his cigar in his teeth and walked up to her. He glanced inside and caught sight of a splendid table full of raw meat. His gaze moved over her dark brown eyes, then wandered to her ample bosom. "May I come in?"

She stepped back to let him in and closed the door behind him.

The two other women were dressed up as well. *Perhaps this will be a banquet in more ways than one.*

Sargon gestured to the table. "Why all the special treatment?"

Tara moved toward the table and picked up a plate. She placed a few succulent pieces of raw meat in the center and

brought it over to him. Some blood pooled under the razor-thin slices. She held it out to him. "Can't we show you our gratitude?"

He plucked the cigar out of his teeth and put it out in a nearby ashtray. His desire was rising, building, filling his cock with lust. "If you really want to show me gratitude," he said, meeting her gaze, "you can feed me."

"All right," she said softly. She gestured to the other two women. "This is Mia," she said pointing to a short, attractive Hispanic woman. Then she pointed to the auburn-haired beauty. "And that is Alexis. They will be helping me make you comfortable."

Sargon sat down on the couch and leaned back. He'd been with a human woman before, but it had been a long time ago in a whorehouse on a mining planet. This was already promising to be much more enjoyable than that awkward, hurried experience.

Tara sat on the low table in front of him and dug the silver three-pronged fork into the meat. Placing her hand under the dripping morsel, she held it out to him.

He grinned. Fixing his gaze on her, he moved his forked tongue out and wrapped it around the offering. With a surgeon's precision, he peeled it off and pulled it into his mouth. All three women watched him chew with their mouths open in surprise.

Alexis, seeming to forget her nervousness, moved forward a few feet. "Can I see your tongue again?"

Sargon swallowed and extended his tongue.

Alexis was obviously intrigued. "May I touch it?"

"Only with your own tongue, dear," he said.

Tara moved back to allow Alexis closer. She moved slowly, cautiously, as if she was expecting to be attacked at any moment. Sargon closed his eyes and met her part of the way. Their lips connected in a gentle, sexy kiss. She moved her tongue into his mouth and explored it, caressing along its length and forked tip. She broke the kiss and moved back, her eyelids fluttering as if she'd just woken from a wonderful dream.

Mia moved up behind her. "What's it like?"

Alexis gazed into his eyes and smiled. "It was fantastic."

His passion was rising, tearing a scalding trail through his soul. He wanted them all right here on the floor, but he knew it would be much better if he waited.

"May I try?" Mia asked, already moving up to take Alexis' place.

This time, Sargon didn't wait for her to lean into him. Placing one hand behind her head, he pulled her into a hot, steamy kiss. She kissed him back, then pushed on his chest to be released. He let her go.

She stumbled back from him, her eyes sparkling. She moved one hand up to touch the side of her mouth.

Tara looked at her, concerned. "Are you okay?"

Mia glanced at her like she'd never met her before. "Yes," she said breathily. "Yes, I'm fine."

"What about you, Tara?" Sargon asked. "Aren't you going to kiss me, too?"

Tara nodded. Hiking her dress up, she straddled his hips and gazed up into his eyes. He saw so much passion in that look, he almost forgot himself. She leaned into him, pressing her lips to his, and kissed him with a feverish heat he hadn't felt in any of the others.

The Mission

Her tongue stroked his, boldly exploring his sharp teeth. Then she stopped, her breath coming in a quiet pant. “I’m forgetting myself,” she said. “Here I have invited you to eat and I’ve barely given you anything.” She picked the plate back up and placed another morsel on his tongue. “They’ll be plenty of time to explore you after you’re finished.”

Chapter 10

When the meal was done, the women led Sargon into the master bedroom. The room was decorated in various shades of soothing blue, right down to the drapes and bedspread.

He stopped before the bed and watched all three women studying him. They were tense and aroused, growing more curious and hungry for him by the minute. He stood perfectly still as they took turns removing his armor and undressing him. When he was completely naked, they walked around him, stroking and exploring his body. Delicate fingers traced the many scars on his chest and belly. He remained very still, allowing them to do as they pleased. His pleasure would come soon enough. He could wait.

Mia moved up behind him and stroked the thick ridges of his raised spine, sending a staging wave of aggressive lust surging through his cock. "I wouldn't do that if I were you, dear," he said with a slight grin. "That is an erogenous zone. I cannot be held accountable for my actions if you're going to tease me like that."

Mia blinked nervously and moved back from him.

Tara moved up and ran her hands down his chest. She dragged her lips and tongue along his flesh, pausing to take the nipples into her mouth and suck them. He ran his fingers through her hair and pulled her head back. Leaning down, he

planted a savage kiss on her mouth. She kissed him back, moaning into his mouth with lust.

Breaking the kiss, he picked her up and tossed her on the bed. Climbing up over her on his hands and knees, he peeled her clothes off in seconds. She was only too eager to help him. Once she was naked, he rained kisses along her belly and up to her breasts. Tara gasped and squirmed, running her fingers through his thick black hair. The two other women watched, their desire so thick it hung in the air like smoke.

The beast within him was beyond control, flooding his senses with the sweet scent of the women's arousal. He covered Tara's mouth with his own, giving her such a scalding kiss, it took her breath away.

Her hands roamed his body, exploring and caressing him. Then she stroked the thick ridges on his back. The result was powerful and immediate. He froze, his cock throbbing and stone-hard. Wrapping his hand around the shaft, he squeezed it to ease some of the pressure.

Tara opened her legs for him and he placed his fingers into her swollen, wet center. She closed her eyes and groaned, pushing her hips up to him. He licked her essence off his fingers and lowered his hips between her legs. Guiding his hungry cock, he rubbed the head against her clit, listening to the music of her soft moan. Then he slid deep inside her.

Tara gripped onto his back and groaned loudly. He could feel her tight pussy stretched around him and he buried his face in her neck to immerse himself in her scent. He gave her a moment to get used to his size, then began a slow, steady rhythm. Tara went wild, her body bucking up to meet his quickening thrusts. He was lost in a sea of pleasure and he

gave himself over to it, pounding deeper and harder into Tara until she was screaming out her ecstasy to the sky.

When Tara was exhausted, he took Mia into the bed. She was afraid of him, but her curious passion got the better of her. Opening her legs, she let him prop her hips up with a few pillows. He licked and kissed her pussy until she was bright pink, and opened up for him like a flower. Then he filled her, fucking her from the rear until she orgasmed twice and begged him to stop.

Then it was time for Alexis. He took her against the bedroom wall with her long, curvy legs wrapped around him.

When all three women were spent and asleep, Sargon dressed in the moonlight and pulled on his boots. He stood over the bed and watched them as they slept, wishing he could curl up with them. But unfortunately, he had duty in the morning and a million things to do. But he'd be back for more.

That was the only thing about this he was sure about.

Chapter 11

Tara walked into the vacant building given to them to build the embassy feeling sore and deliciously used. As she stepped carefully over some debris, her thoughts raced back to last night. Her body immediately responded, filling her with a feeling of desperate heat. She wanted Sargon again; she ached for him.

“This place is a wreck,” Alexis said, tossing a rotted wood plank out the back door. The statement pulled Tara from her thoughts. “How long do you think it will take to get it up and running?” Alexis asked.

Tara focused on the job at hand. She looked around. “Three, maybe four days. It’s not as bad as you think, Alex.”

Mia tossed a few pieces of rock out of her way and slapped her hands together to dust them off. She looked up and scowled. “Don’t look now,” she said. “But it appears we have company.”

Tara and Alexis watched as an *A*Essyrian nobleman entered the building. He was handsomely dressed in a double-breasted black uniform and boots. Like most *A*Essyrians, he was tall and muscular, but he sported a monocle in his right eye.

“Good morning, ladies,” he said in perfect English. “My name is Molitov Von Goth. I am a grand duke in the royal

court. The king requested I come by and see if there is anything you need to get started.”

Tara came forward. “Well, sir,” she said, not sure how to address a grand duke. “We could certainly use some help clearing some of this debris.”

He adjusted his monocle and looked around the room, the hint of a frown curving his mouth. “I’ll send some soldiers over to help you.”

“I’d really appreciate that,” Tara said.

“The admiral said you like to entertain.”

Tara swallowed. She ignored the hard stares coming from her crew. “Yes,” she said, meeting Molitov’s cunning gaze. “We do like to entertain. As long as our guests are kind and...” Tara let her gaze wander around the messy room, “helpful. Will you be stopping by tonight?”

The grand duke studied her then let his gaze roam over to the other two women. “No,” he said, with an evil sparkle to his eyes. “The king has requested only you come by tonight.” He glanced over at the two other women. “Just you, Tara. No one else.”

“Okay,” Tara said. “Will you come by and pick me up?”

Molitov grinned. “Yes, be ready early. It’s going to be a long night for you.”

Chapter 12

The royal bedroom was dimly lit with candles and a gentle hint of jasmine incense filled the air. Tara walked in cautiously, as if she was barefoot on broken glass. The king was there, of course, sitting on a large round bed with an enormous window behind him, awash in bright, frosty stars. Before him, lying on the bed spread-eagle was an Assyrian woman Tara didn't recognize. She had large, round, violet eyes and small pointed breasts.

Tara drew in a shaky breath. "Who is this?" she asked.

"Tonight's conquest," he replied. A cruel grin curved his lips.

"I don't understand," she said. "Why did you ask me to come here? What has this got to do with me?"

"Have a seat over there, Tara," he said, pointing to a chair by the bed. "I want you to watch. And when I'm done, I'm going to watch the grand duke take you."

Tara lowered herself into a chair by the wall. She eased into it slowly, letting her weight settle into it a little at a time. Her heart was beating fast and her brain felt frozen. She'd heard of the Grand Duke Molotov Von Goth's particular sexual taste. Should she protest and risk angering the king?

The king positioned his partner so Tara could watch him enter her. Tara's interest in the scene was dulled by her own

worries about Molitov. After a long coupling that Tara found particularly unerotic, the king grunted out his orgasm and dismissed the woman.

“Now,” the king said, pulling his robe around himself and approaching her. “It’s your turn.”

Molitov entered the room from a side entrance as if on cue. He was a very attractive Assyrian man, dressed in a neat black uniform with gold trim. He held a coiled rope and a blindfold in his right hand. He stalked up to her chair and stared down at her. The king moved back and took a seat in the corner.

“Are you ready to begin?” Molitov said in a voice rich with dark sin.

Tara licked her dry lips. She was vaguely aware of her hands trembling. “I’m ready,” she whispered.

Molitov held his hand out to her. She took it and followed him over to the bed. He sat on the edge and placed the rope and blindfold next to him. Tara stood before him trying to steady her breathing.

“Undress,” he commanded.

Placing her hands on the hem of her shirt, she lifted it over her head. She studied him, hungering for his control, needing his approval like a child. She reached behind her back and unhooked her bra. Casting her gaze to the floor, she let the bra fall.

She could feel his eyes riveted to her. “Do you think you are beautiful, Tara?” Molitov asked.

“I don’t know...”

He grinned. “You may call me Lord.”

“I don’t know, Lord.”

He reached out and ran a black gloved hand down her cheek, letting it trail down to her chest. He paused and her nipples became erect. Pulling her against him, he placed her right breast in his mouth and suckled it hard. A shockwave of pleasure raced through her mind and Tara leaned her head back and gasped. She raised her arms to embrace his head but he pulled away.

Standing up, Molotov towered over her. “You don’t touch me unless I tell you to. Do you understand, Tara?”

Keeping her gaze down, she nodded.

“Finish undressing,” he said, walking a slow circle around her.

Tara obediently peeled her boots, pants and underwear off. A guilty hunger had taken root in her. Something she’d never known before. It was like undefined sexual desire, but much deeper. It was primal and savage, and filled her with a longing to be destroyed by the diabolical alien nobleman. It defied all understanding, and as it took over her mind, she realized with growing horror that she was hopelessly attracted to him.

As she stood naked before him, he kicked her legs open and stood before her, gazing down into her eyes. He sliced his gaze over to the king, who smiled and nodded. Molotov leaned down and placed his lips against hers. His forked tongue slid into her mouth, caressing hers, the kiss burning with an infernal sexual promise. He kissed her with a dark passion that dazzled her and brought her lust to a higher level. She wanted to kiss him back, to beg him to take her no matter who was in the room, but she knew none of those things would be allowable.

He broke the kiss and she let a ‘no’ escape her lips.

An evil laugh rumbled from his chest. Lifting the blindfold, he gently tied it around her eyes and pulled her over to the bed. Guiding her by the arm, he lowered her down on the edge and made her lay back. Climbing up over her, he bound her hands together and tied them to the headboard. Then Tara felt him bind her legs apart so that her sex was completely exposed to him.

His fingers stroked her belly, tracing lazy circles around her belly button. He petted her, letting his hand roam down to the downy pelt of her pussy. Moving his fingers through her, he explored her with light gentle strokes. Tara twisted in her restraints in a hopeless effort to get free. He touched her for a long time, making her so wet she thought she might orgasm just from the touching alone. Then when she was quietly begging him to bring her to orgasm, he stopped.

Her pussy ached with lust.

She felt his breath on her cheek. "What do you want?"

Tara tried to kiss him, but he moved back. She felt like crying. "I want you to fuck me, please."

She felt the heavy weight of his body move on top of her. She could feel the fabric of his uniform against her skin and bit her lip in disappointment. *He's teasing me again. I can't take much more of this.*

Tara pushed her hips up to him with a desire she'd never known. "Don't tease me anymore," she begged. "Take me, Lord. *Please.*"

Reaching down, Molitov opened her vaginal lips and placed the head of his penis against her slick pussy. Gripping her hips, he pushed into her, driving himself completely inside. Tara arched her back and gasped.

The Mission

The orgasm came over her in a rushing wave. With every thrust, it built in intensity and she fought her restraints desperate to touch him. "Let me go!" she screamed in frustration.

"When I'm done with you," he said in an evil, lusty growl. "And that might not be for a very long time."

Chapter 13

Sargon sat in the dark of Tara's room waiting for her to arrive. He'd been waiting a long time and was prepared to wait as long as necessary. He was in no hurry. He felt like a hunter waiting like this, absorbed in his thoughts. He rehearsed what he'd say to her and what she might say back. None of it would be anything like he envisioned, he knew, but it helped with the uncertainty.

In the middle of his long vigil, he fell asleep. He awoke to the sound of her bedroom door opening. She didn't notice him at first. Padding through the darkness, she made her way to her bedside light and turned it on. She smelled like she'd freshly bathed and he wondered what sins she had tried to wash away. When she turned around and saw him, she gasped in surprise. She regained her composure quickly and glared at him.

"Surprised to see me?" he asked.

Tara tossed her jacket and purse on the bed. "Kind of. What do you want, Sargon?"

"I came to be seduced. That is your specialty, right? Seduction?"

She shook her head. "I don't have time for this jealous nonsense," she said. Her tone carried a blade edge. "I'm tired."

“Too much nocturnal activity, I expect.”

“Jealously is ugly on you. Why don’t you go home and we can discuss this when you’re not so upset.”

“Not as ugly on me as harlotry is on you,” he snarled. He stood and stalked toward her. To her credit, she stood her ground. “Who were you with?”

She lifted her chin. “Grand Duke Molitov.”

He thought about slapping her, but clenched his fists at his sides instead. “I should know better than to ask this question. Did you sleep with him?”

“Yes,” she said calmly. “I did.”

“Why?”

“Because the king ordered me to, that’s why. What was I supposed to do? Tell him, ‘No thank you, Your Highness, maybe some other time’? It’s not like I was given a choice in the matter. Besides, why are you being so possessive? You have legions of lovers. I know—I’ve heard the stories.”

Sargon stalked toward her and seized her by the shoulders. “We’re not discussing me, we’re discussing you!”

Tara’s lips grew thin. “Get your hands off me.”

He read the fury in her eyes and released her. Turning his back on her, he went to the window and stared out. She was right. He had no reason to be jealous. They had never made a commitment to each other. He’d even slept with her two crew members on the same night he’d had her. “What if I told you I wanted an exclusive relationship? No one else, just you and I?”

She moved up behind him, but didn’t touch him. “I’d be willing to try that, but I think it’s going to prove to be impossible,” she said softly. “The king likes to watch Molitov have sex with me.”

Sargon grimaced. He appreciated her honesty, but it was a difficult thing to hear. “You had sex for the king’s entertainment?”

“Like I told you, I wasn’t given a choice.”

“Did you enjoy your little show?”

Tara chewed her lip. She sat on the edge of the bed. “Yes, Sargon. I did enjoy it.”

He paced the room. “Do you want it to continue?”

“Frankly, I don’t know what I want right now. But I know I’d rather not become the king’s plaything,” she said.

If he wanted to get the king off her back, he’d have to battle Molotov for her. “I’ll go talk to the king and see what I can arrange.” He didn’t want to worry her, but this might get nasty.

Tara touched his shoulder and he turned around to face her. “I don’t understand you,” she said. “Why do you want to help me so badly? I’m not even a member of your race. There are tons of women you could have. Why fight to keep me?”

He touched her cheek and kissed her. A rush of emotion tore through him. He had to have her to himself, no matter what he had to do to get her. “I don’t know, Tara. I honestly don’t know. But I can tell you this—I’ll not stop until you are totally and completely mine.”

Chapter 14

Sargon found the king sunning himself on the royal patio like some overfed feline. He approached and stood over the sovereign, deliberately casting a shadow over him as he dozed on his stomach.

The king rolled over and glared up at him. "What do you want, Admiral?"

"A word, if I may, Your Highness."

"Go on then," the king said with an impatient gesture.

Sargon pulled up a chair. It scraped across the stone making an annoying grating sound. "I understand you and the grand duke have been having some sport with the human captain, Tara."

The king smiled wickedly. "That's right. You should have seen her, Sargon. She was quite the lusty vixen. The grand duke certainly knows how to bring out the best in a lady."

Sargon nodded, careful not to show the jealous outrage he felt. "I would like to claim her as my own, Highness, and see to her protection."

The king frowned and sat up. "What the devil for? She's a foreigner. She has no title or status, hell she can't even bear you children because of her human blood. Why waste your time with her?"

Sargon ignored the question. If he answered it, they'd be here all night. "Will you honor my victory if I challenge the grand duke for her?"

The king stared at him, clearly annoyed. Finally, he threw his arms up in the air. "Of course, of course, but none of this makes any sense. What about the other two human women? Are you going to fight for them as well?"

Sargon got up and glanced at the twin suns. It was just past midday. "No," he said. "They will remain under your protection. You may do what you like with them."

"Are you sure you want to do this? The grand duke is a formidable opponent."

"I've never been surer of anything in my life," Sargon said.

* * * *

Sargon went to see Grand Duke Molitov at the arena, just finishing up from sparring practice. His chest was bare as he wiped sweat from his face and belly with a towel.

"Admiral," Molitov said with a slight nod.

Sargon leaned against the far wall and crossed his arms. "There's something I must discuss with you, Lord."

Molitov tossed the towel into a dirty hamper. "All right," he said. "What is it?"

"I've decided to claim the human woman, Tara."

Molitov grinned. "She's yours. I lay no claim to her."

Sargon frowned. "But you took her the other night."

"I enjoyed her by the king's request, not because I wanted her. I have no interest in her. So go ahead, take her."

Chapter 15

Sargon rode up to the embassy just as the suns were beginning to fade into the horizon. Making his way through the building, he was impressed by how much they'd accomplished in such a short time. He spotted Mia sweeping the floor in a back room and leaned in the doorway, waiting for her to acknowledge him. She looked up and started.

"Sorry, I didn't see you there."

He smiled at her. She was a pretty woman and had a lovely smile. "Where is Tara?"

Mia pushed a lock of hair from her eyes. She pointed to a large room at the front of the embassy. "She's been working on the transmitter. You should be warned, she's in a very bad mood. I guess she can't get it working."

He nodded and stalked over to the room Mia had indicated. Tara was seated in an office chair, a half-empty bottle of gin next to her on the table. The transmitter sat on the table in front of her, emitting garbled noises every few seconds. She heard him come in but ignored him.

He took a seat nearby and remained silent.

After a long while of adjusting the transmitter without improvement, she shut it off and took a sip of gin. She made a face. "What are you doing here?"

"I came to see you."

“I’m a little busy right now,” she said, not looking at him. She glared at the transmitter.

“Perhaps I can help.”

“I don’t think you know anything about Earth technology,” she said flatly.

“You’d be surprised what I know. Why don’t you let me look at it?”

“I’m sure you didn’t come here to fix my transmitter,” she said. She turned and looked at him. Her mouth moved into a tense line. “What did you say to the king?”

Sargon propped his boots up on the table and interlaced his fingers on his belly. “I basically told him I wanted you all to myself.”

She took another sip of gin and scowled. “I hope you haven’t cost me my mission here with your possessive bullshit.”

A surge of rage filled him, but he held it at bay. “Would you have preferred I let the king toy with you whenever and however he pleases?”

Tara ignored the question. “What about my crew?”

“They’ll be protected as well.”

She nodded, but tears welled up in her eyes. Sargon moved closer and stroked her cheek. She stood up and wrapped her arms around him. Burying her face in his neck, she said, “I’m sorry for being so short with you. I haven’t been sleeping well since we got here and nothing is going as planned. There have been soldiers hanging around our home and they’re starting to get bolder. I’m worried they might rape my girls.”

Sargon squeezed her and reveled in the flowered scent of her hair. “I could move in with you,” he offered. “That would keep the night visitors to a minimum.”

Tara sniffled and rubbed her wet face onto his tunic. “I think that would help a lot.”

“I’ll move in tonight,” he said, his anger at her fading. “Now why don’t you let me look at your transmitter?”

Tara nodded and moved back from the table. Sargon switched on the power and ran a few tests to make sure the equipment was working properly. When he decided it was, he tried a few different frequencies and finally got a clearer one to Earth.

Tara stared at him with her mouth open and beamed. “That’s fantastic. How did you do that?”

He picked up the gin bottle and tossed it in the trash. “First,” he said with an amused leer, “I’m not drunk. And second, I’ve spent the majority of my career on ships. Interstellar communication is a constant problem for us as well.”

Without warning, she grabbed and kissed him. He returned her passion with a smoldering fire of his own.

She took a step back and smiled at him. “I’ll have to reward you for this tonight.”

“I’m looking forward to it,” he said.

Chapter 16

Tara lay in the quiet darkness of her bedroom stroking Sargon's powerful back. Despite his alien appearance, she found him very attractive. It didn't hurt that he was an amazing lover. Tara wasn't used to being so desirable to men. Back on Earth, she'd had little time for relationships, even when a man did show interest in her. The only boyfriend she could claim was Peter. *Poor Peter*. She wondered how he'd taken their breakup. For the most part, she'd always considered herself married to her work. Now she had no shortage of men and sex.

The more time she spent with Sargon, the more she grew to like him. She didn't dare tell him though, for fear he'd take advantage of her affection for him to play head games with her. She was hopeful he was sincere about wanting to be with her in the future, but there was also that nagging suspicion that she was nothing more than a novelty fuck.

He stirred for a moment and she stopped touching him, so he wouldn't wake. He rolled over and settled again, making her grin.

* * * *

Mia and Alexis appeared to be adapting to this new world well. Except for some liaisons with Sargon, they steered clear of the local men. They kept themselves busy working on

clearing and setting up the Embassy. Tara wished she could be around to help them more, but she'd dedicated herself to keeping Sargon entertained. She couldn't afford to let him get away. They'd be screwed if they were totally dependent on the king for their safety.

Luckily, they understood what she was doing, and did everything they could to support her by giving her lots of time alone with the admiral. For a brief second, Tara felt guilty about using him like this, but then she reminded herself that it wasn't like he wasn't getting anything out of it. Once the embassy was complete, there would be plenty of time to explore her fledgling relationship with this big alien warrior.

Tara looked down at his face and noticed he was watching her. She stroked his cheek and gave him a light kiss. "I thought you were asleep," she whispered.

"I sleep light."

"Me too."

"Tara," he said, "I want you to come to the arena with me tomorrow. I'd like to give you some lessons in handling a saber."

"I'm not much of a brawler," she said, amused.

"I know, but it would make me feel better. Please just humor me, will you?"

"Okay, if it will make you happy, I'll take some fighting lessons."

Chapter 17

The arena was an enormous domed building with elevated seating all around the central fight floor. The floor was small in comparison to the rest of the building, made all the more ominous by its packed black sand. Sargon told her the color of the sand wasn't just decorative, it was to prevent the combatants from slipping in all the blood.

Tara followed him to the preparation cells, a nervous flutter tickling her gut.

"I don't know if I'm ready for this," she said.

He glanced back at her over his shoulder. Turning his attention back to the pile of armor pieces, he picked up a small cuirass and tossed it to her. She caught it and held it like it was a live shark.

She really didn't want to learn how to wield a sword.

"Put it on," he commanded.

Tara hesitated. Maybe there was still time to talk him out of this. "Why do you want me to learn this?"

"Because it might save your life one day."

"I have no intention of getting into a fight with anyone on this planet. My mission is to set up an embassy and that's my main priority." She tossed the armor on the floor and folded her arms across her chest.

He leaned against a metal examining table and lit a cigar. The room filled with the rich scent of burning tobacco. “You may not have a choice in the matter. Some of the Assyrian females have already begun talking about killing you. They want to make an example of you to ensure other human women don’t sleep with their men. You need to learn how to handle a sword in the event one of them attacks you.”

Tara made a face, but she knew he was right. She had wanted his protection and help, and now she resented him for it. She shook her head. Sometimes she became so determined she resented anything that got in the way of her goals.

“I’m sorry. I know you’re right. I’m just frustrated with the lack of progress we’ve made fixing the building up,” she said, tossing her hands in the air. “I don’t know what I was thinking. I guess I was hoping the king would offer us a little more help.”

“I understand your frustration,” he said, chewing his cigar to the other side of his mouth. “But that’s no reason to get careless about your safety. Your crew should be learning this as well.”

Tara reached down, picked up the cuirass, and put it on. “I know. I’ll talk to them.”

When she was encased in her protective armor, Sargon led her to the arena.

At first, she felt out of place and awkward, trying to see out of a helmet that was much too big.

Suddenly she felt the bite of a blade cut her in the forearm. Hissing from the pain, she pulled her helmet off and swore.

“Put your helmet back on! I could have cut your head off!” he roared.

“I can’t see with this fucking thing on!”

Snarling, he launched a ferocious attack, making Tara stumble back. She deflected his blows as best she could until one finally knocked the saber from her hands. It fell to the floor a few feet from her and she lunged for it. He was on her in seconds, holding his blade to her cheek. Tara glared at him.

“You’re going to need a lot more practice,” he said. “Maybe I did you a disservice fucking you too soon. From now on, we’ll do a little more fighting and a little less fucking.”

Tara grabbed her saber and struck his away from her face. “Did anyone ever tell you you’re a real charmer?”

He laughed and held his hand out to help her up. “All the time, my dear,” he said. “All the time.”

* * * *

They rode home in silence. She was more exhausted than she could ever remember being. She wondered if he’d be staying with them for a while. She sure hoped so.

“So you told me you’d been with a human woman before. Who was she?”

He grinned and studied her. “There have been a rare few humans who have ventured out here before you. Unfortunately, for them, they lacked the understanding of our culture and it cost them. The woman said her name was Nina and she had come to AEssyria as a stopover to the new mining colonies. She didn’t speak the language and didn’t know she wouldn’t be able to find a job here to earn enough money to continue her journey. She ended up making money in the whorehouse. It was quick, easy and very profitable. After a while, she told me it became a way of life. Like many other AEssyrian men, I was curious about her and slept with her for the adventure of it. It was an empty sordid experience; I didn’t enjoy the feel-

ing of taking advantage of her misfortune. Eventually I gave her the money to return to Earth.”

“Did she?”

He shook his head and laughed. “Unfortunately no, she ended up blowing the money on a ticket to the mining colonies. Last I heard, she’d married some old prospector and had a few children.”

Tara nodded. “That’s kind of sad.”

“How so? She got the life she was looking for. That’s more than I can say for you.”

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“Just that I doubt your life’s dream was to give up five years of your life to build a human embassy here on a planet millions of miles from Earth.”

They stopped in front of the house and Tara dismounted her hyperia. “It was a lot more than five years if you figure in the twenty year travel time. To tell you the truth, I thought this and the money were exactly what I wanted. Now, I guess I’m not so sure.”

Chapter 18

“Rumor has it you have a new woman and you’re holding out on me,” General Gavin Theron said as the admiral entered the military complex. The general had just finished a conversation with a few junior officers when he spotted Sargon.

Sargon scowled. He and Gavin had been best friends for centuries. They’d even gone to the military academy together, but being so close to anyone usually meant everyone knew your business. “Maybe I didn’t want to share,” Sargon said, marching toward his office.

Gavin fell into step with him. “That’s rather selfish. I’ve always shared with you.”

Sargon couldn’t argue with that. Gavin was most generous with his women, especially if they were as lusty and attractive as the captain. He stopped and turned to face the general.

“So you want to come for a party?” Sargon asked. He normally would have been ferociously jealous of watching anyone but him sleep with Tara, but Gavin wasn’t interested in any woman for more than a night. In fact, he’d made a reputation of being a notorious bed hopper. Sargon certainly wasn’t afraid Gavin would take Tara away from him.

“Of course I do. I’d love to sample your lovely young human captain and her friends.”

The Mission

“What if I can only get the captain to agree?”

Gavin gave him a wicked smile. “I’ll take what I can get. Will you be joining in?”

Sargon smiled in spite of his annoyance with Gavin. “Sure. Just like old times.”

“When should I come by?”

“What about later tonight?” the admiral said. “This might take some convincing.”

Gavin placed a cigar in his teeth and smiled. “I have every confidence you’ll convince her. I’ll see you tonight.”

Chapter 19

“I thought you wanted to keep me all to yourself,” Tara said when Sargon told her about the general.

He shrugged. “The general and I are old friends. We’ve shared women before in the past and I know he’s a philanderer. After his orgasm, he won’t have a romantic interest in you.”

“I’m not sure how to feel about that,” she said with an amused smile. Then she sighed. “Well, if it will keep the peace, I suppose it would be all right. You sure you won’t be jealous watching me fuck him?”

Sargon moved up to her and kissed her gently on the lips. “No, in fact the thought of it is starting to turn me on.”

“Hmm...if I’m going to have company, I’d better change into something more appropriate,” she said slipping out of his arms. “Will you let my crew know we’ll be entertaining for a few hours?”

“Sure, my love. I’ll meet you back in the main room. I can’t wait to see what you’ll be wearing.”

* * * *

When General Gavin Theron arrived at the villa, he was not alone. Colonel Caraculla, a young handsome Razorback AEssyrian was also with him. Sargon didn’t seem surprised at the extra guest. He led the men in and out to the courtyard,

where he brought them cigars and drinks. Tara remained in her room, fighting down the rush of nerves that had suddenly overtaken her.

After the officers were settled, Sargon came in to see what was keeping her.

Tara came out in a sheer flowing red dress. It billowed around her thighs as she walked, showing a little flesh as it moved. Gavin and Caraculla were seated on lounge chairs each enjoying a whiskey and a cigar. As she emerged, they watched her, their eyes blazing with lust. She could almost feel the hunger in the heat of their stares. Sargon walked close behind her, taking a seat himself when they reached the others.

Tara stood before Gavin and grinned. His gaze moved down her body, scorching a trail of desire that she swore she could feel.

“What do you think?” Sargon asked. He was clearly pleased by how attractive the other men found her.

“Lovely,” Gavin said.

Caraculla smiled as if to echo his general’s sentiment.

“She has graciously agreed to do anything you wish,” Sargon said. Then he added, “Within reason, of course.”

Gavin plucked his cigar from his teeth and placed it the ashtray. “What’s your name, dear?” he asked.

“Tara,” she replied, trying to stop her nervous fidgeting.

Unbuttoning his pants, he pulled them off his hips revealing his fiercely erect cock. “On your knees,” he whispered.

Tara knelt before him, painfully aware of the other men watching them. Gavin squeezed the base of his cock and invited her to climb up on top of him. She pulled her dress up,

so not to catch the fabric with her knees, and crawled up over him until her mouth was right over his penis.

It was a beautiful cock, thick and long with soft ridges on the underside. Tara imagined what unique pleasures this alien cock could awaken in her hot and hungry pussy.

“Suck it,” he told her.

Tara leaned down and draped her long hair behind her ears so the other two men could watch. She took Gavin’s penis into her mouth as far as she could and gripped the base with her hand. Slowly, she moved her mouth down the hard shaft, rubbing her tongue across the tip as fast as she could. The general leaned his head back and moaned, running his thick fingers through her hair.

Tara enjoyed the power she had over this dangerous man. His moans and growls became deeper as she worked. Then just when she thought he was going to climax, he stopped her. She looked up at him and blinked, feigning innocence.

“Did I do something wrong, General?”

He let out a perverse laugh. “No,” he said. “I want you to put my cock in you.”

Tara climbed up over his hips. He kissed her and, before she knew what he was going to do, he lifted her dress off her. A cool breeze tickled her nipples, making them like tiny pebbles. Gavin pulled her torso against his armor, and leaned down to maul her right breast.

Waves of stunning pleasure moved up through her body. His rough tongue circled her areola, teasing the nipple. Tara gasped and nestled her hips over his until the insistent pressure of his cock was at the threshold of her pussy.

Gripping her hips, Gavin guided her down onto his shaft, filling her up completely. Unbearable bliss fired her body with

a hunger she'd never known. Leaning forward, she gripped his hips to lift herself for another devastating plunge, but he held her still.

"Don't move until I tell you," he said, with a hint of anger in his voice.

Tara was annoyed, but did as he told her. Manipulating her hips back a little, he drove deep inside her and pumped with short, quick thrusts.

The pleasure inside her womb became torture. She wanted to scream, to beg him to let her move, but he maintained control of her movements as he continued to manipulate his cock deep inside her.

"What are you doing?" Sargon asked.

Gavin's tongue darted out and licked a trickle of sweat off Tara's neck. "I learned this in a whorehouse years ago. Human women have an erogenous zone deep near the womb. If you manipulate your cock and hit it, she'll go crazy."

Tara wanted to tell them that she wasn't their new toy or some alien curiosity, but try as she might, she simply couldn't speak. Gavin was right, she could feel him getting close to *something* inside her and every time the head of his cock came close, her womb fluttered with excitement.

Wrapping his arms around her waist, he pumped hard and deep into her and found what he was looking for.

Tara's pleasure became explosive. A loud primal moan escaped her and an orgasm like nothing she'd ever experienced tore through her senses. The world melted away and all that existed was her singing pussy. Suddenly, she couldn't get enough of the general. Slamming herself down onto him over and over again, she fought any attempt he made to slow her down. She took her lust from him as eagerly as any rapist,

savaging him with feral kisses and begging him to come inside her.

He snarled in her ear, pounding into her with wild abandon, and Tara orgasmed again. Then, just as quickly as it had come on her, the fever was gone and she was exhausted and aching.

She eased herself off him and almost collapsed on the floor. Sargon picked her up and kissed her. “That was the most exciting thing I’ve ever seen a woman do,” he whispered as he led her into the bedroom to rest. “Every new thing I discover about you makes me want you even more.”

Tara smiled weakly and closed her eyes. She sure hoped Sargon and the other soldier had taken notes on that technique. Regular sex would never be the same after that one.

Chapter 20

Tara went down on one knee before the king. “You sent for me, Highness?”

“Yes,” the king said, with an evil twinkle in his eye. “I have a proposition for you.”

“I’m your servant here on AEssyria,” she said. “It would be my pleasure to do anything for you.”

“Very well, then, I’ll come right out with it. I would like you to participate in the annual hunt.”

Tara felt an electric fear charge her system. *What the hell had she agreed to now?* “What kind of hunt?”

As if in response to her question, she heard heavy boots advancing behind her. She resisted the urge to turn around. Sargon circled around her and took his place next to the king. They exchanged a private look.

“I’ll let Sargon tell you,” the King said.

Tara stared at her lover, waiting for an explanation. “The hunt,” Sargon began, “is an annual event where women are hand-picked to be hunted by the males the king invites to attend. Being chosen is considered quite an honor. No one is harmed during the event, but the women are released naked and are expected to do their best to escape the hunters. If they make it to the safe zone, they win a cash prize or whatever else they want, agreed upon in advance. If they are captured,

the male who captures her will have sex with her and can chose to give her to other men in the hunting party. Eventually, she is released and can try for the safe zone again.”

“Unless she’s captured again,” Tara said.

“That’s right,” Sargon said.

“What do I get if I agree to participate?”

The king rubbed his chin. “What do you want?”

“I want the army to finish building the embassy. That’s the only thing I want.”

“That’s agreeable enough,” the king said. “But you should know that Sargon has made a request of his own.”

Tara met Sargon’s gaze. “And what is that?”

“He wants you to be his exclusively after the hunt. Do you agree to that arrangement?”

Tara smiled for the first time in a long time. “Yes, I’m agreeable to that arrangement. When is the hunt?”

“Tomorrow morning, early,” the king said, slumping in his throne, looking content. “Sargon will tell you anything else you need to know. Sleep well, Tara.”

“Thank you, Highness,” she said.

Chapter 21

The morning was warm, but slightly overcast. Tara rode up to the gathering area naked, on the back of Sargon's hyperia. Wind gently licked at her nipples, making them stiff. Sargon lowered her down to the ground and dismounted. "Don't be frightened," he reassured her with a soft kiss. "Even if you are captured, no one will harm you."

Tara noticed several other women there, all naked and all AEssyrian. Their bodies were so much taller and leaner than hers, but that didn't seem to deter the warriors, all of whom openly leered at her.

Thinking of the hunt, a quiet sexual thrill filled her. Certainly she'd do all she could to escape, but she didn't know if she'd mind being captured. She spotted General Theron, all decked out in his black battle armor. He approached them, his spurs jingling loudly. He smiled at her, his yellow eyes burning with desire. "You look breathtaking, dear," he said.

Tara blushed. "I can't help but feel that I'm going to be at a disadvantage. All of you have mounts to chase us with and we're on foot."

Sargon ran his fingers through her hair. "Perhaps, but the women get a good head start."

Tara shook her head. "It would take a huge head start to beat a hyperia."

Both men laughed. “Even if you lose, you’re still going to get your embassy built by my men, so what are you complaining about?” Gavin said.

The trumpet sounded, indicating that everyone needed to take their places. Tara joined the other women at the beginning of the line. Her heart was pounding and a tiny ribbon of fear tugged at her heart. The other women looked nervous as well.

The trumpet sounded again and all the women ran. Tara sprinted forward, feeling a cool breeze caress her face. The grass beneath her feet was soft as cotton, the soil beneath, a loose powdery loam that was pure luxury to her feet.

As she slowed herself to a manageable pace, she watched some of the women bolt off toward the trees to hide. That was probably a big mistake as it would be the first place the warriors would look.

Her pace evened out and her run became more like a jog. It felt good to be naked running through an open field. The only discomfort she felt was her breasts as they bounced heavily without support. Then she heard the thunder of the warriors coming. Glancing over her shoulder, she spotted a large group of them disappear in the forest and the surprised screams of the women hiding there. Three broke off from the pack and headed right for her. She recognized them as Sargon, Gavin and Grand Duke Molitov.

With a renewed sense of panic, Tara pushed herself to run faster. Off in the distance she could see the canopies of the safe zone, but knew she’d never make it before the men overtook her.

She could feel the frantic beats through the ground of the hyperia’s cloven hooves as they closed in on her, but she kept

running. Suddenly, she was lifted off the ground and pulled onto the front of one of the mounts. Her captor was Sargon, who let out a cruel chuckle at her struggles. Securing her onto the front of his animal, he rode with the other two men into a thicket of trees.

Tara was exhausted, panting and gasping to catch her breath. Sargon offered her a canteen of water and she drank greedily. When she had caught her breath, Molotov said, "Who wants to go first?"

"You can, Lord," Sargon said, helping Tara onto the ground. Molotov handed his reins to Gavin and dismounted. Stroking her cheek, he said, "All I want is that luscious mouth around my cock."

Tara went down on her knees and unbuttoned the front of his pants. His large cock was stiff and engorged as she took the shaft in her hands and slipped it into her mouth. He moaned, visibly arousing the other males. Tara ran her tongue along the swollen erotic spine and gently squeezed his balls. Then she focused on making him come. Grabbing the shaft firmly, she licked the tip in small circles as she milked the shaft. The grand duke exploded in orgasm, growling loudly and filling her mouth with his seed.

Then he mounted up quickly and rode off to catch some more prey. Now there were only two left and they would not be so easily satisfied.

Chapter 22

Sargon moved up and pulled Tara into his arms. He was thick and powerful and felt so good against her naked body. Sliding his hand down to her sex, he moved his fingers past the outer folds and rubbed. Tara felt herself grow weak and moaned. The general moved up behind her and braced his back against a tree. Reaching out, he pulled her back against his chest. Tara could feel him guiding his massive cock toward her anal core.

She opened her mouth to protest, to tell him that he was much too large to get into her ass, but Sargon quieted her with a carnal kiss. His tongue moved into her mouth and found hers. She kissed him back with all the passion in her soul. Her hands took on a life of their own, sliding up his broad chest and feasting on the cool surface of his battle armor. Behind her, the general lubricated her anus with something slick. He massaged the small opening until he could fit two fingers inside easily, then he slowly eased into her.

Tara gasped at the invasion.

Waves of ecstasy rolled up her spine as she willed herself to relax. Then Sargon opened her swollen pussy lips and eased his cock into her. Once the two of them were buried deep inside, they paused to enjoy the sensation. Tara was amazed at how intense the pleasure was. Never had she felt anything like

it. Both men filled her up to the point of breaking, and even the slightest movement made her gasp with pleasure. Then she squirmed as the general came, grunting out his hunger in a low, savage voice.

Taking great care not to injure her, Gavin pulled his cock out of her ass, tucked it back into his pants and mounted up to rejoin the hunt.

Sargon kissed her with such desire, he pulled the air from her lungs. "Such passion," he whispered. "I love it and I love you, Tara."

Tara stared at him, completely at odds over what to say. He pumped his cock deeper into her and the world around them melted away. Her flesh became an instrument for him to enjoy. Tara's body twisted and moaned under his relentless thrusting, until she gasped and was finally released. His orgasm followed right on the heels of hers.

They sat on the ground in silence for a moment. Then she said, "Aren't you going to rejoin the hunt?"

"No," Sargon said, playing with a lock of her hair. "I got what I wanted."

"Am I going to get what I want?" she asked. "Am I still going to get my embassy built?"

He traced the hairline along her temple with his index finger. "I'll make sure of it, my love."

Chapter 23

Tara folded her arms and felt a rush of joy. *It's finally finished.* She stared at the completed embassy building. *I really did it.*

Sargon moved up alongside her and grinned. "The general and his men did a good job. Your government is pleased as well. They transmitted a message of congratulations and asked if you're planning to come back now."

Tara didn't look at him. "It hasn't been five years yet."

He rubbed the back of his neck. "They indicated that since you accomplished your mission..."

"Did you mean what you said to me in the forest the day of the hunt?"

"You mean do I really love you?"

"Yes," Tara said. "Do you really love me?"

"Yes, I do very much. But I know it's too much to hope that you might feel the same about me. I'll be unhappy if you decide to leave, but I'll understand."

Tara shrugged. "I don't know. I think I've kind of fallen in love with you, too."

Sargon didn't look at her. He only smiled.

"I would like to see what the girls have planned though," Tara continued. "I should let them know I'm planning to stay."

“They both have lovers and asked me to ask you if they could stay when you returned.”

Tara sighed. She guessed she’d been so busy trying to get this embassy built, she hadn’t kept up with her tiny crew. Well, at least they were doing well. She reached out and took Sargon’s hand. “Thanks for everything,” she said. “You did a lot for me and I appreciate all of your help.”

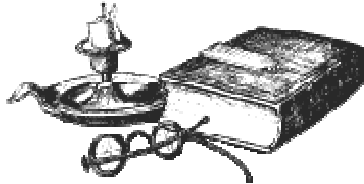
He nuzzled her cheek and kissed her by the ear. “How else was I going to get laid?”

Tara shook her head and hit him playfully. “You men only ever think of one thing.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michelle Marquis has been writing erotic romance for a few years and has many titles to her name. For more about her and her books, please visit her website at www.michelle-oneill.com.

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