The Savage Dark

by Kulkum

Summary

With their feelings for one another still burning hot, Nick Wilde and Judy Hopps leave their bubble of serenity to face the world. But what does it mean when Nick begins to display unusually aggressive behavior?

Continues where The Broken Mask ended. Drama, Romance, Action, Conspiracy, Surprises, Humor, and Erotica all wrapped up in a Clawhauser sized package.
In the car with her parents, two of her siblings, and her –

What did she call him now? Her boyfriend? Ugh. That was terrible; that was what high school kits called the object of their usually short term affection. Her lover? That was a little better, though perhaps a little too complicated to explain; lover brought to mind a quick fling, or someone else’s mate which she detested. Love, then. Her love. She rather liked the sound of that, but still. ‘This is my love, Nick.’ That wouldn’t roll off the tongue right, and her friend was certainly out as a term of endearment. Of course, he was her friend and always would be she hoped, but it was far from everything they were now. Her fox had merit, but it seemed clingy to use it in public or to describe him to someone else. She loved Her Fox, and she had no doubt that she would think of him in that way. But that was theirs, and she would keep it that way. Partner. Always and forever her partner, no matter what. The one who had saved her, believed in her, and forgiven her when she had stumbled and made a speciest fool of herself. That was it, and it didn’t need to change to something other than that.

– partner all together, Judy was starting to wonder if this was what it meant to go quickly insane. With all of the bunny bodies squished together, though squished only seemed to apply to one side of the vehicle, the majority of her family had scooted close to her on the passage side while Nick drove. Thankfully, they were almost to the station. And then she could…

“What are your intentions towards my daughter?” Stu Hopps suddenly pipped up, in his best authoritative, father figure tone of voice.

“Dad!”

“Well a father has to ask these things, carrot pie,” Stu responded as she groaned and dropped her face into her hands. She was not having this conversation while in full uniform. “It was obvious what was going on there, and I’m just not sure that it’s a good idea for a healthy young bunny like yourself to…”

“Now now, dear,” her mother cut in before he could fall into one of his speeches about doing what was easiest and being comfortable. “They work close together. You can’t blame her for being curious. And it is that time of year, so…”

“Mom!”

“Well I think he’s kinda hot,” Beth quipped, which drew Judy’s attention to the fact that the almost pure white rabbit was, in fact, the one sitting closest to Nick. Closer than she had been when the drive had started, in fact, and was now reaching out with one dainty paw towards the aviator wearing fox’s arm in a bid to cop a feel as the rest of the family gaped at her.

“Stop that!” Judy cried, reaching out to rapidly swat at her sister’s curious paws until they withdrew. This only drew a bright smile from her sister, who looked at her with all of the smugness ever put on earth for siblings to use to torment their older sisters.
“Well I don’t trust him,” came the deeper, very unamused voice from her other side. She turned her eyes to Jason, her muzzle pulled down into a frown that matched the tan and white buck’s own when he continued with a wave of his hands towards Nick. “I mean look at him. He looks like he’s about to snarl already. Probably because he’s in a car full of ‘food.’”

Rolling her eyes, Judy still turned to look at Nick along with the rest of the family. She did see it now; the brief, occasional twitch of his lips that pulled them back enough to show the barest tip of his canines and made the top of his muzzle almost imperceptibly curl. Of course, most people would have missed it entirely, but Jason was obviously watching her partner like a hawk. With a windy sigh, she dropped her head back in the seat and closed her eyes.

“He’s not snarling, you idiot,” she explained, feeling just a little bit like shoving her relatives into the Cage. “He’s trying not to laugh.”

Which Nick, to her total lack of surprise, took as his cue to actually start laughing. It wasn’t a light chuckle, either; he let out a sharp bark of a laugh, followed by continued belly gripping laughter that had the whole family staring at him as though he had lost his mind. Except for her, of course.

Of course he would find this amusing. If I didn’t love him, I swear I would…

“I’m sorry, Carrots,” he said, though the fact that he said this while swiping one finger under his sunglasses while still chuckling made him sound very un-sorry. Especially when his grin only seemed to grow when she glared at him. “But you have to admit that this situation is a little ridiculous.”

“Why does he call you Carrots?” came Beth’s immediate question, looking between the two of them with curious blue eyes.

“He’s sitting right there,” she said, deciding that throwing Nick under the bus was acceptable considering his amusement at her suffering. “Ask him yourself.”

All eyes turned to Nick again, and the fox flashed his best, closed-mouth, no teeth hustler grin. “You got it. Ask me anything, anything at all.”

Judy put on her own smug grin, leaning back in the seat and closing her eyes to make herself seem less available as the barrage began.

“Why do you call her Carrots?” Beth repeated, her voice as eager as her eyes no doubt were.

“Let’s call it an insult that turned into an endearment,” he replied, which turned her smug grin into a softer one, though she still didn’t open her eyes.

“Can’t you get another fox instead of my sister?”

“Jason!”

“No, it’s all right,” Nick said, his voice holding a cool edge that it often did when dealing with a speciest. “I could. But I won’t.”

“Were you really a street hustler?” Judy rolled her eyes behind her eyelids. The eager-to-know-the-city-fox tone had not faded from her sister’s voice.

“I was an entrepreneur,” he replied smoothly, which drew a snort from Judy and forced him to amend, “Of pawsickles.”
“You never told me what your intentions are.”

“Dad, stop that! Don’t answer any questions under duress, Nick.”

“How does it feel being the first fox police officer?” came the smoothly sweet voice of her mother, bringing what Judy saw as the first serious question into the conversation. “Are they treating you well, Mr. Wilde?”

“I love it. The job, being on the streets, spending all day telling Carrots jokes.”

“Bad jokes,” she inserted, small smile playing over her muzzle.

“Excellent jokes,” he corrected easily without missing a beat. “As for the others. I suppose they treat me like they would any rookie,” he replied, and now she opened her eyes to turn them in his direction. She could see from his expression that he was holding back, mask in place to hide the fact that he still didn’t feel fully accepted. She understood his reluctance to talk about it. It wasn’t that they were treated badly, but it could be hard to relate to mammals that were all at least twice your size. And a lot of them still referred to him as just ‘fox’, which he often replied to with his general snarky sounding off of their species in reply. But she knew he wanted to be more than just ‘the fox on the force.’

“How much bigger is it than a bunnies?”

“Bethany Amelia Hopps!” her mother cried, blustering and stuttering and waving her paws at her husband. “Talk to your daughter, Stu!”

“And on that note,” Nick said easily, as if the question hadn’t been as horrifyingly invasive as it had been, rolling the cruiser to a stop next to the coffee shop across the street from the station. “I’m going to get some coffee. Anyone want anything while I’m in? My treat.”

“I’ll help,” she said, in part because everyone wanted a Carrlatte from the big city coffee shop, and in part because she wanted to get out of the car to breath. “You guys wait here. We’ll be back in a minute.”

Bonnie was already shushing protests – most of which came from Beth in her desire to learn more about Nick – when Judy opened the door and hopped down into the parking lot. Trying her best not to slam the door, she dashed around to the other side where Nick waited with his dark glasses tracking her.

“Well, that was bracing,” he said, a smirk tugging at the corners of his muzzle as they made their way into the coffee shop side-by-side. “I especially liked the part where your sister sexually harassed me multiple times. I may need to file a complaint with the police. Are you available, officer?”

“Ugh, I am so sorry about that. All of it. My sister especially,” she said, feeling ready to throttle all four of the bunnies, three of which she could hear were currently focused on telling Bethany to keep her muzzle and paws under control, thankfully. Some small miracles were still possible, and one was the fact that her sister kept drawing the ire of her parents instead of them focusing entirely on her relationship… With… Nick.

Oh.

“Well, it was your idea to bring them along,” Nick had continued, wandering at his deceptively lazy gait into the brightly colored café, strolling towards the counter as she considered giving her sister the bunny equivalent of a bear hug.
“I didn’t exactly have a choice,” she mumbled, keeping her voice low in the otherwise empty shop. “It was either this, or leave them in my apartment. My apartment, which smells like fox.”

“Equal responsibility there, Carrots,” he said with a grin, swaying his hips a little closer to let his tail brush over the back of her legs. While she could hardly feel it, it still made her jump and flush at the little intimacy it conveyed. She knew how Nick was about his tail, knew that for foxes that tail was something of a ‘no touch’ zone unless invited. Or if they were close enough to someone to allow that sort of contact freely.

To direct her attention away from thoughts of his tail, and what it might feel like to slide her fingers through the luxurious and beautiful fur late at night, she turned her attention back to the coffee shop. Doughnuts, pastries, and various other goodies of all sizes were on display; from little white cakes with a single strawberry on top that would hardly have been a mouthful for either of them, to bagels large enough for her to crawl through the hole in the middle. Most people misunderstood the relationship between cops and doughnut shops. It wasn’t some obsession with the calorie laden doughnuts themselves; it was the fact that the necessity of caffeine was readily available in whatever size was required to survive a shift, and the pastries just happened to be a quick, easily transportable means to fill the belly. Right then, the sweet scents assaulted her nose in the most pleasant of ways; and when mingled with the warming aroma of fresh brewed coffee, she found her stomach growling loudly. When was the last time she had eaten?

Obviously hearing the sound, her partner grinned down at her toothily. The fact that that dangerously charismatic smile still managed to be predatory sent a little thrill through her that settled in her belly as a tingle. She shoved him away playfully as they reached the counter and the smiling gazelle behind it.

“Good Morning Officer Hopps! Officer Wilde,” she said with a benign sort of cheer that often rubbed off on the ZPD officers who came into the shop with a bright smile.

“A very good morning it is, Jess. How are ya?” Nick said in a brightly charming tone that she was sure he would have used to swindle a free doughnut or twelve at one point in his life. Now that charm was sincere, as was the smile when they jumped up on the bench that ran the length of the counter to allow smaller mammals to see the menu. “Are those blueberry muffins? I’d give you my heart if it wasn’t already taken! I’ll take two of those, if you don’t mind, darlin’. Two cups of coffee the usual way, four Carrlattes - one with extra anti-psychotics - and whatever my partner here wants to appease the tiger that seems to be living in her stomach.”

Landing a solid punch in his arm, both for the tiger and the anti-psychotics joke, she shook her head as she decided to be bad that morning. “I’ll take a chocolate cream filled, a chocolate glazed, and one of the muffins, please.”

Seeing that Nick had tugged his glasses halfway down his muzzle to level a bland gaze at her over the dark lenses, she simply folded her hands behind her back and rocked back and forth on her heels with high ears pointed in his direction. “What’s that look for? I’m hungry.”

“Hm,” was his only reply as he slid his glasses back into place with one clawed finger. “You’re never going to finish it all.”

“I haven’t eaten since yesterday morning, I’ll have you know,” she huffed when the coffee was set in front of them. Thanking whatever entity had blessed Zootopia with caffeine, she reached out and took her cup in both paws. Lifting it to her muzzle to breath it in slowly, she sighed happily when she concluded. “You’d be surprised how much a bunny can eat. Especially when there is sugar involved.”
She savored the first slow sip from the coffee, finding it strange how a stimulant could be so relaxing. She could almost forget that her parents were right outside…

“I think I’ve learned not to underestimate how much you can fit inside you.” Nick commented in a tone that was so perfectly innocent that she almost choked on that first drink.

Sending the fox a glare as he leaned against the counter and oh-so casually took a sip of his own coffee while watching her with a face that should have told her nothing. But she could feel the heat of his gaze on her, even though all the aviators let her see was her own reflection. It never left her, even when the clerk brought back the second part of their order.

“The carrlattes will take just a minute!” she informed them cheerfully, before turning her attention to the steam hissing machine at the back of the room.

Judy turned her attention to the two bags that waited, and nearly scrambled for the larger of the two bags. Her stomach not willing to wait – even as she tried to think of a good comeback against her partner and tried not to let the way her own reflection followed her get to her as much as it was about to – she opened it quickly and pulled out the first thing within reach. Not even bothering with the little white squares of wax paper in the bag, she lifted it to her mouth and took a hefty bite. The delicious burst of overly sweet flavor coated her tongue, and she groaned in blissful acceptance of her own gluttony as she took another bite before she had even finished swallowing the first.

Her gaze flicked to Nick, unashamed of her hunger even under the grin that had gown on his muzzle while watching her. She swallowed the two bites, daintily licking the frosting from one claw before she reached for her coffee. “One more remark like that out of you, Mr. Wilde, and I might have to bring you up on charges myself. Conduct unbecoming an officer.”

“Okay,” he said, setting down his coffee and taking a step closer to her. She watched him with wary eyes, the doughnut in one hand and the coffee in the other. “A few things: A. I am not an officer right now, technically. B. This coffee shop is very empty and the clerk is distracted by your family’s carrlate lust.”

She swallowed a bit when he reached up and slid the sunglasses off slowly, setting them on the counter beside his coffee. While that look of hunger in his green eyes should not have surprised her, it still sent a little shock through her to see it as he leaned close to her. The bright newness of it all left her more than a little stunned; she simply wasn’t used to him looking at her that way, and it sent a curl of desire spreading through her that made her fur want to stand on end.

When he reached out and lightly traced his thumb over her bottom lip, she was already melting into his paw. And almost melted completely when he took that thumb away, slowly licking the spot of chocolate he had gathered away with one swipe of his long tongue. “Is there a ‘C’?” she managed, feeling like she might crawl out of her uniform on the spot if he didn’t at least kiss her.

“Mnhm,” was his first reply, his eyes on hers as his paw returned, though this time it was to nudge her chin up until their lips were nestled together. His voice was a low, whispered vibration against her lips that made her entire muzzle tingle; he was growling the words, and she had no idea why that excited her. “C. I have to get it out while I can, before Officer Wilde has to worry about ‘Conduct Unbecoming.’”

She folded her ears back and surrendered to the kiss. Surrendered, bent, and was gently blown away by it as she savored the almost odd but still so perfect way his mouth fit against hers. The way he tilted his long muzzle when their lips parted let her feel the heated exhale of a contented sigh, and when her tongue met his larger one for a lazy but satisfying exchange the taste of fox left her knees weak. They had kissed multiple times the previous night, had slept together in her bed, and had
woken up to make love twice – not forgetting the episode in the rainforest. Oh no, not forgetting that – and when he pulled back from the kiss she still couldn’t fully grasp the fact that it was real.

Which left her swaying there for a moment with her eyes closed, her lips parted, a cup of coffee in one hand and a bag of pastry in the other. When she finally came to her senses – and damn her sexy fox for making her loose them in the first place – she licked her lips slowly, finding that he had put his sunglasses back on and was leaning against the counter with one elbow watching her.

“Well, that didn’t get it out of my system at all,” he said, and she could hear the strain in his voice when he said it. And she knew he was as affected as she was by the kiss when she saw him reach for his coffee with a paw that shook ever so slightly.

Smiling now, feeling brave and maybe a little foolish, be it because of the kiss or because the sugar and caffeine had reached her system somewhere between those first two bites and the bone melting kiss, she set the coffee and the bag on the counter next to him. After a quick glance to make sure the clerk was still occupied with the cappuccinos, she reached up and snagged his tie with one paw, almost making him drop his coffee as she pulled him down to her.

“Then let’s try again,” she said, this time taking the kiss herself and finding that it was just as sweet.

The loud thump from the entrance to the shop made both of them jump, pull apart and stepping back as their gazes turned towards the door. She saw the bulky form of the cheetah against the glass window beside the door at the same moment that Nick did. Clawhauser had his face pressed against the window, his mouth hanging open with eyes as wide as she expected they could get. She groaned loudly when the surprised look became one of unparalleled delight and unrepentant glee as he pulled away and, with his paws clasped together under his chin, did a little bouncing dance in place that had his belly jiggling. She was pretty sure everyone within a mile heard the excited and drawn out ‘Eeiii!’ that he let loose as he ran for the door, moving amazingly quick for such a large mammal.

“Caught twice in one morning. This is your fault,” Nick told her in an offhand but soft voice as the door swung open, keeping it low so only she could hear. Of course, he was already leaning against the counter again, coffee in hand and sunglasses neatly settled on his muzzle with a cheerful grin spreading at their fast approaching co-worker. “Had to go in for that last taste of fox. Hey, Clawhauser!”

Scrunching her muzzle in a frown, which she hid behind her own cup of coffee, she watched the whirlwind of delighted feline practically dance his way up to them with his trademark “Oh… M… Goodness,” before he did a mock swoon that had her worried that he might actually fall over. “I just cannot believe what I’m seeing! Oh, this is the best thing since the Gazelle concert! And I’ve gotta say, you two make…”

“Don’t say it,” Nick warned half-heartedly.

“…the most adorable couple I’ve ever seen!” Seeming completely un-phased by their mutual groans, he continued, much to her embarrassment. “And one of my best friends is an otter who married his high school sweetheart. They had the sweetest wedding out of the city by a lake, and at the end they jumped in the water, holding hands as the current carried them away and that was the cutest thing I think I have ever seen until now. But I never expected this!”

“Clawhauser…”

“I mean, I didn’t even believe it at first, but when Delgado swore me to secrecy he said that your reaction to the weasel was ex-tremely territorial and protective,” he continued without pausing for breath, pointing a chubby paw at Nick. Nick, who simply sipped his coffee with a blank expression
behind the aviators when she turned a glance at him.

Territorial?

She didn’t have time to contemplate the intricacies of predator territorial behavior as Clawhauser plowed on with all of the grace of a charging rhino.

“. . . But I didn’t believe him when he said it looked like more than protecting your partner. I mean, a fox and a bunny? That’s like a wolf and sheep! But that’s what makes it so sweet!”

Judy reached her limit, her foot thumping quickly on the bench for a moment before an idea had her ears lifting and her face brightening. Grabbing the bag containing her breakfast, she fished out the remaining doughnut. Sweet treat in paw, she jumped at the much larger predator and planted her feet on his round belly. The surprise on his face was replaced by sinful food delirium when she shoved the first half of the chocolate treat past his still moving lips before quickly back-flipping onto the bench again to stand with a smug look turned towards Nick when the cheetah ‘Mm’ed and ‘Oo’ed his way through the first bite.

“So how long…” he started again, but Nick cleared his throat loudly.

“The doughnut was a bribe to shut you up, Benjamin,” he said, making Judy smother a laugh in her paw when the cheerful face fell into a look of understanding.

“Oh, I’m sorry! I’m doing it again, aren’t I? Dummy Clawhauser. Always talking tu mucph,” he said as he shuffled the second half of the doughnut in his mouth, somehow managing to look contrite and blissful at the same time. Judy still believed that he had to be the most adorable predator that she had ever known, with a cute, carelessly affectionate way about him that often overstepped social cues.

“So, um,” Nick began, fishing out his wallet and some bills when the gazelle delivered the carrlattes. Which she did, Judy noticed, while giving her an odd look. She couldn’t quite read it, but it didn’t come across as unfriendly. Just… Confused. Judy could just imagine the rumors flying already. But she was distracted, and blinked quickly when Nick continued. “You said that you didn’t believe it ‘at first.’ When exactly was ‘at first?’”

“Oh! Well, Fangmeyer and Wolford have a bet going,” the cheetah all but chirped, moving over to the other side of the counter. “Hiiii Jess! Could you get me a mixed dozen, a caramel triple shot expresso with an extra sugar, and… Hm. Oh! One of those angel food cakes. Thank you so much!”

“Clawhauser, old buddy? What. Bet?”

Any humor or fun had drained from Nick’s voice now, and Judy lifted her ears and focused them on him. He sounded angry. On the edge of furious, in fact. It was such a rare sound from him that she reached out to brush her paw down his shoulder gently to calm him when she saw the top of his muzzle wrinkle in the start of a snarl. The touch seemed to calm him instantly, the curl fading away as suddenly as it had come, so she continued the slow strokes down to the fur of his arm even as her partner took another slow drink of his coffee. The bubbly cheetah didn’t seem to notice any of this.

“Oh. Well,” he began, and then seemed to hesitate for the first time. Though that hesitation could have been caused by the fact that his eyes had settled on a massive elephant sized cake in the display longingly. “They’ve both taken the tactical classes with you. And there may have been talk about changes in your behavior towards each other. And Wolford may have said that the two of you were going to hook up, and hook up soon based on the smell of things. But Fangmeyer may have said that it would never work, so Nick would have to go… Ahem. ‘Bang one out’ with a vixen to ease the tension. And they may have ended up betting on it? But only them! No one really pays attention to
that kind of thing, I swear! And I didn’t believe them, so anyone else they told probably didn’t believe it either. Are you mad? Please don’t be mad!”

She understood why he had gone from a cheerful tone to an apologetic one. What might have otherwise been a mortifying revelation to her was blocked by the fact that she could feel the tension return to his arm. Tension filled every inch of him, in fact. Red rimmed ears were pinned back so far against his skull that they almost vanished into his neck fur and he shook for a moment. She expected his claws to pierce the coffee cup he held any second.

Then it passed, and he drew a slow breath that was released in a rushed sigh. “I’m not mad at you, Clawhauser. Though Carrots here might not share my thoughts.” He reached over to take the cardboard cup holder full of carrlattes with his bag of muffins balanced on top in one hand, and the coffee in the other. “What do you think, Carrots? Want to rough him up while I take these to your parents and loving siblings?”

Her gaze followed him as he hopped down from the bench easily, and strode towards the door with a sway in his tail. A tail that was higher up than normal, showing that he was still tense and irritated. But knowing that she couldn’t do anything at the moment, she turned her gaze to the cheetah, who had his hands clasped together under his chin pleadingly.

She considered him for a moment, noting that his gaze kept darting to the door where Nick had gone curiously. Or to be more precise, to the squad car where her family sat. A slow smile tugged at the corners of her muzzle before she recovered her own breakfast and coffee, and jumped down next to the big cat.

“Get your doughnuts. And then I’ll forgive you, as long as you do Nick and me a favor.”

It had been quite the sight. Driving up to the ZPD in a cruiser filled with five bunnies, one very large cheetah who was doting over four of them – even offering to share his doughnuts – and a fox wearing salmon pink and gray. While no one commented on it, there was curious stares. The same sorts of stares he had gotten when he had arrived for his first day of work in the Downtown District; those ‘well that’s not normal’ looks that now made him chuckle as Bonnie, Stu, Jason and Beth were led through the main lobby by the quickly talking and excited cheetah.

“He’s going to talk their ears off,” he commented. Keeping his tone even and amused was easier now, as even the short drive across the street with four confused Hopps and a cheetah that was impossible not to like had calmed him considerably. “Passing them off on him was a slick move there, Fluff.”

“Why thank you, partner,” she said, heading immediately to the front desk to drop her coffee and what was left of her breakfast on the cabinet behind it. “It wasn’t hard to convince them that he’s harmless, and we really need to get to…"

“Hopps! Wilde! My office, now!”

“…Chief Bogo’s office,” she finished, her ears dropping as she turned her gaze towards him.

He shrugged off the tension, though inside he felt a fist balling in his guts. What if the Chief changed his mind? What if he lost his job? It was especially concerning, considering the story they were going to have to tell him to explain why he had turned his badge over in the first place. Because of bunnies, of the beloved and the annoying variety, he had not been given a chance to come up with an acceptable story to explain things without telling the whole story. And he knew that this he couldn’t
slide off with a quick hustle, no matter how much he wished it were so. Which brought another fear that was somehow even more terrifying: what if he kept his job, but lost her as a partner?

“Well, let’s get this over with then,” he said, bottling up the unease as they started towards the stairs to Bogo’s office. Sliding his sunglasses off as she quickened her pace to fall in step beside him, he turned his gaze to her and flashed her a grin. “It’ll be fine, Carrots. I’m sure we can think of something. We don’t need to tell him the whole story.”

He watched her gaze shift to his face, and she was doing… That thing again. Where those beautiful amethyst eyes seemed to be reading between the cracks and seeing everything he tried to hide from her. Before she even replied, his face went flat and annoyed as his ears flicked back; he even shoved his hands in his pockets, even if it made him feel a bit like a sulking kit.

“Stop that,” he griped, stomping unhappily up the stairs. “Fine. I don’t think we’ll be able to wheedle our way out of telling him the whole story. I haven’t exactly been focused for the last twenty four hours.”

“You felt pretty focused to me,” she muttered under her breath, which instantly lightened his mood and allowed him to relax.

“On you, maybe, but not on much else,” he said, drawing his hands out of his pockets to increase his pace up the stairs to a jog.

“Nick, wait,” she said when they reached the top of the stairs, and he turned to face her with his eyebrow raised. “No stories. No trying to avoid what happened. I told you last night, I want my partner back, and I think telling the Chief everything that happened is the way to do that. And that’s what I’m going to tell him.”

A brief moment of silence passed between them, where he wondered which one of them was more uncomfortable with that scenario. She was clearly not jumping at the chance; he could see the light tremble in her ears as she faced him. But she was also determined, stubbornly so. And if there was one thing he had learned, it was that a determined Judy was almost impossible to sway.

“If that’s what you want, Judy,” he replied, resisting the urge to reach out and slide one hand over those trembling ears to calm them. He had a feeling he was going to be resisting the urge to touch her a lot in the future. But he could deal with that; he could still touch her when they were alone. Perked up again by the thought, his ears high, he motioned towards Bogo’s office with his muzzle. “Come on then. Let’s go embarrass ourselves until our fur spontaneously combusts.”

When they reached the door, which was already open for them both, he caught sight of Wolford walking towards the same stairs they had just taken up. This gave him a moment of pause as he watched the timber wolf, who was busily flipping through the case report in his paws, pause as soon as he reached the head of the stairs. He saw the quick twitching of the black nose, followed by deeper breaths as he took in a scent that Nick knew very well he was still covered in. Raising his head to look around with alert ears, the wolf caught sight of the fox standing at the door.

Giving him a two fingered salute and a suggestive wink, Nick turned to close the door just as he caught sight of the grin spreading over the lupine muzzle.

*That’s right, take it in and enjoy winning your bet, dumb-dumb. I’ll settle things with you later. And revenge will be sweet.*

Chapter End Notes
I wanted this chapter to be funny mostly. Steeling myself for the dark things to come. :p
Discipline (Or the lack thereof)

He felt very much like a kit who had been sent to the principal’s office for getting caught necking with his sweetheart in the hallway between classes. It wasn’t exactly a comfortable feeling, though there was an underlying feeling of accomplishment that went along with it that had him wondering about the bragging rights teens gained when caught in a similar situation. Not that he would know himself. He had never been caught kissing a girl in the hallway; he had always saved that for after track practice, under the bleachers. And he had never been caught. Now he felt like he was under the gaze of the largest, most intimidating school administrator there could ever possibly be.

And he was fine with that.

Bogo sat, his hooves folded neatly in front of him on the surface of the desk, metallic-brown eyes curious, cool, and bordering on irritated as he looked between the two of them in silence. No one had said a word since they had entered the office, and Nick decided that it would be better to let the Chief have the first say. Which, when it came, almost made him jump after the long quiet.

“You have five minutes before noon,” came the deep baritone of his voice, shattering the silence that hung thick in the room. “You have that time to explain to me why Wilde turned in his badge, and why I should give it back when he can’t even be bothered to come into my office in uniform.

“And if you try to spin a fairytale or crack one joke, Wilde,” he continue, cutting them off with a sharp jab of his finger at the fox just as he opened his mouth to speak, “I’ll have your resignation on record and your hide out of this building so fast, even your partner won’t be able to keep up. Just so we understand how serious this all is.”

The last was said with a dangerously pleasant smile that just screamed ‘Try me.’ This had Nick tugging at his already unbuttoned collar of his shirt uneasily as he glanced at the bunny sitting in the chair beside him. She’d been right when it came down to the moment of truth, and the high set of her ears and the calm expression on her face told him that she had been expecting this all along. So Nick took a calming breath himself, and released it in a soundless sigh as he straightened himself in the massive chair.

“Well, Chief,” he began, squaring his shoulders and putting on his best professional air. “As the report states, Officer Hopps was perusing the weasel on suspicion of dealing narcotics. My attention turned to the buyer, because money and drugs had already exchanged paws, and we split-up to apprehend them. After subduing my suspect and calling for an ambulance, I heard a scream. When I arrived at the source I found my partner on the ground, along with a bag of the aforementioned narcotics on the ground beside her, and at least some on her face and muzzle. After the drug took affect and she went savage, I chased her into the denser parts of the rainforest, where I was able to locate and contain her.”

“That is the official statement given when the EMT arrived,” Bogo stated blandly, looking uninterested. “I assume there is more, since saving your partner isn’t a reason to resign.”
“Yes, sir. What was left out of my statement was that, between the time I entered the forest, and the
time I brought her out, there was a…” He paused, trying to find a way to work it harmlessly. But the
pause was thick, as if even Bogo was holding his breath. This was ridiculous, of course, as the cape
buffalo looked unaffected and if anything annoyed by the break. So he pressed on. “There was a
sexual encounter between myself and Officer Hopps.”

This caused the stern face to drop a bit in shock, which left Nick feeling only slightly relieved that at
least Bogo had been in the dark about their not-so-secret attraction for each other. Then the look of
shock faded, and the aged face tightened. Nick wanted to shrink into his chair as the chief pulled
himself to his feet, palms flat on the desk. “Am I to understand that, while your partner was drugged
and savage, you took advantage of her?”

If there was ever a moment when Bogo showed he cared about his officers, this was certainly one of
them. Nick could see the tension in his arms, the fury in his eyes and even his voice had deepened
dangerously. The massive male looked for all intents and purposes like he was ready to reach over
the desk and snap him in half.

And he couldn’t blame him. Not one bit.

“That’s not what happened, Chief,” Judy cut in quickly, her ears dropping and her nose twitching as
the anger seemed to roll over the room like a thundercloud. “He didn’t take advantage of me. If
anything, it was my doing.”

“You’re going to explain that statement, and fast, Hopps,” Bogo demanded, starting to pace behind
his desk as he kept his eyes on the two of them. “I am one word away from not only accepting his
resignation, but having him locked up!”

Nick saw Judy swallow once, before she pushed her ears upright and straightened her stance in the
chair. It was amazing how that actually did manage to make her look bigger than she was.

“Before there was a sexual encounter, I was aware of myself and my surroundings,” she stated in a
clear voice, one that he had no doubt took an effort if the trembling twitch of her nose was any
indication. “I was the one who instigated, and I was very aggressive. I was also aware that Nick… I
mean, Officer Wilde, was the one holding me. My reaction was probably because of this.”

This brought Bogo to a stop beside his desk, his eyes narrowed as his gaze focusing on her directly
now. His face was no less angry, but there was hesitation in his eyes now. “Because he is your
partner?”

Her voice drops a few notches in volume and he could see her ears quiver as she tried not to lower
them. “Because it was him, sir. I’ve been attracted to Wilde for months. I think before he ever left for
the Academy.”

The ease with which she stated that made Nick’s tilted ears shoot upright as he turned his gaze to her
fully, a look of pleased surprise impossible to suppress. The quick jolt of pleasure shot right into his
heart, and it took him a moment to school it away under Bogo’s stare. Which was now focused on
him as the large male stood with his hands clasped behind his back.

“And you? Do you agree that this is how things unfolded?”

“Yes, Chief. I had my own concerns about her state of mind, which is why I turned in my badge,” he
admitted, his ears folding to the side when Bogo’s eyes narrowed again. “She was…”

He hesitated, his muzzle pulling into an irritated frown as he felt a trickle of anger leak through the
forced professional calm. What more did he want from them? Did he want every damned detail? Did he want to know how hot she had been; how she had squirmed and writhed against him? How hard he had been from the sounds she made, and how much he had wanted to take things to the next level and just fuck her against the tree? Was he going to have to tell him that afterward, he had felt vile for the thought and felt that he had betrayed the trust and friendship he had cherished more than anything in his life? How he had been afraid to see his best friend again because of his fear that she would look at him, and he would see loathing and blame in her eyes? Was that what he wanted to hear?

The trickle had become a flood. He wasn’t even aware that his muscles had tensed, his paws clenched into fists, and the top of his muzzle twitched as it started to curl before a light paw rested on his bare forearm. The touch was familiar, welcome; and as quickly as it had come, the anger drained away as though it had never been there at all.

“Nick, it’s all right. Tell him.”

“As she said, she was extremely aggressive. She didn’t force me,” he clarified, bolstered by her assurance and straightened his shoulders again to give the massive mammal across the desk a level look. “But I was afraid that she was going to hurt herself when she attacked her gear belt and her clothing with her claws in the panic. She was in heat, and I think that it…”

“Enough,” Bogo said, his voice sounding weary as he waved Nick to silence before he sat behind his desk and lowered his head into his hooves. “I have a disturbingly clear image of what happened now, and I don’t need to hear anything else.”

They all sat in silence for a moment, during which time he watched Bogo raise his head and steeple his fingers in front of his snout. He gazed at the two of them with without expression, save for the occasional flick of his ears: as if he were trying to shoo away a particularly annoying gnat. Nick often found it more difficult to read Bogo than most mammals he had met. His default expression was somewhere between angry and uncaring, which almost never told the entire story. When he finally broke the silence, Nick felt his stomach drop.

“I should fire you both,” he began as he stood and stomped towards the file cabinet and opened the top drawer with enough force to make the entire thing slide jump away from the wall with a clash of metal on metal.

“Hopps! If you had come to your senses enough to recognize Wilde, then you should have stopped before things went too far,” he accused, turning and jabbing one hoof at her. “In heat of not, you were selfish, and didn’t give a thought to what the repercussions for your partner might have been. And as a result, his guilt over what you as the senior officer allowed to happen drove him to almost throw away one of the most promising carriers I’ve seen in years. You are his senior officer, his mentor, and I don’t think I am out of line saying that you are the reason he is the fine officer he is today. You have responsibility in that, and you failed him.”

Judy’s body slumped, shoulders, ears and eyes all dropping so quickly he thought she might slide right off the chair and crawl under it.

“Sir, I…” Nick began in her defense, but he was silenced quickly by a glare from burning metallic-brown eyes.

“Shut. It. The blame isn’t all on Officer Hopps, Wilde,” he continued as he pulled a folder from the drawer he had opened and carried it back to his desk, dropping it as he turned to face Nick. “The last time I checked, every officer is issued a hand-tranquilizer to subdue violent offenders at close range. You should have used it the moment she became violent beyond your control. Now either you forgot that in the panic of the situation, or in a far more likely scenario, you chose to ignore it because you
share her attraction. You endangered your partner, you endangered yourself, and if the story you told me had played out just a little differently, I would have you busted down to the night shift file clerk in Tundra Town!"

Now it was his turn to slump lower, trying to make himself seem even smaller than he was in the large chair by folding his ears back and curling his tail around his midsection in the protective gesture of a kit who had been chastised. Suddenly he did feel smaller, because he couldn’t deny anything that had just been laid out in front of him.

Bogo seemed content to let them wallow in their thoughts over his words for a moment as he walked around his desk and took a seat. Nick saw him lift the folder in one hoof, remove the band around it, and pour the polished brass shield into his hoof. Nick raised his eyes to stare at it, and he didn’t even try to hide the longing in his gaze as his focus remained.

“However, this… Event, let’s call it,” the Chief continued in a calmer tone as he rolled the shield around in his hoof for a moment before placing it on top of the folder. “Was extraordinary. The situation was unique and you both had forces working against you that go beyond my willingness to formally reprimand you for the choices you made, poor as I feel those choices were. And I will not lose an officer because of it. Wilde, take your shield.”

Relief washed over him, enough to have his ears rising high as he stood on the edge of the chair and reached across the desk. The bright polish of brass was suddenly like a beacon to him, beautiful and needed as his paw closed over the cool edges of the metal. And his paw was closed in the much larger hoof of the cape buffalo as he did so. Looking up, he saw stern eyes looking down at him coolly.

“Everything else aside, this badge is a symbol. It is a shield so that when people see it, they know that they can trust the bravery and the integrity it represents. It is an honor to wear that badge, and I think that you more than most understand that.”

Nick silently tightened his fingers around the shield until he could feel the corners biting into the pad of his palm painfully, raising his muzzle as pride and guilt filled him. Because Bogo had nailed the truth of it for the fox who had once given up hope of being anything more than the world expected of him. “Yes, sir.”

“Then remember it,” Bogo said, and Nick felt the grip on his paw relax and release. Even as it did, his own didn’t relax on the badge as he drew it close to his chest. “And if you ever think to surrender your shield again, for any reason, you won’t get it back.”

“I understand, Chief,” he replied, and lowered himself back into oversized chair next to Judy. Now that he had it back in his paws, now that he realized how close he had come to losing it, it seemed all the more precious to him. So much so that he refused to relax his grip, just pressed his fist to the spot where he would have pinned it on his uniform and held it there. He felt the light touch of a silky paw on his arm and turned his gaze to the bunny beside him. She smiled softly, but it was a smile that never touched her eyes. There was something else in them, something that robbed them of their normal sparkle, but before he could dwell on it Bogo was speaking again.

“I am going to assume that this relationship has gone beyond what happened in the rainforest,” he said as they both raised their eyes to him. “While there are no regulations against it in the department, it does raise the sticky question about your partnership and the wisdom of keeping you together as a team.”

“But sir!” they both began together, both sets of ears falling as distress came over their faces. Both of them were silenced when Bogo raised his hoof, shaking his head with a grim look on his scarred
“Don’t care,” he said flatly. “And I won’t be splitting you up, for a few reasons. The most obvious is that you’re still the only two officers in your size class, and the new recruits will take at least another four months to pass the Academy, if they do. Even then, I’m not sure I want to break you up. This incident aside, both of your records are not only spotless, but commendable even beyond the Nighthowler Incident. I can’t help but believe that this might have to do with who you’re partnered with.

“Before you relax,” he continued, just as Nick had started to do just that. “There will be conditions and restrictions. One: there will be no public displays of affection when you are in uniform, in this building, or in any way representing the ZPD. Two: it cannot affect your work performance in any way. You will arrive on time, finish your paperwork on time – I’m looking at you Wilde – and you will not try to garner special treatment because you want to spend time together. And three: Remember why you put on your uniform. The job comes first, your orders come first, and the people of Zootopia come first, always. Anything less could put lives at risk, and that is unacceptable. If you feel that you can’t handle perform your duty as well as or better than you have to this point, then I will give you temporary partners until someone more appropriate can be found.”

Nick knew deep, deep down that at least one part of what was being asked was impossible. When it came down to it, there was nothing he could put before Judy; no length he wouldn’t go to and no rule he wouldn’t break if she was in danger and he could protect her. The fact that she was more than capable, more capable than him in so many ways didn’t change that. But it was the fact that he couldn’t lose her as a partner that allowed him to lie as completely as he did when he answered.

“Understood, Chief. It won’t be a problem.”

“And lastly, as of this moment you are both on unofficial probation,” he added, one finger pointing and moving from one and then to the other. “Consider it my personal probation. I will be watching everything you do carefully, and until you have proven that you are capable of handling yourselves professionally, you would do well to tip-toe through everything you do. Is all of that clear?”

“Yes, Chief Bogo!” they said in unison, and like his partner Nick raised his arm in a crisp salute that seemed to at least mollify the large mammal.

Bogo slipped on his reading glasses, which was one of his ways of saying that the conversation was about to come to a close. “Hopps, were those your parents I saw in the lobby with Clawhauser?”

“Uh… Yes, Chief,” she replied, and Nick had to smother a grin as her ears dropped at the reminder. “They arrived unexpectedly this morning.”

Nick’s own ears dropped when the chief glanced at him speculatively before rolling his shoulders and clearing his throat. “Well, that must have been awkward,” he muttered under his breath before continuing. “Take the day. Deal with them, and be ready for business as usual tomorrow.”

“Thank you, Chief.”

“Wilde.”

Straightening his back, her ears righting themselves, Nick prepared for the worst. “Yes, sir.”

The worse came.

“Parking duty.”
“Well, that was bracing,” he said lightly as they walked towards the rear stairs, finding it easier to keep his tone a playful one now that he had his badge back in paw. “That might be the closest I’ve ever come to jail time, or being trampled by my boss. Do you think... Wait. What? No, no, no, don’t do that!”

A spurt of panic shot through him when he saw the look on her face and the way her breath hitched as she tried to fight back the tears shimmering in her eyes. A quick glance around told him that no one was on the upper floor with them, and that the closest room without a glass door was the filing room across the walk. Quickly, before really thinking about it, he scooped her up with both paws and tucked her against his chest as he dashed across the walk to the door. Once he had her inside, door closed behind them, he lowered to one knee and set her down in front of him, hands resting on her shoulders. The little bit of privacy that the room afforded them seemed to be all she needed to let the tears trickle down. She started before he could think of anything to say.

“He’s right, Nick,” she said, her voice wobbling a bit but clear enough for him to hear the misery behind the words. “I was aware, and I could have stopped myself. As soon as I knew who you were, I should have stopped it. This is my fault. I should have known better, I should have had more control. You almost lost your badge because of me!”

“No, I almost lost my badge because I was stupid enough to turn it in,” he commented, trying to keep his tone light. When her only reply was a tearful glare, he released a light sigh and sat on the carpet in front of her. He opened his paw, and looked down at the shining badge resting on the pad for a moment before he raised it.

“Do you know what this used to be to me before I met you? I’m sure you can guess. Sly fox, street hustler. Doing absolutely nothing illegal,” he reminded her, which surprised a watery laugh from her and made him grin softly. “It used to mean that when I saw someone wearing it, it was time to take a turn down a different street. Or that somewhere someone that I knew was probably getting busted because of it. It was a symbol to me that I was different from them; that I was standing on one side of the law, and the ones wearing this were on the other. And that was just the way it had to be.”

“Nick,” she began softly, but he placed one finger pad against the tip of her muzzle lightly.

“Then I spent a little over thirty six hours with this insane, naïve, and very annoying bunny,” he continued, turning the paw from her muzzle to slide his palm pad over her cheek. A touch which she turned into with a small smile. The tears had stopped. “Miss steps between aside, you believed in me and made me want to believe in myself. Before I ever loved you, before you planted the idea of becoming a cop in my head, you made me understand why people want to wear this badge. To make a difference in a world filled with indifference.

“Thirty six hours, Carrots. That’s all it took to undo a lifetime. Do you even know what that makes you?” Holding her gaze, which was watering up again, he reached out to take her paw and draw it over his badge. Pressing it on the now warm metal, he held it there as she looked down at their fingers joined around it. “The reason for this. Officer Nicolas Wilde wouldn’t be, without Officer Judith Hopps.”

He drew her close when she stepped into him, closing his eyes as he savored the warmth of her for a long moment. She may have cried a little more, but the reason was different and that made it all right. She sniffl ed once, and rubbed her face against the crook of his neck, and he felt the warmth of her
breath as she released a slow sigh that seemed to signal the end of the tears. He turned his muzzle towards her when she lifted her head and tilted her mouth up towards his.

And he had the satisfaction of watching her blink in surprise when he put his paw between them just as their lips would have touched. “No kissing on campus, Officer. Do you want me to get sent to Tundra Town? You may have the day off, but I have the joy of being hated by every driver downtown to look forward to.”

A sly grin grew across his muzzle when she huffed and reluctantly pulled away. She didn’t go far, however, as amethyst eyes widened a little and looked pleadingly into his.

“Just one short one? No one is here.”

“Carrots. I can’t believe I’m being the strong one here,” he grumbled, then narrowed his gaze when she ran her paws down his chest. In the silence of the room, he could hear the scratching of her tiny claws over the material as her eyes followed the motion. His ears shot up. His muzzle twitched.

“Wait, are you still…”

“Mmhm. Until tomorrow, at least.”

Utterly defeated – and suddenly really looking forward to the end of the work day – he licked the tip of his muzzle once as he glanced towards the door again. Then he looked down at her and held up one finger. “One little kiss. A quick one.”

When she brightened with those high ears at their peak, he had wrapped her up again for a kiss that rapidly turned into anything but little or quick. Internally he groaned, even as he growled into her mouth when her lips parted to deepen it.

*We’re so doomed.*

Chapter End Notes

Comment! There is a button. Press it. Type words. Make meaning of love or hate.
Inspire me to keep writing.

Or Bogo will come for you, and chew you out. :D
The kiss was anything but little or quick. Whimpering into the kiss as she looped her arms around his neck, her paws tangled into the fur at the base of his ears; drawing him closer as the kiss deepened, letting the taste of him tingle over her tongue as they met. Need spread like fire through her belly. Lightheaded enough to forget or just not care where they were, she crawled into his lap and found him more than willing to welcome her. The bunny found the warmth of the fox to be a perfect body to nestle against, with her legs straddling his hips until she was seated in just the right spot to feel his arousal throbbing against her rear. She didn’t understand why when he growled into the kiss, a sound that was a much predator as the sharp teeth her tongue grazed over in eager exploitation, it didn’t frightened her. It increased her awareness; as if her instincts were confused and tried to identify him as a danger and heightened her senses, only to refocus on the way he made her feel. The way that affected her, she couldn’t even begin to describe it.

And he was doing it now, lips parting from hers to leave her gasping one second and whimpering the next when that narrow muzzle wedged under the collar of her uniform and sharp teeth nipped at her neck. The shock of what might have been fear in some Judy past – a Judy that wasn’t already madly in love with this fox – turned into a liquid spread of desire that had her grip on his shirt tightening and her hips rolling as she surrendered herself to him. She savored the feeling of his paws as they slid down her back, curved around her tail and cupped her hips to lift her higher against him. Giving himself easier access as he rained tiny nips along the underside of her muzzle, cresting by catching her lower lip between his teeth for a gentle, lingering pull that made her wish horribly that they weren’t in a file room in the middle of the ZPD.

“Nick,” she whispered, because she couldn’t seem to find the voice to do much else. She gently pulled away from him, squirmed away after letting him take another kiss. She watched him watching her as she stepped away, both breathing in quick, deep pants. “You know we have to stop…”

She trailed off with wide eyes when he placed his front paws on the floor, moving towards her on all fours with his tail straight out behind him and black tipped ears focused in her direction. Something more sparked in his eyes, something she had never seen before from her playful, sly, affectionate partner. It sent that confused rush of yearning that should have been fear racing through her until she didn’t know if she should keeping backing away or stand her ground and let him have her. She had seen desire in that brilliant green; she had seen love, longing, lust and need. This was darker, no less heated but a lot less controlled. Almost…

_Savage._

But as soon as the thought came, it was swept away when his muzzle curved in one of his easy grins. A grin that would have been playful, had it not been for the fact that his eyes still held that wild glint. The combination just made him look a little feral, a little dangerous and incredibly sexy. She tried to hold her ground, nose and tail twitching as she breathed in the scent of fox, only to find herself nudged back a step when his muzzle bumped her chest. She felt the door against her back, and swallowed the moan that threatened to rise when he pressed close against her with his paws flat against the door on either side of her to trap her. She almost felt like her world had been swallowed by his simply being close to her; replacing it with the scent of him, the heat of his body.
close to hers and the mouth that came in for a kiss that skipped right past sweet and slow, driving heat down her spine until the fur on the back of her neck stood on end. His muzzle swallowed the moan that finally did spill out, along with any trepidation as their tongues met and mated with an aggressive fever that had her forgetting reason. His touch was a little rougher than before when his paws moved to her hips, his kiss more intense, that edge of danger heightened by the odd sense of aggression that was pouring off of him.

And for some reason, she loved it.

“Nick,” she said weakly when he let her breath again. She felt one of his paws slide between their bodies, felt those talented fingers slip the first loop of her duty belt free before she could gather enough breath to speak again. “Nick, we have to stop. We can’t… Ah!”

Her body was listening about as well as he was, and she barely managed to muffled the cry when she felt his paw shift to cup between her thighs. She could feel her own heat, her own need spinning out of control, so she had no doubt that he could when he pressed the pad of his palm upward until the pressure caused pleasure to spread from her core. The fact that it was reminiscent of the first time he had touched her only heightened it, as if he were inviting her to finish what they had started in the Rainforst. She wanted him. She wanted him so much that it felt like she would burn up from the inside out, and it took her a moment to gather her will enough to try one more time before she knew she would surrender.

“Please, Nick. We have to wait.”

She realized the moment she said ‘please’ was the moment he stopped, almost frozen for a few seconds; as if realizing what he was doing for the first time. His palm against her sex, his muzzle at her ear; even his breathing seemed to still for a beat before he released in a heavy breath and pressed close to her. This press, however, was not one intent on further seducing her much to her relief. Or frustration, depending on which part of her she was thinking with at the moment. It was a deflation, during which he drew his palm from between her thighs and slid it up her hips to cup her waist. Then he pressed the top of his head to the cool surface of the door beside her own.

“Sorry, Fluff.”

“Don’t be,” she murmured lightly, and leaned in to nuzzle his cheek in hopes of easing the strain in his voice. “You know I…”

“If you tell me you want me inside you, I’m going to bite,” he groused playfully, raising his head to look down at her with an expression that was half regretful, half apologetic, and all blended with the same need that must have been written all over her own face.

“Promises, promise,” she said, and grinned as she met his eyes. She watched them as he chuckled, watched them as he placed a light kiss to the tip of her nose, and continued to watch them as he drew away from her and backed away a few steps. It wasn’t there anymore. That feral glint, that dangerous edge that had made her think for a moment that he had actually gone savage. Just gone, making her wonder if she had imagined it because of his stance, because of the way he had moved towards her. As if he had been hunting her.

“Ugh, this is going to be the longest day of my life,” he groaned when he slipped away from her and turned to where they had been sitting. She felt her skin burn under her fur when he made a less than graceful adjustment to the front of his pants, which he had at least waited to do until he was facing away. He swept his arm down to grab the badge he had left on the floor where the kiss had started, bring a smile from her when he examined it and rubbed it lightly over his shirt, as if lying on the floor might have tarnished it in some way.
“This isn’t going to be as easy as I thought,” she said, glancing down and realized that he had managed to unbuckle her duty belt completely. A little huff escaped her as she flushed from ear base to ear tip as he turned to face her with one brow quirked upward.

“You thought this was going to be easy? Officer Hopps, I think I might just be insulted,” he said with an offended look as he dropped the shield into his breast pocket. “I had no doubt my patience and will would be tested. You are awfully cute.”

She sent him a heatless glare as she buckled her belt again, and started to make things right with her uniform, finding that she needed to tug the vest back into place; and smooth down the fur on her neck, and at the base of her ears, and around her muzzle. He had been a busy fox.

“And I suppose that makes this my fault?”

“Of course it’s your fault, Carrots,” he said as he stepped closer again, and she let out a surprised snort of laughter into her paw when he clasped his hands together at one side of his muzzle. The starry eyed look he cast her way must have been something he had practiced quite a bit in the mirror before he let out his best impersonation of her. “Oh, Mr. Fox. Just one short one? No one is here.”

“I did not call you ‘Mr. Fox,’” she laughed, shoving at his chest to push him back a step when he came a little too close for her current state of mind to handle. “And keep your distance there, Slick. You have a very dangerous set of paws.”

“Which I promise to keep as far from you as possible,” he said, raising two fingers in a scout salute. “Until I’m off duty. Spending the day making the world a better place for absolutely no one, being called the vilest names by the nicest people. All the while thinking of what I’m going to be doing to you with these paws once I get you alone tonight. Did I mention that this is going to be the longest day of my life?”

Just like her, he was frustrated but not annoyed or upset; trying to defuse the desire that still sparked between them with an almost tangible intensity with humor. How could she not love him? She stepped close to him, and tugging him down by the tie, gave the light kiss she should have given him before. Short, sweet, and to show him how much she loved him. And when she broke it with a soft ‘Mmm’ of appreciation, she watched him stand there, still leaning forward for a moment with his eyes closed and his arms limp as he swayed just a bit, and grinned. Turnabout was fair play, after he’d left her in the same state in the doughnut shop.

“Come on, let’s get you to work so I can go spend the day being interrogated by my family,” she said, and popping the door open just a bit for a quick peek outside to make sure no one happened by. She pushed it opened to step outside and waved for him to follow.

“Oh right, your parents are still here. With all of the brain cells you just fried, I forgot. They’re not… Staying with you tonight, are they?”

The sudden dawning despair on her face made her laugh as they left the file room together.

Nick saw her parents and two siblings waiting for them in the lobby, and could hear the funeral march playing in his head as all four pairs of eyes watched them as they made their decent. Five pairs, actually, because Clawhauser was back behind the front desk and was watching him with a little apprehension marring his chubby features. Nick grinned and slipped his hand into his breast pocket, flashing the shield and a quick wink that made the friendly feline clutch his hands under his chin and beam a smile.
This made it easy to keep the genuine smile on his muzzle when they reached the foot of the stairs, Judy parting from him to join her family, who started with the questions before she even reached them. Catching the nose twitching and the accusing evil eye from her brother, he was quick to assume that bunny noses were more attuned to her current condition than they were to most other scents. Nick kept the friendly smile, and only offered a shrug and an expression that didn’t look the least bit sorry.

Little speciest jack-off. Just going to have to get used to the idea. Not that I’ll mind rubbing your nose in it while you’re here. Is that petty? Meh. Maybe a little. Nothing wrong with being petty when… Oh, wait. That’s Fangmeyer and Wolford.

He watched the wolf and tiger leisurely make their way across the far side of the lobby. Wolford was chatting up the tiger quickly with animated paw motions and a wagging tail. Nick felt a bright surge of annoyance when he turned and gestured to the top of the stairs where Nick knew he had picked up the scent of fox and bunny mingled in all new ways. Of course when they turned their attention there, they also spotted him standing at the foot of the stairs and quickly turned their attention in other directions. And since the wolf turned in one direction, and the tiger in another, they were forced to make themselves look like idiots when they corrected themselves to avoid colliding. Then they just sort of stood there, trying to remain unnoticed.

“Hey, Carrots,” he called without taking his eyes off of the two, tucking his hands into his pockets as he waited for his partner to cheerfully bounce over to his side. “Remember that bet Wolford and Fangmeyer had about whether or not we would hook up? Well there they are.”

“What? Where?” He saw her cheerful expression fade into his favorite annoyed bunny-cop look when she turned with ears high and found them with her eyes. “Those… ‘Bang one out with a vixen’ huh? Grrr!”

Another time, in another place, he was going to have to tell her how cute she was when she made little growling sounds. And how adorable it was that her concern wasn’t the bet on their sex life, but over some vixen that Nick had never intended to meet in the first place. His grin grew when she started forward to confront them, only to halt when he rested his paw on her shoulder.

“No no no,” he said quickly when she turned and frowned at his interference with what he was sure would have been a Bogo Master Class level chewing out. “Let me handle those dumb-dumbs. If you could just keep that mad going, and glare in their direction while I have a little chat, I think we can get them back with a little bonus on the side.”

She folded her arms across her chest and leaned into one leg with her hips cocked as she looked up at him for a moment, her face still set in a less than pleased frown. He was actually wondering why she was giving him that look when she spoke. “Like this?”

That’s my sly bunny.

“Exactly like that,” he said, tamping the delighted grin that threatened to split his muzzle into a knowing, closed mouth grin. “I’m rubbing off on you, Fluff.”

“You wish,” she muttered, and he wondered if she had intended that to be the innuendo it came across as. Seeing the sparkle in her eyes, he decided that she had and tsked her with a quick uncontrollable swish of his tail.

“Careful there, Carrots,” he chuckled, his tail still swaying behind him as he started towards the pair, who were still doing everything to keep from looking in their direction. “People will talk.”
He decided to keep it happy. Hands in his pockets, just strolling over to the two larger predators with a friendly smile on his face. The moment they noticed that he was heading in their direction, Fangmeyer actually looked like she wanted to head off in the opposite direction as fast as possible. Wolford, on the other hand, perked his ears and seemed to take Nick’s friendly act at face value.

“Heyyyyy guys,” Nick drawled, coming to a stop close enough that he had to look up at the two of them, rocking on his paws a bit. He put forward the most harmless façade, which the wolf was clearly buying as he raised a paw in a greeting wave with a smile curving his broad muzzle.

“Hey, Wilde. You seem to be in a good mood for someone who just escaped Bogo’s office,” Wolford commented, his tail swishing behind him. He was obviously pleased with himself because there was no doubt that both of them had gotten a good sniff of him by this point. The bet was won, and the wolf would collect. “Find yourself a hot vixen last night?”

The question, which was about as subtle as a polar bear performing ballet, gave Nick every opening he needed.

“Actually, my taste is running more towards bunnies these days,” he said causally, and was rewarded by seeing Fangmeyer’s jaw drop open far enough that every tooth in the tiger’s maw was on display. He also noticed that the pleasure that lit Wolford’s face wasn’t entirely one sided. He almost looked happy to hear the news direct from the fox’s mouth.

A feeling that was confirmed when he balled his paw and moved in to give Nick a little nudge in the shoulder with it. A little nudge that rocked the much smaller Nick to the side, and caused him to reach up to rub the light ache away even as the wolf said in that same pleased voice, “Nice, Nick. You two have been mooning over each other for a while now. I was wondering when you would make a move.”

There was a warm feeling of acceptance in that, one that he had not really felt in his time at the ZPD thus far. And very wolf-like turn of phrase aside, Nick almost felt bad for what he was about to do.

Almost.

Payment must be made, regardless. Might be nice to have an actual cop friend aside from Carrots afterward, though.

“Aha. Thanks,” he laughed cheerfully, then lowered his voice a bit. “See, the thing is… Come on down here, fellas. I don’t want anyone overhearing.”

The two larger mammals glanced at each other, then shrugged and lowered themselves to one knee, leaning closer to the fox with two sets of ears perked forward curiously.

“The thing is,” Nick continued, standing almost between their heads now and throwing a glance over his shoulder. A glance which they followed until they saw Judy standing there, and to Nick’s massive satisfaction, both of them immediately looked uncomfortable under the watchful glare of the bunny. “My partner found out about this bet you have going. You know the one I mean.”

One meaningful look at both of them both clearing their throats and looking more than just a little uncomfortable, but he continued before they could start making excuses. Keeping the conversation flowing on his end was a crucial part of the hustle, after all.

“I mean, I’m fine with it. Guys will be guys, after all. But you see my partner over there,” he said with a gesture in her direction for emphasis. “She’s not as understanding. She’s actually pretty upset
that you’ve been betting on her private business. She was even talking about going to Bogo and filing a complaint against you two.”

Of course, no such thing had or would be done. But the reaction of the two was instant and priceless, both talking at the same time and casting panicked glanced towards Judy. Apologies, excuses, submissive ear sets; the normal thing one expected from anyone caught with their pants down.

“Now, now. It may not be as bad as all that. She’s just having an off morning. With her parents showing up out of the blue with two of her siblings, having to beg Bogo for half a day off so she can spend time with them, the whole being drugged thing. Then there’s the fact that she got the day off, but I didn’t, which has us both kind of Ugh!” He finished with a little clench of his paws and let out a sound of frustration. *That* part at least wasn’t an act. “But I am sure I can calm her down, and convince her to let bygones be bygones. And you could even help with that! If you bought her and her family a nice lunch.”

“Oh,” Fangmeyer said in a gentle rumble, reaching up to scratch the back of her neck before he shrugged a bit with a short look to the wolf beside them. “Well, that’s not a problem, of course. I don’t know where bunnies would eat, but we could…”

“Don’t trouble yourselves with such petty details,” Nick interrupted and flashed a grin that would have charmed the hump off a camel. “You leave that to me. All you need to do is pay up on the bet, and I’ll take care of the rest.”

With that, Nick held out one paw towards the tiger, the most logical choice. She was the one who had lost the bet after all and would be expected to cough up the money anyway. After a slow blink, and a moment hesitation, Fangmeyer seemed to realize that she was beaten before she reached into her back pocket to pull out her wallet. Fishing around for a moment, she grudgingly pulled out five twenty Bucks of the size meant for medium-to-large predators and placed them into Nick’s paw.

Looking down at the bills that were a good size or three too large for him, Nick kept his grin in place as he turned his attention to Wolford. The still extended paw was shifted in his direction.

“It’s only fair that both of you pay up in this case, don’t you think buddy?”

Even though the wolf looked crestfallen when he realized that he would have to pay out as well, Nick did notice the twitch and perk of the lupine ears when he called him ‘buddy.’ He figured there was hope in that after all, and as the sheepish canine fished out his own wallet and added to the tally his grin was a little less hustle and a lot more sincere.

“This is great. I’ll get right on calming her down,” he said, closing his paw on the stack of bills and leaning forward with his other paw to his chest in a play on humble. “You guys have been a big help. Wolford, we’ll hang out soon, alright buddy? Fangmeyer? …Next time bet on the fox.”

With that he turned from the two shell-shocked predators and headed back towards Judy, whose expression remained somewhere between annoyed and angry.

“Hey! So, she’s not gonna tell Bogo about this, right?” he heard Wolford call, his voice not as uneasy at it had been before but still holding just enough of a hopeful plea that Nick grinned. He saw Judy’s face relax too, so he swung around to walk backwards.

“I am a fox of my word. You two have a nice day now,” he said without losing the grin and turned around to find himself almost toe to toe with his partner. “Oh, well hello there, officer. Was I speeding?”
“Did you just hustle two of our fellow officers, in the lobby of the ZPD?” she questioned, though she made no point to hide her amusement as she reached for the wad of cash he had in his paw. Which he held out of her reach as he started to count it, dividing it into two stacks.

“Officer Hopps, I would never,” he said, placing one of the stacks against his chest with an insulted look and holding the other, larger stack out to her. “Bribe?”

She snorted a laugh and snatched the large bills from his paw, looking down to count it out for herself before looking up at him. “This is a little light, fox. You trying to short me?”

“Absolutely,” he said, stuffing the remaining cash into his pocket. “I was thinking that while you were out and about with the family, I’d treat myself to lunch somewhere almost nice during my break. Maybe Pred Lobster. Or Longfin Fishhouse.”

“Uh huh,” she said, counting through her share of the take again as if she didn’t already know how much it was. “You’re going to blow it all on blueberries.”

“Maybe,” he said, and grinned down at her when she raised her gaze to meet his with an equally dopey grin on her muzzle.

“Judy, dear,” came her mother’s voice, which popped the little bubble that had started to form around them again. It was getting to be a habit. They both turned to the four bunnies, who had been waiting patiently for a few minutes now.

“And that’s our cue,” she said, and beamed up at him. He knew the smile was mostly fake, but there was still a sparkle of humor in her eyes and a twitch in her ears when she raised them in his direction. “I’ll get them out of everyone’s way, while you go play meter maid.”

He watched her go, that energetic little bunny, her mother and father, her brother with anger issues, and her animated little sister who turned to wave and wink at him before they reached the main entrance. When Judy held the door open for her family, she turned to glance at him one last time. The quick smile that she sent him when she realized he was watching her made his heart beat just a little faster, and the way her tail twitched when she turned to walk out made sure the quickened pace remained.

Wilde, Wilde, Wilde. So in love with that sly bunny that you can’t even think straight. What would your mother say?

Deciding that it was actually a good question, for later, he turned toward the front desk to retrieve his cold coffee and muffins before heading to the showers, only to find Clawhauser leaning over the desk with his paws sunk down into the fat of furry his cheeks and a dreamy look in his eyes.

“You two are so…”

“If you say that we’re adorable, cute, precious, sweet, or any variation of those words, Benjamin,” Nick warned as he reached up and took his breakfast. “I’m going to tell everyone where you hide your doughnut stash in the breakroom.”

Grinning at the look of panic on the chubby cop’s face before he put his paw in front of his mouth and mimed zipping it closed, Nick enjoyed a big bite of his blueberry muffin as he made his way to the lockers.
Chapter End Notes

Don't worry. This is all going somewhere. This chapter adds a... Unique angle to the problem. More to come! Until then, enjoy the slow build and the ride that comes with it.

Comments are still love!
Love as Defined by Nicholas Wilde

Chapter Notes

All found errors corrected. :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Living in a family where siblings shared rooms by the half dozen, chatter was a constant in the life of a bunny. Learning to tune out conversations that she wasn’t a part of was easy despite her sensitive ears, which had actually made her adept at that part of city living already. The patio seating of the restaurant was abuzz with such background noise, from the various couples, families and friends that sat in tables around them. Everyone tuned into their own little slice of Zootopia, hardly aware of those around them beyond an occasional curious glance or a particularly boisterous laugh or the sound of a crashing plate from the kitchen. Mingled with the scents of so many different species, the sounds of traffic a few paces away, and the feeling of constant movement that the downtown area always had about it, it had just become a part of her everyday life in the city. It was all very normal.

Except that on the other side of the small class mammal table where she sat, there were four bunnies just like her sitting a little closer together than they needed to be. The comfort of family in unfamiliar surroundings, in the big bad city of Zootopia. As someone who still slept in a bed filled with stuffed bunnies to give her that little taste of home that she still missed sometimes, she didn’t blame them really. Except maybe for Jason, who glared at every predator that came within ten feet as if trying to ward them off with his displeasure at their very existence. Him she wanted to wallop between his ears until he learned to at least be polite. At least the conversation hadn’t strayed to Nick yet.

“So, Judy. You and this fox,” her mother began, her paws resting on the iced celery-juice in front of her as she leaned back in her seat.

“Yes, let’s talk about the fox!” Beth’s enthusiastic reply came as the slender bunny fairly bounced up closer to the table to lean against the edge to take a sip of her soda. “I’ve been dying to ask questions all day, but mom said we should focus on spending time together.”

This last was finished with a roll of her eyes at her parents edict, accompanied by a roll of Bonnie’s eyes at her ever lacking youthful tact.

“Can you please call him Nick? Or at least Mr. Wilde?” she said, holding her paws out to both of them pleadingly with her ears folded back in annoyance. “Can you do that for me? He’s not just a fox, you know.”

“You’re right, of course, dear,” her mother amended gently, reaching across the table to take one of Judy’s still outstretched paws in hers and lower it to the table. Judy relaxed, almost reflexively slumped forward and felt drained as she felt the soothing touch of fur to fur. “We just want to understand.”

“Understand what?” she asked at length, her gaze moving to each member of her family in turn before resting on her mother’s own violet eyes. “That I love him?”

“Oh, sweetie,” her mother sighed, squeezing her paw gently. Judy saw what was coming a mile
away, but let it happen regardless. “You’re in this big city where everything is so different, I know it must be very exciting; I’m sure he must be very exciting, too. But you still don’t see gazelle married to lions. Or wolves running away with sheep. It just doesn’t happen. They are… Too many differences, too many dangers. He’s so much bigger than you, and his… Well, his teeth, Judy. And those claws. He could hurt you without meaning to.”

She released a short laugh at that, and drew her paw away to lean back in her chair. She didn’t bother to deny any of it, at least not yet. She was just going to let them have their say, get it all out while she sat there like a good bunny and took it all in. And then she was going to let them have it.

“You’re young, honey-bun,” her father put in, brown eyes looking at her with concern that he had hardly managed to contain from the moment he had seen Nick at her door that morning. “Young people do crazy things, believe me. I did in my day, let me tell you. I was a regular… Well, never mind. But we’ve raised your brothers and sisters and seen the wacky things that they do to rebel. Drinking, and smoking, and even running away from home…”

“Sleeping with foxes,” she inserted in a testy tone, which she regretted when his nose went pale and his ears dropped as she confirmed the truth of it. She lowered her eyes to the table, avoiding her mother’s scolding gaze and her father’s miserable one as she looked at her paws. “Sorry, daddy. I didn’t mean to say that.”

“Yeah, but it’s true isn’t it?” Jason’s voice cut in sharply, making her withdraw inwardly with the disgust in his tone. “Letting that… Predator put his paws all over you. How do we know he didn’t actually hurt you? His claw marks could be all over your body!”

“Jason,” her mother warned, but he plowed on with hardly a pause for breath.

“He should be arrested, the sick prey-chaser. Does he threaten you? Tell you that if you don’t bend over like a good little bunny he’s going to eat you? Or maybe you get off on that sort of… Ow! What the hell? Ow!” he yowled when Beth stomped on his rear paw for the second time, this time harder. “What the hell, Beth!”

“I’m trying to shut you up,” Beth said, and just for good measure stomped on it for the third time, making him curse and try to pull it out of her reach. “And if you keep talking, I’m going to break it, you thick headed jerk.”

“Both of you stop it right now!” Bonnie said, and Judy even felt her insides shrink a little at the authoritative tone that her mother only used when she was trying to quiet a whole room of the family. Or just two siblings who were about to come to blows. “Jason, you will not speak that way about family ever again, do you hear me? She’s your sister!”

Even in full temper, Judy saw that the tone had the large buck folding his ears and lowering his eyes to his lap. “Yes’um.”

“And Beth,” she said, after Beth had stuck her tongue out at the downcast rabbit. “That’s not how I raised you to behave.”

Not as quick to cave as her brother, Beth huffed and folded her arms across her chest as she glared at him.

“It’s not my fault he hangs out with those bucks down by the bar. They don’t even like Gideon. He bakes pies, and they talk about him like he’s cooking our neighbors. Doesn’t stop them from stuffing their fat, speciest mouths with them when they come to the stand, though. Oh, look at us,” she said in her best moron voice, puffing out her chest and holding her arms out to the side to mimic
her bigger brother. “We’re big bad purists who talk a big game but all we really do is drink and darn if this isn’t good pie. Hypocrites."

“Okay, Bethany, that’s enough,” her mother warned after the last word was spat angrily, and Judy gave a small grateful smile to the young bunny as she huffed again and sunk into her seat without another word.

Turning her eyes to her parents, trying to control the sick feeling in her stomach, she decided that she had given them enough time to talk.

“Is that what you two think, too?” she asked, ignoring the fact that other mammals on the patio had gone silent and now watched them from the corners of their eyes. She focused on her parents, who watched her with the same loving worry that they had the day she had left for Zootopia. Only this time it wasn’t because of a whole city of unknowns, it was because of one fox.

“We worry,” her father said after a moment, and when he placed his paw on the table Bonnie laid her own paw over his arm supportively. “When we learned he was your partner, we worried a little. But he seemed like an O.K. fella when we talked over the phone. But this is… This is different, Judy.”

“It’s only different because you don’t know him like I do,” she said, rubbing her fingers over her closed eyes for a moment. Fighting the headache and the pain of trying to make them understand. Her voice softened when she continued. “I know that doesn’t sound fair, but you haven’t even asked. All you’ve said so far is that you’re worried something might happen, that he might hurt me. Or how it must be because I’m in heat, or the excitement of the city. Or how disgusting it is, even. Why haven’t you even asked how it started? Or why I trust him? Why haven’t you asked about him, even when he was just my partner? Or when did I realize, or when did he realize? You could at least ask why he was in his boxers when he opened the door this morning before you start telling me that I’m making a mistake!”

She realized that they were looking behind her only a breath before the familiar pads of a large, warm paw ran a slow caress down the length of her folded ears and the tickle of claws caressed the back of her neck. Tension drained out of her as the pleasant tingle his touch caused made her body melt into the chair, her head rolling back to look up at the fox behind her. He was the most gorgeous male she had ever seen in that one moment, wearing the dark blue of his ZPD uniform with sleeves rolled up to just below his elbows, bright bronze badge gleaming on his chest next to a tie that was just a little below regulation. Dark aviator glasses were pulled up behind his ears so she could look into those warm green eyes of his as they looked down at her. The warm, closed mouthed grin on his muzzle made her own lips curve upward when his fingers found their way into the fur at the base of her ears for a light scratch that had her wishing her family wasn’t across the table. Otherwise she might have wallowed in the sensation. Okay, so she did wallow in it as she closed her eyes and let out a slow sigh of contentment.

“They are right, you know,” he said in a gentle tone, and she opened her eyes to look up at him with a quirked eyebrow. “This is very different from us being just partners on the force.”

“Oh god, I hope so,” she groaned without the least bit of guilt when he ran a claw in a feather-light caress along the inside of one ear. She glanced at the bouquet of flowers he held in his free paw and her ears perked instantly as she felt a little flood of warmth in her chest. No one had ever given her flowers before. “Are those for me?”

“Oh, right!” She couldn’t hide the disappointment when he slipped his paw away from her ears and his attention turned to her family. Raising her head as he stepped around the table, she felt another little moment of disappointment when he moved towards the table, and her mother with the
flowers in paw. That disappointment didn’t last long when she saw the softening expression on her mother’s face when he offered them to her. “I hear you like magenta carnations, Mrs. Hopps. And I happen to know where to get the best in Zootopia.”

Watching her mother take the flowers from her partner was a hopeful image for her. The softness of in the older bunny’s eyes when she looked down at the simple but fresh and beautiful arrangement, following the bewildered surprise and pleasure when she looked up at him, pressing her muzzle into the flowers to breath in the scent of them. And she felt that flood of warmth all over again when he produced a single yellow rose, which he had hidden in one belt loop at his back, and offered it to his all but swooning sister. No one had ever given her flowers, but watching her mother invite him to join them with a warm smile was so much better.

*Sly fox. I love you. I love you. Oh, I love you.*

As Nick motioned to their waitress to let her know that he would be borrowing a slightly larger chair, and settled down to join her parents for dinner, she really didn’t think it was possible to be more in love than she was watching him charm at least one half of her family.

Then, Jason opened his bigoted, hateful mouth.

This were going a little better than expected, by his gage. Not only had her mother openly invited him to join them without prompting from Judy, but the conversation started off almost immediately with her parents and Beth. Of course the speciest jack-off, as Nick now thought of her brother, was more than welcome to keep his peace, even if his glares made the fur on the back of his neck want to stand on end.

Easily brushing that little annoyance aside, while at the same time flipping his tail into Judy’s lap under the table just to see the smile that curved her muzzle, he focused most of his attention on her mother.

“I didn’t realize Judy even knew what my favorite flower was,” she was saying, which caused his ears to twitch a bit when he glanced in his partners direction. Her expression was just as curious as her mothers, with ears perked high and eyes focused on him.

“Well, I didn’t find out from her,” he said, deciding that a full confession might make the flowers a little more meaningful. His ears flicked, and he gave a slightly embarrassed shrug. “My mom always told me it was polite to bring flowers, but I wasn’t sure what you would like. So I checked a directory only for Bunny Burrow, thinking of course that it would be easy to just ask someone. After finding a *lot* of numbers for Hopps and having no idea who to call, I remembered that Carrots mentioned that you worked with Gideon Grey now. So I called him up, but he didn’t know, but he told me to call your oldest daughter, Sarah. And Sarah told me that you liked some kind of pink flower that grows on the hills near home but she didn’t know the name. So she told me to call Barry, one of the middle children I think? Anyway, he said that he remembered seeing the flowers around the burrow and that they smelled real nice, but he didn’t know the name either. So he handed me over to Cathy I think, who said that they were carnations but a certain kind. Then she told me to
“I think they get it, Nick,” Judy cut him off, and he glanced down at the smiling bunny. Then he stuck the tip of his tongue out at her, which made her giggle as she turned her attention to sliding her fingers of one paw through the thick fur of his tail.

“She always does that, you know,” he said easily, even though he was very aware of the little thrill that little intimacy sent through him. “Cuts me off mid-sentence all the time. Just last night, she…”

“Well, it was very sweet of you to go to all this trouble,” Bonnie said, with a knowing little smile on her prettily plump face as she cut him off.

He narrowed his eyes at her, then leaned back in his seat a little dramatically as he released a ‘Huh’ while looking at her with teasing accusation. “So it’s inherited. Just like the lovely eyes.”

Laying it on a little thick seemed to work, as the older bunny’s ears went pink on the inside. And even as she tried to wave it off, Stu’s chest puffed out a little. Clearly not wanting to be outdone by a quick tongued fox, he laid his paw on his wife’s arm lightly.

“I always said you have the prettiest eyes in Bunnyburrow,” he said, and Nick’s grin grew a bit when her face softened as she turned an affectionate look towards her mate.

“Hush now, Stu,” she said softly, though the way she leaned into just the touch told him that this sort of flattery wasn’t new to her.

“What do you really want with my sister, fox?”

The abrupt and far less friendly tone of the question brought every bunny at the table to a standstill, but Nick let it slide off his shoulders as he settled back with one paw resting across the back of Judy’s chair. Green eyes were cool when they settled on the angry gaze of the smaller male, and he kept his face carefully blank save for the one raised eyebrow. He had expected this, of course. Jason’s dislike for him was a little beyond typical, but Nick couldn’t find it in himself to care or wonder why.

“You’re going to need to be more specific, kid,” he said, lightening his tone and his face as he slid one claw lightly down the back of Judy’s neck to calm the mad he could see brewing. He was gratified to feel the little tremble that raced through her, and the slow lean into the touch, though her eyes were still hot when they rested on her brother. “What do I want from her now? An hour from now? Years from now? Those all have very different answers.”

“Mr. Wilde, you don’t have to answer any of his questions. He’s forgotten his manners since we came to the city,” Bonnie said, casting a warning glance at her son. One which this time, he ignored.

“No, mom, he does need to answer!” he all but shouted, sitting tense in his chair. He looked ready to jump across the table, ears flat, muzzle trembling as his nose twitched. Nick expected that he was being this brave because they were in public, and the sense of fear rolled off him in waves as clearly as the anger. He wondered how long he had been containing that, and wondered where the fear came from. “We need to know! Dad, you’re the one who told us never to trust a fox! She keeps telling us that he loves her, but how does she even know? How do we know that ‘love’ even means the same thing to him? Ow! Damn it, Beth!”

The ruckus at the table increased as Beth stepped on her brother’s paw again, was scolded by her mother, which started a back and forth argument between the two siblings. Nick kept his gaze on
Judy throughout, tuning them out even as Mrs. Hopps interceded to keep them from coming to blows. Her anger seemed to have drained away, replaced with a sadness that he could see in the set of her ears and the slump of her shoulders; the way she refused to look at her family, and even refused to look at him when he moved his paw to rest on her shoulder. He thought he understood. He hoped he understood. This wasn’t going to be an uncommon point of view, and it would mainly spring from the fact that he was a fox, and she was a bunny.

But right now, she was miserable. And he wanted that to stop.

He raised his eyes when the argument devolved into a shouting match between Beth and her brother. Even Stu, who seemed the calmer member of the clan, got involved when Jason jumped to his feet and started to storm away from the table.

“Hey, Jason.” Maybe it was the oddly calm, easy going tone of his voice in the midst of the melee of emotions that made the young bunny stop and turn on him that look that was a mixture of fear and anger in his eyes. But once he had stopped, Nick waved him towards the seat he had just left. “If you sit down and listen, I’ll tell you.”

Surprise seemed to crack through that wall of anger, and the moment of hesitation seemed to have the whole restaurant holdings its breath (mainly because it was, as the argument had drawn more than a few stares from the other patrons) before the buck reluctantly moved back to his seat and sat. His face was no less hostile, and he gave Nick a ‘This I’ve got to hear’ look before he waved his paw. “Well? Then tell me, fox.”

“Jason,” Judy began, the irritation almost as obvious as the sadness in her voice. He gave her shoulder a little squeeze, and shook his head with a slight twitch of his ears when she looked up at him. She sighed a little, and leaned back in her chair with her arms crossed over her chest and her ears falling over the back of her chair irritably.

Nick drew a slow breath, and released it in a windy sigh as he closed his eyes for a moment. A dozen ways to explain ran through his mind, a dozen more that would be the same basic platitudes and pretty words that anyone in love could come up with.

“She beautiful, she’s stronger than anyone I’ve ever known. She’s funny and driven, she can knock out rhinos in the ring. Hm… But then again, so can I so that doesn’t count. She saved my life, but I’ve saved hers, too. The way her nose twitches when she’s mad is adorable. Adorable isn’t an insult to bunnies, is it?” he questioned, opening his eyes and finding that they were all staring at him. He had been muttering it all, as if talking to himself. Which he hadn’t been, but the desired result had been achieved: all ears were perked in his direction, all eyes on him. He leaned forward then, and folded his paws on top of the table carefully. “You know what? Forget all of that obvious chatter. I’ll just tell you about my day.”

“I didn’t ask about your day,” Jason said, his ears quivering with irritation.

“I know, I know. Just bear with me,” Nick replied lightly, waving the interruption off with an actual wave of his paw. “You know how most mammals wake up every morning, and drag themselves out of bed wondering why the day has to start so early? I don’t. I wake up every morning wondering how many minutes it’ll be before I see Carrots. Every time I lay eyes on her for the first time in the morning – this bright and energetic bunny in her blue vest and her shiny badge and a smile that I like to think is just for me – it’s like remembering what changed my life; remembering who helped me become the fox I had given up on being when I was only nine. And through the day, no matter what kind of day it is, I would catch myself trying to think of reasons to prolong the day, not end it. Anything, really. Had we missed lunch? Was there a movie she wanted to see? Had we gone out for a drink the day before or not? Heh. I would even find myself wondering if we should
catch up on paperwork, just so I could sit across from her while we suffered the boredom together. But of course it does end, and I would end up back in my apartment, alone, thinking of Judy. And when I was in bed, letting the exhaustion of the day drag me into sleep, she’s the last face I see in the dark behind my eyes. Her voice the last voice I hear, telling me that we did a good job that day, not realizing that I do it all for her.”

They were all watching him now, intent and silent, but he wasn’t looking at them anymore. He was looking down into the stunned eyes of the one beside him, realizing that he was confessing more to her than anyone else.

“That was all a very long winded way of telling you what she is to me: she’s a necessity for me to be who I am now. Over time, this crazy little bunny has filled every dark little corner of my day, times when I used to doubt myself and would remind myself that I could never be more than what everyone expected me to be. She’s filled it so that if I lost her, there would be so many holes left in me that I wouldn’t even know where to begin piecing myself back together. And once I do, if I do, I know I won’t recognize the shadow I’ll be without her.”

That they saw how gentle he was when he brushed away the first tear that spilled down her cheek with the pad of his thumb didn’t matter to him. His muzzle just curved into a light grin when she released a shaky laugh, and tilted her silky cheek into his paw when he cupped it adoringly. It wasn’t until she gave a little sniffle, and glanced in her parent’s direction that he returned his direction to her brother. Her brother who sat silently, brooding, but looking… Uncertain.

“You asked me to tell you if the love I feel is what you expect it to be, and I hope it’s not. I hope it’s unique, because I don’t believe people like you could possibly understand it,” he said, waving his paw towards Jason accusingly as his ears flicked and then folded to the side. “Because I don’t feel one simple emotion when I’m with her. I feel pride that she believes in me even when sometimes I don’t; I feel the longing of just wanting to be closer to her, a longing that I thought for a few insane minutes last night might ease knowing she wanted it, too; I feel hope for a future, one that she showed me, where mammals don’t look at either of us and see just a fox and a bunny. And… Fear. Fear that somehow I will still manage to screw it all up and lose her. Today was the first time I woke up with her beside me, and now knowing that she loves me, I feel this crazy happiness that I can’t describe and I can’t help but think that it shouldn’t even be mine. But I’ll hold onto it with everything I have. I’ll fight tooth and claw to keep it.”

“I love her,” he said, his voice unwavering as he turned his eyes to each one of them. Stu just watched, looking a little thunderstruck. Bonnie looked at him with eyes that were a few dozen degrees warmer than they had been before. Beth, being Beth, looked like she was ready to melt, or cry. Or cry then melt. And Jason. For the first time, Jason looked unsure, and maybe just a little ashamed when Nick held his eyes the longest. “And I don’t need it to mean anything to anyone, as long as she knows it.”

He wasn’t expected his lap to be filled with the warmth or weight of bunny, and his paws spread and hesitated for a moment to let her settled where she wanted. But the contended smile spread over his muzzle as soon as she curled into him, her paws gripping the front of his uniform as she nestled her face into his chest. She wasn’t crying now, thankfully, but the fact that her grip on him tightened when he moved to adjust her into a more comfortable position told him that she wasn’t going to let herself be moved anytime soon. So he contented himself with sliding his paws down the length of her ears in an easy caress as he lowered his muzzle to nestle into the fur between them. She smelled sun warmed, faintly of the shampoo she had used that morning, faintly of the city around them, and little more intensely of the sweetness that he had become very familiar with recently. Had the thought crossed his mind that he wasn’t biologically wired to respond to it?
“Judy?” The voice belonged to Beth, and joined in with the soft murmur of quiet words that were passing between Judy’s parents. The bundle of curled up grey and white in a blue uniform didn’t even bother to lift her head, simply hummed a questioning sound that made him chuckle softly. “Does he have a brother? Because I want one.”

Nick glanced down as Judy started to blindly reach for something on the table, and seeing what she was reaching for, slid the napkin into range of her grasping paw. She crumbled it up, and with a blind throw that was dead on, beaned her sister in the muzzle, causing Beth to giggle softly.

“Yeah, sorry to disappoint ya there, Snow-flurry,” Nick said, deciding that the first layer of fallen snow suited the obviously hopelessly romantic and pretty white bunny. “But I am an only child. One of a kind. Unique to all Zootopia. There is a gaggle of vixens out there wondering what they’re going to do now that Nick Wilde has been taken by a bunnoomph!”

The punch to his stomach was surprising and quick, but not hard enough to actually hurt. He maintained his grin when he looked down as she raised her eyes to his. He dipped down and kissed the tip of her nose with his tongue, making her wiggle it before she socked him again.

“Police brutality, police brutality,” he chirped mockingly, and when she pulled her fist back again, he slipped his paw behind her head and right up under her ears until his claws tickled around the base of both. This made her freeze, shiver, and surrender willingly when he lowered his mouth to hers for a soft, regretfully chaste kiss. A kiss that ended when the adoring ‘Awww!’ came from the other end of the table, followed by a quick shushing from her mother.

Clearing his throat, he drew back from his blushing partner, who turned her face into his chest again before peeking a look around to her family. “Sorry, guys. Officer Judy Hopps, participating in PDA right in front of her parents. What is the world coming too, right?”

“Oh that was hardly a display of anything,” Bonnie said, reaching up to smooth the fur of her cheeks with one paw before she turned her gaze to her husband with an innocent smile. “Your father had his moments of uncontrollable passion when we were young. Could hardly keep his paws to himself.”

While Stu sputtered protest, Judy buried her face in his chest again with a groan, and Beth giggled uncontrollably, Nick glanced across the table at Jason and found the rabbit’s gaze resting on him. Or more precisely, the way ‘the fox’ held his sister. He looked confused and uncertain, lost in thought and worry. But the hate and disgust were gone, at least for now.

*Small miracles, I guess. It’s a start.*

This in mind, he squeezed Judy a little closer and joined the family in their laughter.

——

“I don’t understand. There have only been minor changes in the target’s behavior. Are you certain he was exposed at all?”

“Very sure. All samples, including the ones gathered from his apartment last night, confirm.”
“How long have you been observing him?”

“Forty eight hours.”

“Then he could not have been exposed. Every mammal exposed started to have savage episodes almost immediately. Twelve hours is the longest delay we’ve observed. The samples must have been tainted somehow.”

“All sixteen of them, from three different locations?”

“…Theories?”

“Many, but none of them concrete.”

“Most likely, in your opinion?”

“Judith Hopps.”

“His partner in the ZPD? How is that relevant?”

“More than a partner now, interestingly enough.”

“So they are lovers? I still fail to see how this changes things. Romantic relationships, marriage, familial ties: none of those have prevented the episodes from occurring.”

“You asked for my opinion, not your own. Are you going to hear it?”

“…Continue.”

“I have observed two separate instances where interaction with her has brought him down from what could have become an episode.”

“Wait, why didn’t you report this before?”

“…”

“Continue.”

“The first was in the Rainforest District, where he became enraged upon encountering the weasel that exposed them to Feral Blue. When he was restrained by a fellow officer his agitation only increased. Then Hopps calmed him, almost instantaneously. The second was in the bakery across from the Downtown ZPD station. A moment of irrational anger was observed, almost to the point of bearing his teeth at a fellow ZPD officer. Again, physical contact with her calmed him almost instantaneously.”

“How?”

“Unknown. Their partnership is unique, you’ll agree. That may be a factor. She is completely unafraid of him, which may be another.”

“Unafraid?”

“You saw the surveillance from the night in the Rainforest.”

“Yes. It was an act. She saw through it. That doesn’t prove…”
“A very convincing act. And it was unexpected, unrehearsed. I’ve seen trained soldiers jump for less than that. Even I would have flinched. She didn’t even blink, face to face with a snarling predator. A bunny, completely unafraid of a fox. Given their past experience with the Night Howler toxin, she has every reason to be wary of savage mammals.”

“Very well. But we cannot bring him in. He is too public. The disappearance of the first fox on the ZPD would draw unacceptable attention.”

“And no doubt the ZPD would not rest until he was found. It would limit our movement, and we need to retain full mobility. That is not what I have in mind.”

“Explain.”

“I need to get closer. Make contact.”

“To what end?”

“Pressure or support. I am unsure. I will determine when the time is right to make them aware of the danger. Given their past achievements working as a unit, they may become an asset. And with their attention focused on me, you can continue with the primary mission.”

“That is too dangerous. I…”

“That was not a suggested plan of action; it is the plan of action. I’ll contact you when you need to know more. I will maintain surveillance until you can bring in a replacement.”

“One more thing to consider.”

“Yes?”

“If your theory is correct, Judith Hopps may not only be the calming factor, but also a trigger. Sooner or later, this will overcome him. If she is caught unaware, she will be lost. We may need to consider finding a way to separate them to avoid an incident that cannot be explained away.”

The striped rabbit raised his eyes to watch the lovely gray furred bunny and the uniformed fox beside her leaving the hotel where her family would spend the night to walk towards the ZPD cruiser. When Wilde spoke, she shoved him away with a laugh that brightened her eyes. Amethyst eyes that were brilliant with happiness, humor, and love when she looked at the fox. And the fox. The rabbit recognized the look in the eyes of the predator; love, adoration, and at the moment a hint of undisguised desire. He found it strange, even impossible.

Which made it more than a little remarkable.

“Do you know anything about foxes?”

“Just the basics. Largest of the small class predators, higher than average intelligence, quick reflexes, able to adapt to even the most dangerous areas of Zootopia, primarily nocturnal. Believed to be one of the least trustworthy predatory species. Threat level while savage: minimal to hazardous if contained outside of Little Rodentia.”

“Hm,” he replied, waiting until the pair had started their cruiser, and allowed them to take a good quarter mile lead before he started his own ugly, oversized but perfectly inconspicuous car to follow where he already knew they were going. “Broaden your mind. Look up the behavior of foxes from our more savage days. A trip to the Museum could prove enlightening. I think it should be interesting to see how this plays through. Savage, out.”
Chapter End Notes

    Ah, plot progress! Or is it a tease? You decide!

    Comments are crack! Feed the addiction!
Stay With Me

Chapter Notes

Quick notice. The Savage Dark has lacked the erotic content noted in the tags. This chapter changes that. You have been warned. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Stay With Me

“Are you going to invite me in, Officer Hopps?”

The fact that he murmured the question against the base of one ear while his muzzle rested on top of her head from behind, standing at her front door as she dug her keys out of her pocket, almost made her laugh. But the laugh was interrupted when his paws slid up the length of both high ears at the same moment, fingers curved around in such a way that the pads of his thumbs traced the fur around the rim. Then, even as her legs started to weaken, his claws brushed lightly along the sensitive skin inside of each. The sensation caused heat to bloom, her heart starting to race as her skin flushed under her fur. She had to bite her lower lip and close her eyes for a moment to keep the moan from being as loud as she wanted it to be. And it certainly didn’t help when that long muzzle shifted around, the warmth of his breath trickling down the back of her neck before she felt his teeth graze through her fur just enough to touch flesh. The wave of tingles that sent down her spine made her attempt to muffle her moan come out as a strangled whimper.

“I-I’m never going to get this door open,” she whispered once she could form coherent thought again. Trying to steady her voice was a losing battle when he tipped his muzzle around to target the base of one ear with the next little nibble. “At least that way I won’t have to invite this shifty character into my apartment, because you can have me right here if you don’t stop that.”

She felt the insides of her ears burning, and turned to face him with her paws on her hips as he stepped in

“I wish they had stayed for dinner,” she grumbled as she pushed open the door and stepped into her dark apartment, though she was fully aware that it was only guilt that made her think it. She was too excited. Nervous, even. Why it felt like she was letting him into her apartment for the first time all over again she didn’t understand. Then again, no one had ever made her feel like the fox behind her did, emotionally or physically.

“It’s not my fault. I’m not the one who decided to crawl into your lap,” he reminded her, seeming to take his own sweet time following her in. “It didn’t take anyone long to realize that you weren’t interested in food.”

She felt the insides of her ears burning, and turned to face him with her paws on her hips as he waddled in slowly. And how, exactly, was she supposed to stay irritated at him? When he stepped in
close to her in full uniform what could have been irritation was replaced by unrepentantly lustful thoughts; the same uniform that she had imagined peeling him out of at least a few dozen times since she had first seen him wear it. She reached around him to flick the light switch on the wall, filling the little apartment with light even as he paused to kick the door closed behind him.

“It is entirely your fault,” she teased lightly, affectionately as she pressed her finger into the center of his chest before she turned to move towards her desk. “You were the one who… Oh!”

The keys slipped from her grasp and dropped to the ground as her paws came up to cover her muzzle, ears falling back as shock jolted through her. Shock that was followed just as quickly by the swell of too many emotions and thoughts for her to even begin to sort when she realized what she was seeing. Her collection of stuffed bunnies, all elven of them, were sitting neatly arranged upright against the folded blanket and pillow at the foot of her bed. As always, the adorable toy bunnies had their ears set in various states – from perked high, to flopped out to the side, and everything between – with tiny plastic eyes focused on her. She thought they looked like they were smiling, because in each of their arms was hugged a single purple tulip.

Anything she might have said wasn’t coming out as her paws dropped and rested against her racing heart and her words stuck in her throat. She spun to face her fox, to thank him, and almost ran into him and the single matching tulip he held in his paw. He looked down at her with a smile that was obviously pleased by her initial reaction, showing the tips of his canines when she reached out to accept it when he offered.

“I wasn’t really sure how things would end with your parents. If they had ended on a sour note, I thought this might cheer you up. And if things went well,” he said with a shrug of indifference that he obviously didn’t feel when he looked down at her with sparkling green eyes and perked ears.

“No one’s ever given me flowers before.” She held his gaze as she brought the petals of the flower to her nose, closing her eyes to breathe in the sweet scent for a moment. It reminded her of the burrow in a way; the perfume of petals and plant and the earthy scents of the soil in which it was grown. And she savored it for a moment before she opened her eyes to the reality of the fox in front of her.

“Wait, what? Really?” He looked genuinely offended at the very idea of such a thing when he reached up to smooth one paw over his now flattened ears. “I thought with the popu… You know what, never mind that.”

“Were you about to say something horribly speciest, Mr. Wilde?” she asked, not even capable of keeping the grin off her face when she turned towards the bed and started to gather the rest of the flowers. She sniffed at each bloom with purely feminine pleasure every time she looked at one of the stuffed bunnies holding the next flower. It made her feel giddy as delighted laughter bubbled from her. She was being a little ridiculous about the whole thing, she thought, but really couldn’t find a reason to care.

“Absolutely not,” he said, and she turned to watch him place his paw on his chest, shaking his head with an overplayed earnest expression. “How could you think such a thing of me? I would never dream of wondering how bunnies have such a reputation for multiplication when the bucks are obviously romantically incompetent. What other reason could there be for such a fine example of your species to go without a single flower until now?”

Another titter of laughter escaped her as she now held all of the tulips in paw, gathering them under her muzzle to breathe in the combined scent deeply. “I was strange when I was young. I wanted to be a police officer,” she said as she carried the precious bundle to her desk and spread them out over the surface, arranging them with the blooms facing her so she could slide one finger lightly over the smooth surface of one fragile petal. She felt his presence a moment before he was on one knee
behind her, the tip of his muzzle nestled into her cheek fur and both arms wrapped around her to draw her close. She leaned into the warm and solid form of him with a need that went far deeper than physical desire. And that was saying a lot at the moment.

“You wanted to be a cop? Very strange for a little bunny,” he said, cupping her cheek with one gentle paw to angle her muzzle back toward his. She felt the whisper of his breath over her lips before he brushed his against them softly, and the fact that it still caused those butterflies in her stomach to go mad made her mind go blank.

Reaching back, her fingers burrowing into the fur at the back of his neck, she held him to that kiss until he deepened it. The parting of his lips as he angled his muzzle against hers and the meeting of tongues caused that flickering spark of nervous desire to ignite into the darker ache of slowly growing need. Going with the feeling, she pulled away from him just enough to turn herself around and wrap her arms around his neck, dragging her body upward along his. She was grateful that his mouth followed hers every step of the way. And even more so when the paw on her cheek slipped back to cup the back of her head while the other ran down her hips and cupped her rear to lift her as he stood. The feeling, the knowledge that came with the motion as he carried her to her bed was so novel that it alone was enough to make her head swim for a moment, forcing her to break the kiss to catch her breath. And even catching her breath was a challenge when his momentarily unoccupied muzzle dropped to her neck as he lowered her to the sheets. The glide of a warm, gentle tongue tracing the line where white fur blended with gray down her throat had her mouth dropping open in a sigh that was much contented wonder as arousal.

“I’m still not entirely convinced this isn’t some amazing dream.” Her ears twitched, and then flared hot with a blush when she felt him go still for a few breaths, only to raise his head and look down at her with a grin spreading over his muzzle. His ears were perked, nose flaring just a bit, canines showing in the grin, and she could feel the motion of his tail as it gave a few quick wags behind him. All of it just had ‘delighted fox’ written all over him. “Uhm, I didn’t actually mean to say that out loud, so you can omit that from the record.”

“Oh, is that what I can do?” His tone had dropped to a sly note, and she felt the quiver in her belly when his paws moved to her shoulders and the sound of stripping Velcro was followed by the loosening of her vest. She hadn’t even known he knew how to take it off, but clearly he had paid attention when she did because next nimble paws loosened the side panel and she arched her back off of the mattress to allow him to slide it away. It hit the floor with a light thump as he tossed it aside. “You have very complicated dreams, Carrots. Very pleasant ones from my perspective, but you have to tell me: what would you do if you woke up and this was just a dream, hm?”

“Aside from wallowing in self-pity and frustration for months?” She had more, but lost the train of thought and released a little whimper when, after tugging her shirt up a bit to free it from her waistband, his paws slid under it. He spread his finger-pads over her belly and upwards along her chest, just seeming to savor the shape of her body under his paws for a long moment before dragging his claws through her fur in the opposite direction. Her breath came in little hitched gasps as her world centered on the sensation as the tips touched skin, a feeling that had her squirming to be freed of the shirt entirely. When she managed to open her eyes, she realized that he was watching her; predatory green locked on her even as he lowered the tip of his nose to the white fur of her now partially exposed belly. He sucked in the scent of her, nuzzling his way lower until he bumped the barrier presented by her uniform pants. But the wave of heat that followed his growled exhale, bringing that low vibration and the hot caress of his breath together to drive her mad; had her reaching down herself to fumble with buckle and button.

When his tongue slid out over her fingers just as she managed to get the button unfastened, she jumped just a little. But watching the pink muscle drag over them a second time, between them as his
gaze lowered to watch her progress, made her scramble to finish. Thankfully, he helped when she raised her hips and started to squirm out of them, his larger paws covering hers as she hooked her thumbs into the pants and panties under them, both of them dragging them off. The ankle braces were little more than an afterthought caught in the moment, trapped and removed in the same motion that had the next piece of her uniform discarded as easily as her vest.

“I want you to promise me something,” he said, making her ears quiver at the unfairness of asking her to promise something now, when she was bare bottom on her bed just wanting him to keep touching her. A giddy thrill shoot through her when he slid his paw up the back of her calf, then behind her knee to lift it up and place it on his shoulder. His eyes rose to meet hers, and she saw the same thing she had seen in the file room: something hungry and feral behind his eyes when he nuzzled the soft white of her inner thigh. And again, he breathed her in. His eyes closed as he held the breath as if trying to make the scent a part of his memory before he released and continued in a voice that was roughened, lingering just on the edge of a growl. “If this is a dream, and you wake up? Don’t wallow. Go find me. I can’t imagine there is a reality where Nicholas Wilde doesn’t love you.”

“Nick,” she said, reaching down to run her paws over his high ears. The touch may not have been as gentle as she wanted, her fingers curling into the fur at the base as she tugged to tempt him closer, but the urgency in her grew as the heat between her legs was assaulted by almost-touches. He was so close to her that she could feel the humidity of his breath against her sex, but though she could see the hunger in his eyes, he seemed intent on driving her insane by turning to nip at her inner thigh. She felt his paw again, on her other leg this time. Drawing it up and over, letting her press the weight into his shoulder. She wanted to take it further: wanted to wrap her legs around his neck, urge him forward; beg him if she needed to. She swallowed thickly instead, her eyes never leaving his. “And what if you’re the one dreaming?”

“I know I’m not dreaming, Carrots,” he said, and chose that moment to nudge the heated pink flesh of her folds with the tip of his tongue. She didn’t even have time to try to muffle the sound that escaped her, a sound that was somewhere between a question and moan of surprised pleasure. She had never felt anything like him before. It had only taken moments to get here - with his muzzle between her legs and the lingering pleasure of his brief kiss warming her sex - but now his pace was torture.

“H-How do you know?”

“I dream about you often enough to know the difference,” came his reply, and a sweet sort of sadness started to fill her before he dipped his muzzle forward and replaced the world she knew with one of sensation and need.

Teasing seemed to be finished, and now he seemed intent on following the hunger she saw in his eyes as he dropped his gaze down the length of his muzzle. The first real, long taste he took caused her fingers to tighten on his ears as the warmth of his tongue dragged over her folds. The ache was already so intense that it was almost painful, and a low whimper escaped her as her thighs tried to squeeze closed for a moment. His eyes rose to her instantly, watching her as his paws moved to slide down the top of each thigh. The touch was gentle, almost comforting, and was mimicked by the much softer brush of his tongue that followed. It caused a tingle of pleasure as the slick sensation and warmth soothed away the ache, replacing it with a slower burn.

Her gentle fox. Even though she could see the need in him, see how much he wanted her, he took his time again. Building on that gentle pressure of tongue on flesh until the nearly painful ache grew into the simple ache of need. It allowed her to surrender herself to him, to fall back onto the bed and arch her hips to meet him with more urgency as he pressed deeper. She muffled her moan with a
fisted paw to her muzzle and a knuckle caught between her teeth, her eyes falling closed as she allowed herself to feel every seemingly lazy stroke. Lazy strokes from a tongue that withdrew to lightly play along her outer lips, building the need for more before pressing deeper than before, causing sparks to flicker behind closed lids as she released a cry that might have been his name. She couldn’t think clearly enough to define what she was feeling, to wonder how long she lay under his paws, or to fight against it to prolong what she knew was coming.

Feeling it as a tightening in her belly before the pleasure even really struck home, a flutter of muscles as she gave into the desire to cross her rear paws behind his head to drag him closer as she felt the beautiful pressure begin to rise. Pleasure became need, and need became a desperate rise as she opened her eyes to look at him, intending to plead with him not to stop. Whatever cries had begun were stopped when she saw the eyes that watched her; eyes that were not tender or kind or even loving. The shock of the savage green eyes locked on her, vertical slits narrowed and hungry, would have made her stop, try to think, try to understand under any other circumstance. But just as her mind tried to wrap around it, he parted his muzzle – his maw, she trembled – until she could see all of the deadly teeth that could easily have devoured her. The fear that she should have experienced was lost in the surge of lust when she felt his teeth press dangerously into the white fur of her belly, the widened muzzle allowed him to slide his ravenous tongue deeper; and it was all accented by the sudden feral growl that escaped him as he devoured her.

“Nick! Oh my..! Ngh! N ngh!”

She had never felt anything like the orgasm that rolled over. Even when compared to the bliss of the morning they had spent together, this was more intense on an entirely new level. Different. A driving heat that sent little shocks of pleasure all the way through to her limbs, making her paws feel numb and causing her ears to burn so hot that it was almost painful. It all centered on an intoxicating pleasure as her sex squeezed down around the hungry tongue, forcing her to rise from the bed and desperately try to grasp at his shoulders, his ears, the large paws that still held her thighs. Anything to give her a piece of reality to hold onto as her mind felt like it was flying apart. She wasn’t even aware of the bite of her own claws into her palms when she found no purchase, and was finally forced to fall back onto the mattress. With nothing solid to hold onto, all she managed to do was scream his name and tighten her legs to raise her hips against the muzzle so passionately attacking her.

She wasn’t sure if she passed out for a few seconds, or if she had simply closed her eyes and been unable to think as the aftershocks of pleasure continued to roll through her. What she did know what that she could feel her own heartbeat, quick and hard, inside of her own chest. She could hear the rustle of cloth, the falling of a zipper, and panting breaths that were not her own. She was also very aware that she was alone on the bed. The absence of his muzzle between her thighs and the touch of his paws and even just the breath of him close to her made her whimper as a lonely, empty feeling started to rise. The moment she managed to open her eyes to look for him, her vision was filled with the blue and gold of his uniform and the loneliness was replaced with the weight of her fox on top of her. Large paws were urgent as he dragged her to the center of the bed, and hers were just as urgent as she reached up to fumble with the buttons of his shirt.

She looked up into the eyes of her partner, the slits of his pupils so different from the gentle fox he had been that morning, and knew she should have been afraid. Should have been, but couldn’t. How could she be when he leaned over her, and both paws – paws that she knew easily could have killed her – cupped her face to draw her into a kiss. A deep kiss that sent the questions of why, and how skittering away as she managed to release that last button and shove his shirt open. Her fingers buried themselves into the cream color fur of his chest, savoring the warmth of it and the strength of the predator under it before spreading to his shoulders. Her paws gripped him, and pulled him closer desperately as she returned the kiss with as much passion as she could give. She parted her thighs
willingly, wrapped them around his hips to let him know that she still needed him. This was still Nick, after all. He was still hers.

And she was willing to die rather than believe he would hurt her.

The honesty of his words, the words he had confessed to her in front of her family, were so intensely true now. He had been wrong to believe that having her would ease the longing. Maybe it wouldn’t always be this way, but his entire day from the moment he had watched her leave the ZPD had felt like this growing need that he hadn’t been able to suppress. Seeing her, touching her had been enough to soothe him for a time. Holding her with feelings of love and contentment easing the need, he had been able to relax fully for the first time that day. But still, he had never been more grateful to anyone than he had been when her parents had decided to take their dinner in the hotel.

And from there, he was proud of himself. He hadn’t dragged her into his lap in the cruiser like he had almost been compelled to do. He had even managed to take his paws and mouth off of her in the hallway long enough for them to get through the front door, for her to see his surprise. The pleasure on her face, the love in her eyes had been a short-lived balm as he had watched her move around the apartment; one that had not stopped him from taking her to the bed, filling at least one need with the taste and scent of her fresh and hot on his tongue and surrounding his senses. He felt control slip further just from watching her writhe on the bed, hearing those passionate sounds she made as he took his fill of her. His focus of the world narrowed to the single figure of the bunny, the impossibility of her love and the pleasure she took in his touch. The fact that she accepted his need and returned it just as intensely.

The focus was so intense that he was aware that he could hear the quick beat of her heart, see every ripple of silky fur as she quivered, and smell the subtle changes of her scent even beyond the sweetness of her need. Everything about her became clear, while the rest of the world seemed to fade into a dark ring leached of color. But he didn’t care, not even really notice when she turned her eyes to him. There was a spike of… Something. Almost fear? It was edged into every breath of her scent, and while one part of him wondered if he should soothe her, he already knew that the fear was not of him.

Still, he couldn’t risk that she would run: that the almost fear would grow into something that would make her try to escape him. He reacted without thought, parting his muzzle to gently snap it onto the fur of her belly as he slipped his tongue deeper with a playful growl. It was playful, to him. To show her that he just wanted to make his mate happy. Maybe she didn’t see it, maybe she didn’t recognize that gentleness of the bite, but she reacted. It wasn’t the reaction he was expecting to the attempt at play, but it was something. He could feel the bed itself tremble lightly as she tensed from head to toe, that quivering of muscle under fur that he had seen before becoming a near frantic twitch. It almost worried him before she cried his name, and was rising up to grip at him. He felt the slide of her tiny claws through the fur around his ears as she tried to find purchase, felt the light sting of them when they met skin before slipping away as she fell back.

This time when he growled, it was simple pleasure as the flavor of the bunny deepened and sweetened, as her body writhed and bucked against him. The almost-fear scent was fully gone now, and there was just a primal sense of passion and need that he could very easily relate to. This is what had him leaving her, still gasping and trying to recover from her climax, to stand and unbuckle his
belt. The fact that he still knew how didn’t strike him as any more strange than the fact that the world was mostly black and white now, with hints of color mostly focused on his bunny with her blue shirt still bunched halfway up her belly. All he knew was that he needed her, and the uniform he wore was in the way of that. So he stripped the pants, tossed them aside, and just as he moved towards her he heard a little whimper escape her as she opened her eyes to look for him. The longing in that sound echoed his own, and once she was in the center of the bed, he responded to it by closing his muzzle over hers.

He hardly noticed when she managed to open his shirt, his senses high on her so that when those tiny, silky paws ran over his chest, his own breath caught for a moment. Then he was being dragged into her, in all ways. He wasn’t sure if it had been her intent or his own, but his hips angled as she wrapped her legs around him and the incredible heat of her sex was too inviting; too needed to be resisted as his body rose over her and his hips bucked forward. As the liquid heat wrapped around his length, a blissful growl was torn from his throat as his hips met hers.

Even now he stilled when her fingers tensed against his shoulders, and the whimpered gasp escaped into his chest as she buried her muzzle into him. Feeling the huffs of her breath, the ripple of her sex around him, and the gradual relaxation as her paws moved from his shoulders to wrap around his chest fully. His ears perked when she whimpered again, and this time the sound was a plea as her body moved against him. Familiar, this desire she seemed to have for him to give her more than he thought she could handle. And his instinct to mate and finally quench this unending need surrendered to her as he drew back and filled her again just as quickly.

Their mating reflected that need, as his paws moved to grip the bed on either side of her to anchor them and she clung to him as the pace was chosen. Every breath came with some sound: soft moans and gasps from her, throaty grunts and growls from him. It was basic, simple. No sweet words or light touches; just the heat of her body wrapped around the hardness of his. His was rougher than he normally would have thought to be, but even when it seemed he might ease the pace she refused to accept it. Her hips rose to him, her paws dragged through his fur, her voice urging him to go deeper, thrust harder. And it wasn’t a pace meant to last. Her head was thrown back, and the increasing cries that spilled from her were no longer muffled by his fur when he felt her tighten around him. And tighten further as his knot started to swell.

She didn’t give him the chance to even consider slowing this time as she clung around him. All of her. Her arms, her legs, her sex. She clung to him with such force that she lifted herself from the bed in an attempt to wrap herself around him, a reaction that compelled him to rise to his knees and grab her hips. Giving her what she wanted, giving him what he wanted as he drove himself into her with shorter, quicker, urgent bucks of his hips. It only took a moment after that for the bliss of release to overcome him. The ache that had grown through the day and reached its height when she had again showed her lack of fear of him was finally released when he emptied himself into his trembling lover.

They stayed like that for a long moment, and for the longest time he felt no desire to do anything more than breathe her in with his muzzle lowered to rest between her ears. He listened to the quickness of her breathing, the rapid rhythm of her heart, and felt the slide of her fingers through his fur as she turned to rest her cheek against his chest. After long moments of silent bliss, she was the one who spoke first.

“Nick,” she said softly, her voice oddly… Alert. Concerned, even. “Can you understand me?”

The question had his ears flipping back to pin against his head for a moment, before he decided it must have been a joke about her sexual prowess blowing his mind and he released a light chuckle. He didn’t notice the trace of a growl that lingered with the sound, however.
“I know it was amazing, Carrots, but I am pretty sure most of my brain cells are still in place. Not so sure about the rest of my nerve endings, though.” He felt her relax against him, almost going lax before the arms around his chest tightened and her paws gripped his fur painfully. Desperately even. “Is something wrong? Judy? I didn’t hurt you, did I?”

The fact that she let out a laugh that was still laced with a touch of hysteria did nothing to ease the tension that rose in him. The fear as he looked down her, twitched his nose, running his paws over her hips slowly until she raised her eyes to his. He was already frowning, already thinking that he had been too rough with her when she shook her head.

“No, Nick. No, don’t look like that. You didn’t hurt me at all,” she assured him, one paw reaching up to touch the side of his muzzle until he leveled his gaze on hers. Then he saw that she hesitated, folded her ears back, and the way she looked at him was strange. Concerned, confused, searching. Her nose was twitching. “Your eyes, Nick.”

“My eyes?” Utterly perplexed, he carefully and fully aware of the bunny still squeezing around his knot, he turned and leaned to the side so he could catch a glance at himself in the mirror by the door. Seeing the eyes of a savage looking back at him, he went numb. So numb that he lost his balance, and tumbled off the edge of the bed, dragging a squeaking bunny with him where they landed on their sides in a tangled heap. He looked at himself again, this time from a clear angle that allowed him to see every detail of the eyes that looked back at him. Eyes that were not his own. Eyes that reminded him instantly of Mr. Manchas, eyes that he had seen clearly a moment before the savage jaguar had tried to maul them both.

“No no no no.”

Panic shot through him and he drew them both up so that she was sitting in his lap as he looked down at her with wide eyes. He pried her away from him so he could run his paws over her fur again. Chest, arms, back, belly, hips, legs. His nose twitched as fear prickled through him. “Did I hurt you? Don’t lie to me!” he demanded again, fear raising his voice. Only now did he start to realize how strange the world looked, how different. Only then did he realize that he only cared that he could have killed her.

“Nick, stop!” The sharp tone in her voice made his paws stop on her ears, though it didn’t slow the quick pace of his breathing when he looked down at her. He flinched away when she reached up to touch him this time, but she was having none of it and reached up with both paws to grip his muzzle and pull him down until he was nose to nose with her. “Look at you! You’re on the verge of tears because you think you hurt me! You are not savage!”

He hadn’t allowed himself to cry since his childhood, since he had learned never to let anyone know that they got to him. But his vision was blurred with them now, and he quickly blinked them away before they could fall. The will didn’t exist in him to resist when she cupped the back of his head and drew him down to her. With his back arched so he could rest his head on her shoulder, he wrapped his arms around her and held her tightly. The fear of hurting her drained away slowly, trying to linger as he breathed her in. No blood, no scent of fear. Just the lingering scent of passion, the warm sensation of his body still joined with hers. The fear was replaced with gradual confusion, and a strange mixture of contentment and anxiety. His mate was safe, unafraid, and with him. He would protect her, even from himself.

“Carrots, what’s happening to me?”

“I don’t know,” she whispered into his head, nuzzling and kissing around it as she stroked him soothingly. “But we’ll find out. You’re going to be fine. Stay with me, and we’re going to be fine.”
“I wasn’t planning on barging in like this, given your current state of closeness,” came the cool voice from the door. Both of their heads snapped toward the sound, eyes locked on the tall, striped rabbit in a neatly pressed black suit who stood there. “But if you’ll bear with me, I believe can explain everything.”

Fury rolled up in Nick faster than he could think to contain it, and his ears pinned back as a vicious snarl twisted his muzzle.

All he saw was the gun pointed at them.

Chapter End Notes

So that just happened!

Did anyone else know that foxes could see magnetic fields? I didn’t! But you can bet your asses I will use it.

Comments are love! Love me!!!
Savage Foxes and Awkward Conversations

Chapter Notes

It's finally done! Computer crashes, school, children that are not my own be damned!

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Well, not exactly everything,” he amended, keeping his distance with the gun trained on the snarling fox only feet away. It was only training that kept that paw from shaking, or high ears from falling flat as the desire to run filled him. He had never faced anything like this, never anything so unusual. Those infected with this particular toxin? Certainly. But a fully cognitive fox that showed all of the signs that he should have been a slavering savage, including the temperament, while still holding a conversation with his lover? This was entirely new and it had begged him to enter the room, to see it. To verify what he had heard said through the paper thin walls of the apartment next door. “I’m afraid I don’t know everything. But I know a great deal about what is happening. Miss. Hopps, you may want to calm your partner. Though I would prefer not to, I will shoot him.”

The bunny looked about as pleased as the fox, especially when the threat seemed to settle over her. Her reaction was far calmer, and he did have to give her credit. She didn’t seem the slightest bit disturbed by the fact that she was currently, and very clearly, locked hip to hip with the fox. She reacted quickly to his words, likely because she understood that he meant them. He watched as she slipped her arms under the fox’s shoulder, looping them around so she could slide her fingers lightly over the base of his ears and down the back of his neck. The effect was very nearly instant, particularly when she spoke in a sweetly soothing tone that only trembled the faintest bit.

“Nick. Nick, you need to calm down. Please. If he wanted to hurt us, he would have already.”

She didn’t sound convinced of that, which was perfectly fine. Staying alert was a good sign. Though even as the snarls died down to low growls, the fury in the wild green eyes didn’t dim in the slightest. The predator started to move, one arm wrapped around the very naked bunny to keep her close as he backed away and turned to the side, putting as much of himself between her and the gun as he could without actually turning his back.

“Tell him that I am not going to hurt you, Miss Hopps,” he said in a moment of inspiration. “You, specifically. If it helps, I have no intention of harming either of you.”

She handled herself with a great deal of grace, given her situation. Grace that was no doubt difficult, given the fact that she was being handled in a very ungraceful manner; legs and arms were now wrapped around her lover, allowing him to carry her wherever he seemed inclined to without any attempt at all to steer him. It could not have been any more comfortable than it was dignified.

“Nick, he’s not going to hurt me. Did you hear him? He’s not going to hurt me.” The paws on the fox’s ears tightened as he watched, and she dragged the drawn and tight muzzle towards her, until green eyes turned to lock on her. “Shh. That’s it. Calm down. Look at me, Nick. Look at me. I’m fine. I’m safe. You have me.”
The transformation was remarkable. The curl of the snarl started to ease, his lips dropping to hide sharp white teeth before the long muzzle smoothed out and relaxed. Because he was naked, the rabbit could see every tense muscle slowly relax as well; a relaxation that seemed to come more quickly as she eased her grip on his ears and brushed her palms over his shoulders easily. Even as he lowered himself into a crouch beside the bed, almost kneeling as he kept the attractive bunny held close to his chest, the eyes softened for her. Calmed for her as she continued to speak soft words to him until she leaned up and placed a trail of soft kisses down one side of his mouth until she reached his neck. And as he had seen in the Rainforest only slightly more than twenty-four hours ago, she showed no fear of him. Her nose didn’t even twitch when he lowered his muzzle to her throat and drew his tongue slowly over the fur there. She actually tilted her head back, and allowed him access, making his own insides twist in what was almost panic when the predator parted his muzzle and slide long canines through her fur. The action, he quickly realized, was not only harmless but loving and only managed to draw a silent smile from Hopps.

And for a moment, he could have sworn that they forgot that he and his gun even existed. In fact, that seemed to be exactly what was happening as she ran her fingers over the fox’s muzzle, and then down to dig her fingers into the fur of his chest as a visible shiver raced through her. Of all the things he had seen in his life, of all the dark things he had faced… He had never been forgotten.

He was a little insulted.

With a slow roll of his eyes, he tucked the gun into the shoulder holster under his suit jacket and stood there with his arms crossed over his chest. He was feeling a bit like a voyeur, especially when Wilde’s hand moved to slide up and over one long ear. His own ears twitched a bit, as he watched the slow sensually charged touch travel down her ear in such a way that his thumb pad slid along her inner ear before it stopped at the base. There it lingered and gave a half scratch, half massage that had his claws digging into the fur until they touched skin. Knowing exactly how good that felt himself, he wondered now who was calming who as Hopps released a little whimper. And shifted her hips, tightening her thighs around the predator’s hips in a motion that caused a growl to rise from Wilde as he returned the intimate motion with a slow forward thrust.


“Ahem,” he cleared his throat, loudly. The bunny tensed as if she had forgotten he was there, her fingers sliding to a more manageable and innocent grip on the fox’s shoulders as she turned her eyes towards him. Embarrassed now, maybe because she saw that he no longer held the gun and she was able to focus on the fact that there was a strange rabbit in the apartment with them, she turned and hid her face in Wilde’s shoulder.

Wilde, on the other hand. Wilde took his time, and even while she struggled with the embarrassment, he nuzzled his nose into her shoulder and breathed in the scent of her fur. The tip of his nose rooting around to find flesh with an audible huff, a huff that was followed by a quick lap of his tongue over the juncture between neck and shoulder. Even embarrassed as she was now, it caused a noticeable shiver to race through Hopps. Only then did those green eyes raise to him again, narrowed but focused as his muzzle curled; a curl that was almost a grin. A savage sort of grin, one that showed a great many teeth, managed to look dangerously challenging and not in the least bit friendly. And like all of his actions since she had drawn his attention to calm him, it looked like it was given to send a message that the striped rabbit could see clearly as he held green eyes:

Mine.

Possessive. Territorial. Showing no signs at all that he was aware of the state of mind, or that he minded it even if he did. It left him to wonder how much of it was the savage, and how much of it
was Wilde himself. But it made little difference at the moment, because the message was received and accepted.

“What do you know? What’s happening to me? Did you cause it?”

The questions were all easy to answer when taken at face value, but it still sent a chill through him when the fox spoke, caused the fur on the back of his neck to want to stand on end as he stepped further into the room. Even though he had heard it through the walls, actually seeing the eyes of a savage and hearing the words of a perfectly intelligent mammal was not something that anyone could have been prepared for.

“Astounding,” he murmured as he slowly swung the door closed and turned the light off without letting his eyes leave the fox. The moment the room was shrouded in near dark, he could see the glow of luminescent green eyes watching him as the pupil’s dilated. Being in a very small, dark room with the glowing eyes of a predator watching him was pushing his instincts to their limits. Even beyond the civilized there was always that layer of instinct when faced with a real threat. And the bunny that he was by nature? That deeply hidden, trembling prey animal that his training and centuries of evolution tried to suppress? That part of him wanted to bolt from the room and get as far away from those watchful eyes as possible. Of course, the scent of a female bunny in heat meant that the primal side of him also wanted to get a piece of the pretty gray bunny which was a perfectly natural and reasonable reaction.

He had no intention of indulging in either desire.

“The change in the eyes,” he said, speaking in a calm, conversational tone as he reached over and flicked the lights on again. The soft light that filled the room caused the slits of Wilde’s pupils to contract again, and narrow in annoyance. “We’ve found that it works something like the fur on the back of your neck standing up, or moving around on all fours. These are physical aspects that we no longer need in our everyday lives, and thus only use when pressed. The change in the eyes takes that to another level. The primitive mind causes a physiological reaction, taking what most consider a useless trait that has almost left our evolutionary path and making it relevant again. I assume the world looks different to you right now?”

“Yes. There is a… Dark ring, like a shadow all around me. Even past the walls. When you move, it reacts.”

Now the fox sounded curious, interested, but still cautious and irritated, on edge, even frightened. His grip on the bunny did not relax, nor did the fact that he was keeping her as out of sight as he possibly could now. For her part, Hopps was stroking her partner still, paws running down his neck and shoulders slowly even as she rested her head on his chest. Purple eyes were watching him carefully, curiously, and angrily enough to make it clear that she did not like being caught in this situation. He decided to push his own curiosity to the side for now, and focus on given them exactly what he had promised: answers.

“My name is Agent Julius Lapin, ZIA,” he began, even though he detested using the ZIA as a cover. It was possibly the only agency that would regularly work within the ZPD, and he had decided that his instincts had been correct. He needed to stay close to them. “We have been investigating cases of savage mammals throughout Zootopia; cases that started to appear three months ago.”

“If it started three months ago, then why haven’t we heard anything about it?” questioned Hopps, her gaze turning to him with a frown creasing her muzzle. “Savage cases fall under the ZPD’s jurisdiction.”

When he turned his eyes to her to reply, it seemed that Wilde had taken just about enough of some
buck getting an eyeful of his very naked and vulnerable partner. The sudden and vicious snarl that escaped him proved once again that he was not dealing with a fully sane fox, and caused his eyes to snap up even as Hopps reached up to place her paws on either side of the long muzzle. How she trusted him so completely, that she did not hesitate in the slightest to place her paws less than an inch from exposed and flashing teeth, was something he was certain he would never understand. But the touch did calm him, even if he did get a word in on the subject in a voice that was half growl and all furious.

“Eyes on me, Stripes,” was the warning, his ears pinned back so far that they almost vanished into the orange fur on top of his head. “You’re already unwelcome here. And I will eat you.”

“Nick,” drawled the softly feminine voice of Hopps, and though he heeded the warning and kept his eyes away from her, he still heard a note of humor in it.

“What? I will,” Nick looked down at her, and his muzzle curved into a smirk now. He had seen that smirk before while watching them over the past two days. Amusement, charm, a teasing edge. Even his voice was almost normal. Trying to get a handle on whether or not the fox was more savage than sane was giving him a headache. “Well, maybe not eat him. My tastes turn more towards…”

He stopped when she slapped her paw over the tip of his muzzle, but that only caused his grin to grow. “Focus, Slick. And get the blanket off the bed. It would be very awkward if Agent Lapin had to talk to the top of my head every time I ask him a question.”

“It’s already very awkward,” Wilde grumbled, but did what she requested as he reached over to the bed and dragged the blanket from it.

At her direction, he didn’t immediately wrap her in the blanket. He held it out in front of him, blocking his view of Hopps entirely. Which he didn’t mind in the slightest, because from the look of concentration – which could have been taken for either pleasure or discomfort – and the little grunts from Hopps herself, he felt he didn’t want to see what was going on behind it. The fact that he heard her whisper ‘First time I wish this would shrink faster’ and then Wilde’s reply of ‘You haven’t complained yet’ had him wondering if he should just step outside and come back when they were less attached to each other. The thought was interrupted when she shushed the fox again, and the blanket was flipped over lowered to wrap around them both. Now she was facing him, her face took on a more serious expression.

“You were about to explain to us why the ZIA has been keeping reports of savage attacks secret from the ZPD?”

“Because things are more complicated than a power hungry sheep darting individual predators at random to spread panic,” he replied as he took a step back to the door, leaning against it with his arms folded over his chest, a neutral expression on his face, and his ears laid back as he watched the two of them. He waved one paw towards them, or Wilde to be more precise. “This is the result of Night Howler, but a far more refined mixture than the simple extract that Bellwether was capable of producing. And more complex than Feral Blue, the unofficial street name of the drug that Officer Hopps was exposed to. We believe that Feral Blue was one of the initial test stages of the toxin that Wilde has been exposed to, because they are both refined into a similar crystalline base.”

“So this is Night Howler,” he heard the fox grumble, though he didn’t seem surprised. Perhaps it was the lack of surprise that kept his tone calm; or the fact that his partner was wrapped up and unseen under the blanket. “Why am I being affected now? If I was exposed to Feral Blue, then why didn’t I go savage in the Rainforest when Judy did?”

“You misunderstand,” he said with a sigh, shaking his head before he met Wilde’s eyes. “What is
happening to you is the result of a toxin more advanced than the one that affected your partner. The entire reason you were not affected by Feral Blue when you carried your partner out of the Rainforest is because your body had already started to produce antibodies against the more potent toxin that was already in your system.”

“Wait,” Hopps interrupted, and he had the feeling that if she had not been… Stuck as she was to the fox, she might have walked right up into his face. “You mean Nick was exposed to Night Howler before the drug? How long? How is that even possible without him showing signs of anything being wrong until now? And how the hell do you know about it? And when were you planning on warning us? After he went on a bloody rampage through the streets of Zootopia?”

“Officer Hopps,” he began, and because she was glaring daggers at him with violet eyes that were filling with a building fury, the striped rabbit considered his words carefully. “As far as we can tell, he was exposed over forty-eight hours ago.”

“Oh, you are under arrest!” shouted the tiny gray rabbit, who was obviously in no position to arrest anyone. Though that was not the case for long when Wilde winced as she tried to lurch forward, his hands coming to rest on her shoulders to hold her back a little too late. The rabbit could see the hot blush rise through her ears, and became aware of the sudden increase in mobility when she reached back to snatch the blanket from around the fox as she stood on her own. That one brief flash of every white and grey inch of her had him quickly averting his eyes under Wilde’s watchful gaze even as she wrapped the blanket under her arms and tied it off in front of her chest. Then she stalked the three steps it took her to reach him, standing up in his face with all of the authority that a cop could manage with one paw holding a sheet in place to hide her nudity.

“Obstruction, withholding information on a Night Howler case, endangering an officer, breaking and entering, unlawful voyeurism!” She jammed her paw into his face, one finger extended so that he had to cross his eyes to see her claw touching the tip of his nose. “And anything else I can find to throw at you.”

“Miss Hopps,” he began, starting to lean away from the door only to be silenced when she pressed her paw into his chest and shoved him back.

“And I don’t care who you are, who you work for, or what kind of good you think you’re doing,” she said, her sweet voice somehow coming across with all the strength of iron as she kept him pinned where he was. “I’ll have your tail in an interrogation room for the next forty-eight hours and I’ll pin your ears to the wall until you tell me everything. Starting with how to fix my fox!”

He was impressed more than he was intimidated. The situation didn’t exactly scream authority from his perspective, but she managed to exude enough of it to make him understand how she had become the first bunny on the previously speciest ZPD. It was almost a shame that she hadn’t been recruited for the agency.

“Believe it or not, I am here to help,” he began, keeping his voice calm even as he gentled it a bit. “Officer Wilde’s situation is unique, which is why I am here now. The other mammals that were exposed to this toxin went savage within half a day at most. Full savage, the sort of savage that everyone expects from exposure to Night Howlers. But something has been slowing the process, preventing him from losing himself fully. And I believe that something is you. This is why it took me so long to decide the best way to approach you both. Because he is reacting differently, whoever is exposing mammals to this toxin might be interested in finding out why. The agency hoped that this might draw their attention, and draw them into the open if they made an attempt to take him. But I…”

Perhaps at any other time he might have seen the fist coming. But the fact that the entire situation was
awkward, and that she smelled distractingly appealing to the buck as close as she was, left him a little more open than he would have been under normal circumstances. And she punched hard, that balled and well trained paw slamming into the tip of his muzzle with enough force to drive his head back into the door with a solid smack that had him seeing stars and a sheet of black behind them for a moment. Falling on his ass with about as much grace as one could manage with the taste of blood in his mouth and a hell of a headache in his future, he covered his nose with his hand as he glared up at her. He realized then that the only reason she hadn’t hit him again was because Wilde, who at some point had put his pants on, had moved wrap his arms around her and hold her back. Actually, he was holding her off the ground as she squirmed to get away. She still struggled to kick him, even as he pulled the paw away and calmly looked down at the blood soaked into his white fur.

“You used my partner as bait?” she yelled, twisting more violently as she tried to get away from the fox holding her. “Let me go, Nick! I’m going to interrogate him right fucking now!”

“All right, Carrots, calm down,” he soothed, keeping his arms wrapped around her and drawing her back towards the bed. Which he was only able to do because she let him, the rabbit had no doubt. “As satisfying as that would be to watch – nice punch, by the way – I don’t need you getting into a fist fight when I’m finally starting to calm down. And things are looking normal, so if everyone could calm down, it would be fantastic.”

This caused her to stop struggling, her ears dropping back as she turned her gaze to look up at the fox. She likely saw it in the same moment that he did: the vertical pupils of the savage were gone, replaced with round and calm greens that relaxed further when she stopped struggling against him. The striped rabbit, despite his already aching head and the harsh throb in his muzzle, drew himself to his feet slowly, adjusted the line of his suit, and rechecked the gun in its holster as the clearly relieved rabbit slid her paws over the fox’s muzzle gently. He gave them a moment to do their ‘we’re stupid in love, and will forget the rabbit at the door’ routine again as he checked the status of his muzzle. Luckily, nothing seemed to be broken and the bleeding had already stopped. He was fairly sure that she could have hit him harder, if the information he had gathered of her time in the academy and as a police officer were accurate, so he was at least grateful for that much restraint.

Even if they weren’t showing the slightest bit of that restraint now. He released a low sigh as he watched the two of them lock muzzles and sink into a kiss that made his ears quiver in something that wasn’t entirely frustration. Thankfully aware that Wilde was wearing his pants, and that the blanket had managed not to fall even after she had slugged him, he counted down fifteen full seconds – more than enough by his reasoning – before he cleared his throat loudly.

“As I was saying before you interrupted me and attempted to mangle my nose,” he said once the two had turned their gaze to him. This time neither one looked in the least bit apologetic, Wilde in particular; with his muzzle resting on top of her head and his arms still wrapped around her even as she turned to face him again with a frown. Everything about his posture – from the half folded ears, to the direct focus of green eyes on his own blue, and the way he seemed intent on making it clear that she wanted to remain close to him – screamed possessive and territorial on an instinctive level that he wasn’t even sure the slightly grinning fox was aware of. “The plan to follow Wilde in an attempt to apprehend someone associated with our primary target, that target being whoever is producing these different variations of the Night Howler toxin, was not one that I agreed with. Which is why I took the assignment of watching you while I formed my own plan.”

“Anmd part of your plan was to walk in on us while I was not only savage, but knotted to my mate? You’re lucky you only got a punch. I was ready to tear you apart.”

The ease with which the fox talked about being savage was bravado, and did not fully hide the
disquiet in his eyes. This was easy enough for the bunny to see, just as the chosen wording told him that there was still something feral lingering just below the surface.

“No,” he drawled easily, feeling more comfortable in his own skin now that the urge to run and hide from the savage predator was no long pressing at the borders of his mind. The ache that had settled was actually preferable to that. “Not directly, and it certainly was not expected. When I heard the two of you talking, I was able to focus in long enough to get an idea of what was happening. I needed to see you, Wilde, under control even with the toxin working on your system. Now that I have seen with my own eyes that Hopps is the reason you haven’t gone fully savage, I will be able to use that information to prevent the unfortunate measures that were suggested.”

He saw Hopps’ eye twitch at the mention of ‘unfortunate measures’, and wasn’t in the least but surprised when she asked, “Unfortunate measures? What were you going to do? Tranq him? Lock him away in a cage? Kill him?”

The last was said with such an ‘Over my dead body’ tone that his couldn’t resist allowing his muzzle to curve into a slow grin as he spread his paws in front of him a bit. “The former, of course, not the latter. I don’t work for savages, Officer Hopps.”

“Har Har,” she said with a roll of her eyes that ended with those violet pools resting on Wilde again. “There are two smart asses in this room, and I only like one of them.”

“Yes, well,” the rabbit said, clearing his throat as he drew away from the door. “I am afraid you’ll be seeing a great deal of me until all of this is sorted out. Just because Wilde doesn’t seem to be a danger doesn’t mean I can let him run around the city unchecked. Least of all as a member of the ZPD. The stress, and the risk to you, could easily trigger another… Let’s go with episode. Anyone caught unaware would be in danger.”

“And what exactly do you expect us to do, then?” Wilde questioned, dark tipped ears flicking once as he focused his gaze. “If you were going to lock me up, I doubt we would be having this unpleasantly awkward conversation. But you can’t possibly expect us to leave the ZPD. I just got my badge back, and if you think I’m just going to give it up again without…”

“No, no. Of course not,” he interrupted, raising his paw to the base of his muzzle and lightly rubbing at the throb that was spreading. Being checked for a concussion was now on his list of things to do before getting some sleep. “I can arrange for a temporary transfer to my agency, under my command where I can keep a direct eye on you. Another reason I decided on contact rather than containment - aside from Officer Hopps’ likely reaction of a citywide foxhunt – is your experience with Night Howlers in the past, and your capabilities as a team. If, for the sake of argument, you can manage to keep your paws and various other parts of your bodies off of each other long enough to actually work.”

“Isn’t he cute?” Wilde snorted derisively, making the striped rabbit smother a surge of annoyance at the term. “He thinks we’re going to work for him.”

“The alternative, Nicholas,” he ground out, his stance stiff and face cool, ears erect as he looked at them. “Is a nice, small apartment with glass walls, an uncomfortable bed, and scientists poking needles into you every time you slip into a less than civilized state of mind. I don’t think any of us want that, do we?”

He wondered for a moment how much of the calm Wilde kept on that vulpine face was due to the fact that his partner, who now watched him with a tiny hint of fear in her eyes, was constantly stroking her fingers through the red fur of the arms around her. If she did that intentionally, to keep him calm now that she knew she could, he had to give her credit for her ability to adapt quickly.
When she turned her gaze up to the fox, they locked eyes for a moment before she gave a tiny nod. A nod that was responded to with a roll of green eyes before they settled on him again.

“All right, mom, since only my mother ever calls me that. What exactly do we need to do?”

“We will meet at the ZPD tomorrow morning. I will arrive before you to clear it through Chief Bogo, with the needed paperwork for your temporary transfer to my command,” he informed them, glad to finally have some cooperation. He slipped his paw into the inner pocket of his jacket, taking out the simple white card with his number printed on the front and placing it on the table next to the door. “I will give you all of the details on the investigation thus far once we reach that point. This number will allow you to contact me if needed, through the agency. Please, only use it in case of a true emergency; once the number is used, it will no longer exist.”

“Uh huh,” Wilde said, his gaze shifting to the card for a brief glance before it returned to him. “I have one more question for you, then.”

Turning to open the door, the rabbit paused just inside as he turned to look back at the pair. “All right. Ask it.”

“If we do need to call, do we ask for ‘Agent Lapin,’” Wilde asked with a wave of his paw towards the card. His face suddenly filled with everything that was smug and superior. The face of someone who knew a secret and was about to tell it, and the grin that spread over that red and cream muzzles was filled with almost child-like delight. “Or Jack Savage?”

It took real effort to keep the shock from showing, which he knew meant that at least for a moment it was clearly written all over his face. Once he did manage to control it, he simply stepped out of the apartment and closed the door behind him. Rubbing the base of his skull with two fingers, both because of the punch and because now he had to figure out how Wilde knew his damned code name, he started down the hall. Even as he reached the stairs, he heard the fox’s amused tone.

“What? I told you, I know everybody.”

*These two are unbelievable…*

Chapter End Notes

Comments are love! Comments of life! Comment or I'll send Jack to have awkward conversations with you, too!
Judy watched him as he stepped away from her, watched him as he adjusted his shirt over his shoulders and started to button it without comment. Somehow, it didn’t surprise her, even if it caused an ache in her chest to see it. Now that the other bunny – who was apparently named Jack Savage – was gone and the irritation of his presence in her apartment was starting to fade, worry started to work its way to the surface. And she watched him with that worry in her eyes, listening to him talk as if nothing they had learned in the last few minutes even mattered.

“He is an agent of some kind,” he was explaining as deft paws slipped the last button just below the collar line into place. “Working the streets, you hear all kinds of rumors. Or at least I did. Roaming the bars, the seedy places that a fox can go into without getting a second glance or a dirty look from a bartender who’d end up ignoring them. While everyone else was sticking to their own business, I listened. Learned who to go to for what, who to avoid, where there might be prime targets for a hustle.”

The worry didn’t fade, but it blended with a feeling of curiosity and sympathy as she stood next to the bed and let him talk without interruption. They had talked about his past as a hustler, many times, but he almost always kept the stories light hearted and humorous. Unless she had questioned him about specific subjects, subjects that he was sometimes reluctant to talk about. But he always told her anyway, always shared those little pieces of who he had been before they had met.

“Well, there were rumors for years about a bunny with black stripes. They were pretty funny at first,” he chuckled, though she couldn’t bring herself to smile as she watched him stand in front of the mirror to start looping his tie. He was avoiding looking at her. “‘Hey, did you hear about that rabbit so and so had trouble with? Can you believe it? Stupid lion.’ Or ‘Marty found a bunny down by the warehouse. Nah, just some drunk bunny with stripes. They let him go. It was pretty funny.’ Then the lion disappeared, and the warehouse was raided by the ZBI a few days later. The whispers stopped being jokes. Goons – you know, muscle for the big cheeses in the underworld – whispered about some rabbit screwing up big scores, or people vanishing after an encounter with him. Jack. Or Savage, which always struck me as funny. You know, bunnies being savage. Who comes up with this stuff?”

“So you think he’s dangerous?” she asked, and decided to discard the blanket, tugging the makeshift tie free and letting it slide to the floor as she made her way towards him. Discarding the blanket had the desired effect: she saw his gaze move to her and his hands pause on the knot of his tie when it was halfway up his chest. Normally she might have enjoyed that reaction, but the fact that he looked on the edge of panic for a moment after his eyes scanned her rumpled fur and compact form was anything but a good feeling.

“Maybe? I don’t know. It’s not like I have a full record of his doings. Just a name, a few bits here and there. Stripes. Bunny. Uh.” She saw him swallow when she stepped closer to him, reaching up to place her hand on his chest. And because he was standing next to the mirror, it was an easy matter to shove him back a step until his back pressed into the door. That was becoming a habit tonight. “Carrots, this whole you being naked and sexy and a little scary isn’t exactly productive in a ‘I
should leave’ kind of way.”

“Why are you leaving?” she asked, her tone bland, her eyes trying to meet the green ones that were obviously trying to avoid looking at her as he rolled his head back with an exasperated sigh. She didn’t move, just kept her paw on his chest. “I don’t want you to leave.”

“You know why I’m leaving, Fluff,” he said, sounding defeated as he turned his eyes to hers and held them sullenly. “You know why I need to leave.”

“What happened to fighting to keep me?” she demanded, her temper rising right alongside her determination. She was not going to let this take him from her, even if she had to play dirty. “Suddenly a little stress enters our relationship, and you decide to run off and hide? Is that what you call tooth and claw?”

“This is not a little stress,” he replied, and she could tell that he was trying to hold his temper. Not an easy thing, according to what Lapin had just explained to them. “This is reports saying ‘Savage fox eats girlfriend, news at 11!’ And I am not running away, I am putting a little distance until we know more about what’s going on.”

“No, you’re right,” she said, and stalked past him to open the door herself. She stood to the side and waved a paw towards the exit. She waved her arms in the air, and grunting as frustration and hurt gave her that little irrational push, she gripped the front of his uniform and tried to drag him out. “Go on then! Get out! Because that’s exactly what I need right now. For my partner to end up running savage through the streets because he’s a dumb fox; one who’s obviously too dense to understand anything said in the last half hour. You want to talk about stress? That’s stress!”

When he didn’t move, she glared at him, amethyst eyes glittering with sparks of anger as she slammed the door again. She could see the hurt in his, the fear, the uncertainty. But she knew she couldn’t let up, and wouldn’t let up. She wouldn’t let this cost them. Not even…

“Judy, I could…” he began, but stopped when she slapped her paw into his chest to shove him back into the apartment.

“You could what? Hurt me?”

“Yes!”

“Then do it!” she snapped, her ears dropping as she stepped closer to him, making his ears do the same. She wasn’t exactly imposing, standing naked in front of the much larger predator, but she was also stronger than she looked. When she stood toe to toe with him, she placed both hands on his chest to shove him, causing him to stumble back a step. She advanced on him, and punched him in the shoulder hard enough to draw a growl from him. “Take your big, dangerous claws out and attack me. Or use those vicious predator teeth to take a bite! I’m just a helpless little bunny, after all. A savage wouldn’t care; a savage wouldn’t stop himself. So do it! Maul me! Make me bleed! Hurt me, Nick!”

“I can’t!” he snarled, making her heart slam hard against her chest in a way that had nothing to do with fear as she found herself looking into the eyes of the savage again. Those savage eyes, that should have been right on the brink of insanity, that just looked miserable when he dropped himself into the edge of the bed and lowered his face into his paws.

Silent steps carried her to him, and he didn’t resist when she gently drew his paws away so she could meet his eyes. “I know.”
“Damn it, Judy,” he growled, and she didn’t resist him when he wrapped his arms around her and pulled her close to him. She felt the heat of his breath against her shoulder as he buried his muzzle there; the slow and deep breaths causing a shiver to race through her as she buried her face into the blue of his uniform. “Why can’t you be reasonable?”

A little laugh, slightly manic in her own ears, escaped her when she gripped the front of his uniform with both paws and clung to him, feeling as if she was trying to keep him from pulling away. Tilting her head to the side, she nestled her muzzle nest to his and nudged it slightly, until he raised it and those strange eyes a bit to look at her. Taking advantage of being the shorter of them, she ducked her head and before he could speak fit her mouth to his. And she kept it there, waited one beat and then two, until he responded to the kiss by closing his eyes and softening. She moved her lips over his softly, easily, and lovingly at first before she tempted him with a small and contended sigh against the side of his muzzle. Then she urged it deeper, until she felt his mouth part and his tongue glide over hers, filling her senses with the taste and smell of him until she felt that warm tingle start to grow in her belly and between her thighs again. Still, she kept it slow until she broke the kiss and looked up at him. Her gaze almost shy now, seeing bare and wild desire fighting with his attempts to control himself.

“Look at us,” she said, her voice a whisper against his mouth before she eased into another slow kiss. She had been seduced by him, loved by him, and shown his desire for her at every turn. And now as she relaxed her grip on his shirt and moved her hands down to slowly tug the knot of his tie free, she was going to show him hers. “You’re a fox and I’m a bunny, Nick. The very idea of what we are, and how much I love you is not reasonable.”

She saw his eyes move over her face as she spoke; hunger and longing, warmth and love, curiosity and fear all intermingled in the way he watched her as she slowly drew the tie from his collar. When she moved her fingers to the buttons of his shirt, he moved one of his paws between them as if to stop her. Closing her fingers over it lightly, she drew it to her face to nuzzle and kiss the pad lightly, feeling the shiver race through him as she directed it to rest on her hip rather than impeding her as she returned her attention to his buttons.

“This is different, Carrots,” he said softly, though he showed no inclination to pull away from her now. His nose twitched, his muzzle parted slightly to show the tips of his canines. She could hear the little growl in his voice, and despite his confusion and his fear, she recognized the sound of one of desire. “We don’t know what will happen if I go fully savage. I could hurt you.”

“No. No, we don’t.” she replied. She continued to watch her fingers pop the buttons free, breathing in the scent of his fur with every rise of her chest and savoring the warmth of the paw pads that now slid up the curve of her waist. “But I know what won’t happen. And there is nothing that will convince me otherwise. And I know it’s not reasonable. I know it’s not smart. And I really don’t care if it is. I love you, and I don’t want it to be reasonable.

“I want it to be crazy,” she murmured when his shirt fell open and she was able to lean close to nip at his chest. She smiled a bit when she felt him jump, heard him groan. She reached for his belt and nuzzled her way up against his throat as she worked to unbuckle it. “Because I feel a little crazy when I’m with you, you know? Out of control. Mad with passion for a scruffy old fox.”

It warmed her heart and eased her mind considerably when he released a breathless laugh. One of his paws came up to touch her ears, and she lowered them so he could slide a caress down the length of them. The touch was just as comforting, both from the easy excitement and shocks of pleasure it sent through her heat added body and because he was touching her without hesitation. Once his pants were open, she gave him no time to think before she slipped her paws down his hips to slide them down. The warm glow of desire grew hotter when fabric hit the ground, the quickening of her heart
roaring through her ears when she turned her mouth to his again.

She slid over him, nudged him until his back hit the bed so she could straddle his hips. Everything she saw in those savage green eyes of his was a little more feral than normal. The hunger was a little more intense, the desire a little more eager, the urgency a little less restrained, and the love a little more possessive. The pleasure a little richer in his sigh when she slid her hips forward, and wet heat met hard flesh in a slow slide that made both of his paws grab onto her hips. She felt his claws extend, press through her fur until they touched her skin, and now more than ever wondered at the fact that they didn’t break the skin. It sent a thrilling spark of pleasure through her rather than frightened her, and she rolled her hips against her in a slow grind to draw a throaty sound from him that hovered somewhere between a moan and a growl.

“So is this your plan then,” he managed, his voice gravely. His paws tracked up her hips, and took a slow turn to slide upward through the fur of her stomach. She watched his eyes follow the trail of ruffled fur his fingers left, seeing the light in them when she shivered as he used the pads of his palms to smooth it back down again before starting the process over again over the smooth plain of her chest. She loved how big his paws were. They made her feel like he could touch her everywhere at once. “Take me to bed and seduce me until we know for sure that I won’t lose control? Oh God, Judy!”

Not bothering to stifle her own moan when he growled out her name, she gave the first part of her answer by sliding her hips forward and then back suddenly, taking the already throbbing length into her without a spark of hesitation. The size and difference made her ache, made the last inch a difficulty, but the sigh that escaped her was blissful when she had taken all of him. Amethyst eyes met deep, predatory green when he looked up at her. When he looked ready to say something again, when his muzzle parted, she raised her hips and slid down again, letting the friction silence him. It was as adorable as it was sexy, the way his muzzle tightened as his eyes seemed to lose focus for just a second. She moved her paws to his, drawing them away from her body until they hovered between them so she could place her palms against the pads of his. She never felt as small as she did when she was with him like this. Small, fragile, and so completely safe.

“I already know you won’t hurt me, Nick,” she said and pressed into his paws for leverage, her hips rising again until just the tip remained inside her sex. She savored the pulse of his shaft as much as the pleasure it caused her when she rolled her hips on the way down, stopping in a slow grind that left him panting. “But I will seduce you until you believe it.”

She was pushing him, and she knew it. She kept the pace of her hips just a little too slow, kept their paw joined between them to draw things out as long as possible. She never stopped moving, which made everything feel so amazingly good when he filled her, but always slowed when she withdrew and paused a little longer than was needed. He wanted to touch her. She could see it in the way his eyes moved over her body, the way his tongue licked at the tip of his muzzle when he looked between them to see where their bodies mated. But she kept his hands between them with hers, moved hers with his when he tried to reach around them until he stopped trying and just looked up at her almost pleadingly. Frustrated, longing, so hungry that she could almost feel the need rolling off him as he arched his hips to hers. It all made every inch of him throb eagerly, urgently until she could see the corners of his muzzle start to twitch, exposing the deadly teeth of a predator in his pointless struggle for self-control.

“You’re going to have to take me, Nick,” she whispered, her voice breathy and soft, causing his eyes to snap to hers. She could see the savage just under the surface, with Nick struggling for control. It wasn’t smart. It wasn’t reasonable. But she needed him to see it, needed him to know what she believed with every part of her being. Down deep into the heart that quickened when his fingers closed on hers and tightened enough to make pulling them away difficult, not that she intended to.
Her breath hitched when his hips jerked upward as she lowered herself again, driving the full length into her aching sex quickly enough to cause her already flushed body to heat considerably.

“D-don’t you remember what it was like in the rain forest? Half savage,” she groaned and tightened her thighs on either side of his hips, feeling heat seeping into her as his eyes darkened, focused. “Half mad, just needing you to touch me. I know you held back, because I could taste you in the air around me. I wanted you inside of me so much.”

“Judy.”

There was almost no control left in the voice, and what control was there slipped behind the growl when she pumped her hips down to his firmly. The muffled whine that escaped him, a very rare, very canine sound made her ears burn and her fingers tighten under his as she held his gaze.

“Judy.”

“I didn’t want you to hold back then, and I don’t want you to hold back now.”

Maybe she was expecting it, even hoping for it, but the sudden movement was so sudden and quick that it made her vision swim for a moment. Breathless, she found herself on her back in the center if her bed, eyes wide as she looked up at the fox that now loomed over her. She felt very vulnerable, and the fact that he hadn’t released her paws only added to the feeling when he dragged them above her head and pinned them there. His eyes were focused on her, wild burning emeralds, and she saw only the primal need in them now as he lowered his muzzle to her throat. It should have terrified her. She had no idea how far gone he was, or if he was even able to think. But that didn’t stop her from tipping her head back, and arching her hips when she realized he wasn’t inside her anymore.

“Nick, please,” she groaned, in a voice that in no way asked him to stop, her legs wrapping around his hips fully. She felt the graze of sharp teeth through her fur, brushing her skin with a little more force than she was used to. Hard enough to leave a mark, make her skin heat as blood rushed in and rose to the surface, making her writhe in a crazy need that made her wonder which one of them was more savage with it.

She found soon that she didn’t need to beg, because he was beyond teasing, and she felt it when he shifted his hips to match hers. The first hard thrust took her breath, forcing it from her in a quaking scream of pleasure that was muffled in the fur of his neck as she toppled over the edge of a climax she hadn’t even known was that close. It was all she could do to keep her mind from slipping into oblivion, and what she managed to keep was overwhelmed by the bright flash of sensation that wracked her body centered around the fox inside of her. And he did exactly what she had wanted him to do, what she had driven him to do: he took her without restraint, without fear. She wondered if he kept her hands in his as some line to sanity, because his felt like hers in what was otherwise a madness of need and unrestrained passion.

She wasn’t even sure if it lasted a minute or some sort of eternity that was just for them, but she was lost in it. She could only remember his body sliding over hers, demanding more of her with every filling thrust, every hungry bite and lick and suckle of his mouth that fell on her neck and shoulders. She gave what she could, and took what he gave her in turn until she was gasping for breath, unable to tell of the pleasure had ever reached the peak or if she had simply been driven from one orgasm to the next.

What she did know was that it did become too much when she felt the swell at the base of his shaft, when his thrusts shortened and quickened into an urgency that she understood very well. Feeling the need, the tension in every muscle of the larger predator on top of her. A part of her wanted to grip his fur, while another part of her was glad that she could only ride it out when at last the snarl of pleasure from her fox sounded. A snarl that was muffled in the mattress below them when he raised his head and pressed the bottom of his muzzle between her ears. She pressed her mouth to his throat, nose
twitching as she sucked in breaths filled with the scent of him, feeling the thickening pulse within her as liquid heat flooded her.

She decided then, in a half conscious state of pleasure, that she had been right: if this wasn’t reasonable, then she wanted to live the rest of her life without reason.

The rabbit drifted under the weight of him then, surrounded by the scent of him, savoring the way he felt inside of her. Feeling his paws relax, ease their hold on hers until she realized they had been holding so tight that she had lost some of the sensation in them. She didn’t mind, and hardly noticed anyway when she used that new freedom in her dreamy state to simply lace her fingers with his as best she could. She wasn’t sure how much time passed, as their gasping pants became normal deep breaths, as the quick beat of their hearts – both of which she could hear in the silence of the room – slowed to a manageable pace. Neither one of them seemed inclined to move, and she allowed herself to drift between consciousness and warm darkness until she felt him move.

A small sound of protest left her when he withdrew, both from within her and by taking his weight from on top of her. She quieted and relaxed when he settled down beside her, wrapped his arms around her and pulled her into him. She came right back to where she was with a few adjustments, molded herself to his large frame with her face pressed into his throat with her chin resting on the thicker fur of his chest ruff.

She may have drifted off again. It was so hard to tell if it was simple, perfect contentment or peaceful sleep when she felt like this. But she was suddenly aware of his fingers sliding through the fur on his neck, parting it to see the skin beneath, and it drew a slow sigh from her as even that couldn’t drag her out of her happy place.

“Someday, you’re going to have to stop looking to see if you hurt me,” she murmured, tilting her head to the side to give him easier access as one finger pad slid very lightly down what she was sure was the mark his teeth had left.

“No, never.”

The quick and unquestionable reply made her smile a little, mostly because even in the certainty of it, he sounded relaxed. At ease. As calm and content as she felt. When opened her eyes at last and raised them, she found herself looking into the rounded green that she knew so well again. There was a moment where she wondered if his heartrate had something to do with the change, or if it was simply emotion. Maybe both, as they were directly related physically. But she set the questioning aside for later as she reached up to cup his muzzle with both hands to draw him down for a light kiss.

“This was risky, Carrots,” he said, tilted his muzzle down so he could rest his nose against hers while he held her eyes.

“Both of us have gone savage, Nick,” she reminded him, and ran her fingers up to scratch at the base of his ears until he relaxed into the sensation. “And only one of us has hurt the other while savage. And that one wasn’t you. I don’t know who is doing this, or what will happen going forward, but I do know one thing for certain: I won’t let it take you from me.”

“It’s not,” he began, but she placed her paw on the tip of his muzzle.

“I won’t let this take you away from me. Not even for a day. Not one day.”
His eyes searched her face for a long moment before she was drawn closer to him again. Nestling into him, tilted her head into the sound of his sigh, she smiled. The sound was content now, maybe just a little resigned.

“All right, rabbit,” he said in a low voice, his fingers sliding in a slow caress down the length of her ears. It felt amazing, even with everything else, when he traced the pad of his thumb along the rim lovingly. “You win. I won’t try to leave again, even if it is the safe thing to do.”

“Just try to leave again,” she said with a grin, and a light tug at one ear that made it flick away playfully. “And I’ll show you how safe it’s not, fox.”

“Big words from such a tiny ball of fluff,” he deadpanned, and only laughed when she playfully smacked his shoulder. “There you go again! Assaulting an officer, madam, is a very serious crime.”

“And what exactly are you going to do about it, Officer Wilde?” she asked, and to make sure he was moving in the right direction with his answer, she nipped at his shoulder lightly and glided her fingers through his belly fur slowly until he groaned lightly.

“Try to survive the night?” he quipped, batting her hands away when they wandered a little lower than his belly. “I keep forgetting you’re in heat. Is that strange?”

“Everything about the last two days has been strange,” she said, and grinned as she swatted his hands away in turn to allow her own continued their path downward. She didn’t stop until his back stiffened and his tail thwapped the wall behind him with a little yelp. “We should make up for lost time tonight.”

“Mercy,” he begged weakly, turning his face towards her with a pleading look that was made ineffective by the sparkle in his eyes when he looked at her. “I am only one fox.”

“You started this, with the flowers and the pretty words. Now, Officer Wilde, you have to pay the price for being in love with a bunny,” she said, nudging herself closer and giggling when he nipped at her ear.

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,” he began, and came to a stop when she cover his laughing mouth with hers.

Chapter End Notes

I was going to write more plot... Move to the next day halfway through the chapter. But they took control of me, and wouldn't let me type unless I gave them some more alone time without interruption from Jack!

The fluff made me do it!
Report:

Case File – The Savage Dark

Reporting Agent: Code Name – Jack “Savage”

Affiliation: Unknown

Current Whereabouts: Unknown

Agent Status: Unknown (Active)

Recording Begins:

“The most difficult thing about law enforcement in a place like Zootopia is finding a balance. The three major agencies that enforce the law are known by their popular names: the ZPD, the ZIA, and the ZBI. In an ideal situation, all three of these agencies share equal power to uphold order and protect the populous, with no control over each other and no jurisdiction over each other’s territories, as it were. Because of this, and because each agency has its own specialty in the broad scope of things, there is constant mingling and cooperation between the officers and agents. If the ZBI needs assistance with a kidnapping case, for instance, the ZPD will lend assistance and officers – if any are available – to speed the process. Or if the ZPD needs a certain piece of intelligence that the ZIA can provide, it is freely given as long as it does not compromise existing intelligence efforts. And like most of Zootopia, the three exist in harmony with each other.

“This is, of course, all based on the situation being ideal. When the situation is less than idea, as was the case during The Savage Dark crisis, this harmony slips. Certain agencies, believing that they have the best interests of Zootopia and the outlying territories in mind, will keep all relevant information to themselves. Being who I am, I understand the need for secrets. I understand the need to be careful. But soon enough, often due to inexperienced paws taking on more than they can handle, the keeping of secrets turns into paranoia and the need to protect internal interests becomes an obsession. Covering their own backs while stabbing everyone else in theirs, if you would.

“In the case of The Savage Dark crisis, the greatest sinner along these lines was the ZIA. And if you try to erase it this time, I will shoot you in the knee. Yes, of course I’m armed. I’m Jack fucking Savage, and after the month I’ve had there are only two mammals left that I trust, and you’re neither of them. Now take your paw away from the button. …Good lad.

(Three seconds of static)

“Ahem. As I was saying: in the case of The Savage Dark crisis, the greatest sinner along these lines was the ZIA. And if you try to erase it this time, I will shoot you in the knee. Yes, of course I’m armed. I’m Jack fucking Savage, and after the month I’ve had there are only two mammals left that I trust, and you’re neither of them. Now take your paw away from the button. …Good lad.

“Where was I? Oh yes. The ZIA covered up everything they knew about the introduction of a new Night Howler toxin, which actually turned out to be dozens of variations - almost all of them in structured to inhibit higher brain functions by lacing them with narcotics - and at great risk to the entire city tried to handle the matter covertly for months. Without assistance, without reporting to the powers that be, and while doing everything in their power to ensure that no one else was involved.
Everything in their power included underhanded tactics, violence, espionage, and lawless disregard for the safety of the population. This is what is known in the business as ‘going rogue.’ And when an entire agency goes rogue, they call me. I didn’t know it at the time I made contact with officers Nick Wilde and Judy Hopps, but in this case they almost called too late…”

Some people called coffee the “meaning of life” in the morning, the only reason they were able to drag themselves out of bed. Others enjoyed it for the aroma, a rich scent that could make angels weep and mouths salivate in anticipation of that first hot sip. The rush of caffeine as it hit the system, increasing the heart rate, making the blood flow warm and wiring the brain with enough short term energy to get the day started. Yet others were so addicted to it that they couldn’t get through the day without at least three or four cups – sometimes jugs or canteens – to allow them to slosh through their dreary lives thanks to the miracle of a little bean. From the darkest black, to the creamiest sugar laden concoction, it was likely that the economy of the entire world would have collapsed if coffee were to stop flowing into steaming cups or frosty fraps for a thirsty, exhausted world.

For the rabbit with black streaks running across his cheeks, the cup of coffee in his paws was a convenient way to keep watch on the world around him without seeming obvious about it. Anyone who saw a bunny with a cup of coffee, releasing the low contented sigh that he did after taking a sip, could easily have assumed that – like most of the mammals walking down the street – he was trying to wake himself up. They didn’t know that his cup was filled with decaf, because the last thing the world needed was Jack Savage high on a caffeine buzz, and that he had been alert and awake for hours already.

He had slept the required three hours, showered, and changed his clothing to something more street causal without sacrificing style; pair of dark jeans, a simple black button up shirt, and a white sport jacket, the former of which was left unbuttoned. His temporary badge, which identified him as a ZIA agent was tucked into his belt. One of the biggest mistakes young agents made was trying too hard to go unnoticed, dressing out of a style that they were comfortable in. And if an agent was not comfortable in their own clothing, someone would notice it quickly enough. But he was comfortable as he strolled along the sidewalk, taking another sip of his coffee as he watched the black and white cruiser pull into the lot only a dozen yards away.

After the encounter the night before, he had been left with as many questions about the two as answers. Foremost in his mind was their ability to focus, beyond the fact that Wilde was a walking bomb without a fuse, just waiting for someone or something to push the button that turned him savage. Their... Amorous attitude, and almost complete lack of control had been off-putting, but he was willing to give them the benefit of the doubt considering the unique situation. And the fact that she was, or had been, in heat had almost certainly played a part.

At least they managed to be punctual. Maybe I’m being too hard on them. They have potential, but they’re not agents.

This train of thought came to an end when he saw Wilde hop down from the passenger side of the cruiser, giving a rather graceless stumble when his paws hit the ground. He was sure that the slight limp would have gone unnoticed by most, but it made his own eyes narrow. Particularly when Hopps walked around to meet him at the rear of the vehicle, an energetic spring in her step and a glow that was damned near blinding radiating from every follicle of fur when she smiled up at the fox. The fact that Wilde sent her a look that was equal parts besotted and annoyed before he slipped his sunglasses into place was all Jack needed to see.
He really hoped there was a dentist around when all of this was done, because these two were going to rot his front teeth right out if he wasn’t careful.

Still, it only took a moment for them to spot him once they stopped looking at each other. And he respected the way both of their faces went instantly business serious. Especially Wilde’s, which shouldn’t have surprised him. The fox seemed capable of going from a friendly sort of charm to cool and expressionless at the flick of an ear, which is what he did now when the two of them started in his direction. It slightly offset the unkempt appearance of his ZPD uniform, slightly off regulation with his sleeves rolled up to his elbows and his tie slightly looser than it should have been. Hopps, who was a step ahead of the fox in their approach, looked neat as a pin, if there was any other way for her to look in what appeared to be a body suit designed specifically for her. And where the fox’s fur still appeared scruffy in some areas around his neck and ears, her own fur was smoothly groomed and well kept. If he had never seen or heard of them before, he never would have believed that the two of them were partners, much less lovers.

“Look who it is,” Wilde was already saying before they reached him, and he felt a moment of tension where he wondered if his code name would be blabbed out on the streets. “Agent so and so. Sorry, Stripes. I forgot your name.”

“Lapin,” Hopps supplied as both of them came to a stop in his path, her with her arms folded across her chest and him with his paws shoved into his pockets. A united front against who they both saw as an adversary. It was as cute as it was telling.

He didn’t stop his stride or change the direction of his forward motion, however. It was when he was only a foot from both of them that the social drive to avoid contact with a stranger kicked in, and they both pivoted to the side to let him pass.

“Agent Lapin will do,” he said, not turning but knowing that after a moment they both started to follow him towards the ZPD lobby entrance. “It’s good to see you both dressed. We have a lot to do, starting with your transfer into my care.”

“Shouldn’t you buy us a drink first?” Nick said with easy sarcasm saturating his tone, though from the reflection in the glass doors they were walking towards, Jack could see that his mood was not as playful or relaxed as he tried to let on. The fox was watching him very closely, measuring every step, and staying very close to his partner.

“Hm,” was his only reply for a moment, tossing the cup of decaf into the trash bin as they reached the door. He swung it open, and waved them forward. “You might want a drink before the day is done.”

Wilde merely looked at the trash bin with open regret as they walked past him. “I’m pretty sure that breaks at least two regulations. Caffeine abuse is not tolerated at the ZPD.”

“It was decaf.”

“Six regulations,” he amended, and with a long suffering sigh entered the building after his partner.

The ZPD hadn’t changed at all since the last time he had been through though those doors, right down to the rotund figure of the exuberant cheetah sitting behind the welcome desk. Presently having a friendly, if one-sided conversation with a stag in pawcuffs and antler restraints, it took the large feline a moment to notice their entrance. The moment he did, Jack saw the friendly amber eyes take on a world of surprise when they settled on him, his paws slapping over his mouth as he leaned over it to look down at the three of them.
“Julius?” The voice held a quiver that made Jack raise one eyebrow, a gesture that he saw was mirrored in Wilde as he came up to stand beside them. Surprise came over all three when tears glistened in the big cat’s eyes, then with a mad scramble the oversized feline crawled over the desk so suddenly that it had the buck and arresting officer pulling back quickly. The cheetah took a very undignified tumble off the edge of the desk, sending papers flying as he landed on the ground in an undignified heap. Jack moved to help him up, and found himself squished when he was lifted off the ground and folded into a bear hug while the excited and emotional cheetah squealed and bounced up and down. “It is you! You’re alive!”

“The last time I checked,” the rabbit grunted, feeling like his eyes might be squeezed out of his skull along with what little air was left in his lungs as he was swung back and forth in a very undignified display of affection. “Benjamin? Benjamin!”

“Oh, right! Sorry!” After he was set back on his feet, Jack took a deep breath as he looked up at the large feline, adjusting his shirt and doing a mental inventory to ensure that all of his bones were still in one piece.

“It’s good to see you, too. But who told you I was dead?”

“Oh, well, after ‘the case,’” Clawhauser began, using air quotes and a wink that was about as clandestine as a bullhorn. Jack knew exactly which case he was talking about, of course. “When the ship exploded, the coast guard was only able to recover one body from the wreckage. When it turned out to be a bunny, we feared the worst and hoped for the best. But then the ZIA confirmed that you were the body recovered. But here you are!”

Jack simply sighed, and a little better prepared for it this time, took a deep breath a second before he was picked up and crushed again. Thankfully, it was a shorter hug this time, and he didn’t have to fight for his life before he was set back onto his own two paws. His thoughts turned towards the short sightedness of his ZIA contact for telling the ZPD that he had died in the explosion. It should have been obvious that there was a very good chance he would need to make contact again, as was the case now. He would need to make sure that his ZIA handler was replaced with someone less incompetent in the near future. Or at least have a good, long talk with him about interpersonal relationships and unnecessary death certificates.

“I’m happy to see you, too, Benjamin,” he repeated, and flashed a friendly smile that wasn’t at all fake. He really had found it impossible not to like the cheetah, and the personality that made that true had not changed much at all. “And I am sorry for the error. I’ll have to make sure that’s cleared up as soon as I handle my business here.”

“Oh, oh! Right! What can I do to help you?” Clawhauser seemed to notice Wilde and Hopps standing nearby, and at a glance Jack could tell that they were a little befuddled and amused by the display. “Oh, hi guys! Have you met Agent Lapin?”

“Oh, we’ve met, Clawhauser,” Hopps replied, seemingly trying to keep her curiosity and her laughter at his expense in check at the same time. It gave her face a scrunched up sort of look, with eyes that were focused on him in a look that was cute in the way bunnies were cute to other bunnies. Blue eyes rolled skyward when he turned his attention back to the cheetah.

“I’m here to meet with the Chief, Benjamin. Though assuming that he also thinks I’m dead,” he muttered under his breath, reaching up to slide one paw over both ears to smooth the fur absently before he shoved that paw into his pocket. “this could be a longer conversation than I anticipated. What do you think? Should I just go up, or do you want to buzz ahead to let him know I’m coming?”
Because his gaze rested on Clawhauser when he asked the question, the cheetah looked perplexed and a little uncertain. “Oh, I don’t know. I usually have to call ahead if someone wants to see the Chief. But I bet he’ll be really happy to see you! OooooH! A surprise! He’ll be so happy!”

“Yes, happy. Or something equally bracing,” Jack muttered to himself, even as the excitable cheetah beamed at him again before he seemed to realize that there was still a stag in cuffs standing beside the desk. When he excused himself, Jack turned his attention back to Nick and Judy. “I’m pretty sure Bogo hates surprises. Let’s go then. No reason to further our stay of execution.”

Stay of execution had been the right term for it, Nick decided as he leaned against the wall on one side of the door to Bogo’s office while Judy paced in front of it. From behind said door, the volume of Bogo’s voice seemed to go through various stages, most of which were either loud and angry or low and dangerous. The fact that the conversation, if it could be called that, had focused on Jack’s disappearance three years ago and the apparent faking of his death made him feel like they were just waiting for their turn in front of the firing squad. Still, it was at least a little satisfying to hear Mr. Breaking and Entering get the teardown from the Chief.

“It wasn’t my call, as I’ve said twice,” he heard Jack’s voice say. Through all of the yelling, Jack’s tone had remained calm and even, if a little apologetic at times. Now it was a little strained and rushed. “Someone dropped the ball. Someone who never bothered to inform me that they reported me as dead to the ZPD.”

“Reported you were dead in great detail,” came Bogo’s reply, and his tone lowered so that Nick had to strain even from his place right next to the door to hear what was said. “A report that said you were overpowered by the bear, and were forced to detonate the explosives while you were still onboard the yacht. A report that colored my reaction to Mayor Lionheart’s Mammal Inclusion efforts, and nearly caused me to derail the career of one of my best officers before it had even started!”

Casting a glance at Judy, who had paused in her steps to blink at the door, Nick gave her a lopsided grin and a wink when she turned her eyes to him. Actual praise from Bogo often came in the heat of the moment rather than friendly conversations and pats on the back. And that was pretty high praise, which caused a little pinking of her nose.

“That’s right, beautiful. I don’t call you superbunny for nothing.

“Well, it looks like things turned out for the best anyway,” Jack responded, where the only sound of reply from the Chief this time with a snort of derision. “It is actually Hopps, and her partner, that I am here to talk to you about.”

“What have you gotten my officers into, Jack?”

Nick almost imagined he could feel the temperature drop through the door along with Bogo’s tone. A tone that was devoid of patience, devoid of care, and only wanted to know one thing: What had the rabbit done to endanger his officers. It made the fox feel all warm and fuzzy inside and out, in a way. Not that he would ever tell anyone that.

Then he realized that the Chief had called the rabbit by his… Well, Nick could only assume that it was his spy name, code name, secret identity, or whatever mammals who walked around breaking
into police officer’s apartments without a care in the world called it. But he had called Jack, Jack. It was a little relieving that he wouldn’t have to keep a secret from The Chief, and from the look on Judy’s face she was feeling the same way.

“It’s not something that I caused, but it is something that I intend to help correct,” the rabbit injected smoothly, sounding about as affected by Bogo’s lethal tone as he would have been from walking across the street. “This would be better said with both of them in here, if you would allow me?”

“Wilde! Hopps!”

“We’re up, Carrots,” he said, keeping his tone as light as possible. Not that he believed Bogo could actually blame him for being secretly poisoned. Well, maybe he believed it just a little. And maybe he was a little more nervous than he should have been, because Judy certainly seemed to notice. She came to stand beside him in front of the door and gave him a little encouraging hip bump.

“We’ll be fine. It’s not like he can blame you for any of it,” she assured him, confirming his own thoughts; a fact which made him release a windy sigh before he propped his drooping ears up and reached up to open the door.

First thing he noticed, and was surprised by, was the fact that Jack wasn’t sitting in one of the large chairs across from Bogo’s desk like everyone else did. He was actually standing on one corner of the desk, his arms folded across his chest in a way that made the fox groan internally. The fact that the Chief didn’t seem bothered by it gave the very clear impression that the buffalo saw Jack as an equal, which meant that the rabbit was very likely about to become his boss for the short term.

The second thing he noticed was that Bogo’s normally stoic expression flicked between Judy and himself, as if checking to see if there was a visible sign of what had caused Jack to get involved in the first place.

“Oh, Nothing to see right now, Chief,” he thought as he easily climbed up into the chair next to Judy and sat looking up at the larger mammal. But give it time.

“Over the last three months,” Jack began, obviously seeing no need to wade in slowly. “There have been random occurrences of savage mammals throughout the city. There is no obvious pattern, no select group of targets as was the case with the Night Howler incident. Predator and prey alike have been affected, with various degrees of severity if you believe the ZIA reports on the matter. However, if you track the occurrences in correlation with the case files and the length of time between capture and containment, it becomes obvious that their involvement in the case goes deeper.”

“So, you’re not actually ZIA?” Nick interjected, somehow managing to not to feel like an idiot when asking it when he already knew the answer. “There hasn’t been a lot of ‘our involvement’ or ‘we contain them’ lingo going on, Jack.”

He noticed the slightly annoyed but mostly surprised look from Bogo. A look that turned towards the rabbit, who merely shrugged it off as if it meant nothing. “Somehow Wilde here was already aware of who I am.”

“Which he shouldn’t be,” Bogo concluded, and rested eyes that somehow always managed to look just a little pissed on the fox.

“It’s not like I’ve been breaking into government buildings and stealing classified information about rabbits,” Nick grunted, making sure to keep his face as blank as Jack’s was. “I was a street fox. People in that world talk. Not a whole lot goes on a city like this without someone noticing it, even if
you don’t want them to. And you, Jack, make noise, even if you need bunny hearing to catch most of it. You may want to consider dying your fur, though. Stripes are pretty memorable on a rabbit.”

This made Jack frown, which made Nick flash a cocky grin in return.

“Back to the subject at paw,” Bogo interrupted, his hooves folded neatly in front of him as he glanced between the two before he settled his gaze on Jack. “So that’s why you’re involved? You think that the ZIA is either the cause of this, or knows the cause.”

“More than think it, Bogo. I’m still not one-hundred percent on the reason behind it, but the effect is very clear. The ZIA is pulling a Lionheart, but they are doing it with beforehand knowledge of who the targets are,” he continued, gesturing towards Nick with one paw. “As agent Lapin I was assigned to Wilde, to monitor him for the first signs of becoming savage since he was exposed to the toxin.”

And there it is, Nick thought as he watched the Chief’s face turn from stoic curiosity, to shock, and then to worry as dark eyes settled on him. He had to resist the urge to show his teeth, just to see if he could get the massive buffalo to jump. It was a hard struggle, but he managed to hold it in when those stunned eyes turned to Jack.

“It’s pretty obvious that he’s not a savage, Jack,” Bogo said evenly, then frowned as his gaze moved between Nick and Judy. “Are we talking about the blue narcotic that Hopps was exposed to? Was Wilde exposed as well? Was that the cause of their… Encounter in the rainforest?”

The fox nearly rolled his eyes at not only the mention of the rainforest, but at the fact that Bogo seemed to be considering the idea that everything that had happened between him and Judy had been the result of a drug. The eye roll was shelved when he saw that Judy was looking down at her paws with her ears pinned back, a small frown turning her mouth down as a look of concern wrote itself all over her face. She had obviously never considered that possibility, and neither had he. Because it wasn’t true.

“No.” He wasn’t even aware that he had said the word himself for a moment until she turned her eyes to him, but that didn’t stop him from continuing. “That is not why, and it has nothing to do with what’s happened between us. You know that, Carrots.”

Even as she didn’t look convinced – with a lingering spark of doubt in her gaze that he wanted to stamp out – Jack interrupted.

“I’m not sure you can say that with certainty about anything in the last 48 hours or so, Wilde. You were already under the effects of the toxin by the time you encountered the weasel, Edgar Stoat.”

The flare of rage came from deep inside him, a rage that he hadn’t even known was still lingering. With his attention focused on Judy for the past two nights, there really hadn’t been room left in his mind to even think about that fucking weasel and what he had done. But just the mention of him, and the fact that Jack was not helping him mollify Judy’s ridiculous doubt caused it to bubble close to the edge of boiling over.

“It’s not the reason,” he ground out, hardly managing to keep his voice from becoming a growl as he turned his eyes to Jack. The speculative look that the rabbit gave him only increased his irritation, and his ears folded back as he tried to ease back the emotion.

“Then what was the reason?” Jack asked causally, pacing a bit along the length of the desk so that he was standing parallel to him.

“She was hurt, not thinking clearly. She needed help,” he provided, even though he already knew
from the deadpan look the rabbit leveled on him that he wasn’t buying it. He had no doubt everyone in the room could hear it when he started to grind his teeth, but he gave in and snapped his real reason. “I wanted her, all right! I had wanted her for months, but what was I supposed to do? Was I supposed to say ‘Hey, Carrots, I know I’m just a fox that you pulled out of the gutter, but I’m in love with you?’”

“Nick,” came her whisper soft voice from beside him, along with the light touch of her paw.

“It’s what I felt,” he said in a low tone, relaxing the fist he had formed without realizing it when she stroked silky fingers over the back of his paw.

“You hunted Stoat down that same night, Wilde.” Jack seemed to have ideas other than calming him down, and after sitting on the edge of the desk and leaning forward with his elbows on his knees and his paws clasped in front of him, he continued. “What were you going to do when you found him?”

The question made him jolt internally, and flinch away from Judy. He knew. That damned rabbit knew exactly what he had been planning to do to the weasel, and just the fact that someone aside from himself knew the truth behind the lowest he was sure he had ever sunk made his guts twist. The self-disgust was so intense that he pulled himself away from Judy, hopped down from the chair and paced away from them. “I… Don’t know.”

“Was it the first time you thought about killing someone?”

He flinched away from the words and the bunny, but even the self-reproach couldn’t tamp down the flare of anger. His tail lowered along with his ears as he shook his head.

“Yes. Wait, no! That… I wasn’t thinking that,” he said in a low growl, and watched as Jack held out a paw to Judy to keep her sitting when she started to rise.

“Oh come on, Wilde,” the rabbit said, jumping down from the edge of the desk. Nick watched him approach warily, his muzzle twitching with the desire to curl. “Last night you were ready to bite my head off for looking at her. This weasel hurt her. Put her in mortal danger. Who knows what might have happened if you hadn’t gotten there in time. If he had stuck around long enough to finish the job. Maybe played with her a little beforehand. I heard some predators like to play with their food.”

“Stop it!” Judy cried as she jumped down from the chair and moved towards them.

Nick was aware of the movement because of the shift in the dark ring at the edges of his vision. The world had drained of most of its color, and the rage wouldn’t be pushed back. It boiled well past the edge, a white hot flash that mostly revolved around the idea of what could have happened. What might have been if he hadn’t heard her scream, hadn’t been fast enough to get to her before she ran into the forest. And the weasel would have done more if he had been given the chance. The scraggly little bastard, with his paws on her; claws, teeth, scratching, biting, blood, death.

“I was going to kill him!” he snarled when it all snapped, and he lunged towards the striped bastard who had put the ideas in his head. The only thing that held him back was Judy, who physically put herself between them and hugged her arms around his waist to push him back. “I wanted to tear his throat out, and I was going to do it! I couldn’t stand what he had done to her, and what I had done because of him! I wanted to see his worthless corpse rotting in the gutter!”

Bogo was already on his feet and around the desk before Jack halted him with a paw. He had backed up a step, but no further. To Nick’s gaze, he looked unafraid on the surface, but the eyes of a savage could see every little quiver of muscle and quiver of ears and twitch of nose that signaled his desire to run. It only made him want to advance further, but the pressure against his stomach and the tight
arms around him kept him steady where he was.

“Nick!” Judy cried, and when he felt the pull of her claws through his uniform and into his fur, he stopped struggling against her. He’d been baited and he knew it, but that didn’t stop the fury.

She did, though. When he stopped struggling to reach Jack, his breathing coming in deep breaths that always exhaled on a growl, she relaxed her grip around his waist only to reach up and climb up the front of his uniform. He didn’t resist, allowing his attention to be drawn from everything else in the room to the bunny that wrapped her arms around his neck and squeezed herself in close to him. His paws came up to wrap around her in turn, though his grip was not meant to be soothing or comforting as the soft words she whispered to him were. His grip was protective, even if he already knew that what he felt the need to protect her from was not in the building. He breathed in the scent of her, nudged his head alongside hers just so he could be a little closer. Seeing the wide eyed surprise, the fear and the shock on the Chief’s face confirmed what he already knew; it wasn’t his own eyes that the larger mammal saw.

The only person in the room who seemed to be calm was the striped rabbit, who watched the process of his calming with a familiarity that irritated the fox, but didn’t do much to further his anger. When he spoke, his voice was calm and aware, but didn’t share the thick tension that otherwise hummed through the room around them.

“I am sorry for this display,” he said, shoving his paws into his pockets as he wandered back to the desk and with an easy vertical leap planted himself on the surface again before he turned to face Bogo. “But I think everyone in this room needed to know how dangerous this situation is. How dangerous he is. And I needed you to understand, Chief, why I have to take them under my wing and off your hands for now. At least until a treatment can be found.”

Nick knew already that there was really no argument against a case like that.

Chapter End Notes

Stepping a little deeper into the dark with this one. Just a taste of it.

And lest I forget... Comments are love! :)


Report:

Case File – The Savage Dark

Reporting Agent: Code Name – Jack “Savage”

Affiliation: Unknown

Current Whereabouts: Unknown

Agent Status: Unknown (Active)

Recording Continues:

“I’ve never really worked with anyone before, you understand. It goes with the territory. In the short term, other people have assisted me. Other agents from all agencies, my handlers, occasional teams or raid groups, short term working partners. They were always the means to an end for me. Tools in the field. I’m not talking about people like Chief Bogo, or Benjamin. I’m not a robot, I can certainly form friendships. But I never worked directly with them. Even those I have been assigned to protect in the past were just ‘The Target’ to me. Protect ‘The Target’ at all costs. Films and literature often romanticize this, of course, assuming that because an agent is willing to lay down their lives to protect someone that a romantic or at the very least sexual attachment is destined to form. Ah, if that were true I would have left a string of lovers behind twice as long as it already is.

“And a string of just as many bodies and failures.”

(Three seconds of static)

“Officer Wilde and Officer Hopps were different from the start. They were annoying, for one thing.”

(Muffled, feminine laughter)

“It’s true. At first I had my doubts, of course. Professionalism is important, the ability to shelve emotions to get the job done, never get too attached. These were all things that I believed, and still believe the be true in most cases. People become sloppy when they are emotional. They lose focus on the final goal, they get distracted. Night Howler toxin aside, the need to keep Wilde calm aside, the pair of them were very easily distracted. Always deep in their own emotions, emotions that seemed to color almost everything that they did. I learned of Bogo’s decision to allow them to remain partners, and some part of me was ready to advise him that they needed to be separated when on the job.

“I don’t often change my mind, as is evident because I didn’t simply turn Wilde over to the agency to remove the possible danger of sudden savage fits from the general population. I had never in my life or my career seen two people so wrapped up in one another that they couldn’t even seem to focus on the fact that their world had been turned upside down. But it was because their world had been turned upside down that they held so tightly to each other. I didn’t understand that at first. I also didn’t understand the lengths they were willing to go to protect what they had, even as everyone else in the world seemed determined to take it away. Or how capable they both were of going those
She held onto him tightly, her face huddled between his jaw and his neck so she could keep her ear pressed close to his throat, listening to the too fast beat of his heart as it slammed against his chest. She didn’t know if it was the cause of his going savage, if heart rate or blood pressure triggered it, or if the same was the result of what was already happening due to anger, stress, or arousal. But she had learned the night before - every time they made love - that once his heart rate dropped below a certain number of beats per minute, she would see his eyes return to her Nick’s eyes again. And she stopped herself again, even as she nuzzled the side of his throat with soft kisses that caused his rough breathing to even and his trembling muscles to calm. It was always her Nick. The stupid idea that there was some unfeeling difference and that Nick’s exposure to Night Howler had been affecting his every decision for over forty-eight hours had been planted in her head because of what Jack said.

Even before he had... We had...

“You could have chosen a less dramatic way to explain this to me, Jack,” she heard Bogo rumble, the cape buffalo sounding less than pleased as he slammed down into the chair behind his desk again.

She also heard the quick rhythm of her lover’s heart very gradually start to slow.

“Yes, but I am not sure how much time we have at this point,” came Jack’s reply, and there was tension in his voice even if it was cool on the surface.

Just as there was tension in every aspect of the fox she held and stroked softly. A coiled spring ready to release, muscles quivering in anticipation under the surface of his fur. Not just tense and ready, but wanting to release. Wanting to strike at something. Slowly - too slowly for her - starting to relax as she hummed lightly into his fur. Not a song, or even a tune: just the gentle hum of her voice that she occasionally mixed with his name. It was different when she was the cause of it, when passion was the reason. She had learned it the night before because he was almost playful, eager for her, hungry to touch every inch of her and taste her and be inside of her. The flex and ripple of the muscles under his pelt had almost been intentional, like he was instinctively showing off to her, and every growl and snarl had been of pleasure or want. There had been no threat in any of it; only a sense of unrestrained, savage need.

This was very, very different. This was a male ready for war, ready to fight, to bleed and draw blood. Ready to kill.

“I was ready to kill him! I wanted to tear his throat out, and I was going to do it!”

The image of Nick’s snarling muzzle covered in blood, fangs stained crimson, claws tearing at flesh and fur with eyes that didn’t even remember who or what he was. This is what she could have found staring back at her if she had been only a few seconds later in reaching him that night. How far gone would he have been? How far gone could he be before there was nothing left of Nick for her to bring back?

The shiver raced through her as the thought brought a surge of fear that she had no way to stop, and she felt every inch of Nick suddenly go very still. The paws that had started to stroke her back rather than hold onto her possessively were still as his muscles locked, and he even stopped breathing for a
second. She didn’t need to raise her head to know that he was looking down at her now, had felt her shiver, and tried to cling to him when his chest rose and fell quickly as he sniffed the air. When she did raise her head to look up at him, she saw it instantly, and brightest even through the savage eyes: hurt. It was quickly followed by something a lot like the look he had given her when she had reached for the fox repellant so long ago, a sort of understanding self-reproach and pain. The fear was replaced by panic when his paws moved again, only this time they were firmly prying her away from him.

“No, Nick stop!” she cried, but a little too late. Even as she tried to cling to him, he managed to half pry half squirm free of her, leaving her sitting on her rear as he stormed out of the office with his tail slashing the air behind him. “It’s not… Nick!”

She didn’t even pay attention to Bogo or Jack as she stood and went after him. He was already on his way towards the back stairs before she cleared the door. “Nick, stop! I’m not afraid of you!”

“Don’t lie to me, Carrots!” he snarled without looking back at her, his pacing increasing as he leaned forward into a run. “You reek of it! I can smell it all over you; I saw it in your eyes when you looked up at me! Just… Back off, I don’t need you to lie to me again.”

She felt another trickle of fear skitter down her spine when one of his front paws touched the ground. If he went onto all fours she knew she would never catch him. She pumped all of the speed she could into a few hard leaping strides and before he reached the door to the stairs, tackled him around the legs. He tried to get away again as they both crumbled to the floor, squirming as he clawed at the ground and tried to shove her away with his rear paws as he twisted his hips out of her grasp. They were an untidy tangle of limbs soon enough, before she managed to loop her arms around his knees and flip him over onto his back. Before he could rise or turn over again, she climbed over him and straddled his uniformed chest. Sat on it more like as she looked down at him. His only reaction was to turn slitted eyes away from her, his muzzle lying to the side as he refused to look at her.

“I’m not afraid if you,” she panted, and when he tried to use his paws on her hips to lift her off, she snatched them away by the wrists and pinned them on either side of his head. Larger he might have been, but she had position and leverage on her side now; she used her weight and the grip of her thighs on his chest to hold them down even when he tried to pull them away. “Listen to me!”

“I did!” he half shouted, half snarled as he turned his gaze back to her. She could hear the hurt in his voice, and in his eyes even as he tried to bury it in the anger. “I listened to you last night, and in the rainforest, and every other time you’ve told me you’re not afraid. And I know you don’t want to be, I know, but it still hurt to look at you and see that fear so plain on your face.”

“Oh course I’m scared,” she said softly, and felt a stab in her chest as the hurt in his eyes turned to anguish as clear as the fur on his face. “But I’m not scared of you, you dumb fox. I’m scared that I’m losing you! I’m terrified, all right? I’ve never seen anything like this, and we don’t know what’s going to happen. I didn’t want to show it last night because you were scared enough for both of us, and I needed you to know that it wasn’t going to change anything or change how much I love you. But you were so angry in the office…”

She trailed off as she was forced to control the hitch in her breathing, the tightness in her chest as her vision started to blur when her eyes met his. She felt him pull against her paws, trying to free them. Whether or not it was so he could run, she didn’t care. She pushed them down with her weight and steelled herself as she continued.

“And you talked about wanting to kill the weasel, but even when I tried to calm you down like last night it didn’t go away. You’re so tense, even now. Like you’re about to snap, and I’m afraid that one day I won’t be able to bring you back,” she said, her voice trembling as she looked down at him.
He was looking at her in a way that made her want to give in; want to let him wrap her up and hold her close until everything was fine again, because that’s what he looked like he wanted to do. But she had more to say. She took a few quick breaths, and struggled through. “And I’m afraid that it’s true. That all of this – us – is only happening because you’re under the influence of some mind altering drug that’s slowly making you less and less Nick. Like I was in the Rain Forest. Would we ever have done that? Would we ever have reached this point if you weren’t…”

She was cut off when he strained against her suddenly with a growl, ears pinned back as he strained against her grip suddenly. A body weakened by the struggle not to burst into tears in the middle of the ZPD couldn’t really stop him when he finally shoved her paws up and broke free of her grip. It didn’t frighten her when he rose up with her still on his chest, that growl still rumbling through him as she slid down until she plopped into his lap. Having no will to resist, she fell into him when he wrapped his arms around her smaller frame, drawing her up and close against him as he all but swallowed her in an embrace that was as desperate as it was welcome. She curled into it so she could wrap her arms around his chest as she burrowed into the scent of her fox and the warmth of his arms, shutting out all other thoughts when she felt the light touch of his muzzle and lips on the top of her head.

“Dumb bunny,” he said in a softer voice, the growl absent now as she felt one of his paws slide under her ears to the back of her neck. She easily melted into the touch, in part because she could still hear his heart beating too fast, and in part because just the size of his paws and how gentle he could be with her despite both of those factors made her want to give him everything. ‘I’ve known I was in love with you since Academy graduation day.”

She was more than a little stunned, so much so that she did an instant-replay of his sudden and total stillness minutes before as she stared into the blue of his uniform shirt with wide eyes. Letting out a little, unbelieving laugh, she spoke in a little warble in her voice, “W-what? Nick, you can’t be serious.”

When she raised her eyes to him after a moment of silence had passed, she saw that his brow had dropped and he was giving her a bland, sardonic look that reminded her without question that this was her Nick, savage eyes and all. She squeezed her arms around him, and pressed her face into his chest to breathe his scent as she almost let herself break down into tears before he spoke. “Do I look serious, Fluff?”

“You look very serious,” she said with a small laugh, half of her trying to process what he had just admitted while the other half started to calm slowly. She kept her ears low and relaxed them when his paw moved from the back of her neck to slide down the length of one slowly, and then the other. The pleasant tingle it caused was more about the comfort of the action than anything else, and she turned to press her furry cheek into his chest with a slow, relaxed sigh before she spoke again. “That’s a long time not to say anything, Nick.”

“Not that long, once you get to be my age,” he said, which she replied to with a soft snort and a slow rub of her cheek over his chest. She could feel his heart beat slowing now. Slowing, calming. ‘This can’t come as a total surprise to you, Hopps. I said months. I was hugging my mother, feeling so good for making her proud of me, when I saw you standing there. This beautiful bunny with a soft smile and bright eyes, who looked just as happy; just as proud. And then mom was hugging you, and that was it. I knew I was in love. I just thought to myself ‘You’ve got it made, Nick.’ It was easy to think that even if it was just for that moment, or just for that day, I could let myself love you more than I deserved and you never needed to know. I even managed to convince myself later that it was just that going to be for that one fantastic day, and I was letting myself romanticize you. Of course that lasted until I got to work the next day, and there you were again. The feeling was back,
unquestionable, until I realized that every day after that, it only got stronger.”

“I’m not sure if this is making me feel better, or worse,” she said, though she sighed contented as she snuggled into him further, if that were possible. His heartrate was almost normal again, almost where it needed to be. She listened, and loved the sound as much as she loved the feel of his paws still slowly caressing the length of her ears. Her own ran up and down his back comfortably. “But I understand. Thank you for telling me, Nick.”

Her ears twitched, along with her nose when she heard the fall of heavier paw pads coming up the stairs beyond the door. She inwardly cursed as she felt his heartrate increase instantly, and his paws grow still as he heard the same. Both pairs of eyes turned as the door opened to see the high pointed ears and grey fur of the fully uniformed wolf step out, looking around. Ears perked instantly when he saw them, surprise and then delight crossing his muzzle before he started in their direction without hesitation. She could even see the sly little smile that curved his muzzle, probably thinking he had just caught them in the act of sneaking a quick make-out session in the open.

“You two, have got to be insane doing that so close to Bogo’s office,” he started, waggling a finger at them as he took a few steps closer.

And the closer he got, the faster Nick’s heart raced. She felt the low growl rise in his chest as the other officer came towards them, and she very nearly screamed at Wolford to leave before his eyes widened when they settled on Nick’s face. His eyes. Maybe even the snarl that she could almost feel forming as his body tensed and his hackles rose to make him look larger as he started to scramble away from the threat the larger predator posed. Likely to her.

“Oh fuck me,” Wolfard exclaimed as he instantly reached to his duty belt for the paw tranquilizer they all carried. “Hopps, just… Stay calm. It's going to be fine. Try not to make any sudden moves.”

“No, no stop! It’s fine!” she exclaimed as she lifted her head from Nick’s chest, her paws placed on his shoulders as she was dragged back. “Nick, it’s fine. It’s Wolford. Say ‘hello’ to Wolford so he knows you’re you while he puts the damned tranq away. Now.”

The last was said with a glare over her shoulder at the wolf, who was looking uncertain and more than a little stunned as his paw hesitated with the tiny wand of Tranq-All already between two fingers. Looking uncertainly between the two of them, one of whom he had already decided was a savage about to eat her, it wasn’t until Nick managed to speak that he nearly jumped out of his uniform with a literal yelp escaping him as he released the tranquilizer and let it fall to the floor.

“Hello, Wolford.” It was likely the combination of the words, and the snarl they came with that caused the reaction from the wolf. But the defensive stance did ease slightly once the tranquilizer was removed from the picture, though Judy was very aware of the fact that he was turning his body to put himself between her and what he saw as the threat.

“Wolford, it’s fine,” she said again as she kept one arm tightly looped around Nick’s chest as the other reached up to stroke between his pinned ears. “It’s… Complicated, to say the least. But we’re fine. Nick’s just being protective, aren’t you, Nick? Who’s a big, handsome, overly protective fox?”

Nick’s eyes snapped to her when she used a cutesy voice, and she had to bite back the sudden laugh that threatened to bubble up at the insult she saw on his face, savage or not.

“Sorry, sorry,” she finally said, covering her muzzle with one paw as he continued to look at her like she was as insane as he was. A long snort escaped her, which ended in a laugh at the complete craziness of the situation and his reaction to something as silly as being talked to like a kit. “I won’t do that again, I promise.”
“Protective? Right. Uh, protective.” Wolford, for his part she noticed, was calmed by the laughter far more than Nick was. He was also lowering himself into a crouch, his ears drawn back fully, his lips pulled slightly up to show his teeth in what she wouldn’t have called a snarl, and most surprising to her, his tail tucking between his legs. Even she knew what that meant. She also noticed that while Nick was staring at the larger predator intently, Wolford was keeping his gaze lowered. Not away, just… Not looking directly at the near-savage fox, and avoiding looking at her at all. She was surprised; the entire show made Wolford seem smaller, compact, and submissive.

The effect on Nick was instant and surprising. The tension started to leave his body, and while she wouldn’t have called the change in his stance relaxed, he did ease back on his grip and settled to sit on the ground again. She found herself pulled around in front of him, and drawn into his lap where he rested his head on top of hers as he kept his eyes on the wolf. She recognized the stance, and settled back against him, accepting the fact that he was staking a claim on her in the eyes of the other male.

“Thanks,” Nick said, surprising her with the calm, almost normal tone of his voice. She turned her head slightly to press her ear against his chest, listening to the beats. Slower, slower. Now dropping even more quickly than before. She would have guessed it was because it wasn’t anger anymore, just an instinctive reaction to the presence of another predator. She listened to it with her eyes closed, as she listened to Nick continue. “Yeah, like Carrots said, it’s complicated, Wolford buddy.”

They had followed the pair past the door, but once Hopps had tackled Wilde and managed to restrain him, Jack held Bogo back as they watched the goings on from a distance. Jack’s high set ears could catch every word they spoke, even after the fox was calmed enough for them to lower their voices. Every loving, sweet, sappy word of it. Perhaps the worst of it was that he actually found it touching when Wilde recounted his falling in love to the lovely bunny to assure her that his current mental state was not the cause for his feelings. Something that he admitted was his fault.

“Getting soft, Jack. Ugh, they’re so… Sweet. In a terrifying, edge of your seat, Lamb and The Lion way that makes me want to scream, but still sweet. I’m going to need therapy after this.”

“It seems she can calm him even when he doesn’t want her to calm him,” he said in a low tone to Bogo, who was watching the scene with an obvious discomfort written all over his scarred face. Jack chuckled when he glanced up and saw the look. “They’re in a public place, Bogo. It’s not like you broke into her apartment while they were being intimate like I did last night.”

“You did what?” the Cape Buffalo said, making the rabbit cover his mouth to muffle the next chuckle at the look of shock on his face.

“Yes. I needed to confirm that he could be contained, if only by her,” he explained, and shrugged when the Chief frowned down at him unhappily. “Rest assured, it was exactly as awkward as you would expect and in no way what I would call a shining moment in my career. And if it helps your tender sensibilities, she punched me in the nose, after he threatened to eat me.”

The satisfied grunt from the larger mammal said it all, and Jack resisted the urge to roll his eyes as he turned his attention back towards the odd couple. Calmer now. He was holding her, speaking softly, his breathing normal, ears high, facing looking content. A quick look at his eyes when they opened for a moment confirmed that he still had not reached the point where he could be considered normal again, but he doubted it would be long before it came at this point. By his estimate, based on how
long it took in the room, once he was calm and sure that there was no danger to her, it would take five minutes. Maybe six. It had been three, so he waited patiently with the large buffalo waiting far less patiently behind him.

The waiting was interrupted when the fox and bunny both tensed, first her because she clearly heard something from the stairwell, and then the fox, far more dramatically when the wolf appeared. Jack didn’t know the officer’s name, but he was pretty sure that in Wilde’s eyes, his name was simply Predator. A predator that was soon very close to him and his bunny, prompting exactly the response Jack would have expected: a feral series of warning sounds, followed by a quick retreat with Hopps well in paw. Jack felt more than saw Bogo start to move forward, and when he glanced up he saw the raised hoof.

“Wait,” he said before the Chief could call out. Blue eyes narrowed and high striped ears twitched as he focused on the conversation taking place, even as the wolf reached for the Tranqu-All. “She’ll keep him calm. Let’s see how this plays out.”

His voice drifted off as he watched the wolf submit himself to the smaller predator, which was something of a surprise. Even civilized as they were, wolves were generally not intimidated by smaller anything, much less foxes. But he realized that the movements of the wolf were not quick and frightened, they were steady and respectful. He was trying it to calm the situation. Canines were canines, and wolves were among the most social of the different types found in Zootopia. They understood body language, social cues, and non-verbal communication more than most, even if they had the tendency to howl at a moment’s notice. Jack watched Nick with avid interest, and was pleasantly surprised to see the snarl relax from his muzzle within a matter of seconds. The tension seemed to drain from him, his ears perked towards the wolf, and he drew Hopps into his lap facing the other male.

And then he called him ‘buddy.’ Jack had never heard of Wilde calling any of the other officers buddy, likely because he still felt like an outsider from what the rabbit could tell. With a glance at the wolf, he saw the tip of the tucked tail give a little wiggle and the strained muzzle of the larger predator relax into a relieved little smile. Then the three of them started to chat as if Nick wasn’t watching him through the eyes of a savage, and the tension that had been there moments before seemed to dissipate.

“Chief,” Jack began without taking his watchful blues off of the three of them. “I’m afraid I might need to ask for another one of your officers.”

“Damn,” Wolford said after a long moment of silence. They hadn’t told him everything, of course. They weren’t even sure if they were supposed to tell him anything, but at the moment, even as he calmed down, Nick wasn’t really giving two happy shits what he wasn’t supposed to tell. “So she keeps you calm, and you don’t go savage? Or fully savage?”

“Bingo,” Nick said, nuzzling his nose into the fur between her relaxed ears and letting his eyes fall closed. Wolford didn’t feel like a threat anymore, which he took as a good sign, so he allowed himself and his grip on Judy to relax as he breathed in the sweet, cleanly feminine scent of her.

“So,” the wolf said, drawing out the ‘o’ a bit as he looked between them with ears that were now perked with interest, though his tail remained tucked and his stance low. “You two are more than just… Eh, playmates? I mean, it doesn’t look that way from where I’m sitting. And I can’t imagine
that just any vixen could come in and calm you down. And you know you can tell me to shut up anytime, because I probably shouldn’t be talking about vixens at all!”

Giving a little snort, Nick lifted his muzzle and looked down at Judy with a playful smirk curling his muzzle. “What do you think, Carrots? Are we ‘just playmates’?”

Violet eyes raised to meet his, one of her brows quirking up at the question. And he laughed when she socked him in the shoulder hard enough to make it ache before she dropped her head back on his chest and leaned into him again.

“You do realize that hitting me might not be an effective way to calm me down,” he said, his tone mildly playful as he rubbed his paws from her shoulders to her elbow in a slow caress.

“You are calm now,” she said almost absently, her eyes falling closed. She looked tired now, in a way that he wasn’t sure he had ever seen her look tired. “Your eyes are normal again.”

“Oh,” he said as he looked around with a slow blink of green eyes to look at the world around him. He ignored the fact that the Chief and Jack were watching them from a distance, and just took a moment to realign his mind to seeing the world in full color again. He licked his teeth with a light clicking sound before he turned his gaze back to Wolford. “You know, that should be the first thing I notice. But no, you’re right on the nose. I am a kept fox.”

Nick watched the wolf’s reaction. He told himself that he was ready for every reaction every time someone learned about his relationship with Judy and how deep it ran. And he didn’t exactly expect negative from the wolf. If anything, the wolf had seemed genuinely pleased when he had been given the news that they were lovers. And the reaction seemed to carry forward on hearing the news that lovers was not all they were as the long muzzle curved into a grin and dark eye lit up as he slapped his knee.

“I knew it! That’s great, you two,” he said, as both Nick and Judy stared at him now with open surprise. Acceptance maybe, but the happy exuberance that their normally calm co-worker showed was more than either of them expected. Seeming to notice this, Wolford, with his tail now uncurled and wagging behind him, continued. “I mean, come on. You have to admit that it’s pretty amazing. You’re a fox, and she’s a bunny, Wilde. Teaching acceptance in Zootopia or not, I don’t think I ever heard of another bunny having a fox as a friend, much less a mate. And I thought it was impressive when you two first showed up as partners! She must trust the hell out of you.”

Yes, it was silly in his mind. Yes, it was unexpected. But Nick couldn’t control the warm feeling of pleasure that spread through him at hearing the words from someone else’s muzzle. Which left him feeling stupid again for the scene a few minutes before. A feeling which only got worse when he felt his partner turn her head to rest her cheek against his chest, one eye looking up at him as he glanced down at her.

“All right, you three,” came Jack’s voice, which was enough to kill the mood. Almost. Nick rolled his eyes a bit as he turned his now frowning muzzle towards the striped rabbit in the black and white street wear. Who the hell wore a white jacket with black pants and shirt outside of a wedding party anyway? “We have places to go and Night Howler toxins to find, but we won’t find them sitting around hugging and singing Kumbaya all day. Pleasure to meet you, Wolford, I’m Jack.”

Nick wasn’t sure if he was more surprised by the fact that Jack had actually identified himself as Jack right off, the fact that the rabbit had said ‘you three’ which he picked up on immediately, or the fact that his partner let out a titter of laughter when he mentioned singing Kumbaya. Grumbling on the inside, the fox helped his partner up as the agent and Wolford shook paws. “You said ‘you three’, Jack.”
“Wolford will be going with you, Wilde,” Bogo said, drawing his gaze up to the massive mammal. “And I do expect to see paperwork for these transfers by the end of the day, Jack. I won’t have any of my officers dropping off the grid.”

“Of course, of course,” Jack said as he walked over to the Chief. “You’ll have all of their papers this afternoon. It was good to see you again, Bogo. Again, I am sorry for the trouble and the mix up about my not-so unfortunate demise.”

“Just take care of my officers,” the Chief rumbled, folding his arms over his chest and looked down to give the rabbit a look that would have withered any officer’s whiskers. “I don’t like this, Jack. Any of it. And I’ll hold you personally responsible if anything goes wrong.”

“I expect nothing less,” the rabbit replied, and then waved his arms towards the three officers as he started towards the stairs. “Come on, then. If you have any fish to feed or appointments to keep let me know, Wolford. We’ll have them taken care of for you until things settle down. We’ll get the three of you civilian clothes once we get to our first stop.”

Nick stood to follow, feeling a bit of pity for the poor wolf who looked a little staggered by the sudden reassignment. He looked to Nick for help, or answers, or maybe just a pat on the back. Nick could only shrug as he fell into step beside Judy, a frown curving his muzzle as he forced his ears to remain upright. At least partly.

“Do we at least get a luxury car for the trip? Something cushy,” he imagined as he spread his arms and lifted his head in a grand gesture. “A limo would be nice. Something where we sit in the back sipping fine liquor while you sit in the front. That way, we can close the privacy glass in your face when you start talking too much.”

Jack merely chuckled as they made their way down the stairs, reaching into his jacket pocket to pull out his cell phone to make a call that was instantly connected.

“Put her down on the ZPD track,” he said without missing a step as he turned them in that direction. “We’ll be there in three minutes. You’re not afraid of heights, are you Wilde?”

You’ve got to be kidding me, Nick thought with an internal groan as they followed their new boss, who gave one cheerful wave to Clawhauser on their way out the back. Stupid bunny spies.

Chapter End Notes

Comments are love! Comments are life! Love it, hate it. Let me know!
More Questions Than Answers

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Report:

Case File – The Savage Dark

Reporting Agent: Code Name – Jack “Savage”

Affiliation: Unknown

Current Whereabouts: Unknown

Agent Status: Unknown (Active)

Recording Continues:

“Finding a treatment for the Night Howler toxins that we encountered in the months prior to Nick’s – Excuse me, Officer Wilde’s – exposure had been problematic from day one. The first attempts made by the ZIA were very basic and expected. Night Howler already had a known antidote which was perfectly effective are reversing the effects of pure Night Howler exposure, even up to the concentrated extract used by Dawn Bellwether. This was the first attempt that the ZIA made to treat the new toxins, and it ended in failure: the normal antidote caused no visible change in the patients, no matter the species.

“Further testing showed that these toxins had fundamental changes that caused reactions in the brain that were anywhere between two to six times more complex than your simple purple flower variety found in carrot gardens. This was achieved through the introduction of various refinements, purification processes, and some pharmaceutical chemistry that would make any drug company pay half their yearly profit margin just to keep the mind responsible away from their competitors. This is all too complex and boring for me to put on this recording, as anyone who’s not wearing a lab coat would fall asleep in the first half hour, but the basics should be explained.

“You see; night Howlers are simple. Once the toxin reaches the nervous system, it dampens the nerve impulses in the evolved mind which allow us to think and build and form societies where we’re not trying to kill each other, ideally. At the same time, it excites the impulses in the primitive brain. Those parts of the mind that are responsible for things as simple as breathing and swallowing, or more complex needs like food, safety, and sex. So it does exactly what the ‘savage’ state suggests by causing these feral needs to take over our somewhat civilized minds. The sudden shift in thought pattern, the confusion caused while the brain tries to correct these changes, is responsible for the rage response. The need to survive, you see. Our brains want to think, they want to feel and speak and they want the world to make sense. When these things are not possible, it drives the need to survive to heights that turn everything into a threat.

“Skipping past the older versions of the refined Night Howler toxins and moving straight to the one that Officer Wilde was exposed to, the difference is potent and devastating. The effects remain largely the same, but along with the time delay before the first signs of regression to savagery, there was also a clear indication that the effects were designed to be incurable by any known treatment. Including all known Night Howler antidotes.”

********
“Blueberries?”

Nick managed to sound incredulous even over the steady hum and repetitive beat of the helicopter that was currently carrying them away from the city of Zootopia. While not what could have been called a luxury craft, it was not at all what she had expected when they had first realized that their transport would be a helicopter. The passenger interior of the sleek black machine was easily large enough to carry upward of ten medium-sized mammals, which did make her feel slightly awkward leaning against Nick in the larger seat that they were buckled into. It was very opaque, in a way. The functional but far from comfortable seating made it so that two rows of passengers could face each other across an aisle that was wide enough to carry various sorts of cargo or equipment, but from the outside, it had looked nothing like any military helicopter she had ever seen.

“Yes, blueberries,” Jack replied as he slid his paw over the screen of his phone without raising his eyes. “Whatever is responsible for your exposure did their homework, as was the case with every target. Your favorite fruit is blueberries, and we found the toxin in dozens of food items in your… Apartment, if you could call it that.”

“Great,” Nick grumbled, and she gave a small smile as she patted his arm lightly. This drew his gaze, which as predicted was unhappy and grumpy. “Do you hear this? Now they’ve ruined blueberries for me. I may never touch another blueberry again!”

“Of course you will,” she said with a small snort as she rested her head against his shoulder and let her eyes drop closed for a moment as she rubbed her cheek against the coarse fabric of his uniform. She was tired. Mentally and emotionally drained more than physically, but it was enough to leave her feeling listless and agitated. Two things that she didn’t want to be when Nick was still somewhat on edge. “One sniff of my mother’s blueberry cobbler will set your love for blueberries right back where it was.”

“Hmph,” came his reply as he draped his arm around her lightly, his paw pads sliding up and down her arms slowly for a long moment. She almost assumed that he was going to let the subject drop before he added, “As long as I get some the next time we go visit, I guess I might recover. But you’re telling me, Jack, that these people broke into my apartment to… What? Inject Night Howler into individual blueberries and frozen pancakes?”

“Just the fact that you eat frozen pancakes that contain fruit is cause for concern, Wilde,” Jack replied dryly, and she could actually agree with him on that subject. When she opened her eyes, she found that he had tucked his phone away and was watching the two of them closely. “And yes, that is exactly what happened. As I said last night, I was hoping that they would either return to find out why you had not been infected or attempt to acquire you for that same reason. They have not tried to enter your apartment again, however, and the agents watching your apartment have seen no sign of unusual interest. At this point, it looks as though the idea of you being a lead has run dry, so we will have to turn our attention to other possibilities.”

“What other possibilities?” Wolford asked, speaking for the first time since they had boarded the helicopter. “You have other leads?”

“Yes,” Jack replied, his nose twitching a bit for the first time that Judy could remember when his gaze focused on Nick. This made it clear to all of them that he was talking to her partner when he continued. “Though I doubt you’re going to like it.”

“Stoat,” Nick said flatly, and she watched his eyes narrow as the two males locked eyes.

“Yes, Stoat. We are certainly at this point that he is not directly connected to the person or persons producing the toxin. It would make no sense for someone with such a carefully laid trail of
unknowns and dead ends to have a low-level drug pusher spreading an early form of the toxin on the street as candy to the junkies,” Jack checked his watch, a little too intently for a moment, before he returned his gaze to Nick. “We suspect that someone has grown impatient and is supplying him with an easy to produce, short-term version of the drug for the sake of making a little extra money on the side.”

“So, what?” Judy asked, her paw slowly stroking over Nick’s stomach as she kept her ear on his heart rate. It had picked up slightly, but was still a long way from what she thought might cause him to snap. “You took him into your custody? You’re going to question him?”

“We released him two hours ago,” came the calm reply. She felt Nick’s muscles tense to suddenly that the straps holding them in tightened around his chest and his ears twitched, though they didn’t drop back fully. “He is under constant surveillance, of course. We hope that he will lead us back to his supplier, if he is stupid enough to do that anytime in the near future. Which I personally think he is.”

“Isn’t that risky? Weasels are very slippery,” Wolford suggested, his gaze ticking between the three of them curiously and cautiously. “I mean, it only takes one wrong turn before he drops off the radar and we’re back to square one, right?”

“We have three agents following him separately to make sure that doesn’t happen. A weasel, who is well aware of the tricks Stoat might use to disappear. A wolf with the best nose I’ve ever seen. She could track a mouse through Savanna Central at rush hour, an hour after the mouse left the area. And,” he continued, but was cut off when the low buzz of a cell phone was heard over the sound of the helicopter. He paused to drag it out and look at the screen for a moment before he tucked it into his jacket pocket again without comment. “And a cheetah. I don’t need to tell you why we chose him. We won’t lose track of him.”

“Yes, and my trust in you and your various agents is flying high at the moment, Jack,” Nick said, his tone sliding between sarcastic and annoyed. It was a tone that she knew very well herself; one that said he knew he was stuck in this situation and just couldn’t see any way out of it. “Of course, that’s only because I’m actually flying at the moment, otherwise it would be closer to ground level or below. Can you at least tell us that there has been some progress because of his release?”

“We only had him released this morning,” the rabbit said, leaning forward to rest his elbows on his knees as he continued to watch Nick. From what she could tell, he was un-phased by the sarcasm. “So far he has returned to his hovel, wasted no time in scratching up a hidden stash of the drug, and went right back onto the street to sell. Given his haste and the danger of putting himself out there again so soon after being arrested, we can assume that he is unafraid of the police or he has a deadline to meet. I favor the second scenario, because it means he will have to meet his supplier in the near future to exchange the cash for more Feral Blue.”

“So you’re just letting him spread a drug that turns people savage to gain a lead?” she asked, her muzzle turned into a slight frown as she watched the stripped rabbit. That didn’t sit well with her, at all. Even beyond the fact that they had released someone who had broken multiple laws, including battery on a police officer when he exposed to the very same drug.

“Of course not,” came the scoffed reply, making the other bunny sound as offended as he looked. “Not that we wouldn’t if it were necessary, but in this case it is not. We are picking up those he sells the drugs to once they are out of visual range of the target. Each bag he sells is a sample that we can use to further work towards a cure, after all. Added to that, we will be able to tell if they come from different batches, use different formulas which will tell us if they possibly come from more than one supplier, or if there has been further refinement.”
That did ease her mind somewhat and directed her attention on another, extremely important subject.

“And has there been any progress in finding a cure?” The question hung in the air for a moment as Jack seemed to hesitate to answer, causing her to raise her head from Nick’s chest so she could focus her eyes on him with a frown curving her muzzle. “Has there been progress, Jack?”

“We are testing various possible antidotes,” he said at last, though the reluctant tone of his voice made her lean forward as Nick did the same beside her. Both of their ears were perked, giving him their full attention as he continued. “So far, none of them have proven effective as a long term cure. We do have one that offers a short-term easing of the symptoms – the symptom – but it has to be administered and monitored carefully, requiring sedation and bed rest for the duration. So that is not ideal, given that Wilde is already ‘curable’ in a similar way by love and attractive bunnies.”

“One very attractive bunny and a lot of love,” Nick corrected, and she watched him lean back in the seat, grunt, and cross his arms over his chest as he mulled over the fact that there was no cure in sight. But to her, progress was progress, even if it was not complete yet. It meant that they were trying.

“How exactly does that work, anyway?” Wolford asked, drawing all of their gazes to him this time. “I mean the part where she can calm him down. I’ve never heard of anything like it with Night Howlers before, and we’ve seen married couples where one was affected. Otterton was the first case, and he didn’t even seem aware that his wife was – Well, his wife.”

“The power of love?” Jack supplied, giving a small shrug of his shoulders when all returned to him. She frowned at his glib reply and was surprised when he looked at them blankly for a moment; as if he had given them the answer they wanted. “I’m being perfectly serious.”

“You actually believe that the fact that I love her is the entire reason she can keep me calm?” Nick questioned, flicking his gaze down to Judy with a slight grin on his muzzle. “While I am inclined to agree with that hypothesis, I never would have guessed that you could be such a romantic soul, Jack. I do believe my heart is aflutter.”

“I’m not without my romantic charms, of course. But my reasons for believing that is entirely based on actual facts rather than fanciful beliefs in the heart winning out over common sense or modern pharmacology,” Jack replied with a dismissive wave of his paw. “Foxes mate for life.”

“Well, yeah,” Wolford said, even as Judy tried to control the trip those words caused in her chest as she glanced at Nick and found that his gaze had not moved from Jack. The trip was caused by the fact that Nick didn’t look even a little bit surprised by the statement, or what it implied. “A lot of people get married.”

“No, that’s not what I’m talking about. Marriage is an often failed institution where two people who may or may not be in love bind themselves together legally, and it as often ends in divorce and misery as it does in a lifetime of babies and happy memories.”

“Well, I’m afraid I’ll have to suspend your membership to the Romantic’s Club,” Nick mumbled after that, Judy releasing a little chuckle as she nudged him to lift his arm again so she would rest against his side. Now she did it because she simply wanted to be close, relax a little, digest what she was hearing from Jack. Something that Nick still seemed to have no interest at all in disputing even as the rabbit continued.

“Yes, well. What I am talking about is older than that. Back into the days when we were all savages; days that are not as far removed from our DNA as many of us would like to believe. Back
when rabbits ate grass and foxes hunted rabbits to consume their hard earned body fat and protein. And don’t give me that look, Wilde,” he said coolly, and from the tension that had come into the arm he had wrapped around her, Judy could imagine the look Nick gave Jack to be annoyed/boarder-line angry. “Stating a fact about the natural history of the many species in our fair city is no more specist than saying rabbits still eat green things and predators still need large amounts of protein to survive. And that’s not the relevant subject anyway. What is relevant is the fact that back in those days, foxes mated for life. Even so recently as the formation of the society that would become Zootopia thousands of years ago, foxes were well known for their monogamous tendencies. And while they certainly were not the only ones – rabbits and wolves also mate for life, for example – there is a large difference specific to male foxes.”

“We don’t remarry,” Nick stated simply, drawing her wide gaze up to him. A gaze which he met after a moment, with something like an uncomfortable look on his face. “Vixens usually don’t either, but male foxes very rarely get married again.”

“Especially,” Jack interjected easily, “in cases where their mate dies, no matter the means of death.”

“So when Wilde starts to go savage, he what?” Wolford asked, his ears perked and his eyes focused on Nick with avid interest. Obviously, the wolf was pleased and fascinated by the subject at paw, while in Judy’s eyes Nick almost seemed distant and dismissive about it. “His instincts take over? Sees her as his mate rather than food?”

“In the simplest terms, yes,” Jack agreed, leaning back in the oversized chair. Amazingly, it didn’t really make him seem any less Jack because of the size of it. He simply owned the space around him with the ease of someone who was very familiar with their current mode of transportation. “This is all speculation, of course. I have no proof, other than the fact that Wilde is here with us and is not currently trying to eat anyone. Added to his instinctively recognizing Judy as his mate, as I believe, this variation of the Night Howler toxin works on a delay for reasons we haven’t determined yet. The slow progression from intelligent mammal to full blown savage is interrupted by her presence, as I have now seen twice. Wilde, can you tell me how you see us when you’re in the half-savage state?”

Nick seemed to hesitate for a moment. From the way he shifted against her, almost seeming to want to escape contact, she could tell that he was not comfortable with the subject. Once the motion stopped, though, he relaxed his arm around her and allowed two of his fingers to slide up the curve of her side slowly. Watching him, seeing the way that his ears went from splayed to the side to calmly erect and his muzzle relaxed, she wondered exactly how much comfort he did take in simply touching her that way. All of this was new to her. Her studies had touched around the ancient mammalian history of Zootopia, but largely because of where she had been raised, that history focused on prey rather than predator. And now that she was actually thinking about that, she realized that a lot of the misconceptions about predators would be lifted if they were included in something as basic as a high school biology class. She saved the thought for another time when Nick opened his long muzzle to speak.

“Put simply in your case, Jack, I see a threat,” he began, his tone now as at ease as the state of his body from what she could feel. “It’s a little hard to describe. I don’t want to say rival for Judy, though that would be the first thing that came to mind when you barged into her apartment last night.”

“He’s not a rival for anything,” Judy mumbled, though she kept her tone low enough so that they wouldn’t think she was trying to interrupt. She saw Jack smirk slightly and felt the trace of Nick’s paw pads up against her side again. This time, the motion was firmer and caused a little, unseen
shiver to race through her as a tingle trickled down her back.

“I am pretty sure I see almost everyone as a threat, though,” Nick continued after sending her a slow smile. “Even the Chief would have been on my list if he had kept coming towards us. Wolford was a threat at first, too, but…”

When he didn’t seem to want to continue with what he was saying, Wolford filled in for him. “I submitted.”

“Right,” Nick said, drawing out the word a bit as he sent a grateful glance at the larger predator. Even Judy knew that wolves didn’t submit normally unless forced to, or unless they respected someone enough to do it. From what she could remember Wolford had never submitted to anyone, especially in such an open away. “I suppose that goes along with the savage instinct as well. He submitted and quickly became less threatening. I say ‘less’ threatening because he stopped moving closer. I think if he had come closer, I would have attacked him. No offense, buddy.”

“No, no,” Wolford said, waving his paw while obviously forcing his ears to stay upright. “I get it.” Judy couldn’t decide if he looked more downtrodden because Nick had still been ready to attack him, or uplifted because Nick had called him buddy again. She was going to have to ask him where his obvious desire to be Nick’s friend came from someday. So many things to do, once she had time to stop worrying about what was going to happen to the fox she loved.

“And what else?” Jack asked easily, a tone that made her feel a certain level of disdain that only added to how tired she was. The rabbit kept pushing Nick, kept “testing” him, and it was grating at her every time she laid eyes on the banded rabbit. She was more aware, however, that Nick hesitated again before he answered.

“I want to get away from everything, except Judy,” the fox continued, his brows furrowed as he seemed to be focusing on actually defining what he felt for the first time. “There are too many smells, too many mammals. I want to take her and hide away somewhere away from everything, which would be hard to do in Zootopia. Not a lot of quiet spaces outside of small spaces. Her apartment? Which is why I wanted to kill you when you barged in on us. It felt exactly like you were invading my territory.”

“And your territory?” Judy grinned as she looked up at him, that little bubble of amusement mirrored in his expression when he tipped his head and met her gaze. “Last I remember; we never did finish the conversation about living together.”

“So adorable,” he quipped, his tongue poking out of the front of his muzzle for a moment as she lightly slapped his stomach. “A conversation that we will finish once we’re in more familiar surroundings, Carrots. But you’ll give in and ask me to move in with you in no time. I can be very persuasive.”

“And her?”

Jack’s voice didn’t exactly end her good mood at his light joking, which was more like the Nick she knew then she had seen since they had walked into the ZPD that morning, but it didn’t help her hold that mood when she turned a curious gaze towards him. Caught off guard, with her mind on Nick and the possibility of living with him, she didn’t frame the question back to the subject at paw as quickly as Nick obviously did.

“Protect,” came the first simply reply, and one ear flick later, “But that’s not really unusual. I always feel protective of her.”
“You are?” She hadn’t expected that, and couldn’t think of a time that he had actually been protective of her outside of the last few days.

“I mean, I don’t run around thinking ‘I have to protect Judy!’ every time we’re on the beat, but when I see you stand toe-to-toe with a predator three or more times your size on the streets, I have to resist the desire to be the one doing the toe-to-toe part. It comes off as a little macho, so I keep the urge kicked down in the back of my mind,” he explained, doing his best not to look as embarrassed as he obviously was. “I mean, I’m pretty sure you could beat my tail in a fight, Carrots. We’ve sparred before and it’s all I can do to keep up with you.”

“I’ve been thinking the same thing since you got back from the academy,” she said with a little snort, though keeping her pleasure at his praise a secret wasn’t really an option as her ears flushed and he grinned down at her.

“Well I can’t keep up with either of you,” Wolford groused, though he didn’t actually look too put off by the fact. More amused when he continued with a gesture between the two of them. “I’ve only managed to lay a paw on Nick once or twice. And you, Hopps; you’re like some kind of crazy jumping dervish on the mat. I can’t think of anyone other than Wilde that’s managed to even get close to you. Er… Again, on the mat.”

“Well, that is sort of the point,” Judy said, grinning at the blush creeping up the wolf’s ears at his self-correction. “‘Small, meek, fragile’. Something like a tiger landing a solid hit would be like you getting hit by an elephant, which is why you make sure not to let that happen, right?”

“Yes, I get it,” he replied with a lupine grin that showed all kinds of sharp, predatory teeth. It must have said something about her relationship with Nick that this made her nose twitch once or twice before she controlled the little flutter in her ‘run for your life’ instinct, but when Nick did it the result was a flutter of an entirely different kind. “That doesn’t make it less embarrassing when I end up on my back with a bunny on top of me.”

“Funny. That’s become the favorite part of my morning. And afternoon. And a few times last night,” Nick said, grinning when Judy jabbed her elbow into his side. He looked about as contrite as kit who’d made off with the cookie jar without getting caught, and she had to fight back her own grin as she rolled her eyes up at him. “What? You seem to enjoy it, too. If not, we can always… Oomph!”

“What else, Wilde?” Jack said, though he did seem amused by the banter between the three of them. “Protection is the most obvious and is one of the triggers to set you off. Sex is another, likely because mating is one of the more primal acts that has changed very little over time.”

“I hope that’s not true,” Nick smirked, his paw resuming the slow slide up and down her side as his green eyes rested on Jack. “Otherwise, you’re not having very good sex.”

“I would argue that if you can’t go a little savage now and then, then you’re not having very good sex,” Jack retorted easily, his mouth quirking upward in a smirk of his own.

“I would argue that if you can’t go a little savage now and then, then you’re not having very good sex,” Jack retorted easily, his mouth quirking upward in a smirk of his own.

“Huh,” Nick said with a quick tilt of his head to the side to concede the point. “You got me there, rabbit. But to answer your question; I want to be close to her, non-sexually. I don’t want anyone else close to her. Eh, that’s sounds possessive, but…”

“But you’re trying to put words to a feeling. What feeling?” Jack asked, his head tilted just a bit to the side as he watched Nick try to sort out the words. “We’re trying to get a handle on why exactly Hopps may be the reason you haven’t gone and stayed fully savage like every other mammal exposed to these toxins. Don’t think about it. All of the feelings you have, wrapped up into one thing
that you’re not saying and even I can see it.”

“Mine,” Nick said suddenly, and just saying the word aloud caused him to twitch against her side and his arm to tighten around her possessively. ‘Not like ‘my partner’ or ‘my lover’ or even ‘my mate.’ Just… Mine. I don’t want anyone else near her, even now. I don’t want anyone else touching her, or threatening her, and I know without a doubt in my mind that if she is hurt I won’t be able to control myself. She’s mine to love, mine to care for, mine to protect.”

She was silent and unmoving against him as she listened to him speak. She was pretty sure that she was the last person anyone who knew her would have called overly feminine or of the type to want a big, strong male to take care of her. The protection of a strong male, be he a fox or another bunny, had never been on her list of needs or even wants. Her siblings had joked that she would always wear the pants in any relationship she found, and her dad had even nicknamed her ‘Jude the Dude’ because of her generally tomboyish ways growing up. But she would be damned if her heart wasn’t beating faster and her stomach wasn’t fluttering. She wanted to be his; and him saying, even now when he was calm, that he felt that way made her almost giddy. It was stupid, and girly, and she knew that sooner or later that attitude might clash with her need for independence, but right now it just felt good.

“You said you feel that way now. Do you think it might just be normal for you?” Wolford asked, her ears perked and his nose twitching as he looked between the two of them. Which made Judy want to slink under the seat because those good, mushy feeling had also come with the darker tingle of mild arousal.

Damn predator noses.

“I’ve never been in love before, so I don’t really have anything to compare it to personally,” Nick said, his tone more at ease now. Relaxed, light as his grip on her eased into the slow up and down strokes again. “I doubt it, though. I am sure someone somewhere in my life might have warned me I would turn into a prehistoric lunatic if I ever fell in love.”

“We should get T-shirts. ‘Mammals Most Exposed to Night Howlers and Night Howler Related Crime’,” he said, spreading his paws apart and making a square with his thumb and forefingers as if to frame the spoken words. “Then printed on the back yours could say ‘I’m with Savage’ and mine would say ‘I’m Savage’ with little arrows point to each other.”

“Oh no,” she groaned, pressing her paws against him to shove him away playfully. “If I get that for a birthday present, I’m never talking to you again.”

“Liar,” he muttered and grinned when she tipped her muzzle up to let him nuzzle his nose against hers lightly.

“It is possible,” Jack said before the nuzzle could evolve into the kiss it had been close to. “Obviously your relationship is unprecedented. There would be a predator/prey angle we haven’t considered or seen before. His possessive attitude could be perfectly normal in a case like this, at
least as far as we know. And that is a question we may not have the answer to until there are more cases like yours.”

“You expect there will be more cases of foxes and rabbits falling in love?” Nick asked, one brow popping up in obvious surprise before she turned her own surprised gaze to the other rabbit.

“Society is a funny thing.” Jack said and paused for a moment when his phone buzzed again. He stared at the screen a little longer this time, his muzzle quirking in a slight smile. “When something is as taboo as predator/prey relationship, a lot of mammals assume it’s just not possible, especially with two species so clearly conflicted as foxes and bunnies. Until they are shown otherwise, in which case they become curious. Your sister is an example, Hopps. I would wager that she had never considered the idea of a fox and a bunny being lovers until your family literally stumbled on it. Others will react exactly the same, though perhaps on a less enthusiastic level.

“Then there is the fact that you two are minor celebrities. The first bunny ZPD officer and the first fox ZPD officer, in a relationship? Two previously unheard of things, combined with the romance angle. I expect your story will be all over the news at some point, whether you like it or not. You have avoided it so far, not for lack of trying to make your relationship known to the world. And since keeping it secret is something that you haven’t done very well in the slightest your lack of entertainment news coverage is pure luck, I assure you.”

The fact that the last part came with a knowing grin on the rabbit’s muzzle made Judy’s ears twitch as the idea that Jack had somehow prevented them from being exposed settled in. It made perfect sense if they were being investigated as a part of a conspiracy that the public was being kept in the dark about. Nick seemed to have come to the same conclusion when he spoke up.

“Uh huh. Well, I suppose I can thank you for that at least, Luck. I want to be able to tell my mother myself. And can you tell me what’s so damned interesting about your phone? Getting sext messages?”

“Ah,” Jack said as he tucked the phone that he had been staring at back into his jacket pocket before he leaned back and looked between them. “That was our resident expert on Night Howlers. He’s been updating me on the status of our research into a reliable cure and he may have found something promising.”

“How promising?” she asked, pulling away from Nick and sitting fully upright with her ears perked in the other rabbit’s direction. The feeling of hope couldn’t really be pushed back, though she tried to temper it.

“He can only give me minor details over the phone,” Jack replied, and even as he spoke there was a call from the front of the pilot warning that they would be touching down in two minutes. “But we will change our plans, and make his lab our first stop once we’ve landed.”

Chapter End Notes

Finally an update! Sorry for the delay, Mid Terms are a bitch. Future updates will come faster, I promise. Review if you love it, hate it, or just want to curse at me for taking so long!
Report:

Case File – The Savage Dark

Reporting Agent: Code Name – Jack “Savage”

Affiliation: Unknown

Current Whereabouts: Unknown

Agent Status: Unknown (Active)

Recording Continues:

“Soft-hearted. I have never been accused of being ‘soft’ except for the occasional comment on my fur, but that is to be expected for bunnies. I have always considered myself to be pragmatic, for the most part. It can be difficult to stick to the mindset of a realist when the mammals and events around you are prone to change more quickly than a logical mind can process. That being said, I will admit that I am something of a romantic, though that may be something that has developed recently. The power of love. Combine that with a logical mind and you begin to understand that “the power of love” is an attempt to romanticize reality by giving love itself mystical powers to overcome all obstacles.

“I find this to be a disservice to the reality of what I have seen. It has nothing to do with magical powers or love itself overcoming all things simply because poets and authors have said it should to help sell their work for centuries. The truth behind the power that love has is that, when it is true when two mammals realize that their lives would never be complete or happy without the other in it… Well, then you have two mammals who are will to do anything and everything to keep what they have. They will fight harder, think faster, take risks that they would never consider otherwise, and reach heights that were previously unattainable. They will suffer any agony, do things that they previously believed were deplorable, and turn from everything they once believed for the sake of that one person. It can be a weakness, a terrible strength, or a magnificent truth. And perhaps that is a sort of magic when you want to look at it that way.

“To say that Officer Wilde and Hopps are in love is an understatement if I’ve ever heard one. To say that they exemplify the reality of what mammals can do when they are in love is more on point. And I am not simply rambling or having a moment, so you can stop giving me that look now, Agent. I am telling you this because the reality of what two mammals in love can and will do for each other became very clear to me, and became very important to the events of the three days that followed our arrival at home base…”

***************

The base was exactly what Nick would have expected from a covert installation meant to house an organization that no one knew existed. That was a simple way of saying that it was a farm. Under the farm, actually. It was all very cloak and dagger, the way they had landed in the forest clearing just
outside of the fields that the farm tended. The entire helipad lower into the earth until they were well underground, and he could only assume that the surface of the metal hatch that slid closed above them was covered in a forest menagerie that would fool anyone who might run out to investigate the vanishing helicopter. Heavily armed guards waited at each corner of the bay they settled in, a bay that was watched over from above through a line of windows that no doubt let the to a control room. From there, they boarded what could have passed for a fancy golf cart: a quick little white machine that had no doors despite the sleek appearance. The instructions to board in a monotone, stern voice from the speakers above made him roll his eyes until his partner nestled against his side again once he slid into the surprisingly comfortable seat.

The fact that she insisted on remaining close to him through every step of the trip was understandable and welcome. He had not been exaggerating. The desire to have her within arms-reach was intense and even if he had often had to resist the desire to be protective of her since they had become partners, this wasn’t the same. This was almost overwhelming now, and he was sure that it had something to do with the fact that he wasn’t sure about where they were or how secure they were. He wanted to take her home. His apartment, her apartment, the ZPD, even his mom’s house was an option in his mind. Anywhere that was familiar, safe and theirs. Hell, he would have settled for the back seat of the cruiser.

It surprised them both when the shuttle came to a stop after only a little over thirty seconds, Jack jumping off and waving for them to follow him down a corridor. Two guards flanked the entrance, and Nick was starting to understand that this would become a regular view when in the base. Just like the various cameras that he saw stationed in positions that would allow whatever security was watching a clear view of every shadowed corner. He wasn’t sure of that was comforting or annoying, but he did pull Judy closer to him when they walked past the two wolves.

“Don’t mind the guards,” Jack said as they followed him into what looked no different from the hallway of an apartment building. Doors lined the walls, each one with a number counting up from the entrance to the corridor. “They are here for the protection of guests. And these are the guest quarters, where you’ll be staying until we sort this mess out and you’re able to return to your normal lives. Wolford, you’re in room six down the hall. Wilde, Hopps, you can choose between rooms two and three, as someone apparently wasn’t informed that the new fox and bunny on campus would be sharing a room.”

Neither of them had an argument about being put into the same room. The reality of it was that they had only been lovers for a few days, and had hardly spent any of what could be called ‘domestic life’ together yet. Aside from the past few morning of waking up together, working together, making love, and sleeping together, almost everything about their relationship remained unspoken and undefined. Unlived. It raised a number of questions in his mind, given their situation. Aside from his own need to stay close to her, how did he even know that she wanted to live with him? Sure, he had joked about moving in with her and she hadn’t flat out rejected the idea, but that was a far cry from saying she wanted him as a kept fox.

That was where all of the questions lay for him: what she wanted. He knew exactly what he wanted, exactly how far he wanted to go. He didn’t doubt for a second that she loved him, because God, she showed it. She showed it every time she put herself between a savage fox and the rest of the world without even considering that he could hurt her. Could, but never would. Even though he wanted to doubt it, even though intellectually he wanted to make sure that she was safe and wanted to see himself as a threat to her because she was a bunny, nothing he had felt even came close to it. Even now as he wanted to be close to her, he knew why. The conversation with Jack had been a vocalization of everything he already knew: she was his mate. His one and he knew that if he lost her that he would never find another. And it concerned him, not knowing exactly what she wanted.
‘In love’ did not always mean forever.

“I thought we were going to look into a possible cure first,” Judy’s words cut into his thoughts, causing him to turn his gaze to Jack curiously. More curious should have been the fact that his thoughts about Judy had made him completely forget that a cure had been mentioned.

“Possible cure, yes,” the striped rabbit responded, reaching into his jacket pocket to pull out three keycards. He handed one to each other them, as he continued, “The first test looks successful, but it might be best to wait until morning before we decide to inject Wilde here with anything. After I am briefed on any changes on the current situation, I will check with our expert to see how the case has progressed. In the morning, if everything seems to be in order, I will let you decide if you’re willing to be a test subject.”

“I’m pretty sure we’ve already passed the test subject phase,” Nick smirked, running the pad of his thumb over the card in his paw. “And if there is a chance I can go through my day without suffering the desire to violently murder weasels and annoying rabbits, which might be detrimental to my career as a ZPD officer, I’ll take a needle and the chances that come with it.”

“Whatsoever the case, I did promise that you two would not be separated,” the bunny continued without responding the quip about being murdered. “And I’m not going to walk you through the building looking like that Wilde. It would be counter-productive to the idea that Hopps can control you in the eyes of some.”

Realizing that all eyes had turned to him, the fox frowned when he realized that the world had indeed changed around him. How recent it was, he couldn’t say. The walls were white and gray, and his attention had been on Jack who was just as monochrome, so he hadn’t even noticed the world being drained of color. Knowing from Judy’s worried frown only confirmed that his eyes, at least, were savage annoyed him to no end.

“Damn it,” he grumbled, reaching up to scratch the back of his neck as his ears dropped back. “But why? I’m not angry, really. At all. I’m just…”

“Uneasy?” Jack suggested, and Nick nodded as the rabbit’s gaze ticked towards Judy. “You are out of your element, and so is she. Stress causes many of the same physical reactions as anger, so it’s not really surprising. I would recommend relaxing, getting some rest. Or doing whatever you need to do to ease your mind.”

The last part came with a meaningful look that made Nick’s ears twitch upright and his eyes narrow slightly. Though in reality, he did this more because he felt that he should be annoyed than an actual feeling of annoyance. The suggestion, which was as subtle as a brick to the face, actually sounded like a damn good one. That could have been the savage talking, but the fact that he was apparently going savage without even noticing it made him wonder exactly how far removed that was from ‘Nick.’ When Judy simply chuckled against his side, narrow green eyes rolled up into his head for a moment.

“You’ll find wardrobes in your sizes in all of your rooms, a fully stocked kitchenette and bar, and full sized baths,” Jack continued, seeming unphased by his own innuendo and their reaction to it. “There is a phone you can use to contact facilities if you need anything, have any requests or any problems. If something requires immediate attention or you feel threatened, just let the guards know and they will do their best to accommodate you. Your cell phones will work, but be aware that everything is being monitored and I’m sure I don’t need to tell you not to tell anyone where you are.”

“And here I was thinking of inviting my criminal buddies down here for a housewarming party.” The snarky comment was met with a jab from Judy’s elbow, which only made him shrug down at
her with a smartass grin spreading over his muzzle. “Anything else we should know, dad?”

“On special request, I’ve had surveillance disabled in your room,” Jack replied, stuffing his paws into his pockets as he looked between them. “Somehow I thought that this might cross your mind at some point, and given your reaction to my appearance at our first meeting, I decided it would be best if you felt secure in your privacy.”

“How thoughtful,” Nick sighed, though in truth he was grateful for it. The thought had already crossed his mind, after seeing the cameras that covered every possible angle in the base. The thought that they would be watched or turned into a curiosity for some horny late night watchmammal was anything but appealing. Knowing that they would not be eased a lot of his stress, and made him a little anxious to be in the room. “Seriously, thanks for that.”

“You’re welcome,” came the simple reply before Jack turned to jump into the tram again. “You’ll get a call in the morning an hour before we’re ready to move forward to your own situation briefing. Be sure to wear something aside from your uniforms. Maybe at some point, if this breaks to the public, you’ll need them as the public face of this incident. Until then, we should try to keep your day jobs as far from this case as possible.”

“So does this mean we’re officially agents?” Wolford asked, and Nick couldn’t help but grin as the larger predator’s tail gave a little wag. He seemed rather pleased with the idea, and it made the fox wonder if this was some lifelong dream of the friendly lupine.

Jack fixed him with a bland stare, which caused the wolf to drop his ears to the side and look a little crestfallen. Then the bunny chuckled and tapped the side of the tram to let the driver know to move on. “We’ll see how things move forward from here before we talk about your temporary agent status,” he said, giving a short wave with one paw as the tram started to move away. “Have a good night.”

“Easy for you to say,” he grumbled, following the tram for a moment with his eyes before he turned his attention fully to Wolford. He avoided looking at Judy for a moment because he was sure that once she had his attention, she was going to keep it. “Sorry that you were dragged into this, buddy.”

“Why? This is actually pretty cool,” the wolf replied, his muzzle splitting into a toothy grin that made Nick fight the desire to tense up further as his arm tightened around Judy. It was obviously something that the wolf noticed because his ears dropped into a submissive set as he took a step back. Even then, he continued as if nothing about the conversation had changed. Nick had to admit, the wolf’s ability to carry on a conversation with someone who stared at him through feral eyes was pretty impressive. “ZPD isn’t exactly boring, but this is certainly is an interesting change of pace. I’ve never been in an unground secret lair before. Not that I don’t understand how serious this is.”

“I get it. I don’t think this was on any of our to-do lists, but if things were different, I might feel the same,” Nick soothed when that last little addition came with a look that was about as sheepish as a wolf could manage. Realizing that he was shifting from paw to paw anxiously, he cleared his throat. “Well, might as well start this adjustment process. You gonna be all right alone?”

“Don’t mind me,” the wolf replied, and flipped the key card around in his fingers to wiggle it in the air in front of him as he backed towards his door. “I’m going to check out exactly how well stocked these kitchens are. I just hope they have TV. I don’t remember him mentioning TV.”

Feeling Judy draw away from him, Nick looked down to watch her eyes tick between the two rooms that were theirs for the moment. He half wondered if she was playing mental ini miney moe before he rolled his eyes with a laugh and snagged the back of her vest to drag her towards one of
the doors. She cast a playful glare at him when he slipped the card over the sensor and waved her in after opening the door.

Following her in, he looked around the surprisingly large room. It almost looked more like a top floor suit at some high-end hotel downtown, though the decor was anything but fancy. The walls were a pleasant shade of light beige, the carpeting thick and soft under his paw pads. The bed in the center of the room was a number with a full, high headboard of light colored varnished wood and what looked like a plush white comforter. Of course, he realized suddenly that the reason everything looks light colored could have been because of his eyes.

He was about to turn his attention to the other parts of the room, such as the promised kitchenette when a tiny paw gripped his tie and dragged him down. A quick breath later, he lost focus on everything but the soft muzzle, warm lips and the taste of bunny. The favor ripened as the kiss deepened when she laced her fingers into the fur at the back of his head, her muzzle parting to trace the tip of her tongue over his lips. There was nothing for him to do but comply with the sudden demand, and while her kiss was hungry, he tried to contain the sudden flare of lust that came over him. A losing battle when he realized he was being led blindly towards that rather large bed, stumbling a bit over his own paws at the suddenness of it. She didn’t hesitate to slide her tongue over his, drawing a little groan from him when she reached down to grip the front of his uniform.

A growl finally did escape him when she fell back onto the bed and drag him with her, not hesitating to wrap her legs around his hips to draw him between. Distracted. He had been distracted, so he hadn’t noticed the subtle changes in her scent. Or maybe he had, and his instinctive reactions had been the cause of his possessiveness. Whatever the case was, he felt the heat between her thighs when he pressed down against her willingly, that little flicker of doubt that she was only doing this to ‘relax’ him was banished. Seeming content that he wouldn’t have away, she reached down and pulled his shirttail out of his pants at the same moment that his moved to unfasten the straps on her vest.

Fingers worked with the speed of memory on the now familiar territory, but still shook with the excitement of this very new desire between them. Both of them. He could feel the light tremble in her paws when she released the last button of his shirt to slid her fingers into the thick fur of his chest, even as he felt his own shake when she rose up and broke the kiss to let him drag her shirt over her head. Her light whimper was music to his ears as he stood over her on his knees to tug the knot of his tie free and strip his shirt off, his eyes focused, nostrils flaring as he took in the growing scent of arousal. Deft little paws were already unbuckling his utility belt, letting it drop carelessly to the ground with a heavy thud behind them before she flipped the button of his pants. Lavender eyes rose to meet his, eyes that were void of anything but passion and love as she drew down his zipper.

His teeth clenched when silky palms slid over the already achingly hard length of him through his boxers, causing his hips to tense and thrust forward as he throbbed eagerly. His gaze narrowed on the smug little smirk that came over that all too adorable muzzle as she squeezed him firmly, getting what she obviously wanted from him as the growl rolled up from his chest. The sound alone seemed to make her squirm on the bed, and he was losing what little patience he had, so he was up in the next second to strip his pants and boxers off and kick them away.

“You know,” she said, her voice soft and sweet and deliciously sexy. How she lowered it until it made him want to eat her alive he didn’t know, but just the tone was seductive enough without smoldering eyes behind it to drive him slowly mad. “I think maybe I’d like to try out the shower.”

He should have seen that playful sparkle in her eyes, but there was enough surprise at the sudden change in direction that he stood there for a few seconds – fully naked and fully hard – as the half-naked bunny slipped off the bed and started towards the open bathroom door. Her blue-clad hips
ticked in a subtle sway and that fluffy tail twitched in just the right way as she moved, just a little too slowly. Not that her speed would have mattered when the fox pounced.

Quickened by basic lust and need, he ignored her squeal of surprised delight when he swept her up by those hips. The little ‘Omph’ that left her when he pressed her back against the smooth surface of the wall beside the bathroom door was quickly followed by a moan when he braced her there with one paw under her rear while his free paw moved to unbuckle her belt. His grin was more than a little wild when he felt her lift her rear paws and place them on his thighs, a very familiar position. A huff of breath escaped him as he pressed his muzzle against the side of her throat, a sharp little bite through her fur drawing a shuddering cry from her, a cry that deepened into a moan when he cupped the heat of her sex through her pants.

“You’re the one who said you wanted me to take you that night in the rainforest,” he whispered against her ear, grinding his palm pad against her slowly through her pants until he felt her hips arch into the touch. He licked wetly up the length of her ear, ending in a series of nips that would border on painful as he felt her tremble and strain against him. Her scent was so thick now that it actually did remind him of the rainforest; sweet and alluring in ways that made him want to taste her, take her and fill her all at once. “I think your exact words were… ‘I wanted you inside of me so much’.”

“Nick, please,” she whimpered, a sound that he delighted in almost as much as the feel of her paws digging into the fur of his back in an attempt to urge him onward.

“We’re not there yet, Carrots,” he hummed against the rim of her ear, feeling her shiver with every syllable. She tried to follow his paw when it withdrew, another familiar sensation, but he easily followed the motion as he unbuttoned and unzipped her slacks in one motion before he slipped his paw into them. “You’re not needy enough, not desperate. I’ll have to go a little further.”

The heat between her thighs was gloriously similar to what he had found the first time he had touched her this way, the first time he had tasted air thick with her scent just like it was now. It was something to be savored even though his body urged him to take her, breed her, and claim his mate. He found he could resist that feral need because he already knew the outcome, even as her tiny claws dug past the fur and touched skin when he slipped one finger into the tight heat of her folds. She bucked then, a throaty moan escaping her as her hips pumped forward to meet the pad of his palm as he cupped her. He remembered the rhythm, followed her hips with his trapped paw and applied pressure to the nub of her clit when she rode his finger forward. But he did what he had not done then and turned his muzzle to hers, and smothered her needy cries with a kiss. The passion made the kiss hard, her muzzle just as eager as his, her tongue just as questing as they slid around each other. It wasn’t even about an exploration of the love they shared or the passion between them. It was just needed. The sound of his growl mingled with the moans and breathless cries that escaped into his muzzle now and then.

It didn’t take long. In hindsight, it had been quick in the rainforest, too, though it had felt like an eternity of need, frustration, and desperation. But now he realized how quickly it had come; the sudden increase in the pace of her hips against his palm as she urgent pump of her hips as she searched for the release that he offered; the squeeze of her already tight folds around his finger as her rear paws pressed almost painfully into his thighs; the fact that now she was forced to break the kiss to breathe in heavy gasps, gasps that were laced with his name was she climbed right up to the edge of orgasm. Only to cry out in surprise and almost painful frustration when he slowly slipped his finger from the heat of her, and withdrew his paw.

“Noo!” she nearly wailed as she reached down to try to keep his paw between her legs, which was likely one of the most adorable things he had ever seen in his life. Which was saying a lot, considering who his partner was? “Don’t st…”
Her plea was cut off by the sudden motion of being turned to face the wall, one of his arms sliding around her waist to keep her up off the ground on his level. The startled yelp that escaped her was the only complaint she made when she quickly braced her paws against the smooth surface, her rear paws quickly finding purchase on his thighs again. He heard a quickly whispered ‘Yes’ leave her when he yanked her pants down off her hips, not bothering to take them down more than was needed to expose the white and gray of her rump to him. The slick juices on his palm was all the confirmation he needed that she was ready for him, so he didn’t hesitate to rise up and press forward. She arched her hips back against him, and the second he felt the mouth of her sex line up with his aching red length, he drove himself forward hard and relentlessly. The incredibly tight liquid heat of her surrounded him, soothing and painfully good all at once, and tore a snarl from him when she suddenly squeezed down around him viciously.

She had never been particularly hard to bring to orgasm, but when she came from that first thrust and started to grind her hips back into his, all he could do was grip her hips with both paws to help her ride it out. So tight that he almost couldn’t move at all, he felt the ripple of her sex squeeze and suck around him as her voice called out in exquisite release. His ears perked towards it, even as his muzzle curled into a snarl from the intensity of it. Never had he felt anything like it, and her climax was almost as intense for him as he knew his own would be. Maybe it was that he loved her, or maybe it was something more primal between them that made it seem so, but even as her cries died down to moans and she slumped forward against the wall, he gave her what she said she wanted.

He took her before she had fully recovered. His paws tightening on her bare hips as he pulled back almost to the point of withdrawal. He felt her shiver slightly, her head turned to the side to watch through dazed eyes and a silly grin of pleasure before he drove himself forward just as hard, just as deep. Her cry was drowned by his throaty growl of pleasure as he pressed himself fully against her, forcing her feet to leave his thighs as he pinned the full length of her body to the wall and kept her suspended with his paws and his hips. Now he let it come over him. That savage lust that had been lurking just under the surface, free to take what it wanted as he bucked his hips against her. He wasn’t aware of anything more than her, pinned by him, wrapped around him, under the length of his tongue as he bathed the back of her neck with hungry licks.

It was one of those things that was never meant to last long, not after the teasing, not after she had already cum around him to show him how much she needed him. He could already deep the thickening at the base of his length, felt her tighten with each pass and heard her cries grow more urgent and wild. The grating sound that reached his ears drew his gaze to the fact that her fingers had curled into the smooth surface of the wall, and her claws were tearing grooves into the paint. And it was exactly what he needed as he felt her tighten around him again, his hips slamming forward to sheath himself fully inside of her as he started to swell swiftly. From their first time together, when he had been worried that she wouldn’t be able to take him at all, she had proven to have a love for this moment. And she showed it again as her entire body went ridged against and around him, squeezing so tight that the near pain of it had him parting his muzzle and clamping down on the fur on the back of her neck. The sound that escaped him couldn’t even be described when the flash of pleasure robbed him of everything but the ability to savor and suffer the intensity of the sensation. His sac tightened, he throbbed thickly and ground his hips tightly against her as he toppled over the edge himself. Even pinned as she was, even with the teeth of a predator at the back of her neck, she still pressed back into him as her body milked his spurting member of both seed and pleasure.

His breath was hot against the back of her neck as he breathed through the muzzle he kept tight on the back of her neck, bright spots flaring and vanishing behind his closed eyelids as he savored the orgasm. Hearing her own ragged and desperate breathing as he continued to pump his hips slowly, in short, greedy thrusts, he tried to ease the weight of his chest against her only to have her reach back with one paw. Gripping the back of his head, she dragging him forward again and press his muzzle into the back of her neck. It took him a moment to understand the action, and to understand that his
teeth were buried well past the fur and pressing into tender flesh. Oddly, it didn’t panic him. There was no taste of blood, no sign of pain from her. If anything, the fact that she dragging him back and urged him to keep his hold on her was a sign that she not only accepted it but appreciated it.

Sooner than either really wanted, his legs started to weaken. He was only mortal, after all, even if he was in the best shape of his life after the academy. He released his grip on the back of her neck, dragging his tongue over the ruffled fur there to smooth it and get her blood flowing properly again before he wrapped both arms gently around her belly and chest. Then he just let himself slide to the floor, taking her into his lap. The unexpected weight of her body adding an extra little bit of depth to their union made them both gasp and her laugh softly as she snuggled back into his embrace.

“Going to have to give me at least a few seconds before we continue, Slick,” she murmured, turning her head so she could rub her cheek against his chest fur slowly. Looking down at her, the contentment on her face was so clear and obvious even through the ruffled fur and scent of sex that it made his heart ache. Maybe it was strange, that her contentment meant more than her actual physical pleasure to him. That they both seemed connected was a bonus, of course, but it still gave him an almost giddy feeling to watch her snuggle into him. Where she wanted to be, where she was happy. Where she belongs.

“We’ll need more than a few minutes, Fluff,” he said in a low tone, voice lazy and content even as he realized that the world was still marked by shades of gray and white for the most part. Somehow it was less worrying now. Maybe because she didn’t seem to care either way and because right then he was anything but angry or distressed. All he felt was contentment. And very tight, very warm bunny wrapped around his still throbbing length.

“Oh come on now,” she grinned as she tipped her muzzle straight back and placed a kiss on the underside of his. “I’ve heard that sometimes you foxes can go again before you even unlock.”

“Oh is that what you’ve heard?” he said, a grin growing as he tucked his muzzle between her high ears and let it rest there. “And where exactly are you hearing these things, bunny? Exactly how much fox porn did you watch?”

“I did not watch ‘fox porn,’” she protested, then release a little giggle when his paws ran up and down the length of her chest and bellow slowly. She arched her back into the touch, which caused her rear to slide against his lap and her sex to tighten around him. “I did… Research.”

“Is that what they’re calling it today?” he said, a breathless little laugh escaping him as he decided turn-about was fair play. He allowed his paws to wander lower, sliding to her inner thighs, over the line where white joined gray. Feeling her shiver when he slid his claws through her fur slowly, he arched his hips upward to meet hers and though she did her best to muffle the moan, she couldn’t hide the way she squeezed down on his knot. “Admit it. You were watching fox porn. Did you imagine me while watching it? Moan my name maybe?”

“Oh, yes,” she sighed breathily, surprising and pleasing him with the complete lack of guile in the admission. “Though I have to admit, Mr. Wilde. If I knew then how good this would actually feel, I would have been beating down your door.”

“I love you, Judy,” he blurted, grinning when she grinned up at him.

“You’re just saying that because you like the way I feel around your knot,” she teased, making a laugh escape him as he wrapped his arms around her and squeezed her close. “But I love you, too, dumb fox.”
Chapter End Notes

Unexpected Erotica! I didn't actually plan it, not for another... Four chapters, but the characters took over and ran with it. So there we go.
Chapter Summary

Special present from my favorite artist, TheWyvernsWeaver!
http://thewyvernsweaver.deviantart.com/
Relaxation was a matter of opinion, Judy realized as she stood under the shower, letting the hot water beat into her fur. The pleasantly high water pressure did its best to massage the tension from her muscles, penetrating to the skin as she rolled her head forward to focus the forceful stream on her shoulders and neck for a long moment. She was not unhappy. The night before having removed any possibility that she could be unhappy, at least in the short term. After being ravished against the wall of the apartment – an act that she had initiated herself when the stress and need had combined to a lust that had surprised even her once the door closed – she remembered the blush that had heated her ears when, after withdrawing from her, he set her on the floor and tugged her blue uniform pants back up over her hips. The self-satisfied smirk on his face when he did this and the wild gleam in his eyes told her that he rather enjoyed the lewd act of trapping his seed inside of her. Compatible as a species or not, he certainly had no problem making it clear that he had just marked her. The fact that it caused a little shiver of arousal to race through her was telling. At least she had managed to hold it back until he turned to look around the apartment they had been assigned. There was no reason to make him think that she was completely at the mercy of her attraction to him.
Even if she was.

Exploration that had ended almost instantly for her when she found herself in the largest bathroom she had ever seen, complete with an inground bath that looked large enough to hold half a generation of bunnies. In hindsight, calling Nick had been a quick way to find themselves in said bath with her legs wrapped around his hips and his teeth at her throat in only the best of ways. That was where she learned that relaxing in his lap, his knot locked inside of her, hot water soaking into her fur at every angle was one of the most enjoyable and relaxing things she had ever experienced. Which was saying a lot given their current situation.

Afterward, they took a great deal of time after that soaping, grooming, and exploring each other’s bodies in non-sexual ways that had her wanting to wallow in the simple intimacy of it all. Somehow it was revealing, being wet in the bath together. The way their wet fur clung to their bodies allowed her to see and feel every toned muscle of his predatory build as she ran her paws over him without a bit of shyness in her. She had never considered a fox’s build before like she did his. Unlike larger predators, he would never be thick across the chest or have bulging muscles that were so powerful they could be seen through the pelts of even a winter coat. He was sleek and swift, and after his time in the academy certainly stronger than he had been during their first meeting. His muscles held lean strength, allowing him to move almost as fast as she could while making it easily possible for him to pick her up with one paw.

She still tried to tell herself that this didn’t arouse her, even if she failed to convince herself. And it wasn’t like his being physically stronger was the point. She could still take his orange ass down in the ring more often than not. But there was something crazy hot about how easily he had pinned her to the wall with his large, crimson paws between her legs…

At this point, she had been forced to direct her attention to another subject before desire sparked again. Or sparked further. Not that he helped when he announced that it was his turn to wash her and requested that she turn around to face away from him. Swearing that she wasn’t in heat anymore didn’t seem to make much of a difference to either of them. After her less than pure thoughts about his body and paws, it took less than five minutes of those same large but amazingly gentle paws on her soapy fur to have her turning to brace her paws on the edge of the bath with her hips raised to his muzzle level. After she glanced back to see him staring at the twitch of her tail with a lusty grin, they went right back to where they started.

It was afterward, during their second bath, that his eyes returned to normal, though somehow she no longer found that to be nearly as important as it had been before. She wondered if perhaps he was getting used to the change in his state of mind when he was savage because he showed no sign of real change. His temper was even, he spoke normally, and he didn’t seem jumpy or paranoid. This led her to think that perhaps it was the lack of possible threats that gave him this calm state of mind and allowed her to conclude that if a cure couldn’t be found, she was going to take him to the deepest part of the most remote forest to live out their lives peacefully. There had been a time when giving up her life as a ZPD officer would have seemed impossible, unbearable. But now her only real concern was not losing Nick and she was determined that nothing in Zootopia would take him away from her while she was still breathing.

Those thoughts ran through her mind when she turned the shower off. Their morning had been no less amorous than their afternoon in the bath. A hungry fox’s long tongue doing all sorts of wickedly amazing things to a bunny was one hell of a way to wake up and had quickly washed away the idea of worrying. It hadn’t occurred to her until after that he might have been doing the same for himself; removing the ability to worry in a situation where they couldn’t do anything but. The newness of their relationship, and the passion that came with it, was the perfect distraction. But the shower had given her time to think and her thoughts were focused on one thing now.
She quickly towed off and didn’t bother with the fur dryer, slipping on his uniform shirt before stepping into the main room. Her nose twitching as the scent of food reached it, the towel paused halfway down one ear when she considered the kitchen and saw him there, standing in front of the stove while something sizzled in the skillet. It wasn’t what he was doing that caught her eye. It was the fact that he was wearing black slacks and a crisp white shirt while he did it that made her wander closer to him. She opened her mouth to speak when his ears twitched and he turned to face her with one of those ‘Hey Carrots’ grins on his muzzle; the kind that showed the white tips of his sharp canines and had secretly been making her belly quiver for months. And a shirt that had yet to be buttoned. And a black tie that remained untied and hung on either side of his fully exposed cream-colored chest and belly. And he hadn’t even bothered to button the pants, which was not fair with the way his fur thickened just a bit before vanishing into the waistband. That she could see the lump of his sheath simply combined with the entire image of him and left her more than a little weak-kneed and unsteady on her feet.

Whatever she had been thinking of saying turned to gibberish in what was left of her mind as the rush of attraction fried everything that was coherent and remotely intelligent.

“You all right there, Carrots?” he questioned, moving away from the stove to slide one paw under her muzzle and tilt it up towards him. The grin didn’t fade when he bent low to slide his lips over hers and she found it very unfair that he seemed perfectly calm and collected while she was trying to find the switch in her mind that would reset her ability to speak. That search for her voice was cut off when he deepened the kiss, her eyes falling closed when his tongue lightly traced over her lips until she supplicated and sank into him. It was slow and soft, but sensual and hungry at the same time. It was also, she realized when he drew back to look down at her with adoring green eyes, something that she wanted every morning.

Not just the kissing or the sex or seeing him half-dressed and insanely hot in the morning. All of it. Coming out of the shower knowing that he was going to be there somewhere. Seeing him in the kitchen making what her nose told her was one of the dozens of different types of sausage available in Zootopia. Seeing him get dressed in the morning, and undressed in the evening. Making plans to for what to eat, where to go that night. Curling up beside him on the couch to watch TV, or talking about the day’s work without having to dread knowing that once it was time to go home, their homes were separate. She watched him as he turned back to make sure that the food didn’t burst into flames with a sway in his tail, these thoughts running through her mind.

She knew exactly where she wanted to be.

“Marry me, Nick.”

Having been in the process of flipping one of the sausage patties, the sudden jerk of his entire body caused him to yank his paw back. The patty hit the ceiling, leaving behind a greasy stain before it fell to the tiled floor with a wet slap. Neither of them noticed it, her gaze on him even if he hadn’t turned to face her yet. His ears were pinned to the side, his tail now low to the ground, and the paw holding the spatula unmoving for a long moment before. She felt a little sick, a lot nervous, and perfectly certain in what’s she’d proposed even if she was as surprised as him that the words had come from her muzzle.

Oh God, I just proposed to him.

“Ha, funny, Fluff,” he said at last, and without turning to look at her he set about the task of cleaning up what his reaction had caused him to drop. “That’s just the night of amazing love-making talking.”

Judy didn’t feel let down by his attempt to laugh it off because it was such a poor attempt. Even
though she still felt the roll of nervousness in her belly, she could see the jerky twitch of his tail and the effort he put into forcing his ears to stand upright again; she could hear the tremble in his voice when he’d dismissed it. Hell, she could hear his heartbeat now. Her ears perked towards it, the quick, hard beat so strong that it was almost violent. When neither of them said anything for a moment, she watched him place his paws on the counter and lean forward a bit. She knew what was happening when he drew a deep breath, released it slowly. She could take his cue and laugh it off, make it a joke. But she couldn’t decide which one of them she would hurt more if she did something that cowardly.

“I’m sure it has something to do with it, yes,” she agreed as she pulled his uniform shirt closer around her chest without taking her eyes off him. “That doesn’t mean I don’t want to marry you.”

“You don’t want to marry me, Judy,” he said, at last, speaking slowly as he tried to calm himself. When he turned away from the counter to face her finally, the savage green eyes that met hers confirmed what she thought about his heart rate. And like before, it didn’t cause the same feeling of dread that it would have only the day before. There was no anger on his face now, just a fear that made her heart ache when he placed his paw on his chest. “Look at me!”

“I am,” she said, her eyes moving over his face for a long moment as she tried to calm her own heart. The long, predatory muzzle, ruffled orange and cream fur, green eyes that were full of emotion beyond the savagery. He was so amazingly handsome, even if he shouldn’t have been to her. And that was a part of the point when the surprise and self-doubt on his face became fear and maybe a little hope when his ears raised towards her. “We both know what this is. We’ve both said it, and we both mean it. I love you, Nick. I am in love with you.”

“Judy,” he began softly when her voice trembled, but she cut him off by placing her paw on the tip of his muzzle.

“And I know it’s not just a fear of losing my partner or even my lover,” she continued, stepping into him until her face was pressed into the thicker fur of his chest ruff where she could take in the scent of fox. Her fox. “This is what I’m afraid of losing. All of it, especially the things we haven’t even shared yet. Falling asleep beside you with your muzzle between my ears and waking up in the morning with you inside of me as the first sensation of the day. Walking into the kitchen to see you cooking half dressed. Dressing at the same time, leaving for work together, coming home to crawl into bed together or just falling asleep in front of the TV after eating crappy microwave dinners. I want to take you to Bunnyburrow and show you off to my other brothers and sisters. I want to see gray fur on your ear tips so I can make fun of how old you’ve gotten. I want everything, Nick. And I know that’s why I’ve been so afraid of losing you. I know that I have everything I’ll ever want in life right in front of me, and the thought of you being taken away terrifies me. I…”

Her voice trailed off when his paw slipped under her chin and tipped her muzzle up so that his could meet it. The kiss was long and slow and through the course of it, she found herself drawn against him, into his lap when he sat where he was. Surrounded by the warmth and scent of him, she felt that she knew his answer and struggled to ease the ache in her chest during the little breaks in the kiss. Breaks during which she smiled at him like an idiot and sniffled slightly when she realized that tears were rolling down her cheeks. His eyes were a fascinating and beautiful combination of happiness and a savage sort of pleasure as they moved over her face before he tipped his muzzle to her cheeks. She closed her eyes and tilted into the gentle slide of his tongue over her fur, letting him brush away the tears as she pressed her fingers into the thicker fur of his chest.

“So what do you say, Slick?” she questioned, her voice soft when his tongue brushed the corner of her mouth. “Kissing me brainless isn’t going to rescind the proposal.”
She could feel the quick rhythm of his heart against the palms of her paws as clearly as she could hear it when he pulled back to look down at her. Maybe it was her heart, actually. It was beating so fast she was almost light headed when he took on of her paws in his and pressed their palms together. She didn’t have to look at them to realize how small her paw was compared to his; her fingers barely covered the pad at the center of his palm, a good mirror for how small she must have looked nestled in his lap as she was now. Vulnerable and exposed to the predator that she knew would never hurt her.

“You’ll be stuck with me for the rest of your life,” he warned her gently, though she could see the playful happiness in his eyes when he said it.

“I’m pretty sure I’m already stuck with you for life, and I’ll just have to learn to deal with it,” she replied, pressing her nose against his when he leaned closer.

“I’ll get on your nerves.”

“You already get on my nerves. I still want to marry you,” she huffed softly, making him laugh when she darted her muzzle up to kiss his nose.

“What about your parents?”

“They’ll come around,” she murmured, nestling her mouth over his lightly for a feather light kiss. “I know you’re not supposed to rush these things, but you’re stalling.”

“I would never,” he said, his muzzle curved into a lazy, pleased grin. She heard the swish of his tail wagging over the floor behind them. “Just making sure that you understand what you’re in for when I say yes.”

“Just say it, before I bite you,” she said, rolling her eyes a little even though his words caused a surge of blissful happiness that made her fight back more tears.

“Promise? Because I sure do.” When she smacked his chest, he grinned toothily before snapping his teeth at her. Once upon a time, that might have startled her. Now it made a little shiver run all the way down into her belly because she knew exactly what those teeth could do.

“Yes, of course I’ll marry you,” he said finally, both paws moving up to cup her cheeks as he looked down at her. His expression was warm and serious, happiness all but written on his face in the high set of his ears. Happiness that was mixed with more than a little uncertain wonder. “I spent most of the morning trying to come up with a way to bring up moving in together when this is over. You jumped over three steps there, Carrots.”

“Three steps?” she grinned and reached up to take his paws from her muzzle so she could press her face into his chest again. Surround in the scent of him, she breathed in until it almost hurt her lungs before a hot release of her breath caused him to shiver when she burrowed in. She understood that she was wallowing in him and knew it was sappy and silly. But she couldn’t bring herself to care as the endless concern and fear was covered by a deep contentment with his answer fresh in her mind.

“Three steps,” he confirmed, the hum of his voice in his chest causing her to shiver slightly before she raised her eyes to look at the underside of his muzzle. His head was tilted back, offering her easy access to this throat. “Though skipping steps seems to be our thing. We were supposed to move in together, like normal couples. Decide if we can stand being together pretty much twenty/seven. We haven’t even really been on a date yet.”
“We’re far from a normal couple. And you can’t possibly expect me to believe that the Gazelle concert wasn’t a date.”

Grinning softly, she angled her muzzle to press her chin under his muzzle and against his throat. She felt him go completely still when she did this, his paws resting on her shoulders as he held his breath when she slowly rubbed her scent mark into his fur. Deeply, with slow strokes that would reach the skin as she felt his heart rate increase again when she brushed over the beat of his pulse. He was aware of what it meant, aware that any bunny that crossed their path would know exactly why the fox smelled like a rabbit. If she had her way, the mark would never fade.

“Carrots. I love you,” he murmured softly, and she went as still as he had when he lowered his muzzle to brush his nose against her ears lightly. The low rumble that rolled through him felt so base and possessive that it caused a shiver to race down her spine as she slipped her arms around his neck. Tipping her head to the side lightly so that her chin was rubbing against his shoulder, she offered him access to the same. She released a little sound of simple contentment when he pressed the edge of his muzzle against her throat and slowly ground his own scent into her, the sound of his tail quickly swishing over the ground again making her grin. The scent of fox and flowers eased her further even as the feel of his large paws sliding down the small of her back, cupping her bare rear, excited her on a very different level.

“I love you, too, Nick,” she whispered, her paws moving to the back of his head, sliding her fingers around his ears as she encouraged him to continue. The fact that her paws tightened in a possessive way all her own was deepened by the husky tone that followed. “My Fox.”

As the warmth and contentment started to heat into something darker and more erotic, the marking continued. His paws molded to the full curve of her rear to squeeze and draw her tighter against the growing bulge in his pants. The sound that escaped her this time was soft and feminine, filled with the growing need.

A growing need that was brought to a sudden, terrible halt when someone knocked on the door. Her annoyed groan was as loud as his growl when she collapsed into him, her breath escaping her with a final huff as she nuzzled into his neck. The real world had to come back eventually, she knew. And it wasn’t as if they had been interrupted the afternoon or night before or that morning. It was pure, unashamed greed that had her wanting to shoo whoever was at the door away so she could lose herself in Nick again. Despite his annoyed growl, the fact that he didn’t seem at all tense told her that maybe he understood the same thing. Even if that didn’t cure the thick throb she still felt against her bare rear. A small chuckle escaped her, and his followed it shortly even if it held a rougher edge as he lifted her gently to set her on her feet.

“I’ll get the door,” she said, purposefully buttoning his shirt as she looked down at him with a slow smile pulling at the edges of her muzzle. “You finish breakfast. And don’t forget that there is a herbivore in the room, Mr. Fox.”

She took the time to adjust the name tag that read ‘Nicholas P. Wilde’ while she watched him. The look in those savage eyes as she proudly presented herself in half of his uniform was seriously tempting her to crawl on top of him again and let whoever was at the door keeping knocking until she was satisfied. But with another grin and a turn, she wiggled her tail as she headed towards the door. She gave a surprised shriek, laughing when his paws seized her hips and dragged her back just far enough for him to bite her still exposed butt right next to her tail. Fighting back the moan that threatened to join the laughter at the feeling of those teeth sliding through her fur, she swatted Nick and that savage grin plastered on his muzzle away. Tugging the shirt down over her tail to cover her offended backside, she made her way to the door while he returned to the abandoned breakfast.
Some part of her was still trying to process the fact that he was her fiancé now when she reached the door and swung it open. Some of that good mood went away the moment she saw Jack standing at the door, looking mildly annoyed. Though it lifted again when the male bunny, now dressed in a dark gray suit, black shirt and faded purple pattern tie, closed his mouth and tightened his grip on the briefcase he held as soon as he saw her. She wasn’t sure what caused his nose to twitch rapidly like that: it could have been the fact that she smelled very clearly of an aroused bunny; or maybe the fresh scent mark of a fox on her; maybe both, combined with the fact that she was wearing Nick’s shirt with Nick’s name and absolutely nothing else. And amazingly, not a bit of it made her feel self-conscious or shy. A very small part of her wanted to walk through this underground base dressed as she was, but that small part of her was obviously insane and immature.

It wasn’t that she believed Savage was jealous, either. If anything, she thought maybe the blatant and unrepentant display of her relationship with a fox just derailed him for a moment. A reminder of the first time they had met him, maybe. And that was a thought that made her grin when she realized that Wolford, who had opted for simple gray pants and white polo shirt, stood slightly behind the rabbit. His nose twitched as well, though his reaction was a knowing and pleased grin that made her give him a little wave before she turned away from the open door.

“I thought you were going to call before you came knocking,” she informed Jack as she walked over to the closet that Nick had left open. The smaller items on the left side of the closet were clearly for her, and after a few seconds of searching, she found something that would suit her for now. The dark blue jeans and a red blouse tucked over one arm, she nabbed the black leather jacket as a last minute thought to fit her current ‘Fuck it all’ mood. Dropping these things from the bed, she didn’t even need to tell the others in the room to turn their backs. One look from Nick had Jack and Wolford facing the opposite wall when she started to strip off his shirt. Of course, Nick didn’t turn around himself. He watched her like she expected any wild predator might watch his next meal when she slipped the dark blue and hold from gray and white.

“I did call,” Jack stated, one ear twitching towards the low rumble that rose from Nick. “I assume Wilde neglected to tell you. I was hoping that he would be calm before I arrived, but that doesn’t seem to be an option at this point.”

“Ah. Well, we did get sidetracked,” she shrugged off the accusation in his tone and didn’t blame Nick in the least for forgetting to mention the call. No doubt he had intended to share breakfast before spoiling her mood by letting her know that their time alone was coming to an end. The bomb she’d dropped on them both had sidetracked everything, if only for a few precious minutes.

As she tugged the jeans over her hips, she found herself grinning like mad and repressing the desire to squeal like a kit. While buttoning them, she turned her eyes to Nick and found him still watching her. He seemed to have caught onto her own mood, sending a wink in her direction even as he flipped the reheating sausage that he hadn’t sent flying out of the pan, off the ceiling, and onto the flood.

“I expected you might, which is why I brought this with me rather than taking you to the armory,” Jack said, indicating the briefcase by swaying it out to one side. “It will save some time while you catch up with the rest of the world.”

Because his tone was only half amused, she decided to let the little jab slide. It also helped that she knew they were not behaving professionally at the moment. If she were still in her uniform, still at the ZPD, she would feel differently. Would have behaved differently. There was no chance at all that she would flaunt her relationship with Nick in Bogo’s face, for example. But they had both been forced into this situation by whoever had poisoned Nick and having no choice in how things moved forward was one of many things that was wearing on her as much as it was on Nick.
“Armory?” After tugging the blouse over her head, she glanced at the case that Jack carried, her ears perked in his direction as she crossed the room towards him. “You’re arming us?”

“I am,” he replied and noticing that her voice was closer, Jack turned to face her with a short nod as he carried the case over to the bed. “You are active agents under my care, after all. I do intend to peruse this case with your assistance, and I think we can all agree that someone willing to poison multiple mammals, including an officer at the ZPD, can be classified as extremely dangerous.”

Nick joined them beside the bed as Jack tapped the code into the keypad on the face of the case, holding out a small plate with some of the sausage and two pieces of toast. She grinned when she took it, rather liking the idea of trading off breakfast duty when they didn’t feel like loading up on sugar. She sniffed the sausage once before nibbling on the edge, finding that it was some tasty tofu based vegetable blend. A blend that didn’t smell or likely taste nearly as good as the salmon patties that he had on his plate. She gave a little smirk in his direction, to his surprise reached up and dropped her nibbled-on patty on his plate before swiping one of his. The look he gave her when she popped the salmon into her mouth and chewed slowly was a speechless surprise and a hint of arousal as she swallowed it down and picked up her piece of toast with an innocent blink up at him.

“We don’t know how dangerous, however. As such,” Jack continued, pretending not to have noticed the exchange as he opened the case to show the contents. “We will be using both high-velocity tranquilizer pellets and live ammunition. I know that all members of the ZPD are required to train with live-fire weapons for SWAT engagements. These will all be familiar to you.”

Looking down into the case, she saw the guns in the padded gray foam molding and what looked like shoulder holders tacked to the underside of the case lid. There were five pawguns. The three with the longer barrels and in-stock silver cylinders she recognized instantly as the tranquilizer guns, one sized for each of the three of them. The two firearms, one clearly larger for a medium sized predator such as Wolford and the other small enough for her to handle easily, were black semi-automatics with two spare magazines for each underneath. Her eyes narrowed when she realized that there was no third live-fire weapon in the case for Nick, and it caused her stomach to tighten in anger as she turned her gaze to Jack.

“No, there is no gun for Officer Wilde,” he said, his expression calm as he looked to the fox. “You of all people should understand why I can’t just give over a lethal weapon, Wilde. Given your violent intentions towards the weasel and the reality of how easily you can turn to the savage state of mind, it would be foolish to give you means to attack your targets from a distance with lethal force.”

The good mood was gone now as she looked up at Nick. His eyes were normal again, his face calm and blank on the outside, his ears calmly upright. But she could see the minor irritation in his eyes at the words; irritation that seemed to stem from the fact that Jack was right.

“I get it,” he confirmed, shrugging it off when he stepped over to the case and took the tranquilizer gun meant for him, plus the shoulder harness. “I’ll just have to shoot you before I maul you. Seems like an effective way to keep me under wraps.”

She was a little eased by the fact that Wolford was frowning as well, even when Jack directed him to take his arms from the case. She was last to take them, mostly because she couldn’t decide if she wanted to be armed when Nick was only half as prepared as everyone else. Finally, the understanding that she wouldn’t trust anyone else to protect Nick if it came down to it made her take the shoulder holster. While they armed themselves, Jack went on.

“There are a few things that we need to get done today,” he said, helping Wolford adjust the holster to his body size while Nick and Judy did the same for each other. “There has been some intel gained from tracking the motions of Stoat and questioning those he’s been selling Feral Blue to. He
tends to stay in the Rainforest District, likely because it is easier to lose tails in the forest than anywhere else in Zootopia. But one of his clients has been more than willing to cooperate due to ties to the mayor’s office and our promise to keep things quiet if he had anything worth knowing.”

“And did he know anything worth knowing?” Judy asked shortly, standing in front of Nick, who sat on the bed let her help him with his tie now that they both had the shoulder-holsters and guns secured. They both knew very well that he didn’t need the help but there was something intimate about it and sweet that he wanted her to tie it as much as she wanted to. Another thing that she wasn’t going to give up. That she wouldn’t let anyone take from her.

“He knew that Stoat frequents a club downtown. A place called Wallabies,” Jack confirmed, turning to close the briefcase now that it was empty. “It actually seems to be the only place he goes aside from the streets and what he calls a home. We’re trying to find his contact inside, trying to find out if it is the place where he gets the product, but so far we haven’t had any luck. Once we find a way to infiltrate without being detected, we should be able to get a name, a face and then a solid body to question.

“Before we get into that, there is the question of this possible cure,” he continued, wandering into the kitchen and opening the refrigerator to pull out a bottled water. She wasn’t sure why exactly it felt like an invasion of privacy. This wasn’t their apartment. They didn’t have an apartment. She had her place, and Nick had his place, and until this was done they wouldn’t be able to look for a place of their own. A place that belonged to them. Jack’s unintentional reminder that this place wasn’t theirs made her angry, but she pressed it back as she gently nudged the knot of Nick’s tie up most of the way. “It seems to be effective, if the two test subjects it has been administered to are any indication.”

*Test subjects.*

“Our expert on campus would like to have a little time with you before we administer the cure, Wilde,” he continued, sipping from the bottle in his paw as he returned to stand beside Wolford. “He has some questions, and he wants to see the half-savage state. Maybe run some tests.”

“I am sorry for this display. But I think everyone in this room needed to know how dangerous this situation is. How dangerous he is.”

A display. Testing. No doubt that they would refer to Nick as another ‘test subject’ when he was out of earshot. Just another infected savage to shove needles into to test a cure that may or may not work. And worse was Jack. Not only had Jack already pushed Nick to become savage before to prove points and test theories, but now he made it more than clear that he trusted everyone else more than the fox. Disarming him, leaving him vulnerable while everyone else in the room was given the privilege of a proper firearm. Segregating him. Making him feel like less than the rest of them. Like he couldn’t be trusted because of something that wasn’t his fault. Because he was just a savage fox. It was dangerous thinking. She knew that it made Nick the liability in Jack’s eyes. It made him the one who would be sacrificed if the chips fell the wrong way.

She wouldn’t let anyone think of her fox as expendable.

The sound metal on leather was the only sound in the room and it drew all eyes to her seconds before all three males froze in place. Everyone, even Jack, was too surprised to speak when he found himself staring down the barrel of the gun he had just given her. The gun that she gripped in two perfectly steady, competent paws as she stared at him with burning violet eyes.

“I have another plan,” she said, her voice calm even as the events of the past two days caught up to her. None of it was fair, none of it was *right*. She would not let Nick feel like he was less than the
rest of them. Not again. She shoved the gun against Jack’s nose, pushing him towards the chair beside the bed. “Sit down, Jack. I think it’s time we talk as equals for once.”

Chapter End Notes

Welp, now you understand the title had two meanings. Ha!

Comments! I love comments! I want to know if you think I am awesome or insane. Or both!
Report:

Case File – The Savage Dark

Reporting Agent: Code Name – Jack “Savage”

Affiliation: Unknown

Current Whereabouts: Unknown

Agent Status: Unknown (Active)

Recording Continues:

“Rational. Generally, the mammals that I deal with are rational - the agents that I work with: those that feed me information, the ones that pull the strings, and those that I am sent to stop. It gives them all a certain level of predictability that I have come to expect with my work. Agents may sometimes be hotheaded, but you can talk sense into them. Informants are looking for one of two things: money or a favor. The powers-that-be don’t always explain the reasons for what they do, but we all know why they do it in the end. And, yes, even my targets are rational to a degree. I can figure them out, understand their methods, follow a pattern that they themselves are not always aware they follow. This is how I do my job. Mammals by and large are very predictable if you take the time to learn to read their patterns.

“That being said, I will admit that I made a mistake where Officer Hopps was concerned. She is a professional, but she is not average. The very fact that her relationship with Wilde began and continued was proof of that. If I had known then what I know now, I would not have been surprised at all to find myself facing off with her. She is as protective of Officer Wilde as he is of her, even more so in certain situations. Why is this part important? I’ll get to that later in the report…”
armrests to keep them visible as he sat facing the three of them. The fact that this was not a planned event, at least not between the two of them, was obvious from the shock on Wilde’s face and the way his ears were pinned back as he watched his mate - calling them partners now was a moot point, he had decided given the scent of sex in the room lingered strongly enough that he thought it would take more than one pass with scent neutralizer to make the room livable by anyone else once these two left. The third recruit was just as surprised as Wilde, but he hid it better. Obviously wanting to throw his support behind his fellow officer, the wolf’s eyes rested on him and only him - watching for any sign of resistance or hostility. This was why he had wanted Wolford along to begin with: to have someone who would identify with the pair of them and be ‘on their side’ enough to keep them from doing things exactly like this.

And how well is that working out so far, Jack?

“All right,” he said without moving more than his eyes between the three, “you have my attention. What exactly do you want to talk about on equal ground, Officer Hopps?”

“Choice,” she replied, her voice unwavering as the level of the weapon when she stepped around the bed. “Nick, darling, disarm him, would you?”

Having seen them work in the field a few times was not a clear picture of how in sync they really were. Stunned as the fox might have been a second before, his face sobered up and he didn’t hesitate to move to do what she asked. More than that, the fox didn’t for a second block her view and stayed outside of her target box as he quickly slipped large, but agile, paws into his jacket to slip the sidearm from its holster. Green eyes settled on blue for a moment as he slipped the gun, which was too small for him to use effectively, into his pocket and the long muzzle dipped down to consider him. “Shall I find out what else he’s carrying?”

“I think that will be enough, Nick. Wolford, I need a chair facing him.”

“She’s so hot when she gets like this,” Wilde smirked, striding over to stand beside her as Wolford moved quickly and without question to place a fox-sized chair in front of him. Just out of reach of his feet and paws, Jack noticed.

“Nick,” she said in a warning tone, though the twinkle in her eyes as she easily hopped into the chair made it clear to Jack that she was far from put off by the sentiment. That twinkle died when she focused on him again, the paw holding the gun moving to rest against her thigh. Still aimed exactly where it needed to be, but at the same time allowing her to lean back and give at least the illusion of relaxation. “I’m going to tell you a story, Jack. One that you may be familiar with. The story of the fox who saved Zootopia.”

“Judy…” Wilde began, his tone half-annoyed and half-resigned as he sat on the edge of the bed parallel to her.

“Shut up, Nick,” she said and, even though it had no heat behind it, the fox held up his paws in surrender.

“All right. Tell me the story.”

He really saw no reason not to listen, in part because it clarified the reason he had a gun leveled at his chest. This sudden change in behavior clearly had to do with Wilde directly. His choice not to arm him with a lethal weapon had been tactical, realistic, and easily made. That being said, he was curious to know why that single choice among so many had triggered this little coup.

“I’m sure by this point that you’ve read all the stories, watched the news reports, and probably
“Even seen the actual case files if I’m right,” she began, and continued once he gave her a simple nod of confirmation. “‘Heroic ZPD officer stops plot against city’s predators.’ They did manage to mention Nick a few times in those articles and reports. For the sake of PR, after I all but gave Bellwether exactly what she wanted with a stupid and thoughtless speech, I was given most of the credit no matter how hard I tried to change the story to something closer to the truth. A more accurate tagline would have read ‘ZPD Officer Judy Hopps manages to stop plot thanks to the heroic actions of her friend and partner, Nicholas Wilde.’”

“That is a bit long for a tagline,” the fox slipped in, smirking at the glare she sent his way. Jack had known before even introducing himself to the two of them that the fox’s sarcasm and jokes were often a defense mechanism. A way to deal with things that he found too uncomfortable to take seriously. The twinge of amusement at the quip also reminded him that the fox was very good at it.

“You see, Jack,” she continued, pretending that the interruption hadn’t happened at all. “When I first met Nick, he was mean. He talked down to me, belittled me, was openly hostile and even cruel at times. He tried to shrink my self-esteem and walked all over me. I was forced to blackmail him to get him to help me at all. And even then, that frustrating fox hindered my investigation intentionally with clever little annoyances that wasted most of the day in a case where time was already short. I hated him almost as much as I needed his help.”

Now he was interested on more than one level. He had read the case files in every detail once he had acquired them and had watched them in their daily lives since this case had started. Not once had the idea that she might have disliked Wilde at any point in their relationship crossed his mind. When she talked about him in news reports, she had nothing but good things to say. And it made sense that she would keep such an opposing start to their partnership a secret. But it still fascinated him.

“I realized, through trial and error and confession, that the fox I met on the street wasn’t Nick at all. In his own words, he was showing everyone what they already expected to see. What he had been taught they would see no matter what he did to try to change their minds. It can be jarring for mammals to realize that they are capable of being specist, even when they normally aren’t,” she said, her eyes resting on his. He could see the determination in them, a desire for him to understand. “Those little social cues that seem perfectly normal, that we were raised with, that we are bombarded with from every direction. We can tell ourselves that we’re not like that, and out in the open we might not be. Little country bunny, moving to Zootopia to be a cop. Ready and willing to work with and around predators every day, showing the world that bunnies are capable of more than what we’ve been told we are.

“And as progressive as I wanted to believe I was, the first thing I did was exactly what I was trying to prove I wouldn’t do. I thought I was being put down and stepped on, but I was the one who did it first. I walked around with Fox Repellant on my belt, I followed him thinking he was up to no good without a single shred of evidence, I was patronizing…” She managed not to look at Wilde when he let out a little cough of laughter. “…insulting and, when he returned the favor in kind, it only got worse. I felt justified in being hostile towards him, forcing him to help me, taking him into situations that no officer should ever take a civilian into. Because he was just a sly, annoying fox.

“When that changed, when we started to work together instead of just tolerating each other, it was easy to think that whatever prejudice there had been was gone,” she continued, and he realized that the gun was no longer actually pointed at him - though it remained in her lap and in her paw. She was still focused on him, still watching him, but her mind was divided between now and back then. He allowed her to continue. “But I proved that wrong quickly enough. I told the entire city that predators were dangerous. I all but handed Bellwether the keys. And worse for me, because I can still remember the look on his face, I showed Nick that I was still afraid of the big bad fox.”
It didn’t take a mind reader or empath to realize that the moment she spoke of still haunted her. Her lips curved into a slight frown, her ears drooped until they rested flat against her shoulders, and her eyes became distant and regretful. He already believed that he understood the point of what she was saying, though he didn’t agree with it fully. The situation was different. Wilde was seconds away from going savage when the right trigger was applied and that changed the reasoning.

“Reason and logic tells me that I might have been able to solve the case without Nick,” she said after a moment of silence. “But without Nick, I never would have made it back to the ZPD with the evidence. I would have been captured by the rams on the subway car. If I avoided that, I would have been killed when the car slammed into another oncoming train. If I had avoided that, I would have lost the evidence when the train crashed at the end of the track. If I had avoided that, I would have been captured when I hurt my leg running from Bellwether. If I had avoided that, I never would have been able to trick her into confessing on tape. There are too many ‘if I had’ in the story, and if I had my way, everyone would know it. It’s not just the fact that he was necessary in all of it. It’s the fact that he chose to do it. After I hurt him, after I almost caused this city to tear itself apart with my own specist fears, he chose to forgive me and help me. He chose to be more than what the mammals in this city expect from a fox. He chose to enter the academy and become the first fox on the ZPD.

“Choice, Jack,” she emphasized the word by raising the gun from her lap, the lines of her muzzle taking on a hard edge that looked strange on such a soft and lovely bunny. “And just like the mammals who made him the cynical bastard he was when I met him, you are making choices without considering that he is a mammal and not just a fox. The same fox who is, with every breath he takes now, proving that you can be more than your biology. Because biologically, he should have gone full savage by now. You’ve said that every other mammal exposed to this toxin has gone fully savage, right? Do you have any explanation as to why Nick hasn’t?”

“No,” he admitted, and groaned inwardly when he realized that he was going to have to concede this point to her in the end. “Other than his relationship with you, there is no other obvious reason for it.”

“I’ll tell you why,” she snapped, leaning forward in her chair with her ears perked high and a stony look on her face. “Because he’s Nicholas Wilde. He’s not just some random fox. He’s MY fox. I didn’t ask him to be my partner in the ZPD out of pity or because I wanted to show how non-specist I was. I did it because it only took me 36 hours to realize how amazing he really is. So amazing that I was in love with him before I even realized it was happening, and so amazing that even some wackos drugging him hasn’t been able to change him enough that I wouldn’t trust my life to him. He’s not your test subject. He’s not your burden. And if we’re going to work together, he certainly is not going to be treated as if he’s less than the rest of us because you’re too afraid of him to offer him the same protection that you freely offer the rest of us.”

She had him doubting himself, if only superficially. If only because there was some validity to what she was saying, about leaving Wilde vulnerable while expecting him to put himself into the same possible and likely danger as the rest of them. He was getting sentimental about the two of them, he knew. He wasn’t really sure what to make of it, mainly because it had never happened before. He understood both of them on some level, as the first bunny in his position within the agency, but it was more than just common ground. They were both different, both unique even when separated from each other. But when they were taken as a package? They both also happened to be very good at their jobs in the ZPD, and they had effectively protected the peaceful status quo in Zootopia. At the same time, they had stirred it up just enough to make mammals realize that there was a deeply seeded and silent problem in the city.

All in all, it was hard not to like them.
“Fine,” he said at last, releasing a slow sigh without moving more than his head as he turned his gaze to Wilde. “I will have a gun brought from the armory and have it waiting for you when we reach the labs. You are, of course, free to refuse any testing that they may suggest before the possible cure is administered. Granting that you are willing to try the cure at all. As your partner has reminded me, it is your choice.”

“I am more than willing to try this ‘possible cure’ if there is any chance it will stop me from going any crazier than I already must be,” Nick replied from his perch on the edge of the bed. He had leaned forward, his elbows rested on his knees as he watched and listened to the story Judy had replayed. “And, I suppose it depends on what the tests actually are. Also, I don’t want a gun.”

“I’m sorry, did you say you don’t want one?”

“You’re right about one thing,” the fox said, his voice calm as he gave an easy little shrug that made irritation flare inside of the rabbit. “I am dangerous. These are not mood swings. I have almost no control over myself when I’m like that, and if it weren’t for Carrots I don’t even think I would have that little bit that I do. So I don’t think handing me a loaded gun would be in anyone’s best interest.”

He was certain that when he turned his gaze on Hopps he would find an expression of exasperation or even anger on her face. Wilde’s refusal of a weapon had made all of this, from the drawing of the gun to the speech she had given, a bit pointless after all. Instead, he saw her easily slide the weapon into its shoulder holster as she met his eyes. If anything, the smug sparkle in purple eyes told him that she was satisfied with the outcome of the exchange.

“Are you going to arrest me now, Jack?” she asked, proving that she could be as much of a smart-ass as Wilde when she batted her eyes at him prettily.

“No,” he said with a slow sigh, drawing himself to his feet as she did until they stood facing each other. The general tension was gone, though there remained a charge of it between them. He had crossed some line with her, and she wasn’t going to let him step over that line again if she could help it. He understood that. “You’ve proven your point.”

“No, I told you a story,” she corrected him, crossing her arms over her chest as she cocked her hips slightly in a deceptively easy stance. “He proved my point. Insufferable as he can be, he makes good choices.”

“Ohhh, can I get that carved on my tombstone?” Nick said, drawing both pairs of eyes to him. “Here lies Nicholas Wilde. Insufferable as he could be, he made good choices. I want you quoted on that, too.”

“Smarty fox,” she said, and Jack watched her smirk climb when she turned from him to close the distance between herself and Wilde. “Wouldn’t you rather have something like ‘First fox to join the ZPD’ or ‘First fox to marry a bunny’ instead?”

Jack tuned them out when she stepped between the fox’s legs and wrapped her arms around his neck. He lost track of what was said after that because the question added another segment to the many things he was already processing. He had been played, or hustled as the two of them tended to call it. The hustle, in this case, had been a way to prove to him that he could and should trust Wilde more than he had been. And because Wilde had not decided to take a gun just to spite him, even after he himself had been slighted, her trust did seem warranted. He was thoughtful, intelligent, and self-aware. Things that he might have noticed on his own, had it not been for…

“You doing all right there, boss?”
Drawn from his thoughts by the deeper tone of the wolf’s voice, Jack turned his gaze up to the larger gray-furred mammal. In what Jack noticed was becoming a pattern for him, Wolford seemed to be in a particularly good mood suddenly: ears high, grin splitting his broad muzzle so wide that the canines could clearly be seen, tail swishing behind him with enough force to cause his body to vibrate. It didn’t seem like a stretch to believe that this lift in his spirits was due to the noncommittal and possibly accidental reveal of the engagement of his fellow officers.

“Am I the boss?” he wondered aloud as he turned his attention back the couple.

They were at least being polite this time, just chatter and laughter that he continued to ignore for the moment. Wilde looked at her with undisguised affection as he casually touched her with large paws that were more than used to handling a smaller mammal without the concern of hurting her. The relaxed set of his ears and hers, the general ease of their body language when they were this close to each other. This was a more familiar and relaxed state for them, one that he had seen before the toxin had started to change the fox. The night together and their apparent engagement - and perhaps the little chat at gunpoint - seemed to have eased a good deal of their tension. Or her tension, which by default seemed to ease Wilde’s tension. The fact that he was watching something unique was not lost on him either.

“Sure. Just maybe not so much so when she’s holding a gun?” the wolf suggested, cracking a grin when the striped rabbit cast a mildly annoyed glare in his direction.

It wasn’t that he disliked doctors, though like might have been a strong word; he wasn’t afraid of doctors. As he had climbed the ladder of years into his thirties, he had started to realize that they were a necessary part of life if one planned for that life to last. Not that he was feeling old. Being trim and carrying more lean muscle than he had even thought possible for the slender build of a fox, he was actually in the best shape of his life. He also had a highly energetic partner to ensure that he remained that way, both in bed and in the gym. She would keep him in peak condition, or she would kill him before he reached fifty, and he couldn’t find a reason to complain either way. But he could complain about sitting in the middle of a cold examination room in nothing more than his fur and boxers with a flame-red vixen poking at his bicep with a sharp needle to check his reflexes. The twitch it caused and the wince that came with the mild irritation seemed to satisfy her and she tucked the needle away to scribble on her clipboard.

“He is in excellent physical health,” she said in the pleasant if somewhat drab tone one would expect from a doctor who didn’t really care either way if their patient was in excellent health or not. “And his temperament is remarkable. You are certain that he was exposed to Night Howler toxin?”

This question was addressed to Jack, who leaned against the far wall with his paws shoved in his pockets, watching with his own brand of disinterest and a noticeably distracted look wrinkling his muzzle. Drawn back as he was addressed, he nodded affirmation. “I am absolutely certain. Aside from the episodes where he goes near savage, we have confirmed that the food in his apartment was contaminated.”

“I would like to draw some blood to be absolutely sure before I administer the antidote,” she said, her gaze wandering back to Nick and sliding down his body in a way that made him want to squirm on the paper-covered exam table. “While there shouldn’t be additional side effects if he has not been exposed, I don’t want to waste what is still a very limited supply on him until I can confirm it. Unless we can trigger this response of ‘near savage’ as it’s been described to me.”

“The blood test takes eight hours and we are already running on a tight schedule,” the rabbit
replied and, as if to prove the point, he glanced at the watch on his wrist. “You’re just going to have
to take my word for it, Doctor Velox.”

“Hmm.” Making a dismissive sound in her throat, the vixen flipped through the pages on her
clipboard for a moment. “Causes for the change include stress, anger, protective inclination towards
his partner, and sex. Well, of those it sounds like the last one would be the most pleasant.”

The words already had his muscles tensing and his ears dropping back when she turned dark
amber eyes on him with a slow grin spreading over her muzzle. That tension spread like wildfire and
had him leaning back in an eager attempt to avoid her when she stepped close to the exam table. One
paw rested on the fur of his thigh, through which she slid her claws until they touched skin which
caused an automatic reaction of heat to flush through him. But little tingle or not, his only real desire
in the moment was to get the hell away from her. “Whoa, doc. I know it’s true that a todd is more
attractive when he’s off the market for some reason, but this is taking it too far.”

“Don’t worry, Officer Wilde,” she all but purred, setting the clipboard down to free her other paw.
A paw that she pressed to his chest until her fingers all but vanished into the thicker fur of his belly
ruff, making him jump and yelp as he tried to squirm away. It was the simple fact that he didn’t want
the trouble that might come from hurting her in this unfamiliar environment that prevented him from
lashing out and knocking her away. But even that bit of restraint was wearing off quickly as she
pursued him, even as he tried to crawl over the table to scramble away. She was like a koala stuck to
a eucalyptus branch. “I’ll be gentle.”

“I want it on record that I was provoked into murdering her, Jack,” he heard Judy say and they
both turned their eyes towards the sound of her voice at the same moment. The little bunny in blue
jeans and a leather jacket (an ensemble that made her look incredibly sexy and dangerous all at once)
was already on the move and almost in arms reach before Jack caught her under the shoulders and
held her back. A hold that didn’t prevent her from kicking out towards the vixen, a kick which
missed by only an inch or two. “Get your paws off My Fox or the next thing those fingers feel will
be the inside of your own throat!”

“Hopps, you cannot kill our Night Howler expert, even if she is behaving unprofessionally,” Jack
warned, dragging the struggling bunny back a few paces.

“Get your paws off me, Jack! What is wrong with all of you?” she demanded, raising one foot and
slamming it down in an attempt to stomp on Jack’s. An attempt which he saw coming and avoided
easily as he continued to restrain her. Even knowing that it was likely a good thing that the rabbit
weren’t allowing her to feed the doctor her own paws, it still caused a quick rise of anger in Nick to
see his paws on her. He slipped away from the distracted doctor and rose from the table as Judy
continued her furious rant. “Is driving him savage the only thing you can think to do? Do you even
know what effect it might be having?”

“Oh come now, Officer Hopps,” the vixen said smoothly and, seeming to notice that he was no
longer on the table, turned her gaze to look for him. “It’s not like I intend to keep him. I just want…”

Her voice trailed off when she found him. He was already aware of the change. He had spent a
good bit of the night before with Judy in this savage state of mind and the way his vision changed
when it happened was becoming more noticeable. The shift in colors from bright and vibrant to
muted and grayed was clearer to him. So clear that he recognized movement as a front of waves
moving towards him before he ever saw the paw of the doctor. His reaction was quick. He caught
her wrist before she could lay her paw on his cheek and squeezed it tightly enough to cause her to
wince. When his voice came, it was a low growl of warning from one fox to another.

“Don’t touch me again.”
“Oh my, you can speak,” the vixen murmured, the seductive note of her voice replaced with a professional curiosity, a hint of excitement, and just a little fear. “I must admit, that was the part I had the hardest time believing.”

Later he would realize that even Jack didn’t see it coming. It was so fast that even though he saw the waves of the motion beforehand, he had no chance to react when Doctor Velox jammed her paw into his shoulder. The bite of pain was explained when he looked to see that she had left had a syringe protruding from his left arm with the plunger depressed. Before he could fully process what had happened or retaliate, she had deftly twisted her wrist free of his grip and danced back a few steps with a smile gracing her muzzle.

“There now, that wasn’t so bad, was it?” she said cheerfully, rubbing at her offended wrist while she watched him closely. “You should feel the effects fairly quickly, Officer Wilde.”

He did. From the pain of the injection site spread a mild tingle that seemed to warm his blood as it traveled through his body. A moment of panic as he wondered what exactly she had done to him caused him to reach up and pull the needle from his arm, tossing it aside as he turned a worried gaze to Judy. Both bunnies stood watching him, frozen where they had been: Judy, still restrained by the paws under her arms, looking stunned and a little shell-shocked and Jack with a curious frown on his muzzle. He noticed it, too. As quickly as it had come, the grayed vision started to fade. The irrational anger and irritation that came when the savage state of mind was triggered by anything other than Judy started to ease into a more recognizable annoyance. Like they were draining away as something changed inside of him. As he felt it, the doctor began to speak.

“I would apologize for my bedside manner, but I honestly don’t care,” she said as she moved back to the examination table to retrieve her clipboard. She started to walk around in front of him, her eyes moving over him as she jotted notes. She pulled a small light from her pocket and directed it at his eyes, making him wince as she shifted it from one eye to the next. “With all of my other patients, it was easy to tell whether or not the antidote worked. They were savage one moment, sane and lucid the next. Given your unusual symptoms after exposure to the toxin, I needed visual signs to be sure that the reaction was the same. Pupil contraction has returned to normal. The vertical pupils have reverted to their normal circular shape. How do you feel, Officer?”

It took him a moment to consider the question, during which he probably looked like the dumbfounded idiot that he felt like. His open mouth worked a few times as he tried to speak before he snapped it closed to consider the question and himself while she jotted down notes. The tingle remained. He almost wondered if she had tranquilized him because the calm had been so sudden and complete that he was having trouble remembering what the anger felt like. Blinking a few times, he looked around the room as if to be sure that it wasn’t an illusion.

“I feel… normal,” he said at last, as a broad grin spread of his muzzle.

“Ow! Damn it, Hopps!”

He heard Jack curse and turned to see him hopping on one foot while holding the other, injured one, in his paws. Less than a second later, he was thrown back against the table when two feet of flying bunny wrapped her arms and legs around him and crushed her mouth into his. She wasn’t gentle about it. So much so that their teeth clacked together once before her tongue searched for his. The little rumble of approval that rose in him came with the taste of her and the feeling of the plush warmth of her body against his. Mingled with the hopeful feeling that his savage episodes might not be returning, he could forget that they were not alone in the room for four whole seconds as the kiss deepened and his paws slid under her hips to lift her up. That lasted until his shirt landed over their heads followed quickly by his pants, which eventually led him to break the kiss so he could look at
her in the shadows of their new cloth prison. They both grinned.

“I will throw a bucket of water next if you don’t get your paws off her ass, Officer,” came the now prim voice of the vixen. “This is my examination room, not your bedroom.”

“Good luck. It’s like trying to separate the stars from the sky,” Jack grumbled, his grumpy tone followed by tinkling laughter from the vixen.

“Why Agent Savage, that was almost romantic. They are cute, though.”

“Okay, okay, we get it,” Judy exclaimed as she yanked the shirt off so she could cast a hard glance back at the other two in the room. “You could have given me two minutes to celebrate.”

“Two minutes of that and you would have been celebrating on top of the exam table,” the other rabbit returned, smirking as she rolled her eyes.

“Now I’m glad I stepped on your foot,” she muttered, turning to peck Nick on the end of his muzzle with another grin before she hopped down. “So, not to sound pessimistic - because I really don’t feel it right now - but you did say that this antidote was experimental. Are you sure it will last? Have the other patients remained stable afterward?”

“It is honestly too soon to say,” Velox replied, scribbling a few more notes on her pad without raising her eyes to them again. “It would be vain of me to say at this point that the antidote is flawless because I simply haven’t had the time to test it fully. But so far, none of the mammals that have been exposed to the cure have reverted to a savage state of mind. In another week or two, if their bloodwork shows no side effects and none of them return to savagery, I believe we may be ready to administer it to the rest of the patients.”

From the way his partner slumped back against him, forcing him to pause the buttoning of his pants, her relief was obvious. He might have been a pessimist himself in most cases, but the change from savage to normal had never happened that suddenly. It always required time - required calm or even sleep before he would even notice that his vision was normal again and the instincts that constantly pulled at him relaxed. Relaxed enough that he soothed her this time, reaching down to slide his finger pads down the length of her ears until he felt a tiny shiver race through her. When she tilted her head back and turned violet eyes up to meet his green ones, his mouth curved into a cocky smirk.

“We could always celebrate back in the room, you know,” he suggested, winking at her as the inside of those high ears turned a slightly darker shade of pink. “Test the water. A little alone time hasn’t failed to change me yet. If we can get through three or four…”

“I am afraid that we don’t have much time for a proper celebration, either,” Jack said, making them both turn their scowls on him. “There is the matter of Stoat to discuss, and the means to infiltrate a nightclub to be found. We are still working against a ticking clock. A clock working on a timetable that remains a mystery, with a deadline that we probably don’t want it to reach. It’s time we stop running around in the dark.”

“I hate it when he makes sense,” Nick grumbled, reluctantly letting his paws fall from her ears to his zipper as he continued the process of getting dressed.
Finally back to writing! Whoo! Finals are done. Now I have five days to write a Christmas Special. Ha! Enjoy!
Judith and The Suicide King

Chapter Notes

Report:

Case File – The Savage Dark

Reporting Agent: Code Name – Jack “Savage”

Affiliation: Unknown

Current Whereabouts: Unknown

Agent Status: Unknown (Active)

Recording Continues:

“Here, I will skip forward a little. Not much, of course. The general details of the case are important to why we are here, even if they are not the actual reason I agreed to this recording. I will give the important details of the meeting before moving forward.

“Back in the less civil days of collars and heavy predator segregation, Wallabies was a place where marsupials, both predators, and prey, could gather without fear of judgment. The owner at the time, a wallaby named Eucaly, enforced this no discrimination policy with an iron fist. The story that enforced this was of a group of kangaroos who became hostile towards a possum. They
harassed her, called her chomper, made disparaging remarks about her parents and things of that nature. Apparently, they ignored his orders to settle down or get out and became physically abusive to their target. That was when Eucaly had them dragged out the back. No one really knows what happened to them, except that they were never seen again. Rumors were whispered of course, ranging from having them shot and dumped in the bay to personally beating them to death. And then having them dumped in the bay. None of it was proven, however. It became something of a haven after that, though it remained marsupial only.

“On the day that collars were outlawed, Eucaly had a huge party and invited everyone: marsupial, non, predator, prey. The crowd was so large it spilled into the streets but he continued to serve drinks to the mammals outside. It became such a party that it was on the news and in every paper, yet for fear of Eucaly it never became anything more than the celebration it was intended to be.

“When he died a few years later, the bar was passed down to someone else with a heavy paw in dealing with trouble makers. And again, to someone else with a heavy paw. And again. And the problem with the heavy-pawed approach is that eventually, even with the best of intentions, those heavy paws become abusive and single-minded. Eventually, that became an opening for the criminal elements to take over without the moral designed to sensor them. As is the case with the current owner and the reason for our meeting that afternoon. Douglas Muste, a relatively minor figure in the criminal underworld. He had not, until the report came in, even pinged my radar as a person of interest.

“With our agents following Stoat, it was only a matter of time before he returned to who we believed was his supplier. It happened as quickly as one might expect with a character like the weasel: the second he ran out of product he went right back to home base. His greeting was less than warm per the agent that witnessed the exchange. After being picked up and carried to Muste by the back of the neck, a heated exchange took place. While we were not able to hear everything, the gist of the tension was the fact that he had been picked up by the ZPD and released too quickly. Muste, being a badger well known for his short temper in the underworld, looked ready to kill Stoat. The agent watching stated that the tension was so thick that it could be felt all the way across the street, ten stories up. But Muste proved to be intelligent to some degree when he carefully refused to provide Stoat with what he needed.

“In a police investigation, this would have closed the case where Muste is concerned. But people like me are not restrained by the need for probable cause. Once it became clear that the weasel had visited Wallabies to obtain more Feral Blue, he was picked up again and very quickly wanted a deal to be struck for testimony. The information he provided was helpful but hardly enough. We were not looking to convict Muste, after all. We were looking to find out where his supply was coming from and to that end, we were looking for something to use as leverage against him. And to do that, we needed a way into the club after-hours. Our reports said that he had an unusual sexual appetite, preferring smaller species for bedmates. Had I known the depth of this appetite, I would never have allowed anyone near him.

“But in the end, the choice was mine no matter who spoke out for or against the idea. So I take responsibility for everything that happened that night.”
through rather than the dark blue of the ZPD, and the addition of a camera attached to the front of the vest. As Jack explained, these were to allow the agents watching from the half-dozen vans that were a part of the operation to offer advice, give direction from blueprints on the building, and so that their actions could not be brought into question afterward. “This is stupid, Carrots. You’re almost famous. They’ll probably recognize you.”

“I’m not really famous, Nick,” she said, rolling her eyes a bit as she looked up at him. She reached over to readjust the heavy vest into the correct position, her gaze lingering on his for a long moment while she did. “I don’t really look like myself right now.”

Seeing the way his eyes moved over her when she spoke told her that she was right about that. The little team of artists Jack provided had done a quick job of making her look nothing like she normally did. The fur of her cheeks were darker by a few shades, her lips were a fine line of blood red, and her ears had been given temporary coloring so that the black tips now ran down the full length. The lavender sweater, which was fully open-back with a snug skirt-like hem hugging her hips and a collar-like neckline, made her look younger than she normally did. And that was saying something. As was the fact that, as angry as Nick was at the moment, his eyes lingered on the way her tail was fully uncovered by the backless sweater for a moment longer than they needed to when she stood as the van stopped. His appreciation of the view pleased her almost as much as the normal appearance of his eyes despite his anger. It softened her reaction, though it didn’t sway her resolve.

“Are you telling me that you don’t want me to go in there?”

“Of course I’m telling you that,” he replied with a sigh and ears that dropped to the side for a moment. It was the expression that she knew meant he knew it was pointless to argue.

“Well, too bad,” she said, confirming his resignation and reaching up to pat his chest with one paw lightly. Now wouldn’t be the time to tell him that the body armor and tactical gear was an oddly effective turn on for her. He just looked so commando and ready for a fight. He looked almost as good as when he wore his ZPD blues. “Because I have a job to do. And if this has anything to do with what happened to you, I want to know why. I want to know who did it and I want them stopped. So, we are in this until it’s finished. Right, partner?”

“Right,” he muttered, frowning as he directed his attention towards the gear that she knew had already been checked four times. His voice lowered so that only she could hear him. “It doesn’t help that I can smell every inch of you right now.”

That caused her ears to heat right up to the painted tips as a rather direct sexual charge raced through her. She had to beat it back, which was something she realized she had to get used to doing if they were going to continue to be partners once all of this was over. And she was determined that she would do everything she could short of not loving him to make sure that they remained partners. She turned her back on him with an intentional twitch of her tail when the rear doors swung open to show Jack on the other side. Flanked by Wolford and a cheetah in similar gear, Jack, who was wearing a trim long sleeve white shirt and tie, was the only other mammal on the field that she could see not wearing the tactical armor.

“All right, Hopps,” he began immediately as they jumped down to join him to join him. “You know this drill. We want visual or verbal confirmation of anything dealing with Feral Blue. Failing that, any sort of criminal activity that will allow us to legally take him into custody will have to do.”

“I didn’t know people like you worried about legality, Jack,” Nick said, staying little more than a pace behind her as they move towards the surveillance van.

“Normally, I don’t,” the rabbit replied without pausing his steps or looking back at the two of
them. “But there are players in this game that may use my normal approach to interfere once we’ve acquired the target.”

“Fun,” the fox murmured, his worried but still normal green eyes resting on her for a moment before Jack directed him into the van.

“We’ll be able to keep an eye on Hopps from here,” he said, slapping him on the back when he climbed into the darkened van with its various screens and recording devices. Her own eyes lingered on the inside of the van for a moment. The van was sized for medium mammals, so when Wolfard climbed in behind Nick there was still plenty of room for the cheetah and Jack when he joined them a moment later. When he crouched on the edge of the bed, she moved in to face him as he slipped the tiny recording device into her ear. “All right. Testing, testing. Wolford, verify that you can hear this clearly.”

“Confirmed. Testing, testing,” the wolf repeated, pressing his paw against his ears to block noise outside of his own earpiece. “Hopps, confirm that you can hear this clearly.”

The testing continued until the four inside of the van confirmed their ear and recording devices before Jack addressed the two snipers stationed on the adjacent rooftops. During this time, she double checked the tiny tranquilizer gun holstered in the front of her sweater. The only way it would be found was direct contact, which she planned to avoid, with the drawback that it held only four full strength darts. Not the best protection, but if the report of three medium sized predators inside was right, she wouldn’t need anything else.

Once everyone reported in, she gave one final glance to Nick. Her partner looked as relaxed as a mouse in a room full of angry rhinos, which she didn’t blame him for, but remained unchanged beyond that. His ears stood erect, his tail was still and his eyes were focused on her. Only someone who knew him as well as she did could see the signs of tension below the surface. There was no spark of humor in him and the muscles around his muzzle tightened now and then as he clenched his jaw. It was still a far cry from the protective rage that had possessed him over the last few days. She cast him a small smile that she hoped conveyed comfort before she turned to make her way down the street. She had two blocks to cover on foot.

The bright flash that filled the otherwise dark street startled her, making her spin around to see Nick leaning out of the van with his phone in paw and a grin plastered on his muzzle. Frowning slightly, she narrowed her eyes when he shrugged and turned the screen to face her. Heat flooded her cheeks when she saw her own ass snugged into pink panties, which was a lot more exposed than she thought, on the screen. As his wallpaper.

“If you’re going to wear it, I’m going to remember it. You have a great ass, Carrots,” he smirked, slipping the phone into a pouch of the front of his vest before sliding back into the van. She glared at Jack’s grin when he swung the door closed, reaching back to tug the sweater down over her panties to give herself at least a little dignity.

“All right, mammals,” came his voice seconds later as she continued down the deserted street. “Game faces.”

____________________________________________________

She had faced mammals larger than the grizzly bear that watched the front entrance to the club, but the very fact that he was there set off warning signals in her mind. Legal businesses didn’t generally need a bouncer to watch over the entrance after hours, least of all one that instantly turned his attention to the slight movement of a bunny walking down the street as though she had guns drawn and was screaming like a lunatic. Honey colored eyes that were anything but warm watched her as
she made her way towards him, his paws folded low in front of his open leather jacket in a stance that was anything but welcoming. The low placement of his paws meant that he was ready to reach for whatever weapon he happened to be carrying if she turned out to be a threat.

So, she plastered a big ditzy smile on her face, perked her ears and moved forward with a little sway in her hips.

While he didn’t relax exactly, she could see the consideration on his muzzle when he looked her up and down for a moment. Not the way a mammal looked at another mammal, but the way a mammal looked at product. Which was exactly what she was going for when she stopped in front of him, forcing her nose to twitch as any bunny would when looking straight up into the muzzle of a predator that could step on her at a whim. Bunnies were, after all, skittish around predators.

“You looking for something, cotton-tail?” the throaty voice came, his eyes leaving her just long enough to glance around for a sign of anyone in earshot.

“I’m just looking for a place to keep the party going,” she said, pouring on the country girl from the Burrows innocence. “These big city bunnies have no stamina. Are you… Gonna let me in? The bar closed or something?”

As she asked, she reached into the front of her sweater. Pretending obliviousness to the fact that his paws flinched when she did, she drew out her phone and scrolled through text messages that were a few days old. Pretending they were new was nothing too difficult before she rolled her eyes back up to the bear. Seeming to relax again, the small smile that curled his muzzle wasn’t enough to show teeth. But the glint in his eyes was a greedy, dangerous one as he reached behind him and pushed the door open.

“We’re closed to the public. But Mr. Muste is a real gentleman,” he said, waving her through with one massive paw. “I’m sure he’ll give you anything you need.”

“Really?” she said, bouncing excitedly in place before she hopped towards the door. It was a little annoying that the bubbly bunny act wasn’t exactly too far from her normal personality if she removed the complete moron factor. “That sounds great! Thanks, big guy!”

“You just have a good time,” he rumbled, sliding the door closed behind her. She heard his parting words, which were spoken because he obviously didn’t know that her hearing was several times more sensitive than his. “Stupid bunny.”

The club smelled like a predator’s playground. Not like a Bug Burger or seafood place where predators frequented where the scent was just like any other passing smell in Zootopia. The scent that came from the old, dark finished wood was far more territorial. Strong musk, almost like someone wandered the relatively small but otherwise classy looking club to piss in every corner or rub their chin against every chair at every round table. The fact that it was deliberate was obvious because aside from the smell everything was shining and clean. Even the tieless suit of the wolf was spotless when he stopped her from moving past the door with a raised paw and a frown.

“Hey now, be nice to that little bun,” came the gruff voice from the bar itself, drawing her eyes to the badger standing behind it. The black fur was meticulously groomed and sleek, cut across his muzzle and forehead by the white stripes expected of his species. Pitch black eyes focused on her with a pleasant smile as he waved her forward. “I mean, what? Do you think she slipped past Mike in that? Come on over here. What can I get you, bunbun?”

She managed to shyly lower her lashes when his gaze raked down her body as she walked past the wolf who simply grunted and moved back to his seat next to the door. One quick glanced told
her that Muste was alone in the room aside from bodyguards: the wolf next to do door she had already encountered, another sitting on the far side of the room with his jacket pulled open far enough for her to see the side arm in his shoulder holster, and a third sitting at the end of the bar with a bored look on his muzzle. This only confirmed in her mind that there was something in this club worth that amount of firepower, which caused a rise in excitement rather than fear. That made it easy to look pleased even under his gaze when she jumped up onto a barstool three times too big for her light form.

“You sure I should be in here?” she asked, giving him an opening to tell her to leave and hopefully removing doubt that she had her own reasons for being there. “This place looks pretty dead. You don’t think the owner’ll mind, do you?”

“Oh, sweets,” he said, smiling so wide that she could see almost every tooth in his stubby muzzle, “you’re looking at him. Douglas Muste, at your service.”

“Careful, Hopps,” Jack warned lightly in her ear piece.

“Julie,” she said brightly, then lowered her voice and muttered the made up full name as if ashamed of the rest of it. “Julie Roots.”

“Visiting from BunnyBurrow, or moving into town?” he said, waddling away from her behind the bar and returning a moment later with a bottle of whiskey. A hard drink to start with, but typical of someone who wanted to get some dumb country party girl drunk she figured.

“Visiting. Vacationing, really,” she replied, swaying her feet freely as she slowly turned the large stool back and forth. Expose her vulnerability, her naivete, her lack of real connections in Zootopia. “Just getting away from the country for a while. I managed to find some does here in the city willing to put me up for a few days. But they crashed early and left me to find some way to entertain myself.”

She was aware that the eyes of every predator in the bar were on her, most noticeably Muste’s. The expected lust for small females was in his eyes, but there was something else in the way he looked at her that made the fur on the back of her neck itch. She watched him pour the dark amber liquid into a snifter before she slid it towards her. The risk of her next action was well known to her, but she still wrinkled her nose and covered her mouth with one paw.

“Ew, no!” she shrieked, drawing away from it. Seeing the confused and slightly insulted frown crossing his muzzle, she huffed a bit and leaned back as though she were the offended party. “I can’t drink that! I’m all-erg-ic.”

Saying the last part as if he should have known that already, she lowered her ears and tugged them over one shoulder in a way that Nick seemed to find sexy.

“Allergic?” Muste asked, looking less than convinced as he drew the glass back across the back towards himself.

“Drinking makes me sick,” she stated, playing the dumb bunny roll as she ticked her ‘symptoms’ off on her fingers. “I get dizzy, I throw up, and I wake up with terrible headaches feeling I slept with dirty crammed into my mouth.”

The act worked perfectly, which she was proud of. The badger glanced at the wolf at the end of the bar, rolling his eyes at the idiotic bunny who was describing normal reactions to getting drunk as he downed the glass himself without so much as a wince. Slamming the glass down, he turned eyes that were half amused and half irritated towards her.
“So why did you come to a bar if you’re ‘allergic’ to drinking?” he said, his tone a little less friendly but a little more confident at the same time.

“Oh come on, I’m not an idiot,” she scoffed, earning a snicker from the wolf across the room. “I know how things work in the city. My doe friends told me.”

“And what did your doe friends tell you, little bunny?” he said, leaning across the bar with a glint in his eyes that made her glad she was armed.

“That you can get ‘special refreshment’ in bars,” she said, tugging on her ears as she looked at him coyly. “You know, the not always legal kind.”

As expected, he slammed shut like a clam in ice water. His blunt face went cold; the sort of cold that the cop in her wanted to react to. That special ice of someone who suspected they were being set up, which crept into his voice when he spoke. “I’m not sure what you’re getting at, kid. There something you want?”

“Yeah!” she laughed, dropping her paw away from her ears to place both on the bar as she leaned close to him. “I want some…”

Then she stopped, a worried look coming over her face as she leaned back a bit and looked between him and the wolves slowly. “Wait a minute. You guys aren’t cops, are you?”

“Why would we be cops?” he asked, and she almost missed the tick of his eyes to the wolf near the door. The light sound of paws on wood told her that he had moved to cover the door while the wolf on the far side of the room did the same to the bathroom. Finally, the wolf at the bar stood and put himself between her and the entrance to the kitchen. That explained the number of wolves.

They were looking a lot less like bodyguards and a lot more like a trap.

“Drugs!” she cried when he came around to stand in front of the bar stool. Though there was an inkling of fear in her, but it was minor compared to the startled fear she played out for the badger. “I was talking about drugs! If you don’t have any, that’s fine. I just didn’t want to say it if you were cops, okay?”

The act seemed to work as he relaxed slightly, though she couldn’t help the tension that rolled through her when he reached into his pocket. It wasn’t a weapon he pulled out, but what she saw did make her stomach lurch and her heart quicken. The tiny baggie, filled with light blue powder, brought back quite a few memories. Not all of them were bad and some she wouldn’t have changed for the world, but the reality of being one step closer to the source of what led to Nick’s condition struck her. Luckily, her dazed and fascinated face seemed to further appease Muste as he dangled the little bag in front of her muzzle.

“Well, I’m not a cop. And I may have exactly what you’re looking for,” he said, her eyes following the bag for a moment when it was pulled away. She snapped them back to him when he closed his paw over it.

“What is it?” she asked, a question that wasn’t entirely played out.

“Hopps? Is it blue?”

“The ultimate high,” he replied, a feral grin creeping up the length of his muzzle. It was when she saw his tongue slide out over his lips slowly, leaving them noticeably wet, that she realized why his gaze had made her fur want to stand on end. “For me. The last high for you, my tasty little idiot.”
She realized that the gray wolf at the bar had moved into the kitchen, her eyes ticking in that direction in time to see him close the door. Her eyes moved to the other wolves, who had similarly closed themselves off from the main bar. The sound of locks clicking had her frowning, and the harsh sniffing had wide violet eyes turning to Muste as he sucked the content of the baggie in through his nose.

“It’s Feral Blue!” she shouted, her paw darting into the front of her sweater as the badger's eyes widened in surprise as because of the drug. “He took the whole… Hmph!”

Her words were cut off and the tranquilizer gun she had just gripped flew out of her paw when she was knocked off of the barstool by the large paw of the badger. Winded, stinging from the bite of claws in her shoulder, she managed to roll to the side to avoid the pounce from the slower mammal when he charged after her.

“I knew it!” he snarled, his pupils already blazing as the drug started to take effect. “You little… Rgh! Little…”

Whatever he had intended to shout at her was lost when he lost his ability to think, dropping to all fours as he shook his head, She knew the effects. He would be confused. Probably enraged. She could…

“We’re moving now, Hopps,” came Jack’s voice as she bolted towards the far end of the room. “Snipers, cover the… Wilde? Wilde!”

The all too familiar snarl of an enraged fox came through the earpiece, almost causing her to miss her landing when she jumped onto one of the tables as the now fully savage Muste seemed to become aware of his surroundings. She crouched where she was, nose twitching but otherwise still to avoid drawing his attention as she listened with fear twisting her guts.

“Eyes on Wilde! I need eyes on Wilde! Swift?”

“I see him! He’s moving toward Wallabies’!”

Survival almost wasn’t enough to distract her as she listened, but the fact that a large black nose dusted with blue powder lifted to the air and a whining growl sounded from the savage badger. Black eyes focused on her and his muzzle pulled back into a ferocious snarl before he charged the table. Just like her feelings for Nick had remained when she had been under the influence of the drug, it seemed rage carried over as well. The heavy body of the thickly build predator slammed into the edge of the table full force as he lunged for her just as she jumped to the next table in the room.

“I can’t catch him!”

“You’re a fucking cheetah!”

“He’s tossed his vest! He’s moving on all fours! Damn it, he’s fast!”

The shattering of glass ashtrays and clatter of silverware as Muste clawed his way up onto the adjacent table was her warning to move again. She waited him out this time, crouched low as she watched him until she saw the thick muscles tense as he bunched his hind legs. Springing to the side just as he charged, she managed to skid to a stop right on the edge of the table as the less graceful mammal went spinning off the edge with a howl of fury. She gave herself a full two seconds to look around, trying to locate her lost side arm.

“Don’t lose sight of him! We’re on our way. Team B, report. Do you have eyes on Wilde?”
“Negative, Alpha. Wilde Card has not entered the perimeter.”

“We’re turning the corner now. Eyes open!”

“Roger. Wilde Card spotted. Headed straight for the front door.”

“Take the guard! Take the guard!”

Judy moved again when a clawed paw slapped down on the table inches from where she knelt, forcing her to scramble back to the edge of the table. Seeing the badge struggling to climb the smooth wooden surface again, she placed herself at the opposite edge and jumped, high. She came down full force, the impact causing the base of the table to kick out, driving the edge up under the predator’s muzzle with a ‘whump’ that sent him stumbling back. The solid smack might have been more satisfying, had she not been as worried for Nick as she was for herself.

She scampered back to the bar while Muste recovered from the blow, eyes searching frantically for the tranq gun. The badger’s feral side seemed to be fully in control now and his recovery time was narrowing. She barely managed to skitter up the side of the bar and over the other side before he slammed into the bar full force, causing the entire bar to vibrate. Stubborn and sturdy as badgers tended to be, this didn’t slow him down much.

“Target one down. Target two is still upright, but Wilde Card is too close.”

“Swift?”

“Wilde is… It would take too long to explain.”

The roar of pain from the other side of the door had Judy popping her head up over the bar just in time to see the twin doors explode inward. The grizzly who had allowed her entrance crashed through, the hulking form stumbling over the steps as he spun around and tried weakly to dislodge… Nick. Her muzzle dropped open when she realized that Her Fox was on the bear, his feet planted on the huge shoulders and both arms wrapped around the huge muzzle from behind in a desperate attempt to keep it closed. The fact that the bear had seven darts sticking out of his chest had more to do with his sudden fall in the center of the room than Nick’s hold did, but that didn’t make the fox look any less fierce when he rolled off and came up on all fours facing the badger.

“Jack!” Judy cried, bolting out from behind the bar when she realized Muste had climbed on top of it. “Damn it, everyone! Get in here!”

The second the growling mustelid gave chase, she knew she couldn’t stop it from happening. The feral eyes of her lover stared past her at the animal that threatened his mate, his muzzle twisted into a snarl that instantly distracted the badger from his intended prey. She had no time to react beyond throwing herself out of the way as the two larger predators charged each other, clashing in a fury of claws, teeth, and blood.

Chapter End Notes

I have returned! And in style.

This latest chapter of The Savage Dark has been a long time coming. I do hope you
enjoy.

Shout to RasputinRemix can be found within. Shout out yourself if you've read his story, Wilde's Card!

Special thanks to my followers for their patience waiting for this and for my suspension to expire!

Amazing cover art (yes, that is the Virgin Killer sweater. I had to do it) by TheWyvernsWeaver

Special note: If you can find out what the title means, you get a hug. ;)
Savage: Part 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Report:

Case File – The Savage Dark

Reporting Agent: Code Name – Jack “Savage”
Recording Continues:

“No, up until that point I had never seen a savage mammal engaged with another savage mammal. I have seen fights in the wild. I think we all have, especially now that there is the Discovery Channel and Reptile Planet for kits to watch. But seeing something on video, where it is disconnected by a screen that allows the mind to understand that what you’re seeing is distant and not dangerous, is completely different from seeing the real thing. Even seeing the bloody aftermath, because I have seen mammals torn apart on murder scenes involving large predators and even one who was stepped on multiple times by an angry elephant, doesn’t really compare.

“Adrenaline, for one thing. It sharpens the mind. Did you know that even color is more vivid when your adrenaline is up? Reaction time improves, your eyes dilate to allow in the light needed to see every detail of the scene before you, you breathe more quickly to saturate your blood in glucose to prepare you to fight or flee. It also sharpens the mind, recalling previous conversations in this recording, in regions that we normally don’t even use anymore in our day to day lives. Which is important to remember, because that is what caused Wilde’s rather spectacular relapse.

“Don’t get me wrong. Our scientists, Doctor Velox in particular, are more than capable. They tested the same antidote given to Wilde in various situations on other patients. Exposed them to fear, stress, sorrow, mild pain. Even things as positive as laughter, reunions with loved one and even sexual pleasure in one case. In none of the many, many tests did the subjects revert to their savage state. Wilde’s return was not exactly an anomaly but the situation he was placed in was significantly more intense than any lab test could duplicate. Had the mission gone as planned? We likely would never have known until much further down the road. In that single respect, it was beneficial because it halted our plans to release the other patients into the population of Zootopia again.

“It was all because Muste’s tastes in small females turned out to be anything but sexual. Frankly, I doubt there was a better way in all creation to reach those deeply buried instincts in Nick’s mind. I don’t blame him a bit for going savage.”

He was moving so fast that the asphalt scratched his paw pads when he turned the final corner leading to Wallabies, though he didn’t feel the sting. He knew that something was following him - he could see the ripples in the shadowy ring around his vision as clearly as he could see the bar in front of him - but he didn’t care. The pursuer was not a threat. The figure of the massive bear baring his way was the threat. He understood that a fox charging headfirst into the waiting paws of a bear was insane on pretty much every level. Jack and Wolford could have backed him up with guns and authority if he had waited a few more seconds. But he didn’t care. Understanding these things didn’t stop him when he heard Jack’s voice in his ear, calling urgently for someone to update what he was doing.

All he heard was the sound of tables being overturned and the snarls of a savage predator intent on killing what was his. His mate. His Judy. These past few days of perceived threats causing his instincts to rise had been nothing compared to this and even if the desire to stop existed, he couldn’t have. Driving forward, the blood screaming in his ears loud enough to drown out the voices on the radio. Sprinting on all fours towards the grizzly that outweighed him by close to five hundred
pounds, he pushed his muscles until they should have been burning. But he felt nothing but the intense need to get into the bar and protect her.

The wolf who had stepped out just before Judy was attacked was already going down, knocked out by the dart sticking out of his neck. The bear noticed but was quickly distracted from any attempt to help by the sight of the charging fox. The look of perplexed amusement at the sight of the much smaller predator charging the front door was short lived when he seemed to realize that the luminescent eyes were sent into the face of a savage.

No matter their size, sensible mammals were never prepared to face a savage. They didn’t expect the chaos of the wild. The bear, massive as he was, took a surprised step back before seeming to decide that he could easily handle such a tiny threat. Every motion of the massive male was a ripple in the shadowy ring when he braced himself, lowered his stance and raised his arms a bit to receive the incoming charge. But he wasn’t ready when Nick, slowing only slightly from his charge as his sprint changed to a three-limbed lope, whipped the tranquilizer pistol from its holster at his hip. The bear froze, blinking down at the spread of seven tiny darts that appeared on his chest one after the other. That moment of lost eye contact was all Nick needed to finish his advance, flinging the gun to the side as he crossed the few yards remaining and launched himself into the bear.

Even with his massive size, the unexpected impact of an insane fox on his chest staggered the bear enough to allow the fox time to dig his claws into cloth and scramble up and over one shoulder. By the time the bear seemed to realize what was happening, it was already too late to stop the arms that looped around his wide muzzle. Already half-drunk from the potent overdose of tranquilizers, the grizzly could only swing wild and weak as he stumbled further back and slammed into the double doors of the bar with a roar of pain.

Focused on staying on top of the bear as he was, Nick was still aware of every scent once the doors caved and they went crashing through. Her scent was faint, new, tiny compared to the rest. But the stink of predator was all around him. Pungent and thick, enough to overpower the noses of most mammals. This was marked territory, rank with the scent of badger and wolf and the fainter scent of blood coming from the kitchen. A den of killers and flesh eaters.

And he had let her walk into it.

Fear and protective rage became pure fury. Leaping from the shoulders of the bear as the massive mammal finally dropped, rolling onto all fours to face his mate when he saw her. There was no time to feel the comfort of seeing her unhurt because of the beast chasing her. His lips peeled back as a snarl of challenge escaped him, the sound enough to distract the badger from his pursuit of the rabbit. Even as undecided and unprepared as he was, the badger was quicker to recover than the bear had been. The instinct to protect his territory and claim his prey clashed with fox’s need to protect his mate. So, when Nick’s lashing tail broadcasted his attack, the badger met him head first, their bodies collided in an ugly mass of lashing limbs and snapping teeth.

The fact that the badger had a weight advantage over him was quickly obvious. Even as teeth snapped no more than an inch from his paw when he smacked it soundly across the blunt muzzle of the other male, pain flared in his ribs as he was knocked onto his tail with one solid blow. The claw resistant weave of the tactical shirt prevented him from feeling the bite of claws but the impact alone left him winded with aching ribs. Growling low in his throat, he struggled upright only to have the badger attack again before he could gather himself. A quick pull of his hind legs under the heavy predator’s belly was all that prevented gnashing teeth from snapping down on his neck. It took repeated panicked kicks, his foot claws ripping through the fabric before the badger yelped in pain and writhed away with pinned ears and a line of bleeding cuts on his belly.
Rolling away and onto all fours, the fox knew he wouldn’t be able to handle this more durable adversary head on. His mate was no longer in direct danger because the badger was no longer after her. While that did not dim his need to protect or the rage of the very existence of the other predator near her, but it did allow survival instinct and his remaining intellect to guide him when the badger rushed forward again. Rather than meet the charge, he scampered back and out of range. His lithe frame and quick paws easily outpaced the enraged badger, who tore across the bar in short bursts that always ended with the fox just out of reach.

He waited for an opening until another furious charge left the badger panting and unbalanced only a foot away from him. Taking the advantage, hind legs bunching, he jumped up nearly vertical and came crashing down on the badger’s back with his teeth fastened into the back of the thick neck. The hissing snarl of the suddenly very active and thrashing badger only increased the tension of his bite as he twisted and yanked his muzzle from side to side viciously. The coppery flavor of blood filled his muzzle as the metallic tang of it filled the air thickly. Desperate and violent as the grip was, he was only dislodged when the larger mammal rolled onto his back, forcing a release and roll away.

He pushed the advantage as the wounded male shook his head and staggered unsteadily sideways on all four paws, darting forward to snap his bloody into one stubby leg. He wrenched and yanked it as he bored down to drag Muste until the badger stumbled and dropped onto his belly. But Nick didn’t release. He bit down until he felt the grind of bone against his canines along with a fresh gush of hot blood on his tongue. The hissing yowl of pain from the badger was satisfying on a primal level, but in his anger, Nick held on longer than he should have. The slap of a paw and the rake of claws down the length of his muzzle blinded him for a moment as pain flared in the side of his face and caused his world to go white for a moment. Stumbling away, he barely managed to get away before the now limping badger tried to advance with another snap of his own powerful jaws, forcing him to scramble under the legs of a chair to escape. Even that didn’t get him far as the stocky predator barreled under the chair after him, sending it crashing across the bar as they began the chase all over again.

Once the pain fueled rage began to pass, the state of the badger became clear when he slowed to a stop. Blood dripped from the ravaged back of his neck and pooled on the once clean floor with every laborious step he took on his mangled leg. He was weakened, seriously wounded compared to the mostly unhurt fox. Panting heavily now, knowing that the fight was not going to turn in his favor, the badger turned and waddled quickly toward the bar in search of a possible means of escape.

Nick, while there were bloody stripes on his muzzle and pain from his bruised ribs, readied himself to press the attack and made to block the escape. He wouldn’t stop until the threat was dead. He would bleed the badger, ripping one limb and chunk of flesh at a time until there was nothing left but glassy eyes and cold…

The sudden, rapid ‘thwip thwip thwip’ that accompanied the appearance of three darts in Muste’s rump caused his head to snap towards the door. A striped male bunny and gray wolf stood at the door, tranquilizer rifles at the swaying badger before he dropped to the floor in a graceless sprawl. It wasn’t clear even to him if it was that he had been denied the pleasure of slowly slaughtering Muste or the weapons themselves, but his rage bubbled all over again.

“Nick, you have to stop.”

Softly spoken words in the only voice that he wanted to hear. A voice that soothed his anger and directed his attention away from the two males as they lowered their guns and put up their paws to show that they were no threat. There was no need to doubt or wonder if she was afraid of the things she had seen. Not beyond his own injuries, anyway. But it was still important to him when he turned and saw her standing beside him. Had it not been for Muste, he never would have lost track of where
she was and he was more than happy to let her scent drown out his need to alert to every sound or motion in the room. When tiny paws reached up to cup both sides of his bloodied muzzle, he hesitated as he became aware of the taste of blood in his mouth. Blood that was not his own. The roll of his stomach was the first sign to him that his sanity was returning, though the desire to retch was staved off by the slow slide of her fingers over his cheeks.

“Judy,” he said, his voice raw as he felt all four limbs weaken and want to give out.

“It’s okay, Nick,” she murmured as he dropped down onto his rear, his harsh panting slowing as nausea battled with relief that she seemed uninjured. “I’m safe. It’s going to be fine. Jack, what the hell happened?”

“That should be fairly obvious,” the other bunny replied coolly as he carefully made his way around the two of them towards the unmoving Muste. Nick ignored him and instead reached up to swipe the back of his paw over his muzzle to try to get the taste of meat and metal out of his mouth. “The antidote failed. Thankfully, even though he was forced into actual violence this time, your ability to calm him doesn’t seem affected. Nightingale, we’re going to need a medical team on site to stabilize the target. Superficial wounds but noticeable bleeding. And I have no idea what effect Feral Blue will have when he wakes up, so make sure they have the proper restraints.”

“Roger that.”

“Two wolves in flight through the back,” Swift’s voice said calmly through the ear pieces. “Containment in progress.”

“There is one more,” Judy said, even as she wrapped her arms around his head to draw his head down to her chest. He closed his eyes and breathed in the scent of her, letting it drown out the smell of blood as the sound of her heartbeat ease the lingering fear and anger. “The kitchen.”

“Wolford,” Jack said simply, followed by the sound of two sets of footfalls shuffling past and into the kitchen. A few seconds later, he winced and jumped against Judy at the eruption of shouting and live gunfire following by the softer hiss of tranquilizers being fired.

“Clear. He’s down,” came Wolford’s voice, adding to the slow calm spreading through him at the gentle stroke of paws over the back of his neck.

“Alpha, we have a situation.”

“Report,” the striped rabbit replied as he returned from the kitchen, Nick lifting his eyes to check the buck and wolf for any sign of injury. Finding none, he relaxed marginally.

“Incoming vehicles,” came the curt reply. “Two large class vans, three cars, and an armored car. Heading your way.”

All eyes in the room turned to Jack as he paused his forward motion and stood with a frown turning down the corners of his muzzle. Nick caught his eyes when they moved to him, the frown deepening as his ears radared towards the front entrance as the glare of headlights swung through the bar. He could feel the tension radiating from the rabbit, hear the grinding of his teeth as he set his jaw and flexed the paw holding the grip on his rifle. His felt his hackles rise again as that tension bled into the air, his muscles tensing as he turned his attention to the sound of van doors sliding open and the thump of many heavy, booted feet on the asphalt.

“Ten unknowns on the ground,” came the whispered words from one of the sniper team. “Tactical vests, submachine guns, breaching gear loaded for bear. Three medium mammals
“moving to the rear to cover the exit. Swift, better ghost.”

“Already gone,” the cheetah replied, his own voice low. “Half a block down, waiting for your word, Alpha.”

“Weapons off,” Jack said suddenly, dropping his paws away from the rifle and letting it hang free from the chest strap. “Sniper team, go silent. Nightingale, stay high and dark. I feel like I’ll be needing you in one piece soon. I want no engagement until I give the word and know who we’re dealing with. Hopps, can you keep him calm?”

“I’ll do my best,” she murmured, keeping her arms wrapped around his neck. The words were not comforting to Nick. The uncertainty in the room and all of those within it had his lips wanting to pull back from his teeth, but staying close to Judy was his primary goal now. He would find a way to defend her, he didn’t care how many of them there were.

Whatever restraint he had left in him was lost when he saw the mammals charge through the front door with weapons raised. The shouts of ‘Don’t move! ZIA!’ in all of their cliché glory grated on him. It was the pair of rhinos, the largest of the mammals in the formation, that snapped his control when they swung their weapons around and leveled them on Judy. It never occurred to him that they were targeting him because of the vicious, blood-soaked state he was in. All he knew was that the weapons were a threat.

She clearly didn’t expect the sudden twist of his body as he pulled backward and out of her arms. Hearing her cry for him to stop came too late this time as red ringed the corners of his vision instead of gray and he rushed forward.

“Tasers and tranqs only!” came a feline command less than a second before something snagged in his fur as he readied himself to attack the nearest rhino.

Every muscle on his body convulsed once before they seized like iron as the pulses of electricity rolled through him from the barbs lodged in his arm. He couldn’t move but to fall forward, the forward motion of his charge carrying him forward until he slammed into hoof of the rhino who held the Taser gun. He couldn’t struggle, though he tried as the pain blanked his ability to do more than panic further. He snarled and barked at his attackers, or at least tried to. The sounds never reached his own ears as he twitched and shuttered on the ground, only able to watch helplessly as a wire loop on the end of a pole was extended and wrapped around his throat.

“Nick!”

“Wolford, hold her!”

“Let go! Get your paws off him! You’re hurting him! Nick! Nick!”

Her scream was desperate, full of fear and anguish. The second the pulses from the Taser stopped, he tried to move again. Feeling weak and a little lightheaded, the rage and panic combined when he could turn his head and see that Judy was struggling to get away from the larger predator holding her back. While he didn’t feel fear that she was being held, the fact that more of the guns in the room had been turned in her direction. Forcing himself to all fours, he tried to move towards her. Protect. Shield her with his own body if he had to. He stumbled forward only to feel the noose around his neck tighten and drag him back towards the entrance to the bar.

“Take Wilde to the transport,” came the feminine voice again, drawing his gaze to the source. The snow-white vixen, dressed in a dark gray one-piece bodysuit, stood at the center of the mass of armed mammals. “Control your bunnyfriend, Jack. It would be a shame if we had to shoot her.”
The fox’s lips pulled back as a strangled but loud growl escaped him. He tried to yank himself forward, desperate to escape now as he tried to twist free of the noose by thrashing his body towards the offensive bitch who had threatened his mate. When that failed, his struggles became crazed twists. The pain in his neck meant nothing, the tightening of wire making it hard to breathe only made him angry and desperate and the cry of his mate had him clawing at his own throat in an attempt to cut himself free.

The sharp pain in his arm was hardly noticed amid the fear and desperation to escape, but the effects were swift. Strength fled his limbs as he felt a numbness roll through his body, a numbness that settled over his mind as his struggles died down to weak squirming as his vision swam. Rolling his head towards his mate as his breathing evened and sensation of any kind fled, his last vision of her were the tears shimmering in her eyes before darkness consumed him.

The tears, and the anguish that caused them, only lasted for a few seconds before a numb anger settled over her. Watching the now limp, motionless body of her partner being dragged out of the bar caused a seething and sudden hatred for the vixen. The vixen who was still holding the long-barreled, silenced sniper rifle, which she had just used to dart Nick, at the ready on her shoulder when she turned her attention to Jack.

“A pleasure to finally meet you, Jack,” she said, her voice coolly pleasant somehow. It only made Judy, who was still being restrained by Wolford, want to kick her until that smug fox smile was nothing but a mass of broken teeth and dislocated jaw. “I’m afraid I’ll be taking Wilde. I must admit, I am surprised that you have taken interest in this case. But this is ZIA territory.”

Too furious to be surprised that the vixen knew who Jack was, Judy stopped her struggles against Wolford as she turned her eyes to the agent. He saved himself a good deal of grief with the gaze he had leveled on the artic fox: ice blues were cold and dangerous even though he kept his paws well away from the weapon slung over his chest. He might have seemed expressionless to most, but she would see the flare of his nostrils and the slight quiver that race through his ears now and then. He was a very angry bunny who was hiding it very well.

“Special Agent Skye,” was his reply, his voice many degrees lower than the already icy blue eyes that didn’t waver from the vixen. Judy could see the surprise in the hesitant waiver of the weapon she held and the twitch of her ears as they tried to lay back. “I suppose you’ve been watching Muste longer than I have.”

“We’ve been waiting for some development, though Muste is too stubborn to talk,” she said, waving her paw in a dismissive gesture towards the still unconscious badger. “Maybe you can get something out of him and pass it along. We’re on the same side, after all.”

“Hand over Wilde and we’ll see about that,” Jack replied, his tone anything but easy. He never raised it, never even changed his tone really. But something in it now made Judy’s fur prickle. A feeling that seemed to be shared as the vixen’s thick coat of fur seemed to ripple and rise before she managed to contain the reaction. “He is under my protection.”

“Mm. No no, Jack.” She clucked her tongue once as she glanced around the room at the armed mammals around them. “These large, heavily armed individuals around us tell me that he is now under my protection. Don’t worry so much. We’re just going to contain him until a cure can be found. We’re not monsters.”
“That remains to be seen, but it changes nothing. If you leave here with Wilde, I will get him back by any and all means available to me.”

Judy watched her eyes narrow and her grip on the rifle tighten for a moment as she held Jack’s eyes. While some of her fear had ebbed when this Skye had promised that Nick wouldn’t be harmed, that did not mean that she was ready to let him go into the paws of an agency that Jack didn’t trust. She wouldn’t have been willing to let him go into the paws of someone she trusted for that matter. Not if she wasn’t there to watch over him.

“Are you really going to take on the ZIA for one fox?”

“The question is,” Jack said, drawing her gaze back to him with the ice dripping from every word, “is the ZIA ready to stop me?”

The uncomfortable silence that fell over the room was only broken by the sounds of gloved paws squeezing down on SMG grips, the shuffle of uneasy movement and the beat of her own heart. For the first time, the vixen looked spooked. The smug expression, which just might have been a fox trait, wavered for a moment as her ears flicked and her tail stilled behind her. She looked ready to answer before she paused and raised her paw to one ear. After listening for a moment, she returned her eyes to the three of them, looking for the most part like she had shaken off the momentary hesitation.

“Understood. We’re withdrawing. The doc is ready for our newest patient,” she said, one paw raised to motion her units to withdraw. Which they did, filing out of the bar in a neatly practiced backward retreat formation that allowed them to keep their eyes and their guns leveled on Jack for as long as possible.

Jack didn’t reply. He simply kept his eyes on her as she backed towards the door herself. Judy felt the need to pull against Wolford again as the ache in her gut deepened. They were taking Nick away from her and there was nothing she could do to stop them. How long? How long before Jack acted? How many days would they be apart? Would the vixen keep her word that no harm would come to him? If they hurt him, hurt Her Fox…

“Oh, one question before I go, Jack,” the vixen asked as she and a single rhino paused at the exit. Her smile was almost playful, almost flirtatious as she focused her eyes on him. “How did such a cute little bunny end up with the call sign ‘Savage?’”

The fact that the smug question and the use of the term ‘cute little bunny’ reminded her of her first meetings with Nick made Judy want to break that muzzle all over again. So much so that she yanked against Wolford’s paws, prompting him to squeeze her almost reassuringly. Which only managed to irritate her, because she didn’t want to be reassured. She wanted to punch the bitch who smiled pleasantly and waited for a reply.

None came. Jack simply stood where he was, unmoving with a small smile barely perceptible at the corners of his mouth. There was a long moment of silence between them again before the fox huffed and looked deflated.

“No answer, huh?” She sighed, a bit dramatically before she shrugged and jerked her head for the rhino to take his leave. “Ah well. Be seeing you, Jack.”

Judy held her tongue as she listened to the multiple doors slam and engines come to life outside, her teeth grinding together as she resisted the desire to give in to the ache in her chest and break down. It would have been easy enough to do, with Wolford holding her like he was. Instead, she waited as the sounds of the vehicles faded into the distance before she opened her mouth. Opened it,
just as Jack motioned for the wolf to release her.

“We’re going after them,” she demanded, her ears pinned back as she stalked towards the door in a reflexive move that had her looking out into the dark night after the convoy she could no longer see.

“Yes,” Jack replied simply, his tone as calm as it had been during his conversation with the vixen. “Sniper team, keep visual on them as long as possible and tell me if you can judge their direction.”

“Roger, Alpha. They are headed west.”

“We’re going after them now,” she demanded, narrowing the window.

“Yes,” he replied again, surprising her slightly when he moved to stand beside her. “Right now. Nightingale, I need the package on the ground five minutes ago. Swift, get back to the vans and make sure recordings are in one piece. If they noticed them on their way in, they may have been smart enough to wipe them.”

“Right now, Jack.”

“Yes, right now,” he said, turning to face her as he unclipped the rifle from his chest and passed it over to Wolford who looked ready to take off down the street on foot if needed. “I promise you that I would not let you and Wilde be separated. I break a lot of promises, I won’t deny that. Comes with the job. But when someone tries to break one of my promises for me? That just pisses me off.”

She was eased by his now obvious anger as he unsnapped and stripped the armored vest off, carelessly flinging it back into the bar with more force than was needed. “So, what do we do?”

“You and Wolford are going to ride with Nightingale to the ZPD,” he said and held up a paw when she prepared to protest. “We need a heavy vehicle and the ZPD is the closest place to find them. Just tell Bogo… Whatever you need to tell him and get your paws on the heaviest SWAT vehicle you can handle at high speeds.”

The hum of the helicopter drew her eyes to the sky for a moment, where she saw the same black beast of a machine that had carried them to the Agency the day before. The fact that she had not been aware of it, had not heard it, told her that it was capable of running far quieter than a normal helicopter despite its size. When she turned her eyes back to Jack, she was surprised to find that he was pulling the tactical shirt off as well. There was half a second of interest in the bare rabbit for a moment when she realized that he had the same black stripes running down his shoulders and arms. But it only lasted for a moment as Nightingale touched down.

“And what will you be doing?”

“I’m going after them,” he replied, turning blue eyes to her with the same odd grin that he had given Skye moments ago before moving towards the rear of the chopper. “She asked me a question. It’s only fair that I give her the answer.”
Thank you to all of my readers. I am sorry I have not been able to reply to the comments as often as I would like but with school, work and trying to get these stories out at a decent pace it has been hard. I will start working on that now.

Enjoy the story! Comments are love! Thank TheWyvernsWeaver for the awesome art on both ends of this chapter!
Savage: Part 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Report:

Case File – The Savage Dark

Reporting Agent: Code Name – Jack “Savage”

Affiliation: Unknown

Current Whereabouts: Unknown

Agent Status: Unknown (Active)

Recording Continues:

“'The package’ was intended to be a safeguard if Wilde went savage and was set loose on the city. It wasn’t designed for this, of course. In the right hands, my hands, it is a countermeasure for high-speed hard target neutralization. Even my tech and logistics teams can only do so much in the twelve hours I gave then, which in this case turned to my benefit.

“I say ‘to my benefit’ as it was the only thing on that particular night that had gone my way up to that point. I thought I was prepared for Wilde to go savage again if it did go that way, but I was not. His progression from perfectly normal asset to running down the street on all fours faster than a fucking cheetah was not really a progression at all. From what I could tell, he simply snapped. One second he was listening in, his eyes normal, his body language uneasy but nothing out of the ordinary. The next second, he was already out of the van with his vest lying on the ground and the rest of us hoping he didn’t get himself or Hopps killed. Him going savage and running off into the city somehow had been in the playbook, thus the package, but tackling a grizzly and fighting tooth and claw with a savage badger was not.

“With the arrival of the ZIA, I came to understand that they had been watching the situation far more closely than I realized. This was a simple case of underestimation on my part. I learned later that they were not even there for Nick. They were there for Muste, just like we were, though when it
became clear that they had an opportunity to capture the ‘one that got away,’ they – meaning Special Agent Skye – took it. Hard-armed, loaded, and ready to fight to get him if they needed to. The situation in the bar was lose-lose from the moment I was told that a convoy was inbound, without question. Which is why I let them take Wilde without resistance. Gave Special Agent Skye all the cards for a few precious moments so I could reorganize the plan. I don’t like to lose. I don’t like being taken off guard, least of all twice in one evening. I don’t like it when my promises are broken through no will of my own. So at that moment, I was angry. And realizing this, I made two independent plans.

“The first was personal and reckless. Which is why I made the second: Judy Hopps.”

‘The package’ was a quick, black bullet through the dark streets of the city. What otherwise would have been a roaring through the night was muffled by design but it had no effect on the speed that Jack was aware of. He didn’t track it; didn’t glance down at the display on the HUD of his helmet to see how many kilometers he had eaten in the three minutes since he had mounted the bike. Knowing your actual speed when moving so fast that all other vehicles seemed to be standing still, by comparison, was never a good idea in his experience. Wind rushed past his helmet, into his visor, and behind his folded ears, bringing with it all the scents of a sleeping city. He had little time to enjoy it as he often did. The thrill of the chase remained, as a secondary sensation. Like the vibration of the engine that thrummed through his entire body and the cooling air of the night that beat against the skin tight black jumpsuit he now wore.

His attention was focused solely on finding the arctic fox who had taken his charge. A fox who, for the moment at least, remained carefully out of his crosshairs.

“Nightingale, report.”

“Passengers offloading now, Alpha. Awaiting further instructions.”

“Keep Hopps and Wolford appraised of my location on a separate channel. I need you in the air to the west to locate…”

He was cut off when he was forced to rear brake hard and dart to the side to avoid the black SUV that tried to side-swipe him as it pulled onto the road with a screech of tires and the blue lights of a Federal agent in pursuit. Despite the dramatic entrance, the pursuit was short-lived and quickly ended when he punched his speed up again, leaving them with no chance of keeping his pace.

“…the target,” he continued, his eyes on the road ahead as he noted a clear lack of moving traffic. “If that attempt to run me down is any indication, however, I am on the right track. West side past Savanna Central, still heading west. I would hazard a guess that they will head north toward the Canal District rather than drive into the docks, but require visual to confirm.”

“Roger that, Alpha,” came the crisp reply, along with a good deal of engine noise. “Cargo delivered and I am airborne. ETA on west bank with a northern sweep, three minutes.”

Three minutes was a long time at the speed he was traveling. Cursing mentally when he was faced with the choice of continuing to the bay on the chance that they may try to offload Wilde onto a ship or turning his pursuit north, he made the choice when he reached a wide intersection. Sweeping around the corner at a speed that made his legs ache when he dipped the bike low enough that his knee-pad skimmed the asphalt, he calculated how long it would take him to return to the docks if it turned out that his choice of direction had been wrong. They would have to split in case of a decoy if a boat was used, in which case he only had a 50/50 chance of facing off against Skye, whom he had no doubt would be sticking with Wilde the rest of the way. But it was speculation.
A visual. He just needed a damned visual.

“Alpha, target spotted north of the docks, still in transit. I count seven total vehicles, now,” came the updating, causing him to mentally fist pump as he tightened his grip on the accelerator and increased speed. “It looks like they swapped the vans for large class SUVs as escorts for the armored car.”

“She expected pursuit,” Jack muttered, just confirming out loud what he had already guessed. He wasn’t impressed by the realization. It just proved that she wasn’t an idiot. “I just passed Oak and Seawall, center of the road. Eyes on me and tell me where to go.”

“Confirmed, Alpha. I have you one block west of the target’s current route. Clear turn to intercept two blocks up, one mile behind.”

The adjustments to his course brought him into visual range less than a minute later, the rear lights of the escort vehicles glaringly obvious down the straight stretch of road. It was obvious that they saw him, too. The four huge SUVs drifted away from the convoy and lined themselves up as a mobile road block, dropping speed as he quickly closed the distance. He easily could have gone onto the sidewalk, or taken another route around that would have put him up right beside the armored car, but he still had a point to prove. He yanked an ultra-light submachine gun from one of the holsters on the body of the bike, not hesitating as he aimed high on the rear windows and sprayed a quick line across all four. The kick of recoil from the gun, which he was well familiar with, hardly registered as the line of bullet holes peppered the glass well above the driver’s heads.

Even with his attempt to be non-fatal against agents doing their jobs, the result was quick and obvious as the line broke. One of the drivers, panicking under fire, tilted the SUV suddenly and sideswiped the one to his left. The force of the impact drove the leftmost vehicle onto the sidewalk, opening a path easily wide enough for the bike to slide into. Which he did, sweeping his gun low and releasing two quick bursts into the front tire of one vehicle, feeling the pressure wave as it exploded with a reverberating boom. Quickly dropping back as the driver lost control and slammed into the truck beside him, the rabbit took the opportunity to jump ahead of the pack. Steering the bike around the two remaining trucks, he feinted left and then went right before they could adjust, easily breaking ahead and towards the rest of the convoy.

He was aware that there had been no fire exchange from the escort vehicles. To this point at least, it had been made clear that they did not want him dead. Though that might change soon when it became clear that a few extra cars on the road were not going to stop him. Whether or not they would change that all depended on how much they really wanted to keep Wilde. A consideration that worried him more when two more cars with flashing blue lights peeled out from side roads as he approached the armored car, forcing him to angle his body right quickly to avoid slamming into one of them.

With no time to swallow the heart lodged in his throat at the near miss, he realized that he had dropped the gun in his rush to avoid becoming the victim of an unwilling velocity-times-mass experiment. Grunting at the distraction, he glanced around to realize that three cars were moving into position to box him in, a move completed by the roar of an SUV engine behind him. When this forced him to drop his speed, he glanced over at one of the cars as the dark tinted window rolled down, the muzzle of a black wolf poking out.

“Stop the bike and cut the engine!”

Keeping the bike at a steady speed, Jack held one paw up to the side of his helmet and shook his head to indicate that he couldn’t hear them.
“I said, stop the bike and cut the engine! You’re not going to accomplish…”

The wolf stopped his pointless shouting when a brass disk slapped into the center of the hood of that particular car and stuck as the powerful magnet caught on steel. The wolf’s broad muzzle curved into a frown as he questioned his leopard driver but his eyes widened when one black gloved paw was raised in an almost friendly farewell wave. When the tiny explosive within the disk triggered, the plate of copper behind the magnets was driven through the hood with enough speed and force to cause the rear tires to kick up off the ground as the engine block was pierced. The other cars were quick to spread out after that, though not before Jack pulled his secondary submachine gun, turned his gaze back and emptied half the clip into the grill of the SUV. Even though it tried to swerve to the side, the sudden burst of smoke from the hood and trail of various liquids spilling out as it rapidly lost speed indicated that it would not be continuing the chase.

At this point, all of them fell back to put some distance between them and the rabbit who had already disabled half what otherwise might have been an impressive convoy. The armored car increased speed, as much as something as heavily armored as it was could increase speed, but he was able to ignore it for the moment as he considered the rest of the convoy. One of the trucks had caught up but kept its distance with the rest of them. He had no doubt that they were debating whether or not he would risk hurting Wilde in an attempt to stop or crack the still fast moving armored car before the reached…

What? What are they heading towards?

“I am seeing a large amount of movement from up here, Alpha. Coming from the east.”

“Nightingale, I need your eyes ahead,” he said, one finger toying with the trigger under his break as he eyed the two cars that tailed him. They were inching closer, maybe not sure how much room to give him. “They are delaying me rather than trying to take me out and I need to know why.”

“Roger, Alpha. Eyes ahead.”

Close enough now. When he pressed the trigger, the compartments next to either side of the bike’s rear tire sprang open and dropped their cargo all over the road behind him. The little black spheres acted as advanced caltrops: when the cars drove over them, the micro-explosives within triggered a cascade of tiny explosions that seemed to set the road on fire. The sharp hiss of air escaping ruptured tires accompanied it, forcing both vehicles to limp along on sparking rims as they fell behind. That just left…

“Alpha, you have incoming. A lot of incoming.”

He was about to question exactly how much incoming ‘a lot’ boiled down to when the ZIA answered the question for him. A flash count told him that at least twelve new vehicles in all size ranges joined the armored car in a neat formation that told him this was not a random assortment of drivers. Chances were this had been set into motion the moment they realized they were dealing with him, which also explained their reluctance to engage him with violence. Whoever was pulling the strings in the ZIA did not want the agency more involved than they already were by openly causing the death of an agent. This was a show of force in an attempt to get him to back down.

Obviously, whoever was pulling the strings had never dealt with him before.

“What time is it, Nightingale?” he said, keeping a safe distance from the convoy in front while not allowing them enough space to try to remove the armored car from his line of sight.

“2:14 am, Alpha.”
Hopps had been dropped off at the ZPD twenty-five minutes ago, give or take.

“Has Hopps been updated on my position?”

“Affirmative. She is inbound.”

“They are headed to the Canal District,” he muttered, mostly to himself as he moved in on the rear-most of the vehicles in the convoy. When it altered course parallel to his own, he fired a two shot burst into the rear, this time intentionally placing the shot so that they would exit the front windshield right below the rearview mirror. This caused the slight hesitation and change in course that he needed to pull up beside them and drop a disk on their hood before falling back as the disk triggered. “Once they reach the first bridge, this convoy will turn into a road block to keep me from following. Not a bad idea.”

“Sir?”

“Just thinking out loud while playing footsie with the locals,” he said as the car he had disabled vanished into his rear-view mirror. When he moved forward again, the formed a neat wall to prevent him from moving up beside anymore. Which was fine by him as he unleashed a full auto spray of bullets across the line of their rear tires. He only saw and heard three tires burst from the barrage, causing one van and one SUV to lag behind the group until he managed to easily swing past them and leave them in his mirrors. It was enough to have them scatter and move forward to move closely cover the armored car. Luckily, they didn’t seem aware that he had spent the rest of the clip on the little show of force.

“Put me through to Hopps.”

“Hopps here, Jack,” came her voice a few seconds later. She sounded broody, which was the least he had expected, but also focused. He expected the look on her face was a cross between professionalism and murderous. “We’re almost at your location.”

“You got the vehicle?”

“I did,” she replied and after half a beat of silence continued, “and a few extra as back up.”

“I’m going to have to train every agent under my command on the validity of actual numbers,” he said, though there was no actual annoyance in his tone when he said it, watching the large class ZPD SWAT armored truck swing onto the road with a squeal of tires a block behind him. He could already hear other sirens in the distance. Not coming in quietly, as he expected. “How many extra?”

“All of them.”

Even knowing it was coming didn’t stop the thrill of pleasure when the ZPD cruisers swarmed the street behind the lead vehicle in a blaze of blue and red flashes, loudly blaring sirens announcing their arrival. She hadn’t been exaggerating. The sea of black and white continued to build as more cruisers poured in from side roads, telling Jack that they had been called from their patrols to join in the chase. He didn’t bother to try a count, but the sheer force of numbers meant that they were not just active duty from Savanna Central. It was no less than he’d hoped.

This was the reaction of the ZPD when one of their own was taken.

The fastest of the pack, the medium class cruisers, broke away from the rest in a perfectly ordered maneuver that had them blowing past him in a roar of horsepower that he could feel vibrate from his teeth to his toes. A satisfied, and slightly manic, grin grew on his muzzle as the escorts ahead tried to increase speed in reaction, but with the armored car slowing them down they were forced to stand
their ground. He could almost imagine the chaos going on in Special Agent Skye’s ear as the agents in the vehicles around her asked for instructions to counter what was doubtless an unexpected development.

He was surprised that it was Wolford’s voice that boomed from the bullhorn of the lead cruiser, which muscled its way past one of the escorts with a blithe side swipe that had the entire formation shifting to the left to make way.

“This is the ZPD! Obviously! Pull over, shut off your engines, and prepare to hand over Office Nicholas Wilde. This is your only warn…”

His voice was cut off when one of the escorts, either by order or simply to test their resolve, swerved hard in an attempt to take Wolford’s cruiser out. It was a move that had clearly been expected as with a squeal of breaks it dropped back far enough so that the attempt missed, sending the escort run sidelong into a building. The scream of metal and rubber against the side of the building was highlighted by the sound of the tires blowing under the force and friction.

The ZPD moved in, clearly taking that as a non-compliance in their one and only warning. He had to admit, he was impressed by the restraint and control the ZPD showed in their vehicle takedown maneuvers. Even as the heavier escorts tried to enter a tighter formation at the rear to prevent passage to the armored car, the medium class cruisers dropped back and made way for their larger comrades. Then, with a precision that he respected, they moved in, to firmly nudge the rear bumpers of the two outermost escorts. Traveling at high speeds, those nudged fell into a quick wobble that forced them out of formation and even sent one into a sideways slide. Before either could recover, they were boxed in at the front and rear by the cruisers still following at the rear.

It was a tactic that would have worked well given the number of ZPD officers in pursuit, but it was also one that was obvious. After the first two were taken out, chaos erupted. The armored car escorts started to blatantly try to take Wolford’s cruiser out. The combination led quickly to wrecks, from those that happened as planned to those that caused the entire fleet of pursuers to adjust their course to avoid colliding with the ZPD cruiser and escort that had stalled and rolled to a stop in the center of the road.

It broke up suddenly and quickly when most of the convoy split, turning down random roads as he sped past.

“Hopps, keep them contained,” he snapped, seeing the number of escorts dwindle until there were only two left. “They may have been ordered off, but I don’t want them coming back once we have the target stopped. Do not capture and arrest unless needed. I don’t think anyone wants to spend the next week in court trying to process agents for following orders.”

The order seemed to be understood as the ZPD broke off in pairs in pursuit of the fleeing escorts, thinning the herd until he counted five cruisers trailing behind. And no SWAT vehicle among them.

“Hopps, report. I’ve lost sight of you.”

“I pulled off of the main road with two units,” she explained, sounding distracted over the roar of the heavy vehicles engines being pushed to the limit. “We both know they’re headed to the bridge. We’ll be there before they arrive.”

“Confirmed, Alpha,” Nightingale chimed in. “Hopps should be in position before the target reached the bridge.”
“Understood. Order the remaining units to break off direct pursuit and meet us at the bridge. I’ll try to stop the target before it reaches the bridge. Once they have been stopped, everyone stand by and wait for my order.”

“But…”

“Everyone stands by, Judy. This agent won’t hesitate to tranq you just like she did your partner, which would make you effectively useless once we’ve recovered Nick.” He allowed it to sink in for a moment as he punched up the speed to easily close the distance to the target. “She will be handled. You focus on keeping the area clear while I do it.”

Nothing stupid, such as a pointless attempt to run him off the road, was tried when he pulled up alongside the passenger door. Not surprisingly, the blue eyes of the arctic vixen met his through the tinted glass, looking non-too-pleased with the turn of events caused by the ZPD’s arrival. He gave an annoyingly friendly wave of his paw, which caused her scowl to deepen before he motioned for her to stop.

He hadn’t really expected her to stop, though he did expect the muzzle of the tranq gun that emerged from the gun slot just under the window. He dropped back as a few rounds were quickly squeezed off. They were still using non-lethal means, though he had to wonder if that would continue in the future. Because he knew that this wouldn’t be his only run in with the ZIA if they were this intent on keeping whatever they were hiding bottled up.

Knowing that his final disk explosive might not penetrate the armored hood and having no more SMG ammo, he swung around to the driver’s side. The wolf driving glanced in his direction, then did a double take when he saw that Jack was holding up the brass disk explosive. He waited until he was sure it had been seen before he narrowed the gap, his knee almost brushing metal before he loudly slapped the disk onto the door and pulled away quickly. Obviously having seen what the disks could do, the driver panicked and slammed on the breaks. The squeal of tires filled the air and the flickers of red and blue filtered through the white smoke caused by the sudden friction of the stop, which came less than a quarter mile from the bridge.

Coming to a full stop just ahead of the truck, Jack dismounted as both doors swung open. The brown wolf in a neat black suit spilling out of the driver’s side and stumbling onto all fours as he tried to escape the explosion that would never come. Before he was able to realize that it had already been too long, Jack closed the distance and drove one foot into the back of his neck, pinning him head first to the asphalt. The snarl was easily ignored, as the flailing paw that tried to reach back to swat him away was grabbed by the thumb and twisted until resistance stopped with a yelp of pain. He pinned the arm with his knee and grabbed the other one with similar results.

“Be a good little predator and stay down,” the rabbit hissed from behind the helmet as he zip-tied the wrists together, “or next time I put an explosive near you, I’ll be sure to arm it.”

He caught the movement in the corner of his eye mainly because he knew she was there already. Swiftly rolling off and yanking the body of the still squirming wolf onto his side, he allowed the larger predator to take the first two darts. Letting the soon limp agent drop, the bunny slid his helmet off quickly and rose as the rifle was leveled on him again. Flinging his headgear at the barrel of the rifle as she fired again, it took the next shot for him and forced her to swing the weapon to deflect the oncoming projectile. But the time she leveled it again for the next shot, he was on her. Very literally. She stumbled back when she was forced to take the full weight of his impact as he went air-born and landed with his feet in her belly and his paws wrestling for control of the rifle.

To her credit, she managed to stay on her feet even as the wind was knocked out of her. Icy blue eyes narrowing in anger as she twisted around sharply, forcing one of his feet free and making him...
lose his grip long enough for one paw to end up at her hip. She drove him back, using the fact that he was fully supported by her to slam him into the armored car with a snarl, his paws slipping free as she drew back. He raised his eyes when she leveled the rifle on him, a pleased and rather feral grin spreading over his muzzle when she pulled the trigger.

It didn’t even click, making her eyes widen as she looked down at it and then back at him as he raised one paw, the rifle’s bolt dangling between two fingers as he drew himself to his feet. The look of surprise was replaced with frustrated determination as she unshouldered the rifle, tossed it to the side, and reached for her sidearm. This time, the surprise was muted but no less satisfying when she found the holster empty. Wide blues rested on the gun now swaying lightly by the trigger guard on one of his fingers. The shock slowly melted into a slightly bemused and impressed smile.

“I should have listened when they said not to underestimate you,” she murmured, her eyes following his paws as he released the clip, ejected the single bullet from the chamber and tossed those plus the rifle bolt under the armored car. Getting them back would require crawling under to get them and, unlike the movies, placing yourself on your belly to retrieve a lost weapon was always a very stupid idea. “Here I was thinking I had caught the great Jack Savage off guard.”

“Oh, you did,” he replied as they started to circle each other, both pairs of eyes following the other as they drew close range weapons. “Under normal circumstances, you might have kept that advantage for a few days while I worked out a plan. But you tried to break a promise I intend to keep after my plans were already turned to shit by not just one, but two savage mammals.”

He drew a pair of paw-held tranquilizers, popping the caps off of both as he watched her draw a stun wand from her belt. The snap of electricity as she tested it was enough to make his ears twitch as he considered the best line of attack. His own state of irritation made it hard to think about the well-used, safe, and often time-consuming path of wearing her down a bit first.

“I have my orders,” she said with a shrug as she moved around him, swaying her tail slowly in time with her hips in a way that, oddly, made his eyes want to follow it. “But you are awfully cute when you’re…”

Frontal assault it was, as an insult that normally wouldn’t have phased him sent a bolt of anger right down his spine and sent him charging towards her. She might have thought she was expecting it, might have been trying to goad him into it. But she was obviously not ready when he dug his foot-claws into the asphalt and launched himself towards her with a single strong jump.

She managed to avoid taking the brunt of it only by swinging out with the wand, missing catching his leg with the crackling blue tip by a few inches when her side-step made his foot slam into her shoulder rather than her head. The impact sent her spinning, and even as she staggered to recover and face him again, he lashed out with one of the tranq-sticks. She ducked down and rolled to the side, gracefully avoiding him but he knew she was already unbalanced. Her only moves were avoidance as he pressed and pushed further, his muzzle twisted into an almost predatory show of long teeth as he kept the distance between them so short that she couldn’t utilize what would normally have been a reach advantage over his smaller build.

The vixen dropped her guard suddenly, something that most might have seen as an opening but he saw as her trying to arrange the battle to her advantage by allowing him in. He took the feinted opening, seeing the attack coming. Her open paw strike was easily deflected, allowing him to twist around when she drove the wand towards his belly. Her growl of frustration was cut short when he drove the tip of one of the tranqs into her exposed thigh, following up when she tried to stagger away. The bunny tackled her bodily, shoving her back onto the asphalt by the rear wheel of the armored car. He straddled her belly, pressing his legs into her sides to keep her still as he raised the
remaining stick.

That narrow muzzle was turned into a slow, lazy, almost pleasant smile as drowsy blue eyes turned up to him. When her paw released the wand, letting it roll away, he stayed his own hand but kept it raised. Her tongue slid out over her lips as she chuckled, her voice weakening as she relaxed under him.

“Well,” she whispered, that predatory gaze meeting his for a moment before she rolled her head to the side. That long, lean, and warm-under-his-hips body stretched out before him as if she were settling down for a nap rather than falling under the effects of the drugs running through her system. The motion and the simple beauty of the body partaking in it caused a faint twinge in his sheath that he ignored when she met his eyes again. “I guess that answers my question, Agent… Savage.”

The drunk tone faded further until she fell limp, her eyes drifting closed. He waited a full ten seconds with his paw raised and ready before he relaxed, breathing out slowly as his eyes raised to the armored car. Attention shifted when a large ZPD cruiser pulled up beside him, a slight chuckle escaping him as Chief Bogo stepped out. The scowl on the Cape Buffalo’s muzzle and constant twitch of his ears were more than enough to tell Jack that he was less than pleased with the outcome of the evening.

“You told me you would watch over my officers, Jack,” he rumbled, stopping as he looked over the scene before him.

“Oh, well,” Jack replied, rolling his shoulders in an easy dismissal as he drew himself to his feet. Still not fully over the anger, and now dealing with minor arousal – which he blamed fully on the intensity of the fight – he wasn’t entirely in the mood to be chewed out. “You caught me, Chief. This high-speed chase through the city was just my way of letting them get away with Wilde. I didn’t send Hopps to the ZPD, knowing exactly how you would react to learning that he had been taken. And I thought after I subdued the one responsible for his kidnapping, that I would just leave him in the back of the armored car, wander off, and have a drink to celebrate how much I didn’t let them get away.”

The closed-mouthed, flat-eared, but silent look of exasperation from Bogo was enough for Jack as he slipped the remaining tranquilizer into its sheath. He stood facing the much larger mammal with a now blank expression, both folding their arms over their chests in obstinacy.

“Thank you. For the backup.”

“Thank you. For not letting them get away.”

They both grunted at the same moment, which led Jack to smirk and sigh as he turned his gaze to the vixen and the ZPD cruisers that surrounded them. “I suppose we should start clean up. We’ll need a containment team to get Wilde to a safe location. I’m afraid he’s gone full-savage. He may need to be sedated so he can be…”

He stopped when he heard the familiar snarl of a fox, loud and clear. Both mammals turned to see Judy already standing in the wide open rear of the armored car. There was a look of determination in her eyes and the keys, which he assumed she lifted from the unconscious wolf while he was distracted by Bogo, in her paw. She didn’t even seem to notice them as she pulled the large door closed, the snap of the locks engaging as clear to his ears as the sound of Bogo shouting for her to stop.

“That makes three times tonight I’ve been caught off guard by the obvious,” Jack murmured to himself as he reached up to rub the bridge of his muzzle when a headache started to form around the
worry. “Fuck me, I need a vacation.”

Chapter End Notes

Comments are always welcome! Thank you to everyone who continues to follow me in my madness for a fox and bunny.
Mr. And Mrs. Wilde

Report:

Case File – The Savage Dark

Reporting Agent: Code Name – Jack “Savage”

Affiliation: Unknown

Current Whereabouts: Unknown

Agent Status: Unknown (Active)

Recording Continues:

“I never asked what happened in the back of the armored car. I wasn’t sure that I really wanted to know, either way. Don’t give me that look. What happened will come up again and the story will be told in this recording, but that relevancy here is less important than the results. I’ll start by going over the answers for some of the obvious questions.

“The agents involved in the convoy to kidnap Officer Wilde were not charged, of course. As I requested, the majority of them were allowed to escape without incident or an attempt to return to the scene. A wise choice as well as the obvious one. Charging them or even detaining them would have been costly and pointless, in the end. The same could have been said for Special Agent Skye at the time. I was tempted to have her locked away for the allowed 48 hours without charges just to spite her. But I decided on a different route to… shall we say, spook whoever was pulling the strings.

“Whoever it was had a secret to keep and they were so desperate that they sent dozens of agents into the streets in an attempt to keep it from me and The Agency. You see, I knew already that there were only four people in all Zootopia who could have mobilized that many ZIA agents in such a short span of time. Keeping Skye and attempting to question her would have given the guilty party the impression that we were still clueless as to their identity. However, letting her go without a single question asked? That was going to make someone nervous. Nervous people make stupid mistakes.

“Not unlike the many mistakes I made that night. Though those mistakes were corrected through a high-speed chase, nearly a dozen disabled vehicles, an incapacitated agent, and a recovered fox. All with zero fatalities and only minor injuries.”

(Sound of a feminine throat clearing)

“It’s not pride. It’s balancing the books for the record. But you’re right. Moving on.

“Nervous people make mistakes. I intended for those mistakes to be minor. Our eyes were fully on the ZIA now and I was already thinking of activating agents within the ZIA to look around for changes in behavior. Odd phone calls to unlisted numbers, late night meetings, sudden cancellations of appointments to make trips out of the city. Anything like that can mean that plans are being
changed suddenly and when that happens, people need to be informed. As I said, there were only four people in Zootopia that could have caused these events. Two of them could be ruled out. The other two had to be watched. This, unfortunately, takes time.

“Or not so unfortunately when you consider that I was serious when I said I needed a vacation. And I wasn’t the only one.”

---

**One Week Later**

They had finally released him.

“You have to decide if you feel comfortable being alone with her, Mr. Wilde.”

They all questioned his control. And because they questioned it, they expected him to question it.

“I am comfortable around her now. You’re the one who keeps asking.”

All because of the bite.

“Agent Savage has ordered your release into her custody. She’s sleeping now, but you can return to your room whenever you like.”

Staring back at him, reflected in the mirror, were the eyes of a savage.

“You haven’t shown abnormal tempter in a week, though that could be due to her constant presence. But your eyes haven’t returned to normal, either. If you have any questionable thoughts…”

Questionable thoughts. He cocked his head slightly as he gazed into his own eyes. It had been days since the idea that they were not *his* eyes had faded. He wasn’t looking at a stranger and certainly wasn’t looking at some crazed beast. His thought process, as far as he could tell, had not changed.

“Breakfast is almost ready,” she called from the main room, her tone as light and easy as his current mood. “I’m not going to hold myself back from eating these blueberries if you don’t stop staring at yourself in the mirror, Slick.”

He considered himself for a moment longer before he finished what he had come into the bathroom for, to begin with: making himself look presentable. A touch of water around the muzzle to smooth his currently untrimmed whiskers, more than a few strokes of a brush through his fur to soften and straighten his neck ruff, one thumb sliding up to the tip of each ear before he took a few looks at himself from all angles. Seeing that everything was in order, he turned on his more electric hustler smile and gave the now naked fox in the mirror a quick two pawed thumbs up.

“Be right there, Carrots.”

He hadn’t felt this comfortable and certain of himself since the first time he had seen slit-pupil eyes looking back at him in the mirror. So comfortable that there had been no hesitation to accept the release into Judy’s custody that morning because there was no reason to. Feeling like himself, really feeling like Nick, was a good change from everything that had come before he had been taken.
Before she had taken it upon herself to lock them in the back of the armored car with him a fully savage fox.

“Nick, I’m eating a blueberry right now.” Her voice was sing-song and playful, drawing a smirk to his muzzle. It might have seemed strange to anyone else. He was changed. Changed in a way that no one was sure could be reversed even if a long-term antidote was found. And despite that change, they were on solid ground.

Just the two of them.

“My clothes fell off in the bathroom,” he chuckled when he finally opened the door and stepped into the main room. “I wanted to make myself look…”

His voice died when he realized that she was no longer in the kitchen, as he had expected. No, his bunny was on the bed, curled up on her side, propped up on one elbow as she lay facing him with a bowl of fruit on the bed in front of her. One foot started to rub slowly up and down her bare calf when their gazes met. She was exactly as naked as he was. There was no doubt in his mind that the flare of desire he saw in her eyes was reflected in his when they both realized that their idea for breakfast had been shared. The silly grin was also mutual, as was the chuckle that followed when she muffled a laugh in her paw.

“I see my plan worked as expected,” he drawled, moving towards the bed with a slow sway in his tail as he appreciated the view of all that white and gray perfection laid out before him. “I thought the natural reaction to my getting naked would be your clothes just falling off, followed by you taking a sexy pose on the bed for me. I applaud you for efficiency because I didn’t even see it happen. The bowl of blueberries is a nice touch.”

The laughter came again, though this time it had a slightly more sensual note to it. Her voice deepened a bit, became husky as she fell into a slow stretch that offered him a delicious view of her every curve as she stretched her arms much too slowly over her head without taking her eyes off him. The stretch also allowed his gaze to settle on the bandaged state of her forearm. The dull brown wrapping, which he knew covered an underlying layer of gauze and medical tape over shaved fur, held his attention for a moment. Mostly because he constantly wanted to make sure it didn’t start bleeding again.

“We haven’t been alone in a week,” she reminded him as she adjusted herself to rest on her side again, her eyes dropping to the already thickening sheath between his thighs before returning to meet his. A little smile quirked her muzzle as her nose twitched. “And haven’t made love since the last time we were in this room. Our clothes didn’t stand a chance, anyway.”

“Why Officer Hopps,” he said as he wandered around the bed slowly. “Are you trying to tempt me into bed with blueberries? Or yourself?”

She followed him with her eyes but seemed to know better than to turn around to face him. First off, there was a bowl of blueberries dangerously balanced on the bed. And second, green eyes were looking for that particular view that her lying on her side with her leg drawn up in such a way afforded him. That soft, round ass had been a force of attraction he had lost the ability to resist the moment he had realized that her cuteness leaned heavily towards beauty. The way white fur blended sharply into gray between her thighs made the soft pink flesh of her mound a wonderfully appetizing sight. The sparkle in her eyes was teasing when she adjusted her hips just a bit to block his view, but that didn’t stop his tongue from sliding along his muzzle slowly.

“Blueberries first, Officer Wilde,” she responded, though her gaze lowered between his thighs for a moment. She clearly appreciated the crimson tip that was showing his own arousal, because her
tongue did a similar dance over her lips before she lowered them further. “You’re taller when you walk like that.”

Brow furrowed, he glanced down to his feet. He wasn’t standing flatfooted as was normal for more civilized mammals. Only his paw pads were touching the floor, as he might have moved when he was on all fours. It would indeed have given him a good six inches of extra height, which explained why she brought it up. He started to correct it, as natural as it felt to him at that moment, but she turned on the bed and placed a paw on his hip.

“No, it’s fine,” she said quickly, her eyes soft as she gave him a slow grin. “It’s kinda sexy. Makes you look a little savage, combined with your eyes.”

“So me being savage is sexy now?” The words held a hint of a growl to them, mostly because her paw slid from his hip, tickled slowly down along beside his sheath, and came to rest as she cupped the furred sac between his thighs. The growl deepened into a moan when she ran the silk of her thumb over one orb slowly, curiously, while her eyes followed the growth of his arousal with a hunger that had him thinking breakfast might have to wait.

“Pretty sure you’re always sexy, Slick,” she hummed, her voice a little distant as she parted her lips and breathed in deeply through her nose. He realized that she was tasting the musk of male arousal in the air, which only caused that arousal to surge until he was fully hard and pulsing. When she continued, her voice was soft and distant. “Very sexy.”

Finding that he could do little more than stand there like a good fox while she sat up and moved closer to him on her knees, he watched that cute muzzle drift closer as she continued to breathe in deeply. He felt the rush of heat when she touched the tip of her nose against him, exhaling slowly before she tipped her muzzle to place parted lips on the shaft. The feeling of wet warmth and soft suction near the base and the cup of her paw over his sac had his legs wobbling under him as his breath rushed out. She lingered on him for a moment, until he felt the slide of her tongue just at the entrance of his sheath when her muzzle dipped a bit. A week may not have been long, but it was starting to feel like forever. The long nights spent in the lab. Even though she had been there every moment, threatening violence if they tried to make her leave, neither one of them had been particularly interested in being recorded.

Now? They were not and with this being the first time he had felt her lips on this part of his body? He was in a special kind of heaven. She seemed fascinated herself when she drew back, licking her lips as she looked up at him with violet eyes darkened by passion. Within that passion was curiosity, a curiosity that he understood as she rolled her tongue around in her mouth for a moment to consider the taste of him from before. He was so enthralled by it, the touch of her paws managed to catch him off guard when she wrapped them around the base and squeezed lightly.

“I’ve never seen your knot, you know,” she murmured, her gaze lowering. He almost thought it was a moment of shyness, until her tongue slid out to gather the clear drop of precum that had left a trail from the tip. The look of curious consideration returned for a moment as she licked her lips again, an action that had him praying for the strength not to swell in her paws right that second before she leaned forward and kissed the tapered tip lightly. “Always locked inside of me before I get the chance. Greedy fox. We should change that.”

“Should we?” he managed, doing his best not to squeak it when she kept her muzzle pressed against the tip and looked up at him. There was so much in those eyes. Passion and love, curiosity and need, playful desire and hunger. It was beyond him to deny her anything she wanted in that moment. “I thought you said blueberries first.”

“Get your tail in this bed, Wilde,” she hummed, her paws slowly sliding up his full length, tilting
his shaft towards her so she could glide her tongue around the tip slowly.

“Okayahahaha!” The word escaped his muzzle with a breathless laugh when her mouth enveloped the tip, his eyes rolling back into his head for a moment before he reached down with one paw to rest it between her ears. Ears that folded down as she gave a little groan around his length. It was very hard to resist the desire to urge her to go down just a bit, which was a mute point when she sucked hard enough to have his knees wobble. “What you’re doing right now is robbing me of my desire to move, Fluff. I may just stand right here and let you keep doing that.”

Knowing that she had never done this, for him or anyone before him, had him a little surprised by the hunger she showed when she continued by sliding her muzzle further down his length of her own bidding. It was when he felt the head nudge the entrance to her throat, felt the pressure increase when she swallowed even as she drew in a deep breath and released it as a moan, that his knot did start to swell into her paws. Paws that squeezed down firmly when she realized it, causing his hips to buck forward suddenly of their own accord. A light cough that escaped her when the tip pressed further than he intended snapped him out of the pleasure-blind stupor she had so easily put him in. He quickly raised his paw off of her head, looking down at her to apologize as he tugged his hips back a bit. A surprised snarl of pleasure escaped him when the pressure of her mouth only increased, her paws squeezed around the thickening bulb of his knot tightly as she pulled herself forward until he touched the back of her throat again.

“Sweet Fox Jesus, Carrots,” he groaned, actually feeling her throat stretch and convulse as she swallowed again, this time without the cough as her silky paws started to squeeze him in a slow rhythm. “Are you trying to kill me or make me lose my mind again?”

It was only because of how aware they both were, how comfortable and safe they felt knowing even as a savage he wouldn’t hurt her, that they could grin at each other. Which for him sent an erotic thrill through him, because she grinned around a muzzle full of fox dick as she slowly pulled back. Her face took on that considering expression again as she licked her lips, then the tip, and finally slowly down the shaft again. Her nose twitched every time it brushed against the now throbbing crimson. She was scenting him, tasting him, and was trying to decide how she felt about it.

“I like it,” she declared, causing him to raise a brow as she ducked down low enough to press a kiss to the cream-colored, less dense fur of his sac. It gave him a fantastic view of her rump. Round and perfect, a hint of her mound seen when her hips arched, with the tail above it twitching now and then as she nuzzled him. He ground his teeth with a little whimper when she lightly suckled on one orb, deciding that she was trying to drive him savage when she released him to the cool air again.

“I’m glad I like it. You certainly seem to like doing this to me, so I was hoping I would.”

“It’s a little more natural for foxes to eat bunnies, though,” he chuckled breathlessly when she turned her attention to his knot. Her eyes were noticeably wide, likely realizing that she wasn’t able to wrap her paws around the full girth of it even when she tried. Which made him grin. “It gets bigger when it’s inside you.”

“You’re kidding?” she asked, looking up at him with one brow raised. When he gave her his best bland look, she looked back to the knot, a slow shiver racing through her as he intentionally flexed and made it throb thickly. “I’m impressed. With myself. No wonder I feel so full when we’re tied. I’m never going to fit that in my mouth.”

This caused him to raise one eyebrow. “You were planning on trying?”

“Hm,” was her reply as she looked up, watching his face when she squeezed her paws around it. “Foxes can’t orgasm without stimulation to the knot, right? I’ll just have to use my paws on this, while my muzzle handles to rest.”
“Even without the knot, I might still be too big. You don’t have to,” he began, only to grow silent outside of a growled moan when she ran her wet tongue slowly but firmly over the front of the bulge.

“Nick, have you ever known me to do anything halfway?”

His expression of general acceptance said it all. She did have a point. It even brought fond memories of their first time together, where the comparatively tiny bunny had all but forced him to knot her. And she had never accepted less than all of him since then. Given her ‘I can do anything’ attitude, which had led her to do everything she set out to do, he shouldn’t have been surprised.

“I suppose not,” he replied, looking down at her with a quirked brow. The thrum of pleasure and arousal was a constant now, steady but eager as she traced her fingers up the length of him. “Just letting you know, what you’re doing now is more than enough. You’re always more than enough.”

The grin that climbed her muzzle when he said this could only be described as pleased, teasing, and sexy as hell. Which was why it surprised him when she released his length and moved away from him. Given how cold this made the now achingly ready length of him feel, it was no surprise that he was forced to restrain the disappointed frown that threatened to form. Until she spoke, that was.

“Nicholas Wilde,” she chirred, knee walking that incredibly sexy body back into the center of the bed, an action which caused the bowl of blueberries to topple off and spill out over the floor. Neither of them paid attention. She simply stayed on her knees and patted the pillow at the head of the bed. “I’m not going to stop until I have that knot pressed against my nose while you cum down my throat.”

And it was very, very cute, the way he could tell she was blushing because of what had just left her mouth. Sexy as it was - and by god, it was something he would likely have wet dreams about just because she’d said it - her eyes darted away from him with a touch of shyness, and her ears dropped back again. Maybe to hide the fact that the inside of them was burning red, though it just as easily could have been because of the way savage greens narrowed on her hungrily. Sometimes, in the heat of the moment, she did seem to forget that she was a mostly innocent farm bunny. It was both arousing and endearing to the fox and compelled him to accept her beckons by climbing into the bed on all fours. Violet eyes were heated as she watched him, fascinated to the point that she licked her lips when he nuzzled her belly with flaring nostrils. He drew in the sweetly aroused scent of her as he moved past, felt the shiver race through her when he rubbed the full length of his naked body against her front and ended the motion by flipping his tail over her shoulder. Feeling her nuzzle into it with a contented sigh, he curled himself around her just long enough to nip at her tail before he rolled over to sit at the head of the bed with his back against the pillow.

“Try not to kill me in the process, Fluff,” he said, grinning wide enough to show a good number of teeth as she moved closer.

“No promises,” was her reply as she slid her fingers into the fur of his chest.

Supporting her weight against him as she leaned in closer, his grin was lost when she pressed her lips to his. His scent mingled with her scent, earthy arousal, and fox, as she nipped his lower lip, tempting him to deepen the kiss until their tongues met with an easy sensuality that he knew wasn’t going to last long. He knew this because her paws had already moved down beyond his belly fur, gently caressing the sides of his cock with featherlight teases until his growl melted into the kiss. He felt her smile slightly, just a twitch at the corner of the lips that were sealed against his, as urgency rose and his tongue explored her mouth with more fervor. He was breathing heavily all over again
when she broke the kiss, tilting his head back when she nuzzled her way under his muzzle to breathe in his scent. She had told him that the lightly floral scent reminded her of home; if home was also mingled with the musk of aroused male fox. That she showed only appreciation and love for the smell of him as she continued to kiss her way down the side of his lightly rumbling throat had contentment rolling in to join the need that she was quickly building.

He was hers, and he had a feeling that she knew it. He was a subject to her whims, a willing slave to her surprising and often seemingly endless need for him. The way she made him feel, now more than ever, had become necessary in his life. It went beyond the sex, beyond the pleasure and the need. The simple fact that she made him feel needed and wanted in ways that he hadn’t known he was capable of made him want to find ways to give her the world. When something as sexually charged as the hot exhale of her breath on his belly as she nibbled her way down his torso made him feel as loved as aroused? He knew he would have laid his life at her feet.

And being male, that feeling became even more intense when he felt the touch of her lips on the tip of his arousal again. Lips that trailed wet, open mouthed kisses from the tip all the way down to the throbbing mass of his knot, and then even beyond that. He fought the desire to close his eyes as the pleasurable sensation threatened to rob him of thought, mostly because he wanted to enjoy the view. She was down almost on her belly now as she lapped at him with her small but warm tongue, which had her hips hiked up high. And he enjoyed the way she jumped a little when he slid his large paw over one cheek, massaging the firm but malleable flesh he worked his fingers down the cleft of silky white fur.

Her moan was long, loud, and strained: almost painfully so. He felt the trilling vibration of it pressed against his length as she buried her nose into his groin fur, drawing a throaty growl to rise in his chest. The moan was expected, considering how wet she was when he touched her. Not that he had expected she was doing what she was doing just for him, but the fact that it aroused her so much had a clear effect on them both when he ran the pad of one finger over the slick mouth of her sex. She let out a trembling cry and pushed back into that paw, the muscles of her rear flexing as she eagerly squirmed against his touch. When he relented and allowed the thick digit to slide into the welcoming heat, relief was the note of the groan that spilled from her muzzle. It was so basic and beautifully sensual that he almost forgot that she had plans for him. The desire to turn her around and take her right then almost won out before she silenced her own moans by raising her head and sliding him into an eagerly sucking muzzle.

“Judy,” was the only intelligent sound to come from him, the shockingly sudden, hungry, and deeper than before sucking of his mate causing any other words to die as a gargled moan. His paw clenched on her ass, sinking his finger deeper, which ripped another moan from her and seemed to encourage her to take him deeper. The nudge at the back of her throat was felt and a moment’s pause was dismissed by both as his paws slid to the back of her head and eased her down. Not only did she not resist, she urged him as she swallowed around the head of his cock as it slipped past the threshold. When there was a moment where she seemed to struggle and he eased the pressure on the back of her head, she countered his consideration by wrapping her fingers tightly around his knot. The way she squeezed, rolling her fingers up the mass of aching flesh encouragingly, worked in time with the continued rise and fall of her muzzle as she took him deeper. The fact that her inner muscles tightened on his finger in the same rhythm told him exactly what she was doing.

He was still hers, after all. And completely at her mercy.

Teasing and self-control only lasted so long, he knew. Green eyes widened when he felt the brush of her nose and the light tickle of fur against the top of his knot. He couldn’t decide if his mouth dropped open in awe or in pleasure, but it didn’t matter when she swallowed around him suddenly. The slick ripple of her throat and the puff of her breath in his crotch fur as she pulled back and slid
back down with obvious effort written all over her face was all it took. If her intent was to have him cum right then, his body was more than willing to comply as his sac tightened and his knot throbbed thickly.

The tight seal of her throat and sucking muzzle combined with the squeeze of her paws made the pleasure blinding and almost overpowering when the climax rushed over him. It came hard and fast as her muzzle touched more firmly against his knot and stayed there. The thick pulse that caused his knot to thicken further as the first spurt of cum shot down her throat was almost as much relief as it was pure sexual delight. The ache of need became the heaven of release with every twitch of his sac, every rope of his seed that he fed directly into her belly release tension in a world where pleasure overtook everything else.

She didn’t try to pull away. Didn’t even seem aware of what was happening beyond the fact that her hips started to buck against his paw, which compelled him to quicken and deepen the pace of the finger inside of her. She joined him in orgasm, which honestly surprised him through his pleasure. The scent of her arousal spiked as did the heat inside of her and she clamped down around him so tightly that he remembered what it meant to be jealous of his finger. The struggle and strain of taking his full length became huffed moans through her nose, moans that were cut off now and then as she swallowed around him. There was no inhibition in her, only hunger as she pressed her hips back in a quick humping motion while at the same moment nuzzling the pulsing flesh of his knot in what almost looked like contentment. She had gotten what she wanted, after all.

All in all, it was unquestionably the hottest moment of his life to date.

Slumped over her as he became more coherent, finger pressed so deep that his palm rubbed against her tail as she rolled her hips in languid circles through her own afterglow, his attempts to catch his breath were distracted by the fact that she wasn’t lifting her head. In fact, she stayed right where she was, in the way of canines, his release continued. He could feel her throat rippling around him, and the whisper of her breath. Which made him realize: she could swallow and breathe at the same time. In fact, she seemed perfectly content to do just that. Suckle, swallow, inhale, suckle, swallow, exhale. He really felt no need to disturb the moment as she continued to nurse and swallow. It was as relaxing as it was insanely arousing, especially the one time she drew back to drink him directly from the tip as she met his eyes with sparkling lavender before she swallowed him down again with a slick gulp that almost had him bucking into her muzzle again.

“That was amazing,” she said when the flow finally slowed and his knot started to recede. She had drawn back, licked the tip for a moment with a look that was now pure enjoyment on her face, before speaking. Aside from a little roughness in her voice and the fact that one paw kept massaging her throat, she seemed no worse for wear. In fact, he was pretty sure she was in better shape than he was. “You didn’t stay hard as long.”

“It’s a full-length massage inside of you, Carrots,” he said, his voice coming out far more drained than he really felt. He kept his body loose and relaxed, his gaze following her through half-closed lids. No doubt, from her content and ‘I did good’ pat on the back expression, she thought she had all but killed him. And she wasn’t far from the truth. But he had enough energy to catch his breath as he watched her like a predator watching prey from the shadows. Made all the better when she innocently licked her palm after releasing him. “And you took the words out of my mouth. You are amazing, you realize.”

She gave a little snort in reply to that, though he could see the inside of her ears blush as she leaned in and kissed the side of his muzzle. “You’re just saying that because bunnies can breathe and swallow at the same time.”
“Oh, so you were aware of that particular talent,” he chuckled, rolling his head to follow her as she moved to the edge of the bed. The view this afforded him when she looked out over the spilled blueberries was enough to prevent him from going fully soft, which didn’t surprise him at all. He swallowed the growl when the white and gray butt facing him gave way to now flushed pink folds when she leaned over, reaching for the bowl before she gave up and just crawled down on all fours. He took this moment to raise the paw, still damp with her juices, to his muzzle to slowly lick and suck the sweet taste from his fur. An action that quickly had him rolling onto all fours so he could follow the source of that deliciously feminine flavor.

“It’s common knowledge to bunnies, though I don’t think it comes up often in conversation,” she replied, as he heard the plop of berries being dropped into the bowl. A quick peek over the edge told him that she was still on all fours as she crawled around to pick them up. “Basic anatomy, really. This particular application isn’t something that I’ve heard of, but it was…”

She was cut off when he pounced her from the edge of the bed. The surprised “Omph!” that escaped her hardly worried him. He had tackled her a lot harder than this before during training, though he generally didn’t follow up by pinning her shoulders to the ground with both paws and closing his teeth on the back of her neck in a possessive bite. And how he loved the fact that the surprised sound that escaped her quieted when she felt the thick length of his cock slide between the satin fur of her butt-cheeks for a firm grind. Her eyes fluttering closed, hips rising eagerly to invite him to take what she knew he wanted as she crushed blueberries into the carpet. The cry of pleasure that escaped her was mingled with his growl as he adjusted his hips and slid deep into the welcoming heat of her sex. He didn’t bother to pretend to start slow and gentle as he claimed his mate fully for the first time in what seemed like forever to them both.

They were an exhausted mess afterward. Somewhere in the rush for more pleasure and passion, she had ended up rolling him onto his back and riding him as she faced away from him. This new position and the new sensations it brought for them both had been enough to drive them over the edge until she had collapsed back onto his chest with her legs splayed and his knot tightly gripped by her eager body. The afterglow was lazy this time for both of them. Nothing to do but wait, as his paws caressed the silky fur of her chest. He delighted in causing little shivers to race through her when he searched out and lightly rubbed his finger pads over the hidden nipples under that fur until she was rolling her hips against him again with little whimpers. When he responded by thrusting against her lightly, it only took a few minutes to have her cumming again. A fact that delighted him to no end once she slumped against him as an exhausted ball of well-fucked fluff.

“Is it different?” she asked lazily, her head tilted back so her ears rested over one of his shoulders as she looked up at him.

“Not that I can tell,” he admitted, knowing exactly what she was talking about. The change in him was not just the eyes. Settled and calm as he might have been, he was aware of far more instincts pulling at him than had previously been there. “But then again, we are still very new to this. It helps that I’m not worried about hurting you anymore, even if I were to go full savage.”

“You were never going to hurt me, Nick,” she replied softly, turning her head to the side to rub her muzzle over his chest.

“Tell that to your arm.”

She gave a little snort as she lifted it, looking at the bandage for a moment before she waved her paw easily. “Exactly my point.”

“Hm,” he muttered as he lifted his head long enough to lick once between her ears before he weakly laid back. “A good point. I accept our logic.”
“When we get married, who is taking whose last name?” she wondered aloud after a few more minutes of comfortable silence. The question surprised him, in part because he had almost forgotten that they were engaged at all in the madness of the last week. The reminder warmed him, drew a smile to his muzzle.

“Nicholas Hopps,” he said, testing the name out first just to be fair.

“Ew,” she laughed, the sound delighted even as she made a face of distaste. “That sounds so wrong on you, Mr. Wilde. Hm… Judith Wilde.”

“Judith Wilde,” he repeated, both of them considering it for a moment before they grinned. “You are a wild little bunny.”

“I am perfectly civilized!” she protested, smirking as she squeezed down on his knot until he growled. “Except when you’re involved. You make me a little savage.”

“Don’t blame me, Miss ‘I swing from vines on my second day of work’ Hopps,” came his retort, which had her smacking his side lightly.

“That was your fault. If you had left on the tram when I told you to, none of that would have happened.”

“Oh yes,” he said, rolling green eyes up as his fingers teased down her ears slowly. “Then I would have missed being tied to you by vines. Almost like the rainforest was giving us a sneak peek. And then another one much later.”

“I like being tied to you, Mr. Wilde,” she chuckled, his voicing joining hers a moment later before she continued. “So, your name then. It fits me better than Hopps does you.”

“Unless you want to go with WildeHopps.”

She blinked as she turned her eyes up to him again. “WildeHopps?”

“Yeah. Keep both names,” he explained, scratching the base of her ear in a way that made her foot twitch and her muscles squeeze around him pleasantly. “Judith Wilde Hopps.”

“Meh, not sure that really works. It should be ‘Judith Hopps Wilde.’”

“Change ‘Hopps’ to ‘Jumps’ and we have the truth of it,” he said, a broad grin cracking his muzzle when she sent a playful glare at him.

“You did the jumping this time, Fox. And I think it sounds better if I just go with your last name as is,” she finished, a statement that pleased him more than he had expected. He hadn’t really thought it mattered until she admitted that she wanted his name. Now? Now it was just warming.

“All right then. Judith Wilde.”

“Mr. and Mrs. Wilde,” she hummed, letting her head relax on his chest to give him easier access to her ears. “My mother is going to give birth to a whole new generation when she gets this news.”

“Hm,” was his only reply, and anything else he might have come up with was cut off when the phone on the bedside table started to ring. They both did absolutely nothing to move towards it or even acknowledge it at first. “If that’s Jack, I might have to reconsider my current state of inner peace.”
“Maybe it’s Wolford,” she suggested, though they still didn’t move. Eventually, the ringing stopped to their relief. “They can call ba…”

The tone of his cell phone ringing came from the bathroom this time, making them both roll their eyes with a synchronized sigh. As always, it was an interesting and not entirely comfortable adjustment as they prepared to move. She turned herself around, very slowly as not to strain the tie and injure one or the other, and wrapped her legs around his hips as he rose and made his way towards the bathroom. Once the phone was in his paw, he carried them back towards the bed, took his sweet time sitting, and allowed her time to get comfortable in his lap before he pushed the Talk button.

“Is this Jack?” he demanded right off, making her muffle a giggle into his chest fur.

“This is Jack. I’ll be brief.”

“You’ll have to be,” he replied, setting his nose between her ears lightly to breathe her scent slowly. “I have a bunny attached to my hips right now, and I intend to have her there for the rest of the day. And most of the night.”

He grunted when she play punched him in the side, grinning down at her as he heard Jack’s sigh on the other end of the line.

“Acceptable. Though you need to get some sleep tonight and be packed before bed. We are leaving at dawn.”

“Leaving?” he said, frowning down at his mate with a slow shrug of his shoulders. “Where are we going.”

“I need a vacation,” came the simple reply, “and you’re coming with me - to Bunnyburrow.”

Chapter End Notes

Let me explain… Before anyone wonders if they’re missing a chapter.

Savage: Part 3 (the events in the armor car) is still coming. But it will be coming a little later in the story at the right time. Trust me. It will be worth the wait. ;)

On the chapter itself… This does mark the end of "Season One" of The Savage Dark. What I mean by that is that the "Savage Nick is out of control" thread is over. We have a whole new level of savage Nick, and I think people will like him! Just like most ended up liking my version of Jack. ;)

Sorry for the delay in getting this done. I actually deleted and restarted twice because the flow didn't feel right. This sets them back to classic WildeHopps humor, verbal play, affection and... One hell of a love scene.
Chapter Summary

Case File – The Savage Dark

Reporting Agent: Code Name – Jack “Savage”

Affiliation: Unknown

Current Whereabouts: Unknown

Agent Status: Unknown (Active)
Recording Continues:

“Officers Wilde and Hopps. There are three primary traits that come to mind when they are brought into any conversation, or recording in this case.

“Breaking it down in order of importance to me, personally, the third trait is their excellence in the field. When I first met them it was no secret that I had my doubts, as I am sure they had the same about me. As their often-obnoxious desire to be with one another, intimately and otherwise, was constant and apparent almost every moment they were in the same room, I was convinced that they would never be able to carry out the duties required of them at the ZPD. Their record said something different and with the unique situation we found ourselves in following my introduction, I was given little choice other than testing their abilities myself. On the day we left for Bunnyburrow, many of those doubts had been set aside. Moving forward, I found them to be more than capable and dedicated. Not only to each other, which was most obvious, but to the city and their duty to it.

“Second most important is their friendship. Tense as our relationship was, there was already something of a thaw beginning. Rather quickly on both sides. I had been reminded, with a gun in my face, that they were not the type of mammals that could be dismissed as an assignment to be handled. Seeing them as more than that came more quickly. They were unpredictable and uncontrollable by the standards of how I normally took on those I was assigned to protect. They never really accepted me as their superior, even when they were following orders. Without that to balance things, I found myself growing fond of them. Their sense of humor no longer grated on my nerves as it had at first, their affection for each other was no longer a burden, and I found myself caring about their fate as more than just possible leads on the case. As dangerous as this normally would be, when combined with their own capabilities as agents and officers, I cannot help but accept that their friendship became as much a benefit as it was a reality.

“Finally, there is their primary trait in my mind; the trait that in some very strange ways links the other two together.

“Officer Wilde and Officer Hopps are completely and happily insane.”

Morning was always kinder to her than it was to Nick. The rumor of a bunny’s stamina, sexually and otherwise, was not far from the truth in her experience. This was especially true when combined with her constant workout routine to stay in shape, allowing her to keep up with the larger mammals in the ZPD. Not that Nick wasn’t a willing, if sometimes grouchy, participant in her workouts. It was just that he was also nocturnal, a fact that she had grown accustomed to as his partner long ago. It was a little different when Jack dragged them out of their bedroom at the crack of dawn. He hadn’t been kidding, calling their room at 6:00 am and telling her that they had exactly half an hour to be down at the car. Mildly annoyed, in part because the time frame didn’t allow her the chance to wake Nick up the way she would have preferred, she had managed to drag the grumbling fox out of bed after reluctantly deflecting his wondering paws.

That morning, she learned that he was fully capable of seducing her without being fully awake or even opening his eyes.

Forcing him into the shower alone was a task by itself, because somehow, even when half-lidded with sleep, the savage eyes managed to take on a predatory gleam that made her heart race. It was only because she was certain someone would come knocking as soon as they started that she
managed to leave him to his shower, busy herself packing, and not drag him into the shower with her when he stepped out wet and naked. When her own shower was finished, she came out to find that he was wearing comfortable clothing. Which for him meant he had slipped into the same sort of Hawaiian shirt and khaki pants that he had been wearing back in his hustler days.

It wasn’t until they were settled in the back seat of what looked like a brand new white Sedan that her fox had shown his reluctance to wake up all over again. Sleepy greetings were given to Wolford, who sat in the driver’s seat with a grin on his muzzle, and Jack was flatly ignored as he tipped over and surprised her by snuggling his head into her lap without preamble. It wasn’t that she was surprised by the action so much as the normality of it. No hesitation, no permission needed. He simply knew he was welcome and once his head filled her lap, he closed his eyes with a sigh of contentment and quickly slipped off to sleep. It was so perfectly normal and yet so perfectly new for them at the same time.

The drive was silent for a time, save for the occasional hum from Jack’s phone and the tapping of keys as he replied to whatever messages he received on an almost constant basis. It was after half an hour that her own phone chimed a message in her pocket, forcing her to lift her hips to reach for it. The grin was automatic when Nick lifted his head, but quickly replaced with a bite to her lower lip when the fox’s reaction to the motion was to turn his muzzle to squeeze it between her thighs. A quick glance up front told her then neither of their companions had noticed, so she placed the phone on the seat beside her before reaching down to cup his head with both paws. He grumbled, huffing a quick breath out through his nose and frowning slightly when she turned his head so that his nose was pressed against her belly instead, then settled back into sleep.

Sighing slowly, in part because she shared his sentiment in her own way, she reached for her phone and saw that the message was from her sister, Beth. Opening it curiously, her eyes widened and her muzzle dropped open when she read the text.

B: Knots are so awesome!

Her ears dropped back as she stared at the message for a long moment in silence, her fingers cupped around the phone as if doing so would hide the message that only she could see anyway. After a moment to process the possibilities, she held back a little groan as she quickly typed a reply.

J: If you ran off and found a random fox, I am going to pull your ears out.

B: Of course he’s not random! I’ve known him for years. William? You remember William F’Talis, from school?

J: We were in different grades, so no.

B: He’s like you! Sorta. He went off to Zootopia for a while. But he’s back now. He works for daddy!

J: That’s… Nice?

B: It really is. He says hello. And this feels awesome!

J: Are you, right now???

B: Yeap!

J: Goodbye, Beth!

B: Call me later! I want to talk about it!
Don’t bet on it, she thought, running her fingers over the bridge of her muzzle for a long moment before remembering that they were on their way to Bunnyburrow. Rolling her eyes skyward for a moment when she realized that she wouldn’t be able to dodge her sister once she arrived, she looked down at the screen again.

J: I am on my way to Bunnyburrow now.

B: Oh, come on. He’s not going to eat me… Or maybe he will! Don’t be a mom, sis.

J: Not because of that! I’ll explain later. And we’ll talk later.

B: Yay! Maybe in a few days. I am going to ride this fox until…

She stopped reading at that point, though there was a good deal more in the last text to read, and leaned her head back against the seat. It wasn’t as if she could blame her sister or worry about the fox she was with. That would be a little hypocritical of her, obviously. Her concern, as a sister, was that Beth had taken a fox as a lover for all the wrong reasons. The obvious and somewhat obnoxious fascination her younger sibling had shown for her relationship with Nick could lead her to search for the same herself. Someone that young, getting into something she didn’t fully understand…

Sitting up quickly enough to cause Nick to stir in her lap, she tapped a few more words.

J: Foxes mate for life.

Waiting for the reply, she lowered her eyes to Nick, who remained peacefully unaware of her sister’s hijinks for the time being. A warm smile grew on her muzzle, her free paw reaching down to caress the black tip of one ear, causing it to quiver slightly but not flick away when she traced her finger along the rim. Despite what a lot of mammals would say, she could clearly remember the male he had been before they’d become mates. She could remember the smart ass hustler who had almost succeed in making her believe that her dreams would always be only that. She could even remember how distrustful she had been during their first meeting, no matter her belief that she was beyond such specist thoughts. She’d had absolutely no attraction to him then. Not only were they different species but he had been a jerk; a bastard who stood in her way with every little step she took towards solving the case.

With one finger, she traced the line of his muzzle where cream met orange until the light touch was lost into the thicker fur of his cheeks. What changed had never been the old fairytale of ‘love showing the inner beauty’ or anything like that. Her attraction to him had started way before she’d loved him. That was how she saw it, anyway. It had been one of those days when he waited for her until she’d left work, after solving the case and convincing him to apply for the Academy. The grinning fox that had greeted her with a letter of acceptance from said Academy had laughed when she’d hugged him delightedly. Not their first hug, but the first hug where she’d been pressed against the full length of his body with her face buried in his shirt.

Right then, it had struck her. At that moment, when she’d breathed in deeper than normal and realized that the musky and strangely floral scent of male fox made her stomach flutter, an ‘Uh oh’ ghosted through her mind. Trying to brush it off hadn’t worked, especially when he returned her grin and had her trying desperately to get that ‘just friends’ vibe back. It had never returned, of course. Weeks turned into months, months into a full year. Every day that passed, every minute spent with him at her side as her partner and her best friend, increased that attraction until it had very literally driven her into heat. He wasn’t attractive to her just because she loved him. He was gorgeous.

The reverie was broken when her phone chimed again, a small groan escaping her muzzle when she realized it wasn’t a text, but a Muzzletime request by her parents. She debated for a few rings,
trying to decide if the risk of having Beth be the first one to mention her visit was worth missing the call.

“Hey guys!” she said with forced cheer after making her choice. “I was just about to call you!”

“Hey there, Carrot Cake!” Stu said his chubby face lighting with a large, toothy smile that warmed her despite her misgivings. “Now, I know it’s early, but your mother and I couldn’t wait to share the news!”

“Stu, at least find out how she’s doing first,” Bonnie chided as she moved closer, her softly aged face filling the screen. “How are you, sweetie?”

Both paws cupped the phone as her face softened further. She adored her parents, as annoying and backward as they could be at times. “I’m doing fine. We’re…”

“Mathew, put that down!” Stu’s voice interrupted, followed by an apologetic mumble from one of her nephews. After the kit seemingly obeyed, Stu nudged his way in again, moving too close to the camera until all she could see was his nose. “We’re expanding the burrow!”

“Oh, dear,” Bonnie sighed, making Judy grin when she tossed her arms up in exasperation before she gave a reluctant nod. “Your father thinks it’s the biggest news in the world, of course.”

“Well, how much bigger can it get?” he asked, looking perplexed at his wife’s lack of enthusiasm before he turned a grin to Judy. “Two of your siblings have asked to move their new families in. At first, we thought about moving a few things around to squeeze them in but then we got to talking and decide that now was as good a time as any to expand. So, I brought an architect in from Zootopia!”

“Imagine that!” Judy said, quickly putting two and two together before hearing the rest of the story. Beth had mentioned that William had moved to Zootopia and that he now worked for their father. It was a strange feeling to be talking to her father about the very fox that was very possibly still naked with her younger sister, at the very least. A change of subject was in order. “Speaking of which, I’m headed into Bunnyburrow myself for a while.”

“Oh, that’s great! Bonnie!” he shouted, turning and looking surprised to see his mildly annoyed wife right beside him. “Oh. Judy is coming to visit!”

“Yes, dear. I heard,” she said patiently, then turned her smiling face to the screen. “This is a surprise. When will you get here? We’ll have to set up a room, and let your brothers and sisters know. Do you need us to pick you up at the train station?”

Realizing that she actually didn’t know when they would arrive or what their arrangements would be, while so desperately hoping that she wouldn’t be staying with her family on this particular trip, she leaned forward as far as Nick’s head in her lap would allow her. “That’s a good question. When will we get there, Jack?”

“We’ll be driving the whole way,” replied the striped rabbit, who turned his head halfway to meet her gaze with one blue eye. “So, we should arrive just before noon barring any major traffic disasters.”

“Jack?” her father asked, leaning in beside her mother. “Who’s Jack?”

“Oh, right,” she said, and not really thinking about it, turned her phone to face the bunny in the dark suit and tie. “Mom, dad, this is Jack… Lapin.”

“It’s a pleasure to meet you both, Mr. and Mrs. Hopps,” Jack said, his voice taking on a friendly
tenor that she hardly ever heard from him. Something more like talking to a normal bunny, rather than ‘Agent Savage’ to be sure. “And there is no need to put yourselves to any trouble. I have a house in Bunnyburrow where we’ll be staying.”

It clicked in her head the moment she heard her father’s gasp what this must have seemed like to her parents. At least, what it would have seemed like to them if they still had the hope of getting her to move back to Bunnyburrow and start a family like a ‘normal’ bunny.

“Bonnie, she’s with a bunny! And a handsome one, too!”

Which was exactly what was happening.

If anything, Jack looked side swiped for a moment before he opened his mouth to deny it as her father went on one of his “She’s with a bunny, she’s with a bunny, she’s with a bunny!” chants that made Judy sigh slowly and lean back in her seat. She gave Jack an apologetic shrug, which he returned with a look of mild pity before she raised the phone to look at her father’s delighted face and her mother’s, thankfully, more reserved and curious one.

“We’ll see you two soon,” she promised, managing to squeeze that in between her father’s gleeful misunderstanding before she swiped her paw over the screen to close the call. Slumping back in the seat with her ears dropped back, she cast her eyes skyward in an exasperated stare at nothing in particular.

“Well, that was something,” Nick said, drawing her gaze as he rolled over to lay on his back with his head still in her lap. When she looked down, she was greeted by the sight of a mouth full of long, sharp teeth and a curled tongue as he yawned hugely mid-stretch. Blinking sleep away, he turned his eyes up to her and she was relieved to see that he seemed to be in good humor about it when his lips curved into a slow grin. “Flash a secret agent in their face and they think you’ve traded up for a new model.”

“I know. I’m sorry,” she murmured, wrapping her arms around his head as she leaned over to place a light kiss on his smiling lips.

“For what?” he replied, his voice was lazy as his expression when he turned his cheek into her stomach to rub against it before green eyes settled on hers. “It’s not like you’re actually trading up. Unless there’s something I’m missing.”

“I have no interest in trading up for an inferior model,” she said, grinning when Jack snorted from the front seat. She glanced up at him, catching his eyes in the rear-view mirror. “You knew what this was.”

“I feel so used,” the striped bunny sighed, rolling his head back to look at the pair of them. “Which is interesting considering we’ve never slept together.”

“I’m not going to sleep with you, Jack,” she quipped, causing Wolford and Nick both to snicker lightly. “Though there are still moments that I almost want to kiss you.”

“Hey now,” Nick grumbled, causing her to grin down at him.

“Just because of what he did to get you back,” she murmured, rubbing around his ears lightly until he hummed low in his throat and tilted his head back to expose his chin. Turning her attention to the exposed cream-colored fur, she scratched her tiny claws through his thicker fur with alternating slow caresses and quick strokes. “You know you’re the only one I want, Slick. Now I just have to remind my parents of that.”
“Then you should marry me,” he said, catching her paw with his lightly. She smirked when he turned the paw in his, placing the tip of his tongue against her palm for a moment in a light kiss before nibbling on her fingers.

“Sorry, partner,” she said, her tone smug despite the flicker of emotion and sensation that ganged up on her. Eyes half closed after only a few seconds of the gentle attention, she used her other paw to stroke his muzzle gently. “But I beat you to asking that question.”

“And I gleefully said yes,” he replied, making her snort and lightly nudge his muzzle away from her fingers when he pulled one finger between his lips. “After reminding you that you have many better options. But that’s not what I mean. I meant you should marry me right now.”

The little hiccup in her chest had her paw freezing in place on his growing whiskers, her eyes widening slightly when he met her gaze with an expression that was just the right blend of earnest and playful for her to realize that he was serious. And that serious question sent her mind into a short-term tailspin, more questions than she knew how to answer all at once coming along with a warm feeling in her belly. The most important question, though, was whether or not the question came just because of her father’s reaction to seeing Jack? Looking down into the patient but hopeful eyes of the fox she loved, she knew the answer. He would accept it if she said no, that she wanted to wait because he wasn’t afraid that her parents would somehow convince her that she could do better. Those fears had been laid to rest, given everything they had been through since becoming a couple.

The bubble of excited pleasure rolled over her in a way she hadn’t felt since the first time she’d seen him in his ZPD blues, with such giddy force that she shivered from head to toe before she gripped both sides of his muzzle and closed her mouth over his. She released a small, excited sound into the kiss, one that he responded to with a softly growled laugh even as his tongue swept over hers. After she drew back, they were both grinning like idiots when they turned to face the front where both Jack and Wolford were watching them. Wolford’s ears were perked and his broad muzzle was drawn into a big, toothy grin while Jack watched with an apathetic sort of resignation when the two of them spoke at the same time.

“We need a priest.”

Most of the day was gone. After turning around to return to Zootopia for what she had assumed would be a quick and easy affair of find a church or a justice of the peace, ideas started to fly between all four in the car. This was a little bit of a surprise, given the widespread belief that males tended to leave wedding details to the females. Now a part of her understood that this was, at least in some cases, simply because the females assumed this to be true and took charge right away. But being stuck in a car with three males who clearly wanted her to be dressed in more than a simple button up shirt and jeans, a car that she was not driving, had led them on an adventure she hadn’t expected.

First, there was Jack’s insistence that they were to be separated for at least an hour before the wedding itself.

“Luck,” he said, tapping away in reply to a text on his phone. The same phone he had used to call to inform whoever was expecting them in Bunnyburrow that they would be very late. “Traditionally, you wouldn’t see each other for a full day before the wedding. But in cases like this, where it is sudden and unexpected, at least an hour will suffice. During which time, you and I are going to get you a dress. Wolford can take Nick to get a proper tux…”
“I was thinking of my ZPD uniform,” Nick, who was now sitting upright beside her, interrupted as he leaned forward to rest his elbows on the back of Jack’s chair. “And why do you get to go with Judy? Afraid the overwhelming sexual attraction will drive you to have your way with me if we’re alone?”

“That’s it, exactly,” Jack replied, sliding his phone into his jacket’s inner pocket when Wolford pulled the car over in front of a boutique. “But while I have no particular aversion to males – or foxes for that matter – I still have flashbacks of your mate shoving a gun in my face. I can only imagine what she would do if I gave into my overwhelming passion and she caught us together.”

Everyone in the car was silent for a long moment, all eyes on the stony-faced bunny before that silence was broken when the hilarity of what had been said caused her to break out in a fit of giggles. Giggles that she tried to muffle behind one paw as she pointed at the flabbergasted expression on Nick’s face with obvious delight. An expression which cleared as the fox licked the roof of his mouth once before rolling savage green eyes towards her with a toothy smirk.

“We have a problem, Carrots,” he commented, chuckling as she reached for the handle to let herself out, still fighting the giggles. “He’s learning.”

That had been four hours ago.

After what she felt was much too long choosing a pretty but simple dress that she could walk out wearing, Jack had taken her to a florist for a small bouquet of flowers that matched the dress and a tiara of roses before finally leading her into a jewelry store in the same plaza. After a short argument, during which he revealed that he was paying for everything from a personal account and not the money of the taxpayers of Zootopia, she agreed to let him buy simple gold bands for them. Promising to repay him, and finding it impossible to be miffed when he simply shrugged it off as unnecessary, she had given up on the subject for the time being.

Now she stood staring at her reflection in the small bridal room of the church waiting for word that the priest, a surprisingly young and chatty otter named Father Fisher, was ready for her to meet her soon to be husband.

Husband.

A little more than a year ago, if anyone had told her that she would be getting married before reaching her thirties, she would have laughed it off as ridiculous. Too much to do. A career to build, a dream to follow, a point to prove to those who still managed to doubt her as a cop. But back then, the idea of marriage for her had always involved the idea of moving back to Bunnyburrow, at least for a while, to start a family. But things were different now. The domestic life, a huge family, hundreds of kits running around under foot and a handsome buck to help provide for and love them all, was not meant to be hers. She had always known this, in a way. The fact that she had never been interested in a family beyond the one she already had made any past relationships all but impossible.

This had nothing to do with the reason she fell in love with Nick. The reason she was standing in front a mirror, looking at the bride she was about to become with something akin to mad glee and nervous energy all but vibrating through her fur, had not been a mad rush to escape anything. They’d both taken ample time, during which they could have screwed everything up and almost did more than once. And now that she was where she wanted to be, it was no less awe-inspiring. Ridiculously fast, considering that it had only been a week and four days since their feelings had finally been exposed. Which she supposed was the point. The knowing wasn’t required for two mammals to be in love. Love was a fact…

“Judy?”
Her thoughts came to a standstill when she saw Jack in the reflection of the mirror, the striped bunny looking like he had started the day dressed for a wedding in his dark suit and neatly presented tie. Holding the door open, he stepped aside to make room for her as he gestured for her to follow. “He’s waiting.”

Nodding as she gave herself one more look in the mirror, she found that her smile came very easily when she went to meet her mate.

Nervous.

Terribly nervous.

So nervous that he felt like he was going to lose the lunch Wolford had forced him to eat over an hour ago all over his neatly pressed blue uniform. His paws shook noticeably even as he wrung them together while trying his best not to shift from foot to foot. He waited for the doors to open. Wasn’t there supposed to be music? Some kind of march playing to announce when she arrived? Well, maybe that was just for planned events. No need for that right now, where they had decided on the spot that they wanted to be married. It had been such an intense need, one that had been growing since he’d returned to his right mind, that he hadn’t been able to stop himself from blurt it out after she tried to soothe him. It wasn’t doubt that he felt, so much as a basic level of fear. Where was she? Wasn’t the bridal room just down the hall? Had she decided not to go through with it?

“Wolford, do you want to go check on her, buddy?” he said to the wolf in a matching ZPD uniform standing beside him at the altar.

“Nick, everything is fine,” Wolford soothed gently, and Nick found it just a little annoying that the wolf looked just a little bit amused at his obvious state of nerves.

He almost managed to say something else before he stopped talking when one of the double doors at the rear clattered lightly as it opened. The three pairs of eyes, including those of the patiently waiting otter in white vestments, turned as the two bunnies walked in.

Nick hadn’t expected her to be so beautiful, which genuinely surprised him because she was already the most beautiful mammal his life had ever been graced with. Jack had been somewhat reluctant to share information on what they had been shopping for, for reasons that he now understood. Seeing her in the stunning but simple ivory dress with a bouquet of white roses held in one paw and a tiara of flowers pinning her ears back caused a lump to rise in his throat. She wore no make-up, for which he was grateful, but he could tell that she had taken the time to carefully smooth the lines of her fur around her muzzle and mouth. A mouth that was drawn a little tight at first when she stepped past the doors but quickly melted into a brilliant, toothy smile.

Fears, which he knew were common at this moment, melted away as he stood a little taller, ears perking towards her as Jack led her down the aisle with her hand linked at his elbow. Not that he noticed anyone else, cared for anything beyond the slightly damp and sparkling eyes that were focused on him when they reached the altar.

“Dearly beloved,” began the otter. Words that he was sure were supposed to be important and life changing were little more than background noise as he stared at the bunny he loved and she stared back at him. Neither one of them seemed capable of wiping the smiles off their faces or simply didn’t
care to when she released the bouquet with one paw and reached out to take his. “Does the couple have vows to share?”

“Vows?” he said, blinking as he looked to the priest for a moment then looked at Judy to see that she had a similarly perplexed look on her face. Rather than panic, he chuckled a bit as he squeezed her paw. “I don’t think there is anything that we haven’t said already.”

“If anything important comes to mind, we’ll just say it when it comes,” she replied with a light laugh, causing his smile to soften when she blinked rapidly and took a deep breath to hold back tears.

“They are something of an impromptu sort of couple,” Jack added, his voice offhanded and his grin quick when they all laughed.

“Very well,” said the otter, who didn’t seem at all phased by the lack of vows or the interruption. In fact, Nick was still a bit surprised that he didn’t seem phased by the fact that a bunny was marrying a fox. “On this blessed day, before these two witnesses, Nicholas Piberious Wilde and Judith Lavern Hopps wish to be joined together in wedded matrimony. And while, according to Jack, the two of you are completely insane…”

“Completely,” Judy agreed, causing his muzzle to split into a huge grin when she squeezed his paw tightly.

“…The bond of love between the two will be no less because of it.” The priest turned a bit to face him, small, dark eyes holding the pools of savage green without a flinch of blink. “Do you, Nicholas Wilde…”

His name alone had his heart beating hard against his chest as he stared down at the bunny he loved.

“…take this bunny to be your lawfully wedded wife?”

The smiling fox almost, just almost, said yes instantly when that question was asked. He was eager, happier than he thought he could ever be when he saw teardrops form in the corners of her eyes.

“To have and to hold, in sickness and in health…”

His tail twitched uncontrollably, and he resisted the urge to spare a glance at Wolford. He trusted that the carrot pen was in paw and ready.

“…for as long as you both shall live?”

_Oh, you’re damn right I do, father. I have never been more certain of anything._

With his eyes locked on hers, feeling just the slightest bit damp as he soaked in the moment for all of one second before he replied with a steady voice.

“Of course, I do. One-hundred percent.”

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the delay on this chapter! School grabbed my by the balls, etc etc. You know
the deal.

Hope you enjoyed. This chapter is special in more ways than one. ;)

Need You to Understand

Chapter Notes

Here it is at last! Really sorry for the extended delay! I do hope you enjoy this chapter, which is a good turning point in the story.

My proofreader is out of town right now, so there may be errors/repeated words that I missed.

Thanks to TheWyvernsWeaver who helped me decide on the direction of this chapter. :-D

Report:
Case File – The Savage Dark
Reporting Agent: Code Name – Jack “Savage”
Affiliation: Unknown
Current Whereabouts: Unknown
Agent Status: Unknown (Active)
Recording Continues:

“You think you know the reason I call the two of them happily insane, but you would be wrong. This was just the beginning. As someone who had read the case file for the Night Howler Incident, I came into this case with an understanding that at least one of them was unstable. My money was on Judy, personally. Swinging from vines in the Rainforest District, riding on the top of a train, only to later crash that train in a way that caused a considerable amount of damage to a luckily unpopulated station, and bringing down the mayor. Twice. And marrying a fox, which was another example of the two of them catching me off guard on what should have been a nice, relaxing drive.

“Of course, the choice of Bunnyburrow for our vacation was not random. It goes without saying that Judy and myself, being bunnies, were still unique at this point. While it may have been obvious to the three agencies that bunnies could not be discounted for field work, it was still a rather new revelation. In my case, a lifetime of training is not something that can be quickly replicated. And while Hopps herself did start a trend of new lapin recruits being accepted in the ZPD, there was zero chance that any other agency had recruited them without The Agency knowing.
“Which leads to the exact why. Bunnyburrow’s population is approximately %96.8 bunny, which sounds rather silly when you say it. ‘Bunnyburrow’ after all. The mammals who live there are, understandably, aware of anyone who is not a bunny, specifically when they have never seen this new mammal before. An example being, it would be impossible for an unknown wolf or panther to wander around unnoticed. There would be no mysterious vehicles parked on the side of the road for hours without someone wander over to ask if they needed assistance. Just as the abundance of small, friendly, and often obnoxiously energetic mammals can be a little much for newcomers, the appearance of a stranger causes talk, strange looks, curious stares from young bunnies.

“This sort of attention is easy to track by random observers scattered across the burrows. Whisper stations would pick up mention of strangers, which would allow us to check for new numbers running on the cell towers. There is more to it, but I think I’ve made the point clear. We were going to BunnyBurrow because it was the best place to hide in clear sight. Not hiding in a way that would prevent them from finding us, but hiding in a way that would make it impossible for anyone to reach us without encountering a wall of resistance first.

“That being said, I was also very aware that this was Judy’s hometown. And, because Judy was my responsibility, I was fairly certain that I was in for some interesting moments of familial drama. Which is why it was no surprise when they decided to delay their honeymoon to pay her family a visit and clear up some misconceptions.

“Thankfully, I wasn’t asked to come along. Family matters are not my area of expertise.”

“You can take them off, Nick,” she said, her voice surprisingly calm considering what she was asking her new husband to do. “It’s not like you can wear your sunglasses indoors all the time without someone wondering if you’re a douchebag.”

“I’m nocturnal,” he huffed slightly, causing her to grin slightly even though they were sitting on a little couch across from her clearly confused parents. Even with the explanation, which she had never really bought into even when he’d used it in the past, he reached up to remove the sunglasses as requested. “I was hoping we could try a little harder to find a working antidote before we started to parade me around your parent’s house like this.”

While her parents had reacted well to their arrival at the family burrow sans the male bunny her father had been expecting, their reaction to the slitted green eyes of a fox was about what anyone might expect from bunnies when faced with an apparent savage. Both pairs of ears dropped back as they visibly jolted, and Stu’s nose went white around the fur line as his eyes widened, his paw fumbling as he crossed his arm in front of Bonnie as if to shield her from an oncoming attack. Her mother was fairing only slightly better. Her eyes were wide, her nose twitching furiously as she stared up at Nick with a fearfully befuddled expression.

“Oh, Holy Carrot! Judy, he’s gone savage!” her father stammered, jumping to his feet in front of Bonnie while looking as if he was trying to decide if he could make a break for the next room to reach the Fox Taser she knew he always kept in the main room without leaving his wife and daughter to become fox food.

“No no! It’s okay,” she soothed quickly, her only motion being to wrap her arms around one of Nick’s as she looked between her parents with a pleading look. “It’s fine. He’s not savage!”
“Well, you could’ve fooled us!” he blustered, though he made no move to rise or run out of the room. She had to wonder how close he was to doing just that. Rush out to warn the family to lock their doors to protect them from the vicious predator, even though there hadn’t been a fatal predator attack in the Burrows in her lifetime. “Judy, why did you bring him here? Why does he look… Like that? And where is the handsome buck you were with earlier today?”

She was a little impressed with how quickly the questions came. She had expected a lot more ‘Run! It’s a savage fox!’ before they reached this point in the conversation. Not that either of her parents looked ready to forget that fact just yet, with wide eyes and twitching noses, tension in every inch of them. She knew they were ready to bolt or fight if made so much as a move in their direction right now. Which was one reason she kept an arm wrapped around Nick’s. His natural hustler instinct to charm them might have terrified them just then, so she did her best to keep him in place.

“I wanted to introduce my family to my husband,” she said at length, forcing her ears erect even as the fox beside her leaned back with a little sigh. She couldn’t mistake the sound as anything other than contentment brought about by the word ‘husband’, a feeling that she mirrored even when faced with her still confused parents. Or one confused parent. Her mom stared at her silently for a long moment before like colored purple eyes turned up to Nick curiously, and then again back to her with what just might have been the start of a smile on her muzzle.

“Your husband? That’s what I was asking about! Where is this buck?” Stu asked, a frown creasing his muzzle as he turned his head towards the door for a second. His eyes shot back to them and widened. “Oh, no! The fox didn’t eat him, did he?”

The sharp elbow to the ribs had him jerking in place, his baleful glare turned to his wife, who simply gave him a long-suffering but patiently affectionate look. “Stu, sweetie,” she soothed, reaching out to take his paw to give it a pat. “Don’t be dense.”

“Well, I think it’s a perfectly acceptable question given that she says she’s married, but the only one here is….” His words, and the animated wave of his free paw, were both cut short when he looked up at Nick with an expression that was a mix of fatherly horror and shock. “Oh, sweet cheese and crackers! He’s your husband!”

“Yes, daddy,” she said, refusing to allow herself to show her real annoyance when her dad quite literally looked ready to faint. He even swayed a little in place, his eyes turning to his wife as if looking for help only to find that they were forced on Nick. They all looked at Nick, who had raised his paw to scratch under his chin slowly and in doing so was making point of showing the golden band that circled his middle finger. She struggled to muffle the chuckle at him, the focused on her parents again. “He’s not savage. At least, not savage like you’re thinking. Okay, look, it’s complicated. All you need to know is that he’s not going to run around eating anybody.”

Her assurances combined with the fact that he had done little more than sit quietly while she explained seemed to calm them, if only enough for them to lose the look of rabbits about to bolt.

“What about the buck I saw on Muzzletime?” Stu asked finally, scrubbing his paws through the fur of his face for a long moment before he focused his uncertain eyes on her. “Who was that?”

“The buck you saw earlier today is our… Hm. What would you say he is, Nick?”

“A pain in the ass?” he quipped, giving a little snicker when she nudged her side against his with a chuckle. “Associate? Boss? Ew, forget I said that last one. We have a temporary working relationship.”

“We’re helping him with a case,” Judy added, then raised her paw as she fixed both of her parents with a firm expression. “But about Nick. You have to be okay with this. You have to accept it.”
“Judy, sweetheart,” Bonnie began, casting a quick glance at her own husband before turning her roundly cute face back to her daughter with firmly raised ears, “Of course we want you to be happy. You know that. We just never expected, well…”

“Him,” Stu finished for her, waving a paw towards Nick without looking at him. It might have been her imagination, but it seemed to her that her that they were both avoiding the use of his name. Or referring to their relationship. “Carrot Cake, we just want you to be safe. I mean, look at him. You said it’s complicated. How do you know he won’t snap?”

“It wouldn’t matter if he did snap. It wouldn’t matter if he went fully savage,” she said, a warm little smile gracing her muzzle when she saw the perplexed expressions on the faces of both her parents as they glanced at each other and back to her for answers. “I know he would never hurt me. I’ll tell you why, as long as you understand that I’m only telling you to ease your minds. I need you to understand and accept him, because nothing you do – nothing anyone does – will change a thing between us.”

Savage: Part 3

“I suppose we should start clean up,” she heard Jack say as she crouched over the unconscious wolf, her paws patting his clothing search of the keys. Other officers might have noticed her as cruisers started to form a protective ring around the armored car, but even if they did they likely thought she was feeling a lot more rational than she really was. She found the keyring, which only held two keys, and snagged them before dashing around the truck to keep herself from being seen by the distracted Jack and Bogo. She already knew that they wouldn’t let her in with Nick, just like she knew it would be the only way to calm him down.

“We’ll need a containment team to get Wilde to a safe location,” Jack continued as she jumped onto the rear bumper and shoved the key into the lock. Luckily, it was the right one and turned easily. “I’m afraid he’s gone full-savage. He may need to be sedated so he can be…”

Her heart jumped into her throat when the spill of light into the back of the armored car over the lone figure within. The vicious snarl that rose from the shadowed figure caused a shiver to race through her even as it drew the attention of the two males nearby. Left with no choice, she turned and yanked the door closed without a glance at them.

Cut off from the outside, she quickly turned to face the interior only to be met with pitch black. Sensory deprivation was a common method of suppressing the savage, she knew. The belief, and sometimes fact of it, was that a lack of light could convince the savage mind that it was night and that it was time to sleep. Of course, this didn’t really apply to a nocturnal animal like Nick. Her heart hammered in her ears when she searched the absolute dark for any sign of movement. Maybe just a flicker of the luminous eyes that she so often saw in the dark now, eyes that made her heart race for reasons that had nothing to do with the fear of panic that surged through her when the growl sounded again. Quick huffs of breath preceded the rattle of… Chains? Her paw scrambled for the phone on her duty belt, almost fumbling it before she tapped the light icon on the screen. Wincing at the sudden flare of white light that filled the previous dark, she squinted as she swung the light into the bed of the armored car.

“Oh, Nick,” she whispered, her voice choking a bit when she saw him in the center of the truck.
They had made it nearly impossible for him to move more than his head, no doubt using his previously unconscious state to make quick work of strapping him into a fox-sized straightjacket that pinned his arms around his chest. His legs were pinned together with leather straps, pulled tight enough that worried instantly about blood flow. The jacket and the leg straps were both attached to four chains that stretched out to either side of the van and pulled taut, allowing at more the writhing motion that she saw as he struggled against the bonds. But worse than all of this was the muzzle. The cage that kept his mouth mostly closed and his teeth guarded was not unexpected, but the blinders were. The heavy leather hood was strapped over his eyes and ears both, leaving him blind and deaf to the world around him, causing him to constantly toss his head as he tried to toss it off.

Tears formed in her eyes as she took the few steps to close the distance between them. Now understanding that the quick, desperate breaths were his attempts to see the world around him with scent alone, she was almost overcome with the desire to march back outside and pummel the arctic vixen. Beat her until she woke up, then beat her unconscious again. The more pressing matter was Nick, though. She placed her cell phone on the floor in the center of the bed, light facing up so she could see what she was doing when she reached forward. His muzzle snapped towards her so suddenly that she flinched but didn’t pull away when his nose twitched behind the cage of the muzzle, desperately searching for the source of the light touch to the straps of the blinder.

“Shh,” she murmured, knowing he couldn’t hear her but hoping he could at least feel the gentle hum of her voice through her fingers as she tugged at the buckle on the back of his head. He tried to twist away from her, his growls deepening to a threatening tone when she managed to free the strap and pull it free. “It’s all right, it’s all going to be all right, Nick.”

She carefully pulled the blinders away, shushing him as she did so until she could see green eyes staring up at her wildly, the green nearly swallowed by the back of his pupils for a moment before the light hit them. The shrinking of his pupils was her focus as she tried to calm him, a focus that prevented her from noticing that the cage of the muzzle itself came off at the same moment as the blinders until his muzzle was free.

The snap of his head, the flash of white and pink, was followed by a blinding flare of pain when his teeth sank into her forearm. Even when the tears of pain blinded her when his canines sank through the fabric of her uniform, she dropped the muzzle and clamped her paw over her mouth to prevent her scream from traveling when he jerked her towards him sharply. The last thing she wanted was someone from the outside trying to breach the doors, likely making things even worse.

“N-nick,” she whispered, gulping in air through hiccuped sobs as he tightened his grip and narrowed his eyes on her. “It’s okay, it’s okay partner. It’s me. See? It’s Judy.”

It seemed like forever that he held her arm like that, crimson staining his teeth as snarled at her. Her voice caused his ear to tremble, then lightly twitch while his nostrils flared and his eyes adjusted to the dim light and focused on her. She didn’t see Nick in those eyes. Not calm, smooth Nick. Not even the sub savage fox, the one who had been so passionately protective of her, was in those eyes. They were feral and toneless, as if all intelligence had fled to leave behind a fox that might well have hunted rabbit for food thousands of years ago. Still, she talked to him, reached out to him with her other paw even though the sudden jerk of his head caused a fresh flare of pain. She remembered how he had come for her, stumbling and weak from an injury that she had given him when her own mind had been savage. And she would do the same. She couldn’t do anything less.

“I’m here,” she murmured, her voice trembling slightly as she pressed her palm lightly against his nose. She could feel the puffs of breath as he sucked in her scent, and she gentled her fingers as she stroked the dark tip of his nose softly. “Please, please remember. Let me go so I can get you out of this, Nick.”
Whether it was the sound of her voice or the scent of her, she wasn’t sure, but even though the eyes of a savage didn’t change, he eased the pressure of his bite as he continued to breathe her scent. The low-toned growls faded and even as she felt his teeth slide free in what was both relief and white hot agony, those growls faded into a light whimper. His ears vanished against his skull as she withdrew her arm, his eyes falling the bleeding wound with another whimper as he started to struggle against his bonds again. Relief that he at least seemed to understand that she wasn’t a threat to him caused her to sag where she stood. With a grunt of pain, she rubbed her bloodied forearm for a moment as she glanced down at the dual rows of the bite mark and rotated her wrist slowly. Sighing in relief when she found that she could move her wrist freely, which meant he hadn’t severed any tendons with the bite, she tried to forget about it when she turned her attention back to him.

“I’ve always sort of wondered what it would feel like if you really bit me,” she murmured softly as she started by unhooking the chains that held him. Once they were done, he slumped to the floor with a whine. His trapped legs still preventing him from standing, and she gently caressed the side of his muzzle while making soft shushing sounds again. Once he settled enough for her to start working on freeing his legs, she continued, “About as bad as I expected, really. Okay, that’s a lie. That really, really hurt, Slick.”

She worked as quickly as the throbbing ache in her arm would allow her to, soon tossing the leg restraints aside before she turned her attention to the straight jacket. He made it difficult, though he didn’t become aggressive in doing so. In fact, it almost amused her when he realized that he could use his legs again and he tried to roll into all fours. This only trapped him again when he found himself chest down with no arms to hold him up, his rear legs kicking helplessly as he tried to right himself. When he gave up with a huff, she leaned over and started to unbuckle the straight jacket with a small grin on her muzzle.

“You don’t like this position as much I do, I take it?”

His distressed whine was disappointing. Hell, some part of her had hoped that a dirty joke would get something more ‘Nick’ from him. Instead, she paused for a few seconds on the last buckle before she slipped it free. The sudden slack in the jacket wasn’t lost on the fox, who quickly backpedaled away from her and started to thrash violently to get it off. About to try to calm him, she was instead forced to jump out of the way when he flung himself past her. The savage fox she loved finally broke free of the jacket by taking the lose corner in his muzzle and tearing it from his shoulders, vigorously shaking the offending article with a vicious snarl. The whipping motion struck the phone on the floor near him, sending the phone skittering across the ground as he flung the jacket out of the way. The bright green, fully feral eyes of her fox trained on her just as the phone hit the wall, plunging the cab back into inky darkness.

The blackness came far more suddenly than when she had first entered the cab, leaving ghostly afterimages floating in front of her as her mind tried to process the sudden lack of all visual stimulation. Even with ears as acute as a bunny’s, audible illusions began almost instantly with the lack of sight. She could hear him in the dark around her. The subtle sound of his breathing came from all around her, louder than it should have been as she turned her head in an attempt to decide where he actually was. Knowing he was scenting her. Stalking her. The pace of the breathing was uneven; quick one moment, deep and long the next. It caused a shiver to race through her as the combination of the sound and the darkness made her feel as though running and finding her way out of the armored car was the best option.

But that was the rational part of her mind. Reason wasn’t her strong suit when it came to Nick.

“I can’t see,” she whispered, keeping her voice as low as possible as she lowered herself to the floor and knelt there. Even so, the sound was almost offensively loud in the sightless world around
her. Unable to keep the quiver out of her voice, she reached into the dark with one paw outstretched. She hadn’t even realized that it was her injured arm but the fresh flare of throbbing pain was a stark reminder. Still, rather than withdraw it, she kept it reached out towards what she thought was the last place she had seen him. “Nick, I can’t…”

Words stammered to a stop when she felt the rush of breath against the fur of her palm, just a light whisper of it at first. Then a series of strong huffs. When the sensation vanished along with the sound of him, she felt the stirring of panic as she pushed herself forward and reached blindly towards the sensation. When she found nothing there, heard nothing else, she almost called out again only to freeze. The scent of fox was all around her, but now it was hot and close. There was a part of her, deep down, that still wanted to run when she felt that same warmth against the back of her neck. But the far larger part of her, the same part of her that had overcome her own savage instincts to trust the fox she loved, had her tipping her head forward when she felt the touch of his nose again. This time it remained, quick, warm snuffles rooting through the fur along the back of her neck for a long moment before moving on. Upward, over her ears. She couldn’t identify the sensations that rolled through her, really. A combination of fear, a spark of eroticism, contentment, and hope.

The sudden wrap of a large paw around her chest dragged her towards him before she was shoved down onto her back. She released a sharp cry of surprise, one that was responded to with an odd series of chittering barks that had her blinking blindly as she was pinned by the same paw. Then laughter bubbled up from her throat, unbidden, as her face was slathered by a long, wet tongue in a series of rapid-fire licks by her unseen assailant. The giggles that escaped her were unstoppable as the assault continued, the steady vibration of the body that pressed down over her familiar enough to tell her that his tail was wagging. The tears came as suddenly as the laughter as a sob of relief escaped her, mingling with the continued laughter as she reached up to wrap her arms around his neck.

“Oh, Nick,” she murmured, finding no resistance when she pulled him closer. Burying her face into the scruff of his neck, she tucked her muzzle under his until she was lost in the scent of fox and the warmth of his fur. “I’m sorry. I’m sorry we didn’t stop them.”

Not entirely sure if the soft whine that escaped him was a reply to her words, she simply held onto him, not even minding when he dropped most of his weight onto her. When he squirmed his muzzle around, switching it so that it was his muzzle pressed into her neck, she released a low sigh when he rested his head there and grew still aside from the soft swishing of his tail in the dark. When the light nibbles and softer licks rained along her throat, she released a heavy sigh and arched her head back further as she slowly relaxed under him. The dull tingle of pleasure and contentment that it caused ease her, even as she tried to focus her mind on how to bring him back into his right mind even as exhaustion slowly started to drag at her.

Three sharp, spaced knocks on the side of the armored car snapped her blurred mind back to reality as they both jumped slightly, bleary eyes blinking at the darkness they simply couldn’t penetrate. The grumbled growl from the male on top of her rolled through her as he lifted his nose from the fur of her neck. It took her a moment to realize that she had started to doze off with him on top of her and if the blast of fox breath in her face when he yawned was any indicator, she hadn’t been the only one. She shoved at him lightly, relieved when he allowed himself to be moved off without resistance. Reaching out towards the source of the sound, she sighed lightly when her paw connected with the wall. She returned the three knocks at the same pace, letting those outside know that she was alive and well.

For the most part, she thought, wincing as the throb in her forearm made itself obvious again. The ache was dull but constant now and when she reached down to touch the tender flesh around the wound, she found the blood sticky and partly dry, making her wonder how long she had been out.
“All right, Nick. Let’s find my phone so we can get out of here,” she muttered, partly to herself as she dropped to her knees and started to feel along the floor with one paw while using the wall to guide her. She had no idea where her phone had ended up, but she was at least halfway sure it had ended up towards the back of the truck…

The flare of light caught her off guard, the blinding glare of it forcing her to close her eyes as she almost lost her balance when she turned. It took a great deal of squinting through watering eyes before she could focus on the source of the light: the cell phone in the fox’s paw.

“Sorry, Caaarrots,” he said, his voice a little rough and colored by an odd inflection on the word as if he struggled to speak at all. “Didn’t… Know they left my phone in my pocket.”

“Oh, thank god,” she breathed, not even bothering to pull herself to her feet as she crawled over to him and threw herself into his arms. He wrapped them around her, releasing a soft rumble as she trembled and clung to him. She just held on for a long moment without a word, placing kisses into his neck fur, along the sides of his gorgeous muzzle and finally finding his mouth with hers. Her fingers gripped his cheek, digging in almost desperately as she drew him into a deep kiss that filled her senses with the taste and scent of him, allowing her fears to gradually scatter as she wrapped her legs around his waist.

“T ook you long enough,” she said when the kiss broke, her still twitching nose pressed against his as she stared into his eyes. The fact that they were still savage didn’t bother her. She could see the intelligence in them again, the warm and welcoming love looking out at her in the now bright green.

“I was kinda hoping you would give me a pawjob,” he explained, his tone playful even though his words were still unusual. It reminded her of someone speaking a non-native dialect. His grin was soft when she looked up at him with a raised brow and a smirk. “What? I did it for you when you were savage.”

“I’ll do better than that,” she murmured, leaning in close to nuzzle her nose under his chin softly as she ran her paws slowly up the side of his neck. She could feel his instant reaction as his paws slipped down to grab her hips, the nudge of his sheath against her rear when she pressed down against it apparent. “I do have the keys, after all…”

“I think you can stop there, Fluff,” Nick cut in, shifting uncomfortably beside her as he did his damnedest to keep his eyes on anything in the room except her parents. They had such lovely wallpaper! And he was going to need to have a serious conversation with his wife about not telling her parents the details of how she’d made good on that promise. “And you could have excluded the pawjob joke, too.”

He wasn’t sure if he was relieved or shocked when, as he finally did glance at her parents, they didn’t seem nearly as embarrassed as he was. In fact, that two of them were sitting on the couch, holding paws with looks of interest on their cutely plump faces as they looked between the two of them.

“Right. Sorry,” Judy said, casting an apologetic look at him before she snuggled into her side. He was grateful that bunny noses were not as acute as fox noses, otherwise, her parents might have realized that retelling that memory had affected their daughter in very un-daughterlike ways. He cleared his throat slightly and decided to take over the telling before her current change
in *mood* caused her to continue spilling details anyway.

“From the moment I realized that I was slowly being driven savage, my biggest fear was hurting her,” he said, drawing their gaze to him fully. “I was afraid that it would reach that point. The point where I was fully out of my mind, unable to control myself. I was afraid that I would see her prey, because she is. It’s not a secret that before we became more civilized, foxes and rabbits were not exactly bosom buddies.”

“But you didn’t” Stu interjected, though he frowned a bit when he turned his eyes to his daughter’s still-bandaged arm. “Except for the bite.”

“My brother bit me harder than that, and he comes over once a week for carrot cake,” Bonnie reminded him, to which he gave a reluctant nod.

“That was a moment of blind panic,” Judy reminded them as she squeezed up against his side. “Really, blind panic. Nick was blind and scared. I shouldn’t have pulled the muzzle off as soon as I did, but I couldn’t just leave him like that.”

“It was reflexive, mostly,” he said, crossing one leg as he leaned back and wrapped an arm around her shoulder to pull her closer. “I recognized her scent as soon as she was close enough, but I was confused. Couldn’t see, couldn’t hear. Everything was threatening. It wasn’t what I expected at all, really. Once I could see again, could hear her voice, I knew she wasn’t food. It took my mind a minute to wrap around who she was, but ‘mate’ came quickly enough.”

“So, now you’re not afraid of hurting her?” the older buck asked, clearly still trying to work all of it out in his mind as he looked between them.

“That was the worst-case scenario, dad,” Judy said, her head resting on his arm as she looked at her parents. “He was fully savage. I could see it in his eyes. There was very little Nick in there, except for instinct. But just like when I went savage, his instincts told him that I was his.”

“Now wait a minute,” Stu piped up, his paws raised as he looked at them with fresh curiosity and fear. “When did you go savage?”

“Oh, right. I never told you about that. It’s complicated,” she said at length, drawing his gaze when she sighed slightly.

“Well, dinner will be ready in a few minutes,” Bonnie said before another story could be told, gently patting her husband’s paw before he helped her to her feet. She looked between the two of them with an expression that Nick couldn’t really read. The moment was weighty, but at the end of it, a smile grew. Whether it was genuine or not, he wasn’t entirely sure but she still offered her paws to the two of them. “Nick, if you’re going to be a part of this family, you have to set the table.”

“Oh, but we weren’t going to stay for dinner,” Judy protested, but he hushed her by taking her mother’s offered paw and pulling himself to his feet.

“Nonsense!” he said, giving the older doe a closed-mouthed smile. No need to press his luck after that story, after all. He placed the paw on his arm and allowed the now smiling bunny to lead him out of the room. “We would be glad to stay for dinner. And I would be happy to set the table. Did you know Judy hasn’t once cooked for me?”

“Oh dear,” she replied, not noticing when Nick cast a grin and wink over his shoulder at his mate. “Well, she never was the domestic type. Obviously. One time, she tried to bake an apple pie and didn’t even bother to remove the cores!”
His tail wagged behind him in amusement when he heard Judy groan ‘Moom’ behind them, following Bonnie into the kitchen. From the quiet sitting room to the chatter of a literal legion of bunnies, curious eyes, and the smell of freshly cooked home cooking. All in all, a better ending to this first meeting than he had expected.
Honeymoon: Part 1

Report:

Case File – The Savage Dark

Reporting Agent: Code Name – Jack “Savage”

Affiliation: Unknown

Current Whereabouts: Unknown

Agent Status: Unknown (Active)

Recording Continues:

“The plan to use Bunnyburrow as a buffer against outside threats worked as expected. A full week without hostile agents getting within striking distance of any of us allowed some relaxation and allowed time for our inside mammal to begin the process of finding out who was pulling the strings and why. Questioning of Muste was also underway, but up to this point, there was no progress there. As expected of a badger, he seemed as concerned with his time in solitary as others might be watching a sunset. But we’ll get back to that later.

“As for the Wildes, I admit that I was pleased to be able to offer them the first real stress free week of their relationship. That is what a honeymoon is supposed to be, after all.”

“Oh, God!”

The deliciously sweet, blissful sounds of her moans filled the master bedroom of the small home and caused his ears to twitch as he savored the sound. His tongue slipped out over his lips as he relished the feel of silky fur under his paws and the scent of bunny with every breath. The slow roll of his body above hers caused the bed to rock lightly as he stared down at his naked mate, taking her in with silent delight. From arms that were crossed under her head so she could use them as a pillow, down the curve of her back and to the swell of the hips he currently straddled. He decided that she was like ice cream: she was a sweet, quickly melting treat that he wanted to lick from top to bottom until his muzzle was sticky and his tongue tired. The fact that his cock was a thick outline in his pants and nestled between the cheeks of her rather amazing ass was secondary to the slow slide of his fingers through her fur. Paw pads slowly working at the muscles just below the surface until another little groan escaped her.

“If I’d know you could do this, I would have married you the moment I met you,” she mumbled, her eyes closed and muzzle curved into a blissful smile.

“You’ve said that four times since we got here,” he replied lightly, though that didn’t keep his smile from spreading when she cracked open an eye to look back at him. “The last time I think was right where we are now, though I was doing more than massaging you.”
“Hm,” was her only reply for a moment, a contented sigh escaping her as she wiggled her hips a little to nudge her rear against the aching length of his arousal through the jeans he wore. She either did this to let him know that she was aware of it or simply wanted to enjoy the feel of it. Either way, it caused him to throb but didn’t cause him to change the pace of his paws. “I used to laugh at stories of newly-weds being insatiable. Now I am a little more sympathetic. You know you could take me right now, don’t you, partner? Just raise my hips a little, unzip your jeans… Oh God!”

The little outburst came as he spread his fingers out and placed his pads into the small of her back, rolling them slowly and firmly in circles. He was starting to regret not doing this for her before. The upsurge in her scent even as her muscles started to relax under his attention told him all he needed to know. She was loving the treatment, in more ways than one. It gave him a great deal more patience than his still half-savage state normally allowed.

“It can’t all be about sex, you know,” he said, keeping his tone teasing. She released a little laugh at that, maybe a result of the little grind of his own hips. “We may want to leave the house, sooner or later.”

“I wouldn’t count on it,” she replied, her voice dreamy as he ran his thumbs up and down the cords of muscle around her spine. “I am fine with this. All of it. We eat, we make love. We make love, we sleep. We wake up, we make love.”

“We breathe, we make love,” he continued with a light chuckle as he leaned over her a bit. His fingers curled around her slender shoulders and, careful to keep his claws off her skin, he squeezed them rhythmically as his thumps circled a tense patch of muscle on either side of her neck. The shiver and moan that raced through her was far more sensually charged this time, but still held a note of deep contentment. “I massage you, we make love.”

“Is that where this is leading?” she said, her voice distant and soft, her eyes closed again as she all but melted into the mattress. “Because I can find no reason to argue. Remember, just raise my hips and I’m ready at this point.”

“So you’ve said, Carrots,” he chuckled, his ears perking when she trembled a bit as he rolled his thumbs in slow circles around the base of her neck. He could see the spark of hesitance in her that followed the pleasure, a hint of uncertainty crossing her face when her eyes opened to glance back at him.

“I’m not pushing too hard, am I?” she asked, her voice taking on that softly shy tone that rarely ever surfaced. Rarely, because it only surfaced when they talked about sex. Which amused him, because as often as they made love, they didn’t talk about it much when they weren’t. It reminded him that she was still somewhat new to the whole relationship aspect of their relationship.

“You’re wondering if the fact that you’re by far the most sexually active female I’ve ever known, and that you have no problem saying when you want me, bothers me?” he asked, allowing the amused sarcasm to all but dribble into every word. His paws moved again, finger pads working firmly up the side of her neck until his thumbs brushed over the base of both of her ears. Her reaction to the touch was fantastic. Little whimpering mewls of pleasure, a jerk of her legs, an unconscious rise in her hips. He savored it, and quietly wondered if he could make her orgasm just with ear play as he murmured his reply, “No, no, no. Maybe someday in the distant future, when I’m much older and my fur’s gone gray. In that golden age when I will be feeling the wear of time and you’ll be just as ready as ever. Maybe then, when you’ve broken my hips and exhausted me to the brink of death, I’ll regret it. But I doubt it.”

Thankfully, the internet had been very informative on proper massage techniques for bunnies, though adjustments had been made simply because the instructions always assumed it would be
another bunny giving said massage. The instructions also hadn’t mentioned that the scent of aroused bunny would be deliciously tempting him to forego further romance in favor of her route of just grabbing her hips and rutting her. He didn’t even have to question if it was his more primal state of mind that had that idea running rampant. A fox didn’t have to be a savage to want what he had in his paws right now. Just male.

“Hm,” she moaned, and as she relaxed again he knew the sultry tone was not entirely her fault. His wife – and he wondered if it would ever stop giving him a giddy thrill to think of her as *his wife* – looked as relaxed as she smelled aroused. And felt aroused. Her fur was hot under his paws, paws that spread out so his fingers could slide down the fur of her back until he reached the base of her tail. “And you’ve ‘known’ many females, have you, Mr. Wilde?”

“This fox isn’t going to fall into that trap, Mrs. Wilde,” he smirked, sliding off her back and hopping off the bed quickly. He ignored her sound of protest, a protest that came with a note of desperation in her voice that was almost as hard to laugh off as the aching length in his pants. Glancing back at her with a grin, he wagged his hips and tail in a full body wiggle that had the bunny watching him with narrow eyes and a twitching nose. “Come have lunch with me, now that you’re ‘relaxed’, Fluff.”

He hadn’t even made it halfway through the charmingly furnished living room before he heard the stampede of aroused bunny charge him. Not bothering to dodge, he braced himself and rolled with it when she tackled him full body to the ground, an impressive feat for someone hardly more than half his size. His laugh was quick and delighted and was followed by a yelp of surprise as he rolled to flip her off only to have her roll with him, coming up straddling his thighs. Bright lavender eyes that were alight with fun and hot with need met his as she reached for the button of his jeans. This he reacted to by jumping her right back, one paw gripping her hip and throwing the very naked bunny to the side before he scrambled onto all fours with a ‘fierce’ growl. She shrieked lightly, then laughed as she scammed away from him to begin the chase.

They somehow managed not to knock over any of the cute furniture in their game of fox and bunny, though on more than one occasion she scrambled under a table and behind the couch to escape him. Her scent was a constant in his nose now, as the chase scratched at instincts that he couldn’t deny had everything to do with the fact that he was the fox and she was his prey. The sweetness of her scent, the earthy spice of her arousal, that toned and beautiful body in motion with every twist and turn had him nearing his limit as a male and a predator. Even the way she managed to dodge him with quick motions, though it was obvious that she wanted to be caught, sparked frustrated arousal to new heights. He wasn’t even sure when he managed to squirm out of his pants, but he knew the moment she realized it when her steps faltered at the sight of crimson arousal between his hind legs. Her eyes widened, nose twitching quickly, as a visible tremble raced through her. When he leapt for her this time, her attempt at escape came too late, a surprised laugh escaping her when she was taken down to the carpet on her back with a fox nestled between her thighs.

He slid himself into her without hesitation and enjoyed the way her eyes widened in surprise when he did. An incredible feeling of wet heat surrounded his length one inch at a time as he pressed his hips into her, savage eyes watching her muzzle drop open as a series of sharp huffs for breath escaped her. Still, even as ready as they both were, there was some effort in squeezing his full length into the bunny below him. The difference would always be there, he knew. It was something he delighted in, savored as she clenched around him like a silky fist until crimson flesh ached to drive into her. He didn’t, though he could have. He didn’t rut her like a feral Todd, even when she wrapped her arms around his torso and gripped the fur of his back to drag him closer as a moan of pure delight escaped her muzzle. Even after the chase, or maybe because of the chase and his deeply predatory reaction to her, he wanted it to last.
“W-when did those come off?” she whimpered breathily, her face the picture of surprised pleasure when she tilted her head back to meet his eyes.

“I have no idea,” he replied, arching his back as his hips rolled back and forward again in a single fluid motion that had her arching hers to meet him. The tip of his narrow muzzle settled between her folded ears, the heady growl that escaped him causing her to shiver as he nipped at the base of one. “I just know that you feel amazing, Carrots.”

“You’re the one that teased all morning,” she replied, moaning and breathing hotly into his chest fur when he braced himself on both paws to rise up over her as he thrust again. “I was about to club you and drag you back to bed by the tail.”

He noticed that she didn’t try to change the pace, even as clearly eager as she was. The touch of her paws slid down his back and over his rear, gripping his butt to urge him deeper rather than faster. He gave her what she wanted, pressing deeper until he almost felt that he shouldn’t be able to go further before her body relaxed enough to accept his full length. The cost was a sudden, almost painful squeeze on the tapered tip of his already sensitive cock when her body rippled around him in reaction. This illusion and resulting tightness was a part of the difference that made her so perfect for him. That and the fact that she released a shuddering moan of pleasure, her legs tightening to keep him from doing more than grinding the fur of his sheath wetly into her. The stimulation directly to her clit had her squeezing around him again, which in turn caused his back to arch as another growl escaped him.

“You say the sweetest things,” he rumbled, his voice throaty as his muzzle pulled back into a snarl of pleasure and concentration as he looked down at her. The steady rock and grind of his hips against hers had little moans escaping her, nearly drowning out the slick sound of his flesh sliding into hers.

“You’re the one who insisted on lunch, Wilde,” she said, a pleasure-dazed grin on her muzzle as she rolled her hips slowly to meet his pace.

“Yes, but you were going to be lunch,” he growled, taking the moment of surprised pleasure that came into her expression to yank his hips back and drive full length into her again. The surprise changed to glassy-eyed pleasure as a cry was torn from her muzzle when he stretched her again, not even pausing to let their hips rest before he pulled back to the tip and thrust into her again. “I was going to take you on the table, spread out like a feast. Then I was going to spend the better part of the afternoon enjoying the taste of a very horny bunny.”

Said horny bunny was beyond words now, her eyes still locked on his as she gave up her grip on his rear to grip his back as he took her. Sharp cries filled the little house, mingled with the muffled slap of furred hips on furred hips and the wet sound of his damp sac slapping against her ass every time he filled her.

“Then I was going to roll you onto your belly on the tabletop, your ass sticking out towards me,” he continued, causing her eyes to widen and her sex to clench tight around him, “and because I spent all that time with my tongue coated in delicious bunny, you would be too weak from the orgasms to do more than lie there and cum again and again while I took you until the table broke.”

His plans alone, which really had been his true plans for that afternoon, were enough for his mate. The bunny’s paws tightened painfully in his chest fur even as her sex clenched, deliciously tight around him. He lowered his muzzle to her ear as he felt her ripple around him eagerly. “Think about that, little bunny, the next time you wonder if you’re being too forward.”

The groan that escaped her was muffled into his chest fur when she pressed her face into his ruff where hot, rapid-fire breaths told of her overstimulation only a second before he felt her body
convulse sharply. She came harder than he expected, bucking under him as every muscle under silky
fur tightened and strained against him and her sex squeezed around his next thrust like a vice.
Whether the strength of the climax came from the hour-long massage or his open expression of his
plans he couldn’t say. And soon didn’t care. It was hard to avoid, seeing that beautiful body alive
with pleasure under him, hearing her cries and feeling her hot pants into his chest. He wasn’t far
behind her, feeling the rushing build of pleasure in his gut as he drove into the swollen heat of her
sex just as his knot started to thicken.

Feeling her wrap herself around him, arms and legs tightening until moving literally meant taking
her with him, was almost as perfectly intimate as the way her body stretched around him as he
knotted her. Harsh, panting growls escaped him as sensation and emotion robbed him of rational
thought, the steady pace of his hips replaced with quick, rapid humps as the need to breed what
was his overcame. The jerking throbs of her sex around him as his quickly thickening arousal
stretched her to the very edge of her limit only quickened his climax as his thrusts dragged them both
across the carpet. Almost frustrated, his paws snapped down and around her hips to raise them up,
holding her still as he pumped himself into her quickly, desperate to fall over the edge that his mind
had already crossed. The sharp cries and almost reluctant clench of her inner muscles around him
dragged him into the blissful release as his hips slammed into her and held still. Two thick throbs,
two sharp whimpers from her and he was pumping her eagerly receptive body full.

Some part of him always wondered what caused her to cum when he did. The stretching caused
by their different sizes and the fact that his fully swollen cock in climax filled every possible inch of
her hungry body? Or simply the feeling as his seed erupted into her, as his twitching sac pumping jet-
after-fertile-jet of seed into her waiting womb? Whatever it was, which she could never explain
herself, it seemed to happen without fail. It was a pleasure that bordered on pain, a sweetly desired
torment that drove him wild enough to buck his hips against her even as he continued to spill into
her. His world was blind for a few moments, leaving him only with the scent of their mingled lust
and the taste of her in the air, saturating the back of his tongue with every gasped breath.

He knew the world was gray when he opened his eyes, a change that wasn’t as entirely significant
as it once would have been. A week where his mindset was balanced between the savage and the
norm had followed the more recent week after his snap at the bar. His mind was much closer to feral
now in many ways, much more aware and that brought him a great deal of understanding of how
exactly it worked as time passed. As far as he could tell, there was really no difference between
‘Savage Nick’ and ‘Calm Nick’ anymore. There was more of a middle ground, which he was coping
with well enough, in his mind.

And when it came to his wife, it seemed to work very well. Green eyes turned down to the bunny
under him as her arms relaxed and she went limp. The pleased grin on her muzzle was more than a
little dreamy, interrupted by little whimpers of pleasure when his continued orgasm caused him to
throb thickly inside of her. She didn’t only seem to be taking the constant state of half savagery well,
she seemed to be thriving on it. Enjoying it, even. He had to admit, the chances that he would have
been so rough with her so early in their relationship would have been zero if the feral side of him
hadn’t driven him to do so. Not that he wasn’t capable, but the same fear of hurting her on a physical
level had always existed for him. Knowing what he knew now, that idea proved that he was still a
dumb fox sometimes. The contented eyes that turned to meet his were not the eyes of exhausted
satisfaction. They were the eyes of a bunny who would have been perfectly happy to stay where she
was for a while, and just as happy if he’d flipped her around and taken her again on the spot.

“You know, I think I might be in love with you,” he said, lowering himself to his elbows, arching
his back, and arranging their position slightly so he could nuzzle his lips against hers.

“I think you might be, too,” she said, and he could feel her grin grow against his lips before he
deepened the kiss. Slowly sensual, tongues played across each other intimately as he savored the
taste of her. He was always gentle in this respect, aware of his teeth and the size of his tongue
compared to hers. It was she who suckled on the tip of his tongue and increased the passion of the
kiss as her paws cupped both sides of his muzzle, shivering against him when the vibration of a silent
growl hummed into the kiss when he felt her hips roll. The steady squeeze and quiver of her sex had
him breaking the kiss.

“You’re about to cum again, aren’t you?” he muttered against her lips, grinning when she
whimpered with a quick nod, prompting him to turn his muzzle up and trail little nibbles along the
sensitive rim of her ear. He felt her body heat up all over again, if it could even be said that she’d
started to cool. “Did a little massage get you that worked up, Carrots?”

“I was just thinking that this is our honeymoon,” she moaned, not resisting at all when he bathed
the base of her ears in attention with his tongue. “Married to my partner. My sexy, amazing fox. It’s
been really… Fast!”

The last word jumped when he nipped her ear and bucked his hips forward again, the small series
of motions seeming to be enough to drive her over the edge into another orgasm. He savor ed the
whimpering bunny, a bunny that jolted in pleasure and bucked under him when he sucked firmly on
the edges of her ear before pressing his sharp canines into the sensitive skin it caused. She was right,
of course. There was a special vibration between them now that they were married. A different
feeling of connection, closeness. A feeling that he had never expected to even get close to with her
only a few weeks ago.

“Moving too fast for you, Carrots?” he murmured, his tone more a sensual tease than an actual
question as he reached down to grip her hips with one paw while the other slipped under her back to
drag her up against him as he sat on his haunches. She released a weak gasp when he settled her into
his lap, causing him to sink even deeper if it were even possible. At least that was how it felt when
her plush ass was settled against his thighs and her sex clenched around him. The dazed look in her
eyes held a question, which he answered by pressing her hips down as he rocked his hips up in time
with a thick throb from the length still firmly knotted inside her. “Let’s see how many orgasms this
honeymoon daze can drag out of you.”

It turned out to be seven.

She came another seven times under his gentle, and sometimes not so gentle, attention. Halfway
through, he became so aroused himself that even as his knot finally started to shrink, he had just
taken her again. This time from behind over the kitchen table as he had planned to begin with, which
led to her last three orgasms before she was actually begging for a break. By that point, they were a
sticky mess that smelled of sex, cum, and exhaustion. It was on wobbling legs that they managed to
make it to the shower, wash each other until they felt somewhat civilized again and then decided to
take a bath. A bath which she ran, because her legs were the weakest, while he went into the kitchen
to make a quick, much-needed meal.

Not that their position changed much in the bath, aside from the reality of physical limitations.
Which meant that, even while she was sitting in the large tub with her legs straddling his hips and
their bodies remained close together, neither of them did more than simply soak in the hot water
while letting the light scent of apples she had added to the bath ease their addled minds.

“What do you think Wolford is doing while we’re here?” she questioned, taking a big bite of the
cucumber sandwich triangle he held in front of her muzzle. They could both hear the angry rumble
of her stomach even as she fed it, but neither commented. His was doing the same as his other paw shoved half of a cricket burger into his muzzle, after all.

“Don’t know,” he shrugged, releasing a contented sigh as he reached for another piece of the sandwich. “Don’t care. As far as I’m concerned right now, until someone knocks on that door, they don’t exist.”

“Honeymoon seclusion? Or honeymoon fever?” she said with a grin up at him before he nudged her to eat some more.

“I think we’ve just seen the beginning of that particular fever,” he chuckled, his now free paw smoothing down the wet fur over her back and rear under the water slowly. “We’ve been this exhausted before…”

“No we haven’t,” she disagreed, causing him to laugh softly.

“…I’ve been this exhausted before,” he amended. “Remember, I survived your being in heat. And worn out as I was after The Night of Endless Humpings, as I have named it, I was mostly recovered the next day.”

“You caught the tail end of that heat,” she laughed, causing him to raise one eyebrow as she sat up in his lap to look at him with her paws combing through the thicker fur of his chest. He had to admit, he almost wished he had another round in him right then and there, seeing her wet body settled in his lap with an amused little smile on her muzzle. She looked entirely too appealing, especially when she lowered her ears in a way that had him wondering if bunnies found it as sexy as he did. “I was in full ‘Take me, you dumb fox’ mode for almost a week before that. You, my handsome fox, haven’t seen anything yet.”

“Riiiight,” he murmured, ears twitching sideways while he found himself half wondering if he was delighted or terrified by the idea. Maybe a little – or a lot – of both. “I’ll be sure to stock up on energy drinks and vitamins. And protein shakes. And emergency fluid IVs. Come to think of it, I wonder if they’ve perfected cloning yet. Might not hurt to have another me to tag in when… Ow!”

“Don’t put the idea of two Nicks in my head, especially not when I go into heat,” she said after the light punch to his shoulder, sniffing and raising her nose as he grinned a little wickedly.

“Not even married two days and you’re already abusing me.”

“Well then, don’t tempt a bunny with two of you,” she murmured as she leaned in to touch her mouth to his lightly. He tasted cucumbers and bunny. “I don’t think Zootopia could handle more than one Nick Wilde.”

“I don’t think Judy Hopps could handle more than one Nick Wilde,” he replied, chuckling softly as a smirk crossed her muzzle before she nestled into his chest again. “At least not in a physical capacity sense.”

“Nick!” she cried with a bubble of laughter escaping her, lightly smacking his shoulder without moving the rest of her. “Though I can’t really argue there, Slick. I think it’s pretty amazing, after all.”

“Hm? What is?” he asked, the lazy grin not leaving his face as he closed his eyes and leaned his head against the edge of the bath. He was content right down to the tips of his toes.

“That you fit at all,” she replied, her tone not teasing or joking in the slightest. “I’ve done the research. You are not inconsiderable in that department.”
“Them’s fancy words for saying that I’m not Tiny Nicky?” he commented, humor ever present in his own as he looked down at her. It dawned on him. “Oh, so that’s why you seemed so curious the first time you gave me a blowjob?”

“In part,” she admitted and he could tell by the little squirm of her hips and the heat in her ears as he ran his paw over them gently that she was blushing. Strong willed and active as they were sexually, it seemed that just talking about sex in a frank way was an easy route to making her blush still. “A very small part. Mostly I was curious and wanted to make you feel good, because you always seem very eager to do it for me.”

“The fox that I am loves the taste of a certain bunny,” he confirmed, then grew silent so she could continue.

“I was worried, at first. As insistent as I was - you know, during our first time together – I think in part I was that way because I wasn’t sure it would work at all. I don’t like to think that I can’t do anything, and once you were inside of me,” she said, trailing off with a slow shrug of her shoulders as she ran her paws up and down his arms slowly, “Give a bunny an inch and she takes a mile.”

“And you very nearly hurt yourself in the process,” he muttered as he remembered her whimpers of pain and the lengthy period of stillness where he had desperately wished his knot would go down to give her relief. “If I had lost control then…”

“You didn’t. I wouldn’t change a thing about that night,” she interrupted, tilted her head up to slide her nose through the fur of his neck slowly. Every whisper of breath that caressed his skin was a forerunner to the fact that he felt her hips squirm a moment later. Felt the different type of warmth as her sex slid up to grind against his sheath slowly. “Do you think this is what normal couples do, Nick? Sit in the bath, talking about clones and physical limitations of the female anatomy?”

“I doubt I’ll ever care what ‘normal couples’ do,” he murmured, both of his paws vanishing under the water to mold over the cheeks of her rear. He saw the water ripple when her tail twitched, felt compelled to wrap one paw around the base of the wet patch of fluff. Doing so only caused her hips to rock forward again, though neither of them was in a rush to move things forward this time. “When this case is over, I see us going back to the ZPD. We’ll go on patrols, chase down the bad guys to make the city a better place, get dressed down by Bogo now and then. Sometimes we’ll go out to dinner or get a drink afterward, just the two of us like we used to. I’ll tell excellent jokes while you try not to laugh at them.”

“Hmm,” she mumbled softly, her voice heavy with desire but still managing to sound interested as she slipped her paws between their bodies to cup his already swelling sheath.

“We’ll talk about work, we’ll talk about family, we’ll buddy around the city,” he said, arching his hips up into her silky wet touch as he grew into paws that rubbed up and down the increasingly exposed length of vulpine arousal. “Then at the end of the day, we’ll go home. The difference being, of course, knowing that we love each other. And that it will be our home we go home to. Where we can do things like this.”

The last part came breathlessly when she rubbed the satiny fur of her palm around the tip, causing pleasure to sing through him for a moment before she released him and stood. He stayed where he was as the water cascaded over her fur, giving her a very sleek, wet and much too appealing look. She placed her paws on the edge of the tub on either side of him as she stood over him, the scent of sweet earth and musky female arousal far more interesting than the apples when she placed her lips against his ear.

“As often as we want, where we want,” she hummed, this time making it clear that it was her turn.
to play the seducer when she grazed her tongue along the rim of his ear. Not as sensitive as hers, maybe, but it still sent a little electric shock down his spine and out to the tip of his tail. “Anywhere, like right here for example. If I were to turn around, brace my paws on the wall, stick out my hips and…”

She trailed off as she followed through with the first part of her description, turning to face away from him. The only part of him that moved was his throbbing arousal, which was just as eager as his eyes to drink in the view when she braced her paws against the wall, took a step back, and shoved out her hips. The last stage of this, which she had neglected to speak aloud, was the spreading of her feet as wide as the tub would allow and raising her hips with a twitching tail. This afforded him a delicious and damned-near-obscene view of flushed, wet, and aroused pink bunny that had his mouth watering and his already hard length aching. He stood out of the water, watching her as she looked at the erect crimson with much the same hunger as he looked at her outthrust rear. Large paws gripped those hips tightly, making her grin and then yelp.

*I really love this bunny,* he thought when he dragged her back into a single hard thrust that had the sound of wet fur slapping into wet fur filling the room.

Chapter End Notes

Well, glad I managed to get this done today! Sorry for the delay. I intended to be finished on Saturday, but life gets in the way sometimes.

Thanks to all my readers for sticking with me through this story even as I work on 50 other projects. ;)

Part 1 of 3 in the Honeymoon series.

Romance, erotica, smut, a lot of kissing, more romance, fluff, story progression, the return of long absent characters...

And newlyweds behaving as newlyweds often do.
Sorry for the huge delay on this chapter. Life, brain death, etc etc (who cares. Read the story!)

Art by TheWyvernsWeaver over on DA.

There will be a poll on my DA account soon about what I will write next. Don't miss it!

---

Report:

Case File – The Savage Dark

Reporting Agent: Code Name – Jack “Savage”

Affiliation: Unknown

Current Whereabouts: Unknown

Agent Status: Unknown (Active)

Recording Continues:

“It is often referred to as ‘The Honeymoon Period.’ Simply put, it is the period in a period where everything is new. In relationships, it means that the mammals in said relationship are starting to learn how to live together, both on a romantic and a literal sense. This time often involves a good deal of goofy races, longing looks, excessive romance, and of course, rutting as if we had never managed to make ourselves civilized. On average, it lasts about a year. Apparently, this is the point when the brain accepts someone as a permanent fixture in life. The excitement can fade, if it is allowed to fade. A mistake many mammals make.

“In my world, the Honeymoon Period is that moment when the case starts to move quickly forward after an extended period of inactivity. New evidence is presented or someone talks. A lead directs us to something vital. Even, in extremely rare cases, those we are after learning that they are being investigated or perused and decide to turn themselves in for questioning. Like relationships, if
this period is allowed to fade due to inaction, it can cause things to fall apart. Which is a problem, because generally speaking, we don’t always know when we are in the Honeymoon Period until it is finished or at best after the first lead takes us to places we never suspected were involved. Luckily, in this particular case, it was a bright flash of ‘We really have no choice.’

“I still find it funny that it came while the Wildes were still on their very literal honeymoon.”

Bunnyburrow was a crowded place, though the broken sign that continued to tick well into the hundreds of millions was far from an accurate representation of the population. But it was the expansive swaths of land, which were free for settling and farming to feed Zootopia’s ever expanding need for vegetables, that made it seem less populated than it really was to those who visited. When moving from the homes of one family to another, the streets were no more crowded than one would expect from a small town as the sons and daughters of family units moved further into the outskirts to continue this expansion. A survival strategy, obviously, and a fine way to make sure that kits were given some real distance from their family when they decided to move out on their own. This did not dissolve the closeness of family units, though. The Hopps were a prime example, with a large central home that was almost constantly flooded by visits from already grown children and their kits.

At the year-round Farmer’s Market, as representatives from every family came to show their wares to possible customers from Zootopia and beyond, the true population could be seen. It fit the bustle of downtown Savanna Central during rush hour, and often maintained that level of hustle through most of the day. Even though he’d thought he would be prepared for the hustle of bunnies and the chatter of a multitude of voices, Jack had never lived in Bunnyburrow. Experiencing it first hand was something of a surprise. Even with the plethora of bunnies moving like a massive, living thing, he already knew that his idea of making any incoming agent obvious had worked to his advantage.

“Alpha, target has stopped moving,” the voice in his ear stated calmly, the earpiece easily cutting through the sound around him.

“Understood, Nightingale. Do you know if the target is the Wildes?”

“Negative. Too far from their safe house. No possibility of a visual.” The answer surprised him slightly, though there was always the possibility that whoever had decided to brave his perimeter simply didn’t know where Nick and Judy were staying. It wasn’t as if they’d left the house for the last three days.

“Your thoughts?” he said, his voice drifting off when he noticed a young, pretty, and stark white bunny staring in his direction.

“Home base, though the angle of the lenses isn’t quite right.” the voice amended quickly, causing Jack to focus his memory on the area surrounding his temporary base of operations even as the white furred bunny made her way towards him with a frown on her dainty muzzle. “Not really searching. Just wandering aimlessly.”

“Keep a visual on her. Inform me of any movement,” he muttered under his breath.

“Her, sir? Expecting someone?”

Giving no reply, as the reply would have been clearly heard by the slender bunny that stopped a few feet in front of him, he allowed one brow to raise slightly. Of course, he knew exactly who she was, though he couldn’t think of any good reason for Judy’s sister to be stopping in front of him, her arms folded across her chest. She was as bright as sunlight standing there, if that sunlight had run
through a filter that provided the blazing pink of her t-shirt. A T-shirt that, before she had covered the words with her arms, had clearly demanded ‘Knot Now’, causing him to suppress a slight groan. Though the brightness of white and pink, blue eyes glared at him as if he had somehow slighted her, run off with another doe and left her standing alone at prom. She was hardly past the age where she should be worrying about proms and bucks and first loves, after all. Which again, left him wondering why this bright little bunny who stood at least a head shorter than him looked ready to murder him.

“You’re Lapin?” He couldn’t help the feeling that she had thrown the name at him in hopes of murdering him with every letter.

“And you’re Beth,” he returned easily, causing her ears to drop back in mild surprise as his thumbs hooked in his jean pockets and stood facing her with a slight cock in his hips. No reason not to play the charm card, as a male who had no desire to run on the wrong side of Judy’s family. “A pleasure to meet you.”

“And you are the one who stole my sister away from her perfect fox!” she said, the moment of surprise melting into finger pointing anger that quickly drew gazes from multiple bunnies around them. A finger that was now shoved into the tip of his muzzle as he processed what she’d said without comment. “My cousin heard it from her friend, who heard it from her parents, who heard it from my older brother, who heard it from my parents when they saw you on Muzzle Time. Who do you think you are? How did you do it? Trick her? Dig up something dirty in his past to make him look bad? Drug her?”

“I assure you,” he began, only to be cut off when the soft finger pressed against his nose shoved hard enough to make his head rock back.

“Well, let me tell you something,” she ranted, clearly not interested in listening to anything he had to say until she had hers. “I’m going to get to the bottom of this. And as soon as I find her, she’s going to get even more of an earful than you’re about to get, Mr. Zebra Bunny. And then we’ll see who’s stealing who away!”

“Hm,” was his only comment for a moment, allowing the now quickly breathing and obviously irate doe to tremble out her anger. Brave little bunny, too, with her nose twitching a mile a minute as she confronted an unknown buck who had ‘stolen her sister’. “It seems the Hopps rumor mill is running a little slow. Did you leave town?”

“No! What do you mean?” she demanded, looking confused as blue eyes considered him suspiciously. “I’ve been… Busy for a few days. What does that have to do with anything? And where is Judy?”

“Because you are a few days behind on the hometown news,” he said, a slow grin crawling up his muzzle as she twisted her paws together. Righteous indignation was giving way to uncertain curiosity, which again came with a realization that she was making a spectacle of herself in a market full of bunnies. Not that she looked embarrassed, he decided. Just aware as she gave a quick wave to someone she ether knew or was related to with a bright smile. He continued when she turned her attention back to him. “As for where your sister is, I can pretty accurately assume she is either tangled in a passionate embrace with the fox you seem so protective of or sleeping one such tangle off in the house where they’re staying.”

“Really?” The tone of her voice pitched up a bit into pure delight for a moment as she literally bounced in place before she narrowed her eyes at him again. “But you did try to steal her away, didn’t you?”

“I have no romantic interest in your sister whatsoever,” he assured her, which caused her to
positively beam at him. Which made the white bunny much too pretty and dangerously cute. Deciding to assure her further and hopefully distract her away from him so he could slip away to deal with the intruder, he pulled out a card for his Jack Lapin identity and scribbled the address on the back. “You can find them here, if you want to pay them a visit. Though I would try to call first. As I said, chances are they are doing what newlyweds often do.”

“Newlyweds?” Her ears were perked high and her mouth was dropped open a bit before she grabbed the front of his dark t-shirt to drag him closer. Which really ended up with her dragging herself closer and standing on her tip toes until they were almost nose to nose. “Did you say, ‘newlyweds’?”

“You should get in touch with some family,” he said, gently extracting her paws from his shirt and setting her back a few steps. “As I said, you are a few days behind.”

“William!” she called, loud enough to make him repress a wince as the high tone offended sensitive ears. Others around them even grumbled in annoyance as she turned and bolted off, calling the name again as she went. His gaze followed her, one brow quirking when the blur of pretty white bunny dashed right into the arms of a tan and white swift fox with dark grey around his eyes. The dash turned into a sideways leap, one that the fox somehow managed to catch without falling on his ass, as laughter peeled from her muzzle. Casting a surprised glance in Jack’s direction and then a somewhat resigned to Beth, the fox asked a quick question as she took advantage of being held to pull out a cell phone. Snuggling into the fox’s arms, she raised her free paw to the buck, wiggled her fingers with another bright smile before she pointed down the road and chirped an order to the fox. It was with a slight roll of his eyes and a more than besotted grin on his muzzle, that the fox obeyed her command without complaint.

“Must run in the family,” Jack muttered to himself, shaking his head slightly as he glanced around and raised his paw to his ear. “Nightingale, update status on the target.”

“Unchanged,” came the reply a moment later, causing him to consider his options for a moment before he started to walk again.

“Give me her location.”

She wanted to be seen.

That much was clear and obvious, so it seemed redundant to repeat it even as a part of his thought process. The shade of dense trees not only helped keep the heat of the day at arms-length but should have provided ample cover for someone trying to camp the hilltop. That Nightingale had been able to track her from above so easily and for so long was either very sloppy or very intentional. It wasn’t that even highly skilled professionals were not occasionally sloppy. As was apparent by the fact that he didn’t notice the laser trigger for the motion sensor until his leg had already passed through it.

Fuck it.

“Skye?” he called, his ears perked to listen for sign of her. The rustle of leaves, the cheerful sounds of birdsong, and the not too distant hum of life in the burrow answered him for a long moment as he inched forward again. Blue eyes scanned for more triggers as he moved forward. “With how easy you made it to find you, I assume you’re here to talk. I’m unarmed.”

“Does that even make a difference with someone like you, Agent Savage?” came the lilt of her voice from behind and overhead.
He hardly had time to turn before she tackled him. The blur of white and black was as fast as he’d remembered, this time enhanced by her previous position somewhere in the trees. The impact sent his world spinning as she rolled them over the ground, forcing him to react by tucking his arms and carrying the momentum forward rather than trying to slow it. The result was a faster roll than she’d expected, enough of a surprise to have her overcompensate in her own attempt to gain control. Her arms flung out to the side, gripping grass and dirt, which freed him long enough for him to kick away and come to a stop on his paw and knees facing her just as she did the same.

“If you wanted a rematch, there are gyms,” he said, drawing himself to his feet slowly in time with her. A quick check showed that she had no obvious weapons, and the tight-fitting black suit she wore was a hard place to hide anything larger than a knife. The empty holster that hung from the softly rounded curve of her… Hung from her waist, told him that she hadn’t come unarmed but had intentionally disarmed herself upon arrival. “Rings, matches. We do technically work for the same people.”

“Oh, how I wish that were true,” she murmured, frowning for a moment as she dusted her paws together to clear the dirt from white fur without taking her eyes off him. “But rings and matches have too many rules. And no trees. Are you really unarmed?”

“I am,” he said, considering the weight of her words about who they worked for as they started to pace around each other. “You went to some trouble to get this far alone, you’re not tracking the Wildes, and you made yourself easy enough to see once inside the perimeter. It follows that you have something you want to say.”

“How do you know I’m not a distraction?” she quipped, flashing a grin as they inched closer to each other. Her paw darted out in a quick test strike, one deflected and turned as she spun away from him with a flourish of her bushy tail. “I could have agents all over. Moving in on the Wildes – do congratulate them for me – while I keep you occupied so they might have an actual chance to escape this time?”

“You could be,” he lied, having no doubt that she was alone in this. Just as she had been spotted the moment she’d come within a mile of Bunnyburrow, anyone else out of place would have been noticed as well. He didn’t have to tell her that, though. “But then you wouldn’t have made the suggestion, even under the obvious guise of bringing my guard down.”

As if to test the words themselves, they moved at the same moment. They were not holding back, not in a ‘let’s play nice’ way. There was weight behind every blow, enough that when he knocked aside her roundhouse with the pad of his paw, he was sure that they both felt the sharp ache of the impact down to their bones. He was curious of her reason for being here, as every instinct was telling him that she was not a threat; both the instincts of an agent and the instincts of a bunny. This held true even when she slipped past his guard with one paw while he blocked the other, gripping the front of his shirt to viciously drag him forward into a vicious throw. He also felt that she intentionally held onto the T-shirt he wore as he fell, allowing the fabric to tear. Or more precisely, to be shredded by her claws on the way down. It left her with a large swatch of cloth in her paw, and him with one side of his chest completely bare.

“You did that on purpose,” he commented, his tone cool as he held up one of the torn edges between two fingers as if to show her what he meant.

“I have no idea what you mean,” she said, not a trace of innocence in her voice as she raised the scrap of cloth to her muzzle and breathed the scent in with blue eyes focused on him. The way those eyes changed, from the basic excitement of a good fight to sharp predatory interest, almost managed to make his nose twitch. “I’ve never tasted bunny before.”
“Blunt,” he said slowly with an odd feeling of interest in her actions, releasing the scrap as she started to move closer to him, an unsteady sway in her tail now. “I’m not entirely sure if I should be aroused or sprinkling myself with seasoning right now.”

“Too much salt is bad for you,” she quipped in return, obviously either distracted or believing that their little spar was over. This allowed him to easily sweep his foot behind her leg as both paws connected with her chest, sending the vixen tumbling back onto her ass. He followed her down, his paws pinning hers over her head as he straddled her hips and used his weight to keep her pinned. Surprised as she was, it was almost repeat of the last time he’d had her pinned: her eyes were almost lazy now, even with the predatory glint in them. A lazy smile spreading over her muzzle as she stretched out under him, as if she enjoyed being under his weight. This time, there was a little more than a twinge in his sheath when her lithe body slid sinuously under his, a fact that she seemed to notice as she arched her back up a bit. “So, you are armed.”

“That is a terrible joke,” he said blandly, even though he couldn’t and didn’t even try to hide the fact that she had clearly managed to get something she’d wanted: his arousal. “Is this why you’re here? To seduce me?”

“Oh please,” she said, giving a grand roll of her eyes as a light laugh escaped her. Leverage only went so far, particularly when he was distracted by the tightness of his own pants, and the vixen was no doubt stronger than him when she bucked her body under his. The ride was short and wild as she destroyed his center of balance and forced her arms up as he tried to regain it. He was tossed over, and rather than allowing her to be the one on top, he quickly rolled away a short distance so they were facing each other again. “This isn’t a honeypot, Savage. I am here to help you.”

“Help me?” he said, trapping her arm under his when she struck out again, spinning on his heel to drag her along with him for a moment. A quick series of maneuvers had him behind her, her arm pinned behind her back and his free arm around her throat. The fact that she was really only an inch or so taller than him was a little surprising but made it easier for him to speak into one folded ear. “I’m not exactly high on the ZIAs list of loved mammals right now. How can you help me?”

“I’m not here as a representative of the ZIA,” she grunted lightly, testing the strength of his hold on her wrist as she squirmed against him. Squirming that, despite his best efforts, led to the swell of her rear and the bush of her tail brushing against the swell in the front of his jeans. She released a strained laugh when he released a low chirring groan. “Okay, that sound is much cuter than I expected.”

She took full advantage of the moment of bluster, her free elbow driving back into his ribs until the only sound he could make was a pained wheeze. When she shoved her hips back this time, stepping back into him, it was to unbalance him so she could flip him over her shoulder. Landing on his feet, he started the turn to face her again when pain shot through his ears. Ears that she now had a hold on, yanking them back to keep his throat exposed as she wrapped herself around the front of his body like a second skin. It was anything but innocent. He knew she could have chosen something other than the heat between her thighs to nestle against his already aching arousal, and could have put her muzzle at his throat instead of at the base of his ears.

“I’m here because the ZIA is overstepping its power. I cannot see how their actions or the order they keep handing out are for the good of anyone but the Director himself,” she breathed, her breath teasing the fine fur just inside his ear as she spoke. The stark eroticism of her hold on him was taken up a notch when her paw relaxed on his ears and her claws lightly raked upward through the fur. He ground his teeth to prevent another ‘cute’ sound from escaping, though he had no doubt she felt the effects between her thighs. “They’re sending agents to acquire you, of all mammals. To detain you, until the situation is contained.”
“The situation being savage mammals that are somehow the ZIA’s doing,” he concluded, gaining a sound of confirmation from her as he allowed her a moment to please herself by nibbling on the rim of his ear.

Then allowed her another moment to nibble on his ear to please himself, savoring the devilishly erotic sensation that sang through his entire nervous system for a moment before the paw he had gradually squirmed free slipped behind her knee. Testing the waters of acceptance, she made the mistake of lifting her leg to the touch and pressing further into him, which allowed him to push his body forward and take her down to her back with enough force to knock the wind out of her. He stood and backed away as she stayed where she was, panting with blue eyes focused on him with equal parts accusation and arousal. He knew that one directly related to the other, causing him to grin slightly as he reached up and almost tried to brush his shirt off before he remembered that she had torn it. Glancing down with a sigh, he realized that it had torn further during their grappling match and seeing only advantage in the action on so many levels, he slipped the ruined rag off and tossed it to the ground.

“You’re not playing fair,” she stated, now sitting up to catch her breath with her eyes dragging over the gray-furred, toned span of his torso for a long moment before her eyes moved down further. “I don’t know exactly what’s happening, but I feel like it’s a Lionheart type scenario. They’ve been catching the mammals that go savage and are locking them up just outside of Zootopia.”

“And you know this because you’ve been catching them and locking them up yourself,” he added, noticing that her eyes lingered on the front of his jeans openly for a long moment before she shrugged slightly. The flippant attitude irritated him slightly, as did her clear and unhidden attraction. Or maybe it was his and the fact that he couldn’t hide it in any realistic way. “So, given that, why are you suddenly so chatty and eager to help?”

“I’ve already told you, they are overstepping what is good for Zootopia. And they intend to come after you,” she stated, drawing herself up onto all fours and moving towards him slowly. The stance was fully predatory: a slow stalk, steps placed in a way that made no sound on the ground as she moved towards him. It almost reminded him of Nick when he had gone full savage and while it was obvious that she wasn’t savage herself, she moved as if it was something she was accustomed to. The effect was, overall, frighteningly sexy.

“You’re intent is to protect me?” he said, his muzzle curving into a grin. He refused to move when she moved closer to him, even though the way she looked at him now did cause his nose to twitch unconsciously. He didn’t react or move away when she pressed her advance into him rather than around, one snowy white paw raised to slide up his hip as the other moved upward through his belly fur. “A phone call would have sufficed.”

“Oh no, it wouldn’t have,” she murmured softly, gently dragging him to the ground this time. He wondered, looking into sky blue eyes, if he was allowing this or if he was simply powerless to resist as she pushed him onto his back and crawled up to straddle his hips. He was sure she could feel the heat just as clearly as he felt hers if the pleasantly feminine sounding growl was any indication. “They’re coming in the morning, before dawn. So, I figured, half a day to debrief me. Earn your trust.”

“Earn my trust?” he replied, his voice an amused chuckle. The fact that he couldn’t keep the lust out of his tone was slightly vexing, but he had always known that there were some mammals that were just irresistible. So irresistible that, even as both of her paws moved to slide over his chest, his moved to grip the black-clad curve of her hips in turn. “How do I know you’re not the one who was sent to acquire me Special Agent Skye?”
“It would be hard to acquire you,” she mumbled, her eyes, and shortly one paw, distracted by the pattern of dark stripes that cut across his shoulder. “While being watched. How else would you have known where I was?”

“True enough,” he chuckled, allowing her to continue her curious exploration of his stripes as he raised one paw to his ear. “Nightingale, the situation is under control. Resume normal surveillance. Sniper One, Swift, you are clear to return to baaaase!”

The last word was drawn out when the vixen on top of him rolled her hips in a way that was a little more than suggestive. The motion from the smirking vixen was a slow grind that caused him to lose his train of thought for a full two seconds before he became aware of soft laughter from the other side of his ear piece.

“Roger that, Alpha,” Swift replied, his normally professional tone full of humor. “Are you going to tell us which one of you has the situation under control first?”

“It is hard to tell from up here, Alpha.” This time it was Nightingale who spoke, causing the rabbit to release a slow sigh as he looked up at the vixen undulating on top of him. “All I see are nice flanks and your legs sticking out from under them.”

“I will see both of your smart asses in the sparring ring when we’re back at base,” he commented sourly, satisfied when the smirking replies were exchanged for sudden radio silence. “And you, Special Agent Skye. As much fun as this has been, it is time to get back to work. I don’t plan on staying in Bunnyburrow for the rest of my life while the ZIA rounds up mammals that they may or may not have turned savage in the first place. So, you can stop doing that, get your paws off my zipper, and follow me to a safe house where I can debrief you.”

The night, he knew, was deceptively quiet. Through the slit in the shaded window, Bunnyburrow slept while a few hundred miles away, Zootopia remained awake and in motion. He supposed they were a little piece of Zootopia brought into the sleepy town, watching the dark as he sipped the coffee he held in one paw. Lack of sleep was something he was well used to, as was doing so after expending a great deal of energy, and it didn’t slow his mind as he considered the changes that this information brought about.

He now had confirmation of many theories, as well as new facts that tossed a few of his old theories out the window. He had known that the ZIA were rounding up savage mammals, but now he knew exactly where they were taking them. He had suspected that they were doing so as some form of cover up, and now he had confirmation of that. His belief that Nick was still considered a liability had been proven, and he also knew that the ZIA was willing to go so far as to attempt the kidnapping of an Agent to reach him. That meant the Director of the ZIA’s involvement in the savage mammals was likely direct and was either illegal or life threatening. The simple thing to do would be to tell his superiors at The Agency that the ZIA Director was directly involved, which would begin an interagency diplomacy contest to see who was better at showing the other what secrets they could expose if cooperation wasn’t given.

Jack wasn’t feeling particularly diplomatic.

Taking another slow sip of the coffee, he turned his gaze back into the bedroom. In particular, the snowy white vixen who was stripped naked and sprawled comfortably over his bed in deep sleep. After debriefing her for hours, looking for any inconsistencies in the information she was providing and the help she promised, it had become apparent that the actions of the ZIA Director had annoyed her to say the very least. Distressed her in certain recent cases, in fact, which had led her to seek him out. And had led to another thing he had learned today: his former belief that Special Agent Skye
wanted to prove that she could somehow beat him had been incorrect. If anything, to his embarrassment and annoyance, she had a very mild case of hero worship combined with a competitive streak that had her thinking she would make a good partner for him. And, less to his annoyance – much, much less – had a real and ravenous attraction to him. Which was why the naked, stripped buck leaned against the desk on the far side of the room, admiring what he considered a true work of Nature’s art while running possible scenarios for the next few hours through his mind.

Eventually, he set the mug down and reached to the desk behind him to pick up his phone. Bringing up the program that allowed him to contact his entire team securely via text, he started typing.

*Alpha: I believe the Intel is actual.*

*Swift: Understood. Orders?*

*Alpha: For now, SAS will be given the benefit of the doubt. She is not to be left without supervision until I say otherwise and further interactions with The Agency will be determined given her actions moving forward.*

*Swift: Understood. What about the Intel? How do we proceed to intercept?*

This caused him to pause for a moment as he lowered the phone to his side, his gaze leveled on the sleeping vixen. The glow of the cell phone’s screen, for a moment, gave her an almost ghostly glow. Or angelic. And maybe Doctor Velox had been right when she’d called him a romantic, a thought that made him smirk in self-derision. She was still an unknown factor, as much as he would have liked to believe that she was to be trusted. He very much wanted to believe it, but if he had learned anything over the years, it was that quickly placed trust was a good way to get a knife driven into your back. Usually, it was him sliding the knife, but the point remained valid. He turned his eyes back to his phone.

*Alpha: I have a plan. Further instructions will be sent before dawn.*

*Swift: Understood. Awaiting further instructions.*

“Jack?” The sleepy sound of Skye’s voice had him raising his eyes from his phone to look over at her. The fact that her eyes reflected the dim light of the phone like twin moons caused his heart to skip a bit, and silent curses about the ‘being a romantic’ thing again. It was hard not to be. Especially when she rolled over onto her side lazily, elongating that delightfully soft body into a slow stretch that had every curve, from shoulders, to breasts, to hips, displayed for his eyes only. That the arousal pooled in his gut so quickly was still surprising. But he could learn to live with it. “Work?”

The short, curious question was something to consider. While he had no illusions about the fact that she had seduced him, and would continue to do so, she didn’t use her obvious sway over him to try to tempt him away from his work. She asked, watched him curiously but lazily, looking ready to drift off to sleep at a moment’s notice. He glanced down at his phone, saw that the time was 2:30 am, and decided that he would be a lesser male if he allowed her to do that looking as she did right now. He set an alarm in his mind and set the now dark phone back on the desk before walking towards the bed.

“Done. For now.”
Honeymoon Part 3: Taken (Part 1 of 2)

Chapter Notes

All right! The first of the two promised stories that covers all options on my DA poll! Thank everyone who is reading, everyone who voted, everyone who reviews (reviews are love) and everyone who enjoys this crazy story.

And mostly, thank you TheWyvernsWeaver for the delicious cover art. Glee! hug

This is the promised Jack/Skye chapter, showing what happened after their meeting on the hill. Good times are had.

Also contains some important plot development, which as I said will be divided between the two chapters coming up.

Report:

Case File – The Savage Dark

Reporting Agent: Code Name – Jack “Savage”

Affiliation: Unknown

Current Whereabouts: Unknown

Agent Status: Unknown (Active)

Recording Continues:

“Spies - meaning Agents in this case - are portrayed in a certain light by most forms of media. Movies, television shows, novels, short stories, poetry. Even Fan Fiction. Or, so I’ve been told on that last one. Ahem. Of course, some of them get some parts of it right. To the point that, if you combined certain pieces of all these forms of media together you would end up with what an Agent really is. But that is all it ever really is: pieces. Agents themselves are fragmented creatures, to the best of my knowledge to understand the minds of my fellows in arms. We are not the whole of one thing but important pieces of many. To understand what I mean is simple, really. An Agent can and will do many things, wear many faces, live many lives. All of them become a part of who we are in the end, because we take the pieces that are most useful to us and carry them with us on our next mission. And then the next after that, and so on and so forth.

“Agent Lapin, for a very basic example. Carry a name and a face, keep the mannerisms that come with it, and keep those allies or friends made during your time wearing that mask. The Package, as I described earlier. While all Agents are trained in advanced maneuvers with multiple
vehicles, it was during a particularly difficult evasion that I learned that I had a fine talent on a motorcycle. Thus, the Agency granted my request to have a specially outfitted bike always at the ready when I was in the field. Nightingale, who is actually the agent flying the helicopter and not the helicopter itself, also an asset that I insisted on. Swift, despite not being able to outrun the fox, another. These are all clear examples of pieces that I have added to myself, as Jack Savage, over the years. Vital though they are, because they are, they are not the pieces that keep me moving. They are the pieces that keep me alive in many cases, the pieces that make the job doable.

“And that leads me to one thing that the stories about ‘secret agents’ in all their forms usually get wrong: the ‘lone wolf’ mentality. If you will remember an earlier part of this recording, you know that I was a fan of this ideal. Keep others at a distance, remember that no one is important enough to etcetera, etcetera. That doesn’t mean that Agents are not allowed to feel. We all do. The heart that bleeds also feels, which many would see as a vulnerability but those who understand see as a reason to continue doing what we do. Not the only reason, of course. Anyone who has only one reason for doing anything in life risks losing the drive to do it at all. Hopps and Wilde, for example. They may be motivated by their relationship and each other, but they both want to make Zootopia a better place.

“If it wasn’t obvious by this point, this was leading to my conversation with Special Agent Skye that evening. Her motives were pure, on one level. Being told to follow an order that is illegal is different from following an order that you know would likely end in masses of death, all to save the career of a mammal who didn’t know when to admit that he’d fucked up. That being said, obvious attraction to me, as the target of the order that she was refusing to obey, played a part as well. Which meant I had to take care. Because even if the results were positive from my end, that didn’t mean she wasn’t still capable of betraying me if it was of benefit to her in the future.”

Intimate was the environment he decided on, one that was easily obtained in the safe house he currently used as his main base of operations. Protocol on these things didn’t exist in the Agency. There was no proper or legal way of gaining the information desired from a possibly hostile agent, no list of rules to follow. There were various methods, of course, including wining and dining. With this step complete, and the fine meal cleared from the table, sweet talk could follow. Flattery. Then seduction. No doubt the snowy white vixen in the black jump suit sitting in the deep plush, finely finished lounge chair opposite his knew this already. Not that she was holding anything back as she stared at him with sky blue eyes over the old-fashioned glass and the fine liquor within. She sipped as he digested the latest piece of information in silence, lightly swirling the dark liquid in his own glass as he watched her. It was interesting to him, how there seemed to be firelight flickering behind her eyes when she stared at him despite the hearth beside them sitting empty of any flame.

“I understand that you didn’t care for the order given, but that doesn’t fully explain why you decided to approach me directly,” he explained, keeping his tone carefully professional to match the standard dark gray suit and tie he had opted to change into. It was a feat that was not easy to accomplish, if he was honest with himself. Even after sharing a meal, drinks, and small talk as a poor disguise for information gathering had not eased the tension that had built between them during their little spar. There was no question in his mind that she could see an equal level of heat in his eyes when he looked at her, because he certainly felt it. “The risk of you coming here seems unnecessary.”

“The fact is, I wanted to be here,” she replied, softly rounded ears twitching to the side for a
moment as she chose her next words carefully. “The order to capture you was very clear, urgent, and ‘by any means necessary.’”

“I see,” was his reply, careful to keep his tone neutral even as his gut tightened. “So, the Director has lifted the No Kill order.”

“Yes,” she said, shifting in the chair for a moment. It wasn’t an uncomfortable motion, or at least she managed to make it seem like it wasn’t when she drew her legs into the chair and angled her hip to display the curve of her rump. It was no act that drew his eyes to that curve, a second before she teasingly flipped the bush of her tail in such a way that blocked the appealing view. “I had to make sure to reach you before they did. I also didn’t want to use obvious channels.”

She was a picture, that was certain. While he had trained in and taken part in flirtation between species, he had never engaged so directly. Or been engaged so directly, as the case was with her. But those flirtations were social, friendly, complimentary and conversational rather than naked desire between two very different agents. One part of him wanted to blame Hopps and Wilde for their part in it, opening the mind and all that, but the reality was that she was something new to him. Talented. Quick witted. Openly seductive, at least where he was concerned, but in such a way that she didn’t throw feminine wiles and fluttering lashes in his path. Combined with the fact that she was a stunning predator, from tail to ear tip, he had no doubt that he would have found her desirable without the influence of the exceedingly amorous couple.

Of course, because he was aware of them and their relationship, there was simply no way to be sure of that. Not that it mattered, when this vixen continued to look at him as he was sure her ancestors looked at their late evening catch.

“And?”

“I want to be an Agent,” she said flippantly, what he could only call a playful little smile curving the corners of her narrow muzzle.

“That isn’t generally how it works,” he commented, allowing his brow to raise slightly as he set his glass down and leaned forward with his ears perked towards her. “Mammals don’t ask to be Agents, even those few who are aware of our existence.”

“I wasn’t asking to be an Agent, Jack.”

The tone of her voice caused his brow to raise again as she unfolded and rose from the chair, the glass still in her paw as she swayed her way to his chair. There really was no other word for the way she moved, with a gentle tick of her hips with every footfall, the bush of her tail stirring the air in a full half-moon arch that had his eyes focusing on her hips again. The bunny was pretty sure, if she had worn something more feminine and frilly, that she could have given him a heart attack. As it was now, his suit pants seemed to shrink a size or two in a matter of seconds as she walked around the back of his chair. The graze of her paw down the rim of one tall ear only worsened that condition, enough to force him to suppress a shudder of lust as feather light finger-pads toyed with the fur at the base of one.

“I was stating a desire of mine. One that I am willing to work for” she continued, her voice much closer this time. That voice was now as satin soft as he imagined the rest of her to be, and just a little wicked around the edges. He opened his mouth to speak when he suddenly found her drink dangling in front of him and playing the gentlemammal, he allowed her to place it in the palm of his paw. This occupied both of his paws while freeing hers to rest on the arms of the chair. He spread the drinks out to either side when she leaned in close to him, her breath softly sweet and mildly spicy from the liquor in his nose as she breathed out through parted lips. He felt a light tug, loosening his tie as eyes
met, blue to blue. “But work is finished now? For a while?”

It was in her eyes and in her voice for a moment so brief that he doubted it had been there at all. A pleading, a need that spoke of something beyond her control. It was too brief to be identified, though it did settle in his mind as he parted his lips when she closed the distance between their muzzles. The kiss was unique in his life, not something he could easily say as a male who was as far from a saint as it was possible to get without being the devil. The shape of her muzzle was different, making the size of her mouth seem almost tiny given the narrow design. The contrast was interesting, more than a little thrilling when those lips parted and her tongue teased his. Again, almost tentative. Almost hesitant before he allowed his tongue to meet hers and she was the aggressor again, filling his senses with his first taste of her. It was a bit of a rush, more of one than he expected. The taste of her was heady, pleasantly distracting his ability to think for a moment as he switched the glasses to one paw to allow him to cup the side of her face.

“I need to make a call first,” he said, managing to keep his tone controlled as she gnawed on his lower lips with surprisingly sharp teeth. The sensation left a little tingle behind when she drew back, a tingle that shot straight to the throb at the front of his pants when she slid down the length of his body rather than pulling away. “Make some changes.”

“All right,” she said once she had settled on her knees in front of his chair with her paws sliding up his thighs. “Don’t let me distract you, Agent Savage.”

“Wouldn’t dream of it,” he said, savoring the primal pleasure that coursed through him when those questing paws reached the front of his pants.

He set the glasses aside without taking his eyes off of her, pulling out his phone just as the button released and his zipper was slowly pulled down. He made not a sound, however, as he scrolled through to his main mission contact in The Agency. He pushed the green icon to start the call, lifting one finger to his muzzle when she gave a little moan of approval as her paw wrapped around him. Quiet as he was, even as he throbbed thickly against the touch, he was kind enough to lift his hips with a little grin when she tugged his pants and boxers down until he sprung free. Obeying his call to silence when he set the phone against his ear, the beautiful vixen instead directed her attention to the achingly hard length of bunny flesh in front of her nose. Not the type of male to wonder if he measured up to any Todd she might have taken to her bed in the past, his mind was more focused on the lustful expression on her face as she wrapped bare fur around the naked flesh of his cock. It glittered in her eyes, showed in the squirm of her body as she scooted just a bit closer to the chair, and left the length of him surrounded in humid breath as she greedily breathed in the scent of him.

“This is Savage,” he said, his tone as coolly professional as ever even when he felt the first curious swipe of her tongue slide wantonly from the fuzz of his sheath to the pulsing tapered tip. From the way she rolled her tongue over her lips for a moment as she met his eyes, then dipped her head to swirl her tongue over the tip again slowly seemed to indicate that the flavor appealed to her. Not a surprise, given that her species had once been fond of fresh rabbit. The pleasure was intense enough that it was almost a flavor in his own mouth when he continued with an unchanged tone. “There have been changes in the nature of my mission.”

Skye did not seem at all interested in the conversation, though he would have been a fool to believe that she wasn’t listening as she wrapped her paw around the length of him. Thankful silence followed as she slid a little closer to him, until her arms were draped over his thighs and her head filled his lap as she continued to lavish his arousal in some admittedly much-needed attention. Keeping to his call for silence, she didn’t make a sound as she nuzzled her cheek against throbbing pink flesh to squeeze it between thick, silky fur and the paw that still cupped it. She managed to extract a twitch of his foot when her other paw slipped under to tickle the fur of his sac, the tinges
that sent racing across his skin causing a thick drop of precum to travel in a clear path. A path that was cut short when the now hungry, wet tongue of the vixen lapped it up just as he was connected.

“Yes,” he said, his eyes meeting hers as she raised a brow at his still unchanged tone. “I am upgrading the threat level of the mission. Live rounds on all agents under my command.”

Even as he finished the words, the vixen lowered her lashes a bit as a shiver raced through her. He wasn’t entirely sure what to make of that, though she thoroughly distracted him from caring when she raised her head and sucked the tip of his cock into her muzzle. Eagerly sucking, the hot and increasingly hungry mouth was enough to cause his free paw to move to the top of her head, where his fingers laced through her fur and gripped tightly. The slow rise and fall of her head over half of his arousal caused him to close his eyes for a moment as the reply came through.

“The ZIA has decided that any means necessary is an acceptable form of inter-office communication at this point,” he said, pleasure forcing him to try to focus his attention keeping his voice even as she drew back to the tip, licked him playfully, and then swallowed him again. He managed to keep the pleased grunt confined to his chest when she took him down to the sheath this time, which also meant he was subject to the pleasurable torment of her tight and welcoming throat swallowing around him. That she clearly wasn’t intent on letting him ignore her even for a business call had him taking a slow, silent breath before he continued even as he throbbed in the tight warmth of her muzzle. “Obviously, my attempt to be kind last time has gone unheeded. I won’t let them threaten my agents, or civilians by being unprepared. And yes, this order includes Wilde.”

He felt a little pause in the suction for a moment, watching sparkling blue eyes rise to him in obvious surprise. It was quite the sight, that surprise at the conversation when the tip of her muzzle was presently wrapped in a rather pretty ‘O’ around him. A smirk was his reply before he lightly tugged on the back of her head to urge her to continue. After a flicker of pleasure at his comment danced through her eyes, she continued with surprising passion as she sheathed him fully again and wrapped her tongue around him in a deliciously erotic dance that had his vision refusing to focus for a moment. He knew the phone wasn’t sensitive enough to pick up the slick sucking sound coming from her as she nursed on him, but he also knew that the sounds she made were about to be the least of his concerns. A low rumble started in the back of her throat on the upstrokes, sending a delicious vibration rolling down the length of his shaft until it tickled his sac when her muzzle came to rest. He realized that she was purring. Did vixens purr? A stupid question, as the purring from this beautiful vixen was causing his toes to curl and his balls to draw up as utter bliss looked closer than he’s expected.

“Correct. More orders will be coming soon once I decide how to handle the situation,” he said, feeling the pleasure begin to build to a level that had him grinding his teeth for a moment. The thick throbbing as he held himself back was clearly noticed by the vixen, who slowed her pace a bit to ease off. He tightened his grip, causing her eyes to widen when he bumped his hips upward into her muzzle until she continued to suck greedily. He was sure that, without the jumpsuit she wore, the scent of her would have filled the room if that eager mouth was any indication of the rest of her. “I’ll be in touch soon. Savage out.”

He ended the call and slammed the phone onto the table next to the drinks as he stood up in front of her and allowed the orgasm to overcome him. Skye, equal parts startled and delighted from the widening of her eyes, could do nothing more than keep her muzzle tight and her suction strong as his paws gripped her ears. Pulling her into his crotch in pace with the pumps of his hips, he hissed sharply through his teeth as he throbbed and bucked sharply in her mouth before stopping with the tip resting against the undulating bed of her tongue. The relief of that first thick splash of cum covering the vixen’s tongue was as palpable as the pleasure that rolled through him, finally given voice as a throaty moan of bliss as his paws tightened. Not in the least bit upset by the sudden shift in
control, blue eyes blazed up at him with hunger all but vibrating through every inch of her as she swallowed visibly before sliding her tongue over the head to gather the next wave. It was an incredibly erotic display, really. The beautiful predator on her knees, paws gripping his thighs as her hips squirmed and her tail writhed like a live animal all its own behind her. His eyes, narrowed from the pleasure as the orgasm started to bleed away, caught every moment of it. Right down to the way she looked up at him when he stood over her.

What he saw had him releasing her ear with one paw, a paw he used to loosen his tie and slide it over his head as she softened the pull of her lips’ muzzle around him. Then she started to suck him clean, the low vibration of her purr surrounding the length of him as she bathed his still lightly throbbing length with her tongue as she slowly slid him out of her muzzle. The expression and care could rightly only be called worship, which he took into account as he allowed the tip to slide past her lips.

“That was…” She started to speak, only to blink and glance down as he looped the neck of the tie around her muzzle. The blink turned into wide eyed shock when he raised one finger over his lips to shush her as he tightened the tie and slid his cock into her muzzle again in the same motion. The obvious shock in sky blue eyes did nothing to stop the full body shiver that raced through her when he tightened the silk binding just enough to keep her muzzle closed around him. Then with a firm paw, guided her head to follow as he sat in the chair again. She released a little grunt, followed by a throaty moan that vibrated around the pulsing flesh in her muzzle when he pushed her down far enough to slide back into the snug heat of her throat.

“I have another call to make,” he said, the cool tone now warmed with affection, lust, and no small amount of command. He didn’t even feel the need to tell her what was expected, nor was it needed as the soft suction of that bound muzzle caused the pleasant ache of need to rise again. “More purring this time. I rather liked the purring.”

---

She really was a thing of beauty.

Stripped of the black suit, which was all he had seen of her to this point, she was gloriously naked stretched out on the bed beside him. Athletic, with a little extra fluff in her fur that told him she normally resided in Tundra Town. Probably a vanity, or a tool of seduction from one who wanted to keep her fur sleek but beautifully white. As soft as it was pleasing to the eyes, he savored it as he rooted through the fur under her muzzle, brushing his lips over her neck where his tie now hung.

Not that she was simply lying there. She squirmed magnificently, her entire body alive and vibrating as little needy whimpers escaped her now and then. He was being cruel, just to watch the writhing of that lithe body. He kept her on the edge, an edge that she had been riding since he’d cum in her muzzle for the second time. He hadn’t even touched her past her ears and muzzle before she’d been more than willing and ready to be taken to bed, which delighted him to no end. That need was all around him, unfiltered lust in every breath of her scent as his paw cupped the center of her thighs. He used only the tip of his finger to tease the entrance of her spaded sex, a finger that was soaked to the palm as she tried to urge him on with every rise of her hips. She was hot like a doe in heat, tangy on his tongue when he decided to give her a break by lifting his paw to his mouth to sample her. Her eyes were dark with lust, sky blue stormy with need and desperation that he continued to build in her as she watched his tongue glide from his palm to the tip of his claw slowly.

“This is new to you, isn’t it Skye?” he murmured, a soft grin touching his lips as she nodded.
quickly. The nod came with a squirm of her hips as he returned his paw to her body, this time to the soft mound of one breast as his muzzle followed. He cupped the firm flesh and soft fur, lifting until the pink of her nipple was exposed to his lips. Her cry was sharp and sweet to his ears when his tongue tickled it, followed by a drawn out moan as he pulled the tiny bud into his mouth for a firm suck. Her entire body squirmed under him as he released, his eyes on hers as he nuzzled his way through her fur to the other breast. “You came here wanting me. Seduce. Enjoy. Probably with thoughts of conquest in mind. But submit…”

He cut himself off as he very lightly nipped at her other nipple, long incisors dragging to the tip before he flicked his tongue over the warm skin. He felt her body shift as her legs parted, exposing the soft puffy pink of her sex in an invitation that he doubted she was even aware of. It wasn’t the first time she had given it, either. If she were on her paws and knees, he had no doubt that the fluff of her tail would have been pulled to the side to give him access to that beautiful rump. It was becoming harder to resist the temptation she offered, but he would play a little more.

“…Submitting isn’t something you normally feel the need to do. Not like now,” he chirred lightly as he replaced his mouth with his paw on her nipple, tugging softly as he nuzzled his way up her throat. “Not to the point that you almost came while I was in your muzzle, hm?”

He saw by the widening of her eyes that she hadn’t realized he’d notice that, and it made him chuckle as he nosed the underside of her muzzle lovingly before capturing her mouth with his. The first kiss had been interesting, and it remained so. Erotic in the shape of her mouth, the size and taste of her tongue, and the way sharp teeth felt smooth and dangerous when his tongue glided over them in his explorations. Her breath was warm against his cheek, ruffling the fur before she sucked in a breath when he pinched the nipple trapped between his fingers, moaning into the kiss when he rolled it in slow circles. Her paw moved, wrapped around his bare back until her fingers dug into the striped fur of his back until he could feel the press of her claws against his skin. It was a change which made him grin into the kiss. She had been almost placid in her need for the last few minutes, perhaps afraid any movement of her own would make him stop his attention. Now it seemed she had come to understand that not much of anything was going to move him until he was ready.

But she could urge him onward. She wriggled under him, sliding her leg around his hips until he acquiesced by moving to cover her and pressed his weight on top of her until he could feel the rise and fall of her chest as her breathing quickened. He angled his hips, felt and heard that breath catch when the length of pulsing pink flesh nestled against the damp opening of her spade. It made her whimper urgently when he didn’t thrust into her right away, even though the heat that saturated the length of his shaft tempted him to do just that. It was so delicious that his mouth watered. The look on her face, the part of her muzzle as she made no attempt to keep her need silent, the way her body felt pinned under his, and the heat that saturated the shaft of his cock as he ground his hips against her firmly. A grind that was enough to have her back arch and leave the bed as he blended that sensation with that of his mouth on her breasts again. He wasn’t a heartless male, after all. And he wanted her to cum almost as much as she wanted it herself. So, he continued to grind against her, drawing the full length along the opening of her sex in strong glides that had her whimpering and whispering nonsense into his ears as she kissed and nibbled on the base of each.

The tension built quickly in her, manifesting in quivering muscles as she tried to keep her hips moving at the same pace as his, something that she failed to do when he pressed his paw into the bed on either side of her and increased the force behind his hips. For all intents, it looked like he was already taking her as he gazed down into the pleasure drunk face of the vixen under him. The slick sound of his bare flesh sliding against her bare flesh became more prevalent as he lengthened the slide until the tapered tip of his cock nudged her entrance on every backstroke. This made her eyes take on a pleading light as every nudge caused a spark of lusty pleasure to shine through clearly in her eyes.
“J-Jack,” was all she managed to stammer as the slick promise of their coming mating drove her closer to the edge, causing her legs to tighten around his hips as her trembles became jerky pulses of her hips. Her lips parted as he watched her eyes, leaning in to nip at the vulnerable bottom lip lightly, and she was blissfully undone.

The sound she released was a mix of a purr and warbling cry that he found almost unbearably cute coming from such an impressive agent. Her eyes snapped closed as her face became the image of orgasmic concentration, followed quickly by orgasmic release as she tossed her head back and drove her hips upward with almost enough force to have him sliding into her. He didn’t stop, though he still didn’t give her the full satisfaction of taking her even as she was lost to the pleasure. She grew hotter and wetter against his cock, warmer against the rest of him as the pink insides of her ears visibly flushed red before being hidden when her ears shot back and a howl escaped her. Very vocal, which was just another delight to the bunny as the body of the snowy white vixen slowly settled into trembling compliance and heavy breathing.

He saw the shock in pleasure dazed eyes for the second time that night as he pulled away from her, a protest dying on her lips to be replaced with a yelp when he grabbed her paw and yanked her upright against him as he stood on his knees in the center of the bed. He didn’t give her time to question before he spun her around and shoved her forward until she dropped to her paws and knees with a surprised yelp. Delightful, intense arousal rippled through him when she tried to stay up on her paws as she looked back at him, only to have her orgasm weakened arms tremble and give out. He leaned over her, pressing his hips to her upturned rear as he stroked one paw down the center of her back to make it clear that she was to keep her chest pinned to the bed.

“Stay just like that, my beautiful vixen.”

The blue eye that watched him was still wide, but there was no fear in it. Nor was there fear when she swept her tail to the side as he rose up behind her prone form, gripped her hip with one paw and his cock with the other. The whimper of pleasure drewled into a high-toned moan when he rubbed the tip of his shaft against the entrance to her wet sex and, no longer playing at teasing, drove himself up into her with one strong thrust. He ground his teeth at the ache of pleasure as she yelped, the sudden clench of her sex around him seeming determined to suck him in further. He placed both paws on her hips, fingers and claws digging into the flesh past the fur as he was forced to take a few breaths to gain some form of control. All of this buildup, just to have him cum from a single thrust wouldn’t look very good, after all.

The moment was all he had, really. She was still eager, still wanton, and his stillness had her squirming her hips back against him as she called his name. Softly, the voice of supplication and need, coming from a vixen who had managed to catch his eye and his passion like no doe had before. Breath huffing through his muzzle as he maintained his stride for a moment longer, he drew his hips back. It required some effort, surprisingly. He was not a small buck and she was an amazingly tight vixen who didn’t seem willing to let him withdraw, the squeeze of her spade around him making it an effort to withdraw and a blissful release when he drove forward with enough force to cause the bed to buckle under them. That first meeting of his hips to her ass came with a strained cry of total bliss from her, followed by an ecstatic yelp when the action was repeated quickly and with more force. The time for teasing, gentle foreplay and patience was at an end as he pulled her back into every thrust of his hips. Ice blue eyes watching her body as the rush for that final pleasure became the only thing on either of their minds, a primal need that had her hips thrusting back to meet his in equal urgency every time he sheathed himself in the soaking heat of her sex.

Pleasure and need built quickly in the buck, urged on by her obvious delight in finally being given what she wanted. He adjusted his grip, sliding his paws under her belly to guide her forward as he pressed her down until she was flat on the bed with just enough rise in her hips to allow his pace to
continue unhindered. Her cries came in gasps, her whimpers were accented with yelps and blended with his grunts. All of them became a lurid melody with the slick sounds of sex and the muffled beat of his hips against hers as he drove himself into her harder, leaning over her back as his paws slipped between her chest and the bed to cup her breasts. Her body bucked under him when his fingers spread out to cup the softly-furred peaks of her breasts, her nipples sliding over his palms while her body rocked under him. He savored the feel of them, squeezed and stroked in time with the roll of his hips as he felt her already achingly tight sex squeeze around him in a telling rhythm.

“That’s it,” he grunted as he nuzzled against ears that were pinned back as sensation overwhelmed them both. He was close, something that he didn’t bother to fight this time as she rolled her head into his muzzle so he could nuzzle her cheek with passionate affection. “I can feel how close you are.”

Softly grunted words as his own peak bore down on him as he pumped his cock more urgently into the tight body of the vixen under him, not really caring if it was the words or the simple fact of the bed rocking pace that sent her over the edge just as he spoke them. Clenching heat spasmed, deliciously soft and wet folds quivering as she turned her face to bite the quilted blanket under her, muffling her howl as she came. And he came right behind her, riding the sensation as heat that had pooled in his belly erupted in nearly blinding pleasure when the first thick, hard thrub that warned of his coming climax caused her eyes to roll back as her hips bucked under him. His sac tightened against her rear as he pressed his muzzle to the back of her neck, quick pants through his nose filled with the scent of their mingled sex. His fingers tightened in what had to be a painful grip on her breasts as he drove himself forward and unloaded the first rush of seed into her with an urgent groan. His grip didn’t seem to bother her in the slightest, though she seemed preoccupied as another orgasm followed the spurt of hot bunny cum into her belly. She seemed incapable of doing more than trembling after that, panting and moaning into the muzzleful of the blanket that she held onto as he ground his hips into her to work off the need that she had so easily brought out in him.

When the flow and the pleasure tapered off gradually, he was left panting into the back of her neck. A neck that at some point he had decided to bite, it seemed, as he eased the grip he held on the flesh under plush fur. No blood was drawn, no sign of the slightest bit of discomfort from her, though he would check later to see if he had bruised her. For now, he simply collapsed on top of her with his length nestled in the still trembling warmth of her sex, pressing his lips to the side of her neck as he closed his eyes. Allowing himself to relax for the most part as her scent surrounded him, he was slightly surprised when she released a breathless chuckle under him.

“Something amuses you, my dear?” he asked, though he felt no need to move to see if there was some outside source of her sudden amusement.

“I was wrong,” she said, her chuckle blending with a purr that he could only have called a sound of pure, feminine contentment as her voice became lazy, heavy and drowsy. “About why they call you Savage.”

“Mm,” was his only reply as he raised his head for a moment to look down at the vixen.

Her eyes were closed and her arms were tucked under her head now, a sleepy smile curving her muzzle when he placed a light kiss against at the base of her ear. She would sleep soon if the slowing of her breath was any indication, and he would stay for a while. Watch her, admire the beauty of this strangely erotic vixen and the warmth of her body against his for a time. Because as comfortable and tempting as she was, the information she had given had changed the parameters of the case. Raised the stakes on many levels.

And if he wanted to minimize damage to both the ZIA and the Agency, Jack Savage had work to do.
Morning began with a blissful ache across most of her body, centered between her thighs, that had her sleeping mind wondering if there was validity to the idea of simply lying in bed for the rest of her life. Silly thoughts, but one that lingered as a private joke as the vixen opened her eyes to stare at the ceiling as she took stock on the mild muscle pain that seemed to spread over at least fifty percent of her body. Even her muzzle joint was a little stiff, a fact which made her skin heat in a pleasant flush as she raised her paw to tug at the tie that still dangled loosely around her neck. She glanced around as she stretched her legs under the silky white sheets, not at all surprised to find that the bed beside her was empty. Not surprised but somewhat disappointed at the same time as she sat up with a light groan when the motion caused her inner thighs to tighten, light laughter spilling from her muzzle as she tiredly scratched one ear. She was feeling about as thoroughly bred and bedded as a vixen could, she imagined, which had her thinking that the stereotypes about bunnies being sex machines existed for a reason.

While he was absent, his scent lingered warmly on the air, fresh and just as appealing as it had been when her nose had been pressed into his fur. Masculine with a hint of sweet musk and a very mild cologne that had done nothing to hide his natural smell. And right now, it was mingled with the scent of coffee, she realized as she glanced to the table beside the bed. There she found a note, a still steaming mug of coffee, a cup of water, and two white pills that she assumed were pain relievers.

_Smug bastard,_ was her first thought even as she took them and swallowed them without question. _Well-deserved smugness, but smug none-the-less._

Taking up the coffee next, breathing in the scent of life itself for a long moment, she savored the first sip as she read the note without picking it up.

_Skye,

Make yourself at home but please don’t try to leave the house without an escort.

Lunch?

Jack

With her lips curved into a slight smile as she sipped the almost perfectly strong, unsweetened coffee, she carefully extracted herself from the bed and made her way towards the window she had found him standing next to in the middle of the night. He’d been watching her as she slept, not even bothering to dress himself as he stood in the dim light. The lack of light hadn’t prevented her from seeing that lean, gray-striped body and the intense blue eyes caught somewhere between lust and serious contemplation as they’d moved over her body. No doubt, that was where his mind had been for at least a part of the night. Trying to decide if he could trust her as deeply as he wanted her.

A little chuckle spilled past her lips when she found her phone on the desk next to the window, with another note.

_Skye,

Linked you to my private cell network. Blocked everything else. The numbers are on the phone._
Enjoyed the view from here.

Jack

He was a perplexing and completely fascinating male. They were as professional as they were romantic, these little notes. He somehow managed to make the act of making it obvious that she was still under review charming, which she found ridiculously appealing. She plucked up the phone, wondering if she would find any other notes scattered about the house as she reviewed the short list of numbers added to her phone. Savage, Swift, Wolford, and WH, which she assumed meant Wilde and Hopps since those two were joined at the hip. Aware that this Nightingale had been left off the list, which she assumed meant Nightingale was one of his primary assets, she tucked the phone into her paw she sipped the coffee again and swept the curtain aside to enjoy the light of morning.

The mug slipped from her paw when she saw a limp Jack dangling between two antelope in dark suits, two darts clearly sticking from his back. Cursing under her breath, wondering where his agents were as he was shoved into the back of a black car, she swiped her paw over the number that made the most sense as she turned and dashed for her clothes.

“They’ve got Jack.”
Honeymoon Part 3b: Sunshine and Sheep

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Report:

Case File – The Savage Dark

Reporting Agent: Code Name – Jack “Savage”

Affiliation: Unknown

Current Whereabouts: Unknown

Agent Status: Unknown (Active)
“Hm? Oh, I have no idea. I was unconscious.”

“Clear skies, cool water,” Nick sighed, drifting along on what looked like a precarious sprawl over the bunny sized green inflatable raft in his tacky Hawaiian swim trunks. His arms and legs dangled limply from either side, swaying lazily in the crystal-clear water as a parody of swimming that bordered on comical. Eyes covered by sunglasses rested on the bunny, who sat on the edge of the pool with her long feet dangling in the pool as she smiled at him. “And a hot bunny. What more could a fox ask for?”

“Flattery lines that didn’t exist before that bunny was born?” she said, her smile turning into a smirk as he chuckled.

She was, to his complete lack of surprise, wearing a suit that was almost demure. A sports tank for the top and what looked more like short shorts than a bikini bottom over her wonderful hips, much to his sorrow. It should have seemed odd, considering how much of her he had seen already and how brazen she had been in certain situations recently, but it didn’t really surprise him. His image of her as an innocent country bunny had never been based entirely on stereotypes, after all. She was, in most respects, exactly that.

“Classics,” he corrected her, flashing a toothy grin as he rolled his head back to enjoy the warmth of the sun on his fur. “Some things never get old. And you, Carrots, are most certainly a hot bunny.”

“I wasn’t debating the truth of your flattery,” she quipped, causing a surprised laugh to escape him as he swayed his left arm and leg to move closer to where she sat. The ripples in the pool increased as she stepped in, the water hardly reaching her hips as she waded out towards him. Reminded that he was in the shallow end of a bunny pool, he reached down a few inches deeper with one foot and pushed off the bottom towards her so they met halfway. He released a little grunt when she placed her paws on his chest and dragged herself, and a great deal of cool water, onto the float with him.

“But I expect better flattery from you in the future, fox.”

“Hm,” he said, not the least bit disturbed by the introduction of her weight on his chest as she stretched out across it, the cooling water in his fur, or her soft lips on his when she stretched up to kiss him lightly. “Let’s see. You’re more beautiful than the sunrise in the morning, which explains why I always miss the sunrise now that you sleep beside me.”

“Hm,” she said, smiling as she angled her head up to kiss him again as he raised one paw from the water to slide it down her bare back. This time she held the kiss, lingering long enough to allow him to savor the familiar taste of her as her paw rose to cup his cheek lightly. “That’s a little better. Still a little cliché, though. Sunrise and all. Been done before.”

“You’re also cuter than a basket full of newborn pandas,” he deadpanned, laughing when she narrowed her eyes, then yelped when she grabbed the sides of the raft and intentionally rocked it until they both tumbled into the water.

She wiggled away from him under the water even as he grabbed for her hips, the motion causing his sunglasses to fall off. Ignoring that, he made another grab for her as she started to swim away, this time catching her by the foot as he surfaced with a playful growl. “And where do you think
you’re going, little bunny? You have to pay for that one!”

She squealed and sputtered as he dragged her back towards him, her other foot kicking out to splash water in his face as she tried to get away from the savage eyed fox. Once she was close enough, and he managed to catch her other foot so she couldn’t splash him again, he dove at her again to drag them both back under the surface. She squirmed, writhed, tried to bat his paws away when he grabbed her hips to pull her into his lap and then just as quickly surrendered when he covered her mouth with his. With a rush of water and light, he surfaced when her legs wrapped around him and her tongue slid out to meet his. The little growl that escaped him came in response to the little moan that slipped into his mouth, then deepened as he shivered when her fingers traced through the fur of his back. The embrace held, even as he carefully maneuvered them to that they were far enough in the shallow end for him to sit on the bottom. He felt the ripples of water when her tail wiggled and grinned faintly against her lips as the kiss slowed to a few gentle brushes of his growing whiskers against her nose.

“Cute little bunny,” he murmured, nipping lightly at her bottom lip as her eyes met his with the now familiar spark of desire in the beautiful violet.

“Deviant fox,” she said in reply, her tongue sliding over her bottom lip as she held his gaze, a coy grin spreading across her muzzle. “Almost a shame we have company coming over.”

“Almost?” he smirked, his paws squeezing down on her hips until he saw her eyes darken and her long front teeth catch on her lower lip to suppress whatever sound wanted to escape. “Think maybe they’ll be late? We might be able to…”

“Adorable, aren’t they?”

The familiar and amused voice had Judy’s head whipping around to the opened fence that led into the pool, a deep flush causing the pink of her ears to darken as she squirmed out of his arms. Nick was far lazier in turning his head as she scrambled to stand from their only mildly compromising position, squinting against the sun as he saw the dark gray fur of Wolford standing there with swimming trunks, a towel slung over one shoulder, and two other mammals on either side of him. He assumed that this was the reason for Judy’s uncharacteristic shyness. One brow rose at the small, slender, artfully half shorn black sheep wearing a much skimpier bikini than Judy’s on one side and the rotund, homely red fox in knee length Bahama trunks on the other. Both of the mammals, Gideon and Sharla he expected for lack of any other black sheep and chubby red fox mentioned before, looked both embarrassed and fascinated at the same time as Judy pulled herself out of the pool in a rush of water. Rather than being embarrassed himself, he focused the narrow slits of his pupils on the other fox and plastered on a smug grin when said fox did everything in his power not to look at Judy.

Not that he saw the other male as competition for his wife or anything, but a little savage tick in his mind told him that there was nothing wrong with making sure everything was clear.

“I’m so glad you could come!” Judy said, her voice just about bubbling with delight as she and Sharla met halfway in an enthusiastic hug the likes of which Nick was sure only female friends who hadn’t seen each other in forever could share. Complete with rocking, bouncing in place, and squeals of delight that had all three males winging their brows up at the very un-Judy like display. “Gideon, I didn’t expect you to be here.”

When she parted from the sheep and stepped up to the fox, there was no enthusiastic embrace. He remembered that their relationship was more of a forgiven bully than actual friends, so when she offered him a paw he took it with a mumbled and heavily accented greeting. Of course, Nick noticed that while Gideon still looked a bit like a fish out of water, his gaze drifted to the now slightly damp sheep who beamed at the two of them. And shy as it might have been, the way the other fox’s blue
eyes grazed over the wool free midriff of his companion was a look that Nick knew well.

“I invited him, Judy,” said the oblivious sheep, with an accent that was almost as thick as Gideon’s. It came in that easy sounding Burrows drawl that very rarely slipped into Judy’s own voice. And was adorable every time it did. “Me and Gid have been friends for a while now, you know. And when I heard he’d had the chance to talk to you a while back, I didn’t think anyone would mind.”

“No, no! Of course not!” she said, clapping her paws together as she looked between the three of them. Then, clearly in an excitable mood, took a few quick hops towards the pool before she leaped towards him. Releasing a light grunt as he caught her around the waist, he rocked back a bit with her added weight and the sudden press of her muzzle against his in a noisy, smacking kiss. Her eyes sparkled with more than the mid morning sun as she framed his muzzle with her paws for a moment before she slipped from his grasp. “Come on, guys! It’s not exactly a party, but we have juice, soda, beer, bug burgers, salad, some baked potatoes with all the fixins. Oh, and a pool.”

Ah, that moment when her accent came out when she said ‘fixins’ almost made his chuckle slip free before she dove under the water in front of him. Blinking in surprise, because of the close proximity to… Well… Him, he watched the blurred image of the bunny linger under water for a moment, paws in motion before she popped up with her ears pinned back and water streaming down every inch of her. She looked very sleek, beautiful, and playful. It was that playfulness which put the expression on her face that told him that she had been fully aware of what he’d been thinking, even as she reached up and slipped the sunglasses she’d just retrieved onto his muzzle.

“It’s very bright out, Mr. Wilde,” she said, bumping her hip against his while moving away to meet Sharla as she gingerly tested the water before stepping in.

“It certainly is, Mrs. Wilde,” he said, allowing himself to settle to the bottom of the shallow end again as he watched her wade away from him.

He had a moment where he wished she would wear something a little more like what the sheep was wearing. Though, given their already active sex life, that might not have been the best idea. The Todd felt like he was ten years younger most of the time and only in part because he constantly wanted her somehow. Energetic and driven combined with bright and beautiful wrapped in sweet with a sharp mind. Everything she was seemed to energize him, made genuine smiles grow over his muzzle more often since he had known her than in the ten years before, combined. Allowing himself to drift in these thoughts as she grabbed her reluctant friend’s hoof to drag her further into the pool, he ran his thumb over the pleasant reminder of the wedding band.

_You thought you had it made once, Wilde, but it only got better. Shit storm after shit storm, a little night howler poisoning, and probably twenty agents within half a mile of this house, but you have her, Mrs. Wilde. That really has to be the…_

“Hey, Nick!”

Ears perked as he turned his head towards the shout of his name only have a tidal wave of water slap him in the muzzle and sent his sunglasses flying off again. Sputtering a bit, the dripping fox playfully glared into the laughing eyes of the wolf standing in the deeper end of the pool. Titters of laughter from his mate and her friend had him rolling his eyes as he reached down to pluck his sunglasses from the bottom on the pool again. Sliding them on, he pulled himself to his full height - which earned him a catcall from Judy – before suddenly diving towards the wolf, then vanishing under the water. Any attempt Wolford made to escape was in vain as his paw wrapped around one large, lupine foot and yanked it towards him. Larger or not, the sudden change in balance had the wolf losing his footing and stumbling forward, submerging just in time for the wily fox to come up
behind him. His laughter rang out when Wolford surface with a yelp, paws gripping the fur on his back as he scaled the larger canine until his foot pads were planted on each shoulder.

“Lowly wolf!” he exclaimed in what he felt was a good and exaggerated tone of royalty, each paw gripping an ear lightly as he put on his best triumphant expression. “You are no match for..!”

He managed to take a breath even as the world was suddenly moving much more quickly around him, the sudden rush of cold as the wolf simply dropped them both back into the water. He didn’t release, no matter how the wolf struggled to shake him off in their brief submergence and was still on top a moment later when Wolford managed to stand again as water sluiced around his hips.

“…me!” Nick finished as if nothing had interrupted him, shaking water from his ears and laughing as the wolf slumped his shoulders to the sound of Judy’s laughter. Defeated by the fact that he was being ridden by a fox, the larger mammal moved when Nick nudged his shoulder with one foot to make him move towards the rabbit.

“You should have known better, Wolford,” Judy said, tilting her head to the side as she squinted up at him. The sheep beside her was staring up at him in what he could have taken as shock, so he gave her a friendly wink. “You were there when he rode a grizzly bear’s head through a door.”

“Slander and lies, Carrots! I did no such thing,” Nick scoffed, then dropped his feet over Wolford’s shoulders to sit more comfortably before patting between the wolf’s ears lightly. “Thanks for the ride, buddy. Now, you can put meeeeee doooown!”

The last words were cried as the wolf grabbed the feet dangling off his shoulder, using the grip and a buck of his back to fling the light frame of the fox head over tail into the deep end of the pool. The rush of cool water again ended when he surfaced to the sound of Judy’s laughter, which was muffled as she tried to hide it behind one paw, and Sharla’s voice as she angled her head around the wolf. “Is he okay?”

“Fine, fine,” he muttered, sending a heatless glare at his mate as he waded towards their end of the pool again. When he arrived, Wolford grinned and slapped him soundly on the back, which created a nice splat of a paw-pad on wet fur. “I bet you think I deserved that, don’t you rabbit?”

“Awww. I would never say something like that, Slick,” she said, failing to look sympathetic as what she’d muffled until then snorted out into a peal of laughter when he splashed her playfully. “I’ve never seen a savage fox missile!”

“Maybe we should suggest it to the boss man,” Wolford interjected, his muzzle split in a large grin as he looked down at the bunny. “A Nicksile.”

“That was terrible,” Nick deadpanned, keeping his expression carefully blank even as the wolf and bunny continued to laugh. Sharla and Gideon looked on, bemused but mostly perplexed. “You two should leave the jokes to the professionals.”

He had no idea how much time passed as everyone settled in to enjoy the pool. Judy’s excitement to see her friends had an obvious part in her energetic and playful mood through it all. As often as he roughhoused with Wolford, which he personally enjoyed as something he hadn’t done with another male in… ever, Judy would drag Sharla along into a splash fight or an attempt to urge Gideon to stop being a loner on his end of the pool. It was an act that both the bunny and the sheep took part in with mixed results, for reasons that were becoming more obvious to Nick. Sunglasses were good at hiding where his eyes rested, after all. And more than once, he had found the other fox trying to steal little glanced at the slender black sheep. Not in the hungry, possessive way he was pretty sure he looked at Judy, himself, either. It was a shy, distant longing. The sort that one felt when they were certain
something would never actually be theirs.

And, oh, how familiar that feeling was to him.

The funny thing was when they did manage to drag him into whatever little games they were playing, Sharla moved away from Judy to slide closer to the fox. It was subtle, likely unconscious, but it was there. And every time he waded off again to watch from a distance, the tug of a frown would pull of the ewe’s lips. Every. Single. Time. That told Nick one thing: she was very aware of his presence. Friends? Certainly. Just friends? Not likely.

A conclusion that made him roll his eyes behind the dark glasses the third time the act came to an end, with Gideon inching away from the two females as they chatted while Sharla secretly frowned with a twitch of her little sheep tail under the water. Reaching over, Nick nudged Wolford’s arm and motioned with his muzzle once he had his attention. Curious but willing, the wolf followed him to where Gideon leaned against the edge of the pool further into the deep end and when he took one side, Nick took the other. The curious glance that was directed at the two of them came with a slightly uncomfortable smile and a sideways splay of his ears, which Nick assumed came from the fact that he was suddenly surrounded.

“Well,” Nick began in a cheerful tone, propping one elbow on the edge of the pool as he faced the shorter male, “we’ve met. But with the prey squad over there hogging all your time, I haven’t even had a chance to chat with my fellow fox. I don’t actually chat with many foxes at all, come to think of it, but since you’re here…”

“Oh,” came the first sound of reply, which was all that was said for a full three seconds before the Burrow fox realized they were waiting for him to say something else. “Y-yeah, I guess that’s true. I guess it’s just that I’m not really all that good at ‘male talk’, to be honest.”

“No male is good at ‘male talk’,” Nick assured him, flashing a toothy grin as he said it. “Except maybe sports. Which is why males tend to gather in groups, so there are more of us to say random things until an actual subject comes up. Otherwise, you get extended periods of silence filled with beer swigging and cigar smoking. And I’ve never been a fan of cigars myself.”

“Yeah,” Gideon said, a short laugh escaping him as he seemed to relax a little. And how he managed to have an accent within the sound of a laugh was just amazing to Nick. “Or when they take you shopping and you end up holding the bags in a group of males who have nothin’ to say to each other.”

“Oh, I feel your pain,” Nick agreed, though he had never once been dragged along on a shopping trip with his wife. Even before they’d gotten married he quickly learned that she was in no way a mall bug. Though the opening was a rich one. “So, how long have you two been an item?”

“W-what?” The absolutely dumbfounded expression that crossed the amiable face of the other fox was perfect, made better by the fact that he instantly turned his eyes to the sheep only to drop them again as he tried to stutter out a denial. “N-no, no. It’s not like that at all.”

“Oh?” Nick said with feigned surprise, placing his paw against his chest for a moment. “Well, it looked to me like there was something there. Wolford?”

“I…” Gideon began and then paused as he lowered his voice to a low mumble to ensure that they
chatting females didn’t catch what he said. “We’re just friends. I mean, she’s a…”

“Sheep?” Nick inserted helpfully.

“Yeah,” he said, actually sounding grateful when he looked up again. Nick found those oddly soulful eyes on the male who had been a terrible bully in his youth almost pleading. “And I’m a…”

“Fox?” Nick said again, this time his voice far more unimpressed and enjoyed the way the other male squirmed a bit in place.

“Well, yeah. I guess.”

“Wolford, am I a fox?” Nick asked, without taking his eyes off Gideon. The shorter fox had sunk down a bit into the pool with his ears back, clearly trying to avoid further embarrassment. Nick wasn’t about to let him get off that easy.

“You look like a fox to me,” Wolford all but chirped, clearly enjoying the coup as he lightly swirled one finger in the water without further comment.

“And I’m pretty sure Judy is a bunny,” Nick continued, turning his eyes toward the bunny in question. “Wait, I’ll check. Hey, Judy! You are a bunny, right?”

“You know I’m a bunny, Nick,” she called back, completely unaware of the fact that Gideon looked ready to panic as he tried to shush the fox. “What kind of question is that?”

“Because you look more like an angel from here,” he replied, blowing her an exaggerated kiss with a wide grin. It was easy to tease when he meant every word and even as she rolled her eyes at his antics, he could see the insides of her ears darken as Sharla ‘awwed’. “So, we have established that the fact that you’re a fox and she is a sheep. But because you are talking to a fox who is married to a bunny, that argument is invalid. I used to think that way, too.”

“Oh, here we go,” Wolford said, earning a glare from Nick even as he held up his paws in surrender. “Kidding, kidding!”

“Uh huh,” Nick muttered but turned his attention back to Gideon. The fact that the other male’s eyes were once more on the half shaven sheep, who was currently leaning back against the edge of the pool with her head tilted up towards the sun next to Judy who was doing the same while they continued to chat. Sheep shearing their wool was as much a comfort issue as it was a style choice for ewes, though he found Sharla’s choice of completely shearing her torso, hips, rear and breasts to be pretty adventurous for a Burrows sheep. “Has she always shaved that much of her wool?”

“Wut?” came the slightly startled reply as the chubby fox seemed to snap out of a little dream world. “Oh! Uh… I don’t think so. Not like I paid attention. Or anything.”

“Uh huh,” Nick repeated, a smirk crawling over his muzzle. “Looks interesting, though. Shows off a lot of curves. Nice, tight little body under all that wool.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Gideon said, his eyes narrowing as he showed the first sign of irritation and even aggression of the day when his fur bristled. Nick wondered how long and hard he had trained to keep it all tamped down, given what Judy had told him about the days of the vicious bully Gideon Grey.

“Oh, don’t worry. My taste turns towards bunnies,” Nick assured him, plastering on a friendly smile that kept his teeth from showing. He’d wanted to see a little rise, he didn’t want that rise to linger or grow into real anger. “And I certainly don’t want Judy shaving like a sheep. That would
just look odd. I think. I’m just wondering, has she been dating? Any rams catching her eye?”

“Uh,” came the exceptionally articulate reply. The only one that came for a long moment as he seemed to think on the subject.

“Tell me if this sounds familiar,” Nick said, slinging one arm over the other’s male’s shoulder as Wolford chuckled lightly at Nick’s tell-tale tone. “Little sheep and a not so little fox who have been at odds for years meet as adults and surprise! They hit it off and become friends. They start talking as friends, going out as friends, and I bet she even shows up unexpectedly at his bakery near closing time – I intend to try that blueberry pie Bonnie told me about, someday – just to say hello, have a little sweet something while chatting with said fox. She does this even though the bakery may or may not be anywhere near her part of Bunnyburrow. She hangs out with him, as a friend of course, and even drags him along with her while she goes shopping. They see movies together, share meals, even take long walks for no reason other than finding excuses to be together.”

Taking a moment to let it all sink in, Nick glanced at Judy over Gideon’s head, grinning when he saw that her ears were radarred in his direction with a look of surprise on that beautiful bunny face. Raising his sunglasses for a second, he cast a wink in her direction as she looked at the oblivious sheep beside her, then to Gideon himself, a fox who looked like he was trying to process the truth of a great secret being revealed to him.

“Then one day, the fox realizes that he has feelings for this little black sheep. Of course, he doesn’t make a move or say a word because he’s convinced that foxes are foxes and sheep are sheep, so he keeps his muzzle shut without making a peep.” He paused for a moment at this point, casting his eyes skyward with a sigh at the wolf’s chuckle. “I really didn’t mean for that to rhyme, sorry. But it all comes around to the fact that the fox is convinced that he can’t have the sheep. When did she start shaving her wool that way, Gideon?”

“About a week ago,” the dumbstruck fox said without hesitation or sidestepping this time. “After we…”

“After you..?” he pressed when the fox hesitated.

“After we saw the news report,” he said, scratching the base of one ear uneasily as he glanced over at Nick. “You know, the one where you come out of the back of the van?”

“That was on the news?” he asked, looking at Wolford for confirmation. When the wolf nodded, he brought the memory of that night into mind, at least the parts after he had regained his sanity, he remembered carrying Judy out of the back of the van. It had been his condition for leaving the van at all, given his still antsy state of mind at the time. They had chatted with the Chief and Jack. Well, she had been chewed out by the Chief and Jack for locking herself in the van and getting bitten. Then once they had left them alone while the EMT cleaned her arm, he chastised her himself before…

“Someone caught us kissing on camera?” he said, frowning a little. As he recalled it, the entire block around the bridge had been locked down.

“Phone video,” Wolford supplied helpfully, grinning at his stunned expression. “Jack says someone in the ZPD must have released it to the press, but I think Jack had something to do with it. Remember when he said he had something to do with the lack of news reports about you two?”

“Oh right,” Nick muttered, his eyes considering Gideon for a long moment before a large grin split his muzzle. “You’re telling me that she changed her wool style as soon as she saw that news report?”

“Yeah, but…”
“But nothing,” he cut him off, squeezing his arm around his shoulder again to give him a friendly little shake. “She hangs around you all the time, she goes out of her way to visit your shop, she takes you shopping with her, and she changes her wool style the day she sees that report. If you think something is there, you need to go for it. You never did answer my question. Have you ever seen her with a ram? Or even a bunny for that matter?”

“Well, yeah. She’s around bunnies all the time.” When Nick lowered his sunglasses to level a savage eyed look at him, Gideon chuckled a little nervously. “No. I don’t think she’s dated anyone since…”

“She started hanging out with you,” Nick confirmed, shaking his head before he removed his arm from the other male’s shoulder and dropped into the pool to drift around a bit. “This is familiar, in a lot of ways. Judy and me. We were just friends for a long time, by our own doing. We both went out of our way to spend every waking hour together. We were best friends. Are best friends. But there was more to it, a more that we kept hidden from each other because we were both obviously idiots. At first, I took all of the blame on myself. She’s a bunny, I’m a fox. Why would a fox want a bunny? Never knowing that she felt the same. Both the ‘in love’ part, and the ‘why would a fox want a bunny’ part.”

“Yeah, but what if Sharla doesn’t feel that way about me?” Gideon asked, a frown forming in his muzzle as he lowered his voice a little further as if that would stop Judy from listening in. “What if… What if she’s just being friendly because I don’t have a whole lotta friends?”

“What if she wants you to put your paws all over that sheared body of hers?” Nick and Gideon both looked at Wolford, who was the one that had spoken, in surprise. A long-toothed grin was his response as he spread his paws in front of him. “What? She might. From what I understand, ewes like it when their shaved parts are touched.”

“Just how much do you look into cross species sexuality there, buddy?” Nick asked, his own muzzle spreading in a like grin as the other fox’s ears dropped down in clear embarrassment when his gaze drifted to the sheep. Luckily, they were chatting again so there was little chance that she was hearing anything being said, even if Judy was.

“You could call me a student of the subject,” the wolf replied blithely, flicking some sparkling droplets of water at his friend. “I mean predator and prey is almost unheard of, especially bunnies and foxes, but I mean like… A tiger and a wolf or something could happen.”

“Right,” Nick said, drawing out the word a bit as he narrowed his eyes playfully. “That’s a very specific species mix you have there, oh my partner is a tigress. And how did sheep come into wolf and tiger?”

“Oh no, that was,” he said, laughing uneasily as he avoided eye contact with both foxes. “I might have looked it up when I saw a certain black sheep walking around town. That was before I knew she had a thing for the baker fox, though.”

“You wolf, you,” Nick grinned, got a grin in return, and then turned his attention back to the still blushing Gideon. “Back to the point before our friend here explodes thinking about his paws all over that slender little sheep.”

They both chuckled when Gideon sank a little deeper into the water, until just his nose and the top of his head bobbed above the surface. He looked helplessly between the other two males.

“The point is, Gideon, you never know until you do,” he continued, easing his tone to a more serious tenor. “I almost lost Carrots – Judy – because we were stuck in the whole ‘not possible’
friend-zone. That would have been a horrible mistake, made worse by the fact that I might never have known I was making it. Certain events forced our paws, made things clear that should have been obvious a long time ago if not for the fact that we were separated by that line we had drawn between us.

“Nothing ventured, nothing gained,” he continued cheerfully as he heard his phone ring from poolside near Judy and Sharla. He drew himself away and swam backward towards it. “Nothing lost that wouldn’t be lost anyway if you don’t try. I have more but…”

He stopped when Judy handed him his phone as he reached the poolside. Grinning down at her as she looked up at him curiously, he slipped his free arm around her to drag her into a toes curling kiss. Savoring the softness of her mouth, and the fact that she didn’t hesitate to return the kiss, for a few seconds, he slid his thumb over the phone to answer the call. Left grinning down at his flushed bunny wife when he places it carefully close to his wet ear, he answered, “This is Wilde.”

The unfamiliar voice that came from the other side of the line was calmly professional, with just enough of a panicked edge to have his fur stand on end as his eyes met and held Judy’s.

“They’ve got Jack.”

**Chapter End Notes**

Big thanks to TheWyvernWeaver for the new cover art. :D

Second of the promised two chapters finishing up the Honeymoon string and leading deeper into the larger storyline.

Comments are love!
Forgive me for taking so long with this! Life, college, work, Sunderance, brain death are all factors. Please do enjoy and comment to let me know that you forgive me and are still reading!

Report:
Case File – The Savage Dark
Reporting Agent: Code Name – Jack “Savage”
Affiliation: Unknown
Current Whereabouts: Unknown
Agent Status: Unknown (Active)

Recording Continues:

“I knew they were going to try. That goes without saying. While I did not fully trust Special Agent Skye, my mistrust for her was directly related to the idea that she herself had been sent to take Nick once before. It was reasonable to assume that if the ZIA intended to take me this time, she might have been the one sent to do it. A redemption, of sorts. Or payback for my taking her target from her...
the first time we encountered each other. Agents are sometimes testy like that, you see. Any agency. No one likes to lose, of course. But when you have been trained and continue to train for as long as we do, when you feel that you are fighting for something bigger and better than yourself? It can easily become personal. By that morning, after a long night of talking things over with Special Agent Skye, I had come to the conclusion that that was unlikely to be her intention.

“But there was still the ZIA’s plan to remove me. In the colloquies of the inexperienced, the fact that the ZIA took it upon themselves to abduct an Agent on active duty could have been seen as a power play. It could easily be taken as such, for anyone looking in from the outside. I was an obstacle to their attempts to reach someone who was capable of exposing their attempts to cover up the savages that were unusually resistant to the conventional Night Howler remedy. In removing me, they would have shown that they were willing to do anything to achieve their goal, gone to any length to keep things working in their favor.

“To those outside of my world, such a thing would seem like a show of control. The problem being, abducting an active Agent is not something that ever ends well. The ZIA knew this when they did it. No. My abduction wasn’t about maintaining control; it was a display of exactly how little control they had left.

“It was an act of desperation.”

“Agent Savage,” the muddy voice called again, followed by a light tap on the side of his muzzle that had him pulling away reflexively. “Agent Savage, I know you’re close to waking up if you aren’t already.”

The tapping continued, persistent and quick, as his mind was slowly dragged out of whatever drug they had injected him with. The world around him hummed faintly as he struggled to open his eyes, eyes that refused to focus when they finally did open. Mercifully, the light level in the long room was already dim enough that his dilated pupils didn’t burst into flames when he managed to pry his lids apart. Everything was a blur, and that damned tapping - which he now clearly felt as light slaps to his cheek from a medium sized paw - became annoying enough that he tried to roll his head away from it with a wince. As his vision cleared, the long muzzle of a middle-aged grey wolf moved in close to him, a toothy smile that could almost have passed for coolly friendly gracing his expression. The hand that had been slapping him to speed the process of the drug wearing off shoved his head back none-too-gently and two fingers pried one eye open. His instinctive attempt to bat the hand away was thwarted by the obviousness of the handcuffs that kept his wrists pinned to the chain at his back.

“Ah, there you are, Agent Savage,” the wolf murmured, brown eyes peering into the open eye for a moment before his head was released abruptly. As the hand withdrew, Jack took a quick glance at the silver watch on his wrist. “I was starting to wonder if you would ever wake up.”

“And you are?” he asked, mildly annoyed that his voice still wasn’t one-hundred percent free of the drowsy drawl of the drugged. The time on the wolf’s watch told him that it was just past noon, so he had only been unconscious for a few hours.

“I think it’s best if you don’t know my name,” the wolf replied, his tone cheerful.

Jack’s eyes followed him as he moved over to a nearby metal table, next to which hung his jacket. The top of the table was sloped towards the center of the room, weakly reflecting the light from the single light swaying overhead. They were in motion, he realized as he examined the instruments
arranged and secured on the table. The instant realization of what they were quickened his mind as adrenaline surged, the annoyance more than anything causing the drug’s hold on him to slip further. All this really managed to do was cause a trickle of annoyance. He looked away from the table once he noticed that it was bolted to the wall, blue eyes moving to the sway of the light and the rectangular box of a room he was in. Cold metal walls, much deeper than they were tall or wide, combined with the still present hum and the motion of the light…

“You’re going to interrogate me in the trailer of a truck?” he asked blandly, returning cooling blue eyes to the wolf. From the fact that the larger mammal was wearing a ZIA standard suit and tie, and was currently sliding black gloves over his paws, at least he could assume there was no fear of future blood splatter on the agent’s mind. “It makes sense, really. No physical address to associate with clandestine torture, quick clean up, fully disposable in case of emergency. A little theatrical with the swinging light, which could just as easily have been a stationary. Was that your choice?”

“Light is a focal point,” the wolf explained as he flexed his freshly leather covered fingers together to tighten the gloves; and maybe in an attempt to look intimidating as he moved towards the bunny. “Stationary lights give those being interrogated something to focus on when close to unconsciousness, or close to breaking. This disorients to some degree, as you’ll find out.”

“Are you even going to tell me what you’re trying to get from me before we begin?” the bunny asked, a smirk curled his muzzle as he reclined as best he could in the chair. The relaxed expression and lack of struggle seemed to annoy his captor, an annoyance that almost became obvious on the larger mammal’s face when he continued, “I might be ready to talk.”

“And where, Agent Savage,” the wolf said with a slow grin forming on his muzzle as he stood in front of the chair, “would the fun in that be?”

“So first you’re going to pay me back for all of the…”

The words were cut off by the blinding pain as the fist connected with the side of his muzzle, one that had enough strength behind it to be exceptionally painful but not so hard that the larger mammal broke his neck. A nice, solid bunny strength punch with a much larger paw. Rolling his lower jaw a bit to loosen the knot of pain that formed, his gaze returned to the wolf.

“…trouble I’ve caused the ZIA?” he finished easily, keeping his expression friendly as he raised his muzzle a bit to angle it towards the wolf when the other fist cut across his cheek.

“There is more to it than that, of course,” was the cool reply, letting the bunny know that at least his captor wasn’t getting off on the torture. A professional. “I will need to know where you’re keeping Muste, what former Special Agent Skye told you, and where they plan to move Nicholas Wilde now that you’re out of the game.”

“Well, I’ll give you a piece of advice,” Jack said, tilting his muzzle again with the next blow and the blow that followed that one. Grunting slightly, his ears rose as he licked the coppery taste from the inside of his muzzle slowly before he gave a grin that he had no doubt was a crimson smirk. “If you expect to get anything from me in the fleeting time we have, you’ll want to skip ahead to more advanced techniques.”

Of course, as he expected, the wolf didn’t take his advice.

*Likely better for my shirt anyway*, he thought as the muffled sounds of fists on his own flesh and pain became his focus.
“Do you have any idea how to contact Nightingale?”

“Why would we have any idea how to contact Nightingale?” Judy replied simply, glancing around to the fox on the other side of the room as he checked the tranq gun in his paw before he shoved it into the holster at his hip. Her questioning look was met with a shrug and shake of his head as he walked over to where she stood by the door. “Apparently, no one outside of Jack and the Agency knows how, and we’ve been told to stand down and wait for further instructions. Swift told us that they were planning to move us since it is obvious the ZIA knows where we are.”

“Oh course they know where you are,” the vixen replied, managing to sound completely unconvincing even though there was a good deal of interference coming through the open speakerphone. “And I was told the same thing. Sit tight and wait to be extracted.”

“And yet,” Nick said, leaning against the wall beside the door while Judy finished tucking in her shirt and adjusting the live firearm under her jacket, “that background noise sounds remarkably like someone who’s not doing what they’re told.”

“Jack may not have time for us to wait for the Agency to plan an extraction. You’re telling me you’re not both arming yourselves and planning to sneak off?”

When her muzzle raised to Nick as he leaned over her shoulder, those savage green eyes seemed to consider the phone for a moment in silence. It wasn’t as though either of them had reason to trust the vixen; far from it, in fact. But their options were limited and neither one of them had any intention of being huddled away to another safe house after Jack had been taken who-knew-where. Especially not when Judy still considered how much she owed the other rabbit. Plus, if she was honest with herself, he was sort of growing on her. Just a little. The fact that Nick gave a slight roll of his eyes and another nod had her grinning slightly as she leaned over to kiss him on the cheek lightly.

“We have no intention of sneaking off. We were going to go visit my parents and on our way there,” she said, rolling her paw with an amused glance to the door, “we were planning on taking the long way.”

“Sounds like a perfectly homely outing,” was the amused reply, followed quickly by the squeal of tires both through the phone and outside the front door. “I don’t think the two guards would agree. Hello, fellas!”

“Special Agent Skye,” Judy heard the male voice outside saying, causing her to close the call and move towards the door with her ears perked so she could hear everything. Nick joined her as the guard continued, “You were ordered to remain…”

Phsst! Phsst!

“I know, I know,” came her voice, moving closer to the door now as the sound of two large bodies hitting the ground caused Judy to glance at Nick with a quirky grin. “I’m just really bad at following orders from people I don’t actually work for. Actually, when you think about it, I’m not doing too well at following orders from the people I used to work for either, but…”

She was smiling when Judy opened the door, her paw raised to knock in the same tight black outfit she had worn the night she had tried to take Nick. Judy was pretty sure the vixen wasn’t expecting the fist to slam into her muzzle, likely because she wasn’t expecting it either. Nick was almost quick enough to stop her from landing the second punch. Though when it connected nice and centered into the muzzle of the baffled bitch, it was satisfying to feel the ache in her paw and
watch the white-furred agent stumble back with her paw covering her nose and curses filling the air. Nick made little soothing growls, and even though the flash of anger had passed, she appreciated the effort and snuggled back into the arms that were currently holding her off the ground for Skye’s safety.

“Sorry,” she chirped cheerfully when furious blue eyes settled on her over the paw still holding her nose. “I suppose I wasn’t as over the whole ‘You tried to kidnap My Fox’ thing as I thought I would be. I feel better now, though.”

“Damn it,” the vixen growled, looking down at her paw for a moment. They could all see that there was no blood, even though Judy figured it would serve her right. She gave a quick sniff and straighten up again, rubbing her thumb over the spot where the paw hand landed. “You hit like a bunny. And that’s not the insult it would have been a few weeks ago.”

“Thank you,” Judy replied, grinning up at Nick when he placed a lick gently between her ears before setting her on her own two feet again. She turned serious eyes on the vixen again, folding her arms over her chest. “Judy Hopps. Nick Wilde. You’re Skye, formerly Special Agent. Nice to meet you, again, nice to meet us. What are we going to do about Jack?”

“I know where they will take him,” Skye replied, tossing her head behind her and waving for them to follow her as she stepped back out of the doorway. “Grab anything you think you need and come on. Given their head start, we likely only have an hour before they change direction and vanish.”

“They’ve been gone for hours now,” Nick said, following her as she moved to follow the vixen. Both of them paused at the door, looking between the two leonine guards who seemed to be comfortably sleeping their way to a future headache with darts sticking out of their necks. “What about Wolford… Oh.”

They both stopped and blinked at the fire red, sharp-edged, high-powered machine that was waiting on the corner for them. Judy thought it reminded her of something she had seen burning up the track in a Formula One race, minus the various stickers and advertisement logos. It was low to the ground with more sharp edges than a saw, the windows tinted so dark that she couldn’t even see the interior, and while she didn’t know much about cars in general, she did know that triple exhaust was likely lead to an engine with more power than a ZPD cruiser. When she glanced at Nick, she was pretty sure he was seconds away from having drool run down the corner of his mouth, prompting her to give him a sharp nudge with one elbow.

“Okay, okay,” he laughed as he pulled away, both of them watching as Skye went around to the front of the car and popped the hood. Which was actually the trunk she realized as the snow-white vixen waved them over and started to pull out light tactical gear.

“We need to move and this car isn’t large mammal friendly. He’s likely been swept up already for whatever countermeasure they’re planning since he’s not a target. None of the heavy stuff this time,” she said to change the subject, tossing two lightweight tactical vests towards the two of them, one for each size. “No bells and whistles like the Agency had you in, I’m afraid. Bulletproof with an underlying stab vest, pouches for spare clips. Have some wireless earpieces, in case we need to split up. CZ Scorpion SMGs, a few thousand rounds…”

“Whoa whoa,” Nick said after strapping the vest on, holding his paws up when one of the weapons was pushed towards him. “I’m not taking a live fire in my state of mind.”

“Because of the savage thing?” the vixen snorted, taking the gun in both paws and shoving it into his chest until he was forced to either take it or drop it. His ears went back when she got up muzzle
to muzzle with him. “We might just need a little savage on your part. Things are going to get dirty out there, Wilde. They’ve taken an Agent and everyone who knows that Agents exist know that it’s a big ‘Fuck, what are we doing?’ move. They’re going to try to make Jack disappear and they’re not going to be using tranquilizers to stop us from getting him back. So, pretend for a second that you haven’t drained all your testosterone into your wife, take the damned gun, and get in the car.”

“Well, when you put it that way,” he said lowly, looking down at the gun for a few seconds as if he had no idea what to do with it before he shrugged in Judy’s direction and swung the strap over one shoulder.

Her heart racing a bit, realizing that this was no longer a case of play nice between the agencies, Judy did the same and double checked the gun at her hip before taking the earpiece she was offered. “You seem well prepared for this, considering that we’re all going rogue now,” she commented as she adjusted the earpiece, powered it up and tested the sound. “Test one, test two.”

“I read you, Hopps,” the vixen said as she slammed the trunk and moved towards the door as the other two tests passed. “If you’re going to go rogue, I like to be prepared. Especially when the head of the ZIA has gone off the deep end. Technically, I’ve been rogue since I came here anyway.”

“I suppose that makes sense,” Judy said, blinking when the engine roared to life as the vixen climbed into the car. When she popped open the passenger side, which caused her to take a step back when it swung up rather than out, she frowned once she got a look inside. Aside from the perfectly clean, polished, and futuristic looks of everything right down to the seats, one thing was glaringly obvious. “There are only two seats.”

“Oh, right,” the vixen murmured, half turning to reach between the seats. What looked like just another fancy panel in an overly expensive car came away from the rear of the car and, to Judy’s surprise, folded down until it locked into place about half a foot from the gear shift. It left a small, but cushioned, backless seat between the driver and passenger seat. With the size of it, it was obvious where she was going to be sitting when Skye waved her towards it. “All yours.”

“Great, thanks,” she muttered as she climbed in, having to take extra care to position her SMG so it wasn’t digging into her shoulder. She wasn’t even finishing getting comfortable in the seat that was tiny even for a bunny by the time Nick climbed in with no problem, earning a glare from her when he whistled about the inside of the car. “You don’t even like cars, Nick.”

“A fox can appreciate a thing of beauty when he sees one,” he quipped in reply, turning his head to wink at her. “I married you, right?”

“So corny,” she murmured, ignoring his chuckle when she turned her attention to Skye as they pulled away from the house. She was surprised by how quickly and smoothly they accelerated, yet the vixen seemed intent on maintaining a constant speed while still in Bunnyburrow. And by how intense the expression and set of the vixen’s ears were, she was just as sure that she wanted to simply floor it. “You said you know where they’ve taken Jack?”

“I am pretty sure I know,” she replied, her eyes never leaving the road as she weaved her way around cars. Judy realized she was taking a back exit, leading the long way onto the highway away from Zootopia. This surprised her. “There is only one place they would take a high-value target like Jack if they intended to make him vanish. Anywhere inside of the city would be too risky.”

“So, what?” Nick cut in, frowning slightly as he looked between the two. “Even the ZIA has secret bases outside of the city?”

“Not exactly,” Skye murmured, going silent for a beat as she took a turn at such speed that it made
Judy’s stomach lurch. “They have a convoy for situations like this. A rig to house the target, escorts, and aerial surveillance traveling the highway between checkpoints.”

“And no one notices this?” Judy asked, frowning slightly as she leaned forward. “How does that work?”

“They’re not all together in one place on the road. That’s what the aerial surveillance is for,” she explained, taking another turn that put them on a straight path towards the highway. “The escorts look like normal travelers, normal cars flanking the target at a distance. Two mammal teams, armed to the teeth and the aerial units who stay high and unnoticed, will tell them if someone looks suspicious. Then depending on the severity of the threat, upwards of two dozen vehicles will converge from all directions, the last to arrive within ten minutes at top speed. They can form roadblocks, bottlenecks if the road splits in their advantage, and more aerial units will arrive to assist if needed.”

“That sounds like a ridiculous amount of mammal-power for one bunny,” Nick commented, shrugging when Judy shot a glare at him. “What? I know Jack is a super-secret agent bunny, but that would take a lot of training and planning ahead to pull off. Wouldn’t someone notice?”

“Maybe?” Skye shrugged, her eyes narrowing when she saw the truck on the side of the road leading onto the open highway. She recognized Swift, who raised his paw and stepped away from the shoulder in an attempt to make them stop. Judy and Nick both were shoved back against their seats when she easily avoided him and hit the accelerator, picking up speed at a rate that had the bunny’s heart racing into her throat. Skye, however, continued the conversation as if it wasn’t unusual to be going more than one-hundred fifty mph. “But it’s not used often. I was trained to be a member of that team, and from what we were told it was only used once before. Very effectively, if anything the ZIA says is to be believed.”

“So,” Nick said, his ears flat and the tone of his voice telling Judy that he was anything but keeping his calm as his paws gripped his knees tightly. “What you’re telling us is that we, two ZPD officers, and you, a former Special Agent for the ZIA, are about to go up against at least forty-eight armed agents with aerial support. Two foxes and a bunny, in a sports car?”

“Calling this a sports car is a crime, Carrot,” the vixen said, slanting him a look. “And you have vests. Try not to get shot, though. I paid for those out of my own pocket and they were not cheap.”

“I’ll be sure to keep that in mind,” he said, making Judy chuckle to herself when he frowned a bit. “And she’s Carrots, not me.”

“You’re the color of a carrot,” the vixen retorted, pausing again when she was forced to drop speed along a deeper curve in the road before she punched it again. Judy felt like she was on a very dangerous roller coaster but still managed to blush when the vixen finished, “I am pretty sure Hopps likes how you taste. You’re the carrot.”

The bunny watched him raise one paw and open his muzzle as if to protest, then savage eyes narrowed slightly when he looked back to her. “I am the color of a carrot.”

“A very handsome - and tasty - carrot,” Judy assured him, her muzzle splitting into a grin in reply to his adorable roguish smirk. “How long before we catch up?”

“If we’re lucky, they’ve been in a holding pattern over the fifty-mile stretch before the mountains,” she replied, her ears twitching in the only emotion that Judy could readily read. “If we’re not lucky? We may already be too late.”
Whether or not the agent’s expression seemed emotionless, the bunny was very aware that those words came with a very noticeable increase in speed.

The toneless buzz in his ears was anything but his favorite tune, but at least it came and went rather than constantly battering his mind. He could thank the fact that it paused every time the wolf’s fist connected with his muzzle. Now it was starting to feel like white-hot shards of glass being driven into his face with every blow, a sensation that was more familiar to him than he would have liked. The bonus was that the, thus far, unnamed predator did seem to have a good deal of control. The blows were designed to produce considerable pain over time without causing brain damage or unconsciousness, so no bones had been broken. But the rattle of his teeth in his head, an illusion causing by the constant barrage of strikes, was getting tiresome.

“Are you ready to move on to advanced techniques yet?” he asked after spitting blood on the male’s shoes, slurring his voice a little more than was needed as still sharp blue eyes focused just in time for another blow to land. “This is getting tiresome. What are you waiting for exactly?”

“You don’t ask the questions, Savage,” was the reply, followed by another long string of blows that left his vision blurred for a moment as he tried to shake it away.

“I’m simply curious,” he ground out slowly, shaking his head again when he felt another tilt in the world that he knew wasn’t being caused by his beating. “This is the third time this truck has made this turn. I’m pretty sure that we’ve been going around in circles. I figure either someone doesn’t know what to do with me or they don’t know what to do at all.”

“Not my concern either way,” the wolf shrugged, dark eyes narrowing as the bunny grinned slowly through a split lip. “I’m only here to ask you some questions.”

“Yes, so you’ve said,” he began, then paused at the hum of a phone in the wolf’s pocket which he didn’t hesitate to answer.

“What?” he said, sounding unhappy, though Jack wasn’t sure if that displeasure came from being interrupted or his lack of progress softening up a bunny when he turned to back towards the other end of the trailer. Jack’s ears raised, and even through the ringing in his head, he could pick up the wolf’s end of the conversation. “How fast? Uh huh. Is it a threat? All right, I’ll secure Savage as a precaution. Keep me updated.”

Jack watched the wolf sigh as he slipped his phone into his pocket again and turn back to him, giving an almost nonchalant shrug as he walked over to the metal table. Opening a pouch and withdrawing a syringe, he turned towards the bunny.

“I’m afraid we have a complication,” he said coolly, uncapping the uncomfortably long needle as he gave a wolfish grin, “and that means you need to take a nap in case we need to move you. Enjoy it. It’ll be the last time either of us gets any sleep for a long while.”

“Pity,” Jack murmured as he wrapped the rings of the cuffs around his now free paw like knuckles behind his back, his smile a mix of friendly and feral as he watched the wolf move closer. “I was hoping to have more alone time with you.”

“Not how I pictured our honeymoon ending, Carrots,” Nick yelped as the vixen whipped the red
car around another oncoming vehicle. That they so blatantly tried to drive them off the road came as a shock to the fox, though no more than the way the little red demon they were in managed to keep its grip on the road during some insane maneuvers to avoid it. “Almost as exciting as the near-death experience of you letting go of the vine a thousand feet in the air!”

“Almost?” she replied with a strained half-laugh as she glanced at the multiple cars behind them as the wind whipped around her ears. Skye had ‘dropped the hood’ mid-maneuver a minute before, turning what was already a stomach-dropping ride into a windy stomach-dropping ride. The acceleration and speed of the machine they were in was well beyond anything following them or trying to run them off the road. It gave them at least a momentary advantage, as the cars of assorted sizes became dots behind them. “We only had one mammal trying to kill us back then, at least.”

“Yeah, that we know of,” he muttered as his gaze, which had been with hers on the cars falling behind, returned to watch for more oncoming traffic. “This is a good sign though, right? If they’re trying to stop us, it means that the truck is still on the road.”

“It also means that there will be more coming very soon,” Skye replied, the strain in her voice more obvious now as she kept her eyes forward. “Shit! Down!”

Judy had half a second to see the whitetail buck standing out of the sunroof of the SUV heading towards them, and the automatic carbine in his hooves, before she dropped her head reflexively as the sharp retorts were heard. Not seeing the road seemed to make the sudden jerk of the car even more gut-wrenching, though no more than the sound of impacts on the hood of the car. Soon, the roar of the engine had all other sounds fading out until she lifted her head just as Nick did the same. She swallowed when she saw the paw sized bullet holes marring the red paint on the hood of the car and splash strikes on the front window.

“Luckily, they don’t seem to realize that the engine is in the rear of this particular model,” Skye chirped, seeming suddenly too cheerful for the situation. It was a tone that drew a glare from Nick.

“If you have armored windows,” he said in a voice that she recognized as dangerously irritated, motioning to the unbroken glass with one paw, “why did you put the top down as soon as we came into range of mammals trying to shoot us!”

“Obviously because one of you is going to have to jump onto the truck once we reach it,” she said, causing Nick to glance back at his mate with his ears pinned against his head. “Or both, depending. Speaking of which, there it is.”

When she looked forward, the truck didn’t seem to be anything special at their first look at it. Just a typical shipping vehicle, medium mammal class, white exterior, Zootopia plates. Though from the two vehicles that dropped back from beside the truck with suited mammals standing out of the sunroof, it was obvious that they had found their target.

“Down!” Skye shouted again, swerving sharply to the side as their speed dropped to match the convoy as the two escorts opened fire.

The sudden maneuver Skye used to avoid the hail of bullets had the bunny jerking to the side, grunting in pain when her shoulder struck the side of Nick’s seat. The snarl that followed it had her eyes widening as she looked at her mate just in time to see the furious male rise out of his seat enough to brace himself over the windshield, the Scorpion braced on both paws. He didn’t even hesitate to let loose a spray of fire, one that clipped the grey fox firing from the lead car in the shoulder. When the vehicle turned hard to avoid the next burst, one that had sparks flying up from the hood of the SUV, he was forced to retreat as they withdrew momentarily.
“Nick!” she cried when he didn’t even drop back into his seat while leading a fresh magazine. She reached up and grabbed the back of his vest, dragging the growling fox into the seat as the next volley from the SUV that still blocked them from reaching the target forced Skye to fall back from the truck. “Dumb fox! If you get shot, I’ll…”

Her words were cut off when the rear doors of the truck exploded outward, propelled by the body that was sent flying through them. The wolf - bloody, motionless, and limp aside from the fact that he was airborne for a moment - slammed into the windshield of the SUV, causing the driver to overcompensate and veer hard to the right. They and their new passenger ended up fishtailing until they hit the grassy side of the road, the impact and the fact that the escort was sent flying in a series of fast flips that wrecked the SUV and those within it, went unnoticed as the three mammals in the little red car stared at the bunny in the now open trailer of the truck.

Jack stood looking down at them with an expression that could only have been called calm irritation on his face, pawcuffs wrapped around one still-clenched fist, and his lose tie snapping in the wind like an angry serpent. The white striped fur on the side of his face was streaked with blood and swollen, though that certainly hadn’t helped the wolf lying among the wreckage of the escort behind them.

Nick chambered a round in his freshly reloaded SMG, a growl rumbling in his chest that Judy could feel through the paw that still held the back of his vest as savage eyes focused on the Agent.

“Aren’t we supposed to be the ones rescuing him?”
And here it is! Finally, after far too long, the story continues.

So many delays and side trips. Life, Sunderance, Holidays, etc etc. I won't bore you. Thank you for your patience. I will do my best not to let this sort of delay happen again!

Also, Happy Valentine's Day!

Cover Artwork by TheWyvernsWeaver

---

**Momentum**

**Chapter Notes**

Report:

Case File – The Savage Dark

Reporting Agent: Code Name – Jack “Savage”

Affiliation: Unknown

Current Whereabouts: Unknown

Agent Status: Unknown (Active)

Recording Continues:

“*Yes, I heard the question. And the answer is... I’m not entirely sure. The vain part of any male such as myself - the part that gets slightly annoyed when people in the field question me or speak as if they know better than my decade of experience – refuses to believe that the answer is ‘no’. I am Jack Savage, after all. The name, for those who know it, comes with a certain expectation that going against me is the same as going against the boogie mammal. There has never been a successful capture on my record. That meaning, I have never been held against my will at a secure location long enough for a rescue to be required.*"

“But, while some would call me a romantic given recent events and my acquaintance to two
specific mammals, I am also a realist; and as a realist, I know that there is never certainty in anything. Could I have escaped on my own? I might have. I might not have. Opening the back of the truck and removing the wolf who enjoyed his work far too much for comfort was hardly an escape. It was the beginning of one. I still had multiple escorts to evade, transportation to secure, not to mention getting off the moving truck without killing myself. One cannot simply jump from a fast-moving vehicle and expect to come out unscathed, especially when bullets were likely to be flying at me from every direction before my paws even touched the ground…”

(A muffled and amused feminine voice speaks, words intentionally garbled)

“Yes, I know. But as we saw many times through the course of this case, Officer Wilde is an anomaly. But we haven’t reached that part of the report yet.

“As I was saying, it certainly wouldn’t have been impossible for me to escape without the unexpected assistance from Agent Skye and the Wildes. An Agent must be self-reliant, after all. At least to a degree. I would say it breaks down like this: Twenty-five percent personal skill and intellect, twenty-five percent teamwork, thirty percent luck, and the last twenty percent is theatrics.”

“What is he doing?” Judy asked, her voice clear enough in the relative quiet caused by the large truck’s wake.

Relative being the word as the wind was still roaring in Nick’s ears, only at a slight quieter level due to the wind tunnel effect following the truck. Not that her question was meant to be answered: it was perfectly obvious what the striped bunny was doing as he grabbed the paw bar to drag himself up and over the top of the trailer, something that required gymnastics the likes of which he had only seen from Judy before. A short backwards flip, a moment to steady himself against the momentum once his paws touched the roof, and they were all looking up at Savage as he stood on a very precarious edge above them.

“I need a bullet in the driver’s window!” he shouted, all the while looking amazingly calm while the wind caused his ears to bend until they were almost directly over his eyes and had his tie attacking various parts of his red dotted white shirt with quick snaps. He offered no further explanation before he turned and, shielding his eyes against the wind, moved towards the front of the truck.

“He’s crazy,” Nick muttered, largely because the savage part of him wasn’t liking being shown up by Super-Agent Savage. Nor was he particularly happy when he glanced around and saw two SUVs moving in on them again, mostly because they were slaved to the speed of the truck Jack seemed unwilling to leave. “Can’t he just get in the car so we can leave?”

“Doubtful,” Skye replied coolly, her paw settled on the gear shift as she upped their speed to easily overtake the truck. “Remember, the convoy includes lead vehicles. If we just grab Jack, no matter what direction we go they will likely have a roadblock waiting. And agents armed with a lot of automatic rifles behind them. And, please, don’t shoot the driver.”

While he tried to figure out what that meant, Judy seemed to catch on. Rising in her seat as they came alongside the cab, her feet braced on her seat to give her a few extra inches, she raised her SMG and with a quick bark from the weapon sent a single round into the driver’s side window. The webbed hole that appeared proved that the window wasn’t bulletproof, sure enough, and the ram
driving obviously wasn’t hit when he swerved towards them. Luckily, both the car and the vixen
driving it were agile enough to match the motion to prevent the contact which, at this speed, could
have been deadly. They could all see the ram glare out at them, his hooves bracing on the wheel as
he prepared to make a more aggressive attempt. An attempt that never came as Jack, suddenly
gripping the rearview mirror, swung down in a blur of black and white, his feet smashing through the
now weakened window and into the driver’s stunned muzzle. This little action, of course, caused the
truck to swerve regardless, though it moved away from them.

“He’s going to get himself killed,” Nick growled, surprised that he actually cared whether or not
the not-as-annoying-as-he-had-once-been bunny was taken with the truck when it pulled a quick drift
off the road. When the massive tires on one side of the truck ripped into the dirt and grass the entire
mass of it and the trailer attached to it shuddered, making the fox’s heart drop into his guts for a
moment as it looked like it would simply drive off the mountain road. That or the different grip on
the treads would cause it to flip. As it was, the three nervous mammals weren’t given much time to
worry about the truck when one of the SUVs gained ground.

“We have our own company,” Skye said, taking one last glance at the truck as it seemed to return
to the road in an unsteady weave as the rabbit and ram fought it out in the cab. Then she punched the
gas, the little red car shooting ahead before the escort could pull up beside them. “Feel free to pull
that macho, surprisingly accurate, ‘You hurt my bunny’ shooting again, Nick.”

“Well, I can’t just turn it on and off,” he growled back, leaning up to glance behind them as the
SUV fell behind. This time, rather than popping out of the sunroof, one of the agents, an antelope,
leaned out the window with a handgun in his hoof. They had obviously decided that standing in the
sunroof was a bad idea, something that caused him to grin toothily as he haphazardly aimed and let
loose a short burst of auto fire in that direction. “And you’ll remember that the last time I tried, I
nearly got my head chewed off.”

“Shot off,” Judy inserted, still sounding irritated, a tone that almost managed to pull a laugh from
him. Though that was cut off by of the sound of return fire impacting on the back of the car just
before Skye whipped them around the front of the truck.

He had no idea how she managed to keep them as close to the massive vehicle as she did, given its
still erratic behavior as the bunny and ram in the front seat fought for control. The motion of the two
bodies in the front seat looked like someone had thrown two wolverines into a sack to let them fight
it out. But it wasn’t that that caught Nick’s eyes. It was the passenger, a large cheetah, pressed
against the other side of the cab with a gun in his paws. Looking somewhere between angry and
panicked as the truck swerved again, the predatory mammal was obviously trying to get a shot off on
the struggling rabbit without killing the driver in the process.

He didn’t really think about what he was doing. Things were moving too fast. The SUV and
another like it were catching up on either side of the car now and Skye would have to move to
prevent them from being boxed in. Moving on instinct rather than thought, he ignored the surprised
words from both his mate and the vixen when he unbuckled himself and climbed over his seat. A
surprisingly steady running start over the trunk, about half a second where his sane mind was
wondering what the fuck he was doing, and he was airborne. The heavy but manageable jerk of the
automatic fire pouring from his gun didn’t halt his forward momentum, though it certainly stopped
the cheetah as at least five bullets continued through the windshield to puncture his arms and torso.
One even managed to strike gold, a bright crimson stain painting the side of the cab when the bullet
that entered through his temple took the most violent means of exit possible.

Then Nick hit the windshield. The impact was not gentle, though he luckily managed to turn his
shoulder to take the brunt of it. Traveling at high speed, he felt like he had been... Well, hit by a
truck. A truck that thankfully was moving at the same speed as the car, otherwise he might have broken his neck. And every other bone in his body. As it was, he had been hit by rhinos in basic training that didn’t hit as hard as the seat he slammed into. His more savage state of mind was in survive and protect mode, however, and a healthy dose of adrenaline had him ignoring the pain as he turned his attention to the still battling mammals.

Trapped in a life and death struggle, it almost seemed that they didn’t notice him. That was, until he growled, snarled, bared his teeth with savage green eyes focused on the ram. A ram who screamed in a very sheep-like way, a high-pitched bleat of shock, right before Jack took advantage of this distraction to drive the larger part of his foot into the driver’s muzzle. And then he did it again, just to make sure before he dragged himself upright, standing on the driver’s seat so he could see through the unbroken half of the windshield. All of this was done with his paws on the wheel, clearly the one who had kept the vehicle from going over the edge or flipping during their struggle.

“Quite an entrance,” he said shortly, glancing over the still growling fox without a hint of fear. Nick couldn’t tell if his scrap with the ram had caused any damage, mostly due to the fact that the rabbit already looked like he’d had the hell beaten out of him. Something that had obviously put him in a sour mood, because with a quick glance at the driver he kicked back with one foot again in a kick that connected with the unconscious feline’s muzzle hard enough to have him falling sideways into the passenger seat. “I would offer more thanks for the help, but we’re slowing down. I need you to manage the pedals until I decide what to do here.”

“So, you didn’t have a plan beyond taking over the truck?” Nick asked, his mood somewhere between wondering why he had left his mate to fend for herself and feeling like being a smartass with Jack. Still, seeing that they were slowing down, he quickly scampered on all paws into the floorboard where the pedals had been left unattended. Sitting in front of them, one foot on the break and one on the gas, he applied pressure to the gas until he could feel the truck rumble as the engine picked up again. He tipped his head back and looked up at the stoic looking bunny. “Not that I’m complaining. It saved us the trouble of finding a way to get you out of the truck.”

“I actually wasn’t planning to take over the truck at all,” was the reply as the striped bunny looked out the missing window. The fox could hear the now familiar roar of the car just outside of the window before Jack cursed and let go of the wheel with one paw to reach out. “Damn it, Hopps!”

“It’s Wilde now!” the reason for the curse said when the paw returned, filled with another as Judy was dragged in to quickly scramble into the cab. And onto the unconscious ram, which made her blink once before she turned her eyes around with concern. Seeing the dead cheetah made her pause for a moment with a deepening frown before she turned her eyes to Jack. “Where is..?”

“Down here, Carrots,” he said, drawing her confused gaze to him, and causing it to turn quickly from fearful, to annoyance, then to humor in the span of two seconds as she stood on the passenger seat next to Jack with her paws on her hips.

“What the hell, Nick?” she demanded, obviously trying to sound annoyed while also trying not to laugh at the fact that he was stuffed under the driver’s seat like luggage. “You couldn’t stand the fact that Jack looked cool, so you decide to jump from a moving car onto a moving truck?”

“I looked ‘cool?’” Jack questioned, sounding pleased with himself, causing the fox to roll his eyes as he answered.

“I jumped from a moving car onto a moving truck with a gun,” he amended for her, raising one paw to point at Jack. “And he was about to get himself killed. I bet he didn’t even see there about to start shooting.”
“I did see the cheetah, actually,” the bunny interjected, pulling the wheel to the side so suddenly that Judy was forced to drop to one knee and brace a paw on the dashboard to keep from going flying. The impact was loud and caused the truck to shudder, though from the sound of squealing tires and crushed metal, it still won the argument with whichever SUV had been stupid enough to get too close. “I was keeping the ram between us until I could reach that side of the cab without killing myself. Punch the gas.”

“Well, I saved you the trouble. And you’re welcome,” the fox groused, pushing his foot to the gas until the pedal was floored. “What are we going to do? Drive all the way back to Zootopia?”

“We wouldn’t make it that far before they filled the cab with bullets,” Jack mumbled, his head tilted to the side as he glanced towards Judy. “Give me your earpiece, Judy. Ease up on the gas now, Wilde. About half.”

She didn’t hesitate to do so, which convinced Nick that she was better at working with authority figures than he was as he gave a snarky little mutter before he did ease up off the gas. Generally, anyway. He almost had a moment to remember that her clashing with authority is what landed her in a situation to work with him the first time they met. Then the sound of gunfire from outside and the quick, loud ‘vrrrrmm’ of the little red car reminded him that now wasn’t the time to reminisce. He glanced over and held in a growl when Judy moved past Jack to the driver’s window, the quick response of automatic fire from the SMG she had brought into the truck sounding out as she provided what cover fire she could. Every cell in his body was telling him to protect her, and every iota of knowledge he had about his mate told him that it would just get him a smack if he tried to pull her away from the window. They were both cops, after all. She was trained for… Well, not this exactly. But trained to handle dangerous situations.

But when the sound of return fire and the quick ‘plink plink’ of low caliber rounds striking the door of the truck filled the room, his growl deepened in the same moment that Jack started to talk to Skye.

It was not a good day to be a half-savage fox stuck in the floorboard of a truck.

He managed to ignore the growl from the fox controlling the gas, even when he thankfully noticed their speed increasing again. Nothing beyond his ability to handle, though Judy turned a concerned glance towards the fox. His growing temper was obviously an issue to be considered because by this point Judy would normally have been allowed to do what she could to soothe him. It was something they couldn’t really afford at this point, so this was going to turn into a test of how far this ‘New Nick’ and his constant state of near-savage performed under pressure. Not a planned test on his part, either, but it was something he would just have to deal with.

“Skye,” he said once the earpiece was in place, “what’s your situation?”

“Currently driving circles around the escorts to keep them off your tail, handsome,” she said cheerfully over the roar of the wind and the sound of whatever engine drove the quick red speedster he saw swing around in front of the truck as if they were standing still. He tried his best not to smile when he saw a white-furred paw pop up for a backward wave and managed. Barely. “The laws of physics aren’t letting me drive around the bullets they’re shooting, though, so I do hope you have a plan in mind.”

“Do you know if my team was informed of this situation?” he asked, letting the truck drift towards the railing on his side of the truck, forcing the SUVs on that side to fall back or be driven into the
outcropping of large rocks on that side of the road. This did allow one SUV to move up on the passenger side, though. Luckily, the truck gave them the advantage of height over even the SUVs, which were forced to shoot upward into the cab with little effect.

“Of course they were,” she returned, sounding only slightly irritated. He could almost imagine her rolling her eyes when she continued. “Someone told them I wasn’t to be trusted yet, so they told me to sit still like a good little vixen while they rushed, far too slowly, to your rescue. Which explains why I’m here. Because I am not a good little vixen and I move a lot faster than them.”

“Yes, we’ve established both of those facts twice now,” Jack murmured, his lips twitching this time when she laughed over the sound of returning gunfire.

Her little red car cut across the road easily when one of the escorts pulled up beside her, decelerated until she was near their rear tires, then kept pace long enough for her to send a short burst of automatic fire into said tires until the black vehicle swerved sharply and fish-tailed in the middle of the road. It managed not to flip as the driver tried to regain control. Not that it really mattered when Jack didn’t bother to adjust the course of the truck to avoid them, slamming into the rear half of the SUV with crushing force that hardly slowed the truck at all and sent the SUV into a wild spin of shattered fiberglass and twisted metal.

“I need frequency switch to the following,” he continued once the road was clear, sounding off a frequency which she repeated back. While this was happening, Hopps (he had to think of her as Hopps to keep the two separate in his mind) moved across the cab of the truck, walking over the ram to do so. With the gunfire coming from that side of the truck continuing, making him grateful that the truck obviously had some sort of anti-flattening system to prevent them from doing exactly what they were trying to do, he wasn’t surprised when she didn’t look out the window before raising her gun over her head. She didn’t even bother rolling the window down before letting loose with a long, sweeping burst of fire. One that obviously worked when the fire outside stopped with the sudden sound of screeching tires.

“All bands switched,” Skye said, her voice tight now. “Take care soon. They have had plenty of time to set up a roadblock in this direction. The SUVs have fallen back behind, likely to herd us into it. I’m going to pull ahead to see if I can give advanced warning.”

“Who is this?” came the familiar voice of Swift in response to hers through all of their earpieces. “Special Agent Skye? Where are you? Where are the Wildes?”

“This is Alpha,” Jack replied shortly, “And the Wildes are with me, along with Special Agent Skye. What’s your status?”

“Good to hear your voice, Alpha,” came the crisp reply, followed by a two-second pause. “We are on the road, ten minutes from your tracker on the ground. Nightingale is in the air.”

“We’re surrounded by hornets here,” Nick put in, his voice no less calm than it had been a few moments ago. “Maybe you could speed things up?”

“Put me through to Nightingale,” the bunny stated without responding to Nick’s growled voice or statement of the obvious as Swift did so without comment. He spoke once he heard the tell-tail hum that told him the audio was coming from inside of a helicopter in flight. “Nightingale, estimated best speed to our location?”

“Two minutes, Alpha,” came the always calm voice, bringing only one other question to Jack’s mind.
“How are you dressed?”

“For war, sir.”

“Perfect,” he said shortly, his patience and his temper wearing almost as thin as the fox below him. “Make sure they know it the second you arrive. We are in the sixteen-wheeler for the moment, though I’m not sure how long that will last. I expect a roadblock any minute if Agent Skye is right, and I think she is. They are all driving very obvious black SUVs, and I think I hear their air support incoming now.”

“Do you have a preference for my introduction?”

“You know my musical preference. Just remember that I am pissed off and ready to end this little spat with the ZIA.”

“Fast and loud. Understood sir. ETA, one minute.”

“That needs to be a fast minute,” Skye cut in, the sound of shrieking tires and a revving engine preceding the sound of heavy automatic fire. “The block is less than a mile down the road hidden around a bend, and they are not looking ready to take anyone alive.”

Jack’s mind worked over his options, which were few for the next minute. Bringing the truck to a stop would complicate things, allowing for the agents and their SUVs to surround them in close quarters in an attempt to prevent them from moving again. Driving straight through the roadblock would mean taking a hail of automatic rifle fire through the front of the truck, which, if it failed to kill them outright, would certainly kill the truck. This would also leave Skye vulnerable to fire from the rear, as she would be forced to follow them in to make it through. Turning around wasn’t an option, obviously…

“Judy, buckle up,” the buck said shortly, his eyes on the bend where the little red car came barreling around the curve towards them. “Skye, get behind me now. Wilde, give it all the speed you can. And you might want to brace yourself, too. I’m about to do something very stupid.”

“Hey, what do you mean stupid?” Skye asked, though the moment her car passed them in the opposite direction, he was already doing it.

As the truck came around the steep bend in the road, he turned the wheel sharply the moment the roadblock - which consisted of half a dozen vehicles stretched out over the entire length of the road with armed mammals of all sizes aiming down their sights at the curve - was in sight. Despite their size, trucks like this were perfectly capable of sudden turns and agile movement, much like any other vehicle in the right hands. The problem came, obviously, when the fifty-three-foot trailer hooked to the back of the truck tried to make the move with the truck. The forward momentum caused the rear wheels to kick out, allowing Jack to spin the entire truck sideways much faster than would normally be possible. So fast, in fact, that his feet left the seat for a moment and he was left hanging onto the steering wheel for dear life like a flag in the wind as the truck tipped precariously sideways. Somewhere in there, he managed to yell for Wilde to hit the brakes, which he somehow managed to do. Then there was a sudden and violent ‘BOOM’ and a jarring snap as the trailer tore free of the truck when it wanted to continue moving as the truck very suddenly slowed. This was followed by a sharp hissing explosion as the brake lines snapped with the sudden release. The truck came to a stop as the trailer jackknifed across the entire road, tipped sideways, and slammed into the SUVs that made up the roadblock with enough force to send every one of them back a few dozen yards.

Panting and pretty sure he had fractured his paws and a few limbs after being slammed into the steering wheel during their sudden stop, Jack’s death grip relaxed as he jumped up to look out the
window. Behind them now, because he had turned the truck completely around, was the half-crushed wreck of the trailer and SUVs lying across the road where the roadblock had been. With its rear axle hanging off the edge of the mountain road, and its front end wedged against the guardrail that separated the road from the rocky face of the mountain the road was carved into, there was no way around it. Only over, which he doubted anyone would be jumping at the chance to do.

“I’ll be damned,” he muttered a moment before he burst out laughing. “It actually worked.”

“Fucking rabbits!” Nick’s growling voice came from the floorboard. “Do you cute little mammals take classes in crashing large vehicles and walking away to brag about it later? And why do you always have to bring me along when you do it? First a train, which exploded I’ll remind you, and now a truck on a mountain road. Remind me never to get into anything that flies with either of you.”

“At least this didn’t explode,” Judy groaned, dragging herself out of the floorboard and into the passenger seat. “Though a little more warning would have been nice.”

“Pardon me for not taking the time to explain the mechanics of what was mostly random luck,” he replied, turning blue eyes from the two, who seemed no worse for wear. His attention was directed out of the front window as Skye pulled up beside the truck, and the SUVs followed close behind to block their exit from the other direction. “Which, from the looks of the escorts getting ready to aim their weapons at us, seems to have run out.”

“Any other crazy ideas?” Skye’s voice came as he took a moment to glance up to where two unmarked black helicopters arrive and begin to hover overhead.

It was clear that everyone on the ZIA side of things was focused on the truck, and everyone in and around the truck was focused on the ZIA outside who were filing out of the vehicles with various types of weapons in hand. It wasn’t until he heard the general warning over the radio that he knew someone, at least, was aware that something was about to change.

“This is the ZIA. This airspace is temporarily restricted by general order… Uh… Frank, is that an attack chopper?”

“Attack chopper?” Nick asked from his spot beside Judy, the two of them checking each other any noticeable injuries put on hold when he moved to the window. “I thought Nightingale was a transport chopper.”

“Nightingale is the pilot, not the craft,” Jack said shortly as they watched the pure black, arrow-shaped, and heavily armed helicopter approach at high speed. “And the pilot flies whatever I need at the time.”

“This is an Agency gunship, offering a response to the pilot trying to create an unlawful no-fly zone.”

With that, just as it reached the scene and started to slow, the black attack chopper let a single missile fly. It happened so fast that the ZIA helicopters had no time to react before the propelled rocket zipped past them and slammed into the rocky cliffside beyond the road. The sound of the explosion came just as the two choppers pulled up and moved in opposite directions in a really big hurry.

“If this response wasn’t clear, I can repeat myself. Force me to repeat myself, and it won’t be a warning shot.”

That was all it took. While the black helicopters were armed with marksmammals holding high
caliber rifles, the chances of them getting a shot off on the now hovering military grade craft before it sent them to the ground as burning heaps were nil. The pilots didn’t seem interested in testing their luck, either way, as they split up and moved away from the scene at their best speed.

Jack glances at the SUVs blocking their exit once the sky was clear. The ZIA agents seemed to have decided, wisely, that it was a lost cause to stay and try to take their target again. Most of them were scrambling back into the trucks, which Jack watched with mild impatience as he opened the door and jumped down onto the road.

“Patch me into your intercom, Nightingale. And lay down some fire in front of the first one who tries to pull away.”

“Roger that, Alpha. Patching you in now.”

The quickest of the escorts, driven by an antelope, backed out of its place in the roadblock and started to pull away. The almost pleasant and punchy ‘thupathupathupathupathupa’ of the attack choppers chain gun sounded, causing those who hadn’t managed to get into their vehicles fast enough to dive for cover. In front of the lead car, the road exploded in a series of small eruptions as projectiles the size of soda cans left large smoking holes on the road right in front of them. The driver wisely slammed on his breaks, bringing the vehicle to a stop as the ejected asphalt rained down over the hood, his hooves and those of his passenger stuck out the windows a moment later to show their surrender.

“This is the Agency. Specifically, this is the Agent you kidnapped, beat the hell out of, and have repeatedly tried to shoot.” Jack said through the intercom as he stepped forward, moving away from the truck and into the center of the road. Even as he spoke, Nightingale moved the deadly attack helicopter to hover over the bunny, fair warning to anyone stupid enough to take a shot. “And I did not give you permission to leave. I will, however, accept your complete surrender. If you would be so kind as to throw any weapons you have on the ground, remain in your vehicles if you’re in them already, and otherwise, don’t move. I have had my patience stretched to the breaking point, and when it does break, I might just let my friend above me turn all of you into bloody, unrecognizable stains on the road. Is there even one question about what I just said?”

His response was the sound of a few dozen weapons, from automatic rifles to standard issue ZIA handguns, hitting the asphalt mingling with the steady beat of the helicopter over his head.

“That is so damned hot,” Skye said, causing him to turn and look at the white vixen. She was watching, transfixed, from the driver’s seat of the now bullet-pocked red car. He saw her blink, her ears turning so red that he could see the change from where he stood when she realized that what she’d said had just been broadcast over the intercom for all to hear due to their shared line.

Clearing his throat, he simply reached up to adjust his tie, which was a little pointless as the downdraft from Nightingale caused it to snap over his shoulder again. He continued.

“Thank you for your cooperation. A team of Agents will arrive shortly to take you into custody. You will be escorted back to the ZIA, by me, so that I can finally have a word with your boss about proper interagency interaction. Cut the link.”

Once he was sure he wasn’t on the intercom anymore, he left Nightingale to hover over the agents while he turned to walk back to the truck. Nick and Judy were standing beside the car, while Skye had her head resting on the steering wheel, paws over her eyes.

“Every single one of them knows me,” the beautiful vixen said, not sounding nearly as embarrassed as she tried to look.
“Well, it was pretty hot.”

Three sets of eyes turned to Nick, who had spoken.

“What? I’m not saying I would go jump in the sack with you are anything, Savage, because… No,” he said, savage eyes gleaming as he turned his eyes to Judy with a grin as she swatted his arm. “But if I had a helicopter armed to the teeth hovering over me when I ordered the surrender of a few dozen ZIA agents, I would want people to know that it was pretty hot.”

“Point taken,” Jack said, reaching to touch the side of his face with a wince. Now that things were slightly less life-threatening, he had a little time to feel pain again. And his face felt like it had been hit by the truck. “Now let’s see about getting me cleaned up. We have a meeting with the soon to be former head of the ZIA.”
Debriefing

Chapter Notes

Been a while, been a while! I can hardly believe how long it's been since I updated.

This story, anyway. As most of you know, other things have updated between the previous chapter and this one. Hopefully, I will be able to get this one back in full swing now.

On that, it seems that streaming my writing was a surprising success in two ways! People showed up and stayed to watch me write and chat with each other! And it also kept me writing because I had already set that time aside from the stream. Motivation!

So I will be continuing the streams in the near future to keep the chapters coming. I will let everyone know!

Now, I'll stop yammering and post the chapter as promised!

Awesome cover art by TheWyvernsWeaver!
Report:

Case File – The Savage Dark

Reporting Agent: Code Name – Jack “Savage”

Affiliation: Unknown

Current Whereabouts: Unknown

Agent Status: Unknown (Active)

Recording Continues:
“Dealings between The Agency and other branches of law enforcement can be tricky, as you’ve doubtless realized. It is never an acceptable situation when an Agent is forced to end the life of someone who works for the same government, it is to be done with good reason and usually means that the shit has hit the fan on a level that no one is aware of yet. I mean that beyond my own kidnapping, which was a rare enough thing in any century, and any attempts to contain Officer Wilde.

“Hm. Nick. I supposed I should use their first names at every mention from this point on.

“What I mean by the previous statement is simple: having a drag race-shoot out that ended in the deployment of military-grade hardware against ZIA agents was a sign that something bigger than the ZIA was going on. Before this point, I already knew that the ZIA Director was involved thanks to Special Agent Skye. What I was starting to get a clear picture of was the fact that, even though the Director was involved, he wasn’t the cause. He was trying to cover something up, to be certain, but he was not the big picture. When speaking of the head of the ZIA – who personally only reports to the highest levels of our government – saying that he was trying to cover something up that was bigger than he could handle is an understatement. Further, I knew that his obsession with covering up what had happened to Nick was a sign of desperation because whatever he was trying to cover up was simply too big.

“In a very real way, it was like trying to cover up the fact that a house had burned to the ground by painting the door red.”

“I’ll expect a full report in two hours,” the Whitetail stag said tersely into his phone before mashing the end call button so hard that the screen very nearly cracked under the pressure of his hoof. “Damn it!”

The sound of his own voice echoed back at him within the confines of the elevator, causing his ears to twitch once in further annoyance before he reached over to push the button that would take him directly to his office. Once the soundless jolt of motion began, he closed his eyes and released a slow breath through his nose as he attempted to find a calm that was about as far away as it could possibly be. He opened them again a moment later when the elevator chimed its arrival on his floor.

When the doors opened, he was almost pleasantly surprised to find that there was no gun waiting for him.

“Good afternoon, Director Rack,” the conservatively dressed doe said upon seeing him, her lovely amber eyes raising to him along with her smile. She was a pretty thing, slender and sweet spirited with a soft but easily heard voice. She was exactly the sort of attractive that was needed to greet mammals coming into the ZIA, simply because she put people at ease. “How was your lunch?”

“It went well enough,” he said, not meaning a word of it as he paused beside her desk to send her a warm smile. He did like her, found her competent and easy to talk to. If he wasn’t already a happily married buck, he likely would have fired her, so he could properly court her. But he was, so he kept his mind and his hooves to himself, and she kept her job. “I didn’t have much of a chance to eat, as if that’s unusual.”
“Oh,” she said, looking mildly annoyed by the news. Already he could see the mother hen look coming into her expression, which seemed oddly appropriate despite him being fifteen years her senior. “I’ll have something sent up after your appointment, then. You can’t just skip meals, sir. You’re too busy for that.”

“I’m not terribly hungry,” he replied simply, though he did give a moment’s thought to having her send up something truly extravagant. Who knew when the next time he would be able to choose his own meal would be, after all? Then he felt a little jolt in his chest, causing his tie to feel tight. It was only his three decades in intelligence work that allowed him to keep his friendly expression as he tilted his antlered head slightly. “Did I have an appointment?”

“Oh! Yes, sir,” she said, lowering her eyes to the screen built into her desk near her mouse. “You have a meeting on your schedule for five minutes from now. Special Agent Skye and a Mr. Lapin are already waiting for you in your office.”

“Of course, they are,” he said, keeping his tone pleasant even as he repeated the words with a little more anger and panic in his mind. Still, he managed to smile as he adjusted his tie, wondering how the appointment had ended up on his schedule in the first place. The damned truck had only been taken two hours ago. “I had completely forgotten. Look, why don’t you take the rest of the day off? This meeting will consume the rest of my afternoon and I’m just going to tell you to hold my calls, anyway. Might as well let the operator take a message.”

“Well,” she said, her expression a mix of pleasant surprise and curious concern. It was an interesting combination, one born because a quick search of his memory reminded him that he wasn’t usually the sort to give anyone half a day off. “If you’re sure there is nothing else you’ll need, then I won’t say no, sir.”

Ear flicking to show amusement he didn’t really feel at the moment, he gave her a smile and a nod as she gathered her things. After a quick thank you, she beat a hasty exit and cast him a sparkling smile as the doors of the elevator slid closed behind her. He was going to miss that smile.

Looking at his own reflection in the door for a moment, he studied the aged buck looking back at him for a moment as he adjusted his tie and smoothed the line of his suit. When his hoof brushed over his sidearm, he considered for a moment before he reached into his jacket to draw the 9mm easily. Then he took it to his secretary’s desk and left it resting in the top drawer. With that done, he buttoned his suit again and, with his horned head high, stepped into his office.

“Director Rack,” the familiar voice said, sounding somewhere between cold and welcoming. “So glad you could join us.”

Then, of course, there was the soundless press of a barrel against the side of his head.

The fox was still angry. There hadn’t been sufficient time for any of them to do more than change clothes into something less torn, blood-splattered, or stinking of gunpowder. Generally, just trying to make it through the building without looking as though they had just returned from a war zone. That hadn’t prevented him from insisting on wearing his tactical vest while everyone else went with less aggressive attire. He wasn’t feeling less aggressive, even though they were out of immediate danger. Or more importantly, she was out of immediate danger. To him, it felt like he was going from being chased by the lower ranking members of a pack to walking into the den of the alpha without
expecting a fight.

Of course, rational thought told him that the Director of the ZIA wasn’t going to be stupid enough to start a war in the middle of his own building, given the illegal nature of his actions recently. But rational thought wasn’t high in his mind, beyond knowing that he should follow Jack’s lead and keep the persistent growl that continued to rumble through his chest on the subvocal level. Everyone in the room knew that this calm was only kept because of his close proximity to his mate, who sat calmly in the chair beside him when the buck walked into the room. She looked no more pleased than he, her eyes narrowed and slightly aloof. Her smile was almost pleased when the silenced barrel of a pistol was pressed against his temple.

“Please, it is your desk,” Jack said, sitting in the other chair on the visitor side of the Director’s desk. “Have a seat. Once Skye has made sure you aren’t armed, of course.”

“Empty holster,” the vixen observed, the statement not really needed as all in the room could see it when she ran her paws under his jacket. Then she continued, patting him down from shoulder to ankles before she twitched her own gun towards his chair. “Go on boss. Have a seat.”

“I’d almost wished the reports were wrong, Special Agent,” Rack said, his voice tense as he moved towards his chair. Nick noted that he still managed to hold his antlers high, maybe something that came naturally to someone who had been in his position for as many years as he had. His eyes locked on Skye, not without a little accusation as he settled into the large chair, placing his hooves on the arm-rests to make sure everyone could see them. “I’ll admit it surprised me to learn that you were spotted heading towards Bunnyburrow without orders. A part of me had hoped that your intention was payback for the thrashing Agent Savage gave you and your team.”

“As well deserved as that was, it is irrelevant,” the cool voice of the rabbit interrupted, drawing the stag’s gaze and holding his attention. It might have been the gun in his own paw that kept the attention or the simple fact that Jack was the entire reason he found himself in that position. Nick didn’t know, but he did appreciate the look of discomfort, near fear, that came into the mammal’s eyes for a moment before his face turned to stone again. “We are here because you’ve fucked something up, and I want to know what.”

“Straight to the point,” Rack said, drawing a deep breath that he held for a moment before he released it with a throaty snort. “You’re telling me that you don’t know what’s going on?”

“I’ve been distracted by an extremely high ranking official breaking pretty much every law in Zootopia, including kidnapping and attempted murder, in an attempt to keep it from me,” Jack said, the tension in his own voice making Nick wonder how he managed to keep from snapping the words. “Successfully, to this point. But frankly, given the day I’ve had – the details of which I’m sure you’ve been briefed on – my patience is at its limit. So, tell me why you’ve obviously lost your mind so we can all get on with our day.”

It was obvious to Nick that the two were basically pissing on each other’s trees at this point, trying to decide which one was dominant. Savage eyes rolled towards the sky for a moment, his paw moving to rest on the back of Judy’s chair as he finally let the growl vocalize as he focused green eyes on Jack. “Leave me alone with him for five minutes. I’ll get him started.”

“Nick,” Judy’s voice warned, her tone half soothing, half amused as she reached out to pat his belly with one paw.

“What?” he grunted, and even if the touch was muted by the tactical vest he wore it still managed to soothe him a little. Not enough to keep an overly toothy grin off his muzzle. “I’m not going to eat him. He’s too big.”
There was one thing he had learned very quickly since his savagery had seemingly become permanent or at least long-term: no matter how big, civilized mammals were terrified of the idea of a savage mammal of any size. The further they got from their ancestor’s primal ways, the more mortifying the idea of someone acting on those instincts became. A tiger might even be frightened by a fox snarling and slavering, the threat of a bite paramount to one of the most dangerous things one could face on a normal day. Having seen this in action, even with Agents that worked with Jack, the muzzles at the ZPD made a little more sense to him. Even if he still hated them.

The Director seemed to be no exception to this rule, as his eyes widened slightly at the mention of being eaten. Wide nostrils flared, ears twitched uneasily, and - while his expression hardly changed - there was a sudden shift in the overall tension of his body. He looked very much like prey ready to bolt, though to his credit that tension fled when he reached up to tug his tie and cleared his throat.

“Obviously that won’t be necessary, Officer Wilde,” Jack said, his tone easier than it had been. There might even have been a touch of amusement in it if he used his imagination. “Director Rack was about to explain everything, weren’t you Director?”

“I suppose I am out of options at this point,” Rack said, clearing his throat as he slumped back into his chair. His gaze moved to each of them for a moment before settling on Jack, his unreadable expression seeming somewhat… embarrassed, a fact that had Nick’s brow raising. “I lost someone.”

“You lost someone?” Jack repeated, his eyes narrowing slightly as he tucked the pistol in his paw into his shoulder holster. “I’m assuming you’re not being sentimental and that you mean you lost someone of high value.”

“I was asked to help someone with a great deal of influence,” he nodded, finally leaning forward and out of his defensive position to rest his elbows on his desk. “Ferris Lobos, to be precise. After meeting with him a few times about a plan he had to improve relations between predators and prey after the Night Howler incident, he managed to convince me that one way he could speed the process would be to rehabilitate those involved.”

Nick wasn’t familiar with the name, though one look at Jack told him that the rabbit was. The deep frown that dipped his muzzle matched the thunderous expression and for a moment, the fox was certain he would draw his gun again.

“So, you’re telling me that you lost Bellwether,” he said, his voice coming out in a grate that sounded like his teeth were grinding together.

“And her associate, Doug Ramses,” the stag added, dipping his head to rub his muzzle between his hooves for a moment before he raised his eyes to Jack again. “They just vanished in transit, and we have no idea how they could have escaped. A few months later, all this business with savage mammals started to happen again, with a different pattern. A different formula, as you all likely know.”

“Yeah,” Nick muttered, his ears high as he drank in every word. “So, you’ve been kidnapping the victims to hide the fact that you ‘lost’ the crazy sheeps, imprisoned who knows how many innocent mammals to keep the fact that someone is poisoning Zootopia again hidden, and tried to kill my mate because you’re a moron!”

The last came out in a snarl, his paws clenched tightly enough for him to feel the bite of his claws against his palms as he took a step forward. He stopped when Jack’s voice spoke again, calm with an edge of condescension.

“No, he’s been trying to cover the fact that Bellwether is the least of what he’s unknowingly
caused,” he said, his high ears quivering slightly in restrained fury.

“What do you mean?” Nick snapped, though he did take his place at Judy’s side again as the growls died down to subvocal again.

“Neither Bellwether nor Doug Ramses has the sort of expertise required to create the drug we’ve been dealing with,” he explained, waving his paw towards the stag in a gesture that meant for him to continue the train of thought.

“No, they don’t,” he agreed after a long sigh, turning his eyes to Nick to meet his savage gaze for the first time. “As you’ve no doubt already experienced, this particular toxin is not as easy to cure as pure Night Howler extract. That was Doug’s only real skill in chemistry, come to find out, and we’re not sure he didn’t simply follow a list of instructions for extracting plant toxin. And Bellwether, even though she almost managed to destabilize the city, had no knowledge that would have allowed her to create the refined and truly weaponized toxin that we’re dealing with now.”

“Making such a refinement would have taken facilities and equipment,” Jack interjected, drawing himself out of the chair to pace to the far side of the room. “And that equipment would have required a great deal of skill, training, and – most importantly – money to acquire and maintain. Tell me Director, who was your biggest backer when you were being considered for the position of ZIA head?”

“Lobos,” came the low reply, causing Nick to frown slightly as he and Judy both turned their gazes to Jack for clarification.

“Ferris Lobos is one of those quietly richer-than-god mammals,” Jack explained, examining an empty counter for a moment before pushing against one corner. The top of the counter spun around, revealing a bar with crystal decanters of dark amber liquid and a few glasses. As he picked a glass and picked up a bottle, he continued, “You’ve likely never heard of him in more than financial news, meaning that most mammals in the city wouldn’t be aware of his existence beyond the fact that he owns the largest pharmaceutical corporation in Zootopia.”

“Oh, that’s not ominous or anything,” Judy said, leaning forward in her chair to rest her elbows on her knees as she focused on Jack when he turned with the drink. One that Nick noted was larger than a rabbit his size could handle. “So, we’ve been unknowingly fighting a super-rich mammal that no one has ever heard of?”

“No,” Jack corrected, stopping beside the Director and putting the glass in front of him as he looked up at the larger mammal. It was something to see when the large stag looked decidedly uncomfortable when faced with the comparatively tiny bunny, but he still reached out to take the glass as Jack continued to his seat again, “We’ve been fighting the ZIA, because once Rack found out what was going on, he knew that he would have to cover it up or lose his job. Face possible jail time. In effect, he played favorites and secured the release of two dangerous mammals, which in the end turned out to be nothing more than a smokescreen for what was really about to happen.”

“I don’t get it,” Skye said, tilting her head as she looked between the two of them with a creased brow. “I thought you were covering the loss of Bellwether and company.”

“I was covering the fact that I made a stupid decision at the request of someone who pretty much ensured that I ended up sitting where I am now,” Rack corrected, taking a small sip from the glass before looking down into it to avoid meeting the eyes in the room. “And then it became about covering up the results of that stupid decision. I had planned to have everything wrapped up before it became obvious. I would find some proof, silently force Lobos to stop whatever he was doing with the Night Howler toxin before things got out of hand.”
“At what point would things be considered ‘out of hand’?” Judy demanded, her tone sharp as she waved a paw towards Nick. “Was it before or after you tried to kidnap an active member of the ZPD because he had been targeted and infected? Or maybe it should have been when the entire ZPD was involved in a high-speed chase to prevent his kidnapping at the hands of your agents?”

“Things were out of hand the moment I got involved,” Jack commented, causing the stag to turn an uneasy glance at him before he downed the rest of the drink in one swallow. “But it was too late by that point. You had already broken at least twelve different laws that would have cost you your job and your freedom. And rather than accepting that fact and putting the good of Zootopia ahead of yourself, you decided to take me out in a further attempt to keep this farce from being discovered.”

“That was the point where I realized you had gone off the deep end, you know,” Skye interjected, the gun still in her paw even though the stag clearly knew he wasn’t getting anywhere in this situation. “In case you were wondering why I decided to side with Agent Savage.”

“Aside from your pants catching fire every time his name was mentioned?” Rack snorted, almost managing to force a smirk out of Nick when the vixen’s inner ears reddened. “I may have fucked this up, but I was still in this business two decades before any of you. But whatever the cause, you are right. I knew it, but there comes a point when there is nowhere to go but forward.”

“There should never be a point where the direction cannot be changed, Director,” Jack said, sighing slowly as he leaned back in his chair in a rather sloppy, exhausted droop. “It’s as bad as I expected it to be, though. I never expected that you would be directly responsible for the toxin. You’re not the supervillain type.”

“Very Bond of you, Jack,” Nick muttered, smirking humorlessly as he moved behind Judy’s chair and placed both paws on it’s back. Restlessness was starting to set in, a desire to be out of the room and alone with Judy again. He wasn’t sure how long it might be before that could actually happen now, but that part of his mind was doing its best to convince him that Jack wouldn’t really need them much longer. “So, what are we going to do now? Rack isn’t the cause of this, he’s just a result. When do we move onto this Lobos?”

“That will be complicated,” Jack answered, drawing himself out of the chair again, his ears perked forward. “I suppose I can count out any hope that you have anything at all that might be helpful, Director?”

“I’ve been trying to figure out what his intent is since the first savage mammal appeared,” Rack said, shaking his head slowly as he looked sorrowfully at his empty glass. He still didn’t dare stand to refill it, not with Skye’s gun leveled at his chest, so he continued, “but like a lot of mammals with his resources, trying to get something and finding anything are two different things. His network is unbreakable, his security is top notch, and since he hasn’t done anything that can be linked to illegal activity there is nothing we can do that would allow us onto his property.”

“There is nothing you can do,” Jack said sharply, drawing himself out of the chair. He tilted his head towards Skye, motioning her towards the door as he straightened his jacket. “Aside from the laws broken, the mammals killed, and the number of headaches you’ve given me, one of your biggest mistakes was forgetting that Agents are not limited by the same laws as you. We’re going to get what we need from Lobos and put an end to this. And he should hope that there is a cure that works floating around in one of his labs.”

“You’re not just going to barge up to his offices and demand…” the stag began, starting to stand, only to stop mid-sentence when Jack leveled a look at him that had him sitting right back down. “Of course you’re not. What are you going to do, then?”
“I haven’t decided on that, yet,” the bunny replied, turning his eyes to the two of them with a slight grin on his muzzle. “I will have to discuss that with the members of my team. Though I am tempted to just have someone put a bullet in him if that would guarantee an end to it. But that brings me back to the problem that he may be the one who knows how to cure the toxin.”

“What we need to do,” Judy said, holding Jack’s gaze for a moment before she tilted her head back to look up at Nick. “Not that I don’t enjoy him like this.”

“No doubt,” the buck snorted softly, turning his full attention to Stag. “And you, Director. We do share one thought in this situation: the public shouldn’t know what’s happened and what’s continuing to happen. The last time there was a surge of savage mammals in Zootopia, the city nearly destroyed itself. If it becomes public that something like the Night Howler Incident can and likely will happen again, it will just increase tension. I am sure most parties involved would rather let mammals believe that it was a one-time scare.”

“That would be best,” the stag reluctantly agreed, his voice reserved as all in the room waiting to learn exactly what Jack was going to do with him.

“To keep it a secret, I can’t very well have you arrested and tried, no matter how much damage you’ve caused,” the rabbit continued, holding up one paw when Nick felt a growl rising in his throat. “But you are going to resign, as quietly as possible. The reason for your resignation will be the abuse of ZIA resources, not specifically citing the reason. I will make sure that the story flies under the radar in the media, and anyone who is curious will have a cover story that would take them a decade to disprove.”

“We’re just going to let him retire?” Nick growled, no longer able to keep his fury in check as he stepped around the chair towards the desk. “He tried to kill all of us to cover up his own mistake!”

“No retire,” Jack corrected, his eyes never leaving the now obviously pallid Director. “Resign in disgrace. No pension, no retirement fund, no contacts willing to work with him ever again. I hope you have something saved up, Rack. After this, you’ll be lucky to get a job as a file clerk. But you can be happy that you won’t be in a cage. We’re also going to hand you over to another Agent for a debriefing on all events between the moment Lobos proposed this plan to improve Zootopia and when you walked through that door today. I would do it myself, aggressively, but I need to make sure another madmammal with Night Howlers doesn’t manage to crack an already tender city.”

“I don’t have much of a choice,” Stag said, drawing himself out of his chair without interference from the bunny this time. He walked towards the counter and took the bottle, pouring himself a very generous triple before he turned back to the bunny. “If it helps, I had no intention of letting him go any further than he has now. I never intended to cause more damage to Zootopia and if there had been even a hint of what I know now, I never would have helped him.”

“It doesn’t help,” Nick said, his voice low as he kept his growl in check. “Are we finished here, Jack?”

“Yes,” the buck replied, turning to face the fox with a nod. “I’m going to gather an infiltration team, so we can plan what our next move will be. In the meantime, Rack, drink up. A loose tongue will only help you when they come for you. Which should be within the hour.”

Once in the elevator to the lobby, Nick found it hard to keep his mad going for more than a few seconds as Judy leaned back against his belly, drawing his arms around her. He knew she did this as much to calm him as to be close to him, though he was hard-pressed to find a reason to be annoyed by it.
“It is not ideal,” Jack stated, his eyes on the phone in his paw as he tapped away at the screen, “but even if his reasons were misguided and selfish, keeping this from the public is the right choice. If for no other reason than making it public would put Lobos on his guard, making it that much harder to get what we need to end this.”

“I’m almost in favor of just putting a bullet in him,” Nick muttered, shrugging when Judy frowned up at him. “I said almost. And I’m not feeling particularly peaceful. Sorry, Carrots.”

“If it was a viable option and would end this without further savage events, I assure you I would do it without hesitation,” Jack confirmed as he looked up from the phone for a moment. “But right now, our primary concern is to find a cure. Once the Agency debriefs Rack, I am sure we will have many more savage mammals on our hands than we had before, and we need a cure for them. And you.”

“So, what do we do now?” Judy asked, rubbing her head back and forth against his chest, causing him to chuckle lightly. He realized it was a lazy way of petting him, and it caused him to squeeze her tighter as they both looked to Jack for the answer.

“We learn as much as we can about Lobos,” he replied, sliding his phone into his pocket when the elevator came to a stop. All three followed him as he headed through the lobby at a brisk pace. “We need to know why he took Bellwether and Ramses, if they have anything to do with this, find the lab he is using to produce the toxin, and then shut it down as quietly as possible.”

“And if it can’t be done quietly?” Nick asked when they reached the waiting car.

“Then we just have to hope we get the cure before things start exploding,” the buck replied simply, bring a pleased grin to the fox’s muzzle for the first time since leaving Bunnyburrow.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!