

The Pain of Vengeance

Time felt unimportant, even though I knew it was important. Wolf instincts worked a certain way in certain seasons. It was a really interesting experience to be a wolf for longer than a few hours or a night.

We ran south to start. I saw high desert, pine-forests, small canyons, and wide plateaus. There was all sorts of terrain to explore, and all sorts of creatures to hunt.

When we scented the border of someone's pack, we'd turn away and stay clear. At one point, we smelled something similar to the scent of a pack's border, but wilder. It was enough to make us stop and investigate.

'What do you think it is?' I asked.

'I think it's the border of a rogue collective. There's something in it that smells safe, and something that smells deadly. I bet if we went in intending to do harm, the safe smell would go away and only the deadly would remain.' Gwyn said.

'Let's avoid it for now. I'd rather spend the winter somewhere warmer.'

'Me, too.' She replied.

We continued on, avoiding the place and heading further south until there was more desert than forest. I figured we would stay there for the winter. Gwyn agreed. We found a place that wasn't in any territory and claimed it as ours.

A year seems like a really long time. It can feel even longer if you're living in constant pain. Gwyn's senses were the only contact I had with the world outside my wolf. Through our connection I could hear, see, smell, feel, and taste what she did in the way she did. I could talk with her, so I wasn't terribly lonely. Gwyn and I probably bonded more than any other werewolf.

Sometimes, we'd come across a pack of natural wolves. They were usually scared off by our size. On occasion, we would find a natural wolf alpha who decided to approach us. If Gwyn took a submissive posture, they would let us stay with their pack. We would help bring down large prey.

We never stuck around long. I was awake when Gwyn slept, because of the pain. Like how our wolves worked to heal us while we fought on, I worked to protect her while our vengeance was taken. It fueled me, rather than drained me, though. I didn't feel sorry for myself, and I didn't see it as a punishment.

I knew Michael's pain was worse and he couldn't mark Wendy until I accepted the rejection. He also couldn't have s*x with her. A year of celibacy was exactly what that horny mutt needed.

Only Gwyn and I knew the plan was for one year. I did it for a reason, other than just my revenge. The pain would only go away if I accepted his rejection or if I died.

A reasonable person, like me, would choose to punish until either they got tired of the pain or gave back the pain they'd received. Michael probably thought it would only last a few months because that was probably all he thought I could handle.

People always underestimated me because I didn't look like a normal werewolf. When it lasted longer, I was certain he'd think I decided to punish him forever.

When the pain suddenly went away, they might think I was either killed or killed myself. It would keep them from looking for me later. I never wanted to see my family again. When spring came, I knew Lyd would be heading to one of the packs she applied to. I hoped to reach out to her once she was away from there.

I wished I'd been thinking and told her goodbye before I left. Everything just hurt so much. I felt like a terrible friend. With luck, she understood. There was no way I could stay in the pack after what Michael and Wendy did.

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Gwyn and I lived carefully. We were fairly large for a wolf. Based on the bears I'd encountered, we were roughly the size of a black bear. It was one of the reasons natural wolves were frightened. Even brown bears would turn the other way if they saw us coming.

We moved back north as the summer heat came in. I knew there'd be forest res. You don't live in the west without knowing that summer was re season. It meant being on our guard for the scent of burning wood or fleeing animals.

There were times we would see humans camping or hiking. I told Gwyn to try to stay away from them as much as possible. A giant white wolf would terrify them and I didn't want someone coming out to hunt us. I was trying to keep us safe.

Gwyn overrode my urgings to stay away whenever she heard crying children. She would guide them to a place where their parents or searchers were heading. I didn't like children being hurt or scared, but it was so dangerous for us.

Once, we only barely got away before someone found the child. He insisted to the adults that a giant ghost wolf had found him. They didn't believe him, I breathed a sigh of relief over that.

I was more pragmatic than my wolf. I knew the wrong human would lead to something bad, like a hunt. It didn't stop her, though. I really was too soft when it came to kids. I wanted them to be safe as much as she did.

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Fire season ended slowly. I figured it was about October. That was when we would see the larger ones starting to die out. It was nearing time for me to let go. I was so tired. I just wanted to sleep forever.

'Gwyn, let's go to the beach for this. I want to see the ocean again.' I said.

'Sure, Heather. We'll go the long way to that beach we went to back in the spring. It was private and secluded. We don't have any clothes, so I think it would be best.'

'Good plan. Let's go accept our mateless future.'

'You don't know that, Heather. The goddess might give us a second chance, especially after the way our mate used your body while loving your sister. Even if you actually liked the b***h, it was a betrayal of both of you. Do you honestly think he told Wendy he was doing that with you?'

I hadn't thought of that. It actually made me feel a little bad for Wendy. She thought he loved her, but he didn't give me up right away. Then, she had to find out he wasn't just not rejecting me but sleeping with me, too. I may not have liked my sister much, but that felt like it was worse than any punishment I could think of.

'You're right. Maybe our second chance won't reject us because I'm short and fat. Maybe he'll be human. They don't have an idea of what female werewolves should look like. I just worry. Once the pain of the broken bond isn't taking all my focus off the fact that I don't have a mate, I could turn into one of those obsessed rogues. The ones who kidnap people to turn them into their mates.'

'As long as I'm in charge, you don't have to worry about that. I've got your back. Once this is over, I want you to rest. You've been working hard to keep the pain from affecting me.'

'Thanks, Gwyn. I was lucky to get such an awesome wolf.' I told her.

It took a little longer than we'd thought to get to the beach. That rogue collective's borders had grown. We ended up having to cut across it to keep going west. It seemed to take up a large portion of central Oregon now. I wondered what collective it was.

As we were making our way across it, we changed direction a few times to avoid being confronted by rogue born wolves. After the first few got aggressive, the rogues would try to talk to us. It made me really nervous the first few times, but I soon realized they wouldn't attack, just try to talk.

We would turn and run, then try to figure out another path that steered us away from human cities and towns and wolf packs. It was a bit irritating, but we managed to make it to the little beach we'd visited in the spring.

It was beautiful. A tree-lined cliff face protected it from the freeway. Large boulders obscured the line of sight up and down the beach. In order to see what was happening on the little strip of sand between the cliff and the water, you had to either be looking down from the cliff or in from the water.

This was exactly the place to give up my revenge. It was like finding the perfect place to get married. This was the first day of my new life. A life without pain. A life without Michael.

We sat on the sand in wolf form, watching the sun start to sink into the water. It felt right like the goddess was telling me this was enough. I felt it in my heart, peace. I'd done enough.

I changed back into my human form, standing nude on the beach, watching the sunset. Looking down, I saw not much had changed. I was still chubby, still short. For the first time, I was grateful for it. If I had looked like my sister, I would've been stuck with a vain asshole for a mate.

The air was crisp, but not too cold. It would have been downright chilly back home. The scent of autumn leaves would be heavy in the air. All I smelled here was the ocean. It was a different world.

"I...." My voice cracked. It had been quite a while. I tried again. "I, Heather Nicholas, accept Michael Whitman's rejection."

After months of living with the pain, I'd forgotten what it was like to not feel it. The pain was supposed to intensify and last several hours after I accepted the rejection, not disappear. I supposed the goddess must have decided to alleviate the pain.... Unless Michael died right when I accepted his rejection. That would be another reason it could go away.

I hoped he was alive. I didn't forgive him and I never would, but I didn't want to be the cause of someone's pain like that. His parents may have known he was stringing me along, but not what he was doing to me entirely. They didn't deserve to lose their only child.

With a sigh, I shifted back into my wolf form. It was too cold to stand out there naked. Without the pain, I was finally able to relax. For the first time, I looked around the world inside my wolf.

It was always a warm, spring day in Gwyn. Tall grass and flowers swayed in a welcoming breeze. There was even a sun that was hot, but not hot enough to burn. I had a form there that was very similar to my human form.

I wished there was a place I could sleep and a bed appeared in the meadow. I walked to it and climbed on. It was so soft and inviting.

This was what I'd wanted more than anything in the last year. Even our wolves rested when they were inside us. Without the physical component to make me sleep, I stayed conscious and alert for the last twelve months. Even though my physical brain got to rest when Gwyn slept, my mind didn't.

'I'm going to sleep for a while, Gwyn. Stay out of trouble.'

'Will do, Heather. Don't worry. I'll be here when you wake up. You deserve a rest.'

'Thank you, Gwyn. Thank you for being my wolf. My amazing wolf.' I murmured.

'Thank you for being my amazing human. I wouldn't have ever thought past the pain to consider a revenge plan.'

'One of us has to be devious. I'm going to sleep now.'

Curling under the blankets, I wished for it to be darker and the sun turned into a moon. The world was illuminated by the soft moonlight. Crickets and frogs sang me to sleep.

I felt myself seem to sink into whatever sleep was for the spirits inside of two-natured beings. It was like I was floating peacefully. I was really happy my revenge was finished. But, I wasn't eager for whatever happened next. I had no mate, no family, no pack, and no home. Where was I going to go? What would become of me? I was so tired.