Love in a Leap Year ©

By Layla Revis

The Narrator's Release

It began on what was called "The Night of the Gracious Moon." In the southwest, the night was referred to as "La Noche de la Luna Bondadosa." And it was said, by more than a handful of Sonorans, that when they glanced to the sky that night, the moon's plump belly eased her way into their hearts and filled them with intense desire to share. They claimed the feeling lasted approximately seven seconds, until a single white cloud shaded their glowing eyes from the warm heat of her guiding touch. For a little more than an instant, the sky too, seemed blanketed with a certain comfort.

That night also marked the evening of the protagonist's birth. As the unborn peeked her head around the corner and yelled at the moon like one child to another in a taunting game of tag, "You're a flustered flan moon, a flustered flan moon!" six thousand miles away, the moon, as well as the night, seemed remarkably the same. So, though a Brit might've likened the moon to a bundle of cashmere, an Irishman might've seen the bottom of a frosty mug.

At a small Parisian café on the Rue de Renard, a wealthy Swiss banker dined at Chez Nous. He overheard the gray bearded baker proclaim that the evening moon "bathed the rich night in love's sweet lacquer." As a matter of course, the ninth to be exact, the baker added a sprinkle of cinnamon to his prize-winning brulee and noticed that the moon, like his own fragile delicacy, appeared to quiver in the deep blueberry sky. He playfully jostled the brulee with the tip of his fork, smirking at the thought that the custard trembling before him was his lover's sweet thighs.

He proclaimed, to his usual Persian patron, Ali Adumin (though honestly to none other than himself), “Ah… such as this! Such as this! Does Louis D’Bonnet cause such caramel rivulets to pour from moon’s titled bowl? I think so, Monsieur Adunmin. I think so.”

Yes, it was that kind of moon.

Under that moon, the unborn scurried around the glittering night’s edge. With guided moonbeam and gilded light, a tale was beginning to unfold. In this tale, eyes now peer in and widen - at once disappear and demand. And so tonight, underneath our own tooth-aching, but delectable, light of the moon, we know that there are many moons past and many different moons yet to come. Moons of rusted nail and peach cobbler, any Jenny moons, a Mona moon, a lost and feathered bedroom slipper moon, and sometimes, even in fancy, there’s a moon so captivating and reflective it can become almost dangerous.

This moon stuns the wild animal. It is a glint in the eye of a stranded coyote caught in traffic. It is both difficult to remember, but impossible to forget. In the north, it is known as “La Luna de Los Suenos.” In the south, it is called “La Luna de los Recuerdos,” but to those who glanced at the night sky on “La Noche de la Luna Bondadosa,” it was something quite different.

So here we have already begun. For aren’t the tides of life moved by the moon? And so, as the noteworthy element of that night has been well described, I must then quickly introduce myself. I am your anonymous guide. Am I a mother, a father, a child, a barmaid, a bandleader or a gypsy? It does not really matter who I am in all of this, no! And I cannot be held responsible for the incorrect assumptions, disgust, dismay, abashed

conclusions, joy, confusion, or laughter that this tale may provoke. It is best to think of me as a simple janitor of this hallway, sweeping as the novel collects dust or tears, and carries with it rings of black coffee and dog-eared pages.

I am you, or your enemy, but here, every night, we are underneath the light of the same moon.

The Conception

In the desert lap dance of dry earth and heat, conception lingered uncertainly amid the dust. Shuffled easily between the tendrils of the tumbleweed. So many colors in dust, all shades of a common mahogany and a green so prickly pearness. In that part of the country, sturdy palm trees greeted with a gentle brush between lazy winds. Here, life… was waiting to happen.

On that pre-evening table, dusk placed a setting for "La Noche de la Luna Bondadosa" and a very confused Ruby-throated Hummingbird hovered frantically above the hood of the car. Perhaps the lightning trickster was lost somewhere between North Carolina and Mexico, but if one were to believe in Mayan legend or the words of Emily Dickinson then there was good reason why "He never stops, but slackens / Above the Ripest Rose."

In the eyes of the lyrical Mayan, a hummingbird was much more than a delicate flash of nature's kaleidoscopic reign. The hummingbird was, in fact, the sun adorned in a glinting disguise; his sole purpose resting in the courtship of a lovely rose. Wearing a silken, dawn-tinted disguise of her own (for she was indeed the moon), the rose displayed her mischievous color and aroma with abandon. Folds and petals joined the verdant green and blush velvet with the dewy fresh scent of innocence. Veins of aqueous life shook the

throttles of purity, and with one cleverly dropped bead of fragrance, a handkerchief beneath a nobleman's foot, she left the slightest hint of musk. She would then open up to him, her suitor, her sun, her Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and in one climactic widening, the light of sun's knowledge would unite with the mysterious wisdom of the moon.