

My Sister 339

Chapter 339 STUDY DATE

SERAPHINA'S POV

By the time the sun climbed high enough to burn the last of the morning haze away, I had added 'study date' to the increasingly growing list of my favorite things about my new relationship with Kieran.

He and I sat shoulder to shoulder at the long table in his office, the curtains drawn, the doors locked.

The only light came from the desk lamp and the laptop's muted glow between us.

The New Moon Institute's offline database, which Alois had gifted me, was open, its folders branching into increasingly obscure classifications the deeper we went.

Psychic theory.

Cognitive fractures.

Soul-adjacent phenomena.

And then...

Rituals.

Not the modern kind. Not meditation techniques or grounding exercises disguised as mysticism. These entries were old. Fragmentary. Written in language that felt...cautious, as if the authors had known that even recording the information was dangerous.

"Soul mending," I murmured, my fingers slowing over the keyboard.

Kieran leaned closer, soothing warmth radiating from him. "That doesn't sound like something people do casually."

"No," I agreed. "Doesn't sound easy either."

I clicked the file open.

Most of it was redacted—lines interrupted mid-thought, diagrams half-erased. But enough remained to make goosebumps rise on my arms.

There were mentions of fractured soul-anchors. Of intentional excision. Of restoration attempts that failed more often than they succeeded.

Forbidden arts.

“This isn’t healing,” Kieran said slowly, reading over my shoulder. “It’s reconstruction.”

I nodded. “And whoever did this to Aaron knew exactly what they were cutting away.”

We sat in silence for a moment, the weight of it pressing down on us both.

If soul mending existed...that meant something had to be broken first.

“Okay,” I declared. “I’m going to do it.”

I sent Alois the call request with hands that didn’t quite feel steady.

An hour passed.

In that time, neither of us spoke much. Kieran paced for a while, then stopped, leaning against the window with his arms folded, a faraway look in his eyes.

I studied the ritual notes again and again, determined to memorize every step, map the shapes: how the power moved, where it anchored, where it tore.

When my laptop chimed at last, I flinched.

Incoming Video Call

Before I could answer, a message flashed beneath it.

‘Set up a psychic barrier. Impenetrable.’

I inhaled sharply.

Of course he would sense how dire the situation was.

I closed my eyes and reached inward, pulling my psychic defenses into place with careful precision.

As soon as the barrier was established, surrounding the room like a second skin—layered, sealed, humming faintly with restrained power—I accepted the video call.

Alois's face filled the screen.

He looked exactly as the last time I saw him—silver-streaked hair pulled back neatly, sharp amber eyes magnified slightly by thin-rimmed glasses.

But there was something alert in his expression, a flicker of immediate assessment.

His gaze flicked once. Then settled knowingly on Kieran.

“Well,” he said mildly. “This is an...interesting development.”

Kieran inclined his head. “Director Alois.”

Alois's lips curved. “Alpha Blackthorne. I can't say I'm surprised.”

“Nor should you be,” Kieran replied coolly.

I frowned, looking between the screen and Kieran, confused. Their exchange spoke of heavy context beneath the surface, and I couldn't help feeling I was at the center of it.

Before I could ask, Alois' attention shifted to me. "Hello, Seraphina."

I exhaled and leaned forward. "Director Alois, I hope you've been well. Thank you for calling back."

"I certainly didn't do it to exchange pleasantries," Alois said. "Tell me what the problem is."

So I did.

First, I told him about finally being able to Shift. I left out the part of being a silver wolf, though. For some reason, I didn't feel the release to share that piece of information.

Then I spoke of the rogue attacks, the hollowness I sensed in one of them, and how it was mirrored in Aaron. I explained the wrongness of Aaron's return and how precisely parts of his mind and soul had been removed.

When I was done, Alois leaned back in his chair, folding his hands. "That complicates things."

"Because?" Kieran prompted with a frown.

"Because among the forces you're dealing with, one of them is a psychic," Alois replied. "A formidable one at that."

The words landed heavily.

“Psychics,” Alois continued, “even the strongest among us, have limits. Range. Endurance. Anchoring requirements. No one can stretch indefinitely without leaving traces.”

He looked directly at me then.

“You,” he said, “are already an anomaly.”

My stomach tightened.

“A psychic of your caliber is rare,” he went on. “But theoretically, after a full transformation, you should be able to sense any psychic operating within proximity—especially one exerting control at that scale.”

I swallowed. “And if I can’t?”

“Then,” Alois said quietly, “the only logical conclusion is that their level exceeds yours. And there’s only one level that exceeds yours.”

The room felt suddenly too small.

Corin had said I had the potential to reach Dominator status, which meant...

'Most never even meet a Dominator. Sovereigns are...rare.'

I sucked in a sharp breath before I could stop myself. "That's—"

"Dangerous," Kieran finished, tone flat.

"Yes," Alois agreed. "Extremely."

I felt the words settle deep in my chest, cold and heavy. Surpassed. Outsensed. Outmatched.

Alois's expression softened, just slightly. "Which is why you must be careful, Seraphina. Until your psychic abilities are fully anchored, until you reach your full potential, you cannot afford exposure."

"How do I protect myself?" I asked.

"Barriers," he answered. "Constantly. During training. During exploration. Even during rest. You cannot risk broadcasting your signature."

“Because they’ll notice,” I murmured. “Whoever this big bad is.”

“They already might have,” Alois said. “But do not make it easier. You must make yourself an enigma. Unpredictable. Inscrutable.”

I nodded slowly.

“As for Aaron,” Alois continued, “I would need to see him in person. Soul tampering of that nature cannot be accurately assessed remotely.”

Relief surged through me. It felt like my teacher had announced that he would take control of a project that stumped me.

“When can you—?” I began.

A sudden commotion erupted on his end.

“Director!” a voice called urgently, off-screen. “We have a problem.”

A moment later, a young man burst into frame, breathless, brown hair uncharacteristically disheveled, glasses askew.

He was so rattled I almost didn't recognize him: Lionel, Alois' assistant.

"There's a fire," he said. "Moonlight Alley. It's spreading fast."

Alois's face hardened instantly. "Evacuations?"

"Already underway," Lionel replied. "But the psychic suppression grid is destabilizing. We need you."

Alois closed his eyes briefly, then looked back at me. "I won't be able to leave immediately."

My chest tightened.

"Did he say Moonlight Alley?" I asked.

"Yes," Alois answered. "I have to go."

"Wait. How are Ava—"

“I’ll be in touch,” Alois said distractedly, already standing. “Maintain your barriers. Do nothing reckless.”

The call cut off abruptly.

For a long moment, neither Kieran nor I spoke.

Moonlight Alley. On fire.

I pressed a hand to my chest, unease winding tighter in me, my instincts screaming that this wasn’t just bad timing.

This was convergence.