

I was sick and tired of being a nerd. I was sick and tired of being a loser. Of being made fun of, of being picked on. I thought it'd stop when I finally got to senior year of high school, since I'd at least be older than most other people, but then it actually got worse! I mean what the hell, I wasn't even a kid anymore and I was still having to endure this stuff? Who gives a shit if my horns are small, I'm a sheep for god's sake!

Well I had enough. I wasn't going to take this anymore. It was time for a new Daef. A more in charge one who wasn't going to take anyone's crap anymore. I may not be buff or whatever but who cares, it's all mental anyway. No one was gonna fuck with me anymore.

And that was the attitude that had me pressed up against the wall with a knife in my face. Shit. Shit, what a stupid fucking idea. Why did I choose this guy as the first person I stopped taking crap from? Why not one of those idiot bullies at school? Why some guy who looked like he was from Grease, but instead having 1950's glossed over psuedo-charm he just has a fucking switchblade? Shit.

*"No one, and I mean nobody, is gonna treat you like shit anymore, got that?"* I was thinking to myself not even ten minutes ago. It was my resolution. It made me feel good, feel great even. Yeah! New Daef, new sheep, not taking anyone's shit! Really though, as big a dick as the big brown cat in leather jacket was for knocking me on my ass when he passed me on the sidewalk, this was one more person's shit I maybe should have taken.

"Outta the way dumbass," he barked, his big idiot dog friend laughing beside him. I managed to get a good look at him, see how tough and scary he looked, and for some reason I *still* thought it was a good idea to stand myself up, dust myself off, and yell "Watch where you're going prick!"

I could have just as easily applied my newfound self-confidence to my next encounter. You know, with someone who wouldn't wheel around frothing at the mouth as he heard me back talk him. But here I am, about to get killed in an alleyway somewhere because I decided that this was the time and place to start asserting myself. I feel like there's a lesson in all this. Oh well.

The cold steel from the flat of the knife tingles against the short hair of my snout. I have no idea how I'm so calm right now. Maybe there was at least one positive to this standing-up-for-yourself thing. Even if I'm still regretting my actions I'm not a nervous wreck about them anymore. The big cat snaps me out of my meditative state by snorting a bunch of cigarette smoke in my face, and I reflexively gag. For someone who's about to kill me, he sure is taking his sweet time about it.

"What're you waiting for? There's nobody around boss. Come on, spill his guts out already!" says the dog, apparently more than eager to see me dead. Jerk.

"Shut the fuck up!" the cat barks back. The dog cowers instantly, despite being a whole head taller. Couldn't really argue with that. Still, I can see where the dog is coming from. The cat doesn't look any less angry (Maybe that's because he always looks like that?), but he's definitely giving off less of an impression that he's out for blood. Actually, he kind of looks like he's studying me, looking me up and down now. Weird. As long as he's not beating the shit out of me I guess.

"Hmmm, too shrimpy, but--"

"Who're you calling shrimp, fucker?"

I don't know what is wrong with me, seriously. How did I not learn my lesson literally a single minute ago? I *thought* I did, but nope, nope, I'm a dumbass. And now, before I even realized I was

doing it, my face got red, and I spouted out more insults as angrily as I could. Jeez, I must be more wound up about this whole doormat thing than I thought.

He's not cutting me. He's not punching me in the gut. He's not throwing me on the ground and stepping on me, or breaking my teeth, or anything like that. He's just staring. And staring. Is he trying to drill a hole into my head with laser vision? Did I make him so mad his brain just broke? I'm gonna just try to slide out of his grip then, an-Nope. His grip is getting really tight, and he's blinking once again. And... Smiling? Oh man, this look is way scarier than his angry face.

"He's a shrimp, but he's got the right attitude. This's the guy," the cat says, looking pleased as punch. I have no idea what he's talking about, but I really don't like where this is going.

"This skinny little loser? Him? Are you sure boss?" Yeah, what he said. The dog looks really confused and angry, looking like he's about to take a swipe at me himself now.

"You got all the muscle we need dumbass. But he's got the right attitude. Look at him. Not afraid of a thing, and I'm a foot taller. Look at those nubby little horns" I don't feel like it's prudent to correct him on that one. But rest assured, I am very, very scared at this moment. He's turning back to me now, easing up on pressing me against the wall, and putting his knife away. He's not letting me go though.

"Well yeah, but-"

"But nothin'! Now shut your trap, you're gonna bring the whole neighborhood over here dumbass," he says, patting down his jacket with his free hand. He turns back to the dog, indicating with his head.

"Get over here and hold him while I get the smokes."

The nameless dog thug does not look like he's happy to be touching me, and I'm going to just go ahead and say that the feeling is mutual. He's grabbing me with so much more force than the cat did, and oh my goodness he has not stopped growling since he lifted me up against the wall. Okay maybe I'm a little bit less composed now. He's looking at me like he wants to just take a bite out of me, and I can feel my clothes starting to get soaked in sweat. I've almost forgotten that the cat had a purpose for having the dog hold me up, that is until he's pushing the big mutt out of the way again, pack of cigarettes in his hand.

"Out of the way Marty," he growls, and my feet touch the ground again. I'm thinking about my chances of getting away from these two if I book it, but his hand is already pressing hard against my chest once again. Fuck, it feels like he's trying to deflate my lungs.

"You smoke kid?"

"N-no..." I wheeze, it's getting harder to breathe, oh god let up man, please.

"Well you're gonna," he says simply, and he jams the cigarette in my mouth. I am not liking the taste of this at all, and it takes everything I've got to not spit it out in his face. But thankfully, finally, I think I've learned my lesson about picking fights with this exact person, and I hold back, watching him flick a big silver lighter to life.

The alleyway seems like it's suddenly very quiet, and I can hear the tip of the cigarette burning. I can already taste the smoke, and the gag reflex comes back with vengeance. But gotta try to hold it, gotta try to not sputter, I don't know what they're planning on doing but maybe I can actually get out

of this alive if I play along. He's holding the cigarette to my lips and gives me an expectant look, and I try to take a long drag.

I'm coughing and sputtering almost instantly. I don't even remember inhaling that much smoke, but there's so much it must look like my insides are on fire. The cat is chuckling, I think, and I can swear I hear the dog grumbling about how I'm weak or something, but it's really hard to tell with all this coughing I'm doing. Fuck, what kind of cigarette is that? It tastes like poison.

"You gonna have to do better than that fucker," says the cat, pushing the cigarette right back in. I have most certainly not recovered from my last smoke, but he's taking me by surprise and my body is desperate for more air, so I take another drag.

It's... Well, it isn't as bad as the last one, actually. Yeah, I'm still coughing, but the smoke doesn't burn like it did even a second ago. There's still a ton of smoke though, how the hell is this happening? What the fuck kind of cig is this? I don't know what the hell this fuckin' cat is tryin' to do to me, but whatever. At least he let me down.

"There we go. Finish it off," he says, or rather, commands. Whatever. Maybe when I finish this he'll let me go and I can get the fuck out of here. I take the cig out of his hands and take another puff, a really big one this time. No coughing this time, I got used to that pretty quick. Hell, there's not only no coughing, I kinda like this shit. Burned like hell before, but now I like it. Like there's a fire in my belly. Heh, no wonder I'm puffing out so much smoke. Jesus it's like there's a fog machine in this fucking alley. The dog is looking my way, still looking mad as hell. Wipe that stupid fucking look off your face you prick, I'm having a smoke here.

He looks taken aback suddenly, and really confused. Wait, did I say that last sentence out loud? Eh, not like the dumbass didn't deserve it. Guess there's a reason why the cat calls him that. The cat's smiling really big now, that wicked smile back on his face. It's less scary now, or maybe it's that I don't feel scared anymore. Yeah, why should I? After all, I'm not some scared sheep anymore. I reach up and feel my big curling horns, liking the heft. This seems about right, right? Yeah, of course it is. I'm a fucking ram, and I'm not taking shit from anyone. Not him, not that dumbass dog, NOBODY.

I finish off the cig and flick it into the alley. I lick my lips, hmm. Could use another.

"Got another one of those boss?" I say, voice kinda gravelly. Makes sense, none of that low voiced whimpory shit for me anymore. He just nods. Jesus I wish I could wipe that stupid smirk off his face, but whatever, he's got cigs, and no point backtalkin' him. Hell, maybe I should even be thankful, I'm feeling pretty fuckin' good after a smoke. Like it feels right, you know? Whimpy little sheep would never smoke, but that's not me anymore, and I want everyone to fuckin' see that. No, I'm gonna *make* 'em see it.

"Here ya go kid-"

"It ain't kid, it's Daef, fucker."

He's got me against the wall again, scowling quite a bit. I don't spit in his face, but I'll sure glare at him. He thinks I'm really that scared? I'm just as big as he is. Mess with the ram, you're gonna get the fuckin' horns.

"Have a smoke Doofus, it'll calm you down," he says, leaning off of me. He throws me the pack and the lighter. He turns to walk away, and I'm following. Tough guy like this, *this* is the kind of guy I

need to be hanging out with. He doesn't take shit from anyone, just like me. We leave the alley, but not before I slam my shoulder into the dog and wipe that stupid look off his face.

"Come on Marty. We gotta get Doof here a new pair of clothes. Don't know why he's wearing that nerd shit."

What the fuck ever, I won't correct him. Doof sounds better anyway. Bigger, not a little wimp name like that baby sheep had. What'd he say? New clothes? Heh, yeah, I could use some new threads. I don't know why I'm wearing this shit. Rams like me gotta dress tough. We don't take shit from anyone. Not anymore.