

Touch Starved

I felt a nervous jitter run through me when I started smelling more and more werewolves. It wasn't just pack wolves. It was rogues as well. This was the highest concentration of wolves I'd been around since I left my pack.

We kept walking and eventually came to a large garden. Alpha Lucien guided us around the edge of it and to one of the three tower-like buildings in the back of a large house. I'd never seen anything like it.

A young woman opened the door as we got close to the building. She saw me and froze a little, then shook it off and rushed to Alpha Lucien. He handed his daughter off to her and she took Lulu into the house.

Alpha Lucien and Queen Bellamy turned to me. They smiled and started walking in a different direction. We went around the other two tower-like buildings, that I now saw were attached to the large house. What a strange packhouse.

"There they are. We wanted to do this closer to the kitchens so the water would stay warm." Queen Bellamy said.

There were a couple of women standing next to a metal tub. Steam was rising out of the tub. I didn't think they'd prepare something like this. They could've just hosed me down with a garden hose.

"Go on. They'll get you cleaned up. We'll see you when you're done." She told me.

I walked slowly to the tub. The women got washcloths wet in the water and kept waving me on. They seemed to want me to put my front paws in the water.

Once my front paws were in the very warm water, I wanted all of me in the water. I climbed in and laid down, keeping my snout out of the water and letting them start scrubbing with the cloths. It was so nice.

It reminded me of some of the hot springs I'd found in my travels. It felt like the hot water was seeping into my body and relieving tensions I didn't even know I had. Those springs had never felt like that. The pads of my paws had never felt so good.

The women had me stand and lathered up my fur, being careful to keep suds out of my eyes, nose, and mouth. They let me lay again while they washed my back and really dug their ngers into my fur. It was like a sweet-smelling massage. I had never experienced anything like it.

"Alright, ma'am, you're all clean. We have someone in the mudroom with hairdryers. They'll get you dry fast." One of the women told me.

I stood and shook myself, then followed as she led me into a door. There were two people with dryers and two people with towels. I stood still as they dried me with both.

There had never been a time when I would call myself pampered, but I felt like one of those fancy dogs people took to those dog shows. This was something I could get used to. Heather stirred inside me.

'Heather! Please wake up.' I pled.

'Tired, Gwyn. Just a little longer.' She replied and slipped back into sleep.

Damn it. I was hoping it meant she was waking up. It was the rst time she'd stirred before I yelled and screamed at her. It was an improvement and made me resolve to stay here. This was the place that could heal my human.

"You're dry, ma'am. The Alpha and Luna are waiting for you in the hallway." One of the men said and held a door open for me.

I went through the door and saw Alpha Lucien and Queen Bellamy. They were deep in conversation and didn't notice me at rst. I was ne with waiting. Disturbing an Alpha was not a great idea.

"Are you sure it's safe? She seems like she's calm and sane, but I don't want to wake up to her having stolen one of our sons for a mate." Alpha Lucien whispered to her.

"She's not obsessed. They have a certain scent that comes with their insanity. Frankly, she almost smells like a natural wolf. I don't understand it. I've never met a pack born wolf who smelled like that." She replied.

"Have you met a rogue who did?" He asked.

She looked thoughtful for a moment, then saw me. I was hoping she wouldn't, maybe she could have gured it out and I wouldn't have to gure out a way to tell her. It seemed I was not so lucky.

"You look lovely. There's a room right through that door. We had someone bring some options for clothes. We have pants and shirts in all different sizes. Once you're dressed, I'll take you to the closet and we'll get you a few outts with underclothes and toiletries. Sound good?" Queen Bellamy smiled.

This was happening faster than I wanted it to. I had no idea how to tell her that I couldn't shift. So I sat down and looked at her.

Queen Bellamy tilted her head and pressed her lips together. Alpha Lucien was looking between me and her. I let out a little whine.

Please. Help me.

"Chouchoutte, I don't think she can shift." Alpha Lucien said after a while.

I wagged my tail and yipped. Queen Bellamy covered her mouth in shock. He gured it out! I was so happy.

"You can't shift?" She murmured.

Dipping my head down, I gave a whine. Queen Bellamy approached me and dropped to her knees. She took my face in her hands and looked into my eyes.

"A pack born feral.... Dear Goddess. I've never heard of such a thing."

"I didn't think it was possible. Ferals are rogues who are raised by werewolf parents who choose to live as wolves." Alpha Lucien asked.

"Not entirely.... Let's go home. I don't want to talk about this in front of everyone in the packhouse. Come with us, Miss Wolf. Until we can gure out what to call you, this will have to do." Queen Bellamy said.

She stood and walked to her mate. She looped her arm through his and leaned against him as they walked down the hall. It was painful to see two people who were so happy together.

Heather dreamed of a love like theirs. Even when they were having their discussion, they were touching each other and holding hands. The way they were with Lulu was even more proof of their love and how it extended to the rest of their family.

I wouldn't focus on that. I needed to focus on getting help to wake Heather up before this killed her. If this was something rogues did, then, maybe, Queen Bellamy knew how to help me.

We walked down a corridor with a door at the end. When Queen Bellamy opened it, the silence in the hall was broken by the sounds of children chattering, squealing, bickering, and playing. They walked into the room beyond the door.

Slowly, I crept toward the door. I didn't want to scare the pups. It sounded like a lot. I peeked around the corner.

There were at least eight kids, including Lulu and a boy who was a little taller than her but looked just like her. In the corner were two women who didn't look human. They had four arms and pointed ears. They were chatting quietly. A woman walked in with two babies who had to be around six months to a year old.

"There she is!" Lulu shouted.

She grabbed the boy's hand and pulled him to me. He smelled like his mother, a mix of rogue and pack. Lulu only smelled like a pack wolf.

"This is Étienne. We call him Tiny. He hates it."

"She hates being called Lulu." Étienne said, sticking out his tongue at her.

The other children stopped playing and started making their way over to me. I'd never seen so many kids. I mean, I had, in the pack childcare center while I was in Heather, not in person. I lowered myself slowly onto my stomach.

I was bigger than all of them. They started climbing all over me, though. None of them were scared. They must know their parents wouldn't bring someone dangerous around them. Plus, they would be familiar with large wolves as the pups of Alphas.

Queen Bellamy watched how they crawled all over me. She put her hand on Alpha Lucien's wrist when he made a move like he was going to come take them away. I closed my eyes.

Children scratched and petted me. They climbed on me and rolled off. It felt so good to have people touching me. I felt the same relaxation I'd had when I was being cleaned up.

After a long time, Queen Bellamy, Alpha Lucien, and two women came to take the littler children off me. The older ones left on their own to go to the dining room. I hadn't even heard them say anything, but the smell of food made my stomach growl.

"It's dinner time, Miss Wolf. We have some food for you, as well. Come on." Queen Bellamy said gently.

I stood up and followed her. One of the women was setting a large bowl and a smaller bowl onto a low bench. Approaching slowly, I looked in the bowls.

The small one was water and the other was a mix of meat, vegetables, and gravy. The meat was rare but warm and there were spices. The big downside to being a werewolf was that I remembered all the tasty things I got to eat as a human. I don't have all the taste buds humans do, but, at least, the foods that are toxic to natural wolves aren't toxic to me.

For the rst time in a very long time, I was able to ignore what was going on around me and eat. In the wild, I had to be aware of everything. Something could attack me for my food. It made meals stressful.

When I was done eating, I looked around. They were still working on their food. I laid down on the oor by the bench where my empty bowl sat. I'd be polite. I was a guest in their home.

Soon, they were cleaning up and sending the children off with the women I'd seen earlier. Queen Bellamy came and crouched near my head. She stroked my ears and I closed my eyes. I missed being touched so much.

"We're going to bathe the children and get them into bed. Deanna will let you out, so you can take care of any personal needs. Try not to go too far, and, please, come back. I want to help you. This can't be healthy. Stay with us, Miss Wolf." She said quietly.

I let out a soft bark. Heather needed help. I wasn't going to leave. This was the best chance for me to save her.

Queen Bellamy stood and left. A woman came over to me and bowed. I got up and followed her into the kitchen. She opened the door for me and I went outside. The sun was completely down now. I needed to nd a place to relieve myself.

After searching for a little while, I found a place where I felt it wouldn't be too much of a bother and did my business. When I was done, I wandered a little more. Putting that many children to bed probably took a while.

The forest was fairly close to the packhouse and gardens. Since it was autumn, there were barren bushes and trees. I was betting it was beautiful and fragrant in the spring and summer.

I wandered into the wooded area. It was familiar. More familiar than being inside human structures. I listened to the sounds of the night creatures. There weren't as many as in the spring and summer, but they were there.

As I walked through the woods, I let my head go empty. There was safety in a pack's land that I hadn't really had the chance to experience. Heather's parents told her to keep me inside while on the pack lands.

They didn't want other people to see how big I was or the fact that I was white. It would be hard to explain. Neither of them was an Arctic wolf. I was just as different as Heather.

There was no way I would've been accepted in that pack. This collective wanted me, even though I was the same size as an Alpha male. I knew Queen Bellamy would want Heather, too.

As I turned to follow a path, I heard a rustling from above me. My instincts told me there was danger. Suddenly, a man dropped in front of me. I assumed a defensive position and bared my teeth with a growl.