The Weight of Stones

The stones in Wolf’s belly unbalanced him as he climbed out of bed, resulting in a stagger that carried him all the way into the bathroom.

He stretched arthritically, flossed, then sprayed fur thickener onto mangy, singed, haunches. Damn pigs.

He wouldn’t normally bother – the only things that saw his arse these days were the sofa and the loo seat – but the fact was the cupboard looked pretty much bare. This interview was crucial.

The problem was that no author worth his salt was writing animal stories. Mythical creatures were doing well – they had well-nigh taken over Millionaires Row, riding high on the success of one or two novel length roles. Dinosaurs seemed to be making a comeback too. He’d seen Rex only last week, cruising in his tricked out black 4x4, rims spinning. But your common or garden animals, well, they were screwed.

He rummaged through the kitchen, looking for some mush to eat for breakfast and found a three year old bag of porridge hidden behind a roasting tin. It was weevil infested, but he shrugged. Figured they counted as protein.

It became clear, during the bus ride to his interview, that the porridge had not been such a good idea. It acted like a fast drying mortar, cementing the stones in his stomach together into one huge lump.

His stomach sank further, if that was even possible, when he realised that the writer he was meeting was based in some two-bit rent-by-the-hour office space positioned, rather cruelly he thought, over a small family-run butcher’s shop.

He climbed the stairs, wheezing hard. He hoped that this wasn’t some other Red type gig. He doubted he could even manage to chase granny around the forest these days.

The author turned out to be a woman. Beggars couldn’t be choosers, he supposed.

‘Take a seat, Wolf,’ she commanded.

He did as he was told. He knew from past experience that authors liked to feel in control of their characters.

‘I’m working on a narrative that reveals the inner fragility of a seemingly strong individual,’ she said, making notes against his CV.

‘I’m not a werewolf.’ There, get it out in the open.

The woman smiled thinly. Wolf noticed that her right hand never strayed far from the small 9mm gun that resided on her desk. It made him wonder just how much fragility was required.

‘I know you’re not. I think the world has read enough about those for a while, hmm? No, what I’m looking for is someone who can be both wicked yet vulnerable. How are you with kids, for example?’

Wolf scratched absentmindedly at the scar on his belly. Mother Goat’s stitching still itched, even after all these years. How to answer the question without losing the job?

Inspiration struck.

‘I’ve always tried to create a warm environment for them.’ He smiled his best wolfy smile at her.

She tapped her pen on the desk, thinking.

‘When can you start?’ she said.