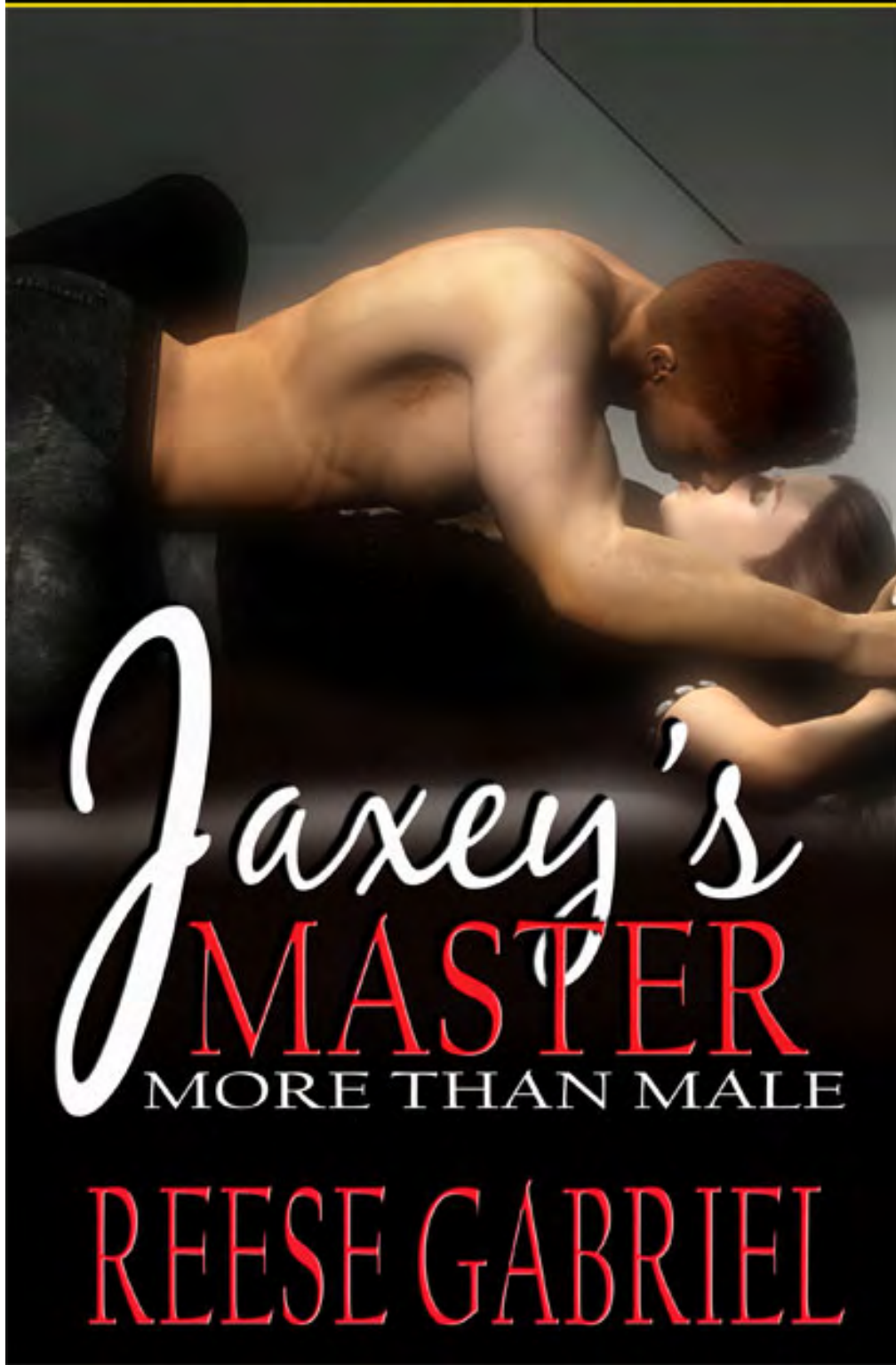


ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS



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Jaxey's Master

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MORE THAN MALE:

JAXEY'S MASTER

Reese Gabriel

Chapter One

They were lost in each other's eyes, side by side in the booth of the orbiting space diner—the tall, dark and handsome primale in his one-piece, light blue Guardian's uniform, the small blonde female in her short, clingy, pink liquex dress, her small, delicate hand reaching for his. A subtle offering, an unconscious surrender to his will. Fingers intertwining, a dazzling smile, blushing cheeks, the promise of eternal love as he told a joke and she laughed too hard, her lips full and ruby red, his, lean and hungry—craving a kiss...and much more. Hard muscles pressed demandingly against soft, pliant female curves, moans of ecstasy and thrusting lust, every second of delay an agony for the intended lovers. Conqueror and conquered.

Garrgghh! Stars and supernovas, thought Jaxey from across the table, *why didn't Korlon and his fiancée just go rent a sex-making pod and be done with it?*

Pointedly, and none too subtly, Jaxey turned off her laser fork and set it down noisily on the smooth, mirrored surface. It was not that she had an inherent objection to her mission partner receiving the devoted affections of his intended mate Desela, especially since she was a genetically bred obedient and therefore biologically unable to turn off her hormones in the man's presence. But did he have to look so damned happy about it?

"What's up, Jax?" Korlon wrenched his gaze from the woman who had literally been born to arouse and please him. "Don't you like your food?"

Jaxey just rolled her eyes and shook her head. How could a man so brilliant in the ways of the physical world, not to mention the military arts, be so incredibly oblivious to the most basic emotional things?

Did the term "third wheel" mean nothing to him?

Jaxey couldn't even remember the last time she'd been able to flirt with a member of the opposite sex or burn down a room with a kiss, let alone make decent sex. Even masturbation was a thing of the past these days. Her own hand was a stranger, so snubbed by now it wouldn't even take a com link call from her pussy.

Not that her pussy was in much danger of waking up any time soon. She was all business, Jaxey was. One hundred percent devotion to duty.

Just get me through Guardian Probation and I'll be a happy space camper—that was her mantra.

Korlon, the clueless, azure-eyed hunk across from her was in the same position, career-wise at least. They'd gone through the Academy together. Suffered the miseries of field drills on the jungle world of Narg, studied weeks on end for finals, assembled

countless tech projects out of old scrap pieces. Not to mention all the practical jokes they had played on fellow classmates.

Thick as thieves, they were, and so they remained, on the eve of their Probationary Mission, the final qualifying test for Level One Entry into the Guardian service.

There was no one, male or female, Jaxey would rather have as a partner. From the start, she knew Korlon was different. Most of the other guys regarded her as an outsider, a freak. She was, after all, only the second female to enter the Academy. The first was Theryssa, who everybody found out later was Theron and Nyssa's daughter.

Lots of people said that's why she was admitted in the first place, but Jaxey knew better. Theryssa had worked twice as hard as any of the males and she had earned her spot in the class. She was an officer now, fighting in the War beside her husband, the legendary Azar Xenelion.

Jaxey didn't have famous parents. In fact, she had no parents at all that she knew of. She was a product of ordinary genetic engineering, anonymous DNA, mixed to lab specifications.

With one important difference. Whereas every other female to date had been created as either fem, obedient or some mix of primale hybrid, Jaxey had been given pure primale genes. That meant she could compete with and beat men in ways not even the genetically mixed Theryssa could manage.

Ordinary men, the mems, were absolutely no match for her, in or out of bed. It wasn't bragging on her part, just the cold hard truth. The one time she had tried to make sex with a mem she had met at a club, he had run home after begging to be let go. She had exhausted him in minutes, leaving herself unsatisfied.

This left her with the primales, who made up the Guardians and other vital security services. They were more or less her equals, though they seldom gave her the time of day. They had no use for a woman like her who could hold her own at the Guardian Academy and quite often beat them.

Even the fems, who were designed to be free-thinking and free-spirited, were too much for most primales. They preferred the obedients—that sub-gender of female designed specifically for them.

Obedients were a man's fantasy come to life. Designed for beauty, sensuality...and submissiveness. Obedients lived literally to be controlled and dominated by proud, strong primales.

More power to them was Jaxey's motto. If having a man tell them what to wear or spank their asses for the hell of it was what got them all hot and bothered, who was she to object?

She just didn't have to watch it, that's all.

"Food's fine." She watched one of her sizzling varn snails hop off her heated plate and over the edge of the hover table. "What's left of it, anyway."

"You're letting them all escape," Korlon said, pointing out a fact that would not be news to anyone with an intelligence quotient above that of a three-year-old. "You need to zap 'em with the fork."

She flashed him an icy stare. "Really? I had no idea, Korlon. I've never eaten a varn snail or used a laser fork before."

Korlon's brow crinkled at her sarcasm. He ran his hand through his hair. "Wow. What's gotten into you?"

"It's my fault," said Desela. "I shouldn't be here. It's your last night before your mission. You should be spending time with Jaxey, getting relaxed and ready."

"What?" Korlon turned his handsome face toward his beloved. His was a profile designed for coinage. "That's ridiculous, Des. Jax doesn't care if you hang out with us. Do you, Jax?"

Jax toasted with her glass of vor juice. "The more the merrier."

"Jaxey, will you please forgive me?" asked Desela, her green eyes on the verge of tears. "It's just...it's just that I've not been away from Korlon since our engagement. I know it's silly to worry so about a training mission, but I just can't help myself."

Great, thought Jaxey. *I'm about to make an obedient cry.* That was right up there with pulling the wings off a butterfly or kicking a puppy.

Damn, this three-way thing was getting to be a drag.

"Des, it's okay, sweetie. You didn't do anything wrong. Really, the best thing is for me to go home and get some rest."

Desela turned to her betrothed, her gold tresses bobbing. She had yet another new style today, some sort of gravity-defying thing that must have taken her hair-designing machine the better part of two hours to come up with. Korlon had not said a word about it so far, the big dolt. And he wouldn't either, unless Jaxey took him aside and give him the usual coaching in how to respect the feelings of his woman.

"Korlon, may we please bring Jaxey with us, tonight?"

Jaxey tried not to gag too much. Desela was literally holding her breath waiting for his decision. He could tell her they were going to entertain an entire colony of gheel grubs and she would thank him for deigning to answer her at all.

"It's up to Jax," he shrugged.

"Jaxey, will you please come with us? I would feel so terrible if you were alone tonight because of me."

"I'd love to, Des." She managed a smile. "That's very kind of you."

Korlon spread his well-muscled arms over the back of the booth. "See," he teased, "there's plenty of me to go around."

Jaxey gave it right back to him. "Trust me, *buddy*. You can't afford to spread it. Desela is more woman than you'll ever be able to handle."

Jaxey really hated when Korlon acted this way, playing up his maleness, his sexuality. For some reason, he only seemed to do it when Desela was around. When it was the two of them, he was a really great guy.

Of course to him, she was just one of the guys, so that didn't necessarily tell her much about his ideas on treatment of females. She certainly hoped he would never behave like some of the other primales. To them, their mates were little more than pretty pets, to be loved and cared for, but not to be taken seriously as true mates.

Jaxey had made it clear she would kick Korlon's ass if he ever treated Des badly. Korlon had turned around and bent over in reply, offering to let her strip him down and kick it ahead of time.

Jaxey had walked off. That was not the kind of shit she needed to hear. She had seen Korlon's naked ass, and the rest of his body, too. Hell, they'd spent some pretty fucking intimate time together huddled under survival blankets. The man was one part primale, three parts living god. He had a lean waist, broad shoulders, full, hard muscles, a washboard abdomen and powerful thighs. His buttocks were tight and yummy and his cock...well, his cock was quite simply out of this world.

It hung down ten inches—a thick, veined mass, beautifully sculpted. His balls were works of art, too. Luscious repositories of so much semen. Enough semen to fill an ocean.

Oh, yes, Jaxey had had some fantasies. How could she not? A couple of times she had even masturbated thinking about him, but that made things awkward afterward. Almost as if it had been something real between them that threatened to alter their relationship.

Funny, how vivid it had felt to her, being possessed by that shaft of his. In her mind, she had made it erect, touching its silk-covered hardness...but for Des, there was no need to imagine.

While intercourse would not be allowed between them until after the mating ceremony, on account of the powerful, irreversible possessive drives the act would awaken in Korlon, it was Des' responsibility, and privilege to give her betrothed pleasure with her mouth and hands.

Sometimes Jaxey would wake up in a cold sweat, thinking of little Des with one of her splendid hairdos, on her knees. Korlon masturbating in her mouth, or stroking himself in front of her, in preparation to come all over her face.

What expression would he have as he squeezed his fist? What sort of smile and how would his belly look, as he breathed...in, out. In, out.

"For once, I won't argue with you, Jax." Korlon put his arm around Des. "She is more than I can handle and more than I deserve. But the way I see it, I have a lifetime to get it right."

For some reason, this remark pissed Jaxey off even more. It made no sense, because it was a really sweet thing for him to say.

"Oh, baby," Desela put her hand on his chest, "I'm the one who's not worthy. I thank the universe every night for you, do you know that? You are my sun, my moon...my whole world."

Wow. There was a fucking original statement, coming from an obedient.

Jaxey had to catch herself. She was crossing that line between cynical and bitchy. Des couldn't help how she was. And Jax didn't really think badly of her. She was just feeling...on edge.

"That's my angel," said Korlon, kissing her forehead.

You would think he had just given her a multiple orgasm, a gold ring and a condominium with a front-row view of the Rainbow Nebula. "Oh, Korlon, I just have to tell you, in case something happens...on your mission...I love you so very much. With all my heart."

Desela was crying now for real.

"I love you, too, Desela, but you know Jaxey and I will be just fine. It's only training." Korlon let her put her head on his shoulder. He seemed so natural like that, stroking her hair, protecting her.

Jaxey felt a little pang of jealousy. Just once, for a half second, she would like to be the weak one. The kind of woman who could let a man take care of her. Korlon was a damned good one to pick, too. Desela was one lucky female. The luckiest on Earth, and Jaxey hoped she appreciated that.

"You believe me, don't you, Des?"

"Yes," she sighed, embracing him.

And just like that, she was all better. If only Jax could feel that good, just from hearing a man's soothing words.

"Say, I have an idea," Des exclaimed, all smiles and sparkles. "Why don't we go to the Operadrome? I hear there's a really incredible show later. The Three Mecha-tenors. It would be amazing, Korlon. You and Jaxey could wear civilian clothes. You could zap together a nice suit and Jaxey could come over to my place and use my new dress machine. She and I could have a ball, doing girl things together."

Korlon was chuckling.

Jaxey homed in with eagle eyes. "Did I miss a joke?"

He cleared his throat, trying to put on a straight face. "It's nothing, Jax. It's just a little hard to picture you doing girl things. I mean, seriously, have you ever worn a dress in your life?"

"I could if I wanted to."

"Of course you could," Des rushed to her defense. "Korlon, honey, don't you think Jaxey has an incredible figure?"

Korlon squirmed. "Des, what kind of question is that? Jax is my partner. I can't think of her like that. Besides, I'm spoken for."

Desela squeezed his arm. "I know that, silly. But speaking as a man, looking at Jaxey as a woman, you have to admit she is beautiful."

Korlon frowned at his plate of colored soy straws. Jaxey could see he wasn't going to touch this one with a ten-foot pole. Actually, she was a little curious herself, because on occasion, the man gave out some mixed signals.

For the moment, she covered his ass, ever the faithful partner.

"Save your breath," Jaxey advised Des. "The day my partner here sees me as a woman is the day the Narthian bug hordes stop looking at us humans as lunchmeat."

"Ha, ha, real funny," said Korlon, showing his sarcastic appreciation of Jaxey's humor.

"You know, Des," Jaxey ignored him. "I think the Operadrome is a terrific idea. In fact, I would love to go with you right now and do all sorts of girl things."

"You would?" Des was nearly jumping in her seat. "Korlon, can we? Can we go to the Operadrome? And can Jaxey come over and make dresses with me?"

Korlon grumbled something noncommittal.

Jaxey stood up and took Des' hand. "Of course it's fine. For goodness' sake, Desela, you're a full-grown woman. If you want to go to the Operadrome, you're perfectly entitled."

Desela stared blankly. "But..."

"But nothing." Jaxey tugged her to her feet. "If you don't show some backbone now you'll spend the rest of your life asking for permission to breathe."

"Korlon?" she called piteously over her shoulder as Jaxey dragged her away.

"Go." He waved his arm in surrender. "I'll meet you two later at the Drome."

Jaxey's smile was ear to ear. She was eminently satisfied with herself.

And this was just the beginning. Before the night was through, she intended to give her buddy a little run for his money.

She would show him she was a woman, all right.

If it killed her. And him, too.

* * * * *

Korlon sat there at the table, abandoned.

Unbelievable. Desela had actually run off on him. Under Jaxey's influence, of course, but still...

This was totally improper behavior for an obedient. His obedient. Betrothed and under contract. Yes, they had not yet had the mating ceremony, but that was only a matter of time. Desela had begged him to fully claim her some months ago, but he had insisted on waiting until he was done with training and fully commissioned as a Guardian.

Call it vanity, but he would stand before her and say the oath of betrothal in his full officer's uniform, with the gold embroidered marks of service on his shoulders. He loved Desela and he wanted her to submit herself to an honest and true Guardian.

Jaxey gave him grief about the inequality of the waiting period. While Desela must remain sexually untouched until fully mated, she was to see to his pleasuring on a regular basis. Out of guilt he had tried on one occasion to stop Des from tending to him, but she had broken into tears, claiming he was rejecting her.

There was no calming her down, not until she had been allowed to resume her place on her knees. Damn, but his cock throbbed even now, thinking of those delicate fingers stroking him and that warm, sweet mouth wrapped around his erection, pumping it in and out of her mouth.

Des needed it daily, whenever she could get it. Body worship of her betrothed, the complete subjugation of her whole self to his pleasure. It never failed to amaze him, the simple peace that came over her, the way her eyes slid shut, the way she would mold her lips to the hard, smooth roundness of his shaft, taking him as deep as she could, her mouth moving up and down the length of him as though she were born to perform this function.

It wasn't only his cock she wanted. She would lick and kiss every part of him, for as long as he wished. Naturally, she desired nothing in return and would not have accepted his own pleasuring of her had he not commanded her in no uncertain terms to submit to his caresses.

She had objected, citing the prevailing custom which forbade pre-mating sexual attentions to the body of an obedient. But in the end she'd yielded, accepting his will as final. The responsibility was his, as well as any negative consequences.

Des liked it best when she was tied down, and she was learning to ask, albeit shyly, for the kind of strict bondage she craved. Using his tongue on her swollen clitoris he would tease her until she screamed, making her come in wild paroxysms, like a woman possessed. Sometimes he played with her for hours, exploring her physical and psychological limits, licking and nibbling and suckling, transforming her consciousness with mind-blowing climaxes, one after another.

Des' body was like a kind of drug that way.

How could he not be boundlessly turned on by her? She was his property and she was beautiful. For some reason it was hard to talk about all of it with Jaxey. She didn't know, for example, that he gave Desela oral sex. He wasn't sure why he didn't tell her. Was he being macho, or were there other things going on in his head?

In any case, resisting his urge to make love to Desela was proving more and more difficult. It wasn't that she was trying to seduce him. He had said no and his word was law. She would wait as long as he told her to, until such time as he was ready for her.

At that point, all it would take would be a whisper in her ear, a single command and she would succumb, opening her body, fully and completely for his use. How could she not, she was an obedient?

She had no future, no life but him. Meanwhile, he could do as he pleased. Many of the primales took advantage of this, giving themselves time to sow their wild oats with various pleasure women available throughout the civilized galaxy. This was their one opportunity, for once a primale mated, it was for life. He would be literally incapable of taking another lover.

This was part of their genetic code. A built-in protective, possession urge designed to keep primales from battling each other to death over one or another female.

Primales were notoriously controlling of their brides, much to their women's delight. Desela often peppered him with questions about his intentions for her. Would he keep her collared and naked around their home? Did he intend to be a strict disciplinarian? Were there certain rules and expectations she could begin memorizing now? Would she be often chained, flogged? Or did he imagine spanking her, loose and free, her bare ass over his lap?

The heat in her eyes indicated how aroused she was at the thought of domination. Admittedly it aroused him, too, but frankly he could not think ahead to domestic life no matter how hard he tried.

His mind was on space, on the Guardians. And on the War.

The latest incarnation of the Bug War, the cataclysmic struggle for galactic control between the humans and the Narthians. The Guardians were Earth's first, last and only defense. He had been honored to apply to the Academy and the day he was accepted had been the greatest in his life.

A week later he'd met Jaxey. He had just arrived for processing. He and four hundred thirty-eight other first-year cadets, complete newbies, waiting in line for their standard-issue green coveralls and caps. Here he was just standing in line, minding his own business and up marches this fierce, green-eyed cadet with the prettiest long eyelashes and a bobbing ebony ponytail. *Eyelashes, and a ponytail, hardly standard male issue...*

"We're supposed to be partnered up," she introduced herself, not cracking a smile. "Chief says we can pick our own. I figure you'll do."

Korlon didn't point out the obvious—that she was the only woman there—because obviously she knew that fact already. Instead, he went for the gutsier answer.

Shrugging imperceptibly, totally aware of the hell he was probably letting himself in for from the rest of the cadets, he muttered, "Makes no difference to me."

"Good." She gave him a firm handshake. "Name's Jaxey. Folks call me Jax."

"I'm Korlon."

"You got a nickname, Korlon?" she wanted to know.

"No."

"Want one?"

"Not especially."

It was the start of a beautiful friendship.

If only she wouldn't pull stunts like this. He had almost said something, right there at the table, but he knew that would have made her even madder.

Jax, why do you have to act like such a girl, sometimes?

Okay, so she was female and he didn't begrudge her that, it was just that she made things so damned complicated when she started in with the emotional stuff. As a buddy, a partner, she was solid as hell, totally levelheaded, reliable—he would trust her with his life a thousand times over. But when they were out in public like this, usually with Desela around, Jax just got so darned moody. Snippy one minute, sarcastic the next.

Flipping on a dime, and all without him having a clue what it had to do with him. He was just being himself—your regular, average primale.

Okay, so primales weren't average. But they were certainly predictable and logical. Everything he had said was straightforward. Jaxey shouldn't have gotten upset.

And what was this business about dragging Desela off, encouraging her to be openly defiant? That wasn't cool at all. He knew for a fact a lot of primales would not have stood for that. He would have been well within his rights to order Des over his knee, right there in the diner for a firm spanking, never mind that she had been led astray by another.

Some primales put their obedients on leashes, requiring them to heel at all times. Sometimes when Korlon would see such a woman, in a lovely jeweled collar, eyes sparkling, kneeling at her lord's feet, he would become so hard he would require immediate relief.

If Des was with him, she would become hot and breathless, begging him to do that to her one day. As quickly as possible, he would take her to a private place, order her to strip and get on her knees.

He would like her on her knees right now, licking and sucking, preparing to swallow a full measure of his pent-up, primale semen. On the other hand, he wouldn't mind Desela with her hands cuffed, over his lap, receiving a few stern smacks to her pert behind.

Did she really have to aggravate things by pointing out that Jaxey was not only a woman, but a damned attractive one? Of course he knew she was beautiful. He had seen her naked plenty of times. He had touched her, too, in personal combat training, and many other incidental times.

Jaxey's complaints aside, he most certainly did know her gender. Unbeknownst to her, he had requested a change of training partner on four separate occasions, for fear of giving in to sexual desires where she was concerned.

Did he know she was a woman?

How could he not? He had walked the line with her, since the start. Because she wasn't obedient he had assumed he wouldn't be attracted to her, but he had been wrong. There were times...

In the cave that night, when they had been required in field combat exercises to bed down together, alone. And the incident in the hand-to-hand combat chamber—the infamous Take-Down Room when her smoldering mouth had nearly proved irresistible to his and when their violent, nude wrestling had nearly turned into him pinning her down for real.

Thank the gods he was primale and able to control his erection. Barely.

He shuddered to think what might have happened if the exercise bell had not rung, cutting short the encounter. His hormones were raging. He had gone right to the CO, requesting partner reassignment, again.

“No,” had said the tall, bull-nosed man who looked like he was always on the verge of picking a fight. “Request denied.”

It was a rare occasion for Korlon to talk back. “Sir, I respectfully request a reason.”

The Bull Nose’s eyes homed in, red as a Gofian sunset. “You mean other than because I damned well said so?” he thundered, rising up from behind his desk like the wrath of an immortal god.

Korlon had stood his ground. Stiffening at attention, he’d replied. “Sir, yes, Sir.”

Bull Nose scowled. “You want a reason? Try this on for size, Cadet. Because no one else can handle her, that’s why. Now get the hell out of my office before I reassign you to space latrine detail for a week.”

It was the crispest salute of his career.

“What happened in there?” Jaxey wanted to know, never missing a trick. “You were talking about me, weren’t you?”

“We were discussing my possible fun-filled, all-expenses-paid trip to latrine detail,” he said, ending the discussion.

He went right to his personal chamber after that, having no choice but to deal with his hard cock. There was only one thing on his mind, and only one person with which to do it. The fantasy emerged full blown, in living color. He took things up from the last moment of their physical contact. In his imagination, there had been no buzzer to stop the combat training. No observers, no officers, nothing at all to stop things going in the direction led by lust. The impulse was there, to kiss his partner and he did not resist it...

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His lips seized upon hers, stifling a mild protest. Jaxey’s eyes went wide and she stiffened, but her resistance was short-lived, dying in the flames of the moment. Tension poured from her, like drops of sweat, converted into instant desire, the inevitable combustion from their bodies pressed against the padded wall.

The kiss smoldered, the contact of their lips spreading down their bodies. He could feel her nipples hard against him, like points of sheer passion. Her belly was so smooth, her crotch so hot.

He used his tongue, pushing it into her mouth, letting her know what he would be doing to her with his cock, exploring, taking, stimulating.

Korlon was so swollen he was going to come right there and then. He needed to be inside her, he needed to be between her legs. Jaxey was not quite ready, however, to surrender fully.

Turning her hip, she blocked his first attempt at penetration. His primale instincts surged – not to overpower her, but to seduce her masterfully.

Separating her legs with his knee, he put her back in place against the wall, her arms on either side of her head, her wrists locked in his grip. “Don’t fight it, Jaxey,” he soothed. “We both want it, we both need it.”

“Go to hell,” she snarled, though it was clear her strength was largely gone. She was more kitten now than wildcat.

Time to have some fun...

“If you give me any more trouble, Jax, you will leave me no choice –”

“What are you going to do?” she demanded. “Spank me like an obedient?”

“Not a bad idea.”

Korlon spun her about, pressing her breasts and belly to the wall. Pinning one arm up behind her back he administered a single crack to her ass cheek.

She swore at him, calling him a name. He hit her again harder. Twice more he repeated the ritual. Jaxey was panting now, red streaks gracing her luscious cheeks.

“Are you ready to be a good girl?”

“I’m not a girl.”

He spanked her again. “That was a yes or no question.”

“Yes, damn you,” she exclaimed.

“You will be a good girl?” Korlon pinched her ass strategically.

“Yes.” She winced.

“Say it.”

“I’ll be a good girl.”

He touched her pussy. “Red hot,” he observed. “And nice and wet. You like this, don’t you?”

She was silent.

He hooked a finger in her pussy to get her attention. “Don’t you?”

“Yes,” she squealed.

Korlon explored her, feeling the depth of her canal, the strength of her muscles contracting against his finger. He thought she might come then and there. “Turn around,” he ordered.

There would be no need to hold her anymore. Unless he wanted to for their mutual pleasure.

Jaxey put her back to the wall.

His hand went immediately to her throbbing pussy. "Open."

Jaxey complied, though not without objection. "We can't do this, we're both primale," she reminded him, her breathing shallow.

"You're still female," he countered, taking her breast, molding it with his hand. "And I am male."

He noted her reaction, how excited she became.

Leaning into her, nibbling her earlobe, inducing a moan as he worked her other breast, Korlon said the magic word, the one that would surely crumble the remainder of her defenses. "Submit."

A tiny groan escaped her throat—he had penetrated her to the core.

"Never," she hissed, but her body said otherwise.

Putting his come-soaked finger to her lips—the very one he had been using to explore her—he induced her to taste. And then to lick. And finally to suck.

"You're a woman, Jax," he reiterated. "You said so yourself. And I'm a man. How long did you think we would be able to deny it to each other?"

Her eyes locked on his, a flurry of emotions flashing behind them. Need, lust, and a bit of fear of the unknown. Above all, though, he read her willingness to be led.

As long as he chose to exercise his place as the male, the Dominant, then she would take her place...as the submissive.

"Touch it," he commanded. "Feel my cock with your hand."

She bit her lower lip, pulling it between her teeth. It would be the point of no return.

"Do it, Jaxey."

Jaxey shuddered, her full breasts rising and falling temptingly as she complied. "You're...hard," she stated the obvious.

"Yes. I'm hard for you."

"I need you," she said throatily, "inside me."

Those were the last words spoken between them. He took her hand once more, fingers interlaced in his, and placed them above her head on the wall. Pressing his hard abdomen against hers, glistening with oil and sweat, he claimed her. The tip of his cock edging its way up into her canal. He took her primale style, giving maximum pleasure, controlling his erection so as to make her cry out—a gasping, quintessentially feminine sound of wonder.

She grunted as his pelvis locked against hers. His cock fully inside her. At last, at long last. No more arguing, debating or dancing around the subject. They were fucking. Fucking. Fucking.

Korlon went at her with a speed no ordinary woman could handle, particularly a frail obedient like Des. Jax not only accepted it, she gave it right back, pushing herself against him, encouraging him to give her more.

His cock pumped lightning fast, in and out, in and out, flesh melding, combusting, reaching meltdown point. Their fingers locked tight, knuckles white, every muscle tensed, her rock-hard nipples against his, her full, female breasts squashed, her muscular thighs, meeting him as he moved.

Climbing inevitably up the vertical cliff side to an orgasm of monumental proportions, out of the range of possibility except for two super-beings—super-fit and supercharged.

They climaxed together, in exact precision, perfect rhythm and efficiency, just like when they studied together or did their exercises together.

The word symbiotic came to mind...

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Korlon had splattered the wall of his quarters with his semen. It was the most powerful ejaculation of his life. He had let his cock swell to full primale proportions. For hours afterward, he had still felt the effects upon his senses—Jaxey's skin, the way she'd tasted, the way it felt being inside her, the look in her eyes, the sound of her moaning and crying out and coming—all just as if it had been a real encounter between them.

He'd sworn he would never again masturbate thinking of his partner, but of course he had. Couldn't help himself. Maybe it was better that he did, though, because it relieved some of the stress that kept on building every time they were together.

Some occasions it got downright painful. That night in the cave, for example, when they had sought shelter during overnight training exercises, the night Jaxey had acted so strangely subdued somehow, cooking him that horrible soup, like she was trying to be an obedient.

Weird.

He had had to sneak off and relieve himself twice on that occasion, just to resist pouncing on her shapely body, curves illuminated in the flickering light, the dancing flames that seemed to beckon him to claim that softly breathing sleeping beauty, his tough as nails buddy whose touch he ached for more than she would ever know.

More than she ever *could* know.

Korlon had his share of guilt over the whole thing. He really did love Desela and he tried his best to keep himself focused on her. But the more time he spent with Jaxey the more she intruded into his thoughts. He felt like he was using Des. Allowing her to please him, to devote herself absolutely to him when all the while he was harboring...doubts.

Was that the right word? Could it be the kind of love he felt for her was not the sort that made for a complete male-female bonding? What was lacking?

Truth be told, it wasn't just on account of his upcoming commissioning that he was delaying the mating ceremony. He was trying to give himself more time. Whether to be sure or to talk himself into it, he didn't know. The whole concept terrified him. Settling with one woman. Forever. And a woman who would never be able to share much of what he was about.

Des was so sweet and she was smart, too, in her own way, but she would never know what it was like to be blasted in a rocket at three Gs or live in a forest for a week with nothing but water, bugs and roots. She wouldn't understand multidimensional physics and she would never appreciate the simple joys of a fingian butter nut and jelly sandwich eaten in a zero-gravity free float chamber.

Not the way Jaxey could.

If only he could put the two women together.

There, he had said it. The thing that had been eating at his mind, a secret wish that he knew was not only impossible, but wrong.

You couldn't blame a man for wishing, though. It all came down to what you chose in real life and how ethical you were once you made your choices. There were males at the Academy he talked to sometimes who accused him of thinking too much, of being too sensitive. Prone to indecision.

It was true, he was different. Whether that was due to Jax's influence or whether she somehow knew to pick him out in the first place because he already was different, he couldn't say.

All he knew was, other primales did not laugh like he did, or try to tell jokes. And they certainly weren't capable of teasing.

Had he really been too rough on Jaxey? Des had caught him off guard, that was the problem. He had nearly let it stumble out, the erotic feelings, the sweat-filled nights, the torment he felt on account of his partner.

So he had gone with the knee-jerk reaction. Deny. Deny. Deny. With a healthy shot of not-so-helpful male bravado.

Whatever. He had made his bed, he would have to lie in it. Jaxey was a big girl and she was clearly taking care of herself.

Korlon shuddered a little thinking what sort of revenge his partner would take tonight. He had called into question the female side of her and he was damn sure she would find a way to throw it in his face tonight at the Operadrome.

A painful, cock-teasing way.

He was going to need to masturbate ahead of time, he decided. Maybe more than once.

Pulling out his credit disc, he slid it into the slot on the table, covering the cost of their half-eaten meal.

A clicking sound drew his attention down to the floor. A small Varian puff crab was staring at him, flexing its claws. The collar around its neck indicated it was the pet of some nearby diner patron.

"What about you?" Korlon asked the foot-tall crustacean. "You ever have woman troubles like me? Oh, wait." He snapped his fingers. "You guys are hermaphrodites, aren't you? Damn good thing. Maybe your race is smarter than ours after all."

The puff claw snapped its pincers in reply – one, two, three, four.

"Friends?" Korlon extended his index finger.

The puff claw clamped down with all four appendages.

"Ouch," Korlon laughed. "You're quite a fighter, aren't you? I think I will call you Little Jaxey. So you want to hang out with me, tonight, or what?"

The puff claw inclined its head warily and scuttled backwards. Korlon had to respect the creature's judgment. This evening was going to be complex to say the least.

"All right, LJ, I'll let you off the hook."

Just then a small boy came up to retrieve his pet.

With that Korlon headed for the portal of the diner to catch a transport bubble.

It occurred to him that he would have to get some clothes to wear tonight for his date with the two women. *Civvies*. The very idea of it filled him with dread. If he was smart he would outfit himself in the latest style rocket suit and head straight out of the Dome, never to return.

Chapter Two

Jaxey left the diner in a much more adventurous spirit than her partner.

Arms intertwined with Desela, leaving the dumbfounded Korlon stewing at the table with the robot waiter and the Varn snails, she said, "I appreciate you offering to let me use your dress machine. The truth is, I haven't a clue...how to make one, I mean. Left to my own devices, I'm afraid I would end up looking like a clown."

"You think so?" Desela seemed shocked. "But Jaxey, you really are a natural beauty. In fact, you want to know something?"

Jaxey signaled for a transport bubble. One hummed up alongside the front entrance of the disc-shaped, free-floating restaurant right away, the round door sliding open for easy access. "What's that, Des?"

Des stepped into the bubble, Jaxey following her. "I know you'll laugh," she said, as the two of them settled into the plush seat, "but when Korlon first introduced me to you, I thought you were pretty enough to be an obedient."

Jaxey laughed at the odd compliment. "Thanks, I think."

"I hope you're not offended," said Des.

"Address?" chimed the voice of the bubble's guidance system.

"Not at all," Jaxey assured Desela.

"Oh, good." Des turned her attention to the computer. "345 Romanor Court, Tower Six, Level 87-987," she directed it to an apartment location in one of the mile-high floating cylinders in the central area of the Dome.

"Just don't tell Korlon that," Jaxey joked. "Or he'll start wanting me to take orders from him."

"Oh, I know you could never do that," Des said somberly.

"No," Jaxey agreed, "I couldn't."

Although there was that one time, during a forest training exercise.

They had been in the woods, no sleep for two days straight. She was running on pure adrenaline. She wanted to push on, across a certain river, but Korlon had this sense that there were troops hiding on the other side—the "enemy" in the game. Jaxey had called him chickenshit and said she would bloody well go on alone.

That's when Korlon had grabbed her arm. It was a primale grip. Unbreakable. "No, Jax. We're staying here and that's final."

Her mouth had opened to emit its usual smart-ass answer, but nothing came out. She just stood there, feeling a kind of tingling all over her body. Damn it if it didn't go

right to her crotch, too. Unbelievable. Her pussy had actually flooded, and not just from the rain.

It was the way he'd said it, not like he was bossing her around, but like he was meant to take charge, right then and there. He had been firm, strong, and about as calm and steadfast as she had ever seen a fellow human being.

Something in her just opened up and responded. "All right," she had said, her voice cracking slightly.

And that was that.

He'd seemed a little surprised, but he'd stayed in character. "Let's see if we can find some kind of shelter back in the woods. We'll check this out again in the morning."

She had followed him without argument. Her heart pounding, her nipples pressing against her soaking wet field uniform. They'd discovered a little cave not too far away. There had been some brush inside, enough to make a fire. They had taken their clothes off to dry.

The smell of his naked body against the earth, deep and elemental, had made her nostrils flare and her hands shake. She had volunteered to get water, just to get away for a little while.

When she had come back and seen him, cross-legged by the fire, the flames dancing off his smooth, bronzed muscles, she had been overcome with the most bizarre urge to serve him, to cook him something and serve it on bended knee.

She'd skipped the kneeling part, but she did end up whipping him up a kind of mushroom broth using local fungi. It had tasted like hell, only a little more pleasant than mud.

He'd tried hard not to make a face. "Jax, we have energy capsules and a whole tin of nutri-snaps," he'd reminded her diplomatically.

"Just eat the fucking soup, will you?" she had barked.

The images kept swirling in her head, hard as she tried to dissolve them. She blamed the cave and the exhaustion resulting from their mission. Such a primitive place, that rock-hewn hole in the earth. It had beckoned to ancient days, when men and women lived so differently, so naturally. When a man wanted a woman, he took her and made her his.

She would have been required to cook for him, to keep his cave neat.

And please him sexually. On command, she would open her legs, or crawl upon the furs on all fours to be mounted. If he wished, he would keep her roped and collared.

She would present her wrists for binding, crossing them in front of her or behind her back. She would go to her knees, too, opening her mouth wide to take her man's cock.

She would be little more than his slave and he would lord it over her as Master. Fucking her at his whim. And punishing her as he pleased.

He would make whips from the hides of animals. Or use his hand.

Korlon would have made a fine caveman, smoothly chiseled muscles, iron will, the constitution of an ancient warrior, unstoppable as a robotank, keen-eyed, unafraid to kill and conquer as he needed, to survive.

Jaxey was strong, but not that strong. She was smart and tough and better than most of the primales at the Academy. But not better than him.

If she was a cavewoman and he was a caveman, he would be able to enslave her. Were she chosen by him, she would have no choice but to follow. And obey.

Jaxey had been horny as hell all evening.

"We need to sleep apart," she'd told him, the word sleep being a loose approximation of the low-level trance primales place themselves in for rest purposes.

"I agree," Korlon had said quickly, although they could have used the body warmth.

If she had thought about it, it might have occurred to her that he was having trouble with his bodily reactions, too.

As it was, she was too preoccupied with her own condition. She'd kept trying to tell herself it was just some thermic-delusion on her part, the demands of the exercise causing her to react in an unusual, sexual manner toward the man.

It passed by morning and they'd never spoken of it again. One thing she had always wondered about was what he had been doing when she had awakened at one point and seen him skulking in the corner. She'd asked him what was going on and he had mumbled something about needing to restore circulation in his legs. That had been a halfway reasonable explanation, although she could have sworn she saw, there in the shadows, just for a second, the outline of his hard shaft, projecting from his groin.

Was her partner, colleague and buddy masturbating? And if so, had it had anything to do with her presence?

If it had, then she admired him for handling the situation in the best way, not involving her and putting their relationship in jeopardy. On the other hand, there was a part of her that wished he had not held back but rather had opted to satisfy himself utilizing her body as he saw fit.

She would not have resisted him, by any stretch of the imagination.

Even now, she could feel layers of her mind slipping away, over the edge into the abyss of imagination.

What would it have been like? How would things have played themselves out if Korlon had exercised his natural, biological dominance?

Watching outside the view screen, seeing the expanse of the crystal dome above the city, the various lights reflecting off it from the signals of afternoon air traffic, she let herself slip into reverie, pleasant and arousing...

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They were in the cave. She had just finished making her pathetic soup. Nervously, she offered it to Korlon, who still sat cross-legged by the fire.

Lifting the bowl to his lips, he took a sip of it.

She waited, on her knees, for his verdict. He drained the whole of it and she was hopeful. When he set it down, however, he was not pleased. "You must learn to cook better. Shall I give you incentive?"

Jaxey put her head down to the ground. "No, Sir."

"You deserve a whipping."

A shiver passed down her spine. "Yes, Sir," she said in dark, but strangely eager resignation.

"Fetch me the tiger whip."

Jaxey brought it in her teeth, as she had been taught. On hands and knees, she laid it at his feet. The tiger whip was multi-stranded, made of strips from the hide of a fearsome saber tooth. She knew well the feel of it on her ass, her thighs, her breasts and belly.

The whip was her teacher, her corrector.

And one hell of an aphrodisiac.

Korlon picked up the whip by the handle. "You will pleasure me," he said, "while I punish you."

"Yes, Sir," she said, still facedown.

He ran the strands of the whip up and down her spine, light and teasing. She had scars there, some fresh, others faded. She was his slave. She took punishment. And she gave pleasure. With her mouth. Her pussy. Her ass. She was her man's property. He did with her as he pleased.

Korlon lifted her head, pulling her up by her hair.

She gasped at the sight of his erection. No matter how many times she saw it, no matter how many times he dominated her sexually, she remained in awe, as if it were the first time.

His cock was so beautiful. Long and thick, with a sculpted head. Veins crisscrossed all along it, and full, hanging balls, so heavy with semen.

Her mouth watered. She wanted to taste it and lick it and worship it so badly.

Korlon prevented her, holding her head in midair. "Did you forget something?"

Panic filled her. She was not allowed to touch him without saying the right words. How could she have forgotten?

"May I be allowed to suck your cock, Sir?" she exclaimed quickly, hoping to avoid punishment.

Korlon bowed her back, lightly slapping her helpless breasts. They swelled in reply, the nipples begging further attention. She remained passive, not daring to block him with her hands. It was up to him whether or not she would be struck again.

"You are forgetting your place lately," he said.

"No, Sir," she offered her piteous objection. "I belong to you. I am your property... I never forget."

He raised his hand, but he did not slap her. "Show me." He put it to her lips.

Jaxey licked and kissed, desperate to please. He allowed her to abase herself for several minutes. "Enough," he commanded.

She looked at him, intent on nothing but his next order.

"Tonight," he informed her. "You will be taken by mouth and ass only. I will not allow you to feel pleasure in your pussy."

"Yes," she shuddered, "Sir."

Such a strange paradox, to be forbidden vaginal stimulation when in fact his very words aroused her. The denial and domination itself could bring her to orgasm as they both knew well.

"If you work hard, I will fuck your pussy tomorrow. Perhaps."

"Yes, Sir."

He pointed decisively, masterfully to his erection.

"Sir," she sighed. "Thank you."

Jaxey fell on the upright shaft, kissing the tip respectfully and lovingly. This organ was hers to worship, hers to satisfy. It was her function, her purpose and it was for this reason she had been given such a fit, shapely body and agile mouth.

Korlon liked long licks of her tongue and she administered them, making sure to appear neither too eager nor too standoffish. Attempting to rush could get her punished, but so could stalling. The balance was fine and as always, Korlon was the arbiter, the holder of the whip.

He let it rest on her lower back. Anticipation coiled within her. Going up on her knees, she took the tip of him between her lips, lingering for just a second.

Korlon whipped her hard.

She resisted every impulse to respond. She must go on sucking soft and pleasingly, no matter what.

He whipped her again. She sought to appease him by taking her deep, just as she had been trained. Korlon took lots of time training her. Long nights by the campfire, Jaxey in bondage, suckling and satisfying in utter subjugation.

The stakes were high. He controlled her food. Her pleasure. Her pain. He was her lord, her protector. Her owner. And she loved him.

Up and down her back and over her thighs, Korlon applied the whip while she fucked him with her mouth. Warm and slippery, making a pocket between her cheeks. Sweat poured from her body, just as it was supposed to. She was not permitted to hold back. She had no function, but his pleasure.

Taking his pain, giving him his pleasure, she awaited his climax, the hot, thick cream that would pour into her mouth. She would swallow every drop and afterward lick him clean. And then she would thank him, putting her head to his feet.

If she worked hard tonight, she would be fucked tomorrow or perhaps allowed to masturbate in his presence, legs splayed, naked and moaning on her back, for his amusement.

It would only make her want more. She could not get enough of this man, his hard loving, his ruthless will, and his twisted desires.

She was slave...property, his chosen pet, his woman...

Korlon did choose not to ejaculate in her mouth. As part of her punishment, she would be made to take his semen on her face and breasts, and he would force her to leave it there to dry.

"Hold up your breasts," he commanded, rising to his feet. "Put out your tongue."

Jaxey knew this pose. As a slave, she knew many poses, each of them designed for her sexual exploitation. In this pose, she could take his come all across her upper body. She knew enough to look up at him and not to close her eyes.

He gritted his teeth, looking so commanding and beautiful as he stroked himself. So smooth and effortless. He pumped his buttocks one time, forcefully and out it came. Jets of thick, white semen, landing on her tongue, in her eyebrow, on her cheeks and across the surface of her proffered bosom.

"Thank you," she moaned, saying the words a hundred times. "Thank you, thank you."

And then she did a very bad thing by slipping her hand down between her legs. One touch to her clitoris and she was gone, erupting into cataclysmic orgasm.

She hissed, knowing how fucked she was, but she didn't care. She just knelt there, reveling, taking his semen and giving back her own low, guttural groan in reply.

It didn't last long, not long enough. The soaring led to falling deep into the abyss, promising trouble and sharp discipline.

One look into his eyes and she knew.

Her head went to his feet. "Forgive me..."

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Reality in the form of Desela's voice broke through Jaxey's surprisingly potent fantasy.

"You know, I really admire you," Des confided as the tiny bubble began its ascent amidst the central cylinders, their pseudo-glass surfaces reflecting every color of the spectrum. "But I'll bet you get pretty tired of hearing that, huh?"

"Actually, you'd be surprised how few appreciate me. Generally, I'm considered a freak."

"Because you're a woman in a man's world..."

The perceptiveness of Desela's response surprised her. Perhaps she had underestimated her. "Yes, and I tend to hold my own, which annoys them even more."

"I can see how that would happen, yes." Des was looking down at her own hands folded on her lap. She had lovely hands. Very feminine, the nails artfully decorated with lavender paint, accented in tiny swirls of magenta and fuchsia.

"Something's on your mind," Jaxey stated. "What is it?"

"Oh, it would seem silly to someone like you." Des shrugged.

Jaxey lifted the woman's chin with her finger. "Des, no one will ever want to hear anything you have to say if you don't believe it's important yourself. Now why don't you take a deep breath and just take a chance."

"Like this?" Desela inhaled.

"Yes. That's fine," Jaxey acknowledged. "If you're trying to qualify for your outer space breathing equipment license. Now how about you just relax and talk."

Des put her hand over her mouth, laughing. "That was silly of me, wasn't it?"

"Yes, it was." Jaxey cut her slack. Desela couldn't help that obedients were programmed to be so literal in following instructions.

"All right, here goes." She took another, more reasonable breath. "I've been wondering...I mean that is, I've been thinking..."

"Yes, out with it!"

"I want to know if I'm really making Korlon happy."

Jaxey's heart froze for a second, though she maintained her jovial expression. "What kind of question is that? He adores you. You just heard him say how he loves you."

"I know he loves me, Jaxey. Primales are designed to love obedients. But is he *happy* with me?"

Now it was Jaxey's turn to have breathing problems. Was the seemingly simple Desela into mind reading? Could she know somehow that Jaxey was wrestling with this very question of her partner's well-being?

"Why wouldn't he be?" she replied, trying to keep her tone neutral. "You're everything he needs. You're beautiful, you're caring. He's never said a bad word about you, I can promise you that."

All this was true. Desela really did offer Korlon everything a man could want. And aside from Jaxey's occasional cynical moments, she really did support her partner's relationship in every way she could. But, yes, there was a nagging doubt. Would Korlon become bored with a woman who could never really challenge him mentally or physically?

And what about Desela? Would she not be frustrated terribly if she reached a point of seeing that she simply didn't have it in her nature to give him the challenges he needed?

Jaxey could challenge the man, that was for sure, and she did every chance she got. She kept Korlon honest, making sure he and his primale ego didn't get too big. But they were partners, colleagues, never anything beyond that.

The thing that really confused Jaxey was why she fretted so much over the question. It was Korlon's life, right? And yet for reasons she didn't quite understand she was obsessed with Korlon's relationship with Desela. It was like her whole view of the universe hinged on it.

Was she sending out some kind of negative vibes to Korlon that Desela was picking up on?

Stars, if I've done anything to put a wedge between these two, I'll never forgive myself...

"Des, talk to me." Jaxey took her hands, holding them tightly. Desela looked like she was going to cry again.

"Oh, I know this is foolish. We obedients can be such an insecure lot. I know it will be better after the mating ceremony. I just want to be sure, you know? If I can't make him happy, Jaxey, I must not be his mate. That would kill me, do you understand?"

Jaxey nodded. "Sure. I think so. I mean, I'm not like you, but I want Korlon happy, too. He's my friend. My best friend in the world."

Jaxey regretted the words at once. Taken out of context, this could look very bad. His best friend ought to be her, his betrothed.

"Des," she quickly corrected. "I meant because we work together, that's all."

"I know, Jaxey, it's all right," Des replied, with typical obedient graciousness and trust. "You are bonded to him in ways I can never be, on account of being Guardians. That's why I'm turning to you. You would tell me, wouldn't you, if..."

There was a slight jolt as the transport bubble attached itself to the exit tube. They had arrived at Desela's cylinder. The timing couldn't have been more dramatic.

"If what?" Jaxey exclaimed, unable to endure the suspense any longer. Oh, she knew exactly what Des was going to say, she just had to hear it from the woman's own lips.

"If there were someone else."

There, she had said it. Put the cards on the table. Did Desela suspect anything between Jaxey and Korlon?

The door slid open, buying Jax precious seconds to reply.

"Voyage complete," chimed the neutral voice of the machine.

Jaxey felt her mind slipping back into the past, into that whitewashed room, pulsing padded walls designed for combat training. As in everything else, they had been partners. Sealed into the Take-down Room they were supposed to go at each other full throttle until one of them surrendered. No weapons were allowed, no clothes. The only

limits were no open wounds, no broken bones. It was every bit as intense as it sounded and worse. Sometimes people dropped out as a result. Korlon had taken a lot of ribbing because he was going in there with a woman.

"Jax holds her own" had been his only reply, stoic as always.

Indeed she had. They'd set a record for measured intensity over a ten-minute period. Back and forth it went and in the end there had been no clear winner. Not one person made fun of Korlon afterwards, though. She had held her own, all right, and then some.

It had been good clean fun—except for a single moment at the very end, when their lips had come into dangerous proximity. She had just effected a high body slam on the wall and lunged in for a follow-up. Korlon was ready for her, countering with a full reversal so that she ended up pinned against the wall and not him.

She cursed her sloppiness even as she plotted her escape. It wouldn't be easy. He had her by the waist, and there they were, face-to-face. Bodies oiled and drenched in sweat, two perfect physical specimens, maximum adrenaline, unshakable will.

Quick pulses and a whole lot of pent-up energy between them—so much time together, so many things to be expressed that went beyond language...

Talk about sparks flying. It had been a near explosion. She had drawn a small, tight breath. He'd moved his head, leaning in toward her, his eyes heavy-lidded, his motion instinctual. She had nearly closed her own eyes. She could feel his cock hardening. He was losing control over his primale erection, he was going to give in to desire, he was going to touch, to taste.

Her lips half parted in response.

The raw feeling of sex was in the air. And not just sex, but submissive, primale sex, with her in the role of obedient. For once her always reliable, rock-solid body had failed her. Her independence, her will hung in the balance. If he had but blown a breath of warm air into her ear, had he brushed her with his lips in the tiniest way, or stars forbid, had he moved to take that kiss he wanted—the very one she was offering—then it would all have been over.

She did not think she could have withstood anything after that. Hot, openmouthed kisses, long lingering caresses of her body...even full penetration. She would not have been able to deny him. Being primale, she held on, keeping back the flood of liquid in her pussy, hiding her desire behind a dam. A dam ready to break.

Jaxey had never wanted a man so much in her life—and of all people it had been the one she was supposed to see not as a male but as her sexless partner, her life-and-death companion.

All wrong. She wasn't supposed to want him hard and ready for her. She wasn't supposed to want to take his primale cock between her thighs.

Into her mouth. Between her breasts...and in her ass, too.

But she had. There'd been no denying it. She'd wanted to be overwhelmed by cock. She'd wanted to be taken and used. Fucked to the core with all its complex, dangerous implications.

Oh, damn, that had been a close call.

Just in time, the buzzer had sounded. The mechanical voice of the central processor. Time was up.

Just like time was up for her now.

"We should go inside." Jaxey rose to her feet, hoping to forestall the conversation indefinitely.

"No," Desela reached for Jaxey's uniformed arm, showing surprising fortitude. "Not yet. Not until you answer the question."

Jaxey's heart throbbed. She sat back down.

Trapped.

Suddenly she found herself facing questions she had been avoiding for a long time. Nowhere to hide, nothing to do but ask. Was Jaxey herself the other woman Desela should worry about? Was there something between her and Korlon that was going to erupt no matter how hard they fought it?

Impossible.

And yet, here Jaxey was having the hardest time getting a denial to her lips. It ought to be so easy to say, *No, Desela, there is no one else. There never will be another to keep you two apart.*

So strange. Guardians were trained to lie under interrogation, to fool the most sophisticated torturers in the galaxy, even the Narthian bug hordes, but somehow this innocent-eyed woman was undoing her.

Jaxey would rather be facing those Narthians, as a matter of fact, than sitting here. Clearing her throat, she opened her mouth, wondering what would come out.

Would it be something shocking? And if so, who was going to be more surprised by the answer – Desela or her?

* * * * *

Korlon was in the cylinder-shaped sanitizing chamber back in his quarters, under the warm cleansing beams. His eyes were closed as he enjoyed a rare moment of true peace and quiet in the life of a Guardian cadet. No responsibilities ahead of him, at least for tonight. Other than picking out clothes, which he would leave to the dressing robot – a low-budget version of the kind of clothes-making machine favored by most civilians.

Korlon was in a sensual mood, his cock right there on the verge of erection. He needed servicing, to put it bluntly. He could call Desela and she would be there as fast

as the Dome transport system would allow, her eyes filled with tears of gratitude at the opportunity.

Des was busy, though, with Jaxey. Doing girl things. Whatever the hell that was all about.

That left him to his own designs. Impulsively, he ran his palm along the underside of his long, tapered shaft. The vein pulsed in response. Blood came pumping in. Automatically, he tried to think of Desela, her beautiful blonde hair a perfect match to the thatch covering her pussy. And her large pink areolas, centering full, milk-white breasts.

Once, in the home of an instructor, he had seen an obedient grasped by the nipple as an act of discipline. She was the host's mate and she had gone instantly to her knees in response, begging forgiveness. Her eyes had lit with pain, but there had been something else, too—a kind of dark, flashing pleasure.

He could do such things to Desela, as much and whenever he wished. She would accept this kind of sensual torture, even revel in it.

What about Jaxey, though? How would she respond? Likely she would attack him if he even tried to pinch her nipple. Korlon chuckled. She would fight him like a wildcat, refusing him any kind of sexual access to her body.

But she had passion too. He had seen that in the Take-Down Room. In the cave, as well. On that occasion, she had shown definite cracks in her usual sleek, dominant armor.

Her willfulness only turned him on all the more, of course. What a masochist! He was only making himself miserable, dreaming of her, because he would never have her.

A new thought came to mind. Suppose she didn't resist indefinitely? Suppose she went with him toe to toe, resisting just long enough, until he had touched the core of her libido.

By the Code of the Guardians, what a meltdown there would be. Jaxey, writhing in pleasure, fierce-eyed, wanting him. They would come together like animals, jungle creatures. He would pounce at her, at her insistence. He would subdue her and she would scream out her ecstasy.

Korlon squeezed his cock as his mind continued to move in that snaking direction, deep into forbidden territory. He had been there before. Was it a world of sheer fantasy, or did Jaxey ever go there, too? That night in the cave, when he had been so close to seizing her...as a primate.

He could see her now as she had been in the firelight. If he had not gone off to masturbate...

She had nearly caught him. That had only added to the thrill of it.

Korlon pumped his cock, his hand moving up and down the thick, long expanse of flesh, a steel, blood-filled core, covered in a soft, velvety exterior. Such a sensitive thing, a cock, and yet so powerful.

He brushed the fingers of his other hand over his nipples. They were hard and tight. He was breathing hard. He needed to make sex desperately. Masturbating like this would only take off the edge, but it was the best he could do.

He was not ready to mate with Desela and he sure as hell would not touch Jax in real life. Not with their training mission coming up tomorrow, and not after that either. She was his closest friend. He loved and respected her. He couldn't ruin that with sex-making that was bound to lead nowhere.

They were colleagues, fellow cadets. They could never be mates.

Poor Jax...

Who would ever love her? No primale would have her and she could never settle for a gaggle of mems, those sad, little half-men, sorry excuses for the masculine gender.

Korlon grunted. His muscles tightened. He imagined himself deep inside Jaxey, filling her and capturing her, even as he completed her soul, helping her not feel lonely, just for a minute, showing her, for a moment at least, that he did find her attractive. That he did regard her as beautiful.

The most beautiful woman in the galaxy, as far as he was concerned.

His semen erupted, the rich white spray reflecting the multicolored cleansing beams like some kind of organic, shooting rainbow. He tightened his buttocks, pumping his pelvis. He wanted to get out every drop, to experience every last sensation.

His emission did not adhere to the chamber wall. The tiny zappers neutralized it on contact, identifying it as a foreign organic compound. Wicked thoughts filled his mind. Of coming all over Jaxey, on her face, so she could lick his semen off. Or in the hollow between her shapely breasts, not as large as Desela's, but still very feminine and pleasing.

Or perhaps on her flat, concave belly, fit and toned.

Would Jaxey ever beg for his come, like Desela? Would she ever dream of having him fill her feminine openings? Predictably, Korlon's erection did not flag. He was primale and he had not yet attained the object of his desire. Was he capable of bonding to Jaxey through sexual release? Theoretically, he should not want to make Jaxey his mate because she was not obedient. But there were no rules for these things. She was among the first of her kind. They might be able to have sex safely, but then again, they might not.

If he exploded even once into Jaxey's pussy, or inside her tight asshole, her belly pressed to the wall as he coveted her and conquered her from behind with primale intent then everything might change. He might no longer see her as his partner, friend or colleague. She might become something else. A quest, an obsession. The very meaning of his life.

Conquest, that was the word...

Jaxey wasn't the most beautiful woman to him just because of her looks, but because of the challenge she radiated. She was prey, luscious, worthy prey.

Once again it came into his mind to ask for a transfer. Before it was too late. But that wasn't an option, not at this juncture. Probably never had been. For whatever reason, she had chosen him, that first day, out of all those cadets.

He would love to know why.

If she did have some reason, other than random choice, so far she had not seen fit to tell him.

Tonight would be the time to ask, seeing as how Desela had opened the whole issue.

Yes, definitely tonight, before they went off into deep space together tomorrow, where they would be alone for an entire week on their mission which, training or not, would still be quite real and one hundred percent top secret.

So top secret that they had not yet been informed of its nature.

Talk about a recipe for disaster.

The way his head was working, he would spend his time drooling over Jaxey, or worse still, acting out on his fantasies – chaining her down on the bunk and having his way with her again and again.

And again.

Frowning heavily, trying to distract himself from erotic thoughts of Jaxey, Korlon forced through his mind the formulas for hyper-matter mix to fuel a starship into a reverse, double wormhole. He took his theoretical ship through every possible maneuver and a few impossible ones.

All to no avail. In the end, he was still hard.

Hard as a piece of Tarlian granite.

Hard as his own head...that for years had held on to the laughable notion that he could handle any potential feelings for Jaxey. He wasn't handling anything now, except his own cock.

Up and down, his hand moving like a man possessed.

Possessed by lust...and maybe more.

Time would tell. It always did.

Assuming one survived the harshness of its lessons.

Lessons would come quickly in space, he had a feeling. In spades.

He and Jaxey were in for the challenge of their lives, and the mission would be only half the battle. The other half would be their libidos.

Their own deep hearts and maybe even their souls.

* * * * *

"I think it should be red," said Desela. "Definitely red."

Jaxey was standing in the middle of the room, the dress-making machine hovering in front of her naked body, taking its measurements with a thousand tiny beams and pulses, sweeping across her body in myriad colors.

"Are you sure, Des?" she asked uneasily. "I was thinking more blue, aquamarine, maybe?"

"That's practically the same color as your uniform," Des laughed from her advisory position, just behind the machine. "Do you want to strut your estrogen, or not?"

"I am leaning toward 'not'," Jaxey declared, having gotten a significant case of cold feet since beginning her re-imaging session.

"Oh, Jaxey, don't give up." Des held her hands together. "Please? I know it will make Korlon happy to see you looking so good. Even if he won't admit it."

Jaxey couldn't believe how easily she had managed to allay all of Des' suspicions. All she had to tell her was that, to the best of her knowledge, Korlon had not been physical with any woman, nor had he ever expressed affection for any woman other than Desela herself.

And after all, this was the plain truth. The fact that Jaxey had a wicked case of the hots for Korlon and that she might, deep down, wish that the man would make a move on her did not change that fact. Korlon was faithful, rock solid.

Okay, so she had a question or two she might like to run by him one night, over a bottle of scotch or Vingian whisky. Like what exactly he had been doing that night in the cave, all alone in the corner and what was really on his mind that time in the Take-Down Room. Had he been ready for things to take a decidedly erotic turn?

And if so, what did that mean? Was it just stress from the rigors of their training, or the effects of them spending so much time together? Or was something deeper going on?

It was like cat and mouse sometimes. She felt like he needled her, just to make her mad, like at the diner, practically forcing her to do something outrageous.

"I think Korlon would be most happy not to see me at all tonight," said Jaxey.

"That's not true," said Des firmly. "I know him too well."

"Then you should know he needs to be with his woman," Jaxey declared. Clearing her throat, she added. "For a whole host of reasons I won't get into."

"If you mean sex-making," Des said bluntly. "We aren't consummating until the mating ceremony. Korlon is very traditional."

Jaxey bit her tongue, pretending to receive this as news. "That must be frustrating. For you, at least."

"I'll say," she agreed. "All Korlon ever wants to do, it seems, is to go down on me."

Jaxey blinked. "I beg your pardon? Did you say he goes down...on you?"

"Every chance he gets." She nodded. "I'm not allowed to pleasure him unless I get it, too."

"Really?" Her head swam. She didn't think he had it in him. That wisecracking tongue of his, that handsome face between his woman's legs.

"Is something wrong, Jaxey?"

"Not at all." She forced a smile. "Just thinking...about my new dress."

Des' eyes widened. "Oh, yes, we need to get on with the dressmaking."

"The dressmaking." Jaxey forced enthusiasm. "That's exactly what we need to do."

She was picturing Korlon's face, in her sweet spot, his short, bristly hair, right there for her hands to run through and play with. Yes, that was good, her pussy clenching, her clit reverberating against his lips and tongue. But one thing seemed to be missing.

"Des," she said on pure impulse. "Can I ask a personal question?"

"Sure," Desela beamed. "We're like sisters, right?"

Jaxey felt a twinge of guilt. "Yes, sisters... Des, I was just wondering, when Korlon goes down, are you...free to move or not? You don't have to answer if it's too sensitive."

Des didn't hesitate. "I don't mind telling you at all. I know I can trust you with anything. No, I'm not free, not if I can help it. I'll do anything to be put in bondage. Ropes, chains, the tighter the better. I like to be helpless. Totally at my Master's disposal."

"Your...Master..." The words zapped her ears, bounced around her brain, stimulating every nerve cell only to reemerge, charged off her lips. It wasn't so much a rejection of the idea, it was just that she had nowhere to put it in her psyche.

Except maybe at the level of primal desires. Nipple-tightening, pussy-wetting.

"I'm sorry, Jax, if that language disturbs you. I mean no offense. It's...the only way I know to be."

"You shouldn't ever apologize for who you are, Desela. If there's fault here, it's mine. I'm not very open-minded sometimes. I don't think I give the credit to your relationship with my partner that I should."

Des smiled kindly. "Oh, you do, Jaxey, more than you realize. You love my Master, you protect him and I know the things you do to bring out the best in him. He's such a good man. I'm the luckiest obedient in the world, I know that, and it has a lot to do with your influence."

Jaxey turned beet red. "I'd rather not go that far," she said uncomfortably, not feeling at all certain whether she was helping Desela's cause. "Let's just leave it that I have got a lot to learn about all this primale mating stuff."

Desela sighed. "I wish you had a mate," she said, turning the subject in an equally unpleasant direction. "It must be so hard for you, finding a man worthy of your talents and energies. You deserve to have the same love that Korlon and I have."

"I'm good with my life as it is." Jaxey angled her smile, trying to appear nonchalant. "Besides, if I had a relationship of my own, how could I keep Korlon on task?"

"You're right," she concurred with Jaxey's witticism. "That is a full-time task." Desela giggled now. "Listen to me, being such a smart aleck. I am practically begging for a spanking."

Jaxey felt an unwanted hot rush as she pictured Korlon's large, capable hand administering bare-assed correction to the beautiful Desela. Corporal punishment of their mates seemed so barbaric, and yet it was automatic among primales.

The idea made Jaxey so very uneasy and yet she was curious about what it would feel like.

Once, alone in her sleep chambers, she had tried it on for size, delivering smacks with her palm to her exposed butt cheeks. The hot, crisp blows had made her wince. They had also made her wet and horny as hell.

She had played with herself all night long as a result, thinking of him. Korlon, treating her like an obedient and not like a partner. Punishing her, binding her...possessing her, his hard cock, entering, penetrating, taking its pleasure.

"Never mind that." Jaxey sought to put off the flood of passion in her belly. "If anyone is going to get spanked for causing trouble tonight, it will be Korlon."

Desela smiled nervously. "You're such a kiddier, Jaxey."

"Who says I'm kidding?" she said impetuously. "Why shouldn't you get a chance to get even with Korlon?"

"But we're not even, Jaxey. I am his woman, his submissive."

"So you're just going to take whatever he gives you your whole life?" Jaxey had no clue why she was getting so vehement with Des. "Spanking, bondage and stars knows what else?"

She grinned impishly. "I kind of like being spanked...and tied up, too."

Jaxey rolled her eyes. This was going nowhere fast. "Forget I mentioned anything, you are obviously doing just fine and I should mind my own affairs."

"No," said Desela emphatically. "Your thoughts are always welcome. Now how about we design your dress?"

"If we must," Jaxey agreed.

"We absolutely must," said Des. "Machine," she issued the requisite command. "Give us something clingy, very sensuous...in fire red."

"At once, madam," chimed the robotic voice. The machine began to hum. The rays it had been aiming at Jaxey changed color, flashing green and purple and finally red. Its computer brain was issuing the orders now, beaming the material across to Jaxey's skin along microscopic lines of energy.

At once Jaxey felt herself bathed in warmth, as if her body were being hugged, wrapped tight, like a mummy. And indeed it was, except in this case, way too much of her was being left exposed.

Jaxey stood, warily waiting as the machine did its work, knitting and fusing material, molecule by molecule, until the dress was complete. Red, luxurious...scandalous.

"Oh, Jaxey," Des exclaimed, examining the finished results. "You look absolutely gorgeous."

"What I feel is naked," said Jaxey, looking down at her bare belly and barely covered breasts. "I don't dare breathe in this getup."

"It's the men who won't be able to breathe, Jaxey," said Des.

"If you say so." Jaxey adjusted things as best she could to maintain some bit of modesty. A single strip of material covered her full globes, horizontally. The material connected to vertical spaghetti straps, which met behind her neck. Two more tiny straps held the lower part down, connecting it to the waistline. The hem was cut to mid-thigh, though there were slits up both thighs.

As if the dress were not outrageous enough all by itself, the dress-making machine had given her some wild accessories, too.

A pair of thigh-high silver boots with high heels and a silver choker made of cool metal, to grace her neck. She also had long dangling earrings, of looped, gleaming metal and silver lipstick.

Her long black hair was pulled tight into a topknot, bound with a silver band. She wore no underwear, as it would have spoiled the effect of an outfit like this. As a result, Jaxey's nipples were subtly evident through the strip of material.

The dress was made of liquex, which was a notoriously sexy material. Just having it against one's skin tended to make a person want sex, often against one's better judgment.

"What do you think?" Desela held up a small mirror.

Jaxey licked her lips. Her breath caught in her throat. There was no hiding her sexuality. "I look like a pleasure woman."

"You look like any man's fantasy, if that's what you mean," said the ever kind Desela.

"Korlon will laugh at me," she declared, though she was afraid the man might have a very different reaction.

"He will not laugh. He will think you are beautiful. And I will make sure he tells you, even if it earns me a very sore bottom," Desela insisted.

"Don't bother with him," said Jaxey. "Let him keep on thinking of me as just another one of the boys."

A part of her had perked up, though, at Des' prediction. At some level, she wanted him to find her attractive, desirable. To be wanted by a primale, it was said, was the highest compliment a female could receive. For as rigid as they might be in their mating practices, they were notorious for accepting only the most pleasing and desirable of women.

A mem might take a fem for a night of pleasure, but a primale took possession of a woman for a lifetime. How could he accept less than the best?

Especially a primale like Korlon—strong and brave, first in combat training. And among his classmates, he alone had had the guts to take a female partner. She had known that about him, just taking one look at how he carried himself, the firm set of his jaw, the determination in his eyes.

“You know,” said Desela, her eyes moistening again. “I think you could easily have stolen Korlon away from me if you had wanted.”

Jaxey bit her lip.

You might be right.

“Korlon belongs with you, Des. Anyone can see that.”

“I want only to make him happy, Jaxey. To kneel at his feet,” she said. “The day he collars me, the day he possesses me fully, that will be the happiest day of my life.”

Jaxey’s hand went unwittingly to the choker on her own throat. Such an odd coincidence that the dress machine had given her a collar of sorts. There was no way the machine could have known the history between her and Korlon. The way she had felt toward him at points, seeing how commanding he could be, how strong and in control of every situation.

He always treated her as an equal, but there were those moments when their usual give-and-take, the constant banter gave way to deeper sensations. Like in the cave. When she had been overtaken with strange, deep urges.

Urges not to fight, but to yield. To the man’s decisions, his dictates. His domination.

“And I want to be there with you,” declared Jaxey. “To celebrate.”

For some reason, this got Des weepy.

“Sweetie, what’s wrong?” Jaxey took the much shorter woman into her arms.

“I’m not...good enough,” fretted Desela. “I wish I could be more...like you.” Her breath came out in stabs. “Then my Master...would accept me.”

The words were like a stab to Jaxey. Between that and the sudden tightness of the collar, she was feeling pretty uncomfortable. “Honey, he accepts you now. He’s just...a man.” Jaxey fished for words. “He can’t express himself very well.”

Jaxey hoped that’s all it was. Korlon was delaying his mating to Desela for reasons she could not completely understand. This was not a good thing. In the meantime he was spending all his time with her, frequently in tight quarters. Also not good. Tonight he would see her half naked, collared like an obedient and then tomorrow he would go off into deep space with her on an as yet unspecified training mission.

Doubly and triply not good.

“You’re right.” Desela pulled herself together. “Oh, look at me, I am going to ruin your dress.”

If only I could be that lucky, thought Jaxey.

"It will be fine," Jaxey assured her. "Now how about we get you dressed to kill so you can wow that handsome hunk of a fiancé of yours, huh?"

Desela's smile was already breaking through, like the sun peeking out from a storm cloud. Honestly, her changes of emotion could be dizzying. Jaxey could never live with Des – she would be driven crazy. How Korlon was going to manage it was beyond her.

Then again, it was supposed to be simple for a primale, because all of his mate's emotions centered on him. They were utterly dependent and therefore malleable.

In Jaxey's estimate this equaled boring.

"I was thinking of something in black. Kind of basic, you know?"

"Black sounds good," agreed Jaxey, pretending to know something about fashion sense.

"Here goes nothing." Desela closed her eyes. "Direct feed," she announced, commanding the dress-making machine to pick up directly on the images in her head.

The beams refocused, covering her in a golden, pinkish light. She looked like an angel from a very old fairy tale. Soon the lights began to dance, following her breathing pattern. Desela looked so lovely.

The dress-making machine dissolved her existing garment, leaving her pink and clean and naked. What a fine body she had. Sculpted, exquisitely designed for male pleasure. Breasts, made to be held and suckled. Hips, meant to be pressed by a man's palms. Glorious sex lips, meant to draw a man's eye and tactile caress, not to mention the plunging penetration of his hard cock.

She had a wonderful ass, too. Smooth and well-toned, but still soft and very white. An ass like that begged male attention. Love taps, playful squeezes. And spanks. Hard smacks that would really sting. Not enough to cause deep pain, but enough to remind the woman that she was a female under the sexual control of a male.

Jaxey was getting wetter and wetter thinking about it.

This fine ass she was looking at belonged to her partner and Korlon could have it anytime he wanted. Desela would refuse him nothing. How could she, being an obedient?

And even if she weren't, how could a woman resist a man like Korlon? A perfect physical specimen, with his rugged jaw, his perfect muscles, honed by hard training, his keen, intelligent eyes, his passionate mouth, his fiery, one hundred percent male attitude.

Jaxey was feeling oddly weak-kneed. She must be empathizing too much with Desela.

The machine continued its work. A haze surrounded Des now and it seemed like the process was taking much longer this time. Was it only Jax's imagination?

"Process complete," announced the machine.

Jaxey beheld the stunning results. Desela was one of the most gorgeous creatures she had ever seen. It was like looking at a living holoïd, some star off the hologrid.

"Is it really awful?" Des asked, mistaking her awe for some sort of disapproval. "I know I sometimes dream up dresses that belong on prettier women."

Jaxey tried to form the words. "There isn't a prettier woman, trust me. You look...like perfection."

Perfection, indeed. The black sequined dress clung to Desela's curves in all the right places. She had worked some see-through fibers here and there, which left interesting places exposed on her hips, at the small of her back and just under her shapely breasts. The dress was long, which made the effect even more tantalizing.

There was no way Korlon was going to see this and not want to make sex with his intended mate. *I might as well stay in my quarters reviewing space operations protocol*, she thought glumly.

Strange she should feel so bitter, though. Almost...jealous.

"I did something naughty," Desela confessed. "Underneath. I am wearing caps."

Jaxey swallowed. "Caps?"

Desela thrust out her chest. "On my nipples," she said, without embarrassment.

"I don't see anything."

"The metal is thin as a layer of skin and it's virtually invisible," Desela explained. "Only I can feel it."

Jaxey's pulse raced. Her own nipples tightened defensively. "And what does it feel like?" she inquired.

"Like pressure. I made them tight. Not enough to cause pain, but I will know they are there by the end of the night," she laughed knowingly. "So don't expect me to be much of a conversationalist by then."

Jaxey glared in astonishment. "But...why? Why would you do that to yourself?"

"It reminds me of what I am, of what can be done to me," she said without shame. "Once Korlon owns me, he may subject me to whatever sensations he wishes for his own pleasure."

Jaxey was fighting sensations of her own. The thought of being controlled sexually, of being made into a man's plaything was incomprehensible, indefensible.

Unfortunately, it was also sexy as hell. "I can't picture Korlon doing those kinds of things," she said flatly.

"I see a side of him you don't," she said reasonably enough. "Korlon is all primale, of that you can be sure."

The words sent a shiver down her spine. *All primale*. That meant his idea of partnership between the sexes did not extend to the bedroom. In that arena he would demand submission, like every other male of his type. A woman in his hands would have no option but surrender—complete, delicious reduction of herself to a sexual object, a breathing, writhing animal of sex, taking and giving pleasure on command, kneeling before her lover as a slave to a Master.

"He better not pull any of that shit on me," said Jaxey, not realizing she was speaking aloud.

"What do you mean?" Desela cocked her head. "Why would Korlon do anything to you?"

Because maybe at some level I have been asking for it all along?

"Sorry, I was just teasing," Jaxey explained away the slip. "You know what a smart aleck I am."

"You're not a smart aleck. You're just funny," said Des. "It's not your fault we obedients have such poor senses of humor."

"You're doing just fine, Des," Jaxey reassured her.

"I'm just so edgy," she sighed. "I'll feel so much better when the mating is over."

"Tonight," said Jaxey, feeling a sinking in the pit of her stomach even as she predicted the coming true of Desela's dreams. "He will have you tonight."

"Oh, Jaxey." Des took her hands, her eyes glowing like stars. "Do you really think so? I would do anything to be taken by my Master this night. To become his, in the flesh."

"He won't be able to keep his hands off you, the way you look," Jaxey encouraged.

Des closed her eyes, still squeezing Jaxey's fingers. She was shuddering just a little, her body moving as if she were really feeling Korlon's touch. They were in for an interesting night, all right.

Jaxey doubted her partner would get much sleep. This in itself was not good before a training mission, but if it meant his sexual energy was released in the process, it would be worth it. Then maybe Jaxey's hormones would quiet down, too.

She frowned at this thought. It sounded like wishful thinking. Right up there with hoping the Narthians would stop trying to exterminate humanity and take up sculpting or outer space polo instead.

Discretely, so as not to shock Des out of her reverie, Jaxey cleared her throat.

Desela's eyes popped open. She looked like she had been on her way to orgasm, without even touching herself. "Oh, Jaxey, I'm sorry," she exclaimed. "Sometimes I get so overwhelmed."

"Don't worry about it." Jaxey winked. "We all have our moments."

Obedients were notoriously horny. They were forever begging their Masters' attentions. Because the conditions in which they were kept were sexually stimulating to their submissive natures, it was doubly difficult to ignore their arousals.

Tie up an obedient and she would want you more. Discipline her for her displays and she would only moan and cry, rubbing her naked crotch on your thigh even as you lay your hot hand on her ass.

Sooner or later, you would have to fuck her. Hard and long.

Sometimes Jaxey wondered if the primales were really in charge, because it seemed as if their females eventually got just what they wanted anyway. It was certainly ironic. Every male rule seemed to work against the intended master gender.

Take the prohibition on masturbation. An obedient could not touch herself because her body and all the pleasures within belonged to the Master, but this only obligated him all the more to keeping her satisfied.

The only loophole, and it was a big one, was the fact that those primales who served in the Guardians tended to be away for long periods of time in space. Those were times of real hardship for obedients and as far as Jaxey was concerned, those females were every bit as sacrificing and brave, if not more so than their males.

After all, the obedients were made to need male presence and domination. For them to be denied it for the sake of the war was a source of endured pain no primale could ever imagine.

Thus it was that Jaxey did her best to elevate and celebrate Desela, both to her face and also in her contacts with Korlon.

It had been a long road, getting her partner to the point of his mating, and she sure as hell was ready for it to happen.

If she was going to mourn the loss of any chance for something between the two of them, then so be it.

The waiting was what was killing her.

She needed to stare the whole thing down.

Beginning with tonight.

"You're the best, Jaxey." Des gave her a hug. "I love you very much."

Jaxey hugged her back. "I love you, too," she replied. "Are you ready to go?"

Des nodded. "I am if you are."

Jaxey wasn't even close to being prepared. And to think she had been the one to push for this night together, intent on using it as a chance to get even with Korlon for teasing her about not being feminine.

"Are you kidding?" She made an attempt at enthusiasm. "I'm chomping at the bit to see Korlon's reaction when he gets a load of you."

Des touched her arm. "I hope there's someone there for you, too. Someone tall, dark and handsome you could fall in love with."

Jaxey felt the lump in her throat. "You never know," she said.

Actually, there was going to be someone there fitting that description. Unfortunately, it happened to be Korlon himself. The one who was supposed to be noticing Desela.

Chapter Three

Korlon forced his erection down as Desela and Jaxey came into view, walking around the corner to the front of the Operadrome where he had been waiting for them. Clenching his fists, his skin damp with sweat, he sought to keep control. The two women were beyond gorgeous...and he was reacting to the wrong one.

Desela was obviously perfect. She had outdone herself with her shimmering, shapely black dress and long, dangling gold curls. Men would kill for that kind of blonde beauty. Never had he seen her eyes so brilliant, so focused on him. She was beyond ready, her every muscle subtly tensed with pure feminine grace as she displayed herself. His, ripe for the plucking. He need only give the word, offer the command and she would become his complete and absolute sexual slave, a dream of pleasure.

The things he could do to her and with her...

But it wasn't Desela capturing his imagination, or driving his lust.

It was Jaxey.

You could have knocked him over with a molecule swatter. Talk about cleaning up good. Jaxey was stunning. That dress, pure devil red, took a man's eyes everywhere they shouldn't go, at least not if that man was her partner, obligated to a platonic relationship.

He wondered who had designed the outfit, with its teasing band of material over the bosom and the deliciously exposed belly. Was this the machine's choice or Des' or had Jaxey herself had something to do with it?

Korlon found this last possibility a little hard to believe. Then again, he could hardly say he knew everything about Jaxey. She hardly talked about her past and she seldom exposed her emotions. Maybe she liked dresses. Maybe she liked a lot of things.

The choker encircling her graceful neck was the real killer. His primale mind immediately converted it to a collar. Jaxey, dressed for pleasure, ready to be leashed. To be tugged over, a man's hand wrapped around the free end of the chain, pulling her lips up and close for a kiss. A hot, long kiss. The kind that makes a man strip off a woman's clothes and pin her down, naked, sweating and panting.

Jaxey would pant well, and she would writhe, too. She might seek to hold out, preserving her dignity, but in the end she would have no choice but to beg her own conquest, her thighs parting invitingly, helplessly offering up her throbbing, dripping pussy to be filled, completely, decisively.

Take me, Korlon...please.

Yes, Jaxey, take you I shall.

Korlon forced the image from his mind. Where the hell was it coming from? Desela was his fiancée – sweet, charming, fantastic Desela.

“Darling,” Des exclaimed. “I missed you so much.”

Korlon accepted her warm and loving embrace. A stab of guilt passed through him because he was imagining Jaxey in his arms, her bare belly against the fabric of clingy, charcoal gray, one-piece suit. His hand slipping around her narrow waist to her firm, fine ass cheeks. His mouth nuzzling her neck, just above the collar-like choker, letting her know just how much this little outfit of hers was driving him crazy.

Damn, he winced, this was torture. He was going to have to have a word with Jaxey about this later. This was a direct violation of the unwritten rule between them – never do anything to draw attention to your gender, especially where it might cause awkwardness with the other.

A wicked thought crossed Korlon’s mind. Suppose he were to show his dissatisfaction with her attire not with words but by employing a more traditional primale method?

His pulse raced as he imagined taking Jaxey, in her barely there liquex dress, and putting her across his lap.

The message would be plain as the “fuck me, Master” expression written all over Des’ face right now.

You want to dress like an obedient, Jaxey, he thought to himself, then you will be treated like one.

“Korlon.” Desela ran her fingers over his chest. “You look so handsome.”

“Put your hands down,” he said to her, his tone harsher than he wished it to be.

Her hands dropped straight down, along with her eyes. “Yes, Korlon. Forgive me.”

Shit. Now she was blaming herself. He would either have to offer some pretty convincing forgiveness or else take her somewhere for a discreet but intense correction session.

“It’s okay.” He lifted her eyes. “You didn’t do anything wrong. I’m just...tense about the mission tomorrow.”

Jaxey looked at him strangely. Was she seeing through his half-truth?

“It will be fine,” encouraged Desela with all the confidence of a woman who had never been in space before let alone faced any hostile aliens. “I am worried a little, too, but I know in my heart that you two will be all right. Jaxey convinced me, didn’t you?”

He looked at Jax, who nodded somberly.

What other things have they been talking about? he wondered. He sensed something, but he couldn’t put his finger on it.

“Korlon, doesn’t Jaxey look beautiful?”

Korlon stood stiffly, his back straight, his cock held under control for the moment. “Yes, she does.”

"You don't have to say it like that," Des teased.

"Like what?"

"Like you're being forced to," said Desela.

In a very real sense, he was.

"Jaxey knows how I talk. And she knows I don't lie," he said, his tone designed to end the conversation quickly and politely.

"That's right," Jaxey came to his defense. "We keep things nice and straightforward between us. Just like buddies should."

Was it his imagination or was there a little something conveyed in her voice at the pronunciation of the word buddies?

"Well, I won't presume to understand you two," said Des. "But I do know that Jaxey is going to be turning some heads tonight."

"Or stomachs," quipped Jaxey, trying to turn this whole topic away from her supposed beauty.

"Hardly," declared Desela. "The men will line up for you, won't they, darling?"

Korlon frowned. He didn't like the idea of men lining up for Jaxey. He liked the idea of anyone touching her or talking to her even less. There wasn't one of them, primale or mem, who was worthy of her.

"They'll line up to get away, more like," said Jaxey, seemingly intent on desexualizing the moment.

"We should go inside," said Korlon, who couldn't agree with her more.

"Yes, Master." Desela slipped her arm inside his.

Korlon bristled, but refrained from disciplining her for using a term that did not yet apply. Instead he looked over his shoulder at Jaxey. He expected to see her rolling her eyes, out of Desela's view.

Jaxey was busy however, touching her choker, her fingers light on the metal. He could see the wheels turning, her mind far away. She had that look in her eyes. It was like the time in the cave. When he had forced them to stop and she had made him the soup as an act of submission, giving him such a hard-on he had been forced to masturbate virtually in front of her.

Now it was his turn to give her the strange look.

She made a typical Jax response, sticking out her tongue.

Still, the damage was done. Something was going on here, all right, and it had to do with domination and submission. Not from Des, but from Jaxey.

Inside the Operadrome, it was already crowded. A number of people were milling about on the various platforms while still more were waiting to occupy the special observation bubbles which would float over the main bowl of the stage.

Far below them, beneath the rim on which they stood, was the stage itself. An open pit which would soon be filled with all the lights and colors and sounds of holo-theater.

The Operadrome was considered a great marvel, both of technology and art. Drome composers were among the most highly trained persons in the galaxy. In addition to possessing a full range of musical and artistic skills, they were also required to be geniuses of mathematics, optics and computer design.

Their symphonies had to be translatable into all mediums, including mathematics. There were the classics, such as multimedia renderings of Einstein's *Theory of Relativity*, and also the more recent theories of particle-hyper dynamics and trans-universal field theory credited to Garosh of Ceti Minor.

The Drome was also great fun, providing direct escapist stimulation to the neural net.

Korlon wanted to sit on the end, away from Jaxey, but Des wanted him in the middle. "You're the man," she said. "We have to pay respect. You don't mind, do you, Jaxey?"

"No, that's fine," said Jaxey, though Korlon had his doubts about her sincerity.

Korlon sprung for the extra credits to get an acrobatic bubble, the kind that flew freely throughout the Drome, following the rhythms of the performance itself.

The seat was narrow, which meant that touching Jaxey's thigh with his own was unavoidable. So was controlling his heart rate.

"This is going to be so much fun." Des snuggled against him.

He put his arm around her, doing his best to keep his other one away from Jaxey. "Sure it is, sweetheart."

Jaxey was glued to the side of the bubble. Half naked in her dress, looking like some kind of sex goddess. Damn, he had never noticed just how desirable she was—sure she had gotten him going plenty of times before, but he had never wanted to just flat-out take possession of her.

Was she as nervous and aroused as he was? Every second was proving agony as he tried not to reach across and touch her to find out.

Fortunately, the show started right on time, which meant they weren't stuck sitting around too long.

It was an explosive show, with a long introduction he didn't listen to. As far as Korlon was concerned, it was a matter of counting down the minutes until the blasted thing was over.

He could tell Desela was ready to get frisky, but she was holding off because Jaxey was there. Which was a good thing, because Des was not what he wanted.

Korlon licked his lips as the first act began. Finally.

He was in for a pretty big shock, though. There had been a last-minute substitution. Probably explained in the introduction he had tuned out. The women must have tuned it out, too.

The change couldn't have been worse.

Instead of *Reflections on a Supernova*, they would be participating in *Passion's Flight*, the highly regarded erotic symphony.

Korlon's mouth went dry. It was too late to resist the sensors hitting the neural net of his brain. What was he going to do? How would he resist his urges?

"Des." He leaned over and whispered fiercely. "This isn't the time to respond. You keep your hands in your lap."

He was being cruel to her. Again. But he couldn't help it. If Des aroused him here and now, he was liable to reach to the other side of him...to touch Jaxey. And that would ruin everything. In his personal and professional life.

Des whimpered just a little as she complied.

The waves of color and heat were just beginning to pour over them. It was already too much. People were known to lose themselves during such shows, giving in to displays of open passion. Korlon was using his primale will to keep his cock at bay, but he was not doing very well. He was afraid Jaxey might notice.

The lights were dim, but not that dim.

His fingers were sweaty. Korlon felt coils of arousal cut through him. Holoïd ghosts danced in the Drome, their ethereal forms combining and recombining, amid crescendos of mathematically precise electronic beat.

He was trying not to touch either female now. The key was to focus on his heart rate. And not on the swell in his unisuit crotch, or the tightness of his nipples, or the full swell of his balls, indicating the presence of multiple loads of semen.

Jaxey was moving in her seat next to him. Blast it, why was she doing that?

What a horrible idea this had been, coming here, the three of them going out together. He would never make it. Never survive a night of keeping himself in check. Not when he had seen Jaxey like this. Not when he was sitting next to her, so completely, agonizingly available.

All he had to do was reach over and touch her breasts. A mere sweep of his hands and he could brush aside the strip of material and have them in his hands, her naked globes, with her proud pink nipples.

He would like to cap those nipples, to put pressure on them, to crank up a little metal tension. Desela had hers on—she had whispered the fact in his ear. But he didn't care about that.

He should have, but he didn't.

Korlon was an irresponsible primale, a fiancé without honor. He did not deserve Desela's love.

At the moment, he didn't even want it. He wanted Jaxey. Moving around him, past him, through him, soul to soul, like the holoïd images in the show.

Korlon wiped his palm on his thigh. He was feeling lightheaded. So much sweat. He licked a drop from his lower lip. Did Jaxey have sweat on her body for him to lick off?

His palm was itching. What was up with that? He moved it to a new place on his thigh, intending to clean it off again.

That was when the seat they were in took a sudden lurch to the right.

Damn, he had forgotten they were in the acrobatic seats. The sudden displacement had its inevitable effect, forcing Jaxey's body toward him. They met, hip to hip. Her fingers somehow found his. Pure slithering electricity ensued. She lingered a half second too long.

Dangerously long. So long that instead of recoiling, she pulled her hand down. And that's when they got themselves into real trouble.

Jaxey was touching his crotch.

Korlon held his breath. Des was laughing lightly, pointing at something in the show. She didn't know what was happening. Jaxey seemed frozen, and so was he. Neither one of them was doing what they were supposed to do, which was disengage.

Korlon got hard for her. Primale hard, which meant the material of his suit was straining to its limit.

What would Jax do next? Would she retreat...or go to the next step?

And how would Korlon respond?

Things happened fast after that, faster than lightning, faster than a blast from a Guardian death ray gun. Jaxey let her fingers slip across his erection, gauging its size. Ostensibly she was removing her hand, but the intent was clear. When she did take her hand away, he could not help but respond.

Just like that, he seized her wrist in midair...and put it back on his cock.

He felt Jaxey stiffen, her body on guard. For a moment, he thought she might pull away or put up a fight. It would get ugly, in a hurry if she did. In a moment, though, something seemed to pass over her. Being held restrained by him seemed to bring something out of her.

Korlon felt Jaxey sigh. There was a shiver, a release, and then she began to stroke him. Pleasingly...obediently.

His heart thundered in his chest. His mouth was dry as a desert. His every primale instinct told him to press on, capitalizing on his advantage. Despite what reason said, not to mention his sense of obligation to Des.

And press on he did. Leaving her hand where it was, throwing all caution to the wind, Korlon reached for her thigh. Smoothness assaulted him, the pure seduction of the liquex and below it, Jaxey's thigh.

He heard her release a small sound. Was it a moan?

Korlon touched her belly. The flesh undulated, as if inviting him to explore further, to widen the territory of his conquest. Upward went his fingers, the milliseconds still passing like hours.

A groan rose from deep within him, silent and desperate as he reached her barely covered breasts. He flicked his fingers, one after another across her nipples. Hard, firm

and tight. Jaxey's back arched. He could see her face in silhouette. Eyes glazed and yet wild with heat.

He leaned across. Her lips were beckoning. Full and tender, begging a kiss. A kiss and so much more. Plunging tongues and dueling mouths, the press of flesh, hands exploring, the inevitable motions toward union, undeniable, and totally wrong.

"No." Jaxey's whisper was fierce, barely audible. The single word broke the spell. Their hands retracted, to their rightful places, though Korlon's blood continued to pound.

So close to the brink.

So close to exposing himself, revealing desires, in front of Desela, which he was barely ready to acknowledge himself.

Korlon shut off his mind now, blocking out as much of the outside reality as he could. Desela could probably sense it and he hoped she would not mistake it as coldness against her.

He was fighting to keep control of himself, that was all.

For all the credits in the universe, he could not have relayed any of the specific elements of the rest of the show. It was literally not registering. At some point he felt Des poking him.

"Wake up, sleepyhead, show's over."

Korlon blinked, adjusting to the light. "Primals don't sleep," he grumbled.

"Could have fooled me," she teased as the trio stood up, their little booth safely back on the ground. "You did everything but snore."

"Hmmp," Korlon grumbled, choosing not to pursue the matter. The sleep thing made for a good cover story, even if it did bruise his male ego a little. Better a little humility than having his behavior with Jaxey exposed.

Whatever it took to make it through tonight, right?

Had he, though? Made it through?

As if in direct answer to his unasked question, Jaxey was glaring at him from the other side. "We need to talk," she said, her voice intense but too quiet for Des to hear.

"We will have time on the ship tomorrow," he put her off.

Frankly, he didn't know if he could bear being in her presence any more tonight, not with her dressed the way she was.

Jaxey grabbed his arm, brooking no argument. "We'll talk tonight," she repeated. "Now."

Korlon nodded, bucking up. She was right. And even if she wasn't, there was no arguing with Jaxey. Not once she got something set in her head. "Consider it done," he said.

"Consider what done?" Des wanted to know.

"We need to conclude our evening," said Korlon.

Des' features betrayed nearly infinite disappointment. "Oh?"

"We need to get our rest," Jaxey stepped in, as always knowing just what to say. "For tomorrow. We have to be our best."

"Of course." Des inclined her head, ever the brave soldier. "It's selfish of me to want to keep you out."

"I'll see you back to your apartment," said Korlon to Des. "Jaxey, I'll meet you back at your quarters...to go over the flight plan."

Jaxey nodded. "Desela, I had such a lovely time. Thank you for everything. I will remember this night always."

Desela embraced her. "I did, too. I feel like I have known you all my life. I only wish we could have found you someone."

"We'll have time for that when we get back from our mission."

"True," Des agreed. "Please be safe, will you? Take good care of my Master?"

"We need to get going," Korlon said, his tone curt enough to draw a fresh apology from Desela.

Damn it, he thought. This woman is so fragile. I'm afraid she will break half the time. "No apology necessary." He steered her by the elbow toward the exit of the Drome. "It's just been a long day."

The hell of it was, as long as it had been so far, he had a strong feeling the hardest part of this day still lay ahead.

In Jaxey's quarters.

Could he have picked a worse place to rendezvous? Temptation would be staring them in the face, overwhelming and irresistible in the form of Jaxey's bed and all the things two healthy, naked, erotically charged beings could do together on such a surface.

Which didn't begin to cover the possibilities inherent in the sanitizing chamber, the soft furniture...or even the floor.

Already bracing himself, Korlon got into the transport bubble with Des.

It was going to be a hard night all right. Maybe the hardest of his life.

"You seem preoccupied," said Desela, seated next to him in the bubble, which had already begun its ascent into the purple-black sky, rendered fully tame and temperate by the great dome covering the city.

Korlon blinked in response, straining to keep his hard-on at bay, feeling like the scum of the galaxy because it wasn't for her. "It's nothing," he said, hoping he was right. "Just a little pre-mission edginess."

"I understand." She squeezed his arm. "The last thing you need is a woman right now to pester you, huh?"

He nodded, his mind instantly imagining Jax, waiting for him in that provocative dress. He couldn't wait to get at her. He wanted her, like he had never wanted a woman before. Moaning, screaming.

Coming.

"Let's not talk anymore, Des," he tried to cut short the conversation. "If it's all the same to you."

Her head went to his shoulder. "It is. As long as I'm with you, my Master."

Korlon watched through the view screen. The bubble was descending toward the tall, floating living cylinders.

In a few minutes he would have her home. A part of him welcomed this, but another part was terrified.

All too soon he would be confronting Jaxey. Dealing with the one thing that all his training could not equip him for.

Desire. Passion.

And maybe some deeper emotions, too.

* * * * *

Jaxey tore the dress from her body the moment she was safely behind the sliding doors of her sleep module. Her breath was still quick, her hormones were raging and her mind was working at primale speed, trying to figure out what had happened back there at the Operadrome.

Oh, she knew what had happened, in the sense of being able to describe the physical actions, but that didn't come close to explaining anything.

What the fuck?

She had been stroking her partner's cock and allowing him to feel her breasts. If she hadn't grabbed hold of herself she would have let him kiss her, too, and put his hands between her thighs.

Her body had wanted him to, that was for sure. She was wet for him and her every female instinct had screamed to open, to let him in so he could see what he was doing to her.

And then what? Was she actually ready for Korlon to make sex with her? Would she have yielded herself if he had pushed the matter? More to the point, what was she going to do in a little while when he arrived here for a supposed talk?

What an insane idea, she thought, heading straight for the sanitizing chamber. Having the two of them alone again, after what had just transpired. Whose idea was that, anyway?

Jaxey swallowed hard, realizing it was her idea. She was the one who wanted to talk. He wanted to let it go. Smart man. They could talk on the ship, he had said, probably hoping they would never talk about it again.

Maybe he had the right idea. They could bury the matter, losing themselves in the mission.

But no—things could well go the opposite way.

Standing beneath the beams in the tiny round chamber, stark naked, the warm lights bathing her, she gave consideration to just what might happen if they didn't stamp out this thing between them here and now.

They would be in deep space, alone, possibly in a faster than light wormhole. That was tough enough on the human psyche. Loneliness set in, desperation of a kind no Earthbound human could imagine.

It was a fair bet they would turn to each other. Making sex like fiends, devouring each other with passion, only to turn one against the other in the inevitable letdown.

A schematic for disaster, that's what they were looking at. This was no mem she was dealing with, but a vibrant primale. She could end up the man's sex toy for life. And what of her own genes? What if she did some primale bonding of her own?

Jaxey arched her neck. She had the beams on full power, though she had taken a cleansing only a few hours ago. She needed to get the feel of Korlon from her skin. She needed to burn away her own desire, too. The unstoppable wetness between her thighs, the perpetual tingling she had been feeling every time she thought of him and what he had done to her tonight.

She ought to be horrified that it had happened in front of poor, innocent Des. Jaxey was a woman, though, and part of her was responding in a major way to the play Korlon had made.

Touching her so blatantly. Compelling her to touch him.

Compelling.

The word made her feel wicked with sexual need. For all her strength and independence, she had responded on a primal level the moment he grabbed her wrist. Taking command. Of her. Of what was going to happen between them.

Jax shuddered. Talk about dangerous. Fantasizing about Korlon acting the part of dominant to her submissive was one thing, but real life was quite another. She would never *really* ask for this between them, she would never pursue it.

And yet...she did not know if she would be able to refuse him. Even knowing what it would do to Desela, she could not be certain.

Stars, woman, get hold of yourself. You're not that weak...

She had willpower. She was trained to resist torture, to stand up to grueling, miserable conditions, physical and psychological.

So why was this so difficult for her? Why had she allowed Korlon to do what he had? Why had she crumbled like an obedient in the face of even the mildest sexual pressure?

Sure, it felt good, but she was better than that.

Jaxey put her hand to her throat. She still wore the choker! The silver band that was so very much like a collar. Her pulse raced. She couldn't help herself, she was touching, sliding her hands over her belly, wanting them to be his, working their will and desire over her flesh, marking and branding, soothing and heating and cooling, everywhere at once.

On her breasts. In her pussy.

Over the smooth surface of her ass.

Jaxey gasped, finding her clitoris. The liquid poured from between her nether lips. Almost at once she was overcome by orgasm, short sweet stabs of ultimate pleasure. Slow and easy – flicking her clit, teasing her slit, beckoning her legs to part, baring her sex, the swollen lips behind whose folds lay the aching canal of her being. So very vulnerable...

The breath caught in her throat. Naked need. Not only for tenderness, but for something altogether different in combination.

Using her other hand, she sought to deliver. Hard pinches to her nipples. Nails scraping over the flesh of her belly.

Slaps to her ass cheeks, driving her forward, with guttural moans onto the impaling fingers of her other hand.

Jaxey was coming again, much harder this time and much more desperately. She spanked herself twice more, bringing genuine pain. She didn't care, she could take it. If anything she wanted more. A firmer hand than her own, a man's hand.

Korlon's hand.

And his cock. And the rest of him, too, pinning her to the wall. Having his way with her, throwing over all the arguments in her head of how wrong this was.

Sucking her lower lip she gave way. More orgasms were waiting, lying dormant. It was like an iceberg breaking up, one cliff collapsing upon another – white, melting heat over roaring walls of ice, shaking the very sea itself, splashing it thousands of feet into the air.

Coolness, washing over her surrounding a core of red-hot heat...

Nothing but silence, the roar of climactic stillness. A moment held in time forever.

That and the sound of the door ringer.

Damn. Was this for real? At this time of night?

Interruption in the middle of the best solo sex of her life?

Then she remembered Korlon. Not the one in her fantasies, but the real one. He was coming to see her. That would be him now. What a wonderful presentation she was going to make.

Jaxey shut off the beams and went to the small clothes-making machine she kept in her hygiene chamber. What was she going to wear?

Her uniform would be good, or maybe a suit of space armor.

Better still would be a few more walls.

Jaxey opted for a skintight exercise combo consisting of knee-high bottoms and a midriff top. She couldn't quite bring herself to put on her Guardian uniform. Her behavior tonight and the urges within her were anything but appropriate to the Code. One gave one's life for fellow Guardians. One did not crave to surrender to them sexually.

"Guardian Cadet Korlon to see you," announced the robotic voice of the computer as she gathered her hair back in a ponytail, wrapping it in an elastic band.

"I know who it is," she snapped.

The machine was oblivious to her anger. "Shall I let Cadet Korlon in, madam?"

The very mention of the man's name bristled at her sore nerves. "Absolutely not," she declared. "And I will thank you not to ever mention his name again."

The machine considered the matter. "What if he comes to the door another time in the future? How will I announce his presence? Would you prefer a code of some kind?"

Jaxey growled. You would think she would learn to stop arguing with her own computer. "No, I don't want a code, and no, he won't come back," she declared.

"Statistics suggest otherwise, madam," the machine informed her helpfully. "Probabilities of a return visit are actually more than—"

"Do you have to rub it in?" Jaxey licked her lips, looking about the small chamber. She was stalling and she knew it.

She might have checked in the mirror to see just how she looked, but that would have been acting too much like a female, and a needy female at that. Korlon was a buddy, a partner, what did she care if he found her pleasing to the eye or not?

In fact, the uglier she appeared the better.

"No," the machine offered up its reply, employing its relentlessly literal approach. "I am not required to create any sort of friction motions. Unless you command me to."

Jaxey rolled her eyes and headed for the door. "Just make yourself scarce while we're talking, okay?"

"I have nowhere to go," he reminded her. "I am hard-wired into your walls."

"Must you remind me? Just turn yourself off, then, or link up with one of your computer buddies and play holochess."

"Computers cannot have friends."

"That's because they're so damn annoying," she said, pushing her palm against the small yellow disc on the wall.

At once, the portal slid aside, revealing the silver-gray corridor, with its people mover belt and floating micro lights.

Korlon was there, too, square shouldered, larger than life.

"We shouldn't be together like this," he announced his presence at her door.

She couldn't help running her eyes up and down his muscular form. "You can sleep in space," she said, trying to keep her voice level.

"I don't mean the sleep." His eyes were intense, burning blue flames. "I mean being in your quarters after the general sleep alarm has been sounded."

Technically, he was right. They both still occupied chambers in the area of the Academy. But soon enough they would have new spaces, new assignments. "I don't think anyone's going to report us. Not one night before cherry pop."

She winced a little at the choice of words. Cherry popping. It wasn't her invention, though. That was how everyone referred to the final training mission, in which cadets flew unsupervised into the depths of space.

"All the more reason to cool it. We're supposed to be on the honor system."

"The honor system?" Jaxey had heard enough. "Is that what you call pawing my breasts in front of a million Drome fans?"

"Jaxey, people will hear you." Korlon looked left and right. "Let me inside, where we can talk like civilized adults."

"By all means." She waved him through the open doorway. "Make yourself at home."

Korlon moved to the middle of the room and stood there.

"Have a seat," she said.

"I prefer to stay as I am."

"Suit yourself." She went toe to toe with him, arms folded over her chest.

He put his hands on his hips, accentuating his lean, solid waist. "First of all," he said, stone-faced, looking sexier than any holostar. "I was hardly pawing you. Secondly, I'm not the one who came to the Drome dressed like some kind of...I don't know what."

Jaxey couldn't believe what she was hearing. "Are you trying to say what happened tonight was my fault?"

Korlon frowned. "Damn it, you're putting words in my mouth," he accused.

"On the contrary, I am trying to pull them out and give them the refutation they deserve. Because if you think for one minute I am going to let you hide behind some stupid argument that a man's lust is controlled by what a woman is wearing or not wearing—"

"In your case the emphasis was definitely on the *not* wearing," he interrupted. "What was going through your head showing so much skin, anyway?"

Jaxey felt her temper rising to boiling point. "What business is that of yours? Maybe I wanted to look feminine for one night. Maybe Desela reminded me I actually could be feminine."

"You're supposed to be my partner," he accused.

"I am, you knucklehead. For your information, I wasn't dressing up for you," she exclaimed.

He looked taken aback. "Well, who else then?"

"I don't know." She threw up her hands. "What difference does it make? It could be the man on the moon for all it matters. The point is you crossed the line."

"You didn't fight back." He pointed a finger.

"I was being polite," she lied. "I didn't want to hurt your feelings."

Her last remark struck a nerve. She could tell by the tightening of his lips, the sudden arch of his left eyebrow. "So you felt nothing?"

Jaxey's heart was pounding. What was she trying to do here—cool the man's rockets or get him all worked up? She was risking provoking him and she knew it. "Not a thing," she assured him.

Now he looked angry. "Jax, don't make me get graphic here," he warned. "Just admit it. You were aroused. You wanted to make sex with me."

"I did not. You forced me into a corner, Korlon. I didn't want to make a scene in front of Des. So I...went along with things."

"Your nipples were hard." He took a step closer, his eyes darkening to a color she had never seen before. "I bet they are hard now, too."

"That's none of your fucking concern, Korlon." She bared her teeth.

"I know that you were wet, too, Jaxey. I could smell your scent. Des missed it—oblivious as always to anything or anyone but me—but I didn't."

"Fuck you, Korlon." She took another step back, trying to maintain the distance between them.

"You're aroused by my being here, why can't you just admit it?"

"Get out." She pointed to the door. "I don't want you here."

"That's not the truth." He touched the side of her head, running his finger over her hair. "You do want me here, very much."

His caress went straight to her belly, making her feel hot and weak all over.

"You're pissing me off, Korlon. I'm warning you." Jaxey's voice was strained. She could see the erection in his pants. Either it was too much for him to manage even with his primale control abilities or he wasn't even trying.

Either way, it did not portend for a quiet night alone in her quarters.

Something occurred to her as she looked once more into his eyes. "Korlon, did you have something to drink?"

"I don't need alcohol, Jaxey. Not with you."

"Well, you might as well be drunk, as little sense as you're making. You came here mad at me for crossing the line and here you are demolishing it. All I wanted was to get things back to normal between us."

He closed the gap between them and reached behind her, undoing the ponytail. "We will get back to normal—whatever that is—when you acknowledge the truth. There's something between us and we have to deal with it, get it out of our systems."

She tried to push him away. She wasn't using her full strength. What was wrong with her anyway? "Korlon, nothing's going to happen between us, tonight or ever. You're engaged to Desela, remember?"

His hand went to her ass. "On the contrary, Jax. Tonight is going to happen. Desela can wait. Obedients are good at waiting."

Jaxey attempted to wriggle free of his grip. "You don't mean that, Korlon. You don't have it in you to hurt Desela like that and you know it."

"I'm not trying to hurt Des. I have needs, too, that's all, and so do you." Korlon's fingers dug into her buttocks, holding her still. "Did I say you could move?"

Jaxey growled. Enough was enough. She moved to deliver a punishing blow, knee to groin. Korlon avoided it easily, pivoting his hip. As punishment, he smacked her ass.

"Ow," she squealed. "That hurt, you bastard."

"There's plenty more where that came from."

"I don't like you like this," she decided. "I want you as my friend again."

"I am your friend. I'm just under a lot of pressure, that's all. Des is a wreck. She was crying something awful. Wanted me to stay the night."

Jaxey put her hand on his chest. She was worried to death for him. This stress was inhuman. "You should have. You should have let her comfort you. It's what she's made for."

"I did comfort her. I stayed with her until she fell asleep." Korlon nuzzled her neck. "And now it's my turn for comfort. I want you, Jaxey."

"We're Guardians." She tried to evade his nibbling lips. "Not fuck buddies."

"So maybe it's more. Maybe we have something stronger going for us."

The implications of that statement scared her silly. "Korlon, don't be an ass." Jaxey employed an evasive maneuver, one that left her free of him, ten feet back, in a full defensive stance.

"Nice move," he acknowledged her prowess, sounding once more like her colleague. "But it's not going to work."

"I think it just did." She poised herself, ready for the counterattack.

Korlon just stood there, this strange grin on his face, not quite smug, but hardly genial. "All you did was hasten the inevitable."

"Nothing's inevitable, except you leaving," she defied.

Korlon was unimpressed. "Why are you making this difficult? Take off your clothes, Jax. Get into bed."

"In your dreams, ace."

"I'm not going to ask again."

"Good, then I won't have to tell you to go and fuck yourself again, either."

"Suit yourself." Korlon came at her, smoothly and efficiently. If she hadn't been thinking with her hormones, she would have seen it coming, would have had time to react. As it was, she was like a house of cards, a complete pushover.

He went directly for her lips. Pulling her tightly against him, he offered himself, his muscular chest, his rock-hard cock. She moaned, opening her mouth, giving him free rein to plunge his tongue.

She kept on thinking *no, no, no*, but her body was translating this as yes. A thousand times yes. So long had she been waiting for this moment, dreaming of it. Even when she wasn't aware she was imagining sex-making with Korlon, she still was. Her whole being seemed to be about him, connecting, binding...satisfying.

"Korlon," she gasped, as he took a momentary time-out. "We have to stop. I can't do this to Desela. I will hate myself. You will hate yourself."

Korlon took her lower lip between his teeth, half sucking, half biting. "We will hate ourselves worse if we don't follow through," he rasped. "We have to see where this is going. It could be our last chance. The mission...it could be a red."

Red, as in potential live fire, on the front lines.

He was right. They could draw a red, given how hard the service was being pressed in wartime. If that was the case, they could count on heading to the front, possibly even behind enemy lines.

Korlon tried to operate the control to her top. It was a button on her shoulder that, when pressed by her right fingertip, would cause the material to fall away, exposing her chest.

He growled, unable to make it work. "How does this damned thing work?"

"It's set to my fingerprint. Lucky for me."

Korlon massaged her breasts, enticing her to want more. "Open it, Jax. I need to see your breasts. I need to feel them."

Jax squirmed. "You're not playing fair."

"I don't have to," he breathed down her neck. "I'm a primale in heat. Now are you going to take that off or do I have to rip it off?"

A primale in heat. Damn it, she'd nearly forgotten. "Korlon, what if you bond to me? This is too dangerous."

"You're not obedient, we should be all right."

"We don't know," she implored.

"Open it," he repeated, too forcefully to be ignored.

Jaxey engaged her fingerprint. The material gave way, exposing her chest. At once, Korlon fell upon her, burying her right nipple and half the surrounding globe in his greedy mouth.

"This is my idea of wrestling," he chuckled.

She gripped his shoulders, lacking the will to push him off her.

"You son of a bitch," she hissed as he sent pleasure coursing through her veins. "How am I supposed to fight that?"

The answer, of course, was that she wasn't supposed to fight. To do so, against a primale, would be futile.

Never mind that she was primale, too. Somehow it didn't seem to count at this juncture.

"Hold your breasts up," he said, his voice a sharp rasp. "Let me see how full they are."

"If I do will you leave me alone?"

"Yes."

"You're lying."

"Only one way to find out." He shrugged.

"I suppose you think you are charming," she pouted.

He gave her a grin, as if he knew he was.

Actually, he was worse than charming, he was devastating. Handsome enough to take a woman's breath away, with intelligent sexy eyes and a killer mouth.

"All right," she said. "I'll give you what you want. And then you will go."

He licked his lips, watching as Jaxey displayed herself to full advantage.

"You take my breath away," he whispered.

Jaxey resisted the urge to melt into a puddle on the floor at his feet. "Stop talking foolishness. Desela has a better body and you know it."

"I don't ache when I see it. I don't dream about making sex with her and wake up in a cold sweat, my cock in my hand."

Jaxey swallowed. Okay, so the man had the looks *and* the words to get to a woman, but that still wasn't near enough to cross the gulf between them. "I'm wrong for you, Korlon, you know it. Genetically, biologically wrong. I will never be able to please you in bed."

"It's up to me to get what I want from you." He paused to run his fingers across her nipples, one at a time.

Jaxey resisted every impulse to throw herself at him and sink to the ground at his feet. "What I have is not available," she said bravely.

He smiled indulgently, with all the patience of a hunter playing with his quarry. "I see you left on the collar."

"It's not a collar."

Korlon played with both her nipples at once, stripping her of everything but the complete and naked desire to pleasure the man, to be his toy. "Symbolically it is."

Jaxey squirmed, trying to get away.

"Hold still," he said.

"You can't make me."

Korlon took tight hold, between his thumbs and forefingers, of both nipples. "Yes," he pressed, "I can."

"Oh, stars," she cried as he pressed her sensitive buds, viselike in his grip. "What are you...doing?"

The sensation went through her like a corkscrew, white-hot, that both burned and soothed. She wanted him to stop...she wanted him to do it harder.

"It's called discipline, Jaxey. Primale foreplay. Now tell me again." He tugged on her breasts, pulling them out. "What it is I can and can't make you do?"

"A-anything," she heard herself pant. "I'll do...anything."

He smiled wickedly, quite satisfied with himself. "I'm glad we see eye to eye. For tonight," he declared, ratcheting up the pressure just a little, "that little bit of adornment on your neck is a collar, a symbol of my power over you."

"Yes," she hissed. "I agree."

"We're going to do things. Whatever strikes my fancy. All the things I have dreamed of."

"Yes..."

"You will submit to them, each and every one."

"Yes," she said again.

Korlon took another kiss, gathering her hair in his fist. This time, it felt as if his tongue penetrated straight to her core. By the time he released her, the tables had fully and completely turned.

"Take off your pants. I want you naked."

Jaxey's fingers trembled as she slid them down over her hips. The scent of her bare pussy filled the small room as she peeled the material down to her calves. One leg at a time, she stepped out of them.

She had never felt so vulnerable, so sexually charged in her life. Her eyes filling with awe, she watched him, waiting to see what he would do to her next. Would he want her to come to him to receive pleasure or pain? Would he send her straight to bed for sex-making of some type?

Unable to help herself, she squirmed, just a little.

"Don't move," Korlon ordered, making her stand for him, posing. "Stand as you are. Hands at your sides."

Jaxey felt a little zap of pleasure in her nether region. She was being denied the right to cover herself. It was a small thing, but significant nonetheless.

For with each loss of her power came the increase of his. Estrogen softening to testosterone, soft sex petals preparing to part for his sculpted shaft.

"Turn about," he told her. "Slowly, hands above your head."

Jaxey raised her arms, fingers interlaced, stretched skyward. Gracefully, she bent backwards, displaying her beauty, silently begging his attentions to her cock-starved body.

"Again." He made her repeat her subtle rotation. "Show me your emotions."

Her chest rose and fell. She wanted to show him all right, beginning with throwing herself to his feet, begging him to touch her.

Korlon had something more devious in mind, however.

"Caress yourself," he said. "Face me and put your fingers inside your sex."

She nearly exploded at first contact. He watched her struggling, trying to keep composure, trying not to orgasm in front of him.

"You like that?" he asked.

"What do you think?" she spat. "Who doesn't like to play with themselves, you son of a bitch?"

Korlon was calm, resolved, fully in control. "Is that how you speak to your primale lover?"

Jaxey's toes curled. Being primale herself she understood well the meaning. He was not above punishing her much more harshly, sexually or otherwise. "No," she admitted.

Korlon's justice was swift, creative and harsh. "Put your hands behind your back, Jaxey. You are hereby denied the right to masturbate."

Jaxey felt resistance welling up. This felt like a watershed. If she did not resist now, then when would she ever?

"You can't stop me," she managed, pushing her fingers deeper into her slit.

"I can," he countered with supreme confidence, showing a side of himself that he must surely reserve only for Desela. "But the results would leave you shackled and gagged with a very sore ass by the time we made sex."

Jaxey looked at him, openmouthed.

Swooning was such an ancient, silly thing, belonging to an era of silly, exploited women, but Jaxey could swear she was about to give in to a little of it herself. Could this really be her partner talking? He was sounding so damn serious...so damn primale.

"Make your choice, Jax. Obey...or pay the consequences."

Slowly, very slowly, she removed her hand.

"Lick it clean," said Korlon.

Jaxey placed her glistening fingers to her lips, trapped by her own passivity. She could taste her own fluids, pungent and raw as she worked her fingers around.

"Suck them harder," he encouraged wickedly. "Show me how good a job you will do with my cock."

Jaxey was heavy-lidded with desire. Her nipples were burning, and her pussy was aching. So this was what had been missing from her sexual experiences to date. She had not managed before now to find a man who was truly willing to dominate her.

It was a very fresh awakening indeed...

She felt shy and tender, like a turtle poking out its head. Should she be overjoyed or terrified?

The wrong man, the wrong time and the wrong place. How ironic that she would find the right kind of loving in the midst of such a disaster...the imminent ruination of three lives—hers, Korlon's and the innocent Desela's.

"I should have taken you that night in the cave," he declared, watching her. "You wouldn't have resisted, would you?"

She shook her head, even as she continued to resist.

"I want to hear you say it."

Her throat was intensely dry, despite the saliva and come on her tongue. "I wouldn't have resisted," she confessed.

"And what about now? Do you still want me to leave?"

"No..." she whispered, her voice low and intense.

"I couldn't hear you."

"No, I don't want you to leave." Without realizing it, Jaxey had put her hands behind her back, wrists crossed.

It was exactly the position he had told her to assume.

"I'm going to fuck you, Jax. Hard. The way you deserve to be. As a beautiful, vibrant woman."

His words melted her. She couldn't wait much longer. "Then do it, damn you."

And why not? Everything was shot to pieces already.

Korlon's smile angled sharply. He had her in his sights, fixed, ready to consume, the prey to his predator. "On the bed," he told her.

The words struck deep. This was it. They would no longer be friends, colleagues, but a couple. A sexual couple. "How do you want me?" she asked.

"On your knees will be fine. For now."

"Okay..." The way he said the last part made it clear he had lots more in store for her. With trepidation, Jaxey moved to her bed. She had made sex on it once or twice in the last two years. They were not memorable occasions. Nothing like this.

There was no mistaking the meaning of the position he was having her take, kneeling before him. It was one of subjugation, that of a woman expecting to be commanded.

The material of her sheet was smooth on her knees. She moved to the very center, turning to face him.

"Keep your hands behind your back," he told her. "And spread your legs."

Jaxey clasped her hands more tightly and sucked in her stomach. There was a ritual here, one that a fem might not understand. Primales were incapable of having sex with a woman unless they took complete possession of her. Corporal punishment, bondage, verbal domination were all potential parts of the package.

"Open your legs," he said. "Wide."

Jaxey parted her thighs as far as they would go.

"You look good," he observed. "On display."

"I'm so fucking horny..."

"Not horny enough."

"Korlon..." It was a half plea, half moan as she pushed out her pelvis toward him, letting him know that she was indeed more than ready for him.

Korlon's eyes stayed fixed on her, even as he began to undress. Her heart raced at the sight of his bare chest. She had seen all that marvelous muscle before, even fantasized about it, but never like this. Never so real, so touchable and erotic.

She focused on his nipples. They were hard and tight, perfectly centered on his sculpted pectorals.

"I have had to masturbate, Jaxey," he said, taking his own turn at confession, "on many occasions. Because of you. I could barely control myself around you. I'll bet you didn't even know."

She watched as he peeled the one-piece suit down over his hips, allowing his erection to pop out, long and hard and throbbing. It was the perfect crowning to a perfect body, ultimately masculine, artificially engineered for prowess and strength.

The broad shoulders, tapering to the narrow waist, the thick biceps, the sinewy neck, the washboard stomach and stone-hard thighs. Smooth bronzed skin, like living marble, covering a design of gleaming, polished metal.

Yes, she had known what was going on with him, with this wonderful body of his, but she had been afraid to acknowledge it. Up to this very second. "The cave," she whispered, the pieces coming together in her mind. "That's what you were doing in the cave that night."

"Yes," he nodded. "Twice. I wanted you so badly, beside the crackling fire, the shadows dancing off the dark stone walls, the two of us alone for a hundred miles in that dark cavern. I could have made you scream as loud as I wanted and no one would have heard."

"I would have screamed," she acknowledged. "I would have come for you...over and over."

His lips twitched ever so slightly. What was he thinking?

"Of course you would have come for me," he said with a quiet, fierce deliberateness. "You would have been my slave."

The word slayed her on the spot.

Slave...with all its erotic implications.

"I can't be your slave," she pointed out. "I'm not an obedient."

"You're obeying me now." His hand went to his shaft, stroking slowly.

Jaxey swallowed hard. "Yes, but..."

"Yes, but nothing. Until the dawn, you are mine."

A shiver passed down her spine. It was true, gloriously true and she wanted it to be so. "Yes, Korlon."

"Say it." He approached her and stood beside the bed, one hand on his cock, the other stroking her cheek.

"I'm yours," she whispered hotly, leaning into his touch. "Until dawn."

"You are my obedient."

Her eyes slid shut. "Yes..."

"Look at me."

She did so, looking up at a man she thought she knew but whom she did not know at all.

"On this bed, now, you are my slave girl."

He was cupping her breast, molding it, holding it as gently as a lover, but with a firmness that hinted at overwhelming sexual power.

"You are my property until dawn. Your body," he massaged her helpless globe, "is mine."

Her eyes moistened. "Yes, Korlon."

"You may call me Master."

"Yes...Master."

His finger was at her mouth, tracing a line around her tingling, tender lips. She felt the link directly to her pussy, as though he were making contact with those lips, too.

"Suck," he commanded.

She took his finger deeply into her mouth, suctioning it between her cheeks. He moved it in and out rhythmically, decisively. It might well have been his cock, and Jaxey treated it as such, with passion and reverence.

He allowed her to offer her ministrations a little longer before removing the digit once more, popping it from her eager mouth like a cork. Deprived of her hands, she could offer no resistance now as he teased her, tracing idle circles over her chest and belly.

Her body writhed in sheer frustration.

"You move even better than in my dreams," he declared. "I can only imagine how you'll be, lying underneath me."

Jaxey moaned softly, indicating how very much she wanted them both to find out.

"Do you intend to please me?" he asked.

"With my whole being," she vowed.

He reached her outer thigh, laying his palm on her warm skin. "If you are not fully pleasing, I will punish you. Just like any obedient. Is that clear?"

"Yes, Master," she assured him, her body glowing hot, straining for possession.

Korlon slapped her inner thigh, testing. Jaxey braced herself but did not resist. This was not training nor was this the world of equality they knew in the Academy. "Mine," he repeated, moving his hand to cup her pussy.

"Yes, Master," she concurred in a low, fierce voice.

"Move against me."

She thrust her pelvis out, into his hand. Gyrating as best she could, she followed his instructions.

He waited until sweat was beading on her forehead. "Hold still," he suddenly reversed his command. "Do not move a muscle."

This was harder than it sounded. Especially as he found her slit, allowing the tips of his fingers to move along the ridge between her labia. The pressure was featherlight but excruciating nonetheless.

Very, very slowly, moving like he had all the time in the world, he positioned one finger over her clitoris. Not touching it, but ever so close. Jaxey dared not breathe. If she so much as grazed his finger she would be lost.

Korlon's gaze was locked on her, his eyes like blue tracking beams. "If you come without permission," he told her, "you will go over my knee."

"Yes, Master," she acknowledged, fighting to keep control of her body.

Korlon touched her clit. Jaxey's world spun instantly out of control. Explosions from deep within her, unbidden. An orgasm of too great a magnitude to hide, like shooting stars lifting her up to the ceiling and beyond it to the very top of the Dome.

He was touching her...at long last, taking his due.

She craved to have his finger inside her, better still his cock. If only she had her hands free to kiss him and grab for him. Korlon had other ideas, however.

He lifted her body and flipped her over in a single motion, all while seating himself at the edge of the bed. The next thing Jaxey knew, she was responding to a loud cracking sound reverberating against her ass.

"Ow," she screamed, the raw pain cutting through the happy slave game she was playing in her head. "That hurt, you ass!"

Korlon would not let her up. Either he was getting a whole lot stronger or she was weakening. Without comment, he struck her five more times. More than anything it was humiliating. To be beaten by Korlon in a fair fight was one thing, to be spanked on her naked, squirming ass was quite another.

"That was for not calling me Master just then," he informed her. "We will now begin your original punishment."

"No," she cried, her voice degenerating into a whine. "Kor—I mean, Master, please."

"Settle down, girl." He smacked her again, causing fresh blasts of pain, like molten lava.

Jaxey lay still, tears dripping from her eyes. It wasn't only pain, though. He was doing other things to her, driving heat into her body, making her want the spanking. And a pile-drive fucking, too. Her nipples were like rocks, her breasts squashed against his legs. She was pouring sex liquids.

"That's better." He hooked a finger down inside her pussy, leaving it there. "Isn't it?"

"Yes, Master," she whimpered, on the verge of yet another climax.

"Would you like me to continue your punishment?"

"Yes, Master."

"Beg for it."

"Please, Master," she croaked. "Spank me."

He placed his hand flat on her ass. "Move against me."

Jaxey spread her fingers, which were resting on the floor. Her pulse raced. She was being ordered to hump his thigh.

Tentatively, she lifted herself. Korlon didn't wait for her to come back down. Applying a heavy blow, he put her back in her place. She could feel his cock burning through her skin, draining her strength.

She hoped for a moment's rest, but he ordered her back up immediately.

Jaxey did so only to find herself smacked down yet again.

"Don't stop," he commanded.

She clenched her buttocks, pushing them up toward Korlon's driving hand. Fresh punishment met her, crashing her back into place. Jaxey groaned, succumbing to the sheer animal nature of the act.

Between the pressure of his muscled thigh and the repeated smacks to her ass, she couldn't help launching herself into another orbit. Knowing that she had been forbidden this release and that she was going to earn more punishment only made it that much better.

"Did I say you could come?" Korlon had her by the hair, pulling just hard enough.

"No, Master," she winced, getting off on the sudden tension to her scalp, tugging her tight as a violin string, sending currents of desire all along her spine.

"Shall I spank you more, slave girl?"

Her body felt a delicious tingle at being called a slave girl. "Yes, Master. I deserve it. For coming again."

"An honest answer. I like that," he chuckled. "Just for that I will spare you."

Again Jaxey felt herself lifted, controlled like a rag doll. This time she found herself facing away from him, his hands gripping her waist as he held her just above his erect cock.

She looked down, whimpering.

"Are you ready," he inquired, "for penetration?"

Was she ready?

"Oh, stars, yes, Master, yes."

"And what about my ejaculation inside you? Are you ready for that? And your own, as well?"

He made it sound harder than it ought to.

"I don't see why not," she said, adding a tinge of caution to her voice.

Korlon took her earlobe between his teeth. "We will see."

She cried out as he bit down, the sensation sending her somewhere far away. We will see, he had said. The words made her feel like a virgin.

Though the way he was going at her, she felt more like a pleasure woman for hire.

There was no value to put on this experience, no amount of credits in the universe. A gamble is what it was, of monumental proportions. And she did not like the odds one bit.

Especially since none of them, Des included, could claim to be the house.

Chapter Four

"Do not move," he warned.

Korlon lowered her, just enough so the tip of his cock was pressing her labia. She clenched her muscles, resisting every impulse to squirm and wiggle and impale herself.

Tantalizingly, almost cruelly, he moved his cock across her slit. "Who is in control?"

"You are, damn it," she spat. "Master."

His teeth dragged across her shoulders. It felt like the sting of a whip. "You will take me full-size."

Jaxey screamed from the sensation, the incredible living swell inside her starving pussy. Korlon was not playing any longer. He was impaling her, stuffing her with the fullness of his primale erection. Unlike mems, a primale could control the size and thickness of his shaft. Usually they went easy on their females, entering them at a smaller size, letting their bodies accommodate.

Korlon was showing no such mercy. He was intent on full conquest, relentless pressure, lowering her until she sat fully on his lap.

Jaxey was rocked by spasms as she fought to accommodate him. He was so large and thick, his shaft pulsing with life.

She was on the verge of fainting.

"I have waited for this so long," he murmured.

With surprising tenderness he reached around, cupping his hands over her breasts. Jaxey covered them with her own, smaller hands. "Oh, Korlon." She turned her face, placing her cheek against his lips. "So have I. I've needed this, too. You're not the only one who's been frustrated. I have had to masturbate, just like you. I have tried to take other lovers. No one can give me what I need."

"You feel so good." He kissed the side of her face. "You're so tight, Jaxey, just like I knew you would be."

"Do I please you...Master?"

He answered with an upthrust of his cock, which had suddenly, magically, become even bigger.

"Kor...lon," she stammered. "F-fuck me...Master."

Korlon lifted her and set her back down. His cock was driving her wild. She wanted to explode. She wanted him to explode.

"Master." She reached back with her hands to cradle his face. "Fuck me hard...please?"

Korlon squeezed her breasts, making her whimper. The pain reminded her of the heat on her punished ass cheeks. "Not until you have fully yielded yourself."

"But I have, Master."

"No, you have resistance in you, tension. Let it all go. Surrender...fully." Korlon began to caress her breasts, lightly, maddeningly.

She tried to struggle but as soon as she did, he took his hands away.

"No." She grabbed at them. "Touch me."

He held her wrists. "Surrender," he repeated.

Jaxey groaned in frustration as he kept her this way, in limbo, unable to receive pleasure from herself or him. At last she gave way, leaning back against him, her body in repose. "I surrender," she said.

He teased her breasts, to see if she was telling the truth. Aside from a tiny moan of agony, she did not move a muscle as he played with her nipples.

"Relax your pussy," he said. "You are not prepared to come."

"I am," she whined. "Please, I am so prepared it's not funny, Master."

Korlon took her off his cock, setting her down in front of it. "Surrender," he said again.

Jaxey cursed under her breath. He was beginning to sound like a warning beacon at the edge of a closed star system. The same words over and over. But what could she do except humor the man?

Concentrating as hard as she could, she tried to let her body go slack. Gradually her breathing slowed. He let her lean back against him.

"Master?" she whispered.

Korlon touched her clit. She leaped in response.

"Not ready," he said.

"I don't know what you expect," she protested in sudden frustration.

"I expect surrender," he said simply.

She concentrated on his breathing, trying to get back to some semblance of calm. Before long, she was jelly again. Korlon brushed her cheek and she passed the test, holding her place.

He touched her clitoris again.

Surrender...

This time the pleasure came to her in waves, rolling over her, taking possession of her. She did not budge. She had never felt less in control of her own body and yet more aroused in her life. Who could imagine that being treated as an object could be so sexy?

"That is how you must remain," he said, "while I am inside you."

The sound of his voice filled her with warm, sweet feelings. "Yes, Master...I want to try, please?"

Korlon lifted her, impaling her in a single motion.

She stifled a cry as a million new nerve endings awakened within her. *I was born for this*, she thought, baffled by how she could know such a thing. *I was meant to find pleasure in yielding...*

Was it in general, though, or just to Korlon?

He moved his cock inside her, repositioning. Reaching with his hand, he found her clitoris. Another test. One she dared not fail. Whimpering piteously, she tried to hold on. No flexing. No responding, just...passivity.

"You're a fast learner," he praised.

"Thank you, Master." She wanted to ask for her reward, in the form of a speed-of-light fucking, his cock moving like a rocket, but she opted to hold her tongue. This was his show – his own personal passion show.

"Touch your collar, Jaxey. Tell me what you feel."

Her pulse raced. Her fingers trembled as she placed them on the smooth metal. She was half afraid of receiving some kind of shock, but instead she felt only the coolness, the hardness. "I-I don't know."

"Don't try to think – close your eyes, feel, and let the words come."

Her eyes slid shut. "I feel...secure, warm all over."

The words came from some place deep, lower than reason. He praised her for them, kissing her neck. "My sweet, wonderful Jaxey. My dream woman."

Her mind raced, danger signals flashing. Des' sweet face floated in front of her.

Korlon took her off his cock a second time. "You're freezing up again."

"Master," she cried. "I can't...take this."

"Sssh," he soothed, helping her relax. "You can do this."

Jaxey went limp as a rag doll in record time. He must have been working on her, establishing himself at some subconscious level.

Korlon wasted no time putting her back on his erection. She thanked him over and over.

"I'm going to come," he told her. "You will maintain yourself. You will accept my semen inside you."

"Master, oh, Master..." Her eyes were watering. He was playing deeply with her mind all right, actually making her need his ejaculation as much as she needed to breathe. "I want it, please, I want to accept it. I want to be good for you."

He lifted her up effortlessly. His rhythm and motion was perfect, smooth as a machine. He held her several inches above him, his cock perfectly still, half inside and half out of her pussy, no motion, no pulsing, employing discipline only a primale could have.

She had expected him to move wildly, but instead he was intent on his slow-motion release. He had reduced his breathing, the way he did on training exercises.

Gradually, very gradually, he lowered her again. She could feel his intensity, the sharp building toward primale explosion.

Incredibly, he did not move at all. Jaxey held the air in her lungs and closed her eyes. She could feel herself drifting.

"Jaxey," he said her name, bringing her into exquisite focus. "Put your hands behind your head. Lace your fingers."

She obeyed as in a dream, invisible shackles encircling her wrists.

"Now," he said, giving her the final command, the mantra of their shared sexuality. "Surrender..."

Korlon's cock swelled. Jaxey thought she might break apart from the pressure. The heat was palpable, burning her wet, slick canal.

He made the smallest noise, barely twitching, and then it came. The geyser—the perfect male eruption.

Held in place by both his hands and his will, she had no choice but to sit on his lap as he filled her, semen spurting into her, on and on, warm and thick, pouring up into her sex. It was both agonizing and tantalizing to be forced to stay so still. In one way, she was serving as little more than the man's receptacle. And yet at the same time, she felt so close to him, so treasured, like he was giving to her the priceless gift of his essence.

The paradox was intoxicating. Never had she felt so used, so taken, so deliciously put in her place as a sexually desirable woman.

Aside from the groans that emitted almost like whispers from her throat, Jaxey dared not move the whole time. She was on the razor's edge—the slightest motion would send her over. The position was made worse by the vulnerability induced from having her hands behind her head. Altogether, she was overwhelmed. There was no doubt Korlon knew how to manipulate a woman, making of her the vessel he saw fit. Her only job was to revel in it, breathing the scent of his sweat-covered skin, hearing the sound of his masterful breath, feeling his cock as it continued to throb inside her.

It could have been an hour or five minutes.

At last, he released her hands. "That was good." He ran his fingers through her hair. "Very good."

Jaxey shuddered, leaning back against him, defenseless. "Thank you, Master."

He caressed her left side, lightly trailing his fingers down to her waist, his cock undiminished within her. "Would you like to come?" he inquired.

"Yes, Master, very much." The starch was gone from Jaxey. Her tone was tender, receptive and submissive. He had proved himself worthy of mastering her.

For this night, at least, and in this bed, all was as he had predicted it would be. Jaxey was his property. Subject to his whims and his will.

"You may get on all fours," he told her. "In the center of the bed."

"Yes, Master." Jaxey felt incredibly soft and feminine crawling off his lap. Gingerly, she extricated herself from his erection. Korlon was still hard as a rock and would remain so all night if he wished.

For primales it was truly mind over matter.

Everything was controllable, from the exact size of an erection to the volume of semen emitted. Chalk it up to their super biology.

Jaxey was primale as well and to a degree she could control her responses. Not with Korlon, though. He was rewriting the book on her sex-making experiences.

As she crawled into place, her pussy began to spasm. The anticipation was nearly unbearable. Would he take her from behind, giving her the pounding he had promised...at last?

She looked at him, hopefully.

"Turn around, face the wall," he ordered.

Jaxey's heartbeat quickened. She would no longer be able to see him coming.

"Legs apart." He gave her ass a pat, all the more demeaning for its mild and matter-of-fact nature.

Jaxey obeyed, the sex liquid immediately oozing from her crack.

Her mind hung over oblivion. She was terrified he might touch her, launching her into unauthorized climax. The last thing she could endure now was fresh punishment.

Things grew silent. She could no longer hear his breathing. She strained her senses for some clue of where he might have gone. He couldn't have left her...

It would be so easy to turn around and look, but she was under orders. A sex slave on her own bed.

Digging in with her fingers, she clawed at the top sheet. Her pussy was so exposed along with her ass and the rest of her, too. What if he intended some new form of whipping or bondage to accompany her climax?

The possibilities gave her hot chills. He might easily make her regret the orgasm she was going to be allowed.

Jaxey's body leaped to attention at the humming sound. She knew it all too well. Korlon was using the objectifier. He was making things...things to use on her.

The humming stopped. The completed items were being removed from the machine's drawer.

Her belly clenched as she heard the sound of metal links clinking against one another. Korlon had made chains. He was going to put them on her naked body, binding her in steel, in whatever way suited his fancy.

The implications did not escape her. Strong as she was, she lacked the power of her male counterparts which allowed them to break through metal. In short, her submission to Korlon, which was currently mental and symbolic, was about to become all too real.

Jaxey held her breath. He was coming back.

"Miss me?" He caressed her sore behind.

"Yes." She sucked in air through gritted teeth. "Master."

"Liar," he laughed.

Jaxey cried out as he delivered a loud smack, hard enough to drive her forward, facedown on the bed.

"Up," he ordered. "Mount my finger."

Korlon gave her a chance to get back on her knees. He placed his index finger at the opening to her sex, awaiting her response.

Jaxey backed up, impaling herself.

He wiggled his finger inside her helpless portal. "Good girl."

"Thank you, Master." She shuddered.

Korlon removed his finger, making her whimper. "You may come." He touched the tip of it to her clitoris.

Jaxey went off like a volcano erupting, her body exploding in a thousand directions at once. With that single touch he was demolishing her, shattering her body and her will.

The orgasm tore through her, burning her insides, devastating like a fire, waves of pleasure so intense they crossed the boundary into other sensations, indescribable and unstoppable.

Korlon was doing this to her with one finger, pushing on the swollen nub of her clitoris like a button, a control button to her inner core.

Feeling like a total slave—sexy, desirable and beautiful. She melted down, naked and possessed, for her Master—back arched, her hair pulled snug at the roots, her limbs shaking, her pussy dripping, her scent filling the air.

"Yes," she cried over and over. "Master."

He pushed her through one orgasm, and then another, deeper still. As good as it felt, she feared he might never stop. Could a woman die from orgasming?

At last Korlon released her over-stimulated clit. The waves subsided within her, replaced with a feeling of overwhelming fatigue. Jaxey felt her body collapsing, spiraling downward, totally at peace. The bed felt so good—cool sheets on her breasts, soothing her burning nipples. Sighing, she smiled, ready to curl into a ball for a long hibernation.

But Korlon had other plans for his hard-won sex slave.

"Back up, Jaxey, on all fours," he instructed.

She murmured something about being too sleepy, but thanks for asking.

"I wasn't asking." He administered a smack to the cheek of her ass, hard enough to break through her post-orgasmic fog.

"Ow," she complained, only half seriously. "That was too hard."

"I can make it harder," he reminded.

Jaxey went back to hands and knees, feeling strangely invigorated. "Meanie," she taunted.

He gave her another spank. "That's Master Meanie to you."

"Yes...*Master*." Jaxey was feeling playful, sassy. The truth was, Korlon made her feel good, and it was not just the sex. She liked being with him in this new, intimate way. It was another dimension added to their already close, symbiotic relationship.

"Do I detect a note of cynicism?"

"Not at all, Master."

Korlon laughed, mildly but mischievously. Jaxey heard the chains again, this time jingling in the air above her. And then she felt it, a line of metal, being dragged lightly down her back, over her spine to her tailbone.

"What's the matter?" he taunted. "Nervous?"

"No." She tried to relax. "But you must be...if you feel the need to restrain me."

"You're my property." He let the end of the chain fall between her legs. "Why shouldn't I keep tabs on it?"

Jaxey shuddered as he slid the links over her slit. "Damn it," she groaned, wanting him inside her. "Has anyone ever told you that you talk too much?"

"You do," he reminded. "Every day."

"Korlon, Master," she groaned, unable to keep up the repartee. "Fuck me, please?"

He laid the chain in a pile on the small of her back. "We've a few matters to tend to first."

She shuddered from the cold sensation. "You'll pay for this, I swear it."

"You can certainly try and make me," he acknowledged.

Korlon took hold of her ankle, lifting it into the air. He had a cuff for it, made of leather. She cringed a little as he attached it. She could hear a lock of some kind.

He stretched out her leg now, presumably admiring her beauty. "You look much better in bondage." He ran a hand up her leg, along her inner thigh.

Jaxey moaned in anticipation of having her pussy invaded by his fingers yet again.

He stopped short, however, running his hand back down to her ankle and then over her instep. She tried to hold still as he tickled the bottom of her foot.

Korlon administered a pinch to her ass to keep her in place.

Tears trickled down her face as she laughed and cried at the same time.

He repeated the action with her other leg, first securing her ankle in the cuff and then playing his little game of tickle and tease.

She was just trying to pull herself together when she felt a very different sensation. Korlon was moving directly behind her, his cock poised at the entry to her sex. She took a deep breath, holding it, waiting. He plunged deep into her, without preamble.

"Master," she gasped in all sincerity, "thank you. Oh, stars, thank you."

"Hush, woman," he said, his tone light.

"Yes, Master." Jaxey put her head down, absorbing the effect, the sensations of being filled once more. She wanted to memorize everything about this experience so she would never forget it for the rest of her life.

Likely, of course, it never would happen again. It shouldn't be happening now and by morning they would have to forget it and move on.

"The only sounds I want to hear from your mouth are screams of climax," he instructed, grasping hold of her hips.

"Nnn," she grunted. "Yes...need to...come..."

He rammed himself deep, managing to put just the right amount of pressure on her pleasure spot. "Do it, then. Let me hear you submit."

"Oh...my god, M-Master." Jaxey's body shook all over as she pushed her ass up into him, crying out for him to go deeper and faster. "Come again, please, come with me?"

"No, girl, not yet."

Jaxey shattered underneath him. "Fuck me, fuck me harder!"

Korlon slammed himself against her, managing to swell his cock even larger. His will was stronger than iron. Even with her climaxing again and again, sending rippling heat to his erection, he held himself back.

It was true mastery, true control.

Korlon shifted his hands to her breasts, reaching around to grab both globes firmly. She felt the pressure of it, the sudden transfer of energy that went straight down to her pussy. Jaxey lifted her head, moaning. Mounted and fucked, her body reduced to Korlon's plaything.

Her release was total, wild and animalistic, her body at once trapped and set utterly free. She felt like some kind of tigress that had been hunted down in the jungle, pounced on by its prospective mate and penetrated for rough, instinctive sex.

Her body pinned on the jungle floor, excited against her will...and used.

The sensations went on and on, one orgasm into the next, until finally things subsided.

Or so she thought.

She had no sooner let the tension go in her limbs than Korlon made his next move, designed to keep the flames going.

"Jaxey." He growled her name, leaning forward to brush his lips and teeth against her neck. "My angel."

A ripple went down her spine as he clenched his teeth, delicately, but decisively. Something about being bitten this way, held in bondage in his mouth made her liquefy all over again. Her liquids poured down her legs as she gave in to yet another orgasm.

This one was toe-curling, orbital, time-stopping.

“Good girl.” He released her, murmuring hotly in her ear. “My good, submissive little slave girl.”

The degrading words pricked her belly, keeping her boiling hot. She angled her head, offering him her earlobe to play with, to chew on.

He took her nipple instead, pinching it.

She dug her nails into the bed. He had some kind of clamp, which he applied effortlessly with one hand.

A world of sensation cut through her, a small hot burning in the middle of her chest, a swelling of her nipple into a throbbing center of anguish.

Just to confuse and dominate her further, he offered the other nipple a light caress. She bucked underneath him, unable to tell pain from pleasure.

“Hold still.” Korlon gave a warning thrust with his cock.

The blow knocked her forward, causing her nipple to be stretched in his fingers. He did not let go. She could have climaxed again, but she was too far gone. Her body too intensely overwhelmed to come any more, like her soul had been ripped open, left vulnerable for him to pour himself into her as he wished.

Jaxey remembered her lessons in body submission, in yielding herself totally to Korlon’s will.

Taking a deep breath, she moved to a mode of deep, sexual surrender.

Her body was his, to do with as he pleased...

New ripples of pleasure overcame her, even amidst the pressure he was applying. They were short-lived, however, as he applied the second clamp. The balance shifted toward the spectrum of pain.

It was at this point that Korlon decided to exercise his right, his absolute power over her.

Jaxey drew her breath and did not release it. Her body took flight, her entire reality whisked away in favor of a silent plunge, straight into the heart of a volcano.

Korlon was fucking her. Thrusting in and out with abandon, the entire focus of his energy shifting to his own release, his own desires.

Jaxey was being treated as a slave now in the fullest sense of the word. She closed her eyes, concentrating on the rhythm of pure male lust being exercised on her being.

He exploded inside her, releasing blasts of semen, enough to fill her womb to overflowing. The whole thing could only have taken a few moments, but it seemed like an eternity.

Not just filled, she was fulfilled.

At last, she had been able to do the one thing for her friend she could not as his mere buddy. She had provided him with complete primale release, with herself as object.

But primales were notorious for being insatiable.

Korlon was proving to be no exception.

As he withdrew from her, his cock wet with her liquids, he was still rock-hard. Taking her body in his damp hands, he turned her over, laying her down on her back.

Gently he kissed her forehead and cheeks. "Open," he whispered, encouraging her to spread her legs for him.

"Arms up," he added, running his hand down her side. "Over your head."

Jaxey was spread-eagled, completely at his mercy. She was dimly aware of him connecting chains from her wrist and ankle cuffs to the edge of her bed. The next thing she knew, her body was pulled taut, her limbs deliciously stretched.

"So beautiful," he whispered, admiring her captured body.

His words made her shudder ever so slightly, like a leaf in the wind. She arched her back, looking up at him, offering herself.

"I'm going to take off the clamps," he said. "Brace yourself, it will hurt for just a moment as the blood returns."

She nodded, her heart swelling with trust. This was still the Korlon she knew. Despite the sex-making, the role of Master and slave they had taken on, there was still the same bond between them – even more so.

Korlon returned her smile, offering her a wink.

She winced as he unclipped the clamps. He did them both at the same time, in a single, efficient motion.

Jaxey gritted her teeth. It passed quickly, just as he had said it would. She pulled at her cuffs in response. The chains held her fast. Jaxey's pussy pulsed to the sensation of bondage.

Naked confinement, in a sexually exploitable position.

Korlon moved onto the bed, to a kneeling position between her legs.

Her belly tightened at the sight of his cock. Hard as ever.

"Korlon, Master," she declared, unable to hold herself back. "Your body...it's so beautiful."

"I am nothing compared to you." He put his hand on her belly. "You're a dream of pleasure, for any man."

She shivered at his touch. "I want you inside me, Master. Fuck my bound body. Take me."

"Patience, girl, is the slave's first rule," he chided.

Jaxey clenched her fists as he lowered his head between her thighs. "What are you doing?" she exclaimed.

"Teaching you how to let go," he said. "Yet again."

"I'm a slow learner," she mused.

"Apparently." Korlon kissed her belly, affectionately. "That's all right, I have time."

"Until dawn," she reiterated. "At which time we will be so screwed, trying to fly a mission with no rest."

"Primals don't sleep."

"But they do get punch drunk."

"Not this one." Korlon trailed his tongue, dividing her belly button and blazing a trail to her delta.

"Oh, Master," she laughed, overcome with the tickling sensation. "What now?"

"You're old enough to figure that out. If not, you'll soon know."

It was her clit he was aiming for with the tip of his tongue. A slight dab to drive her mad, giving her hints of pleasures to come. Jaxey tried to wrench free of the bonds with all her strength. It was useless. She was his, for as long as he wanted her.

Her clitoris swelled in reply. Korlon immediately thrust his tongue down into her silky sex, inducing her to emit a fragrant gush, fresh for the occasion.

She was out of her mind by now, begging him to stop and to go faster, begging him to take out his tongue, to thrust it deeper, to untie her, to tie her tighter.

More than anything, she wanted to be fucked.

Korlon obliged soon enough, replacing his tongue with his long, ever-ready shaft. She sought and received permission to climax on penetration. Eagerly she kissed him, tasting her own sex liquids. She felt wicked and deviant, especially given that she had been tied down like an obedient. This was definitely not appropriate sex for her to be making.

Then again, what kind should she be making and with whom?

Korlon lost himself in penetration. His speed was primale speed and she met him with primale strength, lifting her pelvis up to his, elevating her clenched buttocks from the surface of the bed. Over and over, in perfect synchronization. It was perfect male, female symbiosis. She cried out his name and he grunted hers. She adored the look on his face and treasured the pleasure she was giving, knowing that it was a perfect offering of herself.

Meanwhile, she was getting it back, the very same enjoyment, thrust for thrust. His energy continued to build to the point where she knew he was going to let himself go. Jaxey fully expected Korlon to ejaculate inside her, but he had a different plan in mind.

Withdrawing, he knelt up, held his cock in his right hand and aimed it directly at her belly. Immediately seeing his intent, she let him know how she felt.

"Korlon, I want your come inside me. Master...I want you back inside me."

Jaxey bit her lip when she saw that Korlon had somehow managed to get a whip into his left hand. She hadn't even noticed it lying on the bed next to her, practically touching her thigh.

The whip was small and black and made out of some substance like ancient leather. It had the smell of genuine animal hide.

The whip probably was genuine – the objectifier could make anything, after all.

"No, Jaxey, I don't think so." Korlon flexed the whip through the air, slowly deliberately.

"Oh, and what do you think, Master Korlon?" she said nonchalantly, even as she tried to minimize her cringing at the whistling sound, the leather cutting back and forth through the empty space.

The whip was only inches from her tingling skin, from her belly and her breasts. With a mere flick of the wrist, he could strike her. While it was true she had suffered worse pain than this, she had a feeling that in this context, nude and aroused, Korlon was in a position to bring her down to undreamed of levels of sensual meltdown.

Grinning, he watched her watching him. "I think, *Slave* Jaxey, that if you know what's good for you, you will start begging for my come all over that pretty body of yours."

"Sorry, that's not happening." She shook her head.

Jaxey felt like she was coming out of a fog. She could see the stakes here, the implications of what they were doing for later on. Perhaps being cut off from completing this last orgasm had finally woken something in her. Or maybe it was the idea of having a lover ejaculate all over her defenseless body.

At any rate, it was suddenly occurring to her that there would be bragging rights to be had, and she mustn't surrender everything to the man unless she wanted that cloud hanging over her the rest of their working relationship.

Role-playing slave was one thing, but if Korlon got it in his head that he could boss her around after this, there would be hell to pay.

Clearly, this was shaping up to be a test of wills and she had her primale back up.

"Jaxey, Jaxey, Jaxey," he lamented with a shake of his handsome head. "How quickly we forget. You're mine tonight, remember?"

"I have limits that you can't cross."

"True," he acknowledged. "But if you beg for something, can I help following through?"

"Never," she vowed. "Not this."

He lifted her chin with the whip. "It doesn't excite you even a little, the thought of accepting the gift of your Master's semen? Here, and here...and here."

"No," she lied, as he touched sequentially her cheek and lips and a soaked curl of her hair. "Not at all."

He pursed his lips. "Really? What about here, then?" Korlon mowed the whip down, across her neck and over her right breast.

"I already said no." She tensed as he made a move on her nipple. "Stop playing with me."

He grazed her nipple, the touch of the whip featherlight. Even so, she cried out from the sensation, the anticipation.

"What did you say? I didn't quite hear you?"

She whimpered as he touched the other nipple. "I-I said...no."

Korlon moved the whip to her nipple again, this time giving his wrist a slight flick. The pink bud danced in reply. Jaxey moaned, arching her back. It hurt, but it felt good, too.

"No isn't a word Masters like to hear, my dear." He slapped her belly, the leather making a crisp, lascivious sound against her flesh.

She drew in a sharp breath, teeth gritted.

Eyeblink arched, Korlon moved lower with the whip, tracing a line down to the apex of her thighs. "Is there something else you would like to say besides no?" He raised his arm, poised to strike at her crotch.

"Master," she pleaded, attempting vainly to free herself. "Not my pussy."

Korlon delivered a precise, tiny blow, landing the whip directly on her labia. "This isn't your pussy at the moment," he reminded. "It's mine. And I am choosing to punish it, along with the naughty little slave girl between whose lovely legs it resides."

"I'll be good," she promised hastily. "I swear it."

Korlon delivered a second blow, chafing heat, miniature explosions that caused her sex to gape in empty need. "Of course you'll be good. You'll be better than good."

"Yes, yes," she cried.

"You will moan for me and you will beg to have my come however and wherever I choose."

"Yes, Master," she gave him the moan as ordered, even as he hooked his finger into place, flicking her clitoris. "I beg for your come..."

"You will accept it as a gift."

"Please, Master...come on me..." She was tearing at her bonds, her body writhing, pulling taut against leather and chains. "Spray your come on me, Master. Let me feel your hot come all over me."

"Only slaves beg for such a thing," he taunted.

"I am a slave, Master...your slave..."

"I have dreamed of this too, Jaxey, of having you at my mercy, of covering your physical beauty with the signs of my lust."

"Drown me in it," she cried. "Drown me in your come. I want it everywhere."

"You don't sound too submissive," he chuckled.

"Drown me, *Master*," she corrected, though it was obvious there was give-and-take here—they were still playing roles, feeling their way through from one side of sexual discovery to the other.

The only real question was what might lie on that other side, come the morning after.

"Open your mouth and put out your tongue. Ready yourself to receive."

Jaxey did so, greedily.

"It is tempting to leave you like this—in silence," he mused. "It's the most peace and quiet I have had in ages."

Jaxey amended her gesture, just slightly, so as to convey something else.

Korlon gave her breast a slap with the whip. "You stick your tongue out like a brat," he warned, "and I will treat you like one."

Jaxey was put right back into slave mode. "Forgive me, Master."

He held the breast he had just struck. "When you talk like that...you make it hard for me to imagine letting you go tomorrow."

She had no answer to that. The words hit her too hard, too deep—much more severely than any of the sexual play. Was he just joking or...

"Don't give me that look." He teased her chin. "I know the deal as well as you."

She tried to manage a smile, though for the life of her she could not imagine just what look she had given him. Was it the same forlorn, torn asunder expression Korlon had on his face? She hoped not or they were both going to be in big trouble.

One of them was going to have to stay strong and sensible.

Jaxey wet her lips. "Just use me," she said softly, "while you still can."

He nodded as she offered up her tongue once more, no sarcasm this time.

"That's the right idea, yes," he approved.

Korlon started masturbating. Jaxey's mouth watered at the sight of him. His hand squeezed tightly but artfully around his thick, vein-covered shaft. He was so confident about his pleasure, so unabashedly male. There was no shame in him. He could as freely pleasure himself in her presence as he could make sex with her, treating her to mind-blowing orgasms.

Korlon's was the epitome of primale ego—not arrogant or boastful, but most certainly supremely confident of his virility. And why not? He had taken a mere game of slavery with her, a mere exercise in words and turned it into something alarmingly real.

So much so that she was having difficulty keeping the game separate from the reality.

His cock was very subtly changing color. From a pink color to a darker, dusky color. From experience, she knew it would be getting hotter to the touch, too. She had felt it in her hands, and in her pussy.

She could almost wish for that again, but she knew Korlon wanted this and she did, too, because it pleased him and because it was going to bring her to a new connection with him.

She was going to take his semen, his essence on her skin...

She was going to feel its warmth, its thickness, all over her. And she would take it bound by chains and by his will.

Korlon grunted, his eyes darkening in color. She concentrated on the tip of his shaft, knowing it was coming any second.

He reared back his head and unleashed a mighty roar. The kind that might have shattered glass—or the soul of a more feeble woman.

The first blast landed dead center on her tongue, thick and hot. She swallowed it down, eagerly.

“Keep your mouth closed,” he warned.

He was going to make it hotter still. Primales could do that.

The next blast felt like the old-fashioned wax she had dripped on herself once at a lighting ceremony at the Academy. She writhed at the momentary sting on her right nipple.

More was coming fast. Gobs on her stomach and in her hair, on her thighs. The air cooled it quickly, causing her to feel only a little discomfort. Which was greatly outweighed by the decadent pleasure of being used this way.

Korlon released his semen onto her. It splashed thick and white and warm onto her belly. When his grunting and stroking was done, he swiped his hand across the surface of her skin, scooping up as much as he could.

Jaxey opened her lips as he fed it to her. Bit by bit, she ate Korlon’s come off her body, everything that he had deposited.

“Good girl.” He stroked her forehead.

The thoroughly demeaned and mastered Jaxey was on the brink. Eyes desperate, she called his name.

Korlon rolled on top of her, covering her, filling her aching cavern with his cock, smothering her breasts, holding her as this latest cataclysm ripped through her. She had no words for this one. It was as terrifying as it was pleasurable. The only thing she knew for sure was that she could not have borne it alone. Had he not guided her through with his strength, she would have been lost, somewhere in the intensity of absolute, explosive night.

Korlon did not orgasm. This time was about Jaxey—soothing, kissing, and caressing her through it. She felt her body dissolving into his, a nakedness that surpassed anything to do with mere skin. As their heartbeats merged, as more seconds passed, things were happening that neither one of them were ready to talk about.

Eventually, her breathing slowed and he was able to whisper in her ear. “You know what I want now?”

She shook her head.

He teased her lips with his, pointedly, deliberately. “Guess.”

Jaxey felt the hot stab, a plunging knife of desire to the belly that robbed her of any hope of recovering her strength. She knew all right, she just didn't want to say it. "My mouth. You want my mouth."

He gave her his answer, a deep probing by his tongue that said yes, indeed, I do want your mouth...and this is only the beginning.

Korlon kissed her at will, tasting and consuming as he chose. Not waiting for her to give her passion, he took it, forcing moans with the press of her flesh to his. As though this could continue, forever and ever.

Korlon allowed her to breathe. "I intend to slide into this delicious portal," he rasped, "pleasuring my cock therein. I intend to come in your mouth, Jaxey, and to have you drink my semen down. Do you choose to submit to this readily or shall I resume the friendly persuasion on your pussy?"

"I choose to submit," she sighed.

"Are you sure?" He stroked her sex, lightly, but with devastating effects. "If you are in need of another lesson with the whip I would be only too happy to oblige."

"No, Master," she protested. "I surrender my mouth to you unconditionally."

He placed his finger between her lips. "You will pleasure me as an obedient, of course."

She wrapped her lips around him, suctioning his finger, letting him know how far she would go and how much she would strive to serve him.

"Will you be a good cock sucker, Jaxey?"

The derogatory term burned her ears and fired her belly. It made her feel raunchy and cheap...and sexy as hell.

"Yes, Master," she replied throatily as he wiped his wet finger in her hair. "I will be a good sucker."

Korlon played with her nipple incidentally, insolently. "If you are not," he informed her, "I will whip you...as a slave."

"Yes, Master," she croaked.

"Perhaps," he considered, "I will call others in here as well, to have their way with you."

"You wouldn't dare." She stiffened.

Would he? She didn't think so, but then again, primales were known to carry their lusts in odd directions at times.

"If you don't please me," he shrugged, "what choice would I have?"

Part of her was ready to kill him. But another part was overawed with his power—the fact that he would even suggest that kind of thing, something so domineering and outrageous. "The Academy would never let you get away with something like that," she decided to test his resolve.

"The Academy would never know."

"No one would take me," she quickly added, "against my will."

He smiled, quite demonically in her opinion. "I think we have already established that I am capable of making you want anything I choose."

Oh, how she wanted to call him a name – arrogant bastard or worse – but she really did not feel like earning herself more bondage or whip time.

"I don't want to fight with you, Korlon..."

"That's good, because you'll lose." He smacked the whip on her thigh, leaving a red mark.

"Ow! What was that for?"

"For not calling me Master." He attacked the second thigh. "And this is for doing it a second time."

"Ow," she repeated. "Master."

He flicked her nipple. "Are you ready to surrender your mouth?"

"Yes, Master."

"Are you ready to accept punishment for failing to please me?"

This was the hard part. "Yes, Master," she said with trepidation.

"You will submit to anyone I give you to, if that is my will?"

"Yes, Master," she replied, feeling herself move to a place of indescribable connection with Korlon.

He trailed his whip down her leg. "You understand my rights, slave, over your body...to do what I want tonight. Your surrender pleases me. But I could never share you, no matter how much you displeased me."

Jaxey's heart soared. She was straining at her bonds again, but this time it was to get at Korlon's cock. "Please," she begged. "Use my mouth. Put it in deep...let me serve you."

It was about feelings now, as much as anything. Things she wanted to share with him that required actions – servile, loving actions. Actions that told him his chains did not displease her, but rather awakened something deep inside. Primal and passion-filled.

"Yes," he growled low in his throat. "Fucking the mouth of my chained slave – that is what I should be doing."

"Take it...take my mouth like a pussy."

Korlon moved astride her breasts, being careful not to apply undue pressure, even as he squashed them deliciously with his ass cheeks. "Lick my balls," he demanded. "Start with my balls."

Korlon laid his cock on her face so she could reach his testicles. The manly smell of him was driving her mad. She wanted at him. She wanted to consume him and please him and satisfy him beyond his wildest desires. *I am made for this*, she thought, *for pleasing a powerful warrior. This one in particular.*

She gave him long licks, enjoying the feel of the skin tightening up to the consistency of leather. It boggled the imagination he could have anything left in there after all his orgasms.

Yet clearly he did and there was no telling how much of it he intended to administer orally. Would she be offered a few ceremonial squirts or be required to take down a mouthful?

Korlon rubbed his cock on her cheek, reaching behind him to grasp her breasts. "That's it," he encouraged. "Yes."

Spurred on by his words, she continued lapping at his balls, bathing them in her glistening spittle. Before long he was ready for something a lot more intense.

"Kiss it," he said. "Kiss your Master's cock."

Jaxey pressed her lips to the tip of it. A drop of pre-come appeared, which she snatched with her tongue. She loved the flavor of him, the taste salty-sweet in her mouth. She liked the way he sighed, too, and the way he touched her, running his hands over her as he pleased.

"More," he sighed. "Give me more."

Jaxey licked up the base of him, on top and then underneath, paying careful attention to the thick vein in the middle. It was said to be the most sensitive spot on a male.

Judging from Korlon's reaction, he was no exception.

"By the Code!" he cried, leaning back. "By the stars and all the planets."

Jaxey rounded her lips, slipping them over the tip of his cock, encouraging him to go deeper inside.

He did so, releasing satisfied sounds of male pleasure. Holding his cock in one hand, he fed her, in and out, drawing for himself exactly the pleasure he wanted at exactly the speed and friction.

He gritted his teeth, concentrating hard. At last, he spoke. "No one has ever been like you," he declared. "No one comes close...not even..." Korlon stopped short. He was going to say the name of Desela. She was grateful he restrained himself. It was bad enough just to be thinking of Des at a moment like this.

A moment that ought rightfully to belong to her and not Jaxey.

Des should be the one chained up, sucking his cock, desperate to please. That was her purpose in life, her one and true joy. Jaxey was made for...other things. Chasing stars and battling Narthians. Flying starships and defending the civilized worlds.

She would be soon enough, though, wouldn't she? Call this her one last fling, an opportunity to experience complete freedom from responsibility.

Korlon was preparing to come. She could tell from the look in his eyes, from the way he was breathing. She had learned much about him sexually in one night. It was a little scary, actually.

Their symbiosis, their intuitive connection seemed to be spreading to a new realm. As much as he needed to release right now, she needed to be the receiver—to take inside herself all he had to offer.

She made of her mouth a vacuum, applying a pressure that would probably cause unbearable pain to a mem. For Korlon it was just one more turn-on.

"You little...minx," he growled. Leaning back, with a mighty primale roar, he released himself. He was deep inside, his cock head pushed into the back of her throat. She had relaxed in anticipation and she was more than ready.

Ready for his heat, his throbbing discharge, ready to swallow, gulp after gulp after gulp.

He did not disappoint.

There was no mistaking his enjoyment, the full wildness of his climax. Like a controlled beast—just civilized enough.

He pumped at her at will, letting out as much as he wished—or perhaps he was at the end of his supply at last. He gave little indication if he was tired or not as he pulled out. "Lick me clean, slave," he instructed.

Jaxey fell upon him, slurping up whatever she had left behind, which was nothing that she could see.

He settled himself, resting his cock between her breasts. At last, it had receded a little, down to perhaps three-quarters strength.

"Is Master tired?" she wondered, the challenge in her voice ill-disguised.

"No more so than the slave," he retorted.

"Oh, I am just fine. It's you I am worried about. I don't want you having a coronary, Master," she teased.

"How considerate," he said dryly.

"It's the least I could do."

Korlon reached down, releasing her left wrist. "I'm sure it is."

"What are you doing?" she asked, her light playfulness turning to sudden unease.

"I'm letting you go, what do you think?"

Jaxey's heart was racing. For some unexplained reason, she did not want to be free of Korlon's bondage...not yet. "Letting me go? You mean...for good?"

He looked at her strangely. "Obviously it's for good, Jaxey. That was the deal."

"Until dawn, I know," she added quickly, trying to sound casual. "It's just...that it isn't dawn yet."

"It's close enough." He shrugged, releasing her other wrist.

His words struck her like a knife. "Sorry, I didn't realize spending time with me was such a burden. I won't keep you any longer than necessary."

"Jaxey, what's gotten into you?"

"Nothing," she insisted. "I just want to be alone."

"That's fine," he said with infuriating calm. "I'll just free your ankles and go."

"Leave them, damn it." She pushed him away. "I will do it myself."

"All right." He put his palms out. "I'm going already. That's all I was trying to do in the first place."

"Yes, how very noble and reasonable of you," she spat.

"I thought you'd be pleased," he said. "I don't feel any bonding to you at all. You're free of me."

"Just go," she choked.

Korlon put on his clothes, covering the body she had grown to care for so much in just a few hours. Seeing it disappear under clothes pained her more than she realized, especially knowing he was about to take it away from her...

"Get some rest" was his final advice. "Remember, we have to be at the spaceport—"

"I know where we have to be," she snapped. "And when. And don't tell me to rest. I'm not your slave. You want to give orders, go talk to your fiancée."

Korlon gave Jaxey one last puzzled look before leaving her quarters in silence.

She would be damned if she would help him out, either. Let him stew the rest of the night wondering what he had done wrong.

Then he could tell her, because she wasn't totally sure herself.

Near as she could tell, it had something to do with not his using her hard enough and long enough, which made no sense, because she had said about a million times she was ready to call it quits. But he'd just kept pushing her to new limits, making her want more in spite of her judgment.

And now he had her actually wanting this to go to the minute of sunrise and maybe beyond.

What a horrible idea that had been—him coming to her quarters. She had been crazy to do that. And he had been crazy to come. He should have stuck with his initial reaction, which had been to be too afraid to even come near her for fear of getting in trouble with the Academy.

Now the Academy was the least of their worries.

They were about to go into space together, with a huge cloud hanging over their heads.

Or was it just her head? Wasn't it more than likely that Korlon wasn't giving any of this a second thought, that this had been a game for him and nothing more? Just a wild fling before settling in with Desela.

Certainly he ought to see it that way. Unless he wanted to mess up his mating plans.

Jaxey was all set to unbuckle her ankles when she saw the whip Korlon had left behind. She picked it up, feeling the handle in her fingers. It felt nice, sleek and

powerful. She lashed at the air, testing it. Licking her lips, she decided to test it on herself.

Thwack to her thigh. Right over the mark Korlon had left. Licking her lips, she chose a couple of other select spots.

Her pussy responded appropriately for a slave.

Cursing her uncooperative biology, Jaxey tried to fight off the urge to play a little longer. A couple of caresses to her nipple was all it took to make her give in. Lying back down, her legs still wide apart, she closed her eyes.

Still naked, still bound, she was very much a slave in her mind. Korlon might have rejected her, but she could still imagine whatever she wished.

She could even make him play whatever part she wanted—in this case, giving a different ending to their night together. In this version, sitting upon her chest, he did not offer to free her ankles...

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"I'm releasing your wrists." Korlon bent forward, his cock pressing hard between her breasts.

"Am I to free my own ankles, Master?" she wondered.

Korlon gave her nipple a tweak. "Did I say for you to free them?"

"No, Master." She winced.

"Then you are not to free them."

"Yes, Master, forgive me, Master."

"I have freed your hands so that you can masturbate when I am gone."

"You are...leaving, Master?" She asked meekly.

"I am going to Desela."

"Oh?" She could feel her heart cracking open as he said the words.

"You do not wish me to go?" he inquired.

The words stuck in her throat, but she could only hold them so long. "No, Master. I wish you to stay."

His eyes narrowed. "There is only one kind of sex-making left unexplored between us. You realize that would be the next thing I would do with you?"

"Yes, Master."

"And that is what you want?"

Jaxey nodded slowly.

"Say the words," he commanded.

"I want to be taken, Master. In my ass."

"If I fuck you that way, I will show no mercy," he warned.

"I want none, Master. I want to be used. I want to be conquered."

Korlon seized her hair, pulling it hard. "Arouse yourself, slave, now, in front of me."

Jaxey buried a hand obediently in her pussy. "Yes, Master, thank you, Master."

"Your other hand belongs on your breasts," he critiqued. "Alternating between them. Massaging your nipples."

Jaxey did as she was told. The perfect sex slave.

"If you ask me to, I will dissolve my mating plans with Desela," he said, watching her pleasure herself.

"M-Master." She shuddered. "I cannot ask you to—"

"But you want me to," he interrupted. "Isn't that right?"

Jaxey moaned from the sensation of her fingers. "Master, I can't think straight like this, may I stop touching myself?"

"Who asked you to think at all, slave?" he denied her cruelly. "You will keep those hands where I told you until I say otherwise."

"Yes, Master," she whimpered.

"Slap your pussy with your hand. That's your punishment."

Jaxey did so, crying out.

"Do it again, and then resume masturbating."

She was crying, hot chills passing down her spine. Strange spasms racked her, like ghost orgasms.

"You may beg permission to come, slave," he said, reading her dangerous instability.

"Master," she screamed. "May your slave come?"

"No, she may not. Answer the question. Do you wish me to leave Desela?"

"Yes...yes, I do, Master."

"Why?" he demanded. "So I can fuck your delicate slave girl ass?"

"Yes, Master, own me. Make me your own, forever. Brand my ass, my pussy, my mouth. Mark me, keep me in your chains, whip me if I look at another man, make me your secret submissive, your obedient in the privacy of our quarters. Make me crawl for you, teach me discipline, obedience...the love of a primale."

Korlon frowned, weighing the monumental implications. "If I do this, you will be required to tell Desela that you are consenting, that you begged to be my slave in her place. You will seek her forgiveness and you will prevail on her to beat you in fair recompense for stealing me away."

"I will, Master. I will do all that you say."

"You will convince Desela that you are nothing more than a slave, that you never have been more. You will tell her you hid behind a veneer, pretending to be something that you are not."

"Yes, Master," she exclaimed. "I will beg to be beaten."

"Only if she agrees will I let you be my slave. I will not chain you up as my pet without Desela's permission."

"I will grovel," said Jaxey. "I will throw myself on her mercy. Whatever it takes to be your slave girl."

"Come," commanded Korlon, looking down imperiously. "Surrender your body like the animal you are."

"Yesss, Master... Yesss."

Bucking and writhing, her body became a live wire, discharging itself in total and absolute sexual degradation...

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Jaxey cried aloud as her fantasy spun itself out, bringing her full circle. A scream of utter and complete sexual dissolving, a shout of total submersion in the moment. As if Korlon were still there, his fingers in place of hers, his eyes burning holes in her, his smile cutting her soul to ribbons, his warm heart beating and granting her life. The only life she feared she had left after tonight.

Not a very tenable position, she thought as her masturbation wound down. Not very tenable at all. She was going to have to think of some way to toughen up again. Some way to act like she just didn't care.

Korlon didn't care so she should be able to do the same. The problem was her gender. In theory that should make no difference at all. That was the whole premise, after all, of her being admitted to the all-male Academy.

But the Board of Review had never counted on her running across the likes of Korlon.

And if they had, they must have somehow overestimated her willpower. At present she was in a position to say no to absolutely nothing, no matter how absurd.

Undoing the ankle cuffs at last, Jaxey decided to plug in to a meditation cube. She considered her options. *Rolling Waves of Planet Panthius One*? Nope, waves reminded her too much of sex-making with Korlon. How about *Soothing Volcanoes of Planet Sterion Six*? Um...there was nothing soothing about the volcanoes she had experienced tonight. That left *Rushing Rapids of the Amazon*, which did not even require comment.

Jaxey sighed and headed for the sanitizing chamber. She would put the beams on cold sterilization. Maybe that would chill her libido before the morning, and shake some sense in her to boot.

If not, there was always "Option B". Although she was a little old to be running away from home. In her position it was called desertion and that was not something to mess with.

She could always hope their ship malfunctioned. Right. Like the Guardians didn't have a million backups.

What they needed to do was bring Desela along to run interference and take care of Korlon's needs.

Who would meet her needs though, and why was the idea of Korlon coming anywhere near his own fiancée making her crazy with jealousy?

Surely she wasn't buying into that silly fantasy she'd had about begging him to make her his slave? That couldn't possibly be what she really wanted. She was primale, like him.

Or had someone screwed up her genetics, slipping something of the obedient persuasion into the little vial marked "Jaxey 3423" from which her adult self had eventually bloomed?

If so, then the galaxy help her and Korlon both.

Chapter Five

Korlon checked his wrist meter. Four minutes to seven and Jaxey still wasn't at the spaceport. Maybe she wasn't going to show up.

No, that was impossible. Jaxey would most certainly be here. She was the most reliable person he knew. It was wishful thinking that he might avoid seeing her today and getting on a tight, confined spaceship with her.

By the Code, he had made a huge mistake. What had possessed him to enter into a pact with her, to make sex for an entire night? And not just ordinary sex, but Master-slave sex – of the sort which set a primale's blood raging and could likely result in some pretty severe and unwanted consequences.

Such as life bonding, which was the connection a primale made with his one true mate, rendering it impossible for him to be with another or to allow any other male to have the woman he loved. Life bonding was supposed to guarantee that primales would settle down with a single mate and therefore not fight each other to the death for this female or that.

Obedients were there to meet those needs, having been designed to be stimulated by a primale's most dominant ways.

It was a pretty basic, straightforward process.

Except when the Council, in its questionable wisdom, decided to go messing around with things.

Jaxey was a direct result of that noisome practice. She was a woman, but she did not fit into either female category. She was supposed to be primale. Korlon had thought he could handle that, but apparently not.

As of last night, he had turned her into a sexual conquest.

A multiple one at that.

And had he not left when he did, beating a blazing and definitely hasty retreat from Jaxey's presence, he might well have gone over the edge, converting her from sexual conquest to...permanent possession.

The feelings were complicated, powerful and absolutely mind-blowing. He knew she was independent, off limits, not slave material, but that only made him want her more. The fact that she responded so powerfully, beyond any of his expectations did not help matters any.

For playacting, she put on a damn good show.

She didn't seem to want him to leave, either. What in the supernova was that all about?

Korlon checked his wrist meter again, making way for a small communication robot, the size of an ancient dog.

"Pardon, sir," chimed the small, mechanical creature with the bright green eye sockets.

Two minutes. And still no partner. No *buddy* to fly with. What was it she had said last night—they weren't supposed to be fuck buddies? Too bad she had not stuck to her guns.

He couldn't blame her, though. Like she said, she had only wanted to talk and that was the most private place he could think of. He was the one who had turned it into something very different.

At first it was like a game, getting her to admit she was a woman with feelings of arousal for him. He had them for her, too. That had been clear all along. The thing, the really great thing between them, was that they never acted on them.

Up until now.

One minute to seven.

He was getting a little worried. What if she didn't come? What if she was so shaken from last night that she couldn't show her face? In that case, he would have to go get her.

"You're going to wear that thing out, if you keep staring at it."

Korlon turned, surprised that she had sneaked up on him. "You're not supposed to be able to do that."

"Well, I just did, superman." She tossed him her flight bag. "You ready to get this bucket of bolts off the ground, or what?"

"Yeah, sure." He pulled the bag down to crotch level and tried to cover the erection he was sporting.

One look at Jaxey in her fresh one-piece uniform, nipples pert, her long hair tied back in a beautiful braid, was all it had taken.

I'm supposed to be fucking controlling this.

Anyway, hadn't he come about a million times with her already?

"What?" she demanded, not appreciating his stare. "You're looking at me like I have a third eye."

"No...it's nothing."

"You're damn right it's nothing," she said, serving notice that her mysterious anger from the night before had not dissipated.

"You know," he said, following her through the hatchway of the small silver hexagonal-shaped ship designed for no more than two flyers. "This is going to be a long flight if you're going to cop an attitude."

She wheeled on him, just under the main bulkhead. "This isn't an attitude, this is me. The only me you will ever know for the rest of your life."

"Thanks for the warning," he grumbled. "Shall I shoot myself out the waste hatch now or after we're in deep space?"

"Wait until we're in space." She sat down in one of the two matching copilot's chairs. "The vacuum will kill you a lot quicker."

"Thanks for the input. You're all heart, partner."

"Don't mention it...*partner*." She shot back a phony smile.

Korlon sat down next to her. It was an act of sheer bravery. Fortunately, takeoff was far too intricate for her to pursue her private little war. Though he was sure she would resume it at the first available opportunity.

The launch checklist was handled with snap precision as was their joint communication with the robotic launch network. Once they had completed their preparations and initiated takeoff countdown, they were assigned a launch opening, one of the retractable round portals on the city dome through which air and space traffic could exit.

In their case, they would fly straight up through the atmosphere and into the silent, black, cold depths and come to a complete engine halt.

At that point, once they were officially out of gravitational orbit, they would connect with Guardian Command and receive the details of their mission.

Finally...

The takeoff was flawless and the ascent equally perfect. In a matter of minutes they left the congested port behind with all its ships and rockets of various sizes, and entered the freedom of the blue skies. Below them, the launch opening resealed, giving them an unhampered view of the Dome.

Korlon never failed to marvel at the sight of a dome in the morning. With rays of sparkling sunlight glistening off it, the silver material extending as far as the eye could see in every direction.

Flying as smoothly and silently as they were, it was an almost spiritual experience. So very peaceful.

Except that he was sitting next to a woman who apparently wanted to perform some sort of mayhem to his person.

This was definitely something he needed to clear up. The sooner the better.

"So..." He made a valiant if misguided attempt at starting a conversation. "Are you nervous about the mission?"

She gave him a look that would drop a NARTHIAN War Bug dead in its tracks. "No, Korlon, I'm not nervous. I'm pissed off and I have my own reasons, so don't ask."

Actually, he hadn't asked, but he decided to keep that point to himself. "Fine, I won't."

"Good."

"Good," he acknowledged.

Korlon managed to make it about thirty seconds before he couldn't stand it any longer. "It's about last night, isn't it?"

He was treated to another blast from her death ray eyes.

"I know." He nodded. "Don't ask."

Jaxey pressed some buttons. "Five minutes to orbital vortex," she reported with a good deal less friendliness than your average guidance computer.

"Check," he acknowledged.

Really, he ought to let it go. Jaxey was hurting, obviously. He had given her some pretty mixed signals. What she wanted from him at this point he had no clue. Probably nothing—in the sense of being left alone to deal with things in her own way.

That was fair enough.

Except Korlon was having trouble with fairness right now.

Seemed like the harder you tried, the more the universe stacked the deck against you. At least where women were concerned. He didn't want to hurt Desela, but it was clear he was making her suffer with his obvious hesitation in mating with her.

That was the cruelest thing you could do to an obedient—to keep her hanging on, encouraging her to keep pouring her love into you without giving her the structure she needed.

Just like the cruelest thing you could do to a woman like Jaxey, a genetic primale, was to treat her like an obedient, making the kind of sex with her that was all wrong for her genetic type.

What was wrong with him? Desela was the one he should have kept up all night, the one he should have put into bondage and dominated, taking her in every conceivable manner possible.

"Checking main engines," said Korlon, doing his best to slip into robot persona with her. "Performance diagnostic series seven, running."

Jaxey gave the confirmation, followed by a heavy sigh, as if she were debating saying something. "Korlon, I need to ask you something."

"What is it?"

"Do you intend to mate with Desela or not?"

He felt as if the bottom of the ship gave way beneath him. That was due only partially to the ship's acceleration. "You know I do. I've made that clear all along."

"I'm not interested in what you've been saying," she defied. "I want to know what you're going to do. Bottom line—no more games, I need to know."

"Why," he asked the obvious question, even as the first waves of gravitational pull hit them, "do you need to know?"

"Because," she delivered an orbital shock wave of her own. "If you aren't going to, then I am going to ask for a new partner. I may do that anyway. It all depends."

"A new partner? But that's crazy."

"Call it what you want. It's my decision."

"Jaxey, I can't work without you."

"You can't work with me, either," she said tersely. "At least not while managing to stay out of my pants."

Korlon's internal engines heated up over that one. "Jaxey, you can't throw it in my face that we made sex. It was mutual, consensual and adult. I enjoyed it, I won't apologize."

"Of course you enjoyed it," she shot back. "*Master.*"

"What? And you *didn't* enjoy it?"

"Not particularly, no."

Korlon scowled. "That can't be true. You came for me. About a million times."

"Hah," laughed Jaxey. "Shows what you know."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"It means that a man as supposedly intelligent as you ought to realize women fake orgasms all the time. Even your precious obedients, I'll wager."

"An obedient wouldn't dare fake for her Master," Korlon declared. "She would be severely punished."

Jaxey snorted. "Do you even listen to yourself? I'm thinking not, with all the nonsense you spout."

"We can see what nonsense is anytime you like," he challenged. "You think I owned you last night? That was child's play. I can take you to a place of submission you'll never find your way back from. I can make Desela seem like a paragon of free will in comparison to you."

"You like being a bully, Korlon, is that it? You need to control every woman in your life?"

Only the one I love...

Blast it, where had that come from?

"I am simply tired of going 'round and 'round with you. You're accusing me, but from where I sit, I'm the one being taunted into dominating you."

Her response was predictable. "Oh...this I have to hear. And how is it I am taunting you, exactly?"

He waited until they passed the last portion of the gravity field, completing their departure from the atmosphere. "How about those pert little nipples, for starters." He flipped down the sun visor. "Every time I turn around, they are in my face."

"Where would you like me to move them?" she said acidly. "My back? Maybe you ought to stop staring at them all the time, you ever think of that?"

"You like me to stare. You want me to notice you...as a woman."

"Right." She rolled her eyes. "So I can swoon and fall into your arms, resign from the Corps and spend my life cleaning your floors with a toothbrush."

"You're exaggerating, but the basic point holds up."

Jaxey unsnapped her belts, moving to stand up. "The only thing you're upholding is your own primale ego."

"Where are you going?"

"Back to check on the stabilizers."

"We checked them before launch, they're fine."

"I want to check them again."

"You're avoiding our conversation," he accused.

"We're not having a conversation."

"Yes, we are." Korlon's teeth set firmly. "You need to sit down, Jaxey."

"Go to hell," she defied.

Jaxey's lip twitched. Her eyes were dancing with unseen energy. Defiance battled with something else—desire maybe? Whatever it was, she wasn't walking away. Was she testing him?

For his part, his hard-on was raging. He wanted her on his lap, riding him like a wild thing. For the moment, however, he would have to settle for some more esoteric forms of domination.

"Jaxey," he employed his best primale tone of voice, not strident, but definitely authoritative. "Sit."

She jolted slightly as he snapped his fingers, pointing to her chair.

"I'm not a dog," she defied, resuming her seat.

"You're right, dogs make much better companions."

"I would certainly love to replace you with one right about now," Jaxey fumed.

"And I would love to put you where you belong, missy," he retorted. "Squirming over my lap for the spanking you so richly deserve."

"Try it," she threatened. "And I won't be the only testicle-free crew member onboard this ship."

Her feistiness, the sheer venom in her eyes made her way too irresistible. Leaning forward, grasping her by the back of the neck, Korlon stole a kiss. She protested, closing her lips tightly, but her anger turned quickly to passion.

He had her on his lap, his hands on her hips, their bodies straining.

Damn the fingerprint lock on this uniform. There was no asking her help this time. He'd have to rip it open. He did so and was rewarded with a single full breast, nipple pink and hard, spilling out and into his waiting mouth.

Jaxey moaned. "Inside me...get...inside me."

They didn't have much time. They would reach their stationary position and then they would receive their orders. Generally, Guardians in training received their mission specifications in a more dignified position, one suggesting military bearing.

Military bearing had become quite impossible, however, for these two. Korlon didn't have enough hands. Not to be working his clothes and hers, trying to expose her nether regions while still allowing himself opportunities to explore other interesting areas. Any part of her could occupy him for a lifetime. Her breasts and belly, the hollow of her neck, her full lips or her hair, which was once more silky and freshly washed.

He took the time to undo her braid so he could run his hands through it. Jaxey protested mildly, because the momentary diversion left her alone to try and open the front of his uniform, all the way down below his crotch.

His cock popped out, fully rigid and ready for action. Jaxey showed off her limberness and stamina by managing in one motion to pull away her uniform and mount him, knees on either side, sliding him into her wet, slick canal. "Mmm," she sighed in lusty satisfaction.

Korlon rewarded her with another kiss, fully dominating her mouth, his hands grasping her head, his tongue plunging in and out, finding its way to all the nooks and crannies, places he had managed to miss last night.

Jaxey touched his chest, running her fingers over his hard nipples, feeling the smoothness of his muscles. As much as he loved her tied down, Korlon had to admit having her free to play was good, too.

Making more of those darling female noises, demure yet hungry, Jaxey lifted, clenching her vaginal muscles tightly so as to maximize his pleasure. Korlon nearly lost it right there.

He whispered for her to take it easy, but she wasn't interested in listening. This was her moment and she took full advantage.

Her nails sank enticingly into his skin, at strategic places on his pectorals. "Did I say you could speak," she teased. "Slave?"

"Me a slave?" he growled good-naturedly.

"My slave," she confirmed, delivering tiny but devastating kisses to his neck.

Korlon allowed himself to relax for the moment. Jaxey was strong and beautiful, why shouldn't she exercise her sexual powers? Just so long as she knew it was his choice to let her call the shots and not hers. "As long as you're willing to pay the price later," he said, half as information, half as warning. "You can do what you want with me now."

"There won't be any later, ace," she purred. "This is a one-time offer."

"You can think that if you like." He let her torture him with nibbles to his chest. "But we both know who that sweet pussy of yours answers to. She'll sell you down the river in a minute."

"There's going to be a change of management," she assured. "I'll be thinking with my head from now on."

Korlon reached for her irresistible mouth, wanting to run his fingers over it, to have her suck on them.

She bit him instead. "Hands down, slave. Don't make me tell you again."

Korlon settled his arms on the armrests, fists clenched.

"What's the matter?" She smiled. "Don't you like being subservient?"

"It isn't exactly in my nature."

"Or mine," she retorted.

"Yet you respond to my touch like an obedient," he pointed out. "I could do as I wish with you, even now."

She frowned for an instant, perhaps in acknowledgement. Recovering in record time, she said, "You're the one in trouble here. You're the one who's going to be begging."

With that, she lifted, depriving him of all but the tiniest sensation of her pussy. "Uh-oh," she said in mock distress. "Is your poor cock naked? Would it like to go back inside Mistress' warm, wet hole?"

"It makes no difference to me." He found her clitoris with his left hand and commenced stroking it. "How about to you?"

Jaxey gasped, caught off guard. "I told you to keep your hands down."

"Fine."

"No, wait." She grabbed his hand, attempting to put it back in place. "Don't stop, please."

"Please? That sounds a little bit acquiescent, don't you think? For a Mistress?"

Jaxey leaned back, reveling. "I command you, then, make me come with your hand...slave boy."

"Sorry," he said. "The moment is gone."

Jaxey reacted with predictable anger. "Fine, I'll fuck you instead."

"Not so fast." He placed both hands on her bare hips, preventing her from recapturing his cock.

"Come on, Korlon." She slapped his shoulder in clear exasperation. "Don't be a prick."

"That's exactly what I am, though, isn't it? A prick."

"You don't always have to live up to it, though. Just let me fuck you. It's what we both want."

"How do you know what I want?"

"You're hard, aren't you? And you let me get this far. I haven't exactly put a blaster to your head."

"Kiss me," he said, "and I will consider it."

She sighed heavily, but opted not to argue anymore. Instead she planted her lips, soft, female and highly seductive. A robot would have had a hard time resisting that

kind of sexual heat. Still, he feigned disinterest. "I'm not feeling it, Jaxey. Maybe you were too assertive with me before. That doesn't work on primales, you know."

It was a lie, but he was in an exploitative mood. Besides, he was curious to see how she would react. Would she get superficially angry again like last night? Or would she shed some real insight into her deeper feelings?

Her skin seemed thicker this morning.

"So retake command," she exclaimed. "Here." She held up her breasts. "Bite them, pinch them. I know that works for you."

He pursed his lips. "Perhaps an ass whipping," he posed.

"Yes, you can do that to me afterwards. Use a whip, a cane, whatever you like."

"And anal intercourse. You will submit to that as well."

She had the oddest look on her face. "How did you know that?"

"How did I know what?"

"Nothing." She shook her head. "Forget I said anything."

It was something all right. Had Jaxey been thinking about anal sex? Had she fantasized about it as he had? It was a dream for him, one he had been afraid to try last night for fear of becoming too attached to her. He shouldn't have mentioned it now, but the words had spilled from his lips and it was too late to take them back.

He took her hair in his hands. "Tell me."

"I did," she insisted.

Korlon tightened his grip. "Don't think I won't discipline you, woman, because I will. I know you're hiding something."

"They're just stupid fantasies." She continued to resist him.

Korlon changed strategies. "Tell me, word for word," he said, taking hold of both her nipples. The pressure was mild, a hint of what he was capable of.

She put her hands on his wrists. "All right, I'll tell you. Let go."

Korlon did not relinquish. "Hands behind your head," he commanded. "Arch your back."

The position was excruciatingly vulnerable and hot—slave hot. Jaxey's breathing quickened immediately. The blood rushed to her cheeks, turning them a quick, warm pink.

She had just obeyed him, instantaneously and perfectly.

"Your fantasies," he jogged her memory.

"I've thought about you taking me that way," she said softly.

"In the ass?"

"Yes."

"You've masturbated to these thoughts?"

"Yes."

"When was the last time?"

"This morning," she blushed. "After you left."

His cock swelled to record proportions. "You fantasized that I took you in the ass?"

"You were going to," she explained. "You were telling me about it, making me admit I wanted it."

"And you did?"

"I had to," she said defensively.

"Why?"

She frowned, looking cornered.

Korlon gave her nipples a twist. "Why?" he asked again.

"I couldn't resist you...in the fantasy," she stammered. "I was...your slave."

"My slave? As in my obedient lifemate?"

"Yes."

"What about Desela?" he asked, not really expecting an answer. "Did she figure into your little wet dream?"

"You were going to tell her you were leaving her for me," she replied. "You were going to mate with me instead of her. You told me I would have to beg her forgiveness for stealing you away. I was to tell her to...to beat me to gain her revenge."

Korlon's heart skipped a beat. "And is that what you really want?"

He immediately regretted asking the question. It was an impossible one and dreadfully unfair.

"I don't know," she managed a reply. There were tears in Jaxey's eyes. She was no longer the reliable, hard as exo-steel partner. Instinctively, he gathered her in his arms. "I feel like such a traitor to Des even thinking of it."

"It's okay, Jaxey, you can't help feelings. They just are."

If she is feeling even half the guilt I am over Desela, the poor thing must be eaten away inside, thought Korlon. Leaving Des last night, even peacefully sleeping, had made him feel horrible and it did not sit any better now.

He was playing Desela and Jaxey...and himself, too.

Did he want it all, was that it? Did he want to have the possibility of sex-making with both women, while maintaining his carefree bachelorhood, answering to neither one for their emotional well-being?

If so, he had much to be ashamed of.

He continued to hold her until the contact turned passionate again. It was, it seemed, an unavoidable side effect of their physical proximity.

The next thing he knew, Korlon had turned her, sitting on his lap, her back pressed to his chest. From this angle he could consume her breasts in his hands, kneading her

firm flesh, eliciting deep groans of feminine pleasure. She reveled in the contact, moving her body up and down on his cock.

It was a slow, fiercely tense grinding, skin to skin, bone to bone, muscle to muscle. The orgasm was almost painful in its intensity. Jaxey came with him, bathing his cock in her fluids even as she took a full dose of his own.

They were only just subsiding and getting their wits about them when the alarm sounded.

Deep training kicked in for both of them. Still naked, she strapped herself into her seat to check the monitors. Korlon's hands flew over the controls. This was not a drill, nor was it part of any mission.

"We have engine malfunction," said Jaxey, her pussy glistening, her lips swollen from his kisses. "The guidance system is going haywire."

No kidding. Korlon could barely keep hold of the stick. "I've never seen anything like this in any learning cube," he exclaimed.

"That's the problem," she lamented. "All we know is the damned cubes."

"What about the backup system?"

Jaxey tried a couple of things and shook her head. "No, that's off-line, too. Do you think it's some kind of magnetic storm?"

"I don't know, but if we don't do something fast we are going to end up on very unfriendly terms with Cygnat One."

The artificial moon already filled half the view screen and it was occupying more of it by the second. They were scheduled for impact in T minus five minutes.

"How could this happen, Korlon?"

"Do I even have to answer that, Jaxey? We were operating my stick instead of the ship's."

"That shouldn't have mattered," she insisted. "We did everything right. We were on-line, good to go."

"Mistakes happen."

"Not like this."

She was right, this was damn unusual. Well nigh impossible. Not that it mattered. "So consider us the one in a million freak accident."

Jaxey looked at him dead-on. "We're going to have to abandon ship."

He nodded. "I'm activating the pods."

She took his hand. "We might not both make it."

The pods were separate, designed to go in different directions, to minimize the odds of both crew members perishing. "We'll make it," he said, refusing to consider any other option.

"But if we don't, aren't there things...we should say?"

"Save it for the diner back home," he replied, hitting the final switches—one and two for the left and right pods.

The left indicator turned green, the right stayed red.

"Fuck."

He tried again, still nothing.

"What is it?"

"Something's jammed," he said. "It's nothing, just the board."

Jaxey frowned, checking the scanners. "Like hell it's nothing. The right pod is frozen up."

"We'll undo it manually." Korlon unstrapped and reached for his uniform.

As if on cue, an amber light lit up on the board. At the very same time the ship jolted slightly to the left.

"Double fuck," muttered Korlon, for want of anything more intelligent to say.

"That was the right pod," Jaxey confirmed on the scope. "It just launched itself."

"The minute I opened my mouth..." he whispered, uncomprehendingly.

They looked at each other.

"You believe in space ghosts, Jaxey?"

"I believe in survival."

"Me, too," he agreed. "Let's get you fitted in that last pod before it goes for a joyride, too."

"Who decided I would be the one to live?" she inquired.

"I did." He reached for her hand. "Come on. This is no time to argue."

"I'm not arguing." She held her ground. "I'm pulling rank."

"What are you talking about?" he demanded. "We're the same level."

"I finished ahead of you in Leadership. I have a higher ranking."

"That doesn't mean anything."

"Read the regulations. Section ninety-nine, sub-paragraph ten."

Korlon frowned. "I thought there were only ninety-eight sections?"

"That would explain why you didn't score ahead of me."

"Never mind." He reached out and took her arm. "I'm pulling gender and that trumps rank."

"I'm not leaving this ship, Korlon!"

Korlon reached behind her and smacked her ass hard. "You are leaving, slave, whether you like it or not."

She was breathing heavily, her eyes glazed over. His power play was having its usual effect on her biology. "That's hitting below the belt, Korlon, you know it is."

"I've always played to win, Jax, you know that. Now are you going to come quietly or do I have to put you in that pod by force?"

"I'll go," she said darkly. "But I don't like it. Not one little bit."

"You can spend the rest of your life hating me, but you're going, one way or the other."

Korlon marched her to the back of the ship, his grip like steel on her wrist. His adrenaline was pumping too fast to think of much of anything. He knew he was about to die, though the permanence of the fact was not really sinking in.

His mind was on Jaxey, knowing that she would live. That was what mattered. As for himself, the only regret he had was that he would not be able to kiss her again, or hold her...or laugh with her or play with her or spank her. Even arguments with Jaxey were fun and he wouldn't trade a moment of his time with her for anything.

"Put this on in the pod." He tossed her a backup flight suit. "You don't want them picking you up stark naked."

"Why not?" she quipped. "You'd go down as a legend—the first cadet to get the goods from Fort Jaxey."

He smiled in spite of the situation. That was her nickname, a takeoff on Fort Knox, where gold was kept by the old United States in an impregnable vault. "The first and only cadet."

"You know it." She winked.

Actually, he knew there had been other men—not Guardians, but outsiders—a few with whom she had tried in vain to find satisfaction. For some reason he hated them all, especially the first of them who had taken her virginity.

"The clock is ticking," he said. "You better get in."

"One more hug, Korlon. Please?"

He felt a lump in his throat. How could he say no?

She felt so damned good in his arms. So natural and right. How could nature cheat them of a future? Whatever it might be, they deserved to play out their hand, like any other two people in the universe.

Then again, this was their hand, wasn't it?

One in a million spaceship malfunction in a supposedly perfect space fleet. Tick, tock, the seconds bleeding away, his last chance to say something to her, anything at all...except goodbye.

"Jaxey," he croaked.

"What is it, Korlon?"

"I..." His heart pounded. This was the most terrifying moment of his life. "I love you, Jaxey."

She ran her fingers through his hair. "I love you, too, baby. That's why I need to do this."

"This" was a pricking sensation to the back of his neck.

By the Code, he had underestimated her terribly. What had made him think Jaxey would surrender quietly, allowing herself to live in his place? He hadn't even considered the possibility that she could get hold of the minihypo, much less activate it, all under his watchful eye.

His head was swimming. "How?" he managed to grunt, his speech already slurring.

Jaxey took hold of him, guiding him toward the pod. "I grabbed it from the cockpit the minute we got the first warning. I figured something like this might happen down the line."

Clever, clever woman.

He loved her for a reason, all right.

Though at the moment he was never more furious at another human being. For all his strength, he could not lift a finger.

"Hurry." She guided him into the pod seat. "Before the paralysis sets in."

It was a body repair drug, designed to prevent shock and anesthetize against severe wounds. In this case it was rendering him a helpless puppet.

"Sorry, baby." She punched the buttons on the pod display for him. "I can't let you die. You have too much to offer this universe. Anyway, I love you, like I said."

I love you, too...

The words didn't come. Nothing was coming.

"Goodbye, Korlon." She kissed his cheek as she strapped him in. A tear splashed. He was too far gone to wipe it away.

Jaxey straightened, preparing to close the hatch. He saw her crying, not the complicated tears of kinky sex play, but real ones, wrenched from grief. He tried to clench his fists. His hands were heavy as stone. His body was a statue now, which was just as well because everything he cared for was about to disappear behind the pod's exo-steel door.

I don't want to survive. Not without you...

The door was halfway closed when it stopped.

Not just the door, but every mechanism on the ship.

A cold, dead stop. No engines, no freefall. A moment after that, everything went dark.

"What the —"

He could hear Jaxey, trying to find her way to an emergency light. He strained every muscle, desperate to gain control his body so he could help her. If anything happened to her...

He didn't even dare imagine what was going on now. Some kind of Narthian invasion, a new form of attack devised by their ceaseless war laboratories in the Outer Rim nests? Or was it just dark and mysterious fate?

A rushing sound filled the ship. A slight jarring, then a feeling of motion—backward, regular, very fast.

A tractor beam?

"Stand by," called a voice, "for test conclusion."

Test? What sort of test?

The pod door opened back up. The lights came back on. Jaxey was standing there, face-to-face with the holo image of a Guardian commander. And not just any commander, either, but *the* commander.

"Greetings, Cadet Jaxey. I trust you know who I am?"

"You are General Theron," she repeated, sounding as stunned as she felt. "Commander-in-Chief."

"That is correct." He nodded solemnly. "I have much to share with you. As soon as you are aboard my ship."

"What about my partner?" Jaxey's shock was turning quickly to anger. If she felt any self-consciousness about her lack of clothing, she did not reveal it.

"We will reverse the drug at once," the bearded, chisel-featured Theron replied, himself oblivious to her nudity. "I will send medical droids."

"Yes," she said, addressing him as if he were a mere classmate. "You will. And then you will explain what the hell just happened here, *Sir*."

Korlon was smiling inside.

You get 'em, partner...

"All your questions will be answered," replied the stalwart image of the General. "You have my word."

"I count on that, General."

Korlon did not want to be in the General's shoes, should he let her down. And if he gave her any trouble, then the man would be dealing with Korlon, rank be damned.

It would mean the end of Korlon's career, but he was learning that some things were more important than the Code.

Things like loyalty, friendship.

And maybe even love.

He contemplated this, even as the drug went into its final stage, sending him plunging into a deep and dreamless sleep.

Chapter Six

Jaxey's heart was still pounding like mad. Adrenaline pumped through her veins. "You be careful with him," she warned the pair of medical droids attending Korlon as they walked down the corridor of the General's ship.

"We are programmed for error-free service, ma'am," droned the voice of one of the two pure white humanoids with the red cross laminated on its chest.

"I don't care what you're programmed for." She kept a tight grip on the stretcher being used to bear the paralyzed Korlon. "You are answering to me."

It was pointless to yell at a droid but she needed a target to release her anger. The whole thing was a whirlwind in her head. A few minutes ago she had been rendering her partner unconscious to save his stubborn ass from a disaster that wasn't even real.

And now she was on her way to meet the most powerful man in the galaxy—the Supreme Commander of all space defenses.

The legendary Theron, who had apparently tricked them by staging a disaster for some unknown reason.

She braced herself in case he tried to call it a drill. This went beyond any test. This was the kind of stuff that tore people apart.

The main thing she resented was being manipulated into confessing love for Korlon. Being caught naked in his presence didn't thrill her too much either. Fraternization was grounds for court-martial.

The way she saw it, though, Theron was on thin moral ice. He had set them up and presumably spied on them, too.

In addition to the medical droids, there were two security officers accompanying them along with a civilian dressed in long green robes and a sash marking him as a servant of the High Council.

This in itself was strange, one more oddity in a seemingly endless series.

At least the security officers haven't placed me under arrest, she thought grimly. The way I mouthed off to the General back there.

They turned a couple of corners, walking down a series of white, sterile passageways. At last they came to a sealed portal outside which stood two helmeted Guardians in full combat armor, complete with rifle blasters.

The personal bodyguards of the General. The men did not smile. Their jaws were set hard, their eyes indicating the passionate intensity of their work. Make no mistake, should anyone attempt to enter to do harm to their commander, they would move with a deadly ferocity.

The doors slid quietly open. The room inside was pure white and quite large. The droids set Korlon down on the floor just inside the doorway and bent to administer the awakening medication.

The flags of the Council, the Guardians and the Galactic Confederation hung from the back wall. There was a table in front of it. Four people were seated at it. One was General Theron, looking even more imposing in person in his sky-blue uniform covered in gold braid. His hair was tinged with gray and his beard as well. He still looked incredibly vital, however, as if he could have been a man of twenty with only a few character lines to mar his perfection.

To his left was a Guardian Colonel, his head clean-shaven, his eyes hawkish. Jaxey gauged his age to be a few years younger than the General.

On the far right was a tall, elderly, gray-haired man with a red sash and gray suit—the ensemble marking him as a member of the High Council itself.

The fourth person, sitting to the right of the General, was a woman in a long gray gown, also with a sash. She was extraordinarily beautiful, her long black hair arranged in tresses atop her head. Her eyes were deep blue as the sea. Jaxey recognized her as Nyssa. Theron's lifemate and also the Head of the Council.

Like Theron, hers was a timeless beauty that would only improve with age.

Jaxey swallowed, losing more than a little of her starch as she put things together in her mind. The Head of the Guardians and of the Council...both?

Whatever was going on here must be a lot bigger than she realized.

"Cadet Jaxey," said the gray-haired Councilman, speaking for the group. "Will you step forward?"

Jaxey looked down to where they had laid Korlon's litter. She could tell by his breathing that the awakening drugs were about to take effect. "With all due respect, Sir, I would like my face to be the first thing Cadet Korlon sees when he wakes up."

"He will be fine," said the General tersely.

Nyssa touched her husband's arm. "Her place is by his side, Theron. Let her help awaken him."

The General pursed his lips. "Very well."

"Thank you, Sir...Ma'am." Jaxey fell to her knees, taking Korlon's limp hands in hers. "Korlon, can you hear me? It's me...Jax."

She felt his pulse, strong and true.

"Korlon, darling, wake up...please." Jaxey didn't know why she should feel afraid, even a little tearful. This was a mild sedative. Entirely safe. Probably it was the effect of the stress from back on the ship. All she knew was that she would not feel at peace until his eyes were open.

"Jax...ey?" he murmured, blinking. "Where...am I?"

Jaxey beamed, blinking away the moisture in her eyes. "We're alive, honey, both of us."

"Yeah." He nodded, pinching his brow. "It's coming back to me. The whole thing was some kind of simulation. I saw him, that cocksuc—"

Jaxey put her hand over Korlon's mouth before he could curse their supreme commander in his presence. "We're on the General's ship, darling," she said pointedly, her eyes signaling over her shoulder. "Right now."

He blinked, looking toward the far wall at the table full of VIPs. "Fuck me hard," he muttered under his breath for Jaxey's ears alone.

"You know I'd love to right about now," she whispered, hugging him fiercely.

She held him as long as she dared without trying the patience of their interviewers. "Can you stand? They want us to go up there and talk to them."

"Yeah, I'm fine," he replied, with typical primale bravado.

Jaxey knew better than to help him. He was way too stubborn for that. He would sooner fall a dozen times over. She did manage to keep a hand just behind his back, out of sight to provide emergency support if need be.

Korlon wobbled the first couple of steps, but he was able to stand at attention by the time they reached their place, about five feet in front of the table full of dignities.

"Cadet Korlon reporting, Sir." He saluted crisply.

"Cadet Jaxey reporting." Jaxey followed suit.

"At ease," said Theron. "You may consider this an informal proceeding. I hereby grant you both liberty to speak freely, though I highly doubt I could stop you if I tried," he said dryly.

Jaxey suppressed a smile. So the stories about the General having a sense of humor were true after all, she thought. Now to see about those other ones—the ones which claimed he was a man of boundless integrity and duty to the Guardians.

"It goes without saying," Theron continued, "though you are officers of the Guardians, that I am under no obligation to justify to you the actions of myself or any superior officer—"

"Sir?" interrupted Jaxey.

Korlon put a hand on her arm, attempting to stay her.

"Yes?" said the General, his facial expression unchanged.

"You called us officers. Aren't we still cadets?"

"Technically," he concurred. "Until the completion of the appropriate paperwork. You have however, graduated. This morning was your final test."

"So that was our mission, Sir?" asked Korlon.

"Yes. A highly unusual one, granted. As I said, I am not required to justify myself."

"What my husband is trying to say," the beautiful Nyssa spoke up, "is that the Corps and the Council, too, recognizes what you two have just been through, and we acknowledge that in completing this psychological trial, you have given a great service to humanity."

"Begging your pardon, Ma'am," said Korlon. "But I understand nothing of what is being said. What service have we done? You subjected us to simulated malfunction and, frankly, we did not perform well at all. We were...unprepared, and we hardly followed any procedure."

"You followed your hearts." Nyssa smiled. "And that is what we had hoped for."

Jaxey thought she might be piecing things together a little bit. "You wanted to see what our emotional reactions would be," she intuited. "This is some kind of...experiment."

"You are insightful." Theron nodded. "Our geneticists did well by you. The fact is, you have been under the spotlight your whole career. That is no surprise to you."

"I have sought to behave as well as any male, Sir."

"You have exceeded all expectations," he agreed. "But we did not wish you to act only as a male."

"Sir?"

"Men and women function best together, Officer Jaxey," said Nyssa. "They require mates. Traditionally we have paired our primale Guardians with female obedients, as you know, but some on the Council, myself included, have felt that if we could include females, we could strengthen the defense of the civilized worlds."

"I can hardly argue with that," Jaxey replied.

"What concerns me, Ma'am," interjected Korlon, "is the growing feeling I have that Jaxey is some kind of a guinea pig and me, too. What exactly are we supposed to be doing together? To put it bluntly, we made sex on our ship. We let sexual sensations color our judgment. Maybe...maybe the critics are right. Maybe the old genetic types are there for a reason and we shouldn't mess with that."

"I appreciate your candidness," Nyssa said gracefully.

"I don't want to see Jaxey hurt," Korlon declared. "Court-martial me but let her be."

"Korlon," said Jaxey, "I am perfectly capable of speaking for myself and taking care of myself."

"That will be enough," said Theron. "Out of both of you."

"Sir," they both replied in unison.

"I want to show you something," Theron said. He inclined his head and the room darkened. A holo appeared, hovering between them and the table. Jaxey went into a fighting stance instinctively at the sight of the large, multi-armed, venomous bug.

She knew it wasn't real. Just an image.

"As you know," Theron declared, "this is a standard Narthian Soldier Bug. The Nests have been throwing trillions of these at us since the days of our great-grandparents. We were successful in dealing with them, though at a high cost. Unfortunately, the Nest Queens learned to adapt by studying our technology, our techniques."

The image morphed into something sleeker, with artificial parts built in.

"About twenty years ago, we started to see these. A new strain. Faster, smarter, much harder to destroy. They were more independent, too. No longer could we use 'cheats' such as eliminating whole companies of them by knocking out their Nest Drones. My son-in-law, General Azar, was the first to deal with them. He and my daughter Theryssa are leading a campaign right now in the northern quadrant.

"We are holding our own and expect to wipe them out. Recently, however, we ran across something different. Something no one anticipated."

The form of the Narthian altered once again, this time changing into a figure that was startling humanoid in appearance. The head was larger, insectoid and the body possessed six arms, but the rudiments of humanity were evident.

"It's hideous," Jaxey whispered.

"And deadly. A small force of them attacked our outpost on Nebulus Three. We took heavy casualties. If not for the quick thinking and timely presence of our ally General Azar, we might have lost that base. Worse still, the Narthians would have reported the success to their home nests. We might now be facing droves of those things. As it is, we think we have bought a little time.

"What makes these creatures function so well is the same thing that empowers us—free will. They are given engrams, coded orders from the Nest, but they internalize them somehow, they adapt them as needed. The fact that they did that well out of the box is not a good sign. In short, we must adapt, too."

"That's where you come in," said Nyssa. "Jaxey, we created you years before this crisis, obviously. Even then we sensed we would need to be prepared. Now it is imperative. What we have learned from our daughter and her husband is that a male and female, working together in command can perform far better than a male alone. The sexes balance each other, allowing new possibilities."

Korlon shook his head. "Ma'am, I am sorry, but I don't see it. Look what happened to Jaxey and me. It was a disaster."

Nyssa smiled knowingly. "We have bugs to work out, pardon the pun, it's true, but we are firmly convinced from reviewing the records of the two of you that you have formed an invincible team. Korlon, has it not occurred to you that you would have struggled without Jaxey's help in the Academy?"

"I can't deny it," he said.

"And I would never have stood my ground as the only female there without Korlon," Jaxey quickly volunteered.

"You two are still young," Nyssa pointed out. "Not even thirty yet. You have barely recognized your love for each other. You were thrown into an impossible, no-win situation. As far as I am concerned, you both behaved heroically on that ship and with integrity. Isn't that so, my love?"

She put her hand on top of Theron's.

"I would not have granted you your commissions if it were otherwise," he replied.

"Love is never easy, it's a messy proposition," Nyssa declared. "But it is our fundamental belief that it is our one secret weapon against the Narthians. As near as we can tell, they cannot love. They can organize, fight, and seek to survive. But that is all."

"It seems like I am always the naysayer," said Korlon, "but if you are proposing mixed-gender classes, what are you going to do about all the negatives of human love? Jealousy and loneliness? What if your cadets fall in love outside the Guardian Academy? What if they don't fall in love at all?"

"That is a matter of genetics," Nyssa said firmly. "People can and have been designed for each other. Theron and I. My sister Nyssa and her husband, Raylar."

"That is fine for them, but what about us? And what about Desela? Has anyone thought of her?"

Jaxey had thought of her, actually, though she was not sure how to broach the topic.

"Officer Korlon," the General said, his voice a little thin, "need I remind you of the stakes here? The entire future of the human race. We cannot afford to lose to the Narthians."

"Theron," said Nyssa gently. "Let me handle this. Officer Korlon, as I said, events have developed quickly. We knew the two of you had formed a close relationship, but only in the past few weeks did we determine to put you into a situation where passion might reveal itself."

"It isn't as if you hadn't already consummated it yourselves," the General said. "We had nothing to do with your actions prior to the drill."

"Acknowledged, Sir," said Korlon, clearly not wishing to go toe to toe with the legendary commander.

"We can't force the two of you to mate," said Nyssa. "You are free and must follow your hearts. We will ask you to consent to some interviews, some individual testing so that we can better design the soldiers of the future, male and female, who will fight...and love, side by side. Each one partnered with their perfect match, who will be identified long before they reach mating age."

"The system will smooth itself out," said the General.

"Sir," said Korlon, standing straighter and prouder than Jaxey had ever seen him before. "I request time to consider my options."

Theron's brow rose imperceptibly. "What options would those be?"

"My option to resign my commission, for one thing."

Jaxey's heart seized in her chest.

"You are speaking rashly, son," said the General.

"On the contrary, I have never been clearer in my life."

"Think of your duty."

"That is precisely what I intend to do."

"You do realize," said Theron, "that every moment we delay is a moment of victory for the enemy."

Jaxey was hanging on Korlon's every word, waiting with bated breath for what he might say next.

"I have heard what you have said, Sir, and Ma'am," he acknowledged. "But there is an old saying, 'He who fights too long against dragons becomes a dragon'. What if, while manipulating the race so much and obsessing yourselves with making perfect soldiers you have forgotten the basic lessons of humanity—the freeness of life, the natural course of the soul."

Theron's features darkened slightly. "Officer, I would guard your words if I were you. There are those who might consider them treason."

Korlon thrust out his arms. "In that case, you might as well place me under arrest now, because I won't change my opinion. So long as what you are doing harms even one person, then it is wrong."

"Consider it done," said Theron. "And don't worry about cuffs. I can promise you won't go anywhere I don't want you to."

"Sir," Jaxey interjected. "I request permission for Korlon to be excused to sickbay. The medication...it could still be having effects."

"That is an excellent idea," said Nyssa. "Besides," she cast a glance at her husband. "Korlon's is not the only hothead in this room right now."

"This proceeding is at an end," said Theron. "Officer Korlon, Officer Jaxey, you are both detained until further notice. Security will see you to quarters."

"What did she do?" Korlon demanded. "Why are you arresting her, too?"

Theron was ready with a reply, but Nyssa calmed him. Jaxey did the same for Korlon.

"Don't make this worse," pleaded Jaxey. "Let's just go so we can talk things over."

The two security officers, who had been standing at the door, came forward, ready to escort the pair.

Korlon said nothing, though he offered no resistance. Jaxey could feel his rage, and frankly, it was arousing her. He had gotten his back up for her and she knew it. He had shown complete, if not altogether wise, readiness to throw over his whole career just to say his piece.

Deep down, she suspected some of this had to do with Desela. For a primale, there was nothing more agonizing than failing to fulfill an obligation, particularly where a female was concerned. He had to be blaming himself for what he saw as a betrayal of Des, and Theron and the Guardian Corps had come to be proxy villains.

The truth was things had just happened. Theron and Nyssa had reasons for what they were doing and Jaxey might well do the same in their place. As for the two of them, Korlon and Jaxey, nature was taking its course there, too. No one was

intentionally hurting Desela. She was a grown woman. If she wasn't right for Korlon, and Jaxey suspected she wasn't, than they would have to deal with it.

The last thing Des would want to do anyway was to have Korlon be with her out of obligation and throw away his chance at happiness.

So many questions.

What did Jaxey herself want, beyond keeping Korlon from talking himself into court-martial? She needed time to think, but what she was about to get was confinement in a small, likely locked room with the very man who was confusing her mind and making her body burn out of control.

The story of their lives.

Jaxey was going to have to fight her hormones, though. No more sex-making. Not until they had ironed things out.

Her resolve proved to be incredibly short-lived.

The moment the doors of their quarters slid closed, Korlon made his intentions clear.

"You contradicted me," he said. "In front of another male."

"What I did," she exclaimed in disbelief, "was save your ass from a penal colony. Did you have any idea what you were saying? And to whom?"

"I spoke as a primale. One to another. We were given permission to speak freely, were we not?"

"Up to a point, yes, but you put the man into a complete dither."

"He can take it," said Korlon curtly. "The point remains. You spoke against me. You also disobeyed my orders on the ship. You were to go in the pod."

"Pardon me once again," she folded her arms, "for trying to keep your worthless hide in one piece. I'll be sure not to make that mistake again."

"What you will do," he said, his voice sounding cold and distant, "is learn to obey."

"I'll obey my superiors," she shot back. "Which does not include you."

"I am your superior. By virtue of our sexual relationship. You are my submissive."

She laughed. "Because I let you fuck me and play slave with me, now I have to turn over my freedom? Not bloody likely."

Korlon snapped his fingers, pointing. "You will stand against that wall, facing it."

Her pulse was racing. Her pussy was damp. She did her best to hide her powerful arousal. "Korlon, you're not yourself," she protested.

"No? Who am I, then?" he challenged. "This is your last chance, submit now, or your punishment will be twice as hard."

"This is insanity," Jaxey protested, walking across the small room.

He ignored her. "Open the top of your flight suit. Slide it down over your shoulders and bare yourself to the waist."

Jaxey obeyed. The air was cool and tingling against her skin. Her nipples were already hard, as though they had been touched.

"You will lean against the wall," he instructed.

Jaxey spread her hands over her head, palms pressed to the wall. She heard him behind her, approaching.

"Closer," he said.

Jaxey inhaled. There was nowhere to go but full bodily contact.

She shivered at the sensation. Cool, smooth neo-plastic on her belly and breasts. Korlon had a hand at her back. He ran the other through her hair like a comb. "Kiss it," he instructed, indicating how she should place her lips to the wall.

Jaxey did so, tenderly, in utter submission.

"Lick."

Spasms shook her pussy as she performed the degrading action. Clean and sterile as the wall might be, there was no mistaking the symbolism, the power exchange involved.

He could make her do anything, and she would respond with nothing but lust.

"You will take a spanking," he said, his hands reaching around to press at the sides of her breasts. "You will take my hand on your ass like an obedient."

"Yes, Korlon..."

"You defied me," he reminded.

"Yes...I deserve punishment." She was breathing heavily. Her scent filled the air. Unconsciously, she began to back her ass against him, trying to make contact with his cock.

She found it, hard and receptive under his clothes.

"If you are trying to seduce me into lightening your sentence," he informed her, "it won't work. What you will earn is a thorough ass fucking when the spanking is over."

"Oh, gods, Korlon...I surrender to you. Use my body, take possession of it. Be hard and merciless."

"I will be as I wish to you." He pulled her coveralls down over her hips, baring her ass.

"Yes," she sighed. "Master."

She heard him growl, a low, soft sound, sexy as hell. A moment later it began, the first crack of his hand, crisp and true on her buttocks. She was amazed how good it felt, how comfortable. For all the sting it brought, somehow...it was comforting.

"Yes," she moaned. "Make me pay. Teach me to submit."

"I will," he promised. "Don't worry about that."

Jaxey closed her eyes. For all the uncertainty of the moment, with regard to their fate, she had never felt more centered in her life.

Was this what Desela felt in Korlon's presence?

Korlon paused, keeping his hand on her hot buttocks. "What is your place?" he asked.

"Obedience," she said throatily.

He smacked her again and she began to come. Quite against her own design and his, too.

A thought occurred to her now—if the source of their passion was her disobedience, wouldn't things get dull if she ever did obey?

Was that why he sought her over Des? Did he need a more spirited mate?

They had professed love for each other. What did it mean? Was it only the sex act, the discipline and domination? There had to be more, but what exactly? She vowed to figure it out.

As soon as he was done ravishing her.

S

He freed his cock, and she moaned at the feel of it, hard against her hip. It was throbbing and hot—primale hot.

"Do you have any idea what you do to me?" he whispered hotly.

"Yes..."

He snaked a finger into her pussy, causing warm fluid to leak from her sex. "Do not hold back," he said, as if she had anything left to call her own.

"No...Master." Jaxey held her breath as he played with her, teasing her clitoris, very, very slowly. "Pleeease," she begged.

He tortured her for several long minutes before releasing her. "Come," he said at last—casual, possessive.

The insolent tone of his voice melted her down to the core. She clawed at the wall, she writhed against him, she pushed her body back, like the most slavish of obedients.

"Again."

Jaxey cried out. If he wanted more proof of his power, she could hardly give it. Drenched in sweat, she turned over her shattered pride. "Fuck me, Sir, please use me."

His hand twined in her hair. He bit down on her neck. Jaxey's toes curled. She was a living, aching vacuum and his cock poised at the opening to her sex, pushing against her lips and she cried out with joy, mixed with a deep ecstatic anguish.

She needed this. She needed this man and what he could give.

He slid inside her an inch, and no more.

Jaxey groaned and thrust back.

"No," said Korlon sharply, smacking her ass. "Hold still."

Jaxey whimpered. She would have to take it on his terms. "I'm sorry, Master."

"Discipline," he said, delivering another smack.

She panted, biting her lip. He sank another inch.

"You may thank me for fucking you, slave."

"T-thank you, Master for fucking me."

Korlon tightened his fingers in her hair. "I'm going to take you in the ass next, girl."

Jaxey shuddered in reply.

"Have you been taken that way before?"

"No," she confessed.

"You will give your ass to me. You will open when I say."

"I will, Master."

He plunged to the hilt inside her pussy. "Do not move," he reiterated. "Do not come. Not without permission. You are mine. Your body...is mine."

Her body, yes. But what of her heart and soul?

Korlon pumped her, in and out, a smooth, steady pace—expertly, cleanly possessive. More than anything in the world, Jaxey wanted to please him. Now...and maybe longer.

"I'm going to come," he said. "You...will not."

"I obey, Master," she proclaimed.

He came with the force of a ship going into warp drive, filling her insides with his milky white semen. His spray was endless, thick and warm. She held on, resisting the urge to climax herself.

Incredibly, he was still hard when he pulled out. Turning her about, he pushed Jaxey down onto her knees. She did not need to be told what he wanted.

"You're still hard," she marveled, kissing the head of his cock.

"And I'm going to stay that way," he growled.

Jaxey licked the underside, running her tongue all the way up. "Yes...hard for me," she exclaimed.

He took hold of the sides of her face, caressing even as he guided her, just as he wished.

She closed her eyes, relaxing her jaws. Marvelously, the inside of her silky mouth slid along the length of his irrepressible shaft. She took as much of him as she could.

He groaned in deep satisfaction, moving slowly, backward and then forward again. It was like a dream, it seemed to go on forever. Jaxey plunged her hand between her legs. She wasn't supposed to come, but he hadn't told her not to touch herself.

Korlon ejaculated, his semen just as strong and thick as before. She felt the reverberations, the hot joy as she swallowed him down, his intense energy, the sweet, salty taste. It was an incredibly intimate act and they kissed afterward, his face in her hands, her lips glued to his in an expression of pure gratitude.

He took her to the small detention room bed after this, allowing her time to rest. They held each other for the longest time and then, spontaneously, the arousal began all over again. Like sparks over their skin, signaling all kinds of kinky avenues to explore.

This time it began with surprising gentleness—light kisses across each other's bodies, no rushing into the act itself, but just a simple enjoyment of where they were, reclined now, side by side, naked under the sheets.

"I wish this would never end," said Jaxey, her head on his chest.

"Who says it has to?" he retorted, looking at the ceiling, his hand on her back, stroking.

"What are you saying?" she murmured, trailing her fingers idly over her pectoral muscles.

"I think you know."

He gave her no time to ask for clarification or even to think of what he might mean.

Putting her up on all fours, he whispered in her ear, reminding her of the one act that yet remained to be fulfilled between them.

"You must relax completely." He stroked her back.

"Yes." She gripped at the sheets. "I will, Master."

He used his finger, inserting it into her sopping-wet pussy. As always she was dripping wet for the man. She would happily have his cock again, but this time it was only the liquid he wanted.

Lubricant, which he removed and inserted into the tinier hole. She drew a ragged breath. She felt wicked and excited and a little scared, too. She couldn't imagine this with any other man.

"That's it," he encouraged as she began to rock against his finger.

The sensation was different, tight, but not unpleasant. She felt her nipples stiffen in anticipation.

"You're going to be great at this," he assured, giving her just the boost she needed.

This was Korlon at his best, knowing just how to encourage her.

He took his position behind her, his strong body on top of hers, securing and protecting it. She knew no harm would come to her. This would be pleasurable and not painful.

Korlon gave a little sigh as he removed his finger and replaced it with his cock. Her pussy gaped, feeling the invisible pressure. Slowly, very, very slowly, he inserted himself, finding his place inside her.

"Does that feel good?" he wanted to know.

"Yes," she cried in pleasant surprise. "Oh, yes."

"That's good," he approved, pushing into her a little farther.

Jaxey felt herself stiffen and then release. Something had given way. She fell down to her elbows, rubbing her breasts. "Fuck me," she groaned. "Fuck my ass, Korlon...Master."

Korlon obliged, taking possession of her nether region. He allowed his primale cock to expand just enough, to give a thrill without causing pain. He moved at the right pace, heating and enflaming her.

She couldn't believe she was doing so well. She begged for him to come and at last he did, filling her in the most deep and satisfying way.

To her amazement, he had her lie down on her belly now so he could apply his tongue to her needful pussy. He licked her to several sweet orgasms, lapping at her liquid-soaked opening, flicking again and again over the supercharged tip of her clit.

She moaned into the sheet, her body thrashing until she thought she would explode. He brought her down slow and easy, reintroducing her into the real world.

By this point they were both too exhausted to move, too wrapped up in each other to speak. They lay together, listening to one another's breathing.

Some time later, the guards came for them and here they were, no longer on trial, it seemed, but in the position of guests.

* * * * *

Theron gripped the armrests of his favorite easy chair in silent fury. He could not remember the last time he had gotten this angry with anyone. Not even the Narthians managed to get under his skin like this Korlon had.

"I'm telling you, Nyssa," he informed his wife once they were back in their quarters. "I intend to throw the book at him. A man like that is bad for morale. He has no respect for authority."

Nyssa was on her knees before him, barefoot, removing his boots. She had changed into a short silk costume with golden bells on her ankles. Her hair was still up, though she now wore a collar of inlaid platinum about her neck. It was by mutual consent that she served him this way in the privacy of their chambers—in this case on board his flagship.

While he honored her as a queen and yielded to her authority in public as Head of the Council, Theron was ever the primale behind closed doors. He kept his lovely wife scantily clad, strictly bound and under his total command. She was assigned with pleasing him and readily accepted punishments for her failings.

The main function of the arrangement was sexual. Being Master and slave aroused them both fully and completely, far beyond the bounds of most mating relationships.

Naturally, it was done with some leeway for humor, too, with lots of room for give-and-take.

"Actually, he reminds me of a certain warrior I once knew," she offered, tongue in cheek, removing his second boot.

"You mean me?" Theron bristled. "I was never like that."

"You were after I came into your life," she pointed out.

"Yes," he concurred. "You were a bad influence."

"I'd be careful saying things like that," she returned his playful attack. "You're about to be in a very vulnerable position."

He hooked a finger in her collar, pulling her close, over his lap. "Explain yourself."

"Isn't it obvious?" she purred, her lips inches from his, her fingers busily working on the opening to his trousers.

His smile angled sharply as she managed to extract his cock, red-hot, hard and ready for action. "I don't recall giving you permission to touch me," he said.

Nyssa licked her lips. "If you'd rather I didn't..."

Her featherlight caresses drove him mad with need. "Stop now, wench, and I will put you in the belt all night."

He meant the chastity belt, with its grated covering that allowed her to pee but not to receive any sexual input to her vagina. For a creature as sexual as Nyssa, there was no worse torture than denial.

"That will deprive you, too," she pointed out.

"I will make do." He made her suck his finger, giving her just one of the options left open to him.

Nyssa inhaled greedily, looking sensuously into his eyes. She loved sucking cock, as much as she loved being pleased herself, his tongue between her legs, licking at her sex, teasing her delightful, ripe little clitoris. Her screams of joy were enough to unlock the very gates of eternity.

By the Code, how he loved her. She was one in a million—a trillion. He owed his every joy to her, and to the darling daughter she had given him in Theryssa. They were his two women, his two jewels.

Did this Korlon feel that way about Jaxey? He certainly showed fire in her presence. Theron had the distinct impression the man would have defended her to the death against any taker.

"I love you, my lion," whispered Nyssa, her hair falling about his thighs as she lowered her head to his lap.

He exclaimed as though struck with an arrow of pure quicksilver. Instantly, he felt the soothing effects of her tongue, her lips, worshipping his straining, aching cock. She alone understood his needs, the loneliness of his command. She alone could give him the kind of submission he needed—not out-and-out conquest of a mere brainless beauty, but the deep and abiding companionship of a female companion whose own fulfillment lay in surrender to his male strength.

He stroked her hair in awe and love. He would kill for her and die for her. She was the center of his universe, the compass which guided him. As her lips moved over the

tip of his cock, preparing to take him inside her mouth, he was nearly overcome with the sacredness of the moment.

"My Nyssa," he murmured. "My queen."

"My Lord," she replied, sliding him deep into her mouth.

He took hold of her hair, just strongly enough so as to feel connected with her. She responded to the mild control, giving of herself more freely. Grunting, Theron shifted in his seat. He would not hold out long for this first emission. Its purpose was to drain him of his lust just enough to allow him to make sex with his wife more slowly and intimately, the way she needed it.

Nyssa understood this quite well. Bobbing her head up and down just a few times, she received his offering, swallowing the first of his come for the afternoon.

"Thank you." She looked up into his eyes, having licked him clean.

He touched her chin with his thumb. "Thank you, my love."

"Will you not show him mercy, then?" she asked softly, but unabashedly.

"Him who?" He pretended to have forgotten.

"Korlon, the young officer in love."

"Oh, him. Well, I don't see that I have any choice," he grumbled. "There would be no living with you otherwise. You do realize, by the way, that I am supposed to be in charge of my troops?"

"Yes," she said demurely. "My Master."

"To the bed, wench," he ordered good-naturedly. "It is time to pay me for the favor I just extended to your young man."

"I thought I already had."

"That was a mere down payment," he informed her. "You have yet to touch the principal."

"I will remember that," she said, "the next time you ask a favor of me."

"I do not ask things of you, woman, I demand them."

"Indeed." She arched an eyebrow. He could see by the mischievous look in her eyes that he was in for a struggle. "In that case, I think I shall withhold my favors from you. Until further notice."

"Not bloody likely. That body is mine."

"You may consider it closed, nonetheless." Nyssa hopped up and started walking away, a saucy sway to her buttocks.

"Where are you going?"

"To watch something on the hologrid."

"I told you to get into bed."

"I don't feel like it."

He was on his feet. Three steps and he had her, by the waist. She struggled, trying not to laugh. "Bully," she cried.

He tickled her into a state of profound helplessness. "Give up yet?"

"Yes!"

"Yes, what?"

"Yes, Master," she cried.

"You may beg me to use your body."

"Please, Master," she gasped. "Use...my body."

Theron turned her about and lifted her into his arms. "I thought you'd never ask."

"I have only one request," she said as he prepared to set her down on the bed.

"What's that?"

"Be ruthless," she whispered.

"Consider it done."

Thus did he have her, a mere handful of heartbeats later, underneath him, her tiny costume torn from her body, her chest heaving, her legs spread to receive her lord's shaft. He touched her collar and then her cheek and then each of her gleaming nipple rings before finally plunging home, sinking himself to the balls. She wrapped her legs around his back, moaning in pent-up joy as he pinned her wrists overhead.

"Take me," she cried. "Please, Theron... My Master."

Theron conquered her completely, inducing orgasm after orgasm, his hot, thick primale cock piercing her over and over, plumbing her secret depths, to those places no other man had ever touched nor ever could touch. Many times she screamed out his name, accepting the erotic pounding, her body flattened by his, soft curves crushed deliciously by muscle.

Over and over until he himself exploded, releasing the bulk of his pent-up need and tension. He held nothing back, giving her a full dose, enough to tide her over for at least a few hours. Until they could begin again.

Yes, he would spare Korlon. If Nyssa saw something in him, than he was worth a second look and a third as well. Her judgment was flawless. Besides, there might be something to what she had said about the two men being alike. Perhaps that is why they had butted heads.

Could it be this young officer had a future—a very bright one—with the Guardians? Could it be, too, that there was room for Theron to sit back at times and listen to others? What if the way he and Nyssa had been fighting the NARTHIAN War was not the only way?

Was not the hallmark of humanity its flexibility and adaptation to change? If a man became too hardened, then he ceased to be of use. If Korlon was to be the one to give him lessons, to humble him, even, than he must accept it.

There were greater things in the universe, by far, than Theron's ego. Like he himself had said, it was about the species, not any individuals.

Theron grasped his wife's hands, interlacing their fingers. He lay atop her, the passion passed, their hearts returning to normal in total synchronization.

"To mercy." He kissed her.

"To love." She kissed back.

He closed his eyes, as close to paradise as he would ever come.

* * * * *

Korlon and Jaxey's second meeting with Theron and Nyssa was considerably more informal than the first. All four of them were sitting in the living area of the General's quarters, each of the two couples facing each other in a pair of matching love seats.

Nyssa had changed into a green top and skirt. Her hair was freshly washed and combed loose about her shoulders. Theron wore his uniform trousers and boots, but had removed his outer tunic, stripping to a simple long-sleeve T-shirt.

"Something to drink?" asked Nyssa as the servo droid entered the room.

Korlon ordered mineral water. Jaxey took his lead and requested the same. They were sitting quite close together and she was clutching his hand tightly.

Jaxey had made him promise not to antagonize General Theron any further. He had agreed, having been rendered considerably mellowed by his experience of complete sexual domination over Jaxey back in the detention quarters.

"You hold your glass like Theron does," Nyssa remarked to Korlon. "Doesn't he, darling?"

Theron pursed his lips in reply.

"They sit the same way, too," Jaxey piped up. "See? How they spread their legs, with their left hands over their thighs, clenched into fists?"

"I do believe you are right," laughed Nyssa.

Korlon could see what Nyssa was up to. She was trying to make nice, trying to form an alliance with Jaxey. So long as they didn't have to sell themselves down the river, though, what did he care?

"I think we may have gotten off to a poor start," Nyssa continued. "Theron and I were hoping to try again."

"We'd like that." Jaxey squeezed Korlon's hand. "Wouldn't we, honey?"

"We would just like to know what's expected of us," said Korlon. "That's all."

"Good man," Theron interjected teasingly. "Stick to the facts, never let a female take control of a situation."

Nyssa raised her eyebrow at her husband, who grinned in response.

"Jaxey, I'm sure you have found," said Nyssa, "that there are times when primales forget their manners."

"Yes," Jaxey laughed uneasily. "Although I am one myself, by genetics."

"But you're also a female and that counts for something. It means you take the lead in emotional things. You and Korlon, you have the basis of a relationship, no?"

"I love him." Jaxey surprised Korlon with the straightforwardness of her answer. "I believe I always have. From the moment I first saw him, standing there in line waiting to register at the Academy. He was...different. Nobler somehow, strong, but I sensed something gentle in him, too, something that would love a misfit like me."

Nyssa nodded, taking the part of counselor. "And what about you, Korlon? Was it also love at first sight?"

"I wanted her body, that was for sure."

Theron chuckled at this. He was cut short by another stare from Nyssa.

"Tell me more about wanting her, Korlon. What did that entail for you?"

"Nyssa," interjected Theron, "he is a primale, how do you expect him to answer? He saw her as a beautiful woman, he wanted to own her. Put her in chains and have her at his feet. And every other way, besides."

"I felt many things." Korlon drew strength from his newfound ally. "But, yes, I was preoccupied with having my way with her. As I look back on it, I lost all real interest in other women from that time on."

"Korlon is not the only one who was preoccupied with the physical side," said Jaxey. "I used to fantasize about being bound up and taken by him. I was so jealous of his obedient, Desela, because she got to be used by him, exactly as he wished. A lot of it was subconscious, but it was there."

"And what about now that everything is conscious?"

Jaxey looked at Korlon. "I'm not sure. I think we might have something here but...I just don't know. I'm not an obedient for one thing. And I couldn't bear to hurt Des."

"Nor could I," agreed Korlon, though he had to admit, hearing Jaxey talk about a future between them filled him with a soaring joy that he could not articulate.

"Let's deal with the submissive part first," said Nyssa. "You know that primale men can have mates who are not obedient? I am a direct mix of a fem and a primale, for example. I have no obedient blood at all."

"How does that work?" Jaxey wanted to know. "If I'm not being too intrusive?"

"If you mean our intimate life," said Nyssa bluntly, "the answer is quite simple. I am my husband's sex slave. My body exists for his pleasure."

Korlon could see that Jaxey was impressed.

"But you are the Head of the Council."

"That's right," Nyssa acknowledged. "In public, I am the boss, but in private, I bear my ass to the whip."

Jaxey's eyes widened. "You...get whipped?"

"Frequently." She grinned. "I may get one tonight if I keep shooting my mouth off, isn't that right, lover?"

Theron's hand moved to her thigh. "I reserve the right," he said simply.

Korlon noted the very slight tremors in Nyssa's body, the slackness in her jaw, the glazing in her eyes, just from being touched.

"You like that, son?" Theron gave a wolflike leer, watching the look on Korlon's face. "I have her trained. You can do the same with yours."

Korlon hesitated. It was like a dream come true. "I can't really call her mine, Sir."

"I want to be his," said Jaxey to Theron. "I want him to train me to please him."

"What you are asking is no small thing. Tell him, Nyssa."

"My slavery...is real," she said hotly, her palms face up on the love seat, limp. "I have my mind, but he has my body."

Theron massaged her thigh. "There are things we let our friends see. We needn't hide everything in front of them."

As if on cue, Nyssa opened her blouse, revealing full breasts, each nipple pierced by a single metal ring.

Theron lifted one. "Do you like it? It is ornamental and functional, too. I can attach chains or weights."

Korlon's cock was throbbing in his pants, aching to get out. "I...I don't think I should be seeing the High Councilor like this."

"She isn't High Councilor in here," declared Theron. "She is my woman and I am showing her off to you. Surely you don't mean to insult my hospitality by failing to comment?"

"The rings are quite pleasing to the eye," Korlon corrected his oversight. "They do your woman justice."

"Her pussy is pierced as well, but no man may see that but me."

"I understand."

"Primals do not share," observed Theron.

"Never," agreed Korlon.

"Will you pierce your woman's nipples, Korlon?" Theron asked, inclining his head in Jaxey's direction.

All thoughts of Desela faded from his mind. "Do you think that would look good?" Korlon asked, giving no opportunity for Jaxey to answer for herself.

"I would have to see her nipples to be sure."

Korlon's blood surged through his veins. He let go of Jaxey's hand, which was limp and damp with sweat. "Open your shirt," he commanded her. "Show the General your breasts."

Korlon tensed, waiting to see what she would do.

"Yes, Master," she replied eagerly, moving her fingers to open the top of the short dress she had been provided after being allowed to clean up a little while ago before coming here.

"She has good breasts," Theron observed her delicately rising and falling globes. "And nice pink areolas. She would take rings well. You will find they increase a female's sensitivity. Nyssa comes more quickly and more intensely as a result, don't you, slave?"

"Yes, Master," she voiced her assent.

"Hold up your breasts, Nyssa."

Nyssa obeyed without hesitation.

Korlon admired the full globes, so beautifully presented. More importantly, however, he imagined all the possibilities with Jaxey.

"Is my wife not beautiful, Korlon?"

"Breathtaking."

"What do you think, Jaxey?"

"Sir," she told the General, "she is stunning."

"She is the love of my life, my treasure. Can you understand the complexity of our relationship?"

"No, Sir," she said frankly.

Theron smiled. "That's a good answer. Neither can I." He bid Nyssa to cover herself.

"Our love is a journey," said Nyssa, re-covering herself. "We live it day by day. Yours will be unique, but it will be a great adventure, that much I know."

"Jaxey, do you wish to belong to Korlon?" Theron asked.

She nodded almost shyly.

"Then tell him so. In the appropriate way. On your knees."

Korlon was overawed. The most wonderful woman in the world was kneeling in front of him, looking up into his eyes. "I am yours," she said softly. "If you would have me."

Tears filled his eyes. "How could I turn you down?" he croaked.

She reached up for him and he reached down. They melted into one another's arms. The world disappeared around them, including Nyssa and Theron.

Only one question remained to mar his overwhelming happiness.

What of Desela?

Chapter Seven

Jaxey could tell by the look on her face, the moment Desela walked into the diner that she knew. It wasn't a look of anger or jealousy or even sadness so much as...emptiness.

Korlon's tone of voice over the communication link must have given it away, or maybe his strange request to have their reunion take place in public, with Jaxey along.

Jaxey and Korlon were already sitting in a booth. She wanted very badly to squeeze Korlon's hand for support, but she couldn't do that, not yet, not until they had done this last thing to make their mating engagement official.

They didn't need Desela's blessing and probably it was unfair to ask, but it would sure make Jaxey sleep easier at night.

"Wait here," said Korlon, rising and heading over to meet Desela.

Jaxey was more than happy to keep her fanny in place. It was already red and sore from one spanking today and she did not wish another. Besides, the less she had to bear the brunt of Des' initial emotions, the better.

Des was carrying herself with amazing dignity and grace. She had nothing but smiles for Korlon and as he bent to kiss her cheek, she touched his arm lovingly. The pair exchanged a few words before he escorted her back to the table.

"Hello, Jaxey," said Des. "You look lovely."

"Not as much as you," Jaxey exclaimed, noting the finely combed golden locks and the neon print dress with thigh-high white boots.

Des shook her head. "Oh, this is nothing."

"Jaxey's right," said Korlon. "It is lovely." He motioned for her to sit in the booth across from Jaxey.

Jaxey felt a stab of pain as Korlon came to sit with her and not Desela.

He couldn't be making things any clearer.

"Des, I have something I need to say."

"No." Desela shook her head, still smiling. "You don't need to say anything. You have found your true happiness. With Jaxey. It couldn't be more obvious looking at the two of you. I might not know much in this world, but I know love when I see it."

Korlon cast a glance in Jaxey's direction.

"Des," Jaxey said, reaching for her hand which was at the edge of the table. "I want you to know we never intended for this to happen, we never even saw it coming."

Des squeezed her fingers. "Of course you didn't see it. You are the two most honest people I know. You know what's funny, though? I think I knew it all along, in the back

of my mind. That's why I wanted you to dress up, Jaxey. Can you believe it? I sealed my own doom. But no, all along, I sensed it. You two...you're right together. It explains so much, doesn't it? Why I could never make you happy, Korlon. Why I was always so uneasy about our relationship. It wasn't supposed to be that way—it was a sign that we were not meant for each other."

"Desela," said Korlon with a fierce intensity, "if there were anything I could do to take away the pain, if I could go back in time, I would give my very life."

Jaxey balked to hear such words, but she knew it was the primale way. Until he heard the formal words of release from Desela, his heart would feel torn.

Desela took her hand from Jaxey's and gave it to Korlon. "Korlon...Master...look in my eyes."

Korlon did so, for once being on the obedient end of things.

"You did nothing wrong by me. You were honorable, you followed your heart. You gave me joy every moment you were with me. I will never forget you, but you must let yourself be free of me. If you do not I will be miserable my whole life. My love for you demands your happiness. Your happiness is Jaxey. Master, give to me the greatest gift you could ever give, make her your mate and release me."

Korlon squeezed her fingers in both his hands. "Desela...I don't know what to say."

Des laughed. "I think 'Yes, honey' will do fine. Isn't that what non-obedient women make their men say?"

"Apparently, the obedient ones do, too," quipped Jaxey, remembering Nyssa's interchanges with Theron. "At least one in particular."

"Des," asked Korlon, "what will you do? Is there any way we can help you?"

"I will be fine," she said. "We obedients are stronger than we look."

"We could help you," said Korlon, "to find someone new."

"Darling, I'm not sure Des will want to do that right away," said Jaxey. "I know you mean well, but she might need some time. Maybe a retreat somewhere?"

"I'll arrange it," said Korlon.

"I'll be fine, both of you," Des spoke up. "Thank you, but I have to handle this in my own way. If this is the course fate has given me, I must learn from it. Jaxey, you have given me all the courage I need to face this, you know."

"I have? How?"

"By being yourself—a woman, out of her element, forced to make her way upstream, and succeeding wildly as a result. I want to do that, too. I want to try something different. Me, an obedient...daring to swim the tide. What do you think?"

"I think you can accomplish anything you set your mind to," said Jaxey.

"I agree," said Korlon. "And you have my word—anyone who stands in your way or does you wrong will have me to answer to."

"Ever my champion." Des grinned.

Jaxey marveled at how well it was all going. "I half expect to wake up and find I'm dreaming."

"It's real all right," said Korlon. "And we know it is...because it's been one hell of a ride."

Wasn't that the truth? Ups and downs, a happy ending for her and Korlon but a huge question mark for Desela.

She was strong, but Jaxey knew she was hiding pain. Long into their subsequent lunch, as they laughed over lunar ranch steaks and Mars Fizzles, Jaxey thought about the beautiful blonde across from her...and the handsome hunk beside her.

With any luck, she would be in his arms before the afternoon was through. Naked and maybe even tied up.

And if she was really inventive, she would come up with something naughty to do. Just so she could have the fun of being punished.

Fun for her, and for Korlon, too. Because they were birds of a feather. Partners and mates in the deepest sense of the word.

* * * * *

Korlon had Jaxey strung up by the wrists, her lean body pulled enticingly taut. Stark naked, she had no choice but to remain on tiptoes to ease the pressure. A pressure made all the more difficult by his teasing, demanding hands.

He had taken much from her already these past twenty minutes, including a handful of orgasms and a fresh layer of her pride.

Each climax had been a direct result of her scripted begging. For the right to push her pelvis against his knuckles, she had already said the most demeaning things.

She had also bargained pain for her pleasure, accepting one clamp after another on her delicate skin, from the outer circle of her breasts all the way down to her pussy.

Heaving and groaning she even made sex with a whip, finding her release in the kiss of leather directly over her pussy.

For each little kindness and even for the unkindness, she was made to say thank you. Attention from one's Master was a privilege and a slave accepted it as such, no matter what.

In Korlon's case, though, the privilege was all his. He had been itching to take full possession of her ever since they had been removed from the detention quarters. When he had seen what a Master could really do, through Theron's eyes, he was totally determined to make it happen.

The consummation of their love, one man, one woman. One bond.

"We will be mated at dawn," he informed her, standing directly in front of her, caressing her helpless breasts.

"Yes, Master." She smiled, entranced by his words, his will, his naked physique.
"Thank you, Master."

He could see she wanted this, too. She loved his power over her, loved the games, and above all the seemingly endless lust.

"I will keep you under discipline." He put his fingers inside her.

"Yes, Master." She shuddered – penetrated.

"I will teach you to serve a primale."

"Yes, Master."

"Come," he ordered. "On my fingers."

She moaned her release, pouring forth her fluids onto his hand. Afterward, he gave them to her to lick off.

Once, twice, he tapped her with the whip on her hips. She twitched, as though struck. "Relax," he said.

"I can't, Master, I need you too much."

"I need you, too."

"Not like this...not in the way I do."

"What do you need?" he asked as if he didn't know.

"I need your cock."

He pressed it against her. "This one here?"

"Yes," she sighed. "Oh stars, let me have it."

"Be careful what you wish for..."

"Anything, I'll take anything. Use me any way at all."

He ran the whip over her ass, which he had been whipping a few moments earlier.
"If I let you down, you will go directly to bed."

"At once, Master."

"You will need to go on your hands and knees."

"I will."

"You will need to get on your back and spread your legs when you get there," he continued.

"Spread my legs...yes, Master. Let me do it," she pleaded.

Korlon reached up and released her. Instead of letting her down to crawl, however, he kept hold of her. Jaxey wrapped her legs around him and impaled herself. They were a perfect fit, as always.

"This doesn't look like crawling," he pointed out. "And you are not on the bed."

"You noticed, Master?" She grinned.

"Things don't get past me."

"No, I don't imagine they do," she teased, nuzzling his neck with her succulent lips.

Korlon chuckled, even as he dug his fingers into her ass. In a matter of moments he had his rhythm. Faster and faster they built, her body swaying up and down on the end of his cock, until at last they climaxed.

Together, in perfect union.

He did not let go of her afterwards, but held on to her. Just in case the universe should change its mind about giving her to him.

If it did, it would have one hell of a fight on its hands, that was for sure.

Before falling in love with Jaxey, he hadn't even known what true happiness was and he was not about to let go of it. Nor, he suspected was she.

Nothing would keep them apart, not after all it had taken to bring them together.

Talk about an adventure. Theron and Nyssa had nothing over them.

And they were just beginning, too.

They had it all to look forward to, for the rest of their lives. Day to day, moment to moment...orgasm to orgasm.

About the Author

Reese Gabriel is a born romantic with a taste for the edgier side of love. Having traveled the world and sampled many of the finer things, Reese now enjoys the greater simplicities; barefoot walks by the ocean, kisses under moonlight and whispers of passion in the darkness with that one special person.

Preferring to remain behind the scenes, cherished by a precious few, Reese hopes to awaken in the lives of many the possibilities of true love through stories of far off places and enchanted lives.

For the sake of love and hope and imagination, these stories are told. May they be enjoyed as much in the reading of them as in the writing.

Reese welcomes comments from readers. You can find Reese's website and email address on the author bio page at www.ellorascave.com.

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