

## **My Sister 185**

Chapter 185 CELESTE DRAMA

KIERAN'S POV

Margaret's voice still rang in my ears long after the call ended—ragged, breathless, the sound of a mother who'd just had the floor ripped out from under her.

'She's gone, Kieran.'

For a moment, I just stood there with the phone pressed to my ear, heartbeat thudding in my chest like it was trying to claw its way through my bruised ribcage.

Gone. Rationally, I told myself Celeste was being dramatic. Impulsive.

This could've been another act, another ploy for attention, her way to punish us for not revolving around her grief.

That didn't stop me from bolting out of my office and driving through the streets of LA like a madman.

Ethan and Margaret were in the hotel lobby when I arrived.

Jaw locked, shoulders tense, he stood with an arm around her like he was trying to physically keep her from falling apart while she clutched Celeste's purse like a lifeline.

The manager kept glancing between us nervously as he repeated the information for what sounded like the tenth time.

"Yes, Miss Lockwood checked in a week ago. Yes, there are logs of her entering and leaving the building. No, we haven't seen her in...a while. We were under the impression she didn't want to be disturbed..."

I went to see her room for myself.

It was just like Margaret had described it. Barely disturbed sheets. No bags, clothes, or cosmetics.

Records said she's been in and out of the hotel.

My transaction alerts said she'd been in and out of department stores and spas.

But her room told a different story.

The inconsistency reeked.

I gripped the dresser so hard my knuckles went white. A coldness seeped into me, slow and biting.

This wasn't just a tantrum.

Something was wrong.

When we returned to the lobby, Ethan sat Margaret down on the sofa. He placed a hand on her shoulder comfortingly, but his expression was tight.

"This is my fault," Margaret said suddenly, wrapping her arms around herself.

"That day—I slapped her. I screamed at her. I told her she was selfish and ungrateful. I—I have never hit my child before. I was just so... angry..."

Her voice cracked and dissolved into a breathless sob.

Ethan crouched down and untangled her arms, taking her shaking hands in his. "No, Mom. This is on me. I'm her older brother; I should've done more. I should've seen how bad she was slipping. I should've protected her."

I stood apart, watching them unravel. Their voices blurred into background noise. The guilt swarming between them felt contagious, thickening the air.

The truth sat heavy in my chest.

Margaret might have struck her. Ethan might have neglected her. But the straw that broke the camel's back was me.

The breakup—that was the catalyst for this reaction. I had detonated Celeste's illusion of control, shattered her dreams of becoming my Luna, and most likely driven her over a cliff.

But...

I couldn't bring myself to regret my decision.

Not even in light of her disappearance.

Still, I couldn't deny she wouldn't have spiraled this far—this fast—if I hadn't ended things. So I had to take responsibility.

"I'm already mobilizing a search," I said finally, tone firm as I typed out instructions to Gavin. "Nightfang trackers are being briefed. We'll scan city perimeters and neighboring territories. I'll deploy every resource I have to find her."

Ethan snapped his head toward me. “No.”

Margaret looked up, and we both shared the same startled expression.

Ethan stood, shoulders squared. His expression hardened into something sharp. “You don’t get to do this now, Kieran. You don’t get to play hero—not when you’re part of the reason we’re here.”

I held his stare. In this moment, he wasn’t my best friend. He was Celeste’s brother.

“Regardless of how you feel about me,” I said, keeping my voice calm. “Celeste is missing. She could be in danger.”

“And you think I’ll trust you to lead a search for my sister after you broke her like that?” Ethan’s tone was cold steel.

“Ethan—”

“I warned you,” he seethed. “I told you from the very beginning that the path you were on would hurt my sisters.”

“You can’t possibly put this all on—”

"This is a Lockwood matter." His tone turned cold even though his eyes burned. "We'll handle it. You should leave. You've done enough."

Margaret flinched but didn't contradict him.

My throat tightened. Not with defensiveness, just a heavy, dull ache. Guilt was there, yes. Regret—for the fallout, not for the decision—was there, too.

"I'm not trying to absolve myself," I said quietly. "I just want to find her."

"And I'm telling you—leave," Ethan repeated. "And from now on, stay out of our affairs."

I sighed. "Ethan—"

"I mean it, Kieran," he cut in. "We might be best friends, but my family comes first, and I won't let it fall apart because of you."

I opened my mouth. Maybe to further defend myself, maybe to insist on staying and deploying my resources to find Celeste, I didn't know.

Because at that moment, the lobby doors slid open, and every thought blasted out of my head when Sera walked in.

#### SERAPHINA'S POV

As I stepped into the hotel lobby, tension cinched like a hangman's noose around my neck.

Everyone froze at the sight of me, and I forced a small, casual smile, careful not to betray the unease churning inside me.

"Hey," I said lightly, though my voice sounded strange even to my own ears.

"Sera!" My mother gasped, relief and surprise mixing in her gaze as she trembled on the sofa. "You came."

"Um..." I turned to Maya, who flanked me like a quiet sentinel, gaze sweeping the scene.

"Maya said she was meeting Ethan for a date," I explained, attempting a casual shrug. "She insisted I come along."

Ethan's jaw tightened, catching my lie instantly. After all, he'd been the one to send the text to reschedule their date.

He arched a brow at Maya, and she mimicked my shrug, not leaving my side.

“So,” I said, forcing nonchalance, “What’s the deal with Celeste?”

I knew I shouldn’t be voluntarily entangling myself in what reeked of Celeste drama, but after that dream, I just couldn’t rest.

It hadn’t felt like a dream. Something in that vision—the way Celeste had looked at me, distant and haunted—lodged in my chest. I couldn’t ignore it.

I just needed to see her with my own eyes, maybe exchange a few catty insults. Then I could move on and keep pretending I didn’t have a younger sister.

As Ethan filled me in with a clipped tone, my worry dug deeper, like a thorn aimed at my heart.

My gut clenched when he finished.

Celeste was missing. Her friends hadn’t heard from her. Hotel records contradicted the state of her room.



Celeste thrived under the spotlight. It didn't make sense for her to just disappear—not willingly, at least.

I opened my mouth, ready to share my dream—the uneasy feeling that had driven me here—but before the words could leave me, Kieran's ringing phone cut through the tense atmosphere.

"Hello?" he answered gruffly.

His jaw tightened as he nodded stiffly. "Send the footage."

When he hung up, he turned to us.

Our eyes locked, and a flash of that night's memories surfaced—Kieran standing outside the house, voice raw with confession and regret. Me rejecting him. His eyes, pained and haunted, even as he let me walk away.

Guilt stung, unwelcome and stubborn. I buried it instantly, just like I buried thoughts of mate bonds I had no business feeling.

"Gavin found something," he said. His voice was strained, like his mind had gone to the same place as mine.

Ethan surged forward. "What?"

Kieran tapped on his phone. "Airport footage."

He held the device out between us, and we all crowded around. The scent of cedar and rain filtered into my lungs, and I had to literally lock my muscles to curb my body's instinct to move closer.

The grainy recording showed Celeste walking through a busy airport, dragging a bright pink suitcase behind her.

But...

The gait wasn't quite right. The camera angle didn't quite show her face, and there was a subtle distortion, frame-glitched like someone had tampered with the footage. And her body language...

Celeste never just...walked.

She strutted. Preened. Flipped her hair and showed off like the world was meant to stare.

"Gavin said she boarded a flight to the Maldives," Kieran said, when we were done viewing the footage.

Mother's hand flew to her mouth. "Maldives?" she whispered. "She...she must have gone to see Catherine."

Ethan frowned. "Aunty Cath?"

The mention of Celeste's godmother was like a splash of cold water, and I resisted the urge to squirm.

She was once my mother's best friend. She left the pack to pursue a career in dance and married a wealthy human. Now she toured the world as a renowned dancer.

My interaction with her had been limited, but I could still clearly recall the image of her sneer. It was the same as her goddaughter's.

I'd never let myself wonder, but Celeste had probably stayed with Catherine during her decade-long self-imposed exile.

Evidently, they still stayed in touch, because Mother was quick to dial her number, her trembling fingers betraying every ounce of fear she had held at bay. Each ring stretched like an eternity.

Finally, a voice answered, calm but distracted. "Maggie? This is a treat; you never call."

"Catherine," Mother exhaled. "Did Celeste... did she reach you? She—" Her words tumbled, breathless.

Catherine's tone softened. "Yes, she contacted me. Said she needed to visit the beach villa to...clear her head. Of course, I told her she was welcome. But I'm currently on a world tour, so I haven't actually seen her. You should call the villa directly. I'll send the number now."

Mother exhaled. "Thank you, Catherine."

The time it took Catherine to send the number felt like another eternity.

And then—

Celeste appeared on the screen, reclining on a white chaise. Oversized sunglasses masked her eyes, their dark lenses catching the reflection of turquoise waves behind her.

A soft, almost taunting smirk curved her lips—the kind she wore when she wanted the world to think she was untouchable.

The sun kissed her skin in a golden sheen, illuminating the faint, crescent-shaped birthmark on her shoulder...unmistakable proof it was her.

I leaned in before I even realized I'd moved, my chest tightening with a mix of relief and something far more complicated.

“Mother,” she said, voice calm, measured.

“Celeste!” Mother gasped. “We’ve all been worried sick! What happened?”

She looked uninjured. Composed. Effortlessly serene—like she hadn’t just taken everyone on a fucking emotional rollercoaster.

Classic.

“I needed some time.” Celeste shrugged, one perfectly manicured hand lifting lazily to adjust her shades. “Some space to think. I’ll come back after I’ve cleared my head.”

Mother’s shoulders slumped as relief flooded through her. She nearly collapsed, and Ethan stepped forward instinctively, placing a hand under her elbow to steady her.

“Celeste,” he snapped. “This is ridiculous, even for you. Do you know how worried—”

“Ugh. Spare me.”

She ended the call.

There was a long, stunned silence in which we just stared at the dark screen, all high-strung and now unsure of what to do with all the nervous energy.

Then Maya let out a sharp bark of laughter. “Yep. That’s Celeste, alright.”

Mother closed her eyes, leaning further into Ethan. “Oh, thank the gods.”

Though not as visible as my mother’s, my relief was just as profound. I knew I shouldn’t give a flying fuck what happened to Celeste, but I guess my heart hadn’t completely hardened against her just yet.

“Come,” Ethan murmured, his hands wrapped around our mother. “Let me take you home. You should get some rest.”

She nodded, closing her eyes.

As they walked past, Ethan shot Maya a weighted look, lightly threaded with guilt.

“It’s cool.” She leaned up and placed a kiss on his jaw. “I’ll see you later.”

He nodded, then slid me a wan smile. “Bye, Sera.”

I waved a little. "Bye, Ethan."

He didn't spare Kieran a glance before he walked out.

The glass door slid shut behind them, leaving the air oddly hollow, like the room hadn't caught up to the fact that the crisis was over.

"Well," Maya said. "I could use a massage now more than ever. You still up for the spa?"

I smiled. "I have to go get Daniel, but how about afterwards, we validate the existence of house-call beauticians?"

She laughed, throwing an arm over my shoulder. "Perfect."

We turned away, ready to leave the latest installment of Celeste's drama behind.

But I stopped when something warm and firm closed gently around my wrist.

My breath caught.

Slowly, I turned back.

Kieran stood there, expression strained, jaw clenched like he was holding back too much at once. His fingers loosened but didn't fall away entirely—hovering at the edge of touch.

“Sera,” he said, voice rough, gravel-edged. “Can we talk?”