

My Sister 237

Chapter 237: INSECURITY

SERAPHINA'S POV

The night air clung cool and soft against my skin as I stepped out of the pack house, finally, blissfully, alone.

This was the first quiet moment I'd had all day.

I should have felt relief.

Instead, the bond throbbed beneath my skin like a bruise touched too many times.

The lightness from being with Daniel vanished after my brief encounter with Kieran. My feet were heavy, my head was full, and my chest was too tight to contain everything inside it.

The torches along the walkway flickered low, casting deep shadows over the stone path. Most of the wolves had dispersed. Only a few lingering sentinels patrolled the perimeter, almost invisible.

My fingers fumbled for my keys inside my bag as I walked toward the parking courtyard on the east side of the estate. Then a low voice broke the silence.

"Sera."

I turned sharply.

Lucian was leaning against a stone pillar near the entrance, arms folded, silhouette cut sharp by moonlight.

A surprised breath escaped me. "Lucian? You're still here?"

He gave a slow nod, pushing off the pillar with fluid ease. "I stayed a respectful distance from the ceremony so that I wouldn't intrude. But I didn't want to leave without a chance to talk to you properly."

There was something careful in his tone. Almost cautious.

I swallowed. "Right."

"I thought you might want some company walking out," he said simply. "It's been...a long day. For you, especially."

He fell into step beside me without asking, and I didn't mind. It was typical Lucian—quietly present, never barging, never demanding.

We walked a few moments in silence, the night stretching wide around us.

He broke it first.

"Daniel was extraordinary tonight."

My lips lifted automatically. "He really was."

"The way he walked the path, the way he carried himself..." Lucian exhaled with a small, awed laugh. "He's going to become a remarkable Alpha."

"The greatest one yet," I acknowledged proudly.

Lucian glanced sideways at me. "And that's because of you."

I blinked. “Me?”

“Yes, you.” His voice was firm, leaving no room for argument. “Your son’s strength doesn’t come from the blessings or the rituals or the title. It comes from the way you’ve raised him. From the kind of mother you are.”

I knew I was a good mother; I didn’t need anyone to affirm that. Still, his compliment hit a lot deeper than I expected. My throat tightened.

“I...I just did what any mother would’ve done.”

Lucian slowed his steps, turning his head enough that his eyes met mine—dark, steady, unblinking.

“No,” he said quietly. “Not every mother could do what you’ve done for Daniel. Not every mother would.”

My heart clenched.

Because immediately—reflexively—my mind conjured Margaret. The neglect. The silence. The distance I’d spent my whole life trying to understand.

Sometimes the more I loved Daniel, the more I realized how little I’d been loved in return.

Not truly. Not in the way a child deserved to be.

A prophecy, no matter what it claimed, should never have shaped my life.

Parental love didn’t need to be earned. It was a given.

And I wasn't given.

That truth still burned.

Lucian must have felt something shift in me, because his expression softened.

"I'm sorry," he murmured. "I shouldn't have brought it up. And I shouldn't have pushed you before—to question your family. To confront them. That was too forward of me."

"It's okay," I said, though something twisted in my chest. "If the truth is going to be cruel, I'd rather face it now than live in the dark."

His jaw tightened, and an expression flashed across his face that I couldn't read.

We reached the edge of the parking courtyard. The lantern-lit stone stretched wide and quiet. The road beyond was empty. The night felt so still, it seemed fragile.

I hesitated.

I didn't want to leave without saying this.

"Lucian," I said softly.

He turned fully toward me.

"Remember how I said I was going to travel?"

He nodded.

"Well...I'm leaving sooner than I planned."

His shoulders straightened slightly. “I see.” His throat bobbed. “Do you know how long you’ll be gone?”

“I don’t know.” I wrapped my arms around myself. “I guess I’ll know once I go.”

Lucian stared at me with an intensity that almost made me step back.

I forced myself to hold his gaze. “And before I go... I don’t want to hide anything from you.”

He went still.

I swallowed hard, forcing the words out. “It’s been confirmed. Kieran and I...we’re fated mates.”

Silence cracked open between us like ice fracturing underfoot.

Lucian didn’t move for a long moment—not a muscle, not a breath.

The moonlight caught in his eyes, turning them colder, sharper, but beneath that surface stillness, something flickered—raw and wounded.

“That doesn’t mean I’ve accepted anything,” I added quickly, forcing my voice steady. “Not the bond. Not the relationship. Not...us.” My throat tightened. “But I haven’t rejected it, either.”

Lucian exhaled—a shuddering, pained sound, like he’d been slammed in the ribs.

“I see.”

“I just...” I rubbed my arms, pulse racing. “You’re probably frustrated. You probably feel like I’ve been dragging things out and stringing you along, and I’m so sorry for that. But I don’t want to make decisions based on pressure or fate or the past or...proximity.”

I dragged my teeth over my bottom lip. “So while I’m gone, I’m going to think. Really think. About everything. About you. About him. About who I want to be. Who I want to be with.”

Lucian’s jaw flexed.

“And when I come back,” I whispered, “I’ll give you a final answer.”

He didn’t respond immediately. Just stood there, barely breathing, with that unreadable emotion on his face.

When he finally did, his voice was so soft it almost wasn’t there.

“Thank you,” he said. “For telling me. For trusting me with the truth.”

And then, more tightly: “As I’ve always said—I will respect and support your choice, Sera.”

But there was something...off in his voice. Something that made my skin prickle.

I opened my mouth to say something—anything—but he stepped back, gesturing toward my car.

“You should go,” he murmured. “It’s late. And you’re exhausted.”

“Lucian...”

“Go,” he repeated gently. “It’s alright.”

I swallowed and nodded.

“Goodnight,” I whispered.

He offered a faint smile that didn’t reach his eyes.

“Goodnight, Sera. Have a safe trip.”

I turned away and made my way to my car, unlocking it with trembling hands. As I slid into the driver’s seat, I could still feel his gaze—heavy, unwavering, unbearably silent.

The engine rumbled to life, headlights sweeping across the courtyard.

Through the rear view mirror, I saw Lucian exactly where I’d left him—motionless, watching me as if every foot of distance carved something new into him.

Then I drove away.

And the bond wasn’t the only thing twisting inside me.

LUCIAN’S POV

I stood there like an idiot—rooted, frozen, gutted—as Sera’s taillights disappeared into the dark stretch of the Nightfang road.

Respect her choice. Support her choice.

I’d said the words.

I meant them.

But gods—it was harder than anything I'd trained for.

As she drove out of sight, a freezing, hollow ache plunged straight through my chest, heavy as lead.

Something foreign, yet instinctive, whispered through me.

'She's leaving.'

'She might not return the same.'

'She might not return to you at all.'

The thought carved me like a blade, cruel and merciless.

I had told her I would respect her choice.

I would.

I'd also promised myself I wouldn't lose her.

I wouldn't.

But standing there, watching her vanish into the night, I felt the earlier doubt twist. It coiled violently into something far more troubling.

Insecurity.

For the first time since meeting Seraphina Blackthorne, I didn't know where I stood.