

# The Last Spirit Wolf

by Elena Norwood

## Chapter 31

-Noah-

When we reach the front doors to the castle, I'm right next to Vera, my hand to her waist. Since she doesn't have my mark, this possessive gesture should do to show everyone here who she belongs to.

The wide, ancient wooden doors open and one of the Council members is waiting for us on the other side. He beckons us forward and we obey.

"Noah, Eli, Lucas, welcome back." He's greeting us kindly, but we know the Council has no love for anyone but their own. "And who is this? Is she the mate the King told us about?"

He approaches Vera and extends his hand. Vera's expression remains neutral but my hand at her waist tenses. We don't actually know what we are walking into.

Vera extends her hands graciously,

"I'm Vera, it's very nice to meet you." It's the first time I've heard her voice in a few hours, she sounds relaxed.

"The pleasure is all mine Vera, I'm Council Member William."

They shake hands briefly and then the moment is over.

"Gentlemen, Vera, please follow me.

"I was hoping to get Vera to my room to rest before heading for the trial." I interject.

"Nonsense, she is also being requested by the Council and the King. We were all dying to see who this mysterious mate to the fabled warrior Noah might be. Come. quickly."

I tense up even further, but Vera seems perfectly calm. I look at her, hoping to get an indication of what she's thinking. She just looks up at me and smiles again, and I get no read on her thoughts.

Once we arrive at the door where the trial will be held, we are stopped by guards that search us and take Vera's spear away. They hand it to Council Member William and he unsheathes it. He gasps when he sees it, realizing how intricate and old it is; he lightly touches the blue stone that hangs from the shaft.

"They're clear." One of the guards declares and the doors open for us.

Inside, there is a grand, rectangular table that sits at least five feet high. The Council members require stairs in order to get to their places, sitting even higher than the Council table is the King's Podium, where he is regarding us impassively.

We are ushered inside, standing in front of the council members as Council Member William takes his seat.

Eli, Lucas and I kneel before The King, as is customary. Vera moves to do the same but one of the council members speaks,

"The mate of the warrior Noah appears to be unmarked, Your Highness, she shall not kneel since she is not yet a member of this Society; bowing to our King is a privilege."

All council members make a noise, signaling their approval, so Vera remains standing. I suppress the urge to growl at them. Under this context, even a grond could mean our deaths.

"Warrior Eli, Warrior Lucas, Warrior Noah, stand." Another council member orders us.

We do as we are told, standing with our hands behind our backs, and await their questioning.

"From what the King told us, you three deserted your posts, provoking your comrades' deaths. Is this true?"

"No, your Highness," Eli responds.

"And how would you explain your absence from your posts?"

"There were reports of strange noises the night before. I, along with Eli and Lucas went to scout the area." I replied.

"And how exactly did that lead to the deaths of everyone at the camp?" Another council member asks.

“It didn’t. A creature attacked them while we were gone. We found all of their bodies, beaten and dismembered, when we returned the next day.”

“And then naturally, you burned all the evidence!” Another council member accuses us.

I pay no attention to who is talking anymore. All of the council members’ voices sound nasally and whiny to me.

“We burned our warriors, as we should, to give them a proper send off to the afterlife.” Eli says through his teeth. I’m sure he’s finding this line of questioning as insulting as I am.

All this time, Vera has taken her time to study each of the council members. I can see her through the corner of my eye as she deliberately moves her head to study them.

The council room has erupted into a shouting match due to a question I didn’t quite catch while I was discretely observing Vera.

“Enough.” Comes a voice from above us all. The King has spoken, but none of the council members stop their bickering.

I smirk to myself. A real King wouldn’t need to demand respect from his people, but King Alistair can’t even keep control of his trial room.

“I said, ENOUGH!” He yells and the entire room goes silent. “Warrior Noah”, he continues, “In your opinion, what did cause the mysterious deaths of all those Lycans?”

He says those Lycans as if they weren’t his very own people, savagely beaten and killed.

But this is it. The moment of truth.

If they believe us, we will live.

If they don’t, we will die.

“It was a Chimera, your Highness.”