

*A Sip...*



*A Torquere Press Short*

***Wolfy Resolutions***  
***By Julia Talbot***

"Honestly, darling, can't you make the sign hang evenly? I thought you were a manly man, with carpentry in your genes or something."

God save him from prissy interior decorating demons. Cage rolled his eyes, moving the 'N' up on the 'Happy New Year' sign.

"I thought demons didn't really celebrate holidays, too, but you sure went all out for Christmas and shit," he told Amel, moving the 'Y' down a little. "Better?"

"Much. Thank you, sweetie." Amel went by the ladder, heavily clawed hand patting Cage's ass. "Wait until you see what I can do for New Year's."

"Uh, I thought I was now." Stretching up, Cage adjusted the last little bit of rainbow-colored tinsel. He'd just taken down about fifty pounds of green and red shit, and he was covered in glitter.

"Oh, no. This is just the window dressing. The real fun will be tonight. All of the conscientious objectors to Christmas will come to my New Year's bash."

"Oh, yay. It will look like an extra party from Hellboy." Cage wondered at his sanity, sometimes, rooming with Amel. The man was an extra-dimensional demon of some sort; Cage was never sure what kind. The guy was a flaming queen, given to flights of fancy, heavy drama, and fluttering hands.

Kind of drove Cage crazy.

Of course, the guy was also loaded, and since he had horns and a tail and no access to glammers, he was lonely, too. Which meant the rent was priced way lower than it should have been for a mother-in-law suite with access to the kitchen and hot tub.

Cage figured the aforementioned kitchen and hot tub being off limits during the full moon when he was all hairy was only fair enough. Still, he did have it on his list of New Year's resolutions to find a new place to live. A wolf needed something a little more... rustic.

"Very funny." Amel gave him an arch look. "You're just upset because you don't have anyone to ring the New Year in with."

"Thanks for reminding me." The old saying that wolves mated for life was bullshit. Or at least it was as long as that wolf was half human, too. Edward had taken great pleasure in leaving him for a young, hot vampire.

Hell, that was why he was rooming with Amel, anyway. Edward had owned half the house, and Cage hadn't been able to buy him out of it.

"Oh, hon, you know I'm not trying to be ugly. I just know you'd be out doing your big dog seduction routine if you had someone."

Was he that predictable? Maybe he was. He and Edward had been together for three years, so he wasn't sure if he could even do the 'big dog' thing anymore.

"I know." Sliding down the legs of the latter, Cage landed lightly on the polished floor and went to pat Amel on the shoulder. Poor guy was very emotional; he looked genuinely upset that he might have offended. "What else has to go up?"

"The big carnival mask. Other than that, we're all good."

"Cool. So, any other weres coming to the party?" Cage asked it casually, but he really wanted to make sure most of Edward's friends could be avoided.

"Oh, just a few. There's Jerry and Law, and Lloyd and Cal. Oh, and there's this absolutely delicious little boy I invited. He just went to work for Lloyd's garage. So very clever, even if he is a wolf and not a big ape like Lloyd."

Cage bit back his instinctive defense of Lloyd. The man really was an ape. As in, a were-gorilla. Weird, but true.

"A wolf, huh? New in town?"

"Definitely." He got one of those looks from Amel's glowing yellow eyes. "You'll like him."

Cage groaned. Amel was trying to set him up.

"Trying to get rid of me, Demon-boy?"

"Not at all! You know that I just want you to be happy."

"Uh-huh." Any time Amel had an idea that was all about Cage's happiness, there lurked an advantage for Amel. "Where's that mask?"

He would worry about the possible blind date later. Right now he'd just be content that none of Edward's friends were invited. He was a big boy. He could let the new kid down easy. No one really expected New Year's hook-ups to be anything serious, anyway.

\*\*\*

Barney stared at the big fancy place with all of the white lights and tinsel hanging on it. Man, he thought Christmas decorations could be tacky, but this whole New Year 'chic' thing was... wow.

Cold as it was, his hands were still sweaty. He didn't belong here. This friend of Lloyd's might not have taste, but he was loaded, and probably well-educated, and Barney was just... a guy.

Sighing, he rubbed his hands on the thighs of his jeans. "Come on, man," he said out loud. "Get your ass in gear, have a champagne, and go home."

He headed up, about to knock on the door when it opened, a guy in a gold lamé turban and a silky loincloth smiling at him from the doorway. "Hi. Do you have an invitation?"

"You have gilded nipples." He couldn't help it, the words just popped right out.

"I do. That's not the code word, though."

"Oh, sorry." Barney pulled a stiff piece of card stock out of his pocket. "Here you go."

"Perfect! Come on in." The guy gave him the eye, which was just made all the more obvious by the eyeliner and fake eyelashes.

"Uh. Thanks." He smiled a little, but turban boy did nothing for him. If he wanted lean muscle and a too-pretty face, he could look in the mirror. He had green eyes instead of this guy's brown, but it was the same idea.

All the big, bad tops thought he was a twink.

Too bad for them he had teeth and claws of his own.

The party was rocking when he made it upstairs to the loft area. The whole downstairs seemed to be some kind of indoor patio, with a hot tub that was really full, and a full bar, but there were only so many people who could hang out there, he guessed.

The bulk of the guests were up where the food was.

Mmm. Food.

Now, that was something that rich people could do like no one else. There were tables groaning with it, and overflowing with booze. Woo. He could get his groove on and leave. Be polite.

It had been real nice of Lloyd to invite him, but...

Hello. Who was that?

Tall, broad shouldered, dark hair and hot, goldish-brown eyes. Uhn.

Barney stared, unable to look away. The guy had all of the appeal that turban-boy downstairs had lacked. He was strong, muscles bulging under his dark jeans and silk T-shirt. He had big, rough-looking hands, hands that had seen work. Scars.

And the big guy was headed right for the buffet.

Perfect. Barney moseyed on over, trying to be all casual, but he kinda sucked at mingling. He'd grown up in bumfuck nowhere, so his idea of socializing was sniffing butts and showing bellies.

Barney moved up next to the man, his nose quivering at how good the guy smelled.

He got a sideways kind of look and a little smile. "You work with Lloyd?"

His eyebrows went up, and Barney took a step back. "How did you..."

"Amel told me. Said there was a cute kid coming who worked for Lloyd."

"Who's Amel?" Cute kid. Gargh. Grr. He hated that.

"Your host. My roommate. I'm Cage." One big paw extended to him, the calluses deep but the nails clean.

Barney shook, trying not to hold on too long. "Barney. I'm not as young as I look."

He hated for it to come out as a snarl, but he wasn't exactly a pup.

"Well, Barney, it's nice to meet you. Sorry if I offended you. Did you know your boss was trying to get you a date?"

Damn. This was getting worse and worse every minute. "Nope. Had no idea." Then Barney grinned, just a little. "Is it working?"

Cage laughed, the sound almost like a sharp bark. "Yeah. Yeah, it just might be. You want a beer?"

"Sure." He'd take beer in place of champagne any day. Maybe things were looking up. Maybe he wouldn't have to even mingle or be polite. That would work for him.

\*\*\*

The kid was beyond hot.

Cage had been pretty determined to say hi and hand the kid off to someone else, because he really wasn't into being set up on New Year's. In fact, it had been the first thing on the list of resolutions he'd made up earlier in the day.

Meeting Barney had changed his mind. First of all, the kid was named Barney. It couldn't get that much different than Edward. Then, the kid was a working man. You could always tell. Hell, if he worked for Lloyd, then he worked his ass off, full stop. And last but not least, Barney smelled like heaven.

Hot. Spicy. Gamey wolf.

Nothing hidden under expensive cologne or gallons of body wash like Edward had always insisted on.

Just man and wolf, all wrapped up in an Irish Spring coating.

Yum.

They had three beers, and a long, long talk out on the balcony, the breeze cool but not cold. That was one of the best things about living in the Hill Country. It could be seventy-five degrees on New Year's Eve.

Being out in a big house on the side of one of those hills was an added bonus when he needed to be able to get out in some green land and run.

The French doors opened up, a pair of guys dressed like leather daddies spilling out, kissing and groping madly. Cage rolled his eyes.

"You, uh, want to go someplace more private?"

"Like where?" Barney gave him a considering kind of look, biting that luscious lower lip he'd been admiring all night.

"My room? It's up on the third floor. It will be a lot quieter."

"Why not?" That grin lit up Barney's lean face. "Can we take some food? I need it, after the beer."

"You bet. Let's load up."

They worked their way down to the buffet again, avoiding the conga line and the vampire who was doing some sort of ritual sword dance. Cage thought the guy's name was Dino. He looked like a Dino, anyway.

"Anything you, uh, take exception to?" he asked when they both had a plate to fill up.

"Why would I object?"

"Well, in case I end up breathing on you." Kissing you. Blowing you.

"Uh. We ought to stay away from the hot salami, huh? Maybe no onions or pickles. Cheese is good, but jalapenos might, um, sting. Later."

Looked like maybe they were on the same page. Like maybe his resolution was just blown out of the water. That was okay. He could mark "don't hook up" out and add something else.

"Right. Later. Well, here we go. Some chicken, some nice cheddar..."

"You always were so pedestrian, Cage."

His back went up, his hackles rising. Edward. Cage turned, baring his teeth. "I was told you weren't invited."

"Terrance was. He invited me to join him. Wasn't that sweet?"

"Sweet." Terrance was a bottom-feeding demon who Cage was convinced Amel kept around just so he could feel better about himself. Asshole. "Yes. Well. I'm busy, and you're my ex. Happy New Year. Come on, man."

He nodded to Barney, who was staring at Edward with narrowed eyes.

"Huh? Oh, sure."

"How nice that you finally got yourself a sweet little bottom boy, Cage. Just what you've always – urk!"

The plate dropped to the floor, Barney's hand wrapping around Edward's Adam's apple in a heartbeat.

"I'm not sweet, and I'm not a boy," Barney snarled, the wolf coming to the fore in his eyes, just like that. Like it was so close under the surface that no social veneer of humanity could hide it.

It was the hottest thing Cage had ever seen.

"I guess he told you, babe." Cage grinned, making sure it was his least pleasant smile. At least he thought so. Amel always told him that particular face shape was feral. "Come on, Barney. We had a date upstairs."

Amel arrived just when Barney let Edward go. Everyone's favorite demon's tail was lashing, those glowing eyes flashing fire. "Who let this trash in here? Out. Out of my house."

The carpet started to smoke under Amel's feet, which was a sure sign that he could handle Edward without them. He kept a hold of his plate, grabbing the kid's hand with the other.

"Come on. Amel will enjoy this."

Barney came with him, staring back over one shoulder. "That was Amel? Your roommate? Dude, he's rockin' cool."

"He's unique." Not that Cage really wanted Barney thinking of Amel. "Sorry about that. I had no idea he'd be here."

"No problem. I mean, it was kind of encouraging."

They got to his room, which was kind of generic guest bedroom-y, even it did have his big bed in it, and Cage locked the door behind them. "Yeah? How's that?"

"Well, they say a guy goes for something completely different than his ex. I definitely qualify as that."

Turning, Cage carefully set the plate he carried down on the catch-all table just inside the door. Amel insisted every room have one. Now Cage understood.

Then he pulled Barney right up against his body, smiling down into the kid's bright green eyes. "You sure do qualify as something different, honey. And you're right."

Barney blinked, then moved against him, lean body going sinuous as hell. "I am?"

"Uh-huh. You are so not a kid."

\*\*\*

Cage kissed like the man wanted to eat him up. As in, 'my, what big teeth you have'. It was the single hottest kiss Barney had ever experienced, and he figured anyone who could leave his knees weak with just one meeting of lips was going to blow his mind if they made it to the bed.

They might never make it that far, not the way Cage was pushing him back against the wall, lifting him up so he could wrap his legs around those sturdy hips and hump. They'd just gone from zero to sixty in like, three seconds flat.

Cage humped against him, kissing him so hard he couldn't breathe, and suddenly he was laughing, the sound a little like wheezing.

"What?" Growling, Cage pulled back, hands clenching under his ass, the feeling almost like claws were coming out.

"I was just thinking, how I had only come to this damned party to be polite."

"Uh-huh." Cage bit him, right on his neck, below his ear. His hips jerked madly at the sting, punching up against Cage's belly. "Glad you came?"

"Hell, yes."

"Good."

The world spun, Cage turning them, heading for the big bed. He bounced when he landed, and then the whole world became a blur of tearing cloth and warm, fuzzy skin. Cage never let up, getting Barney bare and settling between his legs, rubbing their cocks together.

"Christ." Barney bit back a little, teeth scraping against Cage's collarbone.

"Fuck, yes." Pushing down against him, Cage brought their cocks side by side, one big hand reaching down to pull at them, the tips rubbing together, wet and hot.

His head fell back against the decadent pile of pillows, his fingers scrabbling at Cage's back. Yeah. Oh, god yeah. Just like that.



Barney could smell them, now, primal and heated, the strong animal musk of them more arousing than anything, ever. Fuck, it had been too long since he'd been with someone as strong as he was, as fucking wild.

Maybe he never had.

Cage growled again, the sound the only warning he got before the man took his mouth, fucking it with his tongue. Moaning into the kiss, Barney wrapped his legs around Cage again, clinging with all of his strength, trying to get better leverage, better friction. Something. Anything.

"Fuck. Fuck, honey. Making me crazy. Swore I wasn't going to do anything like this tonight..."

"To hell with that. Kiss me again."

Cage gave him a wild, happy grin before kissing him again, humping against him faster and faster. The bed was rocking, the sound of their grunts and groans almost drowning out the music and shouting from the party beneath them.

They kissed again, like it was all new, but like they'd done it a million times and knew just how the other liked it. Barney held on with a strength he never would have used on any other man, snarling a little when Cage didn't move quick enough to suit him.

"Come on, man. Come ON."

Cage nodded sharply, those dark eyes meeting his. "Gonna come, honey. Come all over you."

"Do it. Goddamn, come on and do it."

He wanted that. Fuck, he knew it would push him over the edge. Barney felt Cage buck against him once, twice more, felt the scrape of a sharp, sharp nail sting the head of his cock.

Then Cage was coming for him, roaring with it, spunk splashing against Barney's skin.

"Oh. Oh, god, yeah." Barney lost it, his head tossing on the pillows, his whole body convulsing as he came. Fuck, yes. He hadn't felt so drained, yet so energized, in his entire fucking life.

They panted together, and the sound of chanting finally resolved itself downstairs. "Three, two, one!"

Horns and sirens went off, the hooting and hollering so loud it could only mean one thing.

Midnight.

Barney grinned up at Cage, who held himself up on his elbows, grinning back down at him. "Happy New Year's?"

"Yeah," Cage said, nodding a little. "Yeah, I think it will be."

They sealed the idea with one more kiss before Cage sort of collapsed on him and started snoring.

Suited him. Barney was all for napping after sex, and it had been a long, strange night.

Good, but strange.

\*\*\*

Cage woke up New Year's Day to a tousled head of blond hair on the pillow next to his, and a lean body wrapped around him, a pair of lean arms holding him loosely.

Damn, that felt nice.

There was also a tray sitting on the bedside table, holding a carafe, two cups, and a pair of covered plates that gave off the very tempting scent of bacon and eggs.

Score one for the demon roomie.

Cage ran one hand down Barney's back, enjoying the smooth skin stretched over the lean muscle. He hoped to hell the guy would want to stay for breakfast.

"Mmm." Barney stretched a little, eyes blinking open to stare into his. Then the kid smiled. "Hey."

Cage smiled back, patting Barney's ass. "Hey, yourself. Breakfast?"

"Sure."

Well. There you go, Cage thought. Breakfast in bed.

He made a mental note to change his list of New Year's resolutions when he finally got up and got moving. Number two he would change to 'get to know Barney better'.

Number one, though, well, that would change from 'don't let the demon fix you up with blind dates' to 'thank the demon'.

end

Wolfy Resolutions

Copyright © 2008 by Julia Talbot

All rights reserved. No part of this eBook may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews. For information address Torquere Press, Inc., PO Box 2545, Round Rock, TX 78680

Printed in the United States of America.

Torquere Press, Inc.: Sips electronic edition / December 2008

Torquere Press eBooks are published by Torquere Press, Inc., PO Box 2545, Round Rock, TX 78680