

My Sister 156

Chapter 156 SURGEON'S SCALPEL

SERAPHINA'S POV

The moment my boots touched down on the polished steel of the Arena, I had to blink several times to convince myself I wasn't trapped in some fever dream. That this was real.

We'd done it.

We had actually crossed the finish portal.

"OTS team One has arrived!" A booming voice carried through the space, magnified by unseen speakers. "The first team to clear the Snowfield Arena and pass the final challenge of the LST!"

For a moment, there was silence—as though the gathered crowd of spectators couldn't quite believe what they were seeing or hearing.

Then, all at once, the hall erupted into cheers.

The roar was deafening. Wolves howled in delight, fists punched into the air, and even a few of the non-competing members of the other milling around turned to gape at us.

For a moment, my team stood frozen, dazed.

The words replayed in my head, almost indecipherable.

First.

Did he really say...first?!

A whoop caught me off guard, and suddenly, I was lifted right off my feet.

“We did it!” Finn shouted, spinning me around like a victorious flag. I laughed breathlessly, not knowing which was more shocking—that Finn was showing this much emotion, or that—holy shit—we did it!

“Raise her higher!” Judy cackled, and between the two of them—and Roxy and Talia jumping in for support—I found myself hoisted onto their shoulders, carried through the throng as though I were some conquering hero.

The world tilted crazily. Faces blurred into a sea of shining eyes and clapping hands. My ears rang with my teammates’ jubilant laughter.

I couldn't stop grinning, joy bursting in me like fireworks. For the first time in ages, happiness didn't feel forbidden or dangerous—it rushed through me, wild and exhilarating.

I'd fought for this, with blood, sweat, and potential hypothermia. I'd fucking earned this feeling.

"We actually did it!" Judy cried from below me, her voice breaking with disbelief. "We beat them all!"

Talia, cheeks red and eyes bright, added, "First place. We're in first place!"

My first urge was to pinch myself—surely this had to be a dream.

But I immediately discarded the notion. I wouldn't let my lingering self-doubt steal this precious moment from me.

Instead, I threw my arms up, laughing until my sore ribs ached. The noise of the crowd seemed to swell with me, feeding my own breathless euphoria.

Once inside the resting room, the exhilaration thinned into something steadier. We collapsed onto the benches, sweaty and bruised and sore, but grinning like fools.

Medics in crisp white tunics were already moving among us like silent ghosts, their satchels clinking with vials and bandages.

One leaned over Roxy, examining the cut on her lip. Another pressed a cool compress to Finn's shoulder and another to his ankle while checking his pulse.

I shrugged off my jacket and lifted my shirt as one knelt beside me. I winced when she gingerly pressed on the rapidly forming bruise. If I looked, it would probably be in the shape of Ashar's paw.

The faint smell of antiseptic herbs cut through the room's damp musk of sweat and frost.

"I thought we were done for," Talia admitted, hugging her knees as a medic dabbed at her cheek. "No way we'd last the night."

"That fruit saved our asses," Judy said, tossing her braid over her shoulder as a healer dabbed at burns on her hands. "Don't care if it tasted like rotten bark, it worked."

Roxy let out a half-groan, half-laugh, dabbing an alcohol wipe against her lip by herself. "And here I was ready to accuse Lucian of trying to freeze us on purpose. Guess I owe him half an apology."

"Half?" Finn teased as a medic sprayed a numbing mist on his ankle.

"Fine, a quarter." Roxy smirked, but her eyes softened when they drifted to me. "You held us together, Sera. None of us would've made it without you."

Heat flared in my cheeks. The compliment meant a hundred times more coming from Roxy.

“We did it together,” I insisted, letting out a breath when a cool salve was spread over my bruising ribs. “Every one of us kept fighting, even when it seemed impossible.”

Judy snorted. “Maybe. But you’re the one who jumped on Ashar’s back. ‘How did you even come up with that? Pretty sure that counts as suicidal bravery.’”

“Or plain suicide,” Roxy muttered.

I laughed, but inside, my chest tightened.

They didn’t know the truth—that Alina had been there, guiding my every step. The real victory was hers.

Alina stirred at the thought, her voice brushing against my consciousness with quiet pride: ‘You were the one who trusted me. And remember, Sera: I am you. This victory is ours.’

My throat constricted. After so long without her, hearing her voice still felt like a miracle I didn’t dare believe in fully.

The room gradually quieted as the others' exhaustion caught up with them. Medics moved briskly, sealing cuts with shimmering gel, securing bandages and slings where needed, whispering instructions about rest and hydration.

I knew my teammates' wolf healing would kick in soon enough. Maybe I should have felt jealous, watching their wounds knit together while mine lingered. But the bruises felt like badges of honor, proof of my survival—a trophy in their own right.

On the massive central screen, battles from the other Arenas played out in real time. The OTS had spared no expense—every angle captured, every strike magnified for dramatic effect.

The Snowfield Arena still flickered on the screen, showing Celeste's team locked in vicious combat with Ashar—I may or may not have smirked when he smacked her to the ground.

At least he wasn't playing favorites.

Cypress Vale was slogging across a bridge over a river of lava, their movements sluggish with exhaustion. But at their head, a talisman glinted in Alpha Thomas' fist.

I leaned back against the bench, arms crossed, and let my gaze travel across the images.

The more I watched, the clearer it became: this wasn't just a Trial. It was a spectacle—a carefully crafted show of strategy, endurance, and sheer willpower.

And it was working.

I could almost feel the weight of eyes from across the werewolf world, watching, judging, measuring.

Lucian's vision for the OTS was unfolding perfectly, and I had to admit...it was brilliant. After this, no one would be able to ignore him or the OTS again.

'He's changing everything,' I realized, pride sweeping through me. After this, who would dare look down on Omegas and wolfless as less than?

I was so caught up in thought that I didn't notice the stranger until his shadow fell across me.

"Seraphina Blackthorne?"

I blinked up. A tall man stood before me, dressed not in the armor or athletic gear of a competitor, but in a sleek black suit that spoke of wealth and status.

His platinum hair was slicked back, his wily smile polished like a salesman's.

"Yes?" I asked cautiously.

He inclined his head with courtly precision. "Corvus Armand, representative of the New Moon Trade Alliance. An honor."

He extended a card—thick, embossed, the kind that screamed old money. I hesitated before taking it.

He nodded to the back of the resting room. "Do you mind?"

My brows furrowed. I glanced back at my team, but they were too busy watching the footage with rapt attention.

I stood from the bench and followed Corvus. We stopped at the back, slightly shielded by a row of lockers.

"My role here is purely observational," Corvus continued smoothly. "I document promising ventures and assess potential investment opportunities for the Alliance. Naturally, your performance caught my eye."

I arched a brow. "My...performance?"

No fucking way he just called the abject torture I went through a performance.

He smiled wider, his too-perfect teeth gleaming. "A wolfless contender, leading her team to victory against all odds? That is the kind of story investors adore. Inspiring, marketable, profitable."

I stiffened. "We weren't fighting for a story."

"Perhaps not," he allowed. "But stories are what shape the world, Mrs. Blackthorne. Yours, in particular, is...intriguing."

"Miss," I corrected a little too sharply. "And it's just Seraphina."

His mouth curved. Oh, he knew.

His gaze lingered on me, sharp and probing. Like a surgeon's scalpel.

"Tell me," Corvus said casually, "how did you manage to survive the encounter with the bear? Alone, in the dead of night. It was quite fascinating to watch. Most would not have survived."

My stomach dropped. "Intuition."

His eyes narrowed slightly. "Intuition," he echoed, as though tasting the word. "Fascinating."

His stare made me want to shrink away. It felt like he could see straight through me, as if he might discover the truth about Alina and the bond we share.

My hands tightened around the card until the edges bit into my palm.

I forced my expression into something cool, distant. “If you’ll excuse me, I should get back to my team.”

Corvus dipped his head, his smile never wavering. “Of course. I didn’t mean to unsettle you. The Alliance merely wishes to extend goodwill. We look forward to...future collaborations, should opportunity arise.”

And with that, he vanished back into the crowd, leaving a chill in his wake.

I exhaled slowly, tension bleeding from my shoulders.

What the hell was that about?

Alina’s voice stirred softly. ‘Men like him are always circling—vultures looking for weakness to exploit. You did well to say little.’

‘Still,’ I whispered inwardly, ‘he looked at me like he knew. Like he could see you.’

‘He cannot, Alina reassured. ‘No one can. Not yet.’

And then, I finally asked the question that had gnawed at me since the Snowfield Arena.

‘Why now?’ I thought. ‘Why did you wake when you did?’

For a long moment, silence stretched between us.

Then Alina’s reply came, quiet but steady: ‘Because you were in danger. Real danger. My instinct to protect you pulled me through, no matter how weak I was. Survival demanded it.’

I bit my lip. ‘So you were here all along? Watching me struggle alone?’

‘I have always been with you. But I could not reach you, not fully. Something held me back... something I am not ready to name. Not yet.’

Her words landed heavy, filling me with both relief and unease.

‘But...you’ll stay?’

‘I’ll stay. I won’t leave you again,’ Alina promised.

My chest swelled with overwhelming gratitude.

I didn't care about the unanswered questions, not at the moment. I had her now. That was enough.

Suddenly, a fanfare of horns cut through the chamber, drawing everyone's attention. The announcer's voice thundered from above once more: "The results are in! With the final portals crossed, the champions of the Latent Spark Trials have been determined!"