

Alien Rule Chapter One

Shaking violently, Michaela whispered, "I can't do this."

Jessica's pounding heart stuttered at her friend's words. Beneath her Middle Eastern complexion, Michaela had paled. White showed all around the chocolate brown irises of her black-lined eyes as they filled with tears. She held a square speech amplifier with a white-knuckled grip, as if attempting to crush the metallic box.

Jessica fought to keep a tremor out of her voice. If she betrayed any of her own nervousness, Michaela would surely bolt. "Of course you can do this, sweetie. You practiced your lines and put us through hell to get ready for it."

"Not just the introduction and dancing," Michaela sobbed. "The whole thing. Having sex. Joining a clan. Jess, I can't do it."

Jessica swallowed to hear her own fears spoken out loud. She still couldn't believe she herself would go through with the show, let alone the rest of the plan.

She took a deep breath. *You're safe here on Plasius. No one is going to arrest you for indecency or lewdness. You won't be punished.*

To her friend she said, "Michaela, you have to join a Kalquorian clan. There's no other choice. You can't stay on Plasius, and you can't go back to Earth. Either is a death sentence."

In the room beyond the heavy curtains they hid behind, Jessica heard the murmurs of conversation grow louder. More people were arriving, building into a large audience. How many had the Plasian leader Saucin Israla invited to the show? Jessica's anxiety climbed to an all-time high.

Jessica McInness and Michael-Michaela Blake were among over a hundred refugees from Earth hiding on the peaceful world of Plasius. Only seven months prior, both had been part of a crew of an Earth military transport. Jessica had been a nurse in sick bay, and Michaela had served hungry soldiers in the mess hall. Until events allowed them to seek sanctuary among the amorous Plasians, the two had barely been aware of each other's existence.

Now they were the best of friends. Jessica and Michaela clung to each other with the kind of desperation reserved for those flung together by cruel circumstances. Escaping Earth's intolerant faith-based government had given them both a taste of freedom, freedom neither had ever contemplated as possible in their short lives. When living under a totalitarian regime that kept its citizens yoked with fear, liberty seemed an unachievable fantasy.

Tonight's performance was the culmination of their flight from the tyranny of their home planet. Only a handful of the 150 members of the military transport remained loyal to Earth. When the commanding officer had been killed, his throat torn out by an angry Kalquorian, the Earthers made a mass plea for sanctuary on Plasius. Israla, leader of the Plasians and a woman who lusted for the young virile soldiers, took the desperate humans in.

The Plasians had saved the Earth traitors' lives, especially Jessica's and Michaela's. As a woman, Jessica faced more brutal punishment from Earth's patriarchal society than the men. Michaela's situation was even more precarious. With Earth now blockading the peaceful world, the women's lives hung on joining the desperate clans of the Kalquorian Empire.

One would never know the threat hanging over the Plasians' heads from the sounds of easy conversation. Laughter drifted through the ivory drapes that separated the stage and the bare backstage space. There had to be dozens of people out there waiting for the dancing to start.

Jessica knew the guests couldn't all be Kalquorian clans hoping to attract Earther mates. Few ships got through the blockade, and Earth considered Kalquor its bitterest enemy. The majority of the crowd had to consist of Plasians and Israla's current stable of young Earther males.

The race of the audience mattered little to Jessica at this point. The worry was in the number of eyes that would be on her, witnessing her perform a dance that would have put her in prison on Earth. Sexually enticing men warranted harsh penalties. Even rape victims on Earth were deemed as guilty as their attackers. If discovered, those 'temptresses' were sentenced to prison terms that always resulted in death before they were fully served. No amount of arguing with herself about the absence of Earth authority could take away Jessica's ingrained terror of discovery.

Michaela's fears went even deeper, though they had little to do with the threat of punishment. She wasn't fazed by performance anxiety either. She'd been born to dance. The only time she allowed herself to relax and be happy was when she rehearsed in her studio or moved to the stage. The trick tonight would be getting her out there.

Michaela shook her head, her wig's ebony spiral spill of curls flying about with the violence of the movement. "I'd be better off dead than to make a fool of myself over those aliens. No Kalquorian clan would want a freak like me anyway."

Jessica tried to come up with something, anything to settle Michaela's mind so Jessica wouldn't be forced to go out there alone. She knew that the normal platitudes, no matter how sincerely felt, would do nothing to erase Michaela's self-loathing, her conviction she was not worth being loved. That was a real problem considering that tonight's performance was all about attracting love, or at least, lust.

As conversation in the hidden room swelled, panic blocked coherent thought. Jessica watched with growing dismay as Michaela edged away from the curtain. The younger woman's desperate gaze skittered towards the door that led to their dressing room. Jessica grasped her friend's broad shoulders in an effort to halt the escape attempt.

In her bellydancing costume of flowing scarves, the breadth of Michaela's shoulders was the only indication of her dual nature, along with the husky voice that bordered on a tenor. She'd lived disguised as Michael Blake until realizing the freedom to express herself among the sexually adventurous and nonjudgmental Plasian populace. Now she reveled in her female side, defining herself as intersex. Most of the expatriate Earthers called Michaela a hermaphrodite. Those still loyal to Earth, the ones stranded without a way off Plasius, referred to her as the 'freak' or 'abomination'.

Had Michaela's condition been discovered by the authorities on Earth, she would have been locked up and probably euthanized. According to the Church, Earthers were made in God's image. Michaela, physically both male and female, would have been seen as demon spawn. Her parents would have been executed for producing and hiding the nature of their only child. Their deaths in a shuttle accident had broken Michaela's heart; paradoxically, it had also relieved the worst of her fear of being discovered. With her parents beyond the horror of brutal executions, Michaela had signed on to the military transport in hopes of escaping Earth permanently. Maintaining the male identity the sympathetic doctor had put on her birth certificate, Michaela had slopped food onto trays in the chow line, learning to curse as colorfully as the soldiers that surrounded her. Men, especially those in the military, could use profanity to their hearts' content. They just couldn't take God's name in vain.

As Michaela strained against Jessica's grip, the lights in the room went out. All conversation outside the drapery ceased, and Jessica and Michaela plunged into silent darkness.

The buzzing alto of an Egyptian kawala flute began to play, swirling around them in the blackness. The straining shoulders under Jessica's hands relaxed as the hypnotic notes filled the air. Michaela shifted toward the curtains, responding to the music's call. In an instant, her shaking ceased. The dance called, and as always, its lover forgot everything else.

She grasped Jessica's hand in her own and squeezed. "Sorry about the hysterics, Jess. They may not like me, but I'm going to dance. Damn Earth all to hell, I can dance and no one will stop me."

Speaking into the speech amplifier to those who had gathered on the other side of the drapery, Michaela's sultry voice wove itself around the music. Jessica shivered to hear her friend's low, sexy tones blend with the mesmerizing notes of the kawala.

"Welcome to the ancient Arabian desert of Earth, where sultans once ruled the kingdoms of sand. It is here you discover the secrets of this lost domain. This is where the harem princesses performed their exotic dances for the pleasure of the men. Now two of these maidens will entertain you with *Raqs Sharqi* as they vie for the privilege of being your favorite."

Michaela's setting of the scene was nonsense, or 'pure bullshit', as the often foul-mouthed dancer liked to say. Her Middle Eastern ancestors would have been shocked to hear such blather about harem dancers, but the purpose of tonight was to seduce, not educate. The dance itself wasn't even the true traditional form.

"I've corrupted the dance so Kalquorians will be driven to corrupt us," Michaela gleefully informed Jessica as she guided the former nurse through her first awkward lessons. "The so-called 'belly dance' actually came about as an exercise to strengthen abdominal muscles for childbirth. Later it was turned into titillation by certain naughty ladies." Then came the exasperation Jessica would hear too often during Michaela's dance instructions. "No Jessica, the shimmy is shoulders-only. Keep your hips out of it...that's a totally different move."

A spotlight illuminated the other side of the curtain before them, and Jessica blinked against the sudden glare. Michaela stooped to set the voice amplifier on the floor. In the light her expression was now dreamy and distant. The music of her mother's homeland had once more rescued her, transporting her from the real world and all its attendant miseries. Jessica's lungs gusted a heavy sigh of relief. Then she tensed once more as the introductory music ended on a high plaintive note.

The time had come to take the stage.

Awareness of how bare her skin was sharpened. Jessica had never shown any man so much naked flesh. Who knew how many were out there, how many she was about to put herself on display for?

The seductive moves of Michaela's choreography suddenly seemed too blatant. How could they perform such a dangerous dance? If it ever got back to Earth and they were captured...

Michaela, her eyes dark in anticipation of the coming performance, tugged Jessica into place next to her. Her whisper carried in the quiet moment.

"Three steps into the dance and the stage fright will be gone. Let the music take you. You're going to be wonderful."

The doumbek and tar drums began a slow, sensual rhythm. The stringed kanoun and kawala flutes joined in. The curtains opened and Jessica stood in the dazzling glare. Her heart stopped.

The downbeat arrived. Beside her, Michaela moved, and everything snapped into place. The long months of endless practice sent Jessica into her first steps, spinning and twirling, flowing white and gold scarves fluttering behind as she made her graceful way into the room. The silver accents of Michaela's contrasting black costume reflected the lights overhead as she matched Jessica's movements.

They reached the center of the dance space. Around them in the shadows, the audience sat in a semi-circle. They were invisible to Jessica's dazzled vision beyond the fall of the spotlight. She executed a final, silk-trailing spin and faced Michaela.

Across the floor, Michaela glowered at her. She was every inch the Saudi Arabian princess her great-great-grandmother had been before the forced combining of countries and rise of Earth's religion-based government. Waist-length curls framed her, bringing attention to her sculpted bellydancer's torso. The silver-beaded bra cupped her round breasts, lifting them in offering. Silver slave cuffs wrapped her wrists and ankles, bringing images to mind of being bound helplessly for her master's pleasure. Her girdle hugged her wide hips and matched the bra. Transparent black strips of silk served as the floor-sweeping skirt, through which lean muscled legs peeked.

Jessica's costume was a white and gold version of Michaela's. Her chestnut hair, as straight as her friend's was curly, was caught back in a gold tiara. They were nearly the same height, but Jessica's willow-thin frame was less rounded than that of the younger eighteen-year-old Michaela's.

Michaela stared at her, an expression of challenge at odds with her cherubic features. In her mind, Jessica heard her friend's voice, the coaching she'd instilled with every practice:

"Half of the dance is in the attitude. In this story, we are wives of the sultan, sisters but still enemies. We both know the sultan's favorite wife rules the harem. She receives the most precious jewels and the finest silks. She receives the pleasure of the sultan's bed. She is adored, set on high, worshipped almost as if she is the sultan herself. If a wife is not the favorite, she is only a slave for breeding. A slave is nothing to the sultan beyond the orifice between her legs. She is a sack of meat, of no more importance than a grain of sand."

"Dancing is a tool to capture the sultan's notice," Michaela continued, her hips swaying to the softly playing music. "You use it to display the grace and energy of your body. You show him how pleasing it will be to bed you; indeed, you are fucking him without the benefit of contact. Even though you do not touch him while you dance, you must make him feel how it will be when you are writhing beneath him in pleasure as he plunges his aching cock inside you. This is the prize you and I battle for, and there is no mercy between us."

Jessica had only been amused before by Michaela's recitation. Both of them were virgins, never having known carnal pleasures. Their knowledge came chiefly from seeing the open displays of the uninhibited Plasians. It seemed laughable that either Earther could simulate real sex. But now, looking into the depths of the other dancer's stare, of the sensual ferocity of her stance, Jessica felt her own sexual instincts come to life...and a need to outperform her rival.

After all, they were dancing to attract mates that would take them from embattled Plasius and put them out of Earth's reach for good. As desperate as the nearly extinct Kalquorians were for women who could bear their children, it was still important to attract the best clans they could.

Jessica's lips twisted her elfin features into a cold smile of challenge. The competition to be the favorite was on.

The tempo of the music altered, and the dancers turned from each other to face opposite sides of the audience. Though she couldn't see Michaela behind her, Jessica knew they performed the same steps in perfect synchronization. Michaela had been relentless during practice. Grateful for the exhausting hours that provided her with the confidence to perform, Jessica undulated closer to the crowd.

The intimate room had been decorated by the dancers to put Hollywood set designers to shame. The heavy drapes were velvety, depicting a fantasy interior of a desert sultan's tent. Oriental-style rugs covered the floor. The space was filled three rows deep with guests who reclined on large jewel-toned cushions. Nearly naked Plasian girls, glittering with gems, served the audience drinks and hors d'oeuvres.

Jessica recognized quite a few of the willowy bronze-skinned Plasians. They were of the elite class, advisors to Saucin Israla. Israla herself sat front and center with four Earther males surrounding her. The Plasian leader was nude, her perfect proportions betraying nothing of her advanced years. None of her companions was over the age of twenty. Israla's delight in young, virginal men was legendary.

A quarter of the audience consisted of Kalquorian men. Immense and muscular, none were under six-and-a-half feet tall. In spite of the size difference, their resemblance to Earther men was uncanny. Theories abounded that the residents of Earth and Kalquor must have a common ancestry; the similarities were too numerous to be coincidence.

Jessica hid her shock behind the inviting smile she'd perfected in front of her mirror. She wondered how had so many Kalquorians gotten through the blockade. There had to be at least a dozen, which meant four clans were in attendance.

Even as she shimmied closer to the first cluster of alien males, the sharp aroma of cinnamon tickling her nose, Jessica's lower body softened and warmed. Moisture crept from her sex as several pairs of blue-purple eyes raked over her fair-skinned flesh.

The Kalquorians were chiseled muscle, their bulging anatomies accentuated by black formsuits. Every Kalquorian Jessica had ever seen had black hair and dark skin similar to Michaela's Middle Eastern coloring. Except for purple eyes with cat-slitted pupils, the Kalquorians could have passed for Jessica's own race—albeit very tall, bodybuilder Earthers.

Oh, and there was also the matter of the fangs and two penises each possessed, she reminded herself. Jessica went hot all over at the thought.

She came close to the clan of Kalquorians. Every clan consisted of three men; Dramok, Imdiko and Nobek. Dramoks were the clan leaders, born commanders. Jessica picked out that breed in this clan immediately. His narrow visage was smiling in anticipation, but underlying the expression was an attitude of calculating evaluation.

To his left was the Imdiko. His gentle expression and perceptible warmth spoke volumes about the clan's nurturer. Kalquorians were known for their warrior mentality, but the Imdikos were most suited to pursuits in medicine and caregiving. This one's stunningly handsome and openly kind demeanor made Jessica like him on sight.

The third, seated on the Dramok's right, couldn't have been more different. The Nobek watched her closely, sizing her up as if she were prey. The clan's protector had an aura of barely restrained ferocity. He was a brute of oversized muscles. Jessica restrained a shiver of mixed desire and dread. She'd met the gaze of such a feral Kalquorian once before. The memory of that threatening alien standing over her had fed many sexual fantasies since.

All the clan lacked was a Matara, the female childbearer. Earth's religious dictates banned the mixing of the two races, which had spurred the desperate Kalquorians to seduce and

even abduct Earther women to breed with. Now the two planets verged on war, with unlucky Plasius stuck in the middle.

The Kalquorians enthusiastically applauded Jessica's approach. She swayed and undulated for this first clan, feeling a growing ache in her groin as they looked her over. She was on display for them. Her purpose was to entice and arouse. She was offering herself as a breeding partner. All the fear of a few moments ago was gone.

The men's eyes darkened. The Nobek licked his lips and leaned back so she could see his arousal bulging the crotch of his formsuit. Jessica caught her breath at the size of him, and the clan laughed, their humor teasing her. Even the fierce Nobek softened with a smile, showing a lack of mean-spiritedness.

She grinned at them and decided to give as good as she got. She traced her fingertips up her ribcage and around the outside contours of her breasts. She threw her head back as if the delight of her own touch was more than she could bear.

Over the music, Jessica heard a chorus of appreciative growls from the Kalquorians. Her arms reached up, flowing like twin serpents and she leaned toward her suitors. Still dancing, she beckoned them closer and the men leaned toward her, smiles expectant. She tilted her face ever closer, her lips parted as if entreating them for a kiss.

When she felt the warmth of their mingled breath, Jessica suddenly twisted away, spinning twice toward the center of the room, letting her hair lash across the three Kalquorians' faces like hundreds of soft whips. Their appreciative howls and applause washed over her. She tipped them a wink and danced to the next clan.

The next trio of aliens were seated near Saucin Israla's group. Before giving the clan her attention, Jessica couldn't resist seeing what the ardent Plasian leader was up to.

If Earth's blockade of Plasius bothered Israla, she gave no sign of it tonight. She lay naked on a nest of Earther men, laughing and fondling eager flesh as they watched the performance. The bronze Plasian had dyed the furry mane that crowned her in gold and silver, a complement to the dancer's costumes. She grinned her delight at Jessica as one of her escorts stroked her hairless sex with fumbling fingers. The others eagerly licked and fondled her small, perfectly formed breasts. Although her unlined features and slender figure would have made most twenty-somethings on Earth mad with jealousy, Israla was older than Jessica's grandparents. Jessica knew age didn't hold any sway over the Plasian Saucin. The four youngsters receiving her attentions tonight would be exhausted within the hour and barely able to walk come morning.

Jessica's amused glance slid from Israla and her boyfriends to check on the next batch of Kalquorian suitors. When her glance met the clans' she faltered for a brief instant.

The men weren't in the same high spirits as the rest of the crowd. They regarded her pleasantly, and there was nothing in their demeanor to suggest they weren't enjoying themselves. Yet they held themselves with a restrained, almost aloof air. Their gazes were sharp on Jessica. She sensed an aura of power surrounding the Kalquorians, similar to Israla's when the Saucin wasn't covered in men.

She examined them as she danced. The man seated in the center of the clan didn't have the blue-black hair of the other Kalquorians she'd seen. The waves flowing past his muscular shoulders were steel-gray where the light reflected. It wasn't the gray of age; his handsome, square-jawed looks were far too youthful for that. His sensuous lips curved into the slightest of smiles.

He was the most muscular of his clan, and his purple-trimmed formsuit showed his powerfully built physique to advantage. Only the heavy gray boots that came almost to his knees interrupted the clinging fabric of the formsuit. It wasn't hard for Jessica to imagine running her hands over his wide chest down to the trim waist. He was built like the statues of Greek gods she had seen in an illicit art book on Earth.

The lean-muscled man sitting to the left of Steel-Hair was handsome too, but in a different way. His coarse hair was plaited in a long braid, accentuating angular features. His eyes, as purple as the rest of his species, slanted upward. A mustache outlined his upper lip and he sported a goatee as well. He had a dangerous aura. Jessica's stomach tumbled at the fantasy of being alone with him despite the easy demeanor that betrayed his Imdiko nature.

He wore a loose-fitting blousy shirt that opened to reveal a smooth, defined chest. His black trousers were cut to flatter his legs. A phrase popped into her head: a long, cool drink of water. She wasn't sure what that phrase meant, but it seemed to fit the Kalquorian.

The third member of the clan could only be described as exquisite. His straight hair was a glossy sheet to his chest. He had high cheekbones, a strong chin, and straight nose. He was too gorgeous to be real. His expression was warm, not nearly as aloof as his clanmates. He wore the same purple-trimmed formsuit as the steel-haired Kalquorian, but his body, while still bulging muscle, was the leanest of all three.

None of the men made her think of a warrior Nobek. Steel-Hair and Gorgeous Hunk both possessed sharp, watchful demeanors, but neither carried the predator air she associated with the most brutal members of the Kalquorian race. They certainly didn't resemble the muscle-bound brute in the first clan she'd danced for.

Jessica danced for this clan too, quite well she believed, each move more provocative than the last. While their stares remained riveted on her, not one's expression changed.

The song was coming to an end. Feeling a little disappointed she hadn't garnered a more enthusiastic response from the clan, Jessica moved toward the center of the room to join Michaela in the last few steps. They finished with a flourish, and applause erupted around them.

There were appreciative shouts from all the Kalquorians except the reserved clan. They simply clapped. Jessica's heart sank. Had she danced so badly?

"Let us see more of the lovely Michaela," Israla called, as had been pre-arranged. Jessica curtsied and swirled off to stand in the shadows.

Michaela's music for her solo began, and Jessica watched with appreciation and more than a little envy. Michaela had been taught to dance by her mother at a young age even though the *Raqs Sharqi* had been outlawed on Earth for decades. So much of Michaela's life had been lived in secrecy; being able to dance in public was freedom she had never dreamed possible.

I hope I haven't embarrassed her Jessica thought, her gaze drifting to the unresponsive clan. Surely they would be impressed with Michaela's mastery.

A chill raced down Jessica's spine. The steel-haired Kalquorian wasn't paying any attention to Michaela. His focus was on Jessica.

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Clajak saw Jessica start when her gaze met his. With everyone's attention riveted on the gyrating Michaela, he allowed a slow grin to spread. The smirk was meant for the lovely Jessica alone.

Despite the shadows she stood in, he saw her blush a delicate pink. His smile grew.

Beside him, Bevau emitted a soft growl in appreciation of whatever moves Michaela performed. Clajak felt, rather than saw, his impossibly handsome clanmate turn to him. Bevau chuckled, catching Clajak flirting with Jessica.

The pretty Earther flushed even darker. Her elfin face abruptly pinched in anger, and she broke eye contact. Her nose lifted imperiously in the air as she looked away. It was all Clajak could do to not laugh out loud. The girl was a slender wisp of a thing, but she had spirit. He couldn't wait to get his hands on her.

Bevau's deep voice rumbled in Clajak's ear. "I think we offended her by not showing how much we appreciated her dancing." He glanced at Israla's group. The Plasian leader and one of her young men coupled as they watched Michaela dance. Her other companions caressed Israla as they too enjoyed the sight of the Earther gyrating her hips at amazing speed.

Bevau's voice sounded strained as he took in the vision of the Earther male's penis slipping in and out of Israla's vagina. "We should be more like Israla. She doesn't allow her rank to get in the way of a good time."

Clajak shrugged. "I'm tired of my fathers lecturing me about restraint. We'll behave to please them as we agreed."

Bevau returned his attention to Michaela, who now writhed enticingly before the first clan Jessica had danced for. Clajak restrained a snicker as his personal assistant Korkla, along with clanmates Raxstad and Govi, gustily cheered and applauded the exotic Michaela, their greedy stares riveted on her every sensuous move. The cinnamon scent of their arousal hung heavy in the air, and it was no wonder. Michaela seemed to be making love to an invisible partner, her hips grinding against nonexistent hips, her head lolling with ecstatic pleasure. Clajak's groin ached agreeably at the view.

"Micheal-Michaela is of royal lineage on the mother's side," Bevau whispered.

On the other side of Clajak, Egilka spoke up. "We're not searching for a Matara."

Clajak ignored the warning tone in his Imdiko's voice. "Israla says the intersex Earther is traumatized by living its entire life in secrecy. We are not suited for the seduction of Michael-Michaela Blake."

Bevau's expression was full of pity as he watched the Earther who, but for the broadness of her shoulders, appeared entirely female. "The man-woman dances as if it has no inhibitions. I still can't believe Earth would execute that lovely creature simply for being born male and female."

Clajak felt his own anger on behalf of Michaela. "Their religious fanaticism knows no bounds. They see evil in everything, and she... Israla said Michael-Michaela Blake prefers to be called a 'she'...has suffered greatly for it. I've given Korkla, Govi, and Raxstad first rights to clan her."

For a wonder, Egilka grunted approval. "Govi and his clan are an excellent choice. His psychiatric work with Earther females has helped many overcome their horror of sexual relations."

I wonder if Jessica McInness is repressed in her desires. Clajak glanced where she stood in the shadows. He saw her gaze dart away. Ah, he'd caught her peeking. Was this perhaps the game Earthers referred to as 'playing hard to get'? Clajak grinned. He liked games. He loved the hunt, loved it as much as the capture and conquest. Tonight promised to be fun.

"I hear the flesh of Earther women is both snug and yielding all at once. Others have said they've never felt anything so wonderful," he confided to his clanmates.

Egilka sighed, his expression both exasperated and resigned. “You should leave her for whatever clan claims her.”

“I’m a free man until we clan Narpok. Besides, I’ve not had an Earther yet.”

The other man snorted. “You haven’t bedded a Tragoom either, but I don’t see you racing to add one to your collection.”

Bevau uttered a soft gagging sound. “Don’t mention Tragooms and sex in the same sentence. Even Clajak has his standards.” His expression turned wicked as he looked towards Jessica. “No clan will mind if their Matara has had the pleasure of the future emperors’ attentions. They may even see it as a mark of distinction.”

Clajak clapped his Nobek’s shoulder with delight. “You like her too? Shall we share or take turns?”

“Since sex without marriage is a death penalty crime on Earth, she’s probably still a virgin. My needs tend to be...primal. I’ll let you break her in with your gentler hand and vast experience.”

Clajak knew better, but he couldn’t resist asking, “What about you, Egilka?”

His Imdiko clanmate’s face darkened. Egilka’s answer was clipped, his tone final. “I have no interest in Earther females, however desirable they may seem.”

“At least you concede Jessica McInness is desirable.”

Bevau shook his head. “Nobody comes to Plasius to be celibate, Egilka.”

A smile quirked the eldest Kalquorian’s lips. “I have no intention of practicing such a ridiculous idea, my Nobek. While Plasian females cannot handle us in the traditional fashion of lovemaking, they have eager mouths. They’ll serve me fine.”

Bevau considered Jessica again. “That’s a terrible waste of a perfectly delicious Earther.”

Egilka responded with more of a growl than a voice. “You know how I feel about mixing our species. This conversation is done.”

Clajak and Bevau exchanged a glance. Clajak sighed and Bevau rolled his eyes. They despaired of ever convincing their reluctant clanmate of Earther women’s worth to Kalquor. Even years of failure couldn’t dissuade Egilka from his work to restore Kalquorian women’s fertility.

Clajak returned his attention to the lovely Jessica, who seemed intent on Michaela’s every move. Her fists tightened and her breath grew quicker. Her reaction betrayed that she watched him from the corners of her bright blue eyes. His knowing grin returned. Her lips tightened in a thin line.

Such a temper! He hoped she would be as fiery when he took her to bed tonight.

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Jessica was well into her solo dance, having singled out all the clans for special attention except Steel-Hair’s. She’d even made a point to beguile several Plasians, who’d responded by throwing themselves into ardent lovemaking. The clans howled and cheered their appreciation, the pungent aroma of cinnamon all but drowning out the musky scentwood burning in a corner. Jessica knew from Israla that the sharp spicy scent belonged to the Kalquorians; it signaled arousal for the alien race. She was delighted to know the effect she had on them.

By this time all of the Plasians were having sex, overcome by desire. Israla crouched on all fours while an Earther male rutted her from behind and another plunged his desperate flesh in

her mouth. The other two lay exhausted nearby, but the Saucin was just getting started. No doubt she had more men on standby.

Jessica's skimpy panties were soaked from her own arousal. The movements and moans weaving through the shadowed audience excited her. Only one thing ruined the sensual flavor of the night.

The steel-haired Kalquorian and his gorgeous hunk of a clanmate had laughed at Jessica after first insulting her by not reacting at all. They had looked right at her, their whispers and grins telling her they found her dancing *funny*.

Now she had to dance for them again. To avoid doing so would tell the pair they'd gotten under her skin. It would tell them they'd made her feel stupid and awkward. She'd never give those arrogant alien bastards that kind of satisfaction. The other clans liked her, so what did Steel-Hair and Gorgeous Hunk matter anyway?

She'd show them.

Jessica moved to the center of the room. *Dance as if you're fucking them* came Michaela's advice. She faced Steel-Hair's clan, skewering them with her glare. They returned her stare, Steel-Hair and Gorgeous Hunk smiling expectantly. The third man watched too, but his expression was thunderously dark. Maybe he thought his clanmates were mean too. Jessica's heart warmed at the possibility of a sympathetic ally.

As the music began to thump harder, building toward a faster rhythm, Jessica deliberately tore a strip of cloth from her skirt, baring a long, lithe leg. Kalquorians on all sides roared approval, and Steel-Hair and Gorgeous Hunk's smiles grew. Their Imdiko's eyes widened, and he licked his lips, his anger fading.

Holding the ends of the fabric, Jessica approached them, her abdomen undulating as if to beckon the men closer. She was only an arm's length away when she halted before them. Letting go of one end of the scarf, she waved it so it slid across all three upturned faces. With satisfaction, she noted the telltale bulges of their crotches. Their cinnamon-y scent blanketed the air around her.

They want me. Jessica's confidence soared with the music. She left behind any pretense of restraint. Her hips gyrated around and around. Her breasts jiggled in their beaded cups as she shimmied. Her hair whipped about her shoulders when she tossed her head with abandon.

She envisioned the aliens surrounding her, pressing their granite, unforgiving bodies against hers, fighting to control her as she struggled against their possession. Her dance descended into wild savagery as Jessica showed them she would not be contained. She had escaped the cage of Earth's repression, and she would not be captured again.

But she was a lone woman and so very small. The aliens were beasts; strong and ruthless monsters. Her dance reflected a struggle against impossible odds, and even as her movements became increasingly frantic, Jessica showed signs of surrender. She wound the torn strip of skirt about her cuffed wrists as the strength of her imagined assailants overwhelmed her.

The music came to an abrupt crescendo as she fell to the floor before the seated Kalquorians. Her bound arms lay above her head, her legs folded beneath her, her chest heaving as she looked up at Steel-Hair's clan, soft with submission. She lay before them vanquished, making an offering of herself.

In the seconds it took for the spell of her fantasy to lift, Jessica saw the darkness of the Kalquorians' eyes and the flash of fangs behind their lips. Low-throated growls rumbled from deep in their chests. They appeared feral. Jessica realized she may have gone too far.

Too late, she tried to roll away. As the other clans wildly applauded her performance, Steel-Hair grabbed her. Faster than she could fathom, he draped her across his lap. His mouth covered hers.

His tongue invaded and swept her in the kiss, hard enough to bruise. Hot, burning hands roamed over her, caressing her breasts, her bare abdomen, pushing aside the skirt to stroke the insides of her thighs. All the while, Steel-Hair plundered, tasting her thoroughly.

He released her from the kiss, and Gorgeous Hunk took his place. Jennifer moaned as their touches grew more demanding. As Gorgeous Hunk sucked her tongue into the furnace of his mouth, Jessica felt her bra pushed up until her breasts spilled out. A wet kiss warmed her pink nipples as a strong palm kneaded the other.

The fingers tracing delicate circles on her inner thighs moved up to slip inside the edges of her panties. Feeling the man's touch on her naked flesh, Jessica's legs parted of their own accord, inviting him to seek further. She cried out into Gorgeous Hunk's mouth as experienced fingers explored her wet folds.

Teeth gently nipped at her breasts as the Kalquorian's probing touch found entrance. Jessica's hips bucked when a thick finger invaded her. She'd never dared to explore herself in such a way. Feeling something inside her untried sex was a revelation. Her insides roiled with molten fire. She gushed honey over the welcome intruder. Warm pleasure radiated as the Kalquorian pumped his finger in and out of her center. Her abdomen tightened as heat built within her belly.

Gorgeous Hunk's kiss ended. He gazed down at her, his breath coming fast. His scrutiny traveled down her body, taking in Steel-Hair suckling on her breasts and the third clanmate, whose expression had transformed to naked lust, working her eager flesh with knowing fingers.

Gorgeous Hunk smiled. It was a dangerous smile full of dark promise, a savage Nobek's smile. It reminded Jessica of something else; the grins and laughter he'd exchanged with Steel-Hair earlier.

They'd laughed at her, and now they expected her to fuck them.

The ache of her sex grew to desperate need. As much as she wanted fulfillment at the sublime hands of the third Kalquorian, Jessica's anger at the other two brought back reason. Her wrists still tangled in the gold-trimmed length of skirt, she pushed Steel-Hair from her tingling breasts. Her nipples pointed upward as if desperate to regain the voracious lips that had been devouring them. Ignoring the pleas of her body, she clamped her legs together against the third Kalquorian and squirmed to escape the delicious invasion.

"I'm not done dancing," she announced coldly in Plasian.

Three sets of eyebrows shot up at her declaration. "Excuse me?" Steel-Hair said in the same liquid language, his tone disbelieving.

Jessica fought off a shiver at the rich, honey-smooth voice. "I have another dance to perform," she said, not quite as firm this time.

"Indeed you do," Gorgeous Hunk agreed in a deep bass rumble. He reached to cover one of Jessica's breasts. He gave it an appreciative squeeze. "You'll dance for us in our bed."

His cocky self-assuredness only enraged Jessica further. She shoved his hand away and tugged her bra down to cover herself. The men seemed too startled by her sudden rebellion to stop her. She took the opportunity to untangle herself from them, moving to stand out of reach.

"I'm not interested in your clan," Jessica hissed. Without waiting for a reaction, she spun on her heel and marched toward where Michaela waited in the shadows. Wild applause from the other clans followed her.

“You will be.” She heard the threat in Steel-Hair’s honeyed voice, and her skin erupted in goosebumps.

“Holy shit,” Michaela whispered as Jessica reached her side. Her eyes were wide as she stared at Jessica.

Thinking how far she’d strayed from Michaela’s precise choreography in the attempt to seduce Steel-Hair’s clan, Jessica blanched. “I’m sorry.”

“Are you kidding? Your dancing was brilliant! You discovered the passion of it.” Seven years her junior, the cherubic Michaela still managed to beam like a proud parent. “I thought that clan was going to fuck you right then and there. You really got them going.”

Jessica’s smile was bitter as she considered her victory over the Kalquorians. “That’ll teach them to laugh.”

Michaela’s delight faded as she uttered a confused “What?”

The music started again before Jessica could answer, and they ran into the center of the room in a swirl of silk.

* * * *

“What was that all about?” Bevau whispered.

They watched Jessica join her friend in the shadows across the room. Clajak’s erection was almost painful in its intensity, and it fueled a spark of anger. How dare the little wisp of Earther tease him that way!

Glowing, Clajak snarled, “I don’t know, but Jessica McInness will give herself to me tonight.” Taking a deep breath to steady himself, he turned to his Imdiko. “You seem to have changed your mind about Earthers, Egilka.”

Egilka sucked on the finger he’d used on the sweet flesh of the woman so recently in their possession. The Imdiko wouldn’t meet Clajak’s gaze. Instead, his regard rested on something behind the Dramok prince. Turning in that direction, Clajak saw a Plasian couple rutting. The male knelt between the female’s thighs, working his thin penis in and out of her warmth. Her buttocks propped up on piled cushions, the bronze-skinned woman’s head and shoulders rested on the floor.

She stared at Egilka’s obvious erection. Her olive mane of hair waved as if to beckon the massive Kalquorian to her. She smiled and licked her lips in invitation. After a moment, Egilka grinned and he loosened his pants closure.

He told Clajak, “As appetizing as the little dancer is, she’s still an Earther. My needs are easily sated by those who won’t pollute our race. But since you insist on pursuing Jessica McInness, you’ll be excited to know she is indeed a virgin.”

His dark stare riveted on the Plasian girl, Egilka crawled to her. She reached eagerly to help free him from his trousers. Long, deft fingers tugged Egilka’s two penises, shining from their own lubrication, to her wicked tongue. He growled as she first laved the smaller organ meant for anal stimulation, then the larger. Neither would have fit in her sexual orifice, but Plasians had a long history of enjoying what Kalquorians had to offer just the same.

Between her legs, the Plasian male tensed and cried out. The tendons in his long, willowy body stood out as he spent himself. Even as she spasmed in kind, the female didn’t miss a beat in her attention to Egilka. She moaned between licks and sucks on the Kalquorian’s rigid cocks.

Her Plasian partner disengaged to fall smiling onto waiting cushions. Another Plasian male took his place, his reed-thin penis slipping into the waiting flesh. His movements were slow and languorous as he fucked the agreeable female.

Bevau stared with avid attention, but his mind wasn't on just the compliant Plasian. "So much for our attempts at royal decorum. We wrecked that with the dancer though." He glared at Clajak. "Don't you dare make Egilka stop. Considering the news we received today, he deserves a little pleasure. He's going to be devastated when you tell him."

Clajak shrugged. "He should have given up trying to fix our females' infertility long ago. The moment we learned the virus had altered not only the chromosomes but also our DNA, it was a lost cause."

The Plasian girl's tongue whipped Egilka's organs in a frenzy. She certainly was talented. If Clajak hadn't been determined to punish Jessica for her teasing, he would have enjoyed a turn with the gifted Plasian.

"Don't worry about Egilka," he continued, hearing the strain in his own voice. "We'll help him get over the disappointment. His sense of logic and duty will see him through."

"There's never been any doubt about his adherence to his duties," Bevau agreed.

Clajak tensed at the insinuation. To retort would only invite another debate on his own tendency to ignore obligations.

Egilka straddled the Plasian girl's face, and she opened her mouth wide to take him in. She held his smaller penis. She pumped it while keeping it from stabbing against her throat as he fucked her with the larger. She kept her head tilted back so he could slide the entire length of his massive cock down her throat. Clajak added the delightful scene to the list of things he wanted to do to Jessica. Her first experience with a man would be epic, he promised himself.

As if thinking of Jessica summoned her, the music began again, signaling the final dance. Clajak and Bevau turned from the view of Egilka driving against the Plasian to watch Jessica and Michaela dash to the spotlighted center of the room. They confronted each other, nearly touching breast to breast, their expressions fierce. They began dancing, their movements a simulated struggle against one another, as if fighting for supremacy. Perspiration made their silken skin gleam, and Clajak thought of how soft Jessica had been in his arms, of the musky scent that exuded from her pores. He tasted again the sweet mounds of her breasts, her nipples pebbles against his tongue.

"Why was she so mad with us?" he wondered out loud.

Behind him, Egilka emitted a low howl, climax ripping through him. Clajak knew his clanmate liked to prolong his couplings. For the stoic Imdiko to have given up his pleasure so quickly proved how thrilling he'd found the Earther. Maybe there was hope for Egilka after all.

Bevau was wistful the Earthers engaged in choreographed battle. "At least we know she enjoys being touched. Jessica McInness is one less female Govi will have to treat. It's too bad she doesn't like us."

Clajak smiled, his gaze roaming over the woman he'd enjoyed a few minutes before. "Don't sound so disappointed, my Nobek. I'll change her mind about us, and you'll have your chance to feel the warmth of an Earther."

The women ended their simulated fight to gracefully beseech the audience for favor. While Jessica went in the opposite direction, Michaela approached Clajak's clan. As beautiful as the intersexual was, as potent as the dance she beguiled them with, Clajak had to force himself to not peek at Jessica.

I'll have you, my teasing Earther. No amount of resistance will stop me, he vowed.

Egilka, wearing a relaxed smile, returned to his place by Clajak's side. He joined his clanmates in applauding as Michaela danced for them.