

Adara stared out the observation deck window. Twenty feet tall and at least as wide, if she sat close enough she could almost feel like she was in space. She saw the eddies made by the ships leaving. The Pritchard and Captain Flannery hadn't picked her. She had two more interviews before she'd have to start looking at private work. With her last assignment ending so badly, she was likely to end up on planet somewhere. She sighed.

"Lieutenant," the hard voice of Captain Flannery pulled her upright.

"Sir," she stood at attention. She hadn't noticed anyone entering the room. "I'm sorry, sir, I didn't see you..."

He cut her off with a wave of his hand. "Are you still looking for an assignment?"

"Yes, sir."

"One of the pilots I selected just got offered a position on an explorer ship. He's opted to take it. This leaves me a pilot short."

"I'm sorry, sir," she said. Hope tingled in her chest. Was it possible she would get the job?

"You should know you aren't my first choice. You are too young, too different and I don't think you will fit in. I won't tolerate any problems with my crew. If you can't get along, I'll kick you free as soon as I can get another pilot."

"Does this mean you're offering me a contract?" she said quietly.

"Yes. It's for four years so you better be prepared for that," he growled at her.

"Yes, sir."

"We were scheduled to leave in three hours," he said.

"I can be ready in time," she said.

"My shuttle's in bay 22. I'll expect you by 1700," he turned to leave.

"Sir."

He turned back to her. "Thank you, sir. I'll see to it you don't regret it."

"Just sign your contract and be there by 1700," he said. He knew he'd just hired trouble.