

A SCI-FI
ROMANCE
NOVELLA

HELL
AND
RUM

LIZZY BEQUIN



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ALIEN HIT & RUN

Lizzy Bequin



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Alien Hit & Run

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CHAPTER 1

The van sped through the darkness.

It was a delivery van, but its sides bore no signs or company logos, only a satin black finish that made it blend almost completely into the night. Were it not for the two halogen headlamps—the only source of light for miles around—it would have been as invisible as the Nevada desert rushing past at seventy miles an hour. There were hills on either side of the gently winding highway, their arid slopes studded with boulders, agave, and the occasional joshua tree, but at this late and moonless hour all those details were swallowed up by the vast and primordial darkness.

Kris felt the vibrations of the well-tuned engine rumbling up through the accelerator pedal. She was tempted to push it harder. The van was capable of doing a hundred twenty—she knew, because she'd tested it herself at the Bonneville Salt Flats only a few short weeks ago—but she resisted the urge, just in case a Nevada highway patrolman happened to be hiding out there in all that blackness with a radar gun aimed in her direction.

There *wasn't* any officer, of course.

There *never* was.

Kris had driven this remote stretch of asphalt hundreds of times both in the daytime and at night, and she'd never once seen a cop. Hell, she could pretty much count on both hands

the number of times she'd encountered another vehicle of any kind. It was one of the main reasons she'd selected this area as her base of operations.

Still, she kept the speedometer pinned precisely at the posted speed limit of seventy miles per hour. She'd waited too long for this. She wasn't about to go and mess it up now by rushing at the last moment.

The hard part was over. Now she had time.

All the time in the world.

She was surprised by how calm she felt. She'd expected to be a nervous wreck at this point—heart pounding, hands shaking, sweat rolling down her back—but that wasn't the case. Her hands were as steady as could be, and her skin felt dry as a bone. Even during the brief scuffle back there in the parking garage in Vegas, her heart rate hadn't climbed much higher than ninety beats per minute.

She was proud of herself for that. She thought Katherine would have been proud of her too.

Beside her on the passenger seat lay a Smith & Wesson Model 36 revolver, better known as a Chief's Special. Kris preferred a revolver over an automatic, because a revolver wouldn't leave behind spent shell casings for the police to find. Not that she was particularly worried about going to prison. That was probably where she'd end up after everything was said and done. She just didn't want to get caught before she'd had a chance to complete her mission—before she'd had a chance to fulfill her *life's purpose*.

Kris momentarily took her eyes off the road to glance at a piece of paper she kept tucked on the dashboard. It was an old faded photograph, its edges worn with time. The glow of the instrument panel was just bright enough for Kris to make it out, though she didn't actually need any light to see it. She'd looked at the picture so many times now, it had become seared into her memory. A pair of grinning girls, both eight years old, arms around each other's shoulders. Matching yellow dresses. Matching black hair and blue eyes.

If she looked at herself in the rearview mirror, she would find one of those pairs of eyes looking back at her, but older now, and less joyful. The face surrounding those eyes was older too, and marred by violence. A pair of deep scars curving outward from the corners of her mouth had ensured that she'd never had a boyfriend. Not that she would have wanted one.

Up ahead, something rushed into the road, a pale blur in the headlights.

Kris jammed on the brakes, and the tires squealed as the two-ton van struggled to bring itself to a halt, but it was too late. There was a heavy *krump* as the vehicle made impact, and Kris's body lurched forward an inch or two before the seatbelt harness caught her.

Then everything was quiet.

Kris took stock of the situation. The sudden jolt of adrenaline had kick-started her heart, but aside from a wicked seatbelt burn on her right shoulder, she hadn't sustained any serious damage. More importantly, the van seemed to be okay. The

right headlight was out, but the engine was still idling, and it didn't *sound* as though anything was wrong with it.

What about the *thing* she was carrying in the back of the van? Had *that* gotten damaged, Kris wondered. Ironic she should be worried about the thing's wellbeing, considering what she planned on doing to it later. She was tempted to go back there and check, but first she needed to see about the animal she'd hit.

"Fucking deer," Kris muttered under her breath.

But she already knew it hadn't been a deer. She hadn't gotten a clear look at the creature, but she'd seen enough to know that much.

She reached for her pistol and experienced a second jolt of adrenaline when her hand found the passenger seat empty. Then she realized the gun had fallen onto the floorboard. Stupid to have left it sitting out loose like that. If it had discharged during the crash, she might have had an even bigger problem on her hands.

Kris retrieved the pistol from where it had fallen, got out, and walked around to the front of the van. When she saw what was lying there in the road, illuminated by the beam of the single remaining headlight, she froze.

It was a man.

And not just any man either. Even though he was curled up in the fetal position in the middle of the road, Kris could tell he was tall, well over six feet, probably closer to seven, and his

muscles looked hard and tight beneath a layer of smooth, tanned skin. She was able to see all those muscles and all that skin because the man didn't have a stitch of clothing on his body.

He didn't have any cuts or bruises either.

Kris cautiously moved closer to get a better look at him, and her nose picked up a whiff of an unusual odor. It was a bit like incense, smoky and sweet, but with a darker, animalistic quality purring just beneath the surface.

What was that? Some sort of cologne? Kris typically didn't like the cloying aroma of designer fragrances, but there was something addictive about this scent. She leaned closer and took another, deeper breath.

The effect was immediate. She gasped and rocked backward on her heels as a surge of arousal roared through her body with an intensity she had never experienced before. In an instant, her nipples went as hard as pebbles beneath her T-shirt, and wetness was seeping between her legs, soaking through the cotton panties she was wearing beneath her jeans. Her knees threatened to give out beneath her.

A groan from the man's mouth snapped her out of her daze.

Kris's face burned with shame. She'd just hit a man with her van, and her reaction was to get turned on by the way he smelled? Jesus, what the hell was wrong with her? Had she banged her head during the crash and not realized it?

She tucked the revolver into the back of her jeans and knelt over the naked man, laying a hand gently against his shoulder. His skin felt strangely cool despite the desert heat, and his muscles were so hard it was like touching a statue. For a moment, Kris felt light-headed as a second wave of arousal sent her blood rushing to all the wrong places. She did her best to shake the feeling off.

“Hey mister, can you hear me?”

“Hear... me...”

The man spoke with a heavy foreign accent Kris couldn't identify, and his voice had an unnaturally deep and rasping quality that made her think he must have suffered some serious internal injuries from the impact. She experienced a momentary pang of guilt, but quickly reminded herself that she'd done nothing wrong. She'd been driving the speed limit, like a normal, sane, law-abiding citizen. This man was the one who'd come running out in front of her like a goddamn lunatic.

And in the process, he'd thrown a serious monkey wrench into the plan she'd spent her entire adult life preparing.

“What the hell were you doing out here anyway?” Kris snapped.

“Please... help...”

The man stirred weakly on the asphalt. He was clearly hurt, despite showing no outward signs of damage. No wonder, Kris thought, glancing back at the front end of the van. The right

headlight was shattered, and the bumper and hood were both buckled from the impact. If he'd hit a few more inches toward the center of the car, he probably would have ruptured the radiator. It was a damn good thing he hadn't, otherwise she would be in even bigger trouble now.

Kris returned her attention to the man.

What the hell was she going to do with him? The obvious thing would be to call 911, but she wasn't about to have a bunch of police poking around her van. Not with the illegal cargo she was carrying in the back. Maybe there was another way.

"Listen," Kris said as she slid her phone out of her pocket, "I'm going to call 911 for you, but then I've got to leave. I'm sorry, but I don't have any other choice." She did a quick mental calculation of the distance to the nearest town. "An ambulance will get here in about forty-five minutes. They'll take you to the hospital, and—"

"*No!*" the man groaned. "*No hospital... no doctors...*"

He pushed himself up onto all fours and tried to stand, but his arms and legs gave out, and he collapsed onto his back.

"Hey!" Kris said. "Be careful. You shouldn't—"

The words got all jammed up in her throat as she saw the massive erection jutting up from the man's groin. The tip was moist with precum, and it glistened in the glow of the single headlight.

Kris knew a little bit about what happened to a man's body when he died violently. It was one of the subjects she'd studied in preparation for her life's purpose. She knew, for example, that it was not uncommon for a man to become erect and even ejaculate at the moment of death. Maybe something similar was possible following a non-fatal impact like the one this man had just suffered? Then again, considering the sudden and unexpected arousal she had experienced a moment before, Kris had her doubts.

Something else was going on here. Something weird.

She dragged her eyes away from the man's engorged member and looked him square in the face. For the first time, she realized just how frighteningly handsome he was. He had a hard, chiseled jaw, full supple lips, and eyes so deeply blue they were almost violet. Kris felt her body temperature rising, and it had nothing to do with the warm desert air.

"Listen," she said, struggling to keep her voice level. "You shouldn't move, okay? If your neck's broken, it could—"

"Not broken... only weak... please, they are coming for me..."

The man's voice was quiet, but Kris heard it as clearly as if he'd whispered with his lips pressed against her ear. The deep, rasping sound seemed to slide over her skin like fingers. It seemed to reach inside her body, touching her in places she'd never been touched before.

Then she smelled it again. That scent. Only this time it was stronger, and more openly sexual. The sweet and smokey aspects were still there, but they had taken a backseat, and the

other part of it had surged to the fore—the smell of raw animal desire.

Kris swooned on her knees. The phone dropped from her hand and clattered on the asphalt, but she barely even noticed that. All her attention was focused on those two deep-blue, almost-purple eyes that seemed to penetrate straight to the deepest part of her soul. Suddenly, her fingers were moving of their own accord, unfastening the buckle of her belt. For a moment, she thought she was actually going to do it. She was actually going to strip naked and ride this total stranger right here in the middle of the Nevada highway.

Then, just as quickly as it had appeared, the scent was gone again. Kris's arousal didn't stop as abruptly, but it did wane enough for her to realize the insanity of what she had almost done. Heat flooded her cheeks, and she turned her face away in shame, but the sound of the man's voice brought her eyes back to his.

“Please... help me...”

For a moment, her mind drifted back to a time more than twenty years before when a different, smaller voice had begged her for help, and she'd been unable to provide it.

Something shifted deep inside her. The arousal was gone now, replaced by an overwhelming sympathy for the naked man sprawled on the road in front of her. She didn't know who he was or what he was running from—she didn't even know his name—but she knew she had to help him.

Of course, there was still the problem of the thing in the back of the van, but she could deal with that later.

“Come on,” Kris said, offering her hands. “Let’s try to get you on your feet.”

CHAPTER 2

The turnoff was easy to miss, especially at night. There was no mailbox, and the driveway itself was little more than a pair of shallow ruts where the dirt had been worn slightly smoother and flatter by the regular passage of tires. It extended for a quarter of a mile in a wide, curving loop that ended at the top of a desolate hill overlooking the highway and the surrounding desert. At this late and moonless hour, one had to take it on faith that anything existed down there besides all that deep and inky blackness even the stars couldn't touch.

As the van topped the hill, the one remaining headlight swept across the property. A chrome Airstream trailer served as the main lodging. Beside it stood an outhouse, and beside that, an old Nissan pickup, its red paint faded by the sun. A little ways off, where it wouldn't be easily visible from the highway, stood a windowless cinder block structure fronted by a pair of sliding metal garage doors. To anyone who didn't know better, it would have looked like a small auto repair shop. Tires, rusted oil drums, and various other junk lay scattered around the vicinity.

Kris parked the van in front of the trailer. She cut the engine but left the single headlamp burning so there would be some light to see by. Normally she would have made the short walk to the trailer in total darkness.

Tonight, however, she had her hands full.

Kris got out, walked around to the passenger side of the van, and opened it. The man was sitting there, barely conscious, his long, muscular legs jammed awkwardly against the dash. It had been one hell of a struggle getting him in there, and it seemed to have sapped what little strength he had.

Kris just hoped he had enough strength left to make it to the trailer, because there was no way in hell she was going to be able to carry his ass. She was strong, able to deadlift nearly three hundred pounds, which was a lot more than what the man weighed, but lifting a solid, balanced barbell wasn't the same as lifting a human body.

“Come on,” she said. “Time to get out. I'll help you, but you're going to have to walk.”

At first, it seemed as though the man hadn't heard her. Then he groaned and began to slowly shift his weight off the seat. Kris positioned herself underneath his arm for support, and she was relieved when he didn't totally collapse on top of her.

She was also relieved to see that his arousal had softened considerably—though not completely.

The ten paces from the van to the trailer took a full minute to complete. The two steps leading up to the door took another. Kris got the door open and pulled the man through. As soon as they were both inside, the man's legs started to tremble. Kris could tell he was about to collapse, so she guided him down as gently as possible onto his back on the floor. She kicked the door shut behind her, then leaned back against the wall of the

small trailer, lungs burning from the exertion, heart pounding in her chest.

Okay... now what?

For a moment, Kris wished she had moved the man to the back of her pickup instead of bringing him inside her home. She could have driven him into town and dumped him outside the emergency room. It wouldn't have been the nicest way to handle it, but it would have been a hell of a lot safer than bringing a stranger into her home like this. She didn't know anything about him. Not even his name.

Then again, he probably wouldn't have let her take him to the hospital. Kris remembered how he'd reacted when she'd suggested calling 911.

No hospitals. No doctors.

Was the guy an escaped convict? Or worse, had he broken out of a psych ward? That would certainly explain why he'd been running through the desert buck naked in the middle of the night. But there wasn't a prison or hospital anywhere close by.

Once she'd caught her breath, Kris stood and flipped a switch by the door, filling the small trailer with light. She looked down at the man lying naked on his back in the middle of the floor. Whoever he was, he was in her home now, and he obviously wouldn't be leaving anytime soon. Kris didn't think he posed a threat in his weakened state. He might have been acting, but she didn't think so. She'd slammed into him pretty hard with her van. It was incredible he was still alive.

It was even more incredible that he didn't have a mark anywhere on his body. Not even a bruise.

"I'll get you some medicine." She had a basic first-aid kit stashed in one of the cabinets of the kitchenette, but she was thinking of the bigger medical kit she kept in the other building. That one contained syringes and vials of morphine.

"No pain," the man groaned. *"No medicine... just rest... need rest...."*

The man tilted his head up to look at her, and Kris saw a flicker of surprise go across his deep blue eyes. She was used to that reaction. It happened every time someone saw her scars.

Out there on the highway, with her back to the headlight, the man wouldn't have been able to see her scars. Now that they were inside with the lights on, there was no hiding them—two deep, ugly lines extending from the corners of her mouth in a grotesque mockery of a smile. As a child, the scars had been a constant source of ridicule from her peers; as an adult, a source of unwanted pity. She'd actually been grateful for the pandemic, which had given her an excuse to wear a face mask in public, but she hadn't been wearing one tonight, and there was no point in putting one on now. The man had already seen that her face was ruined.

And why should she care about that anyway? It didn't matter that this naked stranger was the most gorgeous man she'd ever seen. Nothing was going to happen between them. Nothing.

After a moment, the man's head fell back and his eyelids closed.

"Rest," he murmured. *"Must rest... you should..."*

Whatever he'd been about to tell her, it got lost in a garble of nonsense as his voice trailed off into silence. Aside from the slow rise and fall of his muscular chest, the man was completely motionless. Kris guessed he was asleep.

Without really meaning to, she let her eyes trail down his body to the half-hard member lying against his thick thigh. A shameful heat welled between her legs.

"I should get something to cover you up," she said, finishing the mystery man's sentence for him.

She stepped over his sprawled-out body and made her way to the closet at the back of the trailer. By the time she returned carrying a sheet, the man was snoring softly. Kris draped the sheet over his lower body.

"What am I going to do with you?" she muttered.

She would have to figure that out later. Right now, she needed to secure the cargo she was carrying in the back of the van. She didn't like the idea of leaving a stranger passed out inside her trailer, but she reckoned it was safe enough. She wouldn't be going far, and she still had her pistol. All the other weapons were securely stashed in a locked compartment in the floor of the trailer, and the key was on the keychain in her pocket.

"I'll be right back," she whispered. "Don't go anywhere, handsome."

She stepped over his body again and headed for the door. Before she had a chance to open it, that strange, smoky scent came surging back with a vengeance. Out there on the highway, it had been intense. Here within the enclosed confines of her trailer, it was overwhelming.

Kris turned with a gasp and looked at the man on the floor. He still seemed to be asleep, but the sheet she had spread over him a few seconds before was now standing up like a tent over his groin. Kris suddenly felt light-headed. Her vision got dim.

The next thing she knew, her clothes were off, and she was straddling the naked man.

CHAPTER 3

Kris looked around at her clothes strewn all over the trailer. One of her boots was standing like a sentinel by the door. Its companion was a few feet away, lying on its side like a fallen soldier. Her faded jeans were draped over the side of the couch, one leg turned inside out as if she had tugged them off in a hurry. Her shirt was hanging from the corner of the small table that held her TV set. She wasn't sure where her panties had ended up; she only knew they were no longer on her body. She couldn't remember how it had happened, or when. One moment she'd been standing by the door getting ready to leave, the next she was naked and sitting on top of the passed-out guy lying on the floor of her trailer.

And her clothing situation wasn't the only thing that had changed. The light inside the trailer seemed different too, dimmer. It had taken on an eerie purple hue, and it wavered across the walls like the glow reflected off the surface of a swimming pool.

Purple haze, Kris thought, just like the Hendrix song

It was almost funny.

Almost.

Her eyes darted to the clock on the microwave. She wanted to figure out how much time had elapsed since she'd been standing by the door, but the digital display was flickering with strange symbols she couldn't decipher. Purple symbols.

Her eyes returned to the man lying on his back beneath her. He still appeared to be sleeping. If she climbed off him now, he would never know about any of this.

But Kris *couldn't* climb off him. She *tried*, she really did, but something—some magnetic force—was holding her in place. She pressed her hands against the rippling muscles of the man's abdomen and tried to push herself away from him, but her body wouldn't budge. She couldn't move.

Then, all of a sudden, she *could* move. Or rather, she was *moving*, but not of her own volition.

Her hips started to rock in a slow, steady rhythm, grinding her crotch against the sleeping man's body. The sheet Kris had draped over him earlier was still in place, and that thin layer of fabric was the only thing separating her body from his. As the sheet became moistened with the wetness spilling out of her, it clung to the man's skin, and Kris could feel every detail of his throbbing length sliding against her naked vulva.

It did not feel entirely human.

Kris had never actually been with a man before. As a teen, she'd received no attention from the opposite sex—or at least none that was positive. She had her scars to thank for that. By the time she'd reached adulthood, her life's purpose had solidified itself within her mind, and she no longer had room in her hard and solitary existence for a partner of any kind.

Still, that didn't mean she was wholly ignorant of such things. She was a grown woman, after all, and she still had a woman's needs. To satisfy them, she'd amassed a small collection of

adult toys—Kris thought of them as tools—and she would occasionally resort to visual stimuli too. Even though she'd never experienced it first hand, she knew how a man's anatomy was supposed to look and feel, and there was something decidedly *different* about the thing beneath the sheet. It had ridges and nubs that didn't belong on a human penis.

She wanted to look at it again.

She wanted to *touch* it.

But she knew she shouldn't. Everything about this situation was beyond wrong. She could only imagine how the man would feel if he woke up right now and saw what she was doing to him. If the roles were reversed, and she woke up to find a strange man grinding his body against hers while she was sleeping, she would kick him in the balls. Then she would put a bullet in his head.

She had to put an end to this now, before it went any further. She needed to stand up, put her clothes back on, and get her ass outside to cool off.

Only, the decision wasn't hers to make. Her muscles were no longer under her control. When her hips raised themselves a little, taking her weight off the sheet, it wasn't Kris that did that. Nor was it Kris who made her fingers clutch the edge of the fabric and slowly drag it away from the sleeping man's lap, gradually exposing his hard length.

When she saw it, she let out a small gasp of surprise.

It was an ordinary human penis.

No... *ordinary* wasn't the right word for it. Perfect would have been a more apt description, and it was a whole lot bigger than anything the average guy on the street might be sporting. Still, there were no ridges or nubs that Kris could see. None of that inhuman texture she'd felt a moment ago when she'd been grinding herself against him.

Must have been a crease in the sheet or something. Or just a figment of her overheated imagination.

God, it looked good though. So long and hard and smooth.

"Well, go ahead," a voice whispered. *"Touch it, woman. You know you want to."*

Kris's heart jumped, and she shot her eyes back to the man's face. His eyes were still closed, and based on his serene expression, it seemed as though he was still sound asleep. The only difference was that his features now looked even more handsome in the wavering purple glow filling the interior of the trailer.

"Touch it," the voice said again.

This time it was not an invitation, but a command, and Kris's body obeyed despite her best efforts to resist. Her hips thrust forward slowly, grinding her crotch against him again, only this time there was no fabric to separate them. They were touching for real now, skin on skin, sex on sex.

Kris moaned softly as her wet folds glided up and down the length of the stranger's hard, smooth shaft. Her face flushed

with a mixture of shame and excitement as she continued to roll against him with slow, deep strokes that sent tingles of arousal racing all up and down her spine.

God help her, she wanted more. She wanted to feel him inside her. She wanted to come around him.

Do it, said the voice inside her head.

“No,” Kris whispered. “No, I can’t...”

Her body disagreed. Her hips moved forward until his tip was nestled against her entrance. Then, with a whimper of defeat, she pushed back onto him, and his rock-hard length slid into her dripping heat, filling her completely.

For a moment, Kris’s body remained motionless. The interior of the trailer was still and quiet, save for the purple light dancing over the walls and the ragged sound of her breathing. Then her hips started to move again, working the man’s shaft in and out of her with slow, deep strokes. She tried not to moan, but she couldn’t help it.

Her eyes returned to the man’s face.

He was still sleeping, or at least he seemed to be. Kris braced her hands against the broad muscles of his chest, and she felt his strong heart beating against her palms, slow and steady like the rhythm of her movements. The air was thick with his warm, intoxicating scent. She began to ride him faster, *harder*.

It didn’t take long before she could feel the beginnings of a climax stirring deep within her aching core. Would that finally

put an end to the spell she was under and exorcise whatever demon had taken control of her body?

Kris didn't know, but it seemed like her only hope.

She closed her eyes and squeezed the walls of her vagina around him, willing herself to come. That was when she felt it. The same bizarre texture she'd experienced a few minutes before when she'd been rubbing herself against him through the sheet. Only this time, there was no question about it: all those ribs and ridges and nubs were very, very real. Kris could feel them sliding in and out of her body in excruciating detail.

Whatever was inside her, it wasn't human.

That should have terrified her—perhaps it did a little—but the pleasure far outweighed the fear. Kris bit down hard on her lip and shuddered as an orgasm coursed through her body in waves.

When it was finally over, she found that—*yes*—she was once again in control. Her body was *hers* again.

She started to climb off of the sleeping stranger, but at the last moment, just as his tip was about to slide out of her, his hands shot up, catching hold of her hips, and he dragged back down onto him again. His eyes were open now, and they glittered darkly in the violet haze of the trailer.

“Take it!” the man snarled, though his lips didn't seem to move. “Take it *all!*”

Kris let out a strangled cry as she felt the first hot rush of seed erupt inside her.

CHAPTER 4

Kris stumbled back against the door of the trailer with a thud.

The impact jolted her back to her senses. The light inside the trailer had returned to normal, and she was standing up again, her body fully clothed. As for the man, he was still lying on the floor, just as she'd left him, his privates covered with the sheet Kris had placed over him. The fabric was completely dry.

Had it all been a dream? It had felt so real though.

Too real.

Frantically, Kris pushed a hand down the front of her jeans and touched herself between the legs. She half expected to feel the man's warm semen dripping out of her, but when she brought her fingers out and examined them, the only wetness was her own.

"Fuck," she breathed, feeling both relieved and confused at the same time.

What could have caused such a sudden and intense hallucination like that? Kris knew for a certainty she had not ingested anything. She never touched alcohol or cannabis, and the strongest mood altering substance she ever indulged in was the single cup of black coffee she used to get herself up and moving in the morning. She knew some hallucinogenic drugs—acid for example—could be absorbed transdermally. Maybe the man had LSD on his skin, and she'd touched it without

realizing? Even if that were the case, the effects of the drug wouldn't have set in so abruptly.

Then she remembered: *the scent*.

That part had not been a dream or hallucination. It was real, and Kris could still smell it hanging in the air like an invisible cloud of desire.

She needed to get out of the trailer. Now.

Kris wrenched the door open and stumbled out into the night. The desert air felt surprisingly cool after the stifling heat of the trailer, and it tasted clean and dry—no trace of that strange, masculine scent. She pulled the door shut behind her and leaned back against it, filling her lungs with deep, gulping breaths.

After a minute, the fluttering in her belly had gone away. Her pulse slowed, and a sense of clarity returned to her racing mind.

The first thing she noticed was the van. It was still sitting right where she'd parked it only a few minutes ago. The engine was off, but the single headlight was still on, lancing out into the darkness of the Nevada night.

Kris was stunned. That van contained something she had spent her entire adult life preparing to get her hands on, yet while she had been inside the trailer, she'd pretty much forgotten all about it.

How long had she been in there anyway?

She checked her watch, a cheap but reliable Casio. The glow-in-the-dark digital display told her she'd been inside the trailer for thirty minutes.

Fuck. She was behind schedule.

Kris took one more deep breath. Her heart rate had dropped back to a nice steady sixty beats per minute, and the achy, needful feeling had finally stopped throbbing between her legs. Still, she hesitated with her back against the closed door of the trailer. She was not excited about the prospect of leaving a naked stranger all alone and unattended in her trailer. She wished there was some way she could lock him inside. For a moment, she actually considered going back in there to secure his hands with zip ties, but then she thought better of it.

Before she did *anything* else, she needed to secure the cargo in the back of the van.

Kris walked to the large cinder block structure at the far side of the property. There were two garage doors, and the beam of the van's headlamp painted a fuzzy circle of light on the one to the left. Kris watched her own silhouette come into focus as she strode toward it and knelt to unfasten the latch. The door rumbled like thunder as she rolled it open. Then she went back to the truck, climbed into the driver's seat, and started the engine.

Her eyes flicked toward the window of the trailer. She could see bars of light coming through the slats in blinds. There were no signs of movement, but she didn't have a particularly good vantage point to see inside. She wondered if she ought to go

closer and take a peek, just to see if the man was still breathing.

No. Stay focused. One goddamn thing at a time.

Yet as Kris put the van into gear and got it turned around, her thoughts kept drifting back to the stranger in her trailer, and all the things she'd hallucinated doing to him. It was crazy. She'd spent half her life preparing for tonight, and she wouldn't have thought anything could distract her from the task at hand—not even a perfect man.

Focus, she told herself like a mantra. Fucking focus.

A minute later, she had backed the van into the building. She cut the engine and climbed out. She waited until the garage door was closed before flipping on the half-dozen light switches on the wall.

Light flooded the space.

It was a stark, white room with a smooth concrete floor and a small central drain. Metal shelves lined the back wall, and they were stocked with neatly arranged plastic bins containing duct tape, extension cords, and an assortment of power tools, including drills and saws. Items one might find in any ordinary garage.

The item located near the center of the room was less ordinary.

It was a solid metal chair fastened to the floor with brackets and bolts. The arms and front legs had thick leather straps, similar to the straps on an electric chair. A larger set of straps were built into the back of the chair, like a heavy-duty seat belt

harness. Beside the chair was a stainless steel tray upon which an assortment of scalpels and other surgical tools had been laid out with careful precision.

Kris surveyed the room with a kind of chilly pride. Everything was in order. It was almost time to put her tools to use.

And yet... the image of the naked stranger kept intruding into her mind.

Kris scowled and pushed those thoughts away. She marched across the room to the back of the parked van. The air still carried a whiff of exhaust fumes. With her right hand, she drew the gun from the back of her jeans. With her left, she used the keys to unlock the back of the van. She opened it carefully, and peered at what was inside.

It was a man in his late fifties, dressed in a dark gray sharkskin suit and lying facedown on his belly, unconscious. His hands were bound behind his back with a pair of handcuffs, and a silvery strip of duct tape covered his mouth.

CHAPTER 5

His name was Albert Lee Fish. Two weeks before, he'd been released from the Atascadero State Hospital in California, a maximum security facility for the criminally insane. After twenty-five years of good behavior, the doctors had deemed him rehabilitated and released him back into society. Kris had been there at the time of his release, watching from the trees a half mile away through the scope of a .338 sniper rifle. She could have taken him then, but she had other plans for Mr. Fish.

She had followed him to Nevada, and that was where she'd finally made her move in a parking garage in West Vegas. A needle in the neck had rendered him unconscious in a matter of seconds, at which point she'd deposited him in the back of the black cargo van she'd purchased and modified specifically for that purpose. He wasn't a large man, and more than ten years of consistent strength training had given Kris the power she needed to manhandle him.

Or *woman*handle him.

Now it was time to move him again. Kris set down her keychain on the floor of the van and climbed inside. She kept her pistol drawn, just in case. The man was handcuffed, and he appeared to be unconscious, but Kris wasn't taking any chances.

"Hey," she called, her voice flat. "Can you hear me?"

No response.

She moved closer to the back of the cargo compartment where the man was lying, and she stood over him for a moment, studying his motionless body. Then she gave him a stiff kick in the side with the toe of her boot. A kidney shot. Still nothing.

The drugs were obviously still working. The chemical Kris had injected him with in the parking garage had been a concentrated animal tranquilizer. Figuring out the dosage had been dicey. It needed to be enough to knock him out instantly, but not enough to kill him. Seemed like she'd gotten it just right.

Assuming he wasn't dead.

Kris tucked the pistol into the back of her jeans and knelt. She pressed two fingers against the man's throat. His pulse was slow but strong. Good.

She rolled him over onto his back, then hooked her arms under his shoulders and dragged him to the back of the van. Getting him out was even more difficult than putting him in had been. She could have just dropped him to the floor, but if she did that, there was a chance he might land badly and break his neck or fracture his skull. Kris wasn't about to let things end like that.

She hadn't even gotten started with him yet.

Fortunately, Kris had planned for the difficulty of getting Albert Fish out of the van. There was a metal loading ramp inside the cargo compartment, the kind a delivery driver would

use for moving heavy goods in and out with a dolly. It took Kris a minute to get the ramp set up, then she dragged Fish's limp body down it. By the time she'd gotten him to the floor, the muscles in her legs and lower back were burning, and her heart was slamming against her ribs like a fist. She laid him out on the floor and stood over him, breathing heavily from the effort.

She didn't rest long, however. She needed to get him strapped into the chair before the drugs wore off and he came to. Plus, Fish wasn't the only one she needed to worry about now. If the stranger in her trailer woke up and decided to come investigate, that would be a problem. A big one.

Kris imagined the garage door suddenly rolling upward, and the naked stranger standing there, swaying slightly on his feet. She pictured the expression of shock that would come over his handsome face when he saw what she was doing. The sudden tension in his muscles.

And what about that big thing between his legs? Would that still be as hard as when she'd left him a few minutes ago?

Focus, Kris. Focus...

She stooped again and started to drag Fish's slack body across the room. In addition to a barbell regimen for developing raw strength, she'd also practiced lifting large canvas bags filled with sand to imitate the feeling of moving the dead weight of a human body. Without that training, her present task would have been impossible. Instead, it was merely difficult. Very, very difficult.

After another minute of grunting and groaning, Kris had managed to move the man's body to the foot of the metal chair that was bolted to the floor. She took a deep breath, and with one final herculean effort, she heaved him up onto the seat. Her heart felt like it was going to explode, and her skin was greasy with sweat.

She was almost done. All that was left was to get the man's arms and legs strapped down. In order to do that, she first needed to unfasten the handcuffs holding his wrists behind his back. She turned him sideways and leaned his upper body over the arm of the chair, giving herself access to the cuffs.

Kris dug into her pocket for the key, but her pocket was empty.

Shit.

She'd left her keychain sitting on the floor of the van. Maybe if she hadn't been so busy daydreaming about the naked stranger, she would've remembered to snag it.

Oh well, it would only take her a moment to grab them. Still breathing heavily, she marched back to the van. The keys were right there where she'd left them on the floor of the cargo compartment. She started to reach for them—

—then she froze.

It was that smell again. That scent. Kris wasn't sure where it was coming from. Maybe some of the stranger's sweat had gotten on her clothes when she'd helped him into the trailer, or maybe it had gotten into her hair somehow.

Whatever the case, she caught a whiff of it now, just the faintest little trace, but enough to send her mind right back to the trailer. She was naked again, naked and sweating, as she rode the stranger's hard cock and moaned through gritted teeth.

A sound snapped Kris out of her reverie. The scuff of shoe soles against the concrete floor. Before she had a chance to turn around, she felt the pistol being yanked from the back of her pants, heard the harsh click of the hammer cocking.

Then she felt the cold steel ring of the muzzle pressing against the base of her skull.

CHAPTER 6

Gehn opened his eyes with a groan. Every bone and muscle in his body ached from his impact with the wheeled land vehicle, and the bright lights now stabbing into his eyes only served to increase his pain. He wanted to shut his lids again and give himself back to the painless oblivion of sleep, but he knew he mustn't do that. The keepers were still out there somewhere, looking for him. It was only a matter of time before they discovered his hiding place.

What was this place, anyway?

Gehn kept his eyes open, enduring the burning sensation of the lights until his vision adjusted and he was finally able to see again. He was lying on his back on the floor of what appeared to be some sort of dwelling.

Ah yes, now he remembered. The human had deposited him here. The *female*. She was gone now, but her scent lingered.

Gehn turned his head from side to side, looking around the dwelling. There was a piece of padded furniture to one side of him, and on the other side was something that resembled a primitive viz-screen, though it was dark at the moment. When he lifted his head and looked toward his feet, he saw an array of simple storage cabinets constructed from hardened plant matter.

He noticed something else, too. A thin piece of fabric had been draped over his loins while he was sleeping. Presumably, the

human female had placed it there to cover his aroused breeding organ. The cloth hid his rigid malehood from sight, but it did not fully conceal its presence—the fabric over his groin was sticking up like a canopy over a tent pole.

Damn...

Out of all the pain Gehn was currently experiencing, the ache in his loins was the worst. He was at least two or three planetary rotations into his mating cycle, and his breeding organ was so hard and burning it felt as if it were carved from ice. Lower down, his sacs were so swollen with seed it felt as though they were going to explode at any moment, and his scent glands were pumping out pheromones at an alarming rate. The air inside the dwelling was heavy with his breeding scent, though it wasn't quite strong enough to cover up the human female's delicious odors.

In a way, it was a good thing she had hit him with her vehicle. Had he not been weakened by that impact, he would not have been able to stop himself from breeding her, whether she'd wanted it or not. Gehn was pretty sure she *wouldn't* want it, especially if she found out what he was.

Then again, her own scent told a different story. Her human breeding orifice had been wet and ready to accept his male organ. Gehn could smell it. The odor was different from the scent of a Meszrian female in heat, but only slightly.

Perhaps...

No.

He mustn't think like that. His brain was clouded with hormones, and his mind was looking for any excuse to relieve his painful need. He mustn't allow himself to take the human female by force. He already felt guilty enough for the way he'd used his pheromones back there on the road to manipulate her into helping him.

The last thing he remembered was telling her to leave the dwelling before he passed out from the pain. He didn't think he'd quite been able to finish his sentence, but it seemed as though the human had still gotten the message. That was good. While he was unconscious, he had no control over his scent glands, and he'd already seen the effect his pheromones had on some of the human females back at the facility. The species seemed to be especially susceptible for some reason.

Luckily, he *was* able to remain shifted while he slept. The female would have no reason to believe he was anything other than a human like herself.

He could not stay shifted forever, though. The millions of intradermal muscles that he used to change his appearance were starting to burn from the strain. Sooner or later, he would need to let those tiny muscles relax, and it seemed like a good idea to do that now, while he was alone.

Gehn let out a groan of relief as his body returned to its true form.

He sat up slowly and looked around the room. His eyes had fully adjusted, so he could see everything more clearly, and it suddenly struck him just how tiny the dwelling was, even for a

human. For a full grown Meszrian such as himself, it was downright claustrophobic.

This was immediately followed by another realization. There were no signs of a male habitation within the cramped space, no traces of a masculine scent, save for his own.

The female lived alone.

Surprising. A female as beautiful as this one would surely be desirable to the opposite sex. It made no sense that she would willingly choose to live in such solitude and privation. Then again, Gehn was a Meszrian. His sense of beauty was different.

Anyway, none of that mattered. Just because the human female was unmated, that did not justify using her to satisfy his own biological needs. She had helped him by giving him shelter and a place to hide from his pursuers, if only for a little while. The best way he could repay her would be to leave before she returned and his mating instincts forced him to do things they would both regret.

He would not be able to make it far without food, however.

Grunting softly, Gehn pushed himself to his feet and moved to the end of the dwelling. He could smell the faint odor of nutrients emanating from this area. There was a metal box standing against the wall, and when he opened it, a gust of cold air washed over his scales. A refrigerated food storage unit. Gehn crouched and peered inside.

The lower shelves contained various plants that did little to pique the interests of his carnivorous appetite. The upper shelves were stocked with containers of fluid. He selected one labeled as water.

Gehn shifted his attention to the smaller compartment at the top of the refrigeration unit. It was packed full of meat, but all of it was frozen solid, impossible to eat. Gehn closed the door and turned his attention elsewhere.

All the while, he kept his ears open for any sound of the human female's return.

On a nearby counter, Gehn found a large cylindrical container filled with dry powder and a small plastic scoop. He wet a finger and sampled some of the powder. It was disgustingly sweet, but he could tell it was full of protein.

It would suffice.

He dumped several scoopfuls of powder directly into his mouth, washing each one down with a gulp of water from the bottle. The powder congealed into mushy, mud-like clumps inside his mouth, and the sweet flavor was nearly unbearable, but he managed to choke it down. While he fed, he thought about the human female whose food he was devouring.

She was the most beautiful human he had ever seen.

Actually, she was the *only* beautiful human he had ever seen. He thought perhaps that was just his raging hormones talking, but he knew it wasn't. There was something different about this female. Something special. The ones he had known at the

facility were soft, frail little creatures, but this woman had a toughness to her. A toughness that he liked. Her hair was black as the void of space, and her blue eyes were as cold and hard as chips of ice.

And then there were her scars. A pair of them, one on each side of her mouth. Gehn wasn't sure how she had acquired those scars, he only knew that they made her even more attractive. Perhaps she was a warrior. That would certainly be in keeping with her demeanor and her strength.

A woman warrior. She could give him strong children.

No.

He had already made up his mind about that. He would not breed the woman against her will. It was not his way. He must leave before his instincts got the better of him.

Gehn had finished off almost half the container of protein powder. The hollow feeling was finally gone from his stomach, and he could feel the fire returning to his weary muscles. He knocked back the last of the water and placed the empty bottle on the counter.

Then he turned and went to the door.

He opened it just a crack and peered out. No sign of the human female, only darkness and dry desert air. He opened the door all the way and stepped outside.

Her vehicle was also missing. Gehn recalled that she had parked it in front of her dwelling before helping him inside, but now it was gone. Did that mean she had driven off

somewhere? Perhaps she had gone to fetch a doctor. Or worse, to contact the local peacekeeping force. All the more reason for him to get out of here.

But where was he going to go?

Gehn didn't know. He would just have to figure that out later. For now, moving was safer than standing still.

As he descended the small set of stairs down to the ground, his foot slipped and knocked loudly against the next wooden slab. He took the final step a little more carefully, then he started to make his way across the barren yard.

He'd only made it a few steps when a cry stopped him dead in his tracks. It had come from the larger stone building at the other side of the yard.

Gehn didn't know if it was a cry of anger or of pain. He only knew that it was the human female's voice, and that she was in some kind of trouble.

A moment later, he heard the sharp *BANG* of a human gun.

CHAPTER 7

Kris heard the crackle of duct tape being pulled away from skin, followed by a thin, spidery voice. It was a voice Kris had not heard with her ears in over two decades, but she'd heard it every day inside her head, and it made her skin crawl even more than the gun pressed against the back of her skull.

“Hands up,” the voice said. “Turn around, nice and slow.”

Kris did as the voice commanded, but her mind was going a million miles an hour as she tried to think of her next move. She had practiced both jiu-jitsu and Krav Maga, and she knew techniques for disarming an attacker who was behind her, but it would be easier—and *safer*—to make her move once she had her eyes on her assailant.

She turned slowly, keeping her breath steady, even as her heart threatened to hammer its way out of her chest.

Albert Lee Fish was standing there with the gun pointed right between her eyes. His face looked like a death's head under the stark fluorescent lighting overhead. Kris could see his eyes gleaming within their dark sockets. Were they slightly unfocused from the remnants of the tranquilizer still coursing through his bloodstream? It was hard to tell.

There was a flicker of recognition as those eyes found her scars, and a grim smile spread across the man's face.

“So... it's *you*. My sweet little Kristine. You're all grown up now, but I see you're still smiling after all these years.”

Kris experienced a scorch of hatred behind her breastbone. She wanted to strike, but she held back. Not yet. Not until she was certain of success. She needed to distract him somehow. Keep him talking.

“H-how did you get your hands free?” she asked, faking a stammer.

“A neat little trick, that.”

Fish’s eyes never left her face as he slowly raised his left hand. He was holding a small metal ring, about the size of a wedding band.

“You were careful to empty my pockets, but you didn’t think to remove my ring. Probably didn’t even notice it, did you? It’s got a small lock pick built into it. Had a feeling it might come in handy. I’ve made a few enemies over the years, as you well know. Always figured it would have been one of the fathers who came after me. An older brother, maybe. I never would have guessed it would be *you*.”

The man was a talker, just as Kris remembered. That would be the key to getting the situation back under control. Keep him talking. Keep his attention divided until he let his guard down.

“I guess you’re smarter than you look, Al.”

It was a carefully chosen set of words, part insult, part compliment, a one-two punch aimed at his insecurities and his ego. His smile faltered for a second, but his eyes never left hers, and the gun remained pointed at her head.

“Go sit down in that chair,” he said. “Nice and slow. No quick movements.”

Keeping her hands raised, Kris slowly moved toward the metal chair with the leather straps on the arms and legs. There was no way she was going to let him restrain her. She would make her move before that happened. She just hoped he would slip up first.

Keep him talking. Keep playing with his emotions.

“So, what do you think of the place?” Kris asked, her tone suddenly casual. “I built all this for you, you know?”

“I’m flattered.” Fish flashed a crooked, yellow grin. “How ironic. You went through all the trouble of preparing this playhouse on my account. Now I’m the one who’s going to use it to play with you.”

Kris was right next to the chair now—and the cart loaded with surgical tools.

“P-please,” she said, slipping back into her fearful voice. “You don’t have to do this, Albert. If you just put the gun down and let me go, I promise I’ll forget all about what you did to me and my sister.”

“No you won’t,” the man hissed. “You’ll never forget, and neither will I. Why, I’ve thought about it every day since we were so rudely interrupted. You’re a little old now for my taste, but I think I’ll still enjoy finishing what I started with you.” He chuckled cruelly. “Pity your sister Katherine can’t be here to watch.”

The mention of Kat was the final straw. Kris's rage exploded into a roaring blaze. Her hand reached toward the tray of surgical tools, but Albert Lee Fish didn't see it. He was looking toward the garage door, his attention drawn in that direction by a sudden clatter from outside.

The stranger, Kris thought.

Fish only took his eyes off her for a split second, but it was enough. Kris's fingers plucked a scalpel from the tray beside her. With a shout, she flung it toward the man holding the pistol. The blade flashed as it spun through the air, and the tip of it caught Fish in the chest, just below the collar bone.

Fish winced in pain and squeezed the trigger of the gun. The muzzle flashed, and the report sounded like a bomb going off inside the wide open space of the big garage.

Kris had already ducked in anticipation of the shot. The bullet skewered the empty air where she'd been standing a moment before and smacked into the wall behind her. She charged forward and went for Fish's gun hand with a move she'd practiced thousands of times before—one hand against his wrist, the other on the barrel of the gun, a sharp twist.

Kris felt his finger snap like a twig inside the trigger guard. The pistol went off again, this time punching a neat hole in the side of the delivery van. The muzzle flash singed her fingers, but she ignored the pain.

Fish stumbled backward, clutching at his injured hand. Kris pointed the gun at him, aiming for center mass, just as she'd trained.

“Don’t move,” she snarled.

Fish just glared at her, his dark eyes burning with a mixture of fear and rage. Kris circled around to one side. She never took the gun or her eyes off him.

“Into the chair,” she snapped. When Fish hesitated, she repeated the command: “Into the fucking chair.”

“Why? So you can torture me? No thanks.”

Kris cursed mentally. Fish was right, of course. All that awaited him in that chair was pain. He had no logical reason to follow her commands. He would be better off trying to run or attack. Both options would probably result in him getting shot, but that would be a quicker, easier death than what Kris had planned for him. She could see the gears turning behind the man’s eyes as he tried to work out what to do.

Her own gears were turning too, and turning fast. She didn’t want to kill him, not yet. She wanted to make him pay, and to do that, she needed to get his ass into that chair. Two bullets in his kneecaps would subdue him, but it would be messy.

If only she hadn’t rammed into that stupid, handsome son of a bitch out there on the highway, then she wouldn’t have to deal with any of this.

Fuck it. She aimed the gun at Fish’s right knee and started to squeeze the trigger.

Just then, a loud rumbling filled the room. It took Kris half a second to realize what she was hearing—it was the sound of

the garage door rolling open. Instinctively, she turned her eyes toward the new threat.

Something was standing there in the open garage door.

Something shaped like a man, but not. Its body shone stark and bright against the dark backdrop of the desert night. An easy seven feet of bulging muscles wrapped in smooth, purple snakeskin. A long devil's tail with a spade-shaped tip hung down behind it, and from its groin an erect male organ jutted, its violet surface lined with a pattern of ridges and nubs—a pattern that looked familiar, even though Kris had never seen it before.

Then the scent hit her, carried inward by the soft desert breeze, and she knew.

It was the stranger.

CHAPTER 8

Kris didn't have time to be surprised. A second after she saw the creature, something moved in the corner of her vision, and she realized her mistake. She started to turn toward Fish again, but it was too late. His body collided with hers, and she hit the ground with enough force to push all the air from her lungs. Then he was on top of her, groping for the pistol with his one good hand.

"Give me the gun!" Fish screamed, his voice shrill with fear. "Have to shoot that thing! Have to—"

He disappeared in a violet blur, and Kris was left lying on her back, staring up at the buzzing white fluorescent lights overhead. A split second later, she heard a crash as one of the metal shelving units on the wall collapsed, spilling its contents all over the floor of the garage.

Kris rolled her head in the direction of the sound. Fish was sprawled out on the floor in his sharkskin suit, and the creature was on top of him, pinning him down. Its tail lashed through the air like a purple whip. Fish shrieked as the creature wrapped its claws around his head.

"Oh, God! Help me! *Help meee!*"

Kris realized she still had the pistol in her hand. She rose into a kneeling position and aimed it at the creature.

"Stop!" she shouted in the most commanding tone she could muster. "Don't kill him! Don't—"

With one quick jerk of its clawed hands, the monster wrenched the Fish's head to one side. There was a dull pop, like the sound of someone cracking a knuckle, only louder. Fish went silent. His legs spasmed briefly, then he was still.

"*No!*" Kris screamed.

The creature turned and looked at her over its shoulder. "Flee."

"You weren't supposed to kill him!" Kris shouted. "*I was!*"

The creature's nostrils flared, apparently drinking in her scent. It rose slowly and turned to face her. Its strange, inhuman member was still hoisted with arousal.

"Flee," it growled. "Or shoot me. But do it now."

Kris did neither, but she kept her pistol trained on the creature's chest. Her vision went hazy as tears filled her eyes and poured down her face.

"*I was supposed to be the one to kill him. I spent my whole life preparing for this night, and you stole it from me!*"

"He was going to hurt you."

"No! I was going to hurt him. I was going to hurt him bad. And now I'm going to hurt *you*."

"Then do it," the creature said, "while there's still time."

It was moving toward her now with long strides. Kris had the pistol aimed right at its heart—assuming its internal anatomy was similar to a human's underneath all those lustrous purple scales. Her finger was on the trigger, and she wanted very badly to squeeze it, not because she was afraid of what the

monster might do to her, but because she wanted revenge. Fish's death had been her life's purpose, and this monster—whoever he was—had robbed her of that.

But she couldn't quite bring herself to pull the trigger.

It had something to do with that warm, sweet, sultry scent drifting off the creature's body. The same scent that had put her into a trance back there in the trailer. Her knees were shaking beneath her, not from fear, but from lust. Her face was wet with tears.

The creature closed the distance between them. He pressed his chest against the muzzle of the gun, and just stood there for a moment, as if waiting for her to blow him away. At first, Kris thought he was gloating over her inability to kill him, but when she raised her eyes to his face, his deep purple eyes held only a look of hunger, and perhaps a touch of remorse.

"I warned you," he said.

His hand closed around her wrist and dragged the weapon up and away from his chest. The gun went off, but the bullet flew wide, smashing into one of the fluorescent lights at the far end of the room. There was a pop of sparks, and that side room got a little darker.

The creature shoved her down to the floor. He clutched the front of her shirt with both hands and ripped it open, exposing her chest to the wash of the desert breeze coming in through the open garage door. Kris gasped, and the scent of the creature filled her.

Then his mouth was on her, kissing her bared breasts, drawing her taut nipples between his cool, snakeskin lips. Fangs grazed her skin, and a forked tongue flickered out, laving her flesh with wetness. She tried to cry out, but the words got caught in her throat, just as they had done during her hallucination in the trailer, and now she wondered if it had really been a hallucination after all.

The creature moved lower, his mouth working its way down Kris's belly in a series of kisses so hungry and violent it seemed as though he was trying to suck the skin right off her body. She writhed and mewled beneath him as her blood ran hot and cold with excitement and fear.

"Wait," she whispered. "Don't..."

The creature didn't seem to hear her, or perhaps he simply didn't care. His clawed fingers hooked inside the top of her jeans and tore them open, splitting the denim halfway down her thighs. Another quick tug made short work of her panties. Then he jammed his face between her legs and began to feast on her with wet, muffled snarls. His long tongue rolled against her clitoris, and white-hot pleasure stabbed deep into her core. She arched her back and let out a startled cry that echoed off the walls of the garage and swirled out into the darkness of the night.

"Don't!"

The gun was still clutched tightly in her fist. She aimed it down between her open legs, pressing the end of it against the top of the creature's head. She knew he could feel it, but he

didn't stop or even slow his feasting. Maybe the taste of her was so good it was worth getting killed for. Or maybe he knew she couldn't pull the trigger. His scent was inside her, spiraling through her veins.

And now his tongue was inside her too, thrusting deeper than any human tongue could possibly reach. She could feel its forked tip flickering against her cervix, lapping the juices welling deep within her. She lifted her hips to grind herself harder against his mouth.

When she came, it was like a bomb going off inside her. Her body shuddered against the concrete floor as stars danced across her vision.

Then, suddenly, the pressure of the creature's face was gone from between her legs.

He had pushed himself off her, and now he was lying at her feet, panting with exhaustion. His hard purple shaft pointed straight up toward the ceiling, and his face glistened with wetness. Kris could feel more wetness dripping between her legs and running down her ass. Some of it was hers and some was his. She wondered why he had stopped.

As if reading her thoughts, the creature answered: "My strength is waning, but soon it will return. When it does, I fear I won't be able to stop myself from breeding you. You must get away, woman, while you still can."

"I'm not... going anywhere," Kris said between breaths. "This is... my home."

“Then shoot me,” the creature growled.

“I’m not... going to... do that.”

The creature sighed. “Listen to me, human. I am trying to save you from myself. If you do not either run away or kill me, I will have no choice but to pin you down and breed you. I will fill you with my seed again and again, until my offspring is growing within your womb. There will be nothing either one of us can do to stop it. The breeding instinct is too strong. You must flee or kill me. There is no other way.”

“No,” Kris said, finally catching her breath. “There *is* another way.”

CHAPTER 9

Fifteen minutes later, Kris was crossing the yard in the darkness. The dry, clean aroma of the desert was tainted by the scent of motor oil and grease from the old Nissan truck parked nearby, and a lingering trace of that inhuman, masculine scent, which Kris had not been able to cleanse from her skin and hair, even with a bar of soap and the garden hose.

She had changed her clothing too. A fresh T-shirt, panties, and jeans to replace the ones her mysterious guest had torn to shreds fifteen minutes earlier. Even so, a residue of his scent still clung to her damp hair and skin. She wondered if she would ever be rid of it.

Maybe she'd been permanently stained by that scent.

In her right hand, she was carrying a full-face respirator mask with an NBC-77 SOF air filter attached. She had acquired a couple of them a few years back as part of a somewhat more extravagant plan for abducting Albert Lee Fish—a plan involving the use of a tranquilizer gas. She had since abandoned that approach in favor of the simpler and more direct needle-based method, but she'd kept the masks anyway. One never knew when such things might come in handy. The cylindrical filter was designed to protect against nuclear, biological, and chemical threats. Kris hoped it would work against purple monster musk too.

As she neared the cinderblock structure at the edge of her property, she placed the breathing mask over her head. The

front of the mask had a large pane of clear plastic, so her visibility was only slightly diminished. She secured the rubber seals against her face and adjusted the straps behind her head until the mask was nice and snug. Then she bent over and raised the sliding garage door.

The room inside was nearly pitch black, but Kris could still sense the presence of the creature waiting within. The skin on the back of her neck tingled with fear as she stepped inside. She pulled the garage door shut behind her, felt her way past the ruined front end of the van that was still parked there, and found the light switch on the wall.

She flipped it on.

The room was much as she'd left it a few minutes before. The mess of boxes and tools from the collapsed shelf had been pushed into a pile at the side of the room. Nearby, a gray tarpaulin was spread over a different kind of pile, the mortal remains of Albert Lee Fish. The only parts of him that were visible were his feet sticking out from the edge of the tarp, but that was enough to reignite the burning hatred in Kris's heart.

The creature was right where she had left him too. He was sitting in the metal chair, his arms and legs held in place by the thick leather straps that were built into the chair's frame. His purple scales glittered under the light of the remaining fluorescent lamps beaming down on him from above. When Kris took a step toward him, his forked tongue darted out, tasting the air like a snake.

Heat throbbed between Kris's legs as she remembered how deeply that inhuman tongue had penetrated her. How hard it had made her come.

Hopefully the gas mask she was wearing hid the sudden flush of embarrassment burning in her cheeks.

The mask was certainly fulfilling its main purpose of protecting her from the creature's scent. She couldn't smell anything at all, aside from the slightly plasticky odor of the mask itself. And while the sight of the creature's thick muscles and smooth purple skin touched off a flutter of arousal deep within her core, it was nothing like the wanton frenzy of lust that had overcome her a few short minutes before, when the creature had been on top of her, filling her with his scent.

As for the creature... there was no question about *his* arousal. Kris was just glad she'd thought to cover his lap with a rag after strapping him into the chair. The way the dirty cloth was lifted, it almost looked as if the creature was holding a bottle between his powerful thighs. A really big bottle.

"Are you ready to converse now, human?"

The creature's voice was soft but deep, and Kris could almost feel it rumbling in the hollows of her bones. She realized she'd been staring at him, and her blush deepened. She became even more grateful for the mask.

With a curt nod, she went to the wall and retrieved a metal folding chair that was leaning there. She brought it back to the middle of the room, unfolded it, and placed it about ten feet away from the creature, facing him. She sat.

“I guess we should start with some introductions. My name’s Kristine Morgan, but everybody calls me Kris.” She said *everybody* as if she had a lot of friends. The truth of the matter was that the only people with whom she’d ever been close were her parents and her sister Katherine. They were the only ones who had ever called her Kris, and all of them were gone now. To everyone else, she was just the woman with the scars. “And you? What should I call you?”

“You can call me Gehn.”

“Gehn,” Kris repeated. There was a strange, husky quality to the vowel that her throat couldn’t quite replicate, but the creature didn’t correct her, so she guessed she’d gotten close enough. “Alright Gehn, I guess I’ll go ahead and ask you the million-dollar question—what the hell are you?”

“I am a Meszrian. I come from a far away planet orbiting a far away star. I am what your kind would call an extra-terrestrial.”

Kris’s heart jumped at those words, but only a little. While she’d been washing herself and changing her clothes, she’d had some time to think about the possible origin of the violet-skinned creature strapped to the chair inside her garage. She’d narrowed it down to two possibilities. The first was that he had come here from another planet. The second was that his kind had been hiding on Earth for a long time. He could, after all, make himself look like a human. That second theory struck Kris as being the more disturbing of the two, so she was actually relieved to hear that he was an alien.

Assuming, of course, he was telling the truth.

Kris reckoned he was. Allowing her to restrain him in the chair had earned him several points of trust in her book.

“So, you’re an E.T., huh?” she said, trying to sound nonchalant. “Well, at least you’re not quite as ugly as the one in that stupid movie.”

“I sense that you are making a joke, Kris. Unfortunately, I do not get it. My knowledge of Earth culture is somewhat limited.”

“Oh really? You speak English pretty damn well.”

“I learned the rudiments by listening to radio transmissions from space. I achieved fluency by speaking with my captors.”

That touched something inside her. Something soft and vulnerable that she had kept hidden away for a very long time. Partly it was the hint of bitterness in Gehn’s voice, and the glimmer of sadness in his purple eyes. Mostly, it was those two final words—*my captors*.

Kris knew what it meant to be a captive. She knew all too well.

She had no reason to feel sympathy for Gehn. The bastard had assaulted her less than half an hour before. It didn’t matter that it had felt good. He had forced himself on her against her will, and that was wrong, regardless of what planet he might come from. Still, he *had* stopped things before they had gone as far as they might have. And now this revelation that he had once been a captive...

“I’m sorry,” Kris heard herself say. “I guess I don’t have any business talking about your looks. Not with a face as messed up as mine.”

The alien gave her what might have been a quizzical look.

“You are referring to your scars?”

She decided to change the subject.

“You’re an alien, but earlier you looked like an ordinary human.” *Not ordinary*, Kris thought. *More like perfect*. But she kept that to herself. “How did you do that?”

“It is a skill possessed by every member of my species, a trait inherited from our evolutionary ancestors. Small muscles within our epidermis permit us to alter the shape of our bodies. Our scales contain lattices of nanocrystals that allow us to change colors.”

“Like a chameleon,” Kris said.

“So I’ve been told.”

“Could you, um... give me a demonstration?”

Gehn smirked. It was the first time Kris had seen anything resembling a smile pass across his face. He wiggled slightly against the leather straps holding him in the chair.

“I’m hardly in a position to refuse. What would you like to see me become?”

“A human, like when I found you.”

“Very well...”

Kris watched in amazement as the alien shifted. The transition started at the top of his head and rolled down his body like a wave. His scales bristled momentarily before taking on the smooth appearance of human skin. His long tail retracted itself into his body. In a matter of seconds, Gehn had turned himself into the perfect human specimen Kris had hit with her van a few hours before. Her pulse raced, and something fluttered deep within her core.

She had to admit, he looked good—really good, in fact—but she refused to give in to her attraction to him. Not after what he had done to her, what he had *taken* from her.

“So you can change into anything?” she asked.

“No, not anything. There are limitations. Namely, my skeletal structure. However, I can successfully imitate most species that you would call humanoid.”

Kris was afraid to ask how many such species existed out there.

“So you can’t, like, turn yourself into a blob and slip out of those restraints.”

Gehn shook his head. “No. I am quite secure... *for the time being.*”

Again, Kris would have to take the alien at his word. Then again, if he intended to kill or rape her, surely he would have done so already. Hell, he’d even told her to *kill* him earlier. She hadn’t done that, of course. She wasn’t a killer. Not really. She’d spent most of her life preparing to be one, but the only

man she actually had any interest in murdering was already dead and cold beneath a tarp at the side of the room.

That last thing Gehn had said was a little unsettling, though.

For the time being.

Kris had a feeling they were going to get into that soon enough. At the moment, she still had other questions she wanted answered.

“Okay. So you’re a shapeshifting alien from another planet. How the hell did you end up here, and what the hell were you doing running naked across the desert in the middle of the night?”

“I was sent here by the Interstellar Union to observe your species.”

“So you’re a spy?”

Gehn let his disguise drop, and his skin regained its purple, scaly appearance. “I suppose you could say that. Due to our ability to change how we look, my species has often found employment in the dark arts of espionage and assassination. My mission was a little different, however. Someday, when you humans have mastered interplanetary travel, the leaders of the Union will consider extending an invitation to join the fold of united species. For the time being, they merely want to observe you—your manners, your habits, your culture—to see if you would be a good fit for the Union. They wanted a *man* on the ground, as it were, so they sent me. My shape shifting abilities made me well-suited to the task.”

“I’m guessing things didn’t go according to plan.”

“Not exactly. My ship malfunctioned during entry into Earth’s atmosphere and crashed into the ocean. The United States government recovered the vessel, along with my unconscious body. I was taken to a facility somewhere in the desert.”

“Your captors.” Kris said.

Gehn nodded. “At first they seemed friendly. They gave me food and a clean, safe place in which to recover from my injuries. They also helped me learn their language, which I picked up quickly—my species is good with languages, you see. However, it soon became apparent that my new human caretakers did not view me as a guest. No... I was their prisoner.”

“They wanted to study you,” Kris guessed.

“They were more interested in my ship. They wanted me to show them how to repair it. That’s why they were so keen to communicate with me. They wanted to learn how to construct such machines for themselves. When I refused to tell them what they wanted to know, they tortured me.”

“Oh God,” Kris gasped. “Gehn, I’m so sorry.”

She knew more about torture than she cared to admit.

“You have no reason to apologize, Kris. Besides, I have been trained to endure forms of agony you humans have not even dreamed of. For a long time, I resisted their torments, but eventually I gave in. It was not because they had broken me, though I allowed them to believe they had. The truth is, I had

conceived of a plan to escape. If I could get the humans to rebuild my ship for me, I could use it to return to my planet. It nearly worked... but then something went wrong.”

Kris watched as the alien’s face darkened, and his muscles flexed against the leather straps holding his arms and legs in place. Beneath the cloth covering his lap, his hard shaft seemed to grow even harder and longer, and Kris could see it jumping with the rhythm of his pulse. She felt her own pulse throbbing between her legs, and she quickly looked away.

“What, uh... what went wrong?”

Even though she wasn’t looking at him, she could feel the alien’s eyes on her like a pair of spotlights. When he spoke, his voice was a soft growl that sent goosebumps racing over her skin.

“Mating season.”

CHAPTER 10

Gehn's breeding organ was an aching pillar of need. If it grew any more swollen with arousal, he feared the skin would split open. Lower down, below the base of that throbbing shaft, his heavy sacs felt as though they were filled with hot magma instead of seed. He had endured much torment at the hands of his captors, but none of it compared to this.

And there, sitting only a few short strides away from him, was the source of all his agony.

The human woman.

Kris.

She was wearing a mask now, a simple respirator with a clear face covering and an air filter. As far as Gehn could tell, the mask seemed to be doing a good job of protecting her from the pheromones that were now practically gushing out of his glands, saturating the air inside the room with his breeding scent.

Gehn himself was not so lucky. There was no protective barrier standing between his nose and the woman, and the tangy sweetness of her insides still lingered on his tongue. He could hear the sound of her blood coursing through her arteries, and when he looked closely, he could even *see* it pulsing in the veins of her neck. Hers was a tough little body, built for violence, and that only made Gehn desire her more. His species was not known for breeding their females gently.

“Mating season?” the woman asked, echoing the words Gehn had spoken a moment before.

Gehn sighed quietly. He was going to have to explain it to her, and while his species may not have been known for *breeding* gently, he felt that he owed this woman some gentleness when it came to his explanation of the process. He chose his words carefully, trying his best to phrase everything as tamely as possible without obscuring the important points.

“Once every solar cycle, Meszrians go through a mating season. During this time, a male *must* find a mate, otherwise he will lose his mind and go on a violent rampage. That is how I managed to break free from the facility where the scientists were keeping me. I fled across the desert, using my shapeshifting abilities to camouflage myself against the terrain. But the mating frenzy is still burning within me, and it will not stop until...”

The woman finished for him: “Until you find something to fuck.”

“Basically, yes.”

“Well, I hope you don’t think that excuses what you did to me earlier, because it doesn’t.” She glared at him angrily through the clear visor of her breathing mask. “If you’re so damn horny, didn’t it ever occur to you to jerk off?”

Gehn was not familiar with that term, but he understood the up-and-down gesture the woman made with her fist as she said it.

“It is not that simple, I’m afraid. I wish it were. Truly I do. Unfortunately, a Meszrian’s physiology can tell the difference between real mating and mere... *self*-stimulation.”

“Real mating?” the woman scoffed. “In case you hadn’t noticed, pal, I’m not the same species as you.”

“That doesn’t matter.”

The woman’s expression shifted from irritation to perplexity.

“It doesn’t?”

“Long ago, a plague almost wiped out all the females of my species. As an evolutionary response to this catastrophe, the males developed a trait that has stayed with us into the present epoch. A Meszrian male’s mating fluid contains special enzymes which, if ingested, can make females of other species *compatible* for reproduction.”

“Compatible for reproduction,” the human repeated quietly. Gehn studied her face as that information sank in, but it was impossible to tell what she was thinking. After a moment, she chuckled bitterly. “You know, If I didn’t know any better, I’d say you were feeding me a bunch of lies just to get yourself off the hook for what you did to me a few minutes ago.”

“I do not expect forgiveness,” Gehn told her, “but I *am* telling you the truth. If you don’t believe me, consider my scent. You’ve seen what kind of effect my pheromones have on you, even though we are not the same species.”

The woman thought about that for a moment, then shook her head. “After everything that’s happened tonight, I guess I’ll

believe just about anything. So tell me this—how long does the mating season last?”

“Approximately ten Earth days. I’m about two days in already.”

“Okay. So you’ve got a little more than a week left. No problem. I’ll keep you strapped in that chair until it’s over. I can bring you food and water. Going to the bathroom might be a problem, but—”

“It won’t work,” Gehn interrupted.

“Why not?”

He flexed his muscles against the leather straps keeping him in the chair. “These restraints will not hold me much longer. When you hit me with your vehicle, it weakened me, but my strength is rapidly returning. Soon I will break free, and when that happens, you need to be as far away as possible.”

“What will you do after you’re free?”

“I will have to flee across the desert again.”

“The government will find you. They’ll take you back to that facility.”

Gehn smiled. “Perhaps... but I am fast, and I’m good at hiding.” He knew Kris was right, though. His captors *would* find him eventually. As his mating frenzy got worse, he would become increasingly disoriented. Earlier that same night, he’d been so out of his head he hadn’t even seen the headlights on Kris’s vehicle until it was too late.

Still, he would rather sacrifice himself than force the woman to breed against her will.

“And what about him?” Kris gestured to the man lying at the side of the room under a sheet. Gehn had broken his neck in a fit of protective rage.

“I killed him,” Gehn said. “You bear no responsibility for that.”

“Yeah well, if the cops find him here and figure out who he is, they’ll never believe it wasn’t me who killed him.”

“Who is he?” Gehn asked.

The woman’s expression darkened behind her breathing mask.

“That’s a long story.”

“We still have some time.”

The woman was leaning forward in her chair, her elbows resting on her knees, her eyes glaring at the dead body beneath the sheet. For a long moment, it seemed as though she wasn’t going to say anything, but at last she sat back and let out a weary sigh. When she spoke, Gehn could hear the sound of angry tears trembling just below the surface of her words.

“His name was Albert Lee Fish,” she said. “Over a period of seven years, he abducted and raped a dozen little girls. I would have been one of them if the police hadn’t shown up in time. I guess I was the lucky one. Lucky thirteen.”

The bitterness in her voice let Gehn know she didn’t consider herself lucky. His heart ached for the human woman, but he

said nothing. He just waited silently for her to go on.

Eventually, she did.

“I had a sister,” she said, her voice cracking. “A twin sister. Her name was Katherine. She was my best friend in the whole world. We did everything together. I have a picture of her...”

She got up from her chair and went to the driver’s compartment of the black vehicle that was parked inside the room. It was the same vehicle Gehn had ridden in earlier, when the woman had brought him to this place. The same one that had collided with his body. After a moment, she returned, carrying a small piece of paper in her hand. She stopped right in front of Gehn’s chair, close enough that he could have touched her if his arms had not been bound. She held the piece of paper up for him to inspect. It was a primitive photographic image of two young humans, both with black hair and blue eyes. Gehn couldn’t tell them apart.

“That’s us,” Kris said quietly. “Me and Kat. We were eight years old when that picture was taken. A year later is when it happened...”

There was a cart laden with surgical tools standing next to Gehn’s chair. The woman laid the photograph down on the cart and took a step back, hugging her arms around her body. Even with the breathing mask covering her face, Gehn could see that her eyes were wet with tears.

“We had gone to the fair. I guess you probably don’t know what that is, do you? It’s like a traveling amusement show. There are rides and games and stalls where you can buy toys

and unhealthy food—a kid’s dream come true. Kat and I were so excited. We’d never been to the fair before. Our parents weren’t with us that day. A friend of the family had taken us, along with several other children. Somehow, in all the excitement, we got lost. When we couldn’t find our group again, we started to get scared. Then we met this friendly man who claimed to work for the fair. He said he knew where our friends were, and he was helping them look for us. He said he would take us back to them. Our parents had taught us not to trust strangers, but the man seemed so friendly, so harmless...”

She shuddered.

“He wasn’t harmless, though. And he didn’t take us back to our friends. He tricked us into getting into his vehicle, a van kind of like that one over there. When he started to drive away from the fair, we knew something was wrong, but there was nothing we could do about it. We tried to scream, but nobody could hear us, and we couldn’t just jump out of a moving vehicle. Fish took us to his house way out in the woods and tied us up, then he took Katherine to a different room. I didn’t see what he did to her, but I heard it all. She was crying the whole time, calling for me to help her, but I was only little, and there was nothing I could do.”

As Gehn listened, he felt his body tremble with rage toward the man he had killed. Gehn did not like killing, but he took some small comfort in knowing that the man had deserved to die. He only wished he could offer some comfort to Kristine, but there was nothing he could do or say, so he just sat and listened.

“After he was done with my sister, Albert Lee Fish came for me. He asked me why I was crying... said he wanted me to be happy, and he knew just how to cheer me up. That’s when he took a knife and gave me these.” She pointed at the scars behind her mask. “He said little girls should always be smiling.”

Gehn’s heart felt like a solid lump of stone in his chest.

“How did you get away?” he asked.

“The police arrived before Fish had a chance to do all the things to me that he’d done to Katherine. They’d been investigating him for some time, and they stormed his house just in time to save me... but not my sister. Katherine was still alive, but Fish had raped and beaten her. She was pretty much catatonic when they found her. She never recovered. She lasted another four years until finally she couldn’t take it any more. When she was thirteen, she took her own life. Hung herself one night while everyone else was sleeping. She was my best friend in the whole world.”

Gehn looked around the room at the shelves of tools, the black van, the cart full of surgical tools, and finally the strange metal chair with the straps where he was now sitting. He had been wondering what the purpose of this room was. Now he understood.

“That’s why you prepared all this, isn’t it?”

Kristine nodded. “After Katherine died, I swore I would make Fish pay for what he had done. I trained myself for combat and

stealth, and I started gathering the tools and knowledge I needed to inflict as much pain as possible.”

“I can’t believe the authorities let Fish live after what he had done.”

“I guess you still have a lot to learn about us humans then. You’ve seen firsthand how cruel we can be, but sometimes I think mercy is our biggest flaw. The court decided Fish was insane, incapable of distinguishing right from wrong. His expensive lawyers had something to do with that decision. Fish came from a very wealthy family, you see. Anyway, the judge sentenced him to a hospital for the criminally insane. For a long time, I thought I was going to have to break in and steal him, and I made plans to do exactly that. Then, a few months ago, things changed. The doctors at the hospital said that Fish had been ‘rehabilitated.’ A few weeks ago, they let him go.”

“Unbelievable.”

“Yeah, but it made things a whole lot easier for me. I caught up with him in a parking garage in Las Vegas. He was already on the prowl for new victims. I knocked him out with drugs and put him in my van. I was bringing him back here when I ran into you.”

Her eyes lit up with a fury that chilled Gehn to his bones.

“I built this place to be a torture chamber. I was going to strap him down in that chair where you’re sitting and take him apart piece by piece. I was going to make him beg the way his victims had begged... but then you went and killed him before

I had a chance to hurt him. I spent my whole life preparing for this night, and you ruined it!” she shouted. “You ruined everything!”

“I’m sorry,” was all Gehn could say.

He didn’t really mean it. Yes, the man had deserved every bit of pain the woman had prepared for him, but it wouldn’t have brought Kris any joy. She would have ended up hurting herself more than Fish. The bastard had given her scars on her face. If she’d gone through with her plan, she would have given herself scars on her soul. She probably didn’t understand that now, but maybe one day she would.

“Don’t be sorry,” Kris said. Her anger seemed to have passed. “You didn’t know any of that when you killed him. You were just trying to protect me.”

Yes, Gehn thought. And I did protect you, only not from Fish.

Then out loud, he said: “Nevertheless, I am sorry, Kris. I’m sorry for everything that has been taken from you. You are a good person, and you deserve better than this. You deserve a happy life, a good mate to care for you, a family. Perhaps now, with Fish gone, you can finally have all that.”

She turned away from him. “I don’t think so. I don’t really like men. You can probably understand why. Besides, none of them would want me anyway, not with a face that’s all fucked up like mine is.”

“I think your face is beautiful,” Gehn said, and he meant it.

“The rest of you too. Your body, your spirit, all of it.”

She turned and looked at him with surprise in her eyes. She opened her mouth to say something, but he quickly cut her off.

“You should go now, Kristine. I don’t know how much longer these bonds will be able to hold me.”

She hesitated for a long moment, then nodded slightly.

“Okay. Goodbye Gehn,” she turned and headed for the door.

“And good luck.”

“You too, Kris.” He looked at the cart beside his chair and noticed that the photograph was still lying there on top of the unused surgical tools where she had placed it earlier. “Kris wait, you forgot your picture.”

“I don’t need it anymore,” she said without looking back.

“I’ve got it memorized.”

Then she opened the big sliding door and stepped out into the night.

CHAPTER 11

It took Kris all of ten minutes to get her things packed, and five of those minutes were spent on her knees in the trailer, sobbing her eyes out. It was the first time in a long time that she'd allowed herself a good cry, and she had needed it more than she'd realized. Once the tears had run out, she gathered a few sets of clothes from the closet and stuffed them into an old worn out duffle bag. She grabbed a pistol and a few boxes of ammo from the safe built into the floor of the trailer, plus a couple bottles of water from the fridge, and she stuffed those into the bag along with her clothes. Then she went outside.

She was still wearing the breathing mask. She'd been worried the inside of the trailer would still be saturated with Gehn's pheromones, and she feared they might make her do something foolish. Now that she was outside, she figured it was safe. She loosened the straps at the back of her head and pulled the mask away from her face. She dropped it on the ground by her feet.

Kris didn't know where she was going to go next, but she was pretty sure she wouldn't be needing a gasmask.

She inhaled deeply, drinking in the warm night air. After the blank nothingness of the mask, the desert seemed utterly alive with odors. Kris thought she could smell every grain of sand in the desert, every flake of rust on the old machine parts strewn around her property. She could even smell the bitter spice of the sagebrush growing on the slopes below.

She could not, however, smell Gehn.

Kris reckoned she ought to be grateful for that. She knew what kind of effect the alien's scent would have on her, how it would make her lose control completely. Nevertheless, she couldn't help feeling a little twinge of disappointment knowing she would never experience it again, never feel it filling her senses like a drug. If only...

No.

There was no way it could ever work.

Kris walked over to the old Nissan truck parked at the edge of her property and chucked her duffle bag in the back. She'd decided to use the pickup to make her escape. It was better suited to the job, plus it had two working headlights. The van had served its purpose, but now she didn't need it anymore. Besides, it was parked in there with him, with Gehn.

As Kris turned the truck around, the beam of the headlights swept across the closed garage door, and she couldn't help imagining the scene inside. The muscular alien with his purple scales and long sinuous tail strapped into the seat she had welded together for an entirely different purpose. The image sent a sudden surge of arousal rolling over her body like a wave. No man had ever made her feel that way before, and she was certain no one would ever make her feel that way again.

Maybe in another life, she thought, but then it occurred to her—in any other life, none of this would have happened. She wouldn't be living way out in the middle of the desert all by herself. She never would have hit Gehn with her car. She never

would have gotten the chance to look into those strange, violet eyes that had seen other worlds.

At the top of the trail leading down to the highway, Kris stopped the truck, rolled down the window, and listened. The night was deathly silent. No sounds of traffic. No sounds of jets or helicopters either. If Gehn's pursuers were still looking for him, they weren't looking around here. At least not yet, anyway.

Maybe he would be able to get away after all. Kris sure hoped so. If he made it through the mating season without getting caught, he would be in the clear. With his shapeshifting abilities, he would be able to blend right into human society. And with looks like his, he would have no problem finding some beautiful woman to help him get through the next mating season whenever it rolled around.

I think your face is beautiful, he had told her. *And the rest of you too. Your body, your spirit, all of it.* Nobody had ever told her she was beautiful before. Not since she was a little girl.

Somewhere in the distance a coyote howled, jarring her back to the present.

Time to go.

Kris put the truck in gear and began driving down the trail to the highway. All the way down, she couldn't stop thinking about the alien in her garage. She couldn't stop hearing his deep, soft voice rumbling in her ears, couldn't stop thinking about the way he looked at her with those strange, violet eyes.

By the time she reached the end of the trail, her heart was beating out of control.

She put the truck in neutral and sat there with her headlights cutting horizontally across the highway. There was no other light in either direction. It suddenly occurred to her, she hadn't decided which way she was going to go, left or right.

Or...

No.

The whole situation was so surreal. She wanted to say it felt like a dream, but really, it didn't feel like that at all. It was more like *waking up* from a dream, a long one and a bad one. She'd spent her entire life preparing for this night, and now it was over. Albert Lee Fish was dead, and his death hadn't brought her sister back. Torturing him wouldn't have brought Katherine back either. Kris could see that now. She could see it so clearly, it seemed almost funny it had never occurred to her before.

She looked at the highway again. Darkness to the left. Darkness to the right. Nothing.

Many times over the years, Kris had thought about how things might have been different, how Fish might have taken her first instead of her sister. Kris had always thought she would have wanted her sister to get revenge. She assumed that was what Katherine wanted her to do, too. Now she realized she'd been wrong. If their roles had been switched, and she'd been in Katherine's place, she would have wanted her sister to live life, to be happy.

She would have wanted her to find a man who made her feel beautiful.

Kris put the truck in gear.

CHAPTER 12

Inside the garage, Gehn listened to the rumble of the engine and the crunch of the tires as Kris's vehicle drove away down the hill. Gradually, those noises faded away completely, until all that was left was the sound of his own breathing, the buzzing of the electric lights overhead, and the occasional howl of a desert animal somewhere in the distance. That low and lonesome cry reminded him of the wild *xanha* that stalked the forests of equatorial Meszria, where he had grown up. It made him feel a little homesick.

Yet he did not miss his planet half as much as he missed Kris. As he sat there in the cold metal chair, waiting for his strength to return, all his thoughts were of her. She was a brave little thing, and she would have made a fine mother for his young—but that was the very reason he'd had to let her go. She deserved so much more than he could ever offer her. She deserved a human mate. Gehn hoped she found one, even though that thought made him burn with jealousy.

Instinctively, his muscles twitched and strained against the leather straps holding his legs and arms.

It wouldn't be much longer now.

If only he could have touched her one more time. He would have liked to hold her in his arms, to cradle her beautiful face in his hands while he kissed her gently. He did not mind her scars the way human males apparently did. In his eyes, they were a sign of strength. He hated the way she had gotten them,

but they were a part of her now, so he loved them. He would have liked to have been able to express these things to her while he held her and kissed her gently... but his mating instincts would not allow him to be gentle. His body needed to breed, and breeding was a brutal, messy business for one as far gone as himself.

A sound from outside tore Gehn from his reverie. A vehicle was approaching, its tires grinding their way up the path that led to the top of the property. Whoever it was, they were driving fast. After a few short moments, the vehicle skidded to a stop right outside the garage.

Had his captors found him so quickly then? It was a good thing Kris had left when she did. He would have hated for her to get tangled up in this mess. Or perhaps she had alerted the authorities to his presence as soon as she'd left. Gehn didn't think she would do something like that, but he wouldn't blame her if she did. After the way he had forced himself on her earlier, he deserved it.

Still, he wasn't ready to give himself over to his captors quite so easily. He flexed his muscles again and strained against his bindings with all his might.

The leather creaked and groaned... but did not break.

His strength still had not fully returned.

Outside, the vehicle's engine shut off. A door opened... closed... then footsteps. Had his captors only sent one person to collect him? Surely not. They knew what he was capable of when enraged.

As the big sliding door began to roll open, Gehn prepared to try his straps a second time. Then the door opened all the way, and he froze.

It was her. It was Kris.

Gehn couldn't believe his eyes. For a moment, he thought he must have fallen so deeply into the breeding frenzy that he had started to hallucinate. Then her scent reached him, warm and musky and sweet, and he knew she was real. His Kris had come back for him. Gehn's heart lifted with joy at the sight of her, but a moment later it clenched with concern as he noticed something else.

She wasn't wearing her breathing mask.

"Kris!" he gasped. "What are you doing here?"

The woman didn't answer him right away. She took her time closing the garage door behind her, bending at the waist to give him a nice, long look at her firm backside wrapped in the tight denim of her jeans. A tear below one of the pockets gave him a glimpse of the smooth, pink flesh beneath. His breeding organ throbbed under its covering, and pre-seed fluid leaked from his tip.

"What's the matter?" the woman asked, turning to look at him with her hands on her hips. "Aren't you glad to see me?" The edge of her mouth tugged up into a smirk. "Judging from that big hard thing between your legs, I'd say you are."

She was right. He *was* happy to see her. At least his body was happy, and his heart—but his mind feared for her safety.

“Kris, you shouldn’t be here.”

“What do you mean? This is *my* garage. I built it with my own two hands.”

As she walked toward him, Gehn could see the effects his scent had on her body. Tiny bumps stippled the exposed flesh of her arms and neck. The tips of her breasts made their presence known as they became erect and pressed outward against the thin fabric covering them. Her pupils dilated in spite of the bright fluorescent light filling the room.

There was one more reaction which Gehn could not see, but he could *smell* it, and it made his mouth water with lust. It was the scent of feminine wetness welling between the human’s legs.

Gehn’s body jerked against his restraints. The leather straps held, but only barely.

“Kris, listen to me. My strength is returning. This chair isn’t going to hold me much longer. Once I’m free, I won’t be able to protect you from myself.”

“Then don’t.”

She was right in front of him now, so close he could feel the heat emanating from her body. The scent of her skin and her arousal was driving him insane with desire. Beneath its cloth covering, his cock was weeping precum.

“You don’t understand,” he growled. “It won’t just be sex, Kris. I will breed you. I will *impregnate* you.” At this point in the mating season, his semen would be teeming with sperm.

There was no doubt he would make a baby inside her on the very first try.

The woman shivered at his words, but her eyes remained firmly locked on his.

“I understand,” she said, “and I accept. I want you to use me however you need to, and afterward... I want to feel your child growing inside me.”

Gehn was dumbstruck by the woman’s words, but he was even more surprised by what she did next. Resting her tiny hands against his chest for balance, she leaned in and kissed him, a deep, slow kiss that sent electric impulses racing down his spine. Between his legs, his cock bucked and jumped like it a creature with a mind of its own.

“Free me,” he said when they finally broke off their kiss.

“Unfasten my straps, woman. Do it now.”

Kris shook her head. “Nope. Sorry. You have to do that yourself.”

“But...”

She laid a finger across his lips to silence him. “I built this chair from scratch, you know. Welded all the pieces together myself. I designed it for torture, and that’s what I’m going to use it for now. I’m going to torture you, Gehn. I’m going to torture you until you’re able to set yourself free.”

At first, he did not comprehend the woman’s meaning. Judging from the crazed look in her eyes, he half expected her to grab one of the blades off the cart beside the chair and start cutting.

Instead, she sank to her knees in front of him and pulled away the rag that was covering his lap.

Then she bowed her head and took him between her lips.

CHAPTER 13

Kris moaned softly as the alien's long, thick cock slid into her mouth. His scales were as smooth as snakeskin against her tongue, and the inhuman ridges lining his shaft made her sex flutter with anticipation. She knew before the night was over, she would feel those ridges moving deep between her legs, but there was something else she needed to take care of first.

Gehn had told her that *ingesting* his semen would make her compatible, and that was exactly what she intended to do.

She probably should have been nervous. She'd never pleased a man with her mouth before. Hell, she'd never even kissed anyone until tonight. But the alien's brutal body was telling her everything she needed to know. Every groan, every twitch of his muscles spoke volumes. And more than anything, it was his strange, masculine scent that showed her the way. That scent was so much stronger down here between his legs. It engulfed her and seemed to take possession of her like a demon, guiding her like an invisible hand on the back of her head. She could feel the pulse of his blood beating against her tongue, and the flavor of his precum filled her mouth, salty and a little bit sweet. The stuff was spilling out of him like crazy. It wouldn't be much longer now.

Above her, Gehn let out a deep, rumbling sound that was equal parts lust and fury.

“Set me free, woman, or else I'm going to make you *pay*.”

Kris drew her head back and wiped the dribbles from her chin. She could tell by the look in Gehn's eyes that the mating frenzy had full control of him now.

"That's what I'm counting on," she whispered.

She knew she shouldn't tease him like that. It was about as smart as poking a tiger that was about to be let out of its cage, but she just couldn't help herself. His scent was all over her now—all over her, and inside her too—and it was sending her into a frenzy of her own. She braced her hands against his thick thighs and pushed herself to her feet.

"That's a good girl," Gehn purred, misunderstanding her actions. "Undo these straps for me, and promise I'll go easy on you."

She didn't undo the straps.

She undid her belt.

"What are you doing?" the alien snarled.

Kris didn't answer. Not with words, anyway. She just slipped her belt free from the belt loops and tossed it away to clatter against the hard concrete floor. Her shirt was the next to go. She took her time with it, savoring the hungry look on Gehn's face when he finally saw her bare breasts and rock-hard nipples. Next, she removed her boots and socks, followed by her jeans, and finally her panties. By the time she was finished with her little strip tease, the alien was practically foaming at the mouth. His muscles were bulging with tension, and thick veins were snaking across his arms and neck.

Kris figured those straps had about two minutes left before they finally gave out.

She would have to work fast.

She dropped to her knees and wrapped her lips around him again, bobbing her head with a greater urgency, taking a little more of him inside her with each stroke. Her fingers curled around the base of his shaft and worked up and down, twisting and turning to spread her saliva over every inch of him.

“Do you like the taste of my cock?” the alien grunted through clenched teeth. “Enjoy it while you can, little human. As soon as I’m free, I’m going to punish you with it.”

Gehn’s words sent a tingle of fear shivering down Kris’s spine, but she didn’t let up. She was surprised by how deep she was able to take him without gagging, all the way to the back of her throat and beyond. That had to be another effect of the alien’s pheromones. The feeling of him so deep inside her made Kris’s pussy drip with excitement.

Suddenly, she became aware of something moving between her legs—a long, cool tongue lapping up her arousal. That sudden, unexpected touch startled her, and she tried to gasp, but the sound was blocked by the hard girth filling her mouth. She was just about to pull back when she realized what was licking her.

It was Gehn’s tail.

That long, inhuman appendage was the one part of Gehn’s anatomy she had not been able to strap down. It was just long

enough to reach between the legs of the chair and touch her with its broad, blade-shaped tip. It glided between her folds, gathering her slippery wetness, then it rolled against her throbbing clitoris, sending little sparks of pleasure spiraling deep into her core.

They both came at the same time: Kris with a muffled cry, Gehn with a savage roar. The first gush of his climax went straight down her throat before she even had a chance to taste it. The second filled her mouth with salty cream. More followed, and Kris did her best to swallow it all, but in the end she had to pull back, gasping for breath while the last few ropes of fluid painted her face and hair with sticky heat, marking her.

Then Kris heard a sound like the cracking of a bullwhip. Suddenly, a fist was in her hair, tilting her head back. She looked up at Gehn and saw a wicked smile spread across the alien's face.

“Bad human,” he rumbled.

He released her hair, and she tumbled backward onto her butt in front of the chair. Her brain was telling her to run, but her body remained frozen in place. All she could do was sit there and watch in awe and terror as the alien broke free from his bonds.

One of his arms was still trapped, but a quick flex of his muscles broke the thick leather straps like they were made of paper. Next he kicked his left leg, then his right, and those straps suffered the same fate, splitting apart with the same

whiplash sound Kris had heard a moment before. The alien rose from the chair and towered above her like a purple colossus. He glared down at her with hunger in his eyes. A glistening string of semen dangled from the tip of his hard cock.

Dear God, Kris thought. What have I done?

In a flash, the alien was on her, pinning her down against the floor of the garage. The concrete was hard against her back, yet somehow Gehn's muscles were even harder. His cock was the hardest of all, and he drove it into her with a brutal thrust that forced all the air from her lungs. His girth stretched her to her limit, and the inner muscles of her pelvis ached from the strain, but the alien didn't give her any time to get used to it or get comfortable. He'd told her he was going to punish her with his cock, and that was exactly what he did. Before Kris even knew what was happening, her knees were pinned back against her shoulders, and Gehn was pounding into her with merciless, dominating thrusts. His taut pelvis slammed against her, jolting her with every stroke of his ribbed shaft. His tip brushed against the deepest part of her.

"Take it," the alien growled, "Take it all."

He was like a wild animal on top of her, violent and frenzied. Kris had no choice but to surrender to his fury, so that was what she did.

"I'm yours," she whispered. "Use me, Gehn. Fill me."

The alien snarled, and pounded her even harder.

She came three times before Gehn joined her with his own release. When it finally happened, he speared himself into her as far as he could go and threw back his head in a roar of triumph. Kris felt his cock pulsing within her, felt his liquid heat spreading through her insides, felt it overflow and trickle down her ass.

Her heart was already racing, but it shifted into high gear as the full reality of the situation settled over her. Gehn had spilled his seed inside her. She was going to be pregnant with his baby now. Kris knew it didn't always happen on the first time for humans, but she was pretty sure a Meszrian male in the throes of his mating cycle wouldn't need more than one shot to make it happen. As for her own cycle, it was about two weeks until she expected her next period. She was as fertile now as she was ever going to be.

It was going to happen, she was sure of it.

Kris opened her mouth to say something, but before she had a chance to form any words, Gehn lifted her off the ground and stood up with his cock still buried deep inside her. Kris hooked her legs around his waist and wrapped her arms around his neck, hanging on for dear life.

“Gehn...? What are you doing?”

He answered with a grunt and carried her across the garage. A moment later, her back thumped against the side of the van hard enough to leave a dent. The alien cradled her ass with his clawed hands and started thrusting into her again.

Evidently he wasn't finished with her just yet.

And Kris wasn't complaining. Gehn's thrusting was still bestial, but it was a little less frantic this time, and she was able to enjoy all those incredible ridges and nubs lining the length of his rock-hard shaft. She could feel every detail of him as he moved inside her, stimulating her in ways no human male ever could. She rolled her head back against the side of the van and moaned with pleasure as the alien fucked her hard and deep.

Then something brushed against her backside, and she gasped in surprise.

It was Gehn's tail again. Kris was starting to wonder if that thing had a mind of its own. The slow, gentle way it caressed her was a stark contrast to the alien's rough, animalistic fucking. The tip of it slithered between her spread cheeks and tickled her rear hole, making her mewl and squirm against the side of the van.

"Oh God!" Kris whined. "Gehn! What are you doing to me?"

Gehn just growled and fucked her harder.

The tip of his tail pressed against her anus. There was a moment of resistance, but the tail insisted, and at last it wriggled its way into her, aided by the mess of cum and arousal that was seeping out of her other hole. The sensation of fullness was like nothing Kris had ever experienced before.

Another climax exploded through her. Her body quaked with the force of it. The walls of her pussy fluttered and squeezed around Gehn's thrusting shaft, and he rewarded her with another load of hot seed. It was his third climax of the

evening, but Kris never would have guessed that from how big it was. When he finally slid his cock out of her, a veritable river came gushing out behind it.

“Oh my God,” Kris breathed as the alien set her down on her own two feet again. “Gehn, no wonder you were so out of control.”

The alien spun her around so she was facing the van. He gave her a rough shove, bending her over at the waist, and she had to slap her hands against the side of the van to keep from falling over.

“Gehn?”

“Not... done...”

The alien grabbed her by the hips and plunged into her from behind. His pelvis slammed into her with every stroke, spanking her ass while he fucked her pussy. Kris moaned, and pushed back into him, meeting him thrust for thrust, pushing his cock even deeper inside her body. The room echoed with the sharp sounds of skin striking naked skin.

Kris reached one hand back between her legs and found Gehn’s massive balls. She would have thought they’d be the size of two grapes after all the cum he’d spilled into her, but they were still as big and heavy as ever. Each of them filled her palm completely. She gave them a firm squeeze.

“That’s it,” Kris whispered. “Get it all out, Gehn. Every last drop.”

This time, it was the alien’s turn to surrender.

Somehow, his final climax was the biggest of all. At least that was how it felt to Kris. She tilted her head down and watched as it dripped out of her in sticky white globs that ran down the insides of her thighs and splattered onto the floor between her feet.

At last, Gehn stilled himself behind her. Kris waited for him to make the first move. After a moment, his cock slid out of her, chased by more dribbles of seed.

“Kris?”

She stood up and turned to face him. All the animal fury had left him, and a look of genuine concern had taken its place. His eyes went to the big dent in the side of the van, then shifted back to Kris’s face. He caressed her cheek, and his thumb slid over her scars like they weren’t even there. She had never thought a man would ever touch her like that. Then again, Gehn wasn’t exactly a man.

“Kris, did I... did I *hurt* you?” His voice was tight with concern.

Kris didn’t answer. Instead, she just leaned in and planted a kiss directly over his heart. She could feel it pounding hard against her lips. Then, placing her hands against his sides for support, she slowly lowered herself down to her knees in front of him. His cock was still rigid with arousal, and his shaft was completely coated with seed. Kris started at the base and gradually worked her way up to his tip, carefully cleaning every inch of him with her tongue.

CHAPTER 14

Afterward, they lay curled together on the floor of the garage, basking in the cold electric glow of the fluorescent lights.

Gehn was deeply concerned for his new mate's comfort. He feared that the concrete floor was too hard for her, and offered to let her lie on top of his body instead.

She just laughed at that.

“Are you kidding? Your body's twice as hard as this floor is. Besides, the concrete feels like a featherbed after the hard pounding you just gave me.”

Gehn smiled. He had been right about the little human. She was hard in her own way too. Hard enough to withstand the onslaught of a rut-crazed Meszria male. Hard, tough, and a little mean. Those were good qualities for a mate to have. Even better qualities for a mother. And she *was* going to be a mother soon, the mother of *his* children. Of that, Gehn was certain. Her scent sang a song of fertility, and he knew his own seed was as potent now as it would ever be. There was no doubt it would take hold inside her and grow into a beautiful child—a hybrid child, part Meszrian and part human, the first of its kind. That thought made Gehn's smile grow even bigger. He pulled his mate closer and buried his face in her dark hair. Her skin was damp with perspiration, and she smelled of their breeding, a dirty, delicious perfume that made Gehn's cock stir with renewed arousal. It wouldn't be long before he would need to breed her again.

His mate gasped when she felt his organ pressing against her flesh.

“Already?” she giggled as she reached down and fondled his sacs. “How the fuck do you have anything left in there?”

Gehn kissed her on the lips. “It is Meszrian mating season, little one. I will need to use you many more times before it is through.”

“In that case, I hope it lasts a long time,” she said, grinning, but after a moment, her smile disappeared. “Gehn... can I ask you something?”

“What is it, my mate?”

“Do you... do you already have a mate waiting for you back home?”

“No. There is only you, Kris. You are my only mate.”

Her smile returned, but there was a curious look in her eyes. “I believe you, Gehn... but you must have gone through the mating season before, right?”

He understood what she was asking. “In the distant past, it was usually the case that a male would find his mate during his first season of sexual maturity. After that, the pair would remain together forever, or at least until one of them died. These days, things are a little different. There are medicines which a Meszrian male may take, either to curb his instinctual urges, or to block the enzymes in his seed which make a female compatible for breeding.”

In the past, Gehn had relied on the latter. He had known his fair share of females in his day, all of them from species that were not his own. None of them had been his mate, however, and now, as he tried to think of them, he found their names and faces fading into obscurity, the way a dream fades upon awakening. He had found his true mate now, and she was the only mate he would ever know. From now on, all his dreams would be of her, all of his love would be for her alone.

And all of his lust too.

His cock was now as hard as tempered steel in her little hand. He lifted her leg, spreading her open, and rubbed himself against her, working his tip between her glistening folds, smearing her breeding hole with his pre-seed fluid. One quick thrust was all it would take for him to enter her again...

But he held back.

He would not have been able to do that a few minutes ago.

“What’s the matter?” his mate asked. She shifted her hips until his tip was inside her. “Don’t you want to breed me again?”

Gehn groaned with self-restraint.

“I want to do that very badly,” he said. “However, I fear once I start breeding you, I will not be able to stop again for a very long time. We must be careful.”

“Careful of what?” Kris whispered, grazing her lips against his chest. “Don’t you want to make a baby inside me?”

“Foolish mate. Of course I want that, and I fully intend to keep your pretty little cunt dripping with my seed until your belly is

nice and swollen. But we're not safe here, little one. My captors are still searching for me, and there are only so many places I could be hiding. If they find me here, they will separate us."

His mate's cunt squeezed possessively around the tip of his cock.

"Just let them try!" she snarled. "I'll kill any motherfucker who dares to lay a finger on you!"

Gehn couldn't help but smile at that. Here he thought he was supposed to be the protective one—and indeed, he felt the same way about his little mate as she did about him. He would rip the guts out of anyone who dared even to look at her with thoughts of harm or lust. He didn't have to tell her that, she already knew it. She was his mate now, she knew exactly how he felt about her.

Nevertheless, he would prefer not to kill if it could be avoided.

"We are not safe here, Kris. I'm sorry, I know this is your home, but we need to leave. We need to get as far away as possible before my pursuers come looking."

"This isn't my home," she answered. "It's just a place I've been living, and it seems like a different life now. Everything's changed. I don't need any of this stuff anymore. I only need you, Gehn."

"And I you."

She shifted her hips, and the tip of his cock slipped out of her. He was both disappointed and grateful at the same time.

Disappointed, because her warm inner flesh felt so perfect sheathed around his hard cock. Grateful, because he knew if he had stayed inside her for even one more second, he would never have been able to keep himself from breeding her again, and this time it would take much longer than before.

Beside him, Kris sat up and looked at him.

“So... where are we going to go?”

“I was hoping you might have some thoughts on that. My knowledge of your planet is somewhat limited, I’m afraid.”

Kris thought for a moment. “We could try for Mexico, I suppose. That was my plan for when I was done with Fish. I’ve got a passport, but we’ll need to get one for you too. I know how to do that, but it will take some time. Or...”

She rose to her feet and put her little fists on her hips. She looked so beautiful standing over him like that, her body naked and glowing with a layer of warm sweat.

“Kris? What is it?”

“Fuck going on the lam!” she almost shouted. “If I’m going to be mated to a sexy purple alien, then I want the full experience!”

“The full experience? What do you mean?”

His mate was not listening. She had walked over to the metal chair, and now she was tugging on her boots. Gehn had to admit, he liked the way the rugged leather footwear accentuated her nakedness. But he was even more curious about what she was doing. When she started striding toward

the door with a purpose, he leapt to his feet and rushed after her.

“Kris? Where are you going?”

He followed her out into the night, across the small yard filled with junk, and up the short set of stairs leading to her dwelling. Once they were both inside, he shut the door behind them. His mate was already on her knees in the middle of the floor, right in the place where she had left him lying earlier. Gehn now saw that there was a small door set into the floor, which he had not noticed before. His mate had a set of primitive metal keys, which she had retrieved from the pocket of her trousers back in the garage. She selected one of the keys and unlocked the door in the floor. Then she threw it open.

Inside were more than a dozen firearms of various shapes and sizes, as well as metal boxes which Gehn recognized as ammunition magazines. He had seen similar equipment back at the facility where he'd been held captive.

“My mate... it would appear you are planning on starting a small war.”

She grinned up at him. “Pretty neat, huh?”

Gehn did not return her smile. “Would you mind telling me what the hell you have in mind?”

“We're going to go get your ship,” she said, as if she were talking about picking up some items from the local market.

“You're going to take me back to your planet.”

Gehn nearly stumbled backward in shock.

Not only was his mate hard, tough, and courageous—she was also a little crazy. Gehn told her as much.

“Of course I’m crazy,” the woman replied, standing up to meet his gaze. Her face only came up to the level of his chest, but she had a confidence that made her seem much larger than she actually was. “Look, I already told you who I am. I’m the girl who spent her whole hunting down a man so she could torture him to death. That’s who you’re mated to now, so you’d better just get used to it.”

Gehn stepped forward and gathered her in his arms. His breeding organ was still rock hard with arousal, and he felt his little mate gasp as it pressed against her warm belly.

“I have zero complaints about who I’m mated to,” he growled. “But I’m thinking I may need to fuck some sense into you, woman.”

She smiled and pressed her naked breasts into him. Her nipples were every bit as hard as his cock.

“There will be plenty of time for that once we’re on your ship. You told me earlier that the humans fixed it, right? You said you were almost ready to steal it back when your mating urges hit.”

Gehn thought for a moment. There was some truth to what she was saying. Based on the questions his captors had been asking him in the days before his escape, it did seem as if they had gotten his craft working again. But there would be no way to be certain until he was inside it.

Besides, there were other problems.

“It’s too risky,” he said. “They have guards, Kris. *Armed* guards.”

“They weren’t able to keep you from getting out. What makes you think they’ll be able to stop us from getting back in? Listen, if the United States military really wanted to find you, they would have every single aircraft at their disposal searching the entire southwest right now, but we haven’t heard anything all night. Not a single jet or helicopter.”

“What’s your point?”

“My point is, I think you’re so top secret, the only people looking for your sexy purple ass are the ones who were keeping you captive, and their resources are probably limited. Plus, the last place they’ll expect you to turn up is back at their facility.”

Gehn had to admit, she did have a point. His little mate was even more clever than he had realized.

But still crazy too.

“There’s another problem, little one. When I fled the facility, I was disoriented by my mating urges. I don’t know if I will be able to find my way back there again.”

“C’mere.”

Kris plopped down on a long, cushioned seat and grabbed a small, foldable computer off the table next to her. She opened it and started tapping keys. Gehn sat down next to her and

looked at the screen. After a moment, a satellite image appeared.

“Google Earth,” Kris explained. “It comes in pretty handy. Look, this is where we are now. And *this...*” She scrolled the image over and pointed at a section of curving black line.

“This is where I hit you with my van. You were running this way, so you must have been coming from this direction...”

She zoomed out a little and started scrolling again.

Gehn had looked at a lot of maps as part of his training, and he was pretty good at identifying some of the bigger landmarks he’d seen from the ground. Working together, he and Kris were able to backtrack his course across the desert until finally they found something strange.

A section of the map had been completely blurred out.

“That *has* to be it,” Kris declared. “That’s where we’ll find your ship.”

She set the computer back onto the table, hopped up from her seat, and headed for the door of the trailer. Gehn just stared after her, totally perplexed. “Where are you going now?”

“To get my gas mask.”

CHAPTER 15

The truck sped through the early morning twilight.

They had left the highway ten minutes ago, and they'd been driving off-road ever since. The old Nissan D21 Hardbody had nearly three hundred thousand miles on it, but it still ran like a dream. With four-wheel drive engaged, the tires ate up the desert with ease, and the new shocks Kris had installed a few months ago handled the bumpy terrain reasonably well. The headlights were turned off. They would make the truck stick out like a sore thumb in the darkness, and there was just enough twilight to see by. The sun wasn't over the horizon yet, but the sky to the east was reddening in anticipation of the coming day.

It had been a long, long night, but it was almost over.

"Hey, big guy," Kris called over her shoulder. "How you doing back there?"

Gehn's voice answered through the open window at the back of the cab. The big purple alien was crouched in the bed of the truck, hanging onto the roll bars. "Remember earlier when I said you were a little crazy? I take it back. You're completely insane!"

Kris let out a maniacal laugh and jammed the accelerator all the way down to the floor. The engine let out a snarl, and the truck zoomed forward even faster. Outside, yucca plants and joshua trees blurred past in the predawn darkness. Kris shot

her eyes to her smartphone, which was cradled in a holder attached to the dash. The screen displayed a map of the area. They were getting close to the facility.

Or at least they *should* have been getting close.

Kris felt a twinge of doubt in her stomach. What if that blurry area on Google Maps hadn't been hiding a top secret facility at all? What if it was just a glitch?

A chain-link fence topped with concertina wire loomed in front of her. It appeared so suddenly out of the shadows, she barely had time to shout a warning to her alien mate in the bed of the truck.

“Fence! Get down!”

She aimed the truck for the gap between two of the line posts, and the metal brush guard tore through chain-link mesh like a knife through a pair of fishnet stockings. The fence was a good ten feet high, and the top rail and coils of razor wire soared harmlessly overhead.

“Kris!” Gehn’s voice shouted through the rear window. “Are you okay?”

She couldn’t help but smile at that. Here she was, safe inside the cab of the truck, but her protective mate was still worried about her safety over his own.

“I’m doing fine, big guy. How about you?”

“All good, but I think it’s safe to say they know we’re here now. Keep an eye out for interceptors.”

Less than a minute later, she spotted them. A pair of Humvees racing across the desert. They were hard to miss with their headlights on. Then again, the fact that Kris had turned hers off didn't seem to make much of a difference. The sky was already noticeably lighter than it had been a minute ago, and the cloud of dust that her truck was raising in its wake must have been visible for miles around. Kris knew the drivers of the Hummers saw it, because they both turned in unison and started barreling straight for her.

She didn't bother shouting any words of warning to Gehn. She knew the alien had already spotted them too. In the rearview mirror, she saw him pick up one of the weapons he had back there—an SG-550 assault rifle—and take aim.

Back at Kris's property, they'd worked out the division of labor for this little mission. Since Gehn had no experience operating a primitive Earth automobile, let alone a manual stick shift, they decided it was best if Kris drove. That left Gehn to handle the weapons. Of course, the alien didn't have any experience operating Earth *guns* either, but Kris showed him how to use them, and he'd proven to be a quick learner. The first time he had pulled the trigger on the SG-550 back at her place, he had put a round straight through the middle of an old soup can—Kris had tossed it in the air.

She figured if he could hit a moving target that small, a couple of military grade Humvees weren't going to be a problem.

Gehn waited until the Hummers were within range, then he fired. Four quick shots, two for each vehicle.

He and Kris had agreed beforehand that they wanted to keep the casualties to a minimum. Zero if possible. That's why his shots were aimed at the front tires. Of course, the Hummers would be equipped with run-flat tires that couldn't be taken out by a simple bullet. Luckily, Kris had a few boxes of incendiary rounds she'd received as a sample from her ammo supplier. She hadn't thought she'd ever have a reason to use them, but they sure came in handy now.

Gehn's shots were dead on target. The front wheels of both Hummers burst into flames, and the vehicles skidded to a halt as the Nissan blew past them. A moment later, Kris heard the soldiers returning fire, but her truck was already well out of range.

"They'll radio ahead to their companions," Gehn shouted from the back of the truck. "We'll have a welcoming party waiting for us when we arrive."

"Well, we know how to deal with them," Kris shouted back. "You got the shotgun?"

"Right here." Gehn hoisted the weapon and showed it to her in the rearview mirror.

Good, Kris thought. She just hoped the second part of their plan worked as well as the first.

By the time the first building came into view, the sun was already peeking over the eastern horizon to see what all the commotion was about. The facility was smaller than Kris had expected, but that was good. It made it a whole lot easier to figure out where they needed to go. There was only one

hangar she could see, a long metal structure with a wide, curving roof. That had to be where they were keeping Gehn's ship. It was the only building big enough.

And just as Gehn had predicted, a small group of armed guards were waiting for them out front. Kris counted fifteen men in total. Not quite an army, but enough to be a problem.

She crossed her fingers and ducked her head down below the dash while still keeping the gas pedal jammed to the floor.

"Tell me when to stop!" she shouted.

Gehn answered with an affirmative grunt.

A second later, the guards started shooting. Kris could hear their bullets pinging off the hood of the truck. The windshield spiderwebbed with cracks. One of the front tires blew out and started making a *wuba-wuba-wuba* sound as it rolled over the hard packed dirt. She had to clutch the steering wheel hard to keep the truck from sliding out of control.

Then Gehn was shooting his pump-action twelve gauge. He fired with a steady, methodical rhythm—trigger, pump, trigger, pump, trigger. Kris could hear the spent plastic casings rattling in the truck bed after each shot.

The rounds were some of the most expensive items she owned. She'd had them custom made by an underground arms dealer back when she'd been planning to kidnap Albert Lee Fish out of the Atascadero psychiatric hospital, and they had cost her a small fortune. Ordinary shotgun rounds fired a compact burst of lead pellets. These were different. Each one launched a

small steel canister that acted as a miniature missile. Upon impact, the canister would release a cloud of vapor—a mixture of tear gas and a fast-acting tranquilizer.

Kris hoped they worked.

It seemed like they did. After a couple seconds, the sounds of gunfire died out. Just in time too. Both front tires were gone now, and clouds of steam and smoke were billowing out from the ravaged hood of the truck.

“Stop!” Gehn bellowed behind her.

Kris slammed on the brakes, and the truck skidded to a halt.

She lifted her head and peered over the top of the dash.

Through the shattered windshield, she could see that half the guards were already laid out on the ground in front of the hangar, and the other half were about to join them as soon as they were done choking on the tear-gas.

“Holy shit!” she shouted. “It actually worked!”

“I never doubted you, my clever little mate,” Gehn’s voice said behind her. “But we need to move. More guards may be on their way.”

Bet on it, Kris thought. She grabbed the gas mask off the seat next to her and fastened it over her face. Then she grabbed her pistol and got out. She looked at the front of the truck and frowned. Poor thing. At three hundred thousand miles, the old Hardbody still had plenty of life left in her, but the engine was completely shot to shit now. It was done for. Oh well, it had served its purpose.

“Come on, we need to hurry!”

Gehn hopped down from the bed of the truck, holding the shotgun like a toy in his massive purple hands. He was wearing the other gas mask, along with a pair of jeans Kris had purchased for him at a 24-hour truck stop on the way out here. They were XXL, but they fit him like a glove, and Kris could tell from the imprint of his hard cock beneath the tight denim that he was still very much under the influence of the Meszrian mating season.

Then again, so was she, if that’s where her eyes were wandering at a time like this. She reminded herself to focus. They weren’t in the clear just yet.

Not by a longshot.

There was a closed door at the side of the hangar. Kris tried the handle, but it was locked, just as she’d expected. She noticed a magnetic card slot on the wall next to it.

“We need a security card,” she said, gesturing to the unconscious guards. “Maybe one of those guys—”

Gehn came striding up beside her and gave the door a hard kick. It flew inward with a crash.

“—or, y’know, that works too.”

Kris followed Gehn inside. The alien was already firing more gas rounds as he went through the door. Within seconds the interior of the hangar was filled with clouds of vapor. Several guards were already coughing and stumbling from the fumes.

Others were running to the far end of the hangar to try and get away.

And there, in the very center of it all, was Gehn's ship.

Kris had never seen it before, but she knew what it was immediately. It was a smooth, tear-drop shaped object, about the size of a private jet, and its whole surface was coated in a layer of iridescent chrome that made it look like some sort of giant, flying insect. Six articulated landing legs added to the effect. There was an opening on one side of the hull, with a narrow gangplank leading up to it.

"This way!" Gehn shouted.

He grabbed Kris by the hand and pulled her after him, leading her up the ramp and into the ship. Behind them, the hangar was erupting into a chaos of blaring alarms and flashing red lights.

There were two men working inside the ship, but they weren't guards, and they weren't armed. Judging from their white coveralls, Kris guessed they were technicians of some sort. When they saw Gehn, their eyes went wide with terror. One of them emptied his bladder.

"Out," Gehn snarled. "Now."

The men didn't argue. They rushed out the door and ran down the gangplank at a full sprint. As soon as they reached the ground, the gas got them, and they tumbled unconscious to the floor. Gehn pressed a panel on the wall. The gangplank retracted, and the door whisked shut.

That was good. It meant the ship had at least some power. Kris just hoped it had enough to get them out of here.

“Come with me,” Gehn said, dropping the shotgun and pulling off his gas mask.

Kris removed her own mask and followed him down a narrow metal corridor to a room at the front of the ship. There was just enough light for Kris to make out a pair of swiveling seats. Gehn shoved her down into one of them and took the other for himself. He touched some keys on a panel in front of him, and three video screens lit up the wall in front of them.

Kris let out a loud whoop. “It works!”

“Do not get too excited, mate. Let’s save the victory celebrations for when we’re in the air.”

Kris turned her attention toward the screens again. The two angled screens on the left and right were displaying cascades of alien hieroglyphics she couldn’t understand. The larger central screen showed a view outside the ship. She could see the door Gehn had kicked in a minute ago. Armed soldiers were already pouring in through the opening, and these guys were wearing masks to protect them from the haze of vapor filling the hangar.

“Gehn, baby, we’ve got company.”

“I see them,” he growled. His clawed fingers skated over the keys in front of him. After a moment, he shook his head and let out a defeated sigh.

“What’s the matter?” Kris asked.

“We don’t have enough power to take off,” he said. “We’re stuck.”

Kris’s heart seemed to sink down to the pit of her stomach. She couldn’t believe it. They’d come so far, only to be thwarted at the last moment. She looked at the crowd of soldiers waiting outside the ship and knew there was no way they would ever be able to get past them all.

Suddenly, Gehn started laughing.

“I’m kidding,” he said. “There’s plenty of power.”

“Why you—”

Kris was about to reach out and swat the alien on the shoulder, but before she had a chance to move, Gehn said some words in his own language, and something that looked like a net made of laser beams came down over Kris’s body, hugging her tightly into her seat. A moment later, the same type of mesh came down over Gehn’s body.

“Safety harness,” he explained. “This will be a bit bumpy.”

The ship shuddered briefly, and Kris’s stomach did a somersault as the vessel abruptly took off. There was a deafening crash as they burst straight through the roof of the hangar. The view screen in front of her filled with a view of the early morning sky. The sun was all the way up now, spreading its beautiful golden light across the landscape below.

The ship leapt forward, and Kris felt as if a dozen invisible hands were pushing her back into the cushions of her seat. After only a few seconds, the view of the sky faded, and she

was looking at an image of stars shimmering against the dark backdrop of space.

CHAPTER 16

At another command from Gehn, the central screen switched to a rear view, and Kris found herself looking at a picture of planet Earth gradually receding into the distance behind them. She could barely make out the continent of North America, partially obscured beneath swirls of white and gray clouds. To the west, the Pacific Ocean still lay in shadow. Morning hadn't reached it yet.

"We probably won't be coming back here," Gehn said beside her. "At least not anytime soon. Do you need a moment to say goodbye before I take the ship into hyperspace?"

Kris shook her head. Earth was her planet, but it hadn't been her home for a long, long time. She had no family or friends that she was leaving behind. Katherine, her twin sister and best friend, lived in her heart now. She would be coming with them.

"I'm good," she said. "Let's get out of here."

Gehn nodded and spoke another command to the ship's computer.

Kris had never been a big fan of science fiction movies—or any other kind of movies for that matter. For about as long as she could remember, her whole existence had been consumed by her quest for revenge, and anything that hadn't helped her in that quest had been discarded from her life. She did, however, remember watching the *Star Wars* movies as a little

girl, and she remembered how it looked when the spaceships in those movies went into hyperspace. She half expected to see a similar blur of stars now.

Instead, the screen simply went blank.

“Hey, what happened?” she asked. “Is something wrong? Why can’t we see anything?”

The alien said something in his language, and the luminous nets holding them down in their seats disappeared. They both stood up.

“Nothing’s wrong,” Gehn told her. “We’re in hyperspace now. There’s nothing to see out there. At least not anything that our brains can comprehend.”

When Kris flashed him a quizzical look, he went on: “Look, there are six basic directions, okay? Up, down, left, right, forward, and backward. Now imagine a seventh direction that’s perpendicular to all of them.”

Kris tried.

“Makes my head hurt thinking about it.”

“Exactly. And it would make your head hurt a lot more to actually look at it. That’s why the screen is off.”

Kris decided she was willing to accept that answer. She was on a spaceship, traveling with an alien, whose baby she was soon to be carrying in her womb. She figured that was enough craziness for one day. No point in attempting to unravel the mysteries of the space-time continuum just yet. Besides, she

could think of other, much more entertaining ways to pass the time with her companion.

Then she remembered something, and a scowl stole across her face. She snapped her arm out and drove a hard punch into Gehn's broad chest. The blow would have knocked most human men on their asses, but the alien barely budged.

"Hey! What was that for?" he asked.

"What was all that business about not having enough power to take off, huh? Is that your idea of a joke?"

For a second, Gehn just stared at Kris with an expression that reminded her of a schoolboy who'd been caught doing something naughty. Then he tossed his head back and let out a deep, rumbling laugh that echoed off the walls of the cockpit.

Kris glowered at him. "Yeah, laugh it up, you big purple ass."

Gehn's guffaws softened into a chuckle. "I really wish you could have seen your expression."

He cradled her face in his hands and stroked his thumbs across her cheeks. Kris suddenly felt self-conscious about her facial scars, just as she did whenever somebody stared at her. When she looked into Gehn's eyes, however, the only thing she saw was pure adoration.

"My little human mate is so beautiful," the alien purred. "It pleases me to see all the different expressions she can make."

Before Kris had a chance to say anything, Gehn lowered his face to hers, and their lips locked together in a slow, deep kiss

that made her burn. When he finally released her again, it took her a few seconds to catch her breath.

“I see,” she said, smiling up at him. “And what’s your favorite expression so far?”

“Smile is my favorite... but orgasm is a close second.”

“Luckily, you’re good at making me do both.” She ran her fingers across the top of his jeans. “So, um... are you gonna give me a tour of your ship, or what?”

“Follow me, my little mate.”

The tour didn’t take long. There was a narrow corridor running down the center of the ship, the same corridor they had passed through as soon as they had come on board. Branching off from this were a few smaller rooms, a utility closet, a food preparation area, and a pantry, which had been emptied by the humans at the facility. Gehn told her not to worry. They would be arriving at a Union space station in about twenty-four Earth hours. They would arrive hungry, but very much alive.

At the back of the corridor, there was a bedroom.

“As you can see,” Gehn said apologetically, “there is only one bed.”

“I think we can make that work,” said Kris.

She raised herself up onto her tiptoes and offered her mouth. The alien claimed it with a hungry kiss. Her fingers found their way to the top of his jeans again, and after a bit of fumbling, the button came unfastened, followed by the zipper.

She worked her hand inside and stroked the length of the his hard shaft.

“You poor thing,” she said. “It’s the middle of mating season, and you haven’t mated in hours. It must be painful.”

“Excruciating.”

Gehn’s hands moved over her body, and her clothing seemed to fall away as if by magic. Only when it came to her boots did they have any difficulty, and they both giggled like a pair of horny teenagers as he helped her take them off, followed by the jeans and panties that had become bunched up around her shins. When she was finally naked, she jumped into his arms and hooked her legs around him.

“Take me to bed,” she whispered.

Gehn smirked at her. “Are all human females this bossy? In case you hadn’t noticed, I’m the captain aboard this vessel, and—”

A high-pitched keening filled the air, and purple lights strobed along the ceiling. It was some sort of alarm.

“Damn!” Gehn cursed. “We have a problem. I need to get you secured.”

Kris tried to climb down from Gehn’s arms, but the alien held onto her. He carried her down the corridor and back into the cockpit.

“Gehn, what’s going on?” she asked.

He didn't answer. He just set her down in her seat again. Then, very much to Kris's surprise, he lifted her ankles high into the air. A moment later, the mesh of light reappeared, binding her into the seat. Only this time, instead of wrapping across her chest as it was meant to do, the mesh was holding her legs back too, leaving everything between them totally exposed.

"Gehn! What the *hell* are you doing?"

The purple alien just stood over her, laughing. His tail swished out and tapped a button on the console behind him. The alarm immediately cut off.

"Sorry," he chuckled. "False alarm. To tell you the truth, I pulled the fire alarm when you weren't looking." He wagged the tip of his tail to let her know how he had managed that feat.

"Why you rotten— that's the second time you've tricked me!" Kris struggled against the light-mesh, but it didn't do any good. She was stuck, and totally exposed. From the way her legs were folded back, she knew Gehn could see everything.

"Let me out of this chair right now," she growled.

That only seemed to amuse the alien.

"No, I don't think so," he said. "Not just yet. You had your chance to toy with me while I was tied up in your home. Now you're the one who's tied up, and it's my turn to toy with *you*."

Kris shivered. Her cheeks flushed as shameful wetness leaked from between her legs and trickled down her ass. She saw

Gehn's eyes widen as he focused in on her arousal. He licked his lips.

"Damn," he growled softly. "I wish you could see how..."

His words trailed off, and his eyes lit up, as if he had just gotten a brilliant idea. After a moment, he turned and walked over to the wall of the cockpit. He tapped a few buttons, and a drawer materialized. He looked inside.

"Good. It's still here."

"What's still here?" Kris asked, still struggling futilely against her restraints. "Gehn, what are you doing?"

He returned carrying something the same size and shape as a cigarette, but made of dark metal. He placed it against his temple, and the object stayed there, as if held in place by a magnet. Kris noticed something on the device that looked like a tiny lens.

"What is that?" she asked.

"A camera. I was going to use it to collect images of Earth to bring back with me. I can also use it to send a live feed directly to the ship's monitors."

He spoke a few words in his rumbling, alien language, and all three screens at the front of the cockpit suddenly displayed a live image of Kris, naked and bound with her legs in the air. Obviously the image was coming from the camera on the side of Gehn's head.

Heat rushed into Kris's cheeks. Simultaneously, she saw her face turn beet red on the three screens.

“Gehn, why are you doing this?”

“Because I want you to see yourself from my perspective. I want you to see how beautiful you look through my eyes.”

Kris didn't think beautiful was the word she would have chosen to describe herself right now. She looked more like a pretzel, the way she was folded up beneath the light-mesh, and her skin was still smudged with sweat and dust from their fight back at the facility on Earth.

But then she saw the way Gehn's gaze lingered over her face, and it made her feel good. She smiled, and the three faces up there on the screens smiled back at her. The scars on either side of her mouth were clearly visible, but somehow they didn't look ugly to her anymore. It didn't matter who had made those scars. They were a part of her now, and that was all that mattered.

The images of her face grew larger as the camera zoomed in, and she noticed that Gehn was leaning closer. He kissed her gently on the mouth, and his forked tongue flickered lightly against her lips, making her moan.

“My beautiful little mate,” he whispered.

Then he lowered himself to his knees in front of her. Kris darted her eyes back to the screens. The view was now showing a close up view of everything between her legs.

She whimpered softly as Gehn ran his fingers along her slit and spread open her folds. Then the flat, pointed end of his tail came into view. It hovered above her exposed sex for a few

seconds, then it came down right on her center with a none-too-gentle slap.

“Oh fuck! *Gehn!*”

“You’ve been a very naughty little human,” the alien rumbled.

“First you ran me over with your vehicle, then you held me hostage in your chair.”

“Hey! I also helped you get your spaceship back, and—*Oh!*”

His tail spanked her again, right in the middle of her open folds. Kris moaned and writhed to the extent the light-mesh would allow as even more wetness spilled out from between her legs.

“Not good enough,” Gehn said. “I told you before that I was going to make you pay, and I meant it. You’re a very naughty little human indeed, and you are desperately in need of punishment.”

He spanked her sex again and again with the slow, steady rhythm of a skilled disciplinarian. Soon she was so slick with arousal, each slap sent up a little spray of wetness that speckled her thighs with dew. It took seven blows before she came for the first time. The alien gave her five more blows after that, and each one made a fresh climax blossom inside her. When he finally relented, she had been reduced to a quivering, dripping mess of pure bliss.

“Don’t go getting too comfortable,” Gehn said. “I’m not done with you yet, little human.”

Kris watched as the alien stood up and stretched. The sight of his powerful muscles shifting beneath his smooth, violet scales was almost good enough to make her come a seventh time.

And he hadn't even taken his jeans off yet. The button and fly were still open from when Kris had unfastened them earlier, and she could see the very base of his shaft where it was tucked down the right side of his jeans. The rest of it was bulging against the denim so hard, it was a wonder it didn't come bursting right through the fabric. Gehn must have seen the way her eyes widened, because he let out a dark chuckle.

“That's right, woman. It's breeding time...”

The alien hooked his thumbs inside the waist of his jeans and slowly pushed them down his muscular thighs. When he'd finally pushed them low enough, his swollen cock came swinging up and out. A dribble of precum twirled off his tip and landed on Kris's belly.

Dear God... had that thing gotten bigger somehow?

Gehn crouched until his hips were on the same level as hers. Then he rubbed his cockhead against her, smearing her labia with even more of the precum that was bubbling out of his tip. Not that she needed more lubrication down there. Everything between her legs was already soaked with arousal from the spanking he'd just given her.

Kris shifted her gaze back to the wall behind Gehn. The screens were still displaying what the alien was seeing. She moaned softly as she watched—and felt—his long, ribbed shaft sliding into her.

“Oh God... Gehn... it feels so hard inside me.”

“That’s your doing, woman. You’re the only creature in this whole universe who can do that to me. And that means you have to be the one to take it, nice and deep. Yes, just like that...”

He pushed into her until his tip was brushing against her deepest epicenter. Then he slowly drew himself all the way out. Up on the screens, Kris saw the way her pussy gaped for him. He plunged into her again, a little harder this time.

Back on Earth, Gehn had fucked her like he was trying to kill her. This time, he tortured her in a different way. His thrusts were deep and slow—so slow, Kris could feel every tiny detail of his textured shaft moving in and out of her body. She lost track of how many times he made her come like that.

Sometimes she would climax from a single thrust, only to do it all over again on the back stroke. Through it all, she kept her eyes glued to the screens, watching everything from Gehn’s perspective. Sometimes the camera was on the place where their bodies were joining together. Other times, it was on her face.

“I love the way you look when you come,” Gehn said. “Do it again.”

Kris had no choice but to obey.

When she was finally able to speak again, she said, “I love the way it *feels* when you come. Please Gehn, do it inside me. Fill me up with your seed.”

The alien purred happily. “How could I ever refuse such a perfect little mate?”

He picked up the pace of his thrusting, and Kris could see the tension gathering in his muscles. Her own body tensed in preparation too, and her walls squeezed him, begging for what she so desperately needed.

“Kris...”

She turned her eyes away from the screen and looked into Gehn’s purple eyes.

“You are my mate now,” he said. “Take this seed of mine and make a child for me. Make a strong, healthy child. Will you do this for me, my Kris?”

“Yes.”

The alien threw back his head and roared as he flooded her with his seed. The first pulse filled her to capacity. The second overflowed her and dribbled down her backside—and there were many, many more after that. When the alien had finally finished coming, everything between Kris’s legs was slathered with his sticky spend.

Gehn spoke a command to the ship’s computer, and the light-mesh disappeared, releasing Kris’s body. The alien leaned in and kissed her again, a slow deep kiss that seemed to go on forever. Kris knew there would be many more kisses like that in her future. More than all the stars in the sky.

“My mate,” Gehn whispered against her lips. “My perfect, beautiful mate.”

He began to move inside her again, breeding her a second time. Kris knew it wouldn't be the last before their journey was over.

EPILOGUE

Kris opened her eyes and looked at the clock beside the bed. The glowing Mezsrian numerals told her it was already well past first *vesh*, and indeed when she turned her eyes toward the morningside window, she could see the golden rays of daylight already streaming in through the net curtains. She had slept in, and there was only one way that could have happened.

Her mate had woken up first and turned off the alarm.

Gehn's big, hard body was missing from its usual spot next to her on the bed, and another, much smaller body had taken its place. Kath'rehn was sitting in the indentation her father had left on the mattress, and she had one tiny, pointed ear pressed against Kris's pregnant belly. She looked up at Kris with big lilac eyes full of wonder.

"Well, hello there," Kris said, smiling. "What's the matter? Did you get scared and come to sleep with Mommy and Daddy?"

Kath'rehn shook her head, swinging her messy dark hair in the process. Her body was covered in lovely magenta scales, and her little devil's tail swished softly against the sheets behind her.

"No, I wasn't scared, Mommy." She patted a tiny, gentle hand against Kris's belly. "I just wanted to come say good morning to my brothers."

She was very serious when she said it.

Little Kath'rehn claimed she could communicate with the babies growing inside Kris's womb. At first, Kris had thought it was merely a child's whim, but now she wasn't so sure. Somehow Kath'rehn had known Kris was carrying twins—*male* twins—almost two full mooncycles before the Meszrian doctors had confirmed that fact with their technology.

Gehn had told Kris that strange things sometimes happened when Meszrians mated with other species. Sometimes the offspring of such couplings developed unexpected abilities. Was it possible that telepathy was one of these? It wouldn't be the strangest thing Kris had experienced in her life.

“So, what are they saying?” she asked.

“They're hungry,” Kath'rehn answered.

Well, that was accurate. Because she'd slept in, Kris was starving, and she knew that meant the twins were starving too. They were always hungriest first thing in the morning. And Kris's hunger was heightened by the delicious smells that were now drifting in through the open door of the bedroom. The kitchen was just down the hall, and she could hear the sizzle of frying food.

“Why don't you go see what Daddy's cooking,” Kris said.

“Okay!”

Kath'rehn hopped down from the bed and scampered out the door, her little tail wagging behind her as she went. Although she wasn't yet a full year old by Meszrian reckoning, she was physically and mentally closer to a human four-year-old. That

made sense, considering that Meszria took about four times as long to orbit its sun.

After Kath'rehn was out of sight, Kris could still hear the child's little feet pattering on the floor. Then she heard her talking to her father, speaking to him in Meszrian.

Kris sat up in bed and smiled. She placed her hands over her round belly and felt the two babies stirring inside her. They'd been conceived during the last mating season, and it wouldn't be too much longer before they made their grand entrance into the world. Kris wasn't the least bit nervous about it. Giving birth to Kath'rehn had been easy. She could handle giving birth to twins, no sweat.

She couldn't wait to see them.

She was just about to climb out of bed when Gehn appeared in the doorway bearing a tray piled high with bacon, eggs, toast, and fruit. The only thing he had on was a pair of black boxers, and the purple scales on his muscular arms and legs shone brightly in the morning sunlight. Little Kath'rehn was beside him, holding onto his tail. The sight made Kris's smile get even bigger.

"Wow!" she said. "What's the occasion?"

Gehn gave her one of his trademark cocky smirks. "With a mate as beautiful as you, every day is an occasion."

He walked over to the bed and set down the tray of food next to Kris. He hoisted Kath'rehn and placed her beside her

mother, then he sat down on the edge of the bed and stroked his hand over Kris's pregnant belly.

“Good morning, my mate. I apologize for turning off the alarm, but I wanted to surprise you. Besides, I figured you could use a little extra sleep.”

“Well, it's certainly a nice surprise,” Kris said, looking at the food Gehn had prepared. After their arrival on Meszria, she'd been delighted to discover that her alien mate was a skilled cook. Sometimes she wondered if there was anything he couldn't do. She gave him a naughty look. “It looks almost as delicious as you do.”

“Mommy!” Kath'rehn giggled beside her. “You can't *eat* Daddy.”

Kris begged to differ, but she kept that to herself and just smiled knowingly as her mate selected a particularly ripe berry from the tray, dipped it liberally in warm cream, and fed it to her.

“So,” Gehn said, “since I have the day off, I thought we could have a family outing... assuming my little mate is up to it.”

“You know I am.”

Kris would never pass up an opportunity to spend time with her family. After their arrival on Meszria, Gehn had returned to work for the Union Intelligence Agency, only this time he worked in a high-level office job that kept him safe and close to home. Kris also worked for the agency in a part-time capacity, preparing reports and lectures about Earth culture. It

would be a long, long time before Earth would be invited to join the Union, but the information she provided would prove useful when the time finally came.

It was an easy job, and it paid ridiculously well, but Kris preferred working with her hands. That was why, in her free time, she had been training to become a spaceship mechanic. Of course, she would have to put that on hold for a little while after the twins were born, but that was fine. She had plenty of time to learn. The same enzymes that had made her compatible for breeding also imparted her with a Meszrian lifespan, which was about four times longer than a human one.

She had plenty of time now. All the time in the universe.

While the three of them shared breakfast in bed, they discussed their plans for the day. Much to little Kath'rehn's delight, they decided to make a trip to the nearby seashore, where they would spend the morning basking in the sun and swimming. The water would be nice and warm this time of year. After that, they would have a midday meal at one of the fancy restaurants overlooking the ocean, followed by an afternoon of shopping.

And although they did not discuss it out loud, Kris knew how her evening would be spent. After the little one was sound asleep in her own room, Kris and Gehn would meet right back here in this very bed, where they would mate with each other late into the night. Afterward, if they weren't too tired, they might sit together on the patio and look at the stars together.

"It sounds like a plan," Kris said.

Gehn smiled and fed her the last of the berries. “Good. The little one and I will clean up these dishes while you get ready. Oh, and by the way... *I’ll* drive.”

Kris laughed and looked at Kath’rehn. “Your daddy doesn’t like it when I drive,” she said.

The child gave her father a stern look. “Daddy! What’s wrong with Mommy’s driving?”

Gehn gave Kris a wink, then smiled at his daughter.

“Oh, that’s a long story, little one. Someday, when you’re a little older, I’ll have to tell you about how your mother and I first met.”

* * *

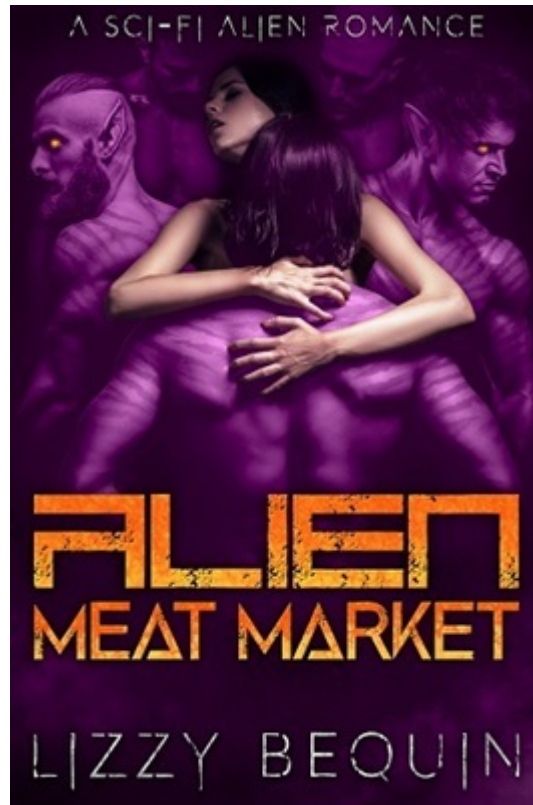
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About Lizzy B.

Hailing from Tennessee, Lizzy Bequin enjoys writing dark and steamy romance stories that explore the primal side of love and lust. When she's not writing or reading, Lizzy is serving the whims of the two evil feline overlords who rule her home.

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