

Traded To The Lycan King by MG Wattsons

Chapter 6-10

Chapter 6

“Does it matter?” I ask and Hayes looks at me in disbelief, giving me his brotherly ‘We don’t keep secrets’ look.

“It matters to me, in how I treat her. Is she your mate?” Hayes asks.

“She is your Luna. You will treat her how she should be treated.” I say, crossing my arms over my chest.

“Merikh.” He whispers low, his eyes softening and I know where his thoughts are going and I refuse to go down that memory lane with him. I refuse to go down it ever again.

“She is my mate.” I say matter of fact, and he laughs, rolling his eyes.

“Mate, as in you chose her and followed through with the union to the Alpha’s daughter-”

“That’s not the Alpha’s daughter.” Percy says with a knowing smile.

“Then who the fuck is it?”

“That’s Colette,” Percy says, his smile even wider now. I roll my eyes because no one knows shit about what is actually happening. Hell, it was hard enough for me to believe it when I saw her.

“Who the hell is Colette?”

“She is my second chance mate...” I admit with a sigh.

“And you accepted her...” He murmurs, his eyes observing me as though he needs to gauge my reaction.

“Lycan’s can’t reject a second chance mate, Hayes, you know that. There was no leaving without her. I didn’t have a choice,” I mutter, and he nods in understanding, blowing out a puff of air.

“How did she take it?” He asks.

“She isn’t aware of it...” I say with a wince, and Hayes watches me with curiosity.

“Recently rejected then...” he muses.

“Alpha, she is waking up,” the healer says, looking over his shoulder. “I think it would be best if you are at least

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around her, so she doesn’t wake up alarmed and thinking she was kidnapped or something.”

I find the sentiment ironic considering I didn’t really give her a choice in our mating. More of an ultimatum. In some realms of the world, that might be considered kidnapping. Not in ours, though, not when you are a royal and privy to knowledge your true mate doesn’t have.

She sits up; her face is pale as she reaches out with a whimper for her leg.

“How do you feel?” I ask, moving to her side.

She squeals and jumps at the sound of my voice, her hands shaking and her face painted in fear before she seems to calm and comes to her senses. I press my hand to her forehead and she closes her eyes, her head pressing into my warm palm as if she is too weak to hold herself up.

“Nothing out of the ordinary.” She says softly and my muscles tense, “aside from my leg, it feels like a normal beating.”

My lips twitch, a snarl waiting to break free as I press my lips together tightly. My lycan roars within me, tearing to get out and head back to her pack and kill anyone who hurt her. But I store those emotions away for a day. I will need that anger. Because there will be other fights. This attack was not the first and now that I have a Luna I dare say it will be the last.

“I recommend getting her settled and re-wrapped as soon as possible. The closest place is her pack “The healer tries to say before we cut him off.

“No!” Colette and I say in unison..

“We should get back to our pack as soon as possible. Staying out here or going back will just leave us exposed to more attacks. The only safe place for us is home.” I finish, my eyes sliding to watch her as she looks down at her

lap.

If I set foot in that pack again, I will only kill people. No, we need to go where I know it is safe. For her and my

treaty.

Her outfit is covered in blood, her pants torn and ripped off nearly up to her underwear line, where a white bandage is settled over her skin with green herbs covering the injury. The long makeshift splint frames her leg, making it unbendable, and I find I want to fix it. To fix her, but I know until the mate bond is fully recognizable for her, my presence doesn't do much to speed her healing. It helps, but not the way it regularly would.

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“Come,” I say in a whisper. Moving to her side, Colette nods without looking at me, her legs swinging to the side. As if she plans to walk and a low displeased grumble radiates through my chest. She looks up suddenly,

shocked.

“I will carry you.” I tell her, not giving her the chance to **refuse** me.

My arms slip under her knees, her splint doing its job to keep her legs motionless. As my other arm wraps around her back. I tug her close, my heart beating fast as she locks her eyes with mine. There's a hitch in her breathing and I smirk. I enjoy having this effect on her.

“When will we be in your pack?” She asks a soft whisper.

“If we get moving now, we will make it by sunset.” Her muscles tense and I can sense a shift in her. She seems to grow smaller, as if she is shrinking into a shell of fear.

“There will be no more attacks,” Hayes says, stepping up beside us, Percy wandering close behind. “After a surprise attack, the victims are always on high alert. Nah, they will wait for our guard to fall before they attack again.”

I scowl at my idiot brother.

“Very helpful, Hayes.” I mutter.

“Who is Hayes?” She whispers up at me, confused. I look at Hayes to my right, who beams at her, about to open his mouth.

“He is my idiot younger brother.” I sigh and Colette looks mildly amused.

“And his Beta,” Hayes does an awkward walking bow as we approach my luxury SUV that I had waiting by for us later in our journey.

“Ah,” is all Colette says. Hayes opens the door and I gingerly slide Colette in. She settles in and I make sure she is comfortable before closing the door.

“I’ll drive

“I’ll drive.” Hayes says.

“We shouldn’t be in the same vehicle,” I remind him. In case something happens, one of us must survive.

“You know I’m the most skilled driver here. If I had been driving, they wouldn’t have-”

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“Bullshit!” Percy growls, stepping up. “That’s bullshit and you know it! They came out of nowhere. Lights off and rammed from the side.”

“Boys,” I groan, pinching the bridge of my nose as my exhaustion and my pain settles into my bones.

“Breaks, or the gas pedal could have helped you avoid

“Enough!” I roar, both of them wincing as they look at me like two pups who just got caught stealing the last cookie. “Hayes, drive. Percy in the passenger seat. I don’t want to hear a damn comment from either of you. Understood?!” I growl.

I don’t wait for their agreement as I move around the back of the SUV, my hand pressing into the back of the cool metal vehicle to help me brace myself and breathe. My back is heated, and my skin cracks with every move, no doubt the blood drying to my skin from the various bite marks I received earlier. I inhale a deep breath, preparing myself to be near my mate for hours, and then I crawl in the door.

Colette

looks up at me as I settle in next to her, afraid to touch her as we begin our second trek home. After a few moments I see her bite her lip as we hit a bump and I reach out, pulling her into my arms to afford her all the help our weak bond can. I prop my leg up, then lean forward, my cheek brushing hers as I lift her injured leg up onto mine for better support.

My back burns again, and I bite back a hiss. These pains aren’t foreign to me. I’m scarred for a reason. I’ve lived through many battles. These little things are no different.

“Is that not uncomfortable?” She asks weakly. “I was fine...”

“The bond may be weak as we are not fully mated, but with my status, my touch can help to heal you faster and ease some of your pain. I got you into this mess, Colette, please allow me to help you how I can.” I whisper into her ears as she presses her back into my chest. She quiets down with a half nod of acceptance.

By the time the sun is setting, exhaustion has weaved a web over my body. My limbs feel heavy, my

arms tingling and my legs seem to burn with every passing second we remain in the vehicle. I shuffle to the side slightly, Colette stirring and pushing up.

She looks up at me over her shoulder, and I watch as little dots dance over her face. My hands reach out, my brows furrowing as I try to catch them. Her skin is soft, and her eyes curious as she seems to watch me curiously.

“Merikh...,” she says as the door opens behind me.

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“Alpha.” Percy says, “We are ho—Shit your back looks...”

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“It will be fine,” I rasp out, suddenly feeling faint as I maneuver my way out of the vehicle. I stumble, my hand slamming into the ground as I catch myself. “Shit hit.”

“Hayes,” Percy calls out in a worried tone, and I grow in discontent.

“Shut up, Percy.” I grumble, moving back to the door and reaching in to help Colette out.

Her leg comes out first, and I ease it past me before I **wrap** my hands around her waist and lift her as my vision blanks out. My body feels like it ignites in a boiling heat as I crumple to the ground, blind and in agony. The only touch that brings me peace is that small patch where Colette’s cool hands touch my heated flesh.

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Colette

My hands cling to Merikh as he drops, my injured leg keeping me from catching myself as I tumble down onto him with a pained cry. My knee lands on his chest, my hands pressing onto him to remove my weight from his massive frame as he lays heated and unmoving. Fear bubbles in my chest, watching his b*

dy work hard to breathe, his tender flesh around his collar bone sucking in harshly.

“Merikh,” I say, awkwardly trying to force myself to stand on the brace that holds my injured leg straight. “Wake up,” I whisper, my request growing more panicked by the second. A hand gently grabs my arm and pulls me up, but I feel compelled to be near him, the way he wished to be near me, to help with my pain.

“Hayes!” Percy screams, and he seems to appear out of thin air.

“f**k.” Hayes swoops down, grunting as he tries to pull Merikh up. He gets him up enough for him to look at his back and his face pales.

“What?” I ask, unable to find my breath now. “What is it? What happened?”

“Get her to her room,” Hayes orders Percy, who turns his attention to me.

“Come with me,” he murmurs, and I furrow my brows in frustration as he hurries to usher me away.

“I want to stay with him,” I tell them and Hayes chuckles, rolling his eyes.

“You just met him yesterday and your bond isn’t even fully initiated yet,” he says with a cool tone to his voice. “You have nothing to offer him. What he needs is a healer.”

I want to fight back, to argue that I am the Luna now. But I don’t feel like a Luna, and I certainly don’t look like a Luna. I am weak, injured, and my chosen mate is out of commission. Without Merikh I am just a weak werewolf on their turf.

“You need a healer too,” Percy reminds me as I frown.

“I was already seen.” I complain, but he presses his lips into a flat line.

“You need a bandage change and rest if you ever hope to heal...”

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"I know but-" I try to spin to see Merikh.

"I don't mean to be rude, Luna." Percy says in a low voice, as he swoops down and lifts me into his arms. I squeal in shock. "But I understand the status you were, and the state your wolf was in when we met you. Healing is exactly what Alpha Merikh wants for you. Of that, I am sure you are not strong enough to offer him any help. Not right now anyway,"

His words sting, hurting what tiny bit of pride I have left. I look over his shoulder as Percy whisks me away from Merikh. Several warriors rush in and scramble to pick up his massive b*dy and take him away. I shouldn't care like I do, but I know it isn't love or even the small pull from our weak bond. I care because Merikh saved me. Not just once, or twice, but on multiple occasions since meeting him yesterday.

He saved me when he chose me. He saved me when Leslie attacked me again. Then he tried to shield my b*dy with his in the crash and then holding me close even though I am certain he finds me repulsive, for the sake of helping me heal.

Merikh, the scary massive mountain of a Lycan and the known alpha of death, protected me. And I can't help but feel a little protective of him in the same way.

"Where are they taking him?" I ask Percy. He gives me a curious look, then a small smirk tickles his lips.

"They are taking him to the infirmary. Then he will wind up back in his room for his resting period."

I furrow my brows and purse my lips. "Does this happen often?"

"The attack or his serious injuries?" Percy asks, and I can gather from his tone that both are a regular occurrence.

“Mmm, so both happen on a regular basis.” I state with a heavy exhale.

“Alpha Merikh is a powerful player in our world. Many want him gone.”

“Why would werewolves want him gone?” I ask, confused. “He is the Lycan king. Without him, there will be no

keeping the peace.”

A world with no king is a breeding ground for chaos for our kind. The smaller pack alphas would fight for control and never fully have it, as there would be no trust between any of them. Even though Alpha Bentley hates being under another alpha, he respects Merikh and the Lycan’s. All the wolves do, so what pack has the power to keep attacking and still survive the wrath of the Alpha of death?

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Percy clears his throat and looks at my braced leg.

“How is the pain right now?” he asks and I **get** the feeling he is changing the subject.

“It is numb for now,” I say truthfully, feeling no pain, though I think once my heart rate and worry for Merikh settle that pain will rip through me like a bear stumbling onto a beehive.

“Ah!” Percy says with a cheery voice. “We are here. Just...wait here for when Merikh calls for you. He will be

better soon.”

He helps me into the room, placing me on the bed. He quickly grabs a small pile of clothing and places it next to me with a smile before he disappears, leaving me alone in the massive room. My hand brushes the satin pajama set and, with a huff, I shuck my dirty top off and pull on the smooth fabric.

I frown down at my jeans. Or lack thereof. Trying to decide if taking off the brace is the best idea. Then again, perhaps doing it while the pain is gone is my better option. I lay on my back wiggling out of my one full leg of denim and the other that was ripped to near nothing on the other side.

e. It doesn't take much to slip on the satin bottoms that come lay halfway down my bandage wound.

A light breeze softly brushes the sheer curtains aside, drawing my attention, and I watch as the rest of the sun goes down on a massive lake. My mouth feels dry, my hands itching as I nervously wait, watching the water as it ripples from the same breeze that tickles my cheeks.

It's stunning.

The way the purples and pink hues dance across the glassy water that hypnotizes me, pulling me into a calming trance as I get lost, looking in the one thing that makes me feel home. There were no bodies of water like this back in my pack. Just a creek that would occasionally flow with water after a massive rain storm. But this beauty. .it is one that has never been tainted with terrible memories or pain. It's new, and soul cleansing-

I ease myself further onto the bed, laying my head down as I watch the way the water grows darker with every passing second. My eyes become heavy, my pain still subsiding as slowly the breeze and the smell of the fresh air seem to wrap me in a soft blanket of serenity and I fall asleep.

When I wake again, I am in the same position, my heart delighting in the realization that I am still here, still safe. Then I hear arguing down the hall as the bedroom door opens and a pretty young woman walks in with a tray of food. My stomach growls on cue. She gives me a soft smile as she walks toward me.

"Is Merikh okay?" I ask, my mind wandering back to the whole reason I am here and even alive. She frowns.

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"He has been poisoned." She takes a seat next to me, placing the tray between us.

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“What?” My eyes grow wide and I try to push off the bed. Pain tears through me, taking my breath from my lungs. as I gasp and bile rises. I clasp a hand over my mouth and the woman frowns.

“You should drink this.” She offers me a steaming mug of something, but I shake my head. Between my fear and pain, I have no appetite for even something to drink.

“When will he be back?” I ask her and she shrugs.

“Might be awhile.”

“C— can I see him?” I ask, worried about backlash, as she laughs lightly, shaking her head.

“You are the Luna: The person you answer to is down the hall out of commission. As far as I’m concerned, you can do whatever the hell you like.”

“Really?”

“Of course,”

“But Hayes...” she rolls her eyes and waves me off.

“Hayes is a beta with daddy issues. He idolizes Alpha Merikh, he is just worried.”

A loud scream vibrates the bedroom door and I swallow roughly, my throat suddenly pained. Merikh must be in so much pain. I tilt my head. Maybe if I am the one to change his bandages, it will hurt less? I know our bond is weak, but it’s something and though I’m not a healer, I was always taking care of everyone back in my pack. This is something I know how to do, the one thing I have to offer.

I push through the pain as I carefully extract myself from the bed. I look over my shoulder, waiting for the maid to stop me, but she pops a grape into her mouth, looking amused. She watches me as I quickly grab the unsteady brace and tie it back to my leg as tightly as possible, hoping to avoid making it worse by walking.

“You aren’t going to stop me?” I ask, a little surprised when I am done and she is still sitting in silence. She shrugs.

“What the hell can I do? My Luna wishes to see her Alpha.” She smirks and her eyes go wide as she leans forward. “And don’t let Hayes try to talk you out of it. You need to talk first and then you need to insist on taking over, got

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it Luna?” She asks and I nod.

“Are you sure?” I ask with a furrowed brow, feeling uneasy.

“Oh, absolutely.” She says with the utmost certainty.

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Okay. I can do this. I just need a little confidence in my status. The status I never wanted or asked for or have an idea how to be, but that’s irrelevant.

“Don’t let Hayes speak,” I mutter to myself, inching my way out of the room and down the hallway. I cling to the wall for support, sweat beading my brow as the pain seems to eat me alive, but for once I **feel** a little stronger, a little more resolved, like I’m making the right decision.

He cries out again, an agonizing scream muffled by something and I can only assume Merikh is biting down onto a fabric. I can hear bickering and angry crashing as I get to the door and release a puff of air.

The door flings open and Hayes nearly runs into me on his way out with a curse.

“Colette,” he says, shocked. “You should be resting,”

“I want to see him,” I say weakly, and he frowns.

“Now is not the best time,”

“Why not?” I ask, placing all my weight on my good leg.

“I am about to clean his wounds and he-”

“I will do it,” I say, piping up.

“Uh, I don’t think that is really a good-”

“I know how to clean a wound and re-bandage. You have been with him all night. I promise to take care of him.”

A smile creeps along his lips as he nods his head and looks over his shoulder.

“You know what? You make a fair point. I am tired and if you truly feel up to it, then why not?” He steps back, gesturing for me to enter the room. Then he points to the corner. “The herbs are there, but you will need to scrub the wounds with that special cream colored scrub before applying them.”

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“Scrub?” I ask, my brows shooting into my hairline.

“Yes, he is in the healing waters,”

“Healing waters?” I ask as he giddily pushes past me. He spins on his heels, taking a few steps backward with a cheery grin.

“It’s like a large hot tub with herbs.”

“Hot tub...” I repeat and he laughs.

“A bath, Luna. He is in a large bath,”

“Woah, wait!” I holler after him as he rushes away, leaving me in the doorway as a pained grunt comes from my back. I close my eyes, my stomach twisting in painful knots as I take three deep, calming breaths.

I step into the steamy room, closing the door behind me as I inhale the fragrant air. The room is silent aside from the heavy breathing coming from Merikh as

I move closer. The air swirls, and my breathing hitches as his eyes meet mine in confusion.

“Colette...What are you doing here?” he rasps, standing and walking toward me. I reach over, taking hold of the sponge thing Hayes pointed out. I clutch it to my chest and hobble to him.

“I’m here to help,” I announce, with a squeak. He arches a brow before wincing and grunting.

“You’re going to have to get in here with me if you plan to help. Are you okay with that?”

“Mm hmm...” I nod, lying. “Totally okay with that.”

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I am not okay with this, I am not okay with this. I AM NOT OKAY WITH THIS.

My insides are screaming, the nerves fueled by the anxiety of what lays below the waterline that is nibbling at Merikh’s waist. He moves closer to me, each step measured and eliciting a pained noise from him as he grows larger, more imposing. My fingers ache from squeezing the sponge. Merikh stops, waiting for me as he tilts his head.

“I am teasing, Colette. I can manage this on my own.” He says with a concerned look. “There is no need for you to stress yourself.”

I snap my eyes to meet his and I see he is serious, his hand extending to take the sponge from me. I scowl and hold it tighter. No, I can do this. I don’t fight, because I was too weak to train. I do nothing of my accord because I didn’t have the status to have my own will. But this, this is something I can do. I can help in this way. So I shake my head ‘no’ feebly. He presses his lips together to hide a smile as he looks away.

“Could you come and sit on the edge? Maybe there are some stairs...?” I ask hopeful, and he tilts his head to the side.

“The water will be helpful for your leg. You could come in as well.” He says like being n*ked with him isn’t easily the most insane idea I have ever heard. He must see the shock and horror on my face as he smiles. “You can keep your undergarments on. I am in no condition to try anything.”

“I don’t know how to do that with this thing on my leg.” I point to the wooden brace still tied to my leg, and he moves closer, stepping up and revealing more of his lower torso without showing me everything. Panic runs rampant through my veins and I spin away, slamming my eyes shut. I can hear his soft chuckle as it fills the steam filled air, echoing off the marble walls as my heart thuds in my ears.

“You do not have to. I won’t force it on you, but it would be good for your healing.” He sounds almost convincing. I peek over my shoulder, opening one eye only to find him watching me with a color of amusement.

Even pale and a little green in the face, he is more attractive than any male has the right to be. I frown but inch my way over to him, where he stands at the edge.

I think it would be best if you soak and I bandage you when you are ready.”

“Come,” he sighs, sounding like he is struggling with pain, or just patience. I can’t quite tell either, though they

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seem like they could both be fueling each other. “I’ve soaked for long enough.”

Merikh takes another step up and I find myself shrouded in darkness as my eyes and lips squeeze together in an effort not to spy him n*ked. There is a rustling sound and after a moment of only being able to hear my heart. beat loud in my head, I feel his fingers teasing my chin and I allow my eyes to open.

He tilts my face up, his eyes meeting mine as he stares into my being. My heart pounds in my ears, my lungs struggling to keep up with the steam and, well ...him being this close. I lick my lips and his eyes flash black for a moment before he winces again, and stumbles back a step. I reach out, afraid he might fall, and I wrap my arms around his waist in panic. His body goes rigid, my breathing heavy as I slowly extract myself from him and place my hands up on his shoulders.

"I need you to be lower if I have to clean out your wounds." I whisper, feeling parched for water.

His eyes lock on mine as he lowers down to his knees. He gently plucks the sponge from my hand and leans over, dragging it through the water before handing it back to me. Then he twists, exposing his back to me as my eyes grow wide in shock. Merikh's back looks awful. Like a jigsaw puzzle of black veins stemming from two angry red spots near his shoulder blades.

"This will probably hurt," I inform him and he nods, his muscles tense as he readies himself.

"Talk to me?" He grunts as I press the sponge to his wound. "Distract my mind."

"I don't know what to say," I admit, and he flinches away before settling with a shudder.

"Anything will do, Colette." he grits out, "Your favorite color, what you like to eat. Say whatever comes to mind."

"How were they able to poison you?" I ask curiously, pressing harder as I drag the herbal scrub over his bite mark. He quivers and grunts in pain.

"They poisoned themselves," he says after a sharp inhale. I freeze for a moment, remembering the red eyes of the man who stood over me. I had thought I imagined it, but maybe that was real. Perhaps I was looking at a poisoned werewolf.

"Is that why their eyes were red?" I ask curiously, dragging the scrub down once more. He pauses, looking over his shoulder at me and frowning.

"You noticed that?" He asks curiously.

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“Yes.” I shrug.

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He hums in discontent, looking forward again. “Their eyes were red for another reason.” He says simply.

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“... why were they red?” I ask. “Werewolves don’t have red eyes, it isn’t something that exists in our kind...but I was sure they were wolves...”

“They were.” He agrees, but he doesn’t elaborate. I frown at his back, releasing a frustrated huff.

“I’m not understanding.” I furrow my brows and he again goes silent on me. “Alpha...”

“I’ve already told you, it’s just Merikh.” He murmurs. “We are mates now. Call me by my name, not my title.”

“Ah. Right, I forgot. Um. Merikh,” I say, pausing and biting back a nervous smile that breaks free. “What was wrong with the people who attacked us?” I ask.

“There are a few things that could have made them that way.” He says with a small shrug. “But my first guess is that they were under a spell.”

my brows knit together in confusion at his statement.

“Percy made it seem like this kind of thing happens a lot...” I mention trying to find the right way to ask about being spelled.

He chuckles, his shoulders rising and falling under my hands.

“In a sense, yes, we are attacked often.”

I frown, considering what he is saying. Here I thought this was the most powerful pack, the Lycan King who reigns over all werewolves, yet he is attacked regularly and from the looks of his scarred body, they often land some good attempts on his life.

“And do they always try to poison you?”

“This is not the first time, no,” he admits, sounding amused.

“But they are wolves...” I say matter of fact.

“Mmm, yes, these ones were.” He says simply, like there are any other possibilities. Unless that’s exactly what he

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means. I blink, my hand stilling, and he slowly spins to face me.

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“What do you mean by that? Like you mean humans?” I ask, and he tilts his head to the side.

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“You don’t really think it’s just werewolves and humans in the world, do you?” He asks, a twinkle in his eyes. I open my mouth to respond but snap it back shut as I process his words. “I see you were under that illusion.” He

murmurs.

“It sounds like...I mean...are you saying...”

“That there are other supernatural beings in the world?” he arches his brow and I feel him extract the sponge from my hand. Tossing it to the side as he faces me fully, rising to his feet. I limp

back, stumbling slightly as he catches me, his warm arms wrapping around my back.

“What are you doing?” I whisper, my eyes following the sponge, wishing for that little tiny barrier between us.

“My wounds are clean,” His voice is a husky grumble tickling through my body as I lick my lips and watch his face. His eyes trail over me, hungrily eating up what they can.

“So you are feeling better...?” I ask, feeling shy.

“A little,” Merikh gives me a knowing smile before he leans away, his hands on my waist ensuring I have a better

footing.

My eyes grow wide in shock as I am drawn to the water dripping down his scared yet impeccably fit body. His abs ripple with every heavy breath and his massive chest rises and falls as he runs a wet hand through his hair, slicking it back before shaking it out.

I am suddenly traveling in the Sahara Desert, my lips dry and my body sweltering with heat. He takes a step toward me, the towel around his waist slipping loose. I yelp, looking away as fast as possible. I can hear the bark of laughter coming from deep within his chest.

“I have shorts on, Colette. Though I find this—innocence—rather endearing.” He smiles wide as I peek up at him. He reaches out, grabbing the herbs on the side table and fresh bandages, and once again drops to his knees as he tries to wrap my leg.

“These herbs are for you,” I say, shoving his hand away. He freezes, scowling up at me.

“Your leg is in worse condition.”

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“You are still fighting poison.” I remind him, and he rolls his eyes, scoffing.

“I am used to my injuries. They will heal,”

“So will my leg.” I say with a frown, and he sighs.

“You are weak, Colette. Your healing will take longer than mine will.”

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My cheeks grow pink again, though this time it's a different kind of embarrassment. It's not being caught staring or having lustful thoughts. It's me realizing how pathetic I must look not only to him, but likely everyone around me. I'm weak. I know it and they know it, but to be catered to because of it? It feels far worse than to be treated like garbage for it.

“Right,” I mumble, noticing how his hand hesitates for a moment. Then he exhales a sigh and places the herbs in my hands.

“Do as you please,” he grits out, spinning his back to face me, leaving me once again shocked by his actions.

I hold the herbs in my hand, looking from them to his back, and then I bite my lip. It's crazy to think about it, even dumber to hope for it, but maybe...just maybe the Alpha of Death likes me...

Chapter 9

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“Merikh POV”

“So when do you plan to announce to the pack we have a new Luna...?” Hayes asks, propping his feet up on my couch. I scowl at him, pacing over and slapping them off my furniture.

“When she is ready,” I say simply.

“And what have you done to make her ready for it?” Hayes asks.

“I have been busy, Hayes. If you haven’t noticed, I have been trying to track the assholes who tried to kill me.” I growl at my brother. He pops up from the couch and paces to the massive bay window overlooking the lake.

“Are we so sure they were after you?” He asks softly, and I don’t look at him. My jaw clenching.

“Yes,”

“How?”

“How what?” I snap at him.

“How are you so sure?”

“Who else would they be after?” I ask with an annoyed sigh.

“I’m not dense, brother. I see the things even you try to keep from me.”

“No. You are right, you aren’t dense, But that doesn’t mean you know what you are talking about with this.”

“They crashed into your vehicle and left YOU.” He says in a scoff, “they dragged her and left you-”

“They were baiting me.” I growl at him. “Trying to draw me out and taunt me. It’s what they always do.”

“What if they know…” he whispers and I press my lips together in worry. It would be a lie to say the same thought hasn’t crossed my mind once or twice.

“There is no way for them to know, Hayes.” I give him a pointed look and he sighs, defeated. “Only we know, hell

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even Colette is in the dark on this. It is not possible for anyone to know.”

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“I know it’s not logical to think they would know, but it feels wrong, It feels off, it feels like what happened with Lauren-”

“Don’t say her f**king name!” I hiss in anger, pacing over and grabbing Hayes by the collar of his shirt. The very sound of her name makes my skin crawl and my chest burn. It doesn’t matter that I agree with him on this. That it feels off. I can’t bring myself to think about what happened years ago.

“Okay,” he says, hands up in defense as I release him with a heavy sigh. “Look, I didn’t mean it was happening again, I just...we ignored the signs before.”

“I know,” I grumble, sighing as I shuffle away from him and drag my hands through my hair. “I know, I’m sorry, I just...”

“It’s been years, Merikh,” he reminds me, but it doesn’t remove the ache of betrayal. No amount of time can muddle the memories that remain so damn vivid in my mind. Her cries, the begging, the lies.

“We need to keep Colette safe,” I say, ignoring him. “They are after me, and her real significance to me remains a secret. It must remain that way even to her. I remind him, and he frowns when I look his way.

“That means you will need to officially take her as a full mate before the month is up, Merikh. You get that right?” He scoffs and I nod, glancing out the window.

“I have it all under control.”

“You say that, but I’m not sure you do. That girl is afraid of you.” He scoffs, and my brows pinch together in distaste.

“She is not afraid of me.” I huff and he snorts.

“Yeah, okay. The tiny, weak werewolf isn’t afraid of the alpha of death she was forced to accept to save her pack. If you say so,” he mutters.

Okay, He may have a point here.

“I’m nice to her.” I remind him, and he finds the statement even more amusing.

“Nice as in you do sweet things for her or nice as in you let her know she has broccoli stuck in her teeth?” He

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pops a brow, waiting for an answer, and I scowl at him.

“I gave her silk pajamas.”

“And you have ignored her since she took care of your back.” He reminds me and I scoff at him.

“I’ve not ignored her. I am giving her space.”

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18:11

“Keep it up and in about a year, she might actually let you hold her hand,” Hayes snorts as he crosses over to me and slaps me on my sore back knowingly.

“You’re an asshole,” I grunt and he shrugs, trying to hide a smile.

“It’s likely it’s a genetic trait we share, but at least I know how to flirt and win over the ladies. You have a woman

* fated to be yours and the big bad alpha lycan is hiding from her...”

“I’m n

not hiding.” I say with confidence.

“No? Should I have her come meet you here, then? For a little date, maybe?” I have to actively remind myself if he weren’t related, he wouldn’t speak to me the way he does. But then again, I have always needed someone to keep me level-headed. Even if he has a very roundabout way of doing so.

“Hayes,” I growl, and he grins, proud of himself.

“Merikh...?” Colette’s timid voice echoes behind me and my eyes slide closed as I hide the way my b*dy reacts to

fists. her. My Lycan nearly pants. I clench my

“Yes?” I respond, not bothering to turn to face her.

you wanted to see me?”

“Percy said you

My eyes blaze as I glare at Hayes, who looks away, biting back a smile. This asshole mind linked my soon to be gammas, and the two planned this behind my back.

“The Alpha was hoping you would join him for a movie and maybe a snack,” he says for me and I issue silent death threats with my eyes. “In order to help you become more comfortable around him. We know he can be imposing, but I promise he rarely bites.”

“Oh.” she says, sounding surprised. “A movie could be **fun**...I’ve never seen one on a screen this big before.”

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Hayes rushes off as I glare at him, my desire to pummel my brother strong. Then I turn and look at Colette, who looks like she is trying to shrink herself down. It’s painfully obvious she is used to hiding, being unseen.

vas!

“What type of movies do you like?” I ask her after clearing my throat. My lycan craves her nearness and, with keeping him away from her for a few days, I’m unable to fight the draw to her. She swallows and looks away grow closer, then she suddenly rolls her shoulders and straightens her back.

She feels a little different from when I spoke to her last. Every day she seems stronger, her wolf more alert, more present, and I can see her confidence growing. It excites my lycan and me to see her this way, finding confidence in herself.

“Romance?” I ask with a smile on my lips as her fiery eyes glance up to meet mine. “Perhaps a drama?”

“Action.” She says, a small smirk hiding behind her plush pink lips and I hum, a deep vibration in my chest,

satisfied.

“Really? I pegged you more as a princess movie kind of girl.” I admit, and she scoffs.

“Romance is not something I expect to ever experience, action however, well, I’ve already lived through one of those scenes.” Her lips press into an unimpressed line, and I realize how stupid I have been. I have left her side when perhaps she may need someone to talk to. Someone to trust in her fear.

“Do you wish to be romanced, Colette?” I ask, and she frowns.

“When I was a girl, I dreamed of it.” She admits, “But I understand that it’s not meant to be.”

“You do not think I can be romantic?” I ask her, a little offended. “Do you think I’m just a brute?”

“No!” she says, shocked and uneasy. “Heavens, no! That’s not what I mean...I mean...you asked me to be your chosen because you needed to make the treaty valid. I understand you probably have someone already chosen from within this pack who will be your true Luna. Give you heirs and lead.”

I bark out a laugh, my head falling backwards. She thinks she is a decoy mate?

“Is that what you were hoping for?” I ask, staring into her as she sucks her bottom lip between her teeth, looking nervous. “You are my one and only Luna, Colette. In choosing you, I have selected you to carry my heirs and be my partner.”

“But why?” She asks deflating.

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“Why not?” I shoot back, reaching out and cupping her cheek. She tries so hard not to flinch away from my touch, but I catch the twitch and it enrages my beast.

“I was not made to be a Luna, or to be cared for. She whispers.

My heart aches to hold her, but my past prevents me from letting her in. I want her because she is mine. And what is mine stays with me. I want her because I need her, even if she doesn't know it or why. What I want is to trust her completely and hold on to her, but I know damn well trust is not something I will ever be able to have in

another woman.

“I chose you, so you are a Luna. And as far as caring for you, well, what is mine is well cared for.”

“Then why do you hide from me?” She squeaks, looking dejected. I sigh, reaching out to take her hand in mine.

“I do not know how to win you.” I tell her as I walk backward, pulling her along with me. “But I want to make this official, make you the true Luna...”

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“I already told you I was willing...” she reminds me.

“Willing is good, but I want you to want it.”

She goes silent for a moment, her cheeks flushing a beautiful shade of pink before she looks up at me.

“Then make me want it?”

My b*dy freezes, my mouth going dry and my hands clamming up.

“Make you want me?” I ask, and she nods. “How does one do that?”

“I’m attracted to you.” She offers, “but I don’t know you...we are supposed to be mates now, but I know nothing about you, this pack...”

“I see...” I mutter, trying to think of what to do next. I’ve never had to woo a woman before. With my ex mate everything was easy, it fell into place because of the bond. Or at least I had thought.

“I enjoy popcorn.” I announce and she bites back a laugh.

“That’s... well, that’s a start. I like it too.” She says, a glimmer in her eyes that brings a genuine smile to my cheeks as I plop onto the couch, dragging her down next to **me** without being too forward.

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“I think we should enter an agreement,” I tell her, and she scrunches her nose in confusion. My hand reaches out, my finger stroking her nose, pressing the confused look from her face.

“We are already in an agreement,” she tries to remind me, but I shake my head no.

“I wish to be fully mated before the next big meeting where we will have to leave the pack.”

“You want me...” she points to herself, her eyebrows shooting into her hairline, “to go with you to meetings? Why? Where? Won’t they know how weak I am?”

“You keep claiming to be weak. Do you still have no idea who you are?” I ask her.

“What kind of meetings?” She asks, changing the subject as she tugs at the sleeves of her shirt and I smirk.

“The kind that will change your life,”

She scrunches her nose in thought, then tilts her head. “For the better?”

“Mmm, that remains to be seen.”

Chapter 10

10090% 18:11

*Colette POV

Merikh walks slowly beside me as I limp along in my brace that keeps the strain off my healing bone and sore muscles. My open wound is closed finally, now nothing more than a scab and a massive bruise where it had ripped through my skin. I wobble, but I hold my own, making sure he can see that even if I am weak, I am not a pansy.

He was quiet for most of the movie and I’m not even sure what we watched as I was so hyper focused on his closeness. The familiarity of him being near me, even though I don’t know him well at all. It’s strange what a small chosen bond can bring to life when there was nothing there to begin with.

“I enjoyed spending time with you,” he smiles, and I chuckle nervously.

“It is kind of nice to see you aren’t always killing people.” I joke and he laughs.

My skin tingles and I look up at him as he shakes his head and his green eyes meet mine. I’m immediately pink cheeked and I can feel it, but there’s no hiding it. Merikh is hot as hell and he is looking right at me like I’m the only person who exists. I have only known him for maybe three days and already I can feel the hope springing

free.

“So you have a sense of humor under that quiet good girl facade,”

“Facade?” I ask, confused. Do I appear fake?

“I know who you really are. I see you.” He says, once again being mysterious and strategic in the way he speaks. Three times now he has alluded to me not being who I am or not knowing what I am to him. And truthfully, it

scares me.

There is much I don't know about myself. Who my parents are, how they both died or where I was before I was found bloodied and left outside my pack's front gate with a note begging for them to take me in. Or so I was told by the staff who took turns raising me.

“I am an orphan.” I sigh, watching him as he processes the information. “There is nothing for you to see other than what is standing before you. Which isn't much,”

“Do you feel like being an orphan makes you unworthy?” He asks, genuinely curious as we stop outside my

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Chapter 10

room.

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“No, but it makes others see me differently.” I sigh. “People used to pity me, then they grew to dislike me because they would be punished if they were friends with me.”

I freeze and watch him curiously and I see a flicker in his eyes that feels like a strike to the gut. Is that why he chose me? Did he know I was an orphan and so there would be no family to protest my going with him? No one will come looking for me if he changes his mind and kills me off. I swallow hard, my blood running cold and my heart racing.

There were rumors he likes to hunt his women. It was a crazy rumor, and I was convinced they were just stories, but the way he watches me, wants to know me but always insists he knows more about me than I know about myself...is this all a setup to toy with me? He can't be nice. That's not in the alpha of death's personality, right?

"Colette, you seem to be thinking too much again," he frowns, his knuckle brushing my cheek as I blink at him.

"I-uh..." I swallow, stumbling back a step clumsily into the door.

"You look like you think I will eat you up." He chuckles and I don't dare admit that I'm worried he might do exactly that.

"I am just a little tired, that's all." I lie, giving him a tight smile before clearing my throat and looking away.

"Colette," his tone is low and husky, commanding my attention as I gulp and look at his unreadable expression. "Where do you go little mate, when you shut down after a perfectly normal conversation? What did they do to make you so afraid of yourself?"

His eyes scan my face, his hand reaching out to slide through my hair, brushing it out of my face.

"I go where I belong," I whisper. "Where I am wanted."

Merikh's head tilts to the side watching me, assessing me, then he sighs and draws his hands back.

"I see. And what can I do to make you see you are wanted here?" He asks. My heart stutters at the thought that he might care. I clear my throat, needing to change the subject, unable to handle the intensity of his gaze

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"Can I do things...in the pack?" I ask.

"What do you have in mind?"

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Emergency calls onlyM

Chapter 10

101090% 18:11

“I don’t know...” I muse, then I look down at my leg. The one thing I have always wanted to do was defend myself. Against the mean words, the strikes to my b*dy, just...the right and ability to stand my ground confidently and not cower in hopes they don’t break me the next time.

“Would you like to start training?” Merikh offers as if the thought isn’t absurd. I can’t help but laugh.

“Me? Train?” I snort, but he watches me intently..

“Why not?”

“Uh...I mean look at me, I am-”

“Weak?” He finishes my sentence for me with an arched brow. “That sounds like an excuse,”

“It was always the excuse I was giving back in my pack.” I frown.

“You aren’t there anymore,” He reminds me. Not that I need the reminder. He has done a decent job of reminding me every time I see him.

“I would like to train...” I admit, looking down at my feet.

“Good.” He says, looking relieved. “I will send Penny to fetch you in the morning.”

“In the morning?” I ask, my eyes wide. “But my leg...”

“There are other forms of training,” He chuckles. “Penny will fetch you in the morning and get you outfitted, then you and I will start.”

“Uh...okay.”

He backs away, sauntering backward before giving me a grin.

“Sleep well, little mate. I plan to exhaust you tomorrow.” Then he winks and turns his back to me.

I push into my room, feeling a little disappointed that he is choosing to stay in a different room still, but I know if he were to come in and stay with me, I would feel the opposite. I don't turn the light on, the bright moon once again glimmering off the massive body of water in the distance, shining directly into the room. My eyes slide closed, a smile drawing across my lips as I inhale.

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Emergency calls only.

Chapter 10

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In the short time I have been here, this room has become my safe space, the only place **where** I feel complete and relaxed and I know it **has** everything to do with the view. I totter over to the window, pushing it open as a breeze dances through the curtains and I feel a shift in my soul. My wolf is more present than she has ever been, lending me her strength and courage, and for once in my life, I don't feel alone.

I move to my bed, stripping off my brace with a satisfied groan as I gently rub my pinched skin. Exhaustion moves in, and instead of moving to get into pajamas, I strip down to my undergarments and wiggle under the blankets, the sound of the waves singing me to sleep.

There is rustling in the room, pulling me from my first full night's sleep in forever, and I peek out of my blankets to see the same maid as before moving about my room pulling clothing out of my dresser while humming a song. She spins gracefully, dancing to the song in her head before she freezes and her eyes find mine. A sheepish grin grows on her face and she stands up straight after getting caught.

“You must be Penny,” I mumble and she nods.

“That would be me,” she says chipper as she moves over to the window. “You left the window open.” My eyes grow wide and I panic. Am I not supposed to have touched the window?

“Oh...I’m sorry,” I say, throwing my blankets off to shut the window for her.

“Why are you apologizing to me? You are the Luna.” She tilts her head, confused, and I squeeze my eyes closed. Right. I’m the Luna. Not the maid who forgot to close a window. Not the lowly servant who gets kicked around for tiny, overlooked mistakes. That’s not who I am anymore. Or at least...it won’t be who I am.

“Right.” I sigh. “Is there a reason I shouldn’t have the window open at night?”

“I only mentioned it because my grandma used to say you could catch something if you leave your window open, but then again, grandma was human, so her perceptions are a little different from her life in her world.”

“You’re half human?” I ask, and she chuckles.

“I mean, aren’t we all human with a little beast inside us?” she winks. “Do you have any family around?”

Penny asks as she rushes over to grab the pile of clothes for me and places it on the bed. Then she looks me over with a curious glance and goes back, grabbing fresh underwear and a sports bra. I look down, realizing I’m just sitting in my bra and undies and I tug my blanket to my chest, embarrassed by the way my bones seem to protrude under my malnourished flesh.

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Chapter 10

“I have no family,” I admit, and she scoffs..

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“Lucky for you. I have a twin brother. Heavens, I love him, but sometimes...so sometimes I want to wring Percy’s

damn n*ck.”

“Percy is your twin?” I ask, my eyes growing wide.

She smiles, bending down to grab my brace from the floor.

“Yep! We are both training to be your gamma.”

“My gamma?” I ask. “I get a gamma?”

“Two, actually.” She gestures to the clothing in a way to urge me to get dressed.

“And...what exactly does a gamma do...?” I ask, feeling a little dumb.

“Well, basically we are your protectors, but we also do whatever you need us to do. Alpha Merikh has Beta Hayes, who will always choose him. You have me and Percy.”

“Wait...you will always...choose me...?” I ask, confused.

“I mean, yeah, as long as you don’t do dumb shit.” She laughs. “But you don’t appear dumb to me. Now, hurry and get dressed so we can meet Alpha Merikh. I can still get in trouble with him, so let’s not push boundaries too

much.”