

Chapter Thirteen

Dreaming

Hey, something's up with you.

Hunter read the text on his phone as he felt a hefty sense of trepidation wash over him. His proactive, and sometimes overactive, mind had been preparing for such a scenario. Sure, college was a time of change and of new things but he had suspected that his friends would pick up on his relative withdrawal from socialization lately.

He had spent the week in diapers during the evening, which meant inviting his friends over with the inevitable potential sleepover conversation had been a risk he had not been willing to take.

Sure, he might have a decent chance at hiding a wet bed even if he did not put on his nightly protection, but the bars on his bed were still there.

Hunter had been putting his hopes on the mysterious honey badger ever since the meeting, deciding that if he had to take extra steps to conceal his predicament he would.

Still, a week had passed and even after he had sent a follow-up message there had been no response forthcoming from the Australian bounty hunter.

Hunter knew he had to respond to the text. She had already seen him read it, and delaying any longer would only arouse further suspicion.

It's Calc. I'm sweatin' a bit on it.

It was mostly true. He had been redoubling his efforts and even pulling overtime in studying in the library. When he was not distracted by thoughts of sitting on a crinkly tushy in the middle of the least populated floor of the stacks, he had actually been making progress. He felt more sure of himself with this upcoming exam, and had even visited the grumpy polar bear in his office hours.

"You'll do alright."

His professor had reassured him, after proofing through the practice problems he had assigned the fox. Hunter knew he was on his side, but he still had to pull his weight in the subject matter if he wanted the score he was going for. The polar bear had no favorites when it came to whoever he was grading on the other side of his red pen, that much had been made clear.

Another text from Malissa came through.

You sure? You've seemed a little off lately, and finals aren't for another month. You know that your mental health is as important as your grade average, right?

He had been too terse with her. Malissa had a way of knowing when people were not telling her the whole truth, unlike Jack who took pretty much everything Hunter told him at face value. For a weasel with as wicked a sense of humor as he possessed, his people reading skills were not nearly as refined as his otter friend's.

I think you're right on that one, I went to the bear's office hours a few days ago.

Malissa responded almost immediately.

Willingly subjecting yourself to more time exposed to that old man? Wow you must be feeling desperate.

You don't even know the half of it on feeling desperate...

Deciding that he would have to offer more to the conversation, he decided to ask a question of his own.

Do you want to meet up with Jack and I tomorrow and work on a study guide?

A minute later, Malissa sent a message back.

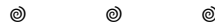
Sure. 😊

Hunter breathed a sigh of relief. If he was going to save face, some semi-productive socializing would probably do the trick. He still had not managed to acquire a pair of bolt cutters, and getting together for a “study sesh” in the library would probably bring him some ease of mind.

Still, even now he looked back on the nights spent together at his apartment filling up on junk food and bad movies with fondness.

He hoped that he would be able to go back to those kinds of platonic events soon.

For now, he could only dream.



Hunter’s sense of comfort was immense. Everything around him felt lush, soft, and lighter than air. He murmured something unintelligible, the sensation of whatever was in his mouth bringing him a sense of ease and relief from whatever had woken him up from his slumber.

Awake now, as the light had grown somewhat stronger, the fox’s eyelids fluttered open to be greeted by the sunshine streaming in from the window.

Hunter was fussy. He had been having the most comfortable dream only to be interrupted by the night’s conclusion and the onset of morning. The bars of his crib were now the only things between him and the star’s welcoming rays.

The little kit shifted, and immediately he could tell that during the night he had done quite a job on his diaper. He did not care in the slightest, however, as that was not his responsibility to take care of. Nestled in his blanket with the army of brightly

colored stuffed animals around him, the small fox wanted nothing more than to catch a few more Z's.

Still, the smell coming from underneath his covers was enough to tell him that he needed a change, and badly at that. Shifting around once more to take full advantage of the warmth he had accumulated over the night in his covers, Hunter heard a muffled squelch coming from between his legs.

He could feel it too, mushy and soft even as it was hugged closely to his bottom kept safe from sullyng his sheets or stuffies. His night time accident was contained, but also beginning to contribute to the fox's inability to get back to sleep. It itched, just a little bit, but enough to cause him to feel just a little bit overwhelmed by the sensation.

The kit sniffled, and before he realized what he was feeling he could feel a little sob begin to bubble up from his chest. He sniffled again, and soon the waterworks were well on his way as his nursery became filled with his cries.

In the distance, just barely audible over his miserable complaints, he could hear muffled pawsteps approaching the door to his nursery. It had been exactly what he had been hoping for, despite not knowing what to expect, when a warm, furry face appeared over the crib bars above him.

Her headfur was a little all over the place, probably from having been woken up by the little kit, but the softness in her brown eyes just about wiped away the tears from his fuzzy cheeks.

"Good morning sweetheart, did somebody wake up a little smelly?"

She crooned, her voice soft as she reached down over the bars and pulled back the blanket.

"Oh honey, you need a change."

She commented, even as she placed a paw on his padded front and squeezed gently as she checked him. Clucking her tongue, the vixen scooped him underneath his armpits and deposited him on her hip. With one paw, she cupped underneath his messy bottom to support him. Hunter felt himself cringe slightly as his accident was pressed up against him, a distinct reminder of the source of his discomfort.

He suckled on the pacifier in his muzzle, grateful now that he had something to focus on as he was carried away from his crib. The soft rustle of vinyl plastic met his ears as he was laid down on his back, with now only the force of gravity pressing the diaper against him.

“We’ll get you nice and comfortable in a moment, darling.”

The vixen commented, half distracted as she reached underneath the surface of the changing table to acquire the aforementioned changing supplies.

“The wipes were in the warmer all night, this should only take a moment. Why don’t you hug Mr. Rex in the meantime?”

Hunter’s eyes widened, looking up as he saw his vision become filled with the face of a lime green dinosaur with several large, goofy-looking canines sticking out of his muzzle. He giggled, his woes now forgotten as he grasped the T-Rex tightly between his stubby arms.

He rubbed his cheeks against the fuzzy dino, his attention completely fixated on hugging him as much as he could while barely paying attention to what was going on in his diaper area.

The vixen coughed once as with a crinkle she unfolded his diaper, chuckling to herself as she set to work.

Hunter sighed, his eyes closing as the rays of sun streaming from the window next to him began to warm up his fur. It was like a blanket of its own, bathing him in its warmth. He was feeling much better already, the scent of lavender baby powder

wafting up to his tiny nose. There was a waft of cool air as he felt something hug his midsection, followed by the sound of velcro tapes being pulled into place.

“There we go, all better now!”

The vixen sang out, scooping him up once more and bringing both him and his dinosaur buddy into a tight embrace.

“No more fussing, only happy little baby kits for me to kiss all over.”

And kiss she did, causing Hunter to burst into a fit of giggles as he wriggled and writhed in his arms to avoid her barrage of pecks and smooches.

She covered his cheeks, and then proceeded down to his tummy causing his giggles to turn into a whole laughing fit. Hunter dimly felt the front of his padding grow warm during the kiss attack, but was distracted by just how much the vixen’s whiskers tickled.

“There’s my little happy camper.”

Ceasing, the vixen brought him down to her hip once more and allowed him a minute to calm down.

As he did so, Hunter rested his head against her shoulder, his gaze wandering down to the front of her shirt.

There was a little piece of jewelry there, sparkling and giving off rainbows as the sun hit the large, fractured opal on the front.

Hunter’s blood suddenly ran cold, his eyes widening in fear as he recognized the item as the cursed brooch.

He opened his mouth to yell out, to fight the vixen’s grasp, and to get away as quickly as he could.

Before he could move, everything around him disappeared, only to be replaced by a pitch black void. As the sound of rushing air filled his ears while he fell into it, he could hear the distinct sound of cackling just audible over the roaring wind rushing through his ears.