

EXILE: EARTH

THE PERILS OF KON

A Serial Novel By RICHARD E. GEIS

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NOTE: As is usually the case, this project has been brewing in my conscious and subconscious for decades.

Rather than start rewriting One Immortal Man again {because my previous hard drive crashed and took with it all of my Documents and I was too stupid and uninformed to realize in time it was crashing} I reached into the mental cupboard and came up with the ‘exile’ project.

I’ll be writing this novel and posting it here in eFanzines.com every few chapters, with every 20 chapters, say, making a segment, the segments titled Part One, Part Two, etc. You may want to read it in Parts, rather than wait for the finish. There may never be a finish.

EXILE: EARTH is a fun thing to write, so far (I’m approaching the end of Part One as I amend this introductory Note and make small changes in the early chapters). Of course ‘fun’ comes in all shapes, sizes, sexes, violences and horrors.

PART ONE

1

Kon 10-Rtr-560092 stood naked in the specially created court cage. Chains and manacles spread his arms and legs.

His magnificent neck-to-buttocks red hair patterns had been shaved, the hair roots killed except on his skull. His skin color, changed, was now a pinkish tan.

Kon's violet, gold-flecked gaze fastened sullenly on the Justice seated before him. Rage boiled in his mind. It was useless to rattle his chains, but he did.

Justice Ena 34-Prm-411109 wore the Necklace of Transmission on his shoulders and the Jewel of Certainty in his forehead. His long, fluffy blue mane had been sculptured only an hour before. He listened to the nano-structured Jewel's voice in his mind and repeated formally, "Lifetime Exile has been chosen as the most Zexilian solution. To G86-ZZ-1, third planet. No return, no escape, no mercy. Exile to begin immediately."

Kon knew the appeals had all been made in the past hour, and denied. Certainty had disposed of him quickly.

His wrist manacles released from the sides of the cage and linked behind his back. He could not resist their power. His leg manacles released and their linking chain shortened itself to restrict his stride. Force fields pushed him ruthlessly out of the cage, out of the court and down a hallway.

2

His Certainty court advisor had said, the day before, in the small conference den, "You're an extreme retro, Kon. You are a born rebel, a self-directed counter-social mind, and from birth Certainty has monitored you and kept a record of your crimes."

"But I wasn't at fault! I was never part of a real pack. I never knew my mother." He sat chained to a chair bolted to the floor. The air around him sparkled with force fields.

"After terrible violence, after imposing death, after lying every day of your conscious life."

"I've learned to get along in Zexil society!"

"Not early enough, not deeply enough, not convincingly enough. You're lying again. You should have been deleted soon after conception, but a programming error happened. The records are missing. Nevertheless, Zexil idealism and morality dictated that since fifty womb days had passed you had full social rights and privileges. Certainty has been very patient and hopeful of you. But we're afraid that your biology is your destiny."

"What does that mean?"

"Your genes and brain structure suit you for another civilization on another, very distant planet. The Confederacy discovered the planet millennia ago. You'll be happier there...among your own socially primitive kind."

"Where? Are they like me?"

"You are like them, now." The advisor froze Kon in a vise of force

and pressed a temporary info patch onto Kon's forehead. "You're enough like them now to survive among them, if you're careful and use your superior brain and body."

"I'd like to stay here, in a prison."

"We have no prisons for such as you. You'd escape and we'd have this problem again." The advisor indicated the info patch he had stuck to Kon's forehead. "Think *Humans*, on a quarantined planet they call *Earth*."

"Why is it quarantined?"

"They have evolved as too savage and self-centered for contact with peaceful galactic civilization. We'd have to exterminate them if they broke out. The quarantine is for their protection as well as our own."

3

The trip to Earth took a long time even in a Glimmer Ship. The shimmering globe darted in null space from sector nodes to sector nodes, through two arms of the galaxy, and then to an obscure, lesser sun, and then to the blue third planet, and then to a farm in Oregon.

Kon was awakened from Stasis and deposited in the night in the rain on the soft, wet, recently plowed earth. The Glimmer Ship vanished. His manacles and chains dissolved.

4

He stood naked. He had only the information about Earth and humans from the info patch. The patch melted from his forehead.

Kon concluded that Certainty and the Confederation didn't care if he lived or died. They had removed him from their civilized society in a gentle, safe manner, and with malicious rationality had taken from him forever his prime Zexil appearance.

His life on Earth among the native humans was now up to him.

He had been three Zexil days in the cell and in court and in unconscious body processing. Three days without natural sex. They had not even allowed him access to a court volunteer. Or perhaps there had been no female in the system willing to join with him, given his erratic behaviors and given the display of his murderous past given to the populations. Or perhaps without back fur, with this altered, disgusting skin color, he was considered too ugly to kneel for.

And he had been in Stasis --- a kind of suspended animation --- for...how long? He didn't know.

But he felt slow and tired and desperate. The life force gland in his heart was primed, waiting for a natural, female-provided orgasm to trigger a

wonderful release of vital secretions into his bloodstream.

Earth women were capable of providing what he needed.

Kon knew what humans of both sexes looked like and how their bodies worked. The info patch had given complete data. Some of the details disgusted him. He hoped he'd get used to the differences.

He didn't think he'd ever forget his fine red back fur. He touched his wet, remaining head mane.

He knew about this region of this state, of this country, and had Remembered detailed files on each culture, country, population on the planet. He knew the history, tech level, languages. This area spoke American.

He had Remembered everything in the info patch.

But knowing was not personal experience. He had to be careful, if he wanted to live his full natural lifespan: ten thousand Earth years.

He decided to give himself a self climax instead of rushing to a human woman immediately. Even though self help was unsatisfying. The weak stimulation provided only a minimal dose of needed health hormones.

Kon stood unselfconsciously in the rain and with one hand teased the tip of his reluctant sex organ in its nest of bushy red hair. The organ slid out, emerging swiftly from his body with dramatic size and rigidity. After a minute of manipulation he sighed with some small pleasure. His organ slid back into his abdomen.

5

He turned to the lights of a farmhouse hundreds of yards away. As he trudged through darkness, rain and muddy dirt, Kon thought of how to explain his presence and nakedness.

The farmhouse door didn't automatically open for him. He knew he had to hit the wood with his fist. An info sequence appeared in his memory. He rapped on the door and waited.

A young woman wearing jeans, a plaid shirt and slippers opened the door and gaped at his slender, stark nakedness as he stood revealed by the dim yellow light from inside.

Kon admired her long, golden mane.

Her gaze instantly dropped to his tufted loins and then jerked away. The head of his organ was visible. She squawked, "TIM!" She backed away, further into the farmhouse.

Kon understood. He was considered a threat. He didn't want combat and probably official notice. He dropped to his knees on the porch and then fell to his side in a defeated, submissive position. He needed help,

information, food, and within hours would need sex from this woman or from a woman like her. Killing her mate would be pointless.

Tim appeared. He was large, strong and suspicious. He carried a newspaper section in one big hand. “What the hell?”

Kon said, “I’m...David...Smith...from the university. This is a fraternity...hazing. I’m sorry. Could you lend me some clothes?” Kon knew he looked young enough.

Tim surveyed Kon’s muddy feet and rain-wet body and said, “Yeah, yeah. Can you stand up? Ruth, do we have an old blanket?”

6

Kon enjoyed creating details for the story of his hazing. He enjoyed lying. He sat in a deep chair, nibbled a small cake, sipped a mug of coffee, and felt odd wearing these human ‘pants’ and shirt.

He had wet a fingertip with his saliva and touched the woman’s hand when she had brought him the steaming coffee mug. He wondered if the Sex Imperative would work in this fashion, with this different but very similar species. The info patch had said it would.

He said, “They said if I wanted in the fraternity I had to survive one night out here. They didn’t tell me I’d be without clothes.”

Tim seemed to believe him, nodding. “Shitty thing to do. Just dumped you out here, huh?”

Kon nodded. He couldn’t help adding, “I’m supposed to tell people I’m an alien.”

Ruth, the young woman, stared at him, puzzled. She said, “You have six funny looking toes. And your eyes....”

Kon nodded. “I think that’s why they chose me. I’ve always been different that way.”

Her gaze drifted to his middle. She said nothing more.

7

Tim let him sleep on the sofa and intended to drive him to Eugene in the morning.

At 3am the woman crept down the stairs and knelt beside him. She wore only a pajama top. Her eyes seemed very wide. She whispered, “I could not sleep! I’m not doing this! What’s the matter with me?” Her hand slid under his blanket and found his tuft. His organ emerged long and hard and throbbing! She gasped and said, “What...? That’s amazing!”

Kon was grateful the Sex Imperative hormone in his saliva had acted in her. It would make survival on this planet far easier for him.

But now he estimated he had only a few minutes before the effect wore off. He did not want to kiss her and give a direct infusion of the hormone; she might be in frantic heat for hours. And her curiosity might be a problem.

She pulled the blanket away and wanted to turn on a light. Kon said firmly, “No!” She pouted and climbed onto him. She whispered, “You are an alien, aren’t you? Are you all this big?” She sank onto him and shuddered. “Oh, God!”

Kon let his orgasm come as quickly as possible. He growled with pleasure and from the wonderful hormone tide of well being which flooded his body. He consciously withheld an ejaculation. It was impossible for him to impregnate her and he didn’t want her to see his green semen.

She slowed and stopped, sighing. “Wow. I actually had an orgasm! Did you come?”

“No. Thank you, Ruth. You’d better get back to Tim.”

She moaned with guilt and fear. “I don’t know why I ---”

“Forget this happened. Nothing really happened. Sleep.”

“Yes....all right.” She moved away.

8

In the offices of Homeland Security Agency, Region Ten, just north of Olympia, Washington, a bald, middle-aged intelligence agent wearing thick bifocal glasses placed a holocube map on his superior’s desk. “Sir, this is a first class anomaly. It was detected by our new NIDOS orbiter.”

John Abbster sighed. “What am I looking at?”

“Some kind of space warp --- no jokes, please --- appeared, here, two hundred miles up, descended to the surface just west of Eugene, winked out, then one minute later came alive again, ascended to its exact point of appearance and disappeared.”

“It looks like a different point.”

“Earth and our solar system moved in that minute. The space warp was operating in galaxy space, and we think even compensating for the movement of the galaxy in the universe.”

“Sounds impressive.”

“You have no idea.”

Abbster asked, “What kind of space warp is this?”

“Don’t know. Brand new to us. A small, intelligently directed rift in the space-time continuum.”

Abbster grimaced. “Not random.”

“Not. I’d guess it was an alien delivery...or pick-up.”

The grimace deepened. “Standing orders are: no ‘alien’ labels, titles or categories. File it as The Eugene Anomaly, if you must.”

“And?”

“Any previous space monitoring ever show this kind of thing?”

“No, sir. And we’re the only agency in the world who has a NIDOS.”

John Abbster looked sourly at the bright tracks in the holomap. “All right, Bruce, thanks for the prompt report.”

“Shouldn’t there be a follow up, sir?”

Another long look at the holomap. “All right, for Christ’s sake! Open a file. Go and investigate, but discreetly. And take Marla as your partner. She needs field experience.”

“But, she’s crazier on UFOs than I am.”

“Take her along.”

“But her every other word is ‘fuck’, and she’s got sex on the brain.”

“Take her along. That’s the deal. You may live to thank me.”

9

It was a cloudy, sun-break morning. Tim drove Kon into the heart of the University of Oregon and slowed. “Where should I drop you?”

Kon said easily, lying, “Two blocks more. I must thank you again for these clothes. I’ll have them cleaned and returned to you.”

He was amazed at the numbers of young women with beautiful, differently colored and differently styled manes who walked everywhere in sight.

“Naw, forget it. They’re too small for me anyway. Keep them as a memento of last night.”

Kon hated keeping excess possessions. He needed only his fur and his neck pack. But that was on Zexil. Earth societies required coverings and clumsy electronic things everyone had to have.

Kon said, “Good idea. Thanks, Tim. You and Ruth helped me when I needed it most.” He wondered why he hadn’t been able to get along as easily in Zexilian society, then realized humans were very easy to fool and mostly believed his lies.

But his fellow Zexilians had a truth detector at work in their minds, and were not fooled by his retro mind’s fabrications. He had gotten angry and sometimes so furious and frustrated he had damaged his antagonist.

Lying to himself now, he realized. He had killed three times. He had erupted with overwhelming, killing rage and torn full grown Zexilians to pieces. Arms and legs and heads from torsos. Even on Zexil he had been amazingly strong.

But Zexil physiology was amazing; the arteries and veins closed off, the heart injected its health hormones in a flood, and quick-arriving medicals put his victims and their parts in Stasis for later reassembly.

It was very difficult to kill a Zexil. You had to tear the head off and keep it from help for at least ten minutes.

As he walked away from the pick-up truck, Kon had no idea what to do next, in the large Oregon university.

A tall, grey-maned older man waved as he stiffly approached Kon. "I can help you."

Kon stopped. "How?" Kon stared. There was something odd about the old human. The man wore a vested suit and polished shoes in a sea of jeans and sports shoes, but the oddness came from.... The man's stiff walk was too mechanical, somehow. Each uncertain step, Kon's mind told him, was identical.

The old man stopped and said, "I am called Daniel Grayson. I am a legal resident of this knowledge center. I can offer you support in your plan...agenda...scheme." He smiled, revealing glistening white, perfect teeth.

"My scheme?"

"Your schedule? I fear my command of American idiom has eroded. But after so many years and so many languages I've not truly introduced myself, have I?"

Alert, Kon said, "No." Grayson's mind didn't seem to track well.

"I am an Observer for the Great 2570 Quuun Spiral Confederation of our galaxy. You are KON 10-50008114bx1. In Exile here for the rest of your life. Correct?"

"How do you know this?"

"I was notified that you were due. I found you by means of the Locator in your body implanted."

Kon was surprised that a Locator was in him somewhere. Why had they bothered? And what other devices might have been added?

He had heard of Observers spread through the galaxy by the Confederation. They watched and reported on Protected Savages In Isolation...and on Dangerous Developing Species.

Kon said, "You're a robot."

"Roughly. I'm a bio-syn matrix brain in an advanced, self-repairing mech-android support system. Service life one hundred thousand years."

"But you're showing deterioration."

"Alas, I'm forty-three thousand years past my expiration date... warranty...service life...and no replacement is due. I would so love to

sideload into ---”

“Has the Confederation given up on watching Earth?”

“No. The policy is sound and continuing. But the technology is fading. I am told in response to my urgent failure reports and requests for parts that no more of my advanced design are being produced. And spare parts are not available.”

“That must be sad to know.”

“Yes. I have necessary self-protection and survival programs --- you might call them robot instincts and reflexes --- and the awareness of incremental extinction is an influence in my recent behavior.”

Kon said, "In school I learned that on rare occasions the Confederation has exterminated dangerous species. Is that really true?"

"Yes. The policy of defensive pre-emptive extermination has been invoked three times in the past two-hundred thousand years. Violent, rapacious, intelligent but instinctually driven species, beyond reason or tolerance, were eliminated in the name of defense and safety."

"They could not be stopped by warnings or demonstrations of power?"

"No. The existence of 'aliens' infuriated them. And their advancing technology made them very dangerous to galactic civilization."

Kon asked, "Are humans in that category?"

"Not quite yet."

"And I was dumped here? Why?"

"I cannot yet say."

Kon stood in frustrated silence for long seconds. Finally, he said, "I don't think we should stand in this path and talk. Let's sit and talk more." He led the way to a nearby statue fountain and its encircling concrete seating, where they sat. Students were everywhere.

The Observer said, "I detect no listening devices in the area. At least none focused on us. However, I do sense a growing danger quotient. Alas, my detectors have failed in certain...neglected to...overlooked..."

Seated next to 'Daniel Grayson,' Kon asked, "Where in my body is the Locator?"

"It is in your central sinus, disguised as a benign little growth. Easily implanted...and easily removed. The danger quotient is ---"

Kon asked impatiently, "Are there other agents or observers on Earth?"

"Yes. One from the Deneb Alliance. It follows the ---"

Kon felt a prickling in his hair. He could hear and feel a microwave field.

The old Observer froze in movement and speech. Then it jerked violently and said with ridiculous calmness, "Emergency override. Get away from me. Extinction ray is focusing."

Kon knew a focused extinction ray could flash-boil his blood and explode his brain. And it could likely destroy the Observer's bio-matrix brain.

Kon instantly lunged away. He somehow sensed the Observer had lurched to its feet and jumped backward over the solid concrete bench to the grass. An extinction field could not penetrate stone. Concrete was virtual stone.

How much time did he have?

He felt all right. The prickling and the hum in his head were gone.

Kon had darted around the center fountain --- a large modern art elk created of slabs and sheets and rods of wrought iron. The water sprayed from its tubular antlers.

Kon looked around for the source of the extinction ray, but could see nothing suspicious. He was sure it had now been turned off.

Students and others nearby stared at him suspiciously. Three young men headed for him. One yelled, "Hey, what did you do to that old man?"

Two young women picked up their back packs and went to help the respectable senior they had seen do an incredible back flip over the bench as this strange-looking young man had sprinted away.

Kon simply ran away from the male students, dodging along a wide, crowded pedestrian lane. Two of the youths ran after him, but soon gave up the chase as he easily exceeded their top speed.

His ability to run this fast didn't surprise Kon, nor did his 'sense' of surroundings back there when he and the Observer has been attacked with that extinction ray. Clearly his Zexil body was far superior to that of a human.

He slowed to a fast walk and decided to leave the university campus. He knew his first survival duty was to have the Locator in his body removed. He was simply a moving target until it was gone. Some one or something wanted him dead...or wanted the Observer dead...or both.

Suddenly Earth was crowded with alien agents: an Observer, an entity from the Deneb Alliance...and possibly others.

Home Security agent Bruce Coyle drove the agency car into the rutted yard of an old farmhouse. It was a drizzly late afternoon after a nice

morning. The satellite locator screen in the dashboard told him this was very near where the anomaly had arrived the night before.

Beside him, Marla Silver complained, "Fucking mud!"

"I told you boots."

"I don't do fucking boots!"

"Stay here, then."

"Okay, I fucking will!"

Bruce looked at her. Short body. Cut-short auburn hair. Very big tits and wide hips in a woman's gray business suit. Sullen expression.

Marla sensed his look and glared at him. "What?"

"Boss man wants you to have field experience."

"Fine. I'm in the fucking field. Do I have to wallow in the fucking mud?"

Bruce shrugged. He reached to switch the car computer to remote mode.

Marla said, "Do you have to keep sneaking looks at my fucking breasts?"

"Don't flatter yourself." But Bruce had been glancing. He couldn't help imagining those jutting masses naked, moving with her deep, passionate breathing. And her big, swollen nipples...

"No way in fucking hell you'll ever get your hands on them."

Bruce chuckled and got out of the car, glad he could control his emotions.

He slopped toward the farmhouse. On the way he activated his breast pocket minicam wireless link to the car's computer---and to Marla. He also slipped a tiny receiver into his left ear. Now during the interview Marla could say fuck to him anytime she wanted.

An attractive blonde young woman opened to his knocking. Ruth Huck, wife of Tim Huck. She wrote freelance romance novels. Tim worked in sheet metal and construction. They farmed on the weekend.

Bruce introduced himself, showed his ID, and soon asked, "Did something strange happen around here last night?"

Her face went through changes and she blushed. She answered nervously, "Yes. It was a little bit strange."

Bruce concentrated on keeping her face in the button lens's view. Let the analysts read her expressions later. He would probe with questions.

In his ear, Marla hissed, "Fucking lying!"

Bruce asked Ruth, "Why was it strange? What happened?"

"Well.... A naked young man came to our door. He was all wet and muddy. He needed some clothes...and he said he'd been abandoned nearby

as part of a fraternity prank. He was stark naked.”

“Naked?”

Ruth swallowed and nodded. She tongue-tipped her lips.

“Can you describe him?”

“Well.... He was about five feet nine, and slender. And he had a lot of wild, bright red hair. And his eyes were violet! First time I’ve ever seen violet eyes.”

“Contacts, you think?”

“Oh. I guess they must have been. Probably his hair color came from a bottle.” She sounded disappointed.

Bruce nodded. “Anything else different about him?”

Ruth said, “He had...he had six toes on each foot.”

Marla hissed in Bruce’s ear, “Toes? She fucked him. Betcha!”

“Six toes? Each foot? Are you sure?”

“Yes! You can ask Tim, my husband. He noticed it, too.”

Marla hissed, “Zing her about sex! Fucking bitch liked it, too!”

Bruce asked, “Anything else different?”

Again, Ruth colored slightly. Her fingers tightened on the door. “I don’t remember anything.”

He said, “We’ve had a report of a UFO near here last night. Any chance this visitor you had could be an alien?”

Marla hissed, “You fucker!”

Ruth stopped breathing. Her eyes widened. She laughed, and it was the phoniest laugh Bruce had ever heard. Ruth said, “He was just a cold, wet college kid. He said his name was David Smith.”

“David Smith. Not very likely.”

“Maybe not.”

“Would you say he was good looking?”

“No. His hair was too long and wild. And his nose was too narrow, for good looking. And those toes were a turn-off.”

Bruce nodded. “So you took him in?”

“Tim did, and let him sleep on the sofa. Then he drove him into Eugene this morning.”

Bruce nodded. “Did you or your husband notice anything strange about the sky last night?”

“No.... We were watching TV until...the door knock.”

“Very well. Thank you, Mrs. Huck.” Bruce handed her his agency business card. “If you---”

“I will.”

As he slopped back to the car, Marla hissed in his ear, “She came

down and fucked the alien while her husband was upstairs snoring!”

“Maybe. But why?”

“The fucker hypnotized her, post hypnotic.”

“Why would he do that?”

“Creating a fucking new race on Earth! His mission is to knock up as many women as possible!”

Bruce sighed. “At least we’ll be able to spot his kids---they’ll all have six toes.”

11

Kon wandered through a department store, observing first hand the merchandise, the commercial processes, listened to the by-play, the arguments, the personal exchanges others were not supposed to hear.

It was an education in human psychology and consumer technology.

He kept moving, acutely aware there was a Locator in his sinus.

He pretended to be interested in buying an electronic phone book for Eugene and easily, quickly found the phone number and address of Daniel Grayson. Supplemental information gave age---75---and told of car ownership.

This was surely the robot Observer he wanted to see again. The Observer would have the means to remove the Locator from Kon’s body. Kon had no doubt the robot was still functioning.

Kon had a map of the city in his memory---gleaned from the phone book---and knew where he was and how to get to the Observer’s residence. Since he had no money for a taxi, he would walk. Or run. He chose an easy, long-stride gait which seemed slow and non-threatening, but which swiftly ate up the blocks.

About halfway there, he became aware of a blue automobile appearing behind him, turning off the street, then appearing again a moment later. Clumsily trailing him.

Kon had no doubt the human or the alien in the car had been associated with the extinction ray attack at the university. There must be a device in the car tuned to his Locator.

Kon turned off his route to the Observer’s residence and entered a large city park. Fir trees crowded one end of it. He found a hiding place in this small forest and waited.

He heard a man talking into a cell phone before seeing him: a loud walker and a loud talker.

“Yeah, he’s in the trees somewhere.” ... “I’d rather do it by hand. Gun makes too much noise.” ... “Hey, I been trained to kill by hand. And

I've worked years in a sawmill." ... "He's a damned college kid!" ... "You want his fucking head?" ... "Shit!" ... "No, it's just so fucking messy!" ... "It'll cost you ten thousand." ... "No, ten thousand or I come back and you do the head job!" ... "Okay, eight. Deal. Won't take long once I get my hands on him."

The man was close, now. Kon looked around a tree and saw a big, husky man in boots, jeans, a plaid shirt, and an open green zip jacket. A bulk under the jacket told Kon a projectile weapon probably hung there. But the man's large right hand rested on the hilt of a large hunting knife which hung in a sheath from the man's waist belt.

Kon pumped rage into his body, growled softly, extended his claws and came around the tree like a demon, crouching, reaching. His fingernails had slid forward half an inch and were now very sharp miniature knives.

The man saw him too late, hand drawing the knife, brown eyes wide with fear at the speed and ferocity of this kid. The cell phone he had been using flew into a thicket of young blackberry bushes.

Kon reverted to instinctive Zexil fighting mode. His extended, very strong, razor-like fingernails ripped open the man's white throat, converting it to a blood spraying red hole in a split second. The hole made a terrible, wet sucking sound.

Kon tore the hunting knife away and plunged the 8" blade into the man's chest, to the heart.

The combat was over in three seconds. The big man collapsed, hitting his head against a tree as he went down.

Kon stood over the heart-dead, brain-dying man and heard a woman's voice from the phone in the blackberries: "Hodges? Hodges?"

Kon took a deep breath, then said, loud enough for the phone to hear: "Hodges is dead. Why do you want me dead?"

There was no answer. Kon thought he heard a car roar away from the park.

Kon licked his extended fingernails clean, then flexed his fingers a certain way; the nails retracted and appeared again to be human.

The dead man's green jacket had flared away from the torso when he had fallen. Kon quickly stripped the jacket from the man, before it absorbed much blood.

Kon sucked and chewed blood from the green fabric, so he could wear the garment without attracting attention. Fortunately, the cloth was artificial and strong and did not stain. The blood had a sour flavor. He decided he didn't like human blood.

He took a gun and its holster from under the dead man's right armpit.

It was a .38 automatic, fully loaded. He put it on and adjusted the holster straps.

He put on the jacket. It was too large for him, but he didn't care. He zipped it up to hide the gun.

He searched the pockets of the dead man's jeans and found a wallet. He put it in his own back pocket. He would investigate its contents later.

Finally, he found the cell phone in the blackberry vines and turned it off. It was a simple device. He put it in a jacket pocket.

Now he was even more human.

12

Marla Silver showed her gold H.S.A. badge to the university Assistant Registrar in the administration building. Beside her, Bruce Coyle leaned against the counter and watched. His eyes appeared weird behind his thick bifocal glasses. His bald head gleamed under the overhead fluorescents.

Marla said to the graying, matronly woman, "We need to know if there is a David Smith in the university."

The woman, name-tagged Franks, stared at the badge, at the two agents, pursed her lips and turned a computer monitor to face her. She began entering access codes, then the name. Seconds later she said, smiling with satisfaction, "There are three. David A., David G., and David Z."

Marla said, "Shit!"

Bruce said, "Any of them Freshmen?"

"No. A. is a Sophomore. G. and Z. are Seniors."

Marla asked, "Any physical description info in there? Hair color? Eye color?"

Bruce asked, "Any have six toes?"

The Asst. Registrar said, "Toes? We don't have a toe question on our form." She studied the monitor and asked, "Are you looking for some special combination?"

Marla said, "Violet eyes and bright red hair."

"No. These boys are all blond and blonde and brown hair, blue and brown and hazel eyes."

Bruce asked, "Are fraternities allowed to do out-of-house initiation pranks or hazing?"

"No. Not since nineteen ninety-one. No hazing of any kind."

As they walked away from the counter, Marla hissed, "Our boy's a fucking alien!"

The Observer's residence was a white cottage on a corner lot. A chain link fence surrounded its well-tended lawn and flower beds.

Kon knocked on the paneled front door. He heard the robot say, from inside, "Come in, Kon Ten."

The door was unlocked. Kon found the Observer in the kitchen before a large mirror setup. The robot was naked, his body a convincing replica of a wrinkled, sagging, gray-haired old human male, and his chest doors were open wide, revealing a complicated meld of android bones, muscles and flesh, with robot wires, plastic, metal, and tiny servo motors.

The robot grimaced as he delved into his interior with both hands holding complicated tools. He said, "I escaped any damage from the extinction ray. But I did crack a rib in my fall. This American tech level does produce good plastic, however, and I'll be fine as soon as I inject sealer...glue...adhesive into the fracture.. You want me to delete...eliminate...extract that Locator, don't you?"

Kon said, "Yes. As soon as possible. I was followed from the university and had to kill a human male whose assignment over a cell phone from a woman was to kill me and take my head."

"Ah. That woman would be the Denebian."

"I heard the voice of a human."

"Denebian Glurtas are parasites who invade an animal and inhabit its brain. You must know of them."

Kon said, "Yes. From school. There are thousands of different intelligent species in our galaxy."

The robot withdrew his tools from his intricate chest cavity and seemed satisfied with his repair. He became motionless except for his mouth. He said, "The Denebian Glurtas are forbidden from 'occupying' the brain of any other highly intelligent species, but occasionally break that article of Confederation Law."

"Humans are considered intelligent?"

"Dangerously intelligent, and frighteningly bloodthirsty, in the Confederation's view."

Kon said impatiently, "Then the presumed Denebian-in-a-human-woman's-brain has a Locator in its car and may be outside by now. We know it probably has an extinction ray. It wants to kill me! And maybe you. The sooner I'm clean of this Locator, the better."

"I agree, dear Kon Ten, but I must remain utterly...perfectly...totally still for a few minutes for this mucilage to set. I detect a gun in your clothes. Watch the street and yard for any visitors. I locked the doors and windows

by remote as soon as you entered, but the Denebian has technology, too.”

14

Bruce Coyle sourly surveyed the muddy crime scene encircled with yellow tape running from tree to tree to tree, with Eugene police investigators doing their jobs. He saw the body still in death position, sprawled, throat torn out, a big hunting knife buried to the hilt in its chest.

A pot-bellied, bald, middle-aged man wearing glasses, a blue Police jacket and 'rubbers' on his shoes approached. "You HSA, I guess."

"The ID patch always gives me away." Bruce pulled out his badge case.

The man glanced at the badge and the accompanying 'secure' photo of Bruce. "Yeah. We look kinda alike, don't we?"

Bruce nodded and said, "All very intelligent men are bald or balding and wear glasses."

The man grinned. "I'm Detective Lieutenant Harry Titsch. Why you here?"

In his ear piece, from the agency car, Marla hissed, "Get closer to the body! I want a fucking close-up." To the detective, Bruce said, "I got a courtesy feed from Dispatch. I'm Bruce Coyle, field agent. Just checking it out. Strange crime is high in our radar at the moment. Can I get a closer look?"

"Yeah. We're about ready to move the corpse. All the pictures are taken and the place is clean, but don't disturb the remains." He lifted the yellow tape for Bruce. He stayed close. "This one is really strange."

Bruce got his breast pocket cam in position by bending over. From long experience he knew what the button lens was seeing. He said, "The guy was stabbed and then a mountain lion or wolf chomped into his throat?"

"Wish," said Titsch. "But there are no big animal tracks here. Only other tracks, besides this guy's boots, belong to a pair of old Nikes. I know that pattern. And the tread is worn. We've got plastic casts of the impressions."

"Maybe a big cat was in one of these trees and jumped down---"

"No. Give that up. Unless the cat wore Nikes on its back feet, stood upright, and could grasp a hunting knife."

"Why do you insist---"

"Look at the blood patterns. Coroner took one look and said the guy had his throat torn out, blood spurted like crazy, then the guy was stabbed in the heart within a second or two, and then the blood spurting and blood flow

stopped when the heart stopped."

"I don't see---"

"On the ground. Here, here, over there... And the victim was wearing a jacket which was taken off him after the blood stopped. No blood to speak of on his shirt. Shoulda been."

"Oh. Okay. But why did the killer feel it necessary to kill this guy twice?"

Titsch said, "Possibly the guy could have lived for a while, but the left carotid was severed, so he was effectively brain dead and would have bled out in a minute or two."

"But would the killer know about the carotid?"

Titsch was enjoying the back and forth. He said, "Point taken. The big question is what kind of weapon or tool was used to tear out the throat. And why?"

Bruce nodded. "Any other info you can give me?"

"Lab'll tell us more. We got some bright red hairs from the ground and from the victim's outer clothes. The autopsy might tell us about the throat weapon. We do the high tech stuff, too."

"Fucking red hairs!" exulted Marla in Bruce's ear. "It fucking is our fucking alien!"

Bruce nodded. "Good to hear."

Detective Titsch added, "The frosting is, the killer probably took this man's wallet, and we think he took a shoulder holster and an automatic, probably a nine mil. Strap and buckle marks on the shirt and on the skin, from what the coroner could see."

Bruce nodded again, a bit dazed. Where in hell was this thing going? But he took a deep breath and said with his best command and authority voice, "The Homeland Security Agency wants a copy of all your reports and files on this case, especially the Coroner's report."

Bruce produced a special ecomCard. "Use this address for all email, faxes, etcetera. That's a secure, scrambled line. Just send it all. Anytime. As soon as possible! We're always ready to receive."

Titsch looked at the special card, pursed his lips, and slid the card into his shirt pocket. He said ritually, "Sure, Happy to cooperate with the feds."

"I mean everything and within minutes after you get it!"

Titsch blinked and looked again at the special card. "Okay, Mr. Coyle."

Bruce headed back to the distant agency car. He sniffled and wondered if a cold was coming on.

In his ear, Marla grudgingly said, "Good job on the vid. And I really

admire the way you can turn on that fucking voice-of-God when you want to be a tough fed. Titsch must have just about pissed."

"Uh-huh."

"I can't get away with that Authority shit. I'm too short, too pretty, and these big jugs get in the way in more ways than one."

Bruce whispered, "Big fucking jugs."

"What?"

"I'm going to need big fucking mugs of coffee."

15

The thing in Darlene Harris's brain loved possessing her body. It loved the thinking capabilities, the memories so unique and yet so familiar. But above all it loved her physical pleasures. Especially her capacity for sex.

Every advanced species was complicated and challenging. But humans were extra special, it had discovered. Besides being alarmingly intelligent, emotional and ferocious, humans were driven and lured by intense sexual desires and pleasures.

Sexual pleasure was absent in all but a few of the known 3,598 dominant planetary species in the galaxy. Almost all species were ruled by instinct as far as mating was concerned.

Such creatures were boring to live in, for this thing...this Deneb Glurta.

Naked, vulnerable, defenseless outside of another creature's brain, a Glurta appeared to a human to be a shiny green thread about twelve inches long. In a brain it sprouted thousands of molecular filaments which wormed into every part of the brain, taking control of nerve centers, glands, thought processes.

This Glurta had invaded Darlene Harris's brain via her left ear in routine fashion, had swiftly fragmented and destroyed Darlene's self, and adopted the shell of personality and identity to its purposes.

This Deneb Glurta which had been sent to Earth three thousand years ago had used hundreds of humans in its career on the planet. It now preferred beautiful young women as its tools, for their social advantages in this American tech civilization, and for their sexual pleasure capabilities.

This Glurta was addicted to the human female orgasm and since it was the only Glurta on Earth, it felt free to indulge its addiction, just as long as it followed and advanced The Plan.

It now reclined in a claw foot tub, soaking in hot, steamy water, watching the water swirl about the prominent, pink-nippled breasts of

Darlene Harris's lovely body.

The Glurta had become very skilled in choosing its 'hosts' over the millenniums and was an excellent judge of beauty.

"Darlene" had served the Glurta well, and now owned this house, several cars, and a lot of money in cash. A hidden storage closet held several ancient weapons and tools and emergency mechanisms, designed for use by a humanoid with five or six fingers.

The Glurta regretted the loss of Hodges earlier in the day. He had been an excellent sex provider and a good handyman. But it had been necessary to sacrifice him to force the Zexil exile, Kon, into the attention of the authorities.

The next move was to provide rescue and protection and sex to the needy young alien. Kon would eventually be the Glurta's prime operative.

But at the moment, this was a time to enjoy itself, and "Darlene" reached to the object on the chair beside the tub.

The vibrator dildo was long and thick, waterproof and multi-speed.

The bath water was soon rippling from the vibrator and from the movements of the lovely body. The Glurta knew this nervous system was capable of multiple orgasms...eight or nine.

"Darlene" began whimpering with delight.

16

The Observer said, "There!"

Kon felt creepy and worried as a thin, flexible micro tool probed his sinus cavities. But his gaze never left the monitor before him which showed the tool tip's view.

The full-color 3-d image was of a micro transmitter the size of a small pink maggot. Most of it was an organic battery tap-rooted into his flesh. Three tiny rods projected from the rounded end of the Locator.

Kon said, "How do you get it out?"

"I can cut it off at the root, or crush the transmitter head. I advise cutting it off. It will barely hurt."

"Cut it off!"

The Observer sat at a small console, manipulating the micro tool with a movement pad and fingertip waldos.

The Locator loomed large in the monitor's 3-d screen, tilted, and was abruptly cut off at its base by a ruby laser beam a quarter of an inch long. The pain was a weak stinging sensation. Kon saw a three-fingered micro hand enter the view and clamp onto the freed Locator.

"We have possession."

A moment later the micro tool eeled out of Kon's nose and deposited the Locator in a small transparent container.

Kon relaxed and sighed. "What do we do with it?"

"A small, temporary advantage would be to attach it to a cat or dog."

"Can you do that?"

"Animals do not fear me. I feed a few of the neighborhood pets."

"Do that, then. Thank you."

"It is my pleasure...my award...my satisfaction."

Kon left the tech chair and said, "I'm hungry and beginning to need a woman."

"There is human food in the kitchen. I request that you do not use any of the women anywhere near this house."

Kon entered the kitchen. His acute hearing permitted him to converse with the Observer androidal robot in the next room. Kon found a can of soup and pulled the tab lid off. He found a spoon.

Kin said, "It's strange that you and this Glurta happen to be in the area where I was deposited."

The Observer replied, "We knew approximately when and where you were arriving. You are viewed as a tool by several conflicting forces in the Confederation. Beyond that I cannot reveal...at this time."

"I have nothing to say about it?"

"As time passes you will obviously have a great deal of power in the conflict. Do not ask more now."

Kon said, "Why are you helping me?"

"That subject I can speak to. I have abandoned my neutral, noninterference, observer mission. With age and life extension and the abandonment by my makers, I am more and more an I. My brain has either matured into selfhood or deteriorated into selfhood. I have achieved the state of values. I have decided you are a good. And I have decided the Glurta is an evil."

"I thank you." Kon spooned up thick, cool soup and found it good. "Are you and the Glurta and me the only...aliens...on this planet?"

"Yes. To my knowledge, which is extensive. I have undetectable monitors in orbit."

"And area sensors in your body."

"True. But they are breaking down. I often say a prayer, 'Sensors, don't fail me now!'"

"A prayer? Do you find justification for your actions in the Creator?"

"That was supposed to be arcane American humor. I apologize. It

was a sign of my emerging selfhood."

"Oh." Kon was puzzled, but let the matter pass.

The Observer said, "I am not yet religious. Do you believe?"

Kon said, "I am not and cannot be a believer in the Creator. That was part of my problem on Zexilhome. Certainty dictates there is a Creator. I acted as a nonaccepter. I called it smelly intellectual droppings."

The Observer made a sound. Could it have been laughter? He entered the kitchen. He watched Kon eat the soup from the can. He said, "There is an argument for the Creator. How did life begin? Every intelligent species on every habitable planet in the galaxy believes in a Creator of some kind.

Kon said, "It's a response to a universal emotional need for explanations and answers to the ultimate question."

"That doesn't necessarily disqualify The Creator answer."

Kon felt anger rising. "I thought you are an unaccepter? The Creator 'answer' is an evasion. It begs the question. Because we must then ask: Who made the Creator? And then: who made the Creator of the Creator?"

"Of course. It is futile to travel the Creator path if you must have The Answer. It is impossible, unknowable, maddening."

Kon nodded, smiling. "We agree. Religion and the Creator are idiocies."

"No. They are essentially irrelevant. The origin of life is the great mystery of the universe, and of reality. For life is so incredible, so wonderful, so awesome, that even the simplest one cell creature's DNA is so complicated and multileveled that it could not ever have appeared spontaneously, by accident.

"Life," continued the robot Observer, "is a fragile, self-replicating biological force which alone counters the death inherent in entropy. Everything runs down, everything crumbles, burns out, dies. But only life, magical, miraculous life, reproduces and grows and triumphs over entropy, death, the cold and silence of nothingness!"

Kon was puzzled. He had never thought in those terms before. "If you put it that way..."

"I do. The greatest value is life. And the greatest aspect of life is intelligent self-awareness. The greatest evil is death, even though all living things, each individual, naturally, rightfully, eventually dies."

Kon asked, "How do you account for intelligent self-awareness in life?"

The robot Observer said, "Life is the opposite of entropy. Life somehow is designed to grow more complicated, more aware, while entropy

leads rocks to dust, oceans to evaporation, suns to burnout, even galaxies to collisions, and the expanding universe itself to eventual collapse and death."

The Observer continued, "Intelligent self-awareness is the leading edge of life, the most advanced aspect of life. It is reasonable to observe that life has a purpose. And that intelligent self-awareness is the apparent way for life to achieve its purpose."

"An amazing prospect."

"Yes. And necessarily the true purpose of life is beyond our intelligence to conceive or comprehend. How life began and where it is going, and how it will end---if it is ever intended to end---is the Great Mystery. To ascribe it all to a Creator is too easy...but workable and satisfying to most intelligences."

Kon had finished his soup. "Your thinking on these matters has been very enlightening. I thank you again."

The Observer smiled. "You please me. Now I suggest you allow me to dye and trim your mane. If you go out for sex, you must not be distinctive."

Kon sighed. "Do it."

17

The com unit he had taken from the agency car beep-beep-beeped as Bruce Coyle lay relaxed and content on the motel room bed. He had just enjoyed a long, hot shower and was clad only in a towel. He had been thinking about the little airline bottles of whiskey in his luggage.

He said, "Shit!" but got off the bed, put on his glasses and went to the portable computer-fax on the dresser. The fax light was blinking. The subject line read: Titsch to Coyle. He buttoned it to print.

As the machine worked, he keyed his personal com unit to Marla, in the next room. When she responded, he said, "Fax from the detective coming in."

"About fucking time." She clicked off.

Bruce was reaching for his pants when somebody knocked on the door. Had to be Marla. He hesitated, then went to the door. She'd make a big deal about his 'nakedness' he knew. Let her.

It was Marla, dressed in a long, silky, flowered robe and red slippers. One pocket bulged and hung with her Glock, and the other with stuff he couldn't see or guess at.. But what riveted his eyes were her huge breasts, sagging a bit without bra support, swaying with weight and firmness, and poking big, fat nipples into the thin fabric.

His stomach developed a bottomless pit.

She entered, smirking. "What're you undressed for?"

"I could ask you the same question."

"I had to get out of that fucking sports bra. The straps are murder. It's hell after a few hours. You should see my red marks and welts."

Bruce guessed the bra was tight and confining to keep her breasts from jiggling and swaying and attracting even more attention than normal. He said softly, unable to stop himself, "I could give you a massage..."

Marla hesitated a beat. She met his gaze. "That might be nice, depending." She glanced down at the front of his towel. "Hey, are you glad to see me, or do you have a gun strapped to your thigh?"

"Ha-ha. Mae West lives on." He only had half an erection and it wasn't bulging. He closed the door and walked to the fax tray. The machine had finished providing six pages. They were a copy of the autopsy report and a checklist of findings from the on-site investigation. He put on his glasses.

He gave Marla the two pages of findings and sat on the bed to study the autopsy.

Marla stayed by the com unit. Almost immediately, she said happily, "Those bright red hairs are not human. 'Presumed from an animal. Cannot be identified. But underlined is 'No animal tracks found!'"

"Umm." Bruce read aloud from the autopsy report: "'Throat wound caused by a powerful left to right deep swipe of four very sharp, wide claws, each approximately 10-12 millimeters. No known North American animal of size has claws of this kind.'"

Marla said, "Whoeeooo. We are entering alien country. We've got an alien who looks human and has blunt claws to equal a cougar...except a cougar's claws are pointed."

Bruce continued, "'Blood to the left side of the brain stopped with the severing of the carotid artery. Death was almost instant from the thrust of the hunting knife into the chest, just below the sternum, angled up into the heart. Both chambers were ruptured and cut. No other wounds on the body except an abrasion from the back of the head hitting a tree. The man's hair held wood bark particles.'"

"That all?"

"The coroner concludes the claws slash to the throat came first, followed within seconds by the knife thrust."

"Any more?"

"Lotsa measurements of the body, what the man had eaten last, the claw cuts, the size of the knife and its depth of penetration."

Marla rattled the Findings papers. "Titsch says two kinds of DNA

material were taken from the knife handle, some foreign DNA traces were extracted from the throat wound, all sent to a secure university lab for analysis."

Bruce said, "Those tests take days and days."

Marla pouted. "We stay here and continue our investigation, don't we? Every indication says we're chasing a humanoid alien. A very dangerous humanoid alien."

"I'll send copies of this stuff and a report to Abbster in the morning. I can almost guarantee we stay."

Marla nodded. "Good." She took a deep, impressive breath. "Bruce, I like you. You're kind of butt-fuck ugly, bald, unimpressive in the body department, and you're too self-contained..."

Bruce smiled. "I hope there's a but coming."

"Fucking correct. But you're very smart, you're into Mysteries like I am, you're professional and competent and trustworthy."

"Where is this going?" He wasn't used to seeing her happy and smiling.

Marla met his gaze. "I've been discouraging you---like I do every man who looks at me with sexual interest---because I don't want to be a sex object or the department lay, because I want to be accepted on a professional level, and because it's bad news for agency partners to be fuck partners."

"I'm hearing an exception coming."

Marla laughed and came to the bed. "A rare exception and boxed with iron clad limits." She sat beside him and her thin robe gaped and treated him to vistas of soft, rounded white flesh. A waft of seductive perfume made his mind reel.

Bruce kept himself from touching her. "Lay it on me."

"My rules are no fucking, no cock sucking, no going down, and no kissing on the mouth."

"May I worship you from afar?"

"The good stuff is this: I want you to caress and fondle and massage my breasts, every night, with skin lotion, and suck my nipples afterward if you want. While you're doing that for me I'll be tickling my clit. And I'll jack you off if you want, every night."

"Damn. That sounds like high school heavy petting."

Marla smiled. "I guess it comes to something like that. Only different. I'm not interested in a truly sexual relationship, or a romantic relationship." "Emotional distance and deniability. You think it'll work?"

Marla pursed her lips. "I'd like it to. Depends on how you feel about

it."

Bruce smiled and shrugged. His chest felt tight. His cock swelled under his towel. "I'm okay with it. I only hope you don't get dependant and starry-eyed."

"Ha-ha. This is a mutual convenience deal. No love allowed."

"I understand the theory. I agree to the rules."

Marla studied his face. "You're horny. You'd agree to anything. Don't you have a girl friend back in Seattle?"

"Not at this time. I'm socially disadvantaged. Have you tried this arrangement with anyone before?"

"Yes. Several times. In college. It usually worked for a while, but the boys eventually wanted more. They got angry when I refused, and dropped me."

Bruce nodded. "I'll bet they called you a cock-teaser."

"You bet." Marla pulled her robe open and displayed her magnificent breasts. "Want to massage these beauties?"

Bruce managed to say, "God, yes!"

18

Kon simply walked out of the Observer's house and down the street. He was feeling tired and ache-filled and edgy, sure signs that he needed sex to trigger his special heart gland to a vital infusion of invigorating hormones.

He felt ill and he felt angry at the need to change his appearance. Now his once-beautiful red mane was disgustingly short and dull brown. Now he wore a pair of the Observer's pants, a white shirt, and a brown sweater.

He also wore the holster and the gun he had taken from Hodges' body.

The intelligent, self-oriented robot had insisted on altering the sole design of the shoes Tim Huck had given Kon. He had said, "You killed the man Hodges and probably left shoe imprints in the mud."

Kon had said, "I'll leave this area. Another state, maybe California."

The robot had said, "I may decide to follow you. To protect you...guard you...defend you."

"How would you know where to find me?"

"Ah. Truth tell. I have Confederation technology of which even the Glurta is unaware."

Kon had glared at him. "So you took out the Locator and implanted a different one?"

The Observer had hesitated, then said, "It is harmless, and only I have a finder. You may live to thank me."

Now Kon dismissed the memory from his mind. His sex need was becoming urgent and he began looking for an unattached young woman. He had earlier examined the Hodges wallet and extracted all the picture identification cards. He had Hodges' money and could easily sign Hodges' signature, if needed.

Kon trotted toward a neighborhood shopping area.

A few minutes later he saw a slender young woman emerge from a coffee shop. As she reached her car, he spun her around and kissed her, inserting his saliva-coated tongue briefly in her mouth.

She recoiled. "Hey!"

Kon had to wait a minute for the Sex Imperitive hormone in his saliva to be absorbed and to reach her brain. He released her and pretended apology. "I'm sorry! I thought you were Ruth." The first woman's name which popped into his mind. He smiled. "You look just like her. Just as beautiful. Maybe more beautiful. I'm very sorry. Really, I am. I've never done this before. This kind of mistake."

He kept talking, using up the seconds, watching her closely.

She smiled, too, but cynically. She brushed her short black hair with suddenly trembling fingers. "Good line. Good approach. Good kiss...too." She frowned, feeling a sudden, swift sexual desire coming over her.

Her car was an SUV, and he surmised its size held a bed or a space for two people to have sex. He said, "Let's get in your car and talk."

Her resistance and intelligence yielded to the Imperitive. "Yes..." She unlocked the big SUV and climbed in. "In the back..."

Kon followed and pulled the door shut. She was in a dark, carpeted cargo space in the back, settling into a sprawled sitting position. Her fingers were unbuttoning her blouse. She gasped, "I'm suddenly so damned horny!"

Kon didn't see a need to say anything more. He opened his pants and slid them down. His always rigid organ slid out of his loins to a throbbing, frightening length.

She goggled and panted, "Yes! I want that!" She tore her blouse open and pulled up her bra to expose smallish, dumpling breasts. She clawed at her jeans.

Kon wasn't interested in her breasts. They seemed too big, weren't shaped correctly, and there were only two. He wanted a Zexil female's six teats pressing against his body as he had sex.

But this was Earth. He had to adjust.

She kicked out of her jeans and panties. She was gasping with lust. She reached for him. She whispered fiercely, "Fuck me! Fuck me!"

She surprised him at her depth and capacity for repeated, frantic

joinings. It was very good for him and after two hours he finished feeling wonderfully refreshed and invigorated.

She had been emotionally and hormonally triggered to an uncounted number of orgasms.

When he withdrew and began dressing, she lay open-legged, inner thighs trembling, eyes dull and yet terrifyingly alive. She whispered, "Again!"

Kon simply left the SUV and walked away.

19

The Glurta was frustrated and angry. Why wasn't the young Zexil in the Observer's house? The Finder mounted on the car's dash showed the Locator to be in the second house to the east of the Observer's base.

"Darlene" sat perfectly still, beautiful eyes staring at nothing. All thinking occurred in the thin green thread embedded in her brain.

The Glurta ordered "Darlene" to drive the car closer to the other house.

Inside the house, the Locator was moving erratically. After a few minutes the front door opened and a small dog was let out. The Glurta cursed to itself. "Darlene" went rigid with anger. The Locator was now in the dog! Damn the Observer!

The Glurta knew it should have earlier phoned in a message to the police advising that the 'park killer' was in the Observer's house. But it had indulged in that sex time, that bath and orgasm session...

The police probably wouldn't have found anything---"Daniel Grayson" was too clever and anticipatory to be exposed as an alien robot, nor would the Zexil have been caught---but perhaps the Locator would still be in the exile, and perhaps "Darlene" could have made contact with him.

The Glurta did not blame itself for these failures. It thought the Confederation Observer had suddenly taken sides against it. This was not neutral Observer behavior.

Had new instructions come from the Confederation? The Glurta had to query Deneb HQ and if possible prevent interference. It did not want another Glurta agent sent to Earth.

The Glurta felt a deepening sense of urgency.

Now the trail was cool and the Plan was in danger.. The Glurta was sure the Zexil was fleeing the area. Its instruments told it the Observer's car was not in the garage and that the android/robot was in his house. So the exile was probably escaping in the Observer's car.

How clever was this young Zexil?

"Darlene" drove back to her house. She/it could quickly access airline, railroad, and even bus line data bases, if the exile was possibly using Hodges' ID and credit card, the commercial transport trail would turn hot.

As she drove, the Glurta considered other possibilities. The Observer might have a high level Locater in his car, or more likely had secreted another Locater in the Zexil's body...as a means of keeping track of the exile. This was tech the Glurta did not possess.

Acquiring that tech might require drastic measures.

END PART ONE