

lemonzsaucce

... Author's Notes ...

Dear reader,

I go by the pen name j.j. scriptease and I've been writing fan fiction on and off for almost a decade and a half now, predominantly of a lemon/erotica variety. None of the places I've posted my stories on however quite felt like home, whether it be due to the design or structure of the website, the restrictions imposed on saucy content, or anything in between. And thus, I thought it would be neat to have a personalised hub for my fan fiction works.

I teamed up with a developer buddy to create a site called lemonzsaucce.com where you can find ALL my literature along with extra goodies - like downloads in PDF format, seeing the artwork that inspired the fics, and subscribing for new story and chapter updates!

The site does cost money to keep up and running. If you enjoy my work and would like to help with maintenance (or would simply like to support me), please feel free to visit lemonzsaucce.com/donate to make an offering - no pressure, and it's not necessary at all :) - any amount from a dollar up will be very much appreciated.

Thank you for reading! I hope this piece of writing lives up to your expectations.

- j.j. scriptease

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DISCLAIMER

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WARNING

This work of fiction is Rated MA and only suitable for mature audiences. It may contain explicit and offensive language, adult themes and graphic descriptions of a violent and/or sexual nature.

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J. J. SCRIPTEASE

HO'ING FOR HOENN

(A Pokémon Fanfic)

CHAPTER 7



Synopsis

When May and her father wind up broke and stranded on foreign territory, an untimely wardrobe malfunction questions the boundaries they're willing to push to get back home.

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Ho'ing For Hoenn

A Pokémon fanfic by j.j. scriptease

Chapter 7 – One Bird, Two Stones

A 'Do Not Disturb' sign hung outside May's room for a full 24 hours. Every so often she'd glanced through the peephole when footsteps walked past her door. The shadows she could've sworn followed her back were only housekeepers and room service committed to their routines. After 24 hours of non-incident, she dared to consider Big Bruce and his ilk might've forgotten her existence.

If only she could forget theirs. Yesterday's atrocities plagued her today and her tomorrow, possibly her forever. Half a dozen showers later and his stink still lingered on her. He didn't get to violate her, not the way he truly wanted to, not physically at least. More than anything, he'd ravaged her sense of security, raped her thoughts, turned her into this fear-stricken emo moping in circles around her room.

She stopped beside the business card on her dresser. Somewhere someone out there deserved her undying gratitude. May hadn't brought herself to reach out; talking about it meant reliving it, which meant she'd need to build up the courage to. The business card barely garnered more than a passing glance since she'd left it there.

May drew the curtains to a burning sun already halfway across the sky. She shielded her tired eyes from the brightness. The afternoon blaze was a glaring reminder time never stood still, even when it did for you. She walked out onto the spacious balcony, spread her forearms along the balustrade and rested her chin on her hands, her downtrodden features looking out across Dytopia. A single bird beat its tired wings through the sky, doing all it could not to fall victim to the polluted city. Was there any point?

Two mornings ago, she would've been wearing a completely different expression, an assured smile, eyes bright and shimmering with hope. The nightmare would've almost been

behind her. And now... just thinking about it pained her heart. Was there any way out of this hellhole? What if she just... jumped?

Seven storeys down below, the ground seemed to call out to her, to stretch out its long concrete arms and promise her everything would be okay. She'd land just fine. And in a better place. The more she bore into its beguiling grey gaze, the more peace appeared to stare back. Without her realising it, her heels slowly lifted off the ground and her body began leaning over the railing.

“Nya?”

May staggered in surprise and landed flat on her feet. “Skitty, why are you out of bed?” Her furry patient stared at her from the sliding door with a concerned expression. “You should be getting more rest if you want your wounds all healed up.” Granted, Skitty already looked ten times better than she had 24 hours ago, thanks to the Hyper Potions May had stocked up during her good run.

Skitty ignored her commands, as usual, and limped towards her at the balustrade. “Ninnyi nyah?”

“Don't worry about me,” May said. “I'm...” Doing awful. The genuine concern in her pokémon's eyes filled her with shame and guilt. She couldn't feed Skitty hollow optimism anymore. “We're going to have to leave this place very soon.”

“Niya?”

“Because those mean bullies yesterday took all our money.” How many times had she heard ‘don't put all your eggs in one basket’? And what did May go and do? She regretted not having the foresight to stash some of her cash in hidden places around the room. All this time she'd been overly concerned about the hotel staff robbing her when she'd been brushing shoulders with real criminals out in the woods. “We can't afford to extend our stay any longer.”

“Nyaa ni ni nya?”

“The police?” May gave a dry laugh. “What do you expect them to do?” She'd figured out very early on reporting crimes to the local PD was an exercise of futility. The sheer volume of daily offences crippled them into inaction. Unless you were a very important figure,

or reporting the murder of a very important figure, chances were your case would be shuffled to the bottom of towering stacks of paper and promptly forgotten. Even if May had the money to bribe them into doing their jobs, what would they care getting off their arses to chase down a gang of rebellious kids? There were probably dozens of those running amok in the woods. Besides, the authorities probably wouldn't take pity on her once discovering how much she'd been robbed of and what she'd done to attain it. "We can't count on them to help us. I don't think this region even has a single Officer Jenny."

Skitty's ears drooped, dejected. "Nya..."

"I know," she said softly, sadness in her eyes. "I don't want to go back to that horrible Pokémon Centre either." Her next rendezvous with her dad was two days away. After selling him hopes and dreams, how was she supposed to explain this soul-crushing development? "I don't know what to do anymore, Skitty. We're back to square one." More like square zero.

Skitty gave a sad purr, then nuzzled up against her leg reassuringly. May smiled for the first time since yesterday and knelt down to pet her behind the ears. They stared out through the balusters, taking in a view they may never see again.

Back inside, May pulled all her clothes out of the wardrobe and tossed them in a messy heap on the bed. Throughout her reckless shopping sprees, she'd only purchased one backpack and it wasn't big enough to carry all her garments and shoes, though she wouldn't have a problem getting rid of half the stuff she'd only bought to tempt male Trainers. Maybe she could sell them and use the profits to book more nights in the cheaper rooms?

She went through all her pockets and, surprisingly, exhumed several loose coins and Pokédollars she'd forgotten about, including the ₧1,000 she'd assumed a housekeeper stole weeks ago. Oops. She pulled all the drawers out the dresser and scavenged for more trinkets of fortuitous savings. Besides a single 10-Pokédollar note unearthed from a pool of bras, her desperate rummaging returned no success. She closed the drawers with a disappointed huff, only for the business card atop the dresser to catch her eye again.

May picked it up this time and narrowed her eyes at the familiar-yet-unfamiliar name.

Skitty hopped onto the dresser and asked, "Nya?"

“I have no idea.” May turned the card over and read the physical address printed on the back. “I don’t know where that is.” Granted, she didn’t really know where any place in Dyttopiah was. “Think we should go? Could be a trap.”

The confusion on Skitty’s face didn’t help her make a decision at all.

Honestly, May was just as befuddled. Chances were, she’d meet the person that had rescued her from certain harm if she went to that address. But did she want to meet them? Her trust towards strangers had sunk to an all-time low. Although, if this person really meant her harm, they’d missed a golden opportunity back on Route 304 when she was a hot mess, down on her knees, wrecked, completely defenceless and all alone. The fact that this Good Samaritan didn’t touch her and left behind a means to reach out had to count for something, right?

May paced around her room with the card for hours, fell onto her pile of clothes and stared up while holding it towards the ceiling.

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The taxi driver whistled, impressed as he pulled up to the mammoth double gates guarding a huge estate on the hills. “You sure this is the place?”

May double-checked the address on the card. “Yeah. Think so.”

“Must be nice having friends in high places.”

“Yeah...” May said vaguely, distracted by the enormity of the gates. “Apparently.”

She stepped out the back of the car in an ugly, Muk-coloured, oversized tracksuit concealing her figure. A baseball cap shrouded her eyes beneath its visor and her hair hung in a long ponytail anyone who’d seen her in the woods wouldn’t recognise.

She pressed the button on the intercom and a posh voice crackled through the speaker. “Good afternoon, how may I be of service?”

“Um, I’m here to see...” May fumbled in her pockets for the business card and read out the name uncertainly. “Mr. Marc Stone?”

“You’re here to see Mr. Stone?” Doubt crept into the voice.

“Uh, yes.”

“Who shall I say is requesting his audience?”

“Oh, I’m May.”

“May. One moment please.” Awkward silence ensued. She rubbed her arm up and down and glanced around the litter-free area, so unlike any neighbourhood she’d come across in Dyttopiah. The voice returned with an abrupt crackle. “Mr. Stone does not have any appointments scheduled with a ‘May’ this afternoon.”

“Oh, um, he – or someone – left me this card on Route 304 yesterday. So, I just thought maybe I’d... I dunno, I just thought – maybe...” *What the hell are you doing here, May? This is stupid.* “Never mind. Sorry to have bothered you.” She dropped the business card and turned back.

No further than five steps away, a loud metallic whirr halted her departure. May looked over her shoulder and the iron gates were pulling open down the middle, welcoming her inside.

“O...kay then.”

The front yard wowed her. Beautifully trimmed shrubbery lined the driveway while tile-paved paths cut through acres of lush green. The front yard alone looked bigger than their entire property back at Hoenn. An assortment of flamboyant flowers added a splash of colour to the landscape and sweet aromas tingling the nose. As May walked uphill towards the creamy-white mansion, she noticed windmills in the near distance, sat amid acres of farmland and a garden of sunflowers. Was she still in Dyttopiah? This place shimmered like an oasis in the dystopian reality torturing her.

An exquisitely well-dressed man, who could only be the butler, stood at the door with some form in his hand. It was a Non-Disclosure Agreement and she was required to sign it before gaining access to the premises. May never encountered such a request before but then she’d hardly frequented obscenely rich individuals with secrets to protect either. She couldn’t imagine what Marc Stone had to hide in there, nor did she care; she wasn’t on some covert mission to expose his dynasty. May signed the papers.

The butler ushered her indoors and led her past extravagant walls flaunting abstract paintings crafted from the hand of an artistic genius, or an unsupervised child – May could never tell the difference. The living room's walls were the colour of the night sky, without the twinkling stars, but mounted pinecone lamps set to provide light once night fell. Mr Marc Stone really liked his Arcanine print, she noticed, evidenced by the Arcanine-print drum tables and multi-coloured Arcanine-print throw pillows. The butler sat her down on one of three purple couches before heading off to summon his master. She glanced around at the eccentric décor, the malformed pokémon statuettes lined up on the mantel – not a single family portrait amongst them, or anywhere in the vicinity.

“Ah, you must be May.”

She swivelled her head in the direction of the voice and found a tall, lean figure observing her from the entranceway. His suit was so white it hurt her eyes, so flagrant, so untouched by the filth of the city. An ascot tie garnished his neck and the rich violet coat worn over his suit looked like it might've been skinned from a Liepard. The same hue of violent dyed his curtained hair and tinted the shades shrouding his identity. Yet, he looked so familiar to her.

“I'm Marc Stone.” The waft of sweet-scented perfume tickled her nostrils as he sauntered over, pristine brogues clicking on the marble floor. “Pleased to meet your acquaintance.”

May stood up, suddenly feeling spectacularly underdressed, and mumbled an awkward, “hello.” She still didn't know what she was doing there.

He took her hand and placed a graceful kiss atop of it. Why was he being so nice to her? Definitely couldn't be a native of the region. The crimson rose poking out of his breast pocket reminded her of a certain presumptuous Coordinator she'd gotten to know back in Hoenn, but any conceit Marc Stone might've bore was smoothed under layers of lavish fabric and natural suave. When he pulled down his tinted shades and showed her his steely grey eyes for the first time, May immediately recognised where she'd seen him before.

“Steven?”

He gave a small chuckle. “Oh, dear. Even miles adrift, halfway across the globe, it appears my brother's obstinate and overbearing shadow continues to stalk me.”

“Brother? Wait, Steven has a brother?” She gaped, only just drawing the connection with his last name.

“Why, yes. A more handsome and refined brother to be precise.”

More handsome? May wasn't sure he could draw comparisons when they looked *exactly* the same, down to the grey eyes and sharp jawline; if Marc lost the violet hair and posh accentuation, no one could've convinced her she wasn't talking to Steven Stone. “How come I never heard of you?”

“Because my father doesn't want you to. Why would he? A powerful man like that wouldn't risk having the reputation of his global enterprise besmirched by acknowledging a deeply disappointing child, now would he? Not great for shareholders' interests, you see.”

It was hard to believe Mr. Stone would reject any of his children to the point of non-existence. May and her travelling companions had had the fortune of bumping into him once in Rustboro City after her klutz of a little brother managed to ruin their only PokèNav. Not only did Mr. Stone see to its repair free of charge, he invited the whole gang to a scrumptious dinner celebration. Sure, he might've been stern and demanding towards his employees on occasion, but he never came across as anything worse than fair – even to strangers like them; how was she meant to believe he wouldn't show the same warmth to his own children? He spoke the world of Steven and nothing of Marc. Something didn't add up.

“Anyway,” Marc said with a peachy chime. “I'm quite certain the wind didn't blow you all this way just to hear me pontificate about family matters. Please, have a seat.” She sat right back down from where she'd stood. He poured himself something from an expensive-looking bottle off his wine rack. “Don't suppose you're old enough to partake?” He held up the bottle like a generous offer to which she gently shook her head. “Ooh, not one to flirt with the rules even when no one is looking. How very... proper of you. Either you're the purest of us all or you haven't been here long enough. No matter, I'll have Hargreaves serve you some... orange juice?”

May shrugged then gave a nonchalant nod.

“Ah, perfect!” Marc practically snapped his fingers and the butler who'd welcomed her inside came bustling in to take the order.

May couldn't stop staring as Marc cosied himself in the middle of a long, purple couch adjacent to hers. The resemblance was *too* uncanny. A part of her brain tried to convince her he really was Steven cosplaying as some rich bastard. Granted, Steven wasn't the type to flaunt his wealth with the kind of huge, extravagant rings and sparkly gemstones adorning every single one of Marc's fingers. Steven had retired as Hoenn Champion but, surely, he would've found better use of any freed up-time than gallivanting halfway across the globe pretending to be someone else? May was so very confused by Marc Stone's existence.

One thing was crystal clear however, Marc had an eye for her. Despite her baggy garbs disguising her figure, his gaze would roam her body unabashedly, glinting with the kind of keen interest she'd come to recognise in sleazy men. He hadn't saved her out of the kindness of his heart, had he?

With her legs squeezed shut, May tucked her hands between them and tried to ignore the silver eyes undressing her. "Um, so you're really not Steven, huh?" She started to believe it; Steven had never ogled her this way.

He leaned back against the sofa, crossed one leg over the other and took a light sip from his glass. "As if that cave dweller could ever thread together this level of prestige. Unlike my spoilt and entitled brother, I had to build everything you see around you from the ground up. Father dearest ensured I wouldn't inherit a penny from the family business."

"Why?" Why would Mr. Stone disown any of his children? "What did you do?"

"What did I do? Oh, I had the audacity to be born." Marc gently stirred his glass in the air. "I wasn't part of the plan. His drunken one-night rendezvous with my mother was meant to be just that – one night of forgettable fun. When he discovered she fell pregnant, he fired her from her secretarial position after she refused to get rid of me. He hoped a hefty severance package and several vapid gifts would make us go away." Marc shook his head at the pained thought. "In the end, I suppose we all got what we wanted. I made my fortune without ruining the 'perfect family' image he'd spent decades crafting in the media. Not bad for someone who wasn't supposed to be here. And yet, here I am."

He took a proud sip just as Hargreaves returned with her glass of orange juice.

"And here you are," Marc added, raising his glass. "Here's to fate for turning water into wine, for brewing the likely out of the unlikely."

An awkward May played along with the imaginary clink of their glasses. The only thing they had in common was the room they happened to be sharing. She didn't want to say or do anything that might antagonise him however. Uncomfortable leering aside, he'd been a very welcoming and pleasant host. And his orange juice might just have been the best orange juice she'd ever tasted in her life.

"So, while I'm thrilled you decided to take up my invitation," Marc said, "I must ask – why are you here, my dear?"

A question she'd been asking herself since she stepped out of the cab. "Well, I'm not sure," May answered honestly. "I guess I needed to know who was behind the business card."

"And now you do." Marc beamed and spread his arms out boastfully.

"Yeah, you could say that." She laughed uncertainly. "Marc Stone. So weird. I guess I also wanted to say thank you for..." She had to pause and take a huge swig of orange juice to wash down the horrid memories resurfacing. "Thank you for what you did for me back there. If you hadn't come along –"

"Ah, but we *did* come along. That's all. There's nothing to be gained from entertaining what could or couldn't have been. Trust me. I've tried."

She nodded thoughtfully. "I guess you're right."

"And you're welcome. I certainly don't want you to feel as though you owe me anything."

"Really?" A massive weight rolled off her shoulders. Nothing she would've done could pay back the favour.

"Absolutely," Marc said. "Don't spare another thought on it. I don't suppose there's anything else you'd like to ask me?" He held the rim of his glass upon his lips and awaited her response with languid anticipation.

"Well..." In the short amount of time she'd gotten to know Marc Stone, May developed a budding trust for the immaculately-dressed mogul. His relation to Steven – someone she'd trust with her life – worked to his benefit, despite his apparent disdain for his half-brother and father. Marc opening up about his painful past garnered some sympathy from her, too, and she could see how it drove him to amass the riches he had today. She

didn't want to overstep the kindness and generosity he'd shown her but, if there was any inkling he'd be open to alleviating the suffering she was going through, she owed it to herself to at least ask. "I was wondering if you'd be able to help me out again."

Marc smiled as the wine seeped through his lips. "I knew you'd see it, too," he said happily. "The potential for us to help one another. *That*, May, is the real reason you came."

She could neither confirm nor deny his assumption. After losing all her money in one fell swoop, she'd been racking her brain for a path back to salvation, and Marc Stone certainly appeared to have enough to spare a little of his fortune, if only to keep her in the Kallagher Inn for another couple of weeks. By then, May hoped she could think up a way to get her and Skitty back on their feet. It was clear to see what Marc could offer to her cause but, "I don't have anything to offer you right now. I promise once we get back to Hoenn though, I'll pay you back threefold of anything you lend me right now. I swear on my life! My dad is actually the Gym Leader of Petalburg City! I can prove it! And if he just had –"

"Now, now." Marc casually waved her off. "None of that will be necessary, my dear. And au contraire, you have a lot more to offer than you realise."

May was almost afraid to ask. "I... do?"

He giggled. "Oh, yes. Come with me."

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Marc led May through the vast fields stretching beyond his backyard, acres of corn, wheat, sugarcane and lush greens tended to by robust tractors. It was beautiful out here and May did enjoy the air of fresh vegetation but she didn't understand why he was showing her all this now. Farmers and their hard-bodied pokémon stopped toiling to greet Marc Stone when he walked past. But what Marc didn't see was how their gracious smiles faded the instant he showed his back to them. May noted the fatigue in their eyes before they put their heads down and continued ploughing the fields.

Marc explained how the scenery and overwhelming sense of openness was one of two major draws constantly luring him back to this property. Not to mention, these crops alone generated a decent portion of his wealth. The other major draw, Marc revealed without expounding on the single word, was: privacy.

For no other reason than filling the air with conversation, May pointed out how she found all the windmills spread across the fields really pretty, and asked what the purpose was of those big, industrial-looking structures in the near distance.

“Ooh, I’m so glad you asked!” Marc said, tickled by her fascination, as though no one had ever given him an opportunity to flaunt his knowledge on the matter. Bloated sacks sat metres apart along the row of corn they were walking down, and Marc stopped to dip his hand in one of them and pull out a fist of whole grain. “This,” he said, as the crushed particles spilled from his heaped palm. “This is what they do. They turn the crops you see around you into fine grain. I’m glad you asked because I’d intended to show you *exactly* how the corn mills function in any case.”

“Oh?” May quirked a brow. “Really?”

“Yes, dear. Come.” He dumped the rest of the grain back in the sack and dusted off his hands. “Let’s go take a closer look, shall we?”

Did she have a choice? May’s interest in corn mills was on par with her interest in watching paint dry. Nonetheless, Marc led the way, and soon they were standing in a long, wide room with an equally long, wide glass dividing their half of the interior from the other. What May witnessed on the opposite side disturbed her beyond words.

About a dozen men stood in tall, narrow cubicles blocking them from the sight of their neighbours. They’d all been forced to wear what looked like dirty, old prison uniforms and each had a number printed on the back. Two men watching over them sat comfortably reading magazines in cushioned seats while the dozen continuously climbed a stationary wheel of wooden steps, not unlike a pack of caged Morpeko. Supposedly, their hamster-like physical exertion powered the machinery responsible for grinding crops.

It was sickening. May was certain Marc Stone could afford to employ updated technology and equipment. This whole charade – he was doing it on purpose to torture those poor people. She turned to him, aghast, and he showed no emotion, simply tapped on the glass to get the guards’ attention and called out number ‘008’. The man fell to his knees as they dragged him off the torturous wheel. May covered her mouth, horrified at the state of his exhaustion. Remorseless, the guards dragged him towards the glass while his head hung in defeat. And the most horrifying part yet – May recognised the man.

“Dad?!”

The sound of her voice flicked a switch inside him. Suddenly, his head jolted up, his tired eyes sprung wide awake and life returned to his weathered features. “May?! What are you doing here? What are you – did they hurt you?! I swear to God if they hurt you – let me go!” His sudden burst of strength caught the guards flatfooted. Norman pushed them to the ground and rushed the glass. “You bastard!” He pounded on the clear barrier saving Marc Stone from a broken nose and busted face. “She’s got nothing to do with this! You leave her out of it, you hear me? If you lay a single finger on her, I swear I’ll –”

“Temper, temper,” Marc said coolly. Norman’s violent outburst appeared to have bored him. With a flippant ‘shoo’ gesture, he had his men wrestle the enraged father away from the glass, and they needed a third to drag him back kicking and hurling death threats.

May turned to Marc with water in her eyes and croaked, “Why? Why are you doing this?” To think, she’d actually believed he was a decent man.

“You’re asking the wrong question, my dear,” Marc said. “What you should be asking is, ‘what did *he* do?’ Now, I won’t fault you for having pity for these deplorables – you’re rather green behind the ears after all – however, I can assure you, every one of these stains on our society earned their place on that wheel, including your father.”

“What? No. No.” May shook her head vehemently. That was outrageous! “Whatever you think my dad did... no, you have the wrong person.”

“Do I now?” Marc said, amused. “So, you’re saying the four highly trained, highly paid and highly effective trackers I had dedicated to scouring the sewers for this rat over the past couple of days brought me back the wrong rotter in the end? Why, it really is hard to get good help these days, isn’t it?”

“What are you talking about?” The creases in her brow doubled in anger and bewilderment. “You had my dad followed? Why?”

“Well, remember when I explained to you how my father offered my mother the world on a silver platter to make us go away? My mother said no to it all. No to the fat severance package, no to all the flashy gifts. She took me and we did disappear. Not because he paid us to, but because he didn’t deserve us. She wanted him to know that. It was important to her. Important to me.”

"I... don't understand," May admitted.

"She thought she'd gotten rid of everything," Marc continued, mowing over her befuddlement. "Until she discovered an original, hand-made Gio-V gold watch tucked in an old coat she thought she'd gotten rid of years ago. Only twenty of them have ever been manufactured, you know? It was an old gift he'd given to 12 of his best employees for hitting record-breaking sales that year. Though Mother was merely a lowly secretary she ended up getting one, too, and undoubtedly appreciated it more than any of the other overachievers. When she accidentally dug up this little trinket however, her only thought was to rush to the nearest garbage disposal. She had no idea little ten-year old me rummaged through the trash moments after she walked away."

May couldn't predict where this was all going, but had the distinct impression she wouldn't get any of her answers until he unburdened himself. "Why?" She hoped feigning interest in his story would help him arrive at his point quicker. "I thought you hated your dad. Why did you want anything from him after he rejected you?"

The real answer to that question remained hidden behind a tricky smile. "I have my reasons," was all Marc said. "My own intentions. I have plans for that watch – well, *had* plans. Plans that will never see the light of day because your father, in all his moral grandstanding, found no sin in stealing from thy neighbour."

May laughed in disbelief, convinced more than ever Marc Stone captured the wrong guy. "My dad would never do that." Marc gave her a questioning look, unconvinced. May turned to urge her father through the glass. "Dad, tell him. Tell him he's lying. Tell him you'd never..." Confidence waned in her trailing voice as Norman's non-reaction and the drop in his shoulders all but admitted guilt. *Dad... how could you? When did you become a thief?*

"Believe me now?" Marc smirked. "My men finally spotted him camping outside the Kallaghar Inn yesterday morning. They alerted me and we kept a close eye on him, tracked him through the woods. We didn't see the watch on him so thought best to keep our distance in the hopes he might lead us to where he stashes stolen goods. But no. It became obvious he had more... perverse reasons for wandering into the woods. We took him out and hauled him back here for questioning."

May's head was spinning. How could all this have been happening without her having the slightest of clues? Evidently, her father had been keeping secrets of his own all along.

“I will give him credit though,” Marc mentioned. “Your father’s not one to go quietly into the night. Even after we’d clobbered him over the head and Butch carried him on his shoulder through the woods, your father kept mumbling in his half-conscious state, ‘I’ll save you, honey’, ‘Daddy’s coming’. Such heart and determination at a time when he shouldn’t have been able to speak. It moved me. We had to go back. And, well, that’s when we found you. I think I can safely say both you and I are glad that we did.”

The old adage ‘never meet your heroes’ struck May hard. Granted, she hadn’t been in any position to choose who rescued her. Marc Stone’s duplicity left her appalled and even more confused. “Let me get this straight, you did all that and left me your business card hoping I’d come here so you can force me to watch my dad suffer?”

“Heavens, no!” Marc cried, clutching his pearls in feigned dismay. “As I said, I saw an opportunity for us to help one another.”

He was insane. “Me help you?” May retorted, indignation flaring up her tone. “Help the man taking out his severe daddy issues on people over some stupid watch?”

For the first time since she met Marc Stone, he wore an expression that wasn’t faux geniality or indifference; his lips thinned as ire simmered through his façade. May found some sadistic pleasure seeing the pain in his face, the only vengeance she could inflict from her powerless position. Marc Stone wasn’t accustomed to anyone belittling his troubled past and May stomping all over his ‘woe is me’ act pushed him to the edge. As he stood there seething in silence, she couldn’t tell if he was about to strike her or break down in tears. Either way, May braced herself, stood in his face ready to take whatever punishment her truth bomb earned her.

Marc huffed and puffed and bemoaned, “How could you ever understand?” He stormed out.

May was taken aback, never imagined her words could have that great an effect. Her brief sense of victory ended the instant she turned to regard her father, still outnumbered, still wrestling against the odds, still confined on the other side of the glass. He had no shot fighting his way to freedom. And even if he did miraculously escape, the property was riddled with henchmen at Marc Stone’s beck and call. Her dad wasn’t going anywhere. And she’d just aggravated the only person who could possibly release him. May couldn’t bear witnessing him suffer a second longer and rushed out of the room in pursuit of Marc.

She caught up to him in the fields marching back to his mansion. “Wait! Hold on a sec.” May rounded him and stopped in his path. “Okay, you’re right. I don’t get it. I probably never will. But what you’re doing to those people... to my father, it isn’t right.”

“Neither is theft.” Marc shrugged with one shoulder. “Perhaps if this region ran just one competent police department, I wouldn’t have to clean up the streets for them.”

He wasn’t completely wrong, though May wholeheartedly disagreed with his particular brand of justice. “Just tell me what I have to do for you to let my dad go.” May threw her arms up. “What do you want from me?”

“Ooh, now we’re getting somewhere.” The smug grin returned to his face. “However, I don’t *want* anything from you. I’m not in the business of making demands.”

Sure seemed like he’d been gearing up to. “Then what?”

“A proposal. Take it or leave it. Though I must say, should you decide to accept it, I guarantee you’ll have everything you haven’t been able to attain in this region. Just like *that*,” he asserted with a snap of his fingers.

It sounded too good to be true, but May couldn’t help be intrigued. “Uh, what kind of proposal?”

...

Marc slammed a heavy suitcase on his dining room table, unlocked the combinations and lifted the top open to reveal countless stacks of pristine banknotes piled in neat rows. The Pokédollars smelt so fresh they might’ve been printed that very morning. May had never seen this much hard cash in her entire life. Marc spared her the trouble of trying to guesstimate.

“100,000 Pokédollars”, he declared, matter-of-factly. “More than enough to buy your way back to Hoenn in first class. You did say that’s where you’re from, right?”

May nodded absent-mindedly.

“Not only that,” Marc continued, “but if you take me up on this offer, I’m willing to write off the hefty debt your father owes me. He’ll be a free man, free to travel right alongside you. For that matter, you could afford to take as many tagalongs as you can fit in the plane.

You could say goodbye to Dytopiah. For good.” Marc stirred then sipped from his wine glass as though he’d already secured the deal. How could she say no to that?

May was still stuck on ₱100,000. She wouldn’t have believed it if she wasn’t staring at it right now. If that really was the amount in the suitcase then everything Marc Stone stated was true – they’d finally have more than enough to patch up Skarmory and head home.

This can’t be real... can it?

After all the pain and disappointment and loss she suffered, May was almost too afraid to be hopeful. But not gullible enough to assume there wouldn’t be a catch. Actually, she was pretty certain she’d already figured out what it was. It had been obvious since the moment he laid eyes on her. “Let me guess,” she said confidently, “you’ll only let me have all this money if I sleep with you?”

Marc spat his wine across the table, forcing his butler to leap into action and wipe up the sudden mess. “Heavens, no! I don’t think my partner would appreciate that very much. And even if I did swing on that side of the court, you’re a little too young for me, honey. Gorgeous, sure; camera ready, most certainly – with a few touch-ups here and there, but you’re not quite my bottle of champagne, dear. Sorry to disappoint you.”

Disappoint her? May was overwhelmingly relieved! So not *every* man in Dytopiah was a flagrant pervert. But then, “Okay, if you don’t want me to sleep with anyone then –”

“Who said I didn’t want you to sleep with anyone?”

Crap. She’d spoken too soon. May regretted asking before the words even left her lips. “With who then?”

Marc downed the rest of his wine, settled his glass next to the suitcase, and said in his typical calm and collected manner, “Only your father.”

... TO BE CONTINUED ...

Author's Notes: Thanks for reading! Please help me become a better writer by sending me your feedback. Whether you hated it or loved it, I'm open to hearing all opinions as long as you're genuine and respectful about it. You can drop a review at lemonzsauce.com or hit me up at reviews@lemonzsauce.com. I do my best to respond to all reviews.

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Special credit goes to *Fujimori Shiki and sana!rpg* for the artwork that inspired this fan fic cover! As of the time of this writing, you can find more of the artist's work here:

https://www.skillots.com/search/profiles/16717?category_id=54&locale=en&tab_index=1

<https://www.pixiv.net/en/users/7683594>

As always, thanks again for reading! Have a nice day and take care!

Sincerely yours, j.j. scriptease.