

\*The Pirate Queen With the Big Bazooms\*

\* \* \* \*

This all took place about eight years ago (said Hurricane Smith). I had just escaped from the prison planet of Bastille, where I'd been unfairly incarcerated for what were loosely termed "crimes against God and Nature", and I'd made up my mind to clear out of the Monarchy and seek my fortune on the Outer Frontier.

I'd docked at Samovar Station, just beyond Terwilliger's Belt, and was having a drink in the bar while they were enriching my ship's atomic pile, when I heard a commotion coming from one of the corridors leading to the inner offices. Naturally I got up to see what was happening, and as I stepped out of the bar the most gorgeous woman I'd ever seen came running up to me. (Remember: I hadn't seen you yet, my dear.)

She was wearing thigh-high boots and a tiny little g-string and a bra that barely contained her phenomenal bosom, and her hair was long and wild. She had a knife tucked in each boot. There was a screecher strapped to her thigh. She had a burner in one hand and a blaster in the other, and she was firing at a bunch of soldiers, so I knew with a single glance that she was a Pirate Queen.

"Help me," she gasped, "and everything I have is yours!"

Well, it's difficult to refuse an offer like that even under normal circumstances. And when a whole lot of uniformed scum are trying to kill the prettiest lady you've ever seen, why, if you're any kind of gentleman, you simply have to do the right thing and take some kind of action.

So I pulled my burner and fired it at the floor right ahead of the soldiers. The tile melted and turned red-hot, and they skidded to a halt just before they ran onto it. I pulled the girl into the bar so that we were out of their line of fire, raced to the service exit, and soon found my way through the maze of corridors to my ship -- and discovered that they hadn't finished enriching the pile yet.

"That's my ship over there!" panted the Pirate Queen, pointing to a nearby vessel.

We raced to it, and took off just before the soldiers caught up with us. As soon as we reached light speeds, she put the ship on autopilot and turned to me.

"I want to thank you for what you did back there," she said.

"I was happy to be of assistance," I told her. "Perhaps we should introduce ourselves. I'm Hurricane Smith."

"Hurricane Smith?" she repeated. "Your reputation precedes you. I've heard about your exploits for years."

"And you are...?"

"You may call me Xenobia."

"That seems to be a popular name with Pirate Queens," I said. "You're the third one I've known to use it."

"Really?" she said. "I've never met any other Pirate Queens. I thought I was the only one."

Now, I'm pretty sure that Pirate Queens don't have a union or a school yearbook or anything like that,

but even so I should have latched on to the clue right there. But then she took a deep breath, which sent out waves and ripples and flutters all through her magnificent superstructure, and all other thoughts promptly vanished from my mind.

"Perhaps you'd like to join me in my private quarters and get comfortable?" she suggested.

I would have thought that the entire ship qualified as her private quarters, but I just nodded without taking my eyes off her bosom and followed her to her sleeping cabin.

And what a sleeping cabin it was! There was no bed, but the floor was covered with dozens of soft, thick furs, and the walls and ceiling were completely mirrored.

She stood in the middle of the cabin and turned to face me.

"You know, Hurricane Smith," she said, "I could use a man like you."

"I was hoping you'd say that," I replied.

She chuckled, which sent still more ripples across her flesh. "I meant in my work."

"What is your work?" I asked.

"Robbing space stations, holding up navy convoys, stealing precious gemstones, and eluding the gendarmes."

"Standard Pirate Queen fare," I noted.

"Well?" she said. "Will you join me?"

"As a full partner?"

"As a junior partner," she replied. "Even the notorious Hurricane Smith can't start at the top."

"I'll have to think about it," I said.

She unhooked her bra and let it fall to the floor. "I'll help you make up your mind," she said.

"That's very considerate of you," I said, starting to slip out of my tunic.

"Considerate is my middle name," she smiled, removing her g-string.

"I don't suppose you'd consider removing all your weapons, too?"

"When I know you better."

"How much better do you plan on knowing me?" I asked.

She walked over, put her arms around me, and pressed her body against me -- well, as much as she could press against me with those magnificent bazooms in the way.

"You'd be surprised," she whispered.

Well, not much we did for the next couple of hours actually surprised me, but it sure went a long way toward making me decide to become her junior partner.

It was when I woke up a little later that I realized that something was terribly wrong. I stood up and

looked down at my Pirate Queen -- and saw that her breasts were now a few feet long, kind of flat, and covered half the floor of the little cabin.

"What the hell's going on here?" I bellowed.

She woke up right away, tried to sit up, couldn't get her balance, and finally realized what had happened. Instantly her breasts resumed their original shape.

"Good morning, my darling," said Xenobia.

"What are you?" I demanded.

"Don't you remember?" she said with a smile. "I'm your senior partner."

"What else are you?" I insisted. "I'll make it real easy. Let's start with what you're not, which is a woman."

"That didn't make any difference to you a few hours ago," she pointed out.

"A few hours ago I was blinded by your beauty," I said. "Or what seemed to be your beauty."

"Didn't you enjoy making love to me?" she asked.

"That's got nothing to do with it!" I yelled. "I want to know what you are!"

"I told you -- I'm a Pirate Queen."

"But what kind of a Pirate Queen?"

"The beautiful kind. Isn't that the kind you're attracted to?"

"I'm getting very confused here," I said.

She sighed, and even though I knew that she lacked a certain degree of -- how shall I say it? -- structural integrity, I just couldn't help staring as her bosom rose and fell.

"All right," she said. "I needed a partner. I saw you at the space station and recognized you from your Wanted posters, so I shot a soldier and arranged for you to rescue me."

"How did you know I'd be willing to risk life and limb rescuing a woman I'd never seen before?"

"Because every member of your race and gender is a sucker for these," she said -- and as the words left her mouth, her bosoms reached out across the room and caressed my cheeks. I was torn between kissing them and running hell-for-leather to the far end of the ship, and the only reason I didn't choose the latter course of action is because I had a horrible premonition that her breasts could reach that far and I didn't want to find out for sure. So I chose a middle course of action and just stood there shaking like a leaf.

"Oh," she said sympathetically. "Have I scared you?"

"Not yet," I said. "But you're getting awfully close. What do you really look like?"

"What difference does it make?" she responded. "I can always look like this for you."

"God, I hope not!" I said devoutly.

She smiled and almost blushed. "I forgot," she said, and suddenly her breasts contracted until they were merely E cups again.

"So, Hurricane Smith," she said, "will you ride the spaceways with me, plunder the wealthy, and share my sexual favors?"

"I don't think so," I said.

"But why not?" she asked. "Has any human woman ever pleased you more?"

"No," I admitted. "But every last one of them has upset me less."

"But I can be human for you!" she insisted.

"Every time I grab you," I said, "which figures to be pretty damned often, I'd always wonder exactly what I was really grabbing."

"If it feels good -- and I assure you it feels good to me, too -- why worry about it?"

"A man's got to worry about something," I explained. "If I hook up with you, I figure I'll have enough worries to last me a couple of lifetimes and maybe part of a third."

"I'm sorry you feel that way," she said. "We could have been a wonderful team."

"Is that a real tear rolling down your cheek," I asked, "or are you just putting on a show for me?"

"Last night was the show," she replied mournfully. "The tear is for real."

And that's the way I'll always remember her -- standing there, the most beautiful creature I've ever seen (except for you, my dear), with a real tear rolling down her face.

But it was a useful experience, for as time went by I realized that appearances aren't very important, and if I hadn't discovered that I might still be a bachelor searching futilely for love instead of a happily married man.

\* \* \* \*

Suddenly a tear appeared on Langtry Lily's cheek, and she leaned over and planted a long, tender kiss on Hurricane Smith's lips.

"Now that's right touching," said Catastrophe Baker.

"It sure is," agreed the Reverend Billy Karma. "It almost makes you forget she's a godless insect that lays eggs and probably eats her young."

He was lucky he leaned over to blow his nose just then, because a stream of acid saliva from Langtry Lily shot out right to where his head had been.

"I knew a lady insect once," said O'Grady. He turned to Langtry Lily. "Not of your species, ma'am. She was a brilliant silver in color, and had a number of long sinewy arms, and the biggest, reddest multi-faceted eyes you ever saw. She showed up at the casino out by Mutare II one night and started winning everything in sight. Took me hours to figure out how she was doing it."

"The eyes, right?" said Little Mike.

"That's what I thought originally," answered O'Grady. "But it wasn't. It was those damned antennae. She was getting signals from another insect that was standing maybe twenty feet behind us."

"What did you do -- tar and feather her, or cut off her antennae?" asked the Reverend Billy Karma.

"Neither," said O'Grady. "All we did was take our money back and burn a big red 'A' into her carapace."

"Why?"

"I take it you're not much on the classics," said O'Grady. "We figured any time she entered a human gambling establishment, the players would take one look at that 'A', figure she was an alien Hester out for a good time, and if their name wasn't Hurricane Smith they'd head for the hills."

Big Red looked at his computer's holoscreen. "Einstein says he likes that idea."

"That's because Einstein is better read than the Reverend here," said O'Grady.

"I don't read anything but the Good Book," said Billy Karma defensively. "Especially the begattings."

"You sound like you're into genealogy," said Achmed of Alphard.

"He's into begatting," Sinderella corrected him.

"Where does the Lord say you can't have a little fun?" demanded Billy Karma.

"How about Genesis?" suggested Hellfire Van Winkle.

"Besides that!"

"That wasn't enough?" said Van Winkle. "He threw Adam and Eve out of Eden."

"Well, I got my own theories about that," said Billy Karma. "You know what I think Eve was really nibbling on instead of an apple?"

"I don't want to hear this," said Sinderella.

"I don't even want to think about it," added Van Winkle.

"If God didn't want you educated, He wouldn't have put me here to preach to you," said Billy Karma. "I've been thinking for some time now that the Bible needs a complete rewrite."

"I can see it now," said Little Mike Picasso. "The Old Testament -- The Good Parts Version, by the Reverend Billy Karma."

"Sounds good to me," said the Reverend.

"Does anything that's filthy or in terrible taste ever sound bad to you?" asked Sinderella.

"Insufficient information," said Billy Karma.

"What are you talking about?"

"You let me nibble up your thigh and down your belly and then I'll know if you taste good or terrible."

"I don't know how to break this to you, Reverend," said Little Mike, "but there's a difference between women with good taste and women who taste good."

"Not to me there isn't," said Billy Karma devoutly.

"I can believe that," said Van Winkle.

"I think maybe you'd better pray to the Lord to send you a restraining bolt," said Sinderella.

"You're into restraints, are you?" asked the Reverend.

Sinderella looked like she was going to reply, but then she turned her back on him in disgust.

"No doubt about it, the Lord had plenty of foresight," said Billy Karma, still staring at her. "Look at that beautiful round bottom. God put most of the fun stuff on the flip side, but He remembered to leave a little something back here for a lonely man of the cloth to admire."

"Kind of single-minded tonight, ain't you?" said Baker.

"Single-minded is an understatement," agreed the Gravedigger.

"Hey, Reverend," said Baker as another explosion lit up the night sky, "maybe you'd better have a quick talk with the Lord and tell Him to leave women alone and concentrate on ending the war."

"Not His department," said the Reverend Billy Karma. "God made women. Men make wars. Well, men and godless aliens."

"You know, any minute now we're going to take offense at that," said Sitting Horse.

"You wouldn't want to go to heaven anyway," said Billy Karma. "I figure if there actually are any aliens there, they all live in the low-rent district and don't get choice tee times at the golf course."

"I don't know why," said Hellfire Van Winkle, "but I get the definite impression that it takes less education to become a preacher these days than when I was growing up."

"Mostly it takes a bible, a black coat, and a personal relationship with the Good Lord," agreed Billy Karma.

"It sure as hell doesn't take any knowledge of Old Earth's literature," put in Big Red. "Hell, even I knew who Hester was."

"He probably thinks the House of Usher is where you train robots to guide dirty old men to their seats at a strip show," said Little Mike Picasso.

"You mean it ain't?" said Billy Karma.

"Just a minute here," said Catastrophe Baker. "Are you saying that the House of Usher is fictional?"

Little Mike stared at him. "Are you saying it isn't?"

"I've been there," said Baker.

"I'm talking about a story called The Fall of the House of Usher," said Little Mike.

"Am I in it?" asked Baker.

"No."

"Well, I should be," he said. "Because I was there when it fell."

"Somehow I don't think we're talking about the same place," said Little Mike.

"How many Houses of Usher could there have been?" asked Baker.

"Tell me about yours and then I'll give you an answer."