

My Sister 295

Chapter 295 ANGER MANAGEMENT

KIERAN'S POV

I didn't remember the drive back to Nighthfang.

There were fragments: red lights blurring past, the steering wheel biting into my palms, the guttural animal sound in my chest that wasn't quite a growl and wasn't quite a scream.

I remembered pulling into the pack territory on instinct alone, muscle memory carrying me where thought no longer could.

Pain had a texture.

It scraped raw. It burned deep. It howled through every nerve.

The bond was gone—yet its absence roared louder than its presence ever had.

Ashar was tearing at me from the inside, his mind a maelstrom of fury and loss so violent it eclipsed language.

The world felt wrong. Distorted. Like something essential had been ripped out, and the universe was bleeding through the wound.

‘She rejected us.’

The thought wasn’t formed in words. It was sensation—raw, feral, catastrophic.

I barely registered the look on my parents’ faces when I stumbled into the pack house, power crackling around me in volatile waves that sent lesser wolves fleeing.

“Take Daniel,” I heard myself say, the words tearing out of my throat like they were being dragged over broken glass. “Far from here. Now.”

“Kieran—” my mother started.

“NOW.”

The windows rattled.

They didn’t question me again.

Amid the chaos, I seized Gavin, hauling him up by his jacket with enough force to lift him off his toes.

"If I lose control," I ground out, every word an effort, "you tranq Ashar. Immediately."

His eyes widened. "Kieran—"

He reached for me through the mind-link, and instead of shutting him out, I hurled the café's memories at him, forcing him to share in the raw fury of my pain.

He gasped as I set him back on his feet, pupils dilated. "Oh, Kieran—"

"Do it."

I didn't wait for his answer.

I don't remember when Ashar tore free.

I only remember the moment thought ceased entirely.

The Shift was violent—bones snapping, skin splitting, reality blurring into red and black and gold as Ashar surged to the surface with a roar that shook the earth.

The pain of the transformation was nothing compared to what was already tearing us apart.

Ashar didn't want to think.

Ashar wanted to destroy.

Trees exploded under his claws as he rampaged across the grounds, power detonating outward in every direction.

Tranquilizer darts struck—once, twice, three times—but snapped harmlessly against his hide or dissolved into insignificance beneath the hurricane of his rage.

Ashar's mind spun with instinct and grief, a wildfire urge to obliterate everything that dared exist in a world where she was no longer ours.

Then—

A scent sliced through the madness.

Leather. Pine. The faintest trace of lavender.

Not her.

But close.

Something familiar enough to carve through the fog.

Ashar skidded to a halt, claws gouging deep furrows into the earth as he swung toward the scent, unleashing a snarl that shook the forest.

Another wolf stood at the edge of the clearing.

Massive. Broad-shouldered. Fur dark as storm clouds.

Logan. Ethan. Kin.

The collision was inevitable.

Logan struck first, a blur of teeth and fury, colliding with Ashar with bone-jarring force. We crashed through the undergrowth, the ground erupting beneath our weight.

We were up again in a split second.

We hit hard. Rolled. Snapped.

Ashar's roar tore the air as his claws slashed down Logan's side, blood hissing as it hit the cold earth.

Logan answered with a savage headbutt, rattling Ashar's skull and snapping his jaws closed just shy of his throat.

There was no strategy. No restraint.

Ashar craved victory. Needed it. The challenge stoked his fury, honed it, gave it purpose.

It was the clash between Xander and Ashar all over again.

But Ashar's rage and agony were magnified a hundredfold, and this was pure Alpha dominance, colliding with unstoppable force.

Alpha-on-alpha clashes never ended with concessions. They ended with one Alpha standing over the cold, lifeless body of the other.

‘Destroy him!’

Ashar leaned back on his haunches, ready to pounce again.

But then—

Logan disengaged.

He Shifted back mid-clearing, flesh folding and reforming in a rush of magic and breath until Ethan stood there instead, chest heaving, blood streaking his arm.

The resemblance hit like a physical blow.

The same cerulean-blue eyes. The same stubborn tilt of jaw. The same quiet, unyielding strength etched into his posture.

Ashar froze.

His claws sank into the dirt, trembling.

The rage faltered—not extinguished, but suddenly confused, snarling inward instead of outward.

Ethan met Ashar's gaze without flinching. "Stop," he said, voice rough but steady. "This isn't helping her. Or you."

Ashar snarled, backing away a step, muscles coiled to flee or fight, torn between instinct and something deeper.

"She's suffering," Ethan continued, each word deliberate. "While you're tearing the world apart, she's burning up in bed, alone, enduring the consequences of a choice that nearly broke her."

The words hit harder than any blow.

Ashar recoiled.

'She chose this,' he snarled.

"And do you think that was easy?" Ethan shot back. "Do you think rejecting a fated bond is some casual decision?" His voice cracked just enough to cut. "What do you think pushed her to take that risk?"

Ashar's breath came in ragged gusts.

'You failed her,' the thought screamed—directed at me.

Gavin appeared at the edge of the clearing, hands raised in a placating gesture, his voice cutting through the tension like a grounding wire. "Ashar, listen."

Ashar's head snapped toward him, lips peeling back in a snarl.

Gavin didn't retreat. "You're missing the point. Sera didn't reject you. She rejected the bond."

Ashar stilled.

'What?'

"Did you even listen to what she said?" Gavin asked. "From what you showed me, she rejected the influence. The pressure. The doubt. The fear that what she felt wasn't real—that it was fate doing the choosing instead of her."

Images surfaced unbidden.

Sera's eyes in the café. Steady. Resolute. Hurting—but unwavering.

'I don't want to be bound anymore.'

Ashar's fury wavered, debilitated by memory.

"She wanted certainty," Gavin continued. "She wanted to know that if you chose her, it would be because you wanted her. Not because the universe told you to."

'But as long as the bond exists, I can never be sure if you love me because of it or for who I am.'

Ashar's shoulders sagged.

The rage drained out of him in a rush, leaving behind something far destabilizing. Understanding.

"She's stronger now," Ethan said quietly. "But that young girl is still in there—the one whose heart was repeatedly trampled on by those supposed to care for it. Who love repeatedly failed. The mate bond is a beautiful thing, but it is not needed to live a fulfilled life of love."

Ashar let out a broken sound, something between a growl and a whimper.

‘We did this.’

The forest seemed to exhale as Ashar finally lowered his head, claws retracting into the soil. The storm of power receded, leaving devastation and silence in its wake.

Ethan released a slow breath and, to my utter disbelief, smiled faintly. “Well,” he said dryly, “I’m glad you didn’t kill me. That would’ve reduced your chances with Sera by a substantial margin.”

Ashar shot him a look so withering it bordered on petulant, then Shifted back with a grunt of discomfort, human flesh reclaiming wolf in a shimmer of magic.

I collapsed to my knees.

The pain hit then—fully, unfiltered. No rage to shield me from it. Just the hollowed-out ache of loss and regret and the brutal clarity of truth.

Ethan crossed the distance between us without hesitation.

I stood on unsteady legs and pulled him into a fierce embrace, my grip bordering on desperate.

“Thank you,” I rasped. “For stopping me. For being there for her when I couldn’t.”

He returned it just as tightly. "I failed her, too," he admitted quietly. "As a brother."

He pulled back and clasped my shoulder. "And I failed you as a friend. I should have been aware of the turmoil you were going through. I won't let myself be blind again."

I covered his hand with mine and squeezed, our grip firm and steady—an unspoken vow forged in shared guilt and resolve.

Gavin huffed from behind us. "I'm just glad I came out unscathed this time. Ashar should really consider Anger Management classes."

A full-body shudder that might have been a laugh or a sob ran through me.

For the first time since the café, something inside me loosened—not healed, not whole, but steadier.

Sera might have rejected the bond. But she didn't reject me.

She had simply chosen freedom from fate's influence.

And if I ever hoped to walk beside her again, it would be by choice.

Mine.

And hers.