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The Yearning of the Law

Written by BlueKittyTales as an entry for RedDeadFox and MaveriKat's Second Annual Carmelita Appreciation Day of 2018.

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Part 1 – The Invoking

Daylight had come before Inspector Carmelita Montoya Fox had been able to escape from the scientific facility the previous time and she'd considered herself lucky that the effects of the liquid Sly had stolen, whatever it was, were not permanent. She hadn't forgotten the terrifying hallucinations it had brought on, nor that her experience had allowed Sly to elude her with relative ease. She wasn't going to let this go, even if her life depended on it.

For the next few days afterwards her light headedness had impaired her ability to chase her suspects, leading to her being consigned to her quarters and tasked with desk work until it eased. Oh, how she yearned for another chance to meet Sly Cooper so that she could make him pay for what he'd done. How she wanted to wring his neck for all the crimes he'd committed, how she wanted to detain him as quickly as possible...how she wanted to take him into her arms and never let go.

She soon shook away this thought. As far as she was concerned, he was a criminal through and through, and it didn't matter that almost all of his victims were other criminals, some of whom being of a very high profile. She'd finally been dispatched to a crime scene that, surprisingly enough, was near the very facility Sly had incapacitated her in. This time, the nearby History Museum had been the target. If this was Sly's doing, why would he target this of all places? Surely it wasn't the kind of place he would normally rob?

When she reached the side of the museum, she looked around the building's front façade. None of the lights were turned on, and as had been the case with the scientific facility, the burglar alarm had been disabled. The front door was open and the alarm's keypad was exposed. She had to give him credit – he was meticulously careful whenever he did this. But it wasn't like him to make the same mistakes twice in a row. This drew her to only one conclusion. *Is he trying to bait me again?* she thought. *I won't let hallucinations stop me this time.*

"This time, you're not escaping from me." she said quietly, tiptoeing through the building's ajar entrance. And just when she'd reached the foyer, she heard a faint, nearly silent sound coming from one of the floors above. *Footsteps.* she thought. *He's still here! You're mine, Ringtail.* Her left ear twitched, telling her that the intruder, whether this was Sly or not, was near the top of the building. She stroked the Shock Pistol on her belt, readying herself to pull it out when the time came, though looking at the amazing artefacts all around her as she made her way to the first set of stairs, an opportunity to use it would likely not come here.

When she reached the first floor's foyer, all she saw was darkness and shrouded display cases in the rooms either side of her, but still no sign of that slippery raccoon. Had he already managed to escape her? Did he know she was there? The sound of a very faint voice came and her ears twitched again. Though it was distant, there was no mistaking whose voice it was. What's more, she knew where she needed to go. *Your time has come, Cooper.* she thought, allowing herself a wicked grin as she felt for her handcuffs.

She ascended the stairs, making sure to tiptoe so as not to alert the raccoon to her presence. Eventually she reached the top floor and heard that same voice again. This time, it was much closer. He was still there, and what's more, she was near him. There was more light to see in, as the two larger rooms that branched off from either side of the foyer had large windows in their ceilings that conveyed the moonlight all around. When she turned to her right, she noticed that one of the displays had been disturbed.

She took a closer look at it. She pulled out her Shock Pistol and turned on its torch. *Statue of Charybdis,* it read. And it was gone. What's more, in its place was Sly's calling card. There was no mistaking the small likeness of his head and mask. *He's not leaving here with that.* thought Carmelita odiously. *Just wait until I get hold of him.* Clenching her fists, she shone her Shock Pistol into the next room. And right before her was a sight she had both dreaded and awaited at the same time. It was none other than...

"Sly Cooper! I knew I'd find you again." The raccoon did not appear to be startled or surprised at all. In fact, he rose from the display case he'd just opened with a wide smile across his muzzle.

"Ah, Carmelita Fox!" he beamed.

"You must have some kind of death wish!" she scoffed.

"Oh, by no means, my dear." said Sly with a smile. "But I can't deny it's always a pleasure to see you."

"Drop the sweet talk." she snapped. "Have you forgotten what happened last time we met?"

"Not at all." he smirked. "The potent liquid I took. I wondered why I hadn't seen you for a while. It's a shame – I really missed you."

"Well, I didn't miss you." sneered Carmelita. "And I'm going to see to it that you get the book thrown at you. Hand over the statue."

"Naturally, I would." said Sly. "But there's already one set of glove prints on this thing. I'm sure you'd rather not incriminate yourself. Unless you'd like us to start spending a much longer time together." But Carmelita was in no mood to play along with his ruse.

"I know what you're trying to do, Ringtail." she snapped. "You think I'm a moron? This is exactly the same trick you pulled the last time we met."

"Not at all." replied Sly. "But I do think I'll see something quite astounding when you step into the moonlight, my dear Carmelita." At that moment, she wanted to punch his smarmy grin right off that muzzle of his, but the one thing that stopped her was the knowledge that if she did, she risked making him drop the ornament he'd stolen and thus break it. Instead, she pulled out her handcuffs.

"Forget it. You're coming with me." she barked. "You're under arrest." But even this didn't wipe the smile from Sly's muzzle. In fact, he didn't move at all.

"Oh, Carmelita," said Sly, "how did we get here, you and me?"

"Don't try and be sentimental with me." she snapped. "Just shut up and drop your takings before I really lose my temper." She noticed him baring his serrated teeth in a smirk. "And don't try and tell me I look attractive when I'm angry like you did one time. You're only digging your own grave even further." Much to her surprise, he suddenly held his wrists out, though his rucksack remained in place. Was he surrendering to her, or was he trying to draw her in? She wasn't going to risk losing him yet again, so she reached out for his wrists.

"Okay, my fair lady." he said huskily. "You've caught me. I suppose the only thing that's missing is the mousetrap." Just when she was about to snap them on, however, he suddenly whipped out his cane and hooked it onto one of the beams just above him.

"Oh, no you don't!" snapped Carmelita. "You're not getting away this time!" She tried to make a grab for him, but he was simply too fast, swinging himself out of her reach and leaving her only grabbing the tense air that formerly stood between them.

"I've just remembered." said Sly. "I have an appointment! As much as I'd love to stay here and enjoy this lively conversation, I really must be going."

"Come back here!" roared Carmelita, giving chase as he swung himself out of the room, narrowly missing a statue she had to weave herself around. He raced down the staircase, using the railings to whip himself around each hairpin turn while Carmelita tried all she could to keep on his tail. Tempted though she was to fire her Shock Pistol at him, the last thing she wanted was to risk any damage to the museum or its contents. Suddenly, the enshrouded darkness revealed another of its surprises. Instead of going through the open entrance, Sly raced down a straight corridor leading to a fire exit. What's more, he seemed to have realised his mistake, for he abruptly stopped. *Big mistake, Ringtail!* thought Carmelita, smirking as he looked around for something, anything to swing from, only to find nothing.

"Ha!" proclaimed Carmelita proudly as she advanced on him with her Shock Pistol's torch aimed at him. "Now I've got you!"

"Yes you have, my love." said Sly. "The stars are bright in this still young night, you know."

"I told you upstairs," said Carmelita, "I'm taking you in." Sly shielded his eyes from the blinding light. To her infuriation, however, this wasn't enough to erode his overconfident façade.

"This is an even better place for us to meet." he smirked. "Now that I can see even more of my darling vixen." But Carmelita was growing more irritated by the second.

"Darling vixen?" she repeated incredulously. "I'm starting to think that you don't take me seriously, Ringtail. I don't go easy on criminals like you. Surely you of all raccoons would be aware of that." Suddenly, he began to come towards her while still keeping his eyes shielded. This was the very opportunity she needed. But before she could pull out her handcuffs again, he suddenly bolted for her, kissing her before he darted off. There that familiar taste was again, and she could feel tingling all throughout her body as, in that very brief moment linked, they connected in a way no man had ever connected with her before they'd first met. But it didn't take long for her to snap out of her trance.

"Cooper!" roared Carmelita as she turned back and gave chase, following him back out of the entrance. Instinctively she looked around the dark street to see if she could find either of his partners in crime, Bentley or Murray. Their van had been nowhere in sight, and if he had indeed come alone like she thought he had, that would eliminate one possible route of escape. He bolted for the museum's car park, and by now, Carmelita was ready to do anything it took to incapacitate him, even if it meant fatally injuring him.

"The thrill of the chase, Carmelita!" cried Sly. "How did you know?" *I'm not gracing that with a response.* she thought. *I'm not letting you get away from me!* She aimed her Shock Pistol and fired it at him, only for him to leap out of the way just in time as the blinding beam hurtled towards him. It served only to hit a parked car, setting it ablaze, but not even one tiny bolt hit the raccoon.

Growling in frustration, she fired at the tree branch he'd hooked himself onto. But he was again too quick for her and her weapon instead set the tree ablaze. For a moment, it looked like he had managed to elude her again. She couldn't see him anywhere. That was, until she spotted his silhouette in a lamp post's beam right in front of her.

"You aren't getting away from me that easily!" she snapped.

"Easy, my dear?" he said, perching himself on top of the lamp post. "It simply wouldn't be any fun if it was. Especially if I didn't have you on my tail." Gritting her teeth, she aimed her weapon at the lamp post again, only for him to leap out of her way again as she fired. The lamp post survived, although its light bulb blew. He vanished again, although as quickly as he'd gone, she felt something brush along her side. She whirled around and fired once more, her beam hitting the already burnt out car.

Giving chase, she raced through the car park as he swung his way across each lamp post until finally, he leapt onto the side of a nearby building and hauled himself up to the roof. Determined not to let him slip away from her, she raced around the side of the building, hoping to grab him on his way down. But it was not to be, for at that very moment, a suspiciously familiar van pulled up just outside the car park. Murray and Bentley stuck their heads out of the windows on either side.

"Hey Sly, get in!" cried Murray. "I've got you covered!"

"Ah, dead on time!" cried Sly.

"You're lucky Inspector Fox hasn't managed to detain you." said Bentley. "I warned you before – all those times you've escaped her will only get her more determined to bring you in." *You're telling me it has!* she thought. *And don't forget that neither of you are innocent either.* Further angered, she sprinted towards the van, but just as she was within grabbing distance of it, Sly leaped in through the open passenger side window and the vehicle sped off. With a roar of frustration, she fired her Shock Pistol towards the van, only for it to miss as it turned around the corner.

"You can't keep away from me forever, Ringtail!" she roared. "One of these days, I'll have you!" But she doubted whether any of the van's occupants had heard her, for by the time she'd finished, it had disappeared into the night. Dejected, defeated and infuriated, all she could do from there was pull out her radio.

"Dispatch, Inspector Carmelita Fox reporting." she announced, her eyes twitching as she struggled to keep her anger out of her voice. "I need you to get units into the area to look for a blue van with a flame vinyl.

Description matches three wanted suspects and they have a stolen artefact with them. They have just burgled the History Museum and were last seen driving away from it.”

“Units have details and are en route.” replied the dispatcher. Carmelita gripped her radio tightly when she slipped it back onto her belt. Despite this request, she thought there would be no chance of her colleagues being able to track down Sly Cooper and his cronies by now.

“You can’t always run away from me.” she said ominously. “One day you’ll slip up, and then you’ll be all mine for the taking.”

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Several days later, Carmelita awoke from a long and restful sleep to find the sun setting, sending an orange glow through the small cracks in her bedroom’s curtains. It had been a gruelling few days, during which she’d been able to bring down a very prominent and highly dangerous crime lady during that time. She was now in prison awaiting her trial, although despite not fearing reprisals from her many subordinates, there still remained a void inside her even with her face in the headlines.

She could scarcely believe her eyes when she read her digital clock. 5:48PM. She’d slept for nearly fifteen hours, having not had any time to sleep for two days as she’d ceaselessly pursued her target. She wondered if she would have another chance to detain Sly Cooper after the patrol units had failed to track him down. They hadn’t been seen around the area since then, although patrols had been set up in the locations it was deemed they were most likely to visit.

Ready to resign herself to yet another defeat, Carmelita showered and put on her uniform. But just as she put on her coat and her gloves, she noticed something hanging out of the left pocket. Curious, she pulled it out.

“An envelope?” she said, thinking aloud. She turned it over in her paws and saw her name inscribed into it with hearts either side. Though she didn’t recognise the handwriting, the hearts gave away the mystery writer’s identity. *Sly. This must be another trick of his.* she thought bitterly, memories of the time he’d trapped her on top of the Krakarov Volcano racing back. She almost went to screw up the letter in anger, but stopped herself just in time, her curiosity pulling out the higher trump card. Suddenly, the time they had shared a ballroom dance reappeared in her mind. Some things changed, she knew, but one thing that never would was his thievery. *Let’s just see what this is.* she decided. *A letter in this kind of package can’t be that harmful.* She opened it and unfolded the letter inside, reading it aloud to herself:

My dear Carmelita, how did we reach this point, you and me?

A love letter? she thought. *That’s his most personal trick yet. Is he trying to taunt me?* She sighed to herself and carried on reading.

We always seem to cross paths when we’re on our adventures. But it’s just as I said the first time we went after Clockwerk – we’re on opposite sides of the law, but I’ll never see you as my enemy. Rather, I’ve found myself forming somewhat of a crush on you. You’ve been in my dreams for a long time, and I get the feeling that you may not be surprised when you read this letter.

What do you say, my dear? How would you feel about us going on our first date? Call me by the number overleaf and we can make our arrangements.

Waiting for a lovely lady like you, Sly Cooper

“That sick creep.” she growled. “Who does he think he is? The next time I find him, I will –” But she stopped mid flow, getting a sudden idea. *This actually might be a good opportunity.* she thought. *My superiors will never buy it, but if I let him get close to me, let him think he’s reeling me in...that could be my chance to finally bring him down. Let your guard down for one second...and you’re mine!*

Without waiting, she grabbed her mobile phone and dialled the number. The voice on the other end was immediately recognisable and was in that same suave tone the letter had been in.

“Hello?”

“Cooper, I saw your letter.” began Carmelita.

“Ah, Carmelita!” said Sly. “I wondered when I’d hear from you.”

"I thought you –" she began, but she soon bit her tongue. *Careful, Carmelita.* she told herself. *If you snap at him, you'll lose your chance to get him. You've already let him escape you enough times, so do this properly this time.* "I suspected this was how you felt about me. I've picked up on that every time we've met."

"Have you now?" said Sly huskily. "And how does my favourite vixen feel?" She could feel her cheeks blushing underneath her fur. *Are you flirting with me again?* she thought, indignant. But this didn't stop her from wanting to find out what he had in store for her. *Let's just get it done.*

"I won't lie to you." said Carmelita earnestly. "When I've chased you down, there's something about you that's different from the other criminals I've gone after." *This'll get him falling.* she thought. *He'll think I'm in love with him, and then I'll turn on him.*

"There is?" said Sly. He sounded surprised. It was not what she had been expecting. "What might that be? I'd like to hear it in your words."

"They're normally nothing more than lowlifes who are just in it for the money." said Carmelita, saying the first thing that came into her head. "But there's a different reason you do it. I can't say I've ever seen you steal from the innocent, even if that does still make you a criminal."

"Guilty as charged." he said.

"Yes, Ringtail, you are." said Carmelita sternly. She could feel her bitterness for him beginning to surface, but she was determined to steel herself on. "But...there's something else too."

"And what's that?" *Your kiss?* she thought angrily, the memories of the last two reappearing in her head like the fantasies of her life after she'd detained him. *The way you trapped me on that mountain? The way you slip away from me every time? The dangerous situations you get me into?*

"I don't meet many gentlemen in this line of work." she said, feeling like she was lying to herself as well as him. She allowed herself a wicked smile. *He's falling for it!* she thought excitedly. *He won't know what hit him.* "For a crook, you really do seem like one. I've never had the courage to admit this to you, but...I like the times we get to talk, the times you stall me. I know I'm basically admitting where my weaknesses are by now, but –"

"It's alright, my dear." said Sly softly. "I know what you're trying to say."

"I do sometimes miss you when you're not around, Sly." said Carmelita. She'd realised only then that she'd referred to him by his first name, something she'd done so rarely, she could count the number of times on her paw pads.

"Carmelita, if you could hear my heart singing at this moment," said Sly, starting to purr, "your name would be part of its song."

"You've got to get some new material." said Carmelita, not able to help but smirk. "That's the corniest thing I've ever heard."

"It takes two to tango, Inspector." said Sly. *He must be serious about this if he's referring to me by my rank.* she thought. *This was even easier than I thought it would be.* "And tango we most certainly shall. If we get the chance, that is."

"You know what?" said Carmelita. "I'd actually like that. Where and when can we meet up?"

"I know just the place." said Sly. "Are you familiar with *The Singing Clam*?" Carmelita's eyes widened.

"How do you know that's my favourite restaurant?" she exclaimed, aghast he'd choose this of all places. She hadn't taken him for the kind of creature who would dine at high market restaurants like this, although now that she thought about it, she didn't think it was very surprising. But she clapped her gloved paws over her mouth suddenly upon realising what she'd let slip.

"That might have been an educated guess, my dear." said Sly.

"I underestimated you." she said. "You do know one of the ways to a woman's heart, even if she is a different species from you."

"You say that like it's an obstacle." said Sly.

"No, no, I guess it shouldn't be." said Carmelita, putting on a bashful tone. "That's never stopped you."

"Where are you now?" inquired Sly.

"I'm at home." said Carmelita. "And that restaurant is only a few blocks away."

"Murray can pick you up." suggested Sly. Carmelita could barely believe what she was hearing. *What is he, stupid? Surely he'd know better than to send his allies to me.*

"I thought you'd prefer to pick me up yourself, if your flirting is anything to go by." replied Carmelita. *I can detain Murray and Bentley another time. she decided. Ringtail is the biggest priority.*

"Murray's kind of protective of his van." said Sly. "But if you'd prefer me, I think I can persuade him to let me do it."

"When would you like to see me?" smiled Carmelita.

"Any time you're ready." replied Sly. "I'm not busy right now."

"Then I'll see you soon." said Carmelita.

"I won't miss this for the world." And with that, she hung up. Finally she allowed herself a wicked giggle. *I can't believe how easy that was! she thought. He didn't suspect anything at all! He's either completely gullible or he's totally in love with me. But that doesn't matter. He seems to trust me either way. And he's going to see he's made a big mistake.*

But then came another realisation. The contents of the phone call had begun to swim in her mind, and it didn't take long for her to reach her conclusion. Warmth was flooding through her body like a summer sunrise, and soon she realised why her heart suddenly felt like it was missing a beat. *Sly Cooper, thought Carmelita, there's more to you than just your thievery. You mean more to me than I've ever let on before. I can't wait to see you.* But she snapped out of it, rebuking herself for letting this appear in her head. *You're doing this to detain him, not have him take you home.* her mind sternly reminded her.

Even so, she still wanted to make a good impression. She flicked through her wardrobe and picked out a stunningly beautiful sparkling onyx black dress. It was the same one she had worn when she had met Sly at a ballroom, and now that she looked back upon the occasion, she realised that it should have seemed so obvious it was him in the startlingly immaculate dress suit she remembered him in. And she had to confess – despite her deep disgust at some of his actions, she had started to form a respect for him. True to what she'd said on the phone, he wasn't a completely lost cause, and though she had staunchly refused to admit it before, she was beginning to understand exactly why he stole.

In what felt like a heartbeat, she heard the sound of a car horn honking outside. She looked out of the window, her heart giving a leap. Outside was a taxi and climbing out of it was a raccoon. And when he turned his head, she recognised him as none other than Sly Cooper. Not only that, he was wearing an immaculate blue and white dress suit, complete with a tie that was as blue as what remained of the daylight sky. *He definitely doesn't think this is a joke if he hasn't stolen a car to reach me.* she thought.

She rushed downstairs, only just remembering to grab her house keys and her purse in her haste. And when she reached the bottom, Sly had a single rose clutched between his jaws. *Okay, now you're just overdoing it.* she thought as she approached him. And to her amazement, Sly caught her in a hug.

"It's lovely to see you tonight, Carmelita." he said. At first she was reluctant to return the gesture, but soon she felt herself sinking into his embrace, feeling very good about it, she begrudgingly admitted to herself.

"It is to see you too." she said.

"Can we get going?" barked the taxi driver. "I've got another fare who needs picking up once I've dropped you two off."

"Of course." said Sly quickly. And with that, they climbed into the vehicle. *This date hasn't even begun yet,* thought Carmelita, *and he's already leaving himself open. But it's too early to do it now.*

“So Carmelita,” inquired Sly, “is it often that you get downtime like this?” Carmelita raised her brows at him, thinking it was something he should already know.

“No. Police work never ends, so days off are like gold dust.” she answered.

“Then maybe your modelling days aren’t over yet.” smirked Sly. “I can already imagine you on the catwalk. You look gorgeous in that dress, you know.”

“Are you flirting with me?” she asked. She intended for it to sound like feigned affection, but instead she said it curtly, and Sly looked quite shocked. However, he soon pulled his face straight.

“I believe I am.” he said, his tail kinking. It wasn’t often she saw it in species other than felines, and she normally saw it as a sign of something that lay far beneath the surface. Even at this very early time of the night, she was beginning to sense that there was more behind his sweet talking than she’d believed.

“What was that song your heart was singing?” smirked Carmelita.

“I can’t remember now.” said Sly. “But maybe I can write another song of my own just for you.” *That’s even cornier than the last line was.* she thought, a painful looking smile crossing her muzzle.

“If the pianist is at the restaurant tonight,” she suggested, “I suppose you could ask him for a song.”

“Now you’re giving me ideas, my dear.” said Sly affectionately, allowing his tail to brush against hers, though he didn’t try to link them like she had seen so many couples do with each other.

“Like what?” she inquired when the vehicle stopped at a set of traffic lights.

“Oh, I won’t tell you just yet.” smirked Sly. “It’s too early for that.”

“I see you like keeping a lady in suspense when you aren’t stealing.” commented Carmelita.

“It wouldn’t be quite the same if it wasn’t a surprise, Carmelita.” said Sly. “We should know that from our lines of work.”

“Yes,” said Carmelita, testing the waters, “about that. What did you do with the statue you stole?” But then Sly silenced her without having even to speak, simply by catching her on the shoulder.

“Let’s not bring up the past right now, my dear vixen.” he said soothingly. “The night is very young.” She went to bite back, but soon remembered what she had reminded herself of just a few minutes before. As much as she didn’t want to, she soon conceded.

“Yes,” she said, “yes, you make a decent point. Let’s enjoy this.” A jolt to her senses came all of a sudden when she realised she was starting to let her guard down. She didn’t want to allow herself to become too acquainted with him, lest she should forget her original goal. And when the vehicle stopped outside of the restaurant, she allowed herself a nasty smile while he was distracted with paying the driver, even if she’d missed out on witnessing him do something she had never believed him capable of. *You’re acting like a goody two shoes now,* she thought, *but you can’t keep your act up until the end of time.*

