

SEX, THE STARS & PRINCESS SIMILA



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A Novel by

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I

Androids do not suffer from seasickness, but Shap felt uncomfortable devoting precious processor time to staying upright on the barque as it heaved on the Great Ocean of Pendor. He had a notion, as far as his android brain would allow, that though his Prime Directive was to defend his mistress, it should in fact be efficiency. And efficiency was not increased by sliding across a slippery deck while Princess Simla smiled at his discomfort. The sun was sinking in the turquoise sky of Pendor and the wind and waves had picked up, throwing the three-masted ship around like a toy.

Simla went over to lean across the rail at the side of the ship and Shap's concern circuits kicked in so that he was at her side almost immediately. "Mistress?"

She cupped her hands to her mouth and retched, and Shap instinctively laid his broad metallic hand on her shoulder.

"Perhaps you should go below, ma'am."

The ship heaved again and Simla's hand flew out and the dazzling, golden bracelet on her wrist, embedded with jewels, glittering in the moonlight, flew from it and shot into the boiling waves.

"Oh, my!" Simla screamed, throwing her hands to her mouth again, but this time in horror. "The bracelet! My father's gift. It's priceless."

"It bears the diamond, Eye Of Venus, and is indeed priceless," Shap intoned.

"You must retrieve it. Shap. You can get it. I know you can."

He could and he would. He clambered nimbly over the bulwark and without a pause stepped forward and let his heavy metal body slip under the crashing waves.

Simla smiled and wiped the salt spray from her face with the sleeve of her jerkin. Quickly, she turned and loped across the deck to the forecabin, her slim, athletic figure cutting through the raging wind. Her light green eyes flashed with anticipation and excitement. A door, a few steps, a short corridor and she was into Torzil's cabin. He lay on his fur-covered bunk, bare-chested and magnificent and the sight of him made Simla's breath catch in her throat. The slamming door made the big man turn and raise himself on his elbows. "You've come then, my fine trollop," he breathed huskily, using the arcane style favoured by his class. Simla quite liked it and wasn't averse to slipping in a few words herself when the occasion required.

Torzil was everything she'd ever hoped for. Broad of chest and shoulder, with brown hair hanging to his shoulders and framing a face that was almost handsome. Admittedly it had a few pock marks from some childhood illness, a scraggly moustache, a broken nose and a livid red scar down the right cheek, but these imperfections only served to arouse her further. "You were expecting me?" she asked.

"I saw you stare at me when we boarded ship," he grunted, "and I know a woman when she has a flame in her belly."

Simla swung one long leg up and placed her booted foot on a low table. "And you have no fire?"

He ran his hand over his short kilt and down his muscular thigh. "For a wench such as thee, an inferno."

"And yet you never pursued me."

"I am a son of Serdan and we do not pursue wenches. There is no need."

She knew what he meant, any woman would be proud to be loved by such a fine specimen of virility. Still, her own pride would not allow herself to be taken so easily. "Perhaps, but a woman likes to be pursued at times."

"I have no time for such fripperies. Come, let me love thee." He held a broad hand out towards her and she admitted to herself that she was shocked by his tone. This had not been part of her plan. She was eager to give herself, but not like some common street slut, he must show her *some* respect.

"Have you no patience, son of Serdan?" she asked haughtily.

He recognised her tone and a wry smile played across his thin lips. "Patience is alien to one such as I. I take what I want, when I want it."

She trembled, unsure now if she'd bitten off more than she could chew. Surely he would recognise her qualities and show her some respect. But even if he didn't she worried that at this very moment, when her dreams seemed about to be fulfilled, her nerve would fail her.

He traced one of his thick fingers down the rivulet of reddish hair that trickled from his navel down to the mysteries of his kilt. It swung the balance and she advanced towards him, peeling off her rain-sodden, red, jerkin. He grabbed her wrist and pulled her over him, saying, "You're a fine one, my pretty, I'll serve thee well."

‘You’d better,’ she thought, straddling him and attacking his mouth with her hungry tongue. His hands immediately flipped up her kilt and gripped her behind and even through her thick, woollen tights she could feel his calloused grip.

“We Serdan have never been found wanting, lass,” he mumbled, tearing his mouth away from her.

“Well, I hope you’re more than mere talk,” she ground herself against him and felt him tense.

“Careful, you’ll have me done before I’m ready.”

“I haven’t even begun to torment you yet.”

“We’ll see.” He rolled her under him and his hands scrabbled to pull her tunic open. She had been dreading this because her breasts were small and she didn’t want to disappoint, but Torzil obviously found them satisfactory for he began to feast upon them. Now, she finally felt pleasure from his attentions and wanted more. Her free hand went to her tights and struggled to slip them off. She’d had a lifetime of kisses and caresses and now longed to be loved properly.

But it was not to be. There was a loud crash as the heavy oak door was splintered from its hinges and Shap stood there. Torzil rolled off Simla and his hand reached for the blade he’d hung above his bed and drew it from its scabbard.

“Who is this vermin who disturbs a Serdan Duke at his pleasures?”

Simla raised herself on one elbow and seethed, “Oh, shit.”

“You know this intruder?” Torzil growled.

Shap took in the sight with his steely gaze, before turning his unblinking eyes on Simla. “You miscalculated, mistress,” he said in his metallic tone, “unlike air breathers, mechanicals do not suffer from the bends. I had no need to pause in resurfacing.”

“Mistress?” Torzil swept the long hair from before his eyes and regarded this interloper. “Ye Gods, a guardian. What’s a scum girl like you doing with a guardian android?”

Simla couldn’t really decide if she insulted or not. “Perhaps I am no scum girl.”

“Whate’er you are, I’ll have thee now I’ve started love play. Begone, guardian, the lass has no need of thee.” His voice was authoritative and he obviously expected to be obeyed because he turned again to Simla, but she knew the game was up. Shap strode over swiftly, grabbed Torzil by his shoulders and with one swift effort lifted him bodily from the couch before placing him on the floor.

“What? Your android is defective, lass, it does not obey my command.”

“I am not a mere android, sir, I am Shap.”

“Aye, I’ve heard of thy kind. A guardian to the lass, art thou? But know, that I am a Duke of Serdan, and thou will obey my command. Now, begone.”

Shap ignored him and handed Simla’s bracelet back to her. The diamond’s sparkle caught Torzil’s eye.

“What goes here? Out, guardian, I say, the lass is in no danger. We are merely at love play.”

“I appreciate that, sir, but you must desist.”

“Not while I have strength in my right arm, machine. It needs reprogrammed, girl, it does not know the meaning of love play.” He reached again for his sword.

Simla began buttoning her tunic. “Oh, Shap knows very well what love play is, and I wouldn’t draw that sword.”

But her words came too late. Torzil drew the blade and scythed at Shap with one fluid move. The attack came as no surprise to the android, for he found humans boringly predictable. He caught the sword with both hands and snapped it in two. This only served to anger the man. “What devil’s work is this, that a Serdan Duke is to be denied his pleasures by a foolish android.”

He swung a fist at Shap, who grabbed his hand, twisted, and broke the Serdan’s arm. Torzil howled and sank to his knees.

Simla swung her long legs off the bunk. “I warned you.” She lifted her jerkin from the floor and paused long enough to give Torzil a peck on his tousled head. “Come on, Shap, you’ve foiled me this time, but I’ll manage to get laid yet.”

II

Back in her cabin Simla stripped off and snuggled under the covers of her bunk. Her slim body still burned slightly with Torzil's attentions and she found it difficult to sleep but Shap had taken a position by her door, with his arms folded and his red eyes blazing. It wouldn't be the first time she'd slept with an android in the room, but Shap was different and she felt guilty. Eventually she rolled onto her side and wrapped herself in her own arms.

"You tried to deceive me, mistress" Shap said but she tried to ignore him. "You are not sleeping," he insisted, "I can tell by your breathing."

She kept her eyes closed. "Yes, I tried to deceive you, Shap."

"We could have taken a flyer to Central City from the starport, but you insisted on taking this antiquated ship and making this dangerous voyage. You said it was to absorb local flavour before meeting with the President, but I suspect you wished for romantic experience. Which was it truly, mistress?"

"Both."

"You make things difficult. I am programmed to protect you, yet you continuously put yourself in harm's way."

"Torzil wasn't going to harm me."

"I am sworn to protect your honour. The extra programming inserted by your father."

"Yes, damn him."

"You are on an important mission, mistress, you should not be distracted."

She turned and sat up. "Who is to say a Serdan Duke would not make a suitable mate for me?"

There seemed to be a note of regret in Shap's voice. "My programming, mistress."

"Damn your programming and damn you. I have rights, I am a human being."

"You are a Princess of Old Earth, mistress. A daughter of the Great Father. Your worth is above rubies."

She threw a pillow at his stoic face. "My worth is shit. I can take no man for husband or lover, because my Great Father, Derkon, commands it."

"That is not true. You may take husband or lover, but only one that is worthy."

"One *you* decide is worthy!" she screeched.

“I am programmed with all suitable requirements.”

“Apart from sheer goddam fun. A man I can enjoy and have fun with and romp with and love.”

“We are all slaves to our programming, mistress.” Shap answered sorrowfully.

She subsided, pulling the furs over her again. “I’m going to sleep now.”

“Sleep well, mistress.”

“Sending you to the bottom of an ocean was only the start, Shap. I’ll elude you and get laid, you’ll see. ”

“You will try, mistress. Your father warned me you would.”

“The old bastard!”

The following morning the storm had passed and the barque wallowed in the harbour of Central City. Simla ate a hearty breakfast of ham and eggs before bouncing on deck, ready for the day’s trials. Torzil, his arm in a sling, was organising his retinue and their baggage, but the sight of Shap made him step back. He pointed accusingly with his uninjured arm and roared, “That thing should be dismantled! I am a Duke of Serdan and I shall have words with the authorities, trollop.”

“Oh, piss off,” Simla shouted back at him, the morning air having cooled her passions and decided her that he looked much less attractive in daylight.

“You heard the whore. She insults me. Ship’s master, have you no care for your passengers?”

The grizzled old captain, smoking a pipe by the gangplank spat into the froth at the harbour wall. “And do Serdan Dukes not fight their own battles no more?” he snarled.

Torzil was affronted. He had two men-at-arms by his side and motioned them forward towards Simla. “Take the baggage, we’ll have her before a magistrate. Her and her infernal machine.”

The soldiers raised their energy rifles and pointed them towards Simla and Shap immediately stepped in front of her.

“Take her, I say,” Torzil insisted.

The soldiers stepped forward hesitantly and Shap’s metallic bulk became fluid as he rushed them and sent them sprawling with a sweep of his arm. Torzil retreated behind his serving wenches and squeaked, “Captain! Captain! This is your responsibility. I’ll have your ticket.”

“Break his other arm,” Simla ordered.

Shap swivelled his head to her. “He is no longer a threat, mistress.”

“He never was.” She threw her pack over her shoulder and made her way to the gangplank. “Thank you for an interesting trip, Captain.”

The old salt made an exaggerated bow. “A pleasure, milady Simla.”

Simla strode down the gangplank with Shap at her back and strolled off down the pier.

“Simla?” Torzil cried in wonder, “Princess Simla of Old Earth? And I took her for a street slut.”

“Just shows you don’t need no brains to be a Serdan Duke,” the old Captain growled, refilling his pipe.

As they marched along the pier Shap couldn’t resist reinforcing his point to his mistress, “You see now that he was not right for you.”

“Yes, Shap, you were right, but I only wanted to have some fun with him , not marry him.”

“The one you mate with must be the one and only, a potential husband. You are a daughter of the Great Father, a Princess of ...”

“I know, I know, Shap, you don’t need to rub it in. Torzil was a clot and I shouldn’t have got hot for him, but despite all the Princess shit I still have a normal woman’s share of hormones.” But as she said it she wondered why she was explaining this to an android.

“And your use of the language is deteriorating the further we get from Old Earth,” the machine reprimanded.

“Oh God, you’re worse than a maiden aunt.”

“Now, your maiden aunts were sluts, according to your father” Shap said loftily.

Simla stopped dead and turned to Shap. “Really?”

“He was in his cups one night and said many indiscreet things.”

“He never did like Celi and Kara. Anything else you want to share? A confidence about me, perhaps?”

“It would be inappropriate, mistress.”

“Spoilsport.”

A long, black, ground-car raced down the pier and pulled up beside them. The driver, in casual civilian clothes, got out and opened the rear door for them. He was a slim man, not much taller than Simla, with a trim haircut and an easy, warm, smile. He was handsome, but it was his movement that intrigued Simla, he had the fluidity of a cat.

He bowed to her and said, “Princess Simla? The President has sent me to collect you.”

She pouted. “One ground-car? One driver? For a Princess from Old Earth?”

The driver bowed. “We were informed that you wished to keep your visit low-key. In any case, I am First Minister Alrick of Pendor.”

She examined him closely. “What manner of world employs its First Minister as a driver?”

“A loose world, ma’am, with few pretensions, and a First Minister who has no respect for rules and will do anything to get out of his office. But never fear, the area is surrounded by troops and a fleet of ground-cars awaits around the corner if we have need of them, as befits your status. Please enter and I shall drive you to the Presidential Palace. I haven’t driven a ground-car for years, it’s quite fun.”

His manner was beguiling, so relaxed and unassuming.

“What’s your first name, First Minister Alrick?”

“Yaf.”

“Well, Yaf, call me Simla, I don’t like that Princess shit. This is Shap.”

“Welcome to Pendor, Simla, we are honoured by your visit. Will Shap travel with us or shall I call a truck?”

“He’s my guardian, he never leaves my side.”

Yaf Alrick grinned. “Except when you send him deep sea diving.” She started and he smiled at her discomfort. “Our security service has, of course, been monitoring you closely since you landed on Pendor.”

She nodded, “What an efficient little world you run. You’ll know about Duke Torzil’s broken arm then. I hope there won’t be charges.”

“Serdan Dukes only come here to hunt our wild beasts. We tolerate them but they’re not very civilised and we wouldn’t have them at all if we didn’t have such a taste for Serdan wine.”

“Good,” She threw her pack into the back of the ground-car and clambered in. Shap, not much bigger than his mistress, climbed in behind her, while Yaf took up the driver’s position.

Reclining in the luxury of the cabin, Simla looked intently at the small curls of hair that fringed the nape of Yaf’s neck and decided they looked cute. “What about this one then?” she whispered to Shap, “Would he be suitable for a Princess of Old Earth?”

Shap did not lower his voice. “He is a First Minister, an elected official and, therefore, unsuitable.”

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