

My Sister 411

Chapter 411 SECRET GETAWAYS

SERAPHINA'S POV

The next few days blurred into fast-paced monotony.

Meetings bled into strategy sessions, into training sessions, into back-and-forths between Nightfang and OTS' temporary base, into moments when I found myself staring at nothing in particular, my thoughts looping through impossibilities I couldn't quite resolve.

Every decision felt as if it carried weight far beyond itself, as if one wrong move would tip something fragile into collapse.

Nightfang was holding, but only just. The attack had left more than physical damage—it planted hesitation and doubt, far harder to root out.

I hadn't realized how tightly I'd been carrying all of it, the tension high and unyielding, until Kieran touched my wrist one evening and I flinched, startled more by my own unease than by him.

His fingers stilled against my skin.

"Sera." His voice was soft, careful.

I forced a small breath out. "I'm fine."

He didn't respond immediately, and that alone told me he didn't believe me.

His gaze moved over my face slowly, not invasive, not pressing, just...taking me in.

"You haven't slept properly in three nights," he pointed out.

"I've slept."

"You've closed your eyes," he corrected mildly. "Very briefly."

I almost argued. But we shared the same bed.

"I don't have the luxury of switching off right now," I said instead.

"You do," he said. "You're choosing not to."

I looked away, my jaw tightening.

“Sera.” Gently, he pulled me closer. “You can’t keep pushing like this and expect to still be standing when it matters.”

I exhaled slowly, dragging a hand through my hair. “What do you want me to do, Kieran? Sit back and hope things don’t fall apart?”

“I want you to breathe,” he said simply.

I let out a soft, humorless huff. “That’s not exactly a strategy.”

“No,” he agreed. “It’s survival.”

I looked at him then, and felt something in my chest ease—a subtle but undeniable lessening of the anxiety I’d held onto. For a moment, vulnerability replaced my guardedness.

He wasn’t arguing with me.

He wasn’t trying to take control.

He was trying to take care of me. I guess after all this time, the sensation still felt strange.

“Come with me tomorrow,” he said after a moment.

“Where?”

“Away.”

I frowned slightly. “Away where?”

“You’ll see.”

“Kieran—”

“Trust me.”

The words weren’t a command; they were earnest. Personal.

For a moment, I hesitated—not because I didn’t trust him, but because I wasn’t sure I trusted myself to step away without feeling like I was abandoning something important.

He must have seen it in my expression.

“You’re not leaving anything behind,” he said, reading me too easily. “Everything that matters will still be here when you get back.”

I held his gaze for a long second.

Then, slowly, I nodded.

The drive was long and quiet.

The road curved away from the pack’s main territory, the familiar paths giving way to something less traveled, lined with tall trees and stretches of open land that hadn’t been touched by patrol routes or training grounds.

I watched the scenery shift, my mind instinctively tracking distance, direction, exits.

Kieran reached over at some point and laced his fingers through mine.

The simple contact pulled me out of it.

“You don’t need to map this,” he said lightly.

“I’m not—”

“You are.”

I exhaled, but I didn’t pull my hand away.

“Habit.”

He raised our intertwined hands and kissed the back of my knuckles. “I know.”

The car eventually slowed, turning off onto a narrower path before coming to a stop.

I stepped out, taking in the view, and for a moment, my thoughts stilled completely.

The ocean stretched out ahead, vast and endless, the late afternoon sun casting a soft golden glow across the water.

The cliffs weren't as sharp or jagged as the ones near the neutral meeting point. These were smoother, quieter, the waves rolling in with a steady rhythm rather than crashing.

It felt...removed, separate from everything.

"How did you find this place?" I asked quietly.

Kieran came to stand beside me. "A while ago."

"You've been here before?"

"Once."

I glanced at him. "And you decided to keep it to yourself?"

He smiled. "I was saving it."

“For what?”

He pulled me into his side, wrapping an arm around my neck.

“For when you needed it.”

My heart literally skipped a beat.

I turned, burying my face in his chest. “Thank you,” I mumbled.

He kissed my hair. “Always.”

We didn’t rush into anything.

There was no grand gesture, no overwhelming attempt to force me to relax.

We just...walked.

Along the edge of the cliffs, the sound of the ocean filled the silence between us in a way that didn’t demand conversation but didn’t leave space for spiraling thoughts either.

At some point, Kieran spread out a blanket, simple and unassuming, with food I hadn't even noticed he'd packed.

"You've been busy," I murmured, lowering myself onto the blanket.

"I can multitask."

I raised a brow. "Planning secret getaways while managing a pack under attack?"

"Impressive, I know."

I smiled, the expression coming easier than it had in days.

We ate, talked in pieces, the conversation drifting from small things to heavier ones and back again without forcing either.

At one point, I lay back, staring up at the sky as it shifted toward evening.

Kieran lay beside me, close enough that I could feel his warmth without him needing to touch me.

"It's quieter in here," he said, tapping my temple.

"Is that a complaint?"

"No." His voice was soft. "It's a pleasant surprise. I like it when it's quiet there."

I turned my head to look at him. "I didn't realize how loud everything had gotten," I admitted.

"You carry it all at once," he said.

"I don't know how not to."

His hand found mine again, his thumb brushing over my knuckles.

"You don't have to stop carrying it," he said. "You just don't have to carry it alone."

I curled into his side and exhaled, feeling the weight I'd been carrying for so long ease, relief, and comfort converging as my guard dropped.

“I wish we could stay here forever,” I whispered.

Kieran nodded. “Me too.”

And for the first time in what felt like too long, I let myself exist in a moment without thinking about what came next.

I woke to warmth.

To the steady rise and fall of Kieran’s chest beneath my cheek, his arm loosely draped around me, holding without restraining.

For a moment, I stayed there, letting myself feel it.

The quiet.

The absence of pressure.

The simple, grounding reality of him.

My gaze traced the line of his jaw, the faint shadow of stubble there, the way it softened just slightly when he slept. Up to the curve of his mouth, relaxed in a way it rarely was when he was awake, then higher, to the strong line of his nose, the barely-there crease between his brows that never quite disappeared, even at rest.

Then I shifted slightly, and Kieran's grip tightened just enough to let me know he was awake.

"You're staring," he murmured, voice rough with sleep.

"I'm not."

"You are."

I tilted my head up. "You can't prove that."

His eyes opened, meeting mine with a look that was equal parts amused and knowing.

"I don't need to. You and I know the truth, little creep."

I huffed just as his hand slid from my back to my waist, his touch warmer now, more deliberate.

The shift in the air between us was familiar.

My breath caught just as my fingers brushed against his chest as I adjusted my position.

“Sera,” he said quietly.

My hand moved, fingers tracing the line of his shoulder, the warmth of his skin grounding in a different way than the ocean had.

His breath shifted.

So did mine.

The space between us closed without either of us consciously deciding it should.

I felt the warmth of his breath just as his lips descended over—

A sharp shout cut through the air.

Distant.

But unmistakable.

Kieran stilled instantly.

So did I.

Another shout followed, louder this time, carrying urgency that sliced cleanly through whatever softness had been building.

The moment shattered.

I pushed up immediately, already reaching for my clothes.

“That’s the training grounds,” I said, my voice tightening.

Kieran was already moving too, his expression shifting from relaxed to alert in an instant.

“Something’s wrong.”

And just like that, the calm from the night before vanished as if it had never been there.