

My Sister 186

Chapter 186 ABOUT DANIEL

SERAPHINA'S POV

The last thing I wanted to do with Kieran was 'talk.'

I still hadn't fully recovered from the last time we'd talked.

The sensible thing would have been to pull my hand out of his grip. Back away. End this before we repeated that night in my driveway—right here in the very fancy hotel lobby.

But...

And there it was: that hesitation, that tiny niggling thread that, for some inane reason, still tethered me to Kieran—making it impossible to step away completely.

I fucking hated it.

I didn't realize how long I just stood there, my chest tight with indecision, until Maya's soft touch brushed my free wrist. "I'll be in the car," she murmured.

She glanced between me and Kieran with a loaded look that told me I was in for an interrogation after this.

Whatever this was.

Maya slipped towards the exit, which left me standing in front of Kieran, his fingers still lightly curled around my wrist.

“I just want to talk,” he said. His voice was lower than usual, rough at the edges, heavy with that same desperation I’d heard that night in my driveway.

“The last time we...talked didn’t go so well,” I said, my voice softer than I wanted it to be.

A muscle ticked in his jaw. “Yes, but this is nothing like that. I promise.”

I swallowed against the lump forming in my throat, taking him in under the soft, almost ethereal glow of the chandeliers.

He was the same Kieran—strong, tall, commanding. But there was an almost invisible strain in the way he carried himself now.

His shoulders, usually squared like steel, now slumped just slightly, as if bracing against a weight invisible to everyone but him.

Tension rippled through his frame. He stood too straight, as if relaxing even a little would allow everything inside him to come undone.

This looked nothing like Lucian's exhaustion. Kieran didn't look sleep-deprived; he looked like something was eating at him, gnawing in places sleep couldn't reach.

For a wild moment, I wondered if this was all because of Celeste—maybe their breakup had taken a toll on him.

But something in me knew it wasn't that.

And then—even wilder—I dared to imagine that he looked this way because of me. Because of how we'd last left things.

I held his gaze longer than I meant to, then gently tugged my wrist free from his grip, trying to ignore the tingling sensation his touch left along my arm.

"Fine." I didn't meet his eyes. "But I really don't have long. I need to pick up Daniel from your father's soon."

He didn't do a good job of hiding his relief at my acceptance.

He nodded and gestured to a quieter seating area by the windows. When we sat, I made sure to keep a good arm's length between us. Silence stretched, heavy, but not suffocating—yet.

Kieran inhaled slowly, as if gathering courage. “About that night—”

“No.” My interruption was sharper than I intended. I didn’t miss the way his jaw tensed. “We are not doing this again.”

His brows drew together.

“I get it,” I continued, pushing past the flutter of nerves that immediately rose as he said, ‘that night.’

“You said what you needed to. I said what I needed to. I assure you my stance hasn’t changed since then, so there’s no need for a repeat.” I pressed my hands tightly into my lap and let out a breath. “I’m not interested in scraping open the same wound again.”

Kieran looked away, swallowed. His fingers curled slightly against his knee. I frowned. The skin over his knuckles was raw and scabbed, like he’d gotten into a brawl.

But I didn’t care. Whatever he did in his free time was his business.

“I’m not trying to hurt you again, Sera, I swear. I just—”

“Kieran.” Too sharp. Too loud. I really, really didn’t want to talk about this again. Ever.

“Okay.” He exhaled. “Okay.”

There was something so...vulnerable in the way he drew back, accepting that boundary. His shoulders dropped, the slightest quiver barely contained, and I found myself having to look away to hide the sting behind my own eyes.

“What is this about then?” I asked finally, careful to make my voice a little gentler.

“It’s about Daniel.”

Immediately, I stiffened. “What about him?”

He hesitated just long enough to make my pulse tick louder. “As you know, my father started his Alpha conditioning and early training while they were on the island.”

I clenched my teeth. “Yep.”

He sighed. "He should have asked for your permission before he did that."

"I bet he asked for yours." My tone had gone sharp again.

It wasn't a question. His silence confirmed it.

"I'm sorry," he said quietly.

I pursed my lips. "It's fine. Daniel's enjoying it, so that's that."

He hesitated. "There's...more."

I held my breath as he continued. "Daniel turns ten soon."

"I'm aware of my son's birthday, thank you very much."

He rolled his eyes.

Something about that movement eased the trapped breath out of my lungs. It was so...natural. Annoying, definitely, but—

“My parents want to hold an heir ceremony for him.”

I stared.

The words didn’t compute for a full five seconds. “An...heir ceremony? At ten?”

He held my gaze steadily. “Yes.”

I let out a breath that wasn’t quite a laugh. “You’re aware most packs wait until a wolf manifests, right? Even then, they wait until that wolf stabilizes. Declaring an heir too early—especially one who hasn’t Shifted—is risky.”

“I know.”

I swallowed back the first snap of anger that tried to climb up my throat. “You know. And you’re okay with this?”

He nodded silently.

“What’s the rush?”

“Daniel has always been my chosen heir, Sera.” Kieran’s voice didn’t waver, and neither did his gaze. “That has never changed. And it never will.”

And damn him, something in me quivered.

A decade of silence. A decade of distance. But that—his claim over Daniel, his certainty about my son’s future—had never once faltered.

I forced myself not to let it soften me. “It’s one thing to know he’ll one day take over as Alpha. But this...it’s too much pressure. He’s a child, Kieran.”

“You think I haven’t considered that?” His tone remained controlled, but I could hear the quiet plea buried in it.

“Daniel’s wolf isn’t fully formed yet, but my father and I can already feel it stirring. And it’s...strong. A lot stronger than I was at his age.”

A tremor of pride flickered in my chest. But it was swiftly overpowered by fear—unbidden, and terrifying.

I pictured Daniel, small and bright-eyed, laughter high and free, someday carrying something enormous on his shoulders—and crumpling beneath it.

“What if his wolf develops differently from what everyone expects?” I murmured. “What if he breaks under that weight?”

A shiver ran through me. “What if...he’s like me?”

Kieran flinched—barely, but I saw it.

I was the daughter of an Alpha, yet my wolf had taken this long to emerge, and she was still weak. The thought of my son facing the same stigma and disdain I endured was a spear to the heart.

“Sera,” Kieran said softly. “Even if, for some reason, Daniel’s wolf isn’t the titan people expect from the son of Nightfang’s Alpha, I promise you the pack will accept him.”

I shook my head. “You can’t guarantee that. I was Edward Lockwood’s daughter, and once my flaws were exposed, my pack didn’t...” My voice trembled, and I pressed my lips together.

Kieran was silent for a while. And then, gently, he said. “You forget, Sera, that you are no longer that woman. You’re the champion who dominated OTS. The whole world watched you fight. Watched you lead.”

His voice dropped lower. “They will accept Daniel. Not because he’s my heir—because he’s your son. No one would dare underestimate him.”

Warmth tinged with fear curled in my gut, and emotion clogged my throat.

I didn't know what it was—Kieran's pride in my achievements, or knowing I'd done exactly what I'd set out to do: become stronger, so life could be better for my son.

"I'm not trying to make him grow up faster than he must," Kieran continued quietly. "But Nightfang has been without a Luna for too long—"

I scoffed.

He didn't miss a beat. "Because of my mistakes. But the elders worry about the pack's future. Naming Daniel officially could stabilize things. It gives them a direction, a future to rally behind."

He hesitated.

"And it buys me time..." His hand reached out, slowly, cautiously. "...to fix what I broke."

That last line wasn't just about the pack, and we both knew it. My breath hitched at the look in his eyes—raw remorse tangled with apology and something like...hope.

For a fleeting heartbeat, the years fell away, and he wasn't Kieran, my cold, distant ex-husband. He was Kieran, the man I'd once loved in suffocating silence.

But that heartbeat passed, and a decade of pain flashed through me like lightning.

I blinked, pulling away—metaphorically and physically.

Kieran's hand hovered in the air between us.

A small, almost imperceptible crack flickered through his expression before he schooled it. He nodded once, slowly—as though accepting a verdict.

He pulled his hand back.

"I'm not asking you to agree now," he said quietly. "Just...think about it."

He reached into his pocket and pulled out a small black velvet box, holding it with a reverence that made my pulse twist.

"This is the heir's ring," he said. "I wore it at my heir ceremony. I want you to give it to him when—if—he's ready."

I had taken the box from him before I even realized my hand was moving.

It was heavy in my hand. Not just in weight, but in meaning.

Two versions of Daniel played side by side in my mind like a slide show. His face lit up with excitement and awe at the honor. And then—confusion, fear, blame, if expectations didn't match reality.

But Daniel wouldn't be a child forever.

And if, in a bid to keep him protected, I ended up hurting him, I would never forgive myself.

"It's his choice," I said softly. "We'll do whatever he wants."

I looked up at Kieran. "It's his choice," I repeated. "Promise me, Kieran."

He nodded immediately. Relief—muted, tired, but relief nonetheless—flickered in his eyes. "I promise. I would never make him do what he doesn't want."

I stood, the ring box felt too warm in my palm. "I need to go."

He rose as well, but didn't move. Didn't reach for me again as I turned away.

"Sera," he said quietly, voice unsteady, "I know you don't want to hear it, but—I'm sorry. For...everything. And I'm grateful. For Daniel. For you, being his mother."

Every syllable scraped against that damn wound I didn't want to touch.

I didn't look back.