

Exchanging Vows: The Swapped Wife Is a Top Shaman #Chapter 5 - Read Exchanging Vows: The Swapped Wife Is a Top Shaman Chapter 5

Ivy's Point of View

Bastian straightened his shoulders, lifting his chin with that arrogant tilt I was already beginning to despise. He released Seraphina's hand and stepped forward, looking down at me like I was something unpleasant stuck to the bottom of his shoe.

"Let me make something perfectly clear, Ivy." His voice dripped with condescension. "I have already chosen Seraphina as my wife. She is the only woman I want. The only woman I will ever want." He paused, letting his words hang in the air. "So whatever fantasies you're entertaining about remaining married to me, I suggest you abandon them now."

I stared at him.

And then I laughed.

It wasn't a polite laugh. It wasn't a nervous laugh. It was a real, genuine laugh that bubbled up from somewhere deep in my chest and spilled out before I could stop it.

The sound echoed through the chamber, bouncing off the walls and high ceilings. Everyone stared at me like I'd lost my mind.

Maybe I had.

"Fantasies?" I wiped a tear from the corner of my eye, still chuckling. "You think I want to stay married to you?"

Bastian's expression flickered. Confusion. Irritation. A hint of wounded pride.

"I wouldn't marry you again if you were the last wolf in the entire kingdom," I said, my laughter fading into something harder. Colder. "You disgust me, Bastian Ashford. The very thought of being your wife makes my skin crawl."

His jaw tightened. "Then why are you refusing the ceremony?"

"Because I don't see why I should suffer for your mistakes." I tilted my head, studying him like he was a particularly slow child. "The bond-breaking ceremony is agony. Wolves have died from it. Wolves have gone mad from it. And you want me to endure that pain just so you can have a proper blood bond with my cousin?"

"It's not just about—"

"I'm not finished." I cut him off, my voice sharp. "Whether or not we have a blood bond makes absolutely no difference to me. I don't want you. I don't need you. The bond can rot for all I care." I spread my hands. "So why should I risk my life and my sanity to break it?"

Bastian opened his mouth, but no words came out. For once, the arrogant second son of the Silvermoon Pack had nothing to say.

But Seraphina did.

She shot to her feet, her composure finally shattering completely. Her face was flushed, her eyes wild with desperation.

"You don't understand!" Her voice came out shrill, almost panicked. "The blood bond isn't just some meaningless ritual. It's essential. Only children born from a blood-bonded union inherit the full strength of their parents. Without it, any pups I bear will be weaker. Less powerful." She jabbed a finger in my direction. "If you don't break the bond with Bastian, I can never form one with him. Our children will be inferior. Is that what you want?"

I looked at her. Really looked at her.

This was my cousin. The girl I'd grown up beside. The Alpha's daughter who'd had everything handed to her on a silver platter while I scraped for scraps. And now she stood there, trembling with rage, because I wouldn't quietly sacrifice myself for her benefit.

"Seraphina," I said calmly, "I don't care about your children."

Her mouth fell open.

"I don't care if they're powerful or weak. I don't care if they inherit Bastian's arrogance or your selfishness. None of that is my concern." I shrugged. "You made your choices last night. Now live with the consequences."

Seraphina looked like she might actually explode. Her hands clenched into fists at her sides, her whole body vibrating with barely contained fury.

She turned toward Alpha Alaric and Luna Helena, but neither of them spoke. The Alpha sat motionless on his throne, his expression unreadable. Luna Helena's lips were pressed together so tightly they'd gone white, but she remained silent.

No help there.

Seraphina's desperate gaze swept the room until it landed on Vivienne. A silent plea passed between them.

Vivienne rose gracefully from her seat, her silk skirts rustling as she moved. When she spoke, her voice was soft but carried an edge of steel beneath the velvet.

"Miss Ivy." She said my name like it tasted sour on her tongue. "I understand you're upset. Truly, I do. But perhaps you've forgotten your place in all of this."

I raised an eyebrow. "My place?"

"You are the daughter of a Beta." Vivienne's smile was razor-thin. "Your father serves the Crescent Moon Pack Alpha. He is not the Alpha himself. You have no title. No status. No power." She took a step closer, her heels clicking against the marble floor. "And yet here you stand, making demands of the Silvermoon Pack like you're someone of importance. Don't you think that's a bit... presumptuous?"

Murmurs rippled through the chamber. Some of the elders nodded in agreement.

Before I could respond, another voice joined the fray.

"The girl has quite the nerve, doesn't she?"

Margot Ashford rose from her corner, her eyes glittering with malice. She moved to stand beside Vivienne, the two of them presenting a united front against me.

"A Beta's daughter," Margot sneered, "daring to cling to a blood bond with the future heir of the Silvermoon Pack? It's almost laughable. What right does someone of such low status have to be bonded to the man who will one day lead this pack?"

The words hit their target.

But not the target Margot intended.

Luna Helena's head snapped toward the older woman, her eyes blazing with cold fire.

"The future heir?" Luna Helena's voice was soft. Dangerous. "And who, exactly, are you referring to, Lady Margot?"

Margot faltered. "I... well, obviously I meant—"

"My son Dominic is the heir to the Silvermoon Pack." Luna Helena rose from her seat, her presence suddenly filling the room. "He is still alive. His heart still beats. And until that changes, he remains the firstborn son of Alpha Alaric and the rightful successor to this pack."

"Of course, my Luna, I didn't mean to imply—"

"Didn't you?" Luna Helena's gaze could have cut glass. "Because it sounded very much like you were already handing my son's birthright to Bastian. While Dominic lies in his bed, fighting for his life, you're already measuring Bastian for the Alpha's throne."

Margot's face went pale. "That's not—"

"Enough."

Alpha Alaric's voice rolled through the chamber like thunder.

Everyone fell silent. Even Luna Helena closed her mouth, though the fury still burned in her eyes.

The Alpha rose slowly from his seat. He was a large man, broad-shouldered and imposing, with the kind of presence that made you want to bow your head and bare your throat. His gaze swept across the room, touching each face before finally settling on me.

"Miss Ivy," he said, his voice deep and measured. "You have made your position clear. You do not wish to undergo the bond-breaking ceremony."

"That's correct, Alpha."

"And yet the ceremony must take place." He held up a hand before I could protest. "Not because of tradition. Not because of reputation. But because my son has marked your cousin, and the situation must be resolved."

I said nothing. Just waited.

"Therefore," Alpha Alaric continued, "I am prepared to offer you compensation for your cooperation."

My heart skipped. "Compensation?"

"If you agree to the bond-breaking ceremony willingly, I will grant you three requests." His eyes bored into mine. "Anything within my power to give, I will give. This is my word as the Alpha of the Silvermoon Pack."

Three requests.

From the most powerful Alpha in the kingdom.

I could ask for anything.

The possibilities spun through my mind like leaves in a storm.

Seraphina was staring at me, her face a mixture of hope and fear. Bastian looked annoyed, like this whole negotiation was beneath him. Vivienne and Margot exchanged uncertain glances.

And Luna Helena... Luna Helena was watching me with something that might have been respect.

I didn't need to think about it.

"I agree," I said.

Alpha Alaric nodded once. "Then it is settled. Name your requests, Miss Ivy. And they shall be granted."

Tip: You can use left, right, A and D keyboard keys to browse between chapters.