

The Wooded Instrument

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Chapter One

The woods have always been my home. From when I was a small fawn, I have always loved the smell of it, the colors that changed through the seasons, the way the earth gives cushion to my steps.

To hear the crunching of the needles and the smell it produced as they broke under my weight.

Pine and earth rushing up to my nose. Scattering the birds as I trotted through, hearing their chirping and whistles as they made way for me.

The light breeze their wings made as they rushed off. The rushing of water over the rocks off in the distances, singing a wet chorus I could taste in my mouth. Moss covering the sides of trees as if to blanket them from the cool mornings and the dew that ran down as if they just stepped out of the bath.

To look up through the great trees that stood strong and fast as soldiers guarding their king. Oh, I had to share it with some of the local woodland creatures, but everyone knew their place.

The fairies stayed more to the warmer parts that got rays of sun dancing in the afternoons, loved to see their ballerina twists and jumps as they left trails of sparkling dust behind them, but in the evenings slept more towards the mushroom patches.

The water sprites, as did the frogs and toads, loved the coolness and darker areas with water ponds with lily pads afloat.

The deer, they kept well-hidden but loved an open meadow to tantalize their taste buds with the young tender shoots of green grasses there.

The woods are home to many a creature and we all shared it well. It was always enough for me in the early years. But as I have grown, so did my curiosity and desire, and I suppose, my tastes. I wanted something more, there was a deep inner stirring inside me. I tried to push it aside or pretend it wasn't pulling me in a certain direction, so I turned my focus towards other skills.

Our kind, and I say that with a pang of loneliness, because there aren't many of us left or never were, I guess. I'm more of a solitary entity I suppose.

Anyway, I'm letting my thoughts trail off to other realms. The woods, my home, has the most magical trees, and that is where I tried to send my desires and focus to. Our skills as craftsmen and musicians are ingrained in our kind from birth. So, this is where I will focus my attention, or so I tried to. The Boxwood tree, a small evergreen tree, with a lighter timber that offers a sweeter, mellower voice than the hardwood trees, was the tree of my choice for the creation of my instrument.

The Boxwood, ah yes, the tree of my choice. It will do well for my crafting skills. Pretty easy to carve and will turn to a beautiful dark honey color as it cures. And the sounds, as sweet as the honey in its color.

Finding one would be another thing, seems like these trees are getting scarcer every year. So off I went, in search of a Boxwood tree, I had the whole forest for my shopping pleasure. I started out early, as soon as the sun broke over the mountains and started to pierce its way like golden needles through the tree branches.

The air was crisp and stung my face a bit as I walked along. Making my way along familiar paths that I knew because of the closeness to home, but as I went further that started to change. I followed the local creek for a bit, hearing the water rushing over rocks as if late to get somewhere. I came to a pond, calm and still, with colors of greens and blues, the fairies were having a morning bath, quickly covering themselves under the water to block my view. Silly fairies didn't interest me anyway.

I kept going past the pond and up a steep embankment that curved around a bunch of thick bushes as the trees thickened together with outstretched branches as if holding hands. It started getting darker as the trees interlaced their green fingers to one another. The smaller stones gave way to larger rocks and boulders, and I could see a break ahead in the trees that let some sun shine through.

A roaring sound was coming from the distance and I could see the mist of what I knew to be a waterfall, I was getting close. Seemed like I had been walking all day when I finally came to the winding path lined with stones and carpeted with needles and leaves off various trees. It led me down twists and turn backs for a bit until it started to flatten out in front of me.

Stopping at a small clearing as if into another dimension, the path stopped and turned into a blanket of thick green grass that had been loved by the sun only in this spot, and there it was! Not too tall, mature trees can grow to a height of twenty feet. It had a compact habit, with smooth gray bark which fissures with age, and green, downy stems and thick, evergreen leaves which smelt sweet.

It was perfect! As I approached it, I could see the perfect branch for my instrument. But before I was to take it, I needed to ask permission and give it thanks for the offering. I knelt down before it, lowering my head as a Jack to my King. "I come to ask thee oh great boxwood tree for an offering of just one of your branches to become an instrument of my craft, to bear the sweet music you will make."

As I rose with one swift gesture, I had it cleanly off into my hand, my axe making a smooth sharp cut. I grabbed a handful of earth that had become mud from a recent rain and smeared it on the bare bark to form a natural bandage. Kneeling once more I gave a heartfelt thank you to the Boxwood for its offering. Putting away my axe in my leather holster, I tucked the branch carefully away beside it as well, and I was on my way back.

Chapter 2

Moving to the country from the city was never my idea. The way our relationship was going, it would either save it or kill it for good. Well, that's the way I felt about it anyway. That was the only reason I agreed to such a drastic move in the first place. Tony had gotten the new promotion, but it came with a relocation stipulation.

They were putting us up in some cabin like house on the outside of town, I was told how beautiful it was and how I could be into town in twenty minutes. I was packing the last box when Tony walked in, he was dressed down, dark blue V-neck tee shirt that hugged his chest so to see his sculpted pecs and just a hint of dark black chest hairs peaking over giving the impression he was all tucked in with a warm layer underneath.

Blue jeans that came around to cradle his ass just right, faded and washed out. His dark brown, almost black hair hung down over his face having gotten out of place from stooping over to retrieve boxes. Ah, he always looks his best this way too me, relaxed and laid back, not like he is at work, in a suit, uptight and stressed out.

"Bout ready to go?" he said coolly as he grabbed the last box.

"Well, you know the answer to that", I replied sarcastically.

"Please don't start that again, we've already been over that", he snarked, "and remember we came to an agreement and are already doing it!"

"Ok, I know, sorry", I pushed out.

"Just let me go pee".

"I'll be in the truck", he said as he walked out the door running his hand through his hair to push it back in place.

As I was washing my hands on my way out, I looked to the mirror as if expecting my reflection to say something to save me before I left my life here. Just my same old face appeared, same hazel eyes and shoulder length wavy brown hair, chiseled nose and high cheekbones. I stepped back and sucked in my stomach, yep, it's just me.

Always thinking I'm heavy, although for my height, 5'7, I probably was really at my ideal weight. I sucked it up and took one last look around at the empty house and left for the truck. Tony already had it running as a sign of his impatience. I climbed up into the big U-Haul and slid onto the wide bench seat. Then it hit me, I'm really doing this!

The ride was mostly silent except for the radio blaring out some classic rock and my mind wandered. I leaned toward the window and pretended to sleep, choking back tears and already missing my past life.

Chapter 3

I arrived back at my cottage near dark, it was starting to rain, and I was thankful to make it home in time. I threw some wood into the big stone fireplace on top of the smaller kindling I had already prepared in the pit and started a fire.

The fur on my legs was slightly damp, so it felt good to have the warmth from the fire drying it out and warming it up. My sandy bond hair was wet too, being long it always took a while to dry out. I ran my hands through it and shook it out to assist it along some.

My hooves had some mud between my toe where it splits up the middle....., yes, I did say hooves!

“I may have forgotten to tell you..., I’m a Satyr!”

“Yes, I’m somewhat of a fairytale or myth, but then so are unicorns and fairies, which are my neighbors.”

I removed my pack and withdrew the branch, I examined and admired it again, it was a beautiful color, shades of grays and browns with perfect striations rolling around its base, looking as if it had been purposely measured between each groove. No knot hole in site, I had made sure of that when I chose it. Knot holes are bad for an instrument prospect, I will be carving my own holes for the kind of music I make. This will be good, something to keep me busy for the next few weeks.

I went to the stove and boiled some water for tea. I had cut and dried herbs of all sorts hanging in my kitchen, Fennel, lavender, oregano, basil, mint, chamomile, well you get the picture, the stove was old and black but served its purpose. Satyr’s are mostly vegetarian by nature anyway, so we eat mostly raw things.

The cottage was made of stone, straw and mud, with a frame of wood. One room, with a small kitchen off to the side. No need for a bedroom as I mostly just curled up in front of the fireplace on the big rug. I had built a wall of bookshelves as I like to read, especially on cold winter nights. Washroom was the creek, as well as any other needs for water. The constant flow kept it clean and cool.

Once I have finished the carving of the branch, I will lay it in front of a good fire too to help it cure and dry out. Carving it while it's still a little pliable is best, so I sat down with some herb tea and went to work on the instrument.

The rain was pelting down, the fire popping and crackling but it faded into the background as I was drawn into my work. It felt good to use my hands for this creative process and it was something I had waited to do all my life. The wood had a natural feel in my hands and it almost guided me as to where to cut and shape it. This instrument would be a part of me.

Chapter 4

The trip took two days, and I was fed up with being cooped up in that bumpy ride of a truck. Thankfully we had arrived a little before dark, and I must say, it was beautiful. The house was on the outskirts of the town with no neighbors for a couple of miles I guessed by the looks of it.

It had a backdrop of the forest and mountains which came right up to hug the back of the house. It was as they said. The house itself was made from dark wood and had the feel and look of a cabin. My melancholy had subsided for now and I was actually excited to see the new place.

“Let’s leave the stuff in the truck for now and go check out the place,” Tony said, as he looked at me unsure. I knew from the sound of his voice that he was hoping I would love it.

We made our way up some stone stairs that cut back and then up again. The air was fresh with a hint of pine and rain smell attacking my nose. It was landscaped using a lot of the natural nature around the place. Colors of orange and reds were falling across the green and browns of the foliage coming over the mountains as the sun was off to bed.

Rays of filtered light chose which path it wanted to light as we climbed the stone stairs. I could see dust, small insects and floating pieces of dandelion or cottonwood seeds, I suddenly got a feeling of magic or a wildness about the area that intrigued me.

Tony could feel me lagging I guess and stopped to look back at me, “Are you coming?” he said, grabbing my hand and pulling me along faster. “Yes,” was all I said.

When we got to the porch there were two big pots with good sized hedges in them on each side of the door in the wide entryway.

“The keys should be behind one of these pots,” grunted Tony as he stooped over to look behind the first one.

“Ah! here it is, were in business,” he said, immediately sliding the key in the door.

As he pushed the door open the last of the light hit me in the face. Big tall windows stood across the back of the long wide room, which I took as the living area. High beam ceilings with a huge wood piece that looked almost like they had just cut a tree down and placed it on its side above us.

A big slab of stone was what you first walked onto coming in, from there were three natural stone steps down into the big room. One side was cut off by free standing square waterfall that was running. It had lights under the water that shown up as the water slid down the side. It was the size of a wall.

The floors were a dark mahogany wood polished to a sheen of a well-groomed bay horse. Off to the left was a bar made out of wood, it had a big granite top for the bar. Behind it was shelves of glass with mirrors behind them.

As we walked down the steps into the big room, I saw it had a long deck right outside the huge windows.

You could see tops of trees and other foliage growing all around. I gasped without realizing and Tony swiftly turned and smiled and said, “Right?! Well I guess that answers my next question”, he laughed.

I couldn’t lie, “Yes, it’s beautiful”, I choked out.

“Let’s see the rest!” He blurted out as he grabbed my hand and pulled me into another room.

It was the kitchen, all the appliances were stainless steel, the counter tops granite, with a big island in the middle that was also granite. The sink was huge and had an atrium window all the way across the top so you could look out at the forests while doing dishes or preparing dinner.

There was a dishwasher, a built-in wine cellar, a side by side refrigerator and a double oven and stove. off to the side and by itself was a walk-in pantry.

‘Oh my gosh’, I gushed. “This is overwhelming”!

Tony laid back against the counters, “So I did good?” he smirked.

“I worked my ass off to get this!” His tone changed.

I hated that tone; the I’ve done everything by myself tone. I was an artist, but he didn’t ever take my work seriously. No, I hadn’t made the money he had but I did contribute some and always in other ways, like taking care of the house and bills etc.

“Yes, you did great”, I told him, careful not to sound patronizing.

“Let’s see the bedrooms”, I said, trying to change the subject.

“Let’s!” He said turning to walk out.

There was a twisting staircase that had the same wood motif as the rest of the house. Walking up the side of the wall had the most interesting worm wood panels. It had two bedrooms and one smaller room that could be used as a studio or office.

Since it was just the two of us, I figured he would get to choose his room for an office, and I would take whichever was left.

The master bedroom was almost as big as the downstairs room. It had an A-frame to it with a sliding door out to a smaller private deck. The closet was a huge walk in and had shoe shelves built in. The bathroom had a jacuzzi tub with jets and there was also a shower.

A huge vanity was on one wall and it had the whole wall in mirrors. His and her sinks with lights over it that reminded me of Hollywood.

“Wow!”, I love this vanity!”, I squeaked.

Tony just smiled, gloating. The other rooms were basic, except for the one larger room also had a small private deck.

“You can have this room”, Tony said authoritatively.

“It has the deck and large windows, you may need that as an artist”, Now who’s being patronizing, I thought. But all I said was “Thank you.”

Chapter 5

After Moving most of the boxes and smaller stuff in, Tony's new boss sent over some help from the office to get the rest of the bulky and heavier stuff in. I'd been working on it for weeks and It was starting to look like a home finally.

I took a look around and was in deep thought when Tony walked in. He was in a suit and getting ready to go to his first day at his new job. His hair was slicked back and held with a light mousse; I could smell the cologne from across the room.

He had just shaved the shadow off his face that I preferred. He was always handsome in a suit, but I preferred him in a more relaxed look.

"You look nice" I said.

"Thank you," he coolly replied.

"I'm not sure the furniture fits this place", I said.

"I've been looking at it and it looks out of place."

I didn't look at him as I said it, but I could feel his expression.

"You want new furniture now?" Tony growled.

"I'm not saying that, just that in our old place, it fit, here not really."

I looked at him, "Don't you agree?"

"I'm late", was all he said, grabbed his keys and walked out. Don't know if he meant too, but the big wood door slammed shut and echoed in the big room, leaving me standing alone in it.

Tony pulled into the garage after his forty-minute commute. The company had him a space with his name waiting for him. He parked the Lexus and took the elevator up to the tenth floor. Doors slid back with a ring and he stepped out into the big office.

Several guys and a couple of nice-looking women turned to stare. He walked up to the first desk he saw and introduced himself. The woman at the desk had shoulder length blond hair, blue eyes and a nice smile. She stood and introduced herself.

"Hello, I'm Carrie," I'll let Mr. Blocker know you are here."

“Have a seat there,” she motioned to a couch near her desk.

“Thank you,” Tony said and sat down on the couch.

A few minutes later a tall gentleman in a dark suit comes from down the hall,

“Come on back,” said the man as he waved him back.

As Tony approached the man he says, “Nice to meet you, Tony”, glad to have you aboard, are you and the little lady getting all settled in?” as he offered his hand.

Tony followed him down a relatively short hall and into a large office with a wonderful view of the city.

“Have a seat just there”, the man pointed to one of the leather chairs in front of a large walnut desk.

“I’m John Blocker, as you well know.”

“Just call me John.” He said chuckling.

“Are you ready for this?” Tony looked at him, almost surprised.

“Well yes sir, it’s why I moved here.”

“How’s the little wife liking it so far?” John bloats out.

“Um, well it’s a big change from Chicago, but she’s adjusting.”

“Well, it’s hard to change places and start a new life”, John said shaking his head.

“But I think it will be worth it for you.”

“Let’s get busy”, we have a lot to do!” John said, all the while shuffling papers.

“There’s going to be some long hours for a while, you ready for that”?

Tony tried to not look worried, “You bet!”

Chapter 6

Shyla found herself busy in the big house alone most days. She tried to get used to being out in the wilderness as it seemed to her. Still getting used to the noises the big house made, sometimes it had her spooked. She just about had everything in its place though and was feeling satisfied about it. She couldn't really plan dinner at night because Tony had been working late almost every night. Eating alone was something she had to get used to it seemed. She was able to do some work of her own now that she had gotten the house together. The studio was coming along well, and she loved having the private deck to sit out on and enjoy the view and sounds of the birds. Sometimes when it was really quiet, she thought she heard a brook. She loved photography and also painted some. She was thinking of taking some shots of the birds that flew up to the decks rail or in the taller trees. Deep in thought she didn't hear the door, and Tony was standing there watching her.

"Holy crap!" "You scared the begazes out of me!" Shyla screamed.

Tony smiled a tired smile.

"Want a drink?" He snipped.

"Sure", need one now." She said, taking in a deep breath.

"Bourbon?", he asked grabbing a couple of glasses from behind the bar.

"That's fine", she sighed.

"What were you so deep in thought about anyway," Tony asked curiously.

"I was thinking about going out and getting some photographs of some of these birds around here." Shyla said.

Tony frowned, "Better not be roaming around in these woods all alone, who knows what creatures are out there." He said concerned, but with a hint of authority.

"Well I'm going to have to go sometimes and you're not going to be here to accompany me," Shyla winced after saying it.

"I have to work!" Tony snapped.

“I know that,” but..... he cut her off, “who’s going to buy pictures of birds anyway!” Tony blurted out. Shyla could feel that same old pain hit her again, her eyes started to well up and her throat was tightening.

“I’m not going to fight with you about this again!” She said trying to keep from losing it.

“I came here for you, the least you could do is back me up a little bit, give me some encouragement for a change!” Shyla started to sob. “Oh Christ!” I’m tired, I’m going to bed.”

Tony swallowed down the last of his bourbon, putting the glass down hard, left the room.

Leaving Shyla standing alone again in the big room with tears streaming down her face.

Chapter 7

Hesiod had been very busy the past few weeks carving his new wooden instrument. He had all of his tools together, the chisels, gouges, curved, short and long bent, straight skews and mallet. He started on the wood while it was still pliable and hollowed it out.

Next, he made all the necessary holes for his fingers on top of the wood. He carved very detailed markings on the wood to make it his own. As he worked, he would blow into the instrument and adjust the holes according to the sound.

It took a long time to hone his craft, but it just came to him naturally, as it would to any Satyr.

This was an instrument that was an extension of himself, as if a part of his own body or breath. He only had to listen to it to know which way to adjust it.

It was something in his blood, born into him and could not be ignored. It pulled at him day and night, but there was something else to it, he couldn't understand yet.

There was an urgency and a passion that went along with it and when he had finished the wooden instrument and it laid curing in front of the fire, there was another fire stirring to be fed.

Something that he felt deeper inside him than anything else. He felt an ache in the pit of his stomach that traveled even lower.

After a few days the instrument was ready to be tested and the forest was calling him out.

Hesiod grabbed up the instrument and went to the door, as he opened it and stepped out, the fresh air filled his lungs. It was a warm day and he knew just where to go to try out his new instrument and musical talents.

As he went, he kind of sauntered along, swaying to the left, then to the right. Getting closer to his destination, he could hear the brook and the water playing a wet chorus of its own. He knew the fairies would be there.

The sun peeked through the trees like a spotlight on the water, sparkles dancing like little diamond ballerinas. There was a light breeze that carried the scent of lavender that grew wild in the adjacent meadow.

Dandelion and cottonwood seed pods were floating in the air all around, looking for a place to lay roots.

As he got closer, he heard giggling and saw the remnants of gold and silver fairy dust on some of the plants. He stilled, stealth like, carefully, he moved in closer, he counted four fairies sitting on the rocks by the brook. They were oblivious to him.

A couple of them had their feet in the water. One of the fairies looked somewhat green, another blue, yet another yellow and the last one took on a purple hue. All had a fairy dust luminous sheen to them and transparent wings similar to a dragonflies. Their hair was long and shaggy, falling down across their faces. Female, all of them, he noticed. Bodies tight, perky breasts and tight little melon butts.

Hesiod raised his instrument; he took a good long breath and blew into it. Watching the fairies, the whole time, they did not see him though. The music came out sweet, sultry with a smooth rhythm that enters the ear and wraps around the eardrum like a swaddle.

The fairies stopped, startled at first, eyes wide, almost going to fly, then with its taunting sound reaching them they stopped. Like in a trance they were drawn to him, no control over their own bodies, actions or desires.

They flew to him, swarming around him, climbing on his back and arms. Rubbing all over him as a cat would if he had been offered catnip. Leaving trails of fairy dust all over his body.

It was as if they had been given a love potion or spell. Hesiod was equally surprised at the fairies show of desire and passion towards him. He stopped playing.

The fairies, as if waking up from a dream, jumped off Hesiod. Embarrassed and ashamed, faces pink and flushed, they flew off as fast as they could to hide.

“Wow?! that was weird!” he said to himself.

Shaking off the event, he now realized his cock had swelled and was throbbing terribly.

“What is happening to me?” Hesiod thought to himself.

The fairies had hidden behind the rocks that lined the brook they had been bathing in, they peered over it to look at Hesiod,

“I’m very sorry,” he said, seeing that they were visibly shaken by what had happened.

“I wasn’t really aware of the effect the music that comes out of my instrument would have on you,” Hesiod tried to explain something he hardly understood himself, but it would be clear to him in time very soon.

Chapter 8

As the weeks past, Shyla and Tony barely saw each other. Tony was always working late and seldom home until well after dark. The weekends were no better between them, Tony was too tired to do anything with Shyla or he was working in his office at home. The distance between them seemed to be growing since they moved here.

“This isn’t the way I thought it would be here”, Shyla said to Tony.

It was Sunday night, so they had a chance to sit down and eat together.

Tony looked up from his plate, “What’s your problem? haven’t you had all kinds of time to work on any of your artsy projects?” snapped Tony.

Shyla shook her head and took a sip of her wine.

“You’re never going to give me any credit, are you?!”

“You think all I am doing with my art is useless!”, Shyla could feel herself tightening up everywhere.

Tony stood, “Most women would be happy to have this place and the time you have to yourself!” Tony argued.

He removed his plate and tossed it in the sink. Gulping down the last of his red wine.

“I’m tired, I have to work in the morning, I’m going to bed.

Shyla again, stood there in the big room all alone, but this time she did not sob.

“This crap is going to end,” she grumbled under her voice.

She poured another glass of wine and went to sit outside on the large deck adjacent to the living room. It was just dusk, the air was still and light, she could smell what she thought to be lavender coming through the trees.

She took a deep breath and sighed. The moon was almost full and peeking through the trees as it was rising as if waking from a long slumber. Yellowish in color, it gave a nice pale outline to the trees leaves. The crickets were singing low and steady, she closed her eyes and listened to the woods.

Her eyes sprung open, “Music?” “is that music I’m hearing,” it stopped, “I must be crazy, hearing things now, nobody would be out in those woods playing music no less.”

She strained to hear it again, nothing. Shyla sipped her wine in silence and came in the house, closing the big sliding door behind her. She paused and looked out a minute while she finished her wine. Her eyes squinted, thinking she saw something moving out there.

“Is that a deer!?” She whispered to herself.

She looked hard again, trying to see through the trees, but it had gotten darker.

“I must be tired,” she sighed.

She put the empty glass on the sink and climbed up the stairs, feeling the smooth cool wood under her feet with each step.

Shyla woke to the sun streaming across the room, it hit the wall and was already warming it up in there, she looked around for Tony, he was nowhere to be found.

She turned and looked at the clock, “Nine ‘O five!” she rubbed her eyes, “I must have been out of it.”

Shyla slowly got out of bed, walked nude into the bathroom, she could still smell Tony’s cologne from him getting ready for work this morning while she slept.

A damp towel hung on the hook near the shower. She replaced it with a new one and reached in to turn on the shower. She tested the water and walked in sliding the glass door behind her.

The shower was big, had a seat for shaving legs or what not. The warm water felt so inviting as she stepped in, taking the soap from the holder, she ran it over her body. Her skin was slippery, warm and wet, she ran her hands across her breasts and felt her nipples tighten.

She had a pang low between her legs, she groaned, it had been so long since Tony had made love to her. She removed the shower head from its holder, adjusting the spray to a rhythmic pulsating stream she sat down on the seat, leaning back she lowered the pulsating shower head between her legs.

The water was very warm, the stream pounded her clit, entering her at times. She started to tremble and pushed the nozzle closer. Her head came back as she gushed so hard, she wasn't sure if it was the water or herself.

“Oh, yes!”, she cried out and slumped on the seat.

After her invigorating shower Shyla made her a quick breakfast of egg whites, toast and avocado.

“What to do today?” she contemplated.

Then she thought of something, did she see a deer last night or was she just seeing things from being tired and the wine?

She climbed the stairs and went to her studio, grabbing her camera, a telephoto lens, and her backpack.

She went to the bedroom and found her tennis shoes in the closet, sat down on the chair by the bed and slid on some short socks, and pulled on her tennis shoes without undoing the laces.

She scrambled down the stairs and into the kitchen. From the kitchen she grabbed a water bottle and filled it with ice and water from the tap. Opening the pantry, she found a granola bar and some crackers with peanut butter, she shoved it all in her backpack and threw it up on her back.

She went out the large sliding glass window out onto the deck, there was a warm breeze and hardly any clouds or humidity.

She moved towards the staircase that led down to the ground, stepping carefully down each step, pausing right before the bottom, peering off into the woods a thought came creeping in her mind.

“Is this a good idea, or one of my stupid ones?” then she thought, Tony wouldn't like it, “fuck Tony!” he does what he wants, and how am I ever going to get any good photos if I don't go?” she whispered to herself.

So off she went.

Shyla was overwhelmed by the beauty of the forest. So many shades of green and the way the light shredded through the tall trees gave some of them a golden hue. As she walked, she could

hear the song of several different birds and the sound of a brook bubbling its way through the rocks that lay beneath.

“I knew I heard a brook”, she muttered under her breath. As she approached closer to the sound of the rushing water the scattered sunlight began to fade as the canopy of leaves closed in over her. The brook came into her view finally and she saw a nice flat rock nestled next to it that invited her to sit.

She went to sit and noticed some weird sparkly dust on the rocks next to the water’s edge. She ran her fingers across it, it was luminous with a rainbow of blues, greens and yellows. A butterflies dust maybe, she thought to herself. She sat down and realized she was getting pretty tired as she looked at her watch to check the time.

“Wow, I’ve been out here walking for almost three hours!” She gasped.

Suddenly her stomach growled at her like a hungry hyena, “Oh the snacks I brought, she thought.”

Shyla greedily tore into the granola bar and started on the crackers and peanut butter, she took out the water bottle and took a long pull off the cool water. The peanut butter had made her teeth thick and gummy, and she wished she had brought a floss pick.

She took a sip of water and gargled it around in her mouth and spit. After her snack she pulled her camera from her pack, opened the case, and connected the telephoto lens. She held it up to her eye and put a blue bird with yellow in its wings into her view.

It was singing happily on a lower branch of a magnificent tree across from her. Snapping several pictures in a row so she could pick and choose the best one.

Then she noticed some strange flat looking brown mushrooms growing off the side of a couple of trees near the brooks edge.

They were unique looking and very interesting to her; the thought crossed her mind if they would be psychedelics.

After shooting a roll of birds, mushrooms and different looking vegetation, the light seemed to be fading.

“I better get my ass back before it gets dark out here,” Shyla thought.

“Where’s my deer?” she laughed under her breath at the thought of what was probably her imagination anyway. As she stood, camera still in her hand, she froze.

Her eyes widened, she blinked several times to try and focus her eyes. The light was fading, and a mist had seemed to appear from nowhere, which made clearly seeing a chore.

The creature was tall, appeared to be up on hind legs, furry legs! It darted behind a big pine tree before she could get a detailed look at it.

Almost looked human, but swore it had horns!

Shyla started to move toward the tree, she stopped, “what the fuck am I doing?” she whispered under her breath.

“I need to get the hell back to the house,” turning on her heels, she started running as fast as she could possibly go.

Shyla ran until her lungs were burning, gasping for air she finally could see the trail closer to the house and the faint twinkle of lights.

“Shit!” “Tony’s home!” Shyla said in between gulps of air. She came to the steps at the deck and hesitated, “should I tell him what I saw?”, she wondered.

Climbing the stairs, she could see Tony pacing the long floor with a glass of bourbon in his hand. She slid the sliding glass door back and walked in.

“Where the fuck have you been!?” Tony snarled.

“I’ve been worried sick, it’s fucking dark!”

“Were you in these fucking woods this late?”

Barely giving her a chance to answer him, she cut in.

“I went hiking to take some photographs today, I thought I saw a deer last night and thought I might catch it on film, I just lost track of time”.

Shyla was trying to catch her breath in between trying to explain her whereabouts.

“Why are you so out of breath?” Tony questioned.

“Um, I was running, trying to get back before dark” Shyla said turning away from him to put her backpack down and shield her face from her lie.

“Not real smart Shyla” Tony said trying to guilt her.

“I know, I’m sorry, like I said I didn’t realize it had gotten so late.”

“Lots of things to look at out there,” Shyla thought back to the creature she had seen.

Probably not a good idea to tell him about it either seeing how upset he was.

“Can you pour me one of those drinks please?” Shyla whimpered.

“Yeah,” Tony said moving to the bar.

He poured her a bourbon and came over to her, Shyla hadn’t moved and was using the chair to stabilize herself.

She reached out for the drink, “why are you so shaken,” Tony asked.

“Oh, just the run, took a lot out of me, I guess.

“Well I don’t want you out in the woods alone anymore,” Tony demanded.

Shyla didn’t want to argue, “Ok,” was all she said and swallowed down the bourbon in one gulp.

Chapter 9

The next day after Tony left for work Shyla decided to go into town and shop for some binoculars, so she could spy into the forest from the safety of the deck. She made the twenty-five-minute drive in fifteen, wanting to get them and get back to start watching out into the woods before Tony came home.

She saw a sporting goods store in a shopping plaza and pulled in. There was a quite a few businesses in the plaza, focused on what she came for she didn't stop to notice each one. She entered the store and immediately a short frumpy fellow with a green vest and a name tag that read 'Sam' came over and asked if she needed any help.

"Why yes, I could use some help," Shyla smiled as she said it.

"What are you looking for today?" asked Sam enthusiastically.

"I'm looking for a pair of binoculars, something powerful, that I can watch, um, deer with!" she blurted out.

"OK, we have just the pair you need!" said Sam proudly.

"Follow me, we will go to the counter over there in the back," Sam motioned for Shayla to follow him.

When they arrived at the counter there were several different styles and brands of binoculars. Some were very expensive she noticed, some had cases, some were big, some were small.

"I didn't realize there were so many different types of binoculars." Shyla said.

"Oh, yes, some for every hobby or use, hunting, bird watching, spying, he laughed, or even some for night vision, if you need that sort of thing."

"Night vision?" Shyla asked.

"I never knew they had night vision binoculars!"

"Why yes Mam," Sam said boastfully.

"They are somewhat more expensive but worth it if you like to watch things at night!" Sam exclaimed.

Shyla's eyes lit up, "Well, um, yes, I think I'd like to have night vision, you see I am watching deer that come close to my house near dark and"she caught herself, why was she explaining to some store sales person?!

"These will do fine," she said.

She hurriedly paid for the binoculars and made her way out of the store. Feeling a little worn, she noticed a pang in her belly, she glanced at her watch, it was a little past one and she was in town after all, lunchtime. She noticed a little cafe in the corner, chairs out front and lots of plants around, looked cute and cozy.

Shyla walked in the cafe and walked up to the hostess, the seating area was shielded somewhat from the front as you walked in, but she could see into some of the back tables. As she peered in, she was shocked to see Tony sitting at a secluded table near the rear, but he was not alone, in fact he was practically sitting on top of a pretty little blond woman!

"What the fuck?!" Shyla said a little too loud.

The hostess looked at her, surprised, "Is there a problem miss?" the hostess said.

Without looking at her Shyla said, "Yes! A big one."

She only watched him for a second more as he leaned over and kissed the woman passionately. Feeling sick to her stomach, Shyla turned and ran out of the cafe to make sure Tony did not see her. Shyla made it back to her car, she was dizzy and sick feeling, she opened the door and slumped in the seat.

"Why!? Why?" she cried.

"No wonder he hasn't been making love to me for so long!" Shyla sobbed.

How long has this been going on she thought.

"Was this the reason we moved here?!" She wiped her face and took a ragged breath.

I've got to get out of here before he comes out and sees me, she thought, starting the car. Shyla drove home half in a daze, tears streaming down her face, the taste of salt in her mouth. She still couldn't believe what she saw was true.

By the time Shyla reached the house her sorrow had turned to rage, she was clutching the steering wheel so hard her hands hurt. She squealed into the driveway and stopped the car, grabbing the bag containing the binoculars and tucking them under her arm, she ran up the stone steps.

When she reached the entry way she wrestled with the lock on the front door.

“Come on, come on!” she screamed jiggling the knob.

The lock gave way and she threw the door open, slamming it hard into the wall. She tossed the bag on the couch, threw her purse on the table and headed straight to the bar, pouring herself a tall bourbon. Swallowing it down, trying to smooth out the lump in her throat, she gagged and coughed, tears again coming to her eyes.

“I need to get my shit together,” she choked out loud.

“Six years, six years of marriage, almost eight together total, how could he do that?”

“What now? do I confront him, or find out more?”

Just then she had an urge to go into Tony’s office. She walked up the wooden stairs one by one, every step harder and harder. Down the hall she stopped at his door, took a breath and turned the knob. The room was dark, shade pulled down over the only window that looked out the back.

She moved to the desk, it was long, dark cherry wood and had several drawers on each side. A MacBook Pro sat on the desktop closed and appeared to be turned off. She lifted the lid, nothing, she touched a key, the lights came on, but it was wanting a password.

She tried a couple of words, her birthday and his, nothing. Losing patience with the computer, Shyla opened the top draw on the right, pens, pencils, some note paper and a ruler. She opened the next drawer, some papers in a folder, scissors, rubber bands and paper clips.

She opened the bottom drawer, a case sat there in the front and she knew it was his 9mm Ruger and some ammunition in the back. Closing the drawer, she went to the other side, opened the top left drawer and found a tape recorder, some highlighters and erasers.

Next drawer, a couple of ledgers, she removed them and thumbed through them, mostly some numbers in one and the other was empty. She closed the drawer and went to open the last drawer

on the bottom. She noticed a lock on this one, she pulled on the handle, it didn't move. She looked back through the other drawers again quickly, no keys.

By this time Shyla had come to the realization that her husband had a lot of secrets! Shyla suddenly felt faint, she realized she hadn't eaten all day and the stress of what she saw along with no food had started to take its toll.

"I need to try to eat something," she murmured to herself weakly.

She walked downstairs and into the kitchen, opened the fridge and looked around for something light. She pulled out some fat free cottage cheese and went to the pantry and pulled out a snack pack of peaches, grabbing a bowl out of the cabinet above her she scooped some of the cottage cheese out into the bowl and opened the peaches, which she poured into the bowl as well.

Shyla sat down at the table and started to eat, the cottage cheese was cold and creamy, with the peaches adding a little sweetness to it. She looked to the couch and saw the bag; her thoughts came back to the creature she saw in the woods. What was it and why was it on its hind legs like a human!?

"Seems like I have a lot to get to the bottom of," Shyla said as she finished the last bite of her snack.

Tony was late as usual getting home, now Shyla wasn't sure if it was because of work or his extracurricular activities. He walked into the big living room, walked to the bar and poured himself a bourbon, putting his briefcase down on the granite top. The house was quiet, dark except for one light by the couch.

"Shyla?!" Tony shouted.

"I'm home!" he added. He listened, no response.

"Shyla!" he screamed again.

"Up here!" Shyla finally replied.

Tony grabbed his drink and hopped up the stairs. He walked down the hall and saw the light coming from her studio. He walked to the door and stopped, leaning on the doorway rafter, he stood as if he was waiting for her to bow at his feet because he was home.

“Did you have a good day at work?” Shyla snapped, without looking at him.

“The usual,” Tony replied.

“Oh? the usual huh?!” Shyla said disdainfully.

Tony seemed oblivious to Shyla’s reply.

“What have you been up to all day?” Tony said nonchalantly.

“Oh, the usual,” Shyla said shortly, never looking up from her work.

“OK, well I’m beat, I’m going to…….Shyla interrupted him and finished his sentence.

“Go take a shower and go to bed!”

“Oh, so you’re in one of “*those*” moods,” Tony said as he turned to walk off.

Shyla could feel herself tighten and her skin warm from the flush, the anger was clawing at her from the inside. She didn’t have the strength though to fight with him tonight, the whole day had taken it all away.

“All in due time,” She thought to herself and let him walk off to bed.

She got up from her desk and walked downstairs, hearing the shower water coming from their bedroom bath as she descended down the rest of the way into the living room.

Going to the bar herself, she poured her a glass of bourbon and preceded to walk out onto the big deck. The night was cool with a breeze, the treetops swayed in the wind. She could hear the wispy sound they made as they rubbed up against each other in the dark.

The lavender she usually smelt was faint tonight, there was a mustier smell coming across her nose. She sat down on one of the lounge chairs, her body sank into the fluffy cushions and she pulled a lightweight blanket from the top of the lounge and threw it out over her legs.

She laid back and was looking up at the stars, they twinkled at her as if giving her a hundred winks. A planes lights moved silently across the black sky and she wondered where it was going. She closed her eyes and started to relive the nightmare of the day.

Then music! it was faint, but she recognized it as the same music she thought she heard for a second a few nights ago.

It was smooth and sultry, it made her stir inside, almost in a trance, she rose and slowly walked to the edge of the rail. This music was enchanting to her ears, she strained to hear it more clearly.

The melody was swirling around her and her body started to feel as if a thousand smooth fingers were lightly touching her, stroking her and pulling her to move towards it.

She moved to the stairs, slowly stepping down each step, yearning to go further and closer to the sound coursing over her body.

She reached the bottom and stepped off the last step onto the pine needles and leaves, her weight made the ground crunch and cry out.

All the sudden she snapped out of her trance, the music had stopped, she was confused and realized she was at the bottom of the deck stairs heading out into the woods, and it was dark!

“What the hell?!” Shyla shook it off, “what am I doing down here?” she gasped.

Just then she heard some rustling noise in the distance, as if something was running away. Shyla turned and grabbed the rail, taking two stairs at a time she made it to the top. She ran into the kitchen and opened the walk-in pantry; she moved a couple of items from the lower shelf and retrieved the binoculars she had stashed away from Tony’s view.

She ran back outside and almost stopped to late at the rail. She put them up to her face and hit the night vision switch on the side. She scanned the woods across and back again, nothing. She listened, no music, no rustling, just then big eyes were in her focus coming at her fast!

She fell backwards as the wind of the wings of a big owl came rushing over her head. She landed on the table, and it made a crash.

“Ouch!” Shyla shouted out. She scrambled to her feet to turn and see Tony standing there.

“What the hell are you doing out here?!” he shouted.

“I, um, was having a drink and relaxing,” she said unconvincingly.

“Relaxing?!” Tony blurted out.

“It sounded like you were wrestling a dragon out here.”

“Well, a big owl tried to attack me,” she lied.

“What?” Tony replied in disbelief.

“It’s late, come in the house and go to bed.”

Just then Tony noticed the binoculars, “Where did you get those?” Tony demanded. “I... I bought them,” Shyla spit out.

“What the hell do you need with a pair of binoculars?”

“Well, I thought since we had the deck, I might see some deer or bird watch,” Shyla fabricated.

“Great another hobby,” Tony said shaking his head.

“So, you were watching birds at night?” Tony snipped.

“Owls,” Shyla chirped, feeling almost like she wanted to laugh, but more like crying, as she thought, “He has some nerve giving me the third degree!”

Shyla woke late again, she felt as if she had been drugged. Slowly she stammered out of bed, noticing Tony was already gone as usual. Off to his other life she thought silently.

She replayed the night in her head as well as she could remember. The music she heard was foggy to her memory this morning. It wasn’t a tune she had never heard before, it for sure wasn’t coming from a radio or even something recorded.

That music was being played, but by who? This mystery was really beginning to bug her, at least it was taking her mind off of something she didn’t want to face right now.

Shyla pulled on some shorts, slid a sports bra over her head and grabbed the first T-Shirt she found in the closet. She slipped into some socks and grabbed her tennis shoes. Pulling her backpack down from the hook she walked downstairs and into the kitchen.

Coffee was still in the pot from Tony this morning. She poured herself a cup and opened the fridge to grab the egg whites and orange juice. Opening the cupboard, she reached up and got the olive oil spray for the pan she retrieved from below the oven.

Turning on the burner she cooked the egg whites and threw them on a piece of toast. Searching the top of the granite counter for an avocado, she chose one that looked ready and sliced it open. Retrieving a small juice glass from the cupboard above her she poured herself a glass of orange juice. Shyla sat at the table in silence and ate her breakfast. After she had eaten, she put the

dishes into the sink, rinsing them off. Grabbing a granola bar and a banana off the end of the counter out of the same basket that contained the avocados, she stuffed them into her backpack along with the binoculars, and her camera and then zipped it up.

“I’m going to get to the bottom of this today!” she said as she walked out onto the deck and down the stairs.

Chapter 10

Hesiod was still shaken from the other day in the woods, that was the closest he had ever been to a human. A female human, he knew from her size and shape and could smell the sweet fragrance of her from across the woods that day.

Something stirs in him every time he would think of her and he had been following her scent the other night after she ran home. He had peered through the woods and came close to the big house she went into. Remembering the effect his playing had on the fairies a few weeks ago by the brook he thought he would try it on the pretty female human.

Last night he went close to the house but always was careful not to move in too close. Hesiod played his instrument as he hid behind a big pine tree. He watched as the pretty female human came down the stairs and to the edge of the woods, but he lost his nerve and quit playing. He watched her sort of wake up and run back up the stairs, that is when he ran back to his house, heart pounding but exhilarated at the same time.

He would go out into the woods again tomorrow and see if he could catch a glimpse of this pretty female human again. He was drawn to her, the smell of her, her long dark hair and shapely body. He would be brave and would not run he decided.

He really had no choice; the urge and curiosity were just too strong. He was still a young Satyr, just came into his horns fully and his coat on his lower torso had come in full this year. When it is time for a Satyr to make his instrument it also comes with the urge to look for, not a female Satyr but a human one.

Hesiod cleaned his instrument that night and would go to the brook early in the morning and bathe himself. He wanted to look his best for meeting his pretty female human. He made himself a roaring fire and curled up on the big rug in front of it. Tonight, he would dream of her, tomorrow it will be true.

Hesiod woke early as usual, he grabbed his pack and put his instrument in it along with his comb made from bone and some peppermint and lavender soap he had made last year. A soft rag and an old raggedy towel. He flung open the door and the crisp morning air hit him in the face, there was a slight fog hanging along the path like a sheet offering him his privacy. He made his way

down the path until he could hear the brook babbling like a baby trying out its first words. He found the deepest part of the brook, where the rocks stopped and made a sort of dam, it dropped off to form a small pool. This was his place to bathe, the faeries weren't out yet, too early for faeries, they liked to sleep in until it was warmer.

Hesiod bathed and dried off best he could, he ran the bone comb through his long sandy blond hair, smoothing it back, but parts of it kept falling back down across his blue eyes.

Packing his things back into the pack carefully one by one, Hesiod was lost deep in his thoughts about how this meeting would go with the pretty female human. Should he try to speak to her, what would he say, should he try to enchant her with his musical instrument or see if he could keep her here without the enchantment?

A lot of questions, none he had the answers to, he was just hoping she would not fear him and run away. Or that he would lose his cool and run away, oh please no, he couldn't bear it, how disgraceful it would be! He was so deep in thoughts that he never heard her come through the clearing and into view.

Shyla had followed the trail that she had last time, as she got closer, she could hear the brook again. The sun was getting higher and it pierced through the trees leaving misty stripes of golden light bouncing back and forth across the ground as the trees waved good morning. She walked out to the edge where the rocks started to line the brook.

Watching the ground beneath her she glanced up, about fifty yards or so there he was! She froze, he hadn't noticed her, he was kneeling down, busy doing something. Shyla blinked repeatedly trying to clear her eyes of what she saw.

It looked like an animal, but a human, but it had horns but also hands, cloven hooves and hair or fur on its torso and legs. Shyla stepped back; the thought crossed her mind to run again. She backed a step and "pop!" a twig snapped and echoed in the dense forest.

Hesiod stood up and turned quickly, he saw Shyla and froze also, both of them stood gapping at each other with wide eyes. Shyla, could not take her eyes away from him, he was so tall, cut and ripped as if in the gym all day long, his sandy blond hair was long just past his shoulder and had strands hanging down across his eyes, he had a foo man choo mustache and a go-tee.

“Hel-Hello,” Shyla forced out.

“Do you understand me?”

Hesiod moved towards her saying nothing. Shyla took a step back, she looked as if she was going to run again. Hesiod bent down in one swift move and retrieved his wooded instrument. He raised it to his lips, took in a deep breath and played.

The music filled the woods with a smooth erotic sound, as he played, he closed his eyes for a moment or two so he could get the feel of the tone. He glanced at Shyla, she no longer looked like she would flee, her posture had changed, and she was coming towards him slowly one step at a time.

Walking with her eyes practically closed, listening to the melody that had taken hold of her body and mind, Shyla started to sway and move like a drunken ballerina, getting closer to Hesiod with every movement.

Shyla was about to reach out to him when he stopped playing, she awoke from her trance stopping right in front of his face. Shyla gasped, she was so close to him, she could smell his musky odor mixed with lavender and a hint of peppermint!

His eyes were a piercing blue like she had never seen, his body glistened with sweat as if it had just been misted by a spray bottle, strands of sun caressed every cut of muscle. His hair hung down across his rugged face, she wanted to reach up and sweep it to the side.

Then as if sobering up from a drunken binge the enchantment started to wear off. Shyla woke up sort of, she stepped back away from him, Hesiod raised his instrument, “Don’t,” She said pleading.

“Please, I don’t know what you do when you play that instrument, but it’s not me when you do.” I mean it’s me.....but I’m not all here.”

“Do you even understand me?”

Hesiod lowered his instrument. Shyla was shaking, still trying to believe what was happening, getting to overwhelmed she turned and started to run.

“Please,” Hesiod said, grabbing her arm.

Shyla turned and looked at him with disbelief and fear.

Hesiod released her arm, "I am sorry, I won't harm you."

His voice was deep and sultry and came out thick.

"What are you?" Shyla asked, then regretted it.

"I'm sorry," "I mean, how are you?" "oh shit, I mean..... "A Satyr," Hesiod said.

Shyla's eyes widened, "Oh my, I have read myths about your kind!"

"You are real!" she squealed.

Hesiod kind of smiled and said, "Yes as far as I know, I have always been real."

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Shyla, what is your name?"

"Hesiod," he said, running his big hands through his hair.

"Do you live out here?" Shyla probed.

"Yes, I have a cottage I built some years back deeper in the woods," he said.

"Would you like to see it?"

"Um, maybe another time, right now I must be getting back to my house, it's getting late," looking at her watch.

"OK, thank you for not running," Hesiod said.

"I must go" Shyla said with urgency as she turned to leave.

"Will you come out again?" He asked.

"Um, I'm not sure," Shyla said, still wondering if she was going insane and this was all a dream.

As she walked home in a fast pace, she peered back time to time and could swear he was there following her, but she could never see him. In a way it creeped her out, in another made her feel safe.

“Weird,” she thought to herself as she saw the faint outline of the house in the dusk light. She arrived at the back stairs and stopped, looking out into the now almost dark woods, was she losing it, or did that just happen?!

She continued to walk up the stairs, at the top she took one last look out, almost dark, she swore she saw him watching to make sure she made it home.

Hesiod *had* followed Shyla from a distance he knew she wouldn’t be able to detect, he had to make sure his pretty female human made it home. After all, there were wolves and other creatures not so pleasant out in these woods.

He had finally met her, he turned and headed down the path in the dark, replaying the meeting over in his head.

“I must see her again,” he thought to himself eagerly.

“She’s so beautiful, and her smell is so intoxicating to me,” Hesiod whispered to himself as he made his way back to his cottage.

Shyla slid the big glass door open and walked in the house, the light that sat on the table next to the couch was on. She could hear Tony in the kitchen, he was talking to someone, she walked slowly over to the edge of the door and stopped.

He was on the phone; she could hear him speaking in a low voice.

“Not yet,” he said.

“I will, I will, just not now,” he said agitated.

“I told you not to get a hold of me here late at night,” Tony’s voice became louder.

“I can’t talk anymore, I’ll see you tomorrow,” Tony turned to see Shyla staring at him with a frown on her face.

“OK, I’ll talk to you tomorrow about that case,” Tony lied and hung up his cell.

“Hey, were you out bird hunting again?” Tony asked flustered.

“Not bird *“hunting,”* Shyla snapped.

“You barely made it home before dark,” Tony said.

Shyla ignored him, “Who was that on the phone?” Shyla insisted.

“Work,” he lied.

Shyla turned her head sideways, “Really?”

“That’s what you’re going with?” Shyla sneered.

Tony started to fidget and turned to look in the fridge.

“Tony?” Shyla waited.

Tony shut the door and turned to her again.

His face was red, and he had gotten a bead of sweat across his forehead.

“What do you mean, going with?” he pretended not to know what she meant.

“Come on Tony!” Shyla’s brow furrowed.

“I heard you, Christ! I saw you! the other day, I was in town, I went into the cafe!”

“The blond?!”

“Who’s the blond Tony?”

“The one you were sitting on top of and kissing!?” Shyla screamed, her eyes starting to fill with tears.

Tony knew he was busted, no sense in lying now.

“She’s a woman I work with,” he said putting his head down.

“She doesn’t mean anything to me.”

“Are you fucking her?!” Shyla cried.

“It happened twice,” Tony tried to reach out for her.

“Do not touch me!” she screamed.

“How could you?!”

“After I moved here for you, after all the time we’ve been married?” Shyla sobbed.

“I’m going to break it off,” Tony promised.

Shyla rolled her eyes and walked into the living room, she headed to the bar and poured herself a bourbon.

“I don’t want to hear any more of your lies Tony!” Shyla shouted.

“Please, Shyla, I promise, it won’t happen again.”

“Give me another chance,” Tony pleaded.

Shyla couldn’t believe her ears, if he wanted to stay together so bad then why did he do it in the first place?

“Why?” she asked.

“I don’t know, I was bored?”

“She came on to me hard, I tried to deter her, but she just kept on.”

“We worked a lot of late nights together and one thing led to another I guess.”

“You guess?!” She swallowed her bourbon.

“I’m going to bed; you can sleep on the couch!” Shyla snapped and she hurried up the stairs.

“Babe!” Tony shouted out after her, “Please, don’t go to bed like this!” he pleaded again.

Shyla never replied and he could hear the bedroom door shut firm.

Chapter 11

When Shyla woke the house was quiet, she threw on some shorts, and a tank top with a sports bra. She grabbed her tennis shoes, looking for her backpack, no sign of it, she must have left it downstairs last night. She came down to the living room and saw a sheet crumpled up at the end of the couch, she smiled to herself feeling good about Tony having to sleep there last night.

“If that’s all the punishment he gets for that shit he’ll be lucky.” she said to herself as she picked the sheet up and threw it in the laundry room.

She went into the kitchen and got out the carton of egg whites and a pan from the lower cupboard. Opening the fridge, she heard something, “Shyla!” very faintly, “Shyyyllaa!”

She heard it again.

“What the heck?” she said as she walked over to the kitchen window.

Looking out she searched the woods, nothing.

“Shyla,” she heard it again. She ran into the living room and flung the sliding door open, came out on the deck and hung over the rail.

“Hello?!” Shyla called.

From around a big tree peered Hesiod, he was waving her down. She ran down the stairs and across the ground making it to the tree.

“What are you doing here?!” She asked Hesiod.

“I had to see you again, I can’t stop thinking about you.” Hesiod said sheepishly.

“It’s not safe for you to be so close to the house.” said Shyla in a concerned voice.

“I know, I want you to come out with me today.”

I want to show you the woods, there are so many things to see.” Hesiod said enthusiastically.

Shyla looked surprised, but smiled and said,

“Ok, just let me get my backpack.”

She ran upstairs and into the house, grabbing her backpack she hurried out the door sliding it shut and bounded down the stairs. Hesiod was still waiting for her behind the same tree and as

she came closer, he took her hand. Startled, she almost pulled away from him, but then something felt right about it, so she held on.

They walked down the same path she remembered going down the other two times before. There was still a mist from being so early in the morning and it was as if it covered them for their privacy. Getting closer to the brook she could hear the water rushing over the rocks making the babbling sound.

“Shhh,” Hesiod whispered.

“There’s always a couple of does’ here in the morning getting their fill of water before they head out to the meadow.”

“Let’s stay down wind of them.” Hesiod pulled Shyla close to him and crouched down, she came down with him. They sat behind a shrub that made good cover for them. In a matter of minutes, two does came carefully down closer to the water. Looking around cautiously they stood frozen for a few minutes. Shyla was in awe of them, they were so beautiful, their eyes were so big!

She had never seen a wild deer so close before. The does were finally satisfied they were OK to drink and lowered their heads, they drank for what seemed like ten minutes to her. Shyla moved, trying to get her backpack open, Hesiod looked at her quickly, frowning and shaking his head no, but it was too late, the doe’s heads sprung up and in a whirl they were gone.

“Oh, I’m so sorry,” she whined. “I just wanted to get a photograph, damn.”

“It’s OK, they are not gone forever,” he said giggling her.

“They live around here, I always see them here.” he said reassuringly.

“Wait until the afternoon we’ll see the fairies.” he said nonchalantly.

Shyla’s head wheeled around, “Did you say fairies?!” Hesiod laughed, “Yes, fairies.”

“Oh my gosh!” Shyla exclaimed.

“Come now, I’ll take you to the falls.” Hesiod reached out his hand, this time Shyla took his hand in hers.

As they walked, the sun started to rise higher in the sky, it shown through breaks in the trees here and there.

There were all kinds of birds flitting about and Shyla got the urge to take some photos of them. Pausing from time to time to get shots of different birds and foliage. Hesiod was patient and just watched her as she did her work, he was loving to get to spend any time with her.

Soon they came to the place the rocks formed a path and descended switching back and forth as they climbed down. The sound of water was getting more intense and Shyla could see mist coming up from below her and to the left. After one more switch back it came into view.

“Wow!” Shyla gasped.

“How beautiful.”

“Yes, it is, be careful it gets slippery here because of the mist and splashing water.” he warned.

It was getting warmer now and Shyla was sweating from their hike. Hesiod could smell her; he was trying hard to behave and not to scare her.

They came to the bottom and Shyla could feel the power from the falling water, the mist felt good and her hair was getting wet.

There was a large place that looked like a swimming hole at the point the water hit the ground and ran off down the hill.

“How deep is it here?” she asked Hesiod.

“It’s not that deep really,” he said.

“Can you stand under the waterfall?” Shyla asked.

“Yes, you want to?” Hesiod smiled.

“Is it safe?” she spouted.

“I’ll keep you safe,” he said looking at her warmly.

“OK, Shyla said unsure, looking to Hesiod for some comfort.

“Well you’re not going in your clothes, are you?” Hesiod asked playfully.

“Um, well, I don’t have a bathing suit,” she said bashfully.

“Well I’m not wearing anything,” Hesiod laughed.

Shyla hesitated, then slowly pulled her tank top off and laid it on a huge flat rock. Then she unzipped her shorts and slowly pulled them down, putting them with the top and her backpack. She stood there in her sports bra and panties.

“Well, that’ll do I guess,” he said as he held out his hand and led her into the water. It was cool but not really cold, refreshing and Shyla could feel the bottom was mostly smooth and sandy. She squished her feet in the sand and liked the way it felt between her toes. She ducked down into the cool water and swam around a bit, Hesiod never swam, just walked around a bit watching Shyla.

She went under water and came back up leaning back to smooth her hair with the water, she rubbed her eyes and as she uncovered them Hesiod was standing close to her, just staring at her. They looked into each other’s eyes what seemed to be a long while without moving, then he moved towards her, she was frozen. He reached out and pushed a strand of her hair back behind her ear.

The wet musky smell of him hit her nose, his eyes sparkled at her, urging her on. Strands of his sandy blond hair fell across his eyes and his brow gave a serious shade to his eyes. If not for his horns he looked human standing waist deep in the water. His big wide hand slowly and smoothly made its way behind her waist as he pulled her close to him. Holding her face with his other hand he leaned in and pressed his mouth to hers, entering her with his tongue. Shyla moaned, she had her hands holding his biceps and as they kissed deep, he pulled her closer and she felt his hardness climb her belly just above her crotch.

“Oh!” Shyla gasped pushing herself off Hesiod.

“What am I doing?!” She reeled.

“I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have done that.” She apologized.

“Did you like it?” Hesiod asked matter of factually.

“That’s not the point.” Shyla argued. “You’re a...., she stopped.

“I’m a what?” Hesiod looked at her kind of sideways.

Shyla got out of the water and quickly dressed.

“I think the day is over,” she said.

Hesiod dropped his head, “Give me a moment,” he seemed hurt and embarrassed.

“Um, take your time.” Shyla said turning away to give him some privacy.

“I’m sorry if I was out of line.” Hesiod said as he walked out of the water.

“I hope this won’t keep you from seeing me again.” he said regretfully.

“It’s getting late, I need to go.” She said trying to ignore what had just happened.

“Come on, I’ll walk you home, maybe we’ll see the fairies on the way back.” He said trying to change the subject.

They walked most of the way in silence until they could hear the babbling of the brook.

“Were close,” Hesiod warned “No pictures,” he said “OK, I promise I’ll be still,” she said.

As they approached the brook giggling filled the air, Shyla’s attention sharpened. Hesiod was leading the way, crouching as he walked. Stopping abruptly in front of her, she fell into his back, quickly righting herself Hesiod reached his hand behind his back and steadied her.

He turned his head and put a long finger up to his lips in a shushing motion. Shyla nodded and he ran his hand behind her waist and pulled her beside him.

They were behind tall saplings and shrubs and Hesiod pointed towards the brook. Shyla could not believe her eyes for the third time this month, first Hesiod, then Tony and the blond and now “fairies!?”

She could see they were female, no clothes, they had long hair and were a lot of various colors, like hummingbirds’ sort of or dragonflies, but with little human like faces. They were iridescent and left a trail of sparkly dust behind them as they fluttered about. Then she remembered the sparkly dust on the rocks she had seen there before.

It made sense to her now. One was in the water and it looked like she was washing her hair, the others would sit on the rocks for a few minutes then fly about as if testing their wings for the first time, all the while giggling and playing. What happy little creatures, Shyla thought.

Hesiod motioned for them to move back quietly. When they were out of ear range of the fairies Hesiod softly said, "I played my instrument near them the other day and they were all over me." he said as if it pained him.

"It aroused me, and I was ashamed, they were embarrassed too when I quit playing and woke out of the trance, they were in." he confessed.

"Why does your music have that effect on females?" she asked.

"It's hard to explain, it's part of me, it is en-grained in me to play my tune and seduce females, but it is supposed to be human females." he explained.

"You see, I could have you if I wanted to take you that way." he said watching her reaction. Shyla studied his face, "Oh?" was all she said with an uneasiness.

"But you feel different to me." he struggled.

"I... I think I have deeper feelings for you." Hesiod's usual coolness about him was gone and he seemed confused and vulnerable. It made Shyla feel sad somehow and it drew her to him even more.

"Let's go, I'll walk you the rest of the way home, it'll be dark soon. When Shyla and Hesiod reached the house, it was earlier than she ever made it back before, so Tony was not at home yet.

"We made good time," Shyla said.

"I'm glad I beat Tony home." she said, not thinking.

"Who's Tony?" Hesiod asked with a certain irritation to his voice.

"Um, my husband," she pushed out.

"Your married?!" Hesiod was surprised.

"Yes, for almost eight years," Shyla said almost regrettably.

"Oh, kids?" Hesiod held his breath. "No, no children, he was always too busy with his career," She replied.

Hesiod was pleased with her answer but didn't want to show it.

“We’ve been having issues lately, he was having an affair, I just found out.” Shyla said with disappointment in her voice.

“I’m sorry,” Hesiod said.

“Thank you, I’m not sure what is going to happen with us,” Shyla said.

“Well, maybe it’s not a good time to ask, but I would really like it if you could come out tomorrow, I would like to show you my cottage,” Hesiod said with hope in his voice.

“Well, I’m not sure that would be a good idea,” she replied.

“Ok, well I’ll tell you what, I’ll be here at the tree around noon, if you come out, then it was a good idea.” he said lowering his head.

“Fair enough,” said Shyla.

“Ok then, I am so glad you came out with me today, I’ll see you tomorrow,” Hesiod said with a warm smile.

“Ok, good night, be safe going home,” Shyla said.

After Shyla put her things away, she jumped in the shower and decided to have a bourbon. As she was behind the bar pouring her one Tony walked in, he was a little earlier than usual and Shyla was surprised.

“Hey Babe,” he said as he walked in towards the bar.

“How was your day?”

“Can we talk?” Shyla just looked at him a long while.

“What do you want to talk about?” she said in an exhausted tone.

“I’m sure you know,” he said.

“I’m tired, I really don’t know what talking will do about it?” she sighed.

“Shyla, I love you, you know we can’t just throw away our marriage like this,” Tony whined.

“I don’t know how to trust you again,” Shyla explained.

“I’m hurt, you know.”

“Yes, I know,” he said.

“But please, are you ready to just stop trying?” Shyla was silent, she put her head down, not wanting to look at him. It seemed she wasn’t sure what she wanted anymore. He walked over to her and put his arms around her, kissing her on her forehead. He lifted her face with his hand, put his mouth to hers and kissed her hard. She met his kiss and returned it for a moment, then flashes of the blond, Hesiod’s kiss and the waterfall incident came rushing back into her mind all at once.

She stepped back, “I can’t, was all she said,” turning away from him she walked out of the living room and up the stairs.

She went to the bathroom and brushed her teeth, she turned the bed down and went back out in the hall, standing at the top of the stair rail, she saw Tony had thrown the sheet on the couch and was in the downstairs bathroom, she could hear the shower. She went back into the bedroom and closed the door behind her clicking the light off as she did.

Moonlight was streaming in across the bed and it gave a silver hue to the room, shadows of the trees made leaves grow off the walls.

Shyla laid on her side, looking at the shapes the shadows made and drifting back to the day she had with Hesiod. The doe’s, taking pictures of the birds, the fairies, and the waterfall. Oh, the waterfall, the way he touched her, kissed her, the size of his hardness pressed against her!

Her legs tightened and a throbbing in her groin made her long for his touch again. “What is going on with me?” she thought to herself.

“He is not even a human man,” Shyla winced.

“But I can’t help these feelings I have for him, what’s happening to me?” she whispered.

Chapter 12

The morning light was in her eyes as she awoke from her sleep.

The house was quiet, same scenario, different day, she turned on her back, laying there with her eyes closed she was aware of her surroundings. As she lay in the bed her thoughts retrieved the memory of Hesiod saying he wanted to show her his cottage today and that he would be here around noon.

She turned to the clock on her nightstand, nine forty-three it read. Shyla contemplated what to do, should she go with him, or should she not and stay home. The decision was tearing her apart, she wanted too, but then there was something holding her back also. She sat up on the edge of the bed, she felt like she had drunk all night, her body ached, and her head pounded. She showered, dressed and went down to the kitchen to make her some breakfast.

“After I eat maybe I’ll feel better,” she murmured under her breath.

Shyla ate and did the dishes from both yesterday and this morning, she sat at the kitchen table sipping her coffee. She glanced at the clock on the microwave, eleven forty-eight it read. Something willed her to get up but not to get her backpack this time. Instead she ran upstairs and sprayed some perfume all over herself and went into the bathroom and brushed her long hair pulling it back into a ponytail. She stopped in front of the mirror and gave herself a dissatisfied look, shaking her head at her reflection, she walked out and down the stairs. Shyla went out on the deck and sat on one of the chairs, it was noon and her anxiousness was making her fidget. Just then she heard the snapping of a twig and she stood up and hugged the rail. Focusing on the familiar tree, Hesiod appeared from behind it, “Hello Shyla, I’m so glad you decided to come out with me today,” he said without a smile.

“Yes, it was a difficult decision,” she said.

“Well let’s go then,” Hesiod seemed to hurry so she wouldn’t back out. She hurried down the stairs and Hesiod reached for her hand in his usual way.

As they made their way down the path, past the brook and towards the waterfall, Hesiod turned off a different path pulling Shyla along. The woods seemed denser and it got a lot darker as they went, the trees seemed to take on different shapes and sizes from the pines closer to her house.

“Not too much further,” he said.

Over a hill they climbed and down into a gully they came to a well-worn path that curved to the right and through a thicket. When they turned the cottage came into view, it was shrouded by tall wide trees and was almost the shape of a mushroom Shyla thought. It was made entirely of natural elements, wood, stone, straw and had a rounded wooden door. There was a good-sized pile of chopped wood just off to the left of the house and a single chair also made of wood sitting by the door.

“Well, this is it,” Hesiod said proudly.

“Won’t you come in?”

“Yes, I would love to,” she said smiling sweetly.

He took her hand and opened the door, as they entered Shyla noticed the huge fireplace in the middle of the room.

“Wow! that is some fireplace,” she said.

“Thank you, I built it myself,” Hesiod said boasting.

“Would you like me to build you a fire?”

“If you like,” Shyla replied.

“OK then I will, I think it is going to rain,” he said.

As Hesiod went out front to retrieve some firewood Shyla investigated the rest of the house with her eyes. She noticed it had only one big room, other than the kitchen off to the side and a large walk-in pantry adjacent to the kitchen. There was a coal black stove with two burners and a flue that ran up and out of the ceiling. Soon Hesiod had the fire blazing and crackling in no time

Shyla could hear thunder off in the distance and it gave her a shudder, “Great how am I ever going to get home now?” she thought.

The rain started and it reminded her of the power she felt near the waterfall. Hesiod reached out for her, “Come here,” he ordered.

Shyla could feel the authority in his voice.

“Come here,” he said again, only this time with a bit more coaxing.

Shyla could not help herself, “OK,” she whimpered.

He was standing in front of the fire, his skin glowing with the colors of orange, red and yellow. She went to him, he slid his big hands around her waist and pulled her against him, his skin was hot from the heat of the fire. She felt weak and she had a throbbing between her legs, she ran her hands over his firm biceps, never taking her eyes off of his.

He moved one of his hands to her face and cupping her head, pulled her to his mouth, his tongue exploring her from within. His kiss was deep and passionate, and she groaned in ecstasy, putting her hands into his hair, and pulling him in closer.

The rain was pounding the roof now and made a roaring sound, running down the sides of the cottage you could hear it puddling. Thunder was deafening at times and light lit up the windows showing its power with each lightning strike. Shyla and Hesiod didn't seem to notice as they became more and more enthralled with each other.

As they kissed Hesiod fell back in a big padded chair that sat off to the side of the fireplace, Shyla stood in front of him looking down at him, he pulled her to him cupping his hands around her ass, he slid his hands to the front and unzipped her shorts, pulling them down slowly. They dropped on the floor, and she stepped out of them, he then slid one hand into her panties and slid a finger inside her, she was wet and swollen, he moved his finger back and forth and put his thumb on her clit.

Shyla cried out, “Oh my God!” “Not yet,” Hesiod said and pulled her panties down.

He pulled her closer and she straddled him, reaching down she felt his cock was hard and huge, he entered her, and she moved down on him to take it all, then up to the head, holding onto the back of the chair for support.

She moved in slow rhythmic movements as he cradled her ass, kissing her neck, he moved his hands under her tank top, pulling her top and sports bra off all at once.

She leaned back as he cupped her breasts in his hands and suckled her nipples, biting and pulling at them. Her movement increased as she was getting close to orgasm, she could feel Hesiod was

close too. They both moaned and their breath was the same, Shyla went down on him hard, taking him all in, he grabbed her hips and thrust himself up inside her as far as he could manage.

They both were yelling “Yes, “Oh Yes!”

Hesiod said, “Come for me baby,” and they both exploded into each other at the same time. Both falling into a slump curled around each other, panting for air.

Shyla was curled up in his arms in the chair, he was cradling her and rocking softly. She looked up at him and smiled, he softly brushed her hair back off her face.

“That was wonderful,” she sighed.

“Yes, it was,” Hesiod kissed her forehead.

The rain had slowed down and the thunder had stopped.

“What am I going to do now?” Shyla said with a hint of sadness in her voice.

“About what?” Hesiod asked.

“About my real life,” Shyla said softly.

“No one would ever understand this,” she whimpered.

“I don’t care,” said Hesiod.

“I want you to stay here with me.” Shyla sat up and looked at him.

“How can I possibly do that?” she cried.

“We’ll figure something out,” he said.

Shyla laid her head back down on his chest and started to cry. Pulling a blanket from the back of the chair Hesiod threw it over them both. After some time passed, both Hesiod and Shyla fell asleep in each other’s arms.

After a while, Shyla awoke and jumped to her feet, “Oh my gosh! What time is it?!”

“It’s almost eight,” Hesiod said.

“Oh no! I’m late! Shit!” Shyla pulled her clothes on and found her tennis shoes.

“I need to go,” she said pulling on her shoes.

“It’s dark,” Hesiod said with a tone.

“I know!” Shyla screeched.

“Just stay here tonight, you can go back in the morning,” Hesiod suggested strongly.

“No way!”

“Tony will have the cops out looking for me if he doesn’t already,” she said in a hurried voice.

“I’m going, I’m sorry but I have no choice,”

“Alright, then I’ll walk you back, you will never find your way in the dark, and there are wolves and cougars in these woods,” he said.

“Wolves and Cougars?” Shyla looked at him with a nervous expression.

“Yes, wild things live in the woods and not all are as tame as I am,” Hesiod raised his head and closed his eyes.

“Damn,” Shyla said with a shudder.

They were making good time and Hesiod said they were about halfway there when he stopped.

“Shhh!” he said.

“Stop walking,” he whispered.

Shyla’s eyes widened and she started looking all around. Hesiod had his nose in the air as the doe’s did that day they cautiously came to the brook for a drink.

“Stay behind me,” Hesiod said and pushed her to his rear.

She peered around his muscular body the best she could manage and then she saw it, it came from a thicket, glowing amber eyes, thick grayish fur with black tips. The hair was standing up on its neck and was still damp from the rain they had before. Its teeth were showing and gave a flash of white as it snarled and growled at them.

“Hesiod!” Shyla tried to whisper it holding back the scream that was crawling up her throat.

“It’ll be Ok, just don’t move,” he said.

The wolf moved toward them, head dropped, stalking slow. Hesiod didn't move until it was almost upon them, "Hesiod!" Shyla screamed; she lost her battle with her voice.

In one swift move, Hesiod lowered his head and rammed the wolf with his horns, making it tumble and roll backwards with a yelp. The wolf jumped up, looked at Hesiod with a snarl and disappeared back into the thicket.

"Oh my gosh!"

"Are you Ok!?" Shyla asked concerned.

"Yes," I am fine," he turned to her and she fell into his arms.

"You are so brave!" she gushed pushing her face in his chest.

He held her for a minute, "You are shaking."

"You Ok?" he asked.

"I'm alright, just scared me is all."

"Come on, we shouldn't stay here, he may come back with friends," Hesiod warned as he took her hand and pulled her along.

The house was finally in view and Shyla could see the lights on in what looked like every room.

"Oh, I'm dreading this," she mumbled.

They stopped out by their special tree to be out of site in case Tony was out on the deck or peering out the windows. Shyla could see him; he was in the house but pacing back and forth.

She turned to face Hesiod, "I'm worried about you walking back alone," she said softly looking up and into his eyes.

"I live out here, remember," he said confidently.

"I want to see you again tomorrow," he said demanding it almost.

"We'll see," she said.

"I need some time to figure things out," she said feeling her eyes well up.

Hesiod was silent, he glanced to the house then back to Shyla, “You better go in.”

“Don’t let him badger you,” he said with a furrow in his brow.

He pulled her further behind the tree and held her face with both hands on each side, took a long gaze into her eyes and kissed her softly on the mouth. He released her and she turned to walk the last few steps to the house.

As she walked, she heard him say, “I love you, Shyla, I love you.

Shyla did not look back and climbed the stairs as tears streamed down her face leaving a salty taste in her mouth. She wiped the tears from her eyes at the door before sliding it open, Tony was back and forth like a soldier guarding a tomb.

His attention hit the door as he saw her walk in, “Oh my God!” he screamed, “Where have you been?!” He wanted to be mad, but he was past that point and just glad to see her safe and home. He hurried to her, grabbing her and hugging her tight.

“I was just about to call the forest service!” he said. “Or the cops!”

“I thought we had an understanding, and why did you not have your cell phone?”

“I called you and it rang here, your backpack and all your things were still here, I thought you had been kidnapped or something!”

Tony was noticeably upset, and Shyla was too, but she could not tell him why. Tony grabbed her face, “Have you been crying?” he asked.

Shyla pulled away from his grasp, “Don’t touch me like that,” she said recalling Hesiod had done that several times to kiss her.

“Like what?” Tony asked confused.

“We need to talk,” Tony blurted out.

“Not now, I’m exhausted, and I need a hot shower,” Shyla sighed.

“You can’t just give me no explanation, you can’t just keep things from me,” Tony dictated.

“Oh? Who keeps things from who?” Shyla said walking up the first few stairs.

“Is this what this is all about, revenge?” he scoffed.

“No Tony, this is not revenge,” Shyla said as she made her way to the top of the stairs.

She continued down the hall and into the bedroom and then the bathroom, dropped her clothes and turned on the shower, as it warmed, she stepped in.

Shyla woke with Tony snuggling up behind her, she had been so exhausted she passed out a few minutes after she hit the bed.

She pretended to be asleep still and turned on her back, trying to deter him. He draped his arm over her stomach and moved up towards her breasts.

She grabbed his hand, “Stop it,” she said.

“Come on, I want you,” he whined.

“You should be on the couch!” Shyla sniped.

“Alright, alright, but I’m sleeping here, this is my bed too.” he said.

“Well, if you would have stayed in your own bed to begin with there wouldn’t be a problem now would there?” Shyla said as she turned away from him fluffing her pillow under her. When Shyla woke up again it was getting light outside, she turned in a fog to look at the clock, “Oh! Crap!” she squealed. Standing beside her bed was Hesiod looking down at her.

“What are you doing here?!” In...in the house!!?”

“I had to see you, I wanted to make sure you would.”

“By breaking into my house?!” Shyla said shrilly.

“I did not break in; the sliding glass was open.” Hesiod said matter of factually.

“Oh, I must have left it open after coming in last night, sorry.” she said pondering.

“But anyway, in my house?!” Shyla continued.

“I waited until “*He*” was gone,” Hesiod said with a snark.

“So how did it go with him last night anyway?” he asked.

“Did you tell him about us?” Shyla sat up in bed and pulled the sheet up around her, “I can’t just tell him about us....um, you!” she stammered.

Hesiod didn't say anything, his expression changed to sadness and Shyla could tell he was hurt.

"I'm so sorry," she said reaching out and grabbing his hand.

A sound came from downstairs, it was the front door opening, Shyla and Hesiod looked at each other, "Quick!"

"Go out on the deck!" Shyla said half whispering.

Hesiod bounded to the door, slid it back and went out on the deck hiding off to the side. Tony walked past the bedroom, "What are you doing back?"

Shyla asked having got up and put her robe on.

"I forgot my briefcase," Tony said from his office, as he walked back, he paused for a moment at the door of their bedroom and said, "Be here when I get home please, we need to talk."

He walked down the stairs and out the front door. Shyla could hear him drive away.

Chapter 13

“That was close,” said Shyla as Hesiod came back in from the deck. “Come out with me today,” Hesiod said as he walked over to Shyla. “I don’t think that would be a good idea,” Shyla replied. “Come on,” he prompted. “I want to take you back to the waterfall today, it’s going to be warm and pretty.” He came to her sliding his hands into her robe and around her waist. He leaned in and kissed her neck. Shyla moaned, “Not here, too risky, you need to go.” “Don’t make me get my instrument out and play for you,” Hesiod said in a sultry low voice. “You wouldn’t dare!” Shyla pulled away. “If you leave me no choice,” he said. Shyla re-wrapped her robe tie and pointed to the door, “Go on, go outside, I’ll meet you at the tree,” she said. “Give me a few minutes.” “OK,” Hesiod smiled to himself, “I’ll be waiting.” Shyla dressed and went to the kitchen grabbed some snacks to stuff in her backpack, Tony’s words rang back to her, “Be here when I get home, please, we need to talk.” Shyla shook her head, “What am I doing?” “This is crazy,” she said as she slid the sliding glass door open. Walking out to the tree she could see Hesiod watching for her impatiently. He grabbed her hand and they walked down the path that was becoming very familiar to her by now. The air was thick and starting to warm, scents of lavender and jasmine lingered, Shyla took a deep breath as she took it all in. She felt as if she was living in a dream world lately and would wake up one day and everything would be as it was. She knew they were getting close to the brook because she could hear the babbling of the water. They came upon it but there were no fairies or does to see today. “No fairies?” She asked Hesiod. “Too early for fairies, but the does are usually here, that’s strange” he said.

They continued on until they came to the switchbacks that started their decent along the falls, making their way down carefully, the spray from the crashing water making them slippery steps. It was loud from the roar and power of the cascade as they passed.

Hesiod had Shyla’s hand the whole time, making sure she was safe on the way down. The woods were always darker here as the trees made a tent like canopy above them. They came to the bottom and were at the edge of the water hole.

Shyla felt warm from the walk and the water looked inviting, “I want to go in, and this time I want to go under the waterfall,” she told Hesiod.

“That is fine,” he said.

“Mind the clothes please,” he said with a smirk.

“Of course,” Shyla said in a playful manner.

She quickly undressed and dove in headfirst into the water. She swam towards the falls, stopping just in front of it, she held her hand out to it, the pressure of the waters force was stronger than she anticipated. From beneath her the bubbles and churning water felt sensual coming up between her legs.

“Oh my gosh!” it feels so good,” Shyla squealed turning to look for Hesiod.

He was standing by the edge enthralled in watching her when it hit him, zing! then pop! A burning sensation came across Hesiod’s right arm, and bits of rock sprang up everywhere. He was knocked off balance as he grabbed his arm.

Then he realized, “Hunter’s! How could he be so careless, you always pay attention in the woods, he knows this, it is his home.

Hesiod grabbed up Shyla’s clothes as he dove in the water and swam towards Shyla, she hadn’t heard the shots because of the falls loud roar but she saw that something was wrong. When he reached her, he pulled her through the falls and came out the other side, the fall made a thick sheet of water that curtained them in.

Shyla was confused about what had happened and then saw Hesiod’s arm, “You’re bleeding, what happened?!”

“Hunter’s,” Hesiod said.

“It’s a graze, I’ll be fine.”

“Hunter’s!?” Shyla gasped.

“They probably think I’m a deer,” Hesiod paused.

“No wonder the does were not around this morning,” he said shaking his head.

“Stupid, stupid,” he continued.

Shyla was shaking and realized she was naked.

“I need to put on my clothes,” as she said it, they heard men screaming to each other on the other side of the fall.

“Shhh,” Hesiod put his finger to his mouth.

He grabbed Shyla and held her close to him trying to warm her. They really couldn’t make out what the men were saying but Hesiod had a good idea. The hunters didn’t stay long, and Hesiod could make out their shapes and orange hunting vests as they made their way back up the side of the fall.

Hesiod stayed still, continuing to hold onto Shyla, blood streaming down his arm, she was warmer now he could tell because she had stopped shivering.

“I think it’s OK to move out of here now,” he said.

Shyla unwrapped herself from him and stepped back to look at his arm.

“Let’s clean that up,” she said.

Stepping cautiously out of the cover of the fall satisfied the hunters were gone, Hesiod walked to the edge and put Shyla’s clothes on a rock to dry. Shyla stayed in the deeper water and Hesiod made his way back to her, she immediately went to cleaning his arm.

“Let me see this,” she said.

“It is a scratch, don’t fret over it,” he said turning his arm away from her.

“Hunter’s,” she said, shaking her head.

“You could have been killed,”

“Yes, and that is my fault,” Hesiod admitted.

“No, that is my fault,” Shyla said. “I am putting you in danger, I’m a distraction.”

“My choice,” he said grabbing her and pulling her to him.

“Remember, I love you,” Hesiod cooed.

All the sudden Shyla was overwhelmed, she held him close and started to cry.

“I... I think I love you too.” she sobbed.

Hesiod cupped her face with his big hands, he searched her eyes for a moment as if testing her truth and then he kissed her hard and deep. He scooped her up and she wrapped her legs around him, sliding his already erect penis into her, lowering her down on to it.

The water made her buoyant as they got into a slow rhythm with each other's bodies. His hands were pulling her ass down and onto him sloshing the water all around them. Slowly at first then faster and faster, working themselves into a frenzy. Shyla laid back as Hesiod held her in the water as she thrust her hips towards him, running one hand down across her front. Shyla moaned and pulled herself up onto Hesiod as they trembled into climax together. Hesiod let out a couple of deep groans as he finished his final thrusts.

"Oh my," Shyla huffed catching her breath, "That was unbelievable."

"Yes, it was," Hesiod agreed.

They kissed as he slowly lowered her down.

"I think your clothes should be dry enough to put on now." Hesiod predicted.

"Maybe your right," Shyla said as they made their way over to the edge of the water.

As Shyla dressed Hesiod was attentively keeping watch and she could tell he was still on edge from the hunter incident.

"As well as he should be," she thought to herself.

"Maybe you should let me walk home by myself today," Shyla suggested.

"No, it's too dangerous," Hesiod snapped.

"For who?!" Shyla protested.

"You are the one getting shot by hunters!" Shyla sneered.

"Come on, I'm walking you home, no arguing," Hesiod demanded.

"Ok then, let's go," Shyla said throwing her hands up and shaking her head.

Every pop and crack had Hesiod looking around, Shyla was trying to keep a look out too. The walk back was so nerve wracking that she couldn't enjoy the woods and the endorphins from their love making this afternoon.

Hesiod was quiet most of the way back, as he always was, dreading having to turn her over to the human man that resided with her. It was still early when they returned today and as if Hesiod had heard Tony that morning, he made sure she was there. Shyla never told him what was said but thought that maybe he had been able to hear him. Nevertheless, she wasn't going to say anything, what was the point?

They came to their special tree and said their goodbye's, "Please be careful going back home," Shyla pleaded.

"I will, don't you worry about me, I'll be fine." he reassured her.

"It's you I'm worried about," he said.

"Don't let him take you away from me," Hesiod begged.

"Not to worry," Shyla told him.

Hesiod gave her a weary smile and turned to walk away.

"Let's not be in my room in the morning," Shyla tried to lighten the mood.

Hesiod just gave her a sad smile and continued walking. Shyla watched him until she could not see him any longer then made her way up the stairs and onto the deck. Leaning on the rail she strained her eyes out into the woods to try and catch a glimpse of him, nothing.

She turned after hearing the sliding glass door, "What are you looking for out there?" Tony asked.

Shyla gasped, "What are you doing home so early?"

"I told you we needed to talk so I took off early today, and while I was here, there was a forest ranger that stopped by here today."

Tony said scratching his chin.

"A forest ranger, what did he want?" Shyla asked, almost not wanting to hear it.

"He said some hunters reported a strange looking animal out in the forest today while they were hunting, and they thought they wounded it." he said.

"He wanted to know if we had seen any such an animal around here,"

“Of course, I told him I hadn’t, but you weren’t here to ask and with all this sudden interest in the woods lately I thought I would ask you?” he said with an interrogating tone.

“Were you in the woods today? Tony asked, his voice getting louder.

Shyla pushed past him and went into the house straight to the bar and poured her a bourbon.

Tony followed her in and stood with his hands crossed, “Well?”

“Well what?”

“Have I seen a strange animal, or have I been in the woods?!” Shyla snapped.

“Define strange anyway!”

“I don’t know, he said like a deer or a ram, but the hunter’s said it was standing upright, almost like a man, Oh, but it had horns.” Tony was animated with his hands trying to explain.

“Doesn’t that seem a little weird to you, were they hunting drunk?” Shyla defended.

“Were you in the woods today, Shyla?” She hesitated, not wanting to answer him.

“Yes, yes I was,” she spouted.

“What the fuck, Shyla!”

“You could have been shot by those hunter’s!” Tony said aggravated.

“From now on those woods are off limits!”

“Now wait a minute, you can’t keep me from going in the woods if I want to!” Shyla said.

“Oh yes I can,” replied Tony.

“I’m your husband!”

“Oh, so now you want to be my husband?! Shyla blurted out.

“Husband or not, you’re not my father and you can’t chain me to the bed!”

“Shyla please, can’t you be reasonable?” Tony pleaded.

“Was that all the ranger said?” Shyla asked changing the subject and wanting more information anyway.

“He said that the hunters were determined to get the animal.”

“But he told them they better be sure it’s not a protected species before they kill it and that he and the other rangers will be on the lookout for it.”

“He also said it may not be safe to be out in the woods!” Tony said as he gave her a frown.

“This is bad.” Shyla thought to herself.

“Hunters are determined to kill him, and the rangers are now looking for him?!” she thought.

“I need to warn him,” Shyla said to herself in a whisper.

“Now we need to talk about us,” Tony changed the subject.

“We can’t keep going on the way we are,” he continued.

“I’m going to cut it off with her.”

“Going to?!” screeched Shyla.

“I thought you already had!”

“I mean yes, I have tried to, she doesn’t want to hear it.” Tony stammered.

“Are you still fucking her?!” Shyla screamed.

Tony was silent, “I guess that answers my question, but yet you’re here telling me what to do and acting like you want to work it out.”

“What a joke,” Shyla snapped.

“There’s nothing more to talk about,” Shyla said with definition in her voice.

“I think you need to find another place to live,” Shyla demanded.

“I think you forget where this house comes from,” Tony said smirking.

“This house is a perk from “my” job!” Tony boasted.

“There it is, it’s always you, you, you, and I’m worthless!” Shyla cried.

Shyla’s head was reeling, she didn’t want Tony to stay but he was right, they had the house because of his job. She couldn’t very well kick him out, but he could her! She didn’t want to

leave because of Hesiod, and then her thoughts went to him, the hunters were after him and she needed to warn him.

Shyla got her composure together, “Your right, this house is from your job, but if you’re going to continue to see this woman then we need to make other arrangements about us.

“I told you I’m going to break it off, I want us back,” Tony blubbered.

“OK, then you better get her to understand that is done between you.” Shyla said.

“But things are not just going to go back to the way they were overnight,” Shyla stated.

“I know, but you have to work at it too,” Tony said.

“Yes, I know,” said Shyla.

“Well, then no more of me sleeping on the couch,” Tony demanded, feeling he had the upper hand now.

“That’s fine,” Shyla lied.

Tony went off to shower and go to bed after their debate was over. Shyla poured herself a bourbon and went out on the deck, the night was warm and there looked like a million stars were hung in the sky. The moon was almost full, and it gave the look of a huge spotlight in the sky. She could see to the special tree and she looked hard to see any signs of Hesiod there. It was quiet, not even crickets or frogs singing tonight, it was eerie, as if nothing alive was out there.

Shyla tried to think of a plan to make everything better for everyone, but she only drew blanks. It was giving her a headache and she grew more tired with each thought. She sat down on the lounge chair and threw the blanket that hung over the head of the chair across her legs. She took a few more sips of her drink and laid back to look at the stars, before she knew it her eyes were heavy, and she fought with them to see. Within a few minutes she fell asleep on the puffy lounge chair and into a dream.

Chapter 14

Hesiod was almost home when he heard the snapping and popping behind him, he turned just as the wolf lunged at him. He fell back and immediately rolled and sprang up to his feet, then he noticed the second wolf off to his right. Both wolves bared their teeth in the moonlight looking like porcelain razors ready to slash. Their growls were low and menacing, eyes had an amber glow to them hooded by furrowed brows.

Hesiod could tell the one was the same wolf he had charged while walking Shyla home. It had the grayish color with black tips to its fur, the same build and smell. Hesiod figured it must be the wound on his arm and the blood that was attracting them.

“So, you went and got help did you?” Hesiod asked as if they would answer him.

He watched them stealthily circle around him, turning with them to keep them both in his view. Just then a third wolf appeared further out the tree line, then another!

“Four of you?” Hesiod said shaking his head and rolling his shoulders up, trying to make himself more intimidating.

“Well come on then, let’s get this over with,” Hesiod said bravely motioning with his hand toward himself.

The two outer wolves stood their ground motionless, but the other two charged Hesiod together. Hesiod yelped out as one of the wolves grabbed his leg and bit down hard, blood squirting and spilling down. The other wolf jumped up and went at his throat, Hesiod caught it by the fur and grabbing it’s snout turned its neck sharply as he heard it snap, throwing it to the ground, his attention went to the wolf still on his leg pulling and tearing at his flesh.

Hesiod reached out with both hands making them into fists, he spread them out on either side of the wolf’s head and came together hard on each side of its head just below the ears. He could hear the pop and the wolf released him, stunned it fell stammering sideways shaking its head. Just then Hesiod noticed the other wolves moving in closer, the stunned wolf had had enough, and it staggered away in the dark. As if telling the other’s in the pack not to pursue, they fell back and slinked off to assist their pack member.

Hesiod was bleeding badly from his leg, but he knew he had to make it home because as soon as the stunned wolf rested a bit they'd be back to try and finish the job. He hopped and limped the best he could groaning and panting, soon he could see his cottage in the moonlight, what a wonderful site to him it was too.

Hesiod opened the big rounded wood door and went in, closing and locking it hurriedly behind him. It was dark except for the moonlight that shown through the windows, Hesiod paid no mind as he knew every inch of his cottage.

He walked to the cabinet off to the side and got out a clean towel, pouring some water from a vase onto the towel he wrapped his leg best he could. He drug himself to the chair he and Shyla had made love on a while back and sank into it, too tired and hurt to make a fire he fell asleep not long after pulling down the blanket that hung over the chair and covering himself with it.

Hesiod woke up just before dawn in excruciating pain, his leg was throbbing, warm and swollen. He tried to stand, let out a scream and sat back down, he felt as if he was on fire, yet he had chills.

He flopped back into the chair and covered up with the blanket, soon he was off into a delirious sleep with dreams of gnashing teeth, hunter's and making love to Shyla.

He mumbled and jerked responding to the nightmares in his head, the sun shone dimly through the window, but Hesiod didn't respond to the light coming in whatsoever.

Shyla awoke to Tony's voice, "Shyla, hey, Shyla," She squinted open her eyes.

"You slept out here?" Tony asked.

"Um, yeah, I guess I did," she answered gruffly.

Her throat was dry and felt like someone tapped danced on her tongue in their socks.

"I've got to head out to work," Tony said.

"OK, I'll see you later," she said.

"No going into the woods today," Tony scolded.

"No fucking your girlfriend today," she said sarcastically.

"Shyla, please don't start, thought we had that all worked out last night." Tony said.

“Yeah, OK, I’m sorry, just hard to deal with is all and I told you, you can’t keep me from going out any more than I can keep you from continuing your antics.” Shyla defended.

“It has to be your choice as well as mine,” Shyla said.

“Whatever,” Tony sneered.

“I’ve got to go, just be careful and maybe go and talk to the forest rangers if you don’t want to listen to me.” Tony said as he turned and walked back into the house.

Shyla could hear the door shut as he left and she stood up, stretched, and yawned, her attention drew out to the special tree as she walked out onto the deck. No sign of Hesiod got her to imagining all kinds of things that involved hunters. She walked into the house and went into the kitchen to put a pot of water on the stove to brew some tea. She made her a quick breakfast and took it, along with her tea out on the deck to eat hoping to see Hesiod show up soon so she could warn him of the danger he was in.

The air was warm, and she could smell the lavender off a slight breeze that came across the deck. Little birds flew back and forth in the trees and one landed on the deck rail, it was chirping and cocking its head side to side.

“What are you looking for?” Shyla asked.

“Are you hungry?” Shyla went to the rail and the bird flew off, she put a couple of crumbs from her muffin she had on the top of the rail.

She sat back down and sipped her tea, soon the little bird was back, and grabbing the crumbs it flew off as if she would change her mind and take them away. Shyla laughed and gathered her dishes, she went to the kitchen and put them in the sink, then off to the shower she headed.

Shyla took her time in the shower the warm water felt good over her body after sleeping on that lounge all night. She dried, dressed and brushed out her hair, she glanced at the clock, “Ten O’clock already,” she sighed.

She walked through the house and out onto the deck. “Still no sign of Hesiod,” she thought, and an uneasy feeling came across her.

Shyla went back upstairs and went into her dark room to get her camera. She gathered up her backpack, snacks, water and binoculars.

Sliding into her tennis shoes and walking out onto the deck, her thoughts went back to Tony's demands and the hunter's and then she remembered the wolf.

"Shit, I hate going out there alone now without Hesiod," Shyla said to herself in a low voice.

"Something is wrong though; I can feel it."

She walked back into the house, ran upstairs and grabbed the emergency kit out of the bathroom, for some reason it made her feel safer.

Shyla walked along keeping a cautious eye on everything, soon she had passed the brook and was worried as Hesiod was that day because of the lack of the doe's presence again. She continued down the path and was coming to the falls, she could hear the roar getting closer and the air cool down.

She had seen no sign of Hesiod and was getting worried; she was also getting tired and hungry.

Descending down the switch back path she came to the edge of the falls, sat down on the big flat rock and unzipped her backpack, rummaging around in it for her water and snack, she heard someone call out to her.

"Hey! You there!" a male voice said. Shyla turned her head to see two male hunters' in camouflage walking up to her.

"Shit," she mumbled low.

"What are you doing way out here alone?" The first man said.

He was tall, muscular build, with a mustache and black hair trimmed short. He had a cap on that matched his clothes and a high-powered rifle with a scope held in his hands in front of him. The other man was blond, had a military style buzz cut, clean shaven, no mustache and was a bit shorter than his partner with a stockier build to him.

He was dressed the same way carrying almost the same rifle but also had a big bowie knife on his belt, along with a small flashlight and extra ammo. They both had a backpack on their backs and looked like they were here to stay for a while.

Shyla looked up at them, “Um, hi,” she said lightly. I’m a photographer, I come out here to shoot pictures, looks like you guys are looking to shoot something other than pictures, deer hunting?” Shyla played it off.

“Yeah, we were, but we saw something the other day that was weird out near here.” the blond said. “Oh?” Shyla tried to pretend she had no idea.

“Yeah, I don’t think it’s safe for you to be out here alone,” the taller dark-haired man said.

“I’m Roland,” he put his hand out to her.

Shyla stood up and shook his hand, “Shyla,” she said.

“This is Scott,” he said pointing to his partner.

“Hi Scott,” she said shaking his hand.

“Well, I live not too awfully far from here and I come out here all the time to take photographs of the local wildlife, I’ve never seen any weird animals,” Shyla lied.

“Well, we did, and it was like a human but had big curly horns almost like a ram but with a man’s body, hairy on the lower torso though.” Roland explained.

Didn’t get a clear look at the thing but I did wound it, but it got away. Shyla was trying to control her rising anger, “Well maybe you should get a better look at what your shooting at?!” she snapped.

Scott, bumped him, “Come on Roland, let’s go, she is one of those nature loving types, no sense in going on about it.” he spouted off.

Roland looked at her, tipped his cap and they turned and walked away.

Roland stopped and turned back for a second, “Just be careful out here miss.”

“Will do,” she sneered. She sat back down on the big flat rock and had a snack and drank some water.

“Weird animal,” Shyla said low to herself.

“They are the animals, if they only knew how kind and gentle, he is.”

“How can anyone who shoots Bambi care how he really is anyway.”

Her thoughts faded back to the day they were here and the love that they shared after those assholes tried to kill him first. Shyla's face scrunched up in a frown, "Pieces of shits," Shyla murmured shaking her head in disgust.

It was midafternoon now and Shyla knew she was close to the cottage by the canopy of trees covering her above, the forest was denser here and the cottage was set back out of the way to be hidden. The way Hesiod had planned it to be. She went through the thicket and it came into view, there was no signs of Hesiod at all, she looked back as she had been doing all the way there to make sure the hunters were not following her.

When she felt it was safe to proceed, she stopped at the door. Shyla knocked at the door, waited, nothing.

"Hesiod," she said trying to be loud enough but not attract attention.

She knocked again, still no answer, so she walked around to the side of the house. Climbing up on the pile of wood she peered in the window, scanning the room she saw what looked like a pile of blankets on the chair.

Then he moved, "Hesiod!" Shyla tapped on the window, no response, she jumped down and ran back around the front, tried the door but it was locked.

"Shit!" Shyla screeched.

She ran back to the window and climbed up the wood pile, she tried the window, it wouldn't budge, panicking she looked around for something to wedge under it.

She saw a small axe lying near the wood, grabbing it up she pushed it into the crack at the bottom of the window and pushed as hard as she could. The window gave an inch and stubbornly stopped again.

Shyla was sweating and straining against the axe, it gave again, she dropped the axe and pushed again with all her strength and it slid up with a cracking sound, she had broken away the paint, or mud that was holding it. She ripped her backpack off to make more room and threw it in on the floor, she jumped through the window and ran to Hesiod.

He was shivering and burning up, "Oh my gosh, what happened to you?" she cried.

She noticed the blood-soaked towel on his lower leg, “Shit!”

“Hesiod, what happened?” she shook him lightly trying to revive him, he would not respond.

She ran to the backpack and retrieved the first aid kit, opening it up she saw it had just about everything, alcohol, peroxide, gauze, needles and suture, lidocaine, syringes, razors, antibiotic and bandaging scissors.

She brought it with her and sat down on the floor in front of him, she untied the towel and gasped, “Oh my gosh, it’s a bite,” she whimpered.

“You poor thing, and here I was worried about the hunter’s” she gushed.

The bite was angry, it had quit bleeding, but he had lost a lot. It looked like it needed stitches as some of the skin was torn pretty bad.

Shyla cleaned it up with the peroxide and grabbed a razor to shave away his thick hair, she loaded a syringe with some lidocaine reading the dosage on the bottle. She numbed it and threaded a needle with some of the suture. She stitched him up the best she could and wrapped it well with gauze.

“We need to elevate this leg,” talking to him as he slept.

She pulled the ottoman from the side, lifted his leg and rested it down softly. He never moved, then she filled another syringe with the antibiotic trying to guess his weight. After giving him a shot, she threw several pieces of wood in the big stone fireplace and started a fire.

When she had the fire going well, she went to the kitchen and put some water on for tea. She made two cups of tea, found a jar of honey with a big chunk of beeswax in it and spooned some into the cups of tea.

Bringing them to the table by the chair she sat them down and sat carefully down beside his elevated leg on the ottoman. She reached over and felt his skin, he was still warm, going back into the emergency kit she pulled out the bottle of alcohol and found a rag, she soaked the rag with the alcohol and rubbed it over his chest and down his arms.

Hesiod moaned and re-situated himself for a second, then back into his slumber. When Shyla was satisfied, she had given him a thorough alcohol bath she put everything away.

She carefully squirmed her way into the chair beside him, lifting his muscular arm over her, she laid her head on his chest, he had quit shivering and felt like his fever had broken.

Satisfied she had taken good care of him and that he would be Ok, she could rest now too, soon she drifted off into a comfortable sleep wrapped in his arms.

She felt safe there and it always felt right to her no matter what hunter's, Tony or any forest ranger had to say about him. The fire crackled and popped as it threw out it's loving warmth to them.

It was quiet and cozy here inside the hidden away cottage that Hesiod had built for his home and she wasn't about to let anything or anyone take it away from him no matter what she had to do, after all she loved him for who he was not what he was.

Chapter 15

Tony had gotten home a little past eight, he was agitated to find the house empty and dark.

He immediately called Shyla's phone number, "Ring!" "Ring!" Her phone was ringing from her studio. He walked up the stairs and down the hall, following the ringing of the phone. He pushed open the door and found the phone sitting on her desk, he disconnected from the call using his phone. Standing there shaking his head in disbelief that she was out again after dark with no phone, he pushed the bathroom door open that Shyla had been using as a dark room.

Several pictures hung across the length of the room on a line she had strung so she could hang them to dry after developing them. Tony walked down the line examining each one, some birds, various kinds of trees and foliage, nothing too interesting he thought. Then he noticed a box that had a tiny keepsake lock on it tucked back on one of the shelves.

He reached up and took it down, it had a small gold lock on it, Tony looked around for the key, without any luck he took the box into his office. He opened a drawer in his desk and took out a paper clip, he bent the end out and went to put it in the small lock, knowing a lock this small could easily be jiggled open. He worked with it for a few minutes and just about the time he was going to give up, it gave way.

There was a pile of pictures in the box and that was all, Tony looked down at the top one and squinted his eyes, "What the hell?!" He snorted.

Tony couldn't believe his eyes, he thumbed through the photos one by one still not believing what he saw.

"What the hell is that?" He said holding one up to the light.

Shyla had taken some pictures of Hesiod without him knowing.

"This is that creature the forest ranger told me the hunter's saw!" Tony said out loud to himself.

"And she's seen it too and took picture's!"

"Why hasn't she told me about this?" He said steaming out of the room with the box of pictures.

Making his way to the living room he poured himself a drink and sat down at the bar, setting the box in front of him. Tony sat there looking at the box for a long time, he opened it again and took out the best picture of Hesiod he could find.

He studied it, wondering what it was, it looked human in the face, arms, chest and hands, except for the horns on its head it could pass for a man until you got to the lower torso, the hips buttocks and thighs all the way to the hooves were an animal, a ram maybe? Tony wondered if it was some science experiment gone wrong.

He picked up his phone getting a card from out of his wallet, he dialed the forest rangers' number he had left him the other night he was there. The phone rang on the other end, then straight to voice mail.

"Hello this is forest ranger Dale Clark, I'm not able to take your call right now, please leave your name and number and I'll get back to you as soon as possible, Thank you, goodbye."

The phone beeped. "Um, Hi, this is Tony Carino, we spoke the other day when you stopped by my house asking about a strange animal in the woods some hunter's saw. I think I have some information for you that might interest you. My number is 550-2225 Thanks." Tony hung up.

As soon as he hung up his phone rang, Tony could see it was Carrie's number and was hesitant to answer it, "Hello," he said being short.

"Hi babe, what ya doing?" Carrie's voice was syrupy and sultry.

"I thought I told you it is not good for you to call me at home?" He said impatiently.

"Well I'm missing you baby," Carrie pouted.

"I told you we needed to cool it," he reminded her.

"But I don't want to cool it," she whined.

"Look, I'm busy with something right now, I will talk to you tomorrow," he cut her short.

"Oh damn, OK, then see you in the morning babe." She said as Tony hung up.

Right now, Tony wanted to get to the bottom of this creature in the pictures. Shyla was gone who knows where, was she with this man animal, was she lost or hurt or maybe it got her and was keeping her hostage somewhere!

Tony poured himself another drink, swallowed it down and got another. He walked out onto the deck and called out into the woods, “SHYLA!” He yelled.

“SHYLA!” He called again.

He could hear his voice echo back to him through the trees. Tony sat back on the lounge chair and sipped his bourbon, not realizing how tired he was he soon slipped away into a restless sleep.

A chill crept up the deck and blanketed over Tony, he rubbed his eyes and a shiver ran across his body. “Damn,” he said sitting up rubbing his arms.

He got up and walked in the house, “Can’t believe I fell asleep out there,” rubbing his head and trying to shake off the chill.

“Was I dreaming some shit last night,” he said talking to himself.

He walked to the bar and saw the box, “I guess not,” he said looking around for signs of Shyla.

Grabbing up the box he walked into the kitchen, setting the box on the counter, he made some coffee, turned grabbing the box he walked upstairs to his office. Opening his locked drawer, he laid the box carefully in it and locked it back.

Tony got undressed and went into the bathroom, leaned in and turned on the shower, when the water had warmed, he stepped in. After his shower he dried off putting the towel around his waist he prepared to shave. Done shaving Tony walked to closet and took out a pair of slacks and a light blue button-down shirt and dressed. He ran his comb through his hair and poured just a touch of gel in his hand, rubbing them together he ran them through his hair to hold it in place. Sprayed a mist of cologne on his neck, took one last look and walked out.

Tony was in the kitchen pouring himself a cup of coffee, he opened the pantry and looked around, he pulled out the bread and threw a couple of pieces in the toaster. He opened the fridge and took out the orange marmalade, the toast popped up and he tossed them on a small plate. He smeared some of the orange marmalade on the bread and sat down at the kitchen table.

He rubbed his still aching head, took a careful sip of his coffee and closed his eyes.

“This is all too weird,” he muttered.

“Where are you Shyla?” He looked at the clock seeing it was time to leave.

“I hope this ranger calls me back pretty soon,” he said to himself as he grabbed his briefcase and walked out the door.

Hesiod was groaning when Shyla awoke, she jumped up off of him, “I’m so sorry,” she said.

“I didn’t mean to lay all over you all night.”

Hesiod was groggy and it took a minute to realize she was there. “Shyla?”

“What are you doing here?” He asked.

“When you didn’t show up at the tree yesterday, I knew something was wrong.” She said.

“And I was wanting to warn you too,”

“Warn me?” Hesiod said rubbing his eyes.

“Yes, the hunter’s that shot at you the other day and grazed your arm are looking for you,” she told him.

“A forest ranger was by my house a few nights ago and they told him about you!”

“He questioned Tony about seeing any weird animals out in the forest.” She watched his expression.

“What happened to you anyway?” “The wolves?” Shyla asked.

“Yes,” Hesiod said.

“They ambushed me the night before last on my way home.” He said slowly.

He looked down at his leg, “What did you do?” He asked.

“Well, on my way here I ran into those hunter’s.”

“They are looking for you,” she said with an urgency in her voice.

“By the time I reached your place it was mid- afternoon and the door was locked” she continued.

“I climbed on the wood pile and managed to get the window open because I saw you lying in here.”

“Luckily I had brought an emergency kit with me because you needed it!” She said animated.

“I fixed you up,” she said proudly.

“I cleaned your wound and gave you an alcohol bath and a shot of antibiotics.”

“Wow,” Hesiod said.

“My little nurse.”

“Are you feeling better now?” Shyla asked.

“Yes, much better, thank you.”

“Just a little sore still, but that is to be expected.” He said wincing a bit as he shifted in the chair.

“Well maybe it is better if you stay here for a few days anyway, you know, kind of lay low.”

Shyla suggested strongly in her voice.

“Yeah, maybe,” Hesiod agreed reluctantly.

“I can come every day and bring you anything you need.” She told him.

“I don’t want you taking chances walking back and forth through the woods alone for me,”

Hesiod said in a strong tone.

“Especially now that these wolves have tasted somewhat human blood.” He said.

Shyla frowned, “Somewhat human blood?”

“Really?” She said distastefully.

“Well I can’t just leave you out here all alone without any help.” Shyla insisted.

“I will bring a gun,” she said.

“A gun?!”

“Where will you get a gun?” Hesiod asked surprised.

“Tony has a gun in his desk drawer.” She said matter of factually.

“I’m not liking this scenario, even if you had a gun, you have to be a good aim, are you?” He asked, “Well I’m no pro, but good enough,” she snipped.

Hesiod could see there was no changing her mind and just shook his head.

“Well, now that we have that settled,” Shyla said smugly.

“I need to bring you in some wood and water for sure, is there anything else you will need before tomorrow because I’m going to have to go soon so it doesn’t get dark on me, and I am sure Tony’s freaking out by now.”

Hesiod rearranged himself in the chair, sat up more and pulled his leg with him.

“No, I will be OK, I hate this.” He whined.

“Oh, quit being a baby,” Shyla pouted her lip out.

She opened the door and went outside to gather up some wood off the pile. After she had a good amount put in the fireplace, she stacked some on the hearth as well.

“Now, what do you have for me to go fetch some water?” She asked.

“There is a vase or two there on the sink.” Hesiod said reluctantly.

“OK, I’ll be back in a few minutes,” she said grabbing up the vases and walking out the door.

She walked the path to the thicket, made her way through it and along the big trees that made a canopy. She came to the brook that was on his side of the forest, the one that comes down from the falls. The woods were quiet this morning; she hardly heard any birds. She bent down and filled the vases full of the clear, cool, running water and hurried her way back to the cottage, making sure she wasn’t being watched or followed.

She said her goodbyes to Hesiod and left. Shyla made good time getting home, no sign of Tony when she got there, he must have gone to work even though she didn’t make it home last night. She thought he probably figured the police wouldn’t do anything anyway until forty-eight hours had passed. A break for her, she thought as she walked into the kitchen.

She was tired and dirty from hauling wood and walking through the thick brush near Hesiod’s cottage. She decided to shower first and then make herself some breakfast. While she was eating, her thoughts wandered about what she was going to do about Tony and Hesiod both.

“Am I really in love with a mythological creature?” Shyla said to herself.

She then felt bad calling Hesiod a creature, but she was fighting with herself emotionally. Was she still in love with Tony, and could she forgive him for what he had done? It drained her emotionally and she didn't really want to deal with either one right now.

She finished in the kitchen and went upstairs to her studio, she looked at her pictures that she had left to dry, seemed like weeks ago. She took them down, one by one and laid them in a pile off to one side. She turned to her shelves and noticed that her box was missing, the box with the pictures...the pictures of Hesiod!

"What the fuck?!" Shyla screeched. "Damn it Tony!"

Shyla immediately went into Tony's office and pulled on the locked drawer; it wouldn't budge. She left the room, went downstairs and out into the garage. Looking through some tools, she found a crowbar, she grabbed it and went back into the house with purpose. She ran upstairs and back into Tony's office, positioning the crowbar in the crevice of the drawer with the lock she pushed down hard and out, the lock gave way with a crack and the drawer opened.

There sat her box as she suspected. She reached in and picked it up, sitting it on the desktop, she opened it to make sure all the photographs were all there. Satisfied they were all in the box, she picked it up and walked out of the room.

It was almost weird to be home all day and especially when Tony got home, and she was there. She was sitting on the couch sipping a glass of red wine when he walked in. It was hard for her since she knew Hesiod was all alone and wounded a good distance away.

"Oh, so you decided to come home finally," Tony said as he walked in the door.

"All this time I've been worried about you and you've been out in the woods with some creature!" Tony exclaimed.

"What are you talking about?" Shyla responded.

"Oh, don't play dumb with me," Tony snorted.

"I have seen your pictures!"

"What pictures?" Shyla said questioning.

Interrupting their conversation was a knock at the door. Tony turned and went back up the steps to answer it, he turned the knob and opened the door.

“Hello, I’m Forest ranger, Dale Clark, I was the one here a few days ago,” he said holding out his hand to Tony.

“I’m sorry if it is late but I was in the area and I haven’t had a chance to get back to you until now.” He said.

“It’s quite alright,” said Tony.

“As a matter of fact, it is a great time for you to come by, my wife and I were just talking about some things that will interest you.” He said smirking at Shyla.

“Please won’t you come in?”

Shyla sat on the couch perfectly content and calm.

“Yes, please do come in, would you like a drink?” She asked.

“No, thank you, I’m still working.” Said Dale.

Tony butted in, “I called you because we have information about the creature you said the hunter’s saw and thought they had wounded last week.” Tony said boasting.

“Oh? What information?” Asked Dale.

“Well, it is more of proof it exists,” Tony said.

“Pictures to be exact,” Tony smirked.

“Oh really?”

“Where did you get these pictures?” Asked Dale.

“My wife, she is a photographer and has gotten some photos of it.”

Dale looked at Shyla, she shrugged her shoulders.

“Did you take pictures of a creature?” Asked Dale.

“I’m not sure what creature my husband is talking about Mr. Clark, the birds Tony?” Asked Shyla calmly.

“Or is it the deer?”

Tony turned to glare at her, “No, not the birds or the deer!”

“Hold on, just wait,” he said turning to Dale.

“I’ll be right back,” Tony said as he ran upstairs.

“You’ll have to excuse my husband, Shyla said quietly, he has been working a lot of long hours since we moved here, and he is not really familiar with the wildlife around here.”

Dale looked confused and folded his arms as he waited for Tony to return.

Tony made his way to his office, flipped the light on and went to his desk. The drawer was closed but he could see the wood was splintered at the top.

“Damn it Shyla,” he said to himself.

He opened the drawer and saw the box had been removed. He walked slowly down the stairs and gave Shyla a glare.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Clark but I seem to have misplaced the pictures, but if I find them, I will be sure to let you know,” Tony said embarrassed.

“I’m sorry I wasted your time.

Dale glanced at Shyla and said, “No problem, just let me know if you find your pictures or if you happen to see the creature again.”

“Have a good night,” he said as he turned to go to the door.

“You also,” Shyla said with a grin.

Tony walked him to the door and closed it behind him turning towards Shyla his expression changed.

“What the hell do you think you’re doing?!” He yelled.

“Doing about what Tony?” She said.

“What do you think you saw snooping in my things?”

“Are you spending time with this thing?” Tony asked.

“Is that where you have been lately when you’re out in the woods?!”

“I think you’ve been working too many hours and playing with your girlfriend too much, it’s gone to your head.” Shyla said calmly.

She got up and took her glass into the kitchen, “I’m going to bed,” she said.

“I’m exhausted.”

“Oh, and Tony, stay out of my studio.”

Tony was beyond pissed, he went to the bar and poured a tall bourbon, sitting down on one of the bar stools. He couldn’t believe what she had done to him, making him look like a fool.

“I know what I saw.” He grumbled.

“I’m not crazy, and I will find those pictures of that creature.”

He got up and walked out onto the deck, squinting out into the woods, then he remembered the binoculars Shyla had bought. He walked back into the house and found her backpack on the chair, he opened it and rummaged through it until he came to the binoculars on the side pocket. He went back out on the deck and turned the switch, there was a slight hum and then everything turned green in his vision.

Tony scanned the woods for anything moving or warm, but nothing seemed alive out there.

Looking intently, he didn’t hear Shyla come up behind him, “What are you doing?” She said snippy.

Tony gasped and wheeled around, as he did, he dropped the binoculars over the rail.

“Shit Tony!” Shyla screeched.

“I’ll go get them,” he said with sarcasm.

“What were you looking for anyway?!” Shyla asked as if she didn’t already know.

Tony didn’t answer her, instead he took off down the stairs. The grass was high where Tony had to look for the binoculars, he looked around but couldn’t see very well, “Hey! Go get the flashlight in the kitchen junk drawer,” he hollered at Shyla.

“Yeah, OK, hold on a minute,” she said as she was walking off to the kitchen.

Tony stood waiting when suddenly he heard growling real close to him, he swung around just in time to see the wolf. It lunged at him and knocked him back, Tony grabbed the hair around the wolf's neck and was trying to hold it off of him.

"SHYLA! SHYLA!" Tony screamed out.

Shyla came back out on the deck, coming to the rail she turned on the flashlight and saw Tony wrestling with the big gray wolf, the same wolf that attacked Hesiod!

"Tony! Shit! She yelled.

"GUN! SHYLA, GET MY GUN! He screamed.

Tony was losing his strength and the wolf's teeth were so close he could smell its rancid breath. Shyla ran upstairs and into his office, jerked the drawer open and grabbed the Ruger that lay there. Running back downstairs cocking it as she went, she came out on the deck and aimed down at Tony and the wolf.

The wolf was growling loudly and was flailing his legs around trying to get better traction.

"SHOOT DAMN IT!" Tony yelled.

"WHAT IF I HIT YOU?!" Shyla screamed.

"SHOOT!" Tony demanded.

Shyla aimed the best she could and squeezed the trigger, "BLAM" the gun went off, the wolf yelped and jumped back, Shyla shot the gun again, "BLAM" the wolf staggered sideways and fell on its side. It took a couple of more breaths and then stopped; she had killed it.

Tony sat up and didn't move for a few minutes, catching his breath and trying to digest what had just happened.

"Are you OK?! Shyla asked as she started down the stairs.

She still had the gun and the flashlight with her. She pointed the light on the wolf to make sure it was dead, "Oh my gosh!

"I killed it" Shyla said in disbelief.

"This was a rouge wolf," She said.

“Rouge wolf?” Tony Said coming out of his daze.

“Well yes, Wolves don’t come this close to houses and attack people,” She explained.

“Um, yeah, I guess you’re right.” He said getting up wobbly.

“Are you alright?” She asked again.

“Yes, thanks to your good shooting,” Tony said thankfully.

“Should we call Ranger Clark?” Shyla asked.

“Yes, I think we must, He will have to dispose of it and take note of what happened I suppose.”

Tony said as he rubbed his hands through his hair and brushed himself off.

“OK, well I’ll go call him then,” She said as she started up the stairs.

“Hey, wait, give me the flashlight, I want to find your binoculars while I’m down here.” Tony said.

“OK, but I wouldn’t stay down there to long, that wolf has friends!” Shyla said raising her eyebrows at Tony.

“Shit! Tony Said and about that time he saw the binoculars.

Ranger Clark had been writing his report listening to their story about how the wolf had attacked Tony. He had brought a couple of other rangers with him and they were addressing the dead wolf.

“You were lucky,” Dale told Tony.

“I know, if it hadn’t been for Shyla and having a gun in the house this could have been a different story.” Tony sighed.

“I’m sorry we had to call you back again tonight,” Shyla apologized.

“No problem, it’s my job.” Said Dale.

“Well we will be taking the carcass in for a necropsy.” Dale went on.

“But I think your wife is correct about this wolf being a rouge wolf.” He paused, “Wolves do not usually want to have anything to do with humans and being this close to a house is strange, also they usually stay close to their packs and don’t hunt alone.” Dale explained.

“It is almost like this wolf had tasted human blood before, sometimes when they do it triggers something in them, and they don’t stop after that.”

Shyla looked at him and almost wished she could tell him about the attack on Hesiod.

“Yes, maybe your right,” She said.

“Well anyway it ended well for you but not so well for the wolf,” He said.

“But it is a good thing it was killed because it would probably have kept on until it did kill someone,” Dale Said, as he stood and gathered up his report papers off the table.

He walked out onto the deck and hollered down at the other rangers, “How you boys doing down there?!” he called out.

“Just finishing up here,” one of the rangers said.

“OK then, I’ll meet you out front!” Dale told them.

“Well, you folks have a good rest of your night and I would stay indoors the rest of it.” Dale looked down over his glasses.

“OK, we will, don’t worry,” Claimed Tony.

“Goodnight Mrs. Carino,” Dale said turning to walk out.

“Goodnight,” She said wondering why he said it that way.

Dale met his partners out front of the house where they were finishing loading the wolf in the truck.

“What do you suppose made this wolf come around here and do that?” One of his partners asked.

“I’m not sure Steve,” Dale answered.

“Like I told Mr. and Mrs. Carino it may have attacked a human before and got the taste.”

“Or, it could have tasted the man creature the hunter’s said they grazed last week, and that Mr. Carino supposedly has pictures of,” Steve said giggling.

“Right Mike?” Steve said bumping his partner.

“OK, that’s enough,” Dale said showing his authority.

“We are going to have to do a sweep tomorrow of the perimeter of the house area I think.” Said Dale.

“You two be here at sunup and don’t be late,” Dale scolded.

Mike and Steve looked at each other and rolled their eyes,” “Yes boss,” they both said in unison getting in the truck.

Shyla was up early, right after Tony left for work; she got some canned food out of the pantry to take to Hesiod. Mostly vegetables and some bread, cheese and a can of sardines. She packed it in her backpack along with a bottle of elderberry wine. She quickly pulled on her shoes and lifted the backpack across her shoulders.

She went out onto the deck and down the stairs, the pine needles and leaves crunched under her weight as she stepped off the last step. The air was crisp and cool, and she took a deep breath into her lungs and blew it out.

“Ahhhhh,” She sighed.

Shyla was getting to like the wooded country air more and more each time she went out in it. She wasn’t very far when she heard someone yell at her.

“Mrs. Carino,” Shyla turned to see two rangers walking up to her on the path.

“What are you doing out here?” Steve asked.

Shyla looked at him, Steve was a nice-looking man, medium build, average height, brown hair, with brown eyes and thick lashes. He had a cleft in his chin and was clean shaven. She noticed his name tag, “Um, I am going out for a hike,” She said.

“A hike? “Isn’t it a little dangerous to be out here all alone?” Mike chimed in.

“Well, not anymore since I killed the rouge wolf.” Shyla stated turning her attention to Mike now and noticing his name tag also.

Mike was shorter than Steve and had a bit of a paunch, his eyes were hazel, and his hair was a bit lighter brown than Steve’s. He had a small mustache and slight dimples on each side of his face that made him look boyish to her.

Mike laughed, “Well, yes you did kill that bad wolf, but we are out here to make sure there are no more.” Mike boasted pulling up his pants.

“Well, I think I will be quite alright,” She argued.

“Nope, we can’t let you go out any further Mrs. Carino,” Steve Said, putting his hands on his hips.

Shyla’s eyes grew big, “You cannot keep me from going out into the woods if I want!” She protested.

“Um, I’m sorry Mrs. Carino, but we can.” Steve replied.

“Are you friggin kidding me!?” Shyla was getting angry now.

“Please, Mrs. Carino, go back to your house so we don’t have to involve the authorities,” Steve told her.

“It is for your own safety,” Mike added.

“Please don’t make us have you escorted back to your house.”

“You guys are serious?!” Shyla squealed.

“Yes, yes we are.” Said Steve.

Shyla could not believe her ears; she was shaking now with anger and her face was all scrunched up.

“Ok, ok, I’ll go back home,” She told them.

“Good then,” Mike Said making a thin smile.

Shyla walked the path back to her house, she glanced back and saw the two rangers were watching her, when she arrived at the house, she climbed the stairs and went in. She dug the binoculars out of her bag and put them up to her face, watching the two rangers through the blinds. When they were out of sight, she hurried down the stairs and back onto the path. She was watching to the left then to the right, looking behind her the whole way. Soon she was jogging trying to make up the time she lost from being policed by the two rangers. She soon came to the brook, the halfway point she knew and stopped on the flat rock to eat a snack and drink some water.

It was past time to see the does and too early for the fairies, but something seemed different today. The air had a smell she couldn't place, and the breeze carried the magical looking seed pods off the cottonwoods and dandelions.

The sun was peeking through at various times and made it look like aliens beaming up particles to study. Shyla had her snack, drank some water and rested her feet for a few minutes. She slid her backpack on, stood up and continued on down the path along the brook towards the falls.

As she came to the switch back trail with the big rocks, she followed it down watching her step. Coming to the bottom she could smell jasmine and lavender and there was a mist hovering right above the water, almost like if it were heated.

Then she saw it, white, flowing mane and tail, it glistened with a shimmer that looked luminous. At first, she thought it was a horse drinking at the falls pool, then she noticed the single horn in the middle of its head.

"Oh my gosh," Shyla gasped.

"It is a Unicorn!" She said under her breath trying not to scare it away.

Shyla stood still and watched as the beautiful creature finished drinking, it was muscular, not real tall, and its skin was almost pink, the eyes were the color of larimar with thick white lashes. There seemed to be a whiteish blue cast coming off it all around. Then it lifted its head and took in a breath, flaring its nostrils, it snorted with a sound that reminded her of the raptors from the Jurassic park movies. Its eyes widened as it saw her and doing a three-hundred-sixty degree turn around it was gone.

Shyla was still trying to sort out what she had seen, then it dawned on her, "I've been having a relationship with a Satyr!"

"Why is this surprising to me?" She had to laugh out loud.

She saw the thicket come into view, "Finally," She said.

Coming to the cottage door she felt an excitement and thrill in her belly, comfortable enough to just walk in, she turned the knob, but it was locked.

"Hesiod," Shyla knocked on the door.

“Just a second!” Hesiod yelled.

She heard him making his way to the door, he opened it and grabbed her before she could even take a step in. Giving her a warm hug, he kissed her face holding it in his big hands as he did.

“Hi, I’m so glad to see you!” He said.

“Me too!” Shyla agreed.

“You’ll never guess what I saw at the falls on the way here!” Shyla said excitedly.

“What?”

“What did you see?” Hesiod asked grinning at Shyla’s excitement.

“A Unicorn!” She blurted out.

“It was white and luminous looking, it had a long flowing mane and tail, blue eyes and pinkish skin, it was so beautiful, I’ve never seen anything like it!”

“It was getting a drink, I think I scared it, but it was so magical!” She went on hurriedly.

“Wow! “OK,” Hesiod laughed out loud. Shyla stopped.

“Why are you laughing at me?” She pouted.

“I’m not laughing “at” you, I’m just happy to see you and your excitement,” He smiled.

Hesiod was still standing but leaning on a cane, a big natural looking stick that she was sure he must have carved.

“Have you been outside?” Shyla asked him.

He limped over to the chair with the help of his cane and sat down.

“Well yes, of course, you didn’t think I was going to sit in this chair for two days, straight did you?” He smirked.

“Well, I expected you to rest,” She snipped back at him.

“I brought some food for you,” She said.

“Thank you, but that was unnecessary.” He said.

“Well you sit there; I have a lot to tell you!” Shyla said with enthusiasm.

“You’re not going to believe it, but the wolf came to the house!”

“The same wolf that attacked you.”

“It had the black points and gray hair.” She went on.

“It attacked Tony and I shot it!”

“What?!” Hesiod said in disbelief.

Shyla told him the whole story as he intently listened to her.

When she was finished, she said, “See I am a pretty good shot with a gun.”

Shyla had a grin on her face, then she told him how she eluded the two rangers that tried to make her stay home.

“That wasn’t happening!” She said.

Then her expression changed as she remembered about the pictures, “Um, I have something else to tell you,” she said lowering her head.

“There’s more?” Hesiod said.

“You’ve been busy in two days.” Hesiod noticed Shyla’s change and put his hand under her chin and raised her face towards his.

“What is it baby?” He asked concerned.

“I’m so sorry Hesiod,” She said.

“I’ve done something I regret now.”

Hesiod’s expression looked worried.

“What is it?”

Shyla hesitated, wondering if she should even tell him about the pictures.

“Um, one day while we were in the woods, I took some photographs of you.” Shyla said quietly without looking up.

Hesiod’s expression turned dark, “Photographs?”

“You took photographs of me?” He said in disbelief.

“Why would you do that?”

Shyla covered her face in her hands, “I don’t know, I guess I wanted to have some of you.”

“Stupid I know,” She admitted.

“But that’s not all is it?” Hesiod asked.

“No, it’s not, Tony found them.” Her face cringed.

Hesiod was silent, “Say something,” Shyla pleaded.

“I’m so sorry,” She whimpered.

“I can’t believe you would do something like this.” Hesiod said but still calm.

“You have put me in grave danger now.” He said.

Shyla came to him and sat at his feet in front of the chair.

“No, I found out he had them and I stole them back!” She said trying to make it better.

“I made him think he was seeing things and he looked like a fool trying to show them to the ranger.” She said in an anxious voice.

“He told the ranger you had photographs of me?!” Hesiod’s voice changed.

“I think you should leave,” Hesiod told her.

“Leave?!” Shyla choked out.

“Yes, I think this has gone too far, what was I thinking.” His voice was riddled with pain.

“I should have just done what is in me to do.”

Shyla’s eyes filled with tears, “You mean enchant human females with your wooden instrument and have sex with them, a lot of them!?” Shyla sneered.

Hesiod hesitated but then said, “Yes, that is what I am meant to do, not have a relationship with one, not fall in love with one!” He choked on his words.

“Now I am compromised, if the male humans find me, they will put me in a cage, or worse!”

“You need to leave now!” Hesiod demand trying to hide his pain and broken heart from Shyla.

“But Hesiod, please!” Shyla choked out.

“I’m sorry,” She pleaded.

“You need to leave here and never return,” He said sternly.

“Forget you ever saw me!”

Chapter 16

Tony was in his office sitting at his desk, he was in deep thought and staring out the big window overlooking the city below. He didn't notice the door swing open as Carrie walked in.

"Tony? "Excuse me, Tony, there is a man here to see you, a Mr. Clark form the forest service," Carrie Said in a questioning voice.

Tony looked up at her, frowned and said, "Show him in, and please hold my calls Carrie," Tony asked giving her a forced smile.

"Sure thing," Carrie smiled warmly at him and winked.

Dale appeared at the door, and Tony motioned for him to come in and sit.

"Hello Mr. Carino," Dale said.

"Afternoon, Mr. Clark, what brings you out to the city?" Tony asked surprisingly.

"Well, I wanted to talk to you about some things." Dale said sitting in the big leather chair in front of Tony's desk.

"Quite the view from here," Dale said waving his hand out towards the big window.

"Yes, it is, but I'm sure you weren't wanting to talk about my view?" Tony said impatiently.

"No, that is not the reason I'm here."

"I wanted to ask you alone about the creature you think you saw in some photographs your wife took." Tony sat back in his chair and folded his hands in front of him.

"So, you do believe I had pictures of it?" Tony said almost smirking.

"I believe something is going on here, first the hunters said they saw it and wounded it and now you say you saw it in pictures."

"Please tell me what it is you saw in the photos."

"Explain the way it looked to you." Dale requested.

Tony sat back up and rearranged himself in the chair.

Clearing his throat, he said, "Well I hope you don't think I'm crazy or on drugs after I tell you."

“Go ahead,” Dale said sitting back ready to hear his description of the creature.

“Well it was not close subject matter, but I know what I saw,” Tony continued.

“It looked similar to a deer or a ram, except it had a man’s body from the lower torso up.” Tony said looking to see Dale’s reaction.

Dale was still and had a look of concentration on his face.

“Go on,” He said.

“It had a man’s face, but it also had horns, not like a deer or bull but more like a ram.”

He said lifting his hands up over his head to make the shape of the horns.

“In all fairness, it’s face is pretty handsome, and it has a great build.”

“It walked upright and had hair on its lower torso and legs, but no feet, it had cloven hooves!” Tony said with a bit of urgency in his voice.

Tony was watching Dale’s expression and as Dale raised his eyebrows, Tony knew he had described what the hunters had.

“So, you see, Mr. Clark, I was telling the truth and I believe it is my wife who has the secret.” Tony said happy with himself.

“Well I’m going to let you in on a little secret of my own,” Said Dale as he leaned forward in his chair.

“The blood they took off the fur and top of the paws of the wolf your wife killed was human but also showed traces of ovis canadensis.” Dale said raising his eyebrows.

Tony looked at him perplexed, “And that is?” He asked.

“Ram!” Said Dale looking directly at him.

“What the...?” Tony gasped. Tony sprang to his feet and started pacing wildly.

“What is this thing?!” Tony demanded.

“Some kind of science experiment gone wrong?” He said rubbing his chin.

Then he stopped and turned to Dale, “Do you think it is possible that my wife is having a relationship with this thing?!” Tony said looking horrified.

“I’m not sure what you mean by a relationship?” Dale asked raising one eyebrow and cocking his head.

“Sex!” “You know exactly what I mean!”

Dale didn’t really look shocked, “Do you think it can communicate with her?” Dale asked.

“Hell, I don’t know!” Tony said getting aggravated now.

“All I know is she has been spending a lot of time in the forest until way after dark these past few weeks and has been distant to me.” Tony said as he threw up his hands and took to pacing again.

“Well do you think it may have something to do with your extracurricular activities?” Dale asked boldly.

Tony swung his head around. “What do you mean by my extracurricular activities?!” Tony said almost yelling.

“Oh, come now Mr. Carino, Your wife told me you had been working very long hours and I saw the way your pretty blond secretary smiled at you when she saw me in.”

“Body language says a lot.” Dale said with a smirk.

“Tell me I’m wrong,” He said.

Tony stopped and put his head down in a shameful manner, he acted like his dad just caught him stealing a cookie.

“OK, yes, I have been having an affair, but that isn’t the reason my wife has been in the woods so often.” He protested.

“Well you may believe that, but if she was happy with you and your relationship, she probably wouldn’t have been out in the woods so much to begin with, you think?” Dale stated.

“OK, we have been having some issues for a long while, but that still has nothing to do with this thing she may be seeing.” Tony defended.

“Maybe, but if this thing can communicate with her and it is handsome and magically different, you think an unhappy housewife, alone all the time wouldn’t be tempted or hungry for some attention or even love?” Dale said.

Tony sat down hard in his chair, “Love?!”

“You can’t be serious!” He snapped.

“Well, we have no idea what we are dealing with.” Dale continued.

“We need to find out though, are you up for a little spying?” Dale suggested.

“What do you have in mind?” Asked Tony.

“Well, we need to follow her into the woods, she will lead us to him.”

“And how do you propose we do that?” Tony Asked.

“You tell her you are going to work one day, but really you and I will follow her out into the woods and see what exactly she does out there with this ram man.” Dale explained.

“I know how to track animals and such without their knowledge of my presence.” Dale told him looking at him seriously.

Tony was tapping his pencil fiercely on his desk, “And after we find it, then what?” He asked.

“Then we capture it, bring it out in the open, study it, find out what the hell it is!” Dale said enthusiastically.

Tony didn’t really know how to react to that, but he said, “Ok, let’s do it, when do you want to?”

“As soon as possible, what’s your schedule, this is my job, so I’m free anytime!” Dale said.

“Ok, let me check my calendar and I will get back to you in the next few days.

Dale stood up to leave and turned to Tony and said, “Don’t wait too long, the faster we address this issue the better.”

“Don’t worry,” Tony said as he stood to see him out.

Dale opened the door and left, Tony stood there and watched him go down the short hall. He went back into his office and was about to close the door when Carrie put her foot in the way.

“What was that all about handsome?” Carrie pushed her way in, locking the door behind her.

Tony backed away from the door and turned to walk back to his desk, he sat down in his chair and looked at Carrie.

“Just some business about a rouge wolf that has been in my area.” Said Tony to suffice her.

“A rouge wolf?!”

“Wow, you never said anything to me about any wolf.” Carrie snipped.

Tony gave her a sideways look, “I didn’t think it concerned you.” Tony snapped.

“Wow are we in a mood,” Carrie scoffed.

She walked around the desk and up behind Tony, she put her hands on his shoulders, “Man are you tight baby,” She said sultry.

“Let me take some of that stress away handsome,” Carrie slurred as she reached down and licked his ear.

“My mind is on other things,” Tony said brushing her off.

Carrie swung his chair around so that he faced her, she slowly unbuttoned her blouse.

“Carrie, I said..... Shhhh,” She sighed.

“Just relax,” She purred sticking her red painted finger nail up to his mouth.

She slowly moved her hand down to his chest and on to his crotch, rubbing and squeezing until she felt him grow hard.

“Ah, I see someone else has different ideas,” She said whispering.

She lifted her skirt; she was wearing black lace panties with the old-time garter belts. Tony watched her as she slowly undid each garter snap from the stockings so she could slide her panties off. Tony knew to fight her was futile, she always won, he tried to resist her, but he was stressed and needed to blow off some steam.

Carrie was a beautiful statuesque blond with long legs and a supple ass, she had full hips and firm perky breasts. Her lips were pouty and wet, a small turned up nose and high cheekbones, with blue eyes and long lustrous blond hair. She always smelt like she just got out of the shower and

covered herself in some kind of body spray with hints of amber and vanilla. Her skin was soft and smooth like milk with hardly a flaw.

Carrie ignored any attempts Tony made at deterring her, she slowly pulled her panties down and let them fall on the floor. She unzipped Tony's pants and slid her hand in grabbing his erect penis.

"Ah, there it is," She said licking her lips.

She got on her knees and grabbed both of Tony's knees and spread his legs as she positioned herself in between them. She lowered her mouth down on his cock and began licking and sucking it. Tony laid back in the chair and moaned, he reached down and grabbed her hair at the back of her head pulling her closer. She took him all in her mouth and just as he was about to explode, she jumped up.

"Oh no, not yet handsome," She said mounting him in the chair.

She got on her knees in the chair and straddled him, "Put it in me," She whispered in his ear while giving it a good lick.

"OH! Ummm," Tony groaned.

He reached into his top drawer and pulled out a condom, he ripped into it with his teeth and rolled it on.

He picked her up as he stood up from the chair and turning her around, he bent her over his desk. Pulling her skirt up over her ass he entered her from behind, he started slowly and started to work in a rhythmic motion.

"Oh baby, fuck me," Carrie moaned.

As they got closer to orgasm, Carrie cried, "Harder baby, harder!"

Tony grabbed her ass and pulled her onto his cock, slamming into her.

"Oh yes! Yes." Carrie said breathlessly.

In a frenzy they both came together as Tony slumped over her. He stayed inside her as long as he could, then pulling out he pulled up his pants.

Carrie turned and leaned back on his desk, putting her arm out and grabbing his belt she pulled him to her.

“That was great,” She said with a sigh.

She kissed him and ran her fingers through his hair.

“You better get dressed,” He told her as he was buttoning up his shirt.

When Tony got home, he was surprised to see Shyla there, she was out on the deck drinking bourbon and looking out into the woods. He walked to the bar and poured him one and took off his jacket, laying it over the back of the chair. She didn’t seem to notice him come in or didn’t care he thought.

He walked to the big window and slid it back, she never turned her head as he opened it.

“Hey,” What are you doing out here?” Tony asked.

She was silent. Shyla, do you hear me?” He asked again.

“What do you want?” She asked never turning to face him.

“What is wrong with you?” Tony pried.

“Leave me the fuck alone!” Shyla screeched still facing forward.

She took a long pull off her drink, got up and walked to the rail of the deck. Tony walked over to her and leaned forward to try and see her face.

Her face was red and puffy, and she was sniffing, so Tony had to ask, “Have you been crying?”

“What is the matter?” Tony tried to be soft.

“Please, just leave me alone.” She begged him.

Tony lowered his head and shook it, “OK, if that is what you really want.” He drank his bourbon down and walked back into the house.

He made another drink and walked upstairs to shower Carrie off of him. Shyla had left earlier today like Hesiod had asked her too. She was still having a hard time believing what he had said to her that afternoon. She had been drinking since she got back home and had a decent buzz.

His words kept replaying over and over in her head, “I should have just done what was in me to do,”

“Not have a relationship with one, not fall in love with one.”

“Now I am compromised, if the male humans find me, they will put me in a cage, or worse!”

“Forget you ever saw me!”

Shyla was whimpering again, “What am I going to do?” She whispered to herself.

“I love him, but he is right, I have compromised him.”

“Maybe I should stay away if I love him.” Shyla murmured.

She laid down on the lounge and covered herself with the blanket. She would sleep out here tonight because it made her feel closer to him under the stars. Soon she passed out and into a restless sleep.

When morning decided to come, she woke stiff and cold, “augh,” She said as she tried to stand.

“Shit, I feel like an elephant was sleeping on top of me.” She groaned.

She walked into the house and saw that Tony had been in the kitchen by the coffee he left in the pot. She hollered out to see if he was still there.

“TONY!” No answer.

“Guess he’s gone to work,” She told herself.

Shyla poured herself a cup of coffee and got out a pan to make herself some egg whites. After her breakfast she went upstairs to take a shower. She still felt tired and exhausted even after her shower. She pulled the blinds shut and dropped her towel, sliding into the big bed she flung the covers over herself, snuggled into the pillow and fell asleep.

Dale had taken it upon himself to be at the house that morning, he waited a few yards away behind one of the big trees.

He leaned against the tree and searched his phone, checking his emails and looking at Facebook. The hours passed and he started to get discouraged, he pulled out his phone and called Tony’s office.

Carrie answered the phone, “Good Morning, Tony Carino’s office.”

“Morning,” Dale answered back, “Can I please speak to Mr. Carino.”

“May I ask who’s calling?” Asked Carrie in a sing song voice.

“This is Dale Clark.”

“Ok, Just a minute please.” Carrie said as the line clicked.

Tony came on the line, “Hello?”

“Hi Tony, It’s Dale,” He Said.

“Yes, I know, what can I do for you?”

“Well, I’ve been here at your house for the past several hours, but Shyla hasn’t” Tony interrupted, “You’ve been outside my house?”

“I thought you were going to let me look at my schedule?” Tony snapped.

“I’m out here anyway so I thought I’d get a jump on things.” Dale answered.

“That is not what we agreed.” Tony said.

“Yeah, I know, but the thing is, I’m here and she hasn’t been out of the house all day.” Dale whined.

Tony paused, thinking if he should give Dale any more information.

“She was drinking heavily last night when I got home and was visibly upset, looked like she had been crying.” Tony told him reluctantly.

“Oh?” Replied Dale. “She slept out on the deck, is she there?” Tony asked.

“No, I haven’t seen her since I’ve been here.” Dale answered.

“Well then I don’t know what you want me to tell you, let’s do this the day after tomorrow, it’s better for me,” Tony said agitated.

“Well, we need to get with it, so this ram man doesn’t get the wiser.” Dale replied.

“The day after tomorrow I said.” As Tony hung up the phone, he heard a click, he sprang up and walked into the front office.

Carrie looked up and he could see the guilt on her face.

“Carrie, can you come into my office for some dictation?” He snapped.

Carrie looked around, no one was paying much attention though.

“Of course, Mr. Carino,” Carrie said.

As soon as she walked in the room Tony hit her with his words, “Where you listening to my phone call?!” Tony demanded.

“Now why would I want to do that?” Carrie lied.

“Don’t fuck with me Carrie!” Tony warned.

She looked down, “OK, yeah, I did. I was curious who this guy is, and what is a ram man?”

Tony slapped his head with his hand, “Holy shit, this is getting way out of control!”

Carrie looked confused, “What is getting out of control, and why is this guy watching your house and Shyla?”

“OK, you just forget what you heard and stay out of it!” Tony said sternly.

Carrie just stared at him, “Why you are keeping things from me baby?”

Tony was getting more and more aggravated.

“Because they are none of your business!” Tony yelled.

With a knock at the door, Tony stopped. “Yes?” He asked through the door.

The door opened and John stood in the doorway, “Is there a problem?” He asked.

Tony looked embarrassed, “No Mr. Blocker, no problem at all,” He said glaring at Carrie.

“Well, that’s good to know, was just sounding a little loud in here is all.” Said John looking over to Carrie.

“You sure everything’s OK?”

“Yes, Mr. Blocker, everything is fine.” Carrie lied, as she gathered up some papers off Tony’s desk to make it more convincing and walked out.

“Alright then,” John said as he followed her out and closed the door.

Tony was livid, he couldn't believe Carrie was listening to his conversation. Now how was he supposed to keep this quiet if she knows about it!? Tony paced furiously back and forth in front of the large window, he stopped and went to his desk. Sitting down, he grabbed his cell phone off the desktop and called Shyla's number. The phone rang a few times and went to her voice mail.

"Come on Shyla," Tony grumbled.

He rang her back again, this time she answered after a few rings, "Hell-lo," Shyla said sounding half asleep.

"Shyla, were you sleeping?" Tony said in disbelief.

"Yeah, so?" Shyla said irritated.

Tony could tell from the tone of her voice she was still upset with him.

"Why are you calling me in the middle of the day, you never do that," Shyla asked perplexed.

"Um, I knew you were upset last night when I got home, I was just making sure you were OK." Tony said.

"Why are you in bed in the afternoon?"

Shyla sighed heavy on the other end of the phone, "Why do you think, I didn't sleep well out on the lounge, I was tired, OK?" She snapped.

"OK, well, um, are you going to be going out into the woods to take pictures today?" He asked trying to be nonchalant.

It was silent on the phone for a few minutes, "Shyla?"

"You there?" Tony asked.

"I'm going to go now," Shyla said and hung up.

Tony looked at his phone, "She hung up!" He then looked up Dale's number and called him,

"Hello, this is Ranger Dale Clark speaking."

"Dale, it's Tony, I just spoke to Shyla, she is in bed so you can call off your spy games for the day," Tony said sarcastically.

"That's strange isn't it, for her to be in bed in the afternoon?"

“I thought you said she was always in the woods until well after dark?” Dale questioned.

“She has been for the past several weeks.” Tony replied.

“Then why have things changed all of the sudden?” Dale asked.

“How the hell should I know?” Tony said aggravated.

“Hmm, somethings happened,” Dale said.

“Maybe they had a lover’s spat,” Dale said with a hint of sarcasm.

“Just leave, let’s do it like I said, day after tomorrow.” Tony spat back.

“OK, see you then,” Dale replied.

The phone line went silent, Tony sat back in his chair contemplating the point Dale had brought up.

“Hmm, he thought, that was kind of strange she was not out in the woods today and she was visibly upset last night.”

“Maybe they did have a fight,” Tony grumbled under his breath.

Tony’s thoughts were interrupted by Carrie on the office phone, “Mr. Carino, Mr. Blocker needs to see you in his office,” She said in a professional voice.

“Alright, thank you Carrie.

Chapter 17

Shyla was awake now after Tony calling to quiz her on her where a bouts.

“That was strange,” Shyla said out loud as she was getting dressed.

She glanced at the clock, “Almost four!”

“Wow I must have been tired,” Shyla said shaking her head.

“All this stress lately.”

She walked into the big living room, stood and looked out the window. Everything from the previous days came flooding back to her, she felt her eyes burn with tears.

“This is a nightmare!”

She went to the kitchen and opened the refrigerator door, after looking for a few minutes she decided she wasn’t hungry at all. She grabbed a beer instead and went into the pantry, searching below and to the back she pulled the box out and walked out onto the deck. Shyla sat down at the patio table and put the box along with her beer down.

The afternoon was warm, and the sun was still lingering on the deck, there was a very faint breeze and the birds were zooming back and forth between the trees. She kept looking out at their special tree, hoping to see Hesiod standing there, but it was as if she had dreamed it all and she was back in the real word. She opened the box and expected the pictures to be gone too, but they were all there nestled in the felt lined box.

She picked out her favorite one and stared at it, “I miss you so much,” Her eyes welling up with tears.

She took a long pull off the beer and as she brought her head down a single tear fell and landed on the picture. Shyla jumped up shaking the picture to try and remove the salty water, as she did it slipped out of her hand and flew over the deck and floated down to the ground.

The wind came up and it blew a bit further, “Shit!” Shyla ran down the stairs. She got to the bottom and made her way over to the picture.

She snatched it up and turned to see Dale standing there watching her, “What’ cha got there?” He sneered.

Shyla put the picture in her back pocket, “Nothing,” She snapped.

“Oh, I think it is something,” He said walking towards her.

Shyla backed away, “Don’t come any closer,” She warned.

“Or what?” He smirked. Shyla could see he wasn’t going to stop; she turned and ran as fast as she could down the path, she had walked so many times with Hesiod before.

She was smaller and had on light tennis shoes, not like his big bulky hiking boots, her walks to Hesiod’s the past weeks had made her have more endurance too.

“Shyla!” Dale hollered after her.

He took off running but she was quite a bit in front of him already. She ran and ran until her lungs were burning her, she realized she was near the brook already. Hiding behind a tree she stopped and took in several deep breaths; she could hear him coming closer from the crunching of the pine needles and leaves.

He came into her view, “Shyla, I know your here, you might as well come out!” He yelled out.

“There’s nowhere to go out here!”

She made an attempt to run but he was on her in minutes, he knocked her to the ground, straddled her and pinned her down with his hands on each of her wrists. His face was close, she could feel the heat from his breath, and she turned her face to the side, thrashing and kicking.

“Oh, stop it, you’re not doing any good, I’m way bigger than you.” He said quietly.

“Isn’t it lovely out here, so peaceful and remote, you could fill a lot of sexual fantasies out here and no one would be the wiser.”

“But you already know that don’t you, nature girl?”

“What do you want!?” Shyla said angrily.

“Get off of me!” Dale readjusted his grip.

“I want what’s in your pants!” He smirked.

Shyla’s fear was growing, “The answer is no!” She screamed at his face.

“Oh, not the little prize between those legs, the picture in you back pocket.” Dale glared at her.

“Although, as I said, who would be the wiser out here?” Dale said in a menacing tone.

“I WOULD!” Something hit Dale from behind, he went down on top of Shyla.

Shyla rolled him off of her with a groan, “Hesiod!”

She sprang up and threw her arms around his neck.

“Are you Ok?” He asked concerned.

“Now I am.” Shyla smiled at him warmly.

“This cane comes in pretty handy; I must say!” Hesiod gave her a satisfied smile as he held his cane up in front of them.

Shyla looked down at Dale, “Is he dead?!”

Hesiod checked him over, “No, he’s breathing, just knocked out.”

“What are we going to do with him now?” She asked.

“Nothing, he can lie here, piece of shit.” Hesiod gave Shyla a long look, “Come on, let’s get out of here before ranger dick comes too, I will make sure you get back home safe.”

Shyla reached out for Hesiod’s hand holding her breath he would take it. Hesiod looked down at her outstretched hand and took it in his. Shyla smiled as they walked off and suddenly everything felt right again.

As they walked along in silence it was as if nothing needed to be said, he knew she was sorry, and they knew the love they felt between them. Shyla felt more animal at this point than she did human and she felt good about it somehow.

They came to their tree, Hesiod stopped, Shyla turned to him and searched his face, her eyes had a hunger for him he knew.

He cupped her face in his big hands and kissed her hard and deep. She moaned and squirmed up to him, “Please, I need you,” She moaned.

She could feel the heat off of Hesiod also, “Where?” He asked.

“Come inside,” She pulled at his arm.

“It’s almost dark, what about Tony?” Shyla looked up at the house, “Come on, I’ll call him and see when he’s coming home.” She said taking his hand in hers and started up the stairs.

As they came to the deck, Shyla noticed the box on the table and her beer she took one drink of. She quickly glanced at Hesiod, let go of his hand and walked over to the box. She picked it up and walked to the big sliding glass window, she opened it, turning to Hesiod she said, “Come on, there is something I need to do.” They walked into the big living area, Shyla opened the box and took out all the photographs.

She pulled the one out of her back pocket and put it with the others. Hesiod watched her in silence, she went to the big stone fireplace and laid them down, reaching over to the tools that stayed by the side she picked up a lighter.

She looked back at Hesiod and gave him a smile, “For you baby,” as she lit the pictures on fire. They stood together and watched the flames rise high and the pictures turn to ash, as soon as it started it was over.

“Now let me call Tony and we can get down to business.” Shyla said with a devious tone.

Hesiod nodded and stood quietly waiting on her to make the call. Shyla walked into the kitchen, He could faintly hear her talking, she came back into the room smiling and came close to him.

“He is working for another couple of hours or playing with his girlfriend.” Shyla said, never taking her eyes off of Hesiod’s.

Hesiod glanced around, “It is weird being in here,” He said.

“Would you like a drink to calm your nerves?” Shyla asked.

“It’s not that I’m nervous really, just weird.” Hesiod explained.

“I understand,” Shyla said in a soothing voice.

“Drink?”

Hesiod walked to the bar, “This is some set up here,” He said nodding towards the big bar.

“I’ve never been a big drinker, some elderberry wine every now and then.”

Shyla strolled behind the bar, “Let me see what I can find,” She said looking at all the bottles on the glass shelves.

“Have you ever had bourbon?”

“Once, a long time ago.” He replied.

“Well, I happen to have some of the best Kentucky bourbon made!” She boasted.

Hesiod seemed intrigued, “Well let’s have it then!” He said lightly.

Shyla put two small rocks glasses on the granite top, picked up a bottle of Blanton’s and poured the amber liquid to the halfway point.

“Too us!” Shyla said lifting her glass.

Hesiod nodded and lifted his glass with her. They both let the warm amber liquid slip down their throats, “Ahh!” Shyla sighed.

“Wow, that is smooth, I don’t remember bourbon tasting like that.” Hesiod said lifting the glass back to his mouth to get every drop.

Shyla laughed, “Come on, let’s go upstairs,” Shyla motioned towards the stairs with her head.

She led Hesiod up to the bedroom and he took over. He swooped her up in his arms and walked into the bathroom, he sat her down and opened the shower door, never taking his eyes off of her.

“You’ve been rolling in the dirt, so we need to clean you up.” He said with a seductive grin.

Shyla’s eyes had that hungry look again.

Hesiod reached in and turned on the water, waiting for it to warm he turned his attention to her.

He slowly lifted her top off over her head, reaching around her he unsnapped her bra, it fell to the floor. He slid his strong hands around her waist, sliding them down to the top of her pants.

One hand searched for the zipper in front, getting it loose he slid down her pants.

Standing in her panties he reached into each side and slide them off.

Hesiod felt of the water, satisfied it was the right temperature, he walked in and pulled her along with him. The spray of the water hit them, and droplets of water made its way into the cracks and crevices of their bodies. Hesiod picked up the soap from the holder, put it to his nose and took in a deep breath, “I know this smell,” He said thickly.

He wet the bar and slid it over Shyla's breasts, soaping them until they were slippery in his hands. He traveled around to her back, pulling her in against his body. She felt he was getting hard and it made her ache with anticipation.

He soaped up her back and ran his hands down to her ass, he moved his hands in a circular motion over both cheeks. She moaned with delight and pressed harder to him.

"My turn," She said taking the bar of soap out of his hands. She placed the soap on his chest and ran her hands over his budding pecks.

She moved to his arms and felt the shape of his biceps. Hesiod took the soap from her and turned her around, so her ass was tucked nicely against his crotch. His hair was soft and woolly on her buttocks and thighs, she felt like she was wrapped in a wool blanket, it was so sexy to her.

He soaped her breasts once again and slid them around in his big hands, pulling tight at her nipples at every end of his strokes. She moaned as her clit was pounding, calling for him to enter her soon. He reached down and felt the nub was swollen and tender, he slid his finger inside her and knew she was ready by the warm moist muscles clamping down on his finger.

"Oh Baby," He slurred into her ear.

Shyla could feel his hot breath in her ear and his sultry voice, she had to hold off from coming then.

"Make love to me," Shyla pleaded low.

Hesiod grabbed the shaft of his cock and moved it slowly back and forth at the entrance of her

"Please, give it to me," Shyla begged.

The water was raining down her face and she closed her eyes, "Please!"

With that Hesiod slid his cock deep inside her.

"OHHH" Shyla let out a pleasurable moan.

She went forward and put her hands up against the tiled wall, pushing back against him hard.

"Damn!" Hesiod let out a groan.

He cocked one leg back and one leg forward to get better traction. He held her breasts as he moved rhythmically inside her.

“I’m gonna come!” Shyla warned him.

“Yes baby, come for me!” Hesiod blurted out.

She was shaking and pushing hard down on him, with one good shove she exploded on him, it was warm and wet, and Hesiod couldn’t hold it any longer. He went faster for a minute then with another hard push he almost lifted her off the ground. Unh, Ung, Ummf, He groaned deep as he finished.

Shyla turned to face him, “That was the best yet.”

“I agree, wow, I think the water’s getting cold though,” He smiled shutting it off and opening the door.

He wrapped a towel around her and rubbed her arms vigorously.

She stood mesmerized by him.

“I want you to come be with me.....Forever, we can live in the woods far away from everyone.”

Shyla knew she wanted to hear this, she longed for it, wanted it. Fairytale or not, she loved him.

“I want that too.”

“Then do it, what’s stopping you?”

Shyla went to the bedroom and retrieved some clothes.

She glanced at the clock, “Shit! Tony will be home at any time.”

“OK, I’m going, but we will discuss this next time, please think hard about it,” Hesiod asked as he came to her and cupped her face to kiss her.

“I love you, Shyla.”

The front door opened downstairs, “Shyla! I’m home,” Tony hollered out from downstairs.

Hesiod went to the deck off the bedroom, slid the door open and disappeared down the stairs.

Tony appeared at the door, noticing the door open, he looked at Shyla and frowned.

“What is going on here? “Nothing, I just had a shower.”

“I saw two bourbon glasses on the bar top downstairs and the door to the balcony is open, come on, I’m not stupid.”

“Where is it?!”

“What?”

“That ram man you’ve been seeing!”

Shyla laughed out loud, “Ram man?”

“What a stupid thing to say, you are losing it Tony.”

“Where are the pictures Shyla?”

“What pictures Tony, there are no pictures.”

“I am not fighting with you about this anymore, I have a decision to make and until then we are not discussing this subject anymore, is that clear?” Shyla glared at him.

Tony threw his hands up in the air and walked out and down the stairs. He went behind the bar and poured him a bourbon. Looking at the two glasses sitting in front of him his anger grew, picking one of the glasses up he threw it in the fireplace.

It made a loud shatter and then he noticed the ashes. Shyla came to the top of the stairs to see what the noise was.

He looked up and said, “I see you and your friend had a little campfire today.

Dale woke up in a daze, he sat up slowly grabbing the back of his head, “Ugh, what the fuck hit me?” He mumbled.

It was dark and he figured he had been laying there for a few hours. Trying hard to remember what happened was sending pain between his eyes. Grabbing the top of his nose just below his eyebrows, he pinched at the pain. Slowly flashes of his memory returned, “That bitch,” He whined. “I was chasing that bitch, and I had caught her too, then.... Something, or someone hit me on the back of my head.”

Slowly getting to his feet, he looked around his surroundings. “Hmm, never really been in this part of the woods.” Turning to get a three-sixty, he staggered off a little.

“Shit, I better get the hell out of here.”

As he walked, using a compass as his guide, Dale started to recognize some of the terrain as familiar. There was no moon tonight and he only had his little belt light to guide his way.

Walking made his head pound worse, but he knew he had no choice but to keep going.

Dale was out in these woods all the time, it was his job, but something about them tonight made him feel uneasy. There was an eeriness in the air, and he felt like the trees were almost watching him.

It seemed he could hear water now and he figured he was close to the brook that ran along here. Getting closer now, he could hear the rushing water over the rocks and when it came into view, he was relieved. He found the big flat rock that sat beside the water and sat down to rest and get a drink.

He took out a handkerchief from his pocket and submersed it in the cool water. Squeezing the excess water from it he wiped it across his face and the back of his neck, then he dipped it back into the water again to rinse it off.

Snap! Dale swung his head around, “Who’s there?!” Squinting his eyes to see through the darkness, Dale stumbled to his feet.

“Hello?”

The woods were quiet, he pointed his little light out onto the trees, as he shined it along, something moved behind the tree. Dale looked around for a good-sized branch he could use as a weapon.

Finding one, thinner than he wanted, he picked it up. Waiting for whatever it was in the trees, he took a stance.

“Well, come on!” He shouted. After a few minutes and nothing coming to attack him, he decided to move on.

Dale was on edge now and kept a sharp eye out, looking back periodically. Finally, he could see the lights of the Carino house through the trees. He made his way down the path that Shyla and Hesiod had worn down together so many times.

Looking into the window upstairs he could see the light was still on. He walked up the stairs to the deck and knocked on the window.

Tony jumped, “Shit, man you scared the piss out of me!” Tony said in a hushed voice as he slid the glass door open.

“What the hell are you doing out there at this hour?”

“Can I come in?” Dale asked rubbing his head.

“Yeah, sure, but be quiet, Shyla’s in bed.” Tony motioned to the stairs.

“You look like shit, what happened?”

“I was hit on the back of my head today and left out there as wolf bait,” Dale grumbled.

He looked at Tony’s drink, “Can I have one of those Please?”

“Yeah, sure, bourbon?” Tony asked going behind the bar.

“That’s fine,” Dale said sitting down on one of the bar stools.

He pulled the cloth out of his pocket and wiped his face again.

Tony poured him a tall drink, sliding it over to him, “So what’s your story?”

Dale took a long drink, wiped his mouth and said, “I was here earlier, Shyla was out on the deck, she had a box with her, I saw her accidentally loose a picture over the rail. Before I could get to it, she came down and put it in her pocket.” Tony started to say something, but Dale put his hand up.

“I know, I know, you told me to go, and I was getting ready to, but then I saw her come out onto the deck with this box, anyway, I came over to her and asked her for the photo, real nice like, but she wouldn’t have it, she slapped me and... “LIAR!”

They both looked up to the top of the stairs. “He’s a liar Tony!”

“I never slapped him, and he did not ask me nicely for anything!”

“He was going to take whatever he wanted!”

Tony flashed his eyes on Dale, “What the fuck?”

Shyla moved down a couple of steps, “He chased me out into the woods and when he caught me, he straddled me and pinned me down, threatening to take whatever he wanted because he said nobody would hear me out there!”

Tony came around the bar and knocked Dale off his seat. The chair hit hard and broke the back off, it sent splinters across the polished wood floor.

“Augh! Shit man!” Dale groaned.

Tony reached down and landed his fist hard across his face.

He pulled at Dale’s shirt, “Get the fuck up and get the hell out of my house!

Dale scrambled to his feet, “Alright man, just don’t hit me again, I was hit already today on the back of the head by her ram man I think!”

Tony looked toward Shyla who was now on the wood floor. Her eyes were wide, and she had her hand over her mouth.

“Deals off!” Tony snapped.

“If I see you around my house or my wife again, I’m going to your supervisor!”

Dale walked to the door, he turned and glared at Tony, “That’s OK, cause it’s your wife that’s in love with an animal!”

“So have fun dealing with that,” He smirked, giving Shyla a disgusted look, he said, “You better hope I don’t find your lover boy either, because if I do, I will kill him.” he turned and walked out slamming the door behind him.

Tony walked slowly over to Shyla, “Is that true?”

“Is what true?”

“Are you in love with him?” He asked softly.

Shyla put her head down, when she raised it, she said, “Yes, yes, it is true, I do love him, I’m sorry.”

Tony gazed into Shyla’s eyes as if waiting for her to say, “Just kidding,” but she was silent.

He walked to the bar avoiding the broken chair on the floor, “Would you like a drink?” Shyla was watching him; he was like a zombie or in a trance.

“Yes, please,” She walked carefully to the bar.

“Let’s go sit on the couch,” Tony suggested after pouring the drinks.

“OK,” Shyla followed him and sat down at one end. He put her drink in front of her on the long table that sat in front of them.

“Was Dale going to rape you?”

Shyla was shocked at the question, “Um, I think he was thinking about it, or he was just trying to scare me, not sure.”

“He protected you, didn’t he, your secret ram man?” Tony was staring forward and talking in a calm voice.

“Yes, he did,” Shyla said softly.

Tony took another long pull off his drink and sat it down on the table. He moved down the couch to be closer to her, turning to her and taking her hands, he looked in her eyes.

“Have you had sex with this...” Shyla stopped him, “Hesiod, his name is Hesiod.”

Tony let go of her hands, he stood up and started pacing the room, “This is real, this is real,” He repeated.

“I know it’s hard to believe, I had a hard time when I first saw him too.”

“What deal did you have with Dale anyway, what was he talking about?” Shyla tried to change Tony’s thoughts.

Tony stopped pacing, “We were going to follow you one day, and have you lead us to it...him.” Tony paused.

“But he took it upon himself to be here and has been watching out for you to leave, but that wasn’t the deal, and neither was him to be thinking of raping you in the woods!”

“He can’t be trusted,” Tony started to pace again.

“Were you going to kill him?”

“No, he said, we would capture him and let scientists study him.”

Shyla gasped, “No! You can’t do that.”

She stood up and walked to him, grabbing his arms, she looked up at him, “Please, please, I’m begging you, leave him alone.”

Shyla’s eyes filled with tears, one fell down her face, Tony took his hand and wiped it away.

He looked in her eyes and brushed back her hair, “How did we get here, what happened to us,” Tony asked sadly.

Shyla shook her head slowly, “I don’t know.”

Tony slid his hand around her back and pulled her close to him, slowly he reached down and kissed her on the mouth.

“I still love you, Shyla.”

“What about Carrie?” She asked searching his eyes.

“I don’t love Carrie; she was just a fling.

“Then why take the chance with our relationship, I don’t think I can trust you ever again, I love you, but I’m not in love with you anymore.”

Tony dropped his head, “Well, I guess I deserve that, I’m going to bed and try to sleep, maybe all this will make sense in the morning, you coming?”

“Yes,” was all she said.

Hesiod couldn’t believe what he was seeing through the window. Tony was holding Shyla and kissing her!

He had followed Dale back at a distance through the woods to make sure he didn’t harm her, and this is what he finds?!

He watched as they walked up stairs together, his head was spinning, “What the hell?” All kinds of thoughts started running through his mind.

Heading towards the stairs he started up, then decided it was a bad idea and stepped back down. Hesiod shook his head and turned away not wanting to see anymore, he headed off down the path and towards home. It seemed like the longest walk home he ever had, trying to shake off what he saw as he came to his cottage.

Entering the cottage, it was dark and cold, he carefully stacked some wood and built a roaring fire. Sitting in the big chair he rested his leg on the ottoman, throwing the blanket from the back of the chair over himself.

Soon he was off in the world of restless dreams, flashes of Shyla and Tony together, of Dale on top of her, wolves and fairies. Twisting and turning in his chair, he called out and woke himself from his torturing dreams.

“Oh man,” he groaned rubbing his eyes.

Seeing that the fire had gone down, he stiffly rose and gathered some more wood to stoke the fire again. Walking to the kitchen to make some tea, he lit a candle on the countertop for a bit of light. Getting the cast iron pot, he poured some water from the vase and threw a couple of the homemade tea bags in the water.

Bringing it to the fire, he sat the pot directly on the coals that had spilled to the front. In a matter of minutes, it was ready, grabbing a mit from the hearth he took the pot off and poured the tea into his cup.

Sitting back down in his chair he sipped his tea and tried to decide what he needed to do. After a long contemplation, he sadly decided, she was human, he was not, and she didn’t belong with him.

He would tell her tomorrow.

Chapter 19

Hesiod had waited until he knew Tony would have left for work before he ventured out to tell Shyla what he had painfully decided. The morning was cool and some of the leaves were starting to show signs that it was nearing fall, sleep time for them, a time for them to rest and renew for the coming year. The clouds were gathering as if getting ready to wager on a game, some were white and took on a chubby appearance, others were dark and more menacing.

He walked slow but steadily toward the task he dreaded, his mind was in a fog, as he got closer to their tree, he could see her sitting out on the deck sipping something warm in a cup, the steam rolling up to her nose.

He watched for a minute to make sure she was alone before trying to get her attention. When he was satisfied she was on her own, he called to her and waved his arm in the air.

Shyla saw him immediately as she was waiting on him, she stood and came to the rail, her face was bright and cheerful.

“Hesiod, Come up!”

He stood fast, shook his head, and waved for her to come to him. Shyla scrunched up her face in protest, but she walked to the edge of the stairs and casually walked down. Once she was closer to him, she could feel his vibe wasn’t one of happiness.

“Good morning,” She said trying to read his mood.

“Morning,” Hesiod said in a low tone.

Shyla went to reach for him, but he withdrew, she looked at him, bewildered at his actions. He stood with his head hanging down and would not hardly look at her, she was becoming more and more concerned with his behavior.

“What is it, Hesiod?”

“I’ve decided something about you and I,” He replied sadly.

“Oh?” Shyla was watching him intently, searching his face for answers before he told her.

“Yes, I followed the ranger back here last night to make sure he did not harm you.” He told her.

“Oh, really, well thank you for that but.....

“I saw you and Tony, ...holding each other, and...” Hesiod choked on the words, “Kissing.” Shyla’s eyes grew wide, “Let me explain,” Shyla said urgently.

“No, I saw it, it was so painful for me to watch, I had to leave and not look back.”

“When I got home, I had nightmares about it, I can’t do this any longer, I’ve decided, you are human, I am not, this is an impossible situation...”

Shyla interrupted, “Please, no, Hesiod don’t do this, we were only having a serious conversation.”

“He kissed me, yes, but I told him I was not in love with him anymore, because I am in love with you.” Shyla pleaded, the tears rolling down her face now.

Hesiod could feel himself weaken and he knew he better go before he gave in to her again. He turned to go, and Shyla grabbed at his arm, “Please!”

“Hesiod don’t do this!” She was sobbing.

As he was walking away, “Pow!” a shot rang out, Hesiod fell forward to his knees, he tried to crawl for a minute and fell, slumped in a tangled pile. Shyla swung in the direction of the shot, walking toward her from behind the trees was Dale. He had a high-powered rifle in his hands.

“You bastard!” Shyla ran to Hesiod, who was lying on his side, legs twisted together, and his arm outstretched where he tried to ask the earth for a hand up. Shyla carefully turned him over and laid across his chest sobbing.

“Oh, come now, your ram man is just taking a siesta,” He boasted.

Shyla sat up and saw the dart in Hesiod’s leg. Her sorrow immediately turned to anger, “You let him be!” She screamed as she yanked out the dart, tossing it away.

As if out of nowhere, Steve and Mike came strolling up behind Dale, “Wow, you weren’t kidding, he’s something alright!” Steve said thrilled at the sight of him.

“Yeah, it’s unbelievable!” Said Mike elevated.

Shyla noticed the pack they had brought with them, Steve bent down and unzipped it. He started pulling out rope and zip ties, along with long strips of cloth.

“Mike go back to the road and get the jeep,” Dale told him.

“Yep,” Mike said turning to go.

“And hurry!” Dale Hollard after him.

Mike took off in a jog, giving Dale a thumbs up as he left.

“What do you think you are going to do with him?!” Shyla wailed.

They were both busy tying Hesiod’s hands and legs together, she jumped on Dale’s back and pounded him with her fists.

“Stop it!” “Leave him alone!” Shyla cried.

“Get this dumb bitch off me!” Dale shouted as he pushed her back.

Steve came from behind her, grabbing her arms, he threw her to the ground, “Get off me, you asshole!” She screamed.

“Shut up, no one’s going to hear you out here.” Steve said as if bragging. He tied her hands together behind her. He got to his feet and she rolled over, trying to get onto her feet, Steve came towards her and she spat in his face.

“Augh, you little bitch!” Steve roared.

Steve slapped her across the face, she went with the force as she turned her head. It stung and left a throbbing pain just below her cheekbone, she could feel it heat up and turn red.

“What the fuck Steve?” Dale asked.

“No reason for that, were not animals,” Dale said with an arrogance.

Shyla’s face was burning, tears that had run down her face made the dry leaves stick to it, she looked toward Hesiod, there was no sign of movement except for his shallow breathing.

Steve roughly grabbed her feet and tied them together with a tight knot.

Mike returned to them with the jeep, he pulled up and got out, looking at Shyla he said, “What’s going on?”

“Nothing a little man-handling won’t cure,” Steve boasted.

Mike frowned and looked at Dale, "It's ok, won't happen again," Dale replied glaring at Steve.

"Were just here for the creature," Mike noted.

"Yeah, well, she's not going to give him up peacefully, and you knew that." Steve explained.

"So, what are you suggesting we do with her?" Mike asked

Dale had put a blindfold on Hesiod and had him tied to his satisfaction, "Never mind her right now, let's get him into the jeep."

"No! Where are you taking him?" Shyla cried out.

The three men ignored her question and hoisted Hesiod into the back of the jeep covering him with a tarp.

"Stop! You can't do this, he has feelings, he's not an animal!" Shyla cried in vain to them.

Dale turned towards her, "Put a gag and a blindfold on her and put her in the backseat"

"My pleasure," Steve sneered.

Mike looked at Dale, "What are you doing, we can't take her with us!"

"Just until we figure out who will pay the most for our incredible find," Dale smirked.

"What about her old man?" Mike asked.

"What about him, he'll just think she took off to be with her ram man, and who's going to believe him if he goes to the authorities and tells them that she's missing because she went to be with her Ram man lover?!" Dale said laughing.

"By the time we find some scientists to pay big bucks for it, then who cares if they believe him or not, we'll already have the money."

"Come on, were wasting time," Steve said as he picked up Shyla and threw her in the back seat of the jeep.

She glared at him and he pulled a cloth from his back pocket, he grinned at her as he leaned over and tied it over her eyes securely. Shyla heard the jeep come to life and it started to move, panicking she stood up and flung herself out of the side, she hit hard and rolled a time or two, the

jeep came to halt and she heard a door slam, within minutes they were on her, jerking her to a sitting position.

“That was a dumb stunt bitch, if you want to do that we can wait until were further away and higher up!” Growled Steve as he grabbed her up roughly and threw her back in the seat.

She heard him walk away but came back quickly and started to tie her to the seat, he pulled the rope hard and she let out a grunt.

“Yeah, how do you like that?” He asked.

“Come on Steve, just get in,” Dale said.

“I don’t want her trying that again,” snarled Steve.

“She won’t try that again once we are moving faster.”

Shyla was hurting really bad now, she had landed hard and her hip was killing her. As she sat there tied to the seat, she tried to get a feel for the direction they were headed, at least she knew one thing, they were going far away and further up.

The jeep was humming along, and the three men were mostly quiet on the ride. Shyla could smell pine and the jeep seemed to be winding back and forth which she figured meant they were climbing.

The air was getting cooler and thinner it seemed to her, it blew her hair around frantically and made it hard to hear. The road felt smooth, and she guessed it was paved, maybe an interstate.

She was fighting the ropes trying to loosen them behind her, Mike was next to her and poked her in the arm, “Better just be still,” He mumbled in a low voice. Shyla stopped as she realized he had noticed her attempt at loosening the ropes.

She rode the rest of the way hardly moving.

Chapter 20

Tony was getting ready to leave the office when Carrie walked in.

“Hey handsome how about a drink?” she asked him in a sugary tone.

Tony started to tell her no, but then he remembered what Shyla had told him last night, she wasn’t in love with him anymore and was in love with something he still couldn’t believe was real. He realized he could use a drink and what did he have to hurry home for anyway, Shyla already knew about Carrie anyway.

“Yeah, we can get a drink if you want,” He told her forcing out a smile.

Carrie was shocked and excited at his answer, “Great!” She said ecstatically.

“Just let me get my jacket,” Tony said as he pushed in his chair and picked up his jacket from the back of it.

Tony pulled the door to his office shut and they walked down the short hall, Tony had his hand on the back of Carrie’s waist as they continued into the main office. It was dark except for a light on the table by the waiting area. Everyone else had gone home already so Tony didn’t mind escorting Carrie to the door.

“You’re such a gentleman,” Carrie said smiling brightly at him.

Tony pushed the button on the wall and the doors sprang open with a ding. They entered the elevator and Tony pushed the ground button. The elevator sprang to life and moved downward, Carrie turned to Tony and put her arms around him, “Ever done it in an elevator?” She whispered.

“Nope,” Tony said shortly.

“Want to?” Carrie said softly running her hand down towards Tony’s crotch.

“Come on Carrie,” Tony grabbed her hand.

“What, I thought you were in the mood to play?” Carrie whined.

“Let’s just go have a drink first, Ok?”

Carrie scrunched up her face, “Oh, Ok.”

The elevator floated at the bottom like a UFO landing, the door sprang open and the ding told them to leave. They walked to Tony's Lexus and he hit his key chain, "Beep, Beep" it sang out and the locks popped. The site of it made her giddy, He opened the door for her, and she slid onto the seat, she could feel that the leather was cool and slick from the back of her thighs and calves.

"Oooh," She squirmed in her seat.

"Is the leather cold?" Tony asked as he looked amused.

He closed the door and walked to the other side, getting in and starting the car, it roared to life, waiting to move like a horse chomping its bit.

"Where to?" He asked Carrie without looking at her.

"Um, I don't care, how about our little café we go to sometimes for lunch, they have a nice bar."

Tony shook his head, remembering Shyla told him she had seen them there that day, "No, let's go somewhere different.

"Ok, how about uptown, say, The Green Olive?" Carrie suggested.

"Yeah, Ok, I've never been there."

Tony pulled out and gunned the Lexus out onto a one-way street, it hummed along without any effort as Tony put on some music. The "Stones" were blasting out about how they couldn't get no satisfaction. As The Green Olive came into view Tony slowed and turned in where it said "Valet Parking," he pulled up to a young man in white coat and black slacks, he had a close-cut hair style and was clean shaven. He looked fresh out of college.

He opened the door for Carrie and walked to the other side, "Evening Sir," He said as he offered his hand out. Tony handed him the keys and told him thank you.

He put his arm behind Carrie's waist as he escorted her in the big glass door. It was a modern place with blue neon lights all along the top of the bar.

It looked like black granite and appeared they had captured the stars under the polished stone. The back was lined with mirrors and was back lit with a warm glow that shown through the bottles of top shelf liquor.

The chairs were tall, black leather, tuck and roll, with stainless steel legs and connectors to the back rest. There was a huge neon martini glass with an olive in it on the wall behind the other seating off to the left. Low set chairs made the same as the bar chairs except they looked as if they had been sawed off to be lower. There were tall palms placed strategically around the room.

Tony looked around, "You want to sit at the bar or a table?"

Carrie noticed a couple of booths to the back of the room, "Let's go to the booths, cozier." She winked at Tony.

"Alright," Tony said putting his hand out, "Lead the way."

They came to the booth and Carrie slid in, Tony followed her, a waitress, already seeing them walk in was on them in seconds.

"Hello, I'm Diane, I will be taking care of you tonight, what can I get for you?"

Tony looked at Carrie and nodded.

"Um, I will try one of your martini's please"

"Gin or vodka?" Asked Diane

"Vodka, Grey Goose." Chirped Carrie.

"How would you like it, neat, dirty, rocks, mixed, olives, pearl onion or twist?"

"Wow, so many options," Carrie beamed.

"I will have it dirty, with two olives, please." She said eagerly.

Diane turned her attention on Tony, "And for you sir?"

"I'll have a bourbon, Blanton's if you have it." Tony told her.

"Would you like a menu; we have a bar menu and the restaurant menu."

"Just the bar menu will be fine," Tony answered.

"Ok, thank you," Diane said with a smile as she walked to the bar and retrieved two menus.

"Did you notice I got my martini dirty, just like I'm going to be after we leave here," Said Carrie breathlessly.

Tony grinned, but didn't really respond to her comment.

He thumbed through the menu, wondering if he was hungry, "Do you see anything you would like?" He asked Carrie.

"Why yes handsome, I'm looking at it," Carrie winked.

"I mean food wise, Carrie," Tony said kind of blah.

"What is wrong with you tonight," Carrie pried.

"Does this mood have anything to do with that Dale person?" Carrie pushed.

"No, he's out of the picture," Tony assured her.

"Oh? What happened?"

"Nothing, I don't want to talk about it now." Tony told her.

"You never told me what this ram man thing is all about,"

"And I never will!" Tony snapped.

"Let's just have our drinks and forget about that, Ok?"

Carrie rearranged herself in the seat, "Ok, geez, I was just trying to make conversation, I don't know why you feel the need to shut me out of your life when what we share together."

Tony was getting more aggravated, "Just let it go Carrie."

The waitress brought their drinks, sat them down in front of them and asked them if they would like to order any food.

"I'll just have the calamari," Said Carrie.

"Nothing for me," Tony sighed.

Chapter 21

The jeep slowed and Shyla could feel it turn onto a gravel driveway, she could hear the crunch of the rocks under the wheels and the ride turned bumpy. It swayed to the right and then slightly back to the left, the three men had been almost silent the whole ride. She was trying to guess the time it took them to get there, it seemed to her to be an hour, maybe more.

It pulled to a stop and there was shutting of the jeep doors, she squirmed in her seat, but the ropes were still tight. Her mouth was like cotton from the cloth that was pulled tight into it, she heard the men behind her, “Still sleeping like a baby,” Dale laughed.

“Yeah how much of that horse tranquilizer did you give it?” Asked Mike.

“Enough, as you see,” Said Dale.

“Let’s get him out of here before it wears off,” Dale ordered.

Shyla could hear them rustling around in the back, she heard Hesiod moan, she wriggled hard, it seemed to do her no good as the ropes held tight.

“Come on,” One of them said, “He’s coming too!”

Shyla tried to scream through the cloth, it came out muffled and just the sound without the vowels. She started stomping her feet on the floor of the jeep. “Bam, Bam,” trying to rouse him.

“Get that little bitch out of there!” Dale demanded.

Mike went around the side of the jeep, “Hey you need to chill, or they’ll be consequences,” he told her in a low voice.

“I’m going to untie your feet so you can walk, don’t try any funny stuff ok,” Mike warned her.

Shyla nodded her head and calmed down.

Mike leaned down and untied her legs, he continued to get the rope around the seat loose, “Can you stand?” He asked.

Shyla nodded, “Ok then turn around in the seat towards me,” Mike instructed.

She did as she was told, “Ok, now I’m going to hold onto your arm, and you can slide out.”

He grabbed her arm and she slid out until her feet touched the ground. She couldn't hear anyone else and figured they had already taken Hesiod in or wherever they were going to take him.

"Ok, now we are going to walk, stay with me so you don't fall, I will hold onto your arm as we walk," He told her.

Shyla nodded, they walked along for a few minutes, Shyla could hear birds and the wind was blowing some. She could feel pines needles crunching beneath her feet.

"There are four steps here," Mike told her.

"Take it slow," He guided her up the steps.

Shyla could smell a fire and hear the crackling of wood burning, probably in a stove, she figured they were in some kind of cabin in the woods. He guided her in and there was a slam, like a screen door shutting.

"Put her over there on that chair," Dale said.

Mike pulled at her arm and walked her to a chair, he grabbed both her arms and sat her down.

"Tie her to it," Dale ordered.

"Oh, come on Dale, where's she gonna go here?" Mike asked.

"Just do it, and don't ask questions!" Dale snapped at Mike.

Just then she heard Steve walk in, "I got him secured," He said.

"Good, now we are going to have to take shifts to watch this spitfire," He nodded towards Shyla, "And I need to make some calls tomorrow and find out the highest bidder on the ram man," Dale said proudly.

"Ok, he is secure, not going anywhere in there, so we only need one person per shift, right?" Asked Steve. "We still need to be working, I can call out sick for a few days, but that's it."

"Well, it shouldn't take long to find someone to pay for this specimen to study," Dale said.

"It's Thursday so I can call in for the next two days, then if it takes longer than that we can switch off," Steve said.

"I have this weekend off anyway," Said Mike.

“We need to get a video of it when it wakes up so I can show it in all its glory to the nerds,” Dale exclaimed.

Dale walked over to Shyla, he stood next to her, she could smell his sweat mixed in with some cheap cologne.

“If I take off your gag will you keep quiet?” He asked her. She nodded her head, “Ok then.”

Dale took off the cloth that was tied on her mouth, “Can I have some water please,” She coughed out.

“Mike get her some water,” Dale ordered.

“Yeah, Ok,” He said walking off.

“Can you take this off my eyes, I’m here now, I can’t see where.” She pleaded.

Dale reached down and untied the blindfold. Shyla squinted and blinked several times, trying to get her focus back. Mike came back into the room with a glass of water, “Here, drink this,” He said holding it up to her mouth. She took a long drink of the water until it spilled down her front.

“Whoo Hoo! Wet T-shirt contest,” Steve yelled.

“Can it Steve,” Dale demanded.

Shyla glared at him but held her tongue.

She looked around the cabin, one room, with a kitchen off to the side, dirty, low light and had dishes piled up in the sink. There were traces that a female touch might have been there at one time. Old curtains hung still that didn’t look like a man would have chosen them for this place. The furniture was well worn and musty, cobwebs hung in the corners, the pantry had a red and white checkered sheet as a door hung over the front. The countertop in the kitchen was tile, stained and dirty, there was a head of a deer over the fireplace, along with two rifles.

There was an old table that looked like it belonged in a fifties drive-in diner that had empty beer cans scattered about the top, shelves with some old books and what looked like ammunition boxes.

She squirmed in the chair, “I have to use the bathroom,” She said looking at Dale.

“Mike, take her,” Dale ordered.

“I’ll take her,” Steve volunteered.

“Mike, take her,” Dale said glaring at Steve.

Mike grabbed her by the arm, “Come on, this way.”

Shyla walked with him down a short hall, it looked like there were two bedrooms off to each side, doors pulled shut, the bathroom was the first door, “Ok,” Mike said, “Here you go,”

“What about my hands?” She asked.

“Oh, Ok, turn around,” He said.

Shyla turned her back to him, “There that ought to do it,” He said as he loosened the rope.

“Thank you,” Shyla said as she rubbed her wrists and walked into the bathroom.

“Be quick,” Mike said as she pulled the door closed.

The bathroom was small, no window, there went any chances of getting out of it, and it was so filthy. Shyla was afraid to sit on the toilet and stood over it best she could. It had light blue tile as accents and the rest was a dingy white, there was a skirt around the sink and an old claw foot tub. The floor tile was peeling up in places and a poster of a girl spread eagle on the hood of an old truck in Daisy Dukes and a beer in her hand. Shyla could imagine one of them jerking it off in there to it and it made her woozy. She thought this place was probably Dales, but she wasn’t sure yet.

She finished peeing and washed her hands the best she could, she wasn’t about to use the dirty rag for a towel that was hanging in there.

Shyla opened the door and walked out, Mike was standing there and grabbed her arm, “I can walk on my own now,” She told him. He let go and walked her back to the chair.

“Sit,” Dale said.

“What the hell is her hands untied for?” Steve asked.

“Well, she couldn’t very well go to the bathroom with no hands,” Mike snipped.

“She’s not in the john now,” Steve growled.

“It’s fine, Dale said, she’s not going anywhere.

Shyla was still trying to figure out where they put Hesiod, when she heard him cry out.

“Let me out of here!” He screamed.

It was coming off the kitchen and Shyla moved to the side and saw a door that looked like it went out to a patio or back deck. The three men looked at each other stunned. “It can speak!” Mike said.

“Of course, he can, you idiots, he’s not an animal!” Shyla screamed.

Shyla stood up, “Sit down!” Dale demanded, pointing a finger at her.

“I want to see him,” Shyla cried.

Dale went to her, grabbing her arm he pulled her along through the kitchen, the other men followed. He swung back the screened in door and walked out onto the old gray wood deck that was screened in all around. Hesiod was in a cage, looked like what used to be the size of an Avery cage, but they had barred it in instead of wire.

It looked like they used to keep animals in it, maybe hunting dogs or something, Shyla thought.

There was an old bench, a cooler, some fishing poles and a cot of some sort on the patio as well. Shyla could see out into the forest, and that was all she could see for miles.

Hesiod saw her and went ballistic, he ran at the bars with his horns, hit them hard making a loud clanging sound and fell back.

“Well would you look at that, he’s pissed because we have his little doe,” Steve laughed.

“Hesiod!” Shyla called out to him.

Hesiod sat up breathing hard he looked at Shyla with a sadness in his eyes that broke her heart.

“This thing has a name?” Steve cackled.

“I told you this would hold him,” Boasted Steve.

He walked to Shyla, put his arm around her and looked at Hesiod, “I think I will have my way with this one while you are getting poked and prodded in a laboratory.

Hesiod’s rage grew, he sprang to his feet and hit the bars again, this time with his hands, “I will kill you human!” He roared.

“Ha, Ha, Ha!” Steve laughed as he reached down and kissed Shyla on the mouth, “Stop it!” She bawled at him, trying to pull away.

Hesiod was stretching his arm through the bars frantically trying to reach him.

“ENOUGH!” Dale screamed.

“Take her to the spare bedroom and lock her in!” dale told Mike.

“As for you, get the hell out of here before I put you in there with him!” Dale warned.

“Who do you think you are?!” Steve protested.

“Just because you are my boss at work, doesn’t mean you are the boss of me now.”

“You wouldn’t be here if not for me,” Dale reminded him.

“You’re not getting any money for him if you don’t follow my rules, my creature, my cabin, my money.

Steve shook his head and walked back into the cabin. Dale stood and looked at Hesiod who was glaring at him and breathing heavily.

“Nothing personal big guy, just need the money and you will be a big paycheck.” Dale said shrugging his shoulders.

Hesiod walked close to the bars and said in a low thick voice, “I am usually a peaceful entity, but you have awakened my rage, you will not live anymore on this earth as a human when I escape.”

Dale swallowed hard, shook it off and walked into the house. He could hear Shyla screaming from the spare bedroom, he walked down the hall and knocked on the door.

“Quiet in there or I’ll put that gag back in your mouth!” She was quiet for a moment.

“Please, Dale, let him go, he is a kind soul, you don’t want to let them study him.” Shyla begged.

“Be quiet, I’m warning you,” Was his response.

“I am going to go get some food, what do you want?”

“I’m not hungry.”

“Ok, I’ll get what I want, and you can eat it or go hungry,” Dale grunted through the door.

He walked into the living room, “You and Mike can go home,” Dale told them.

“I’ll stay tonight.

“Ok, Mike said, I’m ready.”

“I’ll be back tomorrow,” Steve told him.

“I won’t be back until Saturday,” Mike said.

“Yeah, I will get some video and make some phone calls tomorrow and see if we can’t get him out of here before then.” Dale said.

“Should have gotten video of it slamming the bars, that would have sold it.” Steve said.

“I’ll be happy to provoke him again with that little spitfire tomorrow,” Steve grinned.

“Go home, well deal with this tomorrow,” Dale ordered.

Steve and Mike left, and Dale checked on Hesiod who was sitting in the corner of the cage

“What do you eat?” Dale asked.

Hesiod just glared at him. He walked into the house and to the room where Shyla was.

“Hey, I’m going to get some food, you sure you don’t want to tell me what you want, and what about the ram man, what does it eat?”

“He is mostly vegetarian,” Shyla told him through the door.

“Oh, so you’ll tell me what it eats but not yourself?”

“Hello?” Dale said.

Shyla was quiet, “Ok, suit yourself,” Dale said as he turned to leave.

She could hear the door shut and the jeep start up and drive away.

“Hesiod!” Shyla called out.

“Hesiod, can you hear me?!”

“Yes!” He returned her call.

“I’m so sorry I got you in this mess!” She cried out.

“Don’t you worry about it, we will get out of here,” Hesiod promised her.

“Hesiod, I love you!” Shyla sobbed.

“And I you,” He said sincerely.

“If we get out of here, I am going to come live with you in the woods forever, I swear!” said Shyla

“I will hold you to that,” Hesiod said.

“I will hold you to that.....”

Chapter 22

Tony had dropped off Carrie and came home without having sex with her, and she wasn't happy. He just wasn't into it tonight and couldn't stop thinking about Shyla and their failed marriage. He walked into the dark house and flipped on the light. No sign of Shyla, he didn't know if he should worry or be jealous. He took a look around the room and noticed her backpack was there, he rummaged through it and found her cell phone, her camera and the binoculars. He knew she had left those things before, but something felt different this time.

He walked out on the deck and saw a half-drunk cup of tea sitting on the table. He was worried, but at the same time, not. He didn't know what to do, but there really wasn't anything he could do at this hour, and he was already half drunk. So, he decided to go take a shower and go to bed.

When Tony woke up, he saw that Shyla wasn't home in bed, it wasn't like she had not done this before, but he was still worried. He dressed and went downstairs to see if there were any signs of her being there.

Not finding anything that wasn't there last night he decided to go out onto the deck where the cup sat, he walked to the rail and looked out into the woods.

"SHYLA!" He called out.

No response, just the echo back from his call, he was about to go back in when he saw something on the ground out by the trees. It was silver and the sun sparked off it, there was something red by it also. He made his way down the stairs and towards the trees, as he approached, he saw what looked like a dart, the kind you would use to tranquilize an animal. He then noticed the ground was ruffled up like there had been a lot of traffic there which led him to see tire tracks, off road, like a jeep.

Tony immediately got an ill feeling, "Dale," He blurted out.

Tony took the stairs two at a time and bounded in the house off the deck, he grabbed his cell and dialed Dale's number.

"Hello, this is...." "Dale, this is Tony Carino, have you seen my wife?"

"Why no, why would I?" Said Dale too innocently.

“You know why!” Tony demanded.

“Well, you told me to stay away from her,” Dale sneered.

“Yes, but I highly doubt that you have, I found a dart outside my house, the kind you would use to tranquilize an animal!”

“And you think that would have something to do with your wife, is she an animal,” Tony could almost see his smirk in his words.

“Look Clark, I am done playing games with you!”

“You wanted her friend and if you touch one hair on her head, I’ll...”

“You’ll what Carino, are you threatening me?”

“And calling that thing her friend,” Dale laughed.

“You know he sticks it in her, and she likes it, so why would you care, you should be thanking us for getting rid of it,” Dale sneered.

“Fuck you Dale, is Shyla with you or not?!” Tony demanded.

“She gave us issues, we had no choice, as soon as we get somebody to take ram man off our hands you can have her back.”

“That’s kidnapping!” Tony reminded him.

“Prove it,” Dale challenged him, and hung up.

“Shit!” Tony screeched.

Tony went to his study, opened his drawer with the 9mm Ruger, making sure it was loaded he put it in his jacket pocket. He took out his cell and dialed his office number, it rang and then Carrie answered.

“Good morning, Tony Carino’s Off.....”

“Carrie, It’s Tony, listen, I’m not going to make it in today, I need that number to your friend that you said can track a phone number to a location.”

“Is everything Ok Tony?”

“Please, can I have the number, it’s important.”

“Yes, of course, hold on, here it is, 555-990-8888.”

“Thank you, please tell Mr. Blocker I’m out sick today.”

“Ok, I will,” Carrie said confused.

“Thank you, Carrie, I owe you one,” Tony told her.

“I just hope everything is Ok,” Carrie continued.

“It will be, I need to get off here now, please do not say anything to anyone about the number you gave me, Ok?” Tony pleaded.

“I won’t,” Carrie promised.

“Ok, I will talk to you soon, bye now.”

“Bye Handsome,” Carrie said sweetly.

Tony hung up the phone and dialed the other number Carrie had given him, “Hello,” a young voice answered.

“Hi, um, my name is Tony Carino, a friend of yours gave me this number, I need to trace a cell number to a location.”

“Who’s the friend?” He asked.

“Carrie Anderson,” Tony told him.

“Ahh, Carrie, she’s a looker huh?” He said lightly.

“Uh, yeah, she said you could do this for me, can you?”

“Yeah for a hundred bucks,” He said.

“How do I pay?” Tony asked.

“I like Apple Pay; do you know it?”

“Yeah,” Tony agreed.

“Ok, this is how it works, send me the money, then give me the number you need the location on, I trace it for you, and let you know the location.”

“How do I know you won’t just take my money and I’ll never hear from you again?” Tony asked.

“You don’t, but you do know Carrie right, didn’t she vouch for me?”

“Yes, she did.”

“Well Ok then.”

“What is your name?” Tony asked.

“Jeff Long, 555-222-9990.”

“I’ll text you the information in a few minutes, later,” Quipped Jeff as he hung up.

Tony waited anxiously what seemed like fifteen minutes. His phone alerted him.

“Ok sending now, here it is”

“13562 N. Deer Creek Rd. Oregon 75649”

“Good luck!”

Chapter 23

The room Dale had locked her in was small, it had only one window, Shyla checked it over, it was painted shut, locked and Dale was outside of it doing something. She walked over to it and looked out, he had a board and he was carrying a hammer.

He looked up at her and wagged his finger at her as he shook his head no. Putting the board across the window, he nailed it across the glass. Shyla gave him a disgruntled stare and pulled the ratty curtains together. She heard him start the jeep and pull away, going to get food, she recalled him saying.

The room had a bed with some sheets mobbed up in a pile on top of it. Shyla looked it over shaking her head, "Doubt I'll be getting any rest in here," She mumbled.

There were two dingy pillows with blue stripes and no pillowcases thrown at the headboard, which was wood, and kind of pretty Shyla contemplated. It looked as if someone had taken the time and care to carve a beautiful design into the wood, something like Hesiod would do.

In the corner of the room was an old rocking chair that looked too frail to hold anyone. On one side of the room was an antique looking dresser of drawers. She walked to it and pulled one of the drawers open, it was empty except for an old pair of socks and some mouse droppings.

"Ewe," Shyla puffed. She closed the drawer and decided she didn't want to look into the rest.

The floor was wood, but there was an old woven rug that was mostly covered by the bed. There was a door off the right of the room, and she turned the knob and pulled it open, it was a narrow closet with some empty hangers and a couple of sleeping bags tossed on the floor. She pulled one of the bags out and inspected it, it looked to be cleaner than the bed so she decided if she slept at all, this would be the ticket. As she was inspecting her cell, a noise caught her attention, it sounded like Dale pulling back in. She strained her ears to listen as she heard him walk up the front porch and into the cabin. In a minute he knocked at her door, "Hey, Spitfire, I have your dinner," He told her.

"You hungry?"

Shyla was quiet, "Oh come on now, I know you have to be hungry, I got you a nice juicy cheeseburger," He bragged.

Shyla held her tongue, “Ok then, you’ll see things my way soon enough,” He boasted.

“I even got your ram man a salad,” He told her giggling.

Soon she could hear his footsteps walk back into the main room, she heard him swing the squeaky screen door open at the back of the kitchen and she knew he was going out to Hesiod.

She strained hard to hear, she could hear him talking to Hesiod, but it was muffled for a minute, then they got louder, “Eat it, or starve!” Dale yelled.

“Leave me!” Ordered Hesiod.

“Ok, big guy, but you and your little princess in there are going to be begging me for some food soon!” Dale bellowed.

It went quiet for a while and then Shyla could hear Dale talking to someone, must have been on the phone she thought. He was talking low and she couldn’t make out the conversation. She could feel it was getting late and she was exhausted, she rolled out the sleeping bag on top of the bed, tossing the dingy sheets to the floor. She lied down on top of the bag and tried to relax, thoughts of Hesiod in that cold dirty cage kept tapping on her brain, then she wondered how Tony was doing and if he was realizing she was missing by now.

She laid there for what seemed like hours, until her body finally took control and ordered her to sleep. She woke up to voices in the main room, she could make out that it was Steve back to take his shift probably.

She jumped as a loud knock at the door startled her and demanded her attention, “Hey Spitfire, I’m going into town for a bit, but Steve will be here to watch you so be sure to behave,” Dale told her. Shyla didn’t reply.

“Ok, then,” He said as she heard him walk out and tell Steve to behave also.

“Great,” Shyla grumbled to herself.

“He left me here with that psycho.”

Some time passed and it was quiet, too quiet, Shyla was pacing the room as she now had to pee but wasn’t wanting to ask Steve to let her go. He had left her alone so far and she wanted to keep

it that way. After a little while more she couldn't hold it any longer, "Steve," She called out as she banged on the door.

"Steve!" She called out again.

"Slam" The screen door shut, and heavy footsteps came to the door.

"What do you want?!" Steve blurted out.

"I need to use the bathroom," She said with urgency.

Keys jingled and the door swung back, Shyla could immediately smell the beer on his breath, he swayed to the right slightly and she knew he was drunk.

"Your interrupting my weekend," He slurred.

"Sorry, I just need to go bad."

"Ok, come on then," He said motioning for her to come forward as he stumbled backwards.

"Sure," She whispered as she was careful to go around him.

She went into the bathroom and locked the door, she sat in there stalling until he started getting impatient and banged on the door, "Come on!" He yelled.

"I'm coming," She told him.

"Leave her alone!" She heard Hesiod yell out.

"Shut up sheep man or I'll come give you the hose!" Steve yelled, half laughing at himself.

Shyla opened the door, "It's Ok Hesiod, I'm fine!" She called out to him.

With him in that kind of condition Shyla thought it might be a good time to try and run from him as she came out but then changed her mind.

"Yes, you are fine," Steve spit out.

He grabbed her arm and tried to pull her to him, she wrestled with him and went backwards towards the room, hoping to shut him out.

He pushed her back and through the door, "Come on Spitfire, you can't out wrestle me," He breathed out.

“Get off me!” She screamed.

“Stop it!”

That’s all it took to set off Hesiod, he was ramming the bars and letting out roars, “SHYLA!”

Steve pushed her to the bed and tore at her top, he popped the buttons and bared her skin and bra. His hands were all over her now and she was sobbing loudly, “STOP, NO!”

“Oh, come on baby, you know you like it dirty,” He hissed in her ear.

He grabbed her pants and ripped at the zipper, getting it open he yanked her pants down around her ankles. He pushed her arms over her head and held her wrists down, “I need some rope,” He groaned.

“Get off me you pig!” Shyla screamed still trying to fight.

Dale walked in the front door and the noise hit him, Hesiod was going crazy slamming the bars and roaring, he could hear Shyla’s screams and Steve’s groans, he came up behind him and hit him in the kidneys.

“Ouch, shit Dale!” He staggered off of her

“What the fuck, Steve!?” Dale blurted out.

“Just havin a little fun,” Steve slurred.

“I knew I couldn’t trust you alone here.” Dale exclaimed.

“Oh, don’t act so innocent, Dale, you tried it with her in the woods.”

“I was just scaring her to get the picture you moron!” Dale snapped.

“I’m no rapist!”

“But it appears you could be,” He frowned.

“I’m just drunk, she was asking for it,” He bragged.

“Oh, I’m sure she was, she really looks like it,” Dale said looking at Shyla whimpering into the sleeping bag.

“Get the hell out of here, go home, I don’t need you anymore.” Dale pointed to the door.

“And if you can’t control yourself anymore than that, don’t bother coming back tomorrow.”

Dale went to help Shyla up and she jerked away from him.

“I’m sorry he did that, it won’t happen again.” Dale told her as he walked out and closed the door, locking it behind him.

Hesiod had calmed down and was listening to them, he was pacing the cage and running his hands through his hair in despair. Dale walked to the back door and watched him for a few minutes, “He didn’t hurt her, I stopped him.”

Hesiod stopped, he glared at Dale so intense he had to turn away and go back into the kitchen. Shyla curled up in a fetal position and sobbed into the bag trying not to let Hesiod hear her. Her stomach was hurting from no food the past two days and she was wanting this nightmare to end. She cried herself to sleep and into a weird dream world that seemed better to her than the real one.

Hours later Dale opened the door and woke her, “I brought you some water and some crackers and cheese.” He told her. She pulled the bag over her as she hadn’t redressed after the episode with Steve. Dale put down the plate and water and walked out, locking the door.

Chapter 24

Shyla only managed to get a couple of hours of sleep right before dawn, and she was awake now as the sun was peeking through the blinds of the only window in the room. She had checked it last night and saw it had been painted shut and was locked at the top and Dale had nailed a board across it on the outside for extra security.

She needed to use the bathroom, so she went to the door and knocked, “Hello, Dale, I need to use the bathroom.”

She heard him approach the door, keys made a jingle as he unlocked the doorknob.

“Step back from the door,” He called out.

Shyla did as she was told and stood and waited.

“Mornin Spitfire,” Dale said with a grin.

Shyla just glared at him.

“Oh, I see we are still in a mood,” He chirped.

“Come on then,” He motioned for her to come out in front of him.

He walked her the short distance to the door and swung it back.

“There you go, don’t be long.”

She noticed he was dressed in blue jeans and a T-shirt with a buck and some crossed guns, that said something about a hunter. It was weird to see him in regular clothes, he looked just like a regular guy. She entered the bathroom and pulled the door closed.

“Are you hungry?” He asked her through the door.

“No!” She said, even though she was.

“I told Tony I would take good care of you until I find someone to take your lover boy off my hands.”

Shyla opened the door, “Tony?”

“You’ve talked to Tony!?”

“Yeah, he sends his love and thanked me for getting rid of your boyfriend.”

“You’re a liar!” Shyla clenched her fists.

“No, I really did talk to him, he called me this morning.”

“But that’s not what he said!” Shyla protested.

“Oh, it doesn’t matter what ol’ Tony says anyway, I’m in control here.” Dale smirked.

“Come on, I’ll fix ya up some eggs and toast.” Dale grabbed her arm and escorted her into the kitchen.

He sat her down at the table and leaned down on the chair to look at her in the face, “Now be a good little girl and sit here quietly, don’t make me tie you up.”

Shyla looked around the kitchen, trying to figure out where he hid the keys to the cage they had Hesiod locked up in.

“I want to see Hesiod,” Shyla ordered.

“Who?” Dale asked

“Hesiod, that is his name, I told you that yesterday,” Shyla told him.

“It has a name,” Dale laughed.

“Yes, and I want to see him!” Shyla demanded.

“Let’s have some breakfast first Spitfire,” Dale croaked.

“No, now!” Shyla hissed.

“Boy you sure are a bossy little thing for not having the upper hand,” Dale said joyfully.

Dale put the pan down on the stove and motioned for her to get up, she walked to the screen door and pushed it open, Dale followed her out. Hesiod was crouched in the corner like a scared dog, he saw Shyla and stood, then he looked at Dale, his frown was dark and sinister, Shyla had never seen him look this way.

“Hesiod?” Shyla called to him in a soft voice.

He turned his attention to her, and his face softened.

“Have you given him any water?” Shyla asked concerned.

“He wouldn’t take any,” Dale said uncaringly.

“Let me, please,” Shyla pleaded.

“Ok, if you must,” Dale waved back into the kitchen.

She walked back into the house; Dale followed her close.

“Do you have a bottle of water?” Shyla asked.

Dale opened the fridge and took out a bottle and handed it to her. She walked back out on the deck and went to the cage, “Please, drink this, you need some water.”

Hesiod slowly walked up to the cage and put out his hand, Shyla gave him the water and cupped her hands around his, she pulled it towards her lips and kissed his fingers. Tears streamed down her face, and he put his other hand through the bars and wiped them away.

“Oh, how touching,” Dale snipped.

“Ok, visiting hours are over, he grabbed her arm to pull her away from the cage, Hesiod lunged his arm as far out as he could and grabbed Dale around the neck slamming him into the bars.

“Now human male tell her where the keys are,” Hesiod told him in a deep growl.

Dale shook his head no, Hesiod tightened his grip, “Tell her or I will snap your neck like a twig,” Hesiod promised him.

Shyla was shocked at Hesiod’s actions, but she knew he had no choice, “Tell me Dale,” She prompted.

Dale motioned to the cooler, Shyla ran to it and opened it up, they laid in the bottom of the empty cooler. She snapped them up, running back to the cage and wrestling with the lock, it clicked open. Hesiod pushed on Dale’s throat until he passed out, he dropped him and came out of the cage, grabbing Shyla he hugged her as never before and kissed her softly.

“What are we going to do now?” Shyla asked.

“First I’m going to put him in the cage and see how he likes it,” Hesiod said with a grin.

He grabbed Dale under the arms and drug him into the cage, locking it behind him. A clicking noise caught their attention, the sound of a gun being cocked, they turned to see Steve standing there with a shot gun in his hands, “And then what?” Steve said with a devilish grin.

“Over here spitfire,” Steve motioned with his hand to Shyla. She moved hesitantly towards him. He grabbed her around the chest and pulled her close to him, Hesiod started to move, “Oh, I wouldn’t do that if I were you,” Steve told him aiming the gun higher towards Hesiod’s head.

“So, you too thought you were going to get away and live happily ever after,” Steve laughed. He moved his hand over Shyla’s breast and squeezed, licking at her ear, “Mmm, good,” Steve taunted Hesiod.

Shyla was trying to pull away from him and Hesiod’s anger was growing, he started to move towards them and froze.

“Get off her!” Tony’s voice from behind them was a welcome sound to Shyla.

“I have policemen right behind me on their way,” Tony announced.

Steve turned sideways so he could see Tony but also hold the rifle on Hesiod.

“You have nowhere to go Steve,” Tony told him as he pointed the Ruger at him.

“If you shoot him, I’ll shoot you, and if you shoot me, well, I would hate to think what he could do to you!” Tony said giving Hesiod a good look for the first time.

Steve opened his hand and let Shyla go, pushing her towards Tony. She fell towards him and he grabbed her arm as she straightened up, “Get behind me,” Tony told her.

She looked over to Hesiod but did as he told her.

The air filled with high wails, engines roaring and the crunching of gravel, they knew the police where there. “Put the rifle down Steve, it’s over,” Tony told him.

“Yeah, well wait until they get a good look at lover boy over here,” Steve said motioning to Hesiod as he lowered his rifle.

Shyla realized what he said was true, she gazed at him and he could see it coming.

“Go!” Shyla cried tearfully.

“Run, Hesiod, go out the back and into the woods!”

Hesiod stared at her with a heavy look, “I’ll be Ok, go!” Shyla pleaded.

“No, I will not leave you,” He said mournfully.

Tony could feel the emotions between them, and he wasn’t sure how to feel himself.

“I’ll take care of her,” Tony stated as he nodded towards the door reassuringly.

“Remember what you promised Shyla,” Hesiod said, giving her a long look as he turned and went out the back-screen door and disappeared into the thick woods.

“If I were you, I wouldn’t try to tell the cops you were trying to sell a ram man to be studied, you might end up in the looney bin, on second thought...” Tony said laughing as he held his gun on him.

“He is a Satyr, anyway,” Shyla said with a touch of sadness in her voice.

Voices and the sound of people rushing in interrupted their dialogue.

“Hold it right there!”

“Put the gun down, turn around slowly.” One of the police officers told them.

“He’s the one you want!” Shyla said pointing to Steve.

“Him and two other men kidnapped me,” Shyla explained.

“These are the men I reported to you,” Tony said lowering his Ruger.

“Do you have a permit for that gun”

“Yes, yes sir I do.” Tony told him.

Other officers had come in and had Steve in cuffs, “The other one’s in the cage on the back porch,” Shyla said pointing to the door.

“The other man is not here, but his name is Mike and I will be able to identify him if you need me too.” She told them.

“They are all forest rangers,” Tony said.

“Not anymore,” One of the officers told him.

“I will need you both to come down to the station and make out a report,” He told them.

“No problem officer,” Tony obliged.

As the officers left, Tony and Shyla walked out front, Shyla gazed out into the woods and Tony could see her concern.

“He’ll be Ok, he lives out in the wild.”

Shyla looked at him and gave him a half smile.

“He’s something for sure,” Tony said amazed.

“Yes, he is,” Shyla agreed.

“How in the world did you find us anyway?” Shyla asked.

“Carrie,” Tony said with a smile.

“Huh?” Shyla said confused.

“I’ll explain it to you on the way home,” Tony said winking at her.

Chapter 25

Every day for the past few days Shyla was out on the deck waiting for Hesiod, but there was no sign of him. She was starting to fear the worst and decided she would take the hike to his cottage tomorrow. Tony and she had been to the police station and all three men had been arrested and charged with kidnapping Shyla.

They lost their jobs and would be serving a long-time sentence for their actions, so Shyla was not too worried about them anymore. Things were getting back to normal somewhat, but she was missing Hesiod badly.

She was sitting out on the deck sipping on a glass of red wine when she heard the front door.

“I’m home!” Tony sang out.

“Out here,” Shyla answered.

Tony laid his jacket on the bar stool, he walked behind the bar and poured himself a bourbon.

“Do you need a refill?” He called out to her.

“Yes, that would be nice.”

“He picked up the open bottle of wine sitting on the bar and carried it out along with his drink.

“Here you are,” He said topping off her glass.

“Thank you,” She smiled.

“Still no sign of him?” Tony asked taking a sip of his bourbon and sitting down.

“No,” Shyla said sadly with her head low.

“Well don’t give up yet.” Tony told her.

Shyla looked at him and smiled sweetly, she noticed he had some papers in his hand.

“What are those?” She asked.

These are for you, I had them drawn up today,” Tony said, handing the papers to her.

Shyla took them slowly, searching for some hint from Tony's expression, but he was somber. She opened them up and looked them over a few minutes, then with tears filling her eyes, she said, "Divorce papers?"

"Well, I thought that is what you wanted," Tony said softly.

"You said you were no longer in love with me so I thought I would make it easier on you," Tony offered.

"I've been thinking about that day at the cabin."

"What did you promise Hesiod at the cabin when you guys were captured?" Tony asked.

"That is the last thing he said to you before he left," Tony went on.

Shyla hesitated for a moment, "I told him I would come and live with him in the woods forever when we got out of there," she said crying.

"I thought it was something like that," Tony said taking another sip of his drink.

"But I don't even know if he's coming back for me," She choked out.

"I saw his face, if it is in his power to come back for you, he will."

Tony stood and walked to the rail, "I never thought I would lose you to another man, little loan a Satyr." Tony shook his head and gazed out into the woods.

"Part of me hopes he will never come back for you, if I thought you would stay with me, but I know you would be unhappy, so I don't wish that."

Tony turned back to face her, Shyla could see the hurt in his eyes, it made her feel sad.

"We can still be friends, can't we?" He asked with a tone of despair.

Shyla wiped her face, "Of course we can, we have spent way too much time together not too."

"You saved me, us, I am so very grateful for what you did, it was so brave," Shyla praised him.

Tony turned and smiled at her, "Thank you but I didn't do it to be brave, I wanted to make sure you were ok and safe, I will always love you Shyla, even though I was less than a good husband."

“You are welcome to stay here until he comes for you or until you decide what to do,” Tony told her with sincerity in his voice.

“Thank you, Tony,” Shyla said sniffing.

“This is still to surreal for me,” Tony admitted.

He ran his hand through his hair and grabbed at his nose just below his brows.

He finished his drink and looked out at the woods one last time, “Ok, well I’m going to hit it, goodnight,” He said leaning down to kiss Shyla’s forehead.

“Goodnight,” She said watching him walk back into the house.

She looked down at the papers Tony had brought her, she put her head in her hand and gave out a long sigh. She couldn’t believe how her life had changed in just the few months since moving here.

She walked to the rail and looked out, tears pushed their way out and ran down her face, had she lost them both?

First Tony giving her divorce papers and now It looked like another day would go by with still no sign of Hesiod. She finished her wine and decided it was time for her to go to bed also, the past week had really taken it out of her, and she was past exhausted.

When Shyla woke Tony had already gone to work, she saw that it was after ten, she showered and dressed and then went downstairs to make some breakfast. She decided to turn on the radio for some music while she made her food.

She was humming along with a song until it ended, “Breaking news today, a pair of hunter’s killed a strange looking animal in the Oregon National forest yesterday, the pair said they didn’t know what it was, just that they killed it and scientists will be looking into it, stay tuned for details tonight at six, now back to our music.”

Shyla dropped her dish, it made a loud shatter as it hit the floor, “Nooo!” Shyla cried out.

“No, please, this can’t be happening.”

She got her cell and dialed Tony’s number, “Hello Shyla, hey I’m a little busy……”

“They killed him!” Shyla wailed.

“Killed who, calm down,” Tony told her.

“Hunters, they killed Hesiod,” She said sobbing.

“Are you sure?” Tony asked.

“It was on the news, it said hunters had killed a strange animal in the forest and that scientists were going to study it!” Shyla said gagging.

“Well that doesn’t mean it was him,” Tony tried to console her.

“Do you need me to come home?” Tony asked her.

“No, I will be Ok,” She said unconvincingly.

“Are you sure,” Tony asked.

“Yes, thank you, I just needed to talk for a minute, I will try to be positive,” She told him.

“Ok, good girl, I’ll see you tonight,” Tony said.

“Ok, bye,” Shyla said in a trembling voice.

She wasn’t feeling hungry now, so she went out onto the deck, she sat on the lounge chair and sank into it. She looked out into the woods and felt a loneliness wash over her like a wave, she listened to the birds and took in a deep breath of the crisp air. Some of the trees had started to shed some of their leaves and there were a few red and yellow ones that had fallen on the deck.

She thought back to the radio announcement and her eyes filled with tears again, she would just die if it was him, she turned on her side, curled up in a fetal position and cried herself to sleep.

Shyla felt his kiss, warm and soft on her lips, she could smell the mustiness and feel his long hair brush her skin, this was a good dream, she thought, don’t want to wake from this dream. Her awareness got the best of her and she blinked her eyes open, rubbing them to help them along.

He was coming into focus, he was real, “Hesiod?” Shyla’s eyes focused.

“Oh, Hesiod, it’s you!” “It’s really you!”

“Yes, my pretty little human woman, I’m real, and I’m here, I’m here for you,” Hesiod said in a low sultry deep voice.

Shyla reached up and flung her arms around him, “I’ve missed you so much, I was so worried, I heard that hunters had killed a strange animal in the woods, I thought it was you,” Shyla whimpered.

“It wasn’t me,” He assured her.

“Where have you been?” Shyla asked.

“Are you hurt,” She asked.

“I am fine, a bit tired from my travels but it was you that kept me going,” He told her.

“I had to get my bearings after I left the cabin, I ended up going in the wrong direction and had to camp a couple of nights,” He seemed amused with himself.

“I caught some fish and made campfires, but it was the thought of you that kept me driven,” He assured her.

“What happened to those male humans?”

“They are in jail for a long while,” She said satisfyingly.

“Well, they are lucky then, because it killed me to watch what they did to you and I wouldn’t had been so easy on them.”

“Well, that is all over with now, we don’t have to worry about them any longer.” Shyla told him as she hugged him close.

“I also have some news, Tony has granted me a divorce,” She said quietly.

Hesiod put his hand under her chin and lifted her face to his, “Does this make you happy?”

“Yes, it does, it means I’m free, free to do whatever I want.” She smiled at him sweetly.

“I am so happy your home,” Shyla cried.

“Me too,” He said as he kissed her again.

His eyes were so intense as he burned a gaze into hers, drinking her in.

“You could never know how I’ve missed you; I love you Shyla, you are part of me now, you are my muse.”

Shyla put her hands in his hair and pulled him close, he reached his big hands around her back and she came up to him in an arch. His hands traveled all over her body feeling every inch of her, "I've yearned for you so," He told her whispering it thickly in her ear, she could feel his hot breath on her neck and in her ear.

His skin was warm, and Shyla felt his muscles bulging on his arms as he wrapped her up in them.

"You are mine and I'm going to take such good care of you," He told her sliding his hand into her sweatpants. He was pleased to find bare skin and no panties. He cupped his hand between her legs and felt the heat coming off her, "You want me?" He asked in a low moan.

"Oh, yes, please," Shyla begged.

He kissed her deep and she could feel his hardness push against her, she slowly reached down and took a hold of him, he was hot and hard and she could feel him pulsating in her hand, she pulled on him and he came to her, she guided him inside and he moaned. She was wet and warm, and he effortlessly slid into her.

"It's like you were made for me baby," He groaned.

Hesiod moved slow and deep, taking his time with her. She'd clamp down on him as he pulled out and let him slide back in relaxed. They got into a slow rhythm in time with each other, working up to a faster pace, "Look at me," Hesiod told her.

Shyla looked deep into his eyes as they moved in time, "Faster... harder," she cried.

They were close, both knew it, as they both came together, Hesiod groaned, "I love you Shyla, I love you.

"I love you too," Shyla sobbed as tears ran down the sides of her face.

After they made love, Hesiod held her in his arms and as they lay together, he asked, "Do you remember my wooded instrument?"

"Yes," Shyla answered.

"Do you remember what I made it for?"

"Yes," Shyla said lifting an eyebrow.

“Well, I guess I won’t be needing it anymore since you are my muse,” He said thickly, grinning warmly.

“Are you ready to go live with me in the woods forever,” He asked her.

“Yes, yes I am,” Shyla told him happily, as she kissed him hard on the mouth

THE END