**Mallory Merk Official Bio – 2022**

Mallory Merk's music is animated by a youthful spirit, and it possesses the hard-won wisdom of a person who's packed a lot of life into a short time. The 21-year-old, Los Angeles-based singer/songwriter has experienced sudden fame, world travels, addiction, recovery, and heartbreak. Her music reveals a boundless enthusiasm for life, that’s deeply entwined with a sixth-sense knowledge of how the world and the people inhabiting it work. With her latest project, *Thorns*, she's ready to double down on her true calling: writing metaphor-rich songs that reflect her unique experiences while inspiring listeners to begin figuring out their own truths.

On *Thorns*, Mallory draws on the starlit desert landscape of Joshua Tree, where she recorded much of the project, as well as her own ups and downs, branching out sonically from the chilled-out pop R&B that made 2021's *Counterparts* such an inviting listen. Analog synths and a string section add to the tension of the world-weary "Fading Lines," while the storming goth-tinged rocker "We're Not the Same" finds Mallory howling as if there's a full moon overhead. She’s grown as a lyricist as well, writing from different personas while exploring the inner workings of the human mind with grace and sly wit.

"I'm a writer at heart," she says. "On *Counterparts*, I was showing my musicianship and how I can create songs. But *Thorns* is more about my writing."

The loose-limbed title track, a rebuke of femininity’s confines, shows how far Mallory has come since *Counterparts*. It opens with a stunning image: "*She's melting hearts if they're made of plastic,*" she sings over arpeggiated guitars, "*burning arrow since the Renaissance.*" Mallory's strong belief in staying true to yourself led to this line, whose sneaky ambiguity speaks to the song's themes of personal liberation. "Being a truly authentic person will melt everyone's heart," she asserts. "In a good way or a bad way."

Born in Louisiana and raised in New Jersey, Mallory has been figuring out who she could be since her teens when she went from modeling for Pat McGrath and Rihanna to focusing full-time on sharpening her pop craft. Her 2020 debut EP, *Strangers*, was her first major work with producer Dan Farber (Lizzo, Tkay Maidza). She then released 2021's *Counterparts*, which unveiled her evolving songwriting and musicianship on tracks like the slinky pop-soul throwback "Just Because" and fan favorite “Sinister.”

Mallory and Dan worked on the core of what would become *Thorns* at the Joshua Tree studio of engineer Christopher Thorne. "Dan and I just stared at the stars at night and wrote songs,” she says. “It was very spiritual and less about trying to 'create' anything." Back in Los Angeles, they honed the tracks that became *Thorns* at The Village Studios in West Los Angeles. "The songs, I believe, are very me," she says. "They don't sugarcoat anything."

As a result, the title track, "Thorns," is a new type of protest song, one that's made for thrilling sing-alongs in cars cruising down the Pacific Coast Highway as well as cathartic solo sessions in cozy bedrooms. The chorus—wailed in unison by Mallory and her friends Kaien Cruz and Solly—is so triumphant that you can practically hear their collective fists in the air: "*Perfection's never what I stood for/Spliff hanging out the window of my two-door*.” Their realization that they're still making sense of the world serves as a catalyst for introspection—or, as the chorus puts it, coming closer to realizing *"all the things you know you could be."*

"Isolate Myself," another product of the Joshua Tree sessions, pairs strummed acoustic guitar with visceral lyrics about a relationship on the brink. "It encapsulates those moments when you feel really helpless because life's coming at you from every angle, and you have to isolate to even yourself out," she says. "When you're feeling that way, you can run to the bathroom and cry it out."

Other tracks, like "Cancel Your Plans," a collaboration with the LA-based production duo 9AM, take the opposite tack, pleading for after-hours intimacy unfolding over a gently percolating groove. "I brought them outside of their box, and they brought me outside of my box with the way they recorded my vocals," Mallory says of 9AM. "It was such a fun experience."

On *Thorns*, Mallory Merk bolsters her already-impressive discography with impeccably crafted songs that capture her unfiltered self. It deepens one of her clearest goals since she first started writing songs—to be honest and vulnerable. "*Thorns* is my story," she says. "And telling your story, sharing your truth—that's the most important thing you can do as an artist."