

Sex and Violence

Annals of the Librarian Attack Force, part 5

written by Calle Dybedahl

Ivanova with a sword to her throat. Gabrielle and Faith facing a threat they don't know is a threat. Seven and Kendra alone with the Pornoverse versions of Buffy and the Scoobies. Can it possibly get worse?

Featured fandoms: Star Trek: Voyager, Babylon 5, Xena: Warrior Princess, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Blake's 7

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

A.S.S Story codes: ff

Story rating: NC17

Jenna hated moonlight.

She hadn't always. As a child, she'd used to run away from the creche. She'd always gone to the spaceport, climbed onto the roof of the passenger terminal and looked up. There was a large area above the spaceport where the city dome was transparent, and sometimes she could see the moon through it.

Back then, she loved its silver light. The first time she opened an astronomy textbook, it was to figure out how to calculate when the moon would be visible through the spaceport's traffic control window. She'd made her first black-market contacts when trying to buy weather forecasts.

Somehow, that led to a career as a civilian spacer. Eventually, as a pilot. Got a ship of her own, and she didn't even want to think about the amount of bribes *that* had taken. To earn enough to keep her ship, she turned to smuggling. Not very dangerous, but very profitable -- as long as you didn't cross the wrong people, as she eventually did. Then, jail and Blake. In time, Susan and the LAF.

As a smuggler, she'd spent much of her time waiting. Waiting for suppliers to arrive, waiting for the right buyer, waiting for Space Command ships to leave. She'd be sitting in the command chair in her ship, looking out the front viewport, waiting. Waiting for something to happen, for a short time of adrenaline-drenched activity, of fear and elation. She'd wait, and light would shine in through the thick transparent herculeaneum.

In space all light was moonlight.

In her mind, intellectually, she knew that it wasn't. That it didn't really look like it either. That, unlike on a planet where the atmosphere would refract the light and skew the colors that reached her eyes, here she saw all the light as it was. The full spectrum, untarnished by miles and miles of gas. Not moonlight, but more like it than the reddish sunlight of the polluted Earth sky.

Hour after hour after day she spent in that chair, watching moonlight. There'd be a large spot of it, and it'd move across the room as her ship gently tumbled. Eventually, she got so tired of seeing it that she had the viewport painted over.

The sight of moonlight still brought back the memories. It still made her feel tense and kept her waiting for some undefined catastrophe to strike. Even now, when it already had.

Servalan and the pale girl were dancing across the terrace, accompanied by their own singing. The moonlight was bright enough that they threw clear shadows as they moved, dark mirrors following them.

On the other side of the terrace, the woman Susan had called Deathwalker stood, near her blonde bodyguard. She was staring daggers at Servalan, clearly not liking her wasting time with singing and dancing.

She had no idea how she'd ended up tied to a chair on a moonlit terrace watching Servalan dance. Judging from the moon's size and the fact that it seemed to be standing absolutely still in the sky, she was quite sure that she was in no fiction line she knew of.

The singing stopped.

The pale woman looked at Jenna with her strangely piercing eyes.

"She's not sleeping," she said, her voice full of a peculiar kind of depraved innocence. "Why isn't she sleeping, after we sang so prettily to her?"

Servalan sat down on her throne, draping one leg over an armrest. "Why don't you ask her?" she said.

The pale girl walked up to Jenna and knelt in front of her, putting her hands on

Jenna's knees.

"Why don't you sleep, pretty girl?" she said.

Her hands was cold, far colder than any living person's could reasonably be. There was a speck of dried blood on her cheek.

Jenna spat at her, and then everything went black.

"Don't move," Callisto said. "If you move, then I will have to cut you, and then Drusilla will smell your blood. She's very good at that, Drusilla. And I'd rather not see and that *bitch* Servalan know we're here."

Ivanova didn't move. She didn't like the way the blonde woman smiled, and she'd seen before how supernaturally fast and tough she was. It wasn't the kind of enemy she liked to fight hand-to-hand, particularly not when she was naked and felt weak as a kitten.

"You're a Librarian, aren't you," Callisto said.

Ivanova nodded, moving her head as little as possible.

"Good," Callisto said. "I'll make you a deal."

"A deal," Ivanova said, doubt in her voice.

"A deal," Callisto said. "I want to get to a place. You take me there, and I let you go. Unharmed and free."

"How can I take you anywhere?" she asked. "I don't even know where I am."

"You're a Librarian. You can figure out how to control Servalan's library thingy."

"Ah," Ivanova said. "I can't promise that. But I'll do my best."

Callisto put her sword back in its scabbard. "Good!" she said. "Then you get to live for a little while longer. Isn't that nice?"

"Lost?" Faith said. "How can you be lost? This house isn't nearly big enough to get lost in."

Gabrielle elbowed her in the side. "Of course we'll help you," she said. "I'm Gabrielle, and this is Faith." She smiled at them. "You can tell me how you got here while Faith goes and gets the people who live here, and then we'll figure out what's happened. Ok?"

The two blondes briefly looked at each other.

"Please," one of them said.

"We're so glad we met you," the other one said. "We've been so lonely and scared."

"Right," Faith said, not looking too pleased. "I'll go get the living parodies, then?"

"Please?" Gabrielle put her hand on Faith's arm. "Between the two of us, you're more of the kick-people's-behinds person than the people person. So I think it's best if I talk to these two."

"I guess," Faith said, slightly mollified. "I'll be back as soon as I can."

She gave Gabrielle a quick peck on the cheek and walked off towards the staircase. As she started walking down it she heard Gabrielle asking the two girls to tell her what had happened to them, and suggesting that they find somewhere to sit down.

Seven flipped the light switch. Nothing happened. She was still faced with a steep staircase leading down into a dark cellar.

"It doesn't work," Willing said from so close behind her that she could feel the shorter girl's breathing against her neck. "We'll have to walk blindly into the dark. But don't worry. I'll be *right* behind you."

She felt Willing's hands land on her hips.

"Well," she said. "I should be safe enough then." She set off down the stairs, hoping that she'd leave Willing far enough behind that she'd have to let go.

At first, it seemed to work quite well. Until her shin hit something sticking out over a step and she fell uncontrollably forward into the darkness. Adrenaline shot through her as she felt herself lose balance. She tried to twist around, to land in a reasonably safe way. Somehow she succeeded, and she hit ground with her back first.

The ground was soft and its surface was cloth, she had time to realize before Willing fell on her and knocked her breath away.

Willing ended lying up on top of her, her head level with Seven's bosom and her hips between Seven's parted legs.

"Are you all right?" Seven asked after a little while, when it was starting to become obvious that Willing wasn't about to move.

Two smallish hands snaked up onto Seven's torso and caressed her breasts through the thin fabric of her dress.

"Oh I'm perfectly all right," Willing said. "I love women with big tits. You're not as big as Busty, but you'll do."

Seven sat up, making Willing let go and fall to the side. "This is not a good time to have sex," she said. "I am here on an important mission. Personal enjoyment will have to wait."

The mattress moved as Willing stood up.

"Bored now," she said.

Seven heard her climb up the stairs. She drew a sigh of relief. She strongly doubted she could have resisted the girl's attentions for much longer.

A low sob came from somewhere.

"Is anyone here?" she said out loud.

"Ye... yes...?" a soft, melodic voice said. It sounded like its owner was trying to force back the tears.

It sounded like it was coming from one of the back corners. "Are you in trouble?" she asked. "Do you need help?"

"Please..." the voice breathed, so low it was almost inaudible.

Seven headed into the darkness. "Don't worry," she said. "I will help you."

Faith looked around the living room. Empty. A few coffee cups still on the table, but no people.

"Hello?" she said, loudish but not yelling. No response.

She stopped and listened. Carefully.

From somewhere in the back of the house came heavy breathing and barely audible wet, rhythmic sounds. Like the sounds made by two women having sex and trying to be discreet about it.

Faith groaned. She was getting tired of sex-crazed women taking every chance they got to fuck. Particularly when the sex-crazed women were on her own team.

She followed the sounds, and soon found herself in the kitchen.

Kendra was sitting on the edge of the kitchen table. Her jumpsuit lay on the floor a few steps away, obviously discarded in a hurry. Her legs were spread as wide as they'd go, and an equally naked Busty stood between them. She was kissing Kendra passionately, one hand buried in the hair on the back of Kendra's head and the other busy pumping two fingers into her pussy.

Faith tapped on Kendra's shoulder. The tanned Slayer turned her head and looked at her, guilt mixing in with the arousal on her face.

"So, this is how you handle your LAF missions?" Faith asked.

It looked like she was about to say something, but right at that moment orgasm hit her and any words turned to grunts and screams.

Busty looked down at the writhing girl, smiling warmly.

"Beautiful, isn't she?", she said.

"Yeah, whatever," Faith said. "We need you upstairs. We found a couple of strange women walking around. They claim to be lost."

"Probably just a few of Willing's friends," Busty said. "I'll be up as soon as I've dressed."

Faith nodded. "Fine. I'll go back up right away. I don't like leaving Gabby alone. Kendra, find Seven and make sure she's all right."

There was nobody in the upstairs hallway. Again, Faith stopped and listened carefully. Again, she heard the unmistakable sounds of lovemaking coming from one of the bedrooms. She frowned. One set of gasps and moans sounded familiar. Much too familiar. Something cold and hard settled in her stomach as she walked down the hall towards the door.

It felt like someone else's hand reached for the doorknob and turned it. She knew what she'd find inside. She didn't want to find it. If she ignored it, maybe it'd go away. What the eye don't see won't break the heart.

The door swung open.

It was a bedroom, and a huge bed dominated it completely. If there were any other furniture, Faith didn't see it.

One of the blonde women was laying on her back on the bed. Even sweaty, with her hair in a mess and her face hidden she looked far better than Faith ever had. Straddling her face sat Gabrielle, stark naked. She was leaning forward towards the other blonde, who sat straddling the first one's hips. Gabrielle was kissing her, and her hands were on the blonde's breasts.

"Gabrielle?" Faith said, her voice weak.

Gabrielle broke the kiss and looked towards the interruption. Faith could see her slowly grind her crotch into the lower blonde's face.

"Yeah?" Gabrielle said, clearly annoyed at the interruption. "Who are you and what do you want?"

The upright blonde's mouth, no longer occupied by Gabrielle's lips, moved down her neck and chest and settled over an engorged nipple.

"It's me," Faith said. "Faith."

The cold thing in her belly got heavier, and grew spiky bits.

"Oh," Gabrielle said. "You. Go away, I'm busy."

Faith looked at her for an eternity. Gabrielle turned her face away, back to the two gorgeous women making love to her.

"Right," Faith said, her voice weak. "I'll just go, then."

She closed the door, blocking her view of them. But not the sounds.

Kendra opened the cellar door and leaned in, holding on to the doorframe.

"Seven?" she said.

Grunts and moans came from below.

She flipped the light switch, but the darkness remained. She sighed. Broken light-bulb, probably. Which she could fix, if the replacement bulbs were kept in the same place in this house as they'd been in the one back in Sunnydale. She knelt down and

fumbled in the darkness next to the door, and after a few moments found a hopefully fresh lightbulb. She stretched up towards the light fixture on the ceiling to replace the old one.

The old bulb was only screwed in halfways. Kendra frowned. She screwed it all the way in, and then tried the switch again.

Light filled the room.

She looked down into a cellar made over into a bondage dungeon. In the center of the floor was a large, low bed. It was made out of thick and sturdy wood, with plenty of places to fasten ropes and chains. Against a wall was a table full of whips, restraints and other equipment of the kind. Against another wall was a rack, suitable for tying someone up in an upright, spread-eagle position.

At the moment, it was occupied by Seven of Nine.

Her naked body was tied to the rack with black leather bands. Her mouth was filled with a ball gag, fastened around her head with more black leather that contrasted nicely with her blonde hair. A woman with hair just as blonde as Seven's was kneeling between her legs, enthusiastically licking the ex-Borg's pussy. A third blonde stood next to the kneeling one, fondling Seven's breasts.

"Seven?" Kendra said. "What are you doing there?"

The standing woman turned around and looked up at Kendra and smiled. She had the most wonderful green eyes Kendra had ever seen, and her smile made Kendra's knees go weak.

"Seven's having a good time," she said. Her voice was low, husky and it promised endless delights. "Why don't you come down and join her?"

Kendra had started down the stairs even before she had consciously noticed that she'd been asked to. Not that she minded, she was already more turned on than she could ever remember being, and she could tell from Seven's grunts that the two unknown women were truly awesome sexual partners. Her eyes didn't lose contact with the other woman's as she came down the stairs and approached her.

"Take off your clothes," she said when Kendra was an arm's length from her. "I want to see your body."

Kendra let her suit drop. She kicked it aside, stood with her legs a little bit apart to give a more interesting view.

"I'm Marilyn," hypnotic green eyes told her. "What's your name, pretty?"

"Kendra," she breathed.

"Kendra," Marilyn said, and the way she said sent shivers of excitement down Kendra's spine. "What a pretty name."

Marilyn came closer, so close that Kendra could feel her heat against her own skin, but she didn't touch.

"I want to play with you, Kendra," she said. "Do you want me to play with you?"

Kendra nodded, her mouth too dry for speech.

Marilyn smiled. "Good," she said. "First, I want you to lie on your back on the bed. Then I want you to use the straps to tie your feet and hands to the bedposts. I'll help you with the last hand."

Still not letting her eyes leave the gorgeous woman next to her, Kendra got down on the bed and started tying her feet to the bed.

"Well?" Callisto said.

Ivanova tried not to groan. It was the thousandth time her captor had asked her if she'd figured it out yet, and she was getting mightily tired of it.

She flipped a page in the tome she was reading. "Look," she said. "If you want this to go faster, you can get me something to wear and something to drink. I'm pretty damn exhausted from the last few days or weeks or whatever, and it's not really helping my concentration any."

To her great surprise, Callisto left the room without another word.

"What do you know," she muttered to herself. "She might be serious."

The thought that the violently insane woman maybe *wouldn't* kill her as soon as she wasn't useful any longer was exciting, almost exhilarating. Ivanova thought she had figured out how to control the nexus a long while ago, she just didn't want to say so. Maybe she should. Leafing through the book was a delaying action at best, and eventually Callisto would become frustrated enough to kill her anyway. If she returned with clothes and water, she'd tell the truth and try to get Callisto where she wanted to go.

"Here," Callisto's voice said behind her back, nearly making her jump out of her skin. The woman was amazingly stealthy for someone wearing that much thick leather and metal. She placed a bundle of white cloth and a wineskin on the table next to Ivanova.

"The dress is one of Drusilla's. It's probably too large for you, but I figured that'd be better than too small."

"Thank you," Ivanova said. She got up from her chair and pulled the dress over her head. It was, indeed, too large, but not too badly and it was certainly better than nothing. She opened the wineskin and smelled it. Water, as far as she could tell. She drank, deeply.

"I think I may have something," she said. "But I want some reassurance that you won't kill me as soon as we get to the other side."

"Why," Callisto said. "Don't you trust me?"

I trust you about as far as I can *spit* you, she thought. "I've learned that it pays to be careful," she said.

"So how can I reassure you?" Callisto asked. "I really don't intend to kill you, you know."

"Give me your sword and accept a blindfold. You'll probably still be able to get me, but at least I get a sporting chance."

Callisto smiled. "Very well." She threw her sword to Ivanova, hilt first. Ivanova managed to catch it without dropping it. She held it, awkwardly. She couldn't remember ever holding a real, meant-to-be-used sword before. She had no idea how to use it. The sharp edge and the numerous tiny scratches in its sides fascinated her.

"Will this do?" Callisto asked. Ivanova looked up. Callisto had got a length of white cloth from somewhere -- meant to be a bandage, probably -- and tied it across her eyes. It looked like she shouldn't be able to see.

"It'll do," Ivanova said. "Just a few moments and we can leave."

She drank some more water. She could feel her head clearing up as she got some fluids inside, and she didn't feel quite so weak any more.

Waterskin in hand she turned to the elaborately stacked piles of books. The large room was entirely covered with them, except for the windows looking out at moonlit night. There were two doors, one leading back into the strange place Servalan had chosen as her base and one that led into the nexus itself. To Ivanova, it looked and felt a lot like a particularly twisted section of L-Space. Which, she supposed, it pretty much was. With the not so small exception that by moving the books in this room she could change how it twisted. She put the waterskin down and started moving books

around. She would've felt better if she was sure she knew what she was doing, but there was no time for that. Even with the blindfold, she could feel Callisto's gaze bore into her back.

"I'm done," she said after a while. "We can leave now."

"Lead the way," Callisto said. "You're the one who knows where to go."

Ivanova took the warrior's hand and walked into the nexus.

Faith opened the door and walked out of the house. She felt numb. Somewhere far inside she was screaming. In fury or pain, she couldn't tell. She wasn't sure there was a difference. In any case, it didn't get out. She looked calmly ahead, face expressionless, not seeing a thing in front of her.

Gabrielle had dumped her. Just like that. A couple of prettier and nicer girls came along, and Gabrielle went with them. Just like that.

She'd known it would happen, of course. She'd been expecting it, *waiting* for it. Dreading the day when reality would change back to the way it used to be, with Faith alone and hurting. The time she'd had with Gabby was an aberration, a flaw in the universe. It couldn't stay that way. It was a wrong, and now it had righted itself. As expected. No surprise.

It still felt like somebody had rammed a hand through her ribcage and ripped her heart apart. The cold, strange physical pain inside, the strange pressure in her stomach that felt half as if she was starving and half as if she was going to throw up. Her hands were shaking, and tears kept threatening to flood her eyes.

She wouldn't let them.

She was the Slayer. The Chosen One. It was her destiny to fight the forces of darkness alone. Alone. With no one at her side. No warm, smooth body next to hers, no hugs and kisses and laughter and teasing and friendship and ever so gentle words to sooth her fears, and without warning, against her will, tears were pouring out her eyes and down her cheeks.

Being alone was so much harder to take after she had, for a time, not been. Before, in Sunnydale, she'd been able to handle it. Sure, it wasn't fun. Sure, it hurt when Buffy rejected her. But it was her life. It was all she knew. Then, she couldn't even imagine not being alone.

Now she could, and it hurt more than she had every imagined possible.

Even in her nightmares, she'd never imagined the rejection would be so total and so quick. She'd dreamt about Gabrielle dying in her arms, her life pumping red over Faith's leather pants. She'd dreamt about Gabrielle coming home and telling her she'd met someone else. She'd dreamt about their doorbell ringing and Xena standing outside.

But there'd always been a farewell. A few last words. In her dream, Gabrielle would tell her that she loved her with her last breath. In her dreams, Gabrielle would say that she was sorry for hurting her but that she had to be with the one she loved. In her dreams, Gabrielle said she loved her but that Xena was her soulmate with whom she'd shared uncountable incarnations and that was stronger than any mortal love. In her dreams, there were ends.

Not so here.

Faith walked towards the car. She didn't care about Seven and Kendra, they could take care of themselves. She just wanted to get away from here, away from the pain.

Gabrielle hadn't even *recognized* her. Hadn't even remembered her name. Everything they'd shared, gone. All their mornings and days and evenings and nights,

gone. Wiped away by two gorgeous bodies. Vanished, without a warning and without a trace. Just like Susan and Jenna had vanished in L-Space.

Faith stopped dead.

Exactly like Susan and Jenna and sixteen other pairs of Librarians had vanished in L-Space.

"Oh *fuck*," she said.

She turned around and started running back towards the house as fast as her legs would carry her.

She was in a state of constant ecstasy. She was floating in a sea of golden-coloured pure pleasure, and her body shook with orgasm after orgasm. There was one wonderful body between her legs, doing marvelous things to her sex. There was another one by her side, looking at her with eyes that promised heaven and touching her with hands that delivered everything the eyes had promised.

Time might be passing. She had no interest in knowing. Briefly, the thought flickered by that she should care who these angels of carnality were. But it was soon drowned in overwhelming lust, and she cared for nothing but her own feelings. Who they were wasn't important. Who she herself was wasn't important, at least not as long as those soft, firm fingers kept probing the walls of her vagina like they were doing and by the gods may it never end.

There was a loud, discordant noise. Something hitting something else. It was gone as soon as it came, and she quickly sank back into the warm embraces.

Until the wonderful, wonderful body next to her was torn away from her arms.

"Get *off* her, you *bitch*!" she heard someone scream, and that voice sounding that desperate touched something inside her. Something that wasn't pleasure. She didn't like it. She wanted the voice to be happy. She tried to sit up.

She tore the topmost blonde off Gabrielle and threw her aside, not caring where she landed. Gabrielle looked like she was drugged, lost in a world all of her own. The second blonde, the one with her mouth and hands busy between Gabby's legs, didn't react. She just kept going. Gabrielle's breathing came in time with the movements of the blonde's hand, Faith noticed.

"Let her go, or I'll rip your fucking head off!" Faith yelled.

She grabbed her by the hair with one hand, pulled her up and hit her with her other hand. Hit her hard, as hard as the muscles of her arm let her. She felt bone break under her knuckles, and she heard the cracking sound as the blonde's neck snapped. When she let go of her hair, her head fell over backwards as if the spinal column was no longer attached.

Faith leaned down over Gabrielle. "Gabby? Dear? Can you hear me?"

She saw Gabrielle's lips move, but couldn't hear what she said. What she could hear was running steps closing on her back. Must be the blonde she'd thrown away. She focused on the sound, stood up abruptly and slammed her elbow back and up, hitting whoever it was in the face. The steps stopped. Faith turned around.

It was the first blonde all right. She was holding her face in her hands, blood streaming out from under them. Faith guessed she'd crushed the woman's nose, which pleased her a lot. On the other hand, the woman shouldn't have been standing, that blow would've knocked down most vampires and probably killed a normal human.

The woman dropped her hands. Faith could see her nose bending back into normal shape.

"Please," the blonde said. "Don't hit me. I just want to be nice to you."

Faith snarled and kicked her in the face as hard as she could. She felt the skull cave in under her boot, saw the head snap back as the neck broke. The woman fell down, still.

Turning back to the bed, Faith picked up Gabrielle and held her like a child. "Let's get out of here, baby," she mumbled, half to herself and half to Gabrielle.

Drusilla put her arm across Servalan's shoulders. She looked into her eyes. "The vessel of fire is moving away," she said, the moon lending mystery to her smile.

Servalan looked back at her. "That's nice, dear," she said. "Do you see anything else?"

The vampire's gaze slid away from Servalan's face.

"I see a librarian waking up," she said. "She's not sleeping any more."

Servalan turned and looked towards the chair Jenna was tied to. The captive Librarian was indeed starting to move a little.

"So she is," she said. "Why don't you go play with her while mommy talks about business things with Jha'dur?"

Drusilla let go of her. "Don't be late," she said. "Baby's gonna want her feeding."

"Don't worry," Servalan said. "Mommy won't forget."

Drusilla smiled and turned away, heading across the terrace towards Jenna.

"Oh, and Drusilla?" Servalan interrupted from behind her. The vampire looked back over her shoulder.

"Don't break her," Servalan said. Drusilla's smile widened a little before she returned her attention to the captive woman. Servalan turned the other, towards Jha'dur and Najara. They were sitting at different sides of a small table placed against the terrace's railing. There were a couple of fruit baskets, a pitcher of wine and a glass on the table. Jha'dur held another glass, full of wine, in her hand.

"I don't understand why you keep her," Jha'dur said. "Her predictions are so vague that they're useless, and she's unpredictable and dangerous. I wish you would at least let me pacify her."

"There will be tasks for her," Servalan said. "How are the sirens working out?"

"Perfectly," Jha'dur said. "So far, we have a one hundred percent success rate. We cannot expect that to continue, but the likelihood is that we'll have an overall rate in excess of ninety-nine percent." Her face took on an irritated look. "When, or if, we ever deploy them."

"Now," Servalan said. "We deploy them now. I will have the gate open to the target area by the time you get them to the nexus."

For a brief moment, Jha'dur looked surprised. "Good," she said. "I will have them there in half an hour." She got up and entered the house sprawling over the mountain-side.

Najara looked on in silence as Servalan turned and walked over to where the psychic vampire was playing.

"Gabrielle? Honey? Wake *up*, will you? Please?"

Faith had laid her down on the grass outside the house, far enough away that they couldn't hear anyone talking inside. Also, she would be able to see anyone approaching in time to pound them senseless before they reached Gabrielle.

Just in case.

She was gently shaking her lover. She had fallen asleep shortly after Faith had

taken her from the bedroom, a sleep that was much deeper and more still than Faith liked. There was something wrong, something wounded about it.

"Come *on*, baby. You're stronger than this."

A small groan came from the naked bard, and Faith's heart skipped a beat.

"Gabrielle?"

She mumbled something, too faint for Faith to catch.

"What? I can't hear you, love, please try again?"

The second time she caught it.

"My head hurts."

She hadn't opened her eyes yet.

"Gabrielle, who am I? What's my name?"

She opened her eyes and looked at her.

"You're Faith," she said. "And could you get me an aspirin? My head's killing me."

A ton of bricks fell from Faith's shoulders. The relief at hearing her lover make sense made tears well up in her eyes. "I'll get you anything you want," she said.

"Just an aspirin will be fine," Gabrielle said. She looked around, squinting at the harsh sunlight. "What happened? The last thing I remember we were just about to go look for the gateway."

Faith picked her up, gently. "I think we found it," she said. "Or at least got close enough to run into its defenses." She kissed the top of Gabrielle's head. "I think there's some aspirin in the first-aid kit in the car."

Carefully, she carried her over to the car and put her down next to it.

Gabrielle felt her own head. "Can't feel any bumps," she said. "And where are my clothes?"

"You didn't get hit," Faith said. "At least not physically. We met these women that turned out to be the super-seduction babes from Hell, and they got you undressed and into bed while I was away getting Busty or Willing."

She stood up and turned away, pretended to be busy looking for the first aid kit. "You didn't recognize me," she said. She hesitated. "At first, I thought you'd dumped me."

Gabrielle looked up at her. "I'll never do that," she said. "Never." She reached out and touched Faith's leg. "And if it ever even gets close, I'll *tell* you. All right?"

Faith took the aspirin bottle out of the kit that'd been right in front of her all along and sat down on her haunches. "Yeah," she said, trying not to show the turmoil she felt. "Here's your aspirin."

Her hand shook as she handed it over. Gabrielle took the trembling hand in both of her own, brought it to her lips and kissed it.

"Thanks for saving me," she said, smiling her sunshine smile that always went straight to Faith's heart.

"You're welcome," she whispered, throat choked.

"Something to wash the pills down with would be nice."

"Oh. Right," Faith said, feeling stupid for not thinking about that herself. She got up and started looking through the car for something drinkable.

"Are they alive?" Gabrielle said after a little while.

Faith looked up. "Who?"

"The women who captured me."

"Oh, them. I didn't stop to check, but if they're anything like human they're pretty damn dead. I was kinda... upset when I hit them."

Gabrielle smiled. "I don't mind," she said. "I don't like to have my mind messed

with." She paused for a moment, thinking, before she went on. "How many of them were there?"

"Ah, here." Faith pulled out a half-full bottle of Coke. "Warm and stale, I'm afraid, but it's the best I can do out here." She handed the bottle to Gabrielle. "And there were two of them."

Gabrielle swallowed a couple of pills and chased them down with the Coke. "Are you sure there were only two?" she said when she was done. "Where's Seven and Kendra?"

Faith thought about it for a moment. "Don't know," she admitted. She leaned into the back of the car and opened a large bag.

She turned to Gabrielle. "Axe, shotgun or assault rifle?", she asked.

Faith swung her axe a few times to get a feel for its balance. "Your head feeling any better?" she said.

"Yeah," Gabrielle said, slotting a magazine into her G36 assault rifle and cocking it. "Although I think the Coke helped more than the aspirin. Must've been dehydrated."

They were standing on the front porch of the house. Not a sound came from inside, which was wrong enough that it felt quite right to go rushing in armed to the teeth.

"As long as you're feeling better, I don't much care why," Faith said. "Ready to rock?"

Gabrielle smiled evilly. "Oh yeah," she said. "Do you want to go first or shall I?"

"I'll go first," Faith said. "Just don't shoot me in the back with that thing."

Not waiting for a reply, she kicked the door in and jumped after it, turning a somersault and landing on her feet quite a few steps inside. Gabrielle followed, more slowly.

Nothing happened.

"Well, people in this house sure don't come running when you knock," Faith said.

Gabrielle tilted her head. "Listen," she said.

Faith listened. In the distance, she could hear moaning. In a voice she knew. Kendra's voice.

"That's not good," she said.

"Is that how I sounded?"

"More or less."

Gabrielle walked into the living room, heading towards the sound. It grew weaker for a bit, and then got louder again. She heard Faith behind her.

"The cellar," Faith said. "Sounds like they're in the cellar."

Gabrielle looked around, not seeing anything that looked like a cellar door. "Do you know where it is?" she asked.

"Yeah," Faith said. "I spent some time in a house that looked exactly like this one, remember?"

"Right."

They moved on, entering the kitchen. It was a mess. One half of the table had quite obviously been cleared by someone in a hurry sweeping her arm across. Broken cups and plates littered the floor.

"Fighting?" Gabrielle asked, nodding towards the mess.

"Nah," Faith replied. "This was Kendra and Busty fucking."

Slowly, she opened the cellar door. The sounds grew in volume, and they could hear Seven and Willing as well as Kendra. There were also two voices that didn't be-

long to any of the people they knew, people that made Faith's adrenaline levels skyrocket.

"That's them!" she whispered. "The women that captured you!"

Gabrielle looked grim. "So you didn't kill them, and they aren't human."

"At least they stopped when they were damaged," Faith said. "If I were you, I'd aim for their heads."

Gabrielle nodded.

"Right," Faith said. "Here we go." She opened the cellar door fully and jumped down the staircase inside, landing crouched on the floor. Gabrielle followed more slowly, stopping at the first bend in the staircase and aiming down into the room.

The large bed in the center of the room was occupied by Kendra tied spread-eagle to the bedposts. On top of her, cursorily fastened to the bed by a choker around her neck and a leash tied to the headboard, was Willing. The red-headed girl was eagerly nibbling on Kendra's nipples, while a gorgeous blonde woman that Faith recognized all too well was whipping her ass with a riding crop. Further into the room, Busty had replaced Seven on the rack. Clothespins were fastened all over her large breasts. In front of her, Seven stood, bent over. Her face was buried in Busty's crotch, forcing her to bend her neck at a painful angle. She was prevented from lowering her hips by a second blonde beauty, who was standing behind Seven with two fingers buried in her pussy.

Gabrielle lowered her rifle. "They're *gorgeous*..." she mumbled, unable to stop looking at the two blondes.

"Gabrielle!" Faith yelled. "We're here to *kill* them, not gawk at them!"

She stood, rushed forward towards the first of the two, axe held back over her shoulder ready to swing forward. The woman -- who looked *exactly* like one of the two she'd rescued Gabby from, she suddenly noticed -- turned and tried to defend herself with her crop. Faith easily dodged the thin black rod, and a moment later the head of her axe ended up buried to the hilt in the blonde's head. She tried to pull it out, but it had got stuck in the bones of her victim's skull. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw the other blonde raise a pistol. She tried to get the axe free for a few moments more, until she saw the finger tighten around the trigger. She threw herself to the floor, to get under the bullet.

A shot filled the room with noise.

Faith kept rolling, taking inventory of all her parts to see if she was hit. She couldn't find anything wrong, so she stopped and prepared to lunge at the remaining blonde's legs.

As she looked towards her enemy, she saw her collapse into a bloody heap. The top half of her head was entirely gone.

"Sorry I hesitated," Gabrielle said from the staircase.

Faith stood up straight. "That's all right," she said. She looked around. Brains, blood and bone fragments had splattered all over Busty and Seven, but neither of them seemed to have noticed. Seven remained in her awkward position, continuing to lick Busty even without the enforcement.

"Aw," Willing said from the bed. "You broke my friend."

"My head is killing me," Kendra said.

She was sitting at the table in the kitchen, which had been hastily cleared up by Gabrielle. Seven and Busty was also sitting there, still in too much pain even to speak.

"Drink some more water," Faith said from the doorway where she was leaning. "It'll help."

Willing were sitting on the kitchen counter, between Cordelia and Xandra who were leaning against it.

"So what happened, apart from another fuckfest in the cellar?" Cordelia asked. "Why the shooting? And I'd like to know who's going to clean the blood out of the carpet, because it's certainly not going to be me."

"Another fuckfest?" Gabrielle said. She was standing next to Faith, assault rifle slung over her back. "This has happened before?"

"Sure," Willing said. She smiled like a kid let loose in a candy store. "Those girls can make you come like nothing else I've ever felt."

"Have they been coming here long?" Faith asked.

Willing shrugged. "A week or two. Or three."

"I don't remember a thing," Kendra mumbled.

"Gabrielle didn't either," Faith said. "Seems pretty clear that they're aimed at us rather than the locals."

"What were they?" Seven asked.

Gabrielle and Faith looked at each other for a moment.

"They looked human enough after they were dead," Gabrielle said. "If you ignore that they didn't look like the *same* humans as when they were alive."

"As far as we can tell," Faith said, "they're what Deathwalker grew in those tanks under the GENOM tower. And they have some way of seriously messing with our minds."

"When alive," Gabrielle continued, "they looked like two extremely beautiful blonde, curvy women. Faith says that the two that captured me looked like the same pair that got the rest of you. I don't remember that, but have no reason to doubt it. When dead, they were more reasonably good-looking, with much shorter hair and less voluptuous bodies. All four bodies, the two upstairs and the two in the cellar, also look exactly alike. They're like identical quadruplets."

Faith turned towards Busty. "Buff... Busty, do you remember what happened in the cellar?"

"Mostly," she reluctantly said, squeezing her eyes shut in an attempt to ease the pounding in her head. "It was like most times when we've played with Willing's friends."

"Seven? Do you remember anything?"

She shook her head, then winced as the movement made her headache flare up.

"So, on the remembering front, that's a solid zilch for the Attack Librarians, and a full score for the locals. Add the fact that they got all of you in a minute or less, and they look a lot like a weapon tailor-made to be used against us."

"So we probably now know what happened to the missing Librarians," Gabrielle said. "Servalan must've used the nexus to plant these things near or at common L-Space routes. They then waited for some Librarians to pass by, probably pretending to be lost and helpless. The main question that remains is what happened to those Librarians after they were captured. Are they alive? If so, where are they?"

She looked at Faith. "I'd also like to know why they didn't get Faith here, when they had no problems at all with the rest of us."

Faith shrugged. "Luck, I guess," she said. "Willing," she went on, "Buff... Busty said they were your friends. Do you know where they came from?"

"Sure," Willing said and smiled. "They came out of my closet."

"Right," Faith said. "I'll get the guns from the car, then we'll have a look at that closet."

Najara stood behind Jha'dur, watching the long line of sirens walk past them and into the huge library that was the L-Space nexus. Although she knew that they all looked exactly the same, she had to concentrate hard to see through their various projected images. It had been easier with the pilot pairs, they all projected one of two simple appearances.

Jha'dur kept watching them intently, as if watching for flaws. Which might very well be what she was doing. Najara didn't understand the alien woman at all. She didn't understand Servalan or Drusilla either. She did to some extent understand Cal-listo.

And she still hadn't seen anything of Gabrielle. Which she had belatedly realized Servalan had never actually promised her, just hinted that it might happen.

Given enough time, *anything* might happen.

"Jha'dur," she said. The strange woman turned towards her, but said nothing.

"Are you getting what you wanted out of this?"

"I'm getting what I expected," Jha'dur said. "If I also get what I want remains to be seen."

"What did she promise you?"

"Something too little and too much. Why do you ask?"

"I beginning to doubt that she can give me what I thought I'd get."

Jha'dur smiled. "Well," she said. "Maybe you're not as stupid as I thought."

"Maybe not," Najara mumbled.

"If you had control of Mainline, do you think you could get what you wanted?"

"It'd certainly help," Najara said. "Why?"

"Servalan is a moral degenerate. She does not deserve the power she has managed to appropriate. She lacks focus and drive. She might be useful as a subordinate. Failing that, she might make an amusing toy."

"You're going to try to take her place."

"Yes."

"Want some help?"

"As long as you follow orders."

Najara hesitated. "There is a Librarian. Gabrielle."

"So?"

"I will not harm her. Apart from that, I will follow orders."

Jha'dur nodded. "A clear enough limit. We are in agreement."

"This one," Willing said and pointed at a closet in the corner of her room. "That's where they came from."

Willing's room looked like an archetypical young girl's room. It was decorated in white and pink, most things had frills on them and there were large posters featuring cute horses on the walls.

Gabrielle found it difficult to reconcile the appearance of the room and the behavior of the girl who lived in it. She had expected it to look something like a cross between a bondage supply shop and a brothel.

"Well," she said. "Do we open it?"

'It' was an ordinary wardrobe, standing on the floor and reaching almost to the ceiling. It was, of course, pink. Its door was covered with a life-size picture of the singer

from the latest girls' band dressed in a leather bikini that looked about two sizes too small for her bust.

"Not likely to find out much otherwise, are we?" Faith said. She leaned forward, pulling at the closet door from as far away as she could manage.

Nothing much happened, except that the door swung open.

Gabrielle stepped closer and looked inside. There were fastenings on the sides of it where there seemed to have been shelves or drawers, and where a bar for coat hangers had been removed. The closet was empty, and the back of it shimmered as if hot air was rising in front of it.

"Looks a bit like an L-Space gateway," she said. "I think we've found what we're looking for."

"I'm not so sure," Seven said. "L-Space gateways open near libraries, or at least collections of books. A gate to the nexus flaw should form near erotic literature."

Gabrielle turned towards Willing. "Did you use to keep books in here?" she asked. "Sexy ones in particular?"

"No," Willing said. "Just my diaries."

There was a short silence.

"I withdraw my objection," Seven said. "I suggest we pass through the gate and attempt to fulfill our mission objective."

Faith looked questioningly at Gabrielle.

"You've got the superpowers," Gabrielle said. "You go first."

Faith cocked her assault rifle. "Here goes nothing," she said, stepped into the closet and vanished from sight.

One by one, the other three Librarians followed her.