

My Sister 16

Chapter 16 EXES OR ENEMIES

KIERAN'S POV

The door swung open before Sera could spit whatever venom she'd brewed.

She closed her eyes and muttered, "What now?" like everyone—including me—was a fucking inconvenience.

"Enter," I called out, hoping whoever it was would annoy her further.

The door drew open, and Gavin, my Beta, strode in, all military precision. His gaze swept over Lucian's hand clutching Sera's—fuck—and landed on me like none of it mattered.

"Alpha,"—he stretched out a thin brown envelope to me—"here are the results of the investigation."

Sera's nails dug into the sheets. "Take your pack business elsewhere—"

I couldn't resist snapping back at her. "It is your business."

She frowned. "What?"

Ignoring her, I pulled out the single document in the envelope. Gavin narrated as my eyes skimmed the document. "We found the casing of the bullet that Seraphina was shot with."

I heard Sera's breath hitch.

"As you suspected, they had the same markings that we found on the bodies of the dead rogues after the attack."

"Wh-what does that mean?" Sera asked softly.

I turned to her, and whatever compassion I felt for her evaporated at the sight of Lucian still fucking holding her hand.

Gavin looked at me, silently asking for permission, and I nodded. "It means that the rogues who attacked during your father's funeral are the ones who tried to kill you with the silver bullet."

"But... that's impossible..." Her whole body trembled, and I had to make a conscious effort not to race across the room and gather her in my arms.

"I haven't been a Lockwood in years." Her whispered words cut deeper than any blade.

"You may not wear the Lockwood name now, Sera," I tightened my jaw, "but you can never deny your blood."

"This makes no sense." She shook her head, refusing to accept it. "Are you sure you got it right?" Her gaze snapped to Gavin. "Even if they wanted a Lockwood, why target me? To the Lockwoods, I'm nobody."

"Silver casing. Matching striations." Gavin's tone was clinical—no bullshit. Even if Sera didn't know him well, everyone understood my Beta didn't lie.

"This wasn't random. They were waiting for you."

A fractured sound escaped her—half frustration, half fear. Every instinct in me howled to close the distance, drag her against my chest—

But Lucian moved first.

"I'll keep you safe, Sera." His interruption made my fangs throb. "OTS has top-tier security—"

"Over my dead body." The growl tore from me before I could stop it. "The mother of my son remains under my protection."

"Is that so?" Lucian's polished facade finally cracked, revealing something razor-edged. "Then explain why Sera's lying in a hospital bed. Again."

The accusation in his eyes lit a fire in my blood. Who the fuck did he think he was, judging me?

The air crackled with the clash of two Alphas, and with just one move, I would have lunged to rip out Lucian's throat—

"Daniel!" Sera's gasp shattered our standoff, slapping her hand over her mouth. Her gaze snapped to mine, and for the first time since I'd entered, her eyes held something other than icy disdain—raw, primal fear.

"What if they go after him next? We have to protect him!"

For a brief second, our eyes locked, and an understanding passed between us. We weren't exes or enemies—just two parents with one goal: protecting our pup.

I swallowed hard, knowing what came next would shatter this fragile truce. "I've arranged for my parents to take him to—" My jaw snapped shut from divulging the location of my private island because Lucian was still in the room, and no matter how lax Sera had let herself become with him, I didn't trust him one fucking bit.

"What?!" I suspected that if not for her injuries, that one word would have been roared at me. As it was, it came out as a raspy shudder that clawed at my instincts.

I sighed. "It's for the best, Sera. He'll be safe—"

"You're not stealing my son!" Her IV line trembled with her fury. "Our divorce agreement was clear—"

"This isn't about custody!" I barely restrained myself from slamming a fist into the wall. "It's about keeping him alive!"

Her eyes glowed with that stubborn fire I knew too well. "Then we'll protect him together. He's not leaving me."

The monitor's frantic beeping underscored what we both knew—neither of us would back down. Not when it came to our son.

"And what if Daniel had been with you in the park?" I took a threatening step forward, my voice dropping to a dangerous rumble. "You survived because you're human, but our son? A single silver bullet—"

Sera's breath hitched, her whimper slicing through me like claws. Every muscle in my body tensed to go to her—until Lucian's damned fingers brushed her cheek, catching that traitorous tear.

My hands fisted so hard my claws pierced my palms. The coppery scent of my own blood mixed with the stench of my rage.

"C-can't I go with him?" Her broken whisper shattered what remained of my control.

I forced myself to shake my head, each movement agony. "If you are their main target, wherever you go, they will follow—and that puts Daniel in harm's way."

A full-body tremor wracked her frame. I didn't need the bond to feel her devastation—it pulsed in the air between us, thick as blood. Gods, how I wished with all my might that I could take the pain—all her pain—away.

I should have been the one by her bedside, holding her hand. I was the only one who could understand the anguish of being separated from your child. Not some polished outsider who'd never spent nights aching for his child's scent.

Least of all fucking Lucian Reed.

SERAPHINA'S POV

"Are you sure you don't need me to come in and help you?" Lucian asked, his fingers tightened on the steering wheel as he studied me.

I shook my head as I unhooked my seatbelt, swallowing a wince when it pulled at the tender spot on my chest.

"I appreciate everything you've done, Lucian. But I can take it from here."

Over the past week, Lucian had become my second most frequent visitor—right after Kieran. Part of me wondered if his concern crossed professional boundaries, but after Kieran tried sneaking Celeste into my room again, I'd stopped caring about his murderous glares.

At least with Lucian around, I didn't have the energy to fight with Kieran. But each passing day was a countdown to separation from my son, and I refused to spend one more second in that sterile hospital bed.

He huffed. "Frankly, I don't think you should have been discharged yet."

I cocked my head. "Remind me where you went to med school?"

He rolled his eyes, his lips twitching slightly. "Ha ha."

I laughed. "I'll be fine." I reached for the door handle. "You of all people know I'm harder to break than I look."

He smiled softly and squeezed my hand. "Yeah. You are."

I squeezed. "I'll see you at training."

"Not until you're one hundred percent."

"Yeah, yeah." I got out of the car.

As I walked up to my porch, I noticed a black vehicle idling at the end of the street. I didn't panic, though; I knew that it was a security detail, courtesy of Kieran. The car had followed Lucian and me from the hospital.

I took in a deep breath as I stepped into the house, noting gratefully that my chest didn't hurt from it.

I glanced at my phone, and my heart soared when I saw the time—Daniel would be back home soon. I'd missed my baby over the week I'd been in the hospital, and although Kieran assured me that he wasn't aware of my injury, I couldn't help but worry about him.

I went upstairs for a shower and a quick nap. Sooner than I'd expected, the doorbell rang through the house, and I rushed down the stairs to open it.

"Baby!" I gasped as Daniel threw himself at me, wrapping his arms around my waist.

I bit back a gasp as the force of his head colliding with my chest sent a jolt of pain through me.

He stiffened and immediately pulled away.

"Oh, my baby," I whispered, cupping his face. "I missed you so much."

His dark eyes roamed over my face, glancing pointedly at my chest. "You... you lost weight," he said flatly.

I chuckled. "The training trip was rigorous, hon."

He raised a brow, and in that moment, he looked so much like his father. His searching gaze was so intense, I had to force back the urge to squirm.

I waited for him to call bullshit. Although I was wearing a thick sweater that covered the bandages around my chest, Daniel was eerily perceptive, and I wouldn't put it past him to somehow know the number of stitches the doctors had used to close the surgical wound or the serial number of the gun that had shot me.

But after another second of surveillance, he exhaled. "You need a home-cooked meal then."

I smiled, nodding. "I know, I'll get started on dinner right away—"

Daniel shook his head and stepped into the house, grabbing my hand as he pulled me along.

"No," he declared. "I'm cooking for you."

I let out a surprised laugh. "You are?"

He nodded and helped me sit on the island in the kitchen.

"Grandma taught me how to make egg-fried rice."

"Did she now?"

He nodded, opening the fridge.

My smile was so wide, my jaw hurt as I watched Daniel move through the kitchen. I offered helpful tips like "Watch out for your fingers while you chop, hon," or "Add some oil to the rice so it doesn't boil over," "That's enough salt," and "You have to keep stirring or it'll burn."

Each comment was met with an endearing sigh of exasperation that made me giggle.

Finally, he turned to me, two heaping plates of fried rice in his hands. I slipped my phone out and took a picture.

"Mom!" Daniel whined as I giggled, staring at the picture.

He came over to sit beside me, and I glanced at the huge mess he'd left behind—dishes piled high in the sink, vegetable peels, scraps, and eggshells littered all over the counter—and winced.

"Try it," he nudged the plate towards me.

I lifted my fork and clinked it against his.

The first bite was... interesting.

The rice was mushy, the veggies were overcooked, the egg was burnt, and he'd added way too much salt and not enough soy sauce. Still, it was the best thing I'd ever tasted.

Daniel scrunched his face, glaring at the plate. "That is not how Grandma's fried rice tasted."

I smiled, swallowing another mouthful. "It's delicious, hon."

He rolled his eyes. "You don't have to coddle me. You can tell me the truth."

His words resonated within me, and aside from the quality of his fried rice, I remembered another truth he needed to hear.

I set my fork down and turned his stool so he was facing me, his legs tucked between mine. "Speaking of truths..."

His eyes locked on mine expectantly, and a gnawing feeling stabbed at my chest. I had no idea how I would cope with Daniel being miles away from me. He was the only true love I had, and if he was gone...

The loneliness that loomed ahead of me rendered me temporarily mute.

"Mom?" Daniel placed a hand on mine, and I intertwined our fingers and squeezed.

As much as being apart from him for a while would hurt, losing him forever would destroy me more than a silver bullet ever could.

So I took a breath and forced a smile. "Here goes nothing."

