

The Luna Trials by Marissa Gilbert Chapter 51

Chapter 51

Savannah was in and out of consciousness. She was weaker than ever at the worst moment possible. The only thing that still registered in her mind was that they were still in Kai's castle,

Thinking of him was painful. Too painful. Thinking of him made breathing impossible, and she closed her eyes, writhing from the pain, remembering their last moments together and the spear piercing his chest. That damn spear was supposed to be just for decor...

It wasn't true. It wasn't true. It couldn't be. It had to be a dream, and she had to wake up from it. Wake up! Cold air bit at her exposed skin, and she opened her eyes again. Not a dream after all. A nightmare.

They were crossing the main inner square of the castle, which was now clear from people who celebrated her engagement to Kai just this morning.

Bjorn held her tight, and when one of his warriors offered to take and carry her for safety reasons, he growled at him menacingly as if she was already his and he couldn't stand to part from her. She hated it, she hated this. She wished he would have left her back there with the people she loved. That would have been a much better destiny than anything else left for her.

From the corner of her eye, Savannah noticed Brigit and Astrid walking slightly behind them. The latter unfastened the waistband of her gown, and the skirt fell off behind her,

revealing tight, comfortable pants and boots underneath. Astrid came prepared. She said it was her job and didn't lie about that. She was a true warrior. A spy, an assassin, who had no remorse over what she had just done. The gloomy dark aura of death was radiating from her now. There wasn't a trace of the sweet contender.

Someone cried not too far away. Probably Petra. Savvy couldn't see, and in all honesty, she didn't care now.

She had no strength to console anyone. She was broken herself. This... what happened today... it would never be repaired. There was no way to fix it. Her life was pretty much over.

“Brigit Borg!” A loud roar emerged, interrupting her train of thought and making everyone stop. Savannah tensed. The voice was hard to recognise because it was more of a growl, but it seemed familiar. Anger soaked in that voice.

Bjorn turned around, and she could see what was going on as his men stepped aside to give him a better view. Four humongous bear warriors were holding Aspen. He was badly beaten and in chains, but his eyes were still full of fury. He may have lost, but he wasn't defeated yet. Savvy's eyes searched for Brigit. She could

see her pale face with parted lips now and noticed how she clenched her fists so hard that nails were breaking her skin and making her bleed.

“Brigit Borg!” Aspen repeated loudly, and it seemed like time froze here.” I, Aspen Morr, reject you as my mate!”

The words echoed through the square, and Brigit sucked in a painful breath; her lips trembled as she thought about how to respond. Savannah knew exactly what she felt right now, but she wasn’t sorry. Even after finding out everything about her sister.

She could have come to them, she could have worked with her mate, and they would have helped her to rescue her sibling

Brigit chose the bears. Her kind. And soon, her mate would be dead because of this. Savvy was surprised he was still alive, but maybe it was a strategic decision. They were leaving the capital, which meant that this wasn’t the war’s end yet,

Bjorn just decapitated the North and probably planned to trap it into falling to his feet on its own. He wanted to get his crown while people cheered for him. That’s probably why he kept the bloodshed to a minimum. Just the castle. Just people most loyal to kai and his family. He was that confident and believed that this would be enough.

“What are you waiting for?” The leader of the white bears taunted Brigit with a sneer. “Accept it. You reported that it was next to impossible to get rid of him, and here you are. He is disposing of himself for you, saving you the job. Prove your loyalty to us once more, and maybe we will stop calling you a traitor.”

Clenching her fists, Brigit avoided Aspen’s gaze. Tears trickled down her cheeks when shespoke, her voice barely a whisper, “I, Brigit Borg, accept your rejection.”

The Gamma of the North groaned from the new wave of pain that struck him as the mate bond with Brigit was broken. White bears around them laughed as they dragged him away to one of the cars waiting for them. They shoved him into a trunk while making insulting jokes.

“What an eventful night!” Bjorn sneered, and a wave of chuckles followed. “Some bonds are broken, and some are formed!”

His eyes grazed over Savannah. He wanted to add something to his statement, but Astrid interrupted him.

“We need to go as soon as possible! We’ve already lost plenty of time, which is not what was agreed to!”

“Your Master wants something from me. Not the other way around!” The white bear snapped at her yet started walking towards the car designated for him. Savannah saw dead bodies everywhere. Some were killed during fights, and some were probably poisoned as it looked like they had all fallen right at their posts.

“My part of the deal is over,” Astrid informed the self-proclaimed King dryly. “Now I want to get the payment and leave!”

“You’ll get it when we are out of here!” Bjorn answered frigidly, and one of his men opened the car door for him.

Savannah’s eyelids were heavy. Her painful agony was dying down, but it was replaced by numbness. She tried to move a finger but found it an impossible task. She managed to get a last

glimpse of the castle she hated so much when she first arrived here. Once, all she wanted was to leave this place, and here she was, leaving it but wishing to stay. She could already see the flames as the fire spread from the top floors.

She still wanted to stay. With her family and with the man she loved.

The pain was still rippling through parts of her, but she knew she wasn't aching because of Zack and their destroyed bond. Losing Kai was a million times worse. The broken mate bond was just weakening her, but losing her beloved was breaking her beyond repair.

She passed out again and woke up only when the car stopped, having no idea how long they had been driving. It was dark inside, and several scents hit her nostrils simultaneously, indicating she wasn't alone in the car.

"Almost there," Bjorn whispered into her ear, and she realised he was holding her the whole time. Repulsed, she tried to distance herself from him, and he only chuckled, releasing her and letting her fall to the floor. "As you wish," he added, disgruntled as the door opened. "I wouldn't want to impose."

The leader of the white bears left first and gestured to someone behind Savannah to help and get her out. A hand reached for her arm from the darkness, and Savvy flinched when she saw Astrid's expressionless face.

The she-wolf grabbed her and practically dragged her out of the vehicle. "Just drop her!" Emma told her partner with a frown. "Our work here is done."

“Go get our car,” Astrid replied coldly, ignoring the suggestion “I want to get out of this goddess-forsaken place as soon as possible.”

Emma gave her an eye roll but followed the order. Maybe they weren’t partners after all. Instead, Astrid was in charge, and Emma did not like it too much. Not that the Princess cared. She could barely stand on her feet. The skin on her right hand was itching because of Zack’s dry blood on it; every cell of her body was in agony. She wanted to scratch every drop of her ex’s DNA off her.

“Who are you?” Savannah asked the assassin with a hoarse voice while Bjorn was talking to his people. “Why did you-”

“It doesn’t matter.” The woman cut her off without even so much as sparing her a glance. Savvy wanted to hit her, tell her how she felt, what she did to her

“You ruined my life!” She let out a heavy sigh, clenching her fists. “You-”

“I did everything I could to help you,” Astrid interjected, whispering so that only Savannah could hear her. “The rest is in the hands of the Moon Goddess or whatever god you believe in.”

“What do you-” The Princess gasped, not following what was going on, but Bjorn was already walking back in their direction, eyeing them suspiciously.

“I am sorry about Kai,” Astrid added quickly. “Good luck to you, Savvy. You are going to need it.”

She then pushed her at the White Bear King as if she was nothing; the man caught his prize with a chuckle and pressed her tighter against his torso, enjoying his power over her. Savannah tried to look at Astrid, searching for any kind of emotions to decipher what she had just told her.

There were too many mixed messages, and it felt like she was losing her mind.

“So can I have it at last?” Astrid arched her brow and stretched her hand. A little velvet black bag was thrown on her palm, and she carefully opened it with her thin fingers, checking the insides. Then, she closed it back and nodded at Bjorn, acknowledging that the terms of their agreement were fulfilled from his side.

“Best of luck with ... everything.” The woman nodded at Bjorn, but her eyes met Savvy’s stern glare. After which, she turned on her heel and tried to leave.

“Oh, by the way, Astrea,” The White Bear King rubbed the stubble on his chin, and she stopped, “tell Aeron that he has one happy client here. I will definitely require more services from you in the future.”

Emma drove a tall black car and stopped right in front of Astrid, or was it Astrea? The assassin opened the door and was almost done when she replied, “Only if you can afford it.”

The two girls were gone fast, and although Savvy hated them both with all her heart now, she felt like she was left alone with the enemy and the last pillar of support was gone. She didn’t see Petra anymore.

She refused to look at Bjorn, but it didn't seem to bother him at all. He seemed happy with everything, and all she wanted was to wipe that smug smile off his face. She was ready to do anything to make that happen

“Clean her up and prepare her for the ride!” The White Bear King pushed her at someone, and this time, feminine hands caught her.

“She doesn't look too good,” Brigit said calmly and heard a growl in response from her leader, who wasn't interested in all that.

“Yet the show must go on!” Bjorn chuckled.

Someone brought warm water, and Brigit washed Savannah's face and then cleaned Zack's blood off her hand. They didn't speak. There was nothing to say between them, and Savvy felt relieved when the girl left. Only that she came back a few moments later with a blue hooded cape and threw it over the Princess's hair.

A cape! Who would wear a cape in this day and age?! When Bjorn returned, Savannah tried to catch a breath, leaning over a tree. His gaze studied her

carefully, and he frowned slightly. She was too pale and did not look healthy. Yet, at the same time, she saw the excited glint in his eyes. What did he want from her now?

He stood beside her and tried to cup her chin, but she slapped his hand off.

“Just a few miles left from here to your new home,” he informed her dryly. “Our people will be greeting us.”

“This is not my home and those are not my people!” Savannah glared at him defiantly.

“Let’s agree to disagree,” the werebear smirked and took off his leather jacket, throwing it at one of his

men

The princess’ lips parted in shock. Just what was he about to do? His t-shirt followed, revealing his large, toned upper body covered by scars.

However, when he started unbuckling his belt, she realised where this was going. “You are going to shift?” She wondered, eyes wide.

“Yes.” Bjorn’s pants fell to the ground, and he stepped out of them. She did not give him the satisfaction of a reaction and held his gaze with pride.

“Why the hell would you shift now when we are so close?” She demanded.

“Because we have to honour Northern traditions.” The werebear towered over her, and she swallowed the lump in her throat.

“Which one?” Savannah breathed out, holding the tree behind her not to fall down from exhaustion. It was her one and only support now.

“How else should one bring his bride and the future Queen if not on one’s back?” A laugh rumbled in Bjorn’s chest.

“And if I don’t agree?” She clenched her lips so tight that blood drained from them. “I am afraid I am not in the mood.”

“Then, as a good partner, I will help you!” The werebear nodded, and immediately a warrior arrived at his side with silver chains in his hands...

Lachlan sensed that something was off the moment they walked into the main corridor leading to the throne room. The guards he personally placed were all missing. He gestured for Zara to be quiet and took her hand, leading her to one of the side passages. They barely managed to step in there when the smell of fire and the sound of laughter reached them.

“The Old North is dead!” The familiar voice of their enemy thundered in their ears. Zara clenched her teeth and almost ran to attack the bears, yet Lachlan caught her in time and held her in place, covering her mouth,

She struggled against him. They both realised pretty quickly what was going on.

“There are too many of them!” The Beta whispered and felt the werebird’s tears on the hand that was covering her lips. “You will only get us killed.”

Too. You will only get us killed too. This was what he was saying.

Failure. Zara felt like a failure. She should have been patrolling the sky today. Maybe she could have noticed the movements on the ground and warned her friend. Instead, she indulged herself and forgot about everything. And this was the result.

The sounds of laughter were gone, and the smoke started to fill the space around them. “Come on!” Lachlan intertwined their fingers and pulled her behind him.

They entered the room where their two best friends were supposed to unite today and froze, seeing the dead bodies surrounded by flames and broken glasses with spilled wine. Zack was right in the centre, his heart not too far away.

Zara let out a sound resembling a whimper as she ran to Riannon and her husband. Neither of them was breathing.

Her liberator was pregnant! What kind of monster does this to a pregnant woman?! Zara still remembered how that woman made them fight for their freedom, how she reminded them of their worth. Seeing her lifeless on the floor in her golden dress was heartbreaking.

Lachlan didn't move. All he could do was stare at his friend. His King. His brother.

He had seen so much blood and death in his life, often because he caused it. He had lost his mate before. But he never expected to see Kai pierced in the heart on that stage. Defeated for the first time in his life. It wasn't fair. This was a cowardly attack, he could tell that much. This wasn't how his friend was supposed to die.

“Where is Savannah?!” Zara looked at him helplessly, her eyes full of tears. He did not respond. “Where is Savvy?!” the werebird screamed and brought him to his senses.

“They took her,” he muttered and stepped towards Elene, who looked like she was asleep in her chair. The graceful Princess kept up her appearance until the end. She was like a sister to him, and the sight broke his heart.

The fire was spreading rapidly, and Lachlan knew they wouldn’t be able to put it out. He knew that Kai would want him to at least get Elene’s body out, and he intended to do just that.

“We need to go!” he said to Zara, and she shook her head. “We can’t leave them!” she pleaded. “We’ll take whom we can.” His voice was stone cold. He would blame himself for this forever. He got closer to Elene and prepared to lift her when her hand flinched.

He must have been seeing things. Yet the princess’ fingers moved, and Lachlan was finally sure this was the reality. Whatever happened here, at least Elene had survived. This was better than nothing. Right now, he was happy to take that because it was so much better than losing everyone.

“What the-” The Northern Princess scratched her head, trying to focus her vision. Inga’s father groaned next to her.

Zara was taking a hair strand off Riannon’s face when Gideon snatched her arm before he even managed to open his eyes. Protecting his mate came before everything. The werebird squealed, but then Ria knitted her brows, and Zara was ready to let the Lycan King break her hand if he wanted to. She was

ready to give anything for this to be true and not a hallucination because she'd breathed in too much smoke.

“You're alive!” She felt her eyes stinging from tears, relief washing over her.

Before the royal couple managed to say anything, a huge flaming chandelier fell on the ground right next to them. Gideon locked his hands around Riannon, his body was still stiff after whatever drug was used on him, but his pregnant wife was his first priority. He noticed Kai on the stage not far from them with his chest pierced by a spear, and he gritted his teeth in frustration and fury. If not for the spear, the Northerner would be

awoken too. His blood was dripping off the floor and Gideon could tell at once that the wound was fatal. Too much blood and silver through the heart... no one could recover from that.

“We need to go!” he rasped, helping Riannon up. They both could barely walk, but the Western King still gestured to Zara to help others. Kyle was already at the exit with Evelyn, who was desperately searching for Petra everywhere around them

Lachlan really wanted to get Kai's body out, but Celia couldn't walk. He knew what his King would have told him now if he was still alive. He had to save the living first. He had to perform his duty as the Beta of the North. It wasn't the place or the time for sentiments

Soon they were all outside, watching in horror what the bears managed to do in such a short time. The dead bodies of the soldiers who weren't drugged were in pieces all over the place.

It was obvious they fought bravely but were outnumbered and... betrayed,

“Zara, stay here!” Lachlan ordered. “I am going back to get Kai.” The Beta charged for the entrance, but Gideon blocked his way. His strength was restoring slowly “He is dead,” the Western King said. “If you go there now, you will be dead too.” “I am sworn to defend him until -”

“Until the day one of you dies, and that day is today.” Gideon announced grimly. “The North needs you alive now more than ever.”

Lachlan stopped, taking in deep painful breaths. He couldn't believe that this was the reality, but he had to face it

Kai was dead.

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A tall man entered the throne room and walked lazily between the broken pieces of furniture. He saw the dead priestess on the ground and the dead guards. He had seen too much death in his life, it didn't touch him anymore, didn't make an impression.

This was why he never liked big events. He chose to live alone and as far away from all that as possible. It was better for him. It worked.

However, today he had to come here because something that belonged to him was calling for him. And he couldn't imagine that he would ever see this object again.

He stepped close to the dead Lycan King of the North and looked at him with a mixture of regret and respect. He'd known Kai since he was a little boy. In his own way, he knew him. They had more in common than one could imagine, however bizarre that sounded. And he grew up to be a Lycan to be proud of.

Such a shame...

Strong fingers wrapped around the silver-coated metal of the spear, and a wave of electricity went through it, causing Kai to open his eyes.

Damn it! He forgot about that effect...

NOTE:I feel like our relationship was tested this week, and half of the readers applied for a divorce. Who is still here? Don't miss the Giveaway in Marissa Gilbert's Reading Circle.

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Chapter 52

Savannah tried to resist as they cuffed her wrists, not wishing to make things easy for the bears.

“Feisty!” One of the warriors chuckled as he managed to wrap the chains around her waist too. Silver usually did not have much effect on her, but today... today was a different day. And it seemed like there was no end to it.

She tried to break the chains just like back then, with Kai... but found it impossible now. One of the warriors pushed her, and

she almost fell to the ground, but Bjorn caught her at the last moment, growling at his men.

“Careful! I need her in one piece!”

She gave him a withering glare. A promise that the second she regained her strength, she would end his life just like she had her mate’s. However, he only chuckled at that, confident as ever. His mood was getting better and better after he slaughtered everyone she cared about.

Brigit stood not far away from them with her hands crossed over her chest, watching the show and frowning. She wasn’t pleased with it, but she wasn’t exactly doing anything to help the Princess either.

Bjorn turned to give her a stern glance, “Make sure she looks presentable when we arrive. And take care of the twins. The cameras must be working at all times.”

Savannah looked around and found Chloe and Claude not far from them. The siblings were paler than usual, with their clothes and hair dishevelled. That sparkle they always had about themselves was gone entirely as they were cornered into submission. Their cameraman was right next to them, and the trio were surrounded by a group of fierce-looking warriors, ready to end them after one wrong move. Only Petra was still nowhere to be seen. Her crying couldn’t be heard now either.

Savvy’s train of thought was broken when someone pulled her chains back, much gentler this time. She didn’t mind, as it meant Bjorn’s hands were no longer on her.. He still had no clothes on and was about to shift when their eyes locked.

“Isn’t this exciting?” He purred.

“It will be when I get to kill you!” She hissed. The warriors around them cheered her on with excitement, enjoying their King and Queen’s banter. There was something wrong with those bears.

Just like the last time she saw him do it, Bjorn shifted into a huge snow-white beast in seconds. He was both magnificent and menacing, but she hated his guts with all her heart and soul, regardless.

His men led her to him, making her get onto his back while she tried to fight them

off.

The white bears’ leader roared, warning her. At the same moment, Brigit appeared at

her side.

“Listen,” she whispered, “he will find a way to make you do this either way. Why do you think they bothered to bring Petra? Disobey, and she will be paying the price!”

“I don’t care about Petra!” Savannah thundered, secretly hoping that this would help them both.

“Too late for that! You saved her in the Maze!” Brigit reminded her.

“It was a deal! Nothing more, nothing less!” The Princess lied through her teeth. She had a soft spot for Petra, but admitting it

now would be a mistake. “The joke is on you! You shouldn’t have killed Riannon! I would have done anything for her and the baby! But Petra is no one to me!”

“Don’t say that!” Brigit grew grim. “They will test your words! And as I said, Petra will be the one to bear the consequences!”

“Why not you?” Savvy chuckled darkly. “We have known each other longer! I like you so much! Why don’t they test my stubbornness on you?!”

The she-bear lowered her gaze. “I will not apologise,” she breathed out.

“Even if you do, Aspen nor I would ever forgive you!” Savannah found herself to be this cruel for the first time in her life. Brigit flinched at her words, and her fingers trembled. She barely managed to hide them so that no one else could see her weakness.

One of the warriors yanked the chains on the other side, forcing Savannah to climb on Bjorn’s back; the other pushed her feet up from the ground. She hated them touching her. When she was up and where they wanted her, they surrounded her again, adjusting her shackles and ensuring she stayed exactly where they needed her.

They had everything planned to perfection. She was wearing a blue dress, the bridal colour of the North, and now Bjorn was going to take her to his castle on his back while cameras were filming it. She was a true bride today. Only that the groom was a monster.

When they were done, Brigit undid her hair and adjusted her cape so that it was covering her restraints and saving her some dignity.

The white bear leader let out an approving growl and started to move. Slowly, everyone else followed them in a victorious procession. This was what it was.

Savannah couldn't take it anymore. The last bits of strength left her, and she wished all of this was a dream, not reality.

Yet here she was. Deep in the North, chained to her enemy who claimed her as his and with everyone she loved gone. What a cruel fate!

Their procession entered a mountain chain that looked vacant at first. Savvy wondered if it was really necessary to try and show her off when no one was even around to see. However, she soon realised how wrong she was.

One by one, she noticed other white bears in their beast forms lurking out on top of the hills. They were watching them, not taking their eyes off their King and the girl on top of his back.

Dozens of them. Hundreds!

The cameraman was working, filming her and everything around them, while Claude and Chloe commented on what was going on in the microphones adjusted to their laces.

"The bears meet their King and future Queen!" Claude stated dryly. Not a hint of his usual entertaining sell.

“Savannah looks beautiful and strong even as her hands are tied,” Chloe chimed in right next to him, getting quiet as one of the warriors next to her shot her a warning glance.

Their voices became simply a buzz as Savvy observed the area around her. Now there were bears and people watching her from above. They probably had their houses nearby.

This was where their kind resided.

Bjorn walked with pride. It was his victory march, and he was enjoying it.

Savvy felt worse and worse. Her nausea was getting worse, the stress of the day finally catching up with her. In the rays of the setting Sun, she only wished for all of this to end faster.

Soon, she started seeing small cosy houses peppered on the tops of the white hills. An ice city.

They walked for some time, Savannah wishing to simply switch off at this point, her body not listening to her anymore. She had trouble telling how long it all lasted and barely managed not to fall down.

Bjorn stopped when they were on top of a hill, and she saw something she didn't expect. Below them was a castle built into a mountain. A work of a rough master, it was a fortress in its own right. She instantly knew this was where they were heading. He told her he had a castle of his own before. She just never thought she'd actually see it.

The cold Northern sea was raging under the castle, its waves sharp and deadly. Savannah didn't even realise they got this far, but it made sense because the white bears were excellent swimmers.

It took them quite some time to get to the castle. The gates opened as soon as they reached them. People inside clearly awaited their king's return.

By this point, Savannah was so exhausted she couldn't keep her back straight. Her nausea was getting stronger, the pain of her broken bond still rippling through her body, even though it had gotten slightly duller. But her soul was aching more. She wasn't mourning yet. She still couldn't believe what had happened to her. Things like that were hard to process.

People were greeting them inside the castle, and she didn't know how to take this any longer. She had had enough.

"Welcome, my King!" A massive man with silver hair bowed before them as Bjorn stood in the inner courtyard, still in his bear form. "And my future Queen."

He looked at Savannah as if he expected her to say something, and she looked him straight in the eye... right before she emptied her stomach, parts of it getting all over Bjorn's feet.

He tried to remove the spear, but the damn lycan grabbed it with both his hands. The Northern King knew what would happen once the divine weapon was removed. He could sense that this was the only thing holding him here in this world.

“No!” Kai’s voice rasped through his chest. “Please!”

“Your battle is over, King,” the stranger told him, his voice void of any emotions. He had seen this way too many times before to feel something now. “Time to move on to a better place. You are going to love it there.”

“No!” the wolf persisted, clenching his fingers tighter around the spear. “I can’t... He... He took her... I... have to-” Words were hard to form because his throat was full of blood.

“What has to happen will happen. This is why the human world is so awful. The next one will be better, I swear.”

“Not without her!” Kai gritted his teeth, and the stranger felt something he hadn’t felt in a while. This brought back some memories. He once begged for a chance with a woman he loved too. He grovelled... only to be denied their chance.

However, this was different. The King wasn’t him, and the woman he loved wasn’t-he still couldn’t pronounce her name. He prohibited himself from even thinking about it. This was how he survived all these years.

“I don’t see your mate bond. She must be already dead and waiting for you on the other side,” he said, sighing and hoping that this information would help the wolf to accept his death faster. It wasn’t like he was in any kind of a rush, but for some reason, he wanted to be done here faster, to be away from all the emotions that tried to get out from the little black box he locked them in centuries ago.

“She is not my mate!” Kai said and coughed blood. “But she is everything. She needs me, and I- I can’t leave her. Not yet. Not... ever. She is mine!”

“It’s not for you to decide.” Last time. He would try to reason with him one last time before pulling the plug.

“I know. It is for you to decide... Fenrir!” The Lycan king furrowed his brows, watching how the light of the flames around them drew his God’s flawless face.

“I don’t assign mates!” For the first time, the wolf God turned away. He hated that mate thing! Binding people together without them getting to know each other, giving them chances to hurt one another if they wanted to, making it next to impossible to break the bond- what could be more cruel?

“I don’t care if she is my mate or not! This doesn’t matter! It never did! All I want is to be with her, save her-make her happy!”

“You have no idea what you are up against! You are going to lose that war!” Fenrir cut him off, revealing the sad truth. They had no chance. Not when his brother was guiding the enemy.

“Then help me!” Kai begged. He begged for the first time ever. “I served you my whole life the best I could! The whole North worships you over everyone else! Help us! You are our deity!”

“I am done with all that-” Fenrir admitted, feeling guilt rising inside of him. Something he didn’t feel in a while. He hated that emotion the most, along with regret.

“Then be done.” Kai snorted through pain, his lips twitching. “But at least give us a chance to fight! Give us something, and then leave! Do whatever the hell you want. It’s not like you’ve been here for us anyway.”

“Choose your words wisely, boy!” Anger rose from the pit of his stomach. He should have pulled that thing out now and forgotten any of this ever happened, but something was stopping him from doing just that.

She wouldn’t have approved ...

It didn’t matter, though, because she was long gone. He would never see her again.

“Choose your side!” Kai growled, furious. He had the right to be mad, looking at the one who abandoned him when he needed him the most!

Fenrir paused. He had already stayed here for too long. He had to send him to the next world, the better place. Where she would take care of him.

Only that his words ignited something inside. Lycans were his children. The product of his creation. And the Northern royal bloodline were his descendants.

“Even if I help you, you can still lose,” he warned the stubborn King. “I will not!” Kai snarled, and Fenrir appreciated his spirit. “There will be a price!” the God informed him. “Anything!” He didn’t even think twice.

“Are you so sure?” Fenrir chuckled. Such persistence reminded him of his youth. “What if I ask for your firstborn?”

“Done!” Kai said without hesitation, and the God swore under his breath. This wasn’t where he was going with it at all! He wanted to ask for a new shrine for the priestesses. They deserved it for all their hard work, but the damn Lycan was in a rush and promised him his child without realising that his doing so while touching the divine weapon was binding. It was done, and now if Fenrir helped him, he would have the rights to that child...

He had no use for children... It was a stupid joke! Although it was probably his fault for joking in a moment of someone’s desperation. He forgot how humans were, and Lycans had their human side ruling over their minds.

He should have let that spear rot here. Or better burn to ashes.

This was officially a mess now, and the best course of action would be to grab his spear and let the King die as he was supposed to die today.

He couldn’t go through with this, though.

“F*ck!” He growled, and the space around them went dark. “Fine! Be my new weapon then!”

The fire around them started gathering as if it was alive, flames flickering in excitement, ready to devour what was offered to them.

“It’s going to hurt,” Fenrir gave him the last warning. “A lot.”

“Bring it!” Kai snarled, clenching his teeth. Whatever it was, he was going to take it. He was going to survive, and he was going to save Savvy whatever it took. Yes, they were not mates, but he could feel she was alive.

He wasn't sure about the others, but not seeing too many bodies around gave him hope that at least some of them survived.

Fire surrounded him, merciless and glorious. First, licking his skin, probing, then taking a leap, devouring him whole.

Kai tried to hold himself back and be strong but soon found it impossible. An earth-shattering piercing scream left his chest as fire absorbed him whole, destroying him to the bone.

He didn't know if it was minutes that passed or hours. Or maybe days. It seemed like it took forever, but when he already thought he was in the pit of hell, betrayed by the God he trusted once more, something snapped inside of him. Something new. Something that wasn't there before.

The flames died down, submitting to something more powerful. Bit by bit, cell by cell, he was rebuilt, reborn into something new, and Asgard growled when Fenrir finally got the spear out of their flesh, finishing the process with another jolt of intolerable pain.

It was done.

He was changed irrevocably, and he still wasn't sure what he was now. Some strange power surged through him, but he wasn't sure if he could control it yet.

Sadly, there was no strength left to test it. Every muscle, every bone ached as if it was broken, crushed. Kai didn't notice how he shifted into his wolf, he didn't care, but he was amazed at how everything felt different now.

Fenrir stood nearby, watching him, regret and concern written all over his perfect face. The Alpha God still wasn't sure it was a good idea. Guilt washed over him. Was he sending another one of his own to death right now? At least he died more or less painlessly the first time. Now it could be so much worse.

He shouldn't have done it. He shouldn't have cared... Evil always won. Nothing changed. He just gave hope to someone who would hardly be able to win, and his suffering would be on him. Again.

"Th-thank you," kai mind linked his creator and looked him in the eye. He could sense that something was off, that Fenrir... was not what he had imagined all those years, and he wanted to know what had happened to break once powerful God, but he was afraid to push his luck. He already bargained for too much today.

Fenrir looked at his new creation recovering on the ground. The transformation was completed, and he could leave now. Yet something stopped him once again.

The creature was panting on the floor, trying to stand up on its feet, and he felt like he owed him one for some crazy reason. Even though he had just saved his life and given him power, he wanted to do something else for him.

He took a bead off the necklace and crushed it between his fingers, letting the rare ancient magic from the gods' realm land on the wolf's renewed fur.

"I was keeping that one for someone else." A sad smile reached his lips at the memories of his past. "But that wasn't meant to be. Consider this my gift of goodwill and faith. And now rise, Amarok!"

The Luna Trials by Marissa Gilbert Chapter 53

1. Wishful Thinking

-That bad, huh?" Bjorn brushed his hand over her hair, but she slapped it away. He growled as a warning but didn't do anything else.

– Just why would you think that my dead mate's scent would be a good idea when I recover from our breaking bond?" she asked.

"I thought it might be comforting," he confessed and wanted to caress her again, but stopped at the last moment. "I am not a complete monster, you know. I want you to get better later."

* So that you can parade me as your trophy Luna again?" Savannah scoffed.

**You were fine with being paraded before," Bjorn locked his healthy eye with her. His usual black eye patch was missing. "Why is it a problem when it's for me?"

“it is a problem because it’s you!” she rolled her eyes, tired from this conversation alone. “I hate you. You killed everyone I loved and cared about. I will always hate you, and to be honest, you can kill me now too. I will never be your Luna, Queen, prize or whatever you think I am.”

“You just need time,” he insisted, and she wasn’t sure if he was telling this to her or to himself. “Once the bond is finally severed, and you heal, it will-” Bjorn stopped talking, and Savannah flinched. What was that? What was on his mind?

“Once I am healed. I am going to do my best to kill you!” she promised, gritting her teeth and clenching her fists.

“I am fine with you thinking that.” The bear took the cover and pulled it over Savannah’s legs, shocking her with all this. “As I have said, when the time comes, you will see it differently.”

“Time comes for what?” The Princess covered her face with her hands. She didn’t want to talk to him anymore. She did not want to be here. The moment she closed her eyes she was back to where she really belonged – in the real North and with Kai. Now that Zack was dead, they finally had their chance to find out if they were second chance mates. It could have been her wishful thinking, but she hoped that once the bond with Zack was gone, a new one would form with the man she loved.

Suddenly, she realised what the bear king was talking about. Her eyes opened wide, and she tried to sit up, although it was still difficult.

**You must be crazy!" she gasped, and his expression immediately changed to a much darker one. He knew she had figured him out, and she wasn't thrilled with the idea.

"I knew it the moment i met you in the woods," he told her. "No!" she shook her head in denial. This couldn't be true. He was lying! Or he was delusional!

"My first mate died years ago." Bjorn looked at her without blinking, his facial muscles tightening from time to time. "I knew you were my second chance mate the moment I met you."

"Not possible!" She wanted to cover her ears and run away from this. "Anyone but you!"

"If it wasn't for this, you would have never made it out of that forest the night we met. I didn't need any witnesses, the King went on. "But your scent was so... alluringly intoxicating that I couldn't stop thinking about you being my second chance."

"Lies!" She felt tears singing her eyes and wiped them away angrily. She couldn't accept this reality. And she was not going to.

"You will see it for yourself," he persisted. "Once you feel it, you will not be able to deny it. All we need now is for the bond to snap in its place."

That sobered her up from the panic that overwhelmed her. The thing was... she did not feel it. She didn't feel any kind of pull towards Bjorn. She loathed Zack, but she couldn't deny that something was connecting them both until the very last second.

Something physical. And she was ready to thank the Moon Goddess because she did not feel anything like this now.

“Savannah,” the bear took both her hands into his large, calloused palms, “you are exhausted now. Have some rest, and we will continue this conversation when you are ready.”

She looked at him for some time, not knowing how to respond, when a laugh escaped her. And then one more, and one more. Until she simply gave in and burst out laughing,

“Wow!” Her eyes were teary now. “Speak about wishful thinking!” “I know what I feel!” The bear snarled.

“So do I!” Sawyer laced her every word with venom as if it was a knife she was ready to plunge into Bjorn’s heart. “I feel hatred! So much of it. And disgust! You killed my brother, sister-in-law, my best friend, people who were dear to me, and innocent victims too! Mates

don’t do that! Mates don’t chain each other, don’t force each other, don’t torture each other! They don’t lie. They don’t cheat! This is how mates are supposed to be. If you think that what you do is normal, then you need to think again!”

He gawd at her as if he knew her for the first time. The silence between them was uncomfortable, and Savannah just wanted him to wave her on so that she could finally close her eyes and disappear into the world of dreams again. The last bits of strength almost left

However, when Hjorn’s lips curled into a smirk, she knew he had a plan to win what he wanted either way. A vein had never yelled

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Avent she had never shelled before reached her, and she realised that, for the first time ever, he let her know what his real scent was Chestnuts and winteyeen.

Savannah’s lips parted in shock. -See? told youth The White Bear Kung weered at her...

NOTE: Thank you for your patience while I was recovering from food poisoning. Please, consider voting for The Luna Trials by giving it your Moon Tickets x

The Luna Trials by Marissa Gilbert Chapter 54

1. Cruel, Beautiful Things

That's your real scent." Savannah whispered, and Bjorn nodded, confirming her guess. He leaned closer to her, brushing his palm over her cheek. She flinched away, and the motion disgruntled him, although he tried not to show it.

Her skin felt so smooth to his touch like the petals of a most delicate flower. He couldn't get enough of the sensations when he touched her. He hoped that by now, she would say the one and only word he had longed to hear from her lips for so long. Mate.

"Yes, Savannah. This is my real scent. The one I barely use anymore. I didn't even let you smell it the last time we met, although I knew at once you were mine." He tried to be patient with her. He knew he had already overstepped too many boundaries to push her now. She looked so weak, felt so broken... Maybe he should have left her sister-in-law alive as a little consolation gift for Savannah. He could dispose of that woman's baby later and pretend it was an accident. That little girl could have made the transition easier for his mate.

Although he remembered very well how dangerous Riannon Stormhold was. She alone was the sole reason for his brother's demise. That sealed her fate.

Savannah stayed silent, and he took it as a sign of her wishing to know more.

"When I ran in the forest back then. I was going to kill the wolv who witnessed me in lycans' territory. This was what always did. Kill, destroy and get rid of the body." He was so calm that Savvy felt beads of sweat forming on her skin. "If it was anyone else but you, they would be dead. But it was enough for me to inhale a drop of your scent, and everything changed. All my plans went to chaos."

"Didn't you call me Kai's toy?" she reminded him, and a smile reached his lips. At least she was talking to him. This was some kind of progress for them. He was sure that, over time, she would give up and accept him. She simply had to and he couldn't wait.

"I was a bit frustrated at first," he confessed, "I wasn't looking for a mate. I didn't think I would ever get another. And it took me a few seconds to realise what was going on. How you affected me. Who you were to me."

"And what happened to your first mate?" Savannah asked, ignoring his confession. She looked so pale that he knew she'd faint again soon. Now that she was here, there was no rush anymore. He could take his time with her.

"**That's a story for another day." Bjorn dodged that subject. "Today I want to speak about us." He took her hands into his

again and realised they were cold and limp as it life was slipping out of his mate.

“You think we have a future?” Savannah asked weakly, her eyelids too heavy again. “Of course we do,” he didn’t hesitate to respond.

“Good,” the Princess’ lips curled into a smile, and the bear’s heart skipped a beat. She had never smiled at him before. He should have released his true scent long ago just for this alone. He was about to say something when something changed in her face. That beautiful smile of hers turned into a sheer as she narrowed her eyes at him. “Very good,” she added, “because that means I can hurt you the way you hurt me. Although that’s unlikely. You hurt me so much that unless I destroy what you love the most, you will never understand. But even this is good.”

“What are you talking about?” Bjorn released her hands, anger and disappointment burning in his chest.

“I don’t feel anything.” she stated calmly. “Your real scent doesn’t awaken anything inside of me. I hate you just as much as I hated you before you let it out. I don’t want to say the sacred words to you. You will never hear them from me!”

He grabbed her shoulders and lifted her up, not really knowing what he wanted to do. Kiss her? Hit her? Take her? Things were already bad and she looked like she was about to faint anyway.

Why didn’t she feel it? What happened? Or maybe she was lying to wound him? She must have been angry with him for killing her family. It was understandable. She was also

recovering from her previous bond breaking. That exhausted her significantly and that poison to weaken her didn't seem to be such a good idea now. If she died, it wouldn't change any of his plans. He would still take the North. He already had. And the West would fall too without a ruler. What had been planned with Castiel was finally achieved, even though his brother wasn't there to see it.

However he didn't want her to die. Even if that was what she wanted, he wasn't going to grant her this wish. Time would pass and she would give into the mate bond. She had to. He did.

After the last time, he swore that if the gods granted him a mate again, he would kill or at least reject her on the spot to avoid the pain. However, as soon as he met Savannah, he couldn't do it. She didn't recognise him, didn't try to claim him and, although deep

nude he knew she was his, he wasn't so sure anymore.

After their first encounter, he found out everything he could about her. He went through all the old reports after his brother's death and realised that he was mated to another. Moreover, that person had been seeking an audience with him for a while.

He instantly disliked Zack Morpan. Too pretty, too polished, not manly enough to be called an Alpha; yet Zack had an ego bigger than his own. He started talking about his mate early sure that she would be his ticket to being appointed the King of The West when they were done with the current rulers. Little did that pup know that this was never the plan. Castiel would have never given that crown to anyone else.

Bjorn cringed when Iach mentioned this one and only night with Savannah and this was when he decided that the stupid werewolf

would die soon. Just the thought of him touching Savannah enraged him to the core. Initially, he planned to give him a slow and painful death, starting by cutting off his fingers one by one and then moving on to her protruding parts. However, this was when Zack mentioned the little game he played with his mate to remind her of him. As long as they had this bond, he could torture her softly. Zack could influence her, distract her. And that was something Bjorn needed.

He already knew she was here to join the Luna Trials to compete for the Northern Crown. There was no love lost between her and the king, he was sure of that. Nevertheless, he wanted to take certain precautions and he couldn't do it himself since they hadn't had a chance to mate yet. Not to mention how much work he had on his hands. Taking Savannah out earlier than necessary could unite the two kings and ruin his plans. So, Zack was the best card in his hand for now.

It all started to bother him more when he found out they were going on a date. At first, he took it calmly. Dates were normal at the Luna Trials. It was when he realised that Kavalaking her outside of the castle that the whole thing started to worry him. He had been studying Kaval and he knew what that place meant to him. He would never bring a simple contender there. And when he watched them both from the opposite mountain, gazing at the city and the stars, he'd had enough.

He was risking everything each time he met her, but each time only made him more confident that she was the one for him. She was his second chance mate, and she would feel this too the moment Zack died. However, things only got worse and worse from there. She wasn't thinking of him; she ignored his gifts and did not kill her annoying mate when she had a chance. All so she didn't ruin her chances with Kai. Biom never liked the Lycan king of the North, but he started to hate him with his whole heart after this. His old rival was getting what he wanted the most. Again.

The desire to get Savvy out early and to claim her was almost unbearable, but he knew he had to wait for the right chance, or all of his work, including his brother's legacy, would go to waste. It wasn't fear it was torture,. But this was all he could do.

It all paid off in the end. All of his enemies were dead, and she was with him now. Except that her eyes were cold, her lips were pale, and she despised him. He could feel it even without that sneer of hers.

Cruel beautiful thing! She knew what she was doing to him, and she enjoyed it.

"Maybe you feel nothing now," he got his face so close to hers that his lips were almost touching hers, but your soul will heal, and our bond will snap in its place. You will take these words back."

**If I ever feel anything towards you," she laughed him, almost laughing, although her tiny delicate body was shivering in his

arms.” will reject you. There is no future in which you and I live happily ever after.”

“Then we will live unhappily ever after,” he pulled her closer and whispered a promise into her ear. “Either way works for me. The rest is up to you!”

He dropped her back to the bed, and she had no strength in her left to light it. Her eyes closed, and for the first time, Bjorn worried that he’d crossed the line with her. He left the room and growled at the maid who waited outside to tend to him and his bride.

“Get a healer and clean her up! She needs to cal, and she needs detoxifying. The healer will know what to do!” “Of course, my King,” the older woman bowed respectfully and left.

Bjorn found himself standing at her door, listening to her breathe and fearing each breath would be her last until the maid arrived with two younger girls and his trusted healer.

Only then did he decide to leave. His duties couldn’t wait any longer.

*When I get back, she’d better look much healthier than now.” He barked at the group. “If she gets worse, heads will roll. Maybe yours, or maybe your friends and family. We’ll see.”

No one responded this time, and they all bowed to him in silence. This was just how he preferred it. They knew what the stakes were now.

Gideon held Riannon close as they both looked at the flames destroying the Royal Northern Castle. It was a sad sight, and he wasn't sure what to do next. They had just been majorly outplayed by that werebear. His sister was gone, and he knew very well where to look for her, but nothing looked good now.

He and Kai never managed to become good friends. For the past few weeks, he thought that it might be possible, but now he would never find out. However, that uneasy feeling in his chest made him regret so much. They both were slaves to their pride, and this was the result. Kai was dead, Savannah was taken, Riannon and the baby survived by a miracle. So many warriors were slaughtered. The taste of defeat was new to burn, and he didn't like it.

Kia wasn't saying a word, tears streaming down her face silently at the sight before them. Gideon took a look around and saw the Northern Prince not too far away, helping Evelyn, who was sobbing since they did not find Petra. Brigit and Astrid were missing too, and

they had no idea what happened to any of them. They could have been taken together with Savvy of... they could have been the ones who survived.

However, that only meant that one of them was still on their side. If that wasn't the case, they would have been all dead. That was Bjorn's plan.

Memories of the night were cloudy, but he was proud of his little sister. No matter what, she managed to kill her mate before

was overpowered by the beauty of her body and his heart on the floor covered with dust. Savvy's scent was all around it, and he had no doubts who was the one who did this. She nipped the traitor's heart just like he taught her. Even knowing it would hurt her

Hesther deluded at Uwe thought of her, how life was sultry now matter everything she went through. He would get her back, he

would do anything to save her, but... he couldn't bring her chosen mate back. That wasn't something in his power, and Savannah, of all people, deserved to be loved the way Kai had loved her. Gideon may not have liked the guy, but he couldn't deny that what they had was real... and beautiful. It was what he and Riannon had. It was what Reid and Maya had. Kai would have made her happy... They would have led the North together...

And now all that was left was Ilene. He had forgiven her, and she did seem to grow up, but the girl wasn't born to rule. Yet she was Kai's sole heir now. He glanced at her and sighed, realising she had completely broken again. Lachlan held her in his arms while Zara stood nearby and watched the princess sob

"It's awful," he muttered. "Not really." Riannon said quietly, and he looked at his wife,

"What do you mean?" Gideon knew one thing very well – everything his wife said had to be listened to carefully. The Moon Goddess's blessing was working in mysterious ways, and often Ria knew things no one else could know. She had her

dreams, her visions, and sometimes the simply sensed events everyone else ignored. It was her gift given to her after rebirth. They were still figuring out how that all worked, but no word of hers was ever ignored.

* Something is happening there,” she whispered, looking at the flames in the windows. “Something big. Important. Divine.” “Should I go inside and look for survivors?” he asked. “I don’t think so,” she shook her head. “Onyx only senses one, and he will come out on his own.”

The moment she said that all the flames instantly died down as if they were suffocated by a force bigger than all of them. The air grew colder, and Gideon could see his breath turning into steam.

Everyone around them got quiet and looked toward the castle. What they were seeing was impossible. The firefighters hadn’t arrived yet, and such a massive fire couldn’t just disappear on its own.

It was now so dark that they could only see, thanks to their beasts’ night visions.

Instinctively. Gideon wanted to place Riannon behind his back. Something was getting closer. He could sense it and the hairs on the back of his neck rose.

A loud and powerful growl sounded, echoing through the empty castle. Then, sounds of calm, confident footsteps reached their ears.

And then they saw him... First, the creature's eyes gleamed in the darkness, and then he slowly walked into the moonlight, making all of the survivors part their lips at what they saw...

The Luna Trials by Marissa Gilbert Chapter 55

1. The Cold Truth

The creature stepped out of the darkness, and even Gideon grew tense at what was before his eyes. The wolf was larger than any Lycan or werewolf he had ever seen, with fur in a midnight blue colour, almost as dark as black, but not quite. All this, however, wasn't what amazed the King of the West the most. It was the spikes of ice that grew straight out of the wolf's fur. Larger over the top of his neck and back, smaller on the sides. He looked majestic and ominous at the same time as he bared his sharp, sparkling white teeth.

New. He was so new! As if he was just... born now.

It was hard to ignore how cold the night became, and snowy mist started to form around the creature whose eyes were gleaming like two northern stars.

"-Amarok," Riannon whispered. She was the only one smiling now because she was the only one who knew the creature's true identity.

The true Lycan King of the North, he was on his land and in his right. The ruler that was needed now more than ever.

“Who7- Gideon still trying to gently move his Luna behind him in an attempt to protect her, it was hard for him to tell whether the beasi meant well or not.

The bones started snapping, and in just a few moments, the wolf turned into an ice lycan, standing on his two feet. This sight was even more incredible than the first one.

However, in just a few moments, slowly, and it looked painful too, the lycan tried to retract his spikes, but something wasn't working, making him growl in frustration and fall back on all fours, turning back into the ice wolf.

“He can't shift,” Ria explained, voice barely a whisper, but everyone present heard her. She seemed to be reading the creature's mind.

*Stay back, Ria,” Gideon still wasn't convinced it was safe, the memory of holding his pregnant wife's dead body was still haunting his mind. His family being destroyed before his eyes was the scariest thing he had ever experienced, and he was ready to die ten times over to not let that happen.

“Don't you see it?” His wife furrowed her brows as she glanced at him. She knew something he didn't again. “It's Kai!”

“What?” Lachlan stepped in front of them. Seconds ago, he was mourning his best friend and blaming himself for not being able to get Kai's out of their burning home, and now a beast stood before his eyes, and it felt so new and so familiar at the same time.

The Western Queen's words ignited a spark of hope in him. Was it really his King? He was ready to accept his new form, he was ready to follow him to hell and do anything just for the chance of getting his friend back.

This monster walked out of the castle that wasn't burning anymore and he was the one that put the fire out. The second his paws stepped onto the ground, frost covered it, spreading last around him. This wolf was a force of nature and the embodiment of the North.

"Kai?" They all heard Elene's weak voice as the Princess walked closer to the wolf. Their eyes locked, and she threw herself at him before Lachlan had a chance to intercept her. Gideon was ready to step in if it was necessary, but Riannon draped her arm around his and leaned over. Neither she nor the princess had any doubts.

"It's fine," Ria said, "he would never hurt his sister." "Kai!" Elene sobbed. "I thought I lost you too! Thanks to Fenrir!"

There was so much pain and despair in her voice that it was impossible not to feel sorry for the northern princess, Elene had many talents, but inner strength wasn't one of them. If Kai was dead, it would have broken her forever.

"What happened to him?" Gideon asked quietly. "You called him-" "Amarok," Riannon repeated the name. "Onyx can talk to him." "Why would she be able to talk to him?" Her husband didn't really like their sudden connection.

"Because they are the same," Ria explained with a smile, knowing what was bothering him. She gave him a disapproving

glance.” Well, not exactly the same, but they are similar. They have been both blessed by divine power. Thanks to that, I can hear him.”

“But why can’t 17* Elene looked at Riannon questioningly. “He is my brother, my Alpha and my king.” Ria looked back at the ice woll before her, the pair talking without any words said out loud.

it’s because he died,” Riannon sighed, a single tear rolling down her cheek. “He was dead and then he was brought back to life. Just like me.”

“Lucky bastard! He doesn’t even believe in the Moon Goddess!” Gideon chuckled, hugging his wife from the back. He knew she was relieving the memories of her own death and rebirth. No matter how much time passed, no matter how happy they were, it was almost heart breaking for her to remember those times.

*# wasn’t the Moon Goddess,” Ria responded, “Kal says it was fenrir and that it’s a really long story.” “Ter e eds to do buter work then,” Gideon said, observing his old rival’s new form. “Why can’t he shilt into a human again?”

1. I SIN

“Patience, my love.” Riannon rolled her eyes, knowing that everyone was looking at her now and that they needed motivation and hope -After Onyx and I were reborn, it took her weeks to shift for the first time. And Kai has been Amarok for barely an hour. All in due time.”

“We don’t have time!” Gideon interjected. “My sister was taken by that white bear monster and we have to get her back before

“Yeah.” Riannon rubbed her forehead. “Kai says the same, and to that, I have to tell you both that you need to give Savannah more credit. I am pretty sure I stepped on her ex’s heart when we were leaving the castle, and something tells me she was the one to rip it out of his chest. Not to mention, when she was betrayed by him on their first night, she managed to escape in mere hours and bring us valuable information and werecat forces when we needed all that the most. They may have taken her, but this was probably their biggest mistake.”

Everyone grew silent while Zara and Naya both nodded, proud of their friend.

“We still need to get her out as soon as possible,” Lachlan said, and Amarok growled in approval, the air getting even colder around him. “We need to let them know that the Lycan King still stands and -”

“Absolutely not!” Riannon and Alpha Ramina said in unison, exchanging understanding glances.

“You have something in mind?” Gideon’s lips curled into a smile as he observed his beautiful and brilliant wife, who never ceased to amaze him.

“Right now, this is our biggest advantage,” she smirked as she looked at him. “They think we are all dead, and the victory is in their hands. They expect everything to fall into their hands now since they didn’t even bother taking the capital. And let’s be

honest, if we were all dead, that would have been an easy decision to make.”

“But we are here.” Lachlan snorted, pulling Zara into his embrace shamelessly “And they have no idea.” Elene placed her hand on Amarok’s ice fur, and it didn’t seem to hurt her in any way. “They don’t expect us,” Kyle stepped closer with Evelyn by his side. “We can see what they plan.” Zara took the Beta’s hand, entwining their fingers, “And we can ruin it so that they would never recover,” Nayi Sncered, playing with her white hair.

“So, let’s strike them so hard this time that the problem is solved once and for all!” Gideon agreed, and right before his eyes, Amarok stood on both his feet again in his most dangerous form, stretching his hand with ice claws. This did not scare the Lycan king of the West. He knew what his old rival... no, what his new friend wanted to do and stretched his hand to him in return, shaking it as their first-ever pact was created. Together. The West and the North!”

Savannah was in and out of consciousness, abrupt scenes unfolding before her eyes. Some women she did not know washed her and cleaned the room, bringing her back to the bed with fresh sheets. They put on a silk night dress on her, and then a man who looked like a doctor with a bag full of potions and shitter medicines did a basic check on her, pouring some liquid down her throat as she tried to protest.

“It’s just some vitamins and a healing accelerator,” the man assured her.

They all looked worried, but Savvy didn't care. They worked for Bjorn, they lived with him and supported him. They encouraged him and approved of his actions by doing so. They were a part of the problem, and she didn't owe them anything.

The liquid lasted bitter, and Savvy wanted to throw up again, but luckily, she was too weak to do that and simply fell asleep
Haifa

From time to time, she was waking up and finding someone in the room with her. She was never left alone, but then again, that was probably wise because otherwise, she would try to burn this place just like they had burned the bodies of the people she loved in Kai's castle. She dreamed of doing this to Bjorn and his followers, even if it was the last thing she would ever do. Just thinking about it Savannah realised that this would be the last thing she would do. She just had to think it through and get some strength back into her body:

She woke up again in the middle of the night when the veil of darkness surrounded her, and someone's cold fingers were caressing her hair. She wanted to slap that hand away, knowing very well that only one person would be bold enough to touch her like that. She stopped at the last minute, coming to the realisation that if she did just that, he might consider her strong enough to do other things. So, she chose to bear with this for now and hoped that he would leave again as he did before.

The scent of chestnut and Wintergreen enveloped her, and she hated to admit that it did not repulse her. If it was anyone else but her worst enemy, she would have probably even liked it. Yet to her relief, she honestly did not feel anything resembling a

mate bond. Her bones ached after killing lack, but her soul and heart were hurting for Kai. Bjorn must have been imagining their connection. After all, wasn't that exactly what his brother Castiel did to Riannon? He did not call her his mate, of course, but at the same time, he didn't get to spend too many days with her. Hopefully, that would be the case for her, as well. She loathed to even think of having to stay here

longer

Bjorn stopped playing with her hair and wrapped his hands around her waist, bringing her closer, pressing her against his torso. Only the thin silky fabric over her nipples was spilling between them now, and this made Savannah's heart beat a bit faster. Not from pleasure or anticipation. From the horror.

"I know you are not yelling" he told her, and her whole body went virid when his grasp on her became tighter. "Being so close to me will help you heal faster, and our bond will finally fall into place."

21

His hot breath burned the skin on her neck, but she did not move an inch. Not sleeping was one thing: being awake was another. Sawyer knew he was testing her and she did not wish to discover what would happen if he found her strong enough to perform Luna's duties. She had a break because she was weak and unwell, and she hoped to prolong it as much as she could. She regretted not drinking more medicine when she was offered it last time. She would live had something in her stomach to throw

up in front of him again if she did. Hopefully, she would be able to do this next time.

Biorn's fingers brushed over her arm. At the same time, His lips pressed against her shoulder, making a slow wet trail of kisses up to her neck. He grunted as his breathing became ragged, but she gave him no reaction whatsoever. Deep inside of her, Athena was still weak, but she was ready to fight if they had to.

"If he gets his thing out," the wolf hissed in their mind, "We will do the same thing we did to Zack's heart. No one would want to mate us again, but considering the mates we have been getting, this is probably for the best."

This gave her strength, although they both knew that the werewolf would overpower them easily now, and it was best not to test their chances. After all, revenge was the dish that was best served cold.

Biorn growled in frustration and disappointment, breathing into her neck. He stopped caressing her and simply pulled her closer and tighter in his arms as if he was afraid that someone would take her away from him at any moment.

"Soon," he promised, whispering into her ear, but that was probably said more to himself than to her.

He held her in his arms without any intention of letting her go, so she had to accept the idea that she would have to sleep like this today. Probably even tomorrow. He couldn't claim her the way he wanted to, but he was not going to let her forget to whom she belonged to now.

Some part of her was happy she was so weak at this moment, because her eyelids were getting heavier each second, and she had almost drifted off to sleep when she heard the white bear speak.

“You asked me how I lost my eye,” Bjorn said into the darkness, holding his most prized possession tight. “I never tell this to anyone. Only the people who are closest to me know, and now this includes you too.”

She didn’t care. She hoped she would be able to get the second eye out soon, right before delivering the final blow.

“It is a long and complicated story.” Bjorn continued, and she couldn’t tell if he knew she wasn’t sleeping or simply wanted to imagine they had some kind of a connection and were getting closer, “My mother was a beautiful woman with Alpha blood from one of the biggest brown bear packs on the border between the North and the West. She met my father when she turned eighteen, and immediately, the two of them recognised each other as mates.”

He sighed, and Savannah knew that wasn’t the end of the story. He wrapped his arms tighter around her, and she thought that if it went like this, he would suffocate her by the morning, depriving her of her revenge.

*They were very happy. My father was content to be the ruler of the white bears in the North and didn’t think much about rebelling against the lycans. He had everything he ever wanted and did not need anything else. However, one day, different bear clans and packs gathered together to celebrate the Spring

Awakening, the holiday of our ancestors. I was about five back then, and remember that everyone was so happy. One of the bear Alphas brought his friend along with him, the then Fox King.”

Bjorn stopped talking and clutched Savannah tightly. For a second there, she was afraid that he would leave bruises on her and would not continue his story. She wanted to listen because she needed all the information he could give her. It could come in handy

later.

She felt him kissing her hair and sighing as if he was in pain, which evoked no emotions in her. She was numb after everything he had done to her. If anything, she only desired to hurt him more.

“This is usually a very wild celebration,” he started speaking again, twirling one of her curls around his finger. He wanted to study every inch of her, but this was good enough... for now. “There are a lot of drinks, festivals, dances, banquets, and feasts. It all goes on for a week. That year, when the bears were done celebrating, my father found himself missing his Queen. He searched for her everywhere, but she couldn’t be found. One more person was missing as well. That sly fox. Later my father confronted him, bringing his bear warriors with him to the borders of the foxes territory, but the king denied everything. My father left just like that. He didn’t even fight for her.”

For a few food minutes, Bjorn didn’t say a word, and Savannah thought that it was the end of the story. The bear let go of her hair and creased her cheek again.

-Two years later, my mother appeared back in the North with a newborn baby in her arms. She said that she was kidnapped by the For Kine, but my father did not care. He rejected her before my eyes and told her she was now tainted. She cried and begged him to let her and my brother way, even if he did not want her as his mate anymore. But he did not want to see her at all. She was now an eyesore to hai. His warriors threw her out.”

Savannalthead Bjorn sucking in a deep breath before he went on,”Iran alter her. I wanted to live with her that day, but the Hopped me and told me to go back. She told me had tort strong and powerful and that once I was ready. I could come back for her and my little brother. She proved that we would be together again, and believed her.”

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His Hands linally unclenchudaround her, and he pulled lumellway, Savannali wasalad to move, not to give hersell away, but she felt m t of the bed and was ready to uphin relief. However, fordid not leave the room. He only went for the window and

continued his story

“I trained hard. I learned everything there was to learn.” He was looking somewhere deep into the night, the moonlight illuminating his silver hair and strong perfect features, making them visible in the darkness. “I was a good heir to my father, but it was never enough for him. After the insult, he finally became ambitious and decided to destroy the foxes and claim their territories. He had a big grand plan on how to do it, but the Lycan King of the North ardered him to stop and blocked his every move to avoid the war. This was when he appeared in our lives for the first time... The Serpent.”

