JAMES MCKENNA



NUBLEAN ANGELS

Nubilean Angels

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NUBILEAN ANGELS

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OTHER BOOKS BY JAMES MCKENNA
THE UNCOUNTED
GLOBAL RAIDER
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VIVAS

CHAPTER 1

"No," Kiri shouted. The Grolack's weight crushed the breath from her. The others squealed in excitement, struggling to hold her down. Her talons had extended when first attacked and she strained to free her arms. The stench of his breath blew into her face and ribbing on his armour dug against her breasts. She began to panic, thrashing wildly to prevent them parting her legs. Her mind reached out, searching to contact her comrades through the medium of their telepathic powers. She shouted for her friend Eloo, but no answer came.

His genitals were now pressing on her thigh and she kicked in desperation, twisting her hips sideways. This was the dread of every Nubilean warrior. The horror they never believed would happen. Now in her first major battle, almost her first hour, she was being raped by Grolack soldiers. If they succeeded she would lose her will, her courage. They would pull her talons and torture her into submission. The Grolack yelled for the others to force her back. He had never been close to a Nubilean, never set eyes on anything so wonderful. The force of her struggle made her sweat a scent that wafted in the air with a fragrance that drove him crazy to possess her. She was the most beautiful being he had ever laid hold of. To penetrate a Nubilean was to experience heaven and gain the submission of her mind. For a Grolack she was the ultimate prize. She would bring him wealth, her talons alone were worth a fortune.

Eloo's voice came telepathically to Kiri. A strong, authoritative voice that spoke directly to her mind.

"Be calm, my precious. It is your body they want, not your life. Use your wits, delude them. Let them think you're beaten."

Kiri obeyed instinctively. She ceased to struggle and her talons withdrew. She lay without emotion staring into his eyes. The Grolack, believing she had submitted, shouted for the others to slacken their hold. He could barely contain himself as he turned her hips and spread her legs. His squad squealed encouragement and pushed close to watch; her arms were no longer pinned.

"Strike now," Eloo said.

Kiri snatched free her wrist. Her talons emerged from the ends of her fingers and she slashed their razor tips across the rapist's throat. He rolled sideways clutching his neck. Using his momentum, she pushed and freed her body.

The screech she emitted turned their jeers into panic as Kiri rose to her full eight feet in height, her long slender limbs taut with muscle, her talons extended three inches. They scattered, but none escaped her speed of movement.

She slashed with both hands, tearing flesh and tunic alike. Their screams of terror were contained by the crater walls, while she turned and twisted amongst them, striking fast, accurate blows which disemboweled and partially decapitated. She killed by instinct and without compassion, tearing them apart until the slaughter was complete. She was left standing amidst the scattered and bloody remains.

"Come little one," Eloo called. "We have other work to do."

Kiri reclimbed the crater into which she had fallen under attack. She felt an element of shame in having allowed the situation to happen, in not dealing with it alone. Near the crater's edge she retrieved her lost laser and pulled herself onto level ground.

Eloo stood waiting, laser on hip, her expression disapproving.

Kiri embraced her, holding back her tears. "Thank you."

"If you had followed your training the situation need not have arisen." Eloo wiped a smudge from the younger one's cheek. "Grolacks are vicious, but without intelligence. They are easily confused. In panic they turn on each other. Near victory they never consolidate their position. They are too eager for the spoils. Too eager for us, that's why they're killed so easily."

"I panicked," Kiri confessed.

Eloo stroked her, closing her mind so the youngster did not realise what fear and dread had stopped her in battle and brought her to the crater. Their relationship now dominated her life. For the most part they kept it hidden but at times like this it was difficult. Anything but sisterly comradeship between warriors was forbidden. Emotional ties were a weakness that endangered the whole group.

Kiri kissed her without reserve. She had no such inhibition about her feelings. She was young, Eloo was her friend, her teacher and her lover. She would do anything for her.

"Sorry," she whispered.

"Enough," Eloo said. "Come, we must catch the others."

They ran with long, loping strides. Every movement of their bodies combined to a graceful balance of limb and pace. They flowed through the landscape in total harmony, their nakedness covered by traces of a silken blue sheen, hardly visible over the skin,

Across the boundaries, Nubileans were considered the most beautiful of all beings. A female race developed to physical perfection. They remained naked at all times, even in the clash of battle, allowing male enemies the mistaken belief that a display of female nudity was a prelude to capitulation. Their enchanting presence, coupled with purity of gender and uncompromising discipline, developed each into a living temple of their race. For the peaceful they were the angel warriors, the guardians of liberty and justice. For Drakens and Grolacks they became the angels of death.

CHAPTER 2

"No." Philamena clasped a hand to her bodice, preventing Rian inserting a stem of grass. "Behave."

"Behaving is for serious people. I gave up being serious when I stopped being a child."

"You'll always be a child."

They strolled through the park in the summer warmth, heading for the pub on the far side. Mothers pushed prams and kids rode bikes. The large grey dog followed an enigmatic trail, its nose to the ground, occasionally stopping to worry the back of its head with a paw and look with satisfaction upon its territory. Fathers wore out their bodies with the obligatory Sunday jog and a foursome of young women crashed around the tennis courts in vigorous exertion.

"How is it," Rian asked, "that women are always pulling down their skirts to cover their thighs, yet are quite prepared to leap round in public sport showing their knickers?"

"Because they're women," Philamena answered.

"Sure, I'm lost in the logic of it all."

"You're a budding philosopher. Reason your way."

"I'd stand more chance with metaphysics and that's a field of open questions."

"So are women. They play a game, weaving a translucent veil of mystery. Periodically, depending on the woman's taste, the veil is drawn aside, sometimes by design, sometimes chance. Either way, men are always eager for what they see."

"That's female logic. Men don't give a damn about such things."

"Oh yes they do. But most are so taken by it they don't realise they are led by the nose. Lace, perfume and a flash of knickers are just a few of the weapons used to dominate you lot."

"The arrogance of it. I'd never fall for that."

She took his arm, pulling it to her so he was forced to feel the softness of her body. "You think not."

He shrugged, enjoying the contact. "Sure, I'd be on to it straight away."

"That's what I love about you, Rian Corrigan. You're so aware of what's happening to you."

She turned him from the tennis courts and across the grass. In the months she had known him they had grown increasingly close. His easy, Irish manner made him fun to be with, while friendship and love slid naturally together, coexisting in a mixture of passion and laughter. He never made demands, expecting her loving consent. As yet, she had not refused him.

Philamena wanted a table in the garden and Rian gave in to her smile, away from his friends, huddled over their pints by the bar. She chatted idly and toyed with her glass of Campari, her tussle of copper blond hair striking in the sunlight.

Her hair had been the first attraction for Rian. There seemed so much for such a small person. It glorified her, like a halo.

She was petite and to his eyes, exquisite. He did not see any imperfections, nor really cared if any existed. He knew her mind was sharp and she had much to offer. During his life he had become adept at dancing in and out of relationships without making a commitment. He was the envy of his colleagues but it left him with little understanding of women. Now for the first time he had met someone he could not step away from. His amateur groping at philosophy did little to explain his feelings.

"Shall I get another drink?" he asked. Philamena leant forward and traced a finger along the back of his hand. He had drunk two pints to her one glass. She always counted. After a fourth he would start to get silly.

"One more, then if you are good, I'll take you home for lunch." She smiled for him and her eyes promised everything.

"How could a man refuse? I'm as good as yours."

He manoeuvred through the tables and she watched other women eyeing him. He was striking with his Celtic looks. Though he drank too much, he remained lean and firm with the neatest bum she had ever laid hands on. She had given herself to few men and been careful in her choice. She did not accept infidelity, but in return was open to their needs. When it come to her own gender, she made no demands. Such affairs were infrequent, brief and passionate. They satisfied a mutual need for love without the trauma of men. They always finished sweet and sad. They never really ended.

Rian was unlike any other she had met. He leaped into her life one day and bedded her that night; not even asking. They drank bottles of wine, argued freewill and determinism and careered naked round her flat in wild Irish jigs. He had exhausted her. She awoke next morning curled at his side, content.

"Why have you two pints of beer?" she asked disapprovingly on his return.

He passed her Campari and took a deep draught from one of the pints.

"Because long ago a guy called Zeno put forward a theory of philosophy, that movement of any degree is impossible." Rian lifted the second glass and drank. He tapped the first. "The theory is this. For me to drink that glass I have first to drink half of it, which means I have first to drink half of the half of it, and half of that half, and every half before that ad infinitum. And that, as you realise, is impossible. So as I can't drink that glass, I'll drink this one."

"You're having me on."

"That's why I need two, for research." He emptied the first glass and reached for the other. "Jesus, would you believe it, another failed experiment."

"You are incorrigible," she said in reproach, hands on hips.

"Just part of the translucent veil covering the male mystic. Now drink up woman, I'm desperate for your body."

CHAPTER 3

"What is your name Draken?" Eloo observed the hybrid with distaste. By his extended nose and jaw, she judged him of low origins. He hunched his black, wizen shaped body, wringing clawed fingers, oozing subservience.

"Spurg," he answered. "My mother called me Spurg."

"You never had a mother. Only the Draken circle are born of pure female."

"I swear Lady Mistress. I am a scientist of the highest order."

"High enough to breed maggots," Kiri said. She lent forward, allowing another member of the group to fasten a collar and chain around her neck. She did likewise to Eloo.

They stood below the brow of a hill. On the opposite side lay a Grolack compound, an encirclement of junk, of derelict fighters and land cruisers, the scrape and waste that appeared wherever Grolacks settled.

They estimated an enemy force of around three hundred, holding a similar number of prisoners. Most would be females from the invaded planet. Females fetched the highest price in the slave market. Captured males were used as parts in Grolack factories, children were eaten. Few survived capture.

Eloo's plan meant Kiri and she would suffer, but she saw no alternative way to cross the open space before the compound. The Grolacks had a large cannon mounted on the wall that ruled out any frontal attack. Both pulled on gloves with metal caps over the fingers and straps that fastened at the wrist. The gloves were a Draken invention, meant to prevent warriors extending their talons. In these gloves the wrist locks had been removed.

"They are going to enjoy us, "Eloo said to her warriors. So when I call, come fast. Kiri has a temper." She patted the other's cheek and they laughed.

Each sister then touched the other and their minds became as one. No further spoken word passed between them.

Eloo gave the chains to Spurg. "Lead us Draken, and remember, death is but a moment from your first mistake."

The three came round the hill and moved down across the dry valley floor. Eloo saw Grolacks on the wall take interest, saw them swing the cannon in their direction. The closer they drew the more Grolacks appeared, their grunts and squeals carrying in the air. She read the fear in Spurg's mind, he knew there was a strong chance of being killed. Two Nubileans were worth all the other slaves together. Her life depended entirely on how she handled the Grolack in charge. The stench of the compound increased with each step, the smell of crowded, unwashed bodies, mixed with the odour of decay.

They were almost under the wall before the senior Grolack appeared. He showed the typical bloated pig like features of a Grolack mutant, an attempt to biologically create a Grolack with intelligence, an artificial life neither machine or creature, an experiment gone wrong.

"Stay," he shouted. "I am Lug. This is my compound. What have you to trade reptile?"

"Nubileans," Spurg answered. "I need a shuttle to get back to my ship. Some food. Perhaps a female or two."

"How could a freak like you capture two warriors? You'll tell me next you raped them. Do you have anything to do it with?" he shouted, encouraging his soldiers to laugh, bloating his chest when they did so.

"There were others, they have been killed. I am the last of a trading party," Spurg answered.

"I think you stole them," Lug said. "And I am of noble birth, I cannot deal with thieves."

"I too am noble, an aristocrat," Spurg shouted.

"You! You were spewed, not born. But I am noble because I have noble features. Is that not so?" Lug turned to the Grolacks, his arm raised, challenging any to doubt his word. The soldiers squealed and grunted, stamping in approval.

"I recognised your status noble one. I can see you are of the highest Grolack society."

"Indeed I am. The very highest." He looked closer at Eloo and Kiri. "They are fine specimens. Have you pulled their talons?"

"No sir. I saved that pleasure for the one who buys. But as you can see, they are gloved, they are quite safe."

"Bring them," Lug shouted "Let's see what you have."

In the base of the junk pile a gate was dragged aside allowing Spurg to lead them into the yard beyond. Grolacks swarmed from the wall and out of their holes, shouting jeering. Both warriors were pushed and grabbed from every side. Lug came through the mob flaying with a whip and punching any who stood in his way.

Standing tall over the crowd, Eloo and Kiri reconnoitered the compound. The slave pens were full of the planet's indigenous population, small red-haired people who showed little emotion or intelligence. Few Grolacks remained on the wall, and these looked to the square. The cannon was deserted.

"Attack now," Eloo spoke with telepathic power to the minds of her warriors on the hill. "Our ordeal is starting."

Lug struck viciously until he cleared a circle around them.

"You are right reptile. They are unmarked." He fondled a breast of each, squeezing Kiri's until she winced.

"See great one, how readily they respond. It is only their spirit which is broken. They are in prime condition for training, raped only once, and not by me. I've kept them clean.

Control became difficult for Kiri as Lug seized her jaw, forcing her to bare her teeth.

"Not bad. Are her talons unbroken?"

"They will make a fine necklace." Spurg bowed, twisting his hands. Encouraged by Lug's appreciation he turned the warriors round, offering appraisal of both their rears.

"Magnificent," Lug said and he lashed first Eloo, then Kiri with his whip.

The younger cried sharply, unable to stop her reaction to the sting that seared her buttocks. Beneath the gloves her talons pushed against the metal tips.

"Not yet," Eloo told her. "Resist."

"Wait my lord," Spurg intervened, terrified the Nubileans would blame him for their pain. "Before you mark them, we must first agree a price."

"Price. The price reptile is your life." Lug squeezed Spurg's face and pushed him backwards, sprawling the small Draken between the legs of the crowd.

"A few moments more." The approaching warrior's words came clear to both Eloo and Kiri as the tall grey figures sped across the open valley floor. They could see Grolacks on the wall and near the cannon.

Lug turned back on his captives flaying each in turn until red welts rose across the soft, silken skin. "Move you bitches, I have special treatment for you."

Eloo felt her flesh on fire, involuntarily she took a pace forward, straining to retain her talons while the Grolacks cheered at her apparent obedience. Kiri had less success. Her right glove fell to the ground under the pressure within. The skin on her rear smarted with pain and burnt with humiliation as strip after strip was laid on her. The screech started low in her throat and rose to a crescendo. She could do nothing to stop it.

Lug heard the sound on its first note. His reactions resulted equally from fear as self-preservation. He leapt backward into the space where Spurg had fallen, stamping on his body to get clear.

"Kill." Eloo spoke the single word before throwing aside her gloves and lashed with three-inch talons. Face and bodies split apart, splattering the circle with the green slime of Grolack blood.

Shouts of encouragement for the whipping now turned to terror. Those at the front pushed back against the mob forcing from the rear. The combined volume of the Nubilean screech rose above the noise and carried across the compounds where their sisters scaled the wall.

Talons ripped apart armour, flesh and bone in sustained slaughter. The Grolack panic becoming a hysterical frenzy beyond their mental control. Any who were armed fired indiscriminately at whatever moved, killing dozens of their own. Both Eloo and Kiri took up fallen lasers and fired directly into the tight pack of bodies. The volley of laser bolts cut through their ranks. Gasses within the Grolacks exploded, and part of the crowd caught fire. They began to scatter from the centre of the compound, only to be stopped by Nubilean fire from the walls. The warriors decimated them. Soon the compound was a mass of dead and burning bodies.

Smoke drifted in heavy black clouds through the pens where slaves cowered against each other. When she detected no further sign of enemy movement, Kiri stood and with other warriors began to open doors. Soon little people were running from the gate and across the desert floor.

Eloo rose also. She unfastened the collar from her neck and went in search of Lug.

She knew Grolacks had no concern for each other. For the elite, Grolack soldiers were no more than animals, hatched on conveyor belts, while a Draken grabbed all he could and deserted.

"Nubilean bitches," Lug shouted, rummaging where he had hidden money. He pushed bundles of it into a container along with trinkets and crystals. When the box was full, he lifted it to his shoulder and taking a laser, returned outside. The smoke gave good cover but he could see Nubileans at the far end of the compound releasing slaves. He let lose a long burst from his laser and turned the cage with the people inside, to a ball of flame.

The section of wall he climbed was comprised entirely of junked fighter craft, save for one on top. Though it looked no different from the others, it remained functional. He opened its lower hatch and heaved the box inside before returning to the ground. His journey might be a long one and he needed food. Eloo saw him enter the building beneath the wall. She heard cries of Nubileans, not the screech of warriors, but the pleading of little mothers to be left alone.

Inside, the building was sectioned into cages and through the maze of bars she watched Lug drag out a little mother by her collar. He held her close and Eloo hesitated to fire, to do so would kill them both. Lug saw and fired at her instantly. The laser bolt burnt its way through the bars of a dozen cages, splattering molten metal, losing power with each obstacle. It was easy for her to spring aside, but it gave Lug time.

He fired back into the cage, not at the prisoners, but the floor. Flames billowed, driving the little ones back from the door. Lug was now hidden by smoke but Eloo heard him pulling his captive along a passage parallel to her own. In the cage they began screaming, and she had no alternative but to help.

It was impossible to reach them through the door so she turned her laser to minimum and cut the bars. She tried to calm them, to reach their thoughts, but she found only fear. They were frantic, unmindful of a captive warrior who knelt by their feet, head bowed and oblivious to her surroundings.

Eloo cut four bars top and bottom and began to pull the little ones out. They clung to her, making her task more difficult, but she was patient. She encouraged the last, letting her arms go round her neck, pulling her through the gap, before herding them all along the passage, shouting to

make them run. Only then did she return. The warrior remained in the same position, the fine silken down on her body singed by heat. They had clipped her tendons at the back of her knees, making use of her lower legs impossible and condemning her to a life on all fours. In conditioned obedience the warrior opened her mouth, Eloo cried out in pity. They had extracted her teeth. She knelt and took her head but there was nothing in her mind, no thought, no memory. Still beautiful on the outside, they had broken her body and extinguished her spirit. The flames now burnt both of them. Eloo stood back and fired a laser bolt into the warrior's head.

On the wall, Lug bundled the little mother into the fighter and climbed in behind. She slapped out at him and he knocked her unconscious with a single blow.

"Nubilean bitches," he muttered again. Within moments the fighter lifted from the wall and disappeared into the sky. Out of the planet's orbit he set course for the nearest Grolack colony. Only then did he turn to the container. Spurg crouched onall fours behind.

"What are you doing reptile?"

"Escaping noble one."

"Not with me you don't." Lug grabbed and dragged him to the jettison tube.

"I can help you sir, I have black blood. The same as the Draken circle."

Lug stopped, and taking his knife, cut the end of Spurg's ear. Black slime trickled down the blade.

"How can you help me reptile?"

"I am a master at my science. I can make your blood as black as any, it would be proof you are of noble birth. Acceptance to the inner circle. Wealth and prestige, I can do it. I can also make Grolack soldiers. I am very clever."

Lug withdrew him from the tube and threw him across the little one.

"You live for now, but if you cannot do as you have told me, you will die miserably."

Spurg scrambled over the body, testing her with his fingers.

"I'm very clever, noble one. Very, very clever. And I can cook."

In the compound Eloo ushered little mothers away from the smoke. On the crest of the wall she saw the gap left by the fighter and knew Lug had escaped.

"One day I'll find you Lug," she whispered. "One day you'll pay."

She opened her mind to the rest of her companions. The fighting had finished and they called to each other, gathering together as a group. She felt uneasy, knowing instinctively something was wrong. The others were standing by the pens. They were watching her, their minds closed to their feelings. In the middle lay Kiri, a bloodstained cloth on her body.

"I'm sorry Eloo," said a warrior. "Your little one is dead."

CHAPTER 4

"Why do you not perform professionally?" Rian asked. He sat cross-legged and naked on Philamena's bed.

They had made love, not lunch. Later she had risen, still hungry for him and tied on her ballet shoes. Now she enjoyed the exhibition of her nudity. She stood before a mirrored wall, one arm curved above her head, leg raised, her balance aided by a rail which ran beside it. In this position she slowly lowered and raised herself.

"Because I will never make the top," she answered. "I am considered too short and with a figure too full." She floated her arm down and behind her so her breasts were thrust forward. "In fact, I was told they were big enough for a principal male to stand on."

"Jealous nonsense. I bet those guys couldn't wait to lay hands on you."

"It was a man who told me." Philamena turned to the mirror, lifting one leg so her heel rested on the bar. She watched his reflection, saw the widening of his eyes as she bent and stretched taut the muscles of her right side. She enjoyed his reaction and let her years of training sculpture her body to classical lines.

"It is not the way. In professional dance, partners are no more than an extension of one to the other. Discipline makes sure of that. Besides, offstage some prefer to dance with their own gender." She smiled enigmatically, but this flotsam if truth was lost on Rian. He was staring intently between his legs.

"I do believe there was movement," he said. "A definite indication of life."

Philamena lowered her foot and lifted the other, stretching her body in the opposite direction, waiting for his attention.

"I prefer to teach," she said. "I enjoy it." She spun from the bar and faced him, legs as one, feet horizontal, arms arched upwards.

"The fifth position," she declared.

"I know some interesting positions myself." He was looking at her small tuft of pubic hair, it amazed him how little there was compared with the huge cascade of copper blond tresses reaching from head to breast, highlighting the ivory of her skin, curving bare and fragile to this tiny blond mound. When touched it felt like silk.

"I just bet you do," she said. Arms still raised she crossed the floor and lifting one foot to his chest, forced him down. "But I know better."

"Again?"

"Again. If you are capable." She pressed hard with her foot. "You appear very pale."

"Lady, look between my thighs and witness there what brings about this change in my condition. What rises forth in majesty, is a beast so mighty mere mortal man is pushed to cope. So great a demand is made for blood to swell such girth and length, my face and body are drained, as if in death. Lady, I am but the humble bearer of this noble animal, which now, I offer in your service." "Codswallop," she flicked it with her foot, testing its rigidity, before straddling his body. "If this be a beast, let it breathe fire before its demise."

CHAPTER 5

Gabriella twisted her medallion of office. As expected, Bron was being difficult. Other members of the guardian chamber sat with her, unsure of making comment. Gabriella was a forceful leader and her tongue scathing. They had gathered in the palace overlooking the lakes of Nubilea.

Bron, stretched in his cloak, leant against a Doric column and glared sullenly from the window. With height the same as a human, it allowed him to copy the pose of Greek statues. Like other stances, he had practiced this pose to perfection. The meeting was important and the result of long-term planning. He played his part with care and gently tossed bait to his antagonist.

"It's not time for my reincarnation. I have fifty years yet."

Though Gabriella sat, his height still forced him to raise his eyes. To compensate, he glanced indifferently over her nakedness. This always irritated her.

Gabriella would not be goaded. Nubileans aged little, her physical attraction remained till death. She responded by drawing the medallion chain between the division of her breasts and leaning forward, pointing herself at him, like a weapon.

"All of your twenty sons, save the youngest born, are dead, and he is saved for the act of reincarnation. We need to increase our numbers. We need more mothers, more warriors. We are at war. Your sons were born too soon. The cycle must be advanced."

"Not before my time. And let me tell you madam, my sons of this life are dead because you wore them out. From twelve they averaged ten thousand fertilisations each. They were meant to perpetuate your race. Not double its size."

"That was before the Grolacks came. Before them we did not need an army."

"My sons are flesh and blood, not machines."

"We treat them kindly. Better than other male species we deal with. If they were fragile, it is you who are to blame.

"They are people, not animals."

"The male has no part in Nubilean society. Their purpose is for breeding, and soon our scientists will even eliminate that physical contact. We will need only to milk them. Like cattle." She threw the medallion aside in a gesture of dismissal. She loved humiliating him.

"So. I am just an animal, domesticated for your convenience."

Gabriella warmed to her sarcasm. She smiled without benevolence. "You are different Bron. The father and son of all Nubileans. You are the embodied spirit of our crystal. We need your fertilisation, and your last born. If only it were possible to domesticate you, to change your insufferable behaviour. Life would be so pleasant."

"Your life would never be pleasant, you're too busy making it difficult for others, "Bron said. "And my last born? What of that poor boy? What do your virgin princesses do to swallow his life. Get your scientists on that, then I'll listen."

"It is not my doing. That is the manner in which the gods conceived the purity of the Nubilean race. Besides, he does not die. He becomes an embodied spirit. An infuriating little devil we are forced to tolerate."