

My Sister 308

Chapter 308 THE INVITATION

SERAPHINA'S POV

The low thud of Christian's knee hitting the carpet rang through the study like a struck bell.

I gasped.

Leona let out a weary sigh. Gavin swore under his breath.

Kieran shot out of his seat like a rocket. "Father! What are you doing?"

Christian kept his gaze trained on me.

"When I think of how you were treated," he continued, voice roughening, "how alone you must have felt...I am ashamed."

He bowed his head. "I apologize."

My vision blurred.

An Alpha on his knees was unthinkable, a gesture reserved only for utter surrender or soul-deep remorse.

"Kieran," I whispered, "make him stop."

Kieran moved instantly and took Christian's arm. "Father, stop. This isn't right. If apologies are owed, they're owed by the current Alpha—by me."

Christian shook his head and yanked his arm out of Kieran's grip. "You assumed full authority after marriage. The rot began before then. I failed to set the example. Whether Seraphina is a silver wolf or not, she deserved better."

I couldn't bear to witness another second.

"Please stand up," I said, my voice breaking. "You don't owe me this. You don't owe me anything."

He shook his head again.

"I mean it." I leaned forward, my trembling fingers gripping his arm. I tugged, gentle but insistent, drawing his gaze to mine.

"Alina isn't the wolf who saved your ancestor. I'm not her. Besides, you're my son's grandfather; I can't have you demeaning yourself this way."

Christian's expression faltered, and something heartbreakingly human slipped through.

"I don't deserve—" he began.

"I might have died tonight," I admitted. "If Kieran hadn't come when he did, gods know what those rogues would have done with me. That aside, I wouldn't have made it through the Shift without him."

I turned to Kieran, a small, grateful smile curving my lips.

His expression shifted—eyes darkening, jaw tightening, something raw and startled flickering through as if my words had struck somewhere deep and unguarded.

"He anchored me," I continued, "helped me let go of my fear. Without him, without Ashar, Alina might never have emerged at all."

A gentle murmur of agreement rose within me: Alina's presence, warm and unwavering.

"So on that count," I finished, tearing my gaze from Kieran back to Christian, "I'd say we're even."

Christian studied me for a long moment, then nodded and slowly rose to his feet.

Someone—Gavin, I think—let out a harsh breath.

"You may not be the silver wolf of our history," Christian said, his hand covering mine, "but the vow covers all silver wolves that cross our paths. That includes you."

He straightened. "As long as you need it, Nightfang is at your disposal. And if you allow it, we would be honored to help you stabilize your Shifting. You shouldn't have to navigate this alone."

The study seemed to hold its breath, the air thick with anticipation, as if the room itself waited to see how I would respond to the invitation laid before me.

An awareness flickered across Christian's face, and he released my hands slowly, as if making a point of not trapping me in the gesture.

"I know," he said, before I could find the words to reply, his tone softening, "that this may sound like an overreach—especially after all the hurt Nightfang has caused you."

Christian turned slightly, addressing all of us now, though his gaze kept returning to me.

"First,"—he lifted a finger—"we cannot ignore what happened tonight. The rogues who attacked you were not opportunistic. They were prepared. Coordinated. They came with suppressive tools and a clear objective."

Gavin added grimly, "We have their bodies. We're looking into what we can."

Christian nodded once. "Their motives aren't fully clear yet. But this much is obvious: they knew who you are—what you are."

'No wonder,' the scarred man's satisfied drawl rumbled through me. 'They timed it perfectly.'

A knot of dread twisted in my stomach.

Kieran shifted beside me, his presence a solid line at my shoulder, close enough that I could feel the heat of him through the thick material of my borrowed sweater.

"And once word spreads," Christian went on, voice low and steady, "that a silver wolf has emerged, it will draw attention. Covetous attention. From rogues. From hunters. From factions that see power as something to be collected."

I remembered the young rogue's eyes, fever-bright and hungry, and the sharp tang of his greed poisoning the air.

“And your wolf,” Christian added, “is still unstable. Which means you are extremely vulnerable.”

Alina stirred within me, not defensive. ‘He’s not wrong.’

Christian didn’t even know the full extent of my power—and how little of that power I had learned to control.

Dammit, he was right. I was vulnerable.

“Second,” he continued, drawing a slow breath, “I know your first instinct will be to seek the aid of the OTS.”

I stiffened. Behind me, so did Kieran.

“That is not a criticism,” Christian added immediately. “Nor a dismissal of their cause. OTS exists to protect those like you, and I respect the community they’ve built.”

I waited for the ‘but’.

“But it is still just an organization. Not a pack.”

The distinction landed heavily.

“Organizations have structures,” he went on. “Councils. Committees. Rotations of personnel. Too many hands, too many mouths. OTS would do their best, but they cannot guarantee silence. They cannot guarantee ironclad confidentiality.”

Suddenly, the study felt darker, shadows thickening along the shelves.

Unbidden, I thought of Lucian. Of absences. Of recent uncertainties.

If he’d kept our date, he would have been by my side when the rogues attacked. He would have been the one to help me through the Shift.

I would most likely be at OTS headquarters right now.

I couldn’t explain why my stomach churned at that thought.

“And third,” Christian said, voice lowering, “thanks to our history, the Blackthorne line understands the silver wolf.”

My brows drew together.

“Not mythologically,” he clarified. “Practically. Historically.”

He gestured vaguely toward the walls. “Our records. Our training methods. Invaluable information that was passed to us from the silver wolf. You would receive guidance tailored to what you are. Not generalized protocols. Not secondhand theory.”

My heart thudded faster, anticipation prickling beneath my skin.

“And,” he added, softer now, “If you’re worried about how it would look to live here after your divorce, Daniel’s heir training would provide cover. No one would question your extended presence at Nightfang while Daniel trains. It would be...unremarkable.”

I closed my eyes.

Every piece of logic fit together perfectly, each step meticulously planned.

When I opened my eyes again, Christian was watching me closely.

“If you feel uncomfortable at any point,” he said carefully, “you may withdraw. There will be no resistance; we will never violate your free will.”

His words echoed inside me, ringing with unexpected comfort.

I didn't need to reach out with my psychic senses to test him. I could feel the truth and sincerity of his offer the same way I'd always felt his character—solid, unadorned, unscheming.

He had never been particularly warm with me, but his integrity as a leader had never been called into question.

Still, trust was not something I could grant on principle alone.

"You say the Blackthornes understand the silver wolf," I said slowly. "Then I want to see that understanding."

Christian's brows lifted—not in surprise, but in approval.

"Of course," he said. "I wouldn't expect you to accept my word alone."

He turned and crossed to the far wall, pressing his palm against a panel by the bookshelf that anyone would assume was decorative.

It slid aside silently.

A narrow doorway revealed itself, and beyond were stone steps descending into darkness.

A sharp breath caught in my throat.

“This,” Christian said, stepping aside, “is where we keep the records, the details of our history with the silver wolf.”

Alina’s presence rose gently, brushing against my thoughts.

‘We need to see,’ she murmured, more curious than wary.

I hesitated. It was a pretty far-fetched notion that the story and the act of contrition were all just elaborate theatrics so Christian could bludgeon me in a hidden room in the heart of Nightfang.

That didn’t mean I was okay descending into pitch-blackness with him.

My gaze flicked instinctively to Kieran.

He met it immediately, as if he’d been waiting for it.

The words were out before I could second-guess myself. “Will you come with me?”

Kieran’s disbelief flickered across his face so fast I might have missed it if I hadn’t been watching him so closely.

He exhaled slowly through his nose, then gave a single, sharp nod. “Yes.”

Before I could overthink it, before fear could creep back in wearing logic’s mask, I reached out and intertwined my fingers with his.

The grounding was immediate, a steady pull that calmed my racing mind and soothed the restless energy beneath my skin—the same anchor that had steadied me through bone-deep agony and terror hours earlier.

Kieran’s grip tightened, his thumb brushing over my knuckles in a small, unconscious gesture that sent reassurance flooding through me.

I turned to Christian and inhaled deeply, lifting my chin. “Lead the way.”