

# Tyger, Tyger, Burning Bright

*Heroes Lost, part 4*

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**Featured fandoms:** Babylon 5, Blake's 7  
**Featured pairings:** Avon/Servalan, Cally/Ivanova  
**A.S.S Story codes:** mf,nc  
**Story rating:** R

He couldn't think straight. Things kept moving, sliding away as he tried to look at them. They changed, memory overlaying reality, until he wasn't sure what was what.

"Speak!", someone said. "Tell us what we want to know!" He tried to tell them that he didn't know what they were talking about, that they had the wrong person. But the faceless people didn't listen. They hurt him, and they kept hurting him until the Supreme Commander came and saved him.

Hospital. He was in some kind of hospital. The shining machines weren't for interrogation, just a well-equipped surgery. Like the one where he first woke up.

"All life is linked," another voice said. "You must remember this. All life is sacred."

"Kill for me, Ger," said the Supreme Commander. "It's easy. Just pull the trigger."

"All life is linked! You must not kill!", the clonemaster countered.

"Pull the trigger, dear. Show that you love me."

"All life is linked! You are shooting yourself!"

And they went on and on and on and he couldn't make them stop.

"Attention," Zen clanged. "A message has arrived."

Blake looked up. "Let's hear it."

"The message reads: 'Stuck inside Space Command. Holding Servalan hostage. Contact me.' Signed, Avon."

"From *Avon*?", Jenna exclaimed. "But he's right here on the *Liberator*."

"Trap. It's a trap. I say we just ignore it," Vila said.

"How long before we can talk to Avon, Jenna?", Blake asked.

"Impossible to say. He could return to normal right now, or it could be several days."

"As normal as he ever gets, anyway," Vila added. "Are you sure that stuff you gave him is safe? He doesn't look very well, writhing about like that."

"The file on it indicated that it shouldn't be given to patients who has been subjected to Federation brainwash, but that it should be quite safe otherwise."

"Better not give it to you, then," he said, indicating Blake.

"I'll keep that in mind," Blake answered. "Zen, how did the message get here?"

"It was sent by the one called Orac."

"Orac?" Blake walked over to the smaller computer and put its key in.

"Yes, what is it now?", it complained.

"What do you have to say about this message, Orac?"

"I found it, and gave it to Zen, so that I wouldn't have to be bothered with giving it to you."

"Let's make this quick, then. Where did you find it?"

"It was placed in a computer system inside Space Command."

"Who placed it there?"

"Obviously someone with access to the Space Command computer systems."

"Could it be Avon?"

"If he had access to said computers, yes."

Blake removed the key. "I think we'd better look into this," he said.

"You're not suggesting that we go back there, are you?", Vila protested.

"We'll see."

He had tried his best to sound confident when he told her that he was just waiting for his message to be picked up, and it seemed he had succeeded. Servalan hadn't asked who he expected to do the pickup, which meant that as far as she knew the Liberator and her crew was alive and well. She was most likely right, too, since she was usually as well informed as she was sexy. And chained naked and blindfolded to a bed like this, she was very sexy indeed. He traced one of her breasts with the feather he was holding, and was rewarded with an audible gasp as it crossed the nipple.

But if they were alive and well, why had they left him here? Blake was honorable and loyal to a fault, and would probably rather die than leave behind someone he considered a comrade. He ran different scenarios through in his mind, but none of them added up to something likely. If nothing else, Cally should have been able to reach him with an extra bracelet in time to teleport out. He just couldn't think of something that could prevent that and at the same time let the Liberator get away intact. There was obviously something he didn't know. A piece of the puzzle missing. Almost certainly, the beauty on the bed knew what it was. So he just had to figure out a way of getting her to tell him, truthfully. Difficult, but he thought he knew a way. Smiling, he let the tip of the feather return to the hard nipple.

The radio woke up with a burst of static. "White Star, are you there?"

"Yes. We are," Lennier answered. It sounded like the human Blake.

"We think one of our crew may have gotten left behind when we raided the station, and we would like to investigate. Will you help us?"

"Of course. It's the least we can do in return for your help with Delenn."

"Good. I believe Captain Sheridan said that your ship carries a shuttle?"

"Yes, so it does."

"Fine. We'll come over to you in a moment. Could you please tell Ambassador Sinclair that I'd like to talk to him?"

"I will tell him. White Star out." Lennier turned off the radio. So they would be staying here for yet some time. He wondered what he would get to see during that time. The universe was indeed a place of infinite surprise.

Cally lay half asleep, the comfortable weight of Ivanova's sleeping body pressing on her chest. The deep sharing of the lovemaking had faded, so that she was again alone in her body, but a solid sense of presence and contact remained between them. For a time, she just lay there, enjoying the feeling of having someone there again.

The intercom called for attention. She answered it quickly, turning down the volume and hoping it hadn't woken Susan.

"Yes," she said, softly.

"I hope I didn't wake you?", Jenna asked.

"Almost. What's up?"

"First, Blake wants a meeting on the flight deck in two hours. Second, the folks on the White Star is wondering where Commander Ivanova is. Apparently she's been gone for several hours now, and they're getting worried. I said that we'd look around to see if she's on the Liberator somewhere, and you're the only one that's free. Do you think you could have a quick look around?"

She felt a sudden stream of hilarity from her bedmate.

"Sure, I'll have a look. And I'll be on the flight deck in two hours."

"Great. See you there." There was a muted click as Jenna broke the connection.

*Do you think you'll find me?*, Susan asked.

*Absolutely. Although I think it will take nearly, oh, two hours.*

*You'll have to catch me too!*, she exclaimed and started tickling Cally, who retaliated in kind. Soon the room rang with laughter.

Avon ran his hands all over Servalan's defenseless body, paying particular attention to her most sensitive areas. He had to be careful so that she didn't come. That would destroy, or at least delay, his little plan to get her so desperate for release that she'd tell him anything. She was flushing from her face far down onto her breasts, and most of the time her breath came in short gasps. He wanted to enter her, hard and deep, but didn't dare for fear of bringing her over the top. He wanted to kiss her, but didn't dare for fear of her biting him. He wanted to tell her how beautiful she was, but he didn't dare for fear of her laughing.

Blake cleared his throat. "As you see, we have to look into this. It is much too strange to leave uninvestigated."

He looked around, trying to gauge the reactions. Jenna, cool and concentrated. Sinclair, almost unnaturally calm. Lennier, grave. Delenn, inscrutable. Sheridan, not very interested. Cally and Ivanova, sitting close to each other, almost touching. Looking at him with absolutely identical expressions of faint amusement. There was something strange going on between those two.

"Since we want to investigate, we can't just barge in and hope for the best. We have to use stealth. Which would normally be quite tricky, since our faces are very well known to Space Command security. Fortunately, Ambassador Sinclair here didn't participate in our raid yesterday, and has never been seen by the Federation. He'll approach Space Command and pretend to be a bounty hunter who has managed to capture me, and he'll demand to speak only to the Supreme Commander herself."

"Approach how?", Jenna asked. "Neither of our ships are particularly inconspicuous."

"He'll approach in the White Star's shuttle, touched up a bit too look as unlike our ships as possible. Vila and Marcus is repainting it even as we speak."

"What if they decide to just blast you out of space?"

"I think that risk is very small. They'll have no real reason to."

"How are you planning to get out again?", Ivanova said.

Blake hesitated. "That's the risky bit. We do pretty much the same maneuver as last time, with the White Star's jump capability. But the ships only stay for the time necessary to recharge the jump engines. That should be more than enough to teleport us two and possibly Avon aboard."

"There's nothing to brighten your day like cautious planning."

"Do you ever feel like an extra in the great drama of life?", Marcus asked. "Like a character in a play who is just around to take up space on the stage and listen to the wise words of the main characters? Like one of the hero's henchmen, just there to get things explained to him, get beaten up a few times and die tragically near the end?"

Vila lowered his paint sprayer and looked at Marcus.

"Marcus?"

"Yes?"

"Does this ship have a name?"

"I don't think so, it's just a shuttle. Why?"

"The Federation types will ask for it."

"Oh. Well, we'd better give her one, then."

"Got any ideas?"

There was a pause as both men stood watching the small, mostly red spacecraft.

"How about the Red Dwarf?", Marcus suggested.

Vila looked at him.

"Well, it's going to be red, and it's much smaller than the other two ships," he defended himself.

Vila nodded. "Sounds reasonable. The Red Dwarf it is."

He wasn't feeling very well. Sweat ran off him in small floods, and his spine felt as if someone poked it with a red-hot iron. Something was desperately wrong, and he was too weak to do anything about it. The pain in his head was almost worse than the one in his back. He tried to scream, but his mouth didn't work.

This is it, you're dying, he heard himself say. And you don't even know where, who or why you are, you sad bastard.

I do too know, he tried to answer. I'm Space Commander Ger, I'm safe in the sick bay of the Liberator, and I'm here because of the radiation dose I got on Cephlon when we got stranded there far longer than we intended. I think I'm dying, but it's going to be all right because soon we reach the forgotten hellhole Ensor lives on and find the medication we need. And we find Orac. I wonder what the Clonemaster would say about Orac. Is it linked to all life, as it is to all computers?

All this he tried to tell himself, but it didn't seem like he was listening.

Gingerly, ready to pull it away immediately, he ran his finger along her mouth. She kissed it, very eagerly. Even more carefully, he let his lips take the finger's place. It seemed that a couple of hours constant arousal had made her will to fight go away, at least momentarily, for the kiss he got was probably the most intense he'd ever experienced. As it went on, he placed the now unemployed finger on her clitoris and pressed gently. Predictably, she went wild again, trying to rub against it, which he still didn't let her. A frustrated moan bordering on a howl forced its way from her past his lips.

"Do you want me to rub a little harder, dear?", he said, breaking the kiss .

At first she just looked confusedly at him, then she seemed to grasp what he had said.

"Uhu," she said, nodding.

"Just tell me something first," he went on. "Why did Blake leave without me?" He slid his finger along her slit, bringing a fresh moan. "Clone...," she gasped. "Dead clone, with your clothes on."

A clone! Explanation enough. Especially for the moment. He slid on top of her, placed the tip of his penis among the folds between her legs. A low "Please... now..." escaped Servalan and became the final straw for him. With a heavy grunt, he pushed himself into her welcoming vagina. She started thrashing and screaming almost immediately, and he wasn't many strokes behind.

The bright young officer looked at the man on the screen. He didn't trust him, not in the slightest.

"What did you say your name were again?", he asked.

"Jeff Sinclair. Bounty hunter. As I told your underling, I think I've managed to pick up some trash you're interested in." He moved out of the way of the camera, and Barcol saw the rebel Blake lying behind the bounty hunter, tied up and unconscious.

"I see. And what makes you think we might be interested in this man?"

Even the man's laugh was irritating. "The fact that it's Blake, who you've been trying to get for a long time now! I know my wanted lists, fedboy. It's my job."

"Well. Bring him in and let us look at him."

"Not a chance. I'm staying out here until I get to talk to the Supreme Commander herself, and if there's any funny business I'll blow myself, my ship and him to kingdom come." He lowered his voice to a mock whisper. "And you don't want that, because you have to make a big circus of his capture to really make him go away."

Barcol sighed. "Stay where you are. I'll get back to you." He broke the connection to the Red Dwarf and tried to think of what to do next. The Supreme Commander had given orders not to be disturbed for at least twentyfour hours, and not even a third of that had passed. Still, that really seemed to be Blake. The bounty hunter's story of finding the Liberator drifting in space with a huge hole blown in her side sounded quite like what would have resulted if the rebels had tried to disarm the mines he had left attached to their ship. In the end, he left an urgent message for the Supreme Commander, and told the bounty hunter to wait.

His body had stopped hurting, but he still wasn't sure who he was. He could remember waking up for the very first time in the Clonemasters' cold decanting center. At the same time, he remembered a lonely childhood in a sequence of the best and harshest schools for gifted alpha children. He remembered Anna, and he remembered the first time he met his beloved Supreme Commander. Contempt welled up within him at the later memory. That's not love, that's just sublimated fear, he thought. The part of him that was Ger wanted to disagree, but the depth of the feeling for Anna confused him.

Someone or something has been messing with my mind, he thought, and both of him agreed. He got up from the bed and went to find the others.

"You haven't had the chance to look at our ship, have you?", Jenna asked Delenn.

"No. I haven't. Things have been...confused since I got here."

"You must let me show you around, then."

Delenn smiled weakly. "If you insist." She turned to Sheridan and Lennier. "You two go back to the White Star. I'll be fine." She got up from the lounge, and Sheridan followed.

"Are you sure...", he started to say, but was interrupted by Lennier.

"She is sure, Captain. We will leave now, as she asked."

Jenna waited until they'd left, before she started describing the various systems on the flight deck to the former minbari.

Cally and Ivanova, one seated on the lounge, the other by her feet, looked at the other two women.

*Delenn's not herself*, Ivanova sent. *Is there some way we can help her?*

*We can try, but I don't really think so. The dead are very hard to heal.*

"...and this is our weapons locker. The guns look quite strange, and are a bit clumsy to wield, but they work splendidly. Here, try holding one."

She was just about to close her hand around a gun handle when there was a sound at the entrance to the room. All four women looked towards it, at the sweaty and tired Avon standing there.

For a moment, everything was still.

For a moment, Delenn and Ger looked into each other's eyes.

The moment passed. She finished grabbing the gun she had been about to take, pointed it towards the entrance and fired left-handed at the already fleeing man's back. As he vanished, she ran after him.

"Wait!", Jenna yelled. "That's one of us!"

Ivanova got up from the floor. "No, it wasn't", she said.

"Our Avon wouldn't have a reason to fear Delenn enough to flee on sight of her," Cally continued.

Jenna looked at them for a moment, then cursed.

*We go after them?*, Cally asked.

*Of course*, Ivanova smiled.

It wasn't until after he came for the third time that he was sated enough to notice that the message light on the terminal was flashing. Servalan protested a little as he pulled out of her and got up, but he didn't care.

The message was from one of her officers, and said that a bounty hunter called Jeff Sinclair had managed to capture Blake, and wanted to talk to the Supreme Commander in person before he'd turn him over. Relief washed over Avon. They were alive and well! Well enough to spare some time to investigate his message, at least. Using Servalan's id codes, he replied and ordered that the bounty hunter and his prey be taken to her office. Now he just needed something to wear. Urgently, he turned to the Supreme Commander's wardrobe.

Ger ran for his life through the corridors of the Liberator. The little alien he'd raped had obviously been waiting for him, and she'd been aided and armed by Jenna. He'd long known that he wasn't Jenna's favourite person in the Universe, but he hadn't suspected that it was quite that bad. He had to hide. But where? Jenna could get Zen to pinpoint him for the alien, and then keep him there until she could arrive.

Wake up, a part of him said. I thought of this long ago. I just need an intercom. He threw himself into the next door he passed and pressed the call button on the comm panel.

"Zen," he said.

"Confirmed," the computer responded.

"Lockout all but my voice. Deactivate flight deck screens and shut down auxiliary input sources."

"Confirmed."

Better. Much better. Now they wouldn't be able to use Zen against him. He wanted to rest for a while, but he could hear running steps coming closer. Carefully he left the room and ran towards the lower weapons storage.

Group Commander Barcol looked at the Supreme Commander's message. There was something strange going on here, he could feel it in his guts. The Supreme Commander did not send messages. She always made personal calls, even if it was in the middle of the night and she was in bed with her latest toy. There wasn't even a hint of modesty in her, and he admired her greatly for it. She wasn't just an officer, she was a cosmic force. And this message was most unlike her. Somewhere, something was deeply wrong, and he was willing to bet a week's pay that the bounty hunter Sinclair had something to do with it. He reached out for the call switch.

"Red Dwarf, this is Space Command. Attend." The reply came almost instantly.

"Space Command, this is Red Dwarf, I hear you."

"The Supreme Commander agrees to see you. Dock in bay five and come aboard, bringing the rebel."

On the screen, he saw the little red ship begin to move.

Cally ran down a Liberator hallway, Ivanova behind her and to the right, when the lights went out.

*Does he see in the dark?*, Ivanova asked as she came to a stop.

*He does if he's gotten to the nightvision stuff in the lower armory, came the answer. And then he's heavily armed as well.*

*So how do we get him? Set up an ambush and hope?*

Predatory smile. *You've seen my memories. Miri and I used to hunt like this in the tunnels under the psitech dome. You remember that.*

Ivanova felt the smile spread to her own lips. *I remember. "Run by memory, hunt by mind". Maybe we ought to give the poor dead a handicap.*

Mind joined to mind and they ran on down the hallway, following Cally's memory of its layout.