

LOVE BITES

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His name was Brian, but to his johns he was Emilie. All black vinyl, red lace and milky white skin, he worked the sidewalks of North Hollywood. While he made more money plying his trade over the internet, he couldn't ever retire his boots, no matter how worn their tread. It was only when Brian walked the streets, looking for his next trick, he felt most alive.

Leaning into the passenger side door, Brian shifted his body and spread his long smooth legs, allowing his skirt to ride up over his hips. Reaching down, he stroked his cock through the fabric of his panties. It was a well-practiced move, one he had performed countless times.

“I want to see your cock.”

Smile spilling across his black cherry lips, Brian slid his underwear to the side. With barely six inches, he wasn't exceptionally well hung, but that hardly mattered. His johns were rarely as interested in his penis as they were his mouth and ass. “Do you like that?” Brian whispered as he teased the lump of flesh towards erection.

Licking his lips, the paunchy Asian watched in anxious fascination. Smelling of stale cigarette smoke, teeth stained brittle yellow and silver dawning at the temples of his tightly cropped hair, the trick had to be at least fifty.

Before Brian could get too hard, the Asian reclined back and unzipped his pants.

With another well-practiced move, Brian swung across the seat and fished the john's cock out. Leaning forward, Brian teased his spidery fingers around the trick's stiffening member and kissed the Asian deeply. Brian didn't believe in that old hoary cliché of no kissing on the lips. If a john was paying him, they were paying for every inch of him, both body and soul. He liked to think that's why he had so many regulars—when it came to pleasure, Brian held nothing back.

Turgidly stiff and wonderfully erect, Brian suckled the bulbous head of the john's penis. With tender precision, Brian worked the trick's inches—at first only teasing the shaft with his tongue, before licking along its length and then finally engulfing the member completely with his eager mouth. The trick groaned loudly as Brian started stroking his hand along the saliva slicked shaft.

It wouldn't be much longer, Brian could feel it.

The trick laced his fingers through Brian's long black locks and forced Brian down the entire girth of his eight inches. Nose buried in a wiry thatch of silvery pubic hair, Brian held the shaft in his throat until the trick started thrusting his hips. Surrendering completely, Brian closed his eyes. Half a dozen pumps later, the john grunted loudly and came hard, never letting go of Brian's hair. The Asian wanted to make sure Brian tasted his jizz, and Brian was happy to oblige.

Semen jetting into his mouth, Brian fought back the temptation to swallow. His load spent, the Asian allowed his cock to slip from between Brian's lips.

Pitching forward in his seat, Brian discretely spat the coppery load into one of the napkins he kept in his purse. After Brian dropped the crumpled deposit out the window, the john leaned across the seat. Brian met him halfway, and they kissed. When their lips parted, the trick's mouth lingered. He hungrily licked the remaining traces of cum from the corners of Brian's mouth. As the Asian pulled back, Brian gently smiled. "Was it as good for you as it was for me?"

Another eager kiss and the john drove Brian back to his corner, fifty dollars richer.

Back on the street, Brian checked his make-up in the side mirror of a car parked at the curb. His lipstick was smeared and his eyeliner had started to streak. Cursing quietly, he took a moment to repair the damage and then a further moment to admire his face.

Luscious full lips. Delicate cheekbones. Gently rounded chin. Honey brown eyes peering out from beneath a cascade of long raven black hair. Skin like freshly poured milk. If he had been born a girl, his beauty would have been a blessing. But as a boy, it was an invitation bullies simply couldn't decline.

Throughout elementary school there was rarely a day when Brian didn't come home with a black-eye or a bloody lip. His father urged him to fight back. All hardworking muscle and calloused hands, Brian's father wouldn't have thought twice about attacking someone for calling him a fag or a sissy. With every bruise, and every split lip, Brian could see the disappointment in his father's face deepen.

Despite the thousand different disappointments Brian provided, he never doubted his father's love. He was always there to tend for Brian's wounds and offer assurances things would get better. Despite this, Brian didn't doubt he was the unwanted aftermath of a one night stand. If his mother hadn't died while giving birth to him, Brian believed his father would have never even known him. Not that he really knew him anyway. He presented his father with a strangely feminine puzzle he could never piece together. He may have made some effort to make the pieces fit early on, but he had given up entirely by the time Brian reached puberty.

Sensing his father's surrender, Brian withdrew in kind. He retreated into the printed page, spending countless hours at the local library. While he devoured anything and everything, Brian found himself attracted to one literary monster in particular—the vampire.

In Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles* he found creatures both beautiful and familiar. Their profound sadness, loneliness and longing was a dark mirror for all the feelings and ominous urges Brian never understood. Through their strength and power, Brian found his own. He stopped cutting his hair, started wearing tight black clothes that accentuated his more feminine qualities and even dabbled in make-up. By the time he turned fifteen, Brian was cutting himself and sucking at the wounds.

Various rumors about Brian spread throughout his high school. He was a devil worshiper who sacrificed small animals to Satan. Some stories painted him a warlock, practicing his black art in the woods behind the school. There were even whispers he maintained a kill list and planned to one day show up at school armed to the teeth. Bullies finally left him alone—as did everyone else. Brian enjoyed the scuttlebutt so much that when he found a dog's skull in the woods, he brought it to school and kept it in his locker. The more grist for the machine the better, he thought.

Having largely watched the transformation in silence, one day Brian's father finally decided to confront his son. He admitted always thinking Brian was different, but couldn't figure out how things had gone so wrong. Then he asked Brian why he had to be such a faggot. Brian told him the truth. He told him that he couldn't help it—he had been born that way. Watching the disappointment return, deeper than ever, to the creases of his father's face, Brian hadn't ever felt more alone. A week later, just days after his sixteenth birthday, he left home and never looked back.

After fixing his make-up, Brian returned to his corner. Business had been slow all evening. The Asian was only his third john and it was going on three o'clock. Back when he first started turning

tricks, he'd stand his corner until dawn came tumbling across the horizon in deep reds, brilliant purples and vibrant pinks. While he loved the streets, it wasn't where he made his real money. All of his regular clients were email addresses and phone numbers. Another thirty minutes passed without so much as a second look from a passing car, so he called it a night.

Brian had parked one block north of his corner. The silver Honda Accord wasn't much—the body was a little beaten and the paint job more than a little bruised—but after six hours on his feet, Brian couldn't imagine a more comforting sight.

Sliding in behind the wheel, Brian took a moment to remove his boots. He knew it was a mistake wearing them. They were new, and hadn't been broken in yet, but he loved the way he looked in them. When he finally started the engine, The Sisters of Mercy came to life over the stereo. Just like vampires lead him to his fashion sense, they also helped forge his musical taste. “Black Planet” washed over him for a verse before he put the car into gear and he started the thirty minute drive home.

Home was a West Hollywood apartment Brian shared with Michael. When he first arrived in Hollywood, Brian didn't have a dime to his name. He either slept in his car or went to bars hoping some guy would take him home for the night. After five months, he was more than ready for a place to call his own, so he jumped on the first affordable apartment. He didn't care it came along with a deeply entrenched roommate. He didn't care about the lime green walls, eggshell ceilings and kitschy decor. Brian told himself it was only temporary. He was certain he would move on to something more his style soon enough. Five years later, Brian couldn't imagine living anywhere else.

Michael was still awake when Brian got home. Hair a dark tangle, face all cheekbones and sharp angles, lips thick and full—Michael bore more than a passing resemblance to a young Peter Murphy. The manager of a clothing store, he was normally fast asleep by the time Brian returned from a night out. But instead of snoring away, Michael had his bony feet propped up on their coffee table and his MacBook on his lap. Michael sized Brian up in fleeting a glance before returning to his screen. “Nice boots.”

Brian started undressing before he even reached his bedroom. “What are you doing up?”

“You didn't get the video I sent you?”

Stepping out of skirt, Brian entered his bedroom. “You know I don't like watching shit on my phone.” He plopped down on the bed and took off his boots.

“Well, come here. You're going to love this.”

Normally when he got home Brian undressed, washed off his make-up and took a nice long shower. But his interest piqued, Brian decided the rest of his ritual could wait. Slipping on an old Sandman shirt he had bought at a thrift store, Brian went to see what Michael was so certain he'd love. “This better not be some stupid dog doing something stupid.”

While Michael was straight, there was still the occasional hint that he was slightly bent—the way he'd watch Brian model new outfits or how his eyes would linger on Brian's ass as he walked past. As he approached the couch in his T-Shirt and panties, Brian thought the way Michael looked him over was one of those moments. Michael's eyes went from his feet, lingered on his bare thighs before finally finding his eyes. “It's definitely not a dog,” Michael said.

Curling up next to Michael, Brian couldn't help but glance down at the bulge in Michael's shorts. While he would have loved to act on his suspicions, Brian instinctively knew it was a terrible idea. He had never had sex with a man he loved, and didn't want to start with Michael. He feared the complications action would bring far more than he craved Michael's touch. “So what is it?”

Michael played the YouTube video.

As Brian watched the video's greasy redneck break into a motel room, he didn't know what to think. Once the redneck was inside, Brian became even more confused. Between the room's murkiness, the grain of the video and shakiness of the camera work, it was hard for him to decipher the details but what happened next was crystal clear. The room's inhabitants attacked the redneck and his camera man. The camera hit the ground and, by the time its operator regained control, daylight had flooded the

room. When the screaming started, Brian knew exactly what was happening.

Over the years Brian had watched thousands of vampires die in the movies, but none of those came close to that YouTube video. Blood streaking down their faces, smoke rising from their bodies—there was a raw visceral quality to these vampire's deaths Brian hadn't seen before. *It felt real*. Just as Brian thought he had a handle on the video, someone attacked the redneck.

With his long black hair and diminutive frame, it took Brian a moment to realize the attacker was a teenage boy. The kid seized the redneck by the throat and tossed him across the room. All done in a perfectly framed, single grainy shot, Brian had no idea how it was staged. When the boy glanced at the camera, Brian thought he caught a hint of his fangs. In a single graceful movement, the boy launched himself across the room and pounced on the redneck. “Eric!” the operator screamed as blood started flying. The camera hit the ground and the video was over.

“Pretty cool, right?” Michael prodded as Brian stared at the YouTube page. “There's a website with all kinds of shit on it. You're going to want to see that, too.”

Much had changed for Brian since he arrived in Hollywood, but the lone constant remained his obsession with vampires. Filled with books, movies and posters, his bedroom was a lovingly constructed tribute to his favorite monster. As he sank back into the couch, Brian allowed himself a thought he had never dared think, but had always hoped for. In that moment he believed vampires were real. A Cheshire Cat grin starting to set in, he played the video again.

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