



*Can a stubborn
scientist and a sexy
cyborg make love
grow?*

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BEING GREEN

Being Green

Cynthia Sax

Can a stubborn scientist and a sexy cyborg make love grow?

* * *

He doesn't expect to find love.

Doctor Shelby Cooper is the sole resident of a tiny planet. She prefers to be alone rather than risk caring for another being and then losing him. The curvaceous scientist is determined to resist Green's patient caresses, his thought-burning kisses, his slow seduction.

She has underestimated the power of a cyborg's passion.

Being Green

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Thank you for respecting the hard work of this author.

This is a work of fiction. All of the characters, organizations, and events portrayed in this story are either products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual events, locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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Letter To My Readers

You're receiving this eBook for free because you're one of my dear wonderful reading buddies (big hugs). You care about me and my stories enough to subscribe to my newsletter.

I really appreciate this, which is why I've written this short cyborg story exclusively for you. Being Green won't ever appear at booksellers. It won't be offered for free or for sale anywhere else (if you see it somewhere else, it is a pirated copy).

This is a short story and assumes that you've read either *Releasing Rage*, *Breathing Vapor* or one of my future cyborg stories. Green, our cyborg hero, appears in *Releasing Rage*. As this story was written for the holidays, it is also much lighter in tone than my other cyborg stories are.

I'm looking forward to writing many more cyborg stories in the future. *Crash and Burn*, *Crash's* story, is the next story scheduled to release. As a newsletter subscriber, you'll be notified when it does.

I also hope to continue this tradition, giving newsletter subscribers exclusive free stories. Why? Because I love you. I want you to be as happy as you've made me.

Thank you so much for being part of my life!

Cynthia Sax

Chapter One

Green wanted Doctor Shelby Cooper.

It was an irrational desire, especially for a normally logical cyborg such as himself. He'd never seen the botanist. He'd never spoken with her, never heard her voice. They had only communicated through written messages.

But her words had intrigued him. She shared her knowledge of plants fearlessly, not caring if she was judged harshly for her unique stances. Her quirky observations often made him smile.

That, in itself, was a miracle. He'd suffered a lifespan of abuse from his sadistically cruel human masters before he had escaped. Interacting with other beings had given Green little pleasure.

The exceptions being Zip and Barrel, his friends, and Windy, his beloved plant, and now, his Shelby, as he'd grown to think of the human female.

Enthralled by her messages, he had investigated her and these findings had increased his fascination. She lived alone on a planet, cut off from the rest of the universe, enjoying a lifestyle he'd often dreamed of yet hadn't thought possible.

He had to talk with her, had to see her.

Not only for his sake. Windy remained damaged, unhappy with her new surroundings. He had to repair her.

Zip and Barrel didn't agree with his strategy. They thought him reckless and had organized one last

intervention on the bridge of their ship, trying to talk him out of it.

It wasn't working.

"We're hailing her," Green declared, jutting his jaw.

"Hailing her isn't without risk." Barrel met his gaze.

The cyborg sat in the middle of the bridge, in the captain's chair, in front of the giant viewscreen. He was the leader of their group by default. No one else wanted that role.

"Your little botanist is human. She could report our existence to the Humanoid Alliance. They'd then know we're alive and free and come after us." He glanced at Zip. "After all of us, every cyborg."

"That *is* a risk," Green admitted. "But the risk is limited." He'd investigated his Shelby thoroughly and wasn't concerned. "She's isolated from the other humans in some unknown location, by choice, it appears, and if she did report us, this isolation has made the Humanoid Alliance skeptical of her insights."

"They think she's crazier than a Palavian strung out on Mox-X." Zip, the technical specialist and mood lightener in the group, grinned.

"There's nothing wrong with wanting some peace and quiet." Green wanted that for himself. He was tired of fighting, tired of pain, of conflict, of seeing beings die. His gaze drifted to Windy, his plant. Her head was bowed, her leaves limp and brown around the edges. "We have to save Windy."

"We do." Barrel sighed. His friend knew how much his plant meant to him, how she'd once been the only being keeping him sane. "But is this the best way to accomplish

that goal?”

Green knew it was, but he allowed the others time to think. They gazed at the viewscreen, their processors whirling.

Stars sparkled against a sheet of endless black. Green was weary of that vista also. Due to the risk of contagion, Windy wasn't allowed on the cyborg home planet. It had been half a solar cycle since he'd stood on soil, had breathed anything other than recirculated air.

For a cyborg valuing solitude, life on a small ship was an ordeal. Zip and Barrel tried to accommodate him, tried to give him space, but it often wasn't possible.

“Her assistance is necessary.” He broke the silence. “My Shelby is an expert in ancient Earth plants.”

“*Your* Shelby,” Barrel repeated.

Green ignored him. “Zip has determined that Windy is an ancient Earth plant.”

His friend nodded. “There are some variances but there are too many similarities not to reach that conclusion.”

“We need this botanist's insights,” Green stressed. “It's the logical approach.” That was the truth but it felt like a lie. There was nothing logical about his turbulent emotions, about his intense need to contact his Shelby.

Barrel glanced at Zip. The younger cyborg nodded and his friend sighed. “Then we take the logical approach. Cover our transmission trail, Zip, and hail this plant doctor.”

Zip tapped on the console. “Green requesting that Doctor Shelby Cooper open hailing frequencies.”

There was no response.

“Green requesting that Doctor Shelby Cooper open hailing frequencies,” he repeated.

She didn’t answer. They waited and waited and waited.

Green grew alarmed. They normally communicated via written messages at this time each planet rotation. Where was she? “Force the hailing frequencies open.” They were cyborgs. They had that ability.

Zip’s eyes widened. “She’d view that as aggression, as an attack upon her systems, upon her.”

“I’ll deal with her reaction.” Her lack of response worried him more than breaking any hailing protocols. “She could be damaged, require fixing.”

“The humans refer to the process as healing, not fixing.”

“Her damage is none of our concern.” Barrel frowned.

“She’s a female and the sole being on her planet capable of communication.” Green straightened in his seat. “How can we not investigate? We’re cyborgs, not selfish humans. We have a sense of honor and a duty to protect others.”

Barrel’s jaw jutted. “Fraggin’ hole. How can I argue with that logic? Force the hailing frequencies open.”

“Consider them open.” Zip’s eyes gleamed with the challenge of hacking into a new system.

They watched him work.

“She’s not your Shelby, Green.” Barrel shifted in his seat. “I process that you want a female of your own. We all do. But you can’t claim the first unattached female you contact.”

Green said nothing. His emotions toward his Shelby

weren't logical. He processed that yet couldn't deny them.

"Rage bred with hundreds of human females before he met Joan. None of them were his female." Barrel leaned forward. "You haven't even seen this botanist. You might not be attracted to her."

"I'm attracted to her thought processes."

"You don't have to stick your cock into her thought processes." His friend shook his head. "Be cautious. Don't form an attachment to her until you're certain."

Green heard his concern but he didn't know how to follow Barrel's advice, how to combat the conviction deep in his cyborg heart that Shelby Cooper belonged to him.

"Accessed." Zip raised his arms in triumph. "And in record time. I *am* a deity, a cyborg without equal." Humility wasn't one of the young cyborg's strengths.

Green gazed at the main viewscreen. Cyber static snapped and sizzled. Forms appeared and disappeared, distorted by the feed. Was his Shelby one of those forms?

Can our cyborg without equal clean the feed up? He asked through their private communications line, the need to see his female tremendous.

I am a deity. I can do anything. Zip drummed his fingertips against the controls, his actions cyborg fast. *The feed is scrambled at the source.*

His female must be tech inept. That pleased Green. He could share his knowledge of technology with her and she could share her knowledge of plants with him. They'd both grow as beings.

The image stabilized. Leaves framed a view of what

appeared to be his Shelby's sleeping chamber. Plants covered every free space. A covering sheet draped over a mound on the sleeping support. Graphs decorated the white walls.

Is she in the chamber? Barrel asked the question Green was thinking. The space was chaotic.

"Doctor Shelby Cooper," Green called.

"What? Where?" The covering sheet was thrown back. A tanned leg appeared. It was attractively lush, tantalizingly full. "Stars." A husky voice groaned and Green's cock twitched to attention under his flight suit. "Now I'm dreaming of him, matching a sexy voice to his words."

Was she referring to his words? "You're not dreaming, my Shelby." It heated his circuits that she would fantasize about him. "This is Green. I require your assistance."

"Green, the sick plant guy, you're here." A face peeked out of the covering sheet and Green inhaled sharply, the sight of his female stirring his desire.

Fraggin' hole, Barrel muttered though their private line. *She's beautiful. There will be no dissuading him now.*

She *was* beautiful, her face round and tanned a warm golden hue, her lips as red as Windy's petals, her hair as brown as his plant's soil, and her eyes—

Her eyes are green. Zip's transmission was edged with wonder. *I didn't know humans could have eyes that color.*

They're the shade of newly formed leaves. Green gazed at his female, enthralled, yearning to touch her, to determine if her cheeks were as soft as they appeared.

She gazed around the chamber. “You’re not physically here.” Lines appeared between her eyebrows. “But I hear your voice...I think.” Her laughter flowed into Green’s soul and settled deep in his core. “I could be hallucinating. I’ve been alone for so long.”

He heard the yearning for companionship in her voice. “The hailing frequencies are open.”

“Oh shit. Did I forget to turn them off?” She scrambled off the sleeping support. The thin, faded, sleeveless chest covering and skimpy ass covering she wore barely contained her jiggling curves.

Green didn’t know where to look, every view of her stirring his lust. His shaft pressed against the fabric of his flight suit. His balls ached. He wanted this female, more than he’d ever wanted any thing, any being.

She slapped her hands along storage compartments. Her fingers were intriguingly calloused and creased with tiny silver scars. “The communicator is around here somewhere. I know it is.”

Was she seeking to turn it off? “I require your assistance, my female. Windy, my plant, is damaged.” And he wanted to talk with his little botanist, to look at her some more.

“My name is Doctor Shelby Cooper, not your female.” She moved a plant container, looked behind it. “And I have been helping you, haven’t I? I gave you general plant care tips. There’s no need to speak to me directly.”

There was every need to speak to her. “If you saw Windy, you might have additional insights.”

She paused. Her head tilted, her curls shifting on her

shoulders, the tendrils long and tangled. "That's true, I might, and you've already contacted me." Her patting of storage compartments resumed. "But to see Windy, I first have to find the communicator."

"It's located one row up, three columns to your right," he directed, trusting her to continue their conversation.

The female's chambers are a mess. Barrel wasn't as amused as Green was by her disorganization. *Why does she require so many containers?*

My female has no means of replacing them if she discards them. He understood her thought processes. His female had little access to external resources.

She isn't your female.

She is. She's mine. Green rumbled his claim.

You can't be certain of that, not yet. Barrel pushed back.

I'm as certain about Shelby as Rage was about Joan. The C Model cyborg had met Joan and had immediately known that the human female belonged to him.

Green felt the same way about his botanist.

Shelby was his.

He had to impress her, but how? Rage had earned Joan's love by killing for her. According to Shelby's own reports in scientific journals, there were no other beings on the small, unknown planet she inhabited, no enemies for Green to battle.

"There you are." She retrieved the communicator, setting it before her, at eye level. "You're a..." Her lush lips rounded. "No, this must be a mistake. You can't be Green. You're a cyborg."

“I *am* Green.” Did his female have an issue with cyborgs? Many humans did, viewing them as machines, not living beings capable of free thought and emotions.

“You’re contacting me about your plant.” She grabbed her personal viewscreen and scrolled through the data. “Yes, you want to repair her. Repair.” She blew out her breath. “That does sound like something a cyborg would say, but how does that make any sense?” She spoke to herself, not requiring a reply. “Cyborgs kill beings. They’re warriors, trampling fragile ecosystems under their big boots.”

Green gazed down at his big black boots. He’d done his share of trampling. “We also care for beings. We love them, with everything we have.” His attention returned to the female he was destined to love. “And we’d do anything for them.”

Including violate hailing protocols, Zip quipped.

“You’re a violent being and I don’t like violence.” Shelby’s fingers trembled. “Not at all.”

“I don’t like violence either.” Green processed that he was an abnormality. Cyborgs were designed to fight, the desire to kill programmed into many of them. “But before I escaped the Humanoid Alliance’s control, I had little choice. Either I killed or I was killed.”

His Shelby frowned, appearing adorably fierce. “That’s not right. No being should be forced to kill.”

“Many humans don’t consider cyborgs to be beings.”

She nibbled on her bottom lip, her thoughts and emotions easy to read. His little female felt outrage on his behalf, then intrigue, then understanding of his

predicament. “Some humans don’t value plants either.”

“I value my plant.” Windy meant the worlds to him. “I’m risking my existence to speak with you. If the Humanoid Alliance realizes a cyborg is free--”

“How would they realize that? I won’t tell them.” His Shelby stared at him.

Green held her gaze. What was she saying? Would she help him, help Windy?

“Did you finally determine what your plant’s species was?” She *would* help them. “My expertise is ancient Earth botany. If it doesn’t fall into that area, I can’t help you.”

Green grinned, his female’s prissiness amusing him. “This is Windy.” He set his plant on his lap. “Her previous models came from Earth.” That was Zip’s hypothesis.

“Hmmm...” Shelby leaned forward, her beautiful face filling the screen. “Can you turn the container for me?”

He complied.

The thought lines between her eyebrows captivated him. Cyborgs were taught to hide their feelings. His little human didn’t have that training, all of her emotions written on her countenance.

“It appears to be a species of poppy.”

“She,” he corrected.

“She.” Her gaze flicked to him, then back down at his plant. “Some beings consider poppies to be weeds. They spread with the early explorers to other planets, have completely taken over at least two that I know of, strangling the native vegetation.”

Green's amusement faded. He loved Windy and wanted his Shelby to love her also. "Do you consider poppies to be weeds?"

"Of course not," she replied indignantly. "Poppies are an important part of an ecosystem, and are beautiful, *when healthy*." Her disapproving tone straightened his spine. "They are historically important. Poppies were once the symbol of war, of loss on the battlefield." Her lips twisted. "It's appropriate that you, as a warrior, would be drawn to it...to her."

Green exchanged glances with Barrel and Zip. They didn't have to transmit their insights. He knew what they were processing—Windy was destined to be his.

As Shelby was.

"But poppies *are* common." She stacked three similarly shaped empty plant containers, one on top of the other, saving much needed space. "It kills me as a plant lover to say this, but it might be more efficient for you to discard your plant, to replace it, her, with a healthy version."

She advised that he discard Windy, simply because she was damaged? "There's no replacing Windy. She's unique."

"Physically, she's not unique."

"That might be true." Although Zip had never seen another plant exactly like her, not in all of the databases he'd searched. And, during their escape from the Humanoid Alliance, Windy had survived a short venture into open space, a feat he understood was near impossible. "But emotionally, she's irreplaceable to me," Green shared. "She saved me."

“She’s a *poppy*. She has very few natural defenses. How could she save you, a big strong warrior?” His Shelby narrowed her eyes, her disbelief tangible.

Green hesitated. If he shared the truth, revealing his weakness and his shame, he could lose his female, lose her respect, her love and any opportunity to breed with her.

But if he didn’t risk this, she’d never appreciate Windy’s importance to him or understand what he’d been through. His female wouldn’t truly know him.

He had to tell her all of it, the good and the bad.

“She saved me by existing, by surviving. I had reached the point many cyborgs do—when the fighting and the pain becomes too much and we consider ending our long lifespans. I saw no end to the torture and to the death, harbored no hope in my soul.” He touched his chest. He had been a hollow shell of a warrior, devoid of anything other than agony and grief. “We cannot kill ourselves. That’s written in our programming. But there are other ways to accomplish this feat. The planet rotation I met Windy, I had decided to rebel, to force my human tormenters to kill me.”

He had been weak, prepared to give up, to be defeated by his circumstances. Could a female love a male like that? Green dropped his gaze, shame clouding his eyes.

“I trudged through a field of ash, intent on rebelling,” he continued, his voice gruff. “Everywhere was gray and dead and desolate.” Like he had felt inside. “Then I saw Windy, bright and defiant on the battlefield, bending with the breeze, not allowing it to break her. She was the sole

splash of color, of hope, on that cursed planet, and I knew she was there for me, to encourage me to go on.”

He paused, waiting for her reaction to his story. Some of the younger cyborgs had laughed when they had heard it, mocking him for his weakness, ridiculing his affection for Windy, his belief that she saved him. They didn't understand.

Would his Shelby?

Silence stretched.

“Windy gave you a reason to live, to continue,” his Shelby murmured, her voice barely audible. “I know what it's like to lose all hope and then be given a sliver of it back.”

Green's shoulders lowered. She understood. “Do you?”

“Yes, for me, it was my mother's ancient Earth rosebushes.” She stared to the right, her gaze unfocused. “They'd been in my family for generations and, when my parents accepted the Humanoid Alliance's relocation offer, my mother brought them with her to the new planet, planted them outside our domicile.” Shelby breathed deeply. “They smelled so good.”

He wished he could have smelled those roses.

“The nearest agri lot was owned by friends of ours.” She twirled one of her long curls around her finger, twisting it around and around, the action making her appear endearingly young. “The two families had big plans for the future. My parents had one daughter—me. Their friends had one son--Court. He was handsome, intelligent, nice. Every being liked him and I was no exception. I considered Court to be my best friend.”

Green couldn't suppress his growl. She was his. No other male would have her.

Shelby didn't notice his reaction, appearing lost in her memories. "We were to marry, merge the two agri lots and create the next generation. My mother convinced me to attend the Academy for agri lot science before taking this step, telling me my knowledge would increase our crops."

Green searched his processors for her credentials. No, he hadn't been mistaken. She'd studied botany, not agri lot science.

"While I was off planet, at the Academy, the Mantidae attacked." Her beautiful face hardened. "Do you know of them?"

"We fought the Mantidae, losing many skilled warriors and good friends in those battles." The large insect-like beings were the final opponents Green faced before escaping the Humanoid Alliance. "They're very difficult to kill."

"My parents, Court, Court's family, weren't warriors. By the time I was told of the attack and arranged transport to the planet, my family, my family was..." The pain in her eyes stripped him to his frame.

"You don't have to tell me." He wanted to know about her past but he didn't want to hurt her.

"I have to tell you. You were brave, sharing your story with me. I should do the same." Shelby sucked in her breath, held it for a couple of heartbeats and released it. "By the time I returned, my family, Court, my friends, every being I knew on the planet, were dead. Our domiciles had been flattened. Our crops were destroyed,

our livestock eaten. I went from having a bright future to having no future at all. My parents' grand plans for me were wiped out in one attack, one planet rotation."

She'd had nothing as he'd once had nothing. "My Shelby."

"I thought the Mantidae had obliterated everything, everything I loved, everything I lived for. What was the point of continuing? If I had stayed on the planet, where I belonged, I would have perished with my loved ones. Why should I be spared?"

She'd been spared because she was meant for him. He was her destiny.

"That was when I saw it—a white rose blooming between the debris. I don't know why my mother's rosebushes survived. They might have been too alien for the Mantidae to eat. For whatever reason, they remained, their scent perfuming the air."

"They were your poppy in a field of ash, your reason for living." Green gazed at her, awed. His female was the only being he'd ever met who truly comprehended his despair and his subsequent hope.

"I had to save the roses. They were all that was left of my mother, of my parents. I placed them in containers, brought them back with me to the Academy, changed my course study to ancient Earth botany."

She cared for them as he cared for his Windy, his plant. "Where are the roses now?"

Shelby smiled and he blinked, her beauty stunning him. "I planted them in front of my domicile here on this planet."

“Reminding you of your parents.”

“Yes.”

A comforting silence fell between them. Words weren't necessary. He understood her. She understood him.

His Shelby stroked the broad shiny leaf of the plant positioned to her right, her fingers brushing back and forth, back and forth.

Green imagined that gentle touch on his cock and he shifted in his seat, hard as a dagger. Would she caress him until he found release or would she take him into her mouth, fasten those pink lips around his shaft, and suck?

He'd shoot his nanocybotic-infused cum down her throat. When his essence hit her stomach, she'd come, screaming around him, filling the air with her musk. Her fingers would roll his balls, coaxing every last drop from him.

And he'd give it to her, binding his female to him, solidifying the connection he felt even now. She'd heal the hurting part of him, repair his plant's mysterious malfunction, and he'd protect her, love her, give her the sense of family she missed.

She's your female, Green, Barrel conceded softly through their private lines. After hearing about her past, I'm as certain as you are that you were meant to be together.

Green glanced at his friends. He'd forgotten he had company in the bridge. The two cyborgs gazed at his female with fascination but not lust. They didn't want her as he did.

“Green, about your plant.” His Shelby returned his

attention to their problem.

“You saved your mother’s roses and you’ll cure my Windy.” He tapped his plant’s container. “I have no doubt about your abilities.”

“I’ll do my best.” Her voice held concern. “It’ll be trial and error. I’ll send you a list of treatments to attempt. Try one at a time. Doing them all at once will cause your plant too much stress.”

The treatments could possibly damage Windy, especially if he administered them alone. “We’ll try your list together.” Her expertise would reduce the risk. “Give me your coordinates and I’ll travel to your planet.”

Shelby’s eyes widened. “No,” she squeaked. “No traveling to my planet. I don’t see any beings, *ever*.”

“You’ll see me.” He was her destined male.

“No, I won’t.” She shook her head, her brown curls bouncing against her cheeks. “I’ll transmit the list. That’s it. That’s all I’m doing.”

“My Shelby—”

“It’s Doctor Shelby Cooper, and be thankful I’m doing this much.” She ended the transmission.

The main viewscreen returned to depicting the surrounding stars. That image wasn’t as captivating as his female’s beautiful face.

He didn’t know why she refused to meet with him, but he wasn’t dissuaded. Green turned to Zip. “What were the transmission’s coordinates?”

“It originated two sectors away, on a small planet named, appropriately for our little scientist, Earth Minor.”

“*My little scientist*,” he corrected. “I’ll borrow a

transport ship from Vector and travel to Earth Minor immediately.”

Barrel frowned. “She said she didn’t want to see you.”

“I’ll change her mind during the voyage.” Green was confident that she’d eventually want to meet with him face-to-face. She was his. She must have felt their connection. “Rage hesitated to claim his female and he regretted it.” Rage’s female had barely survived the delay. “I won’t make that same mistake.”

“None of us will.” Zip nodded. “I agree that you should go to her but not alone.” He glanced at Barrel and back at Green. “I’ll join you on your transport ship.”

“We’ll both join you.” Barrel rolled his eyes. “And we’ll use our ship, not one of Vector’s. Windy isn’t allowed on any of his vessels.”

The cyborg wouldn’t allow Windy on board his ships due to possible contagion. Vector’s fear might not be as irrational as they had first thought. Based upon the conversation with Shelby, his poppy was an aggressive breeder.

Green hoped to also be an aggressive breeder...with his little human. “The two of you will wait on board the ship while I venture to the planet’s surface and meet with my female.”

“Agreed.” His friends dipped their heads.

“Bond with your female and then bring her back to the ship,” Barrel instructed. “Once you’ve retrieved her, we’ll return to cyborg-controlled space.”

Cyborg-controlled space would be the safest location for Shelby but Green doubted his soil-loving botanist

would agree to living permanently off planet.

He'd make that decision in the future. He'd focus now on securing his female and saving his plant. "File our flight plan with the cyborg council and set a course for Earth Minor."

Chapter Two

Twenty-two planet rotations later, Shelby thumped a stubborn clump of soil with her hoe, breaking it into pieces. Earth Minor's solitary sun shone brightly, the rays heating her bare shoulders. Her muscles ached. Her clothing, a flower-image-covered sundress patterned after the garments worn by her ancestors, was moist with perspiration and covered with dirt.

She was a mess, but the ancient Earth plants, bees and butterflies, were unable to comment and there were no other beings on the planet to see her. Solar cycles ago, when she first arrived, she had shared the space with the founder, an eccentric elderly botanist determined to replicate the ecosystem of his favorite place and era. Once he had transferred his duties to her, he had voyaged into the forest and had never returned. She suspected he was dead.

There were moments when she craved company. Recently, those instances followed her verbal exchanges with a certain stubborn cyborg.

Which meant she'd been experiencing them every sunrise since that first surprise hail. Green used any feeble excuse to contact her, hailing her at least once every planet rotation, and she answered, unable to resist those stolen opportunities to see his face, hear his voice.

It was torture, a pain she embraced so she wouldn't ever forget. Her gaze settled on the rosebushes surrounding her domicile. Hope involved risk. She'd once

planned for the future and lost everything, every being she loved.

She couldn't do that again. The loss would kill her.

Living in the kinder, gentler past, a time when humans hadn't heard of Mantidae, hadn't ventured into far space, had thought themselves alone in the universe, was less perilous. None of those beings had lost their families or their friends to an alien attack.

And Shelby couldn't rejoin the modern world, even if she wanted to. She had made a commitment to her predecessor. Some being needed to tend to the botanic time capsule, to ensure the ancient plants survived for future generations.

No being, especially not a cyborg like Green, would join her in her self-imposed isolation and that was okay. She was happier on her own. Shelby scowled as she dug into the ground.

Yes, she might finger herself after every conversation with him, stroking her pussy while visualizing his broad face, energy-infused blue eyes, clipped short black hair, gray skin, his model number inked under his right eye.

And, when she came, she might envision Green's broad shoulders, narrow hips, bulging biceps, imagining all of the parts she hadn't yet seen.

But that meant nothing. She moved a wiggling worm out of the path of her hoe. A female was entitled to her fantasies.

Shelby attacked the soil with more vigor, venting her sexual frustrations on the ground. Sweat dripped down her spine, between her ass cheeks. Her skirt fluttered around

her legs.

A rumble filled her ears. She ignored it, concentrating on her task.

It grew louder and louder.

Shelby looked up in time to see a single being shuttlecraft fly past, its smooth silver underbelly skimming dangerously close to the top of the fir trees. Shit. It looked like it was going to land.

The drone of the engine slowed.

Shit. Shit. Shit. It was landing.

Her tiny planet was being invaded.

She ran toward her one story domicile. Her heart pounded. Her boots sank in the tilled ground. Dirt splattered against her bare calves.

Shelby knew how invasions worked. She'd researched the Mantidae attack on her home planet, learning the signs the settlement's council had missed, the stages her loved ones had encountered.

This first being was a scout. If luck smiled on her, she might defeat him. When the scout didn't report back, the aggressors would send a large heavily armed second wave.

She wouldn't survive that. Shelby pushed through her domicile's front door. But she might have time to send the rarest seeds and bulbs into underground storage.

She glanced around the crowded main chamber. Where had she left her gun? She hated the weapon, disliked having it in her domicile, a reminder that violence, loss, could breach her sanctuary.

The gun had been inherited from her predecessor. He'd

boasted of spending multiple planet rotations increasing its capabilities, until, he claimed, it could blast a hole through the hull of a battle station.

The thought of blasting anything or anyone made her shudder. But it might be necessary.

Shelby surveyed the space. She hadn't positioned the weapon near the door, not wanting to arm the invaders, yet she'd left it close enough for her to easily reach. Shelby shifted containers of seedlings to the side, found the gun stuck in a larger container.

She wiped off the dirt. Could she use it on a living being? She'd have to or—

Metal rang against wood behind her.

She spun around.

“You're even more beautiful—”

She pressed the trigger before the deep sexy voice registered. The kick knocked her backward, onto her ass. The projectile did the same to Green, slamming him against the far wall, pulling an animalistic sound of pain from his throat.

“Oh, fuck.” Shelby dropped the gun and jumped to her feet, paying no attention to her screaming muscles.

“Green.” She ran to him.

“Frag.” He clutched his stomach. Blood streamed over his fingers, covering his gray skin. “Barrel was right. I should have let you know I was coming.” His smile was tight.

“This is no time for jokes.” She moved his hands and the floor shifted under her. There was a huge hole in his black battle armor. “Green.” She swayed. Blood gushed

from the wound, the strong pulse of crimson scenting the air.

“Sit, female.” He pushed downward on her hips. “Before you collapse.”

She lowered with a thump, her ass smacking against his armor-clad thighs. “I shot you.” She stared at his stomach with horror. “I thought you were an invader. I never would have pressed the trigger if I’d known it was you.”

“That’s good to know.” The strain on his oh-so-masculine face belied his light tone. “Could you help me remove my body armor?”

“Yes, of course.” She fumbled with the task, her fingers clumsy with the shock.

Finally, with his help, she retracted the armor, pulled it over his head, tossed it to the side. “Oh, it’s bad.” Another wave of wooziness swept over her. “Really bad.” Medicine wasn’t her area of expertise but she knew no human could survive the damage she’d caused.

Green wasn’t human. After he first contacted her, she, for some inexplicable reason, had found herself spending every free moment researching cyborgs. They healed quickly, surviving wounds that would be fatal for her. “Can you recover from this?”

“I’ll live.” He grimaced.

“You’re in pain and I have no suppressors.” She’d run out two solar cycles ago. “Is there anything I can do?”

He lifted his head and met her gaze, his eyes bright blue, sizzling with energy, with heat. “Rage, my friend, has a theory that the more nanocybotics a cyborg gives to his female, the more he produces.”

Nanocybotics helped him to heal quickly. She was female. “How do you give them to me?” Receiving them scared her but not as much as the possibility of extending his pain.

“Nanocybotics are concentrated in my saliva and in my cum.”

Shelby had been so concerned about his wound, she hadn't noticed his nude state. She glanced downward and blinked. He was huge, his cock long and thick and erect, his base hairless. “You're severely injured and you want to fuck?”

If that was such a bad idea, why was her pussy wet? Why did she crave him, desire his touch?

His eyes glowed. “I'd be satisfied, for now, with a kiss.”

A kiss, she might be able to give him. She nibbled on her bottom lip. He wasn't a complete stranger. They'd communicated remotely. And she *had* injured him.

“You're certain kissing will help you heal?” The science to justify that wasn't completely implausible. He'd produce nanocybotics to replace the ones he lost. An efficient orgasm would produce more to compensate for future losses.

“I'm not certain of anything at the moment, my Shelby.”

Because he was weak from blood loss, from the wound she'd inflicted upon him. “I'll do this.” She placed her palms on his pecs and he shuddered, his muscles rippling. His skin was warm, human. She'd expected him to be cool, like metal. “But I'm kissing you to ease your pain, not for any other reason.”

“Noted.” Green’s smile was wobbly.

She had to help him. Shelby leaned forward, moving closer and closer to him until his mouth was a lick away from hers. He didn’t move, watching her, his eyelids partially lowered, a dreamy expression on his rugged face. His breath wafted over her cheeks, warming her.

She was in control. That gave her confidence. Shelby brushed her lips against his, her touch light. Green opened to her and she slipped her tongue between his teeth.

His nanocybotics enveloped her, fizzing and popping against her flesh. Her breath hitched and her pussy throbbed with need. She’d never experienced anything like it. It was as though a thousand mouths sucked and released her.

He was addictive and she needed more of him, more of his taste—a mixture of metal and man. She delved deeper. Their tongues entwined and his heart beat faster under her palm, his reaction exciting her. He wanted her as much as she wanted him.

She slid her hands upward, following the vein pulsing in his neck, the strength of his jawline, and cupped his cheeks, holding him.

Dampness permeated her chest covering. “Your wound —”

“Requires more healing.” Green grasped her hips and pulled her forward. The motion hiked up her skirt, revealing her bare pussy. He pressed that intimate flesh against his hard cock, and they both shuddered.

No longer content to be a passive partner, he fastened his lips over hers, cupped the back of her head, and

invaded her mouth, thrusting his tongue inside her. Stars. He was fierce, forcing her to take him, to accommodate his erotic assault. His nanocybotics surged down her throat and the tingles spread across her chest, to her womb, her fingers, her toes. She trembled, her form flooded with sensation, with arousal.

Their kiss was changing her, she realized. Her body was adapting to his, recognizing him as being hers. His musky scent filled her nostrils. His flavor coated her mouth. His fingers splayed over her hips. They were aligning, becoming one.

When he left, she would hurt, but, in this moment, Shelby didn't care. She rocked against him, savoring his rigid length, the pressure against her clit, and he groaned, the sound muffled by their lips. His chest rose and fell, rubbing against her breasts. Her taut nipples begged for his hands, his mouth.

Green didn't touch her curves, didn't break their liplock. She huffed with frustration, wiggled in his lap, arching her back, offering herself to him.

His eyes glowed. "You're beautiful." He skimmed his knuckles over her cheek. "And mine. Forever."

Forever. With that word, she plummeted back to reality.

"I'm not yours." Shelby pulled away from him. For several delicious moments, she'd forgotten the dangers, the futility of building connections, a future that could be taken from her. "We were kissing to heal you. That's the only reason."

"My Shelby--"

"Doctor Shelby Cooper," she corrected, examining his

stomach. The bleeding had stopped. She reached for a cleaning cloth, dabbed it around his wound.

She was unable to find the edge of the wound. Skin, a shade paler than the rest of him, completely sealed the hole in his stomach. Shelby drifted her fingers over the spot, feeling only smoothness.

“You’re the same as you were before I shot you,” she mused. “You won’t ever change.” He was as stuck in the past as she was.

“My body won’t change.” Green covered her hands with his. “Yours won’t either, as long as I share my nanocybotics with you. But *I’ve* changed. I’ll always remember that you shot me, that you were willing to kill to defend the plants and planet you love.” His lips twitched. “I won’t sneak up on you in the future.”

“There will be no future for us.” Dreaming of more planet rotations with him was destined to cause her pain. “Once I cure your plant, you’re leaving.” She stood, her body protesting the increased distance between them.

“*We’re* leaving.” He got to his feet and closed the gap, unabashedly naked and erect.

“I can’t leave. This is my home, and caring for the plants on this planet is my duty.” That was why a relationship between them wouldn’t work. He wouldn’t live in the past as she did. He’d leave, return to his cyborg brethren.

“My Shelby—”

“You wanted me to cure Windy.” She examined the plant set on a wooden horizontal support, escaping into the comforting safety of her work. The metal container was

beautifully etched with images of vegetation and fantastical flowers. “Did you craft this?”

“I did.” Green lifted his square chin. “It took me many solar cycles to scavenge for the materials but I finally found them, pieced them together, crafted the container.”

This rough tough warrior had lovingly made the container for his plant. “I see you added drainage holes and a tray.” The tray was just as ornately etched.

“That was your suggestion. I lined the container also, as you advised.”

He’d listened to her. Her spine straightened with pride. “Is that why Windy is looking so much better?” The leaves were no longer wilted and brown.

“One of the reasons.” Green moved closer to her. Heat radiated from his big body. “Changing the light source helped too.”

That had been another one of her suggestions.

“She’s not completely happy.” He tenderly stroked one of his plant’s bright red petals. “Her little flower head is drooping.”

“But she is flowering.” Her gaze tracked his fingers. She remembered how wonderful his hands felt against her skin. “That’s a good sign. Plants don’t flower when they’re on the verge of death.”

“The flower faced the sky when I first met her.”

“It isn’t the same flower.”

“It is,” he insisted, his expression sincere.

“It can’t be.” She glanced up at him. “Poppies flower for fourteen planet rotations. How long have you had her?”

“Over two hundred planet rotations.”

“I’ve never heard of a poppy flower lasting for almost a solar cycle.” What did that mean? Had she misidentified Windy?

Shelby had taken one quick glance at the plant and assumed she was a common poppy. As she’d taken one look at Green and shamefully assumed he was killing machine.

She’d been wrong about Green. Had she been wrong about Windy also?

Shelby studied the plant more closely. The leaves were slightly more rounded than expected. The coarse hairs on the stem were softer, shorter, almost like fur. These differences, in isolation, wouldn’t be noteworthy, but when combined, they raised questions in her mind.

Could Windy be a new species of poppy? Excitement mixed with foreboding. A new species belonged to the uncertain future, didn’t belong on Earth Minor, wasn’t in her area of expertise.

“You can repair her.” Green wrapped one of his arms around her waist. “I know you can.”

She glanced at him. He gazed back at her, no doubt reflecting in his countenance. He believed in her, in her abilities. She couldn’t say no, couldn’t tell him to take his plant to a more qualified expert.

She didn’t know if that being existed. She could be their best option.

She couldn’t abandon them.

“I’ll do my best to cure her.” Shelby instinctively folded her body into Green. Lost in the challenges of determining the needs of new species, she barely

registered his nude state, the skin-on-skin contact feeling natural, right. “Where did you find her?”

“Nebula Seventeen.”

She wasn’t familiar with that planet. “I can leave Earth Minor for a couple of planet rotations. We could travel to Nebula Seventeen and—”

“You’re not going anywhere near Nebula Seventeen.” Green’s face grew hard. “When we escaped Humanoid Alliance control, Mantidae swarmed the surface of the planet.”

“Oh.” She couldn’t face the beings that had killed her parents.

“What do you require from there?”

She required everything. “Soil, sunlight, air readings. If we replicate the environment, Windy should flourish as she did there.”

“We can tell you everything you need to know.” His confidence was adorable.

Shelby didn’t have the same faith in his abilities. “The average being’s observation skills are unreliable. You’re not a scientist. You’re a warrior and you were battling the enemy.” He wouldn’t have noted much.

“I’m not the average being. I’m a cyborg.” Green straightened. “Terrain intelligence is necessary to successfully fight an enemy. The readings from my mechanics would be accurate. And there are six hundred and fourteen other cyborgs to corroborate my observations. We’ll provide everything you need, my Shelby.”

He had six hundred and fourteen brethren. She was

alone. He'd never stay on Earth Minor, never choose her and her ancient world over his cyborg warriors and their modern surroundings.

And why did she care that he wouldn't? Choosing her implied a future together and she never looked past the next planet rotation. "I'm not your Shelby."

"You are." He caught her fluttering hands, his grip on her fingers gentle yet secure. "That's a fact. Cyborgs don't lie."

Her gaze shot to his. "I read that." They were manufactured to always tell the truth. "But the future is uncertain. To count on it--"

"Don't count on it." Green placed her hands on his chest. "Count on me."

"How can I do that? You could die," she whispered.

"You shot me and I survived." He solemnly addressed her fears. "I battled multiple Mantidae at once and emerged victorious. The Human Alliance sought to decommission me and I escaped. I'm not easy to kill."

Shelby slid her hands lower and touched his healed wound. He was right. He *wasn't* easy to kill. "Every being I've ever cared for has died, Green."

"Those beings weren't cyborgs."

He sounded so certain and she wanted to believe him. Her solitude was eating away at her soul. "Even if you survived our relationship, you'd want to leave the planet permanently and I can't. I'm tied to Earth Minor, responsible for maintaining its ecosystem."

"I'll assist you with those responsibilities. You can relay your knowledge." Green had an answer for that

concern also. “And I won’t ever leave you. You’re my female.”

Cyborgs don’t lie. “Thinking of the future scares me. There are so many variables, so many possibilities for pain.”

“Then don’t think of the future.” Green pulled her closer to him, his body warm, solid. “Think of now, of me, of how I want burrow my face between your wondrous breasts and never again surface.”

Her lips twitched. He was hard, his cock pressed against her stomach. “Shouldn’t I be thinking of a cure for your plant?”

“You said Windy’s condition wasn’t life threatening.” Her cyborg brushed his cheek against hers.

With his gentle touch and reassuring words, he tempted her to forget caution, to forget her past. She wouldn’t be able to resist his charms for long. She had to cure his plant and send him on his way. “I’ll draft a list of the information I require concerning Nebula Seventeen.”

Chapter Three

Once he received his little female's list, Green uploaded the information she required from his processors and transmitted those answers to Zip. His friend would compile the responses from the other cyborgs, construct the most detailed and accurate view of the ecosystem possible.

With that duty delegated, Green donned the flight suit he'd stored in the shuttlecraft. The battle armor Zip and Barrel had convinced him to wear during their first meeting now required repairs, due to the quick response of his female.

Green then devoted his energy pulses to helping Shelby with her daily tasks. He broke up soil with primitive tools, carried containers of water from a nearby stream, gathered fallen branches for the fire now blazing before him. His sexy botanist taught him about the various plants, the planet they currently inhabited, and the original Earth they came from.

She also showed him parts of herself, her passions, her dreams, her fears. This sharing enthralled him, made him want her more and more.

Green inhaled deeply, savoring the scent of female, burning wood and her mother's roses. He craved her *and* the homeland she'd built. Judging by the footage his brethren had relayed to him, the cyborg homeland was more crowded and more noisy than Earth Minor. Structures reached into the sky.

On this planet, trees softened the horizon, swaying in the wind. This was the place he'd envisioned when he was enslaved by the Humanoid Alliance. Peaceful and quiet.

His female was more than he'd ever dared to dream of. He sat beside her on a great rock and watched, bemused, as she mumbled to herself, expressing her concerns about how much of the ash they should add to Windy's soil, if the quality of ash was the same, what would happen if it wasn't. She'd worry as much about their offspring.

Green hooked one of his arms around her waist and pulled her closer to him. He wanted to make those offspring immediately. Shelby's beautiful face was lit by the flames. Her brown curls caressed her cheeks. The stars shining above them were reflected in her green eyes.

His gaze dropped to her lips. Their first kiss had almost shorted his circuits. Would their second kiss do the same?

"Is that your ship?" She pointed to a bright light in the sky. Her fingers were calloused, rough, fingers a male could trust to hold his family safe.

Green looked upward. "Yes."

"They must expect you to return soon." The sadness in her voice warmed his chest. She wanted him. He smelled her arousal. And she wished for him to stay with her.

"They know why I'm here." Green rubbed her arm, savoring her softness, her proximity. "Barrel and Zip envy me. You're beautiful and intelligent and strong."

"They haven't seen me."

"My friends saw you during our first transmission."

She didn't know that. Barrel and Zip had remained silent while they spoke.

"That transmission was scrambled."

Frag. She'd scrambled it intentionally. Knowing her intelligence level, he should have realized that. "We thought it was a malfunction and fixed it."

"Oh." Her cheeks turned pink. She stared into the fire.

Silence stretched. He continued to touch her, exploring the dimple near her elbow, the curve of her forearm, her delicate wrists.

"I thought scrambling the transmission would keep me safe," she whispered.

"I will keep you safe," he vowed.

His little female had taken some precautions, but not enough. Her only defenses against attackers were a scrambled signal and the gun she'd used on him.

Green understood why. She feared the future, refused to plan for it. His Shelby lived in the past, maintaining the ecosystem her predecessor had built, following his planting schedules, working the same fields. The elderly human male hadn't considered the possibility of invasion.

That responsibility was now Green's.

He'd spent most of his lifespan in battle, had once wondered if that would be all he'd experience. He'd considered ending his life.

Now, he knew why he had fought, why he had endured the killing and the pain. The battles had prepared him to safeguard his female, her plants, her planet. His past suffering would ensure their future happiness.

"I'd die before I allowed you to be harmed."

She turned her head and stared at him. “You’d risk death for the possibility of breeding with me?”

“I’d battle the world for you and I want more than to breed with you.” Green traced each of her fingers from her pinkie to her thumb. “I want to fall asleep inside you, wake with you in my arms. I long to watch your seedlings grow into mature plants, harvest their bounty, enjoy another meal like the one you created this planet rotation.” The experience of eating food gathered straight from the source, ripened by the sun, had been wondrous, the flavors distinct. “I seek to be the male you choose to stand by your side, to assist you, to love you.”

“Love?” She blinked, her eyelashes long and dark. “We met, in person, for the first time this planet rotation.”

“I knew the moment I saw you.” He placed one of her palms over his heart. “Don’t you feel the connection between us?”

She splayed her fingers over the fabric and nibbled on her bottom lip.

He waited, allowing her to think.

“I can’t trust this. It’s too much.” She shook her head, her curls bouncing around her face. “You’re speaking of love, talking of future planet rotations, hinting at a life span spent together. I can’t leave Earth Minor.”

“I wouldn’t ask you to.” He’d realized as soon as he opened the shuttlecraft’s doors that she’d never leave the paradise she’d found.

His Shelby’s forehead wrinkled. Her eyebrows knitted together. His past-loving botanist struggled to understand the changes he’d brought with him.

It was too much, too soon for her. He cupped her cheeks. “Don’t think about it.” He was patient. He’d wait for her to catch up to him emotionally, to trust in a future together. “Feel.”

He slanted his lips across her. She opened to him with a relieved sigh and he pushed into her, tasting the mint leaf she’d been chewing on and the flavor of frustrated female.

With each stroke of his tongue, her shoulders lowered and her eyes darkened, her worries visually dissipating. Her hands slid up his chest, curled around his shoulders, and she shifted, drawing nearer.

She remained too far from him. Green eased her forward until she straddled his waist, her ass filling his lap. Shelby felt right there, made for him. He swirled his fingers in small circles, massaging her ample hips, as they kissed.

Insects buzzed. A branch fell in the fire and sparks shot skyward. Shelby’s breathing in and out added a constant rhythm, an underlying pulse to the sounds around them. Her breasts brushed against his chest, teasing his body. Her ass wiggled. Her mons ground against his hard cock, layers of fabric separating them.

“You’re scrambling my processors.” He dragged his lips down her neck. “I want you so much. I can’t think.”

“Think?” His female’s expression was dazed.

He grinned. She was more lost than he was. He nipped at the collar of her chest covering and she trembled.

“We’re wearing too much clothing.”

Speaking was a mistake. Doubts flashed across her face. “I—”

Green formed a protective cage around her body with his arms and legs and rolled onto the soft ground. The scent of crushed grass and aroused female teased his nostrils.

He nuzzled and kissed and caressed until she was delirious once more, panting and writhing underneath him. Her nipples were taut. Would they be pink or a deeper gold than her skin?

He had to find out. Green pulled the garment she called a sundress over her head. She sucked in her breath. He did the same.

“Beautiful,” he murmured. Her breasts were paler than the skin on her neck. Her nipples were a color he’d not yet seen on a human, lighter than red, darker than pink, with a hint of blue. He’d ask her for the word later. He had to touch her now.

Green cupped her curves, savoring their weight. These were breasts manufactured for suckling. He fastened his mouth to one of her nipples and inhaled, drawing her into his mouth. She moaned, arched her back, her response exciting him.

He sucked, released, sucked, released, her right breast, while working her left breast with his fingers, flooding her with sensation, drowning all of her concerns.

She was his focus. Green ignored his hard cock, aching balls, the desire pulsing through his circuits, screaming for satisfaction. He was intent on pleasing his female, binding her tighter to him, ensuring she never wanted another.

“Yes.” She threaded her fingers through his short hair and dug her fingernails into his scalp, the sharp bite of

pain snapping more of his control. "Need you."

He looked upward, meeting her gaze. "Who do you need?"

"You."

"Who?" He flicked her nipple with his thumb and she quivered. "Say my name." He wanted to hear it on her lips.

"Green." A sensual huskiness was wrapped around that one syllable. "I need Green, my cyborg."

"Your male." He bent his head and ravished her, mouthing her skin, nibbling on her nipple, giving her curves the devotion they warranted. Never had he seen a female so stunning, so alive, so his.

"My male." She held him, pushing more of herself into his mouth, embracing him as eagerly as he embraced her. "Cover me with your nanocybotics. Make me tingle all over."

"I'll fill you with my nanocybotics." He slid one hand over her rounded belly, threaded his fingers through her brown private curls. "You'll feel me for planet rotations."

He'd never allow them to fade, would breed with her once a planet rotation, more often if that was viable. Green cupped her mons, dipping his fingertips into her wetness, and she jerked.

"Be calm," he soothed his skittish female. "I have you." He glided his fingers up and down, drawing more moisture, more musky scent from her core.

"Green," she cried, moving with him.

He slipped his index finger into her heat and she clenched around him. Frag. She was tight, made for him.

He plunged in and out of her, watching her face. She panted, her lips parted, her skin flushed. His female eclipsed the most stunning sunset, taking his breath away.

Green added a second, and then a third finger, preparing her for his girth. Shelby's tremors increased in intensity, jiggling her breasts, her hips. She called her name, her voice stretching with strain. Her juices dripped down his hand, branding his skin.

"Please, Green."

He couldn't deny her anything. "Come for me, Shelby." He brushed his thumbs over her clit.

Her inner walls squeezed his fingers and she called his name, throwing her lush form upward. His little human didn't fly very high. Her curves smacked against his fabric-covered muscle and she fell. Green followed her descent, maintaining their connection, his gaze fixed on her glowing countenance.

This was what he had survived for, this moment, this female. All the pain, the torture, the killing had been worth it. He'd do it again to pleasure her one more time.

"You're wearing too many clothes, cyborg." She opened her thighs wider, her body languid, an intriguing smile curling her lips. "I need you inside me, and by you, I mean your cock, not your fingers."

"Frag, yes." Green gripped his lapels and yanked. Fabric tore.

His Shelby grinned, her eyes sparkling. His female liked his eagerness.

He removed the remnants of the flight suit, leaving on his boots. "Are you ready to be claimed?" His cock was

hard, eager for her heat.

His beautiful botanist blinked and he stifled his groan. She was overthinking their relationship again, fretting about the future.

“Focus on now,” he advised. “Not the next planet rotation or the planet rotation after that.” He prodded her pussy with his tip. “What do you want *now*?”

The shadow falling across her face lifted. “You. I want you now.” She wrapped her legs around his waist. “Take me. I’m yours.”

“And I’m yours.” This would be a mutual claiming.

Green pushed into her entrance, met tightness, withdrew, pushed again. How human males lasted through breeding, he didn’t know, because it took all of his machine’s rigid restraint to keep from coming, from thrusting hard. His female felt too good, too hot, and wet, and snug. She clasped his shoulders, holding onto him, his strain mirrored in her eyes.

Her pussy lips pressed against his base and he paused, relishing her intimate grip on him, allowing her to adjust to his size. “Are you well, my Shelby?” He met her gaze.

“No. Yes. I don’t know.” She was delightfully confused. “You feel...”

“Large?”

She lowered her gaze to his chin. “Right.”

Her voice was faint, would be inaudible to a human, but Green was a cyborg. He heard her and smiled. They stayed locked in place, neither of them moving.

Gradually she loosened around him. She shifted. He sank deeper and they both groaned, the impact felt through

his physique.

“Green.”

She didn't have to ask. He pulled out to his tip and thrust forward, shaking her form. Frag. Her curves undulated under him, testing his resolve. He gritted his teeth, repeated the motion again and again and again.

“More, Green.” She bounced her boot heels against his clenched ass. “Fuck me harder, faster.”

He strove to obey her commands, to please his little human, conscious of his greater strength, not wishing to hurt her. Sweat trickled down his spine. He'd keep her safe, even from himself, cherish her the way she was meant to be cherished.

And he would come. Soon.

Green pistoned in and out of her, smacking his beleaguered balls against her skin. She lifted her hips, meeting him halfway, the power in her form impressing him. Although she was smaller, more delicate, she wasn't weak, not in heart, not in spirit.

They rutted wildly on a surface of grass, under a sky sparkling with stars. The fire burning before them was surpassed by the heat between their bodies. Her skin shone, covered by a thin layer of perspiration. Brown curls framed her face. Her cries joined his grunts.

He plunged forward, lost in passion, in his Shelby. Her pussy constricted more and more around his shaft. Her arms and legs shook.

He wanted to feel her release around him. “Come for me.”

“Again?” Her eyes widened.

“Yes.”

She huffed her distress.

But she would do it. He'd give her no choice. Green drove into her and swiveled his hips, grinding against her clit. She shrieked and her pussy walls closed upon him.

“Frag,” he roared, pushing forward even more. Hot cum spurted from his cock, the spine-jarring hard pulses of release bringing an ecstasy he'd never known existed. His worlds spun. His ears buzzed. He poured everything he had into his female.

Shelby screamed louder, twisting under him, slapping his chest, fighting to be freed. Green pinned her hips to the ground, both his man and his machine demanding that he subdue her, make her his, never let her go.

“Mine.” He covered her lips with his, swallowing her cries, tasting her bliss.

Her shudders lessened, stopped, her body turning limp, lifeless. He nuzzled her neck, feeling her pulse slow.

“What was *that*?” Wonder tilted her words. “It wasn't sex.”

“It was breeding.” He rolled onto his back, taking her with him, maintaining their connection. “A cyborg claiming his female.”

“For now.” She rested her cheek on his chest.

“Forever.” Eventually she'd accept that, accept their bond and a future with him. Green stroked her hair, reveling in her softness. He'd waited his lifespan to meet her. He could wait a few more planet rotations for her to express her love.

Chapter Four

Shelby watched Green. Her huge cyborg walked the unseeded field to the right, tapping boulders with the toe of his boots, his eyes blazing bright blue with thought.

It had been thirty planet rotations since he first landed on Earth Minor. The ship now hovering above them had left, returned, left, returned again, and he remained.

He talked of offspring, of the future, of forever, and she was beginning to believe those words. She no longer dwelled solely on the past, on this planet rotation. She found herself sometimes envisioning the next planet rotation and the next after that.

That should have scared her. Usually, when she made plans, something horrible happened, hurting the beings around her.

But that was before she met Green. Now, everything was different. She had hope.

“If you wish, I could ask Zip and Barrel’s assistance to remove the boulders.” He lumbered to her side. “We could expand the garden, grow more of those tubers we baked last sunset.”

“Potatoes.” She smiled. He enjoyed ancient Earth food, devouring it with enthusiasm.

“Potatoes.” Green wrapped one of his arms around her waist and pulled her to him. Heat radiated from his big body. He wore his flight suit. She’d donned one of her ancient Earth dresses, the skirt fluttering against his legs.

A butterfly floated by. They turned their heads in

unison, tracking its flight. Shelby's form folded into Green's.

"Expanding the garden is a good idea," she conceded, taking a chance on the future. She'd only planted enough crops for one being. Shelby placed her hand on her cyborg's chest. And there were two of them now.

Perhaps they would have more beings to feed in the future. Green wanted offspring. She did also.

She envisioned little cyborgs with his black hair, gray skin, brilliant blue eyes. They'd follow their daddy around the fields, imitating his warrior swagger, his proud stance, his serious expression.

Her lips curled upward

The cyborg ship whizzed over their heads, heading for the Earth Minor landing site, and a sense of foreboding swept over Shelby.

Don't overreact, she told herself. This could be a planned visit.

"Were you expecting Zip and Barrel this planet rotation?" She gazed up at Green, willing him to say yes, to tell her that his friends wanted to share the mid-planet-rotation meal or they had new insights on Windy's origins.

This could be good news. Perhaps the males had found another one of Windy's species. The plant would then be able to reproduce. They could fill a field with poppies.

"No, I wasn't expecting our friends." Green squashed her hopes.

Shit. Shit. Shit. Her trepidation increased. She dared to talk about the future and now those dreams would fall apart.

“We’ll see what they desire,” her cyborg grasped her hand and walked toward the site, shortening his stride to match hers.

Bees buzzed. Leaves rustled. Shelby couldn’t relax, fretting about the confrontation. This was the something bad she’d been waiting for. She squeezed Green’s fingers. She was certain about it.

Barrel and Zip waited by their ship. In the past, Green’s friends greeted them with smiles. Laughter glinted constantly in the good-natured males’ artificial eyes. This planet rotation, their lips were flat and their faces reflected that careful blankness cyborgs had perfected.

Shelby’s stomach twisted.

“Green, Green’s Shelby,” Barrel, the leader of the group, spoke first. “Vector contacted us.”

“He’s the captain of the Freedom,” Zip explained.

“Green has told me about him.” She nodded.

Vector, concerned about contagion, wouldn’t allow Windy on the Freedom or on the cyborg’s home planet. Green and his beloved plant had been forced to live on their small ship, orbiting in space. His friends had supported him, staying on the ship also.

“He requires our help.” Barrel met Green’s gaze. “The K models, the cyborgs manufactured to replace us, have escaped the Humanoid Alliance.”

“They’re young cyborgs.” Zip crossed his arms over his chest. “They confirmed that they removed their tracking devices but Vector worries that they might not have covered their trail. We’re closest to their current location. He wants us to meet with them, to ensure they’re

not leading the humans straight to the Homeland.”

His friends needed him. Shelby nibbled on her bottom lip. He'd leave Earth Minor, leave her, realize he had missed the companionship of other cyborgs and never return. She'd be alone. Again. But this time, she'd be heartbroken.

“What are the odds that they'll do that?” Green tilted his head to the side.

“I calculated that risk as being low.” Zip eased one of her fears. Green wouldn't be in danger. “They might be young, but even young cyborgs know when they're being followed. The guidance system on the ship they've commandeered would have informed them of any nearby ships.”

“Vector is being cautious.” Barrel's lips twisted.

“As he is with Windy.” Green dipped his head. “Which sector are they in?”

They talked. Shelby pressed her lips together, swallowing the wild urge to ask Green to stay with her. He had to accompany his friends, help his kind. That was the type of honorable male he was. She understood that.

But she didn't want to spend a planet rotation without him. His nanocybotics bubbled within her. He was a part of her now.

He was more important than her planet, than her mission, than maintaining the botanic history of ancient Earth.

He was even more important than the safety of the past. She had to leave with him. She straightened. She'd rejoin the hectic, noisy modern world, risking the unknown

future, sacrificing everything she'd built to be with the male she loved.

"I'll go prepare," she broke into their conversation about energy sources.

"My Shelby." Green reached out to grab her.

She twisted out of his grip, hiked up her skirt and ran to their domicile, passing her mother's rosebushes. She'd take clippings with her, keep that legacy alive.

Green would want Windy to join them on the mission also. He never went anywhere without his much loved plant.

The poppy had been planted in one of the gardens, had spread her roots. She'd require a larger container.

And ash. That addition to the soil had caused Windy to flourish. Shelby would fill another container with the remnants of last sunset's fire.

She rummaged through her newly organized storage chamber. Green had placed all of the open plant containers together. The containers that could be sealed were stored in another location. That made locating her hoarded objects easy.

She'd be leaving them behind when they left the planet. Would some other being find them, care for her domicile, her gardens? She grasped the needed containers and trudged outside. Would this being realize the significance of the plants, cater to their specific requirements, feel the emotional bond she did to them, to Earth Minor?

Her predecessor had recorded the plants' needs. She'd tweaked his findings. Would the newcomer take the time to peruse their data?

If there was a newcomer. Green had been the first being she'd seen in eight solar cycles. By then, her plants would have either flourished or died.

She might be sacrificing their life spans for this one chance at happiness.

Shelby scooped the ashes into the container, ignoring the guilt gnawing at her insides. She loved her plants, her planet, but she loved Green more.

She chose him. She—

Her thoughts stuttered to a stop as the cyborg ship lifted off. Green was on that ship. She stared, stunned, as the vessel zoomed into the sky above her. He hadn't asked her to join him, hadn't said good-bye, hadn't kissed her one last time.

He'd *left* her.

Without a backward glance, without a word.

Her legs collapsed under her. She fell silently, numb, lifeless. Her knees hit soft ground and a cloud of dust puffed upward. She had been willing to give up everything for him. He wasn't willing to delay his adventure for her.

He might have said the words, might have believed them himself, but he hadn't loved her, not truly, not enough.

A part of her, a small silly irrational compartment in her heart refused to believe this truth. It was unable to accept the facts, even though she'd seen his departure with her own eyes, had heard the roar of the ship.

She waited for him to return, to tell her it was all a mistake.

Because she loved him. He had to love her back. This was Green. He didn't lie. He couldn't. He was a cyborg,

one of the most honorable males she'd ever met.

She couldn't lose him, couldn't lose everything, not again. She wouldn't survive.

Shelby bowed her head. A teardrop trickled down her cheek. She gazed unseeingly at the ground.

"Are you damaged, my female?"

That sounded like... No. She shook her head. It couldn't be. He was gone.

"My Shelby?" Her grief-spawned hallucination persisted.

"You're." She looked upward and her words stopped. Green peered at her, his rugged face creased with concern, his energy-infused blue eyes glowing. "You're not gone."

How was that possible?

She lifted her gaze skyward. "But the ship departed. I saw it ascend." She glanced at him. She hadn't imagined him. He remained on Earth Minor, standing before her.

"Why are you here?"

His forehead wrinkled. "You're here. Windy is here. Where else would I be?"

She brushed her fingers over her moist cheeks. "Your friends approached you, needing your help."

"My friends didn't require my help. They were concerned that their extended absence might put our homeland at risk." Green grasped her shoulders and pulled her upward, gliding her body along his. "We'll no longer have access to our ship's monitoring of the surrounding space. We won't know if a threat approaches our planet."

"Our planet?" She was confused. Which planet was he referring to?

“Earth Minor.” Red bloomed across his cheekbones. “I’m aware that I should have discussed this with you, my female. I was waiting for the proper time. But Barrel and Zip want to claim your planet also.”

“They want to live here?”

He nodded. “They have an emotional bond with Windy, with me, and now with you. When they find their females, they plan to build their own domiciles and raise their offspring here.”

They’d choose isolation also. She looked around her at the greenery, the blue sky, the bees buzzing from flower to flower, letting this new vision of the future sink into her mind.

Green hadn’t left her. He was here. And his friends would return, perhaps with females. They’d live close, visit often, be part of their lives.

That future wasn’t dark or frightening. It felt good, right.

“Zip claims the planet can sustain the additional beings.”

“It can,” she confirmed.

Another silence stretched.

“What are your thoughts, my female?” Green grasped her hands. “Your happiness is my number one priority. If you want the planet to remain ours alone, I’ll tell them to settle somewhere else.”

“You’d do that?” She tilted her head back and gazed up at him. “You’d choose me over your friends, males whom you’ve fought with, escaped with?”

“You’re my female,” he said that as though it explained

everything. "I would do anything for you. I'd die for you."

His cyborg meant every word he said. Anything she asked of him, he'd do. His power was hers. Warmth spread across her chest. "I love you."

Energy surged in his eyes, lighting them a brilliant blue. "You love me?"

"I love you." She smiled. "I've loved you for planet rotations, but I was scared to say the words, to believe." She cupped his face, her fingers golden against his gray skin. "Then I thought you were leaving me and that scared me even more."

"I'd never leave you." He turned his head, pressed a kiss in the center of her palms, his lips firm. "Parting from you would be like parting from my arm or my processors. You're a piece of me, essential for me to function, required for my soul's peace, my heart's beating, my—"

She pressed her breasts against his chest and he stopped talking, his body hardening, his muscles flexing. Shelby grinned. He wanted her. She rolled her hips, brushing them against his.

"My Shelby." Green swooped downward, captured her lips. She gasped, surprised by his enthusiasm and he filled her mouth with his tongue, taste, nanocybotics.

This was what she craved—his kiss, his touch, the feel of his body against hers. She pushed closer to him, cradling his tongue with hers. He threaded his fingers through her messy curls, holding her tight.

Her parents, much loved and never to be forgotten, had once planned a great future for her, the stewardship of two prosperous agri lots, the joining of two families, a lifetime

with a boy every being liked and who she considered her best friend.

After that had been taken from her, she'd thought there was nothing left. She had retreated into the safety of the past, hiding her loneliness under the burden of responsibility.

Then the universe had set her free, sending her this wonderful male, a battle-weary warrior with a gentle heart and an ill plant, and she'd found a future even brighter, even more joyous than her parents could have imagined.

They would have loved Green. She stroked his broad face. He would have earned their approval as he had earned her love—patiently, steadily proving himself, by being the best, most genuine, most generous male she'd ever known.

She kissed him until her lips hummed and her brain spun. Then she kissed him some more.

When they broke apart, they both breathed heavily, their gazes unfocused.

He looked down at her, love and lust reflecting in his eyes. She looked up at him, allowing all of her feelings to show.

“You asked me my thoughts,” she whispered.

“Did I?” Green lifted his eyebrows.

Kissing her must have damaged his processors. Shelby smiled, flattered by his response. “You wanted to know what I thought about your friends living with us on Earth Minor.”

“Ahhh...” He nodded. “And?”

“And.” She glanced around them. “We’ll need their help clearing the boulders from the field. We’ll have to plant more potatoes if we’re going to feed three large cyborgs and one human female.”

“One beautiful human female.” Green swept her upward into his arms, boosting her lush form easily as though she weighed less than his poppy. “I love you, my Shelby.” He grinned, his happiness melding with hers.

“I love you, my Green.”

He swung her around, in a circle. Trees, rocks, her mother’s roses blurred into a continual stream of color and scent. Shelby threw back her head and laughed, her joy spilling out of her.

This was home. He was her present and her future.

There was no female in the universe happier than she was.

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If you have a friend who loves my cyborgs, please encourage her/him to sign up for my newsletter at <http://tasteofcyn.com/2014/05/28/newsletter/> so she/he can receive exclusive stories also.

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About Cynthia Sax

USA Today bestselling author Cynthia Sax writes contemporary, SciFi and paranormal erotic romances. Her stories have been featured in Star Magazine, Real Time With Bill Maher, and numerous best of erotic romance top ten lists.

She lives in a world filled with magic and romance. Although her heroes may not always say, "I love you," they will do anything for the women they adore. They live passionately. They play hard. They love the same women forever.

Cynthia has loved the same wonderful man forever. Her supportive hubby offers himself up to the joys and pains of research, while they travel the world together, meeting fascinating people and finding inspiration in exotic places such as Istanbul, Bali, and Chicago.

Sign up for her dirty-joke-filled release day newsletter and visit her on the web at www.CynthiaSax.com

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