

My Sister 314

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SERAPHINA'S POV

Ethan arrived just before dinner.

I felt him before I saw him—the simultaneously strange and familiar pull of blood and bond threading through the pack house like a change in pressure.

By the time I came down the stairs, he was already in the entry hall, coat half-off, Maya in front of him with her hands braced on his chest.

“You had to hear how he talked to me,” she was saying, her tone accusing.

He chuckled, wrapping his arms around her. “I’m just glad I met both of you alive.”

She snorted, her eyes fluttering shut as he pressed a kiss to her lips.

Warmth and something uncomfortably close to envy filled me. “Get a room, you two.”

They pulled apart, and Ethan's gaze slid past Maya's shoulder to me.

"Sera," he said, voice rough.

I didn't wait for him to cross the distance. I stepped into his arms instead.

For a moment, neither of us spoke. He held me like he was afraid I might disappear, one hand braced between my shoulders, the other cradling the back of my head.

I breathed him in—salt and wind and pine—and felt a knot in my chest loosen just a little.

"You shifted," he said quietly, relief and awe threaded in his voice.

I nodded against his shoulder. "I shifted."

He let out a shaky breath and pulled back, hands braced on my shoulders.

"You won," he said. "You know that, right? All the forces that conspired to smother you and make you small—you beat them."

Tears blurred my vision, and all I could do was nod.

After dinner, we—me, Kieran, Gavin, Leona, Christian, Ethan, and Maya—regrouped in the private sitting room.

I took the lone chair opposite the couch this time because it faced everyone. Maya sat close to Ethan on the couch, one leg tucked beneath her, fingers laced tightly with his.

Leona and Christian occupied the armchairs near the hearth.

Kieran chose to stand, arms crossed, at the entrance to the room. Gavin stood beside him.

Silence stretched as six pairs of eyes fixed on me expectantly.

I inhaled slowly.

“To bring everyone on the same page, I’m going to start with what you already know,” I said, glancing at Ethan and Maya. “And then I’m going to fill in what you don’t.”

My fingers curled together in my lap. Alina stirred, a sliver of warmth beneath my ribs, steady and calm.

"I'm...psychic," I said.

Christian's brows knit. Leona gasped.

"I've always been," I went on. "Since childhood."

Kieran stiffened like he'd been struck by lightning. "What?"

I grimaced. "I know I should have shared it last night, but there was already a lot of exposition going on, and..."

The rest of my statement hung in the air, unspoken: 'I wasn't a hundred percent sure I could trust you.'

"Go on, dear," Leona said, her voice trembling ever so slightly. "We're listening."

So I launched into the story, forcing myself not to flinch as I gave them all the details I knew from my mother's diary—the early manifestation of my powers, the fallout that followed, my parents' fear, and the decision to seal me when control seemed out of reach.

Then I told them about the transformation I experienced during my trip.

I told them what happened in the Starlight Hallway. About how that had been the first step to breaking the sealing. How, after that, the world had unfurled in layers I never knew existed or would be privy to.

I told them about the ambush with Iris' team, and about Seabreeze and Corin, and all the training I'd gone through since then.

When I finished recounting those events, I turned to the present.

I told Ethan and Maya about Alina—about her identity as a silver wolf and what that meant to the Blackthornes.

Once everyone was caught up, the silence that settled over the room was so heavy it felt like it had its own gravitational force.

To my surprise, Leona was the first to react. She shot to her feet like an unleashed panther and crossed the room in three quick strides before wrapping her arms around me.

I startled, breath hitching as her sorrow washed over me in a sudden, overwhelming wave.

"I'm so sorry," she whispered. "I'm so sorry for everything you've had to go through, Sera. And I'm sorry for the part I played in it all."

I sat frozen for a heartbeat before slowly lifting my arms and returning the hug.

When she pulled back, her eyes were wet, and I could feel an answering sting in mine.

“Alina,” Maya murmured, “is a silver wolf.”

I nodded. “That’s why Kieran got...protective.”

I chanced a glance at him. He was still standing stiff, jaw clenched, eyes staring straight ahead, as if he were seeing into another dimension.

For some ludicrous reason, I felt the urge to apologize for not telling him about my powers as soon as I returned, like I did Maya and Lucian.

Maya let out a soft, incredulous laugh that pulled my attention away from Kieran. Suddenly, she launched herself at me, arms wrapping tight enough to cut off blood circulation.

“Of course Alina’s special,” she murmured, stroking my hair. “I expected nothing less.”

I choked on a laugh and squeezed her back.

When she finally let go, her arms remained around me, but her mirth faded, and her brows furrowed with concern.

“Those rogues,” she began. “Were they after you because you’re psychic, or did they somehow know Alina is silver?”

I hesitated. “I don’t know.”

Maya sighed, straightening. “First the rogues at the Seabreeze border, now the ones last night.” She shook her head. “I don’t like this one bit.”

“We’re still investigating,” Gavin said from his position beside Kieran. “We know their aim was to capture, not kill. And once we trace them back to their origins, we’ll know what they know.”

She nodded. “Clue me in. We have an excellent investigative team at OTS, and—”

“No.”

Maya paused mid-sentence and turned to Ethan.

He hadn't said a word since I revealed Alina's color. He sat rigid on the couch, hands clasped together so tight his knuckles blanched.

"No?" Maya echoed.

Ethan looked at me then, his gaze sharp and hard. "Who else knows about your abilities, Sera?"

My brows knitted. "Um... The people in this room, Iris' team, Seabreeze, and—"

"Lucian," he finished for me.

An inexplicable lump formed in my throat. "Uhm...yeah."

"And you said you were supposed to meet him last night before you were attacked?"

Maya bristled. "Babe, what the hell are you insinuating?"

Ethan glanced at her. "How well do you really know Lucian?"

She frowned. "Well enough. Longer than I've known any of you."

Ethan hesitated, then sighed. "I was in Fog Harbor today when I got your call. Guess who was in my sights at that very moment."

My heart skipped. "Lucian?"

"With another woman," Ethan said. "Blonde. Similar build to you. If I hadn't known any better, I would have sworn she was you."

Maya scoffed. "You must have been mistaken."

"I wasn't," he said, his tone hardening. "I could have followed them if I weren't distracted by your phone call."

She cocked her head. "What the fuck is that tone?"

A quiet tension filled the air as everyone shifted in their seats, watching Maya and Ethan.

I raised a hand. "Enough. I don't know what you saw, Ethan," I said. "But Lucian isn't responsible for the rogue attacks. He wouldn't do that."

"You're certain of that?" Ethan asked carefully.

Lucian's face surfaced in my mind. His calm smile. His knowing eyes. The way he'd looked at me the first time we met, as though seeing not what I was, but what I could become.

Lucian Reed had glimpsed my potential long before I had.

But that was faith; there was nothing insidious about it.

"Yes."

Kieran uncrossed his arms and spoke for the first time since I had spoken. "You trust him that much?"

"He's my friend, and he's only ever been kind to me," I said, meeting his tumultuous gaze. "Even his pack welcomed me with open arms when I was little more than a stranger."

Kieran flinched like I'd sucker punched him in the gut.

"He could have been doing that to earn your trust," Ethan said softly. "So you would let your guard down."

I shook my head. "No."

"Can you seriously tell me that nothing about him raises even the tiniest alarm?"

"I—"

Several defense points rose in my mind, but didn't make it past my tongue.

I meant it when I said I didn't believe Lucian would ever hurt me.

But he had kept secrets from me before, and I wasn't naïve enough to think he didn't have more.

And with his recent, continuous absences, his secretiveness, and the emotion that slipped through the crack in his composure...

"I won't condemn him without proof," I said, swallowing back the knot of unease. "Not when he isn't here to defend himself."

Ethan studied me for a long moment. Then nodded slowly. "I won't push. But I needed to say it."

"I appreciate that," I said. "And when Lucian returns, I'll talk to him and clear the air. And I'll decide then whether to tell him about Alina."

A long, contemplative silence settled over us.

Maya broke it with a loud exhale.

"Okay, enough suspense." She fixed her gaze on me. "I want to see Alina."