

My Sister 227

Chapter 227 THE BOND

KIERAN'S POV

A dozen emotions crashed into me at once, each one too big to contain, too sharp to breathe through.

But one truth pulsed louder than all else: Seraphina—my mate—was awake, alive, breathing in my arms.

Her eyes blinked open, heavy with exhaustion, rimmed red from rain and tears and gods knew what she'd endured.

But they weren't distant. They weren't cold. They weren't shuttered like they had been for the past few months.

They were here.

Present.

Looking at me.

No rejection in sight.

My chest constricted painfully.

“Sera?” Her name scraped out of me as if I’d spent years choking on it.

She stared at me, lips parted, breath mingling with mine. The bond thrummed between us like something alive, coils of heat and clarity twisting into place. Our hearts beat at the same pace—fast, unsteady, erratic.

Moon above, it was real.

Not imagined.

Not forced.

Not one-sided.

“Mate,” I whispered, though I wasn’t sure if the words left my mouth or stayed trapped in my skull.

Sera's breath hitched, and her pupils dilated.

"Kieran." Her breath against my lips sent a violent jolt of electricity through me, making me forget how to breathe.

My hand cupped her cheek, thumb brushing her jaw with something halfway between hesitation and desperation, and when she tilted her chin up, just enough to invite, I moved without thinking.

My lips pressed to hers, and the world shattered.

Gods, I'd forgotten how intoxicating she tasted—like something wild and sweet, something I'd ached for long before I even knew why.

Sera didn't pull away.

Her fingers gripped my bare shoulders, nails digging into my skin like she was trying to anchor herself to me. Her lips parted beneath mine, breath shuddering, as she pressed tighter to me.

And suddenly we weren't just kissing.

We were claiming.

Before, we kissed with hesitation, with confused passion, with walls between us. Before, I tasted her body but never her soul. Before, I held her—wanting—but never knowing.

Now the bond surged between us, raw and incandescent, flaring hot and bright like a fuse finally lit.

This wasn't desire.

This wasn't longing.

This was fate awakening.

And I knew, with terrifying clarity: I had never kissed Sera like this before.

Because I had never kissed my mate.

My grip on her jaw tightened, deepening the kiss until the space between us ceased to exist. Her body softened against mine, and the sound she made in the back of her throat nearly undid me.

This, right here—this was our destiny.

My mate was in my arms.

In the bed that should have been ours.

In the room that should have been ours.

Only one thing could make this moment perfect...

My mouth left Sera's only long enough to press hot, open-mouthed kisses down her neck. Her head tilted instinctively, exposing more skin like an offering.

Primal instinct surged through me with the ferocity of a wildfire.

'Mark her,' Ashar's growl rose over the sound of blood roaring in my ears. 'Finish what fate began. Make her yours!'

There wasn't a single resistant cell in my body as my wolf howled, feral and certain, guiding me to the spot where my teeth belonged.

My blood simmered as my fangs elongated with a familiar sting and caressed the soft spot where her neck met her shoulder.

Just a breath more and I would—

Sera's hands flew up, palms pushing hard against my chest.

"Kieran—stop."

SERAPHINA'S POV

For a sizzling moment, I didn't exist as a separate person.

I was heat and longing and want and need.

And beneath all that...

Every tangled thread inside Kieran lit up—each tied to me.

The bond.

It wasn't just emotion. Not just desire.

It was clarity.

It hummed violently, still raw, still new, still singing his feelings into my bones.

His relief wasn't vague; it wrapped around my ribs like an embrace. His desire wasn't guesswork; it pulsed against my skin.

His fear—of losing me—beat against my heart so loudly I could almost mistake it for my own.

I had dreamed my whole life of this exact moment. Of being in the presence of someone who looked at me with love and devotion so fierce it felt like worship.

And now, Kieran was looking at me that way.

Like I was breath.

Like I was destiny.

Like I was his salvation and his undoing all at once.

No wonder I forgot to push him away.

No wonder I kissed him back.

His touch—gods, it was nothing like before.

His hands didn't just hold—they cherished. His mouth wasn't just hungry—it devoured.

And I melted.

I let myself get consumed. Let myself imagine a world where this had always been our life.

Waking up together in his—our—bed. Touching each other like we had every right.

Like we had never broken.

But then, Kieran's breath hit my neck, hot and ragged, and I felt it: his fangs elongating, grazing the skin where a mating mark belonged.

Reality slammed into me, cold and merciless.

A decade of pain rose like a knife under my ribs.

The birthdays he ignored.

The nights I slept alone.

The years I loved him silently while he loved someone else loudly.

And now I was expected to fall obediently into place because fate finally caught up?

No.

Not like this.

My palms pressed hard against his chest, and I shoved with more force than I meant to.

“Kieran—stop.”

He froze instantly, eyes wide, chest heaving.

He swallowed hard. “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have—you just woke up. I—gods, Sera, I—”

His voice cracked, and the guilt that flashed across his face was sharp, unguarded, devastating.

“Kieran...” My voice trembled despite my best effort. “I...I can’t do this right now.”

He blinked. “But... We’re mates,” he said softly. “You felt that. You know.”

The bond flared, hot and bright, as if confirming his words.

And that’s what made pulling away harder.

Because I felt everything he felt.

The bond whispered his emotions into my bloodstream: restraint, confusion, need, desperation—love.

And I wanted to fall into it.

I wanted to let him mark me right there, consequences be damned.

But want wasn't enough.

Because another part of me—the wounded, frightened, fragile part—whispered that want had cost me everything once before.

That rushing back now would shatter me. This time irreparably.

“Don't think the bond erases everything.” Forcing the words out was like pulling thorns out of my skin.
“It doesn't undo what happened.”

Kieran's eyes darkened, not angry—stricken.

His lips were still inches from mine, his chest rising and falling like he was holding himself together by sheer will, and the lingering heat of his kiss burned along my mouth like fire refusing to be extinguished.

"I know," he whispered, voice hoarse. "I'm not trying to erase the past. I just—" His hand hovered near mine, not touching. "Can we just talk?"

Talk.

As if words could untangle a decade of wounds in the span of one fevered moment.

I shook my head, sitting up in bed. My vision swam for a moment, and my fingers curled in Kieran's silk sheets to steady myself.

"Not now," I breathed. "I can't—Kieran, I just came back from—" I swallowed. "From something I can barely process right now. I need time."

His throat bobbed. He sat up too, and when the sheet slipped to his waist, it was a struggle to keep my gaze on his face.

"Time," he repeated, mouth twisting as if the word tasted foul. "I can give you that. Just...Sera, please don't run from me."

I flinched.

“I’m not running.”

His gaze softened. “Then stay. Just for tonight. You just woke up; I need to make sure you’re okay.”

My heart lurched painfully.

“I’m...okay.”

I wasn’t fucking okay.

Slowly, I climbed out of bed. Kieran’s fists white-knuckled the sheets, and I could tell he was holding himself back from reaching out to me.

My clothes were neatly folded on the armchair by the window. They were slightly damp, but I didn’t hesitate to slide into them. My hands trembled as I dressed, each layer feeling like armor.

Heavy, tension-filled silence thickened the air; the sound of clothes rustling felt as loud as a marching band.

I focused on my task, trying not to take in the implications that I’d woken up in Kieran’s bed, naked, in his room, in our old house. That he’d been holding me. Caring for me.

That he was my fucking mate. Irrefutable. Inescapable.

When I was done, I turned—

Kieran was standing behind me, shoulders tense, hands clenched, eyes pleading.

“Please, Sera,” he said softly. “Don’t shut me out.”

I closed my eyes.

“I just need to breathe,” I whispered. “I need space. Time.”

His response was a heavy sigh.

“And...until this settles,”—I took a long, deep breath—“we keep the bond between us. No one else knows.”

“You want to keep the bond a secret?” he asked incredulously.

“For now. Until I understand what this means. Until I know what I want.” I forced myself to look into his eyes. “Please, Kieran.”

He nodded slowly, but I felt the ache in his chest like it was my own.

One last look—just one—and then I slipped out before I changed my mind.

The cool hallway air hit me like a bucket of ice water.

My heart raced.

My body still burned.

My soul felt ripped open.

I pressed a hand to my chest as I walked. With each step, the bond tugged hard, like it was pulling me back to him.

I meant what I said; I wasn’t running from him.

I was terrified of how badly I wanted to run to him.