

My Sister 139

Chapter 139 SEA BREEZE

SERAPHINA'S POV

By the time I made it back home, exhaustion had sunk deep into my bones, and my body ached in all the familiar places.

But my heart felt light, and the excitement bubbling inside me refused to let me collapse straight into bed.

For a long moment, I lay staring at the dark ceiling, replaying the day like a reel I couldn't stop.

The first rush of dread as we stepped into the Misty Woods. The icy spike of fear when we stumbled on Roxy, half-drowned in the marsh. The taut thread of tension with William's team.

And then—finally—the dizzying relief of clutching that last moonstone in my hands, of realizing we had actually passed.

Not even the brief stint with Jessica could dull my happiness.

My hands instinctively reached for my phone, but a pang went through me when I realized that I could neither tell Maya nor Lucian about it.

Ugh.

So, instead, I dug out my encrypted phone and called the one other person I wanted to talk to that I actually could.

The screen lit up with Daniel's name, and before the first ring even ended, his small, sleepy face appeared, framed by the dim golden glow of the lamp in his room.

"Mom!" His voice pitched high, his eyes lighting up with an energy that flooded me with warmth.

I smiled so wide my cheeks hurt. "Hi, my baby! I have good news!"

"I already know!" He lifted up a paper, waving it so close to the camera that all I could see was a chaotic splash of blue and silver crayon. "Grandma and Grandpa told me when they heard the announcer say your team's name! You won, Mom! You did it!"

I blinked. "Wait—you mean...you were watching?" Christian and Leona were watching?

Daniel pulled the paper back, finally revealing the entire picture to me.

It was a child's sketch of five figures holding up a star-shaped stone, with messy letters scrawled across the top: Team 7 Champions.

Crayons filled the page with wild joy—blue for the mist, silver for the shard, yellow for the badges.

But what caught me most were the little additions in the corner—my son's careful handwriting: Drawn by Daniel, Grandma, and Grandpa.

I stared at the words. "They helped you draw this?"

"Uh-huh!" His voice dropped to a conspiratorial whisper, as if we were trading secrets. "Grandma did the shiny part. Grandpa said the trees should be bigger, so he drew them. But I told them only I can draw you,"—his eyes twinkled—"‘cause you're mine."

My throat tightened, the sting of unexpected tears pricking my eyes. "And...what did they say? About the competition?"

"That you're amazing. That you're... They said they're proud of you." Daniel leaned closer, his grin covering more than half the screen. "Me too, Mommy. I'm the proudest."

For a moment, I was too busy reeling from the information to process the end of his sentence.

Pride. From Leona. From Christian.

The same Leona who had once looked at me like I was a stain on her family name.

The same Christian who had cornered me with cold disapproval at every turn.

It should have meant more. Maybe once, it would have. But I was no longer that affection-starved girl who'd been desperate for my in-laws' approval.

So, tonight, I just nodded and tucked the thought into the quiet part of me, where I had started storing things I wasn't ready to examine.

Their pride didn't matter, not anymore. Only Daniel's did.

"Thank you, my love, and thank you for the drawing," I whispered. I pressed my fingertips to the screen, wishing I could touch his warm little face through it. "I love you so much."

"I love you, too, Mom!" he chirped. "And I'll keep rooting for you, okay?"

I nodded, blinking back tears. "Thank you, baby."

His smile stretched wider, then a yawn swallowed it whole. “Okay. Goodnight, Mommy. Win the next round, too, okay? Then I’ll make an even bigger drawing.”

“I will,” I said softly, blinking back tears. “For you.”

The call ended, but the warmth lingered, cushioning me as I finally drifted off to sleep.

Morning found me at the OTS cafeteria, the heavy fog of the trials replaced by sunlight streaming through the high glass windows.

The aroma of coffee and toasted bread drifted through the air, a welcome comfort after the day of damp earth and sweat.

Today was a rest day—no competition or training. Technically, I had no reason to be at OTS.

I would rather spend the day shopping with Maya or hanging out with Lucian.

Alas.

I was at OTS because I hoped to catch a glimpse of one of them. If I couldn't talk to them, at least I could, like, wave from a distance, right?

I might have considered it pathetic that I'd grown so attached to my two closest friends if it weren't already a miracle that I had two close friends to begin with.

The cafeteria was alive with chatter this morning.

Laughter spilled across the room, clattering dishes and rustling uniforms blending into a hum that seemed to vibrate through the walls.

I carried my tray to a corner table, my eyes darting around for familiar faces, but came up empty.

I had just lifted a forkful of eggs when a musical voice drifted over my shoulder.

"Mind if I sit with you?"

I looked up and blinked in surprise.

The Luna of Seabreeze Pack stood there, tray in hand, sea-green hair gleaming under the light like a ribbon of ocean caught in the sun.

She didn't wait for my answer—just slid gracefully into the seat across from me as though it had been reserved for her all along.

“You,” she said, tilting her head with a smile that could've outshone the sun in a competition, “were incredible.”

I blinked. “Excuse me?”

Her laugh tinkled, light and effortless. “Your team. The way you led them through the Misty Woods was amazing. I couldn't take my eyes off you guys—I barely watched my own team.”

Heat flushed my cheeks. I wondered when praise would stop feeling like an ill-fitting cloak resting oddly on my shoulders.

“We just...did what we had to do.”

“That's what makes it impressive,” she said firmly. “Most Alphas and leaders crush their teams into submission, but you pulled yours together like threads into a tapestry. And that girl—the hot-headed one with the sharp tongue? You even managed to get through to her.”

I ducked my head, focusing on my coffee. “You flatter me, Luna.”

“Oh, don’t ‘Luna’ me,” she teased, waving her spoon. “Call me Selene. My friends do.” She winked. “You and I are practically friends already.”

I huffed out an incredulous laugh.

Her energy was...disarming. Most Lunas wore their rank like a diamond crown. Selene wore hers like silk—light and easy.

And against all logic, I felt something stir in me—an inexplicable closeness, as though we’d actually been friends our whole lives.

We talked as we ate, her chatter flowing like a tide, mine cautious but slowly loosening under her fervor.

She asked what Los Angeles was really like (“I always imagined it as stars and smog—glamorous and grimy at the same time”), and I found myself smiling as I described the sprawl of freeways, the neon nights, the strange emptiness that could still seep in despite the crowds.

In turn, she told me about her pack territory, eyes alight with pride. She spoke about the endless coastline, the gull cries at dawn, the wind so sharp it could carry a wolf’s howl for miles.

Her laughter rang out, bright and unguarded. “I’m telling you, Sera, you don’t know true joy and freedom until you’re running on the shore, the sea breeze—the actual one, not the pack—blowing through your fur.”

I smiled wistfully, wondering what it would feel like to have any sort of air blowing through my fur. "It sounds amazing."

Selene set down her cup, eyes gleaming. "You don't have a pack right now, do you?"

The question came so far out of left field, I had to pause to replay it in my mind to be sure I heard her right.

I hesitated. "No. Not exactly." Had I ever had a pack to begin with?

"Well," she said, leaning forward, voice warm and gentle, "Seabreeze would love to have you. If you ever wished it. You'd fit right in with us."

The offer hung between us, startling in its sincerity.

I searched her gaze, looking for pity, for condescension. I found none. Just earnestness, like she meant every word.

A lump rose in my throat. "That's...generous of you."

"It's pretty selfish of me, really," she corrected with a grin. "You're a rare gem, and I want to snatch you up before anyone else realizes."

I stared at her, desperately trying to figure out what her angle was.

She laughed softly. "How about this? A visit? When the LSTs are over?"

I exhaled slowly, touched more deeply than I could admit. "Maybe..."

"Good." She clapped her hands once, delight spilling from her. "Then it's settled. One day, you'll see the sea from our cliffs." Her smile grew kind. "Hair or fur, you'll feel the amazing sea breeze."

The thought evoked a fuzzy sensation in my chest, an image of belonging where I least expected it.

We parted with Selene's kiss on my cheek, her scent of sea salt and citrus still clinging to me as I made for the cafeteria doors.

I was so lost in thought that I didn't notice the figure cutting across my path until I collided with him, hard enough to knock me off balance.

But strong hands caught me before I could stumble back, and I instinctively reached out, gripping a powerful forearm for balance.

“I—sorry, I wasn’t—” The words tumbled out as I lifted my head—

And froze.

The apology withered on my tongue as the tender warmth Selene had left me evaporated in an instant.

Obsidian-black eyes locked on mine. The weight of his presence instantly crackled the air with tension.

Kieran.