



# TRINITY

INTERSTELLAR BRIDES® PROGRAM:  
ASCENSION SAGA - VOLUME 1  
BOOKS 1-3

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

# GRACE GOODWIN

# **TRINITY: ASCENSION SAGA - BOOKS 1-3**

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INTERSTELLAR BRIDES® PROGRAM:  
ASCENSION SAGA

GRACE GOODWIN



*Interstellar Brides® Program:*  
*Ascension Saga Book 1, 2 & 3*  
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# **BOOK 1**

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*T*rinity Jones, *Interstellar Brides Processing Center,*  
*Miami*

“It’s JUST like getting your ears pierced, my ass,” my sister, Destiny, grumbled, her hand covering her neck where the NPU had just been inserted by the biggest needle I’d ever seen go into a conscious person. “That *hurt*.”

She paced the room, as if the pain would go away by walking it off. Her shoulder-length purple hair swayed as she moved.

“Stop whining. I went first.” I wasn’t about to let my sisters see exactly how nervous I was. As the oldest, I had to keep my shit together. No matter how terrifying the last twenty-four hours had been, I had a feeling the next twenty-four were going to be far worse. “With all those tattoos up and down your spine”—the markings were elaborate, feminine, and very beautiful, but I’d never admit

that to her—"you should be used to the tiny little poke of a needle."

Destiny rolled her eyes, still rubbing the area behind her ear. "That wasn't a normal needle. That's a knitting needle shooting tiny bullets into our brains."

Warden Egara, the official representative of the Coalition Fleet at the bride processing center, was from Earth herself, but didn't appear to have much of a sense of humor today. "The NPU doesn't go into your brain, ladies. The nanotech burrows into the temporal bone surrounding the cochlea and transmits modified sounds directly to the cochlear nerve. And you'll all be very thankful when you can understand anyone you come across." She was efficiency personified. Crisp uniform, sleek dark hair, easy-going, yet serious demeanor. And all that science talk? Not my thing, but Faith was nodding with a fascinated look on her face.

Science geek. Faith had been bringing hurt animals and even insects home since she could walk. For all that, she had a gentle spirit that neither Destiny nor I could claim. I liked order. The rule of law. Tradition. Faith never made plans. And Destiny? Well, my baby sister pretty much walked around beating up bullies and making sure shit got done. Together, we were strong. I just hoped we were strong enough to survive the next few weeks. Hell, years. We were going home to a planet none of us had ever seen. And we were hunting for enemies we didn't know.

The whole thing was a giant cluster-fuck, and I wished I'd listened to Mother two years ago when she suggested

we return to Alera. But I'd been in law school. Too busy. Always too busy.

Now she was gone, and it was my fault.

"Stop being a baby or you'll scare Faith," I said. The injection *had* hurt, but since I'd gone first, I'd bit my lip and stifled my gasp at the sharp pain. Really, there should be a numbing solution, or some kind of drug for this.

"Just because I like to dress like a girl doesn't mean I'm not tougher than both of you." My middle sister, Faith, was eight minutes older than her twin. Both of them were almost three years younger than my twenty-seven. They were my half-sisters, but their human father wasn't the reason we were all here—getting ready to transport to another world sight unseen.

Faith took a deep breath, let it out, as Warden Egara prepared the wicked looking tool for her turn. It *was* like an ear-piercing gun, but with a needle meant for an amniocentesis or alien probing instead of adding studs to a little girl's earlobes at the local mall's jewelry kiosk.

"Don't faint. I'm in too much pain to catch you," Destiny taunted.

"Spare me the drama," Faith said to Destiny, who still held her hand over the spot where the NPU had been placed. As Warden Egara stepped closer, Faith swung her long, brown hair up over her opposite shoulder to bare the spot needed for the injection. "Mother taught us the Aleran language, Warden. I'm not sure why this is necessary."

The whistle of pressurized air moving through the needle made me wince right along with Faith as the NPU pierced her skin. "There are over two hundred and sixty

worlds out there with thousands of languages. Most worlds are not like Earth; they are much more advanced and welcome travelers from other planets.”

In other words, Earth was a primitive, unenlightened and unimportant place in the grand scheme of things. Mother had told us she wanted to hide on a planet so far removed from the politics and bullshit of the Interstellar Coalition that she'd chosen Earth for those very reasons. No one in almost thirty years had thought to look for her here. Until I'd screwed up and called Warden Egara a few days ago. Asked for some information on Alera and the ridiculous Aleran Ardor mother had insisted I was coming down with.

My body was going haywire and I got desperate. Stupid lack of discipline and a mistake I wouldn't make again. One stupid phone call, and they'd come for our mother within two days.

Mother. Shit. She was out there somewhere. The small space ship that had been in our front yard gave me hope that she was still alive. They'd broken into our home in broad daylight while my sisters and I were at work. Dad had been asleep on the couch. And later, watching the surveillance video from our home security system, my sisters and I learned they'd pointed some kind of stun gun at him to keep him asleep. The aliens had landed, put the drop on Dad, shot Mother with some sort of light blast, and carried her unconscious body out to their ship.

She'd been limp when they took her. No blood that we could see on the video, but that didn't mean she was still alive.

In fact, if what Mother told us about the light of the sacred spires on Alera was true, I had a feeling whoever took her might *want* her dead.

Alera. The planet was one our mother had spoken of for as long as we could remember. But we all grew up just like normal kids. Dad had officially adopted me when I was two. Mother had married him and then had my twin sisters. We all went to school. Typical stuff like science fair projects, prom. Graduated. I went on to law school, like our dad. Faith was a biologist with a strange title working for the forest service. And Destiny? Well, Destiny was our battle specialist. We'd all been trained in basic martial arts from a young age, but for Destiny, fighting was like breathing. She loved it. And she was damn good at it. She managed a dojo and taught classes six days a week. She was so toned that watching her move was like watching a wild tiger, light on her feet but scary as hell.

Unless our house had been part of a sci-fi movie set we didn't know about, the Alerans had finally come for our mother. Bad guy Alerans. After years of listening to Mother talk about her home planet—*our* planet—I knew we were the good guys.

And now they had her. Why? I had no clue, but I wasn't going to sit on Earth and twiddle my thumbs. We were her daughters. We *had* to find her.

I knew what she'd say. I was heir apparent. It was my *duty* to go to Alera and take my rightful place. Period. No searching for her. No trying to save her. She'd scold us all and insist that the future of Alera was most important.

Yeah, no. Not to me. And not to my sisters.

Dad was staying here, on Earth, until we contacted him with news. The Alerans didn't know my sisters and I existed. I'd never understood Mother's insistence that we have no family photos on the walls, no school pictures. Our rooms had always looked like guest rooms. Pretty, but not personal. We didn't leave our clothes out. Or our shoes. There weren't toothbrushes or makeup on the counters in the bathroom.

Our house looked like a guest house. A vacation rental. Always.

I'd hated it growing up. Capital H. But now I understood. They'd taken her and hadn't even looked for anyone else. Had no idea she had children. Daughters.

Heirs.

But if she had been taken by Alerans, and we all agreed she had—me and my sisters, plus Warden Egara and even Prime Nial, the ruler of Prillon Prime and The Colony—we had to find her *on* Alera. Why would they stay on Earth? They knew nothing of the planet. Staying on Earth did them no good. Even if they killed her, they'd go back to Alera and reap their reward.

"Does this work on animals? Think of how amazing that would be. The symbiosis of the universe would be... complete," Faith said, angling her head to the side to give the warden better access so she could wipe the spot with some rubbing alcohol.

Destiny was still pacing, a bundle of raw nerves. "Symbiosis? Really? They could be torturing our mother right now and you're thinking about communing with

animals? Do you imagine the bad guys even consider symbiosis? Hell, would they even know what it means?"

"No." Faith grinned, completely unrepentant. "But Trinity certainly does." Faith glanced at me, her hand going to the side of her head. She'd switched into speaking Aleran. "With her super-sexy *Ardor* coming on, she'll want some serious *symbiosis* with a hot alien hunk as soon as we get to Alera."

I rolled my eyes as Destiny waggled her brows and grinned. "Oh, yeah. Hot, sweaty, symbiosis. Probably more than once."

"I can understand you," Warden Egara added. "And I've shared the details of Trinity's oncoming Aleran Ardor with Prime Nial—"

I groaned, blushing. I didn't need everyone in the universe to know my pussy was wet all the time and aching for a huge cock. That I was becoming a horny slut, eager for a male to take me for a wild ride. Earth guys wouldn't do. I'd tried that. Ten minutes of making out like high schoolers and my poor date had collapsed, unconscious, on his couch. I was like a freaking sexual vampire. Afraid I'd killed him, I stayed for a bit just watching him breathe. That had scared the hell out of me and I'd called the Interstellar Brides processing center first thing the next morning.

And given away mother's location. Got her kidnapped. Tortured. Shit, maybe dead.

"Don't, Trin. I can see it all over your face. This isn't your fault." Faith shook her head, giving me her very best motherly impression.



“It kinda is, Faith.”

“Bullshit, Trin. Biology. That’s all this is. Maybe we should just get you taken care of here. There’s got to be a few hunky aliens around who wouldn’t mind a quickie.”

“I don’t need a quickie. Thanks though.” No. Nothing quick would do. I needed a big Aleran male to shove me up against the wall and do me. Hard. *Really hard. For hours.*

God, I clenched my inner walls, aching and eager to be filled. This mating urge was getting out of control, but I clenched my teeth—and other places—and ignored it. *Again.*

“—and Prime Nial has assured me he will have an official Aleran consort waiting for you in the transport center,” the warden continued. “I don’t know much about Alera, but I’ve been assured your Ardor will be soothed by the consort.” She offered me a small smile.

“You’re kidding,” Destiny said, looking at me. “Did you know about this? It sounds like a male prostitute.”

Warden Egara shook her head. “More like an escort, although there really isn’t an equivalent on Earth.”

I was sure they could hear my sigh in the next room. “Yes. Mother told me. They are very rare and extremely expensive.” Having sex immediately upon arrival with a complete stranger? Not my thing, but my body was telling me otherwise. I was so amped up, I wasn’t going to have a choice.

“Hey, wait,” Destiny said, holding up her hand, the big needle all but forgotten. “You’re speaking Aleran, Warden. How can you do that? How can you understand us? I mean, you’re from Earth. You’re *on* Earth.”

Warden Egara turned and put the NPU gun away. "I was tested as a bride, given an NPU and matched to Prillon Prime. I had two mates who died in the war. When I chose not to mate again, I came back to Earth to help new brides find their mates." She turned around, glanced at each of us, put her fingers to the spot behind her ear. "And you three? I admit, you're definitely a surprise."

"I'm sorry." Always the peacemaker, but I had to say it. How sad. Two mates who died must be devastating for her.

Her smile was resigned. "It was a long time ago. And now, you three need to get moving."

"Yeah, a secret Aleran princess, hiding away on Earth, waiting to ascend the throne," Faith replied, noticing the way the warden had switched topics and clearly didn't want pity or additional conversation about her dead mates. "Trin, your life is like a romance movie."

"Except Mother's been taken and I can't control my own freaking body," I countered. "It's more like an action-adventure-horror." My stomach twisted, remembering the way the blood had drained from my head when we watched the surveillance video, heard her scream of rage right before they'd shot her. Her instant collapse onto the kitchen floor. The way she'd slumped like a wet spaghetti noodle.

She'd hit her head on the corner of the cabinet on her way down. And I didn't know if it was the twisted version of heat I was in or just my natural rage, but someone was going to pay for that. I wasn't normally violent, but I had my moments. And this Aleran Ardor was not only

inconvenient, it was flat out pissing me off. *Forced* to fuck or go insane?

What kind of messed up biology did these stupid aliens have, anyway?

“Prime Nial won’t be there to meet you himself as he’s on Prillon, three sectors away from Alera, but he will have a contingent of guards as well as the Aleran consort waiting to greet you.”

“It’s hard to think about this Ardor thing when my mother’s missing,” I said. I rubbed my hands on my jeans, realized I’d thrown clothes on this morning and hadn’t even brushed my hair in our mad dash to get to the Brides center. There was no way a consort was going to want to get it on with me looking like this. I tugged at the hem of my t-shirt and realized it was inside out. *Fuck*.

“Your Ardor started a few weeks ago. It was coming on whether Mom was taken or not,” Destiny replied. “Just think, if you’d been on Alera, this *heat* thing wouldn’t have been delayed until you were twenty-flipping-seven.” She waved her hand around in reference to the *heat* thing. It was easy for her to be blasé about it since she hadn’t come into her Ardor. She didn’t have a complete stranger waiting to fuck her brains out so she could *stop going crazy*. “I mean, if it had come on when you were twenty-two, like mother said it should, then you wouldn’t have slept with Aiden Dugen.”

Aiden Dugen. I had to laugh. Hindsight was definitely twenty-twenty. My college boyfriend should have been avoided. As for his cock, yeah, he would never be mistaken for a hot alien hunk. Hell, a *hunky* anything.

“Yeah, but that hot Atlan at the gate is probably hung like a horse,” Faith added, fanning herself with her hand. “If I’d known the aliens were that hot, I might have volunteered to be an Interstellar Bride.”

“If we stay on Alera, you’ll end up married to an alien,” Destiny said. “I think that qualifies.”

“Well, being only half Aleran, we don’t know if you two are going to have to deal with this stupid Ardor. I hope you don’t. I almost killed my coworker last week just *kissing* him,” I reminded them.

“That Atlan at the gate can go beast,” the warden added. “While that might sound hot and sexy, I can’t allow you to mindlessly seduce an honorable warrior and then head off to Alera. He’ll demand much more than you want to give. He’s not just a big cock to ride. You’d get mating cuffs and a hulking beast obsessed with you for the rest of your life. Not fair to either one of you if you just need that Ardor eased.”

I stared at the warden for a second, totally surprised she’d used the phrase *big cock to ride* in a sentence. And *mindlessly seduce an honorable warrior*? “I would never be that dishonest, with any male. Alien or not.”

“Good.” The warden’s brows were up and her lips were tight. Clearly, she had not appreciated Faith’s joke.

“Yeah, talk about bossy. That Atlan looked like a total alpha male. Probably *way* too bossy,” Faith added with a sigh that sounded suspiciously like longing. She tucked her dark hair behind her ear, then gave a little wince when she bumped the NPU injection site. “Even with a big cock to ride.”

She glanced to Warden Egara, who smiled in return.

“I’m not going to have a quickie with the Atlan guard just because my girl parts are craving what he’s got in his pants,” I said on a little laugh, squirming as I thought of *exactly* what he had in those uniform pants. The bulge couldn’t have been missed by any woman within thirty feet.

“Fine. The Aleran consort then. While you’re getting it on with Mr. Studly, we’ll do some investigating.” Destiny swung her arm over Faith’s shoulders and they both nodded.

“Right,” Faith added with a grin. “I don’t want to listen to your screams of pleasure. I might get jealous.”

I had no intention of going off with an Aleran version of a gigolo who was paid to give me a bunch of orgasms—all while my sisters searched for our mother. That was ridiculous. I’d been horny and eager for sex for weeks. I’d just... ignore it. Like I had been. Or I could just make myself come. It wasn’t like I didn’t have a vibrator in my bedside table. There had to be a place to pick one up on Alera, along with a whole bunch of batteries.

Taking matters into my own hands had helped... for a while. Lately, it would take the edge off, but seemed to only make my need, my craving, grow worse.

“Warden.” A woman in a matching gray and burgundy uniform to Warden Egara’s came into the room. “Coordinates are set for Alera; the transport room is ready.”

I glanced at my sisters. This was it. We were leaving Earth and going into outer space. To *another planet*.

Oh my god. It was one thing to have my mother talk about Alera. To speak Aleran. We'd used it as our secret language at school and no one knew a thing we were saying. Everything our mother had told us had all seemed like just stories. A game. Fun.

But now it was real. Really, *really* real.

"Holy shit," Destiny said.

"Yeah, holy shit," Faith added as we followed Warden Egara down a long hallway.

The transport room was similar to a *Star Trek* episode. A woman in uniform stood behind a table covered in various controls. Before her was a raised dais with steps leading up to it. Nothing else was in the room.

There was a hum in the air, a vibration beneath our feet. I looked down at my old sneakers, Faith's sandals and Destiny's black shit-kicking boots. I wondered if I should bother fixing my inside-out shirt.

Shit. Why bother? According to Warden Egara, the second we got there some alien *consort* was just going to strip me out of my clothes anyway. Ugh. Just... shit. I knew I couldn't say no and stay sane. Hell, I was pretty damn sure I wouldn't want to.

Destiny took my hand. Faith, the other. We looked to each other, then climbed the steps, turned around.

We were on the transport pad, the portal to another planet. To *Alera*.

"Good luck on your search for your mother," Warden Egara said. She stood tall, hands folded in front of her, and didn't speak about our heritage, or the fact that our mother was the queen. There were only two people who knew the

truth—the warden and Prime Nial. And that’s the way we intended to keep it. At least for now. “Please, be safe and let me know how things go. I will be rooting for you.”

“Thank you,” I replied, my sisters nodding.

She looked to the transport tech person and nodded. The hum got louder, the vibrations intensifying. The hair on the back of my neck stood on end. I felt the tight squeeze of my sisters’ hands in mine. We were doing this. Together. Now. We would find our mother... alive, and beat the crap out of those who’d taken her. Make things right. Put Queen Celene back where she belonged, on the throne of Alera.

The Jones sisters were headed to Alera. Those alien kidnappers had no idea what they were in for.

“Your transport will begin in three, two, one...”

The warden’s voice faded. Piercing cold felt like a thousand frozen needles pressing into my flesh. My last thought was that the NPU injection hadn’t been that bad after all.



*C*aptain Leoron Turaya, Planet Alera, Outskirts of the  
Capital City of Mytikas

THE SKY WAS black but for the stars as I stood watch on the outermost tower protecting the capital. No moonlight tonight, the darkness feeling like an omen.

“It’s late, Captain. The watch is mine now.” Gadiel was young, barely out of training, but he stood at attention ready to assume my position on watch. His gaze was full of honor and excitement, a look I well-remembered seeing in the mirror. That was before I joined the Coalition Fleet and spent nearly a decade fighting a horror worse than any I could have imagined. I’d seen the Hive, knew what they would do if they ever reached the peaceful planets within the protective arms of the Interstellar Coalition’s Fleet of battleships.

After ten years, my father had called me home. I could continue to serve on Alera, he argued. I would have fought



for ten more, but my parents still hoped I would awaken to a woman's Ardor, that I would choose a mate—or my cock would—and give them grandchildren to spoil.

I'd met countless women in my lifetime, all across the galaxy, and nothing had stirred within me. My body remained mine alone. And to be perfectly honest, I did not hold much interest in changing that. To be so obsessed with a single female? I'd seen mighty Aleran warriors fall, become nothing more than besotted fools. All because their cocks rose—finally—for The One. To be led around by the balls by a female was not what I desired. To be driven by something other than the honor to defend my planet? No, thank you.

I would remain a soldier, a guard, a fighter for life. An Aleran bachelor. Unaffected by the whims of a female.

"Sir?" Gadiel shifted uncomfortably, and I realized I had been staring into the distance, at nothing. No. Not nothing. The spire. That damn queen's spire and how it glowed bright, the only thing illuminating the darkness.

"Very well," I replied, turning to him. "May the light keep you."

"And you as well."

I nodded in acceptance of his words and left him to attend his duties. The city was at peace, at the moment. The last incursion by an outlying family had ended in bloodshed just weeks before. The tenuous peace would not last. The royal bloodline was weak, with no living members strong enough to carry one of the gifts. Ever since the queen's disappearance over two decades ago, the capital had been under consistent attack by one grasping family

after another. These families believed their wealth and armies would grant them the loyalty of the people.

They were wrong. So long as the queen's spire burned bright, the royal guard would defend her throne so that one day she might return to reclaim her place among her people. I had lost hope, for I barely remembered a time before she disappeared, but I would fight until the light of the spire died. When that happened, I would fight for the people in my city, choose a family to rule I found worthy. The battles would be bloody, but currently three families held the wealth and power to potentially ascend to the throne. The day the light of the spire went out would be the first day of a very long, very brutal war.

The tower stairs were dark, but I had no trouble seeing my way as I paced through the shadows. There was no need to count the twisting steps, for I'd been this way hundreds of times since my return from space, from the Hive wars.

It seemed my entire life would be dedicated to battle and blood.

So be it. Gods, I was a broody fucker. I needed an Aleran ale, an hour with the hottest setting on my shower tube and my bed. In that order.

Exiting the base of the watchtower, I slowed my pace, in no hurry to return to my quarters. Below me, surrounded by the twisting alleyways and dense tapestry of stone homes, the royal citadel glowed in the center of the city. The strange tower had been there longer than our people had kept records, built by an ancient race of space

explorers who left our primitive planet with two gifts—the citadel itself and those who carried their alien bloodline.

The citadel was both a beacon of hope to all of Alera and a bitter reminder that our people had been abandoned when I was a child. I barely remembered the day the king was found dead, the queen missing. My father, now a retired captain of the city guard, still clung to his faith that the royal bloodline lived on, that his beloved queen would return to free us from the chaos of endless civil conflict.

The light shined, so Queen Celene was alive.

But where?

And why had she yet to return?

The younger generation had given up hope. War was coming, no matter how valiantly the clerics fought to keep the peace. I wanted no part in it. The rich fools would fight over something they could never hold. There would be no ascension ceremony, no new queen, not while the light of the spire shined over Mytikas. Queen Celene's city.

As if the thought had garnered the attention of Fate herself, the NPU implanted behind my ear buzzed with an incoming message.

“Prime Nial of Prillon Prime.” The voice ringing in my ear was clipped and professional, not asking permission to send the communication through so much as warning me that the comm was coming.

I stilled. “Prime Nial?”

The night was not cold, but a shiver of dread raced over my skin as I waited for the most powerful male in the galaxy to talk to me. Gods, why was he calling me? Now?

Prime Nial ruled not just Prillon Prime, but the entire Interstellar Coalition and its fleet of warships. The Coalition military, made up of at least two hundred fifty planets, was his to command in our war with the Hive.

Epic responsibility and power, and he was wishing to speak with me.

I owed him a life debt. My blood turned to ice in my veins. What was so wrong that he would need to call in that mark? What did he need, a man with so much power? How could he need the assistance of a lowly soldier? I was nothing more than a pawn on Alera. In the grand scheme, I was as small as an insect.

“Prime Nial? This is Captain Leoron Turaya. How may I assist you?” My voice cut through the night.

“Leo? Can you hear me?” The Prime’s voice was deeper than I remembered, and the faint sound of a female in the background drifted to me across the vast expanse of space.

“Tell him to hurry. I don’t trust those people,” she said. Didn’t trust who? What was going on?

“Yes, sir. What can I do for you?” How the hell was he placing a direct call to my NPU? The neural processing unit was standard issue for everyone in the Coalition Fleet, and most diplomats from the individual planets chose to have them inserted as well. Universal translators, they made communication across all the races easy, but I’d had no idea the Fleet could transmit directly to me from halfway across the galaxy. From the ground to a ship? Yes. But from Prillon Prime into my skull?

“I have a very important, extremely delicate task for you, Leo. Are you alone?”

I spun in a slow circle, checking my surroundings. I was on the side of a mountain in the middle of the night at the base of a watchtower. Every sane person on this side of the planet was asleep right now. Besides Gadiel far above me, but he was too distant to overhear. "Yes, Prime Nial. I am completely alone. How may I be of service?"

He cleared his throat and I clenched my teeth. I knew Nial well from my fighting days. He'd saved my life, and I'd sworn to answer his call if he needed me. "Don't call me Prime, Leo."

I couldn't help the way the corner of my mouth tipped up. He might be Prime, but he always said he was just a Prillon warrior saving the Coalition from the Hive, just like any other.

"Fine, *Nial*," I replied, ensuring deference could still be heard. "I have not forgotten the life debt I owe. Ask for anything. It will be yours."

His sigh made my head hurt. "I am transporting three women to Mytikas within the hour. I'm sending you the location of the specific transport station now."

The coordinates were recited in my ear by the transport computer and I recognized the location. "That's on the opposite side of the city."

"Can you arrive in time?"

I looked out over the quiet city streets. Mytikas was a sprawling metropolis that filled the valley between two mountain ranges. "Yes. It will be close, but I can be there in an hour." I'd need to run down the mountain and break a few laws when I reached my EMV, but the vehicle was fast. I'd make it.

“Thank the gods.” I could hear the relief in his voice.

“He can get there? They’re going to need help. And I don’t like the idea of them transporting to a strange planet without someone there we trust.” The woman’s voice was louder now, and soft, but not tender. Hers was a voice accustomed to giving orders.

“Yes, love,” Nial said. “Leo will be able to meet them.” *That* tone was one I’d never heard from him before, and I almost didn’t recognize his voice. He sounded... gentle. Which, when I thought of the giant Prillon warrior, was not a word I had ever associated with him before.

“Thank god,” the female continued. “Especially with Trinity’s little *problem*.”

“Congratulations on your mating, Nial,” I said. He’d called her *love*, which let me know exactly who the new Prime was talking to. Lady Jessica Deston, his mate. I assumed his second was nearby. And what problem?

“Thank you,” he replied. “How did you hear the news? Alera is far from Prillon Prime.”

I laughed, the sound bursting out of me. “Everyone in the galaxy heard about it, you lucky bastard. If you didn’t want everyone to know, you and Ander shouldn’t have claimed the beautiful lady in the fighting arena during a live, interplanetary broadcast.” I’d watched the entire event of the two Prillon males claiming their female. Sacred and erotic, there was no doubt Jessica belonged to Nial and Ander. I was happy for my friend, but had felt nothing as I watched the ceremony. The female he’d been matched to via the Interstellar Brides Program, a woman from Earth, was striking, and very responsive to her mates as they’d