

## Excerpt

### *Merrick's Maiden*

#### Cosmos' Gateway book 5

By S. E. Smith

Merrick jerked awake and rolled. He barely made it to the toilet before the contents of his stomach emptied. He didn't know what they had pumped into him this time, but he could feel his body rejecting it. Heaving, he gripped the bars until the nausea passed.

Several minutes later, he slowly straightened. With a softly muttered curse, he released the bars and stepped over to the sink. He twisted the knob for the cold water. Bending, he washed his mouth out before washing his face. It took several minutes before he felt slightly better.

Standing back straight, he rolled his shoulders. The chains around his wrists rattled as he pushed his hair back from his face. The faint memories of hands on his body sent a ripple of distaste and rage through him. His stomach churned again, but this time for a different reason. He turned back to the bed and stripped the thin cover off of the mattress. Tearing a strip from it, he dampened it and quickly wiped his body down to get rid of the feel of Dr. Rockman's hands on it.

He closed his eyes as his hands slipped under the waistband of the thin, cotton pants he wore. He cleaned himself as thoroughly as he could before tossing the cloth against the bars in fury. Throwing

his head back, he bit back the loud roar that threatened to escape him. He would not give the guards the satisfaction of knowing how violated he felt.

His eyes moved to the door when he heard the sound of footsteps outside it. The lights were off in the room, but the darkness did not bother his vision. Moving to the side of the cage so the thick corner sections of it partially concealed him, he waited as the sound of the lock disengaging echoed in the cold room. Perhaps he would get the chance to kill another one of the guards.

A cold smile curved his lips as the door opened and the light came on. His eyes narrowed when the door opened wider and he saw a slender figure backing into it. Long blonde hair, piled into a messy ponytail, hung down the back of what had to be a female. He couldn't see her face, yet. She appeared to be trying to pull a large cart into the room.

Amusement and curiosity reluctantly tugged at his lips when a low, muttered curse escaped her when the cart became stuck in the opening. He watched as the figure straightened and groaned as her gloved hands moved to her lower back. She rubbed it as if she was in pain.

A tired sigh escaped her this time and she leaned forward to grab something off the cart. He stiffened until he realized that she had turned to the counter. His eyes followed her as she sprayed foam on the countertop before wiping it down. She did the same to the cabinets and sink.

A soft growl escaped him when she bent over and opened the trash can to pull the bag out. The movement pulled the black cloth trousers she was wearing tight over her ass. Merrick frowned in annoyance. First, because he didn't understand why his body was reacting to the female with such an unexpected intensity. The second reason was because he knew she must have heard the sound that escaped him, but she continued to clean the room as if he wasn't there.

He watched as she pulled a long stick out of a yellow bucket. She pressed the strings until most of the water was removed before she started cleaning the floor. A frown creased his brow when he noticed she still hadn't turned around to look at the cage. The need to see what her face looked like was beginning to grow to an irritating, but persistent ache.

The frown darkened as she tiredly brushed her cheek against her shoulder. It was obvious from her demeanor that she either had no idea he was there, or she was pretending. He rattled the chain on his arm against the metal bar to draw her attention. His brow furrowed suspiciously when she still didn't turn around.

*It must be another test,* he thought as the murderous rage he had felt earlier swept through him.

Dr. Rockman had tried to 'research' his mating habits once before. She had a drugged-up woman brought in two months ago at the previous place they kept him. The foul smelling female had taken one

look at him, licked her lips, and run her eyes over him as if she had been given something sweet to eat.

The look of desire on her face hadn't lasted long once he proved he wasn't interested. Her screams and wretched cries for help had echoed once she came close enough for him to wrap his hands around her neck. He would never mate with such a female, no matter how desperate he might become.

He continued to follow the movements of the woman as she ran the mop from side to side. He tugged on the chains holding him. Frustration burned through him when he realized that he couldn't reach through the bars far enough to grab her. She would have to actually be against them before he would be able to touch her.

All thoughts flew from his mind when she suddenly turned until she was facing him. A soft squeak escaped her and her eyes widened in shock when she saw that she wasn't alone. Dark green eyes stared back at him in surprise before it was replaced with confusion as she noted the bars and the shackles around his wrists.

A low, menacing snarl escaped him when her eyes returned to his. His own glittering gaze captured and held hers for several long seconds as they both assessed the other. It took him half that time to realize that the feeling of rage had been replaced with another emotion. An emotion that he wasn't quite sure how to describe.

He impatiently waited for her to speak. The frown marring his brow deepened when the silence dragged

on as they continued to stare at each other. He finally released a frustrated grunt when she blinked in slow motion, as if she wasn't sure if he was real or not.

Merrick watched the female's face as a multitude of emotions swept over it. Surprise, confusion, uncertainty, and finally, curiosity glittered in the expressive green depths. Another jolt of unease ran through him as he felt himself being pulled into their brilliant depths. He tightly clenched the bars in aggravation knowing that he would never be able to reach the woman from this distance. His lip curled in warning as a figure suddenly appeared in the hallway behind her.

"Hey! What are you doing in here?" A voice demanded angrily behind her.