

8. Unmasked

Savannah couldn't believe this. That was denitely the scent of the gardener. This scent was more evident and intense for her than any other in this room even if she couldn't see him yet.

She started thinking hectically while trying to stay reasonable. There was no way that a simple gardener would be invited to a grand party like that. And that could only mean one thing. The man she kissed yesterday wasn't a gardener.

Savvy gulped her champagne and stayed in her corner, watching a group of men enter. She only saw the tips of their heads in the crowd but by the way people were greeting them it was clear that they were important here.

"Your Majesty!" someone close to the group said in a voice laced with fawning and Savvy tensed.

"Are you sure that's him?" she heard two girls who stood not far from her whispering, trying to cover their mouths to mue the sounds.

"Yes, I met the Beta yesterday and I am positive that it's his scent. It's the king and his entourage," was the reply.

They were probably other contenders since they didn't know who was who. Locals seemed comfortable at the ball. The masks for them were just a fun outt element for the party, nothing more.

But this was bad. Really, really bad. If that was king Kai and his most trusted men then it meant that she kissed one of them! It couldn't get any worse than that and Savvy sucked in a deep breath trying to calm down.

Why did she even assume that he was a gardener?!

She knew why. Simply because she saw him in dirty clothes and ... in the garden.

This denitely wasn't her brightest moment and she cursed under her breath at the realisation.

Savannah remembered pretty well that she called him a gardener in the library and he did not deny it. Moreover, he went with it. So did she, pretending to be a maid. But she had a very good reason for that. What was his reasoning to pretend while on his own turf?

The answer for that was too obvious... He knew who she was from the very beginning. And he played her.

Was he laughing at her with his friends? Or even worse – was he laughing at her with king Kai?

Or... was it king Kai's idea?

It was clear that no one wanted her here. Was it another part of their plan to get rid of her? Would they now use it to blackmail her so that she would be humiliated? Did they want her gone that much?

She gripped the stem of her crystal ute so hard that it crumbled in her hand to pieces, drawing blood. But she did not care, as the wounds healed quickly. Not a drop managed to fall on her gorgeous dress. She needed answers and she needed them now.

Anger was boiling and something that she locked inside of her years ago was urging her to let it out.

"The gardener" and other men stood next to the musicians and were chatting with women surrounding them. Savvy watched them from afar for a few seconds but when some brunette in a red dress slid her arm over "the gardener's" bicep, she made up her mind.

She marched in their direction and placed her hand on his shoulder, squeezing it with a royal lycan's might to send a message.

"Hey there," she smirked as if she was in full control of the situation. "I think you owe me a dance."

He looked at her, startled.

She could bet he didn't expect her to be this daring in this situation. Too bad for him.

"Who do you think you are?!" the brunette in red gasped.

"The music hasn't even started," some guy in a black mask with a blonde beard stated. And it was a fair point.

Savannah's head snapped to the musicians as she felt Athena surfacing and her eyes glowing.

"Play something ery!" She gave them an Alpha order which she almost never used and they grabbed their instruments.

"What the..." someone was about to protest but the gardener raised his hand, motioning for them to stop.

"It would be my honour," he took her hand from his shoulder and kissed it gently, sending shivers all over her body. But she had to snap out of it. It meant nothing to him and it would mean nothing to her.

Kai was shocked. The little maid was one of the guests, which meant that she was someone important. And of a much higher rank than he initially thought. He never bothered to check her wolf because he was overwhelmed each time they were together. He let his guard down.

And it was a mistake.

Did she already know who he was? Judging by the look in her eyes she was angry with him. And rightfully so. He was the king of the Northern Kingdom and she probably thought that he was just toying with her. But it wasn't like she told him the whole truth either.

Kai walked her to the centre of the room, and everyone stepped away, leaving the dance oor to the two of them. The rst accords sounded, music lling the room in an instant. Their eyes locked and he pulled her into himself roughly, closing the space between them. After this conversation they would be done, and a part of him wanted to at least feel her closer.

A corner of his lip curled into a smile. She was clever since she wanted to do this with music on. This was the only way to speak privately at a party with so many shiffer ears in the room.

"So, I guess that you..." He wanted to start but she growled at him. A woman never growled at him before.

"I hope you had your fun," she gritted her teeth looking at him with a challenge in her eyes. He hated the mask that was covering her pretty face but at least her eyes were still on full display for him.

"Look, if I knew who you were, I would have kept as far away from you as possible," he told her but, of course, it didn't help his case one bit.

"Goddess," she chuckled bitterly, "are you seriously going to pretend that you didn't know?"

"And you?" he arched his brow although she couldn't see it through the mask.

"I am the one who is new here! I couldn't know!" the woman in his arm hissed and he could feel how fast her heart was beating. She didn't look like she was lying.

"Exactly, you are new here," he mimicked her tone, "how was I supposed to know? I am sorry, but I am not following princess Savannah on social media to know what all her friends look like."

Her lips parted. Was he still trying to play her? If that was the case, she wasn't letting it happen.

"Nice try!" she narrowed her eyes at him. "As if king Kai's closest man wouldn't be checking everyone who was arriving for those stupid Luna Trials."

Kai swallowed. His Beta and Gamma were probably doing this all night and they would know who she was. It all went a bit too far. He had to let her go.

"Listen, it was a mistake," he sighed. "Let's just forget about it and move on from..."

A sudden piercing pain stabbed his foot and he realised that she stepped on it with her sharp metal heel.

"Fine!" The girl purses her lips. "Mistake it is! See you never, gardener!"

Her every word was coated with hate she felt for him at this moment and she was ready to leave when he held her in place, grasping her tighter.

"Not so fast, little maid!" He growled into her ear softly. "No one stabs me and leaves."

He didn't even know why he was still holding her. He deserved that and he had to let her go. He absolutely had to.

Only that neither him nor his wolf really wanted to.

"The dance is not over yet," he whispered into her ear, accidentally brushing his lips over her skin as he leaned down. "Leaving early is rude."

"If you are a masochist, just say so," the girl sneered and stepped on his other foot. He groaned, but not from the pain this time. He was used to physical pain. But that audacity of hers required some answers.

So, when she lifted her foot to repeat the same annoying action, he caught her thigh and lifted it higher, wrapping it around his own as if they were in a sensual provocative dance and not a street ght.

"Take your hands off me," her eyes were throwing daggers at him while her cheeks ushed.

"Only when you learn how to behave in a civilised society," he smirked. "And after that you westerners call us barbarians?"

"Aren't you?" she rolled her eyes. "You can't touch a woman like that without her con.sent."

"It brings me as much pleasure as it brings to you," he glared at her and she did the same.

The two of them didn't even notice that the music was off. They didn't realise that they were not moving anymore. And that everyone around them was staring.

Someone cleared their throat right next to them.

"Excuse me," Elene touched her brother's arm.

"I am busy," he growled at her.

"Kai!" Elene raised her voice slightly. "You aren't supposed to dance with the contenders before their introduction. That is if they get through it in the rst place! And princess Savannah needs to go and take her place because we are about to start."

They both looked at her in awe, processing her words.

And then they got back to gazing at each other...

"Princess Savannah?"

"Kai?" They said the words in unison.

NOTE: Sooo... what are we thinking? And how should I name this chapter?