

Chapter 20

Silver

Elliot surprised me with a romantic dinner; Mariah prepared my favorite meal, and the dining room was beautifully decorated like it was some kind of special occasion. When I asked Elliot about it, he simply stated that he wanted to celebrate my success at the auction.

The meal itself was amazing, but what I wasn't expecting was for Leo to show up with a beautifully wrapped box with a bow on it. He whispered something to Elliot and then handed him the box. Elliot said something in return before turning to me.

"Did someone get you a gift?" I asked him, curiously.

He looked at the box and then back at me.

"No, I had Leo pick this up for you," he told me much to my surprise as he handed me the box.

"You got me a gift?" I asked him, confused.

He nodded.

With a trembling heart, I carefully tore at the wrapping paper and opened the box, gasping when I saw what was inside.

New watercolor paint! These colors were rare; some of which hadn't even been released yet.

I looked up at him, shocked.

"How did you get these?" I asked him.

"I have many connections, Silver," he reminded me.

My cheeks flushed and I thanked him by hugging him. He hesitated a moment before returning the hug.

The next day I was contacted by Pandora Bloom's boss, Barrett Anders. Before I left the auction, he offered me an exclusive year-long contract stating that I would only send my paintings to the Pandora Bloom Gallery for a year. Considering Pandora Bloom was worldwide and the most famous art gallery in the world, I thought it was a pretty good deal. Plus, they were willing to give me a profitable wage for each painting I sent them, along with a commission for the paintings purchased.

Only the best of the best gets exclusive contracts with them, and I was honored to be considered worthy.

I already have a few other paintings that I plan to send to the gallery.

I was with Rebecca on the back patio catching up when Barrett Anders called my cell phone.

"Hello, Mr. Anders," I greeted into the phone.

"Miss Stormwind," Barrett replied. "I look forward to seeing what kind of artwork you have prepared for me. Please make sure to send them soon."

"I will," I told him. "Once I make some finishing touches, I'll send them to your office."

"I was also calling to see if we could get a few more paintings of that mystery model of yours. I'm getting quite a few offers already. They would be quite profitable."

My chest is constricted. I already told Elliot I wouldn't sell any more of his paintings and I fully intended to keep that vow.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Anders. But I can't paint that model anymore. But I have other paintings I'm sure will do just as well."

He was quiet for a moment.

"Other paintings will certainly not do. Can't you make an exception? Why can't you paint that model again? I hate to let my customers down," he said, his voice hardening.

"It's just that I made the model a promise I wouldn't use him again," I confessed. "I'm sorry to disappoint."

"It wouldn't just be profitable for me, Miss Stormwind. It would also be profitable for you as well. Don't forget, I pay you a commission for each art piece you sell. You'd be stupid to turn this opportunity down." "As I said, I made a promise and I intend to keep that promise," I told him.

"I've been in contact with other galleries as well that spoke to you before you signed your exclusive contract and they said you turned them down as well," Barrett said, sounding agitated now. "I thought seeming you signed the contract with me, that you'd be a little more accepting, but I see I was wrong."