

My Sister 261

Chapter 261 A GLORIFIED HUNCH

SERAPHINA'S POV

If this had happened two months ago—before the Moonlit Spring and Moon Dew Nectar, before I ever set foot in the Starlight Hallway—I would have brushed off the feeling without a second thought.

Fatigue. Nerves. Projection.

I would have taken a steady breath, told myself I was reaching for meaning where there was none, and let the moment pass.

But I was no longer that version of myself.

The instant the energy rippled through me—sharp, discordant, wrong—I knew it wasn't imagination.

It didn't come as a thought or a flicker of fear. It pressed in like a change in atmospheric pressure, like the moment before a storm breaks when the air tightens and every instinct screams to run.

I went still, beer sweating in my grip, the tab crumpled beneath my thumb.

Alina stirred, not alarmed, but alert. Watchful.

“Gear,” I said quietly. “Stop the vehicle.”

He glanced to the side, brows creasing. “What?”

“Stop,” I repeated, louder now. “Something’s wrong.”

The engine’s hum didn’t falter.

“Sera,” he said, easing his hands tighter around the wheel, “my diagnostics are clean. No fluctuations. No external interference.”

Wren leaned forward from the back seat. “This stretch was tagged green. I ran it twice earlier today.”

I swallowed hard and forced myself to focus, letting my senses stretch outward rather than curl inward in fear.

The sensation didn’t fade.

It intensified.

It wasn't coming from the vehicle. Not from the crates. Not from the land beneath the road.

It was ahead.

"I know what your equipment says," I replied, forcing my voice steady, "and I know what Wren saw. But I know what I feel. Something is wrong."

"We don't have the luxury of vibes," Wren said, not unkindly, but firm. "People are dying in the quarantine zone. Every hour counts."

"I'm not asking for an hour," I said. "I'm asking you to slow down for a second."

Gear exhaled through his nose. "Sera, we can't just stop because you have a bad feeling—"

"Slow down," I cut in, sharper now.

The words weren't a command, but they carried weight anyway.

The engine dipped a fraction.

I closed my eyes and centered myself, applying meditation techniques Ilsa had drilled into me in the Moon Hall. Not pushing outward, not pulling inward, just listening.

Except this time...I could actually feel something.

The energy around us felt distorted, bent like light through warped glass. There was a hollowness layered over it, a deliberate absence where something should have been.

As the van rolled forward, the pressure in my chest climbed, coiling tighter and tighter.

“It’s getting stronger,” I said. “Whatever it is, we’re moving toward it.”

Gear swore under his breath and flicked on the internal comms. “Iris, waking you.”

Moments later, Iris’ voice came through from the back of the van, sharp, despite the fact that she’d been asleep moments ago. “Report.”

“Sera’s sensing something ahead,” Gear said. “No confirmation on instruments.”

There was a brief pause.

Iris appeared moments later, moving up from the rear bench, jacket half-zipped, eyes already alert. Codex followed, tablet in hand, glasses slightly askew.

“What do you feel?” Iris asked me directly.

“There’s something wrong.” I knew I sounded like a broken record, but I didn’t yet have the words to articulate what I felt.

She arched a brow. “That’s a wide net.”

“I know,” I said. “I...I can’t really explain it. I just know...we’re driving into some sort of danger.”

Iris studied me for a moment longer before turning to Wren. “Scout ahead.”

A violent flash tore through my mind—a vision so sharp and visceral it made my stomach lurch.

“No!”

Every head snapped toward me.

Wren sighed. "What now?"

The vision clung to the edges of my mind, sour bile burning the back of my throat.

Wren's body crushed beneath stone. Her blood on black pavement. Her hand reaching, trembling—then stilling altogether.

I forced myself to meet Wren's gaze—brown, alive, nothing like the empty, glassy stare from my vision.

"You go out there," I whispered, the words tasting like iron, "you're not coming back. You'll die."

Wren stared at me, her easy confidence flickering for the first time since I'd met her. "That's not funny."

"I'm not joking."

Iris' jaw tightened. "What, you're seeing visions now?"

I sighed. "It's like...an impression. If Wren goes ahead alone, she dies."

“An impression,” Iris echoed. “So basically, a glorified hunch.”

“I know,” I said, frustration burning behind my ribs. “I know how it sounds. This is all new, and I don’t even understand it myself.”

She swore under her breath. “You’re delaying us, and you don’t even—”

Codex cleared his throat. “Actually...”

Iris shot him a look. “Codex.”

“I saw something,” he said quietly.

Her gaze sharpened. “Saw what?”

He adjusted his glasses, eyes flicking briefly to me. “Flickers. Moonlight-spectrum interference. Around Sera.”

My breath caught.

Codex continued, warming as he spoke. "It's subtle. More like...latent bleed-through. Psychic-adjacent."

Iris looked back at me slowly, reassessing.

"High-ranking wolves sometimes manifest limited psychic control," she said. "Usually, pack-bound. Within the limits of territory."

Her gaze slid over me, clinical. "Outside-pack sensitivity is rare. Predictive perception even more so."

I clenched my fists, resisting the urge to shrink beneath the scrutiny.

"I don't know about all that," I said tightly. "And I'm not trying to undermine your authority. I'm trying to keep you guys alive."

Before Iris could respond, the ground roared.

A deep, grinding crack split the air ahead of us.

"Rockfall!" Gear shouted.

Boulders tore free from the cliffside, massive slabs of stone tumbling down toward the road in a thunderous cascade. Dust exploded outward, choking the air as debris slammed into asphalt.

The first boulder missed us by inches.

The second clipped the rear panel with a metallic scream, sending the van lurching before Gear wrestled it back under control.

He slammed the brakes, yanked the wheel, and threw us into a sideways swerve so violent it sent our bodies crashing against our restraints and the weapon crates sliding in their locks.

The vehicle fishtailed, skidding across gravel, metal grinding as sparks spat from beneath the chassis.

“Hold, hold, hold!” Gear snarled through gritted teeth.

We stopped only when the rear slammed into a ridge wall, rattling my bones.

Silence followed—thick, ringing, broken only by the hiss of steaming metal and distant echoes of falling stone.

Gear's hands stayed locked on the wheel. "Everyone alive?"

A chorus of confirmations followed.

Iris exhaled slowly. "Damage report."

"Rear suspension's hit," Gear said, already scanning diagnostics. "Front axle's bent. Cooling system's cracked. Not catastrophic, but we're deadweight until I run a full patch job."

He reached for the door handle.

Every muscle in my body went rigid. "Don't!"

This time, there was no objection; everyone froze.

"There's something outside," I added, "waiting."

The pressure hadn't dissipated. If anything, it had sharpened—focused now, honed by proximity.

Iris froze. "You're saying there's more?"

"I'm saying the rockfall was the distraction," I replied, my pulse thundering. "The ambush is what comes next."