

We'll, that last chapter was well received. Still, I'm guessing you lot still need a bit of what they call 'closure'. I'm not one for that idea but this probably comes close.

"Okay, goodnight dad." Jeremy said before ending the call.

He slumped on the breakfast bar emotionally exhausted. Dropped from numb fingers his phone clattered to the counter on the other side of the bar. The calls to family had been as hard as the act of ostracizing his brother. Eric, he internally corrected. He only had two brothers left now, he reminded himself again closing his eyes and feeling the wet spread down his muzzle.

Sam was in his room. He too had looked spent the last Jeremy had seen him. If he managed to be still enough, quiet enough, Jeremy could hear the sobs coming of this brother's room.

He stood and made his way around the bar to the kitchen sink. With the tap running he wet his facial fur. The coolness helped dispel the heated feeling from his face, but only a little. Drying his face on a towel he looked up expecting nothing but noticed Eric's belongings sitting on the floor at the end of the couch. Pulling a few trash liners from under the sink he walked to the pile of clothes and bagged them up.

His mind brought up the memory of watching the two maintenance workers bagging up left behind belongings from a vacant apartment. They had taken everything and thrown it all away. He had no doubt nothing had been spared. He hadn't thought of it at the time but the act itself was the very height of callousness. He was now doing the same to Eric.

Shame burned in the pit of his stomach as Jeremy carried the three bags that represented all of Eric's possessions down the hallway to the elevator. He leaned against the wall of the cab on the way down feeling the metal lining cool his face. Even as the doors opened he stared at the bags at his feet. He didn't know if he had the emotional strength to discard his brother's things. The door closed as he continued to stare at the black plastic bags sitting in front of him.

Pressing the door open button he grit his teeth and lifted the bags. His body told him the bags were light but his shoulders and arms ached strangely from the strain. He kept his eyes down as he trudged out of the building and turned toward the alley he'd last seen Eric. He set the bags against the building where he'd slung his brother from his shoulder to the hard ground. Turning he stopped and stared.

There was still a spot of blood on the pavement. His rebellious mind reminded him it was where Eric had spit out his own blood. His mind taunted him with the thought that were this a movie there'd also be a whole tooth next to Eric's split blood. A carnassial. It would be a movie carnassial. Pure white and wholly intact, as if taken out with the utmost care and tenderly polished clean. Movies were never the same as real life.

He looked at his shirtfront. That too was wrong for movies. The left side of the shirt just under his armpit was in tatters. It was where Eric had been able to reach him when he'd been in a headlock. He was covered in small spots of blood. Some were streaks, blotted into his shirt from the wounds inflicted by Eric in their fight. He still didn't feel any pain from his injuries. Except for the emotional turmoil of losing a brother he felt numb.

That was never expressed in movies either. No, the hero was always emotionally isolated from the consequences of his actions. They were stuffed caricatures. Angular jawed heads full of soft but very dense cotton. Was it any wonder they could take countless punches only to shake it off in the briefest of pauses in the action.

Jeremy looked up at the sky. "Ah, fuck." make it stop he silently wished.

He saw the first snowflake fall from the darkness and land on his muzzle. Still staring up he felt the dampness reach his skin. Eric was out there somewhere. Homeless. Outcast. Hurt and bleeding. And now it was starting to snow on him. Lowering his head he walked back to his apartment.

Turning out the lights as he went he retreated to his bedroom. He stripped and lay in bed. He tossed and turned for what seemed hours before exhaustion finally had its way with him.

Saturday morning Jeremy woke to soreness along his left side and his right arm. In the shower he examined himself and found several deep scratches down his flank and a few bite marks on his arm. It took a few extra minutes to get all the dried blood out of his fur. It was somewhat reminiscent of his fight with Candy's entourage, although Eric had done far less damage. Eric's bite was lower on his arm, closer to his wrist where there was less meat to latch on to.

After drying off he couldn't find anything to wrap his arm with and had to wait for the bleeding to stop once again before dressing. He was late for his training session with Alex. The red panda took one look at him and asked the obvious. Jeremy explained the actions he'd taken the night before.

His trainer insisted on examining Jeremy's wounds. He also probed the rest of his body. His not so gentle fingers found numerous bruises and a few more deep scratches. His trainer stepped back and announced that he would likely heal just fine without the need for a visit to the hospital. All his injuries were closed over with scabs and would heal normally on their own.

Jeremy half expected to be sent home but was surprised when Alex started a new training session. He paced Jeremy through the required moves to keep him from tightening up after his fight. He explained as he went by way of ensuring Jeremy knew the proper form and why each move was important. Were he to wallow in self-indulgence and allow his body to heal without constant movement he's loose far more ground than he expected.

At the end of the hour they parted with Alex finally giving his condolences. Jeremy made his way home still somewhat shocked at the red panda's attitude. Jeremy knew he was a bit harsh in his training methods but he'd never expected him to be so callous as to wait until the last minute to empathize with him.

Then again, Jeremy realized his method of continuing as though everything were a typical day had gone a long way in bringing him out of his funk. He returned back at the apartment to find Sam had gone to work. Jeremy had an appointment in the afternoon. He didn't feel like sitting in the apartment for the hours in between so left for The Floor.

When he walked in Sydney was staffing the desk. She was asking Jeremy if something was wrong even before he crossed to her desk.

"Nothing, just family issues I had to deal with."

"What are those marks all over you? What happened?"

"Please, its nothing. I'll be in the back. Thanks."

Jeremy didn't want to project pheromones to have his way with anyone on The Floor. He smiled what he hoped was something close to appreciation as he turned to go. His first appointment was still more than an hour away when Jenna knocked and entered his studio.

The cougar walked up to him and taking his jaw in paw turned him to look at both sides of his face. "Well, if you're going to start getting in fights at least learn how to brush your fur to cover it up." She commenced pawing at him to adjust his facial fur to cover the scratches and bite marks. Jeremy put up with it as well as he could even through the ache and stinging sensations her ministrations brought out.

Stepping back she appraised him and said "Good enough for now. Now, tell me what happened."

"Can't this wait?"

"No." Jenna said. Her tone clear enough to let even the hard of hearing to know she would not be put off.

Jeremy sighed and said "Eric picked a fight. I finished it. That's all."

She crossed her arms and replied "What else."

Taking a deep breath he answered. "I had to ostracize him. He was getting too aggressive with his brothers." He looked her in the eyes, pleading he added "I'd really rather not have to talk about it right now."

He saw her expression change at the admission. She stepped close and hugged him. He returned the hug feeling her paws rub his back. He was again confronted by the fact he had now grown to match a fully mature dominant. As she stepped back from their embrace she held him by the shoulders and looked at him a moment.

"Damn, you're getting big. Hard to believe this is the little weasel that first came to me only a few years ago." She said with a smile.

His cock was stirring at the observation. Slightly embarrassed at his response he smiled and said "I've noticed. I'm beginning to wonder just how big I'll end up."

Jenna smiled back at him. "I know of a rabbit dominant that's a touch over eight feet tall. I imagine you'll not be quite that big. Still, I have no doubt you'll be a match physically for almost anyone by the time you're finished." She moved a paw to his crotch to feel him up. "And yes, it's okay to embrace your power. Just remember what we teach you and focus on who you want to be."

She backed off after a few seconds of fondling him. "Now you're ready for your first client." Turning to go she waved a dismissive paw over her shoulder at him adding, "Your welcome."

He couldn't help but smile. Jenna, while a master manipulator still sometimes showed her heart of gold. He handled his client of the night and escorted her out once again personally unsatisfied. He took his bedsheets to the laundry room. Sam was still working and smiled faintly as his brother came in.

"Sorry about earlier."

"What are you sorry for?"

"Um, didn't Jenna tell you?"

"No?"

"Oh. Well, she saw me this morning and asked if there was something wrong."

"Oh." Jeremy said already understanding what had happened.

Jenna had gotten the full story from his brother. Sam tried apologizing but he cut him off. "No, don't worry about it. She'd have gotten it from one of us eventually. If anything you saved me the trouble of explaining everything to her."

Sam smiled for a brief moment. He turned from Jeremy and started pulling linens from one machine and stuffing them into another.

"Are you alright?" Jeremy asked.

Sam only nodded and kept working.

"Sam?"

His brother turned and looked at him. "I know I should feel bad for him, but in the past couple months he's treated me like shit. As far as I'm concerned he had it coming."

"Then why are your eyes still red?" Jeremy asked knowing his brother was putting on a front.

Sam's shoulders slumped. "Because that asshole doesn't deserve this. He wouldn't feel half what we're going through."

Jeremy nodded and said "That's likely true, but that's his problem."

Sam sniffed and shook his head. "I'm through with him."

Jeremy pulled his brother in and shared a hug. He backed off feeling his emotions threatening to get out of control again. Coughing and clearing his throat he said "Well, anyway I'm out of here for the night. I'll see you later."

Sam was clearly in emotional turmoil and avoiding making eye contact. "See you back home."

He left Sam to finish his shift. Back in the apartment he changed his clothes and while in the elevator altered his appearance.

An average looking coyote stepped out of the elevator and left the building. On the street the coyote pulled up his hood to cover his head and turned west to start walking. Jeremy knew there would be little chance a perfectly average coyote would draw any attention unless he did something out of the ordinary. With nightfall coming on the dimming daylight further sheltered him from unwanted observation.

With PATOMES open he started tracking Eric's position. It still wasn't precise enough to give him Eric's exact location but could get him within a couple yards. He'd recently used it to find the unfortunate jaguar. He had no intention of repeating that mistake.

It took almost half an hour but he finally spotted his former bother. The weasel was sitting at a bus stop. He was in the same torn and bloodstained clothes as when Jeremy'd last seen him. He was still and leaning his back against the side of the small enclosure. Huddled up with his arms around his chest and his paws up on the bench it looked like he'd been sitting there for some time. Everyone in the area was avoiding him.

Jeremy watched for some time. Several people had sat on the bench while waiting for a bus. They each had glanced at the weasel and sat as far from him they could. The busses would take them away eventually but Eric never moved except to briefly look at them as they sat. He watched for another fifteen minutes before making his decision.

He crossed the street and bought a fast food meal. Walking to the bus stop he sat and took a few bites from the side of fries occasionally looking up the street. He noticed the weasel kept glancing at him. His head was down but Jeremy could feel his eyes on him. It was impossible for Eric to know who was really sitting next to him. The weasel all but stared at the coyote as he ate. Jeremy took a moment to look back at the weasel.

Eric lowered his eyes in submission as the coyote stared across the bench at him.

Jeremy looked the weasel over. He was large for his specie, but he was clearly also the victim of a recent beating. His muzzle was still swollen and the blood had not been cleaned out of his fur. With the torn and bloodstained clothes and obvious signs of the fight still on him he was a clear target to any predators. Unless he got himself cleaned up he wouldn't last long. Jeremy looked up the street blinking away sudden tears.

It took only half a minute for the next bus to appear. The coyote stood leaving the unfinished meal on the bench beside him. Stepping onto the bus Jeremy sat toward the back and watched out the back window.

The weasel had watched him as he stood and gotten on the bus. Once the bus started moving away from the stop the weasel moved to the other end of the bench. The bus turned a corner but Jeremy could see Eric take up the leftover meal and start eating. He got off at the next stop. He walked the rest of the way back to his apartment. He'd thought about his impulsive action all the way back.

He couldn't, and wouldn't undo his brother's ostracism. There were his two other brothers to consider, but mostly his integrity as a dominant demanded it. Each of his mentors had been teaching him that his word was his bond. If he went back on something as profound as banishing his own brother then, dominant or not, no one would trust him. Even surreptitiously giving Eric help was risking everything. He shouldn't have done even as much as he had.

He entered his apartment building and waited for the elevator with his head down and eyes closed. He selected Eric's identity in PATOMES. As the doors opened Jeremy deleted his brother's profile from the menu. He'd not be able to find him again. He wouldn't be able to help him in any way. Unless they accidentally ran across each other Eric was on his own.

In the elevator he changed back to his weasel body. It felt infinitely better to him than being a coyote. He wondered if there would ever come a time when whatever form he took would feel comfortable to him while he was in them. The apartment was dark when he got in. He walked through the living room as softly as he could. Sam was sleeping on the couch with the television on but the sound all but off. There was a half empty liquor bottle on the coffee table. He climbed into bed without turning on any lights. He lay staring at the ceiling thinking over the past day.

The ruckus Eric had caused was likely to get them evicted. He'd talk with Sam the next morning. He would rather foot the rent himself than live without his brother. With his recent promotions he could afford a much better apartment than were they were in now. He'd never admit it aloud but perhaps, he thought to himself, there was an upside to Eric's ostracism.

He woke late the next morning. In the bathroom after draining his bladder he washed his paws and stopped to stare at his reflection. He slowly pulled his fingers across the fur of his face. He stopped and continued staring openmouthed. The still healing scratches and bite marks from the fight with Eric were gone.

It should have taken more than a week for him to heal enough to scrub the scabs away from his skin and even longer for his fur to grow back. It now looked like the fight had never happened. He

remembered simply using the reset function in PATOMES to return to his own form the night before. His last save had been from before his fight. As far as PATOMES was concerned the fight had never happened. He wasn't sure how he was going to explain such a change when anyone noticed.

He resolved that the best way to handle any questions would be with a claim of not knowing how such a thing was possible himself. It was still likely to raise questions should anyone notice but it was all he could do without admitting to having PATOMES. He'd have to be more careful in the future.

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Since there was so much interest lets talk one last time about Eric.

There was speculation that he would try to come back and even the score with Jeremy. The idea of him coming back aside it was observed that he'd likely come back with a group of friends. I have to admit that would probably have been his modus operandi, its not going to happen. Two reasons.

First, that scene in the alley Jeremy employs what I've been calling his command voice. In his world dominants can use it if they've learned to use it properly. Jeremy has. Since its coming from a dominant it should be considered much more powerful than a post hypnotic suggestion. The entire tirade that should he come around again Jeremy would kill him would be almost set in stone as far as Eric was concerned.

Second, and just a bit on the spoiler side, in my notes Eric is never seen or heard from again. Ostracism is that serious in Jeremy's world.

Now, should anyone want a side story involving Eric after this point in exchange for a story reward, that would still be possible but he's out of the main story.