



Branche Olive

~~Fleur de Lis~~

*Martin*

by Tracy Leung

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Branche Olive - Martin

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*For all the bad boys*

# Martin

“Some more champagne, Mr. Gagnon?” The stewardess tipped the mouth of the bottle towards Martin.

“*Non, merci bien.*” Martin shook his head. He sat back in the wide first class seat and looked out at the layer of fluffy clouds below. The stewardess smiled slightly and placed a bread plate and butter knife on the small tray in front of Martin. Her hand gently grazed Martin’s thigh as she cleared away an empty glass.

“Excuse me.” she purred, locking eyes with Martin.

Martin watched silently as the stewardess fussed over him. She repeatedly made contact with his arm or leg. When Martin didn’t react she busied herself by bending over to retrieve something from a low storage compartment. The man across the aisle let out a loud gasp. Martin smirked and chuckled.

With her advances towards Martin unsuccessful the stewardess set her sights on an older man a few rows away. Martin watched with interest as the older man became quickly trapped in her lair. The stewardess started her routine with the same ‘accidental’ touches and eventually progressed to pressing her breasts against the gentleman as she leaned over him to open the window shade.

Martin’s jeans were uncomfortably bunched around his crotch. He used both hands to straighten them and stretch his legs out. The plane made a slight bank left and the intercom system crackled on. Martin checked his watch. They would be landing soon.

The stewardess smiled blankly at Martin as she handed him his jacket. He noted the contrast a few rows over as she draped her body over the older man. The phone in his pocket vibrated as reception was restored.

M- waiting at baggage claim – O.

It had been almost a month since he last saw Olivia. He was surprised when she called him a few weeks ago. Their last encounter in Paris was still fresh in his mind. What struck him the most about Olivia was how much she had changed. She was not the same young woman he met so many years before.

Martin looked over at the people gathered by the movie theatre exit. There was a formidable pack of young women, squealing and laughing together. He recognized a few of them. He had conquered a few of them.

“Who is that?” Martin turned his back towards the women. He didn’t want to encourage any conversation with them, or among them. He shoved Gustav for attention. “Do you know her?”

Gustav frowned. “Which one?” He was sure Martin had been with each of them already.

Martin glanced back quickly. “The blonde, with the curls.”

“Ah,” Gustav smiled. “that’s Olivia.” He shrugged his shoulders. “She’s nice. Too nice.”

“Too nice, eh?” Martin was intrigued. A new challenge. “How old is she?”

“Um,” Gustav considered for a moment. “the same age as my Stefania. So around 18. Young. Just finished school.” He wondered suddenly if Martin knew his little sister.

Martin nodded and made a quick mental note of the other girls there.

**A**nalisa rolled her eyes when she saw Martin coming over to her table. She sneered at him when he sat down opposite her.

“What do you want, pig?” Analisa said calmly.

Martin flashed her one of his charming smiles. He raised an eyebrow when her scowl didn’t change. “Come on. I’m not that bad.”

“Not that bad!?” Analisa shrieked. She paused for a moment to calm down. “You pig. Not only did you cheat on me, you slept with my roommate, in my bed!”

Analisa’s face was red. She vowed the next time she saw Martin she would rip his nuts off. Martin looked around quickly when he noticed Analisa touching the knife next to her plate.

“Analisa,” Martin cooed. “you know that didn’t mean anything to me.” He reached out to touch her other hand.

“That’s always your problem, Martin.” Analisa shook her head. “None of us mean anything to you. We are just pieces of ass to you.”

Martin tried his smile again. “But we were so good together.” He slowly stroked Analisa’s hand. “You used to drive me wild.” He thought for a split second he saw her expression soften.

Analisa sighed. She pulled her hand away from Martin and sat back in her chair. “Yes, we were good together. But you had to go and ruin that.” She shook her head. “Will you ever be satisfied with just one woman? Can you ever give as much as the gift you receive?”

They were quiet for a moment. Analisa fought back her tears. Tears of frustration, hurtful angry tears.

Martin shrugged. "I am sorry Analisa. I never mean to hurt anyone." There was a genuine sincerity in his tone.

"What did you want?" Analisa's voice softened. She did have a great time with Martin once. He was one of her best lovers.

"I just saw you sitting here and came to say hello." Martin decided against asking Analisa about Olivia. He cocked his head sideways and grinned. "Would you like to have another drink with me?"

Against her better judgment Analisa said yes. She struggled to put her key in the lock of her apartment door. Martin was on his knees in front of her, his face buried under her skirt.

"Fuck," she hissed. "someone will see." Analisa gripped Martin by the shoulders to push him away. She could only gasp as he zeroed in on his target. With a throaty groan Analisa shuddered against the apartment door, her keys still in her hand.

Martin was careful not to upset Analisa. Their reunion had run its course. He was ready to move on. During the week they were together he pressed her gently with questions about her family and friends. Eventually he danced around to the new girl he saw at the movies that night. Analisa actually mentioned her first.

"What do you want to do tonight?" Analisa wanted to go out. Martin had spent a few nights at her place and she was ready for other people. "We could go to the café? Or to a movie?"

"Come back to bed," Martin reached out his hand for her. His plan was working perfectly. "I want only you now." He moved the blanket off his body.

Analisa turned her back to him to look in the mirror. "Oh, that's what I meant to ask you. Did I see you at the movies a few weeks ago? I was there with Charlotte and her friend Olivia."

Martin smiled to himself. "I remember Olivia. Which one was Charlotte?"

"No no," Analisa's gaze lingered over the movement Martin's arm was making. "Charlotte you met before. She is the lesbian from Rennes. Remember? Her girlfriend has that scar on her shoulder from the robbery. It was awful. They got so close to her heart."

"Uh huh." Martin was deliberately distracting Analisa. He looked up at her briefly to make sure she was watching him. "So who was that other girl?"

"Olivia." Analisa was now staring at Martin. "She lives over in the 19<sup>th</sup>. She's very very sweet. Young though. We should meet her for a coffee, or..." Her voice trailed off.

"Coffee, really?" Martin's voice had a raspy edge to it. "Why do I want to meet that kid?"

“Oh come on.” Analisa purred. “She’s nice. She’s never had a boyfriend. We can set her up with someone.” She climbed in to bed with Martin and breathed in his ear. “I’ll give her a call. You’ll like her. You’ll see.” She reached for Martin. “I’ll make it worth your while.”

Analisa was angry. She was going to have to make more apologies to Olivia and the new date. Martin was nowhere to be found. Again. The first time he didn’t show up he had a plausible excuse. The next time he had a mysterious stomach bug. Attempt number three was a pathetic story about a stalled Metro. I’m going to kill him, Analisa thought to herself. Olivia’s fourth date was a disaster. The man was shy and loud at the same time. Olivia did her best to maintain a conversation. She looked over at Analisa for help.

“Where do you live, chéri.” Analisa could not remember his name.

“I live in the 7<sup>th</sup>,” the man said proudly, “with my Maman.”

Analisa tried to stifle a laugh. Olivia’s face blushed a deep red. Analisa ignored the pleading expression on Olivia’s face and excused herself to make a call.

“Where the fuck are you?” Analisa hissed in to the phone when Martin answered.

“I’m on my way.” Martin lied. He was across the street, sitting on his new motorcycle. It was a good vantage point. “How is this date?”

“You know what?” Analisa turned to look back at Olivia and her date. “Don’t bother. I was trying to do something nice for Olivia. All you can do is think of yourself.”

Martin watched as the sun danced in Olivia’s blonde curls. There was just something about this young woman that he needed. “I’m almost there. See you in a few minutes.”

“Fuck you Martin,” Analisa snorted. “I don’t want to see you. And you can forget about tonight too.” Analisa was angrier at herself than at Martin. “I don’t ever want to see you again.”

“Analisa. baby.” Martin half-heartedly pleaded. The phone went dead in his ear. He shifted on the motorcycle again to watch Analisa walk back to Olivia and her date. There was an obvious dramatic recount of their break-up. Olivia stood to hug Analisa before she left. Martin noted with approval the gently rounded shape of her ass.

Martin leaned forward to rev his bike impatiently. He needed to time this right. He watched anxiously as Olivia’s date finally stood to leave. Martin jumped on the chance and rode his motorcycle across the street. He stopped it right in front of a very surprised Olivia.

“*Mon dieu!*” Olivia exclaimed. She put her hand on her heart, pulling her blouse taut against her breasts.

Martin revved the engine once then turned it off. He kicked the stand and dismounted the bike in one smooth move. He stepped towards Olivia, offering his hand.

“I’m Martin, you must be Analisa’s friend.” He flashed his best smile.

Olivia was star struck for a moment. Martin was beautiful. He had wavy black hair and a chiseled jaw. His handshake was firm but the skin was soft. For the very first time in her life Olivia wondered what that would feel like on her body.

“Oh. Yes. Olivia. My name is Olivia.” she blushed. “But Analisa left.” Olivia pointed over her shoulder in the direction that Analisa took.

Martin smiled again. He liked the way Olivia couldn’t quite make eye contact. “Analisa had a fight with me. I think there is no more me and Analisa.” He was still holding Olivia’s hand. It was small in his. Soft and warm. “But I promised to come meet you and your boyfriend. Did I miss him?”

Olivia laughed nervously. “Boyfriend, no. Just a date.” She looked up at Martin finally and smiled. “I think he went home to his mother.”

“Well,” Martin smiled. “it was nice to meet you.” He slowly reached for his helmet.

“Wait!” Olivia surprised herself and blushed furiously. “Can you stay for a drink?”

Martin nodded and shook his hair out. Olivia had a sudden urge to pull his head towards her breasts. She blushed again and giggled slightly. They sat and had a glass of wine and then a light snack. Martin talked about his mother and younger sister in Northern France. They live just near the German border. He had met his father only twice. Once when he was a little boy, the man lived with them for a few months. Martin noted wryly that was likely when his sister was conceived. The last time he saw his father was in Stuttgart. Martin tracked him down to find that he was a successful businessman with wife and family. The man coolly disavowed any knowledge of Martin’s mother and the two children he produced with her. Yet since the visit a regular stipend of money was transferred to his mother’s bank account.

Olivia watched Martin’s face. He looked up in surprise. “I don’t think I’ve ever told anyone that.” He shrugged deliberately to get the memory off of him.

“How old is your sister?” Olivia asked gently. She was mysteriously drawn to Martin. His confession made him seem vulnerable, accessible.

“She’s 22.” Martin’s face exploded in to a grin. “Very sweet. She has all of the good qualities of my mother.” He frowned slightly. “You remind me of her.”

They sipped their wine quietly for a moment. “Do you live nearby?” Martin knew exactly where she lived. He followed her home after the last date. Just out of sight. Just to watch her.



“I live in the 19<sup>th</sup> with my father.” Olivia looked at her watch. “*Merde!*” She jumped up suddenly. “I have to go.”

Martin stood. “Oh.” He didn’t want her to leave. “Stay for one more? Or a coffee?”

“No,” Olivia looked worried. “I must go check on Papa.” She hesitated for a moment. “This was nice.”

“Yes.” Martin nodded. “Let’s meet again? Tomorrow?” He was unusually eager. It was rare that he had to pursue a woman.

Olivia gathered her things quickly. “Yes. No. Not tomorrow,” she was flustered. “I mean, soon, yes. I really must go.”

“We’ll meet back here?” Martin called out hopefully. Olivia was almost sprinting to the Metro Station. He thought he saw her nod and wave.

Everyday for a few weeks Martin rode by that café. He couldn’t get Olivia out of his mind. Oh well, he decided, maybe it wasn’t meant to be. Martin set out to resume his regular pattern. He found a job working as a motorcycle messenger. It gave him a great opportunity to spread out across Paris and visit some of the girls he managed to charm.

Within a few months he had a regular rotation of concurrent affairs. Some of them thought he was exclusively theirs. Some of them knew him for his reputation as an effective but transient lover. None of them seemed to satisfy him fully.

“Oh Martin.” Rebecca gripped his shoulders. Martin had his hands in Rebecca’s panties. His jeans were already bunched around his knees. He found Rebecca at her local supermarket. She was always willing to indulge him in a few days of raucous sex. Her husband was away for weeks at a time working as a fisherman off the Marseille coast.

Martin’s fingers expertly plucked a shrieking gasp from Rebecca. In one smooth, well-practiced move he turned her around, bent her over and pulled her on to him. They grunted and bucked together until they were both spent. Rebecca’s legs wobbled a bit as Martin separated from her. He smacked her bottom lightly and pulled up his pants.

“It’s a shame you can’t stay.” Rebecca pointed to the clock. She wasn’t subtle. She only used Martin for the same thing he used her for.

“Oh. Right.” A flash of disappointment danced on Martin’s face. He tucked his shirt in to his jeans, closing the fly. He picked up his motorcycle helmet from the floor. They were still in the front hallway. He never made it in to her flat.

“Thanks Martin,” Rebecca breathed in his ear as she kissed him on the cheek. “that was fun, as usual.”

Martin nodded and forced his signature smile. As he made his way back to his motorcycle there was an unusual emptiness in his chest. It took him two tries to kick start his bike. In frustration he sped off in to traffic, narrowly missing a car. Martin drove aimlessly through the streets for a while before he realized where he was.

He slowed down and carefully navigated around the one way streets. The roads were older in this arrondissement, narrower and cobblestoned. He thought it would be nice to live out here, away from the City center. He shifted to a lower gear to slow down at the corner by the mailbox. Martin turned the bike on to the street and idled a safe distance from the small buildings before him. There was a big moving van in the front of the butcher shop. From his perch he could see furniture being moved in to the building. A sudden sinking feeling washed over Martin. He got off the bike and walked over to the movers. The butcher shop was closed and a young family was moving in to the flat over it.

“Excuse me,” Martin stopped one of the movers. “what happened to the girl that lived here?” He put his hand on the man’s arm when he moved to walk away. “The young blonde. Where did she go?”

“*Mademoiselle Girardin* moved.” a voice behind him called out. Martin spun around. “When the old butcher died the girl moved.”

“Thank you, *Madame*.” Martin smiled politely. “Do you know where she moved to?”

“*Non*.” the woman shrugged. “To the City I think. So sad. The butcher lived here for so long. He stayed even when his wife and son died.” She looked up to see Martin sprint down the street and jump on his bike.

Martin went back to that café, where he met Olivia. He sat at the same table for a few minutes. A waiter came over and Martin waved him away. When the manager approached Martin got up and left.

Charlotte didn’t look up when the bell over the door jingled.

“Hello Charlotte.” Martin smiled. Charlotte was stunning. She had long dark hair that was usually piled on top of her head in a stylish bun. She always wore pointy retro glasses and bright red lipstick. The apron she wore cinched at her waist, emphasizing her curves. Martin hit on her often, despite the fact that she was undisputedly a lesbian.

“What do you want, pig?” Charlotte was a loyal friend of Analisa’s. She looked sideways at her coworker and mumbled to her about taking a break. She wiped her hands on a towel and walked around the bakery counter to stand in front of Martin. With her heels on she was eye level with Martin. With her hands on her hips she called him a pig again.

“You look lovely, as ever, Charlotte.” Martin was unrelenting. “How is Eva? Doing ok?” The thought of a *ménage a trois* with the two lesbians often gave him a pleasant shudder.

“Eva is fine, thank you. Are you going to ask me how Analisa is doing?” Charlotte hated the cocky assuredness of men like Martin.

Martin smiled again. “Analisa is strong. I’m sure she’s fine without me.”

“Ha!” Charlotte snorted. “Analisa is much better without you.” The bakery was getting busy again. “I have to get back to work. Did you want something?”

“I had a message from Maurice,” Martin lied. “one of the guys that Analisa set up with Olivia. He’s looking for her.”

Charlotte’s expression went cold. “Maurice, eh?” She didn’t trust Martin. “Give him the number for this shop. I will pass a message to Olivia.”

Martin knew in an instant where Olivia was. “Thanks Charlotte. I’ll see you again soon.”

“I hope not.” Charlotte said plainly.

It took a few weeks before Martin actually saw Olivia. She was staying with Charlotte and Eva, but leaving early in the morning and coming back late at night. One morning he followed her to residential area in the 7<sup>th</sup> Arrondissement. He looked up at the windows to watch a light come on in a 3<sup>rd</sup> floor flat. There was a movement at the window as Olivia opened a curtain. Martin sat back on his bike, hoping to stay out of sight.

Over the next couple of days Martin watched from a safe distance as Olivia moved in to that third floor flat. He noted where she shopped and which café she might eat in. With everything in place he carefully orchestrated a seemingly chance encounter.

“Martin? Martin?” Olivia stopped at his table. “Oh it is you. It’s Olivia. Remember?”

“Olivia?” Martin tried to look surprised. “Yes, of course I remember you.” He flashed his bright smile.

Olivia grinned back. She wanted to ask Analisa for his number months ago but knew that their break-up was a sore spot.

“What are you doing in this Arrondissement?” She thought he lived in the very trendy 11<sup>th</sup>.

“I am on a delivery,” Martin pointed to his motorcycle. “and I like this neighborhood. It has a lot of long straight roads to drive my bike.” He extended his leg under the table to push out the chair opposite him. “Would you like to join me?”

They sat together over wine and lunch. Martin encouraged her to have coffee and a pastry. Olivia finally sat back patting her stomach. “I’m full.” She chuckled. “I won’t have to eat dinner tonight.”

“Oh, I’ve kept you too long.” Martin stared in to Olivia’s blue eyes. “I can give you a ride if you need to be somewhere?”

Olivia’s expression saddened. “My father passed away. He was sick for so long. I was still not prepared for it.” She paused to gather her thoughts. “I moved out of the 18<sup>th</sup> and bought a nice place around the corner.” Olivia pointed over her shoulder. “It’s really nice,” she smiled. “gets lots of sunlight.”

They caught up on other things that had happened since their first meeting. Martin talked about his sister, Margot at length. Olivia was charmed by his obvious devotion to his younger sister. They grew up without a father, so Martin always took care of her. It was harder since he moved to Paris. He heard from his mother that Margot was dating someone with a bad reputation. The boyfriend was known for sleeping around. An irony that escaped Martin.

A light breeze swept down the avenue and cleared some loose napkins off their table. Martin looked down in surprise to find he was holding Olivia’s hand. “Excuse me.” he muttered with an uncharacteristic blush and sat back in his seat.

Olivia watched Martin’s face closely. He was so handsome, but there was more to him than that. She was unsettled by his staring and broke his gaze. “I should let you get back to your deliveries.” She gestured towards his bike.

“Yes,” Martin said slowly. “I should.”

They stood and walked to Martin’s bike. The emotion of his sister’s problem was fresh in Martin’s mind. He looked down at Olivia’s wide-eyed expression and his heart melted.

“Martin?” Olivia wondered what he was thinking. He looked so sad all of a sudden.

Martin shrugged his shoulders and forced a wide smile. “Are you sure you don’t want a ride on my bike?” He pulled out a spare helmet from the storage under his seat.

Olivia smiled and shook her head. “Maybe another time?” She wondered if she would ever see him again.

In a very rare move Martin wrote down his number to give to Olivia. It was a vulnerable step for him. He wasn’t sure what hold this woman had on him, but he needed to see her again. The attraction wasn’t especially physical. He didn’t even consider bedding her, there was more to her than that. Martin just had this overwhelming need to be near her.

Olivia called Martin the next day. They met a few times for lunch and dinner. Each time Martin was a perfect gentleman. Olivia wasn’t sure what to do. All the guys she dated before always made enthusiastic advances. There was never anyone she was interested in enough to pursue. Martin was different. The fact that he didn’t kiss her made Olivia want him more.

“Charlotte?” Olivia needed advice. “How do you get a man to want you?” The look on Charlotte’s face made Olivia realize the absurdity of the question. Olivia giggled. “I mean, a man OR a woman. How do you know if they want you?”

Charlotte frowned slightly. “You can usually tell by their body language. The way they move around you. The way they look at you.” Charlotte stared at Olivia. “Why do you ask? Who is the guy?”

“Oh,” Olivia shrugged. “no one.”

There was something in Olivia’s reply that made Charlotte wonder. She could hardly be talking about Martin. Martin was never shy with any woman.

**M**artin cleared his throat involuntarily. Olivia was standing very close to him.

“Would you like to come see my flat?” Olivia purred. “They finally finished painting the rooms.” Olivia didn’t wait for an answer. She turned around, grazing Martin’s leg with her bottom. She slowly marched up the stairs with Martin following closely. As Olivia stopped at her apartment door to pull out her key she could feel the heat coming off Martin’s body. Maybe that was from the 3 flights of stairs. She had to be sure. Olivia deliberately dropped her handbag and bent down to pick it up. In the confined space of the landing she had to brush against him. Yep. He was interested.

Olivia let them both in to the apartment. Martin was quiet. She gestured around the room at the kitchen, bathroom and bedroom. Martin’s gaze trained on the bedroom door. Olivia took a chance. In one bold move pressed her body against Martin, pulling him close for a kiss. Martin responded hungrily at first, but then pulled away.

“Olivia.” Martin muttered.

Olivia reached up for another kiss.

“Olivia.” Martin said again, holding her away from him. “Please.”

Olivia was confused. “But... I thought.”

Martin sighed. “I’m sorry. I have to go.” Martin paused for a moment. The hurt look on Olivia’s face tore through him. He stopped to say something else, but changed his mind and left.

Martin had his phone out as soon as he hit the street. He said just a few words before putting on his helmet and speeding off.

**R**ebecca lay back on the bed, panting. Martin didn’t even bother pulling his pants down before leaping on her. The entire experience was over in a few frantic minutes.

“So,” Rebecca rubbed her jaw where Martin’s stubble scratched her. “who is the girl?”

Martin carefully moved the sharp teeth of his zipper to one side. He used the corner of the bed sheet to clean himself before closing his pants.

Rebecca hissed at him. “Who is she?”

“Who?” Martin didn’t make eye contact. He was finished. He got what he came for. He just wanted to leave.

“The girl. Whoever it is that turns you on so much that you come here as nothing but an erect penis.” Rebecca snickered. “You smell of her perfume. Why are you doing to me what you want to do to her?” She pulled her t-shirt off, wiped off the traces of Martin and threw it in to the corner of the room.

Martin shrugged. Olivia was increasing her advances each time they met. His body wanted her desperately, but his heart could not bear to damage her.

“Is she a nun?” Rebecca cackled. “Is she frigid?” She was trying to get a reaction from Martin. “What’s the matter? She doesn’t like cock? Maybe she just doesn’t like yours.” Rebecca made a vulgar gesture with her hand against her open legs. “Maybe she doesn’t like where it has been.”

With that last sentence Martin left.

Olivia was grinning proudly. “Look Martin,” she opened and closed the glass refrigerator doors. “I can put so many arrangements in here.” Olivia excitedly bounced around the room. “My very own flower shop. Finally!” She threw her hands up and laughed.

Martin grabbed her by the waist and spun her around. He held Olivia close and gave her a kiss on her open mouth. Olivia responded eagerly and the kiss quickly became heated. Martin was lost in the sensations and let his hands wander across Olivia’s breasts. He automatically pinched a nipple and Olivia gasped.

Martin stopped. He stepped away from Olivia.

“No Martin, please. I want to.” Olivia reached for Martin’s waistband. She yanked his jeans open and put her hand into his underwear. Olivia had some experience before, mostly with boys when she was in school. She knew enough to satisfy them and still retain her honor.

Martin groaned as Olivia’s hand gripped him firmly. He had to fight the urge to take Olivia right where they were standing. “Please, Olivia.” Martin had to stop her movements before it was too late.

Olivia frowned. She didn’t understand what was going on. Martin was obviously aroused. Maybe he just didn’t want her. “Martin?” She looked so small and lost.

He thought quickly. “Not here, eh?” Martin pointed to the enormous storefront window. He smiled as he closed his pants.

Olivia giggled. “We can go back to my place?” She didn’t want to lose momentum on the progress she’d made.

“I wish I could.” Martin lied. “I promised my boss I would work a later shift.” He smiled to reassure Olivia. “I don’t want him to suspect that I’m not working during the day when I am here with you.”

“Oh.” Olivia pouted. “Will you come see me tomorrow?”

Martin smiled again. “I don’t think you can keep me away.”

**M**artin’s phone rang in the middle of the night. His mother was near frantic. Margot had a fight with her boyfriend and turned up at home with a bruised lip. Martin cursed and jumped on his bike for the long trip up north.

**O**livia was trying to stay busy. Martin wasn’t answering his phone. It had been almost a week since they were together in the store. Olivia tried to put any doubts and fears aside as she planned her grand opening. She fussed over the boxes of fresh flowers. With a smile she picked up a white rose. Rose was her mother’s name. She remembered that the small apartment over the butchers always had a vase full of roses. Her father said they were roses for Rose. Her mother teased it was to mask the smell of meat.

**M**artin was tired. It took him a few days to track down Margot’s boyfriend. The conversation was quick. Martin used his fists to make his point. Margot pleaded with him to leave the man alone. She loved him. Martin spat at her. He’s using you. He sleeps around. How can you let your soul die with a man like that? Margo spat back. He is the same as our father. He is the same as you. The comment hit Martin in the heart. He looked at his beloved sister with deep sorrow at the mistakes she was destined to make.

He rode back to Paris in the dark. His heart was broken by his sister. His heart ached for Olivia. With little forethought he drove right to her place. When she opened the pounding on the door Martin collapsed in her arms sobbing.

Martin had a shower and a strong cup of coffee. He wouldn’t tell Olivia why he was so upset. She was relieved that he came back to her. When Martin looked calm enough she moved to sit in his lap. Martin let out a loud sigh and held Olivia tightly. Soon the soft consoling kisses were deep and hungry. Olivia could tell that Martin was interested. She squirmed slightly rubbing against him.

Olivia let out a soft moan when Martin caressed her breast. She let her head fall back when he kissed her neck. Her movements against his lap were making him pant. With a frustrated grunt he

stood up and carried Olivia towards her bedroom. He put Olivia on the bed and quickly opened his pants. There was something about the look on her face that made him stop.

“No!” Olivia cried. “Please Martin. I want to do this.” Olivia sat up to kneel on the bed and pulled her nightgown over her head. “Don’t you want me?”

Martin gritted his teeth. “I, um.” he was confused. His sister’s screams still played in his head. He did not want to be that man to Olivia. “I don’t have a condom Olivia. I’m sorry.” He swept her in his embrace when she burst in to tears. They fell asleep on her bed. Olivia completely naked. Martin still in his jeans. Yet he was the one naked and raw.

Olivia didn’t answer Martin’s phone call the next day. She was hurt and embarrassed. The next time she saw him she made sure it was in public, at a café. He was sweet and apologetic. It just embarrassed her more. It took about a week for Martin to regain her trust, for Olivia to regain her confidence.

“Martin!” Olivia laughed. “Stop that!” They were teasing and flirting with each other. Martin kept tossing flowers on the floor to make Olivia bend over and pick them up.

“I’m not doing this for me.” Martin flashed his signature grin. “It’s a community service.” He pointed at the teenagers across the street watching through the big window.

“Martin!” Olivia shrieked.

He laughed and grabbed her by the waist. He kissed her softly and held her close. They were both being cautious about the next step. He really didn’t want to upset Olivia again.

“When we’re ready.” Olivia whispered in Martin’s ear. “I have seen a doctor about the pill. When we are ready.”

Martin could only nod.

“There.” Olivia said, standing back to look at the store window. “Ready or not. I will open tomorrow.” She giggled nervously. “You will stop by?”

“I wouldn’t miss it for the world” Martin grinned.

They shared another long, lingering kiss goodnight. It had been more than a week since Martin had been with a woman. He wanted to hold out and wait for Olivia. He wanted to have just Olivia. Olivia’s hip made quick contact with the front of Martin’s jeans. He was frustrated. He needed one last fling before committing to Olivia.

Rebecca looked at the clock. “Sure,” she said wryly in to the phone. “come over now. The timing is perfect.” Martin was at her bed in a matter of minutes. Rebecca was waiting for him on all fours.



With little conversation he opened his pants and pushed himself in to her. He grabbed her by the hips and charged through a fast rhythm. After a few short thrusts Martin was aware of Rebecca's moans. They were different. He slowed down slightly and her noises didn't change. The bitch is faking it, Martin thought to himself. He yanked her hips up and pushed her head down on the bed. He was determined to change the angle and get a real response. It didn't work.

She was now cackling "Oh Martin. Yes, right there Martin."

He was just about to start pounding in to her when he felt a blinding pain on the back of his head. He looked up in surprise as Rebecca moved away from him and was cowering against the wall. Martin turned around just in time to see an enormous fist. And then nothing.

Olivia was beaming with pride. All of her friends stopped by to support her for the opening. She kept an eye on the door in case Martin showed up and Analisa was still there. Charlotte watched Olivia's nervous vigil and poked Eva. Eva whispered something in Analisa's ear.

"Who are you waiting for, chérie?" Analisa confronted Olivia.

"Waiting? No one." Olivia forced a smile. She couldn't hide her disappointment that Martin didn't show up.

"Is this the same 'no one' that you were trying to catch a few months ago?" Charlotte interjected.

Olivia frowned. "It's not what you think," she was suddenly defensive. "he's really sweet with me."

Analisa snorted. "That pig is just playing you." She had little regard for Martin. "He's just going to use you."

"No, he's changed." Olivia looked back and forth among her friends. "He's very kind, and gentle. We haven't even slept together." She surprised them all with that confession.

The women were silent for a moment. Analisa finally spoke.

"Cherie, he is a pig. He will never truly change. He will break your heart. Maybe not right away. But he doesn't know any other behavior." Analisa moved to give Olivia a hug. "You're better off without him. Especially before it goes too far."

Olivia shook her head. "You're all supposed to be my friends. This is the first man I have ever felt this way about. Is it too much to ask for a little support? A little understanding?" The conversation broke up quickly as someone else came over to congratulate Olivia.

The women all hugged and kissed Olivia when they left. Eva was the only one to impart any sympathy. She was the only one that Martin never hit on. "Take care of yourself, Olivia." she said sincerely. "A man like that will suck the joy out of your soul. You will get lost in the relationship and not even know it."

Olivia didn't hear from Martin for two weeks. The argument she had with her friends played in her mind with each passing day.

She frowned at the unfamiliar number on her phone. "Olivia?" Martin's voice was almost a whisper.

Olivia hung up. When the phone rang again she didn't answer it. When it rang the third time she shouted an obscenity. "*Mademoiselle Girardin?*" The surprised voice on the other end hesitated.

"Oh, yes. Excuse me. This is Olivia Girardin." Olivia walked away from the front counter.

"This is Doctor Erickson from the *Hôtel Dieu*." the man had an American accent.

"Pardon? The hotel?" Olivia was struggling to make sense.

"*Hôtel Dieu* the hospital in the 4<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Gagnon has been here since his accident a few weeks ago. He is awake now and asking for you."

Olivia wrote down some information and closed the shop.

Martin was sleeping when Olivia got to the hospital. She sat at his bedside for a few minutes stroking his hair. He had bandages everywhere. His right arm was in a sling. His left leg was in a cast and suspended by a frame over the bed. A doctor walked by and Olivia stood up to ask him some questions.

"How is he?" Olivia stared back at the broken figure in the bed.

"He's recovering well. Considering the condition he was in when he was found, he's doing much better." The doctor reported.

"Found?" Olivia frowned. "Where was he found? Was it on his motorcycle?"

The doctor nodded at someone else trying to get his attention. "He was left on the street outside the hospital. The car never stopped."

"Car? He was hit by a car?"

"No, sorry. He was dropped off on the street from a car that didn't stop. He was beaten up." The doctor touched Olivia's arm lightly. "Now if you'll excuse me."

Martin drifted in and out of his deep sleep. Olivia learned that his jaw was broken, so were his right arm, left foot and a few ribs. He had a black eye, and bad bruising to his testicles.

Despite Martin's protests Olivia called his mother. His mother cried at his bedside, telling him that God was punishing her for having bastard children. She wanted Martin to come back home with her. Martin managed to convince her that he needed to be in Paris near this hospital for his recovery.

It was another three weeks before he could be released. It was clear that Martin couldn't take care of himself. He had to stay with Olivia.

Olivia tried to hold up Martin's weight. He had to put his left arm over her shoulder and half-hop, half-drag himself up the 3 flights of stairs. With some effort and a final burst of energy they managed to get Martin to a chair in the living room. Olivia patted his hand and moved to get his bag from the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor landing where they dropped it.

"Wait. Olivia?" Martin grabbed her hand and then winced. His jaw was still partially wired. "Olivia, I am so sorry for this." He hated having to depend on her.

Olivia pulled her hand away. "Let's work on getting you better so you can go home."

Olivia was gentle in her care for Martin. She helped him with everything. A nurse visited periodically to check on bandages and casts. After a few weeks he could stand on his own. After one month he could go up and down the stairs. He spent a lot of time with Olivia in her shop. He was determined to help anyway he could.

"I have to go back to the flat to meet the visiting nurse." It was the last scheduled home visit. Martin was anxious to get the approval for bandage and cast removal.

Olivia looked up from a floral arrangement. The two of them had fallen in to a friendly routine. The romance they once had was no longer initiated by Olivia. She was quietly angry at Martin for putting them in this situation. She would have to confront him about the beating. She wasn't sure she wanted to know the truth.

"Yes, OK." Olivia frowned. "Can you get back on your own?"

Martin nodded and flashed his smile. His jaw was almost healed. The signature smile was slightly crooked now.

Martin limped to the intercom on the wall to answer the front door bell. He buzzed to let the nurse in then sat on the living room chair to wait for her. He was looking forward to seeing the nurse. She was a large matronly woman who initially came to see him when he was first released from the hospital. He was eager to show her his progress.

"It's open!" Martin called out in response to the knock on the door. It opened slowly.

"Hello?" A younger, different nurse peered in to the room. "I'm Constance, from the hospital."

“Oh.” Martin blinked in surprise. “Where is *Madame Stafford*?”

“She could not make it. I am here to do your release check-up.”

Martin grinned. “Where do you want to start?”

Constance raised an eyebrow and looked at Martin’s chart. She checked his foot and his arm, making notes in her book. She put her hand on Martin’s face. “Open your mouth please.” She shined a small flashlight in to his eyes.

“OK,” Constance stepped back. “take off your shirt please.” Martin pulled it up over his head. Constance ran her hands along his ribs. “Arms over your head please.” Martin smiled as the nurse’s hands traced across his chest and down to his abs. She cleared her throat and stepped back again.

Martin watched her make some more notes in her book. “There was one more injury.” He put his hands on his hips and thrust his pelvis forward slightly.

Constance didn’t look up. “Yes, that’s here in the notes. How are you feeling? Any bruising left?”

“I think you need to check for yourself” Martin pulled his pants down. “I can’t quite look in the same angle you can get to. Can you help me?”

Minutes later Constance was on her back on Olivia’s kitchen table. Her legs were up against Martin’s chest as he pumped in and out of her. He had his hand between them, working Constance to the same rushing explosion. Martin could barely wait for Constance as several months worth of abstinence was charging through him.

“Come on.” he grunted. Martin sped up his attention on Constance. She was starting to moan loudly. He winced as one movement reminded him of the dramatic bruising. Constance clutched at Martin’s hand and let out a shriek as she writhed on the table. Martin took a deep breath and made one final thrust. The release made his whole body shake.

Martin’s knees buckled when he separated from Constance. The nurse was still panting on the table. The evidence of their coupling was all over the place. Jesus, he thought to himself. What did I just do? Martin was suddenly aware of Olivia’s kitchen table. Olivia’s floor. Constance’s clothes on Olivia’s couch. He tried to stay calm and clean up quickly. Constance propped her elbows on the table and watched Martin.

“I suppose I can give you the medical release after that” Constance smirked. “I’ve never seen anyone switch from orgasm to housekeeping so fast.

Martin smiled apologetically. He kissed Constance gently when she gave him the form with his release.

“Take that to the hospital next week and you can get that cast off after your X-ray.” Constance smiled. “This one is my phone number, in case you need another second opinion about bruising.”

Olivia went with Martin to the hospital for all his final appointments. He was so relieved to get the cast off his foot. The skin was white and slightly puckered. He could move it gently and carefully put his weight on it for a few slow steps down the hallway. They took their time going back to Olivia’s flat. As they rounded the corner on to her street Olivia stopped him.

“Let’s have a drink, yes?” Olivia picked the café next to the one they usually went to. Martin blinked in surprise and obliged.

He watched her as she ordered a drink and then sat back to sip it slowly. He was still inexplicably attracted to her. Martin often considered that she was like a flower, just waiting to bloom. She had an innocence about her. A fresh young vibrancy. She could be ecstatically sexy, yet usually behaved demurely. Even the style of clothing she wore modestly hid the swell and shape of her body. Martin vividly remembered the sight of Olivia naked. That was the day everything changed.

“Martin. Martin.” Olivia was talking to him. He was miles away.

“Martin,” she tried again. “where is your motorcycle?”

A hot blush rushed up the back of Martin’s neck. “Hrmm?” He stalled for time to think of an answer.

“*Merde* Martin. Don’t you dare lie to me after all this.” Olivia’s voice was chillingly calm.

“My bike was damaged in the accident.” Martin lied, in spite of himself.

“Really.” Olivia leaned forward. “When they beat you, did they pick up the bike and hit you with that too?” She tapped the table with her finger. “Who beat you? Who did you upset so much that they left you for dead?”

Martin thought quickly. He couldn’t tell Olivia it was the husband of a woman he was sleeping with. He would never have a chance with Olivia then.

“It was friends of Margot’s boyfriend.” Martin surprised himself with that nugget. “I went up to rescue Margot after he beat her. When I caught him I gave him a taste of his own medicine.” Martin shrugged and threw in a fake wince for effect. “I can only imagine they found me and beat me in revenge.”

Olivia frowned for a moment. The story seemed to make sense.

“And where is your motorcycle then?” Olivia’s voice softened.

“I was stopped at a traffic light in the 19<sup>th</sup> when they pulled me off of it. We can maybe check with the police.” Martin had actually called Gustav a few weeks ago. He asked him to retrieve his bike from Rebecca’s place. Gustav reported back that the bike had been smashed and torn to pieces.

Martin leaned forward with some exaggerated effort to take Olivia’s hand. “I can never thank you enough for all the care you have shown me.”

Olivia nodded. She had spent months battling with the notion that Martin wasn’t the gentlemen he made himself to be with her. She didn’t want to acknowledge that her friends were right all along and that he would eventually break her heart.

“Let’s go home.” Olivia finally smiled at him.

They walked up the stairs slowly, with Martin’s arm on Olivia’s shoulder. He no longer needed the support, he just wanted the closeness.

**M**artin watched intently as Olivia warmed to him again. She kissed him gently each night before they went to bed. They slept in the same bed together, since the beating. It was the only bed Olivia had. Olivia gradually kissed him good morning too. Eventually her kisses became more passionate.

A few nights later their kisses made both of them gasp for air. Martin held Olivia’s face in his hands and groaned. They were back to where they were. Martin was still struggling with the contrasting image of this wholesome Olivia and all the other women he had sex with. He didn’t know if he could break from that pattern. If he could have more than just casual sex with Olivia.

Olivia’s eyes were closed when they parted from the kiss. Martin moaned involuntarily and Olivia took it as a sign of encouragement. She ran her hands along Martin’s torso, down to his obvious excitement.

“Wait, Olivia,” Martin faked another wince. “they still hurt.”

“Oh.” Olivia moved her hand away. “I’m sorry.” She frowned.

“We’ll have to take it slowly, OK?” Martin reassured her with a gentle kiss.

**T**he next day Martin fished his apartment keys out of one of his bags in Olivia’s closet. He was supposed to meet Constance the Nurse there in an hour. He walked over to Olivia’s shop to let her know he was going to go to his place to talk to his landlord.

Olivia frowned in concern. They didn’t talk about Martin’s apartment. She had actually gotten used to him living with her.

“I’ll be back in just a few hours.” Martin kissed her on the forehead. “If I’ll be late I promise to ring.”

Martin was kneeling on his bed. Constance was naked and bucked her ass back against him. Her arms were stretched out in front of her and she was gripping handfuls of the blanket.

“Oh fuck,” Constance hissed. “I’m going to ...”

Martin grabbed her by the hips and increased the pace.

“Yes. Oh, again. I can’t stop!” Constance had what Martin called his “Motorcycle Special.” He revved a woman so much that her engine flooded over and over again.

Just as Constance’s grunts turned to another shriek Martin arched his back and slammed in to her. They both collapsed on the bed, panting. Constance slowly turned to Martin. “It’s nice that you didn’t jump off me and start cleaning.”

Martin chuckled slightly and suddenly felt like he should be somewhere else.

Olivia was surprised to see that Martin had dinner waiting in her flat. He had been out that morning shopping for a new motorcycle. He was almost fully recovered and he wanted to get back to work. He wanted to get back to his own apartment. He wanted his own life back.

“This is lovely.” Olivia beamed.

Hours before, Martin was in the supermarket, shopping for ingredients. He caught the attention of a young housewife eager to help him. Within minutes their shopping bags were on a pile by his apartment door and he had the housewife on all fours in the hallway. As he grunted in his final movements a sadness crept in. Martin plastered on a smile and forced himself to go through the motions with the housewife. He couldn’t wait to get his groceries to Olivia’s and make dinner for her.

Martin spent the week wining and dining Olivia. He needed to move out and was trying to find a way to do that gently. One evening he mentioned that his motorcycle was ready to be picked up. He watched Olivia’s expression as he acknowledged that her apartment did not have a designated parking space.

Olivia frowned. “But you can park on the street?”

“Yes,” Martin nodded. “if I can find a place nearby.” Olivia bowed her head. She knew what he meant. “Olivia,” Martin put his hand under her chin to tilt her head up. “I need the motorcycle. I need to work.”

Olivia could only nod. They didn’t speak for the rest of the night. When they climbed in to bed together Martin wrapped his arms around her and they fell asleep like that.

Olivia hated the quiet in the flat without Martin. He had only been gone for two days, but it felt dramatically empty. She cocked her head towards the hallway. She could hear the thunderous march of Martin up the stairs.

“Martin!” Olivia gasped. She wasn’t expecting him.

“Olivia,” Martin was breathless with excitement. “I’ve been offered a job, in Lyon!” He threw his hands in the air. “All expenses paid. I would set up the messenger firm there. One of my old bosses recommended me.”

“Lyon?” Olivia stammered. “Wow.”

“Yes. It’s a fantastic opportunity.” Martin grabbed Olivia by the waist. “Come with me?”

“What? Wait. No. Martin?” Olivia laughed. “I can’t go to Lyon. I have my shop here.”

“Oh fuck that. We’ll get you another shop.” Martin was kissing Olivia’s neck and unbuttoning her blouse. “We could have the new messenger office and a new flower shop for you.” Martin held Olivia to him with one hand while expertly opening his pants.

“Martin.” Olivia was overwhelmed by his touches. He had his hand in her pants and was quickly rubbing her sensitive skin. “Oh God, Martin.” Olivia didn’t know what to do.

Martin held Olivia in place keeping his thumb in deliberate contact while slowly working his fingers inside. Olivia’s body spasmed in a combination of ecstasy and pain. Martin had made his way through her innocence.

“Martin” Olivia gasped. She was panting at the experience. Her hands were clutching at his shoulders. His mouth was now covering one of her breasts. He teased and flicked the nipple until Olivia started moaning. He lifted Olivia by the ass to push her on to the table.

He moved away for a split second and Olivia yelped. “Please. Martin.”

Martin wanted to make long, slow love to Olivia. To set her apart from all the other women, he wanted to lavish her with the tenderness she deserved. He would take her to Lyon and never need another woman again.

Olivia tried again. “Martin?” She was almost naked and lying on the table waiting for him. Just like so many women before. Her legs were open, her breasts were exposed. Just like so many women before. A lustful haze enveloped Martin. He lost sight of the delicate Olivia and lunged for the next conquest.

Martin pulled Olivia’s legs around his waist and shoved forward in one movement. Olivia cried out in shock. Her back arched off the table in reflex and Martin pushed forward again. He put his thumb back on the spot she enjoyed before and used the other hand to clutch at her breast. Olivia



grunted at the conflicting sensations. She closed her eyes and started to feel a wave building with each undulation. She lifted her hips off the table again and moved with Martin just as he cursed and convulsed over her.

Olivia's legs were shaking as Martin helped her off the table. He kissed her tenderly and held her close as they sat on the couch. He was so excited about the prospect of a new job that he had to share the news with Olivia right away. He was ready to give himself to Olivia. He was ready to make Olivia his. Olivia blinked in surprise and confusion at the mix of emotions welling up inside her.

"Martin." Olivia almost whispered. She had different expectations of how her first time with Martin would go. She wasn't quite prepared for the roughness, the urgency, the detachment and lack of intimacy.

"What do you think?" Martin was still grinning.

Olivia turned to face Martin and winced at the pain between her legs. "Martin," Olivia tried again. "I cannot go to Lyon. I have this flat and the shop. My life is here."

Martin stood. He was suddenly angry. "This flat and that shop mean more to you than I do?"

"Wait, Martin. Yes, I mean no. I have the investment here. I cannot just leave it."

Martin clenched his fist and was going to say something. Instead he stormed out, in a thunderous march down the stairs.

Two days later Martin came back to Olivia's flat.

"I'm sorry Martin." Olivia kissed him gently.

Martin frowned. "I'm not going to Lyon either." There was sadness in Martin's eyes.

"I can visit you there." Olivia tried to compromise. "We can have weekends there and weekends here in Paris."

"I'm NOT going to Lyon." Martin choked back a sob. "I left here the other night and went for a few drinks with friends" Martin turned his tear stained face to Olivia. "I got pulled over and given a ticket for excessive alcohol while driving my motorcycle. The company took back their offer."

"Oh Martin!" Olivia threw her arms around him. She kissed his face to clear his tears.

Martin turned to Olivia with a hungry kiss in response. A few minutes later Olivia was underneath Martin on the couch as he sped them both to a frantic, bittersweet release.

When their breathing calmed down Martin got up to go to the bathroom. He saw his reflection in the mirror. He saw, in his own eyes the pain of his childhood, the shame of countless, meaningless women, and the deep sorrow at missed opportunities. He had thrown away the chance for a career instead of a job, and he forever ruined the image of the sweet woman he honored for so long. Things would never be the same between them now.

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# About the author

Tracy Leung was born and raised in New York City. Her mother is a blend of Puerto Rican and Filipino, her father Chinese. Exposed to a wealth of cultures, Tracy absorbed the influences around her with fervor. She has embraced her love of travel and language to live and work abroad. Tracy's personal experience has provided a unique perspective on the diversity of traditions around the world.

Her professional life has taken her into the fashion, technology and finance industries. She has worked in senior positions in the private sector and on Wall Street, dealing extensively with international military, diplomatic and executive contacts.

Tracy's passion and skill in cooking reflects her cosmopolitan background and taste. Always eager to find the back street restaurant where only the locals eat, whether in London, Paris, Rome or at home in New York, she interprets menus into her own distinctive recipes.

Using these experiences to full effect, Tracy has created dynamic characters in actual locations to populate "Branche Olive".