

My Sister 382

Chapter 382 GENUINELY BROKEN

SERAPHINA'S POV

For several seconds after my last words, Celeste said nothing.

We stood in front of the mirror, just as before. Her wrists were still bound by the silver cuffs, and my hand still gripped her arm to keep her from turning away.

The quiet in the room thickened until even the faint rustling of the curtains felt loud.

In the mirror, our reflections stared back at us.

I expected anger. Defiance. Another cutting remark.

That had always been Celeste's way. Even when cornered, she fought with her pride like a blade.

But something else happened instead.

Her expression cracked.

At first, the movement was so subtle I almost missed it. Then her breathing changed. Her chest rose unevenly, as if she were trying to hold something back—and failing.

A soft, strangled sound escaped her throat.

Then the tears came.

They arrived without warning, breaking through whatever fragile restraint she had been clinging to.

Celeste bent forward as if something inside her had snapped. Her bound hands lifted uselessly toward her face as sobs tore through her chest.

It was not the faux crying she usually did to get her way and garner pity.

This was something far more raw—stripped of pride and defense.

For a moment, I did not move.

The sight pulled at something deep in my chest, yet hesitation followed.

Every instinct I had developed over the years told me to keep my distance, because this woman had been the source of more pain in my life than anyone else.

Celeste had orchestrated the humiliation that shattered my reputation eleven years ago. She had spent years cultivating resentment toward me, twisting every small misstep into a weapon.

Part of me still clearly remembered that girl. Still resented her.

But the woman standing in front of the mirror no longer looked like the same person.

Her shoulders shook uncontrollably as the sobs deepened. Beneath the wreckage of her composure, I sensed a raw, disoriented vulnerability that had been buried under layers of arrogance and posturing.

The connection between us as sisters complicated everything.

Blood carried weight that logic alone could not dismiss.

At the same time, another, quieter awareness guided my actions. The night my bond with Kieran anchored me to the moonlight, my mental abilities had sharpened to a degree I was still learning to understand.

Subtle shifts in emotional currents became clearer. Sometimes the boundaries between thoughts and instincts blurred.

If I handled this moment correctly, Celeste might begin to see things differently.

Not instantly. Not cleanly.

But the first crack had already formed.

I stepped forward.

When my arms wrapped around her shoulders, Celeste froze in shock.

For a heartbeat, she did not react. Then her body collapsed against me as though the last support holding her upright had vanished.

The silver cuffs between her wrists clinked softly as her hands pressed against my side, and the sobs that followed grew harsher.

"I'm so tired," she whispered hoarsely against my shoulder.

Her voice sounded fragile in a way I had never heard before.

I rested one hand gently against the back of her head, steadying her as the storm of emotions continued to pour out.

Time passed slowly while she cried.

Eventually her voice returned, quieter and more uncertain.

“Sera.”

“Yes?”

Her fingers curled weakly against my sleeve, the metal of the cuffs brushing softly against the fabric.

“Do I still have a chance?”

The question made my breath catch.

Celeste lifted her head slightly, her tear-streaked face searching mine as if the answer might decide the course of the rest of her life.

“I regret it,” she said before I could speak. The words came out unevenly, pulled from somewhere deep inside her chest. “I regret everything.”

Her gaze dropped again.

“I regret what I did to you. I regret chasing Kieran as if winning him would solve everything. I regret pushing Brett away. I regret...all of it.”

Her voice faltered before continuing.

“Most of all, I regret sealing Kharis away.”

I felt her body tense again as fresh tears slipped down her face.

“I want her back,” Celeste whispered.

The confession carried a painful sincerity that made my chest tighten.

"I know I ruined everything else," she continued quietly. "No one would trust me again after what I've done. Maybe I deserve that. But Kharis..."

Her voice broke. "At least she deserves an apology."

My thoughts stilled.

From the fragments of memory I glimpsed earlier through my psychic interrogation, I already knew Celeste's situation was not the same as mine had been with Alina.

Alina had never truly ceased to exist; she had retreated deep within me, waiting until the moment my body and spirit could support her return.

Kharis's sacrifice had been different.

Her last moments had been an act of desperation inside the darkness of Celeste's captivity, a final surge of strength that burned itself away to protect her.

"I can't promise anything," I said carefully.

Celeste's shoulders stiffened.

“But never give up hope.”

Her eyes lifted again, searching my face for confirmation that I was not simply offering empty comfort.

Slowly, I allowed my awareness to drift outward, and I reached toward Celeste cautiously.

Her mental landscape was unstable, riddled with fractures and scars left behind by Catherine’s interference.

Instead of probing deeper, I focused on the surface currents of her emotions, guiding them the way one might calm disturbed water.

Her breathing began to slow.

The tension in her shoulders gradually softened as the overwhelming surge of grief eased into something quieter.

“You should rest,” I murmured.

Celeste blinked slowly.

"I'm exhausted," she admitted.

"I know."

The gentle pressure of my psychic influence continued to guide her toward sleep. Within moments, her eyelids grew heavy, and her body sagged against me as consciousness slipped away.

Ethan was at my side in a flash, gathering her into his arms.

He carried her to the bed, supporting her gently. By the time her head touched the pillow, she was already asleep.

For a moment, I stood there watching her. Without the tension that usually hardened her features, Celeste looked strangely younger, as if the years of bitterness had briefly lifted.

"Do you think that was another performance?" he murmured.

I shook my head. "She's genuinely broken."

I turned to him. "She needs us."

"How can you..." His jaw flexed. "She hurt you so badly."

I shrugged. "Honestly, I don't know. Maybe it's blood. Maybe it's empathy." I sighed. "Maybe I'm just a fool."

Ethan wrapped an arm around my shoulder. "We don't deserve you."

I managed a small smile.

"Go home," he said, "get some rest. I'll stay with her and send you updates about Mother."

I gave a small nod before leaving the room.

The hallway outside was dimly lit, and the quiet of the Frostbane residence had deepened as the night stretched onward.

Down the corridor, the strategy room remained illuminated, and when I stepped inside, I found Kieran standing beside the table with Corin, Maya, Brett, and Maris.

Kieran crossed the room immediately.

His hand closed around mine, warm and steady. "Are you alright?"

I squeezed his hand. "I'm fine."

Corin watched me thoughtfully from across the table. "Did you learn anything new?"

"Yes."

I drew a slow breath.

"Catherine altered Celeste's mind."

Maya frowned slightly. "You mean the blocked memories?"

"That is part of it," I replied. "But the manipulation runs deeper. The seals protecting those memories are extremely precise. Whoever constructed them understood psychic structures in detail."

"Catherine," Brett muttered.

“Yes.”

I folded my arms. “But there is something else.”

Everyone watched me closely.

“When I examined Celeste’s mind earlier, I sensed more than sealed memories. There is...an absence.”

Corin’s gaze sharpened.

“An absence of what?”

“Power.”

Recognition flashed across his face.

“It feels similar,” I continued slowly, “to the hollowness I sensed from Aaron.”

The room fell silent.

“Celeste said Catherine was experimenting with psychic resonance and wolf energy. And she was a willing subject.”

Kieran’s expression darkened. “You think Catherine’s responsible for Aaron, too?”

I shrugged. “They’re not exactly the same—Aaron was dead, after all—but I can’t help thinking they’re connected.”

“Which means Catherine is preparing something much larger.”

“Yes.”

The weight of that realization settled over the room.

Corin studied me for a long moment before speaking again.

“Your perception has grown stronger since the lunar anchoring began.”

“It has.”

“And you know what comes next,” he said quietly.

I nodded. “Before we confront Catherine directly, I need training.”

The moonlight within my mind stirred, vast and luminous beneath the surface of my awareness.

Whatever Catherine planned to do with the power she had been developing, hesitation was no longer an option.

I needed to master what I was becoming.

As soon as possible.