

My Sister 147

Chapter 147 AS SIMPLE AS A DANCE

SERAPHINA'S POV

I should have said no.

No, what I should have done was turn around and walk right out the door the moment I laid eyes on Kieran on the stage.

But whatever it was, whatever damn invisible thread that still seemed to exist between me and my ex-husband had pulled, and I hadn't resisted as hard as I should have.

I'd stayed, I'd played silly little games with him. I'd let his voice guide me through the last challenge.

Worst of all—I'd enjoyed every fucking minute.

And now—the consequences of my actions: a gorgeous necklace (that I hated to admit rivalled the one Lucian had given me.) And a dance.

I took an instinctive step back. I shouldn't have been here in the first place.

I should've been anywhere but in a bar with my ex-husband, contemplating fucking dancing with him.

I needed to leave, right now. Go home and prepare for the final challenge.

My eyes darted behind Byron, where Kieran stood, a little too at ease, a little too nonchalant, like he was forcing himself not to show any readable emotion or reaction.

And then Byron spoke.

"My Lillian's been gone nineteen years." His voice was heavy with the weight of grief yet light with the softness of reverence. "Like I mentioned before, today would have been our thirtieth anniversary."

My chest tightened. "I'm sorry," I whispered.

Byron shook his head. "No, don't be. Lillian wasn't one for tears or sorrows." The wistfulness of his smile was like a fist around my heart. "When I close my eyes, I can still see her dancing through this bar, the light glancing off her necklace."

His eyes shone—not with tears, but with the glow of a man who had loved and been loved completely. I couldn't look away. "Won't you grant me this one gift, Sera?"

Slowly, without fully realizing what I was doing, I took the necklace out of the box. It lay cold in my palm, the pendant's blue stone winking in the stage light.

And though it was featherlight, it felt heavy.

Heavy with memories. Heavy with meaning.

A lump formed in my throat. Swallowing hard did nothing to dislodge it.

“Alright,” I whispered.

The crowd erupted into applause, but I barely heard them—quite frankly, I’d forgotten they existed.

My gaze slid back to Kieran, who’d suddenly tensed. Surprise flickered in his eyes, as if he’d expected me to reject Byron and walk out.

Byron beamed and gave a small bow, stepping out of the way.

And suddenly, Kieran and I were the only ones on stage.

I hesitated, my heart kicking into a gallop. Every rational instinct pulled me towards the bar’s exit.

But I'd already made a commitment; I couldn't possibly go back on my word.

And then Kieran held his hand out. "Allow me," he murmured.

My pulse lurched. It was stupid, I knew. We hadn't even touched; the outstretched arm was barely a gesture, if you could even call it that.

For a moment, I didn't realize what he was asking. But then I saw his gaze dart to the necklace, and my heart skipped a gallop.

My hand trembled slightly as I held the necklace out. Kieran took it from me with surprising care, the metal glinting between his fingers.

I froze as he stepped behind me, his nearness a quiet storm.

The brush of his knuckles against my skin as he swept my hair aside sent a shiver racing down my spine. The clasp clicked softly into place, and his touch lingered a second too long before he dropped his hands.

Music floated through the speakers—soft, lilting, the unmistakable sound of an old love ballad.

When I turned, Kieran's hand was held out again, and slowly, hesitantly, I took it.

For a moment, neither of us moved. It always felt like this with Kieran—like time was slowing down. Like every move we made had to be felt. Savored.

I saw him glance down at his large hand dwarfing mine, and I wondered if he was thinking the same thing I was: that this was probably the first time we'd ever held hands after a decade of marriage.

And then we moved.

Kieran's hand folded around mine, the other settling on the small of my waist. The warmth of his palm seeped through the thin fabric of my romper, searing, unnerving. Yet...gentle. His grip wasn't iron or rigid. It was steady. Tender.

And, against my will, something inside me softened as I surrendered to the moment.

Kieran and I had never had a formal wedding ceremony. Every gala we'd attended as a married couple had been a stiff, awkward event.

Basically, we'd never danced together before.

I'd never let myself indulge in imagining what it would be like to sway in his arms, but in this moment...

I didn't know how to explain his touch—it guided, not demanded. His eyes met mine, searchingly, almost...knowingly. Like we spoke a silent language only he and I could understand.

And I had no way of explaining the tiny arcs of electricity that emanated from everywhere his hands touched me and spread through my body, coursing through my blood vessels.

And then, to my quiet dismay, I began to compare.

Lucian danced differently—deliberate, calculated charm woven into every movement. Every dance we'd ever shared had been in front of an audience, and though he'd been caring and gentle during, they'd always felt...performative.

With Kieran, though, there was none of that. No charm, no performance. Just...presence.

I didn't know one could be so consumed by a dance. I didn't realize it was possible, so ridiculously easy, to lose oneself in something as simple as a dance.

The music wound through us like a silken thread, tugging me closer than I should have allowed.

My heart, traitorous thing, stumbled on an old rhythm, remembering what it was like to adore this man. To want his eyes on me, exactly like they were now, as if I were the only thing in the world that mattered to him.

And for a fleeting, frightening heartbeat, I forgot all the reasons this was a terrible, stupid idea.

I forgot the long, cold years of distance. Forgot Celeste. Forgot all the pain.

There was only the sway of Kieran's body against mine, the steady rise and fall of his chest, the harmony of his heart beating in sync with mine.

Gods, I could have lived the rest of my life in this moment.

But then, too fucking soon, the final notes faded and silence fell thick between us.

Neither of us moved right away. My eyes were closed, my pulse racing wildly. His breath brushed against my temple, spreading warmth through my entire body.

And then I forced my eyes open, tilting my head back.

The look in his eyes was undoing. The usual storm had muted into something achingly vulnerable, as if he was holding back a torrent of emotions.

And I wanted—gods, I needed—to lean in.

To close the distance. To k—

Applause erupted around us, and reality returned like a knife in the gut.

We released each other slowly, carefully, as though the world might shatter if we moved too fast.

Everything that had faded away now returned with startling clarity. The bar. The audience. The ex-husband I had no business dancing with.

As the crowd cheered, Byron returned to the stage, clapping, his smile outshining the stage lights.

“Thank you,” he said, his voice thick with emotion as he approached. “You’ve given me more than you know.”

He pressed a heavy bottle of red wine into my hands, the glass cool and smooth. “This was one of Lillian’s treasures, too. We bought it on our honeymoon in Greece and were saving it for our thirtieth. I want you to have it.”

I tried to protest. “Byron, you’ve already done so much. I can’t—”

“You can,” he said firmly, closing my fingers around it. “And you will. Don’t argue with an old man.”

My laugh came out shaky. “Alright. Thank you.”

“No, Sera, thank you.”

He patted my shoulder, and in that moment, it wasn’t just gratitude in his eyes—it was something like recognition.

As if he’d glimpsed through me, seen the shadows I carried, and was offering me some light.

The crowd dispersed, drawn back into a chorus of chatter and music.

“Well...” Awkward. That was the only way to describe the way I hovered on the stage, my legs refusing to move.

I hated the hesitancy twisting my insides, but a part of me wanted to stay. Wanted another song to play. Wanted to slip back into Kieran’s arms.

He offered me a gentle smile, his eyes glowing softly, like... Like he was thinking the same thing I was.

“Goodnight, Sera,” he said softly.

I swallowed. The lump still sat firmly in my throat. “Goodnight, Kieran.”

And then, I forced my legs to move.

I slipped from the stage, necklace cool against my throat, wine tucked against my ribs like a fragile secret.

And though I didn’t turn back, I could feel Kieran’s gaze burning into me until I stepped out of sight.