

A Dino Hero

A story commission for StehlenSergal

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Content warning: Transformation, muscle growth, destruction,
corruption

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Jason walked between the trees while reading a comic book. Out in the distance, children played on slides and swings. Various adults watched the kids, making sure they remained safe. He flipped through the pages with no other person beside him, which suited him well.

"Hmm. A dark protector of the city," Jason said to himself. He turned to the next page. "Trying to protect it not just from criminals but from itself."

A soccer ball bounced over to Jason. Without lifting his cerulean blue eyes from the comic book, he kicked the ball back to the kids playing with it. The kids there cheered before they played with the ball some more. Jason nodded to himself while brushing back his brown hair.

"Sometimes, I wonder why people stayed in such horrible cities." Jason sighed and shook his head. "Although, given this city's state, perhaps I should ask that to myself."

Over the previous two years, the crime rate skyrocketed in this city. Sirens blared out most of the week when it would be unusual once a month before. News displayed videos and images of shoplifting and stabbings in this once-boring city. Last week, it turned out that three prominent city politicians in the city's consul accepted bribes from sketchy corporations.

A once shining, peaceful city turned rotten in two short years. Despite that, most folks he knew still wanted to stay.

"I guess someone could get too attached to their homes, eh?" Jason said. He flipped his comic book to the next page. "Even heroes, I suppose."

His mind wandered off, wondering what it meant to be a hero. He knew multiple types, in part because of reading superhero comic books. Some shone as paragons who did the right thing no matter what. Others lurked in the dark, pouncing on criminal prey and making them pay. Some hunted criminals to kill, regardless of necessity. Others only killed if nothing else stopped such villains. Some heroes even fought in a secret, shadowy war that no other person has known about.

"Hmm. What kind of hero would I be, eh?" Jason asked himself. He closed the comic book and placed it under his right arm. "I guess I could lurk in the shadow, but I'm not scary enough to strike evil's hearts cold." He tugged on his button-up, ruddy blue shirt. "Let's face it, eh. I look far too nice for that, even if I dress up like—"

A loud engine roar interrupted his thoughts. He spun around, flinching in surprise, which almost caused him to drop his comic book. A white van rolled into the park's parking lot. It parked with a loud screech, loud enough that

everyone in the park turned toward it. A police officer stood up from his bench in shock and confusion.

"Huh?" Jason blinked. The van held the logo of a *Deinonychus*, with brown-grey and honey-brown feathers throughout its body. It bore the name **Dinolife**, which he recognized as a new company that moved in. "Why are—"

Each van door opened, even at the back, and people in black and white suits rushed out. The one with the sunglasses glanced at the police officer, who nodded and relaxed. The rest of them glanced around the park with its kiddie rides, trees, canopy, and benches until they focused on Jason. His instincts screamed at him to run, but they rushed toward him, spreading out. They surrounded him at all angles in a circle with no hope of escaping.

The sunglasses-wearing one stepped into the circle. "You will come with us."

"Eh?" Jason asked, confused.

"You will come with us."

"Why? What's the big deal?"

"You will come with us."

"Look, eh. Whatever you're selling—"

Two of the men grabbed Jason by the arms and spread them out. He yelped, dropping his comic book to the grass. Another pulled out a syringe and jabbed it into his neck, injecting its content. Jason winced, feeling it flowing through his bloodstream.

"Wh-what did you—"

"It will take hold not too long," the sunglasses one said. "Now, you *will* come with us."

Jason twisted his head all around, gazing out from this circle of black and white suited group. The other park visitors watched both him and the police officer without doing anything to help. The officer, for his part, glanced away as though ignoring this view. He wanted to scream out, but as soon as he opened his mouth, the one who injected him shut his mouth. He tugged against their grip, but they remained firm and even pulled him toward the van with the rest of the group.

"Hey!"

Jason managed to turn his head around toward this new voice. An overweight man with clothes a size too small ran over. He wheezed out, gasping for air as he rushed toward Jason and his kidnappers. Some parkgoers, including a couple of kids, glanced at this fat man, each worried.

"Th-that's a kidnapping!" the fat man said. "Th-they're kidnapping that—"

The police officer ran, not to Jason but to the fat man. He grabbed him by the shoulders, stopping him in his tracks. The fat man turned to the police officer in confusion.

"But-but that's a kidnap—"

"Stop it," the police officer said. "Otherwise, I'll arrest you."

"Wh-what—"

The police officer shoved him to the ground rather than letting the fat man finish his question. He pulled out his handcuffs and cuffed the fat man's wrists together. The fat man screamed out in pain and horror, but the officer ignored him and waved to the other people at the park instead. He made reassuring gestures, which satisfied the adults, though the kids remained doubtful.

Jason widened his eyes in horror and pulled over in the fat man's direction. The others forced him to face forward to the van, covering his lips as well. His head grew numb, perhaps from whatever they injected him with. A helpless feeling overwhelmed him enough that he no longer resisted them dragging him. They pulled him to the back of the van.

At that point, he felt hope left him, leaving him with despair.

They carried him inside and strapped him onto a seat.

"There. That was not so bad, was it?"

Jason slumped his head down, losing consciousness.

#

When Jason came to, he found himself lying on a light gray floor. Bright white light engulfed this room, no bigger than a bedroom. He groaned, his head hurting like an ax split his head in half. Blurriness covered his vision for several seconds until it cleared up, his eyes staring at the light above.

At first, his body felt so numb that he held no control over his body. Instead, he remained lying there, staring at the light. It caused his eyes to burn and water, with him unable to turn away and only able to close his eyes. He wondered if coma patients felt like this every day until they miraculously recovered.

The numbness gradually faded, starting with his fingers, which he twitched. He moved his arms by an inch, regaining control over them. He pushed himself off the floor with a grunt, gritting his teeth. The numbness disappeared, only to be replaced by soreness on his back.

When Jason rubbed his chest, he touched a sky-blue medical coverall instead of his ruddy blue shirt and forest-green jeans.

"What the?" He pressed the coverall between his fingers, feeling the paper-like textures. He wiggled his toes, free from his brown shoes and socks. His back cracked from laying on the floor for what felt like hours. "Wh-where am I?"

Jason turned around the room, with every bit of the walls and ceiling painted bright white. He felt naked, exposed within this prison with no darkness to hide in. He heard his heartbeat, the only sound in this room besides his breath. He breathed in and out, trying not to panic.

"OK, OK, OK," Jason pushed himself back on his feet. "Calm down. Breathe."

Regardless of his words, he felt stress building up within him. He glanced around for something to sit on, but whoever kidnapped him left him with nothing outside a single white door. He stood there, the only thing within the room.

Without meaning to, his mind flashed back to the park and the police officer. He wondered why the officer let it happen, even stopping someone from interfering. Perhaps that officer, realizing how they outnumbered him, decided

to play the long game. When the van left with Jason within, maybe the officer took the van's license plate to trace and called for backup. It felt like a genius move, enough to—

The lone door slid open, breaking Jason from his thoughts. A man dressed in a white suit and coat stepped in with two men beside him. The other two men wore black uniforms, covering their bodies from head to toe. The man in white held a goatee and slick short hair, raven black for both. His icy-blue eyes glanced up and down Jason as though analyzing him.

"Yes. You will do," the man in white said. His voice felt like the dead of winter. "Welcome to Project King, Prototype 108."

"What are you talking about?" Jason asked. He felt the hair on the back of his head standing up. "My name's—"

"Oh, I know all about that, Prototype 108." The man in white adjusted his oval glasses. "But your name, identity, and history are no more."

Jason flinched, taking a step back. "E-eh?"

"The man known as Jason tragically died from cardiac arrest while walking in a park." The man in white pulled out a clipboard from under his arm and showed Jason the front page. It held autopsy information under Jason's name.

Jason felt his body growing cold, reading how a random blood clot blocked his heart's artery and caused his death. The man in white placed it back under his arm. "Your family was notified of your death."

"But-but it can't be." Jason felt every bit of his body growing numb. "Th-there were witnesses of my kidnapping. Even a police officer—"

"For the last two years, before we set up an office building in this city, we infiltrated the police force. We placed our men in key positions, allowing us to hire and fire anyone we wanted, even engineering scandals for the more troublesome ones. We did the same with the IA and DA along with bribing key politicians. This city belonged to us before we came here officially, all for this day." The man in white said it in a bored tone, as though he reported the weather. "Thank you for volunteering."

"Eh? No, no, no!" Jason shook his head. "I ain't volunteering for anything! This must be some kind of joke, a prank! Who are you guys anyways?!"

"I am Doctor Gilbert of Dinolife, a multinational corporation," the man in white answered. "We, for decades, cultivated an image of a humanitarian company, from donations to the elderly to funding paleontology projects. Underneath it all, as our founders planned, we

used it to build technology and knowledge while steering entire governments. Our leadership desired to paint their image of the future, which we will work for."

Despite denying the doctor's words, Jason felt a chill flowing through his bloodstream. Controlling governments, building secret technologies, and blatant kidnapping felt like a bad comic book plot. He shivered, hoping that this nightmare would end and he would wake up in his home.

It kept going, leaving him stranded in wherever this place lay.

Dr. Gilbert gestured to the armored men. "Take him."

"Yes, sir," both said. They marched forward, flanking Jason at both sides. "Come."

Jason swallowed and nodded.

Dr. Gilbert gave a cold smile. "Welcome, Prototype 108."

Dr. Gilbert walked out of the room with his head held high. The two armored men tapped Jason on his back. He nodded and followed the doctor from the room, with the guards following close behind. Jason felt powerless, with his past gone along with his home and his future controlled by them. Part of him hoped to escape, but he knew they would stop him.

Jason stepped into the hallway, just as white as the room before. Various people silently walked up and down the hallway, like a funeral service. He ignored them and their occasional stares and followed Dr. Gilbert. An image of a mouse trapped in a maze filled his head, which matched his feelings.

A minute of walking later, Dr. Gilbert led Jason to a blood-red door. "This is the culmination of Dinolife's work."

Dr. Gilbert opened the door and stepped aside, letting Jason enter first. Jason paused, only stepping in when one of the guards nudged him.

Jason felt his heart skipped a beat when he stepped into this room. Machinery dominated half of the vast space, with the center holding a glass tube large enough to fit two. Benches lay at the other side, with various people in suits and sitting with prideful expressions. Large monitor screens hung above each bench and in front of a control panel full of electronics.

Dr. Gilbert stepped in and rubbed his fingers against a control panel. "For thirty years, Dinolife studied animal DNA: frogs, lizards, birds, and countless more. We spliced together DNA combinations, figuring out which works and what does not. It was not until three years ago that we

made our big breakthrough, which we hoped for after so long."

The doctor turned to Jason with that cold stare piercing the heart. Jason glanced around at the two guards, who shut the blood-red door. The guards marched forward, flanking him again. It took Jason a second to realize that Dr. Gilbert awaited his response.

"Eh? What is it?"

"A way to bring back 'echoes' of dinosaurs," Dr. Gilbert answered. He smiled as though remembering. "Of course, there is no true way of returning them as they were." He tapped on the control panel, which turned on the monitor screens. It displayed information regarding genetic structures and updates, like patch notes. "But reviving dinosaurs was never our goal."

"Eh?" Jason blinked in confusion. "What do you—"

"All we can bring back is 'echoes,' not the real deal. Even now, we only know scant details about how they lived and acted; even then, they may be wrong. It will be more accurate to say that we are creating monsters in the shape of dinosaurs." He tapped on the control panel again, with the video displayed changing. "By figuring out which key DNA does which, we figured out how."

The monitor played a crude CG animation of a human with an oversized head. It morphed into some anthropomorphized dinosaur creature. That creature fought in various battles, like a soldier fighting for a king. Jason widened his eyes, realizing what they had planned for.

"No, no, no." Jason took a step back. The guards grabbed him by the shoulders and kept him still. The other people in suits turned to him with disdainful expressions. "Are you people out of your mind?!"

"I see great beauty in it," Dr. Gilbert answered. He stroked his goatee. "Just imagine an unstoppable army of human-dinosaurs. With the strength of one while in a manageable size, any nation in the world would tax their citizens into poverty just to have one."

"Wait." Jason flinched in confusion. "Y-you're *selling* this kind of service?!"

"Of course. What else would we do with such an army? Take over the world?" Dr. Gilbert scoffed. He leaned in closer to Jason's ear and whispered. "We effectively already do. Selling them would only solidify our hold. War will break out, and all will buy from us to stand a fighting chance. We will start with the weaker types, only showing 'improvements' when they demanded upgrades. They will

even volunteer their own men for this project. We will reach heights never seen before. My God, it will be beautiful."

Jason twisted to him, staring in horror. "You-you're mad!"

Dr. Gilbert sneered. "We are geniuses, enough to bring back 'echoes' of dinosaurs. And you will be the first in the human line, figuring out what works and what does not compared to our animal test subjects. And then, you will be put to death."

The blood-red door slid open, and a lady in a pale blue suit stepped in. At first, Jason's hope rose that rescuers came to save him. At least, until he looked at her again and recognized her as the wife of a corrupt politician, Jill Clips. His heart sank, realizing that she had come to witness this along with the others.

"Is the test subject ready?" Jill asked.

"Yes. Prototype 108 will be loaded in shortly," Dr. Gilbert answered.

Jason felt his skin turned icy cold. The two guards grabbed him by the arms and dragged him toward the tube. Halfway toward it, they tore off his coveralls, leaving him with his underwear. He would blush, being eyed by so

many people during this humiliation, but despair overwhelmed all other emotions.

The tube lifted from the ground to the ceiling, high enough to allow him to step in. The guards dragged him to the center and forced him to stand in place. A mask attached to a tube lowered down, which the guards grabbed and strapped onto his face. They went to the floor and pulled up tubes with needles and straps. They wrapped them around his forearms, forelegs, and waist, ensuring the needle pressed against his skin without breaking through. Once done, they stepped away.

Any thoughts of trying to escape ended when the tube lowered, surrounding Jason at all sides. He pressed against the walls with his hands and shoulders, finding a weak point, but it refused to budge. Panic seeped in, and he punched the glass wall.

"He is a fighter. I will give him that," Jill said. She turned to Dr. Gilbert. "Will he get out?"

"Him? My dear Jill, there is no chance of him escaping," Dr. Gilbert answered.

One of the attending men stood up, holding a folder between his fingers. "Will it work? This is the first time this project went from animal to human testing, after all."

"Our estimates suggest a thirty percent chance of success, sixty-seven percent of failure, and three percent chance of an unexpected." Dr. Gilbert tapped on the control panel again. "Of course, I expect a failure, which we will work on to improve for Prototype 109."

"And, if it is a success, what then?" Jill asked. "Will you use him again?"

"Him? Oh, no." Dr. Gilbert answered in a dismissive tone. "The one attached to his back is designed to drill in and inject enough poison to slaughter five cows."

The entire group nodded with approval.

Jason slammed his shoulder against the glass wall despite the bruises swelling with each strike.

Dr. Gilbert tapped on the control panel again.

Blood plasma flowed into the tube from the top. It splattered all over his hair, sticking them together. Jason twisted around, fear and despair flowing throughout his body. The fluids rolled up his legs, thick enough to slow their movements. He breathed in and out harder, pressing his back against the wall.

The blood plasma filled up the tube more, reaching his hips. He struggled to move in the thick plasma. It rolled up his chest and then his neck. He twisted his neck upward,

but it only delayed the plasma reaching his head for a moment. It flowed over his neck and head, engulfing him in plasma. Seconds later, the entire tube filled every inch of the tube.

"Stage one down," Dr. Gilbert said. He tapped on the control panel. "Now for stages two and three."

Jason winced, his arms and legs pierced by needles. At once, they pumped engineered viruses and nanomachines into his bloodstream. The top of the tube also opened up long enough to pump in a black swarm of nanomachines. They swam through the blood plasma and engulfed him.

"Now, the only thing to do is wait," Dr. Gilbert said. He pressed his fingertips together.

Jason shook his body, trying to shake off the nanomachines on him. His eyes widened before rolling back his head, with them becoming whites. Every bit of his body burned as though sick with a nasty flu. His fingers and toes splayed out, curling forward. If he screamed, his voice did not leave the tube.

His hair shifted in color, going from brown to orange with a hint of red at the tips. Hair sprouted on the back of his neck, down to his back. The sprouting fur remained orange until halfway down his spine, forming black dots

along with the orange. The fur also grew on his shoulders, orange with black dots.

"Now, that is interesting," the man holding a folder said. He sat down, watching Jason with interest.

"But, why is he growing fur?" Jill asked, though more to herself.

"It is a bug in the genetic code," Dr. Gilbert answered. "For mammals, not all of the fur shed away. I even witnessed cases where hairless mammals grew fur."

Jason's fingernails and toenails stretched and thickened, turning into a lead color. His toes sand into his feet, with the little one forced up halfway his feet. The toenails grew much larger and thicker than his fingernails, at least tripled the size. His feet also rounded at the end, so the two center toes stood larger than the side ones.

Black scales also grew on his fingertips and toes, replacing skin. They spread up, with thick padding on the palms and underneath the feet. His feet stretched out, expanding in size into a digitigrade shape. He wiggled his toes, waving the claws a bit.

"Curious place to start the change," Jill said. She rubbed her earlobe. "The hair, I get, but the scales? Should they be starting at the injection points instead?"

"My thoughts as well. I hypothesize that the viruses and nanomachines started there so the host could move once that part was completed," Dr. Gilbert explained.

More scales grew through Jason's arms and legs, taking his skin's place. His hand-paws clenched together tight. Lead-colored spikes grew on his spine, ripping parts of the waist straps without ripping them off. At that point, a lump formed at his rear, pressing through his underwear. It expanded more, soon ripping through with ease. The new appendage grew, with orange with black dots fur on top and black scales on the bottom. It stretched down longer than his legs while thickening. It wiggled as a new, long, thick tail on him.

The black scales reached his stomach and chest, spreading all over. His claws rubbed over his chest as though hoping to rip them off. They remained on, however, and went up his neck. His muscles also thickened, with the pecs expanding on his chest. His abs also bumped out, showing through his stomach with a thickness to grind meat.

"And that is the supersoldier side of the change," the folder-holding man said. He flipped through it. "So, how much will he grow?"

"I estimated that his body mass will grow by twenty percent," Dr. Gilbert answered. He leaned toward Jill and whispered, "Enough to tower over most people while still susceptible to higher caliber weapons."

"Very good," Jill whispered back. "We cannot have them too strong this early."

"Yes." Dr. Gilbert tapped on the control panel again. He said in a louder voice, "There. He already passed the threshold that previous specimens died at, so he is no longer needed. The drill is set to activate in thirty seconds, more than enough to observe the finishing changes."

Jason's eyes rolled forward, revealing slits on them. He twisted himself forward, facing his kidnappers in a growing rage. Bubbles flowed out from the mask's edges, with the straps stretching out. It snapped from his face, showing it stretching out in a boxy way. His teeth grew and sharpened, with new ones growing. His snout stretched forward while his nose sank into dots. The upper part of his mouth also thickened, almost cartoonish in how boxy it transformed into. His ears sank into dots, much like his ears. Meanwhile, black scales spread over his face.

"Yes," Dr. Gilbert whispered. He stepped forward toward the tube. "Prototype 108, an anthro tyrannosaurus rex. It is almost a shame that I—"

Jason slammed his fist against the glass. Dr. Gilbert stepped away, flinching in surprise. Jason's body continued to expand in muscles, thickening his arms and legs. His chest broadened, pumping forward as far as his chin. His biceps thickened so that it pressed against his shoulders without effort.

"I-I think that is beyond twenty percent," the folder-holding man said.

Alarms broke out, with red lights flashing all around. Dr. Gilbert turned to one of the monitors, which flared into a new screen. He widened his eyes at the increasing pressure detected by the machine—cracks formed on the glass, with bits of blood plasma flowing out.

"Everyone, remain calm," Dr. Gilbert said despite everything on the contrary. "The drilling and poison injection should begin any second now."

Jason winced, feeling the drill rubbed against his back. Rather than piecing through, it scraped some of his fur off. He roared with a fury of bubbles flowing out from his nose and mouth. His body expanded in size, popping off the waist strap.

"Uh," the folder-holding man said.

The glass shattered into pieces.

“RUN!!”

Plasma flowed out from the shattered tube, carrying Jason out with it. He ripped off the remaining straps and tube on him, tearing out electronics as well. He stood up afterward, towering over a stunned Dr. Gilbert at ten feet tall. He inhaled and roared into the air, shaking the entire building's foundation. One of the guards grabbed Dr. Gilbert by the arms and dragged him out along with the fleeing witnesses.

The other guard aimed his side gun at Jason and fired. The bullets bounced off of him, doing little more than annoy him. Jason growled, raising his arms to protect his eyes. The rest of the people fled the room, which angered him more. He waited, growing low until the handgun clicked instead of bang. He snarled and charged forward, slamming the guard against his thick arm.

The guard flung back, smashing through the door and crashing against a wall. Everyone, even those fleeing, froze at the sight of the guard. From what little he moved, every bit of his bones broke so he turned into little more than a sack of flesh.

Jason smashed down the doorframe, stepping in.

“Die, you monster!” The other guard pointed his gun at Jason and fired.

Jason flinched, not at the annoying bullets but at the words. Anger built up, but he remained calm instead of bursting into a fury. He stepped toward the guard, who kept pulling the trigger even when it expended every bullet in the clip. When the guard reached for a new clip, Jason swatted the guard's gun off with a hand-paw.

The guard yelped, his wrist snapping from the force. "You-you—"

"Monster?" Jason said in a low, gruff tone.

The entire hallway turned silent, with all eyes on him. The witnesses turned at each other in shock, baffled that Jason spoke despite the changes. Jason pushed the guard aside and stomped toward Dr. Gilbert. He rubbed his claw against his throat.

"You kidnapped me while I was minding my own business." Jason picked him up by the collar. "You forced me into this sick experiment against my will." Steam flowed out from his mouth. "You transformed me into this-this T-Rex. And you all have the *gall* to call me a *monster*?!"

Jason tossed Dr. Gilbert at the crowd before him, knocking them back. He smashed his foot-paw against the floor, shattering it and letting him fall through. He crashed through the next floor and then the next one. The building shook from each smash, though it lessened as it went on. In

time, it quieted enough that everyone heard their own heart beating against their chest.

Dr. Gilbert shook his head, adjusted his glasses, and stood up. "W-well, that was un-presented." He turned to the others. "It seemed that the three percent happened after all."

The folder-holding man stood up while grinding his teeth. "This is no time to be talking about statistics! That-that thing is still out there!"

"It also left us alone after scaring us, in case you have not noticed," Dr. Gilbert said. He glanced at the two guards and sighed. "We will need new hires to replace them."

"How-how can you stay calm at a time like this!?" The folder-holding man rushed so close that his nose pressed against Dr. Gilbert's nose. "You saw how it shrugged off those bullet shots! I bet it will take nothing less than a missile to bring it down!"

"Oh, please." Dr. Gilbert shrugged. "If it wanted to kill us, it would have done so. Instead, it ran away. In fact, it gave me some new ideas for Prototype 109."

"Are you being too careless about this?" Jill asked. "Even if—"

The building rumbled all around them. The second guard lifted his head in fear despite being in pain. Parts of the ceiling fell, landing on a couple of witnesses as the lights flickered. Dr. Gilbert's confidence died, replaced with uncertainty. He reached into his pocket and pulled out his smartphone.

"Let me—"

The power went out, leaving the smartphone's screen the only light in the room.

Dr. Gilbert grunted and dialed one of the workers on the lower floors. It rang a few times before he gave up and dialed another. The building shook some more, with glass-shattering sounds echoing through the hallway. He stumbled just as the second worker he called answered.

"THIS IS A BAD TIME TO CALL US!!" A screeching man's voice said. A smashing sound came from the other side, along with his voice. "THERE IS SOME KIND OF MONSTER THAT TORE THROUGH THE POWER SYSTEM LIKE NOTHING!! IT ALSO TOOK DOWN THE STAIRS AND GOING AROUND THE— AAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!!"

The smartphone screeched with crunching sounds from the other end, and the call disconnected.

Panic seeped throughout the room.

"How could it take out the power without frying itself?!"

"Let me out of here! I want to escape!"

"But how?! It took out the power and stairs! We are trapped here!!"

"Everyone, just stay CALM!" Dr. Gilbert's voice rang through the hallway, silencing everyone. Despite the cold sweat forming on his brow, he said confidently, "We have emergency ladders by every window. So, follow—"

The building shook much harder than before, enough to knock everyone off their feet. Jill got up and, pulling out a smartphone and activating its flashlight, ran down the hall. Her heels prevented her from running too fast, and she tripped. A second later, the floor collapsed beneath her. She fell with a scream, taking the other light with her.

Dr. Gilbert paled, realizing what the shaking meant. "My God. It is—"

The ceiling collapsed on top of him, crushing him.

#

Jason smashed out of the building through a wall. He wore a lab coat around his waist as an improvised kilt, stained with dirt and dust. The ground all around him

rumbled, almost like it suffered from a miniature earthquake.

The **Dinolife** logo and signage fell from the six-story building, shattering into countless pieces of plastic. The floors caved in, no longer supported by support poles and beams Jason smashed through. The walls collapsed down, crashing into dust along with the roof. Hundreds of screams echoed throughout the night before silencing.

It lay bare, flanked by two other tall buildings that held some damage from the collapse. Several people walked out, confused, which turned into horror at the destruction. Few noticed Jason as he walked away, hidden in the shadow.

Jason shook his head, chewing on a piece of metal.
"What a smashing time."

#

News spread around about the collapsed **Dinolife** building in the city, shocking everyone. It took all five hundred and six workers and twenty political visitors, with no sign of survivors. Building inspectors examined the wreckage and, while discovering that it collapsed because of the damaged supports, they remained baffled. From all looks, it happened because of sabotage. Yet, it seemed like

someone smashed through them instead of using heavy machinery.

The Dinolife corporation came in after the inspectors concluded their check and shifted through the wreckage. Witnesses claimed they focused on surviving electronics and tanks, loading them onto trucks. They left no comment on why they chose those over others. And though threats of lawsuits came from the surviving families, workers and politicians alike, none came close to the courts; even the husband of Jill Clips refused to move it forward.

Witnesses also claimed that they saw a looming shadow that moved away as soon as someone approached. They said it did nothing but stand there, watching people sieve through it. Authorities believed they saw a tree or a bear, ignoring one witness's statements that it had reptile-like scales.

#

A month had passed since then.

Jason stood outside of another city, tapping one of his feet-paws against the ground. He wore nothing but huge forest-green shorts that managed to fit around his thighs. His slitted eyes narrowed at one of the buildings, with it holding the logo and name **Dinolife**.

"Eh, I'm not sure if I can be called a 'superhero,'" Jason said to himself. He quavered his muscles. "A hero saves lives, not take them. And I have already taken so many lives." He pressed his hand-paw against his broad chest. "Eh, I can never go back to my old life. Even if I try, all these people will see me as a freak. A monster."

He closed his eyes and breathed.

"But those people there, they'll try again. They failed with me since I became too powerful, but they'll find another. And they'll keep doing it, playing with people's lives like toys until they get their desired supersoldier. Eh, I can't let them do it again, but I have no proof. Would they believe me if I met someone who would listen to me despite being a miniature T-Rex? Or would they doubt that such an esteemed company would do it, eh?"

Jason opened his eyes and clenched his fists.

"Eh, maybe that's also what being a 'superhero' is. Fighting the good fight, even if you're alone." He glared at the building. A memory came to him from that day at the park, where people saw him get kidnapped and let it happen. "Even if facing the world, you fight for what's right. And what's right is to stop them from repeating what they did with me."

With Jason's resolved steeled, he plotted a way to get inside that building. Part of him wondered if he should spare anyone involved with Dinolife. After all, would everyone involved with them know what they really work for?

He shook his head at that thought. Given how they treated him and how brazen they acted in public when kidnapping him, perhaps everyone involved in Dinolife knew. They should know enough to guess the truth but instead look away. With that thought in mind, nobody there worked without some guilt involved.

Jason flexed his arms while rolling his shoulders. It would be a pain, but demolishing the building like the last one would be through. Afterward, he would go to the next one and do the same with that one and the next one.

Even if they somehow covered up the destruction from the public, they would still bleed.

"Eh, sometimes, to take down a monster, you need to make them bleed enough," Jason said.

Jason nodded and, with a snarl, walked toward the building.

About Author

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