

My Sister 47

Chapter 47 TRUTH STONE

SERAPHINA'S POV

The world above was a blur of ripples and shadows, but all I could feel was the suffocating cold.

My limbs flailed, heavy and useless, tangled in the wet fabric of my dress. Panic gripped me, more vicious than the chill. My lungs screamed, but my mind screamed louder.

'Not again. Not again!'

The koi pond might've looked ornamental, and it wasn't all too deep. But water—any body of water—had always terrified me. They were all the same—dark, unpredictable, and greedy.

I was a child again, caught in a flashback I couldn't escape—cruel hands shoving me from behind into the lake behind the Lockwood estate, struggling under the weight of my own clothes, the absence of air.

The slow suffocation and the frightening clarity that I was going to die, never really having lived.

Back then, my father had pulled me out. This time, I didn't know if anyone would.

Then something broke through the cold.

My eyes were squeezed tight, but somehow, I felt the pull, and then—arms, warm and strong and steady, wrapped around me.

I reached out without thinking. Held on for dear life, desperate fingers finding purchase in a soaked shirt and broad shoulders.

I didn't need to see to know who it was. Kieran.

We broke the surface together, and I gasped, choking on air and dirty pond water. I heard another splash nearby and another head broke through the surface—Lucian—but I was already being dragged toward the shore.

People crowded the edges. I heard voices shouting—Maya screaming at someone—feet pounding.

My vision swam. My chest burned.

Kieran carried me up the embankment like I weighed nothing, his breath ragged. He pulled me into his lap the moment we were out of the water.

"Sera?" His hands, trembling, yet warm, grabbed my face. "Sera, look at me."

I blinked up at him, coughing. My fingers curled into his shirt like I still needed anchoring. Like if I let go, I would slip back into that dark, scary depth.

Lucian stumbled onto the bank just behind us, drenched and heaving.

"Is she okay?" he panted, appearing by my side.

"She's breathing," Kieran said, voice tight. His eyes never left mine, his arms tightening around me.
"You're okay. You're okay. I've got you."

My teeth chattered too hard to speak. Kieran wrapped his jacket around my shoulders. He must have taken it off before diving in because it was dry and warm and smelled like him, and my trembling hands pulled it tighter around me.

That's when I heard the sardonic bark of laughter.

"Of-fucking-course," Celeste's voice rang out, venomous and loud enough to gather every onlooker's attention, "you'd fall straight into the arms of my mate. You really just can't give it a rest, can you, Sera?"

I closed my eyes. Not tonight. Not now.

"Celeste," Lucian warned, stepping between us, but Kieran stood first.

"Back off," he said sharply, brushing damp hair away from his face. "She just nearly drowned."

"Yeah," Lucian chimed in. "Thanks to your friend."

"It was an accident," Emma's shaky voice chimed in. All her bravado seemed to have drained out of her, and she looked like a child in danger of being whooped. "I tripped and—"

"One more word out of you and you'll become koi food," Maya hissed. "And I promise you, no one is jumping in to save you."

I forced myself to sit up. All the back-and-forth was worsening my throbbing headache.

"Next time," Celeste hissed, lip curling, "you let her fucking drown."

I heard Kieran's sharp intake of breath. "Celeste!"

"What?!" she snapped. "Why the fuck would you jump in and save her?" Her arm swept behind her to her rapt audience. "Right in front of everyone."

She turned her gaze, colder than the depths of any body of water, on me. "Must be nice, having your ex at your beck and call, huh, Sera? You must be so proud of yourself."

I rose to my feet, swaying slightly. Kieran was immediately by my side again, one hand on my arm, the other locked firmly around my waist.

That vein in Celeste's forehead was seriously going to explode.

"Don't," I said hoarsely. I didn't know who I was talking to—Kieran or Celeste. "Just... don't."

Celeste took another step forward, eyes gleaming with self-righteous fury. "What, am I lying? Or have you suddenly grown ashamed of how you continuously throw yourself at him? Oh, what am I saying? Everyone knows you have no fucking shame. You can't get a man to fall in love with you because you're worthless and unlovable, so you scheme and you manipulate because that's the only way you—"

Something in me snapped.

I slapped her.

Gasps echoed across the garden. Even Maya froze mid-stride.

Kieran's eyes widened, and I half expected him to come to Celeste's aid yet again, but he seemed just as frozen.

Celeste clutched her cheek, blinking in disbelief.

"You fucking bitch—"

"I am done," I hissed. "Done listening to you spew ugly vitriol, as if you're the only one who's been hurt."

"What?" She barked a laugh, sharp and grating. "You're going to stand there and pretend like you were hurt?"

"Yes," I replied firmly. "It was a mistake, Celeste. And I have paid the consequences long enough—"

"Mistake!" she shrieked, and I winced.

"You got my chosen mate drunk and seduced him, trapping him with a child for the last ten years, and you want to stand there and call it a fucking mistake?!"

I closed my eyes, as the memories of that night I'd tried to block out came flooding in.

"Stop it," I whispered, trembling all over again from what wasn't cold.

"No," Celeste snapped, and I felt her step closer. "Let them all know. Let your new friends know your true colors. You knew Kieran chose me—loved me—and you got him drunk. You dragged him into that hotel room with you—"

"I didn't drag him anywhere!" I screamed, my eyes flying open.

The air was tense around us, like everyone was holding their breath. Except for me and Celeste—we were hyperventilating.

"I didn't drag Kieran anywhere," I repeated, my voice wobbling. "I—"

The memories were unlocking, hazy thanks to the alcohol, but—

I frowned. "I went into that room all on my own, because—"

The blood drained from my face. My eyes snapped to Celeste's. "Because you sent me a text to meet you there."

The words slipped out of my mouth softly, but by the time the sentence was complete, I knew they were true.

"I—I'd been drinking, miserable, keeping to myself, and then you—"

"Shut the fuck up, you don't know what you're saying." But her voice was shaky, her eyes darting around like a trapped animal.

"No." I shook my head, wet strands of hair slapping my cheeks. "You texted me. Said you had a dress emergency and I should come meet you in a hotel room—in the hotel room."

I hadn't stumbled into that room by mistake. I'd gone there because I'd received a message from Celeste. She said she needed me, and that had never happened before, so I went without a second thought, running so fast that I tripped and tore my dress on my heels.

My vision had been blurry, my thoughts muddled, but I remembered now.

My gaze locked on hers. "You texted me that night. Didn't you? You sent that message."

Her smug expression cracked.

"What message? I-I don't know what you're talking about."

I took a step forward, and she retreated. "When you found us together, you threw a fit of rage and smashed my phone against the wall." Everything was falling into place with alarming clarity. "Were you trying to destroy evidence?"

"You bitch!" Celeste's eyes flashed. "You brazen little liar, how dare you—"

"There's an easy way to settle all this," Maya said, stepping into the circle, her calm voice belying the fury burning in her eyes. She pulled something from her clutch—a smooth, round stone.

"What the fuck is that?" Celeste snapped.

Maya smirked. "A truth stone."

Celeste paled. "That thing's a gimmick."

I'd never actually seen a truth stone before, but it was said to have been formed under a full moon, with the ability to draw out the deepest, darkest truth from anyone who held it.

Of course, Maya Cartridge would possess a truth stone.

"Oh really? Let's see. Emma!"

Emma flinched, her eyes flaring wide.

Maya turned and tossed the stone at her. She instinctively caught it.

"Now,"—Maya's voice dropped an octave—"did you push Sera or did you trip?"

"I—" Emma glanced at the crowd of eyes fixed on her, and her hand clenched around the stone. "I pushed her," she whispered, bowing her head. My eyes widened as the stone glowed faintly in her hands. "I-I... I'm sorry."

Maya snatched the stone out of her hand. "You're a piece of shit," she said loud enough for everyone to hear, and Emma shrank.

"Kieran?" Maya turned to him.

"What?" he asked warily.

"Wanna test it? If you tell Celeste the sky is green, she'll believe it. You can prove to her it works."

"No one needs to prove—"

But Kieran was already stepping up, taking the stone from Maya.

"Say something simple and true," Maya said.

"I'm the Alpha of NightFang," he said.

The stone glowed faintly.

"Now something false."

"I'm the King of England."

Nothing. No light.

Maya folded her arms. "Celeste says Sera dragged you into that room and seduced you. That true?"

"This is ridiculous—"

"One more word, Celeste," Maya growled, "and I'll gag you with the fucking truth stone."

"Ethan, if your mate threatens me one more time—"

"You'll what?" Maya stalked forward. "Frame me for a crime I didn't commit? Make me suffer ten fucking years for something that—"

"Sera didn't throw herself at me."

All eyes turned to Kieran, who had a fist wrapped tightly around the stone.

I blinked. "What?"

"Sera didn't make the first move. Kieran didn't either."

His eyes locked on mine, and my breath hitched. A flash of golden light shimmered across his irises. He bared his teeth, and his fangs poked out, glinting underneath the moonlight, and when he spoke next, his voice was low and gravelly—his wolf, Ashar.

"I did."

The crowd went silent.

The truth stone glowed.