

## Excerpt

### *Cosmos' Promise*

#### Dragon Lords of Valdier book 4

By S. E. Smith

"RITA, run those numbers again for me and send it to my tablet," Cosmos said distractedly as he reached up for the cup of coffee he had set on top of the file cabinet.

He took a huge gulp before he grimaced. It was not only ice cold, it tasted like shit. He must have forgotten to make a new batch last night - or was it this morning? He gave a blurry-eyed look at the watch on his wrist before he gave a command for it to just tell him the time. His eyes were so tired he couldn't even read the damn thing anymore.

"RITA, on second thought, just tell me what it says," Cosmos called out to the computer system he and Tilly Bell, the mom of his best friend, Tink, had designed.

Well, he had designed the super-computer, but Tilly had hacked into it one weekend when she was visiting her youngest daughter, Jasmine 'Tinker' Bell. Tilly had uploaded into his NOVAD computer system an experimental artificial intelligence program she had designed.

The program named RITA soon took over his entire system, learning and developing at an exponential rate to the point he just thought of it as another pain in his ass when she gave him attitude.

RITA stood for Really Intelligent Technical Assistant. Cosmos had called her a few other things. After taking cold showers for almost a month in the middle of a Maine winter, he had learned to keep his less than ideal thoughts to himself.

Tink's parents, Tilly and Angus Bell, had practically adopted him when he and Tink met a little over four years ago while they were all camping at a campground not far from Calais, Maine. He and Tink had clicked, their minds and personalities made for the perfect balance of acceptance and respect. While he had hoped at one point that it might develop into something else, he realized that he would always see Tink as the little sister he never had. She had become not only the sister figure, but his best friend.

He found he could talk to her about anything. Her knowledge and ingenuity with motors and power generators blew him away and she loved to listen to his newest crazy ideas. When Tilly and Angus decided to move on when Tink was eighteen, she decided to stay. She moved into the third floor of the warehouse and a comfortable companionship had developed.

All of that changed a few months back when he needed help with his current project – a Gateway portal. He had been working on opening a doorway between two places on Earth, not two places between star systems!

He had asked Tink to work on the generators. He needed more power. He had planned to be there, but

was called away to Chicago to meet up with his parents.

A shudder went through him as he remembered that morning when he arrived back unexpectedly. Fortunately for Tink and him, his parents cancelled out on him at the last minute. He didn't even want to think what could have happened if they hadn't.

*Hell, he thought, who am I kidding? Look at what still happened!*

The Gateway had been a huge success, at least from a scientific viewpoint. From a personal one, it was a disaster! His once quiet home was now crawling with aliens from another world.

*Correction, Prime Warriors from Baade, he silently corrected himself.*

Now, one of them was missing, two of them were out there somewhere looking for their 'mates' and another one was about to drive him out of his mind. The male that was missing and the two warriors running loose he could handle. The female who was currently sleeping in Tink's former bedroom was totally another matter. He briefly closed his eyes and breathed deeply, trying to drive the image of the beautiful alien female out of his mind. None of the techniques he used to help him remain focused were working – at least not with her.

Grumbling under his breath, Cosmos walked over to the small kitchenette area, he had built into his lab and poured the remaining brew of coffee down the drain. He didn't care what anyone said, Cowboy Coffee tasted like shit. He quickly made another pot,

breathing in the fragrant aroma as it ground the fresh Kopi Luwak beans he special ordered. He didn't give a damn about the origin of the beans, it was the jolt from these particular beans that he needed to stay alert.

*I definitely need to be alert now that my latest project is a success,* he thought wearily.

"Cosmos dear," RITA's voice hummed out in a voice that was an exact duplicate of Tilly Bell's husky tones. "Your guest is awake."

Cosmos bit back a curse and looked down at his left palm. In the center of it was a series of intricate circles. The damn things pulsed with life, pulling a smothered groan of pain from him as his body reacted to it. A wave of heat flooded him, rolling over his hypersensitive flesh until a light film of sweat coated his body as he fought against reacting to it. It was almost like she was stroking his skin with her long, delicate fingers.

*What the hell have I gotten myself into?* Cosmos muttered through clenched teeth as he felt her running her fingers over and over the mark.

His head fell forward and he tried to breath in deep, calming breaths to fight the reaction his body was having to her gentle strokes, but his damn cock was too busy pulsing to listen to him. With a loud curse, he pulled away from the counter and strode toward the doors leading out of his lab. He called out a short command to RITA to open them, bypassing the keypad. There was no way in hell he would have

been able to push the damn buttons to exit the lab with the way his hands were shaking.

*Who the hell needs to push buttons when they have an alien female doing it?* He thought savagely. *The aggravating female upstairs is doing enough of it to last me a lifetime.* His whole body was trembling now with suppressed hunger, all thought of fatigue disappearing as the urgent need to claim the female upstairs took over.

Cosmos strode through the heavy metal doors that opened and took the stairs leading up to the second floor of the converted warehouse two at a time. He had purchased the old warehouse along the river when he was eighteen and spent millions upgrading and securing it. It had become his main living and research center.

At almost twenty-seven, he was a multi-billionaire in his own right. His defense and security systems made up almost fifty percent of his inventions, but his other inventions and systems' developments in the medical, environmental, and space research fields made up the rest. Both of his parents were world-renowned scientists, though he seldom saw them. They were currently in Asia working on different projects.

"RITA, where is she?" Cosmos gritted out as he reached the top of the stairs leading into his living quarters. His eyes flashed to the set of stairs leading up to the third floor that used to belong to Tink.

"Cosmos," a soft, startled voice said. "Is something wrong?"

Cosmos' eyes drank in the slender figure of the female hesitating on the bottom step. She was absent-mindedly stroking the palm of her left hand. Each delicate stroke caused the flames burning inside him to burst even hotter. Like a moth drawn to a light, Cosmos jerked forward closing the space between him and the dark haired beauty looking at him in innocent confusion.

"Yes, damn you. There is something wrong," he said hoarsely as he slid his large hands around her smaller ones in an effort to get her to stop the torture she was inflicting.

"What...?"

Cosmos didn't give the beautiful, silver-eyed female a chance to say another word. His lips crushed hers in a savage, burning kiss. His hands let go of hers as he slid them around her narrow waist, pulling her closer to his throbbing length.

"Terra," he groaned softly. "You are killing me with your touch. I promised your brother I would protect you with my life, but I swear if you don't stop I'll take you right here and now."

Terra 'Tag Krell Manok's soft gasp died on her lips as Cosmos once again claimed them with his own. Her body melted into his as his fingers gently kneaded her hips. Her hands slowly crept up until she could bury them in the silky brown strands of hair touching the back of his collar, pulling him even closer.

*How could I have ever thought of human males as being weak?* She wondered vaguely as his strong arms pulled her close.

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