

My Sister 188

Chapter 188 D-DAY

SERAPHINA'S POV

Daniel's training had to be completed before his tenth birthday and the heir ceremony, so the day of departure for his secluded training wasn't too far away.

Before that, he had a couple of basic courses he needed to finish.

I was supposed to continue training at OTS, but I took some time off, deciding that this period belonged solely to my son.

She didn't admit it, but I was pretty sure Maya was worried about me, and she took 'I'm on your side' really, really seriously—by rarely ever leaving mine.

Most days, she joined us in the Blackthorne courtyard or the private arena Christian and Leona had prepared.

And afterwards, in our backyard, she ran through drills and practice routines with him.

I watched, half-amused and half-relieved, as Maya—with infinitely more patience than she had with me—walked him calmly through defending, countering, and anticipating, even when he challenged some tactics.

And when Daniel balked, Maya simply smiled, ruffled his hair, and repeated the demonstration.

Kieran would sometimes appear at the Blackthorne mansion, lingering near our exercises or peeking through windows.

Even as he related to Daniel, he respected my space—mostly.

Thankfully, he seemed to understand that pushing too hard right now would only fracture the fragile rhythm we'd managed to find.

Ethan made several appearances, too, joining Maya seamlessly just like that day during training.

And surprisingly, whenever I lingered a little too long in anxious thoughts, it was his calm voice and reassurance that soothed my scattered nerves.

My mother visited the Blackthornes often, and when she and Leona invited me for tea while Daniel trained, I couldn't bring myself to refuse.

They shared their experiences with me, recounting how Alphas once handled similar training periods. Most were anecdotes about their own sons, light and humorous—and I found myself laughing, not minding.

Even Christian proactively included me in the training prep, checking in often to get my approval on things as trivial as Daniel's meal plan.

And because of all these, instead of the dread I thought I would feel, I found an unexpected lightness growing as the days led up to his departure.

My anxiety didn't quite fade—in fact, it resurfaced at the most inopportune moments—but with it came a tentative sense of peace. Harmony.

No looming competitions, no constant coil of dread in my stomach, and—my personal favorite—no screaming matches or subtle manipulations undermining my peace.

Celeste being a whole ocean and a continent away felt like a more precious gift than the Moon Dew Nectar.

The day before Daniel's departure began with sunlight brushing the edges of the kitchen blinds.

He sat at the island, wolfing down French toast and bacon, hair messy from sleep but eyes bright with that fierce spark he always carried.

He must have been tired from all the training, but he faced each new day with unwavering enthusiasm.

As I watched him, pride mingled with worry, and it took a ton of willpower not to let my smile falter.

“Blink, Mom,” he mumbled around a bite of bacon. “I promise I won’t disappear in that split second.”

I rolled my eyes, reaching out to wipe some grease from the corner of his mouth. “Cheeky.”

Like clockwork, Maya strode in through the unlocked front door, holding two to-go cups of coffee in a cardboard cup carrier.

She ruffled Daniel’s hair as she passed. “I hope you’ve been practicing your endurance runs. Care to show me a lap or two after breakfast?”

He nodded eagerly. “Yes! And maybe some strategy drills too?”

Maya’s gaze flicked to me as she set one cup of coffee before me.

I heard the unspoken question: He had no official training at the Blackthornes’; should we push him, or let him enjoy the calm of his last day before things intensified?

I simply shrugged. Whatever Daniel wanted. I couldn't let my own reservations hinder him.

The morning passed in laughter and quick bursts of training. Throughout, I sat on the deck, watching my son glow as he practiced agility exercises in the backyard.

He moved with an intensity and focus I recognized from secretly watching his father practice when we were younger. It was beautiful to watch, and I could see the confidence building in him, layer by layer.

I reminded myself this was what he needed, not my constant protection or my anxiety. Just space. Support. Love.

At one point, Maya joined me.

"How are you doing, Mama bear?"

I exhaled, watching Daniel run through the drills he had memorized. "Seeing him so young, and yet so ready...it's terrifying."

Maya's hand landed on my shoulder. "Terrifying is okay. Maybe even good. But he's prepared. And so are you, even if you don't feel it yet."

I nodded, closing my eyes for a brief moment.

“I just hope I can handle it when the time comes.”

She squeezed my shoulder. “You will. You’ve handled worse. And you’re not alone. Remember that.”

I nodded, her words settling deeply.

Afterward, Maya and I gathered with Daniel at the kitchen table. We walked him through the final checklist—laying out his gear, checking provisions, and reviewing communication protocols step by step.

I repeated the instructions Christian had given Daniel, and each one echoed the reality of the coming separation.

“Mom,” Daniel cut me off after the third time, looking at me with those earnest eyes that always seemed too old for his age, “I got it.”

I sighed. “Yeah, I know.”

“I don’t want you to worry.” He squeezed my hand. “I’ll take care of myself. I’ll train hard, and I’ll make you proud.”

My chest tightened. I swallowed against the lump forming in my throat. "I already am proud, baby. Always."

He smiled, but there was a glimmer of hesitation, the quiet awareness that this would be a test unlike any before. "Even if...even if it's hard?"

"Especially then," I whispered, brushing the hair from his forehead. "Especially then."

The night stretched long and peaceful, and I watched Daniel drift to sleep, small chest rising and falling, one hand wrapped around me and the other loosely clutching Wolfy.

That sight made my heart clench. Just like when he left for Kieran's island, the world would move on. Yet for me, everything would pause—out of order, out of rhythm—until he was home again.

I couldn't bring myself to sleep. So I just rested in the tender comfort of simply being a mother with her child.

The morning of the D-day came way too fast.

Daniel's excitement was palpable. The bags were packed. The itinerary and resources double-checked. Nothing left to do but go.

Maya, Ethan, and my mother showed up at our door, bright and early.

My mother had packed a lunchbox overflowing with snacks, Ethan came armed with last-minute advice and encouragement for Daniel.

Maya was for me, her warm, comforting grip keeping me from falling apart.

The ride to the Blackthornes was just me and Daniel, though. We sat quietly, with only the soft hum of the engine filling the car.

Daniel muttered quietly in the backseat, eyes intent on the window, while I gripped the steering wheel, focused on the road but aware of his every sound.

"What are you mumbling about, baby?" I asked.

"Just trying to remember my old lessons so I can pass the new ones."

I reached over and took his hand in mine. Gods, he was so small.

“Honey,” I said gently, offering the same calm he had given me the day before, “you know it all. You don’t need to repeat it like a mantra.”

He looked at me, serious. “I know, Mom. But it makes me feel ready. I want to be ready.”

That fierce, stubborn determination—that need to be prepared—it was so grown-up of him, so Alpha-like.

When we arrived at the Blackthornes, a convoy of vehicles lined the driveway. Preparations for Daniel’s trip to the pack house were underway.

Kieran and Gavin stood at the front of the group, heads together as they reviewed last-minute plans.

Leona greeted us first, crouching down to his level, her gaze sharp but warm

“You’ve got this, darling. Remember everything you’ve been taught.” She placed a palm over his chest, “but remember also to trust yourself.”

She pressed a kiss to Daniel’s forehead before standing, her gaze briefly meeting mine. There was reassurance there—a silent ‘He’ll be okay.’

Kieran stepped forward then.

Daniel straightened instinctively, his chin lifted.

At that moment, Kieran wasn't his dad; he was his Alpha, his predecessor.

Kieran paused, as if the sight of his heir was something he needed to take in fully, piece by piece.

Then, he lowered himself to one knee, eye level with Daniel.

His voice was calm, steady, so soft I almost couldn't hear him. "Danny."

"Dad." There was a tiny tremor of nerves in Daniel's voice, almost imperceptible, but it made my chest clench.

"I'm so proud of you," he said, quiet but clear. "Not just because you're my son. But because every step you've taken to stand here today, you chose it. You didn't let fear stop you."

Kieran's voice lowered further, his broad hand braced on our son's small shoulders. "And if it hurts—if it feels too heavy—you remember this: you were born strong. But you are stronger now because you have people to fight for."

His gaze snapped to mine over Daniel's head, and my breath hitched. "And people who will always fight for you," he added.

Daniel leaned forward just enough to let his forehead rest against Kieran's shoulder.

Kieran's broad arms wrapped around him, swallowing his small figure. Something cracked open in me as he rested his chin on our son's head and whispered something I couldn't hear—one last message meant for only Daniel's ears.

When they stepped apart, Kieran rose and faced me.

His eyes met mine. Shadowed. Contained. Respectful.

"Thank you," he said simply.

It wasn't a casual thanks. It was layered—For being Daniel's mother. For helping him grow. For letting him go. For not turning this into a battlefield.

I held his gaze for a few moments before giving a short nod. "He'll make us proud."

A faint smile. “He already has.”

He stepped back.

And then it was my turn.

I inhaled once, steadying myself as I approached Daniel.

He suddenly looked so fragile. Not because he was small—but because the world ahead of him was so big.

He offered up a soft smile. “Mom—”

I pulled him into my arms before he could finish. He let out a soft groan, and I knew I was squeezing too tightly, but I couldn’t bring myself to stop.

“You’ll have your father and grandfather and seasoned wolves around you,” I whispered. “But listen,”—I pulled back to look into his eyes—“none of them—not even your father—define your strength or limits. Only you get to do that.”

He nodded.

“Your wolf will come when it’s time,” I promised, refusing to accept any other alternative. “Until then, trust your instincts. Trust your training. Trust your heart first. Your head second. And your fear—not at all.”

His fingers clenched in the fabric of my shirt as he nodded again.

I gently cupped his face, brushing my thumbs under his eyes even though no tears had fallen. “You hear my voice when it gets hard, okay? Imagine me telling you to keep moving. To fight smarter. To rest when needed. And to rise again.”

I leaned in and kissed his forehead.

“I love you,” I breathed against his skin.

“I love you too, Mom.”

And then, because he was the most precious thing in existence, he whispered, “Bye, Alina. Take care of Mom while I’m gone.”

‘Bye, pup,’ she answered, her voice a soft purr. ‘Make us proud.’

When I let go, something inside me stretched painfully—but didn't break.

He stepped back, and Kieran placed his hand on his shoulder again. The picture they formed—an Alpha and his heir—brought hot tears to my eyes.

As they walked away, I didn't take my eyes off Daniel for a second. His steps were small at first.

Then firmer. Steady.

He didn't look back.

Not because he didn't need me.

But because he trusted I would still be there when he returned.

My heart tightened and swelled at the same time with fierce pride.

The little boy who had clung to my side for so many years was now stepping into a world that would challenge him, mold him, and, ultimately, make him stronger than I could have ever imagined.

I wrapped my arms around myself, exhaling slowly.

Alina whispered in my mind, calm and sure, 'Remember, he is special. And he is ready.'

I nodded, letting the belief settle into my chest—not as comfort, but as truth.