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### Let Them Eat Cake

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## "Let Them Eat Cake"

Not many twenty year olds can say that they've lived the life of a Queen. Not many can say that they've lived in the lap of luxury. Not many have been the iconic figure that leads the way in fashion and culture. But they've also never heard the masses calling for their head. Or had people want their blood to run in the street. And they most certainly had never suffered the life that Marie had; however, this didn't stop the world from judging her.

Marie had been no one to the world before Louis approached her at a political party in the ballroom of an Austrian hotel. She was there as a "party favor" as her boss had called it; she was a filler, a pretty face to look at, a young body for the politicians dance up against. Marie had been told to mingle, to always answer "nineteen" when asked her age, to accept drinks, and to say "yes" to anything the wealthy men ask of her. Do you want to dance? "yes". Do you like Austria? "yes". Do you want to go upstairs with me? "yes". Do you want a little something to take the edge off? "yes". She had only been told what to do, this is was her first night working since her no-good parents had kicked her out.

Louis had been hiding at a table in the corner, a glass of red wine and his cell phone his only company; he seemed harmless enough, so Marie glided over to him in her tight red cocktail dress. With a flirty giggle, Marie leaned against the table. "Hello there," she had chirped.

That's how it had started; she had flirted with Louis, dancing with him, the whole nine yards, until he was smiling and slightly sloshed. When Marie had gotten a text from her employer asking her for her location, Louis had panicked and asked if she wanted to spend the evening with him in the hotel room he had for the night. Marie answered her required "yes", but it turned out that Louis was more lonely than anything-they spent the night drinking and talking and eventually falling asleep.

Things moved quickly from there. Louis wanted her to come with him back to France. She tossed her cellphone and climbed aboard the private plane that would take her and Louis back to his home just outside of Paris. Louis was quiet, but he enjoyed Marie's bubbly youth. When they arrived at his penthouse, he awkwardly explained that there was plenty of room-much he didn't use-and that she would have everything and anything that she wanted.

Marie grew suspicious. Everything had strings attached, so what would Louis want from her? However when a black credit card was given to her and she was told to buy whatever she needed, her concerns all but evaporated... for a time.

Louis seemed content with being a stuffy home-body and intent on Marie on joining him. Marie, however, found that sitting beside Louis was not nearly as entertaining as staring over his shoulder at the view of the French nightlife just outside their window. And while Louis was happy with reading about legal president and economic standings, Marie was bored by the end of the week.

"Louis," Marie whined, dragging out the syllables of his name in an exaggerated French accent that she had been working on. She twirled around Louis's study where he was looking over documents. He made a noise but didn't bother to look up. She continued to strut about until she shimmied her way behind his chair, placing her hands on his shoulders. "Oh come on Darling, why don't you take me out-show me off a bit?"

Louis had looked up from his papers. "My dear," he had crooned sweetly, unable to resist her tantalizing pouting. "I wish I could, Lord knows you make it sound extraordinary, but I must focus on these documents-we wouldn't want the President to toss me, now would we?" When Marie had pouted and whined, Louis had patted her hand remorsefully. "Why don't you go out, have dinner, go to the casino or a club-make the most of the night? I wouldn't want to ruin your night. Use your card and take the car, that way I'll know you're safe."

And that's just what Marie does. She puts on a skin-tight cocktail dress that barely covers and sashays out of the apartment with a wave to Louis as she left. It went this way; Marie would beg for attention, Louis would make an excuse, and she would go out. Eventually, Marie stopped begging. The only time that she went out with Louis was when he had an event to go to; she would dress elegantly, speak properly, and smile politely.

They lived separately for the most part. Marie soon became a regular at the nightclubs and casinos, making friends quickly at the bars and spending money fluidly. This was what she was going to do when Louis popped his head into her room one evening.

"Marie I need to go to a party for the Austrian Ambassador tonight." Marie halts in the middle of pulling on thigh-high boots. "I know you were planning on going out, but I need you there-put on something really nice..." Marie sighed as she unzipped her boot. "And be ready in fifteen minutes, please dear."

Marie had grudgingly traded her sequined mini skirt and her backless halter that she had been planning on wearing to the clubs; instead she went to her closet and pulled out a full length pale blue formal gown. She spent some time trying to tame her mess of blond curls, but she was out of practice and only really managed contain it into a puffy bun with a few tendrils framing her face.

"You look lovely," Louis remarked as she emerged from her room, though it lacked the same infatuation that it did when they had first met. Louis hadn't even glanced at her before he was ushering her out of the apartment. The event was being held at in the Versailles gardens.

"So who are you trying to impress?" Marie tried to get Louis's attention as the car swept into the glittering garden and drew closer to the valet.

"The Ambassador of Austria, Joseph something-or-other." Louis was focused single-mindedly on his phone. "He's just been appointed, some big wig in the business world, but no one's heard of him. It's kind of a 'welcome to the world of politics' party, so if you see him just make him feel comfortable." The car stopped and the valet opened the door. "Oh, and Marie," she paused in sliding out of the car to look at him. "I'm sure this goes without saying, but make sure not to embarrass me."

Marie wasn't very in the mood for a formal party after that, so she made sure to keep a fresh place of champagne in her hand and avoid her companion. There were other dignitary's "companions" that she had met at other events, but they tended to be bitches towards her because of her youth. She felt so alone, not to mention irritated by Louis's dismissive behavior; which would explain why she wasn't paying attention.

"Pardon me," she squeaked as she felt her step backwards onto the toes of a man's foot. Marie turned around to apologize further, but stood with her mouth agape, startled by the man standing before you.

"And who might you be?" The deep voice was all too familiar even though she had only spent a week in his employment. "Marie, right? I never forget a face."

Marie took a step away from the man, her jaw clenching and her hand tightening around her champagne flute. Before she has time think of something to say, Louis's clammy hand on the small of her back startles her into muteness. "I see you've met the lovely Marie, Ambassador."

"Your wife, I assume, Louis?" Marie cringed inwardly, trying to keep her face passively neutral. Louis, on the other hand, chuckled at what he thought was a joke. "I would hurry and make it official Louis, it looks like she's the belle of the ball; anyone would be lucky to have her by his side." Marie narrowed her eyes at the towering figure in the prim and proper heather gray suit that didn't fit the man she knew him to be.

Louis chuckled again, oblivious to the threat that Joseph was clearly making towards Marie. Joseph's eyes did not leave the young woman before him, hanging limply at the side of the silly French man she had tied herself trepidatiously to. When Louis finally laughed himself into an awkward stutter, Marie turned towards him with a

docile smile. "Louis darling, maybe we should leave the Ambassador to the party, I'm sure that there are still people who wish to meet him. Let's find the Secretary of..."

Louis's dopey face broke into a soft smile at the idea of leaving the Ambassador; he seemed to understand, at least as much, that he was being harshly judged. However the Ambassador had other thoughts on this matter. "Nonsense," he cut in and both Marie and Louis's eyes snapped back onto him. "The dancing has just began and a beauty like Marie must love to dance." Louis paled while Marie's cheeks flushed. "Louis do you mind if I take your lady for a spin on the dance floor?"

Louis had no other choice but to smile and nod, to his relief. Marie gritted her teeth in silence as Joseph took her hand and led her forward to the center of the dance floor. He swirled around until they were facing each other and one of his hands found her hip and the other lifted her hand. They proceeded to stiffly waltz with each other. "You seem unhappy Marie, I'm surprised; wasn't this what your parents wanted for you?" She stiffened in his arms, tempted to pull away, but he only gripped his tightened. "When you stumbled into my bar all those months ago, a scraggly looking twig with bags under your eyes and a torn H&M dress you pulled out of a thrift shop for five dollars, you said your no-good parents used to talk about you being pretty enough to marry a nice rich man who could take care of you?"

"Why are you doing this?" Marie's eyes darted around to find Louis, but they were moving in circles and she was getting dizzy. Her voice was a whisper. "You were my Employer for less than a month."

"And yet," Joseph said as they twirled together. "Here we are once more. And I find myself somewhat disappointed. You gave up so quickly, to throw away all those possibilities, for a man with money that won't even marry you." He "tsk-ed" her with his tongue.

"I have a man who let's me spend his money and all he ever asks is that I occasionally show up to events like this." Marie snapped in a hiss. "I could do a lot worse."

Joseph sighed heavily. The song was slowly coming to an end. "Marie, dear Marie, you stupid naive teenager. How long do you think your little "Fling" with that dolt will last without anything to keep him permanently attached to you? Yes, you're young and pretty, but without a ring on your finger or a bun in your oven then there's only a matter of time before he grows bored with you. May as well find the local whorehouse now, save yourself the trouble; Lord knows I wouldn't hire you, you flaky little wench."

Marie could feel herself trembling in his embrace, unsure whether she's more frightened or angry. "Well like you said, I'm still young and pretty-I've still got some time." Her voice is a mere croak.

the song comes to a finish and the Ambassador releases his grip on her; she stands awkwardly, suddenly feeling exposed. Joseph bowed to her as she stood frozen and then turned away with a wicked grin and found himself another dance partner. She felt herself shuffle backwards unsteadily on her glittery six-inch stiletto heels.

Louis appeared at her elbow once again, a sweaty palm on the small of her back. "Everything alright dear? Did the Ambassador enjoy dancing with you?" Of course, she thought, always concerned with his career.

Marie painfully plastered a demure smile as she turned back to her companion. "Everything was lovely, nothing to fret about. I'm feeling a bit under the weather though. Do you think that we've done enough for tonight? I would much rather spend the rest of the evening with you at the loft." She tried to make her words seductive, but she knew she sounded more vulnerable than sultry.

Thankfully, Louis was feeling amenable; they left and upon entering their sharing loft, Marie realized just how right Joseph had been. She grew antsy as she walked into her room and began to undress. "You have to do something," she murmurs to herself as she stands naked before her walk-in closet. "Something permanent." Her hands run over the silk and satin that hung on hangers unused.

She resigned herself; at least her fate was her own. So Marie yanked one of the silk frilly things off its hanger and slid it over her head. It wasn't something that she would have ever chosen to sleep in; it was neither comfortable nor warm. Instead Marie shimmied out into the living room looking for Louis.

Marie finds him in his study, reading glasses perched on his nose and a glass of red wine held loosely in his hand as he's looking over more of his ridiculous documents. Instead of knocking or announcing herself, Marie slinks into the office and quietly comes up behind Louis's chair and gently placed her hands on his shoulders. "I'm surprised you're working," she said sweetly with a soft caress of his shoulders and neck.

Louis shrugged but refused to take his eyes off the papers in his hand. "I figured you weren't feeling very well so I thought I'd try to get some work done before bed."

"I thought maybe I could spend some time with you actually," Marie leaned forward to press her face into Louis's neck. She pressed her lips chastely to his warm skin. "I think it was just the champagne and dancing that had me feeling a bit dizzy. I'm feeling much better now." She let her words hum across his skin, but the sigh that Louis emitted doesn't sound turned on.

Louis finally put down his papers and leaned forward to get away from Marie's lips. "Marie," he sighed. He didn't seem very pleased. "What's gotten into you? This isn't like you, first you want to leave an event early and now you seem rather clingy. Did something happen?"

Marie couldn't stand to talk about it, least of all with Louis. Instead, Marie pursed her lips into a pout and snakes her way onto his lap as she swivels the chair to face her and not the desk. It's wooden and awkward as she presses herself onto Louis; he makes a noise of discomfort before she manages to seal her lips over his. Marie spent an hour trying to work Louis into arousal, but when that didn't work she man-handled him slowly out of the office and into the sitting room.

"Marie," Louis whispered as she pushed him onto the couch and straddled his lap, hitching her nightgown up. She swallowed his concerns with her tongue in his mouth. Marie hadn't done this before; when she had been "broken in" it had been by a non-too-attractive older man who was perpetually aroused due to the little blue pills he had taken. Marie had been the passive one while the man, a friend of Joseph's, was the active one.

Louis let out a strangled whimper as Marie's slender fingers forced his limp member into her body. Whereas Marie emitted high pitched whines that she hoped would stir something within Louis, Louis whimpered as she canted her hips. Marie's young body and vocality may not have been what Louis wanted, but biology took care of the rest when his breathing stuttered and he shuddered to stillness with a harsh cry.

Marie continued to sit there on Louis's lap as they both panted to catch their breath. She leaned her head to rest her forehead against Louis's, or at least she tried, but he turned away from her. She laid her head on his shoulder, face turned into his neck. "That was nice," she breathed.

Louis didn't speak. He sat under her, chest heaving, almost shaking. Marie waited for as long as she could before she pressed a soft kiss to his cheek and rolled off of Louis and onto the couch. She sighed satisfied while Louis scrambled away, covering himself up and sniffing as he moved away. When Louis managed to get up from the couch and began to stumble towards his room, Marie propped her head up. "Night Louis," she calls after him.

Louis disappeared into his room without another sound. Marie stayed on the couch a while longer, not moving, just thinking about the possible ramifications of her actions.

They didn't speak for more than a month; Louis withdrew from the room whenever Marie entered. Marie took the hint, shrugging off the awkwardness and returning to their typical routine. She spent her days sleeping off her late nights at the clubs,

even when she knew that Louis was turning down invitations to political soirees. It wasn't until she began to get sick when she woke up that things escalated.

Not barely sixteen and even Marie knew that she was pregnant; she barged into Louis's study late one evening, pregnancy test in hand, to share the news with him. Her shy smile melted slowly as Louis stared at it in disbelief at the slim white plastic stick. "You're going to be a father," Marie said softly, stepping a little closer.

Louis flinched as he stood to get away from her. "Yes, so it appears."

"I thought you would be pleased," Marie's hand found its way to her stomach to dramatize her pleasure. She smirked. "Don't most politicians look to marry and have families?"

Louis sighed and turned away from Marie and the mistake he saw her flaunting. "Most start with the marrying before the children," he scoffed. When he turned back around, his eyes were dark and shining. "Marie," his voice pleaded horsely. "I thought you were like me, or at least that you understood. You seemed so kind when we first met."

Marie's brow furrowed in confusion. "What are you talking about Louis? We've been together for such a long time, I would have thought as a man you would have been glad to have a physical relationship. Why are you upset?"

Louis squeezed his eyes shut, tears leaking down his cheeks. "Marie, you daft girl, I'm asexual. That's why I liked having you around, I thought you knew that."

Marie stood in shocked silence, unsure of how to respond. Louis, however, seemed beyond his emotions. "I'll arrange for a small civil ceremony, can't have the media gossiping too much. I expect you to go to the doctor regularly, but you also need to find a dress-white, modest, and quickly. Best to get this done before you start showing." When Marie remained quiet, her eyes wide and her jaw lax, Louis straightened himself and wiped his eyes before continuing. "You must be tired, go to bed Marie."

The days after were a blur of doctors and dress appointments, until two weeks later she was standing before Louis and an officer of the court. A small group of Louis's friends in politics were gathered around, enjoying the late summer evening air. After a brief exchange of "I Do"s the area was transformed into their reception; Louis was rather stiff and cold as they took a short dance around the dance floor. Louis seemed more jovial knocking elbows with his colleagues as Marie sat quietly at their table. Her appetite had finally come back, so she sat and enjoyed their wedding menu as Louis schmoozed their guests.

As Marie's stomach expanded her life dwindled; Louis had been busy with international affairs, so she was home alone most of her pregnancy. When he was home, Louis was far from loving and wanted nothing to do with the baby. When Marie managed to get some of his time he was consumed with talking about the failing European economy and how he felt responsible.

"Damn it Louis," Marie finally snapped as they were having a very boring conversation over dinner one night. Louis had been going on and on about the wheat famine in the Eastern countries, and she was tired of his bitching. She slammed her hands flat against the polished wooden tabletop, the stemware clinked ominously.

Louis's words vanished on his tongue as he stared at his heavily pregnant young wife. "You think we don't all wish that things could be different? Yes, there's a wheat famine, but is bitching about it going to fix anything-NO!" She stood up, her slight form distorted with her belly. "If they're crying so much about it, they shouldn't be crying for bread they should be demanding something much better than that." She was on the verge of hysterics. "Let them eat cake! Damn it Louis, let them eat fucking cake! They'll love you if you let them have cake!"

Marie stormed away from the table, her hands cradling her stomach and tears washing down her face. She found her way to her bedroom. As she lay there, her tears finally slowing to a stop, she thought about the life that she had trapped herself in.

Louis went back to his travels the next morning without so much as a note left behind to comfort her. He wasn't there when she went into labor three days later. And he was emotionless when he did return only to find a small baby girl bundled in Marie's arms. Yes, Marie thought to herself as she looked down at her daughter, this was the life that she had made for herself.