

My Sister 92

Chapter 92 A DOUSING RAIN

SERAPHINA'S POV

The next morning, the villa seemed too bright, too cheery for how heavy my body still felt.

The sun streamed in golden slants across the dining hall, glinting off silver cutlery and porcelain plates—and one conspicuously empty chair.

Kieran's.

His absence should have been a relief—after last night's reckless brush with temptation, the last thing I needed was to meet his eyes over toast and tea—but instead it left a hollow weight inside me.

And when breakfast was over, and he still hadn't shown up. I couldn't resist anymore, so I asked one of the Omegas where he was.

She bowed her head and said he'd spent the entire night at the training grounds.

That information filled the hollowness with something that made me queasy as I imagined Kieran slaving away on the training grounds.

No bed, no sleep—just blades, sweat, and aching muscles.

A punishment, maybe, or a way to exorcise whatever pull had nearly unraveled us in the kitchen.

I didn't pry further. If he wanted to exhaust himself half to death rather than face what had happened between us, that was his choice.

However, by mid-morning, I realized that Kieran's absence was the least of my troubles.

I'd been terrified of Samantha walking in on us last night, and relieved when she hadn't.

But apparently, the walls of the villa had ears—and mouths. Mouths that couldn't stop whispering.

I caught fragments as I passed the halls— from maids lingering too long with their laundry baskets, guards stiffening when I walked by.

'I thought they were divorced?'

'Could've fooled me with the way Alpha refused to leave her side yesterday. And did you see the way he looked at her?'

'Did you see the way he carried her? Swoon!'

'Maybe they're getting back together?'

'They might as well, they already look like a poster family on vacation.'

It was absurd. And infuriating.

Kieran and I were not in a million years getting back together; it was all just a colossal misunderstanding. And whatever, I didn't care what they thought.

Or I told myself I didn't.

But when Daniel came to me after lunch, brow furrowed and lips pressed tight, my heart sank.

"Mom," he said, shutting the door behind him quietly, his dark eyes sharp in a way that reminded me too much of his father. "Is it true?"

I straightened on the edge of the bed, gripping the edge of the book I'd been reading a little too tightly. "Is what true?"

“The stuff everyone’s saying.” His throat bobbed lightly as he swallowed. “That you and Dad are...getting back together.” He said it like the words themselves were too heavy for him to carry.

For a moment, I forgot how to breathe.

This was exactly what I didn’t want to happen—giving Daniel false hope, dragging him into the whirlwind that was my relationship with Kieran Blackthorne.

With a heavy sigh, I set my book down beside me and opened my arms. “Come here, baby.”

In that moment, my beautiful, maturing young man turned into the clingy two-year-old who screamed the roof down anytime I left the room.

He crawled into my lap, and I folded him in my arms, laying my chin on his curly head of hair.

I forced a steady breath. “Danny,” I said gently, stroking his arm. “Listen to me. Your dad has only been...attentive because I was injured. That’s all. He’s doing what any decent person would do.”

“But people keep saying—”

“I don’t care what people say.” My voice sharpened before I caught myself, then softened again.

I pulled back and tipped his chin up so I could look into his eyes. "What matters is what you think. Not them."

He searched my face for a long moment, then dropped his gaze to my lap.

"What do you think, hon?" I asked, holding my breath for his answer.

He shrugged, snuggling a little closer into me. "I think..." He blinked up at me. "I think I don't want you and Dad to get back together."

My eyes widened, and the breath whooshed out of me. That was so not what I was expecting. Especially not after the conversation we had on my first day here.

"It's just..." He shrugged again. "I know I said I wanted you and Dad to get back together, but then I thought about it a lot, and then I decided."

I swallowed hard. "And what did you decide, hon?"

He idly played with the hem of his shirt. "That what I really want is for you to be happy." His voice cracked a little, but he kept going. "When you and Dad were married, you were always...smaller. Like you were trying to disappear. And even though you always smiled for me, I knew you weren't happy."

My grip around Daniel tightened. I'd always tried to hide my feelings from him, but intuitive as he was, as wise as he was for his years, he'd seen it all regardless.

"But since you divorced," he continued, "you're different. You laugh more, you do things for yourself now, and you don't let people like Grandma and Grandpa, and even Dad, push you around anymore."

Tears pricked at my lashes, but I blinked them away, squeezing his hands.

"I think...your new friends, and"—he hesitated, but pressed on—"your boyfriend...I think you're better with them."

I didn't even want to begin to investigate how he knew about Lucian and our new relationship. The adults in this villa seriously needed to learn how to keep their fat mouths shut around my precocious nine-year-old.

"I don't think going back to Dad would make you happy again," Daniel said with quiet certainty. "And all I want is for you to be happy, Mom."

My chest ached so deeply I could hardly breathe. I pulled him tighter into my arms, crushing him against me, inhaling the scent of his hair like it was the only air I'd ever need.

"Oh, Danny," I whispered. "You have no idea how happy you make me. You're my everything. My joy."

He wriggled but didn't let go, muttering into my shoulder, "You can find other joys, Mom. I don't mind. I just want you to put yourself first for once."

I drew back, cupping his cheeks. "I promise you. No matter what anyone says, I'll choose what's right for me. For us."

He nodded. "Okay."

"And when the timing is right,"—I smiled hesitantly—"if you want, I'll arrange for you to meet Lucian—my...boyfriend—properly."

Daniel's face brightened, shy and eager. "Really?"

"Really," I said. "He's important to me. But honey, I need you to know this." I kissed his forehead. "Nothing—not my new friends or boyfriend or anything else—will ever come before you. No matter what, you'll always be my first choice."

Daniel's smile widened, and he lay his head against my chest. "I love you, Mom."

"I love you, too, my baby." I tightened my arms around him, burying my face in his hair.

For a moment, the rumors, the whispers, the ghosts of the past—all of it faded, leaving only the steady beat of his heart against mine.

Last night's forbidden heat with Kieran still smoldered at the back of my mind, but Daniel's words were a dousing rain—a reminder.

Whatever temporary sparks the moon and venom had lit between his father and me, they weren't worth the price of my son's happiness.

Or mine.

Later that evening, I went looking for Kieran.

Not because I wanted to see him—my body still hummed traitorously when I thought of his mouth on mine—but because the rumors needed to end.

Before they grew into something Daniel couldn't ignore.

He didn't deserve to hear lies in the corridors about his parents reconciling.

I didn't have to look far. I was walking toward the west wing when I heard Blackthorne steel in the air—his father's clipped tone, his mother's sharper one.

They were speaking in the study. The door was ajar, just enough for the words to slide out.

"Kieran," Leona pressed, "are the rumors true? Are you and Seraphina reconciling?"

My chest tightened.

Kieran's voice was flat, cold. "No. It's a misunderstanding."

A pause.

Christian's baritone followed. "And yet, you were seen carrying her. You've been guarding her, tending to her religiously. You must know how that looks."

I should have left. Respectable people didn't eavesdrop. But my feet rooted to the floor.

Kieran scoffed, low and humorless. "She's Daniel's mother. She was bitten by a snake and left weak. I did what was necessary. Nothing more."

My throat closed.

“Then you will make that clear to the household,” his mother insisted. “We cannot afford gossip undermining—”

“I already have.” Kieran’s voice sharpened, icy with finality. “ And I’ll quash any more rumors before they spread further. There is no reconciliation between me and Sera. Not now, not ever.”

“But—”

His voice dropped, a growl lurking beneath. “Ten years ago was a mistake—one I only just got free of. I assure you, I will not repeat it.”

Something fragile cracked inside me, and my feet could suddenly move again.

I drew back from the door, careful not to let the floor creak beneath my steps.

My fingers curled into my palms until my nails bit skin.

I had wanted Kieran to end the whispers. I should have felt relieved. Instead, I felt... erased.

Just Daniel's mother. A necessity. Nothing more.

By the time I reached my room, the burn in my throat had cooled into steel. It was all for the best, after all, this visit was for Daniel's sake alone.

Not for nostalgia, not for temptation, and certainly not for Kieran Blackthorne.

And definitely, absolutely, not for the dangerous, treacherous part of me that still remembered what it felt like to be kissed as if I were the only woman in the world.