

My Sister 323

Chapter 323 SERENDIPITY

SERAPHINA'S POV

For what seemed like an eternity, Kieran and I just stood there staring at each other—him with his fist still half-raised, his jaw set and eyes wary, me arrested mid-step, stomach twisting, my pulse skidding as if I'd been caught doing something wrong.

The air between us crackled with tension and uncertainty.

“Kieran,” I breathed.

“Sera,” he said at the same time.

We both stopped.

Then he cleared his throat and lowered his hand, fingers flexing once like they’d been clenched for a long time.

“I—” he started.

“I was just—” I said.

We froze again.

A laugh slipped out of me before I could stop it. It was soft, nervous, and embarrassingly high-pitched—a clear sign of how flustered I was.

He huffed a quiet breath, something close to a smile flickering at the corner of his mouth. “You first.”

I glanced down the corridor, then back at him.

Up close, I could see the tight line of tension in his shoulders and the faint furrow between his brows. The way his weight wasn’t evenly balanced, like he was prepping for fight or flight, made it clear he was anxious. He kept shifting, clearly struggling with what to say.

An absurd thought struck me.

How long had he been standing here?

I didn’t ask. But the mental image of him—fearsome Alpha of Nightfang—nervously waiting outside my door did something dangerous to the fickle organ in my chest.

"I just put Daniel to bed, and I was thinking of going for a walk," I said, gesturing vaguely behind me. "To clear my head."

His eyes flicked briefly to my wrist—to the bracelet encircling it.

"Father mentioned something earlier," he said, voice careful, like he was stepping onto uncertain ground. "About silver wolves and the moon. Apparently, moonlight helps stabilize you. Especially after strain. I...I was going to see if you wanted to go for a walk."

I blinked.

Then smiled. "Serendipity, I guess."

The word hung between us.

I hesitated, then made myself say it outright. "Do you...want to join me?"

For just a second, something unguarded crossed his face: surprise, relief, maybe even gratitude.

"I'd like that," he said quietly.

I exhaled. "Well then, shall we?"

We walked side by side down the corridor and out into the night.

The moon was high, nearly whole and luminous, casting silver light across the grounds like a benediction.

The air was cool, but not cold, gentle, almost intimate in the way it brushed against my skin.

Kieran and I kept a respectful distance. But somehow, even with space between our bodies, I felt the temperature shift.

It was like the air was warmer where he stood. My awareness kept leaning toward him, whether I wanted it to or not.

To keep myself from spiraling, I reached for the safest topic I could find.

"I still can't believe Ethan," I said, smiling faintly. "Hot air balloons? Who would've guessed my brother was a hopeless romantic?"

Kieran snorted. "You didn't know?"

I shot him a look. "Should I have?"

"Oh, absolutely," he said. "You should've seen him when we were teenagers. He used to sketch out these absurdly elaborate proposal scenarios in the margins of his notebooks."

I stopped walking. "You're lying."

"I wish I were," Kieran said solemnly. "He didn't even have a crush on anyone, but he was obsessed with the thought of his future mate. There was one involving a waterfall, a dozen lanterns, and a trained falcon."

A sharp burst of laughter tore out of me. "A falcon?"

"He was convinced it symbolized devotion," Kieran went on, warming to the story. "Said the bird would swoop down with the ring tied to its leg."

"What the fuck?" I laughed.

If a wave of resentment rose in me because Kieran knew my brother better than I'd ever gotten a chance to, it was tempered by the ludicrous story I was being told. "And you let that shit go on?"

He shrugged. “When I told him he wasn’t a fucking girl, he accused me of lacking romance and said I’d understand ‘when I met the right woman.’”

My laughter softened into something gentler. “Well, Maya is the perfect woman.”

“She is,” Kieran agreed. “They’re well matched. She grounds him. Keeps his head from drifting too far into the clouds.”

“And he gives her room to flourish,” I said softly.

His gaze flicked to me, searching. “Yes. That too.”

We walked on, the tension between us eased by shared amusement, by memories that didn’t hurt.

Until Kieran asked, “What were you like as a teenager?”

The question startled me so much that I tripped. My foot caught on an uneven stone, and I gasped as my balance tipped forward—

And suddenly, Kieran’s hands were on me.

One braced at my elbow, firm and unyielding, the other settled at my waist with an instinctive certainty that stole my breath. Strong. Steady. As if my balance had never truly been in question—not with him there.

The world jolted, then stilled.

“I’ve got you,” he said, low and immediate, already righting me as if the fall had never happened.

My heart slammed against my ribs, wild and disobedient, my pulse echoing everywhere his hands touched.

For a breath too long, neither of us moved. I was acutely aware of the heat of his palm through the thin fabric of my clothes, of the solid line of his body so close I could feel his breath shift.

Too close.

Too familiar.

Too dangerous.

"I'm sorry," I blurted, the words tumbling out in a rush as I searched for something to anchor myself. "The bracelet—it messes with my spatial awareness a little."

For a heartbeat, his grip tightened.

Not possessive. Not forceful. But reflexive—like holding me was the most natural thing in the world.

Then he let go.

He stepped back abruptly, like he'd been burned. His jaw clenched, hands fisting at his sides as if it took effort not to reach for me again.

The absence hit harder than the contact.

Cool night air rushed in where his warmth had been, leaving a hollowness in my chest and a sensation of loss. Suddenly, I felt unsteady again—not in my footing, but in every emotion swirling inside me, making it harder to breathe steadily.

For a moment, we stood there in the silvered quiet, the space between us charged and aching, heavy with everything neither of us dared to say.

"That thing," he muttered, eyes dark as he glared at the bracelet. "You shouldn't have to wear it."

He reached toward my wrist.

I jerked my hand back.

“No,” I said quickly. “Please. I don’t want to risk losing control again.”

His jaw worked. “You wouldn’t.”

“I already did,” I said softly.

“Sera, it wasn’t your—”

“Wasn’t my fault, I know, but...” I sighed. “What if I hadn’t been lucky? What if it hadn’t been Maya? What if it had been Daniel or...you?”

His Adam’s apple bobbed with a thick swallow. “Would that... Would you care if I was hurt?”

“Of course I would, what kind of fucking question is that?” The words were out before I realized I’d said them with a little too much...intensity.

Kieran didn't miss it, and something thick seemed to settle between us.

"You didn't answer my question," he said softly.

I blinked. "What?"

"What were you like as a teenager?"

Oh.

I swallowed hard and looked away.

What was I like as a teenager?

Lonely. Miserable. Pathetic.

I shrugged. "It's not a time I like to think back on. I was usually on the edges, watching everyone else live while I faded in the background."

His jaw clenched. "Sera..."

"Don't feel bad." I let out a nervous chuckle. "It was a general thing; no one noticed me."

Silence ensued, and I cursed myself for saying even that.

But then, Kieran said, "I did."

My gaze snapped back to his. "What?"

He stuffed his hands into his pockets. "You probably won't believe me, but I noticed you. On the edges of the training ground and family pictures and pack celebrations. You never faded in."

A lump formed in my throat, too thick to swallow. His words were...impossible.

Celeste was a big, glowing disco ball. In her presence, no one else was visible.

"You don't...you don't have to say that to make me feel better," I whispered.

Kieran drew a breath. "I'm not. Sera, there's something you should know—about the past."

I frowned. "What do you mean?"

"The truth is, long ago, I—"

The sound of my phone ringing cut through the moment like a blade.

We both flinched.

I fished it out with a trembling hand and glanced down at the screen. My heart stuttered for a whole other reason.

It was Mother.