



STRANGE CHARM

A. PHALLUS SI

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Love's Landscapes

An M/M Romance series

STRANGE CHARM

By A. Phallus Si

Introduction

The story you are about to read celebrates love, sex and romance between men. It is a product of the *Love's Landscapes* promotion sponsored by the *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* and is published as a gift to you.

What Is Love's Landscapes?

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 these authors 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's Landscapes*.

No matter if you are a long-time devotee to M/M Romance, just new to the genre or fall somewhere in between, 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.

This story is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are the products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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Photo Description

Color illustration depicting two muscular youths posed mid-air, their legs form an “X”. One bent over in front, the other directly behind him with his legs kicked up in a “V”, their groins seemingly conjoined, present a mesmerizing but visually confusing tableau for assigning the appropriate limbs to face. The figures radiate intensity via severity of stance, expression and eye contact that make their performance more compelling.

Story Letter

Dear Author,

I want the silliest erotic story you can imagine for these two. The plot can be whatever you like as long as it makes some sort of sense, preferably something fantasy/sci-fi.

Have fun with this!

Sincerely,

Adrian

Story Info

Genre: fantasy, science fiction

Tags: littermate-cest, m-preg(non-MC), mmmm, humorous, public activity, switch/versatile, spacemen/aliens, interspecies, road trip, soulmates/bonded

Word Count: 13,091

Author's Note

Many thanks and much groveling go out to my beta readers for their patience and support during this rookie endeavor. Bree, Sunny, Jen, Jenni, and Ann you were a great help and more than I deserved.

I'd like to extend a special thanks to Bree Archer for her cover design. I loved all 12 incarnations of it! But this one made it real.

Bree Archer

breearcher@gmail.com

<http://www.breearcher.com>

<http://www.facebook.com/bree.archer>

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Cache XXX

“I am not doing that again. Ever.”

“Come on, Igor. It wasn't that bad.”

Igor seemed to be of a different opinion as he glared at his companion while shimmying out of his suit. The material made a loud sucking sound as it separated from his flesh. Finally free, he kicked it into the corner near his boots as he ripped the cap from his head to join the rest.

Naked, he turned back to Jax. “I was just in the egress of a Flatula. Please, tell me. What could be worse?” He asked while wiping his face repeatedly to remove more of the violet grit and slime that coated them both.

Jax opened his mouth to respond...

“Shut up!” Igor's finger pushed his jaw closed. “Don't answer that. And, do not fucking touch anything before you sonic, Jax.”

Clean, Igor grunted as he dropped into the adjacent seat while he was plotting coordinates. The aggravation rolling off of him had been in no way mitigated by his shower. Jax had tried to insist he go first, but Igor claimed that the sooner they left this system behind the better. Short, but thorough enough to remove all traces of their adventure, he surrendered the sonic shower, figuring the less time Igor spent encrusted in flatulence the better. While it had been unsavory, it hadn't been the worst thing they'd done to get a token.

“I don't think this was that bad.” Igor gave him a death glare. Hiding a smirk, he continued, “You weren't thrilled with the stables on Carnarvon Moonbase.”

“We had to impersonate grooms to find that token,” he snorted.

“Not too horrible.”

“Did we even grow up together?” Igor entered calculations in the computer. “I'm allergic to straw, idiot. Plus, we actually had to groom the horses.”

Engaging the drives, “You like brushing.” He leaned over to stroke Igor's head. He loved how soft his hair was, wrapping a length around his forearm and then releasing it.

Jerking away. “My own hair. I like brushing my own hair.”

While he was distracted by the controls, Jax continued playing with the wavy mass bouncing down to Igor's waist. He loved it, but Igor always got cranky when he messed around with his hair. Sighing, "They were pretty ponies."

"They were humanoids, Jax. Not horses. That wasn't the kind of grooming I thought we'd signed up for." His littermate blushed. "And... I had to retrieve your token from a very agitated stallion's nutsack before his rider returned."

The panel seemed to be holding up against Igor's onslaught, beeping incessantly at his methodical hammering. The ferocity with which he did it clearly illustrated that he was definitely not done venting his displeasure at their latest adventure. Jax decided it was far better to provoke his outburst than watch it fester.

Spinning around, Igor continued, "Why is it I'm always the one deep in shit and nuts while you stand nearby?"

That was an unfortunate coincidence, but he doubted Igor would believe it was unintentional. It was funny though, and Igor was so irritated that he was huffing in frustration. Just a bit more and he'd snap.

"I was cornered by those two mares."

"You're a Feltoon military operative. How in the world could two fillies have you cornered?" It took everything Jax had to keep from laughing at the incredulous look on Igor's face.

"The roan took exception to how I was braiding her tail and pushed me into the boards while the other was nickering all over me!"

"Nickering?"

"Well, what do you call it when they run their muzzles up and down?"

"She was nuzzling you?" Igor questioned. His eyes narrowed then abruptly added, "She was sucking you off?"

"No! I managed to escape before she could figure out the fasteners with her teeth. I crawled over the side rail and came to help you!"

"Help?" Igor laughed harshly. "What help? You stood in another stall watching while I fumbled around with his testicles. And he was not happy!"

Between the outraged tone and his expressions, Jax couldn't help it. He fell off his chair laughing. "The look on your face when you couldn't pull it loose

and decided to use your kravnar blade..." His words dissolved into raucous cackling.

"Dickhead." Igor tried to punctuate his point with his boot. "I still have a bite mark on my shoulder and a bruise where he kicked me in the ass—two weeks ago. They might look cute, but those glitter hooves are deadly."

Crawling over, Jax pulled on his leg trying to twist him around, "Here, let me kiss it better."

"Fuck off."

"I set the autopilot. Let's bunk and I'll show you how sorry I am." Igor begrudgingly allowed Jax to lead them towards the sleeping quarters.

"As long as it's your ass taking a pounding tonight."

"Whatever you want."

As it turned out that wasn't what Igor wanted. After extensive kissing, several bites, and then licking it all better—all over—Igor was mewling and begging, with his ass high and legs spread wide. Determined not to fall back out of his good graces, Jax was more than happy to oblige.

"Where is your lube?"

His head popped up and looked backwards, "What?"

"Lube. I'm all out."

Grumbling, "A whole case?" Pointing to a drawer beneath them. "There. Left-hand side."

Jax shoved things around and then stopped. *Are you kidding me?* "What the hell is this?"

Igor looked over his shoulder again and huffed, "A dildo."

"Duh. Why?" He hefted it then swung it around executing a few katas. "And purple, really?" He smacked Igor's ass with it. Good density. Might be useful for something.

"It was a gift. Now stop fucking around." His hand was ineffectually swiping at the dildo poking him.

Alright, that confused him. No one needed a toy like this unless they were going to solitary. He should know; he'd been stockpiling for his next

assignment after they returned. Heck, it didn't even vibrate. Dubiously he asked, "From whom?"

"Valeris. His idea of a parting gift."

Of course, he knew there was something off about that pompous eight-foot salamander. "What, so you'd remember his schlong?"

"It is based on a mold of it."

"Presumptuous prick." He chucked it onto the floor. "I got something better for you."

"More action. Less talk, Jax."

Fumbling the lube, he tried to squeeze some out. "It hasn't even been opened." He grunted and struggled with the top. He tried to imagine whom Igor had been playing with, considering the dearth of supplies and toys. His littermate was too young to be retreating to his den alone. Jax should get *Sirdar* on it, because all this was wrong in too many ways, and he was the only one Igor listened to on a regular basis.

Igor expressed his forbearance at the delay with a long groan, wiggling a bit more in encouragement, his heavy balls swaying. Sexy fuck.

"I'm getting there, baby. Be patient."

Finally! He managed a generous stripe. A couple of slippery tugs along his cock and then he was rubbing Igor's hole. Applying the lightest of pressure and pulling back, reveling in the eager moans. Teasing his littermate until Igor's pucker started kissing his cock. "So hot. Show me how much you want it."

"Jax," he keened. "Give me."

"That's it." Jax leaned in against the gentle resistance, and then was pushing in, one long, slow slide. The warmth surrounding him felt like coming home. "So tight." Two sets of moans echoed as Jax finally came to rest with their balls nestled together. "That's it. Squeeze me, baby." He pulled back just as slow, watching his cock reappear, Igor's anus a smooth ring grasping him. "So fucking gorgeous, baby."

Igor slammed back impatiently. "Only eight minutes older. So. Quit." Panting, he continued rocking deep onto Jax's cock. "With the baby... and fuck me!"

Expelled from the fluttering wormhole, the small space runner slowed as the black void gave way to an increasingly large object. Irregular and cobbled together from old freighters and assorted debris, it failed to inspire. Jax's fingers flew across the controls noting the sibilant voice's docking permissions. Easing into the assigned slot, he shut down the engines and grinned at Igor.

"Space Port Vector 7Z-218. Let's go."

"No." Negligently crossing his feet on the screen displaying the map visuals of the port, Igor reclined further into the seat. "I said I wouldn't do another one."

"But... this is the SPV7Z token. It's unlikely anyone else will find it. I get this one and I'm guaranteed the top circle, if not a win."

"Well, good luck with it."

"Igor," Jax whined. "You seriously cannot be backing out now."

"No. That's what we were doing out of that floriate creature's anus last week. Today, I am shopping for a new equisuit and eating something, no anything, besides reconstituted dried squid flakes. *Five weeks*, Jax. Five weeks of nothing but slightly chewy, gray mush."

"How was I to know that the Grallear space station had been hit by an asteroid?"

"It's in the Schrödinger System! Nonzero chance it would be." Igor thumped his head on the navpanel in frustration.

"Yeah... I sorta forgot about that when I was strategizing. Still, those emergency rations were a blessing." Seeing the unflinching stare and raised brow, he offered, "I'll buy you a nice meal, anything you want." He tugged on a long lock of magenta, using it to pull up his obstinate co-pilot.

What had begun as a lark had become an obsession—for Jax. They'd always joked about galacticaching when they were growing up, and suddenly, with Jax's pending promotion, time seemed to have run out on youthful adventures. He wheedled Igor's participation out of him by playing on fraternal loyalty. The first six tokens they'd found garnered them a moderate ranking, but running around their own star system hadn't landed them any Bling tokens. He had convinced Igor to go after one in the Andromeda galaxy. That had led to another, even further from the core, and their first Bling. Jax was hooked and dragged an increasingly unenthusiastic Igor deeper into space. The last few had

been difficult and Igor's anger, while funny, was not without merit, as he seemed to bear the brunt of the tasks in retrieving the tokens. Seeing him irritable made Jax testy. He needed to find Igor a good meal and a good fuck, then things would be all right. His littermate just needed to relax.

"Fine. I'm going for the food. You're on your own with the token."

"Sure thing." He wrapped his arm around Igor's shoulder and herded him off the tiny space runner. "You'll have your pick of everything."

"More like what I can get," Igor said glumly, staring out across the deserted and battered platform. "From the looks of it, we'll be lucky to get simulmeat on SPV7Z."

Jax slid both their IDentchips across the scarred counter. A pair of pale green tentacles slid through the partition and grabbed them. After a quick insertion into the panel, they were passed back.

"Enter the chamber one at a time." The voice translator system stuttered and skipped a bit.

Igor pushed him inside, waiting patiently as the clear panel closed and the opposite one opened. Jax stepped out and smiled back, "Come on, baby. Gastronomic pleasures await."

Following him, Igor waited as the silent scan ran. And waited. The panels remained closed. Jax made faces at him until a series of lights ran across the top and a disembodied voice stated, "Biometric scans have identified a banned organism. Quarantine procedures are in effect." A beeping commenced. "Level IV safety standards apply."

Igor slapped his hand against the clear wall. The attendant ignored him. "Hey!" He slammed the panel harder. "You! Yeah, you! What is going on?" Still no response, in fact the cephaloid slid behind a partition and was no longer visible to either Igor or Jax. Turning back, "What is happening, Jax? Why aren't you infected?"

Shit. Igor's wide eyes made him want to reassure. "Just relax. I'm sure it's a mistake." He bit his lip. "Or something minor."

Then the floor gave out, and Igor was gone.

The Art of Persuasion

“I don’t care if I need an escort. I’m not waiting any longer.” Patience expended, Jax grabbed the Port Master’s attendant by the beak and mantle. “Where is my companion?”

Immobilized, his eight arms flailing and wrapping around Jax had no effect, and the pressure applied just behind the sentry’s head seemed to be having the desired result. The arms uncoiled from Jax.

Quaking, the cephaloid tried to reason, “Sir, you must wait.” The translator was still hiccupping, but the message was clear enough and Jax was having none of it.

Fine, how about this for a message. Increasing pressure on his mantle, he released the beak. “Give me the location where I can find him or I will start making you asymmetrical.” He waved a kravnar blade for illustration.

A puddle of ink discharged onto the floor beneath the trembling worker. “Here. Right here,” he squeaked. Pointing at a map, he circled a section of the station two levels down—directly below them.

“Where...”

Three tentacles waved madly in the direction of a drab gray panel.

After being led through a maze of back corridors by his hand intelunit, Jax barged into an empty room. Well, almost empty. There was a single human tapping on a panel along the far wall.

“Is this where Level IV detainees are processed?”

The blank look did nothing to assuage his concerns that he had indeed located where Igor was being held. If it wasn’t, he’d go back and tie that Cirrina’s tentacles into a Gordian knot.

“What?”

“Level IV procedure detainees.” Still blank—oblivious. “The bioscan at the docking entry detected a banned organism and then my friend disappeared through the floor.”

A large bubble snapped and stuck to his face. “Oh. You mean vaccinations

and parasite removals. Yeah, you got the right place. Head through that door on the left.” And he promptly went back to staring at the panel and tapping away again.

There were six doors: one black, two red, and three blue. There was a large nutrition center between the red and blue doors. Which left did he mean? The left-left, the black one? The red one left of the Chomp Bars’ dispenser or the blue one just to left of the attendant. Watching the systematic typing some more, and anticipating further useless assistance, he decided to just pick one.

Fine, the leftmost door—black. He tried the panel, but it refused to open. *Okay, maybe not. Screw it! I’ll go down the line.* The first red panel opened and he quickly stepped back and it shut. Frack! Best to forget he ever saw that. Ugh. He hesitated and then tried the other red door. It was dark and vacant, but the lingering odor made his stomach turn.

Next, a blue door. The color alone made it seem less ominous and the panel opened. A scream rent the hushed quiet as eight sets of eyes looked up at his interruption. “Ah... sorry.” He bolted backwards practically falling on his ass.

“The blue door, just to the left of *me*,” said the attendant.

When Jax paused directly in front of it he looked back, seeking and getting a nod of encouragement. He approached and it slid open to reveal a bright passageway, clean, the ambient temperature cool, and emitting only a gentle shushing sound. Optimistic, he ventured forward peering into a few empty bays, until he heard a familiar voice.

“They’re *WHAT?!?*”

Bent over with his jumpsuit down about his knees is how he found Igor. A man was prodding the hoof print bruise and bathing the area with a clear antiseptic just before grabbing a scalpel and making a narrow incision.

“Incubating, organic waste eaters.” The meditech, wielding a pair of tweezers, was pulling a long strand from the cheek of Igor’s ass.

Jax could see that the bruise was undulating.

“Useful in the stables of Carnarvon no doubt, but would probably end up seeking refuge within your intestines.” Another long, wriggling mass was deposited into a tall beaker.

“Can’t you just kill them? Zap them or something?” Igor’s voice squeaked.

“No, no. We’ll take them and use them in the recycling facility, to assist

with the decomposition and regeneration. These will grow to be six feet in length and consume a ton of waste. With any luck they'll multiply." Putting down the tweezers, he put a lid on them. Then picked up a laser and sutured up the opening.

"Are you done?" With the meditech's nod, Igor pulled up his pants.

Igor turned around, grimacing at Jax. He wasn't going to let him forget this, was he? Igor shoved his arms into the sleeves and started to pull up the closure.

"Oh. I missed one. Let me see." The meditech prodded the area just above his left nipple and, when there was no reactionary movement, raised the laser. "This one's just a bruise."

Jax unconsciously growled.

Igor glanced at him, clearly surprised, and then stepped back. "Leave it."

The medtech sighed, "You sure? Looks like it hurts." With Igor's nod, he put it back down. "All set then."

Jax was suddenly pissed. Hunger was getting the better of him. "Let's go."

Igor expressed no surprise at his surliness. One of the benefits of littermates; they were used to his occasional moodiness.

Be Careful What You Wish For

“Look at all of this!” Jax swept his arms wide, encompassing the bustling marketplace, then clasped Igor’s hand pulling him along and stopping at a vendor sweating in front of an enormous fire pit. Rotating items through the grills and plucking off what shoppers around them shouted out. “And you thought it would only be simulmeat. Ha!”

Igor browsed the list of Port Dishes with the slightest of smiles. Jax knew what he needed and he found it. Igor wouldn’t admit it, but that didn’t matter. Score one for him.

“So what do you want?” He asked, placing a hand on Igor’s nape, gently kneading.

“Ummm... well, the kraken sounds good, but not sure since the fraglock is marked as fresh.” Turning he asked, “What do you think?”

“The whole stall smells good and, judging from everyone else clamoring for the food, I don’t think you can make a wrong choice.”

“Alright. Fresh fraglock it is.” Igor grinned at him as he shouted out his order.

The chef grunted, went to a chest against the side of the stall, lifted the lid and extracted a small, wriggling quadruped. It wasn’t until the chef nailed the fraglock through the head before mounting it over the fire that Igor realized how fresh his meal would be.

Igor spun and gagged uncontrollably, but nothing came up. “I can’t eat that, Jax.” He kept dry heaving.

Jax swore silently. For someone who had completed advanced biomedical training and been promoted through the Progeny Institute, Igor had a very sensitive stomach. Then again, cloning wasn’t exactly a bloody endeavor. It probably hadn’t helped that he and his other littermates had teased Igor relentlessly growing up, trying to harden his resolve. The four of them had been asses really, and whenever their *sirdar* caught them—because Igor never told—they got swift correction. Jax had spent more time than any of them bent over in chastisement for taunting Igor. The pain never bothered him, but *Sirdar’s* evident disappointment made him regret his actions. He’d sneak out from his confinement to apologize to Igor—who’d always accepted it.

Tossing some money on the counter, Jax guided him away and down another aisle filled only with textiles. Once the smell dissipated, Igor's midsection stopped clenching and he stood up straight.

"Sorry about that."

"Don't worry. We'll find something more palatable later."

Wandering slowly through the market they made purchases here and there. Jax handed over credits for a couple of starfruits and a large, fluffy bun that was still warm. Igor gobbled down whatever was handed to him. Jax quickly purchased more.

He was just watching some juice drip down the side of Igor's mouth when he said, "Jax! Look there." He wagged his finger pointing to a small table in the back.

Jax wiped the droplet with his thumb and licked it clean. "I thought you didn't want to help?"

"I could hardly not mention a plate full of tokens."

Plateful. Odd indeed. Jax motioned the vendor over, "What are those coins for?"

The old man picked one up, "These here are Sirens. You throw one into the Well of Tells in the aquatic district, and a mer will retrieve your fortune."

The two Sirens jingled in his hand. Try as he might, the vendor refused to sell more than one to each of them. You'd think, at that price, he'd be happy to part with a few extras. Jax held them tighter as they approached the waterwall. There was no glass but the liquid kept its form, encompassing the entire distance from the transport hub to the pleasure district.

They stood there, side by side at the well, just watching. Long leaves undulated and small schools of fish flitted here and there. Circling slowly was a pinniped, doing acrobatic twirls and turns. It slowed as it neared them, observing them as much they did it. There was a knowing in that look and then—wink! It sped away, leaving nothing but a trail of bubbles, rising slowly.

Jax handed Igor one Siren and bade him to throw it. It slowly drifted down, and just before it reached the bottom, a hand snatched it. A figure rose from behind a fan, her hair colored similarly to the blue plants she had been resting

amongst. She approached the barrier and stared at Igor, her tail lazily sweeping the sand. There was something, not quite creepy, but intense in the eye contact between the two and then, with a smile, she darted away.

When she returned, a small golden circle lay in her palm. She raised it to the barrier and began to push it through. More than a little intrigued by how she manipulated the field barrier, Jax reflexively lunged before stopping, letting Igor put out his hand to catch it before it fell.

Interesting. That was no cheap bauble. In fact, the cost of the Siren did not cover the value of Igor's fortune. What would he get? Jax tossed his Siren further into the well, it hadn't fallen far when a small flurry of bubbles surrounded it, and then a pair of green eyes held his gaze. They were huge compared to the boy's face, a giant grin cut across it, and then he was gone.

Jax's fortune was not as easy to find apparently, for some time had passed and he had not returned. Igor was turning the circle over and over in his hand. "Let me see."

He dropped it into Jax's outstretched hand. It was heavier than it appeared and smooth, even with all the carvings scored into it. He twisted it and it came apart into two identical rings, the markings on one mirroring the ones on the other.

"Oh!" Igor plucked them from him and twirled them, putting one on each hand moving them synchronously.

Distracted, Jax didn't notice the mer's return until a shrill whistle called him. The boy smiled and held up a—yes, yes it was—a token. Once again, the barrier gave way and Jax held the token in his hand. The boy watched as Jax showed it to Igor and then when Jax turned back, his dimpled grin broadened as he waved and leisurely cut through the water disappearing back into the depths.

Up, Up... and Away?

“How lucky was that?” Jax bounded up the ramp into the space runner. He inserted the token into the reader and waited. The computer ran, but then it was ejected. “What?” Oh no. This was a token; he knew it.

“Something wrong?” asked Igor.

He shoved it back into the box. Again, rejected. The token fell out onto the floor.

Igor picked it up. “Why won’t it register?”

Shrugging his shoulders Jax said, “It’s like all the others. This is not a fake.” He was sure. Had to be something else, but what? Jax plopped down and started querying the galaticaching board about registration fails. A couple threads had nothing and then, there—one discussing transmutation. “Apparently, ‘some tokens especially higher point Bling tokens require exposure to an element, catalyst or other force before activating’, and I’m guessing we’ve got one of those.”

“How will we know what to do?” Igor leaned over his shoulder scanning the thread.

Reading further, “It says that ‘activation keys are located in the general vicinity of the token’.” Jax dragged his hands through his hair tugging.

“Stop.” Igor rested his hands on Jax’s. “You’ll get patchy and start looking mangy.”

He immediately stopped, just holding Igor’s hands. He was going to miss this companionship when he took his new position—solitary. He barely went hours without seeing or talking to Igor at home, how was he ever going to survive years without him?

“Let’s check out the map and see what else there is in the port nearby,” said Igor.

They spent the next couple hours studying the sectors adjacent to the well. SPV7Z-218 looked like crap from the outside. Situated on the edge of the known galaxy with little assistance available it made sense, but there were high-grade amusements and technology everywhere. The range of activities available between the transport hub with the viewing platform of the aquatic

district and the pleasure district alone numbered into the double digits, making their search not as easy as it first seemed. They agreed that several of the clubs located in the Hedonist sector were where they wanted to go. They touted everything from mind-altering substances to an antigrav stage. Pleasure district it was. Maybe they'd just get lucky. Jax knew they both needed it, and he had no problem paying for Igor to fucking relax.

The Perks of Public Transport

Hopping on the slingshot just inside the security checkpoint, Jax and Igor stood leaning against the doors. It was empty except for one other couple. The larger male was whispering and gently rubbing the grotesquely swollen abdomen of his companion.

Now that looked uncomfortable. Jax diverted his attention to his favorite playtoy when there was nothing else around, Igor's hair. Igor rolled his eyes as he started braiding it.

"Why don't you grow your own hair so you can play with it instead of mine?"

"Where would be the fun in that?" Jax tugged harder to ensure it was straight. Igor might complain, but of all his littermates, it was Jax he came to for grooming. "Besides, until you decide to move in with me and I have someone to do it every morning before duty, I am not spending the time securing and pinning it."

He pulled a band from his pocket and was twirling it around the end when the other pair began a heated exchange.

"No—I can't... fucking slow... my fucking breathing." He growled. The smaller male was whacking the other's shoulder, his beautiful face distorted in pain or rage... or both.

Not exactly a threat to the big guy, but awkward.

"I hate you." The smaller male burst into tears as another groan wavered through gritted teeth. The hulk seemed unmoved by the physical abuse as he pulled his companion closer, massaging his stomach and obviously attempting to soothe him.

Jax had sidled as far away as he could from the pair when the slingshot abruptly stopped; sending them all onto the floor. A sharp cry of pain preceded a long, drawn-out whimper that had the hulk clutching the fragile figure in his arms.

"Hold on, Taro." He rocked back and forth cradling his pregnant mate. With each cry he was becoming increasingly more distressed. "Please. Calm down."

That comment was met with a weaker whack to the cheek. "I will not... calm down." Taro gasped and then an ear-piercing scream ripped through the

metal enclosure. "Something's wrong," he yelled clutching his stomach. A bloom of red stained his silver tunic.

Igor had been pounding on the doors to no avail and the intercom system was not responding. Jax kept calling over the speaker trying to get anyone. Igor stopped fighting the panel and hurried over to the pair after the last cry.

Crouching he said, "Help is delayed. We need to see what's going on with your mate." Igor waited for the hulk's response.

"The babies are too soon. We knew with the difference," he gestured between them. "The size... would mean an early delivery for Taro, but this is months before..." A tear ran down his cheek. "This was only supposed to be a wellness check for them."

"It's okay. Lift his tunic." Igor encouraged as he motioned Jax. "I need the medkit in the wall panel. Tell me what's in it."

Glad to be occupied with anything, ignoring the soft cries emitted with each pant, Jax ripped it open. "General first response items: gauze, suturing laser, disinfectants, unguents, and sheaths."

"Tige, don't leave. Please." Taro's begging was cut short by another cry.

"Never," he vowed.

Igor was focused on the bloody opening revealed by the rolled up fabric that seemed to be getting larger as they watched. "Sheaths," pulling them on as soon as Jax handed them over. "Thylacine, correct?"

Tige nodded. "He's only in his seventh season."

Igor raised a brow, but made no comment. Jax knew blood. He dealt with blood. He dealt out blood. But this, this was nothing like what he knew. He was a nervous wreck watching the three while he had no fucking clue what was going on. On the plus side, Igor seemed knowledgeable about the species.

Jax wasn't sure he understood what Igor intended to do. Heck, Jax wasn't sure he even understood how a male got pregnant. And he was definitely a male; the shriveled dick made that much obvious. All he had to do was help Igor and try not to look. Why was there blood? He hoped that help would arrive before—another scream. Uh oh. He had a bad feeling about this.

"Open the gauze." Igor barked. He grabbed the square and held it out, "Disinfectant."

Jax soaked the cloth. Igor gently swabbed the opening. They continued this until the entire area from opening to pouch was clean.

“How many?”

“Three. He’s too small for more and even then Taro’s been taxed for weeks.” Tige kissed his mate’s forehead murmuring sweet sounds.

“Taro, I’m going to reach in and help pullout your younglings and place them in your pouch.” Igor waited for him to open his eyes and acknowledge him. “Understand?”

Heavy lids rose and Taro gave the slightest nod and whimpered.

Igor looked to Tige. “I’m sorry for this trespass, but I am concerned about both Taro’s and the younglings’ distress.”

Tige’s expression was grim, but he nodded. “Do what you think is best. Help them.”

With a deep breath, Igor eased his hand into the birth canal. Taro gasped at the intrusion and Tige held him tighter. Turning his wrist, he slowly withdrew it holding a crimson-streaked, hairless form that wriggled. Igor gently laid it inside the pouch just above. Then, carefully slid his hand back in. A few moments later, another one was placed within. Igor moved quickly and adroitly, his hand seeking from left to right.

“I need to find the third youngling,” he said in warning and then pushed deeper.

Taro cried out; blood was now seeping onto the floor. The pair seemed to be hyperventilating. Igor’s curt nod towards the two spurred Jax to grab Tige’s shoulder; he guessed this was the time all that triage training was going to come into use. When Tige looked up Jax said, “Breathe with me.”

A slow inhalation and exhalation, Tige followed his lead. Repeat. Taro began to mimic Tige, and Jax just kept them focused as Igor searched the cavity. At last, his arm started withdrawing and the last one emerged.

It seemed too still.

Taro began weeping, burying his face in Tige’s chest. The hulk watched Igor rub it gently. Still. Igor kept rubbing, slowly massaging the form. Tige closed his eyes when nothing happened. The only sounds were Taro’s sobs and Tige’s hitched breathing.

Igor didn’t look upset, merely determined.

And then, the slightest of movements and the last youngling joined his littermates. Igor made sure it attached to a teat and then removed his hand.

Both were staring, not breathing as Igor smiled at them. "It's alright. The last one is a bit smaller than his siblings, but it shouldn't be noticeable after a couple weeks of nursing."

Thankfully, that good news was punctuated by the sound of a laser searing through the slingshot's door.

"Of course I knew what I was doing." Igor was unwinding the braid Jax had woven for him. "I am a progeny and reproduction specialist. We study various species and scenarios for fertilization and birth, not just Feldoonae."

"Their method is so different." *And terrifying.* Actually, insane sounded more like it, but at the same time he couldn't help but feel a little jealous at the emotional result. "Tige and Taro seemed so close. I wonder if we're missing out on something without the incubation and birth," Jax postulated, remembering how entwined Taro and Tige were afterwards. They didn't seem to notice anything beyond themselves. Even while the crew was battering down the door, they just kept whispering and smiling at each other. "Amazing really."

He snorted at the incredulous look Igor leveled at him. "You're on your own with that one, Jax. I couldn't be happier returning to my lab and the bloodless calm of planned cloning."

"You wouldn't even do it for our kittens?" He teased Igor as they headed towards the pleasure district.

Igor cocked his head and stared at Jax. With an almost imperceptible shake he said, "Are you nuts? After seeing that, I'm not sure why other species aren't on board with cloning. Because, I'll tell you this, Jax—if I had to go through that, there's no fucking way our species would propagate." With his arm wrapped around Igor's shoulder, he felt a shudder run through him.

"Heck. If fucking wasn't purely recreational, there'd probably be less fucking."

Well, didn't that just sound shitty.

Blow Me... Away

Igor tried to hand over the card Tige had given him in thanks as they approached the entrance to *Stripes*, a members only club popular with the Thylacine crowd.

“No. He gave it to you,” Jax balked, not taking it.

Undaunted, Igor handed over the card to the brute guarding the ingress. If they thought Tige was big, then this guy dwarfed him. He examined the card and then them. With a slight dip of acknowledgment, he pushed open the panel.

By the stars. “How big do they get?” Jax asked.

“Not that big. He’s been genetically altered.” Igor slid between two slightly less intimidating figures. “Fully matured males are about Tige’s size.”

“Why is Taro so small?”

Igor frowned. “He is still young.” Pushing towards the bar he continued, “Thylacines don’t generally reproduce before their tenth to twelfth cycles, but Taro reached fertility early.”

“Aren’t there females?”

Igor gave him the stupid look. “Of course. Thylacines are one of several species where both males and females are equipped to reproduce. In the presence of the right hormones both sexes will go into heat.”

“Guess Tige made him hot.”

“You could say that,” Igor snorted.

Jax was thankful that at least one of his littermates understood his humor.

“Thylacines generally engage in repeated group matings when one becomes fertile.” They pushed through the crowd heading for the bar and Igor continued, “It is intense and often involves between four to eight participants. For Tige to have singlehandedly fertilized three pups, then Taro and he were quite busy for a couple days.”

“So...” He was going to ask how exactly that worked, but further discussion was halted as they gave their orders. When he turned back to Igor, he had that look he wore when he was going to explain to kittens why chasing fire sparks was a bad idea, and Jax decided that maybe he really didn’t want to know.

The female formulating their drinks wandered back placing the fluorescent green-filled flasks down. "You're the ones who helped Taro and Tige?"

News traveled fast.

"Yeah," Igor said. Taking a deep sip and then shuddered. "Whoa... now, that's got a kick." He gave Jax a goofy grin.

Jax was suddenly aware how quiet the room had gotten and all the attention their conversation was drawing. A few males that rivaled the guard in size were huddled on both sides of them. Jax moved an unaware Igor in front of him.

"Thanks." She leaned onto the slick surface and asked more quietly, "Taro's my baby brother; how's he doing?"

Igor's relief was obvious. "Pretty good considering the shortened term. The younglings, too." He handed over a credit chip.

She refused it. "On the house, the whole evening for services rendered." Then wandered off to another customer.

The drinks kept coming and the company was surprisingly good. Thylacines were big, but a garrulous lot. Igor had been sent a couple more from the admirers surrounding him. Jax hung back watching him. Igor was rarely the center of attention, but boy did he have these dogs chasing their tails to catch his eye.

"Your companion's very attractive," a voice to his right spoke. Jax had noted the presence of the large Thylacine beside him, but since he'd kept quiet, Jax hadn't disturbed him.

"Yes." No doubt about it. Igor was beautiful. And now licking a brightly-hued powder off one of their necks. Well this would be interesting, and here Jax worried he'd have a hard time getting Igor to relax. But Igor just jumped on a psychotropic ride without a care. Jax could only hope he knew what he was in for.

"I suggest you wade in to claim him before the pups get too rambunctious."

Jax took another look, the male didn't seem that much older, but there was a thickness to his muscles that belied his maturity. Only a couple handfuls of years, but he had no idea how long Thylacines lived.

"He's not mine." Certainly not the way the Thylacine intended. Possessive and exclusive were not paired emotions for the Felddoona people, unlike several species he'd encountered.

“Really,” the male grunted. “Then perhaps you wouldn’t be disinclined to a little attention yourself.” As he pushed his body against Jax’s fully.

He was big and thick—all over. The rod presently probing his spine made Jax catch his breath. *God. That is big.* His focus was quickly reduced to the arm wrapped around him, the cock waiting, and Igor licking his way down a Thylacine.

Almost as if he could sense Jax’s thoughts, “Don’t worry, kitty. I know your kind. Felddoona are very limber and supple.” He rubbed harder. “It’ll fit.”

Slowly, they migrated toward an alcove as the four bodies surrounding Igor pushed him back onto a table and Jax followed to watch. Clothes were being tossed to the floor and a meaty paw started jacking him.

Igor was groaning and arching into the hands grabbing him. He was out of control by the time a mouth engulfed his cock and a pair of hands held him down. It wasn’t long before Igor was shooting a load down the throat. The Thylacine yanked Igor’s ankles high, nearly to his shoulders while an enormous cock was being rubbed against his hole, a copious amount of precum bathing it. Igor was pushing his pucker against the thick cock grunting as he licked the one pushed against his lips.

Jax was turned around, his suit on the floor, his cock in a stranger’s hands. “Your friend will be busy for a while. Let me entertain you while my pack works the H3A out of his system.”

No wonder his littermate was sluttier than usual. Igor wasn’t a prude, but he also didn’t usually take a double team like a pro. He wondered how long the effects would last, and how sore he’d be after. Judging from his first reaming of the night, it would be significant. Any more thoughts on the matter Jax might have had were abandoned as he fell to his knees for a taste of his own cockpop.

Ground Control to...

Jax lay in a heap on the floor and watched the table spin as Igor took his fifth load up his ass and down his gullet. There seemed to be a break in the daisy chain as more drinks were passed around. One of them held a wobbling blue cube to Igor's mouth coaxing, "Have this. It will bring you energy so we can play some more."

Igor licked and put his hand up to hold it. Staring at the square and licking, he suddenly sat up on the table head-butting the Thylacine ministering to him.

"Frack!" Holding his head and the cube up he said, "Jax, I know what to do." He jumped off the table oblivious to disgruntled comments from his buddies.

Jax couldn't even pull his legs together. "Yeah?" *Fuck, that cock had been huge.*

Igor thrust the wobbly cube into his face. "We need the antigrav stage."

His blank look must have encouraged him to explain further. "Jellification." He shoved the cube against his lips. "You should have this—you look totally fucked." Igor helped pull his legs together and gave him a hand up as he continued with his hypothesis.

Whatever was in that cube was potent stuff; Jax felt ready to fly. They suited up, ignoring the howls and baying of disappointment behind them as they strode toward the exit. "You're sure?"

A giant grin split Igor's face. "Definitely."

"Hutchinson Effect!" They said simultaneously, staggering arm in arm out the door.

"You're a genius, Igor."

"Duh."

To the Races

Jax was checking his intelunit for the antigrav location when he noticed Igor had wandered off. Jax felt more comfortable keeping an eye on him in his present state. He hadn't gone far; Jax could make out the magenta head bobbing on the edge of a crowd. There was cheering and, if Jax wasn't mistaken, a bit of gambling going on. Igor had skirted the gathering until he'd found a spot where he could see over those in front.

"Place your bets," the loudspeaker crackled.

Participants were queued up in pairs to transverse a circuit on the floor. A mix of genders and species, all lithe and naked, were waiting on their marks. Jax was trying to figure out why the course was so short when Igor started whining.

"What?"

Deep, rapid breaths and Igor responded, "Nothing." Then whined again.

The race pairs lined up one behind the other, and it was then that Jax saw that all the males were highly aroused. As their partners bent over, they grabbed one then the other leg and pulled them flush until they were mounted on their cocks.

"How exactly does this race work?" Jax asked another viewer.

"First cart to cross the finish line without losing its cocking pin, wins."

"Any restrictions?"

"Doesn't matter which hole, as long as it stays in for the duration."

Odds were announced and promised credchips were being wagered on the outcome. One team was the clear crowd favorite, but the odds on another were tempting enough to ensure some action on the sidelines. Jax watched it all while Igor was mesmerized by the view as judges verified team positions and holstering compliance. His whining increased as the starting pistol sounded, intently rubbing against Jax's haunch.

Jax leaned over and nipped Igor's jaw. "Shhh..." He impeded his rubbing by holding Igor firmly against him. "You'll only make it worse. Stop."

Igor was inhaling deeply, his nose buried in Jax's chest, a low whine

escaping with each exhale. Jax drew him further into his embrace, gently petting Igor, massaging his scalp and holding him tight to still Igor's need for frenetic movement.

The race was over before they knew it. The winners, the odds' favorite, were strutting about acknowledging the crowd's cheering. All around them bets were being settled. Jax's informant laughed and collected credchips from two disappointed youths. "Never bet against ass, especially if the lube is light," he sagely advised.

Up in the Air

After stumbling into *The Root*, home to the only antigrav stage within 50 parsecs, Jax cornered the manager and held Igor back from licking him as he pled their request. Other than a few smirks for the wrangling Jax did holding Igor back, he elicited no response aside from the initial rejection.

“Wait! Is there any way we can pay to use the stage?”

“No. House policy won't allow it.”

Jax felt a warm... very warm presence behind him. Turning, he noted the biggest humanoid he'd ever seen. *Where the heck did all of these behemoths come from?* He made the guard at *Stripes* look like a youngling. Tall and wide, the newcomer's thigh was larger than his waist.

“Problem R'wan?” A deep voice reverberated through Jax.

“These two want to borrow the stage, and I was just explaining the rules, boss.”

“I'll take it from here.” He turned to the pair. “Come. Sit with me.”

Igor stopped trying to climb on Jax and peered over his shoulder, his breath hot and heavy as he rubbed up against him. Who knew how long the H3At would affect him, but it didn't seem to be diminishing. Jax watched the newcomer admire Igor. After brief introductions, Jax explained what they wanted and hoped Q'rcus would agree to some terms of use. They had to get that token exposed to the antigrav.

“We need to use your stage for a few minutes,” said Jax. No response. “We'd be happy to pay for the time.”

“The only way anyone gets on that stage is if they're performing. There is a great cost to run it. Patrons expect something spectacular when it is on. *The Root* does not disappoint.”

Igor continued to command interest as he slithered up and down Jax's back. Maybe... “We can perform.”

“I think that may be true.”

“You're a Bauman,” Igor blurted out. He climbed over Jax, barely missing his head with his knee, sitting between them on the curved seat—his appraisal

just as blatant as his appraisee's. Igor reached out a hand toward Q'rcus's crotch and Jax pulled him back onto his lap, where he quickly became distracted by grinding his ass against Jax's cock.

Grabbing his hip and gently wrapping a hand around Igor's throat, Jax stilled him. "Sorry. My littermate is not quite himself."

Q'rcus took a sip from one of the drinks that had appeared. "From the looks of it, this is not the first club you have visited." He nonchalantly stroked himself, the massive bulge attesting that he was proportional all over.

Igor purred, loudly, pulling against Jax's restraint.

"The crowd likes to be entertained." Q'rcus left his hand on his shaft as he continued, "Can you... *please*?"

Igor's enthusiastic moans of assent sounded like he was coming, which he might have been.

"Yes. We can do a routine." They had done exercise performances while younglings. Of course, that was years ago when they did group physical activities as juniors before specialized, individual training. He and Igor had practiced one for a competition so many times that Jax still occasionally dreamed of it. And, the antigrav would substitute perfectly for the ropes they'd used to create their aerial display.

"Good. I would like to see it." Q'rcus reached down below the table and grabbed a tall box. "Here are your costumes. If you need assistance donning them, ask. I will send R'wan to set things up and help as necessary."

Taking the box, Jax herded his littermate backstage. He had just placed it on a table when Igor tackled him to the floor. Biting the back of his neck, grunting while humping his ass. He'd better help get him off if they had any hope of performing, unless Igor fucking him on the antigrav stage was entertainment. For this club, probably, but he had no intention of trying to work out the logistics while floating.

Jax lifted his ass. "Come on," he said while Igor was grinding. "You want to rub one off like this or should I just suck your cock, Igor?"

Igor growled. "Your mouth."

Jax had the closures open and Igor's cock down his throat when R'wan wandered backstage. Jax couldn't care less as Igor pumped hard and deep, groaning as he released. A gentle bathing with his tongue and Igor popped free.

Removing the arm from his eyes, “Thanks for that, Jax,” he said. “I swear. I’ll never do H3At again. Never.”

Probably true, but Igor was still flushed and his pupils were huge diamonds—he wasn’t close to being done. Jax should have left him in that Thylacine daisy chain for a couple more rounds.

“You should get ready, now.” R’wan nodded towards the box. “Markgraf Q’rcus is most anxious for your performance.”

Opening Q’rcus’s box had revealed two bright, jeweled swaths of orange and green. But, their costumes were moving. Undulating as they inched along, crawling up the sides.

“How?” Jax touched one; it was smooth and silky. Reacting, it moved towards his finger. The frills wavering as it slowly progressed up the box.

“Jax why is it moving? By itself?” Igor remained a step back.

“They are nubri. Symbiotic organisms from the Piscean system.” R’wan answered. “They are non-sentient and subsist off natural excretions from many humanoids.” He picked one up, the long black tentacles dangling nearly to the floor. “They are also helpful with dermal infections, but that’s not why we use them. Besides being beautiful, they are unaffected by the harmonics of the antigrav stage, unlike many inorganics which can jellify.”

“Really?” Igor gently picked the remaining one out of the box. “Fascinating.”

“You could perform nude, but many enjoy the benefits of using a nubris.”

Jax snorted. R’wan clearly interpreted his disbelief.

“They keep things tucked and in place while rotating. Less pinching and twisting when one uses a nubris.” R’wan gently stroked the creature and grinned. “Plus, the suckers are very pleasing. Many performers finish their set very happy.”

“Wow. Help me get it on.” Igor had barely finished his request before he offered his penis... errr... himself to R’wan.

The tentacles wrapped around their torsos, small barbs hooking into their skin as the body adhered to their crotches, the suckers gently massaging as they moved infinitesimally. Whoa... that did feel good, but not too good. Jax found it was enough stimulation to keep hard, but not to distract.

Having tucked the token behind his balls, Jax wiggled a little to check for shift—not happening with the nubris's suction hold. "You sure this is safe?" He asked Igor. It was his balls, and the last thing he wanted was to end up with a token-clad testicle.

"Stop worrying." Igor groped him. "All those incidents you're remembering are from early experiments, the nascent beginning of antigrav technology." He fondled Jax, the nubris, responding to Igor's touch, was undulating faster, rhythmically pulsating.

Growing hard and wanting more he pushed into Igor's hand. "Igor..."

Biting Jax's ear he whispered, "Not yet." And drew his hand away after one last caress. "Those beauties will not be gold encrusted when we depart the stage. I promise."

Dragging in several deep breaths, Jax wondered where this new, cruel Igor had come from. Teasing had never been his game before. Adjusting himself and finding no reprieve, he followed.

They stood back to back on the stage after quietly conferring in the dark. Igor quibbled a bit and then conceded that any change to their gymnastics routine was ill advised. But the quirk in Igor's lips alerted Jax that perhaps there would be a surprise or two. Little did he imagine how playful and aggressive his littermate could be.

They interlocked elbows as the music began. Bright lights shone down and the crowd disappeared as they rose from the floor. Igor thrust himself downwards as he pushed Jax up, his body rotating 360 degrees, drilling towards the ceiling. He slowed, maneuvering his body parallel to the floor and stretched his hands out. Dipping his head backwards he could see Igor propelling himself off the stage, spiraling in a tight somersault. Arching his back, Jax grabbed Igor's ankles and allowed momentum to pull him as Igor grasped him and they sailed into a circle, their bodies languidly twirling.

The lights felt warm on his skin and the nubris was more distracting with the added heat and movement. Their suckers were rapidly compressing and decompressing against him, wrapping around his genitals and squeezing. Jax was beginning to see the allure as he enjoyed a particularly strong undulation along his cock.

Having ceased spinning Igor lay inverted, flat against his back, head to tail.

Jax spread his legs and reached for Igor's hands, pulling him through and down along his body, aligning them perfectly. Groins pressed together, they locked legs and arched away from each other bringing themselves to a standstill in midair.

The nubri in contact with each other began to attach and reattach, as they seemed to be wrestling. Indeed, Jax's nubris seemed quite keen on attaching itself to Igor's.

Jax brought this to his attention. "We've got a problem, Igor."

"No shit," he shouted over the music. "You stay there. I'll sort it out."

Igor straightened and then crawled down Jax.

"Apparently, I'm more desirable because I'm excreting more," said Igor as he jacked Jax's cock, luring the nubris back with the leaking precum. Jax was enthralled watching Igor catch the stray droplets floating with his mouth until the nubris glommed on with a ferocity that brought a bite of pain as it increased the pressure.

"Ouch!"

"Stop being a baby, Jax." And he floated through his legs.

"X formation," Igor prompted.

Jax refocused and bent over with his legs spread even wider and arms pushed upwards and back. He felt Igor move into position, his crotch firmly against Jax as his legs veed wide. Once again, the nubri became agitated. Igor grasped his hips, thrusting firmly into Jax.

Jax gasped, "Fuckstars, Igor."

Igor laughed, slapped Jax's ass, and pushed it forward, spinning him out while he spun backwards. Continuing through a series of twenty formations, Jax was tormented by Igor's manhandling and was relieved when they reached the final maneuver. Straightening, Jax raised his arms, bringing his feet down on the stage again. Igor came to rest nestled behind him. Jax and Igor drew in deep breaths, their sweaty bodies vibrating from the performance, the nubri, and the anticipation for having nailed this token. They weren't the only ones affected. The crowd's noise was barely discernable over the thumping base, but they clearly evoked a response.

Jax attempted to readjust the garment cupping him, pulsating with each breath and gently squeezing. He could feel Igor behind him; wished he was still pressed up hard against him. They sauntered over to Q'rcus's table.

"Exquisite, kittens." Q'rcus patted his enormous legs and opened his arms in welcome. Jax crawled up onto one while Igor took the other. "So athletic." His hand gently rubbed Jax's back and down his hips. "Most invigorating. I think the audience found you most inspirational."

Well, if the breathless attendants running back and forth with various toys and lubricants were anything to judge by, they had definitely caused a rush. The raised volume of the Hetairan chants did little to mask the neighboring moans and grunts.

He watched Igor fondle himself as he slid into the cradle between the arm and Q'rcus's leg. Groaning, he pulled at the jeweled nubris barely containing his cock as it pushed against it. Q'rcus gently plucked away the damp strands of hair stuck to his cheek, moving them back over the side even as his other hand caressed Jax's ribs up and down.

"So, little mates, you are not solely bound together?" Q'rcus's palm rested on Igor's chest awaiting an answer. Suddenly, his misunderstanding of littermates didn't seem very important.

"No." Igor tugged at the nubris again. "Help me, Jax."

A large hand tumbled him off his perch and he landed with his face in Igor's crotch. "Take it off him, kitten."

Well, gee. Since you asked so nice. Forget that. Jax just wanted Igor, naked and ready. He pulled the thin straps down; Igor moaned as the tentacles' barbs unhooked and then squirmed as Jax peeled back the body of it as Igor lifted his hips. The nubris slithered into a corner of the box where Jax dumped it. Q'rcus snapped his fingers and an attendant was pouring warm oil into his hand before he'd turned back. He looked and Jax nodded before that large palm encased Igor in a tight grip. His breathing rate increased with Igor's writhing.

"Take off yours."

Quickly, Jax plucked the strands loose ignoring the ripple of pain and pulled them free through his legs, dropping it, with little regard, to join the other nubris. Hopping back up, he rubbed against Q'rcus as he watched him jack Igor relentlessly.

Pinching a nipple Q'rcus asked, "Igor prepared you?"

Jax had no idea what he was asking, but at this point he was prepared for anything. “Yes... YES!” He agreed, wanting to push Q’rcus along. Igor’s moans were almost enough to set him off.

“Good. I want to see the rest of what didn’t happen on stage.” Q’rcus pushed and flipped Jax over his thigh. Jax grabbed Q’rcus ankle to hold on as he heard another snap. A large thumb and forefinger spread his cheeks and a warm liquid drizzled down, tickling as it coated his pucker and balls.

“I would never fit without much training and stretching. It would probably take weeks.”

Jax grunted as a thick finger, slick with oil, circled, teased, and then pushed in. The pressure so divine in this empty wanting. Easing in and out, then harder. Jax started begging, “Please... more.” The finger continued its measured pace. Suddenly, it disappeared and a larger, thicker presence took its place. “Please... Yes! God, fuck me. Fuck me. Now.” He tried to push back, but a pair of hands stayed his hips. “Please, Igor.”

“Shush. Don’t make this end too quick, kitten. Be patient and he’ll give you what you need.”

Maybe Igor had a point about being called baby because kitten was certainly starting to annoy him. Igor rubbed up and down, pushing ever so gently. He felt the initial press and burn, a warm body coming to cover him as he slid deep and delivered a kiss just below his shorn hair. The hands tightening, marking him, bruising as Igor finished seating himself in him. He felt so good.

“So pretty.”

Igor slowly pulled back a little and then pushed in harder, tipping Jax even further over Q’rcus’s leg. Then started a steady pace, pulling out, almost until he popped free and then sliding deep. It was impossible to distinguish whose grunts and moans were whose. Gripping the leather of the boot, rubbing his face against it, and licking it.

“Oh god.” Jax desperately wished he had something in his mouth to distract him from the intense pleasure. He was never going to last long. Suddenly, a thick finger was pushed between his lips and firmly against his tongue. He sucked hard and squirmed.

A deep grunt reverberated through Jax as Igor pulled free. Crying out in protest as Jax was hauled up to straddle Q’rcus’s thighs. His own legs spread

wide, pushed flush against the broad chest and soon breathless, as Q'rcus overpowered him with a kiss. Jax felt a rough and demanding push as Igor recommenced fucking him—hard.

Freed, he gasped air into his lungs. Igor pulled him back to rest against his chest, his fingers playing with his abdomen, tickling up over his ribs and slowly teasing his nipples. Jax groaned as he tugged harder making them respond. So tight they hurt.

Q'rcus had opened the placket to his trousers and pulled out his enormous cock. No way they could possibly envelope it. Jax felt Igor grab his cock, rubbing it up and down Q'rcus's prick; he groaned.

“After I'm done fucking you, we're going to lick that.” A sharp thrust of his hips punctuated Igor's statement, grinding Jax into Q'rcus, whose substantial precum lubricated the way for Jax to slide and grunt between the two.

Igor was saturated in come and busying licking more off when Jax heard the chirring and noticed their company. “*Sirdar!*”

Eyes wide, Igor mewled.

“Ajax.” Turning, “Igor.” Those gold eyes pinned them down.

Jax could hear the soft pants of Igor's increased breathing.

Sirdar focused on Igor. “You missed the Genetics Summit.” His eyes wandered back and forth between Igor and Jax and then Q'rcus and the club. “I was concerned when Leo presented your findings.”

Igor stuttered, “Unimportant conclusions... the allele splicing failed initial testing... I was with Ajax...” He tried to stand up as *Sirdar* stepped closer, stumbled and grabbed Jax's shoulder for balance.

“So I was informed.”

Noting the pause in the exchange, Jax jumped in. “We were just finishing, *Sirdar*.” He picked the token up off of the floor between Q'rcus's legs where it had fallen at some point during the post-stage frivolity.

The golden gaze swung down, relentless in its observance. “Good. You have a new position waiting, Ajax. It is time to go.”

Sirdar didn't ask for an introduction and Q'rcus didn't seem interested either, so Jax didn't bother. “We should... get dressed.”

“Excellent. I’ll meet you at the bar.” No adieus, just his back.

Jax smiled at Q’rcus. “Sorry about that. He can be a bit single-minded at times. Thanks for the use of the antigrav.”

“No worries, little mates.” He grinned and looked to both him and Igor. “That was very entertaining and the pleasing... was more mine than the audience’s. But, there are perks to being the boss.”

Igor stepped near, pulling Jax closer. “We should go.” And then turned to Q’rcus. “Thank you.”

If I Knew Then...

Getting all that spunk off took a bit of scrubbing, but the aquajets felt fantastic. Jax almost wanted to go get dirty just to wash up again. He let the warm liquid rinse away the last of the cleanser, lingering just a bit. Months of sonic showers couldn't compare to the decadence of *The Root's* bathing chambers. Remembering *Sirdar* was waiting, he shut it off, dried, and dressed quickly. Igor was still valiantly grooming his hair, which appeared to have been the primary depository for Q'rcus's impressive load.

Jax scrambled out and spied their *sirdar* near the cages. He was watching the performers gyrate with a smile. It was odd to think of their elder pursuing his own conquests. Then again, it was good. After all, it meant he could expect the same. The conversation stopped as Jax approached, and *Sirdar* excused himself and settled on a seat a few feet from the delicate, furred dancer then pushed a drink over to him.

"Have you made a decision, Ajax?"

"Regarding what?" Jax didn't like vague leading questions. He'd been tricked into things one too many times to jump on it.

"Solitary assignment."

"Didn't think I had much of a choice." Jax grunted taking another swig of his drink and enjoying the burn. Nice distraction from the corresponding one in another orifice. *By the stars, no more Thylacines or Baumans for him.*

"Don't play ignorant." The impatience in *Sirdar's* voice was perplexing.

"Wha...?"

The glass slammed down and *Sirdar* searched his face. "You still haven't figured it out? How long will it take?" The growl that followed surprised Jax. Not once in years had he heard *Sirdar* growl, and never at him.

Feeling inadequate he stammered, "I... yeah, no... I really have no idea what you're talking about."

A loud grunt and *Sirdar* glared at him. "You don't. Do you?" It was followed by a deep sigh and then silence.

Jax waited, trailing his finger through the condensation, making patterns with the moisture. He hoped if he was quiet and patient his *sirdar* would tell

him. It was clearly important and the fact that *Sirdar* was angry with Jax for not knowing was distressing. He didn't like this feeling.

Finally. "Ajax, you've had ambrosia. What does it taste like?"

Alright. Not the expected conversation trajectory. "It has no flavor," he answered. "No. That's not right. It has no description... for each the taste is perfect."

"Perfect."

"Yes, perfect."

"How many perfect things have you known in your life?"

Igor's fucking hair, he loved it. No, pay attention before *Sirdar* gets cranky again. "Besides ambrosia?" He thought about it. Searched his memory and just got frustrated. What could he be referring to? "I don't know."

One black brow rose. Silence.

"I mean... there's lots of things I like—a lot." Jax was gesticulating. "I love when the pack goes up into the mountains and we all hunt and rumble around together."

"Hmmm..." That sounded promising so Jax continued.

"My blade collection. Love them. Especially that tsin dagger Igor gave me during my presentation ceremony." He had been so proud of finishing his examinations and being inducted into the Stealth Division when so many of his peers were assigned to Sentry. And then Igor's gift and the partying after the recognition dinner; it was perfect.

Sirdar snorted. "All right. As a military attaché, your love of weaponry makes sense. I think I got a little too enthusiastic when selecting those allele profiles. Just... Please tell me you've stopped sleeping with them."

"Only one," Jax promised with a sly smile and then shrugged. "Habit."

He could feel *Sirdar* waiting for him to continue. Obviously, whatever the goal for this line of questioning was he hadn't reached it. Damn. What could he be referring to and how would this affect his new position? Solitary was a test, several years of intense internal focus with little outside interference or interaction. There was only one consideration taken when solitary was assigned and that was coordination with mates, but since Jax didn't have one... He nearly dropped the slippery glass.

“Why are you asking about solitary when the only factor in the decision is accommodating a mate?” He couldn't look away from *Sirdar*. The silence was palpable.

“I created this pack. You and your siblings are my design.” He paused. “But, nature has ways of twisting things and creating surprise in even the most perfectly planned endeavors.” There was something like pain... No, Jax couldn't figure it out, but he saw it in *Sirdar's* expression.

“I have a mate.” *What the fuck?!* He gulped down the remainder of his drink.

“You don't have to choose your mate. Life with others can be perfectly satisfying. It's like cake. Still delicious, but not ambrosia.”

Oh hell, no. “I have a **mate**,” he said a bit more forcefully. Who? When? The room wasn't spinning, but he felt dizzy. “I **have** a mate.” He slammed down the glass. *Fuck this.*

Igor.

His heart felt like it just went supernova, racing... expanding, consuming his chest and leaving no room for his lungs. Jax struggled to breathe. *Sirdar* just watched and waited. “You've known.” A nod. “Has everyone known?”

“A few,” his *sirdar* conceded.

“Why didn't you tell me?” *Fuckstars!* Did Igor know?

“It can't be given; it must be acknowledged.”

“It might not be given, but it sure could be hinted at,” growled Jax. *Sirdar* seemed unperturbed by his show of aggression and, for some reason, that just aggravated Jax more. “All that wasted time.”

Sirdar smiled at his outburst. “Never.” He pulled Jax into a hug. “Blessed from the beginning.”

It had been so long since he felt the solace and absolute security of his *sirdar's* arms around him. Everything felt not so bad when he was there. “That's why you kept reassigning Igor and me.”

The hum of accordance reverberated through him like a short purr. “Focus is always better when in near proximity to one's mate. Clarity and intent is strengthened.” Jax melted into the comfort of the petting. “Not to mention, anxiety diminished. You may not have realized it since you are rarely divided, but when separated for extended periods discomfort increases.”

Jax relaxed into the haven of this embrace. “The Tamar fever. It wasn't, was it?” He had been so excited to attend his first galactic-wide training seminar in the Cygnus quadrant, but he fell ill about sixty-five percent of the way through the exercises and had to be transferred for treatment, bypassing the facilities there.

“No. That's why you were treated at the Endox facility, where Igor was studying.”

Jax whined and the arms held him tighter. He imagined that keeping unacknowledged mates close, yet unaware of their condition, had entailed quite the maneuverings on *Sirdar's* part. His whole life. How could he not know? He knew he was closer to Igor than his other littermates, but he assumed it meant they'd be coalition partners.

“There was no wondering with you two. The birthing celebration was summarily interrupted as soon as Igor was plonked down and you dragged him into a corner by the scruff, hissing and swiping at anyone who approached.”

Why wasn't this in the records and vidclips? “Really?” He grinned against *Sirdar's* shoulder.

Sirdar laughed, reminiscing. “You know the scar on Ocet's cheek?”

“The one from the ‘Mating Incident’?”

It was pack lore and always told in hushed voices during gatherings, especially after the drinks had been flowing. Never completely detailed, but Ocet usually blushed, and every one of the elders would laugh while Jax and his littermates just wondered. All they got out of it was that mating was not something you wanted to interrupt, and any questions they asked were immediately dismissed.

“Yes.”

Okay, *Sirdar* really could lose the smirk.

“Be prepared during the next feast. I think Ocet has been waiting to respond to a certain kitten's challenge.”

Oh shit. “I did that?”

Sirdar nodded. “He was the first to notice your display and tried to separate you before... Well, not really sure how he thought the bond wouldn't set, since you are littermates, but he tried to spare you both. And you took exception to his misguided consideration.”

Jax groaned. This was not going to be good. Blood would be inevitable, but with any luck, Ocet's anger had dissipated with the years, not magnified. Regardless, the challenge couldn't be ignored and truth be told, Jax was more than ready to fight for Igor, even if it meant an honor match against his superior.

Sirdar kissed his forehead. "Ocet always was a superstitious one." Another kiss on his cheek. "The fear of the Prophecy of the Felddoona Younglings being reenacted by you and Igor scared him. How he believed that you would be just like the apocryphal mates who found each other and never broke embrace becoming fossilized into the statue in Capitol Park—no clue. Fear does strange things." He kissed the other cheek. "He freaked out, started babbling about the warning on imprinting too early and earned himself a stripe, thanks to you."

"Well, that will liven up our next gathering."

"As if news of your mating isn't enough. But, a little blood match should be entertaining." *Sirdar* pulled back to smile at him.

"Does he know?" asked Jax.

Sirdar didn't pretend he didn't understand. "Igor imprinted at birth, that's why he always followed you." He paused for a second then carefully continued, "When you were first separated for studies, he approached me in tears and asked why?"

Just hearing it evoked a sharp pain, bright and quick.

"He was convinced that he'd done something wrong, that we were punishing him."

Jax shook his head. "Never. He was always the good one." He leaned into the hand cupping his cheek. It was as if *Sirdar* knew how much the retelling of something so old could bring such fresh hurt.

"After a couple weeks of emotional distress, I explained to him about mates. And he made the connection directly."

"Always the smart one, even at the very beginning."

A flutter of magenta in the corner of his eye was all he saw before Igor said, "Is Jax alright, *Sirdar*?"

Jax pulled out of *Sirdar*'s embrace, stepping backwards.

“Yes. You have duties Igor. I expect you at the institute next solarii. Do you wish to return with me?”

Igor looked to Jax. There was a slight furrow in his brow, but then he smiled. How could he have ever been so blind? Not even once thinking about the luxurious accommodations available on the private cruiser should he accept *Sirdar's* offer. It was so obvious and Jax could see it now.

He saw the question in Igor's eyes, but the choice belonged to his mate. The one he had denied for years. “What do you want, Igor?” asked Jax.

“I want to register that token.”

Jax pulled it from his pocket and tossed it over; Igor snatched it mid-arc and smiled. Igor turned it over and over, running it back and forth across his knuckles. He seemed to be pondering something.

“After hosting parasites from Carnarvon, being expelled from a Flatula, wrestling eels on Amphitrite, not to mention our ill-fated run through the Sanguine Fen—even after all those incredibly stupid and foolish adventures,” Igor shook his head and smiled, “I wouldn't give up a moment of this adventure.”

Jax caught the token as he tossed it back.

“I would travel with you until the very end.”

The End

Author Bio

APS is a Jack-of-all-trades and master of none. Self-defined as terminally curious and prone to self-indulgence, APS excels at frittering. Diagnosed as having issues with authority from a young age, APS frolics in being a perpetrator of general ridiculousness and a defender of the irreverent.

Contact & Media Info

[Website](#)