

A Lawful Werewolf  
A Pack of Dawn and Destiny Short Story  
By K. M. Shea

Easton Vickerson loved Timber Ridge.

He'd grown up here, left to get a criminal justice degree, and returned once he successfully finished his law enforcement academy program.

It was a touch morbid sounding, but he intended to die in Timber Ridge—hopefully surrounded by his children and grandchildren once he eventually got married.

East loved his job, and he loved life in Timber Ridge...which was far more interesting than any other small-town East had visited. Partially because of the iron-fist ruling of Mayor Pearl, and partially because of the werewolves.

“Good morning, Officer! Children, say hello.” A man with combed back black hair, a perfectly trimmed goatee, and a sportscoat with patches on the elbows smiled as he held the hands of a little boy and girl, while another black-haired girl—who was about ten if East's police training could be trusted—skipped in front of him, her backpack swinging with every hop she took.

East recognized the man as Hector, Beta of the Northern Lakes Pack.

Although he appeared the opposite of what most werewolves looked like—between his slim build and his polished and scholarly appearance—East had once seen the mild-mannered Beta rip the door off a car to free an elderly woman that had been involved in a car accident.

Beta Hector's kids had been happily chattering and pulling on their dad's hands, but they paused long enough to smile up at East.

“Good morning!”

“Morning!”

“Hello!”

East smiled and waved. “Good morning! Have a great day at school!”

“Thanks!”

“Thank you!”

“Bye-bye!”

East whistled a little as he turned off the side street—which funneled directly into the school—and headed for main street, following his usual morning patrol route.

He passed an apartment building and stopped when he saw a white service van pull up in front of it, pausing to make sure they didn't park in the drop off zone and instead correctly found a parking spot.

Once it did, he continued walking, and saw a woman hop out of the driver's seat, holding a clipboard and talking on a cellphone.

Her eyes were sharp and brighter than average, so East wasn't too shocked when he glanced at the van and saw an insignia of a wolf silhouette sniffing the ground positioned over the words “Canine Cleaners.”

Canine Cleaners was one of the many Pack-owned businesses in Timber Ridge.

“Good morning, this is Roanne of Canine Cleaners. I’m here to smell out your potential mold issue in the basement of Timber Woods Apartments,” the woman said as she bumped the door shut.

When East waved to her, she smiled, waved her clipboard at him, and then turned away from him to focus on her call. “Yes, I’ll go through the front door.”

*When I went to college, I was surprised to learn how rustic most Packs live compared to our Northern Lakes wolves.*

Everyone in Timber Ridge was proud of their wolves, but East hadn’t fully recognized the benefits of having a large group of rich, community focused, super-sense supernaturals living next door until he’d left.

His first experience at a café that was *not* Howl-In—which, while staffed by humans, served coffee from coffee beans that were carefully selected by the scent-sensitive werewolves—had been rather disappointing to say the least. As had his police training when he found out no other communities had werewolves on hand to bodily move cars out of the way if there was an accident on main street.

*It’s a shame—I wish there were more communities like Timber Ridge. But if I can help the city flourish, other communities will wonder what we have, and maybe it will encourage other cities to get wolves of their own.*

East continued on his way, pausing when he finally reached main street.

A red-haired young man who was about East’s age hurried past him, talking on a cellphone and carrying a laptop bag.

“Don’t get your fur in a knot—I’m on my way. Just unplug the internet router and—the router. No, that’s your computer. The router—it’s what lets your devices use the internet. No, that’s your screen. Never mind, I’ll do it when I get there.”

The young man shook his head and growled a little as he ended his call.

Recognizing him as a werewolf, East stepped back to get out of his way, and waved. “Good morning.”

“Morning!” The red-haired young man flashed him a smile, which snuffed out when his cellphone rang again. “Aw, today is gonna be a real gong show. Hey, River. What broke?”

East strolled down main street, taking his time.

This early in the morning none of the parking meters were in use, but he still checked the no parking zones—there was a bridge that went over a river that the human population typically liked to park on for fishing, even though it was illegal.

He kept an eye on the swarms of kids heading to school, and took a peek at the still-closed library. (A deer had broken in last year and badly wrecked the place so that the repair bill raised Mayor Pearl’s blood pressure. Now East and the whole police department had a habit of checking all the windows and glass doors to make sure everything was intact whenever they went past it.)

He was just a few blocks away from city hall when he saw the only person who rivaled Mayor Pearl in terms of city clout: Alpha Greyson.

He'd seen the werewolf plenty, but Alpha Greyson stuck out wherever he went with his tall, muscled frame and gold eyes that got intense enough to make East feel about four inches tall when facing the Alpha down.

Alpha Greyson was always unfailingly polite to city officials, but East had seen maybe three expressions total on the wolf's face: polite interest, polite disinterest, and cement-hard certainty.

The department secretary had always sighed after him—along with a significant number of the female singles in the city—and East had always wondered why, since the wolf felt...not dangerous, but *deadly*. Which was maybe worse. Dangerous meant out of control. Deadly meant absolutely in control, but being capable of even more damage.

As East watched the Alpha—who was standing on the sidewalk outside Howl-In Café—he thought maybe he understood the attraction.

Alpha Greyson was talking with a slim, young, white-haired woman—who was scowling at him like he was a troll—and he was *smiling*.

“No, I’m not getting you coffee,” the woman said. “I already went in and got my frozen hot cocoa, and it was like pulling teeth to get them to make it. I’m not subjecting myself to that again.”

“But it will be different, because it’s for *me*.” Although Alpha Greyson nearly purred in his response, the way his sharp eyes briefly flicked to the building made East suspect some employees were about to get a dressing down.

The woman didn’t notice—she was too busy securing the lid on her to-go cup. “You might need to expand your office if your ego gets any bigger.”

“I’m touched you’re concerned for my comfort, Pip.” The Alpha smirked as he smoothed a lock of her white hair with his fingers.

The young woman—who East recognized as Hunter Sabre, the only other kind of supernatural to live in Timber Ridge and who, despite hunters typically being at odds with the wolves, actually lived among the pack—shooed his hands away with an impatient swat. “Aw, geez. Just tap on the window! Someone will come out to take your order since you can’t go in.”

“That’s not as much fun.”

“Whatever. I’ve got to go—I need to prep the Welcome Center in case we get any more hopeful *mates* popping in today.” Hunter Sabre made a finger gun with her free hand and pointed it at Alpha Greyson before obnoxiously winking. “Don’t worry, I’ll be sure to direct them *straight* to you!”

She hopped off, moving up the street in the direction of the Timber Ridge Welcome Center.

Alpha Greyson watched her with a smirk that was way more wolfish than any expression East had ever seen on him before.

*Huh. I’ll have to tell Chief Henry he is capable of other expressions. And...teasing?*

East would have been tempted to call it flirting, but even he—a clueless human—knew wolves and hunters *didn't* go for that kind of thing with each other.

By the time East got closer to the café, the Alpha's expression had smoothed over to something of the polite variety.

“Good morning.” East smiled as he opened the door to the café.

Alpha Greyson's golden eyes still gave him the slightly uncomfortable sensation of controlled power when he faced him. “Good morning, Officer,” he said.

*Yep.* East stepped into the rustic, cabin-like coffee shop where the rich scent of coffee surrounded him. *Living in Timber Ridge with werewolves around is great! I wouldn't trade this for anything.*

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And then East was turned into a werewolf—something he never planned for, or he'd ever wanted, to be honest.

It brought a lot of changes—some interesting, others...more difficult.

“Thanks, Chief.” East carefully took the paper to-go-cup from the Police Chief, taking great pains to measure his strength so he didn't squash it. “I appreciate that you got this for me since I can't go in Howl-In anymore. How much do I owe you?”

Chief Henry—who also happened to be Mayor Pearl's husband and East's boss...or used to be East's boss since he hadn't been on duty since being turned into a werewolf and having to adjust to everything—smiled, which smoothed out some of his worry wrinkles and highlighted his smile lines. “You don't owe me a thing—this one's on me.”

East paused, his hand closing around his wallet in his jeans pocket. “Are you sure?”

“Absolutely.” Chief Henry slapped East on the back with a surprising amount of strength even though he looked like a stiff breeze could topple his tall frame. “You just focus on adjusting to all your abilities so we can welcome you back to the department as soon as possible.”

East beamed. “Yessir! I'll do that—the department needs its first canine officer, after all.”

“Yes, I was doing some research to see if we could get you a bullet proof vest for when you're a wolf.” Chief Henry squinted, making his overly large eyebrows lower so they obscured most of his eyes. “But I haven't been able to find a manufacturer that would make one big enough.”

“I won't need one,” East said. “It'll take more than a bullet to put me down—as long as I'm careful.”

“Cripes—don't let Pearl hear that.” Chief Henry took a long sip of his coffee. “She'll want to test it out.”

East laughed “I can imagine. Thanks again, Chief! But I better go—I'm on guard duty for Pip today.”

“Ahh, I see. The Welcome Center has been getting quite a few fae visitors these days, hasn't it?” Chief Henry asked.

“Yessir!”

“Fae...that’s a bit of an interesting crowd. I heard a bunch of ‘em took selfies with the fire department. And then gave them gold coins.” Chief Henry shook his head. “Strange.”

East grinned. “Maybe so, but it just adds to the charm of our town.”

Chief Henry laughed. “That it does. Good luck—we’ll be waiting for you!”

“Thanks, Chief!”

Pip’s powers as a Wolf’s Kiss had been spilled in a giant email to all Midwest werewolf Packs just a few days ago, but she’d insisted on returning to work anyway.

*No wonder Mayor Pearl likes her so much. They share a similar work ethic.*

East sipped his coffee as he trotted down the street, making his way to the Timber Ridge Welcome Center.

When he opened the door the sounds of traffic faded as he slipped into the building and let his senses adjust.

The must of old carpet mixed with the metallic scent of the metal wolf statues positioned around the room was topped off with the flower-and-silver scent of Pip, who was already at work behind her hexagon shaped desk.

“Good morning, East.” She smiled at him as she flipped through a binder.

“Good morning, Pip, and Alpha Greyson,” East said.

Greyson lurked behind Pip, frowning as he surveyed the area—though he snapped off a slight nod to East.

Seeing them together made East roll his shoulders back and almost brought an automatic smile to his lips.

*Comfort, safety, warmth.*

The sensations slipped around him, making him stand easier, and taking some of the musty smell out of his sensitive nose. They also made it a little easier to control his strength as East took a sip of his coffee.

East hadn’t been prepared for the very strong reaction he’d get every time he saw either Pip or Greyson, but he didn’t mind it.

As Jack had once said, hanging around Pip was like having the comfort of a hundred mothers. Greyson was an entirely different sensation, something closer to honor and respect mixed with a trust East hadn’t felt before. Together, the duo made a powerful cocktail of comfort, so seeing them together was one of East’s favorite things about being a wolf.

By the time East had shaken himself from the love-fest stupor, Greyson was back to glaring around Pip’s desk. “You’re sure you can’t bring your rifle in here?”

“Mayor Pearl would have a *fit*,” Pip said.

“So? The wolves own the welcome center,” Greyson said. “We can decide if weapons are allowed or not.”

“I’d rather have a can of bear spray and a baseball bat, to be honest.” Pip shut the binder and put it back in her desk. “My rifle would be pretty unwieldy to use in these tight quarters.”

“You have proven you can do a lot of damage with a baseball bat.” Greyson leaned towards Pip, but she scowled at him, still angry.

*She's been scowling at him ever since she came back to work, and he doesn't seem surprised by it. I wonder what happened?*

Greyson winked at her, then shifted his attention to East after he very smartly backed away from Pip. "Are you going to stand guard in your human form today, East?"

East shook his head. "No, sir. I've found my wolf form to have the greater fighting power and most benefits."

Namely that he could fit behind the desk without being seen—giving him the advantage of a potential surprise attack—and then he could control Pip's comings and goings from her desk. But he didn't want her to know that.

East held up his coffee cup. "But I wanted to finish my coffee, and figured I'd be better off changing in the center's bathroom than on the street."

"Smart move," Greyson said. "I get the feeling Mayor Pearl won't let you off any easier than she does the rest of us for public nudity, even if you are a police officer."

"She'd probably give me a bigger fine," East ruefully said. He finished off his coffee with one last slurp, then bowed his head. "If you'll excuse me, I'll go shift."

"Of course," Greyson said.

"I set out fresh water in the water dish if you need any as a wolf," Pip called, only half paying attention as she tapped away on her computer.

East chuckled as he slipped into the men's bathroom and tossed out his cup.

Before he triggered the shift he glanced in the mirror. Mostly, he looked like he always did with his messy blond hair and the gap between his front teeth, but there were a few more subtle changes. His shoulders and chest were a little broader, and East was pretty sure his neck was thicker because the collars of his dress shirts all strangled him when he tried to button them.

While his life had drastically changed since becoming a werewolf, East would have to admit that he enjoyed the new aspects of his life.

*I thought being a wolf meant that the Pack would take over my life, but it's more like my life has expanded to include them.*

Since he'd rough housed with Jack, run with the Pack, laughed with Wyatt and Aeric, and encountered Pip and Greyson as a wolf...he couldn't come to regret his change.

Rather, now he loved Timber Ridge more than ever.

THE END