IV
CUPID STRINGS HIS BOW...

The stories in this section all have happy endings—well at least as much as seems reasonable in the Blakian Universe. The last tale, in particular, was written to appease those who complain that the Glaswegian always does dark, twisted, nasty endings. She suggests that reading it could cause cavities and that toothpaste be packaged with the zine. The Southern Contingent shakes her head at this suggestion and wonders why the Editor ever took the muzzle off the Glaswegian in the first place.

HELL
Adrian Alexander

Blake got up from his bed. Sweat streamed off his naked body in rivulets. Bracing his palms against cool stone columns, he stood in the doorway separating Avon’s room from his, hoping to catch a small breeze on his skin and alleviate some of his suffering. Negotiating with the rebels on Valtos Four was proving fruitful, but the heat here never seemed to end. The planet’s dual suns made the days unbearably hot and the nights gave little respite. Political dissidents whose deaths would have reflected badly on the Federation had been sent here for decades, creating a colony of well-educated malcontents who weren’t supposed to be able to live long in this place. But they’d fought the Federation in the only way they could: they had survived. The now second and third generation natives had adjusted to the high temperatures, but Blake, and especially Avon, had been hard pressed just to function. Any suggestion to resume talks aboard the Liberator had been wholeheartedly rejected; the rebels were cautious, almost paranoid. Their experiences with the Federation had been beyond horrendous, which only added to the reasons why Valtos Four was affectionately known in the Federation archives as Hell.

Silently, Blake made his way across Avon’s room to the window. He sat down on the thick sill and looked out over the rough-hewn terrain of Symitar Valley. They’d been given quarters high up on the cliff face, so their rooms would get any little breath of cool air that might happen by, but tonight the air seemed different. Far into the distance, Blake could see flashes of lightning bursting from the sky. He could smell the ozone it created and much to his amazement the wind stirred. He stood up and stretched out his body like a sail to catch any minute bit. In the back of his mind he prayed for rain to relieve the heat, but rationally he knew any moisture would turn to steam by morning, making it impossible for them to stay any longer.

A distant roll of thunder reached his ears. He sighed, trying to collect his thoughts. Unable to sleep, he occupied the time by running over the coming day’s agenda in his mind. A low moan distracted him and he turned to see if the computer tech was also awake.

Avon lay, apparently asleep, on his bed. His narrow, naked frame glistened with perspiration. Absently, his hand rubbed down his chest and across his abdomen wiping away some of the salty fluid, but it was almost instantly replaced by more. Blake stared at the other man, assessing him. He had never really looked at Avon before. Oh, he’d seen him nude on several occasions, but he’d never really looked at him, and now, reluctant to waste the moment, he took this opportunity to satisfy his voyeuristic curiosity. He liked the shape of Avon’s face, and even the sculpted lips, which should have belonged on a more delicate person, seemed right on Avon. The pulse beating in the tech’s neck was more rapid than he would have expected, but the heat was affecting both of them strangely. And Avon was more muscular than predicted. Belly flat.
His eyes lingered on the curly mass of dark pubic hair and the shaft nestled comfortably against the tech’s right thigh. Blake cocked his head and smiled. It was reassuring to know that despite Avon’s superiority in most things, he was average for a man his size. No surprises there. His eyes travelled on down the leanly muscled thighs to the small, perfect feet. A little envious, Blake wished he’d been blessed this way. He’d always had a problem finding shoes his size. When he did, they never seemed to fit right and so, in turn, he always had problems with his feet.

Avon groaned and his hand slipped down to his groin. Cupping his penis in his hand, he stroked it. Blake watched, fascinated, as the organ firmed. He sat mesmerized as the tech began to masturbate in his sleep, amazed that Avon had the inclination to do it with this heat. The tech’s movements were enticing. Blake shook his head. Once again a smile blossomed on his face. He felt the first faint stirrings of desire growing in his own groin and even though he was rarely inclined to want a man, Avon, naked, stretched out before him like a sacrificial lamb, vulnerable, was almost too much for him to turn down…almost. He sighed and looked away. Therein lay the trap. If he acted on his feelings, several things might happen and a couple of them were not particularly pleasant to think about: he knew nothing of Avon’s views on men making love to other men.

The storm was definitely coming in their direction, moving slowly. The breeze had picked up and little dust devils kicked about in the fading moonlight. Shifting his position, Blake once again tried to concentrate on other matters, but his thoughts kept meandering back to Avon. He remembered how it felt to hold another man. So different from women. Men were hard, their strength more definable. Women, even women who were well muscled, always seemed to have a softness about them. Into his mind came images of taking a man, pulling his cock between his lips, sucking greedily, demanding surrender of mind and body to him. The power of it!

Shocked at the direction his thoughts were going, Blake had to force his hand away from his aroused member. Was that it? Blake questioned his motives. Did I want to dominate Avon? Do I want to see him submit to me? The big rebel stood, his brow furrowed deeply with emotion. The tech had been the first man in his life he couldn’t outmaneuver. Avon’s mercurialness made him a wild card. He couldn’t decipher the man...didn’t understand his motivations for staying with the Liberator. Though Avon had tried to convince him he wanted the ship and only the ship, that that was why he stayed, Blake knew there was more. He closed his eyes and sighed. His hand on was not going away and the vision of what Avon was doing to himself behind his back was becoming more and more vivid. Am I afraid he’ll reject me or am I afraid, as in other things, that he’ll dominate me? Am I willing to lose?

The wind pulled at Blake’s loose curls. Lightning brightened the room for an instant and the deep grumble of the thunder shook the sill the large man leaned against. His hand reached down and he stroked himself vigorously, bringing his member to fullness. His jaw set with firm determination as an old adage sprang to mind: Better to rule in Hell than to serve in Heaven.

Lightning erupted again as Blake turned toward the man on the bed. Dark eyes flashed and the rebel stood, transfixed, as Avon smiled ever so slightly. Without a word, the tech turned onto his side and scooted to the far side of his bed. His hand patted the damp bed linens, inviting Blake in. The rebel smiled, taking advantage of the unspoken offer. The first touch of Avon’s lips on his was the beginning of the end for any doubt of where he may have stood with his new lover. He would be glad to serve in Heaven.