

My Sister 82

Chapter 82 DANGEROUS AND USELESS

KIERAN'S POV

Celeste's words clung to me, long after I hung up, like a stain I couldn't scrub out.

'We'll finally officially get engaged.' 'I want children—several.'

She'd rattled them all with such bright certainty, as if my agreement were already carved into stone.

And I'd said what Celeste wanted to hear just to get her off the line.

But the moment I'd hung up, I found myself pacing the narrow stretch of deck outside the cabins, restless, the briny wind doing little to cool the uncomfortable heat pressing down on me.

I didn't understand why I was feeling this way.

Marriage, children—they were all things I wanted with Celeste, so why did the thought make me consider getting seasick medication of my own?

Not because I didn't want more children. Gods, I wanted them—a bigger family, a home alive with laughter. But...

I couldn't understand why the image of Celeste swollen with my child felt...wrong. Foreign. Hollow.

I ran a hand through my hair, letting out a frustrated curse.

How could something I'd wanted for so long suddenly leave a sour taste in my mouth?

I shook my head. I didn't have to think about this until I went back to LA. Until then, there were other pressing matters to attend to—like making sure Sera survived this trip.

When I finally calmed my raging thoughts down enough to step back inside, I moved toward Sera's cabin, rehearsing what I might say, what excuse I might give for taking so long.

But the words slipped away when I saw her. She was curled on the bed, the medication I'd forced on her lulling her into what looked like an uneasy sleep.

Her skin was pale, her hair damp at the temples, but her chest rose and fell steadily.

I should have walked out at that moment. She was finally asleep; she didn't need me hovering.

Still, I lingered in the doorway, drinking her in.

Ten years married to her, and I'd never really looked at her like this.

I'd stolen glances before, yes, but I'd been a little blind back then—too wrapped up in duty, too consumed with feeling like I'd been cheated.

Celeste had felt like my future, and when I'd been forced to make the difficult choice to marry Sera instead, I'd felt trapped. Punished.

And so, I'd shoved Sera into the shadows.

I sat at the edge of her bed, careful not to wake her, and let my thoughts drift to what might have been.

'Daniel will love being a big brother, don't you think?'

What if Daniel hadn't been our only child? What if I'd given her the family she deserved instead of burying her beneath silence and cold walls?

Daniel was my carbon copy; if we had daughters, would they have Sera's beautiful eyes? Her stubborn chin?

The ache in my chest startled me, so sharp I had to push myself to my feet and retreat before it swallowed me whole.

Musings like these were dangerous. Dangerous and useless.

Because there was no chance of them ever coming to pass, I made sure of that the night I looked into Sera's eyes and asked for a divorce.

She had Lucian now. He would give her the happiness I never could.

She didn't need me. All I could do was return to my own cabin.

Inside, I stripped off my shirt and fell back against the mattress, staring at the polished mahogany ceiling, its gold inlays catching the light like constellations scattered across the cabin.

Although twice as large, the room was almost exactly like Sera's, except for one thing. She wasn't here with me.

I groaned and closed my eyes, hoping I could fall asleep and shove all these dangerous thoughts to the darkest recesses of my mind.

But then my phone buzzed on the nightstand. When I picked it up and saw who the message was from, it took all my willpower not to launch the device across the room—or out the open window into the depths of Exuma Sound.

I swiped it open and froze.

Celeste had sent me an old photograph. Her caption read: We look so adorable in this; we should add it to the family section of our engagement album, don't you think?!

I was too busy studying the picture to wonder when I'd agreed to an engagement album.

It was one of those family gatherings from years ago—before the mess of the Blood Moon Hunt, when our families were still really close, and I believed Celeste hung the stars in the sky.

She was radiant in the center, of course, posed just so. For as long as I'd known Celeste, she'd always been the center of attention, like the sun around which everything orbited.

But my gaze didn't stick to her.

In the corner of the frame, almost out of sight, was Sera. Half-turned, mid-laugh, caught in motion.

Despite their minor resemblance, Sera had always been her younger sister's polar opposite—quiet, muted. Like she dwelled in her own private universe.

I'd always been...intrigued by her.

Ethan was my best friend, and both our families were constantly matching me and Celeste together. Sera had remained an enigma—soft spoken, either ridiculed or ignored.

And yet...

I shook my head, focusing on the picture.

It was one of the rare times I'd seen her smile, and it was so different from the perfect, polished smile Celeste wore.

Sera's was not staged. Not performed. Pure.

And there was something in her eyes—light, clear, achingly familiar—that pulled me under.

I stared and stared and stared, unable to look away until sleep finally claimed me, dragging me backward in time.

I was seventeen again, shoulders still broadening, the weight of my father's pack not yet heavy on me.

It was a warm summer evening at the training yard, back when everything still felt simpler, and all that mattered to me was being the strongest and fastest among the other wolves my age.

Celeste was in the center, as always—flawless, commanding attention without even trying, even when she was barely getting through the training drills.

Everyone's eyes were on her, including mine. But then—for a second—my attention wavered.

Across the yard was Sera. Her hair had loosened in the humidity, strands sticking to her temple as she moved with quiet determination.

She was at the very edge of the training field, ostracized there because she was smaller, weaker. Wolfless.

But something curious lit up in me as I watched her run drills with makeshift equipment. She might have been different, but her spirit was stubborn. She was determined.

I didn't realize how intensely I'd been watching her until she stumbled, skinning her knee, and my breath hitched.

The others laughed, someone calling out a scathing taunt: “Careful, Seraphina! You know you don’t have wolf healing, right?”

Without even thinking about it, I crossed to her and offered my hand.

She brushed the dirt off her palm and took my hand hesitantly, whispering a thank you, so soft I almost missed it.

Then her eyes lifted to mine—and for a moment, it was like something indescribably powerful had been seared into me.

The dream shifted—years blurring—snippets of Sera always on the edge of my vision.

Her bent over a book in the library, lips moving silently. Her sneaking a sweet roll from the kitchen when she thought no one was looking. Her voice joining a pack prayer, soft but steady.

Always there, always overlooked, except by me.

And then—

That night.

The dream painted it vivid, more vivid than memory itself.

I was twenty-one; gone a little wild with moonberry wine. I'd been looking for a room to sleep it off in when I saw her in the hallway.

She was cornered by some drunk fool, a Beta wolf I vaguely recognized attending the Blood Moon Hunt, who thought her meekness meant she was easy prey.

"Oh, come on," he was slurring. "At least your sister has a reason to play hard to get. You should be grateful I'm giving you any attention."

Rage flared in me even now, even in the dream.

I didn't hesitate. My boot connected with his ribs, sending him sprawling, whimpering as he scrambled away.

When I turned to her, Sera was pressed against the wall, eyes wide, looking both startled and relieved.

And when our gazes locked, I forgot every reason that existed for why she wasn't the one for me.

I stepped closer. Too close. My hand brushed her cheek, testing, asking. She didn't move away.

She looked so beautiful that night, her hair spilling across her shoulders like flaxen silk. The glow of the full moon painted ethereal shadows across her face, igniting her eyes like sea-glass.

And then I kissed her.

The dream didn't hold back—it filled in everything I'd forced myself to bury.

The heat of her mouth, the tremor in her fingers as she clutched my shirt, the way her breath hitched when I pressed her against the door of the room she'd been standing in front of.

We tumbled inside, clothes discarded with the speed of light. The world narrowed to the burn of her skin against mine, the soft sounds she made, the way she arched into me as if she'd been waiting a long time for this.

I had her beneath me all night. I couldn't stop, didn't want to. It wasn't careful, it wasn't restrained. It was raw, desperate, hungry.

Every barrier that existed between us was torn apart with each kiss, each gasp, each thrust, each time she whispered my name like a secret too sacred to share.

Even in the dream, I knew—no one had ever felt like this. No one ever would.