

## 3. Set Up

2137 Words

Kai gave his sister a stern look. He was gone for just a month and only now came back home to find all this mess. His castle was full of women he did not know and did not want to know, but each of whom, unfortunately, wanted to get acquainted with him. And he found out that apparently he was supposed to marry one of them in the near future. This did not sit right with him, and he knew very well who to blame.

"Brother!" the Princess of the North chirped and ran in his direction to give him a big warm hug, but stopped halfway and scrunched her nose while scanning his outfit. "What happened to you? You look like..."

"We were attacked on our way back from the mountains," he motioned for her to stop talking and walked past her to his rightful seat behind the desk. The one that she was clearly using all the time while he was gone, judging by the fact that everything was in the wrong places now. "I was lucky that this set of clothes survived the ght as I didn't have to shift this time."

"Lucky indeed," his little sister did not look impressed.

Kai loved Elene. She was the only family he had left. But sometimes, she was reckless and did not think about the consequences of her actions. Especially when her childhood crush, the Western King, was involved. He knew that this was the case now. And that he would be the one dealing with everything in the end. Goddamned Gideon Stormhold. If he had just agreed to give him that small piece of land, they would be in an alliance and barely seeing each other. The best way to live for both of them. But, of course, being reasonable was too much to ask from the westerner. He dared to ask for an alliance and not give Kai what he wanted in the first place.

"You need to have some rest," Elene tried to find an easy way out, seeing her sibling's mood, and was already almost at the door when he growled loudly, making her stop.

"Not so fast!" His wolf was angry as hell too. "I repeat my question, Elle, what did you do?!"

"You already know what," she gave up quickly because there was no point pretending anymore. She knew that she would have to face the music sooner or later, and she didn't regret her decision at all.

"Luna Trials," Kai closed his eyes and rubbed his forehead. It was unbelievable that she dared to pull something like that. "Just why did you do it?"

"And what did you want to do?" His sister scoffed, folding her hands on her chest and sat in the chair in front of him. "I saw how angry you were when their letter arrived announcing that Savannah Stormhold graciously agreed to marry you since you begged so many times!"

He, indeed, wasn't happy about that. In no way was marrying that girl the plan. A few months ago, he met with his old rival king Gideon from the Western Lycan Kingdom, because the latter was suddenly desperate for an alliance between them. The sole reason why Kai even went to that meeting was that he needed a certain piece of land that was in Gideon's possession. A piece of land that was essential to his Northern Lycan Kingdom. And since he had already asked for the princess's hand in marriage before, only to be refused every single time, he was sure that this time the reply would be the same. He and Gideon have hated each other since school and then university. But they weren't just rivals; they actively despised each other.

However, Kai miscalculated this time, and his plan backfired. He asked for Savannah's hand in marriage or the land in hopes that he would get the land. But instead, a few months later, he received a letter of acceptance of his proposal and the date when his future bride would arrive on his territory. And yes, the wording could have been better.

Hating Gideon was one thing, but going to war with him was another. Nevertheless, Kai never wanted to marry his sister. He didn't even want this in the past. There was always a different reason behind his proposals, and usually, he was getting what he wanted. But not this time.

"Admit it, Kai," Elene's lips curled into a victorious smile, "I came up with the best solution. The Luna Trials is an ancient tradition of the North. We will fail Savannah early on and will get rid of her. We don't need that alliance much anyway, right?"

"I wouldn't be so sure about that," the king relaxed his back into his chair and clenched his lips, contemplating his sister's idea.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Elene furrowed her blonde brows.

"There is a lot of unusual activity in the white bears' territory," her brother took the first folder out from a huge stack that piled up on his desk during his absence and started looking through it.

"What kind of activity?" The princess did not want to leave this matter alone. Not too many species chose the North as their place of residence, and there were some good reasons for that. Some parts of the North were uninhabitable, and, because of that, in the past, there were many wars between the northern packs of shifters. The ones between the white bears and lycans were always the worst. No one wanted that part of history to repeat itself.

"It looks like they are up to something," Kai muttered, checking the latest budget. "So, it's really not the time to piss Gideon off."

Elene pursed her lips. For years she was dying to get at least a fraction of the western king's attention. And now she suddenly hated him because he dared to find his true mate. The day she found out, she cried for hours.

"You are not seriously thinking of marrying Savannah!" The princess stood up and slammed her fists over his desk, almost leaving a dent, her eyes glowing blue - the colour of royal lycans of the North.

"God, no!" Kai chuckled. "But we need to play it nicely. Gideon wanted this alliance very much if he was ready for me to have his sister as a wife. You know how many times he rejected my proposals for her."

"As if you'd wanted her!" Elene rolled her eyes and sat back in her chair. "I saw her today, and trust me, she is nothing special. I don't know what all the fuss is about." The girl polished her well-manicured nails, and her brother sighed, placing the budget papers back into the pile. He had already found two mistakes, and that meant that he would have to go through them all over again, despite the fact that all he wanted was a hot shower and some sleep.

"But she is the least of my troubles thanks to you now," he reminded her. "Elle, I really did not plan to get married any time soon. And you set me up with this big time. It's like a never-ending blind date with obligations."

"Don't be dramatic!" his sister smiled innocently. "You need a Luna, and you know it. But you are not even meeting with anyone suitable. And now this is your chance. Just take a look at these girls, and who knows, maybe you will even find your true mate! Miracles happen!"

"Yeah... sure," Kai snorted. A mate was the last thing on his agenda. Although his annoying sibling did have a point - he needed a Luna. And a capable one at that. Someone who could lead by his side and take care of things like budget and many other tasks he had no time for. But something told him that this wasn't the best way to find her. Not to mention that his inner voice, aka his wolf Asgard, was insisting that simply taking a partner who wasn't their mate was out of the question. It was a recipe for disaster.

"Just give the poor girls a chance!" Elene quirked her brow.

"It's not like I have a choice now, do I?" The northern king did the same. "And all thanks to you."

"No, all thanks to Savannah Stormhold," the Princess corrected him. "Anyway, if you don't like anyone, we just fail them all. Trust me on this one. I have prepared tasks that no one will be able to do. But who knows, maybe closer to the end you wouldn't want to let go of a certain girl."

"Why do I have a feeling that you already have someone in mind?" Kai closed his eyes and rubbed the bridge of his nose. This conversation was exhausting.

"No one in particular," Elene giggled nervously, and this was how he knew that she was lying.

"Who?" His voice sounded much lower than usual because he was tired of controlling his emotions now.

"A few contenders," she tried to straighten the creases on her dress.

"Who?!" Kai was on the verge of letting Asgard handle all of this for him.

"Say what you want, but Penelope would make a great Luna for you!" His sister pouted her lips. "She was born to be a Queen, and you are so lucky she agreed to take part in all this!"

"Not this again!" He muttered in annoyance.

"Just listen to me," Elene got her mobile phone out and handed it to her brother. "Look at what they have to do. Test her. You will see that she will handle all that just perfectly. But no pressure. If you still don't want her, then this is it."

He eyed his sister for a while and then just nodded because he was too tired to argue.

"Great!" She clapped her hands. "You won't regret it!"

"I already do," Kai retorted. "And don't think that you are getting an easy way out. I want to stop all that after a test or two. Got it?"

"Deal!" Elene shrugged her shoulders. "It's going to be wonderful!"

She said something else about Penelope, Savannah and the Trials but he didn't listen anymore. The exhaustion was catching up on him and he chose to dismiss her. He would have to figure out how to get rid of all this mess on his own anyway.

His sister was already at the door when she turned and said, "And, Kai, shave that awful beard! I can barely recognise you with it!"

She ran away before he could even growl at her. But looking at the list of the contenders in his hands and seeing who was on it, he knew that she was right. He had to take care of his appearance and look presentable.

But first thing first. He needed to get everything he could find on The Luna Trials. He needed a loophole to bring it all to an end. So, it meant that he would have to start in the library...

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It took Savannah some time to find the library, but the good news was that at least the northerners did not prohibit their guests from using it. Which was a big miscalculation, in her opinion, but who was she to judge? Especially if it was working in her favour.

Savvy was reading one of the many books she found in the castle's library, searching for the right information when suddenly she felt a sharp pain and almost dropped the ancient tome. The pain ripped through her whole body and made it especially hard for her to breathe. Her wolf Athena was howling in agony inside of her mind, and this could only mean one thing - her so-called mate was intimate with someone at that very moment.

Again.

NOTE: Remember that most important announcements will be made in Marissa Gilbet's Reading Circle group on FB.

Don't miss the GIVEAWAY that is taking place in the group this month. There is a winner every day, and you can still take part. The prize today is the Perfect word necklace in rose gold.