

## You're Perfect, Too

"Calm down, cupcake. I'm just here to make sure you don't run off. Bellamy doesn't want you to get lost and decide to leave." The man said with his hands up in a surrender position.

I let out a growling bark. His scent carried an undertone of the people I had met in the pack. He was a member of the pack. I didn't like how he just dropped down in front of me, though. I didn't even know he was there and had the distinct feeling he made noise on purpose.

"I'm Bellamy's best friend, Dillon Metz. I'm the head of one of the top elite warrior teams and head of digital security for the pack and the collective." He told me.

He was tall and not as thickly built as most pack wolves. I couldn't make out the color of his hair in the dark, but it seemed light. His face was friendly, though.

With a huff, I turned to walk back the way I came. I could hear him walking behind me. I knew Queen Bellamy didn't know my motives or how much I actually wanted her help, but it still annoyed me that she sent a babysitter.

When we got to the yard behind the Alpha's quarters, I turned to him and barked. He nodded and bowed a little before turning away. I went to the backdoor. It was still open, so I entered the kitchen and walked through to the dining room, then the living room.

Alpha Lucien was sitting in an armchair and Queen Bellamy was in his lap. His arms were wrapped around her and she was nibbling on his neck. It was amazing they were still this amorous with ten pups. I didn't know if I could handle that many kids for more than a day.

I didn't want to interrupt them, but I also didn't want to have to watch them. It made the fact that I'd been alone for the last ve birthdays even harder. Queen Bellamy had to be Heather's age. She had everything Heather wanted. A mate, pups, a pack... well, collective, to take care of.

Queen Bellamy pulled away from her mate and turned to look at me. She smiled a little and moved to the ottoman next to his seat. With a wave of her hand, she indicated the couch.

"Go ahead and sit on the couch. We have a guest room made up for you. Before you start, I know you'd probably be just as happy to sleep on the oor or the couch, but you're our honored guest. Let us take care of you." She said.

My tongue lolled out in a wolfy smile. She was acting like I had an option to argue the point. It made me feel like she was trying to make me comfortable with her and this whole situation. She was a good queen. A good Luna.

Carefully, I climbed up on the couch and laid down, giving my full attention to her and her mate. They adjusted their positions. They were probably trying to gure out how to talk to me.

"This is a very odd situation, Miss Wolf. Earlier, you heard Alpha Lucien talking about feral rogues. There are two types, the ones who are raised by parents who prefer being wolves and those who choose to be a wolf. It's a decision by their human and wolf selves. They shift into human form a couple times a year, but not for long and then they go back to being wolves. When their pups are young, they'll spend as much time as possible in their wolf form." Queen Bellamy explained. "You indicated that you can't shift. You smell more wolf than werewolf. Did something happen to your human self?"

I nodded my head.

"Is she refusing to come out?"

I huffed. She needed to be awake to refuse to come out. She just refused to exist at all.

"Is she hurt?"

It was a different kind of hurt, but it was a hurt. She wasn't the girl I'd met when I manifested for the rst time. They wounded her badly. I nodded.

"I see. We need to gure out the type of injury and how to heal it. I can't think of any injury I've ever heard of that would make someone shift into their wolf and not be able to shift back. Maybe some sort of brain injury. That could be hard to x.... We'll gure it out, Miss Wolf." Queen Bellamy promised.

"When are Clover and Stanton coming back from visiting her parents?" Alpha Lucien asked.

"A couple of weeks still. They're heading north to visit his parents after hers. Everyone wants to touch the belly, you know that. It's their rst cub. They're enjoying the attention. How about if we go to the pack hospital for a physical tomorrow and see if there's anything obvious? Then we can go from there."

"That sounds good. I can take her. Why don't you look through the les for witches in the collective who might be able to communicate with her?" He suggested.

"I can look, but ones who can talk to shapeshifters are rare. Clover's the only one guaranteed to be able to communicate. I'll see if the new coven leader has a suggestion. You know he doesn't like us, but it's a chance. And I'll check with Jen, she has a few members waiting to join her coven." She replied. "Have Patty look at her while you're at the hospital."

"We're going to gure this out, Miss Wolf. Then, you can decide if you want to stay in the collective or if you'd like to join my pack. We both want you to be one of our people. You've shown that you're a caring, strong, and reliable wolf. Our wolves aren't so different from our human selves. We expect your human self to be just as impressive." Alpha Lucien told me.

If I could have blushed, I would have. Heather stirred a little more. Acceptance and admiration from an Alpha, from two if I counted Queen Bellamy, seemed to get through to Heather a little.

They started playfully bickering about who got to keep me and Heather. I got the impression that it wouldn't really matter who won because they'd be happy either way. They didn't feel like one having me over the other was a loss.

"I know it's a little early, but I'm exhausted. Nearly losing Lunette took a lot out of me. And the stuff that witch did in the pack lands to distract everyone while he took her.... If he weren't already dead, I'd kill him." Queen Bellamy growled a little.

"We'll show you to your room, Miss Wolf. You can wander around the house if you like. The pups have their doors open, but they're sleeping. We ask that you try not to wake them. After the incursion today, I don't want the backdoor open, or I'd offer that to you." Alpha Lucien said.

I nodded and got up when they did. They showed me to a hall where I could smell the pups from either side as we walked toward the end. The carpet runner in the hall mued the sound of my claws on the oor.

When we got to the guest room, they stopped at the doorway. I looked in and saw a big bed with a thick comforter on it. Sleeping in a bed seemed a little silly. I was a wolf, not a puppy dog. Though... it did look comfortable.

"Our room is at the top of the stairs." Queen Bellamy told me quietly. "We'll be up early for training so we can let you out then. I'd love it if you'd stay in the house and guard the pups while we're training. I trust you with my children. If you knew me better, you'd know what that means and what kind of position it puts you in. I don't trust many people with my pups."

The truth in her words resonated. I wouldn't let anything harm those pups, even if it killed me. I'd protect them no matter what.

I nodded to her and went into the room. They turned off the light after I jumped up onto the bed and circled a little before lying down. I rested my head on my paws and they headed for the stairs across from my door, leaving the hall light on as they started up to their room.

The bed was nice. A lot warmer and softer than the ground. With luck, something would come of the visit to the hospital tomorrow. I knew there wasn't any physical injury, but I understood the need to make sure they had all the information they could get.

For the rst time in years, I fell asleep easily. Even with the natural wolf packs, I didn't feel as safe as I felt here. More than anything, my hope was sparked back to life. There was something about Queen Bellamy and Alpha Lucien that made me feel like they could solve any problem.

-

When I woke, I felt almost as tired as when I went to sleep. After the rst year of Heather sleeping, I'd stopped dreaming of our human life and all my dreams became about hunting, running, and playing.

Last night, I dreamed about her old life. The look on Michael's face when he told her to look at herself. The feeling of our heart breaking when he told Wendy he loved her. The cruel expressions of the Alpha and Beta.

They probably laughed at us for running. I bet they weren't laughing when the pain didn't go away. They probably didn't even chuckle when Michael couldn't mark Wendy.

Maybe they were relieved when the pain went away. Maybe they were a little sad that we'd died. I doubted it, but maybe our parents were sad.

Alpha Lucien and Queen Bellamy were coming down the stairs dressed for a workout. I got off the bed and went to meet them in the hallway. They nodded to me.

"Did you sleep, Miss Wolf?" Queen Bellamy asked.

I nodded.

"Good. We're heading out for our morning training. We'll be back in an hour and a half. Keep an eye on the pups. Do you need to go outside before we leave?"

I nodded again.

We went down to the backdoor and she let me out. I took care of my business quickly and ran back to the door. Queen Bellamy shut and locked it behind me. They left through the living room door.

Heading back up to the second oor, I peeked into each of the open rooms. All the pups were still sleeping. I positioned myself at the top of the stairs and waited, listening carefully for noise.

After about an hour, I could hear water running behind a couple of closed doors. That must be the nannies getting up for the day. I heard doors opening and closing downstairs. Quickly, I made my way down to investigate.

Two women were coming out of the hall on the main level. I recognized them from the night before. The household was waking up. They nodded to me and headed for the kitchen.

Going back upstairs, I peeked in on the pups again. Still sleeping.

All of the rooms had either two little beds or two cribs. There were two dressers, two chairs, and two toy boxes. There were sets of twins. Queen Bellamy couldn't be much older than Heather. She must have had ve sets of twins. And in relatively short order. Some of the kids seemed to be about the same age. Could she have gotten pregnant and pupped twice a year some years?

She was a much stronger female than me. That seemed like a lot of work. Though, they all looked really happy. When they'd been nishing their dinner last night, Queen Bellamy and Alpha Lucien engaged the older ones in conversation while helping the smaller ones with their food. The pups obviously got a lot of attention and their parents doted on them.

The Alphas returned from their training at roughly the same time the pups started stirring. The older ones got out of bed and hurried through their morning routine. The little ones were attended to by the nannies. Alpha Lucien came down rst and started helping the middle two get dressed and ready.

Queen Bellamy stopped next to me as the hall lled with pups headed downstairs. I could smell the breakfast food and it was making me hungry. I could hear little tummies rumbling as the older ones passed us.

"Aren't they all perfect?" She whispered.

I yipped and wagged my tail. Her voice was so full of pride and love. I couldn't remember Heather's parents ever talking about her like that. It hurt my heart. Queen Bellamy would never do what her parents did. I kind of wished she had been our mom. I leaned against her.

"You're perfect, too. I want to bring you into my collective, but I've never done it with something that didn't have a humanoid form. I know for a fact that you can't join a pack without a human form. I'll talk to the High Kings in the Association about ways to get you into my collective. That way, we don't have to worry about your mind when we get you healed." Queen Bellamy told me.

She scratched behind my ears and we followed the pups. Alpha Lucien was right behind us. Another thought made me sad. This felt more like family than anything with Heather's family. It felt more like home than our old pack ever did.

When we got to the dining room, there were three bowls on the bench for me. I went to it eagerly. One bowl was full of sausage, bacon, and eggs. The other had waes with butter. I was grateful there was no syrup. I'd never get that out of my fur.

After the meal was done and the pups were cleaned up, Queen Bellamy took the oldest six with her as she left through the front door followed by the two women with multiple arms I'd seen earlier. The pups were heading to pre-k. The nannies headed out with the other four when Alpha Lucien and I were leaving for the pack hospital.

At least they somehow managed to be organized with all those pups. Not surprising that two Alphas could keep their house running well, especially with two nannies, two housekeepers, and those other two women. I was still impressed. It was a lot of work, even with help.