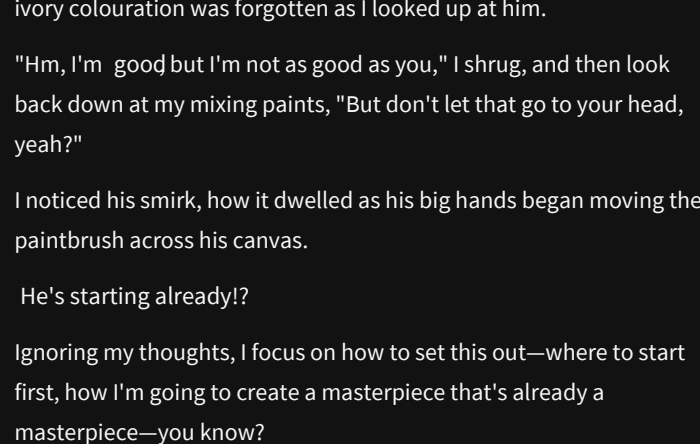


Chapter Seventeen



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Sitting on yet another wooden based stool, I began integrating the colours I would need to create Silver's portrait.

Starting first with his skin colour.

It was a blend between brown and white—adding the tiniest tint of yellow. I continued adding the mix of white until it became the ivory cream colour I wanted, almost close to perfection.

"I feel intimidated knowing how good you are at painting..." I admit to him, beginning to feel his gaze on me but I don't make a move to look up.

"Do you not realise how talented you are yourself?" He speaks, his voice a cold chord, profound and demanding. For a brief moment, my ivory colouration was forgotten as I looked up at him.

"Hm, I'm good but I'm not as good as you," I shrug, and then look back down at my mixing paints, "But don't let that go to your head, yeah?"

I noticed his smirk, how it dwelled as his big hands began moving the paintbrush across his canvas.

He's starting already?

Ignoring my thoughts, I focus on how to set this out—where to start first, how I'm going to create a masterpiece that's already a masterpiece—you know?

"I feel like I hardly know anything about you, Silver." Giving him a glance from over the canvas, his eyes were stuck on his own canvas, focusing and unfazed.

"Ask me anything and I'll tell you."

I pursed my lips, deciding that I should probably start light before going deeper.

Refocusing my attention on my painting, I begin with his eyes. The first colour I created was a combination of blue and white, which I blended to achieve the lightest blue tint.

"Is this the first date you've been on?" I asked him casually, dabbing the colour of his eyes with a finer brush.

"Si." He murmurs, and I nod slowly to no one necessarily. "And you?"

I pause for a moment, figuring if I should mention that I've had a previous boyfriend. Though, what's to hide? It's not like I'm still with him.

"Um, sort of? I dated a guy back in high school but we only really hung out as friends, you know? never really went on dates and such..." I tell him honestly.

"Hm," He drones, breaking the silence between us for that short moment.

"What happened?" I could feel his eyes on me, even if I was mainly focusing on the eyes I was painting. Inhaling a deep breath, I dip a different paintbrush into another colour and continue on.

"He moved away and we lost contact," I shrug nonchalantly, not really in the mood to talk about why my heart was so protective.

He doesn't press further and I decide to continue with my gazillion questions.

"Do you travel a lot for business?" This was mainly just a curiosity. I assume he would be for particular deals and missions—then again, he is the Don, he could make them come out here for a partner-up.

"I did. But being in New York, not as much now."

"Why is that?"

"Business flies out here," he says coldly, "his city is notorious for being an epicentre of crime; whomever we need to find will have some sort of connection to someone here, or will be here themselves."

I pause for a second and look over at him, feeling a sense of peace wash over me. Seeing him concentrated on the painting in front of him, his hands moved with ease, instructing the paintbrush that appeared so small in his hands.

My next question would have an obvious answer, but I wanted to hear it straight from his mouth.

"And do you like... killpeople on a dally?"

I watch his hair ricochet beneath his brow as he looks up at me, a humorous glint in his gaze as he chillingly chuckles.

"Of course I do, Serene."

Biting the inside of my cheek, I nod slowly, taking everything in and focusing on wiggling my toes.

"Yeah, of course, I knew that..." I smile slightly to myself, figuring how silly I was—at least I got my answer.

"Do you mind the partnership you've got with my family? I promise this is the last question about work," I laugh a little to ease the tension and he shrugs, seeming to not care at all about my consistent questions.

"It's good for business, your family's Mafia is the highest ranked in the world. Now that we've joined you for a short while, we might as well be at the top too."

I frown slightly, shrugging off the weird feeling in my chest.

"Is that what you care about? The status?" It didn't come out as nicely as it was said in my head, it was blunt and obvious—but kept on my curious expression, observing his own eyes darken—seeming to have hit a nerve.

He stops brushing for a second and pauses, looking straight into my eyes. A cold look glossed over him as he shook his head in denial.

"No, never. I'm good at my job and I enjoy it, status never mattered to me."

A clench in his jaw had my suspicions rising, why did he seem so ticked off about the idea of status or perhaps power...

I didn't want to dwell on it, and nor did I want to question it further. It was most likely nothing, he could just be sensitive to it, I know what it's like when people assume the worst of you.

"So," I bring my gaze back to the canvas, already having finished his eyes and now, my main focus was his nose.

"How much have you done?" I asked him, curious to see if he had passed my level of detail yet.

Now smirking, his previous cold stage passed onto his blank stare.

"Not nearly enough," he admits but passes a glance at the back of my canvas, "and you?"

I huff and he chuckles knowing that I was frustrated with him passing the facial stage.

"I'm painting your nose now." I grumble, focusing on the ivory paint I shaped onto the canvas.

He lets out a snicker, which only makes me roll my eyes.

It was silent again, honestly because I had run out of questions to ask and because I was concentrating on every detail of Silver's features, attempting to paint a perfect portrait of him.

"Every painting of yours has a meaning, right?" I ask him out of the blue, receiving a quick glance from over his canvas.

"Si."

"Well, technically this is one of your paintings, does it have a meaning behind it as well?"

"It does." He doesn't hesitate with his answer, confidently passing me another glance.

"And what's that?" I raise a brow looking directly at him, taking in the shine his hair reflected off from the street light above him.

"I'll tell you later."

Sighing, I look back over at my painting, seeing the necessary amount of progress I've made. If I kept this pace going then I'd be done within thirty minutes—definitely the shortest time I've ever spent painting a whole canvas.

"I still have yet to look at your artworks," He mentioned and I come to realise that he hasn't even seen any of my paintings—other than the sketch I had done of my tattoo.

"Yeah, cause you keep on cancelling on me." I send him a playful glare and he smiles a little. "How about tonight?" he suggests, feeling that familiar spark grow inside of me again.

"Okay, sure." I bite my bottom lip nervously, actually excited to finally show him.

We continue to paint, and as the wind picks up and the sea sways rockier, it adds to the blithely pleasant setting of tonight.

By the time Silver's features were depicted, I was rather pleased with myself. Without the sketching, I had pretty much nailed it. It wasn't perfect, but it was pretty close.

Sinking my paintbrush into the cup of water beside me, I release an exhale and focus fully on Silver. I'd been staring at him for an hour, taking in every diamond-shaped freckle, every littered hair that would only make him prettier, and the boost in his gaze whenever he caught me staring.

I couldn't tell you how many times he'd noticed me and made me blush. His eyes were focused and serious as if he was dissecting every feature and flaw that could be seen.

And all I see now when I look at him is his perfection. From his all-black hair to his cream complexion and Greek god-like body—his captivating, thick Italian voice which I only fantasised of whispering into my ear now and then.

I liked Silver Ceraso. Whether I liked it or not, he was the new obsession my heart craved.

I wanted him and nobody else.

"I'm done," I state, shaking away the cramps in my hands and standing straight from the mini stool I had been perched on.

Silver drops his paintbrush and looks up at me while I approached him.

"And so are you by the looks of it?" I tried to catch a peek at the painting, only for his body to block the view.

He brings his tongue to the roof of his mouth, smirking down at me while wiggling his ringed finger in front of my face. "That's cheating, Serenity." Shaking his head disapprovingly.

Rolling my eyes at him, I look over at the table which held our bag of food.

"Ready to eat?" Cause I am, I mumbled as I took his hand in mine and led us over to the bag of food. The warmth of his hand so uses my veins, and I can feel every grip of his fingers against mine.

Silver grabs it before I can, and I raise my head, puzzled looking at him.

That is until he jerked his head towards something behind me, at which point I instinctively turned and took a step back against Silver, eventually noticing yet another surprise he'd pulled.

Blankets were spread out on the grass away from the coast, and a small lamp sat among them all, illuminating the area.

I gushed and swept air into my mouth, puffing up my cheeks.

"Perfect," I mutter under my breath, allowing Silver to guide us away. Once we were sat, I made sure to place a few napkins onto my lap knowing how clumsy I could be. Silver sat relaxed, legs spread wide and he leaned back on his hands, observing every inch of me.

Passing him his bowl, I placed him his packet of cutlery and a few napkins too. And almost instantly, I dug in.

"It's cold," I grumble, looking down at my bowl of rice and everything else in it.

The man across from me rolls his eyes, adjusting his legs on the blanket he practically took over with that large body of his.

"You wanted to wait. What do you expect, Flower?" He arched his brow, giving me a look. I poked my tongue out at him when he wasn't looking, but I knew he noticed when his lips quirked up slightly as he stared down at his own bowl.

We started eating in silence, and my only source of entertainment was him. He was even cute while eating. He appeared to pick at least a bit of everything onto his fork before taking a bite, always licking his lips first.

I look away from him before he could catch me, I bring a mouthful to my own lips and delectably enjoy the lukewarm rice.

Silver's eyes were on me, I could feel the intensity. Looking away from the shore, his lazy gaze was burning through me.

He watches me eat silently. A small, gentle tug of his plump lips makes me frown. "What?" I blurted, annoyed. He ignores, still never taking his blue gaze off me as that spark in them ignites.

"You look pretty with your mouth full."

My spoon drops from between my fingers and I stare at the bowl in shock.

Holy, mother of god—

He begins to chuckle, and the allure in my stomach and lower region intensifies.

I mix around my rice while clearing my throat and ignoring the tingles that are rising up my spine. Silver's food was moved to the other side of the blankets, bringing him closer to me.

Looking up, I noticed him pulling a box of cigarettes from his pockets, as well as a lighter from inside the box. When he places one between his full lips, the orange flame re-ignites and illustrates his heaven-like features—along with the cigarette.

The flame falls below, dragging the cigarette into his lungs, and he breathes it out to the side, looking up at the sky.

"You know, Serenity, I've never met anyone like you before."

My food was long forgotten, my hunger not necessarily craving that type of nutrition. I stared at him as he stared at the sky, he didn't blink once, his coated black lashes fanning the skin below his brows.

"What do you mean by that?" I move closer to him, begging my body until it was exactly next to him. I crossed my legs with mine, briefly pausing to catch the race of my heart.

With our bodies so close, everything inside of me was acting up.

"You," He releases something that was in-between a laugh and a scoff, continuing to take another drag. "You are different. Sweet, but never forbidden, but so sweet." The smoke exits his lungs as he speaks, finally turning his direction to me.

With parted lips, I allow his to brush over mine. The cigarette crushes between his fingers and the next thing I know, he was luring me down onto the blankets, hovering over me like a predator to his prey.

"So sweet," He traces his thumb under my jaw, my chest heaved with breathless breaths, my mind completely fogged with the thoughts of him—but the one thing I wanted was his lips on mine right this second.

"I think about you all the time, even when I'm not supposed to," He murmurs, these confessions kept coming both from the left and right—I didn't complain, because every thought he admitted was every thought of mine.

"You fascinate me, Serenity. Beautiful and intelligent, talented and carelessly wonderful."

Enabling his lips to touch mine, I cave and arch my neck so our lips finally link.

Hungrily, we kiss.

These lips, like the so soft touch of pillows, engulf my own, caressing mine with a blidional force.

His hands slide into my hair, tugging at the strands behind my head to dominate the kiss himself. I allow him to do exactly that, dominate me.

My spine arches and my body complies with his, my thighs swinging around his waist as his tongue swipes my bottom lip.

I fight back, not letting him in, until the pressure of his immense bulge presses into my inner thigh and I gasp, giving him exactly what he desired.

A moan crawled out of my mouth, my breathing heavy, taking in his scent of cinnamon and his sweet taste in my mouth.

Silver pulls away but never disconnects his lips from my skin. Pressing his red lips to my cheek and travelling down to my jaw. I crane my neck to the side, my hands sweeping through his hair as my hips arch into his.

I wanted more.

"Silver," My croaky voice speaks out. My hands landed on his broad shoulders, trailing up slowly to the sides of his neck, making him look up at me.

His hungry eyes glance up at me, moving away from the places on my neck he was marking. All of sudden, he towers over me again, my thighs warming more.

It felt as if I was high in the clouds, utterly transfixed with only him.

"I..." I exhale, looking into his glittering blue eyes, a withering cast of concern fogs over them.

"What's wrong, Flower?" His low voice was deeper, adding just an edge of huskiness. I bite the inside of my cheek, willing to only be honest with him.

"I like you"

Suddenly his concern fades out and only something emotionless enters again. I couldn't see what he was thinking, I couldn't tell if this was all too much for him.

"Silver—

His lips fall back down on mine, the kiss wasn't as hungry anymore, instead, it was gentle

Our lips move in a slow rhythm, gradually taking my breath away. Until he pulled away, kissing my neck and under my ear. I can't think and I'm consumed by him again.

"I like the way you say my name," he speaks so ly into my ear, and my hands tighten around his neck.

"I like the way your hands rub against your so, as though when you're nervous," I release a short, shocked breath, absorbing the way his hands moved up my body, his fingers playing with the band of my panties reminding me of a guitarist strumming his strings.

"And I like the fact that you talk to me, exactly as I am. Being someone close to you," his lips hover over mine, making mine part and my eyes stare daydreams into his, "because I know you don't talk to anyone who isn't family, si?"

My mouth my head just a fraction, in an attempt to respond to him. Silver brushes his lips closer, driving my racing heart faster than ever and the adrenaline in me trying to push our lips together, but I wanted to hear what else he had to say.

"But most importantly," his fingers travel higher, digging underneath the stretchy fabric of my top and grazing the side of my breast. It leaves me short of breath, breathless as his next words fall deep into my heart.

"I like you"

My throat runs dry. My parted lips stay parted and I felt my brain stop brainning

I didn't know what to expect. And obviously, I didn't know what to say.

"You do?" I ask, just to be sure.

"You're so unsure of everything, Flower. Why is that?" I feel his hand move back down to the side of my waist, cupping it and continuing to whisper into my mouth.

"I just have a hard time trusting people," I muttered, running my fingers up and down the back of his neck, only focusing on his lips.

"You could have anyone Silver. And yet, you chose me." I confess, trying to make sense of this.

I felt the burn of his gaze on me, following my every movement—exasperated, he clutches my chin, firmly bringing my gaze back up to face him.

"I only want you, Serenity. Only you"

With that, his lips reconnect with mine.

A settling sensation crawls through my veins, comfort in knowing his true feelings—the reality of it all.

My hands run up and down the muscles of his back, falling over every dent and bulge as they move against my palms. Silver rubs against me, his hand returns to my breast and cups it, a gasp from me, breaking our heated kiss.

"This alright?" He confirms before moving forward, I nodded hastily and arch my body into his.

Enveloping in his sweet taste, I mould against him and his hands mould against my breasts.

They were released from the constricting top, bouncing out and hard nipples poking at his chest.

"Holy fuck," he breathed into my mouth, looking down at my breasts before smirking and looking back into my eyes.

"You're fucking sexy," he rasps and slowly brings his body down, only until his lips found my nipple and were pulled into his mouth.

"Oh god," I sigh, my hands running into his hair, stroking him as he massaged one breast and sucked on the other.

The beginning of an orgasm pulsed throughout my skin, my face flushed with heat and my body was already on fire with the so grazes of his teeth against my flesh.

He moved away and played with the strings of my panties, looping and twisting them around his finger and tugging on them, making me gasp at the feel of the fabric moving inside me.

"Does that feel good, Serenity?" He says my name like it's a forbidden secret that shouldn't be spoken. I nodded, unable to find my voice, however, this did not seem to please him as his hand found my neck. He grips it tightly, but not so tightly that it hurts me, just tight enough to send waves of pleasure through me.

"Answer me, baby," he whispered and I gulp, parting my lips. "It feels really good."

Humming in approval, he licks his lips and tracks his eyes down my body, taking in my curves and stretch marks on my little pouch of a belly like an absolutely starving, lustful ted man.

"I promised myself I wouldn't touch you on the first date," he admits through a voice of strains, "although if you want this as much as me, I will."

It was consent. He looked at me intently, taking in every expression and motive, but I had none because I desired it just as much as he did.

I wanted just a little taste, just a little.

"I want you to touch me." I say, arching my back so my breasts collided with his clothed chest—observing the clench of his jaw and his face hardened in restraint. "Touch me with your mouth, your fingers, I don't mind." I say into his ear, receiving the most devious glint in return.

He lets out an amused chuckle and looks down at me with lust and pride, "My girl is a dirty girl, huh?"

Hovering over me again, his shadow surrounds the light contrasting down and suddenly encircles me in darkness.

I feel his hands begin to undo the button of my jeans and I ache impatiently.

"Not your girl yet." I wish I was.

Receiving a hard glance, he roughly tugs down my jeans, a giggle escaping my throat as he, gently leaning down, he kisses a place under my ear.

"By the time I'm done with you, you'll be begging to be mine."

I moan as he runs his palm over the top of my panties. My hips yield up against his hand but he holds them down within seconds.

"Don't move." He demands, sliding between my legs. I look down at him, watching every move he made following.

He separates them, the cool air surrounding us cooling the heat between my thighs. My teeth play nervously with my bottom lip, and our gazes remain locked as he starts pulling down the thin fabric that covers me.

His index finger catches it all in one motion, gathering the panties into his fist and tossing them aside—now naked in front of him.

Silver climbs on top of me again, his body dwarfing mine in comparison to his. His hands move up and down my waist, gliding over my stomach and chasing down until they reach my wet folds.

I breathe heavily, feeling the weight of his chest up against mine, the linger of his lips caressing my neck as his fingers start to play with me.

"Relax, baby." He tilts his head to look directly into my eyes, staring down at his lips before flickering them to my eyes.

The blue in his eyes seemed a shade darker, like a dark grey—the blue was faded and dull. I reiterated what he had said earlier, which made me even more enthused. He may as well be mine now.

"So pretty," He breathed sweetly against my skin, scanning my features with his eyes.

Those stealthy fingers slid right between my cleavage, shamelessly coating his fingers in my moisture. As he feeds his fingers deeper, I feel myself unravel, his manly voice deep inside my head.

"Mmm," I lick my lips dry, feeling my throat coat with need as my hips twitch to move up against his hand.

"No moving, Serenity," He reminds me into my ear, my pulse beneath his lips.

"Kiss me, Silver." I say desperately, desperate for his lips, his touch—his everything.

Silver listens to my demand, almost instantly smashing his lips to mine. The sudden jolt of his fingers slithers its way inside of me, masking my moan with his mouth.

I could feel his fingers still inside of me, deep and steady before rotating out and slamming back in again. I groan from the pain and moan from the pleasure a er it.

"You're tight, fuck." He looks down at his hand that dug inside of me, pleasing me. My eyes roll back as he rubs his thumb over my clit, picking up the pace.

Slowly, he finds a pace that was suitable and continued that onward to build up the intensity inside of me.

I knew I wouldn't last long, he turned me on too much.

Plush lips envelop my nipple, the other being played with. I breathe profoundly, the pleasure increasing so much I figured I would pass out at some point from it.

Silver was a magician at this; his eyes blazed up at me like a whirlpool of ice, with some parts colder than others. His dilated pupils drew closer to my lips, luring him away from my nipples and onto mine.

"So addicting," He murmurs, curling his fingers inside of me. A wave of pleasure riled through me. I couldn't help but arch my back and whither away at his touch. He matches my movements, lunging his fingers and hitting that spot that had me moaning and clenching.

"God, Silver," I murmur, my eyes closed and my lips rocking with the rhythm of his hand. I could feel the burn of his eyes on me, only making me hotter.

Feeling the knot in my stomach nearly tightening to the max, my thighs shook and my stomach clenched—my folds wrapped tightly around his fingers as he continued his thrusts, his so lips plush against my own like cotton candy melting into my mouth.

"Hm," I shudder against him, that wave of electricity running through me with the release he built up and gave me.

Sighing out my pleasure, my hands tighten in his hair and he grunts into my mouth from the grip. The pressure between my thighs had now faded away, leaving only my release on his girth yet rough fingers.

With laboured breathing, my eyes follow his glistening fingers to his mouth, my own lips parting in surprise and desire. He licks his lips clean of my taste, bringing them back in front of mine, this time with a smirk.

"I was right." He presses a kiss against the side of my cheek, smirking against my skin, reaching my ear.

"You taste as good as you look."