

The Luna Trials by Marissa Gilbert Chapter 61

Chapter 61

Savannah's lips curled into a smile, but the man who was staring at her from the main square of the castle did not return it. She wondered for a second if he did not remember her, but then she noticed that he was surrounded by several white bear guards, and it occurred to her that he was probably just playing his part. She knew that Riannon trusted this man, and it was unlikely it was a coincidence that he was the one who came to rescue Petra.

Although, who knows... So many things had changed lately. Maybe he came to the North to negotiate peace with Bjorn on behalf of the Western Kingdom. It was a possibility.

Or worse... Maybe he was a traitor.

Memories of Zack flashed before her eyes, but Savannah blinked them away.

"That's not important," Athena said in her mind. "We weren't counting on anyone helping us anyway, but if he's on our side, that's an unexpected pleasant advantage we did not anticipate."

The maids returned in about an hour, and one of them asked Savannah meekly what she wanted to do next. The Princess realised they have already received their orders from Bjorn not to push her too far. Surprisingly, he was serious about the promises he made to her. Not that she was interested in any of them. However, maybe, just maybe, she was the one who could push him now to make a mistake?

"Leave me," Savannah snapped at them, and the omegas disappeared. She did not need their help to prepare for tonight, and also, she wanted it to be a surprise. And an unforgettable one at that.

Ash and his delegation were not greeted by the White Bear King in person, but he did not expect a warm welcome in the first place. It was a miracle that they were allowed inside this castle at all and with such great timing. Instead, they were searched time after time, after time, by new guards, warriors and high-ranking bears of the North. Each of them already felt superior to wolves, and each of them tried to let them know.

It was a new reality, and Ash swore to himself that he would be one of those who ensured this new world order would not last. He had strict orders about what to do from Riannon and was ready to play his part, not wishing to disappoint her. His main task was to bring his Queen information about the hostages and leave a little surprise at the main gate. He'd already done that before they started searching them. Getting Princess Savannah out was his next priority if the opportunity presented itself. Freeing the Gamma of the North and the heiress of the Blue Forest pack was the last on his priority list, but he would keep his eyes open for any opportunities. Although, he had to be realistic about it, and it was enough to know where they were being kept for when the Lycan allies started their attack.

“We are taking these,” one of the warriors pointed at the box where the werewolves had to put all of their devices – phones, smartwatches, even earphones.

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“I need to stay in contact with my pack,” Ash groaned, but only received a diminishing gaze back. He didn't count on receiving anything back, though. It was best to play like he really needed his phone, and they made the right decision by taking it away. He wanted them to feel they were in complete control.

“You need to stay alive while you are here. That's what you need!” The huge bear with a bald head and a long red beard chuckled. “ And if we see any of you using a phone, you will be executed.”

Ash looked at his men and nodded at them, letting them know that they had to obey and stay quiet. Grim silence was his answer. No one was happy about them being here, but he knew they would fight for him if it came to it.

“Stay here until we come for you,” the Red Beard told them when he and the other warriors were at the doors of the dark, stuffy room they were brought into.

“Can we at least see the girl and make sure she is fine?” the Alpha asked calmly. He wasn’t giving them the satisfaction of seeing him nervous and tried to behave as if it was a completely normal situation.

“You will see her at the marking ceremony,” the Red Beard scoffed.

“The marking ceremony?” Ash furrowed his brows, his whole body went tense. They were watching the news and searching for every bit of information about what was going on inside of this castle, and it was implied several times that the marking ceremony of Bjorn and Savannah would take place soon, but they had no idea that the date was set for today.

“Well, if you are fortunate enough,” the bear scratched his beard. “Some say it was canceled, some say it is still on. I guess we’ll find out when we are there. But if it does happen, consider yourself lucky because it’s going to be the event of the century.”

Ash smirked at that, but only because this whole situation reminded him of something from his past. He knew that Riannon had faith in the Princess, and now he could understand why. It appeared that she was messing with the white bears’ plans already.

“Excellent,” he nodded and went to one of the chairs, taking a seat and lazily crossing his legs, placing his ankle on the top of his knee, trying to demonstrate how relaxed he was.

This mission was important to him, since it was for... her. Riannon might have become a Queen of the whole Western Kingdom and found her mate, but Ash had been in love with her for many years. Nothing changed, and he really believed that nothing ever would.

His Gamma and Delta were on edge, knowing that if it came to battle, it was possible that not all of them would make it alive. If any.

Ash knew that too, but he had to get the important player out. He knew that Gideon played a crucial part during the last massive battle. Thanks to his third royal form. There was no denying that they needed his sister if they wanted to win this war. Not to mention that Riannon told him that Savannah Stormhold was the only one who would be able to help Amarok.

The Red Beard returned a few hours later and lazily offered them to follow him down the dark corridors of the castle. Looking around, Ash noticed that they tried to make this place look festive. There were flowers in vases that seemed out of place and some strange wooden bear ornaments here and there, but overall, it was clear that the castle wasn't built for entertaining guests. Even the tinted windows or the main halls looked like they were cleaned for the first time ever, with dark smudges visible on the coloured

They arrived in a spacious but dark hall with many wooden tables lined up in neat rows and set for the guests. Ash was happy to discover that their places were in the first row. Some of the high-ranking bears glared at them as they sat, probably thinking that wolves were not worthy of the honour.

Something fell off, though, and Ash's wolf, Nox, was agitated inside. Wolves often felt what their humans couldn't but rarely bothered to explain these things.

Bjorn was there as well, seated at the centre of the long table that stood on a platform at the top of the stairs, above everyone else. His most loyal men were by his side, but the chair closest to him was empty.

Ash hoped to see Princess Savannah, but she was not present. The Northern TV presenter twins, however, were in attendance, working in front of the camera, as usual. The Alpha frowned as he watched them, knowing how easily they betrayed their previous King Now they clearly had a new one and served him happily as if they did not witness the m*****e he committed. Just the thought that Riannon might not have been so lucky at that time and could have died as planned made him furious. She may have been with another man, but he still cared about her deeply. In all honesty, he still loved her and didn't know if he could ever stop. He wished her happiness, of course, but if anyone were to harm her, he'd do whatever it took to destroy that person.

And now he was looking at that person. Looking and smiling respectfully, plotting how to kill him sooner.

“Ah, Petra's family!” Bjorn suddenly acknowledged the werewolves presence as he gulped a large glass of what looked like whiskey.”
You're here finally! it means we can start the auction!”

Ash stretched a smile over his lips and nodded politely. All he had to do now was to buy the girl out, hopefully, pass a message to Savannah and then leave solely with the information he managed to gather while in here. But when the doors opened, a strong floral and

vanilla scent reached his nostrils, making him dart his eyes in the direction of the people walking in. A girl with long pink hair in soft Waves walked in wearing a pink one shoulder dress of sheer fabric that was so revealing that she tried to cover parts of her with her hands. She was trembling, and almost every man in the room looked at her with their gazes full of lust.

Ash snarled involuntarily. He couldn't do anything about it or suppress it because he now knew who that girl was. It wasn't just the fact that she was Petra Biernat, daughter of the Alpha of the Blue Forest pack in the Northern Lycan Kingdom.

She was his mate.

His second chance. He didn't think he would ever get a second chance mate. They were a rarity and hardly anyone ever got one.

It was getting harder to breathe, because Ash knew he did not want a mate. He knew he was not lucky in love. His first mate died so early that they were barely beyond being pups. The love of his life, Riannon, married his best friend and then met her own mate and became a Queen. Ash had been through so much pain that he didn't even want to try anymore. He chose to stay by Riannon's side even if it was from the shadows. He had another woman in his pack, Harper, tending to his more primal needs when it was required. Everything was working out for him.

Until now.

And he didn't want to change the status quo.

Petra stopped trembling for a second and looked at him with wide eyes, probably sensing what he had already figured out. Her eyes were as blue as forget-me-nots, and this was ironic because Ash knew that he would not be able ever to forget this woman now.

Petra was extremely young. She looked as if she'd barely reached the age of eighteen. Ash almost instantly knew that she was wrong for him. This second chance was probably a mistake. The Moon Goddess was mocking him for always wanting what he couldn't get.

Someone made a sultry joke about the pink haired girl, and everyone else in the room laughed. It made Petra's eyes well up, but she didn't

cry. her paws locked again, and he smiled at her reassuringly, hoping to let her know that it was going to be okay.

The White Bear King, gestured to Claude and Chloe to stop recording, and their cameraman pointed the lens at the floor.

*Shall we begin?" Bjorn's voice brought both Ash and Petra back to reality. Ash was glad that Petra had the sense not to scream that he was her mate. Something told him that this would have complicated things.

Other men in the room roared in approval. It looked like most of them wanted to buy his mate tonight, and this made him so angry that his claws clanged against his best attempt to hold himself back.

"What is it with you?" his Delia hissed when he noticed what was going on, and Ash managed to get himself under control. "Nothing" he gnashed his teeth.

The familiar Red Beard walked up to Petra and stood next to her announcing loudly, "Consider that the auction has started! The king is willing to listen to your offers!"

Some huge white bear stood up first, stating, "The White Claw Clan offers thirty thousand for the girl."

Others laughed, indicating that none of them took this offer seriously. New offers followed. Bigger offers. Better ones. The bears were offering money, fealty, lands, their own daughters or sisters in return. Women were traded as if they were cattle.

Petra began looking smaller and smaller in the middle of all this, hugging her shoulders as if it could help her protect herself. This was when he knew that he wouldn't be leaving her behind. He would get her out whatever it cost him. The realisation was sudden but so clear he didn't even have to think twice about it. He couldn't leave her.

Ash waited for everyone to state what they were willing to give for his mate, and Bjorn seemed pleased with all that. However, the King's eyes locked with his after all the bids were given, and the werewolf realised his offer was the most important either way. His delegation was invited to take part for a reason, and he was starting to realise what that reason was when he noticed Bjorn looking at the main entrance from time to time. He was waiting for his own queen to arrive.

The Alpha stood up, and now all the attention was on him. Clearing his throat, Ash pronounced loudly, "I offer you any sum you name, the loyalty of my pack and-" A few people chuckled behind his back. They were offering so much more. "And the Western Lycan Kingdom."

Now a wave of gasps erupted through the crowds. Whispers filled the room after, and Bjorn had to let out a mighty roar for everyone to get quiet. When the desired effect was achieved, he looked at the daring Alpha before him.

"What makes you think I need you to give me the West?" The king scoffed, arching his brow and gesturing for one of the servants to pour him more alcohol. "Not to mention that I can't see how you can even offer that. Who are you again?"

"I am Asher Jones, the Alpha of the Silver River pack," Ash replied calmly. "I believe that I can be of service to you. Now that the Lycan King of the West is dead, Beta Reid is preparing to become the new King as we speak. It just so happens that I'm invited to his coronation. And I swear to bring his head to you if you let me have Petra."

"Are you planning to return her to her father?" Bjorn asked.

"Temporarily," the Alpha responded dryly. "We have an agreement about our future alliance, so after Petra spends some time with her family, she will join me at my pack in the West."

Petra was now watching him with hope in her incredibly blue eyes, and he felt guilty because what he had told was a lie. There was no alliance in plans between him and her family. However, he pushed these thoughts aside. It was important that he was simply saving her. It was... enough.

“Fine,” Bjorn smirked. “I think we have a winner here. I can kill that Beta myself, but since you volunteer- I am always interested in saving my own resources. The girl is yours once you fulfil your promise.”

The Red Beard was about to take Petra away, but Ash spoke again, “My King- Maybe you will allow Petra to stay with us for tonight and enjoy this evening?”

Bjorn considered it and nodded slowly. His own night was already ruined because Savannah didn't show up. At least he'd made a good deal and all this with Savvy's help. She was the one who asked him to let these people in. So, he decided to reward the daring wolf. Even if for just one night.

Petra was pushed to werewolves' table, and she looked happy to be able to stay with them. Ash showed her to an empty seat, and she smiled at him gratefully.

Bjorn frowned at that. Sometimes it seemed like he was the only one unlucky with women. Savannah never looked at him like that, despite them being mates. In fact, he would kill for her to look at him just without resentment. Her taste was still on his lips from their kiss earlier today, and he groaned, remembering how sweet she tasted.

He wanted more. More of that taste, more of her.

He had some regrets about giving her the freedom to choose whether to come tonight or not. He would feel so much calmer if he could finally place his mark on her. No one would be able to undo that, and it would secure his claim on her forever.

But he decided to be generous and play nice. And now she wasn't here...

The main doors to the hall burst open, and he lifted his head to see who exactly wanted to die tonight.

However, when he saw the intruder, he went speechless and stood up, placing his glass back on the table.

Savannah stood there in a gown of wine red silk. The draped bodice expanded into flowing skirts that resembled flames. Her lips were painted red too, which made them so much more desirable. If she were to mark him today, she would leave traces of lipstick all over

his neck.

Bjorn's breathing became ragged just from thinking about it.

She came! He gave her a choice to postpone the marking, but she chose to be here tonight, and this made his lips grow into a proud smile.

Savannah smirked, pushing a strand of hair that she wore down today behind her back to demonstrate her bare neck. She did not even wear any necklaces, fully ready for him to mark her.

"Sorry I'm late," her grin deepened, and she took a step towards him.

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1. Taking What Is Owed

She walked between the rows of tables as if the whole world was under her feet, the dark red fabric of her dress flowing behind her

whispering in the silence of the room. No one dared to speak before the King, and Bjorn, himself, was speechless. He did not expect her

to come here tonight, and now that she was here, he couldn't take his eyes off of her.

Savannah was a vision. Everything about her was perfect. Queenly. A perfect woman for a King, and Bjorn couldn't believe that she

had made the decision to join him tonight.

They both knew what it meant, and the bear inside him was already fighting to release his claws to mark her the moment she

reached them, to claim that woman in front of everyone and be done with it.

Bjorn could give her more time before he took her and put a child inside her womb. He could give her more time to accept their

bond and admit it out loud. He could wait for many years to hear that she loved him from her luscious lips. He wanted to do that for her.

But the desire to make the bond unbreakable by marking her was immense. It was something that plagued his mind, something his bear

was insisting on forcefully.

Because it was wise. The moment his claws made the marks, Savannah would be his forever.

Everyone would know this and no one would be able to stake their claim on her. Not anymore. Not ever.

He wanted to secure that claim, and luckily, he would do this tonight. He couldn't believe his own luck because, although deep

inside he hoped for this, his rational mind told him that it wasn't possible. He'd hurt Savannah too much, and it would take him years to earn her forgiveness and, eventually, her love.

That thought sobered him up. Why was she doing it? Was she really ready?

A treacherous idea of it being her plan to humiliate him publicly or get some kind of revenge circled in the back of his mind. He hated thinking about it, but even he had to admit the possibility of it happening.

However, just one glance at the princess's wrist and he saw the bracelet still shining brightly on it, the guarantee of his safety. Whatever Savannah did, she wouldn't be able to do him much harm as long as she wore it. She wouldn't be able to shift even to her second form, so it was unlikely she would be able to do much damage. If she decided to humiliate him, he'd have to punish her. Somehow, that thought alone brought a smile to his face. He tried to be gentle with her, but if she gave him more reason to be personally mad at her, his punishing her would be justified.

The Princess chose a red dress. This wasn't what people wore for marking ceremonies in the North. Bjorn himself was wearing a blue shirt tonight simply for the occasion. A lot of the dresses he sent to her were in shades of blue as well because of this. But then he remembered that she'd already worn a blue dress. She even rode on top of his back and no one ever would be able to take that away from him.

She was already standing at the bottom of the stairs and their eyes locked as she waited for his permission to take her place by his

side.

“Join me, my Queen,” his lips curled into a smile as he gestured to the empty chair next to him. He had been prepared.

Savannah went up, her eyes downcast and cheeks flushed slightly. Although that last part could be the product of his imagination. He wished he could get into her pretty little head and find out what she was really thinking now. Was she imagining his claws digging into her skin too? He knew then and there that as soon as the marking was done, he would make her turn to face him and lick every drop of blood on her soft skin. His manhood reacted to that thought, and it got only worse when she was finally beside him. Her intoxicating bluebell scent had made him close his eyes just for a moment and enjoy it. He envisioned how, after everything was finished here, he would take her to their chambers and rip that dress off her, learning every inch of her with his tongue. If she let him, of course. But she would, after she'd been marked. This was the whole point. The mark would unlock their bond for her and heal her soul after the previous unsuccessful experience. She'd want him just the way he wanted her. She would come around.

“My King,” her sweet voice brought him out of his daze. It was a greeting, and he couldn't help himself from taking her hand and

bringing it to his lips, placing a wet kiss on her fingers.

Her skin tasted divine, and Bjorn wanted to cut the ceremony short now. Anything to speed the process up.

“My Queen,” pride was lacing every word, his voice loud, so that everyone heard him, but then he added quieter, “I hoped you would come.”

“And here I am,” she replied, her red lips trembling. This was an unusual look for her, but he liked it. He loved it. He loved everything

about her.

“Are you sure?” He asked her the silent question of whether or not she wanted to be marked today. Her presence alone was the

reply, but he wanted to show her how caring he could be. He wanted her to know that he wasn't the monster she believed him to be.

They could become a family. He could make her happy. All he needed was a chance...

His hand stretched to her on an impulse, and she shyly placed her palm into his.

“I am,” Savannah breathed out, and finally, their eyes met again. He saw the determination in hers, and it made him smile. She was

ready. It was really happening.

“You will never regret this,” he promised her confidently and pulled the princess into his arms to crush his lips into hers. Bringing her

closer, demanding entrance with his tongue, which was granted easily. It was the sweet submission that he needed and he explored her

mouth for the second time today, enjoying all of the sensations kissing his mate could bring. She chose to come tonight, she agreed that

she was his now. Now, he could kiss her whenever he wanted.

The white bears cheered for them with their roars and clanking of their g lasses. They enjoyed the sight before their eyes because

everyone knew that their

king would be the strongest with his mate by his side. The Northern Lyc an twins were filming the whole thing,

Chloe commenting from time to time into a microphone about the events.

When Bjorn finally broke the kiss, he had the biggest grin on his face. It was a grin of a victor, the man who had it all.

“Honoured guests!” He distanced himself slightly from Savannah and addressed his warriors present in the room. “As you can see,

my Queen is ready to join me and help me make the Northern and the Western Lycan kingdoms whole. We were once the same country,

and it is high time to bring the lands back together!”

He went on with a bigger speech, and Savvy tried really hard not to display any emotions on her face. She took a little step back to

where the Serpent was now standing, placing one of her arms on Bjorn’s shoulder to make him and everyone else believe that she was

supporting him.

“Really?” Joran quirked his brow up at her and whispered. “I thought you would consider my offer.”

“Who says I am not?” She gave him a dazzling smile, and he looked at her with interest.

“Then now is the time,” he taunted, to which she lifted her hand with the magical bracelet, eyeing it and hinting that he would have to help to get rid of it first.

The Serpent sneered at her, crossing his arms over his chest.

“Nice try, Princess,” he chuckled while she took a few steps in his direction, still touching Bjorn, who glanced at her in the middle of his long em

powering speech, growling at his divine ally slightly. Savannah smiled back at him, and then her eyes darted back at

Joran.

“Haven’t you heard?” her lips curled as she playfully pushed her index finger of the hand with the bracelet into his chest. “I’m a

Queen now.”

The applause of the bears distracted them, and Bjorn wrapped his arm around her waist, bringing her closer. The Princess was happy because no one noticed her little trick.

“And now we shall begin mine and Savannah’s marking ceremony,” he declared loudly and another wave of approving roars rippled through the room. Everyone was happy for their King.

Bjorn raised his hand, and every person in the hall grew quiet. No one dared to disrupt their King. His power was absolute.

“We’re not going to say any vows to the gods,” the White Bear King threw a quick glance at the Serpent as if daring him to protest.” There is no need for that! Our bond will be complete the moment my claws leave my mark on my mate’s delicate neck. We don’t need

any blessings other than the ones we already have. So, let’s begin.”

Savannah noticed two familiar faces in the crowd. She wasn’t wrong about Ash, Riannon’s close friend, and she was surprised to see Petra sitting right next to him. They both looked at her as if they were worried sick. Especially Petra. She covered her mouth with her

hand and was on the verge of crying.

Savvy winked at her, which made Petra’s eyes go wide in confusion.

“I have a request if you don’t mind,” the Princess looked at the White Bear King, who was already devouring her with his healthy eye. It was obvious that he was impatient, but her request made him suspicious. It was only natural that he didn’t fully buy her good girl act. Bjorn may have been in love, and it made him make mistakes, but he wasn’t a fool.

“What is it?” He asked dryly in a quieter tone.

“I would like to mark you too,” Savannah smiled and touched the bare skin on his arm, drawing circles on it with her fingers. She knew that he was feeling the tingles that she wasn’t. She realised it when he kissed her for the first time. His whole body told her about this. The way he shuddered, the way his breathing got ragged so fast... it shouldn’t have been that way even if he really really wanted her. It was something else... and that something else reminded her of what she had with Kai.

Remembering the name of the true King of the North helped her to stay focused. While Bjorn stared at her like a love sick teddy bear, all she saw were Kai’s eyes closing while she held him in her arms.

“Sure,” Bjorn agreed. “You can mark me if you like. I would take it as an honour.”

“Can I mark you first?” she fluttered her lashes innocently, but then looked away. “You don’t have to, of course.”

He was calm because he knew that even if she wanted to bite his main artery off, it wouldn’t harm him. Physically, he was indestructible. Savvy knew that too, and that meant she wouldn’t do anything stupid.

Moreover, he wanted to give in to this dream. He wanted her canines to sink into his flesh, making him hers forever. He wasn’t going to question this gift.

“Do it,” he told her, brushing his palm over his cheek. “Anything for you.”

He exhaled when she touched his chest with her warm fingers. Only the fabric of his traditional northern shirt was between them

now.

“You are too tall,” she whispered, and he lowered himself slightly to give her better access as she walked around him and stood behind his back. There were doubts in his mind, but Savannah’s little fingers went for the buttons of his shirt, undoing the two upper ones and then removing the fabric aside. Smirks appeared on his men’s faces. She teased him, and he lost his mind because of this. The thrill of what she was about to do next made him growl in anticipation.

She was going to mark him. She was going to mark him. She was going to mark him. Him.

It was going to be all right. It was going to be excellent. She was going to become his Queen, and they were going to live a long, happy life together. He would bring this woman the moon if she wanted it, he would put any Kingdom she liked at her feet. He would make the world burn for her if it made her smile.

She was going to fix everything for him. She was going to fix him. That most important, broken, damaged part of him was going to be healed with this woman’s love. She would complete him. She would make him whole. Her perfection would fill the cracks in his soul, glueing the broken pieces together the way people in the Lost Eastern Kingdom were joining fragments of broken pottery and filling them with gold, giving them a more refined aspect.

He didn’t see the people before him, everything was blurry because of all the tingles he was experiencing from her touch. Her breath was already on his neck, and when Savannah’s nose brushed gently over it, he had to restrain himself not to moan in front of

everyone.

“Wintergreen,” his mate commented, remarking on his scent. He closed his eye because, at that moment, he chose to trust her, he chose to love her unconditionally, he chose to give her everything that he had.

Something cold and metallic pressed against the skin on the other side of his neck, and for a moment, he thought it was the bracelet he put on her. He would take this bracelet off her tonight before he would take her for the first time...

3/5

“I hate wintergreen,” Savannah hissed in his ear, and it took him a few seconds to realise what he was hearing. “Almost as much as I hate you,

Darius!”

A sharp pain made him open his eye again, and he saw his warriors jumping on their feet. It took time for him to process what was happening, but soon he realised that some kind of a dagger pierced him to the hilt. Savannah’s fingers unclenched, and he recognised that hilt. It belonged to Joran.

A divine weapon...

His men were lost, not knowing what to do, but at the same time, the guests he’d welcomed into his house today because of Savannah started turning into wolves one by one and forming a protective line in front of the stairs.

Because of Savannah...

Did Joran betray him? Or did Savvy manage to steal the dagger while he wasn’t watching?

Bjorn managed to turn his head through the pain and saw that the Serpent was as shocked as he

was. At the same time, his second-in-command pounced at Savannah from the other side of the table, but his mate was ready. She grabbed the dagger she put into him and got it out in one swift move, making blood splutter from the wound. Then she stabbed his man, his brother in arm, right in the eye, ending him quickly.

Bjorn couldn't speak; he felt blood filling his throat, at the same time, trying to stick his fingers into the wound on his neck to prevent blood loss. It hurt so much... but it wasn't physical pain that bothered him the most now.

In a way, *she ripped out his heart too...*

The divine weapon was out, and regeneration kicked in, cells restoring themselves as quickly as they could. Not quick enough because Savannah was already using the dagger to break the bracelet that wouldn't allow her to shift. He let out a gurgling noise, knowing now what she was about to do, what her plan was.

"You are not leaving this place!" he warned her, hoping that it would stop her. If she did stop, he would forgive her. He would take her away from all this mess and hide her until he knew what to do with her, how to fix this.

Another one of his warriors attacked her from behind, but the bracelet was already off, and she snapped his neck with her bare hands. Savannah was a force of nature, awakened and furious, destroying everything in her way.

She was smart. He had to give it to her. She managed to go around his invincibility and destroyed the divine bracelet that suppressed her with a different divine weapon.

Bjorn stared at Joran, who was sitting in one of the chairs as an honored guest and sipped his wine, observing the show calmly. Their eyes lock

ed for a second, and the White Bear King knew that if he wanted the god's help, he would have to offer him something else in return. But he had already bargained for more than he could afford. Besides, he could deal with her on his own terms. He just needed more time. A few more minutes, and it would be safe enough to move.

“Seize her!” He commanded the nearby bears. “Kill the rest!”

The wolves charged at his men, and he knew that those mutts had no chance, considering the difference in numbers and how much werewolves lacked strength when compared to white bears. It was so stupid, to begin with, that they planned something like this. They all were as good as dead.

Savannah was fighting one of the biggest bears in the room. Luckily, it was the last of the ones who sat at Bjorn's table. She still had to finish him off, but someone was constantly blocking her path.

“Savvy, watch out!” She heard Petra scream and point somewhere behind her back. She managed to dodge a sneaky attack from

yet another white bear at the last moment and knew that it was time.

This would be the last time she shifted into her third form, the royal Lycan form. Kai was teaching her how to control it, but she was still too far from being successful at it. After all, they hadn't had enough time.

Ash was still in his human form, trying to think of what to do next, Savvy noticed that he was holding Petra's hand, covering her with his body from any possible attack. While his men tried to keep everyone away from them.

“Princess!” He shouted at Savannah, “Time to go!”

4/5

Just give me a second,” she replied, and looked at Bjorn again.

It had been mere minutes since she attacked him, but the blood almost stopped dripping through his fingers. A bit more time and he would be fully healed. Her efforts would go to waste.

This couldn't be happening!

“Give up now, and I will forgive you!” he promised in a weak voice. His strength was coming back to him slowly. He was lucky she didn't reach his heart. Probably because of their size difference. If she had managed to pierce his most vital organ, it would have been so much worse.

“No, thanks!” A smirk formed on her lips and for a moment, she looked at him with some kind of pity. He hated it, but it hurt him.

even more when that pity was replaced by pure hate. “You killed the man I love and my family! How delusional are you to think that we could have had anything after that?!”

“Savvy-

” Bjorn looked quickly around and noticed that those sparkling twins were standing right next to them and filming the

whole thing on a phone. *A phone!* What is this? A live? There was a reason why live broadcasts were never allowed at any royal events.

This was exactly the reason. How would he ever spin this situation now?

It didn't matter! He'd lost today's battle! Savannah clearly prepared for this better than he did. All in the course of a day.

“They're dead either way!” He snapped. “What difference does any of this make? I was offering you a home! I was offering you a future!”

“After taking the home and future I already had!” There were tears in Savannah’s voice. She was still hurting.

“It had to be done,” the bear replied in a dark tone. “it has always been like this! The survival of the fittest!”

“I know,” his mate sneered at him. “and this is why I am surviving now! You owe me a few lives, Bjorn. And a castle.”

The Luna Trials by Marissa Gilbert Chapter 63

63. True Mates

Savannah charged at him, and this time she was too fast for Bjorn to detect. That’s when she gave him another slash of the divine

dagger over his chest, making a clean cut.

“We are mates!” He said bitterly, covering the new wound with his fingers.

“No. We’re not!” She replied without hesitation. “I’d rather die than be your mate!”

The words hurt him more than the dagger did, but it wasn’t enough for her. He could see it in her eyes as she lifted her hand to try to

kill him again. He’d had enough of this. She had to be contained!

He caught her wrist this time and overpowered her easily, bringing her closer.

“It’s over!” he roared, shaking her roughly, hoping that she’d return to her senses.

However, it only made the princess sneer.

“Bjorn, Bjorn, Bjorn,” she whispered and clicked her tongue. “I am just getting started!”

Savannah’s bones started snapping before his eyes at unnatural angles, and in a few moments, she was able to free her hand from

his grasp. Bjorn stepped away, panting, and watching her turn into something else completely. He’d already seen this when he and Joran

went to observe the battle with Castiel’s men a few months ago and also when Kai did it so effortlessly many times in the past.

It was harder for Savannah, he could see it, but she was determined to go through with this.

“Savvy, no!” Darius’ voice broke. He knew what it meant to her. Other royals rarely used their feral third forms because they were

next to impossible to control. If they didn’t shift back soon enough, they risked never being able to revert back to their human form

again.

The realisation that she was ready to die or stay a beast for the rest of her life just to kill him, hurt him more deeply than the divine

weapon ever could.

But the monster with glowing golden eyes already stood in front of him. Tall, mighty and deadly. And she was out for blood.

blood.

His

Savannah tried to keep control just like Kai had taught her. Lycans were primal beasts who were born at the beginning of times, but

her Lycan wasn't a separate entity; It was a part of her. The part she was taught to suppress, the part she was taught to hide.

Today she was going to embrace it.

Bjorn looked like he was suffocating, but she decided just to end him immediately. However, when she took the first step,

something invisible stopped her.

“Enough!” The Serpent said, looking as calm as if people weren't killing each other left and right around them. He didn't even spare the Lycanes a glance. He didn't take part in the fighting. He just defended Bjorn once and that was it.

Wolves that came with Ash were dying. One of the bears almost grabbed Petra, who was still in her human form. From the corner of her eye, Savvy saw how Chloe shifted into a golden-coloured wolf, and Claude was quickly tying something around her neck.

She wanted so badly to kill Bjorn... but... her friends were more important. If the Serpent didn't plan to act, and it looked like he had something else in mind, then they had a chance to survive. If she would help them, of course.

Growling angrily, Savvy flipped the table and was down next to Petra and Ash in seconds, leaving Bjorn behind.

“Shift!” she commanded in the beast's voice, and, luckily, they understood her instantly, following her lead. Petra's wolf was the smallest, but even in the middle of the chaos, Savvy paused, seeing her unusual colour. The wolf was black with soft pink waves of fur all over her in a beautiful pattern. No wonder everyone wanted her! Someone like her was rare indeed!

Chloe was next to the group already and Claude shifted in one jump, joining them as well.

Now all they had to do was get out of that castle.

If only it was that easy...

1/5

The bears were shifting too and Savvy let out a roar so loud that the ground underneath their feet shook.

She threw herself into the crowd and made a clean sweep, clearing the path for her friends. Thanks to that, they were able to leave

the Hall behind them quickly, and now they were struggling to get through the corridors of the castle.

The

white bears were already alerted via their mindlink and everyone they met tried to attack them, slow them down... Yet, Savvy knew she only had minutes left of sanity, feeling how she was starting to enjoy the scent of blood and chaos she was leaving behind her. Each new kill was becoming easier and easier. Soon she wouldn't care whom she was killing. By then, it would be best if her friends were

as far away from this place and her – as possible.

She made sure to knock down every candle on her way past. Luckily, they were a major part of the decoration for the marking ceremony, and there were plenty around the castle. She watched the flames catch onto the curtains and spread over them quickly. That

should distract them.

A few wolves from Ash's team were already missing, either killed or sacrificing themselves to delay the bears behind them.

Savvy led them in an unexpected direction and she could feel how distressed Petra, Ash, and the twins were. Fortunately for all of them, she knew exactly what she was doing when she turned into a small passage and then paused by an old wooden bear statue. One movement and the walls before them opened, revealing a dark staircase. This was something Savannah learned from the maps the day before, and something none of the bears could have anticipated.

Using their night vision, they went all the way down while still in their wolf forms, and this got them several minutes to breathe.

There was just one thing left to do now – get Aspen.

Savannah had no illusions about that. She knew that they would understand that she would come back for the Gamma. He was one of Kai's close friends. She couldn't simply leave him behind.

"Princess," Ash shifted behind her back. "There is something I need to tell you-"

"Shift!" she growled and pushed the door that led to the square outside.

She was right as there was a thick circle of bears guarding Aspen and waiting for her.

Well, they wouldn't have to wait anymore.

Channelling everything she had, Savannah threw herself at the enemy, tearing, snapping, breaking, destroying... At some point, she felt like she had found a rhythm to all this. It became a part of her and felt so natural that she scared herself.

However, she couldn't stop. She had to do it. While there was still sanity left in her.

When

she reached the wall where Aspen was chained, he didn't look good. He was barely conscious and his gaze was unfocused. There were cuts and bruises all over him, and Savvy almost threw up when the smell coming from him hit her nostrils. What have they been doing to him?

She broke the silver chains with ease, although they were soaked in something that burned her fingers. Claude was surprisingly the nearest to him and offered his back for the Gamma.

Savvy threw him on top of the golden wolf. She couldn't do anything gently in this form. But it was better than the people beating Aspen up. He was practically unconscious, and the princess was worried that he'd fall off during their escape. She wanted to say something, but it was becoming harder and harder to form words. The beast was slowly taking over her.

Not that she regretted it. They needed a beast now. They needed a monster.

"Hold!" Savvy roared, and surprisingly, that helped Aspen to come back to reality. Even if temporarily.

"Brigit?" he asked, looking at her. His eyes barely opened from the swelling and damage. His vision was probably blurry so it wasn't surprising he took her for a white bear in this form. Just like her wolf, her Lycan was white in colour, with black fur decorating her

ears.

"Brigit-" Aspen repeated his mate's name. "I knew you'd come."

There were more and more bears in the square, and Savvy was starting to worry about how they were going to leave this place. She had to get her friends out. Nothing else mattered.

They were surrounded from each side, and Savannah could already feel the desire to snap all those necks. There were more of them than she could handle, but at least she would die trying. She didn't mind. If she died, maybe the Moon Goddess would be so kind as to bring her back together with Kai. Maybe she could ask for this little reward if she was going to sacrifice herself for the Moon Goddess'

children.

The bears halted, probably preparing themselves mentally for the moment that was to follow, and Savannah closed her eyes just for a second, feeling how her mind was slipping away.

"I never asked you for anything," she prayed silently, "but if there is at least the tiniest chance of me saving them and reuniting with Kai, let it happen."

Just then, one of the castle towers exploded. Pieces of the ancient stone were landing around them, hitting some of the white bears. But most importantly, it made them panic.

Another explosion sounded, piercing their ears this time because it was so much closer. Ash growled excitedly, knowing that his little gift worked.

Savannah had nothing to do with any of it, but the bears believed that she did. Moreover, they didn't know what to expect from her anymore.

She didn't hesitate and unleashed herself on the startled enemies, tearing their flesh off and ending as many of their lives as she could. She pounced, and she dodged. She ignored the pain when they managed to hurt her.

“Run!” she managed to command her friends when she created a safe corridor for them through one of the broken castle walls. She knew that Ash would have help somewhere nearby. She just needed to give them a chance to get there.

Savannah noticed that the bears did not follow her friends. All their eyes were on her, tracing her every move, and this was when she realised the order was to get her. Technically, they didn't need her friends.

She decided not to miss that wonderful opportunity and stood on all fours, charging into the darkness outside Bjorn's home. She knew where her friends went; she could feel it. Thanks to that, she chose to run in the opposite direction.

This time she did not use her full speed. She had to make sure that the bears followed her and that none of them got lost on the way. Slowly, her priorities were changing. She couldn't wait to be left alone with them in the middle of the deadly forest.

A black hawk flew over her head, screeching, but she ignored it. Birds did not interest her anymore. She wanted to be killing bears. Her instincts were telling her to kill them all, and each roar she heard from them excited her. A fight. A hunt. Only they weren't the ones hunting this time. She was.

She stopped in the middle of a clearing and waited. The annoying bird was still circling over her head, and she was ready to kill her if that hawk got close.

However, these thoughts left her soon because the bears finally arrived.

She could see their white fur between the dark, ancient trees as they approached, but the primal lycan inside of her couldn't wait anymore. She pounced at the closest one, tearing him to pieces on the spot and enjoying it. Then another one tried to get her but to no avail.

One after another, she was killing them all, feeling only pure rage running through her veins.

But there were so many of them that slowly, they started to overpower her, cornering her to a rocky hill. She wanted to kill them even more now, to taste their blood and to see life leave their eyes, so she kept fighting, kept slaying... Lost in this chaos.

However, her wounds were multiplying by the minute, and it didn't look like there were fewer bears around her. She roared in frustration, realizing that this could be her end. She would die here today, killed by some weaklings just because they had bigger numbers.

A howl escaped her. This time it was a sound of a dying, desperate animal, and she put everything in that sound.

By the end of the howl, her breathing turned into snowy mist, and for the first time, she felt cold. The ground under her feet was icy, the darkness was replaced by clouds of snow. Everything happened so fast that she couldn't tell what was going on.

She felt something. Something she couldn't explain, some kind of strange pull that made her think that she did want to survive after all.

Savannah fell to her knees, knowing that the enemies would finish her off now. However, each bear that was getting close to her was

disappearing right in front of her eyes. Something moved in between all the warriors so fast that none of them couldn't detect it. Yet

there was no denying that someone else was here.

Or something else.

A mighty menacing roar emerged, and it became so cold that sharp pieces of ice flew in the air. Only that the trajectory seemed off.

Unnatural.

Not that Savvy was going to complain. Her humanity was getting back to her against all odds, and she didn't know what the reason

for it could be.

The bears weren't her problem anymore, and she felt a strong desire to shift back into her human form.

Screaming as her bones were slowly breaking one by one, she clawed her way to sanity until she was panting on the cold ground

covered with frost.

Tears were streaming down her cheeks, but she was back. She was alive and she didn't turn into a lycan beast forever.

There was only one question on her mind now. Why? How?

She had bits of the red dress still hanging over her frame. Some parts of the gown were very stretchy, and now she was happy that

she had some kind of coverage. Even if it was questionable.

Her wounds made her hiss from the pain, but she already knew there was nothing lethal. She would heal if no new battles occurred

now.

That strange feeling overwhelmed her again, and she tried to stand up, looking around, but only dead bears were scattered around

her. She took a few steps with her bare feet, trying to adjust the red rags on her, when she saw some movement in the snowy mist.

At first, it looked like a giant wolf. Bigger than any other she had seen.

The mist got thicker, and when it dissipated slowly, she saw a shadow of a naked man walking towards her.

She froze, unable to move. Unable to breathe...

Tears were burning her eyes, and she wanted to say something, but only a weak, broken noise left her chest. It wasn't even a

whimper.

Their eyes locked, and so did their souls. A forever unbreakable bond that no one ever would be able to erase. Two halves of the

same whole united at last.

Savvy placed her hand on her chest, trying to steady her heart, which was racing so fast she was afraid it would fail her.

All the pain she had felt for the past few days found a way out now in one despairing painful sob.

"Mate," she whispered with her trembling lips. The word that she hated. The word that only brought her pain and suffering.

She was afraid that it was a dream, a cruel hallucination, and none of this was real.

"Mate," Kai replied while a single tear fell on the ground from his chin, shattering the world and everything they had known...

63 True Mates

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Chapter 64

Kai had never been a patient person, and it was torture of a new kind to stay behind and wait. It did not bother him that he could not shift back to his human form anymore. He wasn't picky and was ready to spend his whole new life as a wolf as long as he could rescue Savannah. She was his priority and the one and only thing on his mind from the moment he woke up. When Fenrir asked for his firstborn, Kai didn't even hesitate. Why would he? A child was in a distant future he could never have in the first place without the rebirth, and in all honesty, he could have tricked the God later. There were many legends about similar occurrences. Either way, it was a problem for later. But Savvy... Savvy needed his help now.

Of course, he wanted to save his kingdom too. He was brought up and trained to exist with the weight of responsibility for the

North. However, now he knew that if he was ever forced to make a choice, he would have to spend eternity begging Fenrir's and his

people's forgiveness because he knew whom he would choose. It was not right, it was selfish and not worthy of a king, but Kai knew now

that Savvy came first. She was his everything, and somehow, after he was reborn, all those feelings only intensified.

The memories of Savannah's scared face were flashing before his eyes. Memories from when life was slipping away from him. He

understood what was happening before she did, and when she realised he was dying, it scared her beyond belief. That girl had no

problem facing multiple enemies, walking into deadly traps, being betrayed and stabbed in the back, but losing him brought horror to

her face and grief into her soul. Primal boundless fear gripped her and Kai... Kai was horrified, too. Knowing that he was abandoning her,

knowing that the enemy would come for her when she would be at her weakest...

The Lycan King of the North had already felt weak once. Right after his parents died. After just one day, he had to start taking care of

his kingdom and his depressed little sister. Every time Elene sobbed in his arms, every time his then-advisors looked at him as if he was

just a little boy with a sparkling crown, he felt like that. Useless, weak, pathetic... an impostor.

Contrary to everyone's beliefs, his life was never easy. Although his childhood was happy until he lost his parents, even when they were alive, he had to work hard for everything. His father didn't accept any excuses and he had high

expectations of his heir. Kai didn't get to play with other kids much, he had more important things to do. Maybe it was the reason that he had trouble making friends in the first place. He had next to no experience with relating to people. He was introduced to Aspen because their fathers were

friends, but it took them years to get close. Lachlan was an exception – the two of them hit

it off immediately. Although Kai was always surrounded by people, Lachlan and later Aspen

were the only two he could call friends. They stood by him when he became the King, and he knew he could

always count on them. It was important because he was also aware he couldn't count on anyone else. Everyone wanted a piece of him, but mostly, they wanted him gone. The Northerners were fiercely loyal to their King, but, just as with their Lunas, they had to accept him as their King first. So, Kai earned their respect. He had to become stronger, sterner, and more ruthless.

For

a brief moment, he thought that he and Gideon could be friendly, but the

y were too much alike. Kai knew he had to be the best for everyone to fear him and stay away from the North. Gideon had similar ideas about the West. They were unlucky to end up at the same Alpha training facility at the same time because they immediately clashed. It still could have been a healthy competition. They tried to keep it up for a while, but once Kai heard Gideon talking about his sister in a less-than-complimentary way, all hell broke loose. Kai went on the defence, and there was that knowledge etched in his mind that the best defence was a good offence.

Playing the role of the perfect king was hard for him because perfect was one thing that he wasn't. This was why he loved his "gardener and the little maid" game with Savannah so much. He loved her gaze flickering when she looked at him and, at the same time,

having no idea who he really was.

She came into his life unexpectedly and turned everything upside down, bringing chaos into it, but also... she brought him peace.

Kai didn't even notice how his life became all about her.

And now he had quite a few things to worry about.

Kai had made an impossible deal. Maybe she would never forgive him when she found out, but as long as she would be there to find out, he'd take it. He would find a way around this. He would do everything he could to make her happy and not give away their first-born baby, but his main priority would always be Savannah's safety. If he had to die again today to achieve this- so be it.

It was strange to be in this new form. Fenrir called him Amarak, and he remembered old northern legends about giant lonely wolves who destroyed everything in their path. This wasn't what he wanted to be, but again, he was ready to accept it if it meant he would have enough power to defe

at his enemies. He was supposed to be dead anyway, but since he was given a second chance, he wasn't going to waste it.

His whole body was new, and it took some getting used to it because of how giant it was. It didn't feel the same as being in his royal lycan form. He wasn't simply larger now, but in a way, he became stronger and more powerful. He couldn't find it in himself to shift back into a human, but at the same time, he had no trouble making everything around him freeze. He could create ice with his will, and he could shape whatever he wanted out of it.

The first thing that he tried when he realised that was, of course, Savannah's sculpture. He sat in front of it now, waiting for the news from Ash, keeping it away from melting. He had made her almost identical to the real version, and just looking at her was helping him to stay focused and maintain his sanity. She was his anchor to this world, and having her close, even if it wasn't the real Savvy, was helping him to keep himself from going feral and charging at that damn castle.

Riannon was the one who talked him out of it. Surprisingly, Gideon's mate was his voice of reason now. When she was contacting him through her wolf Onyx, he could feel their emotions and knew that they were genuine. That made him listen.

Time after time, the Luna and the Queen of the Western Lycan Kingdom told him to believe in Savannah, promising that the Princess would be able to take care of herself. He really wanted to just go to Bjorn's castle, kill everyone, and get Savvy back. But they all knew that it wouldn't be that simple. Too many things weren't adding up, and traitors were everywhere.

He was greedily watching the news, promising himself to kill both Chloe and Claude when he would get the chance. He couldn't

believe how easily they switched sides. However, thanks to them, he was getting bits and pieces of information about Savannah. Lachlan did not want to show him the whole video of how she was brought to the white bear's castle, but after his menacing growl, his Beta gave up and let it play. Seeing her on his enemy's back brought him back into despair. For once, he and Gideon were on the same page, and both wanted to go to the White Bear Cliffs immediately, but this time Kyle was the one who stopped them.

"You need to see this!" He stood before the two of them with his laptop, opening a page of his TruthTeller website.

"This is really not the time!" Gideon growled and Kai snarled in agreement.

"Just wait!" The young man insisted, and then Evelyn and Riannon stood up for him, insisting that he had a point. "I'm receiving anonymous videos from how everything really went," he told them. "Bjorn probably has enemies in his castle, too! There are so many of them! I mean, so many videos... Look!"

He started by showing them how they'd chained Savvy to make her sit on that white bear's back, which made Kai's insides burn with fury. Then there was a video about how Savannah was almost unconscious by the time they got to the castle and how she threw up all over that piece of trash, the white bear king. That last part brought him momentary satisfaction, but at the same time it pained him to see the woman he loved so much in that situation. The last video was of three girls Kai had never seen before.

“I’ve been cleaning the whole room for hours!” one of them complained, “I don’t think that Queen Savannah will be ready to perform her... queenly duties anytime soon. The healer told the king that she shouldn’t be doing anything physical for at least the next two days. Poor man! I thought the king would snap his neck on the spot. He was lucky to survive.”

“The king seems impatient, though,” another girl said. She had a broom and dustpan in her hands and looked like a maid without a uniform.

“He will not touch her in anger!” The third one rolled her eyes. “Have you seen how he looks at her? She was sick all over him, but he was worried if she was all right, not caring about anything else. He would never do anything to hurt her!”

The video ended, and Kyle closed his laptop. Gideon and Kai exchanged glances. This time they didn’t need to speak to understand each other.

“We have at least a day more,” Riannon said quietly.

“And trust me, Savvy knows how to play sick,” Kyle smirked. “Gid, remember that week you invited the sons of Alphas to our mansion to “get to know” Savvy better and then she accidentally poured wolfsbane all over herself in a class and got stomach flu because of that?”

Kai snarled angrily as the Western King ran his hand over his face.

“Let me guess,” Gideon exhaled heavily. “Never happened?”

“Nope,” Kyle shook his head, “but when all these women suddenly decided that you were looking for a Luna a week later that

“_

wasn’t a coincidence,” Gideon finished the sentence, grunting. He’d always suspected that.

“Look,” the redheaded nephew of his Beta sighed and glanced at Evelyn for support, “I’m not saying that we shouldn’t save her. I would die for Savvy, you know that. Not only is she my best friend, but she’s also like a sister to me. We grew up together, and I care for her as much as you do. But Riannon is right, and we should believe in her. Also, we can’t be reckless about this. We need a good plan to make sure that when we go there, we really get her back and don’t mess anything up.”

“Besides,” Evelyn said, stepping forward, “Princess Savannah is not the only one we need to rescue. I know you probably don’t care much about Petra, but I do and so does Savannah herself! And also, there is your Gamma. I’m sure you want to get Aspen out almost as much as you want to rescue Savannah. In all honesty, the princess is the one who is safe there. It’s going to be much more dangerous for the other two.”

Kai wasn’t torn about this, he felt guilty. Evelyn was right, he really wanted to try and save them all, but Savvy was the one at the top of his mind. Once he got her out, he would come back for Petra and Aspen. And also to kill Bjorn. But that would be after his beloved was safe. Or during her rescue, in the best-case scenario.

“We will, of course, try to save them all together,” Lachlan assured them with his soft political tone. Kai knew that he was about to find an excuse to reject the suggestion, but this was when Evelyn stepped forward.

“And I believe there’s a way to do all of this,” the woman proclaimed confidently. “I have just spoken with Petra’s father over the phone, and he told me that Bjorn offered

d him a chance to buy Petra. They told him to send a delegation to his castle to negotiate this. The bears are putting her-” Evelyn’s voice broke, but she took a deep breath and went on, “they’re putting Petra up for an auction. Whoever pays the highest price gets to keep her.”

They all got quiet, each thinking of how best to resolve the situation.

“Don’t you see?” Riannon furrowed her brows and hugged herself. “This is a perfect opportunity to get our people inside the castle and get Savannah and the others out safely. We just can’t pass this opportunity up.”

Kai still did not like this. It meant waiting longer, and all he wanted to do was get there sooner, grab his woman, rescue her, and bring her back home.

A loud shriek pierced their ears, and they all looked up as Zara was flying down from the sky. She shifted while she was still in the air and landed in front of them with grace. She was the one Kai waited for the most because she could bring him news that nobody else could.

“Did you see her?” Gideon asked without hesitation.

“She was in her room the whole time I was there, sleeping alone,” the w erebird informed them. “I couldn’t get too close, though, without being suspicious. Hawks do not rest on windowsills, you know. Not to mention that they know me. I also saw Bjorn, and it looks like he’s busy. I don’t think he’s going to get to spend time with Savannah anytime soon. She is safe for now.”

That gave Kai the strength and patience to wait a bit longer and plan everything properly.

Luckily, it was a good decision.

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They waited for a signal from Ash but received nothing. He was supposed to come back first and bring them information on who was where and what the weak spots in defence were. Everybody knew that Aspen would be the easiest to access but the hardest to get out due to his multiple injuries. Zara informed them that the Gamma's condition was the worst out of the three. She also confirmed that she hadn't seen Astrid and her friend Emma anywhere, which left their fates unknown. However, Brigit seemed to feel at home, which convinced them that she was the one helping Bjorn all this time to everyone's disappointment. Only Riannon did not comment on how the she-bear was going to be punished for her betrayal when the war was over.

Kai was waiting by his ice sculpture because it was the only place where he could handle the latest news. There were rumours that Bjorn was going to mark Savannah today. Just the thought of it made his stomach churn and his blood boil, and that was saying a lot considering that ice spikes grew out of him now. He tried to calm himself by looking at the sculpture, because every time he closed his eyes he saw his mortal enemy, Bjorn, digging his claws into his mate's neck, marking her for life...

Savannah did not deserve this. She had already been through so much. She had been through more than him or anyone else he knew. A lot of people had a sad story in one way or another, but Savvy could never catch a break and had to face one struggle after another. Not to mention that he knew her. He knew that if she wasn't broken now, this would break her for sure. Waiting now felt wrong more than ever before. He had to be there, he had to get her out, to save her.

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This time, he decided that he'd had enough of waiting for one day. Something did not go according to the plan, and he was not going to listen to any more excuses.

Amarok raced through the dark woods faster than any of his companions, and he was the first to reach the group of wolves desperately trying to escape from the white bears. Surprisingly, there were just a few in pursuit, and Kai pounced on them without mercy. He didn't even need his freezing powers to eliminate the enemy. However, as he was ripping through the throat of the last one, he could already tell that Savvy's wolf was not in the group.

He was enraged, but calmed down slightly when his eyes landed on Aspen. His Gamma looked horrible, chanting something with his broken lips caked with dried-out blood. It looked like the bears were hurting him and then letting him heal, only to break everything all over again. A torture so cruel that it was rare for anyone to use it these days.

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Seeing where Kai's attention was, the Alpha said, "He will be okay—what doesn't kill us makes us stronger."

But when Kai's eyes glowed menacingly in the darkness and the air around them became uncomfortably cold even for a werewolf, Ash quickly changed the subject to what was really important now.

"Princess Savannah is in her royal Lycan form now," he informed Amarak quickly, knowing that Kai was still inside. "She told us to run while she was covering for us and leading them away. We would have never made it without her help."

Kai wasn't listening anymore, he only turned on his paws and sprinted to where the group came from, trying to pick up her

scent.

Brigit was watching from the window in her room as Savannah and the werewolves freed Aspen and placed him on one of the wolves' backs. It was probably just an illusion that her mate... her ex-mate... locked his eyes with hers for a moment. After all, his eyes were so swollen he probably couldn't see a thing anyway. But she let herself believe that it was the truth and that he knew that she was the one that set off the explosion in the tower and helped the fire in the castle spread in order to help him escape. She knew that he would never forgive her betrayal and that they would probably never see each other again, but a smile formed on her lips as she placed her forehead on the cold glass of the window and watched them escape.

"Thank you, Aspen," she whispered, even though there was no chance he would hear her. She was thanking him for the new feeling in her chest that tugged and pulled and warmed her up when everything else in her world was so cold. She remembered how she once thought that she was in love with Castiel. That memory now made her laugh. There couldn't be

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"Just stay alive," she whispered, thinking now that dreaming of getting back with him was too bold. Instead, she should take what life was willing to give her and be grateful for that. She wouldn't be able to live if he'd died because of her. She wouldn't be able to breathe... but now, at least, she could do that.

Two small hands wrapped around her, and she turned to see her sister, Ingrid.

"You love him, don't you?" Ingrid asks through tears, and Brigit tucked her face into her sibling's blonde hair and let herself to let out her tears finally.

Ingrid stroked her back and gave her the time she needed, before she whispered, “Bri, you need to go with them. You can. He would look for me, but not for you.”

“Aspen would never want me again,” Brigit distanced herself and wiped her eyes, knowing that she couldn’t be seen crying. It was too dangerous. “It’s too late for us now,” she smiled sadly. “Besides, my place is here with you. With my people. Don’t you think?”

Ingrid didn’t think that. She knew how badly her sister was treated by some of the white bears, not to mention how the guilt was slowly eating her alive.

“Bri, if you need anything- anything other than me running away from my husband, just tell me,” the girl suggested.

“Right now, I need only one thing,” Brigit smiled and held her sister’s hands. “Come with me downstairs; pretend that we’re both distraught over what happened today. Tell anyone who asks that you were with me the whole time in my room. And we left it just now to come and check on our king.” She paused and then added, “And on your beloved husband, of course.”

Kai’s heart broke into a myriad of pieces when he saw her. He couldn’t move. He did not dare to move.

He was ready to kill all those bears all over again because of what they made Savannah go through. He’d do it in a heartbeat if given a chance.

The last few days were the first ones in his new life, and at the same time, they were the hardest in both of his lifetimes. He failed

her, and he couldn’t fix any of it. She was so close in her torn red dress, with her hair a wild mess cascading down her shoulders. She had

been through hell, and he hadn't been there to save her. He was late, and she had to save herself. Something he would never forgive himself for. Something he would never allow to happen again.

It was torture to stay behind and wait, knowing that he would only make it worse if he arrived at the wrong time. Riannon told them

to believe in Savvy, to trust that she would take care of herself. And that was exactly what Savannah did. This beautiful, delicate woman fought like a hundred men. She was ready to sacrifice herself to save her friends. She was honourable, loyal, honest, fierce, brave... And

also...

Mate. She was his mate.

The whole world screamed this now. All his senses, the scents around them, the air, the stars in the sky, they all sang in unison that they belonged together.

She was his. And he belonged to her.

A part of him knew from the very beginning. From the moment he saw her shredding those roses, from the moment he thought she

was just a little maid. But he knew she was his maid. He loved her from that very first glance, even if he didn't understand it back

then.

The universe stopped spinning. They were the only two people to ever exist. It was hard to tell if it was one moment or if they stared

at each other for eternity. Neither of them could tell...

"You're alive," she barely whispered because she was afraid that a louder sound would break the illusion and she would be alone in

this world again. Alone and ready to die.

“I came back,” his voice rasped through his chest, and her breathing hitched. “For you.”

It was him! He was here... Alive and well. He was breathing, and he wasn't an illusion.

Kai was alive. Her Kai. Kai Fionnlagh. The one she held in her arms when he was dying. The one she mourned for days after witnessing a silver spear pierce his heart. The one she never expected to see again. Not in this world... Moreover, she was trying to get

into the next one to be reunited with him.

And he was her mate! Mate!

Kai didn't know what to say next. Was she angry with him for being late? For abandoning her? Did she feel what he felt now? Did he

hear her right when she called him her mate? Did she even want him after everything?

Too many questions.

He still had a few small ice spikes creating a pattern over his arms. They were melting away, but he didn't want to scare her. She had been through so much, and he wanted to shield her from the whole world. There was so much he needed to tell her but his tongue

couldn't find the right words now.

His eyes trailed over her body, which was barely covered by the leftovers of the once beautiful gown, and he noticed that blood

trickled down her arms and side.

“You’re hurt!” his lips parted, eyes glowing icy blue. His mind started racing, searching for solutions. Where was the healer they brought with them? How fast could he get her there? But he didn’t even manage to say another word when she threw herself at

him.

“Kai!”

She was in his embrace faster than he thought possible. Trembling, so warm and so alive. He wrapped his arms around her, pressing

her as hard against his chest as he could and kissed her hair.

He could feel her body shaking with silent tears, and his soul wept together with her. It roared from all the pain and happiness of

their separation and reunion.

“I thought you were dead! I saw you die! I-

” She sobbed for the first time since he met her, and it made his heart clench. He didn’t want to see her cry; he didn’t want to be the reason for it, so he took her tear-

stained face into his hands and made her look at him. Her

green eyes had a more intense colour now, like the grass after a rain.

He kissed one of her tears and then caught another with his lips, repeating it again and again until she breathed out a whimper, and then he claimed her lips. Pecking them gently at first and checking her reaction, but when he saw that she wasn’t crying

anymore but was panting instead, he crushed himself to her like a hurricane, a force of nature that only wanted to devour her.

“Mine,” he snarled into her mouth.

“Mate,” Savannah replied as she laced her fingers into his hair to bring him closer.

“Mate!” Kai confirmed.

A loud roar emerged from behind their backs...

The Luna Trials by Marissa Gilbert Chapter 64

Chapter 64

Kai had never been a patient person, and it was torture of a new kind to stay behind and wait. It did not bother him that he could not shift back to his human form anymore. He wasn't picky and was ready to spend his whole new life as a wolf as long as he could rescue Savannah. She was his priority and the one and only thing on his mind from the moment he woke up. When Fenrir asked for his firstborn, Kai didn't even hesitate. Why would he? A child was in a distant future he could never have in the first place without the rebirth, and in all honesty, he could have tricked the God later. There were many legends about similar occurrences. Either way, it was a problem for later. But Savvy... Savvy needed his help now.

Of course, he wanted to save his kingdom too. He was brought up and trained to exist with the weight of responsibility for the

North. However, now he knew that if he was ever forced to make a choice, he would have to spend eternity begging Fenrir's and his

people's forgiveness because he knew whom he would choose. It was not right, it was selfish and not worthy of a king, but Kai knew now

that Savvy came first. She was his everything, and somehow, after he was reborn, all those feelings only intensified.

The memories of Savannah's scared face were flashing before his eyes. Memories from when life was slipping away from him. He

understood what was happening before she did, and when she realised he was dying, it scared her beyond belief. That girl had no

problem facing multiple enemies, walking into deadly traps, being betrayed and stabbed in the back, but losing him brought horror to

her face and grief into her soul. Primal boundless fear gripped her and Kai... Kai was horrified, too. Knowing that he was abandoning her,

knowing that the enemy would come for her when she would be at her weakest...

The Lycan King of the North had already felt weak once. Right after his parents died. After just one day, he had to start taking care of

his kingdom and his depressed little sister. Every time Elene sobbed in his arms, every time his then-advisors looked at him as if he was

just a little boy with a sparkling crown, he felt like that. Useless, weak, pathetic... an impostor.

Contrary to everyone's beliefs, his life was never easy. Although his childhood was happy until he lost his parents, even when they were alive, he had to work hard for everything. His father didn't accept any excuses and he had high

expectations of his heir. Kai didn't get to play with other kids much, he had more important things to do. Maybe it was the reason that he had trouble making friends in the first place. He had next to no experience with relating to people. He was introduced to Aspen because their fathers were

friends, but it took them years to get close. Lachlan was an exception – the two of them hit

it off immediately. Although Kai was always surrounded by people, Lachlan and later Aspen

were the only two he could call friends. They stood by him when he became the King, and he knew he could always count on them. It was important because he was also aware he couldn't count on anyone else. Everyone wanted a piece of him, but mostly, they wanted him gone. The Northerners were fiercely loyal to their King, but, just as with their Lunas, they had to accept him as their King first. So, Kai earned their respect. He had to become stronger, sterner, and more ruthless.

For a brief moment, he thought that he and Gideon could be friendly, but they were too much alike. Kai knew he had to be the best for everyone to fear him and stay away from the North. Gideon had similar ideas about the West. They were unlucky to end up at the same Alpha training facility at the same time because they immediately clashed. It still could have been a healthy competition. They tried to keep it up for a while, but once Kai heard Gideon talking about his sister in a less-than-complimentary way, all hell broke loose. Kai went on the defence, and there was that knowledge etched in his mind that the best defence was a good offence.

Playing the role of the perfect king was hard for him because perfect was one thing that he wasn't. This was why he loved his "gardener and the little maid" game with Savannah so much. He loved her gaze flickering when she looked at him and, at the same time,

having no idea who he really was.

She came into his life unexpectedly and turned everything upside down, bringing chaos into it, but also... she brought him peace.

Kai didn't even notice how his life became all about her.

And now he had quite a few things to worry about.

Kai had made an impossible deal. Maybe she would never forgive him when she found out, but as long as she would be there to find out, he'd take it. He would find a way around this. He would do everything he could to make her happy and not give away their first-born baby, but his main priority would always be Savannah's safety. If he had to die again today to achieve this- so be it.

It was strange to be in this new form. Fenrir called him Amarok, and he remembered old northern legends about giant lonely wolves who destroyed everything in their path. This wasn't what he wanted to be, but again, he was ready to accept it if it meant he would have enough power to defend at his enemies. He was supposed to be dead anyway, but since he was given a second chance, he wasn't going to

waste it.

His whole body was new, and it took some getting used to it because of how giant it was. It didn't feel the same as being in his royal lycan form.

He wasn't simply larger now, but in a way, he became stronger and more powerful. He couldn't find it in himself to shift back into a human, but at the same time, he had no trouble making everything around him freeze. He could create ice with his will, and he

could shape whatever he wanted out of it.

The first thing that he tried when he realised that was, of course, Savannah's sculpture. He sat in front of it now, waiting for the news from Ash, keeping it away from melting. He had made her almost identical to the real version, and just looking at her was helping him to stay focused and maintain his sanity. She was his anchor to this world, and having her close, even if it wasn't the real Savvy, was helping him to keep himself from going feral and charging at that damn castle.

Riannon was the one who talked him out of it. Surprisingly, Gideon's mate was his voice of reason now. When she was contacting him through

her wolf Onyx, he could feel their emotions and knew that they were genuine. That made him listen.

Time after time, the Luna and the Queen of the Western Lycan Kingdom told him to believe in Savannah, promising that the Princess would be able to take care of herself. He really wanted to just go to Bjorn's castle, kill everyone, and get Savvy back. But they all knew that it wouldn't be that simple. Too many things weren't adding up, and traitors were everywhere.

He was greedily watching the news, promising himself to kill both Chloe and Claude when he would get the chance. He couldn't

believe how easily they switched sides. However, thanks to them, he was getting bits and pieces of information about Savannah. Lachlan

did not want to show him the whole video of how she was brought to the white bear's castle, but after his menacing growl, his Beta gave

up and let it play. Seeing her on his enemy's back brought him back into despair. For once, he and Gideon were on the same page, and

both wanted to go to the White Bear Cliffs immediately, but this time Kyle was the one who stopped them.

"You need to see this!" He stood before the two of them with his laptop, opening a page of his TruthTeller website.

"This is really not the time!" Gideon growled and Kai snarled in agreement.

"Just wait!" The young man insisted, and then Evelyn and Riannon stood up for him, insisting that he had a point. "I'm receiving

anonymous videos from how everything really went," he told them. "Bjorn probably has enemies in his castle, too! There are so many of

them! I mean, so many videos... Look!"

He started by showing them how they'd chained Savvy to make her sit on that white bear's back, which made Kai's insides burn with

fury. Then there was a video about how Savannah was almost unconscious by the time they got to the castle and how she threw up all

over that piece of trash, the white bear king. That last part brought him momentary satisfaction, but at the same time it pained him to

see the woman he loved so much in that situation. The last video was of three girls Kai had never seen before.

"I've been cleaning the whole room for hours!" one of them complained, "I don't think that Queen Savannah will be ready to

perform her... queenly duties anytime soon. The healer told the king that she shouldn't be doing anything physical for at least the next

two days. Poor man! I thought the king would snap his neck on the spot. He was lucky to survive."

"The king seems impatient, though," another girl said. She had a broom and dustpan in her hands and looked like a maid without a uniform.

"He will not touch her in anger!" The third one rolled her eyes. "Have you seen how he looks at her? She was sick all over him, but

he was worried if she was all right, not caring about anything else. He would never do anything to hurt her!"

The video ended, and Kyle closed his laptop. Gideon and Kai exchanged glances. This time they didn't need to speak to understand

each other.

“We have at least a day more,” Riannon said quietly.

“And trust me, Savvy knows how to play sick,” Kyle smirked. “Gid, remember that week you invited the sons of Alphas to our mansion to “get to know” Savvy better and then she accidentally poured wolfsbane all over herself in a class and got stomach flu because

of that?”

Kai snarled angrily as the Western King ran his hand over his face.

“Let me guess,” Gideon exhaled heavily. “Never happened?”

“Nope,” Kyle shook his head, “but when all these women suddenly decided that you were looking for a Luna a week later that

“_

wasn’t a coincidence,” Gideon finished the sentence, grunting. He’d always suspected that.

“Look,” the redheaded nephew of his Beta sighed and glanced at Evelyn for support, “I’m not saying that we shouldn’t save her. I would die for Savvy, you know that. Not only is she my best friend, but she’s also like a sister to me. We grew up together, and I care for her as much as you do. But Riannon is right, and we should believe in her. Also, we can’t be reckless about this. We need a good plan to make sure that when we go there, we really get her back and don’t mess anything up.”

“Besides,” Evelyn said, stepping forward, “Princess Savannah is not the only one we need to rescue. I know you probably don’t care much about Petra, but I do and so does Savannah herself! And also, there is your Gamma. I’m sure you want to get Aspen out almost as much as you want to rescue Savannah. In all honesty, the princess is the one who is safe there. It’s going to be much more dangerous for the other two.”

Kai wasn't torn about this, he felt guilty. Evelyn was right, he really wanted to try and save them all, but Savvy was the one at the top of his mind. Once he got her out, he would come back for Petra and Aspen. And also to kill Bjorn. But that would be after his beloved was safe. Or during her rescue, in the best-case scenario.

"We will, of course, try to save them all together," Lachlan assured them with his soft political tone. Kai knew that he was about to find an excuse to reject the suggestion, but this was when Evelyn stepped forward.

"And I believe there's a way to do all of this," the woman proclaimed confidently. "I have just spoken with Petra's father over the phone, and he told me that Bjorn offered him a chance to buy Petra. They told him to send a delegation to his castle to negotiate this. The bears are putting her—" Evelyn's voice broke, but she took a deep breath and went on, "they're putting Petra up for an auction. Whoever pays the highest price gets to keep her."

They all got quiet, each thinking of how best to resolve the situation.

"Don't you see?" Riannon furrowed her brows and hugged herself. "This is a perfect opportunity to get our people inside the castle and get Savannah and the others out safely. We just can't pass this opportunity up."

Kai still did not like this. It meant waiting longer, and all he wanted to do was get there sooner, grab his woman, rescue her, and bring her back home.

A loud shriek pierced their ears, and they all looked up as Zara was flying down from the sky. She shifted while she was still in the air and landed in front of them with grace. She was the one Kai waited for the most because she could bring him news that nobody else could.

"Did you see her?" Gideon asked without hesitation.

“She was in her room the whole time I was there, sleeping alone,” the w erebird informed them. “I couldn’t get too close, though, without being suspicious. Hawks do not rest on windowsills, you know. Not to mention that they know me. I also saw Bjorn, and it looks like he’s busy. I don’t think he’s going to get to spend time with Savannah anytime soon. She is safe for now.”

That gave Kai the strength and patience to wait a bit longer and plan everything properly.

Luckily, it was a good decision.

.....

They waited for a signal from Ash but received nothing. He was supposed to come back first and bring them information on who was where and what the weak spots in defence were. Everybody knew that Aspen would be the easiest to access but the hardest to get out due to his multiple injuries. Zara informed them that the Gamma’s condition was the worst out of the three. She also confirmed that she hadn’t seen Astrid and her friend Emma anywhere, which left their fates unknown. However, Brigit seemed to feel at home, which convinced them that she was the one helping Bjorn all this time to everyone’s disappointment. Only Riannon did not comment on how the she-bear was going to be punished for her betrayal when the war was over.

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But when Kai’s eyes glowed menacingly in the darkness and the air around them became uncomfortably cold even for a werewolf, Ash quickly changed the subject to what was really important now.

“Princess Savannah is in her royal Lycan form now,” he informed Amara quickly, knowing that Kai was still inside. “She told us to run while she was covering for us and leading them away. We would have never made it without her help.”

Kai wasn’t listening anymore, he only turned on his paws and sprinted to where the group came from, trying to pick up her scent.

Brigit was watching from the window in her room as Savannah and the werewolves freed Aspen and placed him on one of the wolves’ backs. It was probably just an illusion that her mate... her ex-mate... locked his eyes with hers for a moment. After all, his eyes were so swollen he probably couldn’t see a thing anyway. But she let herself believe that it was the truth and that he knew that she was the one that set off the explosion in the tower and helped the fire in the castle spread in order to help him escape. She knew that he would never forgive her betrayal and that they would probably never see each

other again, but a smile formed on her lips as she placed her forehead on the cold glass of the window and watched them escape.

“Thank you, Aspen,” she whispered, even though there was no chance he would hear her. She was thanking him for the new feeling in her chest that tugged and pulled and warmed her up when everything else in her world was so cold. She remembered how she once thought that she was in love with Castiel. That memory now made her laugh. There couldn’t be

any comparison. She was fighting the mate bond so hard because she knew he would hate her one day. She fought for Castiel’s love for years and spent hundreds of nights with

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Yet the one time she had been with Aspen would be what she would cherish in her heart forever now. The night of Savvy and Kai’s marking ceremony when all she originally planned to do was to kiss him and drug him. Instead, she let him take her in a small dark room he used in the castle when he was overseeing its security.

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Two small hands wrapped around her, and she turned to see her sister, Ingrid.

“You love him, don't you?” Ingrid asks through tears, and Brigit tucked her face into her sibling's blonde hair and let herself to let out her tears finally.

Ingrid stroked her back and gave her the time she needed, before she whispered, “Bri, you need to go with them. You can. He would look for me, but not for you.”

“Aspen would never want me again,” Brigit distanced herself and wiped her eyes, knowing that she couldn't be seen crying. It was too dangerous. “It's too late for us now,” she smiled sadly. “Besides, my place is here with you. With my people. Don't you think?”

Ingrid didn't think that. She knew how badly her sister was treated by some of the white bears, not to mention how the guilt was slowly eating her alive.

“Bri, if you need anything- anything other than me running away from my husband, just tell me,” the girl suggested.

“Right now, I need only one thing,” Brigit smiled and held her sister's hands. “Come with me downstairs; pretend that we're both distraught over what happened today. Tell anyone who asks that you were with me the whole time in my room. And we left it just now to come and check on our king.” She paused and then added, “And on your beloved husband, of course.”

Kai's heart broke into a myriad of pieces when he saw her. He couldn't move. He did not dare to move.

He was ready to kill all those bears all over again because of what they made Savannah go through. He'd do it in a heartbeat if given a chance.

The last few days were the first ones in his new life, and at the same time, they were the hardest in both of his lifetimes. He failed

her, and he couldn't fix any of it. She was so close in her torn red dress, with her hair a wild mess cascading down her shoulders. She had

been through hell, and he hadn't been there to save her. He was late, and she had to save herself. Something he would never forgive himself for. Something he would never allow to happen again.

It was torture to stay behind and wait, knowing that he would only make it worse if he arrived at the wrong time. Riannon told them

to believe in Savvy, to trust that she would take care of herself. And that was exactly what Savannah did. This beautiful, delicate woman fought like a hundred men. She was ready to sacrifice herself to save her friends. She was honourable, loyal, honest, fierce, brave... And

also...

Mate. She was his mate.

The whole world screamed this now. All his senses, the scents around them, the air, the stars in the sky, they all sang in unison that they belonged together.

She was his. And he belonged to her.

A part of him knew from the very beginning. From the moment he saw her shredding those roses, from the moment he thought she

was just a little maid. But he knew she was his maid. He loved her from that very first glance, even if he didn't understand it back then.

The universe stopped spinning. They were the only two people to ever exist. It was hard to tell if it was one moment or if they stared at each other for eternity. Neither of them could tell...

"You're alive," she barely whispered because she was afraid that a louder sound would break the illusion and she would be alone in this world again. Alone and ready to die.

"I came back," his voice rasped through his chest, and her breathing hitched. "For you."

It was him! He was here... Alive and well. He was breathing, and he wasn't an illusion.

Kai was alive. Her Kai. Kai Fionnlagh. The one she held in her arms when he was dying. The one she mourned for days after witnessing a silver spear pierce his heart. The one she never expected to see again. Not in this world... Moreover, she was trying to get into the next one to be reunited with him.

And he was her mate! Mate!

Kai didn't know what to say next. Was she angry with him for being late? For abandoning her? Did she feel what he felt now? Did he

hear her right when she called him her mate? Did she even want him after everything?

Too many questions.

He still had a few small ice spikes creating a pattern over his arms. They were melting away, but he didn't want to scare her. She had been through so much, and he wanted to shield her from the whole world. There was so much he needed to tell her but his tongue

couldn't find the right words now.

His eyes trailed over her body, which was barely covered by the leftovers of the once beautiful gown, and he noticed that blood

trickled down her arms and side.

"You're hurt!" his lips parted, eyes glowing icy blue. His mind started racing, searching for solutions. Where was the healer they brought with them? How fast could he get her there? But he didn't even manage to say another word when she threw herself at

him.

"Kai!"

She was in his embrace faster than he thought possible. Trembling, so warm and so alive. He wrapped his arms around her, pressing

her as hard against his chest as he could and kissed her hair.

He could feel her body shaking with silent tears, and his soul wept together with her. It roared from all the pain and happiness of

their separation and reunion.

"I thought you were dead! I saw you die! I-

" She sobbed for the first time since he met her, and it made his heart clench. He didn't want to see her cry; he didn't want to be the reason for it, so he took her tear-

stained face into his hands and made her look at him. Her

green eyes had a more intense colour now, like the grass after a rain.

He kissed one of her tears and then caught another with his lips, repeating it again and again until she breathed out a whimper, and then he claimed her lips. Pecking them gently at first and checking her reaction, but when he saw that she wasn't crying anymore but was panting instead, he crushed himself to her like a hurricane, a force of nature that only wanted to devour her.

"Mine," he snarled into her mouth.

"Mate," Savannah replied as she laced her fingers into his hair to bring him closer.

"Mate!" Kai confirmed.

A loud roar emerged from behind their backs...

The Luna Trials by Marissa Gilbert Chapter 65

Chapter 65

Bjorn knew that the moment his healing was done, he would pursue Savvy, overpower her, to try to knock her out and bring her back. The silly girl used her third form, and he knew that she couldn't control it. Knocking her out would be the one and only chance to bring her back from this. If she stayed in her Royal Lycan form for too long, he would lose her. He couldn't lose her! She was all he had, and now his head was spinning with ideas of how to get her back. There had to be a way!

Once again, he regretted pushing her too far too fast, but at the same time, he also regretted not marking her at once. If he hadn't taken pity on her situation and just went with it, she would still be healing and

in his full grasp. These were selfish thoughts. The thoughts contradicted each other, and, in all honesty, he didn't know what he should have done. How he should have handled her, but he knew

now that what he chose to do was wrong.

One thing was for sure; he shouldn't have believed in what was too good to be true. She played on his desire to be accepted and

used his one and only weakness.

His wound still hadn't fully healed, but he heard several loud roars coming from the main square that made him fear for her

life.

"Don't... kill," his voice gurgled through his chest as he clenched his neck. The long cut on his chest didn't bother him much, but the

neck wound was still dangerously painful.

Joran followed him with his gaze in silence, and only a few warriors stayed by his side for protection, none of them dared to offer

him help, knowing that he'd rather end them than acknowledge this humiliation. He never forgave humiliation... until now.

Savvy humiliated him more than anyone else in his entire life. Only Castiel's father could possibly compare to what she did to him

tonight. Yet... he... had already forgiven her. He knew that he'd have to punish her, lock her away, keep her far away from everyone, but

he wouldn't kill her, and he wouldn't reject her. She could do anything to him, and the result would be the same. He needed her.

A growl escaped him at the realisation.

“She is long gone,” Jor commented, gulping the rest of his wine and throwing away the glass angrily. His lips were pressed into a thin white line now, and Bjorn didn’t know what to make out of it all.

“You could have helped!” the White Bear King snapped.

“Not in this case,” the Serpent scowled, turning away as if he was keeping more secrets from him. Secrets, secrets, secrets. Everyone had secrets, and Bjorn had had enough of all this.

He kicked a jug that was on the floor right next to him, and a menacing growl escaped his chest as he pushed himself to restore, the acceleration clouding his mind temporarily.

He heard the despair of his men in their mindlink. He felt them dying one by one, knowing that it was Savannah’s doing.

“*Just kill the b***h!*” One of his warriors growled. “Or she is *going* to kill *us all!*”

A wave of panic rippled through him.

Whatever it was, he couldn’t let anyone hurt her. If his men killed her, they were as good as dead.

“*Bring her back alive!*” He snarled at them in his mind and ran. Ran, ran, ran to where he felt her. Though thoughts of the many

punishments he could inflict on her for what she did today were flashing before his eyes, he knew that the main goal was to protect her.

In a way, he would always be protecting her. Why couldn’t she see that and accept him? Her first mate was dead, Kai was dead, her whole

family was dead. He was all she had, too.

The sight in the square startled him for an instance. So many bodies... He'd lost so many men!

But that wasn't important now. All he wanted was to save her, to get her back. He would do everything differently now, he would not underestimate her again.

He raced through the woods in his human form. That let him use some narrow paths a bear wouldn't be able to. He ran without thinking twice, using his instincts to reach her.

110

A great idea suddenly came to his mind. Poison! He could tell people that she was poisoned, and that was why she did all these things today. It wasn't the most believable version in the world, but it could work if he could scare people enough to support his claim.

He would have to lock her in the highest tower and keep her there for a year or two for safety reasons, but... at least they could still be together.

Finally, her delicious scent reached his nostrils, and he breathed out in relief, knowing that she was alive. The stench of blood let him know that his warriors probably weren't...

But he could live with that. Losing Savannah would have been unbearable.

However, he soon smelled something else. A familiar scent but with new notes.

Only that couldn't be... He was dead. He had to be dead! Bjorn personally pierced his heart with that spear *to* ensure a situation like this would never happen.

And yet the Northern Lycan King stood before his eyes, holding his mate. Savannah wept in his arms, and then he claimed Bjorn's mate's lips.

It was worse than when she stabbed him with a dagger, it was worse than when he found out his first mate was sleeping with his father. Why did it hurt so much?

Bjorn had to lean against a tree, his elongated claws digging into the bark as he did his best not to give himself away. Why was life so

unfair to him? He did everything he could to survive, he did everything he could to get his mate to accept his mark, he did everything by

the book! He was told not to face Kai in battle, and he never did! And he managed to win! The victory was clear; it was his and he had

worked for it for so long! His plan was perfect! He had thought about everything! Why! Why did it have to be this way?!

A roar of pain and despair escaped his chest against his control, it was the cry of a warrior, the scream of a betrayed lover and a

warning to the ones who hurt him.

He saw how Savannah flinched in the Lycan King's arms, how the man he hated so much moved his mate behind his back, trying to

protect her from him. Him! They must have been joking!

The rage overwhelmed him, and as if he was an impulsive teen, he shifted uncontrollably and charged at his enemy. All the years of restraining himself were now gone. He did everything as he was told, planned everything meticulously, he kept away from Kai because of

that prophecy, and this was what he got?!

Bjorn didn't care anymore. He was going to kill the Lycan King today, once and for all. He would be more clever this time and tear

Kai's body into pieces, then he would burn them and scatter the ashes in different parts of the world just to make sure that he would

never ever come back and disturb his happiness again.

Blood. He wanted his blood as payment for all the pain and humiliation.

Savannah screamed when Kai gently pushed her back, and then he was gone in an instant, turning into something completely else.

Bjorn's fierce attack was met by a creature no one had ever seen before. The place where they clashed was covered with frost in mere

seconds, making the Princess gasp. She still did not know what was going on, and in all honesty, she did not care how Kai came back. She was genuinely happy to just see him, happy that they had another chance. But now she was asking herself, what did he go through to get

back to her? What happened to him? What had been done to him?

Teeth, claws, blood, growls and roars; they hated each other so much that neither of them cared about anything else anymore. They both equally wanted the other dead and were ready to sacrifice almost anything to achieve this.

Bjorn saw what was before him. He knew that he didn't have to fight just a Royal Lycan anymore. The creature that fought against him was so m

uch more than that, but it wasn't stopping the bear from trying to kill him. The wolf threw him and made him crash against a tree, breaking the ancient pine in half, chips flying in all directions. But the anger and hate were his fuel now, so Bjorn was back on his feet in no time.

He took in the beast before him and noticed how the ice on his back and neck was growing taller by the minute. The white bear charged at him again, knowing that his best chance was a surprise attack. He would aim for the neck and the belly, the parts where he could make a fatal blow. Luckily, regular bears' jaws were strong enough to make deadly bites. Bjorn, however, was no regular bear. He was the White Bear King of the North, a royal in his own right, a bear blessed by a God, invincible, unstoppable and deadly. And he was going to win this.

He was still running when he saw a myriad of ice needles flying in his direction. He did not avert his eyes or cover himself, so the little sharp blades went through his skin and fur. That stopped him as he had to brush them off, get them out of his eyes and nose and other sensitive areas.

But Kai did not plan to wait. Amarok was a legend for a reason, and he fully planned on using his new advantages to destroy the man who had hurt his mate and tried to break them apart. Kai had hatred in his heart, too. Not only was Bjorn responsible for their suffering and separation, for murdering him, for trying to claim Savannah as his own, but he even ruined the sweet moment they had been sharing just now. Savvy did not deserve to have this man coming back for her again and again and again. He did not want her to have to live

always looking over her shoulder, thinking if that damn bear would be back. He wanted her to be happy and safe, and for that, he had to

kill Bjorn.

The bear got rid of the needles too quickly, but Kai was already there, piercing his side with the ice spikes and escaping before Bjorn

could even turn in his direction. The bear let out a menacing roar from the pain, fury, and frustration that echoed through the dark

woods and then he lashed out at his rival. His attack was brutal; he wasn't wasting a second of his time, each move calculated but at the

same time filled with agony. A battle of hateful passion and contradictions. However, Amarak manoeuvred easily, escaping each

time.

Both blessed by the gods, they were equals, but somehow Kai's technique was better. He was exhausting the bear and using his own

anger against him. The Lycan King wanted to pounce on Bjorn and end him quickly, but unlike Bjorn, who was desperate and tried to kill

him at all costs, Kai knew that he had to take his time. Savannah was watching and wounded and if he lost, she would have to go through

hell again fighting for her life. He needed to get her to a healer, and although this way took longer, it was the one that was going to bring

him victory. Bjorn was sloppy, and soon he made a mistake that opened up access to his neck and made him vulnerable. Amarak did not

waste his opportunity and sunk his ice—cold canines in, feeling how the warm blood of his enemy filled his mouth and trickled down both

their furs. He closed his jaws, and then, remembering everything the damn bear put them through, he ripped his flesh out, causing a mortal wound.

Bjorn did not expect this. The words of the prophecy sounded over and over in his head. Never meet the *Lycan King* of the North *in battle; never fight him with your own hands.*

He should have listened.

Bjorn fell to the frost-covered grass, its coolness his only consolation. A pool of blood was forming around him, but all he saw was Amarak shifting back to his human form and running towards his mate. Bjorn's mate. He could still smell her intoxicating bluebell scent, and although it pained him to see her wrapping her arms around his mortal enemy, a part of him was happy that at least her scent enveloped him in his final moments. For a moment there, his eyes locked with Savannah's, and hope took over his heart once again. But Kai had already shifted back into a giant wolf and lowered himself so that Savannah could climb on his back, and they could escape,

leaving him behind as if he was nothing to her.

If Bjorn could chuckle now, he would. His destiny was cruel, after all. The last thing he would ever see would be his mate on his enemy's back.

The two lycans were gone, and Bjorn lay on the ground in his human form now, foraging for when death would come for him. Soon he heard footsteps somewhere in the distance and hoped that his time had come. However, he had to frown when he saw Joran towering over him.

“Go away!” the bear spat blood. The deity was the last person he wanted to see now. At least he wanted to die in peace. Maybe he deserved at least that much.

“How can I leave you?” Joran knelt next to him on the cold ground. “I have known you since you were a little boy,” he confessed with a smile. “I saw potential in you, and I believed in you. I have spent years helping you. I placed my bet on you and I can’t see you lose.

This was unexpected. Bjorn always thought that they had a business relationship.

“We only made a few deals,” he recalled and noticed a sad smile curling the Serpent’s lips. Unreasonably, he wanted to anger the almighty snake. “You and your butterflies!”

“Dragonflies,” Jor corrected dryly, looking at the sky as if he was contemplating something. “They are dragonflies.”

“Anyway, I only saw you caring about them,” Bjorn scoffed bitterly in a broken voice.

“Just one of them,” Joran admitted. “The one that went missing after a mission I gave her because of you.”

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The White Bear King did not care much anymore. He felt life slip away from him. A minute or two and it would be over...

“We have been overplayed,” Joran informed him in a low voice and placed a hand on his chest. Something changed immediately,

and Bjorn coughed, blood spluttering from his wounds. However, he could feel how his healing was accelerated drastically, and his cells

were restoring themselves like crazy. He did not expect it and his eye darted to the Serpent, whose lips twitched as if he was about to smile.

“I told you I care about you,” he repeated his words to Bjorn. “What happened today was not fair. She was your mate, you were both each other’s second chances. The two of you could have been happy together, and honestly, in the castle, I couldn’t understand what was wrong with her, why couldn’t she react the way she was supposed to... After what I saw right now... Darius, now I know. And I am so sorry!”

Bjorn’s brows quirked up, “Wh— what are you talking about? What is wrong with Savvy?”

“I probably chose the wrong words,” Jor took his hand away, knowing that the bear would be restored in minutes on his own now.

He had already dragged him out from the other side. “She is that mutt’s mate now,” he corrected himself, “but this is a forced bond. It shouldn’t be there.”

Bjorn’s claws grew out again, and he grasped the soil underneath him in a new fit of raw fury. A forced bond! He knew it! He knew

that Savannah was his. She was just... mistaken.

“How?” he groaned, trying to get up despite the waves of pain rippling through him.

“My brother,” Joran replied, scowling and gave Bjorn his hand, helping him up. “Fenrir.”

The sounds of thunder emerged around them as the name of the Alpha God sounded. Bjorn suspected many things, he knew that

he had been dealing with a deity, and for a while, he suspected who the serpent really was. But it was one thing to suspect, and it was

another thing to actually know.

And now this... the whole North worshipped Fenrir. Almost every shrine in these lands was built in honour of its patron.

“Why would Fenrir do this?” he asked as the first shock wave subsided. “Why would he take my mate away from me?”

“This is probably my fault,” Joran let out a pained sigh.

“We destroyed the old order together, but many things have happened since

then. It’s very different now, and I think that Fenrir is against me now. And you, Darius, you’re a message to me. He is showing me what he

can do, provoking me, knowing that I care about you.”

“He clearly overestimates our relationship,” Bjorn seemed angry. It wasn’t fair that he got in the middle of some divine war. The

hatred for the wolf God was growing in his heart rapidly. He finally knew whom to blame.

“He does not,” the Serpent looked around. “Years ago, I chose you, Darius Bjorn, as my champion. I have been looking for one for

many years and saw potential in you. When you came back from the foxes without an eye but still alive and still willing to fight, I knew

that you had what it takes. I trusted you many times, and I never made it easy for you. I did not want you to like me, I wanted you to be

worthy. And I found out quite some time ago that you are worthy. I made the right choice, and I never regretted it, not once! Look how far

you've come with just a little bit of my help.”

“You're not seriously thinking that I'm buying any of this,” the white bear did not seem impressed at all. “We only made a few deals,

and you treated me like sh*t most of the time.”

“I stayed by your side for years, boy,” Joran insisted, and something changed about his voice. It was now deeper and darker, nothing like the honey from before. “I did not want to simply give you things. You had to earn them, to deserve them. And when I gave you your invincibility, I already decided that you were my chosen one, my champion, the one who would rule not only the North but the whole Monrise Kingdom. It has been my dream for centuries to restore what my brother once destroyed, and I have never been this close.

”

“In other words, you used me to fulfil your dream, and now I'm paying for it with my mate.” Bjorn closed his eyes, trying to control

his breathing, but no matter how he looked at it, Jor was his only way to obtain what he wanted.

“Wasn't this your dream too? To change the order of things, to unite the kingdoms and rule over them, forgetting about the wolves'

supremacy?” the Serpent taunted. “Not to mention that you got your second chance thanks to me. They aren't given to just anyone, you

know. I vouched for you.”

“And look where it got me!” Bjorn let out a laugh. It started like a little sound that rumbled through his chest, but in a matter of seconds, he was laughing so hard that tears burned his eyes.

Why not laugh? After all, his life was a joke!

“So, you are happy to leave everything as it is, then?” Joran decided to clear the air between them at once. “This is what you wish for?”

The white bear did not reply, and the deity before him nodded silently.

“You’re tired of fighting,” he sighed. “I understand. So be it.”

He was about to leave when Bjorn’s laughter turned into a roar filled with so much rage that birds flew away from the nearby trees,

trying to save themselves in horror. The roar soon turned into a call, a battle cry that every single warrior stationed in this part of the

North knew that the King was summoning them.

Bjorn was panting when he was done, but when he faced his patron, there was determination rippling through his veins.

“Tell me one thing,” he chuckled darkly, “what will happen when Kai is dead again?”

“What do you mean?” Jor arched his brow, watching his champion with a newfound amusement.

“If I manage to kill him again and ensure he isn’t coming back this time, what will happen with- her?”

Bjorn met the Serpent’s gaze, and the deity understood where he was coming from.

“She is your mate before she is his, Darius,” Joran replied. “If her forced mate is dead, she will be back to being your second-chance mate.”

“Will she feel it this time?” the bear wondered.

“That’s hard to tell now,” Joran rubbed the bridge of his nose. “This is an unusual situation, but I don’t see why she wouldn’t feel it if her current bond with Kai is broken.”

“Great!” Bjorn cleared his throat and then took a deep breath of the cold northern air. “I am tired of fighting, but I will not let

anyone take what is mine anymore! Years of staying quiet, of plotting behind the scenes and hiding in the catacombs, I am tired of all of this. This time... it’s going to be all or nothing!”

“I like your spirit,” a smirk spread over the Serpent’s face as he observed the one who was going to help him with his revenge, “And this time, I will help you more than before. You have my word. After all, who says I can have only one champion?”

