

Sorry last week's chapter is a wee bit late, my right paw has been out of commission since Tuesday. Its slowly getting better but still can't use it too much yet. Going to get back on schedule by the end of next week.

Dominic left the storage unit with PATOMES open. He quickly made his way to the apartment the two rats shared. PATOMES let him know their location but only that. He wouldn't know if they were alone. He really didn't expect them to be alone after organizing the all day demonstration. That suited him fine.

Reaching their apartment in under half an hour Dominic was stopped in the hallway by a large musclebound rat. The rat was big, alpha large but not dominant sized big. He could see a second rat on the far side of the hall that had turned to watch. With a quick command both were smaller than ferals and out of the way.

Pounding on the door Dominic was forced to wait for less than ten seconds.

An unfamiliar female rat answered the door. He pushed his way in with little difficulty. He'd made sure long ago his Dominic body was ready for a fight and had been a near match for both rats he's disposed of in the hallway. Just inside the door he slammed it behind himself and backed to put his weight against it.

Everyone inside had stopped and was staring at him. They were giving him time they shouldn't have. He spotted the male at the far side of the room.

"I warned you not to play revolutionary."

He stood and angrily answered "You wanted nothing to do with us. Now we want nothing to do with you."

Showing his teeth Dominic growled "You have no idea how much of a setback to my plans you've created."

Most of the rats in attendance had stood at the male's statement. The rest joined them at Dominic's.

"Get out. You have no place here." The male ordered.

Dominic brought up his paw and snapped his fingers. In seconds the entire company of rats were shrinking fast. He watched for only a few seconds before crossing the room and entered the kitchen. It took a few more seconds of searching through the cupboards to find a plastic container large enough for the whole company.

Turning back to the living area Dominic stood and looked at the group. Most had stayed still and were now looking up at him. Only a few had tried to flee but still at eight inches tall they could do little to escape. He set the large ten inch wide bowl on the floor and stepped back.

"You know what I can do. Its your choice. I'd recommend getting in that bowl though." he said and waited. Most made their way toward the bowl. He recognized the male and female that had been handing out handbills. Once they were gathered around the bowl he executed the second command.

It took him about a minute to pick each of the rats up and place them in the bowl. He ignored the rest that had chosen to hide. He sealed the lid over the bowl and worked on stuffing it in his backpack. It

was a newer pack and small to match his rat persona causing a bit of struggle fitting such a large container inside. As he left Dominic left the door open. He only lingered in the hallway long enough to stop and look down at the rat standing in the middle of the hallway floor. As small as the male was Dominic could see the silent pleading in his eyes.

With a sigh Dominic programmed a command for the rat to return to normal, but for several minutes after he would be out of the building.

Finding an all night parcel store Dominic transferred the bowl to a box and put labels with Allen's address on the top. Before sealing the box he scrawled a note.

'Mister Alversten;

If you have not yet contacted the authorities do so now. They will be very interested in these.

Dominic'

The mongoose behind the counter at the store refused to leave to make the delivery. Dominic settled for stopping a by-passer on the street and paying a large sum of money for them to deliver the box. It took a bit of negotiating. Delivering a box sent by stranger in the middle of the night from a random spot on the street tended to raise suspicions. He paid the soon to be unfortunate young rat well for his coming trouble.

Dominic took the chance of cutting through Center Park on his way back to the storage unit. No one stopped him or followed him from the park. In the storage unit Dominic bagged up the containers he'd bought for his victims. It took about an hour to bag up and throw everything in a trash dumpster at the back of the building. It had been some time since his last endeavor. Leaving his pack in the trash with everything else Dominic left the storage unit.

Back in the park he made his way to his favorite bench. Sitting he again subtracted a little mass from the fox and bobcat then added it back all at once. In less than ten minutes the male was stepping into the clearing. A minute later the bobcat joined him and sat in front of Dominic.

"I've noticed the raccoon and weasel are still alive." He said to the pair.

"I didn't feel like killing them." the fox answered, his high gravelly voice full of defiance.

"And you?"

"The same." Mark said. His voice held a bit of submissiveness but as much defiance as the fox.

Dominic nodded. "Certain things have happened that have changed my plans. I have no further use for the two of you." He stood from the bench. He paused as both feral bodied predators backed away from him. They both looked ready to bolt at the first sign from him. "Relax. In keeping those two alive you've earned a reprieve. I'll be returning the both of you back to normal in about an hour."

They both looked at each other. The bobcat spoke first. "What about them?"

"What about them?" Dominic asked. He had put a bit of faux anger into his voice and was pleased seeing he'd successfully intimidated both ferals.

"Whatever they'd done, they don't deserve to be left as ferals the rest of their lives." The bobcat asserted.

"They don't deserve to die either," the fox added.

Dominic almost smiled. He knew they had both been working against what they'd thought his interests. Should he return the cops back to normal they'd both spread the idea of Dominic being fallible. He continued staring at the two ferals.

"Fine. They'll be returned to normal as well," he said as begrudgingly as possible. He lifted his head and turned to where the other two were hiding in the bushes. "You can come out now."

The fox didn't react but the bobcat looked behind himself.

All four soon sat in front of Dominic looking up at him submissively. "I'll show mercy this once. However, if I ever run across any of you after this I won't hesitate to finish you."

He stared at them a few seconds longer and turned from them and walked away. Dominic tracked them in PATOMES as he left the park. As a group they made their own way to the edge of the park. He couldn't imagine what was so important about where they'd chosen to wait.

In an out of the way part of the park he stripped and stuffed everything and the trash. He activated the waiting command and changed to a hawk and took to the air. He was able to find the four easily and managed a decent landing on the top of a public restroom. He had a perfect vantage to watch the four ferals.

Activating the return of each of them one by one Jeremy watched from the top of the building a hundred yards from their hiding spot. They did nothing but step out of the brush as they returned to their previous forms and grew. He'd programmed both fox and renewed panther to be a little larger than they had been. He smirked to himself as both felt themselves up seemingly enjoying the feel of retaining their far larger male hoods that Dominic had given them in their feral forms.

Once they were all back to standing in normal forms of each of their species the raccoon seemed to take charge. He lead the way to the street and flagged a cab. Jeremy watched intrigued as he leaned into the window of the cab for half a minute and then stepped back. The cab idled for a minute before the raccoon leaned down again. Ten seconds later he stood again and backed away from the cab and watched as it pulled away and reentered traffic.

Five minutes later the first police car pulled up with lights flashing. Seconds later another stopped followed by a third. Jeremy watched as each of Dominic's victims was hustled into one of the cars and seconds later they sped off. Within another five minutes there were a dozen more police cars stopped in the street clogging traffic. Each of the officers had left their cars to start searching through the park.

His curiosity satisfied Jeremy took to the air again. He had no problem finding the dumpster he'd hidden Dominic's backpack in. Changing back to the rat he pulled the pack out and retrieved his keys. Back in the body of a hawk he clutched the key ring and in a slightly awkward hop was back in the air. It was easier than ever for him to find his apartment building from the air.

As he glided in to make a sharp turn just outside his deck and dropped his key ring Jeremy thought he was getting the hang of navigating from the air. Of course it helped that he'd changed the light just outside his door to a blue bulb. It was easy to pick out from all the other white ones on that side of the building.

Landing on the rail for a second and listening for any activity inside he hopped down on the surface of the deck. Quickly changing back to his own body Jeremy opened his door and picked up his keys tossing them on the bed. Just after he'd stepped to the railing he heard Sam's door open. Looking to his brother Jeremy apologized for waking him.

"Trouble sleeping?" Sam asked as he stepped out to the deck.

"A little. I'm not worried about tomorrow or anything, its just, its a big project and I want to get started." Jeremy answered. He had noticed his brother was in just his fur the same as he was.

Sam joined him at the rail on his side of the deck. Looking up to him he said "I know you'll do fine."

"Thanks." Turning at a sound he saw Dan standing in his brother's doorway. "Oh, hey, I'm sorry if I interrupted anything."

Sam said "No, nothing like that, we were sleeping. I thought I heard something else out here."

"What's going on out there?" Dan asked. He'd come out to join Sam and Jeremy and was looking at the flashing lights that could be seen at the perimeter of the park.

Jeremy shrugged. "It started about half an hour ago."

Sam snorted. "I knew there'd be a backlash from that shit they pulled yesterday."

Jeremy stood and listened as Dan and his brother speculated. He didn't add anything to be safe from letting any inside knowledge slip out. He felt exhilarated after flying but also knew he'd been without sleep more than normal. After a few minutes Sam said he was going to go inside and make a quick snack.

Jeremy declined to stay and wait for Sam's snacks. He said his goodnights to both and left the deck to his brother and Dan. Once he'd closed the door behind himself he set his keys on the bureau and crawled into bed. With nothing to occupy his mind Jeremy started going over everything that had happened over the day and everything coming up within hours sleep eluded him.

He continuously ticked over his mental checklist. There were so many contractors to line up in getting the space ready. There was still assigning the the locations of the offices to the individual Bureau members. Then there was the staffing requirements they would need to fill. Being their own company now there was ancillary work that always needed to be done. There was also the need to get everything up and operating as soon as they could.

With a sigh Jeremy sat up looking at the clock. More than an hour and gone by and he still lingered nowhere near sleep. Giving up on sleep he stood and dressed to go down to the gym. The rest of the apartment was dark and silent as he slipped out.

For the first half hour he was alone in the building's gym. Turning at the sound of the door opening he saw a cheetah join him. As he entered Jeremy saw the cheetah was slightly on the tall side for his species. The feline occasionally glanced over at him as he programed the treadmill. The machine the cat had selected for his own workout was situated two over from him. As the cheetah started Jeremy glanced over. The male saw his look and nodded to him. Jeremy smiled and gave a quick wave before tuning back to his own treadmill.

Even though tall for a cheetah the male was still more than a head shorter than Jeremy. He slowly reassessed his first impression, the cat looked thin at first glance but after a few more glances Jeremy got the impression he had a hidden strength. After his warmup period ended the male moved into a much faster pace than Jeremy. He had only another ten minutes in his program when the cheetah began. When Jeremy finished his programed workout on the treadmill the other male was still going at the same rapid pace.

Jeremy went to an elliptical and started a short twenty minute stint. He was in a spot in the room further from the cat but could still watch him. He kept running through Jeremy's time on the elliptical and had yet to show signs of tiring. Jeremy stepped off the machine and paused to catch his breath. He was impressed with the cheetah's fitness and stamina, it was far beyond his own.

He walked toward the door watching the male with open admiration. The other saw him and nodded with a smile and wave. Jeremy slowed and changed direction to stand next to the running feline. "Sorry if I'm interrupting your concentration but I just have to complement you on your stamina."

He looked up at Jeremy with a smile and between huffs replied "Thanks, I'm trying to get ready for the marathon."

"I'm sure you'll do fine." Jeremy said as he stepped back. "I'd offer a paw if you weren't occupied, I'm Jeremy Dawn, pleased to meet you."

The male smiled "Lester Cooper, pleased to meet you." he returned though puffs of air.

"See you around." Jeremy said as he backed further.

"Later." Lester said with another openmouthed smile.

Jeremy had just enough time to freshen up and head out to Alex's club. An hour of the red panda's strenuous training still left him with excess tension. He decided to cut through the park on his way back and took to a quick jog. As he made his way through the park he noticed rats were again congregating in preparation of another day of protests. Back at the apartment Jeremy finally felt he'd burned off the excess tension he felt from the expectation of the coming day.

Jeremy arrived at the new building for the Bureau a little early. He was expected, the tiger was waiting and ready with several sets of keys. He also had a file with copies of the inspection they were to conduct as part of the Bureau taking possession of the space. As they were talking Gakota arrived and after dropping a duffle bag at the door joined them.

After more than two hours of checking over everything in the space they were finished. Gakota and Jeremy stood in the empty offices watching the tiger depart with his set of papers. The space was theirs provided the final lease was approved by the lawyers and signed by everyone concerned. Jeremy got his phone out and started making calls as Gakota pulled out a roll of masking tape and a marker.

He watched as the ocelot marked every office with a swatch of tape. After finishing the first series of calls he walked around to see the office assignments. Jeremy had the one that he liked, right next to Gakota's. He stood looking at the view with a smile on his face as he talked with the painting company they'd chosen. He turned at a knock on his open door to see Makannish standing in the open portal.

The fox was smiling at him. Jeremy smiled back until he finished his call. Then he delegated Makannish a portion of his work list. Much as he expected the fox took the task on with enthusiasm. Jeremy watched as the fox made his way to his new office already dialing his first call of the day. Jeremy grinned as the fox entered the office next in line from his. Stepping into the hallway and peeking through the glass wall he saw that Mak' had commandeered an upturned trash receptacle as a stool. Makeshift as it was it was currently the only piece of furniture in his office.

Sahar came in a quarter hour later and received her own list. She had somehow found an office chair from somewhere for her office. From the inspection Jeremy knew there'd been no office chairs left behind. He stood in her office doorway with an inquisitive expression. The innocent look she studiously returned brought a chuckle from Jeremy.

Within the next hour half the Bureau's members had filed in and joined in the effort to get their offices ready. By lunchtime the cleaning company had shown up. Soon after that Gakota made the announcement that the attorneys they'd retained had gone over the lease and found it acceptable. The space was officially theirs. The rest of the day was a blur of stepping out of the way of one contractor or another. By the time the last contractor for the day had left most of the immediate requirements were ordered and on schedule.

Jeremy left the new offices of the Bureau late. It was already dark out and the rush hour had mostly passed allowing him to reach the Thirteenth Floor almost on time. His first appointment of the night was what he'd learned to see as typical. An otter female that wanted to boast of being able to handle a dominant. The only challenge was in giving them enough encouragement to become return clients. Jeremy was admittedly still working on that.

His second client was to be Sarah Greenwood, or so he thought.

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Mexico has a long history of clashing with its neighbors. During most of its early history it held almost all of the Central America and as such controlled the pathways from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Constantly forced to defend its territory against envious neighbors, sometimes neighbors nearly as powerful as themselves Mexico has always been focused on being a military power.

For millennia they held their ground against some of history's greatest empires that sprung up to their north and south. Two centuries ago they managed to overthrow the nation of Santo California to their north. The expansion added to heir holdings of a third of what they'd already had. The change altered their culture in subtle ways that left them still struggling to redefine themselves as a nation for several generations.

Mexico had just straightened out its interior struggle when the Continental Wars erupted. Subjected to poor timing they were caught somewhat unprepared for the economic and spiritual strain the wars imposed. While they are currently still a power to be reckoned with Mexico is nowhere near the strength they were just prior to the Continental Wars. Mexico still holds much the same territory as they did a century ago but economically they are not the unquestioned force they once were and as stated before are now falling behind.