

My Sister 431

Chapter 431 CHAOS MAGNETS

SERAPHINA'S POV

Shit.

I'd known the name Mireya was somewhat familiar, but it wasn't until she mentioned the name Olivia that the puzzle pieces clicked into place.

Olivia.

The girl who had thrown herself into danger without hesitation. The one who had protected Celeste with her life.

It wasn't my own memory, but I could vividly see the moment the bullet tore through Olivia from Celeste's perspective.

My knees nearly buckled, a tremor rippling right through me, before I forced them steady.

Mireya watched me with hope shining in her wide brown eyes.

'I need to go home to Olivia.'

I let out a slow breath, forcing my thoughts into order.

I couldn't tell her.

Not like this.

Not in the aftermath of what had happened, with everything still too raw and unstable. The truth wasn't just information—it was something that would hit hard, and it needed space to land.

"Mireya."

"Yes?"

"You need to rest."

A small crease formed between her brows. "I'm fine."

"You're not."

“I’ve been through worse.”

“I don’t doubt that,” I said evenly. “But that doesn’t mean you don’t need rest.”

She held my gaze for a moment, as if weighing whether to argue.

Then she exhaled quietly. “Fine.”

Kieran came up beside me. Although his presence was steady, his attention moved constantly—tracking, assessing.

“You’re thinking too loudly,” he murmured.

I didn’t look at him. “Am I?”

“Yes.”

A beat.

“Share?”

My gaze shifted to Mireya. “Not yet.”

His gaze lingered on me for a second longer, then he nodded. “Alright.”

From the tree line behind us, there was movement.

Kieran and I instantly went on high alert—until Willow’s team appeared.

They emerged in controlled formation, their presence cutting cleanly through the quiet of the forest.

Maxwell stepped forward first, his eyes scanning us quickly before his expression settled into something more relaxed when he confirmed we were all intact.

“You two,” he said, “are veritable chaos magnets.”

I almost smiled. “Guilty.”

“Thanks for the assist,” Kieran said. “And I’m sorry if we ruined your mission.”

“Please,” Willow said, stepping forward. “That was the most excitement we’ve had in a while.”

She stretched a hand out. “Willow.”

I did smile then. “Sera.” I shook her hand. “It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

Willow’s gaze flicked to Mireya briefly, then back to me. There was no curiosity in it. No unnecessary questions.

“Where to?” she asked. “We’ll escort you in case there are any...surprises on the way.”

“Nightfang,” I said.

Home.

The journey back was fast.

We doubled back under the cover of night, cutting through forest paths and less-traveled routes until we reached where the team had left their cars.

Kieran and I peeled off briefly, retrieving ours while the others regrouped, engines turning over one by one in the quiet.

Once everyone was in, we moved out in a tight formation, headlights kept low, taking back roads and unmarked routes to avoid attention.

Inside the car, the rhythm shifted—no longer footfalls and breath, but the steady hum of the engine, the blur of trees slipping past the windows, the constant awareness that never quite eased.

Mireya sat in the back, silent again.

In the rearview mirror, I caught glimpses of her—her gaze fixed on the passing darkness, her posture held together by sheer force of will.

Gods, the thought of breaking the news of Olivia's death to her twisted my insides.

By the time the outer edges of Nightfang came into view, the sky had begun to lighten, the first hints of dawn bleeding into the horizon.

The gates opened without question at our arrival.

Home.

For the first time since we left the inn, I allowed myself to relax.

Mireya was led inside immediately.

“Get her settled,” I said quietly to one of the attendants who approached.

She nodded immediately, her focus shifting to Mireya.

“This way.”

Mireya hesitated, her gaze flickering to me.

I held it.

“You’re safe here,” I promised.

The tension on her face eased. She nodded once and followed.

I watched until she disappeared from view.

Only then did I turn back.

Maxwell stretched his arms, his expression easing now that we were inside familiar territory. "Well, that was...eventful."

"That's one word for it," Kieran said dryly.

Willow cracked a smile, revealing a small dimple on her chin. "Well, this has been fun, but we should get going."

"Will you stay for a while?" I asked. "I imagine there's some sort of hunt going on for you guys after...everything."

Maxwell and Willow exchanged a look.

She answered before he could.

“We can’t,” she said.

I frowned. “You’re sure?”

“Yes. I have obligations at the dig site. Arrangements that can’t be left unattended.”

Maxwell gave a small, apologetic shrug. “She’s not exaggerating. If she disappears for too long, people start asking questions.”

“And we don’t want that,” Kieran added.

“No,” Willow agreed.

“But you’ll keep in touch, right?” I said. “Update us if there are any...developments in your case.”

“We will.”

Maxwell stepped forward, his expression softening.

“And if anything happens,” he added, “you call. We’re not that far out.”

“We will.”

I smiled at both of them. “Thank you for everyth—.”

“Maxwell Philip Cartridge, I swear to the fucking goddess!”

Every head turned in the direction of the entrance where Maya stood.

Hair loose, sleep-tangled, and wild around her shoulders. Barefoot. Wrapped in what looked like the first thing she had grabbed—an oversized sweater slipping off one shoulder and oversized pants that most likely belonged to Ethan.

She looked like she had come straight out of bed and hadn’t bothered with anything beyond getting here as fast as possible.

Her eyes locked onto her brother.

“Maya—” he started.

She didn't let him finish.

She crossed the distance in a heartbeat and slammed into him, arms wrapping tight around his torso with enough force to knock him half a step back.

"What is wrong with you?!" she snapped, her voice breaking somewhere between anger and relief. "You disappear for weeks, no warning, no updates, nothing—and then you think you can just leave again without seeing me?!"

Maxwell blinked, clearly not expecting the full impact of that collision—physical or otherwise.

"Maya—"

"No," she cut in sharply, pulling back just enough to glare up at him. "Don't 'Maya' me. Do you have any idea how worried I was?"

Her voice hitched, betraying everything she wasn't saying outright.

Maxwell exhaled, the tension easing out of him as his hands came up, settling on Maya's shoulders.

"We're fine," he said, gentler now. "Clearly."

Maya huffed, eyes still sharp, her grip not loosening.

"I can see that now," she muttered. "That doesn't mean I'm not still mad."

A smile tugged at the corner of his mouth.

"Are those tears I see gathering in your eyes? When did you get so sentimental—oof!"

He doubled over when she sucker punched him in the gut.

"That's for adding another item to the long list of shit I worry about," Maya hissed.

A light tinkering sound filled the room as Willow threw her head back and laughed.

"Gods, I've missed you," she said to Maya.

A smile broke out on Maya's face, and she pulled Willow into a hug. "I missed you, too."

Then she pulled back and kicked Maxwell in the shin.

“Okay, what the hell?” he exclaimed, grabbing his leg.

“That’s for not telling me you and Willow got back together.”

Willow laughed again. “Go easy on him,” she said as she and Maxwell exchanged a tender look. “Things are...complicated right now.”

“Yeah, you pint-sized bully,” Maxwell said, shooting Maya a disgruntled look. “We’re still working things out.”

Maya rolled her eyes. “Whatever.” Her expression softened. “Still...it’s good to see you two together.”

Willow’s smile softened as she looked at Maxwell, and I could see the love he’d told me they’d shared shining in her eyes.

“Yeah,” she said, “me too.”

“What about the twins?” Maya asked.

“They’re fine,” Maxwell replied. “With Mom and Dad. Safe. Probably being spoiled rotten.”

“Good,” Maya sighed. “Cause—Max?”

Maxwell had frozen, his gaze going distant for a long while.

When his focus snapped back, the lightness from moments before was gone, replaced by something more serious.

“What is it?” Maya asked.

Maxwell turned to Kieran. “I spoke with my Alpha on the way here.”

Kieran’s attention sharpened. “And?”

“There are a ton of details to iron out,” Maxwell said. “But he’s agreed to ally with Nightfang.”