

Chapter Twelve

Sleepless Nights

After Hunter had somewhat recovered from the shock of his conversation with the strange badger, he realized that they had not even exchanged names.

So that was a real mercenary... Straight to the point, no pleasantries, and immediately taking charge of the conversation.

The fennec let out a breath, steadying himself as he thought about what to do next. He decided that even though he was in the compromising position he was in, he would not allow himself to get pushed around. After washing his paws in the bathroom sink, Hunter made his way back to his laptop and opened it up to begin to compose a message. Logging into the website, he replied to the message stating that he was going to need a little bit more information if the badger wanted to work together.

He also mentioned allowing the badger to examine the brooch and read his aunt's letter, hoping that maybe if the badger tried to pull a fast one he might be rid of the brooch altogether.

After he sent the message, he was surprised to find that only a minute later he had gotten a response. This came as a bit of a shock, seeing how he had gotten nothing but dead air since his first attempt at establishing contact.

Call me Ishmoel.

Hunter snorted, rolling his eyes before pinching the bridge of his nose between two fingers. The badger had answered his question, but with a quote from Moby Dick. Regardless, he would humor the badger if he wished to remain anonymous. Wanting to take advantage of 'Ishamel's' apparent availability, he responded quickly.

Why so cryptic? You realize I don't care beyond getting rid of this brooch's curse, right?

Again he waited, and found that another response was readily forthcoming.

We'll talk again. Check this site for when and where. I'm confident your dear old Auntie Tare will show up. Regards.

Hunter knew that whatever other message he might send would not get a response, given how determined the badger seemed to keep him blind on what the badger was planning. He sent a simple confirmation, and then pushed himself back from the study table and began to gather his things.

How he wished at that moment to be in a play with nothing else on his mind than childish cartoons and perhaps something warm in his stomach. Managing his infantile desires, academia, friends, and whatever game he was now playing with this odd honey badger was getting to be a bit too much.

Alcohol. I need alcohol.

Opening his phone, he checked the time and found that class was over for both Malissa and Jack. He sent a message, starting with a beer emoji and a quote from Fenrir's Day Off.

He was not surprised when his two college friends leaped at the chance to do some weeknight drinking.

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Hunter murmured softly in his sleep, his right arm curled around the large stuffed panda plushie that had miraculously appeared on his bed a few days ago. It had been two weeks since his last meeting with the badger, and the curse had taken an interesting turn since then.

Throughout his apartment, as if left behind by some kind of diaper-toting fairy, he was finding items that seemed to only further reflect his growing infantile desires. At first it was a pacifier, which he had begrudgingly put in his muzzle as his curiosity got the better of him.

It had been comforting, more so than Hunter would have imagined and he found that he could not bring himself to dispose of the item. Next came the stuffed animals, which started to accumulate in such volume that the poor fennec was running out of closet space to hide them all in when his friends arrived for board games and movie nights.

Lastly, however, after a lull in the magical appearances of kit paraphernalia, came the guard rails on his bed. They were wooden, and of surprisingly high quality painted with a white sheen of paint. These, of all the mysterious occurrences, had surprised Hunter the most. He had never imagined having such an installation on his bed, as he had not noticed something like this existed.

It made sense to him, kids tended to fall out of bed sometimes and something like this would offer quite a valid solution to it. As he was rather determined in stymying the spell's effects for as long as he could, Hunter attempted to dismantle the rails but found to his even greater surprise that it was locked in place.

Two padlocks, one on either side of the rail glistened as if polished new. They were heart-shaped, which stirred something inside of Hunter he now recognized as the increasing attraction he was forming to such infantile accommodations.

Well... Looks like nobody's allowed in my bedroom until I get some bolt cutters or something...

He had thought to himself, resigning to the fact that he would be sleeping with a little extra security around his pile of blankets, pillows, and ever growing collection of plushies.

The stuffed animals he was allowed to some degree, as the pacifier in his bedside drawer remained untouched after he had chastised himself for giving into the spell's wants.

Now, in the middle of the night however, he found himself waking up to a dampness that too was growing a bit too familiar.

"Oh shit..."

Muttering to himself, his right paw fumbled for the switch to turn on his bedside lamp. Squinting as the light assaulted his irises, Hunter looked down in dismay to see the distinctive damp spot on the top of his covers.

This had been the fifth night in the row he had had to do laundry first thing in the morning, and he was beginning to get tired of it. He knew what the curse was trying to coax him into doing, yet the hassle of waking up in the night or morning with this point of stress was beginning to get to him.

So what if I start wearing diapers to bed... Beats having to constantly do my washing before getting a night's sleep... I need a temporary solution...

Deciding that he would grab his spare blanket to get through the rest of the night, Hunter groggily pushed himself over the railing on his bedside and made his way to his wardrobe.

He opened the top drawer, expecting to see his underwear but froze with his paw still on the handle.

His underwear was nowhere to be found. There were not even pull ups waiting for him this time. They were, as bluntly as he could put it, stacks of diapers depicting the cutesy designs he had liked most during his internet browsing.

The brooch had truly outdone itself this time, as he found that the cartoon baby animals sporting their own voluptuous diapers were precisely those that stirred those strange, nostalgic feelings of desire he had experienced.

Despite his shock, accustomed as he was to finding the unexpected at this point, he could not help but feel a sense of dry humor bubbling up in the back of his mind.

*Saving my bank account at least from having to buy diapers at the incontinence store...
These will have to be done I guess...*

Now aware, Hunter hoisted his sodden bed clothes into a pile along with his blanket and mattress cover and threw them into the wash. He'd turn it on in the morning, but for now he was going to have to get as much sleep as he could for the next day. It was a review day for another upcoming Calc exam, and he would only have this last chance to catch up on what he needed to know for it if he wanted to score a high mark.

Tonight my grades are more important...

Hesitantly, and feeling his cheeks redden despite being the only fur in his apartment, Hunter turned around to face his wardrobe once more.

It's just for leaks... It'll help me concentrate if I can get a full night's sleep...

Hunter knew he was making up excuses. Part of him desperately wanted to wear one of the diapers not just for the night, but during the day as well. The knowledge that no matter where he was if he had to go, he would be taken care of was a security that he had been imagining for months. His fantasies had apparently caught up to him, and the curse was offering him an easy way to experience it.

He held one of the diapers in his paws, sleep forgotten as he examined it in fascination. He noted the leak guards, soft material that appeared semi-elastic in composition which he figured would aid in the apparel's intended purpose: keeping him dry.

Hunter bit his lower lip, unfolding the diaper and listening to its crinkle. It had a plastic outer cover, something he figured would not easily be concealed underneath his day clothes. These would have to remain for night-time wear, temporarily, as he continuously reminded himself. He hoped to get more pull-ups from the curse if he started to have issues during the day.

The fennec hung his head, his feelings of excitement abating somewhat as he realized that this was a tipping point in his current predicament. Sure, he wanted to wear the diapers as they brought forth a sense of nostalgia that did not even shine a light to something like watching kid's shows. But still, he felt as if an essential part of his adulthood had just been taken away from him.

Hopefully he would retain his daytime continence long enough for him to figure out a way to break the spell. He silently cursed at the brooch, vowing that he would sell it on Craig's List the moment he confirmed that getting rid of it would break the enchantment. Mentally prepared, he turned back to his bed and laid the diaper out flat on its surface.

He would be sleeping on his mattress with no cover with just his blanket over himself, as well as his stuffed animals.

At least now I can sleep without worrying about waking up with a disaster between my legs...

Awkwardly, Hunter lay himself on top of the unfolded diaper and positioned himself as best as he could in the middle of it. Bringing up the front over himself, he pulled the tabs towards the middle and taped himself up. The tape job was nothing to scoff at, but at least it held relatively snugly.

At that point, he could care less as he checked the clock on his bedside. He only had a few more hours of shuteye before his next class, and he was determined to get as much as he could. Having suffered many sleepless nights in high school, the ability to sleep relatively normally in college was one that he tried his best to take advantage of.

Eyelids heavy, the fox turned off his bedside light and reached for one of his stuffed animals to hug. A plush fennec, that appeared shockingly similar to him. The curse must have been developing a sense of humor at that point, though whether or not there was any sentience to the brooch was completely beyond him.

So much I don't know... So much... I want to...

Hunter's might slowly calmed, and he fell sound asleep in his brand new pair of underwear. Whether he would wake up with a little bit more weight between his legs, was the last of his worries as his bedroom soon became filled with the soft sound of his snores.