



Sofia Grey

*Connor's
Coffee*

A Snowdonia Wolves vignette

Connor's Coffee

Connor was *not* a creature of habit. As Pack Alpha for the large and dynamic Wellington Wolf Pack, he took his role seriously. The lives of his packmates could depend on his flexibility and willingness to change his plans at the last minute. All the same, he had one routine that he stuck to, and that was his morning coffee.

He perched on a stool at the back of the tiny cafe and pretended to flick through the emails on his phone, while he waited for Kelly to prepare his drink. It was crowded today. There were the usual office workers, easily recognisable in their suits, an off-duty police officer that he'd run into a few times, and a gaggle of tourists from the recently-docked cruise liner. They were good for the city and brought in valuable tourist dollars, but today they were in the way *and* monopolising his favourite barista.

Kelly meanwhile, continued to smile at the strangers, and explained about the drinks options. She lifted one hand to idly push back a stray lock of hair and then covered her mouth, as though hiding a tiny yawn. Shadows under her eyes suggested she hadn't slept well, as did the line creasing her pale forehead.

"That's right." She nodded to the group. "A flat white is like a latte. It's the Kiwi equivalent."

They were still undecided and muttered amongst themselves. Come on, how hard could it be? His wolf scratched at him, bored with sitting still. Connor wanted his caffeine, and *needed* to leave for a meeting, but he'd wait another minute. As though she heard his mental grumble, she looked up and met his gaze. "Sorry," she mouthed, and then she smiled properly, and just like that his wolf calmed. In truth, that smile was what he came here for, even more than his preferred blend of beans.

It wasn't just a smile. Her lips would tilt up at the corners, her eyes would sparkle and then she'd wrinkle her freckled nose, just a fraction. She was pretty to start with, but when she smiled... *Jesus*. His wolf wanted to roll over and bask in the glow, and probably wear a freaking daisy-chain necklace at the same time.

Connor's wolf was a tough, battle-hardened warrior of a beast, just like the man. He took no shit from anyone, and keeping distant and aloof was the way he rolled. The Pack was his family, and if he didn't have any close friends, that was just

too bad. He was also too busy for women, and on the rare occasions he sought their company, he looked for shifters. *Not* humans.

It was obvious that Kelly had no shifter blood in her whatsoever. Wolves were almost always tall and slim, had azure blue eyes and dark hair. Kelly could be the complete opposite. She was short – *petite* – even when she wore heels, as she so often did. Her hair reminded him of autumn leaves, a rich burnished copper, while her eyes were the colour of old amber. Then there was her build, her generous curves, and she added up to a package that couldn't be further from his ideal Mate. Not that he planned to find a Mate. He simply didn't have the time or the energy for a relationship.

He knew from his packmates that humans were delicate in comparison to shifter lovers, weaker and with less stamina, yet they still had affairs with them. It was a practice he was uncomfortable with. Keeping their race secret was his greatest challenge as Pack Alpha. It wasn't long since the shifter world had been rocked by the news that the Snowdonia Wolf Alpha, Jake Bledri, had not only Mated with a human, but a high profile celebrity at that. Talk about hiding in plain view. It could only lead to trouble.

Lost in his thoughts, he realised Kelly had spoken to him. The tourists still lurked around the counter, but she'd sought his attention. "Hey, Connor. I can ask Greg to make your drink if you're in a hurry?"

Greg owned the café and was perfectly capable of making his coffee, but Connor's wolf growled at the thought. "There's no rush," he lied, and drew an abandoned newspaper towards him, as though he had all the time in the world. All the same, it pissed him off when people made him wait, and so he tugged his cellphone from his pocket and tapped out a quick text.

Running late.

Jonty, his competent second in command, texted right back to confirm, and Connor settled more comfortably on his stool. If he was going to be here for a while, he may as well enjoy the view. Kelly stood side on to him as she now prepared the drinks for the tourists.

On her, the fitted black t-shirt looked X-rated, as did the tight denim cutoff shorts. Connor tilted his head and admired her long, golden legs, before dragging his gaze up to her heart-shaped ass. Now that was an ass a shifter could get his teeth into. His wolf rumbled approval and for a moment, he indulged in a fantasy of stripping

away those tiny denims. He could see the edge of a tattoo peeking out from the hem and even though he normally disliked ink on women, this one was impossible to ignore. It drew him like a moth to a naked bulb.

Shit. Thinking about naked *anything* while Kelly was in his vicinity, was to be avoided. His cock didn't get the memo though, and twitched with interest. Connor sucked in a deep, calming breath through his nose and tried to focus on the newspaper. And that was a mistake too. Kelly's distinctive scent filled his nostrils and he closed his eyes to appreciate it all the more. Honey and something salty, like the scent of a southerly wind blowing from the ocean.

What the fuck was the matter with him today?

He stared at the newspaper but failed to take in any of the stories. He hadn't gotten laid for what felt like forever. He was horny and he liked girls with big asses, that was all.

Oh fuck. Kelly had bent down to rummage under the counter for something and he couldn't drag his eyes away from the hint of her cleavage, the curves tantalising under the T-shirt. He shifted in his seat, his jeans suddenly uncomfortably tight. Look away. Look somewhere else before she lifted her head and... *busted*. A pink flush coloured her cheeks when she realised where he'd been staring, and didn't that make him feel like a perv.

She was too young. Easily ten years younger than him. A human. It was *inappropriate*.

And she was gorgeous.

Connor adjusted himself beneath the broad pages of the newspaper and had another go at reading the story splashed over the page before him, but the words danced on the paper.

"Here's your mochachino." Kelly's smile was just for him as she held out the paper cup and he revelled in the moment. "Looks good, aye. You going too?" Her words made no sense. She gestured at the newspaper and he followed her finger. Ah, yes. The new movie in town, an action-filled horror flick. "I'm going to see it tonight."

Connor looked properly at the advert. The film was being screened in a recently renovated cinema in a rough part of the city, an area he regularly patrolled with his senior wolves. The younger wolves in the pack were prone to getting into

fight with drunken humans, and the last thing he wanted was an overexcited wolf shifting and being seen.

There was only one screening tonight, so that meant Kelly would be out and about when the clubs were at their busiest. “That’s not a nice part of town.” He smiled to soften the gruffness in his words. “Will there be a group of you?”

Kelly leaned on the counter right in front of him presenting her delicious cleavage at eye level. He swallowed and tried to keep focused on her face when she replied. “No, just two of us. We’ll be fine.”

Her boyfriend. His wolf growled. *She’s human*, he reminded his beast. *Nothing to do with us*. All the same, he’d make sure to patrol the area around the cinema tonight. Just in case.

Connor took the hot, sweet drink and nodded to his barista. He was getting too attached to Kelly, it was time to move on. The thought sat like a stone in his chest. Meanwhile, she seemed to be waiting for him to reply. What should he say? *Be careful? Stay away from drunken punch-ups?*

“Thanks. And... enjoy the movie.”

“I’ll tell you all about it when you come in tomorrow.”

“Yeah. Sounds good.” He pushed away from the counter and made his way onto the street. He was fooling himself if he thought he’d go elsewhere. Same time tomorrow, he’d be there for his mocchachino.

Best coffee in town. And the prettiest smile.