

My Sister 419

Chapter 419 BATTLES WAITING

SERAPHINA'S POV

Kieran hadn't said a word since we left the clearing.

I leaned back against the door of our room for a second, watching him.

He moved through the space with quiet efficiency. He lit a low lamp by the bed, his hands trembling as he set things in place with an almost painfully precise care. The faraway look in his eyes was edged with worry, as if each motion was his way to fend off some rising dread.

The tension sat in his shoulders, in the slight rigidity of his movements, in the way his jaw tightened and loosened with every breath.

"You're brooding," I said softly.

He didn't turn to me.

"I'm not," he replied.

I raised a brow, even though he couldn't see it. "You are."

A pause.

Then a quiet exhale.

He turned to face me, and the instant our eyes met, frustration flashed sharp and raw across his face before he reined it in.

"I'm thinking," he corrected.

"Dangerous," I murmured.

That earned me the faintest flicker of an almost-smile.

"About you," he added.

I pushed off the door and stepped toward him, the blanket still wrapped loosely around me.

"I'm fine," I said.

He scoffed. "Your favorite lie."

I pursed my lips, holding back my instinct to argue. Because he wasn't wrong.

"You think I'm being reckless," I said instead.

"I can't believe you want to go back there after what just happened tonight."

"I handled tonight."

"You nearly collapsed."

"I didn't."

"You would have if I hadn't caught you."

I exhaled slowly, closing the remaining distance between us.

“Kieran,” I said, softer this time, reaching for him. “I’ve done this before.”

“Yes,” he said, voice tightening, “You’re forgetting I was there, Sera. I felt the agony you went through in that room, and now you want to go again.”

“It’ll be different this time,” I promised him. “I know what to expect.”

“How can you be so sure?”

I lifted my hand to rest on his chest so I could feel the steady, familiar beat of his heart beneath my palm.

“Alina is whole now,” I said. “Not fractured. Not weakened. Whatever the Archives show me, I won’t be facing it alone.”

It wasn’t disagreement that flashed in his eyes—it was conflict.

“I still don’t like it,” he admitted.

“I know.”

“You’re asking me to let you walk into something we barely understand.”

“I’m asking you to trust me.”

His gaze searched mine, deeper this time. I knew that deep down, he wasn’t questioning my strength or ability; there was something else.

“I do trust you,” he whispered.

“Then what is it?”

The silence that followed was heavy.

“I hate this,” he said finally, letting out a sigh.

“What?”

“This,” he repeated, his voice low. “Standing back while you’re the one taking all the risk. Watching you push yourself to the edge while I—”

He stopped, his jaw tightening again.

“While you what?” I pressed gently.

His eyes flicked away for a second before returning to mine.

“While I can’t do anything about it.”

Oh.

It wasn’t frustration with me.

It was frustration with himself.

“Kieran...”

“I’m supposed to protect you,” he continued, quieter now, but no less intense. “That’s not just instinct. That’s who I am. And every time something like this happens—something I can’t fight, can’t stop, can’t even step into—it reminds me exactly how useless I am in that moment.”

“That’s not true.”

“It feels true.”

I held his gaze, letting that sit between us for a second.

“You think I don’t feel the same way?” I asked softly.

He frowned. “That’s different.”

“It’s not,” I said. “There are things you face that I can’t touch. Things only you can carry. This just happens to be one of mine.”

His eyes searched mine again; this time, the storm of conflict softened, and understanding flickered over his expression.

“I don’t need you to fix this,” I added gently. “I don’t need you to protect me. I just need you to support me.”

“And I do,” he said.

“I know.”

He closed his eyes. “It physically hurts watching you hurt, Sera. I can’t—”

I leaned up and kissed him.

His breath caught against mine, the tension in his body faltering for a fraction of a second before his hand came up to steady me at the waist.

“You’re distracting me,” he murmured against my lips.

“Am I?” I whispered back.

“A little.”

“Good.”

I felt the shift happen as it always did—the way his control slipped, the way his grip tightened, pulling me closer as the distance between us disappeared completely.

The frustration was still there.

But it was changing, melting into something warmer.

“I won’t be gone long,” I said quietly between breaths. “Two days. Maybe three.”

His forehead rested against mine.

“You’re sure?”

“Yes.”

“You’ll come back as soon as you have what you need.”

“I promise.”

He studied me for a second longer, as if memorizing my features.

Then his hand slid up to my face, brushing along my jaw.

“You’d better,” he said softly.

I smiled. “I will.”

And then I kissed him again.

This time, he didn’t hold back.

The tension that had been coiled in him unraveled all at once, his hands tightening around me as he pulled me flush against him, the warmth of his body grounding in a way nothing else could.

The blanket slipped from my shoulders as I pressed closer to him, forgotten and drifting to the floor somewhere behind me.

His touch was steady. Intentional. Like he was reminding himself I was here. That I was real. That I was still within reach.

I felt it in every movement. Every breath.

Every pause where his forehead rested against mine before he closed the distance again.

“Kieran...” I breathed softly.

His response wasn't words.

It was the way his hand tightened at my back, the way his lips brushed mine again, slower this time, deeper.

The world outside the room faded.

Everything narrowed to this. To him.

To the steady rhythm of his heartbeat beneath my hand, to the warmth of his skin, to the quiet way his control slipped piece by piece until there was nothing left between us but hunger and honesty.

“You always do this,” he murmured at one point, his voice low against my skin.

“Do what?”

“Make it impossible to stay mad at you.” There was no frustration left in his voice now.

I smiled against him. “That sounds like a you problem.”

A soft huff of breath—almost a laugh.

And when he kissed me again, it wasn’t about distraction anymore.

It wasn’t about easing tension.

It was about connection.

About holding onto something real before everything shifted again.

Time blurred after that.

The quiet of the room wrapped around us, the night stretching on as we moved together without urgency—just presence, just closeness, just the mutual understanding that neither of us said out loud.

That tomorrow, things would change again.

That there were battles waiting, risks we couldn't avoid.

But for now, for this moment, we didn't have to think about any of that.