

Grace and Mercy

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Fandom: Panik RPS

Pairing: David/Timo (but not the focus of the fic)

Rating: PG13

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Warnings: baby

Challenge: Panikslash Challenge #1 - Baby Blues

Summary: What is a house full of young men to do when faced with a tiny baby girl?

Author's Notes: Okay, so the idea of men with babies is adorable, who could resist that kind of bunny? Managed to push back the kink bunnies for a little bit and write this instead. TH and Panik are going to be the death of me :).

Word count: 3,197

Linke was on his way to the kitchen to make some coffee; it was about five am. He wasn't normally an early riser, but he'd been reading and kind of lost track of the time and then he'd seen dawn coming through the curtains and he knew if he went to sleep now he'd feel worse than if he just didn't bother. It was nice not to have to compete for the bathroom at least.

He wandered into the living room knowing that his mug was likely to be right where he left it the previous evening. There was a mug shortage in the house thanks to a small accident with the dishwasher so mugs were a highly prized item, even if it meant you had to wash them up yourself before using them again. He was just about to pick his up when he heard something odd, so odd in fact that it made him stop stock still.

After a moment or two he heard it again and he could only describe it as a coo. Everything was silent for a little while as he did his best to figure out what could have made such a noise. They didn't have anyone staying, so he didn't think he'd just blundered in on someone. He turned, looking around the dimly lit room and noticed there was something on the table, something he didn't recognise, but couldn't make it out with the curtains drawn and it being early dawn outside.

When he heard a giggle, he went fumbling for the light switch immediately.

There on the table was a Moses basket and what looked suspiciously like a baby bag. Almost as if it might bite, he walked over very carefully and looked into the basket. There, as large as life and playing with one un-socked foot was a baby, who immediately looked up at him with big blue eyes and grinned.

It really wasn't normal to find a baby in the middle of your living room when a baby had no business being there, so Linke thought he deserved a few moments to process the idea. Then he saw the note on the bag next to the basket and he picked it up.

"Hi Guys," it was a normal start, "thank you so much for looking after Grace. I'll be back in two days and she'll be no trouble. There are more detailed instructions in the bag. Love, Karla"

Linke didn't believe what he was reading, so he read it again, but the words did not miraculously change. There was no explanation, nothing, just a few words saddling them all with a baby. He looked down at Grace, who gave him another grin, that would have been adorable if he hadn't been trying to figure out what the hell was going on, and then turned and walked out of the room. If there was a more appropriate time for a house meeting he didn't know what it was.

He banged loudly on David's door first and was very unsurprised when Timo opened it.

"What?" Timo asked, clearly very annoyed about having been woken up.

"Downstairs, living room," Linke replied shortly, "you'll see. I'm going to wake the others."

Timo looked utterly confused, but Linke didn't give his friend a chance to object and went on to the next room. He banged on Franky's door and received no reply, but since Frank slept like the dead this wasn't overly surprising. He opened the door, walked in, picked up the cushion off the chair, which was there for that specific purpose (at least that's what everyone but Franky had decided) and threw it at Franky's head.

"Hmm ... wha..?" was the almost instant response.

"Downstairs, living room, now," Linke said; at such times in the morning it was best to keep things simple.

When he banged on Jan's door their DJ answered looking like the living dead, but did seem to understand the instructions and Juri had a case of bed hair to rival an afro, but was the most awake of everyone so far. They all ended up in the living room between five and ten minutes later in various states of undress and there was no doubt they all noticed the package on the table.

"Okay," Linke decided he was the only one operating on full brain power, "whose fault is this?"

"Not mine," Franky said instantly, "safe sex all the way."

That might have been funny had there not been a baby lying in a basket on the table.

"Let's try that again," Linke said as everyone looked blank, "who knows a Karla?"

Surprisingly it was Juri whose head came up.

"Um, I know a Karla," Juri said and so Linke handed him the note.

"Something you'd like to tell us?" Timo asked as Juri scanned the note.

Juri just looked confused, which really didn't help matters.

"Karla's my cousin," Juri finally said, "you've all met her once at that family barbeque thing I couldn't get out of so you all came to back me up."

"Oh yeah," Franky said as if he'd finally begun to wake up, "the blonde girl with the huge..."

Okay so not as awake as maybe he should have been before he opened his mouth, since Juri glared at Franky hard and it almost made Linke smile, almost, since they still had a problem.

"Why did your cousin dump a baby in our living room?" David asked, finally entering the conversation, which usually meant there would be progress made.

Juri looked as confused as everyone else, however.

"I spoke to her on the phone the other day," Juri said eventually, clearly trying to work it out, "and I remember talking about Grace, but I swear I never said we'd look after her."

Things were not looking up.

"Well she's your second cousin," Timo said, jabbing a finger at Juri, "so she's your problem. I'm going back to bed."

Juri actually looked kind of scared at that, especially when most of the others agreed. Jan appeared sympathetic, but everyone else was too sleep deprived to be paying much attention.

"I'm making coffee," Linke said as Timo, David and Franky all headed back towards their rooms, "want some?"

The baby was Juri's problem, but he could at least make sure Juri was awake before trying to deal with said baby. With Jan's help he was almost sure Juri couldn't make too much of a mess of it.

When he came back from the kitchen with three mugs of steaming coffee and he saw how much stuff had erupted from the baby bag under Juri's supervision, he decided that retreat was the better part of valour. He made it to his room, shut the door and decided to start reading the next book in the trilogy he had sat up all night reading to begin with.

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Hunger finally drew him out of his reading and he headed towards the kitchen to find some food. What he found in the living room was at the same time adorable and scary beyond belief. David had the baby and was cooing over her like she was the cutest thing on the face of the planet. Timo was, of course, filming the whole thing. It would no doubt be on the internet by tea time and a thousand fangirls would die of the cute.

By the looks of it there had been feeding going on and there appeared to be spots of baby sick on David's shoulder, but since no one else was mentioning it, Linke decided to stay well clear. He shook his head and continued on his way to find food. There were interesting smells coming from the kitchen and hence he was not surprised to find Franky cooking. That actually made him smile, because Franky made very good food.

"Do not eat too much," Franky admonished him as he fished an apple out of the fridge, "lunch will be ready in half an hour."

It seemed that the household was being domestic today, which he supposed was one good thing about having a baby in the house. If it meant being fed, it had to be a plus.

"Don't worry," he said, wandering back out of the kitchen again; Franky got techy if you were in his way when he was cooking, "I'll ravenously consume anything you put in front of me."

His sum total of calorific intake all day had been one bar of chocolate he'd had on his bedside table, so he was looking forward to real food. He walked back into the living room and took up a position in the chair furthest away from the baby and started to watch. It was undeniably fascinating.

There were four grown men in various states of disarray, sitting on and around the one chair where baby Grace was. David had her nestled in the crook of his arm and was cooing and waving a small stuffed animal just in front of Grace. Timo was filming all of this as if it was worthy of an OSCAR while Jan and Juri sat on the floor watching with rather exhausted looks on their faces. Clearly the pair had been run ragged over the course of the morning.

There was baby stuff all over the floor.

"Can you wave to the camera, Gracie?" David asked, waving the stuffed animal in the direction of where Timo was filming. "Give a big smile for Uncle Timo."

Linke almost started laughing at the street cred that David was just washing down the toilet, but it was kind of adorable when Grace did give a huge smile. He suspected it had more to do with the blinking light on the camera than anything else, but Linke still had to admit it was cute.

"Aww, isn't she the cutest," Jan was clearly on the same page as David when it came to babies.

The fascination did not hold with Linke; he had lots of relatives and whenever there had been family gatherings in the past there had been plenty of babies. He had lost any interest by the time puberty hit and he did not intend to have any of his own for some time yet, if ever. He liked kids okay, but only when they were other people's problems.

He watched David playing with Grace a little longer while Timo captured every moment and then he saw David's nose wrinkle. Quite quickly David was holding Grace up and away from himself.

"Umm, Juri, she smells nasty, I think it's time for you to have her back," David said and all but held Grace at arm's length in Juri's direction.

Clearly feeding Grace had had an effect and Juri looked at Jan in panic.

"Oh no," Jan said and sounded quite adamant, "I did it last time."

"Last time wasn't smelly," Juri replied, clearly not calm at all, "and I don't know what to do."

"All the more reason for you to learn," Jan responded and it was clear that for once Jan was not being shy or backward, but very firm.

Linke sat back and watched in amusement.

"Well one of you take her," David said and Linke was pretty sure David would have waved Grace at them had he not remembered at the last second that she was a baby.

Even Timo had backed off and put the camera away while the other three looked panicked. Linke would have laughed if it hadn't been so pitiable. Four grown men scared of a little baby because she smelt bad; it was ridiculous.

"Oh for heaven's sake," he said, uncurling from the chair.

David was still trying to hold Grace at arms length and was clearly about to drop her and Juri looked no closer to doing anything about it. Linke picked up the changing bag, that had come out of the big baby bag, on his way across the room and then took Grace from David.

"You lot really are pathetic," he said and tucked Grace into the crook of his arm.

He had known how to change a nappy from the age of four; his mother had made it her business to make sure he and his two siblings were all domesticated regardless of sex. It came in useful at family gatherings to have a hoard of teenagers all capable of babysitting if necessary.

"Come on, Cherub," he said, walking out of the room as the others looked on in shock, "let's get you smelling like sweet things again."

Changing a nappy was not the most fun thing in the world, but with baby wipes, a little selective breathing and a large dose of baby powder, all was well with the world in only a few minutes. Grace was giggling at him when he walked back into the living room to find no one had moved and he handed her back to David, put down the bag and went back to his chair. All the while the others were looking at him kind of shell shocked.

"Um," Jan said rather tentatively, "you have baby powder on your nose."

It was almost as if they expected him to grow another head, but, since he enjoyed having his band mates wrong footed, he sat down, smiled and left the powder where it was. This was more fun than he'd thought it would be.

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Since all the others seemed frightened of nappy changing, Linke found that he had ended up official changer of the nappies, a duty he had chosen not to shirk for the sake of Grace. However, he wasn't about to do it without some reward, so he had purloined Grace from David and Jan's clutches after lunch to play with her on a blanket on the floor. Since the others didn't want to find themselves with his role in proceedings, it appeared as if they had all decided that pissing him off would be a bad thing. Timo's camera had been put away by then, so he felt relatively safe, and playing with baby toys was childish fun, as he and Juri were finding out.

"I think she's tired," he said as he watched Grace give a huge yawn.

"We could try the basket again," Juri suggested, but didn't look too sure.

Grace had appeared sleepy before and they had attempted to put her down in her Moses basket, but evidently Gracie did not like to be away from her new and interesting carers and had started to scream. It turned out David was a dab hand

at soothing screaming babies with a little help from Franky, but none of them wanted to have to do that again. Grace was mostly a very happy baby, but she seemed to have distinct likes and dislikes.

"Let's leave her here," Linke decided while going over options in his head, "she seems quite happy and we can cover her with a blanket."

It was clear that Juri wasn't a natural with babies and was very glad whenever anyone else gave directions, so their drummer just nodded.

"I'll stay here and keep an eye on her," Linke offered, mostly because his all night reading session was beginning to catch up with him and he had found a nice comfortable, reclining position with a couple of cushions and he didn't want to move.

Grace seemed happy with the idea as well as she yawned again and shut her eyes as Juri brought over the baby blanket from the bag.

There was something very restful about watching a baby going to sleep and Linke found himself relaxing as he let his mind drift. That was the advantage of an active imagination, he could actually be quite busy while his body was completely motionless. He smelt of baby powder and baby lotion, but he found himself smiling as the tension just melted out of him.

He woke up an indeterminate amount of time later and mentally cursed, unable to believe he had managed to fall asleep. It seemed that his instincts were better than he thought as well, because somehow he'd moved closer to Grace and was half curled around her protectively. Maybe there was a paternal instinct well buried within him after all.

He discovered that Juri had been worn out by Grace as well, because Juri was spread out on the sofa, also asleep, but luckily the others all seemed to be absent. He hoped he had only been asleep for a few minutes, because there were certain things it was difficult to live down. Thanks rose to his mind that he hadn't done it when Timo was filming.

Adjusting his position carefully, he picked up the TV remote, turned it on and switched the volume to very low and prepared to stay put until Grace woke up or David reappeared to take over. He suspected that David and Timo were catching up on their interrupted morning, so he was likely to be in charge for a little while yet.

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Linke stared at the pictures all over the official forum; he was going to kill Timo very, very slowly.

Their adventures baby-sitting were over since Karla had turned up a few hours previously to fetch her daughter. By then the whole band had been rather fond of little Gracie, even if their lives had been turned upside down for nearly two days, so there had been no yelling.

It turned out that Karla, being a single mum, had basically just needed some time to herself before she went crazy and it was holiday season and everyone she knew except Juri was away. Rather than risk Grace to her almost homicidal mood swings, Karla had come to ask Juri to look after Grace for a little while.

Karla had found the door on the latch (they were really going to have to string David up if he went outside to get something, put the door on the latch and forgot about it one more time) and had decided to just leave Grace with a note. It had been a desperate act in a moment's need.

Their nearly two days of looking after Grace had been kind of fun, even though Linke was never going to admit it to anyone. What with the work on the new album they were all a little too focused and Grace had been a welcome distraction. This meant they were all willing to forgive Karla, as long as she promised to bring Grace back for a visit or two.

What was not good about the whole thing was what Linke had just found. It seemed his nap with Grace had been not as covert as he had thought; Timo had caught him. The only thing he had to be thankful for was the fact that Timo had taken stills and not video.

There he was; lying on the blanket, curled up to Grace and looking thoroughly adorable, if the comments on the forum were anything to go by. He was not adorable; he was a rock bass player who liked to be sarcastic. Timo was so, so dead.

The End