



# Teka's song

A farewell to a Wolf Haven icon

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Teka Photo by Julie Lawrence

**T**eka came to Wolf Haven from Kamloops Wildlife park in British Columbia. Prior to Kamloops, she was born and raised at a private facility without contact from any other wolves. Her resulting tendency to bond closely with humans became very apparent, as Teka would befriend people easier than she would most other wolves... A characteristic that would prove troublesome for her.

At Kamloops Teka was placed into an established pack that did not take to her, and after failed attempts at placing Teka with various wolves, Kamloops contacted Wolf Haven to ask if we had the available space to take her in.

Teka started lifting spirits here at Wolf Haven from

the moment she arrived on September 19, 1997. Her connection with humans was apparent from the get-go. When I first met Teka, her best human friend, Wendy (Wolf Haven's Animal Curator), introduced us. As Wendy and I entered the enclosure I genuinely felt welcomed by Teka as she slowly approached me, and I, in turn, slowly approached her. Not knowing each other, nor one another's possible reactions, we both remained cautious. I leaned forward and slightly lowered my head as Teka began licking my hair as though it were the best thing since beef kidney.

Teka did have one very special friend who isn't human, and who isn't actually a wolf either... he is a wolf hybrid

named Wolfie. He and Teka were best friends who did everything together. Wolfie loved Teka more than anything in the world and in fact, she was his world. Still, Teka didn't hesitate in the slightest to put Wolfie in his place when he did something she didn't agree with. Every once in a while Wolfie would try to usurp Teka's leadership position only to be promptly met with a loud growl, putting a stop to his plans. The two would commonly be seen sleeping side by side, with Wolfie resting his head on her as if guarding his treasure.

Teka opened her heart up to many people here at Wolf Haven and in doing so touched their souls in a way that I believe no other wolf here has ever done. When you would enter the sanctuary she would always be there waiting to brighten up your day with a smile that stretched from ear to ear that felt like a warm hug. She would jump back and forth bursting with excitement reminding you to stop by her enclosure to say "Hi." She was amazing at lifting your spirit. Many times I confided in her like a grandmother, talking to her about the trials and tribulations of my life. She would always know how to fix my ailment and she had an arsenal of tools she would use to coax a smile from a saddened face. If you were in a particularly bad mood she might sing you a song that would bring you to a place of pure serenity. Teka was known for her singing ability and would often astound her onlookers with a melody of tunes solely composed by her pristine voice, with an occasional back up singer or two.

In April of 2006 Teka started exhibiting odd behaviors like drinking excessive amounts of water and urinating quite frequently. She was also becoming unsteady on her feet and unusually lethargic. We brought her to our veterinarian for a barrage of tests in an attempt to diagnose her ailment, and a urinalysis told us that our Teka was diabetic. While we were relieved at the fact that her ailment was diagnosed, at the same time we were very nervous about her being diabetic. Teka initially required two shots of insulin everyday, which was not an easy task to accomplish. Her bond with Wendy helped make the process easier, but still it was a challenge. Eventually Wendy and Teka developed a routine for administering insulin, which worked quite

well for some time. However Teka was not a casebook diabetic in any sense, and it was very difficult to determine her glucose (blood sugar) level, making it even more difficult to calculate her insulin dose. Another abnormal characteristic of her diabetes was that her body actually started producing insulin again, which baffled our Veterinarian, but she soon reverted back to needing insulin injections everyday. From then on we would periodically take her to the vet to determine what was happening with certain values in her blood and urine in order to better tailor treatment for her. This system worked for some time with little to no complications.

As Teka began showing telltale signs of being hyperglycemic (having a high glucose level) the decision was made to take her into the Vet again to run tests for determining how to readjust her insulin dosage. During her last visit we ran blood and did a urinalysis to see what was happening with her. We were given false hope when we received the blood test results which indicated that she was higher than what she should be but not as high as she was in previous tests. With the urinalysis still pending we left the vet and brought Teka back home to recover from the anesthesia. The next day we received the results from the urinalysis. The test showed that her ketones were high, which was not a good indication, and we closely monitored her for any abnormal signs over the next couple of days. Yet on March 17, Teka's health took a dramatic turn for the worse. The morning of the 17th was the last time that I saw my friend Teka alive.

*Teka, on that morning when I saw you I didn't know you were fighting death. I wish I could have been a better fighter for you, and I'm sorry that I wasn't. I will always remember the last time I looked into your eyes. I will always regret not being there with you when you passed. I am thankful that your very best human friend, Wendy, was with you, desperately trying to breathe life into your lungs as you slipped away I know that you would have wanted her there by your side as you made the transition from this life to the next. I will always hold a place in my heart for you, my friend, and await the day that I can see your smile again. Teka because of you I now know what angels look like. See you again, "Squeak."*



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