

Academic Growth: Part VII
Renard De Fleureaux III

First, I expected it to happen any day, now. Then weeks passed by. Then a month. I hadn't heard a word from Theo or Zataan in ages; not that I'm complaining about that. Those following my sordid tale may have realized that events have slowed down, and, to put it bluntly, junior year in College sucks the big one. But! I was now free; free of school, free of peering eyes, at least, from the College Campus' peering eyes, and free of my position as an RA. Ah, but life is full of disappointment. Apparently, the Residential Life office felt that a near half-ton behemoth of muscle does not make for a harmonious dorm community. Never mind the fact that no one *dared* vandalize my hall lest I bend them into a pretzel, I was popular with my residents for being the literal big man on campus, and I could take care of literally every situation an RA may have to face, no, I was "unfit for any position currently available."

Jerks.

But, I was home, now, and trying to relax. It wasn't a surprise to Mom and Dad since they had followed the news and contact with me, but let's just say relations at home were a touch... off. Mom was probably more accepting of her boy being replaced by a solid wall of muscle, though she was already fussing over my rather limited wardrobe, but Dad. Well. He had always been bigger than me; he was a professional baseball player decades ago, and had a good inch or two on me, because apparently every male secondary character in this story has to be taller than me. Dad wasn't mad or anything, he just seemed to be extremely compliant to anything I wanted. I could probably have gotten a new car and he'd give it to me just so he wouldn't have to be emasculated by his own son for much longer.

So, yes, home life needed certain adjustments. Dad would come around, but I just needed to focus on living with all of... well, me. Artizek and I made good spotters for one another, but, surprisingly, our ridiculous proportions didn't need as much maintenance as you would think: I had almost been starving myself and skipped an entire week of work outs before I realized I hadn't lost a pound. Cheshire trickery, I'm sure.

Regardless of losing weight or not, I still had to do something besides continuously lifting weights. To that end, I still picked up that most loathed of practices; cardio. Jogs were already hard for me- I've always hated them. But there's a new dimension of horribleness to jogging when your thighs are so heavy with muscle and so thick they keep rolling off of each other. I wasn't so much able to jog as somehow trot about like a wounded hippo, but, with practice, I was able to upgrade from wounded hippo to charging rhino- I still bowled over anything within arm's reach if I wasn't careful, and looked about as graceful as American involvement in the Middle East, but I managed all the same.

The last thing I expected as I waddled about on my latest jog, however, was meeting an admirer. I had met admirers on campus; women and quite a few men who apparently really liked absurd muscle sizes, but they had always struck me as a touch too lustful, more in it for my body

than me. And, call me crazy, I don't like it when guys do it to girls, and I don't like when it happens to me. She, however, was different.

She was an absolute lamb, both figuratively and literally. I think she's what one could call classically beautiful- and what luck, that's my type of woman. She had long, chestnut brown hair tied up in a loose bun, and a tall figure you could bounce a quarter off of. Her long legs, attached to a, shall we say, shapely behind filling out tight workout shorts were toned and strong, as was the rest of her, with the beginnings of a nicely sculpted set of abs poking out from beneath her workout bra. Her fluffy wool was, actually, really complimentary to her figure, too... at least, I certainly didn't mind. I'd have fun shearing her, that's for sure.

... Yeah, I'm not sorry. She's a knockout.

Speaking of knock outs, the sad part is, I actually kind of... ran into her. I was looking the other way, and, well. You ever see someone run into a brick wall?

Now I know how the brick wall feels.

"Oh my God, oh my God- I'm sorry, I'm so sorry." I blurted out, trying to bend down without ripping my shorts via my over-muscled thighs or completely eclipsing her with my also over-huge pecs.

"Oh, no- no, that's fine!" She held out her hand, and I tried to pull her up without... you know, accidentally dislocating something of hers.

"Wait a sec... I know you. Aren't you that hero, caught a car before it went over the edge?" She said, dusting herself off.

"Oh, uh... yeah. Yeah, I guess I..."

"And then you were in those commercials for... what, big and tall men's underwear?"

"Heh... right again." I could feel myself blushing as I scratched the back of my head, just as I could feel my bulging arm brushing against my cheek.

"I actually didn't think you WERE this big, like... I thought it was photoshop, or something!" She looked down at my arm, and she offered me a crooked little grin. "May I...?"

"May you... sorry, I don't follow." I asked, blinking.

"Well... heh." She started playing with a loose strand of her hair, "I wanted to see if it was... you know, real."

"Oh." God, she was beautiful. But my eyes went wide when I realized what she meant, "Oh! Oh yeah, yeah... sure, go ahead..." I held out my arm, bending it the slightest bit and watching my... I want to say watermelon sized bicep swell up.

She smiled. Of course she had a beautiful smile. Her hand reached out, slightly hesitant as it touched my arm.

She smiled wider. I was growing to like that a lot. “Wow... it’s hard as a rock. Yeah, that... that’s definitely real.” She said as she squeezed it a bit, and of course, my muscle didn’t give at all. My knees buckled, though, bulging thighs rolling off of each other.

I grinned, rolling my shoulders as they brushed up against my cheeks and swallowed what little neck I had left. “You should see what I can do with you- with it! With... it, the muscle, yeah. I’m... pretty strong. Really strong.” I blurted out, and immediately regretted. My tail started twitching like mad.

She smirked. “I don’t doubt that... but, you know, I never heard your name.”

“Oh... oh! Renard. Renard De Fleureaux. The third.”

“Renard. That’s a nice name.” she grinned, and held out her hand. “I’m Zoe.”

I shook her hand vigorously, and then, well, all of her shook.

“...Sorry.” I blushed.

“Oh! No, no- that’s fine.” Zoe laughed. “Listen, Renard, I still have like, a mile before I’m done. So... I better get going. I’ll see you around?”

“Yeah... later.” I was blushing, and tried to look down- only to be blocked by my own pecs.

She walked past me- and then I felt the elastic band on my shorts snap around my ass.

“Hopefully not *too* much later, big guy.” Was the last I heard from her as she continued her jog.

It took some maneuvering, but I managed to reach around- there was a little note, with her phone number written on it. How and why she had her phone number written down in the middle of a jog is a mystery to me to this day- and she’s not telling.

Having not lost all sense when I got home, I immediately called her up.

“Hello?” Zoe answered.

“Hey, it’s Renard.”

“Oh! Well, hey there, Ren. I was starting to wonder if maybe I scared you off.”

“Oh, a beautiful woman gives me her phone number after just meeting me? Yeah, I was absolutely terrified.”

There was a slight pause, “So... you think I’m beautiful?”

Ah. She didn’t miss much. “Well... yes? Who wouldn’t think so?” I hoped that was the right answer.

She laughed, “Do you woo all the ladies like this, Ren, or am I just lucky?”

“Well, I mean. You ran into a walking brick wall, so I wouldn’t call you *lucky*.” I grinned.

“I’ll say- see, just today, I met this extremely buff guy, and, would you believe it, that’s my type; and I’ve been waiting for him to ask me out, but I’m starting to think that despite his ability to bench press ten of me, maybe he’s more of a timid lamb than me.”

I think the blush was starting to creep into my twitching ears at that point. “Oh- oh! Uhm.” I cleared my throat, forcing my voice down a decibel, “So, listen, Zoe, you ever heard of princesses?”

“Yeah?”

“Well, there’s this place I know. I’m going to pick you up at seven, and show you what it’s like to be treated like one.”

I could hear her trying to suppress laughter, “Oh, wow, Ren, that’s so forward of you! I don’t know, a lady like me going out to dinner with someone they just met... I *think* I can squeeze it in, though.”

“Oh... oh, cool! I’ll see you at seven!”

“Later, big guy. Don’t keep me waiting.” She hung up. If there was ever a verbal equivalent of a wink, I think I was just on the receiving end of it.

I sighed, grinning like an idiot. Like I said, before my transformation, I was not exactly Don Juan, and after... well, I had shied away from any admirers. But Zoe? Zoe was... wow. I barely knew her, granted. Guess I was just looking forward to getting to know the future Mrs. De Fleureaux.

I was very optimistic in that moment, okay?

As I turned around, however, I smacked my chest- and then my muzzle- into a familiar set of pecs in a finely tailored suit.

“And how goes the romancing, Romeo?” Zataan purred, the purple cat leering at me with his omnipresent grin.

“Get out, Zataan.” I growled. “Not a hand on her- do you hear me?”

“Why, Renard!” Zataan gasped, taking mock offense. “I would never lay a hand on a lady.”

“Yeah, not unless you could add a couple hundred pounds on her.” I was not having it. I threw back my shoulders and puffed up my chest, forcing Zataan back. “You still got time with me, I know it- but you don’t get to mess with my date.”

Zataan purred as he felt my chest press up against him, grasping at the ridiculous amount of muscle on my chest. “Perish the thought. But don’t forget, Renard- I have an appointment

with you. And if I want it at any one time, well... You don't really have any room to argue, do you?"

Before I could say anything, the bastard was gone. He was *just* like Theo, it was ridiculous. Alone again, I felt a tense moment of unease. If there was going to be any move on Zataan's part, I needed to move before him. And I was going to need help.

Fortunately for me, a familiar name had just come online on my chat list.