

"This is going to be an easy 'A'." Nikita thought as he paused while copying down information from the geology exhibit. "The Natural History Museum has everything I need to get my geology report done." He smirked as he read the names of a pair of mineral specimens out loud. "Gneiss schist."

'Krunck!' "Shh!" 'Scrape!' The sudden loud noises and exclamation broke his train of thought.

"What's that?" Nikita jogged out of the exhibition room and into the hall. The harsh scraping sound repeated, coming from the next room over. He looked into the gallery and paused, his breath catching in his throat.

Inside the gallery, there was a pair of tall, well-muscled wolf-men wearing torn denim jeans. They were dragging a very tall amethyst cathedral geode. A short, athletic girl, with her black hair cut into straight bangs turned to face Nikita. "Shouldn't you be frightened?"

"Of what? I've heard of werewolves. They're supposed to be big and hefty and eat people, but those two are stealing things." Nikita looked from the werewolves to point to the girl in painted-on leather. "Why aren't you afraid?"

"I'll give you two reasons. One. Those two work for me. Two, I'm not exactly helpless." The girl grew a couple of inches taller while her face filled out to have a short muzzle with buck teeth. Her ears shifted to the top of her head and grew into large circular shapes. She gained whiskers on her snout, while velvety short brown and tan fur covered her body. A long whiplike tail grew in. The girl also gained a more muscular build, with the leather clothing stretching to match. The clothes left her stomach and arms free, as well as her legs from mid-calf and lower.

Nikita cocked his head. "You're a.. Mouse?"

"You should have run while you had the chance." She replied. "I think a little corrective phrenology is in order." The mouse slid her belt off, which collapsed into a long cord with a metal weight on one end of it. She tossed the weight out to her side and began alternately swinging it and pulling it back toward her. Her leather outfit creaked as she moved. When she saw the confused look on Nikita's face, she sighed. "It's the study of bumps on someone's head."

"I've got a secret form as well." Nikita replied.

"Oh. Really.." She circled around him, crossing her legs with each step. The lights played off of the painted-on leather as her thighs rippled. The mouse girl kept her weapon in constant motion. She swung it in quick arcs and alternated between drawing it in and letting it out. "Trying to delay me while you call the police won't work. I've jammed cell phone signals."

Nikita shifted into his weremink form. His face grew into a short snout and he gained an inch in height. Shiny white fur covered him, while his muscles gained a bit of size. His tail, spilled out onto the floor. "Now you see why I wasn't afraid."

"Ooh! You're an exotic one." She slid her small flat tongue over her lower lip. "You're definitely a keeper."

"My eyes are up here." Nikita pointed to his face.

"It's a shame that we've got to fight." She said as she sprinted toward him. She gave her weapon a quick spin and sent it to pass just over his shoulder.

Nikita moved his hands to block the metal weight and turned to follow it.

The mouse followed up her throw with a leaping kick that caught Nikita on the side of his head. The impact lifted his feet from the ground and sent him skidding across the floor. As he came out of his daze, he saw that he was on his back, with the mouse girl straddling over him. The weapon's cord was held in both of her hands, with the weight swinging back and forth. "You recover fast, don't you? I'm able to crumple in cars that way."

He snarled. "You don't need to gloat when you get in a lucky shot."

"That wasn't luck." She smirked. "I really am this good."

Nikita realized that the mouse was standing on his hands. He thought 'It's time to give her a little surprise of my own.' The were mink tossed her into the air.

The mouse traveled in an arc, to do a flip before landing with a 'Thump!'. "Oh my, what huge biceps you have."

"I'm not the big, bad wolf." Nikita replied as he got to his feet. "You're just toying with me, aren't you?"

"What a delicious looking bit you're barely hiding down below." She moved her weapon in arcs again, while walking on tiptoes. "You can call me Candi." The mouse seemed to bounce from the floor with each step. "I'll let you give up any time you want to."

"I'm not letting some thieves get away with robbing from the museum." He matched her movements, slowly getting closer. His tail swished from side to side, the tip kept from hitting the floor. As she moved her gaze down to stare, mouthing the word 'abs', he sprinted toward her.

Candi let out a squeak as she was tackled. She thought 'I was told that minks were fast, but, wow.' She said "You're.. Crushing.. Me.."

Nikita was able to bring Candi to the ground, keeping her in place with his arms around her. The mink had the mouse's arms pinned to her sides. He shifted his eyes to see that his snout was nestled between the mouse's perky breasts. He swallowed hard as his inner voice said 'Unsexy thoughts. Don't think about her tiny waist, nice thighs, hips.. Titties..' As he looked upward, he saw her nose, then her face. She was taking breaths in quick, short gasps.

As she felt his length filling out up along her backside, she said "Are you planning to squish me.." Candi gasped in a breath ".. or breed me? You can't do both."

"Oh.." Nikita rolled onto his back. "I'm not trying to.."

Candi took the opportunity to leap up and back. She did a handspring to her feet. "You've got a lot to learn about fighting." Candi took a couple of deep breaths. "Don't give up your advantage." She set her weapon into motion. "You're fast and really, really strong." She grinned broadly. "You're also really impressive. You tore straight through when you filled out."

Nikita had gotten to his feet as Candi had jumped off of him. He looked down to see how he had ripped out of the clothes. He heard a 'Crack!' as Candi's weapon whipped through the air. Then everything went black.

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"Good Morning." A semi-familiar voice brought Nikita into foggy wakefulness.

"What? How long have I been out?" Nikita raised himself to one elbow on the cot. Lanterns gave the stone chamber uneven lighting, hiding its corners. "Where have you taken me?"

"It's been a few hours." The leather-clad were-mouse walked around the perimeter of the chamber. "I can't tell you where we're at, but you'll find out soon enough. You'd pack a terrifying punch if you knew how to fight."

"Is that what I'm here for, to learn?" Nikita sat up on the edge of the cot and got to his feet. "You don't have to stay on your toes. I'm not going to try anything now."

"This isn't some kind of kung-fu temple where you'll be spending every hour of the day in training." Candi answered. "You're here for us to learn about you and for you to learn a bit about us."

"How did you know when I was going to wake up? Were you just waiting at the door the whole time?" Nikita asked.

"I'm not 'that' devious. Keeping one of our kind unconscious takes a bit of effort. I gave you something that would keep you out for a while. I knew when it would wear off and leave you in regular sleep. If you'd follow me, you can meet the others." Candi replied.

Nikita felt that what he had on was leaving him open to a lot of air movement, so he looked down at himself. He had no shirt or shoes on. The only clothing he had was a thin strip of light tan buckskin held up by a narrow cord around his waist. The strip reached down to almost cover his full length. He looked up to Candi. "Why am I wearing this? It doesn't even cover."

The mouse grinned. "It fits just fine on were-wolves, rats, mice or others. It must be terrible to be cursed with that."

"I don't like wearing this. What happened to my clothes?" Nikita sat his hands on his hips.

"You can have the pants that you deliciously tore through if you'd rather wear them. I won't complain if you want to wear nothing at all." Candi turned toward the exit of the cavern. "You look sexy when you snarl. I like the fangs." She reached behind her to clasp a hand over the peak of one of his biceps. "Keep close. It's easy to get lost here." She looked back over a shoulder. "It's like a rat's maze."

"Where are we headed to now?" Nikita then said to himself 'Don't look at her butt. Don't look at her butt.'

"We're getting lunch. I didn't expect anyone to be at the museum display as soon as it opened." Candi answered. She kept her grip on him.

"You look kind of familiar. Do we go to the same school?" Nikita asked.

"You don't recognize me from Eastlake High?" She replied.

"There seem to be a lot of toned, buff and pretty girls there." Nikita answered.

"The other schools call us things like 'Amazon High'." Candi said. "If it makes you feel any better, I really didn't want to have to knock you out."

"Um, apology accepted." Nikita was quiet for a few second, then replied. "I'm sorry I didn't recognize you. You're also very pretty, and definitely in the musclegirl club. You don't have to hold onto me. I'll follow."

"I don't mind leading you like this." Candi squeezed her fingers and thumb together. "The werewolf guys are firm. You're rock hard." She smirked at the double entendre. She

soon lead him into chamber with an open ceiling. Tree boughs blocked the view of the sky. "They are kept pruned so that rain won't fall into here.

Nikita kept one hand clasped around the other arm's wrist, to try and look natural as he did his best to hide his endowment. He crossed the room to the rough hewn wooden table and benches that had the pair of werewolves from before seated at it. "You're the guys from before, aren't you?"

The taller, grey one replied. "It's good to see that we don't all look the same to you. Take a seat. We don't bite.. Much."

Nikita took half a step back, and held his lower lip in his teeth. His ears folded down.

"Don't worry. I say that every chance I get." He tapped the table with his palm. "Join us. We've even got some fresh fish for you."

The shorter, brindle werewolf said "Our bark is worse than our bite. Yes, I've been wanting to say that for a while, too. I'm Christian." He gestured to the taller wolf. "He's William, or Bill."

"This is all new to me. I had heard of others like me being around, but today is the first time I've ever seen any." Nikita said. "You're both a lot, um, bigger than I expected."

"So says the hyper-hung model." Bill replied. "We don't want to have to stare at that while we have lunch." As Nikita took a seat, curling his tail onto the bench next to him, he continued. "Werewolves tend to be a lot bulkier than anyone else. Rodents are.." He glanced to the side, where Candi was retrieving a couple of plates of food from the grille. "Kind of petite."

"I can hear you!" Candi shouted as she used a finger to flick one of her oversized ears.

"You're a rare, exotic type." Bill added.

"Why did Candi use a weapon to knock me out instead of just all of you punching, or biting me?" Nikita asked.

"Physical weapon damage heals up very fast. Natural weapon injuries don't." Candi said as she walked over. She sat the plates onto the table. "It's considered bad manners to block the seat with your tail." Candi reached with a hand to push the mink's tail onto the ground. "Don't worry, the floor's clean." She sat down next to Nikita, with her own whip-like tail going around his waist. "Also, biting or clawing someone is not a nice way to fight. How many times have you bitten anyone's limbs off?"

“Um, never. That would be kinda gross.” Nikita answered. After trying the fish, he said “This really is good.”

“I have a special seasoning rub.” Candi replied while her hand found it’s way to slide across Nikita’s thigh.

The mink swallowed hard. “Uh.. Why were you stealing that amethyst cathedral?”

Christian, the shorter werewolf, set down his drink. “We’ve been getting some really bizarre requests from Rat-Sputin for what kinds of things were are to do lately.”

“Rat-Sputin?” Nikita asked. “That can’t really be his name.”

“That’s what he likes to be called. None of us know his real name.” Candi answered. “He pays us really well to do stuff for him. He has just one rule: Don’t expect him to ever tell why he wants things done.”

“Aren’t you afraid of getting caught and put into jail? Also, it’s really bad to steal from a museum.” Nikita said.

“What are people going to say? A scary wolfman showed up and took a spool of titanium wire?” Bill replied. “They’ll sound like they are crazy. We haven’t stolen all that many things, and nothing that’s got any historical value.”

Nikita took slow, deep breaths as Candi’s tail tightened and loosened around a more sensitive part of his lower anatomy. “Aren’t you going to ask about me?”

“You’re Nikita Katsan. You go to Eastlake High School. You’re a star on the swimming team.” Candi replied. “You’re a were-mink. If you want, I can give a good guess to your measurements.”

“No.. No, you don’t have to do that much. I’d like to pretend that there’s ‘something’ about me that’s still private.” Nikita smiled uneasily. “Other than taking stuff for him, what does Rat-Sputin have you do?”

“We take care of the ‘Final Form’ gaming club.” Bill smirked.

“That’s, um, near the Wendigo’s restaurant. I live just a few miles away.” Nikita looked back and forth among the others. “I’m not in some kind of secret wilderness lair, am I?”

“I’m sorry to burst your bubble.” Candi sat her hand on the back of Nikita’s arm while her tail continued to stroke along him. “I take it you’ve heard of the club?”

"It's a gaming and comics store with some rooms for people to use." He thought for a few seconds. "It used to be a restaurant called 'The Caverns', right?" He looked to see the others nodding. "You brought me from downtown to my neighborhood."

"I'll try and be more mysterious for you in the future. The people gaming here don't have a clue that they are here with actual magical beings. That makes our jobs a lot more fun." Candi said. "The club's called 'Final Form'."

"Why did you dress me in a loincloth, instead of regular clothes?" Nikita asked.

"You look better this way, and it helped make you think we were in some sort of far-off forest gathering of lycanthrope clans. We didn't want you to run off before having a chance to talk." Candi replied.

"Now that you know I'm not running away, may I have something different to wear?" Nikita asked.

"The guys should have something that you can borrow if you want to follow them. We've got an hour before the 'Final Form' club opens, so you have plenty of time to change." Candi answered.

"I, um.. I think I should stay here and finish lunch first. Maybe one of them could bring me something to put on in a half hour?" Nikita stammered.

"How about if I stay for a while with you, just so you don't have to eat alone, of course." Candi's tail gave a squeeze. She looked to the werewolves. "Someone needs to keep an eye on him while the other two of us set things up in the main store." Once the guys left, she whispered to Nikita. "I'm sure you'll find the dessert a lot better than your meal."

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"Wow, I'm surprised that you're still able to walk." Christian smirked.

"You're hollow inside, right?" Bill chuckled.

"Is it possible to be more jealous?" Candi stood on tiptoes to look Christian in the eyes.

"Are you looking forward to having a litter of kits?" Bill asked.

"I'm not stupid. I used protection." Candi turned to look at him.

"You stretched a Hefty bag over him?" Bill grinned.

“Are we through with all the jokes?” Candi sat her hands on her hips. “We’re going to have to introduce him to Rat-Sputin.”

“Do you think he’ll offer your plushie toy a job?” Bill asked. “Nikita was all set to stop us at the museum.”

“We can’t just abandon him. He knows nothing about our kind. He needs us.” Candi replied. “I’ll bring him something of yours to wear.” She said to Bill. “We’ll meet you in the break room in a few minutes to give a call to the boss.”

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“This could work out very well for us.” Rat-Sputin said. He had slicked-back hair and wore a chalk stripe suit.

“Does that mean I’m hired?” Nikita asked. “I need to let you know that I’m not going to do any awful things.”

“We’re all here to help each other.” The were-rat replied. “That’s the most important part.” He leaned back in his chair and put his feet up on his desk. “I’m not going to ask you to rob from orphans or widows.”

“You ‘did’ have them steal from a museum.” Nikita gestured toward the pair of werewolves and the were-mouse who were all leaning against the office wall. The small group did their best to look in any direction other than toward the mink and the rat.

“Having you on board would be enough to tip the scales in our favor. At first, Mephit-Stopholes was paying really well for things that were easy to get. Now that Pooka is acting like she’s some kind of crime lord.” Rat-Sputin lifted his feet from the desk and settled them onto the floor. He sat up straight in his wooden desk chair. “I don’t want for us to be a big-league crime syndicate. It’ll make us into hoodlums. It will also attract attention. For example, I do not want some super-strength superheroine, like that elf girl, Shayna, or maybe Comet Girl showing up to fight us.”

“What are we going to do about it, then?” Candi asked. “Can we just quit?”

“That’s where our new friend comes in.” Rat-Sputin grinned, showing his buck teeth. “He’ll be enough to tip the scales in our favor. I’ll set up a meeting with Mephit-Stopholes tonight where I’ll be able to change our business relationship.”

“How do you know that I’ll go along with your plan?” Nikita crossed his arms.

"Can you turn down the chance to help others so that they will not have to become hardened criminals?" Rat-Sputin leaned back into his chair.

"Touche`." Nikita replied.

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"This makes no sense." Nikita said as he leaned back against one of the posts on the porch. "We come out to the middle of Silent Hill late at night, and get told to wait outside."

"Rat-Sputin needs us to keep an eye out for any trouble. Telling Mephit-Stopholes that we're not going to be doing what she wants us to do is risky." Candi sat on the railing of the porch.

"Can you hear what's going on inside?" Nikita asked.

"There's violin music drowning out whatever's being said." Candi cocked her head. "She's got to be doing this on purpose."

"Can you tell if they are talking or if they are fighting?" Nikita asked.

"There's a couple of people just inside the door who are arguing about which is better, nok hockey or air hockey. That's all I can tell." Candi replied. "I also have really good hearing in human form." She wiggled her ears.

"All that I can tell is that this place smells from incense." Nikita looked around. "It does have a nice garden. I haven't seen this kind of flower before." He pointed.

Candi's eyes opened wide. "That's mousebane!" She dropped from the railing to her feet on the porch. "It's also called wolfsbane. This can't be good."

"Mephit-Stopholes knows that you're a mouse, and has loud music playing. She's also got those plants, when she knows that a were-rat, a were-mouse, and a pair of werewolves are coming over." Nikita said.

"They walked into a trap. We've gotta tell Rat-Sputin." Candi said.

Nikita grabbed the door handle "It's locked."

"I'll have it open in a little while." Candi squatted to the side of it as she pulled a flat billfold from her purse.

"I'll have it open right now!" Nikita kicked at the door right next to the handle. "Yah!" The wood shattered with a loud 'Crack!' that left him with his lower leg through the door.

"Holy crap!" "What the hell?" Shouts came from inside.

Candi frowned. "We'll have to do this the hard way." She pulled on the handle to open the door. The thin metal picks she was using stuck out of the lock.

Nikita hopped to keep upright as Candi opened the door. "I didn't expect that."

"Get yourself free. I'll handle this." Candi took out her meteor hammer and started twirling it as she stepped in through the doorway.

"Woah. Don't be doing that." One of the thugs reached to put his hand on top of his partner's gun.

"What are you talking about?" The second thug looked from the girl to his partner, and then back to the girl.

"Take a look at her." As the first thug pointed at her, Candi shifted her weight from foot to foot. She smiled a little. "What does it mean when a girl doesn't run when you point a gun at her?"

"She's nuts." The second thug answered.

"She's probably bulletproof." The first thug said. "Take a closer look at her. When do you ever see teen girls that have no body fat and biceps bigger around than your legs? I've dealt with this before. Shooting her will just give her an excuse to beat the crap out of you." He held his hands up above his shoulders. "She's also got fur and a tail. She's an anthropomorphic mouse." He paused for a second, then added. "Do I need to spell it out for you. She's some kind of superheroine."

The second thug thought for a few seconds. He then dropped his gun and put his hands up. "We didn't do anything to you, so we're just gonna go now." He edged his way to the door. "Holy crap. There's another one here."

He was followed by his partner, who said "You've got nothing on us. Just let us go and we'll forget that we ever saw you." Once they got outside, the two thugs sprinted down the street.

"Do you usually win your fights this way?" Nikita asked as he stepped inside.

“Those guys were smart. They knew that they were no match for this mouse girl’s major league guns.” Candi held up her arm and flexed. The leather sleeve creaked as it was stretched. “You’ll be free to worship it later.” She smirked and leaned her head over to kiss the peak of her bicep.

“You’re so modest.” Nikita rolled his eyes.

“That’s coming from an exhibitionist.” Candi sat her hands on her hips on her hips.

“I’m not..” Nikita was cut-off in mid-sentence.

“Who’s that person on the swim team who wears a speedo that’s been stretched out into a sleeve?” Candi asked.

“Okay. Um. Shouldn’t we be helping the others?” Nikita said.

“Nice deflection.” Candireplied. “Let’s hope we catch Mephit-Stopholes by surprise.” She turned and lead the way from the foyer to the home’s central hall.

“He’s got odd tastes, doesn’t he?” Nikita asked.

“You mean ‘She’s’. Mephit-Stopholes is a pooka. I’d only met her and one other fey. They seem to like joke names. Everything here is done up in ultra-fancy, um, rococo style.” Candi stopped at the pair of gilt-adorned double doors at the end of the hall. “We’ll go in on the count of three. One, two... Three!”

A wave of sweet incense smoke wafted from the brass censers to fill the hall as Nikita pulled the doors open. The garden could be seen through the French Doors at the opposite side of the room. Confections sat next to a teapot and cups on a side table. Violin music came from a hand-cranked victrola. Christian and Bill were slumped into a pair of gilded chairs.

“Holy..” Nikita said as he saw an anthropomorphic skunk woman wearing low heels, breeches, a waistcoat and a bicorn hat. She was pointing a flintlock pistol at Rat-Sputin. “What the heck are you doing?”

“I’ve been expecting to be double-crossed.” Mephit-Stopholes replied. “You should know to never put your faith in a rat.”

“What do you mean by ‘double-crossed’? We just don’t want to do bigger and bigger thefts for you.” Candi said. “You’re the one who’s had this big murder plan in place. You stink!”

“And you’re vermin.” She pointed the pistol at Nikita. “Don’t try anything stupid and you’ll get out of here in one piece.”

"There's no way for you to stop three of us at once." Nikita said.

Mephit-Stopholes replied. "You're outnumbered. I've got some nice toys for the mouse to play with." She snapped her fingers. On cue, blown glass mice scurried out of various places around the room. Each was tan, with a chocolate swirl pattern going over it. They would have been cute, except that they also had sharp glass teeth.

"As for you, Rat-Sputin. Too bad you seem to have been unaffected by the tea and petit-fours. I'll have to be more direct. Consider this as payment for non-delivery." Sparks and flames erupted from the gun's muzzle as it's report echoed.

"Rat-Sputin!" Nikita hesitated as he was about to leap toward Mephit-Stopholes. The mink ran the few steps to catch the other lycanthrope.

The rat wheezed in a breath and labored with the words. "It's silver. Pull it out!"

Nikita looked to the mouse. "Candi?"

"I can't help you now." She leaped to straddle Christian, her feet on the chair's arms. Candi grasped his shirt with one hand, lifting him. "C'mon. Wake up! Wake up!" She slapped him across both cheeks, rocking his head back and forth.

"How do I..." Nikita asked.

"Improvise!" Candi hopped down from the chair. "Ow, these little buggers really bite hard." She ran into the garden, through the door that Mephit-Stopholes had left open. The curtain billowed as she passed it. "I need some room to maneuver."

Nikita laid Rat-Sputin onto the floor and pulled open his sport coat. The were-rat shivered and coughed. The mink then pulled open the blood-stained shirt to see a small red hole in the rat's chest. "It's healing over fast."

"Do it quickly." Rat-Sputin struggled to say.

"Ugh..." Nikita wrinkled his nose. The coppery smell of blood was accompanied by the burning metal smell that silver always had. "The only way to get it out would be to cut you open."

"I'll heal." The rat said. "Don't hesitate."

"I don't have a knife." Nikita said.

Rat-Sputin reached a hand to sit on top of Nikita's arm. "I'll die if you wait."

Nikita looked up, to see Candi dart past the doorway, chased by a group of glass mice. The end of the meteor hammer slammed into one, knocking it out of view. "There's nothing here that I can use." He sat his index finger over the wound, took a deep breath, then pushed it in. He followed this by forcing his middle finger in next to the first. Nikita's ring finger followed.

The were-rat was whimpering, his eyes squeezed shut.

Nikita paused. If he could sweat in his were-form, he'd be soaked with it. He could hear his own heart pounding. The mink leaned into the were-rat, forcing his other hand's first three fingers in. Nikita's head swam as the scent of blood and the feel of another's flesh yielding to his grasp brought up a momentary feeling of hunger. His muscles tensed as he pulled his hands apart, snapping the rat's ribs and tearing him open. The mink's razor like teeth were displayed as he grinned.

The sudden metallic tang of silver brought him out of his reverie. The were-mink paused. "What am I doing? Was I really thinking of.. Of eating him? I've.. never seen blood like this before." The were-rat's lung was blackened where the bullet had lodged. "There it is." Nikita hissed in pain as he grasped the projectile. He flung his hand back, as if he had just grabbed a hot stove. The teen looked around for something to cover his hand. He ripped a piece of Rat-Sputin's shirt free and used it to grab onto the object. Nikita rolled the fabric and bullet in his hands for a second, then let it drop to the floor. He sat back on his heels to catch his breath as he saw the other lycanthrope's flesh start to mend itself, ever so slowly.

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Candi leaped to grasp the eave of the gazebo with one hand. She grunted with effort as she tossed herself over the edge of the roof to land near its center. "Those glass mice are relentless." The were-mouse took a running step and jumped to the roof of the house as her pursuers skittered their way to the peak of the gazebo's roof. "Take that!" She hit two of the glass mice with successive throws of her meteor hammer, sending them across the garden.

"Hey! Up here!" Candi shouted to Nikita as she saw him step into the house' garden.

"Why are you on the roof?" He replied.

"I've got to stay ahead of the glass mice. You look like you've just stepped out of a horror movie. You're covered in blood." Candi replied.

"It wasn't easy getting the shot out of him." Nikita replied. "He's healing, slowly."

Candi jumped down to the gazebo roof, landing with a 'Thud!'. The girl's legs quivered as she landed, each muscle showing in chiseled relief as they flexed to absorb the impact. "Do you have any ideas for how to stop those?" She pointed to where the mice had scampered up to the edge of the house' roof, where they shone in the moonlight.

"Can't you shatter them by hitting them?" Nikita asked.

"I've hit them a bunch of times. They won't even scratch." Candi replied.

"I have an idea. Have you played any of the multiplayer online games?" Nikita asked.

"Who hasn't?" Candi answered.

"They follow after you in a straight line, right?" Nikita asked.

"Yeah." Candi paused for a few seconds. "I can have them follow me in a train to where you'll have a trap ready. That's what you're thinking."

"You've got it." Nikita jogged over to the pond while Candi zipped off. He grunted with effort as he lifted one end of a large, flat rock. He thought 'This is a lot heavier than it looks'. The were-mink stood off to one side of it, holding it up at arms-length. "I'm ready!"

"I'll be right there." Candi flipped from a tree branch to the ground. "Just wait a few seconds." She stood in place as the blown glass mice nearly caught up to her. "Drop it when I say to." She shifted her weight from foot to foot, causing her leg muscles to ripple and her tail to swing rapidly. "Okay.." The were-mouse sprinted toward Nikita. "Now!" She dove under the wide stone as it fell.

The loud 'Whump!' as the stone fell into place was accompanied by a splash as Candi rolled along the ground and into the koi pond. Nikita laughed as Candi stood up, water flowing off of her. "I'm sorry. That is just too funny." He said.

"I should have that cartoon gag of standing up with a fish in my mouth." Candi replied.

"That would be a combination of wet t-shirt, painted on leather pants, and dinner." Nikita's eyes opened wide. "Um.. I was supposed to think that, not say it."

"That's right. You should just stare at me and think it." Candi replied. "It's not like I can't tell what's on your mind right now." She lowered her eyes, then looked back to his face. "I see why you prefer to wear things that are baggy." She clasped her hand onto his arm, giving a squeeze to the peak of his biceps as she stepped out of the pond.

“Shouldn’t we, uh.. Shouldn’t we be getting Rat-Sputin, Christian and Bill out of here?” Nikita stammered.

“We’ll bring them back to Club Final Form. The guys can stay there until the wolfsbane wears off. We also need to get showered. I’m not going to have the fish pond water on me all night.” Candi kept her hand clasped onto Nikita’s arm as she stepped toward the house’ back door. “You’ve got to get that blood cleaned off of you.”

Nikita whispered to Candi “I.. I don’t know how to say this.” He paused for a second. “When I was pulling the bullet out of Rat-Sputin, I felt.. Hungry. I think it’s some kind of instinct.”

Candi stopped and turned to him. “You’ve never felt that before?” When Nikita nodded in agreement, she continued. “You’re a predator, and rats and mice are usually on the menu. You’ll get used to it.”

“That doesn’t make you nervous?” He asked.

“I work with a pair of wolves after school. There is nothing that will surprise me.” Candi answered. “I’ve been called ‘dinner’, ‘breakfast’, and ‘snack’. I’ve also heard every lewd comment and every pun name imaginable. Fox girls are vixens and dogs are bitches.”

“Let’s check on Rat-Sputin and get the wolfman guys into the car.” Nikita said.

“Good try at deflection.” Candi replied. “The club only has one shower, and we’re not taking turns.”