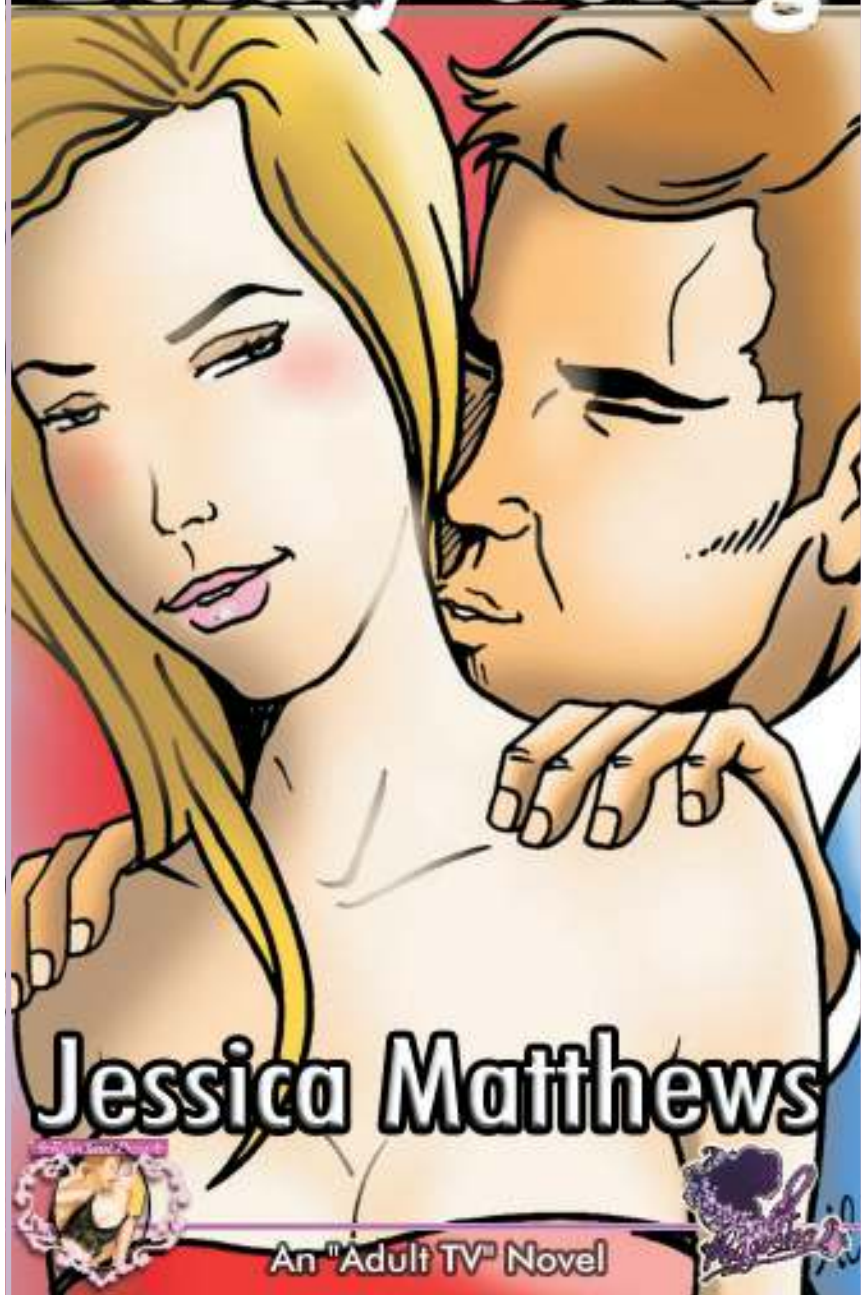


Boldly Going



Jessica Matthews

An "Adult TV" Novel



Reluctant Press TV/TS Publishers

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For information address
Reluctant Press
P.O. Box 5829
Sherman Oaks, CA 91413
USA

Call toll free (800) 359-2116

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Boldly Going

By Jessica Matthews

Camilla had never felt so nervous. This wasn't acting any more, this was for real.

Her dress was such a delightful confection of the dressmaker's art. She was slim and curvy, with breasts that he loved to see and play with. She loved his touch all the time, any time. They were good together.

It was nerve racking. She knew that the critics wouldn't hesitate to snap and snarl if she gave them the opportunity. It was hard work being the perfect girl; hard work but she loved it all.

His ring had been on the third finger of her left hand for months. Now it was on her right hand, making space for him to slip another gold band onto the first finger.

Why should this simple ceremony make her so nervous? Was it because she'd never thought of marriage as a realistic future? Was it because all her friends were watching, waiting to gasp at her dress and see her walk to the celebrant.

Not only was the celebrant standing at the front. There was another man there, the one who asked for this. The one who'd asked her to agree to a showy ceremony when she wanted it to be quiet and small.

He'd persuaded her of course; she could deny him nothing. The studio was delighted; all the pictures and publicity were something they couldn't buy.

That wasn't the reason she was here.

She was here because she'd so much love for this man and so much faith in their future together. He's helped her to be the girl she wanted to be, the woman he wanted her to be.

And in the next season she was still Captain Jeanne-Marie Pichette of the Galaxy Explorer as she visited the heavens and beyond.

Maybe this was what people meant when they said something was heaven on earth but it had taken a lot of coincidences to get there.

"Thank you all for coming to this script meeting for the sixth series of Boldly Going which we have scheduled to start rehearsals in four weeks' time."

"Is it true that the studio bosses didn't like the criticism that we don't have enough women in lead roles in Galaxy Explorer and that we don't represent modern equal opportunities properly?" a voice asked.

"You're right," Mandy replied. "I did point out that it's all fiction and that life in the fourth millennium might be different but that didn't sway them from wanting alterations. They said that we have to represent contemporary sexual mores."

"Do they even know what that means?" The question hung in the air unanswered.

Mandy Sebring, the director, looked around the room as if seeking approval before saying more. "You have some outlines in your folders. Look through them and we'll reconvene this afternoon."

"Did you tell him?" Clare Masters, the script supervisor asked as Mandy walked back to her office.

"Of course I didn't tell him." Mandy dropped her folder onto her desk. "He'll find out soon enough when he reads his folder."

She had no sooner spoken than Bart Tanner flung the door open and walked in. He was a little man with a vanity greater than his size.

“What’s the meaning of this?” He flung his folder onto the desk. “I’m Captain Jean-Paul Pichet. You can’t replace me with Jeanne-Marie Pichette; she’s a woman.”

“Calm down, Bart.” Mandy leaned back in her chair. “I do believe that about half the world is women. Why shouldn’t the Galaxy Explorer be captained by one?”

“But it’s *my* Galaxy Explorer.”

“And the producers know that but they want to show that there’s a role for women in deep space too,” Mandy spoke calmly. “I think you need to speak to your agent before you say anything you may regret.”

Bart looked at Mandy and then at Clare. “Does she know about this?”

“I think you’d better speak to her,” Mandy repeated.

Bart took a deep breath as if to say something but then hesitated, snatched up his folder and slammed the door on his way out. Deep down, he knew he couldn’t afford to upset the director.

The future for one so typecast didn’t look attractive if the series ended. He liked the life; sure it was hard during filming but the rewards in the gaps between seasons were great. He’d gotten used to them.

He liked being footloose and fancy free, even if some of his dates felt let down.

“He’s not happy.” Clare winced at the sound of the door slamming.

“If you think that went well, just wait until he’s spoken to Melody Harper.” Mandy grinned.

“She takes no prisoners.” Clare smiled back. “That’s why she only represents the best.”

“I need to speak to Melody,” Bart snapped at the receptionist, then walked to her office door.

“You can’t go in.” The receptionist stood between him and the door. “She’s on a conference call. I think it’s to your producers.”

“That’s all the more reason for me to go in now.” Bart tried to push her aside but she stood firm.

“I think it’s all the more reason why you should calm down first.” The woman pointed to the chairs arrayed at the side of the office. “I’ll tell her you’re here; I’m sure she’ll see you when she’s finished the call.”

Bart allowed himself to be calmed and sat, glowering at the door, crossing his legs and making his impatience clear.

“Bart, how lovely of you to come so quickly.” Melody’s smile when she opened her office door took him by surprise. “I’m sure you’ll be pleased by the new offer.”

“The new offer?” Bart spluttered. “They’re going to replace me with a woman. Can you believe it? They want a woman to replace me; Jean-Paul Pichet as commander of the Galaxy Explorer.”

“Do calm down; it’s fiction, not historical reality.” Melody sat at her desk. “Did you read the proposals through or did you fly off the handle after the first sentences?”

“Was there more I should know?”

“Did you read the salary increase?”

“I may not have gotten that far.”

“They’re offering to more than double what you got last year, plus a share of the franchising and repeats.”

“But they’re replacing me with a woman after Episode Five.” Bart looked puzzled.

“They’re not replacing you at all.” Melody said. “They want you *to be* the woman.”

“Did I hear you say that they want me to be the woman?” Bart said as if he didn’t understand.

“That’s why the fee’s so high.”

“But I’m not a woman,” he said.

“Well spotted; did you get an A in your biology class?”

“I can’t do it. I’d be a laughing stock.”

“But think about it. You *could* do it.” Melody said. “I thought you’d be intrigued by the offer. It’s a chance to take your acting career to another level. I can see awards on the horizon.”

“So tell me about it.” Bart sat and tried to think clearly.

“The last season was getting a little stale and there was a danger of repeating things, so the producers came up with this idea,” Melody said. “You get infected by something on a faraway planet; nobody knows what it is. Slowly over the course of the next several episodes you slowly change into your female alter-ego.”

“What makes them think I could ever do that?”

“I’ll be blunt,” Melody replied. “You’re small and skinny; you’ve always had hair over your shoulders, no facial hair, and a light voice.”

“I didn’t get a growth spurt,” Bart replied. “It’s just like I didn’t get the genes for a beard and moustache. That doesn’t mean that I could play a woman’s part.”

“They think you could,” Melody replied. “The studio would pay for whatever you needed. They see it as a great step forward for diversity and inclusion.”

“Do they want me to marry First Officer Amundsen?”

“He’s already married to that Venusian.”

“You know what I mean.”

“I do know what you mean,” Melody said. “If you don’t want to do it, find another agent.”

“I don’t want to do that.” Bart suddenly perceived the threat. “You’ve always been my friend.”

“I know that you couldn’t get another agent if you’d just thrown away the most lucrative offer of your career.”

“How lucrative is it?”

“You’d never need to work again as long as you weren’t reckless.” Melody turned her computer screen for him to see the figures.

“They really want to pay me that?”

“Yes and all the expenses on top, including the surgery, health insurance, and the off-screen wardrobe.”

“I guess I’m trapped or unemployed.” Bart didn’t like the alternatives. “What else do they want me to do?”

“They want the usual personal appearances, contractual functions, and respect for the role.”

“What does that mean?”

“It means that off duty as Captain Jeanne-Marie Pichette, you act entirely in keeping with her feminine personality at all times. It means you do all the publicity they can get for you and you do it without any criticism of the company or their sponsors.”

“Does that mean I have to appear as this... woman and pretend I’m happy?”

“That’s what they’re paying for, good publicity and lots of it. The higher the ratings, the more the network can charge for advertising slots.”

“Do they want me to grow a pair as well?” His gesture, hands waving over his chest, completed the sentence.

“As a matter of fact, you get a fantastic bonus if you do.”

“You’re enjoying telling me this.” Bart felt a chill at the thought of having breasts.

“Think of the publicity, the chat shows, the merchandising; think of all the things that could go with being an A list star.”

“But I’d have to change sex to get it all.”

“No, you’d only have to change the way you look and act,” Melody said. “No one’s asking you to have anything chopped off.”

“You’re enjoying this.” Bart slumped in his chair. “I feel trapped.”

“I’m enjoying that this could be the biggest deal of my career, and yours as well,” Melody replied. “I think you’d better take a couple of days and read through your folder. When you’ve done that, come back and see me.”

“I don’t like it.” Bart stood and went to the door.

“Come back on Friday and we’ll do lunch,” Melody noted it on her pad. “It has to be yes or no by then.”

“You look like you haven’t slept.” Melody saw the bags under Bart’s eyes when they met for lunch.

“I’ve been researching things,” he replied. “I never realised how many female impersonators there are on the web.”

“Has that helped you make a decision?” Melody asked.

“I’m not sure I want to do it though.” Bart paused as a waitress came to take their order. “Some of those girls are amazing; they’re better than girls.”

“Most of them worked it out all by themselves, without the help of a big studio.” Melody took his hand and squeezed it. “You’ve a lot to think about if you turn it down and I’d hate to lose you as a client and as a friend.”

“I think I need more time.”

“How much time do you need? The studio is pressing me for an answer. I can’t stall much longer.”

“Can you give me the weekend?”

Bart knew he’d have to agree but he didn’t want it to look like he’d been too eager. Before she could answer, they were interrupted.

“Hi Melody.” A tall blonde girl put her hand gently on Melody’s shoulder; Melody stood and they hugged. “I saw you here and I just had to stop and say hello. I hope I’m not interrupting.”

“It’s fine; we’ve done the business bit of this lunch. Why don’t you join us for a drink?”

Bart stood politely as Melody introduced him to Lara Collins.

“I’d love to.”

Lara smiled at Bart, who felt something stirring as she sat beside him, their shoulders almost touching at the small table. Her perfume made him look at her again.

“Forgive me; you must think I’m stupid,” Lara took Bart’s hand. “I recognise you now. You’re Captain Pichet. I love that series.”

“We’re discussing the next season,” Bart said. “Melody’s been telling me about the plans.”

“That’s so exciting.” Lara leaned in so that Bart could look down the neckline of her blouse. “Are you allowed to say anything or is it all secret.”

“It’s a secret,” Melody interrupted. “But I can say that Bart’s role is really exciting. It’s going to show all his skills as an actor.”

Bart looked at her; she’d guessed he’d accept. That knowing nod across the table gave it away.

“I’ll not ask anymore.” Melody smiled, showing perfect small white teeth behind her generous lips.

Bart fantasised about kissing them; feeling the softness as her lipstick smeared against his lips.

“Are you one of Melody’s clients too?” Bart asked.

“I’m one of her charity cases,” Lara replied. “She’s been really kind and got me a few gigs. I’m a singer in the bars and clubs. Sometimes I do it for the tips when I don’t have a booking but things are looking up, thanks to Melody.”

“She’s a real talent.” Melody leaned back as the waitress put plates in front of them.

“Could we have another glass please?” Melody asked. “Lara’s joining us for a drink.”

“I need your answer right now.” Melody didn’t waste time on pleasantries when she called Bart on Monday morning.

“Okay, it’s a yes,” he replied. “Goodness knows why I’m agreeing to this but you can tell them that you persuaded me.”

“I’ll be happy to do that, even though we know that it’s the biggest payday you’re ever likely to get.”

“Maybe not. I could go on the chat show circuit as the biggest chump in history.”

“It’s all what you make it.” Melody could be heard clicking through screens on her computer. “As you’ve agreed, I can give you your first appointment. They want you at Heaven’s Girl on the boulevard near the studio tomorrow morning early. They’re to sort out your new image.”

“I’ve seen the place,” he replied. “How early?”

“It says they open at seven,” Melody replied. “So you’re not allowed to go carousing this evening.”

“I’ll be there,” Bart sighed, with a growing feeling of approaching doom.

Next morning, he parked outside the place just after seven. The fascia was blank, with only the logo, and the words ‘design services’ visible. He looked for a bell to ring but ended up knocking on the opaque glass door. He heard the locks being pulled back and waited.

“You’re Bart,” The voice came from a statuesque girl, blonde and busty, dressed like a superhero in a short skirt and heels.

“I’m Bart,” he agreed, standing there waiting for her to let him in.

She looked him up and down like a man-eating tiger appraising its next meal.

“You’d better come in and we can see how attractive we can make you. You can change in there.” She pointed to a door at the side of the room. “Come out when you’ve got the robe on.”

Bart did as he was told, regretting saying he’d take the role even though he really knew that without it, he’d be washed up. He saw a pink robe hanging inside the door. He stripped and put his clothes onto the chair in the corner. He knocked on the door and stepped out, wearing only the robe.

“That’s a good boy,” the girl greeted him. “I’m Alice and you’re going to meet Judy soon. Our job today is to measure you, scan you, and work out how feminine we can make you.”

“I’m only acting,” Bart protested. “I’m not really going to be feminine off set.”

“Don’t be too sure about that.” Alice looked him up and down, holding a tablet computer and ticked off a few things. “Being a girl can get addictive. I should know, look what it did to me.”

“You mean... You’re not...,”

“Don’t be coy; there aren’t any secrets here,” Alice replied. “I wanted to have more fun than I did when I looked like a boy. Now I’m a boy who looks like a girl.”

“And is that fun?” Bart could have kicked himself for sounding so stupid.

“My girlfriends haven’t complained.” Alice grinned wickedly. “And some of the guys I’ve dated have been disappointed... but not all of them.”

Before Bart could respond, another girl appeared. She was olive-skinned with long straight dark hair which reached her waist. Her tight waist was emphasised by her jeans which hugged her hips. She wore a white gypsy top which did little to disguise her breasts.

“Are you another...” Bart started to ask.

“I’m Judy and I’m his girlfriend.” She gave him a perfunctory hug. “And yes, I’m a girl for real, before you ask.”

“I wasn’t going...,” Bart stopped as soon as he saw that she was teasing him.

“Seriously; we have to study what we can do with you.” Judy beckoned for Bart to follow her into another room. “The first thing is to get an accurate scan of you.”

Bart saw two footmarks on the floor and an array of cameras on a rotatable gimbal around the room.

“You stand there and we’ll make a computer record of your shape.” Judy walked to a keyboard on the desk at the side. “You need to take off the robe... and your shorts too.”

Bart blushed as he did as he was told. The cameras travelled around him.

“Is that it?” he asked, picking up the robe and pulling up his shorts.

“Not quite,” Judy said. “We have to take some blood and check your electrolytes. A few other tests and measurements, then the computer can make a prediction of how you’ll look.”

“You can do all that today?” Bart was amazed.

“That’s easy, Alice is a qualified medic,” Judy replied. “The computer can work the rest of it out.”

“So you’ll know what kind of woman they want me to be?”

“Not really; there are a lot of things you can choose too.”

“I can choose?” Bart was amazed again. “I thought that the production company had that all planned.”

“You have some choices,” Judy told him. “They’ve set a very generous budget and the contract you’ve signed requires that you undergo some changes, but there’s still room for you to make choices.”

“Melody didn’t spell out the changes when I signed the contract. I think I should have read it more carefully.”

“For the money we’ve heard they’re giving you, I think you’d have signed up anyway.” Alice came back into the room. “It sounds like a lot of things but it’s all reversible. They’re not changing your sex.”

“Just the sex you appear to be,” Judy added.

“I think you need to spell it out for me.” Bart had a sinking feeling that he’d let himself in for far more than he expected.

“The biggest thing is that you’re getting breasts; prepare yourself because the contract says that they have to be as natural looking as possible and noticeable so that you can’t dress to hide them.”

“What does that mean?”

“It means you’re going to be wearing a bra,” Alice said, holding her hands under her breasts. “They

want the fans to know that it's for real, not some cheap special effects done by computer."

"Does that mean I'll have to dress as a girl when I'm not in the studio?"

"I'd guess you won't have an alternative." Alice looked across the room questioningly.

"Don't worry; your breasts will be proportionate." Judy's words didn't sound reassuring. "They need you to look natural, not something out of a porn movie."

"It's a show that kids watch." Bart tried to understand what he was hearing. "I get fan mail from them."

"The producers know that," Judy said. "Our brief is that you should be attractive and normal. They're quite explicit. They want to be an example of inclusion and tolerance to the kids, and maybe some of the parents too."

"I don't feel good about this anymore than I did yesterday, and that was bad."

"You should feel proud." Judy took his hand. "You're going to be a role model to some kids who are struggling with their gender. It's not only the kids; there are adults out there who have real problems."

"But I'm not... I wasn't..." Bart tried to get his words right. "I'm not struggling with my gender."

"All the better. You'll show how comfortable you can be as an actor, despite gender."

"I'm not sure I understand." Bart hesitated. "I'm trying to make sense of this but I think I'm failing."

"Don't worry; we'll help you through the changes."

"What else is intended? You might as well tell me everything."

"As well as the breast surgery, you'll get rhinoplasty. That's a nose job to give you a girl's profile," Alice said, reading from a list. "It may include alterations to your chin or brow to present a feminine profile."

"It sounds like more than it is," Judy said. "Alice had those procedures without a problem."



Bart looked at Alice as if he was trying to see the scars. "I couldn't tell," he admitted.

"The rest is minor stuff; body waxing, nails and hair, a few piercings, and a tattoo."

"A tattoo?" Bart repeated. "I don't think so."

"It's in the contract you signed," Judy replied. "It's to be a lipstick kiss just below your waist on the left."

"Why?"

"I'm not sure but I think it's going to be a symbol for all the girls on the space ship." Judy looked through her papers. "They're going to market temporary versions for the fans."

"Great," Bart said sarcastically. "I think I need to go and lie down."

"Not yet; we have to pierce your ears today." Alice waved a piercing gun threateningly. "Don't worry, it doesn't hurt and lots of men have pierced ears anyway."

Ten minutes later and Bart had three sets of studs in each ear.

"There's a brave boy." Alice hugged him. "Don't mess with them for a couple of weeks and keep them clean."

"I never imagined this." Bart looked at each ear in the mirror.

"Imagine when they're all healed and you can change them for bigger hoops, or long drops. It's the little things that define how you're going to appear as Captain Pichette."

"I guess it doesn't matter," Bart sighed. "I know I have to do what I'm told. "It's in the contract. I shouldn't worry; I don't have a serious girlfriend to make me feel embarrassed when I get home. I'm sure she'll understand."

"You're not finished yet," Alice called from another room. "You have to be waxed before you go."

"Waxed? Isn't that what they do to your car after they've washed it?"

"Very funny. I think you know what I mean." Alice wasn't amused. "It means we get rid of every hair on

your body below your eyebrows, and even those are going to get tidied up.”

“I don’t think you need to do that,” Bart objected. “I don’t have much hair on my body.”

“We *do* need to do it. When we finish, there shouldn’t be a single hair anywhere on your body.” Alice saw his hands unconsciously cover his groin. “You won’t even have a hair down there.”

“That’s not fair; it sounds too painful.”

“You have to suffer sometimes to be beautiful.” Alice spread a sheet over a bench. “Get stripped and back here as fast as you can.”

“Don’t I get a choice?”

“Sure, we can start on your front or your back,” she said. “Now get stripped and get ready for a little pain.”

Bart did as he was told. He didn’t like it. He’d read and heard how it could hurt.

“That’s an experience I don’t want to repeat,” he said, feeling his hairless balls when it was over.

“Well, it’s usually six weeks between treatments so get used to the idea,” Alice replied. “There’s only your eyebrows to tidy and then you’re done for today.”

“Get it over with.” Bart was past resistance.

“It won’t hurt as much,” Alice said. “I’m going to tidy them, not pluck them into high thin brows; they’re not fashionable anymore.”

“I suppose I should be grateful,” Bart growled.

“Yes, you should. I’m an artist and I’ll make them beautiful.”

“That’s not too bad.” Bart looked at his thinned brows in the mirror when she’d finished. “I hope that’s it for today. I’m exhausted.”

“That’s fine, we’re done today.” Judy gave him another little hug. “I’ve got your number; I’ll call when we have something for you to look at.”