

## Fairy Tale – The Wolf Pack

Once upon a time in a forest far away there was a wolf pack of four. When the pack started out they didn't have much but they had each other. The kids played while mom stayed in the den making sure they were fed and taken care of while the father was out all day providing. I was the adventurous ornery one that loved getting into everything. My little sister was a little more shy and protected, but she's the girl. That's what happens.

When I started attending wolf school everything was fine. I got along with the other kids fine and it was all fairly easy for me. I did spend a lot of time at other kid's dens because their families always ate with each other and did stuff together. We did that sometimes but mom was busy with college stuff and dad was working a lot so when they got home they were pretty busy or tired so I found the best way to help them was to be away. This way I and my sister wouldn't fight so much and no one had to yell at anyone. It was easy as long as I was away and didn't get into trouble. I could stay away as long as I wanted.

When I started going to middle school though mom and dad started yelling at each other a lot. I remember waking up one night and my mom was throwing all the pots and pans in our den at my dad. He left and I was told to go back to bed. It wasn't too much longer before my dad left the pack. The funny thing to me at the time was that this other wolf was coming around and calling but my dad never did anything about it. Usually in a pack if someone wants to become the leader they have to fight the head wolf for the position but for some reason the fight was gone. I could see it in my dad's eyes. He never showed much emotion but I learned at an early age that when you really watch someone, you can tell how they feel whether they show it or not. Anyway, I didn't like this wolf at all but I was young and not strong enough to stand up for him. My mom was just as weak as my dad, I could tell. She was living a fairy tale believing that someone new would give her what she needed.

For a little while it was all very weird. Sometimes while dad was there collecting his things the new wolf would be there. I think that just because my sister and I were there is why dad didn't fight him. I remember once though the new wolf said something he shouldn't have and I was right there. My dad stopped and looked at the wolf in such a way it made you want to just die. He didn't say anything though because he knew it wouldn't help. After my dad got all his stuff and moved in with one of his best friends the court process started. I don't remember much of that except that we stayed with my mom the whole time that was going on and the new wolf was around a lot. He would try to take me hunting with him and buy me things but he knew I hated him. Finally the court made the decision that my parents were to take care of us equally. That happened for a whole two months until I moved in with my dad and my sister stayed with my mom. I hated the new wolf.

During the time my parents were divorced they both drank a lot and stayed out late with their friends. In the beginning my mom and dad didn't talk much. They would both try to tell me things to say to the other so they wouldn't have to do it themselves. I wouldn't have it. I reminded them that they were the adults and that they need to act like it. I pretty much took care of myself from this point on. My dad took a job that didn't pay much and I didn't care to see my mom at all. The only bad thing is that while my parents were busy with their own lives I started being introduced to my new one.

I started hanging out with new wolves that weren't really in the same situation as me. They were just bored because their families were busy all the time too. I remember the very first time I was introduced to the thing I had heard so much about but never had seen. My best friends and I were hanging out at our neighborhood park. One of them brought some stuff to smoke. From then on I didn't have to think about anything. I started working so that I could pay for my new habit. The thing was that the place I worked not only gave me the money to pay for it but my boss there sold it for a really good price. After a while I saw how he sold it and learned that he had many other things for sale. I asked if he would let me do some work for him on the side because I knew a lot of people that wanted a lot of the things he

had. Talk about making some money. I could afford everything I wanted. I was very careful though. I never let anyone get too close to me to know just how much I was selling.

During the first two or three years of this I learned how to manipulate people, cheat people and just straight take advantage of people. That's what you do when you have something someone else wants so bad that they would go to any length to get it. After a while though, I started to really feel bad about it all. I looked around and all my friends were hooked on drugs, giving up everything for the next high and more money. I made a decision at that time. In school one day a man came to a law class of mine and explained who he was and that his life's fight was to get drugs off the street. I got his phone number and contacted him. We met like in the old movies in an ally way behind a restaurant. I was selling the most I had ever sold in my life and I couldn't afford to be seen talking to the cops. They showed me a picture of my dealer and I told them how we were going to take him down. I also told them that I would only do it if my friends and I wouldn't get charged with anything. They agreed and three days later they made one of the largest drug busts in the forest. They asked me why I made the 180. They were confused at my answer.

Shortly after that I turned 17 and was working for my first real restaurant job. It was great. I got to listen to my music as loud as I wanted and everyone around me was hurt just like me. When I told you I quit selling, I never said I quit using. Restaurants are the drug superhighway. I met new people that had better drugs and I started really relating to older people. Now don't get me wrong, although I was a champion drinker and drug user, I could cook. I knew this because the older guys always told me that I was better than most people that had been in the business 20 years. I liked that.

At home things were starting to get better. Mom and dad started talking more and drinking less. The new wolf revealed his true self to my mom and she realized he was nothing but a fake. I don't credit my dad much with communication but there is one thing about him that is constant and that is that he is real and will give it to you real every time. My mom kicked the new wolf out of her life and slowly the process came about that my mom and dad were getting back together.

This process though was grueling to say the least. They got back together I think because of me and my sister first of all and I think also because they didn't want anyone else but each other. My mom started taking a lot of prescribed drugs for a lot of self diagnosed diseases. That was bad but what was worse was when she drank while taking them. I became the family counselor listening to my mom's psycho babble and my dad's endless desire to split back up with my mom. I have to admit I didn't blame him. We had to commit her. I came home to her stabbing herself with a broken beer bottle and had to call the police and ambulance because my dad was out getting drunk. She relentlessly thought that the new wolf had given her countless STDs, even though her doctor ran every test and they all came up negative. Through all this though the blame couldn't be put on one or the other parent and I knew that, but the whole situation sure didn't bring me closer to God. All it made me do was realize that the only person in life I could rely on was myself, no one else.

As time went on my mom started settling down and realizing it was all in her head. One day though I was sick of being the most grown up and there was nothing that I could find in my music or friends that could talk me out of what I was about to do. One day after school I went and bought the best smoke I could find. I went and got higher than I'd ever been before and went home and took as many pills as we had in the cupboard. When my dad got home 4 hours later I pretended to be asleep, but then I realized I would only be hurting everyone else even more if I followed through with this. My dad drove me to the hospital and watched as the doctor gave me medicine to throw everything up that was in me. We drove away that day with a strict warning from the doctor that he was releasing me believing that it was an attention stunt and that if I pulled something like that again I would be held for observation for a long time. We never talked about it again. We didn't even tell mom. Dad said he didn't know what it would do to her.

A short time later high school finally ended. The ridicule of other kids was finally over. I was the fat, emotional kid in school and even my own friends had turned away from me at the end of school. This

just prompted me to dive into work even harder and self-medicate even more. I was working about 85 to 90 hours a week at two separate restaurants. Then really big stick got stuck in my spokes. Her name was Sandy. To make this story as short as possible she wasn't like the other wolves. She wasn't like that pastor's daughter that I got blasted with every night that wanted nothing but my virginity. She just wanted to be with someone that would take care of her. I was drunk off that. We were both young. She was the general manager and I was the chef at the same restaurant. On thing led to another and I said and believed those strong words. I love you. We moved in together. I thought she was it. I lost it, the one thing that was mine that only I could give ways. She then cheated on me with someone that worked in the store next to the restaurant. I look back now and don't blame her though. Between college and the restaurant I didn't see her much. To put it lightly I went into a drunken spiral and ended up 140 lbs of a liquid diet with the anger of a caged lion. I moved into a 150 square foot room of an old house and began my self destruct cycle. By this time I was good though. People thought maybe something was up because of my weight loss but I could make anyone believe that I was the most happy go lucky guy they'd ever seen. I said I could, not that I did.

his is the good part though, not just because it's the end but because this is where God came in. I met this other girl in the culinary school God picked out for me. She was awesome. So awesome that I vowed I would never get close to her because I didn't want to hurt her. We became friends and had a lot of intense conversations. Eventually she broke through a few walls and started talking to me about the options I had in God. She invited me to church and I reluctantly took the offer. At first I hated it. The light was bright and shining right on me. Soon thereafter I started driving to her little town so that I could meet her parents and attend their family church. I loved her family. It was a team. They were always positive and protective. To this day the best run pack I've ever seen. I started to realize that this stuff was real and my heart started to melt. We didn't like driving so far so we found a church that was closer. I heard the pastor preach. Three weeks later I was saved. Two months later my new wolf friend was gone. Her dad got a job in Texas. It was a test of God though. See my wolf friend had been a Christian her whole life. She was strong in God. God wanted me to grow and be strong in him on my own. So that is what I did. We talked on the phone a lot. I spent a lot of time in prayer, the word and church. And when the time was right, God gave me the permission to travel to Texas and make My wolf friend a part of my life forever.

My parents to this day are married and live as roommates in my childhood house. They have gotten better. My mom is off all medicine except booze and they are well.....comfortable.

My dad has a hard time watching me lead my pack. He doesn't understand why I believe that Jesus Christ will take me though the wilderness and why I submit instead of work as hard as I can with my own hands. But guess what? It's not his pack.