

18. Our Spot

Shaken, Elene's lips twitched uncontrollably as she looked at her brother. She couldn't believe he was doing this to her, but she knew better than contradicting her King.

"Very well," she let on. A new fake smile appeared on her lips, and she sought to look as if his interruption did not bother her. "The next contender then. So, Brigit, how about ..."

"No!" Kai thundered, and every head at the table turned in his direction. "Enough history. Allow the ladies to enjoy their brunch, sister."

"But ...!" She started, wanting to say so much more; however, upon meeting his stern gaze, she forced another smile on her lips. "You are so lucky that the Lycan King of The North is gracious. I had many more questions for all of you, but his wish is my command. As for the points, they will be summed up based on the"

"No need for that!" Kai stopped her again. Anger ashed in the princess's eyes this time.

Savvy watched the show with interest, her hand stretching to get a succulent strawberry. This was a new change of events.

"This is an ocial challenge, Kai," Elene insisted, "Their points must be taken into consideration."

"Oh, I am aware." The King retorted and gestured for his Beta to come forward. Savannah hadn't had the chance to meet the infamous Beta Lachlan in person yet. The Crimson Wolf got his nickname not thanks to the colour of his fur, which was, in fact, a cream colour on the verge of light golden. A beautiful colour which caused many enemies to underestimate him, thinking he was soft in nature. All of them ended up dead.

The nickname came from the battle where he almost single-handedly killed hundreds of rebellious werewolves. By the end of the ght, his fur had indeed become red from all the blood that gushed onto him from the wounds of his opponents.

So, when a friendly-looking guy in his late twenties with blonde hair and a beard walked to Kai with a grin plastered over his face, she raised her brow in surprise. Looks were indeed deceiving...

"Lachlan will be responsible for the points from now on," Kai announced. Gasps of surprise rippled through the crowd next to them, drowning out the buzzing of drones ying above them.

"That's great," Elene fraudulently offered as she smiled, looking like she was about to break a neck or two. "I will give him the information"

"That will not be necessary," Lachlan stopped her. "I had been counting and am ready to announce the results."

"Begin," Kai gestured, ignoring his sister glaring at him.

"Salome Gray, Autumn Bern, Mikaela Levarro, Naya Knight, Astrid Erling, Mavis Redfeather," the Beta called out and then paused, looking around. Only when he had their full attention did he continue on. "Two correct questions and ve points for each question."

"Penelope Summerstern, Inga Finn, and Celia Morr," Lachlan went on. "Two answered questions. Two and a half points each due to their level of complexity. Five points in total each."

The satised smile on Penelope's face faded.

"Brigit Borg. One question answered correctly. Five points."

The werebear girl only lifted her chin higher, ignoring the murmurs behind her back.

"Petra Biernat." Lachlan cleared his throat and sighed. "Mind link detected. Two questions answered. Five points each. Five points were deducted. Five points in total."

"Savannah Stormhold. Three questions answered. Ten points each due to their complexity," Lachlan announced, and even Savvy was shocked with such a decision.

"Please, announce the nal points for the two tasks," Kai nodded at his Beta.

"Of course," Lachlan was clearly ready for everything. "In the lead is Princess Savannah with 20 points. Followed by Salome Gray, Autumn Bern, Mikaela Levarro, Naya Knight, Astrid Erling, and Mavis Redfeather, with 15 points each. Penelope Summerstern, Inga Finn, Celia Morr, Petra Biernat, Bridget Borg – ten points each."

"Congratulations, ladies!" Kai gave them all his most brilliant smile. He seemed very happy with the results. "This wraps it up for today. Enjoy your brunch!"

The King stood up, trying to catch Savannah's glance, but she was too busy watching the reactions of other contenders.

"Brother!" Elene, however, was already at his side. "Why don't we speak for a minute?"

"Of course," he offered her his hand, and she accepted.

Savannah turned to look at them, but they had turned their backs to her.

She watched as they walked away without saying a thing.

"Well," Inga was the rst to speak, throwing a hostile gaze at Savvy, "whatever services you provide for the king seems to be paying off."

"I'd watch your mouth when you speak to me if I were you," Savannah replied without emotion. Having low expectations with these girls was really the way to go.

"That's the difference between us!" The blonde spat out in contempt as she jumped to her feet, clenching her sts, her chest heaving up and down. "I am not you! I don't use a man's protection!"

"Of course not," Savvy smirked, xing the non-existent creases on her dress. "You can only cling to your so-called friends."

"We all saw you go away with him deep into the garden!" Celia joined her friend in the witch hunt. However, the only witch in the crowd watched the scene with amusement, sipping her mimosa.

"So?" Savvy arched her brow.

"Ladies, please!" Penelope stood up, rubbing her forehead. "We don't have to do this. I am sure that whatever Savannah and King Kai were doing there was innocent."

"Princess Savannah," Savvy corrected rmly, meeting the woman's gaze. "If you are using titles, don't forget about mine."

"Of course. Princess Savannah." Penelope went pale but managed to keep her composure.

Everyone went quiet for a few moments, but Inga broke the awkward silence.

"We still don't know what you were doing there!" She hissed.

"Maybe it's because it's none of your business?" Brigit chuckled. "Should the Northern King seek your permission before being alone with someone?"

Celia opened her mouth to say something, but Petra had joined in the 'discussion.'

"They just talked," she said calmly but loudly enough for everyone present to hear. "I was looking for King Kai and saw them together. They talked. Nothing else."

Savvy caught her gaze and thanked her with a small smile. This was unexpected.

"Doesn't matter," Celia nally got her chance to speak. "We all know King Kai will only marry a northerner and a lycan at that. So, all of you don't stand a chance."

"Why are you so worked up then?" Naya scoffed, moving off the table.

After a speedy yet careful consideration, Savannah decided it was best to follow her example. However, when she had almost removed herself from her companions at the table, she heard Inga's voice again.

"And don't think that this little advantage in points will stick. These were children's games! The best is yet to come, and everyone here will come for you!"

She disregarded her vicious comment simply because experience had taught her that arguing with ignorant people was useless. Nevertheless, she knew Inga had a point. Since she was in the lead for the Trials, she now had a target on her back. And when it came to the battle challenges that would come later, she would be at the top of everyone's kill list.

Savvy wondered if Kai had known that when he ventured to restore a balance in points.

"He wanted to help," Athena hinted, deciding to share her point of view.

"Or he simply wanted the North to look good," Savannah retorted, walking in the direction of the castle. "Elene wasn't doing a good job, you know."

"He likes you, don't deny that!" her wolf insisted, purring inside.

"Zack also liked me," Savvy snorted, "and look how well that ended! I seem to be attracting problems with the men who like me now."

"His wolf also likes us," Athena wasn't one to give up. She was probably one of the most stubborn wolves ever.

"His wolf wants us. There is a difference."

She reached the hidden entrance, one she now singularly used to and from the garden whereby taking advantage of the knowledge Kai provided to the fullest when she heard his voice.

"Savvy, wait!"

"I can't believe you just did this to me!" Elene clenched his hand so hard that even he could feel her effort.

"You disappointed me, little sister." Kai decided to not beat around the bush. He spent all his life sheltering her from pretty much everything and wasn't sure anymore that he liked the result.

"No, you are the one who disappointed me, Kai! You said that you will always be on my side! That we are a team! That you will protect me and save me!"

"Elene, this is exactly what I am doing now. I am saving you from you." Kai stopped and turned her so that she could see his face. "It's partially my fault. I failed you in many ways. You needed parents, and I couldn't replace them."

"Kai!" Elene pursed her lips, tears clouding her vision.

"I am sorry sister, but you lost yourself. I don't recognise you anymore...."

"I was just trying to help you!" The girl blinked away her angry tears.

"This wasn't the kind of help I needed. The way you treated Savvy was just...."

"Savvy?" Elene looked at her brother with wide eyes and an open mouth. "Savvy, Kai? Since when do you call her Savvy?!"

"Don't start!" He sighed heavily, wishing he could end this conversation quickly. But to no avail.

"No, Kai," she grabbed his hand desperately, " don't you start! You don't seriously think there is any kind of future for you and her?!"

He did not reply because, deep inside, he simply didn't know the answer.

"What is wrong with you?" Elene used the mind link so that she could scream at him now without people around listening to the two of them. "Remember what you told me when Gideon humiliated me?! You said our kingdoms were at war for hundreds of years, and a simple truce was a miracle! They slaughtered our werewolf packs on the borders in the olden days, stole our lands, betrayed our trust! And not much has changed since then. Don't be fooled. Gideon..."

"He was not wrong to reject you, El," Kai interrupted her speech and received an appalled expression in return. "In the end, he wanted to wait for his mate, and he found her. Everything made sense. He is happy with her, and she is perfect for him. No offence. You will nd your mate as well."

"And so will you!" his sister reminded him.

"But I will have to get married before then, and Savannah...."

"Oh, Kai," Elene sighed. "I didn't think that I would be the one explaining to you these things... However, I see that I have to."

He scanned the area lazily, knowing he did not want to listen. Asgard also was not interested.

"She is using you. She is using the Trials. When she arrived, she hated the North and us. She didn't want to marry you, and the Luna Trials only made her angrier."

"It's not a big surprise," Kai smiled.

"No, it's not. The surprise is that she stayed," Elene pointed out the obvious. "Don't you get it? She learned about the three wishes. She wins, and she can get anything from you! Honestly, I don't think she would stop at the alliance."

"The wishes have limits...." He reminded her what was important here.

"She still can use them to her advantage," The Princess covered her face with her hands. "You are right. It's my mistake. I shouldn't have arranged all that in the rst place."

"That's ne," Kai patted her head just as he used to do in their childhood. "We can still gure everything out."

"But Savannah..."

"Elene," he made sure she was now looking him in the eye. "I need you to leave Savannah alone. I will deal with everything myself. All I need from you now is to ensure the Trials run smoothly. Lachlan will help."

"You don't want to get rid of her," the girl shook her head in disbelief.

"I want the Trials to be fair. I want the North to not be embarrassed about how the members of the royal family behave. Can you help me with that? Since it's shown on TV, I want us to be the epitome of our principles."

"Of course," Elene nodded, sadness written all over her face. "You can count on me."

Kai saw Savannah going back and tried to catch up with her. She looked as if she was lost in thoughts, and he had to call her to get her attention.

"Savvy, wait!" he grasped her hand, but she yanked it back angrily and stared at him with knitted brows.

"What do you want?" the Lycan Princess snarled, confusing the hell out of him.

"To talk...", He confessed. "Did something happen?"

"A lot happened," she admitted quickly, crossing her hands on her chest, but toned down her hostility. "You just put a target on my back. Do you even understand this?"

"What? Because of the points?" He ran his hand over his hair, "Savvy, they would have noticed our relationship anyway."

"What relationship?" she chuckled. "I am a Western Princess, and you are the Northern King. Everyone knows that you will end up with a northerner. They are never tired of reminding us of that. What kind of relationship are we even talking about?"

"The one where we don't care about the titles," he said, still holding her hand.

She looked at him for a few seconds, and hope ickered inside of him. But Savannah turned away, and the whole world suddenly became colder and... lonelier.

"That's impossible," the girl sighed. "Just... let me go."

"You told me to prove that I care about you, and I did. Maybe it wasn't perfect, but it was my rst attempt, and I did try," Kai insisted, stepping closer. "Now, how about you prove to me that you care. Not about the Trials, the alliance, the North, the West, the war... I want us to prove to each other that we care about us."

"How do you even see this?!" she let out a painful, bitter laugh. "We always have to think of these things!"

"King Kai and Princess Savannah have to," he smirked and added, "but the gardener and the little maid don't."

Her lips parted, and it was very tempting to kiss her. Yet the King knew that if he did this, he would ruin everything.

"For one evening, let's spend time together just you, me, and nothing else. And after that, we will see."

"Kai..." She was about to shake her head and reject the idea when he placed his nger on her lips.

"Nope. Not Kai anymore. Call me... call me Zack!" he suggested with a grin, and her eyes grew wide.

"Anything but that!" she let out an almost hysterical laugh.

"Fine, whatever," he chuckled. "You can call me what you like, but tonight after dinner, come to the pond, and I will take you on a real date."

"Kai," she bit her lip painfully. "I don't know."

"Don't say anything," he stopped her again. "Go back to your room and think. And I... I will be waiting for your decision at our spot."

"Our spot?" she c****d a brow up, impressed by how daring he was today. He sure was working fast.

"Our spot," he nodded. "I'll be waiting for you. If you come, we have a chance. If you don't... I will respect your decision."

He walked away before she could reply, mostly because he was afraid to hear another rejection.

All of that was so new to him. He never asked a woman for anything. He simply did not have to. And tonight, he wouldn't be the one to decide...

He was at the pond right on time, ready for action and nervous. He had never been this nervous, not even before the most challenging battles.

In fact, he would probably better be ghing now than just standing there, hopeless and alone, not knowing if she would show up... Fearing that she would not...