

### **Wolf with the Lion by: Sophie M.**

An elegant gray-furred wolf stalked through the bushes, not making the slightest noise. She came across a well-fed white tailed deer chewing down on the last of the tall grass before it. It stood out in the patches of sun like it was begging to be eaten. The young wolf couldn't resist the thought of biting into its thick fur and sniffed into the air to investigate more about it. Male. Lone. Simple. Sad. Well I guess it's time to put him out of his own misery. The wolf thought logically while grinning. A few bushes rustled beside her, yet the wolf figured it could be a meal after this one. That deer seems bigger than the entire bush. I'll go for that later. She took a few paces back, braced herself to a pouncing position, and leaped towards the deer, only to find a speedy, golden flash appear in front of her. The wolf narrowed her eyes to check who exactly it was, yet all she could find was a young, active lion who she had never seen in the forest. He was eating the dead fawn respectively while licking his bloodstained paws. The wolf was furious at this point. Her prey was caught by this... strange being and it must have known that it was her prey because it must be the one who was leafing around the other bush! The medium-sized lion glanced at the wolf as it was gulping down its meal. "Hello there, do you need anything?" He asked with a cheerful, but curious look. The wolf took a deep breath and growled "That was my prey first, so what is a lion like you doing in my woods and stealing my prey?" The wolf noticed that the lion had a look of shock in his eyes, before calming down. "Would you like to eat this deer with me?" The lion welcomed. As they ate together, they talked and talked and realized they both had a lot in common. They both were 7 months old, stray, and excellent hunters. "My name is Pina, after the pineapples my mother saw once. What's your name, "young wolf", and why are you saying that these woods belong to you?" Pina asserted in a joking manner. "My name is Winter after how the day before I was born, there was a light snow." Winter calmly responded. Then she went back into a rage mode. "And these woods are mine because I was here first!" After that, they did everything together. They hunted, played, talked, (tried to) climb, and did it all with each other. Winter is here to rule the woods and honor her dead pack. Pina came here because humans took over his old environment. For years on end, they were always accompanied by the other. By the time four years passed, they were both full-grown. Winter proved to be a cocky, ambitious, yet caring wolf, and Pina proved to be a sweet, powerful, and cheerful lion.

Then one day when they were hunting in the bushes, they galloped to their feet as they encountered a small human girl skipping through the woods. "Well, what is a girl like that doing in these woods?" Pina thought out loud. Winter crouched further into the leaves. "Probably just another child wandering around, looking for a nonexistent adventure." She sighed. Pina stood up and walked to the human. "Here, I'll lead her back to the human trees." But the closer Pina toed over to the girl, the further she stepped away. Pina quickened his pace, and the girl did too. It turned out to be a full-out sprint, and Winter tailed them. The girl led the animals to cliffs. Winter caught up to them. The sun set like it was hiding under the ground. "We need to get this girl to her home before her parents come looking for her, I get that she is scared of us, but we must find a way!" The child looked to the ground and whined. "I don't wanna go back, I don't wanna go back!" The girl repeated. "The bunny told me to come to these woods!" The pair of predators had a pang of shock running through them. Did this human girl really know what they were saying? Pina pushed his paws forward. "But what about your home, your family? You can't just abandon them because a rabbit told you so!" He exclaimed in concern. "But it told me that it would show me it's home." The girl plainly replied. Winter clawed the ground in anger and shook her tail in annoyance. "I'm not going to beat around the bush with you, this is a very shallow cliff, and it

could break any moment now. And if your parents come looking for you, they might see this as an opportunity to take some of my woods. I understand that you want an adventure, but you staying here could hurt both of us, do you understand?" The wolf negotiated. "But I want to see the bunny family!" The girl moaned. Pina heard the ground crack. "Winter, I think we should get out of here before the ground—" I was too late. The cliff shifted, and shot to the ground. Winter closed her eyes, as she and Pina crashed to the ground. "Good-bye, Pina." Winter whispered with a tear in her eye.

Winter woke up and looked down at her paws, now ghostly. But there was something below that. It was... her! Lying down with a broken neck and still spilling blood out of a pointed wound. Am I... dead? Winter asked herself. She looked beside her. A dead Pina laid there with a stone stuck in his heart, and his ghost above him. Pina looked just the same, yet with very little opacity. His golden mane shone under the trees. Winter's eyes brightened with glee. "I thought that if I died, I would never be able to see you again." She cried. "Me too." Pina sniffed. The two animals locked muzzles. The moon rose, and for many many years, they looked over the woods in which they lived. The woods in which they hunted. The woods in which they climbed. The woods in which they played together, and the woods in which they met. For forever, the Lion was with the Wolf, and the Wolf was with the Lion.