TAKAYA

THE STORY OF A LOST WOLF

Once upon a time, there was a little wolf. He lived with his pack in a dense forest on Vancouver Island. His name was Takaya. Takaya had a simple life, nothing much happened over the years that Takaya lived with his family, until one day the alpha called to speak with him.

"Takaya you are growing up to be a strong wolf and our pack thanks you for the help you've provided, so I come to you with an offer. We need brave wolves out there to continue our family bloodline. I am asking you to break off from our pack to go out and start your own."

"Of course!" Takaya said. He could barely hide his excitement. This was a huge task for Takaya to take on as a young wolf, but he was certain he could do it.

"Great, you should leave as soon as possible, before you change your mind." The alpha said.

Takaya was so excited but also sad; he had grown up with his pack with whom he had so many connections and memories he would have to leave behind. His family, friends, territory…

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Takaya was as lost as a wolf could be. It had been a week since he left his pack and he was still stuck in the forest. He'd had a dangerous encounter with another pack and had been struggling with finding food.

"I'd better stop and rest soon, the sun's setting already." Takaya muttered to himself. He was desperately in need of company. "This'll do." He said as he walked into an open clearing. Takaya scratched at the ground to make the hard, cold dirt more comfortable.

The sun was shining the next morning. Takaya was awake but didn't feel like getting up. Instead, he listened. He could hear the birds bustling about in the trees, a nearby creek trickling quietly, and then, something new. Takaya twitched his ears at a soft rumbling in the distance. He got up and walked towards the sound. It got louder and louder until Takaya came across the most horrific sight he'd ever seen: a huge highway cutting straight across his path. Takaya waited for a pause in the traffic and rushed across as fast as he could. On the other side was a slope leading down to a small town.

"Here we go." Takaya whispered to himself, before taking off down the hill.

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Takaya travelled to many unique places, some of them were beautiful, like prairies, rivers and forests, some were scary, like busy cities, small yards, and big farms, all of them filled with spooked or angry people. He was skinnier than ever as he was only feeding on scraps he found here and there. Wolves depend on their packs to hunt together, often chasing down Cariboo or deer, but Takaya hadn't even smelt any proper prey for weeks and weeks.

It was pouring so Takaya tucked himself away for the night in a barn. He was shivering and couldn't fall asleep due to the loud mooing of the cows he was sharing the barn with.

When morning arrived, Takaya prepared to sneak out the back of the barn, careful not to attract any unwanted attention. But, with one misstep the guard dog tied to the side of the

house looked over and started barking like crazy. Takaya was startled but made a quick recovery and darted away toward the fence that would act as his escape route. Within moments, the farmer came running out of his house, carrying a rifle in his hands. As soon as he spotted Takaya he started firing, but luckily, he was still tired from his sleep and missed shot after shot, allowing Takaya just enough time to slip under the fence and run away in the opposite direction.

"It's been weeks now," Takaya thought to himself, "since I left my pack." He was tired and lost, the only thing keeping him going was the fact that his pack had entrusted him with a duty and he did not want to fail. No matter how much he wanted to, he didn't give up.

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"What are you doing down there all alone?"

The croaky voice startled Takaya and he looked around vigorously for the source. It was a big, old raven perched on top of a signpost.

"You look lost, where's your pack?" asked the raven.

"I'm looking for another wolf so I can start my own pack. Who are you?" Takaya's voice was rough; he hadn't spoken to anyone in forever.

"My name doesn't matter, what matters is I can help you! There's an island nearby and from what I know, it has a few wolf inhabitants. I can bring you to it."

"I've been searching for weeks, if you can help me, thank you!"

The raven led Takaya to the edge of the water, and pointed across to an island. With a wink and a flap, the raven took off. Slowly, Takaya took a step into the water and waded in. The icy ocean crashed up against his body tossing him about. As Takaya went further in, the strong currents made staying afloat impossible. He paddled as hard as he could but a floating log knocked him underwater. Just as he thought it was over, he was washed ashore on the island. Getting to his feet, he sniffed the air, scanning for another wolf but he was alone.

The raven had lied, or so said the island's hummingbirds.

"Those ravens, they're tricksters. There isn't a single wolf on this island!" they said.

Over time, Takaya adapted to his lonely life on the island, learning through the years how to be alone. Every night he would howl a lonely call, hoping for a response, until one night as he howled out to the still sea he heard in the distance the response of another lonely wolf, looking for a friend.