

# The Lycan King's Treasured Luna 219

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I opened my eyes again, this time summoning the heightened senses of my beast.

The world sharpened into brutal clarity. Every leaf, every whisper of movement, every breath of the forest animals became a symphony I could hear and see. Even the heartbeat of a squirrel, perched meters away, thudded in my ears like a drum. Below, the she-wolves began to gather. They filed into the clearing one by one, nervous energy clinging to them like a second skin. Some fidgeted with their clothes, some whispered among themselves, others stood stiffly, eyes darting around with uncertainty. I watched them all meticulously. My eyes scanned every face, curve, and nervous tic. I listened for a whisper of connection, a flare of recognition, anything, anything that would tell me that she was here. But there was nothing. Their scents filled the air, some flowery, some musky, and some sharp and biting but none of them called to me. None of them reached into the hollow place inside my chest and made it sing. I exhaled slowly, pressing my lips into a thin line. Another dead end. I tapped out a quick message to Lupercus, telling him to meet me at the car. There was no need to drag this out any longer. My business here was finished. I slipped my phone back into my pocket and dropped lightly from the branch, moving from tree to tree in quick, fluid movements. I wasn't in a hurry to return just yet. I needed... space to wrestle down the growing despair gnawing at my insides. I let my body move on instinct, leaping and landing, letting the familiar strain of physical exertion steady me. I didn't know where I was going I didn't care until the soft, melodic sound of rushing water reached my ears. I followed it, grateful for the distraction. Minutes later, I broke through the trees and found myself standing at the banks of a river. It wasn't wide, but it flowed steadily, the moonlight danced across its surface like a trail of silver fire. I walked to the edge, crouching, letting my fingers trail through the icy water. The cold bit into my skin, forcing the ache inside to dull just a little. I removed the mask from my face, and rested it beside me on the grass. I closed my eyes and tilted my head to the stars. "Where are you?" I whispered into the darkness. The forest answered only with silence. I pushed my shades down slightly, just enough to see from above the rim, and allowed myself a rare indulgence, to simply look. The night sky stretched wide and endless above me, breathtaking in its raw, unfiltered beauty. The stars scattered like tiny diamonds against a velvet canvas. It was... calming. I couldn't even remember the last time I had paused long enough to notice something so petty. Being Supreme Alpha meant every second of my existence was swallowed by duty, expectations, and the relentless grind of leadership. There was no time for gazing at stars. I closed my eyes, breathing deeply, and immediately regretted it. A horrendous stench hit my nostrils, so putrid and rank it made my stomach lurch. I scrunched my nose up in disgust. God, this pack was the filthiest of them all. I'd have to sanction Joe, I thought grimly, making a mental note to address it once this futile search was over. But then, my nose twitched again. And this time, something different threaded itself beneath the rot. A wisp of a scent so pure, so divine, it cut through the filth like a blade through cloth, honeysuckle and sun-warmed cedar, sweet and earthy, rich and dizzyingly heady. It punched into my lungs with such force that my knees almost buckled. My heartbeat stuttered. Then roared to life, pounding a violent rhythm against my ribs. My palms grew clammy. My body tensed, and every muscle coiled tight with sudden, electric anticipation. A low growl rumbled in my chest, unbidden, as my beast surged forward with a single, searing thought. Mate. Before I even realized what I was doing, I was moving. First a step. Then another. Then my body snapped into motion, sprinting toward the source of the scent with reckless, single-minded abandon. The forest blurred around me. Branches clawed at my arms and legs, but I didn't feel them. The ground blurred

beneath my feet as I tore through the woods, following that wisp of honeysuckle and cedar like a man possessed. The scent grew stronger, richer and, more tantalizing with every frantic stride. It wrapped around my senses like a silken noose pulling me deeper into the heart of the woods. And with every breath, every heartbeat, the gaping hollow inside of me, the one I had carried for years, the one I thought I could ignore screamed louder for her. I pushed myself faster, until the trees opened up and I skidded to a halt at the edge of another clearing. I widened my eyes in horror, my entire body locked up as I stared at the figure before me. It looked like some grotesque, mangled creature. A walking skeleton, but with skin barely clinging to brittle bones, wobbling unsteadily under the cold kiss of the night. Panic clawed at my chest as I tore my gaze away to scan the area. This place... it was farther out than the Snow wolf's main abode but it was still within the Pack's boundaries.. My head whipped back toward the figure just as their eyes lifted and met mine. It was Steel-gray.. The world tilted violently and the fireworks in my mind detonated at once. Mate. My body moved without my permission, closing the distance in long, desperate strides, driven by a storm of emotions I couldn't even begin to untangle, confusion, rage, sorrow, agitation, and overwhelming, bone-deep relief. Who is she? What is she? What happened to her? Questions battered my skull like a raging tide, but nothing absolutely nothing could prepare me for the brutal reality when I finally reached her. The scent that mouthwatering thread of honeysuckle and cedar was nearly drowned now under the putrid rot clinging to her frail body. I stopped just inches from her, my heart was hammering so loudly it drowned out the rest of the world. Our eyes locked once more, my warm brown to her piercing gray and in the next instant, she crumbled forward like a bag of brittle bones, collapsing straight into my arms. Naked. A choked sound escaped me as I caught her, cradling her against my chest as gently as I could. I didn't care about the grime, filth, or smell. All I saw was her. And all I felt was the soul-deep certainty that she was mine. Her long lashes brushed her sunken cheek, her hair hung in matted tangles down her back. My throat burned with rage and guilt. Where had she come from? Who did this to her? How long had she suffered while I was wasting time searching elsewhere? The self-loathing gnawed at me. I carried her carefully, and made my way back toward the main road where the car waited. When I broke through the treeline, Lupercus was lounging lazily against the hood, and Joe stood nearby, shifting nervously from foot to foot. The moment they saw me, both men straightened and immediately recoiled, their faces twisted in disgust as they instinctively plugged their noses. "With all due respect... what the f\*ck are you doing carrying a cadaver?" Lupercus blurted, recoiling further. The words sliced through my already frayed temper. I leveled him with a glare so lethal the night seemed to shudder around me. "I dare you to repeat that," I ground out. Lupercus paled, immediately bowing his head in submission. "I'm sorry, Your Highness. I didn't mean..." "It doesn't matter what you meant," I cut him off coldly. "Open the d\*mn door. We're leaving. My mate needs help." Without another word, he scrambled to obey, throwing the back door wide open. I gently placed her onto the car seat, shielding her fragile form from the night air as best as I could. Peeling off my hoodie, I carefully draped it over her, tucking it around her like a protective cocoon. Only when I was sure she was safe did I turn back to Joe. The pathetic excuse of a man. I crossed the distance between us in two strides, grabbed him by the throat, and lifted him clean off the ground. "Supreme Alpha, please.." he choked. "Did you do this?," I snarled, my voice vibrating with the fury barely contained inside my chest. He trembled, and his eyes were wide with terror. "You are lucky I don't have the luxury of time tonight, pup," I hissed, tightening my fingers ever so slightly, making him gasp. "But hear me well, Joe. This does not end here." I pulled him closer, until our noses almost touched. "You will be summoned. You will be investigated. And if it turns out you had anything, anything, to do with her suffering..." I leaned in, dropping my voice into a whisper cold enough to freeze hell itself. "I will annihilate your family. I will make you kill your sweet little wife and your precious brats with your own trembling hands. And then, Joe... then... I will keep you alive, just so you can relive their screams for the rest of your miserable existence." With a roar, I hurled him across the clearing like a ragdoll. He crashed into a tree with a sickening thud and crumpled to the ground, unmoving. Without sparing him another glance, I turned, climbed into the

backseat, and pulled her delicate head into my lap, to shield her from the jostling of the car. Lupercus slammed the door and floored the gas, the tires screamed against the asphalt as we tore down the road back toward the palace. I gently brushed a filthy lock of hair from her bruised forehead, cradling her broken body with all the tenderness I had never known I possessed.