

My Sister 44

Chapter 44 THE LAST STRAW

CELESTE'S POV

Seraphina was the bane of my fucking existence.

The moment she stepped onto that red carpet in that star-splashed gown, with her hair all done up like she belonged among royalty, I knew everything would go wrong.

It was like living in a twisted version of Cinderella, where I was the stepsister and my rotten, ragged sister had somehow undergone a transformation that garnered the attention and adoration of everyone in the vicinity.

Including Kieran.

From the moment he laid eyes on her, he hadn't been able to take them off, not even noticing me fuming right next to him.

It was fucking unbelievable. I was the one who drew attention like moths to a flame. I was the one who always stood out in a crowd.

It wasn't enough that she'd stolen my man, now she had to steal my spotlight?

And then there was that fucking horrible speech.

It took all my willpower not to burst out laughing as she read the crowd her sob story. And then my energy was diverted into not puking when they ate it all up like hungry orphans.

She played them all like a violin. Wide eyes and soft words, like she wasn't completely aware of how many people were eating out of the palm of her hand.

Poor little wolfless girl, cast aside, forgotten. As if she had a right to be anything more. As if she didn't deserve every ounce of discrimination and rejection she got.

It pissed me off to watch everyone applaud her like she was an innocent victim coming out of the shadows.

She was a snake, a manipulator. She hid in the shadows intentionally, waiting for the right moment to strike and take what belonged to me.

And Kieran...

Kieran dared to clap first. Loudly.

The look of admiration and pride he wore on his face made me want to launch myself across the room and scratch Seraphina's face to shreds.

And then there was the jealousy.

Kieran was usually a master of emotional concealment, never letting anything he didn't want revealed slip out.

But tonight, he was wearing his emotions on his sleeve like a fucking child and I could see how angry he was, how jealous he felt when Sera and Lucian took to the dance floor.

And then he refused to dance with me.

And then, to drive the nail deeper into the coffin, he fucking walked out on me.

Bathroom my ass.

As he walked away, I could feel him slipping out of my grasp, falling under whatever spell Sera so effortlessly weaved.

Tonight was supposed to be the night I showed him off to my friends, to the world. To let them know Kieran's rightful Luna had returned.

No. I wasn't going to let Sera ruin that for me. I wasn't going to lose my man a second time.

I followed him, barely able to keep up with his long strides.

I pushed through the crowd, ignoring the sidelong glances and questioning looks from my friends, trying not to let panic sour my stomach.

By the time I was out of the ballroom, Kieran had vanished into thin air.

I texted him. Called him. Nothing.

I even called Ethan—maybe my brother could talk some sense into his friend. But, of course, he didn't pick up either.

He hadn't even shown up to the gala yet. He was probably off somewhere mooning over his worthless new mate.

I pushed the anger I felt at that thought away, compartmentalizing my feelings. Kieran was my first and foremost priority.

I heard applause from the ballroom as the song finished, signaling the end of Sera and Lucian's dance.

My fists clenched as I stalked through the corridors, past the ballroom and even the damn bathroom, looking for Kieran.

Nothing.

Everything was spiraling and I was debating going back inside to throttle Sera—because this was all her fucking fault—and then I saw them.

Outside, in the garden.

My breath caught.

Kieran was kneeling. The formidable Alpha of NightFang was fucking kneeling.

Right in front of Sera.

Her shoes were off, like she was some delicate little thing who couldn't handle heels. And Kieran was bandaging her feet.

The picture they made was so absurdly intimate, it boiled my blood.

She looked down at him like she was surprised. He looked up at her like he was awestruck.

I could feel the tension sizzling between them like a live thing, and gods help me, I was going to murder someone.

I stormed forward.

"Kie?"

My voice cracked the moment like a whip.

Sera flinched. Kieran stood quickly, tucking something into his pocket, his whole body going tense.

Her eyes met mine—calm, placid, so fucking smug.

And Kieran...

That face that had been so open and expressive all night closed off, shutting me out.

"Oh you have got to be fucking kidding me," I hissed, glaring at my sorry excuse for a sister. "One Alpha isn't enough for you, Cinderella? When are you going to be satisfied?"

She opened her mouth—probably to play innocent, but I wasn't having any of it.

"After you've seduced everyone's man, you shameless whore?"

Kieran moved fast, placing himself between us.

"Celeste. Stop."

Those two words were filled with so much authority that I had the instinctive urge to slam my mouth shut. I blinked, momentarily stunned.

He wasn't pulling me into his arms. He wasn't reassuring me of his affection.

He was shielding her.

My voice shook with rage. "Are you serious? You're protecting her?"

He shook his head firmly. "It's not what you think."

"Oh really? Because it sure as hell looks like you're auditioning to be her footman!"

Sera didn't say anything. She just stared between me and Kieran, like we were a complicated puzzle she hadn't yet solved.

No doubt, the conniving bitch was trying to figure out her next seductive tactic.

"Well?" I urged, wishing I could shoot daggers out of my eyes and stab her fucking innocent face. "What do you have to say for yourself, whore?!"

She sighed. Fucking rolled her eyes like I was some minor inconvenience.

"Listen, Celeste—"

The patronizing tone was the last straw.

I lunged. I was going to pluck out her eyes with my French tips and—

Kieran moved fast, catching me around my waist, his body a mountain I couldn't push past.

"Go, Sera," Kieran said quietly, his head towards her.

She hesitated.

His tone sharpened, and the word became a command that wouldn't dare be disobeyed. "Go."

She shot me one last glance, her expression blank. And then left.

I waited until she was gone before I rounded on him.

"What. The. Fuck. Kieran?"

He exhaled, his hand dropping from my waist.

"Celeste—"

"You regret it, don't you?" My voice dropped. "Divorcing her. Being with me."

His eyes closed briefly. The silence was long enough to answer everything. Long enough to slash open my heart.

I laughed bitterly. "That's all I needed to know."

Kieran opened his mouth, but I cut him off.

"You want to know regret, Kie?" I yanked my sleeve up. There, on the inside of my wrist, was a delicate line of ink—two wolves circling themselves under a full moon.

His gaze furrowed, frowning down at the tattoo.

"I got this to cover the scars," I said softly, the lie slipping out of me easily. His gaze shifted to mine, alarm flaring in his eyes. I let mine brim with tears—it was honestly all too easy. "From when I left. After you slept with my sister, I was going to kill myself. I thought I'd never survive without you."

At least, that part was true.

His face went pale. "Celeste—"

"I thought I was getting better. I thought I could move on and forget the past. But you keep doing this—putting her first, falling prey to more of her schemes." I took a shuddering breath, and a tear slid down my cheek. "Making me feel like I'm disposable. As if you're going to leave me at any moment. Again."

He stepped forward, reaching for me. "Fuck, Celeste, I never meant to make you feel that way." I let him gather me in his arms. "I swear to you—nothing happened between me and Sera. I'd never betray you like that. Not again."

I let myself lean into him, letting the weight of my body press against his chest.

"I don't want to lose you," I whispered, my voice cracking. "Not again."

"You won't," he murmured. "I promise, Celeste. I'll do better. I'll be better. You mean so much to me."

I pulled back just slightly. Just enough to meet his eyes.

"You've said that before, Kie. You've been saying a lot of words without your actions backing them up."

A line formed between his brows, and he said what I hoped he would. "How can I prove it to you?"

My answer was immediate. "Publicly. Tonight. In front of all my friends."

He blinked. "What do you mean?"

I offered him a small, trembling smile. "Let them know it's us. That it's always been us. That you're choosing me, not her."

There was a flicker in his eyes. Doubt? Regret? Guilt? I couldn't name it.

But then he nodded. "Okay."

I exhaled slowly. "Okay?"

"I'll do it. Tonight."

The night air felt sweeter after that. Like I'd won something that had nearly been lost forever.

Seraphina might have her tactics. She may have thought her moment in the spotlight would rewrite everything.

But Kieran had been mine from the start, and everything was going to go back to the way it was.

Starting tonight.