

Chapter 3 Public Humiliation

Sienna’s POV

I laughed.

The sound scraped out of my throat until my vision blurred, my chest heaved and the whole place fell into a thick silence where everyone looked at me like I’d finally lost it. Maybe I had.

When I finally stopped, I could look at him. What had gotten me so obsessed with such a scumbag?

“Kiran Blackwood, put away your self-righteous attitude. I don’t even want to look at you right now. You make me sick” I spat like even his name left a bitter taste in my tongue.

It was near comical when Kiran’s face went rigid and shock flickered across his features before it hardened into something uglier.

Anger.

At least that made both of us now.

I turned to Lilith. She was still holding onto his arm, trembling theatrically, she looked shocked as well.

I smiled at her, plastering her fake expression back at her.

“Lilith Eldritch, next time you put on a performance, find somewhere without surveillance cameras.”

Her face went white for a second before her usual victimized mask slipped back into place.

“You dare!” Kiran growled in his Alpha voice, and red veins stood out at his temples.

The Alpha presence slammed into me, pressing down on my chest until each breath felt like dragging stone into my lungs. If I had a wolf, it probably would be worse, but I didn’t. Perhaps it is for this reason that I felt no fear even when he stood over me like some kind of deity delivering judgment, his eyes blazing with self-righteous fury.

“I saw it with my own eyes! You attacked her. You’re cruel, Sienna. Violent. You hurt a packmate.” His arm tightened around Lilith, and she buried her face against his chest with a soft whimper. “As Alpha, I have the right to punish you.”

Punish. I met his gaze challengingly, and for another split second, that shock passed across his face again.

“You will stay in this fountain overnight, let the water cleanse that filthy heart of yours!”

The crowd around us went silent and then the whispers started again.

“Overnight? In winter?”

“She just got out of the hospital—”

“Even an Alpha wouldn’t survive that—”

I stared at him. At this man I’d loved for five years. This man I’d given everything to. This man who’d held my hand through my nightmares and now he wanted me to freeze to death in a fountain.

Over a lie.

I laughed again but it was quieter this time. Almost to myself.

“Fine.” The word came out of my lips even though I barely felt it move.

Kiran blinked, like he’d expected me to beg. To throw myself at his feet and promise to be good.

But I was done begging.

I turned around slowly, the faces of the crowd blurred together—shock, pity, disgust, morbid curiosity. I saw none of them clearly.

My eyes were fixed on the water and then I jumped in.

It was fucking cold.

Like a thousand needles driving into my skin, burrowing deeper with each second.

I kept going deeper until I was waist-deep now. But I didn’t stop even though the cold was biting my flesh cruelly.

I started to search for it, desperately and I could see it resting near the edge of the fountain basin, the silver chain tangled around itself, the sapphire winking up at me through the water.

I sank deeper into the water, my fingers were already numb, clumsy as I reached for it..

I closed my fist tighter around the necklace, feeling the shape of it press into my palm. Proof that I’d survived this and that some things couldn’t be taken from me, no matter how hard they tried.

This was mine, even if nothing else was.

I met Kiran’s gaze across the water. It’s already over, those days when we comforted each other and I thought it meant something.

“Brother! What are you doing?” The familiar voice cuts through the silence.

Talia.

She burst through the crowd, her face going sheet-white when she saw in the freezing cold water. Her eyes filled with tears, her hands shaking as she pointed at Kiran.

“Are you out of your mind? Sienna just got out of the hospital! Do you want her to die?”

She whirled on him, trembling with rage I’d never seen from her before.

“It’s her own fault,” Kiran said emotionless. Like I was nothing more than a disobedient dog. “She needs to learn some manners.”

“Manners?” Talia’s voice shook. “What kind of manners require throwing a recovering patient into ice water in the middle of winter?”

“Talia, don’t blame Kiran.” Lilith’s voice drifted over, soft and pained. “It’s my fault. I know Sienna doesn’t like me, but I didn’t expect...” She pressed her face into Kiran’s chest, her shoulders shaking with delicate sobs. “I didn’t expect her to react so violently over something as small as a necklace.”

The way she said it like I was the monster.

Kiran’s expression hardened further. His arm tightened around Lilith protectively, and when he looked at me again, there was nothing in his eyes but ice.

“Shut up!” Talia spun on Lilith, rage blazing in her face. “Just shut up!”

Without another word, she plunged into the fountain.

The splash sent water flying and droplets hit my numb face, but I barely felt them anymore. Everything was going numb, including my fingers. My toes. My thoughts as well.

Talia grabbed my arm. Her grip was warm as she hauled me toward the edge of the fountain.

“Let’s go,” she said urgently, grabbing a jacket from someone close by and wrapping it around my shoulders. The fabric was warm and I wanted to cry from the relief of it.

She turned back to Kiran, fury still warring in her expression.

“Brother, you’ll regret this.”

Kiran didn’t even look at us. He was too busy soothing Lilith, who was still crying prettily into his chest.

“It’s okay,” he murmured to her. “She won’t dare bother you again.”

I stopped.

Talia looked at me, confused, but I needed to do this. One last time.

“Kiran Blackwood.”

My voice came out steadier than I expected. Maybe it was the cold. Maybe it was the numbness spreading through me. Or maybe it was just that I’d finally run out of things to feel.

He glanced over. Barely. Like I wasn’t worth his full attention.

“You’re right,” I said. “I won’t dare anymore.”

I took a breath and let it out slowly.

“From now on, I won’t dare to love you.”

Murmurs of surprise threaded through the crowd.

“Sienna...” Talia called my name, fear and grief mingling in her tone.

I didn’t glance at Kiran again. Talia half-dragged me away. I was soaked through, my teeth chattering, but my eyes burned with an uncommon brightness. That public humiliation had severed the last fragile thread tying me to the past.

Through the blur of faces, I spotted Doctor Danton. He stood at the edge of the crowd, his face lined with worry. When our eyes met, he shook his head slowly. Sadly.

And something clicked in my mind.

My father.

The mate he’d chosen for me before he died.

The Alpha heir of the Blizzard Pack.

I stopped suddenly and Talia stumbled, trying to support my weight.

“Talia. Don’t take me back.”

I said and she looked at me, seeming confused.

“Take me to Doctor Danton. Now. Immediately.”