



Robster's  
HOME

EVER LILAC

# Mobster's Home

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# 1.

*Luna*

It's a big world out there and I'm supposed to be a big girl, yet I feel like bursting into tears as I hop onto the metro. People shove at me left and right, trying to get ahead and I wonder what happened to basic decency when a man nearly knocks down a stroller in his eagerness to get a seat.

Did someone squeeze humanity out of everyone when we weren't looking and now it's all about dog eat dog? Popping down on a seat, I wrap my coat tighter around me and drag an annoyed breath. This is a fifteen minute ride home but I want it to go on forever. I don't want to go home, I'm cold when I'm at home, the radiators are not working properly and there's a leak in the ceiling that my landlord claims I'm solely responsible for. I have no idea how the heck I'm supposed to have caused it but reasoning with him is useless.

I do not look forward to my cold, hard bed especially not after a long day like this one. While I am lucky to have a wonderful job, I still wish I could be fortunate enough to move out of my dump. For a while I had a roommate but he kept leaving crumbs everywhere and refused to pay half his rent, so that experiment ended in a disaster. He didn't make much of a fuss when I asked him to leave but what he did do was rob me of all my savings. I'm not sure how but somehow he found out the PIN to my credit card and went full on reverse Robin Hood, to my detriment.

I'd intended to use those savings to get a better place but now I'm back on square one again and I sigh to soothe the overwhelm. They say things always work out in the end and I just have to believe it and think positively. I rub my hands together for some warmth since its always chilly sitting on these plastic seats, and I shiver when cold air blows over my knees when the doors open again.

A stream of new people enter, senior citizens snacking on hard bonbons, a group of rambunctious teens, Wall Street brokers as well as two men that ruthlessly tower over everyone else. They catch my attention, probably without even meaning to and I squirm in my seat at the sight of them, my heart thrashing when I get a look at the profile of the taller one. He seems to be deep in thought, brows aggressively curving over eyes resembling the northern lights. His lashes are inky, cheekbones high and cold in an arrogant way, his undercut hair

a mixture of silver blond and black and it's the only thing on him that looks touchable.

He's too harsh otherwise, sharper than the edge of a midlevel weapon and he has to be the kind of man that cuts people in two with just a look. Power emits from his persona and it's as if I can smell darkness on him but instead of screaming at me to run the other way, it urges me to come closer. My skin suddenly begins feeling itchy, my throat dry and I'm not the only one who has reacted to the man. The whole metro can *feel* him, people clutching their purses tighter to their chests while throwing nervous glances at each other.

The man's made an impression on everyone and it's not necessarily a good one. It feels as if something's about to go down and I gulp, trying to think *happy thoughts, happy thoughts*...Here I was working hard to be positive, yet this is what I attracted; a male who looks like his heart is black instead of red. The lights flicker as the men push their way down and it only adds to their ferocity, causing people to make themselves as small as possible to not get noticed. My pulse races as the two men prowl over to a slouching male sitting opposite me, two seats to the left and they sort of surround him.

“Hello John boy,” the tall man purrs, baring his teeth and he looks down at him while his partner clenches his fists. The man called John looks about ten times more panicky than the rest of us, his face pale, his lips the same color as chalk.

“You’re coming with us at the next stop,” the tall, Viking looking one continues. “We have business we need to take care of, remember?”

John nods frantically, biting into his lip and I let out a squeak when he draws blood. The silver haired man throws an annoyed look over his shoulder that quickly morphs into something else. I lose my breath when our eyes meet and I don’t know if he wants to kill me or do other things to me that are just as physical but not as violent.

I sharply avert my gaze, pretending we didn’t just stare at each other for what had to have been at least thirty seconds while my blood keeps running hot and cold. I glance at the other passengers, registering their uneasiness and I can just tell these two men have bad intentions.

Trembling, I throw a distressed peek at the tall man who’s still watching me with a perplexed look in his eyes as if he’s fallen into a trance. I wonder if he’s mad at me and if he’s going to deal with me right after John.

We come to a stop again and I quit breathing. John tenses when he’s grabbed around the upper arm and the other man says, “Derex?”

That's his name then. *DereX*. I get the strangest, non-self-preserving impulse to taste his name on my tongue but then the man shakes his head. "You two go, I'm staying right here."

He's not getting off and I don't know whether I'm thrilled or terrified. My mind's trying to warn me that this isn't the safest situation but I feel dreamily numb around him, as if I'm about to throw myself into the abyss, only to find out the abyss will always catch me.

Whoever the dangerous man is, something deep inside of him is calling out to something deep inside of me and he wants me to answer his demand. There's an eruption in my chest and I'm drawn to him like a magnet. A flush rises on my face and he notices, his nostrils flaring and it's as if he's just scented me.

I cross my legs when I feel a sharp flicker of arousal. This man...as intimidating and full of menace as he is, I know there's no going back after this. I have caught his attention and I think I'm...wanted.

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*DereX*

I've been jabbed in the heart and the darkness is bleeding out, no longer as determined for me to be its master. All this time,



I've been slumbering but now I am awakened. I know who's responsible for this new sensation: The girl sitting on her seat with her legs crossed and an anxious look on her face. Her eyes are green as moss, her hair the color of ripe apricots and it falls down her shoulders in a way that makes me want to wrap my hand around the strands a couple of times and tug... hear that surprised little gasp and feel reborn in its innocence. In the mob, we all seek for a white queen to our dark king and I think I just found mine.

"Derex...", my colleague Hertz says and I raise my brow as my attention's brutally pulled away from the girl. I don't like it and I don't want to think about work right now. There are more important things to take care of.

"I'm not coming," I whisper and he grimaces, yanking John out of his seat and I cup Hertz around the neck, throwing him what I hope looks like a smile. "Careful now. There's a girl watching us and I don't want her thinking I'm a bad guy and get scared."

"Good luck," Hertz drawls and my grip hardens. "You are a bad guy."

"Yeah but I don't want her knowing that, you idiot. You will walk out of here with John. Deal with this on your own and while you do I want you smiling as if you're about to take a walk in the park," I add and Hertz looks like he has a curse on

his tongue but he knows better than to get on my bad side. He nods, now holding onto John in a way that's less aggressive and they walk away.

“See ya,” I call, ginning and raising my hand in a wave, “football game at my place next week. John, once you get your act together, you bring the beer.”

John's ready to faint but Hertz nods and smiles but fuck why does he have to look like a shark when he smiles? It seems to work though, because everyone breathes out, buying our bad acting. My eyes immediately go to the girl and she watches me as if stunned but at least the panicky look on her face is gone. I sit down opposite her and suddenly she regards me differently, there's some curiosity in her now and she's got that look a child has when not knowing whether an animal is friendly or not but they're prepared to find out. Redness crawls from her throat up to her face and she lets out a gasp, looking away and I wish she hadn't done that.

I feel drawn to her and I'm desperate to know if she feels the same. It's obvious she's not the kind of girl who goes for men like me. There are no tangles in her princess hair, barely any makeup on her porcelain features and she's dressed in a floor length floral skirt, a knitted cardigan and a thin coat.

I'm not sure how I feel about all that wholesomeness. Girls like her go for tender males that don't even know how to give

a good, stiff fuck without coming immediately. Girls like her like men who are ballerinas, or bakers or librarians and they're less into towering murderers from the north. Using sheer willpower, I try to get her to look at me and I flash a smile when she finally does.

The girl cowers, her eyes widening and she lets out a low whimper. Wondering what's gotten into her, I catch my own reflection in the window behind her and now I know what the problem is. If Hertz looks like a shark when he smiles then I look like the megalodon. My smile dies and the girl relaxes, her eyes going to my hands that killed only a couple of hours ago, but the redness on her face increases and she bites her lip as if she just thought of something shameful. I'm madly intrigued and I'd sell my own kidney for some insight into the thoughts in her head.

"Hello," I murmur and her jaw slacks as if I just yelled in her face but then she points at herself.

"You're talking to me?"

As if I'd be interested in talking to anyone else and I nod. "What's your name?" I say in a low voice and she licks her lips in a slow way that's insanely sensual and she probably has no idea what it does to a man.

“Luna.”

Fuck, that’s a sexy name. “What do you do for a living, Luna,” I say in a friendly tone, the kind I imagine she’d be more comfortable with and it seems to work because her shoulders ease and she gets a soft look in her eyes.

“I’m a kindergarten teacher.”

Nice answer. Her job pleases me because it probably means there are no men around. It would be very uncomfortable for everyone involved if she’d said something like cop or surgeon, where she has to get changed in the same dressing room as other males. Other men are a threat and I’m willing to fight my ass off for this girl.

“What do you do?” she asks and I reply without hesitating,

“I’m a bounty hunter.”

The relief in her eyes almost shames me but the snigger she lets out afterward, goes straight to my groin. “Bounty hunter, of course. I feel so silly now.” She shakes her head, causing a snowfall around her face and for a moment my whole world goes quiet in awe. “It was nice meeting you.” Grabbing her purse, she adds, “This is my stop.”

She rises before we're at standstill and loses her balance, falling straight into my lap. I hiss, my heart pounding like a maniac in my chest and she looks up at me with eyes that want something a little bit brutal but are too hesitant to ask. "Thanks for catching me," she breathes and she doesn't immediately get up or throw herself off of me.

Instead, she stays in my arms, gentle as a whisper against my hardness and the armor around my heart cracks little by little with each of her breaths. My eyes bore into hers and I need her to keep clinging to me like this until there's nothing left of me to cling to.

It's not until she squirms that I realize the reason she stays is because of my clutching hands. Clearing my throat, I let her go and she throws me a careful smile, waving and then she walks out on me. It's not even a question whether to let her run or not. Pulling up the collar on my coat, I lower my head and I'm prepared to hunt down what needs to be mine.

## 2.

*Luna*

He's following me. Even before I looked, I could feel him coming after me. His manifestation is too majestic and malevolent to pass under the radar. Biting my lip, I shake my head. He's *not* malevolent, because bounty hunters are normal people just like everybody else.

A thrill tickles my spine as I make my way up the staircase to the street and it's so crowded I nearly can't breathe. I throw a glance over my shoulder and Derex looks like he rules over this town, his shoulders so large he could tackle five linebackers and make them cry for mommy.

His penetrating eyes bore into mine deep enough to almost blind me and if I expected him to be embarrassed that I caught him coming after me, then I was wrong. He's not even trying

to hide it, as if stalking me in broad daylight is perfectly normal but the man doesn't belong in sunshine...he belongs in some place darker where there are tons of shadows and maybe in those shadows he would have his arms around me, his firm mouth sucking my throat until my pulse dances everywhere in my body. Pinching my lip, I turn around the corner and I could choose another route if I wanted to lose him but I have no interest in doing that.

I want him behind me and I want him up close.

Even though seeing him for the first time was mildly terrifying, I also felt strangely at ease when falling into his lap, as if he knows how to look after a girl. And I sure could use some looking after. This isn't a quaint area and I especially don't like walking under the bridge with all that vulgar graffiti and the gang that always hangs around, but now there's no problem.

Usually when I see the gang, I tense up and run the other way but this time I cross under the bridge as if I'm sliding through water and it's all because Derex is walking behind me. Their mean eyes flare at the sight of him, their heads lowering with cautiousness. They're scared of him and I feel like smiling and saying: *Yeah, look who I brought. Not so tough now anymore, are you?* We keep moving like two partners in crime until I slow down my pace, thinking he'll do the same but he's done playing and walks up to me.

“You’re following me,” I breathe, searching his eyes and my voice doesn’t sound accusatory but more as if I want to be taken to bed. He must be so powerful when he makes love to a woman, potent and virile and I bet he can make a girl dazed for days. I wonder how someone even recovers from him and it probably requires a ton of rest, painkillers and a hot water bottle.

Derex gives a curt nod. “I’m walking you home if that’s fine by you.” He reaches his palm out. “Hold my hand.” The way he holds it out, reminds me of a king and I do yearn to be introduced to his kingdom.

Unable to say no, I put my hand in his, feeling more than content when his fingers wrap around mine. His grip is a little too strong, almost as if he isn’t aware of his strength but I quickly get used to it and suddenly I can’t imagine anybody else but him ever holding my hand.

“This isn’t a nice area, Luna,” Derex rasps, his aggressive eyes moving over the grounds as if he’s a hunter looking for threats that need to be taken down. “It’s for bad people and not pretty girls like you.”

“It’s cheap,” I shrug and a muscle ticks in his jaw. “And all I can afford.”



Derex curses. “Are there any men in your life, because if there are then they deserve a good beating?”

My jaw slacks at the ferocity. “I don’t have a father, or brothers...don’t have a boyfriend either.”

“You’re unprotected out here,” he says. “No muscles and strength surrounding you, seems like I came just in time.”

He sounds as if he’s making plans for me, plans that I have no idea what they entail and all of the sudden, I want to help his plans come to life, because from the expression in his eyes I know they can’t be anything bad. He doesn’t look at me the same way he looked at John, there’s no animosity or violence, just something hot and generous and I don’t think of him as overly harsh anymore.

Around me, his edges turn smoother as if they’re perfectly safe to lean into. Others might get hurt when coming too close but he withdraws his talons for me and I’m...flattered. We stop outside my building and I fish out the key from my pocket while he waits patiently and I go dizzy at the smell of him. All that richness and earthiness and I want to bury my entire face in it, just to feel my eyes roll back in my head.

“I appreciate you following me home,” I breathe and he nods. I’m expecting him to tell me goodbye and walk away but instead he watches me with intent in his gaze. Swallowing, I say, “Do you want to come inside? For t...tea?”

His eyes flash as if that’s exactly what he was hoping for.

“I’d love some tea,” he replies in a husky tone and my insides twist into a maze of complicated emotions. He puts his gigantic palm on my lower back as we walk through the entry and I feel like I’m melting. What am I even doing inviting a stranger inside? Especially one that nearly gave an entire metro a heart attack and then chose to follow me home as if that’s something he does every day. Before I open my door, I look at him and pinch my lip.

“Is this something you do all the time, Derex? Do you always follow girls home like this?”

He leans in a little and my lashes flutter at his overwhelming closeness. “Never,” he rasps and inwardly I whimper. “Only girls named Luna.”

Nodding, I try to hide just how much those words thrilled me and I open up but the thrill fades the moment his eyes slide over my apartment. He looks positively pissed off, his jaw clenching and the corners of his eyes have narrowed with

revulsion. Obviously he hates my apartment even more than I do and the place almost cowers in shame at his assessment. I clear my throat, murmuring,

“Lemon or peppermint?”

“Peppermint,” he replies and with a swift nod, I put on the water boiler and take out teabags. Turning around, I jolt when I catch him staring at me. He’s standing by my window, the lights shining behind him and he’s a fascinating mixture of light and dark, which for some reason makes me wonder what he would look like in white.

“You sure wear a lot of black,” I murmur, not intending to make it sound like criticism and he raises his brows.

“I live a very colorful life.”

“Oh?” I say with interest. “In what color?”

He tilts his head to the side. “Red.”

I snigger a little because red is such a passionate shade and his reply made him sound...cute. “You’re a romantic then?”

Derex's face twists as if he just swallowed poison. "Romantic?" he says doubtfully but when he catches the confused look on my face he adds, "Yeah, that's me. A romantic."

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*Derex*

My innuendo went straight over her head and it tugs at the heartstrings. I rub my chest when a wave of emotions hit me out of nowhere, and I don't know what the hell to do with them or which categories to sort them in. The girl doesn't make me feel just one emotion but one hundred at a time and I drag a deep breath.

She's fussing over the teacups, keeping her back to me and silently humming to herself which surprises me, as I wouldn't be humming in a place like this considering it's not even worthy of a mouse. Frowning, I look out the window, my eyes suspiciously going to the bridge where a bunch of lowlife criminals hang out. They're not dangerous, especially not compared to us but I don't want anything dirty around Luna.

There's something about the girl that reminds me of laundry, freshly washed in the northern sea and then left out to hang dry on a cliff in the midsummers breeze. She stirs up things

inside of me and I owe her more than allowing her to stay here. Besides, I won't be able to sleep tonight if I know Luna will be sleeping in this dump.

Throwing an eye on her unassuming frame, I toss out some junk she keeps in a cardboard box and proceed with filling it with things she might need. There's an old teddy leaning against the pillow on her couch and I throw it into the box, thinking she'll probably want to take it with her. I'm busy adding a sentimental collection of some porcelain figurines of a blond chick herding sheep, when Luna registers what I'm doing and blurts in horror,

“DereX!”

I calmly turn to her and she's holding two cups in her hands as a shocked expression colors her face and I know what this must look like. A man inviting himself into a young girl's home then proceeding to grab her stuff... she's probably thinking I'm about to rob her.

“Don't worry, I'm not taking anything from you, just thought I'd do the packing to help out.” She opens her mouth but I cut her off. “You're coming with me,” I clarify in a tone that doesn't tolerate protests. “I wouldn't be able to live with myself if I walked out and left you here on your own.”

She sighs. “You’re making it sound worse than it is. This is hardly a battlefield.” Shaking her head, she adds, “Here’s your tea.”

“I don’t want tea, I want you to come with me.” I continue into her bedroom and open up her closet when she comes running after me. She vaguely protests but I’m already busy adding more stuff to the box. Pulling out a green t-shirt, I say, “You need me to bring this one?”

“Yes! I mean no, wait...I never consented to this.”

“Why would you, when you have me to consent for you.” I open up her underwear drawer and she lets out a pant.

“Hey! This is all getting too personal a little too fast,” she gasps, looking at me with wide eyes and her face turns mortified when I pull out a pair of large, cotton panties. “Those aren’t mine!” she squeals as I chuckle for the first time in a long time. “Someone must’ve put them there...”

“Then you see why you have to come with me. You can’t stay in a place where someone walks in and puts big girl panties in your drawer.”

She shakes her head with flushed cheeks. “You can’t just barge into my life like a tornado, Derex.”

It's the only way, I know how to do things. "If you don't come with me, I'll walk out and you'll never see me again. Either you let me claim a right to you or you shut that door in my face, there's no in between." When she doesn't respond, I drop the box and head for the door.

"Derex!" she cries and I stop, filling with satisfaction because I knew she'd be willing to go with someone like me if it means leaving this place behind. "I'll c...come with you."

I give a curt nod, pushing down the satisfactory bawl in my chest. "You made the right choice."

"Of course you would say that," she breathes, picking up her box. "Will you carry it for me? It's heavy." Naturally, I take it from her and she looks up at me with excitement and hesitance in her eyes. "This is unbelievable. Who would've thought our meeting would end up with the two of us becoming roommates."

The corners of my mouth twitch. "You got it all wrong, Luna. I'm not taking you as my roommate, I'm taking you as my woman."

"W...woman," she gulps as if she's way too inexperienced to be someone's woman, "just like that, huh?" Her eyes turn

glassy. “You did say you were a romantic.”

This has nothing to do with romance but all about territory and possession. No made man would leave a woman he cares about, unprotected like this. She needs to be under his black wings, that’s where she’s the safest and I’ll be very careful, and only let her know the truth about my lifestyle once she’s ready.

When she doesn’t reply how she feels about becoming mine, I feel a flash of worry. She’s looking at me as if trying to assess me and I lower my head, trying to make myself look smaller and she winces. “Don’t do that,” she pleads. “Don’t try to make yourself less intimidating.”

“Thought it would make you feel more comfortable,” I rasp and she shakes her head.

“I like your height,” she whispers, “the size of your shoulders. Never seen a man as enormous as you.”

“You’ve been looking at other men, then?” I say as my throat strains and she smiles softly.

“You know what I mean.” Her smile widens. “I wouldn’t mind being your girl, Derex. There’s something superior about



you that draws me to you and I have a feeling I won't regret this."

"And if you do, what will you do then?" I rasp and she shrugs lightly. "You think I'll let you go?" When she nods in all sincerity, I whisper, "Think again."

Her eyes flare but then she shivers and that spring maiden flush on her face tells me everything I need to know.

### 3.

*Luna*

Squealing, I laugh when Derex picks me up and carries me over the threshold. “We’re not even married,” I say and his eyes shimmer, the aggression that was in them earlier in the day dissipating and he’s magnificent like this “But I guess we can pretend.”

“Does that mean you’ll let me put you to bed and make love to you until we both can’t breathe?” he purrs against my neck and I breathe,

“Maybe.”

His eyes flash as if he just took that maybe as a yes and I have to tug at him to put me down. He does so reluctantly, not giving me much space and he was like that on our way here as

well, stayed close the whole time as if he's replaced my shadow with his own and whenever we crossed a street he'd hold my hand tightly, worried I'd change my mind and run back home.

I wouldn't do that and his own home is amazing, albeit a bit dark and somewhat...morose with stained glass windows and crimson accents. It's up on a hill, surrounded by tall trees and I let out a surprised sound when I see there's a bright red pool outside. Red from the tiles of course but this is so different from my own place and I feel a flash of relief that I won't have to worry about the leak in the ceiling or the crappy heating anymore. There's nothing crappy about Derex's lair and I'm stunned to find it so luxurious.

"I had no idea bounty hunters made this much money," I blurt and for a second he seems uncomfortable and I want to face palm myself. That was such an inappropriate thing to say and I throw him an excusatory glance. "Sorry."

"No," he rasps between his teeth. "Never apologize." He nods at my box. "We should put away that thing." Something calculating flashes in his eyes. "My bedroom would be a good place."

I gulp, following him upstairs and I can't get over his size. If he rolls over on me in the middle of the night while we're in bed, he'll probably flatten me. I let out a nervous snort and

flush, my thoughts wandering to what it would be like sleeping with him...when we come to a stop in his room, and his black and red bed looks like it belonged to a vampire in the past.

“What do you think?” he whispers in a summoning voice.  
“Think you’ll be comfortable?”

“Aha...,” I gasp, becoming painfully aware of just how close he is.

“That fairy hair would look good against my sheets,” Derex raps and I notice he’s staring at me again, “that delicate face of yours screaming into my pillows.”

Shivering, I lick my lips and he slides a hand down my arm. “Derex...,” I pant, feeling helpless as if I’m a damsel from some histrionic movie in his presence but he’s so freaking extreme that I don’t blame myself.

“Luna...,” he begins, his voice low and persuasive now and almost hypnotic, “I prefer sleeping alone but I’m afraid I can’t let you sleep anywhere in this house unless it’s in my bed. There’s a guestroom down the hall but if you tell me you prefer staying in there, I’ll grab a bat from my closet and wreck every piece of furniture in that room.”

He clasps my chin, “So what do you say?”

“I don’t want you to ruin your guestroom,” I pant. “Guess I’m going to have to stay in here.”

Smirking, he purrs, “I’m so glad we could come to an agreement.”

Uh yeah...that was totally a normal way of negotiating. His eyes swirl, searching for mine and suddenly his intensity makes me too dizzy to be able to stay in his presence.

“I should try out your bed if I’m going to sleep in it,” I blurt, climbing on top of it but tense when Drex lets out a needy growl. I throw a frantic look over my shoulder, noticing he has his eyes fixed on my ass, his fists clenched at his sides and I roll over. Red in the face and full of confusing excess energy, I start jumping up and down in his bed and Drex chuckles.

Actually chuckles...the man who looks like he has ice in his veins and I’m the one who made him laugh. “Get down from there,” he grins.

“Why?” I say, bouncing even harder now.

“Because you’re so fucking adorable and I need to kiss you before things get out of hand,” he replies, his voice turning

huskier and his eyes go grave when I stop. Pulling my fingers through my hair just in case there are any knots, I take a deep breath and obediently walk over to the edge until I'm looking down at him and he's looking up at me. There's not that big height difference between us anymore and he wraps his arms around my waist.

“It feels good just holding you,” he rasps, stroking the side of my waist. “I've never been close to something as clean as you.” His eyes deepen with need. “It makes me want to do bad things and teach you to enjoy them.”

My heart starts thrashing in my chest and I let out a pant when he tilts his chiseled granite face up and plants a warm kiss on my mouth. The taste of him goes straight to between my legs and I moan, nearly falling off the edge if he hadn't been holding onto me. His tongue thrusts between my lips, fiercer than a fighter and hungrier than the night itself and this is the first kiss of all kisses ever kissed. He weaves our lips together, eating at my mouth until my pulse races as if it's near danger, but there's no danger around.

It's just Derex and I give into him fully, adapting to his body as if being close to him is a basic need of mine and he holds me tighter than a tree holds onto its roots. I feel him strike cords in me, then drum them with his fingers until his music drives me crazy and I moan, “What is happening to us?”

“Just accept it,” he pants raggedly with furious lips and he moves on to kiss my throat. “You have no choice, my dear Luna. As fucked up as I am you’ve been made for me, my poor girl.”

“You’re an extraordinary man,” I breathe back, “you’re not...” I don’t even want to use the word *fucked up* because he’s not like that. I feel something building up inside of me, the more he kisses me and it’s hot and rushing, the arousal intense and I sag against him, the need for him almost totalitarian. My body’s flushing against his, my core longing for his thrusts and when he picks me up, I wrap my legs around him, craving this man for all that he is in whichever shape he comes.

My hands go to the coat he’s still wearing and I remove it from his big shoulders when something falls to the floor and makes a loud sound. “What was that?” I shriek, looking down and I blink when I notice it’s a shiny gun. “Oh...”

Derex tenses. “For work,” he hurries to explain and he picks it up after I’ve slid down his body. “We all carry these around.” A muscle ticks in his jaw as he opens up his dark closet and puts the gun high up on a shelf. There’s a little bit of tension between us now and throwing me a concerned glance, he stabs his fingers through his hair then looks at his bed and then looks at me.

“You said something about the pool earlier,” he says with a calculated cough. “If you want to go for a swim, I’ll heat it up for you.”

His words distract me from the weapon and I look into his gorgeous eyes. I’m so hot that a dip in the pool sounds perfect.

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“It should be warm enough now,” Derex murmurs, rising from his squatted position by the pool. He glances at me from the corner of his eyes. “Go ahead, moon baby. Jump in.”

My breath gets caught in my throat. I didn’t bring a bathing suit, Derex dragged me here so fast over half of my stuff is still back at my old place. “I don’t have anything to put on,” I breathe and his eyes darken with deviousness.

“Bashful,” he says with a gentle smirk. “Scared I’ll like what I see a little bit too much? Don’t worry, I’ll leave you to it. I’ll be inside if you need me.” To my surprise he walks off and my fingers itch from how badly I crave to bring him back. I didn’t expect him to leave just like that and a part of me wants to trail after him, spend every breathing hour in his powerful presence and another is really eager to cool down and get a grip.



Taking my clothes off, I stand there in just my underwear but then I bite my lip...pending. Derex isn't here anyway, so I yank them off too and get in butt naked. I squeak at the first lick of water, doing a couple of quick breaststrokes before swimming over to the edge and put my hands up.

Resting my head on my arms I think about how it's been a long while since I enjoyed myself like this, long while since I fully could breathe out...I twitch at the sound of something large and ominous plunging into the ruby water and I don't get a chance to turn around before a rough body presses up against my back and a masculine growl slices the air.

"It's just me." Derex's hand goes to my throat. "Couldn't stay away if you insist on getting naked, one look at that ass and my heart nearly fell out of my chest." He rubs against me and I feel a hard length prodding me, until I'm overcome with desire and compliance. "Don't say no to this," Derex pants. "I need you, right here and right now."

"Then I'm all yours," I whisper, knowing in the back of my mind that he's going to terminate me because destruction lingers in his veins and I whimper when I feel him fondling me between my legs, his mouth sucking on my throat and I moan. "Derex..."

"Relax," he purrs, "I'll make this good for you." His fingers move to massage my insides and I feel his muscles ripple

against my back. This man wants so much from me and it's not just the physical but I can't put my finger on what else he needs from me, though whatever it is I want to pour and pour it into him, until he's satisfied. I wriggle against him and the tension in him rises. "Fuck, that's it..."

I'm so slick and smooth, I feel ready to take him no matter how big he is. Even if this man shatters me, I won't care and stars dance behind my eyes as I feel him growing. "I'll go slow," he grits, "you stop me if it gets too much but I'll fucking die if you do..."

Determination flares in me and I promise myself not to stop him. The craving's so intense it makes me lightheaded and I want to be claimed and cherished, spreading my legs a little to give him better access and he groans in approval. I inch closer to him and he snarls, causing me to yelp when he snatches me around the waist and makes me lean over the edge with my bare ass in the air, positioned right in front of his brutal face.

I throw a distressed glance over my shoulder and he licks his lips, before spreading me and diving right in with his mouth. The new, shocking touch makes me squeal and fidget, my skin exploding in goosebumps as he explores me with his tongue. My lashes flutter at the sight of him, my heart clenching in tune with my core because I never thought a savage man would have it in him to kiss me like this.

“You like w...what you see?” I stutter and my voice sounds weak and numb and he growls,

“Moon baby, I’m already obsessed. This sweetness between your legs will be my downfall and resurrection.” His hands go to my backside, fingertips digging into my skin and he uses my curves to get a better grasp so he can bring me closer to his ravenous mouth. My lips fall open, my mind drifting and my whole body goes into turmoil when my orgasm’s gulped down by Derex’s greedy laps and the world shudders when he turns me around, entering me in one swift move.

I pant in amazement at the infiltration, my body unused to this but I’m so turned on that the shock quickly gets replaced with pure pleasure. It’s more than tantalizing, his hard body against mine, the ridge of his gigantic length pushing for acceptance and he snares me, heat simmering between us when he rotates his hips and grinds the ache between my legs.

“I’ll kill anyone who takes this away from me,” he growls gutturally and I’m a little wary of the look in his eyes. “I’ll cut them up piece by piece if they ever dare go anywhere near this pussy.” He fists my hair. “Tell me it’s only mine!”

“Nobody goes near it,” I pant. “It’s meant for you alone.”

He nods. “You know your place,” he purrs in pleasure, ricking me down until I spasm, “and it’s right on this cock.” With his hands firmly clasped around me, he gives me the time of my life, his tongue going from kissing my mouth to licking my breasts and I’m panting so fiercely I forget to breathe when he sledgehammers my insides, making me accommodate to him and my knees buck.

I go faint, too sensitive and swollen all over and I throb so much, that I cry out, “Please let me come!”

He snarls and tugs me down until our bodies become one, fully attached and fully devoted to each other until tears prickle my eyes. This man...he has changed me. “Come then...come for your man.”

And I do, chasing the high and in the mist I’m in, I’m vaguely aware he’s chasing it with me. We detonate, our faces twisting, our mouths hooking and I know I will never care about the wrongs this man does. In my eyes...he is now my new world.

## 4.

*Derec*

I can't sleep, all I can do is look at her. She doesn't toss and turn in bed but lays there peacefully still and satisfaction brims in me because she's right next to me. I hunted her down and I caught her, which means she will be mine forever. I'll hold her tight throughout our life and count the beatings of her heart as I do, her heart beating in a different way than mine, a pure way and it brings an armistice inside of me I haven't been able to find on my own. It's as if the clocks stopped when she came into my life and they'll always keep ticking for her. Stroking a strand of hair from her face, I take her in and I want to give a big *fuck you* to the mob and just stay here with Luna.

A man doesn't want to wander when he has the moon in his bed. He wants to stay right there and let the moonshine wash away his sins. Pulling her closer, I inhale her comforting scent and she's softer than cashmere and more generous than rain

falling on hands soiled with blood. If only I'd had something like her earlier...then I wouldn't have become so ruthless, so hard.

“But you soften me, don't you?” I whisper in her ear and she stirs a little, before sighing. “You soften me and you make me yours when you do.” Putting my lips to her temple, I give her a kiss before I leave her and pull away. Getting up, I drag on my boxers and I can barely get my dick down.

It's angry at me, wants to be where it belongs and I'm tempted to give it a fucking smack with my fist because I don't need this shit right now. Reaching for my slacks, I tense when I hear the mattress creaking and I turn around.

Luna blinks up at me, her face full of sleep and she's my goodnight moon, causing my lips to involuntarily curl. “Where are you going?” she murmurs, rubbing her eyes. “It's in the middle of the night.” Her body draws me in, the skin glittering and everything about her sings and decoys as I'm completely powerless to her, and if I hadn't had that steel will ingrained in me since childhood then I never would've been able to do my job.

But she's going to have to get used to this. I mostly work during the night, sometimes during the day, weekends, and holidays but I'm figuring some of it will change because now I have somebody else to think of.

“I got work to do, but I’ll be here by morning,” I reply and she sits up, pulling the sheet with her. My hands itch from how badly I want to yank the sheet away from her and she yawns. “You go back to sleep and when you wake up again, I’ll be right here with you.”

Her slim shoulders rise and fall. “But I want you with me now. This is a new, strange house to me, Derex and I’d prefer it if you stayed.”

Fuck, I can’t just call the boss and tell him I’m not coming. I have someone to murder and we don’t take that stuff lightly and yet my heart clenches at the sight of Luna’s needy face. I get it. She needs someone to hold on to and I cup her cheeks in my hands.

“Sometimes we just have to compromise.” I thumb her lip. “I’ll give you all my love and devotion when I come back and think of you while I’m gone.”

“Alright,” she agrees, slightly comforted now, “but I’m going to miss you so much.” She grabs my pillow, hugs it to her chest and puts her face in it and my eyes roll back in my head. Fuck, I’d never thought I’d see a woman do something like that for me, didn’t think I was the type who could get those kinds of girls. I always thought if I ever found a female I

wanted, she'd be so appalled she'd run the other way and tell me to never contact her again or she'd call the cops.

Yet, here I have an angel acting as if she will shatter if I'm not holding her.

"I'm going to miss you too," I rasp, my voice so hoarse and I feel like I have barb wire around my heart. It's there to keep everything else away because it belongs to Luna now. "But I can think of something that'll help."

Her jaw slacks and she moans when I hook my fingers in her thong, pulling it down her slender legs and she sucks on her fingers, looking up at me as if I'm being offensive. "Don't you know it's rude to steal an innocent girl's thong like that?" she pants.

Smirking, I put it in my pocket and shake my head. "I want nothing touching you between your legs until I'm home. No friction and no contact with what's mine until I'm back, only I get to take care of it."

"I know." She throws me an insolent look, rolling over to her belly and the sight of her like this just made everything ten times worse. I guess the best thing is to just rip it off, like a Band-Aid and I put on my coat before lowering my face and



giving her a kiss on the mouth. “Derex,” she whispers and I raise my brows in question. “Don’t forget your gun.”

Inwardly, I tense but I don’t show her that. “I won’t. Got it right here.”

“Only use it if necessary,” she smiles and I wince, thinking we probably have very different opinions on what’s necessary. I pull away but stop when she puts a hand on my arm. “What did you mean when you said I soften you?”

She heard me then...great. Letting out a sigh, I rasp, “That you make me feel like a good man.”

Her face flushes and her lashes flutter. “You don’t need me for that.” A smile plays with her lips. “You’re a good man with or without me.”

Oh...but that’s where she’s wrong.

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I’ve never much looked forward to daylight or going home but there’s something special about walking down my street and seeing Luna sitting at *my* kitchen table, eating breakfast under

*my* roof. Grinning at this new situation, I walk inside and call for her.

First thing I hear is a yelp and the sound of a chair toppling and then Luna comes at me like a whirlwind, before throwing herself into my arms. “I never thought you’d come home,” she breathes. “I was so worried, cried and tried calling you but your phone was on mute and I tried to tell myself to relax, to not get all dramatic but...”

“You missed me that much did you?” I groan and pull her to me, so she can feel my body’s immediate arousal and her eyes dash. “Get naked and lay on the couch and I’ll show you just how much I’ve missed you back.”

Her eyes dart, cheeks tinting and she murmurs, “It’s not that I just missed you.” She clutches and clings to me. “I was genuinely worried.” When I frown in surprise, she takes my hand and drags me into the kitchen, pointing at a newspaper on the table. “Look, there’s that guy John, you spoke to when we were on the subway.”

Blood drains from my face as I look at the paper. Fuck! This never should have become public knowledge. Hertz was supposed to take care of him discreetly and fury brims in me, causing me to clench my fists when I feel my pulse speed up.

Luna watches me curiously. “You seem tense, Derex,” she reminds me before exhaling. “See, now why I was worried? I thought whoever exterminated John would come after you too.”

Gritting my jaw, I slowly nod. “You’re kind for being concerned but you need to know that I can always take care of myself. No matter what.”

She breathes out, plopping down on her chair and she’s all better now but I’m pissed she found out about the murder. And even if I’ve calmed her down, there’s no denying that her eyes are a little more careful now when landing on me.

“Brought you pastries,” I murmur, “with icing sugar and I got you some strawberry lemonade too.”

Squealing, she digs in, letting out diverting moans and groans while I try focusing on reading the article. I’m gonna kill Hertz for this. He’s fucking responsible for making Luna look at me with anything else but trust and I realize I should’ve played it up, should’ve acted appalled or horrified when she showed me the article.

Instead, I acted like a damn machine.

Fuck!

Furious, I drag a hand down my face before throwing a look at Luna and the annoyance drains the moment I see her with icing sugar on the tip of her nose. That white little tip cheers me up and I grin, wiping it off and she throws me an embarrassed glance.

“Thanks. The kids would’ve laughed their butts off if I’d come in like this today.”

Right, her work and I have to admit I hadn’t thought much about that, somehow imagining that she’d be at home all day and breathlessly waiting for me but now I’m reminded of something potentially problematic and I murmur, “Luna, I hope there aren’t any men where you work.”

She seems surprised but shakes her head. “Nope, it’s just women.”

Then it’s not problematic. I take no issue with her working as long as I don’t have to worry about her being leered on. It sounds like a fucking nightmare by the way, creeps looking at my Luna and my fists clench. “Good, I don’t want you coming in contact with men when I’m not around to protect you.”

Luna bursts into laughter. “Come in contact?” She sniggers as if that’s the funniest phrase she’s ever heard. “Oops, I’m

afraid I do come in contact with other men.”

Clutching the table, I fail to see the humor in this. “What other men?” I growl and she twitches, spilling her lemonade and I turn around with a curse, grabbing some paper towels and wipe it off. Luna stares up at me as if she’s not sure what’s going on.

“The children’s fathers, of course. Sometimes they drop them off and usually they come to pick them up.”

I didn’t think about that. I didn’t think about the fucking fathers! This changes everything and now I’m tense again.

“Listen, I got an idea,” I say in a very calm and level voice. “I think you should stay home today.”

Grimacing, she shakes her head. “Nah, Fridays are our favorite day. We pull out the guitar and throw a party.”

That sounds very cute and wholesome but all I can think of are men coming in at the end of the day and staring at her tired and beautiful face, wanting to buy her a cup of coffee, wanting to offer her a ride home, wanting to offer her a ride on their dicks...

I let out a growl and Luna glances at me in surprise but ignores me. “I should clean this up or I’ll be late for work,” she murmurs and panic rises to my head. I need to find a way to keep her with me. Humming to herself, Luna cleans her dishes and I’m starting to feel the pressure. Soon, she’ll be out that door and then I won’t be able to stop her.

I need to stop her.

Clutching my chest, I grimace and pretend to be hyperventilating and Luna swiftly turns around, her face whitening and she gawks. “DereX, what is it?”

“Don’t know.” I choke for air. “There’s this sudden pressure,” I groan, rubbing my chest in the way that I’ve seen people do. “Right here...it fucking hurts.”

“Is it anxiety?” she cries in panic. “What about?” She frantically looks around. “It’s the article, isn’t it? The news about his death, you’re scared you’ll end up the same way, aren’t you?”

Stomping her foot, she aggressively crumbles the newspaper and throws it into the trashcan. “I never would’ve showed this to you, had I known you were sensitive.” Wrapping her arms around me, she hugs me tight and I purr inwardly when facing her cleavage. “This is what happens when big guys like you

act all tough, bottling down your fears and then you end up exploding.” Clicking her tongue, she holds me closer. “Let those emotions out, let them out...,” she rocks me and shushes me and I pretend to exhale.

“Better?” she asks and I shrug. A concerned frown forms between her brows. “I don’t want to leave you when you’re like this.” She hesitates and I bore my eyes into hers, trying to get her to do what I want. “Maybe, I should call and tell them I can’t come in today.”

Hiding my smirk, I say in a controlled voice, “Luna, I think that would be for the best.”

## 5.

*Luna*

He insists on coming with me to work on Monday. We spent the whole weekend together, or more like glued to one another. At one point, I even thought he would follow me into the bathroom and when I told him I'd go for a run in the evening, he took his car and followed me, yelling at me through the window things like,

“Pull your top down!”

“Watch your step!”

“I'll kill that motherfucker for honking at you!”



That was his idea of giving me space but I have to admit, it felt pretty bizarre jogging and seeing a car and a man in dark glasses stalking me whenever I looked over my shoulder. This is a nice neighborhood, as opposed to my old one and I don't believe Derex one bit when he said he was doing it for my own safety.

The most dangerous thing around here is the butterflies and I think Derex just needs to be in control of everything. Not that I mind, but I am nervous about bringing him to work. None of the other teachers have ever brought their men with them for a day and their men look *nice*.

Mine looks like he writes other people's testaments, using their own blood.

At least he's not wearing black today but more of a...dark grey. I guess that's something and I take a deep breath, stepping into the school together with Derex. The kids immediately burst into tears at the sight of him, some of them screaming and cowering in the corner and my heart sinks. Glancing at Derex, I notice he seems embarrassed and a little bit guilty and sympathy flares in me.

"They just need to get used to you," I murmur, wringing my hands and I introduce him to my colleagues. They look at him with a mixture of admiration and apprehension and I want to tell them that he's not dangerous but I'm annoyed by their

reaction at the same time. He's a *good* person. "Maybe its best if you sit down," I add, encouraging him to sit on a chair far too small for him and for a moment I worry it'll give in under his weight.

I smile at the other kids who peek out of their hiding places and stare at Derex as if both horrified and fascinated. "It's okay," I murmur, nodding at them. "You can play with him. He won't bite."

In response they shudder, shaking their heads but one brave boy crawls over the floor and grabs a plastic spoon. Wide-eyed, he brings the spoon toward Derex's mouth and Derex throws me a helpless glance that makes me smile.

"You're supposed to pretend that you're eating."

Derex frowns, his shoulders tensing with aggravation as if he doesn't see the point of this but then he pretends to take a couple of bites and the boy coos. Banging his little fists on the table, the boy brings the spoon to Derex again when all of the sudden what I dreaded happens.

The chair cracks underneath Derex's massive weight, causing him to fall on his back and he lets out a wildly inappropriate curse. Silence fills the room loud enough to hear a pin drop, until I shamelessly start sniggering and then the

kids burst into laughter. Even the teachers laugh, the kids coming out from hiding and now Derex is their favorite person. They make him chase them and act like a dragon that they then pretend to slay.

In the midst of everything, Derex and I make eye contact and I grin at him. He winks back and even though I'm getting ahead of myself, I can tell he'll be a good dad one day. A softness spreads in my chest and I feel so wonderful I'm surprised I'm not levitating. Here I was afraid this would be a disaster...and this is how good it turned out.

But it seems that I spoke too soon because Derex's demeanor changes the moment the day's over and the kids ready to be picked up. "You stay right here," I tell him nervously. "I'll get this over quickly and then we can go home."

He gives me a long look that drips with arrogance. Apparently he's not the kind to wait in a corner while his woman interacts with other men but I guess I already knew that. "I just want to introduce myself, moon baby," he purrs. "You've got nothing to worry about."

"I don't know if you s...should," I stutter, but he ignores me, moving to stand in the doorway and blocking it with his wide shoulders as the fathers try entering. Growly and about as approachable as a minefield, he shakes the men's hands, gritting,

“I’m Luna’s male.”

They grimace, their eyes tearing and I can tell he’s shaking their hands just a little too hard. Goodness...is it really necessary to have a pissing contest? According to Derex there is and he makes sure to let everyone know I’m his, before handing over the kids and he’s so quick and efficient that my colleagues gawk.

“Is he for hire?” one of them asks. “That went smoother than when we do it.”

Yeah, because the dads were probably afraid they’d get their heads bit off by a giant northerner and I let out a sigh, crossing my arms over my chest because my colleagues better not tempt him. I’m sure if they offer him a job, Derex will see it as an excellent opportunity to keep an eye on me. As soon as the last child’s out the door, he turns to me and there’s a smug look on his face. He stalks over to me, his shoulders wide and strong enough to function as rafts in a time of crisis and I force myself to not get giddy now.

“Happy?” I hiss as he throws me an unbothered glance. “They’ll never dare pick their kids up again.”

“That certainly wasn’t my intention,” Derex smirks and I pout. Sure it was and he got exactly what he wanted. Now no man will ever dare get within ten feet of me and glancing up at Derex, I get a little bit suspicious. Today I was reminded of just how *scary* he can be, by looking at him through the eyes of others.

There is something seriously *intimidating* about him. Too intimidating for a bounty hunter...and a thought crosses my mind. Who is the man I live with, really?

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I feel the mattress dip as he gets up in the middle of the night. He’s trying to be noiseless and I have to admit he’s as slithering as a snake but I’ve been preparing for this all day. I lay still, my back turned to him as he gets dressed. There’s the rattle of his coat and then comes the rattle of his weapons and I gulp.

Making sure to keep my eyes closed, I stop breathing when he leans over and plants a kiss on my head. It bursts with tenderness and I struggle to stop my mouth from curving, needing to remind myself to not get all mushy. He murmurs a sweet nothing and then he’s out the door. Ripping off the duvet, I yank on a pair of sweatpants and a t-shirt and leave the house. The street is dark and silent, the lampposts shining their gold over well-groomed lawns and I look left and right.

He can't have gone far. My brows rise when I see a figure turning the corner. Aha! I knew I'd catch him red-handed and I'm going to spend the whole night following him around, see what he's really doing. He'll be so shocked when he finds out I've been following him, probably make up some excuse he'll hope I'll buy but he can't explain things away if I see them with my own eyes.

I've even brought my phone with me to document everything so that he'll be forced to tell the truth and I want to congratulate myself on how clever I'm being. There's just no way he'll get away with this...

Turning the corner, my eyes flare when I see him again and this part of the street has fewer lights and I can't quite extinguish everything but I register the dark coat and the fast, almost fidgety movements... he's definitely hiding something big. Grabbing my phone, I snap a couple of pics as he walks toward a black car that just stopped and gets in.

The lights from the car blaze and my heart stops when I see the busty woman behind the wheel and he leans over, kissing her right on the mouth. What the... The lights flare again and I notice that's not Derex. That's some other man and my knees shake from relief but then I grow frustrated because this means I completely lost him.

Muttering to myself, I back but freeze the moment I hit a chest about as hard as a brick wall. I *know* that chest intimately and I raise my trembling face. Derex looks down at me, his eyes stirring with both amusement and annoyance.

“What are you up to?” he purrs, almost sensually and viper like, causing me to shudder.

“Thought I’d go for a walk in the neighborhood. Couldn’t sleep.”

He raises his brows. “That’s a surprise, considering you were barely breathing when I left you.” I wince and he adds, “Luna, is there something you want to tell me?” When I don’t reply, he murmurs, “You were spying on me, weren’t you?”

“Spying?” I blurt before faking a laugh. “That’s just rich. Can’t a girl take an after midnight stroll without being accused of s...spying?”

Derex looks down at me, his face displeased. “Go back to bed. Now.”

“Where are *you* going?” I pant and he clasps my elbow, dragging a hand down his face.

“Nowhere apparently, considering I now have to tuck you in,” he replies and I protest but he won’t hear it. He wraps his arm around me, shushing me with a kiss and I feel like I just lost and he’s won. *Again.*

“You can’t blame me for trying to find out more about you,” I mutter and he shrugs as if he doesn’t blame me. “There’s so much secrecy surrounding you and I barely know anything. I feel like I’m grappling in the dark.”

Tensing, he murmurs, “There’s not much to know. I’m an only child, grew up with a single mother. As a teen I loved watching action flicks and sometimes still do, when I have the time. I was in a car accident at the age of twenty, flung out of my seat and landed on a farm fence.” He pulls up his sweater. “Still have the scar.”

I’ve been wondering about that scar but never asked. Touching it with my fingertips, I nod and maybe I should’ve asked earlier because his answer is strangely normal and it pacifies me. I choose not to question him on the meetings he has with strange looking men in his office and why they speak in an exotic language, deciding to leave that for later to avoid getting into any more trouble.

We walk hand in hand into our room and to my surprise, Derex crawls into bed with me. It really looks like he isn’t



going anywhere, rolling on top of me and the moment he does, my body and flesh is willing to serve him.

It's obvious he's hiding something he's prepared to do anything to cover up but my body doesn't care, and my heart doesn't cower in my chest but blooms when he breathes on me. I break out in goosebumps, whimpering and hurrying to pull down my underwear, gasping when the cold air hits me and Derex lets out a hard growl. "You've behaved very badly," he whispers in my ear and I moan again, "now to please your male, you'll let me ravage you like a savage."

I pant into the pillow, writhing, "But you always do it like a savage."

"You want another side of me?" He tilts my face for eye contact. "You could let me ravage you as something else."

A gasp escapes me. "What would that be?" I ask, but he doesn't respond and I clutch his shoulder. "Derex, what would that be?" My heart pounds frantically because I'm thinking he'll say it but instead he just growls and plunges into me. I cry out from desire before throwing him a dazed glance.

His eyes flash. And they flash with something so dark, the stars and the moon stop glistening on the sky and I hold onto the bedpost while he thrusts, knowing that whatever it is that

he's so scared of telling me, I'll still be his moonshine no matter what.

## 6.

*Luna*

Despite everything, despite the tenderness and reassurance he's not hiding anything, I'm still determined to find out the truth which is why I decide to leave work early and do some snooping in his office. Shivers rip down my spine and my hand trembles on the knob but I close the door, walking over to his desk and audaciously rummage through his drawers. To my disappointment there's absolutely nothing of importance.

Either he is telling truth, or he's really good at covering up his tracks.

Pinching my lip, I google *Derex Warg* but nothing comes up. He's a man who can't be found like the rest of us and *that's* definitely suspicious. Roaming around the room, my eyes land on the vast collection of knives by the window and once I

asked him about it, but he just said he's particular about how he cuts his meat.

What kind of meat, though. Animal or human?

Shuddering, I shake my head and walk over to his bookshelf. He's got a ton of books about martial arts which don't interest me but I find a leather-bound volume that does. Taking it out, I jolt at the symbol at the front, at the intertwined N and M.

I've seen that symbol before, right on Derex's back...what the hell?

The title reads: *The history of the Nordic Mafia-Origins and Legacy.*

Flipping through it, I go woozy because I have no idea why Derex would have this book with pages upon pages of drawings of runes. The same runes Derex has inked on his body, same runes I've traced my fingertips over while thinking they were amazing pieces of art.

I gulp because this isn't making any sense. Either he's a hardcore fan of this underground league and obsessive in his fandom...or he's one of them. Could it be true that *my* Derex is in the...mob? Jaw slacking, I stare at the desk, the place where I've seen Derex sit many times. The man who comes

home to me every day, the man I share a bed with...I twitch when the front door opens and shove the book back in its place before hiding behind the shelf. The sound of Derex's voice hits me like a wrecking ball because he shouldn't be home at this time!

Freezing up when the men enter the office, I clamp a hand over my mouth to restrict my breaths. I recognize the voice of the other man and it belongs to the one, I saw at the subway. My knees go weak from anxiety when Derex stops in front of the shelf.

“Care for a drink, Hertz?” he asks and his tone is surprisingly pleasant. “I ordered this fine mead all the way from Greenland.”

“It doesn't taste like crap then?” the other man grunts and Derex chuckles. There's the sound of glass clinking and Derex declares,

“To ice and shadows.”

“To death and ruin,” Hertz replies and I hear them drinking. My fingers itch because I have a bad feeling about this. Derex is in an overly good mood, almost as if trying to cover up for something much more insidious brewing inside of him and my heart pounds because I hope he won't try doing anything wild.

I need him to be okay. He's my everything and even if he was the most evil man on the planet...I would still want him and I don't care if it makes me bad. In the past I was always so picky about decency and benevolence but for Derex I'm willing to see through my fingers.

I've fallen for him without even fully knowing how. If he hadn't jumped on that metro things would've been so different but he did...and my heart is still on that heavy rail, going faster and faster, wherever Derex wants to take it.

"Sit down," Derex says, "make yourself comfortable. *Min heim aer din heim,*" he chuckles. Hearing that striking language straight out of his mouth makes him seem like an entirely different person, and there's a hint of evil in his laugh that has the hair on my nape bristling.

"Feel free to tell me to mind my own business," Hertz continues, "but are those heels I saw in the hallway?"

"They're my woman's," Derex grits as if he doesn't like that the other man noticed my shoes and Hertz makes a surprised sound. "She lives with me now."

"You have a woman? Since when? Who is she?"

“Remember the girl from the metro?” Derex pauses and his voice is softer when he adds, “That’s her.”

Hertz lets out a whistle “Fuck me. Why haven’t you ever brought her to the compound?”

What compound?

“I don’t want to introduce her to that part of our lives yet.”

“But she does know you’re in the mob?”

“She knows what she needs to know and stop with the fucking questions.” Derex swipes his drink and lets out a long exhale. “Luna’s very different from us, she doesn’t understand the lifestyle or why we’re the way we are.” Derex silences before adding, “Violence isn’t a word in her vocabulary.”

“If she’s as good as you say then what the hell is she doing with scum like you?” Hertz guffaws but abruptly stops and I have a feeling Derex just gave him a deadly glance. I chew on my lower lip and I’m rubbed the wrong way because of what he called Derex but then Derex snarls,

“Ask me that again and I’ll blow your fucking head off.”

My hands start trembling. That didn't just sound like a threat but as if he'd do it...gladly, as if that's something he does every day without blinking. It seems that the man I want, the one who ripped me out of my wretched situation is far more coldblooded than I ever could've thought.

\*\*\*\*

*Derex*

Staring at the pale face opposite me, I drum my fingers against my knee. I think I made a mistake bringing him here. This is supposed to be a verbal warning, maybe some light aggression thrown in but then I'm meant to take him to the boss and let him deal with it. However, the more I sit here, the more I'm tempted to take matters into my own hands.

“How long have we known each other, Hertz?” I ask and he clears his throat.

“Years and years.”

“We've been partners for a long time,” I nod, adding, “You must be wondering why I brought you here.”



He shrugs his shoulders and he's been looking fatter rather than muscular lately, slacking on his duties, slacking on fucking everything...almost as if his loyalties lie somewhere else.

Leaning over the table, I rasp. "Remember our good friend John boy?" I say and he turns into a rock in front of me, as if he thinks I won't pay attention to him anymore if he keeps still. I circle my finger around the rim of my glass. "You were supposed to get rid of him."

"I did, Derex..."

"Without it being known," I grit. "You were supposed to be discreet and yet you might as well have shouted out our business from the rooftops." A muscle ticks in my jaw. "I want the truth. Who paid you off? Who's bribing you...?"

His pathetic explanation doesn't surprise me. He was bribed by the local MC gang to keep John alive but things got out of hand since mixing allegiances like that never turns out well. Hertz starts muttering an excuse but I cut him off.

"Unfortunately for you, my woman isn't home. If she was, I would've reconsidered but I want you to pay and it's not just about your treachery either." I inhale. "You've put me in a tricky situation. Luna *reads* the newspaper and she found out

about John.” I reach for my gun. “And you’re the reason why she’s been looking at me with distrust ever since.”

An aggressive look flashes Hertz’s face as if he’s willing to fight me but I pull the trigger under the table, the soundless bullet hitting vital organs and Hertz drops off his chair. I rub my eyes in annoyance at the mess but don’t regret it. Well...at least there’s that taken care of.

Stabbing my fingers through my hair, I get up. I’ve been worrying about Luna finding out the truth about me before the stage’s right but she won’t be home in hours yet and there’s plenty of time to clean up. I need to find something to put him in and I look around when I hear a mousy squeak. My muscles tense at the sound, my senses on edge and I whirl around. It came from behind the shelf and my heart begins pounding when I pull a shaking Luna from out of there.

Regret nearly renders me unconscious. *No, no, no...not this. This isn’t what I wanted, never wanted her to found out about it like this, never wanted her to see my true nature with her own eyes before I got a chance to explain myself.*

She stutters my name, her gaze glassy and I let out curse after curse, covering her eyes while dragging her out of the office and I’m in a vile mood. “What the hell were you doing in there?” I snarl and she wheezes, stumbling after me.

“What are you doing? You just killed a man, Derex. In broad daylight, in your office, you just pulled the t...trigger.” She gulps, looking up at me as if I’m once again the man she once was wary of. “You’re dangerous.”

I stop and clasp her shoulders. “Not to you. I’m not dangerous to you.” I drag a breath and fiercely hold her to me. “You weren’t meant to see that but you’re a strong girl, you will adjust to this, adjust to me as I am now.”

Her lower lips trembles. “I wish you’d told me.”

“It doesn’t change anything,” I growl, as my heart sinks. “I’m still me and you’re still you and we’re still us.” But I’m furious she witnessed the brutal deed and I go cold when she doesn’t reply, staggering against the wall. “You hate me now, don’t you?” I rasp, watching her in horror. “You hate me now that you know the truth about my nature.”

The redness on her face turns to white. “Why would you think that?” she quivers. “I could never hate you. How can I hate a man like you? After all you’ve done for me, after all you’ve made me feel...”

Ferocity explodes in me, the need to keep her chained to me making me crazed. “And what is it that I have made you feel?” I snarl, yanking her to me and she gasps. “Tell me what I’ve

made you feel other than fear and the feeling of being deceived?”

Her eyes turn reflective and she shoves at me. “How dare you say that?” She puts her soft, trembling hand on top of her chest. “You have stolen my heart from my body, claimed me and provoked emotions in me I’ve never had!”

“And what have you done to me!” I bellow as my pulse pounds with fervor in my temples and I rake my fingernails down my face before stabbing my hand through my hair. “You have bound the darkness in me and now it’s your slave!”

“Stop saying you’re dark, dammit!” she cries, falling to her knees. “You’ve changed my life.” She gasps for a breath. “Don’t you understand there’s so much more to you? Why can’t you see what I see?”

“Because I don’t see the world through rose-tinted glasses!” I growl, slamming a fist on top of my chest. “I don’t have the innocent eyes you have, the goodness, the decency.”

Clasping my hands, she holds them to her. “Then let me be your eyes,” she pleads. “Let me show you the man, I think you are.”

I look down at her, glum and grim and I'm pissed off to the nines that she witnessed the murder. I'm taking it so hard, she has a tough time calming me down. "And what man would that be?"

"The kind that told a lie because he was afraid the truth would push away his girl, the kind who makes little kids laugh and plays with them because it makes them happy, the kind who protects the people he cares about no matter what." Lowering her face, she rubs it against my callus hands. "Please," she begs. "don't be so hard on yourself. I forgive you for lying, now forgive yourself..."

She trails off when I let out a snarl, cupping her neck. "Why must you breathe with so much sweetness?" I growl. "How can you breathe when I no longer can?"

"I'll breathe for you, Derex," she gasps, clutching me with all her strength. "I will always breathe for my man, even when the hour is bleak and the world is nothing but ice and shadows. I will always stand by your side!"

Words from a dream, dreamt a thousand times by those who deserve it the least and yet remain hopeful they one day will hear them from pink lips, poured out from the softest of hearts.

“Aren’t you fucking brave,” I growl, slicing her mouth in a kiss, “and you speak my language, my bold girl.” I throw her over my shoulder, stomping into our bedroom and steam rises from my pores. I’m no longer just rime but warmth because of her and I toss her onto the bed, our clothes coming off in a haze and I take in what’s mine, wanting her so damn bad.

Her elfin body wriggles around and I want to throw a fit of rage because we can’t be joined at all times. That frustrating fragility of hers is mesmeric and a rumble bursts through my throat at how much she’s changed me. My sheets aren’t even black anymore but fucking lavender silk and it’s another small thing where she’s brought more color into my life.

Yanking her legs apart, I stare at her bright pink exquisiteness for a long while as my heart pounds in my chest. I dared trespass on her pussy territory and now I’m lost in it forever, craving her incorruptibility, her soft mischief and she looks at me through half-lowered lids. “You’ll give me this pussy on my deathbed,” I warn, “I want it as my last fucking meal and every single day, until then.”

“That’s gangster talk,” Luna pants, “but yes, you can have it!” she cries, her slit swelling the moment I cup it and she wriggles around, letting me fondle her however I want and our arousal sizzles between us until the air cracks and sparkles. Her eyes are wide when looking up at me, the lashes misty from the tears she dropped while shouting at me and my heart yanks in my chest. Another girl would have run but she

allowed me to take her straight to my bed and she acts as if she can barely contain herself, her panting loud, her core sleek and welcoming even to darkness itself.

This is why my instinct chose her, because it recognized she'd always lower her weapons before me. "Dere...I'll never shut you out," she whimpers before crying out when a wave of lust causes her body to arch and she barefacedly spreads her legs. "Take what's yours."

A snarl rumbles up in my throat. I'll take it and fucking more and I fondle her deeper until she squirms around on the bed and makes me chase her. She can barely handle this and yet she wants me to take everything and I've only fucked her like a savage before but never a mobster and this feels like the love crime of the century. When she tries to twist away from me, I clamp down on her thighs.

"Ah-ah, we keep our word in this house." I splay my hand under her ass, sliding her across the bed toward me again. "You're staying right here, we're not done yet by a long shot."

Her mouth falls open in a pant, her body trembling and taking three digits isn't easy but she keeps her eyes firmly clasped on my face and rising muscles and it heightens the arousal. My eyes roll back in my head when she reaches out and tugs at my length and I let out a curse, immediately thrusting into her small palm.

She whimpers my name, her body rocking and crashing against my hand as I crash against hers, her eyes engrossed by my cock and we've never used any protection. I wouldn't allow her to defend that preciousness between her legs, I'd tear down any resistance, any doubt and I clasp her tit, causing her to gulp when sensation hits her senseless.

"Derex..." she whimpers again, the look in her eyes pleading and desperate and I shove my overstimulated cock into her and she cries out from the relief, her legs wrapping around me in a heartbreaking grip. Underneath me, she's excruciatingly beautiful and I lick the base of her throat where her pulse sprints. "Too m...much," she stutters, complaining about the frantic prods but I need to claim her as the real me, when there's no pretend between us, just a thug and the girl he would die for.

"Need to stretch you more..." I grit in reassurance and her eyes flare as she panicky gasps,

"I can't take any more stretching! I already feel as if I'm about to snap. Derex, please..."

A wave of mercy washes over me and I let out a growl, rolling on my back and pulling her on top of me. Gratitude floods her face, her eyes shining with trust when she licks her swollen lips and she sways when she takes my shaft into her,



her nails raking down my chest. Her skin dampens from my kisses and I try keeping the pace moderate for her as she struggles and grits her teeth the moment I pick it up.

Her body still has a need to get used to me, to my size, to my desires and I curse when she begins moving in a way that makes me crazy. Perspiration breaks out on my skin and the sounds from the street outside seem to have disappeared, my focus only on her as she thrashes on top of me and I coat her nipples with my tongue until they turn a shade darker.

Groaning, I lean back again because that tightness of hers is what violently lustful dreams are made of and her moans start sounding like soft, little sobs. Her throat's constricting, her hips racing and her whole face is triumphant, her eyes turning steamy the more I plunge.

Our bodies yank at one another, working toward the same goal and she makes my black blood sing, finally it buzzes through my veins instead of frosting, her mouth, breasts and slit all working together to make me rabid. "Stop moving like that," I growl when she snaps and twists her hips.

"But I feel delicious!" she moans. "And I need you so much."

“Then you’re going to have all of me,” I warn but she just gasps, nodding her lovely face as if she can take anything I give her. When she jerks her hips again, I let out a snarl and drive into her, my mind blanking, my need for her the only the only thing keeping me sane and I’m rough in my claiming. The fucking’s cataclysmic and she stirs up a ferocious storm in me that wants to wreck and leave nothing untouched. She spirals on top of me, her whole body arching for relief and she meets my rhythm with a frantic perfection that causes tears to burn behind my eyes.

“All this time you were being fucked by a mobster and you didn’t even know it, but you still enjoyed it.” I thrust mercilessly. “You like having mob cock up in your pussy, moon baby?”

“I l...love it,” she pants and gasps, her skin flushing and sweat drips down her thighs and I keep her hooked, piercing her down on me in rapid, desperate bursts and when she comes it nearly rips my heart out. She screams my name and I swallow it in a kiss, ejaculating and she falls on top of me the way a doll falls into her maker’s arms, before snuggling against me. Her breaths can’t keep up, not after a long time and then she finally eases.

Taking my hand, she lifts it to her face. “Such violent hands,” she whimpers with a sigh, “and yet they touch me so gently.”

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She wants what I want, for the two of us to be together despite what she witnessed. The look in her eyes isn't appalled or rejecting but affectionate and her hands squeeze around my biceps, as if she needs to remind herself that underneath it all I'm the same old Derex. For her I won't be viciousness personified but a man that makes her feel watched over. She can feel the love I have for her and it's stronger than any doubts. Biting her lip, she takes in my body and her eyes now understand the meaning of the runes and I feel pride when she touches them without any judgment, just fascination.

It's possible I could've told her the truth from the beginning but I don't know what I would've done if she'd turned her back on me. I never want to watch her walk away from me and I want us side by side, with her light bright enough to illuminate our path for the both of us. "I like how strong you are," she whispers, her lashes fluttering. "I guess you have to be when you have a tender heart such as yours."

"Tender only for you," I whisper and she slides her fingers down my torso and meets my gaze with fierce urgency.

"Was the story about the scar true?"

I nod in all sincerity and she beams up at me. I grin back, burying my face in her throat and her pulse races when she whispers, “This is happiness.” Then she twitches a little as if remembering something. “Oh no, Derex there’s still a dead guy in your office and yet we just barged in here and made love while he...,” she turns white in the face, “What is wrong with us?”

“Nothing,” I chuckle, clasp her cheeks. “Welcome to the mob life. And don’t worry about the office, I’ll clean it up.”

She obediently lowers her lids. “You need me to h...help?”

“Fuck no,” I blurt, repulsed by the thought of her getting her hands dirty but then I tense and look down at her. “You would do that for me?”

She bites her lip. “I’d do anything if you needed me to.” Her cheeks turn a pink shade. “It’s what true love does to you.”

Growling how much I love her back, I make her moan as I kiss her and pour all my affection out on her and our bed is a bed of roses and thorns where we bloom and burst, our bond falling over us as frail petals, not even someone like me could break. It’s too delicate and valuable, too precious and no matter how rough my hands are they will always treat this love with the utmost care.

# Epilogue

*DereX-Five months later*

The crowd's thick as I get on the metro, the underground swooshing by outside the window and I raise my head, searching for her. She sits in the same spot she sat when we first met, with a chiffon scarf wrapped around her throat and an apprehensive look in her eyes because she knows I like when she plays it up. I make my way through the throng and they press as close to the sides as they can to get away from me.

A man sits opposite Luna but runs the other way when he sees me coming and Luna struggles against her sniggers. Pouncing down on the seat, I put my hands on my knees and she's looking everywhere just not at me. I try to get her attention but she firmly keeps it to herself, stingy with what's mine and I'm going to probe it out of her later.

“Name?” I ask and her eyes flash to me and I fall in love with her all over again. She gives me her name and then she asks me what I do for a living. I give her the same answer I gave her back then and she laughs, because she understands the truth now.

Tonight we’re heading to a secret destination, more specifically the compound. Luna doesn’t know where we’re going yet but she will properly be introduced to the life as all mob wives are. A smile crosses her lips when we keep staring at each other and unable to hold back anymore I reach out, snatching her to me.

The passengers horrified gasps make me grit my teeth but Luna’s amused and we both know what they’re thinking. They’re thinking that a man like me will hurt a girl like her and she presses her lips against mine to show them they have nothing to worry about. “Ignore them,” she whispers, playing with the buttons on my shirt. “They’re just judgmental.”

“You were too when we first met,” I remind her and she laughs.

“And I was right!” Biting her lip, she strokes my face with her knuckles and adds, “Well sort of. You don’t hurt good people, I know that now.”

I know better than to correct her. She's not completely right, though. If a man, good or bad ever came onto her then his morals wouldn't matter. Good or bad, they all deserve to die if they as much as look at Luna in a way I don't like.

“So, where exactly are we going...,” she begins, glancing at me when there's a scream somewhere in the back and she tenses in my arms. “What is that?”

We both look and I notice a guy with ginger hair, sitting in his seat with terrified eyes staring up at four other guys wearing baseball jackets. Luna gulps, clutching me to her and I can't have her nervous. There's enough experience in me to know what's going on isn't that serious but I don't want Luna arriving at the compound trembling. Rising, I look down at her when she clutches my hand.

“Are you out of your mind? Sit back down, now.”

The corners of my mouth curve because I always lap up the care as if it's cream. “Moon baby, I don't cower for anyone and neither does my woman. If something's bothering you, you're going to lean back and let your man handle it for you.”

Gulping, she looks up at me but then she gives up and lets me go. It doesn't take long before the situation settles and I throw the punks out, before handing the ginger guy his hat that

they smacked off his head. Then I walk back and everyone's staring at me at in awe while Luna smiles from ear to ear. Nothing makes her more proud than when people see me the way she sees me and when everyone starts clapping, she's the one clapping the loudest.

I bathe in her rays and my adoration hits me hot and gruff, like it always does and I wrap my arms around her, the passengers cheering when our lips meet and they don't see a mobster but a hero worthy of the woman. Our love is stretched wide and sometimes we can't keep up, trying our best by slaking our lust on each other and pouring our hearts out. Sometimes it's enough and sometimes it isn't but that's alright.

After all, we have an eternity together.

*The End*



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