

## Love that Kills –

### 3 Him

I stared at the manager in disbelief, and I wasn't the only one; all the other candidates stared at him in absolute shock. This wasn't just about the fact that I got the job, but because I was the ONLY ONE who got it.

I watched as the other girls exited the club, glaring at me and cursing me in a variety of languages. All those years of bullying should have made me stronger, but I guess I was too sensitive to people's hatred, and the cumulation of their emotions hit me with a vicious blast. Suddenly, my chest became too tight for my lungs to expand. I sipped tiny, insufficient bits of air that only made my heart pound harder. A sharp, high-pitched sound pierced my ears, bringing dizziness and nausea and making me want to curl under the nearest table. A panic attack.

Two strong hands landed on my shoulders, the touch flooding me with surprising serenity. "I thought that getting a job is a good thing, or am I wrong?" Nicor chuckled.

A tight squeeze on my chest lessened, and I slowly raised my head to look at him. Only then did I have a chance to admire his features up close. His golden eyes had an all but hypnotic glow. No imperfections marred his skin—not a scar, a freckle, or the tiniest wrinkle. He must have been either much younger than I initially assumed, or his plastic surgeon was a miracle worker. A minute had passed, and a mischievous grin slowly formed on his lush lips, and I realized I was staring.

An awkward chuckle escaped my throat. "It is a good thing," I finally murmured. "Um... thank you..."

His grin widened. "You are so very welcome, darling." Then he took his hands off my shoulders and pointed at the staff-only door. "Come. I need to show you around, and we don't have much time. You're starting tonight."

I gulped. Then my lips stretched into a thin smile. I nodded and followed him. After ten minutes, I wasn't just nervous—I was terrified and overwhelmed. I learned that they attached great importance to waitresses' appearances. At first, I thought that it was a chauvinistic rule that was supposed to punish workers for gaining weight, but then I figured that was about something slightly different...

"We want our employees to stay healthy. We provide them with the best medical care, and we encourage them to eat healthily," Nicor explained.

More nervous laughter broke through my throat. Was he serious?! He must have been the only club manager who gave a damn what his waitresses were eating!

Then Nicor pulled out a credit card. "Here. You can call it start-up money. There's \$10 000 on this account. Use it to improve your health and looks. This is important for the company." He shoved a card into my hand and walked forward.

I stayed behind and stared at the piece of plastic. "You are joking, right?" I said, my hands trembling.

He stopped and turned around, his eyebrows rising. "Pardon?"

"Mr. manager—"

"Nicor."

"Fine... Nicor. You are not planning to sell my kidneys or liver, are you?" I tried to read him, but all I could see was honest amusement.

"I can assure you that our customers do not lack any internal organs." I could see that he barely resisted a chuckle.

I ground my teeth. "Then, will I be forced to do anything aside from serving cocktails?"

He was right in front of me within a heartbeat, and I gasped at the sudden proximity. "No one can force you to do anything. No one can touch you... unless you are willing." He stared deeply into my eyes, his body only a few inches away from my own.

"Not unless I'm willing," I repeated softly, remembering that these were the exact words the recruiting lady said over the phone.

He smirked and stepped back. Then he turned around, muttering under his breath, "And I sure hope that you are willing..."

My mouth opened. I must have misheard him, right? Lord, have mercy on me! Nicor certainly could become one of my sinful fantasies. There was something demonic in his features, and I was certain that a lot of women would have easily sold their souls to him and given their bodies as an extra. I wouldn't call myself ugly, but I wasn't drop-dead gorgeous either. Of course, Nicor's interest in me would be somewhat flattering, but, in my opinion, it would also mean that he had an odd taste for women. That also meant that he had never heard about my bad fame. Then I began to wonder if I was going to be fired once they learned about my stupid nickname...

"This is your uniform," Nicor showed me my closet and a stunning little black dress. I instantly thought that I should thank the rat that had eaten the one I had. Knowing what my "uniform" looked like, I realized that the dress I was supposed to wear would have only made me look like an idiot.

I gently took out the dress from the closet. "What if it doesn't fit?" I asked, giving Nicor a hesitant smile.

He rolled his eyes and sighed. "Of course, it'll fit." Then, under his breath, he added, "It was made for you."

"What?" I blurted, my heart pounding. "What did you say?"

Nicor snorted. "Just put it on. The rest of the waitresses will be here in fifteen minutes. You will find cosmetics in the drawer. Have fun." He shot me another alluring smile, turned around, and left.

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I was still in a daze when the other waitresses started showing up. Just as I suspected, they all looked astonishing. Their skin was glowing, they had beautifully polished nails, and all had bodies with curves to die for. As I observed them entering the room, I couldn't help but step back into the corner, feeling more and more timid and uncomfortable by the second.

A beautiful brunette walked over to me and smiled. "You must be the new girl. Hi. I'm Adriana," she said, extending her hand toward me.

A faint curl appeared on my lips as I shook her slender hand. "I'm Nala, and yes, I am new."

Adriana looked at my hesitant grip and chuckled. "You're nervous."

I took my hand away. "I don't think I've been more nervous during any of my college exams," I admitted.

She looked me up and down. "Breathe deeply. It's just a job, and it can be fun at times." She grabbed my hand again and pulled me toward the dressing table. "Cosmetics are in the table's drawer. Fix your makeup and change your clothes. We've got fifteen minutes before the hell begins."

I gulped. "Is it that bad?"

She shrugged. "You need to get used to it. Those who come here are peculiar. They have a lot of money, and they often speak as if they were born in a different era. They're never violent and almost never intrusive... but they get rude from time to time."

I chuckled. "That doesn't sound that bad. When I used to work as a waitress, one of the regulars always tried to grab my ass, and I once got hit with a beer glass."

"Ouch!" She snorted and quickly added, "Nothing like that will happen here. The owner would never allow it."

"The owner?" I didn't know why, but my heart began to race.

Adriana smiled, and a faint blush heated her cheeks. "He rarely comes here, and when he shows up, he's always upstairs in the VIP section.

"What is he like?" I asked, surprisingly more curious than I had ever been about any man.

A beaming grin spread across her pink lips. "Mr. Malachious is... like an embodiment of women's fantasies. He is dark, dangerous, mysterious, and..." she trailed off for a moment and cleared her throat. "Let's just say I don't know a single woman working here who doesn't want to fuck him... hard."

A pleasant chill ran down my spine. Could it be that the man standing on the balcony during the recruitment was the owner? Dark, dangerous, and mysterious—that would be a perfect description of the man I saw.

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Five minutes later, I was standing by the bar, wearing a sleeveless, knee-length black dress with a not-too-deep V-shaped neckline. My uniform fit like a glove, and I didn't even want to wonder how Nicor had known it would. Walking in four-inch heels was slightly uncomfortable, but as I looked at myself in the mirror, I realized that I had never felt so sexy in my entire life.

"You look super hot in this," Adriana commented, standing beside me in a dress just like mine.

"Thank you." I chuckled. "So are you."

The "hell" Adriana mentioned began ten minutes later, as more than three hundred people filled the club's lower level and started ordering drinks. I picked up a rhythm quickly, continuously passing the club's length while holding a tray in my hand as if it was the most natural thing for me to do.

I must have left my bad luck outside the club since all my customers seemed rather friendly—odd, but friendly. Most of them smiled whenever I came around, making me feel as if they enjoyed my presence. One guy might have enjoyed it a little too much since he tried to sniff my hand, but aside from that, my first night working at Regale Sanguis passed smoothly.

After a few hours, I finally had a chance to rest. I was leaning against the bar with a smile plastered on my face, savoring my peaceful moment. Then a wave of heat washed over my skin. A tingling sensation crept from my neck to my breasts and down my belly to my lady parts. My head snapped up to the VIP section.

It was him. The sex-on-the-legs in a black suit was leaning forward with hands on the balcony's railing, his fingers curled around the metal bar. His eyes met mine again, and my breath accelerated. I clenched my thighs, feeling the shameful humidity rising in my center. My eyes shifted from his eyes to his lips, and I saw them curl into a wicked smirk. I bit my lip, suddenly imagining what his kiss would taste like. God... I must have gone insane. Unknowingly, my gaze rose back to his black irises. My heart began to thunder against my chest. His searing gaze

made me feel exposed and vulnerable. Shivers ran through me as if his gaze became something physical, as if it was his hands touching me, caressing the skin on my throat, my collar bones, my cleavage... I squeezed my thighs harder, barely resisting a moan. How was it even possible? All he did was look at me, and I was soaked with desire... Was I truly that starving and desperate for any ounce of interest?

"So, what do you think about your first night here?" Adriana shattered my bewilderment, almost making me scream.

I looked at her, slowly chasing the horniness away from my gaze. Then I responded in the only way my malfunctioning brain allowed me to: "Huh?"

She chuckled but then frowned, looking at my face. "I think you're feverish. It would be better if you sat down."

My lips formed a tight smile, and I nodded, sliding down to the nearest chair. I glanced at the balcony, and—unsurprisingly—the place where the man stood was empty. A faint smile curved my lips as I tried to process what I had just experienced. What I felt was raw, strong, and untamed. It teased all my nerves. It stirred my senses. It fueled my excitement.

I wanted to feel it again.