

My Sister 346

Chapter 346 ROOM 417

SERAPHINA'S POV

"Where's Kieran?" Maya asked lightly. "I'm bored and could do with some eye-contact porn."

I rolled my eyes as I scanned the room from our spot near the front of the hall.

He was no longer by the central staircase.

Nor among the cluster of Alphas near the west pillar.

Nor along the perimeter where he liked to observe unseen.

"I'm not sure," I admitted.

We had separated to avoid any more attention. He'd given me that small nod of silent reassurance before drifting out of the ballroom.

But that was about half an hour ago.

"I'm sure he'll be back in time for his speech," Ethan said.

Probably," I replied, forcing my shoulders down as tension wound tight across them.

Kieran was Alpha. People requested him constantly. A private word. A quick negotiation.

I was sure there was a perfectly reasonable explanation for his absence.

And yet...

My fingers tightened slightly around my clutch as the emcee stepped onto the stage, smile bright and effortless. "Ladies and gentlemen, Alphas and Lunas, honored guests—before we hear from our distinguished host, we invite you to enjoy a commemorative reel celebrating the legacy of the Hunting Festival."

Polite applause rippled through the hall as the lights dimmed, and a large screen silently descended.

I slipped my phone from my clutch and texted Kieran.

Me: Hey, where are you?

No response.

Bright footage of past Hunting festivals filled the screen. Young wolves competing in archery trials. Packs laughing around bonfires. Training drills under full moons. Interviews with past winners, their faces proud and glowing.

As the crowd oohed and aahed, I tried calling Kieran.

It rang.

And rang.

And went to voicemail.

A chill ran down my spine.

The screen shifted to highlight reels of the hunt—combat flashes, wolf forms colliding, cheers erupting.

Then the footage stuttered, static rippling across the massive screen before the montage dissolved into something else entirely—dim lighting, unfamiliar shadows, the unmistakable outline of a bedroom that had nothing to do with any festival.

The camera angle was skewed, as though placed deliberately but discreetly.

Amber light spilled across a rumpled bed where a female figure lay draped in silk that slipped over bare skin, while a darker silhouette stood at the bedside.

A hush spread through the ballroom, confusion flickering over faces as the image sharpened just enough to outline the thick arms, wide frame, and shadowed jawline of a man.

The lighting hid certainty but not implication.

Ethan went rigid beside me, and Maya's fingers tightened around my wrist as I struggled to remember how to breathe.

Before the image could resolve further, the screen went black, and the lights snapped back up to full brightness.

A stunned, suffocating silence fell over the room.

Then Gavin's voice filled the room, amplified through hidden speakers. "Ladies and gentlemen, our sincerest apologies for the technical malfunction."

He stepped onto the stage as though nothing had happened.

"Alpha Kieran has been called away due to an urgent matter requiring his immediate attention. However, in his absence, he has prepared something special for you all."

He gestured grandly. "A fireworks display at the rooftop garden. A spectacle worthy of this year's festival opening."

There was a beat of hesitation. A moment of 'Are we just going to pretend that didn't happen?'

Then staggered applause.

Music surged back to life as servers began guiding guests toward the elevators and rooftop staircases.

I stood where I was, unease sharpening inside me.

That image.

That room.

That silhouette...

I glanced down at my phone.

No new message.

No missed call.

I closed my eyes and let my senses expand, not in a reckless surge that would draw attention, but in controlled, deliberate threads that slipped quietly through the edges of the ballroom.

I searched for Kieran, allowing the music and conversation to recede from my awareness as I reached beyond the walls, along the north corridor, the west wing, the upper floors, finding nothing distinct at first.

Then I felt it—a subtle disturbance, a dense, contained presence watching—and my eyes opened.

Vidar stood across the hall near a column, a champagne flute dangling between his fingers. His gaze was fixed on me, his lips curved. Even from here, I could see the amusement dancing in his eyes.

He inclined his head—then began walking toward me.

Ethan shifted, taking a half-step forward.

Vidar stopped just within conversational distance.

“Well,” he said lightly. “Seems we were robbed of quite a show.”

My jaw tightened. “Excuse me?”

He sighed theatrically. “The footage looked interesting. Shame it cut so early.”

Vidar’s gaze slid lazily over my shoulder, then back to me.

“I’m sure if you hurry,” he continued, voice low enough for only us to hear, “you might still catch the grand finale.”

My heart pounded.

“I hear the masterpiece is being shot in Room 417,” he added casually.

Heat flared behind my ribs.

“You think this is amusing?” I asked softly.

“I think,” he replied, “that wolves who play games should be prepared to lose them.”

I took a step toward him, my lips already peeled back to bare my fangs before I could stop myself.

‘I’m going to turn that smile bloody,’ Alina snarled.

Maya’s nails dug into my arm in warning.

Ethan’s hand landed firmly on my shoulder.

He shot Vidar a pointed look. “All guests are to assemble on the rooftop for the fireworks display. Enjoy the show.”

Vidar’s smile widened a fraction, and he raised his glass. “Oh, I will.”

He winked at me. “You enjoy yours.”

Then he sauntered away.

As soon as he was out of sight, my focus tunneled.

Room 417.

“Kieran,” I whispered.

I turned toward the exit.

Maya grabbed my arm before I could take a step.

“Sera.” She stepped in front of me, blocking my path just enough to slow me without restraining me.
“Listen to me. If this is what it looks like—”

“It isn’t,” I snapped.

It couldn't be. I refused to entertain that possibility.

Her eyes softened. "Exactly. Which means someone"—she glanced pointedly in the direction Vidar went—"wants it to look that way. Don't give him the show he wants."

I forced air into my lungs, forced the logic of her words to settle.

If I stormed upstairs publicly, it would validate the spectacle. Fuel the narrative.

Then, Maya raised her voice slightly.

"Seraphina, I need your help with something urgent."

The neutral, mildly concerned tone was just loud enough to carry to nearby ears.

"Of course," I replied.

We turned away from the main flow of guests heading toward the rooftop.

Instead of taking the grand staircase, Maya veered toward a service corridor partially concealed by decorative drapery.

We slipped inside, and the noise of the ballroom dimmed instantly.

The corridor was narrow, lined with storage doors and utility panels.

“Secret passage?” I muttered.

“Old hotel,” Maya replied. “Renovations don’t erase everything.”

Ethan squeezed my shoulder. “Stay calm,” he murmured. “I’m sure there’s a perfectly good explanation for all this.”

I gritted my teeth, trying my hardest not to replay the footage in my mind.

We moved quickly through back corridors, up a maintenance stairwell that bypassed the main elevators.

Room 417.

The hallway outside was unnervingly quiet, the kind of silence that felt constructed rather than natural.

Two Nightfang sentinels stood at attention on either side of the door.

The moment they saw us, they stepped forward in unison, blocking the entrance.

“Lady Sera,” one said respectfully, though his posture did not shift. “Alpha has given strict instructions. No one is to enter.”

My pulse spiked.

“He’s inside?” I asked.

“Yes.”

“Move.”

A flicker of hesitation crossed the other sentinel’s face. “He was very clear.”

Alina surged to the surface, hot and volatile.

My lips stung as my fangs slid out and I bared my teeth. “Move,” I growled.

“I would do as she says,” Maya said from behind me. “Trust me, you don’t want to get on her bad side.”

They exchanged a look, but before they could decide, I’d already shoved one aside. He stumbled sideways, barely catching himself against the wall.

“Lady Se—”

I was already shoving the door open.

The scent overwhelmed me instantly—sweet in an artificial, cloying way, layered thickly enough to make the back of my throat tighten.

Contrary to the video, the suite was brightly lit, every lamp switched on, despite the curtains being drawn to bring in the cool night air.

My eyes adjusted quickly to the harsh glow, and then I saw them.

Kieran was in the bed, jacket off—his arms around Celeste.

For a suspended heartbeat, everything inside me went still.

The noise in my head, the careful calculations, the awareness of politics and optics—none of it mattered.

All that existed was the image in front of me: his hands around her, her body pressed to his chest.

Violent heat surged up from my stomach to my throat in a wave strong enough to burn the room to the ground.

“What. The. Fuck,” I snarled.

Kieran’s head snapped toward me.

“Sera—”

I didn’t hear what he said after my name.

Because I was being transported back in time to eleven years ago.

Same hotel. Same three characters in the fucked up love triangle.