

**“Elucidation of Truth”  
A Medusa Jones Story  
Sean McLennan**

"Damn!"

Medusa Jones leapt from her desk and flew out her office door. "Get Roc on screen; we've lost another shipment," she commanded her receptionist, Cynthia.

"But Mistress, he's off-planet; he's at the UFP legal conference on Tau Alpha 4. Remember?" Medusa scowled and Cynthia immediately realized her subtle mistake of questioning her employer's abilities. No recrimination was necessary for Medusa's look of disapproval instantly caused a reaction akin to that of a child desperately trying to gain the praise of a parent.

"Well get him on subspace then. Coded channel."

Medusa returned to her office and sat down behind the desk. She idly fingered the now frayed edge of the report she had just received.

"Another shipment intercepted by Starfleet," she muttered to herself. "They're becoming more than a nuisance." She crushed the report in a tight fist. This shipment was to Prefect Oslitch, one of her best customers, and consisted of five of her top commodities. He'd have to cancel one of his "private" parties - he wouldn't be pleased.

Her intercom buzzed. "St. John Roc on subspace - coded." His face flashed on the screen.

"Damn it Roc, Starfleet got Oslitch's shipment. I thought you assured me that Admiral was in your pocket and that this shipment was clear!"

"I've just received a message from her. Apparently, "things" were getting "hairy" on her end."

"Hairy!? That's not good enough Roc. That's the third shipment this season!"

"Relax Medusa," he began. She inwardly flinched; she hated being called by her first name, even by someone as high ranking as St. John Roc. But Medusa knew exactly what

concessions would buy her the most loyalty and this one was minor. Roc continued, "It's already taken care of. They'll be transferring the shipment to Starbase Fifty Two along with our freighter and its crew in tow. I've arranged for them to run across a Pakled ship in distress - outfitted and manned by us of course. That'll be about four hours from now. The delay in delivery will only be a matter of hours."

"This had better work out. Oslitch will be annoyed enough about a delay - he'll be impossible if it's a no show."

"Don't worry Medusa, it will. Oh, and I also called in a favour at the dispatch office on Starbase Fifty Two. Aybor Siobhan will be piloting the transport vessel."

"The Deltan? I've been trying to nab him for years!"

"I know, Medusa."

She smiled. Her mood was beginning to lift.

"Alright then. Keep me posted." She ended the transmission.

Leave it to St. John Roc to turn around disaster. An opportunity to get her hands on Aybor Siobhan was worth the ass-kissing she'd have to do in order to pacify Oslitch over his delayed shipment. She smiled again despite herself and slouched back in her chair. She really was glad she discovered St. John Roc in that dusty old law school. A man who truly understood that "law" was not an absolute, but malleable - and he manipulated it with the skill of a master sculptor. Such talent would have been wasted anywhere but in her employ. She thought of the times before she acquired Roc and realized that Starfleet was much more of a problem to her back then. They may have intercepted fewer shipments, but she lost all of them. Roc managed to "re-acquire" ninety percent of those confiscated now, either through the courts or through "covert operations". And, of course, he had brilliantly orchestrated her acquittal when Starfleet arrested her, ridding her of both warrants for her arrest. "A Shadow of a Doubt" was his middle name. Starfleet hadn't been able to make any charges stick since then, either.

Medusa ran her hands through her shoulder length hair, lightly touching her short horns.

"Time for a trim," she thought idly. Her hair was very distinctive - each one being about half a centimeter in diameter. She always wore it down, often three hairs braided here and there, sometimes with feathers or beads. Her horns, she always kept slightly sharp and painted stylishly in metallic colours. She was very proud of her horns; they were perfectly proportioned and shaped. They were her most unique feature, next to her hair. Physical feature anyway.

Medusa stood and walked out the door.

"Is everything under control, Mistress?" asked Cynthia.

"Yes. Mr. Roc has reaffirmed my faith in his abilities.

We'll also be expecting two, possibly three, new commodities tonight; all Starfleet officers. Mr. Roc will be bringing them in. Please ensure that appropriate quarters and clothing will be prepared - Mr. Roc will likely send you their dimensions while en route. And inform Dr. Kleas of their arrival, I want him to see them as soon as possible."

"Anything else, Mistress?"

"As a matter of fact, yes. One of those Starfleet Officers is Aybor Siobhan."

"Oh, Mistress! Finally! I'm so pleased!"

"On second thought, I want to see Aybor before Dr. Kleas performs his duties. Have him held until tomorrow - I'll see him then."

"Yes, Mistress."

"And if Mr. Roc calls back for me, let him know that I'll be at home."

"Yes, Mistress."

"That's it, Cynthia. I'll see you tomorrow."

"Tomorrow, Mistress. Good luck on your showing tonight."

"Thank you, Cynthia." Medusa stepped into the turbo lift, called, "Main," and travelled the two hundred and forty stories up to the lobby of the head offices of the "Medusa Jones Emporium of Exotic and Erotic Biological Commodities".

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Medusa sauntered through the open front door of her house. It closed behind her revealing a serving man clad in black tights and tails, wielding the massive door that would be impossible to move if it hadn't been counterweighted properly. He said nothing, and resumed an "at ease" position next to the door. Medusa kicked off her shoes which were quickly pulled into the closet by an outreaching tentacle and stepped past the relatively small entry way. The room widened out revealing itself to be a perfect square made of white marble. A red carpet stretched from the door, across the room, through the archway at the other end and up the barely visible stairs. The walls were angled imperceptibly inward, stretching a dizzying 100 meters to the apex. They were white marble except for the final 10 meters that were flawless crystal, forming the pyramidal roof of what, from the outside, was a majestic obelisk. The crystal all but absorbed the sun's rays, lighting up the interior.

A massive white marble fireplace, intricately carved, loomed on the wall to her left, in front of which sat two enormous white couches, bracketing a crystal table. To her right stood several life-size sculptures of bisque and crystal. The room was pristine and white, and light continually created moving patterns over the marble surfaces. Not even rainbows intruded upon the purity of the room as the crystal top was specially constructed not to refract the white light. She never ceased being amazed by the sight this room that she privately named "Purity". She mused at how different it would look tonight during the "showing" when it would be lit with the silvery-blue moonlight cast from the planet's abnormally bright moon. And of course open braziers would be lit at the four corners, making up for the additional lack of light and creating a pleasing contrast of illumination. The couches, table, and sculptures would be gone in order to make room for the runway and chairs. Ten meter banners would adorn the walls on either side of the two entries to the room and silver threads would be hung from far above - numbering only enough to be perceptible.

Medusa awoke from her reverie and saw a green figure

sprawled across one of the couches. He jumped up at the sight of her and quickly crossed to greet her. He was an Orion (or at least that was the part of his ancestry apparent from his appearance) of average height and slightly above average build. He had startlingly green eyes, unruly, short, black hair, and wore only a pair of ripped, black, acid-wash jeans, topped by a harness of chain.

"Mistress, you're home early. I trust everything is well."

Medusa sighed and responded, "That remains to be seen, but I have faith that the situation will amend itself with a little help from Mr. Roc. In fact, Aybor Siobhan may soon be among our ... family if all goes according to plan."

The Orion's eyes flashed as he inclined his head slightly to peer playfully through his bangs at his Mistress. "Well that is good news! Finally there'll be someone around here with a little stamina."

"Ah-uh, Number One. I won't let you wear him out before I've even seen him. Besides you should be threatened that there'll be some new, stiff, competition." She had adopted the nickname in mockery to Starfleet and because the Orion refused to go by any name. It seemed to fit him in many ways - he was her first commodity, her number one selling commodity and well... it fit him in many ways.

"That'll only serve to keep me on my toes, Mistress. Come sit down a moment and relax. You've a long evening ahead of you and only a couple of hours to rest." They moved towards the couches. As they sat, a servant appeared and placed a drink on the table before Medusa. She leaned back, allowing the over-stuffed cushions to envelope her and gazed at the miracles of light dancing above.

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Medusa waited at the transporter pad that would place her before the podium in the center of the runway. She liked to make an entrance. She would only make her opening remarks and greetings and would then watch the proceedings from her observation room - a room equipped with a multitude of

sensors and surveillance equipment. She never conducted showings herself and only ever made appearances at these special ones held in her own home. She preferred to distance herself from the public, to maintain her enigmatic presence.

The guests this evening were all of high status and even higher incomes. Of course this meant they also had the most to lose if their names were to be linked to the Emporium and hence, each surrounded themselves with a complex web of aliases, messengers, and Subspace Mail Centers. Some even went so far as to alter their appearances for the evening. None believed that the Emporium knew their true identities, and none were correct; Medusa would never allow a stranger to enter her home. As yet, no one's mask had stood up to the scrutiny of the Emporium's extremely efficient "Customer Investigation Department" and in fact ninety percent of the time, the CID discovered considerably more about the customer than their identity. Medusa Jones was living proof that "knowledge is power."

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"... and thus begins this showing of the Emporium's best. Remember; the Medusa Jones Emporium of Exotic and Erotic Biological Commodities is about desire and ecstasy and tonight you will glimpse the possibilities. Succumb to your own desires and make us a part of your life." Medusa and the podium were transported back to the pad as the music and light show jumped into action. She felt good about this showing - it would be a profitable one.

A serving man approached as she stepped down, "This arrived during your greeting, Mistress." He handed her a sheet a paper. A quick glance told her it was from St. John Roc and she tore through it.

"Attention: M.J.

From: S.R.

Products resecured and delivered. Customer

not even aware of delay. 3 new products obtained including one previously spoken of. Will return before morning."

Medusa assumed from his vagueness that Roc was not transmitting from a secure location. She wondered why. Oh well, the message was clear enough; she had Siobhan! She sat down in front of a screen displaying the stage and the Gicolian slave "on the block". She looked at the indicator to the left of the screen and it showed that the bidding was already into the tens of thousands of credits and still going strongly. And he was only the first slave. Oh this was going to be some night!

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St. John Roc waited for the shuttle to complete the landing procedure at the Emporium complex and felt relieved that he finally had a moment to reflect on recent events. He spent a great deal of time analysing situations, past and present, trying to account for every factor, every individual motivation and reenacting them in his mind, subtly manipulating his influences to improve the outcome. Often, he was likened to a Vulcan in his pursuit of logical thought and his unemotional exterior, but they were incorrect. He was a deeply passionate being - but a being with control. And such analysis was what enabled him to hone his skills enough to orchestrate such complex schemes as the one he had just flawlessly executed. The incident had completely been turned around working out positively for both him and the Emporium. Not only had the Emporium successfully completed the shipment, they also obtained three more high-demand commodities. The Admiral that was supposedly in his pocket was now even more in his debt because of her failure. He had once again proved his ability to outwit the annoyingly competent minds of Starfleet consequently emphasizing his usefulness to Medusa and strengthening her loyalty to *him*.

That turned him to a familiar train of thought; the origins of his own loyalty to Medusa Jones. He had long ago

concluded, and correctly so, that he was not under any artificial control of Medusa's, indeed nor was any member of the Emporium that she had personally recruited. So what exactly was it about Medusa Jones that had such a charismatic effect on every being that she came in contact with? Medusa certainly had a superior ability to determine the desires, motivations, and mind set of any being - an ability that bordered on telepathic but Roc had never been able to confirm that suspicion. And, it seemed to him, she had a unique ability to present her position in such a way as to make her point of view the most logical and most desirable. She often converted many of the toughest commodities to the goals of the Emporium herself and she seemed to take great pleasure in using her abilities to do so. He thought of Aybor Siobhan and wondered if he would be her match.

But, he thought, seemingly telepathic powers aren't enough to account for her ability. There was still another aspect to Medusa Jones that eluded his analysis. A nefarious "Je ne sais quoi" that simply drew beings to her and made them want to devote their lives to her goals and find ultimate fulfilment in their successful completion. As if on cue, at that familiar thought, St. John Roc's sub-conscious screamed "cult" and "brainwashing" and he reexamined the characteristics of cults and compared them to the Emporium. As usual he could find no similarities; where he expected to find deception and unfounded faith he found sincerity, logical conclusion, and truth. Could it be that Medusa Jones was what most cult leaders claim to be? The ultimate leader, and the answer to universal harmony? He felt confident that given time, be it hundreds of years if necessary, he would ferret out the secrets of Medusa Jones and completely understand them.

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Medusa headed towards her bed from her private bath adjoined to her bedroom. She had changed into her nightgown, a shimmering silk that seemed to be of liquid mother of pearl. It was held over her shoulders by two delicate ties and fell all the way to the floor. It was loose fitting but it

was tailored in such a way as to cling in all the right places and to clearly accentuate her perfect figure. She appeared to be floating and indeed her spirit was... the showing had been one of her most profitable yet and to hear Aybor Siobhan was in her hands at last, made her positively euphoric.

The bedroom itself was about half the size of "Purity" and the ceiling was only ten metres high. The walls were covered with a sandstone block facing and there were great sandstone pillars placed appropriately through out, all carved with Egyptian-like hieroglyphs giving the room the atmosphere of a tomb buried deep within one of the Great Pyramids on Earth.

A small tone sounded in the room and she stopped, momentarily taken aback that someone had just arrived in the private transport room adjoining the far wall. She changed direction, walking past the bed and to the center of the seemingly solid wall, thinking, "Of course. It must be Roc coming to make a report." She deftly touched a complex series of hieroglyphs to remove the holo-produced portion of the wall and discovered that she was correct. The transport "room", if it could be called that, was tiny - large enough only house to the pad and provide enough elbow room to prevent claustrophobia. It was, of course, an extremely well kept secret; not even many of the house staff were aware of it or the others placed strategically around Medusa's home, and none but Medusa knew the location of them all. There were more placed in various locales around the planet. St. John Roc was privileged to know most of them and to be one of the very few entrusted with the ability to use them. They were convenient for these little rendezvous' (for although such secrecy was not really necessary, Medusa liked to keep her house staff at least partially unaware of her business) and Medusa was *not* one to allow herself to be trapped. After all, you're only paranoid if everyone *isn't* out to get you.

St. John Roc calmly stepped out of the cubicle, although he didn't feel the least bit calm. The sight of Medusa clad in such a way, without her usual regalia, never failed to quicken his pulse and left him a little agape. However, being better

than average at body control, he was careful that these sudden stirs of libido never revealed themselves in his speech or manner and was, so far, successful.

He came right to the point and said bluntly, "Our 'Pakled' freighter was successful at deceiving the transport and the mission was successful. We now have three new acquisitions including Aybor Siobhan, all of whom are believed to be dead - we changed all records of the encounter to make it seem that they were the victims of a sudden warp core breach and then induced one. Of course, an appropriate sampling of genetic material was replicated and dispersed to confirm their deaths.

"Prefect Oslitch was away at some "beauty retreat" preparing for his party. His head organizer was understandably distraught but has no intentions of informing Oslitch of the delay. Dr. Kleas is currently working on Siobhan's companions and Siobhan has been assigned secure quarters and been given a sedative. He can be aroused at your convenience."

"You are thoroughly amazing St. John Roc. I couldn't be more pleased." Medusa looked directly into his eyes playfully using her abilities to try and compromise his resolve. She was impressed with his ability to withstand the chilling gaze that made those with less control feel as if like something very nasty was crawling into their bed. Every once in a while, she tested him with it and had yet to receive the response she looked for - the one she received from Cynthia that afternoon. She broke off her gaze and casually smiled, allowing a glint of affection show in her eyes - not attraction, but more the affection a child shows a new toy that has done something particularly delightful. As she seductively turned away (another test) she cordially said, "Thank you St. John, I'll see Aybor in the morning. You're dismissed."

"Medusa..."

"Yes?" She did not completely turn around - she only turned her head, dropping her shoulder slightly and rotating her torso.

"I know that you like a challenge and Aybor Siobhan

would be your greatest yet, but I think you may have met your match with him. I feel that he has the potential to be extremely dangerous if not properly persuaded."

"Thank you for your concern Mr. Roc. I enjoy a challenge, yes, but I'm not foolish. I know when to relent. Is there anything else?"

"No Medusa."

"Then goodnight St. John." He stepped back through the break in the wall, and it suddenly became whole.

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Aybor Siobhan lay quietly dozing on the bed in his rather luxurious quarters in the Emporium complex. Medusa Jones never compromised the comfort of her commodities; it reduced quality. Medusa herself sat serenely at his bedside, patiently waiting for him to wake. He lay mostly covered by the bed sheets, but the portion of his chest and arms that were visible pleased Medusa a great deal. It was as if "Millions" was tattooed across his hairless body. Of course, Medusa wasn't without a libido herself - in fact she prided herself on her skill and Aybor Siobhan provided an almost irresistible attraction. But this was business, and Medusa "never mixed business with pleasure" despite the fact her "business" was pleasure.

His eyes opened and he stared at the ceiling. It took him a moment to realize that the fixtures above him were not his own and when he did, it did not alarm him and he continued to gaze at the ceiling, trying to remember the past twenty-four hours. Medusa spoke.

"Did you dream." He started and turned at the sound of her voice.

"As a matter of fact I did," he replied nonchalantly. He knew at once this was not the usual occurrence of his waking up in a strange place; he did not know this woman and despite her seeming warmth, he could feel that she had something to hide. From personal experience he knew it was seldom helpful to allow an adversary see your alarm.

"Only pleasant ones I hope."

He yawned and stretched and replied, "Of course, I don't allow bad dreams to dictate the quality of my sleep." The action of stretching made him realize he was naked under the sheets of the bed. He thought, "If this is some way of trying to gain an advantage by intimidation, you don't know much about Deltans lady." He stared at her unabashedly for a moment, taking in her distinctive features and then continued.

"Would you mind telling me who you are and where I am?"

"Not at all. My name is Medusa Jones and you are currently in your quarters in my establishment." He was unable to hide his shock at that revelation, especially because of her blunt manner. But knowing who she was, he knew that deep within her territory, escape was an unlikely possibility and so he quickly regained his composure.

"I don't suppose that I need to introduce myself, and I can guess why I'm here."

"No, Aybor, you don't. And I think that your perception of your presence here is a little coloured by your past career. No one stays with the Emporium against their will - unwilling commodities are too difficult to manage and I don't have the patience for it."

"Then I would like to state right off that I *am* here against my will and I would like to be returned to Starfleet immediately."

"Now, now Aybor, you needn't be in such a rush. Let me just tell you a little about the Emporium and what we do here." Medusa began to detail her life, her goals, and a life of creating pleasure for others was the noblest and most fulfilling of all. Aybor Siobhan, despite his Starfleet training, was quickly enraptured by this enigma that sat beside him - whom he had never before met, but who seemed to know him so well.

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St. John Roc, was waiting outside her office when

Medusa finally returned.

"Well?" he asked the moment she was within conversational range.

"Your fears proved to be unfounded, Mr. Roc. Aybor Siobhan is now a willing and devoted member of the Emporium."

"But... how?" Despite what he had seen her accomplish in the past, she never ceased to surprise him with every new triumph.

"Very simply, St. John, I just elucidate the truth and the alternatives. People find themselves more generous than they realize and believe that a life of giving to and pleasing other beings is the only truly satisfying life. Certainly more so than living within a restrictive, cut-throat, hierarchy like Starfleet."

"There must be more to it than that."

"Well, it must be presented in a certain way... I can't very well reveal *all* my secrets can I? Even to you."

"If it's so simple, then, why do we employ the services of Dr. Kleas?"

She smiled. "That's just for the sake of efficiency. Most of our commodities are not affected adversely by Dr. Kleas' procedure and it is quick and inexpensive. But with someone like Aybor, the procedure would remove something that would irreparably damage his appeal. So that's when I take a little more time to ensure quality. I'm a busy being, St. John. I can't afford to use my skills on every commodity." She smiled again and casually sauntered by him into her office. St. John, resigned, shook his head and walked away. He began to analyse again as he walked and suddenly felt he had placed another piece of the "Medusa Jones" puzzle together. He would never doubt her abilities again. It was moments like this that made him confident that he had not made a mistake in his choice of career or employer.