



*Brutal*  
**ALIEN**  
*Mercenary*

**NINA SIREN**

# **BRUTAL ALIEN MERCENARY**

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# NINA SIREN

ATHENAVVERSE PRESS

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## RACHEL

"Insectoids!" I mutter between gasps for air. Their grotesque figures haunt my mind - the nightmarish fusion of human and insect traits, monstrous bugs with sinewy limbs that easily outpace human sprinters. I'm their quarry, and they're gaining ground.

Despite the long odds, my survival instinct kicks in, and I push harder, sprinting across the sodden Amazonian terrain. A sharp sting radiates from my foot. Looking down, I find a shoe missing, replaced by a bloody foot. Yet, I can't afford to stop.

My heart hammers in my chest, adrenaline pumping into every fiber of my being, drowning out the world except for the grotesque symphony of the insectoids' pursuit. I can't allow myself the luxury of a glance back. The fear of finding them a hair's breadth away chains my gaze ahead.

Yet, even as I run, the faces of my colleagues haunt me, chilling me more than the wind cutting through my sweat-soaked clothes. Tears sting my eyes, but they're not for me. They're for my friends, now cold and lifeless, casualties of this senseless massacre.

If I hadn't been drawn by an unusual plant a few meters away from our camp, I'd be among them. Their screams still echo in my ears. The sight of their lifeless bodies when I returned will forever be seared into my memory. I'd barely managed to run before the insectoids noticed my return.

We had been on a mission of hope, searching for new, edible flora to bolster the dwindling supplies of our alien allies and our own people on Earth. Our planet, serving as a galactic granary, dreaded the day our fields and livestock could no longer feed our populace, let alone meet the demands

of other planets.

Our search was supposed to continue for days, but it ended in a bloodbath before the first day was over. Now, as I sprint through the haunting beauty of the Amazon, the grief for my fallen colleagues vies with the primal instinct for survival.

However, amidst the chaos, one question plagues my mind—how did these brutal insectoids breach Earth's defenses? Our planet was supposed to be a protected part of the galaxy, heavily fortified due to its vital role in providing water, food, and other necessities to various alien races.

Ironically, humanity, with all our ingenuity, is still just a labor resource for advanced civilizations. They regard us as an inferior species, and we are dispatched as workers across the universe.

Yet, not all is grim. We've earned allies who pledged to shield us from invasion and skirmishes, recognizing Earth's significance in the Milky Way Alliance. We provide, and they protect. Or at least, that's how it's supposed to work.

And here I am, the object of an insectoid hunt. My mind aches with questions as I struggle to outpace the pursuing mantis-like horrors.

These insectoids, despite their limited cognition, are a threat feared across galaxies. They breed at thrice our rate, and if you kill one, it seems two take its place.

Even the formidable Lords, protectors of our planet, are overwhelmed by their vast numbers. Yet, they can exterminate these creatures easily in smaller groups. A fact that offers little comfort as I consider the fate of my team, and the glaring absence of our protectors.

As I dart into a meadow, the stark reality hits me - I may die here. Tripping over a rock, I crash to the ground, the sharp rocks tearing into my skin and shredding my clothes. I rise to my knees and see about twenty insectoids approaching, their claws gleaming ominously, their grotesque green eyes fixated on me.

I prepare for the end. I'm at peace with my fate, having arranged for my belongings to go to charity. My estranged brother won't waste a tear on my demise. I say a silent prayer, squeeze my eyes shut, then open them to face my tormentors.

Summoning the last dregs of my courage, I push to my feet, and with my voice echoing across the open meadow, I shout, "Come at me, you dumb, ugly monsters!"



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## DJINN

"Welcome aboard, Djinn!" Captain Tyron's booming voice greets me as I step into the spaceship's command center. An array of respectful salutes comes from the other iron lords.

After months of imposed inactivity on the Planet of Gold, I'm finally leaving my gilded cage. I had to persuade them, arguing that I was fit for service, that I'd recovered from the injuries that had benched me. They relented when I half-joked that I'd die of boredom if kept grounded any longer.

I stride up to the monitors, my eyes scanning the myriad displays. "Has anyone tracked the insectoids yet?" My voice slices through the hum of technology and muted conversation.

A group of insectoids had breached Earth's defenses barely half an hour ago, an occurrence that baffled us. How did these giant bugs circumvent the planet's guards? It's now our task to hunt them down and thwart their intrusion.

"We can't track them unless we're within Earth's vicinity, but we're almost there," comes an anonymous reply.

I don't turn to acknowledge it. Our focus has to be on speed and efficiency if we want this mission to be successful. The screens before me remain devoid of the insectoid's spaceship transmitter signal we're waiting for.

A familiar itch creeps into my veins, the call for action that has lain dormant for too long. It's been months since I tasted battle, and these insectoids would be a welcome challenge, a means to reignite my dormant

prowess.

Three months ago, I'd tangled with them, an encounter that left me out of commission until my complete recovery. This would be my first mission since then, and I swear vengeance against these grotesque creatures.

The memory of that day still lingers.

"ALL RIGHT, TEAM! GEAR UP!" I bark, rallying my troops for our attack against the insectoids. "We'll be teleporting shortly. Aim for their heads."

Ten of us are on this mission, tasked to exterminate an insectoid colony that's encroached upon our neighboring planet and settled in its barren southern region.

As the spaceship transmitter beeps, I busy myself setting the warp machine, prepping for teleportation. Suddenly, sparks fly and chaos reigns as a glitch sends me spiraling into a black hole.

Time stretches, then snaps back. Blinking, I find myself alarmingly close to the insectoid queen, the Mantis. A horde of insectoids scurry around us, laboring to build a nest for their leader.

Without wasting a heartbeat, I summon my gold spear, morph it into a sword, and lunge at the queen. If the swarm spots me, it's over. But if I eliminate the queen, I might have a fighting chance.

With the death of the queen, a palpable shockwave ripples through the swarm. A stillness lasts for three breaths, and then they spiral into a frenzied chaos, attacking indiscriminately. The queen's death leaves them rudderless and doomed to a short, purposeless existence.

Although my landing here was accidental, it turns out to be mission-accomplished. Yet, as the frenzy engulfs me, the sharp edges of their claws etching painful lines across my body, I fear I might share the insectoids' fate. No being, whether human or lord, has ever survived the manic onslaught of a swarm.

I feel the toxic poison beginning to seep from their bodies into mine. Knowing the end is near, I brace myself for oblivion. But fate intervenes. Abruptly, I'm swept up into a black hole and spit out back onto our spaceship. I collapse onto the deck, my team rushing to aid me.

Normally, I am a fortress, keeping my emotions locked within. But this time, a broad smile splits my face, my heart swelling at the sight of my fellow lords. I hadn't expected to see them again. But, as suddenly as it appeared, my

smile contorts into a grimace as the pain consumes me, and darkness swoops in.

"THERE THEY ARE."

Captain Tyron's voice yanks me back to the present. The screen before me pulses with the signal from the insectoid's spaceship transmitter. We've breached Earth's atmosphere, and the creatures that nearly claimed my life are within our reach.

I shake my head, dispelling the haunting memories of my last encounter. Those damned bugs had me cocooned in a healing shell for an entire week.

Had their potent venom entered a human's bloodstream, instant death would have been the result. As a Lord, though, our physiology is built for resilience, for enduring brutal beatings and counteracting poisons like that of the insectoids. Still, their venomous claws pose a significant threat, even to us.

With a grim determination, I push the spaceship to its top speed, honing in on the insectoid's location. Who knows the havoc they've already wrecked? In the 35 minutes since they breached Earth, there's a high chance of casualties.

All we can hope for now is that they landed in a remote area, a forest or a desert. A crowded city would make for a grimmer scene.

As the monitors beep insistently, they pinpoint the insectoids' spaceship. My heart sinks as the location resolves on the screen.

They've landed in the Amazon.

## DJINN

The urgency in the monitors' beeping heightens, a discordant soundtrack to our impending battle. The Amazon Rainforest is merely a couple of miles away now. We'll breach its canopy within two minutes.

"Almost there," I murmur, scanning the data flowing across the screens. A chorus of agreement echoes around the command center. I can feel the ship's atmosphere shifting as everyone readies themselves for the impending confrontation.

The insectoids are fierce adversaries. Sever a limb, and it births a new insectoid, amplifying their numbers even in the heat of battle. However, we've found their Achilles heel. Decapitate them, and they drop, lifeless. And if we find the queen, it's a significant win. Without her, the colony is as good as defeated.

That's how we've managed to keep the insectoids' population in check.

There's one caution we hold dear: avoid the insectoids' venom at all costs. I, for one, have no intention of being trapped in the healing shell again.

As I secure the shield to my chest and perform a final check on my spear, a familiar thrill of battle courses through me. Three months of rehabilitation have done nothing to quench it. Those insectoids won't know what hit them.

The monitors' beep transforms into a constant tone. The insectoid's runaway spaceship is within sight now, abandoned in the thick foliage. The scene turns grimmer as we spot the bodies of several humans nearby.

Steering the spacecraft north, we finally locate the horde of giant bugs in a meadow. They're hunting a human. My fingers fly over the controls, coaxing the ship to maximum speed. But something's wrong. The ship lags.

Perfect timing, I think bitterly. The chase from earlier had inflicted some damage. Despite our repairs, it seems we didn't fully restore its speed. We'll address it post-mission.

Right now, the crucial task is to reach the human before the insectoids do.

"Djinn," Victor, our mechanic, calls out urgently. "The bugs are almost upon the human."

His words drive me to the monitor displaying the satellite feed. The sight that greets me sparks a curse from my lips. A woman. Vulnerable. Defenseless.

I watch helplessly as she flees from the alien swarm, stumbling, picking herself up, and running again. Her determination is admirable, but the odds are against her. The insects are too fast. Too relentless.

The odds are overwhelmingly against her. She's slight, helpless, and without aid—except for us. But we're still forty feet in the air. Touching down would cost precious time, time she doesn't have.

The insectoid swarm is mere moments from overtaking her. Any second now, and she'll share the fate of the others. Without further hesitation, I guide the spaceship above the woman and plunge into the open air. The shouts of my comrades follow me down, a familiar chorus of concern and resignation.

My boots strike the ground a few feet ahead of her, just as I'd anticipated. I waste no time in launching my counterattack.

In one swift motion, my golden spear morphs into a sword, cleaving through three insectoid heads in a single stroke. My weapon obeys my every command, fluidly shifting from spear to sword, adjusting its length up to ten feet to match my needs. The first wave of attackers falls to my blade.

My focus narrows to the battle at hand. I spare no thought for the woman now behind me, all attention honed on my adversaries. Some have labeled me a battle maniac before, and not without reason. Given the choice between rest and fighting these creatures, I choose the latter every time.

A colossal insectoid lunges towards me, claws outstretched. Dodging sideways, I aim for its neck, careful to avoid creating any new adversaries from its severed limbs. As the creature crumples, the woman's petrified face emerges from behind its bulk.

She's barely moved, frozen in place even in the face of the towering insectoid. The only help I can offer now is eradicating these pests. Once they're gone, she can return to her life, free from the terror of giant bugs and alien encounters.

I shake away these distracting thoughts and refocus on the mission.

The insectoids keep coming. I estimate hundreds must have emerged from their spacecraft. My blade dances in the air, severing heads on the right, evading deadly claws on the left. I'm caught in a deadly rhythm of attack and dodge when the woman's scream slices through the cacophony.

I whirl around, lunging towards her. In a heartbeat, I'm at her side, my sword sweeping through the air. The insectoid rushing at her drops, its momentum carrying its headless body to a halt a foot away from her.

Our eyes lock for a fleeting moment. A hesitant smile ghosts across her lips before I'm yanked away by the clamor of my team landing. With one final look at her, I rejoin the fray, throwing myself back into the battle.

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## RACHEL

I can't help but laugh—a high, hysterical note of relief—even as death encroaches. After pouring my heart and soul into my cry of defiance, the weight on my shoulders feels somewhat lessened. A small, morbid smile plays on my lips as I come to terms with the inevitable.

The largest of the insectoids barrels towards me, a wave of monstrous bugs in tow. Any second now, they'll be upon me, and that will be the end.

*Any...second...now...*

A shudder races through me, and cold sweat trickles down my neck. Despite my mounting terror, I find my gaze glued to the advancing horde, ready to claim my life.

Just as they're poised to strike, a gleaming figure materializes before me. A golden warrior. It's like something out of a movie.

In one swift, fluid motion, the robust figure sweeps his weapon through the horde. With one fell swoop, three insectoids collapse, lifeless. My eyes widen in awe and shock.

Bathed in the golden light of the setting sun, the man's body gleams. Ornate markings trace glowing paths across his skin. A Lord. Has my salvation arrived, or is this some cruel illusion?

He's standing merely feet away, but a part of me still can't shake the feeling this is all a dream. One moment, I'm on the brink of death, and the next, a stranger is battling the alien horde for my life. It's like something out of a Hollywood script.

But the alien fluid that splashes onto my arms, my face, feels far too real. Wiping at the viscous fluid, my hands come away smeared with a greenish



slime.

My heart lurches as the reality of the situation sinks in. He's real. I'm safe.

Relief floods through me, and I watch in awe as the Lord cuts through the insectoids with ruthless efficiency. His movements are swift, sure, like he was born for this fight.

I may not know much about these alien bugs, but I know their six claws can make short work of any human. Even the Lords, superior as they are, must have some vulnerability to the insectoids' venom, right?

Observing the golden warrior's careful evasion of their attacks and deliberate avoidance of their claws, I find my assumptions confirmed.

This Lord displays an uncanny mastery of battle against these mindless beasts. I find myself captivated by his every move. He's taken down more than ten insectoids already, and it's barely been a couple of minutes.

I can't help but feel a wave of gratitude. He couldn't have arrived at a better time.

As the thought strikes me, I glance up. His spaceship is still suspended above us, a metallic bird of prey hovering in the sky.

*Did he... did he leap from that height?*

Is he mad? Or is that just standard procedure for these Lords? Either way, I'm grateful he's here.

My musings are abruptly shattered by a horrifying screech. I hadn't noticed one of the insectoids rushing towards me, too consumed by my thoughts of the golden Lord. But now, with the monstrous bug bearing down on me, I let out a scream.

In the blink of an eye, the golden Lord is at my side. He dispatches the creature with a single strike, its body thudding to the ground, lifeless.

For a fleeting moment, our gazes lock. And then he's gone, charging back into the fray, this time joined by more of his kind. Their spaceship has descended, and I carefully edge my way towards it, ducking behind its massive hull.

From my hiding spot, I watch the Lords engage the enemy. They are masters in battle, every stroke of their weapons lethal and precise. Each of their blows is delivered with brutal efficiency, aimed at the head to ensure no chance of the insectoids' repopulation. None of them appear injured.

They resemble the men of Earth, albeit taller, more muscular, flawless in every sense. They can even manipulate the golden hues of their skin to mimic our own.

My gaze flickers from one warrior to another before settling on my savior. He's wholly consumed in the fight, silver eyes flashing dangerously.

He's incredibly attractive, his warrior physique alluring.

I chide myself for such thoughts at a time like this. But they persist nonetheless.

The insectoids are thinning out. Soon, this ordeal will be over. The Lords will claim victory, and I'll be free to return to my normal life. Will I ever encounter these beings again? Unlikely.

This close encounter with the Lords is surreal. Their formidable strength and combat prowess are astonishing. It's clear why they're entrusted with the task of shielding Earth from extraterrestrial threats.

But what are they, really? Are they like us, requiring food and sleep? Do they truly hail from the legendary city of Atlantis?

My curiosity about their kind swells, questions crowding my mind. I yearn for answers, and the best source of information would be the Lords themselves.

Dare I approach my savior?

My gaze returns to him just in time to witness the final insectoid fall. In that moment, he looks like a demigod, a vision of heroic perfection that could put any Earthly actor to shame.

What's with these thoughts? I mentally berate myself, yet my heart quickens its pace, throbbing in time with the rhythm of the ongoing battle.

Why does he have such a profound effect on me?

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---

## DJINN

**R**adelk extends a coat to Rachel, a garment procured from Victor. A radiant smile graces her lips as she receives it, offering her hand to Victor in thanks. The sight of her dazzling smile stings, a pang of jealousy swelling within me.

It's always been Radelk. With his charm and affable personality, he's typically our point of contact with the humans. He assimilates with ease, adopting their mannerisms and quirks as if they were his own.

Taking the lead, as usual, Radelk begins to introduce our entourage to Rachel.

"See the striking silver warrior over there? That's Coal," he mentions, guiding her gaze towards our comrade. Lowering his voice to a conspiratorial whisper, he adds, "He may seem silent and mysterious, but don't be fooled. There's a horde of ladies pining for him back home."

Laughter peals from Rachel, the melodious sound reminiscent of wind chimes. My brow furrows in confusion.

Where did that thought spring from?

I busy myself with my spear, scrubbing at the alien ichor staining its surface, but I can't seem to block out their banter. Despite my best efforts to ignore them, my attention keeps drifting towards Rachel. Her presence draws me in, and I find my gaze straying to her more often than I'd like to admit.

She attentively listens to Radelk's introductions, studying each soldier's face in turn – Coal, Heron, Victor, and Tyron.

"Thank you for saving me today," she gratefully acknowledges, her eyes glistening with gratitude.

Tyron gruffly responds, "Sorry we took so long. Our ship took some hits during the chase."

But Rachel quickly dismisses his apology. "I'm just glad you're here now."

At the mention of my name from Tyron, my muscles tense involuntarily. "You should be thanking Djinn here," he indicates towards me. "He leapt from the heavens to pull you out of trouble."

As she swivels to look at me, Radelk slaps his forehead dramatically. "How could I forget? Here's your knight in shining armor!" he exclaims. I remain where I am, which only encourages Radelk to continue.

"Rachel, meet the Golden Spear, Djinn," he declares with a sweeping gesture towards me. "As a Marshall, he's second only to our King. His leap of faith shouldn't astonish you; it's merely a testament to his abilities as a warrior."

Heron grunts in agreement, further cementing Radelk's assertions.

Suddenly, Victor strides over, dragging me towards the gathering. I resist, not wishing to intrude, but I yield to prevent any perceived rudeness to Rachel.

"Thank you, Djinn," Rachel extends her gratitude softly, reaching out her hand.

I accept her hand, nodding silently. Her touch is gentle, her hand surprisingly delicate. But as I look into her eyes, I notice a spark of resilience that belies her initial fragility. There's an underlying strength that surfaces, transforming her demeanor entirely.

My interest in her only deepens.

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## RACHEL

**A** barrage of questions hails down on me from the six men – no, not men, Lords. It takes every ounce of my self-control not to interrupt them, to hold back the torrent of questions bubbling inside me. I have to play the good guest, stay in their favor.

I can't shake the understanding that these beings, despite their humanoid appearances, are anything but human. Their whim can change on a dime, and before I know it, I could be whisked off into the notorious red district, my fate sealed.

And yet, they exude an aura of harmlessness, of familiarity that I find oddly comforting. Their questions, innocuous inquiries about my life and work here on Earth, help to lighten the mood.

My attention keeps straying towards the golden-skinned man standing off to one side, a silent observer. Now that the grime and residue of battle has been wiped clean, I realize his skin isn't as golden as I initially thought. Rather, it's a radiant peach color that accentuates the rivulets of gold traversing his muscular arms and chest.

Comparing him to the others, I notice the subtle variations in their skin tones, each a different shade, each adorned with unique markings. The silent man's skin is adorned with the most intricate patterns, mesmerizing streaks of gold that seem to undulate with the light. I've heard tales of these Lords, superior beings choosing to adopt human forms, sparking theories about their lineage tracing back to the fabled city of Atlantis. I remain silent, however, letting my gaze take in the spectacle.

My reverie is interrupted by a question. "So, you study the local plant life

here in the Amazon?" one of the Lords asks.

I sigh, replying, "Yes, although I fear that may be in jeopardy now. The insectoids have laid waste to the entire lab. I fear there were no other survivors." My voice quavers, trailing off.

One of the Lords reassures me, "We're sorry for your loss. We saw the devastation from our ship. We'll survey the area as soon as we can. But for now, rest seems prudent after such a grueling confrontation."

Another Lord interrupts, chuckling, "Tyron, I hardly think that could be classified as a grueling battle."

Tyron. I etch the name into my memory. Deciding to change the topic, I inquire about their ship.

"It sustained some damage," Tyron admits. "We'll likely be grounded here for a few days until we can repair it. But I assure you, it's nothing Heron can't handle. Right, Heron?"

Heron merely grunts in response before striding off to examine their colossal ship. From my vantage point, it seems monumental. Smoke still curls from what I assume is one of the engines. A pang of concern hits me. How could these beings, whatever they are, possibly fix this alone?

"Should I be concerned?" I venture to ask. "Is there anything I can do to help?"

Tyron's response is a chuckle. "No, I don't think so."

An eerie calm envelops me. After the heart-stopping encounter with the insectoids, it seems nothing could unnerve me. I am alive, and that is what matters.

But the same couldn't be said for the others, a haunting voice whispers inside my head. A shiver runs down my spine. Is this survivor's guilt? Shaking off the unsettling feeling, I rise to my feet.

Memories of childhood tales about the Planet of Gold flood back. Stories about Lords threatening misbehaving children with exile: "You'll be sent up there as a slave."

"Up there" referred to the Milky Way Alliance – a consortium of technologically advanced planets reliant on Earth's manpower and water. Ancient humans had no choice but to join the Alliance as lesser beings.

As I grew older, more sinister stories emerged about the Lords and their... "pleasures." Some humans, disillusioned by life on Earth, would willingly venture into the red district, where Alliance's inferior beings, humans included, sold themselves.

A chill ripples through me. Drawing deep breaths, I soothe my panicked thoughts. They'll keep me safe. I repeat the mantra, trying to believe it.

As I wander aimlessly, thoughts of escape start to form. But before I can act, one of the Lords approaches me.

"How about helping me set up camp?" Radelk suggests, thrusting a bundle of sticks towards me. His huge grin is infectious, stirring the same sense of comfort he'd elicited earlier.

Radelk exhibits an uncanny human-like demeanor. His speech, infused with Earthling idioms and phrases, sets him apart from the others.

"Why, of course," I reply, playing along. "You don't think a girl like me knows how to keep herself alive?"

"Well, we did just rescue you from insectoids, but...you do you."

With that, I kneel, sparking a fire with the lighter I had luckily kept in my pocket. I nurture it with dried twigs until it's steady.

"Good job!" Radelk congratulates, his eyes gleaming in the firelight.

"Thanks," I respond, matching his grin.



---

## RACHEL

"**A**nd your skin patterns? How do they work?" Courage finally surges within me, enabling me to ask the burning questions about their lore and mysteries. Not hearsay from Earth, but truths straight from the Lords themselves.

Radelk grins broadly. "Ah, well, not to brag, but do you see these?" He flexes his arms, drawing my gaze to the silver lines that flow like unending rivers on his skin, gleaming against the firelight.

"These show I'm part of the elite. The *crème de la crème* of warriors from the Planet of Gold. The more marks, the stronger the warrior," he explains, striking a series of poses that elicits chuckles from me.

"So, the gold marks indicate someone stronger than silver?" My eyes are drawn to the lone figure sitting under a tree—the enigmatic man adorned with golden marks.

"Gold denotes nobility," Radelk explains. "Djinn over there is a marshal. Powerful, strong...if only he wasn't such a brooder."

"Maybe that's the secret to his greatness?" I venture.

"Nah," Radelk dismisses with a chuckle. "We've trained together since childhood. All warriors start early. But Djinn has an honor to uphold."

At my questioning look, he elaborates, "His gold marks signify pure blood. Royalty, as you Earthlings call it. It's quite a burden."

"Ah," is all I manage to respond.

"He's known as 'The Golden Sphere of the Nation.' A tad melodramatic, if you ask me. They call you anything?"

"No," Radelk replies, undeterred by the question. "Only the top-tier

warriors get honorifics. Like Hades 'The Harbinger of Death', Xeros 'Mad Dog', T-Rex 'Beast Slayer.' I could keep going."

"They sound terrifying."

"They are. No one wants to cross their path."

"And what about you?" I ask, curiosity getting the best of me.

"Hmm?" Radelk pivots to face me.

"Do you have an honorific?"

"No," he admits, his smile undimmed. "Not yet."

"Got it," I say. "Good luck with that."

"Thanks."

"Don't pay him any mind," a new voice intrudes from behind us. I hadn't noticed we were no longer alone. How long had this Lord been standing there in silence? "Getting an honorific is no easy feat. And based on Radelk's track record... well, he'd be lucky to earn one this century."

"Ah, Coal," Radelk exclaims, unfazed. "Ever the pessimist."

"Just being realistic, buddy." A ghost of a smile traces Coal's lips.

I etch the name 'Coal' in my mind, taking in his appearance. Arguably the most attractive among them. It's not hard to believe the tales of his many admirers back home.

Every one of them could probably make any girl weak in the knees, but Coal, he could do it with his eyes shut. An involuntary throb pulses in my chest as he reaches past me for something, his arm gently grazing my shoulder.

"How did Djinn earn his second name?" I ask Radelk, desperate to break the tension.

"Djinn was always extraordinary, even during our training days. Everyone knew he was destined for a second name."

"And he lived up to that destiny," Coal interjects. "No one was surprised when he became marshal straight out of training."

"Do you desire a second name?" I venture, looking at him.

Coal's gaze lingers on me, assessing, before he answers, "It would be an honor. But I'm not exactly chasing it."

As the sun bows out, Coal points out how rapidly night has enveloped us. I hadn't even noticed, engrossed in feeding the fire and their stories. They offer me a meal from their supplies, and we all huddle around the warm glow of the fire.

Despite the fear and uncertainty gnawing at me, I take solace in the

towering figures around me. I stand a mere five-foot-four among men who tower at least two feet taller. The sense of security they exude is unparalleled.

This assurance is validated when we're ambushed by another swarm of insectoids post-dinner. As we prepare to retire for the night, the Lords dismiss the creatures as effortlessly as swatting flies.

"Are you alright?" Tyron checks after the dust settles. A huge yawn escapes me as I nod in affirmation.

"I'm getting really sleepy," I confess.

"We've likely seen the last of the insectoids for tonight. Rest. It's been a long day."

I head towards the tent they've arranged for me, halting abruptly to avoid colliding with Djinn. His golden markings glimmer in the moonlight, captivating me. Yet, for some reason, I can't muster the courage to meet his gaze.

"I'm sorry," I murmur, my eyes cast downwards. Without uttering a word, Djinn side steps, holding the tent flap open for me.

As I enter, a faint hope of initiating a conversation with him flickers within me. But he simply checks on me, then zips the tent shut.

"Good night," I want to call after him, but his silhouette has already melded into the darkness. When I peep out, all the Lords have vanished, presumably to resume work on their ship.

The realization that I'll be spending the upcoming days with these extraordinary men sends a shiver down my spine. Whether it's born of fear or anticipation, I'm unsure.

## DJINN

**T**ime holds a different rhythm on Earth, each moment seems to flutter by in haste. I find myself observing the human girl intently, a fierce curiosity gnawing at me. Yet, my silent vigil yields little understanding about her.

The idea to directly approach her flits through my mind, only to be swiftly dismissed. It feels reckless, even foolhardy. The lesser she knows about our race, the safer she is.

While my fellow warriors engage her in camaraderie, I find myself hoping they tread wisely. The last thing we need is our stately image from the Planet of Gold disintegrating due to their folly.

Shaking my head, I chide myself. What substantial damage could a petite human woman possibly inflict?

But, her mind is an entirely different battlefield. She regales tales of her years in the Amazon, of her countless discoveries that not only enriched the Earth but countless planets in the Milky Way Alliance. Her intellect captivates me, pulling me into a vortex of admiration.

She possesses a thirst for knowledge unlike any human I've encountered. Fear is not her primal instinct upon meeting a Lord, it's an unquenchable curiosity. Rachel is like a wellspring of questions, never running dry.

Despite her small stature, her appetite rivals those of us from the Planet of Gold. Our rations from the ship quickly dwindled, forcing us to embrace hunting as part of our routine.

Thoughts of Rachel flit through my mind as I scour the terrain for prey.

During one midday meal, I procured a wild pig. Shared amongst us, I

half-expected her to surrender midway and ask for the remaining meat to be preserved. But she persevered, gnawing through her portion till the bones were bare. We all exchanged looks of incredulous surprise.

I ponder, are all women of her planet this enigmatic? Or is Rachel an exception?

Historical documents suggest Earthly women were held to certain aesthetic standards, much like our queens and princesses. In my mind, Rachel wouldn't be out of place among them. Despite the harsh environment, she manages to maintain a semblance of cleanliness, splashing water on her face from a nearby lake. The occasional glimpses of her dusky skin through the rips of her shirt always seem to glow.

TWO EARTH DAYS have passed since our ship crash-landed in this lush Amazonian expanse. Victor and Tyron, the prime artisans among us, have been laboriously striving to restore our celestial chariot. Their progress, encouragingly, appears ahead of schedule.

"We'll have her humming before you know it," Tyron's confident declaration rings out, more to soothe Rachel's mounting anxiety than to reassure us.

Seated beneath the spreading boughs of a tree, I spot her nearby, lost in her little world of greenery. Rachel, brow furrowed in focus, scrutinizes each leaf, holding it up to the light before jotting notes in her worn-out journal.

My feet itch with the urge to bridge the distance, to inject myself into her world of discovery. But every time, it is my own hesitation that halts me in my tracks. The ease with which my companions engage her strikes me as enviable.

Even Coal, our resident man of few words, manages to exchange pleasantries with her without breaking a sweat.

It's just a *hello*, Djinn, I chide myself, yet even such a simple interaction seems like a monumental task.

Chance encounters have presented themselves; like that one evening she nearly bumped into me on her way to the tent. Despite towering over her, I couldn't muster the courage to meet her gaze.

The essence of my interest in this woman is a mystery to me, a riddle yet to be solved. I can't deny a sense of intrigue around her, something refreshingly different.

Suddenly aware of my prolonged observation, I tear my gaze away. I hope her engrossment in her botanical pursuits kept her oblivious of my attention. Trying to be as inconspicuous as possible, I rise and tread towards the ship.

Tyron stands proudly, his gaze sweeping over the starboard, a triumphant smile adorning his face. "She's nearing completion," he shares, the pride in his voice undeniable.

Inside the ship, I head to my station, fumbling with the unresponsive controls. It's more a distraction, an attempt to push thoughts of Rachel to the periphery. Heaving a sigh, I pull up the computer, engrossing myself in Earth customs. I can't help but relate some of these ancient habits to Rachel's.

Human culture is undeniably fascinating. The irony of my situation gnaws at me: a living encyclopedia within reach, yet I fail to muster the courage for a simple conversation.

Leaning back in my chair, I call out to the void, "How do you manage it, Radelk?"

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## RACHEL

**I**t's been a mere forty-eight hours since the disaster at the lab. Forty-eight hours since I lost my team. Forty-eight hours since I was plucked from the jaws of death by the lords, not just any lords, but elite warriors of the Planet of Gold.

While they tirelessly repair the ship, I largely keep my distance. As tantalizing as the prospect of delving into their world through a volley of questions is, I recognize the urgency of restoring our transport. The once lively lab, where I've spent countless hours, now lies in gloomy ruins, ravaged by the vile insectoids.

However, life moves on. I've lived to tell the tale, and my enthusiasm for scientific inquiry remains unscathed.

Setting my focus on studying the local flora, I stake out a quiet, shaded spot under a tree, maintaining a respectful distance from the industrious lords. Out of the corner of my eye, I notice Djinn nearby, occupying his own quiet corner.

His presence proves more distracting than I would care to admit. Even as I attempt to focus on my work, scratching hasty notes on the plant in front of me, I find them to be a garbled mess of senseless jargon upon re-reading.

With a resigned sigh, I acknowledge the elephant in the room: Djinn, casting furtive glances my way, is a significant impediment to my concentration. A silent debate rages within me; do I ask him to give me space or let it be? The twist is, I find a part of me doesn't want that distance.

Fortuitously, before I have to make a decision, Djinn rises and departs without a word, not granting me another glance.

Finding myself aboard the ship, I wander aimlessly, drawn in by the unfamiliar surroundings. Barely a few minutes into my exploration, I stumble upon what appears to be the control room, a lone figure engrossed with the dashboard.

"Hello?" My voice comes out as a timid squeak. As the chair swivels, Djinn is revealed, his face as unreadable as ever.

"Hi," I try again, praying for a hint of reaction, but to no avail.

Fortunately, before the silence could stretch into unbearable awkwardness, Radelk strides into the control room. Seemingly attuned to the thick air, he suggests, "Why don't I give you a tour, Rachel," offering both Djinn and me an easy escape.

As Radelk gently steers me away, I can't help but release a sigh of relief. His presence is a comforting constant in the midst of the extraordinary.

"Do you often find yourself in awkward situations like that?" He asks when we are safely out of earshot.

"I've never paid much attention before." Struggling to keep pace with Radelk's long strides, I find myself practically jogging alongside him through the ship's corridors.

"Why is he like that?" I ask Radelk, unable to contain my curiosity any longer.

Radelk halts abruptly, glancing around as if ensuring we're alone. There's a moment of hesitation in his eyes before he finally speaks, "Djinn... he's not particularly comfortable around women. Some might even say he dislikes them."

His words send a jolt through me. "What do you mean?"

"He might be gay? Honestly, I'm not quite sure," he responds with a shrug.

"Oh," I manage to stammer out.

"Indeed," Radelk whispers, his gaze somewhere distant. "No one's ever seen him pursue any... romantic endeavors."

"But that doesn't conclusively imply he's gay, does it?" I argue, still trying to process what I've just heard.

"Once more, I'm unsure. Despite being one of our planet's greatest warriors, he doesn't escape prejudices. It seems bigotry and homophobia still cling to our society, even after all this time."

"But when you say 'our', are the lords truly —" I begin to ask, but he cuts me off.



"Perhaps it's best to give Djinn some space, at least for now."

"But are the lords really the descendants of —"

"Poor Djinn, always so stern. I wish he'd lighten up," Radelk interrupts, effectively closing the conversation.

I can't shake the feeling that he's skillfully diverting my questions about the lord's lineage. As Radelk guides me through the ship, revealing technologies and machinery beyond my wildest dreams, my thoughts keep gravitating back to Djinn.

It suddenly strikes me that perhaps I've been the awkward one around Djinn. Would it be a lie to say I'm not intrigued by him? His aloofness only compounds his allure. A newfound resolve to know more about him takes root within me. If he won't engage, then I'll spur the conversation.

Once I begin to appreciate Djinn's contributions to the Alliance, his courage, his reputation as one of the Planet of Gold's best warriors, I can't help but regard him with a sense of awe. Yes, he's a formidable force, but I'm not deterred. Djinn, renowned as the Golden Spear, is nothing short of a legend.

As my thoughts meander back to the dreadful insectoid assault, I can still recall the paralyzing fear and despair. But the memory of the golden figure shielding me, while I could only watch, swiftly overrides the dread.

Djinn, my guardian. I know he'd wage war against a horde of insectoids if necessary. Even though he'd do it for anyone in need, I've been fortunate enough to witness his gallantry firsthand.

"Pretty cool, huh?" Radelk's voice snaps me out of my reverie.

"Uh-huh," I respond absently, rubbing my face. "Listen, about Djinn..." I begin, my voice barely above a whisper, "I just have a few more questions..."



## DJINN

“Well, men, what did I tell you? We’ll have this ship up and running —”

“In no time. We know, Tyron.” Radelk rolls his eyes and chuckles. “You have been saying it over and over again for the past three days. I assure you, we know.”

We all begin to pack up our stuff to store inside the ship. But the thing that keeps running through my head is how we have to leave Rachel behind. It’s the only thing we can do, I remind myself. Even though Rachel’s group has been completely killed off by the insectoids, she’s going to have to find a new life with new humans.

I look at her as she eyes up the ship’s motor, newly built by Tyron and Victor from raw materials in the Amazon. She’s about to be left to her own defenses and, still, her curiosity and thirst for knowledge shine through. I want to know more about her. I can’t believe I’m about to leave her for the battlefield.

This woman.

“Want to go in one last time?” Radelk asks as he comes up behind her.

“I’d love to,” she replies.

I try to follow the two of them, always at least a couple of steps behind. Radelk tells her about the new engine, the controls, and the layout of the ship. Rachel always has one or two questions for every detail he shares. Radelk answers them without hesitation, confidence oozing out of his every word. I envy him for being so casual around her.

Radelk is so easygoing, and he knows how to get just about anyone to

open up to him. I don't think I'll ever be like that. I head to my room to lie down on my bunk and rest for a moment. I hear Tyron's voice through the public address system telling us we'll be ready for take-off in about half an hour.

Without really thinking about it, I lock the door and quickly jump on the bed. I think about nothing in particular, but I start stroking my cock. It quickly grows in my palm, clear liquid leaking out from the tip. I spit in my hands and continue to stroke, the sound of rubbing slowly filling the room. I start grinding my hips along to the strokes of my hand.

I can't help but let out deep breaths, trying hard not to moan out loud lest I be heard outside. My other hand finds its way between my ass cheeks, and my fingers slowly start playing with my hole.

With a finger going in and out of my ass, I stroke my cock quicker and quicker. I can't hold it in any longer and cum shoots out of my cock. I count five pulses, each shooting cum up to my chest, some of it splattering on my chin.

The moment I finish cleaning myself up, Tyron's familiar voice blasts through the system, calling us down for a meeting in the control room.



## RACHEL

A surge of dread plummets through me, reverberating like the metallic object I've just knocked onto the ship's floor.

My heart pulsates deafeningly in my chest, my voice is strangled by a sudden lump in my throat. All I can do is stare, eyes wide and filled with terror, as the men slowly close in on me, much like predators zeroing in on their quarry.

They won't hurt me or take my life just because I inadvertently overheard something about their home planet, will they?

I mean, I didn't ask to be aboard their ship; they were the ones who welcomed me. Surely, that doctor who failed to notice me lurking in the corner of their communication device screen should shoulder the blame!

Yet, it doesn't really matter. One of them should have pointed me out, shouldn't they? I've spent three days in their company and, despite their brutal combat prowess, I've come to believe they're decent beings. Their warlike tendencies are a part of their nature and they can't help it. My scientist's perspective allows me to understand that and I trust that I will leave this ship unharmed.

"Oh, sorry, my bad," I chuckle awkwardly, indicating the unknown object that now lies on the floor. Maybe I can dismiss this as a minor hiccup, wave them goodbye?

"Well, the tour has been quite educational, guys, but—oh! I just remembered, I have something important to attend to back at the lab." I pivot and start for the exit, but it slams shut abruptly before me.

Panic sets my heartbeat galloping as I spin around to confront them.

They've formed a ring around me, arms outstretched as if ready to corral something...or someone. Feigning ignorance and assuring them I heard nothing is apparently not an option now.

"I'm sorry, Rachel. Truly sorry," Radelk says, his tone somber. "But you must accompany us."

No! This is not what I need to hear!

Perhaps pleading and invoking our budding camaraderie might work?

"Guys, please, let's not do this. We've been getting along well for three days, and you know I won't reveal a thing, right? Besides, you're departing and I'll be stranded here in the Amazon. I promise, I won't utter a word! You have my guarantee!"

I sound almost desperate, but I don't care. Whatever it takes to ensure my exit from this ship, I'm willing to do it.

"Be gentle," a voice murmurs to my left.

My heart jolts, not out of fear, but surprise as I swivel to find it's Djinn who has spoken. A blush creeps up my cheeks as, after three days, he finally acknowledges my presence.

Confusion etches into my brows when I realize his words weren't addressed to me. A shadow looms behind me and before I can ascertain who it is, a sharp prick stings the side of my neck.

My vision blurs, the world around me starts to spin into a disorientating vortex.

The final image I remember is of Djinn bolting towards me - a breathtaking sight indeed, marred by the fact that he isn't partial to women.

With that bitter thought, darkness engulfs me.

Awakening, my eyes take in an unfamiliar ceiling. It doesn't resemble either my room or the lab. Recollections of my recent ordeal cascade into my consciousness, triggering a startled gasp. I spring upright, scanning the surroundings. The bed I'm in is colossal, unmistakably befitting one of the lords.

Yet... why am I here? And precisely where is here? Am I still within the confines of their ship...or somewhere else?

The door swings open, causing me to jolt. A woman, unmistakably human, steps in, arms cradling a set of clothes. The door quietly clicks shut behind her. Noticing that I am conscious, she studies me with vacant eyes. Her voice, gentle and placating, strikes a stark contrast with her cold, aloof countenance.

“T-thank you,” I respond, reaching for the clothes.

Where I am is still a mystery, and it's unclear whether she'll disclose the information if I inquire. Perhaps Djinn has been secreting human women on their ship or perhaps we're somewhere entirely different. The duration of my unconsciousness remains unknown and there are no alternative sources of information.

Drawing a deep breath, I muster the courage to pose my question before she takes her leave.

“Uhm, excuse me, but where are we?”

Her eyes flicker briefly, so fast I question whether I've imagined it. I'm not in need of her pity if that's what it was. I require answers and, fortuitously, it seems she is willing to provide them.

“You were not apprised, evidently. I am uninformed about the details of your capture, but I can tell you that you are to be auctioned today.”

My eyes bulge in shock, I can practically feel my face blanch. Auction? As in...a slave auction?!

Denial rises in me. “No, no, no. That's impossible.”

The thought that Djinn and his cohorts would auction me off in such a manner is inconceivable. I believed we had a bond of friendship. Yet perhaps they never regarded me as a friend, viewing me merely as a creature of an inferior species.

Abandoning the clothes, I dash towards the sealed door, hammering my fists against it while screaming, “Let me go! Don't do this to me, guys! I gave you my word! Why don't you trust me?”

An exasperated sigh emanates from the woman. In my peripheral vision, I see her slump onto the edge of the bed, crossing her arms and observing me.

“Your efforts are futile, you know. Once you're here, your choices are limited to two. You either perish or you get purchased. There's no escape, no return home, regardless of where that may be. No auctioned human woman leaves the Planet of Gold unscathed. Your best hope of survival is to be bought by a powerful warrior who will extend his protection.”

I slowly turn to face her. “P-Planet of Gold?” Holy shit, I was out for that long?!

The woman nods, bracing her hands behind her, and leaning back.

“Yes, you're on the Planet of Gold. Either get a good, strong warrior to serve in return for his protection or choose to die.” She suddenly tilts her head. “Though come to think of it, there is another option.”



I feel a flicker of hope inside my chest as I listen to her eagerly.

“If you can’t find someone to buy you, they’ll put you in the barracks where you’ll be a free-for-all whore, or seka, as they call it here. Anyone can fuck you at anytime. They always need women there.”

I gasp in horror, but she only gives me a half-amused, half-pitying smile as she stands, opening the door beside me and pausing in front of it. For a second, the doors remain wide open, ready for my escape, but my feet are rooted to the floor.

Knowing that I won’t be leaving, the woman huffs and stands before me, whispering. “If I were that poor soul, I’d rather die. Whatever you want to be from now on depends on you, honey. Choose wisely.”

With those words, she leaves.

I really want to go home, but it seems I don’t have any choice now, do I?



## DJINN

“**E**xplain to me what’s happening with the human woman we brought on board. She’s up for auction?!” My voice bellows, its echo ricocheting off the austere walls of the Director's office. The man visibly flinches but holds his ground in front of my wrath. There's a flicker of guilt within me for this outburst, but it's swiftly overwhelmed by a tidal wave of anger.

Though the Director holds authority over this mission, my position outside of it still holds greater weight. Even so, I've always maintained a level of respect towards him as someone in a position of command. That respect, however, doesn't typically involve raising my voice.

But hearing of Rachel's fate snapped the reins on my composure. I'm on the brink of losing control, on the verge of cleaving the Director's desk in two. This kind of fury, outside of the battlefield, is foreign to me - and over a human woman at that.

I manage to rein in my wrath, drawing in a deep breath and pinching the bridge of my nose. Losing myself to anger, creating chaos here, it won't secure Rachel's safety. On the contrary, it might push her further away.

A resolution forms in my mind. I must handle this calmly, devoid of any outburst.

“My apologies, Director,” I sigh, opening my eyes to level a steely gaze at him. “There's no need to subject her to an auction. I’m willing to buy her directly. Just tell me your price.”

The words feel alien as they leave my mouth. I'd never imagined I'd purchase a seka. The mere thought of Rachel, exposed on a stage with droves

of lustful warriors feasting their eyes on her... The urge to cause mayhem swells, but I suppress it.

The Director squirms under my intense gaze. In all the years he's known me, he's never witnessed this side of me - the Golden Spear unleashed.

"Djinn," he begins, his voice trembling slightly. "You have my respect, and I'd truly like to help. If it were as simple as handing her over to you, I'd do so without hesitation. But I can't. She must undergo the procedure, appear at the auction."

He raises his hands as I start to interrupt. "I know, it's frustrating, but it's the King's orders. You know as well as I do, there's no going against them. If it were up to me, I'd hand her over to you right now."

The Director's words hold truth. Defying the King's orders is unthinkable.

Frustration gnaws at me, and I run a hand through my hair. "So, what's your advice?"

I know about the auction, but I'm unfamiliar with its workings, having never partaken before. If I am to guarantee that Rachel becomes mine, it's high time I swallowed my pride and seek guidance from someone well-acquainted with the auction process.

"Hmm." He bridges his fingers and rests his chin atop them in contemplation. "Well, you could attend the auction and bid for her. Announcing your presence would be advisable, so everyone knows you're there."

I frown, puzzled. Why would I need to declare my attendance? Must I advertise my intention to buy a seka? It's not that I intend to treat Rachel as one, but it's a complex situation. First and foremost, I need to ensure she stays by my side.

Sensing my confusion, the Director clarifies with a knowing smile. "You're a prominent warrior, second only to the king. If you make it known that you're partaking in the auction, you're likely to be uncontested. Anyone would have to be either exceedingly brave or incredibly foolish to attempt outbidding you."

His explanation is reasonable. As much as I regret subjecting Rachel to the harsh realities of our planet's auction house on her first day, I may not have another option. I feel a pang of guilt for having brought her here against her will. But once she discovered our secret, it would've been reckless to let her leave, despite her promise of silence.

The responsibility lies with us for having forgotten her presence on the

ship. It was a moment of surprise that left us all stunned, myself included. If only I'd been more vigilant, I could've prevented her discovery and swiftly ensured her safe exit.

All that remains now is to make her stay here as comfortable as I can manage, and that means following the Director's advice.

With his guidance, I find the auction house where Rachel will be showcased. As it turns out, I needn't have worried about announcing my participation. The moment I stride into the auction house, a hush falls over the room and all eyes turn my way. I read shock, curiosity, and caution in the eyes of my fellow warriors as I claim a seat in the front.

The auction begins shortly, and to my disbelief, the first human brought on stage is Rachel.

She's paraded before the crowd in a sheer white gown. While the dress accentuates her beauty, it leaves little to the imagination, displaying more than necessary. A seething rage swells within me.

Rachel. My Rachel is standing under the scrutiny of hundreds of lecherous eyes.

And I plan to bring an abrupt end to this spectacle as soon as I can.



## RACHEL

“Presenting a delightful specimen, folks! Fresh, young, supple! If you prefer curves in all the right places, she's got you covered!”

Of all the people here, what are the chances I'd be the first on display like this? And seriously, 'fresh, young, and supple'? The way he describes me, you'd think I was produce rather than a living, breathing human.

I'm well aware that other races consider humans inferior, so in their perspective, we might as well be commodities. And even worse, inedible ones at that.

But come on! I'm a scientist, for heaven's sake. I didn't sign up for this!

If only I'd kept my distance from Djinn and his crew. I should have stuck to my own affairs, expressed my gratitude for their assistance, and left them be. If I had simply allowed them to repair their ship and depart, I wouldn't be in this predicament.

But no. I had to be fascinated by their kind. More specifically, by Djinn. If only I'd controlled my curiosity, I'd be in my lab in the Amazon, engrossed in botanical research.

Granted, I'd be alone, perhaps even filled with regret for letting an opportunity to learn about them slip away.

But still!

This level of scrutiny is mortifying. I've never been exposed to such a vast audience!

Why on earth do I need to be strutted on stage in this sheer white gown? I've lost count of the times I've attempted to subtly cover myself, only to be

met with stern glares from the auction Director. I have no option but to resign myself to the display.

This is absurd.

I didn't sign up for this! I can't become a seka. The worst part is, I haven't even had a chance to talk to Djinn, let alone bid him farewell!

Why am I even thinking about that?

Firstly, I've been abducted from Earth. Secondly, I woke up on an alien planet and found myself on an auction block, up for sale.

My fury is boiling because I'm trapped here with no escape. I'm awash with embarrassment, standing here practically bare, and I'm consumed with fear because although I can't make out the audience due to the dazzling stage lights, I can feel their eyes raking over me.

"Alright, you've had a good look. Let's start with the bidding!" The host announces, met with raucous cheers from the crowd.

I clamp my eyes shut, bracing myself for the inevitable. I've watched auctions on television and always thought I'd like to attend one. I just didn't anticipate being the centerpiece!

My mind races. Who will win the bid? I'm no ravishing beauty, but I hope whoever purchases me will at least value me as an individual. I can't bear the thought of becoming a barracks seka.

As the crowd's din subsides to murmurs, the host is about to kick off the bidding when a voice rings out.

"One million energy star crystals."

The auction house falls deathly silent for a moment, so quiet that the slightest sound echoes throughout. I strain my eyes, squinting through the glaring lights to identify the person who made the bid. Damn my limited human eyesight; it's impossible to distinguish anything through the luminosity.

As the crowd recovers, a murmur rolls through the auction house like a waking beast, jolting the host back to reality.

He clears his throat, rallying the audience. "Alright! We have one million energy star crystals here from bidder number twenty-one! Any higher? Do I hear one million and one hundred energy star crystals?"

Wait. Did I hear that correctly? Was I just purchased for one million energy star crystals?

*Energy star crystals?!*

In the whirl of anxiety and fear surrounding my impending auction, I



hadn't realized the currency in question was energy star crystals.

I remember reading about them years ago, during my university studies, well before my Amazon expedition. Energy star crystals are universal currency, acknowledged and accepted across galaxies, convertible into any planetary denomination. Their rarity and their value as an energy source makes them precious, seldom used in commonplace transactions.

Whoever has one million energy star crystals is unfathomably wealthy, and for them to spend that on me is... incomprehensible.

“We have the first human for one million energy star crystals. Going once, going twice... Sold to bidder number twenty-one!” the host declares.

Auction house staff escort me offstage, leading me through the backstage labyrinth and into a secluded room. They linger outside the door after ushering me in.

“Stay put and await your bidder,” one of them orders in a gruff voice. “No attempts at escape. We're stationed right outside, and there are guards all over this place. Any such effort would be in vain.”

With that, he shuts the door abruptly.

I'm not naive enough to consider an escape, and I've come to terms with my current predicament, I muse as I approach the bed at the room's center. I take a seat, lost in my thoughts.

Death by labor or life as a wealthy man's plaything?

Gratitude or fear? I don't know which emotion should dominate. My stomach churns with unease, and I battle the urge to vomit, determined not to further humiliate myself.

On the brighter side, at least I won't end up in the barracks. The person who spent so much for me wouldn't toss me aside like that, right? The mere thought of the million energy star crystals is staggering.

What will my bidder demand of me?

Regardless, I hope my new master will treat me decently and have a passion for botany. Granted, the chances are slim, but one can hope.

The door creaks open and another human woman steps in. She holds a piece of cloth in her hand, and my stomach plummets. Surely, I don't have to wear that in front of my buyer?

Reading my apprehension, she smiles knowingly, motioning for me to turn around.

“Your bidder awaits. He requested that you be blindfolded,” she announces, securing the cloth over my eyes.

I comply. What choice do I have?  
Just who in the universe is this person?



## DJINN

**I**t's almost unbelievable that I've just purchased Rachel for a staggering one million energy star crystals. But truth be told, her worth surpasses any material wealth.

My initial bid was more of a dare, a challenge to any brave - or foolish - soul daring to compete. Had anyone risen to that challenge, their elimination would be my next step. I can't tolerate anyone with even the slightest interest in Rachel breathing the same air as her.

Fortunately, no one dared. I secured Rachel without a hitch.

A surge of satisfaction accompanies the anger that seethes within me. The fact that she ended up in this demeaning auction is infuriating. The thought of venting this anger on someone is tempting, but for now, Rachel is my priority.

As soon as the transaction concludes, I make my way to the designated room, where Rachel waits. I asked for her to be blindfolded, uncertain of her reaction once she realizes it's me who's claimed her. The image of her narrowed, accusatory gaze sends a painful knot to my chest. I struggle for breath, weighed down by an unknown despair. Given that I'm responsible for her abduction, her fury would be justified.

From the moment we rescued her from the insectoids, and throughout the days we spent together on Earth, I've kept a close eye on her. Unfortunately, the one time I let my guard down, she stumbled upon our race's dark secret.

My negligence led her to this horrific situation, and the guilt has gnawed at me ever since.

How do we repay her for her gratitude, her kindness, and her patient

teachings about the Amazon? We kidnap her, leading her to be auctioned off as a seka.

Establishing friendships with other races proves challenging due to their fear or envy of us. Thus, forming a connection with someone like Rachel is a rare occurrence.

My men and I had intended to invite Rachel as our guest on the Planet of Gold during our return journey. But we got caught up with our reports and debriefings about the expedition. Before we knew it, Rachel was processed for auction.

The thought still rankles me.

However, that's in the past now. The relief of finally securing her, and doing so legitimately, is overwhelming.

Upon reaching the room, I dismiss the guards stationed at the door. I don't want Rachel to feel like a prisoner when she should have been a guest all along.

I step into the room, my heart pounding like a war drum against my chest. The sight before me freezes me in place.

Right there, in the middle of the room, on a sprawling bed, sits a radiant goddess, still clad in the sheer gown from the stage. An instinctive desire to tear away the dress engulfs me, wishing to rid her of the last vestiges of the humiliating auction.

As I approach her, her visible unease becomes more apparent. She's jittery, trembling, whether from anxiety or fear, I can't be sure. The sight reins in my simmering anger and suppresses any overwhelming urges.

I close the door behind me, its sound causing Rachel to flinch. I pause near the entrance, awkwardly hovering as I grapple with the question of what to do next.

Truthfully, I have no idea. From the moment I discovered her plight, my instincts had pushed me to rescue her. Yet now, with her right before me, I'm still clueless about our next step.

Returning her to Earth is out of the question. The King is aware of her and her knowledge about our predicament. Why else would he have ordered her immediate auction?

Rescuing her is the only viable option to make amends for our transgression.

She shouldn't have been in the control room during that critical meeting. This rescue is, in part, my apology to her, a feeble attempt to rectify our error.

I have no intention of taking her to bed, even though she's undeniably attractive. I'm sure many assume that I intend to attempt procreation, given the doctor's theoretical proposition. But such a theory remains unproven, and I'm not keen on testing it.

Yet, as I draw nearer, intending to lead her away from this detestable auction house, the room's bright light illuminates her skin, rendering it even more enticing. Her sheer white gown does little to shield her allure.

Before I know it, I'm standing before her, my hand reaching out towards her.

An impulse to caress her overwhelms me, but I fight it. She's endured enough already. She surely wouldn't want the one who betrayed her to touch her, I reason, causing me to withdraw my hand.

She's so close, a dissenting part of me argues. A small touch can't be a crime. Besides, she's blindfolded; she won't know it's you.

A silent battle wages within me, undecided about the next course of action. But before I can come to a resolution, I find my hand stretching out, capturing a lock of her hair between my fingers.

Women from my planet usually have long, coarse hair, making Rachel's short, silky strands a curiosity. The temptation to touch has been there, but I've resisted until now.

Its smooth texture leaves me mesmerized as I wind it around my fingers.

An accidental brush against her soft cheek sends tiny jolts of electricity rippling through my body, momentarily halting my heart.

It's now certain. This woman has me completely captivated.



## RACHEL

**S**hrouded in darkness with a blindfold, I feel strikingly alone. The sense of isolation enhances my other senses, turning them into sharp receptors. I can hear the frantic pulse of my heartbeat, inhale the clean aroma of the bed sheets, and perceive the soft texture of the fabric beneath me.

Regrettably, the absence of ambient sound fuels my anxiety, as my imagination begins to fabricate terrifying scenarios. I envision a monstrous warrior barging in, his intentions as repulsive as his appearance. It makes my skin crawl.

Oh, God. These detrimental thoughts are not assisting me, but I can't help it. The uncertainty is overwhelming. Only negative assumptions occupy my mind.

Focus on happy thoughts, happy thoughts. *Victoria amazonica*, *Theobroma cacao*, *Passiflora edulis*, Bromeliaceae...

Reciting the Latin names of Amazonian plants usually brings a sense of tranquility and joy. But I fear that even that isn't enough this time. Especially with the harsh reality that I may never return to Earth and resume my work.

No, I must cease this. I need to concentrate on something that will genuinely calm me down. If not, I might lose control.

Djinn...

His name, his visage, his strength – they unexpectedly invade my mind. Heat rushes to my cheeks at these thoughts. Why him of all people? He is the reason I am in this mess.

And yet, strangely enough, thinking of Djinn alleviates my anxiety. I can't



help but scoff.

Is it because I desperately want to confront him, to make him accountable for thrusting me into this chaos? The mental image of chastising him and his comrades brings a fleeting moment of relief.

My solace is abruptly shattered by the faint whoosh of the door opening, followed by soft footsteps. My body stiffens, and my heartbeat quickens.

My bidder is here. The anticipation of his actions petrifies me.

Although his footsteps are barely perceptible, I know that he must be one of the warriors from the Planet of Gold. I recall Radelk mentioning that, despite their towering stature, they possess an agility and stealth that make them formidable opponents on the battlefield. Only a warrior of their kind could move with such cat-like grace.

The thought only intensifies my fear. Thanks a lot, Radelk.

My hands involuntarily curl into tight fists on my lap. I squeeze my eyes shut beneath the blindfold, feeling the presence of my bidder. When his fingers thread through my hair, I involuntarily flinch.

To my surprise, his touch is not lecherous or forceful. Instead, it feels explorative, almost hesitant, as though he's intrigued. His fingers weave through my strands, occasionally brushing against my cheek with a feather-light touch.

It's difficult to picture a warrior like Djinn possessing such a gentle touch. But then again, I can't blame them for their curiosity under these bizarre circumstances.

Apart from Djinn and his crew, my knowledge about men of their race is relatively sparse. From our initial encounters, I gathered they had little to no experience with human women who aren't seka, like myself. It's possibly an exciting rarity for them— akin to stumbling upon a unicorn.

But, having been sold, does that make me a seka now?

There's a peculiar fascination my bidder seems to harbor for me. He might be aware that I'm not your typical seka, or... could it be that he's never seen a human woman before?

I press my lips together, suppressing a gasp.

Is it possible that I'm his first human woman? His cautious, tender touches seem to imply as much. He handles me like I'm precious, fragile porcelain.

Not only have I dodged the deplorable fate in the barracks, but I also appear to have landed a gentle, considerate buyer. How fortunate!

I attempt to remain still, focusing on heightening my other senses. Something about him triggers familiarity. His scent... it's one I recognize. His touch and presence emanate a comforting aura that oddly soothes me.

I can't place him exactly, but there's a peculiar sense of familiarity. He is far more gentle than any ordinary warrior would be.

This realization eases my tension as he continues his gentle exploration.

However, my thoughts halt abruptly when his hand cups my cheek. If that wasn't enough, I feel his hand drift slowly, ever so lightly, down to my neck. His hand radiates warmth and his rough calluses send a ripple of goosebumps across my skin.

With my sight inhibited by the blindfold, my other senses are amplified. Each of his touches stokes a slow-burning flame within me. As his fingers gently trace my collarbone, I find it impossible to suppress my reaction.

Unintentionally, a moan escapes my lips.

He freezes, his touch paused but not withdrawn, his fingers remaining against my neck, branding me with his warmth.

I feel a blush creep up my cheeks, a mixture of his touch's effects and the embarrassment of being in such an unfamiliar situation.

My interests have always been directed towards plant science. I've always been a total nerd, despising crowds and parties as much as the obnoxious individuals who attempt to flirt with me.

My unwavering dedication to my work has left me inexperienced in matters of passion and intimacy. While I pride myself on my knowledge of plant reproduction, when it comes to my own, I'm pretty much clueless.

Embarrassment washes over me, a result of my involuntary reaction. I hope I haven't offended him. A minute passes with him still motionless, his hand still on my neck.

My mind races with what he might be thinking. In the end, I decide to directly address him.

"Djinn?"



## DJINN

"D jinn?"

Her soft utterance of my name shatters my trance. Her moan, a soft, throaty sound drawn out by my touch, had held more power than any war cry I'd ever heard. But now, with her calling my name, my bubble of bliss bursts, leaving me in a panic about how to handle the situation.

Despite my attempts at concealing my identity, such as blindfolding her and bringing her here surreptitiously, it seems she has seen through my ruse. Her perceptiveness is simultaneously awe-inspiring and unnerving.

"How... how did you know?" My voice emerges gravelly as I gently pull down her blindfold.

I hope I don't come across as angry or irritated.

Her plump lips part as she responds in a breathless voice, and I can't help but be entranced.

"It's your scent. And your warmth. Your... gentleness also. Those gave you away, that's how I knew."

I can't suppress a smirk. Gentleness?

As the Golden Spear of the Planet of Gold, being described as gentle is something new. It's even more surprising that it came from a human, a species known to be the most inferior and timid among races.

A human woman like her is the last person I would ever expect to call someone like me gentle.

She clears her throat awkwardly.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to offend you by saying you're gentle. It's just... you saved me from those insectoids, and when you touched me, it felt

incredibly gentle."

I CLOSE my eyes and clench my teeth, attempting to control my reactions. It's not that I find her calling me *gentle offensive*. Rather, it's the breathless quality of her voice that sends me spiraling.

Being alone with her in this room isn't helping either.

I raise my hands in a gesture of surrender to prevent any temptation of touching her again, but I can't bring myself to take a step back.

"I'm sorry," I say, my voice rough as I attempt to mask my true feelings. "I'll find a place for you where you can be safe and live peacefully. However, it's impossible for you to return to Earth right now."

I clear my throat, hoping to alleviate the roughness in my voice, but to no avail.

"I want to apologize for the... unpleasantness you had to endure on your first day here. Our original plan was to welcome you as a guest, but due to a misunderstanding, you were sent to the auction house."

I clench my fists, concealing them from her sight. The memory of the ordeal she went through continues to ignite fury within me.

"However, moving forward, you'll be under my protection. I promise that no one will touch or mistreat you ever again. I swear this as the Golden Spear of the Planet of Gold. The incident at the auction house will never happen again."

I run out of words, my heart pounding uncomfortably against my ribcage. The air in the room feels thick, stifling. I need to leave, to gulp down some fresh air to clear my head.

"Sorry about the blindfold," I apologize, my voice rough, "I understand we're at fault for your situation and...I'll go arrange a place for you to stay." I turn, intending to exit, but her hand latches onto my arm, halting my movement.

"Wait, Djinn," she stammers, her voice a mere whisper. "I-I'm scared."

Those words strike me harder than any weapon ever could, slashing my cold heart into pieces. The vulnerability she displays is beyond heart-wrenching.

How can a single human woman wield such a profound effect on me? I feel like a novice soldier, trembling before his first battle.

I cover her hand with mine, careful to not apply too much pressure. My

towering height makes the gesture somewhat awkward, so I kneel before her until we are at eye level.

With my free hand, I tenderly cup her cheek. "You don't have to be afraid," I reassure her with as much gentleness as I can infuse into my voice, "I'll protect you. With everything I have."

The words hover at the tip of my tongue: Even my life. But I swallow them back, fearing that such a declaration may unsettle her.

The thought of her being in harm's way on the Planet of Gold fills me with an unbearable rage. Watching her tremble and cling to me as if I am her lifeline fills me with a sense of purpose, but also an uncertainty that makes me uneasy.

What on earth is happening to me?

Ever since I met Rachel, her joyous moments with the guys have been a constant stab to my chest. When she is near, my heart thunders against my ribcage. Her presence leaves me breathless as if I've completed a rigorous training session.

Could this be... love?

We don't have such a concept among my kind. My knowledge about love is secondhand, learned from Radelk's fascination with human experiences. But even he hasn't experienced it.

On the Planet of Gold, the closest thing we have to love is finding a genetically compatible partner. There's no drama, no overwhelming emotions that turn your world upside down.

"Please, Djinn, don't leave me," Rachel suddenly pleads, her voice sending a painful throb through my chest.

Whether this is love or not, there's no way I can leave her in such a state.



## RACHEL

**F**eeling a sudden twist of fortune, I can't help but marvel at the circumstances. Stranded on an alien planet, facing an unthinkable fate, I was caught in a whirlpool of despair. But learning that the person who paid such a staggering amount to buy me is none other than Djinn himself... well, that changes everything.

At first, the astronomical sum he paid left me stunned and confused. I thought he wasn't interested in women. But his touch - it sparked something, made me realize there was more than just a protective instinct at play.

I'm no expert when it comes to men, but I understand the basics of physical attraction. And his touch communicates something more.

Despite my anger and resentment toward Djinn and his team for my situation, knowing that he not only paid a high price for me but also intends to ensure my comfort, makes it impossible for me to maintain a cold demeanor towards him.

Instead, I find myself wanting to cling to him, like a lifeline in a tempestuous sea. He gives me a sense of safety and security, notwithstanding the terrifying stories I've heard about his kind.

There's something different about Djinn.

When we first met, his quiet, serious, and distant demeanor was stark. But I didn't sense malice or hostility. He saved me from the insectoids, which was proof enough that he meant me no harm.

Djinn made me feel... wanted. Despite his distant behavior, I couldn't help but feel that he was battling his own attraction towards me. Perhaps, he too was navigating the unfamiliar territory of emotions.



But I could be misinterpreting the situation, mistaking a one-sided attraction for a mutual one. How mortifying it would be if that was the case, especially after I'd called him 'gentle'! I could only hope that such a term wasn't offensive to a race known for their warrior abilities.

Yet, when I apologized, he didn't seem bothered. Instead, he comforted me when I confessed my fear.

Djinn was the last person I expected to show compassion, let alone buy me. His attempts at comfort might be awkward, but I appreciate his efforts nonetheless.

For the first time since waking up in this alien world, I feel a sense of hope. But I can't let him leave. What would become of me if he did?

I had overheard discussions among the other women, the seasoned sekas, about the importance of compatibility with their new owners. They said that the first night was crucial for testing this compatibility.

IF A SEKA WAS compatible with her warrior, she would then be fully protected by him and taken to his home. But if not, the warrior could back out. He might lose his money but had the option to sell or give the seka to another, or 'donate' her to the barracks.

I need to consummate the first night with Djinn. Even though I know he will bring me under his protection, I can't half-ass this. I need this to be as foolproof as possible.

As far as I'm concerned, I can't depend on just anyone here. The only one I can trust is Djinn, Radelk, and maybe the others who were on the ship.

Using my hold on him, I lean forward. I miss my aim, my lips ending up on cheek instead of his lips, but I don't let it stop me.

Sliding my lips down, I manage to explore his face, planting a kiss on his nose, and ultimately, reaching my destination.

My intention is to surprise him into having me. However, the moment my lips press against his, I feel him reciprocating passionately, catching me off-guard.

It seems my plan is going to backfire. In a good way, of course.



## DJINN

Rachel's lips on my cheek are scorching. They sear me through skin and muscle, straight to my soul, marking me as hers.

It's ridiculous that I'm thinking of such clichés, but I can't bring myself to think of anything else, especially when I feel her lips gliding from my cheek to plant kisses all over my face, making my cold heart pound like a war drum.

Rachel is a unique woman, indeed.

Her kisses are sweet and innocent. It's not supposed to entice me for anything more. However, because it's her, they feel like the most erotic and enticing kisses I've ever received in my life.

I have to stop her. I have to stop this.

I had already told myself that Rachel won't be a seka and that she will never be treated as one, even by me. It's why I should stop this and leave before I lose control, and—

I feel her lips against mine, and just like that, all bets are off. The thin line between patience and control I've been struggling to hold on to finally snaps. If Rachel wants me that badly, then by the gods, she will have all of me.

With a silent groan, I return her timid kiss and take the lead. I reach over, holding her chin between my thumb and forefinger as I tilt her head to deepen the kiss, transforming something pure and innocent into something hot and molten.

I lick the seam of her lips before pushing my tongue past them, plunging it into her hot, wet mouth and tasting her sweetness from within. When she moans, I stiffen, along with another part of my body.

God, but that sounds heavenly.

I let go of her chin and allow my hands to wander over her thin white shift. I still loathe the clothing on her, but I have to admit it feels good beneath my hands. The cloth is supposed to be cool, but I can feel it heating up from her flushed skin.

With one hand, I cup her ass, holding her as I pull her closer to me. As my other hand passes between the valley of her breasts, my thumb brushes over a stiff nipple and she moans again, twitching a little in my arms.

She's so beautiful, and responsive, I don't know if I can last any longer. I'm already rock hard and I'm only just touching her, listening to her breathy moans and soft sighs. There's a little voice in my head who keeps telling me I still have a chance to pull away, but I'm already past the point of no return.

To make matters worse, there's a tantalizing aroma emanating from her skin that only fuels my lust even further. Damn, she smells so delicious and I want a taste of everything she has to offer.

With a growl, I finally do what I've wanted since seeing her on stage wearing that godforsaken dress. I rip the damn material open.

She squeaks in surprise but doesn't make any other movements. She stays still within my arms. Despite my barbaric behavior, she still wants me.

It takes everything in me not to plunge into her right then and there.

However, as I said, she's not a seka and she won't be treated as one. My Rachel is special, and she deserves nothing but the best from me. I aim to pleasure her and not just take my own pleasure.

I think I should be grateful to Radelk for subjecting me and the guys to a lecture on human intercourse in the past. I can't believe all the crap I thought he was spewing is coming in handy.

Leaning over her, I place open-mouthed kisses along her neck, sucking on the delicate skin before slowly traveling down her body, and enjoying every breathless moan and sigh she makes. As my lips close in on one nipple, she gasps and thrusts her chest upward, pushing more of her breast into my mouth. Something I gratefully accept.

My hands grab hold of her thighs to gently pull them apart, and I press my body between them. That wonderful smell she's giving off becomes stronger, so strong I can feel my mouth watering.

Sucking on her delicious breasts is not enough. I want more. I want to taste that delicious aroma from down there.

With a wet pop, my mouth leaves her breasts to trail down her stomach,

and further down below.

“Oh! Oh, Djinn, are you — ah!”

She almost jumps from the bed, but my hands immediately hold her hips down as my mouth finds its way to her pussy. Her intimate, feminine smell is even more intoxicating up close... And her taste...

My tongue slithers out to lick at the wetness flowing out of her, and a burst of sweet and salty deliciousness assaults my taste buds.

Damn it all to hell, but she tastes divine!

I shove my face deeper into her mound, my tongue seeking entrance inside her, tasting and sucking her addictive juices.

This... this is making me lose control. I had thought giving in to my urges and taking advantage of what she was so sweetly offering was it... But this...

All I want to do is to taste her, lick her, and eat her up. In fact, I think I wouldn't mind doing this every day for the rest of my life. Then if I die, I'd consider myself happy.

I feel her hands suddenly grab fistfuls of my hair, and it makes me pause. I wonder if she wants me to stop or if I'm doing too much.

“Oh, oh God, Djinn. It feels so good,” she moans, squeezing her fists, and the slight pain only adds fuel to the fire already blazing inside me.

Like the crazed warrior I'm becoming, I keep licking her, sucking her. But this time, my movements are a little more desperate, my tongue slips deeper and deeper inside her, and my cock is getting harder and harder with every second.

I want her. I want to be inside her now.

However, I don't want to complicate her life any further, so I turn off my reproductive ability. This way, I won't subject her to even more she doesn't want.

Instead, I will protect and please her to the best of my ability.

I may not understand the whole of why I'm feeling this way, but I know for certain that after this, Rachel will be mine.

All mine.



## RACHEL

**O** *h my God!*

Those are just one of the few words, other than Djinn's name, that keeps playing in my mind since Djinn kissed me back. This is probably the best sex of my life!

No, scratch that, it's so good, it feels like the only sex I've ever experienced in my life!

Despite my lack of familiarity with men, I did have a boyfriend in the past. Though I'm not sure you can even call him that.

We only did it once. We were so drunk when we decided to do it, I'm still surprised we were able to accomplish the deed. We were friends and only even did it to see if we clicked or something. Though, to be honest, I can barely recall anything noteworthy happening that night.

We were probably less of a couple than the moment being a one-night stand.

Since there were no feelings involved, it was no real loss for me and I managed to get rid of my virginity, which, at the time, I thought of as cumbersome. Something that people saw as a prize, but which loomed so large over me, I was glad it was gone.

It was a win-win situation for me.

Still, I was half-afraid I would fall asleep on Djinn like I did with my ex, and embarrass myself in the process, but given how hot and steaming his touches and kisses are, every nerve ending in my body is alert and wide awake.

When his tongue slips inside my pussy, I gasp at the sudden intrusion.

Oh, holy hell, wow! This is the first time someone has ever gone down on me, and the sensation is absolutely insane!

I've always wondered what the big deal is with oral sex. Why do people waste time with such endeavors in the first place when it doesn't result in a baby?

Now I know why.

"Djinn! Oh my God! Djinn!" I scream helplessly, squirming and wriggling against his hold because I can feel his tongue going deeper and deeper inside me.

His tongue doesn't seem to end. It keeps slipping inside me endlessly.

Holy fuck, now I remember. The inhabitants of the Planet of Gold have plenty of abilities, and one of them is the capability of lengthening and modifying parts of their bodies during battle or sex.

I can't believe I'm lucky enough to be on the receiving end of it. In a good way.

His long, nimble tongue easily accesses my G-spot and flicks over my womb, and I immediately reach a mind-numbing orgasm that leaves me falling backward on the bed, my limbs weak from the sensations.

However, Djinn doesn't stop there and he gives me another orgasm, licking my clit like candy and finger fucking me like there's no tomorrow.

This is the fastest I've climaxed in my lifetime, even when I'm controlling my own pleasure.

I orgasm four times before he finally removes his sinful mouth, tongue, and fingers from my throbbing pussy.

Panting and out of breath, I'm beyond exhausted. I doubt it's been ten minutes since I initiated the kiss and I'm already spent. We haven't even consummated anything yet and — *Oh no, wait.*

I feel Djinn's strong hands on my hips, pulling me to the edge of the bed. Lifting my legs, he wraps them around his waist. As he positions himself between them, I can feel his huge, throbbing length prodding my entrance.

Even though I can't see what's happening below, I know that the Planet of Gold warriors are tall and big sons of bitches, so when it comes to proportion, it is already massive. Oh, and let's not forget they can adjust their body parts accordingly.

"W-wait! Djinn, wait, oh my God, I just came! Give me a minute!" I cry out in panic.

Granted, I'm not a virgin, but I'm suddenly anxious at how big it likely



is! Will I get pain or pleasure from this experience?

“Fuck, Rachel, I can’t keep myself back anymore,” I hear him growl.

I bite my lip and decide I’ve passed the point of no return. I lift my hips up to his in silent agreement, and he thrusts.

I feel the tip of his cock slip inside me, and I feel myself panic again at the size. If the tip’s already this big, how much more will the rest of it be? Won’t I be ripped apart if this continues?

However, despite the feminine fear, I can’t deny the delicious sensations rippling up and down my spine as he continues to push past my pussy lips. I’d rather die than tell Djinn to stop, but I’m afraid of being split apart if he suddenly shoves himself inside when I haven’t accommodated his size.

“Please do it slowly! Don’t stop though, God, no, just... Ah!”

I shriek and moan as his tip successfully hits my G-spot. An inch further in, and fireworks go off throughout my entire body.

While my senses are still ringing with bliss, I barely hear him groan out an apology before he thrusts, sinking his full length inside me. The sudden sensation of being filled to the brim, coupled with the feel of his shaft scraping and rubbing deliciously inside me, make my eyes roll to the back of my head, and I come yet again.

Once he’s fully sheathed to the hilt, I feel his cock adjust in length and girth to fit my snug channel. His cock perfectly hits my womb.

My senses are drunk with pleasure, and with my eyes at half-mast, I take the opportunity to study him.

His eyes are closed tightly, as if concentrating, while panting heavily on top of me. The lights are still on in the room and I leisurely take my fill of his body. His markings are a work of art. I can’t believe such a beautiful and powerful warrior, who’s also gifted in bed, is having sex with me right now!

Aren’t I lucky?

The moment passes, and he suddenly opens his eyes. Our gazes meet and I flinch in surprise. His molten look seems to sear through my soul and it makes my pussy walls clamp around his cock greedily.

It’s a mistake.

With a pained groan, Djinn grips my hands in his, pinning them to the bed before he starts pounding into me with deep, hard thrusts.

Let’s just say I lost count of how many times I came after that.



## DJINN

The weight of something warm and comforting stirs me from slumber, pulling me towards something enticingly hot and heavy. I find myself teetering on the brink of decision.

For the first time, I wake up feeling wholly satisfied, immersed in a sense of comfort I've never experienced before. I wish I could freeze this moment forever.

Instinctively, I wrap my arms around the figure nestled atop me. Memories of the previous night rush into my consciousness, allowing me to relax. I grapple with a swirling mix of emotions - regret for crossing boundaries and gratitude for the intimacy shared.

Opening one eye, I'm met with a sight so beautiful that my regret dissipates. Milk chocolate hair, long, fluttering lashes framing hazel eyes, a button-like nose, and lips as tempting as they taste.

I've never experienced the luxury of waking up with a woman nestled in my arms. In times of insatiable desire, I'd resort to the seka houses, leaving once the urges were quelled.

Being in this situation was beyond my wildest dreams, and the unfamiliar, warm feeling bubbling within me was strange. It was happiness, a feeling I've only associated with the thrill of combat victories.

Have I ever felt such pure joy before? The memory, if it ever existed, must have faded into the realms of forgetfulness long ago.

Incredibly, I find myself... happy. Simply by sharing a bed with a woman.

But Rachel isn't just any woman. There's an allure to her that pulls me in. I'm not sure what it is, but I'm determined to find out.

Carefully, I shift Rachel aside, laying her down gently to avoid waking her. The blanket slips, revealing her bare skin and igniting a heat within me. I can feel a familiar stirring, but I know she needs rest after our long night.

Closing my eyes, I resist the temptation before me, tugging the blanket back up to cover her. I quickly locate my clothes and dress, aching to escape the room before I give in to the urge to touch her again.

While the women of my kind are robust and resilient, they need time to recuperate between bouts of intimacy. Otherwise, the pleasure is lost.

Human women may lack physical strength and stamina, but they can experience pleasure repeatedly. This is one reason why my brethren prefer human women in the seka houses and why they fetch such high prices in the auction houses.

However, the ability to achieve multiple orgasms doesn't negate the need for sustenance and rest. Thus, I must control my desires and attend to Rachel's needs.

“Who would've thought I'd be thankful for Radelk's knowledge,” I mutter to myself, pulling on my clothing. It's not that I want to leave; rather, I hope being fully dressed might help me resist the temptation of touching her.

As an additional distraction, I pull out my communicator and dial home.

“Greetings, Master Djinn,” my AI butler answers promptly.

“Jarvis, prepare the guest bedroom adjacent to my chambers. Instruct the household to anticipate a guest—I'm bringing someone home.”

“Affirmative, Master Djinn. Does your guest have any specific preferences? We can tailor the room to their taste.”

I halt, realizing I hadn't given that a thought. Initially, I had intended for Rachel to stay in my home. Yet, seeing her trembling in anticipation of her buyer, I knew I posed the biggest threat to her. I had contemplated assigning one of my men to escort her to safety, ensuring she would remain under our protection.

However, that plan shattered the moment her lips met mine.

From that point on, Rachel was mine, and I'd be damned if I let her go. I want her by my side, and bringing her into my home seemed the best course of action. She would stay under my roof, and I would ensure her safety. No one else would do.

SUPPRESSING A SMILE, I respond to Jarvis, “Prepare the room for a human

woman and arrange a meal suitable for her taste.”

“Understood, Master Djinn.”

Ending the call, I glance back at Rachel, sound asleep. I know that accommodating her will necessitate changes in my lifestyle. But right now, the thought doesn't bother me.

In fact, I'm looking forward to the challenge.



## RACHEL

**M**y senses rouse before I open my eyes, an unfamiliar whirring noise echoing around me. Groggily, my hand roams across my body, brushing against the material beneath me.

The fabric is soft, plush. I force my eyes open, peering down at myself. A flowing lilac dress adorns me, with thin straps and tulle ribbons hoisting it up on my shoulders. The sweetheart neckline pairs elegantly with the corset-style bodice.

Intricate floral embroidery weaves across the fabric in braid-like patterns, clusters of tiny Cosmo flowers trailing across the garment. It feels almost wrong to wear something so stunning—lightweight yet warm, hugging my body. A slit along the left thigh offers a glimpse of my leg from beneath the layers of fabric.

Tearing my gaze away from the dress, I survey my surroundings. I'm in a vehicle—massive by Earth's standards—with a sleek, silver interior. It's so spacious, one could easily mistake it for a small studio apartment. I realize I could stand, perhaps even dance, without fear of knocking anything over.

Leaning back, I gaze out the window. A world completely alien to my own rushes by in a blur. The vehicle moves without a driver, seemingly on autopilot. The scenery is startlingly different from Earth, and I can't help but marvel at it.

Djinn, sitting beside me, is engrossed in his communicator, fingers tapping away on the screen. Noticing my movement, he lifts his gaze, a pair of silver eyes flecked with gold meeting my brown ones. He stands out against the silver interior, his golden figure a stark contrast. His lips curve

into a smile as he reaches for something beside him.

His towering presence could easily dwarf me, but I don't feel threatened. Instead, I find comfort in his warmth, in his presence. Djinn hands me a bottle of water, attentively watching as I take it. He's been this way since the beginning, only now, he's not observing from a distance; he's right here, beside me.

"Uh, where are we going?" I ask, unscrewing the bottle cap and taking a sip, the cool liquid a welcome relief to my parched throat. "And how long was I asleep?"

"Quite some time," he replies. "You were so peaceful, I didn't want to wake you."

I nod, clearing my throat before posing another question. I hope he doesn't mind—I've never left Earth before. "And where exactly are we headed?" I furrow my eyebrows in confusion, glancing out the window at the bustling streets.

"We're going home," he says. "To my place."

"Are we almost there?" I ask.

"Yes, we're almost there," he confirms, a smile still gracing his features as he notices me fumbling for a spot to place the water bottle. Wordlessly, he extends a hand, taking the bottle from me and placing it back in its original spot.

"Um, thank you," I stutter, clearing my throat. Offering him a timid smile, I sink further into the plush seat cushions, rotating my body to face him.

I find comfort in the thought of staying at his place. Being dropped off somewhere alien, alone, would have been daunting. It's not like I could return to Earth. Even with his comforting smile, his presence radiates a serious, almost intimidating aura.

His face doesn't wear smiles easily, neither casual nor formal ones. Cautiously, I inch closer to him, anticipating a rebuff. Yet, it doesn't come. Instead, he shifts in his seat, making room for me. As I rest my head on his broad chest, his arm winds around my shoulders, drawing me against him.

His touch is so comfortable I almost drift back to sleep. I bury my face into his chest, his unique scent filling my senses. It feels right, as if this is where I belong.

Enveloped in his arms, nestled against his chest, we journey towards our new home. My new home. The realization sinks in that Earth is no longer home, and that I might never return. This is my home now.



I find my thoughts returning to our intimate moments last night. I wasn't naive to such pleasures, but last night had been a revelation of my own ignorance. His arm around me is firm yet gentle, his hold strong but tender. It's as if he's afraid to cause me pain.

Perhaps he sees himself as a potential source of my ruin. But for me, he's my refuge. He saved me from the brink of death and now guides me towards a new life.



## DJINN

Rachel's head remains nestled on my chest for the remainder of the journey, a positioning I find rather comforting. As the vehicle glides to a halt right in front of my abode, I disembark first, holding the door open for her. She whispers a barely audible 'thank you,' her eyes already absorbing the grandeur of my house.

"Wow," she breathes out in awe, her gaze hungrily drinking in every architectural detail. I stride towards the entrance, my amusement growing. If she's amazed by the exterior, the interior would undoubtedly blow her away.

Such astonishment is expected. The Planet of Gold, brimming with precious minerals and ores, is a stark contrast to Earth.

I usher her in, and as the door clicks open, the first floor lights flicker to life, their warm glow bathing the room. A gasp escapes Rachel as she marvels at the interior.

"Welcome home," Jarvis, my AI butler, announces, standing near the living room with a platter bearing a glass of juice. He approaches Rachel, offering the refreshment, to which she whispers another 'thank you.'

"Rachel, meet Jarvis, my AI butler," I introduce, "Jarvis, this is Rachel. Ensure she has all she needs. Rachel, if you need anything, just ask Jarvis."

Her nod is my only response as we venture further into the house, leaving our bags behind for Jarvis and the rest of the AI staff. They are my household's caretakers during my absences.

The living room, a visual feast of white and gold, shimmers under the fluorescent lights. A spiraling copper staircase off to the side leads to the second floor, and a large, state-of-the-art kitchen dominates the rear of the

space.

"This is the living room, and the bedrooms are upstairs," I explain, guiding her along, "Down that hallway, you'll find the kitchen. If you have any requests, just let me know."

Our conversation is interrupted by the AI chef, usually responsible for my meals but now tasked with catering to Rachel's tastes too.

"Sir, your meal will be ready shortly," she informs us.

"Thank you. Please have Jarvis notify us when it's ready," I respond, steering Rachel towards the stairs.

As the scent of our impending meal wafts from the closing kitchen door, I lead the way upstairs, Rachel following closely. It'll take her some time to navigate the vast expanse of my home, but I'm patient.

As we ascend the stairs, Rachel's fingers lightly trace the railing. Once we reach the second-floor landing, I continue the tour, eventually leading her to her room, where Jarvis has already been tidying up.

"You can settle in here," I suggest, indicating the plush quarters. "Your bathroom is through that door, your closet over there, and that leads to your personal balcony." I pause at the threshold as she steps further into the room. "I'll leave you for a bit. Jarvis will summon you for dinner."

"Sir, dinner is served. Shall I fetch Miss Rachel?" Jarvis's inquiry pulls me away from the mountain of paperwork cluttering my desk moments later.

I nod, and Jarvis hustles off to guide her to the dining room.

On our table, an array of strawberry parfaits and a hearty dish of mushroom and spinach bread pudding awaits us. As Jarvis serves orange juice and water, Rachel murmurs a 'thank you,' her gaze lingering on the savory pudding.

"Please, help yourself," I encourage, nudging the dish her way.

"Can you tell me about this place?" She ventures, a spoonful of the parfait making its way to her lips. "I've heard Earth stories, but I want your perspective."

A satisfied groan slips out as she savors the sweet dessert. "This is amazing. Please, tell your AI I'd love to learn how to make this."

"I'll ensure you get the recipe. As for your question, what exactly do you wish to know?"

She seems to contemplate for a moment. "I've heard about houses made of gold and unimaginable luxuries here. But also, that the Planet of Gold is deficient in natural resources. Is that true?"

I nod. "Indeed, water is scarce, and most terrestrial plants fail to thrive in this environment."

"But then, how do you grow these?" She gestures towards her parfait, her spoon never pausing.

"I must admit, I'm not sure. I'll ask around. What else would you like to know?"

Her next question is about the people of this planet. I tell her about our ability to appear human, but also our pride in our marks—symbols of our strength and courage. She seems to absorb this information thoughtfully, her questions persisting.

As I answer her, I'm struck by how eager she is to understand this new world that she's been thrust into. I find comfort in this, recognizing my role to protect her, to keep her safe from potential threats.

She compares our marks to human tribal tattoos—a nod to their victories. I confirm the similarity, but also explain the innate strength of our people. She listens, her eagerness undiminished.

Our conversation extends into the night, the questions flowing back and forth. At some point, I call upon Jarvis to help answer her queries and guide her on a virtual tour. Her relentless curiosity is invigorating, and I can't help but hope it indicates a determination to adapt to her new home.



## RACHEL

I found myself seated at an ornate dining table, a generous spread of food laid out before me, indecision taking hold as I wondered which dish to sample first. Picking up my spoon, I dug into the strawberry parfait. Its sweetness flooded my senses and momentarily drowned out the overwhelming reality of my situation.

As I savored the treat, my thoughts drifted to Djinn. He'd been surprisingly patient and accommodating, answering my barrage of questions and ensuring my comfort in an alien environment. I recalled our first meeting—his distant, reserved demeanor seemed a stark contrast to the kindness he was showing now. Had we stayed on Earth, I might have never witnessed this side of him.

The room assigned to me was massive—bigger than any apartment I could have afforded in downtown New York City. It was more luxurious than I had anticipated, making me feel oddly welcome despite my forced relocation. This entire scenario, though far from ideal, was leagues better than the worst-case scenarios I had imagined.

Life here was new, strange, and daunting. I found myself in a world where invaluable minerals lay in abundance, but basic natural resources were scarce. I was a world away from my beloved Earth, my passions now an impossible dream. No more exploring forests, identifying new plant species, or freely gallivanting through diverse ecosystems. The reality was chilling—I was likely never returning to Earth, not in this lifetime.

Fear nibbled at the edges of my consciousness, a reminder of the massive upheaval my life had undergone. Yet, there was an odd sense of contentment,

too. With Djinn's reassuring presence, I was optimistic. I wasn't completely alone on this journey.

Breaking me from my musings, Djinn inquired, "What was your life like back on Earth?" He was leaning forward on the table, a subtle indication of his interest. I realized, almost with a start, that most of the food had been consumed during our engrossing conversation.

"I was a scientist, specializing in botany," I began, "I was researching Amazonian flora when your people found me. Thank you, by the way, for saving me. I would probably be dead if you hadn't intervened." A small chuckle punctuated my gratitude. "I would collect plant samples, examine their characteristics, conduct tests, and gather data. Once I had enough evidence to support a theory, I would finalize my research and submit my findings for review."

"That sounds like a significant workload," he remarked.

"Yes, it was. But I loved it—being around plants, studying nature, sharing my discoveries. It felt meaningful," I confessed.

He nodded, silver eyes locked on mine. "It's commendable. You were working for the benefit of humanity—and other races, too. But what about your off days? What did you do when you weren't studying plants?"

"I'm usually the one taking care of my own plants," I say wryly. "I also enjoy reading other people's research. What can I say? I love my job." I shake my head, reminiscing about my solitary existence.

"I can't blame you. I love my job too," he remarks.

I meet his gaze, recalling the rumors the others shared about him. He has a distant demeanor, which led some to assume he had different preferences.

He seems to be so devoted to his work that he has no room for a love life. A true workaholic, just like me. My work is my life. After all, why would anyone want a job they despise?

"What's it like being surrounded by plants all the time? It's a shame we don't have any on this planet. I used to enjoy their presence back on Earth."

"Indeed," I begin. "It's unfortunate that there are no plants here, but perhaps there's a yet unexplored way for them to survive."

This planet is one of the most advanced in existence. The Planet of Gold, part of the powerful Milky Way Alliance, surely would have discovered methods for cultivating plants had they made the effort. The mere thought of conducting experiments to grow plants on this planet fills me with excitement.



Leaning on the table, a look of anticipation adorning my face, I carefully place my spoon on top of my plate before clearing my throat. Djinn looks at me curiously, wondering what has me so enthralled.

"Is there any information about attempts to grow plants here?"

He furrows his brow.

"I haven't looked into it, but perhaps."

"I believe plants could potentially thrive in a controlled environment," I say, stroking my chin.

Lost in contemplation on how to make it a reality—a greenhouse or an indoor laboratory with artificial lighting, perhaps—I can already envision a myriad of questions to ask Djinn. "Do you think it's possible for you to find out if there have been any previous endeavors to grow plants on this planet?"

"I'll make sure to inquire. In the meantime, I can request Jarvis to search for any past research and experiments on the subject. Together, I'm confident we'll uncover something."

"That would be incredible!" I nearly leap out of my seat with excitement. I can hardly wait to see if they discover anything. I'll attempt to obtain copies of the research and visit the facilities.

Maybe I won't have to live the rest of my life devoid of nature's presence. The mere possibility brings me joy.

I'm fortunate to have Djinn by my side. Surely, he will find the answers I seek. Without him, I would be lost in my quest for knowledge.

Being put up for auction is turning out to be the best thing that has ever happened to me.



## DJINN

Our meal completed, we retreated to the comfort of the living room, the space a host to our unending conversation. Hours slipped away like water through fingers as we exchanged stories of our lives. I recounted our planet's history and a collection of intriguing tidbits about our world.

I spun tales of the dazzling crystal walls, massive structures gracing the mountainsides far from the city, their shimmering surfaces turning into constellations under the kiss of the rising sun.

Caught in a relaxed slouch on the couch, she inquired, "Is there anywhere we can go just for fun?"

Being in her company was easy, lively. Our discussions flowed seamlessly, the topics as diverse as they were interesting. The wealth of knowledge I was acquiring about Earth, a pleasant divergence from my usual life of war, power, and destruction.

"Sure, we have malls, parks, and centers nearby. We could take a drive around the city," I suggested, observing her struggle against her encroaching fatigue. A small yawn escaped her, her hand swiftly covering her mouth in politeness. An involuntary smile touched my lips as I watched her drowsy figure from across the room.

She hummed, acknowledging my words, as her head tilted to the side. Even knowing she was likely more asleep than awake, I continued discussing potential sightseeing destinations.

I noticed Jarvis enter the room, a tray bearing a teapot, biscuits, and a cup in his hands. He halted abruptly upon noticing Rachel's slumbering form on the couch.

"Sir, do you need any assistance moving her to her room?" He inquired.

"No, thank you," I replied, making my way towards the sleeping woman. Gently, I gathered her into my arms, cradling her head against my shoulder, ensuring her safety before I began to ascend the stairs.

The unique atmospheric makeup of our planet was a far cry from Earth's, a difference Rachel would need time to acclimate to. A necessity, hence, was the chip we implanted into incoming humans. Rachel had received hers immediately upon arrival—a technological aid to regulate her body functions in response to our planet's environment.

In the beginning, fatigue would be her constant companion as her body worked overtime to adapt, despite the chip's assistance. Possible muscle and joint pain might be minor hindrances, but nothing debilitating.

Reaching her room, a maid held the door open, a quiet thanks slipping from my lips. I laid Rachel gently onto the bed, adjusting her into a comfortable position before drawing the sheets over her. Carefully, I brushed a stray lock of hair off her face, stepping away to leave her to her rest. As I held the door open for a departing glance, the soft rustling of sheets caught my attention. A soft groan escaped her, almost sounding awake. I paused, watching closely.

However, she doesn't stir, prompting a sigh of relief from me. Stealthily, I close the door behind me, descending back to the first floor where Jarvis awaits.

"Jarvis, I need to speak with Jason. Please connect him to my office," I instruct, striding towards my workspace.

"Understood, sir. Anything else?" Jarvis replies promptly.

"That'll be all, thank you."

Jason's voice floats through the office, "Hello?" interrupting my perusal of scattered documents.

"Hey, Jason. I've got a query, you free to chat?" I settle into my chair, rubbing my temples.

"Sure. What's up?" Jason sounds alert and ready.

"I was wondering if there's any research on growing plants here on the Planet of Gold?" I ask hesitantly, my fingers drumming a nervous rhythm on my desk.

Jason hums thoughtfully. "Well, I know we've been successful growing plants under controlled conditions. I can check if any substantial research has been conducted. Would you like that?" The sound of his fingers clattering on

a keyboard seeps through the line.

"Yes, that would be excellent. Send whatever you find to my email, I can handle the printing. I owe you, Jason," I reply, fingers hovering over my email inbox.

"No problem, Djinn. Does this have to do with your guest...Rachel, was it?" His voice held a hint of teasing.

I couldn't suppress a smile. "Indeed, it is. Rachel was curious if horticulture was feasible here. She wanted to dig into some research about it," I answered, my fingers tapping an absent rhythm on the tabletop.

There's a silence as Jason works on his end, followed by his voice filling the room. "Alright, I've pulled up five recent studies. Each focuses on different methodologies of plant cultivation on our planet. Think that'll suffice?"

I let out a chuckle. "More than enough, thank you."

"I've sent the email. Call me anytime, Djinn. But now, I've got a meeting to attend. We should catch up soon," Jason announces.

"Absolutely, let's plan that. Thank you, Jason. Catch you later." My words of farewell had barely escaped my lips when the soft ding of a new email notification resonated through the room.

Plant sciences and research are foreign territory to me, yet I can't help but be intrigued by these scholarly articles. I promptly print them out, anticipating Rachel's surprise. I'm sure these studies would make her day.

I marvel at my readiness to accommodate her requests. Here I am, printing numerous pages from five distinct studies, all fueled by her curiosity about local plant growth.

I could justify my actions by arguing it's the least I can do for uprooting her from Earth. But that wouldn't entirely encapsulate my motivations. From the first moment I laid eyes on Rachel, my actions seemed to revolve around her, and I'm not quite sure why.



## DJINN

"Master, the palace has issued a summons. The King requests your presence at his earliest convenience," Jarvis announces, pulling out the flamboyant attire I wear during my ceremonial duties as the Golden Spear from my wardrobe.

A deep groan rumbles in my chest at the sight of the flashy garments. They're far from my preferred battle attire, too thin for any protection, and the texture is irritating against the skin. To add to my distaste, the length of the garb is a hazard, risking either a stumble or an enemy grabbing hold of it.

"Master, if I may," Jarvis chimes in, perhaps catching my displeasure. "Consider the opportunity to showcase your Golden Spear persona to Miss Rachel upon your return."

I'm about to retort, but he continues hastily, "Afterwards, you could candidly share your thoughts about the attire with her. I suspect she would enjoy the humor in it."

Jarvis' suggestion stops me mid-thought. Indeed, with Rachel's knack for wit, it could make for an entertaining conversation. Suddenly, I'm eager to get the audience over with.

"Jarvis, I can handle the dressing part. Please, arrange for the transport. I'll depart as soon as I'm adorned in this...spectacle," I direct him, pointing at the regalia.

"Certainly, Master," Jarvis nods, moving towards the exit before pausing. "Is there a message you would like me to convey to Miss Rachel?"

My mind flits to Rachel, likely still adjusting to the peculiar environment of the Planet of Gold. I shake my head at the AI. "Just let her know about my

destination and assure her I'll return as promptly as possible."

"Understood, Master," Jarvis nods once more, departing to prepare my ride.

With my eagerness to return, I waste no time. Soon enough, I stand in the grand hall, before the King.

"You've arrived earlier than expected," the King remarks nonchalantly.

Physically, the King of the Planet of Gold is a typical warrior of our kind, large, muscular, and proficient with weaponry. Yet, I've noticed an increasing weariness about him. I suppose being a king has its downsides.

"Greetings, Your Majesty," I bow my head, thumping my chest in traditional salute.

"Golden Spear," he acknowledges me indifferently, drumming his fingers on his throne's armrest. "Word has reached me about your human guest. It's been suggested you plan to sire an heir with her?"

A muscle in my jaw twitches at his question. Keeping my irritation in check, I maintain a composed exterior.

If large crowds are the reason I steer clear of malls, then the King is the reason I avoid the palace. His ability to provoke my anger hasn't waned since our childhood days.

"I'll contemplate it, Your Majesty," I retort, keeping my tone clipped.

His frown deepens, and the rhythmic tapping of his fingers accelerates, betraying his growing impatience.

"Think about it? What is there to deliberate? You have everything necessary for an heir delivered to you, yet you dither. Explain," he demands.

To hide my clenched fists, I place my hands behind my back. I didn't invite Rachel into my life with the intent of producing an heir, however appealing the idea may be. Treating her like a mere incubator, rather than the person I've come to respect deeply, would shatter me.

"With all due respect, Your Majesty, my plans for an heir are my concern alone," I assert.

"You insolent..." he roars, leaping from his throne.

I know well enough that when the King's ire is roused, productive conversation is a futile pursuit. The debate would only spiral into a cyclic argument, delaying my return home, my return to Rachel. I must bring an end to this discussion.

"Insolent or not, my stance remains unaltered," I insist, voice firm. "Deciding upon an heir is not a trivial matter, Your Majesty. I prefer a



measured approach when making such pivotal decisions."

The King's fury seems to dissipate at my response, his hand moving to massage his forehead as he slumps back into his throne.

"So be it," he concedes. "However, Golden Spear, bear in mind your place here. You're a symbol of our planet's strength. Heavy expectations and responsibilities rest on your shoulders. It is an honor, yes, but also a duty."

I have little interest in his words. I never aspired to be the Golden Spear. My goal was survival, yet here I stand, bearing the title of Golden Spear. I doubt the King could ever comprehend such a reality.

Bowing my head in a gesture of compliance, I hope to hasten the end of this tiresome conversation. "I will take your words to heart, Your Majesty."

"Dismissed," he finally permits.

At long last. I'm unsure how much time this discussion devoured, but it matters little. What counts is my imminent return home. With a final bow, I swiftly pivot and stride from the throne room with an eagerness to reunite with Rachel.

As I journey back home, I groan, massaging the bridge of my nose as the precursor of a headache throbs in my temples. This is a familiar affliction, one that surfaces every time I endure a summons from the palace.

Why the King continues to interfere in my affairs, I can't comprehend. If only he'd focus his attention on his own offspring and grant me some peace.

Upon returning home, I step into the foyer, immediately drawn by the lively sounds emanating from the kitchen. My interest piqued at the sound of Rachel's voice, I follow the noise, my senses tantalized by the mouth-watering aroma that greets me, eliciting a rumble from my stomach.

Entering the kitchen, I'm brought to a halt by the sight before me. Rachel, engrossed in the art of cooking, is surrounded by simmering pots and pans, while Jarvis hovers nearby. Her animated laughter rings through the room, and the sight of her joy pulls at my heartstrings.

Absurdly, I feel a lump forming in my throat. Is this what humans describe as 'choking up'? I resolve to delve deeper into human literature to better understand these unfamiliar emotions.

A wave of warmth cascades through my chest, catching me off guard. It's not the first time Rachel's presence has ignited such a sensation within me. Is it possible that I'm experiencing an emotion other than the typical fury?

As I grapple with this new revelation, Rachel's gaze finds mine, and her lips curve into a bright smile.

"Hey, you're back!" Her eyes rake over my attire before she snorts out a laugh. "You're looking... shiny. Care to explain?"

A grin tugs at my own lips, reflecting her playful jest. Whatever these emerging feelings are, they don't seem entirely unwelcome. Their full understanding can wait. For now, I simply enjoy the lightness they bring.



## RACHEL

"Dinner is served!" I announce cheerfully, balancing plates and utensils in my hands. Jarvis and the rest of the staff follow behind me, carefully depositing bowls of food on the table.

To my surprise, Djinn strides up to my side, smoothly pulling out my chair for me. With widened eyes and a faint smile, I cast a quizzical glance his way, wondering if his world also cherishes such gentlemanly gestures.

"Radelk," he grumbles after clearing his throat, making his way to his own chair.

His single-word explanation sends a ripple of amusement through me, and I can't help but laugh. "I can see Radelk teaching the others about our customs and culture, but I can't quite picture how he managed to tame you."

Shaking his head, a hint of a smile graces his features as he serves himself a generous portion of the meal. "He can be... persuasive. I'm often trapped in his so-called 'classes.'"

He takes a bite, a sound of contentment escaping his lips. "Who knew these 'lessons' would come in handy? We don't usually eat like you humans, but if you're the cook, I would indulge anytime."

A wave of pride washes over me at his praise. The task of preparing a meal with alien ingredients in an unfamiliar kitchen had posed a significant challenge. Yet, with my scientist's background, I was no stranger to tackling obstacles. I found it surprisingly enjoyable to concoct a dish that would please both my taste buds and Djinn's.

Discovering which alien ingredients could replace Earth's had been like solving a puzzle. Of course, I had an advantage, as Jarvis assisted by

researching ingredients and revealing Djinn's preferences.

Thanks to Jarvis, I'd also learned that the residents of the Planet of Gold didn't eat in the same way humans did. Instead of three meals a day, they absorbed nutrients from the planet's minerals during their transformations. The specifics of this process were not shared, likely deemed too classified.

I didn't press further, unwilling to risk the comfortable situation I found myself in. I already held one of their most valued secrets, and didn't wish to provoke potential consequences by probing for more. I was content to express gratitude to Jarvis for satisfying my majority of queries.

If ever I had an urgent question, Djinn was always available, never dismissing my curiosity. He was always honest, even when he couldn't provide an answer, and I respected those boundaries.

"You know," I begin cautiously, "cooking has always been a hobby of mine, ever since I was a child. I'm quite curious about your childhood activities, especially yours."

Suddenly, he ceases eating, his gaze lost in the food before him. An anxious knot forms in my stomach and I part my lips to reassure him that he needn't share if he didn't wish to, but he beats me to it.

"My childhood... was not as thrilling as yours and rather short-lived, unfortunately," he murmurs, his voice detached, his eyes distant.

A part of me yearns to interrupt him, to urge him to continue eating, but I sense that no words of mine could halt the stream of memories ready to pour forth.

"My mother perished during my birth. Upon her death, my father showed no concern for the child she left behind, merely passing me onto wet nurses and childcare AIs. I never caught a glimpse of him, even when I was relocated to the warrior's barracks. It seemed he was merely biding his time until I was old enough to be abandoned to fend for myself," he recounts.

His words cut like a dagger. I stifle a gasp, my hands flying to cover my mouth, the clatter of my utensils against the plate echoing in the room. Despite the noise, he remains lost in his recollections. I can hardly imagine a father so callous and heartless as to abandon a vulnerable child.

Yes, this planet is home to numerous ruthless warriors, but surely they don't emerge from the womb roaring battle cries and wielding weapons? They must begin as children, needing care and nurturing, regardless of their race or origin.

Yet, there are also humans who fail to provide such nurturing to their

offspring. But this simply reinforces the notion that if there are humans who neglect their children, surely there must also be inhabitants of this planet who cherish their offspring?

Suddenly, the scrape of utensils jars me from my thoughts. I glance up to see Djinn's panic-stricken face. A wet sensation trickles down my arm, and I realize I've been crying.

He hastily pushes back his chair, the legs scraping against the floor as he rushes to my side.

"Rachel... what..."

Under different circumstances, his bewildered state might have been amusing. Who would envision the Golden Spear, a seasoned warrior, thrown off balance by a crying woman? It only affirms that despite his hardships, Djinn has remained a man of kindness, compassion, and inherent gentleness. I sniffle and lean forward, wrapping my arms tightly around his waist.

"From now on, you have me, Djinn. You won't be alone anymore," I whisper softly.

He stiffens momentarily in my embrace before gradually relaxing. His arms encircle me awkwardly, yet firmly, mirroring my hold. A contented smile pulls at my lips.

Once we separate, we return to our seats, drawing them closer. We finish our meal amidst lighter conversations, akin to a scene straight from a romance novel. As we steer clear of the earlier topic, the somber ambiance dissipates, replaced by an air of joviality and warmth.

I can only hope that such positive transformations will extend beyond the current atmosphere and permeate deeper into Djinn's life.



## DJINN

**S**haring a meal with a human in my home for the first time last night had left me a bit unsettled. Anxiety gnawed at me over potential missteps and I found myself wishing Radelk had included table manners in his cultural teachings.

Yet, as we commenced our meal, the majority of my worries evaporated. Despite the lack of necessity for my kind to eat, I couldn't let Rachel's diligent efforts in cooking go to waste. Jarvis had kept me abreast of her strenuous endeavors in the kitchen during my palace visit, and the knowledge stirred a gentle warmth in my chest.

Her probing into my childhood had stirred some discomfort, albeit, there was nothing in my past I desired to shroud in secrecy. My candidness was primarily intended as a gesture of gratitude for the meal, and once I embarked on the story, it flowed more freely than I had anticipated.

Rachel's response, however, took me aback. She wept for me, a reaction I deemed unnecessary, a futile lament over bygone days. Nonetheless, I recalled Radelk's explanation of human emotional responses and found her reaction within the norms of her kind.

"From now on, you have me, Djinn. You won't be alone anymore."

Her words had a surprisingly soothing effect. I hadn't anticipated feeling so comforted, nor had I thought I could reciprocate such sentiment. But she expected no response, only gave her reassurance freely.

Despite being among the apex species in the universe, she was making me aware of the potency inherent in vulnerability. She brought a sense of contentment and happiness that I yearned to return, to show her how



cherished her presence was.

Hence, I make a spontaneous decision.

"We're going out," I announce.

Startled, she looks up from the alien cookbook she'd been decoding with Jarvis's assistance, her head tilting in question. "Out?"

I nod. "I want to take you on a tour of the planet..."

Realizing I'm coming off as dictatorial rather than cordial, I hasten to correct myself.

"...If you'd like to, of course, and only if there's nothing urgent requiring your attention today."

Her face lights up in delight, and she promptly snaps the book shut. "I'm going to change. Give me five minutes!"

With those words, she darts out of the kitchen, heading for her room, leaving me smiling and shaking my head at her enthusiasm.

She doesn't take five minutes. She's back in three, hopping on one foot as she tugs on her trousers, a sight that draws a chuckle from me.

I had been concerned that her initial experience on the planet might have tainted her perception. But her bright, eager face dispels my worries, clearly indicating her anticipation for the tour ahead.

Her enthusiasm brings a joyous feeling, and we exit the house together, climbing into one of my vehicles. Today, I've asked an AI staff member to take the wheel as I want my attention undivided, solely on enjoying this excursion with Rachel.

As we traverse the planet, I point out various sites, delighting in each exclamation of surprise and admiration she offers. Finally, we reach our destination, the most frequented attraction on the planet.

Stepping out of the car, I gently guide her, making sure to keep her steady on the unfamiliar terrain.

"We're at the *First Ore*," I tell her, pausing before the fenced gate. At its center stands a human-sized ore, its vibrant rainbow glimmers captivating.

"Wow!" Rachel exclaims, her gaze locked onto the marvel.

I watch her as she leans in for a closer inspection, her eyes catching a glimpse of the plaque detailing the ore's history. The problem? It's inscribed in an ancient language and the digital translation is on the opposite side of the gate.

Crowds of tourists are a common sight here, and they're even more concentrated on the other side. Navigating through them just to reach the

translation seems unfeasible.

Seeing the curious glances thrown her way grates on my nerves, a reaction I had anticipated. One of the reasons I maintain a firm hold on her is to dissuade any advances from the crowd. My presence, I know, should be enough of a deterrent, yet I can't help wanting to impose an unmistakable message: approach Rachel at your own risk.

Deciding against crossing over to the crowded side, I take it upon myself to share the lore of the *First Ore*.

Clearing my throat, I capture her attention and gesture toward the weather-worn plaque. "This story is about the First Ore. Would you like to hear it?"

Her eyes light up, her hands clap in excitement as she practically bounces on her toes. I find myself chuckling at her infectious joy.

"This came to be known as the *First Ore*, symbolizing the dawn of our civilization. It's the first and only ore to reflect every color in existence."

The rest of the visit is filled with her curious inquiries, each of which I answer with patience. Once she's satisfied, I guide her away from the attraction, casually pointing towards an artificial pool where the lords often unwind. A few of them are present today, and there's no way I'm letting Rachel near them. In a hurry, I steer her back towards the car.

Her disappointed gaze reveals her interest in exploring the pool, but I'm not risking her being seen by other lords. An unexpected wave of protectiveness washes over me at the thought.

The key right now is to redirect her attention before her disappointment finds voice.

An idea sparks.

"Rachel, let's keep moving. I promise you can explore the pool next time. What do you say we head to the mall and do some shopping?"

That seems to do the trick. Now, she's the one tugging me along, eager to get back to the car. The relief washing over me is palpable.

Next time, when we visit, I'm reserving the entire pool just for us.



## RACHEL

I can't help but marvel at the abundant richness of the landscape as we cruise along. It's fitting that they christen their home the Planet of Gold; from the mountain peaks to the tiniest grains of sand, everything is cloaked in the warm hue of gold, save for a few silver and bronze establishments. It's a real-life Treasure Planet or El Dorado but on a grand, planetary scale.

My eyes have never been exposed to such a vast expanse of gold; everything is incredibly bright and shimmering. I'm grateful the locals don't have a penchant for polishing their homes, or I'd have to buy heavily tinted glasses at the mall to protect my eyesight.

"We're here," Djinn's voice breaks my fascinated trance, his warm breath skirting my cheek. I hadn't noticed his proximity, lost as I was in the golden views. I can feel my cheeks heating up with unexpected thoughts brought on by his closeness. Not wanting to derail the tour with distractions, I scoot away from the window, leaning back into my seat, waiting for him to lead. His attempt to suppress a smug grin doesn't go unnoticed.

You handsome, cheeky devil, I mentally grumble, allowing him to assist me out of the car.

The moment my feet hit the ground, my irritation evaporates, replaced by awe as I behold the golden, palatial structure before us. Its majestic splendor, despite being almost blinding, draws my gaze irresistibly.

"Come on, we won't get anything done if you stand here gawking. It's just a mall," Djinn teases, interlocking his fingers with mine and guiding me inside.

His constant touch, each time we exit the vehicle, hasn't escaped my attention. Not that I'm objecting. I find it... appealing. His possessive, protective instinct is comforting.

For a fleeting moment, I allow myself to fantasize that we're an ordinary couple out on a date. It's a far cry from reality, but harmless daydreaming never hurt anyone, right? He's none the wiser, and it's best it stays that way.

Once inside the mall, the dynamics shift. Now, it's me dragging Djinn from one shiny attraction to another. Of course, I know he's only being hauled along because he allows it.

Each time an item catches my eye, I rush toward it, his firm grip on my hand causing him to be tugged along. I hope the onlookers see this as a testament to his indulgence rather than a hit to his manliness.

The sight of their advanced, impressive technology is enough to pull my focus away from their potential judgments. And I find myself getting lost in the spectacular display of progress, his comforting presence at my side.

My attention shifts as I spot something intriguing. Silently, I pull Djinn towards a clothing store, adorned with whimsical alien signage. A smaller sign underneath it, translated into countless languages, captures my focus: Design Your Own Clothes!

"Djinn, Djinn," I call out, shaking his hand in anticipation while I gawk at the sign. "This isn't a joke, right? This is really possible here? I can design my own clothes?!"

I've always been aware that Earth's technology pales in comparison to what's available here, but experiencing it firsthand is surreal.

As he chuckles, we step inside the shop. Djinn shows me how to use the design kiosk, and once I've input my creation, I watch, eyes wide with fascination, as robots on the other side of the glass transmute my two-dimensional design into tangible clothing.

Observing my captivation with the clothing bots, Djinn arranges for the outfit to be delivered to his residence before leading me to another store of similar concept – one where you can design your own jewelry.

Djinn heads straight to the kiosk, and I eagerly observe him crafting a breathtakingly elegant bracelet. My eyes widen when he adds a Betelgeuse gem, a rare stone sourced from one of the galaxy's most luminous stars, Betelgeuse. The cost of the design and the gem displayed on the checkout screen make my eyes bulge even more.

Whoever receives this gift is one lucky individual!

"Can we watch them craft another one?" I ask Djinn, my eyes glued to the machine, hoping for another marvel to unfold.

But before I can witness anything else, a grinning Djinn spins me around to face him. As I open my mouth to question his actions, I find myself staring in disbelief as he clasps the bracelet he's just designed around my wrist.

I'm utterly flabbergasted. Not only has Djinn given me an incredible tour of the planet, but he's also presented me with an invaluable bracelet he designed himself!

"Just as I thought, it suits you beautifully," he murmurs, his eyes focused on the bracelet adorning my wrist.

And just like that, my heart melts. This may not be a conventional date, but it's indisputably becoming one of the most memorable days of my life!



## DJINN

**A**s we navigate through the labyrinthine mall, I can't help but notice Rachel isn't buying much. Just a handful of items catch her interest.

When I question her about it, she tells me she prefers 'window shopping.' An odd term that I make a mental note to investigate later.

We meander from store to store, savoring the wide variety of offerings and indulging in an array of snacks until the establishment announces imminent closing time. To my surprise, I've lost track of time, engrossed in this novel experience of 'window shopping' with Rachel.

Setting foot in a mall is a novelty for me. I've always deemed such visits as frivolous, a waste of precious time. Jarvis, my AI butler, has always ensured that my needs are met without the need to visit such places.

As the announcement rings out, I notice Rachel's formerly sprightly steps have grown sluggish. Despite the thrill of exploring the mall, human stamina has its limits.

Nevertheless, a smile tugs at my lips when she insists we need to come back, grumbling that we barely visited ten stores. Even with her fatigue, her bright smile remains unwavering, a testament to her exuberance.

Upon returning home, we find Jarvis finalizing paperwork for the delivery bots.

"Jarvis, deliver those items to Rachel's room," I instruct, "and perhaps arrange a hot bath for Rachel before she retires for the night."

"Of course, Master Djinn," Jarvis responds, concluding his business with the delivery bots and directing the other staff members to adhere to my instructions.



Rachel protests, "Oh, there's no need to bother Jarvis. I've only bought a few things. I can manage on my own."

But I won't hear of it. She's visibly exhausted, with droopy eyes and a pale complexion. Noticing her somewhat labored breathing, I reach out, instinctively brushing my fingers through her silky hair.

"Let Jarvis handle it," I gently argue. "Isn't that the purpose of having AI staff? Besides, we've had an exhausting day. It's time to rest."

While the truth is I feel far from fatigued, I look forward to diving into my research once Rachel is asleep and no longer a delightful distraction. Seeing her stifle a yawn confirms my decision.

"Indeed, you're right. I'm worn out. I'm not usually a big shopper, but there was just so much to see in the mall, I—" Her words trail off into another yawn.

Patting her cheek softly, I interject, "Go to sleep, Rachel."

"Alright," she mumbles, offering me a sleepy smile before ambling off towards her room.

Noting her half-closed eyes, I worry she might fall asleep during her bath. As much as I'd like to assist her, I refrain, wary of crossing a boundary I may regret.

As Jarvis, the AI butler, strides past me, I interject, "Jarvis, ensure one of the staff aids Rachel."

"Absolutely, Master Djinn," he responds promptly, "I will personally oversee Miss Rachel's comfort and safety." And with that, he heads towards the direction Rachel had vanished.

Assured she is in capable hands, I make my way to my study to delve into my research on human culture and some of the unfamiliar terms Rachel had mentioned at the mall. While I anticipate a vast trove of knowledge, I find myself instead pulled into investigating the intricacies of human relationships.

I won't deny my desire for Rachel. Her presence stirs a visceral reaction within me, a feeling I wrestle to suppress. Since our encounter at the auction house, I have refrained from any physical contact out of respect. She is not a seka, she is my guest, and perhaps, something more in the future.

Despite our brief acquaintance, I find myself drawn to her. Her company is more than enjoyable, it's something I hope for in the long run. According to my research on human relationships, ours has an unconventional start, yet I am determined to set things right from now on.

Our genetic compatibility opens the door to the possibility of children. The idea of Rachel as the mother of my future offspring triggers an unfamiliar warmth in my chest, an elation that feels quite contrary to my Golden Spear persona.

Yet, I find myself unbothered by such a shift.

What I am certain of, however, is my unwavering desire not to resort to coercion. The mere thought of adding to her distress is intolerable. We have already deprived her of her home world, and I will not be responsible for robbing her of any more.

I aim to demonstrate that being with me can be fulfilling. If I can show her that the Planet of Gold is a place where she can truly be herself, perhaps I can gradually guide her into—

My fingers abruptly halt over the hologram keyboard of my computer.

Home. That's it.

Pressing a button, Jarvis's image appears in the hologram.

"Yes, Master Djinn?" Jarvis begins, "Miss Rachel is safely tucked in and has been asleep for the past half an hour."

"Excellent, Jarvis," I reply, folding my fingers together and resting my chin atop them. "Now, I want you to arrange for some items that would make her feel more at home. Have them delivered and arranged throughout the house."



## RACHEL

**T**he phrase, *Time flies when you're having fun*, feels strikingly real to me. I glance at the calendar hanging on the wall, inscribed with the alien language of this planet. There are translation options, of course, but in my desire to familiarize myself with the language of the Planet of Gold, I've asked Jarvis for learning materials.

A broad smile surfaces when Djinn overhears my request and offers to be my teacher himself. While it is a fun experience, it's also slightly distracting. Nonetheless, I manage to learn quite a bit.

Looking at the calendar, I'm hit with the realization that it's been a month since my departure from Earth and the beginning of my new life here on the Planet of Gold.

The idea of never returning to Earth is a tough pill to swallow and will likely take some time to fully sink in. Despite the considerable time that has passed, I'm still acclimatizing both physically and emotionally. Yet, I find I don't mind it so much, mainly because I'm thoroughly enjoying my time with Djinn.

Leaning back on my desk—a human-sized desk ordered specifically for me by Djinn—I press a button on the digital Planet of Gold calendar. The dates and months fade, replaced with images of Djinn and me, grinning broadly with the colossal golden mall as our backdrop.

The past month has been a whirlwind, with Djinn and I inseparable. Whether we're nestled at home, engrossed in their advanced form of television, or out exploring, we are always side by side.

Another press of a button brings forth images from our trip to the First

Ore and another from the artificial pool, an enticing feature I'd been itching to investigate. Not so much for a swim but to analyze the composition of the water. Djinn had gone above and beyond, reserving the entire pool for a day just for us, even arranging a swimsuit for me. Naturally, we couldn't resist the temptation to take a dip.

A photo captures a playful moment as I splash water at Djinn.

As I continue to flick through the pictures, my smile wanes when I reach the end. Leaning back in my chair, I stare blankly at the ceiling, decorated with glow-in-the-dark stars.

The room echoes with memories of the past month.

With the amount of time we've spent together, it comes as a shock when Jarvis informs me that Djinn has been called for deployment.

Of course, it's an unavoidable reality on the Planet of Gold, a society of impressive warriors bred for battle. How could I forget? Djinn is the Golden Spear. War is his realm. And he's exceptional at it.

The prospect of Djinn going to war isn't what bothers me. It's the creeping fear that he might not return. I have every faith in his skills on the battlefield, but even so, the risk remains, however slight.

An overwhelming sense of sadness and loneliness seizes me even though he hasn't actually left yet. He's simply at the barracks, training, assessing, and overseeing the progress of his fellow warriors. The thought of him not being here at all is like a physical blow, a heart-wrenching pain so intense, it almost feels like heartbreak.

Heartbreak. That's a curious concept. Why would I feel that way unless I...

I let out a sigh and thump my head against the desk, welcoming the sharp pain as a distraction from my tumultuous thoughts. It dawns on me, a realization I'm almost embarrassed to have overlooked.

I'm in love with Djinn. Deeply and undeniably.

It isn't just because he rescued me—though that might be part of it. There's something endearing about his gentleness, his sincerity. The way he makes me smile, the warmth I feel when he's near. He's invested so much effort into making me feel comfortable and happy. His surprising sweetness, his considerate nature—he's nearly perfect. How could I not fall for him?

I pick up the last photo, running my fingers lightly over Djinn's image—those handsome features, his wide, surprised eyes. There's an almost boyish charm to him, and I find myself missing his presence.

Despite the abundance of new discoveries awaiting me in the house, boredom seeps in. Sure, they occupy me for a few hours, but I always find myself back at square one, aimlessly wandering the house in a sullen state.

Djinn didn't explicitly forbid me to go out, but I'm no fool. I know better than to wander this alien world alone. On Earth, my introverted, geeky nature often subjected me to odd looks and hushed whispers. If humans are treated as inferior, pet-like creatures here, how much worse could it be?

This leaves me stuck inside, restlessly waiting for Djinn's return.

If he returns, a cynical part of my mind chides. It's a constant loop of sighs and worry.

While Djinn is supposed to return by mid-afternoon, I've noticed his frequent absences, even when there are no scheduled appointments. Not being his girlfriend or lover, I don't have the right to question him. Yet, a part of me yearns to, simply because I miss his company.

I'm spiraling.

Shaking off my selfish thoughts, I close the photo album, returning the calendar to its normal state. I stride out of my room, determined to lift my spirits from this melancholic slump.

I might be lonely, but I'm not alone.

With a newfound purpose, I start searching for Jarvis. Maybe he's up for a round of chess—the Planet of Gold version, of course.



## DJINN

The 500 square foot glass house is a miniaturized version of the Amazon rainforest where Rachel once worked. Instead of towering trees and verdant flora, an array of potted plants, shrubs, and seedlings are meticulously lined up. Some dwell on the ground, while others sit atop layered plant stands, situated in the heart of the enclosure. Artificial sunlight beams from a ceiling draped with thriving, green vines.

Sizeable trees line the walls, and a charming brook trickles through them, culminating in a small pond nestled to one side of the greenhouse. These trees have journeyed through the cosmos to recreate the perfect environment here.

"If only Earth animals could endure our atmosphere," I muse aloud. Despite the painstakingly curated environment, the conditions on the Planet of Gold are just too harsh for Earthling creatures. "Little yellow ducklings would have been the perfect touch for the pond."

I let out a sigh, accepting the absence of their quacking companions. *This will have to do.*

Taking my time, I stroll around the greenhouse, studying the foliage that Rachel holds so dear. Strangely, they flourish faster here, nourished by an alien atmosphere that promotes rapid growth. However, the team of experts I've consulted managed to mitigate this effect, ensuring these Earth plants don't outgrow their pots.

"But, the challenge of taming this growth... I bet that'll excite Rachel," I note, the idea of her performing further experiments intriguing.

Once satisfied with my final inspection, I anticipate the surprise awaiting



Rachel. It's not a perfect replica of her Earthly greenhouses, but it's close. A sanctuary where she can immerse herself in verdant tranquility.

A rare smile creeps onto my face, the sensation odd, yet pleasant. I'm slowly coming to understand these human emotions I've read so much about.

Feeling content, I picture Rachel's wide-eyed excitement, her eyes glistening with joyful tears. The thought of presenting her with this sanctuary, a place she can truly call her own, fills me with anticipation.

Before that though, there's one more thing I need to do.

I stride over to the supply shed, collecting several pots and a packet of seeds. Neatly arranging them on an empty plant stand, I fill the pots with rich soil. Then, I sow the seeds, burying them beneath a light blanket of earth and drizzling pond water over the top.

"Roses..." I whisper, picturing the blossoming beauties. I've only ever seen them in illustrations, their significance piquing my interest after reading about them in *Romeo and Juliet*. Research revealed their important role in Earthly courtship.

Leaning closer to the newly seeded pots, I whisper a warning to the dormant life within, "You'd better bloom into the most exquisite roses, or else. I'm counting on you to win Rachel's heart."

"Courtship... A human gesture of mating interest... Is it linked to love?" I mumble to myself, the concept unfamiliar yet intriguing. I suddenly find myself pondering a new question. "Am I in love with Rachel?"

A vigorous shake of my head interrupts the thought. "No more self-interrogation, no more plant chat," I admonish myself. "Time to bring Rachel here."

A curious sensation tickles the pit of my stomach at this idea. Hurrying over to my vehicle, I reach for a bottle of water, downing its content in an attempt to dismiss the feeling. But it persists, an unwelcome guest. Determined to ignore it, I jump into the car and head home, foot heavy on the accelerator.

Upon my arrival, I find Rachel engrossed in a book, cozy in bed. At the sound of my entrance, her gaze shifts to me, a warm smile blooming on her face. But the smile quickly fades, replaced with a look of worry. "What's wrong? You look... worried," she observes, rising from the bed to stand by my side, her brows knitted in concern.

"It's nothing," I attempt to reassure her, "I just feel a little off in my stomach. It doesn't hurt, though."

Her eyes widen slightly, pressing me for more information as she guides me to a chair. "What does it feel like?"

"Feels as though a bouffol fluttered into my belly," I admit, finally giving a name to the strange sensation.

She continues to regard me, curiosity etched on her face. "What's a bouffol?" she finally asks.

"An Earthling might call it a butterfly," I offer after a moment of contemplation, "Though, a bouffol is larger... and less appealing."

"So, you have butterflies in your stomach?" she teases, her lips curling into a knowing grin.

"Forget it," I brush off her amusement, "I'm fine."

"Hmmm..." she muses, leaving her observation unexplained.

Confounded, I remain silent. The puzzling sensation had almost distracted me from my initial purpose. "Rachel," I blurt out, "are you busy?"

"No," she replies, setting her book aside, "Just reading."

"Good. Come with me," I instruct, rising from my chair.

Her curiosity piqued, she questions, "Where to?"

"You'll find out soon enough. It's a surprise," I tease, my lips twitching into a half-smile.

Rachel narrows her eyes suspiciously, "Are you sure you understand what a surprise is?"

"Of course," I defend, my smile growing bolder, "You're not the only one who reads, you know."

Her suspicion melts into excitement as she giggles. "Well, what are we waiting for?" she exclaims, pulling me towards the door.

My heart races in anticipation. If this is her reaction now, how will she react to the actual surprise?

I can only wonder.



## RACHEL

**T**he Planet of Gold is a realm of intriguing mysteries, yet after devouring nearly every book in Djinn's extensive collection, a restlessness is starting to stir within me.

Djinn's sporadic absence from the house does little to ease my disquiet. Even though he isn't away for long periods, his absence leaves a noticeable void, and I find myself yearning for his presence.

Having spent considerable time on this alien, frost-kissed planet, Djinn has been my beacon of joy amidst the overwhelming foreignness. His company compensates for my inability to explore outdoors, especially considering the lack of vegetation that could have served as a welcome distraction.

Suddenly, out of the blue, Djinn reappears and announces he has a surprise for me! I hadn't expressed any displeasure, yet he's taken it upon himself to brighten my day.

I can't help but gaze at him, struck by his thoughtfulness. Can a man as perfect as Djinn really exist? Twice he's saved me from the clutches of death, first from the monstrous insectoids, then from the high-stakes auction. Now, he shelters me in his home, treating me like a cherished guest.

His unexpected surprise, coupled with his admission of delving into human literature to better understand me, renders me speechless. No wonder his behavior had seemed odd a few days back.

I WAS ROAMING around the house, uncovering unnoticed corners when I

stumbled upon Djinn in his designated study. Oblivious to my presence, he was deeply engrossed in a book.

Curiosity piqued, I tiptoed closer, straining to catch a glimpse of his reading material. Just as I was able to discern a single word, Djinn swiftly concealed the book and turned to me.

"Guess you forgot you're trying to surprise the Golden Spear," he had chided playfully.

I had grinned, sheepishly, my mind already filled with questions about the character named 'Romeo' I had briefly spotted on the book cover. I could only surmise that it was part of some secretive mission Djinn was involved in.

"RACHEL?"

Djinn's voice pulls me out of my reminiscence. A sudden realization dawns upon me. Could he have been reading a romance novel? Was the book *Romeo and Juliet*?

Suppressing a giggle, I pose a casual question. "Does your surprise have anything to do with that book you were reading earlier? The one with 'Romeo' in the title?"

In response, Djinn's skin momentarily morphs, markings appearing and disappearing in a ripple of gold. Yet, as quickly as it happens, his skin reverts to its regular hue. Throughout this spectacle, he doesn't meet my gaze.

What on Earth just happened?

Confusion paints my features as I try to decipher what just occurred. But before I can voice my questions, Djinn beats me to it.

"Do you, um, w-want to see your, uh, s-surprise now?" he stammers, conspicuously avoiding my gaze.

A wave of understanding washes over me. Djinn is embarrassed.

"Djinn!" I exclaim, throwing my arms around him. "It's incredibly sweet of you to do this."

He embraces me briefly before gently extricating himself from my hold. He then procures a piece of fabric from his pocket and fastens it around my eyes.

"So, you're familiar with blindfolds too, huh?" I quip, laughter lining my words.

"Let's just say I did my research," he retorts.

"The lengths you're going to make me believe you're human is

astounding," I tell him. "But you know you don't have to, right?"

"Yes, I know. But I want to."

Tears prick my eyes, threatening to spill. Surely, fate is compensating for my past romantic blunders by placing Djinn in my life.

"Let's go," he prompts, his voice soft.

His hand finds mine, leading me out of the house and into the car. As we journey towards the undisclosed destination, I can't resist asking, "Is this why you felt 'butterflies', or a 'bouffol', in your stomach?"

He seems puzzled, "What does that mean?"

"It's an idiom we use to describe nervousness, or perhaps excitement," I elaborate. "It's akin to the strange sensation you were telling me about."

"I see."

Before I can pry further, we've apparently reached our destination. Djinn cuts the engine and assists me out of the car. We traverse a short distance on foot.

"Are you ready?" he asks, halting our progress.

"Yes," I respond, my heart pounding wildly against my chest in anticipation.

As the blindfold lifts, sunlight momentarily blinds me. When my eyes adjust, I am met with a breathtaking view of the most incredible greenhouse I've ever seen! Lush trees and rows of vibrant plants stretch as far as the eye can see.

Tears well up in my eyes as I whirl to face Djinn.

"This is the best surprise I've ever had!" I exclaim.

His quick reflexes dry my tears. "Are you happy?" he inquires, concern seeping into his tone.

I chuckle at his needless worry. "Djinn, I'm already content with you. But this... this makes me even happier."

A look of relief crosses his features. "I'm glad."

"Thank you, Djinn." Overwhelmed by gratitude, I rise to my tiptoes and plant a soft peck on his lips.

His initial surprise quickly melts into a gentle smile. Buoyed by his reaction, I throw myself into his arms for a more passionate embrace, a kiss that neither of us hold back.



## DJINN

Rachel's enchantment with the greenhouse is infectious — the terrestrial plants, the celestial blooms, the towering trees, and the serene pond. She lingers over each specimen, from roots to petals, conversing with them in a tender voice. If I could've transformed into a plant right there, I might have.

Before we dove into the exploration of the greenhouse, separating ourselves posed a challenge. Her chaste 'thank you' kiss evolved into an impassioned embrace, a facet of human interaction I've come to understand. It took the remnants of my self-control to disengage from her and pause the heated moment. It left me breathless and with an aching void. As much as I yearned for the kiss to continue, we needed to pause for the surprise to proceed. There will be ample opportunities for more intimate moments with Rachel.

As breathless as I, Rachel recollected herself quickly when reminded of the greenhouse. With an infectious joy lighting her features, she danced inside. I trailed after her, watching as she reveled in every corner of this green haven. Her radiating happiness infused me with a sense of accomplishment and cemented my resolve for more such surprises.

Driving back home, I assure Rachel she can bask in the greenhouse for an entire day in the coming week. Her immersion in the plants had been so profound, I'd had to remind her of the encroaching dusk. A hint of melancholy clouded her eyes at our departure, but her jubilation, fueled by the prospect of returning, quickly overtook.

Her effervescent chatter about the greenhouse echoes within the car. The



infectious energy in her words keeps a permanent smile etched on my face, to the point of mild discomfort. I instruct the autopilot to maintain a leisurely speed, hoping to extend our journey and keep her ebullient monologue flowing.

"How did you come up with this idea?" she inquires, the pitch of her voice climbing with her exhilaration. "The pond... it's the perfect touch!"

Without waiting for my response, she dives back into her enthusiastic soliloquy.

"No one could conjure such a surprise, especially on this planet!" she declares. "The effort you've gone to, it's unparalleled! No man on Earth could compete with you."

Her gratitude spills out in continuous 'thank yous,' her radiant smile never wavering.

"I'm delighted you're pleased," I respond.

"Pleased? I love it!" she exclaims, her voice nearly a shriek of delight.

Upon reaching home, hours later, I advise her, "You should rest. You must've expended all your energy at the greenhouse."

"Rest? No way! I'm so exhilarated I could clean your entire house in an hour!" she counters.

I quickly discourage her idea. "No need for that. Jarvis can manage the cleaning in minutes."

Rachel bursts into a fit of laughter. Perhaps, she's simply overjoyed by the surprise, her happiness taking the form of infectious laughter.

Smiling at her, I suggest, "Perhaps you should rest while I prepare dinner."

Her laughter halts abruptly, and she gazes at me, wide-eyed. "You can cook? But you don't even require sustenance."

"True, but you do," I state matter-of-factly. "I'd like to prepare a meal for you, and we can share it together."

Her eyes well up once more, a response I've learned is triggered by emotions, not necessarily distress.

"Have you not already done so much for me?" she inquires. "Staying with you is a blessing itself, and now, you're treating me like royalty."

"You'll feel even more royal when you taste my culinary skills," I reassure her, grinning.

She chuckles lightly before heading towards the kitchen. I halt her with a firm, "You should rest while I prepare the meal."

"Can't I assist you?" she asks.

"No."

"But surely, I can observe?"

Such persistent questioning is new to me, but it doesn't irk me. Perhaps because it's Rachel.

I nod in acquiescence, and she proceeds to the kitchen, claiming a stool as her perch.

"What's on the menu?" she asks, settling comfortably.

"I believe it's known as spaghetti," I reply, striving to articulate the unfamiliar term.

"Do you have the ingredients for spaghetti here?"

"It took some effort to source them, but I succeeded."

"I find myself constantly astounded by you."

Preparing dinner under Rachel's watchful gaze stirs a familiar flutter within me. However, I strive to remain focused, ensuring every step is correct.

"When was the last time you cooked, Djinn?" Rachel's inquiry breaks the silence as I begin working with the pasta.

"Actually, this would be my first attempt," I confess.

"You've never cooked before?" she exclaims. "Are you certain you know how to?"

"I've spent the past week engrossed in cookbooks and instructional videos on preparing spaghetti," I reveal. "The process is imprinted in my memory. I'm confident it'll turn out perfectly."

"Well, I certainly hope so," she says with a light laugh. "I'm quite famished."

"Just sit back and relax while I handle dinner."

"Very well, Chef."

I start crafting the sauce, adding the meatballs. My eyebrows knit together as I concentrate on the task.

"What's your favorite dish?" Rachel's question punctures the silence.

I assumed she'd let me prepare the meal in peace, given the need for my full attention on the task. "I don't remember," I respond, my gaze fixed on the tomato-spice concoction simmering before me.

"When was the last time you ate?" she probes further, a note of incredulity coloring her tone.

"With you, when you prepared the meal," I reply. "Since we don't require

food and it's not enjoyable consuming alone, I never bothered with it when you weren't around."

Rachel falls silent. I risk a glance towards her and find her watching me, her eyes a tumultuous sea of emotions. Sadly, I can't decipher the precise sentiment she's experiencing.

Finally, our meal is ready. What would have ordinarily taken an hour, with Rachel's company, extends into two. I find no fault in this, however, as every moment shared with her is delightfully treasured.

As we settle at the table, anticipation radiates from Rachel, a tantalizing precursor to her tasting the fruits of my labor.

"Let's see how well you've done," she teases, sparking a twinge of anxiety within me.

"How is it?" I prompt, unable to quell my curiosity as she takes her inaugural bite.

"Mmm..." she begins. "A touch more salt and pepper... plus a few more minutes of cooking, and your spaghetti would've been impeccable."

Her critique leaves me at a loss for words. To validate her feedback, I decide to sample it myself.

"Only jesting!" she suddenly exclaims. "It's quite delightful. Not bad for your first attempt, wouldn't you agree?"

I'm nearly choked by the morsel I'd just ingested. Yet, as I chew and analyze the flavor, I find it agreeable and can't help but smile.

"Just look at that satisfied grin," Rachel remarks, a broad smile lighting up her features. "Cooking a flawless meal certainly agrees with you."

I can't contain a chuckle, and the feeling is fantastic. What's even more remarkable is how Rachel affects me – concerning food, about myself, about everything.

Our meal progresses in a comforting silence. Rachel patiently allows me to relish the food I've overlooked for so long. We appreciate not only our meal but also each other's presence, a symbiotic dance of mutual enjoyment.

As we dine, my attention is riveted on Rachel, and I realize she fills a void in my life I was previously oblivious to. I had been engrossed in the battles of my planet, never once considering my personal struggles. My identity had been wrapped up in my role as a soldier.

The prospect of returning to battle looms on the horizon. It used to be a trivial matter, but now, with Rachel's presence in my life, the thought of departure stirs melancholy within me.

Rachel presents an alternate future – one for the two of us. Yes, I remain a soldier at heart. But now, I am a soldier with someone to defend, to cherish.

It's an unfamiliar sensation, yet it's also exhilarating.

I love Rachel. My exposure to romance novels, aside from the tragic tale of Romeo and Juliet, has solidified these emotions for her.

*I love Rachel!*

And I'm resolved to convey my feelings to her before rejoining the battlefield.



## RACHEL

Following the unexpected surprise at the greenhouse and the delightful spaghetti dinner, I can't help but wonder what Djinn has planned next. His every action seems aimed at ensuring my comfort and happiness. His proclamation about making me feel like a queen wasn't an empty one.

But do I truly deserve all this? And more importantly, what is his motivation behind all these grand gestures?

His actions certainly make me feel cherished, but he's yet to express any physical or sexual attraction. Yes, he reciprocates my kisses, but he never advances beyond that.

Is his sole desire my companionship? Will we not share the intimacy we experienced after the auction again? His enjoyment of our union was palpable then.

Puzzling over these questions is driving me to frustration.

It feels as though I am a queen yearning for her king, for his touch and intimate love, yet finding none.

What's keeping Djinn at bay?

I need answers before my mind spirals into madness.

Suddenly, an idea forms in my mind.

What if I ignite the flame of desire within him?

Yes, that's the plan! Perhaps he needs a little persuasion. I will stoke his desire to the point he can no longer suppress his carnal instincts.

And so, "Operation Seduce Djinn" will commence tomorrow.

THE MOMENT my eyes flutter open, I freshen up, practicing my most innocent expression in front of the mirror. I decide to keep on the loose white shirt I use as a nightgown, curious to gauge Djinn's reaction.

This is it! Good luck, Rachel!

I exit my room, heading towards the kitchen where I expect to find Djinn. As I hear the clatter of dishes, I saunter in nonchalantly, feigning a yawn and stretching my arms, a subtle display of my curves.

"Good morning!" I greet, monitoring his every move. "Did you sleep well?"

His eyes meet mine, but he offers no immediate response.

Perfect. The plan is working.

"I slept as well as usual," he eventually responds, resuming his breakfast preparations.

Furrowing my brows, I question, "Where's Jarvis?"

"He's out procuring groceries and other supplies," he informs me.

"Oh, so it's just the two of us, huh?" I ask, a playful smile tugging at the corners of my lips.

"Yes," he confirms. "I attempted to prepare an omelet, but it ended up burnt. So, we're having cereal instead."

I can't contain a chuckle. Djinn is trying his best, yet he seems utterly lost. Perhaps this isn't the best moment to proceed with my plan.

"Do you want me to show you how to whip up a flawless omelet?" I offer.

"If you're not famished, then yes, that would be wonderful," he responds, grinning.

His boyish charm sets my heart aflutter. How can a revered soldier exude such endearing cuteness? Djinn's influence on me is undeniably potent.

Sighing, I gather the necessary ingredients and begin providing step-by-step guidance. Djinn listens attentively, replicating my actions diligently.

In the end, we successfully prepare two impeccable omelets and a side of crispy bacon to complement our breakfast.

Jarvis returns just as we polish off the last morsels of breakfast. Djinn abruptly rises from his seat, bidding me farewell as he announces he has to leave.

"When will you return?" I call out, trailing after him.

"Probably after dinner," he yells over his shoulder before disappearing through the doorway.

I watch his retreating silhouette, my mind whirring with alternative strategies for my plan of seduction.

Fortunately, Jarvis remains behind, a potential accomplice in my plot.

"Jarvis?" I begin, tentatively. "Would it be possible for me to place an order from the mall?"

"Absolutely," he replies. "Use this tablet; the mall's application is pre-installed. You'll find the master's name and address already populated in the customer details, so you can arrange delivery once you've finalized your order."

"Fantastic! Thank you!" I express my gratitude, seizing the tablet before scampering off to my room.

Navigating through various stores on the app, I eventually locate the items I desire. I confirm the purchase under Djinn's name and address.

To my amazement, the store promptly notifies me that my order is en route and will arrive shortly.

"Remarkable," I murmur to myself.

Sure enough, in under an hour, Jarvis presents me with the parcel I ordered.

Gratefully accepting the package, I eagerly tear it open. The see-through red negligee is precisely as I had envisioned, and the matching lingerie set is equally enticing.

If these don't cause Djinn to swoon over me, I'm at a loss as to what will!

THE EVENING ARRIVES, and I dine alone, the wait for Djinn's return stretching on.

Afterward, I take a brisk shower, don the provocative lingerie, and slip into the red nightgown. I conceal the ensemble beneath a robe and position myself on the outdoor sofa.

Nearly succumbing to sleep while awaiting Djinn, the distant hum of his car pulls me back to alertness.

As I rise, a swarm of butterflies stirs in my stomach, inducing a soft giggle. The memory of Djinn admitting to a similar sensation yesterday flickers through my mind.

I dismiss the thought, focusing instead on the task at hand. I rush back into my room, discarding the robe. I then await Djinn's arrival.

At the sound of the front door closing, I emerge from my room, feigning



astonishment at his presence.

His surprise mirrors mine, but soon his gaze meanders from my face, down to my breasts, and finally my legs.

A wave of nerves washes over me as I observe his eyes darken to a deep silver hue, bordering on black. He advances slowly, halting when our faces are mere inches apart.

"You can't comprehend how challenging it's been to rein in my desires," he murmurs, his gaze smoldering into mine. "But it seems I won't have to restrain myself any longer."

Then, he crashes our lips together. Days of pent-up lust have found its release, and I can feel the heat exuding from him.

I don't back down. I match his desire as I push my body closer to his. I can already feel his growing manhood with every second that passes.

I kiss him back and feel his tongue lengthen in response. He explores every space inside my mouth while his hands gently caress my bare skin before settling on my breasts. I can feel him massaging my soft mounds and it heightens my senses even more.

As his tongue delves into my mouth, I capture it between my teeth and suck like it's the sweetest thing I've ever tasted. Djinn grunts from my actions. But they soon turn into moans.

This fuels my yearning for him even more. I push him back and he sits on the couch. I crawl on top and straddle him, my mouth never leaving his.

But it's as if Djinn had enough foreplay. He lifts me up and leads me to the bedroom, where he gently lays me on the bed. He kisses me deeply and moves his mouth down my neck, leaving a hot trail in its midst.

"I want you to know I respect you, Rachel," he tells me in a soft yet gruff voice, his desire evident.

"Is that why you haven't touched me?" When he doesn't answer, I say, "Djinn, I want you to touch me. I've been waiting for you all this time."

That's the go signal he's been waiting for.

He kisses me passionately for a second. Then I feel a tugging at my lingerie. And the next thing I know, his warm mouth is sucking at my breast.

I arch my back in response, making him take in more of my boob. When he moves to the other side, I moan loudly.

But he suddenly moves away from my chest, leaving them cold.

What he does next brings me to a new level of ecstasy. His mouth now covers my wet being and his expert tongue makes movements that blow my

mind.

“I need you now or else I’ll go crazy,” I whisper breathlessly as I pull him back up.

Djinn only kisses me again.

Then I feel him enter me, and it’s the most amazing feeling ever.

We come together and I realize that Djinn is the only one who will ever make me feel this way.

Snuggling into his chest, I sigh contentedly. I feel his arms wrap around me in a tight hug as I drift off to a dreamless sleep.



## DJINN

The soft beeping of the communicator wakes me from my peaceful slumber. But the first thing my eyes search for is not the annoying device, but the woman I just spent the night with.

Rachel...

Seeing her sleeping beside me is exactly what I've imagined in the past days. And now, it's real. What else will be coming true for me in the next few days, I wonder?

However, the communicator's incessant beeps interrupt my thoughts.

I reach for it and see it's the king.

Sitting up, I answer the device and wonder if something is wrong in the Planet of Gold for the king himself to be calling me this early.

"Good morning, Your Highness," I say, listening through the soft static.

"Ah, Djinn," he answers. "Did I wake you?"

"No," I tell him without as much as a blink. "Is there something wrong?"

"I'm calling to invite you to a meeting. We have something important to discuss. Do come as soon as you can."

Then, the line goes dead. He doesn't even wait for me to answer. That's how abrupt he is. But he's still our king and I need to show him my loyalty.

With a sigh, I lie back down and put my arm around Rachel's sleeping figure. I take delight in observing every inch of her, from the soft hair on her head to the delectable toes on her feet.

She's so beautiful, I think as I kiss her gently. I don't want to wake her yet. I'm sure she's exhausted.

With a smile, my mind drifts back to what happened last night... and to

just a couple of hours ago.

I can still hear her soft moans when I kiss her breasts and her womanhood. I can still taste her sweetness on my lips.

When we came together, it was an indescribable feeling that only Rachel can make me feel.

I was as spent as she was after last night. But we had smiles on our faces as we drifted off to sleep.

Though that hadn't been the last of it.

We made love again just as dawn broke. And again, it was magical. I will never get tired of how Rachel makes me feel.

She's everything I imagined and more, and I want her to be a part of my life forever.

I spend a few more minutes admiring her sleeping form. The slow rising and falling of her chest is in tune with my heartbeat. And it makes me realize just how compatible we are, even our bodies move in sync.

I kiss her again and, with a sigh, I pull myself up. It takes a great deal of effort to pry myself away. But I need to go.

I'll come back as soon as I can.

The thought of her lingers in my mind, a pleasant distraction. Eager to return to her, I silently urge the meeting with the king to end swiftly.

Following a brisk shower, I don my Golden Spear suit. With Rachel still in the realm of dreams, I decide to forego breakfast, instead instructing Jarvis to ensure a meal awaits her when she stirs.

Hopping into my car, I set off for the king's palace.

The grand entrance to the royal residence, as usual, exudes an intimidating aura, designed to make even the most powerful lords feel insignificant and exposed. However, it fails to unsettle me.

The king undoubtedly crafted this atmosphere intentionally, to serve as a reminder of his dominion. Despite his tendency to govern through fear and dominance, his actions are always guided by the welfare of the Planet of Gold. This is the reason for my unwavering loyalty and dedication to him.

Alighting from the car, I stride into the palace without hesitation. Thanks to my high rank, second only to the king, I am afforded the freedom to come and go as I please, a privilege the other lords and guards respect.

"His Highness awaits you in the throne room," one of the guards informs me.

Acknowledging his statement with a nod, I direct my steps towards the

king.

Upon entering the throne room, I take a moment to survey the surroundings. The room, like the rest of the palace, is a grand spectacle. Swathed in gold and punctuated with massive glass windows, the room exudes an intimidating, rigid aura, reflecting the king's stern and exacting persona.

"Djinn, there you are," the king's resonant voice reverberates through the room.

Emerging from a side door, which I know leads to one of his numerous chambers within the palace, he strides towards me.

"At your service, My King," I respond, bowing respectfully.

"Sit," he commands, and I follow him to the elongated table occupying the center of the room. "We have much to discuss."

I remain quiet, awaiting his revelations.

"The Planet of Gold is under threat once more from those detestable insectoids," he begins. "Given the paramount importance of our planet's safety, I'm assigning you the task of leading our forces into battle against them."

I'd been anticipating this call to action, yet I hadn't expected it to come so soon.

How can I leave Rachel behind?

As the king continues to speak, my mind wanders to Rachel – her radiant smile, her gentle voice that can swell with passion. I envision our parting and reunion, the sweet exchange of kisses.

With this mission, however, those shared moments will be denied to us. What's worse, the uncertainty of when I'll see her again looms heavy, as our battles could span days, even months.

The king leaves no room for rebuttal, expecting nothing less than full cooperation.

Inwardly, I sigh, feeling darkness encroach upon my spirit. I want to halt, to refrain from taking any action. I realize I'm experiencing what Rachel would refer to as "sadness."

Yes, the sorrow of leaving Rachel behind is gnawing at me.

And in the same vein as the romantic novels I've read, it feels like my heart is fracturing.



## DJINN

**F**or hours, I've been subjected to his monotonous drone. As much as I hate to confess it, the King's relentless harangue is beginning to grate on my nerves. When does he intend to conclude this meeting? Trapped within his reminiscences and patriotic fervor, my mind incessantly strays to Rachel.

For reasons yet unclear to me, she keeps surfacing in my thoughts. I wonder if this signifies something amongst humans. A vague sense of disquiet and doubt emerges within me. I hadn't considered that my resolution might be starting to wane.

The prospect of re-entering the battlefield has led me to contemplate — what would be the ramifications if I join the combat with my men? How would it benefit me? Is my presence truly required in every conceivable conflict? Could this war lead us to peace? Such questions traverse my mind as I contemplate the future.

Does this unease imply that I harbor fears? Have I become so enmeshed in humanity that my interest in battles is beginning to wane? Preposterous.

I, the Golden Spear, know no fear. As the Marshall of this planet and second in command, I hail from a pure lineage. The mere hint of my presence commands respect and dignity from the people of the Planet of Gold, making a weapon superfluous.

However, does that even matter now? What can my title offer Rachel?

"Djinn, are you paying attention?" the King inquires. Apparently, he's not done with his discourse and suspects my preoccupation. "Is something troubling you?"



"We have an adequate force at your disposal for the battle," I retort.

"I am cognizant of that, but are you not one of them?" the King challenges, advancing towards me with his hands clasped behind his back. I remain immobile, recognizing his attempt at intimidation. "Marshall, have you forgotten what your rank and position signify for the Planet of Gold?"

He continues his stride, adding, "Do you require a reminder of our lineage, or has your judgment been impaired because of —"

"Spare your rhetoric for the warriors who require bolstering before the battle, my King," I interrupt, leading to a tense silence between us. "The fact remains, the northern quadrant of the galaxy is neutralized. I've decimated numerous hives, which should hinder the enemy's progress. Why instigate another skirmish?"

The King regards me with wide, disapproving eyes. He advances towards the expansive glass pane, framed by gold trim, engraved with intricate designs.

"You sound like a warrior yearning for his own progeny," the King quips with a sardonic smile. "Pray tell, Marshall... Are you merely challenging me or defying my will outright?"

Negotiating with the King is on the verge of treason, questioning him can lead to exile, but outright defiance of the King's command implies certain doom.

"I am merely pointing out that this skirmish will breed complications," I caution.

"Then you are resisting my command, aren't you?" The King waits for my response. Am I hesitating to obey the King's order, or am I acknowledging the existence of fear within me?

"Please reconsider the repercussions if we plunge into battle hastily, Your Highness," I implore, attempting to pacify the King's escalating irritation. "We could deliberate this matter with the others. You must take into account that we've only just begun to regain confidence in the survival of our species. This is not the time for reckless risks."

The King remains silent, his gaze fixed on me with a thoughtful intensity. As each minute passes, my eagerness to see Rachel grows stronger. Finally, around one in the afternoon, he dismisses me without another word.

I had left the house this morning without allowing Rachel to see me. What could she be doing at this moment? Will she greet me with joy upon my return?

My spirit soars at the prospect of witnessing her radiant smile.

A few minutes later, as I arrive, an unfamiliar atmosphere emanates from the house. An unease grips me and I rush towards the home.

What I encounter inside is chaos. My immediate instinct is to search for Rachel, but she is nowhere to be found. Rage courses through me as Jarvis finds me in the living room, surveying the disarray with seething wrath.

"Where is Rachel?" I demand, straining to maintain my composure.

"Warriors took her..." Jarvis begins. "We tried to intervene, but they threatened us."

At this point, the other AIs have congregated behind Jarvis. I exhale, attempting to soothe my rage, and prompt Jarvis to recount the events from the beginning.

While Rachel was enjoying her breakfast, silver warriors arrived, demanding entry. She welcomed them inside, but within moments, a ruckus erupted. Jarvis and the other AIs arrived to find Rachel being restrained by the warriors and whisked away.

"Owing to some unfortunate discoveries, this human will be taken to the warrior base to serve as a seka," Jarvis reiterates the warrior's words.

I close my eyes, silently praying for Rachel's safety. Cursed be the King for detaining me at the palace. It could only have been a calculated move. Who knows what they might do to her?

"Jarvis, what do you surmise this *unfortunate discovery* they referred to might be?" I grit my teeth, allowing the reality of the situation to permeate my thoughts.

"Offspring," one of the female AIs responds.

Of course, given my species' obsession with offspring, they'd reprimand Rachel for her inability to conceive a child. If she's incapable of bearing me a child, they'd subject her to punishment.

Because of my kind's sterility, they've elevated reproduction to an unparalleled importance. But my brethren are underestimating me. They've forgotten what I'm capable of. They've chosen the wrong warrior to contend with.

I allow the markings on my body to emerge as I transfigure back to my golden form. I exit the house with a tranquil stride, morphing into the formidable Golden Spear they've always dreaded.



## DJINN

A torrent of emotion storms through me. I teeter on the precipice of surrendering to my rage, striving to resist the rash thoughts that might put Rachel in further jeopardy. I focus on maintaining my composure as I approach the base, resolute in my determination to retrieve her.

The AIs bear witness to my departure from home. Were it not for them, the place might already be in ruins. I triple my pace, while dreadful scenarios flicker unbidden before my eyes. My only hope is that they haven't harmed Rachel, else I'll be forced to take arms against my own. A decision I would make without a moment's hesitation.

Finally, the base looms into view. Some of the warriors hail me in greeting, but I pay them no heed. I stride through the expansive corridors until I encounter a room frequented by medics to conduct human examinations.

With determined strides, I cross the threshold of the automated doors to find two scientists garbed in white, engrossed in their work on a specimen; one brandishing a blade, the other, a pair of forceps. They stare, taken aback by my abrupt entry.

"Marshall Djinn, a pleasure to have you here," the scientist wielding the blade greets me, bemusement evident in his tone.

"Where is Rachel?" I demand, my voice booming in the room. The pair continue to regard me with stunned silence. Is my query not clear?

"Rachel? Who's Rachel?" one queries, turning to his colleague. "Do you know any Rachel?"

"I don't believe so," the other replies, shaking his head. A moment passes

before he adds, "Wait... are you referring to the human taken by Dr. Jonas?"

I incline my head and take a step forward. The scientists recoil, their eyes pleading for mercy. All I do is utter the name echoed moments ago, "Jonas?"

"Y-yes, that's him," comes the shaky reply.

"Lead me to him," I command, grabbing the second scientist by the collar. The scientist complies reluctantly, perhaps regretting his earlier disclosures.

As we traverse the hall, passing rows of sealed doors, a sense of panic swells within me. Will I reach Rachel in time? Is this scientist deliberately wasting my time? Without warning, I halt and grab him by his gown, causing him to whirl around in surprise.

"Your life hangs in the balance if you don't lead me to her this instant," I threaten.

He closes his eyes, takes a deep breath and steers me to the right, towards a concealed door. We arrive at a dead end, a metallic door in sight just a few steps away.

"I can't go any further," he states bluntly. "I lack the necessary clearance. You'll have to utilize your own authority or force. I'd be executed if I dared to proceed. Go, before it's too late."

Without a second's hesitation, I lunge towards the doors, nearly tearing them apart in my desperate race against time. Rachel lies unclothed on an operating table. Her heart-wrenching cries echo through the room as she pleads for the torture to cease.

Jonas and his team freeze in shock as they register my presence by the door. One of them gasps and hastily exits the room. I flex the tense muscles in my neck, barely suppressing the urge to pounce on them all.

"What a delightful surprise, Djinn," Dr. Jonas greets, a smirk playing on his lips.

ALREADY, I'm calculating a plan to reclaim Rachel. I'll employ either cunning or force - whatever it demands.

"Ah, you certainly do justice to your moniker, Golden Spear," he continues. "Not many could have demolished those doors by sheer brute force. A knock would have sufficed, however."

His sarcastic jab sparks a desire to rip his head clean off his shoulders, but I restrain myself.

"Djinn..." Rachel's voice, weak and fearful, fills the room.

"Would you care to shed light on this situation, Dr. Jonas?" I demand, my tone icy.

"There's not much to illuminate. I presume you comprehend why she is on this table and why we are present here," he says, stroking his chin as though deep in thought.

"I'm offering you one chance to cease this travesty and permit me to take her," I propose, attempting a diplomatic approach. But the disgruntled look on Dr. Jonas's face suggests he's unlikely to comply easily.

"You, among us all, should grasp why we brought her here. If you've forgotten, let me remind you. Rachel, you're a prized human... but seemingly infertile. Among humans, infertility is not a grave issue, but for us... impregnating her should have been a straightforward task."

"So, you chose to abduct Rachel against her will, dissect her, and then what, Dr. Jonas? What exactly are you hoping to achieve?" I challenge him, eyebrows arched in question.

"Djinn, no human has ever proved so futile and unworthy. She's an intriguing specimen to observe, that's for certain. Perhaps, given our latest findings, we may yet discover a remedy for our infertility issues. When that day arrives, we'll no longer require her or any other 'lesser' species."

"So, you're willing to kill her," I accuse bluntly.

"Speaking pragmatically, she might die. But at least we won't waste our time dealing with a redundant human. A single act of copulation should have sufficed," he retorts without a trace of remorse.

"You're unhinged. You're a murderer."

"Djinn, such strong words. How does this differ from the battles you've waged? How is dissecting a human for the benefit of our kind different from you beheading creatures of other species for our survival?"

His smile is forced, but he continues unabated.

"You dub me a murderer for experimenting on your human, yet you regard yourself as innocent after wiping out an entire species? Isn't that somewhat hypocritical?"

His taunts consume my patience, eroding my restraint. His self-righteous monologue about the superiority of our species and his grand contributions to our civilization stoke the fires of my anger. Seizing the moment of distraction, I move swiftly, gathering Rachel into my arms.

Dr. Jonas and his team stare, dumbfounded. The gleam of delight in his

eyes is extinguished, replaced by a blaze of fury.

I exit the room, cradling Rachel's frail body, hardly noticing the astonished looks from the other lords. I am solely focused on getting her home. However, before I can exit the base, two silver warriors block my path.

"Move aside," I command, my gaze menacing. The silver warriors promptly comply. Dr. Jonas is barking orders for them to intercept me, but I disregard him. "Think twice before attempting to hinder me, or I'll reduce this base to rubble."

The silver warriors exchange a glance before stepping aside, allowing me to pass. I stride to my vehicle, the angry tirades of Dr. Jonas growing fainter as he is left behind the gates. We arrive home in mere minutes.

My mind races, grappling with the audacity of whoever dared to take Rachel from me. No one would risk such a move... unless they were the king.

*Damn him!*

Rachel stirs, her eyes brimming with tears as she clutches me tightly. "Where are we?" she mumbles.

"Home, Rachel... we're home," I whisper, gently tucking a loose strand of hair behind her ear. "And you're safe with me."





## RACHEL

The sound of Djinn's voice wraps around me like a comforting blanket. Even with his authoritative edge, a hint of tranquility threads through his words. When he assures me that we're home, my anxiety loosens its grip. The horrifying images of being seized, of an imminent end, begin to fade into the distance. If Djinn hadn't appeared when he did, I could have been lost forever.

There I was, utterly defenseless, laid bare for their vicious intentions. Despair had almost claimed me when Djinn stormed in, risking his standing and potentially his life for my sake.

"I'm sorry..." I whisper, tears pooling in my eyes.

"Don't be sorry," he reassures me, gently tilting my chin up. "I bear the blame. I should've been more vigilant."

"No, if I hadn't allowed that silver warrior in... you wouldn't be facing this turmoil," I murmur, a sense of guilt gnawing at me.

He responds with a tender kiss on my forehead, pulling me into the comforting circle of his arms. I sink into his touch, the warmth soothing my frayed nerves. "I can't thank you enough for saving me, Djinn."

"The only thing that matters now is your safety," he comforts me. "I'm here, and I won't let any harm befall you."

"Please don't put yourself in danger," I implore, lifting my gaze to meet his enigmatic eyes. My heart hammers against my chest as we hold each other's gaze. I break away, but he gently cradles my face.

Slowly, I pivot my head and our eyes meet again. His presence, his demeanor, they stir a soft weakness in my knees.

"Why are you avoiding my gaze, Rachel?" he queries, his voice a soft caress. "Are you embarrassed?"

"Yes," I confess, my voice a mere whisper.

"Why?"

"Because I'm not worthy of you..." Shame tints my words as I add, "And I desperately want to be."

"Believe me, you're far more than I deserve. Don't let Jonas's spiteful words undermine your worth," he reassures, taking my hand and pressing a chaste kiss to it.

"Djinn, you don't understand. I want to... I want to bear your child," I admit, a lump forming in my throat. "Even before we came to this world, my will to live was fueled by you. But the painful truth remains... I can't give you progeny, and it's a blow to me as a woman."

"Rachel, I don't want you to bear my child..."

His words strike me like a lightning bolt, leaving me reeling. My face must register my shock because he quickly adds, "Wait... I think you've misunderstood. Let me clarify."

"Please do."

"I don't want you to bear my child out of obligation. I've been in countless battles, and I'm accustomed to being a warrior. It may sound like a cliché, but you've changed my perspective," he clarifies.

His sincerity resonates in his words, and I feel the earnestness of his intention. "Today, witnessing you on the brink of harm, I teetered on the edge of madness. But I had to hold back because losing control would have meant endangering you. And that's a risk I can't afford."

The chilling memory of their menacing faces, their brutal determination, instigates a fresh wave of tears. I still can't articulate the sickening anticipation they exhibited, their eagerness to dissect me. In silent comfort, Djinn places his hand atop mine, his grasp a solid anchor.

His willingness to delve into our relationship in such a candid manner is something new, something heartening. I'm touched by this evolution in him, by his conviction in our bond. I've always grappled with self-assuredness, making it even more profound to find strength in an entity of a different species.

"I can only imagine how petrifying it must have been for you. I'm deeply sorry for having left you alone," he apologizes once more.

I shake my head, "What terrified me was the prospect of dying without

seeing you again. The thought that I had squandered my last moments, my last opportunities to engage with you... There's a whole universe I want to explore with you beside me. I yearned for more opportunities to bring a smile to your face."

"Rachel, you are my source of joy. If death scares you, I guess emotions scare me. But here I am, confessing that you mean everything to me and hoping I mean the same to you."

"Djinn, you do," I manage to smile through the tears streaming down my face. "I love you, even if the sun ceases to shine, even if the moon no longer graces the night with its glow. I love you for being you. My love for you is constant."

Djinn's expression mirrors my own disbelief, his smile a beacon through the tears that blur his vision. This is a sight I never thought I'd witness. Djinn, the Golden Spear of the Planet of Gold, shedding tears in front of me.

"I love you, Rachel Donney," Djinn admits, his voice barely above a whisper.

I pull him into a comforting embrace, reminding him that tears are nothing to be ashamed of.

Humans might be deemed inferior, but our intricate capacity to perceive and express emotions far surpasses our physical strength. Djinn and I are living proof that despite our species' differences, we can share and understand these feelings. We can shed tears or laugh, experience disappointment or rage, we can smile or frown. Emotions build bridges between us, ushering us onto a shared path. I can only hope this journey won't be cut short before it can truly blossom.



## DJINN

**O**n the sacred ground where generations of my ancestors rest, I find myself standing in restless anticipation, my gut churning with a sense of foreboding.

It has been three months since Rachel was snatched away by Jonas. That very day, the King had left the comfort of his palace to pay us a visit. He assured me that the whole ordeal was a grave misunderstanding.

His grim visage at receiving the news still lingers in my memory. His displeasure was palpable and he swore no such order had been issued by him. He gave me his word that Jonas would face the consequences of his reckless assumptions.

Had it not been for Rachel's calming presence, I would have dismissed the King's assurances. My status and position in the Planet of Gold would have meant nothing to me if she hadn't shown such quick forgiveness.

She later reasoned that she wouldn't see me risk who I am. She insisted that I still had significant contributions to make, not just for my own kind, but for hers and other species as well. Her plea was compelling, especially when she expressed her wish for our relationship to not be tainted by political intrigue or exile.

In the end, we concurred on a simple wedding ceremony. Our AI staff and a human to officiate were the only attendees, apart from us.

Now, I see Rachel emerging a few feet away, her dress accentuating her flawless figure. I observe her delicate advance toward me, the AI staff scattering flowers on her path.

"Beautiful," I murmur, overcome with emotion.

As Rachel draws nearer, I'm entranced by her radiant glow, her eyes sparkling with pure joy. I reach for her hand, signaling the beginning of our ceremony.

"Marshall Djinn, please take the ring, and repeat after me," the human officiant instructs. I comply, holding the tiny band with reverent fingers. "I, Djinn, Lord of the Planet of Gold..."

"I, Djinn, Lord of the Planet of Gold..." My voice wavers with the weight of my commitment.

"...take thee, Rachel, to be my wedded wife... To have and to hold from this day forward..." The officiant's words hang heavy in the air.

I echo his words, locking eyes with Rachel. Her eyes well up, and she graces me with a teary smile.

"For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer..."

"For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health..." As I pronounce the vows, I can't help but feel overwhelmed with gratitude. Rachel loves me in a way that I never imagined was possible, despite our differences.

"In sickness and in health, to love and to cherish..."

"In sickness and in health, to love and to cherish," I promise, firmly clasping her hands.

"Til death do us part," the human prompts, before adding, "You may slide the ring onto her finger."

I slip the ring in, and see Rachel begin to cry as I carry on with the last statement of our union. "Til death do us part."

Rachel repeats the same pledge and we kiss right after. The AIs clap their hands and start congratulating us. We thank the human for imparting us with blessings.

The AIs have already prepared our food. They join us temporarily, but head back to their respective areas as soon as the celebration is over.

We look at each other, scarcely believing what had taken place. I can't hold it any longer, so I cup her face and kiss her passionately. Our lips lock, while our tongues clash in eager exploration. Touching her hips, I unzip her dress leisurely before letting it drop from her body.

"I love you, Rachel," I murmur in her ear.

"I love you, too, Djinn," she responds. I pull her close to me and fondle her breast. It fills my palm in just the right way. Rachel lets out a seductive moan as I take one breast into my mouth, while my other hand touches her

body.

We reach the foot of the bed, when she starts undressing me. I wore a human-style attire for the occasion.

She takes my hard cock inside her mouth and expertly bobs her head. She stops and reaches for a kiss. I place her on the bed, and look into her eyes. When I'm finally on top of her, I tenderly thrust my cock into her core. Rocking my hips back and forth, she squeezes her legs around my hips and scratches my back in ecstasy.

She moans from bliss, showing how satisfied she is with my sex drive. She starts sweating from the pleasure of the sex and I come earlier than expected. Afterwards, we lie back and stare at the ceiling. Rachel holds my hand and rests her head on my shoulder.

“Djinn, do you ever regret meeting me?” she suddenly asks.

I turn to her with a confused look. “Where’s this question coming from?”

“I’m sorry, it’s just that I can’t believe we’re married... Well, I can’t believe you married me.” She grins.

“I don’t regret a single thing,” I reply seriously. “Do you?”

“Never.” She kisses my cheek and snuggles closer for a hug.

Silence follows a few minutes later and I realize that Rachel is fast asleep. I don’t mind because we have all the tomorrows to spend together. Rachel is my past, present and future. I will love her for the rest of my life, until death do us part.





## RACHEL

**T**he familiar blue expanse of the sky unfurls above me and I close my eyes, letting the exhilarating breeze dance through my hair, its caress as gentle as a lover's touch.

Grinning impishly, I reopen my eyes and squint towards the rising sun. Despite my newfound love for the Planet of Gold, I've always cherished the view of Earth's sunrises. They simply have no equal.

Djinn and I find ourselves on Earth for our honeymoon. After tying the knot in both Planet of Gold tradition and human customs, we decided this was where we'd celebrate our union. The King, in a reluctant attempt to make amends for the recent transgressions, granted us this opportunity.

However, his gesture did little to mend the frayed trust between him and Djinn. Djinn's suspicions regarding the King's possible involvement in my abduction persist. I can't say I blame him - I harbor a deep-seated mistrust for the King myself. But who could resist the opportunity to escape the royal intrigue, Djinn's duties, and the Planet of Gold to enjoy some solitude together?

The warmth of the sun against my skin acts as a balm, soothing away the stress accumulated from the recent events. A swell of nostalgia engulfs me.

It doesn't feel like it's been that long since I left Earth, but the whirlwind of events since then makes it seem like decades have passed since my last time here.

Glancing back, I spy Djinn's sleeping form sprawled on the bed. We arrived only yesterday and his body is still acclimating to Earth's environment. Yet, judging by the passionate encounter we shared last night, I

wouldn't guess he was suffering from any form of jet lag. His fervor for me remains unaffected by our travels.

Who would've thought that the Golden Spear of the Planet of Gold, Djinn, would have had reservations about getting involved with me?

A surprised gasp slips from my lips as I feel Djinn's strong arms encircle my waist and pull me back against the solid plane of his chest.

"What's got you chuckling?" he murmurs, his voice roughened by sleep.

My life with Djinn has certainly had its ups and downs, but I wouldn't change a thing. Given a second chance, I would embark on this rollercoaster ride time and time again.

A content sigh escapes me as I reply, "Just reminiscing about our first mall outing."

His chuckle reverberates through me as he nuzzles the top of my head. "Ah, that day. I can't figure out what you find so amusing about it. Perhaps it's best I don't know. Nonetheless, I cherish the memories we created that day."

His heartfelt words send a rush of warmth surging through me. If he keeps this up, I might find myself shedding tears of joy, despite my resolution to keep them at bay.

A playful smile forms on my lips as I reach up to caress his cheek. "Oh really? Are our shared memories as important to you as your glorious victories in battle?"

His responding grin is breathtaking. He covers my hand with his own and turns his head slightly, pressing a tender kiss into my palm, sending my heart into a riotous frenzy.

"No." He spins me around to face him, his silver eyes brimming with a raw intensity that sends a shiver down my spine. The golden flecks that I adore are sparkling like stars in his gaze. "Our shared memories are far more precious to me than any victory I've secured on the battlefield."

I can only hiccup in response, suddenly overcome by the swell of emotions.

Despite my best efforts, tears begin to slide down my cheeks. Tears of joy don't count as breaking my resolution, right?

"Rachel, my love," he murmurs, leaning forward to tenderly kiss the tears from my cheeks.

"I know these aren't tears of sadness, but my heart aches each time I see them spill from your eyes. I swore I'd destroy anyone who dared to make you

cry. It's a paradox trying to destroy myself, but for you, I'll attempt it. Shall I begin?"

My tears abruptly cease and I glare at him, indignant. "If you dare harm yourself, I swear—"

My anger evaporates as swiftly as it flared when I see his eyes twinkling with mirth. The audacity! He's teasing me.

"You insufferable fool," I whisper, wrapping my arms around his neck and pulling him down for a kiss.

His grin against my lips is smug. "Well, you're the one who's turned me into this."

"Fine, it's my doing. I'll accept full responsibility."

Our lips meet again, and before I know it, he's swept me off my feet and we've lost ourselves in a passionate dance that lasts till the afternoon.

If it hadn't been for the alarm blaring from my phone, we would have missed our rendezvous with my friends at the local café.

Despite feeling deliciously spent, I quickly change into a lightweight, knee-length dress and manage to coax Djinn into his tailored shirt, trousers, and polished dress shoes.

Despite his ability to morph, Djinn can't quite scale himself down to fit into standard human clothes. Thus, the need for custom tailoring. He looks irresistibly attractive in Earth attire. If we weren't pressed for time, I might have given in to temptation and initiated another round of lovemaking.

Sadly, time is not on our side. On the bright side, the sooner we meet my friends, the sooner I'll have Djinn all to myself again.

"You owe me for this, Rachel," Djinn grumbles as I usher him out the door.

"Of course, I do," I chuckle, closing the door behind us and heading for the elevator. He pulls me back, halting my progress.

"Could we perhaps get a raincheck? You could call your friends or something."

Smiling, I shake my head. Maybe teaching him Earth lingo wasn't such a bright idea if he's going to use it against me.

"Absolutely not, I've already made a promise. But..." A mischievous glint sparks in my eyes as I pull him down to whisper in his ear, "If you play nice with my friends, I'll reward you with a special treat later tonight."

Seizing my hand, he strides toward the elevator with renewed enthusiasm.

By the end of the night, Djinn has charmed my friends so thoroughly they

practically want to adopt him. Their affection stokes a twinge of jealousy, fueling a passionate night that leaves Djinn thoroughly pleased.

"Note to self," I mutter under my breath later, "Never introduce Djinn to any more friends."

All Djinn can do is laugh heartily in response.



## RACHEL

"D a Da? Dadadadada!"

"Radelk, say Radelk, little one. Ra-De-Lk."

The little toddler bouncing joyfully in Djinn's lap crinkles her adorable button nose and shakes her head defiantly, her short brunette locks bobbing with her movements. Her silver eyes, flecked with hints of gold, almost seem to challenge Radelk even as she giggles.

Radelk, however, is undeterred by her faux hostility and thrives on her attention.

"Dadadada," she babbles with glee, scaling her towering father even as she resolutely turns away from Radelk.

Currently, our home is brimming with our closest friends, gathered to celebrate our baby girl's first birthday. It's an intimate celebration, but not lacking in laughter and love.

As I watch our friends interact with our spirited little one, I can't help but marvel at the spark of life Djinn and I have created. It's wonderfully ironic that she seems to have taken a slight dislike to the man who inspired her name.

The connection was enough to send Radelk over the moon. Upon discovering her name, he spent my entire pregnancy pampering me with sweets and treats, much to Djinn's chagrin.

Despite his annoyance, I've come to appreciate Radelk's goodwill and camaraderie. The rest of our friends weren't any less attentive either, bringing gifts and keeping me company whenever Djinn was called away.

I can't help but ponder whether the next pregnancy would entail the same

influx of attention. The jury's still out on that one.

"Da! Dadadada!"

My daughter's gurgling laughter breaks through my musings, drawing my attention towards her. She's precariously perched on Djinn's shoulder, reaching out for Heron.

The stalwart warrior appears frozen, looking both bewildered and slightly frightened as our bubbly daughter waves her tiny arms in his direction.

"Why does Radelin prefer Heron? I'm her namesake! She should gravitate towards me!" Radelk huffs, feigning outrage.

Laughing softly to myself, I turn my attention back to the salad I'm preparing.

Our little Radelin is indeed a wonder. Conceived a year into our marriage, Djinn and I hadn't planned for a child, but we didn't actively prevent it either. When I found out I was pregnant, it felt like another piece of our shared life had clicked into place.

Our angelic Radelin, with her brunette hair and her father's silver eyes flecked with gold, is an effervescent presence in our lives, her smiles outnumbering her tears. However, her reaction to Radelk seems to be an anomaly in her otherwise cheerful demeanor.

Looking up once again, I see Radelin tumble off Djinn's shoulder. But with his incredible reflexes, he catches her in the blink of an eye, continuing his conversation with Tyron as if nothing has happened.

I can't help but marvel at Djinn. Despite his harsh upbringing and the life he'd been forced into, he's a phenomenal father.

The memory of the day Radelin was born is still fresh in my mind. Djinn, appearing quite faint during the labor, was the object of the guys' good-natured ribbing, but he never once left my side. The image of his joyous tears as our newborn was placed in his arms is a treasured memory that I will cherish forever.

He embodies both gentleness and affection when interacting with our little girl. When it comes to her happiness and safety, Djinn doesn't bat an eyelid before offering her the best of everything.

His seamless transition into fatherhood fills me with an overwhelming sense of pride. I would have never imagined that I could experience such profound joy in my life.

Who could have thought that overhearing a dreadful secret would lead me to a love so pure, so profound, that it will span a lifetime?

As I look around, the guys are engrossed in conversations about ships and technology, or vying for Radelin's attention. The ambience is warm and homey, a testament to the fact that I have truly found my home here.

Suddenly, I feel a nauseating churn in my stomach. Reflexively, I cover my mouth and dash towards the kitchen sink, emptying my stomach as the distant chatter continues in the living room.

"Heron, could you hold Radelin for a moment?" I vaguely hear Djinn's voice.

"What? No, I —"

"Hey! I'm the namesake! You should hand Radelin to me, not him!"

In the midst of this banter, I feel arms enveloping me from behind, hands rubbing soothing circles on my stomach.

"Are you okay?" Djinn's voice is tender. "Do you feel unwell? Should I call a doctor?"

Laughing weakly, I shake my head and rinse my mouth. "No need. I already did."

He spins me around, searching my face. "Well? What did the doctor say? Is there something wrong? You've seemed a bit pale lately."

"No, nothing's wrong. Everything is just... perfect."

His frown deepens. "I don't understand."

"Djinn... I'm pregnant again."

His eyes widen in shock before flitting between my eyes and my stomach, disbelief etched in his gaze. He swallows hard, the corners of his eyes glistening.

"Rachel, truly?"

Nodding, I wrap my arms around his neck and pull him into a soft kiss. "Yes, yes. You're going to be a father again!"

A startled yelp escapes me as he suddenly lifts me into his arms and strides into the living room.

"Guys!" His voice booms. "We've got another reason to celebrate! I'm going to be a father again!"

A chorus of cheers and congratulations erupts in the living room, with little Radelin adding to the jubilation from Radelk's arms. Somehow, it seems, he's managed to win her over.

Feeling a pat on Djinn's shoulder and my arm, we turn to see Heron standing before us, his gaze fixated on my stomach.

"If it's possible, please name the second one after me. Please."



My mouth drops open before I burst into laughter. Who knew that Heron harbored such a soft spot for children?

"Get yourself a girlfriend, and we'll consider it," I tease him, unaware that in the future, I might have to keep my promise after all.

THE END.

For sneak peeks and a slice of life about Rachel and Djinn, join my newsletter [here](#).