

Pornoverse

Annals of the Librarian Attack Force, part 4

written by Calle Dybedahl

What was it that Deathwalker built for Servalan in the lab beneath the GENOM tower? How is she planning to use it, and against whom? What will our little group of Attack Librarians do now that their little detour to MegaTokyo is over? And what is Sylia's secret?

Some of these things may or may not be revealed in this installment of *the Annals of the Librarian Attack Force*!

Slight warning: this part contains a lot of explicit sex, and unlike all previous parts it is not a self-contained whole. If you can't stand cliffhangers, wait for part five to be published before you start reading this one.

Featured fandoms: Star Trek: Voyager, Babylon 5, Xena: Warrior Princess, Buffy the Vampire Slayer

Featured pairings: Ivanova/OCF, Faith/Gabrielle, Gabrielle/OCF, Kendra/OCF, 7of9/Kendra/OCF

A.S.S Story codes: fff

Story rating: NC17

Carefully, a short dark-haired woman looked around a corner into the next room. Behind her, her slightly taller and red-headed companion was nervously looking the other way. She was holding her assault rifle at the ready, her finger on the trigger. They were both dressed in red t-shirts, black jeans and black combat boots. Their t-shirts had "LIBRARIAN" printed on them in large black letters. They both wore backpacks, also black.

"See anything?" she asked.

"Huge fucking room," the dark-haired one said. "Enormous wrought-iron thing full of candles hanging from the roof. Must be a couple of thousand candles in it. They're all lit. Floor of the room is full of bookcases. Can't see no people. Several exits."

"So where did they go?" the redhead asked. "Catherine, I don't like this."

"Neither do I," the dark-haired one -- Catherine -- said. "People who are not us running around with firearms in L-Space is bad. That they vanish where there is no gateway is *very* bad. I think we should return to base and report."

She straightened up, moving aside from the door. She held her G36 in one hand, muzzle pointed at the ceiling.

Her companion nodded. "I agree," she said. "Let's."

The redhead nodded and started walking, straight away from the large door. Catherine followed. They were in a large hall, decorated in a Victorian industrialist fashion. The floor was marble, and the high ceiling was glass and stone. Most of the room was filled with bookcases tall enough that one could reach the top shelf without a ladder. In the middle of the room, a wide space separated one set of rows of bookcases from another. The two librarians walked down the central space, nervously watching their surroundings. They walked into another large room much like the first, and another one after that.

In the seventh room, Catherine stopped. She looked intently into an aisle, but saw nothing there.

"Irena, wait," she said. "I think I saw something."

Irena stopped. "Them?" she asked.

Catherine shook her head. "Too small, wrong color," she said.

She walked into the aisle, slowly and carefully, rifle at the ready. The bookcases at her sides were too tall for her to see over, and they were too densely packed with thick leather-bound volumes for her to see through. Four or five segments of bookcase ahead there was a break, a narrow cross-path in the library jungle.

"Catherine, are you sure this is a good idea?" Irena whispered loudly from the mouth of the aisle. "We should be heading back as fast as possible, not investigating strange sounds."

Catherine didn't answer. She could hear breathing from the cross-path. Rapid, shallow breathing. Scared breathing. She stepped sideways out of her aisle, facing the sound, ready to fire at a moment's notice.

In front of her, sitting on the floor and pressed up against the end of a bookcase as if trying to hide, were two girls.

"Please don't kill us!" one of them, a slender but curvy blonde, squealed.

"Who the fuck are you?" Catherine said. At a second look, the girls were older than she'd first thought, maybe a bit over twenty. They were both blonde, they both had lusciously formed bodies and they were both dressed in short white dresses so thin they were almost translucent.

One of them hid her face against the other's shoulder.

"We got lost," the other one said. "We walked for hours. Then we saw people, and they looked nasty, and we hid."

Catherine could see her nipples through her dress. They were surprisingly dark for such a pale girl.

"We can't leave them here," Irena said from just behind her. "They'll starve, if nothing else."

She nodded. "Yeah," she said. She turned to the girls. "Um, look, you," she said. "If you'll follow us, we'll get you somewhere safe. Then we can help you get back where you come from."

The hiding little blonde looked up. "You can?" she said. She had the most wonderful green eyes Catherine had ever seen.

"Yeah," she said. "We can. Just make sure to keep up with me and Irena. This place isn't safe."

The two girls hurried to stand. "Oh yes, kind lady," one of them said. "We will do *anything* you say."

The words sent a shiver through Catherine, a pleasant one that ended between her legs. "Right," she said. "You can start by heading up this aisle, and turn right once you come to the wide space."

They hurried to obey, walking as fast as their high-heeled shoes allowed them.

"They're not wearing any panties," Irena said,

"Nor bras," Catherine added. "I think we'd better hurry back to base, or I'm in grave danger of breaking some promises I made to my girlfriend."

"You and me both, partner. You and me both."

Some hours later, while passing a modern section, they found a Children's Reading Corner. Being experienced L-Space travellers, Irena and Catherine took all the cushions from it and set up camp further ahead next to a large collection of *National Geographic*.

"So, um," Irena said as she lit their portable stove, "what's your names?"

"Marilyn," one blonde said.

"Marlene," said the other.

Catherine tried to remember which was which, but found it surprisingly hard. It was as if as soon as she looked away from them, the memories of their faces mixed up and became indistinguishable from each other.

"I'm Irena," Irena said. "And this is Catherine. We're librarians."

"We're so glad you found us," Marilyn said. Or possibly Marlene did.

"We don't know what we would've done otherwise," Marlene or Marilyn said. "We were getting *so* hungry."

"Is there *anything* we can do to repay you?" one or both of them said, in the sexiest voice Catherine had ever heard. It was as if it didn't actually enter her ears, but instead stroked her neck and gently played with her breasts. She swallowed, her mouth suddenly dry.

"Well," Irena said, and Catherine could see her nipples stand out under her shirt. "It's going to be tricky to keep warm with only two bedrolls."

Marilyn leaned forward and undid the top button of her dress. "We'd love to keep you warm," she said.

"Really, we would," said Marlene, and at some point she had spread her legs enough to reveal the dark golden hair between them. Her eyes burned like emeralds. Catherine couldn't look away from them. She felt hands pull up her t-shirt, and lips touching her own. Her hands moved as if by themselves, up along a slender torso, ending up cupping a marvelously full pair of breasts.

"Relax," Marilyn whispered after she'd broken the kiss. One of her hands was behind Catherine's head, the other was undoing the fly of her jeans. "We just want to repay your kindness."

Susan Ivanova woke up to the sound of waves breaking against a shore. Big, slow waves. The kind that takes several seconds to properly break and fall, and many seconds to build up again, beating a slow rhythm. She felt gentle, warm winds blowing in the open window near the bed, and she smelled hot sun-baked sand and coconut oil. She stretched out in the bed, waking up muscles that still slept. It was a lovely morning. It was going to be a lovely day, she felt sure. As soon as she got some coffee.

As if on cue, she heard the door to the room open. Ivanova opened her eyes.

The room was big, and most of it was filled with a huge four-poster bed. It, and the other furniture in the room, was made out of cordwood. The walls and ceiling were white, as were the curtains hanging on the sides of the window.

"Good morning, sleepyhead," a woman said. She had just come in the door, carrying a tray with a pot of coffee and some toast.

A quick look to the side told Ivanova that she'd not been alone in the bed. There was a clear impression of another person next to her. And, she suddenly realized, she didn't have a single scrap of clothing on. A thin white sheet was all that kept her from revealing her charms to the world.

"Um, good morning," she said, trying not to sound as confused as she felt.

The woman put her tray down at the bedside table. She was gorgeous, with long blonde hair and the most fantastic body Ivanova could remember seeing. She was wearing a long pale blue dressing gown that hid the details from sight, but the outs and ins of her were quite enough. She sat down on the bed, started pouring coffee.

"Headache?" she asked. She poured a drop or two of milk into the coffee and handed it to Ivanova. She had the most amazing green eyes.

"Er, no," Ivanova said. "Should I have one?"

The woman laughed. "After how you drank last night, oh yeah," she said. "If you don't have one, it's just not fair."

"Life's not fair," Ivanova said.

Silence fell. The green-eyed woman looked at her.

"You do remember last night, don't you?" she said.

Ivanova shook her head. "Sorry," she said.

"You know, I really should be terribly offended," the woman said. "I never thought myself forgettable. Particularly not when doing the sort of things we did after we got here from the club."

"Sorry," Ivanova said again, sheepishly. She was starting to feel unutterably stupid.

"Well," the woman said, "it's really your loss if you don't remember." She grinned mischievously. "I really like what you do with your hands," she said.

Ivanova didn't know where to look, and the woman laughed. "I'm Marlene," she said. "In case you don't remember my name either."

She drank some of the coffee. It was good, exactly as she wanted it.

"So," she said, "at the club. You didn't happen to see what became of my companion? Tall, blonde woman?"

Marlene leaned back, and the fabric of the dressing gown stretched over her breasts in a very distracting manner. "Jenna?" she asked. "She had to go back to work. Said that you shouldn't stop partying."

Jenna going off on LAF business without her felt wrong, somehow. Like it was something that shouldn't happen. She looked more carefully at Marlene, but couldn't spot the slightest hint of lie or subterfuge in the beautiful woman's face. Or other parts. Very nice parts. Jenna probably had good reason. A perfectly good reason that Ivanova just couldn't recall at the moment.

Rolling over on her side and supporting herself on one elbow only, Marlene undid the simple belt holding her gown shut. It fell open, making an absolutely perfect breast visible to Ivanova. A breast so beautiful, so alluring, that she found herself unable to look away from it.

"So," Marlene said in a voice so full of sexual suggestion that it gave Ivanova goosebumps, "what do you want to do today?"

"Oh, I don't know," she heard herself say. "What do you suggest?"

Marlene smiled seductively and slowly removed the dressing gown.

Faith drifted slowly from sleeping to awake. Dreams faded and vanished in the light of day, and reality took their place. Reality was a small but comfortable room in a house by Lake Biblios, a double bed that rarely got properly made and a sleeping Gabrielle behind her, pressed against her back and her breath caressing Faith's neck. Reality was, at the moment, pretty damn good, and had been so for the last few weeks.

Most mornings had started out like this, in bed with Gabrielle. Her lover Gabrielle. Sometimes it had been sunshine outside, sometimes it had been rain and once it had been a really awesome kick-ass thunderstorm. Every morning, Faith would stay still, enjoying the warmth and softness, until Gabby woke up. Sometimes Gabby would force them both out of bed to go to class, sometimes Faith would manage to seduce her first and they'd be late. Most days, class was pretty good too. They didn't get taught useless stuff like history of countries that didn't exist any more or what dead old men had thought life was about. No, they got taught how to make bombs out of stuff you could buy in a supermarket, how to field-strip an assault rifle and how to interrogate people who wouldn't return their library books. Cool stuff, stuff that Faith could easily see the

use of. Class usually ended at lunch. After that, they were either free or had exercises that lasted well into the night. To her own surprise, Faith didn't break the LAF records in the exercises. In fact, she had to push herself hard to make it into the top ten. This didn't piss her off. She kept feeling like it should, but it didn't. Instead, she felt like a sixteen-ton weight had been lifted from her shoulders, and if anything did annoy her it was that she couldn't figure out why.

Free afternoons and nights she spent with Gabrielle. They'd join other trainee Librarians and play volleyball or Rugby. Rugby not so often, since Faith tended to get fiercely jealous when other girls groped Gabrielle, and vice versa. They'd go clubbing and dance until late at night, sometimes doing re-runs of their first encounter, except without Seven. Or they'd stay at the house, which they had to themselves since Susan and Jenna left on a mission. They'd cook, and eat, and drink, and talk.

Faith found that she liked Gabrielle not just in a deep in the guts can't-live-without-her way, but also as a friend. The girl was nice, and funny, and she had a way of making Faith feel good about things. She could tell stories in a way that made Faith forget that time was passing, and she listened and seemed to enjoy it when Faith told what few stories she had to tell.

Somewhere deep inside, Faith was waiting for it all to end and come crashing down over her head. She waited for that time she was sure would eventually come, when Gabrielle would look at her with a serious look and say "Faith, we have to talk." Or one of their teachers would ask to have a word about her grades -- except they didn't get graded -- and tell her that she had to shape up or be thrown out. Something like that. Some way she was doing something wrong, she was sure. Some way she was fucking up, and eventually it'd come back and tear her heart out. She was feeling happy, and happy was not for Faith. Faith did not belong in Eden.

Behind her, Gabby's breathing changed and she rolled over on her back. Faith turned over, head resting in her hand.

"Morning, my pretty," she said.

"Yes, it is, isn't it," Gabrielle said. "Do we have to get up?"

"Nah. It's just marksmanship with miss Geerhart. We don't really need that."

Gabrielle kicked away the blankets and stretched herself, a long cat-like stretch accompanied with a big yawn.

"So why aren't your clever hands all over my luscious little body yet?" she asked.

"Well," Faith said. "Today is when we were going to try out the fifty-cal sniper rifles. And while we don't *need* it, I think it sounds like fun."

"More fun than fucking me?" Gabrielle pouted.

"Never," Faith said. "But possibly fun enough to postpone fucking you for a few hours. Possibly."

Gabrielle thought about it. "All right then," she said. "But we'll have to use some time this afternoon to clean up the house, Jenna and Susan are due back tonight."

"Oh. Right." Faith had plain forgot about that. "Still, I think I go for attending class. Because it's the right thing to do." She did her best to look silly serious.

"Good girl," Gabrielle said and patted her on the belly. "And it's not in the slightest because of the rush you get from major destructive power, and you're not at all planning to try and get me to put on the French maid uniform while we clean."

"Precisely. Hadn't crossed my mind. I only think pure and innocent thoughts."

"I'll wear mine if you'll wear yours."

Faith arched an eyebrow. "I thought you said you wanted the house to get cleaned?"

"Well, it's not *that* messy..."

Faith laughed. "Come on," she said. "Let's get to class."

Lessons were had.

The house got cleaned, although slowly and with lengthy breaks.

The sun edged down towards the lake, and the shadows got longer. Gabrielle poured coal into the grill out back, and lit it. Susan and Jenna should be back shortly after dark, at which time the fire would have turned into a nicely hot bed of glowing embers, excellent for barbecuing stuff on.

The sun set. Jenna and Susan didn't arrive.

Eventually, Gabrielle poured more coal onto the grill, since the old ones were starting to burn out.

Getting on towards ten, Faith stalked out onto the back porch where Gabrielle sat. The warm red glow from the grill lit her face.

"We might as well eat," she said. "If they get back this late, they'll probably be exhausted and just want to get to bed."

"I guess," Gabrielle said, and they barbecued their well-marinated pieces of dead cow, and ate them. Gabrielle ate in silence, which worried Faith. A lot. If she had been asked to choose a hundred words to describe her girlfriend, "silent" would not have been among them.

"Look," Faith said after they'd eaten, "they're just late. That happens sometimes."

"I guess it does," Gabrielle said. Faith could hear the "but not to them" that she didn't add.

"If it'll help, I can run up to the LSGC and ask if someone's heard anything," she said. "Maybe they returned hours ago and have been in debriefing ever since."

"I could go over and ask myself," Gabrielle said, and this time she smiled a little.

"Nah," said Faith. "You stay here in case they return while I'm gone."

Gabrielle's smile got a little wider. "What would I do without you?" she said.

Faith smiled. "Call the center and ask," she said.

This time she got a full-blown heart-warming thousand-watt smile from the athletic blonde. "I'd much rather have you in my bed than a telephone," she said.

"Even if it was one of those little ones that vibrate when it rings?"

"Even then."

"No, they haven't returned yet," Charlotte the overseer at the L-Space Gateway Complex said to Faith. "I'll add a note to alert you when they do."

The main building of the complex was pretty odd. On the outside, it was just a big box, a few stories high and maybe a hundred meters square. On the inside, it had lots and lots of little rooms, all of them imitating different parts of L-Space. There was no plan or scheme to it, new rooms had been built inside the LSGC building as new gateways

were brought under its control. At the moment it held thousands, and more were being added all the time. Planning for a second LSGC gateway building had already begun, since the current one would run out of space in a year or two.

"Thanks," Faith said. Charlotte looked tired, very tired. Her job was to keep track of the people leaving or arriving through the LSGC. Normally, this was not a difficult job. People went in, people went out, monsters straying in from L-Space got wasted by the standby assault team. The post of LSGC overseer was commonly filled by someone who for some reason couldn't fulfill her normal duties as an Attack Librarian, but who still wanted to be useful. Like Charlotte, who had lost both her legs below the knee to a thesaurus stampede and was confined to a wheelchair.

"Busy night?" Faith asked.

"Busy night, busy day, busy night last night and busy day the day before that," Charlotte said. Her office was pretty wide, but had a very low ceiling. When she got the job, she had her office built in what had been a dead space under a gateway room that needed to be unusually high. It was impossible to stand up straight in, even for pretty short Librarians, but it worked just fine for someone who was always sitting. It was, as so many other offices, furnished with a desk, a few bookcases and an enormous amount of clutter of dubious origin.

"Really? What's up?"

"I'm not sure I'm supposed to tell you," Charlotte said.

"Hey, come on," Faith said. "I'm a trainee Attack Librarian, how am I going to learn anything if people won't tell me stuff?"

Charlotte smiled, a crooked and bitter smile. "Are you sure you want to be an Attack Librarian?" she asked. "It's not exactly a safe job."

"Safer than some I've had," she said. "*Lots* safer than the one I was born to."

"You can get stomped on by things," Charlotte went on as if Faith hadn't spoken. "You can get shot by natives. You can get crushed under collapsing bookcases."

She looked meaningfully at Faith. "Or you can go into L-Space and just not come out again," she said.

"Jenna and Susan...?"

"Left the B5 fiction line yesterday morning. It's a little more than a one-day hike, through well-known territory. They were scheduled for debriefing today."

"Oh. Of course, they may have been sidetracked."

"As may the other fifteen parties."

Faith thought about it. "Stretches credibility ever so slightly, doesn't it?" she said.

"I'll say," Charlotte said.

"Thank you," Faith said. She rose from her chair and hit her head on the ceiling. She swore.

"Girl," Charlotte said.

Faith looked at her, bent forward and rubbing the top of her head.

"I never told you any of this," the older woman said.

"They're missing," she told Gabrielle when she got back to the house, straight off and without hesitation. She knew Gabby well enough by now to know that anything less would just irritate her. "Left the B5-verse yesterday, haven't been seen since."

Gabrielle smiled, a small and crooked smile.

"Well, at least we know, then," she said.

Faith looked at her. She was still sitting in a lounge on the back porch, with the grill lit. The heat from the hot coals offset the midnight chill that blew in from the lake.

"Are we going after them?" she said.

"It'd be against the rules," Gabrielle said.

"You've broken the rules before."

"Yeah," she said. She looked up at Faith. "But then I knew I only risked my own position in the Force," she said.

"Wherever you go, I'll be with you," Faith said. "You know that, don't you?"

"Yes," she said. "So if I go after Susan and Jenna, we'll both get kicked out of the Force."

Faith shrugged. "We'd still be together."

Gabrielle rose from her seat, hugged Faith and kissed her gently. "Let's decide what to do tomorrow, ok? It's too late to do anything tonight."

"Tomorrow," Faith said.

Ivanova woke up to the sound of waves breaking against a shore. Big slow, waves. She could smell them as well as hear them, smell the salty tang on the wind that blew in through the open window surrounded by the white curtains.

Why did she know the curtains were white?

She opened her eyes and sat up straight, not bothering to try to hide her naked torso as the sheet fell off it. She couldn't remember ever being in this room before, but she still knew every detail in it.

The door opened, and she knew that a fabulously beautiful woman was about to enter, carrying a tray with coffee on it.

"Already awake?" the woman said. She was, indeed, amazingly good-looking. "And here I thought I'd wake you up with the smell of morning coffee."

"Marlene?" Ivanova said.

"Close enough for government work," the woman said. "Marilyn."

She put the tray down on the bedside table. As she bent down, Ivanova couldn't help admire her ass. The dressing gown she wore was very thin, and it was obvious she wore no underwear.

"How did I get here?" Ivanova asked.

Marilyn poured coffee into a cup. "In a taxi, and then staggering and half-carried by me," she said. "I should probably feel bad about taking advantage of you in such a state, but I wasn't exactly sober myself."

Ivanova took the cup. "Have I been here before?"

"Not that I know of," Marilyn said. "And what sort of question is that? Do you usually go out to clubs and get so drunk you don't remember where you've been?"

"No, it just looked so familiar, is all."

Marilyn smiled. "Well, it's not the most original of styles, I'll cop to that."

The coffee was excellent. Ivanova finished it in a few burning hot gulps, hoping it'd help clear her mind. Marilyn sat down beside her in the bed. Her breasts bounced enticingly under the dressing gown. Ivanova found herself licking her lips at the thought of Marilyn's breasts. Which was silly, for as far as she knew she'd never seen or touched them.

"More coffee?" Marilyn asked as she took the cup from Ivanova.

"No, that's fine," Ivanova said. "Thanks."

Marilyn put the cup down. "Good," she said. She climbed fully into the bed, sat down astride Ivanova's sheet-covered legs. As she sat down, Ivanova caught a glimpse of the fair hair between her legs. It felt as if all the moisture in her mouth suddenly transported itself to her pussy.

"Then we can play," Marilyn went on.

She undid the belt that held her gown closed, and threw it aside. The gown fell open slightly, revealing the valley between two very pleasantly shaped breasts, a cute little navel in a marvelous belly with a tempting patch of golden hair the bottom of it.

"Let's play a game," Marilyn said. "Every part of me that your hands touch, I can't touch on you. So if you want me to play with your lovely tits, you mustn't touch mine."

Her voice was fire within Ivanova. Every word aroused her, turned her on like she'd never been turned on before. She *had* to fuck this woman, right now and for a long time.

"But I can use my mouth as much as I like?" she asked.

Marilyn smiled. "For now."

Assistant Head Librarian Sylia Stingray frowned at the report on the display in front of her. Seventeen pairs of Attack Librarians missing in L-Space during the last thirty-six hours. Not good. Not good at all. What was worse, one of the pairs was half of the little group she'd been intending to use against Servalan, who she was quite sure was behind the disappearances. The coincidence of the ex-dictator gaining control of an L-Space nexus and mysterious things happening in L-Space was just too great, there must be a connection.

She swiveled her chair around and looked out over the forest. The tops of the trees were just being lit up by the light from the rising sun.

Even unready and incomplete, she would have to send her team out. Servalan's move had come earlier than she had expected, Sylia's pieces weren't in proper position for the response yet. Which was not only annoying in the way of a tactical loss, but worrying on a strategic level. Initiating action this early was above the capabilities of Servalan, according to her information. So either her information was wrong, or Servalan had got smarter. Or she had managed to recruit smarter help, and was herself intelligent enough to follow her advisor's advice. The last alternative felt most likely, although Sylia wouldn't have thought that her enemy's ego would allow it.

It's from our mistakes we learn, Sylia thought. Let's just hope this mistake of mine hasn't killed an of my people. Probably not, thirty-four trained and armed Attack Librarians did not get killed without leaving traces. A lot of traces.

She got up from her chair. "Terminal," she said.

"Yes," the terminal said.

"Cancel my six o'clock appointment," she said. "Cite the current emergency as the reason. Reschedule for seven PM tomorrow."

"Done," the terminal said. "Anything further?"

"Give me a printout of Attack Librarians who has no recorded contact with Servalan, Callisto, Najara or Jha'dur. Order it in falling order of mission completion ratio. And tell research to find out as much as possible about Jha'dur, also known as Deathwalker. Add a notice for the Head of Research's eyes only that she may be our real enemy, not Servalan."

"Printing, and done," said the terminal. "Anything further?"

She took the thin pile of papers that had slid out onto her desk from a nearly invisible slot in one hand and her parasol in the other.

"Have my plants watered," she said. "I may not get the time to return to my flat today."

"It will be done," the terminal said.

When the morning sun reached the window of the room she shared with Gabrielle Faith gave up on sleeping. All night, Gabrielle had kept waking up shivering and crying from nightmares. Faith had tried to comfort her, mostly by simply holding her and whispering loving nothings in her ear until she fell asleep again. Faith didn't, she just lay with her arms around her lover and felt helpless. Somewhere shortly before sunrise, it seemed that Gabrielle fell into a deep, exhausted sleep, but by then Faith had reached the paradoxical state of being too tired to sleep. Taking care not to wake Gabby, she slid out of bed and pulled on a t-shirt and a pair of panties. She stalked out into the kitchen, prepared and started the coffee machine. Once it was done, she poured the jet-black liquid into her favourite mug and headed for the front porch. She dropped heavily into a chair, put her feet up on the railing and looked off into the distance. Tried to think.

"Good morning," someone said from behind her.

She nearly jumped out of her chair, and she did spill some of the coffee on the porch's wooden floor, narrowly missing her own leg. She swore, quite emphatically, and turned to see who was there.

Behind her, sitting in the back corner chair, was the Assistant Head Librarian.

"Er, good morning," Faith said. "Pardon my language just there. I didn't expect company right here and now."

And most certainly not you, she didn't add.

"I apologize for appearing so abruptly," Sylia said. "But time is short, and I wanted to get to talk to one of you as soon as you got up."

Faith dragged her chair around so she wouldn't have to turn her head like an owl in order to talk.

"Well, I'm all here," she said. "If you wait a minute or two until I get some caffeine inside, I'll even be awake."

"You are aware that my Attack Librarians Stannis and Ivanova have not returned according to plan," the Assistant Head Librarian said.

Faith nodded and sipped her coffee.

"I want you and Gabrielle to go after them," she went on.

Faith nearly snorted coffee out her nose.

"Excuse me?" she said.

"Since you're not yet L-Space certified and since all missing groups so far are pairs, you will be accompanied by two more Attack Librarians."

"We're not Attack Librarians," Faith said. "We're trainees. I'm new here, and you demoted Gabby a while ago."

Sylia smiled. "There are a few things I need to ask you," she said. "Strictly speaking, your contract with the Henchperson Agency prevents you from answering them. However, I think we need the answer to them in order to get the missing Librarians back."

"If it's about Servalan, I already broke that contract when I ran out on her," Faith said.

"How convenient," Sylia smiled, and Faith got a strong impression that she was already quite aware of that. "When Servalan built her nexus," she went on, "something at some point went slightly wrong. We know this, because we can just barely detect an imbalance in the nexus on our instruments. In order to exploit the flaw, we need to know as much as possible about it. Which means we need to know what went wrong during the construction."

Faith's brow furrowed. "Can't remember anything offhand," she said. "What sort of wrong are we talking about here? Misaligned bookcases? Wrong shape of room? Bogus mystical formulas?"

"Something along those lines," Sylia said. "Anything at all that didn't go exactly according to plan."

"I don't know, really," Faith said. "I and Callisto mainly just drove around getting books, which went all right. Bookshops usually aren't high-security places."

"What about the one where you captured me?" a sleepy voice said from the door. "Was that according to plan?"

"Gabby!"

Faith flew up from her chair and embraced Gabrielle. "Are you all right?" she asked. "Did you get any sleep?"

Gabrielle smiled. "I'm fine," she said. "And I got quite a bit of sleep, thanks to you. Did *you* get any?"

Faith shrugged. "Slayer stamina," she said. "I'll sleep some other time."

"It is good to know that you are both well," Sylia interrupted. "But I would like to hear the answer to Gabrielle's question, and I am a bit pressed for time."

"Oh. Yeah," Faith said, still with an arm around Gabrielle. "I was robbing a bookshop when blondie here attacked me. I knocked her out, but it took long enough that the police reinforcements were getting way too close, so I took off with what I had. It wasn't enough, so I filled it up on the way back to base."

Sylia rose from her chair. "Ah," she said. "Tell me, what sort of books were you supposed to get and what did you take instead?"

"It was some kind of porn bookshop. A lot of the books were old and worn, so it probably dealt in used books as well as new ones. I was supposed to get the oldest ones I could."

She smiled a bit and brushed her hair out of her face with her free arm.

"I filled it up with a bunch of random porn out of a W.H.Smith on the way back," she added.

Sylia smiled. "Thank you," she said and extended her parasol. "That was exactly what I needed to know. I'll see you both in briefing room one in three hours."

She started walking away from the house. When she'd got a few steps away from the porch steps she stopped and turned around.

"Oh, by the way, Faith," she said.

Faith looked quizzically at her. "Yes?"

"This is an entirely personal question, and you don't have to answer if you don't want to. But, while you were in MegaTokyo, were you and Priss ever intimate?"

"Intimate? If you mean did we fuck, then the answer is no."

"Ah," she said. "Thank you."

And then she left.

"The head of the research division has analyzed the flaw in the nexus in the light of Faith's new information," Sylia said.

She was standing in front of the conference table, with her back to a large whiteboard. On one side of the table Faith and Gabrielle sat. On the other side from them sat Seven of Nine, Tertiary Adjunct of Unimatrix Zero-One, and Kendra, the Vampire Slayer.

Faith and Kendra kept eyeing each other out of the corners of their eyes, neither of them sure how to treat the other.

"We now know that the flaw lies in the realm of erotica," Sylia continued. "Or, to be more precise, in pornography. Cheap, newsstand-type pornographic literature. The flaw manifests itself as a number of uncontrolled and uncontrollable gateways from the nexus into fiction lines of the indicated type. We believe that Servalan are unaware that those gateways exist. It is our hope that you four will be able to travel to a suitable pornographic fiction line through ordinary L-Space means, find the rogue gateway to the nexus, use it to reach Servalan's base and take her out. That done, you will find the volume she stole from us, use it figure out how to control the nexus and then use that control to return here and place the nexus under the Force's control. Any questions?"

Gabrielle raised her hand.

"Yes?"

"Um," Gabrielle said, looking a bit nervous as Sylia's intense gaze trained on her. "How do we find the gateways in the pornographic universe? What do they look like?"

"We do not know, and we do not know. I would guess that you'll just have to live there, move around as much as possible and keep your eyes open for sudden disappearances, appearances or other strange occurrences."

"I have never been to a pornographic universe," Kendra said. "What are they like?"

"As you may guess from the name," Sylia said, "they focus very strongly on casual and frequent sex without much in the way of emotional connection. You will all have to adopt this lifestyle if you want to blend in at all, unless you can find appropriate in-context reasons not to. I suggest that you don't try to find such reasons, any deviation from the normal is a way in which you can be detected."

"And after we've spent some time in this universe fucking non-stop," Faith said, "we're just going to waltz into Servalan's stronghold and take out whatever defenses she's got there? Which definitely includes Callisto, who is one seriously nasty piece of work?"

Sylia looked at her. "Yes," she said. "You are. You are Attack Librarians. You are expected to thrive on adversity."

"Um, actually," Gabrielle said, "Faith and I are just trainee Attack Librarians."

"No," Sylia said. "I do not send trainees on difficult missions. If you have no more questions that are relevant to the mission, this briefing is over."

She waited a few seconds, during which nothing was said.

"Good," she said. "Ladies, I expect a full report when you return. Good luck."

She nodded at them and left, unopened parasol resting on her shoulder. The four Librarians looked at her receding back.

"Did she just promote us?" Faith said to Gabrielle.

"Yes," Gabrielle replied. "And I think she just told us to get her lots of naughty pictures, many if not all featuring ourselves."

"I look forward to taking them," Seven said.

"Jenna," Ivanova said. "I want to see Jenna. Now."

Something was wrong. She couldn't say what, but something was. The white room, the smell of coffee, the amazingly beautiful woman sitting on her bed. She'd never seen it before, but somehow she knew it was all wrong. She needed desperately to see Jenna. If they could just talk about this, think about it together, she was sure they could figure out what was going on.

"Jenna's not here," the woman said. A vague memory said that her name was Marlene or maybe Marilyn. "She had to go away for a while. She'll be back for you tomorrow." She handed Ivanova a cup a coffee. "Here," she said. "Drink this and you'll feel better."

Ivanova slapped her hand away, throwing the cup against the wall and leaving coffee dripping down the white paint.

"No!" she said. "I want to see her *now*!"

"I'm sorry," Marlene or Marilyn said. "I can't arrange that. You'll just have to wait."

Frustration welled up inside Ivanova. Before she quite knew what she was doing, her fist accelerated towards Marilyn's face and hit her, hard. The blonde woman fell off the bed, landing on her side on the floor. She rolled over on her back, her gown falling open and revealing her mind-numbingly appealing flesh. Ivanova climbed out of the bed, stood over her, still trembling with rage. Only now it was mixed with desire. She found she couldn't look away from Marlene. Her shoulders, the gentle curve of her hips, her long luscious thighs.

"Ooh, rough," Marilyn said. "I like rough." She slowly spread her legs and smiled up at Ivanova. She started to say something more, but Ivanova bent down and slapped her face, hard.

"Be quiet," she said. "Don't say anything at all unless you want to tell me where Jenna is."

She bent down beside the prone woman, roughly turned her over on her stomach. Violently, trying to cause some pain, she pulled the dressing gown all the way off Marilyn's body. Wrenching her attention away from the suddenly revealed ass, she took the belt from the gown and used it to tie Marilyn's hands behind her back.

Sitting back on her heels a moment, she looked at her captive. At her rapidly reddening cheek, her smoothly curved back with her slender arms stretched in a V across it. Her ass, her invitingly parted legs. Ivanova could see moisture glittering on the tuft of pubic hair visible from behind.

She licked her lips. Tying Marilyn up had made her no less alluring, quite the opposite. She was looking up at her as well as she could, as if nervous to see what her captor would do next.

Ivanova slid a hand between Marilyn's legs and felt the slick wetness there. She moved her fingers along the warm folds, ending up pushing at the hard nub of her clitoris.

"Fuck me," she heard her whisper.

"Remember," Ivanova said. "Not a word unless it is to tell me where Jenna is."

She moved her hand a little, put three fingers together and rammed them into Marilyn's pussy. The captive woman cried out wordlessly and arched her back as far as she could to press herself harder against Ivanova's hand.

"Like that, do you?" Ivanova said. "Let's see what you think about this."

Her own pussy was so wet she was dripping, and she had a vague feeling she wasn't thinking clearly any more. She pulled her hand out of Marilyn, held all four fingers straight cradling the thumb. With a violent push, she shoved the fingers into Marilyn up to the knuckles. She pulled out, pushed in again, harder. She could feel the other woman trying to relax, to let her in.

Putting her back into it, she forced her knuckles past the muscles in Marilyn's vaginal opening. Once past that, her hand slid easily in all the way to her wrist, Marilyn's pussy lips stretched taut around Ivanova's arm.

Ivanova clenched her hand into a fist, looking up at Marilyn's face, not sure what to find there.

What was there was ecstasy. Her eyes were closed, her mouth wide open, her breath was coming in short gasps and sweat had broken out all over her. Ivanova moved her hand, and saw ripples of emotion sweep over Marilyn's face. She felt vaginal muscles tense against her hand, and while she moved her fingers around trying to figure out what was happening they all clenched up at once and Marilyn started to thrash about as much as her position allowed, screaming loudly.

Ivanova smiled and moved her fingers about more, keeping her captive's orgasm going for as long as possible, any thoughts of punishment swept away by her own steadily growing arousal.

When Marilyn lay spent and exhausted, she pulled her hand out. Again, she rolled her over, now to her back, not caring that she ended up with much of her weight on her hands. She straddled her face, pushed her pussy to Marilyn's mouth.

"My turn now," she breathed, clenching her hands on Marilyn's breasts.

The street below their hotel room was a solid row of bars and discos along one side. On the other side was the upper edge of a wide, long beach going down to a gently moving ocean. There were quite a lot of women about, every single one of them looking like they were between eighteen and twentyfive, well-trained and in excellent health. Their fashion sense invariably leaned towards the revealing but not too revealing, and the easy to remove.

"Bloody hell," Faith said, looking out one of the windows. "It looks like Baywatch."

"Is that good or bad?" Gabrielle asked.

"I guess it's just to be expected."

Their room was huge, nearly the size of the entire house they lived in back at the Compound. Everything in it was pink, and it was centered around a proportionally huge heart-shaped bed. It was much too big for just Gabrielle and Faith, and could easily have held a small orgy. Which, considering where they were, might very well be the point. No matter that it had been rented as a double. Apparently, the hotel only had double rooms and suites. They'd opted out of a suite, on the pretext that it'd be too high-profile for an undercover mission.

The real reason, as far as Faith and Gabrielle were concerned, was that Gabrielle didn't want to share a room with anyone but Faith. Faith wasn't so picky, she was pleased as long as Gabby was there. But if there was something she could do to make her girlfriend feel better, that something could consider itself done.

"So, how do we start investigating?" Gabrielle asked. "I don't know a whole lot of this pornography thing. I think the closest I've come was some Amazon poetry that got really descriptive at times. Made for some fun times with Xena, that poetry did..."

Faith threw herself on the bed. "Really?" she said. "Care to... describe it to me?"

Gabrielle jumped up on the bed and straddled Faith's hips. "Maybe," she said. "Some time when you've been really, really nice."

"Aren't I always?" she said and pinched Gabby's butt.

"Ouch!"

Gabrielle swatted away Faith's hand, then bent down and kissed her gently. "Almost always," she whispered. "And you haven't answered my question."

"What question?"

"How do we start investigating? How do we find the gateway to the nexus?"

"Oh. That question."

Faith thought about for a moment. "Well, you know," she said. "I always think better on a full stomach, and it's been a while since we ate. Let's order room service."

"Will we have to have sex?" Kendra asked.

Seven didn't even look up from her examination of the room. "That is very nearly certain," she said.

"With each other?"

"That is far less likely. I would expect most sexual encounters to be with locals, unless we actively chose to involve each other."

Kendra walked over to the window, looked out for a bit. She turned back, looked at Seven, who was systematically reading all the information leaflets on the room's small desk. The desk was, like the rest of the room, a deep Burgundy red. It looked like an afterthought, something squeezed in after the enormous four-poster bed had got all the considerable space it needed.

"I wonder what it would be like to have sex with Faith," Kendra said. "With another Slayer."

"Faith is a good lover, happy to try new techniques and she has enormous stamina," Seven said.

Kendra looked disbelievingly at her. "You have had sex with Faith? What about Gabrielle? Does she know?"

"They were not a pair at the time. Indeed, I believe I was instrumental in bringing them together for the first time."

Kendra paced nervously back and forth, from the window looking out over the lush garden behind the hotel to the big, black wooden door.

"Is she better than me?" she asked on her tenth lap.

By now, Seven had finished reading everything except the Gideonite bible. She intended to have a look at it later, to see how it differed from the mainline version. She suspected that the differences might be considerable.

"Yes," she said to Kendra.

Kendra stopped dead, like she'd been slapped. "You are not supposed to say that!" she said.

"But she is," Seven said. "That is a fact. She has been sexually active far longer than you, and thus has had much more time to practice. It would be strange if she was not a better lover."

"I do not want her to be!"

Seven looked straight at the young woman. "Then you will have to practice a lot," she said.

The room service meal was brought on a cart, pushed by a young woman with long dark hair and an extremely short black skirt. She wore heels high enough that her toes hardly reached the ground, and her white blouse was so thin that her breasts could be clearly seen through it.

"Your order, ma'am," she said to Faith, who had opened the door for her.

"Er, thank you," Faith said.

The woman put the cart by the foot of the bed, and lifted the silvery cupolas that had so far covered the plates. When she did so, she bent exaggeratedly forward over the cart to reach. Her skirt rode up high enough on her parted thighs that Gabrielle could see her pussy from behind. Still bent down, she looked over her shoulder towards the overstuffed chair where Gabrielle sat.

"Is there anything else I can do for you, ma'am?" she said in a sultry voice.

Gabrielle just looked at her, shocked at her blatant display. She looked up at Faith, not sure what to do. Faith grinned.

"You'll have to forgive my cousin," Faith said. "She's not from town. As old as she looks, she's still a virgin. She grew up on a small farm, and she knows little of the ways of the world. On her deathbed, I promised her mother I would take care of her and teach her about the world."

Faith bent down and rested an elbow on the food cart, placing her face right next to the waitress' and doing her best to look deadly serious. "Blessed be her memory, and may she rest in peace," she said.

Gabrielle looked at Faith, one eyebrow sharply raised and an "I don't believe this" kind of look on her face.

"Why, that's *terrible*," the waitress said. "Is there anything I can do to help?"

Faith changed her serious expression to one of newfound hope. "Why, I believe there is," she said. "I've been trying to teach my cousin, but you know how hard it is to talk and... demonstrate at the same time. Possibly, maybe, you could... but it would be far too much to ask of a stranger!"

Faith straightened up, turned away from the waitress in feigned distress.

The waitress also stood up straight, although still with her feet a shoulder's width apart.

"Certainly not!" the waitress said. "Just ask, and I will help!"

Faith turned back to her. "Would you please? Would you demonstrate, while I explain?"

"I would be delighted!"

"Wonderful," Faith said. She pushed the cart out of the way, took the waitress gently by the shoulders and turned her towards an increasingly incredulous Gabrielle.

"Gabrielle, dear cousin," Faith said. "This is... what's your name?"

"Juanita."

"This is Juanita. She will help us make you a woman. Isn't that wonderful, dear cousin?"

"Have you gone crazy?" Gabrielle said.

"Ssh, it's all right," Faith said. She slowly unbuttoned Juanita's blouse and parted it widely, then stood behind her and reached around, lifting her ample breasts in her hands.

"And these are her breasts, dear," she said. "They're soft and fun to play with."

"Why don't you touch them and feel for yourself," Juanita said.

Gabrielle got up from the armchair. She stroked Juanita's breasts softly with the tips of her fingers for a few moments.

"Can I just talk to my cousin for a moment?" she said, grabbed Faith by the arm and dragged her away.

"What are you doing?" she hissed at her.

Faith looked a little unsure. "Keeping the local customs," she said. "Sylia said for us to blend in, remember?"

Gabrielle looked at her. "And at the moment, this means that I and this waitress fuck while you watch?"

"Um, yeah," Faith said. "Pretty much."

"Does it turn you on?"

"Um. Actually. Yes. A lot," Faith said, blushing a little.

Gabrielle's look got something evil in it. "Well, then," she said. "Let's me and her fuck."

She walked back to Juanita, who stood where they'd left her.

"Sorry about that," Gabrielle said. "Family stuff. Tell me, does it feel nice to you if I do this?"

She cradled Juanita's breasts in her hands and kissed her in between them, licking her skin a little. She kissed her way slowly to the side and down, traveling up on a large brown breast towards its darker center. As she reached the nipple, she took it inside her mouth. She sucked on it, played with her tongue over it and ever so gently bit it.

"Oh yes," Juanita breathed. "It's very nice indeed."

"I liked it too," Gabrielle said. "But I get a feeling that there is more one might do."

With a quick move, Juanita ripped open a couple of velcro fastenings in the side of her skirt and threw it off to the side. "There is indeed more," she said. She took one of Gabrielle's hands in both of her own and guided it down to her pubic hair. "Some of it is down here," she said.

Gabrielle moved her fingers, gently massaging the area just above Juanita's pussy. When she heard the waitress' breathing change, she inched a couple of fingers further down, into the wetness below. She put her free arm around Juanita's waist, hugged her close. Raising herself up on her toes, she put her mouth right next to Juanita's ear, touching her earlobe with her lips as she spoke.

"My, you're all wet and slippery down there," she said, "is that all right?"

Juanita didn't respond. Her eyes were half-closed, and her mouth slightly open. Probing at the top of her slit, Gabrielle's fingers soon found what they were looking for.

"And there is a hard little knot here," she said. "Maybe I should massage it and make it feel better?"

A couple of steps behind Juanita she saw Faith. She was looking on, transfixed.

Gabrielle moved her fingers again, further down.

"There is a hole here," she said. She slid two fingers into Juanita's vagina, slowly, moving them about playing with the walls as she went. "It feels warm and nice," she said. "Is it nice for you?"

Without warning, she pulled her fingers out, let go of Juanita entirely and took a couple of steps back. As the waitress looked at her, surprised and confused, she brought her wet fingers to her mouth and slowly licked them.

"It tastes nice," she breathed. "I want to taste more. Can I do that?"

"Oh, yes," Juanita said. "You can."

She climbed into the bed and grabbed a couple of pillows. She laid down on her back, with the pillows under her ass. She spread her legs as wide as she could.

"Here," she said. "Taste all you want."

Quickly, Gabrielle shed her own clothes. Naked, she got on the bed and kneeled between Juanita's legs. She bent down, put her mouth to the waitress' sex. She kept her ass high in the air and her knees apart, to give Faith as interesting a view as possible. Once in position, she stretched out her tongue and got to work on Juanita's pussy for real. She used every trick and skill she knew, she used the tip and the flat of her tongue, she used her teeth and she worked the inside of Juanita's vagina with her fingers. It didn't take long before she felt the woman tense up and spasm, screaming out in orgasm.

Gabrielle kept going. She even tried to step up her efforts, going harder and faster. Juanita came again, and again.

After the fourth time, Juanita sat up a little and pulled Gabrielle's head away from her pussy.

"That is very, very nice," she said. "But you must let me pleasure you as well. If you'll turn around, put your pussy to my face while keeping mine by yours."

"Like this?" Gabrielle asked, trying to sound like she didn't know exactly what Juanita meant, and moved into the traditional sixty-nine position.

"Just like that," Juanita said, and the words were barely out before Gabrielle felt something wet and warm push in between the swollen folds of her sex. She closed her eyes, sighed deeply. It felt good, very good.

She opened her eyes and looked at Faith. She was still standing exactly where she'd been before, quite left out of the action. Gabrielle grinned at her, then bent her head down and got back to licking Juanita's pussy. It was harder to concentrate now, but she tried to make up for it with enthusiasm. As she worked harder, licked faster and rammed her fingers more forcefully into her, Juanita did the same to her. They got into a common rhythm, a kind of close dance of carnality. Everything except her arousal and the experience of woman against woman vanished for Gabrielle, nothing else was important enough to notice. It went on and on, and time also ceased to have meaning. There was just flesh, and pleasure, until eventually she felt the tension increase sharply inside her and release into a completely blinding explosion of pure joy.

Exhausted, she rolled off Juanita and stretched out on her back. She felt totally worn out, but in a very good way.

"I have to get back to work," she heard Juanita say. "It's been very nice teaching you. Maybe we can do it again." She felt movement in the bed, then heard the sound of velcro being adjusted.

She opened her eyes, just in time to see Juanita wave and smile at her as she vanished out the door.

"Damn," Faith said. "That was the hottest thing I've ever seen."

She climbed onto the bed, lay down alongside Gabrielle. "Care for a little more?" she asked. "'Cause I'm more worked up than I've been in a *long* time."

Gabrielle looked at her. "Sorry, dear cousin," she said. "I have a headache."

She saw a number of emotions pass over Faith's face. "Oh," she said. "Right. I'm sorry. Do you want me to get you some aspirin?" There was a lot of barely suppressed disappointment in her voice, combined with some guilt.

Gabrielle's face broke out in a grin. "No," she said. "But I've heard that sex can work as a painkiller."

Quickly, she rolled over on top of Faith, straddling her belly and making a wet spot where her pussy touched Faith's shirt. "So you'd better get out of those clothes right quick," she said.

Faith laughed, relieved, and did as she was told.

"I think we'll have to get some local clothes," Gabrielle said as she and Faith walked down the stairs to the hotel bar. "The ones we have take too long to remove."

Faith looked sideways at Gabrielle's tight black top and shorts, clothes she knew from experience she could take off in seconds. The boots would take a few seconds more, but removing those mostly weren't strictly necessary. Taking off her own jeans and armless shirt took a little longer.

"Maybe we can get some made out of guncotton," she said. "One spark and whoof, they're gone."

Gabrielle smiled. "Quick, but a bit too single-use. Although, on the bonus side, I guess they could double as depilatories."

They reached the bottom of the stairs and walked into the bar, a large relatively well lit room. There were a few tables, a number of private booths along one wall and a long bar with high stools in front of it. On the dark walls hung paintings with erotic motifs.

There were quite a few people in the bar, most of them standing in a circle around something going on at the far end of the counter. Near the center of the group, they could see Seven's blonde hair in its typical bun.

Faith and Gabrielle looked at each other and headed for the far end of the bar. After a few "Excuse me", "Do you mind?" and the occasional discreet elbow to the kidneys, they reached the inner edge of the circle.

In the center of it was Kendra, kneeling on the floor and with her face buried in the crotch of a red-headed woman sitting on the edge of a bar stool. Next to them Seven stood, looking at a stopwatch in her hand. As they watched, the redhead moaned loudly, pushed Kendra's head hard to her and quite obviously came.

Kendra pulled her head back. The lower half of her face was covered with wetness. "Next!" she said as the redhead jumped off the stool and walked off to lean against the bar. Another woman, a blonde, pulled up her skirt and jumped up on the bar stool. She'd hardly got herself settled when Kendra started eagerly licking her cunt.

Gabrielle moved up next to Seven.

"What in the Gods' names is she doing?" she asked.

"She is trying to bring as many women as possible to orgasm in ten minutes," Seven replied.

Gabrielle looked at the back of Kendra's head and then back to Seven.

"Why?" she said.

"Because she wants to become a better lover than Faith is."

Gabrielle looked at her, stunned. "What?" she said.

"I believe it has to do with the fact that they are both Vampire Slayers," Seven said. "Seven minutes," she added in the direction of Kendra. "She does not want Faith to be better than her at anything," she added, again to Gabrielle.

"And she thinks this will make her a better lover?"

"Yes."

They both looked at Kendra as she made the blonde come. She left, and was replaced by a Hispanic-looking woman.

"She's quite missing the point, isn't she?" Gabrielle said.

"It certainly does look that way," Seven said. "Eight minutes," she said to Kendra.

"I and Faith are going shopping for local clothes," Gabrielle said. "Do you two want to come with us?"

"As soon as Kendra's ten minutes are up, certainly."

"It is quite translucent," Seven said. She was standing in front of a mirror in a largish shop along the main street. She was out of her customary silver jumpsuit, and was trying on a short white dress. It was very short, ending at the upper half of her thighs. The back of it went all the way up to the neck, but there were large elliptical holes in the sides of it and it showed plenty of cleavage. It followed the shape of Seven's body well, and it was, as she pointed out, quite translucent.

"Oh, but it's *gorgeous*," the shop assistant gushed. "It shows off all your best sides!"

"Really," Seven said.

"Yup," Faith said. "And it's conveniently open." She slid up behind Seven and put her hands in through the holes in the dress' sides, fondling her breasts.

"In more than one way," Gabrielle added, placing herself next to Faith and sliding her hands up and in along the backs of Seven's thighs to her vulva.

"Well," Seven said, slightly flushed, "maybe it is suitable for this mission. I will take it."

"Good!" the shop assistant said. "Will you wear it out of here, or should I pack it for you?"

"I will wear it," Seven said.

"I like this," Kendra said from in front of the mirror next to Seven's. She turned one way and the other in front of it, trying to see herself from all possible angles. She was wearing a kind of an open deep red jumpsuit. It covered her completely from mid-calf to waist, then left the back entirely bare and sent two wedges up the front to half-heartedly cover her breasts and join in a bow tie behind her neck.

Gabrielle, Faith and Seven looked at her.

"Nice," Gabrielle said, noting the way it closely followed all the curves of Kendra's body.

"Looks easy to move in," Faith noted approvingly.

"Is it quick to take off?" Seven asked.

With a naughty smile, Kendra reached up and undid the bow at her neck. As soon as she let go, the entire garment dropped to her feet, leaving her naked.

"It is," she said. "I will wear it," she added towards the shop assistant.

Seven looked at Gabrielle and Faith. They both wore similar clothing, a band of cloth across the torso tied between the breasts to make a primitive bra and a skirt so short some pubic hair could be seen sticking out underneath it when they were standing straight. Faith's top and skirt were black, Gabrielle's were white.

"You are dressed alike," Seven noted.

Faith laid an arm across Gabrielle's shoulders. "This," she said, "is my sweet, innocent, virgin cousin Gabrielle."

Seven snorted derisively.

They strolled down the street, looking at shops and bars and women and the sea. The weather was pleasantly warm. There was enough of a wind to clear the air but not to be bothersome, and the sun wasn't too harsh. There were palm trees, and green lawns, and large bushes covered with brightly colored flowers. The occasional car passed them by, but most of the people were walking or rollerskating. Down on the beach, women were bathing, tanning, playing volleyball and all the other things people usually do at beaches. Further out on the water, waterskiers and parasailers could be seen.

"So we have a base, and we have eaten, and we have local clothes," Gabrielle said. She was walking hand in hand with Faith, behind Seven and Kendra. "I think it's about time to try to figure out how to find that gateway. This place creeps me out, nice though it is."

Faith thought for a while. "So we want to find a place where people or things sometimes appear or disappear inexplicably. That pretty much means that we have to talk to people, to pick up rumors."

"And around here, it seems you can't talk to someone without also fucking them," Gabrielle sighed. "Do you think we can have Kendra fuck all the strangers for us?"

Faith laughed. "And here I thought you were a nice girl," she said.

"A common but false belief," Gabrielle said. "Just ask Xena. If she ever decides to stop being dead, and we then meet her."

"I'd rather just find out all about you by myself," Faith said, suddenly sounding quite shy. Gabrielle squeezed her hand a little harder, and they walked for a while in silence. They sat down, all four of them, at a beachside cafe. It was built on a wooden platform jutting out from the side of the street, supported by thick wooden beams as the sand sloped off towards the water.

"We should split up," Kendra said. "Then we can search four times as quickly as we can now."

"No," Seven and Gabrielle said in unison.

"We work in groups no smaller than pairs," Seven went on. "Alone is too dangerous."

"Pairs might be a good idea, though," Faith said. "It's like trying to find an invisible needle in a haystack anyway. And whatever it is that's been disappearing pairs of Librarians only seems to happen in L-Space, so we should be safe enough here."

"There's a drawback with these clothes," Gabrielle said.

The other three looked at her quizzically.

"You can't hide any weapons in them," she explained.

Sylia Stingray walked the LAF Compound.

She started out at the main gate, the gate leading out to the city that had grown there, the city that was simply called The City and no more. It was no longer the only city on mainline, but it was still by far the largest.

There was always life and movement around the main gate, even late at night. It used to be that it was all or nearly all Librarians returning from an evening out in the city, but since Servalan's attack on the Compound the mood had changed. There were more guards, they were more heavily armed and they actually had got gate security reworked in a tactically sensible manner.

Sylia smiled and walked on.

She turned right from the gate, onto one of the huge lawns that covered most of the ground between buildings in the academy part of the Compound. It was dotted with people, both Librarians and various associates. They sat and read, or sat and talked, or engaged in different sports. Occasionally, she'd nod at people. They'd nod or wave back, because politeness so required, not because they knew who she was. Almost none of them did. She was, after all, only the *Assistant* Head Librarian. To them, she was no more than a fairly attractive and unusually tall oriental woman, dressed in pin-stripe business dress and carrying a parasol as protection against the sun. She liked the anonymity. It gave her more freedom of action.

Of course, *she* knew who all of *they* were.

The largest building at the Compound looked like a small two-story wooden house, yellow with white corners and a red roof. It looked about large enough for one or two families to live comfortably in. The hand-lettered sign above the door just said "Research". On the inside, Sylia knew, it had more usable space than some planets. From the outside, it looked calm and serene.

Sylia decided not to enter. She had no need to talk to the Head of Research at the moment. She walked on.

The climate of mainline was, like many other things there, unnaturally perfect. It was warm enough that light clothing was enough, but not so hot that physical activity became uncomfortable. It was mostly sunny, but it rained enough to keep plants alive and healthy. Mostly, it rained between two and five in the mornings.

She walked past the Weaponry and Tactics buildings. They were naturally close to each other, to ease cooperation. Their areas bled into each other, new weapons requiring new tactics and new tactics requiring new weapons. Eventually, she planned to merge them into a single department.

Halfways to Acquisitions & Catalogue an Attack Librarian Assault Team in full combat kit jogged past her on their way to an exercise. Twelve women strong, led by experienced Attack Librarian Ripley VIII. Sylia nodded approvingly at them. They made excellent shock troops.

Turning slightly to the north, she left the academy area behind. Buildings became rarer and smaller, and the grass was much less well kept. Bushes tended towards the large and unkempt, and trees became more numerous. There were hardly any people at all. She was entering the parts of the Compound where free-standing houses for Attack Librarians who didn't want apartments in the main sections were situated. She kept her distance to the houses. Their inhabitants lived out here because they liked their privacy, and she had no reason to intrude.

The trees kept getting more common, and pretty soon she was walking on a path in a forest. It was, of course, a very pleasant and beautiful forest. It had some undergrowth, but not so much that it became impassable. Birds sang, cicadas played and the odd small animal made small animal sounds.

At about the same time as she started hearing the waves from Lake Biblios, she saw the house she had in a roundabout way been heading for. It was dark, and didn't seem to have been lived in for a couple of days. Which it hadn't, since half of its inhabitants were missing and the other half was out looking for the first half.

Without the slightest hesitation, Sylia took out her master key, unlocked the door to the house and entered.

The door was open, and surrounded with neon signs loudly proclaiming that it was a place where gambling took place. Next to the door a tall, muscular woman in black leather leaned against the wall, looking bored.

Kendra looked at it with revulsion. "I am getting tired of this," she said. "Can't we take this tomorrow?"

Seven straightened her back and tried to look her usual unruffled self, without much success. "Time is of importance," she said. "Let's take this one too and then call it a night."

Kendra grimaced. "If I have to eat one more pussy, I will bite."

"It's a good chance your victim would like it."

Kendra's shoulders fell a little.

The interior of the club was entirely predictable. The lighting was dim, the air was heavy with smoke, a handful or two of scantily clad curvy women were gathered around the various game tables. A few waitresses walked around taking orders and distributing drinks.

Kendra looked around. "Where do we start?" she said.

"I think we do some gambling, and try to talk to people," Seven said. "I would suggest we try roulette, it requires a minimum of attention."

Gabrielle looked up at the stage, where a big-breasted young woman was taking off her few scraps of clothing while moving more or less in rhythm with some bad music. There were four stage-to-ceiling metal poles, which she would occasionally grab and use to do minor acrobatic moves. The entire display was fairly pathetic.

"Faith?" Gabrielle said.

"Yeah?" Faith said, without taking her eyes off the stripper. She was sitting on a couch with one arm around Gabrielle's shoulders and one holding a whisky.

"What's the point of having a strip club in a place where everyone is nearly naked anyway?"

Faith thought about it. "Exhibitionism?" she suggested.

"I guess," Gabrielle said. "She doesn't even dance well. I've seen far better at Amazon solstice celebrations. Better-looking women, too."

A dreamy expression passed over Faith's face. "That would be Amazons you're queen of?"

Gabrielle shrugged. "More like old semi-mythical queen these days, but, yeah. They tend to do as I say and throw parties in my honor and stuff."

"When this thing is over, do you think we could go to your universe for vacation?"

"Ladies," someone said behind them. "If I may have your attention for a moment?"

They both turned their heads towards the voice. Behind the couch stood a short, oriental-looking woman with long, black hair and a long, black dress slit to the hip on both sides. She wore elbow-long black gloves, and smoked a cigarette through a holder nearly as long as her arm.

"I hear that you're looking for information," she said.

"That we are," Faith said. "Do you have some?"

The woman walked around to the front of the couch. Her walk was sinuous, alluring. She drew a long breath on her cigarette, and as she let the smoke out it became obvious that whatever it was she was smoking wasn't tobacco.

"Oh yes," she said. "If there's something to know in this town, I know it."

Gabrielle started to say something, but Faith silenced her with a hand on her arm.

"Are you willing answer our questions?" she said.

The woman smiled. "I am Miss Jade," she said. "And I do answer questions. At a price."

"Ah," Gabrielle said. "Of course."

"What price?" Faith asked.

She took another hit from her cigarette and let the smoke slowly trickle out her nostrils. "You are both very pretty young women," she said. "You would look great on my stage."

Gabrielle looked at her. "You want us to strip?" she said.

Miss Jade returned the look, her expression unreadable. "I want you to perform," she said. "The more arousing I find your performance, the more willing to answer your questions I will become."

"Put down your stakes," the croupier said. She was a tired-looking woman, with short brown hair and dark eyes. She claimed to know nothing about mysterious appearances or disappearances.

Seven put two chips down, one on number seven and one on number nine, just as she had for the last ten throws. One number was as bad as another, so she might as well go for some with sentimental value.

The croupier spun the wheel, threw the ball. "Nothing goes more," she said after a few moments.

"This is boring," Kendra said. "I do not like it here."

"Be happy you do not have to perform oral sex," Seven said. "We will leave in a little while, if nothing happens."

"And what would you like to happen, gorgeous?" a voice said from the other side of the roulette table. Seven and Kendra both turned towards it.

The voice belonged to a woman nearly as tall as Seven. Her skin was very pale, as if she rarely saw sunshine. Her dark hair was long and tied up in a tail. She wore a sleeveless top and tight pants, both made out of black leather. A riding crop hung from her belt, as did a number of less identifiable items.

"I would like for someone to show up and tell me what I want to know," Seven said. "I would not like for someone who only wants to have sex with me to show up at all. I have had quite enough of that for one day."

"Twentyfive," the croupier said. "Odd. Black." She raked in Seven's chips. "Put down your stakes."

"So, what is it you want to know?" the leather-clad woman asked.

Seven put another two chips down on the same numbers as before. "I want to know about anything strange," she said.

"Like, for example, if people that never went into a building come out of it?"

"Yes. Exactly like that."

The leather-clad woman smiled. "I'll play you for it," she said. "We pick colors on the table here. The croupier spins. You win, I tell you some of what I know. I win, you two become my slaves for an hour. We play until you know all I know, or you're my slaves for the rest of the night."

Seven carefully didn't look at Kendra. "That is acceptable," she said. "I pick red."

Gabrielle walks onto the stage, squinting at the lights and doing her best to look like a shy little girl. Faith is already standing on it, casually leaning against a floor-to-ceiling pole. Slow, rhythmic music is playing, and a woman is singing something about a lover who's left her. Gabrielle walks forward, looking around nervously, taking very small steps. Faith is pretending not to have noticed that she's there.

As she gets close, Faith turns her head at the sound of steps. At first she looks uninterested, but when she sees Gabrielle's bare legs and impressive abs her interest is piqued. She stands up straight, walks toward the blonde little morsel, cocky as ever.

Gabrielle looks up, scared, at the suddenly appearing tall, dark-eyed woman. She backs up a step or two, defensively clasping her hands together under her chin, covering her breasts with her elbows. Her gaze flickers downwards, though, taking in the nice swell of an ample bosom and a curvy pair of hips. Unwittingly, she licks her lips.

Faith smiles. It's not a very nice smile, predatory and arrogant. Yet it sets Gabrielle's heart beating, she can't look away from it. Her hands fall to her sides. Faith reaches out, places a single finger on Gabrielle's lips. She raises an eyebrow, urging her victim to act.

Slowly, Gabrielle opens her mouth and takes Faith's finger slightly inside. She extends her tongue briefly, licking the top of the finger. She closes her lips around it, closes her eyes. The contact, the intimacy, sends shivers down Faith's spine. She pulls her finger out, puts her hand behind Gabrielle's head and tilts it up. She bends down, touching lips with lips. She starts to force her tongue in between foreign lips, but no force is needed, they are invited, welcome. There is eagerness, heat, quick breaths and flushed skin. Arousal. Gabrielle's arms come up, go over Faith's shoulders.

Faith's hand moves down, from the back of the head over a downy neck onto satiny soft skin following the ridged line of her spine down down to her muscular ass covered by thin fabric. Keeping the kiss, not having got enough not nearly enough of tender lips, she pushes Gabrielle slightly away so their bodies separate and she can get her roaming hand in between them, up to where their breasts are now just barely touching. She pulls at cloth, undoes a knot. Gabrielle's deliberately makeshift bra opens, falls. Moments later her skirt follows it. But for her white high-heeled shoes, she's naked.

Gabrielle breaks the kiss, steps back. She makes no attempt to hide herself, but she looks a little frightened again. Faith smiles at her again, a warmer and nicer smile. She gestures at her own clothes, an invitation. Gabrielle doesn't hesitate to accept. She gets closer again, runs the tips of her fingers along the black cloth that barely manages to cover Faith's bosom. Carefully, she edges the knot open, removes the strip of fabric and throws it away. Looks at the breasts that have been revealed. She touches them, featherlight touches, her fingers just barely in contact with the skin.

Faith closes her eyes, swallows. As Gabrielle plays with her, gently rolling her nipples, she takes off her own skirt. It has no use, it is in the way. Like her victim, her partner, she is naked but for a pair of high-heeled shoes. She leans forward, needing firmer contact. Gabrielle moves away, denying it to her. Faith opens her eyes, frowns. She puts an arm behind Gabrielle's back, pulls her close. Gabrielle doesn't try to resist. They kiss, deeply, passionately, bodies touching all the way from knee to neck.

Faith bends her knees, gets an arm under Gabrielle's ass. She stands up again, lifting the blonde, who spreads her legs wide, getting a thigh resting on each of Faith's hips. She puts her arms around her neck, holding on hard. She knows that Faith is supernaturally strong, still it feels precarious.

Faith's free hand snakes in under her, strokes her buttocks and the backs of her thighs. It goes in further, strokes her labia, pushes in between them. With little warning, Faith slides a finger inside Gabrielle, as deep as she can. Gabrielle holds on harder, throws her head back, moans almost loud enough to be heard over the pulsing music. Faith

smiles and moves her hand, letting her finger move in and out at a leisurely pace. She feels Gabrielle's muscles moving inside, trying to hold on to her finger, wanting more and faster. When she hears whispers next to her ear begging, she adds another finger to the first. Gabrielle is nibbling on Faith's ear, running her fingers through her hair. She wants to feel her, all of her, all that soft and hard and warm and wet and wonderful of her, and she wants it now.

Faith's mouth catches one of Gabrielle's breasts, her teeth bites almost roughly down on her nipple at the same time as her fingers increase their pace inside her vagina. Gabrielle feels her excitement suddenly rush for its peak, it blots out her vision and hearing and becomes only tactile sensation and its so good so very very good and she thinks she may be screaming.

Gabrielle hangs like a rag doll on Faith, pleasantly exhausted. She puts a hand on each side of the dark-haired head and kisses her, softly, lovingly. Wiggles herself, wanting down. Carefully, making sure her legs carry her, Faith puts her down on the stage. Faith is still worked up, her pulse racing, her sex almost dripping wet. Never mind, Gabrielle is satisfied, that is enough.

Not letting her hands lose contact with Faith's skin, Gabrielle moves around her. She pushes up close, her front to her lover's back. Her arms snake around, her hands stroke Faith's belly as she kisses her neck, tasting her sweat-salty skin. One hand moves through the dark, curly hair above Faith's sex and down, in between her legs. Firmly, she puts pressure on her vulva, massaging gently. The other hand moves up, cups a breast, relishes the weight and feel of it. Faith's puts her hands between her legs, pushes down on Gabby's hand, wanting more. Gabrielle smiles and gives her what she wants.

Two fingers dip into Faith's wetness, move up and rub her clitoris. A shiver so strong Gabrielle can feel it runs through Faith's body, and her knees almost buckle. Somehow, she remains standing. Her hands have moved behind her, grabbing at Gabrielle and pulling her closer. She wants to feel her more, she wants to be touched more. She wants more.

The hand that's been playing with her breast moves away, in between her legs. Its fingers gently part her labia, push into her vaginal opening and enter her. The other hand still rubs her clitoris. This time her knees do give out. She finds herself held up by the fingers inside her for a moment, pressing deliciously at her slick groove. Then Gabrielle leans backward, her back against one of the steel poles. Faith leans on Gabrielle, and the support is enough that she manages to keep more or less upright. Gabrielle's hands start to move again, rubbing and finger-fucking her.

Faith doesn't care if she standing or not. She doesn't care that she's having sex on stage. She just loves feeling this way, so unbelievably turned on, so surrounded by Gabrielle. Her breasts flattened against her back. Her hips against her ass. Her fingers inside her. She feels something running down her cheek, and she suddenly realizes that she's crying. Her first reaction is to fight it, to stop, not to show weakness. But she doesn't. She's in Gabrielle's hands. She's safe. She can relax.

As she does, arousal and pleasure starts to rise again, and rise, and rise. The world fades out, and there is only a shivering naked I that is herself and a huge loving wonderful all surrounding her that is Gabrielle, and then there just *is*.

When her senses return to her, Faith turns around, worn out as if she'd ran a Marathon. She takes Gabrielle in her arms and kisses her.

No more, and no less.

"I would like to point out that such a series of throws is exceedingly unlikely," Seven said. "On average, I should have won about every second throw."

Kendra stared at her. "Every *second* throw?! That would still have left us slaves for hours!"

"True," Seven admitted. "But at least we would've learned something in exchange."

"Enough nattering," the leather-clad woman said. "Get naked, now. Unless you want me to tear your clothes off, so you can walk home nude tomorrow morning."

With a move that looked like it'd had considerable recent practice, Kendra reached behind her neck and undid the bow that held up her suit and let the entire thing fall off her. She stepped aside, leaving her clothes in a small heap on the floor. Beside her, Seven simply pulled her skimpy dress over her head and threw it on the roulette table.

The leather-clad one, their new if temporary mistress, walked around the table towards them. The croupier remained where she was, but looked rather less tired as she unabashedly ogled the two naked beauties. Quite a few of the other guests in the club also had their attention turned towards them.

"Now," leather-clad said, "my name is Linda. But you two will call me mistress. Put your hands behind your necks, elbows straight out to the sides."

They did as she said, Seven a little less unenthusiastic than Kendra.

Linda drew a finger down Seven's left breast. "Not bad," she said. "Not bad at all. Spread your legs, both of you. Feet about as far apart as your shoulders."

Again, they obeyed. The interest in what they were up to had been growing and spreading through the room, and there were beginning to gather a small audience.

"Now," Linda said. "I'm going to give you a choice. I wasn't really planning for this kind of fun tonight, so I didn't bring much in the way of toys."

She walk over in front of Kendra, reached around and fondled one of her buttocks.

"So. I can either bring you back to my place, where I have a lot of fun things to play with and where we get to be alone. Or, we can stay right here, where I only have a few small things but where we have an appreciative audience."

She turned around, took a step back and looked at them both.

"What do you say?"

"We stay here," Seven said firmly.

Linda smiled. "Well," she said. "An exhibitionist. Do you like pain as well? Maybe you lost on purpose?"

"There..." Seven said, and was silenced by a slap.

"When I want you to talk, I'll tell you," Linda said. "Until then, moaning and screaming are the only sounds I want from the two of you."

She put her hand up between Seven's legs and roughly pushed a couple of fingers inside, getting a grunt from the tall woman. Copious wetness met her.

"Well," Linda said. "Seems you like this kind of treatment. Or at least your body does."

She moved over to Kendra, started to do the same thing on her but found her too dry.

"But not you, it seems..." She pretended to think for a few moments. "Although, you know, I really had my mind set on feeling the inside of your snatch. So we'll have to lubricate you somehow. Seven, come here. And keep your legs spread."

Seven took a few steps closer, taking care to keep her legs well spread to avoid further punishment. When she was within reach, Linda's hand returned to her pussy. She got her hand well wet, then moved it over to Kendra and spread Seven's juices over her sex. It took a few passes, but eventually she had Kendra well enough lubricated that she could get two fingers all the way inside her. She wiggled her fingers, intently watching Kendra's grim face.

"I just love it when they hate me," she said to the circle of women who surrounded them. "But, you know, it's even more fun to get them to enjoy themselves even when they don't want to."

She cradled Kendra's chin in her wet hand. "You're pretty pissed off at your friend for getting you into this, aren't you?" she said. "Nod if you agree."

Kendra nodded, a little reluctant to willingly do anything the woman asked of her, but even less willing to lie. At least about that.

"So, would you like to hurt her a little? Nod if you agree."

Kendra nodded, more enthusiastically.

Linda opened one of the small leather pouches attached to her belt and took out two tweezer-like things connected by a silvery chain.

"You may take your hands down," she said to Kendra. "Take these and put them on her nipples. It'll hurt a bit when you put them on, a bit more as time passes and a lot when we take them off."

Kendra smiled evilly and took the nipple clamps. She turned towards Seven, and started to fondle one of her nipples, trying to get it to stiffen. Seven licked her lips, looking both scared and eager. She winced a little as Kendra fastened the clamp and moved over to her other breast.

"Look at that," Linda said from a couple of paces away. "Her pussy actually is dripping. What a slut."

Kendra looked down and saw drops of clear viscous fluid run down the inside of Seven's thigh. She tightened the second nipple clamp, harder than necessary, leaving the chain dangling from one large breast to the other.

Linda put her arms around Kendra from behind and grabbed her breasts. "Enjoyed that, didn't you?" she said as she pinched Kendra's nipples. "What do you think about a few strokes with the crop? I think that'd be fun."

She let go of Kendra and pushed her aside. She grabbed the chain between Seven's tits and pulled it down, forcing Seven herself to follow.

"Keep your hands behind your neck," Linda said. "Or it'll be a *lot* of strokes with the crop."

She kept pulling down, and Seven kept following. When she reached the floor, Linda put a boot on the chain to hold it in place. Seven was on her knees, precariously balanced since she couldn't use her hands. She was leaning to one side, in order to avoid bumping into Linda's leg.

Linda stood up straight and dragged the tip of the riding crop over the kneeling Seven's bare back. "I don't think your knees are far enough apart," she said. "Spread them."

Seven did her best to comply, and after some awkward shuffling got her knees spread far enough that Linda could see them stick out on each side of her torso.

"Good enough," she said. She handed the riding crop to Kendra. "Just a few strokes, cutie, and not too hard."

Kendra smiled cruelly and moved behind Seven, who tried to look up and see what was coming. She failed, and almost lost her balance from trying to twist her head around. Kendra swung the crop and struck Seven's ass, hard. Seven gasped and jumped, but only managed to make the nipple clamps pull hard at her breasts. At the second stroke, she managed to stay still, but a pained grunt escaped her. The third and fourth went much the same, with louder grunts. At the fifth her entire body was trembling with the effort of staying still.

"That's enough for now," Linda said and held out her hand. Kendra reluctantly returned the crop.

"Stay exactly where you are," she added towards Seven. She took her foot off the chain and approached Kendra. Seven didn't move a muscle, or at least did a very good attempt to.

Linda put her hand on Kendra's pussy and tried again to get a couple of fingers inside. This time they slid in easily, without any external lubrication. Linda smiled.

"Liked that, did you?" she said. Kendra blushed and looked down. "Would you like her to lick your snatch? You may answer."

"Yes, ma'am, I would," Kendra said, her voice hoarse with arousal.

"Well, then. Get down on the floor and put your little slit under her head, and we'll see what she does."

Quickly and with a gleeful expression, Kendra did as she was told. She sat down on the floor, scooted her crotch in under Seven's raised head and leaned back on her elbows, legs spread wide.

Linda bent down and took hold of the nipple clamp chain. She pulled it out from under Seven, towards Kendra. "Here," she said. "To encourage her with, if she'd not work hard enough."

Kendra's smile gained an evil glint as she raised herself up on one hand and took the chain in the other.

Linda put a hand on the small of Seven's back. "You know what to do," she said.

Seven bent down and put her face to Kendra's crotch. She opened her mouth and let her tongue gingerly touch the engorged labia. A quick, nasty pull at the chain encouraged her to increase the pressure, to let the tip of her tongue push into Kendra's vulva and slide along it. After a few seconds, she was licking for all she was worth, hoping for relief for her abused nipples.

Behind her, Linda knelt. She had both of her hands on Seven's buttocks, the riding crop on the floor next to her. She massaged the large muscles lightly, ran her hands over them, down her thighs and up again. For every stroke, they got a little closer to middle, and pretty soon she was dragging her fingers over Seven's dripping pussy again and again. When she saw the bent-over woman's thighs start to tremble, she stopped

for a moment and retrieved the riding crop. She looked towards Kendra, smiling at the way the back of Seven's head bobbed up and down and the white-knuckled way Kendra pulled on the chain. Reversing her grip on the crop and holding it a ways below the top, she carefully placed it at the opening to Seven's vagina and roughly pushed it in as far as it'd go. She could see Seven's muscles tense up and hear a muffled scream from in between Kendra's legs. Linda smiled.

She pulled the crop almost all the way out, and she pushed it in again. Seven's reaction wasn't as violent the second time, but she could still see it. She kept fucking her with the crop handle, waiting for Kendra to come and watching Seven's muscles clench with every stroke.

Kendra pulled harder and harder, and Seven licked at her ever more desperately. She used her tongue, she used her teeth, she tried to use her lips and jaws to bring pressure to Kendra's sensitive flesh. She tried everything she could think of, with an inventiveness born from desperation, to ease the pain in her tits. She was beginning to lose hope, to think that she'd end up with her nipples torn entirely off by the Slayer's strength when Kendra suddenly screamed and let go of the chain. She put her hands on the back of Seven's head and pressed it to her pussy, hard enough that Seven could hear the bones in her head creak. Distantly, she felt the riding crop handle hit her cervix and stay there. Kendra held on like a hydraulic press for a few seconds, then let go and relaxed completely.

Linda stood. "Get up, both of you," she said. "Hands on your necks, no talking."

Kendra got up, legs a bit weak. She put her feet a shoulder's width apart, as a precaution. Seven managed to stand after a few more tries, the riding crop sticking out of her vagina hitting the floor and hurting her insides as she tried to lean backwards enough to find her balance without moving her arms. Eventually, she just gritted her teeth and took the pain for as long as it took to stand up.

"Well," Linda said once both women were standing in front of her, hands behind their necks and legs spread. "That was fun, wasn't it?"

She started to pace back and forth in front of them.

"But now I'm finding myself rather... worked up. Tense. Not to mince words: *horny*. You put on quite a show."

She stopped and looked at them. They were both watching her with rapt attention, as if they were scared to miss the slightest nuance of her words. She smiled again.

"As you may remember, this kind of fun wasn't really in my plans for tonight. So, honestly, I don't really have time to use all the time I won from you. Which is a pity, really. Now, I could just leave you for the rest of the people here to use for the rest of the night. Possibly ask them to take plenty of pictures."

She heard a strangled groan from Kendra.

"Or... We could make a little deal."

Kendra's face lit up, cautiously.

"If one of you can make me come in less than five minutes, I'll let you both go. If you fail, I'll tie you both to the bar and let anyone who wants to play with you until dawn. Nod if you understand and agree."

Kendra nodded vigorously. Seven nodded, although less enthusiastically.

"Good," Linda said. "The one of you who'll try, lie down on your back on the roulette table, your ass at the edge."

Kendra quickly moved to the table and laid down, her ass at the edge and her hands behind her neck. While she was maneuvering herself into position, Linda undid a few buttons on her leather pants and removed a wedge of leather covering her crotch. Her pubic hair was just as black as the one on her head. She climbed onto the roulette table and straddled Kendra's head.

"You may move as you wish, cutie," she said to Seven. "Who knows, maybe you'd like to pull that riding crop out of your snatch and use it to encourage your friend in her efforts."

She looked up at the clock on the wall above the bar.

"Five minutes from...*now*," she said, and Kendra started fervently licking her.

Linda slumped a little and an expression of enjoyment spread over her face. "Hey, she's not bad at this," she said. "Half an hour of it would be really nice."

Seven slowly let her arms down from her neck and shook some life back into them. Once her fingers obeyed her, she pulled the riding crop out. It emerged with a slight smacking sound, the handle very wet and slippery. She wiped it clean as well as she could.

"Four minutes left, darling," Linda said. "Imagine the edge of the bar counter digging into your back all night, your feet tied to a couple of chairs, your hands roped to a hook in the ceiling and some drunk bitches throwing darts at your tits."

With a hand on each knee, Seven parted Kendra's legs and stepped in between them. She stroked the lips of her pussy. They returned to their aroused state almost instantly, blood rushing to them. Stepping back a little, Seven swung the riding crop.

Kendra twitched as if she'd been hit with a high-voltage wire.

Linda laughed. "Oh, *yeah* baby," she said. "Gimme more like that and you might make it!"

That was quite enough encouragement for Seven. She hit again and again, putting more burning red lines across Kendra's labia. Most of the time, she'd aim for the fleshiest parts, which still hurt more than enough. Sometimes, she'd lean forward and let a strike hit the Slayer's unprotected breasts. Occasionally, she aimed more carefully and laid a lash exactly along Kendra's slit, hitting the moist and sensitive flesh at the bottom of her groove.

Kendra jumped and twitched, her hands pinned behind her head by Linda's legs and her mouth covered by her pussy. Somehow, through the pain and humiliation, she managed to keep her lips and tongue working. Linda wasn't talking any more, she was just making incoherent appreciative noises.

Seven looked over her shoulder at the clock. One minute left. She eased up on her lashing, aimed more carefully. She could see Linda getting closer, her breaths changed and she had closed her eyes.

At what she hoped was the right moment, Seven brought the riding crop's tip down with all her strength on Kendra's clitoris.

Kendra went completely nuts. She thrashed about as if she was having an epileptic fit. She nearly lifted Linda off her face, she tried so hard to close her legs that Seven got bruises on her hips just from standing there. She screamed into Linda's inflamed flesh so loud that Seven could hear it clearly.

She almost didn't notice how Linda shook and trembled in orgasm, then let herself fall a little backwards, enough to free Kendra's head.

"Bloody hell, girl," Linda said. "That was amazing. You win. You can both go."

Kendra wasn't listening. She'd fallen off the table and lay on the floor clutching her privates, quite oblivious to anything except her own pain.

"Thank you," Seven said. She carefully removed the nipple clamps. She held them out towards Linda. "Here you a..." she managed to get out before the pain of the returning blood hit.

Gabrielle was still tying the knot on her bra when she and Faith got back to the table where they'd been sitting, and where Miss Jade was waiting for them.

"So, did you find us arousing?" Faith asked.

Miss Jade had her dress bunched up around her waist and her gaze had a slightly glassy and remote quality to it. There was a strong smell of sex around the table, and Gabrielle was pretty sure that not all of it came from her and Faith.

"Huh?" Miss Jade said. "Oh. That. Yes. Very."

Gabrielle laughed a little.

"Yeah..." Faith said. "I sure hope the information you promised us can be formulated in words of one syllable, or I'm going to be pretty pissed off."

Gabrielle put an arm around her waist. "Was it that much of a sacrifice to make love to me?" she asked mischievously.

Faith kissed her on the top of her head. "Don't be silly," she said. "I just don't want you to have had to humiliate yourself on stage for nothing."

She pretended to think about it. "All right," she said. "Fair enough. Let's be pissed off if she won't tell us what we need to know."

Having got herself somewhat together, Miss Jade stood up and smoothed down her skirt. She was blushing slightly, and wouldn't meet either of the girls' eyes.

"There have been a number of mysterious appearances and disappearances lately," she said. "The one thing they all have in common is that they've occurred at or near one specific building on the outskirts of town. A smallish house at 1630 Bordello Drive."

Faith frowned. "That sounds familiar," she said.

"Not to me," Gabrielle said. "You haven't been here before, have you?"

"No... And I haven't been to any bordellos either." She shrugged. "Never mind. Let's try to find Seven and Kendra and go have a look at it."

"Unless they've found something more promising," Gabrielle said.

"Pah," Faith snorted. "They've probably just spent all night fucking each other silly."

Seven and Kendra staggered out from the club. They were both dressed again, but they still looked like they'd recently been through a lot. They started walking down the street, Seven with a peculiar forward-leaning posture as if she tried to make her dress not touch her breasts and Kendra with a rather bow-legged gait.

"I have a suggestion," Seven said after some time.

"As long as it has nothing to do with sex, I am listening," Kendra said. "If it does have to do with sex, I will kill you."

"I would like to suggest," Seven went on, "that we never, ever talk about what happened tonight."

They walked a little while in a silence only broken by the occasional soft whimper.

"I agree," Kendra finally said. "Tonight never happened."

"Good. We are in agreement. Now let us find Gabrielle and Faith, and see if they have managed to do better than we have."

Kendra snorted. "They've probably spent all night boinking like crazed weasels," she said.

"Let's rent a car," Gabrielle said. "It'll be easier to get there with it, and we can get away faster if need be."

The four of them were, again, sitting at a beachside cafe. It was fairly early morning, and they were having breakfast. None of them were looking particularly spry and enthusiastic, and somehow the topic of what had happened the night before hadn't yet been breached.

"'There'?" Kendra asked. "You know a 'there' to go to?"

Gabrielle speared a piece of melon on her fork. "Um, yeah," she said. "We got an address from a woman last night."

Faith paused from shoveling in bacon and scrambled eggs. "It's not much," she said, "but it's something. So unless you have something better, we may as well check it out."

Kendra and Seven looked at each other.

"No," Seven said over her coffee cup. "We have nothing better."

"So, what did you guys do last night?" Faith asked. She grabbed another bread roll, broke it apart and spread butter and marmalade on it.

Kendra blushed. "Nothing!" she said.

Faith looked at her. "This nothing," she said, "is that why you walk like you've been fucked with a cheese grater?"

Kendra's blush darkened and spread down from her face towards her chest. She looked away, lips pressed together to a thin line.

"So, since it seems nobody's got anything else whatsoever to suggest," Gabrielle tried, "do we rent a car and go look at the address or not?"

"Yeah, we do," Faith said. "There's something about it that bugs me."

Seven drained her cup and reached for the pot to refill it. "What is the address?" she asked.

"1630 Bordello Drive."

Kendra frowned. "That is familiar," she said. "But I have never been at a Bordello Drive. I would remember that."

"I so have that feeling too," Faith said. "Like I should know it, I just can't tell from *where*."

Ivanova put a hand on each side of the window and leaned heavily forward, her head hanging down. Getting out of bed and walking over to the window had taken far more energy out of her than it should have. Sweat ran down her unclad back. She didn't feel at all well, and there was something at the far back of her mind *nagging* her. There was something she was missing. Something she couldn't remember. She rested for a while, listening to the soothing sound of the waves.

She raised her head and looked out the window.

There was no ocean outside. No lake, or river, or any other kind of large body of water. There was a huge empty nothing, and far, far below the window she saw a farming village that could've been taken out of a Disney movie. The source of the light shining in through the window that she'd assumed was sunshine came from something that looked like a massively scaled-up moon.

"What the hell...?" Ivanova said to no one in particular.

"No, not hell," a voice said behind her.

Ivanova spun around. Behind her stood a stunningly beautiful woman who she knew well but couldn't remember ever seeing before. She was dressed in a flowing white dressing gown and carried a tray with a pot of coffee and a couple of cups.

"Quite the opposite from Hell I'd say, sexy," she said, smiling.

She put the tray down on the bedside table. "I didn't think you'd be up this early," she said. "What with all you did last night, I thought you'd sleep to noon at least."

"Where is this?" Ivanova said. "Why can I hear waves when there are no waves?"

She couldn't remember how she'd got here, but she knew she wanted out. Somehow, she also knew that the gorgeous woman was an enemy, no matter how nice she seemed to be. She had to get out.

"You're Marlene," she mumbled, and she saw a shadow pass over the woman's face.

"Well," she said. "You remember my name. How nice."

She sat down on the bed. Her gown slid aside and revealed her long, shapely legs, all the way up to the hip. "Why don't you come here for a while?" she said, her voice husky and inviting.

Ivanova took a step in the general direction of the bed. She knew she shouldn't. She didn't know why, but she knew she shouldn't approach the woman. She took another step. Her legs seemed to gain energy with every step closer to Marlene.

Marlene leaned back on her hands. She spread her legs, giving Ivanova a good look of her pussy. "Come here," she said. "You know you want it."

Ivanova did. She knew she wanted it too much. She couldn't tear her gaze away from the soft slit and the thin blonde hair above it.

The nagging little feeling at the back of her mind had grown to a desperate wail. She closed her eyes, shook her head to clear it.

When she couldn't see, her head did clear a little. The desperate, unthinking *need* to possess Marlene waned. Without thinking, before something could happen, she dashed blindly for the door.

"What? Hey!" she heard Marlene cry out behind her, and she almost missed a step on hearing her voice. She opened her eyes, tore the door open and ran outside, slamming it shut behind her.

"Ah," Faith said after they'd rounded the corner onto Bordello Drive. "Of course. From *there*. I should've remembered that right away."

Kendra had never been behind the wheel of a car, citing being brought up training to be the Slayer as an excuse.

Gabrielle hadn't either, which was less strange since she came from a world where cars didn't exist.

Seven still wasn't used to vehicles that didn't drive themselves.

So, by default, Faith got to drive in spite of still not having a license. She didn't mind, she liked to drive. She insisted that they rent the largest vehicle the rental place had, a big old open-top Range Rover with four-wheel drive and a winch at the front. It was an aggressive sort of car, one you could drive up and feel bad-ass in. Not nearly as bad-ass as in the Knight Sabers' fusion-powered armored truck, but that sort of thing only came once in a lifetime. The Rover would do. Most of the other cars on the road were knee-high little sporty things she could easily drive over, should need be. So far, need hadn't been. The traffic had been calm, although there were an unusually large number of hitch-hikers and pairs of cute women with flat tires along the road.

"Me too," Kendra said from the back seat. "I don't know how I could forget that."

"What?" Gabrielle said. "What place is it?"

It was a white two-story building with a garden around it, no different from any number of such buildings.

"Buffy's mom's house is at 1630 Rubello Drive," Faith said. "And it looks exactly like this."

"Oh," Gabrielle said. She frowned. "What does that mean?"

"Hell if I know," Faith said. "Let's go check it out."

She parked the car at the side of the road, turned the engine off and jumped out over the side door. "Coming?" she asked, looking at the others.

Outside her room was a corridor. It was covered with a thick carpet, and the walls and ceiling were covered with murals. Not stopping to look at it, she picked a direction and ran. Running down it felt strange, as if the directions she saw didn't quite match the ones she was moving through. It felt as if she was running along the rim of a circle, while her eyes told her she was moving in a straight line.

She might be hallucinating. Her head was far from clear, although the mind-numbing desire Marlene had provoked in her was fading.

Without warning, her knees buckled. The thick carpet broke her fall, but it took some time for her to get moving again. She looked back, and she couldn't tell which door she'd left the room through. She had no idea how far she'd run. Maybe the door just a few steps behind her would open, and Marlene would come out.

She felt pretty sure that she'd be lost if she even got close to the woman again. That it was more luck than skill that she'd got this far. She had to hide, to gather strength and give her head time to clear.

After that, she had to find Jenna.

She opened the next door she passed and entered it. The room behind it was almost exactly like the one she'd ran away from. It had the off-white walls, the large four-poster bed, the little bedside table, the one window and the sound of waves. Luckily, it had no Marlene.

Ivanova sank down to the floor, her naked back resting against the door. She couldn't have run more than a hundred meters or so, yet she was utterly wrung out. She must've spent weeks in bed to get that weak. Weeks she couldn't remember. She could hardly remember waking up a few minutes ago. And there was the way Marlene affected her. Something was very seriously wrong here, and the more she thought about it the more hopeless her situation seemed. How could she fight an enemy she couldn't even *look* at, with no clothes and no help? She leaned her head back and took a deep breath. She was an Attack Librarian. She was used to difficult situations. Even if the current one seemed pretty hopeless, there was a point in not giving up. Even if she couldn't win, she could tie up some of her captors' resources, which might help other Librarians somewhere else.

See, her brain was getting better. She could reason somewhat. And she could figure out that the hand sticking out over the side of the bed meant that there was someone in the bed.

She got up, supporting herself against the door, suddenly afraid. She looked towards the bed. Someone was in it all right, someone she hadn't noticed at first. Someone who was being absolutely still. Not even breathing.

Dead.

Slowly, she walked up to the bed. The blankets covered the face of the one in it, but from the size of the bulge she didn't think it was Jenna. Too short. Gingerly, she reached out her hand and pulled the blankets off.

Irena.

She knew her. They'd got their L-Space creds the same month.

Now she was dead. Without a single scratch marring her skin.

Ivanova put the blanket back over her. She sat down on the floor and tried to rest.

Kendra pointed over Faith's shoulder. "Look, there's Buffy!"

She was pointing at one of the front windows of the house, where the back of a slim young woman had just become visible. The four Librarians were standing on the path up to the house's entrance, Faith and Gabrielle in front with Kendra and Seven following behind.

"Yeah," Faith said, "it sure looks like..."

The girl turned so her side was towards the window. Faith's sentence trailed off into silence.

"Ok," Faith said. "That's *not* Buffy. Buffy does not have tits anywhere *near* that big. Apart from that, it sure looks a lot like her."

Gabrielle shrugged. "Let's knock and find out," she said. She walked straight up to the door and rang the bell. A few moments passed, and the door opened. The girl who looked a lot like Buffy except for her unusually well-endowed chest looked out.

"Yes?" she said. "Can I help you?"

"I hope so," Gabrielle said. "But it's a bit of a story. Could we possibly come in and tell it?"

Not-Buffy looked Gabrielle up and down, raising an approving eyebrow at the scraps of cloth covering her breasts and hips.

"Yeah, sure," she said. She stepped aside to let them in.

As the gang walked in, another girl appeared from inside. She was about as tall as not-Buffy, with slightly more than shoulder-length red hair and nice, friendly features.

"Hi," Gabrielle said. "I'm Gabrielle. This is Faith, and Seven, and Kendra. We're Librarians."

Not-Buffy smiled. "Pleased to meet you," she said. "I'm Busty, and this is my very good friend Willing."

Faith made a peculiar strangled sound.

Eventually, Ivanova felt enough like herself that hunger and thirst became a bigger concern than fatigue and confusion.

She still had no idea where she was or how she'd got there, but at least it felt like she could think again. And she was thinking that figuring out how she'd got into this would have to wait until she had had something to drink, something to eat and something to put on. Not necessarily in that order. Running around naked in an enemy base would be a sure way to stand out as a fugitive, and without water she'd exhaust herself again pretty damn quick.

She got up and listened at the door. She heard nothing except the breaking waves that didn't exist. Carefully, she opened the door and looked out. The corridor looked exactly as it had when she'd left it, empty and garish. Ready to dive back in again at a moment's notice, she stepped out of the room.

Nothing in particular happened.

She started to walk down the corridor. Pretty soon the strange feeling of walking in a circle while her eyes told her she was walking straight returned.

She stopped. What if she *was* walking in a circle? This place certainly could play with her head, they'd proven that beyond a shadow of a doubt. She closed her eyes and walked straight ahead, holding out a hand to avoid walking into the wall. Two steps. Three. Four, and five, and six, and she really should've hit the wall by know. Seven and eight, and nine and ten.

She stopped and opened her eyes. She no longer was in the corridor. She was standing in a large, dark room. The half she was standing in was decorated in an old-fashioned manner, with big furniture made out of dark wood and the floor covered with an intricately knit carpet. The other half was kind of modern, with furniture in pale wood, shiny metal and plastics. There were several doors.

Looking back, there was an opening through which she must have entered. Beyond it was a corridor, which looked somewhat like the one she'd thought she'd been walking in. It was, indeed, curved.

So she wasn't entirely deluded when she thought she had her brain in working order again. Unless they were playing *very* elaborate games with her.

She chose a door and walked on.

"Have a seat," Busty said and gestured at the living room in general. There were a couch and a couple of armchairs, so they sat down. Seven and Kendra took separate armchairs, Faith took one end of the couch and pulled Gabrielle close to her. Busty sat down next to Gabby, leaning forward to give her guest a clear look at the more than ample amount of cleavage her low-cut blouse showed off.

"So," she said. "What is this long story?"

Willing sat down on the armrest of Kendra's chair, a little too far in so she'd touch the dark-skinned Slayer.

"We've come here from another world to fight evil," Faith said.

"And we suspect that this house may hold a gateway for evil to get into and out of this world," Gabrielle filled in.

"That wasn't a very long story," Willing said.

"It's a pretty good start, though," Busty said. "And I feel inclined to trust them. My Layer intuition says they're good people."

"Your *what* intuition?" Faith said.

"Busty fights evil too," Willing said. She softly stroked Kendra's hair with her fingertips.

Busty looked a little shy. "Yeah," she said. "It may sound strange, but I'm this sort of chosen one with supernatural powers. The Vampire Layer."

"And you do what, exactly?" Faith's voice sounded weird to Gabrielle, as if she couldn't decide whether to laugh, cry or attack.

"I lay vampires. I fuck them to death with a wooden stake."

She reached into her cleavage and pulled out a foot-long object. It was obviously made out of wood, about two inches thick and with a rounded tip. It shone as if it had been polished.

"Like this one," Busty said. "It's my lucky stake. I call it Miss Shiny."

"If we're going to fight," Willing said, "we should probably wait for Xandra and Cordelia to get back. It might be bad if they walked into the middle of something. And when they get here, we can pair up evenly with you four."

Her fingers had travelled downwards, and were now doing something behind Kendra's neck. Whatever it was, Kendra didn't seem to mind.

"Cordelia?" Faith said. "Um, I'm kinda afraid to ask, but... what's her whole name?"

"Cordelia Caught," Busty said. "Why? Is there something wrong with that?"

"Nothing. Did I hear you say something about refreshments? Coffee, perhaps?"

"Oh!" Busty said. "I'm being a bad hostess again. Does everyone want coffee?" She looked around, and seemed to count the general lack of responses in the affirmative.

"Right," she said. "Coffee coming up. Will, could you give me a hand in the kitchen?"

"Sure," Willing said. "I'll be back in a little while, cutie," she said to Kendra.

Busty put her stake back between her voluminous breasts. "We'll just be a few moments."

Faith turned to Gabrielle as soon as their two hostesses were out of sight.

"This is insane!" she hissed. "It's a filthy parody of people I know. For all I know there may be a filthy parody of *me* out there somewhere!"

Gabrielle tried to calm her down. "Remember where we are? The pornoverse? That it's *all* crotch-level entertainment? Your fiction line is not only popular, it blends well with this place. It's just natural that they're here. And I'm sure it could be a good deal worse."

"I wonder what Angelus, Spike and Drusilla are like in this place," Kendra said. "Or Giles."

"I wonder how she can fight anything with those breasts," Seven said. "It must be terribly inconvenient. Unless she has developed a martial art where she uses them offensively. I will have to ask her."

Faith groaned.

There was room upon room, none of them in the same style as any other, and only a few in the same style all through themselves. None of them had any windows, and nowhere did she find anything in the way of personal possessions. Particularly, no clothes.

On the good side, there weren't any people either.

Eventually, she heard voices. Singing voices. Singing, of all possible things, a lullaby. She turned towards it. At least it was something different, something other than endless empty rooms. The voices got stronger as she walked, and after passing a handful of rooms she reached one with windows. High, narrow, arched windows framed with silver. The entire room was silver, from the mirror-finish floor to the chandeliers hanging from the relief-covered ceiling. Strong moonlight shone in, and she wondered how she ever could have mistaken that light for sunshine. It was as silvery as the room, cold and silent.

She cautiously approached a window. There was no glass in it, it was just an opening to the outside. The singing clearly came from below, and by now she could tell that it was two voices singing. She looked down.

Below her was a stone terrace, decorated in a vaguely neo-gothic style. The railing that made up the border between it and the abyss beyond was made out of stone, spottily covered with moss and lichens and with worn gargoyle heads sticking out towards the emptiness. On the terrace were two chairs and a table. One chair was large and vastly overdecorated, as if made by a delirious sculptor trying to do a dwarven throne out of a demented fantasy novel. The table stood next to it, a bowl of fruit and a whip lying on it.

The second chair was also made of stone, but narrower and hardly decorated at all. Someone was tied to it. Someone with long blonde hair and black Attack Librarian clothes.

Jenna.

Near her, a pair danced and sang. One of them she recognized. Servalan. Her dancing partner was new to Ivanova, a curvy woman with long dark hair and pale skin. She sang quite well. Further off, leaning on the railing, she saw Deathwalker and Najara.

Well.

She'd found Jenna, at least. Fat lot she could do about it naked, unarmed and alone, but at least she knew her lover was alive and in passably good shape. So far. Better than she'd been herself, it looked. Which made her wonder why Jenna hadn't been stuffed

in a pleasant room to die slowly like herself and Irena had, but that was a question for another time. Now more than ever she needed to find clothes, weapons and a way out. She turned to leave, and found herself face to face with a leather-clad blonde.

"Well," Callisto said. "What do you know. One of them managed to get away from Jha'dur's little sirens. How strong-willed she must be."

Xandra was tallish, dark and a bit on the boyish side. Cordelia was tanned, curvy and, like her original, one of the sexiest women Faith had ever met. They both dressed more than a little bit provocatively, showing off far more flesh than they'd ever done in her native universe. Not that Xandra had even existed there, but anyway.

"So," Seven said. "You two help Busty lay vampires."

"Yes," Cordelia said. "I always get to be the bait."

"And you are so very good at it," Xandra said.

With eight of them gathered around Busty's living room table the room was getting rather crowded. Busty herself sat on the couch unnecessarily close to Gabby. Willing had somehow drifted from the armrest next to Kendra onto her lap. Xandra was in the process of trying the same with Seven, and judging from the way Seven's hand had crept in under Xandra's skirt she was succeeding quite well. Cordelia remained standing.

"So, this evil you're after, what's it look like?" Willing said.

"We don't know," Gabrielle said. "We are fairly sure, though, that somewhere in this house is a gateway from this universe to the one our enemies come from. You wouldn't have happened to notice any strange women come and go here, would you?"

The four locals looked at each other.

"Well, with all the women Willing takes home, we might have missed a few," Busty said.

Willing had bunched the top of Kendra's suit together between her breasts and was slowly playing with her dark brown nipples.

"If you weren't out laying so often I wouldn't have to take home strangers," she said.

Busty looked lovingly at her. "I'd much rather fuck your hot little pussy than their cold ones, dear," she said. "But you know I have to. It's my destiny."

Willing sighed. "I know," she said.

"So!" Faith said. "If you don't know where they might be showing up, or even if, would you mind if we looked around the house by ourselves?"

"No, that's fine," Busty said. "I think we can trust you."

"But we'll keep an eye on you," Xandra said. "Just in case. Never think otherwise!"

"I could show you our bedroom," Willing said to Kendra. "Would you like to see me in bed?"

Faith got up from the couch and pulled Gabrielle up after her. "Right!" she said. "Off we go!"

"Um, I can explain," Ivanova said. "It's not what it looks like."

"It's not?" Callisto said. She tilted her head to the side and looked at Ivanova. "So what are you, if not a nude woman in a room where she shouldn't be?"

"Well, if you put it *that* way," she said. "Ok, so I shouldn't be here. If you'll just..."

Callisto drew her sword so fast Ivanova hardly even saw her arm move. The tip of the sword tickled her throat.

"...then I'll stay exactly where I am, shall I?" she continued.

Outside, the singing stopped.

"She's not sleeping," a strangely childish voice said. "Why isn't she sleeping, after we sang so prettily to her?"

"Why don't you ask her?" Servalan said.

Ivanova and Callisto looked at each other, one frightened, one smiling. Neither of them moved.

"Why don't you sleep, pretty girl?" the childish voice said. There was a sound as of someone spitting, then a loud slap.

"Now she's sleeping," Ivanova heard. "Look, her head is hanging down like on my dolls, only bigger."

She wanted desperately to look down, to find out what they'd done to Jenna. She turned her head a millimeter, and immediately felt the tip of the sword dig into her skin. She stopped.

Callisto shook her head, still smiling.

"Those people just creep me out," Faith said. "Make my skin crawl. And what's with the nympho version of Willow, and why does that silicone queen just *accept* it as if it was perfectly all right? Damn!"

Gabrielle had dragged Faith upstairs, sensing that she'd start ranting as soon as she thought they were out of earshot. The upper floor seemed like the most likely place to actually *be* out of earshot.

"It's not them, all right?" Gabrielle said. "They're not the people you knew. They're cheap, tawdry wish-fulfillment fantasies dreamt up by juvenile imaginations. Please calm down."

"I mean, just look at those tits on Buffy!"

"Busty," Gabrielle interrupted.

"...who wants tits like that in real life? She'll have back problems before she's twenty even *with* Slayer strength, and you can't even *hug* her properly because they're in the way!"

"Faith!" Gabrielle whispered as loud as she could.

Faith fell silent.

"Look for gateway now, rant later?" Gabrielle said.

"Yeah, I guess," Faith said. "It's just.. It pisses me off, you know?"

"I kinda noticed. Let's look now?"

Faith nodded. She took Gabrielle's hand and turned towards the doors to the various bedrooms.

Two women stood in the corridor, just a few steps in front of them. Both blonde, with long, flowing hair. They had long, slender legs and gently curving bodies, perfectly formed arms and the faces of green-eyed angels. Faith was totally stunned by their sheer beauty.

"Hi," one of them said. "I'm Marilyn."

Her voice sent shivers of pleasure down Faith's spine.

"And I'm Marlene," said the other in a voice that was different yet the same.
"We're lost. Do you think you could help us?"

To be continued...