

BLACK SUV

by

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*"Many lick before they bite."*

**EXT. NEWYORK BACKSTREET - NIGHT**

A gleaming black SUV rocks rhythmically, giving away a sordid clue as to what may be happening behind its dark tinted glass.

A PARKING METER ATTENDANT moves in for the kill, tapping away at his PDA as they approach. He snatches the ticket as it prints and goes to snare her prey but--

ERIS (30's), a woman in a sharp suit, steps out the shadows.

ERIS  
I just can't stand bullies.

ATTENDANT  
Rules are there for a reason, hun.

ERIS  
The plate, tell me what it says.

The Attendant checks and rolls his eyes defeated.

ATTENDANT  
Government vehicle.

ERIS  
You need to see the badge too, hun?

ATTENDANT  
Wow, and here's me thinking I'm the kinda person nobody can like.

A rear door opens and what's quite clearly a PROSTITUTE stumbles out. The Attendant shakes his head and leaves. With complete indifference, Eris climbs in behind the wheel.

**INT. SUV - NIGHT**

Sat somewhat formally on the leather rear seat, MR BLACK (50's), smartly dressed, and devilishly handsome, couldn't look more pleased with himself.

MR BLACK  
(to self)  
I've said it before and I'll say it again, a good whore is like a fine bourbon, therapy without any need for pesky personal questions.

Eris fires up the SUV.

**INT. SUV - NIGHT - MOVING**

The engine drones as club frontages stream by.

MR BLACK

Tell me, what would you say it smells like in here to you?

ERIS

It's not my job to say.

MR BLACK

It's your job to obey my orders, and I'm asking you a question.

ERIS

(long beat)

Sex, it smells like sex.

MR BLACK

Does that make you jealous?

She stays quiet.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)

Tell me, honestly, I'll know if you're lying anyway.

ERIS

(long beat)

No.

He chuckles to himself and watches the world go by.

MR BLACK

I told you I'd know.

Mr Black studies Eris driving, watching her focused stare via the rearview mirror.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)

I know it's our first night out together but there's no need to be quite so uptight, even if Darrow did get shot.

ERIS

I've been shot before, it's no big deal.

MR BLACK

Darrow Died.

ERIS

Good for him, it's a lot less painful that way.

Mr Black smirks to himself.

MR BLACK

Oh, I'm just yanking your chain. I know you got shot alright.

(MORE)

MR BLACK (CONT'D)  
Straight through the abdomen I believe. I read up on anyone they send to protect me. Does it still hurt?

ERIS  
Only when I deadlift.

MR BLACK  
Oh I didn't mean like that. I mean the fact nobody came to visit you while you lay there in pain.

She's a little surprised he knows that.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)  
I'd be there for you.

She glances at him via the rear view.

ERIS  
I appreciate that.

MR BLACK  
Purely out of professional courtesy, of course.

He grins, suggesting a little sarcasm to that claim.

ERIS  
Where to now?

He puts his window down and savours the fresh air as he listens intently.

MR BLACK  
Johnson on Dumaine.

They stop at a sat of lights. Mr Black watches a DRUNK sat dancing by himself and sniggers.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)  
(calling out window)  
Hey you! What you looking for?

DRUNK  
What you offering, son?

MR BLACK  
The whole world, baby!

Mr Black laughs as they pull away.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)  
Oh how I love New York, a place so punished by God people have little choice but to revel in sin.

**EXT. CITY CROSS ROADS - NIGHT**

A GUITARIST sits playing badly to an audience of none. The SUV glides up to the kerb and waits. From his open window, Mr Black politely gestures for him to come over and get in.

**INT. SUV - NIGHT**

Mr Black slides across the rear seat behind Eris as the Guitarist timidly gets in and shuts the door. She eyes him up and down with one hand ready on her holstered firearm.

MR BLACK

You know who I am, correct?

The Guitarist nods.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)

Then say no more, I know the drill  
only too well.

To the Guitarist's surprise, Mr Black takes the Guitar and adjusts the tuning pegs without any need to try a note. Eris watches confused via the rear view.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)

It may surprise you to the fact I  
once tuned the violin for none  
other than Nicolo Paganini himself.  
It was a long time ago, but I like  
to think I never lost my touch.

Mr Black goes to hand back the Guitar but hesitates.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)

I assure, you sir, that no bad note  
can come from this instrument and,  
should that not be the case, I  
insist you seek my consultation  
with no fear of further charge.  
Now, by accepting this fine Guitar  
back from me, do we have a deal?

The Guitarist nods. Mr Black smiles contently.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)

And, before you leave for the  
wonders that await you, may I ask  
you a simple question?

The Guitarist thinks for a moment and nods. Mr Black lays his hand on Eris' shoulder.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)

Could you please face us a moment?

Confused and uncomfortable, but hiding it, Eris does so.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)

Now you tell me, is the woman who sits before you not the most beautiful specimen a man has ever laid eyes upon?

Eris averts her eyes as a shyness overcomes her.

The Guitarist nods. Mr Black grins from ear to ear and firmly shakes the Guitarist's hand.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)

My dear friend, your silence comes second only to your sincerity.

**EXT. CITY CROSS ROADS - NIGHT**

The Guitarist exits the SUV, which leaves quickly and roars away. With a degree of anticipation, he goes to play only to be startled by the perfection of his very first note.

He fills the streets with a beautifully played tune as he strolls away, his confidence growing with every step.

**INT. SUV - NIGHT - MOVING**

As they cruise along, Mr Black remains sat behind Eris and a little too close for comfort.

MR BLACK

You act like no single person has ever acknowledged your beauty. Now why would that be?

She remains apathetic.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)

Oh now don't give me the silent treatment. There's nothing wrong with feeling vulnerable, or angry. However, to withdraw yourself from the world, that's nothing but sure fire way to punish oneself.

She looks at him via the rear view. They lock eyes.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)

STOP!

He glances around alert, as if overcome with a strange sensation. He opens his door and bolts out.

**EXT. NEW YORK BACKSTREET - NIGHT**

Eris jumps out the SUV and catches a glimpse of Mr Black sprinting down an alley. By the time she follows he's already nowhere to be seen.

A bloodcurdling scream from a man being chased echoes down the walls.

She runs toward the call, drawing her firearm ready. Another petrified scream. She runs round a corner and stops stunned.

Mr Black stands panting, glaring down at the ground with fury in his eyes. Eris takes a step back.

ERIS

What the hell? How'd you do that to him?

He takes out a handkerchief and wipes blood from his hands.

ERIS (CONT'D)

What's going on? What did you do?

He continues to ignore her, instead choosing to pick something up and offer it over. It's a small black sphere.

MR BLACK

Put this in the trunk.

**EXT. NEW YORK BACKSTREET - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER**

Eris opens the SUV tailgate to find six black bags stored neatly in order. She unzips one to find it full of black spheres just like the one she's been given.

**INT. SUV - NIGHT**

Mr Black gets in completely unaffected. Eris gets behind the wheel and sits contemplating what she's seen.

MR BLACK

I guess you feel entitled to an explanation but you'll get no screed from me, it is what it is.

She stares at the dash thinking.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)

Let's not forget that the duty assigned to you here is one of obedience and vigilance. Do we have an understanding?

She looks back and warily nods. He looks her in the eye.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)  
Now you say, where to next?

ERIS  
(long beat)  
Where to next?

MR BLACK  
We're headed outta town, New  
England or thereabouts. I must  
advise however, I have another  
score to settle, so you'd better  
not be feeling too squeamish.

She goes to start engine and pauses.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)  
I don't scare easily, but I think  
it's in both our interest I know  
what I'm dealing with.

She looks back. They stare a little too long.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)  
I'm afraid trying to explain the  
point in what I do would be just as  
futile an undertaking as trying to  
explain the point in love.

**EXT. NEW ENGLAND - DAY BREAK**

Beside a long empty road, LIZZY, a dishevelled woman, walks  
alone burdened with a backpack. While she moves slow, she is  
clearly hurried and looking around for ride.

As she approaches a crossroads, the wind seems to pick up.  
She becomes agitated and looks back to see--

The SUV approaching in the distance. She picks up her pace.

The SUV breezes by and pulls up ahead. Mr Black and Eris get  
out. Lizzy gasps and heads the other way.

MR BLACK  
Now now Lizzy, where you going?  
Don't you have me chasing you all  
over these here streets, you hear?  
We had a deal, signed and sealed!

She falls to her knees distraught and prays.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)  
(to Eris)  
Between you and I, I prefer it when  
they run, but then who doesn't  
enjoy embracing a challenge when  
you're secretly guaranteed to win?

Mr Black and Eris stroll over to Lizzy as she sniffs back tears and mumbles incoherently to herself.

MR BLACK (CONT'D)

Lizzy, Lizzy, Lizzy, you know I should be furious at you for what you did. You really thought his judgement would be any less vengeful than mine? Why, I'm too offended to even begin processing my anger. I am truly disappointed.

Mr Black signals Eris to hand over her firearm. She withdraws the gun and stares back, trying to work him out.

ERIS

I don't get it. You don't need anybody to protect you, or to do your dirty work.

He looks at her and the gun a little wary.

MR BLACK

You want answers, we'll get to those in time, but for now-

ERIS

-No.

He's a little taken back.

ERIS (CONT'D)

I figure you want, what you *really* want, is the one thing you can't make happen?

He stares deadpan but reveals a little vulnerability.

She offers him the gun, keeping it by her side so he has to move in close. He goes to take it. She stares seductively, locking him into her gaze. He weakens a little.

ERIS (CONT'D)

I see your purpose.

Their lips draw close.

ERIS (CONT'D)

And I'll do the work.

He stares, lost in her eyes and captivated.

ERIS (CONT'D)

But *that*? *That* will never, ever, happen, okay?

She moves back and stares deadly, leaving him with the gun limp in his hand. He tries to smirk off the emasculation, part furious and part besotted. He dwells for a moment.

MR BLACK

You know what? You are one cruel  
son of a bitch.

With a look of complete torment, he cocks the pistol and aims for Lizzy's head.

BANG!

THE END