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*Scarlet Rose*

# Her Big Bad Wolf





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by

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&  
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This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales, is entirely coincidental.

Her Big Bad Wolf

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## **Dedication**

This book is dedicated to all those Big Bad Wolves  
out there who know the right way to seduce a  
woman and keep her wanting more.

## Reviews

Jam-packed with excitement! HER BIG BAD WOLF is a paranormal, erotic thrill! Fun & sexy, readers will love every word!

*~Lisa Childs, Silhouette Nocturne author*

What do you get when you mix all the sweetness of a fairy tale with scorching-hot sex and laugh-out-loud humor? HER BIG BAD WOLF by McKenna Chase and Jana Mercy! Fun, fast paced and fabulously sexy, this story rocks.

*~Tawny Weber, Harlequin Blaze author*

## Chapter One

*If only Granny and the Woodsman hadn't returned early from their date...*

Red stepped to her bedroom window and ran her fingers up and down the thick wooden bars that had been installed for her 'protection.' What if she didn't want to be protected? What if she yearned for the Big Bad Wolf to finish what he'd started the night he snuck into her bed and awakened her with his seductive caresses?

Red unbuttoned the top of her nightgown and slipped a trembling hand inside. She let out a soft moan as her fingers skimmed over a hardened nipple.

She closed her eyes, remembering that night. Remembering the way the night air kissed her exposed flesh as it had drifted in through the open window. Her eyes had opened to find Wolf's face hovering over hers, the sharp angles of the beast's face dulling, reshaping to that of a man's. Paws becoming hands, stroking her, touching her in places only she herself had ever touched. Bringing her to heights of passion she never knew existed and keeping her there until her body shuddered in maddening release.

"Red..." Her name, in the form of a husky whisper, drifted in through the window, much as it had on the night she'd been dreaming of.

Her eyes flew open and heat filled her cheeks. Yanking her hand from the opening in her gown, she called out, "Who's there?"

*But she knew. How that husky voice had*

*haunted her fantasies. Sexual fantasies thanks to the night he'd shown her his big—*

“Who do you think?” he growled.

“Wolf?” she asked, feigning surprise. Like perhaps she'd been expecting someone else. As if. No one in the woods had a way with women the way Wolf did. Apparently hers wasn't the only bed Wolf had slipped into, which was why she didn't feel guilty at playing coy.

His face appeared at the window, his large brown eyes staring down at her, his wide mouth curving into a devilish smile. “Hello, Red.”

Her body trembled, but not from fear. “You shouldn't be here.” The woodsman was determined to end the Big Bad Wolf's reign of lust in Fairy Tail Forest. “The woodsman will cut you to pieces.”

Wolf chuckled. “I'm not afraid of some ax-toting tree whittler.” He reached between the bars to stroke the exposed flesh of her throat, eliciting a needy moan from her.

“Wolf, please...”

“That's it, Red, beg me. Beg me to touch you again. You know you want me to.”

His arrogance only served to flame her desire even more. “No,” she breathed.

“Yes.”

“What about Gretel?” Her friend had taken great pleasure in bragging about the night Wolf followed her bread crumb trail and sampled the goodies in her ‘basket.’ Red gritted her teeth. Great pleasure, indeed.

Wolf arched a thick brow, baring his teeth in an Oh-yeah-I-did-that kind of smirk. “What about her? You didn't really think she was leaving that bread crumb trail so she and Hansel could find their way back home? She wanted me to find her. To come to her.”

Red looked down, avoiding his intoxicating gaze.



“You and she...”

“I’m no innocent, Red,” he admitted without hesitation. “A woman deserves a man who knows how to please. Now go unlatch the door and let me in.”

She wanted to. Lord, how she wanted to. She’d even swing by the kitchen and drop crumbs leading straight to her bed if that would get him there. “But Granny—”

“Went into town with the woodsman for supplies,” he informed her with a knowing smile. “They won’t be back for hours. Let me in, Red. Let me show you what it is you yearn for.”

A rush of unexpected moisture dampened her panties and she squeezed her thighs together. The movement pulled the cotton of her gown taut across the sensitive peaks of her breasts. Breasts that ached to be touched. Not by her own hand, but by the seducer of Fairy Tail maidens—The Big Bad Wolf.

Knowing better, she unlatched the door.

He burst into the room, a lusty beast with hunger in his dark eyes. Standing well over six feet tall on his hind legs, his impressive frame filled the doorway. Muscles rigid beneath the thin fur covering his broad chest, rippled with each and every breath he drew. Corded flesh she longed to run her fingers over. Hands, not quite paws, flexed at his sides. His nose, not nearly as sharp as that of a full blooded wolf’s, scented her as he stood gazing down at her.

Her gaze moved down his lean form to his thickened arousal and then back up to his partially bared canines. His uneven breathing told her that he was as affected by her as she was him. Even as a beast, she wanted him, ached for the pleasure she knew Wolf could give her.

He licked his lips with his long, pink tongue, filling her mind with wicked visions of him licking

her lips. Her breasts. Her thighs.

“You’re sure that we have time?”

“Time?” he asked wickedly. “What is it you want time for, Red?”

He reached for her with a dexterity no other wolf possessed. His ability to do so, no doubt, something he had inherited from his human mother. One Red was extremely grateful for. He dug his fingers into her hair, pulling her to him. Roughly. Wolf was no Prince Charm-them. Yet, all the maidens in Fairy Tail Forest yearned for his attention. What was it about a bad boy that made good little girls swoon?

Red swooned. Oh how she swooned. Right into his muscular arms.

“Red,” he murmured, his sharp teeth nipping at the fleshy part of her bottom lip, not hard enough to draw blood, but with enough pressure to make her whimper with need.

He pulled her body flush against him, his huge, muscular body dwarfing her petite form. Lord, he was so big. And so wild. It both alarmed and aroused her.

“You look frightened.”

“Only of having the moment end too soon again.” Her gaze drifted down to his extended cock. “And maybe of not being enough woman for you.” Wolf stood nearly a head taller than most men, his body lean and muscular, the perfect blending of both man and beast. It was said that when angered Wolf’s features sharpened, becoming more feral. His claws lengthened and his teeth became deadly white daggers. But she had never seen that side of him, nor could she imagine Wolf in such a manner.

“Your body will accommodate me,” he assured her, pulling Red from her thoughts.

“How can you so be sure?”

“Because I intend to come to you, not as a beast,

but as a man to a woman. Prepare yourself, Red, and know that I do this only for you. No others.”

A surge, like lightning during a fierce summer storm, lit the cabin. Wolf groaned aloud in what might have been pleasure or pain as his body began the startling transformation from beast to man—an incredibly handsome man with the same dark eyes, firm jaw, and devilish grin that were so Wolf. Only his skin was smooth, with no trace of his wolf bloodline in his face, his claws replaced by blunt male fingernails.

Red gasped.

“It’s all right,” he said, his breathing strained. “Few know the truth about me. That I am half-wolf, half-human.”

She knew. She’d overheard her grandmother and the woodsman discussing it one evening when they thought she was asleep. But she hadn’t known this physical change was possible. No mention had ever been made of that.

“Gretel never said anything about you—”

“She doesn’t know,” he replied, cutting her off. “None of the maidens do.”

“But you’ve lain with them.”

He nodded. “As an animal feeding its sexual hunger.”

“And you don’t hunger for me?”

“Oh, I hunger, Red. More than I ever thought possible. But I don’t want to take you as I took them, an animal with no feelings, crazed and rutting.”

Tears glistened in her eyes. Wolf’s words touched her deeply, making her fall even more in love with him than she already was. “I would lie with you, Wolf, be you beast or man. Just as long as we’re together.”

He smiled, his teeth no longer pointed, but even and white. He reached out to stroke her hair. “I know you would, but I want your first time to be as

painless as possible.”

Her gaze shifted down his bare chest, trailing further down his lean abdomen to his still impressive erection. Wolf was a force to be reckoned with both in bed and out. Man or beast. And she was more than ready to be reckoned with.

Wolf cupped her chin, lifting Red’s face to his. He had inherited his feral father’s cunning and strength and his human mother’s determination and desire. And right now desire drove him.

He ground his lean hips against Red, digging suggestively into her belly with his straining cock. She hadn’t bothered to fasten the opening of her gown, giving access to Wolf’s large hand as he slid it inside to cup her breast in a possessive squeeze. Red was his. Only his.

Wolf had lived his life going after what he wanted. And thanks to Prince Charm-them’s tiny cock, ‘Once Upon a Time’ maidens had willingly given themselves to the beast that prowled Fairy Tail Forest. For after one night in the bed of Fairy Tail Forest’s breathtakingly handsome reigning royalty, the maidens had learned that the prince, despite his good looks, easy charm and well-honed body was nowhere near man enough to satisfy the eager maidens. The Prince’s charm just didn’t hold up in the light of day. Actually, from what Snow had told him, the prince didn’t hold up at all. Prince Charm-them was as flaccid as a meat pie without its filling.

Red moaned softly at his touch. She might be a near innocent when it came to sexual experience, but her friends lived on the wild side. Take Snow for instance. She slept with seven men. All at the same time. The stories she’d told about her sexual escapades in the dwarfs’ cottage made Red blush.

Wolf plucked her nipple between his fingers. “Are you with me, Red?”

“Mmm,” she moaned, gliding her pelvis over his hard thigh. How had he gotten between her legs without her knowing it? Why did that hard length of flesh pressing so intimately against her make her want to thrust her hips again and again?

“Tell me what you want, Red.”

As if he had to ask. His dark brown eyes took in every emotion that flickered across her face, knowing without her saying what it was she yearned for.

“Red?” he prompted in a seductive tone as he raised the leg he had positioned between hers. His muscular thigh pressed against her aching pussy.

She couldn’t stop herself from riding it, grinding her slick, throbbing flesh against him. Heat surged through her at lightning speed. Red arched into him, needing more. “You.”

“Good.” He lowered his leg, leaving her wet and wanting. “Let’s go to Grandmother’s room.”

She wanted him bad, but in her grandmother’s room? Red wrinkled her dainty nose at the thought. “I’d rather go to my room instead.”

Wolf shook his head. “No. If you want pleasure, then it’s to Grandmother’s bed we go.”

She hesitated just long enough to spare a glance toward the cabin door. Wolf had already secured the latch, guaranteeing their privacy. Her gaze slid back to Wolf’s hungry eyes. Holding out her hand, she allowed him to lead her back to her grandmother’s room. To the passion he promised.

His naked body was honed to perfection, his every movement exuding unquestionable strength. He made her body tremble with need just watching him.

Her grandmother’s room was small and smelled of the lilac water Granny used whenever the woodsman came to call on her. A slender flame flickered in the lamp on the nightstand, illuminating

the intensity on Wolf's handsome face.

"I used to follow you through the woods," he confessed, his voice low. "You in your little red cape, giving me mere glimpses of the short skirt and calf-hugging boots beneath."

She'd had no idea. But the thought of him watching her, wanting her, thrilled her immensely.

"Always carrying a basket filled with flowers or goodies," he continued as he moved to stand behind her.

His nearness made her shudder.

"That's it, Red," he said, his voice thick and warm against the flesh of her neck. "Tremble for my touch."

Her body obeyed his command once more. "Wolf..."

"Shh..." He nipped at her slender shoulder before his now-human tongue swept upward to tease the lobe of her ear. "Be quiet, Red." Deft hands worked diligently to free the remaining buttons on her sleeping gown. "You are mine to command."

She bit her lip to keep from crying out, from pleading with him to put her out of her virginal misery. Wolf had silenced her. She would obey.

He pushed the cotton gown from her shoulders, letting it fall into a puddle on the floor at her feet. His low growl filled the tiny room as he stepped around to look at her. "Small, but perfectly round," he muttered as his palms cupped the pale flesh of her breasts.

Moisture oozed into the cotton of her panties at an alarming rate. It was as if she was melting from the inside out. Perhaps she was. Her body burned for Wolf's skilled touch.

When Wolf knelt before her to remove her damp panties with his teeth, her resolve shattered. She gasped his name. "Wolf...w-what are you doing?"

His husky chuckle filled the room. "I'm going to

eat you, my dear.”

Red’s eyes widened. Her heart pounding even faster, she tried to back away, but the panties now wrapped around her ankles kept her at his mercy.

His smile widened. “Not eat you in the way you’re thinking,” he said as he knelt before her. “I’m going to feast on your sweet body by running my tongue over your heated flesh.” Lifting her foot, he slipped the damp panty free.

Red gave a needy whimper.

Wolf continued on his sexual mission, his fingers sliding up her inner thighs, parting her damp folds. “Now I’m going to taste your body’s sweet nectar.” He guided her foot upward, hooking her leg over his broad shoulder.

Her whimper became a soft moan.

She had never felt as vulnerable as she did now, standing there, open fully to Wolf’s heated gaze. Cool air brushed the sensitized flesh of her slick pussy, making her shiver.

Wolf leaned forward. “Such smooth legs,” he said, his voice gravelly with need. He ran a hand slowly up her inner thigh, stroking her skin.

The warmth of his breath against her quivering flesh made her gasp. “I rub sweetened cream over them. Granny says it softens the skin.”

“I can smell it,” he replied, leaning even closer, “though it’s not nearly as sweet as the scent of you.” His tongue brushed the aching flesh at the apex of her thighs, just a light, teasing sweep that had her hips surging forward.

“Ooh,” she moaned, her head falling back.

She closed her eyes as his tongue lapped at the exposed flesh of her cunt, a taunting caress that had her pulse racing. Oh, how she yearned to cry out his name. To profess her true feelings for him. For Wolf held a huge part of her heart. He eased her loneliness and made her feel truly wanted.

A low growl sounded in Wolf's throat. "I can't tell you how badly I've hungered for you, Red. Your scent lures me from the woods to your window every night."

He'd been watching her? Watching as she touched herself, wishing that it had been him doing so instead. She trembled with desire, clinging to his shoulders for support. "Wolf, please..."

"Please you is what I intend to do, Red," he promised as he moved between her parted thighs and began to stroke her clitoris with his tongue. "Mmm," he mumbled as he lapped at the sensitive flesh. "I love the taste of your hot, sweet pussy."

Red closed her eyes, her body taut with swirling frustration that built higher and higher with each lap of his tongue. Swirling heat that burned hotter and hotter, scorching her from the inside out. "Have mercy, Wolf. I beg you."

Long, thoroughly skilled fingers parted her until she was completely at his mercy. Without hesitation, Wolf's tongue delved deeper inside her, filling her, driving her closer to the edge of something she couldn't quite fathom. The intimacy of Wolf's caress stirred her body's juices as his long, thick, man-tongue moved in and out of her quivering body. Fast and hard, then slow and gentle.

"Come for me, Red," he demanded in a husky whisper before that long, wicked tongue of his impaled her once more.

Her nails bit into his shoulders. Nothing she'd heard about Wolf's prowess had prepared her for this. Snow White had told her about the mind-curling pleasure Wolf could bring a woman. A pleasure so intense one felt as if her body melted and her mind floated off into Neverland. Her hips lifted, giving him even more access to what he hungered for. What she hungered for. While his skilled fingers had brought her to release on that night long ago,



nothing could have prepared her for the intense spasms throbbing to life courtesy of his clever tongue.

“Wolf!” Red finally cried out. Her body shuddered, her pussy clenching around his tongue as waves of pleasure washed over her.

Wolf lifted his head and ran his tongue across his now glistening lips.

“I never...” she muttered shakily. “I mean, that was...”

He sat back on his heels and lowered her leg to the floor with a triumphant smile. “Just a sample of the pleasure I promised you.”

“There’s more?”

His grin widened. “Such an innocent.” He rose to tower over her. “But not for long.”

Red gasped in surprise as Wolf swept her up and carried her over to her grandmother’s bed. The naughtiness of it all heightened her anticipation and sent another rush of liquid heat to her still-pulsing pussy. Wolf may have had countless conquests with Fairy Tail Forest maidens in the past, but this time he would leave wanting no other. Red was determined to conquer Wolf’s restless heart whatever the cost.

## Chapter Two

God, she was too young to be a ‘grandmother.’ But she was, thanks to a royal command she was given nearly twenty-three years before, an act she was called upon to carry out, but had not followed through with. Now here she was, years later, still supple, beautiful, full of life, yet forever to be known in the forest as ‘Granny.’

The entire forest believed her to be Red’s grandmother. A lie she’d lived with from the day Red was born. And she’d loved the child as if she were her own flesh and blood. Being called ‘Granny’ had never bothered her until, in the heat of the moment, the woodcutter grunted that name while he came inside her cunt.

“Granny,” he’d groaned.

*Granny?* Was she supposed to be turned on by that? Not hardly. As a matter of fact, she’d been on the verge of that sweet, curling sensation low in her belly, the one that built and built until her insides melted. And then ‘Granny’ happened.

She opened her eyes to find the woodcutter watching her. He wasn’t much to look at with his bushy red beard and crooked nose, but the man had a cock that would make a donkey proud. A cock that made the act of achieving melted insides a matter of ‘when’ rather than ‘if.’

In all her years of spreading her legs, she’d only encountered one other who compared in size to the woodcutter. One she’d spent years trying to get over

after having her youthful heart broken to pieces. The Fairy Tail maiden seducing scoundrel hadn't even been human. He'd been—

“Oh, Granny, that was so good.” The woodcutter's husky voice snapped her out of her straying thoughts once more. He pulled his monster cock out of her dripping cunt, but didn't bother to fasten up his britches.

“Don't call me that,” she spat at him, dipping her fingers into the hair between her thighs. It wasn't often she got an afternoon out of the cottage. An afternoon for her own pleasure. She was damn well going to get her climax!

She spread her lips, caressing the slick nub that had been swollen with excitement only moments ago. She'd learned years before not to count on a man to finish what he'd started. She would take matters into her own hands and finger herself into oblivion.

“Call you what, Sugarpie?” Noticing what she was doing, the woodcutter picked up his ax from the forest floor beside them and stroked the handle. “You need some help with that?”

“I'm doing just fine on my own.”

“I can see that,” he said, his thick tongue wetting his lips as he watched. “Tell me what you want me to do.”

“You can start by not calling me Granny when you're fucking me.” The motion of her fingers intensified, quickened.

“Sure thing, Sugarpie.”

She closed her eyes, her hips lifting off the cool, green grass. She was almost there. Just a few more strokes.

Tiny spasms started a domino effect, muscle after muscle contracting until she trembled with the power of her self-induced orgasm.

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Heart pounding with anticipation, Red looked

up into Wolf's hungry eyes as he moved over her. Her naked body sank into the mattress as his body covered hers. Warm, muscular flesh pressed against her thighs, her belly, and her breasts. The weight of him comforted her, made her want to wrap her legs around him and never let go.

She had waited for this moment for so long, aching for Wolf to return to her, to finish what he'd started all those weeks ago. She'd been out picking wildflowers in the woods by the cabin when she felt someone watching her. She'd turned and found Wolf leaning against a nearby tree, his heated gaze moving over her in a way that made her legs tremble beneath her. He pushed away from the towering pine and moved slowly toward her. She didn't run. Instead, she'd dropped her basket and let him touch her through her clothes in places she'd never been touched before. His husky whisper spoke of all the things he intended to do to her. Then he was gone. Later that evening, he came to her and began making good on his promises. But Granny and the woodcutter returned early from their date, ruining her chance to experience all the things that Wolf promised.

Thrilled at the opportunity to rectify what that interruption had robbed her of, Red lifted her hand to touch him, then hesitated.

"Do as you wish, Red," he said. "Touch me if it pleases you."

She did so, easing a trembling hand across his powerful chest and down his lean abdomen. Her fingers grazed the tip of his straining shaft, causing Wolf to groan. Red started to pull away, but Wolf caught her hand.

"Don't stop."

"I...I don't know what to do."

"Touch me, Red. Curl your fingers around my cock and feel how much I want you."

His hand still over hers, she wrapped her fingers around him, reveling in the feel of him, hot and hard in her hand.

“Stroke me, Red.” His large hand guided hers up and down the length of him.

Moisture pooled between her thighs as she ran her hand along the warm, satiny flesh that covered his huge cock. He released her, letting her discover his body on her own. And what a body he had! Such strong arms, so sinewy and hard, so different from her own. Such muscular thighs, thick and powerful. Such an amazing penis, long and thick and all the better to give her pleasure with.

Wolf remained still as her hand worked the length of him, his jaw clenched. A few strokes later, he blew out a breath and moaned.

Red looked up at him, worry creasing her brow. “I’m hurting you.”

“Yes.”

Her hand stopped.

He reached down to urge her to stroke him again. “You aren’t hurting me in a bad way, Red,” he admitted. “What you’re doing to me...Well, let’s just say it’s a welcome kind of hurt.”

Satisfied, she returned to touching him, stroking him, enjoying the feel of his swollen cock in her hand, hard and pulsing with a life of its own.

Wolf finally stopped her. “No more. I can’t take it. I need to be inside you, Red. I’m going to slide my aching cock into your pussy.” He raised up slightly. “Spread your legs for me, Red.”

She obeyed, closing her eyes as she did so.

“Open your eyes,” his deep voice commanded.

Her parted thighs trembled as she lay there. She opened her eyes slowly.

“Good girl. Now look down between us. See the need you’ve stirred in me,” he said, lifting his hardened cock, the taut tip of it glistening in the

lamplight. "Do you like what you see?"

She nodded, her cheeks warming.

"Tell me, Red. I want to hear you say the words."

"I like looking at you."

"Not me, Red. My cock. Say it."

"I like looking at your cock."

He smiled. "Now watch as I slide it deep inside you."

It was huge, even in his human form, and the thought of something so big being thrust inside her had Red nervously biting at her lower lip.

"Are you afraid?" he asked.

"I'm more afraid that you'll leave before we..."

"Not this time, Red." He lowered himself slowly, carefully guiding his cock into her opening..

She felt immense pressure and saw the strain on his face as Wolf held back, no doubt trying to be gentle.

"Take me, Wolf," she pleaded. "I need you inside me."

With a curse, he plunged into her tightness, pushing through the virginal barrier.

Red's cry was muffled by his mouth as it covered hers in a heated kiss. Wolf's hips pumped madly, grinding against hers, his cock filling her completely.

The pain eased and the pleasure grew more and more intense with each demanding thrust. Red arched back, sinking into the feathery pillow beneath her head. Despite his size, Wolf's shaft now seemed to fit perfectly inside of her cunt. A stretching fullness that made her feel complete, as if he'd been destined to fill her, to be a part of her body. As if she'd been meant to accommodate his thick girth. Her insides twisted and whirled as did her thoughts. She wrapped her legs around Wolf's narrow waist, drawing him in even deeper.

Wolf groaned, a breathy sound against her ear and then stiffened, crying out her name.

She smiled contentedly as Wolf's lean, muscular body collapsed over her. This was what she had dreamed about for so long. No, it was even better than she had imagined. Wolf coming to her, wanting her the way she'd longed for him, needed him. She couldn't bear the thought of never being with him again. Even if it meant risking the king's wrath.

The sound of wagon wheels rolling up outside the cabin had Wolf pulling away with a curse.

Red sat up. "Wolf?"

He slid from the bed. "Your grandmother is back."

"Oh, no!" She scrambled off the straw-filled mattress, grabbing for her discarded gown and panties. "If Granny finds you here..."

"I know," he acknowledged as he moved to open the bedroom window. "I'll be back."

She nodded, her heart pounding. A second later he was gone. Red ran over and closed the window, latching it securely.

"Red," her grandmother called out.

Red adjusted her nightdress and ran her fingers through her hair. "I'm in here, Granny," she replied as she tugged the sheets from the bed.

The bedroom door swung open.

"What are you doing in here?"

Heat surged up Red's neck. "It's such a beautiful day I thought I'd do the bed sheets and hang them out to dry."

"Are you feeling okay? Your cheeks look a little flushed."

Red pushed a strand of hair from her face. "My nightdress is warm."

Her grandmother studied her for a long moment before turning away to walk over to her washstand. "Then perhaps you should go put some clothes on. It's not proper to still be wearing your night clothes so late in the day."

No less proper than lying naked in her grandmother's bed with Wolf. Red shifted. The damp, sticky remnant of Wolf's claim to her body stirred up memories of the heated passion they had just shared.

"Yes, Granny." Red started past her, the sheets bundled up in her arms.

"What's that?" Granny asked, lifting her nose into the air.

"What?" Red asked, her heart pounding.

"That smell."

Red's heart drummed even faster. "Smell?"

Her grandmother's expression changed. "Red," she gasped. "What have you done?"

"I don't know what you mean, Granny."

"Don't play innocent with me, young lady! You reek of him. The room reeks of him!"

"Who?"

"Wolf! He's bedded you. I recognize that feral scent of a wolf's passion."

Red shook her head but couldn't bring herself to deny her grandmother's accusation.

Her grandmother grabbed the bundle of sheets from her grasp and shook them out. Evidence of Red's lost virginity stood out against the faded white of the linens.

"Grandmother..."

"The bastard took your innocence!"

"No," Red replied, her gaze fixed on the floor at her feet. "I gave it to him."

"You invited him in?" It was more a statement than a question.

Red nodded guiltily.

Her grandmother paced the room. "You are not at fault. He's just as his father was, seducing young innocents with his devilish charm and masterful touches."

"I welcomed it," Red admitted.

Granny sank down on the foot of the bed and



hung her head in her hands with a tormented sigh. "How could you do such a thing?"

"Because I love him," Red replied in a tearful whisper.

Her grandmother looked up. "Love? You foolish child. You have no idea what love is. And you're only fooling yourself if you believe he loves you. A wolf is incapable of love, only animal lust."

"That's not true," Red argued. "You don't know Wolf like I do."

"I knew his father," her grandmother admitted.

It took a moment for the meaning of Granny's words to sink in. "You and Wolf's father..."

Granny turned to stare out the window, her slender arms folded across her breasts. "It was a long time ago."

Red stood there in shock, unable to speak. So that was how Granny knew Wolf was half-human, half-wolf. Her grandmother and Wolf's father had...

Red pushed the thought quickly aside. Although Granny was a good bit younger than most grandmothers, it was still unsettling to think about her having done such a thing.

Her grandmother sighed. "I've tried to spare you the heartache that's destined to come from this situation."

"Wolf would never hurt me," Red said in his defense. She didn't know how, but she just knew it to be true.

Granny spun around, her eyes narrowed in anger. "You're a fool to believe that. Do I need to remind you, Red, that it's against Fairy Tail Forest law for wolves to have physical contact with the Fairy Tail maidens?"

Wolf wasn't afraid of the king's decree. His past was proof enough of that. "What right does the king have to tell Fairy Tail maidens who they can and can't be with? And Wolf is half-human."

“That matters naught to the king.”

“The king does not own my heart. I want to be with Wolf and I shall be.”

Her grandmother shook her head. “Oh, Red, your innocence, or what’s left of it, makes you blind to the truth. Therefore, you leave me no choice.” That said she swept from the room in a swish of her cotton skirts.

“Granny?” Red called out in a panic as she followed her grandmother from the room. “What are you going to do?”

“What I should have done the first time I found that oversexed mongrel sniffing around our cottage! Have him arrested and neutered.”

“Granny, no!” Red gasped. She couldn’t bear the thought of any harm coming to her beloved Wolf.

### Chapter Three

Ignoring Red's pleas, Granny stormed from the cabin and headed for the weathered barn where the woodsman was preparing his horse for the ride back to his tiny shack at the far edge of the forest.

He turned to her with a smile before seeing the expression on her face. "What's wrong, Sugarpie?"

"He was here," she spewed angrily.

"Who was here?"

"Wolf," she spat. "He was here, in my cabin, with Red." Her fury gave way to sobs.

The woodcutter's brows furrowed angrily. "Where is he now?"

"Run off with his tail tucked between his legs."

"That cowardly bastard," he muttered.

"Bastard is right! My poor Red."

"You mean he..." he began as he ran his thick fingers along the handle of his ax, "touched her?"

Granny nodded.

"Son-of-a-bitch."

"It's all my fault," Granny said through her tears.

He gathered her into his arms. "Don't blame yourself. You warned Red about him."

"How can I not blame myself? I should have been here to protect Red from Wolf's lusty intentions instead of off spreading my legs for you."

"You weren't spreading them just for me," the woodcutter replied. "I seem to recall you doing your fair share of moaning while I was thrusting my cock

into you.”

Granny pushed him away. “This isn’t about us. It’s about that beast seducing Red.”

“Stop worrying your pretty little head. I’ll find Wolf and teach him a lesson he’ll not soon forget.”

“No.”

“No?”

“A lesson won’t keep him from sniffing around here. I want word sent to the castle that Wolf forced himself on Red and took her innocence.”

“Are you sure you want to do that? You’ve spent so many years keeping Red’s presence a secret from the king. What if he figures out who she really is?”

She had spent what felt like a lifetime hiding Red from the king. The woodcutter, her lover, her confidant, was the only other person in Fairy Tail Forest who knew the truth about Red.

“The old king lies on his deathbed. He’ll be none the wiser. And the prince knows nothing of her existence. Wolf *will* pay for what he’s done.” *For what his father did to me.*

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Red stood outside the open barn door, a trembling hand clasped over her mouth, her thoughts whirling. It was bad enough she’d had to hear about what Granny and the woodcutter had been doing out in the forest, a thought that had her stomach churning. Now she was the subject of some long kept secret. One that had been kept from the king, of all people. Surely that was as much against the law as her having ‘been’ with Wolf.

Granny’s words played over and over in her troubled mind. Why had her grandmother kept her hidden away? And why had she never been told about this?

As badly as she wanted answers to her questions, Red’s fear for Wolf’s life was far more urgent. She had to find him and warn him before the

King's men set out to hunt him down for breaking Fairy Tail Forest law.

She couldn't bear the thought of Wolf being imprisoned forever, or even worse. Not when she was as much to blame for what had happened between them. Perhaps even more so since she had made the decision to unlock the cabin door and let him inside despite her grandmother's warning not to.

Slipping silently away from the barn, Red grabbed her cape from her room and then took off into the woods. She'd never been allowed to venture far from their cabin, but the urgency of the situation left her no choice. She would travel as far into the forest as necessary to make certain Wolf was safe.

The screech of an owl in the treetops startled Red as she moved deeper into the heavily shadowed forest. Her already racing heart beat even faster as she searched for Wolf, calling out to him as soon as she was far enough away from her grandmother's cabin to do so.

The wind whispered through the trees and branches creaked overhead. She was grateful for the near full moon, casting pale beams of light through the covering of branches.

As night set in, animals scampered about the forest floor around her, unseen but there all the same. The shadows cast in the Fairy Tail Forest were frightening enough, but now she was alone in the Dark Forest.

Branches grabbed at her hair and snagged her cape with nearly every step she took. When had she strayed off the narrow path? What if she got lost trying to find Wolf? A very real possibility.

Wolf's image flashed through her mind, reminding her that venturing further into the Dark Forest was a risk she was willing to take. She would do this - for Wolf. Because losing him forever was far worse than facing the gnarled trees and whispering

winds.

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Wolf let out a howl as his body morphed back into that of a wolf. He dropped forward to run on all fours through the forest, far away from Red's tiny cabin. Away from the one female who made him lose all rational thought with just a smile.

*Red.*

Just the thought of her made his heart react. When had it happened? When had he let down his guard and allowed her into his heart? He wanted to deny the feelings she stirred up in him. Blame his state of confusion on lust. But the truth couldn't be denied. He had 'changed' for Red and it was by far the best mating he'd ever experienced.

He wanted more. But what kind of future could he offer Red? Despite being part human, he would always be considered a wolf by the king. Being with Red was forbidden, not only by her grandmother but by royal decree. No matter how right it felt, their being together was destined to be an ill-fated love affair.

His father had died because of his deep love for Wolf's mother. Hunted down by the king's men and slain mercilessly. Less than a year after his father was laid to rest, Wolf's mother took her last breath. Some in the kingdom blamed it on a weak heart, but Wolf knew better. His mother's heart hadn't been weak at all, it had been broken. Was he destined to follow in his father's paw prints as well?

Wolf ran until he could run no longer and then dropped to the ground, clawing in frustration at the dirt beneath him. "Damn the king and his asinine laws!"

Fatigued, he settled onto his side on a bed of twigs and dirt and lowered his head onto an outstretched paw. The image of Red's face followed him into sleep.

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“Wolf!”

He awoke with a start, his body taut with tension.

“Wolf, where are you?” a familiar, though trembling, voice called out from the distant darkness.

He lifted his head, his body tensing at the unexpected sound.

“Red?” he muttered in disbelief, his mouth drawing down into a frown. He scrambled upright with an urgency that surprised even himself.

“I’m here,” she replied, her voice catching.

What in the hell was she doing in that part of the forest? Didn’t she know the dangers that awaited a fair maiden in the darkness that swallowed up the forest?

“Red,” he called out as he moved toward her, his eyes scanning the night.

She stumbled toward him over the uneven ground and gnarled roots that lined the floor of the Dark Forest. The red, hooded cape she wore caught on branches as she moved. Beneath the open cape, her sleeping gown was dirty and torn, the sight of which made his heart lurch painfully.

“Who did this to you?” he demanded as he gathered her into his arms. He couldn’t bear knowing that she’d been injured in some way. Anger surged through him, his features becoming more feral. “Tell me, Red. Tell me who hurt you and I will see to it they pay for what they’ve done to you. Was it the trolls? The bears?”

She shook her head. “No. They’ve done nothing to me.”

“Yet you come to me with your clothes torn and your hair in tangles?”

“I couldn’t see where I was going. There were so many jagged trees and thorny bushes. And the sounds at night...” She gave an involuntary shudder.

Relief, however brief, swept through him. "Are you certain you're not injured?"

"I'm certain."

"Whatever possessed you to come here? The Dark Forest is no place for a maiden such as yourself. I told you I would come to you."

"I couldn't wait.. I had to find you," she said as she fought to catch her breath.

"Why the urgency?"

"I had to warn you."

"Warn me about what?" Warn him that what had happened between them could never be repeated? Warn him not to care for her? He knew all too well that few men, let alone maidens, would dare go against the king's wishes. Why had he believed Red to be any different?

"I'm so sorry, Wolf," she sobbed.

"About what?" As if he didn't already know.

"Granny found out about us and she's sent word to the king that you seduced me. The king's guards will be searching for you."

Red had risked leaving the safety of Fairy Tail Forest, not to end things between them, but to warn him. Her unselfish act touched him deeply for no other had ever sought to protect him, the Big Bad Wolf. But here stood a mere slip of a woman who chanced losing her freedom, even worse, her life, to save his. His jaw clenched as he bit back the unexpected emotion she stirred in him. He brushed several straying auburn hairs from her dirt-smudged face with a sigh.

"Sweet, sweet Red, what have I done to you?"

Thick, unshed tears shimmered in her green eyes. "No, Wolf, what have I done to you? If only I hadn't unlatched the door..."

"I would have found a way in," he assured her as he scooped her up into his powerful arms.

She curled her arms about his neck and laid her



head on his powerful chest, feeling safe at last. "I'm so glad I found you." She looked up at him.

He kissed her brow tenderly. "If anything had happened to you..."

She ran her hand along his jaw. "I'm with you now." That was all that mattered. Not Granny's disappointment. Not the king's ire. Only Wolf.

But she couldn't stay. It was too dangerous. And tempted as he was to keep her there with him forever, he couldn't. Red had a home. Family. All the things he would never have thanks to a black-hearted king. He started back through the woods with her. He wouldn't let her give up her home, not because of him.

"Where are we going?"

"I'm taking you home."

She stiffened in his arms. "Wolf, no, you can't go back there."

"And you can't stay here."

"But I want to be here with you forever."

"I warn you, Red, your stubbornness will not win out here. The Dark Forest is no place for a genteel maiden. I need to know you're safe."

"As I do you," she argued.

He gave a low chuckle. "Rest assured, my love, I am quite capable of taking care of myself."

"Then let me stay with you," she pleaded. "If just for tonight."

He groaned, torn between what he should do and what he longed to do. Her soft pleas only served to weaken his resolve. Tonight might be all the future held for them as the king's guards would no doubt be relentless in hunting him down.

Fortunately for him, the king's men rarely ventured into the Dark Forest. They feared it too greatly. So for now he was safe. But spending the rest of his life in a haven of darkness wasn't something he intended to do. Not when he knew Red

would be awaiting him on the other side in Fairy Tail Forest. His gaze met hers and he knew at that moment he'd risk facing a hundred guards to be with her again.

"Just for tonight," he conceded with a sigh. He turned and made his way deeper into the woods. Finding a grassy spot amidst a gathering of bushes, he lowered Red to the ground. He stepped back to look at her. Despite the toll her flight through the Dark Forest had taken on her, her beauty beckoned to him, made him hunger for her.

She wet her lips in a slow, sensual slide of her tongue. "Wolf..."

He could take her right then and there, like the beast the others believed him to be, but Red deserved more. She deserved to be loved deeply, passionately, forever. The last of which he could not give her. "I want you so bad, Red."

Her gaze moved downward, her eyes widening as they came to rest on his jutting penis. She looked up at him with a hint of devilry in her eyes. "I can see that."

Her response brought a grin of delight to his face.

She undid her cape and let it fall to the ground below her. Then her fingers caught the hem of her sleeping gown and lifted it over her head, leaving her in nothing more than her panties. "I'm yours to do with as you please."

He pleased to do a great deal to her delectable body. Her high breasts called to him, her narrow waist, the juncture of her thighs covered by so little. His animal instincts yearned to devour her, to bring them both to the heights of ecstasy they found with their bodies locked together as one.

"I'm not sure I can 'change' again so soon," he reluctantly admitted, knowing he couldn't take her like this, that he might hurt her. She was still too

new to the ways of love-making, too naïve to the untamed strength of his body in this form.

“I don’t care.”

But he did. He looked up at the moon and closed his eyes, visions of Red’s near nakedness etched in his mind. He gathered all his mental strength and forced himself to ‘change’ back to his human form once again.

Wolf’s howl shattered the quiet of the night. The air around him hissed and crackled as beast became man. As if caught up in a whirling vortex of blinding lights, he couldn’t see, but he could feel, each and every change of his bones, his flesh. When it finally ended, he sank to his knees in front of Red with a groan. Transforming left him vulnerable. The end product, his human form, robbed him of the sheer power of his wolfly body.

“Wolf,” she cried out as she watched him suffer through the change—for her. Scrambling to him, she wrapped her arms lovingly around him.

“I’ll be fine,” he assured her with a weak smile. “I just need a minute to adjust. I’m not used to ‘changing’.”

Her hands stroked his shoulders, kneading the knots of tension away. “You didn’t have to change for me. I told you that.”

“I wanted to,” he admitted. For both of them. He sat back, propping himself up against the thick trunk of an aging oak, his strength slowly returning.

“Are you sure you’re all right?”

Reaching out, he caught Red by her wrists and pulled her onto his lap. “My sweet Red.”

“My Wolf.” She cupped his handsome face, loving the light in his eyes, the light that shone for her benefit. She straddled him, her hands caressing his neck, his shoulders, his chest. Then they slid down the muscular groove of his abdomen to curl about his awaiting shaft. So hard. So thick. Her

thumb brushed over the swollen tip to capture the drop of pre-cum that had seeped from the slit. She brought her thumb to her lips, licking away the surprisingly salty droplet with a teasing smile.

Air hissed through his teeth. "Red..."

"Yes, my wolf?" she asked, grinding her shapely bottom against his powerful thighs.

"If I didn't know better," he replied, "I'd think you have some wolf blood in you as well."

She flashed him a mischievous smile. "Perhaps I do. That could be the reason for this urge I suddenly have to devour you."

He tipped his head back with a husky chuckle and then lifted her from his lap to stand over him. No maiden had ever made him burn from the inside out the way Red did. Hunger for her like a man starved. Need her like his next breath. She called to him in the way of the full moon. In a way that ran through his blood, his ancestors' blood. He could no more resist Red than he could the need to howl.

"Not until I've had my chance to feast on you first." That said, he dragged her panties down.

Red lifted a slender leg and then the other, stepping out of them.

Wolf tossed the panties aside and gave a growl of approval as he stared up at the red-gold curls beckoning to him from between Red's creamy white thighs. He reached up to cup her ass, forcing her to step closer.

"Brace yourself, Red, I'm about to feed my hunger."

She grasped his shoulders and closed her eyes.

"Mmm..." Wolf moaned as he parted the silken curls. He leaned forward and inhaled slowly, breathing in her scent. Woman and musk with a hint of something faintly floral. His thick cock pulsed with anticipation.

Licking his lips, he eyed his next feast. An

offering of hot, wet cunt. He lifted his face, moving toward the fleshy lips of her pussy and ran his tongue along them, tasting her. "Ah, yes." He drew the extended nub of her swollen clit into his mouth, suckling it.

"Wolf, please. I can't take it," she whimpered.

"Then don't." He stroked her with his tongue again. "Give in to the pleasure. Come for me, Red. Let me drink my fill of your honeyed sweetness."

Red's legs trembled with the effort to remain standing as Wolf feasted on her. Her grip on his broad shoulders tightened along with her body as Wolf's tongue stroked her clitoris, her labia, lapping inside her cunt, over and over, pushing her to the edge.

"I so love the taste of you," he murmured against her aching flesh.

She moaned her reply, loving the feel of his tongue thrusting into her, his mouth tasting her. She was so close to coming undone..

As if sensing that, Wolf urged her legs further apart and thrust a finger deep inside her weeping pussy, sliding it in and out while his mouth worked her into an impassioned frenzy.

A strangled cry escaped Red's parted lips as her body quaked and shuddered. She came in a rush of madness, crying out in the night.

Wolf withdrew his finger and lapped at her one more time before taking her hand and urging her down to him. "My cock awaits you, Red."

Red placed a splayed hand on his chest, shaking her head. She ached to have him filling her, but not until she too had feasted.

Kneeling, Red reached for the cock thrusting out from the thatch of dark hair between Wolf's muscular thighs.

He laid his head back against the expansive tree trunk with a groan and bent his knees as her fingers

curled snugly around the base of his cock.

She lowered her head, taking the hot, glistening tip between her parted lips. The thickness of it filled her mouth, the length of it brushing the back of her throat. Reflex had her pulling away, but desire and the very male taste of him had her drawing his cock in again. Pleasuring him this way made her feel wild and wicked, made her pussy weep for its turn at Wolf's cock.

A low growl caught in Wolf's throat. One of pure pleasure.

This time it was Red who feasted. She ran her tongue up and down the length of his shaft while her free hand tested the weight of his balls, shaping them, stroking them with her thumb. Her lips tightened around his cock as she pulled away, sucking as she did so. Then she'd take him deep into her throat again.

The muscles in Wolf's thighs bunched and hardened, his knees drawing up even more. He muttered her name over and over, his fingers grasping mindlessly at the long strands of her unbound hair.

Red had never felt so in control. Her every stroke, every lick, every deep suck on Wolf's cock had him crying out like an animal gone mad.

"I love the feel of you, hard and heavy in my hand," she told him, following up with another firm, eager stroke.

"Red," he breathed.

"And the taste of you," she continued, "hot and salty, in my mouth."

Her words sent him over in a powerful burst of release. Hot, spewing cum filled her mouth. Red swallowed several times as she continued to milk the salty seed from him.

Wolf stopped her with a low growl and pulled free of her mouth. With a hiss of need, he dragged

her up onto his wet cock.

She sank onto him, her thighs pressed firmly against his lean hips.

Teeth gritted, he caught her hips and lifted her up, her body squeezing the last of his seed from his cock. Then he brought her down, plunging deeply into her. "Come for me, Red."

Red clung to his shoulders, her head thrown back, her body arched.

He caught the tip of a milky-white breast between his teeth and tugged at it as he worked her body up and down on his rock-hard shaft, making her cry out. Then he ran his tongue around the taut, glistening nub.

Red's body quaked around him as she found her release. Wolf followed, emptying himself inside her, their impassioned cries shattering the silence of the night.

## Chapter Four

“It’s time to go,” Wolf whispered as he lifted a sleeping Red in his arms.

Dawn was just breaking, casting sparse rays of light into the Dark Forest. Awakening that morning with Red in his arms was a memory he’d treasure forever. She was so beautiful, so trusting and innocent. So opposite of everything he was. He knew better than to wish for more between them.

“I don’t want to leave,” she protested.

“The choice is not ours.” He sighed. “If it were, I’d never let you go.”

She frowned her displeasure at their situation, then snuggled closer, curling her arms around his neck.

He was once again the wolf who made his home deep in the Dark Forest. And she was the maiden from Fairy Tail Forest he had no right to have fallen in love with. But fallen he had, long ago, as he’d stood hidden amidst night’s shadows, watching her as she stood gazing out her bedroom window with such yearning. Hearing his name, a mere whisper on her lips, drift out into the night, into his heart.

The realization of the true depth of his feelings for Red shocked him. He’d never allowed emotion to rule him. But then Red had come into his life and had him feeling things he never thought he would. Wanted. For more than the passion he offered. Needed. For the protection he would gladly give her. And contentment. For she was the woman his



restless heart had spent a lifetime searching for.

He made the long walk back to Fairy Tail Forest with Red asleep in his arms. His one true love. When they neared the cabin where Red lived with her grandmother, he roused her from her peaceful slumber. "Red, wake up. We're almost there."

She stirred with a sleepy moan of protest. Then her eyes fluttered open to look up at him. "Wolf..."

"Yes?"

"Will I see you again?"

"Without a doubt." He brushed his lips tenderly over hers, wishing he were back in his human form and making love to her. Wolf slowed his step, not ready to have to say good bye. With the king's men looking for him, each venture into Fairy Tail Forest meant risking his life.

He looked down into Red's beautiful green eyes, imagining what his life would be like with her in it always. To have her smile greet him every morning. Her touch ease him into sleep every night.

Even if he could never have her fully, just seeing her again was a risk worth taking.

The sun's rays stretched higher into the morning sky. Red's cabin could be seen through a spattering of pines. They had finally arrived. He looked down at her, drinking in the sight of Red's beautiful face one last time before leaving her there and walking away.

Wolf lowered her to her feet, holding her against him. "Even when I can't come to you, know that I'll be near." He reached up to stroke her hair.

"Halt, in the name of the king!"

Red gasped as two dozen of the king's guards surrounded them, swords drawn. Her panicked gaze darted from the circle of sword-wielding men to Wolf, his expression unreadable.

Wolf thrust her behind him, shielding her with his body.

"Release the maiden unharmed, you foul beast!" the captain of the guards ordered.

"No," she cried out, wrapping her arms tighter about Wolf's waist. "He's not a beast! I won't let you hurt him."

*He's not a beast.* Her words touched him deeply. Red loved him for the man he was inside. She had accepted him unconditionally, be he beast or human, and he would never forget that. Wolf pried loose her hold. "Red, you have to go."

Tears rolled down her cheeks. "No."

"Red..." her grandmother called out from beyond the armed men. "This is a matter for the king."

Wolf freed himself from her grasp and set her away from him. "Don't make this any harder than it has to be on us, Red." His tone was pleading. He could easily have escaped capture, but he wasn't willing to put Red's safety on the line. One wrong swing of a sword...

Giving Red no chance to reply, the guards moved in. The sound of iron shackles filled the air as her beloved Wolf was taken captive. "Wolf," she sobbed as the soldiers, weapons still drawn, led him away in the direction of the castle.

Why didn't he fight? He was stronger, more cunning. Instead, he'd let them take him away without so much as another glance her way. He walked away, shoulders drawn back, head held high, pride carrying him to the punishment that awaited.

"No!" Red screamed again. She started after them, tears running down her cheeks, but was stopped by a large hand as it curled about her waist. A second later she was hefted up into the air and over the shoulder of the woodsman.

"Put me down!" she demanded with a sob.

"Lock her in her room," her grandmother ordered.

"I'm sorry, Red," the woodsman said as he

carried her into the cabin. "You've given us no choice."

Tears streaking down her cheeks, Red looked up at her grandmother who followed a few steps behind. "How could you do this to me? To Wolf?"

"Give it time, child. You'll see that I did the right thing. Wolves are not a loyal lot."

"I'm not a child," she cried out as she was lowered onto her mattress. "And I'll never believe what you did to Wolf was the right thing. Ever!"

The door closed and Red heard the heavy wooden plank being slid across it, imprisoning her.

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"Move faster you defiler of innocent maidens," the guard behind Wolf ordered with a shove.

Wolf stumbled with a curse, the shackles digging into the fur-covered flesh on his hind legs. Fury at the injustice of the situation had brought about the dark 'change' in him, a state he rarely found himself in. His features sharpened, his nose and ears becoming more pointed. His eyes turned blacker than night. His lips curled back in a feral show of razor-sharp teeth that promised death to those who dared venture too close. He was grateful that Red wasn't around to see him that way.

"We expected you to lead us on more of a chase," another guard said. "But you walked right into our trap. The king will be pleased."

"The king is a fool," Wolf growled. He was rewarded with a hard blow to the back of his shoulders—probably a hilt of a sword. Pain sliced through him, but he made no sound, refusing to grant the king's men satisfaction.

Word spread quickly of his capture, reaching the castle well before their arrival. People lined the streets to watch the infamous Wolf being brought in through the castle gates. Men scowled while maidens fought back tears. He saw the faces of those

he'd seduced, used simply for his own pleasure. That was how he'd lived. And now, when he'd finally found the one woman who left him wanting no other, he'd never get the chance to show her what she meant to him. To be committed.

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"Red," a soft voice called out from the other side of the barred window.

Red swung her legs off the bed and wiped the tears from her face. "Snow? Is that you?"

"Yes. I knocked but no one answered. Then I heard you sobbing. Are you all right?"

"Granny is off with the woodsman somewhere." She stood and crossed the room to the window where her friend's worried face greeted her. "And to answer your question I don't think I'll ever be all right again."

"I'm so sorry about Wolf."

Red's heart lurched painfully. "They've executed him?"

"Oh, no, he's still alive and being kept in the castle's dungeon. I just returned from town where I heard news of what had happened."

"He doesn't deserve to be imprisoned," she said with a snuffle.

"He's not as bad as some have made him out to be."

Snow would know, Red thought with an unexpected twinge of jealousy.

"I know what you're thinking," her friend said, "and you needn't worry. There is nothing between Wolf and me. In fact, I believed him to be void of the ability to feel until now. He wouldn't have given up his freedom if he didn't care for you." Snow sighed in envious admiration. "It's clear that he has feelings for you. I'm so sorry things had to end the way they did between the two of you."

"I would give anything for Wolf to have feelings

for me as you suggest, but you and I both know where Wolf stands on emotional commitment.” It hurt her to say it because she so wished it to be otherwise, but the truth couldn’t be denied no matter what her feelings for him were. “I don’t think Wolf’s capable of truly loving anyone.”

“I beg to differ. The Wolf I know would never allow himself to be captured so easily. He’s far too cunning. But he would do so if he’d feared that harm would come to you if he did otherwise. That tells me he cares deeply for you. Face it, Red, you’ve brought about a change in him no other maiden has ever been able to do.”

And look what that change had done to him. He’d been hunted down by the king’s men and taken away like the lowliest of criminals. “I can’t bear knowing that he’s locked in some cold, dark dungeon because of me,” Red said with a sob. It had been two days since her Grandmother had locked her in her room, two days since Wolf had been taken away in chains.

“Then we must figure out a way to free him,” Snow replied.

Was it possible? Could she find some way to free Wolf? “I can’t allow you to be a part of such a plan. The risk is too great. This is something I must do on my own.”

Snow smiled. “Who would be the wiser if I were to toss a few ideas your way and perhaps a basket of wizzleberries?”

“Wizzleberries?”

“Sleeping guards are much easier to get past,” her friend replied with a mischievous grin.

A flicker of hope sprang to life inside Red. “Snow, you are the best!”

“So the dwarves tell me.”

Red laughed for the first time in days. “Now I just need to convince Granny that I’ve seen the error

of my ways and regain my freedom.”

“I’d best go before she returns,” Snow said.

“How can I ever thank you?”

“By taming Wolf. I long to see him meet his match and have that wild heart of his stolen.”

“As he has mine,” Red admitted with a soft sigh.

“I’ll be by tonight with the berries.” Snow waved goodbye and then disappeared into the woods, singing happily to the forest animals as she went.

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It wasn’t easy convincing her grandmother that she’d had a change of heart where Wolf was concerned, but she had. Perhaps it was knowing that Wolf was beyond Red’s reach in the castle dungeon that helped convince her grandmother no harm would come in returning Red’s freedom to her.

As soon as her grandmother had gone off that morning with the woodsman, as they did now nearly every morn, Red began baking her ‘special’ tarts.

It had been five long days since she’d last seen Wolf. The memory of him being hauled away in chains brought another rush of tears to her eyes.

Red glanced down at the basket she clutched in her hands and prayed that she wasn’t too late, that Wolf was still alive. If the king was a reasonable man, she’d have considered going to him and pleading for mercy where Wolf was concerned. But the king, rumored to have no heart, was confined to his bed awaiting his last breath. Once he was gone Prince Charm-them would take over as king. And she knew the prince would be no more compassionate. Not when Wolf’s renowned virility had put the prince’s to shame.

The tarts she’d baked for the prison guards were her only chance to free Wolf. If she failed...No, she couldn’t think that way. Her plan had to work. Wolf’s life lie solely in her hands.

Red made the long walk through Fairy Tail

Forest to Storybook Castle, images of Wolf filling her mind. If fate were kind, she'd be with her Wolf again very soon.

The towering castle gates opened upon her arrival, welcoming her inside. Red's mouth went dry and her heart pounded wildly with the thought of what she was about to do. Thankfully, Fairy Tail maidens were considered no threat to the safety of the kingdom, which made it easy for her to make her way through the dark, musty stairwells leading down to the dungeon.

"What brings a fair maiden such as yourself down here?" a young guard greeted with a flirtatious smile.

"I've brought sweetened pastries for the guards," Red replied, her stomach twisting in knots. There was no turning back now. Her plan had begun.

The guard's smile widened as he peered into the basket. "Mmm... berry tarts. My favorite. I'm tempted not to share them."

Her eyes widened. "Oh, but you must," she exclaimed in a panic.

He chuckled. "I'm only jesting, fair maiden." He reached for one of the pastries and took a large bite, savoring its sweetness.

Red waited, her heart pounding.

Suddenly, the guard collapsed onto the cold stone floor, unmoving as he lay in a deep sleep. Red bent to snatch the ring of keys off the hook on his belt.

Basket of goodies in hand, Red hurried along the winding dungeon corridor, passing out her pastries to each and every guard. One by one they fell into a deep slumber.

"Wolf?" she called out. There were so many doors. What if she couldn't find him before the next change of guards?

"Red?" a husky voice replied from behind one of

the heavy wooden doors.

She ran to it, dropping her basket at her feet. "Wolf, I'm here," she said, flattening her hand against the door as if doing so would allow her to feel him.

"What are you doing here?"

"I've come to free you," she replied as she maneuvered the keys she'd gotten from the first guard. One by one she fitted them into the lock on his door.

Wolf leaned his head against the rough wooden door with a groan. This couldn't be happening. What kind of foolishness was she about? "Red, go home."

"Not until after you are free."

The keys clanked against the lock on the other side of the door. How in the hell had she managed to get the key ring from the guard?

"Red—" The heavy wooden door swung open and Red swept inside. Her fiery hair hung in sweat-dampened tendrils along her face. Her eyes were wild, like a woman pushed to the edge. She was even more beautiful than he remembered. How that was even possible was beyond him.

She ran to him, wrapping her slender arms around his waist. "You're alive."

*For now.* Wolf held her trembling form. "You have to leave before the guards find you here." Before she's forced to watch his sentence of being hung for his crime against the king carried out. Knowing she watched his death would be a punishment far greater than that of the gallows themselves.

"You needn't worry about that."

"But the guards—"

"Have been taken care of."

He grasped her arms and held her away to look into her eyes. "Tell me, Red, what have you done?"

"I've not harmed them, I swear. I've simply put



them to sleep with tarts.”

“You’ve put the dungeon guards to sleep with tarts?”

“Well, perhaps it wasn’t exactly the tarts that did so. It was the wizzleberry filling I put in them.”

Wolf nodded. Wizzleberries were used in tonics to help those to whom sleep would not come. “You risked your freedom for me?”

She looked up at him with a smile that warmed even the dankest of dungeon cells. “How could I not? I love you.”

It had been so long since he’d known anyone’s love. Wolf felt a knot of emotion wedge in his throat. He gathered her to him. “And I love you, my beautiful, brave Red.”

“There she is!” an angry voice cried out.

Wolf and Red turned to find several armed guards filling the open doorway. Among them, one of the guards she’d given a tart to.

“But how?” she gasped.

“Fortunately for me, I have a sensitive stomach. Your poison didn’t have time to serve its purpose.”

“But it’s not poison,” she explained, her heart pounding. “The guards are only sleeping.”

“It matters not, fair maiden, for a crime against the king is a crime all the same.” He turned to the others. “They shall pay for their crimes on the morrow. Take her away and lock her up.”

“No!” Wolf exclaimed, charging the guard who started for Red.

The others struggled to pull Wolf away, beating him down with wooden clubs.

“Wolf!”

“Charge me with her crime,” Wolf insisted as he hunkered in pain on the cold stone floor. “I made her do what she did.”

“He made me do naught,” Red argued as she pushed her way to Wolf. She dropped to her knees

beside him. "I would do it again to gain him freedom."

"Red," he groaned.

She caressed his pained face. "But it's true."

"Leave her here," the head guard commanded.

"Alone, in the cell?" another asked in surprise. "With him?"

The man turned to Wolf with a scowl. "Yes, with him. If he eats her in the night, then we won't have to bother with her in the morn."

Leaving Wolf and Red to await their impending fates, the guards closed the heavy wooden door behind them, the sound echoing throughout the dungeon, rattling the bars of their holding cell. Laughing and making crude jokes amongst themselves, the guards withdrew, their voices fading away to leave only the silence of mortar walls.

"Wolf..." Red whimpered, her eyes filled with fear.

Despite the pain and exhaustion that racked his body, Wolf forced a 'change,' taking on his human form once again.. He needed to hold Red, needed to be with her for whatever time that remained for them. What she had done was a crime punishable by death. How he wished he could spare her the consequences.

"I will fight to my death to keep you from harm," he whispered against her ear. But they both knew that once he was gone there would be no saving her.

Red looked up at him, running her fingers tenderly along his swelling eye. "I will die, loving you."

He kissed her hard, his long fingers tunneling through her hair.

Red slid her hands up over the muscular contour of his bare chest. "Love me, Wolf," she breathed against his lips. "One last time."

Wolf untied her hooded cape up and tossed it

onto the straw-littered floor. Then he did the same with her clothes until her naked body pressed against his own. He wanted to remember everything about her when his last breath was taken from him. Her sweet scent. The softness of her lips. The eagerness of her touch. And most of all, the love that lit her beautiful eyes whenever she looked at him.

“The guards were right about one thing,” he muttered, his voice thick with desire.

“And that would be?”

“That I might devour you this night.”

She managed a smile. “I can only hope.”

## Chapter Five

Wolf swept Red up into his arms and carried her over to the deeper straw in the far corner of his cell. *Their cell*, he thought with a pang in his heart. She was there because of him and it nearly tore him apart knowing that.

If any other maiden were in her place, he had no doubt they would be weeping and begging the guards to release them. But not his beloved Red. The only release she pleaded for was the one he fully intended to give her.

Lowering her onto the makeshift bed, he parted her legs with animal urgency and buried his face between them, inhaling her female scent. A musky sweetness that drove him mad. “Ah, Red...”

She moaned softly, her hips lifting in silent pleading.

Parting her with his fingers, he ran his tongue between the slick feminine folds, eliciting more whimpers from Red. His cock grew harder with each swipe of his tongue along her clit. She tasted of heat and need and woman and he eagerly lapped up her juices. Then he caught her hips and speared her with his tongue.

“Wolf!” she cried out, her fingers clutching at the brittle pieces of straw beneath her. He was killing her in the most wonderful way. She would gladly die a thousand deaths if this was how it was to be done.

And he wasn’t through with the sweet torture yet. Wolf jabbed his tongue even deeper into her aching pussy, making her entire body tense. She

squirmed, need burning hot inside her.

He withdrew and plunged again.

When she came, it was in a maddening frenzy.

Before her body had even finished quaking in the aftermath of the orgasm he'd given her, Wolf turned her roughly.

"Get on your knees," he rasped.

She did as he asked, arching her back so the bare flesh of her ass teased him.

He gave a low growl as he grasped her hips, shoving his swollen cock into her awaiting pussy. He thrust in and out with hunger-driven strokes. He was half-animal, half-man, and fully crazed with need.

Need, she understood all too well. Red cried and whimpered in pleasure.

Driven by desire, Wolf pulled out and slid the glistening tip of his cock up and down the crack of her shapely ass, dampening the puckered circle within in preparation. Before the night was over, Red would be his completely in every sense of the word.

She gave a needy little moan and arched her back, giving him easier access to her sweet ass. "Take me, Wolf."

Would that he could, but her body had never held a man there. He had to go slow, had to acquaint her body with the feel of his cock filling her ass. He reached between them to dip his fingers in her wet cunt and then coated his cock in her sweet juices. "I ache to be inside you here," he said as he inserted a finger into the bud of her ass. "So deep," he added, inserting two fingers and pressing in further.

Her thighs trembled as she knelt before him, waiting, wanting, pleading for what she knew only he could give her.

He withdrew his fingers and guided his shaft to her awaiting anus, pressing into her. Slowly.

Insistently. Sinking in deeper and deeper.

She gasped and he stilled. "Am I hurting you?"

She shook her head. "Only by holding back when my body aches so desperately for you. Take me now, my wolf."

With an animal cry, he claimed her, burying himself deep inside the tight sheath of her ass. Hands gripping her narrow waist, he pumped her, each measured stroke bringing him closer and closer to the edge.

Wolf threw back his head and howled as his cock exploded inside her, her sweet body continuing to milk him.

Red threw her head back and cried out, a cry as wild as any he'd given in the throes of passion. She ground her ass against him, burying his cock to its hilt inside her as her naked body shuddered in release.

She was a mate who would make any wolf proud. And she was all his.

\*\*\*\*

"Red," Granny called out. "We're home."

Silence greeted her.

"She must be sleeping," she said to the woodcutter. "I'll check her room."

"She hasn't been sleeping long, if she is," he replied, motioning toward the baking utensils spread out across the table. He walked over to sweep a finger through a drop of filling that remained on the table.. "Mmm," he groaned as he sucked his finger clean..

Before Granny reached Red's room, a loud thud sounded in the kitchen and she ran back. There, sprawled awkwardly across the kitchen floor was her woodcutter, eyes closed.

She dropped to her knees, relieved to find he was still breathing. Then she reached up to swipe a speck of red tart filling, bringing it to her nose. She

recognized the sweet scent of wizzleberry immediately.

“Oh, Red, what have you done?” But she knew. Red had gone to rescue Wolf.

Granny hurried out to her wagon and set off for the castle, praying she would catch Red on her way there. She had to stop her.

But Red was nowhere to be found. Granny drove through the castle gates, her heart heavy. All those years of protecting Red undone in one foolish act. For if Red were caught, death would be the punishment.

No sign of Red inside the gates either. As she feared, she had arrived too late. Granny left her wagon and went in search of Red. It was inside the castle she received the dreaded news that Red had been taken prisoner as well.. They were to be executed the next day at sunrise.

Distraught, Granny did the only thing she could, she insisted on having council with the king. Her request was denied due to his declining health. Refusing to give up, she went off in search of the prince, praying that he would be able to save Red from an untimely fate as she had done all those years before.

\*\*\*\*

A key clanked clumsily in the lock of the dungeon door, waking Wolf and Red from slumber.

Red lifted her head from the cushion of Wolf's once again fur-covered chest with a gasp. “They’ve come for us already? I thought we had until the morrow.”

Wolf sat up and grabbed for Red's cape, shielding her nakedness as the cell door swung open. He sprang to his feet to stand between her and the king's men, but it wasn't a guard that greeted them.

“Granny?” Red gasped as she peered around Wolf's hulking form. “What are you doing here?”

"I've come to set things right, something I should have done years ago."

A man with deep auburn hair and dressed in the finest of garb stepped around her grandmother. "Stand aside, beast. I wish to see my sister."

"Sister?" Red and Wolf repeated in unison.

"Red," Granny said, "this is Prince Charm-them, your brother."

"My what?"

The prince turned to the guards. "Leave us. I wish to have a word with my sister in private."

"I don't understand," Red said, her thoughts spinning wildly..

The prince turned to Wolf. "I understand you risked your life to be with my sister and then again last night to protect her."

"I would die for Red," he replied without hesitation.

"Admirable for a beast," the prince said with a nod. Then he turned back to Red who was now standing, her cape clutched to her breasts. "You have our mother's eyes."

Red studied the prince. "I appear to have your eyes as well. How can this be?"

"We shared our mother's womb together," he explained. "Apparently our father, the king, feared someone would learn you were the firstborn of us and entitled to rule the kingdom instead of the son he'd longed to see take his place someday. So he ordered his wife's servant to do away with his newborn daughter."

"He wanted me killed?" It was hard enough to accept the news that she was of royal blood, but now to learn that her father had ordered her to be killed...Red felt her legs go weak.

Wolf was right there to support her.

"I couldn't do it," her grandmother said with tears in her eyes. "I couldn't end the life of an



innocent child.”

Red gasped. “You were the queen’s servant?”

Her grandmother nodded. “Yes. I served her for many years. But my service for her ended when she passed in childbirth and the king ordered me to...” Her eyes teared up.

“End my life,” Red finished for her.

Her grandmother nodded. “Yes. I took you far away from the Storybook Castle and hid with you deep in the forest where I raised you with help from the woodcutter.”

“The woodsman knew I was the king’s daughter and that he’d be betraying the king by helping you?” No wonder he’d been so overprotective. He didn’t dare risk the king finding out the truth.

“His loyalty to me knows no bounds.”

Deep down Red knew it to be true. She looked to the prince, her twin, taking in the mirror-like similarities between them, the hair, the eyes, the smile...

“While there is no love lost between us, I am forever indebted to the woodcutter for what he’s done for Red,” Wolf said. “How were you able to keep her true identity a secret?”

“We told those who crossed our paths that Red was my dead son’s child,” her grandmother explained. “A son I never had, but no one in Fairy Tail Forest was the wiser as I had spent so many years in the king’s service at the castle.”

“Surely I am dreaming this,” Red muttered as she clung to Wolf. If it was a dream, she prayed never to wake. For waking would mean losing Wolf forever.

“It is no dream,” her grandmother replied, a tear streaming down her cheek. “My dear, sweet Red, can you ever forgive me for driving you to such lengths? For had I not blamed Wolf for his father’s actions years ago—something Wolf had no control over—

neither of you would be locked away in this dreadful dungeon.”

Her grandmother’s words touched her deeply. “How could I not forgive you?” Red replied with a tender smile. “For without you it seems I would not have made it past infancy.” Would never have had the chance to love Wolf.

“I thought I was dreaming as well when your grandmother came to me,” the prince admitted. “Her story seemed to be one created by a woman not in her right mind.”

“But you believed her anyway?”

“Not at first,” he said. “But your grandmother was adamant. She demanded that I go to my father for the truth—which I did, however reluctantly.”

“For fear that what my grandmother told you was the truth,” Red said, understanding the prince’s reaction. His seeking the truth could cost him his claim to the throne.

“No. That had nothing to do with my hesitation. You see, there is no love lost between our father and myself. Thus I avoid conversation with him as much as possible.”

“I don’t understand. What happened between you two that makes you wish to avoid him?”

“My father and I have not been on the best of terms for many years now, as I am not in like mind when it comes to the laws set for the kingdom. He claims that I am too soft to be his flesh and blood.”

“Yet you went to him anyway?” Wolf said.

“I needed to know the truth,” the prince replied, the hurt their father had caused him over the years plain on his face. Red searched his handsome features, trying to see bits of herself reflected.

“And he confessed when you confronted him?” Red asked in disbelief. The thought of being the king’s daughter frightened her. She was no princess, had no desire to be a princess. She only wanted to be

with the Wolf she loved.

“Were our father not on his deathbed and as of late prone to reliving his past, I might never have gotten the truth from him.”

“So it is true?” Red could barely process the news of her true birthright.

“Yes. Now, my blood sister, it seems you are next in line to rule in the days ahead when our father takes his last breath.”

She shook her head in refusal. “I don’t wish to rule the kingdom.”

The prince looked stunned by her reply. “But you are the true first born, a princess soon to be given her place on the throne.”

“Perhaps I am a princess by birth, but rule of the kingdom belongs to you.” Red turned to look up at Wolf. “I wish only to live the rest of my life with Wolf, without fear of him being taken away for loving me.”

“I will grant your wish, Red. From this day forward, a Fairy Tail Forest maiden may love freely without fear of repercussions. And you are welcome to make your home in the castle, as it is rightfully yours as well.”

“Thank you for your offer, but I am perfectly content to live in the forest.”

Stunned by her refusal to accept his offer, the Prince studied her. “But you shall visit so we can get to know each other?”

She nodded. “I would like that.”

The prince stepped forward to shake Wolf’s hand. “Take good care of my sister.”

“You have my word on it.” He turned to Red, his eyes full of love and concern for her well-being. “Are you certain about this? You are willing to walk away from being royalty to live a simple life with me in the forest?”

“Very certain,” she said without hesitation,

flashing him a loving smile. “Experience has taught me that a life with you promises to be anything but simple. I will welcome each day as a new adventure that we shall embark upon together.”

“You are my greatest adventure.” Wolf chuckled, a smile curling his lips. “I love you, Red.”

“And I you, my Big Bad Wolf.”

And they lived happily ever after.

## About the authors...

Award-winning author, McKenna Chase, attributes her passion for penning hot, sexy romances to her husband of over twenty years. Having found her very own hero, she sets out to give her heroines their very own happily ever after as well. And the journey to get there promises to be filled with lust, laughter and longing.

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Whether she's sailing the Caribbean with Johnny Depp, dancing the night away with Brad Pitt, or stripping off Gerard Butler's clothes with her teeth, award-winning author Jana Mercy lives life to the fullest. Okay, so in her over-active imagination Jana lives life to the fullest. In reality she's a dreamer who never gave up on her life-long fantasy of writing romance. Dreams do come true, so keep reading romance and let your dreams soar.

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[www.janamercy.com](http://www.janamercy.com).

Also available

# Beauty's Beast

by

Jane E. Jones

Beautiful Holly thinks she's found the man who loves her, but Ristan continues to insist they meet in secret, refuses to marry her, and hides from the night. Unsure of his past, his life, and his love, she is forced into a situation that will bring her love from another man; a cursed, tortured man named Alexavier whose own beauty is hidden beneath a hideous exterior.

Abandoned by Ristan and living in a lonely castle with Alexavier, she is astounded by her immediate attraction to the Beast—his rough touch and scorching kisses leave her trembling and aching for more.

When Ristan returns, Holly realizes where her heart truly lies and discovers a secret that may cause her to lose the Beast forever.

## An Excerpt from Beauty's Beast

I had never seen the Beast but at a distance. I had never seen his face. How could I have schooled my face into a mask when the man was such an acute shock to my senses? It was too much to ask of anyone.

I must do this. I must. I chanted my sister's name in my mind.

He filled the doorway, and I tried not to quake in fear, I truly tried. But I was not successful. I felt my face lose its color and my eyes widen. I was not good at stoicism.

His face...his face. He was not pretty. His features resembled those of an animal; a wolf, maybe, all sharp and half-covered with hair. I thought of a razor, of taking the hair away. Perhaps then he might look more like a man.

His slanted golden eyes shone at me from a sea of redness, and I caught a glimpse of white, pointed teeth. Half man, half wolf.

He stood straight and aloof as I studied him, his demeanor cool. His large frame was covered with a long, black leather duster that fell nearly to the floor and skimmed the tops of his boots. His hands were long fingered and ended, I was glad to see, with fingernails. They were black, but they were not claws.

His head was covered with regular hair; long, thick, glossy, and dark. His eyebrows were drawn low in a scowl, and his lips were thin. Man, animal. He looked to be both.

All in all, I was...relieved. He was not nearly so dreadful, upon this prolonged viewing, as I had first

thought.

He did not speak, but stood staring at me as I was staring at him. He might have waited to see if I would faint or scream. Perhaps he thought I would throw the candelabra at his head.

I did none of those things. The longer I stared at him, the calmer I became, as I remembered watching him as a child. Those long hours I sat in hiding, or so I had thought, and watched the lonely monster, long after dark when I should have been home abed.

I remembered him.

He watched me and, though his face was savage and hard, in his eyes I caught a glimpse of pain and desperation. How terrible to be so cursed.

I swallowed hard and turned to the hastily set table pushed between two chairs and piled with food and drink, and I sat. I had not even noticed that the serving girls had left the room.

He shifted awkwardly, his eyes growing quizzical. His face remained hard as he protected himself against his own fear.

I could not imagine living as a monster, and I wondered at what cruelties and horrors he had been subjected to over his lifetime. At least his mother loved him.

Slowly I looked up at him. "Won't you please join me?"

He stood as if frozen for long moments, and I pretended to be interested in the food as I filled his plate, then my own, and waited for him. Casually, I picked up my glass and drank.

And he came. His eyes were narrowed, and his movements slow, but he came. He sat stiffly in a chair, his hands clasping and unclasping, his eyes landing everywhere but on my face.

I forced myself to remain as casual and calm as I could. I hoped he might relax. There was a constant awkward silence between us. Once, as we lifted our



forks, I thought to ask him if he could speak but decided against it.

That the Beast was eating a civilized supper with a fork, sitting on an upholstered chair, in this luxuriously appointed room was so incongruous that I nearly laughed. The stress and fear might have played a part, since I nearly always laughed at inappropriate moments, and I dug my fingernails into my thigh to keep the giggles at bay.

I knew that if I laughed, there would be no saving the situation, and I was horrified at myself. I kept my gaze downcast so that he would not see the laughter in my eyes. I was not amused, I was hysterical.

And then suddenly he was reaching toward me, his huge, rough hand tilting my face up to his view. All thoughts of laughter left me at his touch, and I stared into his animal-like eyes. My heart beat fast and hard, and I was sure he could hear it.

It was only a touch, but with it, the Beast's dangerous eyes brought to me an immediate and very sexual feeling, which caused me no small amount of confusion. Why would I feel desire for such a creature?

With no warning, his hand slipped to my throat, and I had a sudden fear that he was going to rip it open and dine on the blood. Nothing of the sort happened, but he trailed his hand down my throat to my breast, and through the thin covering, he brought my nipple to a hard point.

My breath came in hard, quick gasps. He never took his eyes from my face. He scratched at my nipple with his fingernail, and I bit my lip to keep the moan inside.

"You are to be my bride. You will not wear rags." So saying, he suddenly grasped the neckline of my dress with both hands and gave a savage pull. He then pulled the pieces apart so that my breasts spilled forth. As I sat there in shock, he took his

hands away and picked up his cup as if nothing had happened.

I thought him mad. My hand trembled in fear as I reached up to pull the pieces back together and my eyes filled with tears.

He rose and swept the table away to lift me high into his arms. "Forgive me. I do not mean to act the monster as well as look like one."

My breasts flattened against his massive chest, and again, there was the tingle of attraction. He was so big. The duster parted where my fist lay curled and my fingers brushed the hot skin of his chest. Hair as soft as a breath brushed my hand.

Gently, he carried me to the bed and placed me upon it, as if I were the most delicate and priceless treasure, but I realized I wanted none of that. I wanted...something more. I did not dare voice it.

To purchase Beauty's Beast and other erotic titles, visit [www.thewilderroses.com](http://www.thewilderroses.com).