



Smugglers and Mercs



By Ardath Rekha

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Synopsis: The crash of the *Hunter-Gratzner* isn't the first time that Richard B. Riddick and Carolyn Fry have crossed paths. Where they knew each other from, before, will surprise you...

PS: If BDSM concepts squick you, you'll want to skip this story.

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The scent stirs at his memory. Chained to one of the structural supports, blindfolded, Riddick lifts his head. It's a female scent. One he knows. Frowning beneath his blindfold, he puzzles over it, wondering. He's heard three female voices now and matched scents up with two of them. One of those was trying to sound as male as possible but there's just no fooling Richard B. Riddick. Now... a new scent that nudges at him, recalling other places, other times. He frowns again, remembering the third voice, filled with pain and anguish. How would it normally sound? Would it sound familiar?

Behind him Johns offers a lame explanation of who he is and what he's done. He barely pays attention until he realizes that the woman might answer. She does.

That's impossible, he thinks, and only barely manages to hide a shiver. *She can't be here.*

They leave far too soon and say far too little. He isn't sure. He can't be sure. But that scent, that voice...

Impossible. Impossible.

She'd have to be forty by now. Probably she's still on Earth with a whole mess of rug rats, and this is just a very strange coincidence. He's spent too much time in cryo on his way to and from different prisons, done too much, seen too much. She couldn't possibly—

Sure she could. If she became a pilot, she's probably spent more time in cryo than me.

It's a tantalizing thought.

He escapes and heads into the rough terrain, staying closer to the ship than even that idiot Johns realizes. If it's *her*, he doesn't want to be too far away. She may need him. He shadows her search party as it moves through the canyons and steals ahead of them as they reach the boneyard. He knows Johns will spend time hunting ineffectually through the skeletons for him. Plenty of time to observe *her*, see if he's right.

She walks over to the skeleton he's hiding in, which Johns supposedly just searched thoroughly, and he swings down and lands within it. Despite all of his precautions, he knows she hears him land. She stiffens slightly.

Now we'll find out.

She doesn't turn around, but deliberately continues messing with her oxygen unit. He steps closer, a little confused. Why doesn't she turn around? The sound of Johns' footsteps answers his question. Her attempt, soon after, to get Johns to move away from the skeleton, confirms it.

*She's **covering** for me. That **is** you, Carrie... isn't it?*

Gliding closer, he snips of a lock of her hair and inhales her scent. It's her. It's really her.

It's been a long time since he's seen her, a long time since they were separated. Despite the proximity of the irritating wanna-be-badass merc, she fills his vision. Carolyn Fry. *Carrie*. As she walks away, the memories overwhelm him and sweep him back...

They were both sixteen that summer. He'd lived in the foster home for five years. She... well, she'd only just arrived. Her parents had died two years earlier and she hadn't been dealing with her grief very well. Finally her grandmother had gotten tired of her ways of "acting out" and turned her over to the State. Now she was his "sister." How painfully ironic... he wanted something else from her entirely.

He had watched her for months, fascinated by her freshness and lithe beauty. She was small and delicate-looking, but there was a fierceness to her that left him in smitten awe. He dreamed about her every night.

Toby was the one who suggested playing "Smugglers and Mercs" in the field and woods behind the group home. Riddick — even then, for some reason, everybody was calling him by his last name alone — had hoped to be on the same team as Carrie Fry, but they'd ended up on opposite sides. He was on the Merc team and she was a Smuggler.

The rules of the game were simple. The Smugglers had a Secret Base where their fictional contraband was kept. The Mercs had to round up the Smugglers and find the Base. Smugglers could attempt to rescue their captured comrades, as well. At the end of three hours, a winner would be declared. If most of the Smugglers

were still free, they won. If most had been captured, the Mercs won. And the Mercs could also end the game early and win by finding the Base.

Carrie added one new rule to the game, but it was a fair one. Mercs could only hunt Smugglers their own age. It wouldn't be fair, she pointed out, for Toby and Riddick to hunt down the seven-year-olds on the Smuggler team, who had no chance of eluding them. Everyone agreed, and the game began. The Mercs waited the required half hour while the Smugglers plotted and hid their Base, before beginning their hunt.

If Carrie's rule hadn't been in place, the game would have been over in minutes. Riddick could easily have caught several of the younger Smugglers, but he passed them by; they never even knew he'd been near them. He decided, after several moments, that he'd go hunting for Carrie. She turned out to be hard to find, but find her he did.

She was crouched among some bushes, watching as two nine-year-old Mercs loudly and enthusiastically dragged an eight-year-old Smuggler away for "interrogation at the Merc Base!" He stole up on her and smiled as she rose and turned toward him. The shock in her eyes was priceless as she saw him before her. She tried to make a mad dash for the woods. He let her get about thirty feet before he caught her.

Grabbing her around the waist, he flung both of them down, twisting his body so he landed first and took most of the impact. Carrie landed sprawled on top of him, gasping, and he rolled. She was pinned beneath him before she'd realized just what had happened.

"Gotcha," he chuckled, holding her down with the weight of his body.

Carrie stared up at him, panting. He could feel the rapid rise and fall of her chest as she caught her breath, and the way the tops of her breasts brushed against him. He lowered his head a little and inhaled. Oh, she smelled nice. The scent that he'd caught whenever she was near him drifted to him now. He could feel his groin stirring.

Shit, that would be embarrassing, getting a hard-on in front of her. Better get the situation under control...

"So... *Smuggler*... what brings you out this way anyway, hmm? Your Base near here, maybe?" He kept his voice low. No point letting the other Mercs horn in on his catch, or drawing other Smugglers to her rescue.

Her answering grin was wicked and defiant. "Wouldn't *you* like to know?"

A nearby voice startled him. Somebody was *not* being sneaky. He covered Carrie's mouth for a moment, leaning close and putting his lips to her ear. "Oh, I would. And you're gonna tell me, too."

Beneath him he could feel her body shake with laughter. A strange thrill passed through him. She wasn't afraid. Since he'd hit his growth spurt, most girls had been nervous around him. His imposing physical appearance and deep voice unnerved them. The vast majority considered him Big and Scary, and most of the rest assumed he was Big and Dumb.

Not Carrie. She never feared or looked down on him. Now, pinned beneath his body, there was a playful sparkle in her eyes that delighted him. He chuckled. "You're gonna tell me everything, *Smuggler*."

The person nearby had moved away, so he removed his hand from her mouth. The grin beneath was teasing. "Fat chance, *Merc*."

"You don't think I can make you talk?"

Her eyes danced. "You don't have it in you."

He wanted to laugh. It had been far too long since anyone had dared tease him like this, and he'd *missed* it. Nobody had flirted with him... until now. "You're gonna find out exactly what I *do* have, baby."

Her smile widened in answer.

He rose and lifted Carrie to her feet and then off of them, pulling her against his body. "Now don't make a sound," he murmured, and headed out of the field and into the trees. He knew exactly where he was going to take her.

Fifty or so years ago, this area had been wealthy. As always, there was an ebb and flow of poverty through the region and the once-graceful mansions had deteriorated, their owners fleeing to more genteel districts. Most of the proud houses had been razed. Some, like the one housing their group home, had been preserved, more or less. And some of the outbuildings still stood, in various states of disrepair. The gardening shed was one of them.

It was tucked among the trees and brambles. Another ten years, Riddick figured, and it'd fall, but for now it was a sturdy hideout. He often came here to be alone, to think. Now he brought Carrie inside and wrestled the door closed, pushing a decrepit tool bench in front of it before turning to look at her.

“So, Smuggler...” He made his voice dramatic, teasing her with his smile as he overplayed his *nefarious* role. “Now I got you right where I want you.”

Her mouth curved in an answering smile. He stared at her for a long moment, studying her in the dim light. She was more beautiful than ever. He took a few steps closer and gazed down into her eyes.

“Talk.”

Her smile widened. “No.”

“I can make you talk,” he growled, feeling his own smile widening in response. Damn, she was beautiful...

The look in her eyes was half defiance and half flirtation. “Bet you can’t, Merc.”

He had her pinned to the floor a moment later, his body pressed down upon hers yet again. “I can, Smuggler. I really... *really* can.”

“Prove it.”

He captured her wrists and moved them over her head, grinning. Once he had them both imprisoned under one large hand, he moved his free one to her throat. Her skin was so smooth and soft. He stroked it, marveling at its silkiness, before letting his hand drift down over her tee shirt to cup her breast. He sat up, straddling her waist, and smiled down at her.

“Any time you want me to stop, just tell me where your Base is, Smuggler.”

She arched her back, pressing the soft mound into his hand. “You’re never gonna find out.”

Shit, he was *definitely* getting a hard-on. He couldn’t remember ever being so turned on in his life. “We’ll see about that.”

He glanced around and spotted exactly what he’d hoped to find, a small coil of rope. It was within his reach so he snagged it. Tying her wrists together, he secured them to a table leg. Now he could use both of his hands.

He spent several long minutes playing with her clothed breasts, stroking and kneading them while she made soft purring noises beneath him. The dialogue continued.

“Talk.”

“No.”

“C’mon, talk.”

“Not gonna.”

Finally he slid his hands under her shirt.

“I’m gonna up the stakes here, Smuggler. You gonna give in?”

“Not likely.”

His questing hands found her naked breasts now and his fingers stroked at her tight, hard nipples. Her soft gasp sent a shock through his body and he felt his cock twitch in response. He let out an unsteady breath and continued caressing her for a moment. The urge to see her became too great and he tugged her shirt up, awkwardly drawing it over her head until it was tangled on her bound forearms. She was naked from the waist up now, and he’d never seen anything so lovely.

“Gonna talk now?” he asked her, and was rewarded with her amazing laugh.

“I’m just getting comfortable here.”

“Really?” He chuckled and bent his head. He could barely believe what he was about to do. “This help any?”

When he flicked his tongue against her nipple she gasped again. “Mmmmmmm...”

Her skin was salty with perspiration and sweet as well. He groaned and drew her tight nipple into his mouth, suckling on it. This was an entirely new experience for him and a fascinating one — he’d been a bottle baby, after all, abandoned at birth. Hers was the first breast he’d ever tasted.

Never knew I’d been so deprived, he thought to himself, closing his eyes and sucking harder, nibbling at the delicate skin. Below him she moaned, her body undulating slightly.

He didn’t know how long he spent devouring her breasts. His “interrogation” of her was forgotten for the moment as he drowned in the taste of her, the feel of her. She moaned softly, pressing her body upwards to meet his questing mouth. Finally he released her, gasping. How long had it been since he’d breathed?

“Wow... oh, shit, Carrie... I, uh...”

He glanced up at her and confronted her pleased smile.

“You ready to spill your secret yet?”

She laughed. “Gonna have to do a lot worse than *that* if you wanna get me to talk, Merc.”

His blood surged. When he answered her, he was surprised to hear his voice *crack*, something it hadn’t done since he was fourteen. “I can do that.”

His hands moved to the waistband of her jeans and he fumbled with the button for a moment. Finally he managed to undo it. He drew down the zipper, and then began pushing the denim down over her hips. Her panties almost came off with the jeans but he stopped their descent. It wasn’t time yet. She might freak out if he took them off. One thing at a time... one thing...

She arched her back, lifting her hips off of the floor and making it easier for him to pull the jeans down. He drew them down to her knees before he remembered her shoes were still on. It only took a few seconds to draw them off, along with her socks. A moment later her jeans landed on top of them in an untidy pile and he turned back to look at her, his breath catching in his throat.

In his entire life, he’d never seen anything so beautiful.

He paused for a moment, drinking in the sight of her. Naked except for her panties, she lay peacefully below him. Even with her hands tied above her head she looked completely relaxed. She was pale, her skin ivory in the dim light, with almost no tan. Her breasts were only a little whiter than the rest of her skin. Those now bore marks from his enthusiastic explorations.

His gaze traveled down her body, admiring the supple lines and curves. His mouth quirked a little as he admired her flat abdomen and belly button —

— *An “innie,” not an “outie” like mine* —

— and then his gaze moved to her panties. He couldn’t hold in the hungry, purring growl that escaped his throat.

They were bikini style, the waistband resting just below her hip bones. Still smirking, he bent his head and licked one of those delicate, protruding points, feeling her shiver in response.

“You gonna talk *now*, Smuggler?”

The husky tremor in her voice thrilled him. “Hell no. Gonna take a lot more than that, Merc.”

He couldn’t believe how much she was letting him do. Normally he’d have thought it was some trick, some joke, that soon she’d laugh and tell him “*Jeez, Riddick, why the hell would I want you?*” But —

But Carrie wasn’t like that. She played fair with everybody. She wasn’t going to laugh at him. Even if he...

He smiled at the thought.

“Something like *this*?”

He hooked his fingers under the waistband of her panties and drew them down her legs. His hands, he noticed, were shaking a little. Well, shit, of *course* they would be, this was straight out of one of his wildest, wettest dreams —

“Hmm...” Carrie mused, and then a playful grin lit up her face. “Nope!”

Riddick was transfixed. He stared at her, mesmerized by the soft mound of delicate, dark gold curls. Taking a shuddering breath, he moved his hands to her knees and drew her legs open. He wondered if she could feel how he was trembling. He glanced up at her face for a moment and marveled at how calm she looked. *His* entire body was humming. He felt like he was in danger of exploding. Taking yet another deep, shaky breath, he opened her legs wider and gazed at the enchanting view before him.

No *Playboy* magazine could beat this. Not even the hardcore magazines Toby kept under his bed could compare. A long, strangled groan escaped him as he stared at the exotic, dark pink folds of glistening flesh that seemed to beckon to him —

Get it together, man, you’re acting like a junior high school dork!

“So... what’s it gonna take to make you talk, S-smuggler?” Fuck, now he was stuttering!

She chuckled, but there was no disparagement in the sound. “Oh, I’m not telling you *that*, either. How far are you gonna go, Merc?”

He slid his hands up her thighs, nerving himself up, and let his fingertips brush the soft curls. A shock traveled through him and his pants suddenly felt even more painfully restrictive than ever.

“However far it takes,” he whispered. Steeling his tremulous fingers, he stroked her, parting her outer lips and exploring the silky, delicate flesh within. He was startled by the feel of slick moisture on his fingertips as he moved lower.

Riddick glanced up again, still nervous, and was once more reassured by Carrie's smile. He continued staring at her, keeping their eyes locked, as he pushed one finger into her sleek depths and her smile widened.

Oh shit, she's so warm and smooth... His erection pulsed in indignant complaint within his pants. *It* wanted to be inside her. It wanted to feel the hot, wet, pliant silk of her on every inch.

"Gonna talk now?" His voice cracked again.

Please say no, Carrie, oh shit, I want you so much, say you won't talk, say no...

"Hah. It'll take more than *that* to get me to spill!"

Shit, I'm ready to spill right now!

He withdrew his finger and brought it to his lips. She chuckled as he tasted the moisture on it. Another shudder passed through him. He'd never tasted anything like this before in his life...

...and he wanted *more*.

He crouched down and slid his hands under her, lifting her towards him even as he bent his head. Her scent was overwhelming, intoxicating, mouthwatering... he drew his tongue along her satiny folds and heard her groan.

"Oooh... Riddick..."

Nobody had *ever* said his name like that. Exultant, he stroked his tongue along her again, reveling in her taste. The tip of his tongue found a small nub of flesh where the lips joined and—

"Oh yes, ooh... mmmmmrrrrRiddick..."

Encouraged, he concentrated his efforts on the little nub, flicking at it and then nibbling it with his lips. He racked his brain to remember what his health teacher had called this. Sex Ed had been one of the few topics he'd really cared to pay attention to—

Clitoris. That's what it's called. Her clitoris.

Now her hips were churning and her moans were almost nonstop.

"Oh yeah, baby, that's it... mmmmm..."

Riddick slid his finger back inside her and continued his gentle assault while she writhed.

Somehow I don't think she plans to talk if I keep this up. That was just fine with him. He'd up the stakes again soon... *Please make her not talk, God...*

God would probably screw him out of even this, of course, but he could hope...

Beneath him, Carrie's hips rocked and she pressed herself against his hand and mouth, groaning. He obliged her, suckling on the tiny nub as if it was another nipple. She cried out and he flinched, looking up from his obsessive exploration of her to see if she was alright. The look of blissful rapture on her face both reassured him and thrilled him.

I wanna be inside her... I gotta be inside her...

He lifted his head and rose to his knees. "Carrie..." His voice cracked again. "Carolyn... One more chance... if you don't talk..."

He shakily unzipped his pants and pulled them down along with his briefs.

"...I'm gonna use this on you..."

She gazed at his freed erection. Was that hunger on her face? It looked like *hunger!* She smiled at him, defiant and daring still.

"Do your worst..."

Thank you God, I take back everything I ever said about you!

Hardly daring to believe his luck, he took a moment to strip of the remainder of his clothing before crawling between her spread legs.

*Don't mess this up. Do **not** mess this up.*

He positioned his cock at her slick, inviting opening, astonished by the warmth that seemed to roll over the tip as he did. Shuddering, he began to push into her. He really wanted to just thrust into her in one rapid movement and bury himself inside her, but that might bring a premature end to everything—

Go slow, go slow... whatever you do, don't be a 'minute-man' like Vera and Jennifer were giggling about last week...

It was the most amazing sensation he'd ever felt. Slowly, as he pushed in, he was sheathed in what felt like liquid silk. His eyes widened and he stared down at Carrie in wonder. She, beneath him, smiled and tilted her hips to draw him in deeper.

“Mmmmm... ooh yeah, that’s it,” she purred. The muscles in his thighs twitched as her bare legs wrapped around them. Everything about her felt like silk. Her touch, her voice, her depths...

He couldn’t restrain a guttural groan as he slid all the way into her. Her voice seemed to wrap around his.

“Carrie...”

“Riddick.”

He lay against her for a long moment, not daring to move. If he moved it might all end. He sure as hell didn’t want it to end yet.

Finally he trusted himself enough to rock back and thrust in again.

Oh, God... oh, Carrie... His eyes locked with hers and he was transfixed, caught in her. Captor and captive reversed roles in that instant; the ropes binding her wrists were meaningless.

Their eyes remained locked as he continued stroking in and out of her, the game forgotten. Riddick bit his lip, trying to control his growing impulses to thrust harder, not wanting to ruin this beautiful rapture. Beneath him, Carrie smiled and made a small purring sound.

“You can go faster if you want, Riddick... I can take it.” Mischief danced through her eyes again and she thrust up to meet him, using her strong legs to jerk his pelvis against hers.

Oh my God!

He couldn’t hold back any longer. The groan that escaped him was more a growl as he began to pound into her, amazed by the joyous cries that exploded from her with every thrust. He wrapped his arms around her and buried his face in the join of her throat and shoulder. If he could have found a way to fuse his body into hers, he would have. His body was drenched in sweat now, his arms and legs tightening with the strain of controlling himself.

Gotta hold on, gotta hold on... oh God...

Below him Carrie gasped and threw her head back, thrashing. Riddick opened his eyes and stared down at her, perplexed for a moment. Was that pleasure or pain?

Her eyes flew open and met his and he had his answer. His world exploded seconds later.

For a long moment there was no self, no existence. Just rapture. Intense pleasure. Something above and beyond any sensation he’d ever experienced before in his life. Even before self-awareness returned, he was aware of *her*. Carrie.

Once he could move again, he lifted his head and gazed down at her. He reached out and pushed her sweat-soaked bangs out of her face with the gentlest touch he could manage, still shivering. So beautiful... so beautiful...

His hand moved to her wrists and he undid the rope. Below him she smiled. Her freed arms moved to wrap around him and she drew him back down to her, rubbing her soft cheek against his.

“You know,” she whispered, “I thought you’d *never* get the nerve up to do this, Riddick.”

“Huh?” Not exactly the best after-sex repartee, but he couldn’t figure out what she meant.

“Well, I kept *hoping* you were going to ask me out or something, ever since I moved in. What were you waiting for, anyway?”

“Didn’t think you’d want to,” he managed after a moment of speechless wonderment. “Most girls—”

“—are idiots, Riddick. They don’t see you. I do... and I’ve wanted this for a long time.”

Riddick closed his eyes again and sighed against her bare skin. “Me too.”

“I was about to ask *you* out if you didn’t get off your ass, you know. But I like your idea better.”

Outside, suddenly, he could hear Toby’s voice calling. “Game over! Time’s up! Smugglers and Mercs return to your Bases!”

Below him, Carrie abruptly giggled. “You know what else? I won!”

That made him burst out laughing. “Yeah, never *did* get you to talk, did I?”

Her smile was teasing as she shook her head. “Well, you can try again tonight if you want.”

They dressed and headed out to catch up with the others. The Smuggler team had won; their Base had gone unfound. Riddick didn’t care; he’d found something much better.

They were together for seven weeks before it all went to hell. When their nightly trysts were finally discovered, Carrie was tied to his bed and they’d been playing games with candle wax. He was sent, that very night, to a facility for criminal youth. Nobody believed that she’d been a willing participant no matter what she said. His reputation as a sexual predator only departed when he acquired a much worse one two years later...

...Murderer.
He never saw Carrie again...

...Until now.
Standing in the shade of a leviathan skeleton, Riddick watches her walk away, Johns by her side.
Gonna let you go for now, Carrie, he thinks, blowing the lock of her hair into the wind. It drifts after her.
But this time...
This time nothing is going to pull them apart.