

My Sister 432

Chapter 432 CIRCLING OF PREDATORS

DAMIAN'S POV

Marcus and Catherine were an unlikely pair of allies.

Marcus burned hot—impatient, volatile, always pushing, always needing to feel like he was the one driving the conversation forward.

Even sitting still, there was a restlessness to him, a tension coiled beneath his skin like he might snap at any moment if the world didn't move fast enough to match him.

Catherine was the opposite.

Where Marcus reacted, she observed. Where he pressed, she waited.

There was something unnerving about the way she held herself, like she was never fully in the room—like part of her was always somewhere else, calculating, rearranging outcomes before anyone else even realized there was a game being played.

If Marcus was fire—loud, unpredictable, always threatening to consume—then Catherine was something colder. Something that watched the fire burn and calculated how best to use the ashes to her benefit.

The meeting had started as all our meetings did—layered words, veiled intentions, the careful circling of predators who had agreed, for now, not to turn their teeth on one another.

“...you’re underestimating the rate of disruption,” Marcus was saying, irritation threading through his voice as he leaned forward, fingers tapping against the table. “The interference patterns we’ve been tracking aren’t random. They’re deliberate. Someone—hell, maybe even a group—is moving against the system.”

I watched him without responding, my gaze steady, my expression giving nothing away.

He hated that. I could see it in the tightening of his jaw, the way his shoulders squared just a fraction more.

“Your system,” he added pointedly. “Your auction. Your network. If it collapses, everything we’ve built around it goes with it.”

I leaned back in my chair, folding one arm over the other.

“If it collapses,” I said, my voice calm, measured, “then it means it was weak enough to be broken.”

Marcus’s lips curled into a sneer. “Or maybe you’re the one who’s too weak to maintain it.”

I felt it then—not anger, not yet. The tightening thread of something darker.

Catherine’s gaze flicked between us, her silence more deliberate than either of our words.

“Careful,” she said softly.

Marcus exhaled sharply through his nose but leaned back, though the tension didn’t leave him.

I tilted my head, considering him.

“You’re agitated,” I observed.

“And you’re not agitated enough,” he shot back. “That’s the problem.”

A faint smile touched my lips. “You mistake stillness for inaction.”

“Stillness?” He scoffed. “If your chest wasn’t rising and falling, I’d think you were a fucking statue.”

“Careful,” I repeated Catherine’s warning. “I promise you prefer me still.”

For a moment, the room seemed to narrow, the shadows pressing closer, the air growing just a fraction heavier.

And then the door opened.

One of my men stepped inside, head lowered in deference, his movements controlled but not quite steady enough to hide what lay beneath.

“What is it?” I asked.

He hesitated.

“Speak,” I barked.

“Sir...” His voice dipped, careful. “There’s been a...development.”

“Regarding?”

“The auction.”

Foreboding stirred in my chest.

“Go on.”

“The...untouchable piece” —he swallowed— “has been claimed.”

For a second, I didn't understand the words.

Not because they were unclear, but because they didn't fit.

They didn't belong to any version of reality that made sense.

“Repeat that,” I commanded.

He did, the abominable words wobbling as they fell from his lips.

Something inside me snapped.

The chair beneath me scraped sharply against the stone as I stood.

“No.” The word came out as a low growl.

“Sir—”

“No!”

My hand came down on the table hard enough to crack the surface, the polished blackwood splintering beneath the force.

“She was not available for purchase,” I said, each word clipped, controlled only by sheer force of will.

“That condition was absolute.”

“Yes, sir,” the man said quickly. “But the bidder...she invoked the rules. Forced the claim. There was no opposition.”

Of course there wasn't opposition.

No one would dare.

No one—

My thoughts halted as rage swarmed in and overrode all else. It surged up fast, violent and molten, burning through the thin layer of control I was an expert at maintaining.

“She’s gone,” I said, more to myself than to anyone else.

The moment those words were out in the open, I felt it—the absence.

A hollow space where something vital had been, something I had allowed to exist within my reach, within my control, under my protection.

Gone.

Taken.

My breathing slowed, my nostrils flaring with every heavy breath as I fought to keep my emotions under control.

Marcus let out a sharp, humorless laugh.

“Well,” he said, pushing back from the table, “that’s what happens when you insist on keeping liabilities alive.”

I turned my head slowly to look at him.

“Careful,” I growled.

But Marcus wasn’t done.

“You should have listened to me,” he continued, his voice rising. “I told you from the beginning that Omega was a risk. A wild card you refused to eliminate. And now—”

I moved so fast, Marcus barely had time to blink before he was grabbed by his collar and slammed against the wall.

“And now,” I interrupted, baring my fangs in his face, “you’re speaking as if you hold no value for your life.”

“Get your filthy hands off me,” he choked out.

“Say one more fucking word about my mate, and I’ll tear that wagging tongue out,” I snarled. “Got it?”

Marcus's expression darkened. "How dare you threaten me in my territory?"

"You think I give a flying fuck about hierarchy and territories?"

I released him with a sharp shove, stepping back. "You seem to be under the impression that this is a partnership of equals."

"It is—"

"It is not," I snapped.

"I allowed this arrangement," I continued, my voice trembling with trapped anger, my red-tinged gaze locked on his. "Because it served my interests. Profit. Expansion. A certain level of...entertainment."

His jaw tightened.

"Keep pissing me off, and not only am I out, but I'll also burn your fucking territory to the ground on my way."

Marcus held my gaze, anger sparking.

“You do not threaten an Alpha in his territory,” he snarled.

My lips quirked up. “Yeah? What the fuck are you going to do about it?”

I saw the tension coil up in Marcus’ body, saw the rage ripple through him—and I relished it.

Let him charge. Let him attack. I needed a good brawl, an outlet for the raging emotions I could barely keep leashed.

But before he could move, Catherine’s clipped voice sliced through the tension.

“Enough.”

She rose slowly from her seat, smoothing an invisible crease from her sleeve, her expression composed in a way that made the tension in the room feel almost...irrelevant.

“This is not the time,” she said.

Marcus let out a sharp breath, dragging a hand through his hair as he stepped back.

Only then did I shift my attention to Catherine.

She met my gaze without flinching.

“You’ve lost control of a piece you deemed untouchable,” she said with a nonchalant shrug, as if I’d misplaced a fucking pen. “And from the sound of it, she’s now in the hands of someone who has already demonstrated a willingness to disrupt your operations.”

I gritted my teeth, jaw muscles aching as I forced my expression blank, refusing to show the ache her words left pulsing beneath my sternum.

Mireya—gone. Taken.

Fuck.

“Which means,” Catherine continued, “this is no longer just your problem.”

“So what?” I asked. “You’re going to help me track down my mate?”

She scoffed. “I couldn’t care less about your little pet.”

She crossed her arms. "I have a solid guess on who your mysterious buyer is, and if I'm right, then this escalates beyond inconvenience."

"Inconvenience?" I hissed.

"Pull yourself together. This is more than the Omega, and you know it."

I took a deep breath, stamping down the urge to charge forward and snap Catherine's pretty little throat.

She was right after all. There was a whole world outside Mireya. I didn't yet know how to live in it, but I would learn.

There were more important things to focus on right now.

"So what exactly are you suggesting?" I asked.

Catherine's gaze didn't waver.

"That we stop reacting," she said. "And start acting."

Marcus scoffed under his breath, but he didn't interrupt.

She leaned forward, her fingers resting lightly against the fractured surface, as if the damage were nothing more than a detail to be accounted for later.

"We knew this was coming," she continued. "Disruption. Interference. Opposition. We prepared for it."

Her eyes locked on mine, and a shiver ran down my spine.

"It's time to use that preparation. Time to activate our hidden asset."