

Okay you lot, take a deep breath before this one. Its one of the longest chapters yet. I just didn't want to break it up, besides the length of the previous chapters should have you conditioned for a marathon read anyway. Enjoy;

The work week went by as any other for both brothers. Jeremy learned Sam had already started training for his place on The Thirteenth Floor. His brother had even completed the prerequisite physical prior to employment. Jeremy declined his brother's offer to join in shopping for his studio's furnishings. Jeremy's reason was that it would speed the introduction process by enlisting the help of other willing staff members.

Sam accused him of not wanting to because he disliked shopping. He had to admit to the charge and begged his forgiveness. His brother knew him too well.

Friday evening came and Jeremy had diner with Jackson Buttons again. They were able to discuss their plans for the Bureau for hours. Jeremy noticed he was finally becoming comfortable around the fox. The relaxing setting of the male's home helped. Jeremy didn't know how such a thing was possible just from decor but he felt a sense of peace in the condo. He left with yet another Friday diner scheduled with his mentor. This time for two weeks hence.

Saturday morning came and Sam knocked on his brother's door making sure he was awake. Jeremy called out telling his brother he'd be ready on time. After a rush through his morning activities Jeremy joined Sam as they went searching for their next apartment. They'd narrowed their search down to just a few choices they were both comfortable with.

Jeremy had noticed a drastic change in his brother over the course of the week. It was good to see his brother excited about anything. His confidence had made an even greater comeback. Jeremy wondered if it was his efforts or what went on on The West Side.

The first apartment was three blocks away. It was cheap but also had few of the amenities that Jeremy had gotten used to. Sam too was less than interested in the small apartment. They moved on.

The second was little better. Five blocks away from The Floor it was actually a converted hotel. While it was spacious the apartment was located in the interior of the building and had no windows. The building also had few amenities to offer.

The third was just a block away from the edge of Center Park but the apartments were tiny and the building had so few amenities to offer they both dismissed it after only minutes.

As they made their way to the last of the day's choices Jeremy brought up the idea of spending a little more in rent to find something of slightly better quality. Sam only smiled as they came up on the final apartment building. They'd had the discussion once already and Jeremy was sure his brother was comfortable with him picking up most of the rent. Sam had offered to take up most of the household chores as compensation. Jeremy readily agreed, he admitted he'd gotten spoiled by his brother's excellent cooking. Jeremy thought his brother's smile was acceptance of his offer to take up more of the rent.

This last preplanned choice was six blocks from The Floor and had plenty of amenities. It had been a last minute addition to the list of the day's visits on Sam's insistence. As they toured the amenities Jeremy was impressed with the layout of the gym, it took up almost a quarter of the second floor. They went up to the forty sixth floor. Stepping out to the hallway Jeremy raised his eyebrows at his brother. He

was getting the feeling he was being had. They followed the agent through the maze of spotless hallways until he stopped to unlock the door.

The kangaroo opened the door and stepped back for them to enter. Sam moved inside only to step aside. Jeremy walked in and only saw hallway. He looked at Sam who only smiled back. He walked down the hallway and stopped less than ten feet in where there were doors set to either side.

They both proved to be good sized bedrooms and each had attached bathrooms. Finished looking at the bedrooms Jeremy started down the rest of the hallway. He was pleasantly surprised as it opened up to a view of the city. He looked back down the hallway and back to the view. They were in the corner of the building, the large open space had windows looking both north and east.

Jeremy looked at the building agent "Its how much?" he asked putting as much skepticism into his voice as he could.

The kangaroo named the price again where he waited at the opening of the hallway.

Jeremy walked around looking at the large space. The kitchen was part of the main space and he could stand in the middle of it and still see the entire view. He whispered to Sam "There has to be something wrong with it."

"Well, actually Jake gave me the tip on this one. They're desperate to have dominants in the building. Seems they're something of a status symbol to the owner."

Jeremy stepped back and glanced at the agent. He was clearly trying to listen in while acting nonchalant.

"Who's the owner?"

"Some Australian by the name of Tarkanna."

"Never heard of him. So, whats the catch?"

"From what I understand he's trying to lure as many dominants to his buildings as he can. He's giving huge discounts in return for the bragging rights. Other than that you'd simply have to occupy the apartment."

Jeremy looked at the view. He could see a bit of Center Park but most of it was blocked by other buildings. He turned to the kangaroo "What else do you have, maybe a bit higher?"

The 'roo smiled and answered. "We do have another two by two on sixty one, but it won't be available until next week."

Sam asked "Can we see it?"

"Certainly, but its still being worked on at the moment, so please excuse the clutter." He answered as he made to lead them down the hallway. Jeremy had noticed the satisfied smirk of the male before he'd turned to lead the way.

At the next apartment the kangaroo opened the door and again stepped back letting them enter first. The layout was completely different. The door opened to the living room with its view of the southeast. Jeremy stepped to the middle of the space a little confused. He had tried to track their path in the interior of the building but now felt a bit turned around.

He turned to the agent and asked "Shouldn't this be a corner apartment?"

He grinned and answered "It is." He walked to the large twelve foot floor to ceiling windows and opened a sliding glass door that Jeremy had overlooked.

Jeremy heard Sam softly say "Fuck no."

Together they followed the kangaroo outside. Jeremy was shocked at the size of the deck. Shaped in a wide half circle it was at least twenty-five feet from the wall of glass windows to the curved edge of the deck. The glass wall spanned almost the entire length of their apartment and almost matched the arc of the deck. There were walls separating the deck from the neighboring apartments on both sides. Each separating wall looked to be ten feet long giving the deck an enormous sense of depth. Both bedrooms had sliding glass doors that also opened to the deck.

He looked up and guessed there were only five or six floors above them. Leaning over the railing to look down there were decks in the same scallop shape as the deck he stood on. The face of the building had been a rough square on the street level. Somewhere along the way the outer shape of the building had changed to nothing but rounded curves dominated by the arcs of the decks. Jeremy could see from his vantage that each floor had a bit more cut out of the building footprint as each floor ascended.

He glanced at Sam as stepped past him to go back inside. His brother was grinning ear to ear at the view. Jeremy explored the rest of the apartment. The kitchen was a little smaller but was also positioned to provide a view much as the other apartment. The bedrooms were tucked away on either side and while only one had an attached bathroom there was another bathroom entered from the common area.

Jeremy was fiddling with the kitchen appliances when his brother came back in from the deck. Sam stood at the other side of the kitchen island and started looking at the stovetop. Jeremy leaned against the countertop and hinting at as much disappointment he could manage asked the kangaroo "How much?"

The kangaroo consulted his tablet and eventually gave a number almost double that of the previous apartment.

Jeremy turned to his brother. Sam had stopped to stare at him, he was clearly disappointed. Jeremy had no doubt his brother felt he'd turn the apartment down but he'd could easily make the payments himself. Before he turned back to the kangaroo Jeremy winked at his brother and said "Sorry, thats a bit more than what we budgeted for."

"Sorry, I didn't take into account the discount." The agent said.

Jeremy turned as the kangaroo tapped on his tablet and named a lower price. He ran the numbers in his head and figured they were getting almost a thirty percent discount. It was still more than the previous apartment and still over their agreed on budget but Jeremy was ready to make up the difference.

Sam came over to him and said to the 'roo "Can you give us a minute."

He motioned for Jeremy to follow him. Once they were on the deck and the door closed and both of their backs to the 'roo Sam confided "I'll be making a lot more now that I'm working on The West Side. I could make up the difference if thats what it takes."

Jeremy almost laughed. "I was about to make the same proposal. Lets take it."

His brother grinned and said "Great. I'm going to love it here. Still, lets see if we can get the price a bit lower." Sam took a moment to shake his head for appearance and turn with a disapproving expression set on his face.

Jeremy walked back inside joining in on the act and before he said anything the kangaroo said "We could also give the first month free if you sign today."

Sam nudged him in the side. Looking at his brother a second Jeremy turned and announced "Okay, we'll take this one."

The kangaroo simply smiled. Jeremy wondered for just a moment how much his commission was going to be. They spent the rest of the afternoon signing the lease agreement.

As they walked back to their current apartment Sam commented. "We're going to have to get some furniture for all that space."

"I'm sure some of the staff on the Floor would love to help out with the shopping part. Just let them know what's going on."

Sam looked at him and asked "How about you? That's larger than the apartment we're in now. You're going to need more stuff too."

"I'd rather get settled in before I think about adding more furniture." Jeremy said. He stopped walking before he added "We haven't decided who gets the bedroom with the attached bathroom."

"I figured you'd take that one." Sam replied after stopping. The tone of his voice had been one of acceptance.

"I'd like to but I also want to be fair." He said as he dug into his pocket. He pulled out a coin and positioned it on his paw ready to flip it. His brother stepped closer and stared at the coin.

"Call it." Jeremy said as he flicked the quarter into the air.

"Heads."

It landed on the concrete and rolled a few inches. They both watched as it stopped and fell flat. It landed tails up. Jeremy picked up his coin and smiled at his brother. Sam was smiling back at him. "What are you so happy about, you lost."

"Yeah, but I could've actually won this one."

Back in their apartment Jeremy changed for his appointment with Alex. The red panda had agreed to move Jeremy's training session to the late afternoon. He spent the last half hour of his time catching up on the backlog of Bureau work that had come up during their apartment search. He looked up every once in a while. His brother had taken to packing frenetically. He would have said something but with the increasing demands on his time Sam would likely be the one to unpack everything at their new place. He kept silent and let his brother have his fun.

The rest of the weekend seemed to drag on. He knew it was the excitement building of moving into the new apartment but was helpless against it.

Moving day came all too soon. It was fortunate that Sam had done the majority of the scheduling. There were also plenty of volunteers from The Floor to help. It only took two hours to get everything from the apartment to the moving truck parked on the street.

Everyone followed it to the new apartment and in three hours had the truck unloaded. The major difference in time was the increase in distance from the truck to the freight elevator. The volunteers were just starting the unpacking process when it was time for Jeremy to leave for his next appointment on The Floor. Sam had scheduled the day off and was more than happy to stay and supervise everyone. His brother was in his element.

Jeremy walked back to his new home after he was done for the night. It was an easy stroll of only six blocks. At almost midnight there was only a few pedestrians about. He took the time to peek in the gym to see if it saw much use at the late hour. He smiled at finding it empty.

Entering his apartment he was surprised to see most of the volunteers had stayed and were having a party. He stifled his initial reaction when he realized the noise level was fairly low in observance of the hour. He looked around noticing that everything was already sorted organized and placed. A quick look in his bedroom confirmed that it was ready for him whenever he wished to hit the bed. The apartment looked as though they'd been in residence for weeks instead of hours. The only thing out of place were all the folded up moving boxes leaning against the living room wall.

He stopped at the kitchen island and looked over the wide assortment of foods still available. Jeremy was presented with a stack of paper plates. He smiled at the necessity. They didn't have enough real dish wear to hold a party of this size. After filling his plate he started nibbling and headed for the deck. It was where half the remaining volunteers were standing and enjoying the view. Their view he reminded himself with a satisfied smile. He found he didn't mind the break in his routine at all. It was a small price to pay for the help they'd given him and his brother. Most of the staff worked odd hours and often had plenty of time between appointments anyway.

On the deck he interrupted things for a bit as everyone greeted him. As everyone was getting back to their conversations he found a place at the rail and watched the city as it began to settle in for the night. Their corner of the building gave a great view of Center Park. The lights of the buildings across the park glimmered like fat stars. Jeremy could stare at it all night long. He didn't think he'd ever tire of it.

He smiled at the thought that he could even launch himself from the deck as a hawk whenever he felt the desire. In fact, the more he thought on it he wouldn't need to steal a set of maintenance keys to skulk around as Dominic. He could fly to his rented storage unit and make his changes there. He'd only have to make sure he wasn't observed by the cameras at the storage facility. Or Sam.

He was brought out of his reverie by someone hugging him from behind. When he was released he turned to find even Jenna had joined the party.

"So, Jake got you hooked up for a discount too."

He stared for a second. "From what I understand Jake told Sam about the discount. Is there something else that I'm missing?"

"Probably not. For what it's worth, the owner is a bit of an elitist. He's got this idea that having more dominants living in his building will somehow give him some kind of higher status among his peers." She shrugged and continued "But, hey what do we care, the rent's cheap and the views are killer."

"Fool and his money." Jeremy muttered.

"Exactly." Jenna replied and laughed.

"So, you live here too?"

"Yep. So does Jake and Judy. He's bagged us all now. I might just have to consider moving The Thirteenth Floor here."

"Really?"

"Pish. No, from what I hear he's a bit of a prude. He'd charge too much if he knew what we did, or throw us out once he found out."

They both laughed, drawing the attention of everyone. Jeremy looked back and smiled at everyone. The atmosphere was still celebratory despite the hour. He shivered at the chill brought on by a sudden gust of wind.

"You should look into getting some gas heat lamps installed. There're gas lines for them on every deck."

Jeremy looked around and spotted what might have been the gas connections Jenna mentioned. "A grill would be nice too. I'm sure Sam would love it. He's the chef of the family."

"Good for him."

Jeremy looked at the cougar. The way she'd made her comment made him send a questioning look.

She looked back for a moment and turned her back to the party. Looking out at the view she softly said "Most of those that work the West Side have been abused by their family and friends, or even ostracized." She glanced at him sharing a look. "Its good to know you're in his corner."

"He's family. Our father was always giving advice that makes it clear that family should come first. He's got an open mind and has always supported us in whatever decision we made. He even backed Sam over Eric a few weeks ago."

"That makes me happy for the both of you." Jenna said. Her tone made Jeremy stare at her. There had been a hint of pain in her reply.

"So," Jeremy paused and thought for several seconds before continuing "do you think I overreacted with Eric? I have to admit I've regretted it ever since."

She put her drink down on the railing and turned to look him square in the eyes. "Mentors shouldn't judge too often. This time though, I think you were right. It should also hurt and make you question yourself. Nothing that drastic should ever be easy nor taken lightly."

"Damn, I was almost hoping you'd tell me not to obsess over it."

She snorted. "No easy outs from me, you should know that by now."

He looked down at the plate of food in his hand. It was cold and uninviting now. He'd also lost whatever appetite he'd had.

"Enough of this, you look like you need some rest." Jenna said as she moved closer. She hugged him and whispered "If only you'd been born a cougar."

He stiffened within her arms. He'd had no idea she felt this way. Sure, she was his sexual mentor, but that to him hadn't guaranteed they would have feelings for each other. "Just being with you is enough." He said before thinking.

She stepped back and said "Go, sleep. You've had a busy day. I'll throw these bums out for you and Sam."

"No. Let them have some fun. It's Sam's party more than it is mine anyway. He can make the call on when to end it."

"Fine. I'm done for the night though. I'll see you tomorrow." Jenna said and stepped away.

Jeremy watched as she stopped and spoke with Jake and Pete who were talking a few paces away. Sighing he admitted to himself he was tired. He picked up her discarded glass and went inside. Leaving the glass on the counter he slid the paper plate in the nearly full trash bag. He took that bag and the three others out to the trash chute.

Back in the kitchen Jeremy started filling more trash bags with the discarded plates and cups scattered about. A little cleaning up was the least he could do for his brother. He wasn't able to clean any of their real dishes, he'd rather not start creating noise complaints about them on their first night. Another trip to the trash chute and he felt awake enough to rejoin the party.

After another hour most of their guests had left. Another hour from that and all the rest had gone except for a raccoon and squirrel that were talking with Sam. Jeremy felt he'd fulfilled his duties as host at that point and quietly slipped away. He was pleased once again that his bedroom had been organized for him. His coworkers at The Floor really were a brand apart.

Jeremy woke with light pouring through the windows. Disoriented and confused it took him a few seconds to remember the move. He'd never had a bedroom that faced east before. As good as their new apartment was it was going to take some time for him to get used to waking to light on his eyes.

Climbing out of bed he padded to the bathroom and relieved himself. Despite the bright light and late hour of the morning it was quiet in the apartment. Walking out to the open area they would call a living room he stopped at the sight on the couch. His brother was still sleeping, with the male raccoon that also worked the West Side. By the way their limbs were tangled together they'd had a bit of fun before falling asleep. He couldn't place the raccoon's name and shrugged it off for the moment and went to the kitchen.

He was forced to start cleaning the countertops off again before he could cook anything. He tried to make as little noise as possible but he woke the pair anyway. Sam got up from the couch and looked over at his brother. The raccoon stood a second later. The raccoon followed Sam's stare and looked somewhere between scared and embarrassed on seeing Jeremy.

"Sorry to wake you, I was just getting ready to make something to eat." Jeremy explained.

"Sorry Jeremy." "Sorry Mister Dawn." they both said at the same time.

Jeremy looked at the two and laughed after a second. "Relax, its not like I didn't know where you two work."

The raccoon had started picking his clothes up as Jeremy had spoken. He headed for the door as Sam said "Dan, you don't have to run off like that."

Dan shook his head and repeated "Sorry Mister Dawn. It won't happen again." He was already at the door and fumbling at the knob. The bundle of clothes in his arms was making the task difficult.

Jeremy ordered "Dan, stop." It was the third time he'd used the command voice as a dominant.

The raccoon stood straight as if struck. He stared at Jeremy wide eyed.

"We've both asked you to stay. You're Sam's guest, and so also mine." Jeremy said in a normal tone. "Please, have a seat and at least let Sam cook you something before you run out on him. And make it Jeremy." Jeremy added as he saw his brother nodding at the raccoon.

Dan turned to look at Sam and relaxed. He turned to Jeremy and stared. From his position at the door he could see all of the weasel.

Jeremy realized he'd fallen back into his old habit of going about in only his fur. The raccoon continued to stare, his eyes slowly roving over his body. He glanced at Sam who was actually smiling at the situation. Jeremy sighed and looked back to the raccoon to apologize but stopped at the sight. Dan was staring at his sheath and reacting to the sight. The tip of Dan's cock had already poked out of his own sheath and continued to push up further.

Sam was grinning at his brother with his arms folded across his chest. All three were clad in only fur. Jeremy wondered if this kind of thing was going to happen a lot.

Jeremy turned to the countertop going back to clearing a space and said "Dan, why don't you go ahead and use the bathroom to get cleaned up while we get breakfast ready."

Dan shifted his clothes before himself and said. "Oh, yeah. Sorry, its just--"

"Don't worry about it." Sam said, staring at his brother in an effort to lessen the raccoon's embarrassment.

Dan scurried to the bathroom and almost slammed the door. Sam laughed a moment later.

"Sorry. Things just sort of happened last night." Sam said as he moved into the kitchen. He took over cleaning a space around the stovetop.

Jeremy nodded. After a second's thought he replied "I don't think there's any need to apologize. Its not like either of us should have any inhibitions considering where we work."

"True. Still, I should have thought to take him to my bedroom instead of sprawling out on the couch."

Jeremy shrugged. "I'm going to get cleaned up and dressed before Dan finishes. Don't need him soiling himself again at the sight of me."

"Don't kid yourself." Sam shot at him and laughed.

Jeremy found his closet was a lot less full when he went to get dressed. In checking, all of the smaller sized clothes for his alternate PATOMES identities hadn't made the move. Jeremy walked out to the living room to see Dan sitting at the kitchen island where the barstools had been set up. Sam was almost finished making something that smelled good enough to make his stomach rumble. He took one of the other stools and looked at the counter height. The barstools were clearly too tall for where they were now.

"Hey, Sam, where are the rest of my clothes? I don't see any more boxes."

"Oh, we donated them. Seemed a lot of trouble moving them, its not like you fit in them anymore anyway."

Jeremy couldn't argue with the logic, nor could he tell his brother why he had them in the first place. "Oh, thanks I guess."

So last week I detailed the borders of York, the nation state. Time to explain what I mean by nation state. I believe I've mentioned before that the history in Jeremy's world somewhat paralleled our own up until the revolutionary war with the north american colonies. For Jeremy's world the situation that they were in to parallel that time of development they weren't really considered colonies.

I've detailed the rise of the different species elsewhere, so the Americas would have been similarly developed as the European and asian nations. The main difference would be that the European and Asian Empires were far stronger than any in the Americas. More on that later.

For political reasons about three hundred years before now the 'New' was dropped from New York. Also many of the colony borders changed for various reasons. For much of the area around York the patronage that supported the various basal states dried up due to the fall of most of the empires. Second, since the king thought to disrupt any chance of there being any insurrection many of them were converted into what were called Protectorates.

It wasn't until the continental wars that would have taken place around the time of the civil war here in the US that the borders changed again. Afterward York was pretty much unchanged and recovered fairly quickly compared to the rest of North America and the world.

Next week a bit of detail on the surrounding states.