

## **My Sister 422**

Chapter 422 STARLIGHT HALLWAY II

SERAPHINA'S POV

The moment I crossed the threshold, Kieran vanished.

One step, he was beside me, solid, steady, his awareness brushing mine like a second heartbeat.

The next—

Nothing.

I stopped, breath catching as I turned, already knowing what I would find.

Or rather, what I wouldn't.

The hollow was gone. The mountain path, the ancient tree, Elias—all of it had dissolved into something vast and familiar.

Starlight stretched beneath my feet once more, soft and weightless, glowing with each step I took.

Above me, the endless expanse of violet and silver swirled like a living sky, constellations shifting in dazzling patterns.

The Starlight Hallway.

I exhaled, steadying myself and forcing the instinctive spike of disorientation back under control.

I guess the Origins Archives wasn't built for companionship.

It was built for judgment.

For truth.

And truth, more often than not, was something you faced alone.

A flicker of awareness brushed my mind—Alina, quiet but present, her warmth a steady anchor beneath the vastness pressing in around us.

'You're not alone,' she murmured.

"I know," I whispered.

A pulse of light rippled outward beneath my feet, subtle but deliberate, and then—

'Seraphina Lockwood, you have returned.'

The voice threaded through me, not heard but felt, settling into my bones with familiarity.

"I have," I said calmly.

'Sooner than expected.'

There was something almost...curious in it now.

I lifted my chin, my gaze sweeping the shifting expanse. "I have another question."

A faint flicker passed through the surrounding stars, like the echo of amusement.

'You are indeed Edward's daughter.'

My chest tightened, but I didn't linger on the feeling.

"I bet you know why I'm here," I said, my voice steady.

'You mistake the Origins Archives as all-knowing. But only you know truly why you are here.'

A small smile tugged at my lips. "I forgot how cryptic you could be."

There it was again—that small flicker that felt like amusement.

The path ahead of me unfolded, leading once more toward the circular dais at the center of the expanse.

'You may ask your question.'

I closed my eyes for a brief moment, letting everything settle—the urgency, the pressure, the countless threads of chaos unraveling beyond this place.

Aaron.

The fragments of his mind.

The incomplete restorations.

Catherine.

Marcus.

Whatever they were planning.

The war that hadn't fully begun—but was already in motion.

I didn't have the luxury of asking something vague or personal.

I opened my eyes.

“How do I resolve the immediate crisis?”

Silence followed.

The stars dimmed slightly, the air tightening with something that felt like consideration.

Then—

‘The Archives do not resolve crises.’

I exhaled, unsurprised. “Of course you don’t.”

A faint ripple passed through the space, almost like acknowledgment.

‘You seek direction,’ the voice continued. ‘Not outcome.’

“I...guess.”

If I couldn’t get a solution, I’d settle for the way to reach it.

‘Your question cannot be answered as you have framed it.’

Frustration flickered, but I didn't let it take root.

"Then reframe it for me."

The starlight drew closer, brightening as though the space itself were narrowing its focus.

'You do not lack knowledge of the threat,' the voice said, calm and absolute. 'You lack mastery of your own power.'

I went still as the words settled into me, not striking like a blow but sinking deeper.

Because it wasn't wrong.

I understood what I was facing. I had seen enough, felt enough, pieced together enough to recognize the shape of the danger closing in around us. That had never been the problem.

The problem was me.

Or rather—what I had yet to become.

I had used my power when I had to, pushed it forward in moments that demanded it, relied on instinct and desperation, and whatever fragments of control I could grasp in the middle of chaos.

I had fought with it, survived because of it, carved my way through trials that should have broken me.

But every time, it had felt like holding onto something just beyond my reach. Like trying to direct a current that moved faster than I could think.

I hadn't guided it.

I hadn't shaped it.

I had endured it and called that control.

And now, standing here, with the weight of everything waiting beyond this place pressing against the edges of my mind, that distinction no longer felt small.

'Your silver power remains incomplete in execution,' the voice continued. 'Not in origin.'

Alina stirred within me, her presence heightening, resonating with the words.

“Then show me,” I said, quieter now, the urgency in me settling into something steadier. “Show me what I’m missing.”

‘This is not knowledge that can be spoken,’ the voice replied.

I stepped forward without hesitation, my feet carrying me to the center of the dais, accepting whatever would come next. “Then give it to me another way.”

For a moment, nothing happened, and the silence stretched just long enough to make me aware of my own breath, of the faint hum of energy threading through the space around me.

Then the world tilted as though something had adjusted the angle of reality itself.

Light unfolded, layering itself around me in intricate, precise patterns, weaving through the air and into me.

Whatever was happening didn’t tear through me the way it had before. It didn’t burn or fracture or demand that I endure it.

Understanding followed—not all at once, but in fragments that settled into place with increasing clarity.

At first, it felt abstract, too vast to grasp in a single moment, like trying to comprehend the shape of something that existed beyond the limits of sight.

But slowly, steadily, it began to align.

Silver. Not just as power, not just as something I could call upon in moments of need, but as structure—deliberate, precise, governed by principles I'd never had the luxury of time to understand.

It was a language, one I had been speaking without properly learning its rules.

I sensed the way it moved, the way it responded, the way it threaded itself through thought, through intent, through emotion without ever being ruled by any one of them.

A quiet realization settled in as the patterns became clearer and the flow began to make sense in a way it never had before.

I could feel the places where I had forced it, where I had pushed instead of guided, where I had reacted instead of shaped.

I had treated it like something separate, something I had to reach for and wrestle into submission when in truth, it had always been part of me.

Not a weapon I wielded—something I was.

Alina moved with me, her presence aligning seamlessly with my own awareness. There was no distinction in the way we moved through the knowledge now, no separation between her understanding and mine.

She was me, and I was her.

There was no resistance as the final pieces settled, no strain, no sense of something pushing against me from within. The silver flowed cleanly, naturally.

It felt right.

And best of all, there was no pain.

I wasn't bracing against anything, wasn't forcing my body to endure something beyond its limits.

My breathing was steady, my limbs stable, my mind clear—a rarity after all I'd endured.

I stood there, fully present, fully aware, and entirely intact.

A soft breath slipped from my lips, followed by an incredulous laugh I didn't bother to hold back.

"That's new."

The starlight around me pulsed once, subtle but distinct, as if acknowledging the shift.

'Your foundation has been restored,' the voice said.

I exhaled slowly, letting the last traces of the experience settle into something steady, something I knew would remain with me long after I left this place.

"Thank you."

There was no spoken reply, but the space responded all the same, the faint shift in the air carrying a quiet sense of acknowledgment that didn't need to be voiced.

I stepped back from the dais, the glow beneath my feet dimming.

'Your second visit concludes.'

It was done.

One question. One answer.

Even if the answer had come in a form I hadn't expected, it had given me exactly what I needed.

The world began to fold inward, the vast expanse of starlight drawing itself together as though the space were closing around me, returning me to where I had begun.

And then I was back.

The hollow reformed around me, the cool mountain air brushing against my skin as the weight of reality settled into place.

The scent of earth and wood replaced the endless expanse of the Archives, grounding me in something solid and familiar.

I blinked, steadying myself.

And then I saw him.

Kieran stood just beyond the edge of the hollow, exactly where I had last seen him before everything had shifted.

Relief rose instinctively because we had both made it out unscathed.

But it didn't hold.

He wasn't moving, his posture still in a way that immediately drew my attention.

Something was off.