

## My Sister 298

### Chapter 298 THE FAMILIAL BOND

SERAPHINA'S POV

Seraphina Lockwood.

It had been so long since I answered to that name, and it felt strange in my mouth when I said it out loud.

It wasn't that it didn't fit; it was that, for the first time in my life, it finally did.

It was almost absurd how easy it had been—just a thumbprint and a signature, and that was that.

"Well," Ethan said, gathering the documents, unable to hide the joy in his smile. "You're officially Seraphina Lockwood. Welcome back, sister."

I drew my knees close, my smile mirroring his.

"Thank you. I—"

In a heartbeat, something shifted.

It felt like a seam giving way inside my chest, a hidden pathway opening where there had once been a wall.

A soft gasp escaped me as my fingers curled into the sheets and my vision blurred.

Ethan stiffened instantly. "Sera?"

Before I could answer, his eyes went unfocused, his jaw tightening as another presence stirred—older, heavier, threaded with instinct and power. It wasn't overwhelming or intrusive, just there, like a heartbeat quietly syncing with mine.

'Ah,' a voice rumbled, amused and curious all at once. 'There you are.'

I sucked in a breath. 'What—'

'Hello, Sister. It's nice to finally meet you.'

Before I could react, Alina answered, soft and only a little hesitant. 'You too, Brother.'

Ethan exhaled, his gaze refocusing on me. And then his voice echoed in my mind. ‘I wasn’t going to bring it up because I didn’t want to stress your recovery, but how could you keep the fact that your wolf had awoken from me?’

I blinked. “Wha—what’s happening?”

Ethan said out loud, “You’re officially a Lockwood again. The familial bond has snapped into place.”

My heart pounded—not from fear, but from the disorienting intimacy of it. “That was...?”

“Logan,” Ethan confirmed. “My wolf.”

Maya straightened instantly. “Wait—what?”

Ethan gave her a sheepish look. “It was inevitable.”

“That’s not the point,” Maya snapped, pushing off the wall where she’d quietly borne witness to me signing the documents. “I was the first one who knew about Alina, and I haven’t been able to speak with her, and Logan just—what—wandered in?”

I pressed my fingers into the quilt, torn between apology and disbelief. “I didn’t know that would happen.”

Ethan ran a hand through his hair. “The familial bond follows instinct before intention.”

Maya scoffed and crossed her arms. “Fantastic. Love that for both of you.”

Ethan smirked and slid next to her, slipping an arm around her waist. “Well. There is a workaround.”

Maya’s eyes narrowed. “What?”

“You could marry me,” he said. “Be an official Lockwood and join the family bond. You’d sense Sera’s mind, too.”

A heavy silence settled. In that suspended moment, I sensed the conflict take root in her—freedom versus connection, autonomy weighed against intimacy.

Maya was a free spirit. She loved Ethan, but I doubted she was ready to settle down and wear the mantle of Luna just yet.

“Tempting,” Maya admitted after a beat. “Very tempting.”

Ethan grinned. "I'm going to ignore the fact that you're more tempted by the concept of bonding with Sera than marrying me."

She rolled her eyes, but there was no real heat behind it. "You know I love you." She shrugged. "I just don't want to be claimed by a title yet."

"Yet," he echoed, leaning down to capture her lips with his.

I groaned and looked away, warmth blooming in my chest, both infuriating and sweet.

The warmth lingered, settling instead of surging, and with it a new sense of orientation—an awareness of Ethan's presence, an acknowledgement of the echo of shared blood and history.

It was a feeling I'd spent my whole life missing.

And this new bond made it easier not to dwell too much on the one I'd lost.

\*\*\*

Taking back the Lockwood name was one thing. Rejoining Frostbane was an entirely different ball game.

That door remained ajar, but I couldn't bring myself to step through.

For now, my name was mine again, my blood acknowledged, my history reclaimed—but my future remained unwritten.

I'd meant it when I said I was leaning towards Shadowveil.

Shadowveil wasn't a cage. Not the way Nightfang had been. Not the way Frostbane felt even now, heavy with legacy and expectation.

Shadowveil offered a fresh start, a place where the scarred were welcomed and gently guided toward healing.

Besides, I'd given Lucian my word. After all we'd been through, and all that still lay ahead, keeping it was the least I could do.

Ethan hadn't argued, but he hadn't liked it either.

"You're really going to Shadowveil," he said the morning I prepared to leave, having gotten Tallulah's all clear.

He leaned against the doorway of my room with his arms crossed, his tone a little too neutral.

“Nothing is set in stone,” I replied, tying my hair back. “But...maybe.”

He exhaled through his nose. “And there’s nothing I can do to convince you to come back to Frostbane?”

I offered him an apologetic smile. “There’s too much history here. If I tried to sweep all the water under the bridge, the bridge would drown.”

He chuckled dryly. “Fair enough.”

Then he sobered, the lightness fading from his expression.

“I’ll admit, I’m not much of a fan of Lucian Reed,” he said, “but I won’t push you. I know how big a concession it was for you to change your name back to begin with.”

“Thank you.”

There was a brief pause—just long enough to acknowledge how unfamiliar this still was—before Ethan stepped forward and pulled me into a hug.

It was a little awkward, our movements hesitant, as if we were still getting used to the shape we were allowed to take in each other's lives now.

His arms were firm around my shoulders, protective without being possessive, and after a heartbeat, I found myself relaxing into it.

When we pulled apart, he cleared his throat and asked, "Do you want me to go with you to pick up Daniel?"

I shook my head. "Before I do that, I have a quick detour to make."

He cocked his head. "Where?"

I shrugged. "It's Friday."

"And that means...?"

It meant I'd survived the fallout from one half of my choice. Now it was time to face the other.

\*\*\*

Lucian and I agreed to meet at one of the restaurants we usually frequented back when dinner dates were a normal part of routine.

Soft light bathed the room in amber and gold, glinting off polished wood and muted glass.

The air was rich with the scent of roasted herbs and fresh bread, warm and inviting, curling through the space and urging you to stay a little longer.

I arrived early, sliding into a cushioned booth along the wall. The vinyl was cool under my fingertips, warming slowly as I settled in.

The place felt lived-in in the best way: quiet laughter drifting from nearby tables, cutlery chiming softly, a low hum of something familiar and safe, the steady reassurance of a place unchanged even as everything else in my life shifted.

It felt like the perfect place for this conversation.

A waiter brought water with a polite smile.

I traced the rim of my glass as the minutes slipped past, studying the menu more out of habit than hunger.

When it was five o'clock, and Lucian hadn't walked through the door, I checked my phone and found no message from him.

I set it down, then lifted it again a few minutes later, thumb hovering over the screen.

Me: Hey. I'm here. Are you close?

Delivered. Unread.

Concern crept in slowly, uncalled for but persistent.

An hour passed.

My concern sharpened, threading uneasily through my calm.

I told myself not to spiral. There were a hundred reasonable explanations for his lateness. But each of them was accompanied by a hundred unpleasant scenarios that made a prickle of unease slide down my spine.

The sky had begun to darken when my phone finally buzzed.

Lucian: I'm sorry, Sera. I won't make it tonight; something urgent came up. I'll find you when I'm back.

I stared at the screen, its glow painting my fingers with pale light.

Relief and disappointment washed over me, neither strong enough to overpower the other.

I exhaled slowly and typed back, my hands a little unsteady.

Me: Okay.

I set the phone down and closed the menu, suddenly aware of how tired I was—not physically, but in that deep, bone-level way that came from too much change in too short a span of time.

And even though I now had an explanation—albeit a half-assed one—for Lucian's absence, the unease didn't lift.

If anything, it intensified.