

My Sister 291

Chapter 291 WAVES SMOOTHING STONES

SERAPHINA'S POV

That night, I didn't go home.

I followed Maya back to her place instead, my overnight bag slung over my shoulder.

Daniel was staying over at Kieran's, and I told myself that I didn't want to return to the silence of an empty house.

But that was only a half-truth.

I didn't want to return to the silence of an empty house—because then I would have nothing to drown out my thoughts.

If I let those thoughts take over, the doubts would follow, and I wasn't ready to face them, not after everything that happened earlier.

I already knew what my answer would be.

That certainty settled in my chest, a quiet weight both steady and unyielding.

But Lucian's words from earlier still echoed faintly, not because they had changed my mind, but because they had brushed against something raw and unfamiliar inside me: fear.

Not the sharp, immediate kind that sent adrenaline spiking, but something subtler—psychic unease, like a pressure change before a storm.

I kept circling it mentally, trying to decide whether I was overreacting, whether exhaustion and frustration had simply frayed my nerves and made everything feel sharper than it was.

But Corin had told me that intuition was as vital to a psychic as breath was to the body—ignore it for too long, and you would suffocate.

And the way Lucian's eyes had darkened, the intensity of emotion I saw in that split second when his composure slipped...

My stomach churned every time I thought of it.

Maya noticed before I said anything.

She tossed my bag onto the floor by the couch, kicked off her boots, and dropped onto the couch unceremoniously. "Okay," she said lightly. "You're spiraling."

I blinked. "I am not spiraling."

She gave me a look. "You've been quiet since we left OTS and not your usual reserved countenance."

I let out a reluctant snort and sank onto the edge of the couch. "I'm just...thinking."

"You know I hate it when you do that without me." She kicked her legs up into my lap. "Talk to me."

I hesitated, fingers twisting together. "Lucian and I had a...moment today."

Her brows lifted. "Define 'moment.'"

I sighed. "It was barely an argument, but it wasn't exactly a giggle fest either."

She drew her legs up and shifted closer. "I'm listening."

So I told her about the exchange with Lucian.

Her eyes widened when I got to the comment he made. "He seriously said that to you?"

I shrugged. "He apologized right away, and I know he didn't mean it the way it came out. But it...stuck."

Maya leaned back on her hands, studying the ceiling. "You're both running on fumes," she said after a moment. "You just came out of a multi-day psychic intensive. He's been bouncing between negotiations and power plays without sleep. When people are that exhausted, their worst thoughts slip their leashes."

"I know," I said. "Logically, I know. And I don't begrudge him his emotions. It just...felt off."

"Off how?"

I searched for the words. "Like I was suddenly seeing something sideways. Or maybe...through?" I shook my head. "I dunno."

Maya nodded slowly. "That tracks. Psychic sensitivity amplifies emotional dissonance. You're not just reading intent anymore; you're picking up residue."

"That's what scares me," I admitted quietly. "I don't know yet how to tell the difference between intuition and my own anxiety."

"You will," Maya said without hesitation. "But not overnight."

I let out a breath. "So you don't think I'm losing my mind."

She nudged me gently. "I mean, there's that, too. But who could blame you? If I went through half the things you've endured, my brain would probably be leaking out of my ears."

I chuckled, running my hand through my hair. "Yeah, I guess so."

She nudged my knee. "Come on. Shower. Then we'll eat something unhealthy and talk about literally anything else."

True to her word, once we'd both changed into comfortable clothes and commandeered the couch with takeout containers and mismatched mugs of hot chocolate, Maya launched into stories from her past travels.

There were botched missions and questionable hostels, a brief stint pretending to be a florist to infiltrate a compound, and a truly unhinged tale involving a cursed fountain and a goat.

Laughter spilled out of me until my stomach ached, each burst loosening the knots in my shoulders.

Eventually, she turned the conversational spotlight back on me. "Okay, Seabreeze," she said, eyes bright. "I need more details."

I smiled, warmth blooming at the memories. “It’s...different there. Softer. The pack dynamics are calmer. More community-oriented.”

I told her about Selene and Adrian—about the way they moved through the world together, unforced and steady. And when I told her their love story, she leaned back on the couch and kicked her legs like a schoolgirl.

“That’s so fucking romantic, ugh!”

I laughed. “Yeah. You should see them together, they’re beautiful—the whole family.”

I told Maya about the way Selene laughed openly, unguarded, how Adrian reached for her hand without thinking when he passed her in a room.

About how their children orbited them with easy confidence, secure in the knowledge that love wasn’t conditional or fragile.

Maya went quiet then, thoughtful in that way she got when something hit close to the bone.

“That,” she said finally, “is the dream.”

I nodded, a gentle ache blooming in my chest, warm and bittersweet.

Not perfection. Not fairy tales.

Just that kind of steadiness. A love that had been proven through sacrifice and endurance. A family built on choice, not obligation.

Someday, I hoped that we'd have something like that, too.

That night, sleep found me quickly, but my mind did not stay still.

My dreams unfurled in vivid, tangled layers, scenes blending like film reels spliced together from different eras of my life.

I was little, sunlight warmed my face as my father spun me in the garden, my laughter unrestrained and wild. The scent of cut grass mingled with something sweet baking inside. The world felt vast and safe all at once.

My mother's voice floated nearby, half-laughter, half-scolding, telling him not to make me dizzy.

Then I was older. Eight. Ten. Twelve.

Standing at the edges of rooms where conversations dipped when I entered.

Learning, instinctively, how to make myself smaller, how to soften my footsteps, how to read the air and decide when silence was safest.

I watched myself fold inward, not from a single cruelty, but from a thousand quiet absences. Affection rationed. Praise deflected. Love that stopped reaching for me first.

The reel jolted again, and I watched myself fall in love—slowly, painfully, from a distance.

Watching Kieran train from my window, hours bent over a sketchpad trying to perfect the angle of his nose. Watching him smile at Celeste like she was the center of his world.

Then there was pain. Daniel's birth—agonizing and torturous, quickly dwarfed by the overwhelming love and awe of holding him in my arms, hands trembling, heart breaking open in a way that could never be undone. Love, immediate and absolute.

Then it shuffled through the years that followed, heavy with compromise and silence. A marriage that became a concession instead of a partnership. Words swallowed. Needs deferred. Silence thickening until it pressed against my ribs.

The divorce. The loneliness. The decision to leave.

Then OTS.

Endless training. Pain that demanded presence. Growth that hurt in ways I hadn't expected. I saw myself fail. Stand back up. Fail again.

I saw strength form not as a sudden revelation, but as a slow accumulation of small refusals to give in.

Faces flickered past.

Maya's fierce grin. Corin's steady patience. Lucian's calm reassurance. Judy, Talia, Finn, Roxy, Selene, even Iris and her team. Strangers who became allies. Allies who became something like family.

Moments where I surprised myself—held my ground, trusted my instincts, chose myself when it would've been easier not to.

And threaded through it all, beneath every scene, every version of me, was a constant sensation.

Peace.

The memories didn't claw at me.

They moved through me gently, like waves smoothing stones.

It felt as if all I'd been, all I'd lost, and all I was still becoming could finally share the same space without tearing me apart.

When I woke, the morning light filtering through Maya's curtains was soft and forgiving, spilling across the room in pale gold. My chest felt full—not heavy, not hollow. Just...settled.

For the first time in a long while, I didn't feel like I was running from my past or bracing for my future.

I was simply here.

For a long moment, I lay there, breathing, my mind calm.

I reached for my phone.

My thumb hovered over the screen.

Then, without overthinking it, I typed a message.

‘Can we meet at noon? The café near the park.’

I hesitated for half a second, then hit send.