

My Sister 122

Chapter 122 TOXIC PRINCESS

CELESTE'S POV

"Alpha Thomas," Sera greeted with a polite smile, her eyes darting curiously between us. "Is there anything I can help you with?"

I knew I should relax my shoulders, ease the look of horror on my face, but I was too busy trying to keep my heart from pounding out of my chest.

"Oh no," that familiar voice answered, amusement edging his politeness. "I thought I recognized your...friend. Celeste—that is you, right?"

Sera arched a brow, and I took in a deep breath. It was time to end this before I gave the bitch another weapon in the arsenal she was building against me.

I spun, forcing a detached smile onto my face. "You must be mistaken," I said quickly, my words sharp as glass, my eyes unable to meet his. "I don't know you."

Before he could speak and declare that I, in fact, knew him, before he could list out all the ways I knew him and doom me, I turned on my heel and fled into the night.

Cowardly? Perhaps. But better a hasty retreat than the ruin his presence threatened to unleash.

I barely remembered how I got from that café door to my car.

My heels clicked too fast across the pavement, my breath shallow, hands trembling as I gripped the door handle.

I slammed the door shut, sealing myself inside. The air inside felt suffocating, hot against my skin.

Sera's voice still clung to me like a bloodsucking leech: proof.

I still didn't believe it truly. And yet—her eyes... no, damn it, I couldn't shake the feeling she had something real.

And then he had appeared.

Of all the people to walk out of the shadows—fucking Thomas Bane.

I pressed my palms hard into the steering wheel, forcing steady breaths. It was fine. Everything wasn't ruined. Surely he was only passing through. Surely—

A firm rap on my window shattered the fragile thought, and I flinched violently, head whipping toward the sound.

There he was, his face lit by the amber streetlight, his derisive smirk every bit as mocking as I remembered.

“Terrible performance, Celeste,” Thomas drawled, his voice muffled through the glass. “You’d think a cunning shrew like you would have better acting skills.”

My stomach dropped. My fingers scrambled uselessly at the ignition, but before I could start the engine, he motioned lazily with one hand. “Relax. I’m not here to expose you. I just stopped to say hello.”

I forced a scoff, rolling the window down an inch. “How...courteous of you.” My voice was steadier than I felt, though my pulse pounded violently at my throat.

His laugh was short, cutting. “Don’t flatter yourself. You never deserved courtesies from me.” And then his voice dropped, the amusement vanishing like smoke, replaced by familiar loathing. “Just like you never deserved Brett.”

The name struck like a slap.

My nails dug into the leather wheel, but I tilted my head, painting my expression in the mask I’d worn since childhood. “Oh, Thomas, you think dragging up old history will wound me?”

I shrugged, my shoulders aching from the tension suddenly winding through them. “It was for the best. Brett and I were ill-fitted. Partners ought to be well-matched—from family to legacy. He knew it, too.”

“Funny,” Thomas said, his gaze unwavering, “because he didn’t know it until you shoved it in his face. He would have kept worshiping you till his last breath if you hadn’t snapped the tether yourself.”

Something twisted inside me. A flash—Brett’s stormy eyes the night we fought, his voice rough as he said, ‘Fine, Celeste. If that’s what you want. I accept.’

I had laughed at him, even as my stomach caved in on itself.

I had thought he’d crawl back. He never did.

I stiffened. “He was beneath me. I did what was necessary.”

Thomas leaned closer to the glass, his smile frigid. “He was too good for you, and you knew it. I thank the moon every damn day my friend got away from you before you rotted him completely.”

The words burned hotter than I wanted them to. I snapped my chin higher. “Think what you want. I’ve already moved on. Soon, I’ll become Luna of the Nightfang Pack. Kieran Blackthorne’s Luna. And then we’ll see who rots.”

His laughter rang out, sharp and scornful. “The toxic princess finally found a new throne to poison. I’ll be sure to send my condolences to Nightfang. May the goddess save them all.”

My throat ached, but I refused to give him the satisfaction of seeing the effect of his words. “Goodnight, Thomas.” I rolled the window up with deliberate slowness, savoring the finality of it.

I started the car, forcing my hand not to shake, and drove off.

Only when the city lights blurred around me did I realize how wet my lashes were.

Damn it. No.

No tears for him.

My gaze dropped, unbidden, to the ink on my wrist.

The tattoo we had gotten together—Brett’s idea. A symbol of forever. Of eternal love.

I’d thought it glamorous then, romantic. And Brett hadn’t known at the time, but Kieran was who I thought of when I branded that mark onto my skin.

He was the one who was supposed to be my forever.

The tears brimmed again, and I didn't know who they were for—Brett or Kieran. I swiped them away furiously.

I did not regret. I could not regret.

The only mistake I had made was walking away a decade ago, leaving the field wide open for Sera to take my place in Kieran's bed. In his fucking heart.

But she would never surpass me. She couldn't.

I was the Lockwood princess. Radiant, destined. The one the elders whispered of since birth. The one born to stand at Kieran's side.

She was nothing but the pathetic shadow that slithered behind me.

By the time I reached the house, my fury had outpaced my fear. The moment I saw Kieran in the living room, the anger morphed into desperation.

He looked up from a spread of documents, his dark hair rumpled from running his hand through it too many times. Tired, but still so infuriatingly gorgeous.

I didn't even bother asking where he'd gone. As long as it hadn't been to Sera's arms, I was appeased.

For now.

"Kieran." I crossed the room quickly, dropping my purse, my voice rougher than intended. "Mark me."

His eyes widened. "What?"

"Mark me." I gripped his shoulders, nails biting through the fabric of his shirt. "Tonight. Right fucking now."

He pulled back slightly, frowning. "Celeste. We agreed—we'd respect Edward's traditions. The marking will be after we're married."

My breath came sharp. "Traditions?" I laughed, the sound too high. "Who cares about dusty traditions? We're already bound by promise. What difference does it make if you mark me now?"

He studied me, confusion shading to alarm. "What's wrong? Did something happen tonight?"

"No," I snapped too quickly.

His brows furrowed further, and I softened, dropping my voice, my body trembling with the truth I could never fully cage. “I just—I need this. After everything... I need to feel that you’re mine. That nothing can take you away.”

His jaw clenched, his silence unbearable. “Celeste—”

I kissed him.

Hard, desperate, crushing my mouth to his before he could reject me outright. If he marked me now, it would be sealed. There’d be no going back.

But even as my lips pressed to his, he did not melt the way I wanted him to, the way I needed him to.

His hands came up—not to pull me closer, but to push me gently, firmly back.

“Celeste,” he began, his voice low, conflicted—

“You don’t have to mark me now,” I said, hating the desperation that laced my voice. Fuck, how did I get so fucking pathetic? “But, Kieran, I’ve been back for months now, and you won’t even go further than kissing me.”

His jaw clenched. "I'm trying to respect your father's wishes."

"Bullshit!" I snapped. "You didn't care about traditions and my father's wishes when you impregnated my sister!"

His eyes flared wide, and his grip on my shoulders tightened. "Celeste—"

And then the shrill ring of his phone cut through the air.

We froze.

The name on the screen flashed once before he snatched it up.

Daniel.

Of.

Fucking.

Course.

Kieran didn't even hesitate as he turned away from me and answered the call.

The sound of his son's voice on the other end pulled him entirely away, his face softening with paternal concern.

I stood there, chest heaving, lips still tingling, fury clawing at my insides.

Even now, even after everything, Sera's shadow reached between us, stealing what should have been mine.

Not for much longer.