

MICROFICTION

The Name She Did Not Use

The Velvet Hunt - Book 1 Expanded Canon

written by
Oryxia Bluebelle

The Name She Did Not Use

At the ferry terminal, the clerk asked for her name, and Amara gave him the one Blackthorn had built for her.

The lie had a birthday, a credit history, school photographs purchased from databases that had never known her face, and a mother who existed only as three notarized signatures. It was a beautiful identity. Clean. Expensive. Dead on arrival if Elias looked at her for too long.

She signed the manifest and felt the old name rise behind her teeth—not because she wanted it, but because Bellgrave Harbor remembered before people did. Salt wind. Rusted railings. A boy laughing beside the water. Her father's ink-stained fingers tapping twice against a newspaper margin when he had found something important.

The clerk pushed the ticket toward her. 'Welcome home.'

Amara smiled as if the word meant nothing. Outside, the harbor opened beneath a gray sky, polished mansions climbing the cliffs like teeth.

Home was not what waited for her here. Evidence was. Sebastian Valcour was. Vivienne was. Elias was.

She folded the ticket into quarters and slipped it into her coat. Blackthorn had taught her never to keep sentimental objects on an operation. She kept this one anyway.

By midnight, she would tell her first lie to a Valcour. By dawn, someone would begin measuring her.

For one breath, alone among strangers, Amara let herself remember the name she had come back to protect by refusing to use it. Then she stepped into Bellgrave Harbor and became someone else.

• • •