

Traded To The Lycan King

by MG Wattsons

Chapter 21

Merikh stands next to me, the entire pack of lycan's watching anxiously from the center of the new **town** square. I wish I would have been able to have a moment alone with him before we started all of this, but this is the life I have to get used to. There are far more important things than me. **Especially** with traitors among us here in **the** pack and the red-eyed wolves who seem to have it out for **him**.

My light blue dress ruffles in the wind, my hair **tickling** my cheek **as my** nerves and tensions grow. I reach out, touching his hand, hoping he picks up maybe wraps it up in his. He doesn't, instead he slides his hands into his pocket and looks **in** the opposite direction, making my heart lurch in fear.

"As you all know, there has been a new member in our pack these past few weeks." Merikh says, looking out at the crowd. "Many of you have seen her in training down at the lake or roaming around the hiking trails. Today I would like to introduce her to you.

He slides his icy gaze to me, my heart skipping a beat at the lack of warmth in his eyes. If I didn't trust the words, he **has** told me many times, I would think he hates me.

He places his hand out before me, waiting for me to place mine in his palm. I hesitate for **a** moment before accepting it **and** he pulls me forward with him. The pack members watch me, waiting for something to happen.

"This is Colette. Your Luna, and my new mate." Merikh announces, his voice booms through the air, authoritative and firm. The **pack** members collectively drop their **gaze**, bowing their heads before looking back up and watching me, then Penny and Percy, who stand at the front of the crowd, step toward us.

"We accept you as our Luna, and we pledge our lives to you in service. They kneel, dropping their heads. A tingling starts in my chest, a warmth spreading and my eyes go wide in surprise. Hayes steps up to my side, sliding me a warm and encouraging smile.

"Accept them," he whispers, and I realize I am supposed to be doing my part,

I glance at Merikh, frustration tickling my mind that he is not helping to guide me through this, but maybe it's a test to see how I handle the stress of all of this. Which is fantastic because I have proven frequently how poorly I do with that.

"I accept your promise, and I promise to do my best as your Luna. To lead you only where you can follow and follow only when I know it is right to do so. I only wish to serve you all and prove myself worthy of your loyalty."

Merikh **chortles** quietly next to me, shaking my confidence, but I don't let it show. **The** pack members all lift their heads and Jet out a howl that resonates through the air, vibrating the ground as my **chest** seems to burst with white energy that spills into pale blue. It whips around me like a storm, stealing my breath away.

Each passing breeze calls **to** me, voices of encouragement and love before the air stills and the world seems to pause for a moment. A whooshing screams past my ear, the light zipping away before spinning and heading straight for me. I close my eyes, tilting my head back as it hammers into my chest, the whispers echoing through my body until they rest in my chest and I **gasp**.

The mind link. The world around me is silent, but internally I can hear the excitement, the whoops and hollers for their **new** Luna, and tears flood my eyes. They accept me. They want me.

A warm hand takes hold of mine and I squeeze it, looking at Merikh who wordlessly holds it up in celebration, though he doesn't look at me. I ache to feel his gaze on me, but I relish the touch of his skin instead, looking down at Penny and Percy, whose eyes flash blue and then their usual shade. They grin from ear to ear and I hear them in the mind link.

-Welcome to the **pack** Luna Letty, we are honored to serve you-

"Now!" Hayes announces, filled with giddy excitement. "Who the heck is ready to **party?**"

We watch as everyone disperses, and I turn to face Merikh. His eyes find mine **looking** hollow and again my heart races. Something is wrong. I can feel it in my very being

"Merikh..." I whisper and he seems to focus on me.

"Yes?" he asks, then **he** snaps his hand from mine.

"Are you okay?" I **ask** him, and he frowns.

“Of course. Why wouldn’t I be? I just announced my new Luna to my pack.” I can feel my old self wanting to cower and hide, begging to just drop this and let it fester but the new me. The stronger one with a wolf who is nearly at her full strength for the first time in our lives stands firm. I am a Luna now. Not the maid who is being reprimanded for so me misdeed.

“Did I do something wrong?” Lask.

Merikh watches me for a moment, a hurricane forming in his emerald eyes.

“Did you do something wrong?” He asks, arching a brow. “That is a good question. Is there something you wanted to speak with me about, Colette?”

I can feel the blood drain from my face, my mouth dry as I blink at him. He knows. He has to know otherwise why else would he be asking me. It was idiotic to **think he** wouldn’t have **known** that someone like Grady was on his pack lands. But **that** means that he let him enter and that Grady would only leave if Merikh allowed him to leave.

“Yes,” I swallow roughly, licking my lips. “I need to speak with you.”

“Good.” he smirks. “But it will have to wait. We have a party, and then I have a gift for you.”

Merikh walks away, leaving me stunned and teary-eyed as every terrible possibility swirls in my head. Did Penny tell him? Or **maybe** he was watching me the whole time? Heavens, I have been so stupid. Merikh wasn’t just out in the woods sitting in the rock to clear his mind. He was waiting for me.

“You coming. Luna?” He calls out, stopping and looking over his shoulder. “Our **pack** members are eager to meet you person.”

“Of course.” I mutter, shaking my head, ridding myself of the negative thoughts. Merikh seems to enjoy my discombobulation. “Let’s go.” I smile.

I follow Merikh, rounding the outside of the building and turning the corner to see a beautiful garden decorated with **string** lights and floating jasmine flower balls. The tables are covered in delicate lace covers with a gold satin beneath, each one decorated with a stunning display of white lilies, ivy and eucalyptus cascading from the center.

Music starts up, ringing through bluetooth speaking hung in the trees where **white and** lace streamers sway in the breeze.” The attention to detail down to the tiny fountain with water lilies and white fish swimming in the rippling pool. There is a bow on the fountain, the twinkling water sounds, making me shiver with a calm. It’s so beautiful.

Penny rushes up to me with a huge smile on her face.

“Luna, Percy **and** I would like to give you our gift now, if that’s okay?” She asks, looking up at Merikh and back at me.

“Take her,” Merikh bites out as Penny pulls me to the fountain where Percy stands.

“Okay.” Penny says in a squeal. “Percy and I were trying to come up with the best gift, and we couldn’t help but remember **that** the sound of water **is calming**

“But you can’t **have** your window open anymore.” Percy interjects.

“So, we convinced Alpha to let us install this in your room.” Penny is glowing, and her happiness is contagious as I look at the fountain and back at them.

No one has ever given me such a thoughtful gift. Heck, no one has really ever given me a gift **at** all unless we are **counting** the few little things Merikh has given me. I bite my lip, fighting back tears as I step forward and touch the water, playing my fingers over the top **and** then a sob **breaks** free. I throw my arms around the two of them.

“It’s stunning,” I blubber as Penny hugs me back and Percy pats me. When I pull away, I see Percy’s red cheeks and Penny elbowing him with a “we did so **good**” Percy says with a grin. And they did. They did so well.

“We are pleased you like it,” Percy says.

“No one has ever..” I pause, calming myself. “This is the **most** personal gift I have ever received.”

“You are going to do great things for our pack, and the whole community of **our** kinds, Luna.” Percy says reassuringly.

“Do you really think **so**?” I ask that old insecurity creeping in as I catch Merikh watching me with a scowl from the forest line.

“We know it.” He whispers, giving me a sweet smile. Someone taps on my shoulder and I spin to find a pretty woman holding a little boy about three years old.

“Luna,” she says, bowing **her** head in respect before looking up at me with a soft smile. “My son was hoping to meet you in person, and he is a persistent little guy”

I grin at him and give him a wink. “Persistence pays off sometimes, doesn’t it, little **man**?”

He smiles and then buries his face into his mother's shoulder before popping back out shyly.

"I **am** Luna-

" I stop **and** look at Penny and realize Colette **might** be too long for a little kid to say, so I decide to **rename** myself right here. "Letty. Call me Luna Letty. Can you say **that?**"

"Luna Letty," he says a lisp, making the L's sound like W's. His cute little baby voice makes my chest **ache** with how sweet he is.

"And who **are** you?" I ask him. He looks up at his mom, who encourages him.

"**Josiah. And** I'm three." he says.

"Oh! A whole three years old?" I ask, sounding shocked, and he grins.

"Yep. Then he looks **at** his mom. "I'm hungry.."

She gives

me a soft smile and a nod before she totes him away and I feel a hand on my back. I jump, looking up over my shoulder to see Merikh standing there with a satisfied grin on his face.

"Seeing how happy you were with your gift from Penny and Percy has made me jealous."

"It did?" I **ask**, confused by his whiplash. He takes my hand in **his** and **tugs** me away.

"I have told Hayes to keep the party going until we come back!"

"Where are we going?" I ask **him** and he chuckles.

"To **show** you your present."

My heart clenches as he takes me through the forest, and the sound of people and music dulls. The memory of the story Penny told me about Lauren resurfaces **and** I swallow. He wouldn't kill me, would he? Just after announcing me to the pack as the official Luna? I know he must know about Grady by now, but would **that** lead to him being violent? He is obviously angry.

"Merikh..I need to tell you- "

“Shhh,” he says, finally stopping and spinning me to face him, his hands landing on my hips as he tugs me close. I missed this closeness, craved it since **last** night, but it feels...forced and angry. “Are you ready?”

He spins me around, his chest to my **back** as he leans down, pressing his lips to my ear..

“Yes,” I say with a shiver of both fear and delight.

“Bring him out,” He calls out, and a warrior drags out a a man covered in blood. My heart stutters, my hands shaking when the man lifts his **eyes and** I recognize him. His **face** is swollen, his lip fat and busted, but I would know those eyes anywhere.

Grady

My worlds collide, my past **and** my future. The stark **reality** of the monster I am mated to and the kind, gentle lost rejected me. I spin in Merikh’s arms, looking up to him, ready to beg. He leans down as he grabs my chin, anger on **his face**.

“You are my Luna, and you will not leave me.” He growls.

“I wasn’t going to!” I rush out, hoping he can hear the honesty in my quivering voice. All I can see is the murderous rage of his lycan barely restrained in his mind. If he makes me watch him kill Grady, there is no world in which I could ever forgive him, ever love him.

“I warned you, Colette. Did I not?” Merikh asks. A sob rips from my lips **as I cover** my mouth and nod in acknowledgement.

“Please, I whisper. He grips my arms.

“I WARNED YOU!” He roars. Then he steps away from me, pure anger and hurt on his face. “I warned you, and now **you have** forced my hand.”