

Chapter 10: The traitor

Lily's POV

"Five seconds of summer or Chord overstreet?" I asked Ren as we sat on the couch and stared at his completed painting.

"Five seconds of summer and that's because my sister listens to them and wants to blow off my ear all the time." He answered, his eyes on the painting. When I glanced at him, his lips turned up in a fond smile that made him look even more handsome.

My heart started racing. My cheeks heated up.

Focus, Lily, he is way out of your league, I reminded myself.

This was not a fairy tale story and I was supposed to be smarter than that now, considering that my first experience with something that I wanted to be a fairy tale had crashed and burned before my very eyes.

Cade.

And he was just as nice and sweet as Ren was. But no one could ever say they were similar. Not in the least. Where Cade was more of a social butterfly, Ren looked like he was comfortable not speaking to anyone for a day and be completely happy with himself.

Cade was also not someone with healing powers who could also see souls in shades of colours. And then Cade could not paint such a masterpiece like Ren.

"Who is she?" I had asked him in the beginning when he started painting and he had joked that he didn't know yet. Apparently, he was serious. He had just been painting and when it came out, he assumed that it was probably someone he must have randomly walked past that her facial features had stayed with him.

I wondered what it would feel like to be someone that caused Ren to be intrigued, to cause him to remember their features and paint them. Then again, he had not had any forlorn look on his face like he was talking about a lover when he painted the woman so I could be reading too much into it.

He had a straight face, deadpan, nonchalant. I got the vibe that he really didn't care about most things. He was a pair of contradictions. Poised and elegant, his starched white shirt ironed to perfection but charcoal smudges on his hands and hair packed messily behind his head.

I realized that I was staring harder than a vampire thirsting after fresh blood.

Deciding to go back to safer territory, I continued asking him questions like we had both done since he completed the painting.

"It's your turn to ask me a question." I told him and he nodded, turning to look at me.

Now that I knew he could see souls, I could not help the way my face heated up when I held his attention, like now when he stared at me as he thought about a question to ask.

His soft brown eyes like melted honey were both intense and gentle.

"What do you like to do when you are not in school? What are your hobbies? You've only been asking about mine. I want to know about you too."

He seemed genuinely interested in knowing me and it surprised me that yet again, he was telling the truth when he said he didn't care about me being a pariah.

"I hang out with my best friend, Bia and I work at her father's ower shop too."

"You like owers?"

I nodded shyly. "I love owers."

I've always loved them since I was a child and it was one of the few things in common with my mother, when she was still always wearing a smile on her face.

My father's death had changed her. It had changed all of us.

"What's your favorite ower? Let me guess, Lilies?" He asked and I rolled my eyes because this was probably the millionth time someone would ask me that. I got that question at least twice a week whenever I was at the ower shop from customers whenever they asked for my name.

"Actually, no. Look at me again, what colour shines the brightest?"

"You think that might give me a clue to what your favorite ower is?" He asked and I nodded and when he shifted closer to me, I swallowed nervously as we stared at each other.

The silence between us was thick and tense as he reached out to tuck a stray hair behind my ear and the school alarm suddenly blared through the speakers situated around the school, ending the moment.

Clearing my throat, I looked away from him, my face red and when I turned around to look back at him, he was still staring at me.

"What?"

"Dahlia." He answered and when I raised my eyebrows in confusion, he stood up and walked over to bring a painting that made me understand what he was saying.

It was a painting of red and black dahlia owers.

My eyes widened in surprise because how did he guess correctly?

Dahlias were my favourite because they had so many varieties of colours and they reminded me of love and commitment. I'm sure it had something to do with the fact that it was the first bouquet of owers that my father had ever gifted me when I was six years and how he had told me that I was special and dynamic like the different colours.

A gift for a gift, my father had said.

Rising to my feet, I cleared my throat again, feeling so exposed because what exactly did Ren see that made him so good at reading me?

"Did I get it?" He asked and when I nodded, his smile was bright and he walked back into a storage room, coming out with the painting inside a big paper bag.

"You should take this then."

Looking at my phone, I realized that I was already running late for the next period which had already started when the alarm sounded five minutes ago.

"Oh, no I could not accept this." I tried to object but he shrugged and took my hand, placing the handle of the bag on my palm before taking a step back again.

"Thank you for this. I really should get going now, attendance is very important here and I've already missed two classes today."

He nodded and walked me to the door but as I was about to open it, he cleared his throat and I turned to look at him.

"I should probably say this now but since I saved you from those girls, you are now in my debt. And no, it's not a big deal, but a Fae thing."

"You mean the rule that when a Fae does something for you, you automatically owe them a favour?" I asked, knowing that it was not an uncommon practice among the Fae and those with Fae blood and he nodded.

"Okay, so what do you want?" I asked, sure that he was not going to ask for something weird. Not after how kind he had proven himself to be.

"How about lunch tomorrow?"

My eyes widened and nearly fell out of its sockets.

"You want me to have lunch with you? In the presence of everyone?"

When he nodded, I frowned. In this place where it was just us two, it was easy to forget who I was but it would not be easy to do that out of here.

"Do you know who I am?"

"You're Lily..."

"Beauregard" I completed and I realized when it finally hit him. The reality of who I was.

"The daughter of Edgar Beauregard. The traitor." He said, his voice at and that was all it took for the smile on my face to disappear.

How could I have forgotten that this was Ren Hawthorne, son of one of the most powerful families in Shadow cove? Of course, he would call my father a traitor.

"He was not a traitor. He was a good man, but you're a Hawthorne, one of the families that vetted to have my dad executed in front of everyone. So it doesn't really matter to you, does it, Hawthorne?" I snapped and opened the door, slamming it hard as I ran away from the studio.