

It was the first day of the new school year and Alex was already well known amongst the upperclassmen as the big, bad, don't-get-in-his-way bully. It wasn't hard to imagine him as such, and the freshmen caught on really quickly; he was a rather large imposing bull after all. He was the biggest kid in school and he knew it, whether it was a genetic trait or the result of all the working out he does, he was over two hundred pounds of beefy bull. He always seems to be on edge, always huffing and snorting, ears always flicking and his tail lashing around like a whip. The bullring and horns didn't help to put on a friendly demeanor either. Alex pushed his way into his math class, nearly knocking over the poor deer that was in the doorway, and made his way to the back of the room to take his seat.

"Aw man, look. That Alex guy is in our class," the husky pointed out.

"Dude, don't make eye contact. Let's just sit on the other side of the room away from him," the fox said.

"I can't believe he didn't graduate."

"Yeah, I heard he didn't even show up to any of his finals last year so they had to flunk him."

The two canids made their way to the opposite side of the room to avoid the intimidating monster sitting in the corner. They spoke in whispered tones, afraid the bull might pick up that they were talking about him and come charging at them. They wouldn't be able to do much to defend themselves; Tim was a slender fox and David could be described with the name of his breed, husky.

The final bell for the day rang and the students began to flood out of the school. Tim and David leisurely made their way to the senior parking lot, catching up with friends along the way that they hadn't seen a lot during the summer. It was their last year here at high school and one of the perks of being a senior was being able to drive to school and using the designated parking lot.

"First day of school and I already have a book I need to read, a ton of math homework, and an essay coming up," the fox complained.

"What are you complaining about? You only have three hard classes. It's your fault for scheduling them all on one day," David reminded Tim. "Besides, you had a free period today and isn't your B-day schedule all of your electives?"

"Not all of us are nerds that like to take hard classes."

"Maybe if you paid more attention in class they wouldn't be so hard for you."

"Yeah, whatever, I've got some free time before work. Want to go to the mall with me. I've been eyeing these new pair of jeans and they just went on sale."

They climbed into Tim's BMW hoping to race to the mall and beat the crowd there. Unfortunately they got stuck behind all the school buses leaving and had to wait for them to clear out.

"Hey, look," David pointed to the sidewalk, "It's that bull. Is he walking home?"

"I'm not letting him in this car if that's what you're insinuating. He'd probably break it in half or punch holes in it with his horns."

"No, I don't want you to ask him if he wants a ride. It's just, doesn't he live on the other side of town?"

"Well that sucks... to be him," Tim chuckled. "Oh, speaking of sucks, guess what Jennie told me about Samantha Wayne."

The next day Tim and David walked into their math class and took the same seats they had last time and waited for class to begin. The late bell rang and the large brown ursine in a blue dress shirt and black slacks greeted the class in a booming voice to gather everyone's attention. Mr. Thompson was his name; he taught several of the upper level math classes and was known to be very friendly and easy going.

"Hello everyone and welcome back, don't get too comfortable with your seats. Just so I don't have to do a roll-call each day, I've made a seating chart to make things easier."

A universal groan went around the classroom as all of the students protested to the idea of assigned seats.

"Now, now, this is only to make things easier. Once I get to know everyone, you guys can go back to sitting where ever you want. But, for now let's have everyone get up and move to the front of the class."

Everyone did as they were told and huddled in groups saying good bye to each other if they knew they were going to be split apart. Mr. Thompson began calling out last names and seating everyone in alphabetical order. Tim and David looked at one another disappointedly knowing that they wouldn't be next to each other since their last names were Bradford and Smith, respectively. Tim ended up being third from the front in the first column while David was in the middle of the fourth column. The last column began to fill up and it wasn't until the last fur standing was the annoyed looking bull alone in front of the class. David looked to his right at the empty seat next to him and his pulse began to race, his ears sank low and his curly tail tucked its self under the seat to seek shelter. The leopard in front to his right must have also had the same feeling as him because the feline's tail was wound tightly around the leg of the chair and those round cat ears were twitching with each thunderous step the bull took as he made his way to his seat. Even the German Sheppard in front of David looked nervous.

Alex hated assigned seating, even if he was usually in the back because of his last name, he'd prefer sitting in the very back where everyone usually put a seat in between themselves and him. He didn't know why everyone always seems to be on edge around him, he hadn't done anything to them. He hadn't even been in a fight since his sophomore year and that was only because the little prick had threatened to blackmail him. That incident followed him where ever he went and had earned him a reputation as a bully because everyone saw it as the big ole bull beating up on the defenseless badger for badgering him. The badger even told everyone the information he was trying to blackmail Alex with but everyone took it as the badger trying to spread a rumor. Regardless though, no one wanted to mess with Alex, or even talk to him for that matter.

Alex took his seat, the students around him shifting nervously in theirs. He huffed in frustration causing the bull ring to smack against his nose. He sat there disinterested having been in the class already and not caring much for what the bear was talking about.

Tim and David sat on the bleachers during their free period they shared after lunch today.

"Oh My God! I can't believe you got stuck sitting next to him in math. I feel sorry for you man." Tim placed a paw on David's shoulder.

"Tell me about it. That scared the color out of my fur when I realized he would be sitting right next to me." David ran a paw through the fur on his arm, it was one of the few things he liked about himself. He had a rather unique fur pattern for a husky, in that there were patches of brown fur in places the black and white met. "I just hope Mr. Thompson memorizes everybody fast so we can go back to sitting where we want."

"Well I heard Alex might be getting expelled or at least suspended. Did you hear what happened to the principal's car on the second day of school?"

"Yeah, it was full of dents like someone had thrown a brick at it."

"Or punched it, word is someone saw Alex going into the principal's office on the first day of school and remember how you saw him walking home. Well he passes through the teacher's parking lot where the principal also parks and they say he punched all those dents into his car."

"You don't believe that do you?"

"I don't know, but I can imagine he could put a big dent into a car if he was mad enough."

"Yeah, anyways did you set a date for the first T.E.A. meeting?"

Tim huffed in frustration. "No. That prima Dona Tevin is trying to run the whole thing and keeps shooting down my ideas. I'm trying to get it on Wednesdays so it doesn't interfere with drama and a lot of other furs' jobs but Tevin keeps arguing against it. It's bad enough he's president of the drama club but now he's trying to take over my position as president in T.E.A. It'd be Tevin Education Awareness instead of Tolerance if he had his way with it."

Tim quickly went from being agitated to happy if his wagging tail indicated anything.

"Hey, look," Tim said nudging David, "some of the football team is coming out to do a little practice."

"Is that why we are here? So you could get some eye candy."

A smile spread over his muzzle, one of those sly smiles that only a fox could pull off. "I thought you'd enjoy a nice view while we talked," he said and turned to look at the players on the field.

David facepawed himself at his friend's antics and sighed. He opened his eyes and looked at the field through his fingers and saw some of the bigger furs removing their jackets and heavier clothing. *When in Rome.*

The first three weeks of school passed by with some bumps as everyone got use to their schedules and the norm of school life. That also meant the teachers were piling on more homework and classes were getting harder. Tim and David were sitting halfway up on the bleachers under the overhang for shade during their A Day free period as usual. Tim was looking over a script for *Little Shop of Horrors*, the play that the drama club had decided for this semester. The fox was going to audition for the main role of Seymour Krelborn, in hopes of beating Tevin who was also gunning for it. David was busying looking at the players on the field through his viewfinder. He needed an action shot for his photography class so he brought his camera with him. Both were unaware of the large defensive lineman sneaking up behind them.

"Whatcha fags doin' here!" shouted a voice from behind.

Tim nearly scattered his script all over the bleachers, his ears stood straight up and his tail fur bristled from the sudden shock. David would have dropped his camera if it weren't attached to the strap around his head. His ears flattened from the loud voice and his tail curled itself to his front.

The boar looked down, a smug smile of satisfaction on his face for having scared the shit out of the pair. He turned his attention to the chubby looking husky with the camera. The boar was breathing harshly, his big frame moving up and down with each breath as he moved closer to tower of the shaking husky.

"You taking pictures of us for your queer club to jack off to?"

"N...n.... no, I... was..."

"He was just taking pictures for photography class, he needs an action shot," Tim cut in.

The boar turned his attention to the fox now and was about to bark something in his face when another voice interrupted him.

"Ben, stop playing with your gay friends and get your fat ass down here!" the team's quarter back hollered.

Ben looked down at the wolf in anger but followed his directions. He pushed himself between the two canids making sure to knock them hard and step on some of Tim's script pages as he made his way down the bleachers. David let out a breath he didn't realize he was holding while Tim straightened up the pages of his script.

"Maybe we should find somewhere new to sit for a while," David said.

"Yeah let's go to the library for the rest of the period."

Alex was walking the halls of the school heading towards his final period of the day, he used the excuse of going to the bathroom to slip out early. It was a literature class that he didn't care too much for. The books they chose he had already read once and they were boring the first time. Not to mention the mare teaching the class was boring and droll which made him nod off only to be woken up when she clacked her teeth together when ever she's done talking. The hall was deserted except for a stray jaguar at one of the locker banks in the hall who was fiddling with something. As Alex drew closer to the jaguar a strange smell hit his nose that made him snuffle. He recognized the smell and after inspecting the feline, now that he was closer, he had a pretty good idea of what it was. The jaguar was a known stoner and often hung around the back of the school in one of the secluded places with his friends where the same strange scent could be smelt much stronger. As he was about to pass the cat, he peered inside his locker to see what he was doing. Inside, the cat had a text book open but the middle had been cut out to form a hidden container which was filled with some green leaves and rolled up pieces of paper.

The jaguar stopped rolling his latest joint and closed the textbook and clutched it close to his chest when he sensed someone behind him. When he turned around he was staring at the heaving chest of the big bull, his ear flattened and tail wrapped its self around his ankle.

"Oh ... uh... hey Alex, would you like a drag?" the feline chuckled nervously.

Alex slammed the locker close. The cat flinched thinking the big bull was going to punch him but instead just heard a loud metallic thud. The bull's massive arm was still leaning against the locker cutting off one path of escape for the helpless kitten while the bull positioned himself so that the feline could not run past him easily. Alex simply grabbed the book from the jaguar, intending to dispose of it.

"Hey! Come on man, give it back. I need my book back," the jaguar pleaded as he tried to grab his book with his weed stash hidden inside. Alex simply raised his paw and moved it out of the stoner's reach.

As his luck would have it, the bell rang to dismiss the classes for the next period and the halls were instantly filled with student, students who just so happened to notice Alex towering over the frightened jaguar. Naturally a circle formed around the pair, the poor kitten was pleading for his textbook back from the menacing bull that trapped him against the lockers. Everyone started murmuring at the scene and all eyes were on Alex. The bull gave one big huff, his bull ring lifting off his snout from the force, and shoved the book back into the arms of the jaguar. He then turned and made his way through the parting sea of furs to his class.

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It was a nice day outside, there was a light breeze that rustled the fur, furs were out shopping and having fun, and the sun was setting over the downtown main street area making for some great scenes. David snapped a few pictures of the shadows of furs standing at the bus stop in front of the bakery. Their shadows leaning up against the brick foundation and peering into the large window of the delicious smelling shop making it look like they were staring at the mouthwatering goodies inside. It was late afternoon on a Saturday and David had nothing better to do than go out and do some schoolwork. Tim was working an afternoon shift and he didn't feel like being the third wheel with Stacy and her

boyfriend at some party, though she had offered to ask one of her friends to come accompany him with them. His father had even encouraged him to go out and party, going as far as to give him a bottle of Henesys as a gracious offering to the host. The husky wasn't much of a partier though.

No, David was happy to spend this weekend afternoon working on his photography assignments. The eccentric bespectacled lion thought that a month of practice was enough to send them out on their own to work on ideas for a portfolio. David was focusing on shadows for his folio and he had gotten some pretty good shots. He looked up at the sun sinking below the skyline. He had maybe an hour left of light before he could get some night shots. He made his way to the park hoping to get some nice photos of the park benches in this light. It was a little cliché to do a series around benches but he thought incorporating it into his focus on shadows would make for a different perspective on the idea.

The entrance to the park was in the middle of Main Street. A large company wanted to buy the land to add a couple more stores and bars to the area but the community had banded together and protested against it. The park was an oasis of green in the busy tourist district. The city made sure to keep it maintained, the grass was cut, the bushes trimmed, flowers and other plants were neatly arranged, and the brick paths were swept daily. It was a really peaceful place, benches were scattered around, some in secluded private areas, and there was a water fountain in the middle that made the sounds of a babbling brook.

As David made his way into the park he started looking for some benches whose shadows would make for an interesting shot. He kept searching around until he found what he was looking for near the back of the park in a secluded area. There were two young looking trees that were situated on one side of the path and there was a bench on the other side across from them. Because of the angle of the sun the shadows the trees cast were elongated but that worked to his advantage. The shadows of the trees lay onto top of the shadow of the bench which made it look like they were sitting on the bench. The best part was that their branches made it look like they were reaching out to each other while sitting on opposite sides of the bench. It was a great shot and he immediately started shooting the scene.

He was so engrossed in capturing the moment before the sun retreated for the day that he didn't sense the group of furs coming his way. It was only until a large shadow flanked by two others interrupted his image that he stopped taking pictures and turned around to see who ruined his scene. It was that big boar from school and he had two of his cronies with him, an equally large brown bear and a slightly smaller pit bull. Nothing about Ben's smile spoke "friendly" to the nervous husky whose heart was racing now, his ears had drooped down and his tail was no longer wagging but tucked in between his legs.

The bear was the first to speak, breaking the sneer Ben was giving the scared husky.

"Did you really drag us back here to say hi to your friend?"

"He's not my friend," the boar barked.

"Whatever, I'm heading to the club without you guys."

"Hey, Stan, common," said the pit bull.

“Just let him go, we got someone else we need to deal with.”

David watched as the bear walked away down the path to the center of the park. He frantically looked around to see if anyone was near, anyone who would come and save him, anyone who would stop them from hurting him. Panic began to grip him as he realized he was alone, the sun had disappeared with only a few fleeting rays making it over the horizon. The park lights had turned on at some point highlighting the menacing looking boar and creating shadows that made the scene of a large creature looming over its quivering prey. David let a whimper escape and he was about to yell for help when the large paw of the boar clamped over his muzzle. Before he could even struggle to get free the pit bull had gone around to his back and put him in a full nelson. The difference in their strength was obvious when the pit bull lifted the chubby husky off his footpaws and retreated back behind some bushes. He struggled regardless, hoping he could get free and make a run for it. The whole time, the boar held his muzzle shut and kept pace with them, a sinister glint in his eyes.

The first blow took the wind out of David, air escaping harshly through his clenched teeth and bringing tears to the corners of his eyes. Another hard blow to the side made him whimper. The paw released his muzzle for a moment and he used the opportunity to gasp for air. Each breath ragged and caused his stomach and side to hurt. Ben took his camera around the canine's neck and pulled it up choking the poor husky. David tried sucking in a breath but the makeshift noose constricted his air passage making him wheeze each time he breathed.

“Little fag, I’ll teach you to make a fool out of me.”

The next blow made him cough and rasp.

“The queer like messing with me? Answer me you piece of shit.”

Another blow he saw flashes of light.

“I bet you like this, don’t you? You fags are into this shit. I bet you wish you had my cock in your mouth huh? That’s what you really want.”

“Dude you should muzzle fuck him, bet he’d like that.”

“The little fag would, wouldn’t you?”

Tears were now streaming out of David’s eyes soaking the fur around them and dropping on to his shirt. His heart was thumping so fast and so hard it hurt, his lungs burned for air, it felt like his chest was on fire. He kept whimpering but no one seemed to hear him, no one was coming to stop them, everyone was just going to let them beat him up. *Would they really fuck my muzzle? Are they going to rape me?* He shut his eyes which did little to stop the flow of tears coming out. He heard Ben laughing and felt the rumbling chuckles of his partner as they looked over the pathetic state of the husky.

Alex was heading home after grabbing a bite to eat at the diner his mom worked at. He had stayed later than he intended to because Louie kept shoving plate after plate in front of him and he didn’t want to

waste any of it. The fact that it was mouthwatering delicious didn't help either. By the time he said goodbye to his mom and the crew the sun had already dipped below the horizon. The walk back home was going to be in the dark, not that it bothered him; the walk would help him burn off all the food he ate and everyone steered clear of him just like at school. The diner was located near the city's main street which is a little over an hour's walking distance from his house which isn't too bad considering the walk from school to his house was a little longer. Alex took the short cut through the park like he usually did. He liked the park; it was a refreshing place amongst the commercial and hectic brick and mortar of the city. The park was usually crowded and busy with furs meandering about and kids running everywhere but the outer reaches offered some isolation and seclusion, especially the area leading to the back entrance of the park. It leads to the "wrong side of town", an area masked by the boisterous and busy commercial district on the other side. Not many furs like to visit it because it seems like the place where shady deals go down. If they did take the time to walk through it they would know it just looks rundown and that a lot of older furs live in the area. The back gate is usually kept closed but never locked, the community didn't want drunken furs coming through and making more of a mess.

As Alex entered the park he passed a large bear that he recognized. He'd seen him in school a couple of times but recognized the ursine from the diner. A lot of the football players liked to stop at the diner late night to get something to eat. Alex never stayed when they showed up but his mom told him they were usually loud, rowdy, and bad tippers expect for one bear. The bear was mumbling something about picking on furs as he made his way towards the neon lights.

David was waiting for the next blow to come. He took as big a breath as he could, his muscles, what little there were, tightened up, and he steeled himself for the next punch. He didn't expect the next thing that came. He fell to the ground on his side, his camera coming down on his muzzle and settling next to his head. He hadn't realized how numb his arms felt, the hold he was in left little sensation in his limbs. He let out the breath he had been holding and gratefully filled his lungs with fresh air. His limp form heaving on the ground as he tried to steady his breathing.

His ears flicked at the sounds of grunts and loud thuds coming from somewhere behind him. Some shouting followed as he heard someone scampering away and soon it was quite save for the sounds of heavy breathing. David braced himself on his arm and he tried to turn over. Someone's paws were on him forcing him to sit up but he instantly fell down on his back when he saw who it was. It was that big bully bull, Alex. His large heaving form looked bestial, the light from the lamp post behind him casting him in a horrifying shadow. David scooted back and curled into a fettle position, he had escaped from two Neanderthals to be placed in front of a raging bull. He began to whimper and cry some more, unable to yell out because of how scared he was. He heard the bull give a big snort; David could feel the air brush against the fur on his arms that covered his head. Then the light of the lamp hit him as the giant moved and lumbered on down the brick path into the back of the park. David laid there wondering why he wasn't flattened into a pancake. That only lasted a moment as a shock sent him up to his footpaws and running the opposite direction to safety.