Synthesizer units hummed quietly, door seals thwumped gently as Blake systematically searched the room. He kept the lights low, his movements stealthy and cautious. He riffled every storage place in the room, until finally, he found what he was seeking. A cold draft wafted up under his robe creating tiny goosebumps on his bare flesh, adding to his excitement as he lifted the steel-grey bowl from the pale blue light of the stasis unit and placed it on the countertop. He eased the cover up, revealing a mound of ivory smoothness. Blake sighed happily and smiled in triumph, thrilled to hold it in his hands at last. Delicately, careful not to leave any obvious marks to mar the pure-as-driven-snow surface, he stroked a finger along the top of the bowl’s contents.

“Well now,” came a voice from the doorway, “what are you up to, Blake? Surely skulking around in the middle of the night is hardly appropriate behaviour for our Fearless Leader?”

Blake blushed and surreptitiously lowered his laden finger. “Why, hello, Avon. I didn’t expect to see anyone this late.”

“That’s rather obvious. When one is expecting to meet others, one is unlikely to slither furtively around in the dark.” He snapped the lights on full. “And you didn’t answer my question.”

“No, I didn’t, did I? I was rather hoping you wouldn’t notice,” Blake murmured, smiling a little, turning on his disarming charm.

“No, Blake. You didn’t and I did.” Avon walked over to stand beside the rebel. He looked at the bowl, then at Blake’s finger. “However, it’s obvious that you think it’s worth ruining Vila’s surprise for tomorrow, despite the unnatural amount of work the idiot has put into it.”

Blake shifted uncomfortably. “Yes, well, I’m not ruining his surprise, am I?”

“Now this should be amusing. Just exactly how do you choose to rationalise this…skulduggery?”

“All I’m doing is…anticipating the event, nothing more.”

“Ah. I must remember that, next time I want to take a break from your damned Revolution. I’ll simply say that I’m…anticipating the Federation’s defeat, shall I?” Annoyed, Avon realised that he had lost Blake’s attention to the goo dripping off the rebel’s index finger. His curiosity got the better of him. “What is that?”

“Cream.” Blake decided the well-educated, high-born computer expert really didn’t know his arse from his elbow—not where important matters were concerned, anyway. “It’s for trifle.” The comptech did not seem to be fully appreciating Blake’s explanation.

“I shall regret this, I know, but…what the hell is trifle?”

“Well,” said Blake, warming to his subject, and Avon, who was looking rather fetching in his lovely red-leather suit. The one that showed off all his interesting bits so…interestingly. “Where was I?”

“God knows, but it certainly wasn’t the rarefied strata of thought.”

Blake stuck his finger in his mouth, lovingly licking the cream off. “Oh, yes. Trifle.” He stopped again, recoating his finger and licking it with evident delight.

“Trifle?” Avon prompted, becoming a trifle annoyed himself.

“Amongst the lower grades, every new year, they have a huge family party, with food and games and dancing.”

“How very thrilling.”

Blake ignored the cynical comment. “I had forgotten all this, you see. I didn’t remember any of it until Vila started all this carry on about ne’erday. Anyway, my maternal grandparents were born Betas, so they continued with some of the old ways, and passed them on to us.”

“Sounds like a disease. Does the Department of Health know about this?”

“As I was saying, every year, we’d have this big family party. My grandmother would disappear into the kitchen for hours, just like Vila did…”

“So the little idiot reminds you of your old grandmother, does he? I must remember to tell him—I’m sure he shall feel positively honoured.”

Blake ignored him again—it seemed to be the best way to have a conversation with Avon. “Her pièce de résistance was her trifle.”

Avon sighed heavily. Having a conversation with Blake sometimes seemed like having a discussion with a malfunctioning Teasmaid. “To re-
peat myself, probably uselessly, what the hell is trifle?"

“Oh, it’s a dessert.”

Avon threw his hands up in disgust. “All right, that does it, I give in. I shall ask Orac. Even that recalcitrant machine will make more sense than you tonight.” He paused. “Actually, any machine makes more sense than you do. Any night.”

“Avon, can you describe a cloud? Can you analyse the soul?”

Blake sighed. “Avon, can you describe a cloud? Can you analyse the soul?”

Blake stuck his finger in his mouth again. A grin slowly blossomed across his face. The tech did a double take. Was that smile Blake’s attempt at looking seductive? The computer expert shook his head in bemusement. No, he must be mistaken. He was convinced that Blake’s libido had been surgically removed at birth and replaced by a halo.

Blake licked his finger, sucking on the very tip. “What I was trying to say, was how can one explain a flavour? How can one quantify a sensation?”

Avon turned to leave, realising that to stay would only lead to one possible thing—Blake’s death. Avon didn’t suffer fools lightly. In his heart, he knew everyone in the Galaxy was of baser intelligence compared to himself. That explained quite nicely why he was such a perfect picture of a misanthrope. That, and years of practicing his menacing glare in front of the mirror.

“Before you go, Avon. Aren’t you always the one who says that any knowledge is potentially useful?”

“Hardly always, Blake.”

“Well, fairly often at any rate. So, surely you should at least try trifle before you disappear off for your little tryst with Orac?”

Avon looked daggers at the burly rebel. “Jealous, Blake?” he said, wickedly.

Blake grinned again, quite smugly. “No, not at all. Orac lacks certain…assets, shall we say. Assets which I enjoy to the fullest.”

Again, it crossed Avon’s mind that Blake was using sexual innuendo, but the image was so absurd, he dismissed it. Blake, meanwhile, was beginning to think Jenna was right—Kerr Avon was one place where there was smoke, but no fire. Or as Vila had been heard to complain, “All black leather and studs, but no stud.”

“I believe I shall return to the flight deck and do some work. Not to mention ask Orac what the hell trifle is.”

“Facts and figures won’t explain it, Avon. Why don’t you, and this time, not even Avon could miss the blatant suggestiveness in the sultry voice, “try it for yourself?”

Blake leaned against the cabinets, index finger liberally swathed in a thick layer of cream, poised in overt invitation. Avon paused for a moment, considering this bizarre and unexpected turn-up for the books. He shrugged. “Why not?”

He came up to Blake and grasped the rebel’s hand in his own. He opened his mouth and leaned forward. Blake raised his finger in anticipation, waiting for the luscious mouth to descend upon him. Suddenly, Avon moved his head and Blake found an extra tongue in his mouth, vibrating in a sinuous dance. After several eons had passed, Avon withdrew from Blake. “Hmm,” he murmured. “Not bad. Not bad at all.” He smiled, giving Blake a quick, but thorough lesson in ‘How To Seduce, The Easy Way.’ “The cream was quite nice as well.” He started to walk out.

Blake moved the bowl of cream out of the way, then quite calmly and confidently went over to Avon, picked the smaller man up and plonked him down on the counter where the cream had so recently lain. Avon opened his mouth to speak, which Blake took as an engraved invitation to kiss him soundly. The tech, having no air left, didn’t protest. He became downright enthusiastic when Blake managed to get rid of the infamous red suit with a few quick movements. The persnickety part of Avon’s mind made a mental note to ask Blake how he had done it so easily, when Avon had spent the better part of a fortnight trying to beat the damn thing into submission. Blake purred with pleasure when he got the comptech naked. Now this was Avon at his very, very best. Blake filled his hands to overflowing with a rigid cock and tight balls. He kept his mouth on Avon’s—this was no time for the man to use his sharp tongue for anything other than kissing. Avon indulged himself, sucking on Blake’s tongue, biting on his lower lip, giving a host of tiny butterfly kisses all over the rebel’s mouth. Blake wrapped Avon’s legs around his ample waist, loving the way the comptech crossed his ankles, clutching Blake hard against his groin. The rebel’s robe fell forgotten at his feet. Pleasure surged through them and Blake started them moving together. The kissing went on and on, much to the growing delight of the big rebel. Avon responded with wild abandon, lunging against Blake, moaning into his mouth, grabbing huge handfuls of hair, and running his fingers through the buoyant
curls. Blake pulled Avon forward until the dark man was perched on the very rim of the counter. The rebel dug his left hand into the bowl, enveloping his rigid member in cream. He bit Avon’s nipples, moving rapidly from one to the other, rubbing his solid hardness against Avon’s lust-engorged groin. The tech moaned and whimpered, whispering absurd terms of endearments, using gutter language the likes of which Blake had never heard. It excited him enormously to hear Avon talk dirty like that. It spurred Blake on. The big rebel suddenly lifted Avon straight up in the air and then plunged him down, just as suddenly. The tech was ready for Blake, his body screamed at him to fill it. The larger man was more than adequate. Avon threw his head back, breaking the kiss, loudly keening his pleasure. He tried to push himself down on the big rebel, but couldn’t get enough purchase. Blake grinned at him and withdrew slightly from the hot moistness clutching him. He thrust in, hard, pushing Avon up. The tech bit Blake’s shoulder, tiny drops of blood like rosebuds in his wake. Blake thrust into him again, an abrupt upward jab of his hips, burying himself to the hilt in Avon. The tech moaned, abandoning Blake’s shoulder for his talented mouth. The big rebel was the only person Avon had ever found who kissed better than he did himself. He submerged himself in the erotic delight of Blake’s mouth, of Blake’s cock, of his own phallus rubbing, enveloped by their two bodies pressed so wondrously close. The tech wrapped his arms tightly around the burly rebel, hanging on as Blake surged in rhythm, every thrust stroking Avon deep inside, massaging him, bringing him higher and higher. He rippled his muscles, caressing the essence of the man he held within. Blake shuddered, gasping and shouting, pulsing orgasm streaming through him and from him, draining his seed. Avon, as always, followed where Blake led, burying his face against hot, sweaty skin, drunk on sensation.

They stayed locked together for several minutes, Blake’s softening penis held inside by Avon’s greedy muscles. He didn’t want to relinquish this, not quite yet. Blake was still kissing him in the afterglow, tender mouth sucking on delicate neck. The big rebel smiled to himself. He had always said that he wanted to leave his mark on Avon, and now he was. He wanted to make sure the lovebite would show, no matter what fabric armour Avon might choose to wear tomorrow. Blake raised his head and Avon stretched his neck out for more kisses. Blake obliged, happily, sucking just under Avon’s jaw… Eventually, the chill of the room and the counter digging into his back made Avon disengage his legs and reluctantly pull away from the rebel’s embrace. He smiled up into smoky brown eyes and gently shoved the other man away.

“Avon? Something wrong?” Blake asked, concerned, knowing only too well how mercurial this man could be. He watched, trying to keep serious, but losing the battle as Avon lost his battle to get into the infamous suit with some semblance of dignity. Blake, magnanimous to the core, went over to help him. Seconds later, the tech was bound up in the glove tight leather, snug and safe.

“One of these fine days, I shall have to make you show me how you managed that…” Avon said absently as he bent to pull on his boots.

“Is that it? Is this how it’s going to end? Does it just stop here? Avon, wait a minute, man, where the hell are you going?”

The computer expert grinned at him. “I have to go and see Vila.” Avon paused, letting the grin bloom to a full grown smile, “He has a recipe I want to borrow….”