

>>>> Sasha

She'd heard the rumbles and felt the tremors, they all had. It had been happening for about an hour off and on. It was enough to put everyone on edge and wary of staying in the open for longer than necessary. It was when they could hear the sounds of trees falling nearby that it became real. That was when her parents acted.

Sasha pulled her little brother into her family's selected hiding place with her. Being leopards the family had chosen to make their home in the trees. Suitably camouflaged to be unnoticeable from above it had taken years for their parents to weave branches together to form walls and a wonderfully rain proof ceiling. They even had the necessary scurry hole dug out among the large root system. Everything a feline family needed in the present day and age.

From their scurryhole Sasha and Alvin could just hear their mother and father above collecting the few items they'd need to wait out the disturbance. She was also able to feel the vibrations growing stronger. Whatever it was, it was getting closer. She hugged her little brother tighter.

Then, it happened. Then their small settlement was found.

Not having experienced anything like this before her judgement of the adversary's nearness was a bit off. To her it seemed that whatever was coming would happen the next second, and yet the tremors kept growing in power. Her brother whimpered against her signaling he felt the same. The seconds that went by seemed like hours to the two small felines huddled inside the family's scurryhole. The sudden thrumming scream of live wood tearing she felt through the roots around her told just how off she had been.

She hugged her brother tighter as the sound of live wood splintering filled their hiding place. The tortured drawn out shriek of their home being torn limb from limb above them mingled with that of her parent's. Alvin pulled himself free of her arms and crawled toward the entrance of the scurryhole even as dirt rained from between the shocked root system above them. Sasha stopped crawling after her brother at the sudden crash of daylight streaming into their hole.

They both stopped moving and looked through the sudden opening up to the surface. Seconds later Sasha saw the splintered bole of what was once part of their tree invade the space from above. Awestruck at the sight of a small part of their once mighty tree being moved so casually she could only watch as it was withdrawn just as easily. To her young mind the situation called for only one thing. Freeze and hope the larger predator would go away.

The splintered trunk was driven down into their scurryhole again. In the slow, almost frozen moment before the true terror came she actually recognized just what part of their home tree the huge spike had come from. The next instant it seemed as if the backlog of time came crashing through her inability to understand just what was happening with the force of a damn burst.

Everything happened in a rush of horror. The jagged diagonally splintered edge of the bole moving with the indifferent force of an avalanche. The stunned upturned face of her brother, his expression showing the knowledge that he was squarely in the path of the splintered jagged edge. His arms and paws placed on the upward sloped entrance of the exposed scurry hole.

They both knew then, they were both experiencing a moment in time where nothing would ever again be as it had been.

Seeming to be hours long in the impact and a fleeting instant in the experience. The breathless fraction of time just before that inevitable movement of the branch, as slow and inexorable as the slip of a gripped knife just before it cut into your own flesh. The impossibly harsh reality that the stuff of their home could be used to do harm to one that had taken shelter within it. The agony of reality brought crashing through and shattering the perceptions of youth to the brutal realization of life in a predatory world.

The next instant and most of what came next was mercifully sucked into a sunless pit of shock. Unfortunately her last memory before the darkness shrouded her senses was her little brother falling back against her staring in shock at the bleeding stumps of his arms.

<<<< Darin

"Yes, see. I told you how they hide." Gary said. "You have to flush them out."

Darin watched as his professor dug the hole wider. He held the male leopard against the ground with a foot paw. The female had escaped and was somewhere in the dense brush hiding. That male was face down in the dirt and struggling to get out from under. Perhaps, Darin imagined the small male thought he could escape and join his mate. The idea brought a smirk to his face.

He was trying to be careful but the excitement was getting to him. The sense of his own empowerment was making him respond, just a bit. It was but an effortless matter to keep the male under his paw. He felt and heard a bone crack under him. A moment later he knew it had been loud enough for his mentor to have heard.

Gary paused and turned to the younger rat. "I told you to be careful. We need to keep the healthy ones undamaged."

"Sorry sir." Darin replied. He moved his foot off the cat and pressed a finger on the center of his back. Crouching closer he examined the male for damage. The bone of his thigh had broken. He reached down to lift the male up but failed to grasp him properly. Claws raked across the back of his paw. "Fuck."

"Here, hold them like this." Gary instructed as he plucked the feline from his grasp. He held the male in the air by the loose pelt at the back of his neck and smirked. "When you take them like this they always submit, see?"

Nodding at his senior's example he looked at his hand. The scratches were shallow and hardly bled. Looking back he smirked with Gary at the male. He was held by two fingers at the back of his neck and yet that was enough to subdue the cat. The cat had brought his feet up and tucked his tail between his legs. He'd even managed to bring his broken leg halfway up. Now completely submissive he was a perfect example of their race. The large grey offered the male to him.

He carefully took the cat from his professor. Once he demonstrated that he could grip a feline properly Gary nodded acceptance.

"Well, now that he's damaged, you might as well have him."

"I really didn't mean to." Darin said, contrition and apology clear in his tone.

"I understand. He's useless to us now, so go ahead."

Darin took a moment to look the feline over. This one was larger than most. Almost two finger lengths long, not counting the tail, and meaty. He could feel his response again. Deciding to savor the rare treat he brought the cat close and sniffed. Fear and pain filled the male's scent. Darin's member surged out at the sense of power over their former enemy.

With a smile Gary turned back to digging out the other cats from their hidey-hole. He still glanced over at his student occasionally. It was after all a sight even those in their positions rarely enjoyed.

Darin took his time with the rare luxury. Licking the fur of the male's belly he felt his member finish coming to fullness. It was an incredible feeling. To have one of their ancient foes so under his power. Ageless instincts screamed at the nearness of the feline enemy and yet the more evolved part of his brain begged for this. He smiled as his breath stuttered out of him. Another lick of the feline's fear scented fur caused his male hood to ache with need. He took hold of himself to combine life's two greatest pleasures.

As he continued his mind roamed over his professor's lessons.

>>>> Morgan

They had suddenly been everywhere, and coming from every direction. He had dropped his catch and turned back toward the village. It had only taken seconds for him to realize they'd reach the village well ahead of him. He'd continued on despite the knowledge that he'd be far too late to raise the alarm.

He reached the first location where one of his kind lived in a tree made into a home, only to find it gone.

He slunk low to the ground doing his best to use the brush to screen his movements. His heart pounded in his chest. At the size the rats were they'd covered the distance dismayingly quicker than he ever could have. He worried irrationally that the massive creatures could hear the pounding of his heart even as he hid from them. He understood now why the traditions prohibited the clearing of the brush away from their homes. As tough as it was on his brethren the rats were having a hard time peering down through the foliage. Even as Morgan watched another leopard made a quick exit out from under the huge rats.

In hindsight it would seem as if they had known exactly where the village was. That debate would be for later, at the moment the order of the day became hide and survive the attack. Morgan couldn't believe how huge they really were. The stories of his grandparents told of a time when they once reigned supreme over these creatures. Now though. He shook his head to clear the dread of his situation.

"I can't believe this shit." He whispered crouching to the ground. He shivered, slinking under a thick overgrown berry bush. He watched as a pair tore at his neighbor's home. He felt his lips curl in a mixture of empathy and scorn. He always thought they were fools. The rat tore the adobe hut apart with spectacular ease. Morgan closed his eyes. The female was only using a single finger to demolish a home five had lived in comfortably.

The male head of that family had assumed the role of village leader years ago. Instead of living like the rest of them he had put on airs and built a home out in the open. They'd even cleared a space out from around their strange home. Both adults had actually scoffed at the same stories they'd all grown up hearing. Their adopted lifestyle showing just how little stock they put into the oral traditions of their race. Now they were paying the price.

Only mouthing his observation "Stupid lions." Morgan opened his eyes at the screaming.

<<<< Darin

Darin took the male's tail into his mouth. Holding the feline overhead and lifting him he pulled the cat's tail from his mouth. Still stroking himself slowly he watched as the cat's tail whipped about above him. The male's fur now lay against his pet, slicked down and drenched in Darin's saliva. It had little flavor left in it. The rat extended his tongue to catch the thin tail and sucked it back into his mouth. The texture of the furred tail back in his mouth and against his tongue stimulated him just a bit further.

Darin kept his strokes slow. He wanted to extend this as long as possible. It was nothing to them to indulge in a little self pleasuring in public. What did it matter anyway? At the size they'd become it was impossible to get any privacy. His professor's casual stare barely registered to him. He was enjoying his delicacy far too much to care.

Positioning the cat's tail just right Darin paused. With his tongue he pressed it up against his incisors. The boney shaft of the male's entire tail fit snugly in the Shallow V shaped grove between his two front teeth. This was power. To have the tail of a hated cat between his teeth and they were powerless to do anything to stop him. He let his tongue roam over the feline tail just a few seconds more.

His bite brought a quick flood of savory blood to his mouth.

Darin couldn't stop himself from speeding up his strokes.

>>>> Niles

He'd been helpless to do nothing but watch as the roof was pulled aside shedding light into the interior of their dwelling. He was was all but soiling himself. He'd have given anything to keep his family from knowing how close he was to losing control though.

He stood between his family and the rat's efforts with nothing but a spear and the lofty expectations of his family. He tried to keep it at the ready as any brave male would. He could see how he failed to keep his body from shaking due to equal parts shredded disbelief and overwhelming fear. He could feel debris bouncing off his mane mercifully insulating him from the worst of the impacts.

"Stay behind me." He ordered his family. It barely mattered that his utterance had little of the fear that was even then swallowing his last rational thought. His wife was almost at his side, just a step behind him yet also in a position to defend their kits.

A second later a set of huge fingers probed their way inside, followed by most of the equally huge hand powering it. Niles backed away as it plowing into the wall opposite flicking a good portion away and opening their home to prying eyes. Looking up with dread he could see two sets of eyes staring back.

"Oh, nice, a whole family in this one." The enormous rat observed.

Niles craned his head as the enormous rat reached over him to pluck his son from the ground. His mate moved to attack the intruding appendage but was buffeted back with an almost negligent flick of the wrist. The momentary distraction failed to give their son time to flee from the oversized paw. He stared wide eyed as Aaron was carried higher, well out of reach and dropped into a basket. His head tracked the progress of the massive rat paw back down into his ruined home.

Gritting his teeth and gripping the spear tighter Niles willed himself to move. His fear won out.

The rat was reaching for his daughter now. His mate was still getting back to her feet, it would be up to him. Even as the huge fingers surrounded Wendy he could do nothing but watch. As a horrified "No!" from his mate echoed in the ruined house Niles could only watch.

The impossibility continued. Not satisfied with his children the rat reached back for his female partner. Even then, as she simultaneously dodged and stuck out at the questing fingers Niles was rooted to the spot. His eyes tracked everything. The incredible twisting turning attacks of his wife, the fumbling grope of the rat, the final trip and fall of Selisa. Carried away from him he still couldn't push his mind out of the shock to attempt a rescue.

Still rooted to the same spot as when the attack started he could only look up as the two giant rats looked down at him. They stared for several long seconds before chittering to themselves.

<<<< Mearse

She sighed. "No. Leave it. After all, Professor Green thinks leaving genes like that in the wold will make it easier to catch later generations."

The female at her side laughed. "A whole species of cat that'll go tharn on sight of us, priceless."

Chuckling at the imagined future Mearse turned to look for other signs of habitation. "Come on, we still have a quota to fill."

>>>> Sasha

Her world was coming back into focus. She looked at her brother. He wasn't moving. His damaged arms had stopped bleeding as well. She wasn't sure if it was a good sign or bad. She could hear the muffled sounds of screams and a bellowing kind of chittering sound. Mixed with all that was the occasional sound of something breaking.

She lowered her chin to her brother. Nestling her jaw onto his small shoulder she closed her eyes. It was now her job to keep him warm. Welcoming the blackness of her closed eyes she wished folding her ears back could have muffled the sounds as well. Hoping for the best she waited for one of her parents to come. She desperately needed someone to help her save Alvin, if it wasn't too late already.

She whimpered to herself at the thought and hugged him all the tighter.

<<<< Darin

Pulling the squirming cat free he took a deep breath.

It was such a heady feeling. Having the entirety of a living being, one that had once been a powerful foe, completely under control. He all but stopped stroking himself. He was close to the brink. Tonguing again at the cat's belly Darin grinned.

This was the ultimate experience. Professor Green's remembered lessons still whirled through his head. The full knowledge of their history only added to the experience.

Ages ago this cat he now held at his mercy would have been more than capable of tearing Darin limb from limb. That had been then, now their roles had reversed. Better yet, the solution to the rat's predicament continued to grant them an even larger advantage of the felines. The thought drove his paw to speed up once again. His offspring would have even greater power over felines than he was now enjoying.

Lowering the leopard back into his maw Darin pulled the right leg deep inside his mouth. His teeth felt around the joint of thigh and hip. His tongue probed the fleshy muscle of the cat's leg. He savored the feeling, the sudden taste of fear saturated urine was even a pleasant addition. An entire limb of the cat held securely within his mouth. Slowly he increased the pressure of his teeth.

Darin's cock pulsed heavy and tight within his grip.

He could feel the flesh slowly yield under his teeth. Still not yet enough force to break the skin Darin felt the resistance of feline flesh soar. The cat's leg muscles were at their limit. His teeth were in place and ready. With a snap it was done. Chewing on the freed limb he also felt his mouth fill with the incredibly salty sauce of the cat's lifeblood. The crunch and pop of the small bones caused a bit of drool to become evident to the watching professor.

"Be sure to clamp down on the severed part or he'll bleed out before you're done."

A nod and muffled lip closed "urhmm" was all Darin could manage as he continued to enjoy his treat.

>>>> Morgan

Slinking closer now that the rats had moved on he made his way to his own home. The tree was in shambles. Broken limbs were scattered about and the trunk splintered and shattered just feet above ground. He lowered his body to the ground and closed his eyes. There was nothing he could do now. Either his family was safe, or they were dead. He sucked in a breath at the next thought.

Or captured.

<<<< Gary

Smirking as he watched his student, the professor also enjoyed the vicarious nature of the display. He too was indulging in a bit of self gratification. He'd had many opportunities to partake in the rare delicacy of a live feline. Watching Darin enjoy his first cat brought each and every one of his back. He even suppressed a chuckle at the sight of pinkish drool flowing down his student's chin.

Looking around the area he saw that most of his students had done well. They looked to have caught a fair number of felines.

Three teams were still digging out around the root balls of large trees. The rest were simply engaging in their favorite pastime. He admitted to himself it would have felt good to do the same, but he also knew that the native life also needed to be able to recover. Their dominating size forbade such indiscriminate destruction on their homelands. He'd reign them in soon.

For now he'd focus on Darin as he was coming close to finishing the leopard. He smiled. They were both pacing themselves well.

>>>> Niles

Finally able to move all he'd done was walk over to peer over the damaged wall. He was shocked at the number of rats roaming around. The two that had ransacked his house were a few hundred yards away now. Together they were dismantling a tree limb by limb. He wet himself a bit more at how easily they were ripping the mighty tree apart. One handed and with just a simple flex of their wrist whole branches as thick as Niles' thigh snapped off under the rat's strength.

A little further away he could see another pair digging out a tree's root system where the Amberson's lived.

To the north another pair worked at getting into the Grims' scurryhole.

Slumping down the wall and laying flat he put his paws over his eyes. He had started blaming himself for their capture. On seeing what the rats were doing he instead chose to rationalize. It wouldn't have mattered. Even those that had followed tradition were being hunted out their burrows.

And yet, he would need an explanation if there were any survivors. Lifting his head up he looked around. His discarded spear was a few feet away.

No, he needed a different kind of wound. Or rather the appearance of a wound, yes. Reclaiming his spear he made a shallow slice across his forearm. It stung a bit but bled enough for his purposes. First his face then a good portion of his left side he smeared his own blood over himself.

He felt that should satisfy most. They'd be in shock and not look too closely at another's wounds. Especially one that had lost his entire family to the rats.

<<<< Darin

With his mind swimming in erotic and savory sensation he was nearing overload. Barely in control of his appetites he bite off the arm of the leopard.

So close to climaxing he pinched off the stump of the limb and pulled the cat from his mouth again. Chewing the fresh meat he grinned at the feline.

Still forced into a curled up ball of mewling meat the leopard could do nothing to stop him.

Darin let himself go. Licking thin trails of tasty blood from the wet fur of the cat he let his hand finish the job. With a mouth full of half chewed cat flesh he grit his teeth as he finally allowed himself to climax. Several seconds later he swallowed and took a deep breath.

The leopard was left with just an arm. It was now a pathetic specimen. With his other hand finally free he cradled the partially dismembered cat in both hands. It barely spanned the distance of both his paws. The male's eyes were glazed over and mouth open and breathing shallow. He was all but finished. Blood loss and shock were doing him in.

With a glance to his professor he smiled at the nod. Gary looked to be about to climax as he pleased himself. Darin and not realized his professor was enjoying the show he'd put on that well.

Darin held the mangled leopard a moment longer sampling the slight weight of the once feared predator.

Bringing the leopard up Darin inserted the cat's head into his mouth. It fit with plenty of room to spare.

>>>> Morgan

He waited for most of an hour after the rats left.

Once he was sure that they'd not return he padded out of his hiding spot. He made straight for his home.

At the widened entry to their scurry hole he looked down at the damage. Ten feet deep they'd dug before giving up.

"Meako? Allen? are you there?" He asked almost breathlessly. His voice carried just enough.

"Dad?"

"Morgan? Are you alright?"

"Yes, its safe now." relief flooded his voice and blurred his vision.

<<<< Darin

He smirked at the looks. It was worth it. He'd been able to enjoy the delicacy of a leopard all by himself. The jealous looks proved to be as added aftertaste to the experience.

Still, they all listened to the professor. The success of the search had loosened his tongue. There would be more expeditions, and they were all invited to participate. He was predicting that in a few years he'd be rich from the offspring of those that they'd captured this day. Once there was enough breeding stock they'd all be able to share in the rewards.

Darin smiled. He was in.

>>>> Niles

He slowly scrambled out of his shattered house. Making a point of stumbling he paused at the sight before him.

He only drew the occasional glance and even then it was either neutral or rather dismissive.

The smeared blood had dried and crusted. He'd even rolled in the debris of his home to add a bit more to his cover story.

He continued his act, stumbling away from his house. He sat a few feet from his door and leaned back against an undamaged tree. He was clever enough to act as dazed and lost as everyone else. Now was not the time to attract attention to himself.

The shade felt good. He watched and assessed those around him. Most were in shock. Others grieving and weeping. He could exploit that, it was his best trait.