

## **My Sister 424**

Chapter 424 SOMETHING WHOLE

SERAPHINA'S POV

"Kieran?" I asked, stepping toward him.

"You're alright," he said, his voice steady, but there was something beneath it—something tight, strained.

"I am," I replied, studying his face. "You?"

A pause. Brief. Almost imperceptible.

"Yes."

It wasn't a lie.

But it wasn't the truth either.

I opened my mouth to press him, the question already forming—what happened in there, what did you see, why do you look like that—

“I was beginning to wonder if the Archives had decided to keep you.”

Kieran and I turned.

Elias stood a few steps away, his posture as composed as ever, though his face betrayed him.

For someone who spoke in measured tones and carried himself as if nothing could unsettle him, the relief in his expression was unmistakable.

His gaze moved over me quickly, assessing—not just my physical state, but something deeper, something I could feel him searching for.

When he found whatever he was looking for, his shoulders eased.

“Good,” he murmured, more to himself than to us. “You’re intact.”

“I told you I would be,” I said, unable to keep the smugness out of my voice.

He snorted. "Maybe third time's the charm."

His eyes flicked to Kieran, something unreadable passing between them, before returning to me.

"So tell me," he said. "What did it give you this time?"

I hesitated before answering. Because the answer wasn't simple.

It wasn't a single thing.

It was...everything.

Understanding flooded my mind in layers. It was not chaotic or overwhelming, but precise and structured. Like someone had taken the scattered fragments of what I could do and arranged them into something whole.

"My power," I said softly. "I know how it works now."

Elias's brows lifted. "Interesting."

It was so much more than interesting.

I could feel the way it moved, the way it connected, the way it responded when I reached for it.

Before, it had always felt like grasping at something just beyond my control, like trying to shape water with bare hands. Now it felt like threading something delicate and exact, each movement deliberate, each result predictable.

“I want to try something,” I said.

Elias rolled his eyes. “Of course you do.”

There was the faintest hint of dry amusement in his tone, but he stepped aside anyway, gesturing loosely.

“Be my guest.”

My gaze shifted, searching.

Soon, I found what I was looking for. Leaning against the stone wall a few feet away—a small, weathered object.

I stepped closer, crouching as I reached for it.

It was an old compass. The casing was tarnished, scratched from years of use. The glass was cracked, a thin fracture running across its surface like a scar. The needle inside sat crooked, unmoving.

I glanced back at Elias. "Yours?"

He nodded once. "A long time ago."

I turned it over in my hand, feeling the weight of it, the history etched into every imperfection.

Then I closed my fingers around it.

I didn't rush, didn't force it.

I let my awareness settle first, letting the knowledge guide me instead of trying to control it.

I exhaled slowly and reached.

The silver responded instantly.

Not as a surge or as a flood, but as something finer—threads, delicate and precise, slipping into the spaces between what was fractured.

I could feel the misalignment, the way the internal structure had shifted just enough to disrupt the whole.

I guided the threads carefully, weaving them through the damage, not forcing the pieces together but encouraging them—realigning and restoring the pathways that had once held it whole.

The crack in the glass shimmered faintly. The bent needle trembled.

And then it snapped back into place.

I opened my eyes.

The compass sat whole in my hand.

Not new.

But functioning. Alive again.

I held it out to Elias.

At first, he just stared at it, disbelief flickering across his face.

Slowly, he reached out and took it from me, his fingers brushing the surface like he wasn't entirely sure it was real.

The needle inside spun once, then steadied.

Pointing true.

"Impressive," he said quietly.

A small smile pulled at my lips. "It's as easy as breathing now."

"I'm sure it is," he murmured.

His gaze lifted, sharper now. "Try something else."

I already knew what he meant.

My eyes dropped to his leg.

Or rather, to the absence of it.

The prosthetic was well-crafted and integrated seamlessly enough that most people wouldn't notice unless they were looking for it.

But I was.

And now I could see more.

The...void. The place where something had been completely severed.

I stepped closer.

"May I?"

Elias didn't move. He looked like he was holding his breath.

"Go on."

I knelt, letting my awareness extend as it had with the compass.

Find the fracture.

Find what can be restored.

The silver moved with me, slipping into the space—

And stopped.

Not resisted or blocked. There was simply...nothing to anchor to.

No fragments. No remnants. No structure waiting to be reconnected.

I frowned, pushing a little further, testing the edges, searching for anything that could be used as a starting point.

But the result didn't change.

There was nothing there.

I exhaled slowly, withdrawing.

"It won't work," I said quietly.

Elias didn't seem surprised.

"No," he said, sounding resigned. "I didn't think it would."

I straightened, meeting his gaze. "It's not damage. Not in the way the compass was."

"No," he agreed again. "It's absence. Absolute."

I nodded slowly, the understanding settling into place.

“My ability restores what still exists,” I said. “What’s broken, misaligned, fragmented.” I paused, choosing the words carefully. “But if something is entirely gone—if there’s nothing left to reconnect—then...”

“Then there is nothing for you to work with,” Elias finished.

“Yes. I’m sorry.”

Silence stretched between us for a moment, a little heavy.

And yet, it didn’t feel like failure, not the way it would have before.

Because now I understood the limits.

And more importantly, I understood the potential.

I looked down at my hands again, flexing my fingers.

“I can fix them,” I said, more to myself than anyone else.

Elias tilted his head. “Fix what?”

“People,” I said, lifting my gaze.

“Aaron,” Kieran whispered.

The way his mind had fractured.

The way his memories had scattered into disconnected fragments.

A pulse of excitement built in my chest as I nodded. “I can restore him.”

Kieran shifted beside me. “Sera—”

“I know what I’m doing now,” I cut in, turning to him. “It’s not guesswork anymore. I can see it. The connections. The way they fit together.”

Hope surged—stronger than anything I had allowed myself to feel in days.

“I can fix him,” I said, softer now.

And in doing so, find out what Catherine and Marcus were planning.

For a moment, Kieran didn’t respond.

He just looked at me, and in his eyes, I saw equal parts relief and fear.

Something else, quieter, more guarded.

But he nodded. “Alright.”

I turned back to Elias, already shifting mentally, already mapping out what I needed to do.

“We should leave, then,” I said. “The sooner we get back to Nightfang—”

“No.”

I blinked. “No?”

“You will go back,” he said. “But...not yet.”

A flicker of irritation sparked in my chest. “We don’t have time to waste.”

“You have time to make one stop,” he corrected calmly.

I narrowed my eyes. “For what?”

“For information.”

That cut through the urgency just enough to make me pause.

Elias adjusted his stance, his gaze moving between Kieran and me.

“There is an inn along the lower pass,” he said. “It does not appear on any official maps. Most who pass it believe it to be nothing more than a resting point for travelers.”

“And...it’s not?” Kieran asked.

Elias's mouth curved. "It is many things. A place of quiet exchange. Of observation." His eyes sharpened. "Of intelligence."

My pulse quickened.

"What are you saying?"

"I'm saying," he answered, "that the Origins Archives Room is not the only place that has answers to questions."

"You think they'll have something there?" I asked.

"I think," Elias said carefully, "that if there is movement—plans, shifts, preparations—traces of it will pass through that place."

I glanced at Kieran.

He was already thinking the same thing I was.

We didn't have the luxury of time. But we also couldn't ignore potential leads.

I exhaled slowly, forcing the urgency in my chest to settle into something more controlled.

“Fine,” I said. “We stop at the inn.”

Elias inclined his head. “Good.”

But as I turned, already preparing to move, my thoughts weren’t entirely on the inn.

Or Marcus.

Or Catherine.

Or even Aaron and the fractured pieces of him waiting to be put back together.

They were on my power. It had clear and defined limits, but within those limits, it was stronger than it had ever been.

I was stronger than I had ever been.