

THREE SPICY EXCERPTS!

THE SIZZLING NEW CHAPTER IN THE
BESTSELLING DARK OLYMPUS SERIES

MIDNIGHT RUIN



“SATISFIES ON
EVERY LEVEL.”

—*Publishers Weekly*,
Starred Review, for *Electric Idol*

**PUPPY
PLAY 101:**

Eurydice's
Step-by-Step Guide
to Bringing
Your Boyfriend
to Heel

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EXPLAINER: PUPPY PLAY



In kink/BDSM, puppy play is an umbrella term for a large number of activities and play styles.

In *Midnight Ruin*, the style of puppy play is heavy in degradation and praise, but not so much in heavy role-playing.

Example: Less “Bark like a dog” and more “If you really want to make things up to me... Crawl, Orpheus. It’s what good dogs do.”

THE COLLAR

I wake to the sound of someone moving around the kitchen. There's absolutely no reason for me to expect it to be Eurydice, but even after nearly a year apart, I would know her soft footfall anywhere. Part of me wants to lie here with my eyes closed and prolong the moment before this all comes crashing down on me.

She may have been hesitant to see the back of me last night, but that was an emotional moment, and I had just shown up when she didn't expect me. I'd be a fool to hope that maybe she misses me even a fraction as much as I miss her.

I am a fool.

Still, it's better to get this over with. I sit up and climb to my feet. The kitchen is down the hall from the living room where I spent the night, so I follow the sounds of Eurydice pattering until I find my way.

I stop in the doorway and allow myself to drink in the sight of her. She looked good last night, of course. This morning she's like something out of a dream. Sunlight filters in through the window, giving the room an almost dreamlike quality. She's wearing an oversized T-shirt that must belong to Charon. It dwarfs her, but it

only hits the tops of her thighs, leaving her long light-brown legs bare. I'm strangely delighted to discover she's painted her toenails a bright yellow.

I clear my throat to let her know that I'm here, but she doesn't even flinch. She just glances over her shoulder and gives me a tight smile. "Morning."

"Morning." I don't know what else to say. Do I apologize again? Do I turn around and quietly leave? The thought of doing the latter makes my feet feel as if they are filled with concrete. I don't care if she hates me, just as long as I don't have to leave her presence. Selfish. I'm so fucking selfish. Apparently I haven't learned anything at all.

Eurydice doesn't say anything else. It takes me a few seconds to realize what she's doing, and I take a step into the kitchen without thinking about it. "Pancakes?"

"I was in the mood."

This is so fucking awkward. It feels so good and yet hurts so badly, all at the same time. I find myself speaking without thinking it through. "I know coming back around has complicated things for you. I'm sorry. If you and Charon are—"

"Me and Charon have nothing to do with this." She sets the bowl on the counter with a little more force than necessary. "He's giving me the space to do what I need in order to get over you."

It feels like she just reached out and punched me in the stomach. "What do you need in order to get over me?"

"If I knew, that would make things so much easier." She sighs. "Charon had some suggestions."

Every word out of her mouth is a knife between my ribs, and yet I never want her to stop. At least she's talking to me. "What did he suggest?" I find myself asking.

Her lips twist, and for moment I think she won't answer me. But then she says, "He said he doesn't care if I put a collar on you and walk you like a dog, fuck you, or sleep with you. That he and I are endgame."

That strange feeling from last night is back, compounding in my chest until I can barely breathe past it. I hardly feel like myself as I sink to my knees before her. "Do it."

"What are you talking about?" She flutters her fingers at me. "Orpheus, get off the ground."

"I'm not saying you should fuck me. I would never presume after everything that happened." Even if I want her so desperately, it feels like I've been cursed, possessed, or have some kind of otherworldly influence over me. Maybe all three. I tap the front of my throat. "But if you want to collar me, I'm more than willing to pay penance that way."

"Orpheus, don't be ridiculous."

"He's not being ridiculous."

We both jump at Charon's voice. I hadn't heard him come in, and from the way Eurydice's eyes go wide, neither did she. She crosses her arms over her chest. "I don't care what you said last night—"

"Look at him, baby." Charon crosses the kitchen in slow steps that I don't hear but I can feel nonetheless. His big hand lands on the back of my neck. "If you're not going to set him free, then exorcise him."

"He's a *person*." But her gaze drops to the point where his fingers curl around my throat.

"No one's saying he isn't. You've spent enough time in the club to know better." There's a dangerous edge in Charon's voice, but I don't know him well enough to divine its source. He's not gripping me tightly at all, just letting me feel the weight of him while all his

attention is on Eurydice, but I can't stop shivering.

I've messed around with kink in the past, but it never really did it for me. Bondage can be fun, and a little spanking spices things up, but that's not what this feels like.

It feels like Charon is *branding* me. The fact that he's doing it for her only heightens the experience. The muddled feeling that's plagued me for so many fucking months finally clears, the clouds parting for the space of a heartbeat. I want this.

I *need* this.

"Yes." My voice is hoarse. Even as I speak, part of me is all too eager to point out that this is just as selfish as everything I've ever done. Two birds, one stone, or something like that. I don't know. I can't think clearly. "I'll do it."

Charon's thumb strokes my throat, a tiny movement so brief I'm half-sure I imagined it. "What do you say, baby? He'll give you all the submission and pleasure to balance out all the fear and pain. Is it a bargain?"

She frowns at him, obviously searching his expression for answers. I don't know if she gets what she's looking for, because her gaze drops to me and goes complicated. "You've never submitted once in your life, Orpheus. You were a selfish lover and a selfish boyfriend. You're going to get tired of this within a day, maybe two, and go back to your life in the upper city."

She's wrong. I don't have much life to go back to. Saying as much won't convince her though. I don't know *what* will convince her, but ultimately this isn't something I want to bully her into doing. I never would have dreamed this was a possibility when I crossed the River Styx, but now I need her to say yes more than I need my next breath.

I hold my inhale, waiting.

Eurydice focuses on Charon once more. “You’re sure about this.”

“I meant what I said last night.” His tone goes lower yet, downright sinful. “I saw the way you watched some scenes more intently than others. You’ve spent months watching, figuring out what interests you—in theory. Time to put it into practice.”

She searches his expression. Some kind of silent communication flickers between them, a testament to their shared history and the strength of their relationship. I knew it was happening—he wouldn’t have come to me to give her closure if he didn’t care—but witnessing this small, intimate moment is a knife in my guts.

Eurydice shifts her attention to me. “You’re sure about this.”

There’s only one correct answer. “Yes.”

“So be it.” She flicks a hand at me. “Orpheus, if you’re going to insist on being on the floor, the least you can do is clean it.”

Surprise flickers through me, quickly followed by my bruised pride. Clean the *floor*? I thought she was going to command me to lick her pussy or something. That, I would have been all too happy to do.

She arches a brow, and it’s like a different woman stands before me. Gone is the innocent, sweet girl who used to stand at my side, replaced now by a proud queen. “But before we begin, you will pick a safe word. Use it at any time, and the scene stops.”

“I don’t need a safe word to do chores.” I sound like a brat, but I can’t quite help it. “If you wanted a maid—”

“Pick a safe word or this goes no further.”

I bite down a curse. Either I meant what I said about penance or I didn’t. I don’t want to crawl around and clean the floors, but the only other option is going back to the upper city. Which is no option at all. I swallow hard. “*Grace.*”

“Good. Charon will show you where the cleaning supplies are.” She turns back to the bowl of batter, effectively dismissing me. It stings...but that sting feels almost good. Maybe this is the way. I can’t time travel back into the past and change my behavior, and I can’t battle all the invisible shit between us, but I can do this.

I jolt when I realize Charon still has his hand on the back of my neck. I look up to find him watching Eurydice with a thoughtful expression on his face. He glances down at me and squeezes, just a little, before releasing me. “This way.”

I start to rise, but Eurydice’s voice stops me. “Crawl, Orpheus. It’s what good dogs do.” She speaks without looking over her shoulder, but there’s a new tension in her spine that makes me shiver.

Okay. I can do this. I don’t know what the fuck is going on, but I can do this. I turn carefully and crawl after Charon to the closet tucked around the corner. He sets a bucket, cleaner, and a brand-new sponge in front of me.

I stare. A mop would be easier, but I suppose that isn’t the point, is it? In the old stories my mother used to read me when I was a kid, there were always impossible tasks the heroes had to go through in order to get their just rewards. I don’t know that I deserve a reward, but I can do the task.

Crawling with a bucket and cleaner is awkward as fuck, but I manage to get back to the kitchen and fill the bucket halfway with hot water. By the time I’ve started on one corner of the decently sized kitchen, Eurydice has finished cooking the pancakes and served them on two plates at the small dining table in the next room over.

Charon doesn’t even look at me as he steps around me to take a seat across from her. “Thanks.”

“I am not happy with you.” But she nudges the syrup over to him.

“Can you talk about last night?”

I keep scrubbing, giving myself over to the repetitive motion. The floor is already pretty clean, which means I don't have to pause in one spot too long. As I inch along, it strikes me that I've never done anything like this.

Oh, I've always picked up after myself, but even from the time I was a small child, we had a housekeeper. I might have been cut off from everything else in my normal life, but my mother has sent Thyia to me on a regular basis to assure herself I'm not wasting away in filth.

There's something...soothing about this.

Charon and Eurydice's conversation filters over me. He sighs. “Someone destroyed the greenhouse.”

“What?” She gasps. “Why would someone do something like that?”

It's a good question. I don't know what this greenhouse is, but it's obviously got some import for her to react like that.

Instead of answering directly, Charon says, “Why don't you tell me?” He takes a couple bites of the pancakes while he waits.

Eurydice sips her coffee and considers him. After a moment she says, “Hades and Persephone spend a lot of time there. It's not exactly advertised, but anyone who's familiar with the lower city is aware that the greenhouse functions as a refuge for both of them. It's a direct attack.”

“And?”

She sighs. “I didn't realize this was a test.”

“It's not a test.” He takes another bite and chews slowly.

“You're the daughter of one of the Thirteen, sister to another, and sister-in-law to two more. It's smart to reason through what moves your family's enemies will make.”

“I know.” Another sigh, this one almost playful. It strikes me that this is something of a teaching game they’ve played before. She sets her coffee mug down. “Okay, it’s not a simple attack. If it was that, they would have actually *attacked*. Was Matthew okay?”

“Yes. Scared, but okay.”

“Hmm.” She nods. “If they hurt one of Hades’s people, then he would seek them out and destroy them. It would be a direct conflict. This is more insidious.”

“How?”

“I’m working on it.” She points her fork at him. “If he can’t even keep one of his refuges safe, then can he keep his people safe? It’s more about sowing fear and distrust than about seeking a confrontation. One of his strengths is that he protects the lower city, and he wasn’t able to do that this time.”

“Yes.” Charon takes a deep drink of his coffee. “It’s a problem. They didn’t leave a trail, and while we have cameras scattered about, they didn’t pick up anything.”

“So they studied the system before taking this step.”

“Looks like it.”

I mull that over as they move on to more mundane topics, talking about people I don’t know. The upper city has seen increasing unrest in the last month. It makes sense that the lower city is seeing it as well, but it’s interesting that it’s not taking the same route. I don’t know what that says about the people involved.

Apollo’s warning rings through my head again. It’s not just the Thirteen in danger these days. Triton might have been killed for other reasons, but there’s really no way to tell for sure.

Is Eurydice in danger?

The thought makes me scrub harder, until my fingers cramp. I’m

no warrior. Besides, with Charon at her side, she hardly needs more protection. That doesn't change the fact that I want to do whatever it takes to ensure she's safe.

No matter what that looks like.



THE LEASH

Every scene has a different flow, a unique cadence. But one thing that is consistent is that a...submissive...needs to be taken care of. A good job should be rewarded. *A good dog should be praised.* I snap my fingers. “Come.” I point to the spot right next to my chair. “Sit here.”

Orpheus doesn’t hesitate. The tile floors have to be killing his knees, but he doesn’t complain as he crawls to me and kneels carefully at my side. He bows his head and a bolt of something sizzling and complicated goes through me.

I hesitate, but he didn’t complain and he showed every evidence of doing exactly as I ordered to the best of his ability. It’s the most natural thing in the world to place my hand on his head and guide it to my thigh. “Good boy.”

His breath shudders out on my bare skin, and I fight down a shiver. It was satisfying to see him follow my command, but this... the heavy press of his head, his inhales and exhales ghosting over my thigh, his long hair soft beneath my fingers as I pet him.

Heat blossoms inside me. Desire. I won’t do anything about it. Not now, maybe not ever. As much as I didn’t want to see him go, I don’t know if I’ll survive letting him close enough to share my bed

again. I don't intend to keep him, and if we have sex...I'll want to.

I look up to find Charon watching us. I don't know what I expect, maybe jealousy or anger, despite his words last night.

Instead, he's watching me with so much heat in his blue eyes, I have to fight not to shift in my seat. The desire surges higher, hotter. I lick my lips, and my voice comes out a little ragged when I finally manage to speak. "Charon?"

"I like you like this." He braces his elbows on the table. "You're steady on your feet."

That's exactly what it feels like. Even now, so many months later, there are plenty of times when I feel like the ground is moving beneath me. Not this morning, not since Orpheus knelt before me.

Not last night either, when I had my hand wrapped around Charon's cock.

I can't help it any longer. I press my thighs together, as if that will do anything to alleviate the ache that's begun in my core. Orpheus goes tense, which is the moment I realize he relaxed completely while I stroked his head.

Charon sees. Of course he sees.

He leans forward, gaze intent. "Does he deserve the reward of your body?" The question has a formal feel to it, which makes me realize the scene isn't over yet. Maybe it's only just beginning.

"No." The answer comes out too harshly, but it's too soon. I'm not ready.

"You're all achy and wet, aren't you, baby? He might not have earned access, but that doesn't mean you need to go without." Nothing changes in Charon's expression. "You want me to take care of it?" He doesn't even try to make the question subtle. He's so tense, I half expect him to leap over the table and grab me.

I want him to.

But...I glance down at Orpheus. Is it wrong that I want to fuck Charon when he's right here? It must be. How can I go from offering him comfort to wanting to twist the knife as if a switch flipped inside me? I don't know. I don't understand it, but I'm feeling my way at this point.

I give his head one last stroke. "You..." I drag in a breath. "You may watch if you'd like. No touching. Don't move." I can't believe I'm saying the words. Surely I'm not going to fuck my current... whatever Charon is to me right now...in front of my ex- boyfriend? Surely that's breaking some kind of rules.

How many nights did I spend haunting Orpheus's social media in the weeks following that night when everything changed? He certainly wasted no time being photographed with models and socialites and all manner of beautiful people. Surely he didn't go home alone most of those nights.

I *tormented* myself with visions of him fucking them, even though I knew it was technically none of my business because we were over. I'm petty enough to want him to feel even a sliver of that now. I might have done that before hurt to myself, but he's choosing to do it to himself now. A twisted kind of full circle.

A shudder works its way through Orpheus. He turns his face and presses a kiss to my thigh. It's a light touch, almost seeming accidental, but it shoots a trail of need straight to my pussy. He might have been a selfish lover in any number of ways, but he *loved* eating me out, and somewhere there's a series of small paintings of my pussy that he's promised never to share with anyone.

One promise he's actually kept.

He sits back carefully and presses his hands to his thighs. "I'll

watch.”

Oh gods, this is actually happening.



THE TREAT

Charon takes me at my word. He rises and scoops me into his arms easily. “Call your dog, baby.”

I look over his shoulder as he carries me out of the room. Orpheus watches us with such heat in his gaze that I press my thighs together, hard. “Come, Orpheus.”

It’s not far to the living room, and Charon slows down so I can watch Orpheus crawl after us. I never thought something like this could be so hot. Charon walks to the couch and sets me carefully on it. I watch with my heart in my throat as he pulls his shirt off and his hands go to the front of his slacks.

“Let me.”

For a moment I think he might argue, but his hands fall to his sides, and he allows me to undo the front of his slacks. I hook my fingers into his underwear and tug it down just enough to free his hard cock. My body trembles at the memory of what it feels like to be split wide open by him. Soon. But not yet.

Orpheus reaches us as I wrap a fist round Charon’s cock. Without looking at him, I snap my fingers and point to the spot right next to us. And then I take Charon’s cock into my mouth. My jaw

starts to ache almost instantly. I relish the sensation and wedge him deeper, working to relax my throat and breathe through my nose.

He lets me have my way for a moment, but when my gag reflex gets the best of me, Charon digs his fingers in my hair and pulls me off his cock. His face has plenty of emotion now. He looks at me like a man possessed, like I've gotten into his blood, and he never wants to get me out.

"Your dog's famished, baby. Let's stop wasting time and feed him."

—

I didn't have any plans for seduction when I came home this morning. After a night of fruitless searching, my frustration was riding me hard. All I wanted was to see Eurydice and let her presence soothe me.

Then I walked in to find Orpheus kneeling on the ground at her feet.

I meant what I said last night. I will take Eurydice however I'm able to; after having her, I'll do anything to ensure I don't lose her. Even if that means sharing. I knew she needed closure with Orpheus, but even with all the time I spent studying her, I never anticipated the gleam of dominance in her eyes when she looked down at him. *Need* doesn't begin to cover it.

Even so, she's new enough at kink that I didn't think she would be able to take what she wanted for herself. The morning has been full of surprises.

Not that I'm complaining. Not with me sinking onto the couch and Eurydice naked and straddling me. She's flushed and so turned on that her pussy is practically dripping all over my lap. I love her like this. Needy and bossy and so desperate for what only I can give her.

Well, me and Orpheus.

I haven't quite let myself think about the mess I've gotten myself into. I won't pretend the flutter of attraction I felt for him is anything but the truth, but we're in a strange state right now where everything feels far too fluid. The past, the present, the future. All that melts together into a chaotic mess that is going to blow up in our faces.

I can't wait to get his mouth on my cock.

I don't know what the fuck that means. Probably something as simple as lust, though literally anyone else in the city would have been a safer choice. There's no use thinking about it now. Not when I have Eurydice grinding against the length of my cock.

She could move this along if she really wanted to, but she seems to enjoy the tease as much as I do. As good as it feels, it's obvious that she's also putting on a show. Whether that show is for me or Orpheus remains to be seen. Maybe it's for both of us. I find myself hoping it is.

I need her.

That's why I am the one to reach between us and position my cock at her entrance. She rises up on her knees to make room for me, and there's an imperious look in her dark eyes that makes my balls twitch. I've fallen in love with all the different facets of this woman, and it delights me to no end to continue to find new ones.

Her attitude isn't quite bratty, but has a similar flavor.

"Don't tease us, baby." I don't push her though. I watch her drag her folds over the head of my cock, swirling her hips until I think I might lose my mind. "Take my cock."

She plants her hands on my shoulders and begins to lower herself. Her orgasm has made her slippery, but she still has to work to take me from this angle. It's hot as fuck to have her fighting her way down my

length.

Without thinking, I look to Orpheus. His gaze is pinned to the point where my cock disappears into her pussy. There's a hunger there, written across his face, and I can't begin to say if that hunger is for me or for her...or both.

I shouldn't care. I meant what I said about us being endgame. Eurydice and me. When I spoke those words, there was no room in that vision for anyone else—especially him.

Now, I wonder.

It's nothing that needs to be decided tonight. We've all agreed to this scene, and that's enough for me. Eurydice slams the rest of the way down on me. The feeling of her pussy clamping around my cock nearly sends me to the moon. I jerk my gaze back to her face to find her glaring at me. "You're distracted."

"Not distracted, baby." That's not the word I'd use, but I don't feel like getting into it now. "Take care of your dog."

She glares for a moment longer but then snaps her fingers at Orpheus without looking at him. "Here, boy." She doesn't watch him to make sure he obeys her command, crawling to her and pressing his head to her palm...but I do. It's sexy as fuck. Eurydice pets him for a moment. "Now be a good boy and sit there silently. You'll get your reward soon enough."

Orpheus has the dazed look on his face of a sub deep in a scene. I'd been prepared to hate him for everything he's done—and part of me still does—but he's so fucking broken, I can't help wanting to pick up the pieces. My white knight complex is a bitch and a half. That, at least, is expected. What I *didn't* expect is the strange tenderness that makes me want to reach out and guide his face to my thigh, to offer him comfort.

It's not my place to offer him comfort. It's not my place to offer him anything at all.

With that in mind, I refocus on Eurydice. She's still got that bratty look on her face, but she doesn't quite pull it off, not when her eyes are so filled with emotions. I lean up and kiss her, just because I can. She's mine in every way that matters, even if we haven't ironed out all the details yet.

I've been hers for a long time.

She starts to move. Until the day I die, I don't think I'll see a more perfect picture than Eurydice, her hands propped behind her on my thighs, her lean body rolling as she rides my cock. I can't stop myself from running my hands up her thighs to catch her hips, though I don't try to take control. Not yet.

It's perfect. Too perfect. No matter how controlled I am, I'm still only human. I can't keep this up forever. I grab her hips and pull her down onto me, sealing us together and preventing her from moving. It's a mistake. This feels too fucking good. "Baby, please."

Her smile is slow, sweet, and a little evil. "Problem, Charon?"

"If you don't stop, I'm going to come, and then you can't play out your little game with your dog." I can feel Orpheus watching us intensely, but for once I'm not interested in looking at him. He can wait until it's time.

"So concerned about Orpheus." She strokes her fingers along my jaw. I can't tell if she's bothered by my words or not. Truth be told, I'm having a hard time stringing any thoughts together at all right now. It's everything I can do to stop myself from rolling us over and fucking her hard enough to make her forget her own damned name.

Another time.

"It's not *Orpheus* who's about to make me blow my load."

“Very well.” She sighs, her irritation not quite believable when she writhes a little on my cock and her nipples are hard points begging for my mouth. “If riding your cock isn’t working out...I suppose I can ride your mouth.”

A laugh bursts from me, making them both jump. “You *suppose* you’ll ride my mouth. Come on, baby. Don’t pretend you’re not needy for my tongue.”

“Don’t gloat. It’s unbecoming.” She sounds so delightfully prissy that I laugh again. It takes no effort at all to lift her off my cock and haul her up to straddle my face. I like her squeak of surprise to find me supporting her weight like this. She wiggles, but I have a firm grasp on her and she’s not going anywhere. “Charon, you’re showing off.”

Maybe a little.

Instead of answering with words, I pull her closer and drag my tongue up her center. Eurydice gives a sweet moan and snaps her fingers again. She can’t quite manage a firm, bitchy tone with my tongue inside her, but she does a damn good job of trying. “Orpheus.”

“Yes?” I can’t see his face, but his voice has changed, deepened, gone rougher with need.

“Be a good boy and clean Charon’s cock for me.”

**I RAN TO THE UNDERWORLD
TO FIND THE LOST PIECES OF MYSELF.
INSTEAD, I FOUND *HIM*.**

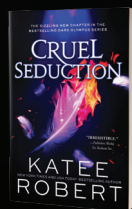
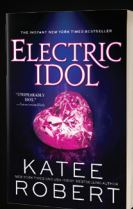
Eurydice Dimitriou has always been the innocent sister, but she's finally ready to step out of the long shadow cast by her powerful family—and the ex who shattered her heart. Perhaps rough hands on soft skin are exactly what she needs to forget her heartbreak once and for all...

Charon Ariti has been Hades's right-hand man for years. He's given everything to the lower city, but now he's ready to take something for himself. He's only too happy to give Eurydice a special kind of education... but is her heart really free enough to be claimed?

Orpheus Makos is desperate to make things right. Once the golden boy of the upper city, he's now a shadow of his former self. He'll do anything to get Eurydice back...even if it means she's not coming into his arms alone.

Three hearts. Three futures. Countless ways to get it wrong. But with enemies slipping through Olympus's faltering barrier to lay siege on the lower city, a trio of broken hearts will be the least of these would-be lovers' worries.

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