

My Sister 371

Chapter 371 NOT FRAGILE

SERAPHINA'S POV

I staggered backwards into the real world, my hands slipping from Celeste's face.

The Frostbane guest room snapped back into focus in fragments. Curtains half-drawn. The muted glow of the bedside lamp. Celeste's body arched against the restraints.

Air seared my lungs as I fought to breathe, reeling.

While I was still trying to get my bearings, Celeste screamed.

Her body jerked violently against the leather cuffs. The metal ring clanged, sharp and resonant, against the bedframe.

"What did you just do?!" she demanded, panic splintering through her words, her eyes wild.

"You were inside my head. You—you can't do that. That's not normal. That's not—"

She sucked in a ragged breath, staring at me as if I had grown horns before her eyes. “You’re a monster.”

I straightened slowly.

My pulse was still unsteady, but my voice was not. “I sought the truth.”

She thrashed harder, hair lashing across her face, breath short and ragged. “You violated me!”

The irony almost made me laugh.

I stepped closer to the bed, close enough that she could see the sneer on my lips.

“Doesn’t feel so good, does it?”

Something in my tone—quiet, steady, utterly stripped of emotion—seemed to freeze her in place, stalling her thrashing.

“Lie to me again,” I continued, “and I’ll have a field day in your fucked up mind.”

Her jaw trembled, her eyes bright with a rush of fear and fury so intense it vibrated off her.

Her eyes searched my face, looking for the softness she used to exploit. The hesitation. The quiet endurance.

She didn't find it.

"What are you?" she hissed.

"I'm not the Sera you left behind," I said. "I told you things had changed."

I took a step back. "If you calm down and are willing to communicate like an adult, maybe you, Ethan, and I can sit down and have a conversation. One without lies and schemes, hmm?"

Her expression flickered—defiance clashing with uncertainty and something that looked like fear.

Her lips parted as if to retort, but the words stalled before they could form.

I turned toward the door.

“Rest,” I said. “You look exhausted.”

Her scream followed me out. “You don’t get to walk away! You don’t get to act like you’re above me! Sera—!”

I closed the door behind me.

The hallway outside was dim and cool, the air calmer than the charged space I’d just left.

I took one step.

Then another.

The drain struck all at once, as if the floor vanished beneath me. My vision tunneled, blackness creeping inward as my legs gave out.

Strong arms caught me before I hit the ground.

“Sera!” Kieran’s voice was low and sharp at the same time.

His scent wrapped around me as he steadied my weight against him. "I've got you."

I blinked up at him, trying to force the room back into clarity.

"I'm fine," I murmured.

"You're not." His hand slid to the back of my neck, fingers warm against my skin. "You're shaking."

I tried to straighten, but my knees protested. "I just...pushed harder than I meant to. And..." I swallowed. "It felt like something pushed back."

His jaw tightened. "What did she do?"

"I don't know." That unsettled me more than I wanted to admit. "It could've been my limit. Or her defences. Or—"

Catherine.

It was easy to guess who Celeste had called before I'd been shoved out.

Besides Father. Besides Mother. Besides Ethan.

There had always been Catherine.

Her godmother. Her confidante. The woman who had whispered into her ear since we were children, who had shaped Celeste's understanding of power and entitlement and performance.

Who had taken care of her after she'd broken up with Brett.

Who, until recently, she'd been with.

Kieran studied me for a long moment, a storm of emotions swirling in his eyes.

"We're going home," he said finally, no room for argument in his tone.

I didn't fight him.

He lifted me as if I weighed nothing and carried me down the corridor.

Ethan's door opened briefly as we passed; he took one look at my face and didn't ask questions.

“Call if anything happens,” I told him faintly.

“You will do no such thing,” Kieran retorted.

Ethan’s expression was unreadable, but he nodded.

The drive back to Nightfang blurred.

I rested my head against the window, watching the dark stretch of road unspool ahead of us, trees and shadowed hills swallowing the distance as Frostbane disappeared behind us.

The image of Father standing in that suite replayed in my mind. Demanding apology. Ordering Celeste home. Choosing accountability over favoritism.

Choosing me.

He had known the truth.

But he hadn’t buried it to protect Celeste.

He had buried it to protect me.

The tension—the shock and hurt and disbelief—I’d carried since I watched the footage on that USB loosened like a fist uncurling from around my heart.

Combined with the shocks of the past few days—the rogues, Marcus, Celeste’s confession, the psychic strain—my body seemed to decide it had endured enough.

By the time we reached Nightfang, exhaustion dragged at every limb.

Before I could open my door fully, Kieran was already by my side, once again lifting me into his arms.

Inside the packhouse, instead of turning toward the guest wing, he carried me down the main corridor to the Alpha wing.

“This isn’t the way—” I began weakly.

“I know,” he said.

He pushed open the double doors at the end of the hall.

The master bedroom.

The space was dark and expansive, moonlight filtering through wide windows, everything unmistakably his—lean lines, disciplined order, and the quiet, commanding presence of an Alpha who ruled both this room and everything beyond it.

He crossed the room and lay me gently on the large bed.

“Welcome to our room,” he murmured.

The word settled somewhere deep, and I answered with a soft smile.

He adjusted the pillows behind me and pulled the covers up, tucking them in with quiet care.

“I’m not fragile,” I whispered.

“No,” he agreed softly. “The last thing you are is fragile.”

His fingers brushed a strand of hair from my face.

"I'm going to check on Daniel," he said. "I'll be right back."

"Give him a kiss for me," I mumbled, already drifting off.

When I woke, the house was silent, save for the low, steady hum of sentinels on night rotation outside, a constant reminder that even in rest, the packhouse remained guarded.

Moonlight streamed through the bedroom windows, pale and silver, casting long shadows across the floor.

Initially, I was disoriented, confusion sparking anxiety until I realized why I had woken up.

I was burning.

Heat pooled beneath my ribs, spread across my shoulders, down my spine. It felt like a fever, but not an illness.

More like...energy without an outlet.

I pushed back the covers carefully.

Kieran's arm was draped around my waist, heavy and warm, his palm resting low against my back, pressing me against his bare chest.

His breathing was slow and even, the deep rhythm of someone who rarely allowed himself true rest.

Moonlight traced the strong line of his jaw and the relaxed set of his mouth, softening the severity he wore so easily when awake.

Without the weight of command in his eyes, without tension pulling at his shoulders, he looked younger. Less guarded. Just a man, not an Alpha.

Carefully, I lifted his arm and eased out from beneath it.

He shifted slightly, brow tightening for a brief second as if sensing my absence, but he didn't wake.

The air against my overheated skin offered little relief.

Barefoot, I slipped from the bed and padded toward the ensuite bathroom, the cool floor grounding beneath my feet.

I turned the shower handle toward cold and stepped under the spray.

The water hit my skin in a sharp rush, cool and bracing, sliding over searing flesh and raising goosebumps along my arms.

I tilted my face into it, letting it soak my hair, my shoulders, my chest.

It should have helped—should have shocked the heat out of me—but it didn't.

The warmth wasn't something resting on my skin that cold water could rinse away; it ran deeper than that, settled beneath the surface, threaded through muscle and marrow until it felt as though the heat lived in my bones.

I shut the water off.

Breathing harder now, I stepped out of the shower, not bothering with a towel, and moved toward the window instead.

The curtains were half-open, moonlight spilling—bright, full, nearly tangible.

Drawn by instinct I didn't fully understand, I drew the curtains open the rest of the way and stepped into the silver wash of light.

It touched my shoulders first, then slid over my collarbones and down the curve of my waist.

I tilted my face upward and closed my eyes as relief seeped in, subtle but undeniable.

The lunar pull felt different—stronger, closer, as if the distance between myself and the night sky had diminished.

Energy hummed faintly along my nerves, as if the moonlight itself carried a frequency only I could feel.

I didn't realize how long I stood there until the bathroom door opened softly behind me.

“Sera?”