

"Is this the place? This can't be."

Alex, one hand in her pocket and the other on the little card, double checked the address listed there with the one on the building. She frowned, swallowed, and gave her head a toss, flipping smooth black hair over her shoulder and out of her face.

"Gotta be," she said. A shrug, a little bite of the lip, and a quick glance to her friend beside her, and she moved to stride forward again. "Who'd'a thunk it, huh? Right here on campus..."

Frankie hung back for a moment, natural nervousness thumping through his veins, before he hustled forward to catch up. A small group of other students passed between the two of them, two wolves, a fox, another human, and a mouse, before he made it there. Luckily she waited at the door for him, looking up and down the blacked-out windows and otherwise austere exterior.

"I've seen this building before," he said, and leaned over to peek around the other side of the path. Neither of the two had class today, and seeing as both lived in separate dorms on campus, they had decided that a better opportunity might not come up. A quick phone call in the morning and a confirmation text, then a few messages exchanged between the two of them, and they met in front of the biology hall to make the walk over. "Passed it a few times last year..."

"Well, yeah," Alex scoffed. "Building's been here, that's not gonna change. I think this used to be one of the general ed buildings, and..." She paused while another pair of students, this one a wolf and an otter, passed arm-in-arm in front of her. She blinked, glanced at Frankie beside her, and then continued. "And I forgot where I was going with that. Anyway. After you?"

She was nervous, too. Frankie could tell that much: normally she was a lot chattier than this, and when she *did* speak it felt like she did so faster than her brain could keep up. How couldn't they be? After talking about this for the past two months, seeing each of their individual bills stacking up, watching the increasing costs of tuition as well as the dwindling returns from their jobs, Frankie part-time and Alex full-time...

It had turned from a back-pocket possibility into an imminent need. The little card that shown up in each of their boxes with the email address and phone number alongside the insignia of the military; the conversation that Frankie had one night, and then found out that Alex, too, had had the very next night; the thick contract sent in a twice-sealed envelope to each of them, the night spent together over pizza poring through the dense legalese and taking notes, then heading to the campus post office the following morning to send it back; and then the waiting, and the waiting, and the waiting... all to this.

Tuition paid, cost of living on campus settled, extra stipend guaranteed and then a periodic payout for the next however many years the contract said – it was too good of a deal, and yet it had taken quite a bit of talking, considering, and eventually drinking to build up the confidence to sign the contract.

And here they were, both on their days off, claiming to be ready to start. Frankie held his arms out toward the door.

"Ladies first."

Alex scoffed again, remained in place with her arms crossed over her chest, and then after another moment closed the distance to the door. She tried the handle, found it stuck – Frankie looked around behind them while she struggled with it – then peered in to the window, grumbled, knocked, and finally reached over to tap the buzzer set into the bricks of the exterior wall.

“If this kills me...” she began.

“You can’t blame me,” Frankie finished for her. “We decided on this together.”

“Yeah, yeah, I know. But still, I can-”

A lock on the door clicked and then hissed, and it swung open. The interior was a lot more brightly lit than the darkened windows let on, and after looking at each other for a second longer, Alex stepped in with Frankie close behind. It was quite a bit cooler inside as well, the interior sparsely decorated and painted in neutral tones. An attendant, or a clerk, or *something*, stood nearby.

Frankie looked her over. Clean and prim, just like all the military personnel in the movies, with a form-fitting suit colored a chill charcoal-grey against her black fur, lupine muzzle angled up a bit so she had to look down her nose at the two humans here. She wore glasses, interestingly enough, modest rectangular frames set at a wide angle across the wide bridge of her snout and clasped... somewhere along the sides of her head. It felt as though she were judging him, so Frankie didn’t want to look at her face for too long. He glanced away as soon as her orange gaze flicked his way.

The wolf tapped at her clipboard. “Alex and Frankie?”

“Yes,” they both said at the same time, and glanced at each other.

She looked from one to the other and back again, then pointed at Alex. “Frankie.”

“Alex.”

“Alex?”

“Alex.” Then she pointed at Frankie. “Frankie?”

“Frankie.”

The entire exchange seemed silly; Frankie smothered a smile and giggle, and thought he caught a ghost of what might have been a smirk at the edge of the wolf’s lips. She nodded again, marked something down on her clipboard, and then turned to head further into the building, toe claws from bared footpaws – due to the mixed population at this school, shoes were optional in the dress code – tapping along the tile floor. A nod over the shoulder and quick motion of the paw showed for the two humans to follow.

On the way through the main room, looking as though it had been built with the idea of being a reception area or lobby of sorts, and then through one of the hallways leading deeper into the building, Frankie and Alex glanced at each other time and time again. Frankie wondered if she had the same worry as he did: *there’s nobody else here. What’s going on? We can’t be the only ones to get that notice.*

Certainly with the payment as offered, and the tradeoff being simply to stand as a pair of test subjects for an in-progress serum...

*"Super-soldier serum,"* Alex had joked when they had looked over the contract together. *"I bet they're gonna turn us into huge, hulking monstrosities, like out of the movies or something."* Frankie had hit her and told her to stop messing around, and she had laughed, though just like now he could clearly see her nervousness.

*"It's probably just some kind of antibiotic or something,"* was his theory. *"Or, like... what is it, some kind of hormone injection? Like how they used to put cocaine in soda?"*

*"Cocaine isn't a hormone,"* Alex had scoffed. *"Are you sure you should be attending college?"*

*"No, I mean, like – something that affects the way your body works and processes stuff. The ingredients of the serum are right there,"* and so they were, occupying the next page and a half of the contract in fine text. They had searched the first ten or so up online, to no results.

The wolf turned another corner and led them towards the end of the hall, yet stopped just before, tapped a code into the door's keypad, waited a moment, and then held it open for them. The two humans paused just outside; she blinked, tilted her head, and nodded toward the open room.

Alex cleared her throat and crossed her arms in front of her chest. "Hang on a sec. When are we supposed to get our payment?"

A slight impatience tightened the edges of the lupine's eyes, and she looked up to the ceiling for a fraction of a second. "It's in the contract."

Frankie edged forward towards the door. The wolf straightened up and tilted her head back so she again had to look down her nose at him.

"Will there be a second appointment once we're done here," Alex went on, "or is this the only one?"

"It's in the contract."

This room, just like the rest of the movie, looked exactly like something out of a movie. Clean tile floor, a few fluorescent lights in the ceiling, an intercom speaker, a table in the center with a lounging chair on either side. Another door stood opposite the room; Frankie stepped in, looked around, and then turned when he heard Alex come in behind him.

She turned around to face the wolf, who had just started to close the door. "You're not – expecting us to go on some wild assassination mission after this, right? This is just a volunteer trial test, and we get paid and go home?"

Amber eyes peered through the crack of the door. "It's in the contract."

"Wait." Alex managed to wriggle a foot into the door. The wolf glanced down: unlike herself, this human wore shoes. "Your... *group*, isn't associated with the school, are you?"

The wolf wet her lips and gave a tight smile.

“Let me guess. That’s in the contract?”

“No,” the lupine answered. She nodded towards the chairs. “It’s on our website. Please take a seat. Our assistant will be with you in a moment.”

Nothing to do but obey, Frankie figured; he and his friend were on *their* time now. He was, of course, the first to do as told, with Alex begrudgingly following a moment later. Sleek, plastic-coated leather creaked underneath their weight as they settled in, with each looking over their shoulder at the other for support and confidence before turning to take in the rest of the room.

To their surprise, though, almost before they had gotten settled did the other door open up with this so-called ‘assistant’ coming in a moment later, bearing a tray with a pair of syringes and appropriate accoutrement atop. The species of this one Frankie couldn’t pin down other than vulpine, or another lupine, or possibly a dog, for the way they wore a full head to toe hazmat suit, loose material obscuring most of their body and faceplate adjusted to fit the shape of the muzzle.

They approached Alex first. She blinked, surprised, and glanced over to Frankie across the table for support, though he had none to offer. Both watched as the assistant took her arm and laid it out over the table, wiped down a spot near her inner elbow with an alcohol-soaked pad, picked up one of the syringes, peered closely into it, gave it a tap... then held her wrist, squeezed, lined it up – and sank it in. Watching her face Frankie could see the moment it punched in, then the lingering slight ache and sting of the needle itself, then the twinge afterwards. He also very clearly saw the silent curse that dripped from her lips once the assistant retreated, fiddling with the things on the tray before coming around to the other side of the table.

He didn’t watch his own injection. Heart in his throat, head going wild, Frankie looked up towards one of the long fluorescent lights and focused there, letting the heat and brightness sting at his eyes so he wouldn’t notice the pinch too much – and then it was there and gone. He worked his fingers to make sure he still could, then turned his arm over and back again. So far it didn’t feel like anything.

Should it?

Across from him, Alex had rested her head back along the chair and looked up at the ceiling, though she tilted to face him when she noticed. She blinked, shrugged, and sighed, then wrapped one leg over the other.

“So...” Frankie began. The assistant’s ears, also wrapped in the suit’s helmet, flicked his way. “That’s it? We can – go home now, or...?”

For a moment they, whoever *they* were, looked up at him, blinked, seemed to frown – and then nodded as the intercom speaker fizzed to life.

“We need you to remain here for at least thirty minutes,” instructed the wolf’s voice. The assistant nodded and wagged a finger, then resumed in taking all of the equipment away. “To watch for any side effects, unintended or otherwise, and any other immediate results. Thank you for your patience. The door through which you entered will automatically unlock when you may leave.”

That was that, then. Both humans watched as the assistant made their way out through the other door again, turned around to pull it shut, disappeared from the small viewing window... and then the lock on that door clicked into place, sealing them in here. Frankie watched for a moment longer and then, still wiggling his fingers, looked at Alex across from him.

"Feel anything yet?"

She tapped at the spot on her arm and ran her fingers down toward her wrist. "No. Should I?"

"You know the answer to that."

Alex frowned.

Frankie grinned and leaned in. "It's in the contract."

"God." She shook her head. "Insufferable. I can't believe I didn't notice anything like this here before. We can't be the only ones, right?"

"I don't know. I do remember some kind of NDA clause in the contract."

"Fuckin'... *contract*. Maybe this was a bad idea..."

Frankie leaned forward in his seat. If anything, his arm felt as though someone were constantly rubbing it, up and down with gentle fingers – or claws. "I don't know about you, but the money was just too good to pass up. Even working like this, I'd have to either go homeless or drop out, or both."

Alex sat up a bit, squirmed in her seat, moved to rest her chin in her hand, then grumbled and switched arms. "Yeah," she said after a moment. "Me too. I just hope it's worth it."

"I mean, at this rate we just sit here, wait out these thirty minutes, then go home, and..."

And he paused. Something felt suddenly *off* about the injected arm, something not particularly wrong but just... *different*. Frankie looked down, wiggled his fingers, turned his arm over again, and at the edge of his vision saw Alex do the same thing.

"Are you..."

"Yeah. You too?"

"Yep. What do you think it-"

Already it was beginning. That slight difference, the little tickling and pulling of nerves and skin, showed its source in thick, bulging veins just beneath the surface of his arm, cinnamon-tan skin webbed with thin scars over several years moving and changing. Blue lines shifted and pulsed towards the surface, then started to bulge out – and then, tightened and settled into place, as the taut lines of muscles underneath also started to shift and move, and grow and swell and adjust.

“Whoa.” Frankie shifted over onto his other arm and lifted this one into the air, watching as the muscle mass there accelerated and expanded beyond anything he could believe. He reached up with his other hand and adjusted his glasses on his face, stuck between believing what he was seeing and shrugging it off as some hallucination from the effect of the drug. “This feels...”

Again he trailed off, looking over towards Alex across from him – was it just placebo, or were his eyes a little sharper now too? – who was undergoing much the same changes as himself. Excitement and interest painted her face, gaze shifting from one spread hand to the other, as the changes began to pass over that way as well. From over here Frankie could see the shifting and pulsing of muscles through her clothing, pulling at the material over her shoulders and neck, tendons and ligaments wrapping into thick cords, growing, tugging.

“Super-soldier, *indeed*,” she said, voice close to a rumbling growl. Frankie’s leg kicked, then did so again; across from him Alex gripped the edge of her seat, tried to lift herself up, and then fell back again. A sizable chunk of the chair’s cushion came off in her fingers, nails drawn out to broad, thick claws. “I wonder if this was – *rrrrh* – meant for *them*–”

The ones who weren’t human, she meant. Frankie had the same thought but kept it to himself: hearing the subtle yet distinct change to Alex’s voice already, he imagined he could feel something similar in his own throat, an odd sensation that felt like something broadening and tightening at the same time. Grumbling deep in his throat, he shifted again, swallowed, sighed, felt his shirt start to strain over his chest, tried to find another more comfortable position – and instead succeeded in just tearing it, first along the back, then under his arm, then over his chest.

Where originally had been smooth curves and soft skin and flesh – Frankie had never been particularly in shape, and tended to avoid removing his shirt if he could – now instead pulsed the same clear, tight musculature that had begun in his arms and now made its way down his body, chest chiseled and carved into defined pecs and abs, hips tightening, bones still adjusting and lengthening to accommodate the wild influx of unknown hormones.

Alex tried to stand up, drawing Frankie’s attention over to her, but couldn’t quite manage it. She, too, had continued to change, now looking halfway between herself and something wholly *else*, the same muscles ringing and binding around her entire body beneath her skin, though that itself had started to change too: lines and patterns started to simmer into place along the surface, in all of the spots revealed by her tearing clothing, shirt and bra and pants straining, pulling, tearing, shredding against the rapidly-increasing mass.

Then, to Frankie’s only slight surprise, she started to sprout and grow *fur* following those patterns, smooth shadow black atop stark white like a badger. She grunted, growled, roared, tried to brace herself against the table between them – and of course ended up shattering it beneath her weight, splinters of wood shearing out between thick, muscular fingers and deadly claws, and dumping her out along the floor between the two chairs.

Frankie shivered, head rolling back and body starting to move of its own accord again. He sat back in his own chair, the wood and metal creaking and complaining with his rapidly increasing mass, and spread his legs and slid a hand up his chest – where he felt what he had thought of as pecs instead stirring and shifting from inside, pushing and growing out. From having a regular male’s body, to suddenly *hyper*-masculine, to... something in between, it felt like: a whisper of arousal and enticement shocked through

his abdomen, a little lower and a little sharper than he recognized. A growl similar to Alex's, still squirming on the floor with her hips thrusting and back arched, rumbled in his throat, and he squeezed that hand – that paw: as he watched through half-lidded eyes he, too, saw the same changes again reflected in himself – along his chest he could tell that whatever hormones had been apportioned to him had indeed fostered such... *unusual* growth here.

Huge, heavy, *firm* with that distinct layer of soft skin and fat atop, the skin itself coated over with a more snakelike assemblage of smooth velvet scales, then with spotted fur growing in over that. He jerked in place, sucked in a gasp, shivered as he squeezed along first one breast and then the other, doubled forward a bit at the sensation, then squeezed again... and promptly felt a loose spray of hot wetness against and between his fingers, like water being pressed out of an inflated balloon from a few miniscule puncture points.

When he looked down again he discovered for certain that these new, huge breasts, pulling forward along his chest, were *very* active. Even the one he hadn't yet touched or squeezed dripped and dribbled, filled to the brim with unmanaged, unrestrained milk. Alex was in much the same place too, of course – she had had breasts to start with, and from what Frankie could see of her on all fours squirming and writhing over the floor, she had her own slick whitish puddle growing from beneath her chest, her own nearly touching the tile floor themselves, and...

And a second puddle from between her legs, and not from the spot that Frankie expected. Not *entirely* from there, at least; it was hard to tell, hard to see, but while there *was* a line of slick arousal dripping down her inner thigh, most of it was obscured by the mirror opposite end of the spectrum: a loose, hefty sack, palm-sized balls hanging down in supple skin and fur, with a fat, plump sheath right above, connected to her lower belly but heavy enough to hang down, with rich reddish-pink flesh, growing right before Frankie's eyes, twitching, sputtering, oozing what could only be sticky pre.

He swallowed, gasped, and felt his own hips buck again, and looked down between his own legs. Whereas he began with the opposite set of equipment, the hormones still had the same effect on him, forcing all his constituent parts to jiggle and twitch and adjust as they grew and shifted, coming up and forward a bit, sack swelling out – or, at least, his balls growing and expanding, with the containing skin loosening to accommodate. He watched, pants and underwear long since reduced to shreds at his feet, as he also slid back, skin thickening and puffing out into a dense sheath, shaft halfway retreating into beneath that pocket of warm, moist flesh and then bulging forward again, blood and adrenaline and arousal zapping through him and making him thrust, and grind, and buck, and gasp – and then twitch when something brushed against his toes.

Frankie glanced down, a hundred different things lancing through his mind and none of them recognizable or coherent. Some part of him recognized this half-human, half-badger on all fours, snout brushing against his ankle, hot wet breath pouring out over his slightly-scaled skin, as Alex, but the rest of it... he lifted his arm, watched the way the fur filled in in patches, rich wine-red speckled and splashed with spots of charcoal and shadow.

The new beast's head slid back again and rolled side to side, toes flexing, muscles contracting and pulling with all of the new space and meat and flesh filling into the gaps. To his surprise, and his slight discomfort, a certain pressure tugged at the sides of his head and necked, followed by a few distinct pinpricks of a sharp pain, then a sensation like hair being pulled from the follicle out of his skin – and when he reached up again and felt at himself, his fingers stopped a good inch, three inches, half a foot,

more, curving up and around the sides of his face... or, his muzzle, short and stout, broad, slightly angled. What *was* he? Something between a snake and a dog, or...

Hyena. Cobra and hyena. He spread his fingers, themselves thicker, coated with fur, punctuated at the end with broad claws, back along the tender crest that had grown alongside his head and shoulders. Alex had become a massive badger while he had gone to this odd hybrid, both of them bearing the outward signs of a mixed body type, Alex on the floor panting and grumbling – now she had her nose pressed between the base of his toes, still twitching and tightening with the sensation of the changes, not entirely pleasant yet certainly not painful – with heavy cock and heavier breasts nearly touching the floor, while Frankie sat here dripping down his belly and chest with his own half-arousal twitching and throbbing, halfway stuck in that pool.

He sighed again, spread his legs, half-intentionally lifted a footpaw up against Alex's muzzle, felt a shivering exhalation of breath and a thick drip of drool slide down along his toes. Then to his surprise, when he moved to unstick himself from his chair, he felt *another* pool down between his thighs and gathering under his tail, associated with and accentuated by that *other* sort of arousal bubbling inside of him. One paw gripping the arm of the chair, most of his bodily changes apparently having reached completion, he ran his other down his broad chest, his firm, sculpted stomach, down along his plump sheath and heavy sack, then in between his legs... and felt there precisely what he had expected, in a wide, slick pair of wet feminine lips, clit bulging about half an inch beneath the base of his sack, slick and hot and so humid.

Again he shifted and spread his toes, more trying to work out the odd lingering feeling and discomfort of the changes than anything, and again felt Alex's muzzle right there in place. At this point Frankie couldn't tell whether she remained there on purpose or not, but as he poked and prodded at himself and explored these new parts and sensations, she slid her own fingers, similarly equipped with short, broad claws, along the sensitive underside of that footpaw, and lifted it up and forward. Frankie continued to watch, one, two, three fingers sliding up and into himself, pressing in and between hot wet walls of supple flesh, while Alex dripped humid breath and thick saliva along his toes and footpaw.

Slowly Frankie moved his other paw from the arm of the chair to his shaft, one working above his hips and the other underneath, both reverberating and shifting in rhythm with the other, two separate kinds of arousal and pleasure mixing and mingling in his loins, thick pre dripping out over his thumb right when another shiver and drip slid out against his fingerpads between his thighs.

And Alex continued where she was as well, short tail hiked, back arched, body shivering also with the remnant sensations of the transformation and, certainly to no lesser a degree, the force of the hormone-induced arousal pulsing through her system as well. From here Alex could see the way her heavy shaft bounced and jumped with those feelings even though it went unattended, one of her paws keeping her suddenly broad body propped up while the other came forward and lifted Frankie's footpaw closer to her muzzle.

So, just barely coherent enough to do so, he obliged her interest. The hyena-cobra spread his toes, stretched them out, wiggled them around, and then lifted his footpaw and pressed it down against the short bridge of Alex's muzzle, pushing a soft *huff* out from wide nostrils. She looked up at him and swallowed, eyes recognizable only in the slightest behind their new animalistic ferocity. The badger grunted, gave her head a shake as though he pushed Frankie's footpaw away, but then squeezed him in against her nose and mouth with both paws, fingers reaching up to spread his toes still growing broad

and thick, human foot-shape turning to the rounder, thicker footpaw of a hyena, pads pushing out, claws curling down... and all coaxed and teased along by the sensation of hungry badger tongue slipping up and under and between and through, scaled skin soon to be coated with slick saliva.

Frankie shivered and let another growling rumble out from his throat, one paw pushing down against his sheath while the other sank in further, fingers digging and searching inside of him, then slipping out and seeking up for the nub of sensitive flesh hidden beneath the base of his sack. Finding and touching at his clit made his accidentally kick his leg forward a bit, pressing in against Alex's face and pulling another little growl out of her, but still she worked and licked and sucked, bringing each of his toes into her mouth, running her tongue along the long claws and slipping it between each one, wetting and caressing the little wrinkles and cracks in the pads underneath.

Deep in his body, wrapped in thick layers of new flesh and skin, Frankie could indeed still feel small subtle changes taking place, the foundations of his body readjusting and settling into their new schematic throughout the enjoyment and pleasure. He half-sat up, half-laid back so he could continue digging at his full spread of parts, one paw swiftly stroking while the other alternated between rubbing and circling at his clit and slipping two or three fingers deep inside of himself, digging and pulling, wet flesh squelching and dripping, abdomen as well as his entire body shivering, shaking, twitching.

Somewhere along the way Alex dropped one of her paws to work at herself as well, eyes closed and mouth open while she huffed and licked and sucked at the underside of Frankie's footpaw, and between each individual toe, and around and over the thick, broad knuckles. Every now and then a sharp, broad fang poked in or bit down, never more than enough to make him twitch or jerk or shift his footpaw, often just tickling a bit so that he spread his toes again, catching the exterior of Alex's lips, or curled them in and down to squeeze her flat tongue in the supple flesh of his fresh, new pawpads. He could feel her panting, feral hunger, her heavy breasts also dripping fresh milk along her knees and the tile floor beneath her – reminded of his own, Frankie reached up and gave another squeeze, managing to spray Alex across the face and again pulling a growl out of her. One eye half-closed, she brought two and then a third of his toes into her maw, closed her lips around them, sucked, swallowed, and sucked a bit more, all the while her other paw worked between her legs, focusing solely on this broad, thick length that she had grown, fingers sliding forward towards her tip and then down to her balls, cupping and squeezing and massaging and then coming forward again.

The pleasure and changes proved to be quite too much for the new badger, as Frankie quickly found out. Half wrapped in his own world, eyes fluttering shut, mouth open, hips bucking and jerking with the mixing and overlapping waves of pleasure from two different centers focused so close to each other, at first he didn't notice – until Alex jerked, huffed out along the top side of his footpaw, and then nearly bit off his big toe under the force of her orgasm. That first, and then the heavy, wet *splat* of the first rope of cum arcing out and far beneath the chair, followed by a second, and then a third, and a fourth, shooting out and splashing into the already-wide pool of hormone-driven seed, his friend's entire body shivering and shaking with the sheer pleasure while the other pool beneath her steadily grew, each full-body buck and jerk forcing her to squeeze and spray more from her original sex down between her legs.

Still she remained loosely mouthing at Frankie's footpaw, the hybrid flexing and wriggling his toes inside her mouth and feeling her fangs, her tongue, and the roof of her mouth. He swallowed, pressed his other footpaw against the ground, lifted up so that she would get an unobstructed view of the underside of his shaft, his sheath, his hanging balls, and then at least the lower portion of his lips – and then he, too, felt himself tumble towards and over the edge.

Instead of painting the floor, though, at this angle Frankie nearly spurted against the ceiling, his entire body similarly jerking and bucking with the physical force of the finish. Each wave burst through and out of him, forcing his hips up and forward with each and every rope of thick, wide seed, springing free and arcing up over his head, then over his shoulder, then over his shoulder again, and along his chest, and his belly. His other paw between his thighs shook as well, barely able to remain in place – and soon became soaked through with arousal, spurting and spraying out of him until the pool poured out from the seat of the chair, streaked and specked with foggy white from the trails of milk dripping down his chest and belly.

Panting, exhausted, and still oozing and leaking from the occasional throb, Frankie rested back in his chair and let his legs spread open. Alex retreated from his footpaw, though suckled along his toes as she went and lapped up the hanging drips of sticky saliva as she did so. For a moment their eyes met; Frankie wasn't sure if he was currently capable of actual speech, and not just because his entire body arrangement had been forcibly reordered.

After a moment he became vaguely aware of muffled speech from behind the same door they had entered. Frankie rolled his head to the side, trying to hear and listen in, but all of these sensations both new and old, accented and magnified by so many things, muddled and confused the words and sounds beyond his and Alex's exhausted panting and lingering moans.

Suddenly, though, his leg twitched, and he reached back to scratch at the base of his back – and felt there his own tail still stirring and growing, the base widening, the fur continuing to sprout. He frowned, sat up, then shifted forward to look at Alex, who had managed to roll back into a sitting position and now turned her hands back and forth in front of her, fingers continuing to shift and adjust. So their changes had not finished yet.

*Are the changes permanent?* Frankie found himself wondering, the words in his head coming from a far distance. He swallowed and then licked his lips, feeling at each of the sharp teeth in his mouth, then the huge serpentine fangs jutting out from beneath his lips. Despite himself, then, he smiled. Overhead the intercom buzzed.

*I suppose that was in the contract, too.*