

A Match Made in Purgatory

Calvin Aristide, the former privateer. Goes by Calvin.

Janelle Hobbes, the Martian demon. She goes by Hobbes

Sparky, the robot.

Scene: *A bar on a space station. Everything is metallic and shiny. Neon lights over the bar proclaim the name PURGATORY.*

HOBBS is seated at the bar sipping something red and viscous. CALVIN and SPARKY enter from offstage.

SPARKY: Target acquired, Boss. The lady with the wings, third stool from the left.

CALVIN: Mate, I've told you. Ms. Hobbes is not a target; she's our new partner.

SPARKY: Whatever. She's parked at the third stool from the left. Don't go getting all amorous before we've finished the job. I know how fluttering wings get you started.

CALVIN: Just because I had a brief association with a faerie queen...

SPARKY: If by 'brief association' you mean 'disappeared from the grid for seven months, three weeks, six days, twenty-one hours –

CALVIN: *(cutting him off)* Don't go into the hours, minutes and seconds, mmkay? Anyway, time passes differently in FaerieLand than it does in the real world. For me it was only a night or two.

SPARKY ... or two hundred thirty-eight...

CALVIN: Just a reminder, mate, I know where your power switch is and I'm prepared to use it.

SPARKY: Buy me a beer, Boss, and I'll be charming and effervescent.

CALVIN: Well, you'll be charming... Come on....

(They approach the bar. CALVIN takes the stool next to HOBBS, while SPARKY attempts to sit next to CALVIN. His form isn't really conducive to hopping on bar stools, however.)

CALVIN: *(to HOBBS)* Through all the seven sectors of the galaxy, I've been searching for the perfect woman, and lo! I've found her here.

HOBBS: *(snarky)* Really, that's the best pick-up line you can come up with? Points for balls, I guess, but not for effort.

CALVIN: Not tryin' to pick you up m'lady. Not in the way you mean, anyway.

(HOBBS swivels her stool so she's facing CALVIN.)

HOBBS: Then how *did* you mean it?

CALVIN: I'm Aristide. Calvin Aristide. Metal dude on my right is Sparky.

HOBBS: *(ruffling her wings in irritation)* And this information matters to me... why?

CALVIN: *(annoyed)* The Agency didn't tell you? I'm your new partner.

HOBBS: The Agency hasn't bothered to contact me in weeks. They still blame me for what happened with the last guy. It wasn't my fault he decided to go to Kestrel Five without me. I mean, who *does* that?

(beat)

Figured they'd call me in, put me on permanent sabbatical, not assign a new partner. Do you drink?

CALVIN: Well, not blood...

HOBBS: *(looking at her glass)* Blood? This isn't blood. It's jamaica tea, cranberry juice and honey. And a shot of vodka. Good for digestion and a quick sugar rush.

CALVIN: *(smirking)* You had me at vodka. (to Sparky) Pal, can you get us a coupla drinks? I'm pretty sure they have a motor oil you'll like.

SPARKY: Sure thing, Boss.

CALVIN: Thanks, mate.

(SPARKY goes off to get drinks.)

HOBBS: So, you two are a package deal?

CALVIN: We are... Sparky was originally a service bot, but someone started experimenting with a personality overlay upgrade... accidentally made him sentient in the process. So now he's a registered independent AI. He's great with the research.

HOBBS: Not exactly someone who can blend in though... *(eyes CALVIN, notes his great height)* Then again, neither are you. Oooh, I love this song!

(sings along with the music playing on the bar's sound system)

All the vampires, walkin' through the valley

They move west down Ventura Boulevard

And all the bad boys are standing in the shadows

And the good girls are home with broken hearts

And I'm free

Free fallin', fallin'

*Now I'm free
Free fallin', fallin'*

CALVIN: Not to interrupt the serenade, but...

HOBBS: You want to know what happened to my old partner, or you want assurances it won't happen to you and your shiny friend?

CALVIN: I've read your dossier. I know it wasn't your fault.

HOBBS: Then... what?

CALVIN: Agency wants you – us – back in the field. There's a group of rum-runners out of Jupiter Station trafficking a lot more than liquor.

HOBBS: As in?

CALVIN: Let's just say, the Martian population in the Outer Band has doubled since they started ops.

HOBBS: *(borrified)* Sentients? They're trafficking Sentients? By the twelve levels of Hell I will see them stopped.

CALVIN: *Twelve* levels?

HOBBS: Martian Hell has much more... nuance... than the Terran construct.

CALVIN: Oookay. Anyway, I was kinda hoping you'd feel that way. We look the other way with service bots, and minor AIs, but Sentients are another story. *(beat)* Look I've got some skill in magic, and I come from a privateer family.

HOBBS: Privateer is just a fancy word for pirate, isn't it?

CALVIN: Yeah. Yeah, technically.

HOBBS: Why'd you leave?

CALVIN: You noticed how tall I am. Privateer ships... they don't have a ton of headroom. I was constantly bumping into hatchways and banging my head on bunks.

HOBBS: Ouch.

CALVIN: Yeah.

HOBBS: So, you should know that I can't tolerate Terran daylight. Mars is farther from Sol, doesn't bother my kind. But anything brighter, or less filtered...

CALVIN: Are you really a demon?

HOBBS: Demon is such a limiting word. We're called that because of how we look. The wings, the horns, the glowing yellow eyes. But we're really just aboriginal

Martians. We left the Red Planet long before humans started paying it close attention. But once in a generation we have to come back to...

CALVIN: *(guessing)* Spawn?

HOBBS: I was going to say 'breed' but, close enough. From the red world we came, to the red world we must return. Of course, it's only red from offworld, but that's not the point.

CALVIN: I'm suddenly realizing how long Martian generations must be... and I'll ask about it later... Look, I have the info-cube with deets on our mission, but this isn't the place to activate it.

HOBBS: No worries, we'll go to my ship. *(she eyes him again)* There's plenty of head room. I have to have it, to stretch my wings.

SPARKY: *(returning)* Boss, I got your drink. Got a refill for the lady, too.
(he distributes the glasses, then stands at the bar to suck down what is literally a straw stuck in a PennzOil can.) Mmm. Delicious.

(HOBBS tosses back her second drink much quicker than she did her first.)

HOBBS: Alright boys – well, boy and bot – drink up. We've got a case to solve.

(SPARKY slurps the last of his drink. CALVIN tosses his drink back in an imitation of HOBBS.)

CALVIN: Ms. Hobbes, I hate to say it, but...

HOBBS: It's just Hobbes. No title. And... please don't.

SPARKY: But he loves this quote.

CALVIN: I think this is the start of a beautiful friendship.

(CALVIN waves his hands and the drinks disappear. He makes a broader gesture and the bar dissolves, replaced by the outer hatch of a spaceship.)

HOBBS: *(a bit unsteady on her feet)*

Well, that was impressive.

(HOBBS touches a panel on the ship, and the hatch opens. A ramp descends and she leads the way up it and into the ship, singing:)

*Somebody save me
Let your warm hands break right through me
Somebody save me
I don't care how you do it*

*Just stay with me, stay
Come on, I've been waiting for you*

(ALL THREE disappear into the hatch.)

CALVIN: *(offstage)* So, do you do that a lot? The singing?

HOBBS: *(offstage)* You don't like my voice?

CALVIN: No, no, it's great, but...

HOBBS: Listen here, magic man. My ship, my rules.

(sings)

I did it my way.

End