

Alien Indiscretions Chapter 1

Cissy gripped hands with her identical twin Tasha. She tried to appear cool and calm for the Kalquorian attendants on board the shuttle. She'd hate for them to realize how her heart raced.

They'd left the doomed Earth nine months before on board a large transport, which was in orbit around the planet of Kalquor. Most of the other rescued women had been taken to the complex that would house them until they joined clans. Though Cissy and Tasha also planned to live in the complex, they were regarded as special cases. They'd gotten a shuttle all to themselves, which had flown them into a cavernous bay within a seaside cliff.

They stood before the hatch and waited for it to open. To Cissy's surprise, the bay showed no sign it was within a great rock that jutted over the pink-sanded shore on the planet Kalquor. The vid viewer to the left of the Salter twins displayed a thoroughly modern landing area with soft illumination glowing from the walls and ceiling. Other shuttles and transports dotted the surroundings.

The vid also showed a large number of people waited for their arrival. There were easily fifty out there, if she ignored the red formsuited guards standing at attention all over the place. Most of those standing outside the shuttle were the dark-skinned, black-haired Kalquorian race. They were almost all male...unabashedly masculine and muscular. Judging from the blue robes worn by most in the group, they were politically powerful, the ruling elite of the Kalquorian Empire.

Cissy swallowed against the nervousness that flooded her. Her cousin Jessica had clanned with the emperors of Kalquor. As a member of the empress' family, Cissy herself had been treated with deference throughout her journey from Earth, deference that bordered on embarrassing. Still, the status she'd gained hadn't created a real impression until this moment.

Tasha sounded as breathless as she felt. "It looks as if half the Royal Council showed up, along with the Imperial Family. You'd think we were important."

Cissy was glad she wasn't the only one knocked off-balance. "Who'd have guessed we'd end up related to royalty? I'm so underdressed for this."

Tasha emitted a nervous giggle as her long-lashed hazel eyes took in Cissy's denim trousers and black tee-shirt. At least she'd also thrown on a nice turquoise blouse, which Cissy wore unbuttoned over the tee. "Better than flaunting all your wares like you did on the transport." Tasha winked. "Everyone knows you hate pretension. No sense dressing like someone you're not."

Cissy examined her twin. Tasha adored pretty clothes, so she was better than presentable in her wraparound dress of purple. She'd pulled her dark brown waves into a tidy bun, except for the few tendrils that had artfully escaped from it.

Beyond their clothing, the pair were nearly impossible to tell apart. They'd even gained the same amount of weight during their nine-month trip from Earth to Kalquor. Close to starved before admitting there was no choice but to turn themselves in to their former enemies, they'd appeared to be children. The Kalquorian rescue party they'd given themselves up to had taken some convincing that the twins were in their early thirties.

Discovering Cissy and Tasha were first cousins to the Earther Empress of Kalquor had caused a sensation amongst the aliens. Supplies in those final days of evacuating the dying Earth had dwindled, but the Kalquorians had ensured the women had everything they could give them.

That included copious amounts of delicious food, which the sisters had availed themselves of without restrictions.

Cissy had laughingly referred to Tasha and herself as Chub One and Chub Two for the past couple of months. The men on the transport that brought them from Earth to Kalquor had discovered how much the pair loved chocolate...and pizza...and pie. Edible gifts from those wishing to enjoy the twins' favors had abounded.

"Stop fretting," Cissy had told her twin more as they'd walked the corridors of the huge Kalquorian ship. "None of the Kalquorians are complaining. In fact, they tell me how deliciously soft I am."

"They appreciate the extra cushion," Tasha agreed. "But I'm logging another mile before I take it easy this evening. Those fried mozzarella balls Dramok Niot brought me this afternoon aren't adding another inch to my ass!"

"Didn't he already help you work them off?" Cissy teased.

"A lady doesn't discuss such things."

"A lady also doesn't yell 'Harder you beast' at the top of her lungs for the entire Matara section of the ship to hear."

"Pig."

"Prude."

Eating was low on Cissy's list now that she'd reached Kalquor. She felt nauseous as she waited for the shuttle's hatch to open. If the Kalquorians on the transport hadn't been devoted to showing their approval of cuddly girls, she'd be more nervous.

Tasha drew a deep breath. "Here we go. It's time to greet Empress Jessica. Are we supposed to curtsy?"

Cissy laughed harder than the statement warranted. "Jessica will break both your legs if you dare. No way living on an alien planet has changed her that much...even if she is royalty."

Cissy checked the vid to reassure herself. Their youngest cousin, standing in the bay on the other side of the hatch, appeared impatient as only Jessica could.

The Imdiko flight attendant stepped to the hatch and bowed. "Are you ready to greet your family?"

Cissy did her best to match his smile. "As ready as we'll ever be."

The hatch slid aside. Stairs descended beneath the opening and waited for them to disembark.

Tasha balked. Her hazel eyes wide, she told Cissy, "You're the brave one. You go."

Cissy's heart thundered in her chest, and she attempted to cover her sudden terror with humor. "The brave one? You said I'm the twin with no sense."

"That's what makes you so brave." Tasha gave her a little push.

"Twit."

"Moron."

They grinned shakily at each other. Cissy squared her shoulders. She led the way out, holding Tasha's hand at the small of her back. To keep her cool, she refused to look at the crowd of huge muscled Kalquorians. Instead, she stared at her cousins and aunt and sought the old warmth of long-lost family.

Cissy needn't have worried about their reception or greeting Jessica with regal decorum. Like the exuberant children they'd been, Jessica and her older sister Lindsey shrieked with delight at the twins' appearance. Cissy yelled back in a wordless shout of happy greeting.

The four women restrained themselves from running across the space separating them, but they didn't precisely walk either. Within moments they were a knot of embracing arms, laughter, and joyful tears. They called each other's names and talked over each other, but Cissy wasn't sure of what was said. The glee of full hearts overrode everything else. Words were meaningless.

They began to talk sense when the initial burst of exhilaration eased enough to do so. Jessica chortled and tugged on a belt loop of Cissy's jeans.

"There's my rough-and-ready tomboy cousin. You haven't changed a bit, Cissy."

"Well, you have. When did you get so fat and ugly?"

Jessica shrieked with laughter, knowing the joke for what it was. In truth, she looked spectacular. The years since Cissy had seen her cousin had been more than kind. Jessica was almost thirty. Maturity, along with a few extra pounds, had softened her too-stark elfin features. Jessica was still tiny, especially compared to the Kalquorians standing nearby, but at least she no longer appeared as if a breeze would blow her away.

Her elder sister Lindsey planted a kiss on Cissy's cheek. Bigger boned with classically lovely features, Lindsey appeared unchanged from their last encounter. "We've missed you so much! I can hardly believe you're here."

"Can I join in?" came a melodious and calm voice.

Cissy and Tasha turned at once to see an older, shorter version of Jessica beaming at them. "Auntie Tara!" They wrapped her in a hug between them to kiss and exclaim with abandon once again.

When they'd calmed, Tara jerked her chin towards the three men closing on them. "Here are the rest. They've been almost as excited for your arrival as us."

One of the three emperors didn't have the typical black hair of the Kalquorians. His shoulder-length locks were the color of dark steel.

Blue-robed Dramok Emperor Clajak gave them a mischievous grin. The expression lit his broad, handsome face and crinkled the skin at the corners of his eyes. "Don't you dare bow to us, you two. Welcome home."

The heart-stopping gorgeous Nobek Emperor Bevau bowed, his red robes doing little to hide the perfect body beneath them. "If half the stories Jessica and Lindsey tell us are true, the empire will never be the same now that you're here." His perfect features grew more impossibly stunning as he grinned.

His comment brought laughter from everyone, including the often-alloof Imdiko Emperor Egilka. Though the Imperial Clan's eldest member was typically staid, his smile offered warmth as he added his welcome. Cissy thought Egilka should smile more often. It softened his sharp features.

He hugged the twins, wrapping them in the softness of his emerald green robes. Leaner than his clanmates, Egilka felt made of muscled granite to Cissy. Nice. Very nice. She had to remind herself not to grope her cousin's Imdiko.

When he released her, Cissy fixed Jessica with a glare. "You're telling stories on us? We might have a few of our own to share about the empress and the Imperial Sister."

That brought more laughter and fist-shaking from Jessica and Lindsey. "Put them in chains and throw them in the dungeons!" Jessica cried.

Clajak gave her a naughty grin. In a low voice so only their family could hear, he said, "We don't have dungeons, my love. As for the chains, those are reserved for you."

Cissy bellowed laughter with the emperors and Lindsey as Jessica turned pink. The small empress punched her Dramok none too gently in the stomach. He laughed harder.

Tasha rescued Jessica from the embarrassing attention. “Clajak, I’m sorry about the loss of your father Zarl. Jessica had the highest regard for him. I can only imagine how it’s affected you.”

Clajak’s hilarity fled, but his pleasant expression remained steady. “Thank you. I miss him more than I can tell, but I’m glad his pain is over. His life might have been cut short, but it was full and he was much loved. For that, I’m grateful.”

Jessica waved her hands as her eyes filled with tears. “Don’t get me started crying. I wish you could have met Father Zarl. He was wonderful.”

That started off a fresh round of hugs between the cousins and Aunt Tara. Cissy was sorry for Jessica’s pain, but it was good to see her cousin still had a tender heart beneath her fiery personality.

Clajak stroked Jessica’s hair. “Zarl would hate to see you crying over him again. Especially at this happy occasion. Your family has come home, and we must be glad.” His voice filled the space for the benefit of those gathered. “Cecilia and Natasha Salter, cousins to our empress, welcome to your new home of Kalquor.”