

My Sister 112

Chapter 112 PERFECT WORLD

SERAPHINA'S POV

The first moments back in my apartment were...quiet. Almost shockingly so.

I glanced at the scattered grocery bags I'd hastily thrown inside before rushing off in the ambulance—there was a tub of ice cream in there that I knew was a goner.

It was hard to believe I was still in the same day that had promised to be peaceful and restful.

But at least now, I was free of the chaos. No judgements or accusations or pain.

Just me. Just the sound of the rain pattering faintly against the window, the scent of the lingering storm mingling with the faint warmth of home.

Ethan's presence in the car lingered in my chest like a ghost I wasn't sure I wanted to exorcise.

The ride home still confused me. He hadn't lectured me. He hadn't tried to twist my words or corner me. He'd just...believed me.

For the first time in what felt like forever, my brother and I had shared a conflict-free moment together.

And in that, there was a thread of comfort, a small, glimmering hope that maybe, just maybe, not everyone I'd ever counted on was completely lost to me.

Oddly...Kieran too. He had stood by me today, his patience and defense quiet but firm.

I could still feel the echo of his presence as he stood between me and my mother, the warmth of his intervention like a shield.

But even with that, my chest felt heavy.

Sure, it seemed like my divorce had been some sort of wake-up call, and I was starting to see glimpses of the people I'd once called family. They were starting to act like they actually cared.

But the damage—the years of small betrayals, dismissals, slights, and outright cruelty—didn't vanish in a single day.

That kind of pain lingered, settled into the muscles and bones, into the rhythm of my breath.

More than a decade of being treated as inferior, of being undervalued, didn't dissolve with a few conciliatory gestures.

Too tired to shower, I simply stripped out of my wet clothes and pulled on an OTS sweatshirt and sweatpants.

I sank into my bed, hugging my legs to myself as the light rainfall from outside mixed with the residue of the storm still inside me.

I had to put all the confusing thoughts of Ethan and Kieran out of my mind. I'd been doing well without them so far—I hadn't needed them all this time, and I didn't need them now.

I exhaled, letting the tension roll from my shoulders. I had to do something to quiet my thoughts, to reclaim myself.

I shifted my legs, crossing them in front of me, and closed my eyes. I pressed my palms into my knees. Meditation—yes, that was what I needed now.

It sounded so simple, almost laughable, but, just like the previous times I'd meditated to find peace, it worked. Bit by bit, my ragged breaths began to even out.

The sharp leftover ache in my chest eased, and I could feel serenity settling.

Only this time, it was...different.

The world around me didn't just settle; it expanded, stretched into an uncanny, almost electric clarity.

Every sound seemed sharper, clearer—the faint echo of Mrs. Harlow's terrier barking across the street, the distant hum of a lone car, the delicate patter of raindrops on the roof—all weaving together into a rhythm that thrummed in my chest, synchronized with something deep and instinctual inside me.

Colors grew vivid in my mind's eye. The gray of the clouds outside glimmered with hints of silver, each droplet on the windowpane sparkling like fractured light.

Shadows and highlights were enhanced, vibrating with a subtle energy I had never noticed before.

My pulse quickened at the sensation, an awareness that went beyond sight and sound—a resonance that felt like a whisper from within, something...familiar.

Like the first time I'd meditated with Lucian in the Moon Hall.

And then, faintly, almost imperceptibly at first, I heard it: the rumble of Lucian's car descending my driveway.

My eyes flew open, and for a split second, my heart stuttered in disbelief.

Could it be? Was it possible? Could this mean my wolf was stirring, awakening?

The connection I had felt in flashes and whispers before, now throbbed with insistence, teasing at the edges of my senses.

My chest constricted with a mix of awe and fear, a tethered exhilaration that left me trembling.

Before the doorbell even rang, I was at the entrance, flinging the door open. The smell of the storm followed him in, mixed with his own signature scent—something warm, musky, and undeniably Lucian.

He barely had time to drop the bag he carried before I flew into his arms, ignoring the moisture clinging to my hair and wrapping my arms around his neck.

His laughter vibrated through me as he held me tightly to his powerful frame. “Well, this is a nice new way of being greeted.”

I pulled back, giddy laughter spilling out of me. “I think I can sense her. I think my wolf...she’s awake, or close. I don’t know. But I was just meditating and I felt—”

“Evidence,” he said, voice soft. He was smiling at me gently, eyes bright with pride. “It’s evidence of the awakening. You’re progressing, Sera. That’s...good. Really good.”

I squealed, burying my head in the crook of his neck.

The world outside faded—storm, rain, the weight of the day. Only Lucian, the solidity of him, the warmth of his arms around me, the amazing reality that I was closer than ever to my wolf, mattered.

He chuckled, and after a while, gently set me on my feet. But he still held on to me, pulling back just far enough to look at me.

“This calls for a celebration,” he declared. “What do you say we leave the cooking for another day and go out to eat? Someplace special.”

And just like that, a dark cloud rolled in, overshadowing the sunshine of my happiness.

I shook my head, cheeks flushed. “Not going out again. Not today.” My voice held a tinge of somberness that I couldn’t hide, and Lucian noticed immediately.

“Hey,” he said, his voice soft. “What happened?”

I inhaled sharply, shaking my head. “It’s...a long story.”

He took my hand, his grip steady and warm as he led me to the living room, gently pulling me down onto the sofa and sitting next to me.

"I'm listening," he said in that firm voice that didn't leave a single doubt that I had the full force of his attention.

And so I told him the whole tale.

The way Celeste had shown up at my doorstep yet again like the world's most frustrating game of Whack-a-Mole. The photo album and her revelation of what she'd done fifteen years ago.

Then I told him the way she'd toppled into the street, the screech of tires, the chaos, the hospital, the accusations.

My voice wavered at first, then steadied with each word. Each phrase was a brick I laid to release some of the weight I carried.

Lucian's expression hardened as I recounted the drama. "That's outrageous." His voice shook with restrained fury. "She—she needs to be held accountable. I'll talk to my legal team, and they'll take care of this. Celeste won't get away with what she's trying to do."

I held up a hand, shaking my head. "No. I'll handle it. I told you I don't want you to concern yourself with my family drama."

"Sera—"

I squeezed his hand. "It's okay, I promise. Besides, I bet Celeste is having a worse time than I am right now. She hates getting hurt, hates the mere sight of blood. Just imagining her lying in the hospital bed, wondering if the bitch of a pain is worth it, brings a smile to my face."

I tried to smile reassuringly for Lucian's benefit.

He leaned back, eyes narrowing slightly, scanning me as though deciding whether to push or relent. "I understand," he said finally.

My smile eased. "Thank you."

He nodded, his jaw still tight. "Were her injuries severe?"

I shrugged. "Concussion, bruised ribs, sprained wrist."

I fought back a laugh at his look of disappointment.

He shook his head. "I can't believe she would go so far. What kind of point was she trying to prove?"

“Honestly, I have no fucking idea. I was so shocked. I know she feels strongly about Kieran, but to throw herself into danger like that over him.” I shook my head, confusion warring with unease. “Is that some kind of twisted reflection of the mate bond?”

“No,” Lucian said firmly. “That is not what the mate bond does to you.”

I blinked. “What...does it do?”

“It doesn’t make you crazy, Sera. Not like that. It makes you want to be the best part of yourself you can be. It makes you stronger, better. It...completes you, fills you up like nothing else.” His voice took on a wistful quality that made my breath still. “It’s like searching for something your entire life and finally finding it. It’s beautiful and scary at the same time, but nothing—absolutely nothing—compares to the feeling of finding your mate.”

The way he spoke...

“Do you...” I swallowed. “Do you want that?”

His brows dipped. “What do you mean?”

“Your mate. Don’t you want that feeling with your mate? Wouldn’t you rather spend the rest of your life with your destined mate, other than...” It felt like a thorn had lodged in my throat. “...me.”

A shadow passed across his face so fast that it felt like I imagined it.

But then his gaze softened. “And what about you?” he asked quietly, not pressing, but the weight behind the words unmistakable. “When your wolf awakens, if you find someone else—your true mate. What would happen to us?”

I hesitated, the possibility sending a ripple through my chest. “I don’t know,” I admitted finally.

Because that was the truth. The thought of getting my wolf was already so fantastical, but the thought of finding my destined mate seemed near impossible. I had no idea how I would feel or what I would do.

But what I did know was this: “But I can hardly trust another man the way I trust you, Lucian. You’ve already helped me become...better. A better version of myself, more than I ever thought was possible. That’s what a mate does, isn’t it? So who could be better for me than you?”

His lips quirked in a serene smile, and he leaned forward. The space between us shrank until I could feel the warmth of his breath. “Sera...for the rest of my life, unless you reject me, you’re my choice.”

Heat crept up my neck, cheeks flushing crimson. My hands clenched in my lap as I stared at him, shy, stunned, touched.

After being someone’s compulsion, it felt surreal to be someone’s choice.

“You mean it?” I whispered.

“I mean it,” he said simply.

Then he pressed his lips to mine, slow, lingering, and utterly tender.

The world, with its storms and accusations and chaos, fell away, leaving only the pulse of warmth and certainty between us.

When he pulled back, his forehead resting gently against mine, I breathed shakily. “Even if my wolf...even if she chooses someone else?” I asked, voice trembling slightly.

He shook his head, firm but soft. “Not if you don’t. You’re mine, Sera. But I won’t force your heart. Only you decide.”

A quiet, almost dizzying relief washed over me.

“I don’t know what the future holds,” I admitted, leaning against him. “But...right now, this is enough.”

“It is,” he said. “And you’ll have time. Time to awaken, to grow, to decide. I’ll be here.”

The soft scrape of rain against the glass, the gentle thrum of life outside, the warmth of Lucian beside me—it was a small, perfect world.

And for now, it was mine.