

LETTERS FROM LUPUS

(1)

Dear Sis,

It was a madhouse for a while, but things are finally settling down. I hate starting fresh in a new community, and being a wolf doesn't make things any easier. But I guess I shouldn't expect anything different. After all, it was my choice to leave the pack and take up residence in town.

On the bright side, Sis, you'd love the cave I found! It's deep and dry, with a beautiful sandy floor, and a great view. I'm halfway up a hill in the suburbs, and when I get up in the morning I can watch the sun rise just across the river and the mists curl away. The town is a little gem! All the houses are different, but they fit together with a kind of patchwork craziness that seems just right. I hope you can get away soon and visit, before the cubs come.

Sorry this can't be more than a quick note, but I want to get down to market and meet some of my neighbors. I figure, if I start out on the right paw, I can overcome all the prejudices against our kind, and make a few friends!

Love,
Lupus

(2)

Dear Sis,

It was great seeing you! You're looking terrific! I would never have guessed you were so close to whelping! The Old Woman from the shoe down by the river was asking about you almost immediately after you left. She's taken quite an interest in your coming family – probably because she has so many children of her own. I don't know how she does it!

I want to thank you again for helping me. You were right; the cave needed a woman's touch. (Sorry – hope the human reference doesn't offend you.) It's so much cheerier, I'm actually looking forward to that cave-warming you helped arrange. And guess what – all my neighbors will be coming! Even poor Turkey-Lurkey is going to try to overcome his fear of caves (remember the nasty escape he had from that rogue fox?). I owe all that to you, too. You were so charming to everyone that they almost forgot what we are! You know, I think I'm going to like it here!

Love,
Lupus

(3)

Dear Sis,

Just a quick note to let you know – the cave warming was terrific! Everyone was at ease – even Turkey-Lurkey loosened up and let his feathers down! Sis, I'm so happy – I feel like I'm in a fairy-tale!

I have to clean up and get to bed now. Say 'hi' to my favorite brother-in-law for me, and give the rest of the pack my love. And tell them I'm going to be just fine!

Love,
Lupus

(4)

Dear Sis,

Congratulations! Lycan dropped me a line and said your litter was the finest he's seen since Ulfra's octet. I can't wait to get over and see the little pups! I'll bring the Old Woman along - she's got Mother Goose to look after her circus. She's dying to see you. She's writing down all sorts of advice on how to deal with more than six at a time. Humor the old dear - she keeps forgetting this is your third litter!

I'm doing fine, except that I've somehow managed to get three of my neighbors mad at me. Remember the Pig brothers, the triplets, who moved in down the road just after I did? I saw them at the market the other day, and they just turned up their snouts and didn't say a word. I asked Jack and Jill about it on their way up to their well, and they think the Pigs are offended because I didn't invite them to my cave warming. I thought the Pigs would be too busy settling in themselves. Jill said she understood, but "you know how Pigs are". I know they're right, but I hate to have anyone upset with me so soon, even Pigs. I've worked hard to get my neighbors to accept me; all I need is for a bunch of Pigs to spoil it all!

Anyway, that's enough of my problems. You just take it easy, get plenty of rest, and let the family look after you. The Old Woman and I will be around to visit you as soon as you're up to it.

Love,
Lupus

(5)

Dear Sis,

Please forgive the messy paw-writing, but I'm steamed! Those Pig brothers are out to ruin me!

I decided, after visiting with you, to go down and make peace with them directly, like you suggested. The three of them are getting on each others nerves, I guess, living in that pen together (good thing they're bachelors!), so they're building houses. One of them, at least, has some sense - he's using bricks. But the other two - are you ready for this? One of them is using sticks, and the other, straw!

Stupid, right? I decided they needed some good advice, so I suggested - very nicely, too - that their houses would be a little sturdier if they used bricks, like their brother. I even offered to help them, but would you believe it? - they told me to take my advice and shove it! Isn't that just like a Pig, though? But wait - that isn't the end of it. A couple of days later, the wind started kicking up, so I figured I'd try once more to be neighborly. I went down to the straw house first, and then to the stick house, to see if I could help them strengthen the structures. But each time I asked if I could come in, they gave me some smart-alecky "not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin" answer. I warned them the wind would blow their houses in, but they ignored me, so I went to the brick house, since that brother had a little sense. But he gave me the same snotty "chinny-chin-chin" routine. So I gave up, came home, made a pot of tea, and waited for the wind to blow those stupid houses away.

I was right, of course. By late afternoon, when I went down to market to pick up the latest gossip, there was nothing left of those "houses" but a few twigs and wisps of hay. I was feeling pretty smug until I found out that I was supposed to have gone around huffing and puffing and blowing those miserable shacks down myself! Of course, it was too late to correct those lies, so I just came home and spent the rest of the evening alone in my cave. I stayed here all yesterday and today, and no one's come to see me. I wouldn't be surprised if those filthy little liars told everyone I tried to eat them. As if I would waste my teeth on such

trash!

Anyway, Sis, I'm sorry your plan backfired. But then, I guess you're not used to dealing with Pigs. You can't trust them, Sis. If you give them half a chance, they'll boil you alive!

Thanks for letting me unload on you. Give Varkas my best, and tell him I'm counting on him to treat my favorite sister well. I'll be up your way soon with the Old Woman, if she's still talking to me.

Love,
Lupus