

My Sister 177

Chapter 177 MATTERS OF THE HEART

GAVIN'S POV

By the time we made our way to the pack infirmary, the forest was preternaturally still, as if the storm that had torn through it had never come.

The trees stood silent again, but the air still held the ghost of violence—charred earth, splintered bark, blood. The quiet after carnage.

We looked like hell—ragged, bloody, and utterly spent—as we sank onto the stone bench in the infirmary courtyard.

Moonlight caught the edges of Kieran's shredded skin and the sheen of sweat on him. He didn't look like an Alpha then—just a man gutted by his own mistakes.

I grabbed a first aid box and a spare set of clothes from the store. When I came back, he hadn't moved, staring at nothing, jaw tight, eyes hollow.

Ashar had receded deep within him, but the wolf's unease hadn't vanished; I could feel it simmering beneath the surface.

The night air stung against the open cuts on my arms and legs, and the faint metallic tang of blood clung to our skin. I began cleaning the gashes along my forearm, the sting of antiseptic grounding me in the moment.

When I handed Kieran an alcohol wipe, he just shook his head—too proud or too tired, I wasn't sure which—and I didn't press him.

Our wolves would heal it all by morning anyway. No bruises, the faintest of scars. Barely any proof of the chaos that had torn through the mountains.

That was the cruel irony of it: the body would forget what the heart never could.

For a long time, the only sound between us was the faint chorus of crickets and cicadas, a fragile attempt by nature to return to normal.

I knew better than to fill the silence. Kieran wasn't ready, and pushing him would only drive him deeper into that spiral.

It took nearly an eternity before he exhaled—a long, weighted breath that seemed to deflate something inside him. He stared down at his hands, at the blood crusted over his knuckles.

"I broke it off with Celeste," he said hoarsely.

The words hung in the air, thick and heavy.

“Congratulations” nearly slipped out, but I bit my tongue just in time.

“Why?” I asked instead, quietly.

He shook his head, sweat-damp hair sticking to his temples. “It’s not important.” Another exhale, longer, harsher, like he was expelling poison from his lungs. “I never should have gotten with her to begin with.”

“And...what did Sera have to say about the news?”

That was the real wound. Beneath the blood, the sweat, the exhaustion—her scent lingered. Lavender and heartbreak.

Kieran stiffened instantly, his entire body coiling like a drawn bow. I held my breath, weighing whether I had the energy to survive another round with Ashar.

But then, he spoke. The words were strained. “She...rejected me.”

I frowned. “Rejected you? What the hell did you say to her?”

He didn't look up. His fingers flexed and released. "That I was sorry. That I wanted her back."

"You fucking—"

This time, I bit my tongue hard enough to taste blood.

His shoulders vibrated with a bitter, humorless laugh. "Go on. Say it. I'm a fucking idiot."

"Put yourself in her shoes," I said softly. "You spent a decade of marriage loving her sister. Divorced her as soon as said sister came back. When that fell apart, you ran back to the woman you'd broken—just as she was starting to move on with her life. What did you expect, Kieran? A welcome banner?"

He didn't answer, but his silence said everything. The great Alpha of Nightfang bowed under the weight of his own remorse.

"I fucked up," he declared stiffly.

No argument there.

"What do I do, Gavin?" His voice cracked—barely, but enough that it made my chest tighten.

His eyes found mine, hollow with pain that looked centuries old.

I'd known him since we were pups. I'd seen him take blades to the chest, arrows through the ribs, and still stand tall—but this was different. This was the kind of wound no healer could stitch shut.

Kieran Blackthorne was the strongest Alpha I'd ever known. But he absolutely, utterly sucked when it came to matters of the heart.

It was humbling.

I sighed, rubbing the bridge of my nose. "What is this really about?" I asked carefully. "Why the sudden change of heart toward her?"

His jaw tightened, the muscle twitching. "She might be my mate."

My eyes widened. Oh. Shit.

"How—are you sure?"

He hissed through his teeth, turning away. "It doesn't even matter. She doesn't give a fuck. She wouldn't even hear me out."

“She doesn’t owe you anything,” I said gently. “Not belief. Not forgiveness. Not even a conversation.”

“I know.” His voice cracked. “But how can she ignore it, Gav? I feel it. It’s not just attraction—it’s something deeper. Right now, it’s unsteady, but it’s there. It’s undeniable. How can she pretend she doesn’t feel it too?”

I gave a humorless smile. “Fun fact: before Lydia, I met my fated mate.”

His head whipped toward me. “What?”

I nodded. “Yeah. We felt the spark, the pull, the whole divine setup. But there was a catch—she was married. With two kids.”

He blinked, stunned. “You never told me that.”

“There wasn’t much to tell.” I shrugged. “I could’ve marked her anyway, claimed what the Moon Goddess had given me. But what would that have made me? Some entitled bastard who thought fate excused cruelty? I couldn’t do that to her. She was happy with her family. So I walked away, severed the bond. It almost killed me.”

I paused, letting the quiet settle. “But then I met Lydia. She didn’t care that we weren’t fated. She chose me, Kieran. That’s worth more than any Goddess-given bond.”

He was silent, his face unreadable. Finally: “What are you saying? I should give up?”

“I’m saying,” I replied softly, “you need to figure out whether you want Sera because she’s your mate, or because she’s Sera.”

He frowned. “What’s the difference?”

“One’s love,” I said simply. “The other’s duty dressed as destiny.”

For a second, he said nothing.

I continued, “You keep talking about regret, fate, bonds—but none of that matters until you decide what you want. Do you want Sera back because you feel guilty that you may have mismanaged your mate, or because you genuinely miss and want her?”

“I—” A shudder ran through him. “Fuck, I miss her so much.” His hand came up, pressing against his chest as if trying to dig out a thorn lodged there.

“The aroma of her cooking, the scent of her perfume lingering after she leaves a room. The way she hums when she thinks I can’t hear from my office. The way she laughs when she’s with Daniel. It’s—” His voice cracked, raw. “It’s a physical fucking ache.” Grief etched his features as he confessed, the pain undiluted and new.

Despite everything, I smiled faintly. “Good.”

He shot me a disbelieving look. “Good?”

“At least now you know,” I said. “For ten years, you’ve lived in confusion—wanting what you didn’t have, dismissing what you did. It’s late, but clarity’s better than cowardice.”

He huffed a bitter laugh. “A lot of good that’s doing me now.”

“First things first,” I said. “Stop taking your anger out on the ground—and your very loyal, very amazing Beta.”

He snorted, the faintest ghost of a smile tugging at his mouth.

“Thank you,” he said softly, “for coming.”

I nodded. “Of course.”

“And...” He slanted a heavy look at me. “About earlier...you know I would never—”

I nodded firmly. "I know."

He exhaled in relief.

"You're bleeding for all the wrong reasons," I added.

He laughed again, but it was a broken, glass-sharp sound. "I'm bleeding because I deserve to."

I shook my head. "No, you're bleeding because you're trying to undo ten years in one night. And that's not how healing works. You can't brute-force redemption."

Kieran's shoulders slumped, every ounce of fight draining from him. His voice came out small—foreign, almost. "So what do I do?"

I reached out and clasped his shoulder, firm and steady. "You fight. But not yourself this time. You fight for her. You pick up the pieces with the same hands that broke them, and you do your best to put them all back together. Not through punishment, but through patience."

He swallowed hard. "And if that doesn't work?"

“Then you respect her choice,” I said quietly. “And you learn to live with what’s left. Otherwise, the cycle of hurt will never end. Celeste, Sera, Daniel, yourself—you’ll leave only anguish in your wake.”

For a long while, neither of us spoke. The wind rustled the leaves; the moon hung low, pale and indifferent.

Then Kieran let out a ragged breath, barely more than a whisper. “Fuck.”

I huffed out something between a sigh and a laugh. “Yeah,” I murmured. “That about sums it up.”

And for once, the Alpha of Nightfang didn’t argue. He just sat there—head bowed, heart cracked open beneath the moonlight.