

-Transmission Lost-
Chapter Seven: The Flames
by Havoc

Jack watched as the demons prowled around his hiding spot, their noses snuffling the ground as they searched for him. They were slowly coming closer to him, and he knew they were probably catching whiffs of the blood seeping from his fresh wounds. Jack only had a few minutes before they would be right on top of him. His hand tightened on the grip of his pistol.

I've really gotten myself into it this time..., he thought. His jaw clenched, his heart pumping quicker with fear. *Damn it, I should have just stayed put back at the river. What the hell was I thinking, going off all on my own? It's like I thought Aria wouldn't come looking for me.*

He felt a wash of shame as he realized that, although he'd convinced himself he was reasoning through the situation rationally, that was *exactly* what he'd been thinking at the time. Jack had really thought that Aria wouldn't come to try to find him, even if she thought he was dead. Though she could be abrasive and cold at times, Jack ought to have known by now that she wasn't the kind to abandon somebody, especially not a friend. And he was certain that at the very least she felt friendly towards him, even if she wouldn't call him a friend, exactly...

Right then...Let's see what I can do...

Jack quickly took a mental inventory of his resources. He had all of the tools on his belt. He had no water, and no food, though those were secondary concerns at the moment. His handgun had eight rounds remaining in it, and he had two spare magazine of ten rounds each. Twenty-eight rounds for the...it looked like eight...predatory animals prowling around his hiding spot. Jack was hungry, dehydrated, sore, and injured. However, he did have one thing going for him. While they were close to him, they hadn't yet pinpointed his exact location.

I can take at least two of them before they can strike back...That should even the odds somewhat.

Not a whole lot, but some.

Ever so slowly, Jack raised his weapon. He extended his arm, pushing the weapon out through the leaves of the shrub that was covering him. Jack was very thankful that pistol skills were the one thing from his old job, apart from piloting, that he'd allowed not to atrophy. The sights lined up perfectly, and his hand was steady. He took aim on his first target...

With a snarl, Aria leapt from her hiding place, wrapping her arms around the beast closest to

her. The animal bucked, trying to get her off of it, but Aria clung fast, drawing back her knife arm and plunging the blade into its body. With a yelp of dismay, the creature went limp in her arms. Yanking her knife free, Aria tossed the corpse aside and turned her attention back to the rest of the group. The six remaining animals regarded her with apprehension. One of them seemed more apprehensive than the rest. The Ailian took a sniff of the air, keeping her arms up in a guarded position, pointing the blade towards the creatures.

“*Ke la...?*” she hissed in surprise, her eyes widening. She recognized that scent. Taking another sniff, Aria's tail whipped the air behind her. There was no doubt about it. These creatures weren't just of the same species that attacked them before, they were the same pack!

Growling deeper, Aria took a step towards the creatures, quickly shucking the backpacks from her shoulders. She didn't much like the idea of having been stalked. She imagined that the creatures had been following them this entire, waiting for a good moment to strike at them. They'd waited for Aria and Jack to become separated. If Aria didn't do something about it right now, they would certainly do the same thing again and again.

“*Sala te ke'na ai,*” Aria hissed at the creatures. “None alive this time...”

Roaring, Aria set into the group, slashing and stabbing with her blade. She had learned well from her first encounter with the creatures. In a matter of moments, three more lay dead on the ground. The remaining creatures scattered, but did not flee. Aria halted her attack, standing still, catching her breath. She had a small cut across the back of her neck where she had carelessly allowed one of the demons to scratch her with a claw, but otherwise she was unhurt. She swiped the back of her free hand over the cut, silencing the irritating tickle from the seeping blood.

“*Kre...*,” she murmured, waiting for a move from her enemies. Looking around, Aria saw glimpses of them darting between the thick trunks of the conifer trees, the blades on their twin tails flashing in the growing moonlight.

In the distance, Aria heard the sudden crack of a gunshot. Her ears pivoted towards the sound, and she chanced a glance in that direction as well, though she saw nothing through the trees. In that moment, one of the creatures charged her, whipping its twin tails directly towards her head. Snarling, Aria twisted to one side, snapping her foot out in a powerful kick that caught the creature under the chin. It tumbled to the ground, stunned. She placed her foot on its back, pinning it to the ground. Reaching down, she grasped a handful of the fur on the top of its head, pulled its head up, and very calmly slashed its neck with her knife.

Straightening up, Aria turned around and hurled her knife through the air end over end, and it embedded deep in the skull of the predator that had been attempting to sneak up behind her. With an

abbreviated bark of surprise it fell dead. Aria swiftly strode over to it, stepping on its neck and tugging her knife from its head with a wet scraping sound. Sighing, Aria wiped the knife clean on the dead animal's fur and replaced it in its sheath at her side.

Aria turned her head sharply, her eyes locking on the last remaining enemy. She narrowed her gaze, baring her teeth at it, and the beast shied back. With a whip of its tails, it turned and started running away.

“Na la!” Aria shouted. She began running in pursuit, her strong legs propelling her faster than the demon could run. Dodging around trees and smaller ground plants, she gained on her quarry steadily. The beast looked over its shoulder at her, and Aria saw fear in its alien eyes. Grinning, she roared at it. She was mere meters behind it now.

In minutes Aria caught up to it, and she reached out with her arms, grabbing one of its tails with one of her hands. Barking at her, the beast halted, whipping its other tail at her. It missed with the blade, but the muscular portion slapped the side of her head hard and knocked her off her feet. Aria kept a grip on the tail, dragging it down with her. She wrapped her legs around it from behind and held on for dear life, on her back with the animal on top of her. Now it couldn't strike at her with its tails.

Aria pressed her nose to its neck, inhaling a deep breath. The scent was unmistakable. This creature was definitely one of the two that had escaped from the first attack. It seemed so long ago, though it had been only a matter of weeks.

“Ailia'kra me le nai,” she whispered into the beast's ear. *“Ailian never leave enemy alive...”* Aria grabbed the demon's head in both hands, at the front and back. With a mighty wrenching to the left and up, she shattered its neck.

Her failure corrected, Aria rolled the corpse off of her, getting to her feet. The adrenaline, the thrill of battle, was coursing through her veins. Before she had a chance to finish reveling in it, the distant sound of gunfire drew her mind back to more important matters. Aria swiftly returned to where she'd left the packs and her rifle. She reloaded her weapon and quickly strapped on the packs, then hurried to follow the sounds of the shots.

Jack was doing well, better than he'd expected. His first shots had taken two of the beasts, as he'd predicted, and in the confusion of his attack he'd managed to take two more of them. The other four had scattered, and while he'd gotten a few rounds off at them he hadn't gotten any more hits. Still huddled in his hidey-hole, Jack reloaded his weapon. He'd expended eighteen bullets against the first four predators, and he was down to his last magazine of ten rounds.

Knowing he'd get no clear shots if he remained where he was, Jack cautiously extricated

himself from underneath the shrubs. He stood up, looking around. The evening was growing very dark, but strong moonlight made it fairly easy to see. Even so, Jack drew his flashlight from his belt and switched it on, illuminating the area. Jack crossed his hands, holding the gun and the flashlight so that the backs of his hands were touching, with both items directed forward. He played the beam of light around the trees.

His beam lit up two shining points of light. The beast to whose eyes the reflections belonged started to growl, its eyes widening in surprise. Clearly it had never seen anything like a flashlight, and hadn't expected to be found. Barking loudly, it broke from the shadows, its jaws spreading wide as it prepared to strike.

"Oh, no, you don't!" Jack shouted. He aimed his weapon, loosing two rapid shots. Both rounds shot through the predator's mouth, exiting the back of its head. The dead animal's momentum carried it forward into Jack, and he was knocked to the ground. He landed on his back hard, the heavy corpse on top of him, and his flashlight flew away. As Jack hit the dirt, he got an upside-down view of another demon leaping out of the shadows and into the moonlight, its tails poised to attack. "Shit!" Pain was rippling along his back from the gashes in his shoulders, but he pushed through it. He swung his gun over his head in a two-handed grip and fired three times. Two shots struck it in the flank, and it landed on four legs just short of Jack, though it was obviously badly injured.

Jack took the few precious seconds he'd just been given and kicked the dead animal off of him, freeing himself to be able to stand. He got to the side of the wounded demon and pressed the muzzle of his weapon to its head, firing once and finishing the job. The human stood over the two dead bodies. *Four shots left, two enemies left. Not a lot of room for error.*

Looking around, Jack saw and heard nothing except tall tree trunks and a breeze rustling through the long needles of the conifer trees. His flashlight was nowhere to be found; when it had been thrown from his hand it had either shut off or the LEDs inside had shattered. He had to rely on the moonlight and the soft green glow from the tritium in his gunsights. Moving away, Jack started walking through the trees, keeping his steps light and trying to make as little noise as possible. His head turned from side to side, his eyes searching for a target in the darkness.

Jack heard a soft crunching noise ahead. His sense heightened by the severe need of the situation, he started to move towards it, but then he stopped. Something wasn't right. The noise had been too loud, too obvious. Jack wasn't a warrior, but he knew this felt like an ambush. Well, he wouldn't walk into it, not this time. Retracing his steps a bit, he moved off on a different heading.

The demon crouched behind a tree, its ears perked up and its eyes scanning the night for any

signs of movement. It did not have the best night vision, but it was very good at sensing movement no matter what the time of day. It stilled the twitching in its tails, its paw scratching deliberately at fallen needles again, making a noise to lure its prey. The creature had done this many times, though against less formidable foes.

Licking its lips, the beast waited. It was very hungry, had been stalking its prey for many days. It could go for weeks without eating, but now it was ravenous. The strange creature it was tracking looked as though it would make a tasty meal indeed, and when the other half of the pack caught the other strange creature...It drooled in anticipation.

Growing impatient, the beast took a few steps forward, looking around. This was taking far too long. Where was its prey? Growling softly, it continued moving forward, gradually passing the tree trunk.

As soon as the beast's head was visible, Jack fired a single shot from his ambush position. His round struck dead center on its head, blowing a part of the skull away. The demon keeled over instantly, blood gushing as its heart thumped out its final beats.

Just as Jack reveled in the triumph of his successful attack, he was struck from behind. His weapon flew out of his hand, landing a short distance away. Jack stretched out an arm for it, but he was pinned to the ground by the demon that had just tackled him. Desperate, he rolled over, just in time to grab the throat of the beast before it tore his face off with its jaws. He gritted his teeth, squeezing as hard as he could. His arms shook with the effort.

The beast snarled, straining to get its jaws at Jack, clawing the ground on either side of its head as it tried to get enough leverage to overcome his arm strength. Jack was just as determined not to allow this, and he tightened his grip even more, focusing on choking the animal. The tongue started to protrude from the demon's mouth, and he heard it wheezing, its eyes narrowing gradually as it started to suffocate. With a grunt of exertion, he finally rolled it over and perched atop it, putting all his weight on his hands over the animal's neck.

For several minutes the beast pawed ineffectually at the air. Then its movements slowed, weakened even more, and finally stopped. With one final wheeze, it went completely still.

"Oh god..." Jack gasped, relief washing over him in intense waves. He slid off of the corpse and laid on the ground, a hand on his forehead and he tried to catch his breath. All of a sudden, his hunger and dehydration was pressing in on him. He had a terrific headache and his body was wracked with pain from all of his wounds.

After long moments of trying to gather strength, Jack got up from the ground and shakily walked to his fallen weapon. He picked it up and checked it. One bullet remained in the magazine and

there was one in the chamber, hardly enough for protection on this planet. Jack sighed, sinking to a sitting position on the ground. He was just about ready to give up. He'd managed to kill all of the creatures that had been stalking him, and for what? So that he could die in a little more peace from starvation and dehydration. Well, if he had to die...He did have two bullets left...

The sound of crunching dead needles broke Jack out of his contemplation. He looked up, his heart kicking into overdrive. Whatever was making the noise, it was moving rapidly through the trees, with little regard for keeping its presence hidden. Swallowing, Jack looked down at his weapon. Though he was full of pain and despair, he didn't want to die. Gritting his teeth, he raised his weapon, waiting for the source of the noise to come through the trees. The sound was growing louder, coming nearer, and he thought it would be close in a few seconds.

When finally the source of the noise emerged from the trees, Jack's arms went weak and the gun slipped out of his fingers.

"Jack!" Aria shrieked, rushing up to him, falling to her knees and catching him before he collapsed. She wrapped her arms around him, clutching him to her. "You alive!"

"Aria...", Jack gasped, his voice hoarse. He put his arms around her in turn, more than relieved to finally have a friendly presence near. The human just rested against her, not caring at all anymore for what his previous employment told him he should think of her. Right now she was the most wonderful thing he had ever experienced in his life.

"You fall into river, and I...I not sure if you alive, I...", Aria's voice faltered and she leaned back from Jack, keeping her arms on his shoulders. Her eyes widened in the moonlight as she saw the state he was in. "Your arm...and your shoulders. You hurt..." She shuffled the packs off of her shoulders, concern on her face as she reached inside one for the medical kit.

"No...", Jack said, putting his hand on her arm. "Not here. Not around all these dead...things." Wincing, his muscles straining as he moved, he got to his feet. "Let's...Let's get out of here. Find a spot to camp for the night. I can make it that far, at least."

Aria, though she looked uncertain, nodded. "If...If you sure." She stood as well, strapping the packs back on. "Come. Water nearby. Can smell it in the air. Follow." But she kept a hand on Jack's arm as they started walking, leaving death behind them.

"Keep still."

Jack winced, looking away as Aria stripped the makeshift bandage from his arm. His body was warmed by the fire as Aria tended to his wounds at their campsite. She'd located a nice spot near a slow-flowing stream, where she'd set up the tent and gotten a fire going. The stream was clear,

sparkling in the moonlight shining down through the clearing in the trees. The ground around them was covered in a silky, feathery moss, quite pleasant to sit on. As Aria had worked, Jack had eaten his first meal in almost twenty-four hours and drank almost three liters of water. Now, they were both sitting by the fire, with the medical kit open next to them.

“Not as bad as seemed...,” Aria mumbled, setting the soiled bandage on top of his fatigue jacket. She took some water from a canteen and washed the crusted blood away from his injuries, then sprayed them with disinfectant before setting to work with the sealer. “You tougher than I think, yes?”

Jack chuckled. He felt much better than he had an hour ago. “If you say so. I just did what I had to do to survive.”

“Yes...,” Aria agreed. She sealed the last of his wounds, leaving behind only faint lines along his skin that would fade over time. The Ailian turned away from him, packing the medical kit back up and closing it. She was quiet for a few moments. “I...I sorry, Jack.”

He looked at her, surprised. “For what?”

“My fault you fall. I go too fast, make you try to go fast with me. Stupid. Should not have done.” Replacing the kit back in her pack, she turned back to him. Her eyes were shining, and she was smiling slightly, her tail waving back and forth. “But...you survive. You do better than I do, I think. I...proud of you.”

Jack felt his cheeks warm. It was the highest praise he had ever heard from her. “Thank you.”

Aria turned away from him again, and he heard a quiet sniff. “So glad you survive...” Both of them were quiet, listening only to the sound of the crackling fire. When Aria spoke again, her voice sounded a little hoarse. “So. I eat now, yes? You go wash. Has been long day, tired day...” She managed a smile. “Not want to share tent with dirty human.”

A bath did sound pretty good to Jack. He was filthy from the long hours in the sun, as well as from the prolonged fighting with the pack of wild animals. “No arguments from me,” he agreed. “You promise not to watch me this time?”

“Yes,” Aria said, laughing quietly. “I turn my back to stream. You bathe in peace. But you make same promise for my turn, yes?”

Chuckling as well, Jack nodded. He started to rise from where he was sitting, but he paused. Hesitating just a moment, he hugged Aria. She gave a start, her tail twitching sharply in surprise, but then she hugged back. Their mutual relief at being together again was almost palpable. Then Jack let go of her, stood up, and walked down to the stream. Aria turned away and began to prepare her dinner.

Jack finished his quick wash long before Aria was finished with her meal. After he got himself

reasonably dry, he redressed and walked back up to where she was eating. He bade her goodnight and then went into the tent, lying down to sleep.

His eyes closed, Jack breathed deeply and slowly, feeling totally relaxed. Yet sleep wouldn't come to him. His mind was abuzz with all kinds of thoughts, most of them about Aria. He still felt the remains of the shame that had gripped him earlier, the shame over not having had faith in her desire to find him. It seemed obvious to him now that she would have searched for him. Somewhere along their journey, she had stopped thinking of him as a prisoner and had started to consider him a friend. Jack should have known better. He had saved her life, and whatever Aria was she had a sense of honor, and paid her debts.

Jack rolled onto his back, opening his eyes and looking at the roof of the tent. He crossed his arms behind his head, sighing. Aria. He still wasn't sure he'd figured her out completely. By all rights, she should have killed him long ago. She was a lieutenant of the Ailian Ascendancy, trained to do nothing else but kill her enemies. Yet she'd also had the presence of mind to recognize when sparing a life was appropriate, more than Jack had been taught to expect of an Ailian. Aria had very rationally concluded that she wouldn't be able to survive without his help, and had set aside her prejudices to enlist his assistance.

Perhaps that was why Jack had found it impossible to hate her. He realized that he hadn't ever exactly felt any ill will towards her. Annoyance at first, certainly, and irritation at her imperious and stiff personality, but never hatred, even though she'd directed a fair amount of that at him to start with. Before long, she'd seemed to sense that he didn't dislike her, and had grown to trust him and even rely on him. When their initial unfamiliarity had faded, they'd even begun to like one another, especially having gone through the things they'd experienced together.

Which might be why..., Jack started to think, but he stopped. He wasn't sure he was ready to admit to himself that he thought Aria was beautiful. He'd never met anyone like her, and he didn't just mean an Ailian. She was different from any of the women he'd ever bothered to associate with. Aria was strong, smart, and she had courage. Most of the women who'd paid any attention to him had been vapid and shallow, the kind of women who only hung out with fighter pilots because of the reputation they would get for having a "cool boyfriend". Aria didn't care whether he was cool or not; she appreciated his skills and his companionship.

His train of thought was derailed by the soft sound of splashing; it sounded as though Aria was taking her own bath. The memory of when he'd seen her washing in the pool atop the mesa rose to the front of his mind, and then the memory of her kiss. Jack brought a hand to his face, touching his lips. He knew he wouldn't fall asleep tonight, not with those memories in his head.

Not until...

Jack sat up and crawled to the entrance of the tent, unzipping it and exiting. The night was warm, for a change, even with the light breeze blowing through the campsite. The sky above was still completely clear, and the planet's moonlight made the area glow softly. He stared at the stars for a few moments, breathing the clean, fresh air. Then he brought his gaze down, looking out to the stream.

Aria was there, kneeling in the water. Her orange fur appeared dusky brown in the low light, and the reflection of that light on the water's surface silhouetted her form. Jack made his way down the gradual, mossy slope, stopping about halfway between the edge of the stream and the campsite. There he sat, drawing his knees up in front of him and hugging his arms around his legs, just watching. Aria had her back to him, and she was dipping her cupped hands into the water, lifting them and letting it fall down over her body.

As Jack looked, she slowly turned around where she knelt. Her eyes were closed. Droplets of water dripped down her fur, and she wiped her hands down her front, slicking it off of herself in a shimmering sheet. Then her eyes opened, and they locked on Jack. He thought he saw her take in a sharp breath, and her arms started to come up in a reflex to cover her breasts. But she stopped.

"You break promise," Aria said simply, her head tilting to one side. Her voice was quiet, and her words were accusing, but her tone was light. The tip of her tail lifting from the water and waved back and forth, stirring the surface behind her.

Jack nodded in response, not saying a word. He didn't trust his voice not to shake right now. His heart felt like it was going to hammer itself out of his chest. Aria stood up to her full height, and she started walking to the water's edge. Stepping out, she dropped down to all fours for a moment, shaking her fur out before rising up again. Jack was looking over her body, taking everything in. The swell of her breasts, the curve of her waist, the subtle, feminine sway of her hips and tail as she walked towards him.

She noticed his gaze moving up and down. "See something you like?" she asked, her voice scarcely more than a whisper.

"Yes," Jack answered her, his eyes flicking up to her face. Her yellow, gold-speckled eyes were enchanting, almost hypnotic. He felt flushed, knew that his face was probably reddening, and he felt just a bit scared. He didn't care. Aria stopped in front of him, standing with one hand on her hip, her tail swishing behind her. The vague hint of a smile was on her lips.

"Wet...," Aria said. Jack blinked, not understanding. She held out a hand towards him, gesturing to the jacket he wore. "My fur. May I...?" Jack unbuttoned his jacket, shrugging it off of his shoulders and handing it up to her. Taking it, Aria sat on the mossy ground, drying herself with it. She rubbed the

jacket down her front, over her back, stretched out her long legs in front of Jack...When she finished she set it aside, then smoothed her fur with her hands.

“Beautiful,” Jack breathed. He felt a bit silly saying it, but he wanted her to know. “You’re beautiful.” Aria leaned forward, coming to her hands and knees. She shuffled towards him, bringing her face close. Gazing into his eyes, she touched her forehead to his. He felt her breath on his skin, gentle and warm.

“*Ara le se ch'aa...*,” she whispered. Aria kissed him, her hands coming to his cheeks as she pulled his face close against hers. Jack’s arms came around her back, his fingers sinking into her fur as he kissed her in return. He felt her tongue come from her mouth, rubbing along his lips, slipping inside to toy with his. The Ailian pressed forward, gently laying him on the feathery moss. She took her hands from his face, taking hold of his arms and moving them to her front. Jack cupped his hands around her breasts and squeezed softly. Aria exhaled slowly through her nose, a low, deep purr starting in her chest.

Jack almost couldn’t believe what was happening. This was crazy, but it felt like exactly the right thing. She was so soft and warm, nothing like the strong, cold warrior she appeared at first glance. Her fur, still slightly damp, was nonetheless silky and sleek. The human moved his hands lower, down her belly, feeling the long, thin scar on her front. Her taut abdominal muscles twitched as he rubbed her stomach, and he could sense the vibrations from her purring.

With a soft gasp, Aria broke their kiss. She stayed on all fours over Jack, looking down at him. Desire was evident on her face, and she licked her thin black lips. After a moment she rose to her knees, taking one of his hands in hers. Standing, she helped him up from the ground.

“Come.”

Aria led him into the tent, not bothering to zip it up behind them. Once inside, she settled down on the bedrolls, leaning back, propped up on her elbows. She stared at Jack, her expression of want even more intense than before. Jack knew the same look was on his face. He’d never felt a greater need before, never wanted a woman more than he did right now.

Her foot came up, tracing along the leg of his fatigue pants. “Off,” she ordered, her voice husky. Jack was all too pleased to remove the now-uncomfortable garment. He lowered the zipper, pulling them down his legs. His erection sprang up from the confines of the clothing, standing proudly. Aria’s eyes locked on it, her tongue flicking out to lick her lips again. Jack kicked his trousers aside and knelt beside her. There was nothing between them now.

Slowly, with just a hint of hesitation, Aria reached out a hand for him. Jack bit his lip as her

fingers wrapped around him, the short, soft fur on her hand tickling his sensitive flesh. Her mouth opened a little, a growling purr heard as she breathed. She squeezed, not harshly, and moved her hand along his length. Jack watched as she stroked him, small tingles of pleasure starting to well up inside of him. Her hand slid to the base of his cock, held there for the briefest of moments, and then came back up to the top, her thumb circling firmly over the tip. Jack let out a sigh, his eyes closing as he lost himself in the feeling for a while.

When his eyes opened again, he let his gaze slide down from her neck, over her breasts and down her trim, cream-coated stomach. Jack touched a hand to her lower belly, brushing it down even lower. She mewled softly, a strangely kittenish noise from the tall tigress. Jack's hand went between her legs, feeling warmth and wetness there. Aria arched her back, gasping, her hand faltering on his cock for a second before she regained her grip. She really wasn't that different from a human girl, at least not there. Jack rubbed softly in a circle, his fingers sinking in to her sex. He started rubbing up and down along her slit, her slickness coating his digit. He pressed deeper, and his finger went slightly inside, suddenly kissed by intense heat.

"Jack...", Aria moaned, her voice sounding desperate. She let go of his member, her arms coming behind her head as his finger moved inside of her. Jack tore his gaze away from between her legs, looking up to her face. She was staring back at him with half-lidded eyes, her lips parted as she breathed in and out, her breasts rising and falling. "S-Stop...No more..."

He took his hand away, confused, afraid he might have done something wrong. Perhaps he'd made some mistake, done something an Ailian female would consider improper. But his fears were allayed a moment later. Aria sat up, leaning forward. She kissed him again, her hand coming up to fondly stroke his cheek. Then she leaned back again, turning away from him. She dropped forward to her elbows, drawing her legs underneath her and coming up on her knees. Lowering her chest to the floor of the tent, she rested her face on her bedroll. The Ailian raised her rump, lifting her tail, presenting herself to him. Jack's heart was in his throat as he saw her opened up to him. Her alien pussy was so inviting, soft pink and glistening with her arousal.

"Please...", she hissed softly. She swayed her rear back and forth gently. "Need you..."

"Aria..." Not wasting a moment, Jack came forward on his knees. He moved between her legs, pushing them apart, and placed a hand on top of her rump to lower it a little. Jack came close, gliding his hands down her back and around her waist, taking hold of her. He pressed forward, the tip of his cock coming to her sex. Jack leaned himself over her rear, lowering his face and kissing the small of her back. Aria's hand came around, brushing the back of his head, a soft cooing noise coming from her mouth.

Ever so slowly, Jack pushed against her, and his cock sank deeply into her. He groaned aloud, his hands gripping her waist fiercely. The Ailian was incredibly tight, warm...she felt wonderful around him. Aria moaned softly, her tail curling around his back as he slipped inside of her. Neither of them had felt anything like it before. It was a deliciously sinful sensation, that of mating with one outside their own species. Her sex clenched around him, drawing him deeper, holding him firmly.

Jack pulled back, beginning a slow thrusting rhythm. He heard a quiet ripping sound, saw that Aria's claws were digging into her bedroll, tearing the fabric slightly. He had imagined how this might be; he could hardly have helped it, being in such close proximity to an attractive female. But his imagination was not as good as this. There was no way he could have predicted how her pussy would feel as it hugged his cock, the silky sweet warmth bathing his flesh.

Aria's head swam with pleasure, her body shivering as her claws hooked firmly into her bedroll. She'd not known that things would end up this way, but she knew this was right. Jack hadn't been what she'd normally have thought of when she thought of a mate, but then she never thought she would travel with a human, either. And right now she didn't much care what species he was, he felt wonderful inside of her. And he had said she was beautiful...Much the same that she had come to think of him.

"Kas'ne...ne sa'i ra...", she moaned, pushing her rump hard back against Jack's hips as he slid in and out of her. He was filling her up, deep inside of her, drawing her pleasure from her like water from a well. Aria pushed up on her arms, coming back to all fours. She rocked back and forth along with her human lover's rhythm, her firm breasts swaying beneath her. Aria curled her tail tighter around Jack's back, hugging him with it. *"Faster..."*

"As you wish," Jack managed to gasp. He was all too happy to oblige her, and he sped up his thrusting, going as hard and as fast as he thought he could manage. It was almost too much for him to handle. Aria's body was overpowering him, the strength of her form accepting his efforts and giving them back to him threefold. She was more woman than he'd ever experienced, but even so she felt perfect for him.

"Mmmm Jack," Aria whimpered, her head drooping towards the tent floor, her fingers splaying out as her claws released the fabric beneath them. She was panting now, her mouth sucking in great gasps of air. *"So close...Please..."*

Jack didn't need her encouragement. He was almost there himself. He hunched over, plunging his cock inside of her as far as he could, leaning over her until he was resting on her back. Jack hugged his arms around her middle, the softness of her fur caressing his skin. She was clenching around him, her inner muscles coaxing him along, trying to make him cum.

"Aria!" he groaned, hugging her tightly as he rose to the peak. Jack held himself firm within

her, his cock pulsing streams of his seed to her waiting depths. He let the waves of bliss carry him off, his body trembling with the intense sensation. Jack felt as though two weeks of stress, tension, and fear were evaporating with it, replaced by pure satisfaction and relaxation. He slumped against her, his body vibrating with her thunderous purring.

“Gods, Jack...” Aria balled her hands into fists, squeezing tightly. She could feel the warmth flowing deep into her, the alien seed flooding her womb. The pleasure was incredible, like nothing she'd ever felt. It was not her first mating, far from it, but this time was different from all the others. She felt full, warm, and...happy. How strange, that a human could bring her happiness...

Both of them spent, exhausted with the frenzy of their mating, they collapsed together on the floor of the tent. Feeling like he could barely move, Jack slowly rolled off of Aria's back, his cock sliding out of her. It felt like a loss to part from her even in that small way. For several long minutes he lay there, staring up at the canvass ceiling, just breathing. The enclosed space was hot, very hot, but he wouldn't have dreamed of leaving the tent for fresh, cooler air. Quiet gripped the night again, the only noise to be heard that of Aria's soft purr.

After a time she turned her body over, placing a hand on his bare chest. Jack looked over at her. Aria stared back at him, her face a mixture of disbelief, wonder, and something else that he couldn't quite place. Whatever it was, it made him feel like all was as it should be. He leaned in and kissed her, reaching over to stroke a hand along her furred side.

“Well, that bath was a waste...,” Jack said, a grin spreading across his face.

With a brief snort of laughter, Aria clapped a hand across her mouth, her shoulders shaking in quiet mirth. She nodded, her tail waving peacefully behind her. Putting her arms around him, she pulled him close to her and curled her tail around both of them, enveloping him in the warmth of her body. Jack settled in, cuddled against the taller female, finally tired enough to sleep.

A small gust of wind ruffled the outside of the tent, but it did nothing to disturb the two as they went to sleep.