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Wild Things: A Chicagoland Vampires Novel



Par Chloe Neill

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Par Chloe Neill : Wild Things: A Chicagoland Vampires Novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Wild Things: A Chicagoland Vampires Novel:

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurSince Merit was turned into a vampire, and the protector of Chicago's Cadogan House, it's been a wild ride. She and Master vampire Ethan Sullivan have helped make Cadogan's vampires the strongest in North America, and forged ties with paranormal folk of all breeds and creeds, living or dead ... or both.But now those alliances are about to be tested. A strange and twisted magic has ripped through the North American Central Pack, and Merit's closest friends are caught in the crosshairs. Gabriel Keene, the Pack Apex, looks to Merit and Ethan for help. But who - or what - could possibly be powerful enough to out-magic a shifter?Merit is about to go toe to toe, and cold steel to cold heart, to find out.To find out more, visit:Facebook: authorchloeneillTwitter: @chloeneillExtraitWithin the last ten months, Id become a

vampire, joined Chicagos Cadogan House, and become its Sentinel. I'd learned how to wield a sword, how to bluff a monster, how to fall, and how to get back up. Perhaps most of all, I'd learned about loyalty. And based on the magic that was pouring through the House's first-floor hallway, I hadn't been the only one who'd taken that particular quality to heart. Dozens of Cadogan's vampires stood in the hallway outside the office of our Master, Ethan Sullivan, waiting for a call, for a word, for a plan. We stood in our requisite Cadogan black with our katanas at our sides because Ethan-our Liege and my lover was preparing to run. "Out of one fire and right into another," said the attractive blond vampire beside me. Lindsey was a member of Cadogan's guard corps and a skilled and capable fighter, but tonight she looked, as usual, more like a fashionista than a century-old vampire guard. She'd left her suit jacket downstairs and had matched her satin-striped black tuxedo pants with a white button-down and four-inch stiletto heels. "Do they actually think we'd just let them take him?" she asked. "That we'd let them arrest him out there in front of the House?" An hour ago, a Chicago Police Department detective fortunately, one of our allies had come calling, advising us that the city's prosecutor had obtained a warrant for Ethan's arrest. Ethan had killed Harold Monmonth, a powerful vampire from Europe who'd murdered two human guards before turning his sword on us. Ethan had acted in obvious self-defense, but violence had recently rocked the Windy City. Its citizens were afraid, and its mayor, Diane Kowalczyk, was looking for someone to blame. She'd apparently managed to bring the prosecutor to her side. That's why Ethan was sequestered in his office with Luc, the captain of Cadogan's guards, and Malik, the House's second in command, making a plan. Detective Jacobs suggested Ethan seek refuge with the Breckenridges, a family of shape-shifters who lived in Loring Park, a suburb outside Chicago. That meant he'd also be outside the mayor's jurisdiction. The Brecks were well-connected, and politically influential. That was a powerful combination and enough, we hoped, to keep the mayor from using him as a sacrificial lamb. Papa Breck, the family patriarch, was a friend of my father, Chicago real estate mogul Joshua Merit. I'd gone to school with some of the Breckenridge boys and had even dated one of them. But the Brecks had no love for vampires, which was part of the reason for the closed-door negotiations. Ethan was the other reason. He was nearly four centuries old, and he had the stubbornness to match his age. Going gently into that good night wasn't his style, but Luc and Malik wanted him safely away. It had been a long winter for the House including Ethan's premature demise and resurrection and we didn't need any more drama. We certainly didn't trust Kowalczyk and feared turning Ethan over to a justice system that seemed to be rigged against us. The door had been closed for an hour. Voices had been raised, and the disagreement between Ethan and his soldiers spilled tense magic into the hallway. That was my particular point of contention. I was Cadogan's Sentinel, but I hadn't been allowed in the office. The words plausible deniability had been thrown around right before the door had been shut in my face. "The mayor knew there'd be trouble, I said. The CPD already said Ethan acted in self-defense. And we just handed McKetrick to them on a silver platter. The city has absolutely nothing to complain about where we're concerned. The detectives' warning had come only hours after we'd managed to prove McKetrick, the city's now former supernatural liaison, was the source of the riots that had spread violence, destruction, and fire around the city. You'd think that would have put us in the mayor's good graces. Alas, no. They won't stay away forever, I said. Jacobs wouldn't have warned us if he didn't think they were serious. And that doesn't give us many options. Ethan flees, or we have to fight. Whatever their next move, the House will be ready, Lindsey said. We just have to scoot Ethan out of here. She checked a delicate gold watch. Not much time before sunrise. This is going to be close. Papa Breck could still say no, I pointed out, wrapping my arms around my knees. He and Ethan were different subspecies, but equally stubborn. But Lindsey shook her head. Not if he's smart. Arresting a vampire for a bullshit reason isn't far from arresting a shifter for a bullshit reason. If Papa Breck doesn't take a stand now, he'll put the Pack at risk. But if he does take a stand? She clucked her tongue. Then he wins, double or nothing. We'll owe him a favor, and he'll have stood up to Kowalczyk. That reinforces his power, and it's just before she could finish, the office door opened. Luc and Malik emerged, Ethan behind them. All three were tall and bore the toughened shoulders of men in charge, but the physical similarities ended there. Luc had tousled blond-brown hair and preferred snug jeans and well-worn boots to Ethan's and Malik's exquisite suits. Since Ethan's welfare fell under his jurisdiction, Luc's ruggedly handsome features were tight with concern. Malik had cocoa skin, closely cropped hair, and pale green eyes that thoughtfully took in the hallway of vampires. Malik was reserved, careful, and unquestionably respected by the House. But like Luc, he also didn't look thrilled with the circumstances. And then there was Ethan. He was built like an athlete, long and lean, with taut muscles and a body that fit perfectly into his trim black suit. His hair was straight, shoulder length, and golden, framing a face so gorgeous it might have been sculpted by a master

artist. Straight nose, honed cheekbones, lush mouth, and eyes as sharp and green as flawless emeralds. Ethan was as alpha as they came, protective and pretentious, intelligent and strategic, and stubborn enough to match me well. We had our false starts, but we finally found a clear path to each other. That might have been the biggest miracle of all. Ethan's forehead was pinched in concern, but his eyes gave away nothing. He was the Master of our House; he didn't have the luxury of self-doubt. A dozen vampires jumped to their feet. I'll be traveling to the Breckenridge estate, Ethan announced. Cadogan vampires do not run. We do not hide. We do not scurry into the dark. We face our problems head-on. But this House has been through much of late. I have been asked, for the sake of the House, to consider making myself scarce. I have agreed to do so as a temporary measure. The tension in my chest eased, but not by much. He clearly wasn't thrilled with the plan. In the meantime, we'll try to put this ugly business to bed. The House's lawyers will address the warrant. Malik has a friend in the governor's office, and he'll reach out to determine if the governor can encourage Mayor Kowalczyk to act reasonably. That was news to me, but then again, Malik was the quiet sort. And I didn't think he was the type to call in a political favor unless absolutely necessary. You'll take Merit to the Brecks? Lindsey asked. Assuming she can fit it into her schedule, he said. Drama or not, there was always time for snark in Cadogan House. I'll manage, I assured him, although I hate to leave my grandfather here. My grandfather was Chicago's former supernatural liaison, emphasis on the former, but he and his employees, Catcher Bell and Jeff Christopher, still helped the CPD with supernatural issues. Because he'd helped us investigate the riots, McKetrick had targeted him. Grandpa's house had been firebombed, and he'd been caught in the explosion. He was recovering, but he was still in the hospital. He'd been more of a father to me than my actual father, and although he had people to protect him, I felt guilty leaving while he was out of service. I'll check in on him, Luc promised. Give you updates. In that case, Ethan said, we'll leave shortly. Malik has the House. And as you know, he makes a very capable Master when I'm . . . indisposed. There were appreciative chuckles in the crowd. It wasn't Malik's first rodeo as Master; he'd held the job when Ethan hadn't been among the living. I will be honest. This may not work. We are betting that Diane Kowalczyk is politically ambitious enough to not cross the Breckenridge family. That gambit could prove incorrect. Either way, our relationship with the city of Chicago could get worse before it gets better. But we are, and we will remain, Cadogan vampires. He arched an eyebrow, a habit he used frequently and usually with good effect. Of course, those Cadogan vampires should be at work right now, not eavesdropping outside their Master's office. Smiling and appropriately chastised, the vampires dispersed, offering good-byes to their Liege as they passed. Margot, the House's brilliant chef, squeezed my hand, then headed down the hallway toward the kitchen. Malik, Luc, Lindsey, and I stepped inside Ethan's office. He looked over his staff. We have a brief reprieve, Ethan said, but the city may come knocking again. The House is ready, Luc said. Lakshmi, however, is still on her way. We couldn't convince her to delay. That was another sticky situation. Cadogan was no longer a member of the Greenwich Presidium, the organization that ruled North American and Western European vampire houses. Mon-month had been one of its members. The GP was no friend of Cadogan House, and they apparently weren't willing to ignore the fact that we were now responsible for the deaths of two of their members. While we were no longer concerned about their opinion of us, they made powerful and dangerous enemies. Lakshmi, one of the remaining GP members, was traveling to Chicago to render its verdict. It probably helped that she was one of the more commonsensical members of the GP, but it was odd that she was traveling while Darius West, the GP head, stayed under the radar in London. He'd been a political nonentity since an attack by a vampire assassin relieved him of his confidence, or so we surmised. As it turned out, Lakshmi also was a friend to the Red Guard, the secret organization that kept watch on the Houses and their Masters. I was a new member, partnered with the guard captain from Grey House, Jonah. Lakshmi had provided insider information about GP shenanigans; in return for her help, I'd offered an unspecified favor. It was inevitable she'd attempt to collect; vampires were particular that way. Keep her out of the House, Ethan said. We aren't members of the GP, and she has no business in our domain. She may have a legitimate claim to reparations, but that can be dealt with when we've dealt with the city. I spoke with Lakshmi's majordomo, Luc said, tried to winnow information out of her. She wouldn't budge. We'll deal with it when we deal with it, Ethan said. This entire situation is fraught with hazard. Malik nodded. It all comes down to who blinks first. Ethan's eyes flattened. Whatever happens, Cadogan House will not blink first. We lived in Chicago, which meant off-street parking spots were hard to come by and the objects of envy. The House's coveted underground parking lot was accessible through the basement, so we headed downstairs. Ethan keyed the security pad at the door and stepped inside the basement but, when the heavy door closed behind us, dropped his duffel and grabbed my hand. Come here, he said, voice heavy with

desire. He didnt wait for my response, but caught me by surprise, his mouth on mine, his hands at my waist, suddenly insistent. I was nearly out of breath when he finally released me. What was that? I barely managed to ask. Ethan brushed a lock of hair behind my ear. I had need of you, Sentinel. Youve got me, I assured him with a smile. But at the moment, we have need of speed. Not your best work, he cannily said, but he put a hand on my cheek and gazed into my eyes as if he might discover the worlds secrets there. Whats wrong? Im nervous about leaving, I admitted. Youre worried about your grandfather. I nodded. He was asleep when I called. Hell understand he always does. I just wish I didnt have to ask him to be understanding. Ethan kissed my brow. You are a good granddaughter, Caroline Evelyn Merit. Im not sure about that. But Im trying. Sometimes, that was the best a girl could do. I gestured toward the gleaming silver bullet that sat in the Houses visitor spot, the antique Mercedes roadster Ethan had bought for me from the Pack leader himself. She was sweet and perfectly restored, and I called her Moneypenny. She was also still registered in Gabriels name, which seemed a better transportation option than taking Ethans car. But since he had decades more driving experience than me and we were in a hurry I held out the keys. Shall we? Ethans eyes widened with delight. Hed been attempting to buy Moneypenny for years and had probably wanted to slide behind the wheel for even longer. If were going to run, he said, taking the keys from me, a spark jumping across our fingertips as they brushed, we might as well escape in style. Sometimes that was the best a vampire could do. *Revue de presse* Praise for the Chicagoland Vampire Novels If you are looking for a vampiric role model, you couldnt do any better than Merit.... Chicago is lucky to have her. #1 New York Times Bestselling Author Charlaine Harris One of my all-time-favorite vampire series. . . . Its witty, its adventurous, theres political intrigue, murder, magic, and so much more. USA Today Perfectly paced and tautly written. Fresh Fiction If you loved Nancy Drew but always wished she was an undead sword-wielding badass, Merit is your kind of girl. Geek Monthly Neills Chicago is an edgier, urban Bon Temps. Heroes and Heartbreakers I was drawn in...from page one and kept reading far into the night. *Julie Kenner, New York Times bestselling author of the Devil May Care Novellas