

The Luna Trials by Marissa Gilbert

The Luna Trials by Marissa Gilbert Chapter 33 - 39

Chapter 33

"Kai, what were you thinking?" Savvy yelped helplessly. "Days? We are going to be stuck in a cave for days?!"

"You sound so scared!" he chuckled, brushing his fingers over her legs and lifting the fabric of the dress slightly higher.

"Scared isn't the right word for what I feel," she ran her hand over her face. "It's a cave! There is no food, no water, no place to sleep! What are we going to do?"

"Oh, about that," he moved her off his lap. "There are actually a lot of things to do here. Follow

me."

He walked away into the darkness, and Savvy grabbed the lantern, trying to catch up with him.

He turned in a different direction from which they originally came from, and Savvy gasped when in just under a minute, they walked out into what looked like a much bigger cave, the bottom of which was filled with beautiful teal water that seemed to glow delicately.

Vaults and arches of stone resembling marble surrounded them, high, beautiful and majestic. It would be impossible if a man wanted to create something like that. Only the force of nature was capable of such a masterpiece. Savannah had never seen anything like it. The water shimmered softly in the light that came from the ceiling. This was another thing that amazed the princess. The top of the cave was peppered with glowing crystals. They gleamed in the darkness, creating an ethereal atmosphere around them.

"What is this place?" she turned to look at Kai at last and lost the ability to speak as the King was already stripping himself, throwing his clothes to the ground.

"This is a place where no one else can get," he said with a smirk, enjoying her reaction to his body. "The Sacred Northern Mountain Springs."

He didn't explain anything anymore and just jumped into the crystal clear water, creating waves around himself.

Savannah carefully placed the lantern on one of the rocks and watched him swim for a while. Werewolves usually didn't like swimming too much, but Kai seemed confident in his skills. And also, he was showing off before her, which made her grin at him.

"Care to join me?" he asked when he swam closer to the shore after a while. "Or maybe the Western Princess doesn't know how to swim? No worries then, I can teach you. I am an excellent

teacher."

"You just want to get me naked, do you?" She arched her brow, sliding out of one of her shoes and carefully testing the water with her bare foot. It was nicely warm.

"I wanted to get you naked from the moment I laid my eyes on you, Savvy." Kai chuckled, making her cheeks flush with his honesty.

"Then I guess it's your lucky day." Savannah's lips curled as she slowly moved her dress off one of her shoulders and then the other, playfully shrugging out of it and watching it fall to her feet.

She stood bare before him now, wearing only the North Star necklace on her neck. He took her in for a few moments as if he was speechless and then a growl of approval became his response to her. Kai's eyes were glowing blue now, and he didn't even try to hide how much he wanted her when he stretched his hand, asking her to join him without saying the words.

Cautiously, Savannah stepped into the water, finding the sensations mostly pleasant. She had to admit – no one would be able to repeat that date even if they tried. There weren't too many marble mountain caves with hot springs and magical glowing crystals in the world.

Kai was waiting for her, and she decided not to waste the opportunity to tease him more. So she dived underwater, swimming past him. Savvy was amazed to see that there were more crystals at the bottom of this warm lake, illuminating everything around them. However, she didn't get to enjoy the sight for long as something even more magnificent swam right in front of her.

Kai caught her in his arms and pulled her all the way up to the surface. Water trickled down their faces as they were pressed tightly against each other. He could feel her soft and delicate body against his hardness, hands sliding over each of her curves.

They didn't need any words anymore; all the choices were already made a while ago. So, when the lycan brushed his lips over hers, she parted them for him. The desire was overwhelming, but they still were not throwing themselves at each other. Now it felt like they had all the time in the world.

Kai pecked her lips gently, enjoying the smoothness of her skin under water. Deepening the kiss, he hooked one of her thighs and helped her wrap it around his waist for support. Savvy moaned when he started peppering her neck with kisses and then lifted her higher to bite at one of her breasts gently. This caused a wave of pleasant tingles all over her body, and she threw her head back

He loved seeing the North Star above her perfect peaks, but he knew he would like to see something else not far from it. Asgard wanted to mark that woman as his so badly! Not to mention that he was sharing this desire of his.

Savannah traced her delicate fingers over his chest and arms. He was so much bigger than her, so much stronger. And she craved him more than anything in this world.

“Would you take me already?” she asked him bluntly as he cupped her bottom. “Impatient little maid,” he chuckled darkly and slid his hand between her thighs. “Kai,” she groaned as he parted her folds, the warmth of her core not lost on him.

“All in due time,” he bit on her neck slightly, right where he planned to mark her later and teased the sensitive bundle of nerves in her centre. A moan escaped her, which was like music to his ears. He wanted her to come undone in his hands and slowly inserted a finger inside of her, which caused another jolt of pleasure in her. He added another finger, and this made Savannah arch her back. Not thinking twice, Kai spun her in the water so that she could lean her back over his chest now, and brought his fingers back to work, pumping in and out of her at a rhythm that seemed comfortable for his future queen.

He grasped one of her breasts, kneading it and tugging her nipple in between his fingers, building her up slowly but inevitably.

Savvy lost herself in the sensation. Kai knew very well what he was doing, and she was

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enjoying it to the fullest. She wasn't a fan of s*x in a lake, but the idea was quickly growing on her as the King hit just the right spot every time. With him, she was ready to explore new things.

He could feel her tight little s*x clenching over him and made sure to tip her over the edge, enjoying how her trembling body felt against his.

“I love you, Savvy,” he whispered into her ear as he pinched the already swollen bud softly and made her scream loudly as she came on his fingers. To heighten her release, he grazed his canines over her marking spot, and that made her forget about everything. He was still stroking her gently when she tried to steady her breath, despite her quivering thighs and heaving chest.

She turned around to face him, and her hand found his hard member pressed tight against his abdomen. She ran her fingers over his length, unable to wrap her fingers around it and sucking on a sharp breath. She was going to enjoy it immensely.

Just her touch made the mighty Lycan king of the North shiver with joy. She found his tip, looking straight into his eyes now and rubbed her thumb over it in a circular motion, enjoying the power she now had over him.

She was ready, and they both knew that now.

However, Kai surprised her when he suddenly swam away from her and all the way to the opposite bank from where they came from.

“Excuse me?” Savvy’s lips parted. This wasn’t what she expected at all.

“Don’t be greedy, Savannah!” The King smirked at her getting out of the water. She really did not see where he was going with it. “The night is young.”

He shifted into his dark wolf right in front of her eyes and waited for her.

Intrigued, Savvy chose to follow him again. He clearly had planned everything, and who was she to deny the King?

In just a few moments, she stood naked before the huge wolf, and he growled at her, greed and lust in his eyes. However, he didn’t budge and waved his large head, motioning for her to shift as well.

Savannah chose to obey him this once, especially considering Athena wanted to be unleashed badly. She and Asgard never had a chance to bond, and Savvy knew it wasn’t fair.

She shifted into her beautiful wolf, and the two of them just looked at each other for a few moments. Asgard stepped closer, rubbing his nose in the crook of her neck, digging his canines into her fur to let his female know what was to come soon.

Then, when he managed to inhale her wonderful bluebell scent, he suddenly sprinted away, howling.

Savvy and Athena were both startled, but Asgard’s howl let them know he was just leading the way. The white wolf with black ears huffed in annoyance but ran after the northern Alpha. Nothing could beat her curiosity.

They were running for a few good minutes, and Savannah realised that this mountain was full of hidden caves and passages. It was a real maze, and the King was finding his way with ease. She was memorising the turns too, just in case, and generally, it felt like they were getting higher.

* Soon, they saw the light before them, and Asgard ran out of the cave to what looked like a snow-covered clearing at first. But soon Savvy realised they were on the shoulder of a mountain. This was probably on the other side as she couldn't see the views of the northern capital of the castle. Just more mountain peaks and woods beneath them stretching for miles with the tree tops frosted with snow.

It was still snowing heavily. However, the biggest surprise was that Kai wasn't taking her just anywhere. Right in the middle of all this, there was a small wooden house. The light was lit inside, but she couldn't smell any scents around other than Kai's.

He shifted before they reached the little house, still not bothered with his nakedness, and a smirk played on his handsome face. He had planned it all just perfectly

"Come on, Savannah," he gestured for her to follow his example. "The best is yet to come."

She turned back into her human form when they almost reached the wooden stairs, and he barely let her touch the cold ground, sweeping her off her feet.

"You have prepared!" she praised him with a giggle, and his eyes lingered on her before he stormed inside the house.

"Sometimes I feel that I have been preparing for you all my life, Savvy," he said firmly, and she placed her head on his shoulder. This felt so good...

He took her inside, the warmth of the house greeting them and making the goosebumps on Savannah's skin disappear. The interior was the last thing on her mind now, but her eyes still had a quick glance over, noting a huge fireplace carved out of stone identical to the one she saw in the caves, cosy furniture, a large white fur rug on the floor and a glass wall with the best view she had ever seen behind it.

As if she was the most precious thing in the world, Kai placed her carefully onto the soft fur that tickled her skin. The fire was already crackling in the fireplace, sparks twirling and flying up the chimney.

"Lights off," Kai said loudly, and now the flames were the only thing illuminating the room and their faces.

"What a smart little house!" Savvy curled her lips as the lycan towered over her, his hand gliding up her thigh gently, drawing patterns on the way.

"You will remember this house as the place where the magic happens," he leaned down and nibbled at her lips.

"Cheesy!" she let out a laugh, wrapping her hands around his neck.

They were so happy now, and it felt so right that she was afraid she would wake up any minute.

For the first time ever, they were finally alone. She could sense that there was no one around. No one was going to interrupt them. Nothing was going to happen.

There was him and her. They were the only two people in the entire world.

They both needed this closeness. All the odds were against them at all times, and only their desire to be together was not letting them give up. Even though they didn't really know each other for too long, it felt like they had been waiting for this exact moment *forever*.

Their skin heated against each other, and Kai moved slightly to part her legs and slide in between them. His fingers feathered over her skin, eliciting a rush of goosebumps over it. Savannah arched her back for him, and he took it as an invitation to devour her delicious body. Grasping both of her breasts, he inhaled one of the ni

ples into his mouth, then, after realising it, flickered his tongue over the other until he managed to draw a moan from her.

Savvy gasped from the pleasure when he slammed his lips into hers, madly and greedily, demanding dominance. And this time, she was ready to submit to him, which only caused another snarl of approval from him.

Kai slowly plunged his fingers back into her core, probing how ready she was for him, and caught Savannah's moan with his mouth.

"Mine!" The word escaped him against his will, but she did not object, and he enjoyed repeating it over and over as he covered her skin with wet kisses.

"Kai!" His name on her lips sounded like a plea, and he was happy to fulfil her wish, positioning himself at her entrance. He nudged slightly, parting her glistening folds and coating his tip in her juices.

Breathing hitched, the princess closed her eyes and curved her back for him, grasping the fur around her. She felt his large palm on one of her breasts, playing with it, teasing her hardened bud.

"Eyes on me, Savvy," the King ordered, and she did as she was told on instinct, surprised by her own reaction. She never considered herself the submissive type, but right now, his voice alone was almost tipping her over the edge. She had never experienced this before and found herself enjoying the new game. Kai was never stern with her and always treated her as his equal, but she liked his authoritative tone now.

They were both radiating, desire. It was impossible to hold back anymore, so when he slowly started thrusting his member into her, stretching her inner walls, she let out a loud moan.

He was watching her patiently, afraid to hurt his Little Maid. This was the last thing he wanted, but his body was already shivering from the restraint. Holding himself back when she felt so good was an impossible task.

“Kai, please,” she begged him, furrowing her brows, and he understood her at once. Withdrawing slowly, he plunged himself back to the hilt in one rough move, and she struggled to keep looking at him because it felt so good. He thrust into her again and again, pulling her closer now and leaning lower to capture her lips.

“Mine,” he growled into her mouth. “Only yours,” she replied, digging her nails into his flesh ... And this undid him. He lunged at her, locking his arms around her small frame to keep her in place.

Their breathing came in sharp pants as he pounded into her like the savage beast that he was, Asgard taking control from time to time. Savannah’s whimpers and moans filled the room as pleasure pulsed through her body. She was giving him sloppy kisses when he was close enough, and he responded to her with everything he had.

The cl*max ripped through Savannah’s body, and Kai let her ride it before stilling. He spilt her seed into her, ensuring no drop went to waste.

His body, covered with beads of sweat, collapsed against hers and Savvy felt his hot breath

in the area of her neck..

“I love you so much,” he muttered, kissing her delicate skin.

Lying next to her, he pulled her onto his chest because even after everything they had just done, he wanted more. A part of him wondered if it would ever be enough. Could he ever have enough of Savvy?

“You know,” she looked at him through her lashes. “You were right after all.” “I am always right,” he huffed. “Care to elaborate?”

“Don’t be such a... gardener!” She giggled and tried to get off him, but he rolled them both and made sure to pin her against the fur with his body weight.

“I thought you loved me as a gardener,” he chuckled, leaning to kiss her.

“I would love you as anything or anyone,” she said, suddenly serious. Their eyes locked, and he knew that she meant it.

"Then I am the luckiest man alive!" Kai admitted, his heart racing and ready to jump out of his chest. That woman belonged to him and him alone.

"You are!" She scoffed, and the sound of their joint laughter danced around them. "Magic does happen in this house!"

"We haven't even started!" Kai's eyes got darker, and she felt surges of desire again. But he stalled, and she didn't know what he was waiting for.

The Lycan king of the North was clearly looking for the right words, and she gave him a moment to find them.

"Savvy," he trailed her neck with his fingers, stopping in the most significant place and rubbing it with his thumb. "I want to mark you.... I want to mark you here and now."

34. Breakfast

Savannah froze, hearing his words. She had thought about this moment so many times in the past few days.

A mark would definitely seal their fates forever. There would be no turning back from that.

Unless they would end up like her sister-in-law Riannon and her first husband. Being chosen mates did not work out too well for them. Moon Goddess, that divorce was ugly.

But this wasn't possible with Kai. They were different. Kai was different.

They were in love, and it could conquer anything. Even though they were just chosen mates, it felt so right. Riannon's story wouldn't happen to them. Or at least... to her.

Because she already had a true mate, it was unlikely she would ever be granted another.

Second chance mates were more of a myth now. Although she did hear of it happening a few times.

However, she couldn't deny the possibility of Kai meeting his true mate. What would he do then? What if he would fall in love with her on the spot and forget all his promises? This... the thought alone made her shiver, and it did not escape the King's gaze.

"Savvy, what's wrong?" He asked, watching emotions change on her beautiful face. He was disappointed she didn't say yes on the spot. It was a beautiful moment for them, and he felt it was perfect for the marking. He could barely hold himself from digging his canines into her neck. It was so close, and the bluebell scent was stronger there, intoxicating, to say the least.

But the woman he was so madly in love with wasn't saying a word; it felt the same as piercing his heart with a silver knife.

"W-wasn't there a tradition that you have to have a marking ceremony for your Luna?" she asked. His own excitement dropped as he watched her hopeful gaze.

"She is scared," Asgard said in his mind, stepping away from trying to get the control and surprising Kai with such behaviour. Just a second ago he was fighting to mark her faster, not wishing to wait for even a second longer. And now, he took a step back for the first time in their life.

This was new. "You are giving up just like that?" Kai was truly perplexed with his wolf now.

"Give up?" Asgard scoffed, "She is ours. We chose her, and there will be no other. Ever. Even if the Moon Goddess sends us a thousand perfect true mates, we will reject each one of them for this woman. Fenrir didn't have a mate, but he devoted his existence to the woman he chose. And so will we."

"I am glad we are on the same page here," Kai admitted. "But what do we do now if she is not as sure as we are?"

"She is sure, or she wouldn't be here," Asgard assured him. "The thing is that this f*cktard of a mate of hers ruined her trust in love and f*cked with her head. He was supposed to be the one person who loved and protected her, but he hurt her instead. She gave herself to him, and he spat into her soul. For that, he will die, of course, but that's not what's important now. What's important is that if we want our mark on Savannah's neck, we need to make her feel safe and loved with us. This is the only way."

Kai knew that his wolf was right. He couldn't push Savvy into something she wasn't ready for. She deserved better and so did he. When the time would come, it would be perfect. Today was already good enough. Complaining when he lay naked on top of the woman of his dreams wasn't in his plans. He knew that he would do anything to make her happy. This was just a little step back.

Even if his mark wasn't there yet, the North Star was. Everyone would know who she belonged to.

"Yes, there is a ceremony," he said after a long pause and saw the relief on her face. "But I hope that we can do this in private instead."

The Western Princess was clearly lost for words, and he smiled, brushing his palm over her cheek to give her peace.

"That's okay," he leaned down and kissed her lips gently. "I know how to wait. I waited for you all my life, and I will give you as much time as you need. There is no rush with this."

"Kai, it's not..." She wanted to explain herself as guilt washed over her, but he stopped her.

"Savvy, I know," he pecked her nose. "It will happen sooner or later, and that's good enough for me."

"It's just ... I didn't think this would happen to me after everything," she admitted and averted his gaze. Confessing such things wasn't an easy matter. "You are my first after everything and...."

"And I intend to be your last, Savvy." Kai cupped her cheek and made her look at him again. "I will do everything for this, so you don't have to worry about anything. I will wait for you, fight for you, and find a way to make you happy."

"I am happy," Savannah stretched her hand and ran her fingers through his hair. "Kai, don't think that I am not. I've made my decision, and I know what I feel. I just want to take one step at a time, if that's okay."

"Then this is what we are doing," he brushed his lips over her cheek, scooped her into his arms, and stood up. "And the next step is taking a bath together!"

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Savannah woke up the next day *wrapped* in white satin sheets. To her surprise, she was alone in bed, and that brought some unpleasant memories back to her. Kai's delicious scent was now embedded into her skin, and she wouldn't have it any other way, but he wasn't there.

It was already the middle of the day as they spent the whole night making love,

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missing the morning completely after they fell asleep.

Savvy shivered as she dropped the sheets and stood up from the bed to find some clothes. It was hard for her to breathe, but she tried to push the dark thoughts away.

Familiar. This was too familiar ...

This reminded her so much of the one and only night with her mate. She woke up just like that, alone... because he had to talk to his accomplice and assure him that he was still betraying and using her.

The Princess swallowed a lump in her throat. This couldn't be happening again. Kai wasn't like that. He wasn't.

She opened the wardrobe in front of the enormous wooden bed they slept in and found a good choice of sweaters, shirts and other garments. Not thinking twice, she took the first chunky white cotton jumper she saw and pulled it on, not bothering with anything else.

She walked into a hall that led to other bedrooms and quickly realised they were empty. Savvy looked over the living room as she went downstairs, sadly noting that no one was there as well. The curtains were closed, and the space seemed so dark.

Her heart was racing in her chest, and she felt fear gathering in the pit of her stomach. She had to hold onto the railing to keep from falling down onto her trembling feet as she slowly descended the stairs.

And this was when she smelled... food. Bacon, eggs, avocados... everything she liked was there.

She tried to speed up a bit because she couldn't take it anymore. She needed to see this.

Savannah pushed the kitchen doors open and stormed in, the bright light from all the windows and glass ceiling blinding her temporarily.

"Morning!" Kai was wearing just a pair of grey sweatpants and an apron as he flipped a pancake in a pan with a happy grin. However, his smile dropped when he saw her panting. Savvy's brows were still knitted as she processed what she was seeing.

Breakfast... He was cooking them breakfast.

He wasn't running away. He wasn't plotting her brother's murder. He didn't discuss using her ...

He was still here, and he cared. History did not repeat itself.

"1..." Savannah mumbled, feeling silly. What was it with her? Since when did she become so insecure?

"Come here!" He switched off the gas stove and dropped everything, locking the girl in his arms. Realising only now what she was thinking about when she woke up alone.

“Sorry, Savvy,” he kissed the top of her head. “I just wanted to surprise you. I thought you would be starving when you woke up and hoped to come back to you first.”

“Don’t apologise for being a good guy,” she chuckled, wiping away a tear that threatened to escape her eye. “This is... How on Earth do you know how to cook?”

“Didn’t I tell you?” the Northern Lycan King winked at her. “I am not only a gardener. I am a chef too.”

“Well, that’s more like it!” Savannah smiled, returning to her usual self, and tried to get out of his hands to steal something from the table. “Definitely more useful than those ugly roses!”

He caught her and pulled her all the way back. “Not so fast, Little Maid!” Kai sat comfortably in a chair and placed her on his lap. “Since I am the chef, I tell people where their place is in the kitchen. And yours is right here.” He delicately brushed his hand over her exposed thighs and all the way to the edge of the jumper that was barely covering her while sitting

“If the chef orders,” she arched a brow at him, “I am afraid I just have to obey.” Savannah wrapped her arms around his neck as he took a fork, gave her the first bite, and growled approvingly when her lips closed around it. Their eyes met, and it suddenly became much hotter in the kitchen.

“You should eat something too,” Savannah pointed out after a while because chewing in silence was awkward.

“I am planning to,” Kai smirked, and his palm slid between her thighs. “But it’s not food I am craving for.”

She felt blood rushing to her cheeks while he took a strawberry and pressed it against her lips. Slowly, Savvy bit (into) it without breaking their eye contact, and Kai finished what was left, throwing the calyx away. Then in one swift move, he had her in his hands again, carrying her all the way to the living room.

He carefully placed her on the sofa and then pressed a lever at the back, making it recline. Savannah crawled back on the soft fur covers, but he yanked her closer to the edge, spreading her legs for him and kneeling before her.

“Should we revise the alphabet, maybe? I am not sure you memorised it the first time.” The devilish glint in his eyes was back and the Princess couldn’t stop watching him lowering his face right between her thighs. His hot breath was burning her sensitive flesh, and when his tongue made the first contact, she shuddered from the pleasure. It felt too good. He felt too good.

As always, he loved to tease her and made one long torturous slide from the base of her entrance to the already throbbing bud at the top. Kai caressed it in quick circular motions until he managed to get a loud moan out of her.

Savannah curved her back, giving him all the access he could have needed and felt his large palm sliding up her belly all the way to her breast under the thick jumper. This time he

grasped her possessively, roughly even, but that only brought her more satisfaction.

He pinched her n*pple between his fingers, and Savvy grasped his hair. She could already feel she was almost over the edge.

“I am not even in the middle of the alphabet yet. How will you ever learn?” the lycan chuckled into her, creating overwhelming vibrations.

“I guess you will have to repeat and repeat until I can grasp it,” she murmured.

“What do I do with you?” he teased her petals, making her body shudder.

“Do as you please!” the words left her tongue before she could process them, and she saw Kai’s eyes glowing blue at her words.

“That’s a dangerous thing to say to a hungry beast,” he told her, and she noticed his canines protruding slightly.

“You are not the only beast here.” Now she was the one with a smirk on her lips, and that made him tower over her instantly. Savannah bent her leg and brushed it down his waist, hinting that he should lose his sweatpants already. And Kai was happy to oblige his

future queen.

He thrust into her as if he already belonged there, drawing a sharp gasp out of her. Then pumped a few times before his fingers slid to her sensitive bundle of nerves that was already on the verge of exploding. One little pinch, and Savvy threw her head back, getting a mind-shattering release. The effect his simple touch had on her was indescribable.

He let her ride out the org*sm and then withdrew to her surprise. She didn’t even manage to ask what he was doing when he grasped her waist and flipped her, placing her on all fours and lining himself at her entrance again. She could feel him, but he wasn’t entering. Instead, he was slowly brushing his hands over her thighs and back, sliding the jumper higher and enjoying the view. He took a fistful of her bottom, kneading it, letting her know that her flesh belonged to him now.

Savannah did not mind that one bit.

“Mine,” he snarled, and she couldn’t even form words to respond to him. It felt so good. Too good.

“Say it!” the King insisted and nudged his tip between her already glistening folds.

“Yours,” she breathed out, and he entered her slowly. He knew what he was doing because she was desperate for more. Yet again, he pulled out.

“Again,” Kai’s voice was firm, and it only made Savannah want him more. This authoritative Kai was new, and she loved that he was keeping it for bed only.

“Yours!” she repeated, and he slammed into her hard, filling her to the brim. Wave after wave of pleasure rushed through her body as he pounded into her again and again, building her up with each thrust. Savvy was soaring in his grasp as her nerves exploded from pleasure, the cl*max cascading through her body,

Kai stilled, holding her in place until he was done. And even after, he wasn’t ready to let go at once. It was his instinct, and she welcomed it, letting him have his way with her.

He rolled her on her back and removed her jumper completely, throwing it away. Her cheeks were still flushed, and she eyed him questioningly.

“Let’s not pretend that you’ll be needing it any time soon,” he chuckled menacingly and pulled her under his huge arm again. Her warm cheek was on his chest, and this was perfection.

“Open curtains!” he commanded, and the heavy fabric rolled to the opposite sides. Right in front of them was a tall glass wall with the best northern views of the

mountains and the forest. A sparkling white carpet was already covering everything outside, and heavy, *intricate* snowflakes were still falling, creating a serene atmosphere.

For a while, they just lay there, coated in each other’s scents and enjoying this *newfound* peace.

“Kai,” Savannah decided to ask him after some time, and he looked at her with the corner of his lips curled slightly.

“Yes?” his fingers were lazily playing with her long hair. “I always wanted to know something. Can you be honest with me?” “Sure.” He didn’t even hesitate to reply. “Why exactly do you and my brother hate each other so much?”

Kai groaned, rubbing the bridge of his nose.

"It's... everything," he muttered, but of course, it wasn't enough for Savannah. "No offence, but your brother is the biggest pr*ck I've ever met."

"True," the Princess agreed, stretching the word. "But so are you. What's the story there? Tell me because Gideon says the same thing about you. Even Riannon didn't get much out of him, and she is a superwoman, no less. There must be more to the original version you both share."

"The story starts before I met him," Kai grunted hesitantly and then pulled her higher on his chest, caressing her back. "Savvy, whatever you hear now, please know that I love you and please promise that"

"I will not stop loving you because of you being honest with me," she snorted. He felt relief running through his veins.

"Fine," he exhaled heavily. "When my parents died, Elene went into a state of shock. She was their little princess, and they adored her. Without them, my sister was completely broken. After crying for months, she became quiet and never left her room. These were hard years for me, Savvy. I was very young, she was still a teen, and it was just her and me. At some point, I was afraid I would lose her."

"Sounds familiar," Savannah sighed, and he placed a soft kiss on her forehead. She lost her parents too.

"Penelope was the one to help me with Elene initially," Kai continued, and suddenly Savvy did not like this story. *Why did Penelope have to be a part of it?!*

"How ... nice of her," the Princess said through clenched teeth.

"*Anyway*, she was helping, but Elene still wasn't her usual self," Kai continued. "Not even close. She only talked to Pen."

"Wait, wait, wait," Savannah couldn't handle it anymore and placed her index finger on his lips. "Never call her Pen again. Not in front of me." But after thinking some more, she added. "Not ever!"

Kai's lips curled into a feline grin, and he quickly bit her finger gently with his teeth, sending tingles all over her. Then he took her whole finger in, closing his lips around it and released it slowly, bit by bit.

"Stop this!" Savvy almost moaned. This was so silly, but it made her want him again. Somehow it was never enough.

However, she decided that finally hearing this story was more important. So, she pulled the cover higher on them to cover up all the goods, not to be tempted anymore.

It wasn't helping much. Luckily, she was stubborn enough to endure this.

"Continue, please." She put on a serious face, trying to play it cool and only the devilish glint in Kai's eyes told her that he knew what had crossed her mind.

"Very well," he started drawing circles on her exposed skin. "So, one day, my absolutely platonic friend, who is actually more of my sister's friend than mine, and whom we shall not name anymore, brought her to my Alpha training. You probably already know that it's exclusive to the top-ranked wolves. Lycans go there as well. Anyone who is about to assume the position from Alpha to Delta is obliged to study there."

"Of course," Savvy nodded, not biting his joke. That was more like it.

"So, naturally, this was where Gideon and I met." Kai scratched his chin, noting that a beard was forming there again. "I wouldn't want to lie to you, Savvy. There was no chance in hell of us ever becoming friends from the very beginning. Do you know how competitive your brother is?"

"Very," she had to admit because there was no point denying it. Gideon loved his victories.

"And so am I," Kai chuckled. "We were at each other's throats in everything. Especially combat training. Whatever competition they had, we were there. One time he would win, and another time I would win. Well, mostly me, of course."

"Of course!" Savvy giggled, remembering that her sibling insisted he was the one leading their score.

"Once, Elene and her nameless friend witnessed our training," Kai continued. "And after that, they kept returning almost every day."

"They left the North for so long? That training centre is far away from both our kingdoms."

"Elene's health was more important back then, and my uncle was taking care of the kingdom in my absence," Kai explained. "I thought they were coming to see me, but I caught Elene giggling next to Gideon after one training session. Savvy, you have no idea what it meant to me! She was smiling and looked happy again. After such a long time."

"I understand," she whispered. She knew far too well how the pain from the loss of her own parents felt.

“Your brother was always polite with her, so I was starting to warm up towards him. But then... One day I heard Gideon talking badly about her.” Savannah looked at the Northern King in surprise and saw how tense his face was. The memories were unpleasant.

“What did he say?” She asked, sure that it must have been a mistake.

“Lachlan and I heard him and his Beta talking.” Kai’s voice was lower than usual, deeper. “The Beta asked if Gideon was interested in Elene, and your pr*ck of a brother said that he would rather stay alone forever than be with someone like my sister. He called her a spoiled brat who liked to play victim all the time, and when his right hand asked if it was okay for him to pursue her, Gideon prohibited, saying that she wasn’t worth the time.”

Even Savannah had to admit that it was harsh. However, knowing Elene, she believed there was a reason for everything.

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“Did you ever speak to him about it?” she muttered.

“No, I tried to ignore it first and ordered Elene and the nameless one to return to the North,” Kai grunted. “But ... Elene burst out crying and became depressed again. She ... She tried to kill herself.”

Savvy gasped for air. This wasn’t something she expected.

“I had to leave school for a while to take care of her. She was depressed again, and I was desperate.”

“Was this when you asked Gideon to marry her for the first time?” Savvy felt so sorry for him. She could only imagine now what it was like for someone as proud as Kai to make such an offer to her brother.

“Yes,” he replied dryly. “And?”

“And it went really bad. We almost killed each other in the process.” The reply shocked her. Gideon never told her anything about that. “It got worse from there.”

“So, then you asked for my hand in marriage?” She looked at him questioningly, brow arched.

“I was a fool because I simply wanted to piss him off,” Kai admitted. “Who would have known that you are... you.”

“Well, the desired effect is achieved.” Savvy tried to suppress a laugh. “You are not the only one with a younger sister and no parents, you know?”

“I know,” he admitted. “I would have handled it differently now. But now I am older and madly in love with you.” Kai bent down and placed a kiss on her forehead. “Back then, was still the bitter, rebellious boy who had to pretend he was a king and had no boundaries.”

“Kai,” Savannah bit her lip and glanced at him through her lashes. “I always wanted to ask you something. Remember Bjorn?”

The sound of this name made the Lycan sit up and meet her eyes.

“That went from unpleasant to infuriating rather quickly.” A soft laugh rocked his chest, but she could see how puzzled and unsettled he was.

“As you know, we had a conversation,” Savannah decided to come clean about everything, but first, she had to find out one thing. “He said a phrase that stayed with me. He said that you cannot be killed in a battle. Why would he say that?”

She watched his face closely, but not a single muscle twitched,

Kai hoped to postpone that revelation for later, but since she asked, not telling her would be the same as lying. And all he wanted was honesty.

“I can be killed, of course,” he answered after what seemed like forever. “But that’s a challenge for everyone.”

“Killing a Lycan is always a challenge,” she retorted.

“True,” Kai nodded slowly, and she knew he was choosing his next words. “Savvy, this is something I have to tell you anyway. The northern royal bloodline is special. And it’s not

because we just say that. We can do something that other Lycans can’t.”

“What would that be?” the Princess chewed on her lip nervously.

“We can control our third form,” Kai confessed, and his beloved couldn’t believe her own ears. “I can shift into my beast when I want, and I never have trouble shifting back into my wolf.”

It had been days since they were in contact with Savannah and Zara knew everything was in her hands now. She had to be somewhere close since the King was missing too, and they were told that the two of them were spending time together.

It was possible, and Zara knew that. The sparks between the Princess and the King were undeniable. Everyone who worked at the castle or took part in the Trials knew that Kai only had his eyes on Savannah. This wasn't a secret even despite them acting in public like they had nothing to do with each other. It was impossible to ignore all the glances or the fact that when the King was supposed to have dates with other contenders, he ended up only exchanging a word or two with them briefly. Penelope was the only one who got the honour of a more extended conversation, but he didn't look at her the way he looked at Savvy. And the length could have been explained by them being friends.

So, Zara was hopeful that what the Northern Princess was telling her and Kyle was the truth. Savannah was just spending her time with the man she was infatuated with.

However, since the recent events, Zara couldn't sit still, knowing that Savvy had to be in the castle.

This was why she started looking for the one she swore loyalty to. The one who gave her a new home and a new purpose in life.

After the Red Harem, which Zara refused to call that Eden in her mind, she was lost. Savannah took her under her wing and helped her to feel useful, smart, and brave again. Something that Castiel and her flock, which banished her, took away a long time ago.

The snow made flying challenging, but at the same time, it covered her from all the eyes on the ground. They were told not to look for the king, and technically, Zara was disobeying Princess Elene's orders.

It was too bad; she served a different princess. And the black hawk didn't plan to stop looking for her since Kyle couldn't reach her via the mind link.

On her first day, she flew around the capital and surrounding areas, but there weren't too many people outside. Sadly, she realised very fast that her abilities were limited and she couldn't fly too far in such weather without risking death in the process. This wasn't an option.

She tried flying over the surrounding mountains on the second and third days but had to return to the castle quickly because of a heavy snowstorm.

Next, she decided that she needed to be more innovative. The King couldn't have been missing without anyone knowing where he was. Elene knew their location for sure, but she wasn't going to share. The other one who had to know Kai's whereabouts was his Beta, Lachlan. So, when Zara saw him speaking to Elene on the other day, she shifted into the smaller version of her black hawk and watched him until he left the castle in his wolf form. Lachlan had a cream-coloured wolf and was hard to spot in all that snow,

especially during a blizzard, but she still managed to do it. When he stationed himself as one of the mountain guards, Zara knew that his King had to be close.

But then the lycan was on the move again, and she had to follow him deeper into the mountains. Luckily, the weather was finally allowing it, and she could spy to her heart's content.

Until he entered a cave.

Grunting, Zara shifted back to her human form. Thankful for the fact that birds got to keep their clothes, unlike the wolves and cats. However, she still wasn't dressed for the occasion. Her black jeans and leather jacket weren't enough. It was freezing in the North now, and she couldn't believe they were parading outdoors in open dresses just days ago.

Zara walked into the cave, trying not to make any noise. She did not see the Beta Lycan anymore and, after some time, assumed that he was gone. When she walked further inside, she realised this wasn't just a cave. There was a long dark passage inside.

Swallowing the lump in her throat and determined to find Savannah today, Zara confidently entered the cave's depths.

However, she didn't walk for too long as someone grabbed her neck in the darkness and slammed her against the surprisingly smooth wall.

"What does a pretty bird do in a place like this?" Lachlan chuckled darkly, opening a lighter's lid and illuminating the space around them with the tiny flame. Barely enough for her to see his stern face or the outlines of his naked body. Where on Earth did he take a lighter here?

"Just stretching my wings," she lied without blinking, and his lips curved into a menacing smile.

"Is it a physical activity that you seek?" "Why?" she raised her brow, not letting herself be intimidated. "Are you offering?"

"How can I deny a pretty bird like you?" He stepped closer so that she could smell his scent of blue spruce. She had already noticed it before when they stood next to each other at official events, but right now, it was incredibly intense.

His face was suddenly too close to hers, noses almost touching.

"What happened? Do you feel that I am your mate? Do you want to growl mine?" she taunted him with his large palm still around her thin neck. He could have snapped it

here and there if he wanted to. Their eyes locked, and for a few seconds, it felt like a battle of two minds.

“I already had a mate,” Lachlan snarled, and Zara found herself slightly disappointed hearing this. Not that it mattered. She already knew they weren’t mates.

“Oh, did she reject you and run away?” she smirked and felt his grip tightening. “She is dead,” he let go of her at once, almost making her collapse to the ground and

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turn away. Now she was feeling guilty for being such an evil brat. What was she thinking, laughing at someone’s mating situation? She was the one to know that these things were never simple after what happened to her.

“I am sorry.” Zara suspected that he didn’t care for her lousy apology, but she owed it to him anyway. She knew a broken heart when she saw one.

“Go away,” he groaned with his back towards her, while she let out an apologetic sigh. “Return to the castle.”

“I am sorry,” she repeated, “but I have a mission to complete. I am not a pretty bird. I am a bird of prey!”

“Don’t you dare!” Lachlan warned, but it was already too late.

The girl shifted in a blink of an eye and flew deeper into the dark tunnel at high speed. She could hear a furious growl behind her back and knew that the Lycan had shifted into his wolf already. Luckily, she could feel the airflow and knew that after a while, the dark tunnel would end with an exit, leading her to the other side. This was also why Lachlan was so angry. He would laugh her off if she flew into a dead end. But he was following her, roaring on his way, which led her to believe she was on the right track.

After a few minutes, she saw the light and was finally able to use her top speed. In a flash, she was soaring high in the sky, trying to adjust her eyes to the brightness.

It was still snowing, but the blizzard was definitely behind them. She saw the frosted woods and cliffs, but there was one thing that attracted her attention at once. A generous

clearing on the shoulder of one of the mountains looked well kept, and a little cosy-looking house stood right there. Two people were running around it and throwing snowballs at each

other.

For a moment, Zara was sorry that she was going to break up their happiness. All the shifter gods knew that Savannah deserved to be happy.

But at the moment, Kyle needed her help more...

Chapter 36

Savvy was so comfortable in Kai's arms as they were cuddling on the sofa with a laptop on a small nearby table. She couldn't believe he was hiding that from her, and the moment she discovered it in one of the drawers, she went online to check what was happening at The Luna Trials.

"Why do you want to watch this?" he grunted.

"Because!" she scoffed and wriggled, getting even cosier against his warm body. "I am a part of it, remember?"

"Not anymore," he growled softly into her ear and nibbled her earlobe. "The Luna Trials are over. I have my Luna with me already."

"Well, the world isn't aware yet!" she giggled and stretched her hand to click on the play button.

The faces of Claude and Chloe wearing matching green suits made the princess frown. The twins were polished as always and ready to entertain whether people wanted it or not.

"Why were those two chosen to do this again?" She asked the King next to her as he lazily brushed her hair with his fingers.

"They are professionals," he replied, and she snorted.

"Are they?" Savannah shot him a reproachful gaze. He had to know that they were biased at all times.

"They make any show a show," Kai had to admit. "I think Elene wanted more publicity for this event and with the correct light on our family. We don't do these things often, and it was one of a kind opportunity."

"Maybe you should be doing it more often then?" The girl chuckled. "Gideon and I hate interviews and public appearances, but we do it from time to time to let people see us and feel like they know us."

"See," he pulled her closer and kissed the top of her head. "This is exactly why I need a Luna."

"Oh, take Petra then. She will give you the show of your life every day!" Savvy mocked him, and he tickled her as punishment, making her giggle until she teared up and gave up.

"No, thanks," the northern King grunted, bringing her back to her place next to him. "When I make my choice, it's final. You are all I need."

She hoped he would say that, and it was so satisfying to hear that again. Everything was so perfect lately that Savvy was afraid it was too perfect. Life had never been this

colourful for her. She thought she was happy at some point in her life before Zack. She thought everything was over right after her disgusting mate ruined all her expectations about life and love. However, what was happening now was beyond her wildest dreams.

They were happy. Excessively, overwhelmingly, immensely happy. So happy that she couldn't help but feel guilty to be this blissful every day. Kai may not have been her true mate, but he sure as hell made her feel loved, needed and safe.

"Three contenders face elimination today," Chloe said in a serious tone, a corner of her lips curved slightly.

"Do you see her sneering?" Savannah furrowed her brows. "How does nobody notice that?"

"All right, all right," Kai placed a gentle kiss on her shoulder to make amends. "The twins are evil. Happy?"

"Meh," she pretended not to care, and they kept watching the next round of the Eliminations. It was between Brigit, Petra and Mavis now. One had to go because the three of them had the lowest number of points.

"How are you not there again?" Savvy gave him a suspicious look. "Weren't you supposed to save one?"

"I saved the only one I care about," Kai grinned at her, and this time she was the one to peck his chin gently.

"But what about these three?"

“Elene will pick the one! “saved”, he said, and the princess exhaled sharply through her nostrils.

“Of course, she will...” Savvy sighed in annoyance, watching the northern princess sitting on a throne behind the contenders. She really got herself comfortable there in the absence of her brother.

“So,” Chloe tried to create as much suspense as possible. “The North has voted, and we have the results.”

“Keep in mind that every vote was carefully checked by Princess Elene’s team, so rigging was not possible,” Claude assured everyone with a dazzling smile.

Aloud snort escaped Savannah hearing all this, but she chose not to comment.

“Luckily for the three beautiful ladies here, just one is going to leave us tonight.” Chloe made a concerned face, and Savvy wanted to throw something at the screen. “Because King

Kai Fionnlagh decided to save one of the contenders, and I have her name right here.”

The woman paused, showing a silver envelope to the cameras and opening it slowly, reading the name, then gasping as if she was shocked and, after some time, facing the camera again.

“Come on!” Savvy growled. “It’s taking forever!”

Kai let out a low chuckle, pulling her closer and inhaling her scent. It was never enough, though.

“The contender saved by our King is none other than ... Brigit Borg!” the presenter’s amused voice sounded, and Savannah’s lips parted.

“Well, I have to admit, this is unexpected,” Kai chuckled. “I was sure she’d save Petra.”

“The people of the North will save Petra,” Savvy pointed out. “She is one of you. Elene just made sure Brigit stayed. I wonder why...”

“She knows Brigit is not winning now that I have expressed who I want.” The King caressed her cheek gently. “Now that she isn’t a threat, Elene wants her in the finale to appease the white bears and show them there are no prejudices against them.”

“A bit too late for that!” A huff escaped the girl. “Maybe,” Kai hummed. “But it’s worth a try. Anything to avoid the war.”

Just one word almost ruined their mood. They already discussed it a few times, and Savvy told Kai everything that Bjorn told her and what they found out from Castiel and Roxy back in the day. Both of them knew that it didn't look good.

They watched the vote results appearing on the screen in silence, and it wasn't surprising that Petra won most of the votes. She giggled and jumped on the spot in a silver frilly dress while Mavis took her loss gracefully and left the stage.

Kai leaned forward and slammed the laptop shut. "Enough of this," he kissed his woman's forehead and started to get up. "What are you doing?" Savvy knitted her brows, eyeing him questioningly. "We need to get out," he told her, stretching his hands to help her stand up.

"I thought that it wasn't safe." She reminded him of his words, but a knowing smirk on his lips told her that he might have exaggerated.

"It must be safer now," Kai cleared his throat. "I mean ... If we don't go far and"

"I guess if we stay close enough, it's going to be fine." Savvy giggled and went for the wardrobe in the next room to find some weather-appropriate clothes for herself. She chose a pair of jeans, a men's grey sweater with snow boots, and a warm jacket. When she was done, the Northern King was already waiting for her, dressed slightly lighter than she was. Perks of being a native here.

They walked out of their little house for the first time in days, and the sun, together with sparkling white snow, blinded them at first.

"The scenery definitely changed!" Savannah gasped, looking around. She rarely got to see the snow, although it wasn't her first time.

"I want you to enjoy it, Savvy." Kai breathed in the frosty air and walked slightly further away from her. The snow was almost to his knees, but it did not bother him. "I bet you haven't seen anything remotely beautiful back at the West. Not every country is lucky

enough to be blessed with such locations and"

"Oh, Kai!" The princess called him in a taunting tone, and he turned to look at her at once. Only to get a huge snowball right in the face.

"We have mountains too, you know." The girl snickered, preparing the next icy weapon. "Gideon took me there every year."

"Did he?" the northerner wiped his now red face clean and gave her a menacing gaze. "You love snowballs fights then?"

"What's not to love?" She laughed and sent another his way, but he managed to

dodge this time.

Savannah knew she was in trouble even before his eyes flashed blue, letting her know she managed to annoy them both – the King and his wolf. Squealing, she tried running in the opposite direction when Kai caught up with her and lifted her up in his arms, throwing her over his shoulder.

“It’s good that you like snow, Savvy, very good!” The man chuckled as he slapped her bottom in his usual manner, making her growl at him in defiance. “We have a lot of it for you

to enjoy right here!”

She was about to say something snarky when he dropped her into a pile of freezing snow, and she found herself falling down for longer than she expected.

“Kai!” she yelled angrily, trying to find a way out of some frosty cleft. It was probably a little crack in the mountain or something like that, and the damn King used his knowledge of the location to trap her. Snow was everywhere, and the walls around her were covered with slippery ice, making it impossible to get out on her own.

“No worries, my love,” he looked at her from above with a mischievous grin on his face. “Just say that you are sorry, and I am the best lycan in the whole damn world, and I will help you out.”

“Is this how you treat your future wife?” she asked him, still looking how to get out of that little cleft she was stuck in.

“I am teaching you the northern ways.” She heard a low chuckle.

“The northern way sucks!” she announced, and another laugh emerged from his chest.

“See, now you also have to say that the North is the best place in the world!” He quickly added to her tasks, knowing she wasn’t getting out of there without his help.

But ... he was underestimating her.

“Fine, Kai!” She sighed heavily and made a pitiful look on her face. “Get me out of here first!”

“Aha,” he snorted. “Nice try!” “Kai, please,” Savannah whimpered and heard him exhaling in defeat.

“Come here, Sav,” he bent down to his knees and lowered himself to give her a hand, only to receive the biggest snowball of his life in his face again.

Not wasting time, Savannah grew her claws and used them to pierce the ice, working her way up quickly.

She tried to push him into the snow hole she had just come from, but he dodged her attempt with a laugh.

“Oh, it’s war!” she announced to him.

“You started it!” he scoffed, gathering as much snow as he could. They were running around, shooting snowballs at each other. Until Kai got tired of all that. He didn’t touch her for too long, and the need to hold her in his arms again was overwhelming.

He dropped everything he had and strode towards her through piles of snow like a

- 1.
2. **Chapter 37**
3. **The Blue Ribbon**

“No?” Savannah eyed him questioningly. “I am getting some very mixed signals here, Kai

Fionnlagh.”

“No mixed signals.” The King leaned over his desk and folded his arms on his chest. “It’s just that I am not letting the woman I love go and risk her life fighting while I sit here and wait.”

“Aww, that’s so sweet!” Savvy smiled and walked to him, wrapping her arms around his neck. “Then join the Trials and fight us. When I win, you can be my Luna!”

A menacing warning growl left his chest, and he pulled her closer, not even bothering that they had witnesses in the room.

“Gross,” Elene was the first to turn away. Lachlan and Zara exchanged glances and pretended there was something that grabbed their attention on the bookshelf and the ceiling,

“Savvy.” Kai was oozing testosterone now. “Don’t test me. You are not going. We will announce you as my Luna, and then we’ll take it from there.”

“Kai,” she mimicked his tone and arched her brow while he pulled her closer. Eye to eye, they were both challenging each other. “I have to disappoint you, but I am an Alpha too. I don’t take orders unless like them. And this time, I will have to pass. We have a problem that can only be solved in two cases. One, if I win the Trials. And two, if you find Zack and make him talk. Preferably accepting my rejection in the process.”

The King of the North was silent. He knew she was right, but all his instincts opposed the idea of her

going to the Forgotten City Maze challenge alone. Or at all, actually.

“Elene is right,” he said, savouring the look in his beloved’s eyes. “From what I learned, things get crazy during this contest. You can’t shift or use any kind of magic other than the strength in your human body. A lot of contenders have died during that part. Especially the ones who were leading by points or favoured in any other way. All because they had targets on their backs. Sawy, when you are there, everyone will go after you.” He stroked her cheek gently, and she leaned into his palm, eyeing him playfully. She liked that he was worried about her. She liked it a lot.

“Why would you think that?” she asked.

“Because everyone here knows that I am in love with you. I love you, Sawy.” He breathed the words into her mouth and claimed it with a possessive, greedy kiss, lacing his fingers through her hair.

She broke the kiss early, to his disappointment, but when Savannah gestured at the three other people in the office, he knew he had gotten carried away. They left the cabin, their safe haven. It was time to act according to their titles.

“If you want to stop the Trials, find Zack as soon as possible,” she smiled at him reassuringly. “And until then, do not worry about me too much. I am a Royal Lycan, you know. I can take a few girls who can’t

shift.”

“Sawy,” he released an exasperated sigh, “these girls were preparing. The Northerners know about The Forgotten City Maze. You...”

“I can take them,” she promised with a grin. “Tell me about this Forgotten City. What does it mean exactly?”

“It’s an ancient northern city,” Elene said, turning back to face them. “Long ago, it was the capital of the North where lycans lived. Unfortunately, it was wiped out by the white bears in a gruesome war. It was so bad that only ruins are left there now.”

“So we need to get through the ruins?” Savannah furrowed her brow. It didn’t look that hard, if she

was honest.

“It’s not as easy as it sounds.” Elene shook her head in disapproval. “You need to get to the centre of the city, and it’s a giant maze on its own. Besides that, it’s surrounded by

the Forbidden forest. And let me tell you, it is forbidden for a reason. One part of it borders the Lost Kingdom and is full of rogues. The other part is right next to the white bear territories. And those are worse than rogues.”

“And why are you doing all this there again?” Savvy chuckled, staring at the Northern siblings in

turns.

“Traditions,” they replied in unison.

“In my defence,” Elene interjected, “I was sure we would be done with everything by now, and it wouldn’t get to that.”

“Great plan,” Savvy stretched a smile and slid out of Kai’s grasp. “No flaws at all.”

Lachlan snorted and glanced at Zara, who gave him an approving smirk. But his face changed suddenly as he knitted his brows as if he was talking to someone via mind link. After a few seconds, he

reported to his King, “Aspen is here.”

“Aspen?” Kai tensed, “Tell him to come in.”

Savannah already knew that Aspen was Celia’s brother and the King’s Gamma. He mainly patrolled the borders for him, checking on the guards and gathering intel on their enemies. The charming pub they had been to was his cover to trade information with guests of other species when they visited the place. In other words, Aspen was a spymaster. Him being here could only mean one thing he had something to

report.

He walked in firmly into the room, wearing a black coat with a hood, Snow was covering the top of his head, and Savvy even noticed a few icicles here and there on his ginger beard.

He took off the hood and looked around in surprise.

“My King,” he said in an official tone. “I apologise, but what I need to tell you can’t wait.”

“Speak!” the ruler of the North ordered, and the massive guy looked at him questioningly just to ensure he didn’t mishear. “Speak, Aspen, speak,” Kai pulled the Western Princess closer and locked his arms around her. “Savannah is my chosen mate and your future Queen. You can speak freely in front of

her.”

“Can’t say I am surprised after the last time I saw you.” Aspen shrugged as if he was about to laugh

but ended up frowning instead. Their situation was too difficult. “Maybe it’s for the best since Savannah’s

brother is requesting to enter the country.”

The room filled with silence as everyone present was sure they had misheard the big guy.

“Gideon?” Savvy furrowed her brows.

“Yes, Gideon.” Aspen was studying her face and reaction. “He brought a small army with him, and he is furious. He insists that he didn’t send you here to take part in The Luna Trials, and that the event alone is humiliating for someone like you,” the red-haired spy added. “He demands to enter the country or bring

you to the border so that the two of you can see each other. He gave us a timeline too. So, putting it mildly,

we are on the brink of the war, and I had to pull back some of the warriors to hold them back if they attacked.”

Savvy tried to think in this stressful situation. She knew Gideon wouldn’t be happy with her plan at

all, so she turned to glance at Kai.

“I think you just got one more task to do,” she snickered at her man, and his face became even grimmer by the minute. “Win my brother over.”

“Savvy,” he groaned. “As if it’s possible.”

“It will be possible if you grow up and apologise,” the Western Princess pointed out.

“And then prove

to him that what we have is real.”

“I know what his reply is going to be either way.” Kai exhaled heavily and then pulled her into another

warm embrace. He couldn’t get enough of her. “But do not worry, I’ll do anything he wants other than

giving up on you. We are a package deal now.”

“That we are,” she chuckled into his chest. “Just ... be sincere with him, okay? He is better than you

think. We need to move to the next stage of the Trials as soon as possible so that he can't reach me for a while.”

“What?” Kai distanced himself slightly from her and locked eyes with her. “You are not going to meet

him? He'd take it better if he saw you are in one piece and happy.”

“Oh, I doubt it!” she snorted. “The moment Gideon sees me, he'd grab me and take me back home. He is in his Papa Lycan mode now.”

“This is your home now!” Kai growled menacingly.

“And that's why I want you to show it to him and for you to get to know each other better before he has access to me” Savannah smirked, playing with her golden brown locks.

“That's a horrible plan!” Elene rubbed her chin. “And moving the Trials... It's risky.”

“On the contrary.” Savvy shrugged her shoulders. “If we move the challenge, it will ruin our enemies' plans. If they have any, of course.”

“Lachlan,” kan looked at his Beta “I want double security around the Forgotten City, Warriors should

be ready to act if something unexpected happens.”

“It's a long distance, Kai,” Elene clenched her lips. “Even if something happens, the contenders would

have to take care of it themselves.””

“Still better than nothing!” The King insisted.

“We need to prepare fast then,” his sister gave up. There was no point arguing with him once he had made a decision, and she knew that.

“I will write Gideon a letter,” Savvy went to sit at the desk as if she owned it and opened one of the drawers looking for paper, “Give it to him to support your words. And one more thing, Kai. If his wife Riannon is there, she would be the one to help you.”

Savannah knocked on the door, and it was opened almost immediately. Evelyn looked like she wasn't happy to see her, though.

"Hi," the Western Princess waved awkwardly.

*Your Highness." That woman was the only one who always used titles as it was appropriate and not

on a whim.

"Don't call her that!" Kyle's voice emerged from the back, and he soon appeared wearing a female silk bathrobe. The young lycan wrapped his hands around the older she-wolf, who closed her eyes, annoyed to the core. "We are all practically family now! Just call her Savvy or Sav."

"Moon Goddess!" Savannah was barely holding back a laugh. "You weren't wasting your time!"

"Come in already!" Evelyn motioned for her to enter the room and closed the door after she checked the hall behind it. "I can't believe I got into this mess with the two of you."

"Thank you for helping Kyle out," Savvy smiled weakly. She still knew too little about the werewolf

lady in front of her.

"Don't thank her!" Kyle chuckled. "She got a good deal out of all of this." He looked like he was having the time of his life.

"Which was... what exactly?" Now the Princess was worried.

"Nothing special." Evelyn rolled her eyes. "It wasn't really worth it for me, was it? The North saved Petra anyway. And if it didn't, it would be Her Highness Elene."

"Doubtfull" Kyle scolded. "My article on Petra about how her unusual sense of fashion makes her unique and how brave she must be to showcase it had a record number of likes. People loved that story, and her reputation is safe now."

"Yeah... sure." Evelyn ran her hand over her face. "Amazing work. Shame we are stuck here together,

though I could really use some testosterone free zone right now."

Savvy knew that the woman was right. She also knew for a fact that her best friend Kyle could be a lot

to handle Too confident, too cocky

“That’s not what you said last night,” he said with a smug smile plastered all over his face, and she

wanted to slap him.

“You mean when you got into my bed without permission?” Evelyn snapped at him.

“You didn’t push me away, did you?” His grin became wider.

“Too much information!” Savannah tried to close her ears but then saw her friend choking with laughter. It had been a while since she saw him this happy. If she ever saw him this happy.

“Relax,” he said and hugged Evelyn again. She looked exhausted from his attention and didn’t even try to fight it off. “We just cuddled, but it was the best sleep of my life.”

“I wish I could say the same,” the woman in his arms snickered and pushed him away.

“Only because it wasn’t sleep that you wanted!” Kyle didn’t seem offended one bit. “But it’s okay. We have many nights ahead of us in this room.”

“In your dreams!” Evelyn gritted her teeth. “If I can do anything to help ease the situation,” Sawyer started talking, and Evelyn got close to her

once.

“Actually, there is something,” the werewolf’s eyes sparkled, and she stepped closer, taking both Savannah’s hands into hers. “During the next challenges, help Petra if you can.”

Savvy didn’t know what to reply. She had to win the Trials no matter the cost, and this request was a bit too much at the moment. But Kyle could have had a much worse punishment than being on house arrest with this beautiful woman. She knew she owed her one.

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“She doesn’t have to win!” Evelyn squeezed her palms tighter. “All I need is for her to come back alive. That’s it. She got far enough.”

Sawy saw tears glistening in the woman’s eyes. “You really care about her, don’t you?” She smiled.

“Petra...” Evelyn’s voice broke. “She is all I have. She ... My daughter would have been the same age if she had made it out alive.”

The Princess held back a gasp, and even Kyle stopped grinning, taking his hands off the she-wolf. The mood for Jokes disappeared completely.

help her. She is not a warrior...”

“She can leave the Luna Trials,” Kyle suggested.

“She can’t. Her father is very strict. He would never allow it or let her back if she disobeyed. Her best

chance in life is to get married to a good Alpha who would love her and take care of her. This is why she needs her reputation intact and...”

* * * ” Sawy nodded, “I’ll do what I can ill meet Petra there.” “Thank you.” Evelyn smiled and let go of her. “She is really not like the other girls. She is a sweet

“I know,” the Princess agreed and then switched her attention to her own friend.

“Behave, Kyle. Gideon is here, and he may get you out before I come back.”

“How was your time with the king?” Kyle asked, and she blushed, giving him the answer he needed before any words escaped her mouth. “That good, huh?”

“It’s a long story!” She brushed him off with a short. “I need to go now. It’s almost starting. Take care of yourself, Kyle. And behave. Don’t cause any more trouble.”

“Never!” he promised, and it did not sound serious at all. “No worries,” Evelyn chimed in.

“I’ll keep my eye on him while you are gone.” “Thanks!” Savannah was almost out when she heard her friend’s voice again.

“Break a leg, Sawy!” “They say that to people who go on stage!” She waved Kyle off with a chuckle.

“Yeah, but I mean that literally.” He scoffed as usual. “Break a leg or two. Not yours, of course. But do it and win this thing.”

“Sure,” she grinned. “Just don’t count too much on that motivational speaker career, okay?”

Savannah passed the guards, who reminded her that her best friend was nothing more than a prisoner in the castle.

She already made a detour to the servants’ quarters together with Kai while they pretended to have a tour around the building when in fact, they were looking for the maid who gave Savannah a note from Bjorn. If he had his people here, he was probably the one who helped Zack disappear. However, the girl in question wasn’t found. They were told that one of the maids went to visit her family right on the day of the Interviews. She wasn’t even supposed to be there, but Savvy was sure she was. Same as the princess knew that the warriors sent to her house would come back with nothing. She probably left after she gave Savannah “the gift” In the form of her ex.

No matter how everything unfolded now, the big game, the real game, was only starting

The contenders were lined up in the throne room with a huge screen on one of the walls that wasn’t there before. Today there were no sparkling dresses and high heel shoes. Each girl was dressed in comfortable clothes, fit for walking, running and... most importantly, fighting.

Claude and Chloe were wearing matching black training suits as if they were contenders as well. Elene was the only one in a dress today, but that was understandable as she wasn’t going to leave the

castle

“While we wait for the king, I will explain the rules to you, ladies.” Elene beamed and got out a little remote control. She pressed one of the buttons, and an image of a round maze surrounded by a forest appeared on the screen,

Sowry wasped and caught Flone’s use. The smirk on her face let her know that this little gift was intentional. She looked preadily at the lines, hoping that this was a real map and not just a joke to make

her make more mistakes.

“As every Northerner knows, this is the Forgotten City,” Elene started explaining. “It’s in ruins now, and some of the parts aren’t safe to walk in. Yet a Luna of The North should be able to do it just fine. The City was built as a maze, and you will find many dead ends inside. Not to mention that we have installed quite a few traps. You get into a trap; you lose points. This time we aren’t giving points for you just being smart or pretty. You only get to the next round if you manage to light the torch prepared for you in the shrine. The said shrine is located in the centre of the maze, right here.”

She pointed at the centre of the maze with a laser pointer.

“The people of the North will be able to save one of you,” the Princess continued. “And one could be saved by King Kai.”

That could have been great news, but Savvy knew she couldn't be saved by Kai if she wanted the

title. Not really

“You can be attacked by rogues or white bears,” Elene went on “You will have to deal with that on your own. The food will not be provided. You have to take care of it yourself.”

A wave of whispers erupted through the room “If someone wants to leave The Luna Trials now, speak up!”

Savannah glanced over the other contenders. Penelope, Celine and Inga seemed confident; the rest, unfortunately, looked tense. Yet none of them chose to give up.

“Very well.” Elene smiled dryly. “Since you all stay, I am going to give you a ribbon each. You tie them to your hands, and the colour of your ribbon matches the crystal on the torch you have to light.”

The omegas stepped in with the ribbons, and a blue one was tied around Savannah's arm. Blue was good. She liked that colour, and so did the North.

They heard the sounds of approaching steps and men's laughter, and immediately, all heads turned in the direction of the entrance. Kal strolled in the company of Lachlan, Aspen and a few warriors Savannah didn't recognise.

Their eyes locked, and a smile curled her lips. They hadn't seen each other for a few hours, but it seemed like forever already

“Mate!” Someone growled loudly, and everyone gasped

Chapter 38

1. Cleghtern

It seemed like people forgot how to breathe. Everyone started to look around, searching for the one to whom the claim belonged.

“Mate...” This time Aspen's words sounded like thunder on a clear day. Savannah was shocked because he was looking in her direction. She knew, however, that it couldn't be

her. She already had a mate and had met Aspen before. So, she looked at her right and left until she noticed how pale Brigit

was.

“Mate,” Aspen stepped forward, ignoring his startled king and everyone else in the room. His voice was barely a whisper now, and Savvy noticed how Brigit’s lips trembled. “Mine...”

The white bear shifter did not say a word, but her eyes glistened with unspilt tears.

The red-haired northerner smiled as he approached her, not knowing what to do since she did not

move or say a word.

“What is your name?” Brigit asked, and Savannah got an uneasy feeling rising in the pit of her stomach hearing her tone. Something was off.

“Aspen,” the Lycan smiled. “Aspen Morr.”

“Are you out of your mind?” Celia, who finally got over her shock, hissed at her brother. “We are being

filmed, and she is a contender at the Luna Trials!”

But her sibling did not seem to care. Elene wanted to intervene, but Kai motioned for her to stop.

“Aspen Morr,” Brigit smiled, but that was a sad smile. “I Brigit Borg, the daughter of the Alpha of the White Claw pack, reject you as my...”

“No!” Aspen growled loudly, and everyone around them gasped. “4, Brigit Borg, the daughter of ...” She started again, and this time Aspen growled even louder. “No, Brigit! I decline your rejection!” He clenched his fists and was breathing heavily now, desperation

LT

and frustration evident on his face.

“Brigit, are you sure?” Savvy whispered to her. “Don’t make rush decisions. You have just met each other and ...”

“,” the white bear shifter started again. She had teary eyes, yet not a single drop spilt yet. For some reason, she was full of determination. “Brigit Borg...”

“No!” Aspen interrupted her again. “I am not ...” His voice broke, and one could tell by just looking at him that he was in pain. “Just... just give me a chance before rejecting me ...”

“I came here to represent white bears and participate in The Luna Trials!” Brigit looked him in the eye and pursed her lips. “I will not throw everything away for a mate I just met. I came here to win!”

Aspen’s eyes glowed red. Now he was furtous. He now had his loyalties torn between his mate and his

king, his Alpha. It was the worst situation to be in.

Sawy knew it wasn’t her time to speak, but her heart clenched for the two.

“You do know you may not win this,” she whispered to Brigit and saw Chloe rushing the cameras to get closer. Even now, she didn’t want to miss a good shot. “Leave this decision for after the Trials.”

“She can’t,” Penelope sighed sadly and looked up at them as though she cared. “If she has a mate, she should already be disqualified ... Unless Aspen accepts her rejection, of course.”

Brigit pressed her lips so tightly together that they formed a thin white line. For some reason, the Trials were more important to her than anything else.

Kai strode to them, and Savvy looked in his eyes pleadingly. In all honesty, she had to be happy that the white bear was out. Brigit was a strong competitor. It would be easier without her around.

“She can reject him in the finale if she wants to.” This time it was Petra who spoke, and they all looked in her direction. “I am sorry,” the girl mumbled.

“No.” Sawy decided to continue this thought. “She is right. Brigit can’t be the Luna if she has a mate, but if that’s done before the finale, then....”

She stopped talking too. It was exactly like her own situation; they all knew Brigit was done. The North was never going to accept her whatever happened next. But Brigit wasn’t going to be the Luna. It was Savannah’s place, and she had Kai’s love. All she was giving the she-bear now was a chance to show

herself and think more about her mate.

“So be it,” Kai agreed, looking at Aspen. “Brigit Borg can compete. She will have to talk to her mate after each Trial and make her final decision before the final event. The North is a fair place.”

Aspen didn't seem happy about it, but at least he wasn't breathing heavily anymore. That meant that he had his wolf under control.

"So, we are already late!" Elene clapped her hands, bringing the attention back to her in an attempt to change the subject, "Each contender will now travel to her designated starting point. Before the Trial begins, you will be checked so that we are sure you don't have anything on you that can help you. You will all start the next challenge simultaneously, and the distance to the centre of the Forgotten City is the same for all of you. Drones will be following you on your journey to record everything. And, of course, cameras are installed everywhere. We always keep an eye on the maze but will not interfere."

The contenders were walking out of the hall in a straight line while the guests were cheering for them. Savannah turned her head back to steal one last glance at Kai and their eyes locked at once. He smiled at her without trying to hide his feelings for her, and she did the same.

Savvy was sitting in her car, waiting for the guards to let her out. It was taking a while, and she was eager to start the challenge as soon as possible. So, when the car door opened, she jumped out without thinking and right into the northern King's hands.

"Kai?" She gasped as she didn't expect to see him until this was over.

"You didn't think I would let you go without a proper goodbye," he murmured and crashed his lips into hers, taking her face in both his palms and caressing her cheeks in the process.

This was the boost she needed so much. A reminder of why she was doing this. He was her peace in this cruel world, and she was his. This was worth fighting for.

"My king." one of the guards cleared his throat, making them stop and tear away from each other.

"What?" Kai snapped his head at the lycan who, to his honour, didn't flinch.

"It's time for Princess Savannah to go into the forest."

"Finel" the king growled, still holding her face. He turned back to her, breathing ragged. "I love you, Savvy," he whispered. "Stay safe there."

"Kai," she let out a little laugh. "Out of the two of us, you are the one with the most dangerous

mission. Give Gideon my letter and try to make him believe in your feelings for me. This is the only way. When we meet again, I'll handle it from there."

“Sawy,” he growled softly, placing his forehead on hers and closing his eyes. “In the Forgotten City, pay attention to...”

“Stop.” she placed her index finger on his lips. “Unless every other contender knows this, I don’t want to know. Elene evened out our chances by showing me the map already.”

“Nothing is what it seems there,” he told her. “Don’t rely just on your memory. Look around.”

“I will,” she placed a soft kiss on his lips quickly. “Let’s go do this, kai”

He gave her a simple nod, and his lips curled into a reassuring smile. Drones appeared in the sky, ready to film her, and she promised to herself to give them a good show,

“Let Fenrir protect you,” Kai said, and warmth spread over her chest. “And let the Moon Goddess show you the way,” she answered and winked at him before turning

away.

It was time.

Savannah started running. She knew one thing – the Forbidden forest had to be crossed as soon as

possible to avoid any kind of trouble from the white bears who resided not far from here. Since they were at war with the lycans, even if it wasn’t announced yet, it would make sense for them to appear now. Killing off Kai’s potential Lunas would be a great way to make him look weak. Somehow Bjorn’s words about how Kai would lose everything he had were replaying in her mind.

She did not plan to look for food because she didn’t plan to stay here for long. Picking up speed, she was sure she’d be near the Forgotten city walls quite soon when she heard sounds that made her stop

They were ...sobs. Moreover, the pitch of the voice seemed familiar.

“For the love of.” Savannah was ready to swear. She knew she had given her word to protect Petra but didn’t expect it to happen so fast. Why was she in trouble already? The challenge had just started.

Groaning, the western princess changed her direction and sprinted to the sound of Petra’s voice. She found the girl in what looked like a freshly dug hole. It wasn’t that deep, and technically she was supposed

to be able to get out on her own.

“Petra, what happened?” Savvy furrowed her brows, looking at all that mess.

“Princess Savannah?” The she-wolf looked up, scrunching her nose and stilling another sob. She wore a tight black outfit today like everyone else but stayed true to herself by tying a blush pink scarf over her neck. Her pink hair was made into two tight buns today. “I met Mikaela,” she said, lips trembling “She

Petra pointed at her knee, and Savannah noticed it was all bloody and swollen. From the looks of

things, the knee cap was broken, which would require some healing time, especially for a werewolf

Savvy looked around and found a large old tree branch. She took it and lowered it into the hole where Petra was

“Grasp it,” she commanded. “I am getting you out. Use your healthy leg to help yourself”

“Why?” the girl asked but accepted the help anyway.

Slowly, Savvy managed to pull her out, and Petra collapsed onto the ground, whimpering from the

pain

“I gave my word to Evelyn.” The princess explained, turning her to her back. “You have a wonderful mentor.”

“I know,” Petra tried to smile. “She is like the aunt i never had. Or better say mother.”

“Let me have a look at this.” Savvy pointed at the knee and started checking it quickly. Her prediction was correct. The knee cap was in pieces, and it would require a few good hours for something like that to heal on a werewolf.

“It’s bad, isn’t it?” Petra tried to stay strong to the best of her abilities.

“It’s not great, but you’ll manage.” Savannah gave her a reassuring grin. Somehow she felt as if she was tending to a child.

“How embarrassing to be a contender who didn’t even get to the Forgotten City!” Petra chuckled bitterly as Savvy untied the scarf on her neck.

“You’ll get there. We just need to fix your knee until you regenerate. That’s all.” The princess used the scarf and a few strong twigs she found to create a splint. Things did not look good at all, but it was the best she could do in the given situation. The rules of

this part of the Luna Trials were that help would arrive only after at least one of the torches was lit. Unfortunately, giving Petra first aid and leaving her here

wasn't an option.

Swearing under her breath, Savannah helped the northerner up and gave her the branch she used to get her out for support.

"Here, wrap your arm around my neck," she suggested. "We will walk as fast as you can. Use this as a staf

"You are seriously going to do this?" Petra's eyes grew wide. "I know she is helping out your friend,

but is it worth it?"

"Friends and family are the only things worth it." Savvy sighed, realising that she was losing time. If

she could shift now, she'd take Petra on her back. But it wasn't an option. Shifting meant losing.

They managed to take up some kind of speed after a while, but it was still too slow.

The sun was in its zenith, and if Savannah's calculations were correct, they were supposed to reach the Forgotten City in about half an hour, Mikaela was probably already there, which wasn't fair. But this was the whole point, wasn't it? The Trials weren't fair. They were about survival.

Savannah tensed when she felt some movement behind them. And another one on their left.

"Long time no see!" Celia snickered, and Savannah rolled her eyes. Of course. The minions came to do their job.

Carefully, Savvy placed Petra with her back to a tree and pointed at her self-made staff. "Don't move from here and use that if you have to."

Then she stretched her neck, slightly happy she had a way to let out her frustration. The pair couldn't have come at a better time.

"What took you so long?" she smirked as the lycan and the werewolf circled around her, ready to

attack any moment,

“No disrespect to your kingdom,” Inga sneered. “We are just fighting for the best Queen for us.”

“That makes three of us,” Sawy chuckled. “But no worries. I understand you serve your Queen B. The one who graciously lets you do the dirty jobs for her while she gets all the fame and recognition as always. Just tell me something... You are both Alpha-females. Is it really enough for you to be her

flunkies?”

Both women gritted their teeth, and surprisingly, Inga was the first to attack. Celia soon joined her friend, and Savvy quickly realised that they trained together because each of their attacks were in perfect sync. It wasn't enough to intimidate her in any way; they were still no match for her.

The princess was blocking their attacks with ease. Celia was more of a problem than Inga since she had more strength in her. Yet she wasn't a royal lycan, so Sawy knew the physical advantage was still on her side. She dodged blow after blow, thinking of how to deal with the two. Celia was Aspen's sister, and she didn't want to hurt her too much out of respect for him.

Meanwhile, Inga tried to do a sucker punch to Savannah's stomach, which she recoiled, shoving Celia away at the same time after twisting her hand roughly. She didn't have time for this, so she decided to end this fast. Shame there were no more holes around to put these two in.

But when Inga ran to Petra, realising the wounded girl was Sawy's biggest weakness, the princess lost her patience. Enough was enough!

Grabbing the blonde's hair, she spun her around and kicked her so hard that she flew backwards a

few good feet, slamming against one of the trees

Celia was back in no time, going for Savannah's jaw, but her hand got caught in the process, and with a few swift moves, Savvy nailed her to the ground. The lycaness growled and struggled under her.

“Claghtern!” Savannah shouted, and Celia froze under her. What was it? Some kind of a magical word? “How do you ...” the Lycan groaned.

“Your brother told me!” She sneered, still having no idea what it all meant. “He told me to say it to you if I have to. I figured it's perfect timing.”

Savannah sensed Inga charging at her again and prepared to block the attack when someone stood in front of her at the last moment, doing it for her...

Chapter 39

Savvy blinked and saw snow-white hair swinging before her eyes as Naya took a battle stance.

“Easy there!” Her lips curled into a menacing grin as she blocked Inga’s attack. Her eyes did not promise her opponent anything good, “You may hurt yourself again! We wouldn’t want that would

we?”

The werecat dodged another blow and then kicked Inga’s legs gracefully, making her kiss the dirty ground. Once again, Savannah admired the beauty with which the cats moved. As if they were dancing and not fighting

“If we could shift...” the werewolf growled.

“If we could shift, there would be a blood stain in the shape of you!” Naya retorted with a chuckle. “You don’t scare me, wolf girl. The only one I am scared of in this entire competition is the person I side

with.”

“Enough!” Celia tried to wriggle out from under Savannah, and the Princess stood up, letting her go. The ginger-haired girl rushed to her friend’s side,

“But...” Inga was about to protest

“Did you hear what she said?” Celia seemed more agitated because of the magic word than anything else. “Sorry, but even Penelope is not worth it for me. So you are on your own! Besides, I think we have stalled them for long enough!”

Inga relaxed slightly hearing this and nodded. They exchanged glances and charged in the same direction without saying anything else.

“So much for their company!” Naya turned to face the other two women, and Savvy really didn’t

know what to expect next.

**“You side with me?” The Princess raised her brow questioningly.

“Of course I do!” Alagh followed the reply. “Who else could you and me, two Westerners, join

here?”

"I could join forces with Astrid." Savvy pointed out, throwing a quick glance at Petra, who still clung to the tree branch as if her life depended on it.

"I hate that one!" Naya scrunched her nose. "And Brigit!" The Princess continued. "Ugh, that one is even worse. You see why you needed me here?" The cat smirked.

"I needed you? Since when?" Now Savannah was interested.

"Since always!" Naya rolled her eyes. "Why do you think I am here? To fight for a man? No, thank you. I like pirts more anyway. Although men can be fun sometimes. That depends on the size of their dl-"

"I get it!" Savannah tried to stop her confession. "I still don't get why, though. And how did you know

about the Trials?"

"I received an invitation from Elene. She wanted a werecat of noble blood to compete, and my

mother chose me."

"So, you knew before I even got here?" Savvy gritted her teeth. "Why didn't you inform us? We are

supposed to be in an alliance with the cat packs."

"We are in an alliance," Naya confirmed nonchalantly. "That's the whole point. You didn't need that

information back then. Your brother would flip, and we would have had another war on our hands instead

of a new and powerful ally. Who would want that? My mother sent me here to help you get King Kai's heart and marry him. Or, at the very least, help you win the Trials and get the three wishes. If you had been disqualified, I would have to win this thing myself. Luckily, you didn't disappoint. The King is really not my type, so thanks for that."

"You cats have strange ideas about loyalty," Savvy scoffed; however, she also felt relieved.

"We do what will benefit us all. If King Gideon asked us, we would have told him what we knew. But he didn't, so..."

That was one convenient way of thinking

“And how exactly has your being here helped me?” Savannah let out a laugh. This was indeed

hilarious.

“I had your back and sent information to my mother so that she knew everything was fine. If something wasn’t, I had to report to her, and she would inform King Gideon.” Naya folded her arms on her chest, not bothered with the moral aspect of things.

“That sounds like a very questionable plan!” Savvy chuckled.

“It worked, though!” The werecat snickered. “I was worried when you disappeared for a few days, but after I listened to Beta Lachlan’s conversation with Princess Elene, I knew you were not suffering in the King’s arms. I have to say, you worked faster than I expected. I thought that you two would start seeing

each other as more than enemies somewhere closer to the end of the Trials. And look at you two! Mating

already, and it’s not even ...”

“Mating?” Petra squeaked, and they both turned to look at her. Her lips were twitching to keep a straight face, but tears were already on her long lashes. “You and King Kai?”

“Sht,” Naya mumbled. “I forgot the child was here.”

“That’s not fair!” Petra stomped her hurt foot and winced at the sharp pain. More tears streamed down her cheeks. “Giving him sexy’l favours so that he helps you is not fair!”

“Wow, wow, wow!” Savvy shook her head at once, choosing her words cautiously now. “No one is

giving him sex al lavours! Petra, we ... we are in love.”

She blushed when the words left her mouth. It was the first time she said that out loud to someone

else, the first time she claimed him as hers.

Her confession slowly sunk in and Petra’s expression changed to a more understanding one.

“Are you mates?” The pink-haired girl asked, and Naya snorted, but Savannah jabbed her with her elbow.

“Not exactly,” she cleared her throat. “You know what, we need to move if we ever want to get to the

Forgotten City.”

“So, you stay here and wait for help.” The werecat smiled at Petra, clearly intending to leave her

behind.

“No,” Savannah shook her head. “I gave my word that I’d take care of her.” “For real?” Naya looked at her in disbelief. “Why?”

“Long story.” Savannah returned to Petra and helped her to wrap her arm around her neck for

support. “Let’s go.”

“Unbelievable!” The cat murmured to herself and took the tree branch away from the pink-haired

girl, throwing it away. “Come here! It will be faster that way!”

They practically carried Petra for a while, but since there were two of them now, it was much

faster.

“At least we don’t have to worry about any attacks anymore.” The werecat tried to look for

something positive in the situation. “Inga and Celia are long gone. What did you say to Celia again?”

“Claghtern,” Savannah replied, seeing the walls of the Forgotten City from a distance. They weren’t as destroyed as she imagined. In fact, they seemed very tall and well built.

“What is it?” Naya asked.

“I wish I knew!” The Princess chuckled. “It proved so helpful!”

“It’s a monastery deep in the Northern mountains,” Petra informed them. “Women spend their life there in prayers to Fenrir. They only eat food they grow themselves and are never allowed to marry anyone. Even if they meet their mate, however unlikely if one lives in Claghtern, they have to reject them. It’s pure life. They also train to be warriors

and are considered elite here. They say that Fenrir gives them his blessing, and they are the strongest among lycan females. Almost invincible.”

“Warrior nuns!” Naya snorted, “That’s a first!” “They are more like priestesses,” Petra tried to explain. “It’s an honourable position.” “if it’s that honourable, why did one mention of the place make Cella disappear?” Savvy

chuckled.

“Because she isn’t the nun type?” The werecat sniggered, and they both snorted, trying to suppress

laughs.

* The Morr family gave an oath long ago that each firstborn daughter would join Claghtern” the pink-haired werewolf continued explaining. “Cella had to join them last year. Evelyn says it’s one of the reasons why she is in the Luna Trials. First, it postpones the Inevitable. And second, if she or one of her friends wins, they could use one of the three wishes to free Cella from her obligations.”

“Funny!” Savannah giggled. “If she thinks someone like Penelope would waste a wish on her, she doesn’t know her friend well.”

They reached the city walls, but there was no entrance in sight.

Savannah knew she had already lost too much time, but it wasn’t hopeless yet. She was confident in her own strength and knew she could still catch up, but not while carrying Petra.

Savvy and Naya exchanged concerned glances.

“To hell with you!” The werecat sighed. “Just go already. I will look after her UNTIL her foot is healed. After that, she is on her own.”

“You can leave me now,” Petra realised they were talking about her. “I will just wait here until everything is over. I am not really a warrior.”

“You are now,” Savvy looked her in the eye, reacting fast. “Life has thrown you into this, and now you have to do the best you can. Your leg will heal soon, and then you will show what you are capable of.”

“What’s the point if there isn’t even a prize anymore?” The she-wolf pouted her lips. “According to your own mentor, the point is your pride and reputation. She put her life into bringing

you here. Are you going to just sit and wait until someone arrives to save you?" Savannah taunted. "Or are

you going to at least try?"

have time to wait for the outcome. She had already done enough.

!

"You get to make one now. It's on you," the Western Princess said. "Naya will stay with you until your knee is healed, and I have to go now. But I really hope to see you fight, Petra. Not for Kai, not for any man. For you. You are just as strong as everybody else here. Even if you don't go far until you try, you know you are doing the best you can. Whatever you decide to do next-best of luck to you."

Savannah nodded at Naya, and the werecat gave her a supportive smirk. "I'll find you later by your scent," she promised, waving the Lycaness goodbye.

Savannah was running for some time down the wall, realising there was no entrance to the city. Just

the tall fence and no doors, no gates, no holes ... nothing!

Annoyed, she decided to simply climb the wall, not to lose any more time.

Finally, at the top, an Impressive view of the former northern capital unfolded before her eyes. It was a huge circular labyrinth with thousands of branches, and Savvy had no idea how people lived here in ancient times. It looked like a big trap, and it did not help that now it was lit by the red light of the

sunset.

She was happy to acknowledge that Princess Elene had shown them the correct map before this challenge. At least the parts she could see from here matched now. She knew where she was and where she had to get. The shire where she was supposed to light a torch was in the very centre of the maze, the

- only building tall enough to tower over everything else,

Savannah felt vibrations before they reached her feet and jumped down moments before sharp metallic sparks grew out of the wall top. Once again, she landed on a stone tile and felt something was off. The tile had a small crescent sign on it, and it was the last thing she noticed before arrows with silver tips started flying left and right.

Not wasting time, Savannah ran as fast as she could and felt another click under her feet, realising that the tiles were triggering weapons. However, this time she was

shocked when a wall appeared from the ground, cutting her way to escape and creating a dead end.

“What the...” She grunted, realising she would have to go back by the road she came here. She looked at the tiles and noticed small signs on almost each of them. She saw crescents, circles, diamonds, triangles, flowers, suns, stars and many others. By now, it was safe to assume that a crescent was a no-go.

She measured the distance to a tile that was supposed to change the walls and noticed a diamond on

1. Not thinking twice, Savannah stepped on the closest diamond tile, and a wall beside her moved. A

different wall... which meant that the maze was changing all the time.

Her knowledge of the map wasn't going to help much now, which only made her grit her teeth.

Savvy was sure that some of the tiles were safe and decided to try one to check, carefully stretching her leg to reach it. The floor under her dropped, and she grasped the ground next to her, trying not to fall

down. If she originally stood where that pressed tile was, she would be at the bottom of what looked like a

bottomless pit

Her hands were slipping, and she realised that the walls were sleek and shiny, a mixture of metals

connected together in intricate patterns.

Silver and bronze.

Silver for the wolves and bronze for the bears. Of course... That made sense as these metals weakened the species.

A shadow covered Savannah's face, and she lifted her head to see Brigit towering over her. The white

bear had no emotions on her face, and Savvy didn't like it.

“Hi!” She tried to force a smile. “Give a girl a hand, will you?” “I am sorry.” Brigit shook her head.

Her boot was inches away from Sawy's fingers.

"Come on!" The Princess threw her head back. "You aren't that bad, Brigit! Why do you keep doing these things? You could have already been in your mate's arms instead of all this!"

The white bear's eyes glistened again. Exactly like during her finding out about Aspen.

"I know your mate!" Savvy continued, trying to help her situation. "He is a great guy! He would devote his whole life to making you happy. He has one flaw, though – a very annoying sister, but does it matter really? When it's true love, and you are true mates."

Their eyes locked, and Brigit's lips trembled just for a second before she pulled on a cold and

indifferent expression.

"I wish it could be different!" The werebear muttered and stood on Savannah's fingers. She was bringing more and more weight until the Princess screamed in pain and let go of the last thing holding her from the fall.

Savvy landed at the bottom of the metal pit. Silver wasn't affecting lycans too much, but there was so much of it around that she couldn't help but feel weaker. Besides that, she could feel something else in the air... Something unhealthy.

The pit was deep and impossible to climb up. There was nothing at the bottom that could help her as

well.

"Brigit!" Savannah screamed, but the white bear was nowhere in sight. Sadly, getting out of here without help wasn't an option.

She hated waiting. It was the one thing she despised the most. However, now she was forced into this position and prayed that Naya would soon catch up with her thanks to her scent.

The remaining sun rays falling from above were Sawy's only source of light now, so when it suddenly got dark, hope rose in her chest. She looked up and saw... one red eye gleaming in the darkness...

"Hey there, Princess!" Bjorn said...

Kai knew this wouldn't be an easy conversation. No love was lost between him and Gideon Stormhold, the King of the Western Lycan Kingdom. And also Savannah's older brother.

The Northerner was impressed by the size of the army Gideon brought with him, considering that it was on short notice.

Kal considered many opening phrases, but nothing seemed good enough to use in the given situation. So, he went with the most obvious choice.

“Welcome to the Northern Lycan Kingdo..” Gideon punched him. Hard.