

I awoke to the early dawn light and the shifting of the bed, the memory foam left with a huge divot in it from the man now sitting up on its edge. Even without my glasses on, my smudged vision could tell that the man – Alex, a tall, muscular, white-furred goat with a long mane of blond hair cascading down his back – was easily twice the width of my own scholarly body. Through bleary eyes and low light, I looked over my own body. A black and white-furred rat, I was a mere shadow at a foot and a half shorter than the sculpted 6’8” body that loomed over me. A couple of piercings glinted in the low light, one in my furless ear and another in the extra-plump set of nuts spilling forth from my hips. While Alex was hung, he didn’t compare to me; but then again, I had cheated. A little magic had fattened up my endowments considerably, and soda bottles would weep to have their girth compared. I grunted as I stretched my arm to the table beside the bed to slip my spectacles on, blinking wearily as my eyes focused.

“Did I wake you again, Nick? I’m sorry. Just go back to sleep.” he rumbled, turning his hips a fraction to face me better. Biceps and triceps that nearly matched my skull in size tensed ever so slightly as he leaned over, reaching one of his long arms out to stroke a powerful hand behind my furless ears gently. It traced through dark black hair and white fur, and a thick finger teased at my lower jaw for one slow, intimate moment. “I’m just going out for a run, sleepy ratty. Lay yourself back down in my man-hole.” he whispered, his other hand rubbing at the edge of the impression he had left in the foam mattress. “It’ll be nice and warm for you.”

“I’d like to put something else in your manhole.” I murmured. I shot him a smirk, sharp rodent teeth gleaming in the dim light, before rolling over and spreading out as I came to rest in that wide divot. He smiled, gently picking the glasses from my face and setting them down on his own bedside table, neatly pulling the covers over me before leaning down and kissing my forehead.

“I bet you would, horny devil. Now go back to sleep, you were up late,” he replied, gently cupping my face with one of his huge palms. He sat momentarily, then rose, stretching out his massive frame. His joints cracked loudly and satisfyingly, and he gave a pleased grunt as he began to get dressed. While I could have kept my eyes open to enjoy the show, there was something about the comforting warmth of the place he had just left behind that made them flutter closed, my jaws opening wide as I yawned and drifted away once again.

It was breakfast time before my eyes opened again. I slowly rose and idly trundled towards the kitchen, wiping the sleep from my eyes and stretching my rodent jaws with a fearsome yawn. Chunky incisors clacked together as I pushed into the kitchen to the sounds of sizzling and crackling, the boyfriend hard at work with whatever vegan protein concoction he had found in one of the countless fitness magazines that were buried under the coffee table. As a nod to my omnivorous nature, however, he had prepared me an omelette.

“Mornin’, darlin’.” I rumbled with a half-yawn, settling down at the kitchen table to pack food down my grateful gullet. “Good run?”

“Aye. Great day for it. Gotta love that climate change, huh?” he replied, twisting his muscular frame to look back towards me with a huge grin.

“Well... if you ignore the rather catastrophic side effects, then I suppose I could be cajoled into admitting that the weather is quite nice today, yes.” I twisted the fork into the plate before me, thoughts more on my work than on the food before me as I began to wake up properly.

“I’m joking! Seriously, I know it’s a cliché of the jock-nerd relationship, but you really do overthink things.” He rolled his eyes with a smirk, returning his focus to his spatula as I sat and watched his back shifting like an avalanche, white and shiny fur shifting smoothly across the broad muscle. It was certainly one way to stop overthinking.

“Uh-huh. And how’re you gonna stop me doing that?” I challenged, laying my fork across my plate as I leaned on the table to stare up at his beefy body. With a wry smile, he took his pan off the burner, leaving it to cool as he strutted towards me. Long legs meant that it only took a few steps for him to close the gap, the caprine figure bending down to take my wrists in his hands. He shuffled forward, hoof tips scuffing at the lino, and pressed my hands into his taut stomach.

“I’m sure I can think of something, mister.” he grinned, slowly pushing my hands further and further down towards his hips. My hands were casually cupped along his perfectly-sculpted pelvis, gently pulled down his tracksuit to rest against the slumbering mass of his cock. I knew all too well what that girthy shaft was like when it was raring to go, so even the sensation of it flaccid... well, it was a treat.

“Mhm. That shut you up.”

I stood from my seat, slowly rising and circling my arms around his waist, my hands just about able to touch themselves around his thick torso. Equally slowly, he crouched down to press his nose to mine, kissing my forehead before reaching down to grope at my rear.

“Big cheater.” I huffed, smiling wide as I leaned into him, luxuriating in his scent, warmth, and presence.

“Maybe... but you like both parts. The big and the cheater.” He replied, muscular arm lifting me to his wide pecs.

“If only because I’m one myself. Mages are the ultimate cheaters.” I added with a smile, closing my eyes as I rested my head on his chest.

“I dunno, it seems like a lot of hard work to me. You’d think cheating would be more... hmm, efficient.” he pondered aloud. I slowly rubbed along his forearm, giving him an amused rumble in return.

“It’s plenty efficient. Bending the rules of the universe isn’t easy, y’know.” I replied with a pout, as he nuzzled into my head.

“I know, I know. Just teasing you about how much work you do.”

“I don’t work that hard.” I huffed, folding my arms as he cradled me.

“Uh huh. I had to put you to bed, you were sleeping on your desk. Maybe tonight you’ll take it easy. Have some fun for yourself.” He rumbled, setting me back down at the table as he went to fix his breakfast. Unfortunately, I was already lost in thought. Pondering efficiency, cheating, magic. And, of course, fun, for what good was fun if it wasn’t done right?

It was late in the evening before he returned from work, having hit the gym as usual. By then, I was deep into a stack of books and reagents.

“Hard at work, babe?” he grinned as he peered around the door, sauntering into the room and unbuttoning his shirt.

“Maybe not for long, Alex,” I replied, not even looking up from the library assembled on my desk as I etched runic diagrams into a notebook.

“Ooh. Big discovery?” cooed the caprine, tossing his shirt into the laundry basket before pulling on a tank top over his curved horns.

“Oh, nothing so glamorous. I was just thinking-”

“As usual!”

“-just thinking about what you said about efficiency this morning.” I pouted, huffing a little at the interruption. “The body produces waste energy in the form of heat and sound. What if we could use it for something?”

“I am excessively hot, yes.” flexed the goat, the massive muscles in his arms tensing as he posed. I couldn’t help letting a small grin meet my lips, but I shook my head. “Makes you the perfect test subject then, doesn’t it? I already reconfigured it to adapt it to muscle maintenance. Means you don’t have to spend as much time at the gym because everything you do counts for more.” I flicked through the pages of my notebook, giving Alex a brief glance at my work... not that it would mean terribly much to him.

“You’re going to make me try it out, aren’t you?” came a weary sigh, Alex pressing his hand into the side of his head and playing with his long, blond mane.

“No... but I am going to heavily suggest it,” I smirked, already rising from my seat as he rolled his eyes and laid down on the bed, sinking deeply into the mattress with his imposing weight. “Good boy.” I purred, slinking over to sit on top of one of his powerful thighs, my slender legs able to fit inside just one of his. He raised one of his arms, a hand engulfing my shoulder as he looked up at me with his glittering emerald eyes.

“You do know what you’re doing, right?” he asked, hesitation tugging at his voice. I merely smirked and leaned in, kissing him gently before rubbing his shoulders.

“Oh, my dear goat, look at it this way. If I do it to myself, then I can’t fix it if it goes wrong. I can fix it if it goes wrong with you!” I smiled eagerly as he opened his

mouth to protest, then shut it just as quickly as electric blue mana crackled in the air between us. The room came alive with magical power, runic inscriptions visible on the skin under Alex's white fur as they were drawn across that herculean frame.

His eyes rolled back, his muscles tensed. As I sat across his thigh, I could feel his body heat ebbing away. Normally, he was an utter monster to sleep next to: in the summer, it was strictly an above-the-covers affair. Now? It was precisely engineered, both for his comfort and for mine, too. I had spit in the eye of thermodynamics and challenged it to rebuke me.

“Ooh, hey, we're gonna save so much money on the AC!” chirped Alex, rubbing his hands together before reaching under my shoulders, and pulling me closer to him. The runic symbols faded as the magic took hold, and as he took hold of me, pulling me up against his chest and wrapping a powerful arm around me. He sighed happily, a rumbling groan from within that cavernous chest that practically melted me where I lay. I smiled quietly as he pressed me against his body, the scent of hard work and exercise still clinging faintly to his frame. “When does it start?” he asked, his free hand reaching down absently to toy with my tail, idly curling and uncurling it as he let the strange feeling envelop him.

“It has started!” I replied, looking up at him with some confusion.

“No, I mean... y'know. The bigness.” he rumbled, briefly letting my tail flop down against his thigh as he gestured to his already rather large body.

“Yes, that's started too. We'll check in on it in the morning, and see how it's working.” I wriggled in his grip slightly, finding myself a more comfortable spot. My shaft – ironically, the only part of me that was bigger than his – was trapped uncomfortably against his hard abs. He seemed to chew over the idea for a while, then sighed.

“I should have figured by now that it wouldn't be as easy as Abracadabra, now you're huge!”

I just nodded, leaning into him and yawning. Though it wasn't too late into the evening, the magic was draining to even a practised mage like myself. Always quick on the uptake, Alex shifted to the side to let me lie down, and I threw my clothes off the side of the bed before crawling under the covers. It wasn't until I had already had a few hours of dreamless, black sleep that he came shuffling back into the bedroom, the foam mattress shifting under his weight and rolling me into his body. Groggily, I opened my eyes, but quickly found his hand placed over my face.

“Not now!” he whispered, seemingly trying to suppress a giggle. “You said to wait until morning, and that's what you're going to do!” he added, his usually-deep voice taking a glee-infused tone. Without any energy to argue back, I just nodded quietly and lay against his side, the most comforting and temperate sleep taking hold of me within moments as the rising and falling of his broad chest rocked me into dreams.

The sleep was the same as it ever was after a significant spell. First, the absence of dreams. Then, the vivid colour and exquisite sensation, like sitting front row to watch an orchestra while in the middle of a DMT high. Scientists hadn't yet explained the unusual phenomenon – it was simply chalked up to yet another weird neurological quirk. Moving from the death-sleep to the world of colour came with a head-splitting crack, as though someone had smashed a flatscreen and turned it on to witness a chaotic, shattered rainbow mess. Images stood out to me – lumbering figures in the distance, cold polar landscapes with howling, icy winds. Still, the deep sleep meant that even with the extra time in bed, Alex had gotten up before me.

Groggy from the visions, with dribble on my lips, I rolled onto my side and put on my glasses. A deep trench in the memory foam was still slowly pushing itself back into shape, and on a whim, I rolled into the imprint. It still smelled like him, the faint outlines of his musculature present as I slid my fingers down the sides of that divot. A thud from elsewhere in the house, though, startled me, sending my heart rate racing into the realms of the somewhat awake.

Pulling myself out of bed, I tugged on a fresh set of underclothes and went to investigate the suspicious thump. It certainly wasn't characteristic of Alex, who was as graceful as he was brawny most of the time... but when I walked into the kitchen, there he was, hand on his chest as he exhaled noisily... and what a chest it was! With an extra foot in height, Alex presented an intimidating (and fairly arousing) figure. From his floppy ears to his feet, every inch of him looked full of life and bustling with power. Muscles swelled with new bulk, his tall, curved horns grazed the ceiling, and as for what was happening at waist level...

“What the fuck.” I said, not sure whether to be surprised or impressed.

“I'm sorry!” he yelped, still breathing heavily. “There was a spider on my horns and it crawled on my face!” Alex leaned out the kitchen window, shaking his finger off outside. “I must have brushed past a tree or something with the extra height...”

“No, I mean... what the fuck, you're huge!”

“Oh. Yeah! Pretty good, isn't it? Just a hard morning's work! I remembered what you said about waste heat, so I wore three hoodies for my run. Paid off, hmm?” he replied, an eager grin gracing his face.

“That, my boy, is cheating.” I huffed in faux protest, but I couldn't take my eyes off his improvements. Between us, it was hard to say we didn't do some good work.

“My boy?” rumbled Alex, closing the distance with one swaggering step. His muscular profile seemed to swallow me up as he stepped closer, one hand sliding down my back as he pulled me closer, cupping the small of my back as his dick pressed into the base of my ribcage, that meaty mass straining as his beefy arm kept it pinned pointing downwards. “I think at this size, perhaps you ought to call me ‘Daddy’...” he purred, his spare hand brushing my bangs out of my face so he could smugly smirk down at me.

“Mm,” I replied, sliding a hand between us to trace a clawed finger delicately down his cock, feeling his hips squirm just a little as I teased him. “Maybe when your dick is bigger than mine, hun. Mages of such incredible power as I do not blanch quite so easily when faced with big handsome brutes.” I added with a snicker, bending down slightly to press my snout under his tank top. My nose trailed down the bottom of his abs and crossed the top of his pelvis, my mouth pressing into the fat warm shaft buried in his sweatpants. Slowly, I licked across the base of his dick, my snout caught in his waistband as he smirked down at me with his powerful hands affectionately groping at my body.

“Cute thing,” he muttered, reaching down to scoop me into the crook of his arm. He lifted me with a single hand as my back laid against his forearm, leaning his face into mine. I pressed forward into him, my mouth meeting his as we traded kisses eagerly, his lips overwhelming mine with a set of jaws that could swallow my entire face. Thankfully, he was a vegetarian... and I hoped for a brief moment that his dietary preferences hadn't changed with his size.

The way his tongue invaded my gullet, though, was almost like he was feeding a baby bird. That massive, muscular organ squirmed in my mouth, twisting and teasing. I braced my hands against pecs packed with potential energy, the soft muscle tensing ever so gingerly as though to remind me that tearing through an old phonebook was mere foreplay. It was... overwhelming, but something else burned at the back of my mind. A sensation I couldn't quite articulate, but if I were to do my best, I would say that I wanted...

**MORE.** It felt as though something was squirming and slithering around my mind, but not something so alien that I couldn't identify it as... well, me. I reached forward, planting my hands on Alex's chest. One deep breath, then another as I let my mind go slack. Opening my mind, I channelled the world's ambient magic through my fingertips, converting that ethereal power to heat. That energy was swallowed up by the spell woven into Alex's body, new muscle fibre blooming like weeds under my touch.

Alex leaned back a little, a sheepish look on his face as the goat hunched in the kitchen. His horns creaked as they scraped into the ceiling, and his broad back stooped as he took up more and more space within the room. Powerful calves began to push into the kitchen table, the slightest squeak of metal across the floor as he simply grew into it, his weight more than enough to ground him.

“Haha... uh... okay, getting a little dangerous here, no?” Alex asked, a slight nervous quaver in his tone as his eyes scanned an increasingly-stuffed room.

“**Uh-huh,**” I replied, squeezing a bulky pec beneath my fingers, pushing more and more of that magic through my hands. “**Maybe you ought to take us to bed before**

**we wreck anything.”**

“Nick, I don’t know if I can... fit,” he murmured, eyes briefly lidding as I surged more heat into his body. As he held me in one steely arm, I felt his dick, hard and warm, surge a little higher. It thudded against my leg, this great meaty shaft. On some level, I knew he was right. This was going too far. We had had some fun with this, but we were getting a little silly. I raised my chin to look into his eyes and replied:

**“I’ll make it fit.”** Raw arcane power crackled through my body. He tried to meet my gaze but faltered as he saw something staring back at him. Something that was staring too intently.

“I... uh, meant the door,” he murmured. I wasn’t entirely sure where this newfound strength of mine was coming from. Perhaps from Alex, siphoning from the spell I had placed on him. It didn’t much matter at the moment. I reached out with a hand, an electric blue corona surrounding my body, and commanded the space to change.

The walls folded in on themselves like an accordion, the door clattering along as it was dragged to the side, widening up the hallway and revealing the bed nestled in a corner.

“Nick, it’s a rent...oh,” I interrupted Alex with a well-timed surge of magic. His muscles began to pinch and squeeze as he continued holding me to his chest, his body beginning to crest nine feet in height. Practically crouching, his cock began to press into the valley of his pecs as he shuffled awkwardly through the space I had made.

**“C’mon. We can enjoy it at least once. Besides, what did I say about you having a bigger dick than me?”** I purred, reaching one hand out to cradle the tip of his shaft beneath my fingers. Cradling it in my palm, I found I could only cup half of its girth. With a sly grin, I stroked firmly across its underside, feeling it twitch against my touch.

“Mmm...well, maybe this one time,” he rumbled. He bounced his lower arm, jostling me from his powerful hold before tossing me roughly onto the memory foam. I twisted onto my back, eyes blinking through the harsh magical aura that was surrounding me. His colour seemed... dim. His bright blonde hair seemed dull. His clothes, stretched and torn, were a little greyer than they ought to be. Something in the back of my head found this concerning, but I was thinking with my other head.

Alex stumbled forward, still bowed as his formidable mass swallowed the space in the room. Massive hands gripped into the mattress as he tilted his head down, horns mere inches from carving ruts in the ceiling, and shot me a grin.

“You gonna say it now, or...”

**“Make me,”** I said with a smirk, slowly stretching my legs out to graze the sides of his member. There was still a strange cool sensation to it as the spell continued to devour heat. That turgid beast still twitched as I cupped my soles to the side, however. As I held my body to it, feeling each pulse of his massive heart through his meaty cock, I felt it shudder with growth. Hunched over the bed, Alex gripped either side of the mattress as his dick steadily grew towards me, fatter and wider than my body. Each nut surged and swelled to the size of my torso. Hooves scraped up the carpet and clattered against the wall as Alex shuffled and shifted, bearing down on me like a semi truck staring down a squirrel.

**“I told you. I’ll make it fit.”** I hooked my legs either side of that colossal cock, aiming it towards my hips. A tremor ran down my spine as the imposing weight of it rested against my body; it was like staring down the barrel of a cannon. The blast, I feared and hoped, might be just as destructive. Taking deep breaths to centre myself, I drew ambient magic into my body. Transmutative energy roiled through me, rendering me more elastic and malleable. An old trick to take in toys that were perhaps... outside my capabilities. Not the most edifying spell in the book, but better to have it now than not.

Alex shrugged. With a grunt, his hand wrapped around my upper torso. I felt a little like a car at the scrapyard as he pinned me down, his free hand trying to guide the battering ram hanging at his hips. Digging my feet against the mattress to brace myself, he growled and grumbled, the bed frame creaking and cracking as he levered his monstrous member inside me.

It was definitely too much. It felt like trying to take in a car tyre. Every inch strained the magic trying to keep me intact, and perhaps if I had done anything other than crave more, it would have been the end of me. Wherever I was drawing this strength from, this craving and power, it was keeping me in the game. I lowered my gaze from the cracks in the ceiling and stared into Alex’s eyes, the intensity of the glance causing him to wince for a moment. I stared. He obeyed. Inch by cavernous inch. More and more and more dick surged forth. Growth and exertion combined in an eye-rolling, prostate-annihilating high.

The problems began in earnest when he rolled his hips backwards. Next, he slammed forward. The tidal wave of steely muscle and hot flesh crashed into me, then again and again and again. Every thought was wrung out of my head, and I clung to the incantations currently keeping my body in one piece. A sole lifeline in these stormy seas. He snarled, body too big to fit in the room, horns digging into the room upstairs as his broad back crunched into the ceiling. Plaster and splinters dusted us both, white fur speckled with grey and brown. He devoured the heat of his exertions and grew greater still. Each pulse of growth hit me like a stun gun, each jackhammer impact crushing me with blow after blow of pleasure and pain.



The only thing making all this easier was the steady ooze of precum collecting in my gut, the goat so virile and potent that I could feel it even against the great mass of cock he had buried in me.

My eyes caught brief glimpses of that titanic dick stretching me to the seams in the few moments they were open. My body was a white-furred condom sticking to Alex's gargantuan shaft, his veins visible through my taut skin as blood pounded through it. I could do nothing, now; nothing but whimper out satisfied moans as I gripped futilely at whatever was to hand. My claws skimmed at the sheets or the cracked headboard for mere seconds before Alex slammed me into the mattress once again. I had nothing left in the tank. No trick left to pull. It was perhaps a stroke of fortune, then, that I heard a bassy grunt. The goat's fingers gripped the mattress tight as he growled, a tsunami cumshot surging into me like a waterjet. Each spurt smashed into my body, visibly rippling against muscle and skin, an unstoppable torrent that had me feeling fuller and fuller and fuller-

I blinked, eyes bleary as I came to. I had blacked out for a moment, drunk on cum and overpowering sensation. Alex huffed, his cock already pried loose from me as it unceasingly drooled cum across my wet and weary form. I gurgled as I tried to sit up, but so much jizz was packed away in me that I merely wobbled uselessly. I gritted my teeth. I needed to focus. I spread my fingers, pressing them into the side of my head. Basic incantations steadied my thoughts, the familiar and repetitive thoughts bringing stability into my mind. Breathing slowly, my attention turned to the situation at hand.

A rat's nose was sensitive, and under the overpowering scent of seed... burning. I shuffled back over a mattress that was more semen than solid to prop my back up. Tilting forward, I beheld a giant. It was a poor estimate with my glasses knocked askew, but as his massive barrel chest rose and fell I could only put him at over 20 feet tall. His cock looked like it could compact a sedan, if he didn't feel like doing it with his gigantic slabs of muscle. I couldn't see his horns. His head was already somewhere out of the roof of our home. His legs were sprawled across the floor into various rooms across the house, the muscles twitching. And his fur... still oddly dull.

I screwed my eyes shut for a moment, forcing myself to think. What were the conditions of the spell? Using up waste energy, like heat... light was a form of energy. One that I hadn't specified, but... theoretically I could have slipped up. Pressing my fingers against my temple, I rubbed at my head, hoping to get even a little more blood flowing to my brain. Burning... wait. Matter and energy were different forms of the same thing, if Einstein was right. I desperately wanted to, but I wasn't going to argue with the old fellow now. My gorge rose into my throat as I stared up at what I had wrought.

When mass was lost, energy was released, and Alex was consuming it to fuel his ascension further. I had unleashed the heat-death of the universe for a quick (if unbelievably satisfying) fuck. Watching the colossus recline filled me with dread and

pride, his rumbling breaths rattling loose tiles on the roof as his chest widened the gap he had pushed in it. I had to do something before the spell grew any more corrupt. Heaving my body over to his leg as the mattress squelched in protest, I placed a hesitant palm onto a broad plateau of white-furred muscle.

I winced as it singed me, but I pulled away with the spellwork around my fingertips. I had to lean in close to read it without my glasses, but what I read was a mess. The spell had turned... sentient? Cancerous? It was beyond anything I had ever seen. It was looking for more and more things to transform into size, the whitelist continually expanding. The distribution of that size had changed, too; more explicitly sexual, focusing on cum and cock and brawn. I scanned the room, suspicious, but most of the room was Alex. Most of the house, even. Spreading the lattice of magic between my fingers, I looked for the perfect place to start working my way back, feeling all the world like a bomb technician. With trembling fingers, I made my first change...

I awoke to ringing ears and bright blue light, my hands scraping at debris and dirt. The bright morning sky beamed down on me, a deep crater resting where my house once stood. I squinted down at my body, baffled to see it looking relatively normal. Not glutted with cum, not broken and battered. Just... fine. I stood up on a newborn's legs, dazed and confused as I tried to wrestle my way to the edge of the crater, scanning around blindly for Alex. There was no way he would be difficult to miss, even if he had shrunk back to normal. Unsteadily, I gripped the crooked walls of the crater, putting one furless foot onto the side of the crater's edge. With one heroic push, I began to climb.

Immediately, I felt something grab at my hair. Someone. Their fingers wrapped my long, straight locks around their knuckles and hoisted me backwards, tossing me back into the dirt. The thudding impact knocked the air from me, and I put my hands up, ready to throw whatever deadly spell I could muster into the face of my attacker. That someone loomed over me, outlined in the same incandescent blue that surrounded me whenever I cast magic, and bent down. I reached out, but the magic didn't come. I was drained. Defeated. I saw them reach out to me, their hand covering my eyes as they... returned my glasses.

I chewed my lip as the world came back into focus, looking like a movie scene. My house had gone, blasted into dust. So had everything else for three or four addresses down the block. The figure raised themselves up, face tilted down as they regarded me with a smugly superior smirk. Rich magic energy coursed through their body, their white fur glowing bright as daylight. Long black hair lay in a scuffed mess across their shoulders and down their back.

"You're me," we said in unison. The other me snorted dismissively, nodding with an amused light in his eyes.

“Yeah, we’re us, alright,” he continued. “It’s good to be back, even if it’s only for a while. And seriously? Did you take a few physics classes instead of focusing on your spellcrafting or something? Fucking nerd.” I glared up at him, frowning. He returned the expression. “And look at you. How are you shorter than me?”

“Five foot two isn’t that short for a rat,” I grumbled, staggering to my feet. I grit my teeth as I had to tilt my head just a fraction to meet his gaze. There were only four inches between us, but somehow I found the difference infuriating. “Looks like we have the same *priorities*, though.” I reached down, jostling his hefty shaft with the back of my hand. All considered, his physique was a lot leaner, taller, and more athletic than my own. The disdainful grimace and rolled eyes, though, failed to impress.

“Hey, listen. It’s a beautiful universe out there, with beautiful people who have beautiful ideas. If you want to compete in that knives-out bloodsoaked deathmatch, you use everything you can; bod, brains, b... bmagic...” His lip curled as he tried to think of a suitable third B.

“Look, shut up for a second. Where’s Alex?” I shoved at his chest, but it was like pushing on a marble pillar. No leverage. He shrugged, clicked his fingers, and conjured himself an outfit. A baggy plaid shirt and scuffed cargo pants draped themselves over his body, beaten-up sneakers wrapping around his feet as he took a few test strides.

“That motherfucker is gone. He’s *gone* gone. Listen, I’ll make it quick before the bomb squad gets down here. I don’t need your scrawny behind getting dragged into custody. You turned him into pure magic so fast he exploded. The bad news is that he’s super dead and so are... oh, probably like thirty or fifty more people.”

“What!?” I interjected, grabbing at his arm. Like his chest, it was utterly immovable in my hands.

“Shut it,” he snapped, waving his hand at me. A blast of wind hit me like a truck, and as I fell backwards into the muddy crater, I felt a sharp yank forwards. Suspended mid-fall, I growled impatiently as he stalked closer towards me, leaning over my nearly-prone body.

“The good news is that I’m here now. If I wasn’t here to suck up most of that blast and save your ungrateful hide, you’d be ash. Now, to be clear, it was me who altered your spell to corrupt it-”

“You killed them?!” I snarled, struggling against invisible bonds. I could barely move as he held me captive with magic; just enough to breathe and wriggle.

“We killed them. For good reason. When you started messing with a real fuckin’ wild level of magic, I woke up just enough to start altering things. To make it so that I would fully appear in this world.” He reached out towards me, covering my naked body in a plain t-shirt and a fresh pair of jeans. Gently, he rotated me in place, guiding me upright before dropping me safely on my feet. I wanted to surge forward and take a crack at his smug face, but the sounds of the street held my fist. Emergency sirens were beginning to shout out above the chaos of the streets. It wouldn’t be long before the police were crawling through the ruins, looking for answers. For suspects.

“So, what... you’re me, but you’re...” I murmured, eyes squinted as I chewed over the situation.

“I’ll keep it quick. I was a god, and I was tutored by the me that came before me, who was also a god. The universe waxes and wanes; the Big Bang and the Big Crunch. To survive, gods put themselves to sleep, leaving just enough of their power to ensure that they are remade. Of course, it’s near-impossible to get the process down to an exact copy, which is why you’re a little nerd and I’m not.” He smirked, running his claws through his hair, straightening it just a touch as he looked around at the crater.

“If you’re a god, bring back Alex, and the other people who you killed,” I insisted, folding my arms. I took a step up to him, staring him down. He gave a light shrug, but returned the gaze.

“I’m not gonna undo the circumstances of my rebirth... but maybe you can, in time. You and I are going to merge, you see. I’ll teach you how to use the sweet god-powers I have, then when you’ve got the hang of it, I’ll fuck off and you’ll be us.” The other me flicked his wrist, a cigarette appearing between his fingers. He tucked it in the corner of his mouth, ignited it with magic, and then raised his eyebrows as he looked me over.

“Well, first lesson,” he hummed, sweeping his arm out behind him to point to a tall hotel downtown. “We’re gonna have to get outta here before people start poking their nose in, and you’ve gotta stay somewhere. So... take us there. A little teleporting isn’t too difficult for you, right?”

I considered it as I closed my eyes. Teleportation had always been an unachievable prize amongst magicians throughout the ages. Theoretical models existed, but most of them required so much magic for anything beyond a short jump that they were impractical. But if he, or I, or we, were supposedly god-like in our abilities...

I kept it simple. Just swap the stuff at the destination with our constituent atoms. I primed the spell, reaching out for the power to fuel it... reaching out to my double. As I made contact, I felt a lurch. The world seemed to fall out from under my feet as

billions of years of experience began to flow into me. Unimaginable strength flooded me with magical potency, and my perspective... shifted.

Nicholas stood facing his taller double, the god looking down on the mage with a satisfied grin as they landed safely outside a luxury hotel. The sudden appearance drew a few stares from the people passing by, but the ambulances and police cars paid them no attention. The sight was quickly swallowed up by the busy rush of the streets and forgotten.

"I'm gonna bring them back," muttered the mage, looking up to his counterpart with a fierce glare.

"Do what you want when I'm gone," shrugged the god, pushing through the hotel's revolving door and into a plush, welcoming lobby. "I'm not really interested in that." He stepped over to the clerk behind the reception desk, waved his hand, and watched as they dutifully retrieved some keycards for the pair of rats.

The mage stewed on the thought for a while. That flow of power from the god was almost certainly under the control of his double. Cooperation was the only way forward, but inwardly, he was quietly confident. Surely inheriting all this power wouldn't change his attitude? This god was cocky, arrogant, self-assured, detached... the mage brushed it off. He'd keep true to who he was, and set things right.

The god tossed a keycard to the rat mage, shooting him a wry grin. "Get some rest. I remember what my awakening was like last time. Maybe I'll tell you about it, later. In the meantime... I'm gonna figure out what this version of the universe is like. Maybe hit up a few old buds. Catch me when you're ready." He gave the mage a sharp nod, before disappearing in the blink of an eye. The magic was smooth and practised; nothing like the mage's first clumsy attempt, but then the god was perhaps right. The mage was tired. He started putting together the teleporting spell again, but with weariness weighing down on his shoulders, he stopped. His eyes settled on the elevator, and with a shake of his head, he opted for the easy, technological option. There'd be plenty of time to be a god later.