

K Lover 108

Chapter 108: The Last Lie

Martha walked into the crown prince's private study with her heart in her throat. Fear made it hard to breathe and her legs heavy. Her uncle pulling her into the study was the only reason she could move.

He had told her—while she was standing in front of the west wing, praying that the Queen would answer her—that the crown prince was seeking her. Her uncle looked wretched. He had asked her the night before, and she had admitted to not seeing Rose leave but still insisted she had nothing to do with the kidnapping.

He had seemed relieved by this and had urged her to tell the truth. That the crown prince could be forgiven as long as she could prove this would never happen again. Martha had simply nodded, not thinking much about it. At the time she had thought the Queen would save her.

Something told her she couldn't hold on to that lie for much longer. The Queen had clearly forsaken her, and if she told another lie to the crown prince, she might end up being charged with high treason. She was quite aware the only reason she was being granted an audience to explain herself—instead of being tossed into the dungeons—was because of her uncle.

Martha rubbed her ears; he had pulled at them last night and again that morning when he came to tell her what the crown prince said. Her uncle had scolded her, asking why she would do something like that while urging her to tell the truth.

This was all Rose's fault. She wouldn't be here if it weren't for her. None of this would have happened. The Queen wouldn't have avoided her and certainly wouldn't have angered the crown prince if it weren't for Rose.

Henry pushed his niece to the ground as they walked in, dropping to the ground himself. He didn't have excuses—there was more than enough reason for the crown prince to punish her however he wanted. She had stood in this same room and lied to him numerous times about Rose sneaking out of the castle.

"Henry," Caius called coldly.

"Your Highness, have mercy. My niece has admitted to lying about seeing Rose sneak out of the room. That never happened—"

"Henry," Caius called with a sigh. "You're starting to grate on my nerves with your incessant meddling."

"I am sorry, Your Highness," Henry said and kept his lips sealed. The only other sound that could be heard in the study was the soft sobbing and sniffing from Martha.

"Girl!" Caius called.

Martha jerked, and tears poured from her eyes. Snot was all over her face at this point and was dripping down. Knowing she might get punished for presenting herself to the crown prince in such a state, she quickly wiped her face on her dress.

"Your Highness," Martha said, her voice cracking from crying.

"Who asked you to do it? Don't say no one. You've lied to me once. I assure you, you won't survive a second time."

Martha grabbed the hem of her dress as she knelt, her face giving away what she was thinking. She was shocked by the crown prince's question. She had expected he would want the truth about what had happened that night, and she had thought she'd be able to lie about being scared of the man. If he had gotten into their room, he must have had a way to kill her. She had wanted to blame it all on him.

However, that wasn't the question the crown prince was asking her. He was asking her something that would get her killed regardless of whether she lied or not. It was also the tone in his voice that made her freeze up and the hairs on the back of her neck stand on edge.

He knew.

He wasn't asking her out of curiosity. He was asking her to decide what he would do with her. Something told her if she lied, it might be the last lie she ever told.

Martha gripped her dress tighter—she would have yanked it off her body if it helped. Her throat suddenly felt dry. As much as she couldn't lie, she also couldn't give up the truth. The Queen could be vicious when one got on her bad side. However, she knew the Queen had no intention of saving her now. She had failed and was useless.

"The—" Martha tried to say, but it felt as though the words were locked in her throat. She couldn't speak.

"I don't have all day. If you don't have the answer now, maybe a few days in the dungeons might change your mind."

"Your Highness," Henry called. "She will speak."

Without warning, Henry struck his niece across the face. She had convinced him the night before that she had only lied because she didn't like Rose. He hadn't considered that there might be something deeper—that she had planned to have the poor girl kidnapped.

He had suspected, but her confession had made him think otherwise. But at this point, it wasn't only Martha who was at stake, he was too and it wasn't just his job. The crown prince was clearly still being lenient. He knew exactly what the king's son was capable of. Henry suspected he was even more cruel than the king.

Henry struck her again and again. Caius didn't mind the interruption; he simply watched the spectacle. Rylen was equally baffled, but it was clear he wanted to see the end result of this.

After a while, the striking ceased, and all that was left was Martha's wailing. She was lying on her side on the ground with her hand to her face, repeating, "I will speak, Uncle, please stop. Please."

Henry took a step back and turned to the crown prince, but Caius wasn't about to let his apology interrupt the confession, so he waved his hand at Henry. The steward understood immediately and took another step back.

Caius leaned forward, his arms on the table as he waited for the answer he already knew. Unfortunately, Martha was the puzzle piece that would connect everything.

"The Queen," she said, tears pouring down her face as she lay on the ground. "It was on the orders of the Queen."