

Climbing The Bell Curve

You lot were pretty quiet last week. Yeah, I know its probably due to chapter two being a retread. At least this week is largely new material. You'll be happy to know a good deal of the story from here out will be new, except for a few favorite spots.

The next week saw Sam take his graduation exams on Wednesday. Once they were complete he was essentially dismissed from school until the results were known. Now that he was finished he'd only be back for the graduation ceremony held the next Friday, should he have passed. From the way he moped around the house that night it was clear he thought he'd failed.

He would go to a full time schedule at his job the following day. His job status was also dependent on his having passed his finals. His employer was likely to only promote him if he had passed his exams and receive the coveted diploma. That was if he didn't lose the job he had from failing to get a diploma. Should Sam fail and not get his diploma he'd face a career with very little chance of upward mobility.

Jeremy kept his distance from his brother for the moment. It had become known in the family that their parents and Sam had had an uneasy conversation. Now that he was done with school they let him know of their feelings on him staying in the house.

They would let him stay, but on several conditions. He would need to do his part to pay bills and continue working. Few families were willing to keep a fully grown adult in the house that had no future when they could find a way to support themselves elsewhere. Sam's current pay rate at his job was just enough when it came to helping with the family finances.

However, if he passed he would need the family's initial help in starting a career with a lot of potential and his parents were more than willing to help. Needless to say everyone was anxious of the outcome. Jeremy understood the sacrifice his parents were making for the first time.

It felt strange not only to Jeremy but Ian and Eric as well. Sam was suddenly not with them at the academy but had the same schedule as their parents.

They were coming to realize they lived in a bubble around the school. The entire neighborhood was made of families with at least one of their offspring going to school. Outside that the world looked to be much tougher. It was too late for Sam to do anything but wait, but Jeremy had a new appreciation for school. It had been easy for him compared to his brothers, he'd been gliding along with little effort and still gotten acceptable grades.

Everyone would know on Monday. It made for a tense weekend. Not only did Jeremy study that much harder but Eric and Ian did as well. Their parents noticed the sudden extra effort and let fly a few harsh comments. By the end of the weekend everyone was going out of the way to avoid contact with each other. It was with relief that Jeremy and his two brothers left for school Monday morning.

It wasn't until Sam came home that the family was informed of the results of Sam's exam. The huge smile on his face said it all. He had received an invite to the graduation ceremony to be held that Friday. Seats had been reserved for the entire family. It was only later that evening that he received his results in

a separate note. It was a close thing but he had high enough marks to just make it. Their father couldn't be happier.

"A diploma is a diploma. You already have a job, and at this point no one asks what your grades were." Steven stated just before he gave his oldest son a hug.

When he stepped back Sam was almost in tears. His mother was next to hug him and as she stepped back blinking at him there were tears wetting the fur of her muzzle. There followed a brief discussion of what Sam had planned next. Jeremy was content to stand back and listen. As the youngest he felt the pressure of school the least. Unfortunately for Ian he was drawn into the conversation and the pressure for him to find a part time job began.

Eric and Jeremy both felt it was time to slink off to do their homework. They stayed in their room until called out to join the rest of the family for dinner. The rest of the week went smoother and Friday was upon them. The ceremony was an evening event, held once a month for those who had finished since the previous month. The seats reserved for the Dawn family was almost all the way in the back. It was simply due to the fact that Sam was one of the last to pass his finals.

Jeremy, on being surrounded by adults unfamiliar to him and much larger students realized he'd not added to his PATOMES storage account in over a week. He spent most of the ceremony targeting and siphoning off just a bit of mass from almost all those in attendance. As Sam took his diploma and touched paw pads with the dean of the school Jeremy finally added his brother to PATOMES. After a moments hesitation he subtracted one percent from his brother as well. The action planted an idea in his head that wouldn't go away.

After the ceremony the family went out on a rare night out for dinner. Sam was having a great time being the center of attention. Jeremy felt he probably earned it even if it was perhaps for the last time. At the restaurant he added even more to his storage account. By the time they arrived back home it was late and everyone clustered in front of the television simply chatting and not paying the show any attention. It had been an exciting and challenging month not only for Jeremy but the rest of the family.

Just before bed Jeremy stood alone in the bathroom watching himself in the mirror. He'd decided to use PATOMES to increase his size every week, but was still pondering just how much to add. His previous addition of three hundred was clearly too much for a weekly addition. He decided to try only a hundred for a start and see how that worked. Ready he watched his image as the mass was added.

Even watching closely he saw no difference in his image. He smiled even though he couldn't notice any changes. He had added mass in a high proportion of muscle. He did notice that instead of feeling tired and ready for bed he was suddenly alert as if he's just woken up. Even with the rush of energy he was asleep in minutes.

The next week went far smoother and quickly. Sam's employer received a copy of his diploma and he was officially offered a full time permanent job. With the offer of a permanent job also came a hefty raise, and some benefits. On that Sunday night Jeremy again stood in front of the mirror and watched as he added another hundred units to himself. He still saw nothing as the mass was transferred. Finished with his own transfer he then brought up his brother's profile.

Sam had only grown twenty units over the course of the week. He'd only made up less than a quarter of what Jeremy had taken during his graduation ceremony. He'd also added Ian and Eric's profiles. They too had grown, almost the same as Sam. At a hundred units a week he would catch up to his brothers fairly fast. The thought that he could catch up faster by slowing them would not leave him. He siphoned off half of his two older brothers' growth for the week. Closing PATOMES Jeremy smiled.

He knew it was wrong, cheating, but he couldn't help himself. His entire life he'd been the small brother, and was never allowed to forget it. Soon, he'd be the larger brother and would return the favor. All the taunts, tricks and pranks would come back around to haunt them as Jeremy outgrew first Eric then Ian and finally Sam. The thought came to him then that with PATOMES he could even grow larger than his father.

He slept well that night. The weeks started going by in a blur. His weekly shifting of mass became routine. His rapid growth was eventually noticed but only occasionally remarked upon. Ian took his advancement exams and after a few days learned he'd passed. He started his next year of schooling and not soon after found a part time job to supplement the family's budget. Most of what he made he was allowed to keep after being 'charged' for 'rent'.

Four months after Sam's graduation Jeremy was just an inch shorter than his next oldest brother. Their occasional mock wrestling matches showed that he was already stronger than Eric, and even a near match for Ian. His musculature had advanced to clearly show his greater strength compared to his brothers. Even with the heat of summer fading they often went about without shirts and their thinner pelts gave everyone an opportunity to see just how fast he was developing. Jeremy was enjoying every moment of the summer.

Another month went by and he was taking his own advancement exam. He passed easily, Jeremy was finished with his elementary grades and would start his higher grades the next week. His marks were a pleasant surprise to his parents. He'd achieved the lofty ninety sixth percentile. It earned him a slight discount on the next year's tuition. It also earned him his brothers' animosity. The higher years of study were formatted even more toward self pacing. Not only was he outgrowing them but he also looked to start outpacing them in their education as well.

His first week in the new grade started with a few surprises. Now in a different part of the campus he was among the older students, and a lot of them towered over him. With Jeremy still under four feet tall and many of them already over five he felt a little overwhelmed. He also felt free to remove a bit of mass from many of the larger students.

A few of his friends had advanced before him and were happy to see him again. They'd lost contact just a bit from being in a different part of campus. It had been months since some of them had seen him and he simply smiled as they remarked on his rapid growth. There had been few others who had failed their advancement exams and had been forced to leave school. Failing finals meant starting the year over. Most families couldn't afford to pay for their young to redo a grade. The realization reinforced the importance of his effort to remain focused on his studies.

At his new grade he was also required to spend a block of one hour in one of an assortment of physical fitness programs. He'd heard of some of them from his brothers and liked the idea of having swimming for his first quarter year. However swimming and most other of the choice classes were taken by the more senior students leaving the less sought after classes for the likes of Jeremy. He ended up in a self defense module for the first quarter of his new year.

As his second week started he actually felt comfortable with the tougher curriculum. He enjoyed the challenge of what some considered the more difficult subjects. Another Sunday came and he stood in the bathroom after cleaning up for bed and with PATOMES open checked his brother's profiles.

He'd been retarding their growth for months. He decided to stop slowing his brother's growth for a bit. The larger species at school took delight in pushing everyone else smaller than them around. Jeremy had not really noticed but those larger species were mostly made up of carnivores. He realized his brothers needed all the growth they could manage, but after remembering all the taunts decided they could fend for themselves. His own addition would continue, only now it had a larger purpose than outdoing his brothers.

Another month went by and he grew to match Eric and slowly edged ahead of him. The mock wrestling matches with him ended. Eric and Ian still play fought but there was little point in testing Jeremy. He could subdue them both easily now. His father started looking at him in odd ways but it was Sam that made him pause.

Jeremy had noticed his brother staring at him, often with a studious expression on his face. With the cooler weather and their pelts filling out his advancement wasn't as visible. It was usually only after cleaning up for bed that any of them went without their shirts on, and was then that Jeremy finally understood the glances. It had taken a while to get it but he realized that even at a foot shorter Jeremy was more muscular in comparison than his father.

That next Sunday he passed on adding to himself. From the looks he was starting to receive he felt he was probably close to overdoing his growth. There was no way he knew to explain the growth he'd already given himself. Any more and there'd be far too much attention on him. He'd have to back off for a while. He also elected to continue to allow his brothers to keep their weeks worth of growth. It was time to lay low for a time and let things proceed in a more natural pace.

The weeks continued speeding by and his circle of friends at school had started growing. He thought he understood why, he had become large for a weasel his age. Still, most of the other students were far bigger than he was or would ever be. Weasels were only of average height among the population. Even otters were slightly bigger and yet even they were visibly on edge around the packs of carnivores.

Several more months passed and Jeremy fell out of the habit of even checking himself and his brothers with PATOMES. It was at Eric's birthday celebration that he realized his growth had continued at almost the same rate. When his brother stepped away from the door frame after their father made the mark on the jamb it came to everyone's attention just how much Jeremy had grown. He was now almost as tall as Ian, and he hadn't been using PATOMES to continue to outpace his brothers.

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Going to skip the comments this week. Its been a rough one and it went by really fast. Thats not to say I won't answer any questions that anyone has now that we're starting to get on a roll with the story.