

Wolf Witch DND Prequel 1 - Dahlia

The sound caught Dahlia's attention almost immediately as it whistled between the trees. It was hollow and baleful, like a dying beast howling in the darkness of a winter's night. Even though the mid-summer sun beat down on her, the sound sent a familiar shiver up Dahlia's spine and made the hairs on her arms stand on end. The sound was unmistakable: It was the moan of a Wendigo.

There was something odd about the sound, Dahlia thought as she carefully weaved through the trees, hunting for the source of the hollow howl. She had heard wendigos before, but there were usually enraged roars or wailing death rattles. This sound was neither, it was new, it was... passive.

Dahlia's quarry came into view, hunched over in the middle of a small clearing. The hunter was in luck, as the direction of the wind would be completely masking her scent, and her footsteps all but disappeared into the soft mossy undergrowth of the forest. The Wendigo had not noticed her, and as Dahlia reached for her dual daggers, she was confident of a successful sneak attack that would end in an easy kill. However, before Dahlia could dash out from under the cloaking shade of the treeline, a gurgling growl emanating from the creature made her stop in her tracks. She had never heard a wendigo intonate in this way. The creature sounded positively... happy.

Then another sound, the crisp, joyous laughter of a small child, came from behind the creature. Dahlia froze in horror as the hulking wendigo shifted its weight slightly, revealing a small girl behind it. The hunt had suddenly become more difficult. The child could be under the wendigo's spell, trapped in a dream state and completely unaware of the man-eating monster. Dahlia cautiously observed the beast and the small girl as her mind spun. If there is a chance for her to kill her prey and save the child? She would have to kill the beast in one strike, but with its back to her, its vital organs are completely obscured- The calculations in Dahlia's head spun to a full stop as the scene unfolded. The small girl in the company of the Wendigo spoke. Her cheery voice was crystal-clear against a backdrop of silence.

"My, you're really hungry, aren't you? Here, have some more. This is way too much for even both Ms. Circe and I." The small girl reached up towards the creature's face, her hands holding a large chunk of raw meat, fresh blood running down her arms.

"Go on, it's okay. I won't hurt you." The Wendigo gurgled again, a monstrous laughter bubbling out of its throat. It opened its mouth, enormous sharp teeth bearing.

But instead of clamping down around the small girl's torso, as Dahlia had expected (and as she'd seen countless times before), the monster gingerly picked the meat out of the small girl's hands and swallowed it with a loud grunting bellow. Then, as the small girl held her hands still in the air, the Wendigo's long dextrous tongue licked down her blood-soaked arms, soaking up the gore between her fingers. The small girl stepped back, rubbing her hands on her simple hemp tunic. As she laughed again, two large tufts of hair sprung up from the top of her head.

No, not hair. They were ears. Large, furry, wolf-like ears. And as she twirled and danced around the Wendigo, a wolf-like tail trailed her footsteps. The wendigo seemed amused by the small child, responding to the girl's laughter with mirroring grunts and growls. Dahlia stood in awed silence, still hidden by the darkness of the treeline, entranced by the strange scene unfolding before her. It wasn't until a stiff breeze and a leaf brushing against her cheek that she snapped to attention.

The wind was changing. Dahlia felt it blowing hard against her back, sending ripples through the long grass in the forest clearing. Before Dahlia's mind could register the dire effects of this, she found her ears drowning in a familiar, terrifying sound. The blood-curdling howl of a wendigo on the hunt was not new to the hunter, but that did not dampen its effect. For a fraction of a moment, Dahlia was filled with terror, and her hands fumbled around her waist to find the hilts of her weapons.

By the time Dahlia summoned the coordination and clarity to draw her weapons, ready to dodge a charging wendigo, she looked up and realized that the creature had not attacked. All of her studies and experiences told her that wendigos will always attack on sight, but this anomalous beast simply stood there, hunched and growling and clearly aggressive, but it stood. No, the small girl was holding it back. She was talking to it, whispering in an anxious tone, too hushed to hear. But the Wendigo clearly heard, and understood the strange girl. The beast looked down at the girl, then up at Dahlia, its dead eyes pausing on the hunter, contemplating. Then it ran.

It had taken Dahlia completely by surprise. Without warning, both the monster and the girl with wolf ears took off in opposite directions towards the treeline. It took a second for Dahlia's thoroughly confused mind to make a decision. The wendigo was strange, sure enough. But in her whole life as a hunter and a scholar of monster behavior, she had never even heard of anything like the wolf girl. She had to know. Even knowing there was a wendigo somewhere behind her, Dahlia chased after the girl.

Her footprints through the tall grass was easy enough to track, but as it entered the shadow of the trees, they seemed to vanish. No, not vanish, changed. Where one small footprint should have landed, there was a large paw print. Far larger than the foot of a small child, and judging by the depth, far larger than even the largest recorded wolf. The girl, however, was nowhere to be seen, and even the wolf tracks quickly disappeared. As Dahlia stood frustrated in an unfamiliar part of the dense forest, a hollow, baleful howl echoing through the trees reminded her that it was in her best interest to make her exit while she had the chance.

Claudia slipped out of wolf form as she came to rest under the shadow of a large oak. Her breath was ragged and huffing, and she put her hand to her mouth to muffle the sound of her breathing. She could still smell the scent of the human female all around her, and tried her best to stay as still as possible, hoping her dark hair would conceal her in the shades of the tree.

Claudia silently cursed herself for her carelessness. She had been too caught up playing with the Wendigo to notice that they were being hunted. The creature was so lonely, Claudia thought, stranded on this floating island and constantly being hunted by those strange floating beings. She had hoped that

feeding it would perhaps keep it out of trouble, and thus not gaining the attention of hunters. Maybe she should have kept the creature quiet or simply let it be, but none of that mattered now.

As the hunter let out a frustrated sigh, Claudia heard her footsteps retreating out of the forest. It had been quite fortunate that the Wendigo had listened to Claudia, agreeing to run instead of going after that hunter. She had caught a glimpse of the female hunter's face, noting that she had pretty eyes, but quickly shuttering at the thought of those eyes dimming as the Wendigo dug through her bloody corpse in search of tasty morsels.

But in the end, no harm had come of this encounter, and Claudia brushed the dirt and moss off her bare feet and cleared the twigs tangled in the fur of her tail, excited to return to Circe and tell her all about the new friend she had made today.