

# ASYLUM

# MIINE



# VIOLA GRACE

Under attack and the sole repository of information that could topple her government, Seeri chooses a death in the cold of space over endangering her ship further.

Alpha Tor has been watching the communications during the attack and the moment that the pod is sent toward his station, he sets out to retrieve the beauty within. Feisty and focused, Battle Commander Seeri is a woman to be reckoned with, but as Tor is aware of the fear and hostility caused by his appearance, he stays clear of his guest.

She has to go to him.

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Asylum Mine

By

Viola Grace

Pain seared along her ribs and blood trickled through her fingers. Battle Commander Seeri trembled as she tried to get a clear reading through her watery gaze. The radiating agony made it hard for her to concentrate, but it was up to her to get her men to safety.

"Can you see anything?" Vornor was intact, but nervous. He was far too green to be on this ship, but due to the sudden and nasty case of dead that broke out, he was her second in command.

"I am still looking. We need to find somewhere they can't track us." She tried to keep her voice calm, but she was fading fast.

*There.* It was a tiny blip, it faded quickly but she knew exactly what it was. A hidden station. If she was very lucky it would be a medical station, but lucky was not the word to describe the last few days.

Horrifically complete betrayal was how she would describe the last few days. The Northern Star was being hunted by its own people. The information that Seeri had gleaned from her sources would turn the entire Coalition on its ear if she was allowed to go public. Her life was the stake and her men had refused to let her give it up.

Commander Darkour led the arresting force on

the refuelling station, the moment she balked at coming with him, his men had opened fire.

Her men had returned fire and now, here they were limping through the stars and looking for a place to hide.

Blood coursed over her fingers. The last battle had sent shards of metal rocketing through sickbay and into her body. It was as if they knew exactly where she was at any given time. Her doctor was dead and she was about to follow him.

She quickly laid in a course for the invisible station. Fate had let her see it once, and thanks to her eidetic memory, she would never forget where it was.

"Vorner, I want you to take the ship to safety. Hide it behind the station or make a run for it, it will be your choice. You are in charge now." She was swaying on her feet.

He reached out to support her, but there was no place on her that he could grab without getting covered in blood. "What are you talking about?"

"I am either dead or they are tracking me. When the beacon sounds, I want you to launch a stasis pod torpedo toward the station and get away from the pod as soon as you can. If they are tracking me it will buy you some time, and if they find the station, my corpse will end the chase." She sighed and coughed. Her lung had been nicked, the blood that she had coughed up was not a good sign.

Vorner was almost wringing his hands. "What

will we do?"

She grabbed his shoulder and winced as it stretched her wound. "You will survive, Vorner. You will get the rest of the survivors out of harm's way and hide until you can find out what is going on. If you are caught, tell Commander Darkour that you mutinied and sent me to my death. He should accept it."

She started to make the long journey to the stasis pod while Vorner hopped restlessly behind her. She dragged in a breath that gurgled ominously. "Vorner, take control of the ship and go. When the beacon sounds, launch me. If you don't, I swear I will haunt you in your next life and possibly this one."

He swallowed and straightened his shoulders. "Do you need help?"

"Sure. Hook me up to the lines. I will take care of the rest."

He helped her into the pod and inserted the lines into her veins. He saluted her as the lid to the pod closed.

Seeri didn't have the heart to tell him that she didn't need the lines. He looked so happy when he got them into place.

With the pod closed, she activated the recorder and started to talk. She expounded on the mass assassinations and genocides she had discovered, the deaths that were all in the name of rapid colonization.

She talked until her vision swam again and she had no choice but to activate the stasis pod. If it worked, she would be unconscious and dying at one fifth the rate she would if she was out and talking. *Hooray.*

Fractured images of the interior of the pod mixed with the stark lighting of a station hangar. Seeri's fuzzy mind recorded each and every image it saw as she drifted in and out of consciousness. Some images didn't make sense. If the station was abandoned, then why was a set of bots lifting her from the pod to put her on a medical bed?

Who was the shadowed figure that came to her and with a light touch, eased her pain sending her into a deep sleep?

She wasn't given time to ponder it. He touched her and she slipped into darkness.

All she knew before that moment was that she wasn't dead yet.

It was the monitoring computer that woke her to the peculiar sensation of someone licking at her ribs. She would have jerked her body away if not for two facts. Fact one, she was limp as a noodle, her body had no strength, and fact two, her hands and legs were tied down and slightly splayed from her body so the creature licking at her could get under her arm easily.

The slow strokes weren't painful, in fact her



body was having a rather surprising reaction that reinforced her distance from the state of death that she should have been in. Arousal was rippling through her with every lap of the hot wet tongue against her open wound. The absurdity of her situation wasn't lost on her.

It took her three tries to speak. "If you are going to start chewing, can you knock me out again?"

Her companion jerked in surprise at her voice. He cleared his throat, "I have a healing ability that is activated through my saliva. I am licking the wound closed. It is almost shut, but you will have to be careful for a few days or the wound will haemorrhage internally. I will release you in a moment, but please wait until I leave before you try and leave the table, the bots will help you."

He continued lapping at her skin and she had the embarrassment of feeling her crotch grow damp with the constant slow and wet strokes.

She was starting to twist with lust when he reached up and touched her forehead.

With no idea how much time had passed, Seeri was left to sit up and take in her surroundings on her own. It was not a standard medical bay, the glowing lights came on as she sat up and she winced at the residual pain in her limbs. Her injuries were healed but her body hadn't realized it yet.

Seeri was in a bedchamber with gauzy curtains,

silken pillows and sheets that were no more than a breath of covering on her body. She was nude, her shredded battle suit and boots were nowhere to be found.

A shiver ran through her when the sense memory of the tongue on her body washed over her. She had been succumbing to her hormones when her host knocked her out. It was humiliating that he offered nothing but assistance and her body answered his help with its own selfish needs.

Seeri held the sheets to her breast and called out, "Is anyone there?"

A shadow stirred and she jumped. "I am here."

Her heart pounded in her chest. "Thank you for your help. I thought I was as good as dead."

"Your life signs were weak. You were lucky I was able to reach the automated weapon system in time. You were almost destroyed before the grapplers could get you."

He was on her left, but staying in the shadows. She could see an enticing outline, but wasn't able to make out the details. All she could determine was that he had very broad shoulders and a thick neck on a body that was over six and a half feet tall.

"Why don't you come into the light so I can thank you to your face?"

He cleared his throat and shifted, "It might upset you. My appearance is a little unusual. It will be better if you don't see me."

"I have seen many species and I don't think your appearance would shock me." Seeri was trying to cajole him, but he shook his head.

He laughed, it was a rusty sound as if he didn't do it often. "I don't want to test it, Battle Commander Seerian Vish."

That shocked her. There hadn't been enough of her uniform left to make an identification. "How?"

"This station has full access to all of the communications and archives of the Coalition. I have been watching the attempts of your ship to dodge pursuit and came to the same conclusion you did. You had a tracker inside you. It is gone now. I extracted it." The shadow shifted.

The bass rumble of his voice was lovely to listen to.

"There are many bots on this station and they are yours to command. They will help you to attend your physical needs as well as provide you with food and access to the entertainment feeds. There is a beacon under your right hand that will bring them to you."

She shifted in confusion. "You are going to leave me?"

"I have my own concerns and routine. If you wish, I will return for the evening meal." The question in his tone was cleverly disguised as her decision.

"I would enjoy that. What time is it now?"

He faded back into the darkness. "Before noon,

station time. You will have to spend your day alone."

He was gone. She felt the loss of his presence keenly.

Sitting back in the bed, she realized that nature was calling. Better to test the promise now. She pressed the call button and a wheeled automaton stood by the bed.

A blue light glowed as it spoke through the blank faceplate. "What is your request, mistress?"

"I need to use the lav. I am a little weak in the knees."

"Not a problem, mistress. Remove the sheet and I will carry you."

She nodded and flipped the silk back. The bot immediately lifted her and wheeled her into the lav, depositing her and remaining in place. "I can do this without your help. Please wait outside."

"What if you require assistance, mistress?"

"I promise to call out." She couldn't do what she needed to do while being watched. With a sigh of relief, she was able to do what she needed to the moment that the bot closed the door behind him.

That she thought of the bot as a him the moment she met him was peculiar. Normally there was no problem with her knowing that the mechanicals were neutral. There was just something about this one that screamed male.

Seeri completed her task and stumbled toward the shower. She held onto the walls while waiting

for the heat to warm to a comfortable temperature. The moment that the water coursed comfortably over her, she used the shampoo and soap while leaning against the tile. She darted back under the water to rinse off and felt better, at least from the front.

Reaching her back while leaning was difficult. Her wounds were still aching as she tried to reach her spine.

"You said you would call, mistress." A metal hand supported her while the other took the soap and cleaned her back.

"I didn't need help until just now. Thank you, bot, or do you have a designation?"

"You may call me what you wish."

"Baxter. I will call you Baxter." She smiled and the blue lights that substituted for eyes flickered.

"Acknowledged. Adding it to order roster." He helped her to turn and rinse under the spray. "You are not well enough to be out of bed this long, mistress."

She fought a grin. "Thank you for pointing it out. I believe I am done here."

He wrapped her in linens and dried her from head to toe. She was clinging to him as he blotted efficiently at every drop of water.

"The housekeepers have finished with your bedding. A meal is being prepared and should be here momentarily."

"Thank you, Baxter. Take me to bed." She

yawned and collapsed in his arms as he lifted her to carry her back to the bedroom.

"Dinner first, mistress. You will recover faster if you eat something."

There was no arguing with him. He was programmed for her health and she was going to have to stick to his regulations.

\* \* \* \*

Her taste was still on his lips as Tor used the bot to carefully place Seerian in her bed after he had forced her to sit at the table for her meal. He cursed the soft curve of her hip and the lush turn of her lips that had caused him to throw caution to the wind and heal her.

What would a woman of beauty and determination ever want with a *splice* like him? He would have to be satisfied with the taste of her in his memories, the vague scent of arousal that had stirred in her before he had urged her to sleep. If she had seen his face, the fear in her scent would have overridden anything that her body was feeling. He would have run to save them both discomfort and not come back.

A genetic freak, he was doomed to live out his exorbitant life span on this station, monitoring transmissions and communiqués. Tor sighed and watched her through the bot's monitors. She was lovely. He had downloaded her military history

and found her to be both strong and honourable in all her dealings.

He toyed with the idea of showing himself to her in full light, but a quick look down at his skin with its variegated patterns brought him back to reality. He had no place in polite society anymore. His time was long gone.

With a sigh, he confirmed that she was tucked in for the night and went to take a walk in the arboretum. The flowers needed tending and the watering system needed an overhaul. It would be just the thing to distract him from the warm and real woman in his bed.

\* \* \* \*

Seeri waited until the bots had retreated and she set her body for a quick four-hour nap. That should be enough to bring her energy levels back to mobility levels.

When her internal clock woke her, the lighting came on with her motions. Baxter came to her and spoke. "Mistress, you need more sleep."

"It is not required. I would like some light exercise if that is acceptable?"

He paused. "There is nothing to forbid it. I will accompany you if you wish to explore."

She couldn't help it, she grinned. "Thank you. Which way to the oxygen farm?"

He paused again and as he remained frozen in place, a smaller bot wheeled forward with a piece of fabric in its arms.

"A gown for you, mistress." The bot with the gown raised it up.

She couldn't help smiling. "Thank you."

The gown was fitted to her, a lovely purple sheath that allowed her just enough room to move.

"I am ready, Baxter."

Her metal companion offered her his arm and together they slowly made their way through metal halls. In the distance, she saw bots wheeling around engaged in maintenance and mundane tasks. "How long has this station been on bot-only control?"

"You will have to ask the master. He has given us direction to minimize our conversations regarding him and the station." Baxter continued to pace her, but her curiosity was up and running.

The mystery of the station deepened. "Who is your master?"

"Information denied."

She sighed and kept her mouth shut. The halls of the station were pristine and instead of the cold feeling she had experienced on most stations she had been on she felt a homey warmth in every inch of the station around her.

The silence around them wasn't onerous, but it did make her gasp at the lush garden in the centre of the station rather loud.



"The oxygen farm, as you requested, mistress." Baxter stopped at the edge of the garden. "Please explore, this unit will not join you as the humidity is not good for me. I will remain in the corridor until you emerge or you call for me, mistress."

"Thank you, Baxter." She released his arm and took a few cautious steps into the humid air of the arboretum.

Life exploded in violent and gorgeous colours all around her. Flowers bloomed, fruit hung from trees and grass covered everything except the pathway she was on. A bright giggle tried to fight its way out of her throat, but she swallowed it. No noise should mar this moment.

Each step with her bare feet took her deeper and deeper into the wonderland of life. She had never seen a station with this developed of a forest before. This was a once in a lifetime experience for a woman raised in space.

A shift of movement ahead caught her attention. She slowed her steps and approached cautiously.

It was male and it was barefoot and only wearing pants. The patterns on its skin of vines connecting the colours of a dozen races made her pause. She had seen that kind of a patterned hide in history vids. It was a *splice*. An attempt at a representational peace treaty by making a set of multi-DNA clones. Each *splice* held the DNA of all races in the treaty.

The treaty had been shattered and the clones

destroyed, or so she thought. This man was proof that history could have omissions.

He was working at a pipe and cursed luridly.

She moved behind him and asked, "Can I help?"

He dropped his tool and whirled to face her before darting for the cover of a tree.

She couldn't help but feel a little rejected. "Did I say something wrong?"

He peeked around the tree, meeting her gaze.

She stifled a gasp, he was beautiful, the vines twisting across his skin to give him a fierce expression, but it also highlighted deep blue eyes framed with thick dark lashes and lips that were just wide enough to make her want them on her skin.

She blinked. "You healed me."

He nodded cautiously. "I did."

"Thank you. I appreciate the gift of my life." She bowed low and remained down for long enough for him to know that she was not just sticking to the formalities.

She looked at his abandoned project and the tools. She grabbed the wrench and assessed what he was doing. "Is it a clogged line?"

He came out from behind the tree. "Yes. The filter is jammed and I can't dislodge it."

Seeri grinned and swung the wrench in three short arcs. When the third impact popped the filter loose, her companion laughed in surprise.

"You seem to know a few tricks." He was grudging as he took the filter and swapped it out for a new one.

"I do. Most of the breeder stations have technology like this. I was raised there until I was fourteen and could enter service." She sat back and smiled, looking around and at her host.

"You aren't afraid of me." He said it like it was a strange thing.

"Of course not. I have coughed up scarier stuff than you." She grinned at him. His features were really quite pleasing this close and the sheen on his skin was giving off an intriguing musk that she was finding hard to ignore.

She put the wrench back and got to her feet. "I am sorry to have disturbed you. I should be going."

He was quiet for a moment as if he wanted to let her go and then a soft word came from his throat. "Stay."

"Do you have more repairs to make? I am fairly dexterous."

A light flushed mantled his cheeks. His nostrils flared and he smiled. "Yes, there are a few more filters to changed. They always give me trouble, so I would appreciate your help."

She nodded and waited for him to retrieve his tools. At a tap from his fingers, the juncture that they were working on sank beneath the soil.

He led her to the next unit and knelt to bring it

to the surface.

"What is your name?" She blurted it out so she wouldn't spend her time staring at his broad shoulders and the firm flex of his buttocks.

"Alpha Tor."

"So, you were the first of your set?"

"I was the first. They refused to destroy me, so my creators sent me here and reported me dead. My body contains the last strands of DNA for three species and nine others who are in the Coalition."

"So, do I call you Alpha or Tor?"

"Tor. May I call you Seerian?"

"Seeri, please." She smiled again and he smiled back. Together they began to work through the repairs to the irrigation system.

They worked with only a few comments between them and when he pronounced them done, she was disappointed. "I suppose I should get back to my room and rest again."

He chuckled. "My room."

"What?"

"You are in my bedroom. None of the other chambers on the station are equipped for guests."

"Oh. If there is a cot in storage, I could sleep on that. My life is luxury enough."

"No. I will not hear of it. You are my guest, I will have the bots prepare something for me." He helped her to her feet and she admired not only his presence but the detail in the designs on his flesh.

He flushed and looked embarrassed. "You are

staring."

She met his gaze. "Only at the beauty of your skin."

"The colours were grafted on when I was a child. The process was...painful." He stiffened.

Remorse flooded her. "I am sorry. I thought the design was born with you."

"No. Splices are born with the mixed DNA, but they look like others of the races that donated to the project. They decided that simply saying our DNA was a complete mix wasn't good enough. They needed a visual aid."

She swallowed. "That's horrible."

He shrugged. "It is what it is. Now, go back to your room and get some of that grease off the end of your nose."

Seeri laughed and curtsied to him, wobbling a little.

He scowled. "I should not have let you get this exhausted. Come with me."

She took the arm he extended and let him support her to the entrance where Baxter was waiting. "Accompany us to my quarters."

The bot chirped in compliance and followed them back to the bedroom. Tor helped her to the shower and turned away before she loosened her gown. With his back to her, he asked, "Will you join me for dinner?"

She smiled and loosened her clothing. "Of course. How long do I have?"

“Three hours. Enough time for you to sleep off the pallor that your exertions have caused.” He left her in front of the shower and Baxter wheeled in to take his place. Seeri chuckled as she looked in the mirror. Her nose wasn’t the only part of her sporting grease and smudges.

“Back into the shower, mistress. I will be here if you need me.”

With his promise of support if she needed it, she hopped back under the spray and scrubbed off the marks of her labour.

When she was clean, Baxter held out a towel and she wrapped it around herself while returning to the bedroom. The bed had been remade and she turned the covers down. “Wake me half an hour before Tor will be here for dinner.”

“Yes, mistress.”

She dropped the bathing sheet over a chair and slid between the sheets. The cool crisp fabric on her flesh was lovely and she fell asleep with a smile on her lips.

\* \* \* \*

Alpha Tor crept into the room the instant that the bot told him she was asleep. Her smile made him blink. Arousal spread through his system in a fiery rush that hardened his flesh and sent tingles through his spine.

He leaned down and pressed his lips to hers, breathing some of his life into her. She needed every bit of energy he could spare. Her pallor had been frightening. He knew what colour she was supposed to be and it wasn't that shade of grey.

The softness of her lips made him groan softly. She stirred and he quickly stopped the transfer of life force.

With his guest asleep, he left to check the data streams that were still being relayed through his home. Her ship had fared well until the Northern Star had made it to a Coalition station. Commander Darkour had arrested her entire crew and was holding them on the charges of gross mutiny. They were being accused of killing their Battle Commander and disposing of the body.

With Seeri sleeping in his bed, he knew that her crew was being handed a death sentence for a false report.

He was going to have to consider what to do with that information. Even though she had only been on his station for hours, Seeri had found a place in his heart. Her honest acceptance of what he was caused his heart to trip in his chest.

How would she feel if he told her about the status of her crew?

\* \* \* \*

Seeri was in a more daringly cut purple dress this time. Baxter's nimble digits made short work of the laces that held everything in place.

"Who is making these?"

"Alpha Tor brought some domestic bots out of storage. They created a wardrobe for you. Unfortunately, we only have the one colour of fabric available."

She laughed. "It is fine. I like purple."

She twirled a little and she was mid-spin when Tor entered the room. Bots scurried in behind him laden with trays and dishes.

Blushing, she stopped and bowed to Tor as he came forward with a gleam in his eyes. "Please excuse me, I don't get much of a chance to wear skirts."

He grinned and it looked really good on him. "I can tell. Don't worry about it, it is nice to see someone in a good mood around here."

"I suppose Baxter isn't much of a conversationalist."

He chuckled. "No. He isn't."

The bots had set the table in a flurry of action. One stood and rang a delicate chime.

Tor extended his hand to her and led her to the table. "Dinner is served."

Chuckling she sat across from him and opened her napkin, placing it across her lap. Baxter wheeled up and lifted the covers from the food.

"Wow, I have not seen this much fruit and



vegetable in a while."

"We grow our own." He chuckled. "As you saw when we were fixing the irrigation system."

"Indeed. Thanks for mentioning the grease on my nose, you could have mentioned the streaks on my forehead and chin." She took a small bite and closed her eyes in pleasure. It had been so long since she had eaten fresh food.

When she opened her eyes, Tor was staring at her with a peculiar hunger. She cleared her throat. "Sorry, Tor, I just don't get access to fresh food very often. I am savouring the experience."

He nodded. "I understand. Life in space is always more difficult than most people imagine. The niceties of polite society are few and far between for those who live in the stars."

She met his thoughtful gaze in surprise and knew that he understood better than she could even imagine. "How long have you been alone here?"

"Since the purge. Twenty-five years." He forked up some salad and consumed it.

"May I ask you, why? Why did they purge the splices?"

The history books had one version of what transpired, but she wanted the truth. History had specified that they were dumb abominations, reminders of failed treaties and dead races.

"When I was a child, we were marked, as I have told you. The two dozen splices were raised with

etiquette training, dance, negotiation skills and battle training. Everything that an ambassador needed. It came down to property rights of Decarro."

He finished his salad and served her some of the main course before continuing his story. "The Decarro were a race with enhanced psychic talents, but they were dying out. In a great moment of unity, the entire species expired, leaving their fertile and mineral rich planet unprotected."

Seeri was eating while she listened to his tale. The story was gripping because she had never heard it before.

"I was away from the splice base between assignments when I got the news. I tried to return to the lab, but my makers sent me here. The Decarro had one set of heirs. Their genes lived on in the splices. We were the sole heirs to that world and three others that have been denuded of life since. The others were all on the base when it was blown. The creators, support staff, administrators, everyone involved in the splice projects were killed to allow the claiming of that world by a mining conglomerate."

Stunned, Seeri couldn't help but ask, "How could they get away with it?"

"You know the general opinion of splices, do you not?"

She sighed. "I do. Most wanted you dead before you were even created."

He smiled and kept eating. "Precisely. So, I am here and my long training is going to waste."

She laughed. "Well, in this dress I can't help you with battle exercise, but if you could teach me to dance, it would be nice. I went right from my home to the recruitment centre. Dance was not taught on the breeder base, but I have seen it in vids and it looks beautiful."

"I will have to teach you then. It is a simple thing that can be made more so with the correct partner."

Seeri laughed at the look in his eyes. "It is a good thing you are a healer then. We might both need it before the night is over."

He joined in the laughter and they turned the discussion to the irrigation system.

The music was coming from the centre of Baxter's chest. He was positioned discreetly against the wall and seemed not to be aware of Tor taking her into his arms.

The touch of his skin sent a jolt through her as his arm pressed against the delicate ties holding her dress together. They didn't say a word as he started to sway with her and soon he was steering her in lazy loops around the room. She was completely oblivious to their path, the touch of his thighs against hers with his arms around her held her attention firmly on her body's reaction to the contact.

Her skin heated, flushed and a spike of arousal washed through her. The motion of her thighs together as they moved made her aware of the slick heat she was generating.

She kept her gaze focussed on his collarbone, afraid to meet his gaze. Her hands were trembling, one on his bicep, the other in his grip.

He paused in the dance. "Is something wrong, Seeri? You are trembling."

She looked up into his face and put a tight smile on her lips. "Nothing is wrong. I am just feeling a little flushed."

His nostrils flared, followed by a slow dilation of his pupils. With a deliberate move, he bent his head toward her, leisurely enough to give her an opportunity to back away. She ran through a thousand possibilities in that instant and welcomed his lips when they touched hers.

Heat, energy, power, longing, they all combined in that kiss in and she welcomed it. So much time alone in space and here, she had a chance for contact. On her ship, her rank kept her separate, on this station, with this man there was no reason to hold back.

She threaded her hands through his hair and went up on her toes to deepen the kiss. Tor's harsh groan echoed in the room and she smiled against him.

She teased the seam of his lips with her tongue until he parted for her, then delved in to taste him,

the sweetness of dessert still lingered in his mouth.

A low hum started to run through him and as he returned her kiss with intensity, it spilled into her until her blood was singing to the same tune.

The strings that held her dress in place were loosened one by one. Tor's hands moved the fabric off her shoulders and it pooled at her feet.

Naked, trembling and eager, she waited for him to strip as well. He barked a command in a strange language and the lights dimmed to almost nothing.

She sighed. "I want to see you." Following the sound of his rustling clothing, she touched him, his chest bare and warm under her touch.

"I don't wish to disgust you with my colouration."

She flicked his nipples lightly with her fingers before sliding her arms around his chest and pressing her head to him, listening to his heavy heartbeat. "I want you, as you are. You have not recoiled at my scars and I will return the favour. That is all they are, scars. Marks of your past. Live with them and try to think of the future."

His whisper was in that strange language again, the lights turned up halfway throwing his features into diabolical relief.

He didn't speak, but he let his vest slide to the ground. Tor put his hands on her shoulders and moved her away from him as he removed his shoes and trousers. She would have gasped if he wouldn't have taken it the wrong way.

Impressive was not the word to describe him. Each band of muscle, each delineation of sinew was a piece of art. He had been designed with attention to male perfection and then ornamented with the designs of races alive and dead. Past and future lived on his skin.

Sighing softly, she stepped forward and pressed a light string of kisses across the base of his throat. She felt his hands close on her waist tightly before they relaxed and he started to stroke her back. His fingers found every wound, every scar that she sported from a life lived under fire.

She shivered in reaction to his gentle caress and pressed her forehead against his chest.

His words whispered to her in the dimness. "I am not the only one with marks, but it seems I am the only one who hides from them."

Seeri spoke quietly, "My life was hard, but I survived. Nothing else matters but moving forward with seeking acceptance and pleasure when the opportunity arises."

Tor laughed again, a low ripple of sound. "Then I should try to seize what has come my way and let tomorrow sort itself out."

She smiled against his skin. "Seize away."

A second invitation was not required, he backed her toward the bed and tumbled her to her back. He overlapped her on every angle, and with a peculiar kind of push-up move, he stroked his flesh against hers.

She parted her thighs and when his erection nudged her folds, Seeri tilted her hips in welcome. The blunt heat lodged in her opening and pressed slowly into her as his torso did another of those intriguing slides, stimulating her breasts and starting an ache low in her belly.

Parts of his skin started to glow as he stroked against her again. Seeri's soft cry was one of delight, followed by an inhalation as his wide erection made space for itself inside her.

The glow was a bright blue light that spread from certain portions of his skin across the mass, only the scrolling dividers marking the change in tones. He withdrew slowly and she bit her lip.

"Please, I want to hear you."

She let her breath come out on a soft sigh which increased in pitch when he rocked into her again, shifting her on the sheets.

She anchored her feet on the bedding for leverage and met his thrusts with raised hips and upward shifts of her own. Her sighs turned to moans, the moans to cries as each slide of his cock within her took a faster and faster beat in and out of her.

His breathing was coming faster and Tor leaned down to press kisses against her forehead and temples while his angle of entry now changed to press her clit with every shift of his hips.

She wrapped her arms around him, holding her tightly against her as their bodies slipped and slid,

fire started to slide along her nerves and her voice took on a fevered pitch.

Tor started a dark whisper in that strange language again, and while the words were unknown to her, the tone sent a spike of urgency straight to her womb, causing a clench that made Tor groan and started broken cries as her the fire in her system shattered into a glittering wave of stars.

His shout of surprise and hard shove into her again started a round of small shockwaves that milked him of everything he could give. Instead of slumping on her as previous lovers had done, Tor rolled to his back, taking her with him and lifted her so he could kiss her softly while stroking her from neck to thighs.

The head of his cock was still within her, and from what she could tell, he had not shrunk at all.

She enjoyed the glow of his body under hers until she noticed that her own body was taking on the same blue tinge.

"What is this?" She held out her hand in wonder.

"It is a Decarro thing. It helps mating pairs sync up." He stroked her hair.

She shook her head and smiled. "We are not exactly a mating pair."

"I am still inside you, I beg to differ."

She snorted and then sighed, resting her head on his chest while he wrapped his arms around her. "I feel a little guilty having such a lovely



evening with you when my men are struggling with a hobbled ship."

He stiffened underneath her.

"What, what is it?"

He lifted her from him and sat her next to him on the bed, both of their bodies glowing softly in the dim light. "There is a formal court convened to charge your crew with killing you and setting your body adrift into space to hide the evidence."

Shock ran through her. "Why didn't you tell me?"

He looked down at his hands. "I was afraid you would leave. I got the signal after you were down for your nap. I just wanted some time with you."

Seeri sighed. "I understand, but I need to go to them. The price of mutiny is death."

Tor grunted and got out of the bed, disappearing into the bathroom for a moment before reappearing. He pressed a cloth between her thighs and nodded. "There is a uniform in your wardrobe."

A word in that strange language and the lights were on full. Her glow was almost imperceptible in the brighter environment. She felt a sense of loss when he opened a chest and started to pull on all black clothing. Realizing that he was planning something, she went to the wardrobe and thumbed through the selections until she saw a uniform that would scandalize any of the military officers she knew.

She pulled it on and smiled at the tight fit, the boots and short skirt with the matching top, all in the same purple.

She went to the bathroom and combed out her black locks, weaving them into a quick braid.

“What next, Tor?”

She was facing him in the most intimidating thing she had seen him wear. He looked like a chunk of shadow come to life, even his eyes had shifted from bright to navy. Seeri swallowed heavily when he moved and the blasters on either thigh were exposed.

Whatever was going on, he was ready for anything.

“Come with me.” He didn’t offer his hand, but turned and stalked out of his quarters, leading her into a dark shadow of the station that seemed to be completely shut down.

At his touch on a panel, the halls lit and fans stirred to life, giving them the oxygen they desperately needed.

Anticipation started to flip in Seeri’s belly as she identified the signs of a launch bay. The gleaming and glowing shuttle was made of glossy mirror finished metal.

A tap of his fingers and the door eased open. “Let’s go and save your crew.”

She blinked at the shuttle as she entered it. “What...how long have you had this shuttle?”

“It was the means of my escape. I keep it well

maintained. Get in and buckle up."

Seeri followed his direction and paused as her skirt slid up, the cold contact making her jump as the door slammed closed and locked in place. "Thank you for doing this."

"Thank me if we survive." The whirring of the wheels as they moved toward the bay doors was the last noise she heard as the bay closed off from the station and the exit opened slowly.

They rolled along until he struck the thrusters and at that point, they were back in space. Back to the only home Seeri had really known.

The Coalition base allowed them to land when Seeri provided the necessary codes, and striding through the streets and then halls to the Coalition Courts was made easier by the huge and forbidding presence of Tor at her back.

Guards tried to stop her at the courtroom. "You cannot enter. The court is in session."

She drew herself up. "As I am the dead body they are being killed over, I believe it is imperative that I attend."

A quick consultation with his companion and the guard allowed her to enter.

Striding quickly to the front of the courtroom, Seeri nodded to a shocked and furious Commander Darkour and waited to be acknowledged by the court.

The judge narrowed his eyes at her appearance,

and his companions nodded for him to address her. "Miss, what is your reason for attending this court?"

"I only thought to file a complaint against Commander Darkour for attempted murder and to speak on behalf of my crew. I am Battle Commander Seerian Vish. I was wounded in an attack by Commander Darkour's ship and forced to seek asylum on a healing station." The words could never be tested as untrue.

Commander Darkour tried to exit, but Alpha Tor in all his glory stopped him.

The judge leaned forward. "If you are found to be Battle Commander Seerian Vish, why would Darkour attack you? He has always been a law abiding Coalition citizen."

Smiling at the direct question, Seeri was able to answer it on the record. "I have documentation proving that Commander Darkour has been instrumental in engaging in genocide on three planets, for profit. He is using a bacterial agent that he has rigged into his shuttles and is using a Wedford bank to collect his monies. I have the account numbers and even if he tries to move it, I will be able to track it. This is the reason he wanted me dead."

"Who is the man with you?" A judge on the left had a peculiar look in his eyes. A softness was there.

"He is the true heir of Decarro and the three

planets killed by Darkour. The last survivor of the purge and a good man, Alpha Tor."

Several folk cried out at the name and one of the judges pounded a gavel. When silence was forced into being by the pounding, the judge with the strange expression stood.

Seeri glanced back at Tor and he had a stunned look on his own features. "Father."

A ripple of shock ran through the crowd.

"Son. It is good to see you. The purge was repealed, but no one knew where to find you."

Twenty feet apart, it was as if they were the only ones in the room.

"I knew of the change, but there was no reason to rejoin the worlds as the last of my kind." Alpha Tor gripped Darkour's throat and the man fell to the ground.

"Why did you come forward now?" The man looked happy, his medals and rank bars marking him as career military.

"I was needed."

He placed his hand on Seeri's shoulder, but before the conversation could continue, the doors to the courtroom flew open.

Gurn, Commander Darkour's second in command was there and he was wielding a blaster. In a quick move, Seeri put herself in front of Tor just as Gurn fired. She felt the burn and slumped back against Tor.

He caught her and raised a hand, a blast of

power struck Gurn and threw him back out through the doors. A crack was heard as his back made contact with the marble of the foyer.

Leaning against Tor, it was a relief when he laid her on the floor. "Seeri, come on, you can't leave me yet."

She smiled and touched his face, the glow starting under her skin once again. "This wound is too severe for you to heal and we both know it. Don't look at it!"

The feeling of inches of scorched flesh was enough without him torturing himself. Her body was slowing down, organs locking up as blood flow was disturbed. She didn't have long to live. With a smile, she spoke, "It isn't everyone who gets to die twice in one week. I have the weirdest luck."

Faces were surrounding them, Tor was her focus, but Vorner appeared behind him, as did the man he called Father. Words were spoken, but she was a thousand miles away and the stars were calling.

Tears flowed from his eyes and he lifted her to him, pressing a kiss on her lips that warmed her soul while her body cooled.

\* \* \* \*

Alpha Tor didn't know what to do.

"You can manage it, son. All of their pent up power is now passed to you. Use it." Four star general Quenar Zaric put his hand on Tor's shoulder.

"What if she doesn't want it?"

"She exchanged her life for yours. There is nothing else to be said. Stop guessing and do it!"

With the order given, Tor pressed his lips to Seeri's and the instant that her lifeforce fled, he replaced it with the life of the Decarro.

A species with their lives linked on a frequency of psi energy gave all of that energy to Tor at the moment that they died. Healing came from Tor, but a new life could come from Decarro.

He poured the energy into her, restructuring her body and the neural pathways that his primary people needed. The talent she would develop might be small, but it might be something to make her life easier. Either way, she would have a life.

Tor pressed his free hand to her chest, over the wound. When the flesh turned from crumbled and scorched back to soft and pliable, he gripped her waist. Her light sigh into his mouth was music to his ears.

He fought the urge to smile when she reached up and pulled his lips back to hers. She smiled and blinked her now brilliant violet eyes.

The courtroom was in uproar and Darkour was trying to slink away. Vornier jumped on him and with the rest of the crew taking turns, they kept

him on the ground and in a foetal curl.

Seeri was alive, and now she would leave him, ripping his heart in two.

\* \* \* \*

His eyes were a startling blue. Alpha Tor was still holding her and her afterlife had shrunk to nothing. She was alive.

Seeri smiled. "What did you do?"

"You are Decarron now. Your original DNA is still in place, but all of the extras have now been activated." He looked nervous.

"How did you do it?"

The general next to him spoke, "It has always been his power to give. He just chose to live alone somewhere."

The general was smiling and she couldn't help but notice a certain resemblance in Tor's bone structure.

"You were one of the donors?"

He winked at her quickness. "Obvious isn't it? Yes. And as soon as I met Tor all those years ago I knew he was mine. He knew it, too. It broke my heart when he was reported dead."

"We need to get the mining stopped on Decarro. It isn't right."

He nodded and nudged Tor. "You picked a bossy one."



Her lover lifted her in his arms, "She picked me. I merely embraced the moment."

Laughing, she let him take her to the medical centre for the testing that the Coalition would demand before they let her men go free and clear. In her mind, dying twice had given her an early retirement, but paperwork would have to be filed before she could return to Tor's station. She knew he would not stay here with her.

It had been over a week and her heart was aching at the distance between them. She quivered, ached and longed more than she ever had in her life.

The station looked dead as she approached, but she sent it her name and after a few scans, the anti-aircraft weapons stood down. She parked the tiny shuttle in the bay next to Tor's and quietly made her way into the station.

Lights didn't come on for her. The bedroom was empty when she dropped off her duffel.

No bots moved around today, it was all silent.

If she hadn't been able to sense him, she would have been worried, but as it was, only mild concern filled her when she went looking for him in the oxygen manufacturing centre.

He was lying on the ground and staring up at the trees. Only the minute lifting and falling of his chest gave her the clue that he was still alive.

She knelt nearby and spoke quietly. "Do you

need to replace those filters? I think my hands need a work out."

He sat up and looked around him in panic. "Seeri?"

She cursed as she realized she was sitting in the shade. He couldn't see her. She got up and moved to his side, caressing his face. "Hello Tor."

His hands shook as he touched her in turn. "Why are you here?"

"Because you are. Decarro is yours if you want it. The monies earned by the mining corps were placed into a holding account for you. You can buy whatever you need to make a home there."

"Is that why you came back, to tell me to leave?"

"No, I came back because I love you. We can live here, or somewhere else, or just bum around in your shuttle, but if you will have me, I will be at your side." She punctuated it with a kiss.

In an instant, they were tumbling around on the soft grass and the moment he was nude, she was straddling him, taking him in with the slickness she had been emanating since she stepped on the station, making quick work of fitting him into her.

Long slow strokes as she rode up and down started a trembling in her belly before she could contain it, she bucked and clenched around him.

Tor clenched his hands on her hips and slammed upward until he met her mid-orgasm with his own.

She sighed. "I am sorry, I couldn't hold out."

He laughed. "Isn't that my excuse?"

"Not when I have had thoughts of being with you every moment of every day since we parted at the medical office. The general wants to visit with you as well."

"He can come when he wants, but for now I want to have you back in a bed again."

She looked around. "What is wrong with frolics on the garden?"

"The grass gets itchy and dirt gets into everything. The only thing I want inside you is me." He leaned up and pressed a hot kiss to her breast, pulling on each nipple in turn. His hands kneaded and stroked the flesh and in seconds, her glowing body was warming under his touch.

She sighed. "Cheater."

"Any advantage I can get." With a sigh and a grunt, he got to his feet with her still riding his cock. With slow steady steps, he took them back to the bedchamber and straight into the bathing room.

Sex in the shower was fun, and slippery, but she got to play and touch every inch of him with all the lights on. There was beauty in this beast of hers, and her asylum had been the luckiest place of her life. Whatever their future held, they would do it together.

She knew it with every pulse of their skin. Dead or alive, they were bound for eternity and it wasn't a bad thing at all.

## About the Author

Viola Grace was born in Manitoba, Canada where she still resides today. She really likes it there. She has no pets and can barely keep sea monkeys alive for a reasonable amount of time. Her line of day job tends to be analytical which leaves her mind hopping to weave stories. No co-worker is safe from her character analysis. In keeping with busy hands are happy hands, her hobbies have included cross-stitch, needlepoint, quilting, costuming, cake decorating, baking, cooking, metal work, beading, sculpting, painting, doll making, henna tattoos, chain mail, and a few others that have been forgotten. It is quite often that these hobbies make their way into her tales.

Viola's fetishes include boots and corsetry, and her greatest weakness is her uncontrollable blush. Her writing actively pursues the Happily Ever After that so rarely occurs in nature. It is an admirable thing and something that we should all strive for. To find one that we truly like, as well as love.