

Exchanging Vows: The Swapped Wife Is a Top Shaman

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Seraphina's Point of View

I stared at Ivy like I was seeing her for the first time.

This wasn't the same girl I grew up with. This wasn't the meek, pathetic little mouse who used to cower whenever anyone raised their voice. The Ivy I knew would never look at me with such cold defiance. She would never dare to make demands of me.

What the hell happened to her?

I searched her face for any sign of the weakness I'd exploited for years. The trembling lips. The downcast eyes. The hunched shoulders that made her look smaller than she already was.

None of it was there.

Back in the Crescent Moon Pack, she never fought back. Never. She let everyone walk all over her. The servants treated her worse than a dog and she just took it. She was pathetic. Spineless. She didn't even have the courage to look me in the eye.

But now? Now she stood before me like she owned the world. Like she had never been afraid of anything in her life.

Was it all an act? Had she been pretending this whole time?

The thought made my blood run cold.

All those years. All those times I had mocked her, belittled her, treated her like garbage beneath my feet. What if she had been watching the entire time? Waiting. Playing a role while I showed her exactly who I really was.

No. Impossible. No one could pretend for that long.

But looking at her now, at the steel in her eyes and the confidence in her posture, I wasn't so sure anymore.

Ivy tilted her head, studying me with an almost amused expression. "You look confused, cousin. Is something wrong?"

"Nothing's wrong," I snapped. But my voice came out weaker than I intended.

"If you say so." She smiled, and it was nothing like the timid smiles I remembered. This smile had teeth. "Now, about my offer. Do you accept or not?"

Before I could answer, a commotion erupted outside.

Ivy's Point of View

"Where is that insolent girl?" A shrill voice pierced through the walls. "How dare a Beta's daughter steal from an Alpha's daughter!"

I recognized that voice immediately.

Margot Ashford. Alpha Alaric's stepmother.

The doors burst open before Marcus or Theo could stop them. Margot swept into the residence like she owned the place, her entourage of servants flooding in behind her. Her face was twisted with righteous fury, her silk robes billowing dramatically.

"There she is!" Margot pointed at me like I was a criminal caught in the act. "The little thief who thinks she can take what doesn't belong to her!"

Behind her, Vivienne glided in with considerably more grace but equal venom in her eyes. Bastian's mother looked at me with barely concealed contempt.

"Miss Ivy," Vivienne said, her voice dripping with false sweetness. "We've heard some disturbing reports about your behavior today. Attacking servants? Confiscating property that isn't yours? This is highly inappropriate conduct for someone in your position."

"My position?" I kept my voice level. "You mean as the wife of the heir?"

Margot let out a derisive snort. "Wife of a dying man, you mean. Don't get above yourself, girl."

She snapped her fingers, and her servants began moving toward the trunks and chests that Seraphina's maids had been forced to leave behind earlier.

"Take everything," Margot ordered. "These gifts belong to young Miss Seraphina. It's disgraceful that this... this nobody thought she could keep them."

Marcus stepped forward, his hand on his sword. "My lady, these items are in the heir's residence. I cannot allow—"

"Stand aside!" Margot's voice cracked like a whip. "I am the Alpha's stepmother. My authority supersedes yours."

Marcus hesitated, looking to me for guidance.

Vivienne added her voice to the chaos. "Miss Ivy, you should be ashamed of yourself. Causing such discord on your first day as a wife. This behavior is unbecoming. It shows a complete lack of breeding, a complete lack of class." She shook her head with exaggerated disappointment. "But I suppose we shouldn't expect much from a Beta's daughter. You simply weren't raised to understand proper etiquette."

Margot's servants pushed past the guards, lifting the heavy chests onto their shoulders. One by one, the bridal gifts began disappearing out the door.

Nell appeared at my elbow, her face pale with worry. "Miss Ivy," she whispered urgently, "what should we do? Should I try to stop them? Should I call for Luna Helena?"

I watched the servants carry away the gold, the jewels, the precious silks.

"No," I said quietly. "Let them take it."

Nell's eyes went wide. "But Miss—"

"I said let them."

The truth was, I had never wanted those gifts. Not really. They were just things. Objects. What mattered was what I had gained today.

I had seen the fear in Seraphina's eyes when she realized I wasn't the same weak girl she used to bully. I had watched her confidence crumble when I caught her wrist and held firm. I had made her understand, for the first time in her pampered life, that I was no longer someone she could push around.

That was worth more than any amount of gold.

Margot smirked triumphantly as the last of the trunks was carried out. "There. That's settled." She looked down her nose at me. "Let this be a lesson to you, girl. Know your place."

Vivienne nodded in agreement. "Indeed. Perhaps now you'll learn to behave with proper humility."

Seraphina stood off to the side, watching the proceedings with a complicated expression. Our eyes met briefly. I could see the questions swirling in her mind. The doubt. The uncertainty.

Good. Let her wonder. Let her lose sleep over it.

"If you're quite finished," I said calmly, "I'd like you all to leave my residence now."

Margot sputtered. "Your residence? You ungrateful—"

"This is the heir's residence," I repeated, my voice hardening just slightly. "And I am the heir's wife. Whatever gifts you've taken, this home still belongs to Dominic. And by extension, to me." I gestured toward the door. "So please. Remove yourselves from my property."

For a moment, I thought Margot might actually explode. Her face turned an alarming shade of purple, and her hands clenched into claws at her sides.

But Vivienne placed a restraining hand on her arm. "Come, my lady. We've accomplished what we came for. There's no need to waste more time on this... person."

With one last venomous glare, they swept out of the door, Seraphina trailing behind them.

Nell let out a shaky breath. "Miss Ivy, are you alright?"

I looked around the emptier room, at the spaces where the trunks had been, at the scuff marks on the floor from the servants' hurried feet.

Then I smiled.

"I'm fine, Nell." I turned toward the bedroom, toward where Dominic lay sleeping his endless sleep. "I'm just fine."

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Ivy's Point of View

When I thought everyone would completely exit the residence, a voice rang out.

"Put everything down. Now."

Everyone froze.

Luna Helena stood in the doorway, her presence filling the room like a cold wind. Her face was calm, composed, but her eyes were blazing with barely contained fury.

Margot's servants hesitated, looking between their mistress and the Luna.

"Did you not hear me?" Luna Helena stepped inside, her silk skirts swishing against the marble floor. "I said put it down."

One by one, the servants lowered the trunks back to the ground. They knew better than to defy the Luna of the Silvermoon Pack directly.

Margot's face twisted with indignation. "Helena, what is the meaning of this? We're simply returning Miss Seraphina's rightful property to her."

"Her rightful property?" Luna Helena's voice was deceptively soft. "That's interesting. Because if I recall correctly, a significant portion of those gifts came from me."

Seraphina stiffened. "Luna Helena, those were given to me as—"

"As the future wife of my son." Luna Helena cut her off without even looking at her. "I prepared those gifts believing you would be Dominic's bride. His Luna. The woman who would stand beside him and help him lead this pack."

The words hung in the air like a death sentence.

"But that's not what happened, is it?" Luna Helena continued, her gaze sweeping across Seraphina, then Margot, then Vivienne. "You're not my son's wife. You're married to Bastian. Which means the gifts I prepared for Dominic's bride no longer belong to you."

Margot stepped forward, her chin lifted defiantly. "Now see here, Helena. Let's be reasonable about this. Everyone knows that Dominic's condition is... precarious. It's only a matter of time before Bastian becomes the heir. And when that happens, Seraphina will be the future Luna anyway. So what difference does it make if she keeps the gifts now?"

The temperature in the room seemed to drop several degrees.

Luna Helena turned slowly to face Margot. Her expression didn't change, but something dangerous flickered in her eyes.

"What did you just say?"

Margot faltered slightly but pressed on. "I'm simply being practical. Dominic has been unconscious for six months. The healers say he may never wake up. Bastian is young, healthy, and perfectly capable of leading this pack. Isn't it only natural that we prepare for the inevitable?"

"The inevitable?" Luna Helena's voice was quiet. Too quiet.

"Yes." Margot regained some of her confidence. "Bastian will be the heir. Seraphina will be the Luna. Giving her a larger dowry is only appropriate for her future status. Surely you can see that."

For a long moment, Luna Helena said nothing. The silence stretched until it became almost unbearable.

Then she smiled. It was not a warm smile.

"My son is not dead, Lady Margot."

Margot blinked. "I never said—"

"He is not dead," Luna Helena repeated, each word precise and cutting. "His heart still beats. His lungs still breathe. He is the firstborn son of Alpha Alaric, and until that changes, he remains the heir to the Silvermoon Pack."

"But surely—"

"There is no surely." Luna Helena's composure cracked just slightly, revealing the steel beneath. "You stand in my son's residence, speaking of his death like it's a foregone conclusion. You talk about giving away his birthright like it's yesterday's garbage. And you expect me to simply agree?"

Margot's face went pale. She opened her mouth, then closed it again.

Nothing came out.

Vivienne tried to salvage the situation. "Luna Helena, we meant no disrespect. Lady Margot was simply trying to—"

"I know exactly what Lady Margot was trying to do." Luna Helena didn't even spare her a glance. "And I suggest you all remember your places before you overstep any further."

The room fell silent. Even the servants seemed to be holding their breath.

Luna Helena turned to her personal maid, who had been waiting quietly by the door. "Fetch the household steward. I want a full inventory of these items. Anything that came from me personally is to be separated and returned to the heir's residence immediately."

"Yes, my Luna." The maid hurried away.

Seraphina's face had gone from pale to ashen. "Luna Helena, please. Those gifts were given to me. You can't just take them back."

"I can and I will." Luna Helena finally looked at her, and there was no warmth in her gaze. None of the maternal affection she might have once shown to her son's intended bride. "You made your choice, Miss Seraphina. You chose Bastian over Dominic. Now live with the consequences."

Within minutes, the steward arrived with several servants carrying ledgers and lists. They began sorting through the trunks methodically, separating items into two piles.

I watched in silence as the pile meant for Seraphina grew smaller and smaller.

The jade hairpins Luna Helena had commissioned from the Eastern kingdoms. Gone. The bolt of moonsilk fabric worth more than most houses. Gone. The set of ruby earrings that had belonged to Luna Helena's own mother. Gone.

By the time they finished, Seraphina's dowry had been reduced by nearly half.

Seraphina looked like she might cry. Or scream. Or both. Her hands were clenched so tightly at her sides that her knuckles had gone white. Her jaw was set so hard I could see the muscles twitching beneath her skin.

But she couldn't say anything. Couldn't do anything. Not with Luna Helena standing right there, watching her with those cold, assessing eyes.

Margot was equally furious but equally powerless. She kept shooting venomous glances at Luna Helena, but she didn't dare speak again. Not after being so thoroughly put in her place.

Vivienne had retreated into silence, her face a careful mask of neutrality. She was smart enough to know when to cut her losses.

"There." Luna Helena surveyed the two piles with satisfaction. "That should be everything. Miss Seraphina, you may take what remains. The rest will stay here, where it belongs."

Seraphina's voice came out strangled. "Thank you, Luna Helena."

It didn't sound like gratitude. It sounded like she was choking on glass.

Margot snapped her fingers at her servants. "Take what's left and let's go. We've wasted enough time here."

The servants scrambled to obey, loading the diminished dowry onto their shoulders. Seraphina turned to follow them, her spine rigid with humiliation.

At the door, she paused and looked back at me.

The hatred in her eyes was almost palpable. A promise of retribution. A vow that this wasn't over.

I met her gaze steadily and said nothing.

Then she was gone, sweeping out with Margot and Vivienne close behind. The door slammed shut, and the residence fell quiet once more.