

HOWL OF THE WILD

HOWL OF THE WILD

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A childhood memory

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Table of Contents

HOWL OF THE WILD Chapter 1

HOWL OF THE WILD : Chapter 1

i½ Prologue

When I was younger, I went on a family holiday camping trip in the woods of Northern England. It was just me, my dad, and my mum. It was perfect. We'd set out our large, green tent and sat around the blazing campfire that Dad had successfully made with lots of twigs we'd collected up off the ground on the path on the way.

I remember, as Dad was telling Mum and me a funny story about how Uncle Larry got soaked by dad one summer when they were younger, something caught my eye and I looked up. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. It was the most beautiful creature I had ever laid eyes on. I held my breath, my parents didn't see it.

It was a grey wolf staring out from among the trees at us. Probably scared or curious about us. It's pointy, grey ears standing upright twitched now and again at distant sounds. When I stood up slowly, it backed away and disappeared from sight.

I remember, as night was beginning to draw in, I slowly went over to the trees where I'd seen the beautiful wolf and looked to see if I could see it again. But to my disappointment, it had gone. I did wonder though, why had it been looking at us. Just as I was about to turn back to the tent, I saw paw prints of a wolf in the soft soil. My heart had risen up in excitement. I'd looked back at my parents who were inside the tent.

When I turned my head back round I jumped. My heart started pounding rapidly against my chest as a few feet away stood the grey wolf. It had returned. But why? It looked back at me and I looked back at it.

The grey wolf had turned and started walking off into the trees but glanced back as if it wanted me to follow it.

I glanced over my shoulder back at my folks in the tent and wondered if I should or shouldn't go off into the woods with the wolf, which was a dangerous animal. When I turned back round, the wolf was still there waiting for me to follow it. Rebellion got the better of me and I started following the grey wolf into the woods.

I'd started feeling a bit scared as night was settling in fast. I'd pulled out my mini torch from my pocket of my Nike sweatshirt with a hood and switched it on. I thought maybe I shouldn't have wondered off following a grey wolf. What if it turned and attacked me? But my instincts told me it would protect me. But how? By what? And from whom? A flock of crows resting in the treetops above made a loud sound as they flew up into the air and flew away, making me jump.

The grey wolf stopped and turned back to look at me to see if I was still there. It turned to face me, waiting for me; it turned quickly and began running through the trees wanting me to chase it.

I started running as fast as my little legs could carry me moving the tree branches out the way with my hands. I ducked under some that were low. "Wolf, wait up," I'd shouted, trying to catch up. I suddenly heard the sound of water nearby so I'd continued running until I saw the grey wolf by the edge of a huge lake. It ran off when it saw me deeper into the woods. I'd gone to the water's edge and crouched down and cupped my little hands into the cold water and drank from it.

Suddenly, a loud howl had pieced through the night alerting me. There was chilling silence.

HOWL OF THE WILD

I'd decided that it wasn't the best idea following the grey wolf into the woods at night. I'd pulled out my mini torch again and turned it on then I'd taken several steps forward when I stopped when another howl came in reply to the first. I'd decided to run in the way I came but I couldn't remember which way I'd come so I kept on running.

Suddenly, I'd fallen head first to the ground tripping over a big stone. As I'd gotten to my feet, I'd sucked in my breath as staring back at me were a pair of yellow eyes glowing in the dark. I stepped back and the eyes moved closer as they belonged to a black wolf.

A big and bad black wolf, in fact. It stepped closer and raised its upper lip in a vicious snarl at me. I thought this was it, I was going to die. But suddenly, out of nowhere, another wolf had sprung out and pounced on the black wolf. It was the grey wolf.

The wolves had started fighting and not in a nice way. My instincts had been right. The grey wolf had been to protect me, but why? What possible explanation could there have been for an adult grey wolf to protect me from another black adult wolf?

I'd quickly picked up my mini torch from off the ground and shone it on the wolves fighting. I remembered hearing my Dad calling out to me and another torch light in the distance coming my way.

One of the wolves had yelped in pain and then ran off into the woods. It had been the black wolf. The grey wolf turned towards me and stared.

"Thank you," I'd told it.

The grey wolf had walked over to me to my utter surprise. It had let my left hand reach out and feel the soft, silky fur of its head; it had felt wonderful underneath my fingertips.

"Lucy!" my Dad's voice had wakened the silence of the night and the heavy footsteps of his big boots.

The wolf had suddenly latched its front teeth onto the skin of my left hand and pierced through the skin drawing some blood. I screamed a little. It then let go and then turned and ran into the woods.

I'd watched the way it went until my Dad had found me and told me off for running off like that and had asked what happened to my hand and I'd told him but he didn't believe me. I'd apologised and we'd walked back to the camp. But my mind kept on working, never stopped forgetting that memory of the grey wolf coming to my rescue from a black wolf then had bitten me when I'd only been nine years old; one memory that I'd never ever forget forever.

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