

My Sister 347

Chapter 347 PAWN OR PARTICIPANT

KIERAN'S POV

I stepped fully into the suite, but I didn't move toward the bed.

I clamped down on the storm of emotions rising—outrage, indignation, confusion—letting years of discipline and control take over as my gaze swept the room in one controlled pass.

The curtains were shut. Lamps glowed deliberately dim. The air pulsed with the cloying sweetness of the aphrodisiac that coated my throat. It was so potent I had to deliberately slow my breathing to keep it from seeping deeper into my bloodstream.

And then I looked at her.

Celeste lay half-curved on the mattress, silk twisted around her legs. One strap had fallen loose from her shoulder, revealing the top curve of her breasts.

Her breathing was uneven and shallow, and her eyes were unfocused, staring at the ceiling.

She hadn't noticed me. I wasn't sure she even knew where she was.

I crossed to the window first and pulled the curtain aside, cracking it open to let the night air cut through the artificial sweetness. I flipped every switch within reach, lamps and overhead lights igniting one after another until the suite was washed in a stark, unforgiving brightness that made my eyes sting.

Then I reached out to Gavin through the mind-link.

'Get Doctor Hale to room 417. Now.'

I heard the exasperation in his reply. 'What's going on?'

'And lock this floor down,' I said instead of answering. 'No one enters. No one leaves. And I want Gunnar in a room under lock and key.'

A beat.

'Yes, Alpha.'

Celeste stirred then, mumbling an unintelligible string of words.

I let out a shaky breath and shifted my focus back to the bed.

“Fucking hell,” I hissed.

What the hell was happening? How had Celeste gone from sunbathing on the beach in the Maldives to...this?

She stirred again, and her head tilted, her unfocused gaze falling on me.

“K-kieran?” she breathed, voice cracked and desperate, as if I were a lifeline instead of the worst possible person to find her like this.

I took a hesitant step forward and stopped, the scent of the aphrodisiac stronger the closer I got to her.
“Celeste, what the hell is this?”

She tried to push herself upright.

Her arms trembled violently as she braced against the mattress, silk slipping further down her shoulder.

For a second, she looked almost lucid—determined, even—as if she were trying to prove she wasn’t helpless.

“I—I can—” she muttered.

Her legs swung off the side of the bed.

“Stay where you are,” I said, every instinct in me on high alert.

Whatever the fuck this was had been cleverly orchestrated, and I wasn’t sure yet what role Celeste was playing—pawn or participant.

She ignored me and tried to stand.

Her knees buckled immediately, body swaying as she lost her balance. For a moment, I watched the inevitable collapse unfold, needing to know whether this was a performance.

It wasn’t.

Her eyes rolled back, and she would have crashed face-first if I hadn’t moved.

I crossed the distance in two strides and caught her just as she pitched forward, one arm wrapping around her waist, the other bracing her shoulders. Her full weight sagged against me, boneless and overheated.

Her pulse hammered wildly beneath my fingers.

“Kieran,” she breathed again, clutching weakly at my shirt. Not seductive. Not strategic. Just desperate.

I cursed and shifted my grip to keep her upright, muscles rigid with caution.

“Don’t leave,” she whispered, fingers digging into the fabric. “Please—don’t—”

“I’m not leaving,” I said, my voice clipped.

I guided her back onto the bed, keeping distance where I could, but she was shaking too violently to sit upright on her own.

Every time I tried to ease her down against the pillows, she clung tighter.

Her nails scraped my collarbone as she pulled herself up against my chest.

“Kieran,” she breathed again, and there was no seduction in it. Only need. Panic. Fear.

I exhaled and repositioned, sitting against the headboard to prop her upright while keeping as much space between our bodies as physically possible.

My phone buzzed in my pocket, but I couldn't free a hand without destabilizing Celeste's grip.

The door opened sharply a minute later, and Dr. Hale rushed in, medical case in hand. He stopped short when he took in the room.

"Goddess," he muttered.

"Fix this," I ordered.

He nodded and moved quickly, pulling a syringe from his case while assessing Celeste's pupils and pulse.

"How much exposure?" he asked.

"Unknown."

Celeste whimpered when he approached her arm. "No—no—don't—"

“It’s fine,” I said firmly. “He’s helping you.”

Her gaze darted wildly before locking onto mine again.

“You promise?” she whimpered.

I clenched my teeth and nodded sharply. “I promise.”

She didn’t relax fully, but it was enough for the doctor to inject the suppressant into her vein.

“It should dampen the response within a few minutes,” he said.

But the minutes passed.

And Celeste did not calm down.

If anything, the desperation intensified.

She pressed her face into my chest, breathing unevenly, fingers fisting in my shirt as though I were the only solid thing keeping her from coming apart.

“Kieran, please,” she whispered hoarsely. “It hurts.”

“Celeste,” I said carefully, trying to angle her away so she wasn’t fully draped over me. “Look at me.”

She did.

And for a second, beneath the blown pupils and flushed skin, I caught something raw.

This wasn’t the Celeste who had thrown vases at my head. Not the Celeste who’d shed crocodile tears and made scenes every time she didn’t get her way.

Not the one who’d mocked and maneuvered and postured.

This was...

I had no idea who the fuck this was.

Dr. Hale frowned. “It should be working.”

“It isn’t,” I said flatly.

He checked her pulse again, swore under his breath, and began rummaging through his case.

“It’s stronger than standard. Possibly compounded.”

“Can you counter it?”

“Yes. But didn’t expect this dosage. I need a secondary inhibitor from my main kit.”

“Then get it!” I snapped.

He hesitated only long enough to glance at Celeste clinging to me. “Keep her stable. Don’t let her overexert.”

As if I had a choice.

He left swiftly, and I was alone with her again.

She shifted, silk sliding further down as she tried to climb higher into my lap.

“Stay still,” I said sharply, but my tone lacked bite.

“Kieran,” she whispered again, her breathing stuttering. “I didn’t mean—”

Her words dissolved into incoherence.

I stared down at the top of her head, at the familiar golden hair tangled against my shirt.

Once upon a time, I had loved her.

Or thought I did.

I had been enamored with the way she laughed. The way she tilted her chin when she was challenging someone. The way she drew every attention in every room she entered.

What the hell had happened?

And how had she ended up here—drugged, arranged as bait in a suite meant to frame me?

I exhaled slowly, steadying my pulse against the artificial scent still clinging to the room.

“I’m cold,” Celeste whispered, though her skin was burning.

“You’re not,” I countered.

She pressed closer. “I’m so cold, Kieran.”

And that was when the door burst open and the scent of lavender and fury cut through the synthetic sweetness like a blade.

“What. The. Fuck.”

I looked up and saw Sera standing in the doorway, eyes blazing as she took in the entire scene in a single, devastating sweep.

“Sera—” I began.

But the look on her face told me she wasn’t hearing anything.

Because it didn't matter that this was a trap. All that mattered was that I was in the center of it, holding the most incriminating piece of evidence in my arms.