

## **My Sister 129**

Chapter 129 ARCHERY QUEEN

SERAPHINA'S POV

The bow was heavier than I expected, but it settled into my grip like it belonged there, and the comfort of its familiarity soothed me.

A hush rippled through the crowd as I stepped into the cordoned-off area. My stomach churned—not from fear, but from the sheer awareness of how many eyes followed my every move.

The rules had been called out, loud and clear: No werewolf heightened senses. Only human skill and focus.

Helen stood across from me, already poised, bowstring taut, eyes gleaming with smug confidence.

Good. Let her underestimate me.

The attendant raised his hand. "First round. Three arrows each. Highest total score advances."

I inhaled. Exhaled. The string drew back against my cheek, the feather of the arrow brushing my jaw.

My heartbeat steadied as I released.

Thwack.

Dead center.

Gasps echoed. Scattered applause.

Helen fired next—solid, but just shy of the bullseye. Her mouth tightened, smile faltering before she forced it back on.

The rest followed the same rhythm. My arrows sang truer, sharper. By the final shot, the outcome was undeniable.

The attendant lifted his arm over my head. “Winner—Seraphina Blackthorne.”

Applause crashed like a wave, rousing and unrestrained. Even those who hadn’t cared a moment ago now leaned forward, curious, impressed.

Helen lowered her bow, jaw rigid. For a heartbeat, I thought she’d throw a tantrum, contest my win, express outrage at being bested by lowly Seraphina.

Then, with stiff dignity, she inclined her head. “As promised, I owe you a favor. Name it when you wish.”

I smiled, bowing slightly, though my chest still heaved with adrenaline. “I’ll keep that in mind.”

More applause followed, approval washing over me like warm sunlight.

For the first time in such a public arena, it wasn’t whispers of doubt that followed my name—it was admiration.

But then, like a discordant note cutting through harmony, a voice pierced the air.

“Unimpressive.”

The single word slithered across the crowd, silencing claps. My stomach coiled instantly—I knew that voice.

Abby.

She stepped forward, arms folded, eyes bright with scorn. “Really, everyone’s so easily dazzled. Archery, darts, knife-throwing—those are all Lockwood specialties. It’s practically bred into them. If anything,

Seraphina is only playing her part as a Lockwood daughter. But,”—her lips curled—“the true archery queen was always Celeste.”

The name struck like a spark to dry wood. Curious murmurs rippled, heads turning.

And of course, summoned by the attention, Celeste stepped out gracefully from the crowd. Abby easily fit beside her, flanking her along with Emma on the other side.

Her dress caught the light like spun silver, her smile soft, deceptively demure. “Oh, Abby,” she said, voice honey-smooth, feigning modesty, “you exaggerate.”

But her eyes—oh, her eyes—glittered with triumph. Her favorite place to be had always been under the spotlight.

Someone in the crowd spoke up eagerly. “Then prove it! A contest between the sisters!”

My grip tightened on the bow. Sister. The word rang hollow now, a mockery.

Celeste’s gaze swept over me, dripping with false concern. “Oh, I really shouldn’t,” she cooed, her smile sickeningly sweet. “Seraphina’s worked so hard to make tonight a success. It would be cruel to let her suffer humiliating defeat before such a prestigious audience.”

A few chuckles rippled through the crowd. I felt the weight of their eyes shift toward me, pity mixed with expectation.

Celeste had staged it perfectly—if I refused, I'd appear fragile, a coward like Helen had insinuated.

If I accepted and lost, I'd confirm her superiority.

But Celeste had forgotten one thing. I was no longer the girl who yielded to her to keep the peace.

I stepped forward, my voice calm but clear. "I accept."

Just like at the restaurant when she hadn't expected me to call her bluff, Celeste's composure slipped, surprise flickering in her eyes before she quickly smothered it.

The attendant reset the targets with swift efficiency.

Celeste lifted her bow first. Her posture was impeccable, her smile vainglorious.

She fired three perfect shots, each one splitting the bullseye with precision that drew gasps and applause.

I wasn't surprised. Her archery skills truly had always been formidable.

My turn. I matched her arrow for arrow, bullseye for bullseye.

But while the crowd applauded, I could feel the skepticism in the air—expectation that I'd falter eventually, that Celeste's dominance was inevitable.

By the third round, Celeste was glowing with satisfaction, drinking in the murmurs of admiration.

So I decided to kick it up a notch.

"Blindfold me," I said.

The attendant blinked. "A-are you sure?"

I nodded.

The crowd stirred, whispers rising in disbelief. Celeste's smirk widened, certain I'd overplayed my hand.

The cloth pressed against my eyes, shutting out the world. Darkness enveloped me.

But in that darkness, my breathing steadied. My heartbeat slowed.

I felt the weight of the bow, the whisper of chilled air across my skin, the faint creak of wood beneath my fingers.

I didn't need sight.

I had done this before, in secret, when I was younger—testing myself, pushing boundaries. Because accuracy, to me, had never been about sight alone.

I inhaled deeply. Released.

The arrow flew.

Thwack.

Dead center—I didn't need to look to know.

The silence was deafening.

A second shot. Thwack. Another bullseye.

Gasps erupted. Disbelief, awe.

I nocked the final arrow, pulse steady as stone. When it struck—splitting the shaft of the first—an explosion of applause erupted, wild and unrestrained.

I slipped the blindfold off my face, and I blinked into the brilliance of the chandeliers. Cheers filled the hall.

Celeste's expression was pale fury, her lips pinched, her hands trembling on the bow she was gripping too tightly.

"Extraordinary!" someone shouted. "Incredible!"

The admiration wasn't for her anymore. It was for me.

Emma's voice sliced through the noise. "Celeste, you can't let her overshadow you! Show us something more dazzling!"

But Celeste didn't move. Her composure cracked, and for once, she knew—she couldn't top this.

Her voice was sharp, brittle. "How did you do it?"

The crowd hushed, leaning in.

I stepped closer, my voice low but carrying. "Do you remember when we were young, Celeste? When we played in the garden, throwing darts and arrows at painted boards?"

Her eyes narrowed. "I always won."

"You always won," I affirmed softly. "Or so you thought. But the truth is, I let you. Because Mother told me once: 'Let Celeste shine, it makes sense. It keeps everybody happy.' So I held back. Over and over."

Gasps rippled around us. Celeste stiffened, her fury clear.

I lifted my chin, meeting her eyes evenly. "But we're not sisters anymore. I have no reason to keep holding back. Not tonight. Not ever again."

I stepped past her, leaving her trembling in the silence that followed. "So if you're humiliated," I said quietly, "it isn't me doing it. It's just you finally facing the truth."

The crowd erupted again, this time in thunderous applause that rolled through the hall like a storm. My name rose above the din—admiration, respect, awe.

And for the first time in my life, I stood tall while Celeste burned beneath the heat of the spotlight she loved so much.