

Love & Death

Jo L.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Third Wheel	9
Coffee Isn't So Bad Afterall	17
Quiet Love Confession	30
The Apprentice	40
Innocent Demons	50

This book is dedicated to my family and friends who supported me on writing these stories and book.

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on page 3**

Third Wheel

**Times heals all sorrows get over, no worries 'cause
nothing is more precious than love. Noble...**

Faithful...

My eyes closed shut as the chorus played until I
felt my left earphone taken out of my ear. I opened my
eyes and looked up to the left to see Haru, my guy best

friend, wearing the left earphone that's supposed to be in my ear.

“What anime is this song from?”

“Violet Evergarden. It's called Violet Snow from the original soundtrack.”

“Ah, the one from Netflix.” He said, taking the headphone off placing it back into my left ear, as he took a seat in front of me sitting backward-facing me. Then he asked, “What do you have for lunch today Meili?” I paused the song, took off my headphones, and placed my boxed lunch on the desk.

“Rice, yu choy, chicken and apple slices,” I replied, lifting off the top of the box, taking out my chopsticks, and starting eating.

“Can I have-”

I held up a piece of chicken close to his mouth, “You don't have to ask. We both know I'm going to give you.” He leaned in and took a bite of it then gave me a smile, as I shook my head sighing looking up at him. Then

he leaned on my shoulder causing me to flinch but shrugged it off, as I went back to eating my rice. From the corner of my eye, I could see the mole near his right red-eye while sporting his new simple medium jet black hairstyle. I noticed it was new because the last time he got a new haircut was a year ago.

“So Meili should I confess to Yoona today?”

Right, I forgot to mention Haru has a crush on Yoona who is my female best friend. Plot twist! Yoona has a crush on Haru. These two are oblivious of their feelings for each other like bruh even the whole school knows! I question how I'm their best friend since the 1st grade. This sounds like a typical scenario in a romance movie where the main girl and guy are in love with each other, and everyone knows but them. Except this is the exact opposite since I'm not in this situation! You're supposed to give me the happy ending author!! I'm the main protagonist of this short story. How can you do this to me?! I NEED LOVE TOO!!!

“Haru, I keep telling you this... Yes!” I sighed pushing my round glasses up to my face giving him a poker face.

“What happens if I get rejected though?” He asked with a frown on his face.

“You won’t,” I replied, slowly eating a piece of yu choy, thinking. He raised a brow and asked,

“How would you know?”

“Women’s intuition,” I replied back, eating my food faster than a snail.

“Haru.”

Haru and I looked at the classroom door to see Yoona smiling at us. He quickly stood up from his seat, leaning his hand on my desk trying to look cool. While other students looked at him but turned back into their conversation about OverWatch, or even went back to studying for an upcoming midterm that sadly ranks our school to other school systems in the Tokyo prefecture.

“Smooth Romeo.” I deadpan while munching on my rice.

“Can I talk to you out in the hall?”

“Sure.” He said heading towards the front of the door with Yoona as the two left the room.

A female classmate with medium length ash brown hair began to murmur around the classroom saying how perfect they are, their looks complement each other, they’re going to be together for a long time.

With all the noise going on around me I looked out the window shutting the voices out of my head. I mean everyone’s not wrong looking at Yoona, who wouldn’t want to date her? Her makeup makes her 10 times more naturally beautiful, her long curled hair with pink highlights suits her, painted nails of bright pastel colors, and she’s friendly with everyone. Next, Haru, his dimpled smile, his deep red ruby eyes, his right piercing makes him look cool, and his tall and slim build compliments her petite slim body. This got me thinking,

'I'm not beautiful like Yoona. I'm just average looking-- like a potato. Even if I did confess to Haru, I would get flat out rejected since he has a huge crush on Yoona for like 7 years. The only thing I could do is let go and let them be together like a side character would do for the main lovers.' Wait just a minute am I actually the side character and not the main character of this unrequited love story!? Author... Seriously what the flipping hell girl?! I want to flip my desk because of this predicament!

Then I heard the white door slide open, I turned my head to see Yoona and Haruto holding hands coming towards me with smiles on my face.

'I wish that was me.' I thought smiling fakely at them.

"Meiiii! Guess what? Haru and I are--"

"Going out? I know! Finally, about time too!" I said quickly with a closed eye smile, as Yoona turned the wooden chair to sit across from me, and Haru pulled the chair next to me to my wooden desk. He reaches for an apple slice.

“Yah! No! Get food from Yoona.” I said spitefully slapping his hand away.

“I know right! Who knew we felt- Wait Mei why are you crying!?”

“Eh?”

I touched my cheek as it was wet. “Huh, I guess I’m really happy for you two that I started crying happy tears.” I chuckled bitterly while wiping my endless tears as it runs down my face like a waterfall.

“Aw, Mei you don’t have to cry because of us. We will always be here for you! We are best friends after all!” Haru said with a smile patting my back.

“Haha yeah... Best friends...” I sniffed.

Coffee Isn't So Bad

Afterall **titles of stories, do smaller font size**

Ruby opened the white double doors moving through the loud and bustling noise of the dining hall.

Damn, why do they act like they're back in high school?

While walking past the tables that were filled with students.

Ruby spotted her best friend Noah sitting at the small rectangular table. She walked towards his table,

“Hey, Rube! We need to decide, immediately who is the best girl in Kim Possible,” Noah stated with his arms crossed staring at his best friend.

“What do you mean? We already know who the best girl is,” Said Ruby.

“I know, right? You already said her name, Rube. Though, there are still morons out there who think

otherwise.” Noah said, stirring his boba milk tea around staring at her with the ‘No shit Sherlock’ look on his face.

“What!? Kim is definitely not the best girl! It’s clearly Shego, I can’t believe you’re part of the morons who think that.” Said Ruby.

“Of course, Kim is the best girl! She is athletic, intelligent, and can kickass. Think about it you uncultured swine!” Noah said to her.

“I’m uncultured!? I think you’re talking about yourself their buddy. Shego can shoot a green energy beam from her hands which is more badass then what Kim can do.” Argued back Ruby while glaring at Noah who did the same back at her.

This debate captured the attention of other Redwood university students. They gave odd looks and whispered to one another about the two having a dispute about who the best girl was in Kim Possible.

Well, this is embarrassing... Ruby thought while looking down on the white tiled floor of the cafeteria

pinching the bridge of her nose. She looked up, sighed, "I'll just take a seat."

"Couldn't agree more," said Noah as he turned his body in the chair facing the table. Ruby took a seat across from him at the table.

"So how was your fiction class?" Noah asked, continuing to sip his boba milk tea. Ruby shrugged her shoulders, "It's fine, though our assignment is quite hard."

"What's the topic this time?" Noah asked, placing his head on his hand looking at her.

"Love." Ruby sighed out while tapping the table. "That should be easy." Said Noah. Ruby looked at him as if he had another head.

"Yes, but I want it to be not sappy and cringe like some love stories are, you know? I think Professor Hatheway is just a sucker for love stories."

"What makes you say that?" Noah raised a brow at her.

“She wouldn’t shut up about being married and all the romance movies she’s been watching,” Said Ruby sighing deeply as she put her head on the table remembering the professor’s nonstop rambling of how cute the I’m flying scene in Titanic is.

“Yikes, that must’ve been rough,” Said Noah while sipping his boba milk tea.

“You have no idea... I’m struggling to come up with an idea for this topic.” Ruby slumped in her seat sighing. Noah picked up a fry, “I mean if you’re struggling you should go to Late Latte Cafe,” He suggested while munching on a fry.

“Oh, isn't that the university's famous coffee joint?” Asked Ruby taking a fry as she took a bite out of it.

“Yeah, though that’s not all. The cafe is also popular because of the employees, and how friendly and good looking they are,” Noah mentioned as he took another fry he had on the table. Ruby raised her brow at

him unsure where this conversation was heading, “And how does this cafe relate to me writing a love story?”

Noah looked at Ruby as if she grew another head, “What? Was it something I said?” She asked while looking at her best friend.

“To gather ideas. I thought you knew that since you're a writer,” Replied Noah straightforwardly.

“Wow, gee thanks I clearly wasn't hurt by that,” Ruby stated back with a deadpan expression on her face, as she stood up from her seat and started walking towards the exit of the cafeteria.

“Eh? Rube where are you going?” Noah asked across the room clearly, gaining the attention of some students while the others were drowned in their own world to notice.

“Where else? Late Latte Cafe!”

“Oh Rube, I know you don't like coffee but my friend Hyunjin makes the best coffee on campus you should try it out!” shouted Noah as Ruby stuck her arm up

in the air and gave a thumbs up while pushing the white wooden double doors open leaving the cafeteria back to its usual bustling self.

Wait a minute... Thought Noah as he stood up from his seat, “RUBY COME BACK WE NEED TO DECIDE WHO’S BEST GIRL IN KIM POSSIBLE.”

~~~

Ruby thought, *who’s talking about me?* As she continued to walk through the 1st floor in the west wing. She then spotted a wooden black sign with the words Late Latte Cafe in cursive, *So this is the place...* Ruby walked in to see college students bunched up together at a few tables and couches. She looked around the cream room to see light bulbs hanging from the ceiling, the grey tile floors, and plants hanging around the tables and on the wall shelves.

The atmosphere overall was mellow and tranquil, with students chatting over coffee and tea. Along with pop music softly playing in the background unlike other cafes

or coffee shops play obnoxiously. *I should work on my stories here more often.* thought Ruby. She shook her head as she was about to get distracted by the aesthetic room instead of what she was here for in the first place. Ruby then walked up to the cash register counter where no one was standing now. She then looked up at the digital menu board looking at the different options unsure what to get.

“Hi what can I get for you?” A deep voice said, causing Ruby to jump in the air a bit, almost like Shaggy and Scooby when they see a ghost except not as extreme. She slowly looks up to see a tall guy with short brunette hair and brown eyes wearing a white dress shirt with a black apron on top that has a small white coffee cup on the right breast. He started to chuckle softly, “Sorry didn’t mean to scare you.”

“No, it’s fine um...” Ruby trailed off looking at his name tag which says ‘Hyunjin.’

“Hyunjin!? Oh, so you’re the one Noah mentioned,” she said, a bit astonished, not expecting to



meet him already. “You know Noah?” asked Hyunjin, raising his brow at the short female in front of him.

“Yeah, he’s my best friend,” Ruby replied back with a small smile as he nods a little and smiles back asking her, “What brings you here?”

“Ah, Noah recommended me here so I can be inspired but also try your coffee since he told me you make the best coffee in the entire campus. I’m not much of a coffee person but he insists on me trying yours,” She said back while fiddling with her thumbs.

“Why don’t you like coffee? Is it because it’s bitter?” questioned Hyunjin as all Ruby could do was nod her head at him. He then puts his right hand on his chin while looking up thinking which only lasted for a few seconds. As he took his right hand away from his chin and turned it into a fist and tapped it on his left palm.

“Got it I’ll start making it for you!” Hyunjin hummed with a smile walking to the back as he stopped in

his tracks, came back to the counter, and said, “Oh, I never got your name by the way.”

“It’s Ruby Zhou,” She told him with a small smile on her face.

“Ruby huh? Cute name for a cute girl and that’ll be \$2.99,” said Hyunjin smiling back while winking at her as she rolled her eyes.

“Thanks... I guess. Though what exactly am I drinking?” She looked at him giving an unsure look on her face while giving him the exact change. Hyunjin puts the money in the cash register. He placed a finger up to his lips and walked away to make the drink for her. Taking the hint Ruby took a seat at a small rectangular wooden table with two chairs across from each other. Then she took out her laptop and started typing away on finishing other assignments. She stuck her earbuds in her ears listening to Queen. As the Bohemian Rhapsody song playing from her playlist blocked out the sounds around her while bobbing her head to the chorus.

Five minutes passed by but it seemed more than that as the petite brown-haired female was in her own little universe. She then felt a tap on her shoulder, causing her to flinch as she took out her right earbud turning around to see Hyunjin with a smile on his face.

“Here’s your drink madame~,” He said with a playful tone while placing the paper coffee cup down on the table. Ruby played along and replied back, “Why thank you, kind sir,” Until the two of them looked at each other for a second then burst out laughing.

Hyunjin then stopped laughing and said, “Okay now take a sip and let me know what you think.”

“Alright.” Ruby hummed lifting the cup up and taking a sip from the coffee he made for her. Once the liquid went down her throat, she could taste the sweetness instead of the bitterness of most coffees. *I think I'm tasting vanilla and a hint of espresso.* Though she looked up at him.

“Is this a vanilla latte?” she questioned, as he nodded vigorously with a closed-eyed smile on his face.

“Ding ding that’s correct!” He replied quite happily while applauding her as if she had won a prize at a carnival.

“I like this a lot. Thanks for making the drink Hyunjin.” She started with a small grin that he happily returned.

“I’m glad you like it. After all, I am the best coffee barista on the campus. Well, I must go back to the counter now. Enjoy your drink.” said Hyunjin as he winked at her.

“Alright, and will do, thanks,” Ruby replied back as he walked back behind the counter. She then lifted the cup about to take another sip until she noticed a letter in black marker behind the cup. As she turned it around the message was:

**Can I get your number? Because I like you a latte.**

**Xxx-xxx-xxxx**

**-Hyunjin ♥**

A smile appeared on her face without her noticing as she looked up to see him getting another customer's order. Ruby took a sip from her vanilla latte.

*Coffee isn't so bad after all sounds like a nice title for my love story assignment.*

# Quiet Love Confession

Luna's eyes closed shut as the chorus of a K-Pop song played through in her earbuds only for it to be taken out. She opened her eyes to see her best friend, Naomi standing around her desk holding the earpieces in front of her.

“Why’d you do that? It was still playing?” Luna complained while taking both the pieces out of the long pink-haired girl’s hands.

Naomi eyed her short black-haired friend, “Because we’re on break now so put them away.” She simply replied with a smile

“Alright, alright.” The short-haired girl said, putting away her phone and earbuds under her desk. She pulls out her bento onto her desk at the same time Naomi placed hers as well. Then turned the wooden chair to sit across from her friend. Both open up their lunches as Naomi envying her best friend’s lunch seeing that it

contains fried rice, teriyaki chicken, and veggies. Compared to hers was just a pork cutlet sandwich and apple slices with a toothpick lodged in one of the pieces.

“Lucky...” The pink-haired girl muttered while taking a bit out of her food.

Luna swallowing the piece of chicken she finished chewing, “You can have some you know.” She told the girl while munching on broccoli.

Naomi’s eyes sparkled in happiness, “You’re the best!” Praising her best friend taking the toothpick out of her apple slice and took a piece of her chicken. Putting it in her mouth she hums in delight.

“As usual Luna, you’re cooking is amazing. Let’s get married.” She said jokingly only to notice that her best friend’s attention was elsewhere. Naomi looked in the same direction as the short black-haired girl. Just to see her eyes on a tall boy with messy grey hair and light blue eyes entering the classroom. Making his way over to his desk to see an onigiri with a note attached to it.

“Ooh, Alex’s secret admirer has struck again!”

Shouted his friend trying to rile the grey-haired boy known as Alex up.

Alex nodded, “Indeed they had.” He said.

“Tch. Nothing phases you.” Complained his friend as other classmates in the room laughed along with Alex.

Then he noticed the stares from the short-haired girl, giving her a quick wave. Luna quickly turned her head back and started to eat her food. Naomi looked at her friend whose cheeks were flushed red connecting the dots, “You like Alex don’t you?” She whispered causing Luna to choke on her rice.

“Ahhh! Luna!” Naomi screamed getting up from her chair moving over to her best friend patting her back.

Luna coughed, “I-I’m okay!” She reassured the pink-haired girl while reaching over for her bottled water to drink it. Feeling better she looked at Naomi and whispered back asking, “How did you know?”



Naomi looked at her, “Because I’m your best friend and it’s obvious that you’re red as a tomato. And it’s obvious you keep leaving Alex a food or a drink with a note every lunch break.” She bluntly whispered, making the poor girl cover her face with her hands. Noticing she turn into a darker shade of red if that was possible.

“You should confess to him.” The pink told while taking another bite out of her sandwich.

“E-Eh?! I’ll just get rejected by him...” Luna muttered looking up at her friend from her sweater paws.

Naomi looked at her, “Confess while you can we are in junior year of high school. You will never know the result unless you try Lun. Just believe in yourself.” She told her with a smile.

“Nao...Thanks I’ll do my best,” Luna said with determination as the redness in her cheeks fades away.

Naomi nods, “Great! Now let’s finish our lunch.” She told her while they continued to finish eating their lunch.

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DING DONG!

“That’s it for today. See you all tomorrow!”

Announced the teacher packing his things.

Luna and the other students started to pack up, some faster than others left the room to attend their extracurricular activities.

“Luna, Alex.” The teacher called out, making the two come up to the front.

“Do you need something, Mr. Smith?” Luna asked the older man.

Mr. Smith pushed up his glasses, “Yes, I need you two to deliver these notebooks to the faculty room, and leave it on my desk.” He replied gesturing to the two stacks of notebooks on his podium.

“Okay. Leave it to us, sir.” Alex said while Luna nodded.

“Good I’ll be off to manage the archery club.” He said, taking his leave.

Eh... Why us specifically? I'm going to be walking with Alex! The short thought felt her cheeks starting to warm up.

“Luna! Are you ready to go home?” Naomi shouted, popping her head into the empty classroom making the short-haired girl jump a bit in the air.

The pink-haired bite her gums holding off from laughing, “Pfft... Sorry for scaring you.” She told the now embarrassed Luna while Alex covered his mouth holding back a laugh.

“I-It’s fine. And you can go ahead without me. I have to deliver these notebooks to the faculty room with Alex.” Luna stuttered out while taking one of the stacks quickly leaving the room before hearing her best friend’s answer.

Alex taking the last stack, “Ah wait for me, Luna!” He shouted quickly following her. Not before telling Naomi, “Pardon me.”

“Ah, it’s no problem.” She told him as he picked up the pace after the petite girl.

Leaving Naomi standing alone looking at the two disappear into the left hallway. “I’ll just stop by the convenience store on my way home.” She said to herself walking down the right corridor.

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The two arrived at the faculty office excusing themselves inside. Dropping off the notebooks on Mr. Smith’s desk then opening the door to step out.

“Excuse us,” Luna said, closing the door.

Alex looked at her with a smile, “Man you sure are quick Luna.” He complimented the petite girl.

“E-Eh? I’m not, let’s just head back to the classroom and get our belongings.” Luna told and quickly walked back down the hall with her cheeks becoming flushed. As the messy grey-haired boy followed behind still wearing a smile, *How cute...* He thought.

Finally, back at their classroom, Luna walked over to her desk to finish packing. Alex walked over to his desk doing the same. W-We're alone... I should take the chance! She thought as she was about to open her mouth.

"Hey Luna, are you the secret admirer?" He asked with a serious tone while looking straight at a small short-haired girl.

Luna paused turning her head to meet his light blue eyes, "E-Eh? N- I-I mean yes I am..." She stuttered out feeling the warmth come up to her cheeks.

"I knew it..." He muttered out then walked over to Luna turning her around placing his hands on her shoulders surprising the flushed girl.

"W-Wha!?" She confusingly asked feeling her face burn up from the sudden closeness.

"Do you like me, Luna?" Alex asked, staring straight into her onyx eyes.

Luna gulped but mustered the courage, "Yes, I do." She confessed, waiting for his answer to rejection.

Only to feel lips placed on her forehead making the girl burst red not knowing if she got rejected or not.

Alex pulled away seeing the bright red Luna.

*Whoops, I guess I overdid it.* He thought then picked her to chin up at him. "I like you too. Ever since you started leaving those notes and food." He said with a smile.

"Y-You knew!?" She asked, astonished as he nodded his head.

"It was obvious. I mean I wanted to ask but I waited for you to tell me yourself." Alex laughed a little.

"O-Oh..." Luna muttered.

He smiled reassuring her, "I'm glad I asked anyway."

Hearing his words caused her to smile, "Me too." She said. With that the happy couple headed home walking hand in hand together.

# The Apprentices

**smaller font size on title**

*“Oh my god! Someone, please call 911!!”*

*W-What what’s going on?*

*“Someone please save my son!”*

*M-Mom wait what’s going on? Why are you crying? Shit,  
why can’t I move my body?*

*“Luke sweetie stay with me!!”*

~1 Week Later~

I widen my eyes looking at the white ceiling with  
lights stinging my eyes.

“Oh good, you’re awake.” a feminine voice stated.

I looked over to see a woman with dark black hair  
in a bun wearing a black suit and heels on the white marble  
tiles. As she looked at me with her emerald green eyes  
piercing through my soul with an emotional look on her  
face.

“Where am I?” I asked

“The hospital. Now get dressed, my boss wants to see you.” She replied by throwing my clothes at the end of the hospital bed. Before I could say anything she shuts the door behind leaving me alone in the spacious room. I took off my gown, put on my black ripped jeans and my white T-shirt and red converse. Once I finished getting dressed, I stepped out of the room and looked to the left to see the woman leaning against the wall waiting, as she turned her head, “Follow me.”

Her back was off the wall and started to walk down the hallway as I followed her. The woman then stopped in front of the elevator pressing the up button on the wall. Once the elevator comes up to the third floor we're in as nurses come out leaving it empty. We stepped in the medium-sized contraption, as the woman pressed the 65th floor. While going up there was an awkward silence filled the room causing sweat to run down my face.

*Why am I meeting her boss?*

*Am I going to die?*



*Wait where's mom?*

“Can you calm down? I can smell your anxiety coming off your filthy body.” said the woman rolling her eyes as the elevator door dinged reaching the top floor. She stepped out as I followed her towards the large dark wood double doors with two desks sitting on each side of the doors. Noticing the desk on the right was empty I assumed she must be one of the secretaries for this ‘boss’ that I have to meet. Then I looked to the left to see a male secretary sitting in the desk wearing a small smirk across his face. As shiver was sent through my spine feeling more anxious about the boss I have to meet. The woman knocked on the door three times, “Come in!” a feminine voice shouted, as the woman gestured me to enter the room.

I gulped as I walked in I was met with a woman with a short blueish grayish hairstyle with left side bangs covering her crimson eyes wearing a black dress.

“Ah, Luke Fang... How do you like hell so far?”

She asked with a grin plastered on her face. My eyes widen in astonishment, *Wait.... How the hell did she know my name? And what does she mean how do I like Hell? We're still on earth right!?*

“I know your name because I'm the Devil sweetie. Your death was just one of the saddest ones we've had in the book.”

“Wait I'm dead!?”

“Wow... You, humans, are quite slow creatures. But that's to be expected.”

I looked at her in disbelief, “You're lying this isn't hell! Isn't hell supposed to be all on fire and just rubble. We're literally-” I cut myself off seeing the piercing cold gaze she sent to me.

“Watch your tongue boy... I see humans still see Hell as a ring of fire and nothing but dead souls. We changed that finally a few years ago as it now fits the

modern lifestyle of what you humans live in now. Also, we don't lie... Your dumb race is just gullible."

I felt a cold sweat breaking down in my body, "I-I apologize Sat-"

"Ugh, Satan was my old name. My friends and colleagues call me Lucina or Your Highness."

I could only nod in response terrified of what she could do to me. Though one thing that came to mind, "How did I die?"

Lucina looked at me with a wicked smile.

"What!? How did I die!?" I asked glaring at the demonic being in front of me.

Her smile grew across her face more sinisterly, "Oh... You, my dear boy, have committed a horrible sin. But that's for me to know and for you to never know."

"What the fuck!? You really are a bitch!"

"Awww stop! You're making me blush!" Lucina gushed holding her flushed cheeks.

"That wasn't a compliment!"

I looked at her annoyed as she grinned happily enjoying my suffering.

“Anyways... even if you're death was...”

“I would appreciate it if you would stop bringing that up.”

“Alright... Alright... I want you to be a reaper.”

*Wait! What!?* I thought to look at her as if she was crazy to wait for scratch. She is crazy, she's the freaking Devil. How would that benefit me? Shouldn't she be taking my soul or eating it? That's what demons are supposed to do right? Eat the souls of humans?? This is the weirdest predicament I'm in right now.

“You're probably wondering why? Well, there's been a low percentage of souls that need to be placed in Hell. We're also running short-staffed in the Reaper Department.”

I raised a brow, “So you're hiring me to become a Reaper?”

“Basically.”

She looked at me with her arms crossed below her chest.

“What’s in it for me?”

Lucina then brings her arms upon the table with her fingers laced together while a smirk spreads across her lips.

“You can be reincarnated of course. Usually, there are souls that are assigned to either being reborn or sent to the void. This is a rare occasion for a human to be a Reaper to help us but it can’t be helped. So what do you say?”

“What’s the condition?” I asked, raising a brow at the Devil as her smirk widens on her face. She chuckles softly, “What makes you think there’s a condition? You think I’m lying to you?”

I shook my head, “No not at all. Usually, these types of situations have a condition or two. You are a manipulative race after all.”

Lucina's smirk widens even more, "And here I thought humans were just dumb little playthings." She places her chin under her palm and says, "Yes, there are some conditions. Most of them are discussed with the Head Reaper. The first one your quota will be getting 1000 souls."

I looked at her as if my eyes had popped out of my head.

I screamed, "A thousand souls!?"

"That's what I said. Do you humans not listen?" Lucina questioned while unplugging her ears. She then looked at me, "You didn't let me finish. As I was saying in order for you to complete the quota. I called the Head Reaper and told him the situation. He's willing to have one of his Reapers train you."

KNOCK KNOCK

I turned my head to the door being knocked, as Lucina stood up, "That must be her. Come in!" The door opened revealing a petite woman with snowy white hair

and lavender eyes wearing a black hooded cloak with a scythe behind her back.

“I’m Karen Langton from the Reaper department. Nice to meet you, Luke Fang.” The woman, Karen said with a monotone expression on her face.

“Ah likewise.” I nodded to her,

“Now since we’re done with introductions. What do you say, Luke? Do we have a deal?” Lucina asked, wearing a smile on her face.

I sighed, “I don’t have much of a choice do I?”

“Nope! Unless you want to go to the void with all the bad eggs then be my guest. I can always find another human soul to do it!”

“Ugh, fine you have a deal.”

The grin on Lucina’s face turned into a wicked smirk.

“Smart boy.”

# Innocent Demons

**smaller font size on title**

“Another murder case this week...” muttered out a man with grey hair as he rubs the cigarette butt down in the ashtray.

“Damn it!” He said out slamming his fist on the mahogany desk. The room filled with frustration and stress built from the man. Then there was a knock on his door. “It’s open!” He shouted.

The door opened revealing a woman tucking her hair behind her ears. “Excuse me, Chief Smith, the detective from the NYC police department is here to see you.” She stated as Smith looked at his subordinate coughing lightly, “Ah yes send him in Sarah.”

“Yes sir,” Sarah salutes to him. She stepped out of his office as a light brown hair and green eyes man walked



into the room. Smith stood up from his chair and walked over to the male who was dressed in a beige trench coat with a teal scarf around his neck.

“As you already know. I’m Jason Smith, Chief of Seattle’s police department.” Smith said as he held his hand out to him.

“Detective Christopher Hathaway, nice to meet you, Chief Smith,” replied Christopher, taking Chief Smith’s hand in a firm handshake. The two released each other’s hand as Smith said, “Please follow me to the conference room so we can discuss the cases that have been happening for the past week.”

Christopher nodded his head as the two stepped out of Smith’s office and walked past the bustling officers who were either taking calls or making reports on other crimes that had been committed. Hearing the loud news reporters demanding answers from the officers that were trying to push them out of the station. *Typical.* Thought Christopher as he came to a halt when Chief Smith

stopped in front of the wooden door opening it. It revealed a large room with a projector screen and a large round wooden table with at least 12 desk chairs around it. There were two things that caught Christopher's eyes and that were the five brown boxes on the side of the large table.

"I apologize, it's not usually this busy but since the media found out about the various cases we've been having these past few months in Edmonds. It's just been..." Chief Smith trailed off with a sigh stressed out from the workload he and his department has to go through.

"I understand sir. Though what do you mean by various cases? You mean there's more than one?"

Questioned Christopher as he only heard the recent murder case from the news on the TV when he landed in Seattle.

"I think it's just best to show you," Smith replied by turning on the projector with the clicker as a picture of

a man in his late fifties appeared. “The victim Howard White was found in the woods two days ago. His entire stomach gruesomely cut open leaving all the organs in place except for one...”

“The heart... but why would the killer only take one organ from the victim’s body?” asked Christopher confused. Chief Smith only sighed and responded back, “I’m not entirely sure but this isn’t the only case we had before.” As he opened the first box in front of him, it held cases that were the same as the stolen heart from the recent victim. Not only that, but there were also cases where victims had both their eyes taken out.

“The other cases we had were not related to this one but we had frequent incidents that happened in these past months,” Smith said as he opened the other four boxes and took all the files out on the table. He summarizes what each case file was about, the first one was about Emiko Yoshida, a woman in her early 20s who was a patient of Ashton Chen, a psychiatrist who

prescribed antidepressants to her a month ago. A week later, she killed herself from having and overdosing on medication that was given by him. The next one was about Luke Finch, a 16-year-old boy whose body we found hung in Valley high school's gym with bruises and cuts along his arms from two weeks ago. His best friend Alex Lee and close friend Ella Chen were devastated to learn about the incident. They know him as a happy go lucky person, they never once thought he would end his life.

The third case was on Jessica Nova, a 17-year-old female whose body was found last week in Redwood park. Her body was covered in multiple stab wounds from the front and back as if one stab wound wasn't enough to cover her scarless body. Her ex-boyfriend, Ethan Chen was brought in as they suspected him of her death. Until he told him that he broke up with her three weeks ago, and hasn't talked nor seen her for the time being. Knowing that students that were close with Jessica or close with Ethan have said the same thing as his alibi.

The case from the fifth box was about a nine-year-old girl named Somi Park whose body was found in the outside pool of Roseward Elementary a few days ago. Students and teachers were terrified and scared to learn that a student died in their school. Especially for Somi's parents and Lily Chen as they grew depressed from the horrific event that happened to the person that they loved.

Christopher raised a brow noticing from each case that everyone from the Chen family is involved with each victim. Especially the first case he was presented with Howard White was a patient of Dr. Jessica Chen, a surgeon, who operated on him a year ago. He then started getting up from the chair he sat on starting, "I'm going to investigate the Chens." Chief Smith tilted his head to the side with a confused look on his face asking, "What for?" Christopher then looked at the older male.

“Because I believe asking them more questions will benefit from each case. Considering they all know each victim.”

“I already did so, their alibi all checked out. Believe me, the Chens are one of the nicest families that I know. They wouldn’t hurt anyone especially if they did so much to help around this community.” Chief Smith looked at the younger brunette while leaning against the table with his arms crossed below his chest. Christopher huffed, “Even if you already question them. It wouldn’t hurt to ask them again. If they say the same response then I won’t suspect them.” Before Chief Smith could say anything Christopher left the room only to be met with the silence in the room. He sighed, *Kids these days...*

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“4930 Happy Hollow Road... Yup this is the place.” Christopher mumbled to himself as he parked in front of a dark blue medium-size house. He stepped out of the car and walked over to the front porch, and rang the

doorbell. The white door opened revealing a petite female with long dark brown hair with big brown eyes looking up at him. *'This must be Lily.'* He presumed while he crouched down to her level as the words were about to escape his lips. Lily ran away into the next room, "D-Daddy there's a tall man wearing a big coat outside our door." He heard her tell her father, as he heard footsteps coming his way.

"Hello, may I help you?" The 180 cm male asked with Lily in his arms. "I'm Detective Christopher Hathaway. Mr. Chen, I have a few questions I would like to ask you and your family members regarding the cases that have been happening this past month." He said, showing him his detective badge.

"Of course come in, we can discuss it after dinner," Mr. Chen told him. "Oh no I don't want to-"

"Nonsense you're not a bother at all. We would love for you to join us," Insisted Mr. Chen, cutting Chris off. The young male silently thanked him by giving a nod, as he stepped inside the home. Mr. Chen used his other

hand to close the door shut. Then he lifts his glasses back up while nudging his head to the left as he leads the way. Chris follows suit as he looks up and sees Lily staring at him then burying her face in her father's shoulders.

“Sorry about that, Lily's shy when it comes to meeting new people,” said Mr. Chen as he came to a stop inside the dining room where all the members were at. He sets Lily down as the small child takes her seat next to her mother.

“Everyone, this is Detective Hathaway. He will be joining us for dinner this evening. He is also here to ask us questions regarding the traumatic cases that's been happening here.” Mr. Chen announced to the four members of his family.

“Ah! We would be happy to help right kids?” asked Mrs. Chen with a smile plastered on her face as Ella, Ethan, and Lily nodded their heads. Chris looked at the kids sensing the discomfort looks they each had considering the people that were close to them have

decreased recently. 'Maybe it's best to talk about the cases with the parents first.' He thought while taking a seat at the end of the dining table with Ethan and Lily on his left and right side. Ethan then passed him a bowl of rice along with chopsticks. Thanking the younger boy he takes the bowl and the utensil as the entire family begins to eat in silence. Though there were the typical questions being asked around for each member of the family. Other than that the air just grew more awkward and tense for Christopher.

He then stood up from his seat as all ten eyes were focused on him similar to a pack waiting to pounce on its prey. Chris gulped and asked, "Where's the bathroom?"

"It's on the second floor down the hall on the right and it should be the 4th door on the left." Replied Mrs. Chen as she sipped her water. He thanked her and left the room and headed up the stairs taking the directions that the lady of the household told him. As he walked

down the hall, *She said the third door right?* Before he could open the door, it opened slowly as the creaking sound could be heard through the quiet hallway. Christopher steps into the room turns on the lights and his eyes widened in disbelief.

The room filled with jars of eyes and hearts like what you would see in a mad scientist lab. Except... that wasn't the only thing that caught him off guard. What he saw was a female around his age tied up in a chair wearing a blindfold with her mouth covered with duct tape. "O-Oh my go-"

TWACK!

Christopher's eyes began to droop down, his body became heavier shutting him down in internal darkness.

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"What shall we do with him?"

"I say we should kill him! He's trying to separate me and my beloved Alex!"

“Before we kill him can we torture him first? I want him to feel the pain I went through when people annoyed my ass...”

“Lily watch your language!”

“Sorry mother...”

Christopher’s eyelids slowly went up to see four of the family members having a small argument. He looked around the unfamiliar room he was in as it was filled with weapons and drugs. *‘A torture room? Is this where all their victims come to?’* He thought as he was sitting in a reclining chair with his arms were cuffed to the arms, and his legs chained to the floor.

“Oh look! He’s awake~” Lily pointed out as the four members stared at him. “He probably heard our whole conversation.” Ethan and Ella said in sync which sent shivers down Christopher’s spine as the twins reminded him of the Grady twins from *The Shining*.

“You seem such a nice person, detective. Too bad you had to find us out this way... Lucky for me I can have

those pretty emerald eyes of yours.” stated Mrs. Chen as she had a psychotic look in her eyes while holding his chin. Christopher looked at her with disgust with a mix of fear on his face. ‘How the hell am I going to get out of here? Will they take turns and torture me or kill me?’

“Honey no more taking people’s eyes this month. You already did that two weeks ago.” Mr. Chen told as he closed the door behind him causing his wife to pout almost like a child being told no to have dessert before dinner.

“Daddy, can we torture him?” Lily asked him to give him the puppy dog eyes as Ethan did the same as his baby sister.

“I say we kill him...” mumbled out Ella glaring at Christopher making the poor man cower in his seat.

“No torturing and absolutely no killing. You three already did so this month.” Mr. Chen told his kids as they pouted along with their mother. Then turned his attention back to Christopher, “Sorry you had to see that Detective.

They usually behave so well but once they see something that is a threat or likes... well, you get the idea.”

“Why are you doing this?” Asked Christopher while furrowing his brows in frustration.

“Why? Because it’s fun, of course. It’s a nice change to our mundane lifestyle. Who knew this whole town would be so pudgy in our hands.” Mr. Chen replied with a sadistic smile on his and his family’s faces.

“Y-You’re all monsters... no that would be an insult to them. You’re all demons!” shouted Christopher as he tried to break free from the cuffs on his arms but failed. The sadistic smile playfully danced on Mr. Chen’s lips, “I’ll take that as a compliment. Night Detective Hathaway.” He flashes a light in front of Christopher’s eyes three times causing him eyelids to droop back down bringing him back to the dark void.

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The next day, police cars and officers surrounded the river blocking off any civilians from entering the crime scene.

“So the killers got to you too...” Smith muttered out seeing the deceased Christopher with multiple stab wounds and eyes taken out of his socket. Putting down the body bag, “Don’t worry we’ll definitely catch them. Then you and the other victims will be at peace.” He said determinedly as the killers were still at large.