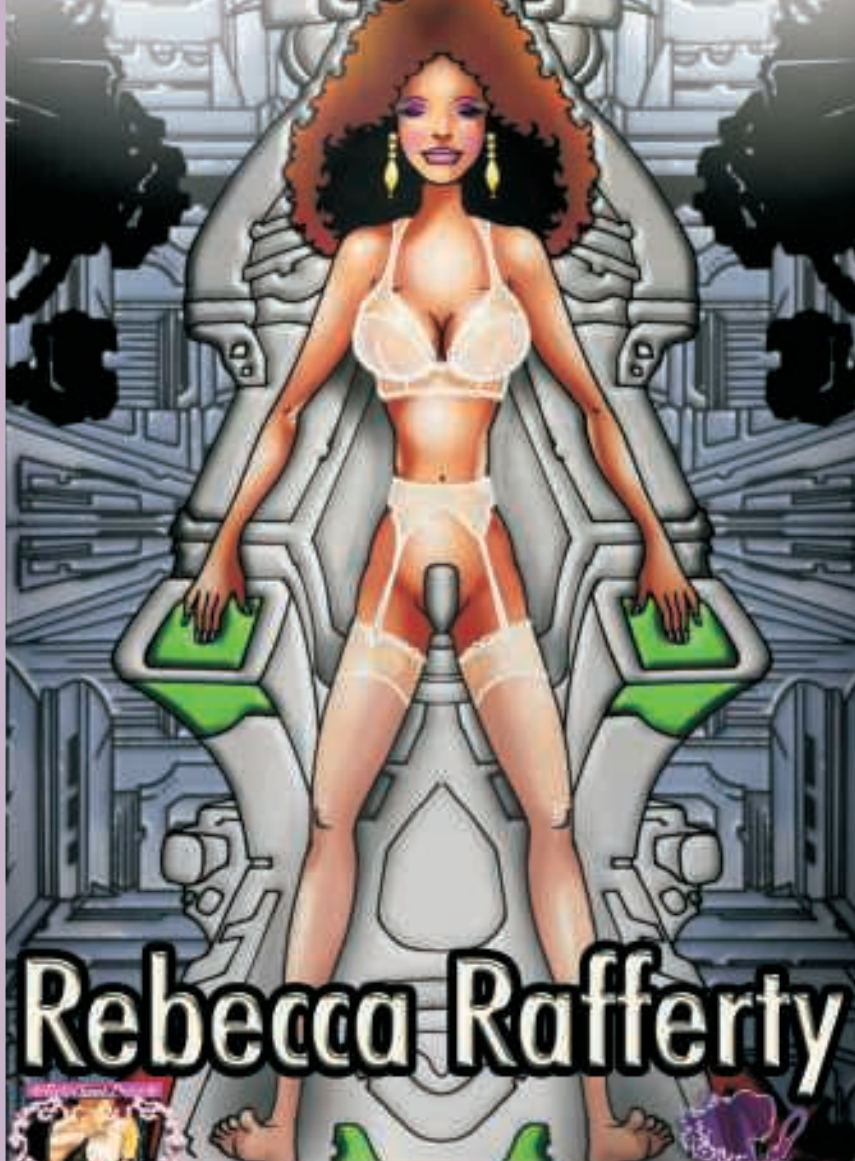


# Stowaway

*To A Perfect World*



# Rebecca Rafferty



An "Adult Tv" Novel



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# **STOWAWAY**

## **to a Perfect World**

**by Rebecca Rafferty**

There was this big argument on the space station dock. I did my usual disappearing act into the shadows and grinned at the participants. The girl was pretty, very pretty, long, dark hair falling across her face. She pushed it back, showing off the thin, diamond bracelets she wore. Out in Trajan's Rift, of course, diamonds are as common as asteroid dust but a scoop of them could buy a rough passage to Old Terra where, on what you had left, you could live the life of a stationmaster, or so I've heard, in conversations I've listened in on.

"We have to go back there," the girl was insisting, her thin arms quite bare as she tried to pull the big guy back towards the docking slips. "Marten, we have a contract with your father ..."

Surprise! The guy slugged her, laughing as the brunette bounced off the deck, exposing panties and lovely, dark-stockings on very feminine legs. I'm a leg man I must admit. I'd seen this girl sway down the

dock before on her high heels. She always wore them, as slim, attractive girls do. I almost jumped out to take on the guy treating the brunette so badly.

Then, I heard some men shouting and the sound of running feet in the distance.

“Oh, look, Karen!” sneered the guy the brunette had called Marten. “Here come the guys you’ve been sleeping with, instead of me.”

“You said you never wanted to sleep with me again!” the beauty screamed, getting up, blood, darker than her lipstick, pouring from her mouth. “We’re divorced! Are you too drunk to remember?”

Marten made a gesture as if to hit his ex-wife again. I’d have broken cover and confronted him, no matter that I was only as tall as she was, and probably lighter than her as food was getting hard to swipe on Averill Station.

“I’m going to find myself a real woman!” Marten shouted at the woman who cowered beneath him. He took something out of his pocket and threw it against the deck. It smashed into several pieces. One, the largest piece of an identity clip, skidded right up to my feet.

“You can go back to your pervy bum friends!” the big guy roared. He took off running before the girl’s boy friends, if that’s what they were, reached him.

“Are you all right, Karen?” asked a slim, athletic-looking guy while his companion, bigger and muscular, breathing a little more heavily, came to a stop and glared down the deck.

“I’m all right,” said the brunette, with a shaky smile I thought was just gorgeous. I think the first guy did as well as he put his arm about her and cuddled her to him. He helped her to her feet. The bigger guy retrieved her high heel. They said something about Cinderella and a shoe fitting which made the girl named Karen laugh as she daintily stepped into the shoe that had come off.



“Marten’s gone, Bretton,” she said, slipping her arm into the bigger man’s so that she held onto both men, limping a little, grimacing, as she walked. “He threw his ID at me and it smashed all over the place.” She gestured daintily at the floor of the deck. “And we’ve an undock call for the fifth of mainshift!”

“That’s Xander’s problem now,” said the big man. “Trash that one was, Karen. I know you only married him to get off Perfect. But you should have married me or Devis,” he indicated the grinning, smaller man. “We’d have been willing.”

“You should have asked me,” a smiling Karen said winsomely. “But April wouldn’t let me get my hands on Dev, you know that! And besides ...”

The rest of the animated conversation didn’t reach me as the threesome went off down the dock. I waited until I couldn’t hear Karen’s heels clicking on the metallic surface of the deck and slid out of the alcove formed by several LOX containers. I had to crawl on my hands and knees but I finally found all the pieces of Marten Sellars identity. It only took me ten minutes to make the ID clip usable. I was able to read the name of the ship Marten had just deserted.

The *Rimrunner Princess* had an undocking time, in eight T-hours, according to Marten’s clip. Yes, Averill was one of those stations that kept to the old ways of measuring time in Terran units. I think it made them think they were so superior and more civilized than the rest of the rougher worlds of Trajan’s Rift.

The first thing most inbound ships did was to adjust to local time. Most offworlders like this Sellars carried clips that converted station time to ship time. I guess since I had his ID and his ship time conversion, Marten Sellars wasn’t going back to the *Princess*. Which meant an open berth, for someone like me, a stow-away.

I had to get on that ship, whatever it was, passenger or freighter, or both, as most ships were. Yes, I was nimble with my fingers, probably with my mind as well. I’d survived the death of my birth ship to pirates,

finding my skills with small electros, faking IDs, masking myself from system scans, really useful. I'd hopped from ships that traded with pirates to legitimate traders and then to planetary stations.

I don't know why but I'd always found it uncomfortable to tell anyone about how I came to be where I was. I found it easiest to pretend I was a Slug, someone's useless kid, dumped on a station for the station to have to look after. I could snivel a bit and actually be put on the station Slug List, the Welfare Roll, but I didn't want the kind of forced labor, that getting your food on cred, meant you had to do.

It was easy just to pilfer what I wanted. I could use just about any handheld and make it do something for me, charge to the previous owner's account, or pay a food or bar bill. But sometimes, if I kept a 'lost' item too long, security would come looking for me, as they were on Averill. I could have kept this Marten guy's ID and raided his ship's credit banks if I wasn't already being sought under two different IDs I'd used. I had to get off what was an orbiting trap for me.

But I'd have to do it in eight hours, less, as I had to understand how this clip worked before I used it. If I just took from the *Princess's* credit banks, the ship would be called and I'd be in big trouble. No, I didn't want a security search to find me as Marten Sellars. They'd probably space me without a suit if they thought I was a real criminal, an identity thief, and not just a petty pilferer, as I'd been called before.

I had to get off Averill. I'd pilfered just a little too many times from the fifth rate eateries along Docking Deck. I'd actually walked into a trap at *Tootles* and was chased by a frigging Robosec. Luckily, I'd learned before how to beam instructions into the asses of those tinboys, that's where their brains were placed, and so I got away. But at least one guy at *Tootles* had seen me, which meant that soon, if I kept stealing as I was, there'd be a real hunt for me. They would know, too, what I looked like.

The *Rimrunner Princess* was an old mixed-job freighter, an Outbounder V. Had passenger quarters,

said the Info-guide I contacted as Marten Sellars, shorthaul usually, longhaul if you could take a couple of T-years in space in a metal casket. Personally, I couldn't.

Twenty-one light years, the docking permit informed me, to Perfect Station. Well, it had to be better than the imperfect one I was on, I thought, setting up opposite Devis, the sentry at the entrance to the *Princess*. I played with the Marten Sellars ID and awaited my chance to move.

It was a girl who distracted Devis. It would have to be, wouldn't it? I heard the click of her high heels, the sound of her laughter and the protest of some guy who was with her.

"I told you," I heard a girl saying in a most seductive voice. "See, we undock in three hours and there's Dev, who's been calling me to report for the last two."

"Come on, April," called Dev from his watchpost. Yes, I thought. That's it. Go out. Meet and greet her like a good, little watch officer! Dev did exactly that, getting into an argument with April and her new boy friend, I gathered, about the little time she had left to board. They were so concentrated on one another they didn't notice Marten Sellars check in at the watchpost, enter the *Rimrunner Princess* and disappear into the hold behind main entrance.

No one posted on the inside. Very sloppy, I laughed to myself. It was so easy. I was Marten Sellars. I had access, from the consoles on every deck, to all the records of everyone on the ship. Nine men and five girls, a bigger crew than I'd expected.

I heard a man talking to a woman above me. I did what I've done twice before in my little career as a stowaway. I used some of the electronics I've made or acquired. I was a 'package', the electros in my shoulder pads, shoes and knee pads informed the scan. I sat down and didn't move in the passageway into the far hold.

'Bretton' led yet another woman down the ramp I might have gone up, down to a passageway where passenger cabins were situated. He stopped not fifteen feet from me and pulled the red-haired girl to him. She was smiling at him, her face exquisitely made up.

"Oh, Brett," she murmured, flinging her arms around his neck. He pushed her back against the bulkhead, gyrating his body against hers. "Whatever brought this on?"

"Seeing you looking so beautiful, Del," Brett whispered to the girl, caressing her hips, pulling her tight against him. Their lips locked together as I sat and tried not to move a muscle, nor to breathe loudly, as they went at it in the hallway.

Del's leg was up around Bretton's, trapping him to her. He freed one of her breasts, kissing it most enthusiastically.

"April's on dock. We have the room to ourselves," murmured 'dear Delores', stroking Brett just as much as he was stroking her. His hands lifted her skirts, showing me her lovely, black, silky panties and her womanly thighs.

I sighed in relief when the pair of them kissed and groped their way through a doorway one of them locked behind them. I was sort of sorry to see them go as all the heavy petting and endearments were turning me on as fervently as the lovers. "I just love coming inside you, Delores," Bretton had said and, "I love the feel of you inside me so much," she'd said to him, rolling her head in ecstasy as he kissed and fondled her breasts again.

I heard a noise from the outer entrance. A laughing April came in, clinging to Dev as she did. Her long, flowing mane of blonde hair gleamed in the light as she and the guy who'd been on watch outside groaned and moaned as they kissed one another with such passion.

"Oh, bother," said April sweetly in a lovely soprano voice. "Delores is in the suite. It'll have to be the matress if you want it now, my darling!"

"After working me over, filling me with jealousy of that patroller lunk?" asked a husky-voiced Dev. "I don't know why I fall for your games, April, I really don't! But you know I can't stop now 'til I have you, have you again, and probably again."

"Promises, promises, big boy," April crooned to the man with her, turning and wiggling her tush against him. "I know you haven't had a girl in ages which is why I'm taking pity on you, my hero!"

Dev was laughing, saying something about a husband. "A marriage of convenience," murmured April as she started undoing Dev's clothing, "to get away from Perfect." She giggled. "And now we're going back anyway!"

I tried not to look through the spaces between loaded items in the front of the hold, but I couldn't move back as they danced past me, arms locked together, like their lips, and fell into a space I'd registered as one to hide in.

Thank goodness I hadn't done that. The two fell onto a mattress of some sort, quite high, maybe a stack of three. I could hear them going at it as any man and woman would have. They paused, April's pretty blouse being draped over a case, his uniform top joining her clothing, followed by his pants. I saw April's legs above the case. Her stockings and bra were draped on the top quite neatly by her lover before he descended on her and her laughing mouth, cutting off whatever she was saying.

I looked away before realizing there was a mirror, a full-length mirror over the 'mattress' they'd stretched out on. It was dark but I could make out April's thin, girlish arms clinging to Dev's bare back and neck. My eyes quickly became accustomed to the lack of light. I smiled as I was aroused myself watching them make love, the girl so pretty and rounded in all the right places, I could see. She quivered and shivered as she wiggled her breasts against Dev, not even looking up at the mirror as her eyes were closed in bliss.



Devis was completely naked, I noticed, but April still had her panties on. Dev was playing with her, kissing between her legs. She squeaked and drew his mouth onto her panties. She must have perfumed herself there as Dev kept murmuring how wonderful she was. He could do this forever, enjoying 'the flowers in her garden'.

"Oh, Dev," murmured April, her voice flushed with emotion. "Please Dev, don't tease me so! I want you inside me! I want you now!"

She started to take down her panties. Dev finished that task, slipping off something else, too, some tape she'd worn beneath her panties. That's when I saw something rise from her that I'd never seen on any girl before. I blinked hard and rapidly. I gasped and was sure they'd heard me; but they were too much into loving one another. They couldn't hear me over the incredible noises they were making.

Dev lifted April who put a pillow beneath her that helped her tush rise, her legs way up and around Dev, allowing Dev to thrust himself into April's tush and showing me what I still couldn't believe, a pecker on a girl! She squealed in a little girl's voice and begged him to do her like that, 'yes, just like that!' She began to buck up and down as Dev wriggled his body over hers, her little breasts being kneaded and caressed as a woman's should be.

I watched in shock and amazement. I'd lost sight of the penis. No, not Dev's. That was going like a ramrod engine into April's tush. No, the other penis I'd seen had been hers, April's, and, yes, there it was. Dev was squeezing it hard between them and she was thrashing around on the mattress, begging him not to ease off.

It didn't take 'her' long. She shrieked and cried, hugging and kissing Dev as the two of them made love. I shivered more than 'she' did. I watched two men making perverted love, I knew, and couldn't take my eyes off the pair. She was so like a real girl, this April, even if 'she' was a man.

Dev must have known it but it didn't seem to make any difference to him. He filled her, I'm sure he did, as she went into feminine spasms on the bed and kissed Dev ferociously. Her generous, reddened lips must be bruised, I thought, as she kissed him forcefully. Finally, she released in a furious climax that had her spurting all over Dev as he was releasing inside her. He quivered on top of her as they kissed and petted frantically as if they were a real man and a real girl.

When they slowed, they didn't stop cuddling and caressing. They kissed and kissed, their tongues often exposed as April received just what any woman might have received from a man. Wow, she worked on Dev so seductively, ensuring their lovemaking continued. Dev had her again and finally a third time. I faded back as far as I could behind the package rack, sure they wouldn't see me as I'd seen this perverted couple, so many times.

April's legs and panties were quite close to me. I might have been able to reach over and touch them, not that I dared. Dev kissed and caressed April's legs enough, however, for me to know they were femininely smooth and scented and 'worth the visit', as Dev said to his 'woman'.

I wondered if April was a 'drag queen'. I'd heard the term before. Dev kind of confirmed it as he raised the matter of the guy outside. "You were being really dangerous with that patroller, April," he said to her, tracing out and caressing her breasts and nipples, nibbling on them as they lay together.

"He only walked me down the dock," said a laughing 'girl', her voice beautiful and soprano-like.

"He wanted into your panties badly," said the young watch officer, stroking his girl's thighs again with his tongue. It sent her into a fit of trembling. She lifted and turned to let Dev mount her from the rear.

"You know I wouldn't let any stationer do anything like this to me," said April, pressing back into Dev, wiggling so eagerly that Dev grimaced in ecstasy, I saw, as he fondled and kissed 'her'.

I thought I'd be trapped by the deviate lovers forever but suddenly there was a chime. Dev reached up and pulled down his pants for his ID.

"Since you're down there in the hold, Dev," said a strong man's voice, "could you and April check on storage items we have in the holds?"

"We can do that," April said with a giggle. "Anything for you, Xander, anything at all!"

"April!" said the strong voice but there was a laugh in it. "My wife is right here beside me. Con is listening in as well and giving me a really black look!"

"Your wife doesn't love you enough, darling Captain," said April with a pout as she trapped Dev with her lovely legs and wouldn't let him up. "And Con, if he really loves me the way he says he does, he wouldn't leave a girl like me all alone for so long I have to turn to Delores's castoffs to get a little male attention."

"Goddesses, woman," said a gruff voice. "Isn't half a dozen times at the end of alterday shift enough for you? You went dancing with Fane who's staggering down the dock now. If one of you two down there could manage to put some clothes on, please let Fane in before you check the hold for some parcel of Marten's. It's showing up on Inventory. We've no idea up here what it is."

"Fane can wait," giggled April. "Devis has more to show me, something to make me feel so-o-o good. Oh, oh, he's found a new position to have me, Con, darling. Oh, you have to try this with me first, darling, before Del learns of it. Oh, Dev, that's marvellous. Oh, do me, do me, like that. Oh, I love you, my darling Dev."

I watched the two of them writhing together. I didn't see anything new in what they were doing. They were just doing it all again but with much greater intensity. I waited. There were chimes again which the rutting couple ignored. I glanced at the way they were making love but Dev's body covered up a lot. April's legs were so high again. She was squealing all the time as Dev seemed to intensify whatever he was doing to her tush,

his mouth glued to her breasts as the two made fervent love.

The chimes started again. Dev finally kissed and kissed April, working himself free of her. "Hurry back!" she murmured as Dev reached for his pants and went off somewhere as the chiming went on.

There was a noise then from the front of the ship. I heard Dev's voice as he returned with another man. "Delores has Brett at the moment. I rescued April on the dock," he said, bringing the other man into the mattress bed area. "I have to do something for Xander now; so if you want your wife ..."

The other man said not a word. He just began stripping off his clothing before climbing onto the bed and into April's loving arms. It began again. Another man cupped April's lovely, feminine breasts, whispering compliments to her, having her, penetrating her tush with his penis, while April clung to him and writhed frantically beneath him. I think 'she' had another violent orgasm. It was just like those I'd seen sometimes in women, real women, that is. April didn't seem to be faking, not with the emissions I could see appearing all over her stomach.

I finally crawled along the passageway, listening to Dev repeating numbers into some kind of recorder. I couldn't evade him forever; so I did the only thing you can do on an Outbounder. I went into the life support system, the air exchange super-piping.

I tried to listen to what the ship was doing. With what I'd seen crewmen doing together, and the captain, that Xander, whoever he was, condoning it all, I thought I should get off the *Princess*. What a perverted ship it was! I grimaced as I thought how apt that name was for what I'd seen.

"It's moved off," I heard the Captain say as I tried to check Marten Sellars' tracker. "Don't worry any further, Dev. I'll get my wife onto it. She's been lazing around for cycles and doing nothing but looking beautiful and making love to the captain of this bucket. She needs something to do."

I eased along life support until I was at a transfer point between decks. A small console was alive. How sloppy, I thought again, with no-one in the life support tube working on repairs. It showed the cabin below and the one above. Above wasn't so bad. A woman sat there, a strikingly beautiful woman, with long, golden hair. Her beautiful legs were crossed I could see. She worked on some kind of console.

Below me, I could spy into the inside of another room. The spyhole was over a bed. Bretton and the red-haired Delores, were going at it. I felt the temples of my forehead begin to throb as I clearly saw that Del had a penis the size of April's. She and Bretton were making love, as April and Dev had, as if they were man and woman. They ignored completely Delores' penis. 'She' must be some sort of male pervert! Yet, 'she', he, was being treated totally as a woman by a member of the most perverted crew I'd ever seen.

The gorgeous blonde woman, alone above me, picked up a cup, drinking from it, studying her console, reminding me I was hungry and thirsty. I needed to go up a level where, according to the scheme posted beside the console, there was an exit through a screen into the kitchen where the golden woman in her dark blue dress was sitting.

I moved quietly, looking through the exit screen first. The table was empty, the woman gone. There was an aroma of coffee and something else, some kind of baking. I spotted the cakes or muffins on a tray by the door, abandoned. I undid the robot hatch and slid out into the room, my mouth watering.

"A stowaway!" said an amused voice over my shoulder. Someone swished behind me, moving as if out of the wall itself, blocking me from the exit I'd opened. "Yes, Xander, a parcel that can move as fast as this one isn't a rat, not at all. It's a rather young man, I think, with a lot of intriguing electronics about him that say he's a parcel and also Marten Sellars."

I stood there all that time while the beautiful, exquisitely made-up blonde spoke. I stared in awe at her. Finally I shook myself free of the spell she'd put on me.

She didn't need the stungun she held in the folds of her shimmering dark blue dress.

"My name is Jennifer Burton, the captain's wife," this most perfect woman in the world said to me so sweetly. With what I'd seen in the other rooms, cabins, on this ship, I was aroused as a man should be, just at the sight of her, the quivering of her long, blonde hair, the swishing of her dress and her lovely, beautiful, feminine voice. "Who are you?"

"M-Marten Sellars," I said to her. The blonde laughed and shook her head. I loved the tinkle of the intricate long earrings she wore.

"You aren't a bumptious idiot," Jennifer said with a lovely smile at me. "So you can't be him." She flicked her hair to one side and pressed a device to her head. "You can go ahead, Xander. By the look of him, this young man is as anxious to leave Averill as we once were to leave Perfect."

"Perfect?" I said stupidly. "But that's where you're headed, isn't it?"

Jennifer Burton sighed. "Yes, we have a contract to fulfill," she said. I could sense her fragrance now. I loved it. "We don't have to like it, though, do we? Why would you want to stowaway for Perfect, Marten?"

"Anywhere is better than Averill," I told her with a little tremble.

Jennifer laughed at me. "I don't think you'll say that once we've turned you over to station authorities on Perfect," she said, her lovely pink mouth curving in a smile.

"Then let me off here on Averill," I said quickly. "You aren't undocked yet."

The ship swayed as the last grapple was withdrawn. The *Rimrunner Princess* was on its way out of Averill. Somehow, every ship I've ever been on seems to do that sway when clear of a mooring and free to engage en-

gines. I hate that awful floating feeling that threatens to overcome me.

The hatch opened. The captain, I guess it was him, came in with Devis, who swore when he saw me. I was expertly frisked. They found and took everything from me, even the stuff I'd had on me for over a T-year which Averill Security had never found.

"Put him in the brig," said the captain to Devis. The captain had his arms about the beautiful blonde, making me feel so jealous. I wanted to be touching her as he was. I wanted her to be looking at me with the adoration she was showing him, the man who'd called her his wife. Jennifer, I repeated the name silently. I'd never heard a prettier name for a girl before.

"Come with me, kid," said Devis, smiling ruefully at me. "And tell me how you got by me." He actually patted me gently on the shoulder. "You look like you've lost a lot of weight, Marten Sellars; so let me find you something hot from the galley."

I stared at him as he winked at me. I went meekly to the brig and Dev was as good as his word.

As I ate, Dev asked in a most friendly tone, "From where you were, you must have seen April and me?"

"Is she one of those tranny things?" I asked him. Dev gave me a genuine smile.

"Kid, you've got so much to learn," Dev said with another grin. "April is a girl, a perfect girl. I just want to warn you. She'll come onto you, so will Delores, and maybe Karen. You're not a virgin, I hope. So, let me assure you that Perfect girls," it occurred to me then that the word 'Perfect' was describing the station these so-called girls came from, "on this ship are not going to disappoint. You wouldn't, either, if you were a girl like them!"

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“How do you know he isn’t a plant?” the older guy insisted as he cuddled his long-legged wife in his lap, letting her kiss his neck and ear. “I wouldn’t put it past Clements to have sent someone like him out here. If he made those electronics himself and put Marten’s ID back together, he’s downright dangerous! He’s probably a saboteur!”

“If you could just stop boffing Abigail for a moment or two, Rafer,” said the captain softly. The couple broke apart as Abigail slid down onto the couch beside her husband, smiling at me as if she knew how her womanly behaviour was turning me on.

“This kid doesn’t speak with a Perfect accent,” said the captain. “He doesn’t know the first thing about Perfect and its, well, its most peculiar customs.”

Abigail looked at me with interest. Her husband, Rafer Baron, took her hands in his, as if he was jealous of me, or any man, looking at her. She looked delighted by his response and cuddled up to him, caressing his hands in hers. Abigail Baron was one of the most feminine women I’d ever seen, in how she dressed, how she responded to her husband.

“We’ll put him to work in the galley, Abigail and me,” Jennifer, the captain’s wife, suggested with a sweet smile. “That’ll keep him away from your project, Rafer. You can keep watch over it if you like. Abigail can come down and share the mattresses with you when you’re feeling lonely.”

“We have to check the cryo-units,” said Rafer abruptly, standing up. “I still say we should space the stowaway before he sabotages what this trip’s all about!”

“It isn’t just about bringing the project back to Perfect,” Xander, the captain, muttered, ushering his sparkling wife ahead of him, out of the galley. “Well,” he finished, his wife’s hands in his, “our new crew

member hammocks with the rest of the crew and does galley duties to earn his passage to Perfect.”

“Where,” said Jennifer, “we’d better make sure to keep him on board.” Jennifer, stood with her husband as he had his arm about her. He had that look in his eye which meant they were about to vanish and make love for a while as everyone on this perverted ship did, on duty or not.

“You are not to go on leave on Perfect, Marten,” the captain said. They were all calling me ‘Marten’ as I hadn’t told anyone my real name. I didn’t want them to laugh at the girlish name, Bell, my parents had given me. “You stay on this ship,” Xander said as his wife tugged on him, making me so jealous of him. “If you want, we’ll let you off on Onyx, where we go, next.”

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April and Devis were in an argument at the watchpost, April telling Dev in no uncertain terms she was going to meet her friends on Perfect station. There was nothing he could do about it as she was a married woman. She had rights. Then, she giggled at him and backed away. Dev followed, trying to reason with her.

Listening to ‘her’ made strange feelings rise inside me. I was used to April and Delores taking off with various members of the crew. I’d begun to think of both of them as women even though I’d seen the proof they weren’t. But no-one else on this perverted ship seemed to care what they were or what they did with other male members of the crew. Putting it bluntly, they were having sex with just about every man on the ship as far as I could see. So was the other dark-haired girl, the long-legged Karen, who’d once been ‘married’ to Marten Sellars.

I’d retrieved a bit of information here, a bit there, aboard the *Princess*, which was a pretty well run ship, save for its sex practices. April and Delores both offered themselves to me on the two cycle run into Per-

fect, laughing at my frantic shaking of my head as I said, 'No!', quickly.

They laughed when I was nice to Karen. "He doesn't think that you're a girl like the rest of us," April said as she poured tea, her lovely breasts bouncing. It was nerve-wracking to work with her in the galley, watching her being so girly. They'd let me out of the brig on leaving Averill space, treating me as one of them, and, as Jennifer suggested, put me into the galley to work.

April's remark made me look carefully at the beautiful, long-legged Karen who studied me in return. "Don't believe everything you hear from these jokers," Karen said. I didn't. I'd probably have gone with her, to find out who was speaking the truth, but Con, the alternate captain, poked his head into the cabin and called for her, Karen.

Karen shrugged and smiled nicely at me. "You had your chance," she'd said to me with a sweet, feminine smile that turned my insides out. I'd wanted her even more than I had when I'd first seen her, arguing with the real Marten.

But she'd gone off with another man. We didn't see them for two shifts. I mooned around the kitchen, wishing I wasn't such a wuss. I should've grabbed her, Karen that is, and had her in her cabin where Con was doing her, I was sure. Abigail and Jennifer were nice, sympathetic to me, but were both in committed relationships with other men. They wore marriage rings as women did in some parts of the Rift. When they weren't looking, I swiped kitchen gadget spares and had new IDs, as Marten Sellars and Devis Alderton, ready for the time when we docked at Perfect.

Of course, I was absolutely forbidden from setting foot on the docks there. "Oh, goddesses!" I heard April scream as I casually walked past the watchpost that recognized me as an outgoing Marten Sellars. I was halfway to the passenger elevator before I heard her scream. "That idiot boy is going on-station!"

Devis called after me but my slow, unconcerned walk alarmed no-one and gave me too great a lead on

him. I got into the express grav-lift and was off at the first deck stop, Double R, right into a group of girls, giggling and dancing along the passageway. One pretty brunette grabbed me in a waltzing dance, her perfume heavy and intoxicating.

"I'm Roxanne," she simpered at me, pressing her bouncy, little boobs against me. "I'm going to be dancing in the Femina Burlesque tonight! Come and see me, darling man. I'll be really good to you!"

Several of the girls, all with exquisite figures like Roxanne's, squealed at her for being so forward. "We're all dancing in the Femina tonight," said a blonde with shoulder-length, wavy hair. "Any of us will show you a good time tonight, you, whatever-your-name-is."

"Marten," I stammered as another blonde put her arms about my neck, her vividly madeup eyes sparkling as she began to kiss me with soft, gentle, feminine lips. "Marten Sellars."

"Oh, that's a terrible name around here!" said a red-haired girl, who seemed a little older than the others. She wrinkled her thin, pretty, little nose and pouted at me. "You're not related to the Stationmaster, are you?"

"No," I gasped. "I, I'm just off an off-world ship! We've got station leave!"

"What are you doing down here?" asked a laughing Roxanne. "You should be on Delta or Gamma decks, spending all your credits on girls like us! Come to the Femina, Marten, next shift, and see us all. I'm the girl in the dark blue bikini and feathers. If you come up to the stage, you can tip me and touch whatever you like!"

"I-I'm a leg man," I managed to gasp.

"So was I," said Roxanne as she took my hand and ran it over the outside of her short skirt and down her lovely, smooth, stockinged thigh. She kissed me quite passionately, as if she was starved for male attention. An older girl, Stella, broke us apart as I was fondling a

shapely female just about wherever I could put my hands. She wasn't stopping me at all.

"Roxanne," said the laughing Stella. "You've mussed your lovely hair and lipstick. We have one more routine to go through. Agnes isn't going to be pleased with you!"

So, as quickly as I'd been covered in girlish attention, as quickly it went away. The girls were hustled off to some dance rehearsal. I was left dazed and aroused, thinking how I was going straight to the Femina Burlesque as soon as I could raid the *Princess* ship accounts as Marten Sellars.

I laughed to myself as I took a slower, viewing car up to Gamma deck. The Devis identity ought to be good for a great time at the Femina Burlesque, whatever that was. I was surrounded by kissing couples on the viewing car, most not interested in the magnificent view of the Nebula and Trajan's Rift, never mind the glowing planet downbelow.

"Looks beautiful, doesn't it?" asked an older looking man, who'd followed me onto the car on RR Deck. He was smiling, studying me as I sat by myself as he did. "There's a prison labor camp still down there," he indicated the glowing planet. "Very few survive three of four T-years down, not on the face of the mines, as they call them. The girls sent there survive, of course, but not the guys."

"I'll make sure never to visit," I said to the guy earnestly.

"Your first time on Perfect?" asked the older man with a friendly smile as the little tram swooped around the outer circle of the station and came to a gentle stop at a watchpost.

"Yes," I began, freezing as I saw the Security step into the car I was riding. A stunner covered me as I got up to move to the other exit. It was being held by the older man who'd been talking to me.