

I Don't Want to Die

Alpha Lucien was holding a stack of foam things when I entered. He and Queen Bellamy spread them on the ground. They were squares with the alphabet on them like they had in kindergartens and the pack daycare. They arranged them in three rows.

"We borrowed these from the daycare today. It's not ideal for long answers, but we can get your name and maybe a little more information. Are you willing to give it a shot?" Queen Bellamy asked.

I nodded. They nished putting the pieces on the oor, then put down 'yes' and 'no' papers. I wondered how much they were planning to ask me.

"Will you tell us your name, Miss Wolf?" Alpha Lucien asked.

Slowly, I spelled out my name while Queen Bellamy wrote down the letters I selected. I was pretty lucky that it was short. Maybe the goddess knew I would need a short name at some point in my life. She was the one who named us.

"Gwyn?" She read my name.

I went over and put my paw down on the 'yes' paper. They looked really happy. I was glad.

"Thank you." Queen Bellamy replied. "Will you tell us your human side's name?"

After thinking for a moment, I put my paw on the 'no' paper. I didn't want them looking into her before I had the chance to get her healed. Healing Heather was my top priority.

"Are you worried we'll try to nd her old pack?" Alpha Lucien asked.

'Yes.'

"We won't do that, Gwyn. If she left the pack, she wanted nothing to do with them. If we did know which pack it was, though, we could nd out about any family she left behind. Do you want to know if they're safe?" Queen Bellamy offered.

They might still be alive, but I didn't want to risk it. It's not like they cared if we were alive or dead. They let Wendy have our mate. They didn't stop her from stealing him from us. They didn't tell us about the cheating.

It didn't matter. The only person Heather or I cared about in that pack was Lyd and she probably wasn't there anymore. As much as I wanted to give them her name, if she was in this pack, it would give away where I came from.

'No.'

Queen Bellamy looked at me sadly. It was all the answer I could give. Our birth-givers may be alive, but they were dead to me and I didn't care anymore. Whatever we attained in the future would be ours and solely for me and Heather.

Wendy couldn't steal it. Michael couldn't corrupt it. Our parents couldn't dismiss it or demean it. They couldn't give it away because they didn't feel like we deserved it.

Deserve. I hated that word. It made me growl.

"Gwyn, you're safe. No one is attacking you. We're just trying to nd out as much as we can to help you." She said softly.

I realized what was going on and shook my head. I needed to control myself better. They weren't my enemies. They weren't the ones who hurt me and Heather.

"Are you alright?" Alpha Lucien asked.

'Yes.'

"Was your pack destroyed?" He asked.

'No.'

"We vow not to go looking for your old pack. Can you tell us what your human name is so we can use it when we try to heal you? Some magic requires at least a rst name." Alpha Lucien said.

He didn't smell like he was lying. I began spelling out Heather's name. She could decide to tell them her last name if she wanted, but this would work for anything they felt they needed.

"Did you leave because you were rejected?" Queen Bellamy asked.

I thought about it. Heather and I left because we wanted our revenge and they would've tried to force us to accept the rejection. They might have even tried killing us. All they would've had to do was manufacture evidence that I did something to warrant death as a punishment.

That wasn't the only reason, though. We lost our love and our family. Heather lost her condence and her innocence. We both lost all respect we had for the men who ran the pack.

If Michael had rejected us before starting a physical relationship, before we got attached and thought it was real, before he started seeing Wendy, then we might not have gone rogue. We probably would have simply transferred with Lyd.

'No.'

"Alright, we're going to stop with the questions. Those were the most important things." Queen Bellamy told me.

I started going around tapping letters with my paw. It took a little while, but I needed to tell them how I felt. I needed them to understand me. When I was done, I sat in front of them while they worked on breaking my message into individual words.

"Thank you for taking me in. I want to stay. We need to be healed. I don't want to die." Queen Bellamy read in a soft voice. "Gwyn, you saved our baby. We're going to do everything in our power to make sure you don't die. I need to ask you something, though."

There was a pretty good chance I already knew what they were going to ask. I nodded. Alpha Lucien looked slightly worried.

"We know it can be tough to see others involved in relationships. According to the information you gave the doctor today, you're only a few months younger than me. I'm sure this wasn't where you saw your life ending up. I'm worried about how painful it might be for you to stay with us and see us together all the time. My cousin is also single and he helps people who have been rejected along with those who have lost their mates. I would like you to decide between staying here or staying with him." She replied.

"You can't stay on your own because it can be dicult getting around as a wolf. Everyone knows who you are and what you look like, so we're not worried about someone attacking you. You've been alone longer than most pack wolves could handle and need someone with you." Alpha Lucien added. "Pick 'yes' if you want to stay with us and 'no' if you want to stay with Bellamy's cousin."

'No.'

It was for the best. I didn't want to feel bitter when they did so much for me. I wanted to be optimistic and supportive for Heather. She needed me to be there for her and help her as she healed and found her place in the pack or collective.

"We'll let him know in the morning. He just returned from delivering a message to another pack this afternoon. You'll meet him tomorrow. Are you tired? You slept most of the day." Queen Bellamy asked.

'Yes.'

My exhaustion had to be from nally relaxing when I'd been on guard for so many years. Now that I was safe, I wanted to rest.

"Go to bed. We'll see you in the morning." She told me.

I turned and left the playroom. I was hopeful that I wouldn't have the same dreams I had last night. I didn't want to be stuck in the past. I would only heal if I could move forward.

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[Bellamy]

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Lucien and I picked up the foam letter pieces and sheets of paper. I looked at the message she gave us. My heart hurt for Gwyn.

'I don't want to die.'

It stuck in my head. I couldn't imagine the pain she'd gone through to get her to this point. Pack wolves needed a lot more socialization than rogues did. She was adapting to being around everyone much faster than I would have thought.

"You were right, chouchoutte. She didn't want to stay with us." Lucien sighed.

He put the letters in their bag, then set them on one of the tables and held out his hand. I took it and gave it a squeeze. He didn't sound upset about being wrong, but he did sound sad.

From the moment he saw her, Lucien had been linking me with observations. He picked up on things faster than I did when it came to pack wolves. We were both just more in-tune with our people. I was better with rogue born wolves.

"I was only right about one thing. It hurt to see people nding their mates when I was seventeen. When Cara called me about Caleb, I felt like my world was falling apart. Even though you loved your friends, I know you couldn't have possibly seen them together and not felt jealous." I replied.

"I thought their pups were probably going to be the closest I got to having my own. Until I found you.... Well, until you found me." He chuckled.

We went up to our room and closed the door. This was one of the three places in the pack lands we could really be ourselves. Our bedroom, our oces, and our favorite eld.

As we undressed for bed, I mentally made a list for the next day. There were a lot of things I had to do while we were waiting for Gwyn's birthday. Plus, I had to deal with the regional mating conference stuff.

Cara said we needed to start planning even though it wasn't supposed to happen until summer. A couple of years ago, we started talking with the other Alphas who participated in the regional conferences about moving it to the beginning of the summer instead of the end.

In a few districts, they had started beginning school in the middle of August. It made it hard for high school and college students to attend. They said we could test it out when Lune Rouge hosted.

"What are you thinking about?" Lucien asked as he came up behind me and wrapped his arms around me.

"I was thinking of how much I hate the Luna parts of this." I sighed dramatically and leaned back against him.

"Mmm. You do such an amazing job, though, chouchoutte. I think you just pretend so you can blame your dislike of it when you make mistakes."

"Lies." I scoffed. "I don't make mistakes."

He laughed and held me to him tightly. "Have I ever thanked you for loving me and accepting me? You could've found a way to break the bond. You could've asked your Alpha to help you undo it. But you kept me and I thank the goddess every day. I just wanted to make sure I'm thanking my queen as well."

Breathing in his scent, I held his arms against my body. Even with my adopted family, I felt alone. My friends helped a lot. Starting my collective made me feel safer and like I had a purpose.

Lucien made me feel all of those things at once. He was my safe place, my purpose, my heart. He helped me get everything I wanted. A successful collective, a large family of my own, a community of support, and a mate who supported me instead of trying to take over for me.

"You never have to thank me, mon saucisson. You hated rogues, but you opened up to me and didn't ght it when Remus accepted Aurora's offer. It had to have been happy to just be your ally, but not nearly as happy as I am to be your mate." I murmured.

"I want to make love to you, my beautiful queen." Lucien whispered.

I giggled. "You always want to make love to me, Alpha."

"No man in his right mind wouldn't want to make love to his mate every moment of every day."

"True. Lucien.... As much as I want to make love to you, I keep thinking of Gwyn and Heather. I'd much rather cuddle with you."

"Then we will cuddle. I have you for the rest of my life and I would rather comfort you when you need it." He murmured.

Lucien let me go and we climbed into bed. I rested my head on his chest and listened to his heart beating and his breathing. This year had been stressful, but saving Heather and Gwyn was going to be one of the good things to happen.

I knew they would prove to be good for the pack or the collective and I hoped they wouldn't decide to leave once they were healed. We would nd out what pack they came from and make sure whoever rejected them regretted his decision. It had to have been a harsh rejection based on the fact that she didn't want to be human anymore. His Alpha needed to deal with him.

Someone like that wasn't healthy for a pack. There was no reason to hurt your mate if you had to reject them. The damage Patty described to me after the exam sounded pretty serious. She said she did her best to downplay it to Gwyn, but she didn't know if Heather would ever be the person she used to be unless she had a second chance mate.

"I forgot to see if she had a connection to a second chance mate." I said with a sigh.

"What she needs right now is to know she's safe and in a place where she can heal. There have been a lot of rapid changes for her in the last twenty-four hours. Once she's gotten into a routine and is more comfortable, we can check."

"You're right. It's not like this is our only chance to help her. I'm just thinking of all the things that could help her." I explained.

"We will make sure she has the life she deserves. The goddess wouldn't have guided her to us if we couldn't help in the ways we work best. Now, sleep, my queen. Morning comes early and I know you want to work out some of that frustration." Lucien whispered.

I turned my head and kissed his chest, right over his heart. He knew me so well. Tomorrow would be a better day.