

## My Sister 277

Chapter 277 COULD YOU MAYBE NOT?

KIERAN'S POV

I wasn't a social media person.

I'd always considered it a waste of time—too much noise, too many opinions, too little substance. Packs didn't run on likes and reposts. Power didn't announce itself through curated clips and filtered smiles.

If anything, it had always felt beneath me.

So when the specialized alert buzzed on my phone, in the middle of rinsing my coffee mug, I was almost ashamed by how fast I lunged for it.

I snatched the phone, water trailing from my fingers onto the cold granite, the screen flaring to life with the familiar interface of LST's internal platform.

A new post from Selene.

My pulse ticked up, sharp and immediate.

I hadn't meant to follow her at first. Not consciously. Not in a way I would've admitted out loud.

But after that phone call with Sera—the most civil exchange we'd managed in, well, ever—I found myself opening the app far too often, skimming past pack updates and logistics, hunting for any trace of her like a thirsty fanboy craving the smallest drop of news from his favorite star.

Selene didn't post often. When she did, it was usually official. Ceremonial. Generic bullshit.

This wasn't that.

The thumbnail loaded slowly, buffering just long enough to make my chest tighten.

Then I saw her.

Sera—barefoot in the sand, hair pulled back, skin sun-warmed and glowing in a way I had never seen in Los Angeles.

She was mid-motion, laughing, body loose and unguarded as she jumped to hit a ball sailing toward her.

Not dressed in the careful layers she favored back home. Not contained by propriety or expectation.

She wore a simple swimsuit, nothing provocative, but it showed a version of her that existed outside the world I'd always known.

Strong calves kicking up sand. Arms raised, muscles engaged. A smile so wide it split something raw and aching inside me.

For a second, I forgot how to breathe.

I tapped the video without thinking.

The sound came through first—laughter. Children shouting. Waves in the background. The thud of a volleyball hitting sand.

Sera moved across the frame with a kind of effortless grace that made my throat tighten. She dove, sprang to her feet, laughed again when she barely saved the ball. Someone off-screen cheered her name.

A foolish, irrational wave of pride surged up.

That's my—

The thought cut off violently when another man stepped into frame.

He was tall and tan and lean-muscled with surf-boy hair. He moved easily, instinctively, like it all came naturally to him.

He high-fived Sera.

The sound cracked through the air, sharp and strangely intimate.

Then she slipped, just a little, and he caught her by the waist, steadyng her with a hand that lingered a fraction too long before letting go.

Something inside me snapped.

‘Mine!’

The word tore through me like a guttural snarl, heat flaring beneath my skin so fast my vision pulsed. My fingers clenched around the phone hard enough that the edges bit into my palm.

I barely registered my own low growl until it echoed off the kitchen walls.

Jealousy wasn’t new to me. Possessiveness either.

But this was different.

It wasn't just the sight of another man touching Sera. It was the way she didn't flinch. The way she smiled up at him, unguarded. The way they moved in perfect sync. The way her body trusted his without hesitation.

A slow burn spread through my chest.

Ashar surged up, restless and furious, prowling the inside of my mind like a caged beast. 'Mine!' he roared again, louder. 'She belongs to us.'

I shut off the video abruptly, my breath coming out in fast spurts.

Without thinking, I scrolled straight to my contacts and pulled up Sera's name—

What the hell was I doing?

I glared at the dark screen, jaw clenched, wrestling logic back into place.

She's allowed to exist without you.

She's allowed to be touched. To laugh. To play a stupid game on a beach halfway across the world.

You do not own her.

The rational part of me knew that. Had always known that.

But the bond, neglected, unacknowledged, and stretched thin by distance and silence, cared nothing for logic.

I thought of Alois. Of his calm, infuriating advice.

Of my resolution.

I would wait.

Give her space. Let her find her footing. Let her choose.

And be content with whatever that choice was.

My thumb hovered over her contact.

What would I even say?

Hey, I saw a video of you laughing with another man, and it made me want to pull my eyeballs out. Could you maybe...not?

Would she even answer?

And if she did—what right did I have to demand anything of her?

Especially since the man's touch wasn't predatory. It wasn't disrespectful. Hadn't carried the sharp edge of threat.

Absurdly, that made it sting even more.

I checked the time.

Daniel would be finishing training soon.

The last thing my son needed was to finish the most stressful part of his day and find his father vibrating with barely contained rage like an unhinged Alpha stereotype.

I grabbed my phone and went down to the basement.

My private gym was empty, as expected.

I stacked the bar with more weight than necessary and dropped onto the bench, surrendering to muscle memory. Lift. Rack. Breathe. Repeat.

My body burned. My lungs strained.

It didn't help.

Each rep only seemed to sharpen the images in my head—Sera laughing, sand clinging to her skin, another man's hands at her waist.

By my third set, sweat was dripping down my spine and my knuckles throbbed from gripping the bar too hard.

Christmas.

The word surfaced unbidden. That was the deadline she'd set.

Would she come home on time?

She'd said she would, hadn't she?

But Seabreeze looked like a place where promises felt optional. Like a place where she was finding something she hadn't known she was missing.

A place where she could forget the world she left behind and be tempted to linger just a little longer.

The thought curled inside me, sharp and painful.

What if waiting was a mistake?

What if Alois was wrong?

What if the right move wasn't patience, but action?

I slammed the bar back into its cradle harder than necessary and paced, dragging a towel over my neck.

That was when the door opened behind me.

The sharp click of my mother's heels echoed across the linoleum, each step as loud as a gunshot.

"Hydrate," she said calmly, holding out a bottle of water.

I took it from her without looking, twisting the cap off and taking a long drink.

She leaned against a machine, arms folded, her silent scrutiny the kind that could unravel grown men and reckless Alphas alike.

"You've been tense lately," she noted.

"I'm fine."

She arched a brow.

I sighed. "I'm fine, Mother."

"Mm," she hummed, clearly unconvinced. "Is this about Seraphina?"

The question hit like I'd dropped a barbell on my chest.

"No," I said too quickly.

Her lips curved—not in amusement. In recognition.

"Kieran," she said gently, "I'm not blind."

"In no way did I insinuate that you are."

"Then why bother denying it?" she asked softly. "You've been off since Daniel's ceremony, even worse since you went on your 'urgent, I can't tell you the details right now trip.'"

Watching my mother make sarcastic air quotes was so unnerving that I had to look away.

"It was urgent," I grit out. "I couldn't tell you the details, either."

"You don't need to," she said. "You've been restless. Distant. More volatile than usual. Anyone with two brain cells between them would recognize the urgency and recklessness regarding one's mate."