

The book cover features a close-up portrait of a young man with light brown hair and striking blue eyes, looking slightly to the left. He is wearing a dark, possibly black, garment. The background is a deep blue, speckled with white stars and streaks of light, suggesting a night sky or a magical, ethereal setting. The author's name, 'KATE STEELE', is printed in a white, serif font at the top. The title, 'MIDDLE MAN', is written in a large, white, serif font on the left side, with the word 'MIDDLE' stacked above 'MAN'. At the bottom center, the publisher's name, 'Changeling Press', is displayed in a white, stylized font with a decorative flourish.

KATE STEELE

MIDDLE
MAN

Changeling Press

Middle Man

Kate Steele

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Middle Man

Kate Steele

For months Gen has performed his duty as an amplier for a Sholsian bond-pair, not only amplifying the emotions each has for the other, but serving as a receptacle for the penetration neither dominant male will allow the other. Though such is seen as an admirable profession, Gen had hoped for more. He wishes for the love and affection sometimes granted to others of his fellow amplifiers by their masters.

Only when he's kidnapped and severely injured is his wish granted and then he fears it's too late. A spinal injury has left him paralyzed from the waist down and though his masters have professed their love to him, Gen struggles to believe it will last. Fear, despair and doubt await him, but Gen is about to learn the power of true love.

Empath, servant, sex toy. Gen fills all these roles, but not the one he longs for most... lover.

Chapter One

Moaning around the thick cock filling his mouth, Gen pushed back into the second solid rod of flesh easing within his well lubed passage. Master Marin's huff of pleasure as his full length was engulfed matched the audible breaths Master Cail took each time Gen twirled his tongue over the swollen crown of Cail's cock.

Immersing himself in the mental stew of their combined pleasure, he separated the ingredients provided by Marin and Cail, and enhanced them with his own sensual spice. With a soft, cerebral push, he served Marin's portion to Cail and Cail's to Marin so each could taste the unique flavor of the other's lust, love and desire. The result was everything and more he'd been trained to bestow.

Voluntarily shackled together by Gen's mental link, both men proceeded to do everything in their power to bring the other pleasure. That Gen was carried along and fed from the table of their carnal banquet was of little consequence. This meal was solely for his masters' pleasure, and Gen did that for which he had been trained -- accepting their cocks into his body while mentally sharing with each man the euphoric sensations a male experienced when skillfully penetrated.

With their three way link firmly established, Gen let the mental aspect of their coupling continue under its own momentum and immersed himself in the physical. Master Marin was pounding into his ass with long sure strokes, invariably hitting his sweet spot more often than not, which sent wild thrills of sensation rocketing throughout Gen's body. In his mouth, the silky glide of Master Cail's spit-slick skin caressed his tongue as the first sweet drops of precum added their moisture to that already filling his mouth and dribbling free in a small rivulet from the corner of his tightly stretched lips.

Marin and Cail bent forward over Gen's back, their open mouths devouring each other. The feel of their tongues twisting together, experienced through their mental link, settled in Gen's groin, pushing his need to come higher and higher. Warm drops of sweat spattered against his skin. It formed at every contact point between himself and his masters, born of the haze of heat generated by three bodies writhing to achieve the ultimate in primal sensation. The hot, musky scent of sex inundated his nostrils, filled his lungs, and played upon his palate until it was all he could smell and taste. Grunts, groans, the creak of the bed and Gen's own muffled moans became a melody of lust to which their bodies danced.

Every facet of their mating intensified, growing and growing to the point where none could withstand the self-created avalanche of ecstasy. Cail was the first to go under, his cock spewing thick streams of warm fluid into Gen's mouth. Gen swallowed as much of Cail's seed as he could, savoring the slightly bitter, slightly salty tang.

Master Marin succumbed next, the sharp jab and pulse of his deeply buried cock alerting Gen to the realization that he was being filled by his master's cum. Gasping for breath, Marin growled, "Come, Gen," and Gen, needing nothing more than two short strokes of his cock by his own hand, released his seed into the waiting sheets. Utter bliss shook his body and mind, and he opened himself and the mental link completely, allowing each of them to experience not only their own climax but each other's as well.

Bones gone weak at completion, the three fell into a well used heap, heaving breaths playing against moist skin. Gen shivered and lay still for a time, allowing himself to recover before moving. Easing himself from between his masters, he crawled to the edge of the bed and sat silent and unmoving. At his exit, Masters Marin and Cail curled together, their limbs entangled, their eyes closed. Turning his head slightly, Gen set his gaze upon them. To his eyes they were a beautiful sight, perfection in form, their honed bodies sleek and defined. How he wished there was a place for him beside or between them. Lifting a hand to his mouth, his fingers brushed against his lips and he allowed himself, for just a moment, to dream of what it might be like to share a kiss with them.

Unexpectedly Master Cail spoke to him, his eyes opening, his gaze finding Gen's. "Thank you, Gen. I..." Cail cleared his throat and continued, leaving his thought unspoken. "You're going to the market later?"

"Yes."

"Enjoy your day."

"Thank you, Master Cail. By your leave?"

Cail nodded and Gen stood, his legs still rather shaky and quit his Masters' room in favor of his own. Passing through the bedroom, he entered his private bath and started the shower before entering the enclosed cubicle.

"I'm nothing but a glorified fuck toy," he whispered pensively while standing under a spray of steamy water. Warm fog began to fill the bathroom and he counteracted the mist by ordering the fans on. A soft hum followed his command, proof the exhaust fans had engaged.

Using a slightly abrasive cloth, he thoroughly washed himself while thinking of his masters, Cail and Marin. At this very moment they were holding each other in the big bed he had quitted as soon as their orgasms were achieved. As a condition of his profession, he'd known he might be excluded from the affection his bond-pair had for each other, but he'd secretly hoped such wouldn't be the case. He'd thought perhaps being physically intimate with his masters would inspire emotional closeness as well. Six months into his new position with them and no such intimacy was forthcoming.

Oh, they treated him well enough. He lacked for nothing, but their kind indifference left him feeling empty and alone. As an amplier, he'd been taught from the time he'd chosen this path that his dreams would be fulfilled the day he found the right bond-pair. To serve as a conduit between a mated pair of dominant Sholsians was an honorable profession amongst Gen's people. It garnered the same respect as working in the public sector as a mediator or diplomat. He'd been overjoyed when he'd found a bond-pair with whom he was compatible. For the past few weeks he'd tried to convince himself he had everything he could desire, but with increasing frequency he was unsuccessful.

“What’s wrong with me?” he whispered, confused by the longing he felt.

From the time his training had begun, he’d been told he would hold an important position in a Sholsian household. What he’d learned on his own from unofficial sources was the subtleties of what that position could truly be. An amplimenter’s place seemed to range from handsomely paid, high ranking servant, to beloved companion and mate. It all depended upon the unpredictable whims of fate. Gen wanted to be in his masters’ bed as a lover. He wanted to be more than an amplifier for their feelings and emotions. Being a receptacle for the penetration neither excessively dominant male would give the other was enough. He wanted their love.

Turning off the shower, Gen dried off with a warmed, fluffy towel before settling himself on the open seated cleanslet. He placed his arms and hands on the padded rests at either side of the cylindrical unit, leaned against the backrest and took a deep breath. As his weight settled on it, the cleanslet’s instrumentation went to work. A directed spray of warm lubricant anointed Gen’s anus and he closed his eyes striving to relax for the tapered end of a tube that slowly, with the help of precision guided arms, was inserted into his body. Antiseptic fluid, slightly warmer than body temperature, was pumped into his colon, the flow stopping before discomfort set in.

A soft melodious voice spoke. “Hold, please.”

Gen did as he was told until the voice gave him leave to expel the fluid, which he did with a grateful sigh. This action was repeated. After releasing the second round of liquid, his bottom was treated to a gentle spray of sterile water then warm air to dry his skin. Another directed spray of lubricant caused Gen’s hole to twitch. He pushed out with his anal muscles to accept the slim end of the plug being inserted. The deeper it went, the wider it became until Gen was biting his lip against the near pain of insertion. Even though the cleanslet was invariably careful and gentle, the final stretch of his muscles around the thickest part of the plug was always a bit of a trial. Why was silicone so much harder to accept than flesh? Having no answer to the question, he merely accepted the inevitable and sighed with relief when his sphincter closed around

the slimmer section above the base of the plug. After another spray of sterile water and more warm air to dry, he was done.

Carefully he stood, wiggling a bit to test the positioning of the plug. A soft moan ghosted over his lips when the plug brushed his prostate. While he understood the need to always be ready for his masters' pleasure, surely it was unfair to keep him constantly on edge because of the plug? At times it was hard not to broadcast his arousal to everyone within range. At least Marin and Cail had given him leave to masturbate whenever the need for relief became too much to bear, but even this small kindness made Gen sad. They could not be bothered to see to the needs of their amplimenter. More often than not, he was left to find his release alone.

Finished with his cleansing, Gen donned his clothing. Determined to escape from the melancholy threatening to engulf him, he turned his thoughts to other, more practical matters. After checking the kitchen to verify what supplies needed replenishing, he left his masters' domicile. Today was market day and he looked forward to meeting his two best friends and fellow amplimentors while shopping for fresh foodstuffs to resupply the household.

With rising spirits he walked the short distance to the tube station. As usual, the clean, paved, communal pathways lined with trees, grass, and gardens served to soothe his wayward emotions. A feeling of calm settled over him, and Gen sighed with pleasure. A deep inhale brought with it the scent of flowers. Some of the aromas were sweet, some spicy, but all, no matter the variant, were pleasing. He loved being outdoors and this day's scheduled weather was perfect for an outing.

As he walked, his gaze was drawn overhead to a sprinkling of lights flaring and flashing far above him. Another shower of meteors was impacting with the dome protecting Hayzar City. As each superheated rock hit the resilient shield, it disintegrated and its energy was absorbed, thus helping to replenish the power which was expended to form the dome. Without the dome's protection, all the people living here would be forced to take shelter underground. Not that underground was unpleasant.

Hundreds of years ago, when the meteor showers began, the Sholsians were forced to take drastic measures to protect themselves from annihilation. Great caverns that riddled the land of many continents, formerly cursed for the inconvenience they presented to certain construction efforts, were suddenly considered godsend and gratefully utilized.

Because haste was necessary, the floors and lower walls of the natural caverns were smoothed and refined while leaving the upper walls and ceilings in their natural state. Many were now glad such had been the case for the stalactites were often quite spectacular, especially when accented by the sparkling veins and pockets of crystallized minerals which adorned the upper walls in sometimes breathtaking displays of natural beauty.

From the displaced rock of created caverns, entire towns were built below ground. Nowadays, though much of the surface of the planet was being reclaimed through use of the energy domes, many people spent the majority of their lives in these underground places. Citizens could even maintain a lawn and garden of sorts around their homes with ground cover and other plants specifically suited to sparse, rocky soil.

Sholsian technology had advanced to the degree where they were able to generate a power equivalent to that of a beneficent sun shining beneath miles of earth and stone. Below ground, just as above, weather was scheduled and maintained to imitate seasons advantageous to all the flora and fauna they had managed to save. Crops grew; insects and birds flourished, domesticated animals were raised and used for their flesh and hides and even wild animals roamed densely planted and isolated caverns far from those inhabited by people.

From the looks of things now, someone who knew nothing of the Sholsians would never guess the depths of the tragedy they'd suffered. Hundreds of thousands dead, untold species of animals and plants lost. Gen could only imagine what life here had been like then and how the brave men and women of this world had struggled to save everything they possibly could even to the point of risking their own lives.

Arriving at the tube station, Gen let his serious thoughts drift away. With much anticipation he boarded an open car, found a seat, and settled in for the short journey to the local marketplace. The thirty-eight kilometer distance was covered in just shy of twelve minutes and when he stepped out of the car, Gen was delighted to see Renka and Sev waiting for him. With a grin he returned their waves.

"Good morning," he greeted them.

"Good morning, Gen," Renka chirped.

"Morning," Sev mumbled.

Gen laughed. Their attitudes were so predictable. Pixy-like Renka, a confirmed morning person, was bright and cheerful while night owl Sev was obviously grumpy at having to be up and about so early. Even their clothes reflected their personalities. Renka was a vision of spring in a delicate, floral print dress that fluttered in the gentle breeze while Sev's vest and trousers were severe in unrelieved black. Gen's outfit fell somewhere between them. His trousers were tan, his vest cream with thin tan and green stripes.

"You're both looking well this morning," Gen ventured.

"You as well," Renka replied. "If I weren't so enamored of my master and mistress, I'd be tempted to pair with you."

"I'll bet he finds that a tempting offer," Sev growled. "Have you forgotten Gen's preference runs to men? He and I would suit much better."

"Are you saying you'd leave your bond-pair for me?" Gen teased.

"Never. Those two fuck with a strength and dedication that, well, if the sun chose not to rise, all the government need do is channel the energy from one session with them into that lazy sun, and it would spin in the sky so wildly it would dazzle the eye."

Gen chuckled not only at Sev's exaggerated declaration, but at the soft blush of Renka's cheeks and her captivating giggle. "You are such a liar," she accused Sev.

"Am not. Why do you think I hate mornings? Those two keep me up rolling around in bed all night, not that I'm complaining." Sev tapped the pocket of his vest

where he kept his personal credit disc. "They're very generous. I'm buying our mid meal. Speaking of which, did you both eat lightly this morning?" Gen and Renka both nodded. "Good. We'll gorge our fill at Kenjik's, if you like. I know Renka is besotted with their jasa cream soup."

"Mmmm, Sev, you're my hero," Renka purred, linking her arm with his. Taking Gen's arm too, she got them moving. "Come on. I want to shop. Shall we take care of all our masters' business first?"

Gen and Sev both agreed, and the three of them headed first toward the numerous stalls selling foodstuffs. Here, each went their own way as their lists dictated. Gen chose to start with staples first -- rice, flour, and whole grains -- then chose spices and condiments. Next came meat, eggs, cheese, butter, and finally produce. Keeping Master Marin's liking for Earth trade goods in mind, Gen chose a healthy mix of products from both Earth and Sholsa.

Studying his list, he noted one last item. Coffee. His lips curved in an indulgent smile. Both Master's Cail and Marin had developed quite a taste for what they considered this unique Earth delicacy. Gen could not agree. While it smelled heavenly, he considered the taste to be vile, and it had taken him some time to learn to brew it correctly. Even so, the task had turned out to be fun.

After having coffee at the home of an acquaintance, the masters had purchased beans, a grinder, a brewer, and instructions on how to prepare the new beverage. The three of them had worked together for several hours one afternoon, experimenting on how fine to grind the beans and how much ground coffee and water to put in the brewer. He still winced when he thought of all those precious and expensive beans going to waste. The masters had a tendency to make adjustments that were too bold, making the resultant brew too weak or too strong. It was Gen who'd finally hit on the perfect combination, and Master Marin had jokingly declared Gen the Sovereign of Coffee.

Thereafter both men declared the day was incomplete without a perfect cup of coffee made by their amplimenter. Such a little thing made Gen proud and he held tight

to the warmth he still felt at their praise. Happily he made this final purchase then went to help Sev with his produce selections before moving on to make payment.

Record of each purchase he made was routed from the individual stalls to the central payment center and after handing the household credit disc over for debit, Gen arranged for delivery of the purchases. He chose a time when he knew he would be back at their residence to receive them.

With their household shopping done, the trio set out to satisfy their own individual wants. Sev had become infatuated with Earth produced movies and was eager to add more to his growing collection. Renka needed a new and bigger cage for her zanta kit and Gen wanted more pencils, paints, and tablets on which to draw and dabble. As agreed, for this part of the shopping they stuck together, socializing and browsing. Sometimes what each individual shopped for held little interest for the other two, but they were all patient and the benefits of enjoying each other's company outweighed the boredom of visiting a vendor in whose wares they took little interest.

"Would you just look at her? I don't understand what she finds so fascinating about zantas. They're odd looking creatures at best, yet she calls them cute," Sev commented as Renka cooed over a pied zanta kit.

"Oh, I don't know. They have a certain charm. She probably likes them because they're unusual," Gen replied studying the zanta litter of three kits. About seventy millimeters long, the kits' bodies were covered in ultra short, silky soft fuzz that could range in a multitude of colors. In this litter there was a parti-colored one in hues of blue and green, one in pink shaded with rose and one in green shaded with purple. With their stick like legs, long pointed muzzles, large slanted eyes and iridescent wings, they definitely had a unique appearance.

"As far as I'm concerned, what little charm they have goes beyond the dome when they eat. Look at that. It's disgusting," Sev declared. "If we were going to eat straight from here, I'd have lost my appetite."

The zanta kit's female parent had been given a ditta grub. With careful precision, she nipped off its head, devoured the rest, and was now regurgitating the result into the

waiting maws of her little ones. Gen grimaced. It was rather revolting in a fascinating sort of way. "She's just doing as nature decrees to feed her brood."

"You're so understanding and yet that expression on your face says you find it as repulsive as I do," Sev observed before wandering down an isle away from the live animals on display. "This is why I don't keep pets. Most of them require they be fed some other living creature. It's a display I have little interest in seeing day after day, never mind the guilt of choosing one life form over another for survival."

Surprised, Gen looked at his friend. "So your main concern was for the grub?"

"You've seen ditta grubs when they transform. They're beautiful, yet there's one that will never see its metamorphosis."

"But ditta moths are so plentiful and zantas were once on the brink of extinction. Don't you think it's a fair trade to keep a species from disappearing?"

"I suppose," Sev muttered.

"I just realized something," Gen said.

"What's that?"

"Despite all your bluster, you've a soft heart, my friend."

"*What?* Only you would come up with something so ridiculous," Sev scoffed, "but then you always look for the best in people, don't you? It's one of your finest qualities... aside from that pert little ass of yours." Sev patted the aforementioned body part. "Is your plug sitting easy? I swear mine is rubbing me into a frenzy. See?"

Involuntarily glancing down, Gen was treated to the sight of Sev who, with no shame whatsoever, was rubbing at the growing bulge in his loose trousers. "Sev," he hissed. "We are in public you know. Stop that!"

Instead of being chastised by his friend's vehement demand, Sev merely laughed. "Oh, relax. No one's paying the least bit of attention. I'm going to the public relief units across the way. Care to come with me? You can give me a hand and I'll give you one," he offered with a lascivious wink.

"Thank you, no. Now go and take care of your... problem. Renka and I will be here waiting for you."

"Renka's still deciding on which cage to buy. She'll never even notice I'm missing, but I won't be long."

Shaking his head at his friend's shameless behavior, Gen returned to Renka's side and with half an ear, listened to her extol the virtues of one cage over another. The greater part of his attention was aimed at the public rest unit into which Sev had disappeared. With fine tuned inner senses, he sought Sev's presence. In truth, Sev's offer had been tempting. Gen's own arousal -- encouraged by the anal plug lodged within his sensitive passage -- was beginning to chafe at his restraints. To share an orgasm with someone who was truly attuned to his needs as well as their own, held great appeal.

When having sex with his masters, Gen served as a receiver not only for their cocks, but for their emotions as well. His job as an amplier was to accept the physical and mental contact and pass the pleasure and emotions back to his masters. Sholsian males of Marin and Cail's class were expected from an early age to assume the role of dominants. As such, they were taught to suppress anything considered a weakness, including open expressions of love and tenderness. This too carried over to mating. Even should two dominant males form a bond, neither would accept anal penetration and therefore their need for an amplier.

For months now, Gen had been welcomed into Masters Cail and Marin's bed. He'd sucked cock and had been fucked until he achieved orgasm, but in every case, at every encounter, his presence had been secondary. The emotions Marin and Cail broadcast were aimed at each other. When joined with him, they thought only of each other. He was a ghost, invisible and unloved.

A wave of sadness cascaded over him followed by a flood of sexual heat. Gen's breath caught in his throat, and he nearly choked beneath the conflicting tides. Sev was well into his pleasure, and Gen had dropped his shields too far. He was truly caught. Against his will, his cock began to swell.

"Are you all right?" Renka asked, giving him a knowing look.

"I-I," Gen stuttered.

Renka gave his arm a consoling pat. "Don't be embarrassed. It's only natural, and I'm sure Sev was teasing you as he's wont to do. Go. I'll finish my purchases while you take care of things."

With a sharp nod and a terse word of thanks, Gen strode across the street and into an unoccupied relief unit. Slamming the door shut and then locking it behind him, he fumbled with the fastening of his trousers. Yanking them open, his already swollen cock bobbed free and with a groan of relief he wrapped his fingers around the length. Sev was fast climbing toward the peak and dragging Gen with him.

Breath speeding and heart pounding, Gen stroked himself. Attuned as he was to Sev it would have been only natural should his be the face Gen pictured sucking him off but no... a vision of his masters, each engaged in worshipping his body pulled a deep, involuntary moan from his lips. Forbidden desires rose to the fore of his fantasies -- Master Marin parting the cheeks of his ass to lave his hidden bud while Master Cail sucked his cock down to the root. Such shameless and longed for cravings drove Gen's arousal higher. Balls aching, his hips moving with the stroke of his hand, Gen lost himself to sensation.

Reminiscent of hands caressing his skin, the glide of fabric over his flanks as his trousers slid down made him shiver. Following the dictates of his fantasy, he parted his legs as much as possible and bending forward, Gen reached around to jostle the plug in his ass. The resultant flare of pleasure caused his groin muscles to quiver, and he did it again and yet again until on the brink of orgasm. It all felt so good. He fought to make it last, but Sev's sudden climax and the bliss of release he broadcast, slammed into Gen catching him within the storm, tearing his resistance asunder. Gen cried out as his own orgasm exploded and ribbons of milky seed shot forth into the wastewater.

Panting, his knees grown weak, Gen spun around and abruptly sat. For the next several moments he was content to do nothing but listen to his harsh breaths slow while experiencing the pleasurable aftershocks of his release. When at last his body recovered, he relieved himself, cleaned up, and set his clothes to rights. A glance in the mirror revealed slightly flushed cheeks and eyes gone slumberous and dreamy.

I look like I've just been fucked.

Hoping to alleviate such an embarrassing condition, Gen splashed cold water on his face and after drying off, gave himself another considering once over. Better, he decided and opening the door prepared to rejoin Renka. The unit next to his opened disgorging Sev, who immediately grinned.

"Got to you, didn't I?"

"No comment," Gen answered, but his lips twitched in a half smile.

Sev laughed. "It's a beautiful day, isn't it? Let's pick up Renka. Can we go for my movies next?"

Surprised at his friend's willingness to not press the matter of him having had to seek release too, he was more than happy to agree. The next couple of hours were spent pleasantly enough and with their shopping finally wrapped up, they finished with the promised meal at Kenjik's. Gen ate until he was just shy of stuffed and sighed with contentment.

"Are you feeling better now?" Renka asked.

The sympathy in her eyes set off an alarm. "I'm feeling fine. Why would you think otherwise?" Gen replied.

"Sev and I could both sense your sadness."

"Are you still brooding over your status with your masters?" Sev asked. "I don't know why it bothers you so much. Look at me. I'm content to amply reward my masters' sex and rake in the rewards. Who needs that lovey-dovey stuff?"

"Sev, not everyone is satisfied with just physical and monetary rewards," Renka gently reprimanded him. "Like Gen, I would feel bad if I felt such a lack from my masters. I feel very fortunate in their obvious regard for me." Glancing at her friend, she blushed. "I'm sorry, Gen. I don't say that to make you feel worse."

"I know. Don't worry about it. I'm glad at least some of us are loved."

"You are so generous in saying so. I... I wanted to tell you both something special today."

Gen tilted his head, puzzled and curious over Renka's hesitance. "What is it, kirecha?" Gen asked, using the endearment to gently encourage her.

Eyes twinkling with pleasure, Renka's dimples appeared. "I'm carrying my master's child."

"Fortune be!" Gen and Sev simultaneously blurted and all three of them laughed.

"That's wonderful news. Are they as happy as you?"

"More so, if that's possible. They've even taken over some of my household duties, even though I've told them it's not necessary at this early stage."

"It's good they treat you so well." Gen squeezed her hand. "It seems not long ago the three of us were mere younglings attending our classes together and now you're to be a mother. It's so hard to believe. I'm so very happy for you, Renka -- in this and the other of which we spoke."

"I second Gen's sentiments and while I hate to be the one to end this happy day with you both, I believe it's time we all must be heading home," Sev reminded them.

Gen checked his chronometer and indeed he had little time to spare. Deliveries would be arriving at home within the hour, and he wanted to be there for their advent. In short order the trio wrapped up their meal with Sev paying as promised. At the station they said their farewells amidst plans to meet again in a seven day.

Chapter Two

On the ride home, Gen thought about their conversation in Kenjik's and resolved to work on his attitude. If his friends so obviously noticed his gloom, might Masters Cail and Marin eventually pick up on it? For them to do so would be humiliating and might even lead them to seek a replacement for him. For one in his position, that of servant only, it could easily be done. To have such a thing happen would surely break his spirit. While his masters might think Gen replaceable, Gen was honest enough to admit he loved them. Though they might never return his feelings, he had no desire to leave them. Gen decided then and there he would strive to be content in all the positive aspects of the life he shared with them rather than concentrating on the things lacking.

With a resigned sigh, but in a more positive frame of mind, he disembarked the car at his stop and began the walk home. Not far from the station, two men approached him. Both were simply dressed in nondescript clothing with one wearing a cap that prevented Gen from clearly seeing his face.

The taller of the two spoke. "Excuse me. Might we ask for your assistance?"

"Of course," Gen politely replied.

Holding out a small comp unit, the tall man showed him a map. "My locator seems to be malfunctioning and we're lost. Is this Delhamp Way East?"

"No, actually this is West Delhamp. If you'll continue walking that way," Gen began but stopped when the shorter man bumped into him and a sharp pinch flared at the back of his neck. "Ow!" Gen exclaimed. Slapping a hand to the sting, he spun around to face his attacker. "What did you do? What was tha...?" Dizziness assailed him and he staggered.

"Quickly. Take his arm," the shorter man ordered.

Limbs weak, Gen fought against their hold but was unable to bring ample resistance to bear. Strong hands and hard fingers gripped him with bruising force as the two men forcibly marched him off the main public path and onto a lesser sideway. Panic flared as they shoved him into a waiting transport vehicle. Thrown onto rough metal flooring, it scraped his skin and sent a chill straight to his bones as they began to strip his clothing from him.

"Don't," he managed to croak though it was difficult to form even that one small word.

The interior of the vehicle was dimly lit, enough so for him to see the shorter of the two men undressing then donning Gen's clothes as they were taken from him. Bewildered and frightened, his muddled mind could not make head nor tails of what was happening.

"Hold him still for the scan."

The larger man hauled Gen upright, trapped him within his arms, and placing a hand at either side of his head, held him steady. Sick with the dread churning in the pit of his stomach, Gen watched the approach of the other man. In his hand he held a strange device with a cup shaped attachment at the end of a short wand. Gen tried desperately to turn his head away but couldn't prevent the man from fitting the device over his eye. Terrified he squeezed his eyes shut.

"Open your eyes," the man ordered.

"Nooo," he moaned.

A vicious pinch to his inner thigh tore a raspy shriek from his throat and caused his eyes to spring open wide in shock. When they did, a bright flash of light pierced his eye with painful intensity. The device was withdrawn, and Gen was released to fall back to transport's floor where he landed with a hollow *thud*. Abandoned by his attackers, Gen lay unmoving. Eyes watering, body aching, weak and nauseous, he listened as the two murmured over a lighted screen.

What little strength he had left was fast deserting him, and Gen knew the time to escape was now or never. Levering himself to his hands and knees, as stealthily as possible, he crawled toward freedom.

He'd edged away from his abductors no more than a few feet before a taunting voice called out, "And where do you think you're going?"

A hand wrapped around his ankle and yanked. Gen's knees gave out. He rolled and with a supreme effort, kicked at the taller man, his foot connected with some vulnerable part that caused his attacker to curse and let go. Gen immediately scrambled toward the vehicle's doors, but was rewarded by a stunning cuff to the head by the other man. Dazed by the blow and the effects of the drug he'd been given, he began to lose consciousness. A terse exchange took place between the two who'd taken him, but he heard only intermittent words.

"Get rid... agreed... outside... dome."

A moment later, bright light flooded Gen's fast diminishing vision. The vehicle's doors were opened, and the shorter man jumped out. Turning back, he removed his cap and threw it inside. For the first time Gen saw his face and shock tore through him. It was as though he looked into a mirror... until a smile the likes of which he'd never seen on his own face pulled at the man's lips. His expression was both cunning and ruthless. Without a word the stranger slammed the doors shut, and Gen lost his fight against the darkness that engulfed him.

* * *

He woke to total silence. Though his eyelids felt thick and heavy, Gen managed a few blinks then opened them. Dirt. Rough, dry dirt met his gaze and he shifted slightly, moaning at the aches even such a small movement brought. With a shuddery breath, he levered himself upright and looked around. There was nothing. As far as the eye could see, only a barren, pitted surface littered with shards and mounds of stone.

Head aching, he rubbed his temples and took stock. He was alone, naked and dazed. Bruises were forming on various parts of his body, especially his upper arms. There were also numerous scrapes and small cuts, some of which had bled. To think

clearly was difficult, his thoughts felt slow and muzzy and for a moment confusion reigned... until he remembered the assault and the man who could be his twin.

Hand slapping against the ground he softly cursed then froze as his fingertips scraped against the dirt. With sudden and startling clarity he realized where he was. Outside the dome. Unprotected, he'd been left to die, victim of a meteor shower.

"Why?" he whispered.

Anger disappearing in a heartbeat, he steeled himself against the fear threatening to swamp him. Panicked images presented themselves and he relived his abduction, but no answer was forthcoming. That man obviously wanted to take his place, but how could he possibly expect to get away with it? Even though they looked alike, there was no way he could fill Gen's position with his masters. The first time he took to their bed, they'd know something was wrong, wouldn't they? All amplimentors had similar training but each was an individual with their own unique ways. Masters Cail and Marin were highly intelligent beings, surely they would notice if his behavior changed, surely they'd paid him at least that much attention. Hadn't they?

Shaken by such demoralizing doubts, Gen forced himself to calm. Agonizing over his relationship with his masters at a time like this was getting him nowhere; he needed to do more than just think. Sinking into the hard won peace he gathered around himself, he opened his senses wide seeking contact with his masters, Renka or Sev or anyone within range. His mental distress signal went unheard. He was too far away; there was no one to feel the emotion he broadcast.

Trembling at the thought of being so completely alone, Gen curled his hands to fists and struggled to retain his equanimity. Losing himself to blind panic would serve no purpose. He needed to get moving. To sit and wait for the end would only make matters worse. Scrambling to his feet, Gen took a closer look at the ground around him. Just as he'd hoped, there were scuff marks on the rocks and tracks in the dirt from the vehicle which had left him here in this desolate place. With a trail to follow, even knowing there was little hope in doing so, Gen began to walk.

There was a small chance he could survive. The meteors didn't strike everywhere at once. Perhaps... just perhaps, he could avoid them and find his way back to Hayzar City. Though he had no food and water and had no way of knowing how far he was from home, this was better than doing nothing. Certainly the chance of rescue was null. With a double in his place, no one, at least for a little while, would even know he was missing. Even if his absence was discovered, they'd have no idea where to search.

Despair at such a thought took his breath away, and Gen stopped for a moment to get his quickened breaths under control. Blinking back the tears forming in his eyes, he bit his lip hard and winced.

Don't panic. Think about something else. Think about that man and his motives.

So instructing himself, Gen went forward and forced his thoughts in another direction. Logic dictated his double would not be able to maintain his masquerade for long. If Gen could figure that out, surely the man himself would know too. Therefore he must need take Gen's place for only a short time, but to what end? Such a ruse was surely too elaborate to carry out a simple robbery. Did he mean to harm Masters Cail and Marin? Why? As far as Gen knew they were involved in nothing controversial, the opposite in fact. Their work revolved around dome shielding and the hope of expanding it worldwide. The success of their project would mean the beginning of worldwide restoration. Surely such could not be a reason for harming them?

With these and other thoughts whirling through his head, Gen trudged on for what seemed like hours. The rock littered soil was harsh against the soles of his feet and every now and then he stopped to rest, gazing warily at the sky overhead. The weather here, not subject to control, followed its own rules and the day was blistering hot. Sweat formed on Gen's exposed flesh, an occasional ticklish, itchy rivulet running down his skin.

As time wore on he grew more and more tired, parched, and filthy. He kept a slow pace, trying his best to steer around the worst of the rough ground but even so the bottoms of his feet began to shred leaving spots of blood that grew ever larger with each step. Eventually he reached a point where the pain made going forward

impossible. With a helpless sob he collapsed gasping as rough, sharp edged stone bit into his knees and palms. Scraping a small area clear, he sat.

The sun was steadily dipping toward the horizon and he knew within the next hour it would be dark. Breathing hard and shaking uncontrollably, he faced the approach of night wondering if he would see the sunrise. It was so quiet. In every direction he looked, the landscape was the same. Nothing lived on this austere plain, and Gen had never felt so alone. Turning his gaze in the direction of the track he followed, he found himself praying with all his might for some movement, some hint that someone was coming for him... but there was nothing.

Despair the likes of which he'd never felt before welled up in Gen. He wanted so desperately to believe he would be rescued, but the pragmatist inside would not let him hide from reality. Moments later his worst fear was realized. The sky darkened and in the distance he heard and felt the first thudding vibrations. A meteor shower. Knowing the end was here, Gen curled into himself and waited. There was nowhere to go, nowhere to hide, and no one to comfort him in his final moments.

Thinking of his masters he whispered, "I wish, Almighty how I wish it could have been different."

A moment later he cried out in pain as a tiny shard of stone struck the hand he'd curled around the back of his neck, a second glanced off his hip, and a third slashed his calf. Each sting caused Gen to writhe and twist, his body instinctively trying to pull into itself to present a smaller target. The next, roughly pea sized piece hit Gen's back with such stunning force he screamed. Every muscle went rigid with shock as blazing agony overloaded his senses and shorted them out. In an instant the flash of white that filled his head winked out and Gen fell into the nothingness that waited.

Chapter Three

"...vitals are steady. His injuries... regain consciousness."

Scattered words rapped against the blank silence that enfolded him, disturbing the peace he'd found. Gen sought to hide from the sound, wanting nothing so much as to remain safe and hidden in the darkness. Deep within his psyche a warning sounded. Outside this cozy place were terror and suffering. He had no wish to return and thus expose himself to more of the same, but the voices drew him out.

Twisting his head a bit in their direction caused a dull pain at the base of his neck, which caused him to utter a soft moan. Footsteps approached and he felt a presence near. For a moment, terror gripped him.

"Gen, can you hear me?"

That voice, so familiar and beloved, filled him with relief and caused Gen's breath to hitch. Moisture stole beneath his closed lids, and he blinked before opening them. Master Cail stood over him and at his shoulder, Master Marin.

His first thought was how inappropriate it was for him to be lying abed while his masters were up and dressed. "Sorry," he managed to whisper past the harsh dryness in his throat. He attempted to lever himself into a sitting position but had little success; every shift of muscle brought forth more flares of pain and his legs felt nonexistent. They completely resisted his attempts to budge them.

"Don't move, Gen. Stay still," Master Cail ordered, his voice soft but firm.

"It's all right. You're safe now," Master Marin added.

Gen frowned in confusion. Why did his masters look so serious and concerned? "Safe?"

Master Cail reached for his hand and enfolded Gen's within his two. "Do you not remember what happened?"

Master Cail's touch was so gentle and so unexpected, Gen was shocked. He peered intently at him. Not that either of his masters had ever been rough with him, but this gesture was so out of character, Gen wondered if his senses were playing tricks on him. He blinked several times and carefully studied the man holding his hand. He could only conclude he was indeed Master Cail. There was no mistaking this person for any other.

Of medium height, he was lean and muscular. As usual, his black hair was pulled back and tied at the nape of his neck. The severe style accented his dark brows, deep green eyes and well formed, chiseled features. Beside him was Master Marin, taller and broader, with blue eyes and blond hair. His appearance brought forth images of Vikings Gen had seen in books about Earth history. He could easily picture Master Marin wielding a sword but more importantly, his presence at Master Cail's side was proof positive that these two were indeed his bond-pair.

"Gen," Master Marin prompted. "What's the last thing you remember?"

"Remember?" He thought for a moment, sorting through vague memories. "I wen..." Gen's dry throat halted his sentence mid word and he coughed, an action that caused more twinges of pain.

"Easy," Master Marin urged. "Here, kirecha, drink."

Eyes rounding at the unprecedented use of such an endearment directed at him from one of his masters, Gen accepted the straw placed between his lips and in a daze took several swallows of cool water. In the process, he noted and wondered at the strange look Master Cail gave his bond-mate. For the first time too, he realized that the bed he currently occupied was not his own and that this room was nowhere to be found within their home.

Clearing his throat, he quietly asked, "Is this a med unit?"

"It is," Master Marin confirmed. "You were injured, but more about that later. Can you answer my question now?"

"About what I last remember? Yes," Gen answered. "I went to the market and met with Renka and Sev. We shopped and ate. I took the tube home..." Gen frowned.

"The deliveries were coming and I... I wanted to get home but... but something... there was something... someone." Gen's memories were muddled and cloaked in confusion. "I... I can't remember. I'm sorry." Having only just awakened, he was dismayed at how quickly exhaustion had crept up and settled over him. Though he fought to prevent it, Gen's heavy eyelids began to close. "Sorry. So tired," he mumbled.

"It's all right, little one, sleep," Master Cail bade him.

Helpless to resist, Gen sank into peaceful darkness.

* * *

"We should have told him," Cail growled.

Seated on a padded bench in the hallway outside Gen's room, Cail Gethern and Marin Suga engaged in quiet voiced conversation.

Marin waited for an approaching med-tech to pass them by before replying. "He just woke up. You really think it was the proper time to tell him he's paralyzed from the waist down?" Doubt and dismay assailed him at just the thought of doing so.

"Not that. We should have told him we love him. We should have admitted it to each other sooner and shared it with him a long time ago. We should have been doing things differently, letting him know how much he's become a part of us, how much we care for him."

Rubbing the back of his neck, Marin grimaced, disgusted by his own stubborn reticence and the traditions of his race that made expressions of affection and gentler emotions, if not taboo, certainly nothing to be proud of or freely conveyed. "Ah. That. Yes, you're right, we should have. It's just that... *stones*. It's not that easy. We never said the words to each other until he came into our lives."

"I know. He's our own personal miracle. We should have taken better care of him."

Hearing the anguish in his partner's voice Marin sought to comfort him. "Cail, no one could have foreseen this. The Deptrans are vultures, but who would have guessed they'd come up with such a plan? Surgically altering one of their own to take

Gen's place so the imposter could walk freely into our home and steal our dome technology? I only wish they'd tried abducting you or me instead of Gen."

"They would never have done that. They went for the most vulnerable of us."

"True. It was a logical move. It's fortunate we installed the DNA analysis sensor as part of our home security system. Though he looked like Gen and had a special retinal lens as well as finger and palm print implants, the impostor couldn't fool the DNA sensor. His setting off of the alarm allowed us to capture him, rescue Gen, and keep the data safe."

"I realize the importance of the Deptran's capture and keeping the dome technology out of their hands, but at this point in time I just don't care. My thoughts are with Gen and how he's going to feel when he discovers what's happened. Marin, we have to do something. He'll be devastated."

"There's nothing we can do right now but be here for him," Marin replied, giving up on trying to lighten their spirits with unimportant things. Cail was right. Dome technology and apprehension of the Deptran spy be thrice stoned. All that mattered at this moment was Gen. "Remember what the med spec said. There's still a chance Gen could recover. There's too much swelling to get an accurate picture of just what exactly the damage entails. We can't give up yet."

Cail sighed. "You're right. We'll stand by him and wait it out."

"That's the spirit, and speaking of waiting it out, I think one of us should remain here while the other goes to meet with the council."

"I'll stay. You're better at dealing with bureaucrats than I. I'm not in the proper frame of mind to control my temper, although we actually owe them thanks for their insistence that Gen be implanted with a locator chip. Though they meant it as a security precaution should Gen attempt to do what the Deptran spy attempted, it allowed us to find him, and for that I'm grateful."

Marin clapped his partner on the shoulder then slid an arm around him for a quick squeeze before letting him go. "As am I." Rising from his seat, he took a step away then turned back, bent and grasped Cail's chin. Looking deep into his bond-

mate's eyes he smiled, kissed him then stepped back. Cail's green eyes, already wide from the hug he'd been given, looked ready to pop from their sockets with surprise. "I'd never have done that in such a public place before Gen came into our lives. You're right. He's our own personal miracle. Guard him well. I'll be back as soon as I can."

At Cail's curt nod, Marin strode away, mentally preparing himself to deal with any and all official fallout from this day's incident.

Cail watched his partner and lover walk away, his mind awlirl. Marin's public display of affection merely reinforced Cail's sentiments concerning Gen. Their little amplimenter was a miracle worker, and Cail berated himself for not speaking his mind earlier in the day when Gen prepared to leave their bed.

When Gen first came to them, Cail had been excited and happy to have him join their household. Since he and Marin had declared themselves to each other, Cail wanted more than mutual masturbation to express his love. With Gen there, shunting Cail's emotions to Marin and accepting penetration as the three of them had sex, Cail was able to do all the things he wanted to show his chosen life partner just how much he was loved. The day he'd actually said those three, never before uttered, words -- I love you -- to Marin, had been so planet spinning intense, Cail was sure his knees would buckle. Especially when Marin returned the sentiment. But for Gen, it would never have happened.

It was then Cail truly began to see Gen, not as a go between for himself and Marin, but as an individual. Gen's sweetness, his calm, even temper, the way he quietly took care of the household chores and little by little made himself indispensable, grew on Cail seemingly overnight. When Gen joined Marin and him in bed, Cail found himself not only appreciating the muscular bulk of his partner's large and well defined body but also the slim, wiry strength of Gen's. Gen took everything he was given with eager appreciation and gave it back twofold. To Cail, he was an amazing male, and the realization of it cemented Cail's belief that he'd come to love Gen too.

Bringing the subject up with Marin had been easier than he'd thought. Cail had carefully watched his partner's interactions with Gen and was surprised at his own

blindness. How had he never noticed the tender looks Marin sometimes bestowed upon Gen? Seeing it nearly made him laugh out loud as he wondered to himself if Marin had noticed the same about him. The conversation they'd had about it was borderline comical.

Cail had simply, out of the blue, asked Marin, "How do you feel about Gen?"

Marin's reaction made it hard for Cail to keep a straight face. His bond-mate had started as though stung by a dice bug and guilt was clearly written on his features before he was able to school them to neutrality. "Gen? Well, I... he's... why do you ask?" Marin had finally asked in obvious desperation.

"Well, I was wondering if you love him as much as I do," Cail had answered boldly, taking pity on him, then laughed when his partner stared at him as though he'd gone mad.

From there it was easy -- the two of them admitting to each other just how much Gen had become a part of their lives and how deeply he'd burrowed into their hearts. For weeks Cail had wanted to tell Gen how they felt. This very day he'd had the perfect opportunity. Gen had looked back at them before leaving their bed. Cail could actually see the longing in his eyes.

He'd opened his mouth to say the words, but his uncooperative tongue had glued itself to the roof of his mouth and the opportunity passed by unused and now mourned with an intensity that made Cail sick. He swore to himself at the first opportunity presented, Gen would be made aware of just how much he was loved.

* * *

Gen drifted in and out of consciousness waking for a few moments only to fall asleep again. Once he felt gentle fingertips gliding tenderly over his forehead. Upon opening his eyes, he was rewarded with the sight of Renka gazing at him, her eyes awash with unshed tears.

"Did I wake you?" she whispered.

"Un unh," he answered and struggling to lift his hand, he managed to touch her cheek. "Don't cry. I'm okay."

"Oh, Gen," she whimpered, and her tears fell on his hand like warm drops of summer rain.

"Hey. He doesn't need you sobbing all over him."

Sev stepped into view, and Gen gave him a groggy smile. "Hi. How are you?"

Sev snorted. "More like I should be asking you that question. How do you feel?"

Gen considered a moment then answered, "Mmm, tired. Not feeling much of anything right now. I must be drugged," he said then snickered.

"Oh yeah, you're dosed," Sev acknowledged with a chuckle.

"You two. How can you laugh at a time like this?" Renka admonished.

"It's better than crying. I'm sure there'll be plenty of time for that later," Sev mumbled.

"Hmm? Crying? No. Don't wanna cry," Gen murmured. "Everything's fine now. No crying. Okay?" He yawned. "So sleepy."

"Then go to sleep, kirecha," Renka whispered. "We love you."

"Mmm, love you too," Gen answered before drifting away.

* * *

Gen stirred and sighed softly as sleep relinquished its healing embrace. He blinked and stared at the ceiling, considering his own condition. For the first time in what seemed days, he felt alert rather than ready to fall back into sweet oblivion. Experimentally he turned his head this way and that, but none of the pain he'd formerly experienced reappeared.

Deciding it was time to try sitting up, he warily eyed the thin tubing attached to the back of his hand connecting him to an intravenous pump. It didn't seem as though moving would disturb anything but just as he was about to try, the curtain shielding his bed from the doorway billowed with air caused by the opening of the door.

"Excuse me. Who are you?"

Gen recognized Master Marin's voice. It sounded as though he was out in the hallway, but fast approaching.

"I'm Cran Jaget from the Bureau of Amplimentor Affairs. Might you be Masters Gethern and Suga?"

"We are," Cail answered.

A tentative smile curved Gen's lips. He was happy both his masters were present, but puzzled as to why a representative from Amplimentor Affairs had come.

"Excellent. We received a report from this med facility that Gen Tobry was injured."

"That's correct."

"How very unfortunate. Is it true he's paralyzed? If that's the case we will of course be happy to help you choose a replacement for him."

"Mr. Jaget, if you would, please step out into the hall. Cail," Marin said.

Gen heard the order in Master Marin's voice and quickly closed his eyes. Feigning sleep, he waited and just as expected, he heard the rustle of the curtain and felt someone approach his bed.

"Gen?" Master Cail softly questioned. Gen said nothing and a moment later Master Cail retreated with a murmured, "Still asleep. Sun and stars be praised."

When the door to his room closed, Gen opened his eyes. Too afraid to move, almost too afraid to breathe, he stared at the ceiling.

Paralyzed? No. It can't be.

Fear flooded his being. Lips parting, he forced himself to take deep, calming breaths. "There must be some mistake," he whispered, willing his pounding heart to slow.

As soon as he'd regained a small measure of serenity, Gen closed his eyes and tried to wiggle his toes. Nothing. He felt no movement, no sensation of flesh moving against fabric. Opening his eyes, he looked down the length of his body to the covered mounds of his feet. Trying again, he watched. Again, nothing. Refusing to believe it, Gen levered himself into a sitting position and pulled the covers away.

Everything looked normal, but for the bandages wound around his feet and the various scrapes and bruises on his legs. He reached down and slid his fingertips over a

particularly dark bruise on his thigh and felt nothing. In disbelief, he pressed the flesh, willing the pain to come, but there was none.

"They're just asleep," he rationalized. "I've been lying here so long my circulation has been affected."

With that reasoning in mind, Gen firmly grasped his right leg and dragged it over the side of the bed. Taking hold of the other, he forced it to follow then wiggled around until he was sitting with both legs dangling over the side of the bed. With all the effort he could muster, Gen willed his feet to move. Sweat broke out over his body, but still there was nothing. Blind panic assailed him.

"No. It can't be. It just can't be," and with those words, he tried to stand. Legs crumpling under him, Gen tumbled to the floor crying out at the impact and the sting of the intravenous needle being torn from the vein in the back of his hand. Stunned and bleeding, he lay frozen for a moment then squeezed his eyes tightly shut. Tears of rage and grief flowed forth. "Almighty, no. Please no. Help me. Please help me."

In the depths of despair, Gen failed to notice the door to his room being opened.

"Gen? *Raining stones*. Gen!" Master Marin's voice rang out as he rushed around to the far side of the bed.

Master Cail's voice followed. "Gen! Are you all right? What happened?"

Lifted and cradled in Master Marin's arms, Gen sobbed out his terror and pain. "I can't walk. I can't walk!"

"Shhh. We know, kirecha, we know. It's going to be all right. You hear me? Gen. Listen to me, Gen," Marin soothed. He sat down on the bed, and Cail followed, the two of them surrounding Gen with their presence.

Cail pressed himself against Gen's back. "Give me your hand," he ordered and grabbing up the bed sheet, he laid a corner of it against the bleeding wound and applied pressure. "There now. Hold still. I don't think this is too bad," he said and enfolded Gen's hand in his. "I know it must seem like the end of the world right now, but Gen, it's not. I promise. We promise. We're going to make it through this. Together. Marin and I will be with you always."

"But... but Cran Jaget... he... he said --"

"You were awake then? Stones, little one. Why didn't you tell me?" Cail admonished, but quickly capitulated. "Never mind. And never mind what that idiot said. We would never seek someone to take your place." Cail cupped Gen's cheek, held him, and gently sealed their lips together for a warm, sweet kiss. "We love you, Gen. I so regret not telling you sooner, but it's not too late, is it?"

Shocked beyond belief, Gen stared into Master Cail's eyes. "But... I thought... I was sure you didn't care."

"I do care. We care. Very, very much. You've changed us Gen. You've given us true strength. The strength to know that showing affection is not a weakness. We've wanted to tell you for so long but... well, old habits are hard to overcome. Will you forgive us?"

Tears streaming down his cheeks, Gen nodded. Precious words. Hearing those precious words at such a time filled him with such conflicting emotions it was hard to know how or what to feel.

Following his bond-mate's lead, Marin too kissed Gen. "Do you accept our love as well as our bodies?"

Gen managed a second nod then stuttered in a hiccupping whisper, "But... but I'm... I'm broken."

"Stones. For all your physical experience, at times you seem so young and childlike, it tears at my heart. Kirecha, you are not broken. Your body is bruised and certain functions affected, but not by any means broken. More importantly, your spirit is intact. I know you, Gen. You're strong and resilient. This more than anything will help you recover, and if your strength should wane then we will gladly give you ours," Marin insisted, his voice thick with emotion. "Believe that, Gen. Believe in us. Somehow, someday, all will be well."

Fervently hoping Master Marin's words would prove to be true, Gen snuggled into the soothing strength of both his masters' arms. "I'll try. I promise I'll try but... for right now... for just a moment..."

“It’s all right, let it all go, little one. Marin and I will never let you fall again,” Cail assured him.

With those words, Gen cried, cleansing his soul of misery and fear while allowing the love and hope his masters offered to seep in and take hold.

Chapter Four

Gen stirred, yawned, and stretched. A fleeting moue of discontent distorted the normal set of his lips. It bothered him how easily he tired. One month out of the med unit and he still had to nap like a youngling barely old enough to leave his mother's side.

Still, a glance at the chronometer beside his bed revealed he'd slept a mere half hour rather than the one or even two hours that, up until today, had been the norm. Daring to hope it was a good sign, Gen heaved a small sigh and rubbed his cheek against his pillow.

At least he was back home with his masters, but even that, something which should have been a happy circumstance, carried its own brand of sadness. This was not how he'd pictured his life would be should his masters accept him as their lover. Instead of uncomplicated bliss, his life had taken an unexpected turn filled with physical, mental, and emotional changes and challenges that at times, nearly overwhelmed him.

While his prognosis wasn't as grim as originally believed -- there was a slim chance he would regain at least some mobility -- his recovery was advancing at a snail's pace, one that had Gen constantly on edge. Hard as he tried, he was unable to perform all the tasks he'd so easily accomplished before his spine had been damaged. Even little things sometimes took such effort his frustration would boil over to resolve itself into either tears or tantrums -- a circumstance he found mortifying. It was as though his former sunny, even temperament sometimes lost itself in a fog of fear, misery, and anger.

Through it all his masters remained patient, but despite their declarations of love for him, Gen was afraid they would eventually grow tired of dealing with his handicap and his fluctuating moods.

Carefully levering himself upright, Gen brought his thoughts to bear on his still incapacitated lower half, and watched with a kind of morbid fascination as his legs followed his silent mental command and began moving toward the edge of the bed. Scooting around to follow them, Gen ended up sitting on the side of the bed with his legs now dangling over the edge, his feet touching the floor.

Before leaving the med unit, he'd been fitted with a special body suit of revolutionary design. Panels of thin, ultra strong flexskin, embedded with a multitude of sensors, receivers, and transmitters were fused to special fabric. The sensors were attuned to Gen's somatic nervous system and cerebellum. With a thought, he could direct his legs to move, something which sounded simple, but when put into practice was extremely difficult.

For someone paralyzed it sounded like a dream come true to be able to walk, and Gen agreed it was a miraculous thing, but deep down inside, a part of himself was dealing with a kind of appalled horror. To walk and yet to be unable to feel his legs and lower body made him feel as though he was trapped in some bizarre nightmare -- as though he'd been cut in half and his dismembered body had not the sense to lay down and die.

Then there were the vibrations. For the duration of the time he wore it, the suit transmitted constant modified subsonic vibrations designed to enhance blood flow, muscle conditioning, nerve and tissue regeneration. While Gen's spine had been severely damaged, the med specialists believed the damage could eventually be repaired and so, except for the hours he slept at night, he was required to wear the suit.

The vibrations, though directed toward his lower half could still be felt by the rest of his body, the effect of which was to make him feel jittery and irritable. It was like dealing with a constant phantom itch for which there was no place to scratch and therefore no relief.

The only true enjoyment Gen gleaned from what seemed to be perpetual aggravation was the visits he received from Renka and Sev, and the change in his relationship with his masters.

Thinking of Marin and Cail lifted his sagging spirits and a growling tummy reminded him it was near time for his mid afternoon meal. Gen's doctor had insisted he eat five small meals a day rather than the usual three, stating it would be beneficial to his recovery. With that in mind, Gen concentrated on the business of standing. The bodysuit, performing as intended, allowed him to gain his feet and stand upright and with that accomplished, Gen left his room and headed for the kitchen hoping to find not only food, but his masters there.

Slow, steady steps as he traversed the hallway had him approaching his masters' bedroom door, and he began to pass by when a sound drew his attention. Their door, only partially closed, gave him a perfectly framed view of their bed and on it, Cail and Marin were seated, naked and face to face. Gen barely managed to stop his gasp of surprise.

Cail's legs were draped over Marin's, allowing them to sit so closely their torsos touched. Marin had one arm over Cail's shoulder, his hand curled behind Cail's head, fingers gripping his hair. The two men were sharing an open mouthed kiss. Marin's other hand was between them and Gen could see the up and down motion of his arm as he pumped his mate's hard shaft.

Cail too had Marin's cock in hand, giving it similar attention. Long and thick, it glistened with the oil used to lubricate it. Cail swept his thumb over the broad head with each upward sweep of his hand and on every third pass would pause just beneath the crown and rotate his fisted hand back and forth in a motion that caused Marin to tense and thrust into the sensations Cail's technique was supplying.

Muffled groans passed their joined lips, and whether caused by the kiss or the mutual masturbation Gen had no idea. Both he supposed. Having been treated to their kisses and knowing their touch firsthand, he knew how good both felt.

His masters' mouths separated, and Marin trailed his lips over Cail's jaw and lower. Gen saw Marin's free hand slide over the chiseled slab of Cail's pectoral muscle, brush over his nipple then pinch the raised kernel of flesh between his thumb and fingertip.

"Stones, Marin, yes," Cail groaned then leaned back.

Marin took his silent hint and lowered his mouth to Cail's chest. His tongue swirled around and around Cail's nipple before lightly nipping and sucking it. Gen's sharp, indrawn breath was masked by Cail's groan. Gen could feel the waves of pleasure radiating from his masters, and his own nipples tightened in response.

The men's hands, each wrapped around the other's cock, began to move faster. Marin straightened and Cail moved with him. "So close, Marin, don't stop," Cail gasped.

"Won't," Marin promised. His head lowered to Cail's shoulder. "There. Right there. Yes!" he exclaimed and mouth opening, his teeth clamped down on Cail's flesh.

Gen winced, shivered then nearly lost his balance from the flash of pain, the rush of pleasure then the overwhelming tide of orgasmic euphoria exploding from his master's psyche. He gripped the edge of the doorjamb with both hands, his gaze firmly planted on his masters and watched the physical evidence of their climax present itself.

First one, then another, then several more thick ribbons of creamy seed sprayed forth between Cail and Marin's heaving bodies. Gen couldn't tell what came from whom, only that when it was done both men wore wet strands across their bellies and on their thighs and hands. Their straining muscles relaxed, and their audible breaths began to slow and quiet. Marin raised his head and Cail turned to him. Their lips met and touched, sharing a slow tender kiss devastating in its sheer, simple beauty.

Tears flooded Gen's eyes. With infinite care he released the death grip he had on the doorjamb, maneuvered himself around and returned to his room. Just inside the door, a comfortable armchair waited, and he blindly groped for it, lowering himself onto the waiting cushioned softness.

Seeing his masters together in that way, feeling the pleasure they brought each other, experiencing the warmth of the love and caring they had for each other had been a gift, an experience he would always treasure.

Before his injury, he'd always been part of their physical joining so had never had the opportunity to witness it as just an observer. Seeing it in this manner made him realize how much they deserved to have the services of a fully functional amputee. Something he wasn't and perhaps might never be again.

The thought of leaving them made his chest feel so tight Gen could barely breathe. His tears spilled over, his grief at knowing in all fairness he must go, was unstoppable, but he knew he had to put their needs before his own.

After letting his sorrow run its course then settle to a manageable level, Gen felt drained and wanted nothing more than to lie back down, but he knew his masters would probably come in search of him.

Regaining his feet, his first goal was his bathroom where he washed his face before leaving his room. Resolutely keeping his eyes forward as he passed his masters' bedroom, he arrived at his original destination and found both men there before him.

"There you are," Marin greeted him. "I was about to come looking for you. Did you sleep well?"

"Yes, thank you," Gen answered. He glanced at Master Cail who gave him, what seemed to Gen, a smile tinged with a certain amount of strain. A bit disconcerted, he hesitantly approached the table.

Cail rose from his seat. "I'll be right back. I need my comp pad."

"I'll get it for you," Gen volunteered.

"No need," Cail answered.

"It's no bother."

"I said I'll get it myself," Cail barked then softly swore. "I'm sorry, Gen. Please, just sit, relax. I'll be right back."

Wounded, Gen did as he was told and took a seat at the table. Master Marin put a plate of food in front of him and took the chair beside his. "Don't mind him, Gen. Some calculations were off on today's work and he's gotten a bit edgy over it."

Gen met Master Marin's gaze and while he was sure what Marin said was true, he had the feeling there was more to it than that. Not wanting to pry and make things worse, Gen nodded. "It's all right. I understand frustration all too well."

"I'm sure you do. Here, take a bite of this and tell me what you think."

Marin speared a piece of what looked like baked veka root with the fork and lifted it to Gen's lips. Gen opened his mouth to accept the bite, thoughtfully chewed then swallowed. "It's good. You put something different on it."

"Something from Earth called garlic. I used it in powder form but I'm told it grows in bulbs much like our dapsalia does."

"It's very good."

"Isn't it?" Marin leaned forward and stole a gentle kiss, his tongue sliding over Gen's lower lip. "Mmm, yes, very good."

Gen smiled, hard pressed to keep his equilibrium intact. The thought of leaving this man, both of his masters, was tearing his heart asunder. He bit his lower lip in an effort to keep it from trembling.

Marin gazed at him a moment, tilted his head in a questioning manner then asked, "Are you all right?"

"Fine," Gen lied then nearly sighed with relief when Cail reappeared.

"Where's mine?" Master Cail asked indicating Gen's plate.

"The same place mine is. Still waiting to be dished up. It but awaits your own efforts to make it yours."

"Hmm, think you're funny, do you?"

"Me? Never," Marin answered then winked at Gen.

Both men filled their plates then took their places at the table. Everyone concentrated on eating with Master Cail pausing every now and then to peruse

something on his comp pad. At one point he growled and shoved it away. "We need to go to the lab. I need to see some practical application to work through this."

"All right. We'll go tomorrow. Is that soon enough?" Marin answered.

"That's fine."

"Gen, will you be all right on your own for a few hours tomorrow?" Cail asked and though he met Gen's gaze evenly, Gen felt as though a barrier had risen between them.

Hiding the hurt he felt, he nodded. "Yes, of course. If you and Master Marin will help me get back into the suit before you leave," he said, plucking at the fabric over his chest. "I'll be perfectly all right."

"Excellent. I'm going to go arrange for some set up so we can get right to work when we get there," Cail answered, directing his focus on Marin.

Marin gave his mate a slight though meaningful frown. "Do you need my help?"

"No, I can handle it."

"All right. Gen and I will clean up then I'd like to watch those movies Sev lent us. We can have a relaxing evening and later when everyone's ready, there's tane berry scramble with sweet cream. If anyone's interested, that is."

"Mmm," Gen and Cail both commented and this time when Gen met his gaze, Master Cail seemed more his usual open self, though his smile had a hint of sadness. "I won't be long. Don't start the movies without me."

"We won't," Gen promised and as he haltingly helped Master Marin clean up the kitchen, he knew the dawning of the next day would be the perfect opportunity for him to leave.

* * *

Gen pulled the gray hood of his outcover farther over his head, grateful for the protection from the rain. Not only did its color perfectly reflect today's scheduled weather, but also his mood. After Masters Cail and Marin had left, Gen had lost no time grabbing up the small case he'd packed with his belongings and meeting at the door the

driver of the personal transport he'd hired to take him to the Amplimontor Affairs office. There he'd begged a meeting with Cran Jaget, explaining his decision.

"I think it's a well thought out choice which does you credit. Putting your masters needs before your own is what you were trained to do and letting their sense of responsibility for you override practicality just won't do," Jaget had pronounced in a self-important manner.

"Thank you. I had the feeling you would see it my way," Gen had answered, shuddering at the thought of how this unfeeling being would handle such a situation if it had been in his hands alone. No doubt after the accident, Gen would never have seen his masters ever again, but would have instead been immediately shipped off. At least he'd had the opportunity to experience their love, if only for a few precious weeks.

Cran Jaget had arranged for his immediate passage on a shuttle leaving Sholsa, and as Gen now slowly approached the ship, his hands trembled and he bit his lip to keep threatening tears at bay. Crossing the covered ramp way, he boarded the shuttle and was shown to his seat. Once settled in, he stared out the window with unseeing eyes, his inner vision picturing first Cail then Marin and even Sev and Renka.

He'd left messages for both his masters and his friends, knowing he couldn't risk telling any of them in person his plans for leaving. He'd decided on what he felt was the best course of action, and wasn't going to let their feelings of affection for him blind them to the fact that he was now nothing more than a burden.

In short order the rest of the passengers boarded, all was made ready, and the shuttle was primed for take off. Gen closed his eyes, hands fisted in his lap to keep from calling out, to keep from demanding he be allowed to leave. He felt ill to the point of retching. The engines, just achieving the shrill whine that signaled eminent lift maneuvers, sent vibrations through him that rivaled even the body suit he wore, and just as their combined efforts drove him to the point of crying out, the engines suddenly powered down.

"Attention, please. We have been asked to stand down for an unexpected delay. Passengers please remain in your seats. We will be in the air shortly."

A buzz of conversation erupted from his fellow passengers, but Gen remained silent, only shaking his head when the person in the seat next to his inquired if he could see any unusual activity out the window.

For several minutes nothing happened until toward the front of the shuttle, the outer doors opened. Two men dressed in security uniforms entered. Consulting the hand comp unit one officer held, both men glanced from the screen to the passengers and back again. They were obviously searching for someone, and Gen thought his heart would stop when their gazes came to rest on him without moving on.

In short order they approached him. "Are you Gen Tobry?"

Finding his voice with difficulty, Gen answered. "Yes."

"Sir, would you please accompany us?"

"Why? What's wrong?"

"Everything will be explained inside the terminal."

"But... but my flight."

"Is delayed for now," the other officer supplied in a tone that would brook no argument.

Rather than cause a scene, Gen stood. Cheeks flaming with embarrassment, he avoided the multitude of questioning gazes following his every move and carefully, with slow, deliberate steps, followed the lead officer off the shuttle. Anxiety held him in its grip as once more he traversed the covered ramp way, which opened out into a passenger waiting area.

About to question the officers again as to why he'd been forced off the shuttle, Gen's words died in his throat. The lead officer stepped to the side and there, not ten feet in front of him with stern, serious expressions on their faces, stood Masters Marin and Cail.

"Gen Tobry, delivered into your hands, Marin. See you don't forget that bottle of Earth brandy you promised me."

"I'll messenger it to your residence, Tep. Thank you."

"Anytime." The officer Master Marin called Tep turned his gaze on Gen. "Looks like you have some explaining to do, youngling. Just remember, a snarling tizgan rarely bites. Approach slowly, talk softly and before you know it the tizgan's curled in your lap and purring for treats. I'm willing to bet those two have purred for you on more than one occasion." Gen felt his entire face flush and Tep laughed. "That's an answer if I ever saw one."

"That's more than enough out of you," Cail growled. "Come, Gen. We're going home."

Flanked on either side by his masters, Gen kept his head lowered and concentrated on moving one foot in front of the other. It didn't escape his notice that Master Cail had his case in tow. Not even his luggage would escape Sholsa. His masters were nothing if not thorough.

Not a word was spoken until they arrived home and were settled in the common room. Gen stared resolutely at the carpet, taken by the strange thought that it somehow mocked him. He knew how soft it was, how cushiony it had felt beneath his bare feet. Now, should he take his footwear off, he'd feel nothing. He could walk across the rocks that had cut his feet so badly the day he'd been dumped beyond the dome and he'd feel nothing. If only his heart could follow suit.

Master Marin's words, breaking the long silence between them were soft, his tone reasonable. "Why, Gen. Why do you want to leave? Have your feelings for us changed so quickly?"

Gen shook his head. "My feelings haven't changed, but feelings aren't enough. I can't perform my duties. You and Master Cail deserve the services of a fully functional amplier. You shouldn't have to... make due on your own."

"I see. You saw us, didn't you? Cail and I making love? I had a feeling you did."

Gen's eyes widened and his heart began to beat faster. The conversation was taking a turn he hadn't expected.

"You felt left out. It hurt, didn't it? I expect, too, you probably felt some jealousy, didn't you?"

"No!" Gen's head snapped up and he met Master Marin's gaze head on. "I wasn't jealous. It was beautiful. The two of you together, so sensual and loving. I could feel it, your joy in each other, and I wanted so much to be a part of that, but I can't. Never again. I can't be here and not be a part of you. It hurts. It hurts so much." Gen cried. The tears he'd held at bay flowed freely forth as the truth hit him, a truth he'd hidden from himself. "You're right. I'm jealous. I want to love and be loved that way but... you didn't need me. You didn't need me."

"Raining stones and fiery hell pits. I knew it," Master Cail growled. "This is all my fault."

Determined to get himself under control, Gen wiped his face and shook his head. "How can you say it's your fault? These are my feelings. It's my failing."

"I'm the one who initiated the sex. My balls got the better of me. You would never have felt this way if I hadn't made you feel we didn't need you."

"No. You have every right to have the needs of your body seen to. You shouldn't have to abstain on my account."

"Why do think I snapped at you yesterday? Because I felt guilty, that's why. Leaving you out was wrong, but I was afraid to have you with us, afraid of hurting you."

"You shouldn't have to think of such things. You should concentrate on your own needs."

Marin's soft chuckle drew both Gen and Cail's attention. "Look at the two of you. Doing your best to convince one another that the other's needs come first. Gen, Cail and I never meant to hurt you. We've abstained for weeks but it finally got the better of us. I won't apologize for that because I know you don't expect it and won't accept it. I am sorry it hurt you, but can you see now how wrong you were in thinking we don't need you? If we didn't need you, would we have stopped you from leaving? Would we be sitting here having this conversation with you? Would you not, even now, be on that shuttle and far, far away?"

Gen nodded and sighed. "But I can't fully perform my duties."

"Not yet certainly, but we don't know it will remain this way and even if it does, you're more than an anonymous body in our bed. You're a part of us now, your mind, your heart, your smile, your voice, your scent, your touch. Gen, stay. We need you. We love you."

"Yes, stay," Cail echoed. "We love you, Gen."

"On one condition," Gen insisted as joy suffused his very soul making him warm and safe and home.

"What's that?" Cail asked.

"You stop treating me as though I'll break at any moment. I... want to share a bed with you. I may not be able to do all I used to, but I haven't lost all my abilities."

"Agreed."

"As soon as the med specialist concurs," Marin sternly amended.

"I accept your addendum," Gen conceded, a shy, teasing smile tugging at his lips.

Marin moved to stand before him and gave Gen a squinty eyed stare. "You look like Renka's zanta after he's eaten a fat, juicy ditta grub. Entirely too self satisfied."

Looking up at his master and genuinely contrite, Gen apologized. "I'm sorry."

"Don't be. It looks good on you. Welcome home, kirecha." Marin leaned down, scooped Gen up into his arms and kissed him. "Let's get your case unpacked."

Chapter Five

"Let me help you with that," Cail offered.

"No. It's my job. Now go sit down," Gen ordered curtly. At the raising of Master Cail's brow, he hastily amended the order and his surly tone. "Please?"

Cail complied, taking his customary place at the table in their kitchen while Gen continued to prepare the morning coffee. Two months had passed since his masters had intercepted him at the shuttle station. Some things had changed completely and some had progressed so slowly he wanted to gnash his teeth in frustration.

He now shared his masters' bed. They engaged in sex, though nothing overly vigorous. Cail and Marin were extremely careful with him. Too careful, Gen sometimes felt, but he had no real complaint. He gave and received pleasure and afterward slept between them, warm, snuggled, and loved.

There were small improvements to his condition, nothing it seemed to Gen to be excited about, but his med specialist seemed very well pleased. At every visit the man seemed truly optimistic that Gen would eventually notice significant changes. As yet nothing had occurred and Gen found himself more often than not frustrated and irritable because of it.

The coffee brewer chirped, simultaneously announcing the end of its cycle and interrupting Gen's gloomy thoughts. He filled his masters' cups, placed them on a tray and drawing a steadying breath, mentally prepared himself for the effort of traversing the few feet between the counter and the table.

"You're maneuvering with more ease every passing day," Marin commented as Gen, breathing a sigh of relief, set the tray on the table and took his seat.

"Yes. Sev says I've morphed from walking like some creature called Frankenstein, whom he saw in an Earth movie, to Frankenstein with a modicum of grace. It doesn't sound like much of a compliment to me," he added with a pout.

Cail and Marin chuckled.

"Your friend Sev is an impertinent brat. Renka on the other hand is a charming young lady," Cail commented. "I like them both very much. Their care of you certainly shows their generosity of spirit and loving hearts. Their masters must treasure them very much."

"I believe they do," Gen answered, feeling a twinge of insecurity.

"Now what's that look for?" Marin asked.

Raising his gaze from the tabletop, Gen responded. "Look?"

"This sad, dewy eyed expression. Are you thinking perhaps you're not treasured as your friends are?"

"No."

"Kirecha, don't lie to me."

Seeing the uncompromising demand in his master's eyes, Gen admitted to the fears he had yet to conquer. "Yes."

"Why would you think that, Gen?" Cail softly inquired.

"I've become even more unlike myself, difficult and grumpy. I can hardly believe you still put up with me."

"It's not a question of putting up with, but more accepting your need to express your feelings. Neither Marin nor I want you to bottle up your emotions. It's only natural you'd experience fear, frustration, and anger during this time. You're dealing with so much. Suppressing your reactions to all these unwanted and forced changes would be damaging. Express yourself honestly. Not that you need it, but you have our permission to do so. You've had it from the very beginning."

"With one exception," Marin added. "Had you become abusive toward others, we would have stepped in and put a stop to it, but Gen, even your tirades have been remarkably well mannered. You aim them at those responsible for your current

condition, which is as it should be and also at yourself for what you deem your inability to deal with and master the skills needed to make everyday living as close to normal as possible. As Sev once said, you've become sassy and neither Cail nor I look upon this as a bad thing. Just the opposite. It perks you up, puts color in your cheeks, and renews your strength. I think what we are seeing here is closer to the real Gen than the soft spoken, oh-so-careful and obedient amplitor who first joined our household. Be true to yourself. We accept you and love you for who you are. All right?"

Touched so deeply he was unable to find adequate words to thank them, Gen nodded. His master's surprising revelation and their complete acceptance of him went a long way toward soothing his troubled heart.

"Now that's cleared up, it's time for your therapy. Are you ready?"

"Yes."

"Good. Let's get to it."

Since Gen had become incapacitated, Masters Marin and Cail had taken to working from home more often than not. At first, feeling guilty, he'd protested this change in their routine, but they'd convinced him that their work, with the exception of controlled experiments done in their lab, could be accomplished just as well at home.

"We actually prefer this arrangement," Master Marin had revealed. "Home has a much more relaxing atmosphere. Makes it easier to think."

"And besides," Master Cail had said. "Leaving you home alone would have me so worried, I'd get no work accomplished at all. You wouldn't want to be responsible for me losing my job, now would you?"

Gen vehemently denied such a possibility and gratefully gave in to their wishes, just as he now willingly followed along to the remodeled room that served as his treatment center.

Thick padded mats adorned the floor in the center of the room and from them, laid out like the spokes of an old wagon wheel, were various exercise machines and a massage table. Upon entering the room Cail and Marin began stripping off their clothes and Gen, as usual, tried his best to keep from ogling them. He was only partially

successful, but felt little guilt at his failure. How could anyone be expected to refrain from admiring such a bounty of toned and tanned male flesh?

Master Marin was the first to finish undressing and he turned to Gen. "Your turn," he announced and thus began the procedure of extricating Gen from his body suit.

It wasn't a particularly difficult task, it was just that Marin and Cail took great pains to make sure no part of Gen's lower body was subjected to any unnatural twist or strain as he was disrobed. Once the suit was off, Gen grimaced at his own body. His skin was paler than normal, a result of always being so completely covered for the last few months. Where Marin and Cail were both hearty and hail looking specimens with just the right amount of bulk, Gen was slim, even willowy in comparison.

"Quit frowning over nonexistent faults, kirecha. Must I tell you again how alluring you are?" Cail asked.

"No, but compared to you two I'm --"

"Beautiful," Marin supplied and with no effort, lifted Gen in his arms and carried him to the first of the machines used in his workout.

The first one concentrated on his upper body and consisted mostly of weight resistance to improve the strength in his arms and abdomen. From there they moved on, coming finally to the machine Gen most hated, the one that made him feel his disability the most. This one exercised his legs, moving them while applying a kind of shock therapy that caused his muscles to expand and contract. He hated it because he couldn't feel it. It made him feel like a lifeless rag doll and even though he knew this treatment played a big part in keeping his muscles from atrophying, he loathed it.

"Relax," Cail lightly admonished. "I know you hate this, but it'll be over soon."

"Sorry."

"You've nothing to apologize for. We've talked about this. We wouldn't make you endure it but for the good it does you."

"At least I'm not screaming anymore when I have to do it."

"Don't even joke about that," Marin said. Appearing at Gen's side with a towel, he wiped the sweat from Gen's forehead. "You actually had me scared there for a time until your therapist explained how you were focusing the bulk of your rage and resentment against your condition on this one piece of equipment."

"Stupid, wasn't it?" Gen admitted. "This one does so much for me."

"It's also the one that makes you feel the most helpless, so no, not stupid. Understandable. Completely so."

The machines cycle completed and Gen sighed with relief sending a smile to his masters. "Now comes the best part."

"Truly," Marin agreed and moved aside while Cail released the straps that held Gen's legs in place.

Once more he was lifted and this time carried to the massage table. While he lay quiescent under their hands, Gen let himself be massaged into a state resembling a catatonic trance. Masters Cail and Marin, using warmed fragrant oil mixed especially for Gen, worked every muscle and covered every inch of skin from his neck to his toes. As he drifted on a cloud of unconcern, Gen let the subtle scent of Earth spices and flowers fill his being. There was sage, cedar wood, and eucalyptus to reduce stress and tension, chamomile and lavender to induce a state of calm and sandalwood and vetiver to encourage the rise of sexual desire.

Every breath he took was soft and easy, every muscle loose, every nerve tranquil and still, yet deep within, at the center of his being, desire stirred to life. It began, akin to water, as a single drop then grew until a pool of warmth filled his belly and groin. Waves of need lapped gently against the shores of Gen's serenity, and he welcomed them with a purring moan.

Eyes closed, he felt himself lifted yet again, carried then settled between his masters bodies on the padded mats at the center of the therapy room. On his master's lap and chest to chest with Master Marin, Gen opened his eyes, watching from a place of mellow contentment as his legs were positioned around Master Marin's waist.

Behind him, Master Cail moved in, his legs encompassing Gen's, his chest to Gen's back until Gen rested more in his lap than Master Marin's.

Encased in the warmth of human flesh, Gen absorbed the heat and scent of his masters... his lovers. "So good," he murmured. "I live for this."

"You live for much more than this," Marin gruffly answered, "but this is certainly a highlight of life, all our lives."

His mouth found Gen's and Gen parted his lips, eagerly welcoming his master's exploring tongue. The taste of Marin was exquisite -- coffee flavored desire, a taste so delicious it bore little resemblance to the brew Gen refused to drink. The heat, the wet, the primal connection of one being to another made Gen's head swim and his heart race. Never in his wildest dreams had he imaged such kisses. The intimacy was beyond anything he'd ever experienced, eclipsing even sex itself and he surrendered to it with soft near desperate moans.

Behind him, Cail was nuzzling his shoulders, kissing the nape of his neck, licking the sensitive hollows beneath his ears then nibbling his lobes. Released from Marin's kiss, Gen turned his head, offering his mouth to Cail. Cail immediately accepted his invitation, and their tongues tangled. Cail's unique flavor mingled with Marin's and Gen moaned, the heat of his breath intensifying the taste. Eagerly, he shared himself, garnering Cail's boldly expressed affection in return.

Marin, once freed from their kiss, took up where Cail left off. He licked and lightly nipped Gen's throat and collarbone, tracing his lips over Gen's skin until he reached Gen's nipple. That tiny bit of flesh puckered and stood up, begging to be touched and touch Marin did. With fingers, lips, teeth and tongue he teased first one nipple then the other until they were rosy and ripe like the berries of an ornamental cicas tree.

Gen reeled beneath the sensual onslaught his masters brought to bear, leaning back against Cail while clinging to Marin with desperate hands. Thus enmeshed, he immersed himself in the mental swirls of energy surrounding him. Masters Cail and

Marin were fully engaged in the growing pleasure and Gen stroked incorporeal fingers over the ghostly ribbons of sexual need tying the three of them together.

Cail groaned then growled in a voice so raspy and rough it sent shivers down Gen's spine. "Do you want me inside you?"

"Yes," Gen answered.

Even though he couldn't feel it, he wanted the penetration, wanted Master Cail seated within his body, wanted him seized and held by the tight, silky walls of his sheath. Gen's body was shifted. Marin's arms wrapped around him pulling him forward to allow Cail to position his cock against Gen's entrance.

"Ready?" Marin breathed.

"Yes. Slowly," Cail answered.

With infinite care, Gen was filled until he rested once more on Cail's thighs.

"Stones," Cail cursed.

"Does it feel good?" Gen dreamily asked.

"Good? Good doesn't begin to cover it. Amazing. Incredible. Gen. So tight and hot. You undo me," Cail confessed.

Gen smiled, tears of joy pooling in his eyes. His greatest fear was alleviated each time he came together with his masters in this way. When he lost the use of his legs he feared he'd never bring them this pleasure again, but knowing he could, knowing it was still his to give, to share and now to share in as an equal partner, was everything and more than he'd ever wished for.

Satisfied that Master Cail's needs would be taken care of, Gen turned his attention to Master Marin. Wrapping his hands around the thick cock that pressed against his belly, he stroked with a slow measured rhythm.

"Gen," Marin growled. "Yes. Perfect. Just like that. Here, little one, let me."

One of Gen's hands was pushed aside and Marin took Gen's hard cock in hand, aligned it with his own and helped Gen pump them together. Their bodies moved. Three in tandem, thrust and retreat, stroke and squeeze, slow, more, faster, harder, deeper until there was nothing but the intensity of their joining.

Gen dived into the carnal maelstrom of psychogenic pleasure. Though he was capable of having and maintaining an erection, all the sensation he received was provided by his mind and upper body. Though not completely satisfying, it was enough to lose himself in, enough to push his body to climax and so he worked it with all the skill at his disposal.

"Can you feel it?" Marin gasped.

Gen struggled to find his voice then to find adequate words. "In my head," he whimpered. "I feel it. Your pleasure, Master Cail's, and my own. All mixed up, pulsing together, living, growing from a fledgling to a full feathered bird... lifting from the ground... flying... soaring. Masters!" Gen screamed, his back arching as the exquisite, blinding rush of three orgasms flooded his mind, imploded within the depths of his psyche then reversed direction and raced outward, flinging shards of euphoric sensation to every part of his body capable of feeling them.

Held tightly between Masters Cail and Marin, Gen shuddered, his breath heaving, his heart racing until, little by little, the world righted itself. Master Marin leaned back a bit and Gen met his gaze, his eyes widening at the sheer surprise and delight in Marin's eyes.

"What?" he softly questioned.

"You..." Marin stopped, swallowed hard then began again. "You squeezed me. With your legs. My waist. You squeezed me."

Gen's brow furrowed. "No. I didn't. Did I? It must have been Master Cail. His legs pressing against mine. Wasn't it?" Even as he was denying it, looking for alternate explanations, Gen could hear the hope in his own voice.

"I'm sure it was you," Cail insisted. "You squeezed me too."

"What? But how could I? My legs are --"

"You didn't squeeze me with your legs, kirecha," Cail growled, amusement plain in his voice.

Realization hit Gen and the small smile that began to curve his lips turned into an instant grin. He felt heat rush into his cheeks as a surge of wild emotion pumped

through him. Laughter took him and he shook with it until tears streamed down his cheeks. At that point he let himself be wrapped in his masters' arms, sharing their laughter and tears as well. All was well, just as they'd promised.

Kate Steele

“I want to improve.” This has become my mantra. I think of my authorial skills as a work in progress. I began with no formal training and no degree, just a need to tell a story. I hope, as time goes by, my ability as a teller of tales will improve to the point where, from beginning to end, the reader can immerse her/himself in the world I’ve created, live, laugh and cry with the characters born of my imagination and emerge satisfied and hopefully even happy with the experience.

As for the boring details, I revel in the quiet life of rural Indiana with family and pets. When not writing I read, garden (battle with weeds) and on warm summer nights sit on the front porch to watch Mother Nature’s fireworks. I think fireflies are pretty and pretty amazing, don’t you?

Feel free to direct questions, complaints or compliments (fingers crossed) to katesteele27@yahoo.com or visit my website at www.katesteele.com.