

Extracts from *Lonely Werewolf Girl*, by Martin Millar



Kalix was lost. Tired, nervous, unable to focus, and lost. And now it was raining. She had padded her way down street after cold street, looking for the empty warehouse that was her temporary home but the streets all looked the same and she was beginning to despair.

The cold rain quickly soaked through her hair which trailed, thick, long and dank, round her bony hips. Kalix was skinny, thin like a reed, not an ounce of fat to show for her seventeen years of existence: a werewolf without an appetite. How her family had hated that. Her mother used to plead with her, beg her to eat. Until last year when Kalix attacked her father, lord of the werewolves. Now her mother had more to worry about than her daughter's poor appetite, or her violent temper, or her addictions, or her madness.

Kalix's hair, never cut, hung down to her hips. As the rain flattened it around her head her ears showed through. Her ears were never entirely normal even when, as now, she was in human form. There was something wolf-like about them, naturally.

Kalix stopped, and sniffed. Were the hunters close? She couldn't tell. Her senses were dulled. She hurried on. If the hunters caught up with her now, when she was weak, they might kill her...

...**Kalix pulled her ragged coat** tightly round her thin frame. She shivered. When Kalix was five years old she could run naked in the snow and not feel the cold. Now she had lost her resistance. She longed to be back in the warehouse. It was empty, with nothing to make it comfortable, but it was some sort of shelter. When she reached it she could fill herself with laudanum and sink into dreams. Not many people remembered laudanum these days. It was almost gone from the world. For a few werewolves, sunk in degeneracy like Kalix, it was still obtainable. It was a further disgrace that Kalix brought on her family...



Thrix was unique among the Scottish werewolves. She was blonde, beautiful, the owner of a fashion house, and a powerful user of sorcery. No other werewolf could claim as much. The dazzling blonde hair alone had always been enough to set her apart from the rest of her clan. She was vain about this, which she knew...

... **Thrix looked at the message** on her desk. Her mother had called. Thrix sighed. No matter how she tried to distance herself from the clan, Verasa, the Mistress of the Werewolves, would

never admit that she was gone. A troubling thought floated across her mind. Could her mother be calling about Kalix?

Her assistant buzzed through to let her know that the call she had been waiting for was here. A very fashionable photographer who Thrix was keen to enlist for an upcoming shoot. She clicked on the speaker phone and prepared to be at her persuasive best. Before she could launch into her speech, the door burst open. This was unexpected. Ann, her personal assistant, was much too efficient to let her be disturbed unannounced.

“Prepare to die, cursed Enchantress.”

It was the Fire Queen. Flames were flickering around her eyes.

“You have angered the Fire Queen once too often, you perfidious werewolf! I am going to roast you over a fire then send you off to the deepest pits of hell where you will suffer a millennium of torment!”

Thrix sighed.

“I’ll call you back,” she said, and hung up the phone...

Kalix gazed down at her feet, at the cracked and broken boots she wore, now letting in water as the rain poured down from the black sky.

“I like it better when they fight,” muttered the second hunter, drawing his gun. “Let’s do it.”

Kalix dragged her gaze up from her boots to the face of the larger man. She spoke, quite softly.

“I’ll kill you.”

The hunters laughed.

“You’ll kill us? What with? Your werewolf strength?”

“You can’t transform. No full moon, dummy,” said the second hunter, pointing at the sky where the crescent of an old moon showed through



a break on the clouds. Both hunters raised their weapons, preparing to fire silver bullets through the young werewolf's heart. Kalix thought, as she often did, how pleasant it would be die, and end it all on this bleak London street. But somehow, she just couldn't do it. As the hunters raised their guns she transformed in a split second from helpless adolescent runaway into the savage, bestial, werewolf who'd killed hunters from one end of Britain to the other, who'd torn the very gates from the prison the clan had held her in after she almost killed the Thane. Before

the hunters had time to squeeze their triggers they were torn apart, shredded by the unparalleled savagery that had been both a gift and a curse to the lonely werewolf girl.

It was over in seconds. Kalix let out a frightful howl then shuddered as she reverted back into human form. She looked down bleakly at the carnage beneath her. Already the rain was washing the blood away.

"I don't need the full moon," she muttered. "I belong to the werewolf royal family..."

...**The Fire Queen**, whose extreme beauty existed somewhere between a Babylonian death goddess and an Asian supermodel, advanced towards Thrix's desk, flames smouldering in her eyes.

"Prepare to suffer dreadful torments, you treacherous werewolf!"

Thrix raised one eyebrow.

"What exactly is the problem, Malveria?"

The Fire Queen reached back into the depths of her nether-realm and dragged forth a pair of red high heeled shoes. She slammed them onto Thrix's desk.

"These shoes you sold me!" yelled the Fire Queen, "The heel broke! One moment I am walking up the volcano with a ceremonial knife in my hand, sacrifice at the ready and subjects bowing down before me – I was looking fabulous, of course – the next I'm hobbling up and down like a servant-girl with ill fitting boots!"

Thrix pursed her lips.

"Well, Malveria, these are clearly intended as dresswear only. You can't expect a fashion item to stand up to ritual sacrifice on the volcano. I've told you before about choosing the right footwear for the right occasion...."



“...**You are disgusting**, Kalix MacRinnalch. Fourth in line to the Thaneship and here you are with habits suited to the lowest scum of werewolf society.”

“You’d know about the lowest scum,” growled Kalix.

“I would that,” agreed Duncan. His own reputation was very unsavoury, as was that of his brother Fergus and his sister Rhona. The Douglas-MacPhees were an unwholesome trio of werewolves in every respect. Kalix was worried. In daylight neither she nor Duncan could

transform and in human form he was certainly more powerful than her.

“Leave me alone.”

“I can’t,” said Duncan. His Scottish accent was stronger than Kalix’s, and very harsh. “The Great Council wants you back.”

“I’m not going back to be tried,” said Kalix, edging away.

“You’ve already been tried. And found guilty. Now they want to sentence you.”

He stared at her.

“Sarapen’s not too concerned what condition you reach the castle in. In fact he’s not too concerned if you get there at all.”

From the depths of his leather jacket he drew a long machete.

“Just your heart will do...”

... **The Hiyasta Queen** was sympathetic.

“Is the young wolf in trouble again?”

“She is, but she won’t be for long. They’ll get rid of her soon.”

“What does your mother want you to do?”

“Find her, I think,” said Thrix, without enthusiasm.

“This is very interfering,” observed the Fire Queen. “Does your mother not know you are busy making fabulous clothes for notable clients like myself?”

“My mother lets nothing stand in her way. Now Malveria, about these shoes.”

Malveria waved her hand dismissively.

“It is nothing. I regret ever threatening my most beautiful and valued fashion designer over such a trifle. The shame of the heel breakage was temporarily overwhelming but I’ve now made a strong recovery...”



...**Markus loathed Kalix**, and made no secret of it.

“We should have tried harder to catch her.”

The Mistress of the Werewolves sighed.

“I hoped she would just disappear. It’s not pleasant for a mother to have her youngest daughter dragged back for sentencing, even if the Council insists on it.”

“Incidentally,” said Markus, raising his head.

“We still haven’t dealt with the matter of the cousins about whom we do not speak.”

An expression of distaste flickered over the Mistress of the Werewolves’ features.

“Please Markus. I can’t think about both Kalix and the cousins about whom we do not speak. Not in the same day anyway. This family will surely send me to an early grave...”

...**The cousins** about whom the family did not speak were something of a disgrace to the MacRinnalchs. Quite possibly a disgrace to werewolves everywhere. Beauty’s lip-piercing alone was enough to make her Aunt Verasa shudder. As for Delicious, her blue hair dye had scandalised the family and almost got her expelled from her expensive private school.

Beauty and Delicious were twins, the only children of Marwis, the Thane’s youngest brother who had died some years ago in a plane crash. As Marwis’s wife was also long dead, the twins were left parentless. They coped with this bravely, and some years later arrived in London a pair of cheerful, drunken, drug-taking degenerates who had started abusing their bodies when they were young and carried on happily ever since. Now twenty-two, the twins spent most of their time in an alcohol-induced haze in their house in Camden in North London, listening to music and practising guitar...

“...**Cut out** her heart? Ew!”

Moonglow was appalled. So appalled that she wondered if Daniel might be making it all up to impress her. She might have been inclined to dismiss his story altogether if it hadn’t been for the book and the journal.

The girl – a wild beauty, according to Daniel, who’d been unusually



forthcoming on the subject – had left them in his car, wrapped in a plastic carrier bag.

“It’s some sort of diary.”

He flicked it open and tried to read from a page near the start.

“It’s kind of illegible. She can’t spell a single word right. I think it says *My mother is mistress of the werewolves. My father is – can’t make out that word, something like thin – of the werewolves.*”

They both laughed.

“*My brother is heir to the werewolf throne.*”

“She’s pretty consistent with the werewolves,” said Moonglow. Really, she was not unsympathetic. Moonglow was fascinated by anything otherworldly. Tales about werewolves were always interesting...

... **The Fire Queen** sent for Agrivex, her not-quite-adopted niece.

Vex, a young girl with skin the colour of dark honey, spiky blonde hair, and an inappropriately large pair of boots, appeared minutes later.

“If this is about the broken windows in your private gardens, I had nothing to do with it,” said Vex. “Nor the overturned plants and stuff.”

“Forget the broken windows and destroyed plants. I have already deducted the money from your allowance.”

“Hey! That’s not – ”

“Silence!” said Malveria, raising her hand. “I have a mission for you.”

“A mission?”

Agrivex looked surprised. The Queen had never sent her on a mission before.

“Will it be fun?”

“Whether or not it is fun is of no importance. I want you to – ”

“But will it be?” said Vex, eagerly.

Malveria frowned. “Yes, it may be fun. But please attend to my words. You must dress entirely in black and – ”

“What, am I going to be sacrificed?” demanded Vex. “This is way too harsh, I mean it was only a few plants and a window. You can’t kill a girl for a minor – ”

“Will you stop interrupting!” roared Malveria. “One more inappropriate word and I will cut off your clothes allowance for a year! And possibly your head as well. Now pay attention. There is no sacrificing in prospect. The black clothes are by way of a fashion statement...”



...**Beauty and Delicious** lived in a quiet residential street, a little way from the centre of Camden. Knowing that she was unlikely to find a parking space, Dominil had left her car at a car park and walked the rest of the way. Heads turned as she strode past Camden tube station. Even in this part of the city, where an unusual appearance was not uncommon, Dominil's severely beautiful face and ice-white hair drew attention...

...**Dominil saw already** that the twins' behaviour would have to be modified if she was to help them. As she arrived back in the living room carrying a tray of coffee, the young man stirred, and opened his eyes.

"Do you live here?" enquired the werewolf.

"No," he mumbled, and reached toward a quarter-full bottle of whisky that lay close by. Dominil intercepted his hand and hauled him to his feet.

"Then it's time to go," she said, and propelled him towards the front door. He protested, but though he was some inches taller than Dominil his strength was as nothing compared to hers. She placed him on the front step, closed the door, then picked up Beauty from the hallway and carried her into the main room. She swept some clutter from the couch and sat both the twins down.

"Wake up," said Dominil. "We have things to do..."

Strength flowed back into her fatigued muscles. As a werewolf, she was stronger than Duncan Douglas-MacPhee. As a werewolf, Kalix feared no one. When Kalix's battle-madness took over her werewolf form, she became insane. She could not be stopped other than by death, and no one had ever come close to killing her.

She leapt at Duncan and overwhelmed him. Duncan knew he was defeated and retreated swiftly, fending off his wild opponent as best as he could, trying to prevent her from fastening her jaws round his neck. His sister Rhona hauled herself off the floor but when she saw that her brother was beaten she made for the door. The Douglas-MacPhees fled, blood dripping from their wounds.

Kalix stopped. Daniel and Moonglow looked at her wide eyed with amazement, and terror, and wondered if she was about to kill them.



“You really are a...”

Kalix’s form seemed to flicker and she slowly transformed back into her human shape. The contents of Kalix’s bag had spilled out on the floor. Daniel tried to gather up her belongings.

“You dropped this,” he said, picking up a dark, old-fashioned bottle.

“Give me!” yelled Kalix, and frantically snatched it from him.

Moonglow picked up a packet from the floor. She read the label.

“You take diazepam?”

Kalix became angry. “Stop looking at everything!”

“Well it’s just a bit weird you know,” said Moonglow. “Werewolf... anti-depressants.”

Moonglow was overcome by sympathy for the young werewolf with her thin little body and ragged clothes, probably homeless, pursued by killers.

“Do you want some food? We don’t have any meat... we have pop-tarts.”

Kalix shook her head wearily. She put her arms round her meagre possessions and her head drooped. Against her will, she fell asleep in a house of strangers...

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