



Gairo (Intergalactic Surrogacy Agency #5)

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Category: Fantasy

Description: To escape brutal injustice, I find myself begging to have the baby of this alien warlord.

Raised in a human colony with antique, rigid ideals of what a woman should be, I cant help rebel against expectations.

To avoid a sentence at the monstrous rehab facility, I agree to have a baby like they think proper women should.

I planned to enjoy my year with Gairo, a massive alien warlord who matches my personality. Then Id be off to explore the galaxy, free of my colony.

I never planned to become his heart-mate. And when Gairos unknown past reveals itself, Im not about to let him go without a fight.

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TRANSPORT SHIP

VERONICA

The omega inoculation churned in my blood. There was another human girl on the ship who didn't look thrilled to be there. Sarah wouldn't give me many details, but I got the impression that I'd like her if she bothered to open up.

When I was negotiating to get away from the Puritanical colony where I was going to be trained into a perfect housewife in something similar to Stepford, I took my one chance from the illicit tablet. There was a program for warlords to have children with women who could genetically match with them. There had been a judge who would have taken me as a twelfth wife until I could get with the program, and he seemed to think that it was fitting for me to be punished by becoming the bride of a barbarian alien warlord. I did too many things that they considered unbecoming of a woman. I wasn't the kind of person who could be a docile housewife. I got in trouble for fist-fights, gambling, and a little bit of heists on the side of all of that. I tried to escape the colony before, but I couldn't manage to get the credits to get off planet until I was sentenced to go to the Intergalactic Surrogacy Agency in this transport ship. My representative was happy to see the last of me. He had seen me too many times, and I still had managed to get to age 19 unmarried. My father had given up on me when I refused to learn how to embroider, and I thought that my mother and aunts quietly cheered for their little rebel. They didn't have a problem cleaning up my peccadilloes until they got big enough for me to be exiled off the planet. The court had not realized that the Intergalactic Surrogacy Agency paid as well as it did. I was exiled from my own birth colony for breaking their rules. Instead of being forced into a mold that I would never fit into in a terrifying rehabilitation facility, I convinced them that I

would go ahead and have a savage's baby. Frankly, the warlords sounded less scary than the men who had twelve wives or more.

I felt stifled when it came to the rules that the men imposed on the colony. The women had certain pockets of safety, and I had been a heathen, running around barefoot and always going foraging. It was tolerable before I hit puberty, but as an adolescent, the men had more rules.

My mother and aunts had set up a rotation so that I was an apothecary and had a reason to go here, there, and everywhere. They had helped put me through minor rehabilitation programs when I started to play around with heists on the richest of the men. Unfortunately, they were fond of me, but they couldn't save me from myself. I stole from the wrong guy, the one with 11 wives already, and that's why the judge at that tribunal had been ready to correct me as a twelfth wife. I had escaped him by getting on this ship.

If I could save the money that I got paid, I could take another ship after the year of service. I had been a midwife and apothecary for enough years to know that raising a human child or part human child mostly was stopping them from putting themselves in mortal peril. My niece at age 2 had a serious fascination with knives. We had to let her decapitate strawberries with her own designated butter knife. Otherwise, she would have gotten into more trouble.

I had rolled around after my coming out party with some of the boys that I'd gone to school with. After I came of age, I could pick between husbands. None of them seemed like great husband material, and some of the elders had way too many wives. The younger boys could become soldiers or space marines; the older men tended to pick up wives at a young age. Plenty of them had shipped off planet, while the girls had far more limited choices. They came back from their travels for Christmas at times, and I had watched more than one of the colonists get married to a man who had seen more of the universe. The guy who had thought that having a savage's baby

was a suitable punishment looked at it the wrong way. I wouldn't really mind getting involved with a space marine or warlord at this point in life. I was bored of the same old things, over and over ad nauseam. I was about to meet some warlords, which meant that there was plenty of mystery in my future.

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MEETING HIS GENETIC MATCH

GAIRO

I hated being late to something as important as meeting my new match. I had watched other warlords meet their women and have babies with humans. A group of young hotheads had decided to get lost today. Because I was on-call for emergency rescue missions, I had to fly to a specific part of a valley with stone monoliths and tree cover everywhere. I wanted to contain my irritation, but I found myself knocked on my match's cabin door too hard. I was already taking my frustration out on my...

I didn't know that humans smelled so good.

* * *

My match was far more beautiful than the other human females who had borne us children after we thought that the genetic engineering had gone too far to the wrong.

"You're finally here, Gairo. I've been waiting. I'm Veronica, and sometimes you have permission to call me Vi. Get in here."

She grabbed my collar and pulled me into the breeding cottage. I had never seen any of the other males get man-handled in this manner by any of the other...

I understood now why sometimes the warlords blushed and didn't get specific about what exactly they did in order to get their heart-mates pregnant. I wondered if Veronica or Vi knew that the genetic matching checked for heart-mates. From the

way that I'd gone speechless when I had scented my omega for the first time, I understood why they were so possessive of their women. I had never felt a pull that strong before, ever.

"Well, you know my name and I know yours. We should have an Earth date; we have a replicator for that."

"I don't think so. The omega hormones in the inoculation are driving me crazy. I want you naked."

Veronica was far more dominant than any of the females of my kind that I had ever met. I didn't know what to do. I wasn't the kind of male who got pushed around in the bedroom.

I pushed her on her back. She had already tugged off most of my clothes, and she was mostly naked herself. She was wearing a blue lacy brassiere and underwear that were plain.

"You should submit to your alpha match," I growled straight into her ear. I used my hand to measure how hard her nipples got.

"Let me feel how soft your core is," I breathed into her ear. I let my hand trail from her breast to between her soft thighs.

She was dripping so much that there was fluid on her thighs.

"Why do you think that you're in charge in the bedroom?" said Veronica. "I'm pretty sure that I am. Touch me more."

I shook my head at my sassy mate. "You're a brat."

She arched her back, which made me wild, and shot me a smile.

“Oh, you like being called a brat?” I asked my new mate, someone who was signed up to bear my child within a year. “Do you like spanking?”

“No one has dared to spank me since I was about 10,” shot back Veronica.

I turned her over and swatted her butt. The red mark and the squeal she let out did nothing to cool my blood.

“Baby, I like seeing my handprint on your butt. Do you get wet to this? Let me check.”

I slid my fingers into her slick wetness, and I knew that she liked spanking as much as I did.

* * *

By the time that dawn came, I knew every inch of her body in a way that made my blood heat with an unquenchable fever. My body was exhausted by how many rounds we had gone for last night, and somehow I wanted more. I wondered to myself how I could ever let her go after only a year and a baby to boot. I understood better now why so many of the warlords had done everything that they could to make their heart-mates fall in love and stay on planet. I didn't know much about her past or her desires beyond what she liked in the bedroom. I needed to find out the keys to what my heart-mate wanted and needed so that I could keep her with me always. She had fallen so willingly in my bed, but it didn't mean a promise for forever. I got the impression that she could casually hook up. Unfortunately for her, I was playing for keeps.

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PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

VERONICA

“What do you want? What makes you happy?”

“I’m not sure. I’m just glad I don’t have to go back to the colony where I’m from.” I gave Gairo a summary.

“I could kill that judge for you.”

Laughing, I shook my head at him. “You’d have to take out the entire colony. I don’t want to go back there ever. This planet is my first stop in traveling the galaxy. The Intergalactic Surrogacy Agency was my ticket out of that colony. I didn’t get married to a space marine.”

“Why would you need to get married to a space marine? What’s wrong with a warlord?”

I laughed at his naivety. “There’s nothing wrong with a warlord. There’s a reason why I am in bed with you now.” I rubbed my cheek on his. “And I’m glad that I get you for an entire year before I leave the baby and you on this planet.”

Gairo got a funny look on his face. “Is it that easy to leave me?”

“I’m not made to be a housewife in any manner of the word. You’re going to have to figure out how to take care of our young one without me. I’m out of here after a

year.”

“I don’t want you to leave. What can I offer you to stay?” Gairo’s tone was serious.

I shifted uncomfortably. It was fun to roll around in bed and make a baby. “Hey, you’re kinda ruining the mood.” I knew what I was here to do. He sounded like he wanted to change the contract to keep me forever, just like back on the colony. I didn’t want to be tied to any man forever, in any world or any planet.

“What would it take for you to change your mind? I don’t want to raise our child alone.” Gairo looked upset.

I shook my head. “It’s called surrogacy for a reason.”

I hated the flash of pain that covered his face. “I have somewhere else to be. I’m a pilot, you know.” He coughed and rubbed his eyes for a moment. “I need to leave. I’ll be back later. Your omega heat is almost over, anyway.”

Had it been a few weeks? I couldn’t tell. There was no time inside of here, just the desire to make a baby with natural inception. I knew that he didn’t have a pressing schedule. It was better for us to keep some distance in between us. He didn’t like that surrogacy meant that I’d leave the baby.

I watched as he put on a change of clothes from his pack. I kept my mouth shut. In the colony, men threatened to lock me into a room by myself when stuff like this happened. My mother had ensured that it went on for about five minutes maximum; being an apothecary meant that they could call me out at any time. It was hard for the men to actually imprison me when I was a midwife and apothecary. I knew way too much about childbirth and child-rearing to get caught in the colony.

Suddenly, Gairo was gone. It was as if I was touching a sore tooth inside of my

mouth. I had lost track of who I was for a while. I looked at the sheathed knife that I had sneaked away from his pack while I had been awake and he had been asleep. It was so small that he could probably ignore it for a while. I didn't plan heists for nothing.

I thought back to the transport ship. Sarah had been incredibly silent while I was getting here. I had a lot of fun with my large, sexy alien who couldn't get enough of his genetic match. It seemed like Sarah needed more of what I had found in abundance. I wanted to go look for her, but I had not moved from my cabin. There was a replicator here for any food that I felt like ordering.

I put on some of the clothes that were hanging in the wardrobe. I decided to conceal Gairo's small knife in my wardrobe, just in case. It didn't seem like I needed it here; I was good at planning for low probability situations.

I was going to go find Sarah from the transport ship and make sure that she was okay, now that I finally had a moment to myself. I wasn't a prisoner, just a surrogate.

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BACK TO THE COORDINATES

GAIRO

I checked the board for what I could pick up today. After that shock, I still wished I was between Veronica's thighs. She did her best to annoy from time to time, but I liked her bratty behavior. Sometimes, she was annoying just to rile me enough for another round. Other times, she turned me on by being extraordinarily stubborn.

When I put on my belt, I had been missing one of my knives. I shook my head and didn't talk to her about it. I had a set of knives that had cost me an entire paycheck. I knew which one was missing: it was the smallest one that I kept on my belt at all.

"What is happening, my commander?" I hailed Soren.

"There's a disturbance at these coordinates, and I want to make sure that you're there with me when I go there."

I took a look at the map of where he was pointing and had a shock. I was found right there as an amnesiac when I was an adolescent. I had a head injury and no memories. I could still walk, talk, and fly. I had no idea how I'd gotten injured or what I was doing there.

"It's probably a faulty sensor and a flock of birds or herd of herbivores or something. We need to check it out."

"But that's where I'm from."

Soren shook his head. “Not anymore. You’re a valued alpha warlord in this clan, no matter who you were before. I know sometimes you feel like you don’t fit in.”

“Every day. I’m a flyboy, one of the pilots who can command most of the spaceships, but I don’t know where I fit in. I have a new baby coming out of this surrogacy contract, but I don’t want to lose her...”

Soren coughed. “A lot of the surrogates stay past the end of their contracts, one way or another.”

“She said that she’s leaving after the contract is done.”

Soren grinned at me. “Keep her thinking that, then. I know something about human Earth surrogates; I have one of my own. She brought her sister and niece to charm Rathgar. It’ll work out.”

“I don’t know what kind of position I’m brining my new child into. I don’t know how to handle newborn young. She said sometime about how her colony used to be, and she doesn’t want to become a housewife.”

“That’s different. I guess she’s not directly from the same place as Lara, Janie, and Iris.”

“No, I don’t think that they had the famine that the three of them escaped from. She had a rigid role in her colony, from the way that she tells it. Her aunts and mother made sure that she was an apothecary.”

“We get everything we need from a dispensing machine and also robotic checkups. She’s suited to look after children on this planet.”

“She sounded like she didn’t want to look after children at all.”

“Then why did she sign up to be a surrogate?”

“She was forced into it.”

“Oh.” Soren’s eyes were round. “That’s definitely a different situation. I made sure that the three of them had the food to survive, and my heart-mate fell in love with me partially because I let her go to her sister. You know that Rathgar’s heart-mate didn’t want him at first. He couldn’t stand her.”

“My mate indulges in being a brat more times than I can count.”

Soren coughed again. “You like that in bed, or?”

I couldn’t hold back my own smile. “I guess that I am worrying too much and I’ll figure out everything.”

“Good job, flyboy. I want your head in the game for this mission. I know that there’s history in that valley for you, but I need you to be at the top of your game. You have a duty to your commander that has nothing to do with impregnating your new surrogate.”

* * *

When Soren gave me the command through my headset to go home, I breathed a sigh of relief. I didn’t know what had been before I was found. I didn’t like going back to the valley. I was full of apprehension that I’d learn something that I didn’t like from my past in there. I was glad that I had a home to go to at all.

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ENJOYMENT

VERONICA

I missed Gairo all day when he was gone and didn't find Sarah at all. I knew that the omega injection was wearing off because I didn't even want to jump him and have him in bed. I was starting to behave like one of the wives from my own colony, but he let me leave the house.

"I'm home," Gairo called softly. "And I noticed my missing blade."

I blushed a little bit. He didn't seem that upset, though. My father was always upset about my heists.

"I'm going to find a belt loop and sheath that are suited to your much smaller size."

"Why don't you want to take your knife back?" In the colony, the men would've been furious with me.

"It's from a set, and I'm glad that you want to be a part of me. If you steal any of the rest of the set, though, I'll need to punish you in bed."

With spanking or shibari? I felt my face go as red as a tomato. I guessed that not all of the omega injection had worn off.

"You amaze me," I told him softly. "In the colony, I would be confined for taking a man's belt knife. I felt too constrained back home. All I've ever wanted was the

freedom to be myself.”

“I don’t even have memories of being back home. I was found in a valley as a teenager.”

“I’d rather have no memories of home. The men didn’t like my rebellious streak. I just got out of things because my mom and aunts made sure that I was an in-demand apothecary. My dad made sure that I felt like a disappointment every day, because I never fit into the colony. My mom and aunts did the best they could.”

“You could never disappoint me, and I’ve felt like a disappointment before, too. I worry about fitting in here, because of my amnesia.”

He touched my heart, being a misfit, too. He might turn out to be too lovable to leave. I didn’t want to leave my heart here. I had watched space marines come and go in my home colony. Sometimes they never came back to their wives. I didn’t want to catch feelings here. I needed to enjoy the time that I had with Gairo during the contract without shame or regret.

* * *

“I want to go for a ride.”

“I’m too sore to ride you.”

His cheeks flushed. “I meant my actual mount. The seat should be comfortable for, ahem, other kinds of riding.”

“I brush and care for my aki, which is my mount.”

“I’ve never ridden a creature since it was considered unfeminine in the colony.”

“Let me introduce you to my mount.”

“How about you go out to the stable and get your aki, and I’ll swing by the main facility and transport station?”

“Done.”

I had plans when it came to the transport station.

* * *

“Are you hungry at all? I have the credits to buy some hot soup with cheese ravioli in it.”

“Sounds divine.” I hadn’t had cheese ravioli since I came here. I guessed that the replicator didn’t do the same kind of cheese ravioli he was trying to buy at the transport center.

He bought two bowls of a steaming hot creamy soup. The ravioli was in a soupier version of Alfredo, and it tasted great.

“Can we not get this from the replicator?”

“I can get pasta with Alfredo sauce on it, but the consistency of the soup is hard for the replicator to do. We have it from scratch here in the transport center.”

Gairo scratched his head. “Even without your omega injection, I’m drawn to you. Do you know that? I keep thinking about the end of the contract, and I don’t want it to end. I want to figure out a way to convince you to stay with me here.”

“I don’t know how you’ll manage to do it. I already warned you about how I felt

about the colony where I grew up.”

“Tyrlyn!”

Someone was noisy in the central transport center.

Some woman bowled into Gairo, grabbing him from behind.

“I thought you were dead. I should have known that you were too stubborn to die like they said you did.”

Gairo released himself from the new woman’s grip. “Who are you? Why are you calling me a different name?”

“Don’t you remember me? I’m Zyloxia, your heart-mate.”

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BACK TO THE CABIN

VERONICA

“What the actual hell? I’m under contract with Gairo right now. Get your hands off my man.” I pulled Gairo away from this new crazy lady. He was mine, or at least he was mine for the year of the contract. I didn’t like anybody else laying claim to him.

“Fuck you. Move.” Zyloxia glared at me. “I can smell him on you. I don’t blame him for bedding an outsider, especially because he apparently doesn’t remember his own heart-mate. He can have a real match with his own species, not some stunted Earth human.”

She was being savage about my size. Gairo was much larger than me, and Zyloxia was, too. “You might be his species, but you can’t give him a child like I can.” I stuck my chin out. “Come at me.” I made a motion with my hands.

Zyloxia looked at me. “If you’re pregnant and a surrogate, I can help him raise the child after you leave at the end of your contract.”

With those words, she crushed me like a pile of bricks falling from the sky. I had already told Gairo that I intended to leave once I popped out the kid. I wanted to travel around the galaxy by myself, or at least I had wanted that back at the colony where I was born. Zyloxia was saying that she’d take my place with Gairo and our baby. It made a lump appear in my throat. I had trouble swallowing.

Seeing the tension between all three of us, Gairo cleared his throat. “Zyloxia, we’ll

have to discuss this later. My planned trip with my mount will have to be canceled.” Gairo shook his head at me. “I wanted to prepare my aki to meet you, but it’s not going to work out today.”

* * *

With sorrow, Gairo took me in relative silence back to the cabin. As soon as we were back, I burst out, “You can’t believe Zyloxia.” I didn’t want to lose him to her at all. “She’s totally new.”

“She thinks that she’s calling me by my real name. Soren named me when I was found with amnesia.” Gairo shook his head at me.

“I need some time with Zyloxia,” he confessed to me. I felt like he had just stabbed my wind pipe with a rusty blade.

“I don’t want you to talk to her at all.”

He bit his lip and waited for a few moments. “I’ll return.” He left me alone in the cabin, the place where we had been going at one another for weeks. It was my fault that he thought that I was going to be leaving. It seemed like a neat solution when I was back in the colony. I had escaped imprisonment by agreeing to have a warlord’s baby on another planet.

I realized in the silence that followed the closing of the door that losing Gairo to Zyloxia was worse than being bound to a male and raising a child together. I had seen plenty of wives of space marines wither away while they waited for men to come home.

I understood my mother better now. My father was traditional and following the male-centric rules of the colony, to an absurd extent. My mother and aunts had made

sure that I had freedom as an apothecary. As much as the men had wanted to punish me for heists, my mother and aunts had made sure that all the punishments lasted for as little time as they could. They knew that my spirit chafed inside of the colony. They hadn't been able to save me from everything.

For all the bad in my father, I knew that the way that he felt about my mother was true love. She had prevented me from being forced into a marriage inside of the colony for my entire childhood. I saw some of the girls who had married space marines and came back for Christmas. Now that I saw Zyloxia offer to take my place, I was more willing to stay with him and raise our child. How could I convince Gairo that I wanted to stick around after I said that I wanted to leave?

VERONICA'S FUTURE

GAIRO

“I knew I’d find you here. You always sit under the stars when you’re troubled.”

Zyloxia had found me again. “How can you know that about me?”

“I’m your heart-mate. I know that you have a younger brother and that your parents died within the last year.”

I breathed hard, thinking about my amnesia and the prospect of family that I could not remember somewhere else on Aesirheim. I knew that Zyloxia couldn’t be my heart-mate, because I already felt the stirrings of my heart with Veronica, the mother of my babe.

Zyloxia came with her lips puckered, for a kiss, and I backed away.

“I have to get back to Veronica.”

“Have an affair. You just can’t remember me now, but you’ll regret it later.”

I didn’t think that I would. “Thanks for telling me that I still have a brother.” I’d have to look for him later. Genetic testing that I’d already done for my surrogacy match should help me find my brother later.

* * *

When I got back into the cabin, Veronica's face was red. "Did you hook up with her?" She snarled, her hair a mess.

"No, sweetheart. We have a contract."

"I don't give a flip about that contract. If you want to hook up with Zyloxia and raise our baby with her..."

"I don't want to raise a child with her. I chose you. We're genetically matched to be together. I'm the one who tried to keep you past the contract, remember?"

In response, Veronica came to me and tilted her face up for my kiss. I bent my knees and sealed our mouths together. I could feel warm singing in my body; I knew that this feeling meant that we were heart-mates in truth. I just had to wait for Veronica to realize how good we could be together as we raised our young. I wouldn't mind more than one new child with a human mother.

Wanting to shuck her clothing off in the worst way, I brought her to our bed. The cabins were made as love-nests, carefully planned to keep us inside as much as possible as we repopulated the planet with human females. I tugged at her shirt, ready to see her body bare for me.

In a few seconds, I had her topless. I attacked her throat in the way that she liked. She undulated beneath me, moaning in the back of her throat. I knew from experience that the wetness between her thighs was leaking from her core as I bit and kissed her throat. I scrabbled at the fastening of her pants as I fought to get closer to her wet core. I could scent how wet my omega was beneath me.

"I want to be inside you," I murmured to her as she panted her way through an orgasm. I yanked at her panties so I could see the glistening wetness. Pushing her knees apart, I aimed my nose for her clitoris. She screamed as I made her peak again

and again. She couldn't control the restless movement of her hips or the wild bucking of her entire body. Her back was arching as if she had no control whatsoever. Her inner thighs were glistening with desire. I took an experimental lick of her taste; Veronica screamed in response.

"You're so responsive," I whispered to her. I started to attack her wet core, waiting for her to buck against my face. She didn't disappoint. She was so wild in bed that I needed my hands on her hips, pressing her down so that I could get deeper with each lick.

"Take me," she screamed. "I can't take any more orgasms."

It was my cue to stand up. "Do you want me naked?"

"Are you going to take that much time?"

I smiled down at her, feeling divine as she waited for me to get undressed. I took off my shirt slowly. I liked watching her heaving breasts as she struggled for control. Then, I took off my pants. She could see that my boxers were tented with need and desire for my heart-mate. I just had to convince her to stay with me.

Soon, we were one. I eased into her, touching her g-spot carefully. She was facedown in front of me and moaning like she couldn't get enough. I felt like I was powerful. What could I do to hold onto this woman who already told me she'd leave?

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SCARY EVIDENCE FROM ZYLOXIA

VERONICA

“It’s only a few days,” Gairo reassured me while I scrubbed at my eyes, not wanting to let him see me cry at our separation. Had I known that giving Ulfar Sarah’s letter would mean that Gairo would leave for a mission far from me, I would have waited until our relationship that seemed more stable. Sarah had sent me on a trip that I really didn’t understand. I didn’t know what was going on between her and Ulfar.

While I thought back to Sarah from the initial transport, Gairo was shoving things into a backpack that unfolded with many clever pockets and webbing. He was getting into his entire flyboy uniform while I watched. His normal clothes went under his armor. I had to say that I really liked him in his armor. He looked ready to go to battle for me.

Gairo cleared his throat and looked at me meaningfully. “Promise me that you’ll be here when I get back.”

I teased him, “I have a contract to be here for a year.”

In response, I saw him wince. “I’ll be here,” I corrected myself. It was hard for him to remember that there was a deadline. Sometimes, I wondered if I needed to even mention the deadline. I wanted to stay here sometimes, even though the galaxy called me away. Maybe I could go on vacations here and still see Gairo and my baby. I didn’t know how it normally went for surrogates who wanted more of a relationship without being a wife who couldn’t leave the planet at all.

When he left and nobody could see me, I cried. I felt so conflicted between my own desire to see the galaxy using the money that I got from being a surrogate and raising a little one with Gairo, whom I was starting to really be in love with.

* * *

Gairo had told me the launch time, so I saw the ship that he was manning leave the station. Unfortunately, Zyloxia had the same idea. She came over, glancing at her communicator before she came too close.

“Oh, his surrogate. I’m so excited for Gairo’s child. Can I touch your belly?”

“Fuck off,” I said.

Her face contorted. “You’ll never have Gairo. He only sees you as a useful thing, an import to hold a baby for him.”

I wound up my fist, ready to strike her jaw. The guards separated us from each other, but in the confusion, I lifted her communicator from her belt.

* * *

Back in my cabin, I took her communicator and put it into the replicator. Gairo had shown how to replicate the things that I wanted, especially things that I bought back in the colony that they didn’t naturally have on this planet.

Score! The replicator seemed to work on the unit. I was going to have the original anonymously sent to the lost and found in the central transport station. If Zyloxia got information, I would know.

I read through a series of messages on the duplicate. There was a new one which

hadn't been opened yet. Zyloxia really did know Gairo as Tyrlyn. It didn't say that they were actually heart-mates. The male sending the messages her to mess up my surrogacy was named Magdorian, and for some reason, he was against Gairo having a child.

As I read on, the mentions of their parents meant that Gairo had a brother named Magdorian who was working against him. I wanted to go to Gairo with this new evidence, but the part of me that had been raised in the colony didn't want to be punished. Gairo was away anyway with Ulfar under Soren's command. If I went to Orvox with the Intergalactic Surrogacy Agency, they probably would not intervene in warlord politics.

The idea of trying to fight Zyloxia and Magdorian alone exhausted me. I needed to find more evidence to confirm what I knew so I didn't sound crazy when I brought it up to Gairo. I also needed to figure out if it was the omega injection or pregnancy hormones making me so tired. The third thing I needed to do was make sure that Zyloxia stayed away from both Gairo and our potential new baby.

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CONFIRMED PREGNANCY

GAIRO

ONE WEEK LATER

I couldn't believe that I had been gone from Veronica, my little Vi, for an entire week. For most of the week, Soren had demanded radio silence. Now that I was on my way home, we could have live video feeds from inside of our cabin.

She showed me a bunch of test results.

"What are those? Are you sick?"

"No, silly, I'm pregnant. I had a hunch that I was pregnant and went to Orvox."

I felt my body glowing with happiness. I wanted to shower her pregnant body with attention and lots of praise.

I heard this and that of her life while I was gone, and I wondered what happened to Zyloxia while I was gone. She had called me a name I didn't recognize, Tyrlyn, and expect me to welcome her as my heart-mate. I knew for sure with the way that my heart sang as soon as I saw Vi, my Veronica, that she was my heart-mate. Just seeing her on a video link made me feel more possessive than ever.

"Just wait until I get home," I warned her. "I've been apart from you for too long."

* * *

She met me at the transport station, and I basically threw her into bed when I got home. She giggled as I struggled to get my heart-mate out of her clothes.

“You’re behaving like a barbarian,” she teased.

“I feel like one. A week is too long to go without my omega.” I didn’t want to scare her off, when I knew she was my heart-mate. Whatever they did with genetic matching worked. I had seen other people fall like a ton of bricks in love, and it was finally my turn.

How long could I keep her interested? She had told me that she planned to leave the planet as soon as she gave birth during our weeks together, as we tried our best to make a baby right here in the ISA cabins. I felt my heart tear every time I thought about a future with a child and no mother in sight. I didn’t know what I could do to convince her to raise a child with me. When she talked about the colony where she had been raised, her fists balled when she described how the men treated their wives. Her mother and aunts had spared her the worst punishments by ensuring that she had the ability to leave as an apothecary, but it wasn’t enough. She wanted to be free to be anywhere she wanted in the galaxy. The only place I wanted her to be was by my side.

When I got her out of her clothes and totally naked, I slowed down. She liked watching me get out of my clothes. Even though I was almost out of my mind with hunger, I wanted to make it good for her. I watched her watching me.

Then I was naked, too, and I reached for her. Our mouths met with so much passion that I felt like I could drown in her. She stoked a fire within me that I felt would be eternally hungry. Was this what it was like to have a heart-mate? What happened after you lost a heart-mate I’d seen happen to a few people on the planet, and it was

ugly. I vowed to myself that I'd find a way to keep her happy and with me. I trailed light kisses from behind her ear to her throat to arouse her. My hand shaped her nipples as she warmed to my touch.

"I love you," I burst out, unable to contain my emotions.

"And I you," she replied. She nipped at my neck playfully in a way that got me hotter than fire. Her hands trailed along my hipbones, teasing me as she got closer to the center of my need.

"Touch me," I demanded, wanting her to touch me, needing it more than my next breath.

"You haven't said the magic word."

"Please."

With that, she played with the tip of my cock, swirling around some of the moisture so she could taunt me with proximity to what I wanted. I let her tease me for a little bit. Then I took her face down, bottom up, which was my favorite position. As I widened her so I could get in, I put the first third of myself into her gently before ramming home. By the way that she was shaking before me, I knew she was into it.

"I'll want you forever," I told her as her body went through orgasm after orgasm.

All I had to do was convince her that she'd be happy with me. I didn't know how.

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MAGDORIAN

GAIRO

TWO MONTHS LATER

S arah was safe with Ulfar back home now. Gairo, my big alien was only a few feet away. He swept me into his arms, and my feet dangled off the ground. After months together, pregnant, I knew that Gairo was my person. He told me that on Aesirheim, it was called a heart-mate. He said that his heart could ring true when he was near me. I didn't think that humans could feel heart-mates like aliens could.

I wished that I could tell him more about Zyloxia. Zyloxia barely ever spoke to Magdorian.

* * *

"I have word from Magdorian." Soren looked irritated.

"What?" said Gairo. "Who is that?"

"Magdorian is your younger brother."

I wrapped an arm around Vi, looking at Zyloxia trailing behind my commander.

"We've been looking for you for a long time. You're the son of an alpha male who led another clan on the other side of the continent. Your communicator went out, and

you've been missing for years. Magdorian has requested that Soren send you and your pregnant surrogate back home."

"I don't think it's a good idea," said my heart-mate. "I have a bad feeling about it."

"We can go to my home tomorrow to settle the matter."

From the hurt look that Veronica gave me, I knew she wasn't happy about leaving our love nest. However, it was time to face the music. I didn't like having no memory of my childhood before I was found here in the valley.

* * *

"I can't sleep." Veronica climbed into my lap. Zyloxia had found me brooding under the stars, and now I was in our love nest's living room area after being unable to sleep and crawling out of bed. Veronica didn't add anything to what she was saying. "Do we really have to go to where Zyloxia says is your home?"

"I don't trust her. I don't think that we are heart-mates, because I don't feel it with her."

"Why did you agree to go with them tomorrow?"

"As much as I don't trust Zyloxia, she has access to the answers I've spent years racking my brain for. Once I find the right answers, I can go back to my normal life." I sighed. "I want to ask you to stay behind."

"Absolutely not."

"I knew you'd refuse. When you're at my side, I can see you and our baby."

“I have to show you something. Don’t get mad, okay?”

“Did you steal another knife, little heist queen?”

“No, it’s a cloned communicator. I think that we are walking into a trap. If you insist on going, I’ll go with you. I don’t want to be left behind like I was when you went on that mission. Soren and Orvox can’t keep me here, not when I’m already pregnant with our baby.”

“I want you to stay safe. All my alpha instincts are yelling for you to stay here. I can’t tell you what to do; it’s too much like that stars-blasted colony that you grew up in. I love you. Being apart from you while I was on that mission was hell already. While you’re pregnant, I don’t want to be separated from you again.”

“I love you, too,” said Veronica.

She was already sitting in my lap. I rearranged her thighs so that they were around my hips. I was already half hard and growing harder by the second. She knew what I liked by this point. Her hands came to comb through my hair as she stole a kiss with passion that made me melt inside. I needed her naked. Thank the stars that her nightdress was one she frequently didn’t bother with undergarments with. I had it off over her head in a split second before I tugged at my pants to open them.

Sometimes she liked it rough, but I wanted to taste her essence. I rearranged us on the couch so that I could eat my little omega until she screamed.

After I’d taken her through two orgasms with just my tongue, I parted her thighs. She was already pregnant, but I couldn’t resist everything we’d done while baby-making. As I slid inside of her, I sent up a silent prayer for everything to be okay. Stars above only knew what was going to happen.

PILOTING SHIP

GAIRO

“I don’t want to travel to the other side of the planet to find your long-lost clan,” said Veronica to my face, unhappy with the journey. “But if I have to, I’m glad to explore this planet a little. I’ve wanted to explore the galaxy ever since I was stuck in my home colony.” She ruffled my hair.

“Rathgar and a couple other alphas will stay with us on the ship. Soren is going to stay behind for this mission. He doesn’t trust unknowns, especially Zyloxia, who will be with us.” Soren knew that you couldn’t plan ahead for everything, but you were bound to run into some unknowns as it was.

“I already explained to you that we can’t trust her at all.” Vi’s suspicions about her were well-founded.

“She tried to stay in the cabin the whole time, but Soren left orders for her to be kept in the transport quarters of the ship the entire time.”

“Did he leave you orders about me?” From her tone of voice, I could tell that she had plans for me.

“Little minx, you know he didn’t.”

“Can I sit on your lap while you’re piloting?”

“Soren wouldn’t let me if he were here. It’s against our regulations. However, I’ll let you touch the controls. Just wait until we lift off.”

Veronica settled into one of the gel-lined seats. I went through my pre-flight checklist with my microphone on, which I would turn off as soon as I got into orbit and put the ship on auto-pilot.

* * *

After the ship alerted me that I could turn on the auto-pilot and I used it, I unhooked Veronica from her seat. The gravity was lighter here, so I nestled her into my lap and let her play around with the controls while I named them. I could not help my raging boner as she wiggled around on my lap. She kept sliding around, unable to get comfortable with the lack of gravity.

I slipped my hand right at her womb. She was starting to show, and the thought of my child growing inside of her made me feel warm inside. We started talking about names, leaning towards one more usual on Aesirheim.

“Maybe I could stay,” said Vi as we went around a small obstacle. “I somehow have stopped thinking about leaving ever since you came back from your mission with Ulfar. I think that the warlords and the human females they are mated to are more my family than the blood family I have back at the colony.”

Hearing that admission, I kissed her. It was music to my ears.

“Do you think that I could move out of the ISA cabin and into your space when we get back?”

I had been waiting to hear her say something to that effect since she announced her pregnancy. “I’ll see it done the very moment we get done with this mission. I love

you.”

Just those three words led to some loving. I couldn’t move much, because I was strapped into the pilot’s seat. With her butt moving around my lap, I felt like she was the most important star in the universe. I wanted to get naked in the worst way, but it was against regulations. If I took her now, the ship could go through an emergency that I could not respond to in time.

Instead, I let my hand settle at the juncture of her thick thighs. “Baby, do you want me to pleasure you? I can keep half an eye on the instruments.”

“Yes, please.”

I watched as her hips were restlessly grinding against my hand. I knew exactly how she liked it from our time in the ISA cabin, so she moaned as I took the ship to another continent on the same planet.

* * *

When my ship told me that we were there, we were docking at a transport station that looked a little different from the one at home. Zyloxia and Rathgar were there, disembarking. At the dock was someone who looked just like me, but smaller. It might be my brother. Why had it been so long since I had seen my blood family?

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LOST PRINCE

GAIRO

It was impossible to deny that Magdorian was my brother the moment that I laid eyes on him. He looked like a smaller version of me. I wondered what else I had lost through my amnesia. He was clearly part of my lost past.

As soon as I got near him, he swept me warmly into a big hug. “It’s good to have our clan’s other prince return.”

“What do you mean, ‘prince’?” I asked.

“I’ll explain later. It’s good to see you, Rathgar and Zyloxia!”

He totally ignored my pregnant heart-mate. After she got off the ship, I kept her hand in mine, which my brother noticed with a long glance.

“Zyloxia reported other me that Tyrlyn had a surrogate.”

“I’d rather be called Gairo. Tyrlyn might be my birth name, but I am more used to being a flyboy than a prince.”

* * *

When I got to the massive grand hall, there was a parade waiting for me. There were cheering groups of people. The noise was overwhelming, and I had to wave at too

many people. Finally, Magdorian let us into a big palace and into a suite of rooms where we could wash up. He told us all, “A feast has been prepared. We have some people to get the females ready. I want a private talk with my brother.”

“I’ll keep an eye on Vi,” Rathgar reassured me.

Magdorian got me into a separate room. “I thought you were dead. I’m the second born from our father. Until I heard from Zyloxia about you running around with a surrogate, I thought that you were dead.”

“I didn’t know that you were looking for me. When I woke up with amnesia, I didn’t know anything about myself.”

“Let me get you up to speed on our family history.” He took a textbook off the shelf. It was hardbound, not a digital one at all. “It has the family’s story in it.”

It was heavy and looked like a dusty tome. “You expect me to read that?”

“Not all at once, but you can keep it in your chambers.”

PRESENTATION

VERONICA

“I don’t want the bathing chamber to be closed to me. I promised to look after Vi.”

The servants looked at each other, but they got the picture. Even though Rathgar wasn’t my heart-mate, he probably had already talked to Gairo about my pregnancy. These alpha males were overprotective. A group of the servants got me pretty without saying much to me. There were robes for me to wear that were nothing like what I had in the human colony.

When we were done, one of the servants went to Rathgar to say that I was ready to attend the feast.

“Where’s Gairo?” I asked a servant. Rathgar noticed that the servants weren’t speaking to me.

“Answer her,” growled Rathgar.

“Gairo is there with his brother and fiancée.”

“Hell no,” said Vi. “Show me to the way to the feast.”

Rathgar chuckled, but he got the servants to get us to the feast. Gairo was seated at the high table, but he got to his feet and extracted himself from Zyloxia and Magdorian. “You can sit next to me. I’ll get Zyloxia to move.”

I walked with him to his seat. Zyloxia had her chin up, and she didn't look like she was going to move. "I need you to move."

"I don't want to." Zyloxia didn't look like she'd budge an inch.

"You'll move for my heart-mate," snarled Gairo. Whispers broke out around us, but Zyloxia finally moved. Rathgar sat at the seat next to the chair that Zyloxia vacated. Another chair was called for by Magdorian, who seemed amused. We finally got to eat, which was great because I was pregnant, and I noticed how many people looked at me. When I finished eating, I was one of the last to do so. Magdorian got to his feet.

"I have a toast," said Magdorian. "To Tyrlyn's return!"

A roar broke out, and I saw a bunch of cups raised in the air. They were really glad that Gairo had come back. What role did I fit into here?

GAS CANISTER

GAIRO

At dinner, I kept a hand on Vi at all times. Rathgar got my silent signals. We had talked about it before we left, where I had shared Vi's suspicions about my brother. Magdorian did a visual presentation of us as young children with our parents, but even the clues to my past couldn't enrapture me in a way that it would have before my surrogate came. The hairs on the back of my neck told me there was something wrong. The photos clearly had not been edited, but there was danger here.

At the end of the dinner, some of the servants tried to take my heart-mate to a different room. I growled and pulled her close to me. "I want to go to my chambers."

They froze for a moment, and then they bowed to me. "As our prince wishes."

Magdorian had told me that my chambers were the same as they were before I got lost, but I felt no ties to the room. I wanted to go back to my normal life. Once I got to Rathgar, I'd make plans to take our ship back.

"Baby, are you okay?" She was a little cranky while pregnant.

She curled her smaller frame into my body. "There's something wrong here."

"I'm glad you're with me, sweetheart." I kissed the top of her head. I was tired, but I wasn't too tired to send my hand traveling between her thighs. From the way that she bucked against my hand, I could tell that she wasn't too tired either. I wait until she

was worked up to eat her. She tasted fresh beneath my tongue as I took her through orgasm after orgasm. When she was limp, I made love to her as gently as I could. It felt like a miracle, watching her fall asleep in my bed. A small sound was all the warning I got before a gas canister went off in the room.

Males in masks ran into the room, and I killed two with one of my knives and injured a few more before the gas got to me. The last thing I saw before I blacked out was Zyloxia taking off a gas mask.

WORST HEADACHE

VERONICA

I wake up with a migraine, almost as if an aki was bucking in my skull. I can feel a male's hands help me drink, but he doesn't smell like my mate. I opened my eyes to see a very concerned Rathgar.

"Why are you here?"

"We were ambushed."

I cursed, using the most imaginative ones that I had from home. "I knew that we couldn't trust Magdorian and Zyloxia." I looked around. "Why are we in a cell?"

"I'm not sure. I don't know where Gairo is."

* * *

Zyloxia came to our cell door with a meal, which I didn't trust at all.

"What's going on?"

"I see no reason not to tell you, now that you're in this cell. Magdorian is correcting the mistake that I made years ago. He and I decided to kill Gairo, but I hoped the amnesia would help keep Tyrlyn safe from Magdorian. Tyrlyn is the heir to their warlord papa. Now that Veronica is pregnant, he has a chance to claim all this

territory for his own. Magdorian has no intention of letting it happen. He's as cruel as he needs to be, and he's power hungry with it. He's forcing me to fix my mistake by bringing back Tyrlyn and killing the new child. It's too public, though."

"What are you going to do?" asked Rathgar.

"There's an ancient rite where they'll fight to the death. The victor will claim the territory."

Rathgar started muttering to himself. "I've heard of it, but it's a barbaric tradition."

"If Tyrlyn loses, Vi and the child will die as well." Zyloxia sighed. "I don't like slaying children. I'm sorry that you were dragged into all this."

Without answering more questions, she swept away and left Rathgar and me staring after her. Where was Gairo?

MANACLED

GAIRO

My head ached. My wrists were manacled behind my back and attached to something. My ankles were chained together.

“Ah, my brother awakes,” Magdorian said.

My vision was a little blurry, but Magdorian was looking at a tablet.

“You know, Zyloxia told me how successful you were as a pilot on the other continent. Mother and Father always believed in you.”

“Where is my heart-mate?” I asked. She was pregnant.

“You don’t have to worry about Veronica. You really should have stayed forgotten on the other continent.”

“Fuck you.”

“I’m going to give you two choices: you can kill your pregnant heart-mate yourself and disappear again back to the other continent or you can fight in an ancient rite to the death on the next full moon.”

“I’d rather fight to the death.” I’d never kill my pregnant heart-mate.

“Enjoy solitude for the next seven days.” Magdorian powered off his tablet and left me to stew in my cell.

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FULL MOON

VERONICA

SEVEN DAYS LATER

R athgar was pacing in our cell, restless. I was not doing any better. I wanted my heart-mate back. Zyloxia had come back with food and the proper prenatal vitamins for the little one inside of me.

“Zyloxia told me while you were asleep that the fight the death is tonight. Soren will know that something is wrong, since he told us to keep in touch.”

“Nobody has come to spring us from this cell.”

“It’s strange to be here without allies. Without the ambush, I would have sent a mayday call back to Soren. It’s good that he stayed back home. I want to help Gairo, but I can’t. Soren can’t help us before the rite happens.”

“I’m sick of waiting here.” There was an old-style lock on the door.

“Have you seen the guards?”

“I can’t smell anyone but us.”

I pulled the hair pins out of my hair and got to work unlocking our cell. Gairo didn’t call me Little Thief for nothing. There wasn’t a computer in it, so after a few minutes,

my hair pins did the trick: we were free. Rathgar immediately shoved the door open and said, “Stay behind me.” There was a long dagger hanging on the wall, which Rathgar instantly grabbed.

There were only two guards posted at strategic points, and Rathgar killed them before they had time to react. They had the long daggers, too, and I put one in my hand. Rathgar didn’t tell me that it wasn’t ladylike to fight, which I liked. I might have been pregnant, but I was not helpless.

Right at the end of the hallway was a guard that Rathgar questioned. He gave up the location of the fight immediately, begging for his life. Rathgar killed him, too.

“We need to hurry and get to my heart-mate.”

“If the full moon rite has started, there’s nothing that we can do to stop what they’ve started. It’s an ancient ritual.”

“Fuck honor. If I have to jump in and kill Magdorian myself to save my heart-mate, I will. Honorable or not!” I hoped that it wouldn’t come to that, but Gairo was the father of my child.

BEGINNING OF THE RITE

GAIRO

A nger and fear had been my constant companions for the last week. Once a day, they gave me water and a travel ration. I knew it was Magdorian's way of weakening me and making me easier to defeat. I kept in shape with bodyweight exercises in my cell. The more that I thought about Magdorian, the more I understood that he was a coward who would fight without honor if it meant Magdorian would come out on top. Magdorian had come to my cell during the week to gloat about killing our parents, whom I couldn't even remember. I cared far more about my heart-mate. Because of our bond, I knew that she was still alive and, I hoped, pregnant with our baby.

When the guards came to escort me to a massive coliseum, I looked and saw my brother dressed for the fight. They had a rack of armor meant for me with weapons. Magdorian was giving some kind of speech over the speaker system, which I ignored. It wasn't relevant to me. When I was fully dressed in the armor that they provided and climbed into the elevated battle ring, I looked for Veronica or Rathgar. They were nowhere to be seen. I could see Zyloxia on Magdorian's side of the arena. I bared my teeth at her, and she never flinched. All she did was look away, as if I wasn't even worthy of her disdain.

A massive gong went off. It had been a week of little food, but I was ready to kill my brother. He had threatened me and my pregnant heart-mate. We went at each other in the ring.

FIGHTING ARENA

VERONICA

Rathgar moved like a one-alien killing machine. There was blood all over his body. He killed the guards who opposed us, while others ran away. I didn't know how many lives he would take on the way to getting Gairo at the full moon rite. I grabbed a small hand-blaster from one of the killed guards who never got a chance to even get it out of its holster.

We got to the arena, and I could see that Gairo and Magdorian were locked in battle. They were covered in blood, as they both had weapons in their hands. It was clear that they were both trained for combat, though Gairo was skinnier than he had been when we first arrived on this continent. I could see that he had his own cheering section. Some of them considered him their prince.

Rathgar was carried away from me inside of the crowd. I could feel more than one pair of hands lifting me into the arena. Gairo screamed my name, but I jumped towards Zyloxia, out of the arena again. I could see my blaster where they had pulled me into the arena. Rathgar was bellowing something a little bit away from me.

"I'm sick of your shit," I said to Zyloxia. Zyloxia charged at me, and I dove to get out of the way, pregnant or not. Zyloxia had a lot more status here than I did. All I was was a rebellious human thief.

"Why don't you fight with honor, human?" sneered Zyloxia.

Finally, I got the blaster back.

“Fuck honor,” I shouted back. I shot Zyloxia in the center of the mass, the way that my aunt had taught me back in our human colony.

The crowd roared. Did they care that much about Zyloxia? But they kept roaring, and I felt something wet fall on me.

It was Magdorian’s head.

NEW QUARTERS

GAIRO

My pregnant heart-mate woke me up by blowing me. We were in brand new quarters on this continent, since I refused outright to go back to my childhood quarters or take Magdorian's place. I had never considered being a warlord on my own. I was content to follow Soren and one day, Soren's successor. I didn't think I'd lead my own clan.

When I came, my mate swallowed it and then nestled her cheek on my bare shoulder. My whole body felt warm. I had never been more content. I had checked my pregnant heart-mate as much as I could since I concluded the fight with Magdorian's headless body, but all the blood on her wasn't actually from her.

I was glad that my little thief had used her hair pins to get her and Rathgar out of their cell. I didn't like that we had been ambushed and I had failed to keep her safe that night, although I had killed some men at that time.

"Baby, I'm sorry about this mess. I should've taken more precautions when you told me about Magdorian and Zyloxia."

"You have a lifetime to make it up to me. I'm not letting you get that far away from me ever again."

"I thought that you were going to explore the galaxy after the contract ended."

"How about you take me out when you go out on raids?"

“We’ll see about that.” On one hand, she would save me from a lifetime of loneliness. On the other, Soren didn’t take his heart-mate out for any battles or raids. I shuddered at the idea of her getting hurt.

“How do you feel about leading the clan? We could always escape into the galaxy if you don’t want the burden.”

“We’ll stay long enough to see if I like it. If we run away, you’ll help me fly.”

She toyed with me a little bit, and I felt my body stir.

“I think we have time before Soren shows up.”

I kissed my heart-mate, and I let my hand drift between her thighs. She bucked her hips as I stimulated her clitoris and got her wet. I explored her body as she made noises in the back of her throat.

“Thirsty, aren’t we?”

In reply, she flipped us over. Her hands explored my body, paying me back for tormenting her. When I was a few seconds away from releasing, she slid over me. I felt like the top of my head would blow off. I couldn’t breathe as she worked her body over mine. The feeling of her muscles clenched around me made me unable to speak, either.

When she finally let me find completion, she eased off of my body. While we cleaned up, I kissed my heart-mate. She was everything that I had dreamed of and more. I was glad that she was pregnant with my child.

LITTLEST THIEF

VERONICA

I wanted to send the colony leaders who had sent me out of the colony a happy family portrait. I had my little one cuddled into a pillow and nursing. I knew they'd have heart attacks, looking at me in alien hunting leathers, looking like my warlord husband. When I left, I had no intention of losing my heart to my alien heart-mate or loving the littlest thief that I held in my arms. Orvox and other ISA staff members had told me what I needed to do to take care of a half alien child when I got ready to have our little one.

"How are you doing, heart-mate?" Gairo asked me dripping from a workout and only wearing pants.

"I hate that we can't get it on for another six weeks because of the episiotomy."

Gairo laughed and grabbed our son. His tiny arms opened for his dad to steal him away.

"It's your job to burp him."

In response, Gairo kissed me long enough to make me breathless and held the baby against his chest to burp him.

"I promised you at our mating ceremony to give you what you need, whether it's kisses or spankings."

“Stop trying to distract me. What did they say during your ISA meeting that you went to prior to your daily workout with Soren?”

“There are multiple warlords in my clan who are interested in a fierce female human match just like you. I never asked to be the head of a clan, but Soren has been supportive. They like me a lot more than Magdorian.”

With another kiss, Gairo wandered away onto our balcony, holding our son who was only a few days old.

What was supposed to be a punishment turned out to be the greatest reward I could ever have.