

LOVE Has NO Boundaries



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KILLIAN'S MOON

Travis Simmons

Love Has No Boundaries

An M/M Romance series

KILLIAN'S MOON

By Travis Simmons

Introduction

The story you are about to read celebrates love, sex and romance between men. It is a product of the *Love Has No Boundaries* promotion sponsored by the *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* and is published as a free gift to you.

What Is Love Has No Boundaries?

The *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* invited members to choose a photo and pen a letter asking for a short M/M romance story inspired by the image; authors from the group were encouraged to select a letter and write an original tale. The result was an outpouring of creativity that shone a spotlight on the special bond between M/M romance writers and the people who love what they do.

A written description of the image that inspired this story is provided along with the original request letter. If you'd like to view the photo, please feel free to join the [Goodreads M/M Romance Group](#) and visit the discussion section: *Love Has No Boundaries*.

Whether you are an avid M/M romance reader or new to the genre, you are in for a delicious treat.

Words of Caution

This story may contain sexually explicit content and is **intended for adult readers**. It may contain content that is disagreeable or distressing to some readers. The *M/M Romance Group* strongly recommends that each reader review the General Information section before each story for story tags as well as for content warnings.

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Photo Description

Two men stand in a dark room, firelight creating a backdrop on a whitewashed wall behind them. They are staring into each other's eyes like they are the only two in the world that understand one another. They are in a strong, passionate embrace that only comes with ease to people who know each other intimately.

Story Letter

He's going off to do this alone. And I have to let him. I know he's strong and capable and will be careful—as careful as he can afford to be. I know what the stakes are, and why I can't help him. But I have to hold him one more time, have to look into his eyes, remind him that he's taking my heart along for the ride.

I won't die if he doesn't make it back, but God knows I may never really live again either. If there are any kind of guardian spirits out there, please help him make it safely through—don't let this be the last time I feel him warm and alive and vibrant between my hands.

So, Dear Author, I'd like a little action, some angst, and whatever ending you feel will fit. You can even let him not make it home, or make it home in bad shape, but the love and grief would have to be there (and I sure wouldn't turn down a HFN or HEA)

No BDSM in this relationship—they are trying to be equals, even though the guy speaking (on the right) is perhaps older or more experienced or has special skills or talents (and yes, those could be paranormal.). Historical, fantasy, sci-fi, or contemporary are all fine. First or third person narrative.

Thanks,

Kaje

Story Info

Genre: science fiction

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*NB: This story was previously published in May 2013 by the author under the pseudonym Talus Ripley.

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By Travis Simmons

The holovision stops chirping and I sigh with relief, trying to relax back into sleep. When I wake up I must remember to change the settings to not let correspondences through so early.

“Taven, I see you.” I haven't heard Killian's voice in two years, outside of dreams. Dreams where he doesn't turn into a shiftless vagabond whenever we start getting close. But that isn't like Killian; he likes to travel, and he likes to run when things start getting too real. Content that the dream is claiming me again, I relax back into the warm embrace of my bed imagining Killian wrapping me in his loving embrace, where there will be more than sex this time.

The holovision chirps again and I growl in protest.

“Go away,” I mutter to myself.

“No,” comes the voice again. I start coming to myself, realizing the voice is within my home, and talking to me. That's impossible.

“What has you so excited, Taven?” he asks. “Your sheets are tenting up pretty good.”

And I *am* getting excited. The timbre of the voice brings back memories of trysts under the stars and it's almost like I can feel Killian moving inside of me in this half-sleeping state I'm in.

“Oh, for the love of God, *wake up!*” he insists.

I roll over with a moan to look at the incoming correspondence and smile when I see the familiar holographic face of Killian floating above the holovision.

“Hey there, sunshine!” The three-dimensional face smiles at me.

“What! Killian, what are you doing invading my holo?” I yelp, balling the blankets in my lap so he can't see my rising excitement.

“Too late, I’ve already seen it. And if you remember correctly, I’m one of the few people you programmed into your holo to have unapproved access. I can pop in on you anytime I want. Maybe I even watch you sleep!” His eyebrows knit together and he takes on a creepy look. “Wouldn’t that be something?”

“I’m sure you’d enjoy it,” I scoff, sitting up in bed and rubbing my tired eyes. I’m bone tired, one of those sleepy qualities that muffles the senses and makes everything seem like a waking dream. The fact that I’m talking to Killian for the first time in two years when he has done nothing but *plague* my dreams for the last couple months doesn’t help the disorientation.

“Maybe I do. See, you never know.”

I really wouldn’t mind, but I quell that feeling. I have never shared a night with Killian, so if he’s watching me sleep like a stalker, I guess that would be close to spending the night with him.

“Listen, tomorrow is my last day home before I have to go back to work, I thought maybe we could spend some time together.”

Time together with Killian almost always translates into sex. I don’t mind the meaningless sex, but I’m kinda getting too old for it. I am twenty-six cycles now, and I’ve had my fill of one-night stands and just sex. I feel the ticking of my biological clock and lately it has been growing rather loud. I don’t want a life of just meaningless encounters any longer. The older I get, the more I feel I will never have a stable relationship, I will never have a husband and will die a withered old troll that’s always on the outside looking in at happy couples. Not to mention, I’ve been thinking of Killian a lot too, and that complicates meaningless sex.

I want to settle down, and not with just anyone. I have been through several relationships and it always comes back to one thing: they aren’t Killian Myles.

“So? What do you say?” He sounds nervous. I’ve never known Killian to be nervous before.

I open my eyes, not realizing I had them closed in the first place, and look at his face. The expression is different. Normally, when he holds it's for sex, not for anything major. We are friends, we spend time together, we chat and have beers, but it has been two years since I've seen him, and part of me thought he was out of my life for good.

"It's okay if you don't want to," he says. "I just stopped in to the lake house to see if you were still around and if you wanted to hang out." His voice sounds dejected, but hard, like he is bracing himself for my rejection. That's most certainly not like Killian, and not the voice of someone who wants to get laid.

"No—yeah, I can come over. I need to shower first, though," I tell him. My curiosity is piqued. What can I say? Killian is acting strange, like something is up. After all we are friends, even if we end up in the sack together, and I wouldn't turn a friend down.

"Great! I will see you in a few." The holo shrinks out of existence until it is just a pinpoint of light that bobs up and down above the projector, happily waiting for the next incoming correspondence.

I force myself out of bed and to the shower. It's made slightly easier by the fact that I'm going to see Killian today in person instead of in my dreams. I set the shower timer for ten minutes before the UV-protection chemical phase of the shower kicks in.

I don't really take a long time picking out an outfit. If today is as warm as yesterday, I should go naked, but since that isn't decent, and invites the wrong kind of attention, I put on a pair of khaki shorts and a light blue shirt. I slip my sneakers on, lock the house up and head on my way.

It's been about a hundred years since the first SES vehicles were created, and fifty years since the last of the cars were made obsolete. Since then, people don't tend to tread the old paths and roads, instead sticking to in-home gyms to escape the sun's harmful rays, and take to the skies in their flying vehicles.

The roads have largely gone back to nature. Sometimes it makes walking treacherous, and takes most of my attention. I can't really let myself focus on *where* I'm going if I want to get there unscathed.

I can't really think about Killian's correspondence until my feet lead me off the broken road and onto the wooded trail leading to the lake. Again, since people use their SES vehicles more often than walking, I follow game trails back to his home.

The dirt and stone crunches under my feet. The sun is warm enough today that sweat has soaked my shirt to my chest and back.

As I near his home, my heart starts racing. I can't count the number of times I have come this way hoping he would be home, and never finding him there. I always tell myself I came this way to enjoy the lake he offered for my use, but I can't lie to myself, I know that every time I've come here it was to see if he was home. I'm glad he hadn't been. If I had come here and found that he was home but hadn't contacted me, it would have caused a whole world of hurt I wasn't prepared to deal with, especially considering my developing feelings for him.

At times I feel desperate, like I'm stalking him, but he was the one who told me I could use the lake any time I wanted by accessing his beach. Even if that wasn't the reason my feet always brought me here.

In fact, the first time we met was late one summer night almost eight years ago. I had snuck through the woods to the lake. Not realizing there was a house so close, I stripped down and sank beneath the refreshing waves. I took in the sight of the moon, at that time it was whole—it was before the mining accident that blew a crater in the face of the moon—and I floated on my back, feeling the peace of the night wash over me. Crickets sang on the grassy shore, and in the distance I heard the lonesome hoot of an owl.

Killian had found me like that, my pale skin illuminated by the silvery light of the moon, the waves lapping around me, and my eyes closed. When he spoke it startled me and I nearly drowned. And I might have if he hadn't come in to help me.

Our friendship started then, and continued ever since. He was, and remains to this day, a man who prefers to smile and speaks about introverted topics. The type of person who is like a drug. The kind of person you wish you could be because he seems to have a handle on life. He knows what it is about, and he enjoys every second of it.

When I round the bend and see a light on in his house my heart skips a beat. I have to stop myself from running to his door. I see a movement behind one of the windows, and I know it is him. He is just as fresh and enticing as the first day we met. I knew he was here. I mean, we had just talked, but actually seeing proof of him makes it all the more real. I know it isn't a dream now, I know it is real.

I stand there for a moment and just watch him, remembering his touch and the feel of him. It seems so unreal that every time I have come here before it was to see darkened windows and memories of him in the living room. But now, I'm actually seeing him! The lights bobbing around in the house, illuminating the windows with a warmth I feel kindled in my heart when he turns and smiles at me through an open window.

"Taven," he calls once he sees me standing there, spying on him.

He comes running out to me and wraps me in his strong arms. The scent of him fills my nose, the manly sweat that sticks my clothes to his chest and the smell of the sun in his hair. I take it all in, and it's almost more than I can bear.

This is what I've been dreaming of for the last few months, and now that it's real, I can't believe it. I want him with me. I know now, having been through so many relationships, that Killian is the one I want. Not only the one, but the life I want to be part of. I want to share the rest of my life with him, and I want to be entitled to worry about him when he is gone without feeling like I am obsessing.

"I'm so happy to see you." He pulls away from me for a second and looks into my eyes. "What's wrong?"

There are so many things I want to say to him right now, but I am so overwhelmed with emotions that I can't think of the words. Instead I shake my head and hug him tight once more.

"My gosh, how I have missed you. Come on, I was just firing up the grill for an early lunch. We can swim for a while before we eat."

"I didn't bring any swim trunks," I tell him. Mentally I kick myself; it's summer, and we are by a lake, why on Earth wouldn't I bring swim clothes?

"Well, if I remember right, that isn't an issue for you," he says with a sly smile, tweaking a nipple through the wet shirt. It sends electricity coursing through my body, and I know that all my bravado of wanting a relationship with him would melt into crazy sex at a moment's notice if he makes an advance. I have no power to resist Killian.

He takes my hand in his, and I see the familiar living tattoo bloom to the surface, black and textured like scales along his skin. It reacts to touch. His is mostly cosmetic—some people get tattoos of stone which become like an exoskeleton when they come in contact with anything.

I remember the feel of that tattoo when we make love, and I shiver.

We make our way along the white stone walkway to the front door. I slip my shoes off before I step into the darker, cool interior of his lake house. The inside is all done in wood. We enter through the kitchen and ahead of us is the living room, the right side of which boasts a large staircase leading to the upper story. Directly ahead of us through the living room is a patio door, with a treated wood deck and the lake beyond. The windows and doors are open and it is so silent in the house that you can hear the insects and birds outside, and the occasional fish splashing in the lake. It's a sleepy silence, and as it stretches I can even hear the sigh of wind through the trees.

The wind brings in the smell of the lake and the sun-warmed forest around the house. I could live here. Just standing inside the house, I feel all the tension of the last few days leave me in a cool rush. Being here, surrounded by the trappings of Killian, I feel at peace and at home, so much more than I ever do in my own house. This place is like a haven away from everyday life.

“You like?” he asks.

“I always love being here, your house is so calming, so quiet. It is insane to even think there is such a thing as SES craft flying around outside.”

“Eh, I don't really see a lot of ships around here, do you?”

“Some, but not many.” I admit.

“So what have you been up to? How is the writing?”

“It's going. I have another book I am about to release.”

“Making enough money to support yourself without another job yet?” Killian leans against the wall.

“Just barely, but I manage. I really hate working for other people, so I will trim away what isn't necessary so I can live with the peace of being my own employer.”

“That's awesome. Now all you have to do is get yourself an SES and you can start living like I do!” He sounds really proud of that. He knows I envy his lifestyle, but I always make up reasons why I can't live like he does, even though it is something I long for.

He heads to the bar and starts mixing a drink. “You still drink Pluto's Gambit?”

He is already mixing the silver liquor with tonic before I answer. I hate how loose the drink makes my tongue, but it tastes so amazing going down.

“Of course.” I smile, easing into a chair at the kitchen table. This place just feels like home, something I never really had when I was younger. It speaks of love and easy afternoons and cookies for breakfast and lazy Solstices.

“Come on, let's go sit outside.” I follow him out the sliding glass door and onto the deck. I look out across the water and love the way the sunlight plays across the ripples.

“I've been thinking about you a lot lately,” he tells me, resting the icy glass on the wooden railing where it instantly leaves a ring of moisture under it.

“Yeah?” I smile and inch closer to him, because I like being close to him. He rubs a hand down my arm and where he touches I can feel electricity. I want those fingers all over me. I want to feel his body pressed against me and his tongue slipping...

“Tell me about it,” I say, my voice husky with need.

“Strange dreams really,” he tells me and I scoff.

“You still believe in that shit?”

“Of course, why wouldn't I?”

“Because of the age we live in? That stuff is just fantasy.”

“I think dreams hold power.” He leans in and whispers sensually to me, his breath playing along my neck, and his words are deep and resonant in my ear. “The brain is a powerful muscle that can do amazing things, make us feel... sensations.”

A shiver runs down my spine and I close my eyes and lean into him.

“You don't think that feeling is magical?” he asks, pulling away from me. I open my eyes and realize he was just teasing me.

“Ass.”

He laughs and walks to the grill. He moves his hand over the wood inside the grill and a flame springs to life in response to the motion sensor igniter.

“I believe we have come a long way in explaining a lot of things,” I tell him.

“But the brain is still a mystery to us,” he says and we fall silent. “But I didn't invite you over here to discuss our differences.”

“You wanted me to come over here and discuss something else?” I say, and sitting in a chair I take a sip of my drink.

“Not really. I mean, we can talk, but I didn't have anything specific planned.” The way he is fidgeting suggests otherwise.

“So where have you been?” I ask him. “It's been two years since I last saw you.” I think about adding the last part—that I have missed him terribly—but

he can probably tell that by the way I look off into the lapping water along the grassy bank of his private shore.

“Recently?”

“Well, I mean in the last two years, yeah.” I laugh. “I guess it isn’t really that recent.”

“Well, they have found another source for terbium on the moon, and with the growing number of SES vehicles, we need all the terbium we can get for the batteries. So, when I go back to work the day after tomorrow, I will be heading to the new site. They don’t have anything drilled there, so we will have to start from scratch.”

I remember what happened last time they started from scratch. I look up at the sky and I can see only a ghost of the moon now that it is daylight. But my eyes know where to go, my heart knows where the crater is. It had been a horrible accident, and Killian was lucky he didn’t die in it.

Terbium isn’t the only mineral being farmed from the moon right now, but it seems to be the most dangerous, and it’s the job that Killian is on.

“You almost didn’t make it the last time they settled into the deposit,” I say somberly.

“Yeah, I know. I’m not sure I ever told you how scared I was. Floating out in space, grappling to that chunk of moon rock before the rescue pods could get to me. I really thought I was going to die, Taven.” He looks deeply into my eyes, and I can read the fear there. I had felt that same fear when I saw the explosion that day, sitting on this very deck, thinking about him. Somehow I knew that he had been part of that explosion. Somehow I knew that he was in the accident, and I had feared the worst. I ran home, waiting for the holo from his parents, but it never came. That night I was able to pull up a broadcast from the moon on the holovision and learned that one person had drifted out to space, but had been rescued. It wasn’t until the following day I learned it had been Killian and that he was safe, and I no longer had to worry.

“You know,” he says, his voice a mere whisper over the crackling flames of the grill. “The entire time I was out there, I couldn’t stop thinking about

you. I was drifting on this rock as large as my house, and all I could think about was how I would never see you again.”

“I have that effect on a lot of boys,” I tell him.

“I am being serious, Taven.”

And I love that he is being serious, but I have a hard time admitting my emotions, and even accepting them from others. It is something I have been working on, and I force myself to relax at his words.

“I have been thinking of you a lot lately, too,” I admit, leaning back in the chair and slipping off my sneakers.

“Have you now?” He stands up straighter. “I did see how excited you were this morning at just hearing my voice.”

I blush. “Not like that.”

He comes over and sits in the chair beside me, swirling his drink around so the ice and alcohol mix together, before he takes a drink. “I can’t wait to hear this.”

“There really isn’t a lot to tell,” I say. “I haven’t heard from you in so long, I thought maybe you had forgotten me.”

“How could I ever forget you?” he asks, taking hold of my hand and pulling it closer to him.

“I had hoped you hadn’t,” I admit.

“You are lonely,” he says, and when I look at him I can tell he is studying my face; he is looking deeply into me as if he can read the weight of my soul, the burden of my emotions.

“Extremely.”

“It’s because you live so far out here without any other men around you,” he tells me.

“I’ve dated.”

“Who?”

“A few guys, but they just don’t measure up.”

“Oh, they don't, do they?” He tugs on my hand playfully. “What are you measuring them against?”

“I just have really high standards, I guess.” I dodge the question; I'm still not sure what will come of this meeting. I would love to tell him that I want to be his, that I want this to be my life from now on, beside him, *with* him. I have had the time to think about it, and I am tired of being friends who occasionally have sex when he wants it. But I would rather share fleeting moments between the sheets or talking on the deck with him than to push him away with demands of something he doesn't feel.

This conversation is so strange though. It seems like there is something else he is trying to tell me, but he isn't *saying* it. It's like he wants me to guess it, and I don't have those super mental powers like he imagines exists.

“Be careful.” He stands and sets his drink on the table. He peels off the sweat-soaked shirt. “We are getting older, and soon we will be trolls that none of the young ones want any longer.” He winks at me and undoes his shorts. As they fall to the hot deck and he kicks them away I can't imagine anyone *ever* not wanting him.

I look from his strong feet, up his sculpted legs. My eyes graze over his flaccid penis lying heavily in his trimmed hair. His abs are smooth, but defined. There isn't anything bulky about Killian. He is trim and fit, and though he is shorter than me, his muscles are long, giving the impression of him being taller than he really is. What a way to cut to the chase.

“We have time for a quick swim before the burgers are ready to go on,” he tells me. “Your turn.”

“Don't you have swim trunks?” I stand and shuck my shorts, and unlike Killian I wear underwear.

“Yeah, but I would hate for you to feel left out.” He winks. “Now, let's see.”

I roll my eyes, pull my shirt off and toss it at him, and while he is fighting with my sweat covered garment on his head, I tug my red undershorts off. When he gets the shirt off his face I stand before him naked as I have been so

many times before. For some reason my being naked feels like it is ruining the mood, like I am expecting just the normal from this, like what I am going to get from him is not what I want, and my life will continue as it is, writing emotionless science-fiction novels to keep my head above water and living a life of non-living, just existing. Killian is the life I want.

“What’s wrong?” he asks, coming toward me. He was always able to read me better than I would like.

“Nothing.” I try to smile.

“Taven, I like to think we are close enough that you can tell me what is going on and not lie.”

“Are we?” I ask, and though I hate to ruin this moment, I feel it is coming and I can’t stop it. “Killian, I really, *really* love what we have going on here, but—”

“It isn’t enough anymore, is it?” He cuts me off before I can really get ramped up.

I shake my head. He gently eases me down into the chair and kneels before me.

“Tell me about it?” he says.

“It’s been two years Killian. I haven’t heard from you in two years.”

“I know.”

“I worry for you every time you are up there, but the thing is I don’t know *when* you are up there. I go through months and months worrying that there will be another explosion on the moon that will take you away from me again. I sit up every night listening to the holovision reports just to see if there is an accident in one of the mines that I can’t see from here, just to know if you are OK. And you aren’t even up there all that time. You are only up there for two-month tours.”

“I didn’t realize it affected you like that,” he admits.

“It does.”

“You know I think of this as a lot more than just sex, right?” he asks.

“No, I don't know that at all.”

“I do.”

I try not to act irritated. I really hate getting this way, because when I have to explain my feelings, when I am so overwhelmed by them that they just come out and I can't stop them, I get pissed. It makes me feel weak, like I am laying all of my vital organs out for someone else to see, to do with what they will.

I have to remember that he is only here for another day, and I don't want to spend our time together fighting.

“Well, at first I thought all you wanted was sex,” he admits. “And I am more than fine with that. You are one of those men, Taven, that I just want to be inside of all the time.”

Yeah, he's a real romantic.

“Then I saw that you were more than a smooth, tight hole and that you had some really great things going on in your mind, and that you were so much like me, a nice fit, a great counterpart. And then I started getting attached.” He stands up and leans against the railing, looking over the glimmering water. “And when I started getting attached I started thinking about how I am a space-miner and how dangerous my job is. I wanted nothing more than to make you more than just an occasional fling, but that wasn't fair to you. If we were dating you could end up tragically alone.

“And then the explosion happened and I am up there, floating through all this darkness, floating away from my crew and our equipment. I look down at Earth as I use what tools I have to try to secure myself to the debris, and all I can think of is you. All I can think of is the last time we were together, and how it was so blissful for me. And that it will be the last time. And I am thankful that I didn't take you to my side. I am thankful that I didn't make you my guy, because you would be alone now.”

I stare down at my hands. There really isn't anything I can say to that because his job is dangerous. People die doing it all the time. It isn't normally the job someone picks if they are coupled.

"So I stopped communications. I thought if I distanced myself from you that it would end all of the thoughts, all of these emotions that can only lead to no good."

"I understand."

"That's why I am getting out. I have enough saved to last me a few years, but I have this new site to get settled and another few months before I can draw on my retirement."

"So what does that mean?" My heart is in my throat. The implications make me glad I am sitting down.

"It means, Taven Majors, that I want to make this a thing."

"Us?"

"No, the deck. YES, *us*, you dumbass."

"We are a thing?"

"Do you want to be my thing?"

"Only if you want to be *my* thing."

"You know how I love your thing."

"And I yours."

He kneels in front of me and pulls me close to him. My heart is racing. This is so much more than just a lustful kiss. This isn't an "I'm going to fuck your brains out" kind of kiss. This is the kiss of solidifying our future together.

Again the tattoo blooms to the surface of his skin, like ink rising to the surface of water, blooming in response to my touch. I reach behind his right ear, and press gently where they had injected him with the strand of the tattoo. The scales fade.

"Why did you do that?" he asks. "Don't you enjoy the sensation?"

"Because I want to feel your skin, not your tattoo," I tell him honestly.

His lips are tender, soft, and taste of sunshine and rain. I close my eyes and lose myself in him. His tongue slips past my teeth and I feel it twine with mine. I wrap my arms around him and slide off the chair, pulling him tight to me. His musk surrounds me. Every inhalation of breath is infused with Killian, and every touch is full of Killian. I can't get enough of him.

It's like the first time we have ever been together. It's like the first time being with anyone, because it is the first time there has been this feeling behind it. I think most people call it love. I am not sure because I have never felt it during sex.

He tosses a shirt on the deck and lowers me onto it so I don't get burned. Even through the moist blue fabric I can feel the heat of the deck mirroring the heat of Killian as he comes down on to me, pinning me in place.

He eases my legs up, and I can feel the slick tip of him there at my entrance. He pushes and I exhale, trembling with the sensation of feeling him, *needing* him inside of me. He moves slowly, wanting this moment to last, wanting the sensation to never stop. But I just want to be overwhelmed with him. I want to feel him on me, in me, *one* with me.

I arch up into him, and fire spreads through me as he loses his balance and crashes down onto me, forcing his entire length into me with one quick fumble. I gasp into his mouth and he tries to pull away, but I bite his tongue, not letting him. I make a noise low in my throat, and he repositions, pushing hard against me, as if his length isn't enough and he wants to climb into me.

He pulls all the way out, lets me get my breath and then thrusts back in. Killian is like this, he likes full-length thrusts. I move with him with the ease of water on a bank, moving to his current.

His breath is getting sharper, more ragged in my mouth and his pace is getting less calculated, more vicious, more filled with the need of release. When he comes I feel it hot and gooey inside of me. I feel his dick slip deeper into me with the heat of his semen.

He is growing flaccid, but doesn't want to stop; eventually he slips out of me and isn't able to push back in. He takes that as his cue and slides down my

sweaty body, taking my entire length into his throat. It doesn't take too many bobs before I blast off in his mouth.

I close my eyes and I can see stars. How many times have I jerked off thinking of him, thinking of something like this? And now that it is happening again it feels euphoric. I have never felt anything as amazing as this moment. Lying here in the heat with him, feeling his warmth encasing my penis, swallowing every drop of everything I have to offer.

I swear at that point I touch God. I know true bliss and contentment.

"That was some swim," he tells me.

I pull him down to me and kiss him deeply, tasting the remnants of me on his tongue.

"Who needs to swim?" I say after we break apart.

"Um, I am pretty sure we do since we are covered in spunk."

I groan. "I just want to lie here with you."

"Later. We can camp out here tonight if you want."

"Nothing sounds better than a night under the stars with you, but I didn't bring any clothes."

"You left some here last time you were over for a swim, I had them laundered last night when I got in."

"Planning this were you?" I ask.

"I don't think God himself could have planned something this perfect." He kisses me again. "Come on, let's take a dip before the coals go out and I have to start another fire for the burgers."

The water is cool against my super-heated skin and feels amazing lapping around me. I would love to freeze time and just stay in this moment, this lazy afternoon, for the rest of my life. I could share eternity in this cool lake with the man of my dreams swimming around me.

"What are you looking at?" Killian asks, splashing a wave of water at me. I splutter and wipe water out of my eyes, only to have him grab hold of me and

dunk me. I come up coughing and trying to blow lake water out of my nose. He laughs at me and swims away before I can retaliate.

“Not much,” I tell him, once I have composed myself.

“Oh?” he says, grabbing my dick. “That’s not what you were saying a few minutes ago.”

“I don’t remember saying anything a few minutes ago. My body was out of my control.”

He laughs and pulls me into his embrace. I feel the entire length of his body press against mine under water and I relax into his kiss as if it is the most natural thing in the world. I lean back and look into his eyes, his tan face beaded with water, his short hair streaking over his forehead.

“What?” he whispers.

“Killian, I love you,” I whisper back.

A huge grin splits his face. “That has to be the most amazing thing I’ve ever heard.”

“It is a truly amazing thing to be able to admit.”

We spend a couple more minutes treading water and just holding each other as if we would never get another chance to. It is amazing to be able to just relax around him finally, to know this is where I belong, and I have finally arrived at the point I have longed for so long.

“Come on, the coals should be ready for the burgers.”

He must have just cut the grass, because when I climb up on the grassy shore, the remnants of cut grass stick to my hands and knees.

When Killian goes to get the burgers I take up a position in his kitchen, slicing fruit and vegetables to go with the meal. I never thought I could have such happiness from such a domestic chore, but honestly at this point I think no amount of success or notoriety could make me this happy. I am ecstatic just being in his presence, and I don’t care if I am a writer that no one knows, because in Killian’s eyes, I am the only person he wants.

I look out the window, and watch him dancing around stupidly with the spatula as the hamburgers brown, and think I have to be the luckiest man alive. He keeps dancing to some internal music, and I know he knows I am watching him, because he starts smiling one of his smiles that always melts my heart.

“What!?!” he says finally, acting like he just now noticed I was watching him out the small window. “Aren’t you supposed to be cutting fruit?”

“I was, until I realized you were fruitier than the fruit I am cutting.”

“Shut your face, Mr. Majors.”

“Or what?”

“I will make you sleep inside tonight, and watch me sleep naked in the moonlight.”

“Now, that seems pretty harsh.”

“Harsh punishment for harsh words, toad.” He laughs. “Burgers are done.”

“Did your dancing help?”

“They took some encouragement.”

“Thank God you had just the remedy.” I gather the fruit into a bowl and place the lettuce and tomatoes on a plate.

“Yeah? I would like to see you dance a burger done like that.”

“Killian, when *I* dance, it will cook the shit out of *steak*.”

He laughs as the screen door slams behind me and we sit down at the table on the deck for lunch.

That night, after dinner is done and dishes are washed, we gather bedding and build a makeshift tent outside.

“I can’t believe with all the traveling you do that you don’t have a freaking tent!” I tell him, snuggling into his shoulder.

“That armpit smell good, does it?” he jokes.

“Like the best armpit ever.”

“I don't really camp, just sleep in my SES.”

The chirping of crickets lulls me into a deep meditative state somewhere between being awake and asleep where I am aware of what is happening around me, but not completely sure it isn't a dream.

“Are you real?” I ask.

“Nope, I am fake.” He pulls me close to him and kisses me on the forehead. “I'm here. This is real. You aren't dreaming.” He whispers the last.

“It feels like a dream.”

“I know.”

I wake before him to the sun in my eyes. He is still passed out beside me, snoring loud enough to scare away any living creature within a hundred kilometers. Just because I can, I lift up the covers to look at his entire body and an unexplainable joy fills me. There may be many amazing men out there, but this one here beside me thinks I am just as amazing as I think he is.

Slowly I crawl out from under the blankets and head to the kitchen. One thing I am great at is cooking. One thing he sucks at is keeping a full pantry. Of course, if he isn't here often he wouldn't keep a full pantry.

I find things to make pancakes and in the icebox I find some side pork. I set the pork in a bowl of water to speed up the thawing while I get working on pancakes. If I were at home with all of my gadgets I could have thawed the pork instantly and mixed the pancakes with ease, but he likes less technology and more simplicity. Whatever. If his side pork turns out tough he will have to deal with it.

As I work I can't help but think of tomorrow, and how his departure is looming on us like some dark beast threatening to steal him away from me forever. I try to remind myself that it won't be long before he is done and safe from his job. But the truth is, now that I have him with me, I don't ever want to let him go.

I know he isn't sleeping any longer because it has been several minutes since he snored last. I hear the floorboards behind me creak and I know he is behind me. Just as he is about to pounce I spin around and shout. The look on his face is priceless.

"Why did you have to scare me?" he says, putting a hand to his naked chest. "And why are you dressed?"

"First off, it was preemptive, and second, have you ever gotten hot grease splattered on your cock? Doesn't feel that great."

"Who says I was going to scare you?"

"I know you Killian Myles. You are a prankster." I go back to mixing.

"Maybe I was going to do this." He wraps his arms around me and pulls me tight into him. His lips find my ear and I moan because that is one of my triggers and he knows it. I can smell his body as he presses me to the counter. He smells like nature, like fresh air and moonlit promises.

"Mind if we lose these?" he asks, tugging on my shorts.

"No," I whisper, and in one fluid motion he has my shorts off me, but he doesn't rise. Instead he pushes me forward and I feel his hands on me, opening me up, and his mouth going to my entrance. I gasp as the pleasure of his tongue fills my body. Each lick sends jolts of electricity through me, and I lose all control of my extremities, slumping against the counter for support.

"I thought you would never submit," he jokes. I push his head back in place.

"Less talk, more lick," I say.

"Sounds like a win, win."

After he has me wet enough, and weak enough, he stands and positions himself behind me. I feel him at my entrance again, but I can't wait for him to ease in. I turn around and push him to the floor. Angling myself over him I place him at my entrance and slide down his length in one fluid motion.

He gasps and I feel him spasm.

“Already?” I ask.

“What can I say? You taste amazing.” I feel the heat of his orgasm spreading through me, but I haven't finished yet, so I keep riding him.

“Up for round two?”

“He seems to think so.” Killian motions to his cock. He puts his hands behind his head and I ride him like there's no tomorrow. His hands find my cock and start to stroke me. I lean back and keep moving around on him, feeling his length plunging into my depths, a shock of pain and pleasure floods my body at the apex of his thrust until finally I am coming, a huge arc into his opened mouth. He bucks hard and I feel such incredible heat flood through me, filling me up.

“Good morning,” he says, swallowing.

“Every day can start like that as far as I am concerned,” I gasp, flopping onto his chest.

In time, we peel our bodies apart, eat our breakfast, and get cleaned up.

When I come out Killian is standing before the holovision above the fireplace, and the channels are flipping automatically.

“What's that?” I ask as one three-dimensional figure vanishes to be replaced by a news broadcaster from the moon. He turns to me and the hologram vanishes.

“Oh, you mean this?” He snaps his fingers and the holo comes back on.

“I can't believe you had one of those chips installed!” I laugh at him. “Aren't you the one always concerned with the archaic belief of Big Brother?”

“Hey, that chip is really helpful when I want to turn on stuff without moving.” The holovision comes on again, the image blurry at first and then gathering more strength until it looks like small people carrying out some soap opera on the mantel.

“Isn't it awesome?” he triumphs. “I feel like a freaking wizard from those books you write!”

“I don’t write about wizards, and that chip makes you more droid than wizard.” I sit on the edge of the couch. “Does that chip in your head brew a good cup of coffee too?” It’s really a joke.

“Only if there is water in the pot.” He frowns.

“You’re kidding me?”

“No. Do I look like the type that would risk mental espionage if I didn’t get coffee out of the deal?”

“Ha. Ha.”

“I have something to show you,” he tells me, holding out his hand.

“I’ve seen your penis already.”

“Sick of the sight?”

“Absolutely not!”

“It’s not my penis. Something even better.” He winks at me.

“Is that possible?”

“Will you just shut up already and come here?”

I take his hand and he leads me out of the patio door and on to the deck. If it’s possible, today is warmer than yesterday, but it is overcast and I know it will storm later.

“Weather predictions are saying thunderstorms,” he tells me, looking to the east.

“That chip tell you the weather too?”

“That and so much more!” He sounds very proud of the fact.

“X-ray vision?”

“If I wanted to see you naked, I would just strip you down.”

“If you could,” I scoff.

“Is that a challenge?”

“No!” I start backing away but he lunges at me and yanks my shorts down. My penis flops with the effort and he slaps at it playfully. “Stop!” I try to run but he grabs me around the waist and it’s down the patio stairs we go, to a lower deck, where I see something bobbing in the water that I didn’t see before.

“What’s that?” I ask.

“What?” he asks, turning around so I lose sight of the object that looks like a round floating bed. “All I see is one fine ass.” He slaps me a couple times and I wince. “It’s kinda red now.”

“No kidding. I mean that boat-bed thing.”

“That’s what I wanted to show you if you didn’t waste so much time. Geez.”

He turns back around and I catch sight of the object again. It’s round, with sides that keep the water at bay. Inside is bedding and pillows intended for sleeping on the water, I am assuming. He takes me over to the bed and tosses me in. Water splashes but the bed is resilient, and doesn’t get any water inside or even wobble precariously as he gets in.

He turns around, unties the bed from the deck, and we start floating away. He moves a basket of food and water to the foot of the bed. Apparently he plans on being out here for a while.

“Now you’re stuck with me,” he informs me as he settles into the bed beside me.

“I can think of worse things.”

“I can’t. I am pretty dreadful.”

“I’ve noticed.”

“And occasionally I short out and do crazy things!” He makes a strange monstrous face and comes at me like he is going to bite me.

“I think I can manage.”

“Really?” He pulls my shirt up, plants his face in my stomach and blows hard. The action produces a loud farting noise and I start kicking my feet and shrieking because it tickles.

“Stop!”

“See? Crazy.”

“Absolutely looney,” I agree.

A few moments pass where we don't say anything, but just stare up at the tumultuous clouds above. In the distance I hear a rumble of thunder which promises a storm to come. I wonder if the bed will be safe, but I don't see anything that can draw a current.

“What's on your mind?” he asks me, serious for the first time in a long time.

“That today is my last day with you for two months.” It hangs unsaid in the air that it could be a whole lot longer if anything should go awry with his expedition on the moon.

“You do know that mining accidents happen all the time?” he asks.

“I know. I am trying to be optimistic about the two months.”

“No, what I mean is, accidents happen all the time and there aren't always casualties.”

“I know, I listen to the holo broadcasts all the time.”

“Then you should know that I am in danger, but that doesn't mean I will die.”

“Yeah.” But it's just my luck that he will. It isn't often that I have this kind of happiness. It seems like an oasis in the desert of misery my life has become.

“Then, you should know I will be back.” He doesn't sound convinced.

“I should know that, but I can't calm myself with the unknown hanging over our heads.”

“It's just this one last mission and then I am done.”

“And we can travel?” I ask.

He nods, but I start crying because I can't imagine that future happening, I just have this overwhelming sense of loss and he hasn't even gone anywhere yet. It pisses me off that I can't just enjoy these last hours we have together.

He pulls me close to him and holds me tight as the thunder rolls closer. When I open my eyes, my head sore from crying, I can see the flashing of lightning in the distance and feel the first drops of rain.

"We are going to get wet," I tell him.

"Nah." He waves his hands above us majestically and a force field wobbles into place, creating a nearly translucent bubble around us. He removes his clothes and tosses them at our feet.

"Again already?" I ask, taking my shirt off.

"Do you want to? I was just thinking how much more natural it feels to be naked around you."

This time when we make love it is tender; it isn't filled with need and hunger, but with a slow burning fire that lasts for a long time.

When we are done we sleep for a while, wrapped in each other's arms just feeling the waves rock the boat-bed, listening to the thunder boom closer and closer, and listening to the rain hit the force field as if it is pattering onto a window.

"Do you believe in magic?" Killian asks me sometime later as we drift in a lazy half-sleep. We are floating listlessly along. We are lying on our backs in a tangle of clothes, watching as each bead of water hits against the force field as if it is sticking to glass before it languidly trails off to join the lake.

"I've told you, that damn chip in your head isn't magic."

He laughs at me, a deep rumble of a noise. Not the silly, blissful noise of yesterday, but a calmer, relaxed laughter. I know this side of him. Yesterday he was the person he shows to everyone else. Today, he is the person he shows when he isn't trying to impress, when all of his walls are down and he is just being Killian.

“Not that.” He flicks a bug off my leg and rolls on one side, his arm propping his head up. He stares at me with his aquamarine eyes and my heart skips a beat. “Real magic.”

“Like witchcraft?”

“I guess. More passionate though.”

“I used to, when I was younger. Now I’m not so sure.” How could I? So many things I used to think were mysterious have been explained the more I learn and the more I have grown into an adult.

“I do,” he tells me. “I feel magic every time I’m with you. Every time I’m inside you, it feels like two pieces of a puzzle that are meant to be together, meant to stay together.”

I can hardly register what he is telling me. My heart is hammering so hard I can barely hear what he is saying and I really don’t trust my voice right now.

“That’s just lust,” I say.

“It’s more than that.” Killian trails a finger up my stomach and I feel all the hair along my body electrically charged by that one touch. “It’s like, when you see someone and your heart starts racing, and you can feel the throbbing beat of it through your entire body. You feel supercharged with this energy that seems larger than you, hard to fit inside your flesh. You think if you could just cast that energy out of yourself you could work wonders.”

“I think I know what you mean,” I say quietly. He is close to me, but this time it is different. He is close to me in a way that is more than physical. I can feel that energy in me now, that throbbing heartbeat and, though I am not horny, the blood runs straight to my cock. But it’s more than that. I don’t specifically want him to take my length into his mouth, but when he does I lay back and watch the rain fall on the force-field, and then trail off like tears.

When we finish, the moon is starting to come out, and I look up to see the chunk that had blown off in the mining accident. Even with the cloud cover I can see the lights shining inside that crater and know Killian will be headed back there tomorrow.

“There isn’t anyone I want more than you,” Killian tells me. “Here, I have something for you.” He leans down to our feet and grabs his shorts. There is a minute where he fumbles in the folds of fabric before he comes back with a necklace.

“Seriously?” I ask. I hadn’t expected a proposal when I got the holo yesterday.

“Taven, I am serious that I want you. I have wanted you for a long time now, but was so unsure of so many things. Now that I have decided to get out, I want you to be mine.”

“Is that an actual proposal necklace?” I ask, sitting up and inspecting the silver locket he is holding. He flips a catch and it opens up. Inside I see the miniature chip and the attached needle. “You really did plan for this didn’t you?”

“This is a really cheap one. I wasn’t out much if you said no. If you accept, I will get another one when I get home, a better one.”

“What do you mean a better one? That is just silly. It doesn’t matter how expensive it is. It’s just a symbol of something you can’t put a price tag on.”

“Is that a yes?”

I want to answer immediately, I open my mouth a couple times trying to get the *yes* out, but things are just moving so fast.

“Look, if we decide against it later we can just destroy it in water. I know this is awfully sudden, but it isn’t like we are complete strangers.”

“No, I know that. I just never expected all of this!” I am just so overwhelmed that it is really hard for me to find words to express what is going on inside of me. It isn’t all just love, there is a lot of fear there too. Am I ready to accept this if he dies? Am I ready for my life to change like this? I am twenty-six cycles. Is that too young for all of this? And where I am living will I ever find someone I am so over the top in love with as I am with Killian?

“Listen, I know I have said not all mining accidents end in death, but there is a real possibility there, Taven. I want to make sure you are cared for if

something happens to me. The chip in this proposal necklace holds all of my will in it. If we prick our fingers and let our DNA seal the deal, I know you will be cared for if something happens to me.”

My head is spinning and the thunder overhead only confuses me more.

“New missions like this are the most dangerous, and I can’t guarantee I will be okay this time if there is another accident. Being so close to the end of my time with space mining means that they probably won’t put me in the most dangerous of jobs, but there have been budget cuts lately and I just don’t know where I will be when I go back.” His voice is starting to take on the tone of defeat, like he already suspects my answer is no.

Since my voice won’t work, I reach out and take the necklace from him. I work the catch and see the silver locket flip open. I stare at it for a moment, and I see the small green numbers flashing on the computer display. The needle is on the opposite side of the locket, small enough to cause minimal discomfort but large enough to draw out enough blood to get a DNA reading on. Once both of our fingers are pricked and the locket closed, our proposal is a legally binding contract, the tip of the needle inscribing our blood on the pact like a signature.

I place my thumb on the side of the locket with the needle. I feel Killian place his hand on my knee, and I stop thinking of him as a fling, as a wayward vagabond, and instead as my other half. I feel the needle break the surface of my skin as the first blinding flash of lightning illuminates the darkening sky.

This man, sitting naked before me, fearful as a child that I will disappear in the night, is the one I am giving myself to now. It’s like a secret door has opened up and I have been let into a world I’ve only glimpsed through murky windows before. A world other people were privy to, but I would never truly know.

He looks into my eyes, and there is a connection. I feel my heart go out to him and know that at this moment we are promising one another the life of a couple. A shared life with appointments and photographs and pets, maybe kids

one day. A true family. Something I lost long ago and never thought I would have again.

I don't stop pushing until my thumb is flush with the sides of the locket. I take his face in my other hand and just nod my head. There are tears standing in his eyes. I pull him close and kiss him tenderly. His lips quiver against mine and I realize he is as nervous as I am.

"For the record," I tell him, pulling away. "I am not doing this to be taken care of. I am doing this because I love you."

"I know. You aren't the type that needs taking care of. But I am the type that needs to take care of someone. I can go back to the moon now, confident that if the worst happens, that I have provided for you long past my life."

I feel the needle retract as I remove my thumb from the locket. There on the tip is a drop of blood that slips down the side of the needle and into a compartment below. I hand the proposal necklace back to Killian and he punctures his finger with it much more assuredly than I did.

He removes his finger, and gives the blood a second to reach the other side of the compartment before he closes the locket. There is a moment of mechanical clicking and some whirring noises.

"Congratulations Taven Majors and Killian Myles on your betrothal," a mechanical female voice says.

"There." He breathes a sigh of relief. "Now, if something happens..."

"Stop." I shake my head. "I don't want to hear you say it. I know where to take it when I need to have the will claimed."

"Good."

When the morning comes, I find we have drifted back to his dock. Killian climbing out of the boat-bed is what wakes me up. He is still naked, and I don't mind that. But I am panicked that it is the fateful day already.

He helps me out of the boat and hugs me tight. I close my eyes and feel the warm wind playing across our skin, I feel the entire length of him pressed

against me, his feet on the outsides of mine, his heart thumping against my chest, slightly off rhythm with my own. It feels like an eternity that we hold each other, but sooner than I would like he is pulling away and kissing me on the mouth.

“I have to get ready,” he tells me.

“Where are you headed to first?”

“I have to check in at Neoma City, and then I will be shuttled out to the dig site tomorrow.”

“When do you actually start work?”

“Not really sure, could be as soon as I get there, but more than likely it will take a day or so to get to the major work.”

“Do you want something to eat?”

“Yeah, but I want to cook for you today. Why don't we shower first?”

There is something about summertime that makes me feel less dirty than other seasons, but I realize what we did yesterday and that we are in need of cleaning up.

I am content today. Last night I felt like his leaving was a death sentence, but now the logical side of my mind is taking over and I know all of the broadcasts I listen to, and I have researched space mining enough to know the chances of Killian living are greater than his dying. It is a dangerous job, but not an assured danger.

I expect there to be sex, but there isn't. I don't think either of us could really function properly anyway after all the sex we had over the last couple days. I step under the hot water and feel it run in rivulets down my flesh. Killian steps in behind me and starts soaping me up. Once he is content that I am clean enough, I rinse off and return the favor, enjoying how the white suds bunch together with the contrast of his body hair.

“What's for breakfast?” I ask as we towel off.

“That's a surprise,” he says.

I sit on the sofa and use the screen embedded in his coffee table to scroll through his list of books, while he slices and dices and cooks breakfast in the kitchen. At times I feel him watching me, but when I look out at the stove I can only see him in profile. He isn't looking at me, but he is smiling as he works. I know he feels it too, that this is our new normal. When he gets back we will have many more mornings like this, and many more evenings like the last couple.

I stand to go to him and he points at me with a spatula, a clump of egg dropping onto the floor.

"Sit your ass back down Mr. Majors, breakfast isn't done yet."

I sit back down with a sigh, and the holo comes on.

"There, watch something." Killian smiles.

"I hate space operas," I protest.

"You don't believe in aliens?"

"Isn't that kind of hard not to believe?" I ask.

"I don't know, is it?"

"Seriously Killian don't you ever watch the news?"

"As little as possible," he admits cheerfully.

"Don't you talk to people?"

"Not about aliens. Please, tell me your theory on space-life, Mister Sci-Fi Author."

"We've *found* life on another planet. Three in fact. One is a very large planet and similar in composition to Earth, one is very old, and the other is a wintry moon." I tell him.

"Really?" He truly sounds shocked, like he didn't know.

"How could you *not* know this?"

"I've been on the moon?" It is a weak excuse.

“Yeah, but you *do* have holovisions up there! You need to stop watching this trash.”

“When did we find them? And are we sure? You know we have had many false alarms.”

“Yeah, we are sure. We’ve streamed some data to them. Some old record that was sent into space almost two hundred years ago.” I shrug, not really knowing the specifics on the data sent.

“So they are going to think we are primitive, then?”

“Really not all that much has changed.”

“Enough has. When did they do all this?” He asks as if he doesn’t believe me yet.

“Finding the aliens?”

“Yeah.”

“I don’t know, like three months ago. We just sent the data to them a week ago.”

“I was in Egypt.”

“They *have* holos there too, you know.”

“Yeah, I know.” He seems to be giving in.

“You are messing with me, right?”

“Nope. Breakfast is done.”

“About time, I am starved.” I take the glass tablet out of his coffee table and start scrolling through the headlines. “Here, educate yourself.” I sit the tablet on the table before him. The article pops up in front of him, projected into the air by the tablet. He reads as we eat the eggs and fruit he prepared.

“Wow, that’s crazy.”

“Yeah, that’s what everyone else said... *three freaking months ago when we found them!*”

“Okay, okay, I will start reading the news more.”

When breakfast is done, I clear up the table while he goes upstairs to pack. When he comes back down he is wearing the skintight silver suit everyone has to wear when leaving the atmosphere. There is a tube that runs from the suit around his right wrist to his nose, where it forks into each nostril.

“I think that’s all,” he says, and he moves closer to me. He holds out his hand and takes mine. Into my hand he places a key. “To the house, use it whenever you want. Feel free to move some stuff in if you like.”

I nod and shuffle my feet nervously.

“And here’s this.” Over my head he slips the proposal necklace, and I put it under my shirt, feeling the cool metal against my heart and the whirring of the computer chip inside like a fly trapped in a bottle, beating its wings feebly for release.

Now that the time is upon us, it feels strange, like we are bracing ourselves for the worst.

“Where would you like to go first when I get back?” he asks, pulling me tight. The space suit is like armor on him. It doesn’t feel right, having only ever seen him with casual clothes on, or naked.

“I would love to go someplace remote with you, where we can just spend a week full of moments like these last two days.”

“The Frozen North?” he asks. “They have some really awesome yurts up there we could camp out in.”

“Oh, yes! I’ve always wanted to go there.”

“It’s a plan. Now, give me a kiss. I have to go.”

My throat is tightening up and I can’t form any words. I was afraid this was going to happen. I hate the quiver in my chin, I hate how my face is scrunching up.

“I’m sorry,” I whisper because I can’t actually make the words come out.

“Don’t cry,” he says into my ear. He leans back and kisses me. “I promise not to be reckless. I have something worth coming back to now.”

“I know,” I nod.

“And two months really isn't that long. I will send correspondence as often as possible.” He pulls me into him again and my hands slip over the resilient suit, wishing for all the world that I was feeling the skin that is underneath it.

“Walk me out?” He takes my hand and we exit the front door, and around the side of the house where his SES is sitting under a tarp. He flips the tarp back. His SES is big enough for two people, compact and shaped like a triangle. It is a popular model and color. There is storage in the back, and he has already loaded most of his stuff in it. I am sure he just never unpacked it. Killian could live his entire life out of the back of his SES.

At his approach, the door opens. He smiles at me and I claim one more kiss. I draw in the smell of him, but it is masked by the metallic, chemical smell of the suit. Chemicals that will help protect him if something should happen in the atmosphere that his SES can't handle.

“I love you,” he says, and kisses my forehead. “Two months and we will be together.”

“Two months.” I nod. “I love you too.”

The door slides shut behind him and he places a small earpiece in his ear. On the dash, the holo of a thin black man appears.

“Peters, are you packed?” I hear him ask. He winks at me and I smile back. Darren Peters is his longtime friend.

“Yeah, man, just waiting on your lazy ass. Hey, who's that?” Peters asks, his holo turning to look at me through the windshield.

“That's Taven Majors, my fiancé.”

“Oh man, that's awesome. Congratulations.”

The vehicle starts kicking up a breeze from underneath and I step back as the wind blows my clothes and hair. There is a mechanical shift and the vehicle takes off, floating up into the air before drifting away to the west.

I stand and stare at it, watching until it is out of sight over the tops of the trees, and I keep watching, even though I can no longer see it. I am trying to

make sure I am okay with this. I am trying to test myself. I know I have to lock up and get home. I had a project going before Killian turned my world upside down, and I have to get back to it. But for now I have to stand here, surrounded by the land he owns, as if that will make me feel close to him even though he is gone for two months.

In time I break my vision from the cloudy sky and go back into the lake house. I make sure everything is in order, the windows closed, the doors locked. I hesitate at the door, looking back at the dining room and the kitchen. Did this really happen? Is this real?

As I look around the house, the memories of the last two days come back to me and I can't help but smile. I feel the weight of the proposal necklace under my shirt and I know that yes, this is very real. When he comes back he will be my fiancé. He *is* my fiancé.

I close the door with a click and start walking back home, my feet taking me along the path automatically, which is a good thing because my mind isn't on the journey home, it is on my thoughts, and the memories of the last two days and how elated I am that I didn't ignore his invitation.

If I had been asked two days ago what I thought would have happened when I came here, I would never have said I would be leaving with the love of the man I have wanted since we first met.

The high follows me home, and my sight is fixed on the ghostly outline of the moon hanging in the morning sky. Looking at the moon I feel closer to him. I feel like the moon is just another form for him. He is my man in the moon, and that is his moon. That's Killian's moon.

THE END

Author Bio

Travis Simmons is the author of The Revenant Wyrd Saga, The Harbingers of Light series, and his newest release, a zombie apocalypse novel featuring necromancers titled Desolation. He lives in upstate New York in a secluded section of the Adirondacks that he loves very well. While he writes dark fantasy and horror under his given name, he has a pen name of Talus Ripley that he writes gay fiction under.

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