

My Sister 132

Chapter 132 HER DREAM

LUCIAN'S POV

The following morning, I was back at OTS before the sun had fully crested the horizon.

The compound still hummed from last night's spectacle—echoes of voices, whispered disbelief over the Moon Dew Nectar, air charged with a promise too big to ignore.

Even in its quiet hours, the place felt alive, pulsing like a heart that beat in rhythm with my own ambition.

I didn't allow myself too much time to bask in it. There was a lot to do.

With the preliminary rounds looming closer, my desk was littered with reports, schedules, and last-minute revisions.

I moved through them with brisk precision, my pen slashing signatures across pages, my voice sharp and commanding as I dictated responses to my staff.

Every detail mattered. Every piece had to fall perfectly into place.

But even as I leaned over the glowing monitors, watching the Arena, my focus slipped. The rigid control over my thoughts loosened in that brief reprieve.

And then she was all I could see.

Zara.

Once one thought slipped past my mind's blockade, more followed. For once, I didn't resist. I closed my eyes and let the wave wash over me.

The twinkling music of her laughter, the bright sparkle of her eyes, the searing ache of her touch.

It felt so wrong that I was here, making all these preparations, without her.

After all, OTS had been her dream as much as it was mine.

I remembered her perched on the edge of the table in one of these conference rooms, gesturing wildly with her hands as she described how she wanted the Arena to feel: grand, yes, but not suffocating; dangerous, but not reckless.

A place where warriors would be tested to the marrow of their bones, yet also given the stage to prove their worth before the world.

Her passion had been a storm I willingly walked into; her brilliance had ignited me in a way nothing before or after her had.

My eyes tracked the latest projection of the Arena's layout—pillars rising like ancient monuments, shadows cut sharp across the sand, the faint shimmer of protective wards designed to heighten the trial's intensity.

I could almost hear her voice again, teasing, insistent, challenging. I could imagine her next to me, peering over my shoulder.

'Perfect, Luc,' she would whisper, pressing her lips to my temple. 'It's perfect.'

But then—just as suddenly as the ghost appeared—Zara faded, leaving behind an unfortunately familiar hollow ache.

In her absence, Seraphina's face surfaced, vivid and inescapable.

It happened without my consent—a cruel trick of my mind.

And of course, like I'd been doing since I met Sera, I began to compare them.

Sera didn't burn with the same fever Zara had, no. But her quiet strength, her refusal to bow even when the world had all but broken her, lit something fierce, determined, unyielding in me.

This time, thinking of Zara—and the way I measured Sera against her—didn't wound me as it once had. Something like...acceptance murmured beneath the old ache.

It still carried weight, but the sharp sting of grief had dulled into something quieter, almost reverent.

I would always carry her in the bones of this place, in the very fabric of my soul. But the radiance OTS was about to witness would not belong to Zara.

It would belong to Sera.

And soon, so would I.

Still, unless the opportune moment arose, I would keep her true purpose—her true power—veiled.

Sera's role in this legacy was not for careless speculation or the greedy whispers of rivals.

The truth about her would be revealed when I decided the world was ready—when she was ready.

I straightened, rolling the tension from my shoulders. I'd slipped into my mind for far too long; I needed to rein in my thoughts and refocus on what mattered.

I exhaled slowly and dragged my attention back to the present, letting the rhythm of order steady me.

Fingers skimmed across the table's surface, pulling up the next set of reports, my mind snapping into the familiar cadence of logistics and command. The hum of screens, the shuffle of staff, the low crackle of intercoms—these were my anchors, and I let them pull me back into motion.

The work, for all its weight, was strangely fulfilling.

The closer we came to the opening of the tournament, the more I felt OTS aligning—not just with Zara's vision, but with my own.

The edges had been honed sharper, the foundations deepened. It was becoming something worthy of the legacy it was meant to bear.

By the time I dismissed the last aide, my temples ached with fatigue. I loosened the cuffs of my sleeves and leaned back, finally letting exhaustion creep in—

The door burst open, and a young staffer nearly stumbled inside, chest heaving, eyes wide with panic. "Alpha Reed! There's—there's a crisis!"

My jaw tightened. “Compose yourself. Speak.”

He swallowed hard, visibly trying to rein in his trembling. “The Alpha we secured to serve as the final Gatekeeper Boss—he just received word of an emergency. His pack needs him immediately. He’s already departed.”

The words dropped like stones in my stomach.

The Gatekeeper Boss: the final, most critical challenge of the LST, demanding not just strength but impartiality—qualities few Alphas possessed.

That position wasn’t just ceremonial—it was a cornerstone of the tournament’s integrity.

And now, less than a day before the first trial commenced, it was empty.

I leaned forward slowly, steepling my fingers against my lips as I considered the options. “We can’t simply replace him with any Alpha—the wrong choice would jeopardize the entire event’s fairness.”

The staffer nodded vigorously, sweat beading on his brow. “We’ve already reached out to several candidates, but...time is short, and most are entangled in obligations to their packs. None can arrive before the trial begins.”

Damn it.

The Gatekeeper wasn't just another piece of this puzzle.

He—or she—was the crucible, the force that would push the contenders to their limits, the mirror against which their strength and resolve would be measured.

Without the right candidate, the final trial would lose its teeth.

Worse, it would lose its legitimacy.

I pinched the bridge of my nose, mind racing. Possibilities flashed through me like cards shuffled too quickly to grasp.

Each name I considered was discarded in the same breath. Too weak. Too biased. Too far away.

What I needed was someone formidable. Someone whose presence alone commanded respect, whose strength was beyond question. And above all, someone whose loyalty to me, or lack thereof, would not compromise the perception of fairness.

And then—unbidden—a name surfaced.

Kieran.

Of course.

The thought was absurd. Dangerous, even. Yet as soon as it struck me, I couldn't shake it.

Alpha Kieran Blackthorne of Nightfang.

His reputation was ironclad, his dominance undisputed. Every wolf alive knew his name, whether it was because they respected him or despised him.

And though his presence would no doubt ignite tension, perhaps that was exactly what the LST required.

Formidable. Impartial. Untouchable.

Except to me.

And to her.

My lips curved faintly, although I felt no amusement. Fate was cruel, weaving us into complicated knots.

To put Kieran in that arena was to place him a step away from Seraphina—closer than I would ever allow under ordinary circumstances.

But this wasn't about my personal war. This was about OTS. About the legacy Zara had dreamed, and the future Sera deserved to shine in.

The staffer's voice broke into my thoughts again, tentative. "Alpha Reed...what are your orders?"

I rose from my chair slowly, the decision solidifying in my chest like tempered steel.

"I have someone in mind," I said. "I'll speak to him myself."

The staffer opened his mouth—perhaps to question me—but the look I gave him silenced the words on his tongue.

He bowed stiffly and hurried out of my office.

Alone once more, I stood before the broad window that overlooked the training grounds.

Wolves were already gathering below, sparring in the early light, their movements crisp and powerful.

The hum of their energy seeped through the glass, thrumming in my bones.

Yes. It had to be Kieran.

Not because I trusted him. Definitely not because I welcomed him.

But because, on such short notice, he was the only one who could stand as a gate no contender could simply walk through.

And if I hated the thought of him coming even a hundred yards from Sera, I leashed those feelings.

Decisions like these could not be made based on sentiment.