

Excerpt

Hunter's Claim

The Alliance book 1

By S. E. Smith

Hunter strained against the chains holding him to the metal bed. His head fell back against the hard surface in frustration. They had bound him with multiple chains from his shoulders down to his feet. He jerked his head sideways trying to dislodge the rag they had put in his mouth, but it was useless with the tape covering it.

He clenched his fists in rage as he thought of the deceit of the humans. Even their females were not to be trusted. He had heard talk among the other warriors of how primitive and hostile this world was. He cursed at his own instincts to protect the female of any species.

He had been returning from bringing in several humans who had set off bombs close to where they were establishing a support center for the humans living in this area. This was to be his last tour before being deployed back home. Now, he would never see the beautiful valleys, mountains and oceans of his world again.

The only regret he had was that he had not killed the traitorous woman who had tricked him. It burned against his pride that he had been tricked even if it turned out to be a good thing. These were the humans they had been searching for before he had

encountered the ones setting bombs. They had heard of a group of humans who were trying to capture a Trivator warrior and take him to a lab. He had just not expected a female to be involved.

He knew how devious human women could be. He had seen some of the things they were capable of many times over the past three years he had been on this planet. He had reacted on instinct when he saw the males attacking her. Her terrified cries had pulled at the protectiveness of his species.

He lay still as the door to the transport he was in opened and the large human male who had hit him in the back of the head walked forward with a grin. A low rumble of warning exploded from his chest as he stared back into the cold blue eyes of the human. His own dark yellow eyes burned with hatred and a promise of death the first opportunity he got.

“You can growl all you like,” the man said with a nasty grin as he leaned over Hunter. “I’m going to be using your balls if you have any as a decoration on the back of my truck by tomorrow night. Let’s see how much growling you do when Betty cuts off your little jewels for me.”

The man jerked back a step when Hunter strained again. He gave another laugh when he saw there was no way Hunter was going to be able to break the chains. With a salute, he turned and jumped out of the back of the van leaving Hunter alone in the dark again.

Hunter lay back, trying to think of a way, any way, he could possibly escape. The first thing he

would do once he was free was hunt down the man who was in here; the second would be the woman. He would show them what happens to anyone who attacks and threatens a Trivator warrior.

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Jesse rolled stiffly to her knees before using the side wall to help her stand. She had been frozen in one spot for almost three hours before the lights in the other room had finally gone out. She bit back a groan as her stiff muscles protested. She wasn't sure if the three men and one woman were ever going to settle down. The one huge guy had come out every thirty minutes to climb into the back of the van before leaving again.

She bent to pick up her backpack before releasing a sigh of resignation. She couldn't do it. She couldn't just leave the alien to die. She had listened to the others talk about what they were going to do to him. She would just as soon shove her dad's hunting knife into his heart if he had one then leave him to those crazy lunatics.

Straightening up once again, she drew in a deep breath behind the black scarf covering most of her face. She would release him. Well, she would release most of him if she could and leave him the means to finish the task while she ran like hell. She ran her hand over the universal key set her dad had shown her how to use. It would be a huge loss, but she wouldn't have much choice.

Jesse set the black backpack just inside the opening that she had squeezed through before. She might have to run like hell, but she couldn't leave the food behind this time. Her sisters desperately needed it.

Pulling her father's hunting knife out, she glanced around the fallen debris before quietly stepping out. She let her eyes sweep the area before she swiftly jogged over to the side of the moving van. Pressing her back up against the cold metal, she waited for several long seconds, listening. Sweat beaded on her brow even though the air was frigid. She could even feel the dampness as it slid down between her shoulder blades, a testament to her fear.

She refused to give in to the terror threatening to choke her though. She couldn't just leave him to die, even if he was an alien. No one deserved to die the way the men and woman were planning. If she couldn't release him, the least she could do was end his life in a more humane way.

Jesse moved slowly, pausing to listen in case anyone came out to check on the van again. Her heart was pounding in her chest as she reached over and carefully slid back the bar locking the back of the van. Her hands shook as she pulled the door open just far enough for her to slip through the opening.

The silence and darkness inside the moving van caused her to start panting. She had never seen one of the aliens up close before. She had always done everything in her power to stay as far away from

them as possible so she had no idea of what she was about to see.

She fumbled in the front pocket of her black cargo pants for the small penlight that she always carried. She turned it on and moved it along the floor until she saw the leg of a metal bench. Taking a timid step forward, she ran the light up along the bench until she encountered the huge boots of the alien.

She stepped forward on silent feet until she was even with his feet. She frowned when she saw the thick chains holding him to the metal bench. She moved up his body, staring at the chains that were threaded through every few inches up his body. She flashed the light down to the corners and saw that there was a master lock on each corner. She turned to look at the top of the metal bed to see if there were additional locks there as well.

She froze when her eyes locked on a pair of glowing yellow ones that were watching her with silent rage. Her hand began to shake so badly that she had to use both hands to hold the beam steady.

"I..." she began in a muffled whisper. She licked her dry lips behind the scarf before impatiently pulling it down below her chin when she felt like she was about to suffocate. "I... oh hell."

Jesse stared at the beautiful features of the man lying on the table. Even with the gag in his mouth, she could tell he was handsome in an exotic kind of way. He had long, thick black hair that was pulled back. His eyes were the shape of a lion or tiger. They were a deep yellow, almost gold color and glowed in

the reflection of the flashlight. He had high cheekbones and small ridges along his nose, which was flatter than a humans. Her eyes moved down over his shoulders and chest. He had very little hair on him, considering he looked like he was part feline. One thing stood out above all others, though. He was huge! He had to be close to seven feet tall and she had never seen any man outside of the movies that muscular.

Her eyes jerked back to his when she felt more than heard the slight rumble of a growl coming from him. That was when she realized that she had dropped her left hand down to rest on his stomach. Blushing, she pulled her hand away quickly and took a step closer to his head. She needed to make him realize she was there to help him.

“Please, be quiet,” she whispered next to his ear. “They will kill me or worse if they catch me and I can’t be... I have to leave...”