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Sheltered and innocent, Meriel is forced to mate with the virile alien captive her mother has chosen for her, but she is surprised to find Gage Bardwin tender, gentle, and caring.

Firestar Details

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Author : Kathleen Morgan

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Mary says

I have this really terrible habit. I keep buying romance novels based on how terrible the covers are. In my mind I envision this great hipster moment of snarking on something bad and having a great time. But in reality I just end up being incredibly pissed off. This was one of the latter circumstances.

FireStar by Kathleen Morgan was published in 1993 by "Love Spell" an imprint of Dorchester Publishing. Which is no longer in business. It reads like 1993. This book is part of the line of "Futuristic Romance" and it falls in with nearly every Romance and Sci-Fi cliché. The two leads are Meriel, the princess and heir to the Tenuan throne, and Gage Bardwin, who is a cynical bounty hunter, or as I like to call him, crappy Han Solo. In the Prologue the King of the "system of planets known as the Imperium" assigns crappy Han to a job doing some reconnaissance on Tenua. The king says of Han "He's nothing more than an unprincipled renegade who lives at the edge of the law." I knew I was in for a treat after that line on the second page. Morgan has basically laid out that Han is a man who [insert movie voice] plays by his own rules. He is just an amalgam of every anti-hero common in space operas. Anyway, crappy Han is a crappy bounty hunter because he lands on this planet and is almost immediately captured by a slaver. He is sold to the Queen and her daughter, our Princess Meriel. It turns out that the sun orbiting Tenua is dying, and that has made the men impotent. Don't ask. It's stupid. Anyway, Meriel and Crappy Han have a super sexxxy night of baby-making in a hot spring (as pictured on the side of a van . . . I mean the cover). They totally have a romantic connection because they're the two leads and they're supposed to. Meriel's mom is a super bitch though and conspires to keep them apart. She tells Meriel that Crappy Han came onto her, so Meriel flees to her fiancé. Then she tells Crappy Han that Meriel went to her fiancé and oh yeah I watched your whole performance on a camera so you should bone me too. He takes off. This scene starts unraveling Crappy Han's massive mistrust of women. I really don't understand how he can be attracted to us, he spends most of the book complaining about our deceitful arts.

All this is to set up the drama of the book, they run into each other years later and they're both mad at each other plus there is this rando kid. I actually really like this trope. I know it's bad, and melodramatic, but I really enjoy reading it most of the time, but this was just annoying. Tenua has been conquered by the Imperium and Crappy Han is leading the conquest. It really reads as kinda rapey. He takes control over this planet, partly to exact this weird power revenge over his ex-lover. This is the part of the story were we get to meet Princess Meriel, who loves her people, and loves her husband, and her son. But she's fucking dumb. She's also a really annoying wet blanket.

The two things that were really terrible about this book were how awful the two leads were and how heavy handed Morgan is with her symbolism/character development. Jaded Crappy Han has to conquer her home planet in order to get back at her? Meriel has a husband who is really just like her best friend. He is devoted to her and to her son. He is literally impotent to spell out how non-threatening he is but we have to have a character for Crappy Han to rage against. He is an Alpha Male in all the worst ways. He is controlling, manipulative and distrustful of women. He's constantly misconstruing Princess Wet Blanket's intentions. He has to get into a pissing contest with Meriel's husband when it's not necessary at all. See how terrible Han is? Remember his issues with women? It's because of his mother. I'm not even making this up. Morgan lays out this terrible tale about how Crappy Han's mother cheated on his father, and his father is actually one of the guards from his home planet. He angst all over the place about how he has no place and is a dishonest man because his mom was a lying whore. He projects this all over Princess Wet Blanket. Every time there is a misunderstanding between the two it circles back to his mother.

Oh and the misunderstandings! Princess Wet Blanket is fucking so stupid. I just wanted to reach into the book and shake her. Part of the reason the Imperium has to conquer Tenua is because some evil alien race has been trying to conquer them. I don't even want to look up what their name is, but they are just like the

brain slugs in Futurama. They take over a person's body and control them. The brain slugs spend most of the book manipulating Princess Wet Blanket into doing things to make Crappy Han distrust her. There is no suspense because Morgan explains exactly what's going on. The reader knows that Princess Wet Blanket is being manipulated, and we know what the brain slugs are up to because we have a bunch of scenes expositing their plans. Ugh. I'm getting angry again just thinking about it.

I couldn't believe how genuinely terrible all these people are. I wanted the brain slugs to win just so I could read about two new characters. I'm going to spoil the ending right now, in the end Han and Wet get captured and he gets a brain slug, she doesn't. But she can save him, with the POWER OF LURRRRRVE!!! Ugh. Her magic love allows him to gain control again of his mind again, but she has to stay in the room with him; which he complains about nonstop because he doesn't like being dependent on a woman. Seriously, he's the worst.

This book just wrapped up everything that is bad about romance and sci-fi in one neat package. Totally unlikeable characters making terrible choices, a romance that felt as if it was going through the motions just as much as characters, completely ridiculous bad guys. It was so awful. Not only that but it was super long! She could have cut so much out of it. I can't believe I finished it. It was so awful.

I give it 0 out of 5 brain slugs.
