

FANTASY BAR

By Trista Ann Michaels

Ellora's Cave, 2005

Reviewed by :: Crystal Jemond

An erotica E-book

At Fantasy Bar, Klindor's most popular nightspot, all the drinks on the menu are named after sexual fantasies and customers get exactly what they order from the barmaid of their choice. No one knows that Professor Kiranda Vordak owns half-interest in this risqué business or that her alter-ego, Kira, enjoys the exhibitionist sex played out in Fantasy Bar.

Kira spends two days at the mercy of a kidnapper who abuses her for his pleasure. Only after she frees herself and kills her tormenter in self-defense does she realize his identity – Micas Lordakin, the Planetary Senate's regent-elect. Uncertain she can find justice on Meenus Prime and knowing any trial would ruin her hard-won reputation, Kira flees to the one safe place she knows – Fantasy Bar.

Investigator Jerrod Scollin arrives home from a trip to Earth only to find his new assignment is investigating the murder of a prominent politician – and his best friend. It appears Micas had some truly sickening tastes in the bedroom, but Jerrod must discover what really happened that night. His search for Micas' mysterious companion leads him to the hedonistic planet of Klindor and a sexy bartender named Kira.

She fascinates him from the moment they meet and he can't help but wonder if *she's* on the menu at Fantasy Bar. Jerrod doesn't know what's happening between them, but his instincts tell him she has secrets. When Kira finds out what brought her hot new lover to Klindor, she knows she needs to get off the planet, fast. She doesn't trust anyone to believe her about Micas, especially not his closest friend. However, Jerrod isn't about to let her escape him that easily.

Ms. Michaels has a nicely developed romance between the main characters, but readers might question the heroine's ability to leap into bed with a man she barely knows only a few days after escaping a sexually-warped kidnapper. Although *Fantasy Bar* is set at an unspecified date in the future, the author's occasional use of 21st century phrases might make the reader have trouble holding onto their suspended reality.

Overall, the author presents a unique story and a sympathetic hero and heroine. Steamy sex and a suspenseful interplanetary chase keep this tightly-constructed novella at warp-speed. Happily, the end holds a few surprising twists for the reader to enjoy. A very fine effort from Ms. Michaels, *Fantasy Bar* is a quick and absorbing read.

4 ½ Kisses