

Real life is about to get a bit more stable for me. Good thing too. I haven't done much writing over the past two months. I've only managed to get two chapters done in that time. Lucky for you lot I'm far enough ahead that the schedule isn't going to be impacted. Anyway, on to the story.

Jeremy was to be back to work the next Monday. It would take that long for Gakota to wrest the necessary tools from Nicholson's tech department. Initially, he wasn't expected back for almost another two weeks so a new phone hadn't been set up. He would also need a new tablet to work from.

Jeremy left the Nicholson building still having several days on his hands before he could get back into the routine of work. He decided it was time to get back to what he'd been intending to do when the Chilean incident had come up.

With a smile he started shopping for a few things that he needed for the plan forming in his head. He stopped in several shops until he had everything he needed. Back in the apartment he ran his purchases through the wash. Once the new clothes were done he brought them to his bedroom and opened PATOMES.

When he'd finished his preparations with the new profile he took the added precaution of a compatibility check in PATOMES. Satisfied he executed the command and watched in the mirror mounted to the back of his door as his body changed. Dropping in height and slimming even more he watched his reflection change to that of a rat. His own clothes drooped around his slighter frame to the point he could step out of them. Donning the new clothes Jeremy looked at himself.

His new rat face smiled back at him. His own brother would not have the slightest clue the rat that stood in their apartment was Jeremy. He'd even bought clothes that were not to his taste. Pulling the clothes back off he changed back to his own body. Dressed once again he packed the smaller clothes in a new backpack and made a stop in the kitchen before leaving. He stuffed the large and empty spice container in his pack on the way to the elevator.

He stopped in the building's gym and used the restroom to change into the rat once again. Dressed in clothes that fit his new rat body stuffed his backpack into a ventilation vent for safekeeping. He didn't want anything with him that could give anyone a chance of leading back to Jeremy Dawn. He'd even bought a newly activated phone for his first prowl as his alternate rat identity.

He took the subway to the laundry he had been watching the lion from. With PATOMES he knew the lion was at home. He resumed his watch from the laundry while keeping track of the other predators of his pack with PATOMES. Both the panther and jaguar were on the move. As he watched the lion's building the jaguar arrived and went inside. Minutes later the panther joined them.

On a hunch Jeremy bought a snack and drink can from the vending machines in the laundry and crossed to the steps of the apartment building. Even after he'd eaten the snack the feline's had yet to make an appearance. It wasn't until several hours later PATOMES told him they were on their way down.

Jeremy heard the door behind him open. One of the cats were talking as they exited. "- don't fucking need his scrawny ass. Ever since we ran into his academy buddy he's been useless."

"What the fuck is this?" From another of the cats.

Jeremy ignored the remark. He took a sip of the now warm and flat soda.

"Who the fuck are you to think you can sit here?" The panther asked as he stepped in front of the rat.

The lion added "This is our territory, your kind are not welcome."

Still not meeting the cat's eyes he answered. "Name's Dominic, not that it'll matter soon to you assholes." As he looked at the panther he lifted his arm and snapped his fingers. He'd decided to take a direct approach, and in broad daylight for any witnesses. His plan had altered to fit the recent movie experience along with the resulting discussion with his brother.

In three seconds all three predators were less than a foot tall. After five seconds Jeremy guessed only he could see them, no one else would be close enough to see the inch tall felines. It took a minute to collect the three miniature cats from their clothes. Each he plucked from the pile of clothing and dropped into the waiting spice container. When he had all three he screwed the lid on and walked away. The discarded clothes he left on the steps as a calling card, perhaps the first of many.

As he walked away from the apartment building he saw several people watching him. Their expressions ran from mildly shocked to almost terrified. None of them seemed to be bold enough to approach or even follow him.

With PATOMES he tracked Allen to what Jeremy guessed was his apartment. The nameplates at the building entrance gave him Alversten's apartment number. With a smile he entered glancing behind him to see if any of the witnesses had actually followed him. He saw no one familiar.

He padded down the hallway softly, he was using PATOMES again to easily track his quarry even though he had Allen's apartment number. He speculated that with practice PATOMES might start improving its precision. He knocked on the door and waited. Allen opened the door and looked down at the rat his head tilted in confusion.

Jeremy smiled and tossed the cheetah the spice container that held his predator friends. The cat caught it easily, impressing Jeremy with his quick reflexes. He glanced at the glass jar and back to the rat standing at his door for a second. A moment later he looked back at the container his face showing the shock he obviously felt.

His three friends had taken a tumble at having the spice container tossed in the air. They were all sprawled on the bottom of the small jar. Allen tipped it slightly to get a better look at the three even as his mouth fell open. "What the fuck?" He said, clearly still not believing what his eyes were telling him.

Dominic had his arm up and ready when the cheetah looked back at him. At the same time the rat snapped his fingers he also activated the command in PATOMES. He watched as the cheetah dropped in height. The cat made no effort to move or escape. Stunned to immobility Allen watched the rat as his height dropped to match the rodent.

Taking the container in both paws as he dropped to only a foot high he stared up at the rat with fear and awe. "No, no no." he finally managed to voice through his shock although his voice got fainter and higher after each shout.

At the end of five seconds Allen stood next to the spice container and could look through the glass to his friends at the same height. Only the panther had the courage to stand and beat on the glass. Allen stood and stared at him, his shock at the situation apparently more than he could handle.

Dominic pushed the door open the rest of the way and stepped inside. He looked down at the cheetah's clothes and sighed. Picking the cat from his floor he dropped the terrified inch long feline into his palm. Pushing the door closed behind him he said. "Cooperate and you'll be fine."

Allen held his paws up "Please, I won't say anything. Please don't kill me."

Dominic looked at the cat on his back laying sprawled in his palm. "Knucklehead, I just said I don't intend on killing you. You're too useful to kill anyway." He replied.

The tiny cheetah stared at the rat, eyes wide and his whole body shivering. Dominic could smell the feline's fear. He had to admit it was intoxicating, to hold another person in his paw. He felt his heart pound faster and stirring of his male hood as a result of the awesome feeling of power over another. He wondered if the physical reaction he was feeling was why carnivores preyed on others. This was even better than being a dominant. Holding Allen in his palm barely compared to his experiment at the beach so many days ago.

"I'll tell you what I expect from you, but first your phone number." he said as he pulled out the new phone. He looked at the cat expectantly with his finger over the pad. He needed to stick with his plan. He didn't need to get sidetracked and give in to the sudden distraction.

Allen rattled off his number. He looked calmer having had something to occupy his brain. He watched as the rat dialed. His phone rang, giving away its location in the pocket of Allen's discarded shorts. The rat looked in the direction of the ring and canceled the call.

"Good, now you have my number too." Dominic said. He felt more in control of himself as he continued with his plan. He crouched low feeling his cock surge out of his sheath as much at the maneuver as the feeling of power over Allen. He picked up the spice container being careful not to spill the tiny cheetah from his paw. It was surprisingly more difficult than he thought it would be. His rat body wasn't as coordinated as his own.

"So, as for your friends, they're mine to play with for as long as they can survive. Do as I tell you and you can avoid that fate. Say anything to anyone and you go in a little jar." he held the predator's prison up and shook slightly it to emphasize his point.

Allen stared over at the jar for a few seconds then back up at the rat's face.

"Here's what you're going to do for me. Call me and tell me of anything you hear about predators targeting us rats. Or anyone else for that matter. That's all. If I don't answer leave a message. Keep me informed and we'll never have to meet again. Yes?"

The male nodded. He still looked terrified but was now calm enough that he wasn't shivering from fright.

"Good." He said as he brought his paw up. He stared at the tiny cat eye to minuscule eye. "Make no mistake, I can find you anywhere you go, and do to you anything I want. Distance is not a barrier to me. Obey me and you just might live a full life." He stared at the cat for a few more seconds before reaching to the floor. Tilting his hand he let Allen slide off his paw.

Snapping his fingers again Jeremy triggered the command to return Allen to his normal size. It would take minutes, plenty of time for him to be out of the area before the cat could act. He opened the door and stepped into the hallway before turning and said "Oh, and leave your dominant friend out of this. You don't want to be responsible for him getting harmed, would you?"

Dominic closed the door smiling to himself. He doubted Allen would or could keep from telling someone. He just hoped he didn't end up in an institution like Samuel Addleson. As he left the apartment building he saw no one paying him any attention. He was back in his apartment and in his own body within an hour. The rest of the evening went normally.

His phone woke him. Jeremy fumbled for the ringing abomination and pulled it close to his face. One in the morning Allen had chosen to call him. He'd gotten just over two hours of sleep. He should have known the cat was going to call him. Even knowing what little he did of Allen he guessed the cat had paced his apartment until he couldn't hold out from calling him any longer.

"Do you have any idea what time it is?"

"He found me. He found me and now he wants things from me. What am I going to do. I can't believe the shit heap that is my life. He found me, shit. Now what?"

"Stop, what are you talking about?"

Allen whispered "The rat. He found me. He was here in my apartment. Those others you saw me with. Its because of them. He has them now. They're tiny, like an inch tall. He keeps them in a little jar. He'll do the same to me if I don't do what he says. I'm so fucked because of those assholes."

Jeremy kept silent hoping the cheetah would run himself down.

"Where am I going to go? He said he could find me wherever I went. I'm so fucked. Shit, what now?"

"Stop, listen, calm down. You need to calm down." Jeremy said. He waited to make sure Allen was listening and not about to go off on another rant. "Meet me at that bakery on Hall that's still open this hour. I'll be there in about ten minutes."

Jeremy got up dressed and was out the door almost as fast as if it had been a real emergency. Arriving at he bakery he was surprised to see Allen already there. The cat would have had to run to make it before Jeremy.

"Morning Adam, two of the usual, please." Jeremy said to the proprietor as he walked inside the almost empty store.

Allen stood and came over to where he waited. The cheetah was agitated and nervous but not as bad as hours earlier. The cat had calmed slightly in the time Dominic had left his apartment. The visit from the rat persona had shaken him badly. He stood looking everywhere, eyes shooting to every movement outside or faint noise inside.

Jeremy was thinking he may have pushed the carnivore too far. "Sit, come on, over here, sit down." he led the cat to a small table with a few seats around it. He went back to the counter and collected his order and paid. Sitting down across from the cat Jeremy put one of the muffins and hot chocolates in front of the feline. Allen stared at the snack and drink for a second before looking up to stare out the window.

"Eat."

Allen looked down at the muffin and back at Jeremy. His expression was miserable. To Jeremy it looked like he may have been in the middle of a breakdown. He repeated the order and watched Allen pull a piece from the top of the muffin and shove it in his mouth. He waited until the cat was eating without having to be prompted.

"Now, from the start, what happened." Jeremy asked.

"He found me. Somehow he found me." Allen started.

Jeremy sat and listened as the cheetah related the story, with a few embellishments he decided not to correct. When he finished the male appeared much calmer. He occasionally glanced out the windows but it no longer resembled a paranoid glare. Allen looked at the weasel and asked "What am I going to do now?"

Jeremy shook his head and replied "Nothing wrong with cooperating with him."

Allen looked at him in surprise. "Are you kidding? He's -" he stopped and stared at Jeremy.

"What?"

"He's smart. How'd he find me. How'd he know about the others? How many other rats are his followers? What if he knows I'm talking to you. He said to tell no one. He even threatened you."

"You said that. I'll help if I can, but honestly, I'm thinking this city needs someone to clean up the predation problem."

Allen stared at him as if he'd just changed into the rat.

"You mean that?"

"Your friends targeted me once, remember?"

"Well, yeah but nothing happened to you. Besides, you're a dominant."

"That only helps me. What about everyone else they've no doubt been preying on since then? I doubt this rat would have bothered with anyone that wasn't actively preying on people. Am I right?"

Allen looked down at the table for a few seconds before responding. "Its just that you, well, we're kind of friends."

"Honestly, I can't say I feel inclined to try stopping him even if I were to believe you."

"Shit, I knew it. No one's going to believe me."

"I didn't say that."

"I can't handle this." Allen muttered. He looked up at the sound of the bell at the door announcing a new entry. He stared wide eyed and fearful making Jeremy look around. It was just the cat's luck a rat would chose that moment to come in for a pastry.

"Relax. He can't have every rat in the city on the payroll. If he did why would he need information from you?"

Allen looked back at him. He shook his head, looking down at the half eaten muffin saying "I can't, I'm not cut out for this."

"Allen," Jeremy said waiting for the male to look at him before continuing "You can do things you never expect. Look, from your story, he didn't see anything in your friends, but left you alive. He had to have seen something in you, something he needs. This rat already knows you have something to offer, otherwise he wouldn't have bothered looking for you." Jeremy sat back seeing his point was getting across. "Just, do what he asks, cooperate. He's even admitted he doesn't want trouble from me, sort of." He shook his head. "Point is, you don't have to worry so much about him."

Allen took a deep breath and sighed as he let it out. "Yeah. Okay. Yeah. I can handle this. I can handle a magic asshole." He stopped and looked up eyes still a little wide but he seemed to be much calmer.

Jeremy stared at him for a second before smiling. Standing he looked down at the cheetah. "Good. Next time though, please wait to call at a more normal hour, okay?"

Allen smiled back and nodded. "Sorry, I was just so scared."

"Fine. See you later." Jeremy said and walked to the counter. He bought a few more muffins for breakfast and left. The cheetah still sat at the table and watched him as he left.

* * * *

And here we have a new wrinkle. I hope the little narrative trick of shifting to the Dominic identity didn't throw anybody, I'm pretty confident in you lot though. I should also tell you to get used to Dominic, it's not as though he's going anywhere.