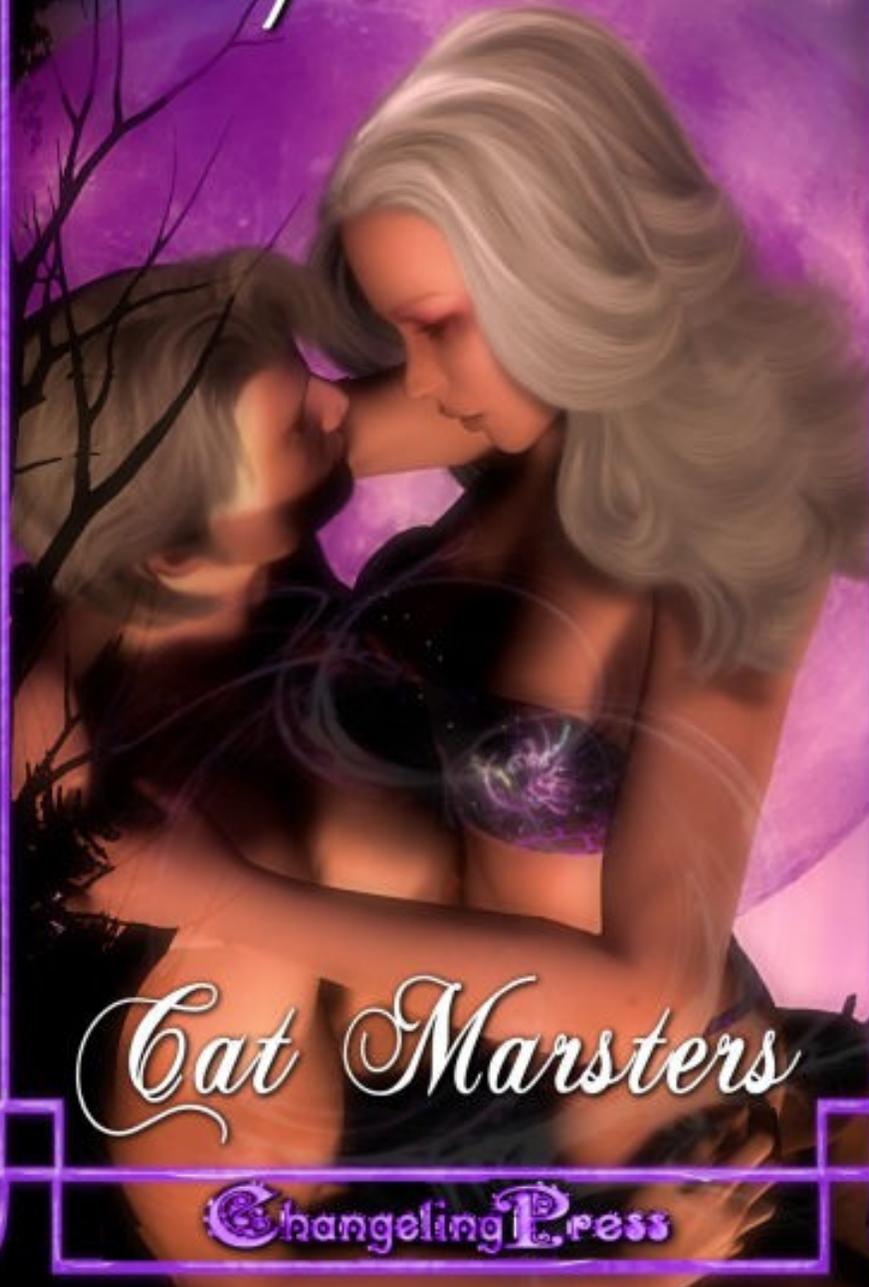


MADAM PERIWINKLE'S

Out Of This World



Cat Marsters

Changeling Press

**Madam Periwinkle's Erotic Delights:
Out of this World
Cat Marsters**

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In Jana's universe, everything is synthesized. Food, clothing -- even sex. Crashing her ship on a backward organic planet, she meets a man who shows her that the real thing can be out of this world.

Jake is quite happy living in solitude on his remote Yorkshire farm. Well, mostly happy. Nearly, at any rate. When Jana crashes on his land, he's surprised, but not totally shocked -- as a werewolf, he's used to the unusual. What does astonish him is Jana's passionate nature. Her ship is powered by sexual energy, but she's never actually been with a real man. A situation Jake quickly sets out to remedy, himself.

Then a chance encounter with a certain purple-haired purveyor of erotic goods leaves Jana with just the item she needs to get her home. But does she really want to go back any more?

Chapter One

The first time Jana had seen the charge console of her ship she'd thought the thing sticking up from the center of it had been a joystick. Until it had been demonstrated -- graphically -- that she was looking at the standard unit for charging a bioship with a female pilot.

The charge console had cleansed itself, but it still wore the shape of the fake penis she'd been riding through her last charge.

"Initialize charge. Authorization 20563JNA. Program 26."

The soft, malleable material of the console altered to form a soft cup-like shape. Jana straddled the console, resting her crotch over the central shape, and said, "Let's go, Dino."

The console morphed beneath her, the soft fabric moistening itself as it molded to her pussy. It vibrated softly, as a section grew to massage her clit. Jana sighed. Up until she'd met Dino and seen what he could do for her, she'd been a little dubious about the ethics of powering a bioship on sexual energy.

But Dino -- 225DNO -- had adapted to her body's chemistry and needs. Now the charge console knew just what she liked, from the soft vibrations on her clit to the morphed tongue that probed the folds of her pussy and slid inside.

She began to rock, enjoying the stimulation. Dino fed off her sexual energy and excitement, so he was already reaping the benefits. The ship flew on through the Void between dimensions, wild colors streaking the interior of the ship through the viewports. She'd used up a lot of energy on that last, fast jump out of an unfriendly dimension. Cruising the Void didn't use much power, but if she was going to make it home, she'd need to give Dino a powerful orgasm.

The console's tongue lapped delicately at her pussy. Dino could simulate the sexual organs of pretty much any species known to the IDA, including the multi-talented Screek with their tentacled tongues and double penises, but Jana still usually preferred the human varieties of sex.

Usually.

Thinking about it made her change her mind. "Change program," she panted, "initialize Program 43."

Dino beeped again, and the human tongue grew in size, small nubs becoming tentacles, pressing softly against her sensitive flesh, stroking and sucking. Jana gasped and pressed herself closer to the console.

A tentacle caressed her clit, then the sucker at the end of it latched on and applied powerful suction. Jana moaned, riding it harder. She'd never had sex with a real Screek. She'd never had sex with a real anybody. Maybe one day she should add it to her schedule.

Dino gave a different kind of beep. "IDA exit portal in one hundred twenty nanocycles."

Hell, too close. If she stopped charging now, she'd never have enough power -- but if she didn't get her brain back in order, she'd miss the portal. Piloting through them required more concentration than Jana could give with a Screek tongue massaging her pussy.

"Slow speed," she gasped. "Five -- thousand -- clicks -- per -- nanooohhh my gods!"

The morphed Screek tongue inside her began vibrating against her G-spot. Dino beeped and said, "Repeat instruction please."

"Five --" Jana began, but then the tentacle attached to her clit redoubled its efforts, and the main part of the tongue inside her started curling in a spiral. Her eyes crossed. She gripped the handles of the charge console and closed her eyes, but the colors of the Void still flashed before them.

"IDA exit portal in sixty nanocycles."

The tremors began inside her. Jana's body shook, heat flushing her skin, her toes curling and her thighs clenching around the console's soft, contoured base.

"Manual control," she gasped. Maybe she could reach it from here.

"Please verify identity."

A manual control pad appeared on the ship's command deck, but Jana barely saw it, her whole body shaking and writhing with ecstasy.

"Two -- oh -- five -- s-s-sohh, oh, oh!"

Dino beeped. "Incorrect authorization. IDA exit portal in thirty nanocycles."

"Oh gods. Oh yes! Oh my great sweet merciful gods!"

"IDA exit portal in fifteen nanocycles."

Jana's hands clutched at her breasts, pinching her nipples. Her head rolled back. Her hips bucked wildly.

"Five nanocycles."

Blindly, she reached for the manual pad and dragged her fingers across it.

"You do not have the authority to command this vessel," said Dino calmly, and then it wasn't just the charge console shaking, but the whole ship. Still in the grip of her orgasm, Jana was flung to the floor, the console's tentacles detaching with a wet sucking sound, and then a siren blared, blocking out all other noise and thoughts.

"Collision with unknown portal in five nanocycles. Four nanocycles. Three --"

Her body weak with orgasm, Jana tried to scramble to her feet, but the ship gave a violent lunge and her head cracked against the vibrating charge console.

Blackness followed.

"Beep! Jake? It's Daisy." Pause. "Haven't heard from you in a while, so I just thought I'd... check to see if you're all right. We're all okay." Pause. Jake stared at the answering machine's blinking red light. "It's raining in London. Hope your weather's better."

It was raining. Well, of course it was raining, he was in Yorkshire.

"We miss you, Jake. Call soon, okay?"

The machine's final bleep was obliterated by an almighty thump that shook the house. What the hell? He was in the middle of nowhere, and even if he hadn't been he couldn't think of anything that might possibly have made such an impact.

Frowning, he muted the TV and listened, but the rain was coming down too hard. Brilliant.

Sighing, he stood up, stripped off his clothes, and changed his shape. The locals called his dog Superman, because they were never seen at the same time. Well, it was difficult, when they were actually the same person. It was mildly annoying to be called a dog, and not a wolf, but since it usually came with the compliment, "Best sheepdog in the Dales!" he didn't mind so much.

Scratching open the latch, he let himself out into the rainy darkness. His wolf eyes couldn't see much, but then his human eyes probably wouldn't have been able to, either. The wind and rain deadened his sense of smell and hearing, but he could feel the earth vibrating through his paws, and set off to the paddock behind the barn, from where the thump seemed to have come.

He smelled it first. Overpowering the clean rinse of the rain came the scent of hot metal, burnt rubber and fuel. Disturbed earth. Scorched grass. Had someone crashed a car into the barn? No, it looked solid from here. And besides, the barn was nowhere near a road. The farmhouse and its buildings were nearly a mile from the lane.

Cautiously, he rounded the barn, letting his nose fill in the details his eyes missed. Sight was like a line drawing, and scent was the color making it vibrant.

Already he could smell a couple of things that were unusual. The first, a strong scent of something synthetic, something he was entirely unfamiliar with. The second, the smell of sex. Female arousal.

So maybe someone had been indulging in some in-car nookie and nudged the handbrake off? Maybe, but that was still a hell of a crash for just one car --

Except that it wasn't a car. And it hadn't hit the barn.

Something had scored a deep groove across the paddock and punctuated it with a crater at the end. Jake padded over to the edge of the crater and peered in. There was

a -- well, a *thing* nestling in the mud. Possibly metallic, possibly plastic -- the source of that strange synthetic scent. About the size of a car, but that was where the similarity ended.

It looked like something from a science fiction B movie. Not quite a flying saucer, but not far off.

And it was wrecked.

And it was in his paddock.

And he could hear someone moaning softly from within.

Jake ran lightly down into the crater and tested the strength of the craft's surface before leaping on top and padding over to the crushed section at the front. Inside, everything was dark, with harsh blinking lights, bright against the desaturated pallet of his wolf vision.

A woman, naked, her hair a shock of silky white, lay sprawled half-on, half-off something that looked like a bucking bronco.

It seemed to be vibrating.

He sniffed, and the scent of sex was all over her, and the bronco.

He couldn't help a doggy grin as he nosed her. No wonder she'd crashed! The woman stirred in response to his wet nose, and it occurred to Jake that this might go better if he was in human shape. He'd never heard of spacecraft or aliens before -- it was possible that this was some sort of high-tech military aircraft, anyway. But either way, a human form would probably be more reassuring to her than a lupine one.

People tended to get kind of scared when they saw a large wolf regarding them calmly from close quarters.

He changed his shape, and was stretching as she opened her eyes. Dark, almost black eyes, although it was hard to tell in the darkness of the ship's interior.

Blinking at him, she started to move, and winced, her hand touching her ribs.

"Are you all right, lass?" he said. "Do you need a doctor?" In his mind he was already calculating if it might be faster to drive her to hospital himself, rather than wait for an ambulance to find his remote farm.

She stared, and said something in a mellifluous language he didn't understand a word of.

"Doctor?" he repeated.

"Doc-tor?" she said, uncertainly.

"No English, eh?" Who the bloody hell was running test flights over Yorkshire now? Jake tried to think of some way to mime medical help, but instead gave up and reached out to touch her ribs, gently, carefully. She let him, staring up with those huge dark eyes.

Her skin was soft and warm, her figure neat, her breasts small and high. Between her legs she was sticky with desire, and even in his human shape, his wolf senses dulled, he could still smell her arousal.

He could feel no broken bones, no swelling. Slowly, checking her face to see if she protested, he ran his hands over her arms, checking there for injuries. Apart from a few scrapes, there were none. Her back came next, a smooth expanse of muscle flexing under more soft skin, which necessitated him reaching around her.

Her body pressed against his, her bare breasts against his equally bare chest. Her heart thumped, fast but rhythmic. Jake started to wish he had some clothes on, because he was getting kind of turned on by her soft body, her hot skin, her spicy scent. Surely she'd notice.

But she didn't seem to be at all perturbed by the increasing size of his cock as she pressed against it. She seemed to actually enjoy it.

Well, that was going to make it harder to remain clinically detached. Jake moved back, and ran his hands over her legs as professionally as he could. No, apart from some scratches and bruises, they were perfect.

Unnervingly perfect.

"Don't think you're hurt," he told her, and her forehead creased in confusion. "Come on, lass, let's get you out of here."

He held out a hand, and she stared at it. Sighing, Jake scooped her up, her thighs and her buttocks and her breasts pressed against his arms and stomach and chest, and ducked his head to carry her out of the wreckage.

Steam spiraled up from it. Metal ticked as it cooled. Jake figured it was probably best to get her a safe distance from it, in case it decided to blow up or something.

She didn't say a word, just stared at him as he carried her across the muddy farmyard and in through the back door. Lowering her onto the sofa, he reached behind her for a blanket to wrap around her shoulders and she put her hand on his chest, stroking him.

Jake froze.

Her hands continued, over his ribs, then his arms, and he realized she was repeating what he'd done to her.

"No, lass, you don't need to. I'm not hurt," he told her, but she didn't listen, and Jake couldn't blame her, he'd hardly been vehement.

When her hands stroked down his back, pressing his body against hers, he couldn't stifle a groan. She looked up, surprise and pleasure in her eyes, her lips parted. Jake kissed them without thinking, framing her face in his hands and tasting her unfamiliar mouth.

Her hands slipped to his shoulders, holding him to her as he knelt by the sofa. She still sat twisted sideways, the outside of her thigh pressed against his hip, and his cock rested against the sofa cushion. The rough fabric abraded his hyper-sensitive skin and he held back a second groan.

But he couldn't hide it when she rubbed her chest against his. There was no mistaking her intention. She wanted him.

And he wanted her.

With a soft growl, he pushed her back onto the sofa and cupped her breasts as he continued to kiss her. Her mouth was soft, welcoming, but clearly inexperienced. Jake took his time, or at least tried to, tasting her lips and tongue with his own.

When his thumbs brushed her nipples she gave a little moan, and he did it again. She arched her back, thrusting her breasts more fully into his grasp, and he dipped his head to taste one of them.

She made a squeak of surprise, but didn't push him away. Jake sucked her nipple into his mouth, swirled his tongue around it, then left it to kiss the curve of her breast. Her fingers tangled in his hair. She made soft, breathy sounds of pleasure.

He could smell her arousal, ever stronger now -- what had she been doing on that ship? -- and slipped one hand between her legs. She was sticky and hot, and as he investigated her secret folds with his fingers, she got even wetter.

Her legs parted as he stroked her, knees bending and toes curling. Jake liked that. In the dim, flickering light from the muted TV in the corner, she writhed in pleasure, the pleasure he gave her.

Her hips bucked against his hand. So she was inexperienced, but clearly not shy about taking what she wanted. His cock throbbed. Circling her nipple with his tongue one last time, he sat back on his heels and removed his hands from her. Her eyelids fluttered, and she looked at him with a slight frown.

Jake slid his right hand, the one coated with her juices, over his cock, and she gasped as she watched. Sliding the tip of his finger around the sensitive head, he gritted his teeth against the pleasure. It had clearly been too long if he was reacting like this.

His mystery woman sat up, edged toward him on the seat, and slipped her hand between her legs, stroking her puffy labia, dipping her fingers inside herself. Jake groaned.

Then she reached out and touched his cock, circled it briefly with her hand, before gesturing to her pussy.

"Oh aye, lass." He grinned. "That's where it goes."

Maybe she was a virgin. Maybe he needed to be careful with her. But as she pushed him to his back on the floor and straddled him, he realized that wasn't going to be necessary.

She sank down on him with practiced ease, her muscles tight. She was dripping wet, sliding up and down and clenching rhythmically as she took him in right to the balls. Her eyes closed, she rode him with an expression of concentration.

Jake slid his hands up her thighs to her hips, and her eyes opened, as if she was surprised to find him there.

He smiled at her, ran his hands up her back and pulled her down to kiss him again.

Still that naïve, uncertain kiss. How strange that she was so comfortable to have sex with a man, but didn't know how to kiss one.

Jake wrapped his arms around her, holding her as she bucked and writhed on top of him. Her hot, wet pussy was heaven, massaging his heavy cock. She was so wet her juices coated his balls, and he entertained a fantasy of her licking them clean. Although, given how shy she seemed to be with her tongue, he wasn't sure it'd happen any time soon.

Her fingers dug into his shoulders as her hips rocked faster, faster and harder, and she broke away from his mouth to gasp, her own hands pinching her nipples. He watched her face contort as her orgasm took her, making her body shake and her thighs clench and her pussy ripple.

Jake gripped her hips and thrust up into her, feeling the aftershocks of her orgasm contract her muscles around him, and it wasn't long before he came too, gasping out his pleasure and shooting his come into her.

She seemed startled by the sensation -- maybe she'd never ridden bareback before -- but didn't complain as he pressed her back against his chest, reaching up to grab the corner of the blanket from the sofa and pull it over both of them.

She fell asleep almost immediately, Jake stroking her hair and wondering what the hell had just happened.

Chapter Two

Jana woke with a start, something warm and hard beneath her. Hard, yet also soft, like toned human flesh. But why would she have fallen asleep on another human?

She shifted, and became aware of two things. Firstly, that she was naked. Secondly, that she was sprawled over an equally naked human male.

A real, naked human male. His real, naked penis rested between her thighs, which were sticky from what she might otherwise have assumed had been a session on the charge console.

But now she was remembering what she'd assumed had been a dream. Well, how could it have been real? She'd woken to sore ribs and a thumping headache, and a big naked human touching her all over. That sort of thing didn't happen to Jana. Then, speaking to her in a totally alien language, he'd picked her up, carried her across a bleak, cold outside space that smelled like -- well, she didn't know what it smelled like! -- and inside an archaic edifice she could only assume was his home.

Jana had dreamed of men making love to her, had dreamed of strange worlds in far-off dimensions, but had never experienced either so vividly.

So she'd given into her dream and let the divinely proportioned man touch her, kiss her and stroke her and slide that big hard organ of his inside her. It had felt so much better than anything Dino's charge console could simulate -- but then again, it had been a dream.

Hadn't it?

She scrambled to her feet. The human male frowned in his sleep and kicked his legs, but didn't wake. Good, well, at least that would give her some time to get her bearings.

Evidently she'd crashed on an organic world in some backwards dimension. If this edifice, built of stone and furnished with materials made from plants, was anything to go by, she was in a dimension where humanity had not yet found the means to leave behind the limitations of their planet.

Jana looked around curiously. She was in a small room with low ceilings, supported by lengths of dark material she thought might have been made from trees. Trees! Earth depended on them to regulate the atmosphere, and yet these unenlightened beings were making buildings from them!

The walls appeared to have been made from rocks. The floor was composed of yet more trees and some tufted textiles. Textiles she was sure had originally come from plant matter. How extremely strange.

A screen in one corner appeared to be a comm console, but it didn't respond to any commands Jana gave it. Well, she was probably using the wrong linguistic commands. The Void alone knew what languages these backwards Earth people used.

She padded toward the light coming in through a view screen, and fathomed the locking mechanism to open it. The outside space was coated with some dark brown glutinous material, soft and cold against her feet, but she crossed it anyway, in the direction of the deep groove scored into the earth by her ship.

She'd landed in an organic dimension. Dismal and bleak, dark colors and a threatening, bruised sky. Folds of green enveloped the little habitation, walls made of rock and strange little puffy creatures moving about in the distance. It was nothing like the synth world of her own dimension. She knew that at some distant point in the past, the humans of her dimension had once lived on an organic planet, perhaps like this one, but not for thousands of years now.

Very strange.

Dino lay broken and crumpled in a hole in the ground. Her hand to her mouth, Jana scrambled down inside the crushed entrance and surveyed the damage in dismay.

"Never charge your ship in the Void," she heard her instructor say. "It is too unpredictable. Set down in the nearest dimension, stop your engines, then charge. Never in the Void. Do you understand?"

Yes, of course she understood. And she'd always followed those instructions to the letter. But the last dimension she'd entered to perform a routine charge had proved so hostile she'd used up most of her energy just escaping. And besides, everyone charged midflight, or so she was told. How dangerous could it be?

Looking at the possibly irreparable state of her ship, she knew exactly how dangerous.

Jake woke to find himself alone on the floor, half covered by the blanket usually residing on the back of the sofa. Last night's mystery woman had vanished, and he was alone with the dawn light and a cold breeze.

He frowned. Cold breeze? Had he left the door open?

No, not a door, but the window was unlatched, and he could see footprints in the mud of the yard. She'd gone back to her ship. Well, good luck to her -- Jake had seen scrap metal in better shape.

He stood up, yawning, and stretched. He supposed he ought to go and find her, figure out what the hell she'd been doing. Military craft? All right, maybe one of the local airbases was testing some new craft -- after all, the Dales were sparsely inhabited, and sheep didn't care about being flown over -- but then why didn't she speak English?

He frowned, pulling on the clothes he'd discarded last night, and strode out into the cold morning. He could hear her crashing around inside the wreck of the ship, and stood looking at it for a moment. In the cold, pale light of dawn it looked even more alien, a crunched-up piece of unidentifiable synthetic *something*.

He found her inside, poking at bits of twisted metal and grumbling to herself.

Naked.

"You'll catch your death, lass," he said, and she dropped the thing she was holding, spinning round, her eyes wide. Yes, they were black, her eyes, large and

fringed with thick lashes. Her hair shone straight and pale, the color of fresh cream, her skin a darker tone, like honey. She was very beautiful, very alluring, and very --

"I know not thy meaning, sir," she said.

-- very weird.

"It's freezing, lass. You're not wearing a stitch. What happened to your clothes?"

"A stitch?" She looked confused, but bravely went on, "It seems my garments were destroyed, sir, with the ruination of my vessel. I know not if aught can be salvaged."

Jake stared for a moment. All right, so it was an improvement on last night's gobbledegook, but not by much.

"Lass," he said, "why are you talking like something out of Shakespeare?"

"Shakespeare?" she said. "Methought this was Earth. Is't not?"

"Aye, lass, but in the twenty-first century. Not that you'd know it around here," he added. "People haven't talked like that for a few years."

"Oh." She looked crestfallen. "How many years?"

"About five hundred."

Her eyes went wide. "By'r larkin, a parlous mess."

"Do you have any idea what you just said, lass?"

"I spoke my dismay, sir -- did not the device express it?" She poked at her temple.

"Device?"

"Aye -- a device. Puts the words into my head so I may understand and speak the language of the dimension I have identified."

Jake sighed. "Right. Okay. You downloaded a five hundred year old Babelfish into your brain. Marvelous."

"'Tis likely it has been many a year since last my people were here."

"Aye, I think so. Who are your people?"

She hesitated.

"I promise you, lass, I won't find it strange."

"My vessel," she gestured to the wreckage, "crosses dimensions. While I am human -- as are you?" At his shrug, she went on, "While I am human, the world of my people is much different from yours."

"It would be, lass, if you can travel between dimensions."

She frowned. "You find this... not strange?"

Jake shrugged again. "Well, I've never heard of it before, but that doesn't mean it's not possible, eh? Besides, I'm not what might be called normal either, lass." He rubbed his hand across his face. He couldn't keep on calling her that. "Do you have a name?"

"20563JNA," she said, then added shyly, "Jana."

A number? Her name was a number? "Your friends call you Jana?" She hesitated, then nodded. "I'm Jake. This is my farm."

He extended his hand, and she looked at it curiously. Jake took her hand and shook it gently, smiling. "That thing in your ear doesn't tell you Earth customs, does it?"

"Nay, sir."

"And don't call me sir. People who've done what we did last night should be on first-name terms."

She blushed, and he grinned.

"Right then, Shakespearean Jana, I reckon it's time we got you on the outside of some food and the inside of some clothes. You can tinker with your ship later. I've got sheep to feed."

She followed Jake, the large man who had brought her to such heights of pleasure she thought she must be dreaming, and he led her back inside his home. Turning right instead of left, he took her to a room lined with small doors, most of them made of trees, and a couple made of metal.

"Sit," he said, and disappeared. When he returned he had some textile garments over his arm, which apparently she was expected to wear.

Jana looked at the entirely unfamiliar garments, bit her lip, and Jake sighed. He helped her dress, his fingers grazing her skin as he pulled the soft fabric over her. The garments were too big, and did not automatically adjust to her size, but they were very similar to what he wore, so she thought at least if she met any other people she might not look too strange.

Jake smiled at her, brushed her hair back from her eyes, and she lost her breath.

"You'll do," he said softly. "Are you hungry, lass?"

On the device with the metal doors he proceeded to heat various objects, adding unfamiliar foods which admittedly smelled wonderful. When he put them on a plate before her she had to admit she was starving.

"'Tis many hours since last I partook of sustenance," she said.

"What kind of sustenance do your people partake of?" he asked, and seemed to be mocking her slightly, although she couldn't understand why. She'd downloaded the most recent language files for this particular part of this particular dimension. Maybe Dino's memory files had malfunctioned. It was likely. Most of his other functions were offline.

"On my ship 'tis protein feeds," she said. "Direct to the vein."

"Yummy," he said, and she realized he was being sarcastic. "Do you ever eat proper foods?"

"Aye, in known dimensions." She hesitated, poking at the items on her plate. Jake was tucking in heartily, using metal implements to lift the food to his soft, shapely lips. In the daylight he was very pleasant to look at, even if with his shaggy hair, unshaven cheeks and rough hands he was not exactly the sort of man usually considered attractive in Jana's dimension.

She frowned. She'd never seen a man like him...

"Thou *art* human?"

This time it was he who hesitated. Jana sighed, and wondered how much protein she had left on board her ship.

"No -- no," he said, "you can eat that. It's perfectly safe for humans. Eggs and bacon, locally produced, very good for you."

"For me?" she said. "But what are you?"

He chewed his lip, then said, "All the dimensions you visit, have you heard of something called a werewolf?"

She frowned. The language files had no translation. "Mayhap by another word?"

"A man who turns into a wolf. You know what a wolf is?"

She stared. "A changeling?"

"No, a werewolf. We're -- uh -- it's not something a lot of people know about, but..."

"Thou changest thy *shape*?"

"Thou livest on a *spaceship*?" he shot back, and Jana felt her cheeks heat.

"'Tis strange, I know, to one such as yourself. In this dimension, there is but one inhabitable planet, is there not? You have no need for vessels which travel between worlds?"

He shrugged. "Eat. Before it goes cold. Earth is the only planet we know of that's inhabited. Doesn't mean there might not be more out there we haven't found yet. So we have spaceships. Primitive, compared to yours, but we have them."

She nodded, regarding her food. If his people were prepared to travel on primitive ships to far-off worlds, with no certainty that they would even find anything once they got there, then she could definitely bring herself to try some new food.

She copied Jake's movements with the metal implements, and put some of the food in her mouth.

"*Oh*," she said, as the flavors exploded on her tongue. She chewed, swallowed, and went back for more, closing her eyes in bliss. "Oh."

She ate more, and more, and when she opened her eyes Jake was staring at her, food halfway to his mouth. Jana felt her cheeks heat again.

"That's the same expression you had on your face last night," he murmured, his voice low and husky.

Her whole face grew hot.

"Tell me something, Jana-the-dimensional-traveler. You seemed to know exactly what you were doing last night when it came to sex. But you had no idea what to do when it came to kissing."

Her whole body on fire with embarrassment, Jana stared at her plate. "I have never kissed a man before."

He frowned. "Never? You're -- how old?"

"Four-and-twenty score."

Jake stared, and Jana realized he probably counted time differently. "Lunar cycles," she said.

"Ah." He appeared to consider this. "Those I understand. How many in a year? A solar cycle?"

"There are four solar cycles in each lunar cycle," she said, and he sighed.

"One new moon every four years? Bloody hell, lass. That'd make my life considerably easier." He shook himself. "Look -- I'd say you were twenty-something, our years. Maybe thirty. Definitely old enough to have kissed a man."

Jana shrugged. "There is an age for such things?"

"Yeah. About half of yours." He got up and fiddled with some equipment on the console above the cupboards, his back to her. "You've never kissed a man, but you didn't feel like a virgin to me."

"A virgin?" She searched her new memory data. "Oh. An archaic term."

"Maybe to you. What do you call someone who's never had sex?"

"But I have had sex," she said. "Perchance not with a man, but I have... er... performed and, um, felt..."

"With what?" he said, turning back to face her.

"With my charge console," she said.

Once again, he looked confused.

"'Tis a bioship. Its food," she gestured to her plate, "is different from ours."

"Aye, I know that. Wouldn't catch me eating the stuff I put in the jalopy."

She tried to translate 'jalopy' and came up with a blank.

"My vehicle," he said patiently. "Vessel."

"Ah. And what do you feed it?"

"Petrol. Gasoline. A fossil fuel."

Her horror must have shown on her face. "Fossil? 'Tis organic?"

"When you think about it, everything's organic at some stage. What do you run your bioship on?"

"Energy," she said, still shocked. Her synth world had no organic materials in it.

"Aye, but what kind of energy? Something must generate it."

"I do," she said. "We do." At his gesture, she continued, "Last night. We created much energy, yes?"

"Yes," he said, smiling. She liked his smile. It softened his harsh face.

"This energy, it feeds my ship."

"Sexual energy?"

She nodded. It had been used for many years in her dimension.

"But -- who do you generate it with? If there's no man -- wait, are you a lesbian?"

Lesbian. She tried to translate this, and said, "This dimension is as new to me, sir -- Jake -- how is't that I might have been to the land of Lesbos?"

He closed his eyes. "I mean," he said with exaggerated patience, "is your partner a woman?"

"No. My partner is my ship."

They stared at each other a while, then eventually she rose and said, "Come. I will show thee."

He followed her, muttering something about a dictionary, across the wet earth to her ship. Jake glanced up at the sky, which was stained a dirty white.

"Going to rain," he said. "Best get this bioship of yours under cover before it rusts."

"Rust? There is no metal in it," she said.

"Aye, but exposed to the elements --"

"Exposed to the vacuum of space, the rigors of the Void -- your weather will not harm it," she said scornfully.

"Lass, you've never been to Yorkshire before, have you?"

She chose to ignore that, and led him inside Dino's damp interior. The charge console, like the memory banks, didn't appear to have been damaged. Many of the secondary functions still worked, but the engines were offline and she wasn't sure any charge generated by the console would work.

"The charge console," she said, gesturing to it. "On't I generate energy, and the ship stores it."

He stared. The console was still molded into the shape of the Screek tongue with its many tentacles. Jana had to admit it didn't look very arousing. If anything, it resembled one of the trees Jake's furniture had been made from.

"You... generate energy?" he said, running his hands over the console. "How?"

"It stimulates me," she said, repeating the explanation she'd been given at the IDA Academy.

"This?" he said, touching the simulated tongue. "It looks like a tree."

"'Tis most stimulating," she said defiantly. "The Screek tongue --"

"The what?"

"The Screek. They have much renown for their tongues, and their... effects. And 'tis needed, for their babes are made in the primitive way."

"Primitive?" Jake seemed to be very big, and very close, in the confines of the cabin.

"Aye. They must mate. They have perfected not the devices --"

"Wait. You're saying your people don't actually have sex with each other, they just fuck machines?"

Fuck. She ran this through her memory files, and blushed again. "Aye. We fuck machines. 'Tis of mutual benefit. We give to them energy, and they create our children. We do not mate with the machines," she added hurriedly, in case he misunderstood. "They take the necessary cells to create a babe."

Jake shook his head in apparent disbelief. "And this tree thing is what you use to get you off?" He folded his arms. "Show me then, lass."

She blinked. A taunting light came into his dark eyes.

"I've shown you how we make love. Show me how you do it."

Her skin burned, but this time with arousal, not embarrassment.

"Your ship's probably going to need power," he added.

"There may not be enough power for it to work," Jana lied. The console always worked, using some of the energy it was creating if none other was available.

"And you think we're backward?"

He was mocking her now. Defiantly, Jana struggled out of the enveloping clothes and handed them to him, standing naked before him. In her own language, she said, "Initialize charge. Authorization 20563JNA."

Dino gave a quiet beep, trying to conserve energy.

"Program..." now, what to choose? Something he could clearly see would be best for demonstration purposes. "Program 12."

The console morphed from the Screek tongue to a perfectly modeled human penis. She heard Jake's noise of disbelief as she straddled the console, fitting her legs to its contoured surface. The synth material was soft against her, warmed to skin temperature, and yet...

Yet it wasn't quite as stimulating as Jake's rough, muscular body.

She ignored that thought and rubbed her pussy against the fake penis. It too was warm, and the texture was perfectly realistic. Or so she'd always thought. Jana couldn't put her finger on what was different, but it just wasn't quite the same as the real thing.

She felt incredibly self-conscious doing this in front of him. Whispering to Dino that she needed him to provide some lubrication, she pressed her clit against the gently vibrating penis and rubbed herself all over it until she judged she was wet enough.

Then she slid down onto it.

Her eyes were closed, but she heard the soft noise Jake made as the fake penis penetrated her. His own cock had been there last night, filling and stretching her.

Although Jana had been using charge consoles for years and was not, in the technical sense, what he'd called a virgin, she'd never had an actual male penis inside her until last night.

Never had a man's mouth on hers, rough and hot and bewitching. Never felt hands other than on her own on her breasts -- and his hands were vastly different from hers. Big, rough with hard skin and blunt nails, the hands of a man who did hard manual work.

Jana began to move as she remembered the feel of his hands on her body last night. His skin was dry and rough, his touch firm and sure, but gentle at the same time. He'd wanted to give her pleasure. Wanted to make her body feel good.

The charge console was really only concerned with the end result.

Raising her hips, she began to rise and fall on the rod of synth material. It plunged into her, filling her, anatomically correct even down to the shape of the soft testicles brushing her bottom with every thrust. The shape, but not the texture. Jake's cock had been smooth and hairless, but the skin at the base of it, and covering his balls, had been covered with short, coarse hair.

Jana had hygienically removed all her hair, save for her eyelashes, brows, and the hair on top of her head. She'd often wondered why this was the accepted practice -- why hair on top of the head, but not in the other places it naturally grew? But she'd never had a lover to tell her whether he liked it or not.

Her hands caressed her breasts as she rose and fell, but they didn't feel as good as Jake's had. Too small, too soft, too familiar. She wanted someone else's hands on her, dammit!

Opening her eyes, she saw Jake standing watching her. His arms were folded over his chest, but she couldn't help noticing the bulge at his crotch. Was he getting aroused over this?

His body was tense. His shoulders were tight, his fingers digging into the sleeves of his clothing. He kept shifting his weight.

When his eyes met hers, there was no doubt he wanted her.

"End program," she said, and the console ceased its thrusting.

Jake's intense eyes drilled holes in her.

"'Tis not the same," she whispered.

"You seemed to be enjoying it," he replied, his voice hoarse.

"Not as much as --" she licked her lips. "As much as I enjoyed last night."

Jake stepped toward her, his heavy footwear thudding on the deck. His hands -- his big, strong hands -- reached out and touched her ribs, where she was dismayed to see purpling bruises. Oh. Was that all? Would he not want a woman who was thus disfigured?

But then his fingertips moved delicately upwards, tracing patterns of fire on her skin, and he stroked her breasts. Jana couldn't help a little sigh.

"You want me?" he asked softly.

"I do," she blurted, and he smiled, looking much like the wolf he said he became, and swung her around so she sat facing him, still impaled on the console. Jana was confused, especially when he said, "Make it start again, lass. Make that fake cock thrust into you."

"But --" she began, and he dropped to his knees. He kissed the inside of her thigh and said, "Trust me."

Jana whispered the command and the program started again, thrusting gently in response to her unsure movements.

"Do you like that, lass?" Jake asked, stroking the insides of her legs. "Do you like to feel it inside you?"

Jana nodded. "But you I like more," she said boldly.

"Glad to hear it," he said, and began to stroke her delicate folds with his rough fingers, massaging the lips stretched wide around the console's penis. He stroked her wet flesh, his touch sure but delicate, and Jana began to move a little more.

"What else can this do?" he asked, touching the base of the fake penis as she rose and fell on it. "What was that tree thing?"

"A Screek tongue," she said. "With many -- uh, methinks the word is 'tentacles'?"

He looked up, comprehension dawning. "Little fingers to stroke you with? While it licks you?" He whistled. "Can it make a human tongue?"

She nodded. "'Tis one of my favorites."

"I should think so, lass, it's the right species. Have you ever been licked by a real human tongue?"

She shook her head. Jake's eyes glinted. "Want to try it?"

Breathless with anticipation, she nodded, and Jake leaned forward. The tip of his tongue touched her clit, and she shuddered, suddenly very close to orgasm.

"'Tis -- oh! 'Tis..."

"Mmm," he said, and pressed his lips to her delicate flesh. The console's penis thrust inside her, stretching and stimulating her, and Jake's tongue swirled around the most sensitive bundle of nerve-endings in her whole body, and within minutes she was screaming.

Jake lapped up the flood of moisture that came with her orgasm, then looked up at her, seeming pleased.

"Better than eggs and bacon, eh?"

Before she could figure out what that meant, he'd lifted her off the console and told her to command the program to cease. She thought she saw him mouthing the word to himself, as if to remember it, as he settled her on the smooth part of the console, her legs spread wide.

He unfastened his clothing and withdrew his mighty cock. Although the console could create any size of human penis, Jana had found size to be immaterial after a certain point. But Jake's cock seemed to her to be proportioned perfectly, thick and long, the head flushed dark red and seeping liquid, much as her pussy did when she was aroused.

He was hard, swollen, and pressing for entrance at her sopping pussy. Jana touched her lips to his, tried to remember how he'd kissed her last night, and wrapped her arms around his broad shoulders.

He pushed into her, somehow filling her so much more completely than the console had, and began to thrust.

He massaged her breasts, stroking the nipples the way she'd touched herself. Pressing closer, he hitched her legs higher and eventually draped her ankles over his shoulders, gripping her hips so he could push deep into her, all the way, so his balls pressed against her bottom. Heavy, soft balls, coated with dark hair. Wet with her dripping cream.

Jana felt the tremors begin inside her again. Jake fucked her ruthlessly, hard and fast, sweat beading his skin. It was unlike anything she'd ever experienced with bland, impersonal charge consoles, and she reveled in every second of it. Her second orgasm burst over her in hot, bright colors like the Void itself.

When he came he clutched her tight, his face buried in her neck. The rough stubble of his jaw abraded her delicate skin but it felt good. Everything about him felt good.

"Nothing but rain from that sky for hundreds of years," he said against her neck, "and then you fall out of it."

He raised his head, brushed his lips over hers, and smiled.

Chapter Three

Jake left Jana watching TV to try and absorb some more up to date language -- although what the hell she'd do if she ever encountered the thick dialect of the locals, he had no idea. He also, with great reservations, switched on his computer and explained the basics of how to use the Internet. He figured the pilot of a space ship that could cross dimensions could use the Net without too many problems.

"Just don't try to hump anything," he said as he left to check the sheep.

The rain started before he was even past Jana's ship. Heavy, hard drops of freezing water. The sort of relentless rain you only got in the middle of nowhere. Jake, wolf-shaped, loped on up to the high field where he'd left the sheep and spent all morning herding them to a more sheltered position. He was just about to push the gate shut with his paws when he realized there was one missing, and spent the next several hours tracking it down. A young ewe, so frightened of the big bad wolf chasing her that she continued to run and nearly caused a traffic accident when she fled across the lane.

The car screamed to a halt, the ewe ran on, and the driver yelled and ranted inside his nice cozy dry vehicle. Jake turned and walked slowly up to the driver's window, put his large paws on the glass, and bared his teeth.

The driver stopped ranting, and drove away quickly.

By the time he'd returned the ewe to the flock, turned human and attended all the other duties he had to take care of, it was growing dark again. Frozen solid even with his heavy weather gear on, he made his way back to the farmhouse, which looked cold and dark with no lights on.

"Jana?"

He stood making a puddle on the tiled floor of the back porch. Faint sounds came from the living room. A gasp. A moan. A cheesy soundtrack.

He sighed.

"Jana, are you watching porn?"

Kicking off his sodden, muddy boots, he went through into the small living room, where the only light came from the computer screen. It displayed a highly improbable group of young women with pneumatic chests, making ecstatic faces as they soullessly rubbed at each other's bodies. One lucky woman had her backside in the air while a man who was oddly hirsute all over, bar his crotch, stuffed his fat dick into her.

The women wore trashy jewelry and ounces of make up. The man wore socks and a gold chain.

"Turn that bloody thing off," he said, not even remotely stimulated, and then he glanced at Jana who lay naked on the sofa, apparently transfixed, stroking herself the way the women on the screen did.

"Jana?"

She gave a delicate shudder and opened her eyes. "Jake? You're back." Her fingers delved into her hairless pussy. "I found these instructional films on your Internet."

"They're not instructional." He closed the browser, and the gasps and fake moans immediately died.

"They're not? But I was learning from them."

"Learning what?" Cold, wet and annoyed, he struggled out of his waxed jacket and scarf. His hair was soaked, and he had to resist the urge to shake like a dog to dry himself.

"What people do with each other." Her eyes shone in the darkness. Her hand caressed her own breast. "How they touch. What stimulates. What's normal and acceptable --"

"Porn isn't normal," Jake said, tugging off his jeans which were also soaked through. "Those aren't real people. And they aren't having real sex. They're just... showing off."

"Showing off?" Her face fell.

"Like you did for me this morning. Pretending you're enjoying something, just to try and turn someone else on."

She gave a small smile. "But it worked, didn't it? You were turned on."

He sighed and stripped off his sweater and t-shirt. "Yes, but that's because I was looking at a real person, not a fake -- hold on a minute, lass. What happened to all the thees and thous?"

She shrugged, and gestured at the silent TV. "I'm a quick learner."

She certainly was. Even now her fingers were pinching at her nipples in a way that looked frankly painful.

Jake ran his hands through his wet hair and sighed. "Look, if you want to learn about real sex, then ask me. I'm quite happy to teach you anything you want to know."

She sat up, reached for his hand. "Really? Would you?"

Her fingers were sticky with her own come. "Aye, lass. But not now."

Disappointment showed in her eyes.

"I am *knackered*, lass, and frozen, and I need a hot shower, or better yet a hot bath, and a drop of whisky."

She frowned. "Knackered?"

"Exhausted. Worn out. Too tired to think of more words."

She bit her lip. "You have been working hard?"

"Aye."

"Jake? Why do you say 'aye' when no one else does? Other people on your 'television' say yeah or yep or yes or --"

"Vernacular," he said shortly. "Dialect." He gestured at the computer. "Look it up."

"Google?"

"Aye, lass. Google 'Yorkshire dialect'. Wikipedia it." He gathered up his clothes and made for the stairs. "I'm going for a bath."

Maybe he was being cruel to her. After all, accents changed so much within five miles that if he taught her how they spoke in Hennydale, if she visited Micklewell ten miles away she wouldn't understand a bloody word.

The pipes creaked and groaned as he filled the bath with hot water. It was one of his luxuries as a human to take proper hot baths, rather than the cold hosing down people gave their dogs. Proof to himself that he was a thinking being, a human as well as a wolf. That he wasn't just a sheepdog.

Closing his eyes, he settled back in the water. There were no sounds from downstairs. Jake had never really been a fan of porn. Plastic people having plastic sex. You might as well fit genitals to blow-up dolls.

He was just getting out of the bath, drying himself with a towel he'd kept warm on the radiator, when he heard the creak of the stairs, and Jana pushed the door open. For a moment she looked at him, still damp and flushed with heat, and he looked back at her, still naked, her nipples hard and her pussy damp. Even in human form he could smell her arousal.

"Tha can allus tell a Yorkshireman," she said softly, "but tha can't tell him much."

Jake blinked. His hands stilled in the act of drying himself.

"It's a reet good language," she added, with half a smile.

He'd never found the local dialect to be particularly alluring, but suddenly, it was an incredible turn on. "You learned that in half an hour?"

Jana nodded. Christ, she was sexy.

"Why?"

"I wanted to speak like other people," she said. "I don't..." She twisted her hands. "I might end up... I don't know if I can fix my ship. If there are too many broken components. The nav banks, and the engine, and all the circuits -- I don't know if all the

energy I have is enough to get him back in the air, let alone making inter-dimensional jumps."

"Him?" Jake said, stabbed with irrational jealousy.

"Dino. 225DNO. Nothing has a name," she explained with defiance, and the very faintest tinge of sadness, "everything has a designation."

"20563JNA?"

"I prefer Jana."

He reached out and ran his hand down the curve of her neck. "So do I. Lass, why are you naked?"

She bit her lip. Jake wanted to do the same. "You said you'd teach me," she said. "About sex. Because I don't -- I've only ever been with machines, and it's not the same..."

"It's as 'not the same' as watching soulless porn on the Internet," Jake sighed.

"I prefer it with you," she said hopefully, and he laughed.

"Me too, lass. Me too."

* * *

Jana had to admit there were benefits to organic worlds.

She had to bounce along in the primitive mechanical vehicle Jake called a car -- Jana was new to such things, but she'd seen the sleek cars on television, and they were nothing like the ancient junker Jake was piloting -- along rutted, twisted roads, but the things she saw were incredible.

Yesterday's heavy rain had cleared to blue skies and occasional pretty white clouds. The sun shone over green fields, rolling into the distance like waves, cresting every now and then with a rocky ridge, netted with walls made of rocks. Here and there sheep roamed, white and puffy creatures, apparently necessary to Jake's livelihood.

The air was clean and sweet, proper organic air instead of the filtered and recycled stuff she breathed on the synth worlds she usually inhabited. Above the noise of the decrepit car she heard animals she thought might be birds.

For miles and miles over the green fields, electric blue skies, the craggy rocks, there were no other people. There were no signs of the modern world Jake had shown her with the machines inside his home.

No wonder Dino had thought she'd landed hundreds of years into Earth's even more backward past.

"Now then, lass," Jake said, as they approached signs of habitation, "I need to get some things in town. You go and buy clothes, all right? Don't spend too much," he added, handing her some paper.

"It's money," he added, then explained how the concept worked. Docking the car in an open area, surrounded by stone buildings and lots of people, he pointed to a circular device apparently used for telling the time, fixed to the outside of one of the buildings.

"When both the hands are pointing upwards, I'll meet you back here," he said, then had to explain what he meant by 'hands'.

She followed him from the vehicle, and almost immediately, a man standing several feet away bellowed, "Jake Holding! Has tha got thyssen a woman?"

"Just a friend," Jake rumbled, not looking at the red-faced, stout man.

"Aye, and a reet pretty friend she is an' all!"

Jake put his hands on Jana's shoulders and turned her in the direction of the shops he'd pointed to. "Go," he said. "Buy clothes."

His cheeks were pink. He was embarrassed! Smiling, she walked away, feeling the imprint of his hands on her shoulders. Last night after he'd bathed, he'd taken her to his bed -- a huge, soft bed, completely unlike the utilitarian sleep pads she was used to -- and made good on his promise to teach her about sex. He'd explored every inch of her body with his hands and mouth, wringing orgasm after orgasm from her until she could barely breathe.

And he'd been right, the things he did for her in bed were nothing like the things she'd seen on those porn videos. Everything he did seemed geared toward giving her exquisite pleasure -- and he took very little of it for himself.

She'd woken with the sunlight filtering through the window, and a bed long cold from Jake's absence. He'd stuck a note to the mirror: *Tending sheep. Back soon. Eat food but do not* (this had been heavily underscored, several times) *leave farm. Will take you to buy clothes later. Jake.*

Jana had watched more television and looked up more things on Jake's Internet to wile away the morning, learning about clothes and shopping. By the time he had piloted his jalopy into the nearest market town, she felt assured she could buy the things she needed to blend in.

Because blending in was what she might have to do. She'd taken another look at Dino's wrecked systems that morning, and there was so much to repair she doubted she could ever do it by herself, even given an infinite amount of time. The engines were wrecked, the power conduits useless, and the construct shifter, the device that allowed her to enter and exit the Void and move between dimensions, had been completely destroyed.

Jana had spent some time on the Internet looking for component parts to build another one, but Earth didn't seem to have even the raw materials.

She browsed clothing stores and bought garments similar to the ones she had seen other women wearing. In each one, she noticed a strange thing: that the women working there widened their eyes when they saw her, and whispered. She heard Jake's name mentioned once or twice.

"Them's the type Jake has," said the woman in the shop selling shoes. "Tha'll need 'em on his farm."

"You know Jake?" Jana said. She'd been advised by him not to use the Yorkshire slang she'd picked up from the Internet: "Nobbut a fool impersonates a Yorkshireman, lass."

"Aye, we all know Jake." The woman elbowed her colleague. "Five year he's lived in Hennydale, and have we seen him with a woman once? Have we, heck!"

"But... he knows so much about women," Jana said, confused.

"Oh aye, does he?" More elbowing. "Well, tha'll be the judge of that, love. Can't get a word out of him on it. Used to live down South by his accent."

Jana opened her mouth, then shut it again. She'd thought Jake had a local accent.

"Mind, his uncle were the same. Never a word to anybody. Mardy bugger."

"Jake's uncle? Where is he?" Jake had never mentioned family.

"Died. Five year ago. Does tha want boot polish with them, love?"

Realizing this signaled the end of the conversation, Jana handed over the paper money -- such a quaint idea! -- Jake had given her, and left, thinking of the other items she needed to buy.

As she left the shop, the two women cackling behind her, a flash of purple caught Jana's eye. The shop next door, which she hadn't noticed on the way in, although the Void alone knew how. The window was filled with purple feathers and lace and the sort of highly impractical underwear Jana had seen on the women in the porn videos.

In her own dimension there wasn't much call for underwear at all. But perhaps here, it was necessary?

And perhaps she'd better get used to what was necessary here.

Inside, the shop was a myriad of purple, mauve, violet and everything in between. Jana's attention was caught by a display of items that looked like morphs from Dino's charge console: penises in many different sizes and colors, some with glitter and flashing lights, and plenty with attachments of varying kinds. Jana poked at one, feeling the unrealistic rubbery texture and frowning.

"Can I help you, sugar?" asked a female voice, and Jana turned to see a woman with tight curves and purple hair wiggling toward her. Her face was beautiful. Her breasts were enormous. She looked like the sort of woman who'd never need to ask a man to teach her about sex.

"I --" Jana wondered if she should make up an excuse to cover her embarrassment, but then figured she was in a shop selling sparkly penises, and gave up. "I was wondering what this is supposed to be for?"

"Oh darling," the woman gave a tinkly little laugh. "If you don't know then you just might be in dire need of one!"

Jana smiled uncertainly. "I thought -- is it a clitoral attachment?" she said, and the woman beamed.

"Indeed it is! You know your vibrators, sugar. But I'd recommend something else for you."

"Oh?" Jana was about to say she didn't need anything with a clitoral attachment -- she had Jake -- but the woman was already wiggling away.

"Now... I have lube here... you want lube, honey? No, I don't think that's for you. How about nipple clamps?" She was sized up. "No, I think that man of yours can take care of that kind of thing all by himself, don't you?"

Jana, no longer surprised that everyone in town knew she was sleeping with Jake, just gave a helpless nod.

"I had a... hmm, a Magic 8 ball, no, that's not you... or..."

Jana leaned against a display of whips and handcuffs, her arms folded. She'd met some interesting characters today, but none like this purple-haired woman currently rummaging through boxes behind the counter.

She was not of this dimension.

"Are you Krullian?" Jana asked.

"Krullian? What's that, darling?"

"They inhabit dimension KRL639. They have hair much like yours, but otherwise look human."

"Oh no, sugar, I'm not an alien! I'm a faery."

"A what?"

"A faery. You know, the wings, the wand... I'm a faery godmother."

A species Jana had never heard of. "I see," she lied.

"Aha! Now, this is for you, honey." The faery godmother sashayed over to Jana, holding out a set of underwear in bright, swirling, ever-changing colors. It was so at

odds with all the relentlessly practical clothes Jana had already bought that she stared for a moment.

The colors of the fabric were like the colors of the Void.

"Underwear?" She touched the soft, sensuous material. It almost felt like synth fabric.

"Perfect for you, darling." The woman gave her a strangely penetrating look. "It's just what you'll need."

"Need? What for?"

"Why, honey, I couldn't tell you that! You'll find out. But it is just what you need." She fluffed her bizarre hair. "It always is."

Frowning, Jana bought the underwear -- which was more expensive than any other garment she'd purchased that day -- and went outside into the bright sunlight. Looking above the shop door, she saw the words Madam Periwinkle's Erotic Delights.

Hmm.

Chapter Four

It had started to rain by the time they got back to his house. He'd taken a long route, over bumpy fields, to check on the flock, before bouncing down an unpaved road to the house. Jana sat beside him, looking thoughtful, the back of his ancient Land Rover full of carrier bags. She didn't seem to have been profligate -- apart from one small bag made of stiffened purple paper, with purple ribbon handles.

He told himself he didn't care what was in it, but he knew he was lying.

"Hungry?" he said as they went in. He'd left a light on, and the house looked warm and cozy after the dark and rain outside.

Jana nodded, frowning.

"Thirsty?"

She nodded again.

"Horny?"

She gave another distracted nod, and Jake sighed. "Aye, I can tell you're gagging for it."

That got her looking up. "What?"

"Where were you?"

Jana looked bewildered. "Here."

"Mentally." He toed off his boots and plunked several carrier bags down on the kitchen table. While Jana had been out buying clothes, he'd stocked up on food and things for the farm.

"I don't understand."

No, he didn't suppose she did. "Doesn't matter."

"I was thinking hard," she said.

Maybe it did matter.

"About my ship. I don't know if I can fix everything."

"I'll give you a hand if you want." At her look, he added, "All right, I might not know about inter-dimensional travel, but I can fix a computer and I'm handy with a spanner."

"I don't even know what a spanner is," Jana confessed.

"It's something that involves hard physical work, and can therefore only be used by strong, masculine men."

She caught his eye, realized he was teasing, and smiled. "Sorry. I'm just... worried. I don't want to stay here forever. I mean -- it's nice, but I need to get home."

There was a short pause.

It's nice.

"Of course you do," Jake said gruffly, turning away. "Chicken for supper?"

While he cooked, she went to put on the new clothes she'd bought, and reappeared hesitantly, five minutes later, in a bizarre brightly colored lingerie set and nothing else.

The kitchen was warm. Rain spattered the windows. Jana's skin glowed like gold against the jewel tones of her skimpy underwear.

Jake's temperature shot up.

"I thought you might like to see this," she said, her voice husky with nerves.

"It's very nice," he said. "Take it off."

Her hesitant smile vanished. She turned to go, and Jake shot out a hand to grab her arm.

"No. Take it off and stay here."

Her eyes met his. Then she looked down and smiled a little. Her hand touched his crotch, where his cock leapt up to say hello.

"I see," she said.

"Not yet," Jake said, unfastening his fly, and she smiled and unhooked her bra, letting it fall to the floor so he could watch her gorgeous breasts sway with every movement. "God, you're beautiful," he said, and she smiled shyly.

He kicked off his jeans, freeing his cock, which had hardened so quickly it ached. Jana slid down the silk French knickers that matched her bra. Jake stripped off his sweater and t-shirt in one go.

Naked, they eyed each other. Her body was perfect, not too skinny but not too round either, her breasts small enough to be high and perky, her thighs luscious, her nipples tempting, her hairless pussy smooth and wet and tight and --

"You've touched me all over," Jana said, her eyes rooted on his cock. "But I haven't touched you."

"No," he said hoarsely.

"Would you like me to?"

"If you want," he nearly moaned.

"I do want," she said. "I want to do for you what you've done for me."

Jake leaned back against the table and found himself nodding vigorously. He took her hand and placed it on his cock, where she left it, her touch hesitant.

"Stroke it," he whispered, and she did, as if petting an animal. "No, like this."

He covered her hand with his and wrapped her fingers around his shaft, moving them gently up and down.

"It's so big," she whispered. "How does it fit inside me?"

"Flattery," he told her, "will get you everywhere." He straightened and led her by the hand up the stairs. Kitchen tables were one thing, but he wanted to take his time with her.

Throwing back the quilt, he laid her down on his bed and stretched out beside her. "Now then, lass," he said, and she smiled at what had become an endearment. "Just do what you did before. Stroke me here," he led her hand to his shaft, "and here," the head, "and here," his balls.

She smiled shyly, her hesitant fingers exploring him. Jake took in a deep breath and tried to think of boring things, because naïve or not, she was a bloody natural. Her touch was light, but once she became more assured she stroked him like a pro, up and down his length, circling the head. She rubbed gently at the slit seeping pre-come and spread it around, easing her massage.

Jake reached for her, lying on her side opposite him, and kissed her long and deep, his tongue thrusting into her wonderful mouth. Lifting her uppermost leg, he slid his hand over her bare mons and labia, already swollen and damp in anticipation of his touch.

She pulled back, panting. "I thought I was supposed to be touching you?"

"Want me to stop?"

She shuddered as he slipped a finger inside. "No."

He kissed her on and on as her fingers explored him delicately. Everything she did was heaven, every feather light touch and teasing stroke. When she ventured south and cupped his balls in her hand, he couldn't help a moan.

"Sorry," she gasped, and he shook his head rapidly.

"No. Good moan. *Good* moan."

She smiled nervously and gently stroked his sac. Jake circled his finger around her clit and she sighed with pleasure.

Two days ago he hadn't known her. And now here he was, lying naked with her, the first woman he'd taken to his bed since Maria. The first woman he'd slept with in five years. How different Jana was! Softer, shyer. Maria had known what she wanted and gone after it -- in every aspect of her life. She was known at work as a ballbuster. Jake reckoned she could hold the title in the bedroom, too.

He looked at Jana, shuddering as he teased her slippery folds, her eyes closed as she shook with pleasure, and smiled.

He hadn't done that in five years, either.

He kissed a trail down her neck, making her whimper softly, and continued down to her breast. But she stopped him.

"I want to learn about you."

"Sweetheart, you've already learned enough to make me very happy."

"I want to know more." Her fingers circled the head of his cock and Jake's toes curled. "What really pleases you. If the things you do to me work for you too." She licked her pink lips and said, "Would you like me to use my mouth?"

Which was how he found himself lying on his back while she licked the head of his cock like an ice cream. Tiny little laps, as if she was a kitten. It was killing him. His cock was standing up all by itself, throbbing and aching, and she was torturing him.

Women in porn films sucked cocks. Maria had sucked his. But Jake had always been a bigger fan of the licking.

Jana licked his cock up and down. She made trails of kisses. He got the feeling she was so fascinated with what she was doing that she forgot he was actually there, attached to the thing giving her so much enjoyment.

And while she licked, she stroked. She fondled his balls, weighing and stroking and swirling her fingers around until Jake's teeth were gritted and stars danced behind his eyelids. His nails dug into the sheets. He thought they might even be turning into claws -- and that would never do, changing shape mid-blowjob. It would terrify her.

"Jana," he gasped. "I'm going to --"

"What?" She spoke with her mouth at the base of his cock, made an appreciative *mmm* as she went back to licking it -- and Jake lost it. His hips thrust, his cock jerked, and he spurted all over her hand.

Panting, helpless, he stared at her, but she was gazing at the sticky come on her fingers.

"Sorry," he gasped, "tried to warn you --"

She shook her head. "No. No, Jake. This is precious, don't you realize? No one has ever -- I've never seen -- I didn't think I even could..."

He raised an arm to hold her to him, and she threw her arms around his chest, pressing kisses against his neck. Jake moved her up so she was kissing his mouth

instead, and slipped his hand between her legs to find her still pulsing with desire, hot and wet and this time, very receptive to his touch.

She lay on her side against him, her eyes closed, her hand on his chest, her leg draped over his thigh. Moaning softly. Her fingers clenched in the hair on his chest as her orgasm approached, and he felt her tremble and tighten around his fingers.

Then she sighed and relaxed, soft and warm against him, and Jake held her close in the quiet and the dark, listening to the rain against the windows and feeling her heart beat.

For an unknown while he drifted, content, until a scent came to him. Burning. Burning flesh.

He jackknifed upright.

"Shit!"

"What is it?" Jana's eyes were wide.

"The chicken." Half laughing, he scrambled to his feet. "I left the oven on. Hell. Be right back."

The chicken was a charred mess, but the potatoes hadn't even been put in the oven yet. Telling Jana to stay put, he quickly cooked some sausages and made a casserole with the gravy he'd been intending to pour on the chicken. Cooking for Jana -- well, he'd made a fine mess of that.

Still got to be better than protein feeds. Yeah, but that wasn't the point. The point was...

Well, the point was...

He didn't know what the point was. Was he trying to please her? Provide for her? Was this the wolf in him -- trying to be the alpha, the pack leader, taking care of everyone? That was why he'd taken over Uncle Gavin's flock -- a pack to take care of, without worrying about the politics and the emotional connection. Without letting anyone down.

It was why Gavin had bought the farm and the flock in the first place.

Frowning, trying not to think about his lupine tendencies, he called Jana down to the living room and lit the fire, handing her a plate of casserole as she entered, unselfconsciously naked.

"People walk around with no clothes on often, where you come from?"

She looked at herself and colored. Jake grinned and fetched the t-shirt he'd discarded in the kitchen earlier. He was already wearing his jeans, having decided that a splash of hot fat to the groin wasn't going to do anyone any favors.

"There are many races who don't understand the concept of clothes," Jana said. "In fact, it's quite rare that humans, as the dominant species, wear clothes -- as if for protection. In other dimensions I have visited, the dominant species is often naked, while inferior creatures have to protect and defend themselves with clothing made of organic material."

"Ah," said Jake, understanding a little more about her reticence regarding such materials. "What are your clothes made of? Back home?"

"Synth fibers," she said.

"Like nylon? Polyester? They're made from organic materials. When you break it down, everything is."

"No." She shook her head. "In my dimension, only life is organic. Everything else is... simulated. Synthesized." She looked frustrated. "I don't know the science of it."

"It's all right, lass. I don't know the science of nylon and polyester, either."

She gave him another of those uncertain smiles, and he caught himself thinking how nice it would be to sit with her like this every evening. Eating supper by the fire. Half-naked. His body still remembering her touch.

Then she said, "The women in town said you'd never been seen with a woman before me," and his happy glow faded.

"Nosy buggers," he muttered, filling his mouth with casserole.

"Is it true though?"

He shrugged and nodded.

"Why? There must have been other women... yes? You can't have learned all that without one."

He swallowed, and managed a smile. "Nay, lass. I've got to break it to you that you're not the first."

"I don't mind," she said, a touch anxiously. "I just... wondered. They said it had been five years."

He shrugged again.

"And that your uncle used to live here? Where were you before?"

Jake's jaw was set. He wasn't eating. But Jana didn't seem to notice. "The City."

She thought for a moment. "York?"

"No. The City of London. Finance."

Her honey-colored brow wrinkled. "Finance? That's..." she thought about this too, no doubt accessing the memory banks she seemed to have stored in her head. "That's quite different from sheep-farming, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Why don't you do finance any more?"

Jake snapped a look at her. Her dark eyes were wide with curiosity. "I just don't," he snapped, and snatched up his plate as he stood. "I'm going to bed. Night."

"But --" Jana said.

Jake was already gone.

Chapter Five

Jana sat silently by the fire for a moment, trying to figure out what she'd just done wrong. She'd happily have told him anything he asked about her life -- why was he so reticent about his own?

She wondered if he had family. It was a new concept to her, one she'd only glimpsed on the television. Here, a person wasn't just created from cells, engineered by machinery. Like the Screek, a species she'd always considered slightly primitive, it seemed the backward humans of this dimension created progeny by mating. Male and female lived together -- well, usually -- and raised their children in a family unit. Children of the same parents were known as brothers and sisters. They were close. They spent time together.

Sometimes, according to what she saw on the television, they hated each other violently, and did appalling things to each other, but that seemed to be the exception, rather than the rule.

She wondered if Jake's family had cast him out. No, his uncle -- brother to one of his parents! Imagine knowing not only who had created you, but their siblings, also! -- had lived here on this farm. Surely it spoke of some familial ties if Jake had taken over the place?

She went over to his computer and switched it on. First she searched the Internet for information about werewolves, and was astonished to find that they were regarded as a mythical species. In her own dimension, the supposition was the same -- but this wasn't her own dimension. She'd assumed their existence was common knowledge.

Werewolves seemed to be regarded as powerful creatures with a strong hierarchy and sense of family. Jana was puzzled by this -- why did Jake appear to live

apart from his own pack? -- until she read that a werewolf was commonly created from a normal human being who'd been bitten by a werewolf.

Was that what had happened to Jake? Had he been a normal person until he'd been bitten? According to her research, lycanthropism was seen as a curse. Had Jake hidden himself away for his own safety -- or for other people's?

She stood up, thinking, and began to mount the stairs. If she was to live here, she'd need Jake's help. And she couldn't have that if he wasn't even talking to her.

"Jake?" She pushed open the door to the room where he slept, the room where he'd made love to her. It was entirely dark, and it took a moment for her eyes to adjust to the gloom.

He lay on the bed, his bare back to her.

"Are you all right?"

Nothing.

"I'm sorry if I said something that upset you."

He sighed, and rolled onto his back, squinting at her through the gloom. "No," he said. "I just don't want to talk about it, okay?"

"But --" *Were you bitten by a werewolf? Are you frightened you'll hurt someone?*

Will you hurt me?

"But?"

"You're a werewolf," she began uncertainly.

He sighed again.

"And -- I mean, I don't mind, but --"

"You haven't told anyone, have you?"

"No --"

"Well, don't. Anyone. Whether or not you think they'll believe you."

She stared at him through the darkness. His expression was impossible to decipher.

"I won't say a word," she said, and he nodded, holding out his arm for her to join him in bed.

He left Jana sleeping, her fine pale hair floating on his pillow, her body warm and soft. For the first time since taking over Uncle Gavin's farm he wished he could just lie in bed and not face the dawn chill and the rain. In the past he'd welcomed the hard work, but now...

Well, now, maybe he had something else to occupy his mind.

He came back down from the fields at lunchtime and headed for the house, but there were clanging sounds coming from the crater in the paddock, so he loped over to investigate. Jana was inside her ship, hammering at something on the wall.

"Hi," he said, but he was still wolf-shaped, so it came out as a bark. Jana spun around, the hammer crashing to the floor and narrowly missing her feet. Her eyes wide with fear, she shrank back against the wall.

Jake cursed himself and loped back outside to change his shape. Even among his pack, it was considered polite to change in private -- the shapes a werewolf occupied between wolf and human were seldom pretty.

Naked, he peeked around the opening of the spacecraft, to find her leaning against her charge console, hand on her chest, taking deep breaths. She looked terrified.

"Jana?"

She jumped slightly.

"Sorry. Didn't mean to scare you."

Her eyes were huge. "There was a -- was that *you*?"

"Aye. Best sheepdog in the Dales," he said with a lame smile she didn't share.

"You really are a werewolf."

"Didn't you believe me?"

"No -- I mean, yes, I did, it's just... they're supposed to be mythical, aren't they?"

Impatiently he gestured to their surroundings. "Spaceship."

"Right." She swallowed. "Well." Picking up her hammer, she turned back to the panel she'd been fixing. "I'd better... get back to work."

He frowned. "Thought you said you couldn't fix it?"

"I can try."

"But..."

But did that mean she wanted to go home? Of course she did. Why would she stay here on this backwards world, with a mythical creature, wearing organic fibers?

"Right," he said. "Okay. Want me to help?"

She paused, her back to him, and he thought he detected a tensing of her muscles.

"It would make the work go quicker," she said neutrally.

His heart sinking, Jake nodded. "I'll go get dressed," he said.

Jana's fingers tightened around the handle of the primitive tool she'd found while searching Jake's farm for materials she could use to fix her ship. After spending the night curled up against him while he held her in a purely platonic way, she'd concluded that maybe he wasn't too keen on having her around forever.

She ought to try and fix Dino. If she couldn't she'd have to find somewhere else to live. Jake was clearly a very private person -- he didn't want to tell her anything about his past, and he probably didn't want her hanging around, getting in his way.

She'd intended to at least give him the option -- and then he'd gone ahead and offered to help her fix Dino.

He wanted her gone.

She squared her shoulders, and went back to beating the panel into shape. She didn't belong here anyway. Maybe it would be for the best if she went back to her own world.

Jake reappeared through the misty rain, this time dressed in his usual clothes. It was just as well -- naked, she wasn't sure if she could stop from herself leaping on him.

"Anything I can do?" he asked, and she handed him the hammer.

"Fix these panels. I'll see what I can do about the energy conduits."

Rain drummed on the outside of the ship. The rhythmic blows of the hammer clanged loudly. But Jake said nothing, and all Jana could hear was his silence.

She glanced back, and watched him wielding the heavy lump of metal and wood. His sleeves were pushed up, showing her how the muscles in his forearms stretched and bunched with every movement. His hands, capable and strong, gripped the hammer's wooden handle.

Beneath his damp sweater she could see muscles rippling.

"Did I really offend you?" she blurted, and he looked round in surprise.

"What? When?"

"Last night. Asking about your past. Is it so upsetting?"

He paused, wiping the back of his arm over his forehead.

"I just don't like talking about it," he said finally. He hefted the hammer again. "Especially not to someone who's just leaving."

Resentment boiled up inside her and she stabbed at the energy conduits, poking her sonic tools -- so much more sophisticated than his primitive hammers -- at the circuits until they bleeped in alarm.

"Well, I'll be gone as soon as I've got the engines working," she said.

"Glad to hear it," Jake said, and she spun around, hurt beyond measure.

Jake had frozen, as if he'd just heard his own words for the first time.

"I'm sorry," he muttered. "I didn't mean it like that."

"Do you really want me gone so much? I'm sorry I've taken up so much of your time --"

"You're the one who's desperate to leave! Now you've learned all about sex with a real person, you can't wait to go try it out with whoever you find in your own dimension, eh?"

"-- I didn't realize sex with me was such a chore, that teaching me would be so unpleasant, or I'd never have asked --"

"Well, now you've learnt and you can go off and fuck whoever you like!"

"Well, maybe I will!" Jana glowered.

"Well, do then!"

He was breathing hard, his broad hard chest rising and falling. Moisture beaded his upper lip. His hair was tousled, his eyes wild.

Jana couldn't help jumping on him.

Her mouth met his in a clashing fury of a kiss. Her arms wound around his neck as his went around her waist, crushing her body against his. He was so big, so hard, and her body absolutely craved him. Inside, she was mad as hell, but so incredibly desperate for physical action that she'd take whatever she could get.

He shoved her back against the wall, his tongue sweeping her mouth, his hands on her breasts. She tugged at his sweater, sliding her hands underneath to find bare flesh, hot, hard male flesh, and shuddering as she stroked her hands over it. His hips pressed against hers and she could feel, even through his clothing, how aroused he was. Tugging at his fly, she freed his cock and palmed it, stroking him instinctively the way he'd shown her last night.

Jake growled and tore off her shirt, exposing the pretty bra she'd bought from Madam Periwinkle. With one quick movement he unsnapped the fastening and tossed it to one side, taking her breasts in both hands and squeezing them. He sucked on one nipple, rolling the other between finger and thumb, until the sensitive flesh was hard, puckered, aching.

His hand dipped beneath her waistband, and when that proved too restrictive he unfastened and yanked down the rest of her clothing. She kicked off her boots, losing her balance and falling against the charge console.

A wicked gleam came into Jake's eye. He pressed her forwards against the console, trapping her there with his body.

"Turn it on," he rumbled in her ear.

His cock was hard against her buttocks and as she leaned forward over the console, he pressed her ass cheeks together and rubbed his cock between them. Her toes curled. Her breath came fast.

"Initialize charge," she gasped, and panted out her authorization.

Dino bleeped, and Jake, his hands tight on her hips, said, "Tell it to lick you. Make it lick your pussy."

Jana shuddered and slid forward on the console, straddling it, as she gave the command. Dino's simulated tongue began to lap at her clit, and her fingers dug into the soft contoured console.

She felt Jake move onto it behind her, lean her forward and dip his fingers into her pussy from behind. She was already dripping wet, and he slid two fingers in easily, thrusting with them, in and out, as Dino continued to stimulate her clit.

"You like that?" Jake murmured. "You want more?"

She nodded helplessly, and felt the head of his cock replace his fingers. He pushed in gently, and Jana felt her pussy clamp down on him immediately, spasming in unexpected orgasm. He gripped her hips as she writhed, coming hard on his cock, and then he started to move, slamming hard and fast into her.

Jana's eyes rolled back in her head. Jake filled her over-stimulated pussy right up, and another orgasm hit hard on the heels of the first one. In response to her clear excitement, Dino licked at her faster, his programming reacting to her movements by swirling around her clit.

"Oh, oh," she gasped, her back arched, Jake's chest rubbing her shoulders as he thrust into her. His hand slid roughly up her stomach and clutched at her breast, and she gave herself to him entirely, a rolling series of orgasms she thought might kill her.

Something slipped between her buttocks, and she realized it was Jake's other hand, stroking at the entrance to her ass. His fingers were wet with the copious juices flowing from her pussy, and the extra stimulation was too much for her to take.

"End program," she gasped, breathless and exhausted. Dino stopped licking her, but Jake didn't stop driving hard into her, and his finger only probed harder, slipping inside her back entrance.

"Initialize Program 12," he said, in her own tongue, and Jana's head whipped around in surprise.

"I listen," he told her, as Dino took on the shape of a human penis. Jake withdrew from her and turned her around to face him, murmuring the command for Dino to provide her with lubrication.

Then he did an astonishing thing. Holding her gently, carefully, he positioned her over the fake penis and pressed her down gently. At first Jana resisted, and Jake said, "Make it smaller."

She did, and it slipped in more easily. The slippery synth material pushed against muscles not used to being invaded, and she sat impaled, her legs spread wide, her cunt gushing with moisture, while Jake sat so close his penis nearly touched her folds.

He edged closer, rubbing her with his shaft. His cock was wet from her, coated from head to balls in her slick fluids, and he slid against her beautifully. Jana forgot about the strangeness of the fake penis in her ass and let Jake stroke her, his eyes intent on hers.

"Does it hurt, lass?" he said, and she shook her head wordlessly. "Does it feel good?"

In answer she curved an arm around his neck and kissed him. The crisp hairs on his chest chafed her nipples and she sighed as spirals of pleasure rippled through her. Her anger faded, she held him close and kissed him long and soft as he rubbed the engorged head of his penis over her clit and made her tremble.

When he began to push inside her she shifted her legs to accommodate him. "You want me to stop, tell me," he said, and she shook her head, smiling.

"Don't," she said. "Don't ever stop."

He kissed her mouth, her cheek and jaw, his arm around her waist as he pushed home inside her. His balls brushed the gently vibrating penis in her ass and he shuddered.

Moving gently, he thrust in and out of her, kissing her mouth and caressing her breasts. His hands were sticky with her come and he spread it over her nipples, massaging in the moisture.

The lazy spirals grew to hot excitement. Jana gasped and Jake smiled.

"Feels good, eh lass?"

"Yes," she moaned, and he laughed, the vibrations hitching up her excitement a notch further.

He began to move a little faster, a little harder, and Jana clutched at his shoulders and gave herself over to the relentless pleasure of Jake's body moving within her, holding her tight and coaxing her gently to another flying orgasm, streaked with all the colors of the Void.

Chapter Six

"It's because I'm a werewolf," Jake said, and Jana's head lifted, her expression puzzled. Wisps of hair clung to her neck and her body was soft and listless in his arms. "Why I left London. It's... a long story."

"Will you tell me?" she asked, and he nodded.

"Inside," he said, indicating the house with a jerk of his head. "It's nithering out here."

"Nithering?" she enquired, a lazy smile on those perfect lips.

"Cold. Freezing. Come on, lass."

Back inside the warmth of the house, he ran a hot bath and washed her gently all over, trying to figure out what to say to her.

It didn't matter if she knew everything. She was leaving anyway.

His gut clenched at the thought, and he tried to dismiss it.

"I was successful in the City," he said. "Stocks and bonds. Ruthless trading. Made a lot of money. Just as well -- farming isn't exactly lucrative."

She opened her mouth as if to ask why he did it, then closed it and let him go on.

"I was the only one of my family who broke away. Didn't want to be involved in all the pack politics. My dad was pack leader. Well, still is. He and his brother fought for the title, for leadership. Gavin always wanted it, but he wasn't alpha material. Everyone knew it, but my dad let him contest it anyway."

"And your father won?"

Jake nodded. "Gavin skulked away to lick his wounds. Bought this place. Said if he couldn't be an alpha, he might as well be a sheepdog."

He ran the soap over her smooth shoulder. "This all happened before I was born. But everyone said I was like my uncle. Too headstrong, that was the word they liked using. I wanted to be like everyone else I knew, like the other kids who didn't have to take time off school at the full moon, who didn't have to learn pack lore and take part in all the shit I had to do."

"You were always a werewolf?" she asked hesitantly.

"Aye. Whole family is, for generations." She looked confused, and he realized why. "Thought I'd been bitten? Nay, lass. Someone in my family, generations ago -- but not me. Werewolves beget werewolves. Litters of four or five at a time. I've two brothers and a sister."

"Do you see them?"

"Not often. The pack has territory in the Peak District -- further south," he explained. "My sister married a local wolf and lives in Matlock." He dropped his gaze. Daisy was always asking him to go and see her, see his nieces and nephews, but he always made excuses. Too much work. The truth was, he just didn't think he could face the knowing glances of his family. They'd always told him he was making a mistake.

"But London is further than that, isn't it?"

"Aye, much further. Not many werewolves there, not enough space to run free. We like open spaces, you see. But I screwed all that down and took myself away to university, to London, forged a career, spent as little time as possible as a wolf. Made money. Bought a swanky docklands apartment." He paused. "Met a girl."

Jana said nothing, but the small incline of her head said she knew this was the real rub.

"Maria was successful. More so than me. She was the one who coined the nickname The Wolf for me, since I was so ruthless." His fingers tightened on her skin, digging into the soft flesh of her waist.

"She knew you were a werewolf?"

"No. No one knew. But Maria and I... I thought we'd stay together. She was everything I thought I wanted. Smart, successful, merciless." He let out a bark of laughter. "Ironic moment coming up: She was the real bitch."

Jana smiled.

"We got engaged. I figured I should tell her the truth."

"And?" Jana said, her doubtful expression telling him she already knew what was coming.

"She thought I was mad," Jake said dispassionately. "Refused to believe it, even when I -- stupidly -- tried to change shape to show her. Started throwing things, screaming -- she called the police. Told them I'd gone mad and tried to attack her. Of course I hadn't, but the place was a mess and I was clearly... unstable."

He closed his eyes, remembering his wrecked apartment, the panic and anger thudding in his veins, the desperation to convince her -- and her screams, her wild-eyed, violent fear.

By the time Maria had repented and admitted he hadn't tried to attack her, his reputation had already been ruined. He'd lost his job, his friends, and crawled back to his family, ashamed and miserable. But before he could confess how badly he'd screwed up, news came that his Uncle Gavin was ill, and Jake had almost leapt off his seat volunteering to take over the farm.

When Gavin died, the farm was willed to Jake, who stayed, using his ill-gotten gains to keep the ramshackle farm afloat.

"I came here to hide," he said to Jana. "But it turns out, I'm good at shepherding. Helps matters if you're your own sheepdog."

She smiled at that, wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed his cheek.

"I like this idea of bathing in water," she said, resting against him.

"Don't tell me, you usually wash with synthesized water?"

"No," she bashed him affectionately. "With sonic waves that cleanse dirt away." At his expression, she laughed and said, "It's not very cozy."

"Doesn't sound it. Still, it's better than a hosepipe and dog shampoo."

Jake went out in the afternoon to finish some work on the farm, while Jana followed his instructions on using something he called the Aga to cook food. It was a giant iron beast against one wall of the kitchen, a warren of hot caves for cooking food, pouring heat into the room. He'd had to write quite detailed instructions for what he teased was a very simple dish, but Jana had never prepared anything more complex or tasty than a protein pack.

She looked around the room where he stored and prepared food, as different from a ship's galley as a hot bath was from a sonic shower. Less efficient, but so much more inviting. The viewports, made of glass, steamed over and dripped condensation onto the sills. The deck was plated with heavy, uneven tiles. None of the cupboard doors fitted properly.

On the dresser made of trees -- no, she corrected herself, made of *wood* -- there were pictures of the kind she thought were called photographs. They showed people of varying ages but similar features, all with dark hair and eyes like Jake's. There were several pictures of men in dark clothes and women in white dresses, everyone beaming. One was of a young man in a sort of cloak, and a hat with a flat thing on top of it. Very strange.

There was a picture of a smiling young woman surrounded by babies, and another of her a few years older, with what appeared to be the same children laughing and making faces. Jana touched it wistfully, trying to imagine what it would be like.

"My sister," said Jake, and she jumped, hearing the door click behind him. "That picture's a few years old. She sends them every now and then." He paused. "They're six now."

"All of them?"

"I told you, werewolves have litters."

Jana pursed her lips, a lump in her throat.

"Did the cooking go okay?"

She swallowed. "I think so. You'd better check."

He took the dishes from the oven and put them on the table, glancing at her. "You okay?"

She nodded, and his gaze dropped. "Miss your family?"

Jana couldn't stop her eyes drifting back to the picture of his sister and her children.

"I don't have any." She turned to face him. "I never had any family. People don't, where I come from. We don't mate or marry, and we don't raise children. We just donate cells and babies are grown in machines."

Jake looked mildly horrified, and she didn't blame him.

"But -- you have parents, right? I mean, you know who they are?"

"No. Well, I could probably find out the designations of the cell donors who created me, but..."

Jake took off the mitts he'd used to extract the hot dishes from the oven. "Are you saying you don't even know who you're related to? Parents, brothers, sisters?" She shook her head. "And this is *normal*?"

"Yes. I had to learn about these family relationships from your Internet and television."

"Please tell me you didn't learn about them from daytime soaps," Jake muttered. "This world of yours sounds mad, Jana. People don't have sex to make babies. They donate cells! You have sex to power machines. You might as well *be* a machine."

Jana shrugged unhappily. She'd often thought the same thing, but never dared to say it.

"Your world is nicer," she whispered. Her eyes were stinging. "It's primitive and dirty and everything smells --"

"Try having a wolf's nose," Jake said dryly.

"Everything is inefficient and crude, but... but the food tastes -- well, it actually tastes of something! And the weather is completely ridiculous, but at least you *have* weather. And families. And hot baths. And sex."

He gave a half-smile, his eyes hot. "And sex."

Her face heated up. "I might not ever fix my ship," she said, her voice so low she barely heard it, but Jake did. His smile faded. "And I -- I thought I'd be frightened to stay here but -- but..."

"Do you want to stay?" Jake said. She couldn't read his expression.

"I do," she breathed. Frightened she'd overstepped her bounds, she added quickly, "Not here, I mean, if you don't want me then I can find --"

"I want you," Jake said. He closed the distance between them, his hand moving up to cup her cheek. A smile softened his face. "I very much want you." His lips traced hers. "Stay with me, Jana."

She wrapped her arms around his neck. "I will," she whispered fiercely in his ear. "I will stay."

Jake woke with the dawn and found Jana curled in his arms. He smiled, breathing in the scent of her pale hair and kissing her neck. She slept with her back against his chest, her soft bottom nestled against his groin. She fit there perfectly.

A warm glow spread inside him. She was staying. She wanted to stay. He kissed the curve of her shoulder and she made a soft sound in her sleep, snuggling against him. Her curvy backside wriggled against him and his cock twitched in response. Last night he'd lit the fire in the living room and they'd made love on the hearthrug before he carried her upstairs and did it all over again in bed.

He closed his eyes and recalled the light of the flickering flames on her skin. Such a strange contrast, to have warm, honey-dark skin and pale, almost white hair. She'd arched and gasped under him in the firelight, and he'd rolled to put her on top, riding him, her glorious body rising above him, ripe and lush.

He was getting hard again just thinking about it. Thinking about how soft and round her breasts were in his hands, how her hot mouth had felt on his aching penis. How wet and tight her delicious pussy was when he pushed first his fingers, then his tongue, and finally his cock inside her. The way she fluttered and gasped with orgasm, tight around him.

Jake found his hand sliding up Jana's stomach, caressing her as she slept, cupping one breast and stroking it gently. Damn, he was hard now. She shifted again, sighing softly, the soft flesh of her ass caressing his cock. Jake moved against her, riding the cleft between her cheeks, his fingers toying with her nipple.

Jana moaned, and he wondered just how asleep she was. He slid his hand down between her legs, and she moved them ever so slightly apart. He grinned against the back of her neck. She wasn't asleep at all.

Finding her wet, as ready as he was, Jake lifted her leg slightly and fitted the tip of his cock to her entrance. He rubbed it against her folds, spreading the moisture around, using the swollen head to massage her clit. Jana made a small sound of pleasure, helpless and involuntary, and he moved to press inside her.

From this angle she was tighter, and Jake had to take a second to adjust to the throbbing pleasure of just being inside her. Jana moved, pressing her body back against his, rocking her hips slightly, and he stayed still, letting her. His hand rested on her hip, moving with her, but it soon slipped down to caress her swollen, puffy folds. Jana made another tiny noise and shuddered, and Jake started moving inside her.

He took it slowly, reveling in the drowsy warmth of her body in his arms. *I want to wake up like this every morning*, he thought longingly, and then realized he could. She was staying. He could wake up to her body nestled against him every morning. Could slide inside her pretty much whenever he wanted.

Jana's fingers were clutching the sheet and she'd given up all pretense of sleepiness now. Arching against him, she moaned, little whimpering cries that had Jake moving faster and harder inside her until he felt the first fluttering contractions of her orgasm. Slipping his hand up to her breast, he squeezed and caressed, his teeth scraping her shoulder as he came too, and lay still with her.

A lazy chuckle shook her body. "Good morning, Jake."

He slipped out of her, rolled her to her back and kissed her soundly. "Good morning," he replied.

Jake had gone up to the fields, transformed into his handsome wolf shape, and Jana was trying to figure out how to put the foodstuffs in the kitchen together in a way that might prove edible, when an alarm shrieked somewhere nearby.

Jana stared, but there were no flashing lights, and no computerized voice to tell her what the problem was. She wasn't on a ship -- what could possibly be wrong anyway? The only remotely complex piece of machinery in the place was Jake's computer, and she went into the next room to look at it. Nothing seemed out of ordinary.

Then the alarm ceased, and Jake's voice -- a tinny, electronic version of his voice -- spoke. "I'm busy. Leave a message."

He sounded grumpy, she thought, and smiled despite herself.

His voice came from a machine on a table nearby. It was showing a red light, and Jana moved closer to investigate.

A beep sounded, and then a hesitant female voice, also tinny and trapped, said, "Jake, it's Daisy. Listen, I was speaking to Dad yesterday and he says this year for Christmas why don't we all go to his house instead of Grandma's. It's bigger, there's more space for the kids to run around. You should see them, Jake, they're like a pack of mad dogs." She paused. "They want to see you. *We* want to see you." Another pause. "Well, call me, or Mum. Or send a text or an email or something. Or we'll be forced to come over in person and check that you're still alive." The joviality in her voice sounded strained. "Bye then."

The machine bleeped and fell silent. Jana frowned. She went to the computer, that ever-useful source of information, and tried to find out what the machine was before she touched it.

A few minutes later she had her answer: Jake's sister had called him using her telephone, and Jana had been listening to the message she left. It seemed a primitive way to communicate, given the capabilities of Jake's Internet, but apparently it was quite popular.

She frowned, wondering if Jake wanted to hear this message. She couldn't understand why, when his family clearly wanted to see him, he was so absent. Still ashamed over what had happened in London? Over Maria?

Had they met Maria, she wondered. Had Jake even visited his family in the time he'd been making money in London? Did they even know about the reason for his downfall?

No, not a downfall. From the way he'd spoken, Jake didn't miss the hard, fast life he'd had with Maria. He seemed much more content here, more at home, even if he was cut off from his family. Perhaps she should talk to him, tell him Daisy had called, that she wanted to see him.

Jana nodded to herself, and put on her boots and the heavy jacket Jake had said she'd need. Outside, it wasn't terribly cold but it was windy, whipping her hair around her face as she set off in the direction Jake had gone that morning.

"There's nowt so beautiful as Yorkshire," he'd told her last night, watching the sun fade over the rolling green and grey fields, rugged and battered by the weather. Jana sucked in deep lungfuls of cold, clean air, so fresh she could nearly taste it, and paused to look around her.

Clouds shrouded the higher hills, sun dappling some of the valleys. A network of ragged stone walls patterned the fields. A hundred shades of green were spread out before her.

How could she ever have lived on a synth world, ignorant of this?

She walked for about ten microcycles before she heard the strange bleat of the sheep, punctuated by a sharp bark. Then as she came over a small rise, Jake the wolf loped toward her.

"Jake?" she said, uncertain how much he understood her. He looked annoyed, and barked sharply again before moving behind a wall made of rocks piled together. When he emerged, he was in human form, and deliciously naked.

"What are you doing here?" he said, rubbing his arms against the cold wind. Up here, out of the shelter of the farm buildings, the wind was fierce, and Jana unfastened her coat to give to him.

"I -- I just wanted to talk to you. There was a message on your answering machine," she said, proud she knew what it was. "From Daisy. Your sister?"

A guilty look came over Jake's face. "What did she say? Is she all right?"

"It was about Christmas." Jana faltered. She wasn't really sure what this was. "The family wants to see you. The children do."

Jake shoved his hands into the pockets of the coat, which was too small for him. Jana bit her lip, because she could see his penis swaying in the breeze and it looked faintly comical.

"Jana, don't get involved in my family problems," he said.

"I'm not. I just wanted to tell you." She moved forward, shivering in the thin sweater that barely kept the wind from her skin. "It's nithering up here."

He rolled his eyes. "Don't," he said, half smiling. "Don't do the accent."

"I like it when you do it." She stepped forward again, nearly touching him.

"Do you, lass?"

She smiled, turning her face up and brushing her lips over his. Jake slipped his arms around her and she slid her hands inside the coat he wore, against his bare skin. Pressing herself against his body, she murmured, "You must be frozen."

"Well, you're keeping me warm."

Her hands stole down to caress his firm buttocks. "You feel cold to me. I should hate for something to happen to you."

He raised an eyebrow. "Something?"

"The cold can be bad for humans," Jana said earnestly. "I saw something on the television. The girl fell down in the rain, and hurt her ankle, and caught a chill, and had to be rescued by the man who wasn't very good for her."

Jake's head was tilted to one side. He opened his mouth and shut it again.

"But it's all right, because she ended up with the Colonel who loved her in the end."

"Jana, have you been watching Sense and Sensibility?"

"I think that was what it was called. They dressed very strangely. And they didn't speak like other people on the television."

"No," he agreed, and seemed amused. His lips brushed her temple and she stroked his backside. She loved feeling it under her hands, loved to clutch at it as he drove himself into her. It was firm, packed with muscles that flexed as he thrust his thick penis inside her --

"Jana?" Jake's hands had strayed to her own buttocks. He breathed in, and smiled. "I can smell your arousal, you know."

"You can?" Embarrassed, she ducked her head.

"Oh yes." He shifted his hips. "And you can probably feel mine."

She could. His hardness pressed against her belly. Her hand slid around, over his hip, to wrap around his shaft. It jerked under her touch.

"Jana," he groaned, and took her hand, leading her away from the flock of sheep, behind the stone wall where he'd changed his shape. Here they were more sheltered from the wind, and he took off her coat and laid it on the ground, gently pushing her down to lie on it.

"I just want you, all the time," he said, standing over her, magnificently naked. His cock swayed proudly, and she reached up to touch it, stroking the moisture at the tip around. Jake shuddered and knelt beside her, pushing up her sweater to reveal her breasts in their multi-colored bra. He stroked her through the fabric and she bit her lip, pulling him closer.

"I want you inside me," she said, and Jake needed no further encouragement. His hands scrabbled at the fastenings on her jeans, diving inside and finding her wet and ready for him. Jana moaned, helped him push away the fabric getting in their way, and pulled him between her legs. His cock rubbed against her once, twice, and then he

was pushing inside and she clutched at his wonderful buttocks, pushing him as deep as he could go.

"I love the way you fill me," she gasped, rising to meet him. Jake's hands lifted her hips as he drove deep into her, his lips on her neck. The wind howled above them, the ground was cold beneath her, and as Jake pounded into her she slid off the protection of her coat and onto the damp grass. She didn't care. Jake was on her, in her, his beloved face tight with pleasure as he thrust, faster and harder.

His hands were on her breasts, pinching her nipples through the slippery fabric of her bra, and Jana felt the pleasure start to swirl inside her, the colors of the Void bursting into life before her eyes. Her breasts tingled, her body shook, and then with a cry she was flying, the Void blossoming around her, rich with color.

She clutched at Jake, but suddenly he wasn't there, and something was dragging at Jana. A dark spot in the Void, a portal --

-- Madam Periwinkle's multicolored bra thrummed on her chest --

-- and with a rush of air she was suddenly still, lying on the synth ground outside IDA headquarters, staring up at the inside of the synth sphere enclosing the world.

Jake's orgasm swallowed him, fierce pleasure rushing through his body as he felt Jana contract around him, crying out. His fingers dug into her flesh, and suddenly felt something strange.

She was... insubstantial. His fingers moved through her. Jake's eyes flew open, and a hologram of Jana lay beneath him, writhing and gasping in orgasm. A swarm of living colors swept over her, washing her away, her body dissolving before his eyes.

"Jana," he yelled, more afraid than he'd ever been, but she was gone.

Cold rain splattered his bare back. Jake scrambled to his feet and stared around wildly, as if it had been some trick, but he couldn't see her. He screamed her name, but there was no answer.

She was gone.

Chapter Seven

“A construct shifter built into the fabric,” said 60052HFX, turning the bra over and over in his hands. “I’ve never seen such a thing. Still, it got you home, 20563.”

“Yes, sir,” Jana said dully.

“Shame about your ship.” He pulled a console toward him and studied Jana’s report. “A dimension where humans lived on an organic world? Very strange. Very backwards. Perhaps not safe to attempt a retrieval.”

Outside the viewport, all she could see were ships buzzing around like flies inside the sphere. The giant plates of the synth world, created solely to serve the Inter-Dimensional Alliance, held out the Void. And held everyone else in.

60052HFX, so unpersonable he’d never developed a nickname, discarded Jana’s bra. Dispassionately, he’d enquired whether her ship’s charge console had facilitated the charge the bra needed to activate, and Jana hadn’t been able to find the words to say that the charge had been triggered by the hot, fantastic orgasm Jake gave her.

Jake. Her throat constricted.

But by now they all knew about him anyway.

“It’s not an unsafe world, sir,” she said. “The people are amicable. The vegetation is edible, and humans are the dominant species --”

“Nonetheless. Seeing what happened to you there, I’m not about to risk any more operatives.”

Jana crossed her arms over her stomach. “I could go,” she began, but 60052 shook his head rapidly.

"No, 20563. No inter-dimensional travel for you. You know that." He regarded her pityingly. "After such a monumental mistake, I'd be surprised if the IDA can even keep you on."

His gaze strayed south and Jana tightened her arms around herself.

"I'd suggest you find an organic world," his lip curled, "to live on. You'd probably fit in there now."

No inter-dimensional travel.

Ever.

Jana bit her lip, determined not to let the tears burning her eyes spill over. "Can I go now?" she said, her voice wobbly.

60052 picked up Madam Periwinkle's bra and slipped it into a drawer. "You might as well," he said.

* * *

"Jake Holding!"

He closed his eyes and cursed.

"Tha's been avoiding us, lad!"

Only because you're so damn annoying and I'm in such a bad mood that I might actually rip out your throat.

He opened his eyes and saw Nellie Black bustling toward him through Micklewell's busy market. Three times in the last month he'd gone into her shop to buy laces for his boots, which wouldn't stay on any more, and three times she'd rushed up with a gleam in her eye, desperate to know how his 'young woman' was getting on.

"Now then. Tha can't keep hiding. Where is she?"

"She's not here," Jake muttered.

"Don't be daft, I can see that. Tha can't keep her locked away on that farm, miles from everybody."

Wish I could.

"She left, Nellie," he said bluntly. "Not here any more. And I'd be obliged if you stopped poking your bloody nose in where it damn well hurts, all right?"

Nellie opened her mouth to retort, but Jake growled at her and strode away.

One month, and it was clear she wasn't coming back. He'd spent countless hours trying to fathom what had happened, searched the Internet and scoured the spaceship he'd eventually hauled into his barn. All he'd ended up with was a big hole in the earth and an inbox full of conspiracy theories.

He'd thought it hurt when Maria turned on him. But some part of him hadn't been truly surprised. He'd always known she was a bitch. But Jana? She hadn't wanted to leave. He couldn't trace her, couldn't find her, didn't know where she'd gone, or even why.

Or how.

She'd just vanished, leaving behind all her clothes.

But not the bra. He wondered why the bra had gone.

Miserable, he drove back to the farm, a crate of whisky beside him on the seat where once Jana had sat with her purple bag of lingerie, and prepared to get very, very drunk.

* * *

The thing about 60052 was his total lack of imagination. Jana didn't know what donor cells had created him, but she knew they weren't people she'd want to have over for dinner.

He expected her to crawl away in disgrace, go and live out the rest of her life on an organic world, which was clearly his idea of hell. He'd given orders to block her entry back into the IDA sphere, but he'd failed to imagine that she might not have left immediately.

Jana, whose donor cells had granted her an imagination, had evaded the guards, hidden around for half a cycle until 60052 had retired to his synth pod to sleep. Then, using his codes -- he didn't seem to realize anyone else might want or need them -- she'd broken into his office.

The bra lay in the drawer where he'd left it. Jana unfastened the top half of her suit and rolled it down to wriggle into the garment. It felt tight, but the synth fabric adjusted to fit her, and she fastened her suit up over it.

Now all she needed was a charge console. She'd considered doing this without one, had even practiced in the sparse privacy of the bunk she'd been allocated while the IDA figured out what to do with her, but she hadn't been able to bring herself to orgasm. Not without Jake.

She crept out of 60052's office and to the training rooms. Students were given a generic access code to enter, and it never changed. Jana walked past the public consoles, where the more extroverted students were enjoying their training, toward the private booths for shyer recruits.

There was a girl enjoying Program 63, lying back on the console while a Tfglsk penis darted in and out of her wet pussy. The Tfglsk, a vaguely reptilian species, had semi-sentient penises, and made love by lying still and allowing their organs to move independently.

A few consoles down was a young man on his feet, his hips grinding against the vagina the console had created for him. Next to him another male recruit was having his balls sucked by a simulated human tongue.

A girl rose and fell, screaming with delight as twin cocks invaded her ass and pussy. Her console was bleeping happily, taking in vast amounts of energy from her multiple orgasms.

Jana closed her eyes, inevitably remembering how Jake had used the console to stimulate her ass while he'd plunged into her pussy. Thank the Void she'd taken the bra off then, or she might have missed so much more.

Letting herself into a private cubicle, she initialized Program 12, the human penis, and asked for lubrication. But after several minutes of joyless riding, she was getting nowhere.

In fact, she felt slightly nauseous.

Changing the program, she lay on her back and allowed the Screek tongue to investigate her pussy, the long suckered tentacles pulling and sucking on her sensitive folds. Her hands caressed her own breasts through the fabric of the bra, and she closed her eyes, imagining it was Jake's fingers pulling on her nipples, caressing the curve of her breast, cupping and holding her tight.

Pleasure began to rise inside her, swirling together with desperate hope. All she needed was one orgasm. It didn't even have to be a big one. Just enough to power the dimensional shift.

She was almost there when the alarm started blaring. Underneath the wail of the klaxon, she heard screams and thumps as the students outside were startled from their practice. Her fingers tightening in frustration as her concentrations slipped, Jana told the console to work harder, lick faster, but the voice blaring from the walls made her freeze.

"Intruder alert! 20563JNA is an unauthorized presence! Report sightings to Security!"

Hell. 60052 knew she was here. Jana listened carefully, detecting the stamp of marching feet. They were here. How did they know?

He must have found the bra missing and jumped to the right conclusion. Hell of a time for him to develop an imagination!

Jana squeezed her eyes shut and pinched her nipples harder, trying to block out everything else with memories of Jake. Jake kissing her. Jake licking her throbbing pussy. Jake sliding inside her, his eyes molten with desire.

Doors were being ripped open further down the practice room. It was only a matter of time.

Jake holding her tight, breathing in the scent of her hair, smiling at her --

The door to her booth burst open, just as Jana flipped over into orgasm.

"Unauthorized!" screamed 60052. "Stop her!"

But the colors of the Void were already taking Jana. Sobbing with relief, she let the practice booth fade away.

There were ten messages on his answering machine. His inbox was choked. He hadn't opened any mail for weeks.

Half an inch of stubble lined Jake's jaw and his eyes were bloodshot from the fifth whisky-sodden late night in a row. Rain hammered into him as soon as he stepped out the back door, instantly finding its way inside his collar and dripping down his back.

He swore, huddling into his sodden sweater and stumbling across the muddy yard to see if he'd left another bottle inside his car, when something streaked across the dark, stormy sky and landed in the high field.

His feet started moving before his brain caught up.

Won't be her. Can't be her. Just a meteor, a shooting star, some other alien landing on Earth -- can't be her.

God, I want it to be her.

The pale figure loomed out of the darkness, appearing without warning from between sheets of torrential rain. Slipping in the slick mud, it went over with a cry and a flash of pale hair.

Jake was there in an instant, grabbing at the shivering, nearly-naked body. Honey-gold skin and white hair, dark eyes staring up at him and a pink mouth grinning in delight.

And that damned multicolored bra.

"Jana!"

He crushed her to him, her skin cold and wet under his hands. She was shivering, but didn't seem to care as she clutched at him, babbling, "I wasn't sure, it all looked so different in the dark, and the rain is so heavy, and --"

He silenced her with a hot kiss, his mouth slanting over hers, her arms winding around his neck.

"Jana," he breathed into her sodden hair. "Are you really here?"

She shivered, blinking rain from her eyes, and nodded.

"Need to get you inside," he said. "Can't have you catching a chill and being swept off your feet by a man who's bad for you."

She smiled at that, and he swung her up into his arms. Running as fast as he dared without dropping her, he made it to the yard and sprinted back inside the house, slamming the door shut against the howling storm.

"Hell of a night to choose," he breathed, letting her slide to her feet as he kissed her deep.

"I came as soon as I could," she said, her face anxious. Her body trembled with cold, and Jake led her into the living room, wrapping the same blanket around her he'd used that first night, and turning away only to get the fire going. "They had me on trial, I'd broken so many laws by even being here, exposing myself to you --"

"You're still exposing yourself to me," he grinned, as she let the blanket drop from her shoulders and began unfastening her bra. "Steady on, lass, you're frozen solid, you need to --"

"Burn this," she said, tossing the bra onto the fire. It hissed and crackled. "It's a construct shifter. It took me back to my world."

"And then brought you back here?" Jake started stripping off his soaked clothes.

She nodded. "I couldn't figure out why she gave me something that took me away from you. I couldn't stay there. But I -- I think I needed to go there again to really see that. Otherwise I might always have wondered. I think maybe that's what she was doing."

"Who?" Jake said, thoroughly confused. He poured her some whisky and she gulped it, shuddering at the warmth.

"Madam Periwinkle. The faery," she explained, as if this made perfect sense.

Jake shook his head and wrapped his arms around her, chafing her hands through the blanket to warm them up.

"I'm not mad," she protested, and he laughed.

"I never said you were, lass." He kissed her mouth. "I'm so glad you're back."

"And never leaving again." She bit her lip. "I, uh. Did you call your sister?"

He blinked. "What has that got to do with anything?"

"You know she said her children wanted to see you. Do you want to see them?"

Jake opened and shut his mouth several times, before eventually saying, "What?"

"Do you like children?" Jana asked anxiously, and a suspicion formed in the pit of Jake's stomach.

"I do," he said. "I'd even like to have some. With the right girl."

She attempted a smile, but the anxiety didn't leave her eyes. "Am I the right girl?"

"I think you are."

Relief flooded her features. "Oh, thank the Void. Jake, I know it's the normal way of doing it here, but where I come from it's all cells and machines, and they thought I was disgusting, I was shameful, they cast me out and told me to go live on some primitive organic world --" She broke off. "I'm doing this all wrong," she wailed.

"Jana." His hand slid to her stomach. "Are you telling me you're pregnant?"

She nodded fearfully. "How did you know?"

"Well. All that sexy talk of cells and donors was a dead giveaway. And besides, we never used protection. You had me in too much of a spin to remember."

"And you..." her eyes searched his. "You want this?"

"I want this." His hand found her bare breast, rounder than he remembered. "I want you." He kissed her, long and deep, and grinned. "Now, how about we warm you up," his fingers gently pinched her nipple, "properly?"

Epilogue

The house loomed out of the snow, a twinkling confection of lights set against the craggy peaks and dark sky. Jake's ancient truck crawled along the drive, snow crunching under the wheels.

"Can't we go faster?" Jana said.

"Not unless you want to hit an ice patch and go skidding off down the hill," he replied. "We're nearly there, lass."

"And you're sure they won't mind you bringing me?"

He glanced at her, his eyes falling to her belly. "Pretty sure," he said.

He'd barely stepped out of the car before the door of the house was flung open and a woman came rushing out, her cheeks pink. Jana recognized her from Jake's photos as his mother. "Jake!" she shrieked. "You're here! You came!"

Jana raised her eyebrows as his mother barreled into Jake, nearly knocking him into the snow, and flung her arms around him. Before Jana could even open the car door and get out, Jake's mother had rushed back to the house, yelling, "Everyone! Guess who's here?"

Voices drifted across the snow to Jana as Jake helped her out of the car.

"Who's here, Ma? Couldn't guess, tha didn't scream it loud enough."

"Think she punctured my eardrums."

"Sometimes I wish we didn't have super hearing."

Jana's hand found Jake's and clutched it tightly. "They'll love you," he reassured her.

"You didn't even tell them we were coming!" she hissed.

Jake's mother rushed back outside again, this time followed by his father, brothers and sister.

All five of them stopped and stared at Jana.

She crossed her arms defensively over her stomach.

"Everybody," Jake said, his voice steady, "this is Jana."

More staring. Jana glanced worriedly at Jake.

Then Daisy said, "So that's why you weren't answering your phone, Jake!" and her brothers both grinned.

Jake's mother rushed over and hugged Jana, tugging her inside, insisting she take off her coat and have something warm to drink, clearly torn between scolding Jake for not telling them about Jana, and telling him how pleased she was that he'd brought her.

She was introduced to Jake's brothers and their wives, to Daisy's husband and children, all of them werewolves and every one of them apparently delighted to meet her. To her horror, Jake's mother started crying when she realized Jana was pregnant, but Jake assured her she'd done the same when Daisy had her children, and that it was really a happy reaction.

The house was full of light and noise, music and chatter, and there were people everywhere. Jake said this was just his immediate family, and there would be more pack members arriving in the morning. The mantelpiece above the fireplace was crowded with photographs of people looking just like Jake and his family. Hundreds of them.

Overwhelmed, she excused herself to hide on the back porch, breathing in the cold air and reveling in the wonderful silence. Jake's family, while undoubtedly welcoming, were more than she thought she could take in one go.

"Need a break?" Jake said, and she turned guiltily to see him standing behind her in the semi-darkness.

"They're lovely," she assured him, "I'm just not used to..."

He smiled. "They're a lot to take. But they like you." He brushed her hair away from her face. "I knew they would."

He wrapped his arms around her, breathed in the scent of her hair. He'd made love to her thoroughly as soon as they woke up that morning, and before they left the house, and even stopped the car by the side of the road to kiss her all over and bring her to an orgasm that had the car rocking.

She nuzzled his neck, remembering.

"I swear you've got extra pheromones," he muttered, his hand nonetheless finding her breast and stroking it through her clothes. Her temperature rocketing, Jana tugged him against her body, sliding her hand down to unfasten his fly and take him in her hand. His cock hardened as she stroked it, her nipples puckering under his touch.

"Would it be wicked of us to do this out here?" she whispered, and Jake grinned.

"Nay, lass. It'd be out of this world."

Cat Marsters

Cat lives in a village in southeast England, which, while not quite a fairytale setting, is nonetheless very pretty and was mentioned in the Domesday Book of AD 1087. She shares a house with only slightly batty parents who hardly ever tell her to get a real job, and a musician brother who knows there's no chance she'll ever get one if he doesn't. Cat doesn't have children but she does have cats, who are her babies in every sense except the biological one.

Cat has been writing all her life, but in order to keep herself rich in shoes and chocolate, she's also worked as an airline check-in agent, video rental clerk, stationery shop assistant, and laboratory technician. She's aiming for a fairytale cottage, and asks all potential Prince Charmings to apply in writing with pictures of themselves and their Aston Martins.

Visit Cat's web site at <http://www.catmarsters.com>.