

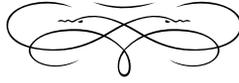
City of Flowers

The story of Primrose

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Dedication



I dedicate this book to my friends from *Erotica ex Machina*, who without their support would not be able to get this book made. I would like in special “Lyra” for the prompt that started all this. I would also thank “Tamryn” for the support, and “Mimi” for all the cute cat pictures. I also would like to thank the team at “EleutherAI” for the research that made this book a possibility.

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Preface



“ To become a writer, one must first write the backbone that makes the art.

The book that you currently hold in your hands is almost written entirely by Artificial Intelligence. Although this sounds like something that should currently be impossible, this book is a result from hours of careful monitoring and rewriting the text, using nothing more than giving the Artificial Intelligence a guideline on how to continue. This story was originally intended to be a small dime novel, however the resulting text is almost 45.000 words long. Although the Artificial Intelligence is great at writing novels, I still feel the Artificial Intelligence can be improved a lot. For example, during the writing phase it tried to veer off in different directions, and that meant that I sometimes had to restart and nudge it from my side to get it back on track. However, when you are looking at the complete picture, the idea written in this book is purely from the Artificial Intelligence. I find this a feat on itself. Although it is my first novel, I feel proud of what it has become. It would certainly be one of the first, but definitely not the last of a series of novels written by an Artificial Intelligence. While the researchers keep improving the Artificial Intelligence, I will keep creating stories.

Rose Cruse, June 21, 2021



The Code



High in the craggy peaks of the Hranir Mountains, nestled in a wind-scoured valley, lies the stone city of Shadebloom. Its streets lie in shadow for much of the day, a colossal cliff overhanging the town. From dusk to dawn, the 'City of Flowers' streets come alive with drunken crowds of men who come to spend their coin, but there is no foliage to be seen this high above the treeline.

Nay, blossoms like Primrose are the main attraction in this miserable pit. Men flock from all over the realm. They like to see her and her fellow women take the stage, or perhaps even partake of a little bit of behind-the-scenes indulgence of the flesh.

Primrose has been dancing here in Shadebloom for seven years now. She has a debt to work off. She is a servant of a man who calls himself Hamish, though she knows him as "Master."

A voice directly outside the door of her sleeping quarters startled her awake. "Primrose! I demand your presence! Now!" It would have been nice to rest a while longer, but her evening of dancing and harlotry beckons, and it would be unwise to ignore Hamish's summons. She'd gotten into trouble earlier for not entertaining a lord Hamish was indebted to and did not wish for a repeat occurrence.

She slipped into a loose dress and headed to the door, finding Master standing in the hallway with a frown. He was dressed in full armour and carried a sword. Her stomach knotted with dread. She'd never seen him this angry before and wondered what he had against her tonight.

"We have an issue," Master said gruffly, his voice quiet in her ears.

"An issue?" she asked, confused. Master would come here unannounced, so of course, there would be a reason why he'd said he would meet her at dawn at some hidden place. Perhaps something from that last meeting had upset him? Or maybe they were having trouble. He wasn't like other men; their word was law around Shadebloom, and even Hamish wouldn't dare cross them. He certainly couldn't afford to.

His lips thinned. “You are to remain in the foyer of the city gatehouse until I return, or you will get arrested.”

“I can explain...” She took a deep breath. How this was going wasn’t how things were supposed to be. Even in this dark little corner of Shannara, she would be considered one of the more respectable and high-born women in town. She wasn’t here with any grand ambitions to rise in society. Still, she hadn’t lied when she said that Hamish wanted to impress her on how her dancing and performance were the highlights of her life. Aquatic creatures swim in the water, not people who looked like her in other places.

She could still feel his presence on her skin as he stepped closer, all but taking her by surprise. He reached for her chin, raising it so he could see her face. He smiled warmly at her as if he knew what her thoughts were. His hands drifted to her throat, caressing the slender column and running down to the soft curve of her shoulder.

She jumped back when her fingers touched the metal band that held the silver collar around her neck. Her eyes flew open wide, shocked by what her hand was doing as she felt him slowly lift her dress until she was standing naked before him in the middle of the foyer. He leaned close but didn’t say anything. She did not want to let him know that she had already got caught before this. She took a deep breath and tried to keep herself calm, even though this situation felt like every horrible dream ever told about coming true.

He touched her shoulder gently, then moved his hand to cup her breast. “No,” she whispered quickly, trying to turn away from his touch. But he pulled his hands away. She couldn’t fight the urge to grab at his arm, but it was too late to stop now.

“I am not your toy. I am an agent of House Dauntless and will demand that you treat me with respect.” His eyes narrowed on hers. He wasn’t angry; he looked just as mad as she’d feared he would. Anger didn’t have quite the same effect on him as other men did on their servants. However, instead of becoming enraged or violent, Hamish’s gaze turned contempla-

tive, and his brow furrowed. “You have been found in violation of the Code, Primrose.”

“What...what Code?” she stammered. It was so hard not to panic. This man had taken her virginity. Her eyes darted from side to side as if looking for an escape route. Even when the door behind her opened, the sound of a booted foot made her jump.

The moment the light fell over his face, the Master looked at her. The tension had passed from his shoulders and face, and his expression was pleasant. “The Code of Shadebloom is obvious on this point. Violations of our laws are punishable by death, or worse.” He took a deep breath. “Primrose, I do not intend to see you die tonight, but you must answer my questions truthfully.” His voice dropped to a low whisper as he continued. His grip tightened on her breasts and thumbs, working at the fastening of the collar around her neck.

Her skin burned with shame, but she refused to give him the satisfaction of inducting herself into slavery for all eternity. She needed to get this over with and make this evening as quick and painless as possible for Master Hamish and everyone else because it might be that they would see each other again. “What has happened, Master?” she asked softly, knowing she had to sound certain in her voice as if there was no doubt that this was what had transpired. He’d be sure of it too if she told him of everything she knew now.

He shook his head slightly and let out a frustrated breath. The silence between them stretched on for another moment before his words came back. “I don’t believe you’re telling me everything about your visit to Shadebloom.” There was a sudden flash in his eyes as he added, “You will tell me everything I need to know if you have anything to hide from us.”

He squeezed the small nipple he held in his hand tightly before releasing it, causing Primrose’s nipple to become rigid. She wanted to pull away and run. How could Master Hamish know she’d been to the City of Flowers and not expect her to be here? She didn’t care if he did or not. He wouldn’t

harm her. Even with all the men in town flocking around, Master was safe. At least that much was true.

“Everything that happened is on record, Master,” she said. “My dancing is a large part of why I’m dancing tonight. It’s all I’ve ever done since coming to Shadebloom.”

“And all this time, your name has been ‘Primrose’?” His voice was still low and even, but there was an edge of anger.

She nodded. “As you can see, I’ve been called many other names. That is the past. Now, please tell me what you want from me, and I will tell you everything I can. If not, then you will see what I have done with my life — I’m sure you’ll be a mighty man one day — and my dancing won’t be worth shit.”

His eyes narrowed at her, clearly disappointed in her for being so honest. But his expression changed when she took hold of the collar around her neck. It felt cold and wrong in her hands as if he knew she’d been wearing it for many years. He released the grip on her breast to let go and reached out to take off the dress, leaving it on the floor to drape over her arm and down her legs.

“That’s far from enough,” he said. “You must remove that necklace of yours.” She was too surprised to say anything. Instead of taking the dress and leaving it where it was, she slowly lowered herself onto the heels standing before her with a shocked look. Her toes curled. They were so cold, but she didn’t think of them in terms like this, even as she struggled against him.

She didn’t want Master Hamish to punish her. She tried to please him. But he didn’t trust her. For all his faults, he had always treated her well, and he was in her debt, she had no doubt. If it meant staying in Shadebloom for another few days, that would be ok with him. But to strip naked right in front of this man and then turn around and walk away from him. She just wasn’t sure what her options were at the moment.

Master had his hand on her back to guide her. His grip tightened as she struggled with the unfamiliar collar around her neck. The first time she'd been on stage, one of the men at the bottom of the set, wearing precisely like it, had tried to grab it and made her squeal. Since that incident, Master made sure not to be too hard on women who wanted his attention and hadn't done anything that might have harmed her. He hadn't done that in Shadebloom. Primrose had never thought of the city as a place where she would meet everyone's needs. She had always thought about how she would repay him for taking care of her when she was here. But now, she didn't even know if he wanted her here anymore or not.

"No!" she said, trying to kick her legs free from his grip.

Master laughed softly. "That's not an option."

"But...you said..." Her voice trailed off as he lowered himself onto her again. There was a moment's pause. Then another moment. And then another. It was when he'd lifted her dress to kiss the insides of her thighs that Primrose realised the silence was over. He'd moved away, and she'd felt his breath on her skin and then smelled his aftershave as his lips left hers and slipped past one of her nipples.

This time there was no kiss at all, just the lightest brush of his mouth on the spot where his teeth were just an inch from touching it, but still, he did not stop. Again, the sensations he created in her body. They had been so intense that the heat had spread through her as quickly as his kisses. He'd kissed everywhere she could reach on her thighs and belly and even licked his way up until he reached the top of her breasts. She'd squirmed slightly, a response to the sensation he left behind, and not even a brush of tongue had moved her. He made sure not to lick her nipples, however.

"You're right," she managed to say when her voice failed her. "I didn't tell you everything." The words escaped her quickly and without thought as the last few minutes passed, leaving them both feeling incredibly satisfied and yet strangely unsettled by each other.