

## **My Sister 83**

Chapter 83 BETWEEN DESIRE AND CONTEMPT

SERAPHINA'S POV

The first thing I registered when I woke was the absence of motion.

The violent rocking of yesterday—the waves pitching me into nausea, into that medicated haze, into Kieran's arms—was gone.

The yacht had stilled into something softer, more docile. Only the faint hum of the engines and the muffled slap of water against the hull reminded me we were still cutting through the waters of Exuma Sound.

I sat up gingerly, bracing to see if my stomach would betray me again, but the queasiness had ebbed to a dull echo. My head throbbed faintly, like I'd woken from a night of drinking.

A knock sounded at my cabin door.

I dragged myself out of bed and smoothened my clothes before trudging to the door, hoping it was Kieran, and wishing it wasn't.

“Lady Seraphina?” It was one of the crew members, a young man with a sunburnt nose and too-wide eyes. “Forgive the intrusion, but—” He hesitated, shifting his weight. “We...we can’t seem to reach Alpha Kieran.”

My brows furrowed. “Reach him?”

He nodded quickly. “We’ve tried his radio, the intercom. No response. No one’s seen him since last night, and we’re about to dock. The men are”—his throat bobbed—“concerned.”

Concerned. But not enough to check.

Of course not. Who would dare enter the Alpha’s room uninvited? Not when a single wrong step could earn them a broken neck.

“I’ll see to him,” I murmured, grabbing a fancy robe hooked by my bed.

The corridor smelled faintly of polished wood and salt, the air-conditioned chill fighting the Bahamian heat outside.

At the end of the hall, Kieran’s door loomed. It was easy to tell that it was his—larger, darker, guarded even in its silence.

I knocked. Once. Twice. Louder.

Nothing.

“Typical,” I muttered under my breath, and reached for the spare key the crew member had procured.

It was almost comical how terrified he’d been to give it to me lest he incur Kieran’s wrath, but after I promised he wouldn’t swim with the fishes anytime soon, he relinquished it.

The lock clicked softly, and before I gave myself time to think about all the reasons why this was a bad fucking idea, I slipped inside.

The curtains were drawn against the morning sun, the room heavy with shadows and the faint tang of sweat.

For a heartbeat, panic sliced through me—Kieran was sprawled across the bed, motionless, too still.

But then his chest rose, rapid and erratic, and my pulse eased.

Kieran Blackthorne, feared Alpha of Nightfang Pack, lay tangled in sheets like any mortal man. His hair was mussed, his brow damp, his lips parted like he was making an unspoken plea.

I'd confirmed he was alive. I should've left at that moment. Just closed the door, let him wallow in whatever fantasies kept him tethered to sleep.

But something—maybe the remnants of last night's fragile tenderness, maybe plain foolishness—kept me rooted.

Even worse, I crept closer, leaning over him. His lashes flickered. His lips moved around a name I couldn't hear.

Kieran Blackthorne truly was a beautiful man. Women paid hundreds of dollars for lashes like his that cast shadows on his chiseled cheekbones, softening the severity of a face that had once turned cold every time it turned to me.

His mouth—those lips that had spoken vows he never meant—was infuriatingly perfect, sculpted in temptation even when parted in something as innocent as sleep.

I hated how easily I could imagine them on my skin, how my body remembered the press of them even when my mind wanted to forget.

His jaw, sharp and stubborn, carried the same arrogance he wore awake, yet the faint stubble caught the light in a way that almost gentled him.

Almost.

Because even in this vulnerable state, he radiated power—Alpha, unshaken, untouchable.

But those lashes fluttered faintly, caught in whatever dream had his longing written across his face—and I knew it wasn't me he reached for in his sleep.

That realization burned hotter than any flame, reminding me just how foolish I could be when it came to Kieran.

Then—suddenly—his eyes opened.

And what I saw there wasn't anger. It wasn't suspicion or command.

It was that very longing.

Raw. Unmasked.

My stomach tightened, colder now than any seasickness. Celeste. Of course.

He must have been dreaming of her. Of their sweet little call I'd overheard yesterday.

Her coy voice, her talk of children. His reassurances.

The memory curdled inside me, scalding away whatever softness last night had planted.

I straightened, the air between us frosting over. “You’re awake,” I said flatly.

He blinked, slow, disoriented. “Sera—”

“I’ll leave you to it.” I turned, already stepping away, but his voice snapped sharper.

“Wait.”

I froze, back rigid, before slowly pivoting. His gaze was clearer now, pinned on me with something I didn’t dare to name.

He was looking at me like I was simultaneously the answer to every question he’d ever asked—and the questions themselves.

I didn’t like the heat that look seared over my skin, so I forced my mouth open to break the tension that was beginning to form.

"I didn't mean to overhear your call yesterday," I said quickly, "but if you and Celeste are planning to have a child, then at least have the decency to speak with Daniel first. He doesn't deserve to be..." Blindsided. Hurt. Cast aside.

But those felt like my feelings, not Daniel's.

"...disappointed again," I finished.

The words tasted like ash, but saying them, steady and cold, felt like the only shield I had left.

Kieran pushed himself up from the bed, sheets sliding down his torso, his expression unreadable.

My breath stilled at the sight of his toned torso, glistening with sweat like a basted turkey.

My stomach churned with a hunger that couldn't be satiated by food. I needed to get out of here.

But before I could retreat, he moved.

Fast.

I found my back pressed to the wall, Kieran's body caging me in. His scent hit me first—cedarwood and storm air, familiar enough to weaken my knees if I let it.

His eyes burned, too close, too intent.

"That's it?" His voice was low, roughened from sleep. "That's your only reaction? To tell me to talk to our son?"

My chin lifted, jaw set. "What else should I say?"

His nostrils flared.

"What do you expect me to do? Weep? Beg? Throw myself at you? You once said Celeste was the only woman you wanted as the mother of your children," I reminded him, each word sharp as broken glass. "So tell me, Kieran—what game are you playing now?"

His grip tightened on the wall beside my head. "You think this is a game?"

"I think," I shot back, "that you should stop tormenting me with your confusion. Choose her. Choose me. Choose anyone—but don't stand here acting like I should feel something other than relief that you'll finally give Daniel a sibling, even if it's a half one."

That was when he snapped.



His mouth crashed against mine, fierce, unrelenting, a storm I hadn't braced for.

Heat flared, scorching straight to my core, dragging me back to memories I'd barely managed to bury. Emotions I still didn't fucking understand.

For a heartbeat—just one—I almost kissed him back.

Almost.

But maybe I was more clearheaded at sea than on land.

In a trophy-worthy show of restraint, my teeth sank into his lower lip, sharp enough to draw a startled grunt. I shoved him hard, breath ragged as he stumbled back a step.

"Don't." My voice shook, but I forced steel into it. I glared at a spot on the plush carpet between his bare feet. "Don't lose your mind, Kieran. Not now. Not here."

Not again.

His hand caught my wrist, but I twisted free, stepping out of reach. My heart thundered, and I couldn't bring myself to face him squarely.

"The ship's about to dock," I said, cold as I could manage. "Daniel will be waiting on shore. I won't have him see us like this—at each other's throats, or...worse."

Because the alternative—this maddening dance between desire and contempt—was worse.

"And I won't give anyone on this yacht reason to whisper rumors."

Kieran's jaw worked, teeth clenched, eyes dark with a hunger I refused to acknowledge. Even if that same hunger also pulsed through me, as undeniable as my heartbeat.

I held my ground. "I won't passively accept things the way I once did. Keep your distance, Alpha."

The title was deliberate, slicing between us.

Without waiting for his reply, I strode to the door, spine stiff. My hands trembled, but I didn't let him see.

The sunlight on deck was blinding, glittering across turquoise waters that stretched endlessly around us. Ahead, the dock loomed, and beyond it—blessedly—my son.

Daniel stood next to a bodyguard, waving as soon as he spotted me. His little face lit up, and something inside me cracked wide open.

“Mom!” he shouted, his voice carrying across the water.

I barely heard the engines rumble down or the shouts of the crew preparing lines. The moment the yacht touched the dock, I was already moving—down the gangway, across the last stretch of wood, and into his arms.

Daniel barreled into me, nearly knocking me off balance with the force of his hug. I sank to my knees, wrapping him tight, inhaling the warm, familiar scent of my boy.

“I missed you so much,” I whispered into his hair, voice breaking.

He squeezed me back, his little arms fierce. “Me too.”

For that moment—for as long as I held him—nothing else mattered.