

A Match Made in Moonlight

The moon shone brightly above me as I waited for her. Quietly I sat, watching the sparse clouds catch that silver glimmer and making it seem all the more radiant. Still, however, though I watched the moon and the clouds, I watched and waited for her. She would come soon, of that I was certain.

And come she did, her paws striding in complete silence as she purposefully approached me. She was a wolf, silver fur shining in the moonlight, a radiant gleam that seemed somehow even brighter than the moon itself. Beauty is, after all, in the eye of the beholder, and she was the most beautiful creature in the world to me.

She approached fearlessly, amber eyes gleaming in the moonlight, and she reached her paw out, placing it in the palm of my hand. I smiled and kissed the side of her muzzle, and she licked my face in return. I reached my arms around her and hugged her tightly about the neck, running my fingers through the mane of fur that surrounded her neck like a woman's hair. I kissed her again on the bridge of the muzzle, shifting to kneel on my knees as sitting became uncomfortable.

I remembered the day I first met her. It was our wedding day. At my father's request it was a proper Christian wedding, held within the small chapel that served our entire community. At her father's request, the service had been held on the night of the full moon, with our vows to be given at dusk under the red glare of the horizon sun.

I was so nervous; our wedding was part of the ages-old peace treaty that had existed between our two communities. Mine, the small town of Land's End. Hers, the small settlement of native Indian inhabitants that had lived here since before we had discovered the coasts of America. On our arrival there had been much tension, but the threat of a harrowing winter forced the peoples to share their knowledge to survive, and peace has lasted ever since. The only real provision that existed beyond the mutual agreement to remain at peace was for one couple to be wedded with one member from each village each year. I had always known that there was a chance that I would one day serve as party to this agreement, but that knowledge did nothing to assuage my concerns.

Back under the moonlight, I continued to embrace her, my fingers, though quickly shortening and thickening, still playing through the fur around her neck, feeling the beads that were always woven there in the tradition of her people.

The day of our wedding, the chapel was hardly packed. Even if all of both villages had been present there would have been room. As it was, it was a private ceremony, with only our two families and the leaders of our villages in attendance. I embraced my future father-in-law for a moment, just long enough for him to quietly whisper his blessing into my ear. I thanked him in his own tongue and turned to the man's wife. Her dark face was wrinkled from many years spent in the sun, but those wrinkles all fell naturally into her easy smile. She grasped both of my hands and enthusiastically reprised her husband's blessings. I smiled and thanked her as well. Though I had never met this family before, the more I saw of them, the more hope I held for a happy life with their daughter.

How right I was to think that! As I finally leaned back from hugging my wife, I smiled at her. Kneeling, too, was becoming uncomfortable, and so I let myself slip to all fours, happy that the pads on my palms had finished changing. As my muzzle was beginning to press forward, I brushed my dark nose against hers, and she wuffed a laugh, licking my nose in return.

The ceremony had been a short one. Either that or I simply ignored it the entire way. My eyes fell ever on the veiled figure before me, and my ears were nearly deaf to the speaker. I could catch glimpses of her dark complexion behind that veil, but it was too thickly woven to make out anything for certain. It distracted me so much that it took me some time before I realized I was supposed to say something.

I brushed up beside her, my own nascent pelt blending perfectly with her own. She pressed against me, nuzzling my side tenderly as I stepped alongside her, my padded paws now imitating hers with their eerily silent steps. She turned to follow my path, until I turned and found myself face to face with her as she waited by my shoulder.

Vows were said amid an almost otherworldly hush, and finally they told me that the time had come to kiss the bride. As I raised her veil and saw that beautiful, dark face, framed so perfectly by her dark hair, decorated in the finest beads her family owned, I no longer doubted. She smiled the moment before we kissed, and I knew that her own doubts had been erased as well.

She smiled again as I licked her muzzle again, tenderly and repeatedly. That smile was always the same with her, no matter what form she took. Her mouth barely made a visible change, but her eyes simply glowed with such a beautiful radiance that the purity of her joy made it touch me as well.

The night of our wedding we were given the use of a small cabin in the woods, owned by my bride's parents. I don't remember the journey there. Had it been up to me to find our way back, we would have become hopelessly lost before we ever saw Land's End again. My eyes were held by her own all the way there. It wasn't until we had been left alone for some time that we first spoke to each other, but more passed between us in those moments than any words could have communicated.

As we stood muzzle to muzzle under the moonlight, that same meaningful silence hung between us. We were close to each other, and as we kissed one another's muzzles tenderly we knew that we could be happy forever if we were only given each other.

The night of our wedding she led me outside, her smiling eyes ever beckoning me until we stood in the woods, underneath the shining harvest moon. I never questioned why she wanted our first night together outdoors, and she never told me. Instead, she shifted before me, her moon-touched form glowing from within as she became lupine before my very eyes. Never did I think to question this, even as the wolf emerged from my wife's discarded wedding dress, her smiling eyes telling me to follow her, even as I felt that same change for the first time.

Now, standing alone underneath the moonlit sky, she looked at me in that same meaningful way, turning and telling me to follow her. Tonight, however, even though she spoke to me different words than she had that first night, they still made my heart leap as it had done then.

"Come, my love. The pups are ready to meet their father."