

Can't Stay Here

The machine was loud and annoying, but I managed to stay still as the bed moved back and forth through the ring. Once they knew there was nothing I needed, they'd work harder to heal Heather. This was just a safety step. I was ne with that.

When we were nished, Alpha Lucien led me back out in front of the building. I didn't look around, just sat behind him while we waited for his car to be brought around. With luck, Lyd wasn't here or, if she was, she wouldn't see me until Heather was awake.

I had to think positively. We would be healed. Heather would wake up. We'd be whole again soon. I climbed into the back of the SUV when Alpha Lucien opened the back hatch door.

He closed the door and went to the driver's side. I wanted to talk to him. I wished I was able to link him. Then I could tell him what was going on instead of trying to get everything across.

Wolves don't have language. We have barks, howls, and yips. We have growls, huffs, and whimpers. They meant something, especially when done in certain orders, but nothing as extensive as human language.

Unable to really say anything, I just looked out the window and tried to see if I could nd Lyd. That would, at least, answer one of my questions.

As we drove along, Alpha Lucien didn't try to talk to me. He wasn't going to force me to listen to whatever he was thinking. When we got closer to the packhouse, he started looking back in the rearview mirror. I tilted my head.

"I have to talk to Bellamy. We have a lot of friends and allies who have special abilities. With luck, someone will be able to communicate with you more directly. I still want to use one to get your name soon. You can't possibly enjoy being called 'Miss Wolf'. I just wish I could help you more." Alpha Lucien sighed.

He looked genuinely sad about not being able to help me. It was so different from the pack Heather grew up in. Even the Alpha before, the one who sided with our ex-mate, wasn't as caring as Alpha Lucien. It was like everyone in his pack mattered to him.

"Anyway, I'm going to take you to my quarters and you can rest. The maids will take care of letting you out when you need it. I want you to rest after everything we just did. If you go out, stay close to the packhouse." He told me.

I nodded. I knew it was probably for the best. Having a rogue running around wouldn't be great. Maybe I could explore the gardens a little or the forest near the packhouse. Not wandering too far, but doing something other than laying around the Alpha's quarters.

When we arrived, he let me out and led me back into the house. I stopped in the entryway. There was a good smell. I closed my eyes and sniffed it. It was mellow and warm. I wanted to curl up in it. I also wanted to run away from it.

Shaking my head, I opened my eyes and looked at Alpha Lucien. He was watching me curiously. It was embarrassing to be caught getting all fuzzy-brained like that. I kind of wanted to hunt down the smell, though.

"Go ahead." Alpha Lucien said.

I started toward the hall where his quarters were. He cleared his throat and sighed. I turned to see he hadn't moved.

"There was a scent that interested you. Maybe it's something that will help your human side come out?" He suggested.

As much as I wanted that, there was a nervousness in the pit of my stomach. I didn't know exactly why traces of the scent made me relax and tense all at the same time. I didn't like it. Wolves don't get conicted. We were decisive creatures.

Instead of going back to him, I huffed and turned back toward his quarters. I could hear him catching up with me as I walked on. I'd investigate the scent later. That whole hospital thing was more draining than I thought.

Alpha Lucien let me into his quarters and talked to the maids while I headed up to my room. My body felt heavy. It had to be the spikes and crashes of adrenaline.

Nothing really happened, but it felt like a lot had. They knew more about my past, more about what Heather went through. Hopefully, more about what was wrong with her.

I laid on my bed and closed my eyes. I could hear and smell when Alpha Lucien came in. He stood at the door for a while, then sighed and left.

He didn't deserve to be ignored, but I didn't really want to deal with whatever lecture might come because I decided to leave the scent alone. It was too different. I didn't like the feeling it gave me. I didn't want to deal with it. Not right now, at least.

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At some point, I fell asleep. It was a deeper sleep than I'd had the night before. The sun was setting when I opened my eyes. I could hear the pups squealing and playing nearby.

Carefully, I started wandering toward the sound of the pups. There was a wide-open door where the noises were coming from. I peeked in and saw a playroom with a lot of toys, and a short table with ten little seats around it.

A shelf with totes sat next to it. In a corner, there were two giant bean bags next to a bookshelf. In another corner, was a tiny kitchen set up. Yet another corner had all sorts of blocks.

All of the pups were wandering around in different areas. Some were building, some were coloring, a couple were in the center of the room with toys laid out in front of them. They were happily existing together.

One of the little ones saw me and squealed. That drew the attention of all the others. I laid down so they could climb on me and wouldn't get hurt.

A couple younger ones decided to brush my tail with their dolls' hairbrushes. One of the small ones toddled over and decided to chew on my ear. Lulu and her brother were trying to get their sisters and brothers off me. I didn't mind too much, though.

Eventually, the older two gave up and decided to just protect me from getting my ears chewed off. They petted me and scratched me. Some of their sisters and brothers decided to mimic what they were doing. It was nice. Maybe this kind of love could be enough to heal us.

"Alright, pack. Get moving for dinner. I want you all washed up and at the table in ve minutes." Queen Bellamy announced as she walked in with a couple of nannies.

The older pups got up. Lulu and Tiny helped their younger siblings up and walked them out of the room. A couple of the kids squealed as they were gathered up by nannies.

Queen Bellamy chuckled and came to sit with me. She pulled my head into her lap and scratched behind my ears. This was much better than when the kids did it.

"You understand how dangerous this is, right? You're obviously an arctic wolf. Arctic wolves only live to be ten, maximum. You may have already passed the halfway point which makes shifting back really hard. I told Clover how urgent it is that she come help you. Our friend, Echo, is going to pick her up and bring her here. Clover wants to do this on your birthday so your human-self will be closer to the surface." She explained.

I whined a little. I understood that I was being a bit of a problem. I thought we had more time. I didn't realize Heather might not be strong enough to change back. What would I do if she died? I didn't want to live alone for the rest of my life.

"Hush. The goddess is watching out for you. If you had headed in any other direction, you could've been killed. You came to us. We didn't try hard enough to contact you, because I didn't realize what could be going on with you. I'm so sorry, Miss Wolf. I hate the idea of failing you. The goddess and Clover will help. They'll make sure you don't die. Let's go have dinner, then we can get your name before you head to bed. Tomorrow, you'll go to the Alpha's oce with Lucien and me." Queen Bellamy told me.

Lifting my head, I let her go, then stood. I focused on Heather. I would keep poking and prodding her. I wasn't going to let everyone's efforts fail.

The evening went similar to the night before. Dinner was delicious and lling. The children were chattery and their parents were attentive. I was let out of the Alpha's quarters to take care of my business.

I even ended up wandering too far and getting stopped by the strange werewolf again. This time, it was because I wasn't paying attention. I was focused on Heather and on what I was going to tell her.

"You're going the wrong way, cupcake." A voice chided from the treetops.

Looking up, I huffed in the direction the voice came from. He wasn't hiding his presence from me like he did last night, so I wasn't startled, but that still didn't mean I liked being babysat. As soon as I could nd a way to communicate with them, I would tell Queen Bellamy and Alpha Lucien that I wasn't going to leave.

They probably already knew how much I wanted to save Heather. I was pretty sure they were being cautious because they didn't know how wild I'd become. A real feral probably wouldn't want to stay with a pack.

"Bemy wants you to go back to the house. They got the babies down and are waiting for you in the playroom. Which sounds kinkier than it is." He chuckled.

This guy was a little weird. If Queen Bellamy was his best friend, then it meant he was more than just a goofball stalker. He said he was head of one of the elite warrior teams. It was obvious he was a skilled warrior.

"Go on. My mate is waiting for me at home. I have to get my own kids down for the night."

He had a mate. People were happy in this pack. They found people who loved them, their leaders cared about them, and they were safe.

I turned back toward the packhouse and ran instead of walking back. It hurt that I was alone. I didn't know how to tell Queen Bellamy and Alpha Lucien how painful this was. For years, I hadn't really mourned the loss of my mate.

The fact was that natural wolf couples weren't the same as werewolf couples, just like human couples weren't the same. There was no mate bond between them. They found their loves on their own. Werewolves..... These were people who accepted the bond between them.

I vaguely remembered something about rogue born wolves not having fated mates, but they got a mate bond once they found someone. It was practically the same thing. There was something bitter gnawing in me. I kept ghing it, but I needed to gure out where else I could stay. I didn't want this feeling to take me over.

When I got to the packhouse, I went through the open door and headed up the stairs quietly. I didn't want to disturb the pups. They needed their sleep.

"Lucien, I think it's the best option. She's depressed. Who wouldn't be after being rejected?" Queen Bellamy said in the room.

Stopping outside, I listened in. If they didn't see me, they wouldn't stop. I could hear more and understand what was going on. Even caring leaders kept things from their people.

"Do you think it's the best option, or do you think two wounded birds might grow to love each other? He has a second chance mate. She might, too. I know you love playing matchmaker in your collective, but you can't do that to them." Alpha Lucien replied.

"I'm not trying to play matchmaker. Richard is my cousin and I love him. He had a hard time, but he's grown over the last three years. He and Magnus helped Kay. I think he can help Miss Wolf. Plus, he's all alone in his quarters. Having a roommate for a week or so should help both of them. She can't stay here."

"She loves the pups. You saw it yourself. No werewolf just lets someone else's pups crawl all over them for an hour. You said she was up here when you got home. You watched the kids play on her while she laid still. She treats them like family. Being around them is helping her." He insisted.

"No, it's not! It's helping part of her. The part that misses being touched and loved. It reminds her of what she lost at the same time. So is being around us. She's almost six months younger than me. You were rejected when you were young. You watched people with their mates and their families. You felt the pain of knowing you were their age and missing out on what they had." She said softly.

Alpha Lucien sighed. "Bellamy. I know you're very empathetic when it comes to other people's pain, but this type of pain is beyond your understanding. I love you and I respect what you're trying to do. I don't think it's a wise decision."

"We can ask her what she would like to do. We'll let her know that we want her to be comfortable while we wait for everything to come together and we will honor whichever option she chooses."

"She's going to think we're trying to get rid of her."

"Then we can tell her honestly that we aren't. The positive about being a werewolf is that we can smell a lie, Lucien. Please, trust me. I only want what's best for her." Queen Bellamy insisted.

"I do, too, chouchoutte." He replied. "We can offer. Let's ensure we give her whatever she needs to heal."

If I hadn't heard that, I would've thought they wanted me gone. I would've thought I was badhning them. They really did want to take care of me. I would wait until they talked to me about it.

Taking a deep breath, I walked out of the hallway and into the playroom. It was a lot cleaner than it was earlier. Queen Bellamy and Alpha Lucien stood in the center of the room. They both smiled at me when I came in. I wondered exactly what they wanted to do here and how they were planning to get my name.