

## The Luna Trials by Marissa Gilbert Chapter 56

### 1. The Ties That Bind

Savannah was afraid to move even an inch because Bjorn still hadn't left room. He stopped his narration, and a part of her was worried he would get back into bed with her. That was something she wanted to avoid at whatever cost.

“That man, The Serpent, quickly became my father's most trusted advisor. My father was obsessed with the idea of destroying the Fox king, and he was wasting all our resources on that, despite order from the lycans to avoid any confrontations. He ignored them, of course, and soon we found ourselves fighting on two fronts. The lycans did not like being contradicted.”

He turned back to look at the moon shining brightly over the northern mountains.

“was growing up in the middle of all this, training fiercely, knowing the reality i would have to live in. But most importantly, I couldn't forget my Mother's words about becoming strong and powerful and bringing her back. Considering what my father was, wanted to have the only other family I had left, so I did everything possible for it to happen. When I was around fourteen, I thought I was ready. As an heir, I had people loyal to me, and I took them with me when I went on the mission of retrieving my Mother from the foxes. I already knew by then that the Fox King had gotten her back and punished her severely for escaping. She was his queen and his obsession, but she didn't have a happy life with him.

I found a house for her to live in for when I would bring her back. I knew my father would never accept her as his mate again. He did not marry again, but he had many mistresses to replace the need for his lost mate. Their bond was already long broken. It was a small but comfortable cabin in the woods on one of the northern borders, and I

was sure I could keep her safe there. Maybe even with my brother if she wanted to take him with her like the last time. It all played out very nicely in my head, but, of course, the reality was different.

I watched the foxes for quite some time before I became daring enough to go into their territory one night to try and retrieve my mother. Now I think I was foolish thinking it would be so easy to outfox the foxes. I got to her bedroom, and she was terrified to see me. She hadn't seen me for years, but she didn't even give me a hug because she knew that every second could cost me my life. She told me to run, but I refused to do so without her. This was when Castiel walked in on us with a broken lip, probably seeking some comfort from her. He didn't even know who I was back then, but Mother begged him not to tell anyone he saw me, and he swore on the spot."

The white bear inhaled sharply and went back to his sleeping princess. Savannah felt the mattress dipping as he sat beside her and ran his fingers through her silky hair. It seemed he couldn't stop touching her the moment he got close. Luckily, she still felt nothing, which was bringing her some relief. Whatever he felt, whatever he was thinking, she did not share his beliefs. He was no mate of hers.

"Mother tried to make me leave before it was too late, but I was stubborn. I worked so hard for this and didn't want it all to go to waste. I told them about the house and that I would keep them safe there until I got the bear crown. And that once I did, I would give them the life they deserve. Castiel asked Mother if we could really go. He was around seven back then and ready to leave his father in an instant and without hesitation." Bjorn's voice broke, and he took his hands out of her hair, running his palm over his tired face and pausing when his fingers touched his missing eye.

"They tried to hide me in the adjacent room, and my mother sent Castiel back to his chambers right before her fox husband arrived, but he-he didn't buy the trick and found me within seconds, Foxes and their scent abilities... You can't hide from them. Funnily enough, I thought I could

still take him. Moreover, I almost did. I fought him and almost won. Almost-”

Savvy dared to take a little peek at what was going on and saw Bjorn sitting next to her with his eyes closed. He looked as exhausted as she was, and for a mere second, she... considered trying to kill him now when his guard was so low.

“We would hardly succeed,” Athena cooled her down, disappointment washing over them both.

Bjorn’s head snapped in her direction, and she barely managed to close her eyes in time. Savannah still had no idea if he knew she wasn’t sleeping and was sharing his sad story just to get it out, or maybe it was his tactic to make her see him as a human after everything he had done.

She wasn’t impressed so far. This wasn’t enough. Nothing would ever be enough to make her forget Kai, Gideon, Riannon and Kyle’s deaths. As well as all the others.

They dragged me to the dungeons and chained me in bronze-coated chains to weaken me,” Bjorn went on, trying to suppress the rising emotions inside him. “Then they starved me for a few days to ensure they had me in the condition they wanted me. And then... the tortures began. The beatings were all right. I underwent extensive training before that and could take it all. Even with my healing abilities substantially slowed down, I could still heal. So, that was when the lox started to experiment, searching for ways to leave marks on me. I didn’t understand at first why it was so important to him. I thought I would die in that dark, dump place. Alone and forgotten because no one was visiting me there in between tortures. Until one day-”

He took another moment to mather his thoughts and continued, “Castiel sneaked into the dungeon to try and set me free. By then. his father had already kicked any naive thoughts out of my head, and I told him to leave. I was ready to die, and I didn’t want to drag him with me. iber-

dum just like my mother berged me when she discovered me in her room. But the little fox thought he was too smart for his own food, it turned out that it was a test of luis loyalty. He didn't just get there. His father wanted to see what he would do if given a chance. Of course, Castiel didn't pass the test. The warriors broke in when he tried to get rid of my chains. His father asked him why he trwd to save me, dhe replied that he jusi wanted to see me... because I was his brother."

Biorn closed his eyes, remembering the day and how a sharp bronze knile was pressed apainst his eye while he was shackled. It wasn't his punishment. It was Castiels. For disobedience, for thinking he was too smart for his own good.

"Too bad your brother will not be able to see you anymore, Coss!" The Fox king sheered as he plunged the blade into his flesh.

He did not remember the pain anymore, but he remembered the fear Thal gul wrenching feeling that crawled up his spine and into butcheart and it seemed like it stayed there forever, that moment in time when the fox king was about to cut his second eveball out and blind him permanently, and he could do absolutely nothing about it

-That man didn't want us to like cach other, and he wasn't going to lake the insult of me, a white bear, being there on his territory and trying to take something he had stolen before. He was about to stali niy second eye when Castiel prowled and shifted into his red beast form for the first time in his life. It would have been a joyous occasion only his parent didn't hate me more than anything. He still tried to stab me, but Cas threw himself at him and tried to light luni despite them not being on equal terms. His father was so furious that when he finally caught him, he thrust the blade in Castiel's eye instead of mine in a race."

Guilt washed over him. He should have begged his little brother to stop, but he didn't. In the hope that maybe, just maybe, he would be saved, but his moment of weakness resulted in his younger sibling being hurt in his stead.

“Now you match with your bear brother, mutt!” The Fox king spat when he closed the doors behind himself, leaving them alone in the dungeon’s darkness, Castiel was still in his beast form, with a collar around his neck to keep him just like that. It was probably the won first shift in history.

Bjorn opened his eyes and looked at Savannah again. Seeing her helped soothe his heart, which was aching from the painful memories.

“Cass and I were locked together for days, healing slowly. If one could call it that, of course. My eye could never heal, and his fox lost his partially. I guess you noticed that only one of his eyes was glowing when his beast was getting through. He used to joke that he liked it better that way. That it made him look fiercer” Bjorn chuckled to himself, remembering the good old days. “He couldn’t shift back to his human form, and I found solace in talking to him. To be honest, I feel like this was what kept me going back then. I was telling him stories of how we will be free from our fathers one day, how we will take our Mother to live far away from there, how no one will ever put us into this position again... As for our Mother, she pleaded with her husband, and he released Cassa few days later. So, I was back to counting the hours until I died in solitude. But to my surprise, after being hit severely again, they threw me out on the border of the white bear territory. Our people had already been searching for me for weeks, and one of our warriors found me. My father was called almost instantly, but he only took one look at me and frowned. He told me that I was his biggest disappointment in life, even bigger than my Mother. And that I wasn’t good enough to wear his name.”

Savvy knew that there was a reason he called himself Bjorn more than he used his first name. Now it made sense. It was a statement. The right he was deprived of by his father, the right he had to take back and own it.

“After all that, my father started to look for a new wife. He announced that he wanted a new heir because I didn’t meet his expectations,” Bjorn

sollid bitterly. “Women started arriving at our castle hoping they would be chosen by him. In a way, he had his own Luna Trials, only with no rules or boundaries. And one of these women turned out to be my first mate.”

That... was a new development, and Savannah would have gasped if she could. Playing dead was harder than ever.

“Her name was Ingrid. She was beautiful, smart and strong, a perfect future Northern Queen, I recognised her at once as every fibre of my soul responded to her. She didn’t look in any way, and at first, I was happy because that meant my father would never know who she was. I thought I could keep her safe in that way.” Something changed in his voice, it became colder and somehow empty. “I never liked the Serpent before and tried to avoid him as much as possible. So, when he visited me unexpectedly, I was wary of him at first. But he told me that I had to see something and then after that, I had a decision to make. I followed him hesitantly as curiosity took over me. My father’s most trusted advisor wanted something to do with me all of a sudden. Who wouldn’t be intrigued? I was shocked when he pushed what looked like a random brick on the wall and opened a secret passage in my castle that I had no idea about. How was it possible that this man knew my own home better than I did? He brought me to a small room that I soon discovered was hidden behind my father’s bedroom, he motioned for me to be quiet and opened a little hole in the wall that allowed me to see what was going on inside. My father was waiting for someone, and soon Ingrid arrived, wearing the most provocative dress.”

Savvy knew where this story was going, and she did not like it.

“I already told you, my innocence died when I was in captivity. I stopped believing in the good in people, so the moment I saw her enter the room. I knew why she was there,” he chuckled as if it was funny. “He asked her if she was indeed my mate, and she looked at him, looking straight into his eyes. And when he asked her whom she would choose, she chose him without as much as blinking. He had to prove it and she

did right then and there. On her knees—"Bjorn grunted as if the memory alone made him sick. "After She was done proving the told her that he would make her his queen if she succeeded with the task he gave her. The task, of course was to help and of me. I stood there, shattered by the betrayal, and listened to them discuss how she would do it

with me and inject me in the process, billing, me off while I was still in pain. She didn't have a problem with any of that. But the more stupid, the more feallydthalle was going buy her for this meant that there was absolutely no way he could do it himself. That bowiedy uberated me ledy-dihavo matter what was telling me, I already had enough power for him to be aliaid of nie. So,

when Ingrid arrived of my doorstepampi weled her with open arms. I gave her ane last chance to save herself, but she Yerlied

and to you with any lathe's plan. So, I allowed her to vreme the way she served him, and she was happy to do it, thing that was on her way to become the bear queen of the northlurejected her while her mouth was still busy and broke her ned when she gasped for the viodad tried to pull away I got out the blade we had tucked safely into the stocking of her thigh and called the guards, wing the tried to kill me. No one had anyteam not to believe me, und my tather's brilliant plan went to waste:

even got a loval vassal in the end. I had to kill Ingrid's clan for reason, but I chose to show mercy and gained their forever servitude aca result. All thanks to that snake! The Serpent suddenly chose me over my lather, and my life became much easier after that hannened i never trusted hini completely, ol course, seeing how casy lic switched udes. Uplo this day, we have a barter relationship, but it works. He was the one who helped me to orchestrate the battle where Kai and Elene's parents, the lommer King and Queen, were killed and blame it alt on my father, cornering him between the foxes and the lycans"

Savannah's chest tightened. She expected many things, but this was one of them.

“Keep calm!” Athenatunci in her mind. “This is just a provocation, and you will give yourself away if you react! This doesn’t change anything, but it can’t change anything for him!”

The princess had to change the words in her mind to keep her claws from growing, she just prayed to the Moon Goddess for this night to be over soon so she could finally take a break.

Horn was silent, watching her intently, but she didn’t move or do anything that could indicate she wasn’t sleeping after all.

“Our Mother died a year before all that, and I was finally able to meet my brother again since he was almost the same age and was allowed more freedom. Neither of us was favoured by our fathers, which potentially meant death. We decided to do something about that, and this was probably the only alliance I could trust in my life. I helped him a lot, and Castiel had his talents too. Thanks to him, I became untraceable. The research he had done on scents is irreplaceable. Did you know that we could all change our scents if we wanted to? All that is required is a little DNA sharing procedure and the scents you want to imitate. I have about a dozen scents injected in me now, and I feel I will add more in the future.”

He sighed heavily, and suddenly Savannah felt him close to her. Too close for her liking.

“I talk too much, don’t I?” His lips brushed gently over her cheek, and his hot breath made the hairs at the back of her neck rise. “I only had that with Castiel. And now you. My first mate may have been a mistake or a test to see how much I could take and if I am worthy of becoming the king of these lands, but I intend to pass it. I intend to make it work, no matter what it takes, Savannah. You and me – we’re right together. It feels right. And you will heal soon too. You will recover, and the bond will snap in its place.”



He continued talking for some time, telling her about his favourite battles and tactics, about the things he had to do and some bits and pieces about Castiel. She tried to listen, but it was too much, and she was too exhausted. She didn't even know how she drifted off to

sleep or when ...

Savannah woke up in the same room the following day and was happy to see just one of the maids from before watching over her. The girl jumped to her feet when she saw her open her eyes.

"Would you like breakfast, my queen?" She asked, trembling slightly. "The king told us you have to eat something today." She knew what it really meant. If she didn't eat, they would be punished.

"I'll eat," Savvy smiled and tilted her head to look at the maid, knowing that this werebear was at her mercy. A little plan had already formed in her head. "But before I do, I want to speak to someone, and you will bring this person to this room."

## **The Luna Trials by Marissa Gilbert Chapter 57**

### **1. Luna Of The North**

"I want to see the man who is called The Serpent." Savannah declared, seeing the maid go pale. "My Queen," the woman in front of her stuttered. "I am not sure you are allowed to see him."

That was exactly what she expected. This couldn't have been easy. Nothing in her life was ever easy despite her being a princess. It was not fair, yet by now, she was already used to this. Moreover, she knew how to overcome such obstacles.

“You just called me your Queen,” Savvy pointed out. “Am I not your Queen then?” “Y you are,” the sil was visibly uncomfortable, fiddling with the hem of her wool jumper.

\*Then what is the problem?” Savannah chose to look ignorant. It would be safer lor her if they all considered her much simpler than The really was

“The King” the maid did not dare to look into her eyes. “He told us to look after you. To make sure nothing is happening to you.”

“I’m here, am I not? What can happen to me in the King’s castle?!” The words tasted like soil in her mouth. Bjorn wasn’t her king. For her, he wasn’t a king at all.

Sawy rolled her eyes and rubbed her forehead as if she was exhausted when in fact, she was feeling great. She was surprised by how quickly she recovered. Only physically, of course. However, she did not wish to go back to the sad thoughts about her chosen mate and her brother, and all her friends. She couldn’t afford to think about them because then she would tall into despair. She had a better plan than that now. She had things to do, and this was helping her to keep going.

She had to avenge each of them. She had to make Bjorn feel what she had felt. Only worse. Cruel thoughts were circling in her mind, and these were the thoughts she chose to embrace.

“I guess,” the girl in front of her was hesitant.

“The King told me the Serpent is his close friend and-“Savvy started speaking and bither tongue when she saw the expression on the maid’s face change. Did she get it wrong? Weren’t they at least friends? Bjorn talked a lot about him in that lengthy monologue of his.

“I need to go,” the she-bear furrowed her brows and went for the door. So much for being called a queen! \*\*Fine!” Savannah muttered loudly. “I will just tell the King how unhappy you made me later. Consider yourself dismissed.””

This was cruel, and Sawy knew it. The girl stumbled, and their eyes locked again. The Western Princess did not blink to make sure the maid knew she was serious about this. This wasn’t what she would usually do, but her soul was numb now. She couldn’t feel sorry for anyone else anymore.

Half an hour later, she was already properly dressed in a long royal blue dress when the door opened again. Savannah’s lips parted in shock when a very tall, handsome and relatively young man walked in. Wasn’t he Bjorn’s father’s advisor? He looked like he was in his early thirties at best. He either preserved very well, or the previous White Bear King was listening to the advice of a child, and Savvy wasn’t buying it.

“Greetings, my Queen,” he smirked and walked closer to her leisurely. One thing was for sure, he felt at home here. “I heard you were very eager to see me, and I have to admit, I am intrigued as to why.”

Savannah studied him carefully. This wasn’t at all what she anticipated to see. He had golden hair that almost reached his shoulders and blue eyes. A face of an angel, but she could tell that was the worst way to describe him. They did not call him The Serpent for nothing, and when an invisible string tugged at the corners of his lips, curling them into a smirk, she knew she wasn’t wrong.

“I heard so much about you,” she shrugged and gestured for him to sit down. “I felt like putting a face to the name.” \*\*Huh!” He chuckled, taking the seat offered. “There you go then, my Queen. Enjoy!” “Am 17\* Savannah found herself asking the same question again.

Ecuye me?” he arched a brow at her. If anything, he looked amused. “Arnil your Queen? Do you serve Bjorn, or are you just-”

\*I have the same deal with him as I did with his father. I help him when our goals coincide.” The man placed his foot on his knee. looking relaxed and confident. Maybe even slightly patronising. You can benefit from my deals too,” he said nonchalantly. “As long as it’s

la charge

\*\*The things I want, you cannot give me.” Savvy scoffed bitterly. That painful feeling was back in her chest. She tried to suppress it as much as she could, though.

“And what I told you that I could give you anything?” He angled his head at her with a smile that looked innocent, but glowing sent appled on his face reminded her of the ones she saw back at the Lost City shrine at the Lunarians and the cave kai took to watch the snow totem.

Arnt. He was about 100. older than anyone and anything she knew

“Who are you?” she whispered, chills rippling down the spine. Although the best question would probably be, what was he?

# Just call me Joran.” The glowing was gone, and the innocent smile was back on the man’s face. “I have many names, but I like that one the most, I guess.”

“You said that you want a deal,” Savvy tilted her head, trying to stay calm even after what she saw. although Athena was unsettled inside.

“No,” he shrugged, “you are the one who wants the deal.”

“Let’s imagine you indeed can give me what I want. What can I give you in return?” Savannah wondered, crossing her hands over her chest involuntarily. This man gave her shivers.

\* it sounds like you underestimate yourself, Queen of the North,” Joran let out a chuckle. “You can give me many things.”

“But there is something in particular that you want,” she was intrigued, but could already tell he had an agenda. Right now, she couldn’t offer much. She was the last remaining royallycan, but at the end of the day, she was just a princess whose brother and fiancé were killed in front of her and who had no real weight or power to her at the moment. She was afraid to think of what would happen to the West and the North in the absence of their respective rulers. But this was why she had to wipe out their enemies even if it was the last thing she would do in her life.

“Don’t worry!” her guest laughed wholeheartedly, seeing her serious expression. “It wouldn’t be your heart or limbs! Not even any of your kingdoms! Just your firstborn child.”

Herlins parted in shock hearing this. Wasn’t it a bit... too much? It had to be a joke!

“That’s a very strange request, Joran,” she chewed on the inside of her cheek thinking about it. Her initial reaction would be a big fat no. But then she suddenly realised she wasn’t going to have any children at all. Her mate was an asshole, and she killed him. The only man she ever loved was dead. This was her end. She had nothing to lose. She would bear no children. Her story would be over when she killed Bjorn and burnt that place.

“It is what it is,” he smirked at her, probably knowing he got her interest. “Take it or leave it.” “Can I think about it?” She didn’t want to rush making any decisions.

“Sure!” He laughed again and stood up. “When you make up your mind, just speak to me again. And now, excuse me, I have something of mine to retrieve from here.”

He left her alone, and as soon as he was gone, the three maids returned with trays full of food. Savannah didn’t make a scene this time, aware of the fact that they needed to know she kept her word. She promised them to have breakfast if they did what she wanted and it was time to pay the

price. Not to mention that she had to eat to get stronger and bring this plan of hers to life.

Although it was early to call that a plan. She still didn't know how to go about it all. When she was done, the maids looked at her awaiting orders, and she decided not to disappoint. "Where is Bjorn?" she asked them bluntly because wherever he was, she had to be far away from that place. "He will be back in the evening, my Queen," one of the girls informed her. "He is inspecting the army, preparing for the siege."

"Is someone about to siege this place?" she asked, hope rising in her chest rapidly, but, judging by their faces, she got the answer quickly. They were preparing for an attack. Something massive this time.

"West or North?" she clenched her lips to stop them from trembling. The maids lowered their heads, not responding to her. "We don't know" one of them said, but Savvy was sure they lied not to make her angry. It didn't make any difference. She would just have to act before that happened. From this moment on, the clock was ticking.

"Fine." She pretended to wave them off, and they were happy to leave, but when the last one was already at the door, Savannah stopped her. "Wait.

The same unlucky girl turned to face her hesitantly. "Yes, my Queen?" She tried to force a polite smile, but by now, she already knew that her "Queen" would only bring her

+ I would like to speak with the woman who was brought here together with me," Savvy announced in a tone that brooked no objections. "Bring her here."

Thus time the girl didn't hesitate and just nodded, disappearing behind the door. Apparently, this request was expected.

Savahtiah went back to the window to study the visible perimeter. This castle had a few advantages for the owners. It would be practically

impossible to attack it from the icy cliff and the sea, which left only the main entrance they brought her through the first time a vulnerable place. Thus would be the main line of defence for Bjorn and the only way out for anyone wishing to escape.

Some tar pavid, but the maid still didn't bring Pirain, which made the Princess worried. She felt stronger today, and she knew she couldn't Wave Person here

The old door deakd, and her lead apped to see her new guest. Her excited expression soon dropped, though, because the maid didn't bring Peta Instied, Chloe was standing right in front of her, wearing a darling white dress. Just like one of those she wore while stw worked as a preve r i una inas. Beautiful, expensive, stylish, but not over the top.

not one meant," Sawyrowd. She and Chloe never had the best relationship, lo begin with. And she could tell, the preynter had already found arwjob here.

"Oh, lan y vry," the nad was panic kingapain le Pilically limite worst list dyal work. "It's the only one I know of who

arrived together with you."

it can't bel" Savannah was annoyed and lernilled al the same time.

H ra was hard not to notice. "A pretty, sweet girl with pink curly hair arrived with me. Shout. Chesa lot. Wars puffy dresses."

She stard at them , but the latter had no clue who Savvy was Lilking about. "What a mew" The Innervind het 'Y' with her hands

"Let's go." the maid tried to make Chilac live the room font, but the reporter stepped closer to Savvy. "I know where she is the declared, looking at the Princess with a mix of hope and belligercrce. "Can we speak?" Sawy dismissed the maid but did not offer Chloe.calShe didn't

know yet where the TV presenter's loyalties lay. "I See you are well." she started the conversation.

"Lam a hostar." Chloe admitted bluntly and in a dry tone, it had nothing similar to how it usually sounded when she was talking in ti nt t! 1 1 1 1 PηΔΓ

\*\*The question is if you are a hostage or a guest," Savannah decided to test her a bit more.

\*\* hostage!" Chloe insisted, sitting her teeth. "They keep Claude and me alive because the North trusts our opinion. They make us Say things we would never say otherwise."

\*\*Poor you." Sawy sighed. "They probably had to torture you to achieve this effect. Did it hurt?"

The hostess clenched her lists and looked down, which made Savannah want to throw her out. They could have at least thrown a fight or two. They were lycans, for Moon Goddess' sake!

\*\*\* You know why my brother and I got to where we are now?" Chloe gnawed at her but did not wait for a reply. We are smart. And we adapt! And we know how to work as a team, and we know when to strike and when not to. And yes, this is what we did right now. What would be the point of being tortured il we knew the result would be the same?! But it doesn't mean we agree with what is going on or that we don't plan to act!"

"Oh, you plan to act?" Savvy raised her brow. "Care to elaborate? Do you have a plan?"

\*This is why I came to see you!" Tears glistened in Chloe's eyes, and for the first time, Savvy felt a prick of guilt. You are our plan! You are my Luna! I serve you! We all serve you!"



I am not alone,” the Princess turned away. This was too much for her.  
“1-”

“My King announced you as one, and he stood at the marking ceremony, saying his vows to you. I saw you cry for him, I saw you fight for him. It doesn’t matter that it was never completed,” Chloe sniffed. “In my eyes, you will always be The Luna of The North. You won the Trials fair and square. It is yours by right! The King is dead now, so we only have you left. We count on you! We need your help! All of us. Especially Petra-”

The she-wolf stopped talking, and Savvy sent a wave of fear washing over her.

“What is going on with Petra? You said you know!” The Luna urged her to tell her the truth, feeling that it was something terrible

“Some of the bears who greeted us when we arrived liked her. Bears of higher ranks... So, since they couldn’t share, she is going to be auctioned to the highest werewolf bidder,” Chloe told her and Savannah’s heart sank.

## Chapter 58

\*\*What do you mean they all long to own her?!” Savannah was trying to get air inside of her lungs in sharp angry gulps. This was outrageous! After everything she had been through this seemed to knock the ground from under her feet now Petra... She wasn’t cut out for this among bears. Hell, she’d barely managed herself among wolves!

“Apparently, several of the high ranking warriors were so infatuated with Petra when they brought her here that they all asked their King to give her to them. A few Alpha-wolves also present and they look an interest in her as well. And now everyone wants her.” Chloe interrupted her professionally as if she was still in a professional setting. They wanted to fight each other, but Bjorn couldn’t have this, of course, so he told them to make their offers, he would make a final decision.”

i me guck” Saww frated out, “and absolutely none of them wanted to ask what Petra wants!”

“She was sobbing hysterically at this point, wiping away her tears with her tulle dress, so yeah, they didn’t bother,” Chloe affirmed,” They are rough men here. I think seeing this tiny little lower trembling before them was appealing to them. She bears are either feisty warriors or take the roughness quietly. It is a novelty in this place.”

She is not a toy, though!” S.v.innal practically exploded but bit her tongue in time. She couldn’t allow herself to make a scene. Not before her plan formed. Not before she knew what to do next. “We need to get her out,” she said in a much quieter tone.

“Iamallaan” Chloc closed the distance between them. This is exactly what I am here for. Tell me what to do.”

The weight of responsibility was heavy. Savvy was a mess, having people count on her now was complicating things. However, she know one thing. She couldn’t leave them. She couldn’t leave Petra and Aspen. The thought of Gamma’s destiny made her shiver.

“What do you know about Aspen?” she asked Chloe.

“He is chained to the wall in front of the main entrance in the courtyard. They want to show him off. Anyone who passes by can hit him or do whatever they want to him. The only thing prohibited is anything that can kill him,” the blonde lowered her eyes. “They want people to see the Gamma defeated. However, the show is only for the bears. They prohibited us from broadcasting about what is being done to him.”

“And what can you broadcast exactly?” Savvy pierced the reporter with her gaze, but the latter stayed quiet and swallowed, her fingers fidgeting over the embellishment on her dress.

Impatient, Savannah charged for the door, jerking the door open, scaring the maid behind it. “Give me your phone!” she demanded. “L... I can’t!” The girl protested.

“Give it to me, or I swear, I am going to kill you on the spot.” Savvy made sure her eyes gleamed gold, showing off her lycan power, and then added an Alpha tone to her voice to amplify the effect. “Give it to me now!”

The maid trembled and got an old phone out of the pocket of her knitted jumper. She probably already hated Savannah more than Bjorn, but the Western Princess wasn’t here to make friends. In fact, she couldn’t care less. She went back to Chloe, opening up the most famous news website in the North.

Her heart dropped when she saw the headlines. “The New Times, The New King?”, “Long Live Darius Bjorn”, “Love Conquers All”. Angry tears burned her eyes. This wasn’t how it was supposed to go.

\*I am sorry,” Chloe sounded sincere. “He prepared himself very well, and we didn’t have much choice.”

Savvy ignored her. Whether she had a choice or not was questionable. She couldn’t move because she saw a picture of herself on Bjorn’s back, it was one of the things that was now etched into her memory, one of the worst moments of her life. And it was front page

The photo was taken in a way that no one could see the chains on her hands. The blue cape and her hair fluttered in the wind, and Bjorn’s

white beard held his head high. He was the winner, and she was his prize. Except... now it looked like she did not mind. “What this?” Her voice came out raspy, barely above a whisper. – Fuss how he tells your story. Chloe couldn’t lace the princess’ gaze.

Savvy hit the play button and heard Claude’s voice telling the viewers that the White Bear King had found his true mate and that the Lynne

Hedwon their tight and took his Queen to his castle, from where the two of them would be ruling the North together they would be working to make it the strongest kingdom as it rightfully deserved. Even the marking ceremony date was already V dawwyeit a wave of tub when she realised that it was in just one day.

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She clicked on the play button, and tears welled up in her eyes when she saw Zara standing in the background. Her friend survived as well, and that brought some kind of relief to the princess, However, Wussoon forgotten when she heard what Lachlan was saying

Il is with regret that I announce the death of the last two remain members of the Royal family,” he said, and Sawy felt the knile that was stuck in her heart twisting painfully. “Roth the King and the Princess were killed in an attack by the white bears, along with their guests King Gideon Stormhold of the Western lyn Kingdom and Quren Riannon Stormhold. Other victims include Alpha Ramina Knight with her

daughter Nay Knight, Alpha...” IT WAS Saying name after name all people that she knew and people she was supposed to get to know soon as the Northern Queen, Only now Savvy realised that there had still been a flicker of hope that they had all survived somehow. Or, if not all of them, at least some of them. Kai, Gideon, Riannon... they were special wolves. They were strong. That thought ended abruptly when she saw her brother’s body lying on the stone floor of the castle with Ria and other bodies lined up right next to him. She didn’t see kai no matter how hard she looked, though, but Elene was right there.

Maybe it was for the best that she didn’t see him. If she did, she would just break again. Now she had no hope whatsoever.

Just the drive to destroy the ones responsible for all of this pain.

\* This situation leaves us with no choice.” Lachlan continued, “the packs in question will need to choose new Alphas and arrive for the Council in the North and the West respectively to choose newlycan rulers. At the moment, we are awaiting a new attack, but I assure you that the North is still protected, and we have enough forces to keep it safe. Until the new King or Queen is chosen, I will remain the Beta in-command and make all essential decisions. Remember that the North Star still shines upon our heads, and Fenrir’s will is for us to stay strong.”

He was saying something else, but Savannah couldn’t listen to it anymore.

She handed the phone to Chloe, forgetting that it wasn’t her device to begin with. So many thoughts were circling in her head. She let out a deep sigh, closing her eyes and trying to concentrate on what was important. It was somehow worse this way. She felt that if she just stayed standing like that, all the raw agony would escape her and she’d never be able to get out of it.

She couldn't go there. She couldn't afford to be weak, Not now, not when people depended on what she would do next. "Let's go!" Sawy motioned for Chloe to follow her, and the woman didn't hesitate even for a moment.

"Just so you know," she quickly whispered to Savvy. "Claude managed to save all the footage. Bjorn ordered us to delete everything and only leave the parts you saw, but Claude is good at these things. He saves a copy of everything we record and uploads it to the Cloud. It is all stored there, including... that day."

"Good." Savannah nodded, not wishing to go into detail. She wanted the truth to come out one day. Even if she wouldn't be here to see that, she hoped that others would. "Why didn't he come with you?" she asked instead.

"You only told them to bring the woman who arrived with you," Chloe shrugged her shoulders. "We knew that it wasn't me, but I had to use the opportunity to speak to you. They keep us locked in the room they gave us. We aren't allowed to leave, but we have to look presentable 24/7 because we never know when Bjorn will request us to start working again. I have to say, he knows what he is doing His campaign is thought through and well-planned."

"It will not help him," Savvy scowled, clenching her fists.

They walked out of the room to find the pale maid and a few guards, one of whom brought Chloe here. They all looked at her with a mix of shock, concern and resistance, sensing that the new queen was troubled.

"Take me to the pink-haired girl," Savannah ordered, and all four guards remained silent. "I swear to the Moon Goddess, if I have to have the "Am I Your Queen?" conversation all over again, you are all going to regret it!"

She probably sounded menacing enough as one of the warriors stepped forward. \*Thuis way” he bowed his head in a sign of respect, quickly understanding the situation and choosing the lesser of two evils.

“Sawy Petra threw herself into her arms the moment she walked into her room. As if they had been friends for years, as if they wetent rivals just a few days ago.

Although nowit vened like it had been years since the Luna Trials happened, il not in a different lifetime. .

Petra looked paint than usual, her pink curly hair was down, and she was still wearing the same dress. She was given a small room with a tiny window, but at least this place was privale enough, and it didn’t look like anyone dared to bother her there. There were guards af het door de

Are you okay?” Savannat checked her friend’s lace and exposed skin for visible signs of abuse, but to her reliel, lound none.

Frnds. They were friends now.

Althoug wla surprised the princess the mosi was the fact that Nina was in a good mood and not crying like Savvy thought the would be

Yes, I am the girl forudssile on her pretty lace. “Are you?” The question sturk Savvy unexpectedly, and she didn’t know how to answer allt, so she chose to simply ignore il “Petra, it’s going to be okay.” We assured. “I will find a way out of this, and I wear you will go home . soon possible.” \*\*\* Not without you the little Alphalitowed her brows.

“Petra-” The princess rubbed her templex. “It’s complicated, but

“It’s not complicated!” Petra indsted, crown her arms over her chest. “Either we are leaving together, or I stay here with youli can’t let you gave me time after time I know how you all see me, and maybe I am not a warrior, but I am not a child anymore. either!”

Saww looked at her. For the first time, she really looked at her, and her lips parted slightly. That leisty spint... she'd never seen it in this girl before,

-Nitra, did you " She wondered for a second, if all those bears fighting for Petra wasn't just a coincidence.

"Evelyn laughi me well," she woli smirked, playing with a strand of her pink hair. "She told me time after time that my beauty and innocence and my weapons I finally understood what she meant to the fullest when we were brought here. Those bears were easy to call for my sobbing. Just a few glances and each of them felt like the saviour I'd been waiting for. Although it does help that I come from good lineage. I was." "

Saww gaped at her, shocked by the turn of events.

Damn, Petra, if you had played this way at The Luna Trials-"

tried," she wolf whined sheepishly. "It was a good experience if I am being honest, but Kai was never interested. From the very first day, he only had his eyes on you."

They both said nothing for a few moments, just staring at each other. The mention of the Northern King still hurt Savannah, but Atratook her hands and squeezed them lightly. That child... stopped being a child thanks to recent events.

"I can keep them fighting for a while," Petra added. "Even when one of them wins me, I can ensure the others don't let it go. I am sure Bjorn was busy today trying to find a way to appease them all when there is none. I hope it gives you time to act."

Petra was toying with those bears, and Saww admired how calmly she spoke about it. This here, right now, was a miracle, and somehow it gave her confidence to proceed with the crazy plan in her head. If Petra could do it, so could she.



“Listen,” Savvy locked their eyes. “You don’t have to do anything. Just stay sale, and when the opportunity to run back home presents itself, use it and don’t think about.”

She didn’t get to finish her sentence as the door burst open, and Bjorn stormed in with a hopelul expression written all over his lace. Savannah couldn’t help but frown at that, and in an instant, that expression ol his faded.

What did he think? That she would throw herself at him and shout Matel Minel? \*\*You are awake,” he said, ineffectually. “I am,” she confirmed, pushing Petra behind her back. The motion did not go unnoticed and Bjorn scowled. “Are you-feeling better?” He stepped closer yet wisely held a respectable distance. \*Not really.” she pursed her lips and turned away, giving Petra a last hug and whispering to remember her words. “Considering

Bjorn cleared his throat as if he remembered the role he had to play. He closed the distance between them in a lew steps and lifted her in his arms before she could even protest.

\*\*You are not supposed to be here!” he grunted and, throwing one dissatisfied look at Petra, who had already managed to force a lew tears to roll down her cheeks as her protection walked out of the room.

Neither of them spoke while he took her to an unfamiliar room, and the moment he placed her back to her feet, she distanced hervell as far away from him as she could, studying the surroundings.

“it’s my office,” he told her, responding to the unspoken question. “This is where most of my work and planning are done.”

Savannah quietly walked around, trying to see if there was anything of use to her causc. She was near the desk when Bjorn caught up with her and closed the laptop right before she could take a peek.

You look better,” he said, and she decided not to answer anything to that either. He took a step in her direction but hesitated afterwards. This was so not like him. He usually just took what he wanted without

ne but now she knew one important thing, He confessed it to her the night before. She was his weakness. His desire to have her not just for a woman but as his mate was his weakest point. He wanted more than just her presence there or her body, he wanted more than the strong hybrid alpha pups she could give him. He wanted them to have a connection. The way real mates did. He wanted that.

And she was going to exploit it while she could. Unfortunately for him, all she desired now was to destroy him and make it

His palms cautiously touched her bare shoulders in an attempt to embrace her, but she flinched away from it, and he let her go,

“Not now,” he said, turning away and planting the idea in his head that there was a possibility of it happening one day. That the day would come, but that just wasn’t happening today, “I don’t think I am ready.”

“I understand.” Bjorn wouldn’t contain his excitement. He was happy to have some kind of dialogue with her now. He was ready to feed the cubs, but the way she was oblivious. She already knew him enough. She knew that the moment he realised he couldn’t

where he really wanted, he would take what he could. He would try to break her and turn her into what he wanted so badly by force. She was on the ground, she lived the truth. She wasn’t his mate. Whatever was happening to him, she wasn’t feeling it. If any kind of bond existed between them, it was one-sided.

\*Tell me when you do this / Bjorn turned and found to lace him again and took her chin into his hand.”

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know what I did was unforgivable, but we will still have to make it work. And, Sawy. I want you to be happy with me.”

She wanted to laugh in his face but held it back.

“I don’t think that I’ll ever forgive you,” medecided to tell the truth to keep it realistic. Bjorn wasn’t stupid. He wasn’t going to buy it il che threw hersell in his am Not to mention that she didn’t want to embracelum in any way. “But if you want to make me believe you care about me, you can start with 100 deed.”

I can’t let that girl,” he uphed, kinowing what she was going to ask. “She attracted too much attention, and some of my key warriors want het, isn’t make them angry.

“You are going to make some of them angry either way.” she insisted. “I am actually offering you a solution here.” He tilted his head, trying to read her lace. “What do you mean?” he asked.

“You vidit yourself,” Sawy taunted, placing her hand on his chest. She heard how his heart started beating faster at once. “You can’t make your warriors unhappy. But what do you think is going to happen when one of them gets her and the others don’t?\*\*\*

“But letting her go would be disrespecting them all,” he exhaled heavily, “It’s an auction, isn’t it?” her lips curled into something resembling a smile. “Invite one more bidder.” “Wha?” Ajorn’s face became grim as he couldn’t see where she was poing with this.

-Petua’sthel.” Savannah said bluntly. “The rumour has it, he loves her more than anything. He would pay you a hefty sum for his beloved daughter, and my friend would have a chance.”

“You really care about her,” he traced her lower lip with his thumb, making her lips part and sucking in a deep breath.

For a second, Sawy was afraid that he would keep Petra to control her. That would have been the smart choice, because she didn't want anything to happen to the girl.

However, Bjorn was smug and sure of himself, sure of their bond. And she got away with her request. "Fine," he breathed out, his eyes still on her mouth, which he wished to claim. "I'll do that for you."

"No, Bjorn, do that for you," she pushed him away and walked towards the window, examining the view. Sadly, there were just rocks of the icy cliff the castle was built on and the sea beneath it. This wouldn't be the escape route for her friends.

"No. Sawy, name things what they are," he went back to his desk and retrieved something from one of the drawers. "You have a soft spot for this girl, you want her out of this place, and it's not a gift to me. You want this. And I want something too. I have to do it alter the stuff you pulled today."

"What did I do?" she raised a brow at him defiantly,

"You met the Serpent, walked around the castle without my permission, you were threatening my people with death-" he sighed as if it was hard for him, but she saw the glistening metal in his hands, and anger boiled inside of her, making her heart pound and body tense. She knew what that was.

You can't be serious." She couldn't hide her emotions anymore.

\*Savannah," he cooed, "this is temporary. Just so that my people know whom you belong to and that you wouldn't hurt them.

If you do this-" she was about to threaten him, but he'd already locked it around her wrist...

## Chapter 58

**\*\*What do you mean they alcung lo dictionner leihenhest bider?!”**

Savannah was trying to el air inside of her lungs in sharp angry guips. This was outrageous! After rything she had been though this seemed to knock the ground from under her leet nou Petra... She wasn't cut out forble among bras. Hell, she'd barely managed herself among wolves!

“Apparently, several of the high nking wanors were si intabualed with Pera when they brought her here that they all asked theit King to give her to them. A few Alphawre also present and they look an interest in her as well. And now everyone wants her.” Chloc internet her profesjonally as if she was still in lont olcanici.is, They wanted to light each other, but. Bjorn couldn't have this, of COUN, yo he told them to make their offers, he would make a la decision.”

i me guck” Saww frated out, “and absolutely none of them wanted to ask what Petra wants!”

“She was sobbing hysterically at this point, wiping away her tears with her tulle dress, so yeah, they didn't bother,” Chloe affirmed,” They are rough men here. I think seeing this tiny little lower trembling before them was appealing to them. She bears are either feisty warriors or take the roughness quietly. It is a novelty in this place.”

She is not a toy, though!” S.v.innal practically exploded bul bit her tongue in time. She couldn't allow herself to make a scene. Not before her plan formed. Not before she knew what to do next. “We need to get her out,” she said in a much quicter tone.

“Iamallaan” Chloc closed the distance between them. This is exactly what I am here for. Tell me what to do.”

The weight of responsibility was heavy. Savvy was a mess, having people count on her now was complicating things. However, she know

one thing. She couldn't leave them. She couldn't leave Petra and Aspen. The thought of Gamma's destiny made her shiver.

"What do you know about Aspen?" she asked Chloe.

"He is chained to the wall in front of the main entrance in the courtyard. They want to show him off. Anyone who passes by can hit him or do whatever they want to him. The only thing prohibited is anything that can kill him," the blonde lowered her eyes. "They want people to see the Gamma defeated. However, the show is only for the bears. They prohibited us from broadcasting about what is being done to him."

"And what can you broadcast exactly?" Savvy pierced the reporter with her gaze, but the latter stayed quiet and swallowed, her fingers fidgeting over the embellishment on her dress.

Impatient, Savannah charged for the door, jerking the door open, scaring the maid behind it. "Give me your phone!" she demanded. "L... I can't!" The girl protested.

"Give it to me, or I swear, I am going to kill you on the spot." Savvy made sure her eyes gleamed gold, showing off her lycan power, and then added an Alpha tone to her voice to amplify the effect. "Give it to me now!"

The maid trembled and got an old phone out of the pocket of her knitted jumper. She probably already hated Savannah more than Bjorn, but the Western Princess wasn't here to make friends. In fact, she couldn't care less. She went back to Chloe, opening up the most famous news website in the North.

Her heart dropped when she saw the headlines. "The New Times, The New King?", "Long Live Darius Bjorn", "Love Conquers All". Angry tears burned her eyes. This wasn't how it was supposed to go.

\*I am sorry," Chloe sounded sincere. "He prepared himself very well, and we didn't have much choice."

Savvy ignored her. Whether she had a choice or not was questionable. She couldn't move because she saw a picture of herself on Bjorn's back, it was one of the things that was now etched into her memory, one of the worst moments of her life. And it was front page

The photo was taken in a way that no one could see the chains on her hands. The blue cape and her hair fluttered in the wind, and Bjorn's

white beard held his head high. He was the winner, and she was his prize. Except... now it looked like she did not mind. "What this?" Her voice came out raspy, barely above a whisper. – Fuss how he tells your story. Chloe couldn't lace the princess' gaze.

Savvy pressed the play button and heard Claude's voice telling the viewers that the White Bear King had found his true mate and that the Lynne Hedwon their fight and took his Queen to his castle, from where the two of them would be ruling the North together they would be working to make it the strongest kingdom as it rightfully deserved. Even the marking ceremony date was already a wave of time when she realised that it was in just one day.

"We cannot wait, Bjorn and at the camera." Savannah and are each other's second chances, and I will die before I let anything ruin True love for us all.

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she was taken away was the castle devoured by flames. It was natural to assume that he wouldn't make it.

She clicked on the play button, and tears welled up in her eyes when she saw Zara standing in the background. Her friend survived as well, and that brought some kind of relief to the princess, However, Wussoon forgotten when she heard what Lachlan was saying

It is with regret that I announce the death of the last two remaining members of the Royal family," he said, and Savvy felt the knife that was stuck in her heart twisting painfully. "Roth the King and the Princess were killed in an attack by the white bears, along with their guests King Gideon Stormhold of the Western Lyn Kingdom and Quren Riannon Stormhold. Other victims include Alpha Ramina Knight with her daughter Nay Knight, Alpha..." IT WAS Saying name after name all people that she knew and people she was supposed to get to know soon as the Northern Queen, Only now Savvy realised that there had still been a flicker of hope that they had all survived somehow. Or, if not all of them, at least some of them. Kai, Gideon, Riannon... they were special wolves. They were strong. That thought ended abruptly when she saw her brother's body lying on the stone floor of the castle with Ria and other bodies lined up right next to him. She didn't see Kai no matter how hard she looked, though, but Elene was right there.

Maybe it was for the best that she didn't see him. If she did, she would just break again. Now she had no hope whatsoever.

Just the drive to destroy the ones responsible for all of this pain.

\* This situation leaves us with no choice." Lachlan continued, "the packs in question will need to choose new Alphas and arrive for the Council in the North and the West respectively to choose newlycan rulers. At the moment, we are awaiting a new attack, but I assure you that the North is still protected, and we have enough forces to keep it safe. Until the new King or Queen is chosen, I will remain the Beta in-command and make all essential decisions. Remember that the North



Star still shines upon our heads, and Fenrir's will is for us to stay strong."

He was saying something else, but Savannah couldn't listen to it anymore.

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She couldn't go there. She couldn't afford to be weak, Not now, not when people depended on what she would do next. "Let's go!" Sawyer motioned for Chloe to follow her, and the woman didn't hesitate even for a moment.

"Just so you know," she quickly whispered to Savvy. "Claude managed to save all the footage. Bjorn ordered us to delete everything and only leave the parts you saw, but Claude is good at these things. He saves a copy of everything we record and uploads it to the Cloud. It is all stored there, including... that day."

"Good." Savannah nodded, not wishing to go into detail. She wanted the truth to come out one day. Even if she wouldn't be here to see that, she hoped that others would. "Why didn't he come with you?" she asked instead.

"You only told them to bring the woman who arrived with you," Chloe shrugged her shoulders. "We knew that it wasn't me, but I had to use the opportunity to speak to you. They keep us locked in the room they gave us. We aren't allowed to leave, but we have to look presentable 24/7 because we never know when Bjorn will request us to start working again. I have to say, he knows what he is doing His campaign is thought through and well-planned."

“It will not help him,” Savvy scowled, clenching her fists.

They walked out of the room to find the pale maid and a few guards, one of whom brought Chloe here. They all looked at her with a mix of shock, concern and resistance, sensing that the new queen was troubled.

“Take me to the pink-haired girl,” Savannah ordered, and all four guards remained silent. “I swear to the Moon Goddess, if I have to have the ‘Am I Your Queen?’ conversation all over again, you are all going to regret it!”

She probably sounded menacing enough as one of the warriors stepped forward. “This way” he bowed his head in a sign of respect, quickly understanding the situation and choosing the lesser of two evils.

“Sawyer Petra threw herself into her arms the moment she walked into her room. As if they had been friends for years, as if they were rivals just a few days ago.

Although now it felt like it had been years since the Luna Trials happened, it was not in a different lifetime. .

Petra looked paler than usual, her pink curly hair was down, and she was still wearing the same dress. She was given a small room with a tiny window, but at least this place was private enough, and it didn’t look like anyone dared to bother her there. There were guards at the door.

“Are you okay?” Savannah checked her friend’s face and exposed skin for visible signs of abuse, but to her relief, found none.

Friends. They were friends now.

Although she was surprised the princess the most was the fact that Nina was in a good mood and not crying like Savvy thought she would be.

Yes, I am the girl for the first time on her pretty face. “Are you?” The question struck Savvy unexpectedly, and she didn’t know how to answer it, so

she chose to simply ignore it. “Petra, it’s going to be okay.” We assured. “I will find a way out of this, and I swear you will go home as soon as possible.” \*\*\* Not without you the little Alpha frowned her brows.

“Petra-” The princess rubbed her temple. “It’s complicated, but

“It’s not complicated!” Petra insisted, crossing her arms over her chest. “Either we are leaving together, or I stay here with you. I can’t let you give me time after time. I know how you all see me, and maybe I am not a warrior, but I am not a child anymore. either!”

Sawyer looked at her. For the first time, she really looked at her, and her lips parted slightly. That leisty spirit... she’d never seen it in this girl before,

-Nitra, did you?” She wondered for a second, if all those bears fighting for Petra wasn’t just a coincidence.

“Evelyn laugh at me well,” she smirked, playing with a strand of her pink hair. “She told me time after time that my beauty and innocence were my weapons. I finally understood what she meant to the fullest when we were brought here. Those bears were easy to call for my sobbing. Just a few glances and each of them felt like the saviour I’d been waiting for. Although it does help that I come from good lineage. I was used to.”

Sawyer gaped at her, shocked by the turn of events.

Damn, Petra, if you had played this way at The Luna Trials-”

tried,” she smiled sheepishly. “It was a good experience if I am being honest, but Kai was never interested. From the very first day, he only had his eyes on you.”

They both said nothing for a few moments, just staring at each other. The mention of the Northern King still hurt Savannah, but Atrah took her

hands and squeezed them lightly. That child... stopped being a child thanks to recent events.

“I can keep them fighting for a while,” Petra added. “Even when one of them wins me, I can ensure the others don’t let it go. I am sure Bjorn was busy today trying to find a way to appease them all when there is none. I hope it gives you time to act.”

Petra was toying with those bears, and Savvy admired how calmly she spoke about it. This here, right now, was a miracle, and somehow it gave her confidence to proceed with the crazy plan in her head. If Petra could do it, so could she.

“Listen,” Savvy locked their eyes. “You don’t have to do anything. Just stay safe, and when the opportunity to run back home presents itself, use it and don’t think about.”

She didn’t get to finish her sentence as the door burst open, and Bjorn stormed in with a hopeful expression written all over his face. Savannah couldn’t help but frown at that, and in an instant, that expression of his faded.

What did he think? That she would throw herself at him and shout Matel Minel? “You are awake,” he said, ineffectually. “I am,” she confirmed, pushing Petra behind her back. The motion did not go unnoticed and Bjorn scowled. “Are you feeling better?” He stepped closer yet wisely held a respectable distance. “Not really.” she pursed her lips and turned away, giving Petra a last hug and whispering to remember her words. “Considering

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Neither of them spoke while he took her to an unfamiliar room, and the moment he placed her back to her feet, she distanced herself as far away from him as she could, studying the surroundings.

"It's my office," he told her, responding to the unspoken question. "This is where most of my work and planning are done."

Savannah quietly walked around, trying to see if there was anything of use to her cause. She was near the desk when Bjorn caught up with her and closed the laptop right before she could take a peek.

"You look better," he said, and she decided not to answer anything to that either. He took a step in her direction but hesitated afterwards. This was so not like him. He usually just took what he wanted without

her but now she knew one important thing, He confessed it to her the night before. She was his weakness. His desire to have her not just for a woman but as his mate was his weakest point. He wanted more than just her presence there or her body, he wanted more than the strong hybrid alpha pups she could give him. He wanted them to have a connection. The way real mates did. He wanted that.

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"Not now," he said, turning away and planting the idea in his head that there was a possibility of it happening one day. That the day would come, but that just wasn't happening today, "I don't think I am ready."

“I understand.” Bjorn wouldn’t contain excitement. He was happy to have some kind of dialogue with her now. He was ready to feed the cubs, but the way she was oblivious. She already knew him enough. She knew that the moment he realised he couldn’t

where he really waited, he would take what he could. He would try to break her and turn her into what he wanted so thoroughly by force. She was on the car but she still lived the truth. She wasn’t his mate. Whatever was happening to him, she wasn’t feeling it. If any kind of bond existed between them, it was one-sided.

\*Tell me what you do. / Bjorn turned his head to face him again and took her chin into his hand.”

ulla

«Π»

know what I did was unforgivable, but we will still have to make it work. And, Sawyer. I want you to be happy with me.”

She wanted to laugh in his face but held it back.

“I don’t think that I’ll ever forgive you,” he decided to tell the truth to keep it realistic. Bjorn wasn’t stupid. He wasn’t going to buy it if she threw herself in his arms. Not to mention that she didn’t want to embrace him in any way. “But if you want to make me believe you care about me, you can start with 100 deeds.”

I can’t let that girl,” he replied, knowing what she was going to ask. “She attracted too much attention, and some of my key warriors want her, it isn’t making them angry.

“You are going to make some of them angry either way.” she insisted. “I am actually offering you a solution here.” He tilted his head, trying to read her face. “What do you mean?” he asked.

“You vidit yourself,” Sawy taunted, placing her hand on his chest. She heard how his heart started beating faster at once. “You can’t make your warriors unhappy. But what do you think is going to happen when one of them gets her and the others don’t?\*\*”

“But letting her go would be disrespecting them all,” he exhaled heavily, “It’s an auction, isn’t it?” her lips curled into something resembling a smile. “Invite one more bidder.” “Wha?” Ajorn’s face became grim as he couldn’t see where she was going with this.

-Petua’sthel.” Savannah said bluntly. “The rumour has it, he loves her more than anything. He would pay you a hefty sum for his beloved daughter, and my friend would have a chance.”

“You really care about her,” he traced her lower lip with his thumb, making her lips part and sucking in a deep breath.

For a second, Sawy was afraid that he would keep Petra to control her. That would have been the smart choice, because she didn’t want anything to happen to the girl.

However, Bjorn was smug and sure of himself, sure of their bond. And she got away with her request. “Fine,” he breathed out, his eyes still on her mouth, which he wished to claim. “I’ll do that for you.”

“No, Bjorn, do that for you,” she pushed him away and walked towards the window, examining the view. Sadly, there were just rocks of the icy cliff the castle was built on and the sea beneath it. This wouldn’t be the escape route for her friends.

“No. Sawy, name things what they are,” he went back to his desk and retrieved something from one of the drawers. “You have a soft spot for this girl, you want her out of this place, and it’s not a gift to me. You want this. And I want something too. I have to do it alter the stuff you pulled today.”

“What did I do?” she raised a brow at him defiantly,

“You met the Serpent, walked around the castle without my permission, you were threatening my people with death-” he sighed as if it was hard for him, but she saw the glistening metal in his hands, and anger boiled inside of her, making her heart pound and body tense. She knew what that was.

You can’t be serious.” She couldn’t hide her emotions anymore.

\*Savannah,” he cooed, “this is temporary. Just so that my people know whom you belong to and that you wouldn’t hurt them.

If you do this-“, she was about to threaten him, but he’d already locked it around her wrist...

## **The Luna Trials by Marissa Gilbert Chapter 59**

### **Chapter 59**

The cold metal made Savannah shiver, and she looked at the ancient bracelet on her wrist.

“It’s just temporary,” Bjorn assured her. “Until I can fully trust you.”

“At this rate, it’s going to take a while,” the Princess hissed, realising that the silver bracelet with a familiar

northern pattern on it was enchanted to drain strength from her and prevent her from shifting. This was something

she had not anticipated, and she glared at the man who swore that he was her new mate. Mates were not supposed

to be like this. She knew it when Zack betrayed her, and she knew it now after everything she had experienced with



Kai. Maybe the moon goddess never wanted them to be together, but in her heart, Fionnlagh was the one and only

mate in her whole life. He gave her what she craved the most. He made her feel safe, wanted, heard, respected ... His

death did not change her heart. She would love that man forever.

“Just think about the positive. I’m letting go of that girl you like,” he had the audacity to smile at her, and if she

could do it now, she would rip his heart out just as she did with her first fake mate.

“Only if her father pays you more than others!” Savannah pursed her lips, reminding him that he wasn’t really generous, and he looked at her as if she had done something absolutely adorable. She loathed the way his eye traced every feature on her face and wanted to getaway, but he caught her from the back and wrapped his arms around her tightly, not letting her leave.

“The things you do to me, Savannah Stormhold!” He buried his face into her hair, inhaling her scent and not wishing to let go. She was so close, she smelled so nice. This woman finally belonged to him, and he couldn’t wait to savour her.

“Let me go,” she said coldly, and he froze from the iciness in her tone. He’d angered her again when he knew he had been walking on thin ice with her already.

“I am so sorry,” he whispered into her ear, brushing his lips over her earlobe gently, wishing to fix everything fast. He didn’t know how long he would be able to hold himself back. “I know this is far from ideal, but it’s just for

now. Savvy,  
after I mark you, the bond will snap in its place, and you will see.”

His fingers trailed over her collarbone, and she flinched. One of his claws elongated, and Bjorn grazed it over the skin on her marking spot, which caused fear to ripple through her whole body. Werebear marks were different from werewolves and lycans. If a bear bit someone, even in half-transformation, it would be safe to say that the bitten

person would have his or her bones crushed and flesh torn because it was harder for bears to control their jaw strength once they tasted blood. Especially the white bears, who were known as the strongest and fiercest of any

other.

So, instead of biting, they left their marks with claws on the same spot every other species used for claiming their mates. Three deep cuts that would turn bright red on a true mate and black on a chosen one.

If he pressed just a bit harder, he would find out that she wasn't his mate, and she couldn't have him finding

out now. She was not ready. Nothing was prepared yet.

“You say you're sorry, but these are just words!” She tried to distract him, and surprisingly, it worked as Bjorn finally let her go, scratching the back of his head instead. He wasn't good at this courting thing. He never got how it worked.

“Savvy, it may not seem like it, but everything I do, I do for you, too.” He placed his large, calloused palms on her

shoulders and turned her gently to face him. “These hard days will soon be over, I will be King, and you will be my

Queen. Both the West and the North will belong to you. I know that you will never forget what I did, the relatives of

yours I took, but with time you will understand that it was a war and I had no choice. I will give you pups to fill that void. So many that you will forget about anything else. We will make you happy. Not now, but one day it will happen.

Mark my words.”

“Still, these are just words!” Savannah said reproachfully and walked away towards the desk, scanning it

quickly as she approached in search of something useful. Anything to make listening to this delusional crap

worthwhile.

“Tell me what I can do to fix this,” Bjorn stepped closer but kept his distance this time, trying to pretend that he

respected her personal space. It almost made her laugh, but she had a role to play, so she suppressed it.

“Tell me something I don’t know about you,” she taunted, locking eyes with him. “No, better yet – tell me

something that no one knows.” She wanted to avoid the repetition of all of the sad events in his past that she didn’t

care about. She needed something useful this time.

But he stayed quiet, and she chuckled bitterly, trying to make him feel even more guilty than he already

did.

“Never mind,” she said and strolled towards the door, “I will see myself out. I can at least walk back to my room,

can’t I?”

“Savvy!” Bjorn’s voice was more like a plea at this point, but she was already prepared to leave.

“Please don’t follow me,” the Princess cut him off. “You clearly want a trophy wife and not a mate. I am not in

the mood for all this.”

Her hand was already on the door handle when she heard him, “I’ve been blessed by a God.”

The words made her halt on the spot, clutching the metal of the doorknob so hard she was afraid that she might rip it off.

“Is that a joke?” she asked without facing him. It was madness! He must be mad!

“No, it’s not,” he assured her. “Moreover, this is my biggest secret, and I haven’t told anyone about it. You’re the first person with whom I’ve shared it.”

Savannah’s head was buzzing with thoughts. Now that she thought about it, it made sense. In fact, it made so much sense that she couldn’t believe she hadn’t thought of it before. His strength was beyond everything she had seen

before. She thought that it wasn't normal, but she had never suspected divine intervention.

First, however, she wished to ensure it was true, so she said, "You're lying."

Bjorn's eye flashed for a second as she angled her head at him with one of her brows raised in a challenge. He exhaled loudly through his nostrils but didn't do anything else.

—

"Why would I? I've proven it to you many times. A regular werebear wouldn't be able to defeat a royal lycan with ease, don't you agree? Not to mention that you already know a person who has been blessed by a goddess – your sister-in-law." Nothing on his face made it seem like he was lying, and Savannah felt like he was sincere. "So, it's not like this is unbelievable."

"What God?" Surely, it wasn't the Moon Goddess this time.

"It doesn't matter," Bjorn shook his head. "He's one of the old ones, but he chose me as his champion, and I have not fail him once."

"What is your power?" Savannah knew that he had to have something. Riannon was reborn back in the past and

now had the ability to see the future either in her dreams or with the help of her wolf talking to the Moon Goddess,

The blessing of the gods meant special abilities.

"Strength," Bjorn confessed easily. "No one can compare with me in strength."

“Why were you running away all the time then?” She couldn’t help this little jab, and the bear’s lips curled into an understanding smile.

“To have as few casualties as possible,” he admitted. “I was serious about this. And also—” he stopped talking,

and Savannah suddenly realised that he was about to reveal something extremely important, something she had to

hear.

“What is it?” She urged him to reply.

“There was only one limitation to my power,” Bjorn said after a pause, looking at the woman that was now his

and thinking there wouldn’t be any harm in letting her in. “I will tell you. There’s no point in hiding it now that

everything is over.”

Savannah leaned with her back against the door, ready to listen, and nodded for him to go on.

“I asked for this power, and I had to prove myself worthy to get it,” he started explaining, “and when I finally achieved my goal and became this strongest shifter to ever exist, my first thought was to march straight to the capital

of the North and kill Kai that very day. He was already the Northern King back then. However, the deity who blessed

me told me not to do it.”

“Why not?” Savvy’s voice was barely a whisper as she imagined that her beloved could have been killed even

before they'd gotten to know each other. Those precious memories she cherished might have never happened.

"I don't know the details, but he warned me against going into a battle one-on-one against Kai. He said that the

lycan king would defeat me if this was to happen and that I had to find a nother way out of my predicament with the

Northern Crown. I didn't have any reasons to doubt the words of the God who had given me what I needed the most,

so I took his advice to heart. After all, there were ways to defeat Kai without fighting him, and this was exactly what I

did in the end."

Savannah clenched her lips as the pain stabbed her heart deeper. If only Kai was alive, she would have known

the one way to end it all. This did not explain, however, why a God would tell him that. Weren't gods almighty? Why

couldn't his chosen one kill Kai? As far as she knew, Kai wasn't blessed by a deity, although he did have a special

ability. Was this somehow connected to the fact that Kai and Elene could easily shift to their third forms and then

shift back without any kind of trouble, unlike other lycans?

She stopped herself. There was no use thinking of this now. Kai was dead, and Bjorn was basically a super bear now. Her plan was getting more complicated because killing him was at the centre of it all, and now she knew exactly what she was up against.

"Again, Savvy," the man walked closer to her, and she felt the scent of chestnuts and wintergreen intensifying,"

I'm telling you this as the first step of our new relationship because I believe in this. Your wolf is still healing after everything that happened and"

Not this again. She couldn't listen to this again.

As if the heavens heard her thoughts, the door opened, and the Serpent entered the office without invitation.

"I hope I'm not intruding," he smirked, although it was written all over his face very well that he knew he was.

Savvy was grateful, though, because it was a chance for her to escape.

"I will leave you to it," she said and tried to retreat to the exit, but Joran caught her wrist and yanked her

back.

"Nice bracelet!" he sneered, and Bjorn growled menacingly.

"Take your hands off my mate!" he snarled, each word filled with venom and warning tones.

"Just admiring my most recent creation," Joran chuckled, unclenching his fingers and making Savannah

gasp.

"You made this?"

She touched the patterns on the cold metal. She knew at once that magic was involved when

Bjorn clasped it on her wrist, but Joran did not give her a warlock's vibes.



“I can make anything happen,” the Serpent winked at her, standing with his back to Bjorn, who seemed furious

about their interaction. He was clearly implying that he could help her, but she remembered the price.

Savannah made her way to the exit, trying to grasp the bits of the conversation between the two men as she

was slowly closing the door behind her.

“Bad news for you, Bjorn, I still have not found my dragonfly,” Joran said in a mocking tone.

“They come and go as they please,” the Bear King grunted. “What seems to be the problem this time?”

“The problem is that I sent you my favourite one, and now she is missing along with my payment,” The Serpent

sat in one of the chairs and placed his feet on Bjorn’s desk, to the displeasure of the latter. “And if you can’t find her,

this will make our last contract void which will result in a lot of trouble for you.”

“She got the payment as usual,” Bjorn had a vein protruding between his knitted brows. “What happens after

she takes it is none of my concern. They all belong to you.”

“She is somewhere on your lands!” Joran said lazily, “so it is very much your concern.”

Bjorn turned to one of the bookshelves and got a scroll that looked a lot like a map. Savannah gasped as a map

was something she could use. If she could take just a glimpse...

The bear's healthy eye glimmered as he spotted her in the darkness behind the door, and she realised that it

was time for her to retreat.

To Savannah's relief, Bjorn didn't come to the room at night. She feared that he might, but for once, luck was on

her side.

However, she was about to test it because the more she was thinking, the more she was sure she needed to see

that map.

The thing was... Savannah did not want to believe it, but she suspected that the God, the deity Bjorn was

talking about, was Joran. It simply made sense because the White Bear King bowed to no one, and most people here

were afraid of him. But not Joran.

Joran behaved like he owned the place. Not to mention their first conversation and

the fact that he asked for her firstborn. That was a bizarre request for any one. Unless...

Unless he was a deity.

The thought alone terrified her, but also... also it gave her hope. She was not going to give him her firstborn

because if he asked for that, then he knew she would have one. Or at least that was what her logic told her.

Moreover, he must have thought that when she did have a child, that it wouldn't be with Bjorn. Savvy did not want to think of it, but it suddenly started looking like she had a future. Like there was hope.

Although maybe it was just her wishful thinking.

However, if Joran wanted her child with Bjorn, he would have asked him and not her. Bjorn would have easily given up their kid for more power. After all, power was what he cared about the most.

But Joran wanted Savannah's future child. Not Bjorn's.

Her hands touched her belly as she looked out of the window into the starry sky. Could it be possible? What if

there was already a small part of Kai growing inside of her? She couldn't know for sure; even Athena couldn't tell her

this early, but even the slightest possibility of it happening made her change her plan entirely as she watched the

North Star shining brightly in the darkness of the night.

A few hours later, she tiptoed to Bjorn's office in bare feet after she managed to get rid of one of her guards and

put the other one to sleep, just like Gideon and Reid taught her. The office was close, and she needed just a second

alone with the map to know all possible escape routes. Her worst fear was that Bjorn would be inside, but yet again,

she was fortunate to see the room empty and didn't waste time rushing to the bookshelves. Savannah took the scroll

she saw earlier today and was happy to see that it was a map of the territory around the castle. She greedily studied

it and moved on to the next one. One after the other, she went through them all until she hit the jackpot and found a

map of the castle itself. The princess sighed in relief when she found a few secret passages she could use in future.

This ought to be the best feature of these old castles.

Savvy was about to clean up when the door opened, and a chill went down her spine. She was caught, after

all!

“What are you doing here?!”

**M Marissa Gilbert**

”

Just hang a little bit more. Action and reunions are coming very soon. I can now confirm that the book will be over in November, but don't ask me how many chapters. Further announcements will be made in Marissa Gilbert's Reading Circle very soon.

Thank you so much for all the moon tickets last month! The Luna Trials has reached 2nd place, and it's a great honour for me because, once again, this is a place brought to me by you, my readers. It means a lot to me. You can still #vote for my books this month as this is a monthly event.

Also, don't forget that the Mini Giveaway is still ongoing and will be done on Monday. You have a chance to win North Star prizes with signed cards and pretty seals x Don't miss it! x

## **The Luna Trials by Marissa Gilbert Chapter 60**

### **Read The Luna Trials by Marissa Gilbert Chapter 60 Chapter 60**

Savannah stared at the white bear in front of her and didn't know how to respond to her in this predicament. The bracelet made the

princess weaker, and she did not like it. However, she hoped to have enough strength to take down Brigit if it was necessary.

"If he finds you here, he will make you regret undermining him!" the girl warned her as she walked in and quietly closed the door

behind her.

Quietly

As if she did not want anyone to hear or disturb them. Savvy still wasn't sure what to do about this. The most logical action would be to kill Brigit and forget about this encounter. That girl was still called a traitor here and Savvy could get away with the kill for a day or two until they put it all together.

And she only needed one day. One.

"What, you're not going to tell on me?" Savannah raised her brow, playing indifferent as she shoved the scrolls back on the shelf where they belonged, cleaning up the evidence of her being there. She couldn't waste time doing this afterwards if they ended up fighting after all.

"Why would I do that?" Brigit crossed her arms over her chest, watching the Princess with her discerning gaze. "If I wanted to give

you away, I would have called Bjorn back when you knocked that guard out.”

So, Brigit knew. Which meant that this was either a trap, and she had already alerted everyone, or... she wanted something. Savvy knew there were just a few things the she-bear could want from her.

“How’s your sister?” The lycaness met the white bear’s gaze and saw a shadow pass over Brigit’s eyes as her face twitched in response. “Was it worth it?”

“She chose to stay with her husband,” Brigit confessed dryly, each word hard for her to pronounce as she brushed away non-existent creases on her dress. “I wish I—” she started speaking and stopped abruptly, swallowing the sob that threatened to escape her. The strong woman in her didn’t want to cry. She hated crying.

“Not worth it then,” Savannah sighed, as she made sure everything looked just as she found it. Only when her perfect memory told her it was exactly right, did she finally give Brigit her full attention.

“She is too afraid to leave him,” Brigit seemed upset, revealing the truth. “Even with Bjorn’s permission for us to leave after I did what he required of me. She chose to stay because she believed her current husband would follow us and take her back if she left. Bjorn’s

promise to me would be fulfilled, and everything would go back to how it is now. Only her husband would never forget the humiliation and would keep punishing her. Those punishments... whatever they are... she is afraid of those more than anything else.”

“I’m sorry.” Savannah heard herself saying and felt like she meant it this time. She hated Brigit for the betrayal, but she still felt sorry for her and her sister. Some part of her soul hadn’t died together with Kai after all b

because she was still able to feel compassion. Not that she planned to act on it, though. “So, what now? What are you going to do?”

“I am going to help you and see what happens,” Brigit stated, and a sharp laugh escaped Savvy’s chest.

“You can’t be serious!” the princess wiped away the tears from her eyes. “Don’t get me wrong, I do feel sorry for you, but I’m not going to believe a word you say. I made the mistake of trusting you once and Riannon trusted you, too. Look where it got us. You may love your sister, but at the same time, your own mate is chained to a wall in the square outside being tortured without a break just because he trusted you. Because he loved you. And if you can do this to him, then you can do far worse things to me.”

“That is exactly why I’m offering to help you,” Brigit insisted. “I want a favour from you for the information I am ready to share.

“Now we’re talking!” Savannah folded her arms over her chest and tilted her head slightly to have a better look at the she-bear.” That’s the Brigit we all know and hate!”

The woman swallowed the insult and continued. “When you leave this place, all I want from you is to take Aspen with you.”

That was Savannah’s plan already, but she decided to see what else she could get.

“He’s as good as dead,” the princess shook her head and slowly strolled towards the door, “if you really want to help him, just give him an easy death.”

Brigit went pale hearing this, and Savvy came to the conclusion that the white bear really did love her mate. Even if they could never be together, even if Aspen would never forgive her, Brigit still loved him with her whole heart. She could have had it all, but she

blew it.

«Destiny is cruel.” Brigit laughed through her tears, “I once told Riannon that all I wished for was to have a mate of my own.

Someone who would only belong to me, whom I would never have to share with anyone else, someone who would love me unconditionally. And when I found that one person, I knew I would have to betray him. Maybe if he rejected me when I begged him to it would have been easier for us both. Then I wouldn’t have been able to distract him on that night, and maybe he could have prevented Bjorn from entering the old palace and killing everyone.”

“You chose this,” Savannah said reproachfully, “Don’t complain to me now just because your sister rejected your help.”

“She may not have wanted it, but she was already paying the price for me insulting Bjorn when I chose to follow his brother. If

didn’t do as I was told, they would have killed Ingrid just to make an example out of me,” Brigit asserted.

“But you chose to sacrifice Aspen, so I guess we’ll never know now,” Savannah wanted to stop her. The sad story did not change anything, and she did not want to lose her focus because she felt pity.

“Just take him with you when you run!” Brigit begged, casting a desperate gaze at her.

“Why do you think I am going to run?” Savannah scoffed, but the white bear waved her hand, implying that her plan was kind of obvious

now.

“Because I know you,” Brigit snapped. “I know you will never give up.”



“Well, I feel like giving up,” Savvy let her shoulders drop as if she was defeated already. “What can I do when I am cuffed, and my strength is literally drained from me? What can I do against Bjorn, who is enhanced by a deity?!”

“You can use a divine weapon to kill him,” Brigit said, and now Savvy turned to look at her with interest.

“And where would I find one?” she asked bluntly.

“The bracelet on your arm is a divine weapon. Everything Joran makes is a divine weapon. Including the dagger he always tucks behind his belt.” Brigit informed her. “Get one of them to take your bracelet off, use that dagger and you will be golden.”

“And while I do all that, what are you going to be doing?” Savvy arched her brow, her heart full of hope... and suspicion.

“I will be where my people need me,” the white bear admitted “But I will do everything in my power to help you and Aspen to escape.”

“Who is he? Who is Joran? What do you know about him?” The Western Princess wanted to get as much information as possible, but Brigit only shook her head to stop her.

“No one knows much about him, but one thing is for sure,” the she-bear lowered her voice, “Bjorn listens to him even though he doesn’t like him much. And his strength comes from Joran.”

They stood staring at each other, a silent understanding forming between them.

“We need to go,” Brigit sighed finally, “He is inspecting his army on the outskirts, but he will be back soon. And then he will go straight to your room.”

“Fine,” Sawy agreed, “but since we are besties again, do me a favour.”

“What do you want?”

“Go to Chloe and Claude and give them a message from me,” Savannah smirked because now, finally, the last bits of her plan were falling into place.

“What is the message?” Brigit did not seem too eager to go to the twins, but that was oddly reassuring. If she seemed too eager, it could have been fake. It could be fake even now, only time would tell, but the message itself was safe. Only the siblings would know what to do after hearing this.

“Tell them to do their job,” the princess’ lips curled into a grin.

Brigit was wrong, and Bjorn did not come during the night, which gave Savannah a few hours of sleep. She spent the rest of the time planning and plotting. On the one hand, everything seemed so simple, but on the other, there were a million scenarios of how it could go wrong.

The maids entered her room without permission, bringing in dresses and jewellery in luxurious sparkling boxes.

“What is this?” Sawy rubbed her temples, tired of it all already.

“Gifts from the King,” one of the maids replied, arranging the presents before her. Beautiful dresses in different colours were arranged on chairs and the bed so that she could see them better. At the same time, boxes from the best jewellers with necklaces and earrings in diamonds, rubies, emeralds and sapphires were opened and placed next to the matching outfits.

“For your marking ceremony.” another maid added but quickly bit her tongue when Savvy’s eyes darted to her. She wasn’t angry. though, as Chloe had already told her about that during their brief meeting.

“My queen,” one of the girls approached her with a royal blue dress in her hands, “Could you try this on, please? You can pick whichever dress you like for tonight, but we need to make sure first that the size fits you.”

Everything inside of her told her to object and to make a scene. Athena growled in protest, but Savannah nodded and stood up. She was going to play a good girl tonight and she had to make it believable.

She was in the middle of the dress fitting when the doors opened again and Bjorn walked in confidently. There were many women in the room now, but his eyes only found Savannah, greedily devouring every inch of her in that beautiful shimmering gown. She was his perfection, and his lips curled involuntarily into a smile as he took her in.

“You look beautiful,” he breathed out, gesturing for everyone else to leave them alone.

“Thank you,” she responded dryly. “It’s not like I have a choice, do I?”

His smile dropped, but he did not deny himself the pleasure of brushing his fingers over her bare back, creating goosebumps. Bjorn believed with his whole heart that she was already starting to feel their bond. Soon all this would pass, and they would be able to properly embrace each other whenever they wanted it. The anticipation of that moment helped him to keep waiting. Why rush things if he could have it all?

However, Savannah flinched from his touch and was about to step away from him when he wrapped his hands around her waist, holding her in place. She was standing in front of the mirror, beautiful and perfect, the queen he had always

ys dreamed of, and even her cold eyes couldn't take away from his happiness.

"Don't be angry," he placed a soft kiss on her shoulder, wishing to do so much more, but knowing it was too early for that. She was unhappy again, exasperated to the tipping point.

"Why would I be?" A sneer distorted her pretty lips. "My mate is going to mark me today, no matter whether I want it or not!"

He froze, holding her tight in his hands. Did he mishear it? Did she... did she just call him her mate?

For a few seconds, he couldn't form words, watching the image of the two of them in that mirror. She was so tiny in comparison. He could crush her if he wasn't careful.

And she was all his. All of her. His mate, his woman, his future Queen.

"You are angry," he did not tease her this time, just drew circles with his fingers on the place where his mark would go very,

soon.

very

He wanted to give her something she would like, something that would help him to melt the ice, and he knew that he hadn't done it yet. She was a princess by birth and wouldn't simply fall for things like jewellery and gowns. It was a given she had to have the best things, so those weren't going to earn him points.

"Don't ask me questions you don't like to hear the answers to," Savvy avoided his gaze, but she didn't take her words back. She called him her mate as if she accepted it, and although he knew better than to push it, he wanted to show her what it meant to him. What she meant to him.

“If you are not ready,” he heard himself saying, and their eyes locked, “we can postpone the marking.”

Savannah’s mouth opened slightly in surprise. He was shocked himself, because just a few minutes ago, he wanted to move the

ceremony to a few hours sooner than it was scheduled. Now he was offering her to cancel it because of that one word she said.

“You’re not serious!” Naturally, she did not believe him. He couldn’t blame her for it, of course. He did not give her any reason to trust him yet.

Yet.

Savannah,” he pressed himself tighter to her body, trying to soak in her warmth and that delicious scent of bluebells that her

skin radiated. “If you are still not ready today, we will push it to a later date. I promise. I would, of course, prefer to mark you and start our life together today, but I understand that you’ve been the one making sacrifices during the whole time we’ve known each other. And it’s

not fair. So, I want to level the playing field. If you don’t want our marking ceremony to be today, it’s fine. We can do it another day.”

“Haven’t you announced it already?” his mate quirked her brow up, searching for his reaction.

“I have.” he nodded slowly, cupping her chin and tracing her lips with his thumb, enjoying their softness. “But I will tell them that

you don’t feel well. Nobody will dare to question me.”

“Are you sure?” she taunted, and his bear roared inside, begging him to claim her now.

“I’m sure,” he stood his ground. “We will be celebrating our victory tonight in the main hall. If you come and join me, we will have our marking ceremony there and then, but if you decide that it’s too early and you need time, stay in your room. My warriors will guard you.”

“Bjorn—

” she looked as if she was considering his offer and wanted to ask something else when he slammed his lips over hers, finally getting a proper taste of his mate. His tongue roamed inside of her mouth, letting her know whom she belonged to now. For a moment, it seemed like she wanted to pull away, but he held the back of her head, holding her closer.

A moan escaped her, or was it a whimper? He did not care, because the tingles were erupting through his whole body, and he hadn’t felt that in so long. There were times when he thought he would always be alone. However, now he had her, and the future did not seem so grim anymore. Not when she was a part of it.

He broke the kiss when he realised he would take her and mark her here and now if he didn’t stop, destroying the little progress he had achieved.

“Darius,” he said when he tore his lips off her, and she blinked. “I want you to call me Darius, not Bjorn.”

He traced his index finger over her now—

swollen lips, proud of the fact that he was the cause of this. “I am Bjorn for everyone else,” he smiled at her sincerely for the first time ever. “For you, I am just Darius, Sawy.”

She nodded silently, lost for words. When she was finally about to say something else, he stopped her again.

“Don’t respond

now,” he leaned lower and placed a small peck on her nose. She wasn’t flinching away from him anymore, and he took it as a good sign. He was on the right path. “I will wait for you

tonight, but either way, whatever you decide, it's fine with me. If you appear at the event, we'll mark each other tonight. If you don't, it'll just happen later, and I will see you after midnight."

This time he kissed her forehead softly and stormed out of the room, leaving her stunned.

Savannah waited for him to leave and listened to the sound of his receding footsteps.

This was a new development, for sure. She took the nearest dress and tore a decorative piece of fabric from it to wipe her lips.

She had to think of how to play her cards right and decided to go on a stroll with her guards to check if the map she saw yesterday was correct. No one stopped her, and she simply wandered the halls in her blue dress, watching how everyone was preparing for the celebration.

After a while, she stopped in the gallery with tall, large windows, looking out of one and seeing the inner square of Bjorn's castle. There, another surprise awaited. Two huge black cars were being checked by security. She was contemplating why they were doing such a thorough search when she heard two men not far from her snorting.

"So, is that the competition for Petra?" one of them was eyeing the guests below.

"I think these are sent by her father," another spoke. "I heard he is quite rich and she is his favourite child. He would pay a lot to get

her back."

"Wasn't he selling her to the lycan in the first place?" the first one scoffed.

"Yeah, but I guess white bears aren't the buyers that he dreamt of!"

Both men laughed and kept walking as Sawyer studied the men whose arrival she observed.

Just then, she noticed something, or more accurately, someone, she hadn't expected to see in a million years.

"It couldn't be!" Savannah gasped as the man with hazel eyes stared back up at her as if he felt her watching.

