



*She can't resist taking him home-and into her bed.*

# ALIEN *Mate* 2

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AMIRA PRESS

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Amira Press  
Charlotte, NC 28227  
[www.amirapress.com](http://www.amirapress.com)

ISBN: 978-1-936279-39-5

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## Chapter One

Lex stood in the bland transport and decontamination room, his naked body tense with anticipation as he waited for the Alpha 350 to teleport him to his intended's location. When nothing happened, he shifted from one foot to another. "Computer, is there a problem?"

"You know, we've been traveling together for a few days now. Could you not call me by something less formal? Your friend Kor calls me Alphie," said a voice from seemingly nowhere.

"You are a machine," Lex stated for the umpteenth time.

"An intelligent one," said the shipboard computer with a sigh.

Lex clenched his teeth. The AI unit on this vessel—artificial intelligence, his ass, more like pain in his ass—kept acting inappropriately. *A machine that wants to be my friend.* He almost snorted at the incongruity. Lex had already noted in the service log the need to service this model.

"Please cease with the idle chatter and transport me to my intended mate that I might bond with her and return her to our world."

"Bit of a problem with that," announced the AI with a hint of glee.

"What now?" Lex said unable to hide the exasperation in his voice.

"The teleporter seems to be malfunctioning."

"Impossible. Try again." The molecular transportation unit had worked as expected at their last planetary spot, so he saw no reason why it wouldn't be working now.

"Try again? Are you joking?" said the computer with a realistic note of incredulity. "You want me to use a malfunctioning teleporter on you? What, you don't like your body parts where they are?"

Lex winced at the vivid image the AI's words painted. "What do we need to fix it?"

"*We* can't. We'll need some of the techs back home."

Frustration made him tighten his hands into fists. "Unacceptable. I'm here to collect my mate. I will not return without her." Lex never failed to complete his missions.

"I was afraid you'd say that," mumbled the Alpha 350. "In that case we'll need to land, and you can disembark manually."

"Make it so," said Lex crossing his arms over his chest imperiously.

"Um, shouldn't you put some clothes on first?"

"What for?" asked Lex, his brow creasing. "I need to be nude to bond with my mate."

“Yes, but you’ll need to find her first,” said the AI with a long-suffering sigh. “You can’t seriously think you can wander around naked and not be noticed. It’s bad enough your skin is blue, but a giant, naked blue male wandering around a human city is sure to get noticed.”

Lex frowned. The computer had a valid point, one he should have realized had he not been so anxious to complete his mission. “I will dress myself while you locate a suitable landing area.”

“You do that.”

With what sounded suspiciously like muttering—something to the effect of big blue aliens with more brawn than brains—that Lex chose to ignore, the Alpha 350 revved the engines in preparation to penetrate the atmosphere surrounding the planet known in their database as Earth.

While the computer took care of the minor details involved with landing, Lex clothed himself in a silvery jumpsuit, the material specially made to adapt to all types of weather conditions. He added a pair of supple black boots to protect his feet, and just in case the inhabitants of this Earth proved hostile, he slid a dagger into a waist sheath and another into his boot.

Checking on their progress—still descending into the earth’s atmosphere—Lex pulled up a picture of his intended, Amanda Beckwith, a blonde, blue-eyed alien doll. The only image the AI had been able to find didn’t show her figure, but Lex sure hoped she sported a well-rounded shape like he’d asked for when selected by the Oracle to enter the ranks of the pair-bonded. It was considered a high honor in his society to be chosen to mate, even if the females had to be fetched from other planets. Arranged pair-mating was a necessary survival tactic forced on the males of his world to compensate for the lack of females in their society, a lack cruelly caused by a deadly virus that had decimated the female ranks many moon cycles ago. Now, only the worthiest were chosen to help repopulate Xaanda, and Lex had acquitted himself well in battle for that honor. A decorated warrior, he’d finally achieved the reward for all his hard work and looked forward to the new life he would undertake with his biddable, if alien, wife.

“We’re almost there,” said the Alpha 350, interrupting his thoughts.

Lex strode down the corridors of the spacecraft to the exit hatch, the AI’s voice giving him last-minute instructions that he only partially listened to.

“Remember to stay out of sight. The humans here are known to capture and medically experiment on unknown species.”

Lex would like to see them try.

“Try and move about at night, where your skin coloring is less likely to be noticed.”

“I don’t intend to be here that long,” Lex muttered. His plan was to find his mate quickly and rendezvous with his ship for a prompt departure to his home world.

“If, by some chance, your communicator malfunctions, I’ll meet you at the gypsum crystal fields on this planet’s full moon a few days from now.”

That warning caught his attention. “Why would the communicator malfunction?” asked Lex.

“Just humor me,” said the AI. “The teleporter shouldn’t have malfunctioned either, yet it did. So remember, on the full moon, meet me at the gypsum fields. Now, your mate can be found at 351 El Paso Drive. Remember to stay out of sight. This location is very close to an Earth military establishment, and while I’ve fooled their radars, I can’t blind their eyes, so be discreet.”

Lex absently nodded, anticipation roaring through him. In and out. His superior warrior training would outclass these humans who were barely more civilized than barbarians.

With a soft thud, the craft landed and the hatch hissed open. Lex descended the ramp and stood on the alien soil, breathing deep. The air, so like that of his own world, smelled of dirt and plant life. Their similar atmospheres made the deportation of the female earthlings viable, that and the fact they were descended from the same group of space-farers who had seeded life throughout the galaxy.

“Where to?” he asked aloud, glad he’d taken on this mission the advanced earpiece communicator that allowed the AI unit to reply back, unlike some other models used on not-as-technologically-advanced planets.

The computer’s tinny voice spoke in his ear. “You need to hike a few miles due west. I couldn’t land any closer without being seen.”

Lex jogged off in the direction of his intended, his groin tightening in anticipation. Soon, he’d be among the ranks of the mated and indulging in his lusts whenever he wanted. No more galactic brothels for him. He—and his libido—couldn’t wait.

A few hours later, his breathing ragged, his clothing torn, the baying sound of the animals with vicious teeth still echoing in the darkness behind him, he soundly cursed this planet and the savages who inhabited it.

A fence appeared seemingly out of nowhere in the lightening gloom that signaled the sun’s rising. He nimbly climbed the barrier and dropped to the other side. He quickly scanned the darkness, looking for threats. All clear. He

loped off towards the shadows of the building he could barely perceive. He planned to hide amid the humans in an unused location, perhaps steal some of their clothing, and mask his scent. Well, that was the plan 'til his foot didn't hit the hard ground, but open space, and he plummeted into an invisible pit of liquid that sucked him down.

His last thought before losing consciousness was he should have listened to the stupid computer who'd recommended they abort when the chase first started.

Too late now.

## Chapter Two

“. . . George, who heard it from his cousin Juanita on the base, swears this time, it's real. Aliens have landed, and they're not friendly.”

The word “alien” caught her attention. Maya turned to the petite Latina woman who spoke. “What's going on at the base?”

Eager to tell her story again to a new avid listener, Marcia spoke quickly. “Apparently their radars didn't catch it, but this object, unknown object,” she said with a wide-eyed whisper, “landed by the white sands. My cousin says the military sent out a detachment, and they found a circle like the ones you see in them crops. The dog unit was called in, and last I heard, they were chasing some giant alien, and he's heading towards us!”

Several of the listeners crossed themselves, and excited babble broke out. Maya shook her head. She knew better than to listen to gossip. How often had so-and-so's cousin, sister, or uncle made the same claim, when the truth usually ended up being something benign. The last false alarm had been caused by drug runners whose plane had run out of gas and done an emergency landing. That night had also involved a chase, and aliens had been caught, but they were of the illegal immigrant type, not extraterrestrial. But Maya couldn't help listening to the stories, nor stop that little flutter of hope that maybe this time it would be for real. Her parents had, after all, raised her to believe.

Seeing the bulky form of Andre, the night-shift manager, waddling into the room, Maya slammed her locker shut and hightailed it out of there using the back door before he snagged her to do one more thing. Alamogordo's stupid yearly balloon festival had almost arrived and, with it, hordes of tourists who for some reason always ended up with an urgent need for food or cleaning at three in the morning. She knew she should be thankful she had a job—especially one with awesome benefits like hers—but right now, tired, her feet aching, and with a headache pulsing behind her eyes, she just wanted to crawl under the covers of her bed and pray she won the lottery.

*Yeah right, I'm more likely to run into a hot alien who wants me for my body.* Maya snorted at the ridiculous thought.

Sneaking through a service entrance, she took the shortcut past the pool deck, a copy of the key that unlocked the gate on the other side—without the hotel's knowledge, of course—a quick route to the employee parking lot and the piece of crap known as her car.

The dawn hadn't yet started lighting the gloom, but even in the dark, she heard the rattle of the fence as if someone climbed it and then, a moment

later, the distinctive sound of someone or something hitting the surface of the pool with a splash. *Keep on walking*, she told herself. *Don't get involved*. The early morning swimmer was probably a drunk on his way back from a night of debauchery, but, if whatever was in the pool ended up being human and drowning, then she'd have a hell of a bigger headache, especially if the cops got involved. No one ever believed the Hispanic girl. *Stupid gringos*.

Sighing, Maya headed towards the deep end, where she'd heard the sound. Peering at the dark, lapping water, she almost wondered if she'd imagined it, but then a series of bubbles rose to the surface, and with a curse, she kicked off her shoes and dove in. With sure strokes she'd learned from years of swim lessons, she arrowed down to the bottom of the pool and waved her arms around in the sightless murk, encountering nothing. Her chest grew tight and she prepared to go up for air when a flailing limb touched her. Grabbing it, she kicked up, dragging a form that had grown limp, her lungs screaming at the added strain. She broke the surface with a pained gasp. Treading water, she pulled at the body she'd found 'til it bobbed up beside her. Wrapping an arm around his upper body—there was no mistaking the wide male chest—she towed him to the shallow end, where the steps would make it easier to pull him out.

Maya wanted to call for help, but her breath stuttered in and out of her chest painfully from exertion. Nothing like a life-or-death situation to remind her she really should get into shape. Wheezing, she concentrated on lugging the big male body clothed in a slick, formfitting material onto the pool deck. When she had most of his body horizontal, she turned him onto his stomach and pumped his back, forcing his lungs to spew out the water he'd inhaled. She flipped him back and, hiking her work skirt, straddled his chest, trying to remember her first aid training.

*Do I pump his chest or give him mouth to mouth?* They kept changing the first aid rules, and, tired, she decided to do both. First, she did some quick compressions to his chest and then leaned down to listen for his breathing.

Nothing. She compressed again, not liking the bluish pallor to his skin that the lightening sky revealed. When he still didn't respond, she thought, *What the hell*. She pinched his nose and latched her lips over his, blowing air.

The chest she straddled expanded. She turned her head to let him exhale, counting, and then placed her lips over his again to breathe.

With no advance warning, she found herself flipped onto her back. The wet stranger pinned her body underneath his and pressed his groin—a very aroused groin—against her. She couldn't make out his features in the gloom,



but she caught a glimpse of glowing violet orbs and white teeth before his mouth claimed hers in a kiss that shocked her wet body from head to toe.

*¡Dios mío.*

### Chapter Three

Lex dreamt he kissed sweet lips while his body covered a luscious body made for pumping. It took him a moment of fuzzy bliss to realize this was no dream. The smart thing to do would have been to break off the passionate embrace with the human, but he didn't want it to stop. No longer confused, even though his shock at falling in that liquid pool had been great, he briefly wondered at his unexpected reaction to the woman underneath him, for there was no mistaking what he felt—desire, and it raged like a wild beast through his body. He might have lost consciousness, but he was definitely awake now, well, a certain hard part of him, that is.

Sharp teeth bit his lip, and with an exclamation, he pulled back from the kiss.

“Get off me,” said a female voice that even in irritation lilted musically.

Lex didn't move right away, his body reluctant to leave the soft haven it nestled on. The body under his thrashed, and a knee came perilously close to his male parts. Rolling off the female, who despite her kissing of him, no longer wanted his attentions, Lex wondered if perhaps he'd finally gotten lucky on his forsaken mission.

“I don't suppose your name is Amanda Beckwith?” he asked.

“*Mierda!*” exclaimed the earthling. “I save your life, let you maul me, and now you have the nerve to ask me if I am another woman? Bah, I don't know who this Amanda is, but she is welcome to you.”

The human's words and attitude were fiery, and Lex, who hadn't lost his initial erection, hardened even more, a fact he didn't understand since he preferred his women respectful and obedient.

“Sorry. I am unsure of your customs.” Lex waited for the Alpha 350 to prompt him on what he should do next, but he heard nothing. Actually, come to think of it, he hadn't heard the AI since he'd plunged into the liquid.

The female just glared at him as she picked her damp self off the ground.

Lex groaned, and not just because he'd lost his link to the computer, but because he finally got to see the plump body of the feisty female, and by all the moons, she was curvaceous perfection. The damp white fabric of her clothing clung to and outlined full breasts, the nipples visible and erect against the cloth.

“What is wrong? Are you injured? Do you require medical attention?” Her words displayed concern, but her tone implied annoyance.

Lex lied. Somehow he didn't think telling her that she had the body of a moon goddess that he longed to worship—with his tongue and cock—would

go over well given her rather violent reaction to his earlier kiss. “I can’t contact my computer.”

She turned to look at the rectangular pit filled with fluid, surely a trap for the unwary, and a great defense mechanism.

“You dropped your laptop?” she finally queried as she slipped on some shoes and picked up a bag.

“Your comment makes no sense, earthling. My lap is still on my legs. I speak of the communicator for my vessel. It must have been damaged in my plunge into that vat of foul liquid. I have no way of contacting my ship’s computer. This is a complete disaster.”

“You are loco.” She laughed. “Figures, a man who kisses a chubby maid like me would be out of his mind. Since you are obviously fine, or as fine as someone like you can be, I will be leaving, *senor*.”

The voluptuous earthling turned to leave just as the sound of baying animals sounded, their rabid voices carried on the rising dawn air.

“Wait,” he called out. When she did not stop, he strode after her and grabbed her arm, spinning her.

She opened her mouth, but then said nothing, her eyes widening as she stared at him in shock.

“¡Dios mío. You’re—you’re blue!” she finally exclaimed.

“Of course I am,” he said with a frown. “What other color would I be?”

\* \* \* \* \*

What color indeed? Maya reached a hand up to smear what obviously had to be blue makeup, but his smooth skin did not change hue, and a tingle ran down her body at the touch of his smooth, beardless face. With the sun rising brightly, she could now see him more clearly, and if he wasn’t an alien, then he wore a damned good disguise. His skin shone a beautiful dark blue, and his hair, cut short, was a startling white. He had strong masculine features, with hard lips and vivid violet eyes—eyes she remembered glowing before he’d kissed her. She stepped back and looked him over, the silvery material of his jumpsuit already dry and clinging to an obviously muscled frame.

*Well, alien or not, he’s sexy.* Even without the dip in the pool, her panties would have been wet. *So why did I bite him when he kissed me?* An even better question—*is he the alien that has the military in an uproar?* She hadn’t forgotten the rumor circulating in the break room.

“Who and what are you?” she asked.

“I am Lex’indrios Vel Romannu,” he said standing tall. “I am descended of the Second Moon clan, the secondary line and fourth class warrior for the Second Moon regiment.”

An impressive title, but one easily made up. “Are you really an alien?”

He grinned at her with impossibly white teeth. “I’m not, but you are, earthling.”

Maya felt her lips quirk. Point in his favor. Who the alien was really depended on the perspective. “Okay, let’s say I believe you for a second. Why are you here?”

“Why, to fetch my mate, of course. The Oracle has decreed that Amanda Beckwith shall be my intended.”

Maya bit her tongue so as to not laugh at his declaration even as a sense of disappointment swept through her. *Why can’t I be someone’s intended, especially someone as hot as him?* But back to his words, if—and that was a big if—what he said turned out to be true, then he was in for a surprise when he told this Amanda person about their arranged galactic engagement. Then again, she thought, eyeing his muscular frame and handsome features, a lot of girls would jump at the chance to be with him, blue skin or not. *Count me in. I wouldn’t mind taking him for a spin in my bed.* Maya couldn’t help the heat that spread through her body at the thought.

Lex, of the impossible name, looked over his shoulder nervously as the sound of dogs approached. “Is there not a more secure place we can continue this discussion? The beasts that track me are relentless.”

The approaching canine cacophony lent even more credence to his tale, and Maya found herself too intrigued to ignore him. Not to mention the spirits of her parents in heaven were probably screaming at her to hide him. She led him through the fence, using her copied key, and across the parking lot to her beat-up excuse for a car.

He stood looking dubiously at her rusted heap. “Is this vehicle deemed safe for transportation?”

Maya blushed at his remark, which in turn made her angry. *How dare he belittle my car! It’s not my fault I can’t afford anything better. Idiot.*

“Don’t make fun of my car. I bought it myself at least. And besides, I don’t see you with any other means of transportation, do I?” she said sassily with her hands on her hips.

Through gritted teeth, he apologized. “I did not mean to sound disrespectful. I thank you for your aid.”

Mollified, and even somewhat amused at forcing the apology, Maya climbed into the car, biting her lip so as to not giggle as he folded himself

into the car gingerly. She started the car with a coughing sputter and drove with her eyes glued to the road, trying to ignore the very masculine presence of the large man—or was he truly an alien?—beside her.

Not entirely convinced of his story, and determined to scrub at his skin a little harder, she had still reserved judgment. *What about his glowing purple eyes when he kissed me?* Probably a refraction of light, she tried to tell herself. But what if his tale were true? *What if he is an alien?*

Maya had grown up with a belief, almost a religion actually, that extraterrestrials existed. Her parents had worshipped at the shrine of UFO sightings, fanatic believers whose idea of a family vacation involved packing up the old VW van and driving across the lower states to places of interest. They'd visited the famous Area 51 and stood with faces pressed against the chain-link fence. They'd camped out in lounge chairs, with telescopes and marshmallows with other UFO watchers, waiting for their own close encounter of the third kind. She even knew all the human-meets-life-from-space movies by heart. Her parents had scoffed at *E.T.* even as they coached her on what to do should an alien ever visit her.

But the absolutely freakiest part of her whole encounter with this giant blue alien? It reminded her of the story her grandmother had told her over and over again 'til her death a few years back. A story about a tall blue warrior, descended from the stars. An alien male who came and took her grandma's sister to be his wife. An alien who took a nubile female for his own and left for the stars, never to be seen again.

Mother of all galactic coincidences, or could this be a prank? But who would know or remember an old woman's tale? Let alone act it out? *If this is a joke, I am going to string him up by his cojones.* But if it wasn't . . . A vivid image of herself cradling those same cojones had her squirming in the vinyl seat, making her glad they'd reached her little house with its plot of dirt outside of town. Even in the dark, the place looked sad, kind of like her life.

It needed sprucing up, she thought looking at it with a critical eye, but working nights six days a week, not to mention the fact she blew most of her budget on movies or books, made that unlikely. And besides, she kept hoping she'd leave it all one day, move on to a better life and never look back.

"This is your home?" He spoke, his velvety voice sending frissons down her spine, pleasurable ones.

Embarrassment made her cheeks color, but she held her head high when she turned to him and responded, "Yes. It's not much, but it's mine."

Saying not a word, just flashing a grin that made even more heat pool between her thighs, he unfolded himself from her car and stretched, the smooth silvery material of his jumpsuit doing nothing to hide the rippling muscles.

Maya just about drooled, and that baffled her. She didn't usually behave like a cat in heat. It just went so contrary to her usual aloofness around men. Yet watching him with avid eyes, she was pretty sure she had a minor orgasm at just the sight of his well-toned body. He had a sinuous grace and masculine vitality that screamed sex. Hot, pounding, sweaty sex. Just unfortunately not with her, no matter that kiss he'd given back when he'd regained consciousness. Now awake and aware, he'd be looking for that mate he'd spoken about, probably some cute, skinny thing who had never had to shop in the big girls' section.

Maya sighed. Her weight didn't bother her most of the time. She might not be the skinniest girl, but she had a nice curvy figure, a very hourglass one that got more than its share of slaps on the ass and boob grabs. But come on, a galactic babe like him, why would he settle for a plush Latina when he could have a Barbie doll?

Annoyed that he made her wish for a different body—and life—she slammed her car door harder than needed, startling him.

"We'd better get inside before someone sees you." Not too likely given her location and neighbors, but still, she preferred not to take chances. She had some questions she wanted to ask before she decided if she believed him or not.

And a cold shower she needed to take. A long, frigid one, she thought clenching her fists at the sight of his gorgeous ass walking into her house first. *Dios, give me the strength to resist this alien.*

\* \* \* \*

Lex found himself swirling with a confusing mixture of emotions, the most prominent one being lust. The woman who'd rescued him looked nothing at all like his picture-perfect Amanda with her blonde locks. Yet this female, whose name he hadn't yet gotten, with her wild brown curls, smooth tanned skin, and mouthwatering curves, made him want to forget the Oracle, forget his intended. He wanted this feisty beauty. In her soft, pillowy curves, a male could lose himself and never want to leave. He couldn't blame confusion on his near-death experience anymore either. He knew full well

she wasn't his for the taking, and yet he wanted her with a desire that almost frightened him with its intensity.

Could the Oracle have made an error? His ancestors not looked hard enough? And since when did he doubt his betters? Part of what made Lex a good warrior and the reason he'd become eligible for a mate was his unquestioning of orders. His superiors gave him a mission, and he did it. Simple. Why now this sudden urge to buck tradition? Unacceptable. Lex always completed his quests, and while this earthling appealed to his baser instincts, his focus still remained finding his mate.

As he wandered into a small room cluttered with worn furniture and earthling detritus, he wondered, though, what to do next. The loss of the AI's instructions meant his mission had failed even before it had begun. How would he find his intended now?

"Sit," ordered the goddess of the lustrous brown eyes pointing to a lumpy sofa. "And start talking."

Sitting gingerly until he ascertained the cushions would take his weight, he leaned back and perused her, an act that made her flush and sent the blood rushing to his groin. Despite her violent reaction of earlier, he could tell she was not immune to him. They had a sizzling chemistry that distracted—and enthralled—him. Leaning forward, he made his turgid state less noticeable and tried to bring his mind back on track.

"If I may ask, you have not yet told me your name."

"Didn't I?" she replied, frowning. "Sorry. I guess I was kind of distracted by the whole alien thing. My name is Maya, Maya Romero."

"I thank you for your timely intervention in the pool of deadly liquid, Maya." Lex gave credit where due, even given the disturbing fact a female had saved him, which went against everything he'd been taught as a warrior.

"Deadly liquid?" Maya giggled, an enchanting sound that made him pulse even larger. "That was a swimming pool. It's only deadly if you don't know how to swim." When Lex frowned, still not comprehending, she explained. "A pool is filled with water and chemicals to keep it clear, and people swim in it. Umm, move their arms and legs to keep their bodies afloat. It's a form of recreation on Earth and a way to cool off on a hot day."

Appalled, Lex sputtered, "You use water for recreation? Is your race completely crazy?"

Maya crossed her arms under her ample breasts, which had the effect of pushing them together and out, a sight that made him speechless for a moment. "Listen here, *senor*. I don't know where you come from, but here

on Earth, we have *lots* of water. And if we want to swim in it, we will,” she said huffily.

“On my world, the use of water is strictly prohibited it is so scarce. Not to mention necessary to ensure a healthy planetary survival. I can’t believe you would treat such a precious resource so recklessly.”

“Whatever. Dios. See if I save your ass next time,” she muttered under her breath, but Lex still heard every word although he had difficulty following when she mixed up her languages.

“Why is it you speak in two languages?”

“I am Hispanic. Spanish is my mother tongue.”

“I thought you were an earthling?” *Or is Maya yet another unknown breed of alien?*

\* \* \* \*

Maya looked at him strangely. “*Ai*, you must be alien to be so ignorant. I am human, or earthling, if you prefer, but my people are called Hispanic, or Latina. We tend to have dark hair”—she pointed to her halo of curls—“and tanned skin. Don’t tell me everyone on your planet is blue like you?” And she wondered if the blue extended to *all* his body parts.

“No, we have different shades depending on the purity of the bloodline, and the occasional other color depending on the mixing of alien genes.”

Maya shook her head at the remark that skirted the edge of racism. “I’m not even going to touch that one,” she said shaking her head. “Now, it’s time you explained exactly what you’re doing here. And you’d better tell the truth, or I’ll call the military police myself. You said something about marrying some human girl?” Actually Maya wouldn’t turn him in. Somewhere between the hotel she worked at and her home, she’d begun to believe his strange tale—kind of hard not to when his eyes kept glowing violet whenever he looked at her. She only wished his mission had been to claim her. She wouldn’t have minded becoming his mate.

“I am to mate with the human Amanda Beckwith. She has been chosen by the Oracle and my ancestors to be my mate.”

“Who’s this Oracle? Is she like a clan elder?”

Lex launched into an explanation. “The Oracle is the oldest being on our planet. She has always been and always will be. When the females of our planet were killed by a deadly virus, she, along with the spirits of our ancestors—”

Maya interrupted. “Wait a second. Did you say spirits?”



“Yes, all who die in the clan are buried in the mausoleums on one of the three moons, thus freeing their spirits to perform deeds. With the help of the Oracle, many are now tasked with finding suitable females for us as mates.”

“That’s barbaric,” she exclaimed.

“What is?”

“Arranged marriages.”

“It is our custom,” he said frowning at her. “We require females of other races to breed with and rebuild our population. Once they are selected by our ancestors, we are sent to retrieve them.”

“You mean you kidnap them? Don’t they get a choice?” Maya couldn’t believe his chauvinistic attitude. Then again, it was kind of hot in a caveman type of way, but also shocking for a woman who had grown up with the right to make her own choices. “And how do you think this Amanda will feel about that?”

“Why, she will accept the honor I extend her, of course.”

Maya giggled. Lex frowned at her, obviously not seeing the humor, and she laughed even harder. “Dios, do you have a lot to learn about human women. I hate to break it to you, but while you are one hot alien, that doesn’t mean this Amanda is going to drop everything and run off to be your wife. Women here have something called choices. You can’t force us to do anything.”

“Are you saying she would refuse me?” The idea seemed to perplex him. “No one mentioned this to me. My mission says I am to find my mate and claim her. There was never any mention that she might not wish to do so. Would you refuse?”

“Possible. Depends.” His question flustered Maya and brought once again to mind vivid images of her kissing him while he ground his heavy body against hers. Maya flushed and dug her nails into her palm to control her raging hormones.

“It matters not anyhow,” said Lex dejectedly. “My mission has failed. With my ship communicator not working, I have no way of locating my intended.”

“Are you always so pessimistic?” she said. “We have something called the Internet and phone directories. Chances are we can still find your lucky winner.” And with those words, Maya wanted to shoot herself. *Estupido. Why would I help him when a part of me wants him for myself?*

\* \* \* \*

“You’d help me?” Lex sat up straighter.

“Yeah, I guess I will. First, though, I need some dry clothes, then some sleep,” she said hiding a yawn behind a hand. “I worked all night. So let me grab a couple of hours’ sleep, and I’ll help you find this Amanda person.”

“Thank you,” he said, standing when she did. Her cheeks blossomed with color, and Lex had to fight an urge to cup her face and kiss her ’til that bloom spread all over her body. Taking a deep breath to dispel his thoughts, he caught an acrid whiff. Sniffing, he realized the smell came from him.

“Do you have cleansing facilities that I might dispel the aroma of that *pool?*” he asked with clear disgust. It still appalled him how they squandered water.

“Sure. Just go through that door,” she said pointing with a finger and stifling another yawn.

Lex, who had no modesty, began stripping as he walked, grinning at her squeak behind him. He could only hope his intended reacted the same way at the sight of his body. And he hoped she’d be as buxom as Maya. *She certainly has a bosom I’d like to bury my face in.*

Stepping into the tiny room she’d designated for bodily cleansing, he looked around momentarily at a loss. He saw a small basin with metallic knobs and a mirror seated above it, a hard white seat, which when lifted revealed a hole with liquid in the bottom, and finally a cubicle with more metal knobs.

Looking down at his sizable erection, a hardness that hadn’t really left since he’d regained consciousness with the lovely Maya straddling him, her lips pressed to his, it occurred to him he should take care of his turgid problem before he cleansed himself. Bracing one foot on the odd white seat, he wrapped a hand around his cock and slid his hand back and forth along its rigid length. Closing his eyes, he wanted to picture his betrothed with her pale hair and blue eyes, but instead Maya filled his mind with her wild, curly hair, her energy-filled brown eyes, and her full lips, lips that would look perfect wrapped around his shaft, sucking. Lex held back a groan as he pictured her on her knees, one hand on his prick guiding him in and out of the wet recess of her mouth. He cupped his balls with his other hand as he continued stroking himself, the thought of her cupping him and—dare he even imagine—licking his sac, making him tremble and break out in a light sweat. And would he find his pleasure in her mouth or turn her around and bend her over, pushing her plump bottom into the air in the perfect position for him to plunge his cock in and fuck her? With teeth gritted to prevent his

shout, he came, his semen shooting across the small room into the upright cubicle.

Spent, Lex shook his head. He should feel guilty finding his pleasure thinking of someone other than his intended, but knowing, once mated, he would never think or be with another female again, he figured he'd best get his lusts out of his system now.

He stepped into the tiled box, anxious to cleanse his sticky body, and fiddled with the metal knobs inside.

At the first freezing blast of water, he let out a very unmanly bellow.

## Chapter Four

Maya didn't even think. She heard him yell and bolted into her bathroom. Upon seeing him, she stopped dead—well, motion-wise, that is. Her body was anything but dead, flushing from the tips of her toes to the top of her head and soaking her panties, barely covered by the T-shirt she'd changed into.

The reason stood in front of her—six foot plus inches of naked, eminently lickable blue skin and muscles that had to be illegal.

Narrowed violet eyes glared at her. “Your bathing cubicle shoots water?”

“It's how we wash ourselves,” she said stifling a giggle while trying to keep her eyes above his waist, but curiosity, like gravity, drew them down. *¡Dios mío, he's hung like a god.* Too fascinated by the sight of his large blue cock, she couldn't look away. Hell, she didn't even blush, but desire roared through her, and she licked her lips wishing she could lick something else.

As if he read her mind—or his shaft did—it lifted in greeting, lengthening and widening in interesting ways.

She heard a soft growl before crushing blue arms wrapped around her and hot lips found hers in a fierce embrace. The kiss from earlier paled in comparison to this one. Molten heat poured through her body, making her limbs sag, but he held her up and molded her against his hard body, his throbbing shaft a pulsing length of steel against her abdomen. Maya moaned in his mouth, and she reached up to clutch at his muscled shoulders. He deepened the kiss, his tongue sliding across the slit of her lips. She parted them, and he immediately slipped his tongue into her mouth, seeking and caressing hers. Fire lit a path through her body. It made her nipples tighten and her pussy throb. She whimpered against his mouth as he ground his pelvis against her. He pressed her back against the bathroom wall and left her lips to trace a line of fire down her neck.

Maya vaguely understood this was wrong. She also knew she should stop this. He had come here for another. She didn't jump into bed with men—even alien ones—she didn't know. But oh, how she wanted to lose herself for a moment and fully taste the passion he unleashed in her. She wanted to taste his silky blue skin. She wanted to feel that marvelously large and curved cock inside of her, pumping. She . . .

Had the phone not rung shrilly and interrupted the most erotic moment of her life, she would have fucked him. Forget the reasons why she shouldn't, she would have let him pound into her willing flesh 'til she

screamed with the ecstasy his kisses promised. But, reality in the form of a ringing phone intruded, as did her self-respect, albeit a tad late.

She tore her mouth from his and pushed at him. With obvious reluctance, he let her go and stepped back. Weak-kneed, she staggered out of the room to answer the phone, and to her disappointment, he didn't stop her.

\* \* \* \*

Lex, breathing heavily and painfully aroused—again—watched her answer a communication device. Had they not been interrupted, he would have taken her like a rutting beast against the wall. He still wanted to, and judging by her flushed cheeks and the nipples that jutted prominently through the cloth of her shirt, so did she.

Raking his hand through his hair, he turned back to the cubicle and stepped back in. He needed to find his famous discipline and control. With no other choice, he swallowed his shock over the earthlings' use of water for cleansing and turned the metal knobs, this time expecting the frigid liquid that hit his fevered body. The coldness of the water cleansed his body and helped ease his tumultuous erection, but it did nothing for his turbulent thoughts.

*How can I want Maya when I am promised to another?* He needed to find his mate quickly before he did something foolish—*like take Maya as my mate instead*. A treacherous thought that did not appall him as it should have, but instead filled him with a deep sense of rightness, and that once again enflamed his ardor. He tried to push Maya and her heavy-lidded, passionate face from his mind and replace it with the blonde Amanda, but his mind rebelled and instead made him picture Maya sprawled on her back, waiting for him. Her curvy thighs spread wide revealing a welcoming, wet sex.

Lex groaned and hit the tiled wall with a fist. *What is this madness? Have I been infected with an earthly virus? I am here to find my mate.* But until he did, his snide mind reminded him that he was technically free to be with whomever he chose. Only once bonded were couples expected to remain monogamous. Treacherous thoughts such as these made him groan, for he saw through them. He wanted to give himself permission to taste the delectable Maya, and more than just her lips. He longed to bury his face between her plump thighs and lap at the nectar he had faintly smelt when she'd responded so feverishly in his arms.

Realizing his thoughts wouldn't stay away from the erotic, he stopped trying. Finding a hard white bar of something that reminded him of the scent of Maya's skin, he cleansed himself, lathering the strange soap over his body and shuddering uncontrollably when he thought of Maya using the same chunk on her own silky skin. He worked himself quickly again, his hand pumping his cock with sure strokes 'til he spent himself on the tiles. Finally clean, in body if not mind, he exited the bathroom with one of her towels draped around his waist.

"Bye." Maya put down the communicator device and turned to him. Licking her lips, a move that made the towel twitch, she dropped her eyes and flushed. Her fingers fiddled nervously at the threads of a blanket draped over the couch. "That was my friend Gina. She says the military are combing the streets."

"For me?" he asked suddenly all business.

"Maybe. They're not saying. But, just in case, you need to lie low. My drapes are already drawn, and it won't cause suspicion because everyone knows I work nights. But you're going to have to wait 'til nightfall to go searching for your mate."

"Very well."

"Good night then." Maya moved past him, the musky scent of her arousal still evident, and he turned to watch her rounded ass, peeking from the edge of her shirt, as she went to find her bed.

Lex gave the couch a quick glance, immediately perceived it as too short, and followed her. He wandered through a food preparation area into another room. Even in the gloom, he could sense her like a magnet that drew him. Dropping his towel, and tempting the moon spirits, he lay down on the bed beside her. With a squeak, she sat up.

"What are you doing?"

"Sleeping."

He could tell she wanted to argue, the tenseness of her body said it all, but instead she sighed.

"Whatever. Just don't hog the bed." She turned onto her side and ignored him. Exhausted, she soon slept, but Lex lay for a long time beside her, unable to stop his hand from softly stroking her cheek and hair.

*Ancestors, why could you not have chosen Maya as my mate?* He'd have happily fulfilled his mission already—more than once.

\* \* \* \*

“Sir, we’ve found something.”

General Beckworth strode across the concrete deck to the edge of the pool, where a scuba diver clung to the side and held up a tiny object.

“What is it?” he asked squatting down to squint at the blob the diver held out in a gloved hand.

“Possible electronic device, sir.”

“Can we tell who designed it?” The real question—was it of human or alien origin?

“We’ll have to get it back to the lab to take it apart, sir.”

“Do it.” Immediately the evidence was bagged, tagged, and taken away for a prompt analysis. The military, unlike other legal agencies, had the means and resources for immediate action in these types of matters.

The general surveyed the milling personnel who flocked all over the outdoor swimming area for the hotel the dogs had led them to. Inside even more staff had the daunting task of questioning all the hotel’s guests and employees, so far to no avail. No one had seen or heard anything—yet.

Wands measuring all kinds of atmospheric and physical traces were being waved in a beeping cacophony all over the place. But the general didn’t need their data, or even the object found in the pool, to know another one of those female-stealing blue aliens had returned.

The general still well remembered the last incident. The woman-stealing bastard had almost taken off with his daughter’s best friend. If Amanda hadn’t arrived in time and disabled the brute, he would have absconded with the chit. And instead of thanking them, the little slut had called foul. She still refused to speak to his poor daughter Amanda to this day and claimed they’d cost her the only man she could love. Deluded girl. The medics and psychologists had been unable to pinpoint a reason for the girl’s affections for the alien being, but the general knew—alien mind control. It was the only possibility that made sense. It made him glad they’d taken no risks with the one they’d captured. The scientists had creamed themselves in delight when he gave the go-ahead on the live dissection.

This newest appearance, though, of a blue ET disturbed him. Apparently the loss of the one they’d captured and disposed of a few years back hadn’t been incentive enough to stop sending the women-stealing aliens. But he had a new plan, one that was sure to get their attention. This time, once they got the ET, they’d keep him alive, just not whole. Perhaps if they sent him back minus a few body parts, the blue bastards would keep their procreation problems away from their planet. And if not, bring it on. Despite what the

White House said, the general was ready for—make that eagerly awaited—an alien invasion.



## Chapter Five

Maya woke to hardness—throbbing, decadent, moisture-pooling hardness.

*¡Dios mío.* She lay sprawled across the alien's chest like some plump, slutty blanket, and instead of jumping off like a good little girl, she snuggled closer.

In her twenty-six years, she'd only rarely slept with men. Her work hours made it hard to date, and her plump size, while garnering male attention, always seemed to be of the temporary kind. Maya preferred the men in the books she read, strong men who took a woman and cherished her forever. Would Lex be that type of man? From what she'd experienced, he'd be a giving lover, a thought that made her flush. Either way, it didn't matter. He hadn't come to Earth for her.

Sighing, she made to move away, but thick arms wrapped around her like steel cord, and a husky voice said, "Stay."

Her heart fluttered, and the throbbing between her legs intensified, naughtily so. "I shouldn't." But oh how she wanted to, and honestly, she couldn't really think of a reason not to. Screw her heart. Screw the mate he'd come for. Her body wanted him—now.

"Neither should I, but I'd say we both need this."

She wanted to ask what they needed, but she found herself rolled onto her back, his heavy weight settling between her legs. She gasped when he pressed his evident erection against the damp crotch of her panties, making her pussy clench in arousal. His eyes, alight with what she had begun realizing was desire, gazed into hers intently. Maya ran her tongue over her lips. He watched her avidly, then swooped to claim her moistened lips. Frantically, they meshed lips and tongues, panting into each other. But they both wanted more.

Sure hands stripped her shirt from her before she could protest, and when his lips latched around her already erect nipple, she opened her mouth only to moan. Swirling his tongue around the tip, he inhaled it into his mouth, sucking her soft flesh. Maya shuddered with longing, and liquid pooled between her thighs. She clutched at his short hair as he switched his mouth to her other breast, his molten touch making her shiver all over. Strong hands gripped her tits and pushed them together, a move that brought her nipples side by side, and he used this new position to quickly flick his tongue and mouth from one nub to the other.

"More," she panted, the pulsing between her legs like a frantic heartbeat.

Shifting his body to the side, his long fingers found the edge of her damp panties and pulled them down. The cooler air of the room tickled against her moist nether lips, and she trembled when she felt his fingers stroke her lightly down there. Parting her, he slid a finger in, groaning himself when she tightened her muscles around his digit. As he trailed a line of fire down her belly with his mouth and tongue to the dark curls above her pussy, she quivered in anticipation.

Gone were all thoughts of right and wrong. She couldn't stop him now, and she didn't want to. The pleasure built in her, more overpowering than she'd ever experienced, and she moaned eagerly as she arched her body, impatient for his touch.

Spreading her thighs wide, he pushed her legs up and back and exposed her to his view. She squirmed, blushing at the intimate look he bestowed on her sex.

"So beautiful," he whispered, his eyes meeting hers. She gave a shudder at the glow that emanated from them, a smoky hot gaze that made her tremble. He smiled at her wickedly before tilting his head and licking her.

Maya cried out. The hot laving of his tongue against her clit spread rapture throughout her whole body. She thrashed and bucked as he licked her thoroughly, then sucked her.

"*Por favor,*" she panted as he probed her deeply with his tongue. "Let me taste you too."

He paused in his ministrations to look at her with hooded, smoldering eyes. "Truly?"

She just nodded. He seemed surprised, but she really wanted to taste him. He moved and lay on his back, his cock jutting proudly. "Bring me your sex," he ordered, and she eagerly obeyed.

Dripping with desire, Maya positioned herself over him. His arms wrapped around her thighs, and he feasted on her again, his hot mouth wringing soft cries from her. Distracted, it took the poking of his shaft on her chin to remind Maya of what she intended to do.

She ran her tongue over the swollen blue head that bobbed in front of her, and she felt more than heard his muffled groan against her nether lips. She ran her wet tongue down the long length of his cock and then back up again. A drop of moisture appeared at the tip, and she swirled her tongue over it, tasting him on her tongue, a sweet flavor unlike any she'd tasted before. Eager for more, she took him into her mouth, a move that made him buck. It seemed her blue alien wasn't as in control as he pretended.

Their sixty-nine position was decadent, their oral play highly arousing. She bobbed her head faster and faster, a speed he reciprocated on her pussy. But it was the addition of his long fingers inside of her, stroking her G-spot as he continued his oral ministrations, that finally made the mounting pleasure in her explode. She screamed, a sound muffled by the thick rod in her mouth, as she orgasmed hard around his fingers. His body went rigid under her and, bellowing her name, Lex came in her mouth, his hot juice sweeter than any come she'd tasted in the past. She swallowed it all, suctioning his cock 'til she heard him hoarsely say, "Enough. You will kill me with pleasure, earthling."

Trembling still with aftershocks, Maya smiled. *What do you know, aliens do it better.* And even though she'd just come hard, Maya felt her blood quickening again as an erotic visual of him plunging his cock into her still-throbbing pussy ran through her mind.

As if reading her dirty thoughts, Lex's shaft twitched, and he groaned.

*Nice to see I have the same effect on him,* she thought with a satisfied inner smile.

But then she reminded herself he wasn't hers to keep, and with a scowl, she rolled off of him.

\* \* \* \*

Lex watched with hooded eyes as Maya covered her delectable curves, her face expressionless even as her slamming of drawers indicated ire.

*Didn't she enjoy my touch?* Actually, he knew she had. The taste of her—ambrosia, for sure—still lingered on his tongue. Why her displeasure then?

Fabric came flying at him and hit him in the face, along with a terse "Get dressed."

Confused by the earthling's reaction and even more by his—*I want her back in bed, naked*—he dressed in the odd clothing she'd given him. The shirt, with short sleeves, stretched tight across his shoulders and featured a faded picture of a rainbow. A pair of short pants that left his legs bare completed the makeshift outfit, and thus attired, he went looking for her out in her main living area.

He found her in the food preparation area banging around, and he approached tentatively and slowly like one would with a ready-to-bolt Jelaxian mount.

"May I inquire as to your apparent anger?"

Flashing dark eyes faced him. "You."

“Me?”

“I don’t fall into bed with strangers. Actually, I don’t bring them home either.” *Slam.* She tossed raw ingredients into a round, shallow bowl that sported a handle.

Lex muddled through her words, not understanding completely, but able to guess. “You are angry that we found pleasure with each other? Does your society frown upon sexual intercourse between unattached adults?”

Her mouth dropped open, and she shook her head. “No, sex isn’t the problem.”

“Then I do not understand. Did I not perform adequately?”

Maya blushed. “You know you did. But it can’t happen again. You came here for your mate, remember? I don’t think she’d like finding out that you banged me while you searched for her. I know I wouldn’t.” She said the last under her breath, but Lex heard her, and despite all his justifications, he knew she was right.

Sighing, he ran a hand through his short hair. “I apologize for my actions. You are correct, and I have no excuse for my lack of control. I will endeavor to act respectfully from here on in out of consideration for my future mate.”

Lex could have sworn he saw a flash of pain in her eyes, but it left as quickly as it came, and with a stiff nod, Maya finished whatever she did in her food preparation area and handed him a plate with steaming food.

They ate in silence, Lex too fascinated by the concept of food cooked and created from raw ingredients and enthralled by the taste to do any more than eat. On his planet, only the finest restaurants and naturalists cooked in that method. Everyone else used a food replicator from the culinary series. The newest one, the Culinary 6000, boasted over one million dishes.

At the completion of their meal, Maya washed the dishes using—*wince*—water. Lex still had a hard time adapting himself to the way these earthlings used and treated water so casually. He also learned another lesson. Dishes that were washed must be dried, a job she relegated to him by flinging a worn towel at his face.

The chore quickly done, Maya moved back to the living room area and opened an odd rectangular contraption. The screen on it lit up, and she tapped a series of commands.

Interested in this piece of technology, Lex sat beside her on the couch, only too aware of her body next to his. A part of him wanted to grab her up into his arms, bring her back to her bedroom, and join his body to hers in a

way that would leave them both sated, but her words from earlier echoed in his mind.

*I am here for another. I must concentrate on my mission and not allow Maya and her delicious body to distract me.* Now if only his rock-hard cock would listen.

“Amanda Beckworth,” Maya muttered. “Where are you?” She typed furiously and with an “Aha!” pulled up a screen with the same picture the computer on his ship had found.

The nonsmiling face of his intended stared at them from the screen, and Lex tried to find the sense of connection—and lust—that Maya provoked in him. Nothing, not even vague interest, stirred him.

“She’s pretty,” said Maya sounding dejected.

“She’s too pale,” said Lex without even thinking of curbing his tongue. Maya looked startled at his statement, but looking at the pale white skin of the mate his ancestors had chosen, Lex couldn’t help wishing that Amanda’s skin was a soft tan color like Maya’s, a color that reminded him of a decadent treat called caramel that Kor’s human mate Diana had introduced him to. Caramel Maya—Lex hardened painfully as he remembered her sweetness, and oh, how he longed for another taste.

Maya kept typing away and let out an exclamation, unaware of his erotic thoughts. “Mierdo!”

“What?” said Lex looking at her screen but unable to read the gibberish characters.

“Don’t your ancestors like you?”

Lex was beginning to wonder the same thing. “Why? Is there a problem?”

“They selected none other than a military liaison for your mate, the daughter of a general, no less.”

“That is not a good thing?” he said, not fully grasping the issue.

“If the military is after you, then no, that’s not good. If she decides to reject your suit, she could turn you in. Lucky for you, she lives off base.”

“You think she might refuse?” Lex couldn’t help feeling elation at the thought of avoiding the trap—yes, that was how it felt, he realized—that his ancestors had set. Perhaps they had erred, a blasphemous idea, yet one that he clutched at.

“She might not be too eager to leave her life behind to go become some dutiful housewife.”

“Would you?” The question popped out unbidden, but now voiced, he leaned forward and watched her, waiting for an answer.

“I would love an excuse to leave this place. I don’t suppose you’ve got a brother or a buddy who’s also looking for a mate?”

Her words said jokingly enveloped him in a rage whose cause he couldn’t understand. Why would the thought of her mating with another bother him? But the urge to hit something—say the male who dared touch her—nearly made him boil over. And for the first time, he truly understood her words from earlier. *Is this how she feels when she thinks of me mating with another? This . . . this jealousy that I never knew could apply to one of the opposite sex.* No wonder she’d seemed annoyed.

Closing her handheld computer, Maya stood up and headed to her sleeping quarters. “I’m going to get dressed and run some errands. I want to see if I can find you some clothes that fit better, and I’ll take a drive around the neighborhood where your Amanda lives.”

Lex remained on the couch lost in his thoughts. *But I don’t want Amanda. The question is, do I have the courage to reject tradition and the wishes of my ancestors?*

Could he be so selfish as to put his foolish desires ahead of those of his race and their need to rebuild their population?

Lex sighed, not liking the answer.

## Chapter Six

The streets crawled with military jeeps and personnel. Maya, entering the thrift shop where she did most of her shopping, greeted the owner, whom she knew well.

“What’s up with the soldiers?” she asked glancing out the front window.

“Aliens,” said a gleeful Marco. “The military isn’t saying, of course, but my cousin whose sister is married to the brother of the assistant to the base commander says they tracked the alien to town.”

Maya didn’t try to follow the convoluted family connection the news came from, but the chill from his words, though, made her ask. “Do they know where he is?”

“Nah, the dogs lost his trail apparently. They haven’t started a door-to-door search, but it’s coming.”

“Would you turn an alien over if you found one?” Maya asked casually as she browsed through the bins.

“Never. Knowing what the military would probably do, that would just be asking for an intergalactic war.”

Maya smiled. She remembered many a night by the glowing embers of a campfire listening to Marco and her parents discussing the military and their probably violent reaction to space invaders. She wished her parents could have lived to meet a real, live alien. *I hope wherever your spirits are that you can see him. You were right. There is life out there.*

Maya finished her shopping quickly, ignoring Marco’s raised brows at her choice of dark male clothing. But he rang up her purchases without question, and Maya drove from there, as promised, over to the neighborhood where the unknown Amanda—whom she already hated wholeheartedly—lived.

The streets of this quiet suburban neighborhood appeared clear of the military presence that prevailed in town. But once she saw Amanda’s house, it became readily evident that Lex would be insane to try to confront her on her home turf, for not only was her yard gated with a high fence, a Beware Dog sign had been posted. Affairs didn’t improve when she noticed a military jeep in one of the neighboring driveways.

But, the choice would be ultimately up to Lex. Which reminded her, she had yet to ask him how, and when, he’d be departing—*grrr*—with his bride.

Maya’s hands clenched her steering wheel tightly. She hated that, after such a short time, she’d fallen so hard and quickly for an alien who didn’t want her. Well, not forever anyway. He’d proven quite passionately that he wanted her body. Maya squirmed in her seat. *Was I hasty in telling him no more*

*naughty stuff? I mean, it's not like he's actually dating or booked up with this woman yet. She doesn't even know he exists, so is it really cheating?* Maya hated that her mind kept justifying and looking for excuses to seduce him. She already had an idea her heart would hurt when he did finally snag his mate and leave.

And she didn't like it one bit.

\* \* \* \*

Maya had left hours ago, and Lex began worrying. What if the enemies who'd chased him had captured her? She could be in danger. Hurt. Or walking through the door with a grim look.

Quick strides brought him to her side, where he enveloped her in a crushing hug before he shook her.

"What took you so long? I was worried about you. Are you injured?"

Looking bemused, Maya just gazed up at him, the longing clear in her eyes.

Lex gave in without a fight and raised her higher for a kiss. She returned his embrace for a moment before pushing away.

"Hi," she said breathlessly. "As you can see, I'm fine, so you can put me down now."

Lex wanted to protest, but clenched his jaw instead as he let her feet touch the floor. Maya avoided his eyes and moved past him into the living area. Crinkling sounded, and once again, flying material hit him. Apparently she had a penchant for throwing things.

He perused the clothing she'd brought him, dark pants of a strange material, a dark shirt, and a scrap of material for the groin similar to what she'd worn.

"Thank you."

"No problem. You did stay out of sight, right? The military is crawling all over downtown. They're not really saying what they're looking for, but the rumor mill has been busy. The one I liked most was the one saying you were an eight-foot green lizard man here to devour our virgins."

Lex chuckled. "You jest?"

Maya smiled and shook her head, her brown curls bouncing. "It's better than the one that says you're actually a cyborg set to blow up during the balloon festival."

What strange ideas these humans had. "And my mate?" Lex had to force the words out, and he could have kicked himself when he saw the slight wince on her face.



“Her place is pretty tight. At least one dog, maybe more, and she’s got at least one military neighbor, but I’d guess with the base being so close, there’s probably more. I wouldn’t recommend hitting her place ’til real late. If she screams when she sees you, there’s no telling what will happen.”

Lex at this point would have preferred to never encounter this Amanda person, but the needs of his planet had to come before his own.

“So what would you suggest we do?” he asked knowing he still needed Maya’s help, this strange world being more than he could handle on his own.

“Nothing right now. I’ve got to get to work before they fire my ass.”

Work? Lex puzzled over this. He’d noticed Maya lived on her own without male family members to care for her, but the idea that they also made their women work shocked him. The females on his planet held some positions, but the majority preferred the role of mate and mother.

Maya emerged wearing the same outfit as the previous day, a white blouse and skirt. Her hair had been pulled back tightly and fastened to her head.

“When will you return?”

She kept avoiding his eyes and sighed when she replied. “I’ll try and cut out early. Fake a tummy illness or something. We’ll go and visit your fiancée once I get home.”

And with those words, she left, but her presence remained and refused leave his mind. He tried lying down on her bed, but her scent clung to the sheets, and before he knew it, he had his cock in his hand, stroking it. He slid his hand up and down his dick, harder than steel already, remembering the way her scalding wet mouth had suctioned him. He’d only wished he could have seen her, watched those luscious lips sliding back and forth. He would have laced his fingers in her hair and guided her in a rhythm. Lex’s breathing hitched as he pumped himself faster, the fantasy playing out in his mind too erotic to resist. He remembered the way she’d swallowed his semen, draining him and enjoying it. Lex reached for something to shoot his come into, and his fingers found the scrap of material that had covered her cunt. He brought it to his face and sniffed. The musky scent of her arousal still perfumed them. *By all the moons, she tasted so sweet.* He wrapped the fabric around his cock and continued stroking, now picturing her on her back again with her beautiful pink sex exposed, her lips glistening and her clit swollen. He thought of sliding his cock into that moist haven, and with a shout, he came hard into the cloth.

Lex couldn't believe he'd come again. What earthling sickness was he afflicted with that, even when she was not there, he could not stop thinking of her? Wanting her?

Lex groaned. *Ancestors, help me.*

But no one answered, and she continued to fill his thoughts—and his cock.

## Chapter Seven

Maya walked into absolute chaos. Military personnel swarmed all over the hotel, and her stomach tightened in fear. Somehow they'd figured out Lex had been here. She made her way to the employee locker room, where staff buzzed.

“... doing a room-by-room search.”

“... saw them with a Geiger counter . . .”

The words flowed over her, and Maya pasted a smile of interest on her face, all the while thanking the fact she'd shown up for work. Calling in sick today would have instantly put her in the spotlight.

But she wasn't out of the woods yet.

Andre, the night manager, walked in and clapped his hands, quieting the clamor. “You may have noticed that the military are here. They are seeking someone who they believe was last seen at our hotel.”

Murmurs sounded, but Andre clapped his hands hard, and the room silenced again. “All who were on duty last night are wanted for individual questioning. Your cooperation is expected.”

And with that, the cacophony started up again, and Maya rubbed sweating palms on her linen skirt. *¡Dios mío, I'd better lie convincingly, or Lex will have worse problems than trying to meet a possibly reluctant mate.* Visions of scalpels and various supposed alien autopsies her parents had studied flashed in her mind, and Maya winced.

*I won't let them catch him.*

She found waiting hard, even more so considering everyone just wanted to talk about one thing—the alien. The only problem with that? None of them had the slightest clue of what they were talking about. Maya tried to act normal. She listened, nodded, or exclaimed in the right spots. She crossed herself several times, but still she was almost glad when her time arrived and they called her name. She walked behind the gun-toting soldier into the hotel suite the military had taken over, then almost stumbled when she saw who waited to question her.

“I'm Lieutenant Beckworth,” said the blonde who looked even cuter and perkier in person.

Maya, feeling big and ungainly in front of this slim, graceful woman, slumped into the chair set in the middle of the room.

Shuffling some notes with smooth hands that had obviously never worn rubber gloves for eight hours straight, Lieutenant Beckworth surveyed Maya with unfriendly blue eyes. “You are Maya Romero?”

“Sí, señorita.”

Maya answered the basic questions posed of her—date of birth, place of residence, occupation, and then they got to the crux of the meeting.

“You were on duty until 5 a.m. according to the time card?”

Maya just nodded.

“Did you see anyone or anything out of the ordinary?”

*Hmm, like a big blue alien?* “No, señorita.”

“Do you drive?”

Maya nodded, trying to avoid speaking as much as possible, not wanting to expose her nervousness to this sharp-eyed questioner. *And to think Lex wants to mate with her. Ai, she looks more like the type to wear his cojones around her neck as a prize. I don't see her going willingly with him, or any man. Dios, but she's a cold one.*

“You park your car on the other side of the swimming pool area, do you not?”

“Sí.” A bead of sweat rolled down Maya's spine.

Cool blue eyes stared into hers, and it took all Maya's willpower not to squirm under that scrutiny. “Did you take your usual shortcut through the gate yesterday?”

How did she know? Maya debated lying, but this woman obviously had information. Maya needed to tread very carefully.

“Yes, I did, senora. But it was very dark outside. I did not see anything.”

Pale, perfectly manicured fingers tapped against the sheaf of paper in her lap. “Did you hear anything?”

Maya smiled eagerly, and the lieutenant leaned forward. “Yes. I heard dogs. They were barking a lot.”

Lex's intended mate questioned her for several minutes more, but Maya stuck to her story. Finally the interview came to an end, and Maya, on impulse, asked a question of her own. “I hear you're looking for an alien. A big lizard one,” she threw in for good measure. “What will you do if you find him?” asked Maya.

Lieutenant Beckworth smiled, a tight-lipped smile that didn't reach her eyes, and that chilled Maya to the core. “Nobody ever said anything about an alien, but if such a thing were found, it would be apprehended and kept in government custody.”

“Even if they came in peace?”

“Beings who come in peace don't hide like criminals. Now if you don't mind, I don't have time to gossip about baseless rumors. Please tell the officer outside to escort your next coworker in.”

Maya scooted out before her tongue got her in trouble. Mind, it was nothing compared to the trouble Lex would have. Somehow Maya didn't get the impression Lieutenant Beckworth would be agreeable to becoming Lex's mate. But if she told Lex that, would he believe her or accuse her of being jealous and trying to sabotage something he obviously wanted?

Maya still didn't know what to do when Andre told her to take the rest of the night and next few days off. The military had kicked out all the guests after rigorously questioning them, and there was no telling when they'd decamp.

That suited Maya fine. She had one big blue alien to help.

But it seemed like forces were working against her, for a mile and a half or so from her house, her car, that rusted piece of mierdo, died with a choke and a rattle.

Maya leaned her forehead on the steering wheel and cursed colorfully in Spanish for a few minutes. Of all the times for her car to die, this had to be the worst. However, sitting here and moaning over it would get her nowhere. Sighing, she grabbed her bag, and leaving the keys in the ignition in the hopes someone would steal the damn thing, she began walking by the faint illumination of the small houses that lined the road.

When the first thug in ripped jeans stepped out in front of her, Maya wasn't worried. She had a can of mace clutched in the hand that hid in her purse. But the rancid, unwashed smell signaling the presence of the second guy behind, well, that wasn't so good.

*Where is a hero when you need one?*

\* \* \* \*

Lex was bored out of his mind. He'd finally stopped masturbating—not an easy task. He'd, through trial and error, figured out how to turn on the vid screen, but the odd programming confused him. Who was this Seinfeld, and why did everyone find him so amusing?

He paced the confines of Maya's home waiting for her to come back, and it was while he walked back and forth that the uneasiness set in, a niggling feeling that something was amiss. Lex tried to ignore it, leaving the safety of her home would be unwise, but the lingering sense of wrongness—*Maya is in danger!*—grew. Unable to take it anymore, Lex cursed and looked for something to disguise him. He found, buried in a closet, a hat with a brim on one side. Placing the strange hat on his head and pulling the narrow brim low over his eyes, he left the confines of her house.

Thick darkness blanketed the road and surrounding houses. Lex thanked the clouds that covered the moon, only a night away from its fullness and the end to his mission one way or another. He scanned the darkness, unsure of which way to go.

A faint cry sounded, and Lex took off running. He didn't question his instinct, nor did he care who saw him. Maya faced danger. She needed him, and he would not fail her.

His long-legged stride soon brought him in sight of a struggling trio, the gleaming white of Maya's clothing a beacon in the darkness.

Bellowing in rage when he saw her struck and pushed to her knees, he added a burst of speed and, with a soaring leap, tackled the assailant who dared touch Maya.

They hit the ground hard, but Lex barely noticed the impact, his fist already drawing back and then connecting with a satisfying crunch. The body under him went limp. Lex jumped up, the blood rushing through his body as he breathed heavily through his nose and regarded the other attacker, who had foolishly remained and balanced a puny excuse for a knife in one hand.

Lex grinned, not a nice smile for sure, and he saw the idiot with the knife freeze for a moment, then even more stupidly advance. Lex beckoned him on, the rage coursing through him needing an outlet.

Maya gasped behind him, but Lex was busy. His hands moved lightning fast as he blocked and evaded the knife-wielding miscreant. Lex had been taught by the best, and with a grab of the foul-smelling human's arm and a twist, he had him on his knees. The sound of a knife clattering became the only sound other than their harsh breathing.

Movement beside him made him turn his head, and he saw Maya come to stand next to him. She placed a hand on his arm. "Are you okay?" she asked, concern in her brown eyes.

"Me?" Lex twisted the arm of the thug he still held and made him cry out. "Are you? I saw these villains attack you. Shall I kill them for you?"

Maya's eyes widened. "Uh, no. That won't be necessary. Thank you, Lex."

Her soft words did strange things to him, but one need rose above the rest. Letting go of the downed human, he swept Maya into his arms and, with a long stride, carried her back to her house.

Her laughter sounded. "I can walk, Lex."

"Quiet, woman," he growled. Lex wasn't working on logic anymore, but pure emotion. He didn't understand what he felt, but knew he needed to hold her close.

Even when they reached her house, he didn't put her down. He kicked the door closed with his foot and kissed her, hard.

Despite that morning's declaration of never touching him again, she responded eagerly and frantically to his embrace. Her wet, sinuous tongue met his in a fiery clash that had him fit to burst in his pants. Turning her and pressing her back up against the wall, he guided her legs around his waist. He continued to plunder her mouth even as he tugged up her shirt and slid his hands under it to stroke her soft skin.

The skirt she wore hitched around her waist, and her molten core, covered by the barest scrap of material, pulsed against him. Lex rubbed his covered erection against it, and she moaned in his mouth.

"Tell me what you want," he said in a husky voice.

"You. I want you inside me. Por favor."

Her "please" at the end almost tore away what was left of his control. Using one hand, he tore the impeding fabric from her crotch and pressed his hand against the moistness of her desire. She mewled in his arms, her fingers clutching tightly at his shoulders. He slid his fingers inside her wetness and stroked her, finding that sensitive spot and rubbing it. She keened and wiggled in his grip as her pleasure built.

"Don't stop," she gasped. But he did, pulling his fingers out of her moist sex. She wailed and pressed herself against him, her passion a thing of beauty to behold.

Fumbling with the button to the pants he wore, he freed his erection, its hard length popping out and slapping against her cunt.

Maya cried out and gyrated her hips. He wrapped an arm around her waist securely and used his other hand to guide himself into her.

He almost came at the contact. Wet, tight, and oh so hot, her channel wrapped around his shaft snugly. By the silvery moons, she fit him perfectly. Placing both hands just under her buttocks, he moved her back and forth on his cock. She whimpered, her head thrown back as she undulated against him in wild abandon. He claimed her lips, his hips pistoning faster, a speed she welcomed with clenching muscles.

When she cried out his name and her pussy convulsed around his rod, Lex could hold on no longer. He poured himself into her, digging his fingers into her plump ass cheeks.

Spent, he stumbled, still holding her, to the couch, where he collapsed with her on his lap. She snuggled into his chest, and Lex stroked her hair. Sadness tinged the moment, for no matter how wonderful and shattering the moment they'd just shared, Lex still had to do his damned duty.

“I wish they’d chosen you for my mate,” he whispered against her hair, the wet tears that soaked his shirt making him angry at the tradition that not so long ago he had held so dear.

*How could the Oracle have chosen so wrong? And why can I not, for once in my life, forget protocol and follow what I know is right?*



## Chapter Eight

Maya couldn't help the tears—stupid girly emotions. However, she just didn't understand. If he wanted her, then why couldn't he have her? "Aren't you allowed a say in who you choose to spend your life with?"

He continued to stroke her hair and sighed. "I guess it might seem strange to a society that doesn't deal in arranged bondings. But there is a reason for the way we do things. Would you care for a history lesson so that you can better understand?"

"Por favor," she said, needing a reason as to why, even with the strong connection between them, he could not buck tradition.

"The planet I come from is called Xaanda. It is larger than your planet, with two suns and three moons. We've been space-farers for quite some time now, and our explorations brought us in contact with a planet of beings who thought to conquer us. They released a deadly virus on our world, one that killed almost all of our females, and many of those that survived ended up barren. Our numbers dwindled drastically, especially after we took our revenge, our race heading towards sure extinction, for we did not have enough women left to mate with, not to mention the violence and fighting that went on over who would breed with the survivors."

Maya listened in horrified fascination. The concept of killing on that kind of scale shocked her, and yet, look at Lex. He had warrior written over every inch of him.

Lex continued. "The Oracle, the wisest being in the universe, or so we believe, made a proclamation. She claimed the spirits of our departed clan members had offered to help us rebuild our society by going forth into the galaxy and finding us suitable alien mates. The mates they chose would be a perfect match in temperament and physical bearing to ensure successful mating and, in turn, procreation of our species."

"But how could they know if you'd love who they chose?" she interrupted.

"Love?" Lex sounded puzzled. "I've heard of this term, which translates to a very strong affection for one person. But in my world, affection has nothing to do with bonding. Males and females mate so as to reproduce and provide our society with healthy Xamians."

"Then you don't know what you're missing out on," she mumbled. Louder she said, "So, you let some long-dead ghost decide who you should spend your life with?"

"Yes."

“And what if you hate that person or they hate you?”

Lex didn't answer immediately. “I don't know. I've never heard of it happening before. I know occasionally, an alien chosen for bonding will fight against her destiny, but in the end, once the first child is born, they all seem to come around.”

He spoke of marrying someone so clinically, coldly. It appalled her that they entrusted their future and happiness to someone else's, make that a ghost's, suggestion. Maya didn't like it. Of course, that could have to do with the fact that they hadn't chosen her. She loved Lex and . . .

*¡Dios mío.* When had that happened? It made no sense. He didn't want her. She barely knew him, but in spite of that, Maya couldn't imagine a life without him. And yet, she was about to help him get the other woman.

“So, even though you are not sure of their choice, you will obey?”

He turned her on his lap to face him, his fingers stroking the tears that ran down her cheeks. Lightly he kissed her. “It's my people, Maya. What I feel with you . . . I can't describe how it feels, but my duty must come first. I am so sorry. If I had any other choice—”

Maya couldn't listen anymore, her heart cracking. “I need a shower.”

She left him sitting looking dejected and shut herself in the bathroom, the tears falling unchecked. The hot water didn't erase her unhappiness.

*How can I ask him to betray his people? To forgo his honor? He's trying to be noble, a trait you never see anymore. I need to respect that, even if I don't like it.*

The thought of what she had to do next didn't make her happy. But there was one thing she could do for herself before she handed the alien she loved on a platter to another woman.

Walking back out into the living room, where Lex still sat, she made a small sound. When he turned to look, she dropped her towel and said, “I know you have to do your duty by your people, but please, make love to me one more time.”

\* \* \* \*

At her words, Lex lost his ability to breathe. If Lex could have had his way, he'd have worshipped Maya's body for the rest of his life. And much as he feared it would hurt him to remember later, he couldn't deny her last request, not when he wanted it too.

She looked like an absolute goddess standing there, naked, curvy, and for the moment, his. He stripped out of his clothes, glad he'd washed himself in her food preparing area while she cleansed herself in the cubicle. He swept

her into his arms, her soft nude form enflaming his lust as he carried her into her sleeping quarters. Laying her down on the bed, he covered her lush body with his. Scorching kisses led to roaming hands. He cupped and squeezed the fullness of her breasts, enjoying her pants of pleasure as he teased her nipples with his lips and teeth.

“Suck them,” she begged when he blew on them, teasing her.

He did as she pleaded and with his mouth sucked on her tender flesh as she writhed under him. Even as he feasted on her hard berries, he slid his hand down and found the apex of her thighs. He parted her slick folds and delved between. A low grunt escaped him when her juices coated his probing digits. *She's so wet for me.* He slid two fingers in and pumped her as he nibbled on her nipple. She ripped at his hair, keening.

Her reaction to his touch was both wild and gratifying. Lex suddenly found himself parched for a taste of her. He slid down her body, trailing soft kisses over her rounded belly. He nuzzled her silky curls, teasing her. He loved the way she bucked and arched for him. He bypassed her molten core and nibbled her tanned thighs. The tantalizing scent of her arousal surrounded him like an erotic perfume.

“Lick me,” she whimpered.

Unable to resist any longer, he latched his mouth onto to her sex. And oh, the scream she let out as she came instantly for him, her muscles spasming as he stroked her clit with his tongue while fucking her with his fingers. He kept working her even as she came, her nectar gushing sweetly into his mouth. He built her up again using his tongue and pumping fingers. When he felt her body poised on the verge of another orgasm, he knelt between her legs and grabbed her thighs, pushing them up high.

“Look at me,” he ordered gruffly.

Maya opened her passion-glazed eyes, and Lex groaned at the emotion he saw blazing in her face. Holding her gaze, he slid into her tight sheath and paused to enjoy the pleasure of being held so snugly inside her. She moaned and bit her lip as he moved slowly in her, pushing his length to the hilt inside her and then swirling it, a motion that made her cry out each time, and through it all, her eyes never left his.

Holding her legs up, he plowed into her velvety wetness, his cock thicker and harder than he'd ever imagined. He filled her up, loving how she took every inch, her body clenching sweetly around him. Faster he moved, his gaze locked to hers, and so he saw when the rapture hit her and she screamed, “¡Dios mío, Lex!”

Lost in the bliss, she finally closed her eyes as her pussy quivered in waves that wouldn't stop. Lex couldn't hold it any longer. A last mighty thrust inside her and he came, his whole body shuddering with the intensity. He collapsed on top of her, and her arms came up to curl around him. And his heart, an organ he'd never thought of or felt before, tore in half when she said, "I love you."

## Chapter Nine

They made love the rest of the night, not speaking of what had to be done. Instead they joined their bodies, time and again, as if trying to make up for a lifetime of lovemaking they would never have.

When the golden fingers of dawn crept through the cracks in the blind, they fell into an exhausted slumber. But when they woke sometime late in the afternoon, they needed to face reality.

“How long do we have before your ship comes back to get you?” she asked as she cooked them some food.

“Tonight, when the full moon rises, I need to be in the field of gypsum.”

Maya closed her eyes and swayed. *So soon. But I wanted more time.* Yet, one more day, or even two, would never be enough. She wanted what she couldn't have. She wanted him forever. And it didn't help that she knew he wanted it too.

If only she were psychic like her great aunt—may she rest in peace. She'd have called up someone's ancestors and made them change their choice. Which begged the question, what did you threaten ghosts with?

Composing herself while devising means of torturing meddlesome spirits, she kept frying the chicken for the tortillas she was making for dinner. This task kept her occupied for a few minutes and brought to mind something he'd said. “How do you know it's the full moon tonight?”

“I'm a moon warrior,” he said, then dropped a kiss on her exposed nape, startling her and igniting, to her surprise, that fire in her loins again. “We always know what phase the moon is in.”

Maya scooted from his distracting embrace and plated the food before it burned. Sitting down to eat, she resumed her previous train of thought. “I hadn't realized we had so little time. I'm sorry.”

“For what? It's not your fault I haven't completed my mission. If I cannot claim Amanda before the moon rises, then I will return to my world and admit I failed.”

“What will happen to you?” Maya clamped down on the elation that threatened to bubble over at the thought of him not claiming that *puta*. How could she get excited when his failure could mean punishment by his people? Would they kill him? Hurt him? Exile him? Maya knew she couldn't allow that to happen. But how could she ensure he succeeded?

\* \* \* \*

Lex admitted, even if only to himself, that he wanted to fail. He didn't want to mate with this Amanda. In fact, he hoped he couldn't find her or that she protested enough that he could return empty-handed and claim without lying that he'd failed to complete his mating mission. Then, he'd beg, if he had to, for the option of taking Maya as his mate instead. Tradition be damned. He'd fallen for the earthling emotion of love. What else explained this overpowering desire of his to claim her as his forever more?

But he said nothing of this to Maya lest he raise false hope, so he only half listened when she mused aloud different ploys for approaching Amanda Beckworth.

"¡Dios mío, I have it," she exclaimed suddenly. "The balloon festival."

"And how will balloons help?" asked Lex, curious at how her mind worked.

"Everyone goes to the festival."

"And if she doesn't?" He'd go home empty-handed—perfect.

"Don't worry, she'll be there," said Maya vehemently.

Lex wanted to tell her not to bother, but while she busily plotted, he thought of what he would say to the Oracle once he returned without his chosen mate. A scary thought, indeed, for it had never happened before.

The hour grew late, and Maya left the room to freshen up and dress. Lex's gut clenched as the hour to leave Earth—make that leave Maya—approached. Just the knowledge that in a few hours he'd be several light years away made his gut clench. He didn't like the thought of leaving her alone without his protection. He had to find a way to convince the Oracle to change his mission—to give him the mate he wanted.

Maya appeared as he fought despair, and like a ray of sunshine, she drove all thought from his head. She wore a lovely gown that hit just below her knee in a bright red that showcased her curvy figure and shot a bolt of pure lust through him. He had to have her one more time. His glowing eyes must have given away his intent, for she squeaked, "Lex, we don't have time for this."

"Yes, we do," he growled, grabbing her hands and holding them above her head. Her eyes glazed over even as she protested.

He pulled up the loose skirt of her gown and tugged down her panties—that stupid piece of material kept getting in the way of his questing fingers. When he bonded with her upon his return, he'd burn every pair she owned. He slid his hands between her thighs and found her wet and ready. Turning her, he bent her over the back of the couch and raised her skirt up high, exposing her rounded, tanned cheeks. He released his cock from the confines

of his slacks, and it sprang forth, eager and seeking. Positioning himself between Maya's legs, he rubbed the swollen head of his rod against her slit. She moaned and shook her ass at him, a tempting invitation he couldn't resist. Poising his rod at the entrance to her sex, he grabbed a hold of her buttocks and thrust into her. He grunted at the slick, hot feel of her cunt and dug his fingers into her ass, spreading her to better watch his shaft pumping in and out of her welcoming pussy—a beautifully erotic sight that threatened to make him spill too quickly.

“Harder,” she panted, pushing back against him in an effort to take him deeper.

Lex complied, slamming himself into her, the tip of his rod rubbing the sweet spot inside and making her keen. He increased his pace as if somehow, if he fucked her hard enough, he'd brand her and make her his. *I don't care what the Oracle or my ancestors say. She is mine!*

Bellowing, he creamed her, his juices milked by her convulsing cunt as she came with him. He stood there for a moment buried inside of her, their two bodies shuddering with aftershocks. He didn't want to leave.

Maya squirmed out from under him.

“Just give me a second to wash up, and I'll call a cab to take us to the festival.”

While she cleansed herself, Lex came up with a plan, one he didn't intend to relay to Maya. Essentially, once they got to this festival, he'd give her the slip. He wouldn't even try to find Amanda. He'd just move off into the darkness and make his way to the gypsum fields. He'd memorized the maps she'd shown him, and along with a compass she'd found for him, he felt confident he could find his way. The festival, after all, was very close to the fields already.

His new mission—find his ship, return home, and convince them they'd made a mistake and insist they let him have Maya. If they said yes, great. If they didn't, then he'd come back for her anyways. And when he did, he'd never leave her again. There were many places in the galaxy that they could go and live together. He might have to forsake his duty and honor to his people, but at least he'd have Maya.

A perfect plan, he thought, but he hadn't counted on Maya.

## Chapter Ten

Maya hated that she'd kind of lied to Lex. When she'd gone to the bedroom to dress, she'd done one other thing—a sneaky thing. She'd called Lieutenant Beckworth, a conversation that left her with an icy feeling of dread.

She'd whispered as she dialed the hotel and asked the stranger who answered to pass her to the lieutenant. She'd almost hung up when she came on the line with a brusque, "Who is this?"

But telling herself she had to do this for Lex, she replied, "It's Maya Romero."

"The maid." Lieutenant Beckworth's tone took on a softer tone. "You have something to tell me?"

The fact she'd remembered her had taken Maya aback. Swallowing her misgivings, she'd forged ahead. "I have information on the blue one."

An exclamation of surprise sounded, but was quickly muffled. Speaking with barely restrained excitement, Amanda said, "Really? Tell me more."

"No, it's—it's not safe here."

"Why don't you come to the hotel then?"

"No, I don't want to be seen talking with you. Meet me at the festival, by the cotton candy stand. And come alone, por favor. I only feel comfortable talking to you."

"Of course, Maya. Anything you say. I'll meet you there in an hour," said Amanda in a sweet tone that did nothing to reassure Maya.

She hung up shaking. *Forgive me, Lex. I can see in your eyes that you would betray your people for me. But I won't be responsible for the loss of your honor.*

She just hoped that the secret rendezvous she'd planned for Lex turned out all right. Or had she just gift wrapped and handed him to the military? What a negative thought, one that she shouldn't even be thinking of. She wouldn't let his people exile him or worse. So taking a deep breath, she'd joined Lex in the living room only to regret the phone call when he'd made such desperate love to her.

They held hands in the cab all the way to the festival, not speaking a word. She'd found him an old hooded sweatshirt and some shades to help disguise him. The darkness and strobing lights of the games and booths would also help. But just in case . . .

"If someone notices you have blue skin," she told him as they left the safety of the cab, "tell them you're part of the Blue Man Group."



Lex squeezed her hand in reply. They waded through the throngs of people, the cacophony even at this time of night unbelievable. Spotting the cotton candy stand, she craned looking for anybody who looked military in bearing. The coast seemed clear. Pulling her hand free of his, with a plummeting stomach, she prepared to leave him so he could be with the woman his people had fated for him.

She had a hard time controlling the tears that threatened, so she spoke quickly. "Why don't we split up? You go that way," she said pointing towards the rendezvous point, "and I'll check this way."

She could see the question in his eyes, but she turned and darted through the crowd before he could speak, unable to stay by him any longer as the tears fell unchecked from her eyes.

*I love you, Lex. Forgive me, and be happy.*

\* \* \* \*

When Maya abruptly left him, her eyes shiny with tears, Lex had almost gone after her. The same emotional tearing he suffered at their forced separation affected her just as strongly. But, at least she'd given him the opening he needed. It was better this way. Now he could just slip away without the painful good-bye he'd feared and without making her promises he couldn't be sure of keeping.

*I will come back for you, Maya. I promise.*

Lex flowed through the crowd in the direction she'd pointed him in, which coincided with where he was heading anyways. As he came up to a brightly lit stand offering fluffy pastel-colored clouds on a stick, all the air left him in a whoosh as he came face-to-face with none other than his intended mate.

*Oh, Maya, what have you done?* He knew this had to be her doing, her way of making sure he completed his mission, a mission that he knew, looking down on the petite blonde, he'd have never gone through with even had he never met her. There was no mistaking the look of loathing in the eyes of Amanda Beckworth, nor the disdainful curl of her lip. Nor was there mistaking his instant dislike of the woman his ancestors thought would be perfect for him.

"Well, well, if it isn't the alien himself. We've been looking for you."

Her words confused him until he saw the men in uniforms pushing their way through the crowd to them. Lex began scanning the area around them and barely registered Amanda's next words.

“I’m going to make sure you and the Latina you’ve infected are locked away, unable to hurt or convert any other humans.”

Lex froze at her words. Was she implying that Maya was in danger? He’d no sooner thought that than he heard Maya’s scream.

“Run, Lex!” she cried. “It’s a trap.”

Not without her, he wasn’t. Rage that these humans would mistreat his woman coursed through his body. Shoving Amanda to the side, and not feeling an ounce of regret for she stood in his way, he charged through the crowd toward the commotion he could see over the tops of the shorter humans’ heads.

A snarl emerged when he saw Maya struggling between two soldiers, cursing at them colorfully in Spanish instead of fainting like a normal woman. When one of them backhanded her, Lex lost it completely. The knives he’d brought as a “just in case” came swirling out. Around him people screamed and stampeded away. The soldiers’ eyes went wide as saucers as he came at them, blades flashing. Letting go of Maya, they grabbed for their firearms. Too slow.

Lex, in a whirling dance he’d learned as soon as he could walk, incapacitated them with sharp knocks to the backs of their heads. He didn’t kill them out of courtesy to Maya, who might not like to see the blood of her fellow earthlings spilled no matter their violent intent. Their unconscious bodies slumped to the ground just as Maya grabbed him by the arm and tugged at him.

“We’ve got to go.”

“Are you okay?” he asked following her through the thinning crowd.

“Yes,” she panted. “Quick. You’ve got to get out of here.”

Now there was an understatement. Uniformed personnel came pouring from all around, their guns cocked and aimed at them, but not firing—yet.

\* \* \* \*

Amanda watched gleefully as the blue alien tried to run with his mind-controlled human slave. They wouldn’t go far. The place was surrounded. Her father, the general, would be so proud. Disgusting alien creature. She still couldn’t understand why her former best friend and now this simpleminded Latina fell for them. It had to be an alien virus or psychic power of some type. What else could explain their behavior? She certainly felt nothing except disgust for the ET.

Impatient at having to wait, she wished the damned civilians would get out of the way faster. She couldn't give the order for her detachment to shoot the tranqs they were armed with 'til they had a clear shot. Too many witnesses and flashing cameras.

But, she wasn't worried. There was nowhere for them to go. Not unless he suddenly sprouted wings. And that's when the universe decided to work against her.

## Chapter Eleven

Panic fluttered in Maya's chest as she saw the trap closing around them, the ranks of soldiers forming an impenetrable wall. *This is all my fault. I should have known that puta could not be trusted.* She'd made a stupid decision, all in the name of doing what was right, and now she needed to fix it.

*Mami and Papi, if you are watching and listening, help me find a way to save him.*

She and Lex continued running towards the edge of the festival grounds, where she hoped the row of troops would be thinner, and that's when she saw it, the answer to her prayers. One huge inflated balloon with a basket was tethered and their ticket out of danger. The sign beside it said "Take your sweetheart for a night flight and show her the stars like she's never seen before." Maya almost laughed, but instead she dragged Lex towards the balloon.

"The balloon," she panted. "Get into the basket, and cut the ropes."

The crowd had gotten thinner here, and Maya could see the soldiers stopping to take aim.

"Duck," she screamed.

Lex instead, in a move too quick to see, flashed a silver blade, and with a pinging sound, the missile shot at him went to the side.

*Dios, he's like a superhero.*

Reaching the balloon, Lex grabbed her and threw her in, jumping in after her. Quickly, he cut all the tether ropes, and the balloon began to rise. Maya stood by the burner and gnawed her lip, trying to remember how to increase the flame. They needed to rise faster. She fiddled with the knobs and stumbled on one that made the flame shoot higher, and with a lurch they rose faster, but not fast enough.

She could hear the cracking sounds and the whistles as the soldiers fired at them and poked holes in the fabric for their balloon. Even worse, they were drifting, and she had no idea how to steer.

"I'm sorry," she whispered, despair over the impossibility of their situation crashing over her.

Lex, the *idiota*, just grinned at her with gleaming teeth. "Until we are dead, there is always a chance."

Maya wished she shared his optimism.

\* \* \* \*

Lex saw Maya had reached the end of her endurance, but he, on the other hand, had hope for both of them. The balloon actually worked similarly to the ones he'd used before on a planet that used ballooning as their main source of transportation. He took over the burner, keeping the flame burning high and hot to compensate for the leaking of the hot gases through the tears. They left the sound and lights of the soldiers and festival behind, the shining light of the full moon their only beacon. The wind blew gently and luckily in the direction they needed to go.

Maya slipped her arms around him and pressed her face into his back. He wanted to tell her everything would be all right, but they hadn't quite made it out of danger yet, even if according to his compass, they should be floating over the gypsum fields. A good thing, for the balloon was definitely losing altitude. Now, if only he could find his ship before the military for this planet did.

"Brace yourself," he warned, turning to tuck Maya into his chest so as to protect her from impact when the woven basket hit the ground and skidded in the crystals. Several bumps later, the balloon came to rest, the silken fabric of the balloon collapsing.

He swung Maya over the side, then leapt out after her and grabbed her hand. Running would do them no good now, so tugging her a small distance from the balloon, he stopped and cradled her in his arms, lowering his head for a kiss.

She melted against him, her lips parting under his, but that only lasted a second. "Dios, are you crazy? We don't have time for this. You need to find your ship."

"My ship will find me." He hoped. She shivered in his arms as the sounds of baying dogs sounded in the distance, and he hugged her tighter. The moon shone brightly on them, and Lex wondered where in the silvery moons the stupid AI was with his ship.

He'd no sooner thought that than the welcome sound of his craft's engines sounded. Bright lights suddenly came on above them, and a hot wind whipped around them as the spaceship came in for a landing.

Lex smiled at the look of shock on Maya's face. *If she likes that, wait 'til she sees what else my planet, make that the whole galaxy, has to offer.* For she was coming with him. He had no intention of leaving her behind. His orders be damned. Maya was his mate, and he was taking her home.

The hatch opened, and the ramp extended. Lex began walking, but Maya dragged behind and pulled her hand from his. He turned to see her standing with her arms hugging herself.

“Aren’t you coming?” he asked, his brow creasing.

“But I’m not your mate,” she said ducking her face.

“I don’t care.”

His words shocked her, and she looked at him with shining eyes. “But your orders . . . your ancestors. I’m not the one they want you to have.”

“Not the one!” Lex almost shouted at her. He strode back to her and grabbed her in his arms and claimed her lips fiercely. “You are coming because I want you with me.” Lowering his head, he kissed her again, a sweet embrace that he hoped relayed exactly how he felt.

But when he raised his head, her face remained determined.

“You don’t want to come with me?” he asked in a voice tinged with disbelief.

Tears flooded her gaze. “Of course I do, idiota, but if you come back with the wrong mate, what will happen to you? I will not be the reason you are punished.”

Silly woman. Did she not yet realize that not being with her was the worst punishment anyone could mete out?

Bobbing lights appeared in the distance, as did the baying sound of dogs and growling of motors. He’d run out of time to convince and get her to come of her free will. So taking a page from his ancient ancestors, he ignored her protests and, hoisting her up, flung her over his shoulder and jogged to his ship.

She bounced and jiggled as he ran, and he could hear her swearing up a storm behind him as she pummeled him half-heartedly.

“Lex! I will not let you ruin your life for me.”

He gave her smack on her tempting bottom, which made her squeak. “Quiet, woman. I don’t care what my orders were. I will have no other, so they’d better accept my choice because I am not changing my mind.”

She quieted after that, and when he put her down finally in the cleansing chamber that would decontaminate them, she just looked at him with wide eyes.

“Computer,” said Lex, “get us out of here.”

“Right away, Captain, and may I say congratulations on completing your mission.”

Lex didn’t correct the computer. As far as he was concerned, his mission was a complete success. He’d found his mate, and as soon as they both got naked, he intended to make it official.

## Chapter Twelve

Maya stood frozen, afraid if she moved or spoke, the dream might shatter. Lex wanted her. Not just that, he was taking her into space. She wished she could say she felt bad that he'd failed his people, but a selfish part of her was cheering madly. He'd chosen her!

And now he was getting naked. *¡Dios mío.*

"Take off your clothes, Maya," he said, his blue, muscled body approaching led by his erect cock.

"But . . ."

"Get naked for me."

His eyes glowed with desire, and Maya shivered. With shaking hands, she tried to undress. Lex let out an impatient sound and, using his strong hands, ripped her dress in half and in seconds had her panties gone. Naked before him, coiling heat coursed through her, and she licked her lips in anticipation.

He groaned. "Hold that thought. First, we need to do something."

"What?" she asked. They were both naked. What could they possibly need to do first?

"Maya, will you bond with me?"

"I-I will." Screw his mission. He'd made his choice clear. She could do no less, and no matter what happened, at least they'd be together.

"We need to kneel," Lex said dropping to the floor in front of her. She followed suit, and when he put his hands up, palms facing her, she aped him and placed her hands against his much larger ones. A tingle shot through her, almost like an electrical current.

"Repeat after me," said Lex, his eyes solemn. "My life, my soul, I pledge to thee."

Her throat tight with tears of joy, Diana spoke in a whisper. "My life, my soul, I pledge to thee."

"Forever joined for eternity."

As soon as Maya repeated the words, staring into Lex's beautiful eyes, a jolt hit her. She heard a loud crack, and energy thrummed throughout her being and into Lex and back again, like a completed circuit that joined their souls forever more as one. Maya had the sense of coming home, and the closeness, not to mention love she could feel, overwhelmed her. And made her hornier than she'd ever been.

As if of one mind, they dove onto each other. Hungry lips met and opened wide to allow their tongues to clash. Maya's feverish body met the even hotter skin of her husband, her mate. She groaned at the fiery feel of his

cock throbbing against her lower belly. She arched against him, rubbing her hardened nipples onto his chest. Long fingers found her wet slit and toyed with her, using her own juices to moisten her clit for playing. Back and forth, he stroked her as Maya panted into his mouth. She needed him in her now. She pushed him back, and when he didn't immediately comply, she growled, "Lie down."

Immediately, he lay on his back, the two of them past the point of caring that there were probably better places than the floor for coupling. She straddled him, poising her moist pussy just over the head of his cock, teasing him.

"Tell me what you want?" she asked huskily, inserting just the tip of his head into her sex. Finally her turn to tease him.

"You, forever."

Lust and love shot through her at his words, and she dropped herself onto him, impaling his whole length with a scream of ecstasy that he echoed. Slowly, she moved on him, rocking back and forth, applying friction to her clit even as his rigid head pressed against her G-spot inside. His hands clasped her hips, and he helped her as her pleasure built inside her like a tidal wave, higher and higher. He ground her hard against him, and faster. Then he grunted out the words she never thought she'd hear.

"I love you, Maya."

With a keening cry, Maya came, the wave of her orgasm crashing over her in shuddering waves that made her quiver. Bellowing her name, Lex came as well, his hot seed filling her and consummating their alien marriage.

She collapsed on him breathing hard, but she still managed to say, "You love me?"

Lex chuckled, his chest vibrating under her cheek. "Yes, even though on my world we do not have a word for love. My friend Kor tried to explain it once to me, and I thought he was crazy. Yet, these feelings I have for you, I know not what else they could be. It's as if my whole world revolves around you. I want to keep you happy and safe forever."

"Oh, Lex." Maya's eyes flooded with tears, the beauty of his words moving her. "I love you too!"

She would have said more, but a strange sensation began crawling up her body, and she jumped up looking to see what the hell it was.

\* \* \* \*



Maya hopped about, her heavy breasts bouncing, and Lex grinned as he lay on his back with his hands behind his head. Much as he was enjoying the show, he figured he should explain.

“The AI unit has activated the decontamination and cleansing process.”

“What? But . . .” Maya blushed. “It feels . . . naughty.”

Lex smiled wider. “Yes, it does.” He got to his knees and shuffled over to her as she stood there, her body flushed with arousal. He buried his face in the softness of her belly, but he could smell her need. He stood and pushed her back against the chamber wall, his lips meeting hers in a sweet kiss. He nudged her thighs apart with a foot, and he knew it when she felt the microscopic cleansing on her sex, for her lips parted on a sigh.

Both their bodies clean again, Lex swept her into his arms. He had a comfortable bed he wanted to introduce her to. As he carried them—both naked—to his quarters, she teased him, nibbling on the skin of his neck, enflaming his passions and tempting him to forgo the bed and take her then and there against the wall.

But he restrained himself and dropped her onto a pillowy mattress, where the vixen smiled at him with heavily lidded eyes. She crooked a finger at him and spread her legs, pulling her knees up, exposing herself to him. Lex almost came right then, especially when she licked a finger and touched herself. It was then that he noticed it. Around her wrist, like a piece of ghostly jewelry, she wore the gray spirit band of a mated one. His ancestors must have approved the match. Lex wanted to laugh with sheer joy. Perhaps things would turn out right after all.

He dove onto the bed between Maya’s thighs to get an up-close look at her stroking herself, a sight he would surely never tire of.

“Um, I hate to interrupt,” said the AI unit, “but the Oracle is on the vid comm waiting to speak to you.”

Maya scrambled for the bedcovers while Lex cursed silently at the horrible timing. “You don’t need to cover yourself. We are alone on the ship.”

“But the voice?”

“Just the computer. I’m sorry. I need to take this vid comm call.”

“Will everything be all right?” she asked, worry in her eyes.

“Everything will be fine. Don’t finish without me, though,” he said ruefully looking at her flushed face and tousled hair. Maya smiled seductively and flung the covers off. Eyes riveted to the show she put on with her finger, he dressed quickly in a pair of slacks and a loose shirt. The quicker he spoke to the Oracle, the quicker he’d be back in bed. He gave Maya a light

kiss that turned into a scorching one with tongue. The AI interrupted by clearing its imaginary throat, and with a rueful smile to Maya, Lex made his way to the command center to face the Oracle, the one being who had the power to bless or curse his changed choice in mates.

The petite Oracle's veiled face filled the large screen in the command center, and Lex dropped his chin under her gaze, staring at his bare blue feet. Few ever got to speak to or see the Oracle. This didn't bode well.

"Lex'indrios Vel Romannu, did you complete your mission?" said a voice that had started and stopped wars.

"I'm afraid I failed in the mission you sent me on," said Lex, cursing the moment that had come too soon. He'd hoped to have time to prepare his speech detailing the reasons why he'd disobeyed orders.

"Did you collect your mate, Maya?"

"No, I—" Lex looked up in astonishment at the screen. "Wait a second. Did you say Maya?"

The Oracle inclined her head. "Indeed. Maya Romero, your mate. You did do the binding ceremony, did you not?"

"Yes, but how? I thought . . ." Lex trailed off, flustered.

"Maya was always the one meant for you."

"But why tell me it was Amanda then?" he said, suddenly angry at all the unnecessary angst he'd gone through.

"Your ancestors and I felt it important that you want Maya for herself and not because you were told she was yours. I've been doing a lot of talking with an earthling mate named Diana here. You should know her. She's Kor's wife. And she said the whole mating process would be easier to accept if both sides felt they were part of the choice. Did you choose Maya? And in return, she you?"

"Yes, but do you realize the anguish you put us both through?"

"A little hardship only makes the feelings stronger. Congratulations on your mating."

The vid screen went blank, and Lex sat there stunned. *I was always meant to be with Maya.* He knew he should feel angry at the trick that had been played on him, but at the feel of her soft hands on his neck massaging him, and a plump bottom settling on his lap, all he could think was, *Thank the silvery moons she is mine.*

Maya had thrown on a robe before joining him, but he still had easy access to her body, and he used that to his advantage, stroking her soft flesh.

"Lex," she panted, "wait a second. Did I hear the Oracle right? Was I supposed to be your mate all along?"

“Yes,” he growled.

“Oh,” she exclaimed, a sound she repeated when he pulled up the loose skirt to probe her with a finger and found her wet already. Lex decided to indulge in a fantasy of his.

“Strip,” he ordered.

Maya stood and, curving her lips in a sensual smile that sent all his blood rushing to one spot, unfastened her robe and let it slide to the floor. Lex stood and divested his own body of its garments. Free of his pants, Lex’s cock twitched at the sight of her nude, tanned body.

He pulled her towards him and cupped her buttocks, lifting her. “Wrap your legs around me.” But he needn’t have spoken, for as if she read his mind, she guided his shaft into her sex with a sigh and hugged her legs around him like a vise. Lex groaned at the feel of her silken sheath, but he still didn’t quite have her where he wanted her. He walked ’til he had her back leaning on the vid screen that now showed the galaxy they traveled through in all its cosmic glory. Then he fucked her on this vertical bed of stars, his rod plunging into her as her fingers clutched tightly at his shoulders.

When he finally came deep inside her black hole, he closed his eyes and saw the universe explode, a phenomenon he could only find in her loving arms.

## **Epilogue**

Maya quivered in anticipation as she set foot on her first alien planet, not the world she'd be living on yet, but one Lex insisted she see. It had waving pink grass that tickled her ankles in a sensuous way. The trees in the distance appeared to be purple, and a babbling brook flowed with the colors of a rainbow, a pastel perfect planet made for pleasure.

Twirling around, she caught site of Lex—her very own alien husband and lover. Smiling at him, she sent out a mental message to her departed parents. *I wish you could have lived to see this, Mami and Papi, and to know you were right. There is other life out there, and it turns out, when it comes to love, we're not so different after all.*

The End

## *About the Author*

Eve Langlais, who is in her mid thirties, has been married 11 years to a wonderful man who gave her three beautiful, but distracting children aged ten, seven, and four. A military brat, she was born in British Columbia but ended up living all across Canada. She now resides with her family, that also includes two cats and a guinea pig, in the historic town of Bowmanville, Ontario. If you want to get to know her better visit her website at <http://www.Evelanglais.com> or friend her on Facebook.