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In Waves

**Written by BlueKittyTales on commission for SaltirePhoenix as a gift for ServieFrostdeer and LightningBolt747.
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Part 1 – Sinking In Flames

Friday June 10th 2016, 23:08. The night life calls for an aspiring medic, but it proves to be anything but a normal occasion.

The night life invited Servie after what felt like the longest day he'd ever had, and he was ready to meet his friends and unwind in any way he possible could. The city looked completely different from how it did during the daylight, the bright lights and street lights adding to the character of the streets under the near pitch black sky. While it was the dead of the night, this was not how it felt to him. The streets were filled with even more life than the daytime had offered, with many creatures of varying species enjoying all they could as the weekend drew so close. He wondered if his friends had already arrived and were waiting for him, for he had not seen them amongst the crowds yet and he hadn't received any messages from them asking him to hurry up and arrive. What's more, his crush Fiann had been on his mind for most of the shift, and he couldn't wait to see him again.

It was a relief to him that he had the coming day off, because he felt dead on his hooves. He was a deer about 6ft 1' in height, with ocean jade coloured fur interspersed with white. Watery emerald green eyes absorbed the sights all around him, though his antlers were no more than a pair of short stumps, having decided not to allow them to regrow after they had detached the year before, as a result of being mocked by other members of his species over them. Coupled with this was a head of leaf green hair that partially surrounded his antlers, and ash coloured hooves that matched the colour of his nose. Brushing the air behind him was a short tail, feeling the warm air of the summer night. He'd only had time to go home and change his uniform before coming back out, and when he passed a large casino, he was very tempted to enter, feeling his pocket for his wallet. But he didn't want to keep his friends waiting for any longer, nor to risk losing the money.

He finally arrived outside a night club at the heart of the city, joining a short queue in front of a pair of bouncers. He could hear the pounding, echoing electronic music as he approached, and he felt his ears twitch the closer he got to it. Though the bouncers were not especially imposing in appearance, the sharpness of their tones was still enough to intimidate, and Servie checked his wallet for his driving license by a way of calming his nerves. It was still in place, still not threatening to slip out. When he reached the front of the line, he needed only to show the bouncers his license and he was let in, although he could see no sign of his friends yet. He didn't have to search long though, for he soon found them sitting at a table close to the bar. Even without having to speak, they turned around to enthusiastically greet him. What's more, a fellow deer he had a crush on, Fiann, was sitting with them too, and he was the first to wave him over.

"Hey Servie!" cried Fiann. "My favourite fembuck made it!"

"What took you so long?" smirked Julie, a smoke coloured wolf, beckoning him over to their table as she sipped from her glass of red wine.

"We were starting to get old over here." grinned Heather, a blue and white vixen, downing the first of her four pints of beer.

"Aw, come on you two." said Matt, a black and silver fox. "He's here now, ain't he?"

"Hey everybody!" smiled Servie as he sat down.

"Saved a mojito for you." said Fiann, taking a dainty sip from what Servie recognised to be a double scotch on the rocks.

"Looks good!" said Servie, glowing appreciatively. "Thank you."

"I knew you'd come!" smiled Matt. "But you look tired."

"A medic's work never pauses for long," said Servie as he sipped from his drink, the peppermint taste sending a burst of cold through his nose and mouth. "So, I treasure the downtime when I get it."

"We're glad you do," said Fiann appreciatively. "You missed a story about Matt's brother."

"Do I have to go through this again?" groused Matt.

"Alright, I'll tell him," said Heather as she drank her second beer. When she slammed down her empty tankard, she let out a loud belch that had several of the other clubgoers giving them bemused looks. *That vixen sure likes her beer.* thought Servie. "You've seen Waylon around here before."

"Yeah," said Servie.

"Well, get this," explained Heather. "He got a day off work last week. Now, he's not the kind of guy who likes sitting around on his days off, so he wanted to do something with it. It started well, but then he meets my friend Luna. You know what she's like – she's always trying to get creatures to join in with her games. Well, she says, 'You wanna join us for our round of *Mario Kart*?' And then he says, 'You betcha!' But what she'd done was she'd tricked him into joining one of her drinking games. He didn't know that when she said round, she meant she'd turned it into a drinking game! He thought she just meant a round of the game."

"No way!" chuckled Servie.

"Yes way," continued Heather. "She got him with her sisters, and they were knocking back one shot every time they got hit with an item like the world was ending tomorrow. Waylon ended up so pissed by the end of it that he walked into the walls when it was time for him to go home. He couldn't drive, so they had to get him a taxi. His boss had to send him home because his hangover was so bad."

"Did he remember any of it?" asked Servie. "And is he okay now? There's a reason they say 'choose your poison'."

"Well, you're a doctor, so you know what's what about the body, right?" said Heather.

"Not everything, but I do try my best," smiled Servie modestly. He and Fiann showed warm smiles to each other, gazing longingly into each other's eyes. He knew what he was thinking. It had been a long time since they were parted for longer than a few days at a time, but it was as though they were meeting for the first time in years. Though it remained unspoken, he never wanted their time together to end and he could feel his heartbeat and breathing beginning to quicken.

"He's back to normal now," answered Matt, "but he doesn't have any memory of it at all. I had to get Luna's brother to fill me in, since he didn't wanna take part and just stayed in his bedroom. He's releasing his next Trance album soon and he's only got one more song to make, so he didn't want to be disturbed. But he still heard what happened, and ho boy, their mother hit the roof! She won't let her drink in the house any more. She even made her pour her stockpile of vodka down the sink, but yet she's got her own stash of whisky bottles in her bedroom! She might as well change her name to Jack Daniels!"

"Double standards or what, huh?" giggled Julie.

"How many creatures has she got drunk now?" chuckled Servie, awakening from his trance.

"I've lost count," answered Julie. "Oh, man! I bet you see that a lot in the hospital!"

"I do," said Servie sadly. "At the start of my shift, I had to treat a cheetah for alcohol poisoning."

"No way!" cried Fiann. "Really?" Servie nodded.

"Her boyfriend said she'd suddenly said she didn't know where she was even though she was at a club she went to every week. When we had a look at her, she was starting to lose consciousness. To cut a long story short, she'd been binge drinking every time she went to this club. It really surprised me that her liver was still in a good condition after all it had been through. My supervisor couldn't believe her eyes."

"Maybe that's how Heather's liver looks," smirked Matt, glancing at the vixen who didn't look as though she was paying attention.

"That's not all. We had another one just like the cheetah later on, but he was in a much worse condition. His wife brought him in when he collapsed on the street. His paw pads and the whites of his eyes had gone yellow, and we found out his liver was close to packing up. He was in denial. In fact, he kept asking us for more vodka even when we were pumping his stomach out."

"Damn," cried Julie, "that is crazy!" She turned to Heather as she took a long gulp from her third beer. "Hey Heather, you listening?"

"Huh?" she said. "Yeah, about the alcohol poisoning you had to treat? I'd never want to go through that."

"Says you, Miss I Love Beer." smirked Matt. "But at least you're not one of those hoarders on TV whose houses are full of empty beer cans."

"Hey, I've got an idea for you!" proposed Heather. With that, she proceeded to drain the rest of her tankard, releasing another loud belch. Servie winced.

"You enjoying your beers?" quipped Julie.

"Immensely." grinned Heather.

"Well, what's your idea then?" asked Matt.

"To drink that." said Heather pointedly.

"Oh, come on. Really?" chuckled Julie. "*That's* your idea?"

"Yeah." smirked Heather as Servie took another sip. "But yeah Matt, you're right about the hoarding bit. I've got plenty of cold ones in the fridge left instead."

"You owe your friends after your darts and your video games, right?" said Julie wryly. "What happened to real friendship?"

"It's still friendship." said Heather. "It's just the way we repay favours to each other. You understand, right?"

"Yeah, I get that." smiled Servie. "Sometimes I do that too, but that usually comes with a night out as well when I've got the time."

"Of course, of course." replied Heather. "But then there's you and Fiann as well. You can't deny you two will be an object soon, right? We've seen you making eyes at each other." Immediately Servie blushed, and he noticed that Fiann had turned away with his cheeks beneath his fur turning as red as his were.

"Yeah, we've seen what you two are like when you get together." said Julie.

"Guess there's no point denying it." said Fiann sheepishly. "There's always been a spark between us."

"It's been like that since day one." grinned Servie.

"Of course it's been like that." grinned Matt to Fiann. "You could –"

"Offer him a drink?" interjected Heather. Fiann and Servie both brightened at the proposition. "Yeah, I wasn't holding out on you."

"Hey, that's not a bad idea!" smiled Fiann. *This night's taking a nice turn all of a sudden!* thought Servie. "I know what his favourites are. Another mojito, Servie?"

"Aw, you shouldn't!"

"It's on me." said Fiann.

"Okay. Since they haven't got any herbal teas here, I think I'll have a raspberry schnapps this time." replied Servie. "I like a bit of variety."

"The choice of somebody who likes their sweets." commented Heather.

"Well, I'm not *that* crazy about sweets," smiled Servie, "but what the heck. There's something there, and I love what I'm seeing in him. He's everything I dreamed he would be, and I've found myself hoping he'll be rushed in and I get to be the one who treats him."

"You know, that sounds both grim and touching at the same time." commented Matt.

"Maybe he doesn't wanna get hurt or ill for your benefit." said Julie sharply.

"Tell you what," smirked Fiann when he returned and gave him his drink, also giving Heather another beer, "I just might have to get myself injured. When I do, I'll request you specially, Doctor Fembuck."

"I can already see that happening," simpered Servie. And as though on cue, the track that was playing wound down, before transcending into the next. The moment the song began, their ears twitched, their heartbeats quickened, smiles weaved through their faces. Servie couldn't quite believe his luck. His mind was sent into a spin like windscreen wipers with no windscreen to wipe.

"Care to dance, Servie?" proposed Fiann. "This is our song."

"You bet!" cried Servie, both of them rising to their hooves at once.

"You go, deeries!" crowed Julie as they headed into the largest available space they could find on the dance floor. Though he'd danced with Fiann before, his heart began to race and he felt a chill race through him, sending his fur on end as both his highest aspirations and deepest fears took hold. He hoped he could impress him with the moves one of his colleagues had shown him, though he was uncertain how well they would fit into this setting. *Let's give it a shot.* he thought. And much to the DJ's pleasant surprise, Servie pulled Fiann into a meticulous and graceful ballroom dance, interspersed with the moves exhibited by the clubbers all around them.

Throughout each section of the song, each move Servie and Fiann treated each other to, they each found themselves enthralled, enamoured, clamouring to see the other flow with the song's time, and all through the buildup, he pulled him close, dancing in time with the song's even pace, while Fiann combined his own style with Servie's to form an amalgam that drew appreciative cheers from some of the surrounding clubbers. Servie caught a glance at Fiann's eyes as he pulled him into a do-si-do. The happiness he saw in his eyes reflected his own as though he was looking at a pair of small mirrors, which served to make his heart flutter.

Suddenly, just as the breakdown drew near and then dropped, quieting the dance floor down, a vicious argument broke out at a nearby table, three huskies advancing on another who was cowering and beginning to shiver. Servie couldn't decipher what was happening due to one of them slurring his words heavily and the music drowning out the rest. He tried to stay focused on their dance, but without warning, one of the huskies punched the scared canine, and just as he'd recovered and two had walked away, the one who remained drained his shot glass and smashed it into his face, sending him crashing to the dance floor. Acting by his instinct, Servie let go of Fiann and rushed over to the felled husky.

"Servie, what are you doing?" cried Fiann.

"Don't get involved!" professed Matt. "Don't you remember what happened last time?"

"This is the job." Servie called back. "I'll be back before you know it. Go get yourself another drink while you're waiting, alright Fiann?"

"Alright." said Fiann with a smile. "You just do what you have to do, my deery." And as Servie navigated through the crowd, some of whom in shock by what had just transpired, Fiann headed the opposite way to the bar.

"Let me through! I'm a medic. This boy's got a long night ahead of him." His head bowed sombrely when he got a look at the husky. Jagged pieces of glass were sticking out of his muzzle and cheeks and he had several deep cuts that were sending trails of blood trickling through his fur. *This looks really nasty.* he thought.

"You're going to be fine, alright?" said Servie soothingly.

"Who are you?" said the husky weakly.

"I'm Servie. I'll get you sorted out." He addressed the other clubgoers and the DJ. "I need someone to get an ambulance over here!" He couldn't imagine what would justify this through a sober mind, or indeed an

inebriated one, but it wasn't his business to try and find out. Just when he'd opened his first aid kit and cleaned his cuts and his fur, however, he found himself rudely interrupted.

"Hey deer," snarled a male voice, "what the fuck do you think you're doing?"

"I'm a doctor," answered Servie. "Somebody just glassed this poor guy."

"Yeah," said the husky proudly. "I did it!" His breath smelt strongly of whiskey and although he wasn't slurring his words, the anger in his voice was enough to greatly unnerve him.

"Why?" he asked. Immediately he cursed himself for uttering this, as he thought he shouldn't involve himself. He was suddenly grabbed by the scruff of his collar.

"You help this walking piece of shit, and you're gonna get some too," growled the husky, baring his teeth and the claws on each hand paw, sending a shiver down Servie's spine.

"W-what did he do?" he asked fearfully.

"He touched my lady," he snapped. "He looked at her funny."

"I told him not to get involved!" protested Matt. "Lay off him!"

"Yeah, Servie didn't do anything to you! He's just a doctor who wants to help out!" cried Heather. But the husky ignored them. He frantically looked around for Fiann, but couldn't see him in the crowd.

"You think we're idiots, you fucking fox tart?" spat one of the huskies, leaving Heather utterly shocked.

"Just get out of the way!" snarled the other as he tried to barge past Servie. But he held his ground.

"I hardly think cutting his face open was the best way of dealing with this, whatever touching your girlfriend means to you. Look at him!" observed Servie, impassioned. But he quickly realised he'd made a serious mistake, for this was enough for the husky to shove him away from him and then swing for him, but he ducked just in time to avoid his fist, causing him to accidentally punch his friend in the cheek. They turned to each other, thorns coiling around Servie's mind when they turned to him, looking ready to rip him apart piece by piece.

"Wait 'til I get my paws on you!" snarled the husky.

"We can talk this out!" pleaded Servie. "You're drunk. Please think this through." But when he said this, he noticed that the husky was shaking on the spot, his pupils were not staying focused and he could also scent cold sweat. He knew he was in big trouble. *Oh, you're joking. They're drugged up as well as drunk?*

"Oh, that's it. You're dead, pal!"

"Run, Servie!" cried Heather. "Run like the wind!" Seeing no other option, Servie weaved his way through the crowd as quickly as he could, feeling guilty about leaving the wounded canine on the dance floor. Hiding inside the club would be of no use, for he knew that their noses were sensitive enough to sniff him out. Several other creatures tried to hold the huskies back, buying Servie enough time to reach the entrance before they broke free and began to chase him down.

"Hey kid," said one of the bouncers at the door, "where's the fire?"

"There isn't one," exclaimed Servie, and just as he'd gone back up the stairway, the two huskies had already begun to close the distance on him. The bouncers stepped in their way, but it was only enough to get him a few more seconds of breathing room. He rushed past the queue of clubbers still waiting to come in. He looked around him for somewhere, anywhere he could use to escape from his pursuers. It looked like it would be an easy feat, for there were still a lot of creatures on the streets and plenty of routes he could take. But it was to prove anything but what it appeared.

He weaved through a large crowd that had gathered near the club's entrance and ducked down an alleyway between two buildings. He tried to pull up a manhole cover, but couldn't shift it at all, so he kept going and found an entrance into two short rows of garages. He looked around to find one that had been left unlocked, but none of the doors he checked would budge. But then he heard two sets of footsteps approaching. Terrified, he looked around for any place he could hide. All he could see was the corners, the way back into

the alleyway and the turnoff back onto the street. He felt cold sweat beginning to soak his fur, and by then was starting to fear for his life. How could he not have seen this would happen? It was a question he didn't know if he could provide an answer to.

"Here you are!" roared a voice from behind him suddenly. He didn't stop to find out which husky it was. He climbed straight up the wall, but he felt himself grabbed from the hoof. Panicking, he kicked the husky away and got up onto the roof of one of the sets of garages, vaulting across it before dropping down onto the street.

"You're not getting away from us!" snarled the husky.

"Leave me alone!" cried Servie as he took off again, ducking into the open fire exit of a block of flats. He bolted up the stairs, slamming the fire exit behind him. But the pair of huskies were close behind, barging in before the door could fully close.

"Hey, what the hell's going on?" demanded a ground floor resident taking out her bin bags. But she was only just quick enough to avoid the huskies knocking her out of the way. Servie raced up the first flight of carpeted stairs, only to run into another resident who had to dive out of the way to avoid him. Desperate, Servie turned a table over when he came around a corner. When this failed to slow down the huskies, his heart filled with dread. He knew he would reach a dead end soon or find himself in front of the staircases again. And he had no means of being able to defend himself from their attacks. But a moment of hope arrived for him when he found three lifts. One had an out of order sign hanging from it, but one of the other two was open. *Sanctuary!* he thought, rushing towards it and frantically pressing one of the buttons.

"There he is!" cried one of the huskies, the smell of alcohol wafting through the corridor again. "I see him!"

"Come on, Albert!" roared the other, drinking out of a whiskey bottle he pulled from his coat pocket. "Let's kill him!" *Come on!* thought Servie desperately, shaking with fear as the canines got closer and closer with each passing millisecond. *Why won't these doors shut?* But just in time, they slid shut, the lift starting to move. *Wait, why's this lift going up?* thought Servie. Then he realised he'd hit the call button for the top floor. His mind finally began to calm, even though he didn't think he'd escaped them yet. *I'm safe. At least, for a little while.* he thought, leaning back on the wall and exhaling sharply. But he soon slid down the wall until he was curled up into a ball.

He had never had this come from wanting to help someone who was injured before. Sure, he'd had creatures refuse treatment and attack him in a bid to get him to leave them alone, but now he was running for his life as though he'd betrayed a member of a criminal enterprise – and not even they had sought fit to hunt him down. How could this have happened to him? His friends had said he was the kind of person who wore his heart on his sleeve rather than keeping it on his medical clogs.

The lift opened, and there was nothing in front of him except a corridor with the lights turned off. He was trapped. What could he do now? If the huskies found him here, he feared there was no reasoning with them now. It didn't seem like they were close by at the moment, but the only way he could get away from them now was the off chance they were too drunk to consider pressing the call buttons. As the lift began its slow descent down to the basement, it felt like the longest minute of his life. His heart raced, cold sweat matted his fur, and as he approached the floor he'd got in on, he cowered into the very corner of his enclosure.

Much to his relief, the lift went straight past it, not stopping until it reached the basement. However, when the doors opened, he could feel his knees weakening.

"He's here!" cried a familiar voice.

"I'd like to say it was nice meeting you, but I can't wait to turn your insides out, boy." grinned the other. And before he could get out, they blocked the doorway, each of them baring their claws and readying themselves for attack. In the brief half second Servie met eyes with them, he saw they were unfocused, not seeming to stay still for even one second. Seeing his opportunity when he saw one of them swaying on his foot paws, he dived through the gap between their legs, landing on the tiled floor under them and scrambling out as fast as he could before they could figure out what had happened. He clambered to his hooves as fast as possible and ran for the only way out he could see – a stairway that led to ground level.

But he was not quick enough. The drugged up huskies soon recovered and bounded after him. Servie was desperate to run into someone, anyone who could help him or at least sidetrack them. When he reached the top of the stairs, he raced towards the open road, sweat flowing down his cheeks into his fur. There had to be somewhere else he could go – somewhere he could at least throw them off his scent. Dodging the passing

vehicles, he rushed across the road and headed in the direction of a pub. But by then, his energy was starting to run low. He didn't know how much longer he could keep this up.

He was about ready to give up and let the huskies take him, before a taxi rolled towards him. He gestured to the driver to stop, only for them to speed off as though he wasn't there at all. He rushed for the pub's entrance as fast as his remaining energy would allow him and blended in with the crowd near the entrance, looking behind him to find that the huskies were gaining on him again, their noses twitching as they scented him.

"There he goes, Albert!" cried one. Servie tugged the front door open and looked around for any place he could hide, although amongst the still large crowds he could only move very slowly as he navigated his way through them. If his scent combined with that of many others, would it dull their desire to hunt him down? He didn't think it would work, but he was desperate enough to resort to anything.

He looked behind him to find that they fortunately had not come in yet. But just when he thought he had some hope of escape, he was suddenly floored. Not by someone grabbing him, but he'd walked into a pool table and found himself faced with a cue just inches from his nose.

"Well, so much for our rousing game of pool." commented one of the players above the dimly lit table. He looked up to find a wingless bat and a panther watching him. The sight of the two watching him in what little light there was around them...his senses could handle no more.

"You okay, lad?" asked the bat. But he voiced no answer but a sharp exhalation, all going black as consciousness escaped him.

