

INT. SPACESHIP - MAL'S ROOM

Mal enters his room from the walkway above, idly unbuttoning his shirt as he walks farther into the room.

MAL
(startled)
Hey!

Camera pans left to reveal an obviously naked Saffron in Mal's bed, covered only by a sheet.

MAL
You're, uh... uh... well, there you are.

SAFFRON
I've made the bed warm for you.

MAL
It looks, uh, warm.

SAFFRON
And I've made myself ready for you.

MAL
Let's ride right past the part where you explain exactly what that means. Didn't you see you got a room of your own?

SAFFRON
And I'm to sleep there?

MAL
That's the notion. Assuming you're... yeah. Sleepy.

SAFFRON
But we've been wed. Aren't we to become one flesh?

MAL
Well, no, uh... We're still two fleshes here, and I think that your flesh ought to sleep somewhere else.

SAFFRON
I'm sorry. When we talked I'd hoped, but I don't --
(moves to stand)

MAL
Whoa, hey! Flesh...
(beat)
Listen, Saffron... it ain't a question of pleasing me. It's more a question of what's, um, of what's morally right.

SAFFRON
I do know my bible, sir.
(beat)
On the night of their betrothal the wife shall open to the man as the furrow to the plow. He shall work in her again and again, til she bring him to his full. And rest him then upon the sweat of her breast.

MAL
Whoa. Good bible.

SAFFRON
I'm not skilled, sir. Nor a pleasure to look upon --

MAL

Saffron, you're pleasing.

(sits down)

You're... yep, you're all kinds of pleasing, and uh, it's-it's been a while -- a long damn while -- since anybody but me took ahold of my plow, so don't think for a second that I ain't interested. But you and me, we ain't married. Just 'cause you got handed to me by some asshole who couldn't pay off his debts don't make you beholden to me. I keep trying to explain --

SAFFRON

Let me explain. I lived my life in the maiden house waiting to be married off for trade. I seen my sisteren paired off with ugly men. Vicious or blubberous. Men with appetites too unseemly to speak on. And I've cried for those girls. But not half so hard as I cried the night they gave me to you.

MAL

(worried)

Why? Is there blubber?

SAFFRON

I cried for I'd not dreamed to have a man so sweet. So kind and beautiful. Had I to dare to choose, I'd choose you from all the planets the night sky could show me. I'm a woman, I'll take you. I want this. I swell to think of you in me. And I see that you do, too.

MAL

Oh. That's-that's just, um --

SAFFRON

Leave me at the nearest port. Never look upon me again. I'll make my way with the strength that you've taught me. Only let me have my wedding night.

MAL

Oh, I'm gonna go to the special hell.

They kiss. Mal pulls back reluctantly.

MAL

I-I really, really wish it was that simple, but I...

Saffron pulls him back into the kiss, hotter than before. Suddenly Mal pushes back from Saffron, looking dazed. He looks at his hand awkwardly.

MAL

Son of a...

Mal falls heavily to the floor, drugged to the gills.

SAFFRON

Night, sweetie.