

Time Moves On

So, you lot are still coming back for more. You have no idea how surprised I am at that. Nine chapters and not a single hint of smut and you keep coming back. Make one wonder about the fandom, you're really ruining a reputation that took years of misbehavior to earn. Anyway, here's another fine squeaky clean smut free chapter.

Two weeks after Ian passed his graduation finals the academy held the ceremony. Front row seats had been reserved for the Dawn family. Jeremy suspected it was due to his status as a dominant but decided it best not to ask. Sam had made the trip to see his brother graduate and sat between their father and Jeremy. Eric had begrudgingly agreed to come and on seeing the seating arrangements threw a mini tantrum.

For several minutes their father made a number of attempts to bring his behavior in line and failed. As Jeremy stood watching his brother embarrass himself and the family he felt his temper rise. His father legally couldn't touch Eric, but not so for another person of majority age. Jeremy placed his paw on his brother's shoulder and squeezed. He wasn't using his full strength but his brother crumbled under the force of his paw. Eric sat silent and staring at the floor just a few feet in front of his paws the entire ceremony.

After the graduation ceremony their own celebratory dinner was more of the same. Eric remained sullen and hardly said anything other than to order his meal. The rest of the family ignored him. It was Ian's night after all. Steven couldn't have been any happier. He even made the comment that he was only two more graduation ceremonies away from reaching a lifetime goal.

Sam laughingly agreed and observed that it was going to be a race to see who would graduate first.

Eric stared at him, the resentment and anger all too obvious.

Jeremy shrugged it off. He was happy for other reasons.

One of the businesses that he helped clean after hours had approached him with a job offer. It was a local gym of a popular chain that stayed open all hours. The manager had been up front in that the job was as a physical trainer, and that they also wanted the status of having an up and coming dominant working there. He had thought it over for a few days and finally applied for the opening. His interview was scheduled for the next day.

The interview only took fifteen minutes. They'd already decided before even approaching him so it was simply a matter of explaining what his responsibilities were going to be. He'd start in two weeks to satisfy the notice requirement for the job he had. He would enter the training program to become a fitness trainer. For the first few months he'd follow along certified trainers and slowly take on his own clients. As an employee he was also given the free use of the equipment should he want.

His change of jobs made Eric's life at home that much tougher. He was the only member of the family without a job. He was pressured to apply for the job Jeremy was leaving. He had no choice but to apply.

Jeremy started his new job and liked it almost instantly. The first two weeks entailed him being the one the trainers worked with. He was being paid to learn how to do the training but he almost felt guilty about being paid to work out. Three days of constant exercise soon remedied his guilt. He was tempted

to use the PATOMES reset function after so many work outs but due to the educational part of the training also realized doing so would undermine the whole purpose of the strenuous regime.

By the end of the two weeks he was able to endure the multiple sessions. From then on he was an assistant in training, which meant he could conduct the training sessions so long as a certified trainer was also in the building. He would have to start at the gym right after the tutoring hour and the last class at the gym ended at ten. His schedule adjusted to fit. His homework was split between the few breaks at work and after. He made it a point to finish before going to bed. He was often up to three in the morning sitting at the dining room table by himself. It was still better than Eric's fate.

He'd not gotten the job Jeremy had left open. Their father was making his life nearly unbearable. Even Jeremy was beginning to feel empathy for him despite the constant angry looks he was getting from his brother.

After a month it was clear his job was having an effect on his physique. His muscles were developing better than they ever had. His growth had spiked a bit as well. He was now just a shade shorter than his father. With the combination of his work at the gym and his continuing self defense modules at the academy he felt fitter than ever.

With a graduation certificate Ian was able to obtain a better job. It was also close enough that he could still live at home. Sam was again pushed to apply for the position his brother was leaving open, and failed again.

After the second failure of taking the job left by his brothers Eric began avoiding home. He'd stay at the academy library to do his homework. He stayed as far from the tutoring hour the space in the library allowed. He often arrived home just in time for dinner. He'd then disappear, sometimes with the excuse that he was out looking for work. Out of curiosity and concern Jeremy used PATOMES to track him one night. He had simply gone to a friend's house. Eric took his advancement finals and passed, with little fanfare. He was for the moment back to the year ahead of Jeremy.

A month after Ian had started his new job he announced his intent to propose to the female he'd been dating from the academy. She was still in her final year, and would likely have her finals just before next year's Celebration Day. He planned to marry her within the year.

Steven and Elisa were ecstatic. They both fully supported him. Their father took Ian aside not long after for a discussion. The announcement shocked Jeremy. He'd known his brother had been dating for years, but had never had any inclination to do so himself. He began to wonder a little about his own single-mindedness. He'd never even considered dating like each of his brothers had.

A week later Sam came back for one of his occasional visits. With all four of his sons' home Steven made a surprising observation. Except for Jeremy all three of his sons were the same height. There was an almost awkward moment of looking at each other but it was true. Ian had caught up to Sam but so had Eric. It was the one good moment he'd had in months. He gloried in the sudden realization. Jeremy said nothing, he understood his brother needed the moment.

Still, none of them matched Jeremy. He had grown taller than their father by an inch, and was clearly much stronger. His job as a trainer had continued to substantially improve his physique. Even the larger carnivores at the academy were even begging to show him some respect due to his size and growing dominance. He was still shorter than those larger carnivore specie but it was clear taking him on would be a difficult proposition.

Family life for Jeremy had found a pattern, even though it was a strenuous routine he became accustom to it. Almost before he knew it Celebration Day approached. With the week break at school he went to a full time schedule. The extra exercise was a bit grueling but it was for only a week, he could

endure. A month or so later he took his advancement exams and passed with the usual high marks. He was back in the same year as Eric once again, much to his brother's aggravation.

His routine was given a bit of a shake up midway through his tenth year. Half his schedule was filled with compulsory modules. They were scattered throughout the day depending on the availability of the instructors. His elective modules were fit in around them. When he was almost finished with his final history module it was to be replaced with one he'd never heard of before.

It was titled Individual Studies, instructed by a Mister Zane Rook. He'd never heard of the instructor at the academy either. He'd been informed of the change in the usual way, a note through the mail account every student at the academy had. He passed his history exam in the fall of the year and would begin Individual Studies after a week's break due to the unavailability of Mister Rook. Jeremy was able to get an extra half hour of study in the library before the tutoring hour began in the mean time.

The next week Jeremy found out what Individual Studies really meant. He had to search for the room since it was the first time he'd had a module placed in the administrative building. He had passed the door thinking it was a cleaning closet or some such. It didn't have the typical narrow window set above the doorknob. Checking again that he had the right door he knocked and opened it cautiously, expecting to still have the wrong room.

He did have to correct room. To his surprise the room was a small meeting room with a long conference table and over a dozen chairs. His instructor Mister Rook stood up from one of the chairs as he entered. "Come in and have a seat Mister Dawn."

Mister Rook was a pangolin. A dominant alpha pangolin. Jeremy couldn't help but stare at the large male. The pangolin was larger than even the biggest carnivores specie at the academy. He stood more than a foot and a half taller than Jeremy but had a slighter build. The hard scales covering most of the visible parts of his body made him appear far more formidable than anyone else with a similar build. He settled himself back in his chair and asked Jeremy to sit in one of the chairs next to him.

"So, I expect nobody's explained why you were assigned Individual Studies, yes?"

"Yes, that's right, sir."

"First off, you do understand you're a dominant alpha."

"Yes, sir."

"But do you understand what that entails?"

Jeremy didn't think there was a correct answer by the way the pangolin spoke. He kept silent assuming it better to wait for the large male to make whatever point he was aiming toward.

"Well, after an understandable bit of imposed wisdom the state has decided to assign every upcoming dominant alpha interviews with a possible mentor. The idea being that only other dominant alphas can be a proper guide. Usually, throughout the course of your final year you'd be meeting with a number of us. From what I understand, your rapid advancement makes it necessary to move up these meetings. They are required to be completed before your graduation finals can be scheduled. Consider it an interview process the purpose of which is to find a proper match between you and your mentor. I'm scheduled to be here for the rest of the week, talking with you and answering any initial questions you may have."

Mister Rook swiveled his chair a bit as he watched Jeremy take in the information. After a slight pause he continued. "The relationship of mentor and trainee has to be a mutual one, both sides should

be in agreement. To be fair, its not likely that many of us that you meet will hit it off perfectly, and even less likely the majority of us would want to continue in a mentor trainee relationship. To that end each Monday you'll meet here with another dominant alpha. Any questions so far?"

"Yes, am I required to have a mentor?"

"Not necessarily. The state mandated these meetings. Other than that they have no say over what us dominants do. Which again brings up the first subject. Just how much do you know about being a dominant?"

"Just what I have been able to find online."

Rook nodded with a wry smile. "Which would be hardly anything."

"So it seems. I'm not even sure what to ask, it's like that saying."

The pangolin raised his scaled eye ridges.

"You don't know what you don't know."

Smiling the huge dominant said "There's a reason for that as well, and its also a good place to start. If everyone knew what a fully mature dominant was really capable of we'd be feared for more than just our size."

"What we're capable of? So, there's more to us than just our size."

A nod from the pangolin. "Which is why we originally made the request to the state for a mentorship program. Trouble was, in their ignorance they went a little overboard with the requirements. I can explain, in only a little detail some of those capabilities. For now, whichever dominant you decide is a good match for a mentor will actually train you in those abilities."

Rook sat up and placed his arms on the tabletop. "The initial purpose of these meetings is to explain the responsibilities you'll have as a dominant. We have a great many rights, much more than an average citizen, but to achieve that status you also must undergo thorough training. Training that we as other dominants will impose whether the state knows or even understands the reason behind it. Understand?"

The manner in which Rook had stated his purpose made Jeremy think back to the statistic of half the dominants not reaching maturity. "Am I to assume, that should I not meet up with expectations, I might become a statistic?"

The other male sat back in his chair. "So, you are aware that more than half dominants do not reach maturity."

"I had thought that was due to, well other factors."

"Only a small part of that statistic can be attributed to, as you put it other factors. I apologize for coming on as threatening as I may sound, but there's much more at stake than you realize at this point."

"I can guess that I also need to keep what is discussed to myself."

"Exactly. In fact," he replied opening a folder that had been sitting on the table and pulling out some papers. "I'll need you to sign a few documents. The first is as you can guess a nondisclosure. The second authorizes the academy to release your transcripts to any dominant scheduled to meet with you. The last

is the acknowledgment of the state requirement and will also be signed by every dominant you meet, whether they decide to continue through the week or not."

It took Jeremy several minutes to look through the documents and sign them. After reading them he understood more fully and just as Mister Rook had explained; to fail to complete the required module he'd lose any and likely all of the expected rights he'd be entitled to as a dominant. After he signed everything Mister Rook began to explain what the mentorship program entailed from the standpoint of dominants.

Jeremy and the pangolin talked for the rest of the period. As the mentorship program became clearer his initial attitude about the pangolin softened. He had to admit there really was no soft and friendly way to get the true nature of dominance across. Jeremy mostly listened, and asked a few questions mostly so the dominant could expand on one or two points being discussed. Before he knew it the half hour was over and the pangolin was standing.

Mister Rook said, "I'll be back tomorrow. I haven't decided yet but to my surprise I find you a little interesting. It's also not a bad idea to have more than one mentor, should things develop in that direction."

Jeremy stood and held his arm out to touch pads. It had been a pleasant conversation after the necessary rough start. Rook reached out his own arm, far further than usual for the standard greeting. "Extend your arm a little further, that's it."

Slowly the pangolin showed Jeremy how to properly conduct the greeting of equals. He'd always simply used the much more common touching of paw pads. The arm grip known as the greeting of equals was first used exclusively by dominants. Of course it was now copied by many of his friends as though making the gesture meant they also rated the increased status. To his surprise there was a subtle simplicity to the grip.

It was really about eye contact. There was something in Mister Rook's stare that even as a dominant made Jeremy want to look away. He forced himself to maintain his own stare and saw the male nod in appreciation.

"That's it. You sense something, don't you?"

"Yes."

"This is something simple enough that I could teach you this tomorrow. Only other dominants can maintain eye contact against it."

Rook released his forearm and finished "Until tomorrow, Jeremy."

The weasel smiled back saying "Thank you, Mister Rook."

He smiled back and said "Call me Zane."

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Been a long week, and I got nothing. I guess I'll just remind everyone this is where I tend to open the floor for questions. I'll explain in detail the next week, since I suspect most don't come back after reading the chapter. Wouldn't want anyone to miss out.

Also, going to remind everyone that I've started a Patreon account. I won't bother you with any more than that, if you're interested the link is on my page...somewhere. Going to to come up with some extras before the end of the month, so check it out.