

**PRISONER  
OF  
WAR**

**BY KODI WOLF**



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Prisoner of War

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# CHAPTER I

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She kept her eyes closed and waited for the throbbing in her head to fade to a more tolerable level.

*Fuck!*

They'd been ambushed. She'd watched her team go down as she herself fell into the prepared pit. She'd been captured. This wasn't good. It would've been much better if she'd been killed in the fall.

She listened to two people having a conversation off to her right. They must've thought she was still asleep.

"Send her to Wren."

"Oh, come on, she doesn't look that stubborn. Hell, she's already got a broken leg, fractured ribs, and her right arm's a mess. They'll be patching her up for weeks to prepare her for that woman!"

"Those are our orders. Anybody ranked captain and above goes to Wren and her unit. And those markings make her a colonel. Besides, I recognize her. That's Luce of Claw Clan."

"Holy shit. Maybe we should just kill her now."

“Are you insane? If our superiors found out we had her and didn’t even try to get anything from her, *we’d* be sent to Wren. Prepare her for transfer to medical. I’ll mark the orders for transport.”

A rush of air and the voice was suddenly in her ear.

“Did ya get all that?”

She almost flinched at its sudden proximity, but her training kept her from reacting physically. She opened her eyes, but it was pitch black.

“You look a little nervous. Something wrong?”

She heard the humor in the voice, but refused to let any reaction show on her face. Her first thought, that she’d been blinded in the fall, was replaced by the staccato words of her psychology instructor.

*“Torture is simply a form of mental manipulation. It’s the fear and sense of hopelessness that twist one’s mind. Nothing is ever what it seems when dealing with the techniques of mind control.”*

She squeezed her eyes shut tightly and saw the sparks of color. Impulses from her eyes could still get to her brain, so the knock on her head hadn’t done that kind of damage, and blindness hadn’t been mentioned in her list of injuries.

It was more likely she was in a military intake facility equipped with the capability of flooding the room with the longer wavelengths of the electromagnetic spectrum while the personnel wore infrared glasses. It was a technique her own side used on its prisoners.

She felt the air move around her head and realized the asshole was no longer next to her. She closed her eyes again when she felt a needle enter her arm. As her consciousness slipped away, her whole body relaxed into it, the part of her mind that held out hope of escape recognizing a chance for rest and healing and going right to work.

When she woke again, it was still dark, but her eyes immediately picked out the shape of a room, which was scarcely lit by a multitude of tiny lights blinking from various machines scattered throughout the small chamber. She tried to lift her arms to push herself up to a sitting position, but they were both held fast by metal restraints, the right one of which encased her entire

arm, while the left simply secured her wrist. The sudden motion caused sharp pains to shoot down her right arm and Luce instantly stilled her movements, though not even her breathing changed to reflect the pain she was feeling.

She realized the restraint was also acting as a kind of cast to keep her injured limb immobile and carefully tested her legs. They too were bound by steel. Her right leg was encased the same as her right arm and it protested just as greatly at being disturbed. Her attempts to move her lower body had also made her aware of her broken ribs, and she suddenly regretted waking up at all.

*Fucking Delphinians. We've offered their people every godsdamned scientific and medical breakthrough we've ever made and they still insist on living in the fucking Dark Ages. If this was an Argolian hospital, I'd've been healed in a few hours.*

She heard a whirring sound and saw a glint of metal and glass out of the corner of her eye. She turned her head slightly and watched as a small bottle filled with clear liquid cycled through the machine controlling her IV. It pushed down into one of the free slots and was immediately emptied, the readout indicating the new medication had been added to her line. A few moments later, she was asleep again.

When she woke for the third time, the overhead lights were on and she was able to get a much better look at the room she was in. It was definitely a hospital room. There were machines all over the place keeping tabs on the state of her health. She waited for the IV machine to start cycling again, but it didn't.

A panel slid aside and a woman stepped through before it closed again behind her.

"How are you feeling?"

Her tone was just on the edge between compassionate and abrupt.

Luce looked at her and kept her mouth shut as she tried to place the woman's accent. It reminded her of an actress she'd once seen in an old vid from before the war. Luce thought she remembered the character was supposed to be from Black-footed Finch Clan, but she couldn't be sure the actress had been doing the accent right.

“I’m not here to interrogate you and I don’t think it’s a big secret that you’ve been injured and are in pain.”

*Yeah, definitely the same accent.*

“I just want to know if we should increase the painkillers. This is a hospital, not a concentration camp. No one here wants you to suffer.”

*And it would be nice to know what my pain threshold is, wouldn’t it?*

Luce just continued to stare and the woman finally shrugged and went about checking the machines.

“You’re doing really well. Your injuries are mending much faster than expected. I’d heard your people were working on new methods of genetic manipulation for healing. How old are you? Two? Three? I will never understand why you can’t just have children the way the Goddess intended. You know, that’s what this war is really about. We can’t just let you defile the sacred genetic code we were created with. Children should be born from a mother, not fully grown from a growth tank like a replacement organ.”

The nurse continued to check over the machines monitoring her body as Luce tried to ignore the woman’s monologue.

“Your people are missing out on so much. Watching a child grow up, the joys of shaping a young mind into a mature and productive adult... And you. You never had a childhood, did you? You were just suddenly awake and expected to fight in a war with no choice in the matter. We’ve offered your people freedom from that kind of servitude. I don’t understand why you don’t take it.”

Luce’s features remained impassive, but inside, her anger was raging. The woman was deluded. She didn’t offer freedom. She offered stagnation and slavery. The only reason the human species was even still on the planet was because a group of scientists, the founding mothers and fathers of her nation, had tinkered with human DNA and RNA to make the next generation immune to the harsh effects of a depleted ozone layer that let in the ultraviolet rays of the sun.

With such a successful foundation to build upon, her people had gone on to change a few more genes in order to make the human lung more tolerant of the deteriorating atmosphere due to

pollutants from factories, cars, and other chemical-producing inventions of the modern age.

In the span of a few decades, children were being born with more efficient lungs, better eyesight, more resilient skin, and greater muscle tone. The woman standing in front of her was no more from original 'sacred' stock than Luce was.

It was true that she'd gained consciousness in a sudden blast of clarity when she'd woken at the end of her growth cycle four years ago, but she hadn't been forced to join the war effort. Her parents had designed her with that specific goal in mind and nothing save death would've been able to keep her from fulfilling that destiny.

She supposed she could see how some people might interpret that as having the decision taken from her, but why was it any different from the random desires of those without intentional genetic programming? She knew what she wanted to do with her life and the joy she gained from using her body and mind to keep her people's way of life safe was just as real as anybody else's.

She did have plenty of other interests should the war end. Her martial arts training had been based on spiritual principles and she knew more healing techniques than most doctors. Her mind was specially designed for strategy and abstract processing, abilities that let her take snippets of information and leap to accurate conclusions. Her skills were transferable, no matter what this woman wanted to think about her 'slavery.'

The nurse finally finished with her examination and tapped in her findings on a handheld touch screen. She gave Luce one last look of disapproval and then exited through the same panel she'd entered from.

Luce stared around the room, studying it. She listened intently to try to ascertain what was beyond the walls of her room, but there was only silence. After about fifteen minutes of just lying there, she finally came to the conclusion that she was just plain bored. She decided if they weren't going to knock her out on purpose, she'd put herself under to use the time to focus her mind on speeding up her body's recovery.

The days passed pretty much the same as that first one. A nurse visited her once each day. It was always a different one, most likely to keep her from building up a rapport with one of

them and persuading them to let her go. He or she would proceed to check over the instruments, while proselytizing to her about her misplaced loyalties, until finally leaving her alone again. She was given food four times a day through a tube that was implanted directly into her stomach, and a similar setup made it unnecessary for her to use a lavatory. Twice a day, her restraints rotated to turn her onto her side, presumably to keep her from developing bedsores. She was never once released from her bindings. The plastic-covered bed even doubled as a bathtub and came complete with hot air jets that dried her thoroughly.

By her time sense, twenty-three days had passed when she was drugged again and woke up in a new location. She was in a padded rectangular room, about twenty feet by thirty feet, and wearing nothing save the two-inch-wide silver bands that went around her wrists and ankles. Diffuse white light came from the high ceiling and warm air circulated over her. She was lying in the middle of the white room, and after her initial assessment of her surroundings, she realized she wasn't being restrained.

Luce stood, testing the strength of her weakened muscles, and did a thorough search of the room. There were creases in the padding in the shapes of squares about two feet on a side, but she was unable to tell a difference between the cracks to figure out which set of squares outlined a door.

She kept looking anyway, intent on finding even the smallest flaw she might use to her advantage, but she was still startled when pressing on one of the pads caused several adjacent squares to slide into the floor, revealing bathroom facilities.

At first glance, the toilet, sink, and shower area appeared to be all smooth surfaces, and after closer inspection, her assessment held. The fixtures were wrought from a single piece of thick metal seamlessly integrated into the wall, so she had no hope of bending anything with her bare hands or ripping something out of the wall to use as a weapon.

After some experimentation, she figured out the facilities were motion and pressure activated. Holding her hands in the sink or standing on the mesh area under the showerhead started the water flowing, while touching the red 'up' or blue 'down' arrows on the wall let her change the water's temperature. Another icon showing what appeared to be bubbles let her add soap to the

water and when she was done, she touched an air jet icon to activate fans that sent out warm air to dry her.

The toilet worked similarly, only running water after she'd sat down. Another touch pad next to the toilet presented two icons showing a water spray and another air jet, which she realized were there to let her clean herself, since toilet paper was noticeably missing. When she stood up, the toilet flushed.

A few moments after she stepped out of the bathroom niche, the padded squares slid back into place. She touched the particular pad again, but only after about three full seconds of contact did the squares slide out of the way, so she knew it wasn't rigged to activate if she just casually brushed against the area. When she didn't enter the niche after about ten seconds, the squares slid back into place.

Luce completed her meticulous survey of the room, but didn't find any other hidden areas. She gave up on the idea of an easy escape, deciding instead to get to work on rebuilding her muscles. They'd atrophied from the effects of their enforced vacation.

She went through her exercises carefully, stopping before she went beyond what was comfortable. Normally, she would've pushed herself to her limits, but she knew she had to take it easy and work back up to her more intense routines slowly or else risk further injury.

She cooled down and then knelt in the middle of the room and meditated. She worked on calming her thrumming muscles and rapidly beating heart and then focused on honing her reflexes. She'd gotten lazy with the last few weeks of predictable routine and needed to get her edge back.

Which was why when six of the squares swung forward near one corner of her cell, Luce shot across the room, almost running right into a second wall before she could stop her forward momentum.

"Please stand in the corner with the blue light."

The words floated from a hidden speaker in the ceiling. She debated disobeying the feminine voice and staying where she was. Instead, she decided to see what was going on and moved to the corner that had been illuminated with a blue spotlight and waited.

Because of the corner she was in, she couldn't see what was happening beyond the opened door, but she heard a whisper of a scrape and guessed a second door was being opened. A tray of food was pushed into view beyond the edge of the padded door with what looked like an aluminum rod. Then the rod was retracted. A slight scrape signaled the outer door being closed, and then the padded door swung shut.

The blue light was replaced by the regular soft white of the rest of the room and Luce realized she was free to leave the corner again. She went to the tray and found two cups of water and several bowls of mush. The tray was cardboard and the cups and bowls were made of plastic coated paper. No utensils had been provided.

Luce realized her captors weren't planning on taking any chances with her, unfortunately. Though her mind leapt to the possibility of rolling up the paper and shoving it down a faceless guard's throat to choke him to death, she had to admit there wasn't much she could do to make a weapon out of the materials she'd been given. More to the point, she hadn't been allowed to even see anyone on which to use a weapon.

Her stomach interrupted her thoughts with a growl, so she tentatively scooped up some of the food with her bare fingers and took a taste. She was surprised to find the bland-looking paste was extremely palatable, but she still ate slowly, focusing on her body's reactions just in case the food was drugged.

She didn't feel anything out of place, so she kept eating. She eventually finished it all and set everything back on the tray when she was done. She waited to be ordered back into the corner, but after another hour passed with no more commands, she decided to take a nap.

Luce looked around the room and considered her options. There was no telling what threats might be hiding behind the walls, so she wasn't too keen on sleeping next to one of them. The middle of the room wasn't any better, though, since she'd be left vulnerable to attack from all sides.

Finally, she moved to lay by the door. At least she'd be alerted if it opened while she was sleeping, so hopefully no one would be able to sneak up on her in her weakened state. She closed her eyes, forcing herself to relax enough for sleep.

She woke instantly when the padded squares began nudging her aside. As soon as the door reached a ninety-degree angle, the request to stand in the corner came again.

Luce moved to stand in the blue-lit corner and watched as the metal rod she'd seen before headed unerringly for the empty food tray she'd deliberately left in the corner diagonally opposite from the door on the other side of the room. A small wire grabber slid out from the end of the segmented rod and latched onto the side of the tray to begin dragging it back to the door.

Luce quickly darted forward, but the instant her leg moved outside of the pool of blue light, the rod released its quarry and retracted in a blur. She was nowhere near fast enough to reach the door before it slammed shut with the speed and efficiency only a machine could muster. Even in peak condition, she could never hope to beat it. She didn't let her frustration show as she turned to walk back to the corner, but the blue light had vanished. She waited for it to come back on, but it didn't.

Not too long after, the lights dimmed, though they didn't completely go out, so she returned to the door and lay down to sleep again.

By her internal clock, it was another eight hours before she was woken up to go stand in the corner again, the lights already at full illumination. This time, she stayed where she was supposed to and received a new tray of food in return for her obedience. She was surprised to find an extra bowl of food, but she wasn't about to question it. It had been twelve hours since she'd last eaten and she was starving.

Once her food had settled, she went through a few basic exercise drills. Approximately four hours later, she was ordered to the corner again and the tray of food was replaced yet again.

Luce figured out the routine by the third repetition of the entire cycle. Food came every four hours, except for an eight-hour gap, during which time the lights were dimmed about half an hour after the last meal and brought back up about half an hour before the first meal. She decided to go along with it, at least until she was taken outside and could reset her inner time sense to reality, even though she knew that was the purpose behind the schedule, to potentially disrupt her body's natural rhythms and make her question reality.

She spent her time drilling, meditating, and being bored out of her skull. She'd never been in such good physical condition. The food had steadily changed from mush to more substantial fare and she'd realized that whoever was in charge of her care was very aware of her medical status. She was given more protein-rich foods and less sugars and starches to aid in her muscle building. She'd never eaten so healthy in her life.

The solitude was really starting to get to her, though. The only voice she heard, besides her own when she yelled during practice, was the one that requested her to 'stand in the corner with the blue light.' She could tell from the slightly altered inflections that it wasn't a recording, but the wording never deviated.

She began practicing more and more intense acrobatics in an attempt to keep herself active and consciously engaged. She considered talking to herself, but the very act itself would give away more about her state of mind than she considered acceptable. However, she knew if she let herself go numb, she'd be that much closer to breaking for whoever ended up in charge of her interrogation. She remembered the name Wren and wondered if the woman was watching her even now, studying her and deciding when the time would be ripe to begin.

She ran along the padded floor for half a dozen steps, jumped and ran for two steps to the left along the wall in front of her, and then leapt across the corner and took another two steps along that wall before landing on the floor again. She kept up her momentum and did it all again on the opposite wall.

The slightly coarse cloth that covered the foam padding on the walls gave her a good amount of friction for her feet to catch on and she was enjoying the thrill of defying gravity for a few seconds. She'd started out only being able to take a step or two along the wall before sliding back to the floor. Now, she was taking four full steps by rebounding off the corners. It was fun.

The padded door opened and Luce stopped. It had been less than two hours since her lunch according to her internal clock.

"Please stand in the corner with the blue light."

She went to the corner and stood, waiting to see what this new change in her routine would bring. The second door whispered open and Luce was unprepared for her reaction to seeing another

human being after nearly two months of isolation. She was near tears, but it was impossible to tell by looking at her. Her body was in a relaxed stance, her face showing nothing beyond bored interest.

“Hello. My name is Wren.”

It was a woman and she was very short in comparison to Luce’s six-foot frame. Her hair was blonde, falling in waves just beyond her shoulders, while Luce’s straight black hair went almost to her butt. The blonde wore a white skintight bodysuit that covered everything except her hands and feet, which were completely bare.

“This would normally be the time you would say your name was Luce, but since I already know that, I understand your silence. Do you know why you’re here?”

Her tone was conversational and clearly intended to be non-threatening. Luce studied her and took in all the non-verbal information she could. The woman standing in front of her was completely unafraid of her. That was interesting. There were no guards and the padded door had closed behind her, so there was nothing stopping Luce from simply crossing the room and breaking the woman’s neck long before a defense could be mounted.

However, there seemed to be a kind of... intensity to the small woman. Her pulse was slightly faster than Luce would’ve considered normal for someone of her size and obvious athletic fitness. Her eyes were also dilated more than what Luce would’ve expected for the level of light in the room.

It occurred to Luce that the woman was exhibiting all the signs of sexual arousal according to what she’d been taught concerning human sexual reproduction, but that didn’t make sense. This Wren woman was supposed to be some kind of torture specialist, wasn’t she?

“Okay. I can see you don’t intend to say anything, but I’ll explain things to you anyway. You’re being held as a prisoner of war by the National Security Intelligence Agency of the Republic of Delphinia. As a colonel in the Argolian Army, you no doubt have information that could be highly useful to my superiors. My job is to get that information from you. From previous encounters, my superiors learned that all of your people

are genetically engineered to be able to withstand pain in such a way that torture is basically useless. That's where I come in. I don't use pain, I use pleasure."

Wren paused to let that information sink in, then continued.

"You will never leave this place. There is absolutely no escape. I am the only human being you will ever come in contact with from now until the day you die. The more you cooperate, the more comfortable your stay here will be. You will not be killed, or in any way harmed, even after your usefulness has ended. If you attempt to hurt me, you will simply be dooming yourself to starvation, along with the other prisoners stationed here. From your psych profile, I don't believe you will choose suicide. Trying to take me hostage won't work either because I'm the only one who would hear your demands and I'm prepared to die rather than let you go."

Luce tried to digest everything she'd just been told. This was something she'd never been prepared for. The woman was right about her being immune to most forms of torture. At a certain point, the pain receptors in her brain would short out and that would trigger the rest of her body to shut down and she would die soon after.

But pleasure? How could one torture with pleasure? She'd spent her whole life waging war. Pleasure never entered into it, except that pleasure she derived from a job well done. She knew a little about it as part of her biology studies, and her parents and other people were in obviously sexual relationships, but beyond that...

"I will begin this the easy way. I won't even touch you if you answer my questions truthfully. It's up to you what happens."

Luce maintained her relaxed pose even though she was shaking inside.

"What is the real troop strength of the Argolian forces? Include all the secret camps of reserve forces you know of."

Luce didn't even bat an eyelash. The question helped her get internal control of herself. She'd been trained to withstand hostile questioning right up to her dying breath. Whatever this 'pleasure torture' was, she'd handle it.

"Maybe I should start with something easier. Something we both know the answer to."

Wren took two slow steps forward and Luce reflexively stepped away from the corner to brace for combat. Wren smiled slightly.

“Hold. East.”

Luce was suddenly lifted off the floor as her body was enveloped in a localized antigravity field. She was floated to the side until she was centered in front of what she guessed must be the eastern wall, then propelled backwards, landing with a thump against the padded wall behind her as her arms and legs were pulled into a wide X by the metal cuffs around her wrists and ankles. Even using all her considerable strength, she was unable to budge the magnetic restraints that held her naked body bound to the wall several inches above the floor.

Wren continued her slow steps forward, staring into Luce’s eyes as she came to a halt only a foot away from the prisoner. Wren saw confusion and mild fear there, but Luce was still very much in control of herself despite her confinement.

The blonde knelt down and didn’t hesitate for even a moment as she leaned forward and licked up Luce’s right thigh. When she reached the crease at her hip, she stopped and looked up. Luce’s eyes were wide and the fear appeared to have increased to a little more than mild.

Wren dropped to just above Luce’s left knee and moistened her tongue in her mouth. Then she traced a similar path upward, the way she had on Luce’s right thigh, but she licked more slowly, letting Luce’s mind attempt to categorize the new sensations being introduced to her body.

Nearly every soldier Wren had come across had been innocent in the ways of physical sexual pleasure. Due to their genetic programming, it was never considered an important part of their studies, and apparently, what one did not know about, one did not miss.

Wren made it to the crease at Luce’s hip again, only on the opposite side, and gave it a sucking kiss. She looked up and saw Luce’s breathing was a little faster. It was beginning to match Wren’s own.

Wren continued to look up, taking in every single little reaction that Luce had to her touch as she kissed across the prisoner’s stomach, just above her pubic hair. Luce’s stomach

fluttered and contracted, the muscles bunching beneath the skin to push a harsh little gasp out of her mouth. Wren saw the bound woman blush at her momentary loss of control.

Luce closed her eyes. She had to get to a place of calm. Meditation could help her maintain control over her body's responses. She began a low chant in her mind that immediately vanished when she felt Wren's tongue flick over her clitoris. Her eyes snapped open and she looked down in stunned disbelief.

Wren nodded internally to herself when she saw Luce's eyes open again. It wouldn't do for the prisoner to escape mentally. She trailed kisses all over Luce's taut stomach and grinned outwardly with every undulation her attentions caused.

After covering every square inch of the firm flesh, she moved upward, bracing her hands on either side of Luce's torso as she got to her feet. Her eyes looked up once more to gauge Luce's arousal and she saw shiny blue eyes staring at her in something akin to both shock and fascination.

She held eye contact as she lowered her mouth over one of Luce's nipples and ever so gently let it rest between her lips. Luce inhaled sharply and her chest rose and pushed into Wren's mouth. Wren smiled around the nipple and then dabbed at it with her tongue, sucking very softly at the increasingly tense flesh.

Luce groaned. She felt herself flush in embarrassment for such a lack of control. She could just imagine her instructors shaking their heads in disappointment. She gained a little strength from the imagery and tried to firm her resolve to resist this strange torture. She would not give in. She could handle this.

Wren saw the hardening look in Luce's eyes and had to smile. That determination wouldn't last very long. Not if she had anything to do with it. She bit down on the nipple in her mouth and sucked it hard.

Luce gasped and her breathing went from slow and controlled to fast and harsh in a matter of moments. The images of a few seconds ago completely vanished and she was left only with the signals coming from her body that told her she wanted more.

Wren continued to suck and pulled her head away to let the nipple snap back to its owner's body. She never relinquished eye contact as she gently pushed off the wall and brought her hands to either side of Luce's ribcage. She stroked up and down with

the palms of her hands. She adjusted the amount of pressure as she studied Luce's reactions, finally settling on an almost firm touch to keep the sensation sensual and teasing. Too light and she could see she was tickling. Too hard and she could see Luce's control returning.

Luce pulled on her restraints again. Her wrists didn't move even a fraction of an inch and the silver cuffs were molded to her skin in such a way that they didn't even cause any chafing, which would've at least given her something else to focus on. Her stomach muscles constantly rippled under the attentions of Wren's hands.

Wren let her palms come to rest on each side of Luce's stomach and then she pressed her body full-length against the prisoner's. Her mouth was at just the right height to take in Luce's other nipple, so she did, not trying to hide her own moan of pleasure when she tasted the firm little protuberance pressing against her tongue. She sucked, letting her lips open wide to take in the surrounding flesh, while her tongue swirled around the nipple.

Luce arched her back and then tried to still the reflex reaction her body had found lying dormant in its repertoire of appropriate responses to having one's nipple sucked. She'd given up on trying to control her breathing, but encouraging her captor was something else entirely.

Wren ground her hips gently into Luce's mound and smiled when Luce thrust her hips up to increase the contact. She looked up at Luce's moan. From the look on the prisoner's face, the moan had been a combination of pleasure from what Wren was doing and frustration at her obvious inability to win the struggle against her body's wishes.

Luce felt Wren's mouth leave her breast and then Wren's body pulled away a short distance.

"Lower. Six inches."

Luce felt her body slide along the padded wall until the bottoms of her feet were flat against the floor. With her legs spread as far apart as they were, this put her head almost level with Wren's.

Wren lifted her hands and cupped each side of Luce's face. She gently rubbed along the soft skin. Wren ducked her head and

kissed the underside of Luce's chin. It was a risk because the soldier had just enough mobility to bring her chin down hard enough to hurt Wren, but from the look she saw on Luce's face, the prisoner wasn't thinking too clearly about anything at the moment.

Just as Wren had suspected, when she touched her lips to Luce's neck, Luce turned her head to the side in silent invitation. Wren sucked hard in various places, biting when the mood struck her and leaving several bruising marks on the surface of Luce's skin.

Luce closed her eyes. Her body was not her own anymore. Why hadn't she been warned about this? She had no defenses against this kind of assault. She'd never been taught to fight something that felt so damn good.

Her eyes opened again when she felt Wren gently sucking on her earlobe. She could feel Wren's tongue caressing her skin, the sharp little teeth nipping at her flesh, and she groaned out her next breath. She just wouldn't speak, that was all. As long as she didn't actually form words, then she could never give away any secrets.

Wren sniffed the air. She was hungry and it was time. She gave a last lick to the plump earlobe she'd been feasting on and then licked and sucked at the woman's neck as she descended Luce's body. She licked over the sweating skin between Luce's breasts, then licked and sucked each breast just for good measure. Her hands caressed the sides of Luce's body as she kissed, nipped, and licked the prisoner's stomach.

Finally, Wren was on her knees, each of her hands resting on a hip.

"Raise. Six inches."

Luce was returned to her previous position and Wren inhaled the scent of Luce's arousal, now that the prisoner's sex was right in front of her face. The air was thick with the woman's pheromones and Wren shuddered slightly. She grazed her hands over Luce's hips and the tops of her thighs before threading her fingers through the soft curly hairs covering Luce's sex.

Luce felt Wren's fingers spreading her labia apart and when Wren's tongue touched her sensitive flesh, she cried out. Her

breathing escalated to gasping and she struggled hard against her bonds, even as her pelvis thrust forward to increase the contact.

Wren moaned. Luce's scent, the feel of her slick skin, the taste of her, was very potent. The only thing that kept Wren in check was her extensive training in denying her own desires. To get her fill, she would have to drag this out anyway and Wren knew how to look at the long view.

Luce held her pelvis still, thrust away from the wall as she felt Wren's tongue pressed flat against her inner folds. Luce looked down and was caught in Wren's steady stare. She felt as though a complete circuit had been created by locking gazes with the blonde. She couldn't look away as pleasure shot through her body and her breaths increased to panting.

Wren very deliberately held Luce's eyes as she tilted her head up to drag her flattened tongue over Luce's moist flesh. She ended with the tip of her tongue, giving a last little flick over Luce's clit before starting over again.

Luce's hips jerked and she grunted out a small whimper. Her head fell back against the wall as she felt Wren lick her again and then again. She lost count after about the first dozen. Wren's tongue was steady and slow and firm. The rough texture stimulated her smooth flesh in the most aggravating way. She wanted to feel that tongue just a little to the left or right. There was skin there that was just crying out for attention.

Wren stopped her tongue from flicking across Luce's clit again and instead took the swollen nub softly into her mouth. Her lips wrapped around it, creating a gentle pressure, and then she held still, while Luce circled her hips to move herself against Wren's mouth.

Luce had completely forgotten the purpose of this incredible pleasure. She'd even forgotten there was a reason why she was restrained against the padded wall. She moaned as she rubbed her sex against Wren's mouth, trying desperately to increase her stimulation. There was something her body was striving for and she was perfectly content to let it do whatever it wanted, so long as the exquisite sensations didn't stop.

Wren could feel Luce's pleasure building and she encouraged it with gentle pursings of her lips and caresses with her tongue. Before it edged into orgasm, Wren drew her lips down, releasing

Luce's clit, but not surrendering contact with the hot flesh below it.

Luce grunted her disappointment, then gasped anew when she felt Wren's tongue lick at the wetness that had gathered at the entrance to her vagina and which was slicking her inner thighs. Her body had another automatic response to this, which was to tilt her pelvis up as far as she physically could and to widen her thighs as much as possible with her ankles locked in place.

Wren groaned as she tasted Luce's sexual essence from its source. It was so much more potent than the woman's airborne pheromones. She dipped her tongue in again and again and decided she wouldn't be able to get her fill anytime soon. That could be a problem. One her superiors had overlooked.

Wren let the thoughts drift away and concentrated on sucking every last drop of Luce's essence from her body. She speared her tongue inside and let new wetness cover it before pulling it out again. She heard Luce groan and Wren's hands moved up to grip around Luce's hips. She kneaded the firm muscles and drove her tongue in once again. She intended to milk Luce to the brink of insanity.

Luce thrashed her head back and forth and her whole body writhed under Wren's attentions. It was quite amazing how much movement she was able to manage while being bound to the wall so tightly. Her thighs began to clench and she felt a hot tingling begin in her stomach that caused her breathing to almost hyperventilate. Then Wren pulled away and got unsteadily to her feet and Luce looked at her in shock as she whimpered without meaning to.

Wren wiped her face, licking her fingers clean after each swipe until the glistening substance had been completely removed from her cheeks, mouth, and chin. She never took her eyes away from Luce's. She used the time to catch her breath while watching Luce's remain almost the same.

"Tell me your full name and rank in the Argolian Army."

Luce's eyes grew wide and she whimpered again. She couldn't give in, not even once. That was what her instructors had taught her. Questioning built upon known answers was a basic technique of hostile interrogation. It would become easier and easier to answer more invasive questions as time went on

until she was giving away secrets she'd sworn she would die to protect.

Wren pulled a thumb-sized device out of a tiny pouch attached to her jumpsuit at the small of her back. She squeezed one end of it and the other end opened slightly. She bent over and gently clamped the device to Luce's prominent clit.

"On. Three seconds. Five-minute intervals. Cycle indefinitely."

Luce felt a vibration at her clit and writhed into it. Then it abruptly stopped after only a few seconds.

"When you answer the question, I'll return and give you the relief you seek. All you need to do is tell me your full name and rank and I will give you satisfaction. I promise."

Wren waited a few moments to see if Luce would change her mind immediately, though she doubted it. Luce continued to stare at her in disbelief and Wren turned towards the padded panels that marked the door.

"Open."

The door swung open and Wren walked towards it. She stopped just before the edge of the door. She looked into Luce's tortured expression.

"Remember. All you have to do is answer the question. I'll hear you and return to give you relief."

Wren turned away and the padded panels closed behind her.

Luce was in a state of shock. Her body could only focus on one thing, release, while her mind attempted to rein itself in and take back control. She concentrated on her breathing, urging her lungs to take slow measured breaths.

Then the vibrations jolted through her clit and she was back at square one, gasping for breath and moaning for more, though she did manage to refrain from forming words. Whether that was because she still had a little control left or she was simply incapable of linguistic vocalizations was debatable.

Every time Luce managed to get her heart rate down or her breathing to slow, the device clamped to her clitoris would exercise its relentless timing and she'd be writhing again. After a dozen cycles of this, Luce got the idea to try to go with it. Maybe if she overstimulated herself, she would find the relief Wren had mentioned. She remembered it being described as physically

similar to a seizure, so maybe she would just pass out and awake later without this insatiable need for more.

She counted down the seconds and arched her hips into the sensation when it came. But three seconds was nowhere near enough time to force her over the edge into oblivion. Another dozen cycles and she had to admit that the timing was absolutely perfect to keep her right on the edge. She couldn't calm down and she couldn't climb any higher.

All Wren wanted from her was information Wren already had. She'd be more careful next time about letting her body react to what the woman did to her. She just needed... release. She couldn't give it to herself. Wren was the only one who could help her. Just a few words and Wren would come back and finish this. It would be so easy.

Luce shook her head. The woman could've been lying. What if she just kept asking more questions, leaving Luce to suffer, bound to the wall, with no hope of relief?

The thought bolstered her reserves for a moment. If she had no hope of relief, maybe her body would stop striving for it. But even through her lust-clouded vision, Luce was sure she hadn't seen any signs of deception on Wren's part. She wasn't infallible, but she did know what to look for, and Wren had appeared to be telling the absolute truth. If Luce gave her what she wanted, Wren would give her satisfaction. Luce was sure of it.

Luce felt several drops of sweat trickle down her skin from the strain of muscles that had been aroused for far too long without completion. She tried to remember what her teachers had told her. She tried to listen to their words.

The device went off again and her hips bucked.

"Please."

It was the first word she'd allowed herself and she knew she was losing ground fast. Begging was the first sign of admitting that one was no longer in control. Once that was done, she knew it was just a matter of time before she gave in.

Judging by the number of cycles she'd endured, she'd been bound to the wall for over two hours. Food should've arrived half an hour ago. How long would Wren allow her to go without food or water? Maybe if she lasted long enough, she would

simply expire before she could be forced into revealing any information.

The vibrations stormed through her clit again and she whimpered. Enough was enough. It was just her name and rank, not vital secrets.

“Luce of Claw Clan, Colonel in the Special Forces of the Argolian Army,” Luce grated out and then went back to panting.

Before the device could go off again, the door opened and Wren walked in. She no longer wore her bodysuit and her skin was flushed. Her eyes were a blazing green as she walked purposefully up to Luce’s body and pressed herself against it.

Wren pulled the clitoral stimulator off the prisoner’s body and tossed it behind her before both her hands went to the sides of Luce’s face, holding the bound woman’s head still as she attacked her mouth.

Luce gave back as much as she could in an attempt to increase her own pleasure. She ravaged the mouth that was trying to control her. She’d never been kissed, nor kissed anyone else, but her tongue seemed to know exactly what it was doing as it dueled with Wren’s.

They shared their whimpers and groans without any second thoughts.

Wren’s hands ran over every bit of exposed flesh they could find. Wren ground herself between Luce’s spread thighs and felt the woman’s answering thrusts. She pulled her lips away and let her tongue slide out of Luce’s sucking embrace as she fell to her knees.

Wren’s hands kneaded Luce’s breasts and the woman pushed into them, moaning her pleasure. Then Wren slid her hands down the writhing and tense muscles of Luce’s stomach until she was at the prisoner’s center. In only seconds, she was lapping at the sopping entrance to Luce’s vagina.

Luce couldn’t control her body’s movements. She couldn’t even stop the moaning that sounded out of her with every exhaled breath. She just didn’t care anymore. She thrust harder at Wren’s face, grinding her sex into the blonde’s mouth, and felt an extra wave of pleasure pass through her when she heard the woman moan contentedly in response.

Wren was beyond what she considered safe. She couldn't have stopped even if she'd wanted to. Somewhere in the back of her mind, she realized she'd become addicted to Luce's pheromones with only two samplings. Her superiors were not going to be pleased if they found out about it either.

Wren shut up her internal meanderings and speared her tongue inside Luce. She had to taste the potent fluid from its source.

Luce was surprised at the high-pitched sounds coming from her throat. Her voice was normally very deep, but between her accelerated breathing and her steadily rising enjoyment of her body's sensations, her vocal chords had constricted so much as to take her from an alto to a soprano.

Wren realized she had to stop or she never would. She placed her thumb over Luce's clit and rubbed it gently several times. The flood that washed over her tongue as Luce screamed her release never got past her chin. She quickly drank it all in, knowing it might be some time before she could get another fix.

Luce thought she might pass out as pleasure exploded in every cell of her body, starting with her clit and radiating in all directions. Not one of her muscles was under her command as they convulsed in unison with the peaks and valleys of her first climax. It was almost painful, but the genuine bliss of sexual fulfillment outweighed any physical discomfort she felt.

Wren continued to lick at Luce's folds until she'd claimed the last drop. Then she sat back on her heels and looked up at the prisoner. Luce's breathing was still panting and she was looking at Wren with a combination of admiration, fear, and gratitude. Wren got to her feet and stood back a few paces.

"Release."

The magnetic restraints let go of Luce's wrists and ankles at the same time and she crumpled to the floor. She braced herself on her hands and knees, her eyes focused on the floor as she tried to ground herself.

Wren smiled slightly at the image. She bent to pick up the discarded stimulator and then backed away toward the door.

"Open," Wren called into the air.

The door opened and Wren stood at its entrance. She gave Luce one last look and then was gone again.

Luce stayed where she was for several long minutes, trying to get her breathing under control. She felt spent and exhilarated all at the same time. Her thoughts were a jumbled mess as she tried to decide what to do, but she couldn't seem to move. Her body was paralyzed as her mind relived the past few minutes over and over again.

The taste of Wren's tongue in her mouth, the feel of her lips, the throbbing in her breasts as Wren squeezed them, the incredible sensation of having her sex licked and sucked by the blonde...

*No!*

Luce shook her head in violent negation as she worked her lips and tongue, swallowing hard in an attempt to rid it of Wren's flavor. Her mouth was dry from all her heavy breathing, so it took several tries, but the effort seemed to encourage the rest of her body that it was okay to move.

She sat up, resting her hands on her thighs as she assumed a meditative pose. She had to calm down. She couldn't process everything she'd just experienced as long as she remained in her current mental state. She slowed her breathing and her heartbeat eventually decelerated to match the quieter rhythm.

As her body calmed, so did her mind, and Luce began organizing everything she'd learned over the past few hours into something useful.

First and foremost was the knowledge that her captors were doing their very best to make her dependent on Wren, not only for continued survival, but also for physical comfort. Considering how easily she'd given in to Wren, Luce had to admit her constant isolation had been more effective than she'd originally estimated.

Luce cringed inside. It had been more than effective. She'd never thought it would be so easy to betray her people, never even thought she was capable of such an act. Yet, she'd yielded to Wren, yielded to the pleasure, with hardly a fight. Granted, she hadn't actually handed over any real information, but all her training had been reduced to nothing as her body had been given a glimpse of...

What? What had been so fucking important that she'd been willing to hand over her name and rank, despite knowing it was the first step towards becoming a traitor?

Luce felt her breathing go shallow as she remembered Wren's lips and tongue on her sex. Her nipples tightened in the warm air of her cell and she unconsciously rocked as she squeezed her thighs together.

Luce was in trouble and she knew it. She couldn't even begin to imagine how she was going to hold out when Wren returned for another session. Though she'd been fully informed regarding the clinical processes of human sexual reproduction, that kind of understanding simply didn't translate to the real world experience of having her first orgasm.

The feeling had been... There just weren't words.

Maybe if she'd had some kind of warning, she could've prepared herself, but as far as she knew, her people had no idea the Delphinians were using such novel tactics on their prisoners.

*How am I supposed to fight something that feels so fucking good?*

Luce took a deep breath. She couldn't think like that. There had to be a way.

Biologically, Luce knew how humans normally 'grew up' when they matured at a normal rate. Around the ages of twelve to fourteen, the pituitary gland activated all kinds of hormonal changes and 'teenagers' as they were called became sexually aware, among other things.

Like most Argolians, Luce had never gone through that stage. She'd been unconscious while her mind had been fed all the knowledge she would've otherwise been forced to learn through years of schooling. She'd also been given information about her family, her own name, and the world in general so that when she woke, she could immediately begin her life.

Though she knew what sex was and knew people in romantic sexual relationships, there'd been no overwhelming drive to experience it firsthand just yet. Her life was so full of other more important activities. At least she'd thought they were more important until about three hours ago.

Now, it was like something had been awakened within her and Luce didn't have the first clue how to make it go back to sleep.

The only thing she knew was that she couldn't give in to this new need to experience that kind of pleasure again. She'd already failed once. She couldn't let it happen again. She'd just have to be strong. She was a soldier after all. She could ignore pain. She would ignore the pleasure as well.



## CHAPTER 2

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Wren studied the monitors that filled one whole wall of the large control room. She could view any place in the entire facility from this room, but at the moment, the only screen she saw was the one that gave her a view of room L2-06. A tall dark-haired woman was running through several martial arts drills and she couldn't take her eyes off the woman.

Wren felt an ache inside the pit of her stomach that was slowly turning into a burn. She was in real trouble. Protocol dictated that she wait at least one week before interrogating Luce again. The loneliness would heighten the woman's inclination to give in a second time, which would of course lead to easier and easier surrenders as time went on. If Wren visited her now, after only two days, the effects would be much less potent.

Once more, Wren tried to imagine waiting another five days before getting to taste the woman again and felt the burning sensation flare into a full-blown inferno in her belly. The pain nearly doubled her over.

Wren sat down heavily in the chair she'd neglected in favor of standing. She took several deep breaths as she tried to relax her

cramping stomach muscles. After a few minutes, the pain eased off somewhat and she tapped a few keys, bringing up her schedule on one of the closest monitors. She would just have to keep busy. There were plenty of other prisoners she had to attend to.

The blonde checked her schedule one last time and then returned the monitor's function to its previous duty of showing one of the hallways leading to several of the prisoners' rooms. She stood up and concentrated on not feeling the pain that had become her constant companion in the last twenty-four hours.

Wren visited three different prisoners. Two were strictly social visits. The prisoners had told her everything they knew, but like all the others before them, they'd been deemed unsuitable for indoctrination into the Delphinian ranks, so now they were treated almost as honored guests, though they could never leave.

Wren didn't think her superiors were happy about the arrangement, but previous efforts had taught them that to get what they wanted, they needed a particular kind of interrogator. Unfortunately, one of the traits that was necessary included compassion, so in order to keep Wren capable of doing her job, they had to keep the prisoners alive even after their usefulness had come to an end.

Previous interrogators who had lacked the traits that kept them from mistreating the inmates had been unable to gain any valuable information. The prisoners chose death through starvation if nothing else was open to them. Similarly, the interrogators who had possessed those traits that made them good at their job had soon fallen into a depression, a few had even committed suicide, when their prisoners had been executed.

Wren was the first of her kind, both able to perform her job perfectly and work within a program that allowed her a clear conscience. She'd finally reached the end of her year-long probation period and was considered a success. If her superiors found out about this latest development, she knew it would all be over. Not just for her, but for the prisoners as well.

The third prisoner Wren visited was very close to breaking. This was his fifth session and he had begun to openly beg for release. He tried to bargain with her, saying he would tell her what she wanted to know, if she would just let him have some

relief, but she was adamant that he tell her first. The outside door had almost closed when she heard him start to spill his guts. The information she'd requested came out in a rush and she was giving him everything he wanted a half hour later.

None of it was enough. She couldn't understand it. She'd done nothing but consume pheromones over the past few hours. At the very least, it should've taken the edge off her symptoms, but the burning within her was growing at an alarming rate, so she quickly headed to the med-center to run a diagnostic.

Wren did her best to ignore the pain and stood perfectly still while the computer conducted its scans. When it was finished, she retrieved the report and began to read. As the words filtered through her consciousness, Wren slowly sank to the floor, her worst fears confirmed.

The pheromones attached to the fluids she collected from the prisoners were normally enough to keep her alive, to feed her biological need for them, which had been genetically engineered into her DNA, along with a heightened sex drive. Unfortunately, her taste of Luce's vaginal juices, which carried a unique genetic marker, had triggered a dormant set of genes that now fed exclusively on the dark woman's essence. If she didn't ingest a large amount of the colonel's pheromones soon, she was going to die.

Wren had tried to tell herself she was wrong, but she'd recognized the early warning signs of withdrawal soon after leaving Luce's presence two days ago. Now, she had the clinical evidence staring her in the face and she couldn't deny it no matter how much she wanted to.

According to the computer's analysis, Wren was in the secondary stages of terminal withdrawal. It should've taken her a week to reach that phase and that was only with complete isolation. Though her body could really only get enough of the chemical compounds when she processed them in liquid form, just being in the presence of another human would allow her to gain at least a little relief from the oxidized pheromones that floated in the air when a person's sweat evaporated.

The whole thing had been explained to her during the first few weeks of her life, which had included a demonstration of the seriousness of her condition. She'd been completely cut off from

all human contact for twelve days. Her superiors had believed it would help reduce any future disobedience on her part and they'd been right. The pain had been excruciating and she had no desire to repeat the experience.

However, this newly activated gene set not only refused to recognize any of the other pheromones she'd been consuming, it also seemed to be much faster at processing what little she'd acquired from Luce during their first two encounters.

Wren set the plastic touch screen aside and considered her options. There was no way for her to synthesize Luce's pheromones. She wasn't allowed access to that kind of technology for obvious reasons. Unless she was willing to die, she was going to have to find a way to be in Luce's presence at least once every forty-eight hours. She could probably survive for a short while on the airborne pheromones she would inhale just by being near the prisoner, but she would have to taste the woman soon.

Wren doubted her superiors would consider this an acceptable solution. That meant she had to keep them from finding out.

She'd learned a few months ago that her medical status wasn't being monitored to the same degree as the prisoners. While processing the most recent transfers before Luce—which involved undressing them, applying their personal security bands, and moving them to their cells—Wren had contracted a minor cold from one of the prisoners who had apparently picked it up from the tech who had put her in stasis.

The prisoner's immune system had done its job of fighting off the illness with hardly a symptom once she'd woken up from hibernation, but Wren had been forced to cancel all her appointments the next day as she lay in bed with a sore throat, stuffed up nose, and raging headache.

When she'd received a call later that evening, she'd assumed it would be regarding the illness and cancellations, but instead she'd been questioned about the prisoner and what steps were being taken to ensure a speedy recovery. Her own sickness had obviously come as a surprise and had been easily dismissed, then quickly followed up with an admonition to get back to work as soon as she was no longer a danger to the other prisoners.

Which meant the scan she'd just performed was unlikely to have raised any immediate red flags. She just had to keep it that way.

It was easy enough to delete the recent medical report and overwrite the storage with a copy of a previous scan, then delete that one as well. Unless someone was actively logged in and looking at this specific section of the system right this second, no one would ever know of the deleted files, since backups were only made at the end of each day and were usually transferred by hardcopy every other month or so to maintain the highest security.

Only a full system audit would be able to recover the deleted copy, which still wouldn't reveal the existence of the original scan, just raise the question of why a second copy had been made at all. Thankfully, she hadn't been subjected to that kind of scrutiny since the first few months of her probation, so when no alarms went off at her actions, she assumed her superiors had better things to do with their time and continued on. She finished purging the memory and then headed towards Luce's room.

Wren stood outside the door. Inset next to it was a small viewscreen that showed the interior of the cell. According to the schedule, Luce should've finished lunch two hours ago. At the moment, the woman was engaged in some kind of complicated isometric balancing exercise.

The blonde forced herself to relax as she spoke.

"Open."

She waited for the green light above the door to come on, signaling that the inner door had opened. When it lit, her next words flowed more easily.

"Please stand in the corner with the blue light."

She waited again, knowing the door wouldn't budge until the room's sensors had confirmed the prisoner's location in the appropriate corner. As soon as Luce took up position, the heavy door swung wide and Wren walked in.

Luce stood, bathed in the glowing blue light. She'd known it was Wren coming to visit her as soon as she'd heard the request filter down from the ceiling only a couple hours after her most recent meal. She'd prepared herself as well as she could, but the instant her eyes fell on the small blonde, she knew her greatest

enemy was going to be her own body. She could feel her skin flushing with arousal as her stomach did little flip-flops in anticipation of what was to come.

Wren stopped at the edge of the door, her heart beating faster at just being in the same room with the woman. As the doors closed, causing the blue light to extinguish, Wren took slow unsteady breaths of the air around her. She immediately felt the burning in her stomach lessen somewhat and smiled.

Luce narrowed her eyes as she took in the interrogator's stance. Something was wrong. Wren was holding herself stiffly, almost as if she was in pain, and her breathing was just a touch off. It definitely wasn't the controlled arousal she'd witnessed a couple days ago. Before she could speculate any further, Wren spoke.

"Are you ready to answer another question today?"

Luce instantly straightened, dismissing her earlier concerns. This woman was the enemy. She had to get that through her head. Regardless of her tactics, the blonde had only one goal in mind and that was to force Luce to betray her people. However, Luce was ready this time. She knew what to expect now and she wouldn't give in. She'd be strong. She wouldn't let the woman get to her.

Wren saw the determination in the soldier's expression and couldn't help but smirk in response. She loved a challenge and considering her own life was hanging in the balance, not to mention the lives of the other prisoners should she fail, Wren had plenty of motivation to succeed.

"I'll take that as a no. All right, why don't we try another easy one. How many troops were under your command during your last mission?"

Luce remained impassive as she worked to center her mind and ignore her body's demands for attention. If she could start out resisting from the very beginning, maybe she would be able to withstand whatever Wren had in store for her. Luce's mind took that moment to supply her with vivid memories of what the interrogator was capable of doing to her body and she barely suppressed her groan of frustration.

Wren stepped forward, but the prisoner ignored her. At least she tried to pretend she was ignoring her, but Wren could see a

blush of arousal quickly spreading over most of Luce's body. Another step and the prisoner gave up all pretense as she tried to press her body further back into the padded walls of the corner as though they could somehow offer her escape or a place to hide.

Luce couldn't believe how she was reacting. She knew she probably looked like she was terrified and she was. But it wasn't fear of what she knew was coming. It was her overwhelming physical response to the blonde's proximity. She was desperate for Wren's touch. The closer the woman came to her, the more she considered answering Wren's question just so she could feel that intense pleasure again.

Luce mentally shook her head. She was practically giving in before Wren had even touched her. She briefly considered attacking the woman. Wren was in no position to defend herself and Luce could send her to her next life before her body hit the floor. However, just the thought made her feel sick and she quickly dismissed the idea.

Instead, Luce attempted to retreat into her mind, closing her eyes against the beautiful blonde advancing on her. She'd never intentionally blinded herself to an attack before, but there was an irrational part of her mind that seemed to think if she couldn't see Wren, if she could just ignore the temptation, maybe it would go away.

Wren reached out her fingers and used the tips to caress the prisoner's lips. Luce tossed her head to the side to keep Wren's fingers from touching her, but Wren simply changed her caress to cup the side of Luce's face.

Luce thought about trying to move away, put some distance between their bodies, but she knew Wren could simply restrain her against the wall again and Luce wanted to feel at least some kind of freedom. Then she had an idea. Maybe she could use the woman's own tactics against her.

Luce opened her eyes and slowly reached her arms up, placing her hands on Wren's back. She smoothed her palms over the silky material of Wren's jumpsuit and pulled her a little closer.

Wren studied Luce's face as she felt the woman's hands move across her back. It was obvious Luce was attempting to take control. Luce was trying to distract her by heightening Wren's own physical desires.

Wren grinned. They always tried that trick. They never realized they were working against themselves until it was too late. She'd broken some of the prisoners simply by denying them access to her body after several sessions. For some, once they understood how stimulating it was to touch someone else intimately, they could never get the desire out of their minds. Wren wondered if that technique would work on Luce.

Luce felt the small body melting into her embrace and a smile graced her lips. Wren was staring heatedly up at her, obviously waiting for Luce to continue. Luce lowered her head and kissed the lips that lifted up to meet her.

Wren groaned. She hadn't meant to, but flashes of the last time she'd kissed Luce were streaking through her mind and she realized her memory hadn't been able to capture the intensity she felt when her lips were pressed against the prisoner's.

Wren pushed her tongue inside Luce's mouth and felt the woman shiver. She smiled a little at the reaction and then backed off slightly to let Luce regroup and take back control.

It only took a moment before Luce's tongue followed Wren's retreating muscle into the blonde's mouth. Luce's exploration was a little tentative at first, her need not as acute as the last time she'd kissed the interrogator, but soon the sensations were sending waves of pleasure from her mouth to her abdomen and below and she wanted to increase that pleasure.

Wren's hands slid down Luce's bare back and cupped her buttocks gently. Then she began to knead the flesh in time with Luce's oral movements. Very soon, the prisoner was rubbing against Wren's pubic mound with her own in the same rhythm.

Wren felt Luce's fingers pulling at the zipper that sealed her jumpsuit closed at the back. She drew her mouth away from the prisoner's and Luce's hands came up to push the stretchy material down over Wren's shoulders until her breasts were exposed. Luce covered the bare mounds with her hands and squeezed slightly. Wren gasped and pushed her chest forward into Luce's hands and Luce squeezed harder.

"Yes," Wren whispered as she stared into Luce's eyes.

Luce smiled and Wren was amazed at the combination of childlike wonder and devilish understanding she saw in the tall

woman's expression. Wren couldn't help but kiss her as she pulled with her hands at Luce's butt to seal their bodies together more tightly.

Luce grunted at the extra pressure on her sex and kissed Wren a little harder. She didn't like the feel of the bunched up material underneath Wren's breasts, though, so she released her hold on the small woman's chest and grasped the edges of the clothing. She pulled her body away from Wren's and pushed the jumpsuit down Wren's torso and past her hips. As she continued to push the clothing down, she went to her knees and Wren was forced to give up her hold on Luce's ass.

Wren's hands found a new home in Luce's hair as she was prodded to step out of her clothing. Luce stood back up, but Wren kept her hands tangled in the soft dark tresses. She pulled down and Luce willingly gave herself up to the kiss.

Luce pressed her body into Wren's and gripped the interrogator's hips. She slowly stepped them around so she could push Wren up against the wall that had been behind Luce. Wren spread her legs apart and Luce naturally fit into the open space. She instinctually thrust her mound against Wren's and groaned in counterpoint to the shorter woman's whimper.

Wren let her hands fall to Luce's shoulders and then jumped up slightly so she could wrap her legs around Luce's hips. Her back was shoved into the wall, the friction holding most of her weight with Luce picking up the slack, and Wren devoured Luce's mouth. Her tongue never stopped moving, never stopped attacking, and never retreated.

It was Luce's turn to start whimpering and she gave her body free rein to grind into Wren's sex. She wasn't quite getting enough stimulation on her own clit, but that just made her push harder for it as she pinned Wren against the padded wall and ground her whole body into Wren's.

Wren groaned and only pressed her lips harder against Luce's in an attempt to push her tongue further into the prisoner's mouth.

Luce slowly began to sink to her knees. She wasn't sure what she was going to do once she got them on the floor, but she knew it involved more grinding and more kissing. Definitely more kissing.

Wren felt them sliding to the floor and shifted her weight to bring them to the side with Luce lying on top of her. The new position enabled her to thrust up against Luce a lot easier and she heard herself moan when Luce circled her hips in return.

Luce pulled her lips away from Wren's and looked down at her. She felt a need to increase the blonde's pleasure. She wanted to hear more of those sounds coming from the small woman beneath her, but she wasn't quite sure how to go about it. She remembered what Wren had done to her, but she didn't want to look like she was just copying her.

Wren saw the look of longing and confusion in Luce's eyes and took hold of one of her hands. She pushed the last two fingers down and then guided the first two fingers into her mouth. She sucked on them and ran her tongue around them over and over again, grinning at the look of pleasure in Luce's eyes. Then she withdrew the woman's fingers from her mouth and guided her hand down between their bodies. Luce automatically lifted herself up to make room for where Wren was going.

Wren dragged Luce's fingers through her pubic hair and used the tips to part her labia. As she drew Luce's fingers down a little further, she felt the slickness there coat the digits and moved them back up to rub over her clitoris.

Wren couldn't stifle her sharp cry at having her clit touched so directly and momentarily forgot what it was she'd been doing. Luce seemed to pick up the thread, however, and began to slowly rub her fingers back and forth over Wren's sex. Wren lifted her head and captured the woman's lips again, giving up her whimpers and cries to Luce's willing mouth.

In only a few minutes, Luce was stroking the full length of Wren's sex and coming perilously close to her vagina. The tips of Luce's fingers would just dip into the entrance and then move back up to graze Wren's clit again. Wren writhed under Luce's touch. Her hips were thrusting up in time with the prisoner's movements and she wanted Luce to enter her so badly she could almost feel the woman's fingers inside her already.

After another minute of being kept on the edge of being filled, Wren finally realized Luce didn't understand the signals she was sending. In her state, she'd forgotten Luce had never done this

before. Though she knew Luce had an intellectual understanding of sex, her practical knowledge was non-existent.

Wren felt along Luce's arm until she was at her wrist and then gently guided her fingers to her vagina on one of the woman's downward strokes. She didn't stop, though, and pushed Luce's fingers into her opening.

Wren's hips had a mind of their own and bucked up to push Luce's fingers deeper before she could pull them out again. Wren gasped and wasn't surprised to hear Luce moan at having her fingers enveloped by Wren's slippery sex.

Luce understood immediately what her new goal was. She wanted to get as deep inside Wren as she possibly could and she wanted to do it again and again. Luce withdrew her fingers only to push them all the way in again a moment later. Wren let out a deep groan and her head moved from one side to the other. Luce bent her head down and kissed Wren's exposed neck.

"Yes," Wren encouraged.

Wren pulled her hand away from Luce's and placed it at the back of the woman's head to keep her where she was. The first time Luce sucked at her flesh, Wren gripped Luce's hair and groaned loudly to make sure the prisoner picked up on how much she liked that. Luce must've gotten the idea because she continued to pull on Wren's skin with her lips and tongue as she moved her fingers in and out of the blonde's vagina. Her thumb bumped against Wren's clit, causing her to jump.

"Oh, yes! Please," Wren gasped out.

Luce let her thumb rub over Wren's clit in time with her fingers moving in and out of the small woman's vagina. Wren's cries were getting louder and Luce worked her fingers faster as she pulled her mouth away from the soft neck and watched the interrogator. Wren's pleasure was visible on her face and her eyes glittered as she looked up into Luce's.

"*More*," Wren groaned out.

Wren saw Luce's look of confusion return, so she quickly reached down to Luce's hand again. She separated the woman's third finger from her pinky and added it to the others as she spread her legs wider in invitation.

Luce understood immediately and pushed her three fingers inside Wren's welcoming vagina on a groan. Her head fell down

between Wren's breasts as she felt the tightness envelop her fingers.

Wren's head tilted back and she cried out for Luce to go faster and harder as she reached up to hold on around the prisoner's neck. Luce immediately complied, pounding into Wren at a desperate pace. Wren grunted her approval with each thrust inside her, adding a few moans when she felt Luce's lips take in one of her taut nipples and begin to suck.

Wren quickly tumbled over the edge. Her vaginal walls constricted around Luce's fingers and her stomach clenched as her orgasm erupted from deep within her abdomen. The feeling was more intense than she'd experienced in a long time and Wren yelled in triumph.

"Luce!"

Her prisoner's name left her mouth before she could stop herself and she called out to Luce several more times as her body rode multiple waves of pleasure in quick succession.

Luce continued to thrust inside Wren until the woman's body stopped convulsing. She gradually slowed down her movements until she stopped altogether, her fingers resting at Wren's entrance. She withdrew her lips from Wren's nipple and smiled down at the sweaty blonde.

Wren leaned up and kissed Luce on the mouth. She darted her tongue inside and then pulled out to lick Luce's lips. Then she kissed Luce once more before letting her head rest against the padded floor again. As she stared into her prisoner's eyes, she tried not to think too much about what she was going to have to put Luce through in order to get an answer to her question. She realized the best way to distract herself would be to simply throw herself into the task at hand, so she reached up to pull Luce down for another kiss.

Luce went willingly, covering the blonde's mouth with her own. She'd completely forgotten she was supposed to be resisting her captor, not pleasuring her. Watching Wren come in her arms had been the most incredible sight she'd ever witnessed and she wanted to do it again.

However, Wren had other ideas. She felt like she was bathing in Luce's pheromones as the scent of her prisoner's arousal filled the air. Even if Wren's thigh hadn't been covered with Luce's

wetness, she would've known the colonel was dripping. It took all of Wren's willpower to keep from simply flipping the woman over and devouring her, but she knew that would be too forceful. It would give Luce something to resist. Wren finally managed to rein herself in and merely caressed Luce's back and sides soothingly while they kissed.

Wren felt a slight tremor run through her prisoner's body as Luce attempted to ravage Wren's mouth with her unspent passion. Instead of reciprocating, Wren slowed and gentled her movements. It took several minutes for Luce to even begin to calm down, but as she slowly relaxed, Wren took the opportunity to break their kiss and draw her lips along Luce's jawbone on her way to the woman's ear.

Luce closed her eyes as she felt Wren's lips wrap around her earlobe and begin sucking. Then Wren kissed the smooth flesh behind her ear and Luce grunted as her stomach clenched in pure desire. Wren lightly sucked at the skin, sending shivers down Luce's spine as Wren gently pushed up with her body.

Wren almost lost contact when she grinned as Luce compliantly moved with her, allowing Wren to reverse their positions so her upper body rested on top of Luce's chest with her legs straddling her prisoner's waist.

Luce's hands slid down to grip the blonde's hips as she turned her head to the side to give Wren more access to her neck. The sensitive skin behind her ear seemed to be sending information directly to her clit and her pelvis rocked up to grind against Wren futilely.

Wren braced her arms on either side of Luce's torso and lifted herself off her prisoner so only her lips were still touching the woman. She kissed down the side of Luce's neck, licking the skin lightly and then letting her hot breath wash over the moistened area. Luce's hands squeezed Wren's hips in reaction to the new sensation and Wren heard her sigh in pleasure as she continued to push her mound up against the air.

Wren carefully moved towards the center of Luce's throat, only offering light non-threatening licks of her tongue as she grazed her lips over the delicate skin. Wren knew the woman might have a violent reaction to having her throat touched in any way if she triggered the soldier's alarms, which would

immediately douse Luce's excitement and put Wren almost back at square one. By the same token, if Luce was relaxed enough, or in a high enough state of arousal, the extremely sensitive skin could give her prisoner a great deal of pleasure.

Luce moaned involuntarily as she felt Wren's lips open wide to cover her larynx. Wren's tongue laved over the firm tissue and Luce felt her hips rise higher off the padded floor in search of similar treatment. As Wren's mouth moved up slightly to kiss the underside of her chin, Luce groaned again and pulled with her hands to bring Wren's hips down onto her own. She had to have contact.

Wren allowed her knees to slide apart and rubbed herself on the toned stomach muscles of her prisoner, both giving and ignoring what Luce wanted. She wasn't surprised at her own complete readiness to climax again, but her need to touch Luce gave her momentary pause. She actually had to concentrate to keep from moving her hands to cup Luce's breasts as she fought her overwhelming desire to enter the soldier's mouth.

Wren was supposed to be in control. Each seduction was supposed to be calculated to weaken the prisoners into divulging their knowledge. Her own pleasure meant nothing if denying it would gain her the information she sought. At the moment, though, she was finding it extremely difficult to resist her impulses.

Luce felt Wren's whole body clench as her vaginal entrance slid over Luce's stomach, slicking the path with copious amounts of lubrication. Wren began to relax her body for a moment, warmly pressing their breasts together, but then she tensed again and arched her back so only her hardened nipples brushed across Luce's chest.

Luce pushed down on Wren's hips, trying to help her slide lower towards her aching clit, but Wren simply raised her pelvis, breaking off contact completely. The wet spot on Luce's stomach felt cool as air was allowed to pass over it and her only thought was that she needed Wren's warmth to make it feel better.

Wren brought herself under control again and dragged her lips down Luce's throat to her chest. She moved lower, sliding her knees back along the floor and breaking Luce's hold on her hips,

but the woman just grazed her hands over Wren's waist and around her sides to cover her dangling breasts.

Luce squeezed, enjoying the feel of the pliable flesh between her fingers, and was rewarded with a small grunt of appreciation from Wren. Luce squeezed again, a little harder, and could tell Wren's hips had undulated slightly by the way the insides of the woman's thighs had brushed the outside of her own.

Wren closed her eyes as she felt her prisoner's large hands cover her soft breasts. She wanted to push into them, but managed to hold back. However, when Luce squeezed again, adding more force, she couldn't help but rock her hips in response. She wanted to sink into Luce's embrace and never leave, but she couldn't do that. She needed to take back control, so she moved down a little further until her mouth was covering Luce's nipple. It puckered instantly, tightening in her mouth, and Wren used her tongue to suck the hard tip deeper inside.

Luce groaned loudly and arched her back, plainly begging for more. Somewhere in the back of her mind, Luce realized things weren't going quite the way she'd planned earlier. Though she'd started out intending to subdue her jailer, she found she was now unable to resist the woman's return advances. Hell, she wasn't even trying.

Wren sucked harder, flicking her tongue over the tip of Luce's nipple for added stimulation. She finally gave in to her earlier desire, since it was actually called for at this particular point in her deliberate seduction, and lifted one of her hands to knead Luce's unattended breast. She was thankful it was as much of a distraction as she'd thought it would be as Luce's hands released her breasts to reach up around her shoulders.

Luce pumped her hips up in counterpoint to her constant arching into Wren's mouth and hand. She couldn't stop writhing beneath the small blonde leaning over her. Though Luce didn't want Wren to discontinue what she was doing to her breasts, Luce was desperate for some kind of contact on her clit. Wren hadn't touched her there at all yet and it was actually starting to hurt as it became more and more engorged with blood.

Wren brought up her other hand, tensing her stomach muscles to hold her in place above Luce's body as she squeezed the breast she was sucking on. Luce moaned throatily and tried to

push up a little more, but then Wren let go of the nipple in her mouth, immediately replacing her lips with her pinching fingers as she moved over to suck on Luce's other breast. Since it was already quite stimulated, Wren picked up where she'd left off on the other one, immediately sucking hard and grazing her teeth over the erect tip as soon as her mouth closed around it.

Luce's arms dropped to clutch uselessly at the padded floor as Wren ravished her breasts. She couldn't stop moaning and knew she was getting close to begging verbally. The only thing that stopped her was her inability to articulate exactly what it was she wanted Wren to do. The pleasure from her breasts was being channeled directly to her clit and all other messages, especially those to her brain, were being ignored.

Wren was doing her best to last as long as she could, but her need was becoming unbearable. She had to taste Luce or she was going to lose it completely. She still had a little reserve left, though, so she offered a few last licks and pinches to her prisoner's aching tits before moving away.

Luce whimpered, almost requesting Wren to stay, but she gritted her teeth and didn't speak. She could still remember at least some of her training, though she was beginning to think her instructors had been seriously misinformed.

Resisting pain was nothing compared to trying to resist pleasure. Her body was biologically programmed to seek pleasure, so there was no reason or need to develop any kind of defense against it. On the other hand, pain was instinctually avoided or endured in order to continue survival. Her training had only magnified that innate desire to avoid or control pain and nullify it. It had taught her nothing about holding out against her natural biological urges, especially such intense ones.

Luce realized she'd unconsciously sought out the pleasure she knew Wren could give her. She'd subverted herself.

Luce's thoughts were instantly derailed as she felt Wren's tongue lick across her stomach in a long stroke. She opened her eyes, unable to remember when she'd closed them, and looked down. Wren's hungry gaze caught her, holding her spellbound as the blonde licked over the rippling skin of Luce's abdomen.

Wren grinned predatorily for a moment when she saw realization dawn in her prisoner's clear blue eyes. She was

cleaning her own essence from the woman's taut stomach and the idea was clearly exciting Luce.

Wren held eye contact as she licked again, gathering up her slowly drying arousal from Luce's flesh. She was quite proud that she was able to continue until she'd completely cleaned Luce's skin before moving lower to satiate her need. She lifted each of her legs in turn, nudging Luce's legs a little farther apart so she could get into position between them.

Luce felt her breathing increase until she was gasping in expectation. She was still reeling from the images of watching Wren taste herself when the woman grasped her hands and placed them on her blonde head. Luce's pelvis automatically drew up to offer herself to Wren's mouth as her fingers entwined with silky hair and she couldn't help pushing down slightly to bring the woman's lips closer to her throbbing sex.

Wren allowed herself to be guided down. It was only the iron grip in her hair that kept her from simply diving in anyway. Luce's vaginal lips were swollen and her clit had distended completely beyond its hood, opening up her sex in such a way that just begged for Wren's attention.

Even before her mouth made contact with the drenched hairs covering her prisoner's labia, Wren couldn't suppress the groan that built from deep within her chest as the pheromone-laden scent washed over her. Her tongue darted out to sample Luce's sex, but as soon as the taste registered on her tongue, she knew she had to have more. She opened her mouth wide, moaning loudly as she covered Luce's inner lips and clitoris with her lips and tongue.

Luce bucked her hips and whimpered, the sound turning into a long moan. It quickly escalated into panting cries of desperation as Wren sucked on her clit and repeatedly massaged her tongue all around the sensitive nub. Wren's mouth was warm and soft and sent chills across every inch of Luce's skin. She could feel her nipples tighten even more as waves of pleasure cascaded over her body in ever increasing amounts.

Wren immediately released Luce's clit as she recognized all the signs of impending climax.

“No!” Luce yelled out through her strangled cry of frustration, momentarily surrendering to her body’s all-consuming desire for release.

Wren barely heard her as she lowered her head and shoved her mouth at Luce’s opening. Her eyes rolled up into the back of her head as she drank in the pure essence of her prisoner, stabbing her tongue inside the tight canal over and over again. The burning in the pit of her stomach instantly disappeared to be replaced by a sense of absolute rapture. She felt only bliss as she swallowed mouthful after mouthful of her prisoner’s juices. She couldn’t get enough and was drinking it in faster than Luce could produce it.

Luce knew she was completely out of control. She could barely even form the thought that she should be fighting this, let alone try to act on it. She held her hips suspended in midair as she attempted to force Wren harder and deeper into her sex by pulling down on Wren’s head.

Wren slid her lips all over Luce’s inner folds, gathering up the thick liquid that had been wicked away from Luce’s vagina by her pubic hair. She carefully avoided her clit as she sucked on Luce’s lips and licked over her entire sex to make sure she hadn’t missed any before returning to Luce’s entrance again.

There was more of the fluid waiting for her and Wren wasted no time in dipping her tongue into the precious substance and drawing it back into her mouth. She felt starved. She had no idea how she was going to stop and almost didn’t care. It wasn’t until she’d cleaned Luce’s vagina for the second time that Luce’s whimpers finally registered in her ears. The interrogator suddenly remembered she had a job she was supposed to be doing and slowly withdrew, turning her head to the side, since her prisoner seemed reluctant to release her hold on Wren’s head.

“Hold arms. Floor,” Wren commanded from between Luce’s thighs.

Luce’s arms were quickly pulled to the floor and spread wide apart. Though she bucked her hips up in protest, Luce knew there was nothing she could do now. She groaned as the ache in her clit doubled in only a few seconds. Wren’s mouth on her sex had been the only thing keeping it at bay.

Wren pushed herself up a little higher onto her forearms.

“Luce,” Wren said, trying hard to ignore the wave of pleasure that ran through her body at saying the woman’s name. “Luce, look at me.”

Luce’s eyes were clamped shut and she couldn’t stop rocking her hips. If a gun had been pointed at her head and she’d been told to stop moving, she would’ve been unable to comply. Nothing seemed to matter to her beyond the constant and acute pressure located inside her painfully swollen clit.

It suddenly struck her that she probably could’ve let go of Wren’s head earlier and brought herself release before the woman could’ve stopped her. She groaned, feeling foolish for her oversight. She’d never actually touched herself before and had been so focused on Wren that the thought just hadn’t occurred to her. Even after Wren’s thorough demonstration of what Luce’s body could do if stimulated the right way, Luce hadn’t even considered touching herself. She’d been so determined not to let it happen again that the very idea would’ve seemed insane to her had she actually thought of it.

“Luce.”

Luce finally opened her eyes, struggling to focus on Wren’s face where she had propped herself up between Luce’s thighs.

“How many troops were under your command during your last mission?”

It took a moment for the question to make its way through Luce’s haze of arousal. The bulk of her blood was definitely nowhere near her brain at the moment. She groaned and let her head rest back against the floor again, shaking it in negation as she continued to writhe uncontrollably in an attempt to ease her ache.

“Please, Luce. Please let me give you release. I want to make you come. Please,” Wren begged, the honest need clear in her voice.

Luce continued to shake her head and closed her eyes as tears began to spill down her temples.

“Please, Luce. I’m not asking you for their names, just how many there were. I just need a number and then I can give you release. Please, let me make you come.”

Luce felt the last of her will crumbling as she listened to Wren's entreaties. She gave it one more shot, though.

"Twelve," Luce grunted out, seemingly defeated.

"Untrue," a mechanical voice spoke from above.

Luce grimaced. She hadn't really thought it would work, but it had been worth a try. It stood to reason, though, that her captors would use some form of lie detector to make sure she wasn't just telling them what they wanted to hear. Her own people had machines that could continuously scan a person's brain to see which centers were being activated during speech. Even combinations of the truth with fabrications could usually be picked out by whether the person was accessing a memory or the creative centers of their brain.

"Luce, please don't lie. If you do that again, I'll have to leave you like this for a full day and I don't want to do that. Please, just answer the question. How many were there?"

Wren leaned over and licked a long stroke from Luce's entrance to her clit. The woman cried out, jerking her pelvis up and gasping in surprise.

"Please, Luce. I just want to make you come," Wren pleaded, allowing her warm breath to flow over her prisoner's exposed sex.

Luce whimpered and tried to catch her breath. She had nothing left with which to fight her interrogator's onslaught. She just couldn't take any more.

"Seven! There were seven! Oh Goddess, Wren..."

Luce finally surrendered and was instantly rewarded with Wren's mouth on her clit when the computer made no protest against her truthful statement. She felt Wren's lips circle her throbbing nub, sucking firmly as the woman's tongue flicked over her clit in rapid succession.

Luce saw stars as her entire body contracted in convulsions of ecstasy. She remained stiff for several long moments and actually stopped breathing as the pleasure overwhelmed her senses. Then her brain kicked in and she screamed incoherently as her body jerked repeatedly with each jolt of pleasure that arced through her.

Wren continued to suck hard on Luce's clit, moving with the woman's writhing body to maintain contact and prolong Luce's orgasm.

Luce felt like she'd lost her mind. Her body continued to be racked with pleasure to the point of pain, but it didn't seem to matter. Wren wasn't letting go of her clit and Luce didn't seem to be able to stop coming as long as she was there. Luce felt a clenching sensation deep within her belly and grunted as another round of spasms seized her body.

Wren could hear Luce crying, but she didn't stop what she was doing. She knew it probably wouldn't last much longer and she wanted Luce to ride her orgasm all the way through to the end.

Luce finally collapsed on the floor, utterly exhausted. Tears streamed from her eyes, but her gasping breaths soon calmed and her tears stopped almost as quickly as they'd started. Luce didn't even flinch as Wren relinquished her clit and moved down to lick at her entrance. The tongue bath was somehow soothing after she'd been tensed for so long. She closed her eyes and drifted in a state of peace.

Wren lapped up her prisoner's juices, quietly moaning to herself with each subsequent taste of the potent liquid. She could feel her body reacting the way it always did when she got her pheromone fix from a prisoner, but this was a hundred times more intense. It was the difference between eating a meal to satisfy an empty stomach and having an orgasm. The two kinds of pleasure weren't even in the same category.

It took her several minutes, but Wren finally licked up the last drop from Luce's sex. She tenderly kissed Luce's soft nether lips and then sat up. Luce appeared to be sleeping, but Wren was pretty sure she was still conscious, if a bit lethargic. After all, this was only the second time in the woman's life she'd ever experienced an orgasm and this one had obviously been quite remarkable.

"Release," Wren said quietly.

Luce's wrists came up off the floor a short ways as the tendons in her arms returned to their natural, more comfortable length now that the stress of being held flat against the floor had

been removed. Luce opened her eyes and looked around, pausing to watch as her interrogator climbed to her feet.

Wren walked around the supine woman and gathered up her discarded jumpsuit, though she didn't put it on. She walked to the concealed door.

"Open."

As the door complied with her command, Wren turned her head and glanced at Luce. She found the woman staring at her, a mix of calm acceptance, betrayal, and uncertainty gracing her beautiful features.

Wren wasn't sure what expression her own face held. She realized she wanted to stay, wished she could just talk to the woman without their respective positions getting in the way, maybe even make love to her without having to calculate her every move to gain advantage, but it was impossible. Colonel Luce of Claw Clan was her prisoner and she was required by her superiors to gain any and all information from her.

The second door finished opening and Wren stepped forward.

"Wait," Luce called out.

Wren kept walking.

## CHAPTER 3

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Wren sat in the control room working on a transcript of one of the prisoner interrogations she'd completed earlier that day. The audiovisual recording had already run through a program that interpreted the spoken words to create a written account of the session. It automatically removed any irrelevant exclamations, which the prisoners frequently shouted out during their encounters. However, extraneous comments still slipped through every now and then, and sometimes words were removed that shouldn't have been, so part of Wren's job was to make sure the transcripts were as accurate as possible, while excluding all unnecessary data.

Wren understood why it was so important for her to make clean reports for her superiors. First and foremost, it kept her interrogation method secret, but there had also been a few problems in the beginning with some of the intelligence analysts not dealing too well with their sexual arousal from viewing the recordings. They'd been unable to focus on their jobs and their work had suffered because of it. As soon as the project leaders had realized it didn't actually make sense for the analysts to

watch the entire interrogation when the real information could usually be summed up in less than a few paragraphs, they'd eliminated the analysts and added the job of transcribing to the list of interrogator duties.

The blonde finished the last transcript and encoded it for transmission. Before she could voice her request, though, the screen lit up with an icon denoting a priority one incoming signal.

Wren frowned. It was extremely rare for her superiors to request a communication link with her. If their signal was intercepted, it would be too easy for the Argolians to pinpoint her location by following the transmission to its destination, whereas the short-burst one-way transmissions Wren sent each night were almost impossible to trace back to her position.

Wren composed her features and tried to prepare herself. She had a pretty good idea why she was being contacted, but if she showed even the slightest apprehension, she could end up giving herself away. She took a deep breath.

"Receive transmission."

"Voice authorization accepted. Connection established," the computer's synthetic voice announced a second later.

The screen changed to reveal the long face of an older looking man with silver hair and chiseled features. After a few seconds, his expression changed to show that he could see her. Wren sat up a little straighter under his scrutiny.

"Wren. We haven't received this evening's reports yet," he said by way of greeting.

"I was just about to send them when you called, Sir. Just a moment," Wren requested as she hit a few buttons and then spoke her name to authorize the transmission. "You should have them now, Sir."

"Yes, they're here," he said a moment later, sounding thoroughly unconvinced even though he was staring right at them. He continued skimming the file for another minute and then finally looked up. "Well. I'm sure you know why I'm calling. Last night's report shows you've visited Colonel Luce of Claw Clan twice in only three days, and my colleagues and I are a little concerned. During your probation, you never once broke protocol. Why have you done so now?"

“Her case file stated she was top priority.”

Wren watched as the man looked slightly to his right to read a monitor. She focused on her breathing to keep her heartbeat under control as she realized what he was doing. She hadn't been double-checked by a lie detector in months. She knew she would have to phrase things carefully.

“You've had other top priority cases. Why break protocol for this one?” he asked suspiciously.

“None of those other cases involved someone as important or as well known as this colonel. Her capture was the first time she'd ever failed to complete a mission and I understand that was only because a malfunctioning autodigger excavated too close to the surface, weakening the ground, which collapsed when she and her unit tried to cross it to presumably take down a critical communications tower. According to the packet I received, she was close to being promoted to Brigadier General, and therefore may have information regarding—”

“Yes, yes, I know all that. I wrote the report. So, you believe you can safely speed up her interrogation?” the man questioned with new interest, having seemingly put his fears to rest.

“She's been extremely cooperative so far. As expected, she's had no prior experience and was unprepared for my... techniques. I believe, in her case, moving quickly may prove more beneficial than the standard deprivation schedule. A constant assault with no time to regroup and strategize may be the only way to break her, Sir.”

“Hmm, yes. You may be right. Well, then. I'll discuss this with my colleagues, but for now, you're cleared to see her once every other day. Try to stay on schedule with the other prisoners, though. Antari of Scorpion Clan out.”

The screen went black and Wren collapsed back in her seat, releasing the breath she'd been holding.

Telling only the truth, while not actually giving a direct answer to the question was the only way Wren knew to fool a lie detector. A skillful enough questioner could usually spot such tactics, but Antari wasn't an interrogator. He was an administrator, capable of coordinating various groups and subgroups to get a job done, but that was all. He'd overseen the project that had created her and her predecessors and was now

her direct superior, but that was about as far as his intelligence went.

Wren tapped a few buttons and the blackness was replaced with an image of Luce kneeling in the middle of her room, apparently meditating. Wren had served the nearly two-dozen prisoners their last meals of the day less than an hour ago, so this was normally her time to sleep.

Instead, she sat and watched her prisoner. Even in the woman's stillness, Wren could see the power and intensity that made Luce one of the most feared women on the planet.

Though Wren was mostly cut off from the outside world and therefore knew very little about the day-to-day specifics of what was going on in the war, she'd received extensive reports about Luce when the woman had arrived. There'd been almost no personal information about the colonel beyond her name, age, and rank, but her list of accomplishments had gone on and on. It had given Wren a great deal of insight into the current state of affairs, not to mention Luce herself.

Only three years ago, Argolus had been on the brink of surrendering. A nation built by scientists just wasn't equipped to wage war, though they'd held out for over half a century. It helped that they could replace their adult population in less than two years. Nine months in natural or artificial wombs and another year in accelerated growth tanks produced adjusted-age twenty-three-year-olds ready to serve their country.

However, mere numbers weren't enough. Though they were far beyond the Delphinians in nearly every form of genetic and biological technology, the Argolians were just barely keeping up in the weapons department. Their sole focus was defense, while the Delphinians spent most of their resources on developing new offensive weapons.

Then Luce of Claw Clan had seemingly come out of nowhere and single-handedly turned the tide of the war in favor of the Argolians. During only her second engagement, she'd purportedly taken command when half her unit and all of her superior officers had been killed. Somehow, she'd managed to rally her remaining troops into holding their ground until reinforcements had arrived and fended off the Delphinian attack force.

In only three years, Luce had risen to the rank of colonel, systematically taking back land that had been controlled by Delphinia since right after the beginning of the war. Her ability to anticipate her opponent's tactics and formulate multiple contingency plans had gained her a reputation as being unbeatable. The fact that she personally led most of the assaults she planned had only increased her status as a hero to her people.

Now, it was the Delphinians who seemed to be facing certain defeat. A great deal of time and effort had been put into killing or capturing Luce, but a simple accident had finally been the woman's undoing. If not for her capture, the collapse would've been considered a tragedy. Dozens of Delphinians had lost their lives when the contaminated atmosphere from the surface had entered the underground city from the errant tunnel.

According to the report Wren had read, the government had done its best to spin the details to its advantage, claiming the capture to be a gift from the Goddess, while those who had died were hailed as heroes for having sacrificed themselves in exchange for such a wonderful prize.

Luce had almost joined the list of fatalities, though. She'd been horribly injured by her fall into the deep underground tunnel. Wren had seen the pictures. The sight of Luce's right arm and leg sticking out at odd angles had almost made her throw up and she still shuddered just thinking about it.

Of course, one would never know it to look at Luce now. Her frame was solid, as were her muscles, and the only fat she carried on her body was in her breasts and buttocks. She had no scars to mar her skin. She could run faster, jump higher, and hit harder than her Delphinian counterparts. She could even breathe the polluted atmosphere of their planet as well as she breathed the purified air circulating in her cell. If their weapons technology had been just a little better, Wren had no doubt the Argolians would've conquered Delphinia long ago. However, things hadn't worked out that way and now Luce was her prisoner.

Wren finally managed to tear her eyes away from the monitor and pulled up her schedule for the next day. She replaced the fourth name on the list with Luce's. The prisoner had been broken several months ago, so bumping the woman off the list

wouldn't disrupt any of Wren's other ongoing interrogations. The blonde looked over her agenda for the rest of the month, making adjustments here and there to accommodate Antari's new orders, and then closed down the program.

She stood up and immediately grabbed the edge of the console as her stomach cramped violently, making her gasp from the pain.

"Oh Goddess," Wren whispered as she tried to blink away the tears stinging her eyes.

She carefully retook her seat and waited for the searing pain to subside as she held her stomach and rocked. The stabbing sensations had been hitting her off and on all day, starting with her being woken in the middle of the night. She'd been unable to do anything but lie there and cry for several minutes while fighting the compulsion to go to Luce. The images of tasting the woman and being held in her strong arms had almost been enough to get her moving several times, but somehow, she'd managed to restrain herself and had simply ridden out the pain until morning. So far, the episodes hadn't happened during a session, but she knew it was only a matter of time.

Wren gritted her teeth, determined not to give in just yet as the sharp pains gnawed at the inside of her belly. They eventually faded to a dull ache and she was able to breathe a little easier again.

"Just one more day. I can wait one more day," Wren half pleaded with herself, but even as she said the words, she brought up her schedule and moved Luce's name to the top of the list.

Wren closed the program once again and cautiously pushed herself to a standing position. The dull burning sensation remained the same as she slowly made her way out of the control room and headed for her quarters. She just hoped she'd be able to sleep through the pain and get some rest in time for her first appointment in the morning.

## CHAPTER 4

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Luce opened her eyes, her moan cut abruptly short as she woke from her dream. She looked around at the empty room and just barely suppressed a groan as she realized where she was and what she'd been dreaming about.

She got to her feet, resolving not to think about the sensual images still flitting through her mind as she began her morning warm-up exercises before breakfast arrived.

She started with some mild stretching to get her blood flowing away from a certain part of her anatomy and then moved into some more serious stretching combined with an isometric workout. The program was designed to put her into a meditative state, but nothing she'd done in the past few days had been enough to keep her from thinking about Wren for more than a few minutes.

She just couldn't get the woman out of her head and for the past two nights, the blonde had been plaguing her dreams as well. Luce had managed to keep herself occupied for the most part, but she knew she couldn't last much longer. In the state she

was in right now, Wren would hardly have to touch her to bring her to her knees.

A vision of herself kneeling in front of Wren as she imagined tasting the blonde for the first time sent a jolt of desire through her already sensitive body and she stumbled. Her training automatically guided her into a controlled fall, but the loss of concentration was enough to keep her from continuing with the practice. She lay where she'd fallen and stared unseeingly up at the white ceiling.

*I think I'm insane. It's the only explanation. She's driven me insane. I've been stuck in this room for two months and then she comes along and pushes me over the edge. And why the hell did I ask her to wait last time? What the fuck would I have done if she had?*

Luce imagined the blonde stopping and then slowly turning around as she waited for Luce to say something. Several thoughts immediately came to mind. Like what Clan did Wren come from? Did she have a family that she went home to every night? What had it been like to grow up? Did she get to see her parents often enough?

Luce thought of her own family, something she'd tried very hard not to do since her capture. She missed her parents horribly as well as her brothers and sisters, not to mention her nieces and nephews, aunts and uncles, and all her cousins. She was the youngest of ten, though only half of her elder siblings had still been alive by the time she'd left her growth tank. They'd been killed in the war, but with so many cousins and nieces and nephews, she'd never felt the lack.

Unfortunately, she'd only been able to spend a few months with her family before leaving to receive practical training as a soldier to augment the information she'd been given during her growth cycle. Luckily, she'd managed to stay in contact with most of her relatives during her time away, but she knew they were probably going through hell now, not knowing where she was or if she was even still alive.

She could easily imagine her homecoming. They'd throw a party for her, just like they had when one of her brothers had come home after being listed as Missing in Action. She wasn't alone, though. Wren was right next to her and she saw herself

introducing the petite blonde to her parents. Then the scene changed to be replaced with a vision of her bedroom in her parents' home in the heart of her Clan's territory. She lowered her body on top of Wren's and then moved in for a kiss.

The feel of Wren's body beneath hers made her moan and the touch of her lips was exquisite. The scene quickly jumped ahead and they were both naked, writhing on Luce's bed as she pumped her fingers into Wren's drenched opening. She could hear Wren's pleas for release with every whimper and moan, and unlike her captor, felt no need to deny her. She plunged her fingers inside, reaching deeper and deeper...

"Please stand in the corner with the blue light."

Luce's eyes shot open and she shivered as she heard Wren's live voice come from overhead. She looked over and realized she'd been so caught up in her little fantasy that she'd completely missed the sound of the inner door opening. As she came back to herself, a wave of depression washed over her and she considered staying where she was. How long would it take her to starve to death?

*If I didn't drink any water either, I could be free from this existence in just a few days. She doesn't open the door unless I'm in that corner... Then again, she could just issue that hold command over the comm, and then hook me up to an IV. It wouldn't interfere with what she does to me... Goddess, what she does to me...* Luce thought as memory and fantasy images alike played out in her mind, making her stomach clench in need.

"Please stand in the corner with the blue light."

Luce frowned. Usually, Wren's voice sounded mildly pleasant, although bored, when she issued that command. But now, Luce could clearly hear worry bordering on panic in the woman's insistent tone. She remembered the pain she'd thought she'd seen Wren trying to hide the last time and wondered if she was hearing some of that, too.

Luce finally sat up and dutifully moved to the corner. As much as she wanted to see what Wren would do if she continued to refuse, she was in no condition to be in the same room with the blonde and was sure that forcing Wren to reprimand her would cause just such a confrontation.

She listened to the second door open and watched as a new tray of food replaced the old one. The doors shut again and the blue light flickered off, leaving her free to retrieve her breakfast.

As she ate, she tried to put the erotic thoughts out of her mind and come up with a concrete strategy for resisting the next time Wren came for a session. However, her mind remained a complete blank.

She was actually starting to wonder if it was even possible to resist. After all, she'd spent every waking minute since meeting Wren considering that very same question and not making any discernible progress. Granted, Wren had only interrogated her twice so far, but she'd failed miserably both times and was no closer to a strategy for resistance than she had been during their first encounter.

The sensations were just so overwhelming. She knew her real problem was that deep down she didn't really *want* to fight. Giving in meant being rewarded with pleasure like she'd never known before and she wanted more.

Luce realized if she didn't get a handle on herself pretty soon, she was really going to betray her people rather than just confirming what Wren already knew. Standard interrogation procedure dictated that the questions become progressively more invasive and despite the lack of pain involved in Wren's unique form of torture, Luce was positive the blonde would be asking more dangerous questions as time went on.

Of course, there was always the possibility of suicide as her mind had readily supplied only a few minutes ago, but Luce had been trying hard to avoid those thoughts, since that basically meant she was admitting defeat and Luce refused to give up so easily.

*Right. Like that would be any worse than what you've already done. You gave in on day one,* Luce reminded herself harshly. *If I could just figure out how she makes my body respond the way it does...*

Luce paused as an idea came to her. She set aside her tray and moved to the corner opposite the door. She leaned comfortably back against the padded wall in a semi-upright position.

Maybe she'd been going about this all wrong. Instead of trying to resist the pleasure, maybe she could give the pleasure to

herself, so she wouldn't want it so much when Wren came to question her.

She tentatively brought her fingers to the edge of her vaginal lips and gently caressed them. She was already aroused from her earlier fantasies and her skin tingled where she brushed against her pubic hair. She glanced up nervously as she suddenly realized her captors could be watching her. She took a slow deep breath and closed her eyes, doing her best to ignore that thought as she remembered how good it had felt to have Wren's mouth licking her sex.

That thought alone made her breath hitch and she lost some of her anxiety as she slid her fingers between her swelling lips. Her middle finger grazed over her clitoris and she moaned subvocally at the sensation of pleasure that was making her sex tighten. She immediately increased the contact, rubbing with three fingers in a circle around her sensitive nub.

Her fingers dipped down and she found the same slippery wetness flowing from her entrance that she'd felt when she'd been inside Wren. The natural lubricant coated her fingers, making them slide much more pleurably over her clit and she quickly settled into a rhythm that made her pleasure build rather than just feel good. Within moments, she could feel goose bumps spreading across her skin and her nipples tightened almost painfully as she neared her first self-induced climax.

"Access denied."

Before Luce could even register the computer's voice, her hand was yanked away from its spot between her legs as both her wrists were pulled by their magnetic cuffs until her arms were restrained against the wall behind her.

Realization of what had just happened dawned on Luce and she groaned in frustration. She really should've seen that one coming. If the computer was capable of detecting when she was lying, then there was no reason why it wouldn't also be able to sense when her arousal was nearing critical. It was probably a failsafe feature that was only activated if Wren wasn't in the room with her.

*Shit.*

Her own touch hadn't been nearly as stimulating as Wren's, but it had still been enough to start the chain reaction of desire

and need for release within her body. Luce didn't know how long the computer was going to keep her like this or if Wren had been alerted to her actions and was on her way there, but she was determined to finish what she'd started.

There was nothing stopping her from using her thigh muscles to pick up where her fingers had left off, so she started flexing, pushing her thighs tightly together to compress her swollen labia around her engorged clit. Using her stomach muscles, she thrust her pelvis backward and forward, clenching her sex in time with her thrusts until she was almost...

"Access denied."

Luce felt her body slide up and to the side until she was in a standing position in the middle of the wall. Her arms and legs were pulled wide enough apart to keep her from finding friction for her swollen clit again and then her restraints locked in place once more.

*This just isn't fair*, Luce thought petulantly.

She didn't have long to brood, though. Less than five minutes later, the door to her cell opened and she mentally cringed as she watched Wren walk naked into the room, the doors closing quietly behind her.

"Was there something you wanted?" Wren asked with an amused grin.

"No," Luce replied before she could think better of it.

"Untrue," came the computer's voice and Luce glared up at the ceiling.

Wren continued to smirk, but Luce was sure it was more than a little forced. There were dark circles under the blonde's green eyes and if she'd slept at all since Luce had last seen her, it wasn't for more than a few minutes. Luce could also once again see the telltale signs of pain from the way Wren was holding her body so rigidly.

Wren carefully walked over to Luce, only stopping when she was within touching distance. She kept her breathing slow and steady, even as her pulse sped wildly out of control from the abundance of pheromones lacing the air. Her cramps had immediately lessened when she'd entered the room, but it still took all her willpower to keep from doubling over from the pain.

“Since you seem to be so eager, why don’t we begin?” Wren said, trying to keep the strain out of her voice. “What was the ultimate goal of your last mission?”

Luce considered her options. So far, resistance hadn’t gotten her very far and she hadn’t even been asked any hard questions yet. In fact, they were still on questions that only confirmed what Luce was sure Wren already knew. On top of that, her sex was throbbing and she really just wanted to beg the woman to touch her. Not a good place to start from. What she really needed was more time to think so she could come up with a better plan than failed resistance.

“If I answer the question, will you go away?”

Wren’s smile was more genuine this time as she shook her head in amusement. Most of the prisoners had tried that tactic on her at one time or another. It was simply another attempt to gain control of the situation by turning the reward into a punishment. Wren had found that ignoring the bargaining worked best because it took the request completely out of the equation and kept the prisoner firmly under her control.

“We both know that’s not what you really want me to do,” Wren stated confidently as she leaned forward and pressed her naked body against Luce’s.

She wasn’t surprised when she heard Luce involuntarily moan at the skin to skin contact. The woman was already in a high state of arousal and Wren knew that even her slightest touch would have a profound effect on the soldier.

What she wasn’t prepared for was her own sense of deep satisfaction at being so close to her prisoner. Luce’s body was soft and warm and strong, and Wren moaned at how perfect it felt pressed against her own. The only thing missing was the feel of Luce’s arms wrapped around her, holding her tight.

Little warning bells sounded in the back of Wren’s mind, but she pushed them away. Other than inhaling Luce’s pheromones, touching her prisoner was the only thing keeping the pain in her body from burning out of control. Unless someone physically pulled her away, she wasn’t going anywhere.

Instead, Wren let herself sink even deeper into the exquisite contact. Giving in to her desire for more, she closed her eyes and rubbed her cheek against Luce’s chest. As her lips brushed over

the woman's pectoral muscles, they tensed, so she began kissing them, moving back and forth as she dragged her lips across the firm flesh again and again.

Her fingers were just as needy as they moved of their own volition, trailing a sensual path up and down the bound woman's sides. When the tips of her fingers accidentally brushed against the sides of Luce's breasts, she followed her desire rather than her training and moved her upper body away enough to allow her hands to cup them. She squeezed the full globes, reveling in the weight of them in her hands as she flicked her thumbs over the quickly hardening tips.

Luce closed her eyes and gave up trying to control her breathing as her nipples tightened into hard little peaks, sending bolts of pleasure directly to her sex with each pass of Wren's fingers over them. She did try to stop her moan of joy as the blonde leaned in again to lick a line from the top of her breast to her collarbone, but it just ended in several panted grunts when the woman began sucking at the hollow of her neck.

*Oh Goddess, help me! I need to fight this!* Luce thought frantically as she felt Wren's mouth begin to move up her neck while the blonde's hands continued to squeeze and pinch her nipples relentlessly.

Wren sucked Luce's earlobe into her mouth, unsurprised when the colonel whimpered and tried to pull her head away, but the move merely exposed more of Luce's neck to Wren. The blonde took advantage of the newly displayed flesh and quickly moved in to kiss the spot she'd found behind Luce's ear the last time. She sucked lightly, eliciting an unrestrained moan, and continued to knead the woman's soft breasts. However, Wren was barely able to contain her own moan as the cramping in her stomach grew stronger with each passing minute.

She realized she wouldn't be able to ignore the pain for much longer and slowly let one of her hands drift down over Luce's rippling stomach. It went against all her training to give in to her own desires rather than to follow a calculated seduction based on her prisoner's sexual cues, but Wren was desperate. The burning was spreading outward and if she didn't break Luce soon, she was going to disregard protocol entirely and simply devour the woman where she stood.

It didn't matter that she was supposed to be taking it slow, proving to her prisoner who was in charge by extending the foreplay as long as possible. She just couldn't stop herself as she moved her hand down to the patch of curly black hair covering the woman's sex.

Luce gasped as her breathing accelerated by leaps and bounds at the feel of Wren's fingers brushing through her pubic hair. There was simply no comparison between the sensations she'd tried to give herself and the ones Wren was causing in her now. She moaned gratefully and thrust her pelvis out to increase the contact.

"I knew you didn't want me to go away," Wren whispered, causing goose bumps to spread across Luce's chest as her nipples seemed to harden even more from the hot breath in her ear. "In fact, I think you want me... right here... don't you," Wren panted through her own excitement as she finally slipped her fingers along Luce's slit, sliding between her folds with ease to caress her clit.

*Yes!*

"No," Luce whimpered as she tried futilely to make her body pull away from the wonderful touch.

"Untrue."

"Shut up!" Luce yelled at the ceiling.

The anger centered her for a few moments and she finally managed to force her pelvis to move away from Wren's fingers, but the blonde used her movements against her, following Luce's rhythm, so that her actions actually caused the sensations she was trying to avoid.

"Stop, please," Luce panted out, but there was no conviction in her voice and Wren simply ignored her as she slowly kissed her way down Luce's neck.

Her goal was the soldier's neglected nipple, but the scent wafting up from the woman's center almost derailed Wren's training entirely. It was only pure luck that her lips stumbled across the taut nipple before they found Luce's dripping sex. She instinctually licked the hardened tip pressing against her mouth, and then wrapped her lips around it, sucking it gently as she continued to slide her fingers between her prisoner's slick lips.

Luce groaned as she felt Wren's mouth cover her nipple. She'd forgotten she was supposed to be trying to avoid Wren's hand. Her hips were gyrating continuously against her captor's agile fingers as she thrust her chest out to meet the blonde's mouth.

*Wait, no. This isn't...*

"No... No... No..." Luce began chanting as she slammed her head back against the padded wall in a last ditch effort to sidetrack herself.

The action didn't really hurt her, but it did jar her head enough to distract her.

Wren quickly realized this and moved her arm lower, angling her fingers up as she slid two of them inside Luce's tight entrance, hitting the woman's G-spot on her first try.

"Oh my Goddess!" Luce gasped and immediately stopped her thrashing as her eyes attempted to bug out of her head at the sudden intrusion.

Nothing and no one had ever been inside her before. Invasive pelvic examinations had long since been replaced by common three-dimensional scans that offered more accurate details than any doctor's hands could possibly hope to provide. Her hymen hadn't survived her military lifestyle, but just as she'd never considered the idea of touching herself sexually before meeting Wren, she'd never wondered what being penetrated would feel like, so her mind was left without any point of reference.

As Wren continued to target her G-spot with every thrust, Luce's brain tried to comprehend the new sensations, but it just short-circuited and then cut out completely. Her breathing quickly escalated until she was crying out with every exhalation as she rode Wren's fingers, unconsciously trying to force them deeper inside her, while Wren's thumb began to lightly graze her clit.

Wren let go of Luce's breast and wrapped her arm around her prisoner's arched back. She could tell Luce had completely lost herself in the pleasure and Wren was trying hard not to give in to her own need to satiate her craving. She knew as soon as she tasted Luce, she wouldn't be able to stop until she was satisfied, even if that meant letting Luce climax before she'd answered the question.

Unfortunately, even though the airborne pheromones had eased her physical ache somewhat, they'd only increased her desire to taste Luce directly. Wren realized she'd started pounding into Luce, bringing the woman to the verge of orgasm, so she eased off and slowed down.

"No. Please... Don't stop," Luce pleaded as she panted for breath.

"Then answer the question," Wren replied just as desperately.

Luce shook her head. She couldn't give in, not again. Then Wren applied more pressure to her G-spot, massaging it in slow circles, and Luce whimpered helplessly. She tried rocking her hips the way she had before, but Wren moved with her again, this time to stop her from gaining any extra stimulation.

"Answer the question, Luce, please. I promise I'll give you satisfaction. I know you want to come and I want to give you that release. Just tell me what I want to know," Wren begged, not sure how much longer she could hold out herself.

Luce knew she was on the verge of the most incredible pleasure she'd ever felt in her life. The only thing keeping it out of her reach was her fear of betraying her people. But she was sure Wren already knew the answer to the question she'd asked. Her saying it wouldn't change anything. It wouldn't put her people at risk and she would get the release she so desperately needed.

Need won out over guilt and she tried to breathe a little more normally, so she could speak.

"We were... going to destroy... the communications tower," Luce gasped out.

Wren shook her head in frustration.

"No, that was the immediate task. What was the purpose behind destroying the tower? What was the ultimate *goal*?" Wren insisted.

Luce groaned. She knew she was in no shape to resist, but giving in meant potentially giving the Delphinians information they didn't have. The mission had taken place several months ago, so most likely the plans had either already been implemented or scrapped altogether, but even so, she would still be giving away strategy and tactics.

Wren massaged Luce's G-spot a little harder, slowly rubbing her thumb over the woman's clit in time with the movements. She didn't try to hold back her own whimpers of need as she forced herself to remain standing.

"Please, answer the question. Please, Luce. Please, let me give you release. I just want to make you come. Please."

Luce could hear the desperate tone in Wren's voice. The woman seemed to want it almost more than she did and Luce recognized the signs of pain again.

She shook her head. It was all part of the interrogation. Make her want to ease Wren's distress and it would only make it easier to give in for her own satisfaction. But she'd been trained against that, so her fellow team members couldn't be tortured and used against her.

"Please, Luce," Wren begged as tears formed at the corners of her eyes.

Luce heard the pain again and looked down to see it unmistakably in Wren's expression. Even through her pleasure-induced haze, she couldn't help wondering again what caused Wren's pain.

Wren tried to calm herself down, but she was having a hard time. She knew if she began licking Luce, she wouldn't stop in time to keep her prisoner from having an orgasm. She considered removing her fingers and cleaning them, but that would take away the stimulus that had Luce on the verge of giving in. She just had to last a little longer.

Wren whimpered as another wave of Luce's sexual scent drifted up to her. She couldn't stop herself as her knees buckled and she hit the padded floor with a soft thud. She gripped Luce's hip with her free hand and leaned in to kiss her prisoner's soft skin just above her hairline.

"Please, Luce. Just tell me what I need to know. I just want to make you come," Wren pleaded between kisses. "I *need* to make you come," Wren whispered into Luce's skin, unsure how much longer she could keep herself from lowering her head those extra few inches to taste the woman.

Luce felt her eyes wanting to roll into the back of her head as tingles swept across her body from having Wren's lips on her flesh. Goose bumps prickled her skin as Wren continued to

slowly slide her fingers in and out of her vagina, and the last of Luce's will finally crumbled.

"We were trying to... to cut communications... so that reinforcements... couldn't be called in... when we attacked," Luce panted out, unable to withstand being kept on the edge of orgasm any longer.

"And that was the ultimate goal of your last mission?" Wren double-checked, at least some of her training still in effect.

"Yes!"

Wren didn't wait to hear if the computer contradicted her prisoner as she finally gave in to her own needs and moved her thumb so she could latch onto the woman's clit with her lips. She didn't suck. She just let her lips slip over the engorged nub so that it enhanced the sensations inside the woman's belly instead of distracting from them.

Luce came instantly, screaming Wren's name as she jerked repeatedly against the wall, her muscles straining against her bonds. Her memory of her last orgasm seemed to pale in comparison as her body tried to implode, collapsing in on itself at the deepest point where she could feel Wren's fingers pumping hard inside her.

Wren felt Luce's vaginal muscles clamp down on her fingers and pushed past the tightness again and again as she licked around her hand to catch the copious amount of fluid pouring out of the woman's core. Her own moans of pleasure were completely drowned out by Luce's yells of release.

As Luce came down from her peak, Wren continued to use her fingers to draw out the liquid essence of her prisoner, causing Luce to quiver with aftershocks.

Wren hardly noticed as she lapped up the fluid, making sure to catch every drop. With each swallow, she could feel the burning in her gut subsiding a little more, but the pain still hadn't completely gone away by the time she'd finished cleaning the brunette's swollen sex. Wren realized she was going to need a lot more before she'd be able to withstand another two days away from the soldier.

She moved her mouth back up to Luce's clit and licked around it as she slowly pushed her fingers back inside the woman's opening. The long drawn out groan she heard from above made

her drive her fingers in a little harder and deeper on her next thrust as she reached around with her free hand to grasp the colonel's ass to pull her harder against her mouth.

Luce wasn't sure whether her interrogator's renewed actions were a blessing or if she'd have to answer another question to get another release, but at the moment, she didn't care. The feeling of Wren moving inside her made all other concerns seem inconsequential.

She pushed her hips out in time with the blonde's thrusts and didn't do anything to suppress her constant moans as Wren's soft whimpers drifted up to her in return. The erotic sounds only increased her arousal at having the woman's lips and tongue playing in her wet folds and the vibrations against her sensitized flesh made her sex tingle.

Wren felt a sense of euphoria wash over her as she drew her tongue along her prisoner's slit again and again, swiping up the sticky fluid that constantly seeped out around her thrusting fingers. The last vestiges of her pain had finally receded into nothing, but Wren continued to work Luce's entrance, taking great delight in the sounds she pulled from the woman. In only a few minutes, she could feel Luce nearing her second orgasm and increased her motions, doing everything in her power to send the woman over the edge. She wanted to please Luce...

Wren felt her world come to a crashing halt as Luce screamed through her climax and Wren suddenly realized how far over the line she'd gone. Her mind reeled, feeling separate from the rest of her body as she automatically drank in her prisoner's release.

She wasn't just addicted to Luce's pheromones. She actually cared about the woman, cared about her pleasure and well being. And not just in the way she cared about all the prisoners in her charge.

Wren finished swallowing the last drops of Luce's come and finally pulled herself away as she sat back on her heels to look up at the woman. Luce was still panting from her exertions and her hair was damp with sweat, making her the very image of sex.

Wren felt an overwhelming urge to kiss her prisoner, but her training reasserted itself, reminding her that at this point, it wouldn't serve any purpose and was therefore unsanctioned. Nothing could be gained from a kiss, except her own personal

satisfaction, which never should've entered into the equation in the first place.

Thankfully, now that her addiction had been satisfied somewhat, Wren found she was able to resist her impulses a little easier, though her emotional needs were starting to tip the scales again. She realized she needed to leave and stood up on shaky legs, backing away several paces.

"Release."

Luce dropped bonelessly to the floor, landing on her hands and knees as she tried to regain her composure. Her mind was a mix of thoughts and emotions, all vying for her attention at the same time and she looked up just in time to see Wren turn around and head for the door.

"No, wait," Luce called out, feeling a sense of *déjà vu* as she remembered her fantasy from only an hour before.

Wren hesitated for a second, but didn't turn around as she shook her head.

"I can't," Wren replied hoarsely, swallowing around the lump in her throat as she tried to make her voice work enough to issue the command to open the door.

Before Luce could even process the thought, she was off the floor, her long legs crossing the distance in just a few strides to reach Wren. She wrapped one arm around Wren to pin her arms to her sides while at the same time placing a large hand securely over the blonde's mouth. The woman started to struggle, but then Luce spoke in her ear.

"Don't. I'm not going to hurt you. I just... Can't you just stay? Just for a little while?" Luce asked, her breathing still a little labored from their recent activities.

Wren stopped trying to get away and Luce carefully turned her around in her arms, keeping her hand firmly over the woman's mouth. She stared intently into Wren's eyes as she tried to decipher the blonde's expression.

"Please. Stay a little while. I just want to talk," Luce explained.

Wren's eyes gave away nothing of her thoughts and Luce realized she was either going to have to let the woman go or kill her. Though the soldier part of her tried to pretend it was still an option, Luce knew she couldn't hurt the blonde. She sighed.

“If I take my hand away, do you promise not to scream for help?”

It took a few moments, but Wren finally nodded in agreement. Luce slowly slid her hand to the side, her fingers grazing over the blonde’s swollen lips. Her thoughts were easily distracted as her fingertips began to trace over the soft lips. Without thinking, she lowered her head for a kiss, groaning when she smelled her essence all over the blonde’s face. As their lips brushed over each other, she tasted herself and couldn’t help thrusting her tongue into Wren’s mouth again to find more.

Wren’s arms automatically came up to clasp around Luce’s neck and she whimpered as their tongues met, slick and soft. The kiss was slow, but full of passion as they each tried to convey their unspoken feelings through the intimate act. They finally pulled apart, breathing heavily as Wren rested comfortably in Luce’s strong embrace.

“Can we just talk? No interrogation?” Luce requested again, but Wren shook her head.

“This isn’t supposed to be happening,” Wren protested, though she made no move to get away.

“I’ve been saying that all along,” Luce replied, her lips curving into a soft smile, which the blonde returned.

“What... What do you want to talk about?” Wren asked hesitantly.

Luce shrugged.

“I don’t know. Anything. I just... I don’t want you to go,” Luce admitted.

“You’re lonely,” Wren realized disappointedly and stiffened in the soldier’s embrace.

“Well, yeah, but that’s not...” Luce paused, a frown creasing her features. “I mean... I want... I want to talk to *you*. I want... to get to know you as crazy as that sounds. I know I’m just making it easier for you, but—”

“No, you’re not. You’re not making this easier at all,” Wren replied honestly. “I...”

Wren stopped. She knew she was in dangerous territory. All she wanted to do was tell the woman how she felt, how she’d become addicted to her physically, and how she was now finding

herself becoming addicted to her emotionally. But she couldn't do that. She had to...

"I have to go," Wren said as she weakly tried to push herself away from Luce, but Luce quickly wrapped her arms more securely around Wren and hugged her, lowering her head to nestle into the crook of Wren's neck.

"No. Please. Please stay," Luce implored. "I'll... I'll answer another question, just please... Don't go yet. I need to feel you. Please."

Wren stopped struggling as she felt tears welling up in her eyes. She tried to fight herself for control, but she knew her ability to hold out was fading fast, if not already gone completely. Her taste of Luce had forced her cramps into remission, but she still wanted more and the combination of her addiction and her feelings was becoming impossible to resist. If she didn't stop this now...

"Fuck it," Wren whispered. *I don't care anymore.*

Wren raked her fingers up the back of Luce's neck through the brunette's hair and grabbed a fistful of her black mane. She yanked Luce's head back and quickly claimed her lover's lips.

Luce went with it as the small blonde devoured her mouth. She gripped the woman's hips and lifted.

Wren took the hint and wrapped her legs around Luce's waist as the soldier slowly went to her knees.

Luce carefully laid Wren on her back, pressing her naked torso against Wren's equally bare body as she drove her tongue deeply into the other woman's mouth again and again while doing her best to maximize their skin to skin contact.

Wren helped her as much as she could, pushing her mound against Luce's lower belly as she fervently sucked on her tongue.

Luce couldn't get enough of Wren's mouth. Her own scent mixed with the blonde's reminded her that she wanted to taste Wren, too, and she slowly began sliding her body down, reluctantly releasing Wren's mouth in favor of kissing her way down the blonde's neck and chest.

She paused when she reached Wren's breasts. Her nipples were so taut and Luce found them impossible to resist, especially when Wren arched her back and thrust her chest forward in supplication. Luce opened her mouth wide and covered the

nearest nipple as she used her tongue and lips to suck the hard peak into her mouth. Then her teeth accidentally raked over the tender flesh. Luce quickly pulled back to offer an apology, but she never got the chance as Wren reached up and pulled her head back down to her breast.

“Oh Goddess, don’t stop, Luce! Please, don’t stop!”

Luce smiled as she retook her position and began scraping her teeth over Wren’s nipple. The sounds the blonde made seemed to go straight to Luce’s clit and she found herself unconsciously pumping her hips and even moaning in response to Wren’s increasingly louder cries. She sucked harder, completely focused on the nipple in her mouth until she felt Wren guiding one of her hands to her other breast.

Luce raised her head and was caught in Wren’s gaze as the woman placed her fingers on top of Luce’s and forced her to pinch her nipple. The reaction Luce saw on Wren’s face as the blonde groaned in appreciation made her stomach clench. She whimpered in need as she moved their fingers away and lowered her head to begin sucking on the neglected nipple. She brought her other hand up and began pinching the one she’d just abandoned, letting the moans she heard dictate how hard she squeezed the hypersensitive flesh.

Wren lost herself in the pleasure of having both her breasts sucked and pinched as she rubbed herself on Luce’s taut stomach. She could feel Luce rhythmically thrusting between her legs and it was almost enough to make her come, but she wanted more.

For the first time in her life, Wren didn’t calculate what would bring her partner the most pleasure so she could gain a tactical advantage or reward good behavior. Instead, she let her desire lead her and at the moment, she needed Luce’s mouth on her own. She used her hands already tangled in the brunette’s hair to nudge the woman up and hungrily attacked her lips, tasting her deeply. Every flick of her tongue seemed to force her pelvis up as she locked her legs around the back of Luce’s thighs to hold her in place.

“Oh Goddess, Luce, I want you. I really want you,” Wren panted, the admission bringing tears to her eyes.

Luce stared into Wren's eyes, taken aback by the raw honesty she heard in the blonde's voice. She could hear the pain again, but it seemed different somehow. The soldier in her considered that she had Wren at her mercy and could use that to her advantage, but Luce dismissed the thought as quickly as it had come.

Luce paused. Why *were* those thoughts so easy for her to dismiss? Every time she'd had an opportunity to fight the blonde or gain the upper hand, she'd backed off. She was a prisoner of war. Her only concerns should've been resistance and escape. She should've been doing everything in her power to thwart her captors. So why did the complete vulnerability she saw in Wren's eyes affect her so much?

In a moment of clarity, Luce suddenly realized why she'd been unable to control her body's reactions to Wren. It wasn't her body she needed to turn off. It was her heart.

"What is it?" Wren questioned, having watched a myriad of emotions cross the woman's face as her own fear mounted at possibly having said too much.

Luce continued to stare at her as she slowly brought her hand up to cup Wren's face. She brushed her thumb over the blonde's temple where her tears had trickled into her hair.

"Why are you here?" Luce whispered.

Wren frowned.

"I don't understand. What do you mean?"

"Is it me? Do you..." *...love me?*

But Luce was unable to finish the question out loud. If she was wrong...

"Do I what?" Wren asked, a note of fear creeping into her voice, but Luce just shook her head.

She continued to trace her fingers over Wren's cheeks as she stared into the woman's beautiful green eyes. She leaned forward and tenderly kissed the blonde's swollen lips. Her tongue flicked out and was soon enveloped by Wren's lips as the woman sucked on it before pushing her tongue into Luce's mouth.

Wren slowly broke the kiss, gasping for breath at the intensity she'd just felt from the simple, yet intimate act. She gazed into Luce's blue eyes and couldn't stop her tears from falling anew as she realized what Luce had been trying to ask.

“I do,” Wren replied a little belatedly, but she could tell Luce understood. “I’m not supposed to, but I do.”

Luce nodded in understanding.

“What are we going to do?”

Wren wanted to pretend she didn’t understand, but there was no mistaking Luce’s meaning.

“I don’t know. I... I don’t know,” Wren said again, her tone defeated.

“You could help me escape and come with me.”

“No. It’s impossible,” Wren replied as she pushed herself out from under Luce’s large frame.

“But you just told me—”

“I know. But I can’t do what you’re asking,” Wren asserted as she stood up. “For one thing, even if I could let you go, you’d just go back to fighting the Delphinians and I can’t allow that. Your people have to be stopped.”

“My people!” Luce replied indignantly as she climbed to her feet. “What about yours? Your government denies its citizens even the most basic medical care, and then you blame us when your people die from curable diseases. *They’re* the ones who have to be stopped! If it weren’t for my people—”

“If it weren’t for your people, the atmosphere would still be breathable and the Delphinians wouldn’t have to live underground! I’ve seen what they’ve been forced to endure because of your people’s carelessness. It’s horrible!”

Luce narrowed her eyes.

“Wait a minute. They? And why do you keep saying ‘the Delphinians,’ as if you’re not... What Clan are you? Are you a defector?”

“No.”

Wren wouldn’t meet her eyes.

“What Clan are you?” Luce asked again, the edge in her voice only becoming sharper.

“I don’t have a Clan.”

“Even orphans have a Clan. As bad as your people are, they don’t abandon their children.”

“I don’t have a Clan!” Wren yelled as her tears started up again and she began to cry.

“But—” Luce began as she took a step forward.

Wren's eyes widened and she immediately backpedaled.

"Hold. East... Thirty seconds," Wren got out between sobs.

Luce felt the familiar feeling of an antigravity bubble lifting her off the floor as it carried her to the wall farthest from the door, the metal cuffs around her wrists and ankles securing her in a wide X-formation against the padded wall.

"Open."

"Wren, no! Please—"

"I'm sorry," Wren replied hoarsely and Luce could only watch helplessly as the blonde hurried out of the room, the door sealing shut behind her.

A few seconds later, her restraints disengaged and Luce fell forward. She ran to the door and pounded on the padding.

"Wren! Please! Don't do this! It's not fair! Damn it!"

Luce gave the door one last kick and then slid down the wall, her head falling into her hands as she began to cry.

"Goddess. Don't you understand, Wren? I love you," she whispered.

\* \* \*

"...Don't you understand, Wren? I love you."

Wren cried even harder as the words came over her auditory implant.

"Disconnect link to Prisoner 22. Alert me... only in case of a medical emergency."

"Link to Prisoner 22 disconnected. Emergency medical protocols established," the computer replied.

*I just can't deal with this right now,* Wren thought as she continued walking down the hallway, constantly wiping at her wet cheeks as she headed for her quarters.

At the very least, she needed a shower. Somehow, she had to prepare for her next appointment, but just the thought made her tears come even faster. She didn't want to be around anyone right now, let alone have to seduce information out of them, but if she missed her appointments and was unable to send a new report at the end of the day, her superiors would know something was wrong and she couldn't let that happen.

Images of her and the prisoners' fiery deaths played out in her mind's eye as she entered her living quarters and headed straight for the small bathroom. As much as she wanted to be with Luce and possibly even help her—after all, she did agree with what Luce had said about the Delphinian's medical policies—she hadn't been lying. There was no escape, not even for Wren, and the risk was too great to even attempt it.

As the recycled water cascaded over her head and down her back, Wren focused on removing her lover's scent from her body. It was a task she was used to performing as many as half a dozen times a day, so the prisoners wouldn't have any physical reminders of earlier interrogations. Though they had to know she was doing the same kinds of things with all the prisoners, earlier studies had shown the negative effects were lessened when there was no physical proof for the prisoners to focus on.

However, every now and then, she would go directly from one interrogation to another, but so far, it hadn't hampered her effectiveness. In fact, her first session with Luce, she'd visited two other prisoners while waiting for the woman to capitulate. She'd taken a shower between those sessions, but as soon as she'd heard Luce give in and state her name and rank, she'd left the session she was in, since it was just a social visit, and had gone directly to Luce. Listening to the woman pant and moan for two hours had nearly driven her insane and she'd been so worked up that the thought of a shower hadn't even crossed her mind. She'd just needed to get to Luce.

Wren stepped out of the shower and dried her body as she realized she'd been affected by the woman from the very beginning. She'd maintained almost no boundaries, using the rules of seduction and manipulation to rationalize her approach with Luce the entire time. And now...

"I'm in love with her," Wren whispered to herself. *Luce was right. It's not fair.*

Wren wiped at the new tears forming in her eyes as she leaned heavily against the wall.

"Oh Goddess. What am I going to do?"

\* \* \*

Luce stared at the floor through blurry eyes. She couldn't seem to hold back the flow of tears and she'd long since stopped trying. At least she'd stopped sobbing finally. Her chest hurt, though, and she felt like her whole face was swollen.

She just didn't understand. Wren had all but said she loved her and she loved Wren. The course should've been clear. If Wren loved her, why wasn't she willing to leave with her and help her escape?

*Maybe she was lying. It could all just be part of some fucked up plan to break me. But I saw it in her eyes, damn it! Could someone really fake that? Oh Goddess, I hope not. Please, Goddess, please. Don't let it all be a lie.*

Luce wiped at the fresh tears on her cheeks as a sob escaped her chest and she coughed.

*Why did it have to be her? She's the enemy, for Goddess' sake! I should've killed her that first time I saw her.*

Even as she thought it, Luce cried new tears of grief and guilt. As much as she wanted to hate Wren, she couldn't. Wren had never been anything but kind to her and even though Luce knew it was all part of the process of trying to get under her defenses, she also knew the actions were completely genuine on Wren's part. She was sure Wren didn't want to hurt her.

*But she is,* Luce thought as she realized she couldn't see the floor anymore and tried in vain to blink the tears out of her eyes.

Luce suddenly felt the door at her back attempting to push her out of the way and she quickly got to her feet.

"Wren? Please, you have to talk to me."

"Please stand in the corner with the blue light," Wren's tired voice came from overhead.

"No, Wren. We need to talk. You can't just—"

"Please stand in the corner with the blue light," Wren repeated, speaking as evenly as she could from behind the door.

"No! Not unless you're going to—"

"Please, Luce! Just... Just stand in the corner... with the blue light," Wren choked out as the tears she'd thought she'd finally gotten rid of came back full force. "Don't make this any harder than it already is."

"Fuck you!" Luce yelled as she kicked at the paper tray, sending the contents leftover from that morning splattering

against the outer door. “It can’t get any harder than this! Just talk to me! Tell me why! Why can’t we just—”

“Because we can’t! Don’t you understand?”

“No! I love you! And I know you love me, too. You could come with me. I’d take care of you, I promise!”

Luce waited as the silence stretched on and then she felt herself being nudged backward as a gravity wall pushed her clear of the inner door.

“Wren? Wren! No! Come back! Please!”

For a moment, Luce stopped struggling and held her breath in anticipation as she heard the outer door open, but then all she saw was the telescoping arm as it retrieved the scattered remnants of her previous food tray. A second attachment quickly cleaned the spilled food from the surrounding area, then retracted again.

Luce waited another moment, but no new food tray appeared. Then she heard the outer door shut and her heart sank into her stomach. She watched as the padded inner door swung shut as well, the blue light in the corner having already been replaced by the normal white.

The gravity field disappeared and Luce ran forward again. She pounded on the padded metal door in frustration, but it didn’t budge, didn’t even vibrate. She slammed her fist as hard as she could into the wall, but the softened impact did little to assuage her anger.

*How can she do this to me? I love her!*

She hit the wall again, but it was only half-hearted. She turned around and surveyed the room. There was nothing to distract her. It was just one big white room. She felt like screaming. She was just so lost...

*“You can never be lost, if you know where your center is.”*

As the words of her meditation instructor echoed in her mind, Luce knelt in the middle of the room, settling into the familiarity of her favorite meditation pose. She focused on her breathing, inhaling deeply as she did her best to let more and more of her frustrations leave her with each exhale. However, the tears streaming down her cheeks told a different story.

She was sure of only one thing. She *would* get through this. She would find a way out. Even if it was the last thing she did.

## CHAPTER 5

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Wren hopped down the hallway, the incoming transmission alarm blaring over her audial implant as she pulled on first one leg of her jumpsuit and then the other.

*Oh Goddess, he knows.*

She fell into a jog as she pulled the jumpsuit up the rest of the way.

*But I've been so careful. Everything I've done against protocol, he's approved. He's had no reason to download the recording to compare it against the edited transcript I sent.*

She rounded the corner into the control room and then suddenly skidded to a stop as a new thought occurred to her.

*Oh no, what if it was just some stupid random check? If he's watched the video from the end of that last interrogation and run it through a lie detector, then he knows I was telling the truth, that I... Oh Goddess, I'm dead. We're all dead...*

Wren fumbled for her chair and sat down in front of the main screen, her whole body feeling numb. Her mind ran through every possible means of escape she could think of. It didn't take long, since she'd spent nearly all of the previous night trying to

come up with just such a plan without success. There was simply no way out.

The sound of the alarm eventually penetrated her haze of hopelessness, reminding her why she was in the control room in the first place. She had an incoming transmission. She frowned as that thought finally made it past her fear.

*Wait, if he knows, why would he be calling to talk to me about it? He'd just press a button and be done with it.*

The thought comforted her, but she still took a few moments to try to slow down her breathing and collect herself. She ran her fingers through her hair in an effort to make it look presentable and then sat up a little straighter.

“Receive transmission,” Wren ordered with more calm than she really felt.

“Voice authorization accepted. Connection established,” the computer informed her.

The screen changed to show Antari's scowling face.

“What took you so long? I've been waiting for almost ten minutes.”

Wren swallowed, but somehow his impatience reassured her.

“I'm sorry, Sir. I.. I was in the middle of an interrogation, Sir.”

It was true and along with her mad dash to the control room would explain why she was flushed and sweating without giving away her recently terrified state.

There was a pause and then Antari's expression cleared.

“Ah. Well, I hope you weren't at *too* critical a point,” Antari said and Wren did her best not to show her disgust at his lecherous grin.

“No, Sir,” Wren replied evenly.

His grin faded slightly as he realized she wasn't going to give him any details.

“Yes, well.” He cleared his throat. “I just wanted to inform you that we've included half a dozen more prisoners with the monthly food shipment. I'm told the transport has just finished refueling at Station 9, but there will be a slight delay while it undergoes minor repairs, so it won't arrive for another fifty-six hours. I've already sent you the reports on the prisoners, so that should give you plenty of time to acquaint yourself with them.”

Wren blinked, forcing herself to mentally switch gears as it became apparent she hadn't been found out after all. Her relief was short-lived as she considered the ramifications of adding six new prisoners to her already busy schedule.

"That many, Sir?" Wren questioned as she began skimming over the reports scrolling up an adjacent monitor.

She usually only received one or two prisoners every other month, since only those ranked captain and above were sent to her for interrogation. Luce was her most recent addition, having arrived a little over two months ago.

Antari smiled.

"Yes, that many. We've captured hundreds of prisoners with those pit traps. I don't think they realized what they were doing when they forced us to go subterranean. We control the very ground they walk upon." Antari leaned forward conspiratorially. "Just between you and me, I think this war is very close to being over."

Wren frowned.

"You mean the accident that captured the colonel? You're using that as a model to capture others?" Wren watched as Antari lost his smile and his face hardened into a blank mask. "It... wasn't an accident... was it." Wren felt her stomach drop as realization set in. "All those people... the families..."

"If the colonel had completed her mission, the resulting chaos would've devastated the entire city. It was a necessary sacrifice. The survivors were well compensated."

"But you could've evacuated the tunnels, sealed off that part of the—"

"And risked losing our advantage? Don't be absurd. We couldn't take the chance of the colonel getting wind of what we were planning. It took us months to devise a trap she wouldn't be able to think her way out of."

Antari smiled again and Wren swallowed the bile she felt rising in the back of her throat at the twisted expression.

"I watched the recording of her capture. It was perfect. She didn't even know she was surrounded until our forces were already in place and had picked off several of her people. Do you know that bitch actually had the audacity to run for the tower as if she still had a chance of completing her mission? But my son

had expected that and she fell right into his trap. Actually, the whole thing was my son's idea. Of course, I was the one who encouraged his interest in medieval battle tactics in the first place. Those stuck up generals at headquarters laughed at him, but I called in a few favors and now he's up for a medal and a promotion."

Antari blinked as he came out of his reverie. He looked at his desk and hit a few buttons.

"Well, you have your orders. Antari of Scorpion Clan out."

Wren was still staring long after the screen had gone black. Not even the cramping that had kept her from getting any sleep the night before and had plagued her all day was enough to make her move.

She couldn't believe what she'd just heard. Antari and apparently his superiors as well were willing to sacrifice their own people in order to hurt the Argolians. She might not have considered herself one of them, but she'd always believed in their cause. They were supposed to be the good guys.

*But he allowed his own people to be killed. Murdered. Even the most honorable ends couldn't possibly justify such horrible means.*

Wren shook her head and covered her face.

*I can't be part of this. I can't be part of murdering innocent people, the people we're supposed to be protecting. Oh Goddess, what am I going to do?*

Wren slumped back in her chair and sighed. She'd been asking that question a lot lately. She just wished she had an answer.

Finally, the calls of the prisoner she'd left forced Wren back to work. The woman was answering her question along with several others she thought might bring Wren back to her more quickly.

Wren entered the room and automatically went through the routine of double-checking the prisoner's answers before bringing her to her release.

When she was done, she returned to her quarters to shower, deciding to forgo clothing afterwards, since the constant low-grade cramping seemed to make even her loosest bodysuit feel too restrictive around her midriff.

Soon, it was time to serve the prisoners' evening meal. The self-propelled cart was automatically loaded with previously prepared food trays and Wren merely had to tell the cart to begin its rounds. At each cell door, Wren instructed the prisoner to move to the corner with the blue light, at which point, the door opened, allowing the cart's main telescoping appendage to seek out and lock onto the old tray and replace it with a new one.

Technically, the automated cart could've handled the job by itself, but past experience had shown the prisoners did better hearing a live voice several times a day rather than a recording. Wren thought the task was probably intended to keep her occupied as well and normally it worked. Feeding the prisoners was usually a calming activity, one that allowed her to relax as she took simple pride in caring for her charges. At the moment, however, it was just another reminder of the impossible position she'd somehow allowed herself to get into.

She came to the door for Prisoner 22 and hesitated. Luce had refused to acknowledge her after their last argument and hadn't eaten since breakfast the day before. Wren had tried to get her to eat that morning, but Luce had ignored her, continuing to kneel in the middle of her room in meditative silence. Wren hadn't tried to contact her again, deciding to give Luce a little more time to calm down rather than forcing another confrontation so soon. Wren wasn't supposed to visit her again until tomorrow anyway.

However, that did nothing to calm the flames burning her insides, tempting her to enter Luce's cell and take her. There was also the ache in her heart, desperate to make things right between them again.

*Again? When were they ever?*

*When I looked into her eyes and said 'I do.'*

Wren shook her head, trying to dismiss the thought as she sent the cart back to its station. Luce could easily go four days without food, maybe more. Two days wouldn't cause her any harm.

Wren retrieved her own meal and sat in the small dining area. The cramping and burning in her stomach hadn't left her with much of an appetite, but she did manage to swallow a few bites before she pushed the food away. She dumped the food tray and

headed for her next appointment, grateful it was her last of the night and merely a social call.

It occurred to Wren she didn't actually have to go. It wasn't like the prisoner knew she was coming and since the social visits served no practical purpose, they weren't tracked by her superiors in the same way the interrogations were. She wasn't allowed to completely ignore any one prisoner for too long, but the truth was the prisoners were only allowed to live so she could work with a clear conscience. It was entirely up to her how happy she kept them.

Wren paused and leaned against the wall. She was sweating and her abdomen was so tight it was causing her breathing to come in short puffs. She shook her head and turned around. Judging by how awful she felt, she doubted she'd be able to complete a satisfactory visit anyway.

She headed for her room, praying she'd be able to get some sleep this time, but as she made her way through the corridors, her pain suddenly increased. Wren put a hand out to steady herself, but she missed the wall and hit the floor. She immediately curled up into a ball, trying desperately to breathe through the pain. She felt like someone was stabbing her in the stomach over and over again.

She wasn't sure how long she lay there, but as the sharp cramping continued, Wren realized it wasn't easing off. If she didn't get up now, she might never be able to again.

Wren pushed herself to her knees and unsteadily climbed to her feet. She used the wall to brace herself as she made her way to the med-center. As soon as she entered the room, she activated the medical diagnostic. Wren held as still as possible while the computer conducted its scans, but she immediately doubled over when the computer announced it was finished.

After a few minutes, she managed to climb into a chair and picked up the plastic touch screen displaying the report.

She reread the findings, adding them to what she remembered from her previous diagnostic and felt her fingers go numb.

“Oh Goddess. It's accelerating.”

Judging by the amount of time between contacts and the onset of symptoms, she was losing several hours with each cycle. If the rate of loss remained steady, she had less than a week before

she would enter the third and final stage of withdrawal, which according to Wren's calculations would barely last a few hours before she would finally die. In fact, she might not even make it to the third stage if the pain sent her into shock before then.

Wren erased the findings the way she had before and then hugged herself as she tried to decide what to do. If she told Antari what was happening to her, he would most likely scrap the entire project. To cure her would mean removing the defect that caused her to require the prisoners' pheromones, but that would also remove their presumed hold on her and Wren knew Antari would never accept that.

There was another option, one Wren had been contemplating all day. She just hadn't been able to see a way to make it work before, but with the news of the prisoner transport, she was sure Luce's tactical experience would let her come up with a workable plan of escape.

*If she'll trust me.*

*And why would she want to do that? I tell her I love her... Well, not in so many words, but... Goddess, I never even said the words. And then I tell her I can't help her, that I **won't** help her. She'll never believe me if I tell her I want to help her now. She'll just think it's a trick. As it is, she probably already hates me. She won't even talk to me. How am I supposed to get her to listen if she's just going to ignore me? She's acting like... a teenager. Oh Goddess.*

That thought brought Wren up cold. What if all Luce felt was infatuation, a crush on the first person to introduce her to sex?

Other prisoners had exhibited such behavior, throwing tantrums while professing their undying love for her in an attempt to get more attention or to persuade her to forego the questioning altogether. It had been easy for Wren to ignore their pleas because she'd never reciprocated their feelings. She'd simply continued to do her job, using their feelings against them to get the answers she needed for her superiors.

With Luce, it was different. Wren had been intrigued by the woman from the very first time she'd read the soldier's file. She'd watched the woman in her cell as she rebuilt her body with increasingly difficult exercise routines that were far more demanding than anything she'd ever seen any of the other

prisoners attempt. Luce had captivated her attention more than she'd been willing to admit at the time. She'd watched Prisoner 22 for hours at a time, something she'd never done with any other prisoner in her care. She should've known then she was falling in love with Luce. Her addiction to the woman's pheromones had only complicated the matter.

*Goddess, this is such a mess. Here I am, wanting her to trust me and I'm not even sure if I can trust her. What if what she thinks she feels isn't even real? Or worse, she's just using me in the hope I'll help her escape. What if... What if it's all just a lie?*

Wren shook her head. Based on Luce's previous inability to deceive the computer, it was highly unlikely she'd be able to get a false statement past it later and the computer hadn't called any of her most recent statements into question. However, that had been true for other prisoners who later came to realize their feelings had only been superficial, the transient emotions of so-called 'puppy love.' Since they'd believed what they were saying at the time, the computer had been unable to determine their statements as false. It was entirely possible Luce was merely under the spell of her first sexual experience, though Wren hoped with all her heart that wasn't the case. Either way, Wren had no way to be sure.

*It doesn't matter. I have to at least try.*

Wren took a deep breath and steeled herself as she unconsciously looked to the ceiling to issue her command to the computer.

"Run maintenance program for all audio, video, health, and lie detection monitors. Inform me of the results when the diagnostic is finished."

"Running maintenance program for all audio, video, health, and lie detection monitors. Approximately 6 hours and 43 minutes until diagnostic is complete."

It was a calculated risk, but Wren was confident Antari hadn't been actively monitoring her after their conversation had ended. If he had, he not only would've seen her curled up in pain for the better part of an hour, but also would've caught the medical diagnostic before she erased it and if he'd read that, she would've suffered the consequences within a few minutes.

By the same token, if her superiors were watching now, Wren hoped they wouldn't think she was doing anything out of the ordinary. Since she'd just been informed of the transport's impending arrival, she could explain her actions as preparation for the new batch of prisoners. Of course, that was assuming they actually gave her a chance to explain.

Wren waited for another few minutes, but when nothing happened, she slowly eased herself into a standing position and began to take tentative steps towards the door.

*I just have to tell her the truth. If she really does love me...*

Wren shook her head.

"No ifs. I can't think like that. She does love me. She does. I know she does. She loves me..."

Wren continued to repeat the mantra under her breath as she slowly pushed herself closer to her destination.

By the time she was standing in front of the door marked L2-06, Wren was sweating and half-doubled over from the pain. It hadn't gotten any worse, but it hadn't gotten any better either.

"Open," Wren whispered just loud enough for the computer to register her voice.

A green light came on above the door, signaling that the inner door had opened.

"Luce?"

Wren watched the viewscreen next to the door, but the soldier didn't move from her kneeling position.

"Luce? Please, wake up. I need you to go stand in the corner with the blue light."

Wren saw Luce's shoulders twitch almost imperceptibly at the request and realized the woman had definitely heard her, so she wasn't in a deep trance.

"Luce, please. You have to move to the corner with the blue light. The door won't open unless you're either restrained or in that corner and I don't want to restrain you if I don't have to."

Wren waited, but Luce didn't budge. Then, just as Wren was about to ask one last time before she issued the command to restrain the soldier, Luce slowly climbed to her feet. She took her time, stretching for a full minute before finally moving to stand in the blue-lit corner.

Wren made sure she was out of the way as the outer door swung open. She did her best to straighten up and then slowly walked into the room. Both doors closed behind her as she stood staring at the tall woman. As soon as the blue light in the corner flickered off overhead, Luce moved to the side and leaned against the wall, her arms crossed, her gaze focused on the floor.

“Luce? I.. I need to talk to you,” Wren managed to get out, almost gritting her teeth as her cramps chose that moment to intensify, the minimal pheromones in the air seeming to do nothing to ease her pain this time.

Luce shrugged her shoulders.

“Fine. Do what you want.”

“I.. Oh Goddess!” Wren cried out as a particularly sharp pain suddenly stabbed through her abdomen, sending her to her knees and doubling her over.

“Wren?” Luce hurried over, easily tossing aside her feigned indifference as she caught Wren just before she fell over completely. Luce held Wren’s upper body, half cradling the naked woman in her arms. “What’s wrong?”

Wren did her best to breathe through the pain until it finally calmed down to a more manageable level. She looked up at Luce’s worried expression.

“What’s going on, Wren?” Luce asked quietly as she reached over to push the blonde’s damp bangs off her forehead.

Wren closed her eyes as she tried to gather the strength for what she was about to do. Though she’d already made her decision, putting it into action made it final.

*There’s no going back after this. They’ll kill me if they get the chance. Then again, I’m dead anyway.*

She opened her eyes and gazed up at Luce’s face, finding the courage she needed in the woman’s concerned blue eyes.

*At least I’ll be with her.*

“I’ve taken all the monitors offline by running a diagnostic program on them so nothing will be recorded for about the next six and a half hours, but I can only do that one more time this month before the system will alert my superiors.”

“Why?”

“Because there’s no reason to constantly run diagnostics, unless I’ve been compromised or turned traitor, so it’s a failsafe to keep me from doing something stupid.”

“Is it working?” Luce smirked and even through her pain, Wren couldn’t hold back her answering grin.

“No, not really.”

“Well, what I meant was why did you take the monitors offline?”

“I... I’ve decided to help you. But on two conditions.”

“Name them.”

“First, you won’t use me to hurt the Delphinians.”

Luce looked a little confused at the stipulation, but she nodded anyway.

“All right.”

“Second... I’m officially requesting asylum.”

“Granted.”

“And third...”

“Hey, you said only two.”

“...make love with me.”

Luce could feel her groin tighten at the simple request, but there was something about the desperation in Wren’s eyes that made her uneasy and she couldn’t help frowning.

“But you’re in pain.”

“It’ll go away if you touch me.”

Luce frowned harder as her mind began automatically compiling the bits of information she’d picked up during her previous encounters with Wren. The way Wren had appeared to be in pain the last two times she’d come to interrogate Luce. Luce remembered the desperation she’d heard in Wren’s voice each time before Luce had finally given in and answered Wren’s questions. But Wren had seemed fine after they’d had sex.

*No, not just had sex.*

Wren had gone down on her at least once during every session, twice during the last one, not even requiring any information for that second round.

Luce felt her heart sink into her stomach as realization set in.

“It’s me. You need me, don’t you? Something about me... My pheromones?”

“Luce...”

“Is that it? Is that all it is? All it ever was?” Wren watched Luce work her throat to swallow several times as her eyes became glassy with unshed tears. “Is that what I am to you? Just a fix?” Luce whispered.

Luce started to let Wren down onto the floor so she could get away, but Wren grabbed her shoulders and pulled herself to a kneeling position in front of the other woman, who remained where she was, her shoulders slumped and defeated. Wren slid her hands up to cup Luce’s cheeks and held her in place as she ducked her head to force eye contact.

“No! No, that is *not* all you are to me! I swear, Luce. I—” Wren grimaced at a sudden stab of pain, but did her best to ignore it, needing to tell Luce how she felt more than anything else. “I love you, Luce.” The pain receded slightly and Wren gentled her hold on Luce’s cheeks, stroking them with her thumbs as she tried to put everything she felt into her words. “I love you and I’m so sorry I didn’t tell you before. I just... This is new for me, too. I’m not supposed to feel this way about... about a prisoner. I’m just supposed to do my job and that’s it. But... with you...”

Luce studied her for a moment, but when Wren didn’t complete her thought, she spoke her own.

“How do you know it’s not just your... need?”

Wren sighed, realizing she still had some convincing to do.

“Because my ‘need,’ as you put it, is only about the physical and what I want with you goes way beyond that. I want to be with you, spend time with you, talk to you, learn more about you, tell you about who I am... If all I wanted was your pheromones, you’d be restrained against a wall and we wouldn’t be talking about this, but you’re not and we are, so that should tell you something, shouldn’t it?”

Wren stroked Luce’s cheek where the woman was beginning to smile.

“You love me?”

Wren smiled shyly and nodded her head.

“I do.” Then Wren grimaced as another cramp twisted her insides. “Though I’ll admit, the physical is feeling kind of important at the moment and if this goes on much longer, you

will be up against that wall because it's getting harder for me to think clearly."

Luce frowned again.

"There's still a lot you're not telling me."

"I know. I promise, I'll tell you everything later, but right now..."

"You need me."

"Yes."

"Then have me," Luce practically ordered, not waiting for Wren's reply as she moved forward, grasping Wren's ass and pulling her closer as she captured Wren's lips with her own.

Wren's response was immediate, her legs wrapping around Luce's hips, even as her mouth opened to spear her tongue inside Luce's, forcing her way in as deep as she could go. Her fingers clawed at the back of Luce's neck, her nails scraping along the soldier's scalp, and she felt Luce shiver in response. Luce sucked hard on Wren's tongue in return and Wren couldn't hold back her grunted moan at the sensation.

Wren's mound involuntarily thrust forward against Luce's taut abdominal muscles. Luce's large hands squeezed Wren's ass to bring her into even harder contact just above Luce's pubic mound and for a moment, Wren forgot where they were or why they were doing this. It was no longer about trying to seduce the soldier and if Wren was being honest with herself, it never had been. She reveled in Luce's touch, the feel of the woman's skin pressed against her own, the sliding of their tongues around one another. She never wanted to stop kissing Luce. She simply couldn't get enough and Wren moaned again at the taste of the other woman.

Luce was lost in the feeling of having Wren's tongue in her mouth and the woman's mound rubbing against her stomach just above her hairline, but it was her body's instinctual need for release that reminded her of the service she was supposed to be providing for Wren. As Wren plundered her mouth, she reached up and drew one of Wren's hands down to her vagina. She slid her knees apart on the padded floor and drew her stomach muscles just far enough away from Wren to allow the blonde's fingers to find her clit.

Wren's palm cupped Luce's sex and her fingers automatically sought out the woman's opening as she slid her legs down from Luce's hips to sit back on her heels in order to give herself more room. Wren stroked Luce from her entrance to her clit and they both gasped at the slickness Wren found, breaking their kiss.

Luce would've sworn she hadn't been aroused until Wren touched her, but that didn't explain how wet she was. It took time to make that amount of lubrication.

*When...?*

Luce's thoughts were cut off as Wren gently pushed two fingers inside her and Luce gave herself over to the sensations, rocking her hips in her kneeling position to try to bring Wren deeper. Wren didn't disappoint her as she circled Luce's clit with her thumb and pressed her fingers as deep as they could go.

Wren pushed up onto her knees, bringing her lips to Luce's neck. As she opened her mouth to lick the sweaty-salty skin of her lover, she couldn't help grazing her teeth along Luce's exposed shoulder. She bit down on the taut muscle as she thrust her fingers hard inside Luce and nearly came at the sound of Luce's whimpered groan of pleasure.

"Oh Goddess, Wren, please!" Luce gasped out.

Wren's thighs tried to clench around her clit to ease her own aching desire and then her stomach cramped sharply, reminding her she needed more than what the pheromones in Luce's sweat could provide.

She pulled back, momentarily unsure what to do as she vacillated between her need to be gentle with Luce and her all-consuming desire to take what she wanted no matter the consequences. She looked up and was instantly caught in Luce's gaze.

Luce felt the spasm in Wren's muscles. To anyone else, it might've been misconstrued as pleasure, but the sudden jerky tensing of Wren's movements told Luce the woman was in pain. The pleading fearful look in Wren's eyes only confirmed Luce's suspicion. As much as they both might want to prolong their pleasurable foreplay, Wren's physical needs had to take precedence for the time being.

Not that it was any kind of hardship on Luce's part, but Luce could see Wren's uncertainty and knew she needed to reassure the woman.

Luce gently withdrew Wren's fingers from her opening and guided them to Wren's mouth. As Wren's fingers disappeared inside her own mouth, Luce saw Wren's eyes roll into the back of her head just before they closed and the groan Wren issued made Luce shiver in anticipation.

Luce leaned forward, kissing Wren's mouth around the woman's fingers. Wren immediately removed her fingers in order to devour Luce's mouth, but Luce drew back just enough to halt Wren's frenzied response. Wren got the message and waited, her breathing labored, eyes wild. Luce moved closer again, kissing and licking at Wren's lips slowly and deliberately. She finally pulled her lips away, dragging them to the side and whispering in Wren's ear.

"Take me. I wanna come for you."

Wren's stomach clenched in reaction to Luce's words and she pulled back to look into the woman's eyes. She felt her heart skip a beat at the love and desire she saw. There was no hesitation, no disgust or resentment. Luce didn't hate her. Luce loved her and was willingly giving of herself to help the woman she loved. Wren kissed Luce again, soft and unhurried, and then pulled away.

"Thank you," Wren whispered and then leaned back, beckoning Luce forward.

Luce smiled and spread her legs wide enough for Wren to slip between them until her shoulders pushed past Luce's inner thighs. Luce positioned herself above Wren's lips and Wren placed Luce's hands in her hair.

As Wren breathed in Luce's pheromones, she knew she'd reached the limit of her resistance. She simply couldn't wait one moment longer, but even as she lifted her head to taste Luce, Luce pulled Wren's face to her sex. Wren immediately covered Luce's opening with her mouth, letting the thick liquid that had pooled between Luce's thighs flow over her tongue and down her throat. She couldn't swallow fast enough and licked greedily at Luce's dripping folds, lapping up every drop she could find.

Luce moaned at the sudden intense contact, but she quickly caught on to the point of having her hands in Wren's hair. Wren was trying to give her some control. Wren wanted to please Luce just as much as she wanted to sate her own need. Luce reasoned the more pleasure she felt, the more Wren would have with which to be sated, so Luce used her hold on the woman to guide her where she wanted her.

Wren felt Luce's urging and covered the soldier's clit with her mouth, swabbing her tongue over the hard little nub to draw more wetness from the woman with each new stroke. Then she changed tactics, alternating between sucking on Luce's clit and slipping her tongue lower to dip into Luce's dripping entrance.

Luce whimpered and angled her hips in an attempt to impale herself on Wren's tongue. She couldn't control the instinctual movements she made as she gyrated her hips to rub her sex all over Wren's mouth to seek further stimulation, though a tiny part of her mind worried she might be suffocating the smaller woman. But Wren showed no signs of struggling for air, so Luce let go of the thoughts and concentrated on the sensations instead. She was so close.

Wren moaned as her cramps were joined by a clenching need that sent tingles up and down her body. There was nothing she wanted more than to bring Luce to climax, to give her that ultimate release, and as Luce writhed above her, her movements becoming shorter and sharper, her breathing ragged, punctuated with little grunts and whimpers, Wren ignored the part of her training that told her she should stop and ask a question, and instead followed the part that told her if she sucked Luce's clit into her mouth, if she flicked her tongue back and forth across it, if she just kept doing that as she gripped Luce's lower back, trying to bring the woman's body tighter to her mouth...

Luce felt the pressure in her clit building with every flick of Wren's tongue and pushed down with her hips, trying to increase the friction. A few more thrusts of her hips and Luce fell over the edge, the intense pressure suddenly exploding through her body in wave after wave of pleasure and she milked it for all it was worth, reveling in the feel of the blonde's soft lips and warm tongue covering her entrance and drinking her in.

Wren swallowed convulsively as Luce cried out and jerked above her, sending a flood over Wren's tongue and down her throat. Wren's cramps completely disappeared with the inundation from Luce's fierce and prolonged climax, but even though her need for Luce's pheromones had been satisfied, it only intensified the need Wren felt deep in her belly.

As Luce rolled off of her and to the side, all Wren wanted was to follow her and climb up her body and rub herself all over the other woman. She wanted contact after their estrangement for two days. But Wren knew that wasn't in the program. They'd only done this to get Wren's withdrawal under control. She tried to prepare herself, expecting Luce to demand answers from her now that her need had been sated.

Instead, Luce reached for her, pulling Wren into a heated kiss.

Luce thought she should've been satisfied with her climax, but it seemed as if that had only been a warm-up. She needed more. She needed to touch Wren, feel her body curve into her own, feel her arch in pleasure. Luce also knew part of her was looking for proof of Wren's love. Since their interrogator-prisoner relationship was based on Wren pleasuring her for information, Luce knew the only proof her heart would accept was Wren's complete surrender in her arms. It wasn't necessarily logical, but it made sense to Luce.

Luce claimed Wren's mouth, enjoying the taste of herself on the other woman, and licked and sucked on Wren's lips.

Wren didn't need any more encouragement and returned the kiss with all the passion she felt, delving into Luce's mouth as deep as she could go. Then it was Luce's turn again and Wren welcomed her tongue, sucking on the wet muscle and drawing a whimpered grunt from the soldier.

Luce rolled their entwined bodies so she was half on top of the smaller woman. She pressed her pelvis down onto Wren's hip, sliding one of her legs between the blonde's and pushing hard against her. Wren met her thrust for thrust as Luce reached down with one hand on her hip to pull her in tighter. She ducked her head to resume kissing the blonde, dragging her lips up the woman's jawline to her ear. Luce sucked on the plump lobe, then released it to move back to kiss the soft downy skin of Wren's cheeks.

Wren couldn't stop the moans that poured from her with every breath. Luce was sucking at her neck, licking her cheeks, kissing her lips, her chin, her chest. Tingles swept over her body, chasing each other across her skin. Then Luce wrapped her mouth around one of Wren's nipples just as she slid two fingers inside Wren, and Wren cried out, pulling at Luce to try to bring her closer. She wanted to touch all of Luce at once.

Luce thrust her fingers inside again and again. She slipped in and out so easily she decided to add a third finger. She grinned at Wren's deep moan of approval and used her thumb to find the woman's swollen clit. Wren was so wet, Luce's thumb kept slipping off, so Luce applied more pressure.

Before Wren realized what was happening, she felt her orgasm overtake her. The earlier tingles she'd felt turned into goose bumps trailing up and down her skin as her nipples tightened and her vaginal walls clamped down on Luce's fingers so hard Luce could barely move them. Wren felt the breath leave her lungs for a moment and she jerked her hips up again and again, trying to ride the pleasure to its fullest. Then a cry ripped from her chest and she rocked her hips, moaning with each panting breath until the waves of pleasure finally receded, leaving her spent, but quite satisfied.

Luce gently extricated her fingers and wrapped Wren in her arms. Just holding Wren brought such a feeling of peace to Luce she could almost forget where they were and what they were supposed to be doing. Almost.

Wren looked at the bare chest a few inches in front of her face and traced her fingers over the soft skin covering what she knew was a solid pectoral muscle. She sighed. All she wanted to do was stay in Luce's arms and drift off to sleep, but she knew she couldn't do that. They needed to make the most of what little time they had left while the monitors were still offline.

Wren pushed herself to a sitting position and faced the brunette.

"I guess we need to talk."

Luce sat up and arranged her legs in a pretzel position.

"Yeah. I guess we do."

Wren studied the floor.

"I don't know where to start."

“Well, how about you start with how and why you were genetically altered by the Delphinians when it supposedly goes against all their beliefs, and then maybe you could segue into why that alteration seems to have latched on to me, since I’m guessing you don’t have this reaction with any of your other prisoners.”

“No, I don’t. You’re the only one, thank the Goddess.”

“I’d also like to know why you said you don’t have a Clan,” Luce said quietly, remembering Wren’s earlier admission.

Wren looked away.

In a world with two cultures fighting a holy war over what amounted to genetic purity versus genetic freedom according to the teachings of the Goddess, a person’s genetic line was more important than just about anything else. It symbolized one’s connection to the Goddess as well as telling everyone what special traits one held. In the current climate, it also immediately let everyone know which side of the war one was on.

The history of the most influential Clans, for good or bad, was the first thing most people learned. It was one of the few things both sides agreed on, since the Clan Chronicles were public record and were maintained in a distributed blockchain database with nodes in every city, town, and village, making it impossible to insert revisions to earlier updates without drawing immediate attention to such alterations, though which Clans were good and which were bad was always hotly debated.

Everyone worked to improve the renown of their Clan, which could include thousands of families, and when someone failed or in some way fell from grace, the whole Clan looked bad. Luce herself had single-handedly propelled Claw Clan to legendary status in the space of only a few years, whereas before then Claw Clan had been relatively unknown.

Everyone knew which Clans were deemed the elite or the very dregs of the ranks. For Wren to say she didn’t have a Clan made her sound like she was either hiding something terrible or was such an outsider, she might as well have been an alien from another galaxy.

Wren stared at the floor, swallowing a few times before she finally attempted a response.

“It’s part of the genetic alterations my creators performed on me. I’m... I guess you could say I’m a mutt.”

“Your creators? I don’t understand.”

“I know. I guess I should start at the beginning and see how it goes from there.”

“All right.”

Wren took a deep breath and began.

“Eleven years ago, two Argolian scientists defected to Delphinia. I’m not sure why and I don’t know if they volunteered or were forced into it, but they ended up working for a top secret group within the government administered by Antari of Scorpion Clan. Since your soldiers were engineered to die if you experienced too much pain for too long, they decided the best way to circumvent that response was to use pleasure. And that’s how I came to be. I didn’t have parents like you did. I was designed and grown in a lab. I’ve had several predecessors, but they didn’t work out for various reasons. I’m their latest prototype. I was supposed to be the perfect weapon against you, and it worked, too. They just forgot to take one little thing into account.”

“What’s that?”

“Love.”

Wren leaned forward and cupped Luce’s cheek as she looked steadily into her eyes.

“I love you, Luce. I’m so sorry for what I put you through. I thought I was doing the right thing, but it wasn’t. Not now and not for me.”

Luce nodded, closing her eyes and rubbing her cheek against Wren’s palm. She covered Wren’s hand with her own and then gently grasped it, pulling it to her lips and kissing Wren’s knuckles. She let her hands rest in her lap, still holding Wren’s hand as she nodded for the blonde to continue.

“No one knows what I really do here. Like you said, Delphinian law prohibits genetic manipulation. If their people were to find out what members of their government have sanctioned, it would be a disaster. That’s why this whole project is completely off the books. And those who have heard of me think I’m some sort of sadistic torture specialist, since the prisoners they send to me are never seen or heard from again.”

Luce nodded.

“That’s what you meant about not using you to hurt them. But why do you even care? They’ve been using you this whole time—”

“I don’t, not about them. It’s what it would do to their people. If you make it public that I exist, the Delphinians will lose faith in their entire government, not just the few members that broke the law to, in their eyes, achieve a greater good. At best, the news would demoralize their troops and maybe make it easier for your people to defeat them for a time, at least until they were able to rally again, but at worst, it could spark a revolution and once those fanatics are in charge, there won’t be any rules of engagement and it’ll be nearly impossible to end the war peacefully.”

Luce snorted.

“Like that’s going to happen anyway. We’ve been at war for over fifty years. What makes you think it’s going to end with anything less than an unconditional surrender from one side or the other?”

“Because of why it got started in the first place.”

Luce frowned as she tried to understand what Wren meant.

A hundred years ago, a new highly communicable and antibiotic-resistant form of pneumonic plague had emerged and swept across the planet, killing millions. The Argolians, with their expertise in medicine, had been the first to develop both a treatment and a vaccine and offered them to the Delphinians just as they’d offered them to their own people.

While the disease was wiped out, it left a large portion of the Delphinians sterile due to their lack of prior genetic enhancements. It had affected many Argolians similarly, but few of them considered it a problem, since most of them used artificial wombs and growth tanks anyway and the condition wasn’t genetically transmitted. Their children were fully capable of natural conception.

The Delphinians, however, claimed it was the cure, not the disease, that had caused their sterility and considered the whole thing an act of war, accusing the Argolians of trying to exterminate them through attrition. The Argolians denied the charge, citing multiple medical studies that showed the low

fertility rates were due to infection, not vaccination or treatment. They also pointed out the Delphinians weren't technically infertile. They just couldn't conceive in the natural way they were accustomed to.

The Delphinians refused to accept such an alternative, seeing it as the Argolians attempting to force them to adopt the Argolians' biologically artificial ways, which went against Delphinian beliefs in following a natural path to the Goddess. The Delphinians closed their borders and for many years little was heard from behind the walls the Delphinians built around their territories.

Then people began to defect with horror stories about how they'd been denied access to Argolian medical treatments, which the Argolians still freely shared in hopes of reconciliation. With all the past years of hints and rumors of a totalitarian regime that had taken control of Delphinia and had a vise grip on scientific research and art, not to mention their barbaric belief that genetic manipulation was evil and a crime against the Goddess, the Argolians came to only one conclusion. Argolus had to liberate Delphinia.

Unfortunately, like any war machine, once it got started, certain ideals fell by the wayside. To make their armaments and build up their defenses as quickly as possible, the Argolians used techniques that polluted the atmosphere beyond anything done in previous centuries, making it unbreathable. Since they had access to gene therapy and other medicines to counteract the effects, they considered it a necessary evil and carried on.

But the Delphinians had no such recourse and had to move into sealed tunnels under their beautiful cities, forced to recreate everything underground that they'd once built above. They saw this as just one more reason they had to stop the Argolians and bring them back to a better, more natural way of life before they completely destroyed the planet.

The war had been raging ever since.

At Luce's deepening frown, Wren explained.

"Each side simply wanted to help the other find a better way, but now those ideals have been twisted into a desire for conquest and revenge. If your people and the Delphinians ever hope to come together, they'll have to do so as equals, not one

conquering the other. If you use me to hurt the Delphinians, you won't be serving either side. You'll simply be continuing with another act of aggression. Please promise me you won't let that happen."

Luce sighed and nodded.

"All right. I promise."

Luce wasn't sure how she would keep that promise, but she'd damn well do her best. She wanted this war over just as much as Wren.

"Thank you."

"So what about the rest? Why are you so affected by me?"

Wren smiled.

"Well, I could say it's those beautiful blue eyes and that amazing body that holds such a keen intelligence and loving heart... But I don't think that's what you mean."

Luce blushed, but smiled as she shook her head and waited for Wren to answer her more seriously.

"Well, I can't be sure, but the scientists told me my DNA template was based on their own White Tiger Clan DNA, so I have all their genetic markers—blonde hair, short stature, pale skin—but they said they also spliced in a dozen other Clans' markers, including Claw Clan. My guess is that they used those Claw Clan markers to map the defect in the artificial gene set they created that causes me to require human pheromones and now your pheromones in particular."

"So I take it you've never... interrogated a Claw Clan soldier before."

"No, you were the first. And there are no other members of Claw Clan here, so..."

"I'm it."

"Pretty much. Normally, I can get a certain amount of pheromones from what the prisoners release into the air just by sweating, but if I don't ingest a large quantity in liquid form on a regular basis, the deficit will cause my body to go into withdrawals, which will eventually lead to death. In essence, they designed me to be an addict, but—"

Luce shook her head.

"That doesn't make any sense. Why would they design you that way? Having an addiction, even if it gave them some level

of control over you, is still a liability and almost guarantees failure at some point.”

Wren nodded, a sarcastic smile curling her lips.

“I’m sure they have several replacements waiting in the wings for that eventuality. I think the real point of the pheromone addiction is so I’ll be more than willing to do my job. My sex drive has also been enhanced, both genetically and with the same aphrodisiacs they add to the prisoners’ food.”

Luce frowned at that revelation, angry at the manipulation and also at herself for not realizing it on her own, but it certainly explained at least some of her lack of control recently, not to mention her instant arousal at the slightest provocation.

Wren continued.

“The addiction isn’t normally that bad, though. They gave me training and placed me in a situation in which I never had to worry about getting my next fix. That’s allowed me at least some measure of control. At least it used to. From the scans I did, it appears when I came into contact with you for the first time, your pheromones triggered a dormant set of genes that are only satisfied with Claw Clan pheromones. Just standing in the room with you was probably my first dose. Licking your skin was my second. Tasting you... By then I knew something was wrong. And now, according to my last medical scan, my previously manageable addiction has spiraled out of control, causing me to enter withdrawal symptoms faster than before. At the rate the cycle is losing time, I have less than a week before I enter the final stage and die.”

Luce’s hands went limp around Wren’s and Wren silently pulled her hand back.

“So that’s why you’ve decided to help me escape. Because you’re dying.”

Luce knew she was being stupid, but she couldn’t help the accusing tone in her voice, though she tried to soften her expression to take some of the sting out of her words.

Wren shook her head.

“It’s not the only reason. And it’s not just you. We need to get everyone out. But I think I would’ve gotten here eventually regardless. The death sentence just speeded up my decision-making process.” Wren glanced down at her empty hands,

unwilling to look into Luce's eyes as she went on. "That and the fact that I just found out Antari sacrificed civilians in order to capture you and is continuing to use the same technique to capture others. I can't..." She shook her head fiercely. "I *won't* be a party to murder."

Wren finally glanced back up, surprised when she saw only patience in Luce's eyes. She took a chance and reached her hand back out to settle on Luce's thigh, grateful when Luce didn't flinch away.

"I know you have no reason to trust me, trust that what I'm telling you is the truth, but... Please believe me when I say I do love you, Luce. All this other stuff... It's just a complication. I was trying to figure out how to be with you before I found out about the withdrawal acceleration. I just couldn't see a way that wouldn't get everyone killed. But now I do."

Luce nodded in acknowledgment, deciding she was going to have to stop looking for proof of Wren's love at every turn or she was going to destroy any chance they had together. Besides, they didn't have time for that shit right now.

"All right. I'm going to need to know everything. How many guards there are, what kind of security measures you have to go through to leave, what part of Delphinia we're in—"

Wren held up a hand.

"We're not in Delphinia."

Luce frowned.

"There's no way they've managed to set up a secret base in our territory. We scan for that sort of thing all the time."

Wren shook her head.

"No, let me finish. We're not in Delphinia and we're not in Argolus. We're not even on the planet. We're on a space station in orbit hidden behind the moon."

Luce felt the breath leave her lungs. That was the last thing she'd been expecting. All her half-formed plans of escape vanished in a heartbeat as Wren continued.

"I'm the only personnel on the station besides the prisoners. Everything else is automated. My superiors are all planetside, but they can see and control everything on this station, including setting it to self-destruct if they think the project has been compromised. That's why I took everything offline, so they

wouldn't be able to see what I'm doing. There's a supply shuttle arriving in less than three days. It's automated, so it'll be empty, except for food and other supplies and the six new prisoners they're sending for interrogation, but they'll be in cryo-stasis, so we shouldn't have to worry about them. What I was hoping was that you could come up with a plan for commandeering the shuttle and getting everyone off the station before my superiors realize what's happening and incinerate the place."

Luce breathed slowly and deeply, her training kicking in to help her remain calm as she took a moment to process everything Wren had just said. Her mind was reeling, but it wasn't long before she was able to organize her thoughts and prioritize her questions. A new plan was already taking shape in her mind, but there were a lot of variables she needed to narrow down.

She started with the most relevant questions and worked her way down the list.

"How many prisoners are on the station?"

"Twenty-two, including you."

"Do you know the type of shuttle that's coming?"

Wren nodded.

"If it's the same as all the previous ones, it should be a Golden Hawk Class IV Lunar Supply Transport with four vacuum-protected cargo containers. But given that they're including six more prisoners, there should also be at least one extra container of food, water, air tanks, medicine, and probably an extra air reclamator the bots will have to slot into the station's ventilation system to support the added load."

Luce frowned for several moments as she considered her options and then finally nodded.

"Okay. Unless they've made serious modifications to the shuttle, I know I can install the reclamator without too much fuss, which should provide enough air for at least half a dozen people, but those cargo containers aren't insulated enough for living human transport. That means we'll have to cram everyone onto the shuttle itself, which could get tight."

"Could we insulate the containers ourselves?"

"Do you have those kinds of materials on board?"

“No...” Wren frowned as she tried to think. “But I’m sure the station uses those materials. If I could get inside the walls—”

Luce shook her head.

“You’d never be able to get enough material in the next few hours and you can’t go ripping out the walls while they could be watching.”

Wren nodded in acceptance as Luce continued.

“What kind of stasis pods will the prisoners arrive in?”

“Ferret-Falcon Generation Sevens.”

Luce nodded.

“Good, those double as life pods.”

“But they’re already occupied and they can only fit one person.”

“Only if you leave in all the cryo-tech. If you pull it out, you can easily get two people in one of those things. It’s a little cramped, but doable.”

Wren looked at her for an explanation and Luce smiled.

“My team once took over a base that had some of those G7 medical pods in the infirmary. We were running out of food, but we had to last long enough for reinforcements to relieve us, so we ripped out most of the pods’ guts and took turns in them, just using the basic biorhythm settings to enhance our own trance states to reduce our metabolic rates. It worked and we still had control of the base when our replacements arrived several weeks later.”

Wren nodded, thoughtful.

“So, with six pods, you’re saying we could put another six prisoners in semi-stasis with the six that are coming. That still leaves seventeen of us sitting in a shuttle with only enough air for half a dozen.”

“Not necessarily. If we can cannibalize a couple of the reclaimators already on the station, I should be able to hook them up to the shuttle no problem. It’ll just be a matter of diverting enough power from other systems to keep them running well enough until we hit atmosphere.

“And if that doesn’t work, a soldier in metabolic trance uses less than half the oxygen a fully awake soldier does. We’ll just have to make sure the best meditators stay out of the pods and try to pick the smallest soldiers to go into them. You said the

shuttle's automated, so I should be able to program in a destination and no one would have to stay awake to monitor it. One way or another we'll make it work. We're not leaving anyone behind."

"Of course not. But I won't be able to go into a trance like the rest of you. I was never trained for that. That means I'll be using more oxygen—"

Luce put her hand on Wren's knee and squeezed.

"It'll be all right. I'll make sure there's enough."

"I'm also going to continue cycling through withdrawals. I'm not sure you've considered what that will mean."

Luce had considered it. It was one of the first things she'd thought of when Wren had declared the shuttle their only means of escape. At the mention of the pods, she'd briefly considered putting Wren in one of them, but her use of one pod with full cryo-stasis would force two others to attempt to enter metabolic trance on their own, and while Luce was fully confident in her abilities, she knew not every soldier was as proficient. Not to mention the power drain from the fully operational stasis pod on the shuttle's resources would leave less for the proposed air reclamators, which were absolutely necessary if they hoped to avoid death by hypoxia or hypercapnia.

All of which left Wren awake and regularly needing to feed off Luce's pheromones at ever diminishing intervals in a cramped shuttle surrounded by hopefully sleeping soldiers for three days. Soldiers who had been having sex with Wren for months and might find it difficult to let go, regardless of the circumstances. Soldiers Luce would find it difficult not to kill if they tried to make a move on Wren, or worse, tried to harm Wren in return for their imprisonment.

To say the least, it was not going to be a fun trip.

"I'll make sure we have someplace private to go to and that everyone else understands you're off-limits. All right?"

Wren nodded, relieved Luce had full grasp of the situation.

Luce returned to planning, thinking aloud as she went along.

"Now, the tough part. How do we get me out of this cell? I'm assuming the computer tracks my location, which is why the door won't open unless I'm in that corner, but is there some way

for you to shut off that particular safeguard or hack the system? Maybe a medical emergency...”

Wren shook her head.

“I don’t think we need to go that far. The doors work in conjunction with the cuffs you’re wearing, which also double as bio scanners and physical location trackers. All of this was explained to me before I even came here. If I’m outside the cell, the inner door will open, but the outer door will remain closed until the cuffs indicate you’re either standing in the corner with the blue light or I’ve restrained you. If I’m inside the cell, both doors will open at my command, provided the cuffs indicate you’re either restrained or in the rear third of the cell. So we just have to remove the cuffs, which I—”

“Perfect. Assuming you have access to at least some basic medical supplies, I know which chemical compounds to mix together to get these off me, so if you can just—”

Wren placed a hand on Luce’s arm and smiled.

“Luce, it’s okay. I already have access to the necessary sprays, since I use them almost every day.”

Luce frowned in confusion and Wren explained.

“Sometimes I need to restrain a prisoner at more than just their wrists and ankles. Those restraints are made of the same metamaterial as your cuffs, so I have access to supplies that allow me to apply and remove those restraints as needed. Trust me, removing your cuffs will be the easiest thing we do the whole time.”

Luce was still frowning, suspicion tensing her muscles beneath Wren’s hand.

“Why would they give you access to something that would let you help a prisoner escape? Are you sure the restraints you’re talking about are the same as the cuffs?”

Wren nodded.

“Quite sure. It was drilled in to me to be very careful where I sprayed the relaxer, so I wouldn’t accidentally elasticize the cuffs. Or if I did, to immediately restrain the prisoner with a full antigrav bubble rather than only at the cuff contact points and spray the hardener. At one point, they were going to implement it as an automatic safety protocol, but trying to get the computer to make the distinction between the hardened and elasticized

states proved unreliable, especially when only a small portion of the cuffs needed to be elasticized to make them loose enough to remove. Something about the metallicized rubber seems to interfere with differentiation.”

Luce still looked unconvinced.

“Why don’t we just test that theory right now before the monitors come back online? You know, just to be sure.”

Wren nodded in agreement and left to get a set of the sprays from the nearest storage compartment. The compact double-ended spray bottle was color-coded and Wren checked to make sure both ends were full. She returned a few minutes later and Luce held out her right arm. Wren sprayed the relaxer and the cuff immediately released its grip on Luce’s wrist.

Luce slipped her fingers under the elasticized cuff and stretched it over her hand, removing it completely. She held the cuff in her hand and stared at it for a long moment before darting her eyes to the small sprayer in Wren’s hand.

“Luce?” Wren asked hesitantly. Luce slowly brought her gaze up and Wren’s eyes widened as she realized what Luce was contemplating. “Please, Luce... Don’t do it. There’s nowhere to go. You’ll just get us all killed... Please, just...”

Luce reached her hand out to gently cup Wren’s cheek and Wren fell silent. Luce pulled Wren forward into a soft kiss, simply brushing her lips over Wren’s. After several passes, she felt Wren melt into her and couldn’t help holding the smaller woman a little tighter. Luce eventually pulled back and looked into Wren’s eyes.

“I won’t say I’m not tempted because I am, but that wasn’t what I was thinking. I was just thinking we need to test this all the way. I promise... at least for the next few minutes... I won’t try to make a break for it.”

Wren looked up at her uncertainly, but finally nodded. Wren sprayed Luce’s other wrist and both ankles, and Luce removed the rest of the cuffs, setting them against the back wall before moving up to stand next to Wren again.

Wren took a deep breath, offering a brief prayer to the Goddess that Luce would keep her promise, and then spoke.

“Open.”

The inner door swung open and Luce breathed in slowly and deeply, automatically pushing down the nervous energy causing her to want to bounce in place as she stared at the last barrier to her escape. Just like the previous times she'd seen it, the outer door appeared just as thick as the inner door, though without the padding. Luce had a feeling it would take some seriously powerful explosives just to put a dent in either one of them. Then the outer door opened and Luce was able to see a brightly lit corridor less than a dozen feet away.

Luce barely waited for the door to finish opening before darting forward. She felt adrenaline skip up and down her spine as she stepped across the threshold, moving from the padded floor of her cell to the surprisingly warm tiled floor of the hallway. She waited for an alarm to go off, but nothing happened. She turned to flash a grin at Wren, but the woman just stared anxiously back at her from where she stood in the doorway, presumably to keep the doors from closing again.

Wren couldn't help the nervous flutter that churned her stomach as she considered the risk she was taking. If Luce decided this was her one chance for freedom...

"Luce? Please, come back inside."

Luce looked at her again.

"I want to see a window."

Wren felt a wave of nausea sweep over her.

"Luce, please. I'm really freaking out here. We have no way off the station yet and we'd barely have a few minutes of warning if for some reason they decided to turn everything back on right now. And if they saw you out here... Goddess, please, Luce, just... Come back in here," Wren said, her voice rising in panic.

Luce took one last look up and down the nondescript hall, memorizing the layout and placement of the nearby doors, and then sighed in resignation. She turned around and walked past Wren into her cell. It suddenly seemed smaller somehow, even though it was much wider than the hallway had been.

Wren let out the breath she'd been holding as she followed Luce back inside. As the doors closed automatically behind her, Wren went to the back of the cell and retrieved the discarded cuffs. She silently knelt in front of Luce and Luce didn't offer

any resistance as Wren slid the ankle cuffs back on. She sprayed the hardening compound onto the cuffs and they instantly bonded to Luce's skin while stiffening just enough to make it impossible to remove them, even if Luce did somehow figure out a way to pry them from her flesh.

Luce held her wrists out, knowing what was coming next and also knowing she didn't have a choice in the matter. As Wren stood up in front of her and brought up one of the wrist cuffs, Luce looked down and saw Wren's hands were shaking.

"Wren..." Luce whispered.

"I'm sorry," Wren said, her voice tight as she slipped the cuffs on Luce's wrists and used the spray to fix them in place. "I think I'm just..." Wren blew out a breath as she looked up at Luce. "Everything in my training is telling me I just made a huge mistake and when I made mistakes before... I was punished. Severely." Wren shook her head as she looked back down at the spray bottle resting in her palm. "Unlike your people, I don't have a defense against prolonged pain. It works quite well on me," Wren whispered.

"So that whole thing about being prepared to die if I took you hostage..." Luce trailed off, remembering Wren's introductory speech.

Wren looked up again.

"Oh no, that part's absolutely true. If you managed to incapacitate me enough that I'd lost control of the situation, the station is set to blow within five minutes if I can't pass a lie detector stating I'm in control again. But even when you prevented me from speaking, I still had more than enough movement to give a nonverbal signal to have the computer immobilize you. I just... didn't want to."

"You really think they'd blow the station? That seems like a pretty stupid waste of good resources when they could just gas everyone."

Wren shook her head.

"Your people are constantly tinkering with your genetic code to make you immune to noxious gases. They wanted something foolproof. Being blown to bits is about as foolproof as they could get. Besides, if you managed to commandeer the station, you could use it against them. Either way, destruction is the safest bet

if I'm compromised. But the truth is, they've set things up so that it would be nearly impossible for you to take me hostage as long as I'm obeying protocol. Which is the other part of the equation. If I've turned traitor, then destruction makes even more sense, since my very existence could be used against them."

Luce frowned.

"You can't possibly think you're safe from me like this. If I wanted to hurt you—"

"One word from me and you'd be restrained in a full body antigrav bubble and rendered unconscious. Or if I couldn't speak, I have several different gestures I can use, depending on what type of movement is available to me." Wren stared down at the floor. "I'd appreciate it if you didn't test me on this. I don't want to hurt you and using that command would light up every alert they have. I've only ever had to use it once and since it was my carelessness that precipitated the event..."

"You were punished."

"Yes."

Wren didn't elaborate and Luce didn't ask, deciding a change of subject was in order.

"All right. Now that I've had my little field trip, what do you say we get back to work."

Wren nodded gratefully and Luce continued.

"We're going to need clothes..."

They continued discussing all the ins and outs of their planned escape, trying to cover as many possibilities as they could think of. After over an hour, they were both satisfied they had a solid plan in place. All that was left was to put it into action.

They had decided Wren should leave early while she still had plenty of time to complete her preliminary assignment before all the monitors came back online. She needed to give the prisoners their midnight snack soon as well.

But as they stood holding one another in front of the door, all Wren wanted to do was stay in Luce's arms. She felt like it was the first time in her entire life she hadn't potentially been under some kind of surveillance. She felt safe. She felt free.

But now she had to go back to the real world and try to pretend as if nothing had changed.

Wren hugged Luce a little tighter and then pulled away, not meeting Luce's eyes as she tried to brace herself to leave what she'd started to think of as their private little sanctuary. She faced the heavy door as she spoke.

"I'm supposed to have a visit with you tomorrow, but I think... I think it might be better if I only see you when I have to, so I'm going to reschedule it for the day after."

"Why?" Luce asked sourly, suddenly feeling more than a little used.

"Because I don't know what affect being around you for so long will have on me. I don't want to speed up the process any more than it already is."

"What if it's slowing it down?"

Wren shook her head, finally turning around to face Luce.

"I'm addicted to you, Luce. What happens when a drug addict receives more of the drug they're addicted to? Does it make them less addicted? Or more?"

Luce frowned, but nodded her head in resignation.

"All right, I get it. That doesn't mean I have to like it."

"Neither do I. But now I'm... I'm not sure how we should proceed."

"What do you mean?"

"Since I broke protocol with you and my superiors signed off on an every-other-day schedule for your interrogation sessions, I don't think I'm going to get away with putting off your next session until after the shuttle arrives, not to mention I'm going to have to see you at least once between now and then to keep the withdrawals in check. Changing your schedule at all is probably a little risky, but if they ask me about it, I'll just tell them I'm trying to keep you off balance and it seemed like you were expecting me the last time. As long as they don't use a lie detector, they should buy that explanation. But it does mean we'll end up having one more session before we leave."

Wren waited for a response, but Luce just stared at her. Wren sighed.

"That means I'm supposed to interrogate you until you answer the next question on the list, but I don't want to do that anymore. But if I don't and they actually decide to watch your session, which is likely, they're going to know something's up. So I'm

going to have to come in here and ask you a question and then seduce the answer out of you. But I love you and I don't want to hurt you. I was just thinking maybe if I told you what the next question was, then you could come up with something truthful I could report back to my superiors, but that you wouldn't feel bad about revealing. You'd have a day to figure it out."

"What's the next question?"

"I'm supposed to ask you to outline the primary contingency mission you designed had the outcome of your last mission been successful. Since it's been three months since your capture and I'd expect anything you were privy to would've been scrapped, it's doubtful the information would compromise any current missions, but I think the question is really meant to give insight into how you plan your strategy."

Luce blanched as it suddenly occurred to her that this whole scenario could be a trick designed to make her a more willing traitor. An image of Wren laughing at her gullibility with her fellow interrogators made Luce feel sick to her stomach.

Wren watched as Luce's face went completely blank, something she knew from past experience probably meant the soldier was experiencing intense emotions and her training to conceal that information had kicked in.

Wren reached out and placed her hand on Luce's arm.

"Luce, if you can't do it willingly, I can seduce it out of you. I was just hoping that our next visit wouldn't need to involve... coercion. I've really enjoyed the freedom I've felt in the last few hours. But I'll do it, if it'll make you feel less guilty about divulging the information. It's just... If you tell me something that you manage to get past the lie detectors, but that they can figure out isn't true before we're able to leave, we're all dead."

Wren waited as Luce thought it over. Part of Wren felt stupid for even bringing the subject up. She should've just left, changed the schedule as she intended, and when she returned, gone about interrogating Luce as per the usual and dealt with the consequences later.

Luce replayed Wren's words over and over in her mind, unable to refute their logic, and despite all her fears to the contrary, she couldn't detect the slightest hint of deception on Wren's part. The woman simply seemed to be trying to make the

best out of a bad situation. A situation they would, with any luck, be free and clear of in only three days.

The thought gave her hope, but the other, more practical part of her mind couldn't help acknowledging it was possible she was being fooled. That part of her vowed that if Wren returned with some story about how the shuttle had been delayed, so they were going to have to 'pretend' to go through several more interrogation sessions until it arrived... If it turned out there was no shuttle, no hope of escape, and Wren really didn't love her, well then... She'd give Wren a quick death, which was more than she deserved if she was lying, and follow her soon after.

"I won't be able to give in willingly and I'm not sure how I could lie about that follow-up mission without the detector catching it. Just... do what you have to do."

Wren closed her eyes and nodded. The cool tone in Luce's voice let her know Luce felt betrayed, but there was nothing she could do about it. For having found such a small fragment of peace and so short a time ago, the gaping hole it left in its sudden absence seemed entirely out of proportion. Wren felt tears forming behind her closed eyelids and turned away to try to hide them.

"I'll..." Her throat was tight, so she cleared it and tried again. "I'll see you later then."

Luce heard the thickness in Wren's voice and felt her heart breaking against her will at the sound. She couldn't help herself as she reached out for Wren's shoulders to pull her around into a hug. She was surprised at how quickly Wren buried herself in her embrace.

"I love you, Luce. I'm so sorry."

Luce shushed her and kissed her hair.

"It's okay. We'll get out of here and everything'll be okay. All right?"

She pulled away and Wren's tear-streaked face looked up at her.

"I just... I don't want to lose you... lose this." Wren looked down again. "I wish I didn't have to leave. I just want to stay here... with you."

Luce closed her eyes and pulled Wren into a hug again.

“I want that, too, but it’s gonna have to wait a few more days. Right now, you have a job to do.” Luce stood up a little straighter and held Wren at arm’s length. “So go do it,” Luce ordered in her best command tone.

Wren nodded and wiped at her face. She took a deep breath and squared her shoulders, giving her an extra inch of height, but still not even coming close to Luce’s stature. She smiled and stood on tiptoe and kissed Luce gently on the lips.

“Thank you.”

Luce nodded in return and then stepped back until she was far enough away from the doors that Wren could open them.

Wren gave her one last smile and then left.

She had a mission to carry out.



# TO BE CONTINUED

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Please check  
<http://www.kodiwolf.com/WOLFsector/PrisonerOfWar/> for the  
latest updates.



# WHAT TO DO NEXT

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Thanks for joining Luce and Wren on their journey so far. There's so much more to come. :)

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