

Miranda had been awake for some time, snuggled up against Cooper. Her implant sounded a tone letting her know someone had sent her a message. She thought about going to check it but decided against it. If she was still using the full suite that came with the implant, she could have read it without moving, but she'd deactivated the visual messaging components within a week of getting the implant. The barrage of written messages showing up in her field of vision had driven her nuts. Now, she only got a notification when one arrived.

She was too comfortable to bother with it right now, resting her head on Cooper's chest. She didn't mind that his skin was harder than normal, due to the implanted armor, it was still comfortable. The armor meant he would survive most fights and he had other implants and enhancements, making him a superbly talented hunter and lover.

After a time, she got up. As much as she enjoyed resting against him, she had work to do, and that meant checking that message.

He stirred a moment later. "Morning," he said, looking at her. She hadn't bothered putting anything on. They were on her ship, it wasn't like they had neighbors to offend.

"Morning." She set the computer to ready two cups of coffee and then read the message.

"Anything important?" Cooper turned on his side, leaning on his elbow.

"Our target's been sighted." She took the cups from the open partition and went back to the bed. She handed one to her partner and sat on the edge.

"You know, even with all we're spending on your contacts, there's going to be a lot of money left over when we deliver him back to the prison ship. I was thinking, we could take it easy for a while. My family has property in the mountains of Thourdraga. No one would bother us there."

Miranda sighed. Why was it her partners always brought up taking it easy? She'd told Cooper when they started this partnership that she had no plans on taking it easy, at any time. He'd been okay with that, or at least that's what he said. Had he lied? Or had he just changed his mind?

Hadn't she promised herself she wouldn't sleep with him? Why couldn't she seem to stop herself from doing that? And why were they all so insistent she slowed down. Taking it easy had never solved anything.

Now, she was going to have to end their partnership once this job was over. It was too bad as he had been one of the best men she'd worked with and he was pretty amazing in bed. Maybe by the time the

job was done, he'd have changed his mind again? She could hope.

He kissed the back of her neck. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine," she replied and stood. "I'm going to go set the coordinates." She left the room and was immediately in the cockpit. She stepped over the ladder going down to the containment hold and sat down.

Fortunately, they were already heading to Deleron Four and would be there soon. She'd intercepted a report of a crashed ship, and some of the details sounded like it was one of the Sayatoga's shuttles. She'd decided to risk going there since she had no other clues to her target's whereabouts. Now, she had confirmation that he was there, somewhere in the capital. Her contact hadn't been able to give her anything more precise.

That was enough.

She looked out into space, that infinite void, and again wondered why men kept being so weak.