

Rogue Wolf by Zoe Perdita published by Eccentric Erotica

My shrink says I need to get back into the groove of things. Easy for her to say. She was never responsible for her best friend's death.

Sighing, I click the "down" button and wait. A moment later the door opens.

"Excuse me."

The timbre of the man's voice catches my attention as he steps out of the elevator, a box resting in his arms. Deep and resonant – almost a growl.

A black shadow. Sharp teeth. Bright eyes.

I don't usually stare, but with this guy it's impossible not to look. He's huge, like a mighty Viking god or something equally impressive. Broad shoulders and bulging arms give way to a narrow waist, slender hips and powerful thighs. He's not skimpy on gym visits obviously.

His dark eyes meet mine and hold, just for a moment. Black hair dangles over his forehead and tickles the nape of his neck. Unfortunately, a neatly trimmed beard obscures most of his face – although it doesn't conceal his proud nose or those cheekbones sharp enough to cut glass.

Swallowing the lump in my throat, I step out of his way. Dammit if my head doesn't whip around to follow him as he walks past.

Nice ass? Check. He looks like a mix between a gypsy and a mountain man—a damn good mix. Too bad about the beard. He might be perfectly hot without all the facial hair.

Brady'd get a kick out of him that's for damn sure. I almost imagine the nudge she'd give me. "Just your type, Alwen. Think how pretty you'd look on his arm?"

I almost smile at the thought, but the memory of her – bloody and dead, fills my mind instead. Who could smile at that?

I sigh again and turn to leave, but Hunt calls from across the room right before I step into the elevator.

"Alwen!"

"Yeah?"

She smiles and points at the boss's office. "Captain wants you."

Through the open door I catch a glimpse of the mystery man. Great. Who is this guy?

"Captain Whitman?" I say and nod at my superior as I walk into the room.

Whitman commands attention, even for a man in his fifties. His smooth chocolate skin doesn't give away his age; only the crow's feet around those keen eyes betray the secret. He folds his powerful hands into a steeple under his dark chin and nods.

"Detective. Shut the door please."

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I do as he says and try not to look at Black Beard. Captain Whitman and I haven't always seen eye to eye, and after we lost Brady facing him got worse. As if I don't feel bad enough as it is, he always seems to size me up now. Accuse me of the terrible truth.

If you told her she'd still be alive, Alwen. If only you told her what you saw.

But that's impossible. He doesn't know about my powers.

"Think you're ready to take on normal cases again?" he asks.

I raise an eyebrow and clear my throat. "You mean no more paperwork but my own? Yes, sir. More than ready."

His eyes narrow, the skin around them crinkling. "I got a fax from your therapist today. She thinks you need to get your life back on track or some shit. I want to make sure your head's in the game, Alwen, before I put you on something important. So?"

Of course he'd say all this in front of a complete stranger. "Understood, sir. I do think I'm ready."

For a long moment Captain Whitman doesn't say a damn word. From the corner of my eye, I feel Beardy watching me – sizing me up.

A drop of sweat runs down my back. Each tick of the clock is like the beat of my heart.

"Good. I just needed to hear you say it. Detective Alwen meet Detective Conner Sharp – your new partner. Moved here from Montana. Already passed all our state tests, and he's ready to go. I hope you'll work well together," he says and glances between us both.

Heat rises to my cheeks. My new partner. Great! Beardy and blondy – that's what they'll call us.

Holding out my hand, I force myself to smile for the second time that day. "I'm Seth Alwen. Nice to meet you."

His square, calloused palm engulfs mine. "Likewise."

A spark of electricity shoots through my body at the touch, exciting my groin – his strong fingers cling to me slightly longer than necessary. I take a sharp breath, and my heart skips a beat as he slowly releases his hold.

"Well? Show him around, detective."

How did I forget we were in the captain's office? "Right. Thank you, sir. Come on, I'll show you your desk."

Sharp nods and follows me, carrying the box in his arms.

His shoes clack on the linoleum floor, his looming presence towering above me. Something about his aura alerts my senses, but I can't fathom why. Hell, with how wonky my powers have been lately there might not be any reason for it.