

Fed by Daylight
By Angelus Glace

Pale's heart was pounding so hard with terror, they thought it might burst in their chest. The sound of their blood pounding in their ears nearly drowned out the sound around them, and they were trying to listen for the sound of approaching footsteps. Their little ears swiveled in a panic, trying to catch something, anything that would tell them if they had to run. A few seconds passed. Nothing. Their heart rate and breathing slowed, and Pale risked peeking their head out from their hiding place.

The short and wide corgi had tucked themselves under a conveyor belt, hiding in its shadow, hoping that they wouldn't be seen by their boss, who was hunting them like a killer from a bloody slasher film. It was a living nightmare. Pale couldn't figure it out. They were just an intern who had been invited to a work dinner by the boss... though an intern getting an invite from the CEO of the company should have seemed suspicious on its own. Still, Pale was cautiously optimistic and had agreed to it. A company car arrived at Pale's home, picked them up... and they woke up in a dim, dingy office with three others.

They had been abandoned inside a run-down GlaceTech facility. It had some offices upstairs, and the bottom floor was a large factory production line. Pale didn't recognize any of the other employees, and they didn't have much time to get to know one another. Once they were all awake, the CEO's voice spoke to them, crackling through an unmaintained P.A. system. "Good evening, loyal employees. This is your Chief Executive Officer, Angelus Alistair Glace." His cold voice was muddled with static from the old speakers. Everyone stood around, fidgeting with anxiety.

"I appreciate you all accepting my generous invitation. I have invited you all here because, in one way or another, you caught my eye, and I wanted to have an exciting night together~" There was something malicious in his voice. A hiss in the way he spoke, the way he savored the words. Narcissistic indulgence. "This facility is locked up and powered down. There are four circuit breakers that must be activated to power the cargo bay door on the factory floor. That is your only exit. While you all work on doing that..." There was a pause. Unknown to his audience, Angelus licked over his sharp teeth. "While you all work on doing that, I will be hunting you. If I catch you, I'll kill you, or worse. So run. Hide. Fight, if you think you can. I will be joining you in five minutes. Good luck~"

There was a crackle of static as the P.A. system was shut off, and terrified glances were exchanged between the four.

"Is he for real?"

"This is some kind of fucked up joke right?"

"I heard rumors about this, but I never thought... Oh god..."

...That had been over an hour ago. In that time, their little team had managed to find two of the circuit breakers and flip them on. In the process, two of them had been killed. The first one dropped early. They were a somewhat bulky hyena who had determined that, joke or not, they were gonna deck Angelus in the face and get this over with.

They all felt the chill as Angelus approached. The air grew colder, making them shiver, and frost crept over the white and black walls of the office hallways. Three of them hid, having

advised against confronting the arctic fox. Against their better judgment, Pale peeked through the door of the office they were hiding in to see how things would go down.

It was swift and brutal. The hyena took a swing at Angelus who made no move to dodge, taking the blow right in the side of his face. He staggered a single step as a trickle of blood dripped from his lip down his white-furred muzzle. Angelus grinned, and there was a flicker of light in his right hand. A sledgehammer made of solid ice appeared in his hand, and he swung it at the hyena, striking him in the skull with the head of the hammer. There was a sickening *crack* of bone, and the icy weapon shattered, scattering shards of bloody ice across the hallway. The hyena crumpled to the floor, convulsing from the blow. Blood poured from his head and soaked into the carpet.

Angelus stepped on his chest and created another hammer, and smashed the hyena's head with it again. And again. And again. Pale wanted to look away, but they couldn't. Their eyes were fixed on the horror, trying to process that this was real. That this was happening. Angelus broke his icy hammer and summoned a new one to continue brutalizing his victim.

Until the horrific spasming of limbs stopped.

Until there was no more skull left to crush.

The fox was winded, and his suit jacket and pants were splattered with blood.

...The memory replayed itself in Pale's mind's eye as they peered out of their hiding spot under the conveyor belt. They couldn't push the thoughts from their head. They thought about ending up like that themselves, and it made them sick to their stomach. They could feel the bile bubble up in their stomach, but they swallowed hard and kept it down. They had to keep moving.

Pale almost stepped out from their hiding spot when they heard hurried footsteps approaching. They ducked back down, tucking in as tightly as they could. A shadow crossed over them, and as they looked out they could see slim legs covered in black and white fur, the same pattern as Angelus. They held their breath. Their heart began pounding again. He was going to find them, he was going to find them, he was going to-

"H-hello?" The voice was nervous and timid, nothing like Angelus'. Pale blinked and tried to tamp down their terror. Looking again, they remembered that Angelus was dressed in expensive shoes and long black pants. This individual had no footwear at all, and was dressed in off-white slacks, though the dim lighting made it hard to tell it wasn't fur at a glance.

They ducked down and squeaked when they saw Pale, leaping back and falling on their ass. "Ahh-!"

Pale yelped, started by the sudden shout and they bashed their head on the bottom of the belt above them. "Augh! Ouch..."

They took a second to recover and then looked at one another. Pale recognized the little arctic fox as one of the other captured employees. They squeezed themselves free and offered a fat paw to the fox, who took it graciously and was pulled to his feet.

He wasn't all that tall, an average five and a half feet, but he was practically a giant compared to Pale, who was just shy of three and a half feet. He dusted himself off, standing a little hunched forward, making himself look smaller. "Y-you were in the lobby earlier right? I'm Arcturus."

"I'm Pale. I'm just an intern here..." They rubbed a sore spot from their bump to the head, and smoothed down their honey-gold fur. Pale was round even by corgi standards. Their

width nearly matched their height, making them look like a large globe of honey. "What about you?"

"I was the head of a small shipping company that GlaceTech acquired recently to help with supply lines. So I guess I'm the head of a GlaceTech subsidiary now. Er, though I really don't know how this horror show factors into that acquisition..." Arcturus fidgeted in place, and his yellow eyes darted around, searching the nearby shadows for threats.

"Doesn't sound like our positions had anything to do with why he picked us then." Pale was thinking out loud. "But, we should stick together, hopefully we'll find the other survivor. I think... it was a red panda woman?"

Arcturus nodded. "That's what I recall as well. I hope she's okay..."

"Me too. Thankfully, there's just two breakers left, I think we can do this!" Pale did their best to sound encouraging.

"I sure hope so." Arc's tail curled between his legs.

"We should be close, I think! Nothing here is powered yet, so there's probably a breaker on the wall near this machine." Pale gestured to the machine that the conveyor belt fed into. Warning signs on the metal exterior indicated that it was some kind of hydraulic press or trash compactor.

Arcturus narrowed his gaze and swept the dark wall. "I think I see it, just barely. There!" He pointed.

"Really?" Pale tried to follow his gaze, but couldn't make out anything through the darkness.

"Yeah! I've got uhm, okay dark vision." Arc moved in front of Pale and led the way. Pale followed behind at a hurried waddle, carrying their heavy-set body along on their short corgi legs.

Just as he said, there was a circuit breaker box in the wall. The cover panel had been ripped off, and was laying on the floor in front of it. "Looks like the other ones." Pale picked up the panel and turned it over. The reboot instructions were written on the inside. "Okay... I'll read through the process and you follow the instructions okay?"

"Got it, I can do that."

"Okay, first, remove the fuse from socket A24, and slot it into socket C13. Then, flip the breaker switch next to..." The troubleshooting process took a couple of minutes, and both of them occasionally looked around to see if Angelus was approaching.

"Almost there, this was almost too easy. Do you think he's busy, uh..." Arcturus swallowed hard.

"Probably." Pale didn't want to say it either, but they both had a feeling that the third person who had been roped into this was probably being chased, or murdered.

"A-anyway, here goes..." Arc flipped the final switch, and the entire facility rumbled. Hanging overhead lights turned on, and a couple of old bulbs exploded into sparks from the sudden surge of power. The nearby trash compactor came to life with a rumble of engines and a grinding of gears. "Ah, it worked!" he sounded cautiously optimistic, and his tail swished.

"No kidding." Pale watched the machine for a bit. Bits of garbage like concrete and scrap metal ran down the conveyor belt and into the hydraulic compactor, and came out of the other end totally flattened. They shook their head. This was no time to stare at trash. "Alright, just one

to go. I think we can do this!" Pale's short tail wagged. "It'll be in the last dark portion of this place, so we just have to, uh..." They both shivered, and their breath fogged.

"Having a nice little chat~?"

Arcturus and Pale stood back to back, frantically searching for the sound of that chilling voice.

"Really, do you think I don't know where the breakers are? I'll KNOW where you are as soon as you turn one on. I was just a little, mmh, busy earlier." His voice seemed to be coming from a different direction with each sentence, and the mechanical creaking of the trash compactor conveyor belt didn't help. They wanted to run, but couldn't tell what direction was safe.

"On the count of three, bolt in opposite directions..." Pale muttered.

"W-what? But-"

"Just do it! One, two...!"

On three, Pale and Arcturus shot apart, running the opposite direction along the length of the conveyor belt, following the wall.

Pale ran as fast as their little legs could carry them. Their stomach bounced against the floor, and they were quickly growing winded from the run. Ironically, the chill air that swirled around Angelus was the only thing keeping them from overheating.

The cold grew more intense, and Pale skipped to a halt. An icy hammer crashed down just inches in front of them and shattered as it hit the concrete floor. Angelus followed it, vaulting over the conveyor belt and landing neatly in front of Pale.

Pale gulped and backed away, hurried footsteps almost tripping over themselves.

"B-Boss..!"

Angelus stood up and straightened his posture. At just over six feet tall, he towered over Pale, glaring down at them with his icy blue eyes. "Well if it isn't my FAVORITE intern!" He grinned, showing his teeth, and took a step closer to Pale. He was holding some kind of metal contraption in his other hand. Pale didn't want to know what it was for.

"Uh! That's flattering sir, but maybe not at this moment!" Pale turned to run, only to feel a cold hand grab the back of their fluffy neck. "Hurk-!"

"Now where are you going? I have something just for you! If you try to run, you'll piss me off." He shoved Pale forward so they fell to their face on the concrete floor. Pale heard the crackle of forming ice behind them, but didn't have time to react.

CRACK

The head of the hammer connected with Pale's leg, and they could feel the bone crack from the impact. They howled out in pain, tears welling up in their eyes as a small trickle of blood ran down their leg.

"That's better," Angelus hissed. "Now, try this on." He melted his hammer to have both hands free, and grasped the contraption, lifting it over Pale's head.

Pale tried to wrestle free from Angelus, but his grip was too tight, and Pale was helplessly beached on their stomach. He managed to shove a muzzle onto their face, and their mouth was invaded by a length of rubber tube they couldn't spit out. Angelus grabbed the top of the contraption and yanked it back, securing a metal harness around Pale's head that tightened so that it couldn't be removed by force without killing the wearer.

“MMMPPHH!!” Pale protested every step of the process as they felt that machine clamp onto their skull and wrap tight around their muzzle. It was heavy and crude, and they could hear two distinct things. One, a tank full of thick liquid was sloshing around behind their head. And two, a timer was ticking slowly in one ear.

“A perfect fit! Oh, I’m really going to enjoy this...” Angelus ran his hands down Pale’s body and squeezed the mutt’s thick sides. “And I can’t make it too easy for you to find the key to this thing, so...” He created his sledgehammer in his other hand and lifted it, eyeing Pale’s other leg. Pale whimpered, tears starting to stream down their face.

“Leave them alone...!” Arc’s voice shouted from behind Angelus. He turned around just in time to get hit in the side of his face by a hunk of scrap metal.

Angelus shouted and dropped the hammer to clutch his face. He stumbled backward and fell against the wall, leaning on it for just a moment before lifting his gaze and staring daggers at Arcturus. “You... I’ll kill you!” He roared and pushed himself off the wall, running for the smaller fox.

Arcturus yelped and ran down the length of the conveyor belt, using it like a moving walkway to cover ground faster. He was so terrified he couldn’t think straight. Why had he even done that?? Angelus was *terrifying*, but he couldn’t bear watching that scene unfold without doing anything. Distracted as he was with his own thoughts, his nimble little paws danced around the debris on the belt as it all moved towards the compactor at the end.

Angelus vaulted onto the belt and tore after Arc, kicking aside all of the refuse in his way. His breath billowed like steam from an engine as he barreled down the track toward his target, gaining ground.

“Ooooh..! I don’t wanna do this I don’t wanna do this I don’t wanna do this!!” Arc shouted to himself as his heart jumped into his throat. He watched the hydraulic press just ahead, watching the timing of the rise and fall. At the last moment, they closed their eyes and dropped, sliding through the machine, and making it out the other side mercifully unscathed.

Angelus stopped just short of the opening, walking backward to keep his place on the belt. “Hah. Hahaha. Hahahaha! Did you seriously think I was going to follow you through there? You’d have been better off jumping off the side than pulling a stunt-” A large piece of concrete with rebar sticking out hit Angelus square in the back. The air was knocked from his lungs, and he crumpled forward, unable to stop from being dragged under the hydraulic press.

Pale pumped their fist in triumph, limping forward. They had another piece of scrap ready to throw in case they had missed the mark, but Angelus had grown so focused on Arcturus that he let his guard down.

“Fuck!” Angelus cursed as the press came down on him. A dozen pillars of ice bloomed from all sides of him, trying to hold it back. It stopped for a moment, but the ice began to crack as the pressure increased.

Arc rejoined Pale, and the two of them hurried away as fast as they could, with Arc supporting Pale’s injured side like a crutch. “D-do you think we got him?”

Metal pinged against metal as bolts and rivets popped from the straining of the jammed machine. The old hydraulics were crumpling under the strain of Angelus’ resistance, even as his ice collapsed bit by bit under the pressure, closing in around him.

They both dared to look back as the sound of groaning metal reached a peak. The machine’s hull bulged, and a huge spike of ice pierced through the frame from within. Then

another. And another. A dozen glittering spires bloomed from the metal corpse, and with a last shuddering gasp, the machine faltered and then exploded. Pale and Arc were thrown to the ground by the pressure wave, and bits of flaming debris were thrown past them, smoldering on the floor wherever they landed.

Arc cowered on the floor, tail between his legs, heart pounding in his throat. His whole body was trembling from an adrenaline overload. Even as Pale tugged on him, he was slow to get to his feet, and his legs were wobbling. "I-I know. We gotta go. Let's go." He rubbed the sides of his face to shake his nerves. Pale looped an arm around his waist for support for their bad leg, and the two of them walked towards the last dark corner of the facility.

Tick... tick... tick... Pale's ear flicked as that device ticked slowly, but incessantly. They recalled Angelus saying something about a key, and now that they had a moment to gather their thoughts, they lifted their free paw to feel around the contraption. Their paws brushed over a small keyhole on the side opposite the timer. That was a start, but there was no telling where the key might be...

Arcturus noticed Pale fussing with the contraption and seemed to notice it for the first time. "What IS that thing he put on you anyway?"

"Mmh mhp-ph." Pale shrugged just as the contraption made a sharp *click-click* sound in their ear. "Hmm? HMMF!" They protested as something thick and tasteless was forced into their mouth. They swallowed it on a reflex and could feel it slide down their throat until it landed in their stomach. For a moment, they worried that it might be poison, but that worry was replaced with a different one as they felt their body grow thicker and heavier. It was slight, but they could feel more weight on their paws, which made them wince as it meant more weight was on their broken leg, even with Arc helping them.

"What happened? Are you okay?" The gains were slight enough that Arc didn't notice them, he only heard Pale's panic.

Pale pointed to the tubing on the contraption on their head, and mumbled some words into the muzzle as they mimed drinking a glass of water, followed by pointing at their stomach and then dramatically widening their arms. "Hrrm m-ph."

"So, that thing is making you drink something that's making you fatter?" Arc tilted his head.

"Hrrm!" Pale gave two thumbs up. It seemed Arcturus had a knack for charades.

"Well that's... weird. Could be a lot worse, but given you're already injured, you getting heavier is gonna slow us both down. I wonder if that's his goal." Arc wondered aloud. Clearly, Angelus was less interested in killing them quickly than he was in hunting them and drawing things out.

The area darkened as they moved into the final quarter of the facility. Arc hefted Pale again, adjusting his support on them as his golden eyes swept over the walls, looking for the circuit panel. "Got it, over there I think." He pointed into the distance, and he and Pale hobbled their way over.

A pile of bad components was laying on the floor, and the instruction panel for the reset had little check marks in marker beside most of the steps. Arc took a look over the panel.

"Looks like someone has already almost finished this one. Uh, I guess you can't really read me the instructions... Just keep watch and I'll finish it," Arc said as he got to work on the fuse box.

Pale thought to take a seat on the floor nearby, but stopped themselves. They figured that at their current weight, they wouldn't be able to stand without assistance, which would make a quick getaway impossible. They stood behind Arc instead and swept over the surrounding area, peering into the grey darkness for any signs of movement.

It took a fraction of the usual time for Arc to get the lights on. His tail wagged to celebrate the victory. They just had to make it to the exit now.

As they turned to hobble to the loading bay door, they heard a machine rumble to life, and a frantic, muffled screaming caught their ears for a moment before it was cut off. Pale and Arc both looked at one another. Pale nodded. Against their combined judgment, they decided to check it out. After all, there was the third survivor here they hadn't seen since they arrived.

They walked around a large metal silo and were met with the sight of the red panda woman, whose arms and legs were chained to a metal slab. A thick hose was stuffed into her mouth and fastened on with a steel muzzle, and her stomach was distended several inches and growing, already tearing the formal dress she had picked to wear for what she thought was a dinner party with the boss. She was pulling against her restraints to try and get free, and her tail was puffed out in panic.

"Wh-what is this?" Arcturus was already so mentally overloaded that he could barely understand the scenario playing out in front of him. He took a hesitant step back as his self-preservation instincts took over, but a sudden shove from behind snapped him back.

"Mrrpph!" Pale shouted through their muzzle and pointed at the hose while miming bending an object.

"O-oh, right! I got it!" Arc ran over to the woman and climbed up on the metal table. She watched, wide-eyed and sweating as Arc took the hose in both his little paws. It was clear that Angelus had thought things through. The hose was ribbed metal, giving it just enough flexibility while making it difficult to squeeze or bend. Arc gave it his all and wrenched the hose as hard as he could while bending it over his knee for extra leverage. The metal gave slowly, bending a slight kink into the hose that partially restricted the flow.

The red panda wasn't relieved by this, due in part to her already grossly bloated guts. It looked like an exercise ball was trying to escape her splitting dress, and her red-orange fur was bulging through the split seams.

Pale was doing their best to find some kind of release mechanism, or bolt cutters, or anything that could be used to hack through the hose and chains. They doubted Angelus would have left anything like that nearby, but they had to at least TRY. Each waddling step made pain shoot through their leg even as they favored it, limping to put most of their weight on their other leg. As they searched, the mechanism on their head released more goop at irregular intervals, and every gulp, no matter how small, had a noticeable and immediate impact on their frame. They could feel their body getting heavier and wider. Their gut dragged more along the ground and their rump bounced more and threatened to swallow their tail. Their fattening face pressed against the outside of the contraption, crowding their vision with cheek fat.

The red panda's dress split in half around her gut. The loud shredding of fabric made Pale and Arc both jump in alarm. She pulled more desperately against her restraints, and sweat beaded on her brow as her stomach began to creak and groan like a taut balloon. It sagged down over her sides and onto the table from the weight of it, now swollen almost as large as Pale and still being pumped bigger. Her tail thrashed like mad.

Frustrated, Arc yanked on the hose, trying to pull it out of the pump it was connected to. The metal hose rattled with each yank, but it remained firmly in place. He couldn't bend the hose enough to completely cut the flow, and the pressure kept the liquid flowing through the kinked segment. Pale hadn't found anything useable either, and they were winded from the search thanks to the couple dozen pounds they had gained in just a few minutes.

They could do nothing but back away as the ballooning panda began to sputter a thick cream from her nostrils. It dripped from the corners of her mouth as she tried to fight back any more swallowing, almost drowning in doing so. Her stomach groaned as it spilled over the edges of the table, covering her torso and legs. The fur was stretched thin, and the skin underneath was taut with red stretch marks where her skin was pulled to the thinnest. Her struggles lessened and her limbs all went tense, her body putting the whole of her strength into pulling against her restraints, to no avail.

Arc and Pale took cover. There was a sickening shred of tearing meat, coupled with a thick, wet BLOOSH! Gallons of liquid sprayed over the machinery and walls and sloshed to the floor in a wave, accompanied by scraps of fur and fabric. The rumble of machinery stopped, and they both hesitantly peeked out at the scene.

The woman's torso was blown open, looking like an empty cavity as all of the guts that would have filled it had burst to shreds like a series of long balloons. Blood tinted the mixture that pooled in her body, and it dripped down the table and onto the floor in crimson rivulets. A few last spasms of life rattled the restraints before all was finally silent.

Arcturus turned away, covered his mouth, and doubled over, dry-heaving at the sight. Pale looked away before they could take in many of the details, sparing themselves from heaving against the muzzle strapped to their face.

"O-okay, that's it, I've had enough!" Arc shouted, breathing heavily to try and settle his stomach. "We've got the exit ready, we have to get OUT of here!"

"Mmph!" Pale pointed at their muzzle with both chubby paws, though the gesture was stilted from the increased girth of their arms.

"We don't have time to wander around for that!" The air grew cold, and they could both feel a familiar shiver up their spines as frost formed along the soaked concrete. "W-we seriously have to leave, NOW." Arc grabbed Pale and helped to support their bad leg, grunting from how much heavier the mutt was now. "Sh-sheesh, this is really gonna slow us down. Angelus must be seriously twisted..."

Angelus stepped out in front of them, grimacing. He was holding his chest with both arms and was slouched over. His suit jacket and pants were torn, and blood was running down one side of his face, soaking into his fur and dripping down his muzzle. "That's not, hrk, very nice you know."

Pale and Arcturus stepped back, retreating at a snail's pace. Angelus didn't follow them.

"H-how are you still alive?" Arc questioned the taller arctic fox.

Angelus snorted and spit a glob of blood onto the floor. "I froze myself solid. The thick ice absorbed most of the blast, but that fucking press, rrrgh..." He tightened his grip around his chest. "At least one broken rib. Because of YOU." He glared daggers at Arc, who felt the air around him grow icy, making him cough from the chill as he breathed in.

"You deserve worse!" Arc coughed, glaring back.

"Shut up, you goddamn piece of trash." Angelus straightened himself out just slightly and began to approach them, dragging his feet forward just slightly faster than Arc and Pale could move.

"Shit..." Arc tried to retreat, but his feet didn't move. Confused, he looked down to find his feet had been frozen in the puddle of bloody slop that they had been standing in. His gaze flicked back to Angelus, who cracked a crooked grin.

Pale grabbed Arc and tried to tug him free, but it was no use; the ice was creeping up Arc's ankles, and growing thicker around his paws. "Mmph!!"

"Oh Pale~" Angelus cooed. "You're looking better than when we last saw one another." His voice dripped with obsession. "I do want to save you for last though... Killing you now would waste all my effort. Waddle along. Maybe you can escape while I toy with THIS one." He winced as he let go of his chest with one, shaky arm, revealing a knife clutched in his hand that he pointed at Arc.

Pale shook their head and pulled on Arc harder, tears streaming down their face.

"Go." Arc swallowed hard and pushed Pale away. "You still have a chance to escape. I'll... stall him as much as I can." Arcturus' whole body was trembling. He was filled with rage and fear, and was sick to his stomach, but this was the only thing left he could do.

Pale whined and lingered for a moment, before turning limping away as fast as their short and fat body could manage.

Soon it was just the two pale foxes. The tension in the air was like a weight on their bodies. Arc had been pushed to his limit, and Angelus' broken ribs made it painful to even breathe. Angelus let air hiss between his teeth as he grit them and stowed his knife.

There was a brief flash from his hand, and with a pained shout he created his favored ice sledgehammer and swung it at Arcturus.

Arc ducked the swing and felt his paws unfreeze. With claws extended, he took a swing at Angelus' stomach. His claws met the thick fabric of Angelus' suit jacket and shredded it, but he came up short of tearing into the skin.

Angelus lost his grip on the hammer, and it flew from his hands and smashed into a vat, punching a hole in the metal. More of that creamy liquid poured out and froze over in the presence of Angelus' freezing aura. He clutched his chest with both arms and doubled over, stumbling back as he growled through his teeth. His chest burned with pain.

Arcturus did his best to take advantage of this. He rushed forward to keep the pressure on Angelus before he could recover. He aimed his blow for his opponent's chest and connected, making Angelus reel backward. Angelus' shoes skittered over the ice and he lost his footing, falling on his ass with an agonized howl. Not risking losing a moment, Arc stepped towards Angelus and swung at him. He would never be this bold. He was fueled by his fear and terror. It was all he could think to do. His fist connected with Angelus' jaw, sounding a crack of bone slamming against bone. Arc's hand stung from the impact, so he pulled back to strike with his other hand.

Angelus opened one sharp eye and caught Arcturus' second swing, grabbing him by the arm. He wrenched the smaller fox's arm, and his icy grip burned Arc's skin, making him cry out.

Crack!

Arc blacked out for a second, his whining turning to a choked gurgle as Angelus pounded his skull with an ice-covered fist. The ice shattered against Arc's forehead, and his

head bobbed around from the concussive impact. Before he could recover, Angelus struck him again. Arc's vision went blurry, and his body limp.

"Trash." Angelus tossed Arc to one side. The smaller Arctic fox wheezed for breath, and his limbs trembled as he tried to will them to move, to stand. He was barely conscious but was still aware of Angelus struggling to his feet beside him. Angelus spoke something, but he couldn't hear it through the ringing in his ears.

A cold grip. Arcturus felt himself get lifted by one arm and dragged across the floor.

Angelus propped him up against one of the metal vats that occupied this part of the facility. He grabbed a length of foreboding, metallic hose and stuffed it into Arc's mouth, holding it in place. Arc gurgled in a weak attempt to spit it out.

"Much as I'd love to bash your brains in and be done with it, I'm craving something a little messier. I missed the first showing because of you and Pale, but watching you swell into a great snowball should make up for it." Angelus pushed the hose into Arc's throat, making him gag. His arms lifted slightly off the ground, then fell back down, shaking.

"What a pathetic resistance." With a grunt, Angelus turned a valve on the vat, and all the liquid in it forced itself into Arc's stomach. His bloodstained pink robe bulged in the middle, and his stomach pushed out against the black belt that held it closed around his front.

A small voice in the back of Arcturus' screamed at him to get up, to fight back, to do SOMETHING, but he was in and out of consciousness, never remaining alert long enough to do anything. His swelling stomach caused his robe to bulge around his belt, and the belt itself was pulling tight, creaking around the buckle as the fabric was stretched until it began to tear.

"Not bad." Angelus stood, watching Arc with disdain, but there was a flicker of amusement over his countenance. He drew his butcher knife and admired the edge, his eyes flicking between the blade, and Arcturus. "Let me help~" He slipped the blade under the tight belt, and Arcturus could feel the sharp point of the blade press against his robes, the point digging into his bloating middle. Still, Angelus snipped the belt with a swift flick of his wrist, and it and the robe fell open.

Arc's white dome of a stomach was revealed. Already bigger than a beach ball, it was taut and almost perfectly round, with the fur slightly thinned from the stretching. Angelus placed a hand on it and rubbed over the fluffy curve. His tail gave a single wag, swishing left, then right, before stopping.

Arcturus was helpless as he felt the pressure rising in his stomach. It swelled into his vision, and he could feel the weight of it pinning his legs. Some part of him was amazed he could handle this much; he'd never eaten more than a few plates at a buffet at best, but now it looked like he'd devoured dozens of entrees. It was churning and sloshing, filling with a thick liquid that felt denser than water. Gentle creaks began to sound from the stretching skin.

Stretch marks began to fade in under his thin fur. Suddenly, he felt sick to his stomach.

Angelus traced the tip of his knife along those widening stretch marks. "Already near the limit... Shame. I'd have liked to see you bigger, imagine myself doing the same. We're so alike, after all." The tip of his knife nicked Arc's skin, drawing a trickle of blood.

The feeling of that cold, sharp edge grazing over his tightening skin was electric for Arcturus. His claws flexed, his jaw clenched around the metal hose. He was regaining consciousness, but much too late. He was pinned by his own gut, and his head was already swimming with the deluge of signals coming from his tightening middle.

Angelus flicked his knife against the swell of fox gut again. Arc's middle groaned. It dominated his form, bloated tremendously out of proportion. Angelus prodded that stomach with a finger, testing the tautness. "Ah, just about. I have to catch up with our mutual friend, so I'm afraid I'll have to end things here."

He touched the tip of the knife to Arcturus' stomach and pressed in just a little. Arc gurgled a whine, feeling the blade slice into his skin. Angelus held it steady, and let Arc swell into it. Centimeter by centimeter, Arc's stomach pushed more against that knife. Fully awake now, his yellow eyes were wide and wild, darting around in a panic. He could feel the knife pushing through his flesh, slicing through the muscle. He was too full to bear it, if it reached his organs, he would-

Arcturus' last thought would remain unfinished. The knife pierced too deep, and his stomach exploded like a balloon popped with a pin. Gallons of bloody sludge burst free, sloshing to the floor with the mess from the earlier bursting. Angelus narrowly avoided getting drenched by freezing the wave that came towards him, forming a macabre wall of fluid and viscera.

Arcturus' lifeless body slumped over. His eyes were dim and grey, and his organs that hadn't burst were spilled out of his open torso and strewn over his legs and the floor.

Angelus barely gave the sight a second glance. He had a honey-colored corgi to catch up to. Luckily for him, Pale's broken leg evened the playing field against his broken ribs.

Pale was getting fatter by the second. The ticking in their ear was getting louder, and they were having that fattening liquid poured into their mouth at more frequent intervals. They were barely able to waddle over the control panel for the cargo bay door, and they slumped all their weight against it, having to fight against the size of their gut to reach the buttons.

Pain shot up their injured leg as they pushed and reached. Tears spilled from their eyes, but with a determined lunge, they managed to slap the big green button on the panel. There was a buzz over a nearby speaker above the door, and lights just above it illuminated the metal door and the surrounding area.

The cargo bay door rattled to life as Pale approached, and it was winched up, allowing the dim glow of the approaching dawn to creep into the facility. They were nearly across the threshold, just a few more laborious steps, and they would be free.

Except...

That contraption was still fastened to their head. The timer ticked in their ear, more urgently than ever. Pale swallowed, both in fear and because their mouth had yet again filled with the tasteless slop that was robbing their mobility. They hesitated. Maybe they could still find the key-

Everything went cold.

"Well well. You got the door open. Color me impressed, I never thought you'd get this far." Angelus' voice was clear and sharp behind Pale. They could hear the sound of his expensive shoes tapping against the concrete floor as he approached. They tried to turn their head to look, but it was useless. If they could have looked, they would have seen the flash of a butcher's knife in one hand, and the swirl of the key in the other. There was never any hope of getting free of that contraption.

"What are you waiting for? You should run, before I catch-ergh..." He stopped and clutched his chest, grimacing from the sting of his broken rib. "Haaahh... Really, put up a fight,

you know? Made this all the more fun!” He straightened himself, still gritting his teeth. His disheveled outfit was marred with scuffs, tears, and blood; a mix of others and his own. He began moving again, teeth bared, eyes wide and wild.

Pale was out of options. They struggled forward with all their might, lugging their exhausted body forward. They could feel the sting of their broken leg as they lifted it, fat and all, and inched it forward. To even call it a waddle would be a disservice to just how pathetically slow it was; a wobbling rocking from side-to-side that inched the dog forward at a snail’s pace. It was the best they could do.

Their stomach passed over the threshold, and the timer started ticking faster. Pale’s ears twitched, and their eyes shrunk to terrified pinpricks that strained to look at the device on their head. Their heartbeat shot up, it pounded in their ears, and more of that slop flooded their throat, straining their stomach until stretch marks began to bloom across the surface.

Angelus sneered through the pain of his injuries. “What’s the matter? If you can survive this, you’re free! You look so good like this, so huge and bloated... you’ll disappoint me if you can’t keep it together! Hr-k-” Angelus coughed, causing pain to lance through his side from his broken rib. He wrapped his arms around his chest and staggered forward another step.

Pale’s buried paw touched the line that marked the barrier between the facility and the outside. They hurriedly glanced to the sides to check for any final, nasty surprises. The loading dock was empty of any trucks or equipment, which was eerie in itself, but nothing was obviously amiss. The feeding helmet was enough, after all.

The blubber-packed corgi’s body trembled as they strained to get their paw across the concrete floor. They couldn’t lift it anymore, only drag it, forcing it forward against the weight of their body bearing down on it. Their stretch marks darkened in color. They could no longer move their arms, and their neck rolls were pushing up against their muzzle and cheeks, making their neck ache. Almost there. Almost... there.

As soon as Pale’s paw touched down on the exterior concrete, the ominous ticking sped up, and the timer wound down to the end in a second, ending with a sharp “ding!” Pale’s eyes shrank to terrified pinpricks that darted around in desperation. Muffled pleas were quickly silenced as the remaining payload was pumped down their throat with enough force to make their eyes water.

Calories turned into more fat at an aggressive rate. Pale felt their flesh strain, packed tight like the skin of an overstuffed sausage. The pressure of the fat under their skin squeezed their muscles and bones until they felt like their limbs might shatter. The tire of neck fat pushed against their head until they thought their neck would stretch and snap. What little mobility they had left departed from them, and more stretch marks tore open along their most strained points. Their entire body trembled from the pressure, too taut to wobble despite the hundreds of pounds of body fat now swallowing their form.

Crrr-rrr-rrrkkk... There was a long, drawn-out creak, followed by deathly silence. Angelus’ ears flicked, and he turned his head up to watch Pale’s last moments. His grin was that of a feral beast at the end of a successful hunt, showing killing teeth dripping with drool and blood.

Pale was almost grateful for the moment of relief that bursting brought them. Their skin finally gave out with a sickening tear of shredding flesh. Their stomach, chest, arms, and legs all exploded. Chunks of hot body fat and a gush of blood and other fluids sprayed from their

ruptured form and soaked the concrete floors and walls. Chunks of meat with fur still attached floated in the ghastly soup of lard and viscera, and what remained of Pale's body collapsed into a meaningless pile of meat and bone.

Angelus' grin fell, and he dropped the key and knife he was holding as he limped his way over to the mess. His fists balled, and his claws dug into his palms, making blood soak into his black fur. He tried to take in a deep and calming breath, barely keeping himself from shaking in rage as the air around him grew cold enough to chill the pools of blood at his feet. "Pathetic. All of this, and for what? For you to die before you could reach your potential? This is why I hate you disgusting fucking monsters. You're all. So. USELESS." He kicked what he thought might be Pale's head, but his shoe just sunk into a pile of meat.

He growled and turned his head away with a snarl, still trying to slow his breaths. "Useless. Useless. How completely boring." He spit blood onto the ground and pulled his phone from his jacket pocket, wincing in doing so. He tapped a contact to call, and they answered before the first ring.

"GlaceTech after-hours janitorial services, how may we assist you Mr. Glace?"

"Biohazard cleanup, facility 36B. Make it quick, it's already dawn."

"Of course sir." The line went dead, and Angelus pocketed his phone again. He didn't even cast a glance at the pile of meat and mush as he walked away. He was already thinking of who his next target should be.