

My Sister 222

Chapter 222 PROPHECIES BE DAMNED

SERAPHINA'S POV

Kieran's hair was wet, plastered to his forehead and temples. His shirt clung to his body, rain dripping from the hem, and his breath came in heavy bursts, as if he'd been running.

Over me, he held an umbrella—large, black, sheltering.

Sheltering me, not him.

His eyes locked onto mine, and I saw the storm of emotions swirling beneath the stoic mask he normally wore.

Panic. Fear. Relief so intense it almost looked painful.

"Sera," he breathed, his voice rough, strained. "I've been looking everywhere for you."

Something inside me cracked at the sound of his voice. At the fact that he had come, that he had searched, that he had found me.

The swing beneath me shifted slightly as I exhaled, a trembling, broken sound I couldn't hold back.

His jaw clenched, and he took a half-step toward me, rain still streaming down his back. "You're freezing."

"I'm fine," I whispered, even though I clearly wasn't.

His brows pulled together in a way that told me he wasn't fooled.

He lowered the umbrella, angling it more fully over me, ignoring how the rain drenched his shoulder further.

"Margaret called me in a panicked frenzy that you left her house without your car. And no one could reach you."

I looked down, gripping the chains tighter.

"I just needed air," I murmured.

"What happened, Sera?" His voice gentled. His knuckles were white where he gripped the umbrella. "Tell me."

My vision blurred, and even though the rain streaked down my cheeks, Kieran saw right through it.

His expression softened. “Sera...” His voice dropped to a near whisper. “You’re crying.”

That undid me.

A sound escaped my throat—small, fragile, humiliating. Before I could turn away, before I could ask that he leave me alone, Kieran crouched in front of me, one knee sinking into the wet, muddy ground so his face was level with mine.

He reached up with his free hand, brushing his knuckles against my cheek. His touch was impossibly gentle, wiping a mixture of rain and tears that wouldn’t stop falling.

“Sera,” he murmured, “if Daniel saw you like this, his little heart would break.”

I choked out a half-laugh, half-sob. “Using Daniel to get me to open up. Touché.”

He let out a half-hearted chuckle. “You would do anything for Daniel, right?”

I swallowed hard. “Kieran...”

He leaned closer. "I'm listening."

"If someone prophesied," I whispered, voice trembling, "that Daniel was destined to be nothing. Ordinary. Would you...Would you give up on him?"

Kieran's head jerked back.

Even through the rain, I saw it: the flash of outrage sharpening his features, the protective, feral instinct rising instantly to the surface.

"Who the hell," he growled, "would say something like that about my son?"

"It's hypothetical," I said, my lips twisting. "Just answer."

His nostrils flared, and for a moment, he seemed to be wrestling between anger and disbelief.

Then he said, with a fierce certainty that left no room for doubt: "No damn prophecy or fortune or stranger gets to define my child's worth."

He scoffed, jaw tight. "I wouldn't believe that crap for a second."

I blinked, stunned by the intensity of his conviction.

“And if they insisted on it?” I asked quietly, needing to hear him say it. “If they said there was no other outcome for him?”

“I’d beat the shit out of them,” Kieran answered flatly. “No one decides who Daniel gets to be. That’s his choice. His life. His future. And I’ll destroy anyone who tries to clip his wings.”

Breath whooshed from me, dissipating some of the heavy weight I felt. “Thank you.”

His expression softened, his eyes gentling even as rain continued dripping from his eyelashes.

But then he frowned, studying my face more carefully, more intensely.

“Sera...what happened?” He shifted closer, voice low. “Please tell me.”

I hesitated.

I considered telling him nothing. I considered burying it the way I used to bury everything.

But his eyes—gods, those dark, undoing eyes—they didn't leave room for lies. They held me in place, steady and warm and unyielding.

So I exhaled shakily and spoke. "My mother and I had...an argument."

Kieran didn't look surprised. He just let out a long, quiet sigh. "What happened?"

I bit my lip. "She said they had my fortune read when I was born. She told me I was destined to be ordinary. Unremarkable."

The words scraped out of me, raw and degrading. "That's why they never—" My voice cracked. "Why they never loved me."

Kieran closed his eyes briefly, rain sliding down his face.

"Oh, Sera," he muttered under his breath.

He shifted, adjusting his crouch so he could rest an elbow lightly on the swing beside me.

"You know..." He huffed a humorless laugh, dropping his head. "My father and I fought all the damn time. Constantly. He hated half the things I did and relished in telling me all the ways I was fucking up. At

some point, I thought he hated me.” He glanced up at me. “Turns out he just had a shitty way of trying to protect me. Doesn’t excuse it. Just...explains it.”

I swallowed back the instinctive argument.

“I’m not saying your parents handled things well,” Kieran continued. “Quite frankly, I can’t imagine letting someone else’s opinion dictate how you treat your child. But...” He rubbed a hand across the back of his neck.

“Maybe they thought—in their own flawed way—that they were doing the right thing. Awful methods.” His lips tightened. “But their intentions might not have been as sinister as they felt to you.”

I looked away, the chains creaking softly in my grip. His words were too similar to what I told Noah, and if I rejected them, didn’t that just make me a hypocrite?

“Sera.” Kieran’s voice deepened, gentler. “You are not who they believed you’d be. You never were.” His eyes heated with something fierce. “You’re yourself. And that’s more than enough. Prophecies be damned.”

The words slid into the cracks inside me, soothing the jagged edges that scraped against my heart.

“You’ve survived more than most,” he continued softly. “You’ve grown beyond anything anyone could have predicted. And your future?” He shook his head in quiet amazement. “It’s only getting brighter.”

A faint, trembling smile tugged at my lips.

Daniel's praises echoed suddenly in my mind—his unwavering belief in me, the way he told strangers I was the strongest person he knew.

And then, there were the others:

Maya calling me a beast during training.

Lucian watching me with curiosity instead of pity.

The woman who had gotten strength from my story to leave her abusive husband.

My teammates, who I'd brought together and led to victory.

Selene's daughter, who called me a Luna of inspiration.

Henry's granddaughter, who had my poster hung in her room.

Family. Friends. Strangers. They all believed in me.

They saw me growing, shining, exceeding the limits I'd once been forced into.

Maybe my mother couldn't see it because she didn't know how.

And maybe...it didn't matter anymore. Why was I letting the bad voice be the loudest?

For every person who'd tried to put me down, there was someone else cheering me on with their whole heart.

I met Kieran's gaze again, finally steady. "You're right."

He gave me a small, relieved smile. And then he held his hand out to me. "What do you say we get out of this rain and get you warmed up?"

I sniffed, stretching my hand out to take his. "Yeah, that sounds—"

My hand froze mid-air as a sharp, crushing pain stabbed behind my eyes.

I gasped as the world tilted violently.

“Sera?” Kieran’s voice sharpened. “What’s wrong?”

I tried to reach for him, to brace myself on his sturdy shoulders.

And then I tried to tell him it was just dizziness, that I just needed a second. But the pain seared again, white-hot, blurring my vision.

The swing vanished beneath me.

My knees buckled, and I tilted forward.

Strong arms caught me.

“Sera!” Kieran called out, panic tearing through his voice.

My head lolled against his chest, the rain a distant echo now, muffled and far away.

The last thing I felt was his arms tightening around me, his warmth pulling me out of the storm, holding me as if he could anchor me to consciousness by will alone.

Then darkness swept over me.