

IN SEARCH OF A GODDESS (Parts 4 & 5)

(a SeldomLasts story)

(amysconquest.com)

Lauren watched Alyssa stretch on the floor. Alyssa's body was so perfect, smooth, muscular, overdeveloped, every muscle flexing and flowing in perfect rhythm as she did splits and stretches. She was like an oversized gymnast. Every move was graceful and elegant, fully coordinated. No wonder she was so muscular, these exercises took a lot of strength! Alyssa put a lot of care into her body, Lauren saw, and it definitely showed.

"How long have you known Ryan?" Lauren asked.

Alyssa was on her back, legs spread out above her, scissoring in and out. "He's been my neighbour for about seven months, but I just got to know him in the past couple of days. He helped me get out of New York." She rolled onto her stomach and grabbed her ankles behind her back. "Actually, he saved my life. Some insane priest tried to shoot me."

"A hunter," Lauren said.
"Father Cohen told me about them. He disapproves."

"So do I," Alyssa grunted. "I don't want to kill anybody, and I certainly don't want to die!"

Alyssa's muscles looked even larger than before. Her skin glistened and expanded as she stretched. Lauren sighed. Alyssa was so incredibly beautiful! "He's a really nice guy, isn't he?" Lauren asked.



"Yeah, he is."

"He really likes you."

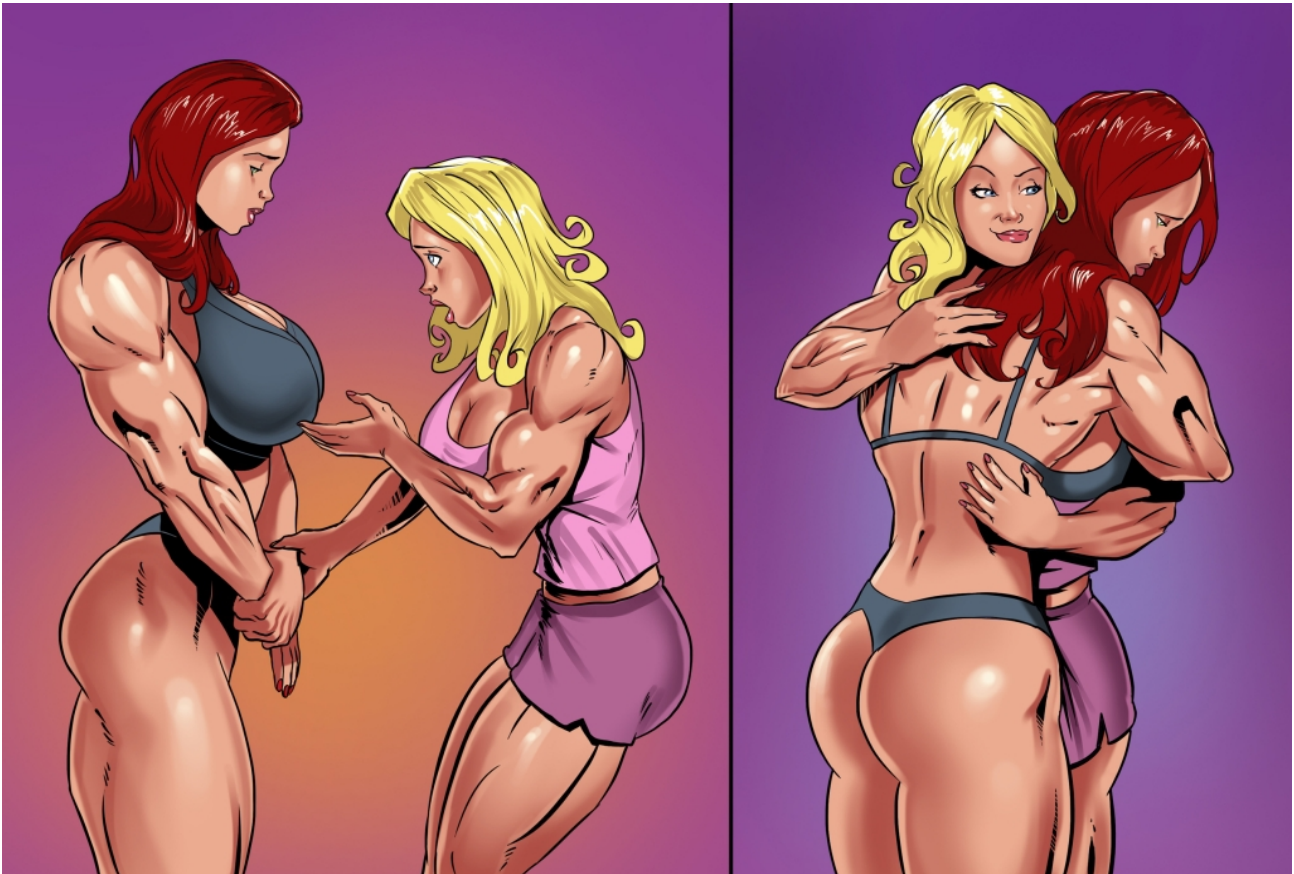
Alyssa flipped over and looked at Lauren. "I know," she said quietly.

"Do you like him?"

The big redhead looked at the floor. "He's the nicest guy I've ever known. Really. I don't meet many nice guys. He's sweet and he'd do anything for me. Of course I like him." She raised her head. Lauren saw the pain in her eyes. "He deserves so much better than me. He should like a nice girl who will marry him and make him lots of babies and keep him happy the rest of his life. He should be happy."

Lauren smiled. "He's happy with you, you know. He can't take his eyes off you. I can't blame him, you're beautiful."

"I know." Alyssa let out a frustrated growl. "All I am is beautiful! I'm also a killer and a bitch. I'm using him for his money, because he's rich and he's nice to me I'm taking advantage of him. He deserves better!"



Lauren leaned over and hugged Alyssa. "Oh, babe, I don't think there is better. You just showed that. I wish a man would look at me the way Ryan looks at you. He worships you."

Alyssa buried her face in Lauren's shoulder. "I don't deserve his worship!" she whispered fiercely.

Lauren stroked Alyssa, feeling very aroused. She felt Alyssa's hard, muscular back, ran her hands over her broad, muscle-bound shoulders. She kissed Alyssa's hair. Alyssa looked up, surprised. Lauren leaned over and hesitantly put her lips to Alyssa's.



The redhead didn't move, didn't respond. Lauren slowly pulled Alyssa up and lay her on the bed, then lay down next to her. "You definitely deserve worship," she said. "You are the most beautiful woman I've ever seen."

She let her curly blonde hair fall over Alyssa's arms and stomach, slowly pulling off her shirt. Then Lauren removed her bra, letting her big, full breasts rest on Alyssa's pelvis. "I've never done this before," Alyssa said.

Lauren laughed. "I have." She arched her back, pulling her heavy torso into the air. "Feel me, Alyssa," she said. Alyssa reached out and cupped Lauren's soft big breasts. She stroked her strong fingers over Lauren's thick hard nipple. Lauren shuddered with pleasure at her touch.

She tugged off Alyssa's bra and pulled down her panties. After she stripped them both naked she lay down on top, letting her hot crotch rest on Alyssa's. Alyssa was feeling very aroused, too; she hadn't had sex in a week, and Lauren was extraordinarily sexy. Lauren fondled Alyssa's huge firm breasts and sucked on her hard nipple, then trailed her long tongue up Alyssa's pale neck and kissed her full on the mouth, pushing her tongue in.

Alyssa responded, arching her powerful body, pushing Lauren into the air. She wrestled Lauren's tongue and kneaded Lauren's soft breasts with her strong hands. Lauren pushed her hand down between Alyssa's thighs and stroked Alyssa's hot, wet clit. Alyssa gripped Lauren's round, soft butt and squeezed.

Lauren deftly rotated around Alyssa, pushing her hot moist pussy onto Alyssa's mouth. Alyssa's strong tongue licked and stroked her clit, slowly dragging over the folds of Lauren's pink pussy lips. Lauren gasped and pushed her clit harder into Alyssa, as she leaned her head down and took Alyssa's large clit into her mouth, sucking and nibbling on it. She stroked Alyssa's tawny bush lightly with her fingertips. Alyssa began bucking underneath her and Lauren gripped Alyssa's thighs to steady herself.



They each had the same thought and pushed their fingers into the other's pussy while licking the clit. Lauren's thighs scissored tightly around Alyssa's head, pulling her harder into her very wet pussy. Alyssa's powerful hands squeezed Lauren's butt and her huge thighs flexed around Lauren's head. Lauren crushed Alyssa's head in a vice that would have seriously damaged a weaker person, but Alyssa just kept licking and stroking.

Alyssa was nearing orgasm from Lauren's expert nibbling and stroking. She came hard, her thighs snapping together around Lauren's head. They were locked in an embrace that would kill lesser mortals, moaning and writhing and squeezing. Lauren's cum flowed easily into Alyssa's waiting mouth. Alyssa's more violent orgasm spurted onto Lauren's face, Alyssa's screams of pleasure muffled in Lauren's hot pussy.

Lauren rolled off and lay at Alyssa's side, stroking her big chest and hard abdomen, kissing her muscular shoulder. "Mmmmm. We are extremely sexy, you know that, Alyssa? We should let Ryan watch. Or better yet, join in."

Alyssa laughed and put her arm around Lauren. "We'd probably give him a heart attack." She grew serious. "You're so young to know so much."

"I had to grow up fast, babe. Sex feels good, better than anything else in this world, and I'll take as much of it as I can get." They lay there for a while, feeling the warmth of each other's bodies.

"Ryan's rich, isn't he?"
Lauren asked after a while.

"Mhmm," Alyssa said.

"How rich?"

Alyssa furrowed her brow. "I don't know. Very, I think. Why?"

"I was just thinking. He stopped working to help you; he's taking you on this trip. Not a lot of guys can afford to do that. If he's really all that rich, we can live very comfortably as long as he's helping us. We should do whatever we can to keep him with us."

Alyssa didn't respond.



After a shower and a shave, Ryan decided to call Victor Grant. Victor was his old college roommate, a big friendly black man, now a crime analyst at the FBI. He fought through a few secretaries until finally Victor answered the phone.

"Hi, Vic, it's Ryan Miller," he said.

"Ryan! Man, it's been years! Good to hear from you! I'm a little busy, but let me get you my home number. You in Washington?"

"Yeah, I am. Actually, Victor, I think it's better if I talk to you at work. I have to ask you a favor."

"Sure thing, man! Are you in trouble? You need some help?"

Ryan smiled. He missed Victor. He was one of Ryan's few friends in college. They were roommate freshman year and had gotten along so well they roomed together the next two years. Victor was always trying to get Ryan to loosen up, to get out more. He took Ryan to a frat party once, but Ryan got wasted and threw up on a girl's dress.

"I'm fine, Vic, I'd just like you to find someone for me."

"Sure thing, Rye! Is this for a client?"

"No, it's for a friend."

"Uh huh." Ryan could hear Victor typing in the background. "Who's this friend?"

"Her name's Alyssa Connor. Can you help me?"

There was a long pause. "Connor's wanted for murder, Ryan. A pretty brutal one. Some big-shot New York investor. NYPD thinks she skipped town so they put out an APB," Victor said quietly.



"I know," Ryan said.

"Did she do it?" Victor asked.

"Yes," Ryan responded helplessly.

"Is she who you want located?"

"No," Ryan said softly. "She's with me. I helped her skip town."

"Man, it's a good thing you didn't call me and I don't know you're in the city, or I'd have to turn you in."

"Thanks, Vic. I owe you one."

"You owe me more than one, Ryan. Who's this you want located?"

Ryan breathed a sigh of relief. He knew he could count on Victor! "All I have is a name, Hy Myu." He spelled it.

"Okay...let's see," Victor said. He whistled. "Who is this woman, Rye?"

"I don't know," Ryan answered. "I just have to find her."

"Well, her file is classified. It's got everybody's fingerprints on it, the NSA, CIA, it's like an alphabet soup."

"Do you have clearance?" Ryan asked.

"No, and neither do you. But what the hell, you probably wrote the encryption software for this, right? I know a few tricks, give me a minute and I'll be in."

"You won't get in trouble for this, will you, Vic?"

"Don't worry about it. What are friends for?" A few moments later, Victor said, "Ah, here we go. Shit, Rye, is this lady special forces? No age listed...race is Asian...no picture on profile. No criminal record. The note says lethal in armed and unarmed combat, warning, approach with extreme caution. It's cross-listed under emergency code 8A, which I don't even know what that means, and there's a note here that says see Project Athena, whatever the hell that is."

"Does it have an address?" Ryan asked.

Victor typed some more. "Yes," he said, and told Ryan an address in southern California. "Ryan, you sure you're okay?" he asked.

Ryan smiled. "Victor, for the first time in my life, I finally feel alive. Thanks for the information."

"Okay, Ryan. Listen, maybe it's better if you don't visit this time, right? Next time you're in Washington, though, give me a call. Bye."

"Bye, Vic, and thanks for everything."

Victor hung up the phone. "Son of a bitch," he said. It sounded like Ryan was getting into something way over his head. He leaned forward to clear Hy Myu's record off his screen when it suddenly fuzzed, then flashed Unauthorized Access Detected. File Restricted. "Shit," he said.



Lauren let Ryan into their room. They looked tired, he thought, and wondered why. He cleared his throat.

"You know that name Celeste gave you last night, Hy Myu?" Alyssa nodded. "I've found her. She's in Los Angeles or near there, anyway."

Alyssa looked at him in wonder. "How did you find her so quickly?" she asked.

Ryan looked embarrassed. "I talked to a friend. I didn't find anything except her address, though. Not even a phone number."

"Well, I guess we'll just have to go visit," Alyssa said. "Is that okay, Ryan?" He nodded. She smiled brightly at him. "Well, it's time for a shower. I feel a bit rank." Alyssa stepped into the bathroom.

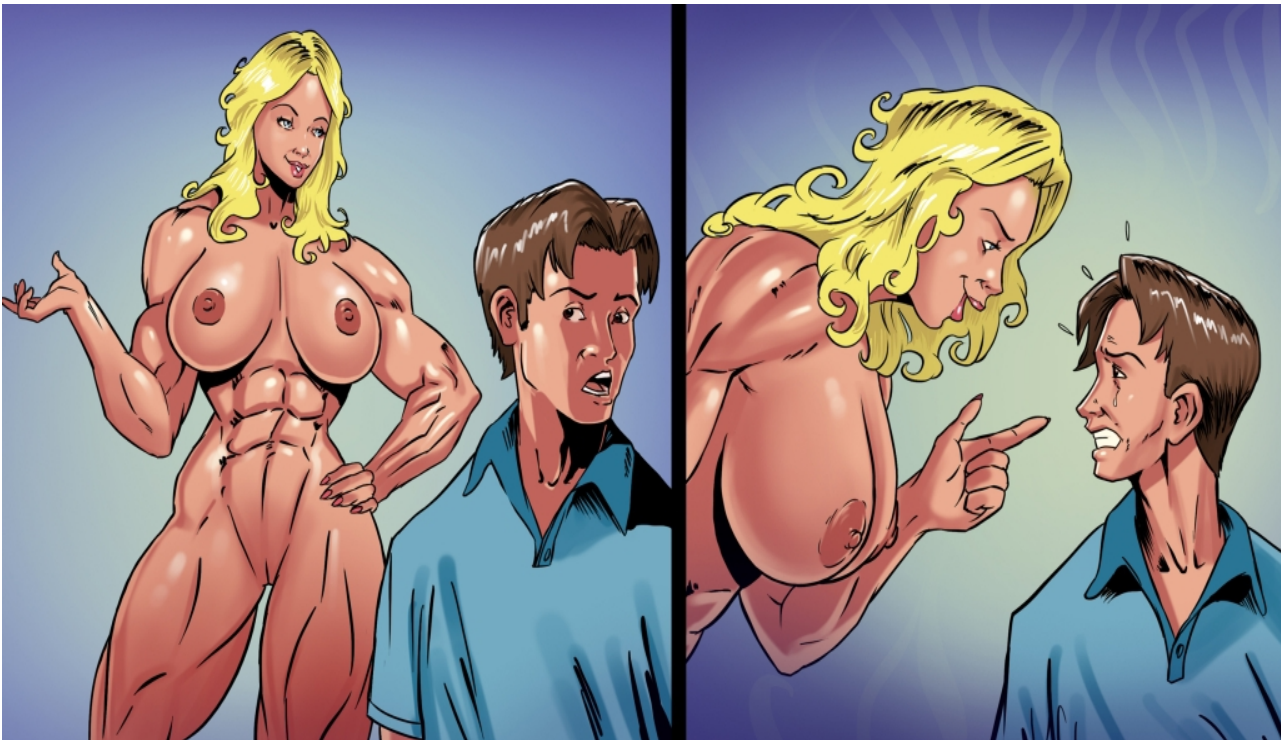
Lauren watched Ryan. He was looking at the bathroom door, lost in another world. "Sport," she said. He didn't respond. "Yoo-hoo, hey, Ryan!" He snapped out of his gaze and looked at Lauren.

"Yes, Lauren?" he asked quietly.

She started taking off her nightclothes. He quickly turned away. "Hey, sport, don't tell me you don't want a quick romp. Look at me!" He kept his head turned away. "Don't you want me?" she asked.

His shoulders slumped. He stuttered out, "Y-y-you're beautiful, Lauren. I-I'm sorry, b-but I want, I want..." he trailed off helplessly.

"You want Alyssa," she said, a hard look in her eye. He nodded helplessly. "Well, I've got news for you, sport!" she spat out angrily. "What you get is little old me. You should stay away from Alyssa, she doesn't want you! She's using you on this little trip! She told me why you're here. She gets your money, your transportation, cover, and what do you get? You get to be with her," she said sarcastically. "If you don't want me, fine! But you forget about Alyssa, she would never want a pathetic little wimp like you anyway."



Ryan fled the room sobbing. Lauren almost felt sorry for him, but who did he think he was rejecting her? Besides, he needed to be broken from his sick obsession. Alyssa was hers, now.

Alyssa came out of the bathroom and looked around, puzzled. "Where's Ryan?" she asked.

Lauren shrugged. "I dunno, he just left. Maybe he was hungry."

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They left Washington in silence. Alyssa didn't know why Ryan wasn't looking at her and only responded to her with one word answers. He looked so forlorn and...broken. She tried to cheer him up but he didn't respond to anything except a direct question. She wondered what was wrong.

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George Robertson hurried back from his lunch break. He adjusted his tie and put his wedding ring back on. He took a few deep breaths and stepped out of the elevator.

There was Jessica, his secretary. God, she had great tits! Every time he saw her he had trouble paying attention, just thinking about how someday he would squeeze those huge fleshy tits, suck on her thick hard nipples. She smiled at him and leaned forward, showing him a little more of her deep jiggling cleavage. Oh yes, it would be someday soon!

"There's a woman here to see you, said her name is Helen. She didn't give a last name. She said you would want to talk to her."

Oh God, not Helen, not today! That sick bitch scared the fuck out of him. He sighed. "Send her in."

Jessica looked nervous. "I tried to tell her to wait out here, but she insisted on going in. I tried to stop her, but, well, she's a rather large woman Mr. Robertson."

"Christ, don't I know it," he muttered under his breath. Then he adopted his best professional smile and walked into his office. "Helen, such a pleasant surprise. To what do I owe the..." he faltered, looking around. The door closed behind him and he jumped, startled. "Oh, hello Helen, didn't see you there," he said.

She was dressed in a tight tank top that barely covered her chest. Her huge biceps flexed and expanded as she stalked closer. George took a step back.

"Hello, George," she said huskily. Her big nipples were erect, threatening to poke through her shirt. Oh please god no, he pleaded, the last time she had broken two of his ribs. "Don't worry, I'm not here to rape you. I've just been going over my accounts, you know, double-checking on you guys."



The color instantly drained from his face. He hid her sizable fortune quite well, making a decent commission. He didn't take TOO much off the top, either, and he hid that quite well, too. She couldn't possibly know! But why else would she be here?

He brazened it out. "Well, ah, Helen, I hope you found everything in order."

She stepped closer. He tried to step back but bumped into his desk. Her hot breath washed over his neck as she leaned into him. Her hard nipples poked into his chest. Her hand rubbed lightly over his crotch. In spite of his fear he got a boner. She smiled.

"Actually," she breathed into his ear, "I've found a few discrepancies that I wanted to go over with you."

"Discrepancies?" he squeaked. Her hand closed around his privates and tightened.

"Discrepancies," she whispered. "Now how did those happen? Your firm has a reputation for trustworthiness and discretion, which is why I chose you. You also have a reputation for meticulousness. So I asked myself, are they mistakes, these discrepancies? And do you know what I decided?" Her hand squeezed tighter, just on the verge of painful.

"What?" he whispered.



"I decided no, they are not mistakes, Mr. Robertson." She let go of his privates and with one hand on his shoulder shoved him violently to his knees. "Which means you've been fucking me, Mr. Robertson," she said calmly. "I fuck men, they don't fuck me. And men I fuck always..." She put her hands on either side of his skull. "Die!" Before he could scream she pushed her hands together, laughing...

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Father Mallory stood over the girl's body. Hannah, her name was Hannah, he told himself. She had been a sixteen year old gymnast. Blood and bits of skull and brain still pumped out of the hole in her head, draining into the street. He took a few shaky steps away, then collapsed against the brick wall. He was losing his stomach for this job, and, little by little, his faith was leaving, too.

He watched the blood flow stop. He wanted to turn away, to leave, but somehow he couldn't. She was so young, and so pretty. She had been so happy, too, until she killed her English teacher, the man who tried to rape her after school.

Mallory crossed her, going over the commitment ritual mechanically and without thought. Sending her soul to heaven, he thought hollowly. It had better be one fuck of a lot better than Earth. He let his hand drop to her still chest, slowly stroking the swell of her breasts. "Were you a virgin, Hannah?" he asked in an awed whisper. "Were you a nice girl or a bad girl?" His fingers trailed over her well-muscled abdomen. "What kind of life did you lead before your nightmare started?" He leaned over and brushed his lips over hers; oh God they were still warm! He stroked her hair, his fingers coming away sticky with blood.



He looked up at the sky. The pain in his eyes was deep and terrible. He was filled with helpless rage and doubt. "Why God? Why me?" His fingers clenched, bruising Hannah's pale soft skin. "When does my nightmare end?" he demanded of the dark night sky. He waited, but there was no answer.

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Lauren couldn't hold it in any longer. "So, sport, why're we driving? I mean, don't get me wrong, it's a cool car and all. But wouldn't it be faster just to fly?"

Alyssa waited for Ryan to respond. When he didn't, she looked at him. He was staring straight ahead, concentrating intently on the road. Just when she thought he wasn't going to answer, he spoke, his voice tight. "Alyssa's wanted for murder, and you need ID to get on a plane."

Alyssa watched the speedometer creep up to eighty-five. "Don't you think you should slow down?" she said. He instantly took his foot off the accelerator and slowed to sixty-five.

They drove in silence for a while. They lunched at a rest stop; Lauren found it highly amusing that Ryan, with all his money, ate cheeseburgers just like anybody else. Ryan smiled at that. Lauren asked him how much he had. He shrugged. "Enough." He wouldn't say any more.

"I have to piss," Lauren said. Alyssa giggled. Ryan grinned and pulled into another rest stop. Lauren got out to go to the bathroom. Ryan and Alyssa stood and stretched. Ryan looked up and found himself staring at Alyssa's chest. He craned his neck. Alyssa was looking down at him, her eyes troubled.

Ryan tried to back up, but he was already up against the car. "What's wrong?" Alyssa asked. "You've been so weird today. What's the matter?"

"Nothing's wrong," Ryan mumbled.



She reached out to hold his cheek but he flinched. She drew her hand back. "Please tell me, Ryan," she said.

"It's nothing, okay?" he said, and dodged around her. She watched him flee to the bathroom.

When they were on the road again, she tried putting her hand on his thigh. He tensed up but otherwise didn't respond. After a while she withdrew it again.

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It had slept for fifteen hundred years. Over a millennia of timeless, dreamless non-existence. It awoke, stretching massive muscles sore from disuse. It shook its great hairy head and blinked baleful yellow eyes.

A voice spoke inside its head. "As you wish," the creature grumbled. It slowly changed shape, becoming smaller, losing its fur. The forces of destiny molded it into an unfamiliar shape: tall, human, female, with long red hair and green eyes...

"I will protect it," the figure said in a deep, husky feminine voice.

Now where the hell was this Los Angeles?

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Lauren suddenly sat up, fully alert. "Stop here," she commanded. Ryan pulled over. "Come on," Lauren said to Alyssa, jumping out of the car.

It was eleven o'clock and Ryan was exhausted. He had pulled in at a motel on the side of the road, but Lauren chided him. So they were headed into down-town Columbus looking for a "nice" place to stay.

Ryan got out and followed Lauren and Alyssa. Then he heard where they were going. The voices of two men drifted out of a nearby alley. "No, wait Alyssa, stop," he whispered. He tried to snatch the back of her shirt. She turned and put a finger over her lips.

She gently pushed him against the wall. "Stay here and be quiet," she whispered. She hurried to catch up with Lauren. After a moment Ryan followed.

Two men had a fairly tall man against the wall in the dark alley. One of them held a switch-blade. The victim looked from one to the other, sizing his attackers up. The one with the knife made small jabbing motions to accompany his statements.

"We make it look like an accident, right Kolya? Isn't that what they teach you?" he said. "Eh, comrade," he laughed.

The man, Kolya, rocked from foot to foot. "I told you, I quit. I won't tell the feds nothing about Petre, I just want out."



The two men laughed. The one with the knife said, "This is how you quit, comrade. My blade is your out."

"It doesn't have to be like this. I give you my word like I gave it to Petre."

The attacker without the knife spoke. His voice was deep, menacing, and more intelligent than that of the other one. "Your word ain't good enough for Petre, I guess. Nothing personal. He just doesn't like his prize assassin mysteriously quitting on him. Now it's time to die."

The knife came closer. Kolya was no fool, he knew that though the knifer didn't look that bright, he was probably one of the best. And the intelligent one had a piece somewhere as well.

His eyes suddenly flicked behind them. The unarmed hitman paused, wondering if it was a trick. But why...

Suddenly he was flung into the brick wall. His partner screamed in pain as something broke his forearm. He spun around to face his attacker. A woman! She was tall, much taller than him. "Alright, bitch," he snarled. Her fist connected with his jaw and his head slammed back into the wall. He slumped to the ground, dazed.

Lauren yanked her victim's skull into her thighs. He still clutched his broken arm. He looked up into her face, terrified at the hatred and fury he saw there. Then pain became his only focus as her impossibly strong legs closed into his head, crushing his jaw. He tried to plead but couldn't breathe. It would not have done him any good. Lauren's pretty face had changed from anger to pleasure, enjoying the feel of his skull crumbling in her powerful legs. As the last coherent thoughts left his brain and he died, the rush hit her. She screamed in orgasm as her thighs closed together, completely obliterating his head.



The other one watched his partner die in the psycho-bitch's legs. He got up, intending to get the hell outta Dodge, but a powerful foot slammed him back into the ground. Alyssa knelt down and he felt the tips of her breasts brush against his back.

Lauren was looking at Alyssa now, still wiping bits of gore off her legs. Alyssa was looking down at her victim, not sure what to do next. "Kill him," Lauren said gently. Alyssa shook her head. "You have to kill him!" Lauren said. "You want to die for this fuck? This might be your only chance. Now break his fucking neck already." She was still flushed from her kill.

Alyssa placed her hands on his head, right hand on his jaw, left on the back of his skull. He looked up at her, frightened, his eyes pleading. "I'm sorry," she whispered, and snapped his neck.

The power filled her again, and she forgot she didn't want to kill him. She lost voluntary control over her body, every muscle straining, orgasm consuming every part of her. His skull cracked in her powerful grip. The rush ended and she slumped to the ground, crying.

Ryan stood in shock at the entrance to the alley, having just witnessed his companions gruesomely slaughter the would-be attackers. Lauren looked at Kolya. Alyssa stared at the ground. And Kolya watched all three of them very carefully.

He was the first to break the silence. "Thanks for taking care of them. I'm Kolya Petrovich," he offered his hand to Lauren.

She smiled at him and licked her lips. "I'm Lauren," she said huskily and pressed her body against his. Her big soft breasts squashed into his chest. He was tall, nearly as tall as Alyssa, and handsome in a dark Slavic way. He looked embarrassed at her forwardness.

Alyssa said nothing, but she did look up at him. She looked like hell and felt worse. Ryan was the next to speak. "Let's go. We don't want to be here to explain why the two of you crushed these guys to death."

Kolya looked at Ryan and smiled. "You are right, my friend. And you are?"

"Ryan," he said shortly. He knelt beside Alyssa and gently helped her to her feet, then walked them out of the alley.

"You too, handsome," Lauren breathed at Kolya, then took his hand and led them back to the Jag.

They ended up at the Hyatt Regency, the only hotel up to Lauren's standards. The two women had cleaned up the gore, but they had been trapped in a small car all day and were very tired. Lauren's strong arm was wrapped tightly around Kolya, and he made no effort to remove it. "Three rooms," Ryan told the clerk. Alyssa looked at him sadly but made no objection.



On the way up Kolya asked what was going on. Alyssa didn't say anything and Ryan was in his own miserable world. "I'll explain everything," Lauren told him.

Lauren and Kolya took one room. Alyssa tried to catch Ryan's arm but he dodged and slipped into his room. "I don't want to be alone," she whispered to the empty hall. She went into her own room and collapsed, sobbing until sleep overtook her.

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Father Cohen watched Patrick Mallory across the desk. He could see the hunter's anguish, the doubts and fears plain on his face. Mallory refused to talk about it.

"So you won't help me," Mallory said tightly.

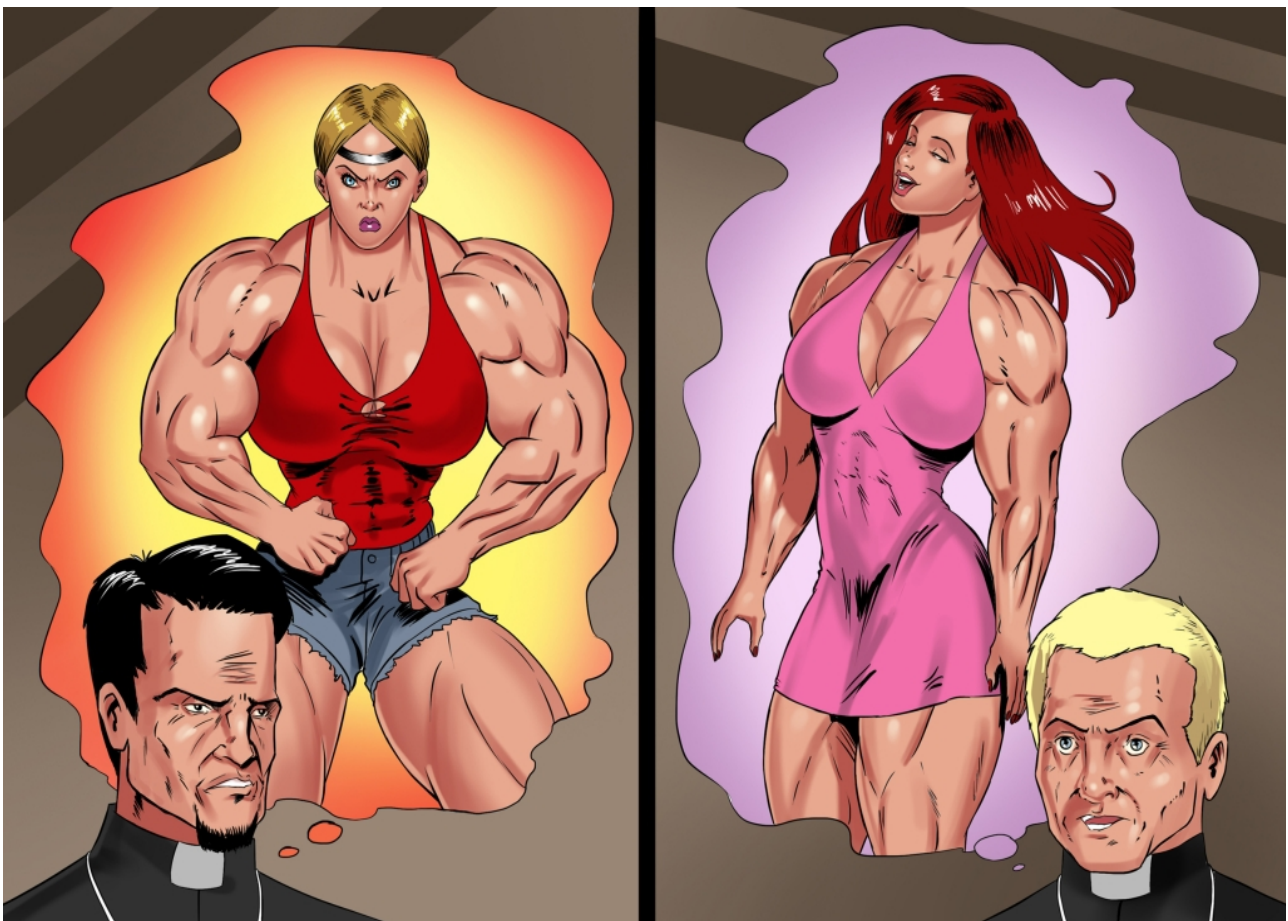
Cohen shook his head. "No, I will not help you track them down and kill them. They put their trust in me and I cannot betray that. If you want to hunt Daughters in Washington, you will have to track them down on your own."

Mallory sat back and sighed. "Fair enough. I don't want Washington, anyway. I'm sure there are already hunters here." Cohen nodded. "I just want one woman."

"I know," Cohen said. He too could not help hating Helen, and he prayed every night for the black mark on his soul to be lifted. "But I can't help you with her, either."

"And the new one? Alyssa Connor?"

"I met her, a delightful young woman. So troubled, and with such a terrible past...She is on a quest for the Amulet. We should wish her well."



Mallory laughed, a harsh, bitter laugh. "Nobody can have the Amulet, you know that. Even if she is the wonderful woman you think she is, its power would corrupt her. You know what happened the last time a Daughter touched the Amulet."

They both shuddered. The destruction and horror before she was finally killed...

"That was eight hundred years ago," Cohen said. "I believe if anyone can handle its power without corruption, it is Alyssa."

Mallory looked at Cohen sharply. "That's a lot of trust to place in a woman you've only met for one evening. It's not relevant anyway, she won't find it."

"I'm not so certain," Cohen mused.

"I am." Mallory got up to leave.

"I am here if you need to talk," Cohen said.

Mallory didn't turn around. "I know," he said, and left.

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They gathered in Ryan's room the next morning. Kolya looked happy but worn. He cradled his ribs. Lauren beamed. Alyssa and Ryan both looked like they hadn't slept.

Kolya began his story. "My parents immigrated from the Soviet Union when I was four years old. Growing up as a Russian during the cold war was not fun, but at least it was not the fifties. My parents were not imprisoned. But we were looked down upon, as we had little money. My father tried hard to support us, and he did a good job. He did not know about my connections with organized crime, running drugs and beating people up for my own income. He found out, I do not know how, and I have not spoken to him since.

"In my mid-twenties, I had graduated to the level of hitman. I was very good at it. Then several years ago a man, Petre, recruited me as his 'problem solver', as he put it. Basically his own private assassin."



"He wanted me to do increasingly brutal and twisted things to my victims, to make a statement he said. Then he wanted me to kill his wife, whom he suspected of cheating on her, in a particularly disgusting fashion."

"She had been cheating on him; I knew this for a long time. I did not blame her. Petre was a hard man, a sadist, and she was too weak for him. So she looked for a kinder, gentler man, one who would make her feel like the woman she wanted to be. He was a good man, too. It is lucky for him Petre never found out who he is.

"I did not accept this job. So I quit. No doubt she is dead now anyway; there are many men who will kill for Petre without question. Men such as the two you killed last night. Don't feel bad for them.

"Lauren told me of your own situation last night. I must say I find it quite incredible. We are all killers here, with the exception of Ryan."

Silence followed Kolya's story. "You're pretty smart for a hitman," Ryan finally said.

Kolya grinned at Ryan. "Education was very important to my parents. Lauren said that we are all in your debt. Thank you for putting us up in such accommodations, and thank you for taking care of Lauren. She is quite a woman for her eighteen years."

Ryan and Alyssa, startled, looked at Lauren. She shot them a shut-up glance, then kissed Kolya. Ryan stood up, ready to leave.

"We don't have to leave quite so soon, do we Ryan?" Lauren asked. "I mean, it's so nice here, and we have plenty of time to get to California," she implored.

Ryan looked at Alyssa. She shrugged. "Alright," he said.

THE END.....for now

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