

Okay, I admit it, I almost forgot it was time to post this. Was a busy week, but a fun one what with the little side story earlier this week. There may be more later but for now lets get back to the main story.

Jeremy woke up in his old room Saturday morning. It would be the last time. Their house had sold within a week of being listed. He cleaned up and joined the family for breakfast. Another last in the house he'd lived in for most of his life.

"Jeremy," his father said gaining his attention as he sat at the table. He was digging in his pocket for something as he continued "In all the excitement I forgot to give you this last night."

He slid a key across the table to Jeremy. He picked the key up and looked at his father. "What's this for?"

"Its in the garage."

Jeremy got up and made his way to the garage. His father was right behind him as he opened the door. His father's motorcycle was where he always parked it, but beside it was another. He looked at his father "Dad," looking back at the bike he added "No, way. You shouldn't have. How can we afford something like this?"

"Actually, it was paid for by the speed with which you went through the academy. They refunded us for every month under a full year you completed. It added up to enough to buy your first bike. Congratulations."

His father reached out and pressed the button that activated the garage door. As it rolled up Steven said "We have a little while before we have to get to work on moving. Until then why not take it out for a quick ride?"

Jeremy stepped over to the bike. Jeremy looked it over. It was huge for a motorcycle, half again as large as his father's. Sitting next to it Jeremy's bike looked like a monster. The more he looked it over he got the impression it was an almost worn out monster. It was an older model, a little beat up and had signs that it hadn't been perfectly taken care of. With the key in the ignition Jeremy turned it to the on position and watched the gages make the usual tick up and settle back to the pegs. He swung a leg over and kicked started it. It started easily enough with a beast of a roar followed by a subdued rumbling purr. It was in good enough condition to ride.

He looked up at his father. "Come with me?"

"You don't want to ride it by yourself the first time?"

"I've always wanted to ride with you, first time or not. Thats what I'd like to do right now."

With a smile Steven said "If its what you want." He went back inside the house a moment to get his keys. Together Jeremy and his father drove out of the garage and down the street. Jeremy followed his father as he led the way to a freeway onramp. They rode about five miles before Steven turned them around. Back home Jeremy parked his bike next to his father's. He was in position waiting for his father to turn from standing down from his bike.

Jeremy embraced his father, with his father's face in his chest he said "I've always dreamed of doing that. Thanks." He felt his father's arms tighten around him in response.

They broke away from each other and Steven said "I'm glad you asked. I didn't want to impose, but it's been a wish of mine that one of my sons would want to ride with me someday. It's even more special that it was you, Jeremy."

He wanted to say so much to his father. It was enough that they'd spent even that little time together. He knew that with the family splitting up and starting to go their own individual ways there would be fewer chances to share the road with his father. He'd been afraid that his chance would be gone before he could have afforded to buy his own bike. His father had surprised him, twice this morning. He tried to speak, tried to express what it had meant to him but his emotions silenced his voice. His mouth worked but nothing came.

Steven smiled his acceptance, "Come on, we have a lot of work to do this weekend. There'll be other chances."

The rest of the weekend was spent packing and moving. Ian got a portion of the furniture, placed in storage until he could get a place of his own. Most was moved to Steven and Elise's new apartment. It was a one bedroom within the city. They didn't say it outright but Jeremy could guess the rent was going to be far less than the house mortgage had been. Now empty nesters they would finally have the chance to have extra money to spend on themselves. Sam and Jeremy only got the few things they had room for in their apartment.

Eric never showed up. His things that he'd left behind were left out on the curb.

Sunday afternoon they all spent the remainder of the weekend cleaning the house for the next family. Jeremy was taking trash out and paused in the kitchen. He'd been thinking of the door to the pantry all day. He crossed to the door and looked at the marks on the jamb. The last mark had been Sam's birthday more than two years before. Their parents had fallen out of the habit of marking their heights soon after it was learned Jeremy was a dominant.

He felt a paw on his shoulder. Steven had come up behind him and was now also looking at the door frame. "Three out of four. We did well."

"He could have passed, you know. He pretty much tanked his finals out of spite."

"I know. What have I always said though?"

"A graduation certificate is always a certificate, no one asks what your marks were, but they'll always ask for a certificate."

"Whatever his reasons, he made his own choices. It's up to him to live with them now."

Jeremy sighed. His father looked at him and remarked "For what it's worth, he's actually happy, he's doing what he wants. For that reason, I'm glad he's found contentment."

Jeremy looked around at the empty kitchen. "Hum. My new job, I think I'm going to like it."

"That's good." Steven said. Jeremy looked at him. The way he'd said it indicated there was more he wanted to say.

"Let's finish up." Steven said moving away and ending the moment.

The sun was just minutes from setting when their mother declared the house clean enough for the new family, whom they'd never met. Jeremy stood in the driveway as his parents drove away with Ian

and Sam in the back seats. They were going to drop Ian off first, then take Sam to his apartment. Jeremy would ride his bike to the apartment but for now he stood watching the neighborhood.

He knew he was staring but couldn't help himself. He had little memory of the house they'd lived in before moving here. With the light dying he got on his bike and started it up. He stopped at the end of the driveway when he noticed Stan standing in his own driveway. He still lived at home, for now. The tiger's youngest brother was months away from his own finals. The family of tigers would likely move out after that. The tiger waved to him. Jeremy waved back wondering if anyone he'd taken mass from had ever even noticed.

Jeremy parked in the underground garage and made his way up to the apartment. He was tired and wanted sleep but with his living situation his room mates would likely keep him awake. He took out one of the books Jackson had given him and started reading.

His room mates were at the television playing a video game. The repetitive sound made it hard for Jeremy to concentrate on his reading. He had nowhere else to go so he just endured. Eventually Sam returned signaling they start preparing dinner. It wasn't until past midnight that Jeremy got to sleep.

His week started much the same as the last. Sahar continued his training by back-seating as she now called it. She still wouldn't give him any clues as to the significance of the title Bureau Of Sabotage. She maintained it was something he would have to figure out on his own, or until she knew he could make the cut.

They made only two trips out of the city that week, both of which Jeremy was able to find a solution fairly quickly. The job was becoming routine to him, so far. Driving the huge company SUV in the city wasn't as intimidating as it had been at first. He was still a bit hesitant in thinking the anticipated emergency was going to be as easy. By the end of the week he was completing and sending in all the written reports of their activities.

They were only required to send their activities to their manager and also to a single contact in the accounting department. Sahar explained that most employees in large corporations had to send reports to so many different departments it rivaled spam in volume.

The end of the regular work week came and Jeremy headed home after being reminded to carry his phone at all times. He had settled into a new routine fairly easily. It actually mirrored his old one from his time at the academy.

He'd get home and read for a while before eating dinner with his room mates. He just went downstairs to the fitness room instead of the gym. He only felt little unsettled at how much free time he still had. Saturday night he became bored and decided to take a walk.

For the middle of winter the night was fairly warm. He wandered the streets enjoying the sights and sounds. He explored around the apartment building in a widening spiral. He was amazed at the number of stores still open past nine at night. He wondered if anything in the city ever closed.

He stepped into a small cafe still open. There were several people sitting at tables. He ordered a small sandwich and watched as it was made. He was a bit put off by the sloppy work, but took it and paid without comment. The first bite confirmed his lowered expectations. The bread was stale and meat must have been frozen to extend its expiration date. He looked around at those eating in the cafe. They seemed to be enjoying their food. He walked out with the sandwich and tossed it in the trash outside the cafe.

He continued exploring. Jeremy was several blocks from the apartment when he decided to cut through a park as a shortcut. He was about halfway through the park when three figures stepping out in front of him blocking the path.

He knew by their behavior they meant to either harm or rob him. He held his ground and took a basic defensive stance from Alex's training and cautioned "Best to leave me alone tonight. I don't feel like playing."

By their size they were likely carnivores. Each of them was taller than Jeremy but not by much. The figure to the right stepped forward and ordered "Give us everything you got."

Jeremy opened PATOMES intending to take a shortcut through the confrontation but was surprised at the query.

[[?UNLOCK ADVANCED FUNCTIONS?]]

He stepped back allowing himself time to answer PATOMES. Once he answered he received a confirmation.

[[ADVANCED FUNCTIONS ACTIVE]]

He'd expected an addition to the menu but after the confirmation Jeremy saw no difference at the moment. Guessing he'd have to explore to find the new unlocked functions he focused on the situation at hand. Using the familiar commands he quickly targeted each of the three that now surrounded him. In his preoccupation they had stepped closer and were within an arms reach.

"Last warning, give us what you got, before we take it from you." One said.

"No, on second thought I think I'll do the taking tonight." Jeremy countered as he activated the command. He didn't wait for the usual period of hesitation and kicked out at the one in front of him. As the feline went down he stepped up taking the place he'd been and spun around to face the other two. They were both down to his size but unaware of the change in status. Both were moving to attack him. Jeremy backhanded the one to his left and recovered with enough time to block and redirect the last one's charge. A second later Jeremy was large enough to push the shoulder height wolf away from him.

With the wolf tripping over his own clothes Jeremy was left standing over three shrinking muggers. He watched as they lost the last of their size and were almost invisible in the dim lighting. He picked up the discarded clothing and dumped the bundle in the nearest trash receptacle. With the cleanup of the site finished Jeremy couldn't see any of the three would be attackers. At the size he'd left them they wouldn't last long against the typical wildlife in any park.

Jeremy was much more interested in exploring the new functions of PATOMES he had access to. He walked away preoccupied with finding the new command pathways now open to him in PATOMES. He arrived back at the apartment to find all his room mates were out for the moment. He took the bathroom and locked the door and standing in front of the mirror prepared the first test of the new functions he'd found in PATOMES.

He activated the command and stood watching himself. In ten seconds his image altered from a weasel to that of a cheetah. His body and most of the features of his grinning face were the same but he looked like an undersized yet typical cheetah now. He'd noticed PATOMES now had more features but this was the one that interested Jeremy the most at the moment. It opened up a whole new world for him.

Jeremy added a little mass to the cheetah body until it matched the musculature of his own. He saved it as the first favorite and used the reset to quickly return to his original body and stood smiling at

himself. As he checked the history of his recent action he learned that there were more than two hundred and fifty interstice for such favorites. He was dazed at the potential.

He could now change his appearance at the specie level. There were still so many avenues he had yet to explore but he couldn't help but smile. Jeremy had noticed the command that allowed him to alter only parts of himself. He'd wait to use that function until he conducted a few tests. There was a lot to learn and even though he knew PATOMES had safeguards he thought caution the wise course of action. He decided to use the newly accessed functions as little as possible until he had the time to go through the tutorials to see if anything had been added.

Turning from the mirror he made his way to the living room. He forced himself to lay down on the couch and calm himself. He started on the tutorials looking to learn as much as possible before using PATOMES again.

He found that there was a capacity of forty interstice reserved for a favorite from every specie. He hadn't noticed but when he'd changed to a cheetah his spots would have looked identical to Allen Alversten; the first cheetah he'd labeled within PATOMES. The more samples in PATOMES the more variation in appearance it could provide. Yes, he decided, he'd rather not go around as a carbon copy of some random stranger.

Three specie were still not represented by a single sample. He'd not labeled any lemurs opossums or pangolins. Granted the pangolins were rare even this long after the Continental Wars half a century ago, but opossums were common enough. Lemurs would be a challenge at the best of times, they rarely left their little island continent. Jeremy had never met one and could only rely on their reputation as being terribly xenophobic.

An hour of checking through the tutorial Jeremy got back up and made his way to the bathroom. Standing in front of the mirror he carefully programed his second change. Within PATOMES he selected not any individual but chose to program a body that exemplified what would be considered an average of all the samples stored. Using the viability check he'd discovered PATOMES assured him the planned body was perfectly safe to assume.

Satisfied he activated the first change. He watched as his familiar form of a weasel slowly changed and shifted. His fur darkened and muzzle narrowed slightly. There were a few more subtle changes but none were enough to wrest Jeremy's attention away from the most obvious thing happening to him. His attention was centered on his rapid drop in height and mass.

When it was finished he was more than a foot shorter. Jeremy now stood in an average raccoon body. He was more than a bit disappointed with it. He now stood in a body smaller and much fatter around the middle than his own body. He stared at himself in the mirror. He was stunned at how small he looked compared to what he had become accustomed to. This body and all its aspects of an average adult raccoon was slightly smaller than that of weasels. To Jeremy that fact hadn't really made itself known until he stood in the short and pudgy body of a raccoon.

Still, he could improve the body of the raccoon he now wore. He examined himself as he programmed another change in PATOMES. Having become accustomed to becoming a dominant sized weasel he'd much rather maintain his size and strength in whatever body he wore. Soon the changes were set up in PATOMES.

With an anticipatory grin he activated the command and watched as the situation corrected itself. Over the course of a minute Jeremy watched as his raccoon body grew thinner in the middle and filled in with more muscle everywhere else. He appraised himself as a six foot tall well muscled raccoon. Even though he was still smaller than his weasel body Jeremy liked his appearance as an overgrown raccoon. He would come back to play around with the raccoon body later. He saved it in the new favorites file and

returned to his own body. He was satisfied he could safely fill in the empty interstices with favorites fairly easily.

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So, now that we're at the point that PATOMES has more to offer things are gong to get even more interesting. Looking ahead I've written a full sixty chapters out pretty much guaranteeing something every week well into next year.

In restarting this I had thought I'd be bringing a lot of previous content in and drawing on even more that hadn't been seen. While I've used a few bits and pieces most of the story has been rewritten after the first couple chapters. Its also taken more than a few different directions than the first run although there seem to be more similarities than differences to me. Anyway, just a bit of rambling since I really had nothing prepared again.

Seriously considering doing a marathon writing weekend again this year. That was how I started the first run of Jeremy off.