

Only Three

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Thorn looked out over the village. Tandy and Zeus came to sit beside him; they had once been part of a large pack, but now there was only three.

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1 - Only Three

A Dark brown wolf lay on a large rock. His fur was ruffled and tattered, he was young, only at three years, but had been in more fights than many. He had numerous scars, the longest being a deep gash down his right hind leg, causing him to limp on it, though he was still a formidable opponent, and no wolf had beaten him.

He heard a low howl, and his black-tipped ears perked. He stood up and stretched, yawning. His deep green eyes scanned his territory. With a quick sniff to make sure there were no wolves outside of his pack where in his territory, he set off at a run, black paws hitting the ground silently.

He ran through trees and bushes, jumping over fallen logs and ignoring curious glances from his pack members. He soon made it to a small cave, partially hidden by shrubbery.

He sniffed the air before crouching through the shrubs. He stood in the cave, softly looking at four pups suckling on the grey and black wolf that was his mate.

He sat down, "Have you named them?" He asked softly.

The female laughed, "You know I would not name them without you here. Don't be a fool Zacharius." She chastised softly

Zacharius's smile softened, "Siren..." He said slowly, shaking his head in amusement. His tail wagged quickly before settling as his eyes twinkled, "Do you know their genders?"

Siren laughed again, "Three are male, one female" she said, resting her head on the ground, "I like the name Tandy for the female." She said, nudging a brown and black pup with a small patch of white on her nose, her fur was somewhat messy.

Zacharius grinned, "Yes, that suits her well." He said watching the newly named pup. "I wish to name this one Thorn, a strong name for a strong wolf." He said, nudging a white and black pup, with various brown patches.

Siren nodded, licking the young wolf. Zacharius stared at the two remaining, both had more white on their fur than Tandy or Thorn, one had grey patches, while the other had brown.

"We will name this one Asura." Zacharius decided eventually, licking the white and grey pup.

"And he will be Zeus." Siren put in, inclining her head towards the brown and white one.

Zacharius smiled, "Tandy, Thorn, Asura, and Zeus" he said in confirmation, lying down and resting his head on his paws. Siren smiled with a sigh, leaning her head on the rocky, cave floor.

An eight-month-old white wolf with various brown patches rolled through the underbrush at the entrance of the cave. He jumped up with a grin, looking around with his ears perked and nose high. His deep brown eyes sparkled with enthusiasm and joy.

"Hey, Zeus, wait for me!" A voice came, another white wolf jumped through the bushes, his fur flecked with grey. His green eyes sparkled like his brother's.

"Asura, you're too slow to catch me!" Zeus yelled playfully, running through various trees, grinning at members of the pack who just rolled their eyes, though each smiled back. Asura laughed, following Zeus.

A large, dark brown wolf emerged, Zacharius, the alpha, he was followed closely by a young white, brown, and black wolf, which looked around in awe.

"Dad, are you sure it's safe?" He asked timidly, his deep green eyes dull with fear.

Zacharius chuckled, "Thorn, you needn't worry, this territory is safe." He said softly.

Another wolf emerged from the den, her fur messy. Most of it was brown, with various white and black patches.

"Thorn, you're such a big baby." She said with a grin, her green eyes sparkled with amusement.

A medium sized female emerged from the den, "Tandy, be nice." She chastised, shaking her silvery fur.

Tandy grinned, "Okay mum." She said, before running off to chase Asura and Zeus.

Thorn looked up to Zacharius, who grinned, "Are you not going to play?"

Thorn shook his head, "I thought you were gonna show us the territory." He said hesitantly.

Zacharius smiled, "I am, go and get your sister and brothers." He said.

Thorn sniffed the air cautiously, before running to where Zeus, Asura, and Tandy had headed.

When he reached the trio, they were staring, ears low, at a large pack of wolves approaching their territory.

Tandy's hackles raised and her lips curled into a growl, Thorn watched her oddly, while Asura and Zeus's gazes were fixed on the approaching pack.

Thorn yelped loudly in sudden fear, and the approaching pack caught sight of the four pups. Tandy snarled, though her tail lowered between her legs.

The largest wolf of the pack appeared to be the alpha because he let loose a loud howl, and ran at the four pups.

Thorn froze, while Zeus and Asura were both overcome with fear. They quickly ran back through the trees, howling and barking to gain the attention of their pack.

Tandy made to run too, but Thorn was horror-struck.

"Thorn, come on, we've got to go." She said quickly, looking back at the rapidly approaching alpha, while the rest of the foreign pack watched.

Thorn shook with fear as Tandy nudged him hard in the side, "Thorn... move!" She said, fear etched into her voice.

A low growl came from behind them, and Tandy hesitantly looked around. Her eyes widened when she saw the alpha of the other pack, a big male with jet black fur, this was Brutus.

Thorn whimpered, and Tandy stared. Brutus chuckled darkly, before pouncing at Thorn. Tandy growled, and jumped at Brutus's face, biting into his muzzle. He snarled, and shook her off him, hitting her with a large paw. She fell to the ground with a yelp, four slices down her cheek. Thorn's eyes widened, as the wolf approached his injured sister.

He sighed in relief when he heard Zacharius's voice behind him, "Don't touch her." He said angrily. Thorn looked around, Zeus and Asura where behind him, Thorn quickly ran to them.

Brutus smirked, "This territory is mine." He said, before diving at Zacharius, hackles raised. Zacharius snarled and bit at Brutus's snout. Brutus stepped back, before growling.

Zacharius bared his teeth, diving at Brutus who snarled as Zacharius's teeth dug into his shoulder. He bit at Zacharius's neck, who let out a quick yelp of pain.

Zacharius managed to throw Brutus roughly to the ground, before biting into the black wolf's neck, not deep enough to get anything vital, but strong enough so that it would hurt.

Brutus yelped, his tail going between his legs. Zacharius released Brutus with a growl as Brutus moved backwards, lowered to the ground with his tail between his legs, though his hackles remained up.

"Leave my children alone." Zacharius said angrily, "And don't ever come near my land."

Brutus glared at Zacharius, but ran back to where his pack waited. Zacharius watched until Brutus's pack was no longer in sight.

He snorted in triumph before going to where Tandy was lay. He licked her injured cheek, and she whimpered. With a small smile, Zacharius picked his daughter up by the scruff of her neck, carrying her back to the den, with Zeus, Asura, and Thorn following closely behind.

Now a year old, all four pups were as big as they were going to get. Tandy was bigger than her brothers, as she liked to remind them, while Thorn was just smaller, but bulkier. Zeus and Asura where both the smallest, but each was faster than both Tandy and Thorn.

Zeus contentedly chased a rabbit through the territory, members of Zacharius's packed occasionally joined him, snapping at the rabbit, who then ran faster.

Zeus grinned as the rabbit seemed to wear down, and he dived at its neck. Just as he closed in on it, the rabbit veered to the right, and Zeus went head-first into a rock.

He stood up with a groan, shaking his head, and frowned when laughter rung through the air. He looked up to see Tandy stood on the rock, her messy fur blown majestically in the wind, making her look as though she belonged their; above other wolves. She laughed melodically, her eyes closed.

Zeus glared, "It wasn't that funny." He stated with a pout.

"That's the funniest thing you've done since `drowning' in that puddle!" She said joyfully, jumping down.

Zeus pushed her playfully, "That puddle was deep!" He argued

Tandy grinned, "Yeah; ankle-deep." She stated with a giggle.

Zeus glared and looked around, "Aww! Tandy, you made my rabbit run away!"

Tandy laughed, sitting down, "No, you were too slow for it."

Zeus's eyes narrowed, "I wasn't too slow."

"Yes you where Zeus-y" Came Asura's amused voice. Tandy and Zeus looked to where the rabbit had disappeared to see a white wolf with silvery patches, holding the rabbit in his jaw.

Zeus frowned, "I'm the fastest wolf in this pack." He argued

Tandy giggled, "Yeah, but that rabbit isn't a `wolf in this pack'" She said, her voice ringing with amusement.

Zeus stuck his tongue out, while Asura ate the rabbit. Zeus smirked, taking the rabbit and running away.

"Hey! That was mine!" Asura shouted, running after his brother.

Tandy followed with a giggle, "This is just way too funny." She said to Asura, who was quite far ahead.

"He stole my meal!" Asura called back, running between trees. Tandy laughed, picking up speed.

Zeus looked behind him, the rabbit firmly in his jaws. He laughed when he saw Asura behind him.

"Ouch." He mumbled as he hit something hard, falling down. He looked up with a groan, frowning when he saw who he'd run into.

Thorn sat looking down at him expectantly, his brown and black fur glossy, while the white of his back looked dirty. Zeus groaned, looking to the floor, only then noticing Thorn's odd front paws. One white, one black.

"Zeus, what are you doing?" Thorn asked with a raised eyebrow.

Asura's voice came from behind Zeus, as he sat down, "Zeus stole my meal." He said.

Zeus grinned, taking a large bite out of the rabbit before dropping it by Asura. "There." He said simply.

Tandy came through the trees shortly after, panting. She was about to say something when a loud, quick, noise split the air. All four pups looked around frightened as a howl of pain came shortly after.

"What's going on?" Thorn asked frantically, his ears low.

Another loud noise came, and another howl of pain. Though they all recognised this one; it was Zacharius.

"Dad!" Asura shouted, running through the trees.

"No, Asura wait!" Zeus shouted, taking a step forward.

Tandy, Thorn and Zeus all stopped still when another loud noise was heard, and Asura's howl of pain split the air. More loud noises came, and more pained yelps and howls.

Tears ran down Tandy's cheeks, "The pack... they've been... killed..." She said softly, lowering to the ground.

"But by who?" Zeus put in, his eyes wide.

Thorn cautiously stuck his head through the bushes, and quickly pulled back as another loud noise split the air, and a small metal object hit the ground where he had stood.

He looked at his brother and sister, "Humans..." He said fearfully, having heard tales from Zacharius of the vicious two-legged beasts.

Zeus stared at the bushes where Asura had disappeared through, never to come back.

Tandy cautiously sniffed the metal object, "It smells of burning.." she said slowly.

Three pairs of ears perked when the sound of a cracking twig came from the other side of the thick bushes.

"Run!" Thorn barked, nudging both Zeus and Tandy to run. Zeus set off quickly, and Tandy followed. Thorn was a short distance behind her, being the slowest of the three.

Tandy looked behind her, and a small gasp escaped her when she saw the humans chasing them. Each human had a metal device in their hand, like a long stick, and were aiming at the three wolves.

She growled, and stopped, turning around with her hackles raised. Thorn looked at her questioningly, though remained running.

"I'll catch up." She said simply as he passed. He looked doubtful, but didn't question her. The humans ran at her, aiming.

She snarled viciously, jumping at the human, and biting at his face. A loud noise came from the metal stick-thing, and the human fell to the floor.

Tandy quickly turned and ran to where Thorn and Zeus had disappeared to as the human yelled in pain.

Thorn looked around unsure of where they were. Zeus and Tandy were asleep beside him. They were on a small hill, overlooking a human village. With a last look at his brother and sister, he headed down the hill, cautiously entering the village.

It was sunrise, so the village was still. He sniffed the air, and wandered silently through the various lanes.

He stopped on one lane to look at an odd cloth-thing outside of someone's home, tied so that it was a sort of ring, large enough for him to get his head through. It was purple with yellow markings. He stared at it, before putting his head through it.

He grinned when he got it on, thinking it was quite comfortable. He then tried to get it off, but it was too low on his neck to get with his paws, but too high to get with his jaw. He frowned, but carried on walking through the village to find food.

Ten minutes later he was climbing the hill with two dead chickens hanging from his jaws. He set them down beside his still sleeping brother and sister, before taking a few bites out of each chicken. When he had had enough, he woke Tandy and Zeus up.

They ate the chickens contentedly, and Thorn sighed. He looked out over the village. Tandy and Zeus came to sit beside him; they had once been part of a large pack, but now there was only three.