

For Robert finding food was a much easier proposal than it had been for Anna. Having worked in the facilities department for the building he knew where several companies that leased space had located a break room that also had either a half kitchen or just a simple refrigerator. With an eye toward the future he spent a couple hours foraging through the floors and searching out packaged food that would keep without refrigeration. He had so much initial success that he had to start looking for something to carry it all in.

As the afternoon wore on the interior of the building had begun to store the heat. As he moved through the building he began closing the fire doors but that did little to stop the heat from building up. The ventilation system of the building was designed to carry heat away and bring it toward the cooling units on the roof. Even without electricity to run the huge refrigeration units the heat naturally rose. The top half of the building was turning into a sauna.

Robert's roaming through the upper floors ended several hours before sunset, it was growing too hot for him. He'd found enough snacks and food bars to fill three good sized gym bags he'd also found in his search. He had enough food to keep him fed for weeks. In roaming the empty building his mind kept coming back to the thought that he should that secure the building. He stepped out onto the third floor balcony that overlooked the lobby and listened for sound and movement.

The large lobby was appeared empty but his new senses informed him there were a number of people back in the office behind the concierge desk. With the sun on the opposite side of the building the light coming in from the street was even fainter. He silently made his way to the lobby level and keeping to the sides of the wide expansive room edged toward the large glass front doors and windows.

He watched the foot traffic out on the street for several minutes before there was a suitable break. Keeping low to the floor he crept up to the corner of the window and reaching up drew the blinds closed. With the first bank of floor to ceiling windows obscured he moved on to the next and closed them as well. Retreating back to the shadows he watched for any sign of his movements being observed.

He made his way around to the opposite side of the lobby and repeated his performance to close the blinds on that side. At the edge of the closed blinds and right next to the blocked open front door he once again waited for a break in passerby.

Racing out of hiding he used his tentacles to sweep the doors closed and as soon as they were properly positioned slid the locking bolts down into the floor. Back behind the closed blinds Robert held himself still for a full ten seconds but heard nothing to indicate he'd been seen.

With only the locked front door giving a view into the lobby Robert approached the concierge desk listening to the movement in the office just behind it. Dropping to all six he slunk around the desk and climbed up the wall until he was directly over the door to the back office. He was intensely aware that he had to look like a mutated cross between a cat and giant gecko as he clung to the wall. He dropped lower and peeked down from the top of the door to see inside the office.

Three unfamiliar men were pulling drawers out and going through everything. The lack of light was slowing them. With the blinds closed there was less light coming into the lobby and the back office was getting even less. They were reduced to pulling the contents from the drawer and staring at the contents inches from their faces. It looked to Robert like they were searching for valuables, robbing the place. From all the debris scattered across the floor and the number of open drawers they'd been at it some time. It also looked as though they were almost finished. With no weapons and little time to find any Robert backed away.

Until then he'd only stayed in the building because of his new appearance. At the sight of someone coming in off the street and ransacking the concierge office he felt offended. While this was just a

workplace for him he still had a sense of investment in it. He'd been part of the staff for a year and a half and had been proud of the work he did here. Robert felt he was understandably angry to see looters taking advantage in his building.

He decided to wait for them to come out and observe from a corner up toward the ceiling about twenty feet from the floor. As he waited Robert found that with six limbs and six tentacles it was relatively easy to grip the wall and hold himself up. Ten minutes later they came out of the back office and stopped at the sight of the blinds drawn and door closed. They ducked behind the wide desk and after a few seconds one popped up to check the lobby for just a second.

Two of the men pulled guns from their waistband and scanned the lobby with them held out. After a few seconds they held a quick muttered discussion about the advisability of going for the door. Robert was pleased to find he could overhear the conversation easily. He watched as they scampered to the door and after pulling at it futilely for a few seconds found the floor lock-bolts and undid them. Once they were out of sight Robert made his way to the floor.

With the front door secure again Robert set out to check the rest of the building's entry points. With so many entry points into the building from all the garage levels he had no other real option but to expose himself to close the barriers at the street. With only two entries into the building's garage it was time to make a display. Robert brazenly walked up to the side of the first garage opening and after releasing the clutch of the opener pulled the chain that rolled the garage door down.

The activity brought the attention of a couple pedestrians. They stared for a second before running away. He quickly made his way to the lower entry situated around the corner of the building and repeated the procedure. This was the side of the building that faced west, the sunlit side. As luck would have it there was a small crowd on the far side of the street. By the time the door was closed they had all gotten a good look at him.

With the building secure he made a patrol of the four parking levels but found no one. Back inside the interior of the building he prowled the four lower floors but found no other signs of anyone breaking in. Between the constant activity and the heat inside the building Robert was feeling close to exhaustion. The garage levels had been cool. The facilities storage area was at the lowest level.

He gathered a few cushions from the lobby furniture and carried them down. With an extra set of arms and six long flexible tentacles he was able to bring quite a few. In a cool comfortable space and with the cushions situated he took a catnap.

It was hours later that he woke, still a little tired but rested. He also didn't want to screw up his sleep cycle. He made his way to the lobby. There was no sign of break in or anyone else roaming the building. With it dark outside Robert felt safe enough to go up to the roof and get some fresh air. Standing in the open on the roof he was nevertheless concealed by the night. With the power out it was much darker than usual but he still couldn't see many stars. The smell of smoke hung heavy in the air. He assumed it was the smell that was making him nervous.