

My Sister 200

Chapter 200 WAKING UP

SERAPHINA'S POV

The days that followed melted together in a haze of golden mornings, crisp air, and laughter that echoed between the mountains of Shadowveil.

I'd walked nearly every path within the territory by now—the narrow bridge that crossed the misty ravine, the training yards where the scent of pine and iron lingered, even the quiet grove where the Moonlit Spring shimmered beneath its canopy of silver leaves.

In just a few days, the place had begun to feel startlingly familiar.

I'd learned the names of the pups who raced through the courtyard at dawn, their exhausted mothers calling after them.

I'd shared tea with the Omegas who cooked for the whole pack, learning how they managed to feed two hundred wolves seemingly effortlessly.

I'd even sparred lightly with some of the younger warriors, and for once, I hadn't felt out of place in a pack.

Too soon, it was time to leave.

The morning of our departure was bittersweet. The courtyard was filled with farewells—pups waving, Omegas pressing small bundles of food into my hands, asking me to visit again.

Sabrina clung to me hard. “I can’t believe you’re leaving already,” she said, voice thick and eyes glassy.

“I’ll be back,” I promised, squeezing her just as tight. “And you’re welcome to visit anytime.”

She pulled back just enough to grin through her tears. “Oh, I’ll visit. Maybe as a guest...” She winked. “Or as your sister-in-law.”

“Sabrina!” I groaned, laughing.

“What? I’m just saying!” she teased. “You and my Lucy looked way too cozy after that run.”

Lucian cleared his throat behind us, amusement dancing in his eyes. “Sabrina, try not to scare her off before she’s even gone.”

“Oh, boo.” She stuck her tongue out at him as she hugged me again.

“Take care, Sera,” she said softly. “And don’t forget—Shadowveil will always welcome you.”

Tears brimmed in my eyes. "I won't."

When we finally set off, Lucian and I sat in companionable silence, the hum of the engine filling the space between us as we cut into the forest that guarded Shadowveil's borders.

As we passed the last ridge, I turned to look back one more time. The valley stretched below us, bathed in light. It looked almost unreal.

"Feels strange, doesn't it?" Lucian said quietly.

"Yeah," I murmured. "Like waking up from a dream."

He smiled faintly. "A good one, I hope."

"The best," I admitted.

His eyes softened. "If I could, I'd stay there with you forever."

My heart thudded painfully. I understood what he meant. There was a longing beneath his words—not just for the peace of Shadowveil, but for something deeper.

I didn't know what to say. So I didn't. I just reached across and let my fingers brush his hand.

He turned his palm upward, linking our fingers together. No words. No promises. No pressure.

When we reached the private airfield beyond pack territory, the noon sun was high. The jet waited, sleek and silver, gleaming under the light.

We landed at the private terminal at Van Nuys Airport five hours later.

And the best present ever was waiting for me as I stepped down the airstairs.

"Mom!"

KIERAN'S POV

As soon as I'd learned of Sera's return schedule, I'd cleared my entire day.

Daniel thought I had planned this as a surprise for him and his mother. And in part, I did.

But the truth ran deeper.

I needed to see her.

After several days of wondering, of having to exert a gargantuan amount of willpower not to lift the 'Do not interfere or report unless she is in danger' rule, a simple, indifferent 'I'm back' text would have killed me.

I needed to see her with my own eyes. That was the only way to soothe the constant stabbing pain in my chest.

The private terminal carried the faint scent of jet fuel and steel. Out on the tarmac, the heat shimmered in the fading California light, the horizon blurring beneath the low amber sun. A soft breeze tugged at my sleeves as I took Daniel's hand.

My son was practically vibrating with his uncontrollable excitement, his dark hair falling into his eyes.

"She's going to be so surprised," he said for the third time, grinning from ear to ear.

I managed a smile, brushing his hair away from his eyes with my other hand. “Yeah. She will.”

But a knot of anxiety kept squeezing my chest, refusing to let go.

What had happened in Shadowveil?

The moment the silver jet rolled to a stop, Daniel bounced on his heels. I almost envied his innocence—pure joy untainted by guilt or regret.

The door opened.

And my lungs forgot how to perform the simple task of inhaling and expelling air.

Sera stepped out into the light, her hair swept by the wind, gorgeous eyes bright.

Even from here, I could feel it. The quiet hum of power around her was subtle but unmistakable. Something in her aura had shifted—grown.

Lucian followed her down the steps, close enough that their shoulders nearly brushed. His expression was calm, composed, as always.

But the look he gave her—that unmistakable warmth between them—twisted something sharp inside me.

I swallowed hard. Maybe this wasn't such a good idea.

Daniel, however, had the opposite sentiment.

His hand slipped out of mine, and he tore across the tarmac, shouting, “Mom!” and tackled her in his hug.

Her surprise quickly melted into delight, and she laughed, a bright, happy sound, wrapping her arms around him.

Watching them was the best kind of déjà vu.

Lucian hung back, giving them space. His eyes flicked to me as I approached with slow, firm steps.

I nodded, the gesture clipped but civil. “Lucian.”

“Kieran.” His tone was even, but his eyes were assessing, his stance protective. The barbaric urge to tear him away from Sera's side was a little terrifying.

But as soon as Sera looked at me, everything else faded, replaced by a surge of longing and regret that threatened to swallow me whole.

In the space of a heartbeat, my eyes took in the expanse of her face. Her hair glinted almost white in the sunlight, the green in her eyes almost blinding.

How could I have mistaken her for Celeste? How could I not have known that she was that little girl who'd rattled my world all those years ago?

"Hi," she said simply. No smile. No warmth. Just basic acknowledgment.

My neck felt stiff as I nodded. "Welcome back."

She gripped Daniel's hand in hers, her posture calm but guarded. Too fucking similar to Lucian's.

"You didn't have to pick me up." Her tone was distant, tight, as if it cost her energy to keep the words light.

My teeth clenched hard enough to crack.

"Daniel's idea," I said. It wasn't. "He insisted." He hadn't.

Daniel tugged her hand, drawing her attention back to him. "Mom, guess what? I finished my training ahead of schedule!"

Sera's eyes widened, a delighted laugh slipping out of her. "Already? That's incredible, baby!"

He beamed. "I told you I was going to come back to you soon."

"You did." She leaned down and hugged him again. "Oh, I'm so proud of you!"

I forced myself to stay silent as she oohed and aahed over Daniel. But inside, a storm of questions churned.

I wanted to ask her everything.

What had she experienced that had fed her aura?

Did Shadowveil change her?

Did Lucian?

But every question backed up, crowding my throat, each one too dangerous to voice.

At some point, she glanced up and met my eyes briefly—calm, polite, unflinching—and then turned away again.

Something inside me fractured.

I'd resolved to win her back.

I'd told myself I wouldn't give up—especially not after the truth I'd discovered.

But standing there, watching her face light up with the smile she offered everyone but me, feeling the deafening hum of distance that seemed to have only grown wider, I had to wonder if I stood a chance in hell.