

My Sister 362

Chapter 362 BETRAYAL FROM BLOOD

SERAPHINA'S POV

My chest constricted so violently that I had to grip the edge of the mattress to remain upright, the room tilting around me with equal force.

No.

No.

I leaned closer to the screen, as if narrowing the distance might somehow undo what I was witnessing, as though proximity could fracture certainty.

But it didn't.

My father had known the truth.

He had seen the footage. He had watched the proof that I hadn't engineered that night, that the narrative forced onto me was incomplete at best and a deliberate lie at worst.

And instead of defending me, instead of confronting the lie...

He had purchased it.

He had buried it. Locked it away behind permissions and suppression codes.

He had watched me endure whispers and accusations, watched me shrink beneath the weight of a sin I did not commit, and chosen silence anyway.

Why?

The question echoed through me, hollow and endless.

Was Celeste's reputation more important than my innocence?

Was preserving Frostbane's image worth sacrificing me?

Did he just simply...hate me?

A wave of nausea rolled through me.

I pressed the spacebar, forcing myself to watch the file from the beginning.

I listened to the distorted voice once more, straining past the digital filter for the familiar inflections beneath it.

I had grown up listening to that voice carry across banquet halls and training fields. I had learned to read approval in its cadence, to brace myself for disappointment in its pauses.

And now—

My vision blurred.

With the way my life had unfolded prior, I hadn't expected him to defend me.

For years, I'd convinced myself that he thought it was justified, that it wasn't personal. That it had been politics, reputation management, damage control.

That he would never willingly disown me unless he didn't think he had another choice. That I was collateral, not a target.

But this was personal. There was no way to justify this.

A bitter laugh escaped me, sharp and unsteady, too loud in the empty room.

Just when I had begun to consider that maybe, just maybe, the hostility and disdain had all been in my head. That, deep down, my father had truly loved me in his own way.

The first tear fell before I realized I was crying. Then another followed, and another, until the screen dissolved into a wash of light and shadow.

That was when the door opened.

“Fun fact, the master bedroom is actually a lot more comfort—”

Kieran’s teasing tone cut off mid-sentence.

When I looked up at him, the grief pouring out of me must have been visible.

His expression changed instantly—panic, then concern.

He crossed the room in seconds.

“Sera.”

The sound of my name broke whatever fragile restraint I had left.

I stood—barely aware of my body moving—and stumbled into him.

He caught me before I could fall apart completely. His arms came around me, solid and unyielding.

I pressed my face into his chest and sobbed.

“I never imagined,” I choked, fingers twisting into his shirt, “I never imagined it would be him.”

“Who?” he asked, voice trembling. “Who hurt you?”

I pulled back just enough to look at him.

“My father.”

The words felt like stones being forced out of my throat.

Kieran's jaw hardened as he cupped my face, thumb wiping away the tears tracking down my cheeks. "What did he do?"

"He knew," I whispered. "He saw the footage. He purchased it. He suppressed it."

Realization dawned in his eyes. "You watched Astrid's drive?"

I nodded, vision blurring with a fresh wave of tears. "I'm sorry, I know I should have waited for you, but—"

"Hey, hey," he said softly. "That doesn't matter."

"He buried the truth," I choked out. "He knew what really happened and he..." I trailed off into sobs again, unable to bear the gnawing ache in my chest.

"Why?" I demanded, though Kieran couldn't answer. "Why would he do that? Why would he watch me go through that and say nothing?"

"We'll find out," he said, voice steady but edged with something lethal. "We'll get answers."

"I thought he didn't know," I said, shaking my head. "Maybe he just chose Celeste blindly. But this means he made a deliberate choice, fully aware of the damage to me."

Another sob tore through me, violent and uncontrollable, and Kieran pulled me firmly back against him as though he could shield me from the truth itself.

I cried until there was nothing left inside me to release, until the storm of grief and betrayal burned itself out and left only a hollow, aching numbness in its wake.

Kieran didn't let go, not when my breathing turned ragged, not when my knees weakened, not when the trembling finally gave way to exhaustion.

At some point, he guided me gently to the bed. I barely registered the movement, only the steady presence of his hands, careful but unyielding.

When I lay down, he followed without hesitation, his arm remaining wrapped securely around me, his fingers threading through my hair in slow, grounding strokes.

I pressed my ear against his chest and listened to the steady rhythm of his heartbeat, anchoring myself to something solid.

Sleep came eventually, but not gently.

In my dream, I stood in the Lockwood manor's main hall beneath the vaulted ceilings and cold stone arches that had always made me feel small.

My father stood at the far end of the chamber. He was not angry, not cold, not even stern.

He simply stood there, hands clasped behind his back, composed and unreadable.

I walked toward him, the echo of my footsteps reverberating across the empty hall.

"Why?" I asked.

He didn't answer.

I stopped in front of him, searching his face for something—guilt, remorse, regret, anything that would soften the blow of what I had seen.

"Why did you hide it?" I demanded. "Why did you let me suffer for no reason?"

Silence stretched between us, thick and suffocating. His eyes met mine, steady and unflinching, and there was no apology in them. No explanation or regret. Only dismissal, as though I were a matter already closed.

I reached out for him, but it seemed like the distance between us was more than I anticipated. I couldn't reach him. No matter how many steps I took forward.

He was too far.

Worse—he was gone.

And I would never get my answer.

I woke with my chest aching as though something inside it had physically fractured. For a disoriented moment, I didn't know where I was, only that the pain followed me out of sleep.

Then I felt Kieran, who was already sitting up beside me, and it all came rushing back.

I didn't need to speak; he had felt it, the shift in my breathing, the tightening in my chest. His thumb brushed gently across my cheek, wiping away tears I hadn't realized were falling again.

"I'm calling Ethan," he said quietly. "He's bringing Celeste, and we're getting to the bottom of this."

I closed my eyes and leaned against him, unable to muster the strength to argue or agree.

The heart I painstakingly pieced back together over the last year had cracked again, fissures spreading through places I had only just begun to mend.

This pain was sharper than the old humiliation, sharper than political maneuvering or public judgment, because those wounds had come from outside.

Betrayal from enemies could be survived.

Betrayal from blood was another kind of wound entirely.