

USA Today Bestselling Author

GRACE GOODWIN



Wild
Wild
Wolf
Claiming

a *Howls* romance



WILD WOLF CLAIMING

A HOWLS WEREWOLF ROMANCE

GRACE GOODWIN

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by Grace Goodwin

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CONTENTS

[Get A Free Book!](#)

[Find YOUR Interstellar Match!](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Epilogue](#)

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[About Grace](#)

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Lily

MY EARS BUZZED with that strange little ringing noise I got when I was being watched. It had me checking every mirror on the car and accelerating to ninety. Which was stupid. No one was here. Wherever *here* was. I was over a thousand miles from home in an unfamiliar car. Idaho was as far from East Springs, Tennessee as I could get before I hit the crowds on the west coast. That was out for me. Too many people. Too much water.

I never thought I'd ever run away from home, not at twenty-one. But that was exactly what I was doing. No, not running away from home, running away from *him*. Robert Nathaniel Howard *the third*.

"Asshole." Reaching for the radio dial, I cranked up the volume to drown out my memories. Oh, he hadn't raped me, but he'd had a hard time listening when I told him no, to stop, that I didn't want it. He'd slowed down, pulled

back, looked at me like I was lying. Said some bullshit about scenting my change, like I was a confused thirteen-year-old just hitting puberty.

Whatever. He hadn't seemed convinced until I'd said my grandfather would kill him. That had shut him down, wilted his dick and had him rolling off me faster than fleeing a fire.

Everyone in East Springs was afraid of my family, especially Grandad. Weirdly afraid. But I didn't ask too many questions. Grandad ran the town and that was just the way things were. That was the way things had always been. My mom was gone now, leaving me alone with him. We weren't touchy-feely huggers. Hell, he was a distant, cold old man with ice blue eyes and a temper I avoided rousing. *Everyone* avoided rousing.

Even worse, being around him reminded me of my mom, which hurt. Since I looked a lot like her, I figured he felt the same. After she died a couple years ago, well, Grandad and I pretty much avoided each other. But neither one of us had to look far to be reminded of my mother. All we had to do was look in the mirror and those ice blue eyes stared right back at us.

But Grandad was always there for me, whether I wanted him to be or not. He ran our town, thought he ran my life. Even now, a thousand miles away, he'd find a way to keep tabs on me. That was just what he did. So of course he heard about Robbie getting a little too pushy with me, and I hadn't told a soul.

People in East Springs paired off young. Too young, in my opinion. Most of the women were head over heels in

lust by the time they were nineteen. That was insane. I had somehow avoided that. So far. Although if Robbie'd had his way, I'd have been paired off with him whether I wanted to be or not. I wasn't going to be with a guy just because he pushed himself on me.

Not that Robbie was a terrible human being. He was gorgeous, as men in my home town tended to be. Over six foot with chiseled features, muscles everywhere and eyes that looked right through me. But he wasn't for me. I didn't know what I wanted, but it definitely wasn't him.

Ever since my sixteenth birthday, I felt like I'd been watched, like the rest of my family was just waiting for a hormone bomb to drop inside me and turn me into a sex-crazed maniac like some of my younger cousins. Maybe that would have helped Robbie's chances. Maybe I would've been so horny it wouldn't matter so much who I was with.

I'd fooled around a bit, sure, but I'd never felt the lust, the need, my friends had mentioned. Because of this, I figured maybe there was something wrong with me. I liked hooking up just fine, it just wasn't worth obsessing over. With Robbie I'd tried, really tried, but his tongue had all but made me gag when he shoved it in my mouth and his hands on my bare skin had made my skin crawl. And look what that got me?

"A black eye and a bad attitude." I checked the damage I'd inflicted in the rear view mirror. The fading green and yellow bruising was almost completely gone now. And the light coating of makeup I wore hid the rest. I'd been stupid, running blindly in the dark. The doctor had said I was lucky