

# The Lead

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“Kamn, you Freewombs expect the silver pedestal, don’t you?”

Alice held her tongue, knowing that the evening’s liquor still buzzed in her head. The lack of inhibition that had landed her this after-party job was likely only to get her into trouble now. So she quietly rested on her knees, grabbed the bars of her hanging cage and let it swing gently, batting her eyelashes up at him.

Her client threw his hands up in frustration and shook his head, grinning from one corner of his mouth as if in disappointment and disbelief.

“I hired you to entertain, and that’s it. You did your exotic off-world dances in the cage and now our contract is finished. Don’t think that just because you shook some meat behind those bars tonight that that earns you my collar.”

Alice was at a complete loss for how to respond to this. She had fought hard to remain a Freewomb, living as a free woman on Torei with no Master or Mistress. It was no mean feat, and was only possible thanks to her off-world citizenship.

The men of this world found her red hair fascinating, and she was often hired to dance just as an esoteric decoration. Her clients would show her off as a pose in front of their untravelled guests. Her chief selling point was in making them appear wise in the inscrutable ways of the far-distant free worlds.

“Please do not mistake me, Sir.” she began, remaining in a crouch to relieve the strain from her ankles, “I only need a place to stay tonight. I am happy to have served you, but I wish to remain a free woman.” She could see that all the eyes of the bound and gagged women around the room were on her, but she could not imagine what was going through their minds as they watched their Owner (or Steward, for the contractors) argue with a Freewomb.

Her client had seemed gentle at the party. She had decided that he was almost kind, in his own way. That was the only reason she had agreed to join the others in an after-party at his high-rise apartment. But he had collapsed during their revels, and woke a few hours later in a clearly hung-over state.

“Look around me, eh? Look at everything I have!” He didn’t seem to be paying attention to what she said. “I’ve got more flesh in this room than most ranches! Kamn, in that trunk at the foot of my bed are two girls I could haul out and

*cook for dinner* if I wanted! So don't think that I'm going to just keep some untrained piece of foreign meat just because she can do a few ginger-dances!"

Alice decided that the deferent tone wasn't helping her cause, so she played an entirely different card. Pulling on the bars of her hanging cage, she brought herself up to her full height. Thanks to the extra inches that the en-pointe cage-dancing shoes gave her plus the space between the cage and the floor, she found herself looking down into his eyes. With one hand she straightened the gauzy green skirts that gathered about her thighs, and spoke in a deeper and firmer tone.

"It's the middle of the night, and it's a simple fact that I need one of three things: a place to stay until the curfew lifts, an escort to take me home, or a pass from the Ministry of Wombs. I asked for the first because I thought you would find it simplest to just go back to sleep and leave me in this cage for a few hours, but if you are dissatisfied with my services I will happily take my fee and leave by whatever *legal* means you provide me."

Men on Torei were not used to women who talk back from a position of power. Some girls were impudent or provocative as a means of inviting punishment, but most men on this world could live their whole lives without a woman ever speaking to them in frank authority.

She could tell he was still in a foul mood, but his headache made him less likely to want to keep arguing. He kicked at a bundle of leather on the floor, which revealed itself with a yelp to be a girl in a straitjacket. Turning away from Alice's cage, he began fondling the body of another young thrall: a busty figure chained to the wall wearing nothing but a glossy sphere of latex over her head. He twisted the slave's nipple and watched the hood pulse and throb with her breathing for a moment. Finally, he spoke.

"Fine, whatever. I've got more important things to do than have an argument with some unowned foreign *tease*." Still facing away from Alice, he slipped a finger between the hooded girl's legs and gently stroked, making her squirm enough to rattle her chains.

Alice knew she had gained some ground in the conversation, but what he was implying was dangerous for her.

"Sir, you may remember that before I came here you signed and sealed your agreement to my contract, which explicitly precluded any misunderstanding that I might be teas—"

"Do not lecture me on the law! I am a twelfth-generation Magister, and I can bring down justice on you so violently that you'd envy the wretches displayed on Traitor's Boulevard! Freewomb or thrall, you are a bird in a cage; and if you persist in this insolent contempt of my position I will pluck you to the bone!"

Magister or no, times had changed on Torei. In their desire to join the cosmic economy, the so-called "ringdoms" surrounding the world's equator had ceded

an astonishing amount of power to the off-world embassies and business cartels. This man could certainly make life miserable for Alice, but he was no doubt under pressure to keep his hands off any foreigners. Any fear she had of consequences for angering him were mirrored on his side, as his government and the senior judiciary saw the need to protect off-world women and coddle the off-world men.

“Forgive my insolence, Sagacity,” she used his court honorific, playing contrite to allow him to save face, “If it please you, I wish to complete our contract and return to my home.”

He unlocked the cage with a thumbprint, and grabbed Alice roughly by the upper arm, dragging her out so quickly that she didn’t have time to find footing with her ballet toes. She fell most of the way to the floor, her knees hitting the parquet with no small amount of force, and she rolled onto her back, winded.

Her elbow jostled a sleeping girl, naked but for a heavy steel collar, who moaned and curled her knees to her chest, reaching down to masturbate furiously. While Alice tried to regain the strength to sit up, the aroused figure slung a leg over her and began to grind against Alice’s thigh. The girl’s hands wandered over Alice’s green corset, reaching between the cups trying to find an erogenous zone, and her legs pushed Alice’s skirts higher, knees searching for her slit.

Alice finally managed to gasp in regular breaths, and used what strength she had to detangle herself from the oversexed slave. The poor girl most likely had stimulators implanted; they would keep her aroused and stimulated for the rest of her life, but never permit her orgasm.

“Well my little bird, here is an example of my justice.” He was speaking calmly now, and Alice found that more frightening than his earlier bellowing. “She was an obedient servant, I suppose. She was always punctual, never complained, and obeyed orders without question. But also... without enthusiasm, either.”

Alice brought herself to her knees, and began to plant one ballet boot on the floor, in the hopes that she had enough of a sense of balance right now to bring herself upright.

“I made her into a creature of pure arousal...” he seemed lost in thought as the girl on the floor continued the futile attempts to come, fresh tears joining old ones on her cheeks as she did so.

Alice did a quick trick of balance to swing herself back up onto her toes, standing fully upright again. She needed to find the way to close this transaction quickly so that she could go home and get some sleep. Alice thought she saw a hint of his reason for condemning that poor slave to a lifetime of unrequited desire: he needed women to admire him. She softened her approach still further.

“Sagacity, your power is impressive.” Alice looked at his feet, doing her best to adopt a contrite tone. “I hope my performance tonight met your standards for enthusiasm.”

He wasn't watching Alice, but instead kept his eyes on the squirming puddle of frustration by her feet. He seemed tired, and almost bored by the whole conversation now. He fumbled on the desk and pulled out a thin transparent card, and soon it sprang to life projecting the terms of Alice's performance contract onto the wall.

"I will pay your fee and send you home now."

"Sagacity, legally I—"

"I am the law!" he barked, pushing his thumb against a signet pad. The funds transferred to Alice, and the contract now listed her transport home as the only unsatisfied consideration. He fussed with another glass card, and the line item vanished.

"Thank you, Sir." Alice curtseyed, tapping one toe en-pointhe against the floor as she lifted her skirts to reveal her shaven mound. The gesture was a local one, something from Torei's golden days of lusty court libertines and beautiful courtesans. Alice did it partly out of thanks, but also to show respect for her client's stature. She may be free, but she only stayed so by navigating Torei's customs and culture.

She stepped around the piles of female flesh on the floor, the chopstick stilts of her severe footwear clicking loudly as she kept her balance with fluid hand gestures. Alice picked her bag off of an end table and made for the door.

"Not so fast, womb."

"Sir?"

"You'll need to take off your corset and skirt, and put them in the bag. They're going separately."

"Separately? I don't..."

"I've booked you a lead on mailrail. Your baggage will go with the morning collection."

Alice froze, scowling. The curfews for women, even Freewombs, meant that she'd been stuck with the lead as her only legal escort before. It was a humiliating way to travel, and the only redeeming factor was how inexpensive it was. She had hoped that a Magister of his stature would have simply ordered a licensed taxi or authorized her travel for the night, but clearly he was not in the mood to do her any favors whatsoever.

Alice decided that she'd had enough of him and his fancy apartment, and that if she had to travel by lead then it was better than staying with him and his gruesome harem for even one more minute. She looked him in the eye as she unbuckled the leather straps and peeled the corset off, then held herself up with one hand and pulled off the skirts.

She stood there, naked but for her stage makeup and dance boots, and bent down to remove the footwear.

“No, you’ll keep those on.” he was speaking calmly and quietly again, and Alice now realized that he only did this when he meant business. It was a judge’s even tone, calculated to project calm even-handedness and firm conviction at the same time. Alice sighed: this trip was going to be murder on her feet, but it would be over soon enough.

He grabbed her upper arm in one hand and her bag in the other, and dragged her out into the hallway. Laying there in a neat pile was a bundle of leather straps and a pair of ball mittens connected by a chain. He brought the straps over her torso in a simple chest harness, the mittens dangling from a loop between her breasts.

Alice was finally unable to look him in the eye as he helped her into the mittens and clipped the cuffs tightly around her wrists. None of the assembly was locked on, but she was now unable to remove any of it without help.

It occurred to her that the concierge at her apartment building would be the small mousey fellow tonight, a thought that made her wince. The rumor going around was that he kept security camera footage of all the women in the building, and was editing it to sell somehow. She’d need his help to get back into her apartment tonight.

Alice nearly jumped as a finger traced through her copper-red hair, drawing it away from her eyes. She looked up to see her client’s kind face smiling down at her, showing the warmth and understanding that he had used to win her over before the night began. She blushed and smiled back weakly.

“I have a surprise for you.” he whispered, pulling a black roll of leather out of her bag.

Without waiting for her to realize what was happening, he shook the thing open and a long transparent silicone phallus sprang free from the bundle, straps dangling to either side. He held the back of Alice’s neck in one hand and slipped the object between her teeth with the other.

Alice yelped as the object jammed her tongue down onto the bottom of her mouth, but it came out as a muffled whimper. Instinctively she squirmed to get away from it, but he knew which way she’d jerk, and managed to keep her head still long enough to buckle it tightly behind her neck.

Her eyes bugged as she struggled to suppress her reflexes and keep from gagging, a task made difficult by her instinctive attempts to dislodge the plug from the back of her mouth. He whispered to her in kind and soothing tones, stroking her hair until she calmed down and breathed normally.

“There you go, that’s it. Just relax, don’t fight it.” he continued to smile gently, infuriating her. “This is my gift to you, meat. All of you off-world wombs need to learn how to use your mouths. You all try to speak like men, and it’s like

little songbirds trying to growl like wolves. If your people can't learn to treat us with obedience and respect, then the best thing for your mouths is a good cock."

He traced a finger over the wide black leather panel of the gag, feeling the base of the protrusion at its anchor point.

"You know, this one is made from a mould of my own. . ."

His finger drew down over Alice's bare throat to the chest harness. His finger followed the vertical strap that bisected her breasts, then lazily went back and forth over the cross-strap that pulled up beneath them.

"You know you have wonderful breasts. Truly, they're delicious." he slipped a finger under the chest harness. "You really ought to get them pierced. If you like, I know a master lancer with the Ministry of Improvements who owes me some favors. He'd do wonders for you, free of charge. Just say the word and I can set the destination for this lead."

Alice's heart had begun to race. She'd taken the lead home before, but she'd just gone into a booth at a mailrail station in a club and endured the walk of shame from the other station home. This was a far more vulnerable position than she'd ever allowed herself to be in before, and she just wanted to leave.

"No? Think it over. This is quite an opportunity you're passing up! Ah, well. I'll leave the offer open. If you ever change your mind and wish to improve yourself, you know how to reach me."

After what seemed to Alice like an hour of useless hesitation, he took the lead that dangled from the track in the ceiling and clipped it to the upper ring in Alice's chest harness. He then dumped the bag down the parcel chute and gave Alice a firm smack on her backside before disappearing back into the apartment.

Alice bit the replica in her mouth, hoping in some superstitious corner of her mind that the original would feel the pain. Looking up to the motorized shuttle over her head, she tried giving it her address.

"Ngpph Ung Mmfm Ngwwll."

It winked amber, playing a warbling chord that signalled electronic confusion. Alice stomped a toe in frustration, but without her hands available to balance she found herself in serious danger of falling over. Relaxing her tongue, she tried again.

"Lpph Ungk Mmfn Ngwwllv!"

This time the device's software was able to correct for both gag-talk and her off-world accent. An even-toned androgynous voice confirmed her address and the shuttle set off slowly down the track, heading for the lifts at the end of the corridor.

Alice marched slowly, wishing that the thing would speed up a little, so that she could work up an easier gait on her pointe boots. The lead tugged her down to

the sub-basement level and down long bleak service corridors. As she neared the mailrail station, she began to see the occasional collared slave or embarrassed Freewomb coming the other way.

Finally the shuttle stopped, and she waited at a panel for the next train. She heard one grind to a halt, and then the panel gull-winged open, revealing an unfurnished compartment. The carriage had an arched roof to fit the contours of the mailrail tunnel, and it was only one metre high at its apex. Alice followed the lead inside and crouched against one wall as the shuttle transferred the lead to the roof of the vehicle. The panel swung back down and clicked shut, and the train rumbled toward Alice's less glamorous district.

After two stops without the door opening, it levered up unexpectedly to reveal a raven-haired beauty with a simple black collar sporting a silver ID panel that read "Deco". She had silver bells through her nipples and a tattoo of a braided whip curling around her hip and up her inner thigh. Her arms were bound behind her in a glossy black singleglove that connected to her collar, and her cheeks were streaked with black eye makeup made runny by her tears.

The new girl was not eager to follow the lead's pull, and she wailed out protests as she resisted. Alice noted with some admiration that her ballet shoes were the "Mary Jane" variety, with a single strap over the top of the foot and no ankle support to help her stand. These were some of the hardest to walk in, and she handled it under duress without trouble. The girl did her best to stamp her toes against the floor to fight the leash's pull, nipple bells jingling with every step.

Her chest harness held, though, and she was eventually dragged into the tiny rail car. Soon the lid had closed again and the two girls squatted, knees intertwined, in the cramped compartment. The new girl, being ungagged, whimpered and moaned. The lights were dim, but Alice soon began to forget her own troubles and cocked her head sideways a little, trying to understand this woman's fear.

"Oh Kamzi, I am finished!" the new girl swore, "Stupid stupid girl, why did I let myself get caught!"

She began blubbing again, and Alice tried to make eye contact. Alice rubbed the other girl's thigh with her knee, and generally tried to do as good a job of making "there, there" gestures as was possible under the circumstances. At one dark stop where some other piece of baggage was being loaded or unloaded, the girl began to explain.

"I was such a fool! I fell in love with a Freewomb, and she treated me like the Princess Thrall. But we were careless, and my Master found out! I think he may have known the whole time—oh, Kamzi I'm such a foolish girl! Now to punish me he's ordered my passage to the Ministry of Improvements. Oh Kamn oh Kamn oh Kamn!"

The girl bawled openly as the train rumbled on to another stop.

"I'm to have..." she sobbed through the grey streaks of her tears, "I'm to be

implanted with stimhibitors! Oh my sweet lover, I'll never know her again!"

Alice was filled with horror and pity at this girl's tale. She listened sympathetically, and tried to comfort the girl with the closest she could come to an embrace, bound as they both were. Somehow though, the two girls ended up scissored into each other, bare flesh rubbing together in the cramped steamy box. It wasn't long before the constant rumble and clank of the train sent Alice's guest over the edge.

"Oh thank you, thank you!" the girl sniffed as she caught her breath, planting tiny kisses on Alice's gag, cheeks, and breasts "I may go now to a hell of eternal need without satisfaction, but I will always keep this memory of your kindness. This slave begs you to take anything you wish from her!" Alice blushed and the condemned girl soon returned to gentle sobs, mourning her life.

The two rode on without interaction for some time, and then at one stop the cabin went dark. The train did not continue moving as soon as it usually did, and there were no sounds of panels opening or closing. Alice could only guess what the other girl was feeling now, and realized with annoyance that in her nervousness she had reflexively begun to suckle on her gag.

Without warning, the panel on their cabin swung open into pitch blackness, and a high-powered torch shone right into Alice's face. The beam lingered there for a few seconds before flipping to the other girl.

"Oh, Deco!" a voice cried from the blackness, "Oh thank Haven I've found you! Gobbers was sending you to Improvements, you silly girl!" In the reflected light of the torch, Alice could faintly see that the rescuer was a voluptuous red-haired woman in a black leather catsuit.

The two ungagged women exchanged gleeful greetings, and once everyone was caught up Alice realized that this was a carefully orchestrated rescue. The girl's free lover had stopped the train to get her out, and they could now run away together. She almost cheered, but the dingus at her throat gave her pause.

"But if we run, Master will track us down! He'll be notified by the Ministry when I don't show up for punishment! Oh lover, we'll both be finished!"

The rescuer had undone the girl's monoglove and unhooked her from the lead, moving more quickly now.

"Don't worry, pet. I've thought the whole thing through. I made sure that you wouldn't be in a carriage alone, and you were fortunate enough to ride with a Freewomb! We're nearly there..."

Alice took a moment to understand what the plan was, even after it had been mostly implemented. The rescuer had swapped the leads on Deco and Alice's harnesses so quickly that Alice didn't pay attention to what had happened, at first. While the rescuer fussed at the slave's collar with an off-world lock-picking device, Alice suddenly worked out where she was now headed.



Alice bucked and kicked, screaming into her gag not caring if she vomited or choked on it. She tugged at the chain holding her hands in front of her, trying to pull them off or reach the clip where the wrong lead was attached. She fought as the rescuer buckled the slave's collar around her throat and locked it in back.

Alice saw stars. She saw pink. She saw red. She saw her future and the amount of raw dread and regret made her stomach feel heavier than the train she rode.

The rescuer gave her newly-freed slave lover a passionate kiss and closed the panel on the two of them. The train rumbled on, lights filled the compartment once again, and Alice glared daggers at her fellow traveller. She gnawed on the gag, willing every piece of metal and leather around her to crumble to dust and blow away.

Deco, meanwhile, seemed utterly unsympathetic. She was feeling her bare throat with one hand and her bare crotch with the other, eyes smiling at some vision ten miles in the distance. She did not even seem to realize that Alice was still in the train.

At Alice's stop, the panel opened and Deco stood on the toes of her mary-janes and was led out, drawn to Alice's apartment block where her rescuer would be waiting. Alice stood and tried to pull herself home, to keep her own life, but the hatch of the train began to close and it pushed her back in. She rode on in despair, her eyes no longer seeing.

At last the train stopped for her. The lead popped up into the ceiling and she was dragged out by her harness. Alice tried to stay limp, but the design of the lead tracks was such that she only bore the pressure on her breasts and ribs, and it was simply less painful to keep tottering on her stiff ballet toes.

Alice walked down the gleaming surgical steel corridor of the inpatients' wing of the Ministry of Improvements. She stopped struggling, stopped trying to fight the future. Her hands stopped tugging, her eyes stopped blinking, and her tongue started suckling on the gag once more. She was just one more girl in a slave's collar, queueing up to have her body permanently altered.

One foot in front of the other, Alice allowed herself to be led on, obediently marching forward to endure someone else's punishment for the rest of her life.

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*This story was written to tell the tale of "FemDeco", by Luctem: <http://fav.me/d2xuxma>*



Figure 1: FemDeco, by Luctem: <http://fav.me/d2xuxma>