

Lyric's Salvation

By

Olivia Starke

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Published by Blushing Books®,
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ABCD Graphics and Design
977 Seminole Trail #233
Charlottesville, VA 22901
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Starke, Olivia
Lyric's Salvation

Cover Design by ABCD Graphics
EBook ISBN: 978-1-68259-892-4

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Chapter 1

Men waited outside, their raucous and foul conversations mixing with the equally coarse odors of sweat and tobacco smoke. Lyric stared into the dim space beyond the platform from behind the heavy brocade curtains shielding her from view. The stage had been hastily thrown together and not entirely stable by the looks of the incomplete welding of the salvaged metal. Erected on the desolate mining moon for the entertainment of the Elitists who formed a mass of fine, brightly colored cloth, with the shaved heads showcasing their social status.

Torches illuminated the stage, making it the brightest thing on the surface of the moon. Even brighter than the planet that glowed a hazy blue on the horizon. A hefty price had been paid for her, and Vander was always happy to oblige an impromptu show.

“Gentlemen, gentlemen, if I could have your most coveted and admirable attentions,” Vander shouted, trying to gather control of the intoxicated throng of men. “I’m happy to introduce you to this galaxy’s most beautiful and disciplined ass. Lyric has been well fed, and well trained. Meek, and as you know, kept pure. Because, let’s face it, a woman with her cherry intact is a woman worth knowing. Am I right?”

Laughter and bawdy shouts filled the room in reply. None of the off-color comments meant much to Lyric anymore, she’d heard them and Vander’s speech hundreds of times. Vander spent some more time, building up the crowd, stoking the fire of their lusts until the air thrummed with the energy of eager anticipation. Lyric took long slow breaths, keeping her heart rate down. Despite having had to perform for nearly two years, sour tension always brewed and bubbled inside her, leaving her trembling and anxious. Depending on the crowd’s mood and Vander’s whims, any show could be her last show.

“Now, I present to you, Lyric!” Vander said at last, waving his arm toward the brocade curtains. A slave pulled the drawstring, tugging them open, and suddenly Lyric stood in a pool of artificial light. Rowdy cheers filled the air.

The metal cuffs around Lyric’s wrists and ankles weighed her down. She had to be careful not to trip over the chains connecting them, binding and hobbling her, as she staggered forward with head down. All of it was for show since she had no hope for escape. It seemed men

particularly liked her helpless, and completely at their mercy. Vander's slave, Marissa, covered Lyric's eyes with a satin blindfold then led her further onstage.

A roar went up in the crowd; the show was about to begin. Lyric couldn't meet their ravenous stares as they devoured her nude body, though she felt their dirty gazes all over her. Instead, she focused on feeling out the welded metal floor with her bare toes, careful not to step on any sharp edges that might cut. Any wound outside of what the men paid to provide her would be met by Vander's anger. And her owner's anger was terrifying.

Marissa guided her to the pole erected in the middle of the stage—an obnoxious phallic-shaped symbol, the only part of the platform that had had any care taken with it. Lyric wrapped her arms around the cold metal shaft, hugging it, while her hands were secured. Her feet were braced wide apart, her ankle cuffs then fastened to bolts in the floor. A peculiar little jut of smooth metal nestled between her thighs and within her pussy lips. Something new Vander had thought up, she decided, though what it was for she had no idea.

Left completely immobile, she could only wait for the show to begin.

“Now, how do we know for sure that this is a fine piece of virgin tail?” asked one in the audience.

“Why, my good man, I would *never* insult my well-paying and much esteemed customers by presenting anything less,” Vander replied. “Why don't you come up and test her yourself?”

Lyric squeezed her eyes shut, knowing what would follow. She'd been through the physical exam more times than she could count. The first time it'd been shocking and mortifying. Now, she'd grown immune to it.

The platform shifted as a hulking weight stepped onto it.

“I beg, do be careful, lest my prized possession be irreparably damaged,” Vander said. “You understand of course.”

“Of course.” The Elitist's hearty laughter split the air next to her ear. His pungent spice-laden breath dampened her cheek as he leaned close, his protruding belly pressing against her back. Lyric clamped her teeth together, hoping he would be quick with his examination.

His hand cupped her backside, and he squeezed the flesh, making a low muttering noise in his throat.

“Well fed indeed. You have excellent stock, Vander.” His finger delved between her butt cheeks, an exploration that made her skin crawl. He paused over her anal bud and the tip of his

finger poked inside. She held still, knowing any objection would only excite the man, and invite more. She'd had men finger her ass before; doing so didn't strip her of purity in Vander's view.

"Nice, quite nice," the Elitist purred. "Nice and tight, just like I like them." He paused at her vaginal opening, and his voice dropped to a rough whisper that stirred the hair at the nape of her neck, leaving her skin damp. "You'd like my prick inside of you. I'd pay a mighty high coin for the privilege."

The Elitist was talking at her and not to her. She kept her tongue as his pudgy finger pressed inside her walls. When he hit Vander's most prized possession, her intact hymen, he stopped. For a brief, frightening moment, Lyric feared the Elitist might breach her. Make her worthless and bound for the whorehouses on some colonized mining moon. A fate promising an early death from overwork, disease or starvation. She kept her breathing slow, even, and unaffected, despite her worry.

The man withdrew his finger, though, and relief flooded her as he stepped back.

"I decree, this one has her cherry!" he shouted.

Another round of rabid cheering greeted his assertion.

"And you will be her first for the evening," Vander followed. "Choose her punishment."

A table sat nearby holding assorted floggers, and a couple of rare wooden paddles. Vander had spared no expense with the implements. The Elitist waddled away; she felt the shifting of the floor, as he departed to the table.

"A flogger, excellent choice my good, sir," Vander called out to the now silent and attentive crowd. "She's been particularly unruly as of late. Why just this morning I caught her trying to sneak onto a cargo freighter. And I've taken such good care of her, too. She needs a disciplined hand, so spare her little mercy for disrespecting my good will."

A lie, of course, she'd done no such thing. It was said as something to thrill the audience.

"Disobedient little whore she is," the Elitist said. "I'll give it to her like I give it to my own slaves."

Vander backed off stage, she heard the padding of his soft soled shoes depart, leaving her alone with her coming punishment. Floggers, she hated them, carrying their scars from the two years she'd been used. Pure white stripes over the pale skin of her bottom, upper thighs and back, forming crisscrosses and hashtags as an everlasting reminder of how fate had saw fit to curse her.

The leather tines made a familiar menacing hiss, followed by a sharp burn as they wrapped around the flesh of her backside. Lyric absorbed the blow silently. The night had only just begun. Judging by the excitement within the crowd, she'd have at least ten men pay the coin to take a turn with her.

Once she'd tried to distance herself from it, imagining her home world a solar system away. But the memory only added grief to the physical pain she was forced to endure. Now, she focused on the rush of adrenaline after each swat, a strange kind of high that would see her through yet another show.

The Elitist struck her again and again, grunting with the effort, the power behind each blow waning quickly. She guessed it was the most exercise the man had had in years. *Perhaps his heart will fail him and he'll drop dead this night.* It seemed the Elitist had heard the spiteful thought that had crossed her mind, and he picked up the pace once more. His labored breaths echoed as he lay the now razor sharp tines over her smarting skin.

The crowd fell silent, transfixed by the spectacle. The painful sting grew. Lyric bit her lip, doing her best to keep her discomfort invisible as her eyes watered. But it became too much; she gasped. Her cry incited a round of applause and yells.

"Very good! You have a fine hand for dealing punishment, my friend," Vander called out, stopping further blows before his property became too damaged and he lost coin for the evening. "Very good indeed, thank you, good sir! Next, we have an honorable man who has paid a great deal of coin to have a go at my girl," Vander introduced. "It seems he has a particular fetish for disciplining disrespectful slaves."

More shouts, and she felt the shifting of the platform as the first Elitist waddled away. The next man who'd paid for a turn at her walked onto the stage. She sensed his presence as he came up behind her, though his weight barely moved the platform. Thin Elitists were as rare as fat miners, perhaps his wealth was new, she reasoned.

"As you see, he has chosen a paddle! Fine choice, my friend. Note the wood, rare as gold once was," Vander said off-stage. "Hundreds of years old, too. It comes from a world called Earth, back when it was still habitable. But enough of the history lessons, that's not why we're here. My good sir, take your turn."

“Rare wood? Rare as a virgin I’d say. Practically non-existent,” her new disciplinarian said near her ear. His breath brushed her cheek, carrying the soft aroma of miner’s ale. “And I’m doubting this one has the claim. What’s your real name, sweetheart?”

The statement couldn’t carry to Vander, only to her. She remained mute; she wasn’t allowed to converse with customers. Actually, no man had ever asked her a direct question while she’d been in Vander’s possession.

The paddle strike came swift, unexpected, the loud pop covering her gasp of surprise.

“Your name, I won’t ask again. Unless, you want me to drop my trousers and have you right here. Vander might object since it’ll ruin the profitable scam he has going here, but I bet the crowd will wait their turn behind me.”

His threat doubled her sudden trepidation. Backstage, Vander’s finest whores waited to service those who wanted an outlet after the show. Always too few women and boys to meet the demand, so gangs would cluster around individuals. From time to time, one of the whores would die, because they simply couldn’t withstand so many.

“Lyric is my true name,” she said in a toneless voice loud enough for her disciplinarian to hear. “I wasn’t given another when I was bought, it suited my owner.”

The paddle stroked over her bottom, its cool surface sending goose bumps over her skin. While she despised floggers, she found she could almost enjoy the flat of the paddle.

“A natural blonde, too. By my guess, anyway, since you’ve been waxed free of body hair. Vander really does have a novelty in you.”

The blindfold tugged then dropped from her eyes. Lyric blinked as the light momentarily left her blind. Impatient murmurs drifted up from the audience, they wanted their show of pain and didn’t want to wait.

“Look at me,” the new man commanded. Lyric squinted over her shoulder, focusing on the face staring down to her. He was much younger than she thought he’d be, close to her own age, and his worn clothing carried none of the finery of an Elitist, nor did he sport the shaved head. *New money*. His face was all sharp angles and shadows.

“I want to see your enjoyment of this,” he said. His mouth drew up into a cynical smile for a brief moment. In another time, in another place, she might have thought him handsome. The idea left her feeling hollow—as if there had ever been another time or place. Vander had taken the notion from her long ago.

The young man stepped to the side, making it easier for him to trap her gaze. His eyes were dark glittering chips in the harsh illumination, and they instantly had power over her. She froze beneath his stare as hot shivers shot through her muscles. The paddle struck her right butt cheek and she clamped her teeth over her bottom lip, stifling her cry.

“I hadn’t expected to enjoy it, but your ripe ass takes to this,” he said. “You know how to work men, don’t you?”

Lyric kept quiet, fearing Vander would step in at any moment and break them up. Elitists never took such time with her, preferring to whip her until their arms gave out. Having this disciplinarian show such attention was a new and not entirely unwanted experience. His voice sounded cold, distant, yet something within his face spoke differently. The slant of his black shag of eyebrows didn’t carry the haughty derision she’d viewed countless times. The stern set of his lips didn’t carry the upward turn of a man enjoying her punishment. She could even imagine a shadow of remorse reflected in his eyes as the paddle shot forward again.

For the first time in much too long, she felt human.

He had good aim, laying it across the same spots time and again until the flesh heated. Firm but not cruel swats that provided a welcome distraction from the slashes made by the flogger tines. Though it carried its own form of hurt, while delivered by this disciplinarian, it brought on an unexpected response.

Inside arousal blossomed. The heat from her punished bottom spread deep into her core. The pole had become slickened by her sweat as she squirmed against it. Though a man had never been allowed to touch her in an intimate way, she’d often, in the depths of night, explored her own body with her fingers. If she’d been caught taking such brazen liberties with Vander’s possession—Lyric shuddered. He’d been known to withhold food until she’d grow too weak to move.

“That’s it!” Vander called offstage. “That’s it my good man! We have a winner for the night! And we have a special surprise for our viewers!”

Footsteps sounded then she inhaled Vander’s familiar spiced soap. Something narrow and rounded slipped between her butt cheeks, before pausing at her anal bud. Lyric froze, this wasn’t the usual show. A cock? No, more metal, she realized in relief. It pressed deep inside her ass, leaving a strange feeling of fullness. She remained mute to the invasion, worry twisting inside

her at this new avenue of embarrassment. Whatever Vander had in mind wouldn't be in her best interest.

The binding pole began to vibrate, the huge phallus buzzing and rattling the platform. The thing pushed inside her ass followed suit, until her lower body hummed with vibration. She struggled against the unexpected ticklish sensations. Her nipples puckered, and between her thighs the little jut of metal hit her clit in a well-planned way. *No*. It was too horrendous a thought, and she fought against tightening spirals of forced pleasure.

"You're strapped to a giant vibrator, I quite like this." The paddle slipped between her legs, and teased within her labia, before it withdrew. "You're getting wet, sweetheart. Sort of kills your virginal purity spiel."

Whack! The paddle made contact again, and she bucked.

"No!" Lyric cried out. No, she couldn't let Vander win, not in this.

"Our naughty girl Lyric will have her very first orgasm tonight!" Vander shouted over the deafening roar of Elitists. "What do you think about that?"

The men's shouts buffeted her eardrums.

"No!" Her voice was swallowed up by the manic crowd's chant *Come for us, come for us, come for us, come for us....* It was too much to take from her—the one and only thing that had always been solely hers in the privacy of the night. Her body, her virginity, her soul, all belonged to Vander. Self-discovered pleasure had belonged to her.

Desperate, she stared into the face of the man wielding the paddle. "Please, no," she pleaded. "Not this."

His eyebrows drew together as he studied her, and his small smile drifted down as his face blurred from her tears.

"Vander." He blew out a hard breath. "Fuck the man." He shook his head then reached up and brushed her tears away with gentle fingertips. "Sweetheart, I can't stop this. Forget about all the rest of 'em. Focus on me, and we'll end this."

Whack! The paddle lay across her tender backside. Mixed with the vibrations, sharp painful pinnacles of pleasure left her gasping for air. *Whack!* She bit her lip until she tasted blood and tried to move off the torturous jut of metal buzzing against her clit. Not that it would've helped since the thing in her ass wouldn't budge. She choked on a sob and coughed. *Whack!*

Lyric slipped and slid over the pole, much to the enjoyment of the spectators behind her. She couldn't escape what they were witnessing, not with how she'd been strapped. But she tried harder, because she wouldn't give in. Not for them. Her sensitized nipples ached where she'd rubbed them against the pole, only adding to the torture.

Whack!

"Look how she's in heat!" Vander's voice shot through the crowd, barely registering over their chant. "A dirty girl she is wanting us to watch her! Take out your cocks, men, because I'm sure she'd take every one of you at this moment! The next man to spank her will be rewarded with another of her orgasms, I guarantee it!"

"Please, stop," she pleaded with the man wielding the paddle.

He cupped her cheek with a calloused palm. "None of those chanting bastards matter. It's just you and me right now. Only the two of us alone on this god forsaken moon."

His gaze swallowed her up as the voices of shouting Elitists faded away in the distance. She could almost believe his words, and let her mind grasp onto the fantasy of only the two of them. Alone. Exploring masochistic desire. She licked her lips, and his nostrils flared as he watched her mouth.

Whack! The paddle paused and stroked over her backside. Her disciplinarian leaned near her ear. "You put on a good show, sweetheart, you've even suckered me in. Come for me after the next one."

No, she wouldn't, she couldn't, but oh, how she wanted to. One last hard slap with the broad of the wood and Lyric couldn't stop it. The swollen sensations burst into dazzling stars behind her closed eyelids.

"No!" she screamed as her muscles seized with the climax.

"I'm sorry." Perhaps she'd imagined his final words as he stepped away while Elitists went wild. Trembling and exhausted, she collapsed against the pole, needing the support. The vibrations stopped. She feared they'd rush the stage, cocks ready to take her however they wished. Perhaps Vander had pressed his luck too far and she'd be helpless to stop the thirty-odd men from ravaging her.

Vander's panicked shouts filled her ears. The thud of footsteps followed, and then the platform groaned with the weight of too many people. She heard the riot unfolding, and terror stole into her heart. This was it, the end for her.

“I think it’s time to go,” her disciplinarian said loud enough for her to hear over the ruckus.

The cuffs suddenly gave way then her feet were freed, before he scooped her up and ran. Lyric watched over his shoulder as the stage collapse beneath a surging pile of rioting Elitists. Grateful beyond words, she clung to the neck of her savior.

Troy dashed down the dark alleyway he’d already mapped out. His ship wasn’t far, and soon Vander would notice his loss and send the marshals after them. *If the bastard survived the lust-crazed Elitist mob. Serves the damned slaver right if he’s trampled, it’ll help me out.* Troy held his captive tighter as he ducked beneath low doorways leading to different passageways—the people on the moon were too fucking short. By the time he spotted the rusted side of the *Mongoose* his back ached from his stooped posture.

The door opened as he darted up the plank and closed behind them. Sealing him safely inside with the woman.

“Get us out of here,” he told his android first mate.

“Aye, aye, Captain.”

The engines fired and they lifted off. Troy walked into a room and deposited his captive on a padded sleeping bench, before he pitched the paddle aside. The wood was worth more than he normally made in a solar cycle, and he intended on selling it at the first opportunity.

His captive’s wide light blue eyes took him in, head to toe, and back up again.

“Like what you see?” Troy asked, still catching his breath. He had grown soft, he thought in annoyance, he hadn’t worked that hard in much too long.

Her gaze dropped to the floor and her pouty pink lips pressed together. A real beauty, he hadn’t seen looks like hers on a whore since...never. Her lush breasts invited his hungry gaze, and made his palms itch to feel their weight. He fisted his hands at his sides. On stage, he’d fallen for her act. Who wouldn’t?

“Sweetheart, you give the word and we’ll fuck right now.” After the show, his horniness level was off the charts. Mixed in with their narrow escape, and the excitement throbbed in his blood. Her skin still held the flush of her orgasm, though her red-rimmed eyes puzzled him. “I’m guessing the crying is to get your customers off. A good way to play those overfed heathens, your slaver taught you well. I have to say, I almost felt sorry for you up there.”

Not almost, he *had* pitied her, believing she was being victimized. The sour taste of being duped left him agitated—the last thing he needed was to feel sorry for a whore. Not with what lay on the line. The woman sat with her small fists buried between her knees, her gaze cast down to the floor. Her cleavage thrust between her arms, while her pale thighs looked soft to touch. They'd close around his hips and hold him tight while he pounded into her. The experience of a whore, with the looks to get him off in thirty seconds flat, was exactly what he needed at the moment.

Troy had a hell of a lot of energy to expend, and too many ideas tripping and stumbling through his mind like drunken fools.

Hard again, Troy pushed his trousers down his hips and grabbed his dick. He walked to her, and grabbed the back of her head. She let out a startled gasp, but he pressed his tip against her lips, and forced his cock into her mouth. Her lips closed over him, her mouth hot, moist, her tongue wrapping around his girth. He fisted his hands in her silky hair when she tried to shove him away.

“Give up the charade, sweetheart.”

He pushed deep into her throat, until she gagged. The woman whimpered, and tried to escape again, but he wedged her against the wall. He stared down; her silvery white hair shimmered in the cabin's lighting. Long, clean and conditioned, its texture baby soft between his fingers. Malnutrition combined with the ever-present threat of lice left most women in the solar system with hair cropped close to their scalps. The femininity of long hair was such a new experience, it alone left his balls tight.

“Behave, I know you're paid well for this by your customers,” he muttered, easing back, enjoying the tight fit inside her mouth.

She squealed and kicked out, catching him in the shin. Frustrated, he yanked out. Her bright gaze bored into his with angry challenge.

“I am *not* paid for anything,” she said. “I am a slave, not a whore.”

“I can't believe that. Vander would never keep a slave like you when he could make a fortune pimping you out.” A slave had less social status than a whore, and a good whore could do well for herself in the three-planet system. Even become independent. Troy wouldn't allow himself to believe she was forced to do anything; otherwise his conscience might get in the way of common sense.

“I do not pass off untrue tales.” The whore lifted her chin and refused to break her gaze from his. “I was kidnapped from my planet, brought to this awful solar system, and sold to Vander. He treats me as he would any slave.”

Troy chuckled as bitterness settled inside him. “None of his slaves have been as well fed as you. I bet my brothers and father are skin and bones by now, while you,” he jabbed a finger toward her, his anger rising, “you have feasted morning to night. No slaver would waste such money as that.”

“What about you?” she shot back. “You may be lean, but I don’t see the effects of starvation taking its toll on your health. Whatever may have become of your brothers and father, you’ve escaped.”

Her words, and the truth behind them, were a low blow. His temper snapped.

“Such a disrespectful mouth you have,” he said through his clamped teeth. “No slave would ever speak to their master like you have me. Proof you are, indeed, a paid whore.”

“I’ll remind you, you aren’t my master.” Her voice came out at a calm and infuriating cadence. “No money changed hands. You’re nothing more than another slaver. Kidnapping and stealing away people’s humanity for profit. A cruel son of an Elitist.”

The last insult broke the last of his control. Troy lunged for her. The whore yelped and tried to dodge his hands, but he had her down on the bed. He wrestled with her until she was draped over his lap, her ass in the air.

“Let me go!” she yelled, clawing at his trouser legs.

Troy brought his hand down in a hard slap on her ass cheek. She gasped and squirmed.

“Let me go!”

“Not until you learn some respect. I am captain of the Mongoose, and I am master of all things on this ship, including you.”

He spanked her until her cheeks reddened to scarlet. She kicked and thrashed, calling him nasty names, and he kept up the punishment until his hand numbed with repeated blows. Finally, the stubborn whore sagged, and went quiet. Both of them breathed hard. He pushed her off his lap and down on her knees before him, before he took his flaccid cock in his fist.

“Now, I want you to take me in your mouth and suck me off.”

The stubborn set of her jaw had softened, though her eyes still flashed defiance. She wouldn’t obey. He bared his teeth; her disobedient bad girl game was best left on stage. “Do it,”

he said, playing along, because he needed to get off and relieve a month's worth of tension. "Or, I'll have my androids come in here to fuck every one of your orifices at once."

Her eyes widened. This time, she reached for his cock, and took him between her lips. Troy kept hold of her head while taking shallow thrusts inside her mouth. He gritted his teeth, needing more than simply compliance on her part. Then her tongue stroked beneath his shaft and she pushed forward, taking him deep into her throat. Soft moans vibrated up his shaft. Her enjoyment of the blowjob had been what he'd needed.

"Fuck, that's it." His head fell back, god it felt like heaven. "Perfect. Don't stop."

The pressure for release expanded in one explosive incredible burst. Troy grunted and pumped his cum down the whore's throat. She coughed, gagged, and he finally pushed her away when she'd swallowed the last of his load.

"Fuck, sweetheart, you're the best damned whore I've ever known. I've never had head that good."

She spit on the floor then wiped her mouth. Her gaze lifted to his face, her blue eyes shining in the low lighting of the room.

"I am not a whore," she said.

Troy laughed, not believing for a second her talent was accidental. "Sure, whatever. The door over there leads to the bathroom. The shower stays on for two minutes, use it wisely." He stood and yanked up his trousers and fastened them. "I have to make sure we're well out of the way of any marshals, otherwise I'd love to eat you out. I might have the androids come in later, though, as a reward since I'm a bit out of practice. I know how you women love their endless stamina."

Her look of shock had to have been practiced many times to look so genuine. Troy left her alone and went to the bridge.

"We'll arrive at Regillia3 in two hours," his first mate stated in greeting. The moon was a predetermined meeting point where he could unload his captive.

Troy took his captain's chair and kicked back, propping his feet on the console before him. A moment of relaxation felt wonderful after so many months of stress. "Wonderful, keep an eye out in case we're tailed. Regardless, let's do some evasive tactics just in case."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Criton, have you ever pleased a woman before?" Troy asked his android first mate.

“I have the programming, sir. Do you require it of me?”

Troy rubbed his chin, grinning, but before he could reply, a siren sounded. His two security androids appeared.

“A ship has appeared behind us,” Criton stated in his ever-emotionless voice. “They’ve hailed us.”

“Open the line.” Static boomed over the speakers. “I’m Captain Troy, how can I be of service?”

“We’re looking for a slave named Lyric, stolen from Pegasus Moon Colony7. Stop and prepare to be boarded for search.”

Of course Vander would have the coin to elicit every damned marshal in the three-planet district. Why he couldn’t replace the whore was beyond Troy. He could bleach another woman’s hair the same color and call it good.

“I’m only passing through this system,” Troy replied. “I assure you, I don’t have any slave on board. It’s just me and my ten androids.”

He only had a crew of four, including him, but hell, if he’d let that slip.

“Stop your engines and prepared to be boarded,” came the firm monotone reply.

Troy frowned, reasoning and persuasion wouldn’t work with an android. The damned things were taking over the galaxy and couldn’t be duped like a human. The last thing he wanted was a dramatic showdown, but he had little choice.

“Criton, slow us down, let them come along side, then fire all cannons at them.”

“Aye, aye, sir.”

The Mongoose slowed momentum, until the engines took on a low hum. Criton moved to a different console. The large screen at the front of the bridge showed the marshal ship pulling alongside. Troy was playing a dirty trick, for sure, but chances were no actual human worked on the ship.

“And...fire,” Troy commanded.

A bright burst of light blinded the screen and the Mongoose rocked sideways from the percussive impact.

“Moderate damage to their ship, sir,” Criton stated after a moment. “They are swinging around.”

“Damn it.” Troy jumped to his feet and pushed Criton aside. He studied the marshal’s flight pattern in the brief few seconds he had. He aimed another cannon, hoping to beat the other ship to the punchline, and fired.

He’d hit his target, catching the other ship square in their aft thruster. A loud boom and resulting shockwave knocked Troy backwards.

“Get us out of here!” he shouted to his first mate.

The Mongoose veered sideways as a chain reaction of explosions overtook the marshal’s ship. They barely made the safe distance needed, when the other ship went up in a star bright blast. Troy brushed his hands together and returned to his chair. His old Mongoose may be outdated, but she had a hell of a temper when pressed. He patted the console and grinned.

“That was too close, how about we find a cozy spot in that asteroid belt. Keep it between us and them until I figure something out.”

Only insane people risked hiding within temperamental chunks of rock, but Troy had little choice. His captive had to be delivered so he could get his fee. The pay would be enough to free his father and two brothers from a slaving mine on one of the worst moons in the three-planet district.

The fight had stirred his blood and he thought of the woman in his hold. Her large breasts, wide hips and rounded thighs were delectable, but her ass. *Fuck*. Her ass had taken that paddle in a way that had been a thing of beauty. Jiggling with each smack, turning a healthy shade of red with the punishment. God, what a way to a man’s libido. Vander had come up with an ingenious way to make money with his whores.

He reached down and adjusted his cock. Hard again, he could take her in her clean-shaven cunt this time. The idea didn’t quite sit right inside of him. *And why not?* Clemens plans for her wouldn’t be sullied if he indulged. From what Troy could gather, Clemens planned to have Vander’s most prized possession fucked by his android army. And have it televised live, a great big fuck you to his biggest rival.

“She’s a whore, she can take it,” he mumbled to himself, quelling the glimmer of guilt about turning her over to Clemens. After all, he had absolutely no choice in the matter. “God knows, how many men she takes on after one of her shows.”

The whore was the last thing he had to save the last surviving members of his family. He’d long ago lost his sister and mother. The system was a hard place for women. Whorehouses,

competition for food, disease, and childbirth all took its toll. Unless wealthy or owned by wealthy men, such as his captive, few survived past thirty-five.

Still, the guilt marred his sense of triumph as they maneuvered behind a large jagged asteroid. He shot a look over his shoulder to Criton.

“Have one of the security officers take watch, I want you with me.”

“Aye, aye, sir.”

Troy couldn't free her, but at least he'd give her one hell of a good time before he delivered her to Clemens.