

My Sister 23

Chapter 23 RUINED EVERYTHING

SERAPHINA'S POV

The shower had washed away the sweat, but not the frustration. Lavender ointment tingled on my bruised knuckles as I towel-dried my hair, the scent doing little to calm my racing thoughts.

The failed training drills. That wretched garden confrontation. The way Kieran's gaze had burned through me like I was the one betraying him.

I exhaled a deep sigh. I should stop thinking of that annoying Kieran. We were divorced. He shouldn't crash through my life like a hurricane anymore.

My phone buzzed on the sink counter.

Lucian: Left the protein shakes in your fridge. Don't overdo it tomorrow.

A small smile tugged at my lips. Lucian had stayed late under the guise of reviewing my training schedules, but we both knew the truth—he'd been giving me space to process while silently ensuring I wasn't alone. No prying questions. No false platitudes. Just steady presence, the way one might guard a wounded packmate.

I typed back: Thank you, Lucian. For everything you do.

Outside, the stars twinkled. At that moment, I just wanted to let the peace claim me.

However, the animal suddenly fiercely banging against my door did not get the memo.

With an annoyed huff, I tied my robe, and when the towel wrapped around my head fell to the floor, releasing my damp hair around my shoulders, I didn't bother to pick it up.

I padded barefoot into the hallway, muttering angrily to myself. I swear, whoever was on the other end was going to—

I blinked, taking in Kieran. He filled my doorway like a tornado made flesh—jaw tight, eyes stormy. His chest heaved like he'd run here.

"What—?" I barely got the word out before he spoke.

"Where is he?" he growled.

I frowned. "What?"

He stepped closer, his presence flooding the threshold. "Where. Is. Lucian?"

Exasperation flowed through me, and I held back the urge to scream in his face. Had he followed us home? What the fuck was he playing at?

"Kieran, what the fuck?"

Then his mouth crashed onto mine.

My body went rigid, frozen by sheer disbelief.

Kieran had never kissed me before, but I'd imagined it a million times. In my fantasies, it would be sweet, soft, loving. He'd take me into his arms, and we'd just sink into it—the kind of kiss love songs were written about.

But this... this was nothing like that.

It was sudden. Consuming. A wildfire of need that threatened to devour me whole. His lips collided with mine like a tidal wave held back too long. Desperate. Heated. Possessive—like I belonged to him.

I couldn't push him away. I was too stunned, too caught off guard to think, let alone move. My heart pounded against my ribs, my breath caught somewhere in my throat, trapped between longing and shock.

His tongue violently opened my lips, claiming. His broad hands gripped my hips onto his firm body, my robe slipping from one shoulder under his rough handling. His gaze darkened at the exposed skin.

"Kieran—" I gasped between searing kisses, fingers twisting in his shirt as the heat radiating from his beastly muscles threatened to melt my resolve. The way he looked at me, damn, sent liquid fire through my veins.

But I knew it was not right. I should remind him. "K-Kieran, we shouldn't—"

Another possessive growl vibrated against my lips as he swallowed my protest with a deeper kiss, his hands locking around my hips like living shackles.

My brain screamed that we were divorced, that this needed to stop—but my body arched into his touch, trembling. Ten years as his wife, and never once did he want me like this. And this time, I could feel it was not just for need.

When his hand slid beneath my robe, the embers of my love for him that I thought I'd already buried seemed to flare dangerously, aching to—

Then, a phone rang—shrill and jarring—shattering the moment like glass on concrete.

Kieran tore himself away from me as if I'd burned him, and still, I couldn't move. I stared at him, breathless, eyes wide, brain short-circuited.

He was breathing heavily, his gaze unfocused, his entire body trembling.

"Your... phone," I whispered, unable to think beyond the ringing—around us, in my head.

Kieran swore softly and shoved his hand in his pocket. He turned away from me as he answered it.

"Ethan, hi." Another curse. "She's crying?" A sigh. "I didn't... I didn't mean to. I'll make it right, I swear."

Then he hung up.

"What the hell was that?" I whispered, my voice a thin rasp.

Kieran didn't answer right away. His expression flickered—confusion, regret, unsatiated hunger.

"Did you fight with her?" I asked, and my voice came out colder than I expected. "With Celeste?"

He didn't respond.

His guilty silence was answer enough.

"Oh my God," I stumbled back, clutching the fallen robe to my chest as humiliation burned up my neck. I couldn't believe I'd almost repeated history.

"I wasn't thinking," he said, stepping toward me. "I just—"

"You just what?" My voice cracked. "Thought you could kiss your problems away? On me?"

"Sera—"

"Are you out of your mind?" The words tore from me raw. "What am I to you? A convenient distraction? A stand-in?"

"No, Sera, it's not like that—"

"Get out!" I snapped, heart pounding. "You have no fucking right to do this to me!"

He hesitated, hunger still dark in his gaze. I didn't care.

"Get out, Kieran," I repeated, firmer. "Some nightmares aren't worth reliving."

When he didn't move fast enough, I shoved him back, and he stumbled back out. The door hit his shoulder as I slammed it shut and turned the lock.

I stood there, breathing hard, one hand on the doorknob, the other pressed against my pounding heart.

The kiss still lingered on my lips, burned through my flesh, imprinted on my fucking soul.

But I'd learned enough over the past ten years.

Some paths, once broken, should never be retraced.

KIERAN'S POV

Something was wrong with me.

I stood on Sera's porch long after the door slammed in my face, the echo of it sharp and final in the night air.

My breaths came out ragged and sharp, adrenaline racing through my whole body.

Ethan's call should've snapped me back to reality. To Celeste. She was hurting. She'd left my house in pieces, and instead of going to her... I'd gone to Sera.

I'd kissed Sera.

And not just any kiss—the kiss. The first real one—full of heat and desire and everything I hadn't allowed myself to feel.

It was a mistake. It had to be.

But then why did it feel so goddamn right?

I could still taste her on my lips. Still remember the way her breath caught when I touched her.

I could still feel the hunger gnawing at my gut, demanding more. That scared me more than anything.

My phone buzzed. I pulled it out of my pocket, foolishly hoping it was Sera telling me to come back.

It wasn't.

It was Ethan. Attached to the message was a photo of Celeste. She was asleep on Ethan's couch, curled up under a throw blanket, her makeup smudged, tear stains visible on her cheeks. Her face soft, exhausted. Fragile.

The guilt punched me square in the chest.

What the hell was I doing?

Celeste had come back for me. She'd offered forgiveness, love, a second chance. And I'd practically rejected her. Not just in words but in every choice I made tonight.

I had let her cry herself to sleep while I chased after a woman who wanted nothing to do with me—the woman I'd used to hurt her in the first place.

I closed my eyes and leaned my head against the cold wood of Sera's door. The contrast between the heat of the kiss and the cold sinking into my bones made everything feel sharper. Too real.

What if I'd ruined everything with Celeste for good this time?

What if I'd ruined everything with Sera with that kiss?

I shoved my phone back into my pocket and walked away from the house, the pavement crunching under my shoes.

I didn't know who I was right now. I couldn't fathom what fucked-up part of me was making all these damning decisions.

All I knew was that I'd hurt two women—one who loved me and one I couldn't seem to let go of.

And the worst part?

I wasn't even sure who I wanted to be forgiven by.

CELESTE'S POV

"Have you sent it?" I asked, arms crossed as I leaned against the kitchen doorway.

Ethan looked up from his phone and gave me a long-suffering sigh. "Yeah. I sent it."

I stepped forward, tension buzzing beneath my skin. "And?"

He raised an eyebrow. "Did you really need me to lie to him for you?"

"It's not a lie," I said, pouting slightly. "If anything, it's a glaring truth he needs to see."

"He knows you're upset. You didn't need to drag me into this."

I scoffed. Ethan was always so quick to act like he was above it all, but he was the furthest thing from perfect.

"He needs a reminder," I said softly. "Of what we are. Of who's always been there."

Ethan rubbed the bridge of his nose. "You know Kieran has only ever loved you. You don't need to compete with Sera."

My lips curled bitterly. "Then why does he care so much about her all of a sudden?"

He hesitated. "Because she's the mother of his son. And she's been through two attacks now. It would be strange if he wasn't concerned."

I scoffed. "Or maybe it's an act. Did you ever think about that? Maybe she's playing the victim, soaking up attention while pretending to be scared. She just can't stand me winning."

Ethan opened his mouth, probably to defend her, but just then, the doorbell rang.

He rolled his eyes. "That's probably him. Happy?"

My heart gave a small, fluttering leap as I spun around and moved quickly down the hall. I slipped beneath the blanket on the couch. I turned to face the backrest, eyes fluttering shut, body curled perfectly still.

I could hear Ethan opening the door, low voices murmuring. The soft pad of footsteps approached, heavier now.

Kieran.

I let myself breathe slower, shallow, like I was still asleep.

The blanket shifted slightly, and a hand rested on my shoulder. I stirred, slowly, deliberately, and blinked like I'd just woken.

"Kieran?" My voice cracked softly. "What are you doing here?"

"I'm sorry, Celeste," he said, kneeling beside the couch. "I should never have let you leave like that."

I blinked back tears that weren't hard to summon. "I thought... maybe I'd lost you. Maybe you didn't want me."

His brows furrowed with guilt. "No. I just—I wasn't thinking. I messed up."

I sat up slowly, rubbing at my eyes. "I get it. I know you've been under a lot of pressure with everything going on."

He shook his head. "I shouldn't have taken it out on you."

I nodded slowly, then gave him a fragile smile. "At least you're here."

Kieran leaned forward and wrapped his arms around me. I melted into his embrace, laying my head against his chest, listening to the quiet, steady beat of his heart.

I didn't say anything more. I didn't need to.

He was here. That was what mattered.

And as I lay there, tangled up in him, I made a silent vow:

I wouldn't let Sera come between us again. Not with her dramatics. Not with her schemes. Not with their stupid fucking history.

I had to remind him of ours. Of what we could have built. Of what we could still build.

And if Daniel was the strongest thread still tying Kieran to Sera...

I'd find a way to unravel it.

Because I am Celeste Lockwood, and I was born to win.