

Attention to Detail

By John Steiner

Well, there's this guy, see, whose car breaks down on a street in Salt Lake City's industrial and low end commercial district. It's probably around eleven PM and partially cloudy. Streetlights aren't so good here. Bulbs flickering, some burnt out. It's your typical urban setting- sure the buildings are shorter, but hey it's Utah.

So anyway, this guy pops the hood, realizes he doesn't know anything about car engines, and slams it down. He was on the way home from the office, and today's special, see. It's his kid's birthday. The stack of gifts and cake on the passenger seat's a dead giveaway.

"Fuck!" he says to himself pacing by his car. Not too far away a siren blares causing a howl from a nearby yard of another warehouse. It might be a junkyard for how dead and bare the ground it... but for the lack of junk. Still, he's nervous. Something howled out here!

A faint grind of gravel has him huffing rapidly, then in reflection he goes for the trunk to find the handle for his jack. Not a good idea if he's about to get hit by a mugger, but some pit bull just might get an incentive if he cracks it right.

However, a whine stops him. He turns and, in the gloom, sees two beautiful German shepherd husky mixes looking at him. Their heads held high with their ears erect. From the way they nose at the fence between themselves and he, they appear to want nothing more malevolent than affection.

"Good god!" he gasps, heaving his relief. "Scared the shit out of me."

He approaches them, kneels down and pokes his fingers through the chain link to scratch a nose of one as the other tries to get in his turn of attention.

Then an ear of each dog pivots to the side and they spastically jolt into hunkered postures with their heads lowered in submission. Whimpering, they lick the guy's fingers in a hurried desperation.

"Hey, what's wrong, huh?"

Another grinding scrape of something against asphalt freezes the air in his lungs. he's not sure what to do, but figures sudden movements could only make things worse.

He stands slowly holding his hands out to his sides, ready to apologize or offer his wallet, "What do you want?"

A firm hand on his shoulder stops him half turned. "Okay, okay, I'm sorry!"

Then it rips him fully around to see a long canine muzzle, framed by a long grey mane, bright yellow eyes and erect round tipped lupine ears, lunging right at his face. Both short fingered clawed hands lift him off his feet and hard into the ground. Long teeth tear at his flesh, ripping his suit to shreds without effort.

His screams go unanswered, unheard.

So then, how could it be his story can be told at all, you ask?

Well, there were two people in the tale...

THE END

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