

Lets have a bit more fun. Time for another road trip.

Jeremy stopped at the exit to the garage. It felt good to have his bike under him again. Smiling he turned to the west again and headed for the bridge. Traffic was light this early in the morning. The sun was still half an hour from peeking over the horizon. With so few vehicles about he felt free to push his bike to more speed.

He was out of the city just in time to turn south and glance to the east to see the sun come up. With the weather cooperating he pulled off to stand astride his idling bike and watch the spectacle. He would have liked to have had company but his father had begged off from riding with him. His parents had already planned the day out together.

With the disk of the sun all the way over the horizon Jeremy got back on the road. Unlike with his cross continent trip he pushed his bike to near its top speed. Grinning at the feel of seeming straightaways forcing constant adjustment Jeremy leaned down resting his weight against the gas tank. The only exposed part of him felt the wind whip his fur down tight against his tail. His grin widened at the stiff resistance increase as he tried to lift it up into the wind stream.

He was well out in the countryside when he slowed and lifted his body back up. Back to a fairly reasonable speed he slowed further and prepared to pull off at a gas station. There was only one vehicle at the pumps. He barely paid any attention to it as he passed it on the way to the station office.

He stopped in his tracks at the sight behind the counter. An instant later he felt the poke at his side. Looking that direction he saw the wolf's accomplice. He was holding a large knife at his back just under Jeremy's armpit. The threat was obvious.

Looking back to the two behind the register he slowly lifted his arms up in the international sign of surrender. The meerkat being held by the other wolf stared at him. The wolf holding the knife to the female behind the register grinned and nodded. The knife he held under the female's throat was as large as the one against his side.

As Jeremy finished adding the meerkat's profile to PATOMES his wallet was taken from his paw. He was glad he hadn't yet pulled his goggles off. They might not even realize he was a weasel given his size and almost his full body being covered up.

"Come on Rodger, lets get out of here before anyone else shows up." The wolf with his wallet said. Jeremy could hear the fear in his voice.

Jeremy executed the first PATOMES command. He looked at the wolf at his side wondering if he would notice. He could feel the change to his tail most of all. The air was much cooler without the thick fur it had had until just moments ago. He was glad he'd created and favorited a Dominic persona the size and build of a dominant ready to use. He slowly reached over and pulled his goggles and head covering off.

"I'll take that back." He said to the wolf standing next to him. Looking at the other wolf he said "I'd advise you leave her be."

Rodger lifted his muzzle in defiance and answered "Oh, really? Then maybe you think I shouldn't do this." As he finished speaking he drew the blade of his knife across the meerkat's exposed neck.

She screamed at the pain and feel of the blade cutting her throat. Dominic held his ground and concentrated on constantly resetting the meerkat's PATOMES profile. Blood spurted and covered the knife and the wolf's paw. Dominic spared just enough attention to glance at the other wolf. The male was too engrossed in the actions of his partner to be of any concern. With his stroke across the meerkat's throat complete Rodger released her.

She coughed blood and placed her paws over her neck and slumped to the counter. The wolf watched wide eyed, fascinated at his own work. Free from having to constantly reset the meerkat's profile Dominic executed the next command. Both wolves shrunk rapidly. It almost looked as if they'd disappeared and their clothes fell to the floor. By the time Dominic had turned and crouched to search for the wolf next to him both were only inches tall. The meerkat was standing feeling her throat, almost tenderly padding at the site where she should have been bleeding to death. Her eyes were wide and clearly in shock.

Dominic found the tiny wolf and plucked him up by his tail. He crossed to the counter and walked around to step behind and look for the other wolf. Standing with his find Dominic looked for something to hold them in. He saw a short but wide mason jar with an assortment of coins in the bottom of it next to the register. Dropping both wolves in the unusual penny tray he turned to the meerkat. She was clearly still in shock and stood watching him meekly and glassy eyed.

Dominic reached out and shook her to clear the mechanism. "Surveillance?"

He saw her eyes drop to something under the counter. Dominic stooped and examined the space under the counter. He saw a set of recording machines. It took a few seconds to find and remove the memory sticks. "Sorry, but I can't have the authorities having my picture. I'll leave these two for you to do with as you please."

"What are you?" She asked. Her eyes may have been full of shock but Dominic was forced to acknowledge her mind was again processing events.

In a flash of movie watching brilliance he answered "I'm an Omni."

"Thank you." She said with a paw still on her throat.

Dominic looked the female over. There was blood across her entire front. It had soaked through and was sticking to her fur as it dried. His mind idly asserted that despite the apparent blood loss she was at no risk thanks to PATOMES. He stepped back around the counter looking out at the pumps. There was still little traffic on the freeway. No one had come in to the pumps, yet.

"You've got two choices. You can either call the authorities and let them deal with these two, or close long enough to clean everything up and deal with them yourself, in your own way. I'll leave it up to you." He said as he backed toward the door.

She looked at the two tiny wolves trying to climb out of the coin tray then back up to the rat. "Did you stop for gas?"

Dominic looked out at the pumps. There were still only two vehicles parked. Digging his wallet back out he answered "I'm at pump three."

"Its on me." The meerkat replied.

He stood staring at the female. She looked to be back to her senses and stared back at him with a deep clear certainty. Opening his wallet he pulled out a single large denomination bill. "For the uniform." He said as he put the bill under the penny jar sitting on the countertop.

She looked down her front and gave a soft "Oh." as if only then noticing all the blood.

Dominic went out and started filling the bike's tank. He watched the inside of the station diligently. The meerkat had flipped the sign to read 'closed' and locked the door behind him as he'd left. She'd been out of sight for about half a minute before she came out with a jacket covering her bloodstained uniform.

Dominic watched as she climbed into what he assumed was the wolves' truck and started it up. She drove it from the pumps to the road just in front of the station. Placing the pump nozzle back in its holster and capping the bike's gas tank Dominic stood watching. She crossed back to the station and locked the door from inside. She stood looking out at him for a few seconds. Taking a deep breath and straightening she turned from the window and disappeared deeper inside the station.

Dominic replaced his headgear before climbing on the bike. With a last glance at the station he started the bike and drove off. He changed back to a weasel about a mile from the station. There were no cars directly behind him to observe fur grow out of his tail. He smiled, pleased at the warmer feel of his tail once again. Jeremy kept at a moderate speed not wanting to be cited and have his identification traced to an area where Dominic's activities might be reported.

He was back in York City mid afternoon. At his apartment he found Sam was out. He changed and texted Jackson Buttons. The fox was free to see him and at home. Jeremy made the trip and was knocking on his mentor's door within the hour.

"How was the drive?" The fox asked as he walked with Jeremy to the huge deck.

"Good, I got away with breaking the law the whole morning." he admitted with a smile.

Jackson laughed. "Speeding is kind of exhilarating. I've gone and done that myself plenty of times."

Jeremy smiled and watched the fox look out on the city. "I didn't feel it was the right time or place to ask last night."

"I thought you'd have questions."

"Yes, the talk last night piqued my interest. I'd like to read what you've obviously had."

He leaned against the railing facing Jeremy. "There's nothing secret or even confidential in the material. It's just obscure, for a reason that you can guess. But you must have something in particular in mind to ask."

"To put it bluntly, am I a dominant because I'm also an alpha, or am I also an alpha because I'm a dominant?"

Jackson grinned his humor. "There's really no way to know. Sure there are genetic markers that can confirm we're dominants, but not so for alphas. The thing is, yours is not the first family to exhibit a dominant and an alpha in the same generation, so the idea of there only being one alpha in a family, well." Jackson shrugged as a way of letting Jeremy draw his own conclusion.

"Has anyone ever actually looked for genetic markers with regard to alpha's?"

Jackson paused a moment and tilted his head in thought. "No. Not that I know of."

Jeremy was thinking about Eric and how he'd acted around his brother. "So, there could be more than one alpha in each generation."

"That would tend to create a lot of conflict if one wasn't a dominant." Jackson said with a bit of humor. A second later his change of expression seemed to indicate he'd caught up to where Jeremy's thoughts had already gone. "That's not to say it isn't a possibility."

"But if, say, someone's parents were predisposed toward having a dominant as one of their offspring, how likely would they be to also have more than one alpha?"

"Jeremy, there's no point in revisiting this. You sought advice from all of us, you can't be held responsible for someone else's actions. He made his own choices in how to act toward the rest of your family."

Jeremy nodded but couldn't bring himself to look Jackson in the eyes. "I just wish you'd have told me about this before hand."

"Would it have changed anything?" He asked. His tone of voice made it clear he believed he would have given the same advice.

Jeremy shook his head. He felt the pain of forcing his brother from the family all over again. He knew Jackson was right, he'd have still taken the same action and ostracized Eric. His heart however wasn't as convinced.

"Jeremy," Jackson said, his voice again full of empathy "it does you credit that you feel as strongly as you do about your family. Now that it's in the past you need to move on, and stop picking up the same baggage."

Jeremy smiled at the comment. "You mean you need me focused on The Bureau."

The fox grinned back. "There is that, but more to the point; I care that you don't take responsibility for someone else's failures."

With a sigh Jeremy turned to the view. "Thanks, but I'm guessing you know how hard it is to tell your feelings what you know in your head."

Jackson hummed his agreement. Turning to the sights with Jeremy he reached out and wrapped an arm around the weasel's shoulders. With a gentle squeeze he said "You'll do fine leading your family."

Jeremy stiffened at the comment. He had thought about what his status meant within his family but to have Jackson point it out as a responsibility shed new light on his position.

Dropping his arm Jackson asked "You hadn't thought about that?"

Jeremy turned to him answering "I had, but not the way you just made it sound."

Jackson turned away from him cocking his ears and looking down. An instant later Jeremy heard the sound as well. They both watched as a small drone lifted up above their position. Jeremy could see the camera pointing at them and slow to hover a distance from the edge of the building.

A muttered "Shit." from Jackson signaled the end of their time on the deck as he turned to go back inside.

Jeremy turned from Jackson back to the floating drone and back before following the fox inside. "What the hell?"

"Price of fame." Jackson said and he walked into his office. Jeremy followed him and watched as he tapped a few keys on his desk computer. The fox watched the screen and pressed a key continuously and eventually smiled and started pressing other keys. Jeremy guessed he was using surveillance cameras to track the drone. After a few seconds he stood with a smile.

"That's taken care of."

Judging by his grin Jeremy guessed the fox had done something to disable the drone. "Where's that going to fall?" he asked.

"It's not falling anywhere. It's captured." was the grinning answer.

Jeremy smiled slightly. He guessed he was not catching the fox's humor at the situation. "I've got an appointment in a little while, thanks for your time."

Jackson's grin faded. "Not a problem. I'll share some of those sites where I get information from. You can explore them on your own from there."

Jeremy thanked him again. He walked with the fox to the front door and parted ways again. Back on the street he couldn't help himself from looking up. He couldn't see anything in the air nor did he hear anything. Smiling he made his way to The Floor.

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Going to take a break from the geography lessons to answer a question one of my Patreon supporters had last week about the lizards. Since it had to do with this chapter I might as well let you lot have the answer now.

The question was whether lizards were one species or many lumped together and called such by mammals. To be fair to lizards everywhere I probably should have had several different lizard species but I was a bit lazy at that point. I decided to lump them all together with the idea that in the early history of civilization several lizard species had risen to intelligence. One fact lost to history was that at the beginning of lizard's second ascension and the difference between them and mammals starts there.

Having several subspecies all close to rising to their second ascension at the same time and also still capable of interbreeding to some extent they slowly melded into a single species. The clue for this is the stipulation that panthers are absorbing the jaguars. As they came out of their second ascension lizards had a wide range of coloration that is still largely on display at Jeremy's time.