

Traded To The Lycan King by MG Wattsons

Chapter 126

"There is a life form in there," Ezra reminds me as if I give a shit. Right now, the only life I care about is the one with a pointy stick near his throat.

"I don't fucking care." I grit out, a gentle breeze tickling through my hair as the fog swirls about, moving across the barren wasteland like tendrils of smoke.

Ezra's lips twitch, pulling into a grim line before he nods and lets go of Merikh. He takes a step back and puts his hands up in surrender. Then he throws the stick he must have brought with him to the side. My chest heaves, my face wet with tears. The small rock like egg in my hand hums lightly, vibrating through my weary muscles as I lower it to my chest.

"What now?" Ezra asks.

"You fucking leave." Merikh growls, rising to his feet, ready for another round with Ezra.

"You can not beat me, Alpha. Not in the current state you are in and I will not hesitate to kill you," Ezra says. His words are calm and factual. Merikh is exhausted and still not in the best health after the last forty-eight hours. Hell, the last two weeks even.

"Take it and leave." I whisper.

"What?" Merikh asks, shocked, as he whips his head in my direction. Maybe he sees something in my face, or perhaps he feels the emptiness in me. But he stops his protesting and his eyes soften. "You have exactly ten seconds to get it and get the fuck away from here."

Ezra rushes forward as I gently drop the egg on to the wet ashy ground. He swoops it up, and pauses, looking at us like he wants to say something more but can't find the words.

"I am sorry for my part-"

"We will hunt you down, and we will find you Ezra. Your expertise is delivering messages. Ours is hunting." Merikh says, his voice a dark threat as Ezra frowns and nods in understanding. "We shall see," he murmurs before he runs away.

Merikh moves toward me, his hands taking hold of my shoulders as he lowers himself to look in my sullen eyes. A sorrowful frown tugs at the corner of his lips at what he sees, then his fingers sweep a hair from my forehead.

The sparks are the only thing that makes me feel like I am alive, fluttering through me and reminding me I have lost a lot, but not everything. Not everyone.

"We need to find and collect Giselle's ashes," He murmurs, leaning in to press his lips to my forehead.

"I'll wait here." I whisper, my voice hoarse as the tears flow again. "They are over there somewhere...I can't...I don't want to..."

"Shh, it's okay. You stay and wait here for me, okay?" He braces both sides of my face, forcing me to meet his worried gaze. "I will be right back,"

I nod, unsure of how else to respond when I know if I open my mouth, the only thing that will come out will be a sob. Everything feels like it is too much. Simply waiting for him makes my heart pound and my body ache, but the mere thought of moving is agonizing. If my pain were purely physical, it would be one thing. But how do I live with a pain no one can see or understand?

I am hollow. Like a pumpkin gutted and cut up to be put on display. Am I expected to placate everyone when it feels like my heart has been ripped from me? Must I wear a smile when just the thought of it makes me feel sick?

"LUNA! ALPHA!" Percy's voice rings through the air, the dense fog rolling out as he rushes through it, his face relaxing when he sees me standing here, blinking at him. He has a bag in his hand that he hurries to open as he makes his way over to me, pulling out a black shirt and a pair of sweatpants.

"Here you are Luna," he gives me a gentle, encouraging smile as he offers it to me, but my arms won't move as I look down at it and then back up at him. My poor gamma takes pity on me as he quickly slams the shirt over my head. I push my arms through in a trance, taking the pants and slipping into them.

"Does it still hurt?" I croak. And he pulls his brows together.

"What?" he asks, confused, looking down at his body for some injury.

"Her death?" I ask, my voice cracking. "She was the only family you had left, and now you are all alone. Does it ever not feel suffocating?"

"Penny's death is still fresh, Luna. But I breathe every day the same as I did before. I just do it for her now." He admits, then he looks around, his eyes wide. "Where is Alpha Merikh?"

I point to the north, where Merikh

collects the ashes of the stupid bird that killed my parents. She stole my future kids' grandparents. Took from them @love that is so pure and sweet, took from me that joy of watching that.

"Is he...I mean he is okay?" He swallows and glance up at him, snapping out of my ever growing whole of pain. Then I realize what he thinks has happened. A pang of guilt slams into me, my eyes growing wide and my hands coming up, shaking to signify he has it wrong.

"No! Heavens no. He is well, Merikh is collecting what is left of Giselle to finish the plan." I explain, taking what little ability I have to feel grateful that at least I still have Merikh.

"Thankfully, we can just give her remains over to King Caspian and he can take care of it from there-" He pauses when my hand flies over my mouth, a soft cry tumbling out. "Oh fuck..., No,"

I nod my head yes; the tears falling as my other hand slides over my stomach, hugging myself.

"They are gone." I say through a voice crack.

"They?" SEAR*ch the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"Both of them."

"They saved us. They saved all of us," Merikh says, coming up to us, a charcoal looking piece of wood in his arms. I notice a pile of ashes in a groove of the item he is holding, almost as if it is a nature made long bowl.

"Is that her?" I ask, looking up at the sky, wiping my tears.

"Yes." He announces and Percy frowns, peeking closer at it.

"Why is it a different color than normal ash?" He asks, pointing out the startlingly white ash that nearly glows. "It looks radioactive."

"Because bitch was toxic, she created toxic waste." I mutter bitterly to no one in particular.

Merikh and he both blink at me for a

moment before breaking into

Velet

laughter. It seems strange to watch them where everything awful happened, laugh so freely. But with no warning, a strangled laugh bubbles up, breaking free as it takes me over. It has a strange hold on me. A laugh that is one of relief things are over and heartbroken. How can a movement be both freeing and agonizing all at once?

"Percy, take this," Merikh says, holding out the singed wood.

I can't stop, the laughter turning hysterical until hiccups form and my lungs burn for air as I try to calm myself.

"Alright, my little Luna." He whispers, swooping up my convulsing body. "Let's get you home."

"I-i-I'm sorry." I force out, trying to control myself but having no luck. "Am I dying?"

"Of laughter and heartbreak?" Merikh asks, "No, love. You are breaking, but it's okay. I've got you, and I will help put you back together."

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Chapter 127

Chapter 127

Merikh

"Have you spoken with Beta Hayes?" Percy asks, the ashes of Giselle in his arms as I carry a now sleeping Colette. My muscles are tense, my instincts screaming out as I try to reach my brother and get no mind link back.

"We might be too far out." I suggest. Percy nods like it is a possibility, but I think we both know that something is terribly wrong. I can feel the pack. I know they are near and that I am well within range of Hayes, yet he says nothing.

-Hayes, answer me, that is an alpha order-I shoot out to him directly one more time.

The silence is deafening and the nagging in my gut tells me he is dead, or in need of saving.

"Fuck," I mutter, my chest ripping in two when I look down at my tear stained luna, who is pale and speckled with injuries, do not heal, even with my presence and constant holding of her.

"Do you want me to go look for him?" Percy asks, just as figures are seen in the distance.

"No," I say, zeroing in on them as I break into a labored run, "I need you to take Colette to the healers and get her in a bath of healing waters immediately. Hayes is my responsibility. I will find him and then kick his ass for not responding."

It's a grim joke, but in order to keep my mind from fearing the worst, I need the light release of humor. Percy, heavens bless him, forces out a tight chuckle, waving down the warriors in front of us. They sprint toward us, eyes wide when they see the sight and then tilt their head, confused, looking at what is in Percy's arms.

"Is Luna Colette okay?" Brandy, one of my top warriors, asks.

"She is in need of healing. Percy will take her." I glance around, noting the bodies on the ground are either bloody or burned. Many of them are my people, and a sadness grows deeper in my chest.

"Where is Beta Hayes?" Percy asks, motioning for the warrior with Brandy to take the ashes.

"No one has seen him since-" Brandy pauses and clears her throat.

"Since what, Brandy?" I ask, my voice firm as my stomach twists in knots. Percy steps up and I gently place Colette into his arms, then scan around once more, trying to decide in which direction I need to look first.

"Leandra disappeared. One moment she was there and the next she was running from the pack house screaming."

"Get to the point already, Nate." Brandy hisses at him. "The alpha doesn't need the details. He needs a general idea of where to find Beta Hayes."

He furrows his brows and looks at the ground.

"His mate went crazy and ran into the woods screaming. All the wolves with the red eyes did- [SEARCH THE Findnovel.net](http://SearchtheFindnovel.net) website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"We tried to stop him, but Beta Hayes went beyond the line, Alpha. He crossed behind the dragons and they chased him and Leandra. As soon as the fog hit and the dragons

left, we started looking for them, but truthfully...I am not holding out much hope for their survival." Brandy says, tears in her eyes.

"Get Percy, Colette, and those ashes to the pack house now. I will return." I spin on my heels when thin fingers gently squeeze my wrist, the fluttering in my stomach disappearing as the bond relieves my worries, even if just for a moment.

"Merikh," Colette whispers, I turn, giving her a gentle look before her teary eyes meet mine.

"I will be back soon," I tell her and she seems to shrink at the thought of me leaving her side. "Hayes is missing,"

She registers my words and nods slightly before she tries to get out of Percy's arms.

"Let me help," she croaks.

"Not a chance, my love. You can barely walk and stay awake. Unfortunately, you would only slow me down. I promise I will be back as soon as I can." I assure her. She reluctantly nods, and I press my lips to hers in a chaste kiss before taking off.

If Hayes is injured, if he is truly out here somewhere, I need to find him before it is too late. My family consists of Colette and Hayes, and losing either of them now, after everything would feel like losing an extension of me. All I can hope is that I find him and Leandra hopefully just passed out from a blast with minimal injury.

Exhaustion is my only companion, as I run from body to body in different openings, hoping to find either of them or at least a clue of where the hell to go next. It feels fruitless and slow, the tedious work of fluttering from person to person.

-Warriors, Beta Hayes is missing, as is his mate. We need to find them now.-- I shoot through the pack mindlink, unable to hide the franticness in my voice.

It is wrong and an asshole move to ask them to stop looking for their friends and loved ones to look for mine, but desperation wins out. Their beta needs them as much as they need him. As much as I need him.

There is a collective yes alpha even though it was not an order, but more of a plea. The hollering of his name rings out through barren trees and echoes off once vast part of forest. "Hayes!" I scream, my voice hoarse as I feel it straining to work through the heavy smell of smoke that clogs my lungs, even after the wave and fog eliminated the flames. "ALPHA MERIKH!" My name rings out and I spin, trying to find the location when I see a young warrior break out of some trees, frantically waving me down. "Alpha! Here!" "You found him?" I ask, my heart beating like a war drum heading into a battle. My legs carry me toward him as I break into a faster run with every step.

"He is this way," the warrior says, turning and leading me. The trees where he takes me are untouched by the fire, all dusted in a light layering of wet ash, but the further we move, the denser the greenery is and the ash disappears.

"Are you

sure?" I ask him and the man frowns, a gloom look on his face as he looks away, pointing behind a rock.

"I am sure, Alpha."

Something feels off, the air stale, tasting slightly of burned flesh and boiled blood. My nose scrunches at the smell, my mouth sealing closed to keep the stench of it from entering any way. I inch around the rock and my body freezes, unable to move, my chest burning and my blood vacating my face so quickly it feels like I might faint.

"Hayes," his name falls from my lips as I snap into action, flying to my knees and landing at his side.

A raging burn licks up the side of his face, nasty little tendrils where the flame had burned hotter reaching up and into his hairline. Muscles are exposed in some parts of his chest, the melted, twisted flesh bleeding into his neck.

It looks as if half his upper body took a direct hit from a dragon's flame, but under it all, behind the stench and the burns and blood, I see the slow rise and fall of his chest.

"What of his mate?" I ask the young warrior, who doesn't respond. I sigh heavily, turning to look at him and chastise him for his lack of response when I see him look up into a tree. My eyes follow his line of sight and bile rises in my throat.

"AHHH!" Hayes lets out a scream of agony that makes my skiing crawl.

"Hayes, I know it hurts, it's okay-"

"NO!" He roars, his burned arm shoving at my chest and knocking me aside, then he looks up and he stares. He says nothing as he lays back down, his eyes focused on the mangled flesh of Leandra in the tree.

"Hayes," I say once more. But he doesn't register me or my words. He focuses only on his dead mate, his eyes locked on her cold and lifeless, bleeding orbs.

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Chapter 128

Hold on, Hayes." I mutter, crawling over to him.

His eyes don't move from her, the grotesque way her body looks as it hangs there, various parts of her impaled on branches. It's not until I move in his line of sight that I see any genuine emotion from him. His void eyes slowly blink as he looks at me like he has no idea who I am.

"Kill me." He garbles out, his words gutting me as my anger grows.

"Not a chance in hell," I grit out.

His blistering hand reaches up as he tries to grab my shirt, his fingers unwilling to bend to his will as he grunts in pain. It drops like a heavy rock to the ground.

"Please," he whispers, his breathing ragged and sounding full of emotion.

"No." I growl, unable to control myself or the hurt in my chest. "We are family. You are my brother. I will get you through this, we will get you through this, Colette and I will."

He turns his face away from me, a sob in chest as he refuses to speak anymore. I stand, bending low as I grunt and hoist him up. His skin squishes against me and he cries out in agony as I try to adjust to how I grip him. Once he seems calm and I have a better hold, I take off running, the warrior just ahead of me, leading the way.

Warriors stop and stare, their eyes filled with sorrow and worry as they see their beta in my arms, deformed and unmoving. I look around, hoping for Brandy when I see Colette walk out. She stops in her tracks when she sees me. For a moment I wait for her to cry or panic. I half expect her to rush over and ask for information.

"Percy," she calls out, looking behind her. "Grab the healers and send for Calvin."

"Calvin?" I ask her, confused as she moves over to me. "I thought..."

"Oh Hayes," she whispers, looking at him in my arms, and then she touches my biceps in the most loving and reassuring way. "He will be okay, Merikh."

"Alpha," A healer rushes out, his eyes growing wide when he sees the state of Hayes, but instead of speaking, he takes him from me.

Everything seems to move at hyper speed around me. One moment they are taking him from me and the next I am seated in the living room trying to understand what is taking so long. Colette's thumb rubs up and down the top of my hand, her arm tucked around mine as she snuggles into my side.

"How is it this is the most normal thing we have done our entire relationship, and it is under the most terrifying circumstances?" I mutter and chuckle dryly to myself.

"It's the first time it feels like life has come to a halt." She whispers back, her voice raw. I look down at her, taking a minute to appreciate that even in her hurting, she is here comforting me. Colette shows me once again not only how considerate she is, but how strong she is.

"How are you? Truly?" I ask her. My free hand comes up to gently stroke her cheek and she leans into it. She then pauses and says nothing until she exhales heavily and tilts her chin up to look at me. "Horrible." her voice squeaks, tears brimming her eyes, and she pulls her lips to an impossibly sweet little smile. "But at least I have you. And hopefully, Leandra will be around soon to help him heal."

I wince and she notices as I look away, realizing how much I have failed my brother and his now deceased mate.

"What?" she asks, rising on the couch as she looks me over for injury, her hands lifting my shirt, searching for something that isn't there.

"I am fine," I exhale, grabbing her hands and tugging her to me.

"Then why do you look like you are getting cut open when I ask about Leandra?" She asks.

"She is dead, Colette." The words feel wrong as they slip from my lips. Her eyes grow wide before they soft and her shoulders droop.

"But you said...I thought you meant she was severely injured and couldn't be moved. That is why he looked catatonic." She murmurs to herself.

"I need to collect her body," I say,

releasing her and standing. Fuck, if Hayes knew I left her like that, he would never forgive me. Hell, I would never forgive him for it, either. [left my brother's mate's dead body spiked to a fucking tree. What kind

of asshole just forgets that kind

body?

get her

"It has already been taken care of, Alpha. Leandra's body is being cleaned up and prepared for when Hayes is ready to return her to the moon goddess." Percy says as he pauses at the doorway. "Poor Hayes," Colette exhales.

"Do you think he will be okay?" Percy asks, as he enters the room with a tray. He crosses in front of us, placing it down on the coffee table and then stands.

"I don't know," I admit, the very thought that Hayes might very well never recover looms over me. He is the sunshine-y one. The one with expert advice and who has been with me through my worst times. "Eat," Percy demands. But the very thought of food makes my stomach churn violently as I taste bile.

"Maybe a little later," I mumble, trying to keep the bile from inching further up my throat as it burns its way up into my tastebuds.

"The only thing that kept me going

the weeks after losing Penny is everyone forcing food on me." He gives a tight-lipped smile and gesture's to the plate. "I would say to go take a shower, but it seems like a pointless suggestion since I've said it at least six times and received no answer. So instead, eat. Both of you."

"I'm not hungry," Colette says softly, her voice sounding a little numb.

"Percy sounds more like he is demanding rather than asking." I tell her and she blinks at the tray.

"Sorry, Alpha and Luna, but I won't leave until you try something on the tray." He insists. I shoot him a glare and he pretends to not see it as he looks away at a spot on the ceiling. Colette frowns at the plate of food, then her stomach lets out a raging howl for something to eat.

With a small sad smirk, I lean forward and grab a few slices of cheese and hand them to her, nibbling on my own.

"Alpha," Calvin says gently, his eyes soft and full of sorrow as he steps into the living room. Colette and I jump up, her hand entwining with mine as we support each other.

"Well?" I ask him, a wad of cheese lodging in my throat as I try to swallow.

"He is alive, and it seems he will survive his injuries, but he..." he pauses and drags his hand down his face. "He will forever bear the scar of the dragon's flame on his body." "Scarring is nothing compared to life." I sigh in relief. Colette gives my hand a gentle squeeze. [SEARCH THE WEBSITE TO ACCESS CHAPTERS OF NOVELS EARLY AND IN THE HIGHEST QUALITY.](#)

"It is not his physical health that I am worried about, Merikh." He says, lowering his voice. "He is in shock, I think, or something similar, and he refuses to speak or acknowledge anyone's presence. It would be best to not press him anytime soon."

"And Leandra's body?" Colette asks.

Calvin cleans his throat and scratches the back of his neck in thought. Then he exhales deeply and shakes his head.

"Her death was not swift or painless. She suffered greatly before she died. It is my opinion that your beta was unable to stop what happened and witnessed it. His reserved and mournful state would make more sense."

"He blames himself?" I ask him, licking my dry lips.

"Of course he does," Colette says softly. "How could he not? It's Hayes."

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I look between the two of them with me and then I chew on the inside of my cheek.

"Do you think he will recover fully over time?" I ask him, and Calvin shakes his head. "The only way to be sure is to wait."

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Chapter 129

I groan as I crawl onto the plush bed, plopping down next to Colette's sleeping body. My tired muscles twitch and tingle through me, from the hair on my head down to my toes. It doesn't matter that I've napped, or that my brother has refused to see me. What matters is my body is finally ready to shut down, and the thought has never felt so alluring.

Colette rustles as she rolls over onto her back, her eyes trained on mine in the low light of the room. I rise onto my elbow, scooting closer with great effort, and she bites her lips in a restrained giggle. My brow arches with a smirk. [SEAR*ch the website](#) to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

"Something you want to say, Luna?" I drop my voice low, reaching out and gently stroking her cheek.

"No, I just..." she pauses, looking at my face before meeting my gaze.

"What?" I ask a concern growing in the pit of my stomach.

"I just love you." The words I have heard so many times feel different.

Maybe it's the heaviness of the days or the fact that this moment has a looming cloud of heartache, but they are weighted. Each one punctuated with the simplicity of the

statement, but the inflection of her voice, the sincerity in her eyes. There is no way I can or will ever doubt that she means it. I can see it, feel it.

"That's convenient." I smile, "I just love you, too."

She giggles before she tugs at the blankets under me, prompting me to sit up.

"Do you love me enough to get off the top of the blankets so we can sleep?" She asks with a sweet smile popping on her face to convince me to move, but I see the veiled threat in it.

Colette may ask with her words, but her eyes are informing me I will be moving. I chuckle, rising up and crawling off the blankets before crawling under the silky textured sheets and heavy comforter. "Now come cuddle me," she demands.

My arm is already reaching out for her when she demands her cuddles, and before she can finish her sentence, I scoop her flush to my body. Colette wiggles into me, the back of her head pressing lightly to my lips. Her small body shudders in my arms and she presses into me further, silence coming over us as my eyes drift slowly closed.

"Thank you," she whispers suddenly.

"For what?" I ask, my voice groggy and just above the whisper.

"In your arms, it almost feels like I can pretend." She says.

"Pretend what?" I ask before realizing how dense the question is.

"That my parents are still alive. That everything is okay and we are safe." Her voice breaks, as I hear a little snuffle. My heart falls to my feet and I lick my lips, trying to come up with anything I can to provide her comforting words.

"Everything is okay, Colette, and you are safe. When you are in my arms, you are safe." I assure her, her breathing hitches. "They are really gone this time."

"But my parents are dead." She says as if she still can't believe it.

"Yes," I sigh, hoping I am answering these questions right for her. "So that you could be here safe in my arms,"

"I know it sounds selfish, because they sacrificed so that everyone could survive, but...Is it so wrong to wish they could be here too? Is that selfish?"

I frown against her hair.

"Love doesn't make you selfish, it makes you self less. Caspian and Melody could be selfless because of how much they loved you."

"And now they don't get to love anymore." She says, her body now shaking in my arms as I squeeze her tight.

"Nah, I don't think love dies that easily," I whisper in her ear. "Love remains after someone is gone. It's how we act, the ways we mirror them and the memories we cherish." She cries, nodding her head,

"When did you get so good at this?" she asks me and I give a dry chuckle.

"I lost my parents, too." I remind her and she turns in her arms, facing me.

"Was it hard?" She whispers, her cheeks glistening with her shed tears.

"Yeah, love. It was very hard," I tell her and she gives me a soft smile that doesn't meet her eyes.

"Let's just sleep." She says through a rising yawn. "Maybe there I can pretend they are still here."

It doesn't take long for her to pass out, her muscles relaxing in my arms and her body settling into me with a gentle pressing of working lungs. I stave off my exhaustion for a few more minutes, watching her sleep, allowing myself this moment of peace.

When she wakes, the depth of her grief will truly settle in and I don't know what that will look like. I just know that tomorrow I will fight against grief on two fronts, my mates and my brothers.

I shoot out of bed, my heart pounding so violently my chest begs for reprieve. My weary eyes drift over to Colette, who pushes herself up as well, her eyes scanning the room.

The scream happens again, one that is full of agony and suffering. I move across the room, slipping into sweatpants before rushing to the door. My hand freezes on the doorknob, my fingers flexing before I look back at Colette.

"Go," she urges me with sincerity. "Hayes needs you more than I do right now."

With her blessing, I break through the door and sprint through the old pack house, hoping my memory is good enough to deliver me right to his room. But another cry breaks out this time, a softer, more painful whimpering as if he is screaming into a pillow.

I break through the door, my heart

pounding as stare at the deformed and blistered left side of my brother's back and arm. It doesn't look nearly as raging in the very minimal lighting of the room, but there is no way it doesn't cause him immense pain.

"Hayes," I say, shutting the door behind me.

I move in front of him, his hand injured hand shaking on his knee and his good hand moving just as much. He looks down at the ground, his shoulders heaving up and down. Then slowly, he lifts his chin and I nearly break down.

"Merikh," he croaks out, his mouth opening as he sputters out a heavy exhale and his chest stutters in breath. It reminds me of when he was little and we would spar. On the rare occasion I would hurt him, he would just look up at me, begging for comfort.

"Shit," My eyes water but I hold it back, squatting down before him, unsure of how to comfort someone you can't hug or touch because of an injury. With Colette, a simple touch can ease her mental load and her pain. But that's the beauty of the mate bond. The very bond he is mourning.

"Please," he sobs. "Please, just kill me. I don't want to be here. I don't deserve to be here."

"What are you talking about?" I say, trying to keep my anger at bay.

He is hurting, breaking apart, and while I can put Colette back together again, Hayes needs to put himself together. I will hold his pieces as long as he needs, but this is his journey. The best I can do is make it a smoother ride.

"Every time I close my eyes I see it," he says, his voice a raspy mess.

"I know," I murmur, trying to be as encouraging as possible. His eyes go black and he snarls at me.

"You don't know!" He screams. "If you knew, you wouldn't want me as your beta anymore."

"Then don't tell me," I say simply. "You are and will always be my beta for a long time." "Unless I die." He mutters, looking past me and out the window.

"You aren't going to die. I was already told you are on the mend." I tell him.

"That doesn't mean I can't die." He says, his eyes finding mine as he blinks slowly.

He looks void. The only emotion left

is that of a man who has no will to live, and I realize what he is saying. My brow pop up in surprise. This is not like Hayes at all, the bubbly, happy brother who is always a great confidant and friend. This is the broken Hayes, the hollow one with no desire to exist, and it hurts my very being.

"Beta, you are not allowed to take any actions that may cause your death. If you are in a fight, you must put in all your effort. That is an order," I boom out, my nostrils flaring in frustration.

He jumps up with a roaring scream, shoving me into the window behind me, the glass panes rattling with the force.

"I watched!" He hisses, his face mere inches from mine. "They made me watch while I struggled. I was inferior, I AM inferior, incapable."

"Brother, I am sorry." I say softly and he snorts a condescending laugh, shoving me again. "Being forced to watch something doesn't make you inferior."

"They impaled her on the tree, and when she refused to scream as they tortured her for fucking fun, they did this." He points to his face. "Because they wanted me to remember."

"Then get revenge, don't let them win," I urge him and he pushes off of me, wincing as he turns away.

"They already won. That's what I am fucking telling you." He mutters.

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Chapter 130

Colette

I yank the covers over my head, my knees pulling up as I struggle to keep myself from breaking into tears. Merikh has been the only thing keeping them at bay. He is my strength even when he doesn't try. His very presence brings me a calm, but since he has left me I feel like I have nothing else to think about but what I am missing.

Well, more like who I am missing, both of them.

I didn't have them for long, yet it felt like forever as the memories I once lost or repressed come flooding back with every passing second I live in a world without them.

Merikh's distress breaks through our mate bond, his emotions overwhelming as his worry for Hayes melds with my own. I toss my blanket off, jumping up and grabbing a robe before I fly out of the room.

My knees give out as I stumble into the wall, an arm grabbing my elbow as I am pulled up. I meet a frowning freckled face when I look up and Percy releases me.

"Where are you heading to, Luna?" He asks. "You should be resting."

"Merikh needs me," I tell him and though he looks displeased, he silently leads the way, looking over his shoulder to indicate that I should follow him.

"I take it he heard Beta Hayes' nightmare and went to check on him?" He asks.

"We both did," I admit, tugging my robe tighter as I recall the way his voice broke through even my most exhausted state of sleep. "Have you seen him?"

"Beta Hayes?" he asks, slowing down so I can walk next to him. My legs feel wobbly with every step. What I need is sleep and a day in the healing waters again. And Merikh.

"Yeah," I say, recalling just how terrible Hayes looked when we checked on him before going to our room. Guilt prickles at my neck. I should want Merikh to be at his brother's side, but the selfish, hurting part of me wants him with me at all times.

Percy exhales, his hand sliding through his red hair as he nods and he makes a worried face.

"His loss is different from ours." He says softly. "He has not only lost his mate, but a part of himself. Those scars will not heal. They will be a constant reminder of how he feels he failed her."

"I know," I admit. "But I have never seen someone alive looking so close to death."

"Losing a mate is incredibly hard to recover from." Percy says, "Or so I am told. All I know is Alpha Merikh is the only person to know both yours and Hayes' pain."

It's like he can see through me. Like Percy knows exactly what thoughts rival in my head as I look at the ground and struggle with my emotions.

"Hayes will need him more," I whisper, my voice betraying me as it cracks. I clear my throat and roll my shoulders back.

"We can't know that, not until we see how you both are doing in a few days' time." He offers me a reassuring smile.

"NO!" Hayes' voice roars through the hallway, startling me as I jump. Percy takes a small step in front of me as if waiting for an attack, but nothing happens. Hushed angry voices seem to come from the same room as I press my hand to Percy's forearm, stepping past him and moving to the open door.

"I can do that all I fucking want," Merikh says in a pained tone. His voice is full of sadness. "You aren't in your right mind."

As I enter the doorway, I witness Hayes, throwing his hands in anger before he turns to the wall and throws his head back in a wrenching scream that pains even my throat.

He hammers at the wall, his bandaged hand and other fist breaking holes into the smooth surface, dust dispersing with every strike. He howls out in pain as he drops to his knees, sobbing loudly.

"I hate you," Hayes cries out, pressing his forehead to the fractured wall. "I fucking hate you."

His words silence everything, only this heavy breathing and softer growing sobs able to be heard as Merikh stands behind him, arms at his side lost for words.

"I don't want you to hurt yourself, or worse, kill yourself." Merikh says, his words sounding distant as if they aren't really for Hayes but for himself. A reminder of why he is putting his brother through whatever he is going through.

"I am already dead." Hayes whispers as he calms down. "How many times must I tell you? I want to be dead. I deserve to be dead."

My hands slide up the wide collar of the robe and I squeeze both sides together tightly. Merikh walks around to the side of the bed nearest Hayes, and he slumps onto the edge, his shoulders dropping in defeat.

I can feel his internal struggle the way he wrestles with doing what he thinks is best and what his brother wants. Merikh has lost a brother, even though he sits here before us, the Hayes we know is gone.

"Hayes," I say, stepping forward, hoping to distract him from his own anger and self hatred. He turns to glance at me, his right eyes red and puffy as he blinks, his other eye bandage over, but I can see the streak where the tears run under it.

"You think bringing your mate here

to console me over my dead mate will help?" Hayes says in a dead tone. He glides a glance to his brother. "Would you let me have her for a night if you thought it would help? You don't want me to die, so léther help me feel alive? ts that what you are doing?"

Merikh shoots up in an instant.

"Enough!" He roars, the room radiating with his anger and his alpha aura. "You are in pain and mourning, so I will let such a heinous accusation go, Hayes, but if you say something like that again, I will-"

"You will what?" he asks with a

ghost of a smile on his lopsided mouth. His tongue flicks out, wetting his lip, a small wince in his eye before he grins maliciously. "You'll kill me? In that case, come hop on Colette, take this beta for a test ride-"

Merikh reaches down and grabs Hayes by the throat, his hand sliding over the sensitive blister skin. Hayes grunts in pain, but he seems to thrive on it. Then Merikh tosses him on the bed, stepping in front of

me.

"You are not the only person who lost someone," I rush out, grabbing Merikh's hand, holding him back.

"Oh yeah? You seem happy enough." He hisses, as he rights himself on the bed, groaning in pain, his body shaking from the weight of it.

"Some of us deal with grief a little more gracefully." I tell him with a frown. He glances away, embarrassed, or so I hope. "My parents are gone."

"I watched Leandra get tortured to death," he growls, shooting me a scowl.

"And I failed to do what I needed to do to save us all, so my parents stepped in to do it and they died in my place." I retort.

He pauses, his agony filled eyes meeting mine as he slowly nods, a tear racing down his smooth cheek. He lets it fall before he looks away and then back up at me.

"Merikh won't let me die with her," he search the Findnovel.net website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

says, his voice breaking. I exhale softly, my head tilting to the side as I move-over to him. "He alpha ordered me not to kill myself or allow myself to get killed. I just got her and now..."

Tears sting my eyes as I nod in complete understanding.

"Hayes, I know." I whisper, biting my lip as I sit next to him and take his hand. "I know exactly what you mean."

Tears roll from my cheeks and I feel Hayes' body shake as he cries as well.

"At least yours died for a reason." He says after a moment of crying. "Leandra... She wasn't herself. She died and she..." He closes his eye and shakes his head.

"What?"

"Forget it, I just need to be alone," he says, taking his hand back before he stands and hobbles to the couch.

"Okay." Merikh replies, sounding defeated. He takes my hand, drawing me up from the bed before he wipes away a tear. We move to the door, Percy already in the hall waiting for us as Merikh pauses.

"I am sorry," Hayes whispers, but he doesn't look in our direction. "It was wrong to say what I did."

"You are forgiven, brother." Merikh says, his tone is gentle and his eyes on his brother who still shies away from us.

"I don't think I can ever forgive you for this order," he whispers as we walk out the door. "You are overstepping as an alpha."

Merikh hesitates, his focus falling to the ground as he gives a soft, barely noticeable nod.

"I will never ask for forgiveness," He says back, "I'm acting as a big brother, and using every vessel I can to save my family."

"I will send a healer in with a sleep tonic." I offer to his back. Hayes nods in acceptance and in the silence we make our way back to our room.

"Hayes is right, you know. You did misuse your alpha command," I tell Merikh, though I don't blame him. In fact, I applaud him for doing it.

"And I will do it again if I need to." He says.

"Do you think it will really keep him from doing anything?" I ask.

"We can only hope." He mutters, reaching up to pinch the bridge of his nose.

"Would you do it to me?" I ask him, and he scoffs.

"Without a second thought, my love."

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