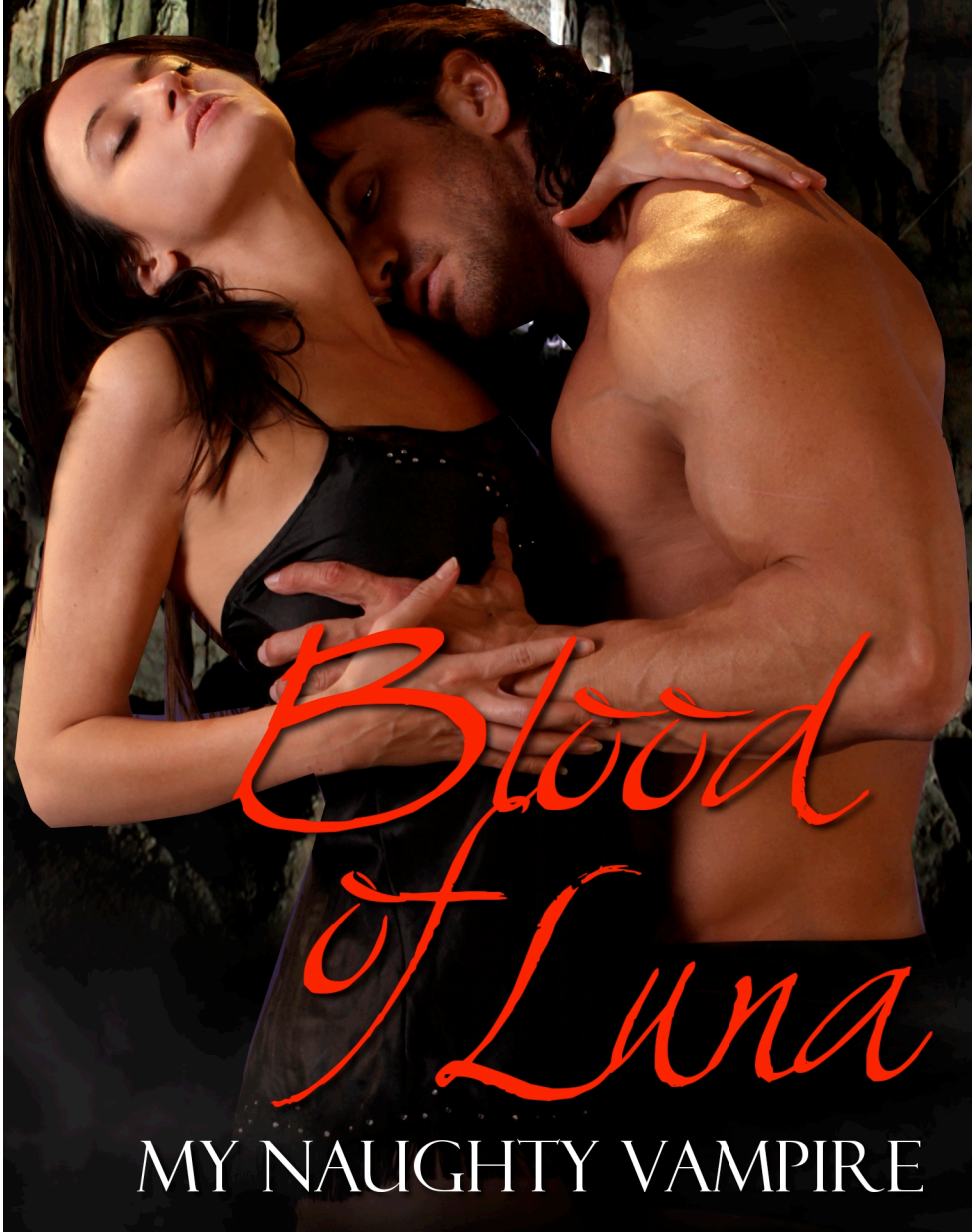


Evernight Publishing

MAYA DELEINA



*Blood  
of  
Luna*

MY NAUGHTY VAMPIRE



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## DEDICATION

For Suzanne- you are the creator of laughs, memories and cinematic magic...where would I be without you ice blue?

For Lala- you quench my thirst whenever I crave sexy, smart and utterly hilarious company. Thank you for the invaluable friendship and for Ickey (R.I.P)

For Tia- with a rousing spirit that matches your beauty, inspiration for Luna was never hard to find.

For Kevin- your kindness and humor is always one step beyond amazing.

For igniting the thunder and weathering the storm, thank you Dawn and Adonis. No one could ask for a better polish and shine.

And for M.J- the emotion on your face as you read pages of my mind are priceless. It's what inspires me to continue to write.

**BLOOD OF LUNA**  
*My Naughty Vampire, 1*  
Maya DeLeina  
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**Prologue**

*F*rom the steady movement of people on the sidewalk to a waitress hastily twisting a long metal apparatus to roll the menu from breakfast to lunch, the popular downtown restaurant was buzzing with energy.

Yet, in the corner of the open-air restaurant, Renny Morgan sat quietly at the bistro table, as if time stood still.

With one leg crossed over the other, he savored the flavor of his cappuccino passing through his lips in a delicate, long sip. He idly picked at the lemon scone that sat on his plate. The only thing that held his unequivocal attention was the woman who sat in complete stillness and silence across from him.

Suddenly he became anxious and alert as she showed signs of life.

With her eyes buried in the pages, she shook her head. A slight gasp, then a pleasing sigh escaped her, breaking the silence at the table.

“I take it that you like it?” Renny asked with an alluring flair. Her eyes lifted from the pages to meet his. “In all this time, you couldn’t tell me that I was in the book?”

Renny cocked his head to the side and flashed his sexy trademark smirk. “I wanted it to be a surprise.”

“Well, I’m definitely beyond surprised. But why me?”

“You once said to me that you wished your life could be a fantasy, where the sexy hero would come to the rescue. I just wanted to give you that escape, even if only in the pages of a book.”

“I—I don’t know what to say.”

“Say what you’re feeling, right now.”

“I’m feeling ... not worthy of this attention.”

“Not worthy? C’mon. You’re the kind of woman who gets attention before you even get out of bed in the morning.”

She smiled and tucked a portion of her long, black hair behind her ears. “You certainly know how to charm the pants off of a woman, Mr. Morgan.”

“Please, Mr. Morgan is my father.”

“You’re my employer. It’s habit.”

“No. I *was* your employer. Now that your work on the book

cover is done, I'm just Renny to you. And seeing that you're no longer my *employee*, I was somewhat hoping to charm more than just the pants off of you."

She smiled with her lips tightly bound together, as if trying to stop the smile from naturally beaming from ear to ear.

Renny uncrossed his legs and leaned into the table. "So now that you realize *you* were my inspiration for the female character, how did you like my portrayal?"

She let out a long sigh, and her eyes looked everywhere except into his. "I loved it. I mean, you used my name. I can't believe I'm reading my own name in there."

"Well, Luna is such a beautiful name. I didn't want to change that."

The pronounced dimples in her cheek melted Renny's heart in an instant.

"Thank you." She paused, then looked directly into his eyes. "But it was a weird in a way. I felt like I was actually in the character's skin, living through what she was experiencing."

Renny lowered his head and peered at her seductively with bedroom eyes. With a raspy and mesmerizing voice, he spoke. "Even the sex scenes?"

"Yes," she whispered.

Renny took off his reading glasses, tucking them into the case that sat next to his coffee cup and leaned in even closer to the table. “Tell me. Was there a particular man you imagined as the hero in the story?”

This time, no amount of lip puckering that she tried to muster could stop the giddy schoolgirl smile from spreading across her face. “Perhaps.”

Renny watched her, feeling his eyes deepen in an insatiable stare. The longer his eyes held her, the more her expression transitioned. He remained silent, hoping that she would reveal what he had longed to hear.

Luna reached for her water, letting her fingertip aimlessly trace the rim of her glass as her eyes focused on her task. “I thought of you.”

The four words were like music to his ears. “Jesus, Luna. You don’t know how hard it was to be around you sometimes.”

“How hard was it?” Luna looked up from the glass as her smile faded. Her eyes no longer had a playful undertone. Her voice was steady and confident.

She was a woman who meant business.

The tables were suddenly turned, and Renny was now the one to have shortness of breath. He licked his lips, which suddenly felt parched.

Luna stood up and slowly repositioned her chair alongside Renny. She sat down next to him. They were as close as could be, shoulders and legs touching each other. Not a sliver of space existed between their bodies.

Renny watched as Luna moved her hand slowly under the table to rest on his knee.

“I asked how hard was it?” Luna whispered in a soft yet commanding tone.

Renny reached for the black fabric napkin that lay scrunched in his lap. He spread the napkin out, covering his crotch. He reached for her hand and slid it under the napkin, settling her on his pronounced hardness. “This hard.”

Luna seemed to detect his rock hard cock under his dress trousers with no problem. She held him firmly in her grasp while her pointer finger and thumb went for an exploration, tracing the length and contours of his confined cock. In a throaty whisper, she let a revelation spill from her lips. “For so long, I dreamed of touching you like this.”

Renny leaned his head towards hers. “I fantasized of making love to you, Luna.”

Feeling Luna’s needy grip on him intensify in response, he reached down and slowly unzipped his pants. Fishing through the material, he pulled his cock out from its confines.

Warm, strong, and solid, he was nestled within the grip of



Luna as she stroked him under the cloak of the napkin.

“You would sit across from me, and all I could think about was touching you. Then I thought about how sweet your moans would sound in my ear as I spread you open and licked your clit,” he whispered in her ear.

Luna remained silent as her breathing intensified.

“I wondered what expression would be on your face as the head of my cock slid into your slick pussy.”

“Oh my God,” Luna whispered.

“I never forgot what you said about your lovers telling you your eyes turn ice blue when you have an orgasm.”

“I wanted to drive you mad with curiosity and desire.”

“Oh, you little devil. I went crazy imagining it as I wrote it.”

“Renny, touch me.” She parted her legs and hiked up her skirt under the table.

Renny moved discreetly under the table, trying not to alert the restaurant patrons to what was going on at the corner table. He slid his hands up along her bare inner thigh and then greedily made his way to her pussy. Through the moistened lace of her panties, he rubbed on her clit, making her squirm in her seat.

“Move it to the side,” she said softly.

Renny tucked his middle finger under the soaked fabric, and his flesh was met with a hot and slick wetness. Running up and down slowly along her lips, he dipped his finger inside her.

“Yes,” Luna whispered in a strained breath.

“Kiss me,” Renny said.

Luna angled her head in such a way that Renny could slowly and softly plant his lips on hers.

The soft kiss quickly became deliciously intense, and they fell into a passionate bliss. Tangled tongues delved into each other’s depths in erotic delight.

Renny pushed his finger deeper into Luna and heard her break their quiet exchange with a moan.

“Shh,” he whispered.

Luna broke from their kiss, and Renny felt her let go of her grasp on his cock. “We have to stop. This entire restaurant will know what we’re doing if you don’t stop.”

Renny slipped his finger out from inside her warm confines. Slowly moving his hand towards his face, he dipped his moistened finger into his mouth delighting in the sweet and spicy taste of Luna. Her eyes widened with excitement. “You dirty man, you.”

Renny smiled.

“Shall we take this somewhere private?” Luna asked.

He leaned in close to her ear. “I know of a very special place.”

A spark of excitement fired in her eyes.

Renny tucked his cock back into the confines of his trousers and zipped himself up. He wiped the corner of his mouth with the fabric napkin and dropped a wad of cash on the table for the waitress. He stood from the chair. “Shall we?”

Luna lifted the napkin from off her lap and smoothed down her skirt. “Absolutely.”

Offering his hand, she slid her hand into his and gracefully got up from the table. They made their way to the sidewalk and rounded the corner of the block to Renny’s gleaming silver and black Audi R8. Renny held the passenger door open for Luna as she glided into the seat. He moved hastily to the driver’s side. Sliding into the driver seat, he fastened his seat belt across his body and started the car. “Here we go”

Renny maneuvered the car through a maze of city streets. Stop lights, taxis, masses of people crossing at intersections—everywhere he turned there was an obstacle. The anticipation to hit the open road was thicker than the concrete buildings that surrounded them.

“We’re almost out of the city,” Renny’s said in a calming voice, noticing that Luna seemed antsy in her seat.

“Sorry, this traffic wears on me.”

After a few more red lights and turns, Renny entered the ramp that would eventually lead him to the coastal highway.

“We’re heading to the coast I take it?”

Renny remained silent and nodded his head.

“Um ... you’re not going to tell me where we’re going?”

“I told you, it’s a surprise.”

“I don’t do well with surprises, Renny. I like being prepared.”

“Prepared has nothing to do with it. You don’t like not being in *control*.”

Luna remained silent as she simply stared out the window.

“That’s the city in you. Try to sit back, relax, and enjoy where the day takes you. No itinerary. No planning.”

Luna shook her head, “All right. All right. Life is short. Stop and smell the roses.”

“Quoting bumper stickers are you?”

Luna laughed. “Seriously though, are we going to be at this *secret* place long? I need some of my things. I have Ickey—”

“Lala’s bringing Ickey,” Renny said, breaking her in midsentence.

“Your assistant has Ickey?”

“Per my instructions, Lala also gathered up your art supplies and some clothes. We’re gonna be at this *secret* place for a little while.”

From the corner of his eye, he could see Luna slump back in her chair. He had never seen her so relaxed.

Minutes passed in absolute silence. Renny sank into the luxury of his leather seats, enjoying the way the car smoothly handled the curves in the road. Occasionally, he glanced in her direction to see Luna watching the scenery pass through her window. Mile after mile, she seemed to submerge deeper into a peaceful and reflective state.

“What has you so silent over there?” Renny asked.

“Thinking about the story.”

“Hmmm, do tell.”

“The hero ... how did you choose his name?”

“He was named after a good friend whom I have known since college. He lives overseas now. I’m hoping you two can meet someday.”

Renny looked in her direction, sensing that she still had more on her mind. “Okay, out with it. What else is in that head of yours?”

“It’s silly.”

“Just say it.”

“Do you ever imagine yourself as one of your characters?”

“See, now that wasn’t silly at all. The truth is, when I am writing a book, I *am* that character. I put myself in the middle of what’s happening. I want to understand how I would react to things, how things would look, sound, and feel all around me. Sometimes my dreams are my storylines, with me right there in it, like it was my reality.”

“What about the entire vampire thing?”

“Do I imagine myself as a vampire?”

“Yes.”

Renny chuckled, “How could I not? I mean, vampires were a childhood fascination of mine. I loved the fact that they were depicted in so many different ways. There are different supernatural powers you can explore and various weaknesses—arithomania, garlic, sunlight, religious symbols. The possibilities of what you could create with a vampire are endless.”

“Very true.”

“Recently though, the eternity part is what interests me. Maybe it’s because I am getting older and thinking my own mortality.”

“Why are you thinking about death?”

“Death frightens me. How do you prepare for death? How do you even begin to accept that? Don’t you fear this?”

“So *this* why you only write about vampires.”

“Imagine how different this world would be if vampires were real. You would have choices ... options.”

“Certainly gets you thinking.” Luna looked down at Renny’s manuscript, which lay in her lap. Turning it over, she traced her fingers over the mock-up cover that displayed her graphic designs and photograph rendering.

Renny watched as her eyes were locked in focus. A look of achievement, pride, and fulfillment washed over her face.

With a deep sigh, she looked up at Renny. She shifted in her seat. Leaning into his body, she traced a finger along his chin. “You deviant and sly man. I think I know where you’re taking me. You had this all planned out for awhile, didn’t you?”

Renny smiled with a devious smirk. “That I did. But unfortunately, all the planning in the world didn’t account for this.”

He raised a hand off of the steering wheel, signaling towards the landscape that lay right outside the windshield.

Luna turned to look outside.

“Damn fog is starting to roll in.”



## Chapter One

“*B*eautiful,” I whispered in pure delight.

I dusted the remaining bits of sand from the stone and rolled it in my palm. The finish was smooth and cold against my skin.

Weeks ago, you would never have found me here.

I used to live in the city. Hectic and demanding, my life had been filled with endless commutes, contract negotiations and meetings. But strolling along this patch of shoreline just before sunrise was now my life.

A light mist danced across the beach for this particular morning’s stroll, and I loved it. Whether it was the chill in the air that crept along my skin or the feeling of being suspended among the clouds, my surroundings were ethereal and dream-like. The degree of mysticism sparked delicious fantasies to play out in my mind, as if wandering through an undiscovered, faraway land.

And while it definitely took the edge off of my reality, the mist was welcoming because it meant I would be alone.

My neighbors rarely made an appearance on the beach on mornings like this. I had the entire stretch of shoreline to myself. I could avoid the awkwardness in having to engage in conversations about nothing that really concerned me with people who meant very

little to me. I didn't care which neighbor was having an affair with their personal trainer. I didn't care if the barista in the town's favorite coffeehouse made adult movies. And I really didn't care if a prominent attorney who lived just houses down from me dressed up in women's clothing.

What I cared about most out here was finding my last stone of the day.

I smiled in reflection as I gave the stone one more look. Playfully, I let it roll out of my hand and into the pocket of my jacket where it tumbled against the other six I had found earlier.

Seven stones. They're what kept me sane.

The stones were going into my oversized glass apothecary jar that sat in the foyer of my house. I told myself that by the time I filled the jar to the top, I would be strong, I would be healed, and I would be ready to start my new life.

I had been here a little over six weeks, and since day one, I had felt like I was in nothing but a state of limbo. The accident had done a number on me physically and mentally. Sure, this was a time for healing, but beyond that, I didn't know what I was trying to accomplish by uprooting all that I knew to be here all alone. And although I knew that I couldn't live day to day walking the beach and sleeping hours on end, I just couldn't get myself to want to get out of this rut and move on. For me, counting and collecting stones for the jar was a calculated goal, something my mind could focus on methodically and ritualistically.

And with the jar just about full, I would soon learn if this plan of mine worked.

I didn't know what it was about my curiosity on this particular morning. Instead of heading down the sea grass path that would lead me back to the house like I typically did after finding the seventh suitable stone of the day, I kept walking. I glanced at my house as I strolled past. It was an old Victorian place with a large wrap-around porch, intricate filigree millwork, and a prominent turret perched picture perfect on the coastal sand dune. Although the house was a bright, sunny-yellow color with gleaming white trim, the mist dulled the color, sheathing it in a mystery.

I stopped for a moment and admired the look of the house in the mist. The feather-like tops of the sea grass swayed gently around the house, heightening the lurking eeriness of the scene. I reached deep into the pockets of my jacket to retrieve my gloves. I stood still, sliding each glove on my hand as my eyes fixed on the house, and my ears tuned into the deafening silence of the landscape. In fact, the silence was so loud that if you listened closely, the sound of the rolling waves and seagulls could not be heard.

After fixing the second glove to my hand, I pulled the zipper farther up on my jacket and tied my scarf a bit tighter to prepare for a longer exposure to the elements.

With a deep breath, I began my journey.

I had never ventured to the rocky part of the beach before, where the sand was traded for jagged rocks. I didn't know what to expect. My world was a tiny bubble of the same rotation of landscape

scenes, so when neighbors had mentioned in passing that caves scattered the shoreline at this end of the beach, it piqued my interest.

And in keeping with the conversation they would typically engage in, the neighbors shared stories of who was using drugs or having sex in the caves. That's all I basically knew. Never mind any geological or historical facts, just more gossip and a warning to stay clear of the caves.

I wondered if the caves were shallow or deep, with systems that led to more caverns. Visions of trekking through old, untouched pockets in the earth danced in my head and quickened my pulse. I lingered in deliberation about what they would look like and especially, what inhabited them. The thoughts kept my mind occupied as I travelled the shoreline in solitude.

Soon, the metronomic sound of the sand crunching under my feet that unconsciously directed my pace was noticeably gone. Noticeably gone, too, were my leisure and the relaxing walk that allowed me to daydream. I had to focus all of my attention on the path that lay in front of me—what the mist would allow me to see of the path, that is.

The rocky path was uneven, sharp, and jagged in some places. The rocks were all different sizes and shapes, which made me gauge and calculate my path like an obstacle course. Add to this the fact that rocks were precariously balancing on other rocks and the obstacle course just became somewhat of a death trap.

“Shit!” I yelled out in a piercing sharpness. The rock I had my body weight on suddenly gave out from underneath me. My foot

slipped from the rock and slid right into the slightest crevice between two neighboring rocks.

“Damn it!” A trace of frustration fueled my voice.

My ankle wedged in between the rocks at a weird angle, twisting it to the point that I felt a sudden icy ache. I winced in pain and immediately sat down with my foot still wedged in the formation. I stilled for a moment, allowing the ache in my ankle to subside. The mist still thickly blanketed the area, but it began to swirl and roll right before my eyes. Like a curtain opening up for the first time on a stage, the mist dissipated, creating a clearing to allow the landscape to reveal itself.

Caves.

Dark chasms carved into the earth pebbled the entire length of the cliff-side.

“Wow,” I whispered.

I took in a deep breath as I soaked in the entire scene. Some of the cave floors were filled with jagged pieces of rock, while others seemed to have a mixture of crushed rock and sand lining the bottom. And as I suspected, some were shallow, merely indentations in the cliff-side, while others seemed endless, like the entrance to another world.

I was simply enthralled with the view.

My heartbeat grew just a bit stronger as the yearning to

explore my new surroundings materialized like a fever.

I shimmied my foot, carefully and strategically, until my foot was at the right angle to free itself. I supported my weight by balancing my hand on a tall rock, and I stood. Slowly transitioning my weight, I took a step. There was a distinct pain, but it wasn't anything I couldn't bear. Moving steadily and cautiously, I maneuvered through the rocky landscape. Rivers of sand peeked through the crevices of the rocks until the ground gave way to a blanket of sand.

I stood on the last rock and scanned the remaining path.

A peculiar patterning in the sand came off the rocks from where I stood. A deep channel cut into the smoothness of the path, as if something had been dragged that way. My eyes eagerly followed where it led. In an unwavering line, it carved a trail directly to one of the caves, before vanishing completely in the swallowing darkness.

A shiver ran through my body.

I placed my foot on the sand and then walked as fast as my ankle would allow me to go. My mind raced as all the possibilities of what I would find at the end of the line played out in my head. There was no denying that a big part of me was terrified at what I could find, but curiosity was overriding every rational thought and instinct. I couldn't stop now. I wanted to see what was in the cave. I needed to see what was in the cave.

Then suddenly, I stopped in my tracks. Sand kicked up behind me in a little whirlwind from my abrupt stop. The wind gusts coming off the cliff blew against me violently, whipping the ends of my hair against my face like little lashes.

“Oh my God!”

Drips of blood lay at my feet. Farther down the path, the drips became lines. And even farther down the path, the lines formed into a big bloody pool right outside the cave’s entrance.

I walked slowly alongside the blood trail, closer and closer to the cave until I reached the pool of blood.

Then the stench hit me like an invisible wall, knocking the breath right out of me.

I coughed and gagged with an intensity that commanded all of my attention. I blinked to ease the burning sensation in my eyes. “H-Hello? Is someone in here?” I said with a faint breath. I was able to breathe again, but I tried to vary my intake through my mouth to deaden the harsh odor. “Are you injured? I can send help.”

I remained at the opening of the cave, angling my voice toward its recesses. Any desire I had earlier to explore that cave escaped me. I didn’t dare step one foot farther into the darkness. I waited for a good minute for a response.

Nothing.

“I see the blood out here. If you are hurt, I can help. But you have to come out here on the beach if you want my help.”

Again, all was silent.

I lingered for what seemed like forever, confused as to what to do.

*What if it's a dead animal in there? Who knows what is feeding on its carcass. What if it's a dead body?*

The stench was no doubt the scent of a death, but in no way was I going to go in to investigate on my own.

After lingering for just a bit longer, I turned and walked away. Caught somewhere between being dejected and relieved, I walked with an air of defeat back to the house.

*So I didn't find out the mystery in the cave. I'll just call the police when I get back.*

Suddenly, the sound of rocks tumbling and crashing together echoed from within the cave.

I froze.

My heart raced, and my knees trembled.

I slowly turned around to see a single rock tumble its way out of the cave and come to rest on the sand.

“Oh shit!”

I walked back slowly to the cave and planted myself once again at the entrance.



The rock that had rolled out of the cave lay at my feet. I bent down and picked it up with every intention to examine it. My hand immediately felt a rush of coolness. I grabbed the rock with my other hand and laid the other out palm up.

My hand was covered in blood.

Shaken, I discarded the rock in fit of terror and fright.

I can't explain exactly why I didn't run. I think it had to do something with the way my mind worked. My inquisitiveness overrode any defensive and self-preservation programming my body was tapped into. I just wanted to get down to the bottom of the mystery.

"I hear you in there!" I screamed.

Absolute silence.

"I heard the rocks fall, and one of the rocks rolled out here. And it is covered in blood! What's wrong? What's going on in there?"

Silence.

"I don't understand this. You're obviously hurt. I can help you. Answer me!"

I had no clue why I continued to talk to "*it*". Whatever was in the cave was likely an animal—something injured or even dead with other animals feasting on its flesh. This is what my brain was trying to

convince my body of—that it was just an animal.

But in my gut, something told me that wasn't the case.

“Go away.” A low male voice projected from the darkened depth.

Startled, I jumped in reaction.

I hated that my gut was right.

“I'm not going to harm you. I—I see the blood on the rocks here. I'm not a doctor, but I can call an ambulance to help you.”

“Lady, I said go away.”

“Look, I'm not going away. Did you hurt someone in there? I will call the cops, you know,” I said with an unconvincing sternness.

“No.”

“No, what?”

“No cops. There is no one here but me. I hurt myself ... badly.” His voice was little more relaxed, softer and calmer this time.

“Let me help you then.”

“You're not going to like what you see.”

I shook as gruesome images flooded my mind, “W-why? You

have a big gaping wound? You missing a leg, arm or something?”

“I’m not missing any leg or arm. I’m just shattered.”

I released a heavy breath. *Shattered? What did that mean?*

Mentally and physically preparing myself for what I was about to see was agonizing and put my stomach in tight knots.

“Look, I don’t want to come in there. Can you walk?”

“Yes, but I can’t step out there like this.”

I bent my knees and rested my hands on my thighs as if trying to coax him out like a frightened kitten. “It’s a dreadful gray and gloomy morning, so no one is out on the beach. It’s just me. My house is not that far away.”

“The sun isn’t out?”

“No.”

“Not even a peek through the clouds?”

I looked up at the sky and slowly turned around.

The mist grew thick once again. I couldn’t even see the sky, let alone a few feet in front of me. And the chill in the air had intensified. I turned my body back to the cave to respond. “No. It’s foggy out here. It’s so thick I can’t even see the sky.”

“Do you have a dark area in your house, a basement perhaps?”

“Uh ... it’s the beach. The house is on stilts.”

“Good point.”

“I have black-out drapes though. I have trouble sleeping.”

There was silence once again.

Our conversation bouncing from one another like a tennis match abruptly came to a standstill. Suddenly I heard movement from within the darkness. The sound of rocks sliding against one another suggested he had gotten up from a seated position and was heading to the entrance, right where I stood.

“Are you sure you want to help me?” he asked.

His voice sounded as if he was right in front of me. My heart beat like a drum. The powerful rhythm nearly took my breath away I squinted and blinked to adjust my eyesight. Yet, for how close his voice sounded, I couldn’t see anything, not even a silhouette.

“I have no choice. I can’t just turn around and leave knowing you’re here.”

Again, there was silence. He didn’t respond, and I didn’t hear a peep of movement. I stood there, at the entrance of the cave, freezing and frightened.

Then suddenly, I saw his eyes. He was moving silently towards me.

“Oh...” The quick intake of breath chilled the inside of my mouth.

*“Dear lord, what have I got myself into?”*

## Chapter Two

The man was towering, colossal, almost giant-like. He was covered in filth from head to toe. The white of his eyes and his piercing stare shone like diamond against the blackness he was covered in.

And then I noticed he was completely nude.

“Y-you didn’t tell me you were naked! Where are your clothes?”

“Ruined. Shredded to pieces.”

“Oh my God! You must’ve been freezing in there. Here, take my jacket,” I said as I unzipped my jacket.

“What good is that going to do? Your jacket won’t even fit around my shoulders.”

“I—I was just trying to help.”

“Keep it on. I’m fine.”

“Your feet, they’re gonna get cut up on the rocky path we have to take back. It’s not all sand.”

“I’ll manage. Can we just go?”

I nodded my head and turned around, beginning the trek home. The reality that I was taking this man home hit me like a tidal wave and robbed me of my ability to speak.

*What was I thinking?*

Maybe the accident had had an affect on my judgment since safety never crossed my mind up until now. But there wasn't much I could do since I had just coaxed him out of the cave and offered my home as a temporary shelter and treatment center. All I could do was hope that everything would be fine. In a moment of apprehension, I squeezed against the pocket of my jacket, assuring myself that I had my cell phone. But even with the slight uneasiness, the unbridled excitement in me was still undeniable and, worst of all, mounting.

He followed me in silence.

I negotiated the uneven rocks carefully and slowly. My ankle was throbbing, and I was careful with balancing most of my weight on the opposite leg. While I didn't look back once, I knew he was right there behind me. It didn't appear that he had any trouble walking on the rocks with his bare feet.

"Lady, you're limping. You okay?" he asked, breaking the silence.

"I twisted my ankle on these rocks earlier. It's tender, but it's manageable. The house is not that far from here now. And my name is Luna, by the way. So you don't have to call me 'lady' anymore."

"Your name is moon? What were your parents thinking?"

“Hippies.” I laughed. “My sister is Kyra—”

“As in *Ra*, the goddess of the sun? Sun, Moon ... got a brother named Stars?” he asked, cutting me short of what I was going to say.

For just being rescued from a cave and offered shelter and first aid from a complete stranger, he wasn't exactly displaying an amount of appreciation in his conversation with me. In fact, he was acting like an asshole.

I stopped and turned around with every intention to put his attitude in check. But when I saw him, my eyes went directly to his cock.

God, he was so naked and so well-endowed.

And he just caught me staring.

“Luna?”

“Shit! Sorry.” I closed my eyes tightly and turned away. I continued to walk without saying a word.

I was thankful that he remained quiet as well.

After a few more minutes of trekking through the rocks, the patch give way to sand once again, and I began to see the beginnings of the sea grass that lined my property. Just a few more steps and the outline of the home peeked through the gloominess.



“We’re here!” I said as I put a little spark in my step. Sore ankle or not, I wanted nothing more than to get inside the house. And I knew that my hint of excitement wasn’t only from wanting to get inside to warm up.

I wanted to learn more about this mysterious naked man whom I found in the cave.

“Quite a large house for someone to live in on their own. Who else is home, Luna?” he asked as he walked cautiously towards the house.

“I—I live alone. There’s no one. It’s an old bed and breakfast that I hope to get off the ground and running one of these days. Shall we?” I said as I made my way to the door.

I fumbled with the keys in the door.

I could feel him behind me—watching me, evaluating me. I had to push through, mentally concentrate on only opening the door. In my awkward excitement, the keys dropped from my hands. But before they even had a chance to hit the ground, he reached out and caught the keys, cupping them in the palm of his hand.

“Luna, am I making you nervous?” he asked as he balled the keys up in his fist.

I looked directly into his eyes and then immediately looked down, breaking the spell he started to put me under. “I just found you in a cave. You’re naked on my doorstep. You’re about to come inside my home. What part am I *not* supposed to be nervous about?”

Suddenly he reached for my hand that held on to the doorknob in a death grip.

The gentle touch of his hand melted me upon contact, and I let loose the knob, allowing him to unlock the door. He gently pushed open the door and gestured for me to step inside.

“You have nothing to fear with me. I’m a gentleman.”

I laughed gawkily.

That was one of my nervous tics, to laugh like a dimwit. I couldn’t control it. In times of extreme nervousness, I outright sounded like a cartoon character.

I entered my house and flipped the light switch to illuminate the entry.

No light shone.

I flipped the switch off and on again.

And again, no light.

Feverishly, I moved the switch from the on to the off position repeatedly.

“What is it?” he asked, still standing outside the door.

“I think the power is out,” I said as the clicking noise of me flipping the switch popped in the room.

“Do you know that the definition of insanity is?”

“Huh?” I asked, still focused on the ceiling lights and the light switch. He didn’t quite have my full attention. I heard what he asked, but it seemed too random and out of place to fully process. Besides, I was more interested in what was wrong with the electricity in my place.

“It’s doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results,” he said plainly.

I stopped instantly, letting my hand fall from the switch to my side.

Hell, he had my full attention now.

I gave him a harsh look, turned around, and walked into the foyer. When I realized that I didn’t hear the door close behind me, I halted and turned back around.

To my surprise, he remained planted at the door, looking into my home.

“Well?” I asked with a little sass.

“You didn’t invite me in, Luna.”

I sighed. “You’re waiting for an invite? All right. Please come in.”

Eagerly, he stepped over the threshold.

Suddenly, this tall, nude man was standing in my home. With the shock of the events wearing off, I finally did what my mind hadn't allowed me to do earlier.

I assessed him as a man and not a creature.

He did not have delicate features. This man was rugged with sharp, piercing eyes, chiseled cheekbones and a strong jaw line. And even though covered in filth, he was handsome, oozing with a rough sexual magnetism that was dangerously captivating. I worked hard to stave off the smile that wanted to plaster itself ear to ear. I turned around, walking farther into my home.

With my back turned to him and my emotions safely shielded, I unleashed the smile. "Close the door please. Let's get you cleaned up, and we can decide if I need to call an ambulance or not."

He closed the door and followed the path I took. "No. No ambulance. I just need to clean up and rest a bit."

I remained quiet as I led him to the upstairs bathroom. The farther I went into the house, the darker it got. "We'll go up to the master bath. There is a big tub that should work well. Can you see okay?"

"Yes."

"Spiral staircase to upstairs, be careful on the steps in the dark," I said as I negotiated the each step. Behind me, his heavy

footsteps shook the metal staircase with every step he took.  
I reached the top of the stairs and headed to the master bath.

It occurred to me that I hadn't bothered to open the black-out curtains in my bedroom, let alone make the bed before I left for my morning walk. "Don't mind my bed. I didn't have a chance to make it yet."

I heard a light chuckle escape him and resonate in the hall behind me. "Well, we're not going anywhere near your bed. I mean, you're just taking me up to your bedroom to allow me to clean up and that's it, right?"

My heart pounded in my chest. I turned around in silence.

He looked at me the way I sometimes looked at a piece of really good chocolate.

One look and a million fiery tingles sparked along my skin and wrapped me like a blanket. My nipples became taut. My knees became weak. My mouth became dry.

"Luna, am I correct?" he asked with persistence.

"Um ... t-that's correct."

"So whether the bed is made or not shouldn't matter."

My nervous laughter sounded again as I hastily made my way to the bedroom. To make matters worse, he continued on the subject.

"Of course, if we were coming up to your bedroom to do

*‘that’*, then not having the bed made makes it a little more convenient, wouldn’t you say? And if you’re one of those women who keep a million pillows for decoration...” He trailed off.

I laughed even harder like that cartoon character. It made me sick to my stomach just hearing it.

My bedroom was completely ensconced in darkness. There wasn’t even a slither of light shining through the seams of my curtains. I couldn’t see my mystery man, but I could feel his unmistakable presence in the room. “I’ll light some candles. Wait here.”

I made my way to the master bath.

The large soaking tub sat center in the room, and I immediately engaged the faucet since it took a while to fill up. I tested the water temperature and corrected for a nice balance. I moved to the vanity and retrieved my long butane lighter. One by one, I lit the tall, white pillar candles that lined the tub surround. Soon, the room began to fill with an amber glow as each candle came to life.

“This will do.” The low tenor of his voice filled the room.

I jumped in a startled reaction. “I thought I said to wait in the bedroom?”

“Sorry. Guess I’m just anxious to get all of this off of me.”

“Well, the bath is still filling up. Why don’t you sit at the edge of the tub? I’ll wipe down your face for you, and then I can leave you

to your bath.” I reached for a wash cloth and dipped it in the stream of water as he took a seat as directed. I wrung out the excess water and balled the cloth up, setting it next to him on the tub surround.

“I thought *you* were going to bathe me.”

I was walking in the direction of the medicine cabinet when his question made me stop in my tracks. I turned around and looked him in the eye. “Oh. I can ... I mean, if you think you need help to bathe, yes, I can help you. I just thought ...well ... you were walking fine, so I thought you weren’t as badly injured as you thought.”

“If you noticed, I haven’t been using my arms much. I am still very much in pain from my injuries, so bathing myself, while entirely possible, would be a little painful. I would appreciate it if you could help me.”

I nodded my head, trying to keep my enthusiasm hidden.

“Sure, I’ll help you.” I turned around and opened the medicine cabinet to retrieve the first aid kit that I thought I would need to have ready as I uncovered his wounds.

“Thank you, Luna. Thank you for this,” he said as I walked back over to him. He sat with his hands cupped together in his lap. His eyes were expressive and sincere.

For the first time since leaving the cave, his callous demeanor faded, and he showed signs of having depth and emotion.

*Damn.* This would be so much easier to get through if he

remained an asshole.

“You’re welcome. Let’s get you cleaned up.”

I set the first aid kit on the tub surround and dragged the bench of my vanity over to where he sat. I positioned myself in front of his face. I kneeled on the thick cushion of the bench, placing one knee at a time, then reached for the washcloth.

“Ready?”

He nodded his head in an affirmative response.

I reached out to touch his face with my bare fingers, accessing the filth that covered his body. The blackness felt like brittle pieces of old paper. It took some pressure, but the shell that covered him began to flake, breaking down to what looked like fine ash in my hand.

“What is this? What are you covered in? This feels ... crispy.”

“I got burned.”

“Burned? You’ll need to go to the hospital if that is what we are dealing with!”

“Just clean. You’ll see. I’ll be like brand new underneath.”

I wrapped a portion of the washcloth around the tip of my pointer finger and began to wipe his face. And like he predicted, unblemished, smooth skin surfaced as I cleaned him up. I continued wiping down his face when I caught his eyes up close looking into mine.



“Your eyes!” I exclaimed as I pulled back from his face.

“I know. It sometimes freaks people out.”

“I’m not freaked out. I think it’s...” I paused trying to form what I felt into words.

“It’s?” he asked.

“Unforgettable. One gray and one brown.”

“Actually, they’re the same color. I have anisocoria.”

“What?”

“It’s a condition I have. My pupils are different sizes, so that’s why they look like they’re different colors.”

“Huh.” I shook my head. “Never heard of that before. Still, it looks neat.”

He smiled and just stared at me.

My stomach dipped and rolled, making me do a quick gasp for air.

Slowly, he raised one arm and caught my wrist in his hand. I parted my lips and bit down on a good chunk of flesh from my bottom lip. My eyes moved from his and concentrated on where we joined flesh on flesh. I watched him slowly move my wrist towards his face as my breath quickened in excitement. He pressed

my pointer finger against his skin.

“Wash, please,” he said, sounding seductive to my ears.

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