

Chapter 111-1

“How is Reginald blackmailing you?” Seth says bluntly as soon as he stepped over the fence. Stephen and Lydia look at each other, clearly unsure of what to say. He’s clearly covering for her, I realize. I know that look, the look between siblings when one is ready to take the blame to keep the other safe.

“Lydia,” I say, and she turns to look at me. “We can’t help you if you don’t tell us the entire truth. Stephen is covering something up for you. I can tell. My own brother would do the same.”

Tears immediately come to her eyes and Seth’s entire demeanor softens a little.

“You killed him, didn’t you?” Seth asks quietly. “How? You were at the palace when he was hurt.”

Lydia looks down at the ground, her body shaking slightly as she cries more. “I’m so sorry, Seth. I never wanted to hurt you. It... I...”

Stephen steps over and pulls his sister into a hug, resting his chin on the top of her head. “It’s OK, Lyd. But we have to tell him. Everything.” I can see her nod into his chest, but she doesn’t move. She just stays there wrapped in her brother’s arms.

“Dad wanted an in at the palace and when you showed interest in Lydia, he made her go along with it,” Stephen begins and I can feel the hurt from Seth, but he doesn’t show it on the outside. “When you asked her to move in, Dad insisted on it. She repeatedly tried to convince him not to make her string you along, but he wouldn’t hear it.”

“What did he want?” Seth says, his voice deep with emotion, but his face still impassive.

“He asked me to spy. He wanted information about our pack, and a few others. I didn’t know why then,” Lydia says quietly, lifting her head, but still unwilling to look at Seth.

I can feel how much this information has hurt Seth and I reach out, slipping my hand inside his and squeezing it. “Were you able to give him any of the information that he requested?” I ask

Lydia looks at me and shakes her head. “After a while, once Seth granted me permission to be in his office, I realized that if I gave my dad any information that he’d never stop asking for it. I told him that Seth would not allow anyone in his office and that he did not bring anything home. He was furious and continued to push me to stay and spy. I didn’t realize then, but Seth’s location was one of the things he was keeping up with.” A fresh set of tears starts to fall from her admission. “I didn’t know,” she whispers.

“Dad was injured in an attack. I’m still not sure who it was who attacked us,” Stephen continues to explain to us. “I called Lydia then, asking her to come home because we thought he wouldn’t make it. He did though. His wolf was stronger than we thought. Lydia... Lydia gave him some medication through the IV the medics had placed and he died within hours of her return.”

She killed the Alpha. That’s the cover up. “You tried to make it look like you had though, right?” I say to Stephen and he nods slowly. “It’s alright. Seth closed the investigation when it looked like it and it was marked confidential. None of this has to go on record, right?” I ask, looking to Seth and he nods slowly, his eyes never leaving Lydia.

“Why didn’t you just tell me?” he asks her. “I would have protected you.”

“You were always so kind to me, and it was nice to live somewhere that felt safe, even if I was just playing house as a placeholder until you found your mate. I didn’t want to come back here, but one night you started to mark me,” she says and I feel my heart constrict. She knew he had tried. “I wasn’t your mate, though. I still don’t know why you didn’t mark me, but I decided I needed to get out as soon as I could, because it had gone too far. I had met my mate before, but Dad sent him to another pack. When Stephen said he was nearly dead, I decided to come home, because I wouldn’t have to worry anymore. I thought that maybe Stephen could have him return.”

Seth looks down at me and I know he can feel how much it hurt to hear her admission. Even if I knew that it had happened, it still hurts to think about. “I came for the investigation. Why didn’t you just tell me then?”

“Reginald had already marked me,” she whispers and I see her brother place his arm back around her shoulder. “He... he realized what happened and we thought he’d just step aside, but he didn’t. He started to blackmail us and when Stephen stood up to him... he forcibly marked me.”

It’s all making more sense now. How everyone acts, how they’re all so scared of him. The poor girl is terrified, and he forcibly marked her. She never wanted him at all.

Seth looks at me, apology in his eyes before releasing my hand and taking the two steps to close the distance between them, wrapping her in a hug. It hurts to witness, but I know that they both need this closure. I notice Gus looking at me, giving me a nod of acknowledgement and I try to tamp down the emotions I’m feeling. She’s someone he cared about, as is her brother, if we’re being honest. I hope their friendship is one that can be salvaged.