

My Sister 108

Chapter 108 THE REAL VICTIM

CELESTE'S POV

I stormed out of the house, fury burning so hot inside me it felt like it would flay the skin off my bones.

It was an old, familiar kind of heat—one I used to wear like armor as a child when I didn't get my way, except this wasn't childish anymore. This was different.

This was bone-deep, grown-up rage—the kind that came from betrayal, from humiliation.

And unlike when I was a child, everyone didn't immediately jump to do my bidding to appease me.

My heels clicked against the pavement like angry punctuation, echoing back at me in the cooling evening air.

The rhythm wasn't just sound—it was the only thing tethering me to myself, reminding me that I still had power, still had presence.

I went out through the manor gates, down the street, and...

I didn't even know where I thought I was going. My body moved before my mind did, powered by outrage, by a refusal to sit one more second at that table listening to them spew absolute fucking bullshit.

Behind me, there was nothing—no hurried footsteps, no voice calling my name. Neither Ethan nor Mother came after me.

Their absence was like a slap to the face. It pressed in on me, heavy, suffocating, cruel in its indifference.

And it stung, sharp and intimate, like only family could manage.

How dare they?

How dare they sit at their perfect little dinner and talk about poor, misunderstood Sera like she was a victim?

Like she didn't rip our family apart the night she ripped my heart out?

She was the villain, and yet somehow, they acted like she deserved sympathy.

As if her sad little sob story excused the chaos she left in her wake.

As if her suffering outweighed mine when she'd been the cause of it in the first place.

My own blood family, treating me like I was the intruder. Like I was the one who didn't belong.

It was grotesque.

I was the one who'd been loyal, who had carried the family name like a crown, who had bent myself into whatever shape Mother demanded.

Perfect, polished, precious Celeste.

I was the perfect daughter, the perfect sister.

And still, they dared to put her on a pedestal and leave me standing in the dirt.

I did not fucking deserve this.

And I wouldn't fucking take it.

I yanked my phone out of my bag and jabbed at Kieran's number. It only rang once before his voice slid into my ear—flat, distracted.

"Celeste, I'm in a meeting." Just that. No warmth, no affection.

The words tumbled out, breathless, desperate. Surely he would hear it, the crack in my voice, the plea woven underneath. "Kieran, I'm so upset! You won't believe what Mother and—"

"I said I was in a meeting, Celeste. If it's urgent, tell the driver to take you wherever you want; you have my card and no qualms about using it as you wish. I'll speak to you later."

The line went dead.

I stared at the glowing screen incredulously, the rejection sharp as glass. It lodged in my chest, cutting every time I tried to breathe.

When had this happened?

How had this happened?

How had I gone from the darling of my family, the apple of Kieran's eye, to this...this... outcast?

I was Celeste Eloise Lockwood, dammit!

Adoration was my birthright; I didn't claw my way into the spotlight—I was the spotlight.

My laughter lit up rooms, my beauty turned heads, my charm could muddle even the sharpest minds.

Loyalty was never something I begged for—it came crawling to me, desperate, inevitable, like moths to flame.

The thought of losing that pull, of no longer being the gravity that every room revolved around, was intolerable.

They had no right to look away.

Sera had no right to have them look at her.

I hurled my phone down onto the pavement. It skidded across the ground with a satisfying crack. A few pedestrians glanced over; I threw them a glare sharp enough to cut, daring them to comment. They looked away.

Good. Let them. At least strangers still remembered how to fear me.

“Drive,” I snapped at the driver Kieran had given me as I slid into the backseat. “Take me to the mall. Now.”

The words came out clipped, vicious. Control, I reminded myself. Power. If they would not give it to me, I would take it back piece by piece.

He scurried to obey.

By the time we reached the mall, my blood had cooled into something darker, heavier. Rage was one thing, but humiliation—that was poison. It ate slowly, leaving nothing but bitterness.

And oh, how it ate. Already I felt it working through me, gnawing away at my composure, leaving behind only the ache of being dismissed, diminished.

I wasn’t going to sit at home like some abandoned pet. If no one wanted to choose me, then I would choose myself.

Yes. I would not beg for their affection. I would not wait for them to come to their senses.

I would not cower in the fucking shadows like Seraphina.

I would remind them all why the world once revolved around me.

The first thing I did was buy a new phone.

And as soon as the pimply nerd behind the counter set it up, I summoned the few people who still knew how to orbit me.

Friends—if you could call them that.

But they were loyal in their own way—loyal to spectacle, to drama, to me.

Right now, that was enough.

“Celeste, hey!” Abby’s voice bubbled through the line.

Always bubbly, always eager. A golden retriever in designer heels.

“Meet me at the mall. Bring Emma. I need you both.”

I didn't explain, didn't beg. They came because they always came. Because it was a privilege to be summoned by me.

It was a privilege to be in my presence.

We tore through boutiques like a storm. My hands barely touched the fabrics before assistants rushed to drape them over my arms, to start tallying my purchases.

Shoes, silk blouses, a fur coat I didn't even like—what did it matter? Every swipe of Kieran's card was a Band-Aid against the wound they'd all torn open.

Hopefully, his phone buzzed and beeped relentlessly, and disrupted his stupid fucking meeting that was more important than me.

The bags piled higher, the receipts longer, but the hollow ache inside me only grew.

Abby twirled in front of a mirror, arms heavy with bracelets. "Tell me you're wearing something like this for the engagement party. It's going to be the event of the year."

Her words hit me like a stone. I smiled too quickly, too sharply.

"Of course. The best. You think I'd let Sera outshine me?"

“As if she could,” Emma giggled.

The sound grated on my nerves, though I forced myself to join in, to let the laughter smooth the edges of my trembling composure.

“Speaking of which,” Abby chimed in. “When is the engagement party, Celeste?”

My pulse skipped. Because the truth, the ugly, choking truth, was that since Kieran got back from the island, he’d been tactically avoiding any talk about the engagement party.

Every time I brought it up, he brushed it off or downright shut it down.

And it was always scraps of the same flimsy excuse. ‘The timing is wrong.’

‘My parents missed our announcement party, but they shouldn’t miss my engagement party.’

‘Once the rogue attacks are solved and Daniel can return, my parents will too, and we can talk about it.’

Even when she wasn’t actively involved, Seraphina still found a way to ruin my life.

Kieran had been different since he returned from that island—even more so than usual.

He'd only drifted further from me, throwing himself into his work, barely spending any time at home.

All I got these days were one-word answers and exasperated sighs.

I felt like I was watching helplessly as he constructed a wall between us, every second of silence and distance a new brick.

And when I thought back to what Sera said in the hospital...

No. I wouldn't go there. I wouldn't consider that abomination for one fucking second.

"Kieran's been a little...distracted lately," I finally answered.

I would not give Abby or Emma the satisfaction of knowing the trouble in my paradise. I wasn't naïve enough to believe they had my best interests at heart.

So I tweaked the truth.

“And do you know why?” I didn’t wait for them to reply. “Sera.” The name tasted like venom.

Abby and Emma leaned in curiously as I continued.

“She bewitched him on that island. Twisting him against me. And now, she’s working with Maya—poisoning Ethan, poisoning Mother. Suddenly, everyone treats her like she’s the poor little outcast. As if I haven’t bled for this family too.”

Their faces shifted—first surprise, then indignation on my behalf.

“That bitch,” Abby hissed.

Emma slammed a pair of heels back onto the display shelf. “Sera always plays the fragile one—the rogue attacks, the shooting—she’s made herself the poster girl for victimhood. But you’re the real victim, Celeste, and when everyone sees that, they’ll see her real face. People like her don’t get to win.”

Her words lit something in me. Yes. That was the truth.

Sera’s power lay in her illusion—this mask of suffering, of silent endurance.

All it would take was a crack, a reversal, and everyone would see what I saw: a manipulative bitch.

I leaned closer to my friends, lowering my voice until it felt like we were conspiring in the dark. “Exactly. She doesn’t have a monopoly on being the victim. The focus just needs to shift from her for a second, and then the world will know who the true serpent is.”

I thought of Mother’s face at dinner, that flash of disappointment, as if I were the problem.

I thought of Ethan scolding me like I was a child.

I thought of Kieran, brushing me off as though I were nothing but an inconvenient weight dragging him down.

My lips curled. The taste of it—plans, vengeance, control—was intoxicating.

Abby smirked, clinking her shopping bags together like glasses in a toast. “Then let’s help the world see it.”