

## Chapter 66

Merida chuckled and I blushed.

He was right; that was exactly what I was wearing. I just couldn't believe that he remembered that.

"So, Silver, tell us about your painting. How many hours did it take you to complete, and what inspired the portrait setting?"

"It took an entire night," I answered automatically. "Honestly, I saw the setting in my mind. My favorite type of flower is red roses, so I always try to incorporate red roses in my paintings. It's kind of like my personal signature. For the background, I put pieces of Elliot's personality and his brewing demeanor together to create something that would fit him. I wanted something that would not only look great but something he would be proud of. I take pride in my work and every piece is customized to appeal to its audience I guess in that moment, while I was painting, I kind of just forgot that it was meant for the auction. In my mind, this portrait was meant for Elliot, and I wanted to create something he could be proud of."

"Silver is the most passionate person I know," Elliot told Merida as he squeezed my hand gently. "Watching her work is incredible. It was an honor to get a front-row seat to it."

As the questions from Merida continued, I could feel the tension between Elliot and me dispersing. I was leaning into him and eventually, he moved

his hands from mine and wrapped his arms around my shoulders, keeping me close to his side. I felt content and happy by his side.

Soon, Merida went from asking us questions herself, to having the audience ask us questions.

"There are rumors about Elliot and Shirley being in a relationship. Can you confirm or deny that?" Someone in the audience shouted, making my face feel hot all over.

I looked at Elliot who visibly tensed at this person's words before clearing his throat.

"Those are just rumors. Don't be quick to believe everything you hear on the media," Elliot said shortly.

"Is it true that Silver was engaged before she met you?" A female asked, making my eyes grow large.

My engagement wasn't known around the territory, so I wondered how this person got intel about that. Elliot didn't look as bothered though.

"It doesn't matter if she was or wasn't. What matters is that she's with me now," he said coolly. "You should mind your manners."

The woman who asked that question bowed her head shamefully and sat back down.

After a few more questions about my painting, Merida finally turned back to look at me with a smile on her lips.

"We are almost out of time for more questions. But there is one more I'd like to ask you about if that's okay?" She asked.

I nodded, bracing myself for this last question.

"Of course," I told her. "You can ask me anything within reason."

"I heard that there was an anonymous buyer for your portrait of Elliot. What can you tell me about that?" Merida asked.

I raised my brows.

"Not much honestly. The buyer insisted on remaining anonymous. I'm honored that someone went to great lengths to purchase my paintings at such an incredible price. But even if nobody bothered to purchase my painting at this auction, it was still an honor to be invited to participate. Whoever this buyer was, I'd like to personally thank them. But I respect the fact that they'd prefer to be unknown. I hope wherever they are, they are taking great care of this portrait because I worked very hard on it."

Merida smiled, pleased with my response. Just before she was about to begin her outro for the talk show, Elliot cleared his throat and held out his hand for her to stop.

"I can assure you that the portrait is in good hands, and it's being taken care of," Elliot surprised me by saying.

"How can you be so sure of that/," I asked him, raising an eyebrow.

He smiled at me before leaning back in his seat.

"Because I was the one who purchased it. So, I know for a fact that it's in good hands"

My jaw nearly hit the ground.

Elliot was the anonymous buyer of my painting?

## Chapter 67

### Silver

"You were the anonymous buyer?!" I blurted, staring at Elliot in disbelief.

"Yes," He answered.

"Wow, that's such a kind gesture!" Merida announced and the audience erupted into cheers, making me blush at the sentiment.

Elliot continued and said, "The painting has extraordinary commemorative significance for us, and I wanted to remember it for a lifetime." He paused for a moment and then glanced at me and said, "It reminds me of what happened the day she painted-"

"Okay, that's enough!" I blurted, my face red with mortification. "We aren't going to discuss that in front of everybody," I scolded, narrowing my eyes at him.

Elliot gave me a boyish grin which made my heart flip in my chest. Merida just laughed and some members of the audience chuckled, understanding exactly where Elliot was going with that.

I folded my arms across my chest and forced a smile, hoping the redness in my cheeks would soon go away.

"No need to be embarrassed," Merida.

I continued to stare at Elliot, not even realizing that Merida had ended the broadcast.

"Great job, you guys. It was such an honor to meet you, Silver," Merida said, shaking my hand. I was still so stunned that it was Elliot who bought my painting.

"Where are you keeping it? I don't remember seeing it at home," I asked him, my brows furrowed in confusion. I was pretending he didn't just embarrass me in front of a live broadcast. "My office," he replied. "At the packhouse."

I supposed I had never really gone into his office before so that made a lot of sense. But I was still in disbelief that he actually bought my painting. He just shrugged casually and took hold of my hand. We walked together off the stage and into the backroom. As soon as we were away from everyone else, I could feel the tension between us returning.

Elliot started to walk toward the dressing room, not even bothering to look at me. I folded my arms across my chest and pouted, fully aware that I was acting like a brat, but I didn't care. I needed my husband to talk to me and not act coldly towards me.

I followed him to the dressing room and before he had the chance of shutting the door behind him, I stopped it with my foot. When he didn't hear the door click in place, he turned and frowned at me. "Can I help you with something?" He asked, his voice sounding a bit strained. I knew he was trying to maintain his cold demeanor like he did earlier, but there was something else in his voice, it was pain. "Yes, we need to talk," I told him.

He looked at me for a short while before sighing and stepping aside for me to enter his room. I shut the door behind me, glad to see nobody else was in this dressing room. I turned to look at him. As soon as our eyes met, I completely forgot what I wanted. My entire brain went completely blank.

His expression seemed to have softened some and he sighed as he leaned against the vanity on the far side of the room.

"About the other night..."

"We don't need to talk about it," he said, cutting me off. "Just forget about it."

I pressed my lips in a firm line and glared at him.

"No, really need to discuss what happened," I told him, narrowing my eyes at him. "Or this argument will never get resolved."

He sighed and ran his fingers through his head.

"Okay, go on," he said. "I'll let you explain."

I nodded and took a deep breath.

"You said something earlier that confused me. You told me that I let someone take advantage of you," I said, meeting his eyes. "What did you mean by that?"

He scoffed.

"What do you think I meant?" He asked, shaking his head at me with disgust all over his face.

"That's why I'm asking you," I told him, unable to keep the aggravation out of my voice.

"When Beta Leo called you and you came to see me, you let Shirley take me into a hotel room and have her way with me!"

I gawked at him.

I couldn't have heard him correctly. There was no way he actually thought I would do something like that.

"Excuse me?" I asked him.

He opened his mouth to repeat himself but then stopped short when he saw the expression on my face.

"You don't actually believe that, do you?" I asked him, my voice coming out as nothing more than a whisper.

He was quiet for a moment as he assessed my face and then his brows scrunched together.

"She said..." his voice trailed off again and then he let out an aggravated huff as he ran his fingers through his hair. "What happened that night?"

Tears welled up in my eyes and I wrapped my arms around my body.

"Beta Leo got us a room and I took you to that room with him and a gamma warrior. They left and I was getting you ready for bed, but you didn't exactly want to sleep..." I confessed, my cheeks flushing from the memory.

He scanned my face for a moment and then his body stiffened.

"Was I with you all night?" He asked.

I bit my lip and nodded my head once.

"We were together until I had to leave yesterday morning. I had a meeting that I needed to get to. After my meeting you called and yelled at me," I told him, lowering my gaze and staring at the ground. "Wanna tell me what exactly happened this morning?"

## Chapter 68

### Silver

He was quiet for a long while as he processed my words. I lifted my gaze to look at him and I was taken aback by the horrified look on his face.

"Elliot?" I asked, keeping my voice low.

"Shirley was in my bed," he said, his brows pinched together. "She was half naked."

I flinched away from him as if he had just slapped me across the face. The pain of his words was almost too much for me to handle. At that moment, my heart shattered completely.

I covered my mouth with my hands and stared at him through my tear-filled eyes.

"She said it was her that I had sex with last night, but obviously that wasn't true," he said, shaking his head. Relief flashed through his face. "It was you..." he breathed as he met my eyes.

I could tell he was relieved by this realization, but I was anything but relieved because this was the first time I had heard about him waking up in bed with Shirley lying beside him. It made me feel sick to my stomach just thinking about it.

He went to touch my arm, but once again, I flinched away from him as if he had just struck me. He furrowed his brows together as he assessed my changed demeanor.

"Silver-"

"Did she touch you?" I asked, folding my arms across my chest.

"I wouldn't let her," he assured me. "I thought it was you lying beside me for a second but when I took in her scent, I realized immediately that it wasn't you and I quickly got out of bed. Well, actually, I dressed first so she wouldn't see me. I didn't want her to see me."

That made me feel a little better, but I still felt uneasy knowing they were in bed together and undressed.

Wait...

"Was she naked too?" I asked, my brows pinched together.

"She was half naked," he told me.

I nodded, trying to process his words.



"Did you really not remember anything from last night?"

He stepped closer to me and this time I didn't flinch away; I let him touch me and wrap his arms around me. I allowed his scent and warmth to envelope me. I missed him these last couple of days. I shouldn't have missed him as badly as I did because this was only a contract marriage and once, he decides to divorce me, it's going to be harder than it should be. But for right now I allowed myself that moment of weakness where I caved into my wants and desires.

"I remember your scent, I remember your face, and I remember touching you," he told me softly. "I was confused when I woke up the next morning and it was Shirley in the bed and not you. When she told me I had sex with her, I thought for a second, I mistook her for you and I hated myself for it... But then when she told me that you knew she gave me a party drug and took me to a hotel-"

"That never happened. I barely even spoke to Shirley. When I got here, she was trying to take you away, but I dismissed her and told her I'd handle it. The gammas present and Beta Leo can vouch for me." His expression softened, as did mine.

This really was a huge misunderstanding.

We remained silent for a moment as he stared into my eyes.

"So, it was you?" He asked me.

I nodded my head once.

"Yes," I whispered.

He took a deep breath and pulled away from me, taking out his phone in the process. He swiped across the screen for a moment before putting the phone to his cheek.

As soon as the line connected, he put it on the speakerphone.

"Shirley," he greeted into the phone.

"Hey, Elliot. I have been worried about you. How are you?" She asked, a bit too cheerfully. I had to stifle a groan.

"I found out something rather disturbing, Shirley," he said in a grunt.

She was quiet for a moment.

"What is it, Elliot?"

"You lied to me the other night. We never slept together Why would you lie about something like that, Shirley?"

"I wasn't trying to lie to you, Elliot. I told you. I took a drug too. I'm not sure how I ended up in your room. When I woke up, I thought we had slept together. It was just a misunderstanding. I swear," she said urgently into the phone.

He sighed and ran his fingers through his hair.

"I'm done with party drugs, Shirley. I'm not the same guy I used to be. I grew up. I'm married now. I can't have misunderstandings like that getting around, understood?"

"Yes. Understood, Elliot. I'm so sorry."

He hung up without another word. I pressed my lips together and folded my arms across my chest, displeased by that conversation.

"That was it?" I asked him, my tone coming out dry.

"Shirley is a long-time friend and ally, Silver. I can't break my ties with her, or it could put my whole pack in jeopardy. That's one thing I'm not willing to do."

## Chapter 69

### Silver

"So, everything got cleared up?" Rebecca asked on the phone, disbelief evident in her voice. It's been a couple of days since our interview on the Merida Ryder show, and since we talked about our misunderstanding concerning the hotel room incident. I hadn't had a chance to speak to my best friend about any of this though because we've both been so busy these last couple of days.

"Yeah, I think so," I told her, taking a deep breath and running my fingers through my hair lazily. "Beta Leo and a couple of the pack gammas did some investigating and found that Shirley put aphrodisiac in his drink. Such despicable behavior."

"And they let her off the hook?" Rebecca gasped. I could only imagine what her face must look like right now.

"Yes," I muttered. "Because she's a strong Alpha and an ally to the Crown pack. Elliot said he's only doing what's best for his pack. He said sometimes we have to do things we don't want to do for the greater good of our pack. I'm not sure how keeping Shirley around is for the greater good of our pack, but whatever."

"That sucks," Rebecca muttered, and I could practically hear the scowl in her tone. "It's not fair that she gets off easy and you got shunned for days after a slight misunderstanding."

I honestly hadn't thought about it like that but now that I was, a ping of hurt surfaced in my chest and I had to rub the sore spot with a deep frown.

"I just don't want to argue with him about it," I murmured. "I'm sick of arguing and being upset."

Rebecca sighed, but she didn't say anything more on the matter.

"Oh, I forgot to mention. I signed a contract with Hope's Gallery yesterday. Elliot set up a meeting with his lawyer and we went over everything. I gave Mr. Wilson the manager of the gallery the contract this morning."

"Oh, my goddess, Silver! That's incredible. I'm so proud of you. You are a rising star and soon you'll be even bigger than Stella."

I chuckled.

"I doubt that, but I love your faith in me."

She said something else as well, but I tuned her out when I heard a knock on my studio door.

"Rebecca, can I call you back later? Someone is at the door."

"You better call me back later," she told me. "We need to set up a time to hang out. I want to meet your new friends."

"I'll definitely make that happen."

"Bye, girl," she said.

"Bye," I replied and then I pressed the end call button.

I still had a smile on my lips from that phone call when I opened the door. I stared surprised at Elliot who hovered over me. I wasn't used to him knocking; lately, he's been barging into my studio whenever he wanted. So, for him to knock, it was certainly something different.

"Why are you knocking?" I asked him, my voice teasing.

He frowned and glanced around.

"Because this is your private studio," he told me as if it was the most obvious thing in the world.

A smile tugged at the corner of my lips.

"Yeah, but you never knock."

He ran his fingers through his hair and gave me a sheepish, almost awkward look.

"I promised you a private studio off limits to everyone and I haven't really given that to you because I walk in without knocking. I wanted to change that," he admitted.

I laughed at his awkward demeanor.

"I admit, it bothered me at first, but it doesn't bother me anymore. I mean, you are my husband. We should have secret rooms from one another. Contract husband or not," I told him, shrugging.

He opened his mouth to say something, but then he shut it. I raised my brows at him, trying to figure him out, but it was proving difficult. He was locking his emotions uptight, and I didn't like that.

"I want to take you somewhere," he finally said, taking me by surprise.

"Where?" I asked him, my brows furrowed together.

He smirked and offered me his arm.

"I'll tell you in the car."

Even as we got into the car and drove away from the palace, he still didn't tell me where we were going. I was surprised when we left the pack territory and started to drive on the highway. Even then, he still didn't tell me where we were going.

An hour later, I was fed up with the silence and I demanded to know what he was taking me.

A smile twitched at the corner of his lips.

"I'm taking you to see my sister."

My mouth dropped open.

"Excuse me, you're what?" I asked him, my brows knitting together.

"I'm taking you to see my sister," he repeated.

"Why would you do that?" It sounded a lot ruder than I meant it and I hated myself for that. But he didn't flinch or take offense by my tone, it only caused his smile to widen.

## Chapter 70

### Silver

"Because she might be able to help you. Or at least give you some information."

"Help me how?"

He was quiet for a moment, and then he countered my question with a question of his own.

"What do you know about my sister?"

"Not much other than what others tell me," I confessed. "You never speak to me about your family, so I kind of have to pick up the pieces from everyone else."

"I assumed everyone knew about my family. Even those outside of my pack," he told me, shrugging one shoulder.

I nodded and bit my lower lip.

"My family made it difficult for me to keep up with life outside of our pack," I confessed.

He nodded thoughtfully.

"Well, my sister is the High Priestess of the Moon Goddess. She can see the past and future. Her power is incredible. She travels around the world often to help those in need. She mainly lives a couple of hours away from our pack though. She stays there when she's not traveling."

"I see, and you are taking me to her because why?" I asked.

"After the last full moon, when he transformed during the banquet, I spent a lot of time researching your condition," he admitted.

My eyes grew large.

"You did? I asked. "Why?"

"Because I want to help you overcome whatever is happening to you. I want you to be able to live a normal life and not worry about others. I don't want what happened during the last banquet to happen again. I guess I've been a little preoccupied these last few days trying to figure out how to help you."

"That's why you've been so busy at work? Because you were trying to figure out how to help me?"

He nodded, not even bothering to deny it.

"Why would you do that for me?" I found myself asking.

"I already told you-"

"I know you say you are doing it to help me. But why? Is it because I embarrassed you?" I asked him.

"No, of course not. But as the Luna of my pack, you need to be under control, and I have to make sure you aren't a danger to the pack."

His words hurt and I flinched like he had slapped me. I bit my lower lip and stared down at my hands as I fiddled with my fingers awkwardly.

"I don't mean to upset you. But I'm the Alpha and my duty is to protect each of my packmates, including you. I want to make sure you are safe, Silver. I want to help you."

I nodded, understanding what he was saying, but I still felt that sting in my chest that just wouldn't go away.

"And you think your sister can help?" I finally asked.

"Yes," he answered. "I think she might be able to shed some light on things. I contacted her and she told me the date on which she would be returning home. So yeah..."

I nodded.

"I get it," I told him, still chewing on my lower lip.

The rest of the ride was filled with silence; we finally reached her house, and I had a nervous pit in the middle of my stomach. I was meeting Elliot's sister for the first time. This felt huge.

"Are you close to your sister?" I found myself asking as we got out of the car.

"We used to be," he told me. "But life happens, and we drifted apart."

"I'm sorry," I told him with sincerity.

"She's certainly not as bad as your sister."

I laughed at that and nodded.

"Nobody is as bad as my sister," I agreed.



He took my arm and guided me to the front door. His sister lived in a cute cottage in the forest just outside of a small town. He knocked on the door and we waited with heated breath for someone to answer the door.

When I heard the lock on the door unlatching and it opened slightly, I found myself taking a step back and practically hiding behind Elliot.

A gorgeous woman stood at the doorway; she wore brightly colored robes and jewels, looking like a gypsy. Her figure was slender and yet curvy in all the right places. Her skin was tanned like she had just gotten back from the beach. Her long brown hair was braided down her back and entwined with different flowers. She didn't wear any makeup, but she didn't need any to be beautiful; she was naturally gorgeous.

She also had an insane resemblance to Elliot. She was literally the girl version of him.

"Elliot," she greeted, rushing toward him and wrapping her arms around him. "It's been so long."

"Charlotte," he greeted in return.

He pulled away and took hold of my hand.

"This is my wife, Silver. The woman I told you about."