

My Sister 130

Chapter 130 PART OF THE STORM

SERAPHINA'S POV

Maya practically launched herself at me the second I stepped out of the hall's cordoned-off space.

Her arms wrapped tight around me as she squealed in my ear before I could even catch my breath.

"Seraphina Blackthorne!" she gasped dramatically, shaking me as if I might have somehow forgotten who I was. "Do you even realize how utterly insane that was? Blindfolded! I swear, you could've walked straight out of some myth."

Her words tumbled over each other in excitement, eyes sparkling with pride that almost rivaled the applause I'd just walked away from.

I laughed, a little breathless still, patting her back. "It wasn't as spectacular as everyone thinks. Just a few tricks I practiced when I was bored."

"Tricks?" Maya pulled back, mouth falling open. "You make it sound like you taught yourself card shuffles, not splitting arrows blindfolded. That was more than a trick. That was fucking legendary!"

Her conviction made pride bloom in my chest, but I shrugged anyway, trying to deflect. If I let myself stand too long under the heat of praise, I'd feel my skin burn.

Movement caught my attention, and my eyes reflexively sought it out.

Across the crowded hall, standing half in shadow, was Kieran.

His eyes were fixed on me—sharp, searching, and layered with something I couldn't quite decipher. Surprise? Pride? Regret?

Whatever it was, the weight of it pressed on me, too fucking familiar, too fucking complicated.

I turned my head deliberately, ignoring the knot in my stomach. He had no right to look at me in any way. And I wouldn't waste a single brain cell trying to understand him.

Not anymore.

"Come on," I said softly to Maya, nudging her toward the corridor. "Let's get out of here before someone decides I need to juggle flaming swords next."

She giggled, looping her arm through mine, and together we slipped away from the swelling crowd.

The noise dulled behind us, replaced by the cool hush of the side hallway. Finally, I could breathe.

But I hadn't taken five full steps before Ethan appeared, leaning casually against the wall as if he'd been waiting all along.

"Ethan!" Maya gasped, leaving my side to go to his.

His arms wrapped around her waist with a natural ease that teased a smile to my face. She leaned against him, her grin wide. "Did you see that?"

He nodded, his gaze on me, intense in a way that made my throat tighten. "I saw."

And then, quietly, he asked, "Why didn't you ever tell me?"

"Tell you what?" I asked, though I knew exactly what he meant.

"That you could shoot like that." His voice wasn't angry—more bewildered, a little wounded. "That you weren't just a passable shot, but...extraordinary. All this time, you let me believe—" He shook his head, cutting himself off.

I exhaled, fingers flexing around the phantom feel of the bow. "Because it was never about being extraordinary. It wasn't even about being good. It was about passing the time."

His brows furrowed.

“No one ever invited me to play with them,” I continued, my voice quieter, softer. “No one wanted me on their teams. So while you and Celeste hung out with the other kids in the pack, and Mother and Father pretended I didn’t exist, I practiced archery against the old garden wall. Again and again. Until I could hit a mark with my eyes closed. Because what else was I supposed to do? Sit inside till I faded into nothing?”

A shadow passed through his expression.

I could see the realization sinking in—what I hadn’t said outright, but lingered between us: the neglect, the isolation, the quiet cruelty of constantly being overlooked.

“Celeste and I played once or twice, but even then I had to pretend I was subpar, so I didn’t bruise her gigantic, yet fragile ego.”

Ethan’s jaw clenched. His usual easy confidence faltered, and he seemed caught between words and silence.

“I didn’t know,” he admitted finally. “Seraphina...I didn’t know.”

I forced a smile, though it felt unsteady. “Not knowing doesn’t erase it.”

Before the moment could stretch any further, a familiar voice cut through the tension.

“There you are.”

Lucian approached with his usual calm authority, his presence shifting the air instantly. Relief surged through me at the sight of him.

“Stunning as ever,” he murmured, his eyes sweeping over me, warm and appraising. “And making headlines without me, I hear.”

I arched a brow. “You heard?”

He gave me a rueful smile. “I would have preferred to see. I can’t believe I missed the performance of the night. A shame.”

I lifted my chin playfully. “You’ll have time to see more...performances once LST is over. You can judge for yourself then.”

His smile widened, something almost conspiratorial in it. “I’ll hold you to that.”

Ethan and Maya lingered at the edge of our conversation, but Lucian's presence made them feel like shadows receding into the wall.

"Come," Lucian said, extending his hand slightly, palm open. "It's time for our speech."

I hesitated only a second before slipping my hand into his. I glanced at Maya, and she shot me a wink and a small wave as Lucian led me away.

Together, we moved back toward the grand hall where anticipation buzzed like electricity in the air.

The stage was set for the keynote, the emblem of OTS illuminated in silver light against deep velvet drapes.

As Lucian and I stepped up side by side, a hush descended.

We stood shoulder to shoulder, his presence steady as stone beside me. And I didn't feel like a guest dragged along to stand in the background—I truly felt like his partner.

Lucian's voice carried first, resonant and commanding, weaving words of vision and strength. He spoke of unity, of innovation, of the trials that had shaped OTS into what it was today.

Then he gestured toward me, seamlessly passing the spotlight. "And none of it would be possible without those who stand with us. Seraphina, will you share your thoughts?"

Hundreds of eyes turned. My heartbeat stuttered, but then steadied. I lifted my chin, recalling the faces of Maya, of Daniel, of everyone who had chosen to believe in me when I couldn't even believe in myself.

"My story," I began, "isn't one of power inherited, or privilege granted. It's one of persistence. Of survival and determination. OTS stands for that same resilience. We are not the strongest because we were born so. We are strong because we refuse to break."

The words flowed easier with each breath. By the end, the crowd was leaning forward, listening—not with skepticism, but with respect.

Lucian placed a hand lightly against my back, subtle but steady. "And because of that spirit," he announced, voice ringing with finality, "we are proud to unveil this year's prize."

An attendant stepped forward, unveiling a glass vessel that seemed to glow faintly under the lights.

A collective gasp swept the hall—mine included, since even I hadn't been privy to Lucian's grand prize.

"The Moon Dew Nectar," Lucian declared.

The name alone sent ripples through the audience.

Murmurs broke out instantly—disbelief, awe, hunger. I could see the way even the most jaded Alphas leaned forward, eyes wide, unable to mask their fascination.

The vessel shimmered like liquid starlight, its pale silver hue shifting as though made of moonlight itself.

I had heard whispers of it before, but never imagined seeing it in person.

The Moon Dew Nectar—said to be brewed from an ancient plant that only bloomed under the rarest lunar phases. Said to purify, restore, heal the unseen. Not a potion of strength, but of clarity. A chance to realign with one's wolf, one's very soul.

“Few in history have even laid eyes on it,” Lucian continued. “Even fewer have tasted it. Tonight, it stands as our grand prize—for the victor who proves not only strength, but ambition and tenacity worthy of it.”

The uproar that followed was like thunder.

Gasps. Cheers. Disbelieving shouts.

Excitement rolled through the hall in waves, electrifying the atmosphere.

I glanced at Lucian, who stood calm amidst the storm he had unleashed, lips curved in the faintest, most knowing smile.

And beside him, I realized, I was no longer a bystander. I was part of the storm.