

## **My Sister 436**

### Chapter 436 BEYOND THE BARRIER

#### SERAPHINA'S POV

The clearing behind Daniel's treehouse became something else entirely over the next few days.

No longer just a quiet place tucked away at the edge of Nightfang, it turned into a space that hummed with purpose, with tension, with the kind of quiet vigilance that never truly let anyone rest.

If there were another way—if there was even the slightest chance we could avoid whatever lay buried beneath the ruins of the royal line—then I would find it.

And that meant fixing Aaron.

Alois, Corin, and I practiced through the nights, the moon our constant witness, refining the delicate, dangerous work of navigating a fractured mind without further tearing it apart.

Under their guidance, I learned to feel the difference between a memory that could be coaxed back into place and one that would shatter under pressure, to thread my power through the gaps without forcing it or triggering any backlash.

Each session left me more drained than the last, but also more confident in my power and skills.

When the time came, I was ready.

Aaron was once again seated in the center just as before, though the difference now was unmistakable.

He wasn't empty anymore. Not completely.

His gaze was no longer blank. It tracked movement, held emotion.

Every time I stepped into his mind before now, the difference from before was stark.

Where there had once been only scattered fragments drifting in disarray, there was now structure—fragile, incomplete, but forming.

“Ready?” Kieran’s voice came from my right.

I turned, meeting his gaze.

He hadn't said anything more about the royal path since that night. Not a word, not even a hint—but it hadn't disappeared.

I could feel it in him.

In the way his attention sharpened whenever I pushed too far.

In the way his presence stayed just a little closer than before, like he was bracing for something.

In the number of times he'd reassured me we could 'find another way' if I wasn't sure.

"I am," I said.

His hand brushed against mine, a quiet, grounding touch.

"Don't push past your limit," he murmured.

I almost smiled. "You sound like Alois."

"I'm serious."

“So am I.”

I intertwined our fingers. “I can do this, Kieran.”

He lifted our joined hands and pressed the back of mine to his lips. I closed my eyes, savoring the flood of electricity that ignited my nerves at his touch.

Wordlessly, he dropped my hand and stepped back.

I turned away and stepped toward Aaron.

The silver rose easily this time.

It didn't surge or fight or demand control. Instead, it gently settled into me, threading through my veins like a current of energy, connecting me to the moon's pull above, as if channeling its magic in a way that felt natural.

I didn't need to Shift tonight; Alina's presence was as strong within me as ever.

When I reached Aaron, recognition flickered in his eyes.

“Stay with me,” I said quietly, lowering myself in front of him.

His lips parted, as if he wanted to respond, but no sound came out. He settled for a sharp nod.

I closed my eyes.

And let go.

The shift into his mind was smoother this time. Less jarring and disorienting.

The fractured space unfolded around me, but it was different now—less chaotic, more...contained.

The fragments were no longer scattered without meaning. They hovered in clusters, connected by faint threads of light that pulsed gently, like a heartbeat.

‘You’ve improved,’ Alina murmured, her presence warm against mine.

‘We have,’ I corrected softly.

Her quiet approval brushed through me.

Then I focused.

The outer layers came first.

Memories of movement, of places, of faces without depth—those were the easiest to restore.

The fragments responded quickly now, flaring to life as I guided them, linking them, reinforcing the old neural pathways that had once existed.

Aaron's childhood.

His training.

The day he met Imani.

Moments that had shaped him.

Each connection strengthened the structure.

Each success made the next one easier.

But deeper...

Deeper was different.

The resistance began subtly at first—a drag against my awareness, a pressure that hadn't been there before.

I slowed.

'Do you feel that?' I asked.

Yes,' Alina answered.

The threads ahead of us were...thinner.

I reached out anyway.

The moment my awareness brushed the next fragment, the space reacted. The fragment flickered—then dimmed.

As if it was being pulled away from me.

My focus sharpened.

“No,” I murmured under my breath. “You don’t get to hide.”

I reached again, reinforcing the connection, pushing more of the silver into the thread—

The pushback was stronger this time.

A force I hadn’t encountered before slammed against my awareness, not chaotic like the fractured memories had been, but controlled, directed.

Like something was actively resisting me.

My breath hitched.

'That's not natural,' Alina said, tension threading through her voice.

I agreed.

I steadied myself—then pushed.

The silver flared, threading deeper, forcing the connection. The fragment snapped into place.

And Aaron screamed.

I was ripped back into my body so abruptly that the world tilted as air slammed into my lungs and sound rushed in all at once.

Aaron's body jerked violently in front of me, his head snapping back as a raw, broken cry tore out of him, the sound so sharp it cut straight through my chest.

"Stop!" Imani's voice cracked from somewhere behind me.

I pulled back instantly, cutting the connection before the damage could spread further.

Aaron collapsed forward, his breathing ragged, uneven, his entire body trembling as if he'd just been dragged through a field of thorns.

"Kieran—" I started.

"I've got him," he said, already moving.

He caught Aaron before he could slump completely, steadying him, his grip firm but careful.

"Easy," Kieran murmured. "You're alright. You're alright."

Aaron wasn't hearing him. His eyes were unfocused again, his chest rising and falling too fast, his body struggling to keep up with what had just been done to him.

I pushed myself back to my feet, my pulse still racing.

"Something is blocking the deeper layers," I said, my voice tight and sharp.

Alois stepped forward, his expression grim.

“I felt it from here,” he said. “That wasn’t natural resistance.”

“Yes,” I said. “And it’s reactive. It pushed back the moment I tried to connect anything past a certain point.”

Imani dropped to her knees beside Aaron, her hands hovering uncertainly before finally settling against his arm.

“Aaron,” she whispered. “Baby, can you hear me?”

His breathing began to slow as he leaned into her touch.

Relief flickered through me—but it didn’t last.

Because I could still feel the barrier.

“If we keep forcing it like that,” Alois said quietly, “you’ll break him.”

My jaw tightened. “I know.”

“And not just him,” Corin added. “You’re taking the strain too.”

I wiped a bead of sweat off my forehead. “I can handle it.”

“But he can’t,” Alois pointed out.

No, Aaron couldn’t.

Not if every attempt meant tearing into something that was actively fighting back.

Not if each failure cost him more than we could afford to lose.

Frustration built in my chest, sharp and suffocating.

I had come this far.

I was so close, I could feel it.

Just beyond that barrier, there was something important. Something we needed.

And I couldn't reach it.

Silence settled over the clearing.

Heavy.

Uncertain.

Then—

“I'll do it.”