It was sixty years since the initial colonization of Mars, and frankly, it was starting to show. The smaller habs and the more original buildings were covered with a persistent coating of powdered red rock and had a general wornness to them.

This wornness was also displayed on the people within the habs. The exuberant utopian hope of the initial settlers had turned with time into the wise cynic of the old hand. There was cussing and spitting when doors broke or the air scrubbers malfunctioned, as they now often did.

They all swore it had been better in the beginning, but deep down they knew it was probably just the same.

The initial rush of mining had subsided once the rarer of elements were extracted and now it was the more mundane, yet common minerals which saw their day. But the work was unexciting and they pay was lousy. Yet these were the people who had agreed to such jobs. For one reason or another, they had come, or stayed, and now it was what it was.

The bar was an old hangout. At one point a group of revolutionaries had set up some sort of operation in the small hab they had built into the side of the cliff, but whatever fate had befallen them, they left, and a bar seemed to suit the old run down place well.

For a time in the past, it would have been considered large; nearly fifty feet by fifty feet, almost luxurious for those used to the austere and crampt survivalist space of the early settlements.

Overhead there was a dull bubble of reinforced glass, studded with micrometer impacts, cracks from improper decompression, Martian red sand, and just general grime.

From the ceiling and walls hung pieces of equipment: old suits, shovels, vac systems, solar panels. Perhaps when the revolutionaries were here, the stuff had been used, but by now it had become decoration, not unlike the instruments or old street signs would be on earth. And if you moved any one of the pieces, you would first need to disturb the years old layer of grime which had covered the items completely. Underneith you would find the vague outline of the item in dust on the wall. Red of course.

It was a great bar.

I looked around the place, eyes jumping over Petrov, the old out of shape bar tender and towards the locals.

There was Bernice, who had once managed a small mine nearby during the boom, and what she had lost in standing and finances, she had gained in alcohol tollerance.

She currently argued with Bryce who we all suspected was, or used to be some sort of smuggler. He lived in a disconnected hab on the other side of the hill and word was he had his own small ship, if it could be believed.

He currently was trying to explain something to Bernice, but as soon as I leaned forward it was all too clear they were talking politics again.

Next, sitting at the bar was Xavier. He could have been the best of us, and was apparently the son or cousin to some big politican back on earth, or had been anyway. Something went south and the whole family had to bolt. Now he cradled a tall pint and stared up at the screen, which was showing a no-holds-barred martial arts showdown cast all the way out from the Mara. Every hit that connected caused his lean face to breifly tighten into a thin sadistic smile.

Next to him were the Black Vac Boys. Those two had thought themselves real gangsters, but at some point had gotten addicted to some very expensive synthetics which had blown through whatever money they had been able to extort in their short criminal careers.

Finally there was Martha. If Xavier could have been the best, Martha could have been the saddest. She hadn't been an executive or politician or outlaw, but instead a simple colonist, just one of the early ones. She had been able to see and experience first hand the slow but inexorable slip into decy that Mars had had so quickly fallen into.

Her partner had taken the children and gone back earthside, leaving her with the hab. She never had really recovered from that rejection of her hope and the dream which had propelled her into space. She could be commonly be found crying quietly into her drink on long nights.

For sure, they are were a good bunch of people despite their shortcomings and they all looked after each other, even after me, the least social of the bunch.

I tried my best to stay on everyone's good side, and had more than once done favors for the others. We, despite all the shit Mars had turned into, had found a community, a fellowship of man, here together among Petrov's glasses; a real connection that the first utopians would have understood.

That why I was against letting the god stay with us that year.

The god had simply walked in through the airlock, no indication of a vehicle or a suit of any kind, let alone a ship. She wore a faded blue outfit of some sort, but it had seen so much dirt and wear, it was hard to tell whether it was the service jacket of the blue collar worker or the uniform of the soldier. She had looked blankly up at us as we had stared at her in curiosity.

As we did so, I was surprised no one had commented on the fact that she was… well… a god. It was really not hard to notice. Despite her disheveled nature, her features were supernaturally defined, the definition of handsome, and she had a glow to her, an actual physical luminescent glow that made it clear what she was.

But no one had said anything about it, so I hadn't made a scene. What did it matter anyway?

The god ignored the curious looks from the lcoals, and the disgusting yet stereotypical stairs of the Black Vac Boys. She had made her way up to the counter and asked Petrov for a drink.

Perhaps Petrov knew something, or perhaps he too had taken a shine to the goddess in front of him, because he didn't ask to see any payment, the usual challenge against outsiders.

“What'll you have?” he asked, a hint of something in his voice that just might have been emotion under his usual eastern bloc stoicism.

“Something strong.” She grunted, and fell into one of the surprisingly comfortable bar stools.

Julio, the older of the Black Vacs, leaned over and made a pass as the god.

“Hey babe, when did you fall from heaven?” It was pathetic at best. I was honestly surprised she didn't obliterate him into a smouldering pile of offal right then and there.

Yet as the god stared at him, it was clear she was actually regarding him or what he just said for some reason. She stared as if she couldn't quite understand what she was seeing. Then, after a moment of silence she went to speak. I watched on nervously.

“Fuck off” she said, laying one dirty gloved hand on Julio's face and pushed.

She must have been trying not to hurt him, since he merely rocked back in his own seat, a grin on his face, rather than smashing through the wall.

He whistled but left her, to talk, in no quiet words about the lude things he wanted to do to her, with his younger compatriot, Udaygo.

I watched on for a long while, feigning at observing the bloodsport on the screen behind her.

She stayed late that night, and again the next day.

On the following day, someone must have remembered that the bar existed, since one of the Black Vac Boy's former lackeys came in to extort the monthly protection fee from Petrov.

Petrov scowled as the olive drab suited man walked in.

The fasimile soldeir was far too well manicured for this sort of area, sporting a fashionable haricut and a spotless helmet. Petrov cursed under his breath and put down the glass he had been cleaning.

“Thought we had forgotten about you, you crazy Russian bastard?” He laughed, nonchalantly showing Petrov his shiny firearm. We weren't going to get out of this collection easily.

I decided that it had gotten a bit too hot in the room and went to leave, but the hired gun aimed his piece at me and gestured me back to the seat.

“No go Amigo. We had some trouble at some of our other colelctions. No one leaves till I get the money.” He warned.

I looked at the weapon and decided that it wouldn't hurt to get one or two more drinks after all, and slunk back to my corner.

I looked up to see the goddess staring at both of us. I shrugged. “Bad time to come around I suppose.” I said unhelpfully, and returned to my seat.

The punk had noticed the goddess now though, and no doubt wanted to push his luck, despite the obvious, insanely deadly risks. Some people…

“Ai! Who is this beautiful lady? Petrov, where the hell have you been keeping her?” he made eyes at her, to her visible disgust.

“Take the money and fuck off.” Petrov said, returning from the back room with a small box. He slid the box onto the bar for the punk to pick up. However, the punk now seemed to have other, more suicidial ideas.

A hand went towards the god's waist. The other lazily holding the weapon, in no general direction, yet present all the same; an implication.

“Hey, I've got some time, might as well enjoy myself” he said to Petrov.

The god smacked his hand out of the way, without looking, with a dull thwack, but said nothing.

“Don't fucking harrass my customers you piece of shit.” Petrov cursed, suddenly more serious than I had seen him in the past.

He fumbled with his hands and I vagually remembered the he kept a piece of his own behind the counter, an anti-armor shotgun of some kind which could blast straight through the armor of most suits and even the hulls of small ships. I had seen him use it once, on the lowest setting. I had no desire to be anywhere near if things got out of hand.

The creep closed with the god and leered down at her.

After a moment of obvious subdued anger, she set down her drink and looked at the man.

“Can I help you with something?”

To my surprise, the tone was more tired than angry.

It was then which I first suspected that the punk, heck, all of the other bar goers, couldn't understandwhat the woman was, and how dangerous she was.

I stared at that greasy blond hair, which, to my mind, radiated a shining unstoppable aura and supreme power.

“Can I buy you a drink?” He asked, sitting in the spare seat to the side of the god.

Petrov glared at him and edged the box closer in an effort to get him to leave. The punk merely waved it off.

“They're not expecting me for some time. And to be honest, I just wanted to talk to someone.” He said, resting his hands on the counter, yet staring at the god. His tone was less braggadocio. Perhaps he wasn't a total punk, but you would have had to dig deep to find that 1%.

I looked at the punk, and with the last response, realized that he was perhaps truly smitten by the woman, in spite or perhaps because of her rustic appearance.

“I'm sory. I don't want to talk; to you or anyone else.” She said, still staring at her drink, which no one, including Petrov had noticed stayed perpetually full regardless of how many swigs she took from it.

“Well, I do want to, if I could trouble you for just a moment. You seem like a nice looking woman. Might even be an eye catcher if you would clean up a bit. You want to head back to my place? I've got a ten person hab all to myself. It even has a swimming pool. All the food I could ever want, even stuff you can only get earthside. Far as I can see, its only missing you.” He grinned.

The god took a disinterest sip. It became clear he was actually going to wait for a reply. The silence was approaching awkward levels, and he looked a bit unnerved. Whatever response he had expected, it wasn't this.

She let out an exasperated sigh and finally looked at him square in the eyes. “What do you really want? Tell me the truth.” Something shot its way from her eyes to his.

He started sweating.

“Come on. You were going to say something. What was it?”

He coughed, looking more nervous by the second. There was something wrong with this woman. He was starting to understand.

His mouth seemed to open on its own. It described how he wanted to engage in carnal relations with the goddess.

He let out a yelp, eyes wide at what he had just said so brazenly. Sure, he was going to have gotten to that, but he needed to lay on the sleeze first! What had made him come on so strong? He must have wondered.

I choked on my own drink and half hid behind my table waiting for the horrifying reaction. However, the god didn't respond violently. Not yet.

She let another sigh escape her and in a fluid motion got off her chair and pulled the man in close.

For a moment, the poor bastard thought she was going to kiss him and made the appropriate facial gesture. She stared at him, face right up close until he got the message. He opened his eyes in surprise, the gears turning furiously, trying to understand what was happening here.

“Carlos.” She stated flatly, if a bit sadly. “You're not a bad man. I know that. What do you fucking want here? What is your goal? What's your endgame past all the money, drugs, food and women? You should just take the money and leave.”

Her voice to me was surprisingly deep and not quite as gruff as perhaps she at first had let on. Had he ever given us his name?

The man recalculated, the hamster having found its wheel once more. I could see the arithmatic on his face. This was not one of the usual tavern wenches. This was someone with some schooling, or smarts at least. He changed his tactics.

“I'm going up in the world. This assignment is the lowest I've been given in the last month. Its just as I deserve. Don't you know power goes to those worthy of it? I plan on going right to the fucking top. And I can take you there as well if you come with me.”

“Ha!” Interjected a voice off to the side.

“We've been there muchacho. You're just going to end up licking Lopez's boots, the fucking ungrateful bastard.” Julio said, spitting to the ground.

But Carlos, the punk, merely waved away the insult. “Lopez is an unimaginative man. Give me a couple of months behind the wheel. I'll be swimming in money, all the power and wealth you can imagine.” He slipped a reassuring grin at the god.

“Its the motivation. The strength of will. The strong eat the weak in this Martian world. Come on with me and be part of the winning team. The people here are losers.”

He looked to the god for some sort of response and perhaps it was that look for reassurance which betrayed that he didn't feel quite as confident as he portrayed, or as set in his confidence as he would have hoped.

“You're just like them.” The god said silently under her breath. I wasn't even sure Carlos caught it.

She lifted herself to her actual height, the dull light shining heavenly behind her and a breeze wafted through the bar as the other inhabitants stared on in half curiousness, half horror.

“Woman, take care, he's armed.” Julio warned, with actual concern.

The poor fools were concerned about *her.*

“You really believe in that? Are you willing to do whatever you can to reach the top? Stamp on the weak to crawl towards the light?” She asked, placing a hand on his shoulder. She had never taken her eyes away from him. The stare was otherworldly. I could not tear my eyes away from her either.

He looked at her, trying to comprehend the screaming sense of danger his body was feeling, and how she was now somehow taller, and more defined than himself. Everything was wrong. She had flipped how all this should be going. She was the one who should be lower than he, and unassured, and impressed. It was wrong and bad, and something she had done or said, or implied disturbed him to the core.

He struggled to regain some of his perceived lost masculinity, and doubled down on his previous answer, although sounding less convincing now. He shook slightly, sweat beading on his forehead.

With visible effort, he put his hand on his waist and sleezed out a trembling smile as he desperately tried to turn the situation back into something he understood.

“Yes I do.” He said, feigning bravery.

She stared at him blankly, the allowed herself a sad smile.

Then Carlos exploded.

“Fucking hell!” Julio yelled, jumping back in his seat.

“Oh god!” Petrov coughed, turning back as the dead man's body fell backwards to the floor.

Bernice grinned something evil, probably having dreampt of doing just that to several people in her past.

Bryce's hand went to his mouth in surprise and looked impressed. Xavier stared in horror.

Even Martha looked up finally from her drink as his body came down with a wet splat.

I was just glad she hadn't taken the rest of us with him.

“Damn!” Bryce shouted excitedly, jumping to his feet. “That was damn good work! I could have sworn you didn't even have a weapon until that last second. You were hells fast! … just warn us next time!” He said with a laugh, going to clap her on the back, then, thinking better of it, clapped his hands together instead. He had not seen where the weapon had come from or returned to.

So they really didn't realize how dangerous she was? What she had just done? I took a look at the reactions and rose to tell them what had really gone on.

“Hey, you there.” She said looking at me.

I froze in terror and looked at her with wide eyes. How had she known?!

“Can you, err… give me a hind with this?” She asked, sheepishly, pointing vagually down at what had used to hanve been Carlos.

“Oh- ahh, sure” I stammered. Our eyes met for a brief second and that same something connected with me, warning me that I better keep my fucking mouth shut.

Left with no other choice, I grabbed Carlos's legs and helped the god carry the body to the airlock.

And from then on, the god was one of us.

The god had never given us their name, but allowed us to call her Mia, which I assumed was some sort of nickname. She really didn't look like a Mia. Perhaps a Gabriel, or a Delilah…

I learned that Mia had been in some sort of military unit if we were to believe her own story. She had seen most of the solar system but also numerous other ones.

She also straight up told everyone that she was a god.

They didn't believe her.

Now every other day or so, she would roll into Petrov's and complain along with the rest of us.

It seemed her experiences as a god hadn't been what she had been expecting.

“You know, I used to burn through nebulas...” She said whistfully, gunning back a shot of something nasty.

Petrov looked up and nodded non-commitally. Julio beamed at her. For whatever, reason the previous incident had only solidified his crush for the woman.

“Oh really?” He asked, with a tone that implied he didn't believe her in the slightest, but was absolutely up for hearing about it.

“Whole nebulas?” He asked.

Mia looked at him, a slow dumb grin running across her face. She was an absurd number of drinks in.

“Whole nebulas.” She confirmed, putting down her glass a bit too hard. It went to shatter, then decided not to. No one noticed.

“When enemy sshlips tried to hide, they'd have me burn off the whole thing. Not too environmental if you ask me.” She got a bit misty eyed.

“Hrm. How come they didn't just have you destroy all the ships?” Bryce, ever the subtle one, asked.

“Diplomashy” She said slurred, raising her glass, which was suspiciously full again, as if in a toast.

“Let em know they're helplesh, let em know they have no chance. Then they just surrender and boom!” She clapped her hands together, the mug hovering innocently in the air above her where it had been left.

“...You've got all their ships!” She seemed pleased with her explanation. “Or at least that’s what they told me...” She added,

“Huh” Bryce said, clearly not impressed. He looked back at the bloodsport. Mia looked at the back of his head with the same silly smile.

“I've flown shtraight through ships; watched them break apart, cracking along the spine...” She said, illustrating with her hands. She looked at her hand and her mind shot light years away, sobering before my eyes. And then her mood changed instantly to sadness.

“The noises as they decompress is horrifying…” She said to herself. “The sight of the bodies is worse…”

She looked around timidly to see whether anyone had heard her somber remarks. No one was really listening. A tiny restrained smile rallied on her face.

“So what are you doing now?” Julio asked Mia, breaking the silence.

Mia reached up and grabbed the mug out of the air and passed it to Petrov, ordering another drink. She shrugged.

“Kinda keeping a low profile. Doing odd jobs if you get me.” She admitted.

“For a god?” I asked, ruining my normal silence. “Seems like you could do a bit better, pardon me saying.”

Julio glared at me, either for wat I had said or because I had taken her attention off of him. Mia shrugged again.

“One day it was. One day it was just gone. The whole thing. Godhood, confidense, reason to live… the whole nine parsecs, haha. Now I'm just drifting.”

Like those bodies? I wondered…

But there was something interesting. Lost her godhood? How was that possible? And if true, why was I so sure she was still one? Not to mention what she had done to poor Carlos.

We had buried Carlos a bit away in the wilderness.

“No longer a god, but you're a real angel in my opinion.” Julios said.

Mia blushed and looked back at her drink. Then the conversation turned to other things.

A couple of months later, Mia entered the bar again. Despite doing nothing of note after Carlos, I hadn't lost my firm belief she was a god, even if the others didn't believe her.

She waved to Petrov. He grunted back. She was one of the regulars now.

She nodded to me. I nodded back, then pulled my cloak around me tighter as the air systems suddenly churned on real cold.

She smiled at Julio. He looked embarrassed for some reason.

She walked forward to Xavier and laid a hand on his back.

“What're you drinking tonight?” She had learned of Xavier's past and taunted him mercilessly about it.

“The best money can buy for my fair lady!” He said, raising a gladd of a putrid, yet very strong foreign drink.