

## **My Sister 125**

Chapter 125 LOCKWOOD INSTINCT

SERAPHINA'S POV

Three straight days of hosting duties had drained me more than I wanted to admit.

Smiling until my jaw ached, bowing, shaking hands, welcoming one self-important Alpha after another—it was exhausting in a way even training wasn't.

But now, finally, the last of the visiting packs had been settled. Tonight, at least, I had my hours back.

After seeing all my potential competitors, I was determined to pour those hours into training. After throwing that miraculous punch at Maya, I didn't want to lose my momentum.

She was already stretching when I walked into the private training room, her braided ponytail swinging behind her like a whip.

The floor smelled faintly of resin and leather, mats worn down from hours upon hours of werewolves honing themselves against each other.

My muscles hummed with anticipation, though a heavy weariness still clung to me from all the public courtesies I had been forced to perform.

“Ready?” Maya arched a brow, already dropping into a stance.

I nodded and rolled my shoulders. “More than ready.”

We began—but within minutes our rhythm splintered.

I couldn’t get the maneuver right. Maya wanted me to use my momentum differently—less force, more angle—but every attempt ended in failure.

She corrected me once, twice, then sighed, frustration leaking through her patience.

“No, Sera, you’re not redirecting. You’re charging. Look—” She moved through the motion herself, smooth and clean. “You let their energy carry over. You don’t fight it head-on.”

“I am trying,” I muttered, stepping back into position. My palms stung from hitting the mat wrong. “You make it sound simple, but my body won’t—”

“Stop fighting the flow,” she cut in, clicking her tongue. Then she flicked my forehead. “You’re overthinking again.”

I scowled at her, rubbing the sore spot. She just smirked. “Again. And this time,”—she tapped the side of her temple—“empty here, goddammit.”

I tried again. Failed again.

The slap of my body against the mat echoed too loudly in the room.

Heat crawled up my neck. For all the progress I had made these past weeks, this small nuance seemed impossible.

The glass door slid open.

Both our heads turned at the same time.

Ethan leaned against the frame, arms crossed, hair flopping lazily over his forehead.

“Having fun?” he asked dryly.

Maya groaned as I bristled. “Don’t start.” She shot me an exasperated look. “She’s refusing to understand basic redirection.”

"I'm not refusing," I shot back. "I just—" I stopped, pressing my lips together. My bruised pride didn't need another witness tonight, especially not my older brother's.

Ethan walked in anyway, ignoring my glare. "Show me."

I blinked. "Excuse me?"

"Do the move," he said, nodding toward Maya. "Go on."

Maya shrugged at me. "Might as well. He's not a half-bad fighter."

Ethan snorted. "You've forgotten how easily I can put you on your back, babe?"

Maya smirked, leaning in to him. "I cleared that memory in favor of all the other...ways you can put me on my back."

Ethan's teeth sank into his lower lip. "Yeah? How about later tonight—"

"Okay!" I exhaled sharply, shooting to my feet as Ethan's head began to dip, a suggestive glint in his eyes.

I supported their relationship, but I absolutely did not want a front-row seat to the canoodling.

Maya winked at him and mouthed, 'Later,' before turning back to me.

Rolling my eyes, I squared my stance opposite Maya.

We went through the motion again. I pivoted, tried to redirect, and failed just as miserably as before.

The result was me flat on my back, staring up at the fluorescent lights with my hair splayed like a halo.

"See?" Maya muttered.

Ethan crouched beside me before I could scramble up. He shook his head slowly. "You're resisting at the wrong point. You want to push, not catch. Watch."

Without asking, he pulled me to my feet like I weighed as much as a bag of feathers, then gestured for Maya to lunge at him.

Without hesitation, she did—sharp, precise—but Ethan moved differently.

He caught her momentum fluidly, almost lazily, shifted his stance, and suddenly, Maya was the one with her back on the ground.

“That,” he said, straightening, “is what she’s trying to teach you.”

Maya blinked, gracefully pushing herself to her feet. “You...actually did it better than me.”

“Don’t sound so shocked.” His mouth curved in a brief smirk, then his gaze returned to me.

“You’re trying to meet force with force, Seraphina. That’s not how our instincts work. Lockwood blood doesn’t only hit head-on. It adapts.”

Something prickled at the back of my mind. “Lockwood blood?”

He nodded. “You keep fighting as if you’re an outsider who has to learn from scratch. But that instinct—you already have it. You’re resisting your own nature.”

I snorted. “You’re joking, right?”

No way my brother was suggesting I had some innate fighting instinct when I didn’t even have a wolf.

Maya crossed her arms. “You mean...she’s making it harder by not trusting herself?” She cocked her head and shot me a knowing look. “She’s thinking too fucking much?”

I rolled my eyes as Ethan continued.

“Exactly.” His expression was unsettlingly earnest. “You already feel it before you move, Sera. That’s what tripped me up when I was younger—I didn’t trust the flicker, thought it was just a reflex. But it’s instinct. Lockwood instinct. And you obviously have it in droves, seeing how far you’ve progressed in such a short amount of time.”

I crossed my arms. “So now you’re attributing my hard work and determination to what, genes?”

Surprisingly, he smiled. “You’re stronger than I was. It took me quite a while to figure out that father wasn’t trying to drill something foreign into me. He was just trying to teach me how to stop ignoring what was already there. He would have been proud of your progress.”

The mention of my father seemed to poison the air. The reminder that he’d never seen it fit to train me. Celeste hadn’t cared to train properly, and he’d respected her wishes.

But I’d wanted to. And he shunned me, threw a dumbbell at the door the day I peeked in to watch one of his private sessions with Ethan.

The thought of him being proud of me would have been laughable if I wasn’t too busy trying to breathe through the sudden pain in my chest.

I turned my back on Ethan and Maya, busying myself with picking up my water bottle.

I heard Ethan sigh. "Sera..."

I shoved my towel into my bag without answering. The scrape of the zipper was too loud.

"Seraphina," he said again, the apology thick in his tone. "He was wrong. We were all wrong. I'm so sorry."

I stilled. Hearing it from him, unprompted, made my throat constrict. But the memory of years wasted, of pain I had carried alone, rose like a tide.

I didn't reply. I couldn't.

Maya shifted uncomfortably, then clapped her hands. "Okay, this is depressing. How about dinner? My shift was long, training was longer, and I refuse to go home hungry."

Ethan hesitated, eyes flicking to me warily, no doubt recalling the hot mess that was the last time we'd dined together. "If she doesn't want—"



"I'll come," I cut in, slinging my bag over my shoulder. His brows shot up. I couldn't blame him; I was surprised at myself.

"You will?"

I forced a small smile. "Consider it payment for the lesson."

The relieved, grateful smile on his face blasted away any reservations that this was a bad idea.

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The restaurant Maya chose was a cozy one on the edge of the district, low lights and polished wood, the air fragrant with herbs and sizzling butter.

The kind of place that made you forget the world outside for a while.

We found a booth near the window. Maya immediately ordered a plate of garlic bread with too much cheese, grinning widely and chattering animatedly as if determined to keep the mood light by sheer willpower.

When the bread arrived, steaming, Maya dove in first. Ethan leaned back against the booth, watching me with a quiet expression I didn't know how to interpret.

“You’ve changed,” he said after a moment.

If I had a penny for every time I’d heard that phrase.

“Meaning?” I arched a brow.

“You’re not...brittle anymore. Or maybe I’m just noticing too late.”

Maya shot him a warning look, but he didn’t back down. His words weren’t cruel—just contemplative. I could sense he was being careful with me tonight.

I broke off a piece of bread, shrugging. “You’re late to many things, Ethan.”

That earned a huff of a laugh from Maya. Even Ethan smiled ruefully. “Fair enough.”

For a while, the conversation drifted to lighter ground.

Maya recounted a disastrous sparring session involving an old trainee, too much bravado, and a window.

Ethan countered with hilarious tales of his early training days and the countless bruises he gave himself, and I actually found myself laughing, genuinely, the tension loosening like knots slowly untying.

Maybe this was what it felt like to breathe among family, without the poison of old grievances constantly choking the air.

But then the restaurant door opened.

The chime above it was delicate, almost lost in the chatter, but I felt the shift before I even looked up.

When I did, I almost honest-to-goodness burst into laughter.

Because someone was definitely playing games with my life—and they'd run out of original moves, so they just kept repeating the same old bullshit over and over again.

Hence, there they were, like a fucking rash that just wouldn't clear up.

Celeste and Kieran.