

My Sister 172

Chapter 172 THE END

CELESTE'S POV

The Lockwood manor had never felt so suffocating.

Every chandelier shimmered with sterile perfection, every corner smelled faintly of lemon polish and wood, but underneath it all was the stench of humiliation.

Three days had passed since the end of the LST. Three days since Kieran had looked at me as if I were something pitiful, an inconvenience. And then walked away.

I'd told myself he just needed time. That after all the noise settled, he'd come crawling back like always—apologizing, rationalizing, making it up to me.

That's how it always went. Kieran might be stubborn and proud, but he was predictable.

And he loved me.

So when his name flashed on my phone this morning, shock and hope crashed through me, my heart leaping.

“Kieran!” I said his name the way one breathes after drowning—half-relief, half-disbelief.

“Celeste.” His voice was calm, too calm. “Can we meet? There’s something I need to say in person.”

I knew it. I knew he couldn’t stay away for long.

“Of course,” I said softly, as if I hadn’t already bolted to the vanity, as if my heart wasn’t hammering loud enough to be heard through the line.

When I hung up, relief and giddy anticipation bubbled up. I nearly laughed out loud in incredulity and ecstasy.

Yes, yes, yes!

My mother appeared at my door at that moment, coat in hand, ready to leave for the cemetery.

“Is something going on?” she asked curiously.

I beamed at her. “Kieran wants to see me!”

“Oh.” Her expression shuttered, and I frowned. “Aren’t you happy?”

“I am. It’s just...” She shook her head. “You promised to visit your father’s grave with me today. You haven’t been since the funeral.”

I waved her off, already heading to my closet.

I rifled through dresses—silk, chiffon, lace. “Tell Father I’ll come tomorrow,” I murmured absently to my mother.

“Celeste, he—”

I whipped my head back. “What? It’s not like he’s going anywhere.”

Her eyes widened. “Celeste!”

I rolled my eyes, turning back to my closet.

My mind spun with possibilities: the ring, Kieran kneeling before me, the headline. Celeste Lockwood and Alpha Kieran Blackthorne: The Union of Legends.

“I’ll visit soon,” I said. “I’ll even bring Kieran so he can be properly introduced as his son-in-law.” I smirked over my shoulder. “The right way, this time.”

My mother didn’t say anything as she quietly left my room and shut the door.

My hand shook as I swept blush across my cheeks. I tried to steady myself, layering on composure like war paint, focusing on each precise motion to contain my nerves.

I slipped into a sheer red dress, sleek, bold, and almost scandalously tailored to every curve.

The fabric caught the light in a way that made it seem poured over my skin, accentuating the warmth of my tan and the long, shapely lines of my legs.

When I stood before the mirror, I saw the version of me Kieran could never resist. The woman he always came back to—even after ten years. The one who could undo him with something as simple as a smile.

And as I left my room, I made a promise to myself: This time, I wouldn’t let him out of my grasp.

The restaurant was empty when I arrived; not a soul in sight, except for the waiter who opened the door for me. Candlelight flickered over the velvet seats and gilded walls, and a soft piano played somewhere unseen.

He'd booked the entire place.

My lips curled. My chest swelled. This was it. This was fucking it!

Kieran was already there, seated by the window. His posture was straight, his suit immaculate, his expression unreadable.

For a fleeting second, I saw the same man who had once sworn he'd protect me against the world. The man who'd been mine before Sera sank her claws into him.

Never again.

"I didn't realize you could be so dramatic, Kie," I teased lightly, setting my clutch down as I slid into the seat opposite him. He'd already ordered wine, and I wrapped my fingers around the cool stem of my glass.

"Booking an entire restaurant? You could've just proposed like a normal man." I winked. "You know I don't mind the audience."

He didn't smile.

"Celeste," he said, his voice low, careful. "There's something I need to say."

Straight to the point. Oh, what a man.

I smoothed my hair, ignoring the faint prickle in my stomach. "Don't be nervous. I promise I'll say yes."

"Celeste."

The sound of my name again—firmer, colder—cut through my fantasy like a blade.

My fingers froze around my wine glass. "What is it?"

He took a breath, steady and deep. His gaze didn't waver as his eyes locked on mine. "We need to end this."

For a heartbeat, I didn't understand the words. They made no sense strung together like that.
"End...what?"

“This,” he said, gesturing between us. “Our relationship.”

I laughed. I actually laughed. “Oh, gods, you’re terrible at this. You nearly had me for a second.”

“Celeste—”

“No, no.” I shook my head. “You know I like theatrics, but this is a bit much, Kie. You don’t get to fake a breakup right before you propose.”

His expression didn’t shift. “I’m not joking.”

Silence cracked between us.

The candles flickered, and the piano faltered into another key.

My throat went dry. “You’re serious.”

“I am.”

I stared at him, trying to decipher the lines of his face. “Did Sera put you up to this?” I asked finally. “Or was it Daniel? He’s always hated me, and I knew that pretentious invitation was a tactic—”

“This isn’t about them,” he cut in sharply.

“Then what?” My voice rose before I could stop it. “What the actual fuck is happening right now?”

Kieran sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose. “Celeste, I’ve failed you. I thought I could love you the way you wanted, but I can’t. I...I don’t think I ever have. And I won’t keep pretending. It’s wrong—for both of us.”

My mind recoiled. This couldn’t be real. Panic rose, refusing to let reality take hold. This wasn’t fucking happening.

“You’re wrong.” The words came out brittle, trembling. “I know you, Kieran. You don’t mean that.”

“I do.”

I could feel my pulse hammering in my throat, my chest, my fingertips. He couldn’t mean it. Not after everything.

“I’ve given you ten years of my life!” I spat. “Ten years of waiting, loving, fighting! You think you can just—end it?” I swung my arm around the empty restaurant. “Like this?”

His eyes softened, but only with pity. That made it worse.

"You deserve better than me," he said quietly. "Someone who won't hurt you the way I have."

"For gods' sake, stop acting like you're doing this for me!" My voice cracked. "This isn't noble, Kieran. It's cruel."

He didn't flinch. He just looked at me, silent, steady, resolute—the same way he'd looked at me when he'd walked away after the Trials.

Was this how he had divorced Sera? Cold and unfeeling?

"Call me whatever you want," he said calmly, like he was discussing lunch plans instead of ending our fucking relationship.

"I'll take responsibility for everything. I'll handle the press, any rumors that may arise—everything. I'll even make sure you're compensated for the time and effort you've put into—"

"Compensated?" I cut him off, my voice sharp enough to draw blood. "Like this is a business deal that fell through?"

"I know you have your heart set on it, but there won't be an engagement ceremony," he continued, tone clipped. "Our relationship has to end here."

The finality in his tone made something inside me shatter.

That festering hate that had been growing exploded like a ripe pimple.

My palm struck his cheek with a sharp crack that echoed through the empty restaurant.

"How dare you?" My breaths came ragged. "You think I care about your money, your stupid offers of compensation? I don't want any of that, Kieran—I want you!"

Tears spilled down, hot and traitorous, streaking my perfectly painted face.

"You think some press statement can fix this? That some fucking cheque that I don't need can erase the fact that I loved you more than my own blood?"

His face had snapped to the side at my strike, and he sat frozen, his eyes locked on something in the distance.

“Look at me!” I shouted. “You were mine before Sera ever came into the picture. And yet, I bore the shame of being the woman who stole her sister’s husband when it was the other way around. You owe me, Kieran. You owe me!”

His eyes flickered—pain, guilt. But still...determination. “I can’t marry you, Celeste. Not when I don’t love you the way you deserve. I refuse to make the same mistake a second time. You deserve to be with someone who truly, truly loves you.”

My nails bit into my palms as his words struck my heart, and I fought the scream building up in my throat.

The tattoo on my arm burned like a fresh scar.

I’d done that already—been with someone who loved me. And I’d deserted that person for Kieran. I’d suppressed my wolf for Kieran.

I would not let all my sacrifices be in vain. No fucking way.

So I swallowed the scream, straightened my shoulders, and wiped my tears away with the back of my hand. “I don’t accept this. None of it.”

He frowned.

"You can hate me," he said, standing slowly. "I'll take the blame, I'll handle the fallout, but this ends here. There will be no engagement, no marriage. You will not be my Luna, Celeste. I'm sorry."

Fuck that.

I rose too, every inch of me trembling. "You'll regret this."

He shook his head. "No, I don't think I will."

"I'll send out the invitations for our engagement party," I replied coolly. "You'll receive one soon. And you'll show up. And when you see me standing there, looking stunning, wearing the dress meant for your wife, your Luna, you'll come to your senses."

"Celeste—"

I didn't let him finish.

My heels clicked sharply across the marble as I turned and walked out, head high, throat tight.

The air outside was cold, biting, too bright against the dizziness spinning in my skull. I slid into my car and gripped the wheel until my knuckles ached.

I laughed through tears, disbelief swirling in my chest. “Break up,” I whispered. The words stuck, raw, surreal.

My foot hit the accelerator before reason could catch up. The city blurred around me—ribbons of traffic, sun glare, and the white blur of my reflection in the windshield.

I didn’t remember the decision to drive to the mall, but the feel of Kieran’s black card in my hand filled me with relish. I would have much preferred to claw his face off.

But this would have to do for now.

By the time I was done, Kieran’s account had taken a beating—designer coats, diamond earrings, a new clutch I didn’t need, and several pairs of heels I’d probably never wear.

The clerks, of course, were delighted. They fluttered around me like ants to sugar, their voices syrupy with compliments.

“Oh, Miss Lockwood, that shade is divine on you.”

“Would you like us to box up the entire collection?”

I let them. I let their flattery wash over me like a balm, numbing the hollow ache Kieran's words had carved out of me.

Every swipe of his black card was another attempt to erase the sting, to buy back the illusion of control. Silk, cashmere, gold—things that used to make me feel powerful, untouchable. But today, it barely scratched the surface.

No matter how many glossy bags filled the backseat of my car, I couldn't shake the feeling that I was trying to fill an emptiness that had Kieran's name carved into it.

When I pulled up to the manor again, I couldn't believe it was just late afternoon. It felt like I'd lived in three consecutive days.

I stepped inside, exhausted, heels clicking against marble, and called out, "Mother? I'm home."

No answer.

I sighed, setting my bags on the sideboard in the foyer. "You will not believe what happened, Mom. Honestly, I could use one of your soups right now—"

Then I froze.

At the far end of the hall, near the foot of the stairs, a small figure stood waiting with a tray in his hands, the scent of sugar and butter weaving through the air.

Daniel.

Anger consumed me in a blistering wave as I slammed the door shut.