

He he he, here we go. Enjoy.

Once he was standing Jeremy found he'd become large enough that his head was above the fog bank. There was a thin layer of clouds at a height somewhere above him. The moon was bright enough that he could see its outline just above the thin layer of clouds over the ocean. The effect was mesmerizing, with the clouds taking on a bluish silver tint the clouds and top of the fog bank looked like a scene from another world. The sound of the waves slowly breaking on the beach under him only added to the impression.

Jeremy slowly brought his arm up until his fingers poked above the fog. He watched as the mist swirled around his digits. He still felt normal physically, even with his body being an otter everything felt just slightly different. It was the new experience of everything being out of proportion that drew his attention. He blew a slight puff of air at his fingers and watched intrigued as the fog around them cleared almost down to his elbow.

The image in his vision from PATOMES was telling him that he stood a hundred and fifty eight feet tall. He'd used less than a third of his account. Even as his body started to respond to the inherent power of his new massive size he focused on the continuing readout from PATOMES. Something was continuing to drain his storage account.

He wasn't growing any larger and yet the numbers were counting down at the corner of the PATOMES display. On focusing on that portion of the display Jeremy noticed the symbol that accounted for the numbers reeling off. The symbol was an exact match for one in the formula PATOMES had provided as answer for the impossibility of his being able to withstand the force of gravity using his own mass in destroying him. It was a startling revelation.

For every second he spent at his current size PATOMES was expending just over a dozen units. With the new understanding Jeremy turned and moved toward the beach. There were a few things he wanted to test before he ended the experiment.

Once he was out of the deep water he leaned down to get his bearings. With a puff of air to clear the fog away he saw the once large branch he'd used as a torch that still stood out of the sand. He reached down and plucked it out of the beach. He could hold it in two fingers. Standing he looked at the extinguished torch. The four foot long branch lay trapped between two of his finger pads. Using his thumb he snapped it in half just with the force he used in touching it.

Rubbing his thumb against his fingers ground it to powder. His body began to respond to the easy display of physical power. As enticing as it was the display and tangible evidence of his size and power was enough for the moment. He programmed a reduction in his size and activated the command. He watched the fog bank rise over him as the PATOMES display documented the changes.

As expected he stopped when he was twenty feet tall. He paused a few seconds watching the storage usage at his new size. This was a much more reasonable size to be at when it came to drainage from his storage account. It was now at a rate of one unit for every three or four seconds.

Looking down he knew he was going to be limited in what he could reasonably do. He still stood in the wet sand watching as the ocean filled the depression of his footprints left over from his larger size. He smiled to himself as the water came up to his knees. He had to climb out of his own footprint. Once back on the more solid feeling damp sand the waves were still tickling over his feet. He stood grinning at

the sensation as he considered his next action. He'd rather not leave any evidence of his experiment behind but he still wanted to know what he was capable of at this size.

He paced down the beach for a few hundred yards as he thought. He was split between continuing his experiment and waiting until a time he'd thought through everything he'd discovered. He was just about to activate the reset when he spotted a piece of driftwood being washed up.

It was about twelve feet long and four inches thick. It looked like a gnarled chunk of tree root that had been in the ocean long enough to be washed clean and hefted much lighter than expected. It snapped in half with almost no resistance. Breaking it to small foot long pieces Jeremy doubted he'd find anything to truly test his strength at his size. Shrugging he activated the reset and watched as the ground came closer.

He walked up the beach to the loose sand and made his way back to the camping area. Back at his campsite he pulled on his shorts and headed back to the beach. He knew he'd not be able to get back to sleep the way his mind was turning over the results of his experiment. His routine of exercising in the mornings also called to him. He was interested to see how his fitness conditioning would stand up to the extra difficulty of running in loose sand.

Jeremy returned to the campsite feeling the muscles of his legs burning from the extra work. It had indeed been harder running in the sand than he'd guessed. He was fatigued but also encouraged that he had managed to complete what he felt his normal distance. The beaver family was also up and about when he got back.

He sat on one of the benches lining the parking area catching his breath and watching the beavers prepare their breakfast. Once he felt rested again he got up and walked off the resulting tightness in his legs. After collecting a few things from his pack he made his way to the public use building at the head of the campsite. When using it the night before he had found that it even had a shower in the small building.

Feeling clean and a bit refreshed he came out of the building to the smell of the beaver family's breakfast. He had to pass their site on the way to his own. They waved to him as he passed and he waved back returning their smiles. At his own campsite he worked on choking down the last of his trail mix and jerky. It killed the hunger but he'd been eating mostly the same thing for almost three days now and was craving something, anything different.

He was halfway through packing up when he heard a vehicle pull into the camping area. He only glanced at the ancient microbus as it parked at a nearby spot. The occupants gained a second glance as they got out of the van and as they loudly talked amongst themselves ran toward the beach. Jeremy paused and sat back watching the antics. They'd left the doors of the garishly painted Volkswagen open.

They raced to the beach and disappeared into the still heavy fog. Jeremy could only hear them until their shouts too became muffled by the fog and the sound of the surf. Turning back to packing his things and stowing them on his bike he was almost finished when another vehicle came in. This one raced through the parking area and braked to a screeching halt next to the VW.

Staring at the pickup he let his displeasure at their speed through the camping area show. As the new arrivals climbed out of the truck they ignored him and the beaver family. They exhibited the same behavior as those from the microbus. He stood watching the two run down to the beach until they too were hidden by the fog. Shaking his head he glanced at the beaver family.

The father was standing with a disproving glare at the vehicle much as he had. The mother was in the process of getting the two young kits safely into the motorhome. Jeremy felt outraged that the family

appeared to be in the process of cutting their stay short because of the unthinking actions of those in the two vehicles.

He started walking toward the vehicles, from what he'd caught of the second pair's conversation they were likely acquainted with those from the microbus. When he reached the beach the four were standing at the high tide line screaming to each other. He slowed listening to their overexcited and excessively loud conversation. He stopped about ten feet from them at the mention of a 'sighting'.

"Hey." Jeremy said in an effort to gain their attention.

Only two of them glanced at him before turning back to their companions. He stepped closer until he stood just outside their circle. He listened to their odd conversation, his aggravation was quickly replaced by a growing sense of apprehension. They were discussing a radar sighting of what they called 'Kaiju' just a little out to sea from that very spot only hours earlier.

While the talk of a sighting caused him some trepidation he still felt they should be corrected in their actions. Projecting his intent he waited. He appraised each of them while he waited for them to stop chattering at each other. They all were overweight and dressed in shorts and simple shirts. By their smell he doubted any of them had bathed in days. For a moment he wondered if they'd been on the road as he had but then their response time to their 'sighting' forced him to discard that idea.

With the fairly still air and even thicker fog the air became saturated with his pheromones in no time. One by one they fell silent and turned to him staring. He was pleased that his projecting had managed to cut through their overexcitement and they were even showing some submission to him.

"Now that you're done, do you realize there was a family in the campground back there? A family with two kits?"

"What?" the raccoon exclaimed. "Really? Did they see it?"

"What?" Jeremy asked, surprised at the question. "I don't think you're catching on, so I'll make it real clear." He stated as he stepped up to the male. "If I see any of you recklessly driving into a parking lot like you did, I'll personally give you a lesson in citizenship."

Jeremy stood his ground among them. They appeared suitably subdued. It helped that he stood more than a foot taller than any of them, was obviously fit and wearing a leather riding jacket. "You," he said, pointing at the raccoon that had been driving the VW, then the other driver "and you, go apologize to the family you endangered and promise them you'll never act like that again. Understood?"

After a round of "Yes, sir's" Jeremy nodded and turned to follow the two he'd ordered to apologize. He let them gain ground on him and by the time they'd reached the parking area were a dozen yards ahead of him. He stood next to his bike watching the exchange.

It looked to be going as he'd hoped, at first. After a minute of talking with the two drivers the beaver male was shaking his head and gesturing with his hands in a negative fashion. Jeremy shook his head at the scene as the father started backing away from the two cautiously making his way to his motorhome.

Jeremy started toward the encounter. Halfway there he could hear the questions from the raccoon and fox. They were badgering the beaver over his claim of not seeing anything.

When he was only a few steps away Jeremy growled "You were supposed to apologize." He had come up behind them and reaching out grasped the back of their shirts at the back collar. "What good would an apology be when afterward you start interrogating someone?"

Jeremy bunched up the shirts in his fists and lifted them as he forced them away from the beaver. He'd only meant to lift enough so that they couldn't resist his effort to remove them. Instead their feet came off the ground. As he turned them from the beaver Jeremy turned his head to say "Sorry."

From his glance at the beaver he imagined the male was almost as surprised as he was at the display of strength. Jeremy'd never tried lifting two individuals before. He felt their full weight and strained to keep them off their feet as he moved them away from the beaver. After a few seconds he knew he was fully capable of carrying them more than halfway across the campground. That they were now fully cowed into immobility helped a great deal.

Both raccoon and fox moved only enough to turn their heads and stared at him in shock and almost terror. At their vehicles Jeremy set them back on the ground and stepped back. "Stay away from them. Do whatever it is you want, you have that right, but you don't have the right to hassle anyone the way you were back there. Now, go."

He stood watching as they slowly backed away from him. With a glance at each other they turned and walked toward the beach. Each of them occasionally looked back at him. He could hear the raccoon still. He seemed to have a problem restraining himself.

"I didn't realize he was a dominant until he lifted us up."

The fox wasn't any better. "Yeah, me too, he lifted both of us even."

The raccoon glanced back again. "He's not as big as some dominants I've heard about."

Jeremy frowned at the tone of awe in the raccoon's voice as he clearly said "Personal contact with a dominant. Thats almost as good as seeing the real thing."

After they were out of sight down on the beach he shook his head and turned to see the beaver family had hurriedly finished packing up. As he stood watching the motorhome pulled out and drove off. He felt like doing the same. Personal contact with the two odd unkempt creatures searching out sightings and conspiracies made him want to shower all over again.

* * * *

I have to be honest here and let you lot know that what with Jeremy being such a cautious fellow he's not likely to repeat that experiment for some time. That's not to say its not going to ever happen again, nor that he won't shrink anyone that makes him a bit irritable. But hey, on the bright side he and you did gain an interesting clue to the nature of PATOMES.