

Tanya and Colin were introduced in the **Wolf** short story series, and they have appeared throughout most of the Campbell Wildlife Preserve series. This vignette is a peek into their lives and occurs shortly before the events in **Pack of Trouble**.

***Home of Colin & Tanya Campbell
Campbell Wildlife Preserve
Outside Flagstaff, Arizona
Tuesday, April 10, 2018***

Hands on her hips, Tanya stared at the morning sunlight coming through the window in the east-facing door of the nursery. More accurately, the pattern of toddler fingerprints and slobber smears Duncan had left behind on every inch of window he'd been able to reach. A grin forming, she shook her head and chuckled.

Familiar, muscular arms slipped around her waist from behind, and her husband nuzzled the side of her head. "What's funny?"

She pointed to the window. "Duncan has smudged the lower part of that window so badly, it looks like we have a dog."

Colin laughed. "Well... technically... he's a wolf, but...."

She turned in his arms and shook her head with a smile. "Funny. Are you headed out?"

Having grabbed his stuffed dragon along the way, thirteen-month-old Duncan crawled past them, headed straight for the window. No matter how much they had him outside, it was never enough to suit him. He'd live outside and crawl every square inch of their part of the Preserve every day if they'd let him.

"Yep. I found a dead tree that needs to be removed before fire season is upon us. If there's a fire in the park along our northern boundary, I don't want it to find such nice, dry fuel on our property."

The ten-foot wall around most of the Preserve offered some protection from fires in the surrounding area. That said, Colin's diligence in locating and removing possible fuel for fires had saved the Preserve on multiple occasions over the years. At least, according to Ian, and Tanya had no reason to doubt him.

Their son used the wall to lever himself to his feet and stood with both hands pressed to the dirty window, the dragon abandoned at his feet.

Secure in the knowledge that Duncan was safe and couldn't get hurt at the moment, Tanya refocused on her husband. "Do you think you'll be home for lunch?"

"Unlikely." He kissed the end of her nose. "Dad's going to help me with the tree, so we'll take a break and hunt at some point. Check the health status of the animals in the area. Want me to bring some home if we make a kill?"

"Sure." Tanya shrugged. "I can put together a stew for dinner."

“Or you could just eat it raw like we do.” Colin’s lips twitched in a tightly held grin.

“Ick!” She wrinkled her nose, well aware that *he* was well aware of her aversion to raw meat. Three years as a wolf hadn’t changed that one iota. She still preferred her meat well done, as did most of the pack females. Much to the groaning disappointment of the male contingent.

He laughed outright, then humor faded, replaced by warmth and affection, his head angled down toward hers. “Do you have any idea how very much you mean to me?”

Tanya rested her forehead against his and smiled, content in a way she never could’ve imagined possible while cowering in a concrete cell almost three years prior. So much had changed since then, and Colin was the greatest gift to come out of the turmoil of those few days. “Probably not as much as *you* mean to *me*.”

“I wouldn’t count on that. You’re my life. Not sure it gets bigger than that.”

She chuckled.

Colin angled his head to press a kiss to her lips. “I better go. Dad’s expecting me to pick him up.”

Nodding, she released him. “Have a good day, and happy hunting.”

“I love you.” He stepped back.

“Love you, too.”

She waited until the front door thumped closed behind him and the deadbolt clicked into place then turned to face her son, who’d somehow managed to add even *more* smudges to the already riddled window. “Alright, little man. We need to clean that window, so you can slobber paint on it all over again.”