

My Sister 33

Chapter 33 BEYOND THE VEIL

SERAPHINA'S POV

I woke up before dawn, unwilling to lie in bed and let my thoughts spiral any further like they'd been doing lately. The quiet house made for too much noise in my head.

I had a yoga session scheduled at the Moon Hall today. I'd done a few over the last couple of weeks, and I found that it helped with my healing and also settled my mind.

I changed into my yoga attire—soft grey leggings and a worn sports bra that smelled faintly of my usual lavender oil.

I hadn't used it in a while because the scent brought back... memories.

Warm, firm hands pressing me to a rigid body. Soft lips. Searing heat.

I shook my head. This was exactly the kind of noise I needed yoga to quiet.

I had just stepped out of the locker room when Maya intercepted me, her hair back in its usual cornrows, two cups of coffee in her hands.

"Morning, sunshine," she said, stretching out a cup to me.

I was still trying to reconcile the idea of my ruthless trainer, Maya, as my new friend. As strange as it was, it made me deliriously happy that someone like her had me in mind to the point of getting me a cup of coffee.

Pathetic, I know. But I'd been shown so little kindness in my life, so seemingly inconsequential gestures meant the world.

I eyed the cup of coffee wistfully. "Thanks, but I can't. I'm going to the Moon Hall."

"Ah," Maya nodded in understanding, withdrawing her hand. "Caffeine and yoga do not go together."

"So," she started, her tone dancing with something... teasing. "OTS has been buzzing with some gossip since your birthday party."

I raised an eyebrow, amused. "I didn't take you for someone who cared about, listened to, or spread gossip."

She shrugged. "I usually don't, but this one is particularly juicy, and I'm invested." She winked.

I chuckled. "Okay, so what is it?"

She wiggled her dark brows. "It's about you and Lucian."

My steps faltered. "What?"

"You guys looked cozy during your party, and it's no secret that he took you home afterward. And you two spend a lot of time together."

I let out an amused breath. "Lucian and I are friends, Maya."

"Sure you are," she sing-songed. "I heard he declared to your family that he was going to court you."

"I—" my jaw dropped. "How did that even get out?"

"Oh, you can't hide anything in OTS." She shrugged. "The walls have ears and big mouths."

I laughed, shaking my head. "Lucian was just helping me. That's it."

Maya snorted. "Is that what we're calling flirting these days?" She nudged me. "Come on, Sera. You can't tell me you haven't noticed how he looks at you. Or how he shows up, no matter what you need."

She puffed out her chest and deepened her voice. "If you need anything, Sera," she said, obviously mimicking Lucian, "and I mean anything. I'm here."

I felt the heat rise in my face and silently cursed my fair skin. "He's just a friend, Maya."

"And isn't that the best foundation for a strong relationship?"

I groaned. "Maya."

She chuckled. "Fine. But I'm just saying, you and Lucian would make the most adorable couple. And I've known him for years; he would be amazing to you."

At this point, my face was the color of a tomato. I shook my head, wishing I had my hair down to shield my cheeks. "I just got divorced. I have a son who's already not too keen on his father's new relationship. I don't want any more complications."

Kieran and Celeste were one thing, but I didn't think Daniel could handle it if I started dating someone new, too.

Maya shrugged, undeterred. "Sometimes love doesn't care what you want. It shows up anyway."

I had nothing to say to that. But it would be pretty fucking ironic if love showed up now after I'd spent a decade waiting for it.

We arrived at Moon Hall, and Maya stepped back as I gripped the door handle. "Well, enjoy your session," she said with a conspiratorial smile, like she knew something I didn't.

I stepped into the meditation hall, and my steps faltered, understanding Maya's smug departure.

The Moon Hall was calm and cool, lit by golden rays streaming through the domed skylight. Low incense braziers smoldered at the corners, releasing a faint, grounding scent of pine and sage. Old claw marks scarred the worn stone floor, left by wolves that had Shifted during sessions.

In the center lay a sunken circle ringed with cushions and woven mats, and on one of the cushions sat Lucian.

He was sitting cross-legged, his posture calm, his expression unreadable. But when his eyes lifted and met mine, something inside me fluttered. Awareness.

Damn Maya for getting into my head.

"Come in, Seraphina," the instructor, a serene-looking Gamma named Ilsa, waved me in.

I'd meditated with her the first two times, but it had just been us.

Lucian smiled softly as I moved into the room.

"This is a surprise," I noted.

It was Ilsa who answered. "Lucian and I have decided it is time to attempt to connect with your absent wolf," she said in a soothing voice that belied the gravity of her words.

My heart skipped a beat. We were going to try to access my wolf.

"No werewolf is born without a wolf," she continued. "But sometimes, the wolf retreats or a connection breaks before it ever had a chance to form. Today, we'll reach for that connection, try to access that silenced part of you."

She waved towards the cushion beside Lucian, who was watching me intently. "And the presence of an Alpha helps immensely."

My stomach flipped, my body buzzed with nervous energy. Before I could get too in my head about it, I sat down beside Lucian as Ilsa sat in front of us, crossing her legs too.

"Now," she said in that soothing voice. "Face each other and hold hands."

Lucian immediately turned to face me. When I did, mirroring his position, he gave me a warm smile. "Relax," he said softly.

"I'm relaxed," I mumbled.

He chuckled and held out his palms, waiting.

I hesitated—but when our hands touched, something shifted. The warmth of his skin seeped into mine, not burning but grounding.

"Just breathe," he whispered. "You're safe."

I knew that. When I was with Lucian, there was no doubt that I was safe.

"Now," Ilsa said. "Close your eyes."

I obeyed.

"I want you to center yourself like you've done in our past sessions. Focus on your breathing. In and out. In and out. In and out. Let the world around you fade away. What you're looking for is inside you. She's lost, but she wants to be found. She wants to find you."

I let Ilsa's words guide me as I tried to settle myself. After doing it previously, it was now easier.

The world dulled. The voices faded. My heartbeat slowed.

Each breath unspooled the knots in my chest, one at a time, until my body felt untethered—floating in the quiet between worlds.

Then—softly, so softly I almost missed it—I heard something.

A sound.

It wasn't a voice, not exactly. More like a note reverberating just beneath the surface of silence. Low, raw. Primal. A vibration through my body.

I leaned into it, unsure if it was real or a figment of my imagination.

But it came again.

A call.

Distant. Wild. Fragile.

And oddly familiar.

My breath hitched. My pulse faltered. Inexplicably, I knew that sound. Knew it as well as I knew the breath in my lungs and the beat of my heart.

It was her.

My wolf.

The part of me that had always been hollow, empty. A werewolf without a wolf was like a person born without limbs. I never knew how to miss it; I just knew something was missing.

But now...

She was here.

Somewhere just beyond the veil. Within reach.

I could feel her—faint as a whisper—circling me from the edges of my mind, pacing in a place I couldn't yet reach.

The air between us was heavy, thick like fog. I felt that vibration again, a movement. Each step she took sent a ripple through me.

She wasn't charging toward me. She didn't leap with joy or relief.

She hesitated.

Wary. Guarded.

Because she didn't know me. I was as much a stranger to her as she was to me.

I wanted to call out to her, tell her I'd spent my whole life missing her.

But I didn't know if she'd understand.

Still, I inched closer—mentally, emotionally—in whatever way I could.

Each breath deepened my anchor to the space, and the fog around us began to stir. The outline of trees shimmered in the distance. Pines. Like the scent in the Moon Hall.

I felt the warmth of Lucian's hands in mine and struggled to remain grounded, not to slip back into the physical.

What I wanted was here. She was here.

Pale and ghostly, a silhouette half-formed, she prowled the treeline. Watching me. Waiting.

And then—just for a moment—the fog shifted, and her eyes met mine.

Familiar. Feral. Mine.

Something inside me broke open at the sight. A pressure behind my ribs I hadn't even known I was holding released all at once. The ache, the emptiness—I felt it begin to fill.

And just as the mist began to thin—just as I felt the first tremor of recognition tremble between us—

Bang!

The door slammed open, jolting me out of the trance like a snapped cord.

My eyes flew open. My head turned.

In the doorway stood Kieran.

Frozen.

His gaze locked onto Lucian and me—our hands still clasped, our faces flushed from the trance, from something more than just breathwork.

Kieran's eyes widened, disbelief cutting sharply across his face. I saw it all in a single second: shock, confusion...and then, something deeper. Something that made the air between us thrum like a struck chord.

And me? I was reeling.

From what I'd just seen, what I'd just felt.

But as the world around me came into focus, I felt that feeling fade, and the fog thickened till it was as solid as a wall.

The delicate ache of my wolf's presence faltered, then vanished altogether, like she'd turned and run back into the dark.

Gone.