

Richard's mighty silver warship Eryon struck next in the Epsilon Eridani system.

It was part of the War. His great Rebellion against the evil Galactic Empire of Tylerane.

He had hit a major naval base and regional fleet HQ of the Empire.

And when we say Richard and Eryon we assume you understand we also meant that Susan and Overmind came along too. For the ride. On board that very same starship.

Overmind being needed in order to serve as Eryon's real-time mind and living guide: to carry out hyperspace navigation calculations, to orchestrate all automated repairs, to plan re-supply, to execute the aggregation and filtering and prioritizing of all sensor feed data, and so on. And Susan needed for... well, for other things. Which we'd have to ask you the reader to ask Richard about, ideally in private, afterwards, while off-duty. Perhaps after a little alcohol. To ask him about why precisely *she* was needed. This particular passenger. And whether she was truly needed or merely *wanted*. And whether the line between the two, for him, was perhaps becoming blurred?

But we digress. Back to the action. The much needed war and the frightening attacks, the sense of excitement in the moment, the lasting aftermath of destruction, and the tales both of danger and love which might be able to pass into legend.

They struck next at Y. A key outpost and staging area for Tylerane marines.

Then S.

Then Q. N. M. P.

Then they raided Z. It was a minor fort which held little significance in the greater war effort, except, perhaps for having a rather cool museum dedicated to obscenely large jeweled rings and necklaces. In addition to leaving behind a newly damaged Imperial battle frigate or two, the museum there would afterwards report a missing ring. Or two. Entire storage boxes of rings went missing. At least two boxes, perhaps three. Though the museum's curator pointed out that they were only rings owned by the leading nobles of the registered major houses who served the Tylerane Imperial government. Everything else in the museum's collection was left untouched.

Strangely enough.

Next... they raided Z again, and within the same week. They figured it would work because it would be the move their enemy would least expect. Because it was so stupid. Because it was so stupid their enemy didn't prepare the appropriate counter-measures for it, and, therefore, it worked. This 2nd raid too was a total success. An Imperial Tylerane destroyer lost two main phasor arrays, requiring a month of repairs, during which it would be out of action.

And a necklace seemed to go missing.

Turns out there had been a necklace skipped over accidentally during the first raid, and therefore left behind. A necklace, or two (honestly: perhaps three), which had enchanted Susan and caught her eye. And when a piece of jewelry catches a Woman's

eye sometimes it results ultimately in also catching Her Man's crotch. Whether merely implied or expressed more directly by her own grasping hand.

Not that Susan was that type of Earth girl, necessarily.

Okay, okay... who are we kidding? She was named Susan Meerson and so you might have thought this Susan was a Good girl but, clearly, this same Susan could also be a Bad girl. Because sometimes it takes a bad girl to Get Things Done. And as a bonus most Real Men won't ever mind having to spank them afterward. If the need arises. They won't mind at all. (Please don't ask me how I, the author of this story/ biography, at least ostensibly, has arrived at this piece of secret insight. Just take my word for it. Ummmm... yeah.)

The right kind of Man won't mind anyway. And by now we hope you can tell which of these two kind of men was our very own Richard of Zyzeen.

But we have digressed. (Which is sometimes good to do. (Oops. There we go digressing again.))

Anyway.

Then... after the 2nd raid on Z, they did do something truly and deeply different, and random:

They set sail to the T star system, injected themselves into orbit of the primary planet there -- a beautiful oceanic world -- then they (R&S) took paraglide aerospace suits down through the higher atmosphere and lower skies, down through the cloud layer, and then landed carefully on the first perfect-looking sandy tropical volcanic island they found, and built a makeshift little camp there. They then spent a month or two on vacation, alternating between chillaxing, vegging, rousing, dancing, orgies, star watching, storytelling around campfires past midnight, sleeping in, early afternoon siestas, parties, drinking, listening to music, meditating, and so much just plain ordinary fucking that there was probably no point anyway to having any officially declared orgies.

However, mistakes were made in the day-to-day planning department during this vacation, and, as a result, one of the lesser known rules of Dread Space Pirates was applied, which is that if you were ever in doubt about the exact most perfect course of action it was a little bit better to risk erring on the side of... orgies. More orgies rather than less. Especially the most private kind, which was the very best kind. Between two people. Two people madly in love.

Madly in some kind of L word anyway.

And yet as long as it was a four letter word and began with the letter L -- the letter L or perhaps also the letter F -- then... it was probably good enough. Good enough for now at least. Richard and Susan each knew there was a rather big L word between them. A word with four letters. Sometimes Susan would find herself on the verge of blurting out aloud a rather specific permutation of letters which belonged to that dreaded family of L words. But at the last possible moment Richard sensed it (despite not being able to sense much of anything else, at most times, due to being a man), would widen his eyes, raise his eyebrows, lunge across the room (if needed) and place his hand (his rather large and strong hand, with long fingers) across Susan's mouth, her perfect

feminine Earthling mouth (always so easy to kiss, if sometimes a bit tart when the least expected), in order to stifle her speech. To prevent her from saying the word in question. After a moment or two he decided the danger was past, and so he let go, pulling his hand back.

"LOVE!" she would say, aloud, almost immediately.

"Groddammit!" he would respond. At least mentally and silently within his own mind. He'd slap his forehead and grind his teeth. Mentally only, of course, meaning silently. So as to maximize the illusion of Manly self-control. He had very good self-control so the only tell-tale sign which escaped was a slight wince, followed quickly by a "You're my girl!" in the most stoic tone he could muster. And he could muster quite a lot, being a Dread pirate of space. On some days he quite liked being a space pirate. And on other days it filled him with dread. Situations like this were a little closer to the latter than the former. Though the line was heavily blurred, he also had to admit.

For while Love might have been the most powerful of human conditions it was also a pirate's greatest weakness.

Especially a space pirate.

Especially for a Dread space pirate.

I mean, how can you be Dreaded if you're all gushy and misty, or caught teary-eyed? Clashes with the vibe, man. We have chest hair to think about. Appearances to maintain. Beards and swords. Tall boots, muscles and deep voices. Men should always look like they can rip shit up, when needed, on the drop of a dime. The fact that we get cold, like hugs and need to nap every now and then should remain a closely guarded secret. It's one of the rules required for being issued a Man Card. Even in the otherwise sophisticated star-faring civilization which is modern day Galaxy G.

But no matter how manly any man tries to be he's still a slave to his body. To the chemical system which comprises his mind. To the primal paths which shape his thoughts. And some of these primal paths or chemical subsystems were quite powerful at times. Especially at certain times in one's life. And in one's story.

For example, they say that there's a rather explosive chemical reaction which can get unlocked when an Earth girl (ostensibly easy, yet with important college class work to do by the upcoming Monday) comes into contact with a space pirate (who himself has a no-entanglements-whatsoever kind of vacation which he's supposed to be having, while in hiding temporarily from a powerful and subtly evil Galactic Empire.) Especially the Dread kind of space pirate.

And by the 'they' in 'they say' we mean Grindle's Galactic Guide, of course. And the Guide's take on the matter was backed up by such galaxy-wide renowned experts as Heinrich von Hexenhammer and Betty From Betelgeuse. The greatest multi-disciplinary scientific genius in the galaxy coupled with their same galaxy's very own living goddess of Love, sex and beauty.

Also of shoes.

And when we say coupled we mean that in multiple senses of the word.

... [because... something about H and B] ...

Heinrich von Hexenhammer and Betty From Betelgeuse began a series of seemingly pure chance encounters. Counting perhaps a dozen or more in the following year alone. Spread all across the galaxy, both on the surfaces of major planets as well as located well underground in the occasional subterranean, vault type city biome. They had chance encounters out in public, whether in parks and gardens, or at late night concerts. They had them in dark bars and popular well-lit nightclubs, in libraries and laboratories. In restrooms, bathrooms and a rather large number of different bedrooms -- sometimes rented only by the hour.

"Science has so much more to offer than most minds can comprehend," Heinrich would tell Betty. Usually while the latter was... well, totally naked. And the former nearly so.

At night and in private, together alone.

"Show me," she would reply. "I trust you."

Then she spread her legs.

"This is not the... typical... kind of experiment... which *I* personally am used to," he would tell her. And with a tone which struck the perfect mix of total commanding confidence and the uncertainty of living in the moment. And yet compelled forward at the pull of some intimate yet powerful gravity.

"And yet... I *am* willing to make a sacrifice... now... for the sake of gathering new data."

She sighed. Looked into his eyes, caught his focus.

"Gather away, Heinrich," she said to her lover.

Heinrich began to gather away. The precise details of how Heinrich began to gather away will be left to the imagination of the reader of this tale. Yes we know, by now, that some of you are total perverts. Totally disgusting and filthy perverts.

And yet... we withhold judgment.

For now.

"You know, Betty... before I met you I was never much of an experimental man. More into theory. Theory seemed to scale up better, than doing experiments. Math is faster. Math is so much easier. And--"

Heinrich needed a momentary break amidst his gathering. Betty's eyes and face suggested that he had, at that moment at least, her full attention.

Or perhaps the other way around.

"And... well, the answers are either black or white. Therefore we can record and replay any calculation or reasoning, in an instant, compared to the arduous work of trying to reproduce a delicate physical experiment, which often are--"

--he was interrupted by Betty reaching up with her hand and covering his mouth, attempting to shut him up.

"Gather away, Heinrich. Just record for now. You can process later."

"But---" he tried to argue with her.

"Shutup! Just fuck me! Fuck me, hard and deep. Fill me up. Fill me with your big, hard, thick, hot, nasty--"

Betty exclaimed, then, in what was surely in a tradition as old and continuing as the very tale of Love itself. If not quite literally found in the so-called Christian Bible of Susan Meerson's home planet of Earth.

"But Betty, I don't underst--"

"Stop! Don't think!" she commanded.

At least as best she could... she tried to *Command* her man, however ultimately futile, in that moment. While in the full crux of the experienced moment of interaction between this mortal yet scientifically historical man and this legendarily famous yet traditionally imperfect woman. In the common space of experience between an ideal Man and Woman within their very same shared galaxy.

By this point, surely, Heinrich had become convinced of the merit of her argument. Despite being only a man, and having only a man's brain, however utterly genius. Heinrich had lost his ability to speak coherently anyway. Turns out this was how the Living Goddess of Love, aka The Lady in the Reddest Red, aka Betty From Betelgeuse, contributed more to the greater advancement of science that year, even across three key distinct fields of research, than most of the other nine zillion organic beings who lived during that very same period.

Just as Richard and Susan together contributed more to the ultimate resulting freedom of the galaxy that year than most of the other beings who lived during that period. They both contributed in ways that involved sex -- a great deal of sex, of course -- but there were also differences. The delineation between which, and their illustration, and the playing out of all that was similar or different between these two couples relative impact on the surrounding galactic history is indeed pretty much the overarching point of the epic story of The Dread Space Pirate Richard.

The Dread Space Pirate of Zyzeen, as it was known to most.

Although... any time sex was involved matters could become complicated. And any time Love was involved also matters could become complicated yet further.

A woman might say, "Fuck me!" to a man and yet, what she truly meant was "Love me... please! Kiss me, hold me and gobble me up! Use me for this moment but please own me for a lifetime."

Whereas in contrast, and perhaps also in compliment:

A man might see a woman, realize he wants to fuck her, to own her, but not **quite** understand that in order to truly **own** her that he must, personally, **after** owning her, also... love her. He must truly Love. Not lust but Love. Because to own a thing means ideally also to protect it and look after its own best interests, in order to keep it alive and in your life.

Put another way: you might enjoy the song of a caged bird but if you open the cage and the bird leaves, and that bird never returns it means that bird did not truly love you and therefore it was not meant to be. Songs might be sweet to hear but love, true Love, is even sweeter. Therefore the songs of a free bird in Love are the very sweetest. That sweetness has power. But the very act of caging it makes it lose its power. It loses its natural sweetness. It becomes artificial, it becomes forced. Therefore if you *wish* to cage it, but also wish to not *lose* it, then, you should *not* cage it.

Which feels like a contradiction.

Richard wished to do that to Susan, the moment he first met her. To cage her. But he did not wish to lose that natural sweetness.

And likewise, Heinrich for Betty.

Indeed both of these men's quests for this kind of caging, as well as their own desire to never lose that natural sweetness of the other -- meaning, to never lose the love of those they Loved the most -- will be seen to be near the very heart of this story, by the very end. Indeed they should become to be seen as literally the very heart of this story.

The story known to Susan's fellow Earth girls at least as:

The Dread Space Pirate Richard.

And known later to Susan's children (in theory, if any), and (ostensibly) grandchildren, and to all her friend's and neighbor's children and grandchildren, as... The Dread Space Pirate of Zyzeen.

"Fuck me, Heinrich!" said Betty, in the heat of the moment.

"I love you, Richard," said Susan. In some kind of timeless moment, and with only her eyes.

The human condition was complex. Sometimes the lines could blur. Though the results could be the same. The goals could be exactly the same. The goal of unity. Two into one. Thesis, anti-thesis and then synthesis. A Hegelian dialectic.

"Fuck me, because I love you."

"I love you. Fuck me. Please!"

Even in love there's a kind of math applied, of reduction then simplification.

A math applied from Heinrich upon Betty, and likewise.

And between Richard and Susan.

For while sometimes a man encounters a woman he cannot resist, and therefore must own, or at least control, or at least command, or to seek out and return to repeatedly, as much as for the impact of her presence as anything else (both upon his mind, perhaps his Soul, just as well as upon his cock. For any man, honestly, the line blurred.)

And sometimes a woman found herself wanting a Man... a Certain man... to fulfill her own needs. To make her feel complete, to make her feel owned while still being

free, to make her feel love without feeling... controlled. To be her... Anchor, without also being her weight. To make her feel empowered... without being ordered around. So she could let herself *become* overpowered by a... frankly... a *lusting* Alpha mate, who was himself in a primal mode. At just the perfect time. While also being protected, guided and cuddled, or at least provided for, as needed. Ideally while curled up together at night, side by side, through every challenge and trial, through every adventure -- though to be brutally frank ideally also through a lot of blatantly unnecessary and totally discretionary, and self-indulgent, random shopping (both online and in person) for new shoes (sexy and exotic ideally, though also sensible and conservative sometimes also worked), and... chocolate, and... mind-blowing orgasms -- unto Death do they both part.

I mean, Susan might have been from Earth, but she wasn't *totally* naive. The best kind of dreamer is arguably the one who is also the most coldly pragmatic and realistic.

Or perhaps it's the other way around?

For whenever Lust was involved, sometimes the line blurred.

Whenever Love was involved that line would *always* blur.

The Dread Space Pirate Richard, ultimately, is about *all* of these different conditions.

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Happy Valentine's Day 2016, D of Earth.