

A Professional Love

By Jonathan Gill

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FADE IN:

On a rundown starship, hurtling through deep space.

INT. STARSHIP COCKPIT - NIGHT

ARCHER SWAINE (45), scars slowly healing across his face, talks to a FEDERAL MARSHALL via digital link-up.

MARSHALL

She's worth four million dollars. Dead or alive.

ARCHER

I have her. Alive.

MARSHALL

You've done well to hang onto her.

INT. STARSHIP HOLD - NIGHT

PATIENCE MULEYA (35) is shackled to her chair. Her big brown eyes burn into Archer's heart.

ARCHER

Our last night. Your turn to cook. A Valentine's supper.

Archer unlocks her chains.

PATIENCE

Who's Valentine?

ARCHER

It's an old custom... for couples... forget it.

Patience looks coy, smiles, turns to the worktop.

LATER

Patience sets down a tray of insipid-looking, freeze-dried space food on a table.

Archer smiles and prods the food with a fork.

ARCHER

Lovely.

He's looking at Patience, who is like a goddess to him. She pulls at her filthy vest, the heat making her sweat.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Archer watches Patience through the cabin door. She plays with a silver trinket around her neck.

Archer unlocks the door and puts his head in.

ARCHER  
I've followed you for a  
long time.

PATIENCE  
You're not the first.

She takes the trinket from her necklace.

PATIENCE (cont'd)  
Here, take this.

She throws the trinket at him. He catches it.

INT. STARSHIP HOLD - NIGHT

Patience stands behind Archer as he begins the ship's descent to a space port.

She moulds his shoulders with expert massaging hands. He turns and rises, locking eyes with her.

They kiss, starting slow then building into uncontrolled passion. She reaches into his pants.

PATIENCE  
I love you.

Archer looks deep into her eyes.

ARCHER  
I love you too.

He holds her face tenderly and kisses her, losing himself in her being.

He freezes. Takes in a sharp breath. He coughs. Blood spurts into Patience's face.

She twists a kitchen knife in his back. He drops from under her.

EXT. SPACE PORT - NIGHT

Archer lies dead on the cold floor. Patience's trinket on his bloodied chest.

His starship blazes away into the dark oblivion of space.