

## **My Sister 344**

Chapter 344 NUMBER ONE

SERAPHINA'S POV

Vidar was tall and broad-shouldered, with pale blond hair braided neatly back from his temples. Faint claw scars marked the left side of his face, pale against tanned skin.

It was easy to tell that he and Brynjar were brothers.

But in appearance only.

Brynjar was loud. Obvious. All brute ego and thin-skinned pride.

Vidar was...still.

His presence didn't crash into a room the way Brynjar's did.

His energy was contained and layered. No careless emotional spikes. No obvious insecurity. Just a dense, unreadable weight pressing against my senses like fog.

“Ms. Blackthorne,” he said smoothly, straightening from the wall to give me his full attention.

“Lockwood,” I corrected, just as smooth.

His lips twitched. “Ah, yes.” His gaze flickered behind me, and I didn’t need to turn to know that Kieran was behind me.

He didn’t speak or move close, but his aura filled the corridor like a storm front rolling in.

Vidar noticed too, and his posture shifted almost imperceptibly.

I bit back a smile. As tough and foreboding as he was, a Beta would always be inferior in the presence of an Alpha.

Vidar’s gaze fixed on me again, and it turned into a sneer as his eyes trailed up and down my body.

He...tsked.

“I expected more,” he said.

My brows shot up. "Excuse me?"

"Gossip is usually exaggerated, but the ones surrounding the wolf who bested my brother during the LST were very greatly so."

Ah.

Wait till he saw Judy.

"And what did you expect?" I asked, arms folded, tone edged.

He tilted his head slightly, studying me as though I were a specimen under a microscope.

"Formidable," he said. "Dangerous."

His gaze dropped, slow and deliberate, to the slit in my dress—to the bare skin revealed there, then back to my face.

"Not some hussy relying on flaunting herself to leech off an Alpha patron. That's how you won, isn't it?"

The words landed like a slap.

The sudden jolt in the air was the only warning before Kieran exploded forward, body tensed to charge at Vidar.

But I shot my hand out and stopped him with a palm pressed tightly to his chest.

“You don’t fight my battles,” I snapped, still playing our new role. “You lost that privilege ages ago.”

I locked eyes with him, silently pleading for him to step back and let me handle this myself.

This was my confrontation.

I watched the war play out in his obsidian depths, and then his jaw clenched once, and he took a step back.

I heard a derisive snort behind me. “Cool trick,” Vidar drawled. “You have to teach me that.”

I closed my eyes briefly and took a long, calming breath.

Then I turned and smiled, as sweet and sharp as a poisoned dart.

“Narrow-minded men,” I said, “only ever perceive a narrow world.”

His brow twitched.

“If all you can see when a powerful woman stands in a room is who she might be sleeping with to get ahead,” I continued, “that says far more about you than it does about me.”

I tilted my head and matched his mocking look. “Or is your ego bruised because you’re not influential enough for someone to sleep with you for power?”

A faint hum of tension tightened the air, and Vidar’s copper eyes darkened.

“I loathe your type,” he hissed. “You wear righteousness like armor. But that façade cracks under pressure.”

“Bold of you to think your presence carries any kind of pressure,” I retorted.

He took a step forward. It was supposed to be a menacing move, but I stood my ground, tipping my chin up.

“You should be careful who you antagonize,” he warned, his voice low. “Shadow Claw doesn’t forget.”

I let my smile sharpen. “How is Brynjar, by the way?”

At the mention of his younger brother, a flicker of rage passed across Vidar’s face.

Good. He wasn’t the only one who could provoke.

“I hope he has a poster of my face in his room that he throws darts at.” I shrugged. “Although he’s so inadequate, I doubt he’ll ever hit the bullseye.”

Vidar lunged without warning, his movements so fast that a lesser wolf would have been thrown against the wall before realizing he’d moved.

But contrary to what I had believed all my life, I was not a lesser wolf.

Alina surged forward, reflexes fluid. I twisted sideways, heels pivoting on marble as I slipped past his reach.

His hand cut through empty air where my shoulder had been as I landed lightly two steps away.

But that was not what I let him see.

As I moved, I altered my psionic field—subtly compressing and releasing it in a brief pulse. Just enough to distort.

To imply that psychic intervention, not pure wolf instinct, had saved me. Alina's existence was still on a need-to-know basis.

Vidar stumbled to a halt, surprise briefly blanketing his face before he straightened again.

Kieran, too, had moved, and he was at my side now, presence heavy and unmistakably dangerous.

“Try that again,” he snarled, his voice taut with barely leashed aggression. “I dare you.”

Vidar ignored him, his attention still on me.

“Psionics,” he mused, sounding bored, but there was a hitch in his voice he couldn't quite mask. “That's a cute little trick.”

I arched a brow. “I have a lot more up my sleeve, wanna see?”

His gaze sharpened. “Accidentally gaining some talent means nothing.”

The word ‘accidentally’ was deliberately derisive, and heat rose in my chest.

Vidar stepped closer again—but stopped after one step when Kieran let out a warning growl that rippled through the hallway.

“Power like that is dangerous in the hands of the inept,” he said with a sneer. “You’re like a child playing with a grenade.”

The heat in my chest intensified, and I had to reach behind me and grip the end of Kieran’s sleeve to ground me, to stop me from reaching forward and showing Vidar just how dangerous I had become.

“Power like that does not bloom in isolation,” he continued, smugness seeping into his tone. “It requires cultivation. A guide. Discipline. Structure.”

“If I didn’t know any better,” I said, forcing my voice to be calm, “I’d think I’d stumbled into some kind of sales pitch.”

Vidar’s eyes flicked briefly toward the ballroom—toward the world of wolves and factions and alliances—then back to me, a faint smile touching his mouth.

“You’re a smug bitch,” he said. “You think surviving the LST made you exceptional.”

“No,” I snarled. “I think winning it made me exceptional.”

His amusement faltered for a second, then he reached into the inner pocket of his jacket.

Kieran tensed instantly. I tightened my grip on his sleeve.

Vidar withdrew his hand slowly, revealing a ruby between his fingers—deep crimson, perfectly polished, its facets catching the light like liquid fire.

He held it between us for a moment, as if he were pausing for us to admire the beauty of the gem.

Then flicked it toward me, the gemstone arcing cleanly through the air.

My free hand twitched on instinct, but I kept it firmly at my side.

The ruby struck the marble floor near my heel with a sharp click and skidded slightly before coming to rest, red against pale stone.

“I’m more of a moonstone kind of girl,” I said coolly.

“It isn’t a gift,” Vidar replied.

His voice had shifted—less taunting now. More coaxing.

“Should you wise up,” he continued, “and decide that raw instinct isn’t enough...seek me out.”

His eyes dropped to the ruby. “If you’re as talented as you think, you’ll know how.”

“Don’t hold your breath,” I hissed. “You’re the last person I need.”

His smile sharpened. “That remains to be seen.”

He stepped back at last, satisfaction settling over his features as if he’d accomplished exactly what he came to do.

He glanced at Kieran and dipped his head in the most irreverent show of respect I’d ever seen.

“Fascinating,” he mused. “I’ve never seen an Alpha on a leash before.”

He smirked at me. "You really are one for tricks."

And then he was gone.

The corridor felt wider without him.

I leaned back into Kieran, exhaling slowly.

His arm wrapped around me instantly, neither of us caring that anyone else could enter the hallway.

"Are you alright?" he asked, voice tight.

I nodded. "I'm fine."

I tipped my head back and offered him a small smile. "That was pretty fucking impressive. I had no idea you had that much restraint in you."

His answering smile was grudging. "You're not a damsel in distress. I'll always be by your side, but you're powerful enough to fight your own battles."

Something warm fluttered in my chest as I turned, wrapping my arms around his torso.

“And if I’m being honest,” he added, “a part of me hoped you’d lose it and slash him the way you did with Maya.”

I let out a burst of laughter as I lay my head against his chest, and instantly the glint of the ruby on the floor caught my eye.

I felt the catch in Kieran’s breathing under my cheek, and I knew he was looking at it too.

“It’s safe to say that Vidar beats Astrid out for number one on the suspect list, right?”

I let out a humorless breath. “Yep.”

Vidar was not his brother. He hadn’t come for petty insult or posturing. He was definitely someone to look out for.

“What are you going to do with that?” Kieran asked.

I stared at the gemstone a beat longer before I crouched and picked it up.

It was warm and heavy as I rolled it between my fingers.

Then slipped it into my clutch.

Kieran's eyes tracked the movement with that comment.

"Tell your people to keep an eye on him," I said quietly.

Kieran's gaze darkened, unfocusing for a beat before it refocused on me again. "Already done."