

My Sister 368

Chapter 368 THE TRUTH

BRETT'S POV

I had imagined this moment more times than I cared to admit.

In those imaginings, I was composed. Detached. Indifferent.

And when I stepped into the living room and saw Celeste fall to her knees, eyes widening as recognition dawned, imagination met reality.

Celeste Lockwood had always known how to hold a room with nothing but posture and a smile.

Even kneeling, she carried herself like a dethroned queen rather than a disgraced conspirator.

But that magnetic force that once pulled me helplessly into her orbit had vanished, leaving something brittle in its wake.

I thought I had already seen the worst of her vanity. The worst of her cruelty.

During our years together, I witnessed her jealousy flare like wildfire. I endured the subtle barbs and the silent treatments at the slightest infractions.

Yet even then, I had believed—fool that I was—that her viciousness came from fragility.

That it was armor.

That beneath it, there was something soft.

There had been sweetness, too. I could not deny that.

Quiet nights abroad when she would curl into me, tracing idle circles over my chest, whispering about how lonely she felt in foreign cities.

Mornings when she would press a kiss to my jaw and call me her only peace.

Those moments had convinced me the ugliness wasn't innate. They made me believe letting her go—releasing the bond that was suffocating us both—was mercy. Mutual liberation.

But watching her earlier tirade from the shadows blasted those thoughts right out of my mind.

The mask had been discarded, and the woman before me was terrifyingly unfamiliar. Cold. Cruel.

At that point, I let the questions I held back in that hotel room flood my mind.

Had I ever truly known her?

Or had I loved a projection crafted precisely for me by fate?

As if sensing the turmoil in my thoughts, Maris stepped forward beside me without a word and slid her hand into mine, her grip warm and steadying.

The bond between us answered instantly, a surge of heat traveling up my arm and anchoring somewhere deep in my chest.

I exhaled.

In that simple touch, I understood something with startling clarity.

I was no longer the man who had been bent around Celeste's emotions.

I was no longer the Omega boy who was grateful for every minute scrap of affection he got.

Maris's thumb brushed over my knuckles once in silent reassurance.

I squeezed.

Then I walked toward Celeste, each step deliberate and measured.

She stared up at me as I stopped a few feet away. For a flicker of a second, I saw calculation spark in her gaze.

Old reflex.

Old tactics.

Tears poised at the rim. Her lower lip trembled just enough to suggest vulnerability without surrender.

It might have worked on someone else.

It would have worked on the man I used to be.

“Did she?” I asked quietly, echoing my earlier interruption. “Did Sera really ruin you?”

Silence.

Her throat moved with a swallow.

“You said you suffered,” I continued. “You said you were stripped of everything. That you were abandoned.”

I crouched slightly so we were closer to eye level.

“I was there, Celeste, remember?”

Her lashes fluttered as her gaze darted around the room before returning to me.

“I was with you abroad. I saw the penthouse in Barcelona, the villa in Barbados, the monthly stipend, the invitations to private galas.”

I shook my head. “You were not destitute. You sure as hell weren’t ruined.”

Her jaw tightened.

“And you were not alone,” I added softly. “You had me.”

Something flickered in her expression then—annoyance? Shame? It vanished too quickly to name.

“You told me you’d been betrayed. That you’d been manipulated. That the world conspired against you.”

I scoffed. “Here’s a fun fact: the ‘Jason’ you were talking to in Corin’s illusion was me.”

A gasp tore out of her,

“That’s right. You revealed all your ugly, evil thoughts directly to me.”

Her lips parted, her breathing quickening as she shook her head, still not speaking.

“Save it, Celeste. The truth is out. The only conspirator is you. The only betrayer is you. You lied and manipulated and deceived, and when you weren’t satisfied with making everyone around you bleed, you turned around and cut yourself.”

Her lips pressed together so tightly they blanched.

The room was very quiet now.

Even the fire seemed to lower its voice.

“Tell the truth,” I said, not louder, but firmer. “You were never miserable. Only furious that your plan failed.”

I waited.

Maris’s hand remained in mine, steady as a pulse.

Celeste trembled.

But she did not answer.

CELESTE'S POV

My tongue felt glued to the roof of my mouth.

I couldn't reconcile the Brett from the Vesper Grand and the Brett before me with the boy I had once wrapped around my finger, not the Omega who had looked at me like I was salvation.

Not the Brett who used to cling to me like I was his anchor. Now it felt like he was the anchor—and I was the one drifting.

I hated that thought so much I wanted to scream.

And then there was her.

I had no idea who the fuck she was, but the sight of her fingers laced through his, as if it were the most natural thing in the world, scraped at something raw inside me.

"Go on," he urged. "Admit it."

I swallowed.

The words lodged in my throat like shards.

He knew.

If he really had played Jason...

I'd basically stood in front of him and told him everything.

For years, I rewrote that Chapter of my life until I almost believed it. I carefully reshaped it, polished the edges, and sanded down the ugliness.

I had been the discarded one. The humiliated one. The wronged Luna robbed of her crown.

That story had worked.

It had worked on foreign packs that only heard whispers. It had worked on social circles eager for scandal.

Most of all, it had worked on Brett.

But now—

I looked around the room.

For the first time since I was a girl, I realized there was no one left who believed in the version of me I had so carefully curated.

Ethan's face was carved from stone. Kieran's disappointment was colder than anger. Maya's expression held clinical disgust. Corin watched with detached amusement.

And Sera...

There was no confusion left in anyone's eyes. No room for reinterpretation. No space to redirect blame.

The footage had played. The confession had left my mouth.

There was no new narrative to construct.

No dramatic collapse to perform. No tears potent enough to rewrite what had just been heard.

For the first time in my life, there was nothing left to hide behind.

No crown.

No mask.

No audience willing to be fooled.

My hands began to shake uncontrollably, fingers spasming with a chilling dread I couldn't disguise.

"Answer him," the strange woman with Brett said, her voice sharp as a blade.

I let out a broken laugh. It sounded thin. Off-key.

"You want honesty?" I said, lifting my chin.

Brett did not blink.

"I was furious," I admitted. "I was humiliated. I was robbed."

My gaze darted toward Kieran, then to Sera. "She wasn't supposed to win."

The words burned like acid as I spat them out.

"We could have been happy together," Brett said quietly. "I would have given you all the love you wanted."

His words were vulnerable, but his tone was flat.

"Oh, would you?" I shot back.

His expression did not change.

"Yes."

I barked a short laugh.

"You really still believe that I ever loved you?"

I pushed myself up slightly from my knees. "Who wants a battered old Camry as consolation for losing a gleaming new Rolls-Royce? Why would I settle for an Omega when I could have ruled beside an Alpha?"

The woman stiffened.

But Brett's face did not crumble the way it once would have. He merely watched me.

"You were convenient," I continued. "You were devoted. You were useful."

A faint tremor worked its way into my limbs, but I pressed on.

"No matter what method you used to claw your way into Alpha rank now," I said, "it does not erase what you were. What still rests in your fucking bones."

His jaw flexed.

"Clumsy," I added. "Eager. Desperate to be chosen. Pathetic."

The words landed.

I saw it in the faint tightening around his eyes.

But it did not devastate him like I wanted

“I never loved you,” I pressed on, willing the words to pierce and hurt. “You were merely a placeholder.”

The woman moved before I fully registered the shift.

She released Brett’s hand and stepped forward in two swift strides.

The shove was not brutal, but it was firm enough to rock me backward.

“Watch your mouth,” she said, fury blazing openly. “You will not disrespect my mate in my presence.”

Mate.

The word rang through the room like a bell.

I stared up at her, at the strength in her stance, in the way she squared her shoulders as if prepared to defend him physically if necessary.

Brett rose to his full height behind her.

“Maris,” he murmured, not reprimanding—steady.

She did not take her eyes off me.

“You call him clumsy and pathetic?” she continued, her voice low but vibrating with restrained power. “He rose through blood and battle. He endured exile, prejudice, and your manipulation.”

Her lips curled. “Breaking free of your clutches was the best thing that ever happened to him.”

Heat flushed my face.

“I don’t need a lecture from you,” I snapped.

“No,” she agreed coolly. “You need a mirror.”

The words struck harder than the shove.

Instinctively, I glanced behind her and saw myself reflected in the dark window—kneeling, disheveled, eyes wild.

Not a Luna.

Not even a rival.

The one thing I'd feared all my life had happened—I had lost.