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“Scribe”

by Kellan Meig'h

Chapter Thirty-six

“In Retrospect”

Last evening during the buff-colored femme's Helox treatment for her vision, Jeff had received a communique asking for them to meet with Flank Commander Vansar'lan so they might discuss an issue that had not been previously addressed. Once they had arrived at his office the next morning, about one *Heth* before classes were to begin, the commander's secretary motioned for them to go right in.

They entered the room as requested, finding High Commander Dangris Fellen'lan, the base commander and their section commander, Flank Commander Jerret Vansar'lan sitting on one of the three couches arranged in a 'U' shape in his office. Before they could come to attention, they were waved off by the Flank Commander.

“As you were,” he offered, motioning for them to join them on a couch facing the two superiors. “Please, close the door and be seated. Also, remove your rank tabs if you would.”

Jeff thought this was odd, asking them to remove their rank but it was even stranger when the two superiors removed theirs, too. There was a shallow plate on the low table between them that at the high commander's urging, Jeff and Na'Krista sat theirs in that bowl with the other officer's tabs, face down like the two commanders had done. As a matter of need, Jeff helped Krista to find the plate so she could add her tabs to the others. That was when the High Commander spoke up;

“This is an informal meeting here. No rank in this room, just a few friends in a like cause.” Dangris offered up. “Jeffrey, try the *Taskanafra*, it's similar to your coffee. I think you will like it.” This was just a bit too informal for Jeff. Hot drink and pastries for a discipline session?

“Dangris, what is this all about?” he asked as he poured some steaming beverage for Krista and himself. Jeffrey had to know what was up with this meeting.

“Jeff . . . is it acceptable to call you Jeff?”

“That is okay.” the Earther agreed.

“Fine then. Please call me Dan.” the elder male replied. “Jeff, Na'Krista, this is in regards to that incident as the two of you were leaving the *Trade Platform*. Jerret and I just want to hear your

account, not colored by a semi-official review. Jeff, I understand you were flying that *Fast Lighter* with instruction from Na'Krista. You had no prior training on that ship beforehand?"

"Yes, you are right. Na'Krista could not see to even remotely begin to operate the *Lighter* so she put me in the pilot's seat. To answer your second question, I have had no prior training at all on a *Lestim Fast Orbital Lighter*." Jeffrey pointed out. "Na'Krista did power it up by feel alone and every instruction she gave me was dead accurate. I'm not sure we would have made it dirtside without any bobbles but up until the weapons discharge incident, I felt like I had things mostly under control."

"I see," Dan mused. "Just so you know, my presence here was just in case we needed to discipline you for actions that were considered unsafe or not in keeping with military policy. So far, I don't see an issue. You were just taking action to get out of a bad situation by whatever method was required. By the way, is that beverage to your liking?"

"It is good." Jeff agreed. "So, are we still in trouble?"

"No you're both clear, as far as I'm concerned. Jerret, how about you? Do you concur?"

"I'm in agreement with you, Dan." the section commander stated. "However, I would like a demonstration of your *Fast Lighter* teaching skills, Na'Krista. We have several *Lestim Block Twenty Mark Twenty-One Veh Fast Lighters* assigned to the base. After classes are completed today, would the two of you like to demonstrate some skills for us?"

"I think I could do that, if Jeff is willing." she agreed. "It was stressful, no sighted certified pilot to help out. Will a pilot be with us?"

"I will make sure of that." Jerret stated. "Also, I think Dan had some questions for you, Na'Krista."

"I do have just a few questions." he put forth. "I understand you're still not fully sight-capable. How are your treatments coming along?"

"My recovery is not as fast as I would have liked," she put forth. "I've had only two Helox based treatments and I am scheduled for my first Baro-pressure treatment later today. I can barely make out where you're sitting and I'm guessing that I'm using echo-location to augment my lack of sight." That made the commander muse out loud;

"I'm hoping you can recover quickly. Your class is being taught by a Trooper that's not completely familiar with the equipment being used for training."

"That's not good." Krista agreed. "I had hoped for Trooper Zavret Trillan'lan to instruct my class once I was in charge of the department. Is he not available?"

"He will be available in a little less than a ten-day." Jerret offered up. "Trooper Grade Five Sa'Venna Loret'lan is filling in, but she is not fully proficient on the current video equipment. I know she's teaching straight out of the manual and she is using your notes as a guide, too."

“At least she has my notes.” the buff-colored femme stated. “If she reads my notes and implements the additional issues I know about, I'm sure she will be good until either Zavret or myself will be back in the classroom.”

“Very well.” the base commander mused. “One last thing; Is there some reason you're both continuing to wear those Bil slave items? Lost the releasing keys while having a bit of fun? To clarify, I'm not trying to pry into your private lives but there has been some comments made about the gear you're wearing.” Na'Krista shrugged her shoulder before answering the question.

“No, we do not have the keys because of the reason we were on the *Trade Platform*.” Krista replied. “Some relatives had sold us into chattel to get us off the planet and out of harm's way. Some being has I guess, said he wants us out of the way for whatever unknown reason. The person we were sold to that would keep us safe is now my chattel but before he was my chattel, he put this harness on me and the collar on Jeff, knowing there was no releasing key for either device. We should have the keys being made for us by tomorrow or the day after.”

“That's all I wanted to know,” Dan put on the table. He then nodded to Jerret.

“I would think this session is over.” their section commander stated. “Jeff, Na'Krista, please put your rank tabs back on.”

High Commander Fellen'lan helped Na'Krista with her tabs while Jeffrey put his back on his shirt collars. Once that was taken care of, the base commander helped Krista to the door.

“I hope your sight gets better soon, Sub-Commander.” he offered as they left the room.

“Thank you, Commander.” she replied, trying to remember to breathe, now that the meeting was over.

“That was strange.” Jeff offered in English as they walked down the main hall toward his classroom.

“Tell me about it.” Krista agreed. “I had only heard about informal sessions, but I had never been to one.”

“We could have gotten in deep Kimchi, I'm guessing?” Jeff asked.

“More like Baku Kimchi. That discharge of weapons so close to the planet is highly illegal and it could have been jail time for both of us.” his *One Love* replied. “I was nice of Mevelia to pay all of our fines for us. I feel bad for Hhess, though. She's going to make him repay her every Crown she put out.”

“Well, it's not like he was innocent in the matter. He did fire the first shot.” After a moment Jeff brought something up; “Is there a way for the pilot to lock out the weapons on a *Fast Lighter*?”

“There is.” Krista replied. “I guess I should have told you how to do that before we disengaged from the docking ring.”

“Oh well, looks like my first session students are waiting for me.” the Earther stated. “I’ll help you get situated in your desk, then I’ll get the class started.”

Once Krista was seated, she found herself unable to clear her mind of that meeting. In all actuality, they should have both been put in jail at the very least. Discharge of weapons that close to the planet's surface had been forbidden for over ninety solar cycles. Why they hadn't been disciplined for those actions, she didn't know.

Settling in better, she tried to pay attention to her *One Love's* voice, giving instruction to his early class. This had been one strange day in her estimations, considering it was just starting for them.

Later that day, Na'Krista was eating her mid-meal while sitting in a barometric chamber, the first of several Baro-pressure treatments she would have to endure. While it was not that bothersome, it was just the fact she had to wait for four *Heth* while they would bring the pressure up, hold it for two *Heth* and then bring it back down so she could leave the metal cylinder.

“Sub-Commander, you're at one point five atmospheres right now. Are you comfortable?” the technician asked over the intercom.

“Just that odd taste in my mouth.” she replied. “I hope you can understand me due to this Helox mixture altering my voice.”

“We hear you sweet.” the med-tech offered up. “The audio filters are lowering your voice to an understandable pitch. I will be right here, checking on you for the duration. If you have a problem or something seems like it is not right, please let me know. I will be increasing the pressure to two atmospheres now.”

Krista nodded in agreement, then went back to consuming her mid-meal. Normally, she would have brought a tablet or a book with her or even worked on her account of Jeffrey's life on a new world. They had agreed to put their encounter as chattel into the tome, since it did happen to them. She had also agreed to put her thoughts and recollections into the cumulative works, since they were a family unit now.

What continued to bother her was the fact the Dannen'lan sisters had both refused to tell her the identity of her aggressor. She kept thinking it might be Dassan, her Grand-uncle. She had heard the rumors of her Grandmother and Great-Grandfather's deaths and how Dassan Trent'lan had been the suspect in at least one of them.

If Dassan had killed a family member, why wasn't he in prison for the incident? This bothered her. Krista was not wanting to be the next one to die over land, if that was truly the motivation. She kept thinking about that note she found in the closet; it was determined to be her Grandmother Sa'Kayla's handwriting because she was the one that had done the comparisons to writings Sa'Kayla had made over the years. The entries in the daily tallies of harvest, the notes concerning the water usage, many things that were found in the logs that matched the style of the penmanship on that piece of paper.

She just hoped the Dannen'lan sisters would take care of the issue and this would be over with soon. They had asked her for permission to do some reconnoiter of a possible problem so Krista allowed them temporary coloration changes to blend in. Na'Krista had also loaned them her old Lestim sedan that was a gift from her father, many cycles ago. It was old but it still ran just fine, being very low in *Hazecan* with only forty thousand on the meter. It was rather nondescript so if they were doing a reconnoiter, it would allow them to blend in.

And she hoped they were going to be safe from harm, too. She didn't want to feel responsible for the loss of a life.

Talram and Kalram were walking around the station the elder brother planned to purchase, taking in the lay of the land and assessing the potential for harvest. All of the Kebra trees were not that old, having been replanted some twenty cycles ago. They stopped to inspect a randomly selected fruit, just to see how it looked, smelled and tasted on the palate.

“Not bad for a fruit from a young tree.” Kam commented as he cut open the fruit and offered a piece to his brother. “Nice dark stone, seems like the aroma is right on.” he added.

“Very sweet for this time of year.” the rust-colored brother pointed out. Once he took another bite and finished that mouth-full he nodded and smiled. “This will bring good Crown with the distributors.”

I agree; this is as good as Na'Krista's regular crop.” the younger one offered. “You should taste her early ripe fruit, though. She gets almost double the price for them from the local purchaser.”

“I have heard of this early ripe fruit she grows; is it really that good?” Talram asked.

“The fruit is very juicy for being firm like this one we're sampling, kind of sloppy juicy.” After Kam had another bite of fruit, he continued; “Her Kebra fruit is very spicy, strong enough it makes your lips tingle. The aroma also has that heavy spice to it. If you ask me, there's a Tavserinite vein in her soil.” The elder brother nodded in agreement.

“I know there are trace amounts in this soil in a few areas but not enough to really influence the crops that strongly. Has she ever had the soil tested?” Talram asked.

“Not that I know, brother.” After a few moments, he continued. “I always wondered if that's the reason our Mother and Grandfather were murdered. Someone knows the secret of the early ripe fruit, what causes them to be the way they are.”

“That would have to be Dassan.” Talram stated. “He was the only one that was close to them, close enough to know the secret. When Mother was given the first pick of the newly divided lands, Dassan was not happy. I would not be surprised if it were him.” The younger brother nodded in agreement.

"Let's stop for a moment and think; what would Krista's lands look like if Dassan had acquired them?" Kam offered up. "There would be a three hundred and eight unit hole in the ground from a massive mining operation. If we think there's Tavserinite in the soil, so does he. You know he would mine it for wealth, since that all he seems to dream about lately. He's been acting erratic of late, from what I've heard. Claims to have seen our mother and grandfather in his office."

"Do you think he has Phasic disease?" Tal asked.

"He was in that main smelting complex of buildings when the *Ezed-Comeri* blew them up to slow down our assault." Kam put forth. "I heard practically his whole unit had to be washed down with heavy detergents before they could bring them up to the ship. They were covered in hot Phaslanic Sulphate, to the point it compromised the seals in some of their suits."

"That is not good. I've heard what it does to your nervous system." the elder Keth'lan mused. "You lose the ability to rationalize, followed by the slow loss of use of your arms and legs. Eventually, you can't breathe due to the atrophy of your diaphragm. Not a pleasant death by any stretch."

"Tal, I think you remember that I went down with the next wave of troopers and we had a hard time skirting the area of the explosion. It covered maybe thirty units or so." After a moment, Kamram continued. "Only a few individuals were not injured from Dassan's squad so the survivors dropped with us, guiding us around the hot areas. I remember the clean-up operations after we secured the complex took our combined technical crews, Elazi, *Fask-aal* and *Comeri* several solar cycles to complete."

"That was a sad, useless war." Talram offered up reverently. "In the end, the *Ezed-Comeri* went home with no gain of of a world to inhabit."

"They did gain a trading partner in the *Comeri* and later on, our planet." Kam offered. "I know it was tenuous at first, but relations have settled down as of late. The *Comeri* helped their distant brothers to set up a mining and smelting operation on a planetoid that's ripe with bauxite. Lestim has purchased several shipments of aluminum ingots from them, very high quality alloys according to our lab techs."

The brothers walked through the orchard, just enjoying the day at this point in time. The slight breeze through the orchard was heavy with the scent of ripe Kebra, almost intoxicating to a degree. After a few *Munar* had passed, Talram asked a serious question;

"What do we do about Dassan? He sounds like a threat to Na'Krista."

"What can we do?" Kam replied. "We don't have proof of ill will toward her. Without proof or new information, the authorities won't make a move. All we can do is watch for anything out of the ordinary."

"I'm not good with that but if that's what we have to do, I will be diligent." Tal offered up. "His property adjoins this one so maybe I could put up a few listening stations? I still have contacts to procure military grade equipment for the next seventy rotations."

“If you think we need to do that, officially I know nothing about it.” Kam put on the table.

“About what?” Talram replied. “Nothing going on here that I'm aware of.”

The elder brother bid farewell to his sibling, watching as Kam headed back to his station. The rust-toned male went to his new roller, a brand-new Taфра coupe, slipped inside and started the turbine powerplant. As the systems went through the checks, he thought about what had been said concerning said happenings in Dassan's office.

Their uncle had claimed to see long-deceased family members, their mother and grandfather, right in his own home office. Some might say he was delusional but others would say he was seeing beings that were caught between realities. It was told in the scriptures, if a family member killed his kin, those souls could become trapped in between the present and the hereafter, awaiting their chance to even the score. Talram wondered if this was the case . . .

The end of the instructional day came for Jeff so after his students left the room, he guided Na'Krista out to the waiting shuttle. He could tell his *One Love* was somewhat apprehensive so he asked a question;

“Are you ready to be my instructor this afternoon?”

“Not really.” she replied. “This is different, Sweetheart. We're not trying to leave the *Trade Platform* the hard way. I . . . I'll try my best. Just keep in mind, you'll be in atmospheric mode and every little correction will seem huge. You flew my skimmer a bit without the auto-pilot engaged so the *Lestim Fast Orbital Lighter* is just about that responsive.”

Jeff thought about what she had just said. Her skimmer was a hand-full for a few moments, until he had the feel of the controls. Once he had settled down, it was not that difficult to control. True, the controls were very sensitive but not any worse than the Bell Four-One-Zero helicopter that he was training in last. He was glad that a certified pilot would be with them to take over this day, should things go pear-shaped. He just hoped he could give a good accounting of his *One Love's* teaching skills.

Up ahead, he could see the gates to the field where they were going to meet with their commanders. Once they were cleared at the checkpoint, he could see several dozen *Fast Lighters* parked in neat rows, then some smaller sub-orbital craft for personnel movement. Several rows further down, there was *The Oraskinal*, sitting with its loading deck in the stowed flight position. It looked huge compared to the other ships on the ramp. On the second row of craft stood their superiors, waiting by a *Lestim Fast Orbital Lighter*.

Jeff assisted Na'Krista out of the ground shuttle so they could approach the craft in question. Once the formal salutes were given, Dangris motioned for them to board the ship and continue on to the cockpit, more of a bridge in its size. Na'Krista took the right-hand pilot seat and began to

put on her sub-orbital helmet, one that had a retractable visor. Jeff took up the pilot's seat and donned a similar cranial protector, rather than a bubble helmet used for orbital use. What he did notice that was different from Mevelia's ship was a third pilot's station to his left. He surmised this was a training ship, due to its configuration. What surprised the Earther was Dangris taking the additional seat.

"I am your backup pilot for this flight," he acknowledged, smiling at the look on Jeff's face. "I was a *Lighter* pilot during the Varpur wars. I think I have at least as many hours as the Sub-Commander has in the Block Two and Three Mark Twenties."

"I'm hoping you will not have to intervene, Saar," Jeff offered. In truth, he really hoped they didn't have to eject due to a major miscue on his part. While he attached his flight harness to what would be called "Sticker Clips" on Earth, he thought about what Krista had said about the flight controls. He adjusted his seat to put his right hand in a proper position to lay his appendage in a smooth grip of the joystick. That would give him the best control of the craft.

"Nice form on the control stick," Commander Vansar'lan offered from his seat at the tactical console on the right of his *One Love*. He then turned his attention to his board. "*Fontaneauz* Flight Control, this is Lighter call sign *Sonnd Vaand* Eight Two Two. Request taxi rights to Pad Two One."

"Eight Two Two, this is Control. Cleared for Taxiway One to Pad Two One."

"Thank you, Control," the commander offered. "Jeff, Na'Krista, you're up. Please stay "On Dirt" while you taxi to Pad Two One." He then offered something to Jeff's instructor. "These are blackout glasses. I know you can see to a small degree so the glasses will emulate the situation as you were leaving the station."

"That is only fair," she agreed. After putting on the glasses, she began to go through the procedures to bring internal power on line and start the powerplant. In a way, she impressed her superior by finding all the hard switches by feel alone. Once she felt the rumbling through the ship, she keyed her microphone. "Ground crew, this is Eight Two Two. Please disengage ground power." About two *Munar* passed, then another voice came through their headsets;

"Eight Two Two, you are disengaged from ground power. Please run through control surface and vector thrust pod checks."

Jeff brought up the screen he needed and selected the "Atmospheric" mode for flight control checks. Watching the ground crew's directions, he cycled the flight surfaces while their crew chief first gave a hand signal for each surface then a confirmation signal for proper movement. He then worked the stick to operate the vector pods through their range of motion. Once that was done, the chief stepped to the side and saluted them.

"We're cleared to taxi," Jeff stated, more to let Krista know where they were at in the checklist, than anything else.

“Okay, use the maneuvering thrusters to roll us on the landing gear. You just need the center button for this.” she replied. “Main power is coming On Line.” she warned as she flipped open the lockout cover and toggled the main ships' reactor power to “On.”

“How much thrust do I need on the ground?” Jeff needed to know.

“Two or three blips should be good. Just a fast walking speed.” Krista offered. “Twist the stick to steer on the ground. Just remember, you have to steer the ship back straight after a turn. Use the “All Stop” command like brakes to stop and hold us in one spot.”

Jeff was grateful there were taxi lanes painted on the ramp, giving him reference as to where to place the craft. Because his station was just left of center, he could easily judge his position in relation to the other craft on the ramp. He gave the thrusters a pair of blips, starting the forward motion. Carefully twisting the stick to steer them, he guided the craft down the line to the main taxiway. When the ground speed would begin to fall off, he would give the switch another light touch to maintain forward motion.

After stopping to ensure the taxiway was clear, he followed the signs that directed him to the designated pad. It took a few corrections but he finally had Eight Two Two rolling in more or less a straight line down the taxiway, feeling slightly relieved at the moment.

“I need an instrument check.” Na'Krista asked.

“We are nominal Blue across the board.” Jeff replied after he bought up the screen for the systems health. “Powerplant idling at ten percent, cabin pressure normal, hydraulics normal, magnetic containment Blue, All hatches show Blue.” About that time, Control made an announcement.

“Eight Two Two, please hold at taxi cross lane Six. You will wait for Caffetren Nine Two *Vaand* to cross.”

Jeff stopped the ship at the designated spot and momentarily, a small shuttle craft marked “92V” on its hull crossed in front of them. Once they were clear, Jeff finished taking them to Pad Two One. He called for takeoff clearance, then Na'Krista was up again.

“Jeff, advance your throttle on the left to fifty percent after you select “Takeoff” mode. When the ship starts to rise, push the stick forward gently and bank us away from the base. General takeoff vector is North-Northwest. Magnetic Absolute will be Three One Five on the compass.”

The Earther knew the next few moments would be “Make Or Break” for them and what had bothered him further was the lack of communication between the commanders and either Krista or himself. Jeff wondered just how ugly this could get, considering there was literally a nuclear fission device powering the ship. He hoped the automatic safeties would not fail on them if there was a catastrophic systems failure.

“Control, this is Eight Two Two. Taking off, vector is Three One Five Magnetic.” Jeff advanced the throttle and eased forward on the stick once the ground began to fall away from them. He kept an eye out for any warnings from the collision avoidance computer while he

banked the ship around to the required heading, taking a moment to clean up the landing gear as they climbed out. So far, so good.

A quick scan of the small displays below the windshield showed the ducted thrusters pivoting from straight down to forty-five degrees in angle aft to give forward thrust as well as lift. He knew at some point when he would translate to full forward flight, the thrusters would be pointing straight aft and the wing surfaces would provide all of the lift.

“Jeff, change to “Flight” mode once we're past eight hundred quatre.” his wife reminded him. “When you can, instrument check. Keep power down to fifty percent. We're loaded lightly so no need for full power.” She was momentarily startled by her commander talking to her on a private channel.

“What's your opinion of the craft?” he asked.

“Attitude feels good to me.” she replied. “Jeff seems to be in a decent climb-out. I don't feel any bad vibrations that would be evident if he were climbing too fast. So far, the stall warning hasn't chirped, either.”

“That's good perceptions on your part.” Saar Vansar'lan offered. “Flank Commander, how do you think you're doing? Feel like you have it under control?” he asked on an open bridge channel.

“I do believe I have this under control, Saar. Computer says I'm well within the climb parameters, switching to “Flight” mode since we have passed through eight hundred quatre. Setting optimal thruster cruise speed to five hundred *Hazecan* per *Heth*. All instrumentation shows Blue nominal conditions.”

“Very good, Saar Andrews'lan.” Commander Fellen'lan mused. “I think I have seen enough, Flank Commander. I do believe you will be able to obtain certification for at least a Class Four license, based on what I have just observed. I will have Commander Vansar'lan give you the required paperwork to fill out for the course.”

“Thank you, Saar.” Jeff replied.

“Sub-Commander, you have done well for your part in this.” Saar Vansar'lan put forth. “Keep up with your treatments for your vision. We need you back in action just as soon as possible.”

Jeffrey banked them back around to line up on the runway, since Saar Vansar'lan had asked for a runway landing. Dirtying up the airframe to prepare to touch down, he finally relaxed. This had been in his opinion, the most exhausting hour of his life. Switching communications to a closed line between Krista and himself, he asked a question;

“Well, how are you doing?”

“Ready to soil my underwear.” she replied, then Jeff heard her sigh.

“That bad?” he asked, looking over at his *One Love* for a moment.

“You have done well.” she finally offered. “However, I will never again try to teach flying without my sight. This is just too stressful.” After a moment, she added this information; “If the gear is down and locked, pull back power to thirty percent, then adjust power to stay on glide slope. Select “Active Landing” mode when you're below five hundred quatre and the computer will assist in your landing. Make adjustments with the stick to keep the red lines even with the ball in your HUD. The computer will take care of the power setting at fifty quatre.”

“Okay, going to “Active Landing” mode.” Jeff announced. “Control, this is Eight Two Two on final, runway is visual to me, I am on glidepath for active landing.”

“Eight Two Two, identify the pilot, please?”

“This is Flank Commander Andrews'lan, Language Training.” he replied.

“Commander, you're doing an excellent job of flying on glide path. Good speed, watch your HUD for glidepath.”

“Thank you, Control.”

Jeff gave his attention back to flying, keeping the two red lines on either side of the circle in his view squared up with the faint line through the ball. Moments after they crossed the end of the runway, he added just a bit of power right as the aft landing gear touched pavement. Retarding the power to ten percent once the mains were on the runway solid, he placed the stick in the center position and used the reverse thrusters to slow down.

Taking the first turnoff, he proceeded back to the taxiway. Moments later, they were parked and shut down, the “Demonstration” over with. They walked back over to their shuttle, climbed in and settled in for the ride back to the training wing parking lot.

“That was stressful.” Na'Krista offered up once they were moving.

“I'll agree” her husband put forth.

“One other thing.” she said softly. “I truly believe I need to change my undergarments.”

That evening, Na'Krista and Jeffrey were surprised by the receipt of a package from the Bil homeworld, proving to contain the keys to their devices and some extras that were for use with the Bil harness Krista was wearing. Jeff laid out the parts on the bed and read through the instructions that came with the equipment, just to familiarize himself with them. Nothing sounded too difficult to implement or seemed too kinky in his opinion so he decided to see if Krista would try them out.

The first item added to her harness was contoured strip of polished steel that covered her “Feminine Zone” below, all the way through her crotch, smoothly attaching to the harness with

tabs that interfaced with hidden slots in the segmented metal surrounding her. Two more pieces were shaped to generally match her breasts, giving coverage but not taking away from her alluring form. They snapped into place easily, giving her full modesty.

“Well, how do they look?” Krista asked, modeling the assembly for her husband. “Is it as sexy as the Ansi fighting suit I purchased on Pharrpoint?” she asked while exploring how the new pieces actually fit her, since her sight was still not up to par at the moment.

“It's very pleasing to my eyes and I will not divulge to any male what I'm seeing right now.” he replied. “You look very sexy dressed like that but you're still modest enough for daily wear. By the way, a second fob with more functions programmed into it was sent to us. Apparently, I can turn off the flashing lights if you want me to.”

“That would be nice.” she offered. “When I sleep, I sometimes put one of my hands up by my face. The flashing lights at my wrists are kind of distracting if I'm trying to go to sleep, like last night for instance.” After a moment to realize what was just said, she carefully asked a question of Jeffrey; “So, you will let me take the harness off tonight, right?”

“Yeah, tonight.” he replied. “Before we decide to go to sleep.” he added.

“You are planning something, aren't you?”

I am.” Jeff agreed. “There are a few more parts that came in the shipping box.”

“You want me to try them out?” Krista questioned. “If they aren't too extreme, I might model them for you. Put the items in my hands and explain what they are or how they function.”

The remaining items in the box were described to her, some a bit erotic, others very much so. Krista touched the three metal segments that had already been added to the Bil harness and gave thought to this. That last fling in bed wearing the harness was interesting but she wasn't sure if she wanted to try it again with more of the items added to the mix. Finally making up her mind, she offered this;

“Sweetheart, maybe I'll let you put the ball mitts on me. I think that's all the extra hardware I can handle.” After a moment, she commented to her *One Love*; “At least I can't scratch you with my hands covered like that.”

While she waited for her *One Love* to close the first steel ball mitt around her hand, she thought about the predicament she had just allowed herself to get into. She willingly gave permission for her hands to be fettered with no hope of getting out of this situation by herself if she began to panic. That feeling was reinforced when her husband put the second ball mitt on her, taking away her ability to remove either mitt, if she had really wanted to.

In actuality, despite the fact she trusted Jeffrey, she wanted to see this through even with her growing apprehension. She knew in her heart Jeff would take care of her while she was in this situation, she just hoped they would enjoy the experience.

She also wondered if she would ever do this again.

Trooper Grade Nine Sa'Vesi Derrel'lan was finishing up the late meal for Orange Detachment, a deserved hot cooked sustenance after a long day of patrolling the Andrews'lan station. The troopers were currently standing around in the courtyard, waiting patiently for her to signal them in. As *Number One*, it was not her place to cook for her squad but it was worth it to consume a meal that was palatable over something put forth by the males in her detachment.

The tall black Elazi femme had spoke with Na'Krista earlier in the evening, concerning the merits and perks of becoming a Non-Commissioned Officer. Sa'Vesi had finished her certification in criminal justice and two immediate choices were in front of her; either become an arbiter or take a commission. The commission would mean she would have to leave Orange Detachment and that would be the same end result if she accepted an arbiter's position.

This bothered her; either choice took her away from main line duty with a Detachment but the third option, remaining with her detachment would mean a long wait for a promotion. At present, there were no foreseeable openings for a Sub-Commander, Junior Grade within the general detachments assigned to various ambassadors. That left only fleet service with a carrier group, a destroyer group or a support unit for either one. One other possibility would be a command position within a ground attack or ground support unit.

She had done service in both destroyer and ground assault units and neither one seemed a proper choice. It was possible that she could apply for some administrative position in the training division, since Na'Krista had indicated the Forces Training Command was always looking for staff positions. She had also pointed out the fact Flank Commander Andrews'lan was going to be instructing students. Well, she did speak, read and write Spanish fluently so maybe that would be an option. What Sa'Vesi did know for sure, she was tired of war.

Motioning to Ronmet, she bid them to come in for last meal. While they quietly lined up by the serving counter to be fed, she smiled. Maybe she would wait a bit before filing for a commission. She finally realized these males were starting to grow on her.