

Chapter 2 :: Things that disappear ::

Out of bed now and down the stairs of the little house he was living, taking each step slowly with another yawn claiming his muzzle. Paws stepping along the cooler floor, he'd round a corner and down a short hall to the kitchen. Green eyes were cast to the half-filled sink, a sigh passing his lips with a soft shake of his head. "Another Day of peaceful bliss."

Taking a small container of coffee, he'd open it and begin the waiting game for his morning caffeine fix. Setting the mug by the coffee pot, taking the decanter and filling it almost full before pouring the water into the reservoir. Stepping away and letting the coffee brew, he'd look out of the small kitchen window to the fields behind the small house. "Work should be slow today with the nice weather. "

His ears perked and gave a small flick when a knock came at the front door, pulling him from his own thoughts as he turned to go see who it was so early in the morning. "I'm not expecting anyone... "

Judy had been eyeing Nick every so often, the cruiser giving a slight bounce every so often. Nick had been quieter than usual, and despite her best efforts, she hadn't been able to get anything out of him about what it may be. "Nick... are you sure everything's alright, you seem like you're somewhere else."

She took note of his ears twitching, followed by a soft nod from him with an 'uh huh' and nothing more. Her own ears had fallen back, droopy as they were when her friend seemed out of sorts and herself at a loss to pull him back from where his mind might be.

Judy saw the movement of his left forepaw, waving at her to stop the cruiser even as she looked to where his attentions were drawn. Seeing the deal in play as well, she would give a soft nod. "I see them, ready when you are ". Grabbing the radio as she heard Nick when he finally spoke, drawing her attention more to the ram they had spotted.

'I'm certain that's the ram from the train car, back when they tried to stop us from taking the Night Howlers.' Nick's eyes glancing to her for only a moment, green orbs focusing on her amethyst colored eyes. He'd look back to see money and something else exchange paws, opening the door on the cruiser as it had come to a stop. The wolf that the ram was making the deal with, he'd slink off quickly enough. 'All right Carrots... let's go'

Judy climbed from the patrol car following Nick, making their way across the dimly lit street, moving after the ram as he entered what looked like a warehouse. They waited an extra minute when he'd gone inside before she tilted her head, her left forepaw on her radio as she called in for backup just to be safe. "Officers Hopps and Wilde in pursuit of large ram, Possible 10-31 in relation to new Night Howler Drug. Requesting backup to Tundratown Industrial district, Building A113".

Entering the building after placing the call for backup, she held her dart gun at the ready by now. The cold concrete floor underfoot, Judy peered into the poorly lit warehouse, her nose twitching as uncertainty was clearly on her mind. Keeping her ears perked and listening, she heard a pair of voices somewhere just ahead of them. Glancing to Nick as she made a motion to move forward, and receiving a look and a nod from her partner.

Judy's sensitive ears took note, that the sound of the voices almost seemed like they were coming from a radio. The very slight electronic feedback that seemed to kick up just before they spoke, and then seemed to return for a few seconds after either party had spoken. She just couldn't place why they would be talking through a radio to one another, it wasn't until she gave the signal and Herself and Nick jumped out. "FREEZE!"

The whole situation seemed to be slightly off, the atmosphere to the odd chance they'd see the deal going down outside. The ram himself was familiar for some reason, though Nick seemed more certain of where from. The thoughts themselves having entered her mind right then were triggered more by the voices, vaguely familiar as they were. "Wh...where are they..."

Eyes looking to the small wooden table, atop it was an old tape recorder playing the voices they'd heard. The conversation about Bellwether, the Night-Howler serum and all could have been from months back, but in that moment, it didn't matter when she heard the voice from the tape recorder coming from just above them. 'Lucky us to find it was you two following us, payback is bitter sweet. But you shouldn't have taken the train from us back then, or stuck your noses where they didn't belong'

Things didn't exactly go per plan, from the very moment they had stopped to pursue the ram it dawned on both Nick and herself. They had played into a trap it seemed, but before she could properly process exactly how, the lights flicked on above them, leaving them both partially blinded for a second. Her sensitive ears picked up the sound of feet above them, trying to train her weapon on the location she heard them from, only to hear the familiar thump of a dart leaving a tube.

She felt herself thrown to the side, sliding a few feet on the concrete floor. Feeling Nick close to her just before the hit, as she rolled a few times before getting up. Judy's amethyst eyes seeing Nick hunched over, in pain as he held his stomach and yelled for her to run, she wouldn't listen. Getting up and running back to Nick, she would try and pull him to herself.

"This is Officer Hopps, in need of medical support and backup, Officer Wilde is down... I repeat Officer Wilde is down" Running her paws through his soft fur, feeling the warmth of his body, of his being as she fretted over him. "Nick, it will be all right, an ambulance is on the way with backup, I'm here... I'm not going anywhere at all, it will be all right, just. Just tell me... one of your dumb jokes, let me know you're ok please."

Judy felt something against her, like being hit in the chest from the punch of a Rhino, her already tear filled amethyst colored eyes closing. She tried crying out as the oxygen seemed like it had been sucked from her body, coupled with the pain as Nicks' head slammed into her chest. She grasped at air though when she felt the floor seemingly vanish, trying to grab onto Nick who was there just a second before. Her mind racing despite the sudden lack of oxygen in her body, she felt the musty air of the warehouse rushing past her.

Judy felt as her body was hit once more, or maybe had hit something this time. The wooden crate she'd been flung into stopping her sideways movement, landing on her stomach as she coughed loudly, trying desperately to catch her breath quickly. She wanted to get back to Nick, he needed her as much as she needed him right then. "Nick.... p..."

Her words were cut off quickly, replaced by a sudden gasp and a scream of nothing but pain. Her senses suddenly overloaded with it, with the sudden sharp jolts along her stomach, side, and back that shot through every nerve in her body. Her disorientation didn't end with being thrown into the crate, with the new pain, and new warmth of her blood through her fur.

She was jolted one way then another, back and forth rapidly before she hit the floor again. Nicks scent was so close to her, but she felt so weak, so terribly tired in those moments. Lifting a shaky paw to try and reach him, brushing it over the end of his soft blood covered muzzle, she drifted to sleep as darkness claimed her mind.

Judy came back in waves, periodically slipping back into consciousness as her eyes searched. She looked for Nick, looked At the Paramedics and the Ambulance she was in. An oxygen mask over her muzzle, the pain in her body was more like a subtle numbness now.

Trying to speak as the paramedics seemed to be busy, it was strange to her that they didn't seem to notice her, how she was talking to them. Though the reality of why would only come later, her lips barely moving and no word escaping them as she slipped away once more.

Days passed by as she was kept unconscious, doctors working to keep her stable and alive, as well doing their best to ensure as best recovery as possible for her. The bite wound had broken at least three of her ribs, punctured her left lung in at least 4 places, her heart had barely been missed.

But the real damage had come when she'd been shaken, the fangs that had so easily pierced her flesh, had torn her side open as well as her lung. Not including the side of her stomach from the angle of the foxes' bite, and the blood loss on top of it all. Judy was truly lucky to be alive, it was a strange testament to predators and how effective they had been in days' past.

Chief Bogo looked through the window into her room, still in uniform and looking equally dreary. Hopps was in far worse from how things looked, bandaged up with tubes in her nose and mouth, machines beeping and humming away. He would cast his gaze to the small Rabbit doctor, just exiting her room in the ICU. "How bad is she doctor? I'd like the full status if you don't mind."

'Well... she was in surgery for nearly 15 hours, but multiple lung punctures cracked ribs. A Possible concussion, bruised spine and multiple tears near her stomach as well. Whatever it was that attacked her, she's lucky she made it to the hospital alive.' Doctor Florida tapped at his clipboard a moment, flipping through some paperwork before looking back to Bogo once more. 'We're keeping her comatose for the time being, but if she makes it through the next two days she should be on a clear recovery path.'

Bogo nodded as he took on what the doctor had said, he would look back into her room once again. "What do I tell her parents, it's just what I need more bunnies around." An idea struck him though as he thought to Clawhauser, he had met a few of the Hopps family, as far as he recalled they seemed to love him. "I'll place the call in the morning, and have Clawhauser meet them at the station."

He'd make his way from the ICU, heading through the hospital to the east wing. He needed to check up on Officer Wilde still, from what he had been told, from officers that had arrived first, it was a very unpleasant scene. When he entered the east wing of the hospital his ears were treated with quite the sound, Snarls and any other number of noises filling the hall he'd entered. "Well Well... it seems officer Wilde is awake." Speaking to himself mostly, he followed the sounds of the Savage Fox, stopping when he heard something hit a wall close by.

: Month 1 :

Judy lay in her hospital bed motionless, eyes on the television screen, watching the news and remaining frustrated at her situation. Stuck on bed rest until her ribs and lungs healed further, she hated that they kept her in the dark with the case. Clawhauser was the only one that had managed to keep her up to date, despite how little he could get away with telling her.

Judy's ears remained droopy as she flicked through the channels, she knew it was odd that there was so little new on any crime, more than likely the Chief had something to do with that. Feeling just as tired yet full of energy, as usual, she perked up only a bit when she heard the door to her room. Hoping to see the one creature she was most worried about, her partner Nick whom she hadn't seen or heard anything from. No, her violet eyes were not treated to orange fur and green eyes, they were treated to the Chief again, for the tenth time that month.

"Officer Hopps! It's good to see you awake, and responsive, hopefully, you're feeling well today."

She gave the Chief such a glare, if it had been daggers then surely, he would be in one of the hospital beds himself. Being unable to speak with a set of tubes crammed down her muzzle, helping her breath as much as she needed it still, for the time being, she weakly picked up the little sign board to write on. Scribbling down a quick note, she would hold the sign up for Bogo to see 'where is Nick??' glaring at the water buffalo, she'd have even been tapping a paw waiting for an answer if she could have.

"I cannot tell you the details of Officer Wilde, we've gone over this already Hopps. You're both a part of the investigation" Raising a paw to cut her off before she could write again. "We were able to apprehend one of the assailants from that night, and he's been in custody for his part, but it seems things may be bigger than anticipated."

Judy kept her ears perked high listening to the Chief, the sign on her features enough to give away her displeasure. She was growing desperate to know her partner's condition, why was something dealing with Night-Howlers so secret, especially with her partner's well-being kept from her 'Thank you for the update, but I'm feeling tired'. Putting the board down, she would settle back more comfortably once again. Closing her eyes before the Chief turned to leave the room, stopping in the doorway before he left completely.

: Month 2 :

Judy sat up in bed with her ears drooping behind her a little, nodding with a soft smile as her parents rambled on. The tubes no longer claiming her muzzle, and over-all she was looking to be in far better health. Her bandages were fewer, though she still had some ways to go in healing, but her doctor had given her a mostly clean bill of health. "Mom, Dad! I love you guys, but it's fine, you heard doctor Florida. I'm Recovering fantastically and should be back at 100% in another few months, I'll even be out of the hospital by next month."

"What if something like this happens again! What... what if you're left killed! Or worse! EATEN!" Stu Hopps fretted over his daughter, often to her own mortification.

"Stu... She will be fine, Judy is a strong rabbit! She takes after her dependable father after all." Bonnie tried to stifle her husband's worries a bit, she loved him with all her heart but he could be a bit much

when left to his own devices. She did give Judy a knowing look, showing her own concern as well as asking her to go easy on her poor father. "I'm certain that she will come visit as soon as she's well enough Stu, we should be going though it's already getting late." Bonnie gave a gentle tug at Stu's arm before stepping to Judy.

"It's all right I promise Dad, Like Mom said, I'll be back home for a visit as soon as they let me out of the hospital." Opening her arms with a warm smile on her muzzle, she would give both of her parents a gentle, and extra careful hug nuzzling against them slightly before letting go.

"Well, I suppose that's good then. We'll get things cleaned up for your visit then, just... be alert I worry." Stu wiping a tear from his eye after the warm hug, he took Bonnie's paw in his own and turned to leave the room.

Laying back in her bed as soon as they were out the door, she groaned in exasperation from her family. She loved them all dearly, but her father really could be more trouble just for how much he worried and doted on her. Looking about the room though, she couldn't help but smile, seeing the flowers they had brought with them. "At least it makes the place smell better, I was getting more stir crazy than usual being stuck here." Turning her attention from the flowers to the window, she looked out to the night sky, her thoughts drifting to her own concern. "What's going on with you Nick, no calls or anything"

The pang in her chest had returned while she thought of him, though her own assumption made her believe it was from the injuries, wincing slightly even if the pain she felt was in her head. "Ughh.. I cannot wait to leave this place, I hope I never have to look at another hospital again." Judy's amethyst eyes would have seemed to sparkle a bit, looking to the stars appear in the night sky from the hospital window.

: Month 6 :

Knock Knock Knock "Judy" Knock Knock Knock "Judy!"

"I'm Coming, I'm Coming all right! Calm down sweet cheese and crackers..." Judy opened the door to her room in the burrows, greeted by one of her brothers who had been knocking unrelentingly. Her Violet eyes greeting Charles eyes the taller bucks hazel colored orbs, his fur was Splotched with brown and whites, as well he was roughly a good foot taller than herself. "What is so important? I was trying to get things ready to go, I've been away from the city and my Job for too long"

"Well... ya have a visitor, His name is Ben, ya Know the Cheetah..." He Stepped out of the way as her ears shot up, and she dashed out of the room and down the hall. Shaking his head slightly before turning to go help their mother again, it was his turn to peel potatoes for dinner that evening.

"CLAWHAUSER!!!" Practically tackling the large cheetah when she greeted him in the main hall of the burrow, hugging to his plump neck and cheeks. "I'm So happy to see you! Have you been well? How's the ZPD? Do you have any more information on Nick?" Her eyes glinting with hope for good news, though the slightly flinch he gave at the last question didn't give her much hope.

"Judy! Ahahah It's great to see you doing well, I'm happy to see you better, work is going splendidly. Though it's a bit less entertaining without you there to keep everyone on their toes, ahhh..." "Hugging her back as they greeted one another, Ben had to pause on the last question, and he could tell he'd made it to obvious that he didn't have a good update for it. "Well... you see the Chief is handling your case with the help if of the ZIA, considering what happened and the information from the ram we took in. But I can't

divulge any information on Officer Wilde, even to you still.” Half mumbling the last bit, he let his eyes study her.

“Anyways though! I brought the car, it’s a long drive back if you’re ready to go!” Ben’s long tail giving a slight twitch and sway as he smiled again, leaning down to Judy and whispering as if it would do any good to stop the prying ears around them both. “I picked up a whole dozen donuts, we can snack on the way back to Zootopia” he was almost glowing telling her that, quite pleased with the thought of those delicious rings.

“The ZBI whatever is happening is that big?” She stood there tapping her foot rapidly a few times, almost pacing even as she thought. Nick had to still be in the same Hospital, or so she hoped since he hadn’t been at his apartment. She had tried contacting his mother about him, but even she was tougher to get in touch with lately. She had never met the Vixen in person, just gotten to know her a little bit from Nick, but getting in contact with her hadn’t been the problem before. She was at least able to find out Nick was alive, and in the hospital but even then, that was about it.

“Alright Ben, let me grab my things and tell everyone goodbye!” Turning to go find her parents first, she left Clawhauser to his own devices, which as her siblings would have things, was to ask him hundreds of questions. Making her way into the kitchen, she smiled a bit seeing her mother peeling carrots. “Hey Mom... Benjamin is here to pick me up, we’ve got a long drive back to Zootopia, so we are gonna head out.”

“Oh.. alright Hun Bun, if you’re sure you guys don’t want to stay for dinner.” Bonnie set the carrot she’d been peeling down, wiping off her paws with the apron she was wearing. She turned and walked over to her daughter, pulling her into a warm hug. “Please be careful out there, your father and I know you can handle yourself. Just... we love you dearly and worry, it’s never easy for us to let any of you leave the nest to lead your own lives. Just remember, if you ever need us, just call please.” Kissing Judy’s forehead as she smiled softly, running a paw over her cheek she’d turn to go back to the carrots.

Being pulled into the warm, and quite welcome hug, Judy closed her eyes returning the affection. “I know mom, I’ll do my best, and if I need anything I’ll let you guys know.” Her nose giving a soft twitch when her mother leaned up and kissed her forehead. She’d turn and leave the kitchen, needing to give her father a goodbye as well as a good portion of her siblings.

Getting away from her father, as well as the many siblings was enough of a challenge, though she was happy to be on the road finally. “You know Ben, I don’t recall much that happened that night. I remember Nick being shot, and trying.... Trying to comfort him, to make sure he was alright. But... I couldn’t help him, everything that happened that night was my fault.” She hadn’t let herself truly open up about that night, but Ben was one of her best friends, and he knew the case and what had happened also.

Tears running down her cheeks, she’d wipe a paw at her eyes. “He was in my arms, and he was in so much pain. Chief told me he’d gone savage, and that Nick had attacked me, but Nick.. Nick wouldn’t have known any better if it was the Night-Howlers, I need to see him, he should know it’s not his fault Ben.” She hadn’t been looking at her friend while speaking, her hands folding in her lap as she dried her eyes and collected herself.

“Judy I know it’s hard, and I really do wish I could tell you more. But all I know is what happened that night, and where they were treating Nick at the hospital. Very few people have been allowed to see him, heck even his mother was only allowed to see him once after he’d first been brought it.” The cheetah

smiled glancing down at her, his eyes would return to the road a moment later. “Now that you’re back though, I’m certain you can make your case to the Chief and he’ll clear you to see him. Just... try not to dwell on it too much, we know Nicks alive after all, and we know where he’s at.”

Eating a donut that ben had brought along, Judy sat in silence for a bit during the car ride aside from the radio. She would perk up as some more upbeat songs began playing, turning her attention away from the worry and concern for her friend and partner. She turned to interrogating Ben, wondering how things had been since she had last spoken to him.

Two weeks had passed since she’d been back to work, and two weeks she had been kept on parking duty despite pleading with Bogo. “The ZBI are working on the case, it’s out of our Hands. If the ZBI have any questions or need for you further, they’ll ask for you directly. The ZBI have to give you clearance to see Officer Wilde, ZBI this, ZBI that.” Slouching forward in the little car as she sat parked along a side street in Tundratown, her head on the steering wheel. Bogo had continued to dodge telling her anything about Nick or his condition, the only thing she could gather was that he still had a job with the ZPD.

“ugghhh... If I could get them for withholding information I would, but I can’t, theirs no way it would hold up or work at all” groaning as she tried to think of anything, it was a daily process for her as of late. She’d even gone by Nicks apartment a few times, hoping that maybe he’d be there one of the times she stopped in. It dawned on her though, sitting there as she instantly perked up. “Mrs.Wilde! I haven’t gotten in contact with Nick mom!”

: Month 7 :

Three weeks it had taken her to find the information, Nick had left her information for emergency purposes, but getting the information without the Chief knowing had been the challenge. Luckily, she had found an older file from when Nick had been younger, buried in the ZPD’s files from a run in they had. She didn’t know if it was accurate for sure or not, but she was bound to find out soon.

“This can’t be the place... could it?” Questioning mostly to herself out loud, she held up the little paper with the address on it. Wearing a simple t-shirt and blue jeans, she checked it and then looked to the building in front of her. It was older and run down a fair bit, it was one of very few that at least looked occupied for what was left in Happytown, a section of Zootopia that she hadn’t heard or known much about to begin with.

Knocking on the door to the duplex, she would step back from the door a little and wait. “Oh.. maybe this wasn’t the best id...” her words cut off when she heard the door’s latches, ears twitching as they perked up, focused on the sounds permeating from the opposite side of the door. It took only a moment before it peeked open, her vision greeted to a pair of green eyes and reddish orange fur. “Oh! Hello, Mrs.Wilde? my name is Judy Hopps. I’d like to ask you some questions about your son...”

“Oh... Oh my, hello... it’s wonderful to finally meet you Officer Hopps!” The older vixen pulling the door open, stepping out of the way to let Judy inside. “Please do come in! Nicky has told me so much about you, please I insist you stay and have a drink.” She would close the door once her guest was inside, clicking only one of the latches once closed. “I apologize if I am too familiar with you, But Nicky had spoken so often about his wonderful rabbit friend in the ZPD. I’d hoped I would get to meet you in person, I couldn’t be at

his graduation from the academy, I had a health thing. But oh, please make yourself at home! I wasn't expecting company, so I'll just fix some tea"

Judy smiled as the Vixen prattled on, hearing how Nick had spoken about her quite a lot it seemed. It gave her another pang in her chest, she wondered if she'd somehow hurt herself or opened an old wound. Her paws pressing to the spot a moment before she continued into the home, taking in the clean but dated look from where Nick had grown up, her smile growing as his mom continued to call him Nicky. "Oh thank you Mrs. Wilde, really it's a pleasure to finally meet you. Nick has told me a little about you, but he tends to be pretty quiet on the family front."

She peeked into the living room, just off from the front door and hall that led straight back to the kitchen. The couch had to have been from the eighties, a weird brown with flower like prints, thick wooden arms on either end. The whole thing looked too heavy to move easily, and the chair across from it matched. The carpet was a simple tan, and the wall paper was a light green with darker leaf prints on it. The scent was far different from in the burrows, or even Nick's apartment, but it was a cozy warm scent.

"Oh, that is just like him, if mum was the word. Then I really would be the best kept secret in town!" Giving a light laugh as she fished about her cupboards for some cups, setting them out on the table in the small dining room. "He is so proud to be working for the ZPD, it's like a dream come true I dare say." Her voice was soft, and still had pep to it for sure. Glancing back to her guest, she took out an old tea-pot and put some water on to boil.

"I could see that, Nick is the best partner anyone could have asked for. I'm glad he's mine, but I do want to talk more, but may I ask a question?" Judy would move the rest of the way to the kitchen, taking a seat at the table, the size not much bigger than the ones back home. She watching Mrs. Wilde set the water on to boil before she too took a seat, adjusting a simple day dress as she did. "I wonder..." she hesitated a moment, speaking clearly as she looked to Nick's mother. "Do you know where Nick is? Or if something has happened to him, there's a Missing mammal case out for him. He went missing from the hospital about a week ago, they say, but staff are unsure if he left, or if he was taken."

Mrs. Wilde seemed to be caught off by the question, her thoughts gathering as she looked to her empty tea cup. "I don't honestly know Officer Hopps... He hasn't contacted me to tell me he was out of the hospital yet, and it's not as easy for me to make the trip to the city center so I can check on him." Pushing herself up from the chair, she walked softly to the stove as the tea-kettle began to whistle. Picking it off the stove with a small towel, she'd move to the table and pour hot water in both cups. "I heard, he had been shot with that terrible Night whatchamacallit, and when I finally was able to see him." Sighing lightly as she put a little tea-bag in each cup. "Well they had been treating him for a while, apparently, the stuff that was used against him wasn't what the ZPD had come across before."

Judy perked up, she'd not heard that information before, only figuring that what Nick had been hit was something they already had a cure for. "So that would explain, why he was in the hospital longer than I was, and why he never contacted me!" Looking at the cup of tea, watching its color shift to a golden brown, the scent faintly smelled of carrots and honey. "I was attacked the same night he was, we were pursuing a suspect from a previous case. But I didn't know anything about what's happened after that night, why Nick was in the hospital still or anything. But that doesn't help me find him still, even with the possibility that he's been taken." Biting her lip softly, she'd take her tea-cup in paw, blowing over it to cool it just a bit before sipping.

The rest of the afternoon went by in a blur, Judy was given a tour of the Wilde families home. She was shown Nicks old room, and shown pictures of when he was younger. His mother telling stories of them, though his father was absent in many of the pictures, she didn't think to question that now. Giving the Vixen a warm hug, she slipped away from the home with a wave. Making her way back across Happytown, she was going to go check Nicks apartment for any clues as to where he might have gone, she would have asked Finnick but he was hardly reachable himself.