

My Sister 288

Chapter 288 FREAKING SERENDIPITOUS

SERAPHINA'S POV

I was six years old.

Perched high on my father's shoulders, my legs swung wild and free, laughter bubbling out of me as each of his steps sent the world dancing beneath us.

"Careful," Mother called, holding up an ice cream cone.

Father laughed. "She's not made of glass."

I leaned down, taking a large bite of the ice cream she held up to me, sticky sweetness smearing my lips and chin.

"This is the best day ever!" I declared.

They both laughed.

The air smelled like sugar and sunshine and something bright I didn't have words for yet.

The amusement park belonged to us alone, every ride alive with promise. I ran until my legs burned, laughter unraveling into something wild and breathless.

On the carousel, Father held me steady while Mother clapped from below.

"That's my girl," he said proudly. "The Lockwood pride."

Back home, my father cradled me in his arms as I fought to keep my heavy lids open, head tucked beneath his chin.

My mother watched from the doorway of my room, her eyes shining.

"I can't believe we have to do this," she whispered, voice trembling.

Father murmured, barely audible, as he laid me in bed, "Even if she never becomes the Lockwood pride—as long as she grows up safely, I have no regrets."

The dream cradled me, holding me weightless in that golden moment, wrapped in love.

Unaware of the storm waiting just beyond tomorrow.

Gentle golden light pressed against my eyelids, coaxing me awake with a soft, patient touch.

For a moment, I thought I was still dreaming.

Then I heard breathing.

Small. Uneven. Close.

“Mom?” The word cracked.

My eyes flew open.

Daniel was perched on the edge of the bed, both hands clenched tight in the blanket near my waist, knuckles pale.

His eyes were red-rimmed, his curls sticking up at odd angles like he'd run his hands through them one too many times.

"I'm here," I rasped, my voice rough like I'd been screaming for hours. "I'm here, baby."

His shoulders slumped, tension draining away as he folded into me, forehead pressed tight against my shoulder.

"You scared me," he whispered, the muffled words trembling. "You wouldn't wake up."

Guilt speared straight through my chest.

"I'm sorry," I murmured, lifting a hand with effort and threading my fingers into his hair. My arm felt heavy, like it had been dipped in lead, but the contact grounded me. "I'm so sorry, my love."

"I was so scared," he repeated.

"I know, baby." My throat tightened. "But I'm here; I'm fine."

Slowly, the rest of my room came into focus, and I became aware of one other person.

Maya sat in the chair near the window, one leg tucked beneath her, coiled and tense like a snake ready to spring.

Her eyes were sharp and bright with unshed worry, fixed on me with the intensity of someone who'd been holding herself together by force of will.

"Oh, good," she said, the lightness in her tone obviously forced. "You're awake. Fantastic timing. I was about five seconds away from cracking your skull open to figure out what the problem was."

"Maya," I croaked.

As if her restraint snapped, she was on her feet in an instant, crossing the room in two quick strides.

She crouched beside the bed, one hand braced on the mattress, the other hovering like she wasn't quite sure where she was allowed to touch.

"You do not get to scare us like that," she said, voice carefully controlled. "You're back for less than twenty-four hours, and you decide to reenact a tragic fainting scene?"

I huffed weakly. "I've always been dramatic."

Her mouth twitched, but her eyes softened. "Yeah. But you're usually conscious for it."

“Touché. I—”

That was when I noticed the glow.

It wasn’t coming from the lamps or the fluorescent bulbs or the window.

It floated above my chest, pearlescent and soft, shimmering with each breath I drew.

I blinked, wondering if I was somehow still dreaming.

Two butterflies were suspended in the air like living fragments of moonlight.

Their wings glowed translucent, laced with silvery-blue veins that pulsed softly, as if echoing something inside me.

They were breathtaking.

And completely out of place in my bedroom.

“What on earth?”

Daniel lifted his head, following my gaze. “They showed up after you fainted,” he explained.

Maya snorted softly. “By ‘showed up,’ he means they were delivered. Like flowers. Except significantly more magical.”

“Delivered?” I echoed.

She nodded. “I came as fast as I could after I called and Daniel answered in a panic. Ran several red lights—I fully expect a court summons in the coming weeks. Anyway, when I got to the door, someone was already there.”

“Who?” I asked.

She shrugged. “A messenger, and a cagey one at that.”

My brow furrowed.

“All I know,” she continued, “is that they handed me a crystal enclosure, said it was ‘for Seraphina,’ and vanished before I could ask a single useful question. Which is frankly rude.”

I shifted, eyes drawn back to the butterflies. Up close, their wings beat with delicate precision, stirring the air with a sound like tiny glass bells chiming together.

"Lunewing Butterflies," Maya said. "Extremely rare. Usually found near old lunar nexuses or places with strong psychic resonance."

And now...in my bedroom.

"They have amazing healing properties," she added. "Stabilize energy fields, calm surges, aid recovery. Their presence is the only reason you didn't wake up surrounded by a dozen healers."

My brows arched.

She nodded. "Trust me, you don't have to say it. The timing of their arrival is eerily uncanny. Fu—" She glanced at Daniel. "Freaking serendipitous."

Slowly, carefully, I lowered my eyes to where one hovered close to my shoulder.

I probably should have been more astonished by their presence, but in light of all the bizarre things that had happened to me lately, this was just a cherry on the surreal cake.

“Thank you,” I whispered.

The Lunewing tilted, as if in reply, then drifted near, its wings brushing my cheek with a cool, soothing touch, like moonlight pressed gently into my skin.

The second followed, nuzzling the other side of my face before both fluttered upward in a lazy spiral.

They flitted back to the crystal enclosure on the bedside table, settling inside as if it were home.

A shaky breath escaped me.

“So,” Maya said dryly, “unless you’ve suddenly developed the ability to summon ancient lunar fauna in your sleep, any thoughts as to who sent them?”

A familiar name surfaced.

Lucian.

The bracelet on my wrist pulsed faintly, as if in quiet agreement. This kind of gift was right up his alley.

But why make it anonymous?

I set the thought aside for now; answers could wait until later.

Daniel shifted beside me, eyes scanning my face with anxious intensity. "Do you need anything, Mom?" he asked. "I can get water."

"Yes," Maya said at the same time I rasped, "Please."

He bolted from the room like he'd been waiting for the excuse.

As soon as the door clicked shut, Maya's humor slipped away.

She leaned in closer. "Okay," she said quietly. "Talk to me."

I swallowed.

"Is this the psychic thing?" she asked. "Because if so, we need to recalibrate immediately. I don't like surprise collapses."

I shook my head first.

Then hesitated.

Then nodded.

Her eyes narrowed. "Which is it?"

"It wasn't the power itself," I said slowly. "Not directly."

"Indirectly is still bad," she muttered.

I managed a faint smile. "It was...truth."

Her posture softened a fraction. "What truth?"

"Ethan gave me my mother's diary," I said.

Maya went still. "Oh. That's why he asked that I give you two privacy this morning?"

I stared at the ceiling, as memory flickered—ink-stained pages, trembling handwriting, love and terror braided together so tightly I didn't know where one ended and the other began.

"I wasn't ready for the truth," I admitted. "I thought I was. I really did."

Maya took my hand and squeezed gently.

"It made me lose control," I continued. "Just for a moment. I think...I think my body remembered before my mind could catch up." My gaze darted to the Lunewings. "I'm just grateful Daniel's okay. If something had happened to him—"

"Hey." Maya squeezed my hand reassuringly. "Daniel is fine. Don't stress yourself over what-ifs."

I sighed. "Yeah, you're right."

"But...you need more training," she said. Not as a reprimand—just a fact. "Sooner rather than later."

I nodded. "I know."

“Not because you’re weak,” she added quickly. “Because you’re not. You’re opening doors that were sealed for years. That comes with...fallout.”

“I don’t want him to see it,” I said softly, glancing at the door. “Not until I can control it.”

Maya followed my gaze, her expression thoughtful. “That’s fair. But don’t isolate yourself trying to be strong.”

She reached out and squeezed my hand, firm and warm. “You’re not doing this alone.”

My eyes burned.

“No matter what memories come back,” she continued, “no matter what powers wake up, you have me. And Corin. And OTS. And people who’ve got your back, whether you like it or not.”

I laughed weakly. “You make it sound like a threat.”

“Oh, it is,” she said brightly.

Just then, the door creaked open again, and Daniel reappeared, a cup clutched in both hands as if it contained something sacred.

I pushed myself up slightly, accepting the cup with trembling fingers. He hovered until I'd taken a few careful sips.

"There," he said, visibly relaxing. "Better?"

"Much," I promised.

He settled back into the bed and leaned against my side, head resting carefully on my shoulder.

"You're really fine, right, Mom?" he murmured.

I kissed the top of his head. "As long as you're by my side."

Outside, late-afternoon sunlight streamed through the window, striking the crystal enclosure and scattering soft rainbows across the walls.

The Lunewings stirred, wings glowing faintly.

The light lingered, gentle and steady—like a promise that whatever came next, I would not face it in the dark.