

My Sister 65

Chapter 65 THE KISS

MAYA'S POV

"Where are you going?" Ethan called after me, his voice low and sharp as he pointed behind him. "The party's that way."

I scoffed, stepping out onto the garden terrace behind the hall. The party was still going strong inside—laughter, clinking glasses, the occasional clatter of silverware—but it all sounded like bothersome static in my ears.

"You're sorely mistaken if you think I'm going back to take any part in that farce."

Ethan frowned. "Maya, this is my sister's party. You have to learn to respect my family."

I blinked at him for a long, incredulous moment, and his frown deepened. "What?"

"You're doing it again," I said.

"Doing what?"

“Acting like she’s not your family, too.”

“Who—Sera?”

“Yes, Sera!”

He shook his head, his lips flattening. “Why the hell are we talking about Sera again?”

“Are you kidding me right now?” I hissed. “After seeing that bullshit your mother and Celeste pulled, you want to stay for the rest of the party?”

Ethan exhaled, rolling his eyes. “You’re being dramatic.”

“Dramatic?” I let out a sharp laugh. “You watched them ambush her. You let it happen. Your sister practically held a knife to Sera’s throat, and your mother—don’t even get me started on that fucking vindictive speech. And you just stood there.”

“Sera wasn’t ambushed.” His voice was too calm, too controlled. “My mother was trying to keep the peace. That’s what she’s always done—what my father wanted before he died.”

I stared at him, stunned. “You think that was peacekeeping?”

“She’s trying to hold this family together,” he said. “To honor my father. You don’t get it, Maya.”

“You’re right!” I snapped. “I don’t fucking get it.”

“Maya—”

“I don’t get how you can talk to me about holding your family together when you all treat Sera like she’s a cancerous tumor that needs to be cut out. She’s your sister, too, Ethan—and the fact that you act this way is pretty fucking disgusting.”

His eyes narrowed. “Watch it.”

“No,” I said, stepping toward him. “You watch it. You want me to respect your family when they treat Seraphina like garbage? Fuck that!”

His hand came up—fast, firm, wrapping around my wrist before I could react. His grip wasn’t cruel, but it wasn’t kind either. It was possessive.

“You will be my Luna one day,” he said, eyes boring into mine. “You will respect my family.”

I chafed against the command in his tone. “And what if I decide that I don’t want to be your Luna?”

His eyes hardened, a muscle ticking in his jaw. "If you really care about Seraphina," he said, voice tight, "then becoming my Luna might be the only way you can protect her."

I stared at him, and for a second, I was so stunned, I couldn't breathe.

"I'm sorry..." I shook my head. "I'm having a hard time figuring out if you just threatened me, threatened Sera, or made a fucking power play over me when you know—"

When Ethan's mouth crashed into mine, it stole the thoughts clean out of my head.

I didn't fight it—not right away.

My mind went quiet as the mate bond pulsed between us like a lullaby, sedating everything bitter and angry inside me.

Without consciously meaning to, I kissed him back. I gave in to the heat, the electricity crackling between us like a lightning storm.

His hand gripped my waist, pulling him to me. My arms automatically wrapped around his neck, pressing our chests together.

I moaned as his tongue slipped into my mouth, claiming, dominating. For a moment, I forgot my anger and indignation, and all that mattered to me was the kiss—the desire suddenly blasting through my synapses.

This was different from all the other times Ethan and I had been intimate. The magnetic attraction between us was always there, but this felt like...a leash. Like I wasn't in control of my actions, like I had absolutely no choice but to kiss him.

I felt it then—that edge of control. The way Ethan shifted closer, deepened the kiss, like he was claiming the last word in our argument. Like he was putting a period at the end of my sentence.

He wasn't kissing me to comfort me.

He was kissing me to shut me up.

And the bastard was using our mate bond to make sure it worked.

I shoved him back hard, wiping my mouth with the back of my hand.

I was suddenly cold where his hands had been, but I shot him the fiercest glare I could summon. "Don't ever fucking do that again."

Ethan looked stunned—offended, even. And that pissed me off more because he had no right to feel that way.

“Do that again,” I hissed, “and you’re going to be a very lonely Alpha. If you can’t have a fucking conversation without manipulating our bond to your advantage, then do me a favor and never speak to me again.”

He opened his mouth, but I didn’t wait to hear whatever sanctimonious thing he was about to say.

I turned and walked away, my heels crunching over the gravel with every furious step.

SERAPHINA’S POV

I didn’t realize how loud the night had been until I finally stepped into the silence of my home.

Lucian followed me in, his presence steady and quiet behind me. I hadn’t meant to take up more of his time—but when I turned to say goodbye, the words never made it past my lips.

I didn’t want to be left alone. If I were, the memories—the weight of the watching eyes, the scent of the cloying perfumes, the ugly, panicky feeling—they’d all return and ruin my night.

“Stay?” I asked instead.

He nodded without hesitation.

I left the lights dim as we moved into the sitting room. I turned on the fireplace, and the soft amber glow gave the space a warmth that soothed my mental aches.

I curled up on the corner of the couch, legs tucked beneath me, my dress tangling between. Lucian sat a little ways off, but close enough that I could feel the heat of him.

I knew I should offer him something to eat or drink, be a good host, but I felt so mentally drained, and I knew that Lucian never expected me to be anything other than what I was.

For a long time, we didn't say anything. I just let the comfort of his presence wash over me.

"Is 'how are you?' a ridiculous question?" he asked after a while.

A light laugh fell out of me as I turned to look at him. "Probably."

His eyes were fixed on the fire, the flames dancing in the pools of his irises.

"I hated seeing you like that," he added, softer now. "Surrounded by people pretending you don't exist unless you're useful or a spectacle. You deserve more than that."

I shrugged. "It's whatever."

"No, Sera." He slid closer and took my hand in his. "It's not whatever. I don't ever want you to let anyone make you believe you deserve to be treated as anything less than the amazing, strong queen you are."

The words undid something in me. I didn't even know I was holding my breath until I exhaled—shaky and slow.

"Why?" I whispered.

His brows furrowed. "Why what?"

I shrugged lightly. "It just seems like you care about me a lot, and I don't understand why someone like you would."

He shook his head. "I don't understand why you would be confused. How do you not see yourself the way I see you?"

Emotion lodged in my throat. "And...how do you see me?"

Lucian didn't answer. Instead, slowly, he reached out, gently tucking a loose strand of hair behind my ear. His knuckles brushed my cheek.

It was barely a touch.

But something lit up between us.

Neither of us moved at first.

Our eyes locked, and I could feel my pulse skittering in my throat. There was no demand in his gaze, no heat pressuring me forward—just quiet permission.

And then he kissed me.

I froze slightly, my breath hitching. The warmth of his lips was foreign, but...nice.

I thought about my conversation with Maya, how disappointed I felt when I woke up in her house the morning after Lucian and I had been drinking together.

I didn't want to wake up tomorrow and regret not saying something—doing something.

So I leaned in and kissed him back.

It was slow, almost hesitant at first, as if he was giving me every chance to pull away.

His lips brushed mine like a question rather than a demand, warm and careful. There was no rush, no claiming—just presence.

It didn't burn through me, didn't send my heart racing like a prized stallion—not like Kieran's kiss.

I deepened it slowly, my hands finding the soft fabric of his shirt. He responded with a soft inhale, his hands still at his sides like he was afraid to move too soon.

When he did finally touch me, it was with steady, respectful hands. One palm at my jaw, the other at the curve of my neck, like I was a fragile thing he feared would break.

I could feel his resistance, his reverence, and I was just about to speak—to tell him that it was okay to be a little assertive, I didn't mind a little heat; I wanted this, wanted him.

But then the shrill sound of my phone shattered the moment.