



Adventures Across the Starways - 14

By Kari

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“Do you have any idea who this little chit of a girl is, or better yet what she is worth?”

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Chapter14 by Kari and Rascal On the bridge, Jason heard Victor enter the common room. His boots made a sound distinct from Sive's light footsteps. Fingers drumming absently on the console, Jason listened to their conversation. Sive looked up when she heard heavy footsteps. Smiling, she said, “Hi Victor, glad to see you're on time. Have a seat, let's get to know one another before I take you on a tour. Oh, and if you want fresh coffee, help yourself, it's just over to your left.” He replied, “ No thanks, I've had my quota for the day.” He sat across the table from Sive looking at her as if trying to make up his mind about something. This put Sive's radar on full alert, she'd been down this road too many

times. She was tired of games after five years of playing hide and seek with her pursuers. She thought, "Let's see if I can call his bluff, whatever it is." "OK, Victor, or whatever your name is, what do you want?" She watched for his reaction carefully. A flash of surprise crossed his features before he could stop himself. He sat back and acknowledged, "You're a clever girl aren't you? But of course being on the run for five years and escaping all our trackers you would have to be. You have met your match now, Alayna McLeod. You're going to make me a very very rich man." He leaned back now with a self-satisfied smirk on his face. Sive sighed, "And how are you going to make that happen out here in space? You really aren't as clever as you think. I'm afraid I won't be going anywhere with you. We will be dumping you on the nearest planet." With disgust she moved to stand up, but suddenly, with amazing speed, he grabbed her wrist and pulled her across the table. He hissed, "Oh you'll come with me. You'll make excuses to your captain that you changed your mind, and you'd rather make your way on solid ground. You see, I know you just recently joined the ship's crew." Sive tried to pull away to no avail before gritting her teeth. "Why would I do what you want?" With a smug look on his handsome face, he pulled her even closer, and whispered in her ear, "Because, my dear Alayna, I will kill everyone on board including your beloved Captain. So if you know what is good for everyone on board, including yourself, you will keep this little conversation to yourself." He let go of her wrist and leaned back smiling, knowing he had won this round. "Shall we now go on that tour you were telling me about?" Shaken to the core, Sive stood up, rubbing her wrist. "Yeah sure I'll show you around." She got up from the chair, waiting for him to come around the table. Once he joined her she quietly added, "You're not going to get away with this, I assure you." She raised her voice as she continued, "Let's get a move on, I need to get back to my duties." As they both left the common room, Sive was desperately trying to think of what she was going to do now. Jason heard the exchange in the common room with concern, blossoming into rage at Victor's calm assurance that the crew would be easy targets. He flipped the intercom to engineering, telling Donny to check every place Victor had access to for explosives. He reached under the console and pulled out a package he hadn't needed in some time. Unwrapping it revealed a service pistol, lovingly cared for. Jason stood and strapped on his gun belt from the war. It still rode easily on his hips as though he'd worn it just yesterday. Then he headed for the corridor Sive and Victor were in. Zlanta would be making her way around via the emergency access tunnel, but he wasn't sure she'd make it in time. Sive needed help now. Jason stepped into the corridor between the bridge and the common room just as Sive and Victor entered. Victor was behind Sive, making any shot difficult at best, and with lightning speed he held Sive tightly by her neck and waist. Jason ordered, "Stop right there Victor. That's odd behavior for a mine expert. Let the girl go." As soon as Victor saw the captain enter the corridor he slid his arm around her throat, pulling her against himself. With confidence he replied, "I don't think so, Captain. I have been searching for her way too long to lose her now. She's my ticket to a life of luxury, and not you or anyone else is going to take that away from me at this point." As soon as Sive felt Victor grab her from behind, she started to struggle against him but it was useless. He was too strong for her. His arm tightened enough to make her start choking. It wouldn't be long before she would lose consciousness. Her hands grasped at his forearm, trying to pull it loose. Victor ordered Jason, "Make

one move and I'll snap her neck like a twig. Now, you're going to take us back to Lacuna and drop us off—and I mean both of us. I'm not leaving this ship without her. I've put in too much effort and expense in getting this far.” He looked down at Sive, noticing her struggles were getting weaker by the second. He loosened his hold a fraction, so she could breathe a little. Not that he cared so much, but an unconscious girl would be much more awkward to maneuver. Glancing back at Jason, “Do you have any idea who this little chit of a girl is, or better yet what she is worth? And what certain parties are willing to pay for her delivery?” He laughed now. “Enough to let me live in comfort for the rest of my life, anywhere I choose. You're not going to deprive me of my prize at this late date. “Now move back to the bridge and change those coordinates back to Lacuna. I'll have a ship waiting for us. Try anything funny and you'll have one dead girl on your hands.” He slowly advanced with Sive, keeping his eye on what Jason was doing. Jason's fingers twitched. The pistol was in his hand pointed at Victor's head in one motion so smooth it seemed to have leapt from the holster into his pointing hand. Jason smiled inwardly at the moment of shock on Victor's face. “No, I don't think so,” Jason said. “That girl's a mighty handy crew member aboard Tainted Angel and I protect my crew. You even twitch that arm again and I'll make the continents of your face shift and collide. Now listen to me, this is how it's going to go. You're going to let the girl go, and lead me to your quarters. I'm going to seal the door of your quarters until we get to the next stop. I'll let you out 10 minutes before we leave and you'll never hear from us again. “On the other hand, you can fight this one out. One of three things will happen. You'll kill me and take over the ship. I'll kill you and space your body. Or I'll capture you and space you anyway. So make your choice.” As Jason said his piece to Victor, Sive felt his body tense up, including the arm he had around her neck. She started to gasp for air again, dots were swimming in front of her eyes. As she slipped into unconsciousness her body started to go limp and slump to the floor. Her last conscious thought was, Oh gods, look what I have brought down on the Angel! As Sive's form sagged, Jason fired, hitting Victor in the shoulder and spinning him away from her. Jason stepped over Sive to make sure Victor was unarmed just as Zlanta dropped out of the airvent further down the corridor. “Zlanta! You and Donny get this guy into restraints and seal him in the air lock. What he tried is piracy and I'm just about mad enough to space him. Search the ship, he seemed to think he could kill us all and I'd like to know why. Get the rest of the crew involved. Wake up the off shift and have them help.” Jason stepped back to Sive, and once he knew she was breathing started rubbing her arms and face to increase circulation. “C'mon, Sive, lovely. Time to wake up. It's over for now, honey, wake up please...” Murmuring softly, he continued until she stirred. “Ohhhh...” Sive moaned as her hand reached up to her throat. “What happened? Where is that creep Victor?” Then suddenly becoming more alert she remembered Victor's threat. “Is everyone OK? He said he would kill everyone on board, you have to stop him!” Looking up she said, “Jason, look at all the trouble I've caused, I should never have come on board. They're never going to stop looking for me...never.” Her hand rubbed her bruised throat. Sitting up, Sive looked around and saw some blood on the deck floor. “Good, you got him. I hope you didn't kill him; we have to find out how he tracked me and if anyone else knows where I am.” Now her temper was taking over. “ I want to question him. Just wait 'til I get my hands on him, he'll be sorry.” She struggled to get up, fuelled by her rising temper. “Here, give me

a hand and take me to him now, I have to get this sorted out as soon as possible—he threatened to kill everyone on board! I don't know if it was real or not but I aim to find out. “Jason,” she asked, “you're not hurt are you?” Her emotions were all over the place and she was clearly very afraid. “Easy, Sive, calm down. Zlanta and Donny are dealing with Victor, and the crew is searching the ship for any signs of tampering. I'm not hurt, Victor took a slug to the shoulder, and your throat is coming up all bruises. You are going to stay right here until you calm down, then you're coming with me to tend to your throat. Maybe, once that's all done, just maybe, you can have a crack at Victor. “As for the trouble? We've been in scrapes before. This isn't our first orbit by any stretch. If you weren't aboard the ship how would you have dealt with him? Better to have friends willing to help than try to be a loner in times like this. Now, if you're ready, I'll help you up and over to the med cabinet for a diagnosis.” Jason offered his hands and helped her to her still wobbly feet. Sive considered what he had just told her, “OK, you're right, take me to the med-cabinet. I know some pain killer would feel pretty good right now. Then let me at that horrid man.” As she got up she leaned heavily on Jason, and looking up at him she inquired, “Once we get some answers, what are you going to do with Victor? I know he's scum, but, maybe we could just dump him on some rock in the middle of nowhere, what do you think? If he isn't in partnership with anyone, he won't have a chance to find me again. I really thought that after we got rid of the tracker in my pendant I was safe from this kind of thing.” As they slowly traveled down the corridor Sive continued, “I suppose I have been pretty lucky these last five years, but I knew it was only a matter of time before someone got their hands on me. Usually on a planet, I have been able to change my outer appearance, and slip away through some back door. You know, maybe I could fake my death, and then these hunters will find someone else to stalk.” She sighed and gently rubbed her throat again, coughing. “You're right, I need some meds. My throat is starting to swell up a bit, as well as hurt like hell now.” When they got to the med-cabinet, Sive quickly got the hypo spray out and inserted the meds she needed. Opening her vest she handed Jason the device. “Here, put it directly in this vein.” She waited while he finished and within seconds, she could feel the pain decrease. Sighing now, Sive looked up at Jason. “That was a pretty dreadful situation we went through. But I am starting to feel like I can handle a little questioning now. You did say you shot him in the shoulder didn't you? Let me get some supplies then let's go pay a visit to Victor.”