

Traded To The Lycan King

by MG Wattsons

Chapter 11

Penny leads me away from the training pitch where I can hear the warriors yell and grunts as they spar. I look over my shoulder as it grows more distant and I frown to myself, confused. I know what it sounds like when warriors train, what a pitch looks like, and that was definitely it. So if I'm supposed to be training, why the hell are we going the opposite way?

My stomach churns and realization dawns. Maybe Merikh isn't ready for his pack to meet me yet. Perhaps he fears they will find me weak and unworthy, as I originally thought. Words are empty when there is no action to back them and while He says it's me he wants as his Luna, he sure has done an awful lot of making it feel the opposite.

"So that's the training arena behind us," Penny says, as if she can read my mind. "You'll be in there once your **leg** heals. It's really only used for sparring with the uppers."

"I see," I mumble, my eyes scanning the surrounding area.

This pack is massive, less concise than I expected. The pack house, which is the only place I've actually been, is the closest to the water's edge, looking over it like a proud parent. The rest of the pack? Nearly every building has its own average of fresh grass and trees. There are a few tall buildings but most are single story making it feel...well a lot like I've stepped into a fairytale village.

"This is what we call Old Town." She says, spinning with her arms out like it's a marvel even to her.

"So I assume there is a new town?" I ask, and she laughs.

"We have a more modern section, yes. But this...this is our slice of the past and it's really our senior pack members' village. The hustle and bustle of city life is that way." she points to my right and I can see the way the buildings change and the sea of people.

"And so we are going....?"

"Ah. Yeah. Sorry. We are going to the lake." She grins.

“The lake?”

“Mmhmm, the first order of business is a gentle walk.”

My brow is already sweating and my leg aching as we walk to the place I’m supposed to start my walk. How damn ironic that the walk there may kill me before I get the chance to start.

“Okay.” I try to remain positive. I mean, what kind of training did I expect with a bum leg, really?

I am so focused on my steps and reminding myself that I’ve had worse pain, worked harder when I felt way worse. I can do this.

When we get there, Penny spins to face me. She gives me an awkward fake curtsy with a wink and then flounces off, leaving me behind.

“Wait!” I call after her. “What the hell am I supposed to do now?”

She lifts her hands in a shrug as I frown at her back. Am I just supposed to wait here? Or start my walk on my own? This is the first time I am outside in the pack and she expects me to just find my way back to the pack

house? If I’m lucky, I will find my way back before dinner.

I groan in frustration before exhaling a huff of air and turning to look at the water.

“Which way would you like to go first?” I hear Merikh say from behind me. I look over my shoulder, a little shocked to see him.

“First?” I squeak out.

The thought of walking much more tires me out. My leg is aching and though I feel stronger than I have in years, but the pain is draining. He chuckles as he comes up to my side.

“Training is for the entire day,” He says, like the answer was so obvious. My eyes slide down to my throbbing leg and I muster a fake smile.

“Of course, let’s go.” I say, brushing past him, losing my balance for a moment before I clear my throat and straighten myself up.

Merikh seems to saunter behind me, either trying to keep from laughing at me or he is worried I will try to turn around and run. I push on for a little while; the pain creeping up my thigh and into my pelvis before

my side aches
and I realize not only is my injury pretty severe, so is my lack of fitness.

“Stop,” he says finally, his voice clipped and an edge to it. I frown, disappointed as I turn to look at him and he tilts his head, looking me over from top to bottom. “How bad does it hurt?”

“It’s fine,” I assure him, but he frowns.

“I do not tolerate lies. In fact, I punish for them.” He steps forward and my eyes grow wide at the simmer of anger I see there.

“I—
I’m sorry. It’s a habit...I didn’t mean to lie. I’m just used to having to work through my pain.” I admit, as he watches me closely. Merikh sighs, his anger melting as he shakes his head.

“Not here, not with me. If you feel pain, I want to know. I care about your well being. Have I not made that clear?”

“I’m sorry.” I mutter.

“Stop apologizing and be honest. How does it feel?”

“It hurts.” I whisper. “Walking is still...hard.”

“Good thing we won’t be walking for training today.” He says, passing me and taking the lead. I scrunch my nose, confused.

“Then what kind of training will we be doing?” I call to his back, but it falls on deaf ears as I struggle to catch up with him as the dirt grows to sand and we trudge to the waterline. Merikh stands there, his eyes watching me as I stumble next to him, my breathing ragged and sweat dripping down my cheek. It’s hot as heck here in the sand.

“Take off your brace,” he says, pointing to the contraption at my hip that runs down my outer legs to just below my knee. I wince at the thought of losing my crutch, but I quickly unlatch the buckles and velcro relying heavily on my other leg for support.

“Okay, now what?” I ask, and he smirks.

“Now you swim.”

My eyes nearly bulge from my face, my mouth falling open to protest, but nothing comes out. I don't know how to swim. Hell, I swear I told him I've never even had a bath. But now he expects me to just...wade into the dark unknown and prove I can swim? What monsters lurk in the water that I can't see? Aren't there all kinds of fish that can bite me?

"Um." I tilt my head and look at him, then down at myself. "I don't think Penny gave me the appropriate clothing for swimming..." I try to reason with him, but he simply smirks, only pointing at the water like he demands me to go in like this.

I whine as I slide my shoes off, wincing as a jolt of pain travels up my leg and to my chest, but I bite it back, refusing to let him see me as any weaker than I'm certain he thinks I am. My bare feet touches the water and a shiver runs through my body as a squeal rips from my lips.

The next thing I know I **am** scooped up in Merikh's powerful arms and he trudges into the water as I cling to his n*ck, not wanting to touch the frigid water with anything more than my feet.

My hair flies into my face as my heart soars to my throat and fear grips me. I am floating through the air, hitting the cold water first with a sharp inhale before I am plunged under into the darkness of the water.

I flail as best as I can, my legs tearing through the icy waves and my arms reach for anything to help me get my head above the water. The water muffles his laughter, but I know exactly what it is which only fuels my anger as I surface and squeal.

"Just stand," he says with a smug look and I go still. My feet hit the ground, my body settling and going upright as I balance easily on my good leg and I find my center. My eyes find his not bothering to hide my scowl when I look at him and his eyes lock on mine, looking pleased.

"I almost drowned." I mutter, and he shakes his head.

"You are standing just fine."

"I've never been in water like this before!" I squeal, my anger and embarrassment taking over my thoughts as my wolf simmers below the surface. Merikh wades closer to me, stopping just before touching me.

"Your wolf is stronger now that you are here. It is okay to trust her, rely on her as she continues to grow and heal with you."

"It's not her I am having trust issues with," I mutter and his lips twitch, trying to hide yet another smile.

"How does the water feel?" he asks, tilting his head, watching me curiously. I give him a side eye before looking around.

"Uh, wet...?" I say and he waits for more from me. "And cold. Why is it so cold?"

"Do you like it?"

"No." I bite out as a shiver runs through my body. He grips me tight, making it nearly impossible to keep my balance as I lean forward and into his warmth, my wolf and body seeking the heat he seems to radiate. Lycan's must just run much warmer than werewolves. And that is saying something. We run damn hot. His chest rumbles with a quiet laugh and I look up to see him shaking his head.

"You are becoming more comfortable," he says finally, smiling down at me. I don't want to admit it, but yes, longer I remain in the water, the more my body adjusts to the temperature and I become comfortable. My leg's throbbing has reduced more to a whisper of pain.

"It feels better on my leg, the lack of pressure."

"Now," he says, taking a slight step back and to my side. He grabs hold of my hand, and I swallow roughly as he gives it a squeeze. "We will walk in the water to help you strengthen your leg again. Each day, we will move closer to the shore until you can walk on your own."

"How long do you think that will take?" I ask curiously, and he shrugs.

"A typical werewolf? Maybe a week or two. With you I expected it being much longer, but you seem to be getting stronger relatively fast now that you are here." I know it is a statement, but I can hear the question in his voice, the way he is saying it, in hopes I might have some insight to offer.

"Is that because I am mated to you?" I ask him and he hums in thought.

"Could be. But we aren't fully mated. We have accepted each other, but the mate bond hasn't been fully..."

"We haven't marked each other yet, hmm." I finish for him in thought. I furrow my brow, my brain running rampant with thoughts, and then it hits me. Maybe it's not just the bond, perhaps there is something here that is making me grow stronger or...

"You are thinking again," he mutters and I frown, stopping as I look up at him.

“Do you think...I mean, I don’t see why they would...no...” I fumble through the awful thoughts. As much as I hate Leslie and she hated me, she couldn’t have...no, she wouldn’t have poisoned me all this time...would she?

“You think Leslie was poisoning you?” He asks, no judgment on his face as he watches me curiously.

“I mean...I do feel better than I have since I can remember...is it possible...do you think?”

Merikh shrugs.

“Possible? Yes. Likely? Maybe. The question now would be, why did she feel she had to keep you weak? Any thoughts on that?”