

Chapter 10

“I swim now papa?” Junior asked for the tenth time of the morning.

“Junior your father said you can go swimming after our guests arrive and you meet his new friend and his wife.” Kylea scolded as she prepared the steaks and burgers for me while I finished up with my assignment I was on for work.

“Alright mama I wait.” He said sitting there in the living room in his blue swim diaper with yellow ducks on them and his yellow arm floaters as he was pretty decent at swimming but still not strong enough to swim without them.

Suddenly the phone rang and Kylea answered it. “Blackflameheart Residence... Oh yes one second. Honey it’s Bella she said she needs to talk to you real quick.”

Picking up the phone I say, “Hello Bella are you having trouble finding the house?”

“No I was just calling to tell you ahead of time that Brock had an episode and that he was nervous about how your family would react.” She said.

“I told them about the possibility that he may have an episode here and become a cub so they are prepared for seeing him in a younger age. How young is he now and should I have Kylea change things up for prepping for the barbeque? We got steaks and burgers but if he prefers something else in his cub form we would be happy to make it instead.” I replied having been expecting a call like this.

“He is about three, three and a half tops. I got him in pull ups at the moment but we’ll be switching to diapers for the drive and for while were there. I have ya on speaker so he can hear your question and he smiled when you said you had burgers but whispered hotdogs to me as well so both would be perfect we can bring the dogs ourselves if you’re sure the little one and your wife will be fine with us coming over still.”

“Nah we got hotdogs a plenty here, homemade ones actually. And yeah I’m sure. Junior may be curious and ask questions but he knows to stop when he is told to so if Brock don’t mind a curious cub asking questions we wouldn’t have any problem with you both coming over. One question though can he swim and if so do you have a swim diaper for him? Asking because Junior is getting all antsy about going swimming in our pool and I was going to say we have plenty of stuff on hand if he does want to use it with junior.” I asked.

“I can’t swim very well at this age and don’t have a swim diaper but the pool does sound fun at the same time.” A very young sounding but mature in sentence structure voice said.

“Well I have plenty of swim wings and floatation stuff here if you want to try and I’m sure you would fit in some of juniors old swim diapers. We never throw out things like that so I have some of his older ones and some extras of his current size in case you fit in them as well. If you need me to do anything special before you get here just say so Brock.” I said as I worked a kink out of my neck.

“Well...I’ll think about it and I would love to try some of the home made hot dogs.” He said sounding apprehensive and excited at the same time. “See you in an hour.”

“See you then Brock.” I say hanging up the phone.

“Papa is Mr. Brock like me right now?” Junior asked having heard the things about his old swim diapers.

“Yes he had an episode with his condition and is now about your size and age in appearance. Remember what I said son you are to be on your best behavior and if he says stop asking questions or refuses to answer one you let it go. He is a person and to be treated with respect not some animal in a cage to gawp at.” I said kindly but firmly to him making his ears droop and his tail go as limp as a wet noodle thinking he was in trouble.

“I be good papa I no want to make him feel bad.” He said with a light mewling.

Pulling him into a hug I say, “I know you will son I’m not mad at you just reminding you to mind your manners. I love that you have a insatiable curiosity about things but you need to know when to not ask questions or press an issue. That’s why papa and mama put you on the time out stool when you do not stop when we tell you to.”

Snuggling into me he stopped his mewling but that was all and says, “Okay papa. Love you.”

Kissing him on the head I say, “I love you too son. Now be a good little helper and go help mama prepare the food for the barbeque and tell her I said to take out some of my hand made hotdogs out and to prep them as well.”

Kissing my cheek he ran off and did as he was told and I go back to work looking at the screen and my notes and after forty-five minutes I shake my head unable to concentrate at the moment and instead of sending the thing along to my boss I send him a message saying that for the first time ever as I needed an extension on my deadline as I was completely flummoxed and needed more time to study the notes and data on the problem. After I sent the email I sat there and pulled my knees up to my chest and rested my face on them trying to keep calm and after five minutes I heard the ding from my laptop indicating I had mail.

Opening the message I read, “Saber I am not surprised you require more time in this particular project and do not hold it against you that you were unable to meet your self-imposed deadline. As you have been such a great member of my research team for these past three years I am more than willing to give you an extension. Since this problem has been giving my men trouble for over five years I am going to let you have all the time you need on it as I know YOU are the only one who can come up with a solution for the problems caused by the FOY project

and Camp Everglades. However this project is still under class 10 restriction so please do not discuss this with anyone below that clearance level this includes your lovely wife. Sincerely, Xerxes.”

Letting out a sigh I close the message and all the documents as Kylea poked her head into the room. “Something wrong love?” she asked as she came over in her cream colored sarong, blue sports bra and her red hair tied back with only a bit left to fall around her ears and face.

“Can’t discuss it with ya love it’s about work. All I can say is this is a problem they have been working on for a long time and that I am the only one who can solve it. I asked for an extension on the deadline because I can’t really figure it out without more study into the notes and data. My boss just replied and said I have all the time I need to solve it and not to let anyone talk with me about it that isn’t cleared for it. But...” and my eyes went wide as saucers as two names popped up into my mind’s eye from the data and notes.

“Honey you got that look in your eyes. Tell me you didn’t just have an insane idea that could cause trouble for you.

“No...no trouble...but I’ll need to make a few calls after the barbeque for now let’s go get that grill started Brock and Bella will be here soon.” I say evasively as I got up with a crinkle, a groan and a few pops from my back.

“Before you get to work on the grill we need to change your soggy butt and before you ask I am not going to wear a diaper in front of Brock and Bella on our first meeting. If he is cool with the idea of people wearing them for leisure MAYBE the next time they come over but not before.” She said taking me by the hand and leading me to our room like she does to Junior from time to time.

After a quick change into my thickest plain white diaper and into my favorite green shirt I go get on my grilling apron and head out back to the grill and fire her up. As she gets warmed up I go inside and get the meat and set it on the right side of the grill and Junior comes out of the house with me and sits at the edge of the pool letting his feet dangle in the water.

“Junior you know what I said don’t go in the pool until after they get here. You can sit there and let your feet dangle in but if you go in the pool before they come you are going to lose your desert tonight and get a time out.” I say warningly.

Nodding he just sat there and said, “I know papa I just wanted to get my pads cooled off a bit.”

“Alright then.” I said checking the heat with my left hand. Feeling it was quickly getting to temp I start putting the meat on starting with the steaks since they would take longer to cook anyway and then the burgers followed by the hotdogs.

Once the meat was on the grill and sizzling I heard a car door slam from the driveway and hear the doorbell ring moments later. “Oh hello you must be Bella and Brock, so nice to finally meet you. I’m Kylea.” Kylea said answering the door.

“Hello Kylea. Yes I’m Bella and this is Brock.” The tall female badger wearing a purple sleeveless top and faded purple skirt and a plain dark grey diaper bag on her left shoulder said as she held the paw of a small three year old sized badger cub who was wearing a green shirt and an average thickness diaper.

“Let me grab the drinks and I’ll show you out back where Saber and Junior are.” Kylea said picking up a tray with a large pitcher of iced lemonade and five cups on it.

Shutting the door behind her Bella smiled down at Brock and led him along and when they got outside with Kylea she nodded in silent awe at the backyard and Junior seeing the two says, “Hello Miss Bella, Mista Brock. You wanna go swimming?”

Smiling with a giggle Bella said, “It’s misses Bella sweetie and perhaps later.”

“Hello Saber Junior. I am tempted but I can’t swim well in this state.” Brock said kindly.

“Oh okay.” Junior replied before looking over his shoulder at me with please in his eyes.

“Oh go on then but you stay in the shallow end and no splashing people.” I say causing him to squeal with delight and slide into the pool and start swimming around the shallow end.

Slipping the spatula in my apron I take off the grill glove and hold my hand down to Brock saying, “Glad you chose to come mate it means a lot to know you trusted me enough to come despite your PTARS episode.”

“Well I admit I was nervous at first but it’s not like it was the first time Bella and I went somewhere after I had an episode. I’m getting used to it. So how have you been holding up since the meeting?” he asked going right for the point of our agreeing on the barbeque in the first place.

“One nightmare but nothing that woke Kylea or Junior, no daytime flashbacks and I got a promotion at work.” I said happily.

“That’s great, I assume you mean your regular job not the “special” one.” He said making the quotes around special with his fingers.

“Yeah It’s been three years since I started there and I’ve solved more problems than any TEAM they have assembled.” I said proudly.

“What is it you do Saber?” Bella asked.

“I work for A.M.R.I.I.D. as a researcher and program designer. They basically give me the projects that are at a standstill due to some problem or another and I look over the data and try to find a way to fix the problem and make a solution to it. Like last year between the 4th of July and Halloween I had a project where they were trying to find a more effective way to cure radiation poisoning with a drug cocktail that they would inject into the subject before they were exposed but all the attempts they made with the computer simulations either made the subject explode, which obviously was NOT desirable or they would fall over dead after ten minutes exposure. I found the solution and now we have a working drug for those who need to say go into a reactor to stop a melt down by fixing something inside the core itself.” I said hoping it was simple enough because I couldn’t think of how much easier I could make it.

“OH that is very nice I can see why they gave you a promotion then.” Bella said as Brock looked on in interest.

“Yes much more satisfying than the “other” job but it didn’t pay as much which is why I had the other one. But that was also part of my problem and why I ended up at the clinic and how I met Brock. So what have you been up to old man?” I said looking down at Brock at the last causing him to laugh.

“Not much really just working on getting a degree in architecture online. Bella here however is a very accomplished and popular physical therapist at the hospital.” Brock said.

“Wow that’s great Bella. And I hope you have a good time with your getting your degree. You might find this funny but we would have similar kits when you become an architect. I have a professional drafting and design kit myself that I use now and then when I need to work things out in the real world and not in the computer.” I said opening the grill to flip the meat.

“That’s interesting. Mind if I have a look at it a little later?” Brock said interestedly.

“Sure I don’t mind. I need to replace a few things in it since they are worn down but the kit is relatively intact. How do you want your burgers done? And you Bella?” I asked.

“Medium rare to medium.” They said together.

“Heh that’s funny. I am the same way.” He said moving half the burgers to the top rack and two of the steaks along with the hotdogs.

As we talked Junior swam and had fun in the pool but he eventually got tired and climbed out by using the stairs and after wrapping himself in his towel which had a giant Green Lantern battery on it. “Mr. Brock do you wanna play with my Lego’s with me after we eat? Daddy got me two big boxes last cwismass.”

Eyes wide Brock says, “I would like that Junior, thank you.”

Smiling Kylea walked over and picked Junior up from behind and says, “That’s very nice of you to share dear but before we eat you need be dried off and changed. Come on you.”

Laughing Junior snuggled up to Kylea as she carried him up to his room to dry him off and change him. Once they were safely inside the house I get a look of nervousness and then look at Brock and Bella who were sitting at the table and Brock notices me. “What’s wrong Saber?” he said suspiciously.

“I had to wait for Kylea to get Junior out of the area because she and he are not cleared to talk about it. I have something I have to ask you that is related to my job, and might involve you Brock. If it doesn’t I would be extremely surprised by the ” I said nervously.

“Before you go any further you better show me something with your security clearance with the military Saber.” Brock said quickly holding up a paw to stop me speaking.

Nodding I say, “Alright that’s reasonable. Come on inside all you need for proof is on my laptop.” I then shut the grill and walked towards the house Brock and Bella following. Once at

my laptop next to the couch I open it up and quickly pull up my files including not just my credentials and profile at work but also the email from my boss and show them to Brock and Bella.

After looking at the things Brock looked up at me and said. “Alright...I don’t like talking about it but if you need to know I’ll answer your questions I just ask one thing in return. You do not let anything I say or this project to become a weapon again.”

“That much I can promise easily, I am working on researching repair to the DNA of those damaged by this thing not for military use. The main question I have is, are the names on this list of people from the place you and your squad?” I said showing him the list.

“Yes. Let’s go outside so you can keep an eye on the food and I’ll answer your questions.” He said getting up not looking at the laptop and walking slowly out of the house towards the pool head and back straight but eyes going slightly distant.

Following Brock and Bella out I try and think about how to ask my next question delicately and say, “I know that it’s going to be hard and I don’t want to bring up anything painful but...I need to know specifics that are not listed in the data I was given to even come close to fixing things. There is just too much black out on it even for my clearance. I told you in the group therapy session I am a Ghost Protocol member. I have exactly three favors stored up since I started so I can get the data I need but...I would rather get it from a friend who willingly talks to me so I can try to help him. Will you please tell me all you can it doesn’t have to be all today but just know that this is my only project my job has me on and I’m putting all my effort possible to find solutions to the problems.”

“Alright I’ll tell you but not now, not today. If you want to know everything I need to talk to someone first and see if they are willing to talk as well.” Brock said looking up to Bella and holding his hands up.

As she picked him up and hugged him I say, “I’m grateful Brock. How about those hotdogs now, they are ready and the burgers and steaks need a couple more minutes.”

Nodding he says, “Yeah that sounds great.” Then Bella sat down at the table and put him in a chair as I ran inside for the buns for the dogs and burgers and come back out quickly as Kylea brought out the plates and a few bags of chips and cookies. On her heels was Junior carrying the huge tub I got for his Lego’s and I smile as I dish up the dogs onto a couple buns each for him and Junior then take them over to the table.

Once Junior was at the table and sat down as well he and Brock started eating the hotdogs and chips though I noticed Brock was intently watching the bag of cookies. “You can have some after you have a burger dear.” Bella said seeing his gaze as well.

“Awe your no fun Bella.” Brock said teasingly as he polished off his chips.

“Well the burgers are ready for you and Bella now so it’s not too long a wait Brock.” I say laughing as I put them on the burger buns and bring them over to the table.

Taking a bite out of a burger Bella says, “These are really good.”

“Thanks lass I appreciate that. I’m a decent grill master but Kylea is the cook of the family. If you think my meats are good you should try her cookin.” I say as I move the steaks up to the top shelf for her me and Brock if he had room for it but keeping Kylea’s on the lower part as she preferred hers well done though she liked medium well burgers which always puzzled me.

“It’s true I can cook circles around him but he is a better griller than I am, though I think were both even when it comes to baked goods.” Kylea said smiling as she grabbed a handful of chips and put it next to her burger.

“Well you both blow me out of the water. I can’t cook for a hill of beans.” Bella said causing us to laugh.

“It’s true last time she tried she set off the smoke detector.” Brock said causing Bella to give him a playful noogie.

On and on the conversation went as the four of us ate. Junior being quiet the whole time simply ate his hot dogs, a single burger and a handful of chips when he finished he said, “mama I can play with my Lego’s now.”

Getting a wet wipe out of her purse she wiped his face clean and said, “Now you can go play with them.”

Letting out a cheer he slid off the chair and went to his tub and started to upend it so they were strewn everywhere. As he did this Brock froze like a deer in the headlights of a speeding SUV and Bella seeing it bit her lip. “Um Kylea is there someplace we can...” and she nodded her head towards Brock.

Kylea knowing the look of a caretaker who loved her charge and knew he needed a change said, “Of course you can use the changing table in our bedroom. I think it would be better than Junior’s due to the room design.” And she got up to show them into the house.

Bella picking up Brock and the diaper bag walked inside nuzzling his cheek as he buried his face in her chest embarrassed. As they went inside I started cleaning up the plates and trash then after washing my hands and face in the kitchen sink I went back out to the back yard and sat

down in the shade with Junior to play with him a bit. We had been playing for ten minutes when I felt dinner leave me and blushed hard as Brock and Bella came back out.

Having Bella set him down Brock walked over to us and sat down saying, “Kylea said you should come inside for a moment and asked Bella and I to watch Junior. Since I promised to play with him for a bit I don’t mind.”

“Yeah I know why she wants me inside...she has figured out how my body works and can always predict when I am in need or about to be in need of a...well I’ll be back.” I say getting up carefully.

Going up to our room I see Kylea standing by the changing table and she pats the top saying, “Come on stinky butt I know you need it.”

Rolling my eyes I hop up on the table and let her work. “So what do you think of them?” I asked quietly.

“I like them they’re nice and I think Brock will be a good help to you both as a friend with a similar condition and in a therapeutic way.” She said moving fast and getting me out of the soiled garment and cleaned up in record time.

“I can’t tell you why dear because you’re not high enough clearance but...my project I’ve been assigned...I think I was assigned it because I am his therapy buddy...the data from it involves how he got the way he is. That’s all I can say.” I said equally quiet.

“Oh my...I am no fool and not a strong believer of coincidence you may be right. There all done.” She said as she taped up the last tape on the diaper.

Looking down I give her a disgruntled moan and say, “Did you really have to do that? Seriously dear there is a time for cute but did you have to put the thickest pink diaper we had in stock on me to go back out there in?”

She just giggled and said, “If you’re not nice I will give you a spanking in front of them both.”

“You’re incorrigible sometimes you know that?” I say sliding off the table and going back outside.

Following me Kylea says, “And you wouldn’t have me any other way and you know it.”

I smile at this and stop dead as we get onto the back patio seeing the huge structure that Brock had built with the Lego’s and Juniors help.

“Papa look Mr. Brock and I made da big church fwom da hunchback movie.” He said excitedly.

“But...we weren’t gone for ten minutes how did you do Notre Dame so fast?” I asked amazed.

Brock smiling high fived Junior and said, “I like to build and design buildings. And your look is priceless better than when I did this to Bella the Morning after she took me in. I was younger than I am now and I still managed to make Notre Dame by the time she cooked breakfast. Though this one is better I didn’t mess up the south tower this time.”

Kylea having run inside quickly when she saw the structure came back out with her camera and said, “Would you mind if I get a picture of you two standing next to that?”

“Not at all how about we stand on either side of it?” he said moving to the other side of the Lego Notre Dame from Junior.

Smiling Junior stood still and said, “Thanks for showing me how ta do this Mister Brock.”

“No Problem Junior it was fun doing it with you.” he replied as he smiled.

“Okay on three. One, two, THREE.” Kylea said snapping the picture of the two little architects and their creation.

“Cher’ I know you want to build some more but it’s getting late and you have a class tomorrow.” Bella said seeing the time.

“Yeah you’re right Bella. Was fun hanging out with you today Saber. I’ll call you soon about that thing we talked about.”

Walking over I shook Brocks hand and Bella’s saying, “Was a pleasure hosting you two. If you ever want to come by just give me a ring. We don’t have to keep it to just therapy assignments and work related stuff. Besides us old war dogs need to stick together right?”

“Right. Take care Saber.” Brock said before Bella picked him up again and snuggled him to her chest.

“You too Brock, if I don’t see you before then see you on Wednesday for our group meeting.” I said yawning a bit as I showed them out.

Kylea going over to junior says, “time to put your Lego’s up dear.”

Nodding Junior quickly demolished the structure and Kylea helped him put them all back in the tub.

Once I saw Brock and Bella out I closed the door and went to my office and shut the door flipping the sign on it over to indicate to leave me be and I grabbed the phone in there which was separate from the house phone and dialed my superior.

“Saber I thought you said you weren’t going to take anymore missions for a while?” he said after picking up.

“I’m not sir I just need to use one of my favors. I need access to the raw data...the non-redacted files on the FOY project and Camp everglades.

“Why do you need those, and how do you know of the FOY project and Camp Everglades?” he said slowly.

“It’s my current assignment for A.M.R.I.I.D. and I need them because I can’t do the job of finding the solution to it without them. I also am friends with one of the members of the project. We met in group therapy and just had a barbeque together. If possible I am going to find a way to help him as well as finish the project I’m given its self. I also want to notify you to keep an eye on this project and that if it looks like my data is going to be used to re-launch the military use of this I want my second favor to be used to stop it by any means necessary.” I said firmly and quietly as though my door was shut it could still be heard in the hall if I talked too loud.

“Very well I’ll have copies of the raw data delivered to you by this time tomorrow. And your request and possible use of a second favor is noted. Take care Lieutenant.”

“I will sir and thank you.” I say hanging up the phone.