

Summary: When Liam decides to investigate Joshua Doors' nomination of his father for President, it sets events in motion that will forever change his life. It doesn't help, that after his encounter with the Jaridian, he suddenly becomes aware of things that up till now, were barely even thought of. During all this, a friendship forms that will test his loyalties, but what is real, and who is pretending?

Categories: [Earth:Final Conflict](#) Characters: None

Genres: Slash

Warnings: Abduction/Kidnapping, Adult Situations, Alien mpreg, Brain-Insane, H/C, Hurt/Comfort, Language, m/m, Non- Con, Sexual aggression, Suicide, Violence

Challenges: None

Series: None

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Story Notes:

This story is inspired by what if thoughts and a series by Lyta titled, "Alterations" which can be found at: <http://dreamwater.net/lyta/Archive/Series.html>. I have not been able to get in contact with her to ask permission, so please don't be mad if you do read this, Lyta. Hers is a gen story while mine is Slash, so please mind the warnings.

Dedication: To Peja, you are inspiration cubed, and Neon Blue Fox, for making me see the wonderful possibility of this wonderful pairing.

Season 2, parts of 3, 4, and 5. Starting with Between Heaven and Hell

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Chapter 1 by lopaka tanu

Part 1 Throw me a kiss through space and time.

The Beginning:

It began with a kiss.

Well actually it began before that, but that kiss was a large factor as to why I am here. It has been months since then, nearly a week since I last saw him. We didn't part under pleasurable circumstances, no matter that it was our first time.

Something in me has changed, I can feel it. It grows stronger everyday. At times I can almost tell what it is, others I am as clueless as the hired goon, Tate.

Now there is an honor student! Tate, the last in a long line of thugs, well if I get my hands free he will be. He has been here taunting me everyday since I was caught. I have no idea what his master wants with me, for he is too stupid to have done this by and or for himself.

I hear sounds coming from the door, somebody is coming down the corridor. Tate said I was to meet my fate today, I can only hope that Lili and Augur find me in time. But if not, I am not going alone frog boy! The door opens, a familiar face, well I'll be damned, literally!

"Ah, the illustrious Major Kincaid, so we meet again."

He had been sitting in Joshua's office for three hours, waiting for the older man to make their meeting. A loud moan escaped his throat as he stretched and yawned. The days events were almost over, saving the world from Adolph Belman and her plans for the master race were the main event. Joshua's announcement was just the icing on the cake.

Still feeling drained, Liam thought on his bed longingly. There was a moral in there some where, what, he had yet to find. Who had known that a Joining could be so energy draining? Sure there was the whole merging of the body and minds, touching of the souls deal, but what the heck was so stressful? May be he was just too young to be doing that sort of thing, after all, Augur said he was fifteen when he first did it. Then again Augur wasn't part energy being and couldn't do that, but from the way he described it all the time, it might be close.

Liam shook his head to clear the thoughts. Checking his watch for the hundredth time, Liam glared at the numbers. One knee started to shake with impatience as the time piece announced a new hour.

"Is there a reason you are scuffing up the floor of my office, or do you like being where you aren't wanted?" Joshua's voice startled him in to standing.

"Major Liam Kincaid, protector to the North American Companion..." He extended his hand but pulled back when Joshua waved it away.

"I know who you are, what I want to know is why you are here?" The hard blue eyes told Liam he was not going to get any warmer a reception.

"I want to know what your political agenda is, Mr. Doors. Does your father know what you are up to in his name? Did he put you up to this? Finally, what are you planning in regards to the Taelons?"

Joshua looked down as he crossed his arms. "I am acting on my father's behalf, that is all you need to know on that." He caught Liam with his eyes as he looked up. "My political agenda, Mr. Kincaid, is to put my father in the White house and replace the puppet who currently resides there. What I am planning in regards to the Taelons is none of your damn business unless I say so. Now you know the way out!"

Having dismissed Liam from his mind, Joshua walked behind his desk and started on reports. After a few moments, he looked up from under his brows and glared. "Aren't you supposed to be leaving?"

"Not until I get my answers." Liam was in a relaxed stance, hands on hips as he looked back at the man in front of him.

A few moments passed as Joshua thought over Liam's presence. Quickly he stood and made his way around towards the younger man. Before Liam could react, Joshua had him by the leather jacket and dragging him towards the door. Opening the door, he was brought up short and forced to face Liam.

Liam smirked as the shorter man in front of him narrowed his eyes. "I want my answers, and I am not leaving until I get them. So spill."

Rolling his eyes, Joshua sighed. "I warned you." His hands shot up and grabbed Liam by the face and pulled him into a kiss. Forcing the stunned man back, he pushed Liam through the doorway of his office. "Have a nice day, Major." Smiling, he slammed the door to his office shut.

Another deep breath as he rolled his shoulders, then he walked back behind the desk to sit. As he started to read over the reports again, he absentmindedly rubbed at his lips. Lips that tingled

from the sensation of touching ungrounded energy he would later come to realize.

In the hall, Liam leaned up on his elbows and opened his chirping global. The expectant face on the other end did nothing to alleviate his pain.

"Motion detectors say you are in the hall. I take it you have made contact, how did it go?"

"Wonderful."

"What did he say?"

"He wants you as President, apparently he doesn't feel too highly of our current one. Joshua believes that he has your best interests at heart, now what that means I can't say, for all I know it could be you would be better off dead."

Johnathan snorted. "What about the Taelon agenda, what did he say his plans were regarding them?"

"He told me it was none of my damn business unless he said so. When I refused to take that as a proper response, he assaulted me then tossed me out of his office." Liam rubbed at his lips letting Doors know exactly where he had been *assaulted*.

"He gets that from his Mother's side. Keep me informed of anything further." Doors' image winked out on the global.

"Yes master, anything you say." Grumbling to himself, Liam stood and dusted off his clothes. May be if he hurried, he could still meet up with Lili and Augur at the Liberation head quarters before they moved on to the Flat Planet. They were never going to believe this. Well Augur might not, Lili might make him spill all the juicy details, as she liked to put it. He still didn't understand what the hold such things had on the others. May be it was just him, but sexual attraction just wasn't. Thinking about all the gossips at the Liberation head quarters, he decided to by pass it and just go strait to the bar.

Standing at the bar waiting for Augur to show up, Lili, Maya, and Liam were discussing what he had learned. "And then he told me it was none of my damned business."

Maya was staring at him with wide eyes as Lili smirked. "And what did you say?"

"What was I to say, did I forget to mention I also work for your father and am here on his behalf?"

Both women started to laugh. "I tried telling you, Liam. He is not one to beat around the bush."

"And you know this how, Lili?" Maya's entire focus was on her smirking sister. She was wondering who this Joshua really was and how he differed from his public persona.

"We dated, once." She started to twirl her straw as Maya looked expectantly.

"And?"

Lili looked her in the eyes with an annoyed expression which quickly turned to teasing. "And what? We went out, had a few drinks, and then I got called out for business. You should have seen Johnathan's reaction when he saw who I was with. Good think Joshua didn't or else I might still be sitting there listening to them two argue." She finished by taking a long swallow of the drink.

Leaning over the bar, Maya tried to hide her interest by wiping the same spot over again. "And do you think there might be another chance now that he is leading Doors' campaign?"

"Not really, he's just not my type."

"Nor you his." Again Liam was the center of wide eyed stares. "What?"

"What do you mean I am not his type?" Lili watched him shrug. "Oh no you don't, Liam. What aren't you telling me?" She shared a look with Maya and started back to her interrogation. "Did something else happen while you were there? Did he say something to you?"

"No, more like do." He shrugged again as he drank from the fruit beverage.

"What did he do?" Lili brought him around to face her. "Do I have to get a telepath to scan you? I know a few..."

"When I refused to take no for an answer, he dragged me to the door, kissed me then tossed me out like yesterday's trash. Johnathan said he gets it from his mother's side, so I can only assume Joshua has done this before." He said it so nonchalantly that it made Lili's blood boil.

"What in hell is that supposed to mean? You based your opinion of his sexuality on a diversionary tactic?" She placed a hand on his arm. "Liam, just because he kissed you to distract you long enough to throw you out, doesn't mean he is gay. It is one of the oldest tricks in the book."

"I know that, I have the combined knowledge of my parents, remember. And no, I did not base my entire opinion on that. The bulge in his pants was also a pretty good indicator of his attraction." He ignored the dumb expressions on their faces as he continued, listing things off on his fingers. "Not to mention the elevated body temperature, dilated pupils, and the energy surge."

"Energy surge?" This time it was Maya who was about to explode with frustration.

"When a person is attracted to another, their body chemistry alters and electrical surges are produced. That is what people mean when they say it felt like a spark. In some cases it is a spark, quite literally. When this energy meets a compatible energy signature, a spark is released, both feel it even if only on a subconscious level. Thus you know if you are compatible." Liam gestured with his hands to show off an energy flash between them drawn from his own body. "To opposite energies attract and set off a chemical reaction in the body stimulating a chemical rush of euphoria called endorphins. It clouds the mind and impairs judgment like that drink you have been sucking on, Lili."

She looked at the drink then sat it down dusting off her hands distractedly. "So what you are saying is, you felt this spark?"

"Basically. It was just an automatic response to his energy burst. We were testing each other's energy compatibility." Continuing to ignore their interest, he started to sip the drink again.

"So what was it like, the kiss and the whole energy exchange?"

Liam looked up in contemplation as his brow furrowed. "It was different. I have never experienced anything like it before. His hands grabbed my face and he pulled me close. The faint scent of aftershave mixed with a musky smell of his body and sweat. Getting closer, I noticed his pupils dilated and his breath paused just before our lips met. Softly, his lips pressed against mine, and the heat from his stung mine. It was then I felt the part of him reach out for contact and my energy reacted on instinct. The charge was strong and the pleasure was instant. He pulled back quickly and left breathless as he pushed me out his door. Told me have a nice day, then slammed it

shut." He seemed lost in thought before shaking his head to clear it. "Oh well, just another new experience I can never tell about."

Lili was swirling her drink with her finger, as Maya played with her necklace. Both seemed to be glazed over. Maya snapped out of it first. "So were you?"

"Were I what?"

"Were you and him compatible?" Both women leaned in at his smile.

"Oh, you mean did I feel that mindless bliss that says we are compatible." Nods from the women. "Then the answer is..."

"Liam! Thank god I found you, it is like a mad house in 'ere tonight." Augur noticed that the women seemed to be glaring daggers his way as Liam smirked. "So what did I miss?"

Maya snorted in anger as she walked away to serve another customer. Lili started to rub at the back of her head as she focused on her drink. "Oh nothing, Liam was just telling us about his first kiss."

Augur gave him a big grin as he punched the Hybrid in the arm. "Liam, you Casanova, not even a year old and already tha ladies' man. Guess your uncle Augur is rubbing off, huh?" He glared as Lili snorted her drink. "So where did you two meet?"

Lili beat Liam to the punch. "Oh, on a work related assignment," she said as she took a drink, enjoying prolonging the torment.

"So, would I know this person?" Augur looked between them as Liam lowered his head nodding and Lili snorted.

"Oh, you could say that."

"Was she any good?" Grinning like a maniac, Augur was starting to feel smug that his lessons *were* paying off.

"Yes, and no."

"Lili, would you let him tell me? The boy hasn't gotten a word in edge wise. Go on Liam, tell me already!"

She held up her hands in submission. "All right, tell him."

"Yeah, tell me." Augur was getting anxious as Lili continued to shake from what he assumed was laughter.

"It was okay, not as much as Lili would have you believe."

"Are you kidding, you practically said it was magical with all that sparks and energy attraction stuff," came a reply from behind the bar.

"But out Maya! Liam, are you going to tell me or do I have to..."

"As you know I was on assignment for doors." He looked back to his drink at Augur's nod.

"So you and who, Joshua's secretary, his fellow blood suckers, who?"

"Ah that would be a no, I didn't see his secretary or any other people, it was late and Doors told me to be discreet." He did a thorough examination of the back of his hand as the wheels turned in Augur's head.

"So if you didn't see any one at Joshua's office, yet you still got your first kiss. That means..." Augur stared at the Hybrid with wide eyes. "It couldn't be. You mean Joshua... and you... you and he..."

Liam nodded.

Augur waved it off with a sigh. "Oh well, guess you have to start some where. But why did it have to be Joshua? He is just so..."

"Male," Lili offered helpfully.

"Much older! He is old enough to be Liam's father. Not to mention the fact he is Johnathan's son... what?" The women found other things to make busy with. "What aren't you telling me, Liam?"

"Johnathan already knows, he contacted me the moment Joshua's doors closed on my face."

"Oh hell! I would learn to sleep with both eyes open if I were you. Just to be on the safe side, avoid all contact with the old man for the next century."

"Not necessary, Augur. He merely shrugged and said Joshua got it from his mother's side then told me to keep him apprised of all changes."

Augur started to laugh as he clapped the younger man on the back. "Oh I say things have just changed, changed a hell of a lot."

"How, I mean it's not like I am interested in him? It was just a kiss, don't over react, Augur."

"For starters, it is never just a kiss."

"He tossed me out of his office afterwards, it was just a distraction so he could do it."

"Then it was just a kiss."

"That is what I said. Not as if it mattered in the first place, I simply am not interested in people that way."

"I suppose you are right, being that you are only five months old and all." Augur sighed as they both turned back to the bar. "But still, it was your first kiss and who would I be if I didn't help you celebrate."

"I'm not getting married Augur, it was just a kiss."

"Right, that is why we are only have a few friends over, say the Liberation. Do you think Joshua would come if I invited him? That way you two could pick up where you left off."

"Augur!"

"Okay! Sheesh, don't bite my head off. I'll drop it."

"Thank you." Liam downed the rest of his drink and grabbed his coat as he left the bar.

"Where are you going, Liam?"

"Up stairs, I am tired. A Joining will take it out of you."

Augur growled as Lili's drink was spit all over his back. "What the hell, Lili?"

In the confusion Liam slipped away from the glare Lili was sending his way. Silently she vowed to get him to fess up when he had done it and who with. Right now she had a pissed Augur to deal with.

"What was that all about?"

"You mean you don't know what a Joining is?"

"No, so tell me. What is it? Why would you know about it and not me? What is so special that Liam would be tired afterwards?"

Signaling Maya for a towel, she ignored the questions Augur was pelting her with. "Shut up!" She waited until he complied. "Okay, this is what I know. If a sharing is the Taelon equivalent of kissing, then a joining is..." Lili made obscure pounding gestures with her hands.

"Are you telling me that the kid and some one had sex?"

"No, don't be crude, Augur." Turn in disgust, Lili walked away as Augur started to apologize. "It's called a Joining," she threw over her shoulder as she ran out the back exit.

Cursing, Augur turned back to the bar towel to clean his back. "Women!" Augur snorted in disgust then another thing accord to him. "So the kid is a man, well I'll be... Now who did he Join with? If only energy beings do it, then that means... Da'an?" He shuddered at that thought. "Talk about Oedipus Rex. Not even the kid is that messed up. Zo'or, may be. Talk about sleeping your way to the top."

Joshua entered his apartment adjusting his tie, the suit already partially undone. Closing the door, his attention was captured by the lamp coming on.

"That's a hell of a way to say hello."

Startled, Joshua jumped at the voice. "Dad!"

"The one and only. What do you think you were doing?"

He smirked as he set down his brief case and removed the tie completely. "I stick by my opinion that you would be the better candidate."

"You know that is not what I meant. He is a Companion Protector!" Johnathan sat forward in his chair. "Do you know what trouble he could cause if you were caught?"

"How did you find out?"

"I have my resources. I want you to stay away from him. Kincaid is a dangerous man in any form, but is deadly as a Companion Protector." A smile creased his features. "Besides what would the press think if they saw my Campaign manager, my son, kissing the enemy?"

"Let's get one thing strait, dad, I will see who I want, when I want. Another thing, I am glad to hear you accept my nomination. Back to the matter at hand, it was just a distraction, something to get

him off balance and out of my office. Even if it was something more, you have no right to tell me who I can and can not date. You lost that one a long time ago."

"You're right."

"Of course I am." Still standing next to the door, he crossed his arms over his chest.

"You are right about me saying who you can and can not date, not about Liam. I don't want you around him. I don't trust him, he is hiding things for the Taelons, and you should not get caught up in them." Johnathan was standing by now. "Liam Kincaid is a dangerous man. I want you to keep your distance. You have to if we have any chance of winning this campaign."

"Why is it so important that I stay away from him? Is he one of your operatives, and being seen with me might jeopardize his cover?" Thinking he figured it out, Joshua smiled at his father.

Johnathan scoffed at him. "Hardly, that man is a menace, and as big a traitor to our people as Agent Sandoval. I wouldn't trust either one as far as I could shoot them. Besides," he fought to hide the amusement, "I have reason to believe he may not be who he claims."

"What are you talking about?" Joshua stepped closer as his father pulled a folder from his brief case near his feet.

"These are photos of the real Major Liam Kincaid. Who this man is, or more accurately, what this man is, are still a mystery. It is believed he is a Taelon project himself, with the suddenness of his appearance and appointment of his position, we can't be far off. I have my best people working on this, so stay out of the line of fire."

"Are you saying you are going to kill him?"

"If it comes down to it." He sighed at his son's wide disbelieving stare. "Listen Joshua, I don't want to harm anyone any more than you do, but if it comes to a war, we have to know who we can trust. That means knowing not only who your enemies are, but what. Right now, we barely know who he is, not a clue as to what. Who knows, for all I do, he could be just another mindless automaton the Taelons have lured to their traps. Just stay away from him."

Tired of the head trip his father was putting him through, Joshua rubbed his temples. "Fine, now can we get down to your campaign?"

"Be my guest."

"Actually it is the other way around, but let's get started anyways."

Agent Sandoval stood next to the Cryogenics chamber looking at his pocket watch. After a few moments he snapped it closed and assumed his interrogative position. His eyes focused on the transparent door of the chamber as the mists inside started to part. At the appearance of the reptilian figure, Sandoval raised an eyebrow. "I believe we have much to discuss..."

"I am Keloren."

"Mr. Keloren, I believe I can offer you a deal, something that will satisfy both our peoples."

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Chapter 2 by lopaka tanu

Part 2 We only want what we can't have.

"Why didn't you tell me, Liam," Lili hissed the question at him. She had waited until the following

morning to confront Liam on who he had joined with. Due to their scheduled pick up of Da'an, there was a fifteen minute gap in which they could talk, and she was taking advantage of it. "You know I need to know these things."

"I am sorry, Lili, but I just don't see the importance of telling you about my joining. In fact it is kind of embarrassing talking about it with you, don't ask me why." A slight flush lit his features as he tried to avoid her knowing smirk.

"Just spit it out, who with, why, and what was it like?"

"Lili!" His stunned expression made her start to giggle. Turning away, he tried to hide his further blush.

"I am not backing down on this, Liam. You will tell me, or do I have to resort to more... persuasive manners?"

Liam froze in midstep as he was walking towards Da'an's audience chamber. A nervous twitch from his left eye as he regarded her wearily from the corner of said eye. "You wouldn't."

"Try me, I've done it before." She made a big deal over her nails as he sweated it out. "Do I have to remind you of the Interdimensional Incident?"

"That's not fair, Lili. I told you it wasn't your fault!"

"After I had you rolling on the floor with fits of tickle induced laughter." The evil gleam in her eyes had him backing away. "Are you going to tell me, or am I going to have to bring out the tickle monster?"

"I am not a kid! You can't scare me with your tickle monster."

"Oh?"

"Not if I run fast enough!" Laughing, he ran for the audience chamber with Lili hot on his heels.

"Liam!" She followed catching him as he entered the large purple room. "This is your last warning, tell me or else." After they wrestled a bit, she had him pinned to the floor, and started to tickle his sides. "Tell me! Tell me or I won't stop!"

Liam could only thrash as Lili sat on his chest, pinning his arms with her legs. "Stop! Please!" He cried out between laughs.

"No! Tell me!" Her hands started to drift to his belly, and his eyes went wide.

Shaking his head no, he tried to beg with his eyes. He knew he lost when she merely smirked and nodded. "It was Joyce Belman! I had to convince her not to kill humanity and the Taelons, and a joining was the only way."

Lili's hand stilled just above his belly as she seemed to think about it. "So you played the role of the virgin sacrifice?"

"Yes! Now you can get off me." He gave her a hopeful expression.

"Sorry Liam, but you took too long." Then her hand descended and the tickles began anew. Liam was in tears as Lili climbed off him. "May be next time you will talk to me?"

"No, next time I will keep my big mouth shut and remember why I don't tell you these things." He

wiped the tear tracks away as he sat up growling.

"Wrong answer!" Before he could think, she was activating the portal.

"Hey! It's your turn to take the shuttle!"

"Snooze ya lose. See you on the mother ship, I'll tell Da'an you wanted to be the one to fly today. See ya!" A wave, followed by an energy wave, and she was gone.

Liam cursed her under his breath as he sulked his way to the shuttle pad. Things were just starting, and he had a feeling they were going to get a lot worse.

Liam's bad feeling was confirmed when he heard the Mother Ship's alarms blare as he was standing to exit the shuttle. Before he could set foot off the ramp, a large figure barreled in to him and pushed him back in to the it. The man's hand clamped over his shoulder and forced him in to the pilot's seat.

"Fly the shuttle or die!" The figure's hand lit up with Shaquarava as he aimed it at Liam's face.

"What are you?"

The man hit the back of his head with his fist. "I said fly the shuttle, don't ask questions, just do as I tell you! Now activate the controls!"

Fear shot through him as he nodded and did as ordered. Just in time to avoid an energy blast, the virtual glass came online. Liam tried to think of a way to let the mother ship drones get in, but the Jaridian had other plans. He suddenly found a hand on his lower back, tingling with energy. His face started to blush green in response to the placement of the shaquarava and he swallowed back the urge to complete it.

"Take us out of here." The deadly whisper made a cold shiver run down his spine. Moments later and the shuttle flew out of the docking bay entering ID space once clear. "You will fly me to these coordinates or else." The Jaridian tapped out the directions on the virtual display.

Liam knew this was going to be a bad day, he was just grateful Lili had tricked him or else she might have been the one in the shuttle. Acknowledging the orders, he activated the drives and headed for the coordinates given. Because of their actions, he might end up having to speak Jaridian for the rest of his life, but at least he knew the basis for the language. A dark, and nervous giggle escaped his lips as he flew the shuttle, always weary of the alien eyes on his back.

Lili was still laughing at the young Hybrid. He was going to be pissy all morning, but it was worth getting this little bit of information. After all, what kind of friend would she be if she let him have sex with-out her knowing all about it. Such things just weren't done. She had been trained as a marine to exploit the enemy's weaknesses to gain information, such methods were employed, when necessary, with the him.

When the alarms had started blaring all over the mother ship, she knew he was in trouble. "Liam!" Rushing to the docking bay, she arrived in time to see the drones open fire on the shuttle before it flew away. "Damn it, Liam!"

Sandoval caught her arm. "What are you doing here, captain?"

"That was my shuttle. What happened?"

Momentary confusion crossed his features before being replaced by his stoic mask of indifference. "The Jaridian escaped. Who was on your shuttle if not you?"

Lili ignored his emotional slip and slipped in to soldier mode. "Major Kincaid expressed his wishes to improve his flying skills and brought my shuttle to the Mother Ship. Are you telling me that an escaped alien has abducted him and my shuttle?"

"Yes! We will talk on this later." He checked the shuttle bay. "I want you to go after it, bring it back alive if possible, if not, make sure that technology does not fall in to the hands of the Jaridians."

Silently, she nodded.

"Then get to it." Ignoring her presence, he started to order the drones around.

Not wasting a moment, she jumped in to the nearest shuttle and took off after Liam. Hoping that he would be all right, and they made it back in one piece was all she could do as the shuttle locked on Liam's coordinates. Activating the ID drive, she wondered what would have happened if she had been the one flying the shuttle and not Liam.

Liam was starting to get anxious as the hand on his back continued to pour energy into his body. He didn't know what the alien was trying to accomplish, but it was causing a build up in his body that was not going to end well. Already he could feel his shaquarava attempting to awaken.

"What do you want with me?"

"I want to get back to my people, you were merely a target. Your knowledge of this Taelon... shuttle, will allow my people to create the technology we have been lacking and finally conquer the Taelons." He continued to kneel next to Liam, keeping one hand on his lower back, and the other on Liam's arm.

"So I take it, you are a Jaridian."

"You learn quickly. Perhaps there is a use for your species after all... What is that?" The shuttle rocked as they were thrown out of ID space. A few more twirls as the ship rolled from the sudden shock. Alarms on the holographic controls started to flash and emit their little pulses. "Get this shuttle under control immediately. I want to know what happened!"

Liam nodded his agreement, now was not the time to be rebellious. His controls flashed as he tried to activate them. "They won't stay on. I can't get any kind of readings, there is no way I can tell what happened. It is taking all I got to keep the power online, something is draining it faster than the core can produce it." He froze at his controls with a look of fear. "We're adrift in space! If these fluctuations keep up, the virtual glass matrix will collapse and we will be sucked in to space."

"Do something!"

"I can't! Whatever is doing this has complete control." Liam gritted his teeth as he felt the Jaridian's reactions through the link. Fear was one of the strongest emotions, next was anger. Before he knew what he was doing, he was bringing his palms to fire on the Jaridian. "Get your hands off me!"

Keloren released his grip on the young man and placed his palms to Liam's before the young

man could activate his shaquarva. His body tensed as he drew on the energy forming in Liam's hands. Before Liam knew it, the excess energy in his body was gone, along with a large portion of his own. A triumphant snarl erupted from him as he squeezed Liam's hands in his own, forcing the Hybrid to his knees.

Liam felt exhausted as his hands throbbed. The Jaridian had been planning this all along. "What did you do to me?"

Keloren smirked as he assumed the pilot's position. "I have used you to enhance my essence, refined is the word I believe you humans use. When I took you hostage, I had just absorbed massive amounts of Taelon core energy in order to sustain my own life. As you may have guessed, it didn't take well with my own, so I had to use your body as a distillation unit." He activated the controls as Liam slumped against the passenger chairs. "I am surprised you survived this long, from what I have learned, Human bodies are still too fragile to process energy. I needn't worry though, you will expire soon enough."

Liam shook his head to clear the fuzziness. "But I thought you needed me."

"I did, to escape. I don't need a lowly Human to understand Taelon technology, Jaridian scientists will figure out how this shuttle works and then we will destroy the Taelons."

"That's where you're wrong. These systems are Human designed, not Taelon. But it doesn't matter, if we can't find out what is wrong with the shuttle, neither of us is going home."

Keloren gave a knowing smirk. "We are caught in an energy web of an alien vessel. They are bringing us aboard their ship. When they do, they will be sorry they ever attacked a Jaridian."

"I am sorry I ever met you, and I didn't even do anything to you."

"You associate with the Taelons, that is a crime punishable by death."

Liam gave a short bark of dry laughter. "The Taelons have said the same thing about your species. I wonder what this is really about? What do your two species have against the other?"

Keloren turned in the chair to face Liam as the ship stopped rolling. "Since you will never return to your people, I see no harm in telling you. We were once one species. Out of fear of the shaquarva and the quest for spiritual perfection, the Taelons traded away their ability to reproduce for long life and a commonality. Jaridians fear the commonality, we value our emotions, our individuality. And for this we are blessed with the continued ability to reproduce. We continue to grow in number while the Taelons slowly die from their own fears. Now which is the criminal and the innocent?"

"Neither, both have destroyed with-out care to who they hurt in your eons of war. Both of you are as guilty as the other!"

"Never! The Taelons are the true enemy, their lies have killed countless species, and yours will soon be just another of those." The Jaridian turned back to the controls as an alarm started to beep.

"You sound like a Human I know," Liam muttered under his breath.

"Then perhaps you should listen to him, and stop associating with them. It might save your life if you joined his cause."

"Or end it," Liam hissed out in pain, "he is as much a fanatic as you are. Both of you believe that your cause is righteous, but so does Zo'or. You can't all be right."

"Then you must choose who's side is right, which cause is the noblest, and hope that you are on the winning side." Keloren said with an air of finality that sounded more like a regret than a threat to Liam.

Liam was about to say something when a large ship loomed in to view. "And here is your tin god."

"Magnificent!" Keloren eyed the alien ship with look of hunger. This was something he had never expected in all his years of existence.

The large silver vessel locked an energy beam on them to bring their ship in to the massive docking bay. The first thing Liam noticed about the ship were all the abandoned transports. An eerie quiet filled the large space as the shuttle's Virtual Glass finally collapsed. He took in a lung full of the old but breathable atmosphere.

Keloren stood from the pilot's seat and walked out of the shuttle down the boarding ramp. Quickly he scanned the area as he went. He knew with-out a doubt the ship was as abandoned as the transports in the hangar. There was something almost familiar about the ship as he followed along the cat walk to the insides of the ship. It was of a design any being with an eye for geometric shapes could appreciate. The simplicity belied the advanced technology hidden in the walls. This he knew and that he must bring it back to share with all Jaridia.

Liam watched as Keloren walked starstruck away from the shuttle. Ignoring the burning in his palms, Liam grabbed the arm rests of the seats beside him, and hauled himself up in one of them. He felt extremely weak as he focused on the situation. Alone on an alien ship with no way to get away or contact Earth, he knew he may not live to see another day. Basically he was screwed as Augur would put it. He could really use the hacker about now.

Something was off about the ship as he looked out through the entrance of the shuttle. It seemed familiar, yet wrong, as if there was something out of place about it. He could almost touch it in the back of his mind when he sagged in the seat from lack of energy. What he needed was to get something to eat, to try and replenish his dwindling strength. Then he could focus on the nagging feeling of familiarity.

Turning the chair to the wall behind him, he activated a panel and withdrew the large box of an emergency kit. Since the previous year's crash, Lili had kept a supply of field rations. Food, water, blankets and a pocket torch for fires were among the meager supplies. There were six more kits in the out fitted shuttle, but all he needed was in this one for it contained the most precious thing of all. Inside he found a glowing blue sphere, placing hands on either side of it, he focused his shaquarava and absorbed the core energy.

His body flushed green-blue as the energy dispersed inside his system, restoring his body to minimal health. It was enough to heal the damage done by the sudden drain on his system, but no more. Sighing with resignation, he placed the sphere back in the kit and pulled out a nutrition bar. Before he could take a bite out of it, the leathery hand took it from him. "What? Can't you just leave me to die in peace?"

"No, I was coming back to heal the damage I had done in my zeal, but evidently there is no need. We will eat, and then you will accompany me to the control core of this ship." He ignored Liam's shocked stare and started to eat the nutrition bar. He made a face at the strange flavor. "Your people call this vile substance food? It is no wonder the Taelons are on your world, this is one step away from core energy."

"It is called an emergency ration. We freeze dry them for such extreme cases when fresh food can not be obtained. It is better when you bite off a piece of it and soak it down with the fruit juice

pouches mixed with water." Liam bit open a packet of the crystallized drink, and poured in water. He then sealed it and shook. A moment later he pulled out a straw and another nutrition bar from the kit. "You stick in the straw, like so. Take a bite from the food bar, take a drink of the fruit juice, and let it soak together in your mouth." Liam demonstrated as he said. After a few moments he stuck out his tongue displaying the moist bar in all its glory. "Sthee!"

Keloren's hand clamped down over his tongue and scraped the soggy bar off in to his fingers. A quick motion and he was eating it. He cocked his head as he swallowed. "That is better, but I still prefer the flavor of my planet's food."

Liam was feeling nauseous as he watched the Jaridian eat the food he had just prepared. When Keloren reached to take the drink packet from him, he handed it over with out a fight. "Take it, I have suddenly lost my appetite."

"You will eat! I do not need you passing out from lack of nourishment. If I must, I will force you."

Liam took one look at the Jaridian and decided it was better to eat on his own. If Keloren had no qualms about eating food out of his mouth, then may be the reverse was also true. Shuddering, he quickly devoured the nutrition bar in his hand and washed the foul taste down with another fruit drink.

"Get up, and bring along that kit, we may need the supplies. Are there any illumination devices inside?" He took the offered blue light sphere and led the way from the shuttle.

Liam looked down as they crossed the cat walk and felt his stomach drop at the site, there was nothing separating them from space. If he fell, it would be forever. Keloren's hand pulled him along after a moment, and together they went deeper into the dark ship, unaware of that they were being watched.

Lili tried to activate the controls one more time as the shuttle continued to roll. Entering normal space had caused the shuttle to rock and throw her from her seat, artificial gravity shutting down for a moment. She thanked whatever gods there were that the virtual glass had with stood the sudden power drain.

Collision alert alarms started to blare moments before the large ship came in to view. The shuttle stopped rolling immediately as the vessel grew bigger in the shuttle entrance. The alerts stilled and lost all power as the shuttle seemed to give up the ghost and finally die. A shudder and it was docked allowing Lili to see the inside of the ship.

Holstering her weapon, and grabbing a pulse cannon, she exited the assault shuttle. Her way lit by dim over head lights and the flash light on the top of the cannon, she carefully examined the collection of ships until she found her shuttle. There was no sign of Liam or the escaped Jaridian, but one of her emergency bolt holes was empty of its supplies. From memory, she deduced they had taken enough supplies to last a few days before they had to come back, that meant she had to hunt them down.

Groaning, she grabbed a supply kit and set off in the direction of foot prints in the dust. Crossing the large cat walks to the entrance of the ship made her shudder. The place was creepy and reminiscent of the early Taelon shuttles she had learned to pilot, but their was a metallic tinge that screamed replicant. She wondered what the hell was going on as she continued after her prey. She too was unaware of the recording devices watching.

Johnathan Doors stared at the global, anger causing him to grind his teeth. "Are you sure?"

"Yes, sir. It was definitely the Jaridian, I saw it with my own eyes." The young woman nodded in to the global. "There is some good news, it took Major Kincaid."

"Kincaid? How in hell did it get that far with out Sandoval knowing?"

"He had no choice, sir. I kinda let it slip by my defense network in hopes it would kill a few Taelons, which I am sorry to say, it did not. The Major had landed his shuttle when the Jaridian came rushing in. Before the Major knew what was happening, both were back in the shuttle and he was being forced to fly the alien away. We got lucky this time, sir."

He schooled his face to keep the operative in the dark over his feelings. She had no need to know that Kincaid was one of his. "Just how did we get lucky, Lieutenant?"

"Sir, it was Captain Marquette's shuttle that he was flying. If she had not let him prove his man hood, she would have been the one with that scaly alien. Then our entire organization would have been in a world of hurt."

Doors leaned forward in chair as he glared at the woman. "I think it is time you got out of there. Delete all files, and your global. I suggest you find a way to get off the Mother Ship now, if they want some one to blame, you are it."

She nodded as fear filled her face. "Yes, sir!" A salute and her face disappeared from the global.

"Damn it!" Johnathan slammed the global against the desk as he turned to face out the window.

"What is that for, losing your operative or the loss of another Human being to the Aliens?"

Looking up, Johnathan glared at his son who was standing in the open door of his office. "What did you hear?"

"Starting with 'Just how did we get lucky, Lieutenant.' Now will you answer the question?"

"If you must know, both! No one deserves to be kidnapped." He looked away from the disbelieving stare. "Contrary to popular belief, I am not the monster you would have me be. I do care about humanity, but some times I simply refuse to tolerate the blind and ignorant members of our species."

"I would have believed that you would be thrilled over the loss of the Major. After all, it gets rid of another traitor, bad man, and the only man you have strictly forbidden me from being with. That does make one wonder." Joshua folded his arms and placed one hand under his chin. "Would the Major and I have something in common... say, genetically?"

"Only if your mother was secretly having an affair. I have never, nor would I have ever cheated on your mother. I may not have been a good husband or the world's greatest father, but I held those vows sacred!" He stood and buttoned his suit jacket, then straitened his tie. "Now is there any thing else you want to ask me, perhaps the names of every woman I have ever slept with in my life? Or may be you want me to confess all the sins I have committed starting with the first lie I told?"

"Fine! So you didn't cheat on mom!"

"You're damn right I didn't!" Johnathan walked out from behind the desk and headed for the door. "Now if you will excuse me, I do have an appointment with the press. Or do you need anything else Herr Commandant?"

Joshua ignored the barb and stared out the windows of the office overlooking the city. Just before Johnathan reached the door, Joshua spoke again. "So Captain Marquette is one of your own?"

"You know I can't tell you that."

"Fine, then answer me this, was that her last year, or was she pulling a Matahari? Hypothetically, of course."

"Hypothetically, a little of both. That is if she was working for me, which I am not saying." A heavy breath. "This never happened! You know nothing about this, got that?"

"Yes, sir!" A long pause and then the door closed. Joshua walked behind the desk and fell back in to the plush leather chair. Hand still under his chin, he leaned against the desk. There was something about the conversation he just had that didn't feel right. For one thing, his father never reacted like that when Sandoval was hurt, but then again, Sandoval had personally killed many of his people.

Another thing was the strange word, Kidnapped. The major was far from a child, and usually Johnathan Doors liked to use big, or as he called them, Propaganda words, say for example 'Abducted'. It played on the old fears from the twentieth century about big, bug eyed aliens with flying saucers. In that moment, Joshua decided he was going to get to know this Major Liam Kincaid better. There was just something not right about the man, and he was going to find out. That is, if the man survived the kidnapping.

The insides of the ship were almost as cold as the derelict docking bay. His first impressions of the ship were that it was probably a prison or military transport, with the lack of vibrant colors, designs, or anything else to make it homey. But that was soon changed when he recognized a grouping of symbols on one of the inner walls. It was the entrance to the ship, the place was poorly lit, and he couldn't make head nor tail of the translation.

Liam was starting to get fed up with the lack of information, and being dragged around like a petulant child did not help matters either. From the moment he saw the symbols, he knew they held an important meaning. If only he could remember what they stood for, but the constant threat of the Jaridian at his side made for a better distraction. When he was jerked past the walls towards the entrance of the ship, he realized why the Jaridian had come back for him.

A mole.

He needed some one to check for traps and scout through the area where they might be. And if there was, set them off. Liam felt his life expectancy drop severely as he looked at the steaming, glowing pool of water. A look at the Jaridian proved it meant business. Shrugging, he started to remove his jacket and kick off his shoes.

"What are you doing?" Keloren observed Liam with a statement of shock.

"I'm doing an impression of Agent Mulder, what does it look like?" He pulled off his under shirt and unbuckled his pants. "If I have to go through that, I am not going to waste the only set of clothes I have. Who knows how long I will be here?" Finishing his statement, he pushed his pants down, boxers and all. A cool, leathery hand on his lower back sliding to cup his butt made him jump up and away.

"So like us, your species is almost identical to my own."

Liam eyed the Jaridian with a look of anger. "Keep your hands to yourself, pal! I aint here for you to grope."

While Liam was telling the Jaridian off, he was busy taking in the young man's appearance. "Your bodies are all like this, hairy in places, and smooth in others?"

"Yes!" Reaching down, he covered his genitals when Keloren studied them.

Keloren noted, with a scientific eye, Liam's entire body. "What sex are you? What you appear, and what you might, could be two different things?"

"This is not a xenological studies course, and I am not your lab rat. I am your mole, and that's it! I find and set any traps off, and you keep your hands the same way." His anger made him forget modesty and assume a fighting stance.

The Jaridian smirked as Liam's face and upper body colored bright red. "Yours is a very emotional species. And a very amusing one. You clad yourselves in garments that serve no purpose, but to hide your bodies. That is most illogical."

"You do the same."

"No," His hands reached up to the dip in the front of his collar, pinching the sides together, he pulled them apart. The suit split down the front, and Keloren pulled it back, exposing the insides. Dark ribs in the fabric appeared like cushions against his reptilian skin. "This is Jaridian battle and body armor. All Jaridians wear this, no matter where we are. However, there are a few exceptions, cleaning ourselves, repairing body damage," He looked Liam over again, "and mating."

"I'm male, are you satisfied now?"

Satisfied, Keloren redid the seams on his suit and nodded before turning away. "Yes, now get in the water."

Muttering to himself, Liam tied the bundle of supplies and clothes up in his jacket. Slowly he set them near the water, when he received a smack on the ass, he jumped up and away, landing in the warm water. He came up sputtering and swearing as Keloren laughed. "What did I say about your hands!"

"You were moving too slow. I decided you needed a little encouragement to increase your pace. Now grab the supplies and get moving. I will soon follow." Keloren smirked as Liam glared at him, but complied. "Inform me when you get to the other side."

"What happens if I get attacked by something in here?" Liam asked as he waded across the water, arms holding the bundle on his head like a washer woman.

"Throw me the supplies and I will find another way around."

"Gee, whole lot of help you are." Grinding his teeth, Liam continued to step through the water carefully. When something brushed against his ankles, he released a yelp and decided to forego caution. Bounding through the water, he made it to the other side panting and soaking wet. "I'm across, you son of a buck!" The Jaridian followed him across laughing at his appearance.

Dripping wet, Liam shook his body. He narrowed his eyes as Keloren moved closer. "What do you want?"

"Put on your garments. I want to move, now."

"I'm still wet!"

"Put them on or else," Keloren warned.

"Not until I am dry.... Hey!" Liam screeched as his clothes were torn from his hands and thrown in to the water.

"Now, they are wet as well. You will wear them, go get them!" With that, he pushed Liam back in the water. Keloren watched as Liam did as he was told in fear of crossing him. His eyes were filled with laughter as Liam climbed back out of the water with only his shirt and boxers. "Where are the rest of your clothes?"

"There is something in there."

"And you fear it?"

"No! It took my clothes, thanks to you, I am now going to catch my death of cold on this damn ship. Leave me alone, or you will be sorry you ever crossed my path." He knew he sounded like a child, but he was tired, cold, wet and, well damn it, he was.

"You are a weak Human. Your species is pathetic, and there for you are no threat to me." He emphasized his point by slamming his hand on Liam's chest making the young man fall back on the floor. He turned his back on Liam, dismissing the hybrid.

When Liam saw this, anger welled up in him and activated his shaquarava. Rolling to his feet, he growled out a reply. "I'll show you weak!" Bringing up his hands to fire on the Jaridian, he did not count on the speed of the reaction by the alien.

Keloren lifted his arms and used his shaquarava to block the blast from the hybrid. Staring in shock as the last of the energy from the blast dissipated, he watched as Liam's body went through an energy blush. "So you are more than you appear. The High Council was correct about the Taelons." He moved in time to Liam's steps as they circled each other. "What other abilities do you have, Hybrid?" Keloren sneered his last word.

"Come and find out, lizard face!" Liam dodged the first blast from Keloren but caught the second in the chest.

Having fired only to stun, Keloren had knocked the young man unconscious. Grabbing the rope from the bundle, he bound Liam's wrists and put a loop around his neck to form a lead. When the young man would come around, he would make him carry the bundle and be able to keep him close at the same time. Before he could wait for Liam to wake up, blasts from an energy cannon sent the water flying up around him.

"Let him go you son of a bitch!"

At the sound of the female's voice, he grabbed Liam, their kit, and fled from the water's edge. In his wake, he could hear the screams of the woman as she cursed him. Both human and hybrid would earn him a great standing, enough to cover the shame in being captured by the enemy, all he had to do was capture her.

As he ran, he felt his body start to grow weak. In the rush, he had not realized the energy was still too Taelon. He needed something more matter based if he was to survive. The young hybrid could provide that, all that remained was a position secure enough for him to accomplish this. Seeing his chance, he took it.

Lili followed the foot prints through the dust covered floors towards a large wall covered in glyphs. Some of the symbols resembled those used by Ma'el in Ireland, but most were indecipherable. There was something about the ship that was familiar, like she had seen something like it before. Ignoring the memories of purple objects, she pressed on forward. The shouting of Liam and the Jaridian drew her nearer. She couldn't make out a word they said, both speaking in an alien language.

When the Jaridian fired the energy blast at Liam, she tried to call out, but it was too late, he went down hard. Angrily she armed the cannon and charged the power cell. When it was ready to fire, the Jaridian was bending over Liam with a rope between the two in his hands.

Bring the cannon to bare on the water at their side of the pool, she fired the cannon. "Let him go you son of a bitch!" The Jaridian looked at her with anger, and grabbed Liam up over his shoulder and took off. "Damn it! Get back here!" Jumping in the water, she threw caution to the wind, and waded through the murky liquid.

When something brushed against her legs, she blasted in to the water several times. Not stopping to see if she killed whatever it was, she continued after the Jaridian. On the other side she fired a few more blasts in to the water for good measure then took off in the direction of the water droplets left by the Jaridian and Liam's clothes.

Cannon in one hand, and energy pistol in the other, she walked along in commando search mode. Along the walls shadows moved in time with her steps. A couple blasts from the cannon and the shadows disappeared. There was something seriously weird going on around here. A tingling in her spine came from the feeling of being watched.

Moving faster as the water drops became less frequent, she came to a bend in the maze of tunnels. Stopping, she looked around for the Jaridian or any traces of Liam. At the end of the corridor was a large wall that blocked the way from floor to ceiling. The only possible exit was a large wall that wilted enough for her to barely climb up.

Shouldering the cannon, she gripped the symbols and used them as foot holds. Midway she found a puddle of black liquid that smelled faintly metallic in one of the hand holds. From the position of it, it was from the Jaridian. Before she could speculate on it further, she heard cries of agony coming from Liam which spurred her forward.

Keloren had been climbing the wall when the nausea hit him and his body started to consume its own organs in order to draw the energy he needed. This action caused his body to heat up and spend more energy. Spitting out the blood he finished climbing the wall. He had previously tossed Liam and the supplies up on the top, so the young man was conveniently placed for his needs. Sitting back against the wall, he reached for Liam.

Liam had started to come around after he landed on the ledge. His back hurt, and his vision swam. When he was suddenly yanked in to Keloren's lap, he fought the urge to puke.

"Give me your hands!"

"Wha..."

"Now!"

Disoriented and wanting only for the shouting to stop, he thrust his hands upwards. His hands were locked in the burning hot ones of the Jaridian. The heat and energy as their shaquarava activated and merged made him cry out in pain. Through his right hand, energy flowed in to his body and out the left. His mind and body were over powered by the presence of the Jaridian energy. Blinding white light filled the ledge as Liam felt his body start to disintegrate. Too late he realized what was happening, and he was helpless to prevent it as their bodies merged.

When Lili reached the ledge, she gasped at the sight of an energy vortex similar to the one she had observed Ha'gel use. In the mix of energy were dark reds and dark purples of the alien energies. Putting her hand to her mouth she backed away. "Liam!" A moment later the energies coalesced and blew apart.

The two figures landed on opposite sides of the ledge, Liam in Lili's arms as the Jaridian hit the far wall. Lili cupped Liam's unconscious face in her hands as she tried to wake him.

"Liam! Liam! Wake up, Liam!" Tapping his face, she tried in vain to wake the sleeping hybrid. Finally accepting facts, she looked up to glare at the Jaridian.

Keloren landed against the wall, the breath knocked from his body. Distantly, he heard Lili trying to wake Liam. He knew he should explain something to her, but all he cared about was that he was alive and whole again. There was no more pain from the lack of proper care, or the threat of burning up as his body rejected the Taelon energy.

"What did you do to him? Why won't he wake up?"

Lili's voice woke him from the pleasure of being alive. When he looked to her face, he registered the shock. "Yes, it is amazing isn't it. I feel better than I have in all my life."

"What did you do?"

"I have made myself whole once more. I am no longer in danger of dying. Do not worry over Liam, Lili, he is merely exhausted of his energy. He will be fine in a few days after some rest. After that he will be fine." Seemingly pleased with her shock, he stood and looked around. Knowledge on the ship filled his mind, he now knew where to go in order to get to the core.

"How do you know all this, how do you know my name?" When he did not respond, she drew her energy pistol. "Answer me."

Keloren frowned at her insistence. The knowledge was slipping from his mind, and he wanted to continue understanding it. "I just do, I know you are Lili, you took care of Liam from the moment of his birth. Made a promise to his mother to do so." He waved off her shock as he walked away distractedly. "Bring the kit, and leave the boy. We don't have time to waste waiting for him to get up if we want to get to the core and free the shuttles. Each moment that passes I lose the memory of this vessel."

Lili started to protest, but decide he had a point. "What do you mean, lose the memory?"

"Exactly as it sounds, Lili." He stood with his hands placed on his hips in a familiar stance. "He will be fine, you can come back for him later."

"Why should I believe you?" She gasped as blue-green eyes locked on hers.

"You're just gonna have to trust me." The smile on the Keloren's face was not his own. Deep inside, his mind railed at his actions, but he ignored it as part of some fear.

Finally placing the characteristics, and the token smirk on the Jaridian's face, she nodded. Getting to the core was the only way to free her shuttle, and if he continued to behave like Liam, they might just make it out intact. "Of course." Keeping an eye on him, she gently lowered Liam's head on to her jacket for a pillow. Making sure the binding on his wrists was extra tight, she prayed she was right on this one. She kissed his stubbly skinned cheek and frowned, when had he started to grow facial hair?

"Let's go, Lili. The sooner we get down there, the sooner you can get back and worry about him later. You know how much he hates it when you do that."

Lili nodded and followed the Jaridian with out saying a word, his impatience showing signs of the his personality regaining control. The more she watched his easy gate attempt to straiten, the more she suspected she was right. And if she was, she didn't have much time before Keloren was back to his old, kidnapping, self again.

Agent Sandoval watched as the entire mother ship was put on emergency status. Shuttle and pilots were being dispatched in fleets to look for the escaped Jaridian. When they had entered ID space, both Liam and Lili's shuttles had disappeared. Zo'or was breathing down his neck to find the missing alien, and Da'an was doing the same to Zo'or.

In fact he was watching their display of an eternal dominance struggle. This time it was different, something new was happening between them. Da'an was standing up to Zo'or. In fact, he was threatening the Synod leader. These turn of events made Sandoval's eyebrow raise when Zo'or looked to him.

"I have tolerated your interference with my projects for the last time, Zo'or." Da'an's eyes narrowed as he stared at his fellow Taelon. "What makes you believe that your ways are best for our people? That you can do what you wish with no regards to our laws?"

"In the respect that I am the leader of the Synod, and you are not."

"That excuse has run its course, you can no longer hide behind your position." Da'an's hands curled out as he moved towards Zo'or. "You know the penalty for your actions. It was decreed that only the entire Synod can decide when and if the time came to expose the Humans to the Jaridians. You have violated that with your act of petty sabotage and once again with allowing them access to a restricted lab. The consequences of which are still being felt in the form of my abducted Protector."

"What do you wish me to say, Da'an, that I was wrong to do this. I was acting on what I felt best for our people."

"Yes, and this is evident that your judgment can not be relied upon."

Zo'or turned sharply to face his accuser. "The Synod does not agree with your sentiments, or else you would have been named Synod leader."

"A foolish decision that can be rectified."

Smirking, Zo'or did a sideways glance at Da'an. "Are you saying the Synod are fools?"

Narrowing his eyes, Da'an stood face to face with Zo'or. "Do not attempt to twist my words. You will be held accountable for this, Zo'or. In two Earth hours, I have scheduled a meeting of the Synod, they will hear of your crimes. There they will finally see what I have known for some time,

and you will be made to stand for all you have done." He turned and left the bridge as Zo'or stared out the virtual glass.

"We shall see, Da'an." With-out changing his position, Zo'or spoke. "Agent Sandoval, take a shuttle and find the Jaridian. If you can not bring it back alive, terminate it."

"Yes, Zo'or. And what of Captain Marquette and Major Kincaid?"

"I shall leave that act to your discretion."

"Of course, Zo'or." He gave the Taelon salute then left the bridge.

Zo'or waited until he was gone before allowing the energy blush. A look of concern appeared over his facade as it returned.

With some trepidation, Lili followed the strangely acting Jaridian down a long shaft deeper in to the heart of the ship. Every so often he would turn back and smile at her. That in itself was grounds to have the alien committed, but it was not the action, but the smile itself that unnerved her. He kept giving her the big goofy grins trade mark of one Liam Kincaid.

"So what should I call you, hey you, or Jaridian number one just doesn't ring true."

"My name is Keloren."

"Well, Keloren, how far until we reach the core?"

He tilted his head a little as he paused mid step. "Ahead there is a drop in the floor that leads to the greeting chamber. One of us must enact the proper sequence and then the chamber will open upon the core. Inside there is the spherical core of the ship. We talk to it, and we get its knowledge."

"I don't want its knowledge, I want off this ship."

"Whatever. Just keep going, it's not much further." He started walking again ignoring Lili as she followed.

Lili began to wonder if it had been smart to follow the enemy in to the middle of an unknown ship. As she moved forward, something brushed against her drying pant leg. Years of finely honed instincts had her pistol out and the thing in a hundred pieces before she could think. Ducking down, she narrowly avoided the large figure as it jumped over her tackling Keloren.

She aimed her gun at the two figures as they wrestled. Keloren and the smaller being evenly matched for strength, but the smaller being was more agile and soon had him thrown against the wall. Turning midnight blue eyes on Lili, Liam charged forward. He stopped when she fired at his feet.

Lili took in his pale skin, wild eyes, and ragged appearance. His wrist were bleeding from where he had rubbed them raw removing the binding ropes. "Liam, just calm down." He flinched when she whispered his name. He tried to charge again, but she shot at his feet again. "Liam, we can talk about this..." He roared as he rushed again, this time ignoring the energy blast at his feet. However, before he could reach her, an energy blast hit him from behind sending him colliding with her.

As she eased out from his body, Keloren came up to them with eyes wide. "What was that? Why

did he attack us?"

"It is exactly as I feared." When Keloren appeared to be more confused she took his hand and forced him to help her lift the young man in to a sitting position. "Liam has taken on the aggressive sides of your two personality. There will be no reasoning with him until balance has been restored. If you are any indication, it will happen with time. We just have to make sure he doesn't kill us in the mean while. What I don't understand is if how come he had gone feral, did he know to distract me with whatever that was?" She pointed to the debris of metal on the floor.

"I have no idea, we had no such device when the ship brought us here."

"Movement in the shadows." Lili whispered. "There was movement in the shadows when I was chasing you through the ship. Do you think he might have caught one of them?"

"Why distract you with it then, why not take you out first? As the weaker target, you would have been the prime choice."

"Not to humans."

"But as we both know, he is far from human." Keloren shrugged at Lili's expression. "I do not know why, but I do know that time is running out. If we are to reach the core while I still know what to do, I suggest we get moving again."

"What about Liam? He could wake up."

"There is nothing we can do until he does, that is unless you are willing to harm him." She shook her head no. "Then we must leave him be, he is unconscious for now. Let us not worry about it and move faster."

Gently setting Liam down, she stood and joined Keloren in running towards the drop. When they were almost there, they heard the groans of Liam waking up. It was a mad dash to the drop after that. Once at the hole, Keloren grabbed the rope hanging down in to the hole and slid down. Just as Lili grabbed the rope and started to slide down, a shaquarava blast singed her hair and she let go. Luckily, Keloren caught her as she fell.

"Oh my hero, put me down and get that damn door open before he figures out how to get down here."

Keloren dropped her and stepped over her growling form towards the door. A key pad was lit up as the only source of illumination in the room. He pressed a few buttons and a light shown on the door. The handle was a twist type of wheel, when he turned it, a bright light filled the room and the door opened. Scanning his body, the light focused all energy on him and sent him flying back against the wall.

"Access forbidden!" A voice boomed as the light sought out Lili.

She scooted back from the light, as it came towards her direction. Noises from above distracted her as a body fell through the hole in the ceiling. Liam landed on his feet, teeth bared and shaquarava active. He growled at her until the light locked on him. Turning he fired on the beam, it exploded taking the door with it.

"Access forbidden!" Another beam shot out through the gaping hole in the wall.

Liam deflected this with his hands and fired on it too.

Lili could only watch in shock as he charged in and blasted all to hell. The words access

forbidden being chanted as it tried to stop the intruder. After a large blast, lights came on all around her and started to flash.

"Warning, core damage has caused an over load in systems. Breach eminent, all must flee ship."

All the world around her shook as she stood. Another blast from the core and Liam was thrown back through the hole he had created.

"Access forbidden!"

Dumping the energy cannon in the lit up core, used the strap to tie Liam's hands to the rope. They had to get out of there if they wanted to live. She climbed the rope back up in to the tunnel and brought it up with Liam attached to the bottom. Ignoring his half conscious groans of pain, she dragged him back the way they had come.

On the ledge she had first caught up to them, she found the bodies of several dozen machines shaped like armadillos. "So this is where you got the energy from."

"Lili," Liam groaned her name.

"What?"

"Did I just do that?"

"I don't know, what do you think you did, and do you think you can walk?"

He nodded as she helped him stand. "I think I just destroyed the heart of an alien ship after draining the caretakers of all their energy like an atavist."

"Then yes, you did."

"kay, just checkin." They slid down the wall back in to the one way hallway. "and Lili?"

"Yes, Liam, what is it? We don't have a lot of time before this ship blows."

"Next time, you take the shuttle."

She started laughing as they limped back to the pool. "Well if you had told me before hand who you had joined with, none of this would have happened."

"Keloren, the Jaridian." He coughed out.

"Dead, or soon will be."

"No, I mean I..."

"Oh, I know that! And we are going to have a serious talk about that when we get home. That's if the shuttles are working."

At the pool, she let him slide in to the water. When he started to growl at her, she didn't know if it was because of the water, or his mind had yet to finish coming back. She decided it was the water when he released a high pitched squeal as a dark cloth floated against his back.

"Oh don't be such a big baby, Liam, it is just a jacket." She pulled it out and handed it to him. "Yours to be precise. Now put it on and let's go."

He complied shakily as his nerves had yet to settle down, the being in the water didn't help. As they made their way to the other side, several machine bodies floated across the water's surface as the ripples from their movements reached them. "Jesus Lili, it looks like the after math of a slaughter."

"So, you are not the only one they squicked, hurry up!"

Complying, he picked up his pace and bounded through the water after her. Once on the other side, he started to settle down, pulling the soaked jacket closer. Loud sirens started to blare as they headed back through the entrance to the cat walks of the docking bay. "Which way Lili?"

"My shuttle, the other is set to self destruct if any one tries to activate the ID drives and we don't have time to over ride it." Not waiting for a reply, she dragged him by the hand through the maze of ships to her shuttle. At her shuttle, she shoved him in to the back and brought the holographic display online. "The systems are dangerously low on power, but operational. We barely have enough energy to get back to Earth with the ID drives."

"What about conventional drives when we get out of ID space?"

"Not enough, I will enter the coordinates for somewhere to land softly cause once we come out of ID space, that is it. We will be completely out of power and if we do that in space, we will be sucked out in to a vacuum when the virtual glass fails. We have no choice but to crash on Earth. So hang on to your hat, here goes nothing." She activated the ID drive while they were still docked, sheering part of the docking clamps with them.

Keloren awoke in the Taelon shuttle as it drifted in space. The last of his personality returned, he cried out in anger. How had he been so weak as to align himself with the Human? It was that hybrid! He had done something to him. For a moment he sat there thinking on how he was going to get his revenge now, when he realized he was no longer on the alien vessel, or in its inner chamber.

He had survived. The last thing he remembered was the white beam of light locking on him, as it cried out in the Earth language. He felt his body shut down as it touched him and sent his remains flying. Something had revived him and saved him. Wait, there was something more. A bright white figure standing over him, healing his wounds, restoring him to life. It had flushed green-blue like the hybrid, and the next thing he was on the shuttle.

The Shuttle!

He checked the spatial coordinates.

Home! He was home!

Activating the controls, he opened a channel to Jaridia. The face that appeared was unknown to him, how long had he been gone?

"Who are you?"

"I am Keloren, Nul of Fal hal-ot. Who am I speaking with?"

"I am High Commander Vorgeac of the Jaridian fleets, Nul Keloren. What have you to report?"

Keloren's smirk lit up his face. "I have in my possession a Taelon shuttle."

"Explain!"

"I captured a Taelon conspirator after my escape from aboard their mother ship. We were captured by an alien vessel, a Kimera ship." He delighted in the wide eyed stare of Vorgeac. "Unfortunately I am unaware of what happened to the ship, or my prisoner due to the fact I was ambushed by another member of his species."

"You were defeated by a lowly..."

"Human. And no, I was not. My captive was no ordinary Human, but a hybrid. The Taelons have succeeded!" Vorgeac's eyes widened again. "An accident occurred and the Hybrid's mentality destabilized. He attacked both his own rescuer, and me before I knocked him unconscious. I was killed and later resurrected by the ship before I awoke in the shuttle."

"Why did it save you?"

"It is well known that Kimera do not kill. I believe it was flawed and when it saw this, corrected the mistake."

"Very good, you will report more on this when you return, but before you return, what was the name of this Human and this Hybrid?"

Keloren tried, but was unable to come up with a name. "I do not know I did not ask."

"It matters not, we will find out once we get your shuttle's ID technology."

Keloren nodded as he brought online the holographic display. "Entering ID space, now..."

The transmission ended.

Sandoval watched as the alien ship exploded. Giving a disappointed sigh through his nose, he snapped shut his pocket watch. The ID points he picked up had disappeared before he could get a lock on the coordinates they were heading to. He knew one was Taelon, but the other was almost Taelon, but not. In anger, he ordered the pilot to set an auto pilot for home.

The young man complied with out question. Before he knew what was happening, the skrill had already spread the his molecules through out the cabin.

Another pilot dead, but if Keloren had done as he said, he would be receiving a communication from the Jaridian High Command. That is if the bumbling fool alien had not screwed that up too.

Both Lili and Liam cried out as the shuttle free fell in to the swamp from a hundred feet above taking out trees along the way. When they had stopped falling, Liam had started puking, and Lili congratulating herself on not dying. It was another fifteen minutes and two global calls later before the Taelon shuttles could be heard exiting ID space over head.

Ignoring the pain in his back, Liam climbed out of the shuttle. The burns from the energy had appeared while waiting for the shuttles to come. A large palm print covered the lower half of his spine where the Jaridian had flooded him with the core energy. He let himself fall out of the shuttle in to the cool water below to sooth the pain. While floating, he observed the shuttle as it laid on its stern.

The drives were shot, damaged from the landing, other wise it was in perfect condition. They should be able to salvage the entire shuttle. All he wanted to do was float in the cool waters for the rest of his life, but something about swamps niggled at the back of his mind. When something slimy rubbed against his back, he yelled one word. "Snakes!"

Lili had to sedate him with her field kit before he exposed his abilities to the swarming FBI agents and rescue personnel. All of which included striking him against the head when the drug didn't have any effect. He went down like a hot rock, she only hoped that he didn't remember when he woke up.

Da'an watched as Sandoval gave his report. Some how he knew the implant was not telling the whole truth, but it did not matter. The Synod's mind had been made up before the meeting had taken place, all this was just a formality. He had his protector back alive, and that was the true source of information.

What Captain Marquette knew, he would gather from Liam after he had been rested. As for the hybrid's memories, he could afford to be patient. After all, Zo'or might have gotten away with this, but the seeds of doubt were still there. So he gave in to the urge, and a subtle smile appeared on his features.

Lili stood over the sleeping figure, her hand reaching out to flick a lock of hair from his forehead. He had given her quite a scare today when he was abducted. Who knew that he was so precious to her? Looking down on his peaceful face under her hand, she suddenly wanted a baby of her own. It had been a long time since she thought about having one. She wasn't getting any younger, and her life was dangerous enough that she might not get another chance.

"He is precious, isn't he?"

Jumping, she turned to face the smiling Dr. Park. Rubbing at the back of her neck with the hand that had previously been on his forehead, she gave a nervous smile. "Kinda, it is hard to remember some times, that he is an innocent in all of this."

"Liam may be many things, but innocent is not one of them. This was his choice." She walked into the room closer to the bed he lay upon. Touching his hand, Dr. Melissa Park, clutched her chest with the other. A single tear slid down her cheek. "I feel partially responsible for his choice, I should never allowed him the chance. If he had been mine..." She let his hand go and looked up startled at the hand on her shoulder.

"Did you ever want kids?"

Melissa nodded at Lili's question. "Once, I wanted them, but my husband didn't. When he died, all my dreams of a family went with him. I haven't thought about it until just now."

"Strange, the things that you think of in a crises." Lili whispered as the quiet beeping of the heart monitor continued to fill the room.

A day, seven doctors, twenty-four hours of observation, burn cream, and a bandage to the head, later, Liam entered his apartment. He couldn't recall almost any of what had happened on the alien ship. His last memory was of the Jaridian taking food from his mouth and then forcing him to eat. Something's had come during dreams, but had faded when he woke up screaming. It would

be a while before he remembered they had said.

Probably never.

That was the best he could hope for.

The lights in his apartment were low, and there was soothing music playing. Figuring Augur was there, he smiled and walked in to the living room. There he removed his clothes that Lili had to get for him before he would even considering leaving Dr. Park's lab.

Clad in only his boxers, he sank down on his couch with a sigh. The smell of food cooking filled his nose with delightful aromas. "What are you cooking that smells so good, Augur?"

As the kitchen door creaked open, something rubbed against his leg. He leaned forward and picked up the gray and black striped tabby. "What are you doing here? Aren't you just the most precious thing?"

"Well thanks, nice to know I am appreciated."

Liam stood, holding the cat to his chest. "You're not Augur."

"And you're not dressed."

"What do you want, Mr. Doors?" Liam ignored the amused smirk as he slid the cat down to cover his boxers.

"It's Joshua, and I thought I could cook you dinner. I heard you had been abducted by aliens, and I wanted to apologize for our last meeting, so I figured why not kill two Taelons with one stone."

Seemingly convinced, Liam held up the cat. "What's with the fur ball?"

"I heard your type of people bonded with cats." An amused look graced his warm features.

"What type is that?" He watched as Joshua crossed the room to pick up his clothes, fold them, and hold them out to him.

"In the twentieth century, you were referred to abductees."

"How did you find out, the public was never informed, I was only gone for three hours." When the cat started to protest being miss held, he brought her back to his chest scratching her ears.

"Oh please, I am the son of Johnathan Doors." Sighing, he tossed the ignored clothes on to the couch.

Liam nodded in agreement of the logic. "But that still doesn't explain why you are here to apologize, bringing me gifts, and cooking me dinner. After all, you are a Doors, too."

"Oh yeah, throw it in my face why don't ya." Joshua smirked at the trace of a smile on Liam's face. "I may be the son of Johnathan, but I am not his clone. I was being an ass hole and got fresh with you and I am sorry. Forgive me?" He looked up at Liam through lowered eyebrows with a pout.

Appearing to think, Liam stared back at him. "What are you cooking?"

"Spaghetti, you'll love it."

"Jar, can, or scratch?"

"What is this, the Spanish Inquisition." At the pointed stare, he rolled his eyes. "I used canned tomatoes, but the rest is from scratch." As an after thought, "oh and I bought the spaghetti in a box, so sorry, my bad."

"You are forgiven."

"Good, now go get ready, dinner is almost ready." Liam gave him a confused look. "You can't eat in your boxers, you might as well sit nude if you intend to do that."

"You would like that wouldn't you?" Setting down the cat, he gave it a final rub down and turned to go. "Oh, and keep your hands off my pussy. I don't let guys do any petting until the third date."

Joshua could only watch in shock as Liam sauntered in to the bed room. What in hell had he been thinking, and where had this tease been hiding? From what his sources said, this kind of behavior from the companion agent would have them calling the men in white coats. Swallowing hard, he adjusted his pants and carefully walked back to tend dinner.

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Chapter 3 by lopaka tanu

Part 3 Swear I can feel it when you try.

Joshua sat the plate on the table with a flourish befitting a magician. Sighing when there was no response, he dusted off the apron and walked back into the kitchen, the cat on his heels. "You would think I would get at least a mew for my efforts, but no, an ungrateful audience tonight." When the cat merely looked at him, he gave another sigh and went back to tending the pasta sauce. "Why don't you make yourself useful and go catch some vermin? I am sure you can find some nice tasty mice in this hovel of a building."

"Why go for mice when she has a big rat in front of her?"

"Oh ha ha, that one is just so lame it can't move, let alone wound me." Joshua stirred the sauce once more and grabbed a large pot off the stove and dumped it in a colander in the sink. "Make yourself useful and get the bread out of the oven."

Liam smirked as he complied. Looking down at the curious cat, he shook his head. "Here I thought I was the owner of this kitchen, silly me."

"Use the bread knife to cut it, there is one on the counter next to the package it came in."

"It seems you have made yourself at home."

Shrugging, Joshua rinsed the pasta. "I never go in a place unprepared. Cover all your bases, my father taught me well." After setting the colander on a plate he turned and handed it to Liam. "Let me do that, you take this to the table, and be quick about it, I have other things for you to do."

"Yes, sir!" Liam saluted as he took the plate holding the colander of noodles and marched out of the kitchen.

"Keep that up smart ass, and no dessert." After slicing the bread, he went back to tending the sauce. As Liam entered the kitchen, he took a spoon full of the sauce and held it out to the hybrid's lips. "Open." Liam grabbed his hand, sucked the spoon in his mouth, and wiped it on his tongue before pulling it out. "More garlic, or Italian?"

In the next instant, Liam froze in mid chew, huffed, and ran to the sink to pour cold water on his tongue. "That was hot!"

"Aw, poor baby, want me to kiss it and make it better? Besides, it wasn't that hot," Joshua spoke as he continued to work on the dinner. "Now for the cheese, grinder, grinder, grinder... left it in the bag on the table, be right back." He turned to leave the kitchen but was blocked as Liam faced him with an angry expression. "If you get out of my way, I can finish dinner."

"That hurt."

"So?" He gave a rueful smile after a moment's pause. "Oh look, you got sauce on your face."

"I got..." He was silenced as Joshua's arms went around his waist and pulled him close.

"Say no more, I can make a small sacrifice just this once." His lips met Liam's cheek, tongue lashing out to lick the sauce. As the man seemed to shiver under his touch, Joshua nipped at the skin.

Liam jerked back as the smirk came back to Joshua's face. "What did you do that for?"

"Careful when kissing a scorpion, Kincaid, you might get stung." He turned out of Liam's grasp and went in to the dining area, leaving the only sound of the sauce cooking and the swinging door.

Liam stood there stunned, he couldn't figure out what Joshua's angle was. People always wanted something. He just had to figure out what the son of the leader of the Liberation wanted before he got too far into a situation there might not be a way out of. "Wonder what the old man would think if he saw me with his son?"

"We would still be peeling him off the ceiling over the boxer rebellion."

"Joshua, what do you really want, I have no time for games. As you know I just got out of the hospital from being kidnapped. I am not interested in playing some twisted mind game."

Joshua set down the grinder. "What makes you think I am hiding my motives? Now get out of the way unless you want to wear the sauce." He paused as he held the sauce off the burner. "I could always lick it from your body, that could be a good way to start what I want."

"You want to eat me?"

"May be later, right now I just want some spaghetti. I made the stuff from scratch, the least we could do is eat it like two normal human beings." He set the sauce on the counter top and growled. "Fuck it!" Grabbing Liam, he pushed the younger man against the counter, kissing him into submission. Breathing through his nose, he lifted Liam, wrapping his legs around his waist. The feel of the younger man's warm body beneath him made him growl again as he tried to get more sensation through their clothes.

When he took in a deep breath, he noted Liam's skin had the smell of burning spaghetti sauce.

'Burning spaghetti sauce?'

Joshua's eye went wide as he yanked his hand and spoon from Liam's grip, turned back to the burner, and pulled the pot from the fire. Cursing himself for getting carried away, he rested his head against the cabinet over the counter. A fantasy, it had all been a fantasy. He startled when he felt Liam's hand on his shoulder.

"The sauce wasn't that bad." He took in the appearance of the older man panting. "What happened, you look a little flushed?"

"I think I better go. You uh, got the ingredients all ready, just mix and serve. You and Whisky here have at it." He pointed at the cat as he walked out of the kitchen. "I'm real busy, got an interview tomorrow for my dad's campaign trail schedule. So I guess I will see you... around, some time, I hope." Grabbing his coat off the hook next to the door, he put it on and turned to go. He gave Liam a friendly smile as the younger man stood in the kitchen door way with a confused look on his face. "Enjoy the dinner." Then he was gone.

Liam stood there stunned. The man was out of his mind, he had been offering him the spoon full of sauce, he grabbed the man's hand, tasted the sauce, and told him it needed more mushrooms. Now thirty seconds later, he was standing there in an empty apartment with a dinner for two, and only a cat to share it with. 'Does he prefer it without mushrooms?' Figuring Joshua needed to have his brain checked, he shrugged and went back to enjoy the dinner.

Joshua slammed the door behind him, leaning against it as if to keep the monsters out. His chest rose and fell in quick succession as he tried to get his thoughts in order. 'What had happened to having a nice quiet dinner among friends? Why did you have to start having extreme sexual fantasies about that blue eyed devil? Or was he green eyed?' Brushing a hand over his haggard face, he gave a gruff laugh. Liam was turning into quite the sex object.

Why now, after all the years of repressing these urges, did they have to rear themselves in such an aggressive manner? Repression never did anything this bad in the past. 'No, Joshua, you never wanted to take a guy so bad you were willing to let the cat watch, or imagine what the major could do with a raspy tongue like that.' His thoughts were like a cold glass of water down his spine.

He had to get these feelings under control, they were getting worse by the second. All thoughts seemed to continue revolving around one thing, fucking the major senseless. His lips twisted in to a smirk as his hand snaked down the front of his pants. Already rock hard, he gave a few rubs over the head for friction. Before he knew it, he was screaming out, coming in his briefs. When he was through shaking from the intensity of the orgasm, he looked down at the front of his pants. The entire front was soaked clear through to the skin. Sighing in disgust, he carefully walked to his bathroom, stripped from the sticky clothes, and stepped in to the shower.

He came twice more while washing his lower body before giving up and finishing the shower. Drying off, he decided to forgo the constricting underwear in fear of another accident, and carefully slipped in to the bed. Joshua decided to lay on his side as it reduced chances of more excitement to his already overly stimulated member. Once settled in, he drifted off to an image of screwing Liam over his own desk.

Walking in the Embassy, Lili watched as Liam tried to adjust something in his coat. When he caught sight of her, he tried to sneak away. "Un uh, Liam, I already saw you. What are you doing here?"

He stopped mid motion and hung his head.

"I thought Dr. Park told you no work for a week." She walked up behind him and waited on him to face her. "What are you hiding?"

"It's not what you think, Lili." He turned to face her, one hand still wrapped around his coat covered abdomen as the other finished zipping his jacket.

"Oh, and it is normal for you to be walking around with your stomach bulging, and... moving!"

Liam, what in hell do you have in your jacket? Tell me it is not what I think it is." She stood waiting for him to open his jacket, a hand on her pistol just in case. "Well?"

"I am afraid I can't do that. I am only here long enough to get a few project briefs for the conference next week."

"What did you smuggle into the Embassy?" She narrowed her eyes to tell him she meant business.

Sighing, he lowered the top of his zipper six inches and the head of a gray and black tabby popped out.

"Oh Liam, she is adorable!" As Lili approached, the cat ducked back into Liam's jacket. "Where did you get her?" She tried to peer down the front of his jacket to get a better look at the cat.

"A friend brought her to me last night. I had to come get a few things and I couldn't leave her there all alone." He snuck a hand up inside his jacket smiling as it started to emit a loud purr. "Isn't she cute?"

"Yeah, but a little shy. I have been wanting to get one for a while, but was afraid of taking care of them." She frowned when Liam started to laugh. "What is so funny about me wanting a cat?"

"Nothing, but your fears are justified."

Now her hands were on her hips. "Oh, and why is that?"

"With your line of work, the cat would have to have a built in ID drive just to survive. Face it, Lili, around you, things tend to end up dead before their time."

"Oh ha ha, very funny, Liam." Before she could smack his arm, his jacket suddenly stiffened and puffed out. A low growl started to come from it as well. "What the..."

"Ah, Major Kincaid, the Human I was looking for." Zo'or's voice rang out in the large greeting area of the Embassy.

Liam started to stroke the bulge and speak softly to it. "What can I do for you, Zo'or?"

The companion walked slowly towards Liam with a smirk on his features. "I have a problem with your report on the abduction, and decided to investigate it with you personally. Your assistant informed me that you would not be here, but I corrected her in this false assumption."

"She was not mistaken, Major Kincaid should not be here. He is under explicit orders to the contrary." Lili glared at Liam as he tried to tell her something.

"Then why are you here, Major?" Zo'or seemed faintly amused at the prospect of Liam's disobedience.

"I have a few things I need to pick up for the conference next week, now what do you want to know?" Liam had gotten the cat to quiet down as the Companion walked closer.

"There are a few inconsistencies with your report. Such as what this Jaridian was doing to your body. You stated that you knew what he was doing, then later in your report you have the exact opposite. Which is it, Major, do you know what he was doing to you?"

Liam stood there for a moment in thought. A feeling held on the back of his mind that he should know what had happened. There was something wrong with his memory, like the information

was being locked out and he didn't have the key. "Fundamentally, I know what he was trying to accomplish, but for the life of me, I can't remember it."

"Elaborate."

Liam was about to continue when his jacket suddenly erupted in a bought of growls and hisses. He held the bulge closer to his body and cleared his throat. "I can't, it is the same way you recognize something you never seen before. You just do. I don't know what it means, but I know what he was trying to do. That if he had succeeded, it would have been very bad for me."

The Taelons seemed to think on this for a moment as the jacket continued to let him know its disapproval. "I find this discovery interesting in that only your species seems to have this trouble, a Taelon would never forget such important information. Perhaps we will discuss it further when you return from your forced leave. By then, may be your clothing will have learned not to be so vocal or else." As Zo'or finished, the noises stopped. He then walked away with no further acknowledgement of the two.

Lili hissed at Liam through her teeth. "Get that cat out of here! I thought for sure Zo'or would have you open your jacket and then exterminate it."

"Would you relax, Zo'or will do nothing of the sort." He tugged at the moving bulge. "It would be bad press for the Taelons. Besides, Mr. Whiskers wouldn't let that big bully lay a finger on him."

"Mr. Whiskers? I thought your cat was a girl."

"She is, I just like the name." Liam shrugged defensively as he walked towards the greeting chamber stair well. "Besides, it fits, she is a tough kitty with a feminine touch."

"That is so sexist of you. I thought I taught you better than that. It was Augur who taught you the differences, wasn't it?"

Shaking his head, he walked on through towards his desk. "It is just a normal thing in our society. What do you feel when you hear the title of Ms.? You feel as if she is young, incompetent, and inexperienced. When you here Mrs., you feel she is supportive, wise, and maternal. Mr. commands respect, whether you admit it or not, you know it is true. Why else would you refer to a married couple as Mr. and Mrs. such and such?" He snorted in amusement at her shocked look. "It is true, and you know it. Face it Lili, we are not as equal in our beliefs as we would like to think."

After a moment, Lili rolled her eyes and hurried to catch up with him. "But still, you are mislabeling your cat. People are going to expect to see a male cat when you tell them her name."

"Let them assume what they will. I just picked out a name that showed both her strength and her most eye catching features. Sorta like a mob boss from the old dime novels Augur has. Mr. Fish Eyes Leonettie was always a favorite." A smile crossed his face as she laughed at him. "It is all in the way you see things. Where you see a title reserved for men, I see a symbol of strength and power. Go figure. Besides, I think it is better than the original."

"The original?"

"Yeah, he named her Whisky. That was just too childish."

"He?"

"Is there something wrong, Lili? You keep repeating what I say, it is getting annoying, and.... and you are fishing for clues. If you want to know, just ask." He stormed over to his desk as Lili

floundered for a reply.

"You want me to come out and say it? Fine, who do you know so well that they gave you a cat? And one with such a cutesy name at that."

Liam stood up, stuffing the briefing materials in a sack before hanging it over a shoulder. "Lili, for your information it was Joshua Doors, he brought her as a get well present. He told me he wanted to apologize and cooked me dinner as a way to say it. I think a simple 'I am sorry' would have been suffice, but I am not one to look a gift horse in the mouth. Especially when there is free food involved."

Lili stood there, mouth agape. When she caught her thoughts again, he was already half way across the chamber towards the exit. "Wait a minute!" She rushed to his side again. "Hold on! What do you mean he cooked you dinner?"

"Look, Lili, it was no big deal! He just cooked me spaghetti from scratch as an apology." When her face turned from shock to angry, he bit back the groan. 'Here it comes.'

"That is not an apology! He is seducing you!" A deep breath. "A man does not just bring you gifts, and dinner if he wants to apologize. That doesn't happen, Liam, not in the real world. There is always an ulterior motive. And Spaghetti, Liam, that is loaded with aphrodisiacs! God, he wants in your pants, that... pervert, wants to mount you. Probably just so he can say he had you. You have got to stay away from him."

"It is no big deal, Lili. He didn't even stay to eat, he finished making the sauce and left."

"No big deal! Liam, just because he didn't stay to eat doesn't mean he didn't want to do other things."

"He said..."

"Guys will say whatever they have to get what they want. And that goes doublely so for him. This is Joshua Doors we are talking about here, the son of Johnathan Doors, one of the most ruthlessly influential men in the world! He will stop at nothing until he has you wrapped around him and screaming his name." Lili flushed at her own words as Liam looked away in anger. "Listen, please. I want only what is best for you. You are the closest thing I have to a kid, Liam. I lost my brother because I didn't stand up for myself to our bastard of a father. I sure in hell will not lose you to some self-centered, spoiled, son of a megalomaniac."

Liam blinked back the tears as he cleared his throat. "Are you through?" A hand on his chin brought him to look at her face.

"No," she whispered. "I am never through when it concerns you. I made a promise a while back, and I intend to keep it." Wrapping her arms around his rigid form, she held him tight until the cat let out a low whine. "You listen to her, Liam. She hasn't been wrong so far as I've known her."

Liam held his tongue about her opinion of Joshua. "I will. I will see you again in a week if I don't see you before."

As he turned to leave, she held his shoulder. "Wait, there was something else. Johnathan globaled earlier, said he was looking for you. He may know about last night, so be warned."

"Fine, I'll keep that in mind." Clutching his jacket tighter about the cat, he walked away.

Lili leaned closer to the virtual glass as he passed underneath. "Be careful, Liam."

Da'an scanned the factory size room filled with shelves covered in identical bodies. The Biosurrogates project was working better than he had originally hoped. His fingers twitched in response to a figure moving behind him. "I had thought your presence to be barred from this room."

"It is my job to be where you are, Da'an. As your protector..."

"Temporary protector, Agent Sandoval." Angling his head to a slight tilt, Da'an narrowed his eyes at the man. "Do not forget your posting is only temporary. Now I ask you again, why are you here when I gave specific orders to the contrary?"

"You also asked to be informed if Major Kincaid had returned to the Embassy while you were away. He has."

"This you felt was important enough to violate my previous commands?"

Sandoval's face remained impassive as he looked around the room.

"I see, get out." Da'an finally turned to face his former protector. "If your master sends you again to spy on my projects, warn him it will be the last thing you do."

Sandoval formed the Taelon Salute with his hands and backed out of the room. "As you wish, Da'an."

The Taelon moved about the shelves scanning their contents. "Dr. Sparrow?"

"Yes, Da'an," came the modulated reply. The wheel chair's motor whirred as Dr. Sparrow pushed forward, his computer screen displaying data on the Biosurrogates. "Is there something I can help you with?"

"I feel it is imperative that you lock out all security codes aside from yours and mine own."

"Do you think that wise?"

Da'an scanned the room once more. "Zo'or has interfered with my projects in the past with disastrous results. Do not underestimate his determination. If he believes this project will be his best chance at winning, nothing will stop him."

"Then I will do as you ask." His monitor beeped as it flashed 'locked down'. "Done."

"Thank you." Da'an studied the door where the protector had exited through the shelves. "I want to be alerted to all changes in this project. You are to contact me directly."

"As you wish." Sparrow's eyes squinted as he looked at the companion. "Do you think the scheduled transfer of my conscious will be delayed by this?"

"We shall have to wait and see the outcome of today's events, Dr. Sparrow."

"Perhaps it would be best to increase the time table then."

"A wise precaution. My protector shall be indisposed for a time, I think it best that we do so before he returns."

He smiled at the Taelon. "With your assistance I will be ready in four days."

"Then in four days, you may walk upon your Earth or be placed in it as is the custom of your people."

"I prefer to think of it as being freed if not in one form then another."

At that Da'an glanced towards his wheel chair bound body. "An enlightened point of view."

There was silence in the Liberation Head Quarters as Johnathan Doors stood on the stairs leading from the upper deck. It was not for the man standing there, but what he had been saying that made the members speechless. "I am warning you, Kincaid, stay away from my son!"

"Listen to yourself, blaming me for Joshua's sudden interest like I had a hand in it. I told you, I came home and there he was, having taken over the place like he owned it."

"I don't care what he did, you energetic Lolita! Keep your alien whiles to yourself, is that clear."

"Energetic Lolita, Alien whiles? You make it sound like I seduced him or something." Liam's customary smirk started then faltered at Doors' glare.

"I know all about your kind. How your father could manipulate people with the touch of his hand. For all I know, he could have passed it on to his son." Johnathan was wound up so tight he couldn't think straight. Finally, after sputtering for a few breaths, he spouted the only thing that came to mind. "You are acting the part of a temptuous harlot and I won't have it."

Liam was incredulous. "You won't have it?"

"That's right. So go play raging hormonal alien some where else!" After he finished, Johnathan turned and stormed down the last of the steps. Once at the bottom he glared at the frozen stares. "Get back to work!"

They quickly scattered about to their consoles and business.

Liam jumped over the hand rail, landing to block Johnathan's path as he tried to make for the elevator. "We aren't through."

"The hell we aren't. Get out of my way."

Glaring at the older man, Liam defiantly crossed his arms. "Not until you listen to reason."

"The only reason I listen to is my own and I don't need anything else."

"Fine, then I guess we won't be going any where for a while." Liam's customary smirk grew into a brilliant smile at Doors' annoyance. "I'm waiting."

"Two minutes!" Johnathan stormed around Liam towards the elevator. "Clock's ticking, Kincaid."

"Yes, sir!" He followed the older man up the stairs and into the elevator, turning to him once the doors were closed. "We have a problem."

"Tell me something I don't know."

"Joshua sleeps in the nude."

"That is not what I meant. Your time is running out fast."

"Fine, I'll get right to the point." Shifting his feet, he assumed a ready stance. "Your son is obsessed with me. I think he might jeopardize my cover."

This caught Johnathan's attention. Reaching over to the console, he pressed a few buttons and the lift stopped. "What do you mean?"

"I mean he ran several searches into my back ground. He came over to my place and fixed me dinner. He left recording devices in my bedroom, kitchen, and living room. My security system picked them up when they activated after I went out this morning."

"Those weren't Joshua's."

"What?"

"If you had bothered to do your homework, you would realize those were placed by a goon working for Sandoval." His anger was suppressed by his concern. "But you are correct about the rest. Braking and entering is going too far. Do you have any idea why he would be interested in you?"

"No, I was hoping you would know that."

"Fine, I'll look into this. Keep me informed of any and all changes." He pressed the lift buttons again and they finished the ride in silence. As they exited the lift, Augur was waiting for them with an amused grin. "Don't even say it."

"Oh come on, Johnathan. Not like I was going to say anything about a shot gun wedding."

"That D'Giammo you wanted," Doors pulled out his global, pressing in a sequence of numbers, "consider it history."

"Johnathan! You wouldn't! I was only joking."

"I did." He pushed the black man on the lift.

"Johnathan Doors, you're a monster!" His shout was muffled some what as the doors closed.

"You didn't really destroy that priceless piece of art, did you?" Liam was eyeing him as they ascended the steps into the cathedral.

"I never make an empty threat."

"So you just threw away a fifty thousand dollars like that."

"Two hundred and fifty, but I made my point."

Shaking his head, Liam put on his sun glasses and walked out of the church. "You're one hell of a monster, Johnathan..."

"...Doors."

The image clicked off as Joshua walked in front of his screen. "Care to explain this to me, dad?"

"Where in the hell did you get that?"

"I have my sources. Don't avoid my question. What were you and Major Kincaid doing in that church?"

Johnathan turned his chair away from Joshua, looking out the window over New York. "What were you doing in his home last night? I thought I told you to stay away from him."

Joshua stalked behind his father's desk, grabbed the chair and forced it to face him. "Answer the damn question. What in the hell is going on?"

"I was covering your ass!" Johnathan pushed his son's hand off his leather chair. "As you seem so intent on bearing it for the whole world to see, someone has to be there to make sure it stays in one piece."

"What did you tell him. If you threatened him, so help me god..."

"And what if I did?"

Pulling back in disgust, Joshua turned away. "Do you have to screw up everything in my life? I thought you wanted to be president. Make this world a better place, a world with our eyes open. How can you do that when you are in jail for threatening a protector of the aliens you so despise?"

"How dare you stand there preaching about me breaking the law when you did it last night. If you must know, I was making sure the hapless Major was not going to press charges against you. Luckily for you, he found out about your obsessive compulsive disorder."

That got his attention back from the skyline. "My what? I don't have..."

Johnathan held up a hand, signaling his son to keep quiet. "As of this morning, you do. I have scheduled you for time with a psychiatrist. It was part of my deal."

Joshua stood there, shock written in his hazel eyes. "You can't do this! I can't believe you lied about me to a complete stranger."

"I did what was necessary to keep you safe and out of jail. You had no right to invade his private life like that, and after your disappearing act you pulled on him last night, you should be glad he actually bought it." With the dawning of this realization in his son's eyes, Johnathan played another card. "What you did last night was criminal at best. The man is a companion agent, not to be trusted. Had you come anytime after last night, he would have evidence enough to prosecute you. As it was, Sandoval's devices didn't activate until this morning."

"As in Agent Sandoval, head of Companion Security?"

"The one and only."

"But how, I mean why? I thought they were all on the same team over there." Joshua couldn't believe it, this didn't sit well with him.

Seeing Joshua trying to think it out, Johnathan sighed. "That is what they would like you to believe, spouting about their great commonality. Lies, it only links them so far as it allows them to know that they are still alive or not." He sat back in his chair, staring at his son intently, making sure the younger man knew he meant business. "They are playing a game of survival, one false step can mean a death sentence for their entire species. Both our species for that matter. We are bound to a single planet while they have the chance to escape to any number of countless

worlds."

Joshua circled round the room, his arms crossed. "So you think that I am in danger?"

"Yes."

"Why the sudden care about my well being?"

"I could ask the same thing," Johnathan shot back as he quickly stood

"What are you talking about?" Turning to face his father, Joshua glared at the older man. Putting his hands on his hips, he narrowed his eyes in suspicion.

"I am talking about that suddenly you are spouting about how I am the second coming. You quit working for that puppet and manage my campaign. That doesn't add up, Joshua." Slowly, he walked towards his son, hands barely moving at his sides. "Why, Joshua, why now after all this time?"

"Because I hate the Taelons."

"That was too easy, try again." This time, he moved his jacket revealing the personal energy gun hidden beneath his jacket. "Who are you working for? You would never trust your greatest enemy in such a position of power, let alone me."

Pausing in his steps, Joshua swallowed. He noticed the gun before he took a step back. "What are you doing, dad?"

"Insuring my survival. I will ask you once again, who are you working for?"

"You, I am working for you!" His retreat ended with his back hitting the office door.

"Now why are you doing that?" He stopped walking when he reached a point directly in front of his son.

"Because I hate the Taelons."

"Wrong answer!" Johnathan pulled his energy gun.

"You were right! All along, you were right. The Taelons, they are just using us."

"Then why not form your own resistance. Why come to me? You are singing, Joshua, but I'm not buying the act."

He held up his hands as the energy weapon was pointed at his face. "Please, dad, please!" While the energy pack hissed as it charged, he closed his eyes. "I hate you! I hate you! Is that what you wanted, you sick fuck? I hate you, I want you dead!" His words came out in a panicked rush. Swallowing, he continued on. "I figured if I could get you in a public setting, the Taelons could do the rest. Once they got rid of you, I would have the public support I needed to get them off my world! Joshua Doors, the mournful son of the People's Martyr..." He went silent as the cold barrel was placed next to his temple. A shudder ran through his body at the feel of it.

"I believe you." Johnathan put the weapon away as his son slid to the floor, pale and shaking. "Now get out."

He stared up at the older man in confusion. "What?"

"I said get out. You have a doctor's appointment in an hour which gives you just enough time to clean up before then." At his son's continued confusion, he gestured toward the stain down the front of Joshua's pants. "Next time you do something that stupid, I will pull the trigger."

Standing, he straightened his suit jacket to hide the stain. Glaring at his father, Joshua wished him dead in that moment. "One of these days I am going to knock that expressionless face from your head! You fucking bastard, I thought you were going to do it!"

"I still might. Just because your motives were more... shall we say, personal, does not mean I agree with your... some of your goals. I will see the Taelons gone, but on my own terms, not yours. Now get out of my sight."

"Yes, dad!" Turning on his heel, Joshua marched from the office, slamming the door behind him.

"I love you too, son." Johnathan sat in his desk chair, then turned it to face the windows.

The dark red haired figure stood over him, his face an emotionless mask as he held something small up for him to see. Squinting, he caught sight of the glint of gold in the dim lab lights. "No! Please, no."

"I assure you, she felt no pain," the soft whisper made him gasp.

"Damn you, Boone. Damn you!" Tears filled his eyes as he tried to fight them. The straps held his head in place, forcing him to watch them. "Damn you..." Pain flared at the bottom of his skull as something penetrated his skin...

"Damn you, Boone!" Sandoval's eyes blinked open several times as he wiped away the tears. Using the sheet to clean his face, he whispered it again to the memory of his past. Sitting up in his bed, he glanced at the clock.

2:00 am.

Rubbing a hand down his face, he dispelled any remnants of tears. The nightmarish memory made his skin prickle with emotions. After a few moments, he climbed out of bed and headed to the bathroom. His image reflected the same emotionless mask he presented to the world everyday. At that a small smile formed on his lips. He was far from the mindless automaton the Taelons believed.

Before he could do anything further, his global rang out. With a carefully neutral face, he walked out and picked it up from the bedside. Pulling it open, he looked down on the pale face. "Zo'or?"

"Return to the Mothership at once, I have use for your services."

"I have yet to find a suitable replacement for Major..."

"I do not care for your excuses. Da'an's safety is not my concern."

"Very well, Zo'or, I will be there soon."

The Taelon's eyes narrowed at him. "See that you don't make me wait too long." As suddenly as he had appeared, Zo'or's image winked out to be replaced by the MotherShip identification symbols.

"Pompous ass." Closing his global, he dropped in on the bed and stripped. Walking back to the

bathroom naked, he ignored the ringing of the global.

Liam walked up the stairs to his apartment, a smile on his face. He was feeling absurdly good this early morning, and he couldn't figure out why. After his confrontation with Doors, he had gone on a little shopping spree with Maya. He and she had done the same thing this morning. His apartment had seemed so bare, so empty. With a few items, they had decided, he could make it more homely. Glancing down at the bags as they hit the wall, he snorted. "Okay, so it wasn't a little, but Mr. Whiskers should like these."

The second set of steps to the top were easily traversed, but he had to watch the floor in order to make sure he made each step. At the top, he stopped when he noticed a pair of expensive dress shoes blocking his path. "What do you want?" Not even bothering to look up, he shoved Joshua aside.

"I want to talk. I have the right to talk with you."

"No, you don't." His good mood all but evaporated at the man's presence. Liam was about to reach for his keys when his arm was grabbed from behind, spinning him to face Joshua.

"I said I want to talk..."

"Don't touch me!" Liam dropped the bags and shook the hand off his arm in revulsion. "There is nothing to talk about. You are psychotic, I am a high profile, you are getting help."

"I am not psychotic, that was my father's suggestion..."

Liam chuckled at Joshua's statement. Focusing his blue eyes on the older man's, he put as much venom as he could in them. "Get this straight, Joshua, as a favor to your father, I am going to forget you were here. Now if you don't leave, I can just as suddenly over come any personal debts. So leave me alone." Turning to go, he bent down to pick up the bags.

"I can't." Joshua, bent over to help him pick up the bags. His hand rested over Liam's as they reached for the same handle. "For the last four days, since we kissed, you are the only think I can think about."

"Get over it, I did."

"No!" Joshua gripped the hand tight, more than he meant to. Loosening his hold, he sighed. "I mean no..., I.... I can't."

"That is not my problem. Now let go of my hand." Liam started to draw back from the older man when suddenly, Joshua gripped their hands together, placing palm to palm. In the next moment, his head jerked back as his spine went rigid. Breath gone, he gasped for air as pain ran up his nerves. His world narrowed down to a black haze as he fought to remain conscious. Finally losing the battle, he gave in screaming as his body flew apart in countless energy particles.

"Why have you recalled Agent Sandoval from my service?" Da'an stared at the image of Zo'or as the other Taelon seemed to gaze of distracted. "Do not ignore my petition, Zo'or, as a member of the Synod, I have right to question your actions. If this is an attempt to limit my access to my project, I assure you that..." Suddenly his world flashed brilliantly and he lost balance. Grabbing for his chair, he lost control of his facade. A mass of energy rushed through his system as he cried out. Regaining his balance, Da'an's facade flickered over his skin. When a second blush

threatened to rippled through him, he forced it down.

His facade disappeared under another extreme blush before he opened his eyes. Their calm intent focused on Zo'or. He noticed the younger Taelon was in a similar state of disarray. A moment of mutual understanding passed between them.

"Major Kincaid?"

"So it would seem."

"How is it possible?"

"The Jaridian." The elder Taelon noted as Zo'or inclined his head. "You knew?"

At Da'an's words, Zo'or blushed again. "I have been suspecting. It was why I felt the need to recall my implant."

"A wise precaution."

"Send for Captain Marquette, I will arrive shortly."

"Agreed." His words echoed in the now empty audience chamber as the data stream cut out. Waving his hand over the sensor, Da'an activated another. Pressing a few symbols, he stared calmly. His eyes slitted as he glared at the pale face of Lili. Face pinched, he spoke in a neutral tone. "You lied to me."

"What are you talking about, Da'an?"

"Is your word worthless? We had an agreement, why did you break it?"

"I don't understand, what is going on?" Lili's growing horror made her shiver as goose bumps appeared on her skin. She had never seen the Taelon's features so tightly controlled, his hands so still. "Please, Da'an, tell me what I lied about."

"The condition of Liam Kincaid. I have felt his terror as he relived his abduction." Da'an's facade flickered before he said the next part. "His pain as he was forced against his will to merge with a Jaridian."

"Oh god."

"Then you knew of this?" At Lili's nod, Da'an looked away. "Why did you not tell me?"

"He was raped, Da'an. There is no greater pain." Her eyes misted over. "I know. When he had no memory of it, I thought it for the best he had no reminder of the attack. Hopefully he would just go on like usual."

Da'an watched her from the corner of his eyes. "At the time, probably a seemingly benevolent decision. However, your mistake was in not informing me. He is in great pain and is in need of my assistance. As of now, it may already be too late."

"I'm sorry..."

"It is not me you must apologize to, Captain." He waved off her data stream before she could say more just in time to see Agent Sandoval and Zo'or portal into the audience chamber.

"Where is the Captain?"

"Captain Marquette has her own emotional censures doing more than we could. She cares very deeply for the Major and will be quite sometime in what is referred to as a guilty conscious. I believe it imperative for the life of my protector that we leave at once." He rose from his chair as Zo'or nodded his ascent once. "Is the shuttle ready?"

"Yes, Da'an. I am sure you know the way."

"Do you have the coordinates? I have Mit'gai awaiting my instructions." Zo'or walked ahead of his protector through the corridors of the Embassy with Da'an at his side. They reached the shuttle pad, the pilot already awaiting them to usher them inside.

"Liam's apartment, the Flat Planet Cafe."

The pilot acknowledged the location with a Taelon salute then took to the controls. Not waiting for the Taelons and Protector to strap in, she brought the drives online and took off. As they disappeared in the ID wave, another two followed.

Joshua came around, sitting up as his body ached from the blast. Something had struck him, hard. Or at least it felt like it. His entire body screamed with remembered pain as old nerves fired into life once more. In all his life, he only remembered feeling like this one time. Looking at his palms, he swore at the red burns. Just as he suspected, he had been shocked.

That brought back more of his recent memories. Liam. Looking around, he found the bags and their contents scattered around the landing. It took him a moment, but he found Liam huddled in a corner on the middle landing down the stairs. Crawling slowly as to avoid the refiring nerves, he made his way to the younger man.

As he got closer, his vision cleared and he noticed Liam's pale complexion take on a green tint. Fast as it started, it was gone. It flickered again and again the closer he got. "Liam?"

Liam slammed into the corner trying to scoot away. His spiky hair the only part of his head visible from under his jacket. He shook his head as Joshua got closer. "Stay away."

"Liam..."

"Just stay away from me!" His arms brought this jacket closer about his body, hugging his mid section. "It hurts. Please make it stop."

"I want to try, if you'll let me." Joshua reached out a attentive hand to what he assumed was Liam's shoulder under the wadded jacket. When the younger man tried to jerk away, he grabbed him up in a fierce hold, keeping his arms tightly wrapped around him.

Liam let out a shriek as he fought to get away. "Let me go, just let me go, please, I'll do anything you want. Just let me go."

Joshua shook his head as he started to rock the young hybrid. "Sssshhh, it'll be okay."

"Joshua?"

"Yes."

"It hurts." Liam wrapped his arms around Joshua's chest as he pulled the man closer to him. Resting his head on Joshua's shoulder, he bit back on the tears as another spasm ripped through

his body. "I need you."

"Anything," he breathlessly whispered, drowning in hypnotizing, deep blue eyes.

"Thank you."

Quicker than Joshua thought, Liam was unbuttoning his shirt. "What are you..." His words were cut off as Liam pressed their lips together.

When he pulled back, he looked the older man in the eyes again. "Need contact, body against body, the only way." His voice carried a hysterical lilt that made Joshua shiver. "Need your energy." Liam placed a glowing hand on Joshua's cheek, gently caressing his face. "Help me. Give yourself to me. Don't resist."

"Yes." And he meant it. Something inside him reached out as Liam's warm hands gently trailed down his spine through his tee-shirt. He grabbed the frantic hybrid's hands from his body, and forced him to back up a little. Quickly, he pulled his tee-shirt over his head, dropping it beside them. Taking a deep breath, Joshua, unbuttoned Liam's shirt, caressing his chest and stomach. He noted the odd paunch Liam's abs seemed to have developed with a curious eye. Before he could remark on not working out, Liam was desperately pressing their bodies together again.

Liam growled in frustration as Joshua forced him back once more. This time he knew what Joshua was doing and tore his shirt, jacket, and own tee-shirt from his body. Once the last was over his shoulders, still wrapped around his arms, Joshua pulled him close again, helping to pull it off his hands. Once it was gone, Liam returned his arms around Joshua to stroke his spine.

"Wrap your arms around me, like this, rub along my spine." His dazed words were barely coherent. Liam's breathing increased as he held tighter to Joshua, stopping occasionally to groan in pain.

Joshua started to feel tired as his spine tingled, his mind numbed and body drained. His grip loosened as he fought to hold Liam closer. The belly Liam had developed, seemed to be getting bigger, preventing him from keeping them together. "Liam, I have to stop... feeling tired."

"No!" Liam's desperate cry carried the same tone of weakness. "Just a little more, please, I need more, need you." His hands ceased their movements as Joshua leaned back against the stair well wall, bringing Liam to lay across him. "Please, just a little more."

Joshua fought to keep his eyes open. "I can't, mmm too tired." His last words ended with a soft breath before Joshua's head drooped and laid on Liam's shoulder, fast asleep.

"But I need more energy." His weak whisper was muffled as he too went unconscious. His body flickered green twice more then stopped.

Outside the building, four consecutive sonic booms filled the morning air. There was shouting as a figure entered the stair well. The ringing echoes of boots running up stairs filled the well before stopping on the first landing. This was followed by a gasp as Lili ran up to the men's sides.

"Liam?"

She tentatively touched his back only to pull him up at his pained moan. "Liam, you have to hold on, Da'an is on his way."

"It's too late." His mumbled words were barely audible. "Nah enough n-r-g." Then he turned slowly sideways as Joshua's arms came up around him protectively. One hand slid gently down his body to rub at his distended belly. It had stopped growing just as the belly button was flush with his skin.

"Stand aside, Captain." Zo'or's authoritative voice filled the well. He gestured for the agents to grab her and move her from the men's sides. He stayed at the bottom of the steps on the first landing, but watched as more agents came with a stretcher. "Take the Major to the mother ship, leave the other Human."

Da'an suddenly appeared at his side, staring up the stairs to Lili. "The Captain will make sure that Mr. Doors is taken care of." His tone brooked no questioning.

"Joshua Doors?" Zo'or stared closer at the second Human male and narrowed his eyes. "Why would he be visiting the Major?"

"I believe they had an altercation a few days ago. Perhaps when he awakens you may ask him yourself. Until then, we have other more important matters at hand." Da'an turned and stalked back down the stairs, the agents carrying Liam on the stretcher behind him.

Zo'or over saw their work then looked back once more to glare at Joshua's slumped figure and Lili at his side. "Do not be too gentle, Captain." He started off down the stairs with Sandoval taking a close second.

Lili watched in horror as they disappeared from sight out of the stair well. When she was sure they were gone, and the other three shuttles lifted off, she pulled out her global. It took three rings, but she finally got a response. "We have a problem."

"What is it now?"

"Liam and Joshua."

"What?" Johnathan's shout caused Joshua to flinch but nothing more. "What has my son to do with the Major? I thought we settled this yesterday."

"Apparently they had other ideas." Lili showed him the area of the landing, the scattered clothes, materials, books, cat products and lastly a shirtless Joshua. "I found them wrapped in each other's arms, stripped to the waist. Liam mumbled something about not enough energy and it being too late. I think something happened with the Jaridian we didn't know about."

"What the hell could that do with them two making out?"

"I don't think they were doing that at all. Joshua is unresponsive and when the Taelons took him neither was Liam. Johnathan, there is something I didn't tell you, I didn't tell Da'an either, and he seemed to know more about it than I."

"Care to inform me already?"

"Liam wasn't just used by the Jaridian to filter his energy. He merged with him, joined with him."

Johnathan's face went bright red in anger but his voice was flat. "Which means what exactly?"

"That bastard raped him! If the ship hadn't killed him, I would have!" Lili stood up as she heard Joshua start to come around. Moving towards the apartment, she spoke in a low voice.

"Johnathan, I think Liam is dying. His stomach was distended, skin sallow, he kept complaining about needing more energy like a dehydrated man after water." Tears filled her eyes as Johnathan shook his head. "It's all my fault. I should have told someone."

"That's enough! You don't have time to worry about that now. Get my son dressed and make sure he is gone before the media and police show up. Augur says alerts have already been made."

When you got that done, get your ass up to that mother ship and try to salvage this situation. You are to use whatever means necessary to keep Liam's secrets from their hands, got that, Marquette?"

"Yes, Johnathan."

His face clicked out, disappearing to be replaced by the MCI logo.

Sighing, Lili reached down for Joshua's shirt. Her hands dropped it from shaking. Forcing herself to calm down, she grabbed it again, and put it in Joshua's arms. "Wake up, Joshua, the police and media are coming."

He didn't move.

"Damn it, Joshua, don't do this. Wake up." When he still didn't move, she put her hand to his neck. Eyes wide, she activated her global. Pressing an automatic dial, she stared beseechingly into it. "Come on, pick up."

Melissa Park's face appeared. "Lili? What is going on? I just received word from Da'an to report to the mother ship at my earliest convenience."

"There isn't any time to explain it all at the moment. Joshua needs your help."

"What are his symptoms? Does this have anything to do with why the Taelons want me..."

"Yes! Now listen, Joshua's skin is cold to the touch, and his pulse is incredibly I need you to prepare a Taelon energy transfusion for when I arrive."

"I will have it ready. You will explain it before I go up to the mother ship."

"I will. Thank you." She closed her global and put it back on her belt. Looking around the landing, she grabbed Liam's jacket and wrapped it around Joshua's shoulder. It was a little snug, but she slipped his arms through it and buttoned him in. Sighing in disgust, she dragged him by the shoulders down the stairs to the back entrance and her shuttle. Just as she had him strapped in, the first news van arrived. Cursing, she activated the controls and took off.

Johnathan stared at the screen in front of him, face carefully blanked. "Very well, thank you, Dr. Park. That will be all."

"That's it? He is your son, for god's sake!"

"I said that will be all!" He waited for her curt nod before turning off the screen. Sitting back, he took a moment to breathe. It was all he needed to compose himself. Johnathan glanced down at his controls then pressed four buttons.

The screen changed appearances, flashing to a the Flat Planet Cafe logo. This flashed to be replaced by Augur's face. "To what do I owe this pleasure, Johnathan? If you don't mind, I am a little busy doing damage control and a little business."

"Did you know Apollo once shot Artimise in the ass with an arrow?" His conversational tone made Augur's eyebrows shoot up.

"No, I did not, that's... strange."

"Yes, very tragic." A tight lipped smile. "I figured you might want to know what all that was about. My sources inform me that the Taelons have taken the Major to their little nest in the sky because of lack of energy. It seems he was desperate for some because of his little ordeal and my son just happened to be the nearest... source. Of course he is now being refueled by Taelon energy as we speak."

"That would explain a lot, like why there were four Taelon shuttles here, and why the press is so hot to get in. Not that my establishment isn't note worthy all by itself."

Johnathan snorted. "I'm sure. Keep them happy, and make sure none of this gets leaked." Before the black man could respond, he cut the link.

Looking around his office, he glared at the objects. Standing, he picked up the chair and brought it down against the glass topped desk before he tossed it through the glass wall behind him. He watched the chair fall fifty stories to land on a car in the parking lot. Growling, he whirled on the rest of the objects inside the office.

The Mother Ship hummed to the rhythm of her power cells. Her soothing sounds calmed the young hybrid as he laid back over the bunk provided him by the Healer. His eyes misted over from the pain every time they opened. Something hurt deep inside, and he could figure out why. Liam rolled over a little to adjust the weak frame of his body.

Grimacing at the pain, he forced his body to settle down into the new position. His entire body ached from lack of energy. The Taelon Healer had told him when he awakened the first time it would for a few more days. That had been four hours ago.

He couldn't remember much since the time he had tried to drain Joshua. All he knew was this immense hunger, a familiar hunger. Memories flooded his mind from the Jaridian. It had been going through the same thing.

That struck something in his genetic memory.

Following the trail, he came to a conclusion he was suffering from an illness. A joining related illness. The Jaridian had passed it on to him when he forced Liam to... His mind shied away from that thought. Needless to say it was the Jaridian's fault. It couldn't handle the Taelon energy so it had forced him to accept the infected energy and cleanse it. In so doing, infecting him.

The Taelons had over come their need for energy from life forms, but that need had turned into a disease for some. Much to their shame, it could not be cured except by purging their energy through a compatible source, thus transferring it from them to another. This part Da'an had informed him of. The Taelon had informed him that there was an infected sample in the same lab as the Jaridians because they were going to try and see if the Jaridian's system could cure it.

He wouldn't say where they got the sample from.

Now he was laying here trying to avoid the pain. Well anymore pain. Apparently, a side effect for those of the Human persuasion, it caused symptoms coinciding with malnutrition. Raising his head, he glanced down at the smooth and now flat stomach. His body's mass had migrated there in an attempt to absorb it for energy leaving his limbs thin and pale.

They had said Dr. Park would be here soon, but that was four hours ago, as well. Sighing, he tried another position, hoping that it might provide relief. In his pain filled mind, it didn't register to ask how he had been cured.

Da'an and Mit'gai watched on as the Hybrid turned once more. Their steady gaze took in all his features with each contortion of pain. It was Mit'gai that broke the silence first.

"It should be dead."

Da'an glanced at him but did not turn away from the wall. "You above all others should know better than to underestimate the resilience of their species."

"Do not presume I am unaware of this one's unique heritage."

Da'an said nothing.

"Why was I not informed of its presence. You jeopardize all our existences by simply allowing it to continue to draw breath."

"If it were not for this one, we might all be dead."

"Then it has merely postponed the inevitable."

At that, Da'an did face his fellow Taelon. "Has not recent events restored a little of your hopes for our future."

"No." Mit'gai gestured towards the one way transparent wall separating them and Liam. "His failure proves our greatest suspicions. It was only a matter of time." His words carried a note of crisp finality before he walked away.

Da'an turned back to the hybrid, hands still. Looking at the turning Liam, he allowed a small blush. "Then perhaps all is ended lost." Eyes down cast, he continued to observe the fitful protector.

In a darkened part of the ship, Zo'or walked to a far wall, a small purple bundle in his hands. His expression neutral, he placed it into the small alcove then with drew. As he pulled back, a transparent barrier appeared over bundle. Zo'or turned to go. Taking one last look around at the countless similar alcoves, he walked out of the chamber allowing it to seal after him.

At the quickly beeping of heart monitors, Dr. Park looked up from the charts with a smile. "Welcome back to the land of the living, Josh."

"Don't call me that!" What was supposed to be a harsh growl came out as a timid whisper. Joshua groaned as she messed his hair. "Why am I here?"

"Drink something before you talk again. Just listening to you makes me want to clear my throat." She held up a cup with a straw to his lips. As he gratefully sipped, she pushed his hair back in place. Taking the water back from his lips, she set it down on the table. "There now, perhaps we can get you to answer a few questions, and then I can give you a few answers."

"Why do I always have to..."

"Go first? Well because I am older, now just answer my questions. What was the last thing you remember before waking up here minus any dreams or sensory images that could be waking?"

He eyed her suspiciously. "Do this a lot?"

"Only with you, now answer the question before I decide you need another physical."

"Bitch!"

"Queen."

"Hag!"

Melissa smacked him up side the head. "Enough with the names, Tinkerbell, and get on with the answer."

"Yes, Dorothy!" He jerked back from her hand, tongue sticking out. "Liam had come up the stairs, I confronted him about father, and he tried to blow me off. When I touched his arm, he lost it and that is the last I remember. Can't think of anything else. I take that back, I do remember feeling being drained like when you stick me with those damned pain killers. Not the regular ones, the opiates."

"Okay, well that confirms what the Taelons have told me. You should be up and about in a few days. Until then, plenty of bed rest and fluids." She pressed an electrical pen to the charts, making a note, and turned to go.

"Hey, Aunty M., what about those answers?"

Melissa stopped, looked over her shoulder with a quirked eyebrow, and smirked. "I lied. It is a need to know situation, and you don't need to know."

"You really are a bitch! What about Liam? Is he hurt?"

"He is on the MotherShip in stable condition. Or at least that is what the Taelon Healer Mit'gai or something keeps telling me. I haven't been able to get away long enough to check on him myself."

Joshua sat up in bed again. "How long has it been exactly?"

Melissa waked back to him before pushing him back down in the bed. "Three days, so you need to spend a few more under observation and resting. Now lay back and rest, unless you want to feel my 'damned pain killers' again as I sedate you." She grabbed the remote off the safety rail of his bed, and clicked on the TV to the first station. Setting it back on the rail, she smiled. "Let the idiot box numb your mind into a sleep. Good night." She walked out chuckling at his aggravated growl.

Joshua let the drone of the news anchor woman rush over him as he laid back into his pillows. At her words his eyes popped open.

"And there is still no word on the condition of Presidential candidate, Johnathan Doors, after his heart attack three days ago following news of the hospitalization of his son, Joshua Doors. From his office at Doors International on the fiftieth floor of their New York Head Quarters, he was rushed to near by Angels of Mercy Hospital listed in critical condition. So far Doctors are refusing to comment, but an official spokes person of Doors International has scheduled a press conference for eight am. eastern standard time."

"Son of a bitch!" Joshua glared at the woman as if she was responsible for the turn of events. "That bastard always has to over shadow everything I do!"

"In other news, the first transplant of a Human consciousness into a cybernetic being, is still set for later tomorrow. This project, which is being overseen by the North American Companion, Da'an, is said to be the future hope for all who are bound in a body which, for reasons beyond our control, is unable to allow them to lead normal lives because of severe physical impairment. As the creator of this project and completely disabled individual, Dr. Sparrow will be the first transferred consciousness. If he proves a success, this will pave the way for future transferences..."

She grabbed her ear, covering the piece as she focused on it. "This just in, a former Indonesian laser satellite has fired on the dark side of the moon. What its target was exactly, we have no idea. However, observatories and monitoring satellites have picked up a massive explosion, the equivalent of a several million kiloton nuclear blast. It is not clear what exactly has been destroyed, but our sources say what was there, could not have survived the attack."

Her eyes went wide as a screech filled the studio. "Oh god! They're dying! The Taelons! They're dying!" Her screams joined them as she clutched at the ear piece trying to rip it from her ear.

Joshua watched in stunned horror as she pulled the bloody ear piece from her ear before the screen was placed with the multi colored bars of the emergency broadcast system. "Oh shit."

TBC.....

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