

My Sister 37

Chapter 37 FIGHT A DRAGON

ETHAN'S POV

Nothing else mattered. Not the way I haphazardly parked my car and stumbled out of it like a drunkard. Or the fact that I dived into oncoming traffic and narrowly missed becoming roadkill.

All that mattered was her—right across the road, within reach. My fucking mate.

Startled, she took an instinctive step back as I stepped directly into her path, panting like I'd run a marathon, not twenty feet.

Her eyes widened, but the surprise was brief, quickly dissolving into a look of amusement and mild intrigue.

She crossed her arms. "Well," she said, cocking her head, "someone's an overachiever."

She'd just sent me on a wild goose chase, had me running around town trying to uncover a name and a damn address. Yet, despite myself, I smiled. "Do I get bonus points for turning in my homework early, Maya Cartridge?"

Her lips twitched. "We'll see."

I took a step closer to her, my eyes zeroing in on the pulse beating wildly in her neck. She could feign nonchalance and indifference all she wanted, but I knew she felt the pull between us. It thrummed between us like a live wire—dangerous, deliberate, and impossible to ignore.

"Congratulations," she said, her voice like velvet caressing my skin. "You passed the first challenge with flying colors."

I blinked. "First?"

Her smile was slow, scheming. Dangerous. "Next: beat me in combat."

I raised a brow. "Is there a final level where I have to fight a dragon and retrieve a magical stone, too?"

"Oh, honey." She reached a hand out, and my breath hitched when she ran a finger down my torso and smirked. "I am the dragon."

My eyebrows arched. She had to be the craziest fucking woman I'd ever met, and gods help me, I was head over heels already.

"I'll fight you," I said, stepping into her space. Not touching—but close enough that the energy between us crackled, undeniable. "And I'll win."

She looked up at me through her lashes, that familiar challenge flashing in her eyes. "Looks like your ego is as big as you are handsome. It'll be a shame if you're all talk, though."

"Trust me, I'm not."

She shrugged. "I guess we'll see."

She started to walk away, but I caught her wrist and pulled her flush against me. Her breath hitched, and Logan surged beneath my skin, restless, growling.

Her scent was a heady combination that momentarily scrambled my thoughts.

"You know," I murmured, leaning in slightly. Our lips were so close I could kiss her. Fuck, I wanted to kiss her so badly. "I'm an Alpha. We don't like being led in circles."

She cocked her head. "Then you're welcome to bow out."

I gritted my teeth. "I'm trying to respect your terms, Maya Cartridge." I hooked her chin with my finger and thumb, tilting her face up. "But if you keep testing my patience, I'll simply take you to bed and mark you."

Logan yipped even as my heart raced at the image of Maya naked in my bed, writhing under me, our bodies slick with sweat. Heat surged underneath my skin.

Her eyes darkened, lust simmering underneath the challenge. But she stubbornly held on to her composure, and her smirk deepened.

"You want to take me to bed, Alpha?" She leaned in, close enough that I could feel her breath against my lips. She was testing every restraint I had, and she fucking knew it. "Then beat me first. If you can."

"When?" My voice was rough, my throat dry.

"Your choice. I'm always ready."

'Now,' Logan roared. 'Right fucking now.'

But before I could answer, a memory surged—my mother's voice, hopeful, fragile: 'Will you come pick them up and take them to her?'

Stupid fucking pastries.

"I have somewhere to be first," I said tightly. "An errand to run."

"Cute," Maya replied. "I didn't know Alphas ran errands."

"This one does. For family." I paused. "After that, I'll be ready."

I reached around her, unable to hide my smirk as she stiffened when my hand slipped into her back pocket and pulled out her phone. I held it up to her face and unlocked it with Face ID.

I typed my number into her phone and held it out to her without saving it. She hadn't asked for my name and I'd be damned if I volunteered it when she'd made hers so difficult to uncover. "Text me the venue, and I'll be there as soon as I'm done."

She took the device from me, eyes gleaming. "Can't wait."

Fuck, neither could I.

Sera opened the door with a face like stone.

"I brought pastries," I said, holding up the bag like the peace offering it was.

She didn't move. "What the hell for?"

"They're from Mom," I said, trying to keep my voice level. "She asked me to bring them."

She folded her arms. "Again—what the hell for?"

I blinked. "She's your mother, and she baked you pastries, isn't that reason enough? They're your favorite, too, cinnamon raspberry, right?"

She stared at me for one long second before she laughed, dry and sharp. "Cinnamon raspberry is Celeste's favorite, Ethan."

I blinked. "No, that can't be right—"

"That the only person whose tastes mattered to Mom was Celeste?" She shrugged. "Sounds about right to me."

She scoffed. "I can't fucking believe her."

I exhaled. "It was an honest mistake. There's no need to be so hostile; we're family."

Her eyes narrowed, and I immediately regretted my words. I fought the urge to take a step back, remembering how she'd shoved me almost halfway across the room.

"Family." She repeated the word as if it were a foreign language. "Do you even know the meaning of that word, Ethan?"

"I—"

"Because last I checked, family doesn't push you away for one mistake. Family doesn't scoff at you and hide you away and write you off because of a defect. And family knows what fucking dessert you like."

"Oh, come on," I sighed in exasperation. "Like you know mundane facts like that about—"

"Your favorite pastry is lemon squares—specifically the ones at that little bakery opposite the pack house. Your favorite color is gray; you hate classical music because you think melody without lyrics is a ridiculous phenomenon, and you'll die before you put pineapple on pizza."

I blinked at her, stunned.

She crossed her arms. "What about me, big brother?" she sneered. "What's my favorite color? Favorite food? Pet peeve? What music do I like or dislike?"

I opened my mouth. Closed it. Nothing.

That silence was a goddamn scream.

Her face crumpled for a heartbeat before it hardened again. "That's what I thought."

"Sera, I—" I had no words.

'Call it the law of elasticity, call it self-preservation.' Gavin's words were deafening in my head. 'Sera reached her limit and snapped.'

"Best get those to Celeste before they get cold," she said, nodding to the pastry bag in my hand.

She stepped back into her house. "I've done just fine without you all for the last ten years, and I don't need olive branches or attempts to rebuild decimated bridges."

Her voice broke a little, but she pushed on. "If you care about me like you so adamantly claim, leave me the fuck alone."

The door slammed in my face. I stared at it, a hollowness spreading in my chest, quickly filling up with guilt and frustration.

Just then, my phone buzzed.

It was an unknown number, but I instantly knew who it was.

'Venue secured. You ready, Alpha?'

I stared at the text, the ache in my chest shifting into something sharper. Something hungry.

Oh, I was ready.

I needed an outlet for the torrent of emotions swirling within me.

And if the avenue for that happened to be the woman driving me to the edge of madness, all the better.