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“Scribe”

by Kellan Meig'h

Chapter Thirty-Four

“Political Maneuvering”

Jeffrey and Na'Krista were in their master suite bathroom, taking care of some incidental happenings from the night before. A certain precaution had not been taken and as such, there was a small price to be paid. While he was preparing the needed materials, the Earther made a comment;

“I don't think it's too bad, Kitten. There were only a few spots of blood on the sheets where I was laying this morning.” Jeff offered up as he helped her put on a pair of the Elazi version of nitrile gloves.

“I guess I should have made you put those leather gloves on me first.” the femme Elazi replied. “That was . . . very different last night but it was definitely enjoyable.” she offered up. “Not something I would do every night, but maybe once in a while?”

“Okay, here's the pad with some antibacterial on it,” Jeffrey stated as he helped to get the item in question into her purchase. He turned his back to her so she could use her left hand to find the spots with his assistance, before using her right hand to swab at the injuries.

“Down a bit,” he directed, using a hand mirror to look at his reflection in a larger mirror over the sinks. “To your left,” he stated. “That's it. You can be a bit sloppy, there are three scratches right there.”

Krista cleaned at each wound before she placed a clear shield over the injury sites. There was some difficulty due to her lack of vision but the task was finally accomplished. This whole situation bothered her deeply, that she had hurt her *One Love* again with her claws.

As Jeff had done the last time, he told her not to clip her claws for any reason and to reinforce that, he had hid the clippers that were in their bathroom cabinet. Actually, with no way for her to see the tool in question, all he had to do was move it to a new location.

“Sweetheart, next time let's use some leather gloves.” she offered as she removed her current hand coverings to be discarded properly by Jeff. “I have to be honest with you; I can't control whether or not I'll claw you when I'm in the throws of passion. I don't want to keep having to patch you up all the time.” That made her *One Love* think for a few moments.

“Kitten, I have to agree with you; I'm not real big on being patched up all the time, either.” he stated. “Is there a place that can make some gloves to our specifications? You know, something custom? I want you to have the use of your hands when you have some protective leather gloves on. Those traditional ones won't allow you to do anything, they're so stiff.” That made Krista think about something.

“There is a place in the North side of Kas'madelle where I buy my hand-made leather goods. We could try there.” she offered. “Not to change the subject, but I'm guessing we might have to begin getting dressed so we can go check in to our posting. It kind of feels late in the morning to me.”

After confirming the time, Jeff assisted his wife with dressing in her military khaki uniform this morning and fixed her a light breakfast of toast with butter and jam before they had to leave. Jeffrey knew she needed to eat, despite her protests. Krista really needed some food in her to settle her nervous stomach this morning.

They were very fortunate that Na'Cira could help out in the foray by piloting Krista's skimmer for them. That way, the couple could report to *Post Fontaneauz* as requested by their immediate superior. With them were two heavily armed members of Orange Detachment, as ordered by her father for their protection. As they lifted off and headed North-East, Jeff was musing to himself, “*This might turn out to be a very interesting day, indeed.*”

The elder Keth'lan male siblings, Tal, Teg and Kam all stood at attention in Kamram and Na'Kesta's living area, patiently waiting for the gray femme to explode. They had been 'Called On The Carpet' by the matriarch of the house for a reading of the Elazi version of the 'Riot Act,' short version.

“Is that all that supposedly happened while you were at the Trent'lan station?” Na'Kesta blurted out, looking at her *One Love* and his two brothers like they had gone mad. For some reason, their version of the incident didn't quite match what had been conveyed to her earlier by someone in the know.

“We had a talk with Dassan, that's all.” Talram offered up with a shrug of his left shoulder. “We didn't hurt him, if that's what you're worried about.” he added calmly. Yeah, they had damaged his desk and gave him a good scare, but that was the point; to show him he was not skirting scrutiny. And Talram could see the anger in his *sister through joining* beginning to build as she put together what she wanted to say.

“I ran into Dassan's secretary at the vegetable market. She says you destroyed his desk top and broke the glass in his front door, besides 'talking' to him.” Na'Kesta was almost livid at this point in time. “I understand you rudely cleared his desk, splashing hot coffee on his lap and broke a few decorations that were on the desktop. Was that really required if all you wanted to do was talk to him?”

“Collateral damage?” Tegram offered up.

“Collateral damage my ass!” Kesta shot back as she finally exploded. “Talram Kenaar Keth'lan, as eldest, it was your duty to keep these two in check!” she put forth. “Your experience was supposed to show restraint, like any good military officer should show! Did you show restraint?” After a moment, she continued; Well, did you?”

“I did not,” he agreed, looking down at the floor in embarrassment. “I did not show restraint nor did I restrain my brothers. I accept responsibility.”

“Then you will have the broken door glass replaced and pay for the repairs to Dassan's desk out of your funds.” she put forth. “I will not ask you to offer an apology to Dassan, since I feel the same way you do about this matter.”

“I will do so.” Talram offered.

“Thank you.” Na'Kesta replied. “Now that we have that bit of distasteful business out of the way, it is good to have you back on Elazia, my *brother through joining*. I will arrange a time for you to go meet the newest member of our family. I'm sure you are more than ready to meet him.”

“I met many Earthers while I was in the Terran System.” the rust-hued one replied. “I am curious to meet Jeffrey because there must be something special about him. That would be the only way Na'Krista would join with an Earther.”

Tegram arrived back at his station to find Traci cooking a late breakfast for them. The Earth femme had spent a great deal of time in the kitchen the last few ten-days, working at familiarizing herself with the foods of Elazia. What she was fixing for them at the moment smelled like it was straight from a Mid-West “Greasy Spoon” diner. She looked up from her work to see her future husband walking into their home, seeming to be tired this morning.

“Teg! You're just in time!” she blurted out, running over to him to hug the focus of her attentions.

“Are we going to eat or cuddle?” he replied. “Either one seems like a good thing this morning.”

“Eat first, then cuddle.” Traci pointed out. “I made a close approximation of biscuits and gravy and I was able to get some imported ham slices to go with that root that's somewhat close to a potato. I sliced them and fried them in your version of shortening.”

“That sounds good.” Teg agreed. “I'm starving, after having to go and meet with Na'Kesta. That whole ordeal wore me out.”

“About that,” Teg's future *One Love* began, “Why did you have to go to your brother's station so early in the morning? What's that all about?”

“It's a long story,” the gray male replied. “I will explain after we eat. If we wait until I've explained myself, our food would be stone cold.”

Tegram sat down at the breakfast counter and waited patiently while Traci served up their morning fare. This was a difficult situation he was going to explain and he honestly hoped his future mate would be understanding.

Arbiter Al'Setman'af Tavvit'lan looked at the documentation in his hands, wishing he did not have to deliver them to the House Tal-Hassanai Board of Arbiters. It didn't take him long, just a few planetary rotations to determine the information delivered to him was indeed factual. Lost in his thoughts, he jumped when the secretary for the board opened the door to admit the smoke gray male to the chambers.

"Arbiter Tavvit'lan, why is this such an emergency that requires our attention so quickly?" the buff tan male at the left end of the meeting table asked.

"You honorable Saar," he began, "This issue was brought to my attention recently. After doing my due diligence, I felt all of you should look at it and be aware of the issue, Saar Demmet'lan."

There was the usual casual conversation between the members as Setman passed out copies of the documents to all in attendance. As he did so, the talking slowly ceased. One of the junior members, Gammal Everet'lan, looked at Setman with a shocked look on his mug.

"Arbiter Tavvit'lan, do you know what this means?" the ivory-hued male asked carefully. "There are some very serious implications here! We need some time to look into this ourselves." he added.

"Understood, Saar Everet'lan." the smoke-toned lawyer agreed. "By *The Old Customs*, you have a ten-day to look at the information before you have to act on it. I would expect nothing less from our House arbiters."

"We will look into this." Arbiter Demmet'lan put forth. "With this situation facing us, we will all be doing our due diligence before voting on the matter."

Setman Tavvit'lan left the chambers, still angry this had been brought up. He just wished he knew who was behind this so a 'visit' could be paid and the situation buried out of sight. Sometimes he really hated his job and this was one of those situations.

What really angered him was the fact that he couldn't share any of the information with the ones this vote would hurt. He was close friends with the key person, having known that being all of their life. If this vote directed the House Senate to go forward with the prosecutions, he vowed to get even with the person or persons that instigated this. He would be looking for blood repayment.

Jeffrey and Na'Krista were being fitted for their new uniforms, the not-quite buff toned femme needing new dress uniforms and upgraded rank insignias for her regular duty togs. She currently had on a dress jacket that was being scrutinized by one of the uniform issue specialists, Technician Grade Nine Nevrem Herret'lan.

The dark gray male had been doing this for many tens of solar cycles so he knew what her uniform should fit like. The issue was the Bil harness making her clothing fit oddly. Nevrem was tugging and smoothing the jacket here and there, still not happy with the fit. Even though Na'Krista was still mostly sightless at the moment, his mutterings let her know there was an issue at hand.

"Nev, is there a problem?" she asked. The specialist had been tugging at the back of her jacket around the waist and shoulders just a bit too much for her.

"Ths Bil harness makes your clothing lay all wrong," he offered up. "I know your sizes from your last fitting so I hate to ask; are you sure you haven't gained any weight?"

"I'm down at least six *Zet* from the last time I was fitted," the buff femme replied. "Is it this harness, do you think?" She had a feeling this metal surrounding her so completely would be an issue.

"Here, let's try on a Trooper's dress jacket in your size so I can compare them," her clothing specialist stated. "I'm hoping the fit will look the same. Tell me; when will you get to take this harness off?"

"Three rotations, maybe," Krista replied. "The Bil that made the harness has to make, then program the keys for my harness and Flank Commander Andrews'lan's collar."

"Your *One Love* has a collar?" he asked. "Some day, when you have time, I want to hear the whole story. It may turn out to be interesting." After a moment, Nevrem made his observation; "It is that harness. This jacket is fitting the same as the officer's dress jacket. It must be the additional bulk throwing the fit off."

Down at the other end of the counter, Jeffrey was going through a full fitting for his first issue of clothes, consisting of a khaki set for standard daily wear, a long sleeve set in olive for certain occasions, his dress set in olive and khaki and a set of camo clothes that were similar to Earth USMC desert digital camo BDU's. He was certainly making the buff tan male work for his pay today.

The shoes hadn't been an issue, since a size fourteen narrow fit real nicely in low quarters and combat styles. Underwear and the cooling mesh for under his armor while dirtside wasn't a problem, either. The shirts had been an issue, however. The technician issuing his garments decided all of his shirts needed tailoring to fit right. As such, the ones he had for temporary wear didn't have that tailored look to them, more akin to something that came straight off a discount department store rack.

"Flank Commander, I think this will do it," Technician Grade Six Mavett Hone'lan stated while Jeff dressed in his khaki duty uniform, the alterations needed for them done while he was

there. "I should have your shirts ready for you in two rotations. Your pants should be hemmed and the back seam closed within the *Heth*. My seamstress is very fast with her work."

"Thank you, Technician Hone'lan." Jeff replied. "We were going to get a mid-meal so after we eat, we will return and pick up my pants."

"That will be good timing. Enjoy your meal!" the clothing tech bid as the couple and their troopers left the room.

Jeffrey, Na'Krista and their two Orange Detachment troopers were enjoying a mid-meal in the All Ranks cafeteria, glad they had obtained a booth off to the side. As it were, they were still the center of attention at the moment. Jeffrey's collar and the harness surrounding Krista's arms and wrists were visible to all and it was causing a bit of a stir. Even one of the servers asked about the shiny items, wondering if they were just "having fun," as she put it.

"Sweetheart, did you get to meet anyone in your Language Department?" Krista asked while they consumed their fare.

"I share an office with Flank Commander Valmet Cavvet'lan and Commander Darren Fellen'lan. They were excited to have an Earther working with them." he replied. "It's official, too. I will be teaching French. An Earth college-level curriculum has been translated and set up so I won't have any trouble with teaching."

"But I thought you spoke French fluently." his wife pointed out.

"I speak the French-Canadian dialect, Quebecois, which is different. That's what my mother taught me as a young boy. The instructor's text book will let me study and break myself of some bad habits when it comes to French." he put forth. He knew if he went to France, he would be laughed at for his bad grammar, use of colloquial English and First Nation loan words and worst of all, bad syntax.

"Êtes-vous sûr de pouvoir enseigner le français?" she asked, smiling a mischievous grin afterward. She knew he spoke French, she was just not sure how proficient he was.

"Tu parles français?" Jeff blurted out, surprised to hear his *One Love* asking if he spoke the language in such impeccable French.

"Je parle un peu français. J'apprends toujours la langue." she offered up. "I wanted to learn French when I heard you speaking it with your brother at our joining. It's such a beautiful language. If I'm lucky, I will be allowed to sit in on one of your classes each day."

Jeff smiled. "French is the language of love." he offered up. "And I would enjoy your presence in my classroom."

Na'Mari Dannen'lan and Marinna Rreal had borrowed one of Na'Krista's Lestim utility cargo skimmers and went North to the *Harb'ness'al* shipyard, their mission being to get the repairs started on *The Dosh'vann'zang*. Even at more than one-half a *Hazecan* out from the yard, the crippled ship was easy to spot by the huge scorch mark and attendant damage on the Port side of the hull.

After setting the skimmer down in a designated spot, the two azure-toned femmes went to meet with the Maintenance Supervisor over that area of the yard. As they had suspected, she was a Bil, most likely having learned her trade at the ship yards on Bil-Cmela.

"I am Devren Hadressen but you may call me Dev," she stated as the ebony-scaled femme offered her hand to Marinna in an Earth-style. "I'm glad we have met in person, Mere Rreal. I understand you own *The Dosh'vann'zang*."

"I am the full owner, no Consortium or Syndicate involvement with the title," the *Fask-aal* replied. "What is your survey of the damage? Is it repairable?"

"Follow me," Dev replied. "I can show you just where we stand as far as repairs go."

The blue femmes followed the frosty black toned Bil up onto the work scaffolding set up on the port side of the ship. Four flights up, they were on a level just above the docking port centerline. Just ahead of them, the damage was quite apparent.

"If you look here," Devren directed, pointing out the docking ring, "The docking clamps on the upper part of the ring are damaged. We also think the actual contact ring is bent at the top edges from hull distortion in this area. Further back on the Port side," she continued, "We have substantial damage to the hull."

"Oh My!" Marinna gasped, looking at a hole she could almost walk through. No wonder the self-sealing systems had failed to close this gaping wound to the hull

"The damage looks bad but it's repairable," the Bil repair tech put forth. "The Port side cooling fin assembly is bent, as you would pilot types would say. The heat exchanger is damaged well beyond repair and the radiator fin assembly is not a viable candidate to send back to Bil for rebuild. This whole Port-side system needs a full replacement and the coolant recharged. I have an assembly to use off of another craft that was recently de-certified, right over there."

Marissa followed the writing instrument being used as a pointer to see another ship like hers, probably built in the same serial range as *The Dosh'vann'zang*. It had been hit hard by something fairly big, a missile maybe, knocking a hole completely through it. The hole was big enough that a small compact personal skimmer could possibly fly straight through the hull.

"That donor ship is low *Heth* in operation, not much over four thousand. Too bad their shielding was off-line when that meteorite strike happened. I plan to use that entire cooling assembly, the composite skin plating, the interior walls and decks, bulkhead sections, and sections of the structural frames from that ship to repair the areas that were damaged on your ship. Is that satisfactory, Mere Rreal?"

“Perfect.” the *Fask'aal* femme replied. “How about my core replacement?”

“I have permission from the yard to use the core from that donor ship.” the scaled femme replied. “The core had just been through its four thousand *Heth* inspection and new fuel rods have been installed. It also has the latest revision shielding and cooling assemblies so your cooling system will be under substantially less stress. Not to mention a twenty percent increase in power output. It was fortunate the emergency shutdown system didn't get damaged so the reactor was stopped cold after the accident.” Dev added. That information made the femme ship owner think out loud;

“My ship has over nine thousand *Heth* on the chrono. That core would be a major upgrade in power and reduce the maintenance needs for a while.” Marinna mused. “Have you talked to my insurance?”

“They have authorized the work.” Dev replied. “As soon as you give me your approval, I can begin repairs. We will need about one ten-day for the work to be done.”

“Where do I sign?” Mere Rreall retorted, happy to hear her ship would be back in action soon.

“There is one other thing.” the Bil femme stated. “I have been directed to remove your defensive armament, specifically the dorsal and ventral turrets. That order came directly from the Orbital Controller's office.”

“I knew that was coming.” Marinna replied.

“You know,” Dev began, “That decommissioned donor ship has the Revision *Seventeen Vaand* shielding generators from Cavvellen Armament Systems. It won't fit any other ship except the *Valang* series ships like yours. Seems a shame to scrap those systems along with the ship after I scavenge that hull to repair yours.” While she was talking, the Supervisor was writing a monetary amount on a notepad that she offered to the femme leonid.

“It would be a shame,” Marinna replied, nodding her head at the very affordable price suggested for the work. “I agree; I would not want that equipment to be put to waste.”

“I will see that it doesn't.” the one in charge of her ships' repairs replied. “You can send the extra funds to my office. I will contact you when the repairs are done.”

On the way back to the Andrews'lan station, Na'Mari kept thinking about that shielding system that was soon to be installed on Marinna's ship. The more she thought about it, the more she was confused. Finally, deciding she had to know, she asked the question;

“Marinna, isn't that *Seventeen Vaand* shielding system military grade?”

“It is, Na'Mari. Only three revisions down from the currently active ships.” the femme leonid replied. “If you look at the specifications, it would take a physical warhead impact of more than

one-hundred Deci-Zet yield to defeat the shielding in normal mode. In defensive mode, it is almost impenetrable.”

“I see.” the femme Elazi mused. “So, that makes up for not having defensive turrets?”

“Well, I would guess so, if you really had no defensive armament.” Marinna replied. “But let's ponder this; you can't remove what you can't find. Remember, *The Dosh'vann'zang* is a former war ship. Because it can operate orbitally, it has been equipped with armament bays so you can 'clean up' coming down into the atmosphere.”

“True, I had forgotten about that.” Mari stated. “So, I don't speak *Fask'aal*. What does *Dosh'vann'zang* mean, exactly?”

Marinna smiled. “It means literally, 'The Bastard Of War.'”

That made the femme Elazi smile.

Na'Krista's small retinue had finished their meals, picked up the uniform pieces that were ready at the moment and now they were at the last stop of the day, this one being for Jeffrey.

At the moment, the Earther was using all the tricks he knew to zip closed his new pressure under-suit, one that was the latest military issue. And just like the first one he was issued while on Earth, it was maybe one or more sizes too small.

“Are you sure this is the right size?” he questioned the armorer, Specialist Grade Six Vinden Kett'van. Apparently, Trooper Kett'van was related to Na'Krista in a round about way. The rust colored male stepped back and performed a careful scan of the situation once he helped Jeff with the closure.

“Maybe you are correct concerning the size.” he replied in clearly enunciated English. “Let's try one that's two sizes larger, Flank Commander. You might be right about this one being a bit small in the torso and shoulders. The legs seem a bit short, too.”

“I can't get over how well you speak my native language.” Jeff commented as he struggled his way out of that first suit.

“I have listened to all the English learning lessons.” the technician offered up while he pulled a larger suit from the rack. “I have also listened to the new ones that are of a college level, too. Here, try on this suit. It is a size Nineteen Medium-Medium.”

Jeffrey did as he was asked, finding this one had quite a bit more room, allowing him to work the closure by himself. Once he had the zipper across the shoulders closed and the pull lanyard stowed in its pocket on his left arm, Specialist Kett'van checked the fit himself.

“This fits well.” he commented. “Just so you know, that last suit was a size Seventeen Medium/Short-Medium/Short. Actually, that is the size that I wear.” After he performed a few

more fit checks to ensure the sleeves and legs were the right length, the rust-hued male continued. "Now to build your new hard armor, the latest revision. Even though you may not find yourself in a battlefield situation, I think the saying goes; Better to have it and not need it than to need it and not have it."

It did not take long for the specialist to bring together the parts to assemble Jeff's new hard armor, one that fit far better than the suit he had acquired on the Flagship Korrallid. The range of movement was greater, the new style bubble helmet was easier to attach to the suit adapter ring and the hard pack almost installed itself when he tried to put it on. Once the fit was confirmed, Vinden adhered a Flank Commander rank insignia to the upper left side of the torso armor. Underneath that, he added the Reserve Forces Ground division designator bar that indicated Jeff was an instructor. One more badge was added, indicating he was a doctor of the Terran race.

"This suit fits very good." Jeff offered up as he extricated himself from his armor.

"I think so." the tech agreed. "Tell me, do you have a storage stand at your home?"

"No, I don't have a spare one at the moment." Jeff related to the Elazi male. "All I have is the stand I have my last set of armor hanging on."

"Then I will send a new stand with you and a second set of armor, should you be recalled from home for whatever reason, such as a response drill. I will have this set sent over to your office where you should have a storage locker available." the armorer stated. He then turned to Na'Krista. "Sub-commander, do you have a set of armor at home?"

"No, my one set of armor is presently stored in my section office." she put forth.

"Then I will send a full armor set in your size to your home along with a stand. One of the few perks of being an officer." their tech put forth. "I understand that Bil harness you're wearing will probably not allow us to properly size a new suit for you. I will send what should be the right sizes and if there is a fit issue, make an appointment to bring in your armor and we will adjust the fit."

"Thank you." Na'Krista offered up.

"Saar Andrews'lan, you will need a new combat helmet, too. Let me measure you up for a "Brain Bucket" as you would say on Earth." Technician Kett'van made some measurements, then pulled a helmet from the shelf for Jeffrey to try on.

"This fits very nice," Jeff offered, trying to move it around on his head as he checked for snugness. The new visor was far easier to operate due to an upgraded design and the chin strap was a four point suspension setup, making it easy on the chin.

"I think it fits well." their ruddy toned specialist agreed. "Not too tight around the ears? This style is usually issued to the few Bil soldiers here on Elazia."

"It's not too tight." Jeff put forth. "Um, are there many Bil soldiers in the Trans-Atmospheric Forces?"

“Maybe five hundred or so.” Saar Kett'van replied. “Many have joined in the last ten Elazi years, since the option to gain citizenship through service was offered.”

“I see. “ Jeff mused. “That would be an enticing option if one were wishing to gain citizenship.”

“By the way,” the technician began, “If I could be so bold as to ask; How did the two of you end up, I'm guessing, stuck with your Bil-designed slave gear? Having a bit of fun and lost the keys? Not to be prying into your private lives, you know. It's just odd to see those items in public, I think is the right phrase.”

“Okay, here's what happened, short story.” Krista offered. “Some of my relatives thought we were in danger so for whatever reason they had, they sold us into chattel with the stipulation they could buy us back at an agreed price. The being they sold us to put the devices on us, knowing there was no releasing keys for them.

“My relatives knocked us out with Trinn gas to get us off the planet and kept us under with it until we arrived at our destination. For me, the excessive time under the influence of the gas blinded me. I have type 'D' Negative blood so I'm very susceptible to its effects. I'm still mostly blinded and I can barely make out light from dark right now.”

“I'm sorry to hear that.” Vinden offered. “I had always heard those with type 'D' Negative blood were more at risk of blinding by Trinn gas. My mother used to say a daily bowl of *Fradunam* soup would help to restore your sight. It's worth a try.”

“Thank you, I will try that.” Krista replied. “Well, this is the last stop before home today. I'm tired and ready for last meal.”

Marinna Rreal sat back from the communications terminal and pinched the bridge of her nose to ward off an impending headache. This whole issue of having to have her ship repaired was giving her grief in spades, having to turn down freight work right and left. This was the latest job she had to refuse due to lack of resources.

“I'm sorry, I have to decline your offer.” she stated, looking again at the smaller window showing the amount of remuneration for a job that was not all that difficult. She honestly hated to pass up on that kind of earnings because it was very good pay, indeed. Her declination of the job seemed to upset her long-term client.

“What is the issue? Is it not enough *Gaess Vinder*?” the Bil male on the other end asked. “Have I somehow offended you by offering that amount?”

“It's not that, Halbra. Your offer is more than generous as it always is.” she replied. “My ship is in for repairs for at least the next ten-day. It's getting a substantial hull breach repaired, a low *Heth* replacement core rigged and a new-to-me primary cooling system installed.”

“Ah, I see.” the Bil mused. “That sounds like a lot of work to be preformed. If I were willing to wait for your ship to be repaired, would you still be interested?” he asked, on the off chance she would agree. Marinna had always been careful with his shipments of fragile Elazi home decorations.

“I will let you know when I can handle your request.” she replied, happy to at least have something in the near future to transport for an income.

“Not to be digging into your private life,” Hal offered up, “Could you tell me why you're wearing a chattel coloration? Are you under chattel? Just asking because I'm concerned for you as a friend, that's all. I've known you for way too long to just let this go unnoticed.”

“I'm under chattel, Halbra but my chattel holder has agreed to let me run freight for a small cut of the profits, only ten percent. She has been very fair about this.” the femme leonid confirmed. “I won't go into the finer details but it suffices to say, if a *Fask'aal* male on your ship wants to fire weapons at another ship and it is not during war, make all haste to toss him out the airlock.”

After the connection was gone, Marinna sat back and took a deep breath. She just knew Hhess was wrong about firing the first shot 'just to get the attention' of his mate. Further, had she given thought to it, she would have remembered the fact that Mevelia Wrraal was a former ships' weapons specialist.

The fact that her ship was only crippled and not vaporized by the particle cannon discharge showed restraint by the femme in question. Some of that Marinna blamed on herself, for not safetying the weapons before Hhess could fire them. She also could have called out to Na'Krista or Mevelia to cease fire, possibly averting the damaging round from being loosed on them.

At any rate, what her insurance would not pay for repairs, she intended to seek remuneration from Hhess. He was the one that was at the center of this. His negligence caused most of this so it was only fair he pay her back for her out of pocket expenses.