



Excerpt from...
A Writer for Children
by Kitt Lavoie

Scene 13

Lights up on Leo's apartment. Later that night. The apartment is dark, save for the streetlight streaming in through the window. Leo sits in a pair of boxers by the counter, silently watching Michael sleep. After a moment, Leo goes to the foot of the bed and stands over Michael, studying her. After a moment, Leo takes the bottom of the sheet under which Michael is sprawled and gently walks back to his perch, sliding the sheet slowly off of Michael as he goes. Leo watches her, beautiful, nude in the streetlight. After a moment, Michael stirs. She looks around the room, trying to place it, before her gaze falls on Leo. Her hand instinctively sinks to cover her scars as she rolls to curl up faced away from him. A moment of silence passes as neither of them move.

LEO

I'm sorry.

A beat.

MICHAEL
(softly)

I love your book.

LEO

I'm sorry?

MICHAEL

I love your book.
(a beat)

I read it again yesterday. It was beautiful.

LEO

How did you--?

MICHAEL

When I saw it here the other night... I used to read it all the time, when I needed to feel better. And I really needed to feel better, you know? After--... So I went to the Barnes and Noble to get out of the storm, and I read it. Twice. And when I finished, who do you think was looking at me from the back flap? "Leopold Markum lives in Vermont with his golden retriever, Molly."



Molly died last year. LEO

I'm sorry.
(a beat)
But I knew you wouldn't hurt me. MICHAEL

I wouldn't hurt you. LEO

I thought you might. MICHAEL

Leo goes to the foot of the bed and tosses the sheet over Michael.

I wouldn't, okay? LEO

Michael rolls over to face Leo.

You're not like I thought you'd be. MICHAEL

If it helps, I'm not like what I thought I'd be, either. LEO

I mean, when I read your book. Natalie. I... you're just not who I pictured. MICHAEL

I know that's what you meant. LEO

You're a good writer. MICHAEL

I'm not. LEO

You are. MICHAEL

LEO



I'm not.

MICHAEL

I think you're good.

LEO

Yeah. No. I mean, I'm not a "writer."

MICHAEL

You won an award.

LEO

Yeah.

MICHAEL

So how can you say you're not a writer?

LEO

Because I don't want to be.

MICHAEL

Why not?

LEO

Because I never wanted to be. I didn't want to be a writer for children. It was just a story. And I was twenty-three and it seemed important and I won, yes, Michael, I won an award. Two awards, actually. A Newbury Medal and a Caldecott Medal for the same book -- the only time that's ever happened. And I was twenty three and they all told me I was the second coming of... I don't even know. Maybe that I was just the first coming. And I got an advance like you wouldn't even believe for book number two. "What happened to Natalie when she got there."

MICHAEL

I didn't read that.

LEO

No one did. Because I have spent the past eleven years diligently not writing it. And also, less diligently, not going to law school and not doing the dozen other things I planned. And they have spent the past six years suing me to get their advance back.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry.

LEO

It was just a fucking story. That's all. Just a stupid idea I had. And it fucked everything up.

A beat.



MICHAEL
All the same, I'm glad you wrote it.

A beat.

LEO
Yeah.

MICHAEL
What did happen to Natalie when she got there?

LEO
I don't know.

MICHAEL
I'll bet he loved her.

LEO
I'll bet you're right.

Leo ambles to the window and leans against the frame, looking out at the street. Michael watches him a moment.

MICHAEL
Leo?

Leo looks at her.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
Will you make love to me again? Just once, not for money?

Leo looks back out at the street.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
I'm going to miss you.

LEO
Me, too.

MICHAEL
Then just once more. For the road.

LEO
When do you have to go?



A couple hours, I guess.

MICHAEL

Can you stay? A few days?

LEO

I don't know. My friend...

MICHAEL

I know. Your friend. I meant here. Stay here. I've got a meeting here tomorrow afternoon -- I'll walk you to the library around the corner, you'll be safe. And I have to go to see my lawyer on Friday. But after that... I've got a car. I could go west. For a few days, anyway.

LEO

You'd do that.

MICHAEL

I'd like to.

LEO

Why?

MICHAEL

Because... it's the kind of thing men do for women they want to remember them.

LEO

Michael slides out from under the covers and stands facing Leo. Leo looks at her nude body for a moment before turning to look out the window.

MICHAEL

It's all right that you look at me.

LEO

Are you--?...

MICHAEL

It's alright. I like what you see.

Leo looks at Michael for a moment. Slowly, she moves across the floor to where he is standing by the window. They melt into a kiss in the glow of the street light.

Blackout.