

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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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.

J. J. SCRIPTEASE

HO'ING FOR HOENN

(A Pokémon Fanfic)

CHAPTER 8



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 8 – 2 Bone For Stone?

If May had beverage in her mouth, it would've been ejected all over Marc's egocentric expression and fancy suit. "You want me to do what?"

"Sleep with your father." He just said that a second time with a straight face. Her ears hadn't deceived her.

May suddenly felt the need to sit down. Marc Stone was an enigma and the more she found out about him the less she wanted to know. What could he possibly have to gain by making her sleep with her own dad? "You're a certified weirdo. You have some sort of sick incest fetish or something?"

"Weirdo, perhaps," he admitted with a nonchalant shrug. "Aren't we all in some shape or manner? But no, I do not have a particular inclination for watching family members perform the horizontal tango."

"Then why they the heck would you ask me that?"

"Because I have clientele that do."

"Clientele?"

He got up and spoke to her whilst his back was turned pouring himself another glass of wine. "Has no one ever taught you the concept of multiple streams of income? My wealth would barely be a fifth of what it is if I relied solely on moving vegetation. Lucrative as it is, I've hopped on several fruitful bandwagons to get me to where I am today. One such fruitful bandwagon cruising down the highway to prosperity is the adult entertainment industry – you might've heard of it? You know, pornography?"

His cheeky question merited no response, simply a sad shake of her head. Of course he'd be into producing that sort of filth.

And not an ounce of shame in his step as he returned to his seat on the other side of the loaded briefcase. "You may shake your head but it's the oldest profession in the world. Tried, tested and undefeated. I've had the fortune of dabbling in a particularly profitable brand of adult entertainment – custom-made content." He regarded her lost expression and explained further.

"You see, I know people – important people – of high regard. Rich people, powerful people – you'd certainly recognise more than a few names if I was at liberty to rattle them off. And what you learn is it doesn't matter if you're a renowned world leader or a repressed recluse holed up in your mother's basement, we all fall victim to the same human, lecherous, reproduction-seeking impulses. Just so happens my clientele have the means to turn their unique perversions into reality or, at the very least, into top quality productions for their viewing pleasure." He pointed at her across the table. "That's where you come in."

May wore a quizzical expression, speechless.

"For the last two years, one of my high-paying clients has been in search of a particular kink," Marc went on. "A kink involving a real-life father and a real-life daughter doing things to each other real-life fathers and real-life daughters shouldn't be doing to each other. As you might imagine, it's been rather difficult scouting participants willing to set their familial ties aside, and the few that have come forth failed to meet the, shall we say, 'aesthetic' requirements my client insists upon. Not you, however." He took a sip of his glass and a long sip of her appearance once more. "Not even that hideous, oversized tracksuit can bury the large bags of potential you're working with, honey."

The busty teen blushed despite herself.

"And your father, well, a little rough around the edges but fit as a Mudsdale. And oh," he leaned towards her and whispered, "he's hung like one, too. My men and I took a cheeky gander when we disrobed him while he was knocked out before getting him into his new uniform." Marc giggled.

“Oh my God!” May covered her ears in a hurry. She did *not* care to hear about how ‘hung’ her father might’ve been! “That’s... ew.” The last thing she needed was Marc Stone graffitiing images in her head she’d never be able to wash off.

“The point is, you two tick every box! With your bountiful breasts and natural beauty, and his chiselled frame and porn-centric phallus, my client will be more than satisfied. You have any idea how much they’re willing to pay for this little production?”

“I don’t know. And I don’t care.” May crossed her arms and retreated in her chair. “I’m not doing it. It’s sick. Why don’t you ask your ‘client’ to look for that stuff on the internet? I bet there’re plenty of videos featuring that theme all over the place.”

“Yes, but the vast majority are pure fiction or poorly-performed re-enactments. Knowing the actors are not really related instantly kills the excitement for my client. And don’t forget, the whole appeal of *custom-made* content is a certain level of directorial privileges afforded to the consumer. You’ll be working off a script that they wro—”

“No, I won’t.”

Marc chuckled. “Word of advice – hollow pride is not a commendable trait. All it’s good for is keeping you down the ditch you dug with your own self-importance. Bigger names than you have contributed to my productions – highly decorated Trainers and League leaders making up the ranks.”

“Bullshit,” May said.

“Honest to Arceus.” He put a hand on his heart.

“You’re telling me there are Gym Leaders and members of the Elite Four that filmed dirty porn movies?”

“Yes. Perhaps, even a regional Champion or two.”

“Bullshit. How come I never heard of it?”

“These are all professional productions carried out under ironclad non-disclosure agreements. I couldn’t give up their names if you held a sickle to my throat. I can guarantee you, however, at least one of the famous ‘heroes’ you looked up to growing up as a child has

done the filthiest, most unsavoury acts you can imagine on camera. And look where it got them today.”

On some level, May always understood the Pokémon League and the world of politics was not what they seemed. It wasn't farfetched to believe some Gym Leaders might've 'slept their way' into the Pokémon League. Just as well Marc wasn't at liberty to divulge their identities; she didn't want to know, didn't want to risk ruining images she'd drawn up from childhood. The possible legitimacy of his claims hadn't swayed May from her staunch refusal.

“I'll sweeten the deal.” Marc wouldn't give up. “If you agree to my terms, I'll see to it you are flown to Hoenn, or wherever else you'd like to go in the world, on my own private jet. You won't have to spend a penny of this ₪200,000 concerned with travel expenses. What say you?”

May shook her head, thought she'd already made herself clear. “I'm not some... porn star. There'd be no point going home to shame and ridicule. What do you think all our friends and family will say if they ever saw our... sex tape?”

“They never will,” Marc insisted confidently. “The only people who'd even know this 'sex tape' exists are sitting in this room right now, my own small, private production crew and the tight-lipped client who's paying for it. Over and above the ironclad NDA, it would be in their best interest not to expose this kind of material – they love their money, their social standing and their political influence *way* too much let something like this slip into public domain. We've produced over 100 private videos and, before today, you hadn't heard a solitary whisper about a single one. I think my track record speaks for itself.”

Well, even if all that was true, no assurance could settle the sick feeling in her stomach at the disturbing notion of sleeping with her dad. “I can't do it.” She took another glance at the treasure trove displayed before her, at her quickest ticket out of this shithole and back to civilization... *are you really going to walk away from 200,000 Pokédollars, May?* Even under normal circumstances, it would take a lot for the average person to decline that amount of money. Two-hundred thousand Pokédollars. The crisp, green notes shimmered in her desperate eyes. Was it worth... sleeping with her dad? Was it crazy she considered it even for a sliver of a second? *Come on, May, you're better than this!* She ripped her money-hungry stare away from temptation and reaffirmed, “I can't. I can't do it.”

“Hm.” Marc looked disappointed. “That’s unfortunate.” He readjusted himself in his seat and in his approach. “Perhaps, you’re too preoccupied considering what will happen if you do it. Perhaps, it’s in your best interest to consider what will happen if you *don’t* do it.”

“Heh, as if my life can get any worse than it is now.”

“Oh, but it can. Did you not lose all your hard-earned cash shortly after we came to your rescue? Which means, you’re not exactly sitting pretty right now and, before long, desperation will lure you back into the woods and have you undertaking the same perilous antics that landed you in this hot mess in the first place,” Marc pointed out, painting a grim picture. “Let’s face it, honey, if you had better prospects of making the kind of money you require in the time you require, you wouldn’t have been doing what we found you doing.”

May looked down, hiding the embarrassment on her face. They saw all that?

“Hey, I’m not here to judge.” Marc put his hands up. “A Pokédollar is worth a Pokédollar, no matter how it’s gained. But consider that those boys, those *monsters*, we’d narrowly prevented from committing grievous bodily harm, are still out there. Probably pissed they didn’t get to complete their heinous assault. Probably keen on having another go given half the chance. And look, if it’s not them, how many more debauched delinquents do you imagine are running amok in the woods simply waiting for their opportunity? You’re nothing to them. They have nothing to lose. You really fancy your odds going back and flashing your goods to potentially dangerous strangers? I don’t mean to frighten you but... if it nearly happened once, it certainly could happen again. And next time, you may not be so lucky to have friends close by.”

If he hadn’t meant to frighten her, he’d made a spectacularly horrendous mess of it. May wore a glum expression, gnawed at her nails, tapped her foot restlessly under the table as she envisioned all the horrible things he implied could happen to her.

“And as for your father... he will, of course, remain under indentured servitude to me. Honestly, he could spend two lifetimes back-to-back on the wheel and still not atone for the irrecoverable loss he’s caused me.”

The finality in his voice convinced her he was petty and deranged enough to make good on that promise.

“Or!” Marc said with a hopeful spike in his tone. “You could free him. You could do the sensible thing and avoid all the madness in the wild, wild woods. Shoot *one* video with someone you actually trust in a completely sterile, completely safe environment. One video that will cost a little more than a few hours of your time. One video no one will ever discover exists. Collect your loaded briefcase, do pass go and before you know it, you’re right back where you belong! Really. How hard of a decision is it?”

She saw what he was doing. The contrast between the alternatives couldn’t be painted starker, but he underestimated how big a hurdle it would be to get over the fact it was her *father* expected to co-star in her X-rated movie debut. Either that or torture for the both of them. May found herself trapped between a rock and a hard place.

As far as Marc was concerned, her delayed response was progress from the non-negotiable no’s she’d served him up till this point. “I do understand your dilemma. It’s a lot to take in. And quite frankly, not a decision you can make on your own. This is what we’re going to do.” He closed the briefcase then steepled his hands over the table. “I’ll release your father today.”

Wait, what? May perked up. “You will?”

“Mhm. Just for 24 hours,” he clarified, deflating her optimism. “Although, truly, it depends on what you two do with the time. I’ll provide you a cosy guest suite where you can lie your heads down and order anything our exquisite cooks are prepared to make for you. Most of all however, I’m gifting you the opportunity to deliberate over the proposal I’ve laid out on the table.” He glanced at his platinum wristwatch. “This time tomorrow, I expect you to deliver your final decision.” He stood, picked up his wine glass in one hand and the briefcase in the other. “Good luck. I sincerely pray you make the sensible choice, May. For your sake. Toodle-oo!”

And with those ominous parting words hanging in the air, Marc Stone took his leave and left chaos and dread storming between her ears.

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May was pacing left and right in the guest suite when the sudden creak of the door rooted her to the spot. Hargreaves held it open for a ragged, depleted man she barely

recognised as her father. Staggering, Norman got one foot and a half through the door before she threw herself at him. The emphatic bearhug nearly knocked him back off his feet. She wrapped her arms around him without a care he smelt worse than a dumpster. Norman rested his frizzy chin atop her head and minutes passed before the pair relinquished the reinvigorating embrace.

“Are you okay?” May asked, worry crackling in her voice.

“Me? Pfft. Of course! You know your old man,” Norman said. “Hard as nails! They’re gonna need a whole lot more than some treadmill from hell to break me.”

May wanted to believe him but a half-hearted smile was all she could offer. “You don’t have to do that, you know.”

“What do you mean?”

“Act all tough.” She wouldn’t think less of him if he admitted to being beaten down, at his wit’s end or even afraid. “It’s been a rough couple days. What they’re doing to you out there is despicable.”

“Yeah, well, as long as they keep you out of it, I’ll be okay.” He walked past her disguising a slight limp and peeked out one corner of the window, hiding his face behind the thick curtain.

“What are you doing?” she wondered.

“Isn’t it obvious?” He looked back over his shoulder. “Trying to figure out a way to bust us out of here.”

While she admired his diehard attitude, something told May his prison-breaking scheme was bound to end in misery. Marc Stone had dedicated some of his best resources to capture her dad and there was no chance he’d overlook the security in his compound ensuring all his captives remained captive. “I don’t think that’s going to work,” May said honestly. “He’s probably got cameras and security guards all over the place – I mean, there are three standing right outside the door. We’d be lucky to sneak out of this room without anyone noticing, let alone the mansion, the compound. And you just know he’s probably got everyone on high alert.”

“Maybe.” Norman continued scanning the area three floors below. “But we have to try, right?”

“We’re only going to piss him off more.”

“Well, that’s a risk we’re just going to have to take, aren’t we? I mean, what else are we supposed to do? Sit here until they decide to come back and drag us apart?” He shook his head, no way. “No can do. I’m not letting you out of my sight this time. And if they try to take you away, it will be over my dead body.”

“Try to take me away?” She suspected her dad didn’t get the full briefing. “Wait a minute. They didn’t tell you why they put us in this room together, did they?” His face went blank. “Marc didn’t mention the proposal?”

“Proposal? What are you talking about?”

Oh God, of course that sociopath wants me to tell him! May couldn’t look into her dad’s eyes and begin to explain Marc Stone’s indecent proposal. That glass of wine she turned down sounded good right about now. “Um, I think you’re going to want to sit down for this one, Dad.” They got comfortable in barrel chairs next to each other before an awkward May tentatively shared the details of her prior conversation.

Her dad reacted exactly how she’d expected him to. “Is that a fucking joke?! If that purple-haired weirdo had any balls he would’ve asked me to my face! I’ll show him exactly what I think of his sick proposal.” Norman punched his palm, outraged.

“Do you know where his watch is?” It might’ve been the only potential bargaining chip they had at their disposal. “If we can somehow get it back to him, he’ll have to write off whatever debt he thinks you owe him. He’d have no reason to keep you here against your will. And he’s already made it clear I can walk out of here whenever I like.”

Norman dropped his face in his palms and cursed. “I slipped up. Like I told those cavemen trying to beat it out of me, I’ve got no cooking clue where that damn watch is. The punks that jumped me for it could be anywhere in Toxi City by now, probably sold it for pot or something.” He sighed, defeated. “I really don’t know where it is. I’m sorry, May.”

She was afraid he'd say that. Her shoulders dropped and she sank back into her barrel chair deflated. "Still can't believe you took it in the first place," she muttered so low he could barely hear it.

"What'd you say?"

"You really thought it would be a grand idea to steal something valuable from a narcissistic egomaniac like Marc Stone?"

"Oh, come on." Her criticism agitated him. "Like I was supposed to know he'd take it so personally? Look at this place! I figured the scumbag had gazillion more watches where that one came from. He wouldn't even feel it if one went missing."

"Yeah, well, he felt it, Dad."

"Clearly I was wrong."

"And now we're stuck here."

Norman didn't appreciate her accusatory tone. Who was the parent scolding the child here? "And what about you?" he fired back. "When were you planning on telling me you're whoring yourself out to the whole region?"

"Whoring?" May recoiled, appalled. "I didn't 'whore' myself to anyone! See, this is why I didn't want to say anything! I knew you'd blow everything out of proportion and take it the worst way imaginable."

"So, you *weren't* out there showing little boys your tits?"

"I – look," May huffed, exasperated. "I took precautions. None of them touched me."

Norman laughed with disbelief. "That's not what I saw."

"Yesterday was different. Nothing like that ever happened before."

"Point is it happened, May. And it could've been worse! What were you thinking?" he asked her pointedly, disgust on his face. "What do you think your mother's going to say, huh? Think your mother would be proud?" May fell silent but Norman carried on. "We didn't raise you like that and you know it. I'm so disappointed right now. A whole lot of good those

'precautions' did you, ey? Maybe if Stone hadn't seen how ready and willing you are to sell your body, he wouldn't have thought up that disgusting offer in the first place."

May huffed. "So now it's my fault? You think Mom will be thrilled to find out you're a thief now?"

He shrugged. "Better a thief than a slut."

"I'm not a slut!"

"Then why would you –" His rebuttal was cut short by the loud grumble of his tummy. He could've gone on, but Norman decided now was as good a time as any to take a breather. "Just, never mind. I can't look at you right now." He got up and paced about the room for a while before knocking on the door and shouting at the guards on the other side to, "Get us some damn food in here."

May couldn't believe how he'd turned this all around on her. Of course he could never be wrong – he was the parent. How silly of her to presume he'd take some accountability. Granted, until he mentioned it, she hadn't stopped to consider if any of her behaviour had led them to this juncture, too.

When Hargreaves delivered them trays of lasagne and antipasto, they ate their lunch on opposite sides of the room – May seated on the bed facing the window whilst Norman gobbled up his lasagne in a barrel chair behind her. The TV was on but neither of them could stomach mindless entertainment right now. Hell, May barely had the appetite for anything on the platter, dallying with her fork as she reflected on her time in Dytopia. Seeing her dad take the revelation this poorly, she pictured it would be twice as bad when her mom found out.

If her mom found out. She and Norman still hadn't developed a gameplan that would get them back home. They'd need to be on speaking terms to do that.

It felt as though hours went by without a word spoken in either direction. May jumped when a hand touched the back of her shoulder.

"Hey," Norman said. His voice had come down to a calm tenor. Perhaps he'd been hangry before the food settled in his gut, or perhaps the stretch of quiet reflection allowed him to re-evaluate his hot take; whatever the case, May was pleased he extended an olive

branch. "This is stupid. Fighting isn't going to help us get out of here any sooner. Let's just admit we both did things we're not proud of and we wouldn't be here if we hadn't done those things, okay?"

"Okay," she said softly.

"Good." He squeezed her shoulder with reassurance. "Besides, what's most important is not how we got here, but how we're going to get out. We'll deal with everything else later."

Fair enough for her. "Any ideas?"

He combed his overgrown beard thoughtfully. "You said he's given us up till tomorrow to decide?"

"Yup."

"That means they'll be expecting us to spend the night in this room."

It was a safe assumption to make. "Yeah."

"But what if we don't?" That was where he lost her. "What if we wait till all the lights are out, right? I guarantee you half of these two-bit guards are going to be out like Snorlax. And the rest, well, maybe you distract them while I creep up behind them and then—" He jumped so abruptly it startled May, simulating his best impression of a sleeper hold. "Boom! I'll leave them out cold right where they stood. We don't even need to climb over the tall walls or anything like that. All we need to do is get to the fields, pick one direction and keep running. By the time they figure out we're not in our beds tomorrow morning, we'll be long gone. Sounds like it could work, right?"

Wow, he still hadn't given up on flying the coop. She wished she could be as confident in her ability to play an action hero, but May just knew she'd freeze up at the first sight of real danger. Norman himself wasn't at hundred percent; he might've hidden it well enough from others, but May noticed the slight limp in her father's gait, and the fact he favoured his ribs from time to time. Not to mention, his great idea completely ignored the likelihood of security cameras riddled throughout the mansion. "I don't know, dad..."

"Come on, don't you trust your old man?"

"It's not that. It's just... too risky."

“Riskier than sitting here and doing nothing?”

“I guess not. But.” She sighed. “I don’t know.”

“Hm.” He crossed his arms. “You have any better ideas? I’m all ears.” Probably not. Silence ensued, and the longer it persisted the more awkward it became, then Norman slowly tilted his head in suspicion. “May... don’t tell me you’re seriously considering his proposal...?”

She couldn’t look him in the eye when she said, in a feeble voice, “I mean...”

His jaw hit the floor. “May! You know how crazy that sounds?!” He clutched his hair in both hands and turned around, flabbergasted. “You’re my *daughter*, May. I’m your dad! Your *dad*,” he pointed out, astutely. “We can’t just – just – God.” He couldn’t even say the words. “This is crazy. Crazy I tell you! Batshit.”

“I know.”

“And you believe this goofy prick? That he’d actually let us run off with all that money?”

May thought about it and, “Yes. Strangely, I do.” Marc Stone proved himself to be many undesirable things, but she couldn’t pick out a single lie he’d told.

At a loss, Norman paced in front of the window with both hands on his head. “No. Nuh-uh. Absolutely not. We can’t, May. I know we’ve done a lot of stupid shit since we got stranded on this island but we’re not going there. There’s no way we’re doing... *that*.”

“You think I want to?” Sleeping with her own dad was just about the grossest thing she could ever imagine. “We’re talking about two-hundred thousand Pokédollars, Dad.”

“I don’t care about the money.”

“Neither do I. But how else are we going to get back home? It’s been like eight months and we hardly have two pennies to show for it.”

“No. There has to be another way,” Norman said, obstinately.

“Like what?”

“Like I give that douchebag the finger tomorrow and tell him to go fu-”

“Dad –”

“No, May, it ain't happening. I don't care if they drag me back to that hellhole. They'll let you go. I'll tell you where to find Jake and Skarmory. You guys stick together and eventually when I find a way out, I'll join up with you.”

“And what if you don't?”

“I will.”

“Even if you did, we're right back where we started, with no way off this region.”

“Not forever,” Norman said. “Jake mentioned all Skarmory recover and self-heal their wings on a yearly basis. His is taking longer than usual because of the severity of its injuries, but if we wait it out, Skarmory can eventually fly us out of here.”

“Eventually?” May asked, doubtful. “In what? Another seven months? A year?”

Norman threw his arms up. “Possibly.”

May droned, exhausted. “I'm tired, Dad. I can't make it another seven days out there, let alone seven months. And a year? I'd rather kill myself.”

“Hey.” Norman knelt down before her and clasped her hands. “You can. You're a fighter. You can. I know it's a little tough out there –”

“A little tough? I almost got raped!” May pulled her hands out of his grasp. “And you weren't there, Dad. I've been all alone, struggling to fend for me and Skitty. You have no idea how tough it's been for us. How could you?” She walked off in a huff.

Norman let her be. What could he possibly say to absolve himself from not being there to protect his daughter? He'd be mad, too, in her shoes. Caroline would be disappointed in him. And as much as he'd questioned May's risqué decisions, it was his lack of presence that left room for those habits to fester. She looked more like an adult every day; it was easy to forget she was still a child in need of her father.

“You're right,” he admitted. “I'm not going to be winning any Father of the Year awards anytime soon. But I swear, what almost happened to you out there, is never going to happen to you again. Not on my watch.” She didn't respond, hadn't even looked at him when he made the vow. “Well, I'm here. Whenever you're ready to talk again.”

He lied down on one of the single beds and watched TV without really watching. One eye and ear drifted between the screen and the other half of the room. There was no movement from where May sat. Just a silent stillness in his peripheral vision. Norman didn't realise how tired he was, how much this past week had taken out of him, not until he opened his eyes to dusk outside the window. On the other side, the vacant bed next to his was vacant no longer.

"Hey there, sleepyhead."

He yawned whilst pulling himself up in a sitting position. "How long was I out for?"

"Two days."

"Two days?!" He jolted upright and glanced around the room in panic before May's smothered giggles gave her away. "Jeez! Don't scare me like that."

"You really think Marc Stone is just going to let you nod off for two whole days?"

"I can dream, can't I?" He yawned again. "Shit. Now I kind of wish I was."

"You and me both," May said. "For weeks, I've had this dream where I open my eyes and I'm in my own bed again." There was hope in her voice but sadness on her face.

Norman was simply glad to hear her speaking again. "Feeling better now?"

"A little. Not really. I've been thinking..."

Norman turned on his side and held his head up on a palm attentively.

"Remember back at the restaurant you said we'd do things my way going forward? And that if I needed you to help me with anything, you would, no questions asked?" He remembered, but it wouldn't have served him to admit it right now. "Well, Dad, this is it. This is me asking for your help."

Saddening. All that time he'd left her to muse during his slumber hadn't changed her tune one bit. If anything, she carried more conviction for filming the indecent video. This wasn't May speaking. It was fear. And fear blinded her from seeing the full repercussions of pursuing the proposed quick fix. Rather than react with righteous vitriol at the prospect of incest, Norman attempted a more measured approach.

“Have you thought about how this could change everything between us?” he asked. “Even if we somehow... pulled it off... do you honestly believe we’ll be able to look each other in the face again? At home? Across the dinner table? At family reunions?” He could tell by her downcast expression she hadn’t thought that far. “Once we go there, there’s no going back. We might be able to hide it from everybody else, for a while, but we’ll never be able to hide it from each other. It will eat away at our relationship from the inside out.” All the progress they’d made two nights ago would be for nought. “Are you really prepared to lose your father?”

She didn’t have to say it. He could see the answer was no. But May was determined to have her cake and eat it, too. “I know things will never be the same. But that doesn’t mean we have to lose each other.”

“How can we not?”

“Because it’s not real,” May argued. “It’s an act. When those lights and cameras come on, it’s not me you’re going to be looking at. And you won’t be you. We’ll be other people for as long as the cameras are rolling, in some made-up world, some made-up scenario that’s not real. And when they yell ‘cut’, we climb back into our skins. If professional actors can do it, so can we.”

“Except, we’re not professional actors,” he reminded her, “and we’re definitely not porn stars. We’re father and daughter.”

“You know what I mean.”

“I also know it won’t be as easy as you think.” He shook his head with an incredulous laugh. “I can’t believe we’re even having this discussion. Almost 20 years I’ve been married to your mom, and not once did I stray from our vows. The last person I expected to try and persuade me to is my own teenage daughter. Pretty fucked up.”

“I know it is. For me, too. We haven’t even done anything and I already feel guilty for betraying my boyfriend.”

Norman’s face twitched abruptly. “Your... what now?”

May covered her mouth seconds too late.

Norman clenched his jaw. “Who is it?”

She kept silent, afraid to lower her hand.

“Do I know him?” her dad pressed.

“Does it even matter?” she mumbled behind her palm.

“It’s that scrawny neighbour kid with the funny hats, isn’t it?” Norman narrowed his piercing eyes at her. “I should’ve known. There was always something that was never quite right about that boy.”

May dropped her hand from her mouth to defend her secret boyfriend. “Oh, come on, Dad. You always loved Brendan! You told me yourself you could see him challenging the Champion one day.”

“That was before I knew he was sneaking around behind my back corrupting my little girl. The kid’s got no integrity, no backbone. Why’d he not come up and ask me if he had genuine interest in you?”

“Oh, I dunno, Dad, maybe because you intimidate any person with a penis that walks through our front door? You even give Max’s friends the stink eye and they’re only like ten! You seriously need to chill out a bit,” May suggested. “It’s not like Brendan’s been seeking my hand in marriage or anything. We’re just dating.”

“Just dating.” He puffed. “You know you’re not supposed to be doing that until you –”

“Turn 21,” May droned the rest of his predictable sentence. “I know, I know, but like, it’s not a big deal.”

“Boys his age are only after one thing.”

“Oh. Like you were?”

“Me?” Norman stammered at her unexpected rebuttal. “I mean, you’re missing the point,” he dodged. “This ain’t about me.”

“Yeah, it is. And about how any boy will never be good enough.”

Norman shrugged. “They won’t.” She rolled her eyes. Then he asked the one question they’d both been dreading since the topic came up. “Have you,” he said, lowering his voice and starting over, “have you had sex yet?”

“Oh my goodness.” She turned away as her cheeks flared up.

Norman’s heart was thrashing in his chest all of a sudden.

The longer she withheld her response, the less he wanted to hear it. He came about two seconds away from telling her to forget he’d asked when she finally mumbled, with her head down, twiddling her fingers, “...maybe once or twice.”

The way Norman slowly shut his eyes and dramatically lowered his face into his palms, you’d think she said 200 times. Even once was too much to hear. “Gee, May. First the stripping and now this? I feel like I don’t even know you anymore.”

She rubbed the back of her head sheepishly. “Don’t you think you’re being a tad dramatic?”

“No. You’ve broken so many of our rules, your mom’s and mine. Just because we happen to be in the middle of a dire crisis right now, don’t think for one second you’re going to get away with any of this scot-free,” he stated in the threatening tone he usually used before grounding her. Though something told May, her punishment this time would be a lot more severe than temporary confinement. Only Arceus knew what he’d do to Brendan.

A knock came at the door.

She couldn’t be more relieved to hop off the bed and escape the tension.

Hargreaves had arrived bearing gifts, a pile of fresh towels and silk pyjamas folded in his arms.

“Ah, great,” Norman said. “Just what the doctor ordered.” As soon as May set down the delivery, he slung a towel over his shoulder and headed for the suite’s bathroom. “Hope you don’t mind if I go first.”

“Yeah, that’s okay,” May said. He smelt like he needed it way more than her anyway. She lay on the bed staring at the orange-pink sky out the window as the patter of a hot shower emanated from the bathroom. Hopefully, the water would soothe his displeasure from learning his ‘sweet, innocent, little girl’ was a virgin no longer.

As dusk dwindled into night, Marc’s offer weighed heavily on May’s head. Disgusting as it was, she’d somehow convinced herself it was their best bet at getting home. Now only if

she could convince her father. His concerns had merit and she couldn't predict the long-term effects of an unholy union between them either. All she knew was she didn't want to go back to Route 304 alone again under any circumstances. Astonishingly, sleeping with her dad appeared to be the lesser of two evils.

Thinking she could do it was one thing but, if it came down to it, could she actually do it? May wasn't so sure. When she'd be forced to confront the moment, she might just run out of the room and completely change her mind. She thought about her mom, too. Not only would her dad be cheating on her, technically, he'd be cheating on her with her daughter to boot, an incestual double dose of betrayal. There was no way she could ever find out. Ever.

May had been so lost swimming in her own thoughts and distress, she didn't notice the shower had stopped running, not until a tall, shirtless figure sauntered into the room with a towel draped over his head.

Her dad was ripped. Hot droplets of water trailed down his broad, hairy chest and picturesque, washboard abs. He looked completely different to when she last saw him topless and on the onset of his dad bod years. Dytopiah had hardened him in more ways than one, chiselled away the excess of a comfortable life. He'd earned a scar diagonally across his right pectoral and another diagonally across his left abdomen, giving May a raw glimpse into how hard it must've been for *him* out there. Her eyes fleetingly drifted to the perfect V-shaped contour leading into the towel around his waist and, for the briefest of scatty moments, Marc Stone's voice slithered into her ears, whispering how well-endowed her dad had proven himself to be.

May fought off her curiosity and looked away a split second before he took off the towel drying his hair. For all he knew, she'd been staring out the window the entire time.

"Woo! Haven't had a shower like that in ages!" Norman exclaimed, drying the squeaky-clean insides of his ears with a hand towel. "The water's great, pumpkin. You should jump in."

"Oh, it is?" May pretended she only noticed him standing there. "Guess I should then." She grabbed a towel and hurried to the bathroom, exhaling a stifled breath as she escaped her dad's half-naked presence.

May could've hopped in the shower, too, but she soaked herself in a luxurious bubble bath instead. Who knew when she'd get another opportunity? The way things were going, she'd be out on the streets again soon enough.

When May returned from soothing her sorrows, pruned and warm beneath her towel, Norman was sprawled out on his bed, picking salumi off a charcuterie in his pyjamas whilst smirking at a silly TV show. He'd taken it upon himself to order them dinner and she was pleased to see him kick back from their onerous conundrum. With a light smile, she changed into her PJs and joined in on dinner. For the next little while, they checked out of Dytopiah and all its trappings, savoured the lazy dinner and each other's company for what it was, even managed to laugh out loud once or twice.

The lights went out before May and Norman came to an agreement on Marc Stone's proposal. She lay in bed staring through the darkness clouding the ceiling, and had the distinct impression her father was wrestling the same insomnia a metre away. The room was deathly silent but their thoughts were loud and wide awake.

"May," Norman said, suddenly.

"Hm?"

After a long stretch of silence, he decided, "I can't do it. I'm sorry. I want you to know you can count on me for anything. Just... not that. I'm sorry."

She closed her eyes and exhaled a defeated, drawn-out breath through her nostrils. "It's okay, Dad. I get it."

"Hey, give me your hand." He extended an arm out of his blankets and May did the same, joining hands in the airspace between their neighbouring beds. "Everything will be okay. Promise." He gave her hand a warm squeeze. "I love you."

May squeezed him back. "I love you, too."

"Good night, pumpkin. Sleep tight."

She tittered. "Good night, Dad."

...

May and Norman sat side by side with their hands intertwined under the dining room table. Two burly men in black suits (that Norman had become regrettably acquainted with) entered the room and set down the heavy briefcase from the day before. They pulled out a chair on the opposite side of the table and Marc Stone occupied it after making everyone wait ten, long minutes.

Norman trained an intense glare on the shoddy kingpin and May felt her dad's hatred for the man when he involuntarily squeezed her hand under the table. It took every fibre of his being not to launch himself at the maniac that had falsely imprisoned him and threatened torture till his dying breath. Retaliation might've felt good, for two seconds, but even if he did get one good lick in before the oversized bouncers sprung to Marc's defence, her dad's impulsiveness would only end in tragedy. May stroked her thumb over the top of his hand, silently pleading for him to keep his cool. His clench loosened ever so subtly.

When she'd woken up a couple of hours ago, his bed had already been made and he was standing by the window, staring through the lace curtains. Had he been contemplating a last-ditch escape? She didn't know. Other than murmuring "good morning" in response to hers, her dad hadn't uttered a single word since getting up. Perhaps the reality of returning to the grinder had started to settle in. May didn't say anything because she didn't know what to say; what words could comfort someone on the precipice of gruelling, non-stop, physical exertion? She allowed him space for his mental preparation all whilst sticking close enough to let him know she was there if he needed her.

Norman brought his boiling intensity and cold demeanour to the table. May noticed his eyes had drawn away from Marc's face and onto his heavily-accessorised hands. Well, if that's what it took to prevent him from bounding across the table in a fit of rage, then May wouldn't begrudge his silent glare.

"So," Marc piped up as though he'd just risen to the sunniest day of the year. He brandished a contract, set it next to the briefcase on the table and plucked a pen out of his breast pocket. "I trust you've had enough time to mull over my generous offer and come to the sensible conclusion." The pen rolled across the contract towards them. "What's it going to be, hm?"

May swivelled her head towards her dad but he hadn't moved a muscle, not even an inch to lift his gaze from Marc's hands. Clearly it was up to her to do the talking. "Um, yes.

We discussed your proposal.” She took a deep breath then added, “And we’ve decided it’s best if we –”

“We’ll do it.”

Marc turned to Norman, stunned. And he wasn’t the only one. May stared at her dad’s profile, speechless and confused.

Marc broke into abrupt laughter, the joy of a man who’d expected proceedings to go a lot rockier. The perplexed goons behind him laughed, too, more out of fear of offending him than finding humour in the sudden turn of events. “Splendid!” Marc cheered. “Well, then –”

“We’ll do it,” Norman reiterated, “but only under one condition.”

“Ooh, a curveball.” Marc smirked and nodded as though he respected Norman’s attempt to negotiate. And yet, he appeared completely unfazed. Marc leaned back in his chair and folded his arms behind his head. “Name it.”

... 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 the artists for the artwork that inspired this fan fic cover!

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

Sincerely yours, j.j. scriptease.