

Doctoral Studies, Part 5: No Means No

Dreamt on: December 17, 2005-January 31, 2006

Recorded on: December 17, 2005-January 31, 2006

Written by R.A. Blackpaws

(Three weeks later...Thursday...5 PM)

...

"Okay, Shari," I asked, mildly annoyed, "what's going on?"

The orange vixen smiled as she showed me into the girls locker room.

"Off-season conditioning," she barked.

I looked at her, a puzzled look on my face.

"Wouldn't want you to get out of shape, now would we?" she asked.

"Yeah, Rob...after all, I think Dan would approve," a cheery female voice added.

I looked down the aisle...at Ariel, Theresa and Brenda, all of whom were in workout gear.

I sighed...and sat in front of my locker.

"Now I see why you said to bring exercise clothes," I groused, unzipping my duffel bag.

"Ah-hem..."

I glanced up at Shari...who sat next to me.

"There's also something we wanted to give you," the vixen said. "Theresa?"

I looked up...as the tortoiseshell feline held up a cheerleader's jacket: silver sleeves with a red body...and...

I blinked...then blushed, when I saw my name on the front of it.

"We used to give these out to people who cheered for two years," Brenda said.

"Since your second year's over..."

"...we'd like to continue the tradition," Ariel finished as Theresa placed the jacket over my shoulders.

I blushed...and slid my arms through the sleeves...then stood up, pulling it closed.

"See?" Shari quipped. "I told you it'd fit him perfectly."

"Yes, Shari, you did..." Theresa commented...then looked at me. "Well, Rob...what do you think?"

I ran a paw along the chest of the jacket...then looked up, smiling.

"Thanks, you girls..." I said. "It's really nice." I slid out of it. "Too bad I can't wear it around campus..."

"Why not?" Ariel asked.

I opened my locker. "A guy...on an all-girls cheerleader squad." I chuckled. "If I wore that around campus..."

"...you'd get the shit beat out of you," Brenda finished.

I nodded...then turned around.

"But..." I added, a sly smile crossing my muzzle, "I'll definitely wear it around all of you."

Theresa nodded.

"You'd better," Ariel added, grinning.

I chuckled...and slid out of my t-shirt.

...

"Dude, would you look at that," a brown wolf declared.
An orange and black tiger scanned the throng. "What?"
"That hot vixen on the track right now," the wolf replied.
The tiger squinted...and saw two vixens, one orange-furred and one red-furred, side by side on the track.
"Which one, Jordan?" the tiger asked.
"The red one, Reggie," the wolf stated. "God, she's hot."
Reggie looked at the two vixens...and nodded slowly.
"She sure is...hey!" Reggie leaned in closer to the wolf. "Aren't they on the cheerleading squad?"
The wolf nodded. "Sure are." He grinned. "I'm gonna ask her out."
"Pff! Forget it, man," Reggie said.
"Why?" Jordan asked.
"Man...a girl that hot...**and** she's a cheerleader?" Reggie countered.
The wolf's grin got even bigger.
"Who better for the quarterback of the football team?" Jordan asked.

...

(6:50 PM)

...

"Phew...I am beat," the red fox muttered, slumping in front of its locker.
"Yeah...me, too," Brenda huffed, plopping next to me.
Shari nodded, her fur glistening with sweat.
"Okay...into the showers," she yelped.
"But, Shari? What about Rob?" Brenda asked.
"What about him?" Shari asked.
"Let's see...girls locker room...male fox..." Theresa said. "Remember?"
"Um...girls?" a voice asked.
All four looked up...and saw Rob, leaning against the entrance of the showers, a towel covering him from armpits to thighs.
"You coming or not?" he asked...then slid inside.
...

"So...how's Dan?" Theresa asked.
I leaned under the spray, letting the warm water flow across my fur.
"All right...but I think he's a little jealous of the time I spend with all of you," I said.
"Jealous?" Shari asked. "Why?"
I backed out of the spray. "I think it's cause you all treat me like one of the girls," I said, patting my arms down with the towel. "I think that's what he wants."
"Any ideas?" Brenda asked, shutting off her stall's shower.
I shut off my shower.
"Well...we could do another girls day out," I said, smiling. "All six of us."
"Six?" Ariel asked. "Rob, there's only..."
Everyone looked at her...and it finally clicked.
"Oh..." she said, softly.

I patted myself down with the towel...then wrapped it over my groin as I walked to the dryers.

"Just do some shopping and sisterly things," I said...then hit the "on" switch for the dryer, causing hot gusts of air to blow-dry my fur.

I tapped the "off" switch a couple of minutes later...and covered myself with the towel before exiting the dryer.

"Sound good?" I asked.

The four women looked at each other...nodded...then looked at me.

"It sure does," Shari said.

...

(Several minutes later)

...

I smiled as I stuffed my exercise clothes into my duffel bag.

"So, when should we do it?" I asked, zipping it shut.

"Do what?" Theresa asked.

"Y'know...Dan's girls day out?" I asked, sliding into my varsity jacket.

"How about next weekend?" Brenda asked.

I shook my head. "Can't. Plans. The weekend after that?"

Shari rubbed the underside of her muzzle. "I think so. Ariel?"

The grey wolf nodded. "Sure can, Theresa?"

"No plans, no problem," the feline said.

"I'm free, too," Brenda added, sliding into her varsity jacket.

"Great! Then it's settled," I said, zipping up my jacket.

"Um...should you wear that now?" Theresa asked.

I slid my bag's strap over my shoulder.

"I'm with all of you," I said, smiling. "Go, team, go...right?"

Ariel chuckled. "Right," she said, donning her jacket.

"I agree," Theresa added, slipping hers on.

We all looked at Shari...and the orange vixen sighed.

"All right..." she conceded, slipping her jacket on. "Go, team, go."

...

We all were giggling as we left the girls locker room.

"Hey, foxy!" someone yelled.

Shari and I looked around, confused.

"Hey, Red! Over here!" a male voice yelled.

Shari and I looked...

...at a lean, brown-furred wolf in blue jeans and a varsity jacket...who waved at us.

"Oh, great," I muttered as we walked on.

"You know him?" Shari asked.

I shook my head. "Never saw him before."

"Hey, Red! Wait up!"

I sighed...and stopped, turning back...

...as that same wolf slowed to a stop in front of me.

"I just wanted to say...that you looked very nice, during your workout," he said, grinning.

“Um...thanks...” I said, fidgeting slightly...and blushing a little.

“I was kinda hoping...maybe...I could walk you back to your dorm?” he asked.
My nerves faded away.

Is he...hitting on me?

“Thanks for the offer...but I can take care of myself,” I said, turning around and walking away.

“Hang on! Maybe we could get a bite to eat or something?” he asked.

“Not interested,” I said...and walked out of the gym.

...

“What did **he** want?” Ariel asked as I rejoined them.

“He was just hitting on me,” I muttered softly.

“Oh...my...God!” Theresa declared. “Do you know who that guy was?”

I looked at her.

“That was Jordan Tyson,” she declared.

I blinked, missing the significance.

“The quarterback of the football team,” the feline stated.

“I don’t care who he is,” I muttered, walking toward my apartment. “I’ve already got a boyfriend.”

...

Jordan let out a soft growl as he watched the red fox walk away.

“Not interested...” he growled. “I’ll **make** you interested, little vixen.”

...

(9 PM)

...

“Rob...are you okay?” Dan asked, walking into the bedroom. “You’ve been quiet all night. Is something wrong?”

I sighed...and sat up on the bed.

“Dan...something happened today,” I said. “Something...you aren’t gonna like.”

He sat next to me...and rested his paws over my right paw.

“What is it?” he asked, whiskers twitching. “You can tell me.”

I sighed...and squeezed one of his paws.

“Dan...some guy...hit on me...while I was at practice with the girls,” I said.

Dan’s eyes went wide. “Some guy **hit** you? Who?”

I shook my head. “No, no, no. A guy...made a pass at me.”

The snow leopard’s left ear twitched. “He threw a football at you?”

I sighed, annoyed. “Dan...a guy tried to pick me up.”

“He couldn’t...lift you?” Dan asked, a confused look on his muzzle.

I grabbed the sides of his head with my paws and stared into his eyes.

“Dan...a guy asked me out **on a date!**” I declared.

He blinked...then slid his paws over mine.

“Someone...asked you out?” he asked, pulling my paws down.

I nodded. “Theresa said...he’s the quarterback of the football team.”

Dan’s eyes widened.

“Jordan Tyson asked you **out?**” he asked, shocked.

I felt my ears twitch. “What’s the big deal about this guy, anyway?”

Dan looked at me...then chuckled.

"He's only the hottest guy on campus," he said. "Haven't you seen him play?"
I shook my head. "Was too busy cheering, I guess. Besides, he wasn't that hot looking, anyway."

Dan blinked...then leaned in close.

"Did you...say yes?" he whispered.

I shook my head. "I told him I wasn't interested."

"Hoooo..." Dan muttered. "That's a relief."

"No kidding," I said, flopping back on the bed. "He acted like he'd never been told no by a girl before."

Dan nodded...then looked at me.

"You aren't a girl, though," he said.

"Jordan thought so," I said...then sighed. "And...that's a big problem."

"Why?" Dan asked, sliding next to me.

"Jordan doesn't know that I'm a guy," I said. "If he found out that one of the cheerleaders was a guy..."

"...he'd out you," Dan finished. "Shit..."

We laid there for a bit...then Dan smiled.

"Well...he'll just have to take no for an answer," Dan said.

"Damn right," I said, rolling onto my side. "I'm already taken."

We giggled...then nestled against each other.

...

(Monday...12:30 PM)

...

"Hey, girls," I said, sitting between Theresa and Ariel.

"Hey, Rob," they all said...then looked at me.

"What?" I asked, confused.

"How's it feel to be the first girl to shoot down Jordan Tyson?" Shari asked, smiling.

"Not funny," I growled.

"Hey, Red," a voice said from behind me.

I turned around...and saw Jordan standing there, smiling at me.

"What?" I asked, a little annoyed.

He crouched down to look at me.

"I was hoping...maybe we could get together sometime," the wolf said.

I sighed...then looked at him.

"Look...Jordan..." I said, "I'm just not interested in you."

"Why not?" he asked.

"Cause I already have a boyfriend," I said. "He's been my boyfriend for over six years now."

Jordan looked at me...then got up and shuffled off.

"Ow...I think you broke his heart," Brenda said.

"I'd rather break his balls," I snarled. "The **nerve** of him."

"Rob, some guys just won't take no for an answer," Shari said.

I sighed...then went back to my lunch.

...

(5 PM)

...

"Hey, Glen?" Reggie asked.

The gold and brown hyena looked up from the counter. "Yeah?"

"Seen Jordan yet?" the tiger asked.

Glen pointed past the tiger. "Over there."

Reggie turned...

...and spotted Jordan, clad in a white t-shirt and black shorts, pounding on the heavy bag.

"Been there since 3," Glen stated. "Hasn't even taken a break."

"No shit?" Reggie asked.

"No shit, man," Glen replied. "That boy's got some issues." He looked at the tiger. "Probably **women** troubles."

Reggie nodded. "Thanks, Glen," he said...then walked over to Jordan.

"Jordan?"

The wolf smacked the bag, causing it to sway.

"Jordan?" Reggie asked again.

A growl left the wolf's mouth as he slugged the bag again.

"She shot you down again...didn't she?" the tiger asked.

Jordan grabbed the bag...and glared at the tiger.

"She's got a boyfriend," the wolf snarled. "My girl has a boyfriend!" He drilled the heavy bag with a right hand, tipping it over.

"Jordan, man...she's not **your** girl," Reggie said. "She's not interested in you!"

Jordan slid the gloves off his hands...and smiled.

"Then I guess...I'll have to get rid of the boyfriend," he said...and walked off.

Oh, shit...I...I gotta tell someone, Reggie thought as he watched the wolf walk away. *Man, he needs help.*

Reggie walked toward the counter.

And I know who I need to call...

...

"How's the head, Sweetie?" Dan whispered.

I moved my head just slightly...and felt it pound.

"Hurts..." I whimpered...as Dan set a cool washcloth over my eyes.

"My poor little sickie," the snow leopard cooed.

Brring!

I winced, the bell driving a spike through my skull.

"I'll get it" Dan said, running into the other room.

"Hello?" he asked after picking up the receiver.

"Dan? It's Reggie...look, man, I need to talk to you about something. Can I come over?" a voice asked.

"Um...I suppose," Dan said.

"Great! I'll be over in a few minutes." **Click!**

...

(Twenty minutes later)

...

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Dan pulled the door open...and stepped aside.

“C’mon in, Reggie,” he said. “Just keep it down, okay?”
“Keep it down?” the tiger asked, walking in.
Dan nodded, shutting the door.
“My boyfriend has a really bad migraine,” the snow leopard said.
The tiger sighed as he sat on the couch.
“I’ll try, Dan...but...this’s just so...” he began.
Dan sat across from him in a chair.
Reggie took a breath.
“Jordan’s been trying to pick up this girl,” he explained. “One of the cheerleaders...a cute red and white vixen...”
Dan rested his muzzle in his paws...to hide his smile.
“Every time he’s asked, she’s shot him down...” the tiger went on. “Today, she told him why.”
“Is she...gay?” Dan asked.
Reggie shook his head. “No. She’s got a steady boyfriend...” The tiger frowned.
“And...Jordan didn’t take the news well.”
The snow leopard slid his paws away. “How badly...?”
“He beat the shit out of the heavy bag at the gym,” Reggie said.
Dan nodded. “He probably just needed to blow off some steam. That’s all.” He slid back in the chair. “Rejection’s a hard thing for people to deal with, Reggie.”
The tiger looked up, a haunted look in his eyes.
“Dan...he said she’s **his** girl,” Reggie said.
“His girl? Even though she already has a boyfriend?” Dan asked.
The tiger nodded.
“I pointed that out to him...and he said...he was going to get rid of the boyfriend,” Reggie said.
Dan took a breath. *Oh, fuck...*
“Is...is he serious about it?” he asked.
“I don’t know, Dan,” Reggie replied. “I just don’t fucking **know!**”
“Reggie...” Dan chided, lowering his paws in a “keep it down” gesture.
“I mean...I know it’s the first time he’s been shot down...but to say **that!**”
Reggie went on. “It’s...I just don’t know what to...”
“Danny...could you guys keep it down, please?” a soft voice asked.
Dan looked up...and saw Reggie freeze, his eyes widening...and spun around...
...and saw Rob, clad in a soft black robe, leaning against the doorjamb, eyes barely open.
“Oh...my...God...” Reggie breathed. “Dan...she lives **here?**”
Dan got up...and walked over to Rob.
“I’m sorry we made so much noise, dear,” he said.
The fox looked up at him...then at the tiger.
“Aren’t you...going to introduce us?” the fox asked softly.
“I’d rather not...” Dan whispered to the fox.
“Dan...she lives here...with you?” Reggie asked...from close by. “Shit, man! Why the fuck didn’t you tell me?”
The fox winced, a jet black paw rubbing the side of its head.
Dan sighed...then looked at Reggie.

“Reggie...this is Rob...my boyfriend,” he said. “Rob...this is Reggie Hyatt, a fellow psych major.”

“Hi,” the fox said softly.

Reggie’s eyes went wide.

“She...she’s...a he?” the tiger asked, stunned. “She...she’s...your boyfriend?”

Dan and the fox looked at him...and nodded.

“No fucking way!” Reggie yowled. “She’s way too hot to be a guy!”

“Thanks,” the fox said, smiling...then looked at Dan. “Can we keep him?”

The snow leopard rubbed his eyes. “No, Rob...we can’t.” He looked at the tiger. “You’d better sit down, Reggie...”

...

(One lengthy explanation later)

...

Reggie leaned back on the couch, stunned.

“Wow...” the tiger breathed, rubbing his eyes. “So...he’s...a cheerleader?”

Dan and Rob nodded.

Reggie looked at Rob...and shook his head.

“Unreal...” he muttered.

“You can kinda understand why we keep this quiet, right, Reggie?” Dan asked.

The tiger nodded. “Don’t worry. I’m tellin’ no one about this...but...” He looked at the fox...and smiled. “Could...could I see you...in that outfit?”

The fox smiled...and patted Dan’s shoulder.

“I think that can be arranged,” Rob said...and padded to the bedroom, shutting the door.

Dan chuckled softly, smiling.

“You’re really lucky, Dan,” Reggie said...then chuckled. “Specially if he looks as hot in that outfit as he did before.”

Dan looked up.

“Yeah...I guess,” he said...then heard the bedroom door open...

...and saw Reggie’s eyes widen.

“Oh, wow...” the tiger breathed.

Dan turned...and smiled...

...as his boyfriend padded over, clad in an Ayerdale Academy cheerleader’s uniform...and looking very sexy.

Rob walked over to Dan...and leaned against his chair.

“Well?” he asked.

Reggie stared for a few seconds...then blushed, his ears turning pink.

“Damn...you lucky bastard...” the tiger said...then blinked. “You look...just like a vixen.” He chuckled. “A damned **hot** vixen.”

The fox smiled...then looked at Dan.

“Are you sure we can’t keep him?” it asked.

“No...we can’t keep him,” Dan chided...then looked at Reggie. “He does look good, doesn’t he?”

The tiger nodded. “Sure does. Fooled me into thinking he’s a girl. Fooled Jordan, too.”

The fox’s smile vanished. “You know that guy?”

Reggie nodded. "That's why I came here. Jordan...doesn't like the idea of his girl having a boyfriend."

"His girl..." the fox stated, clenching a paw. "I'm gonna deck that arrogant little..."

"Rob, that's not the issue," Dan said. "He's going to get rid of your boyfriend."

"Get rid of..." the fox began...then its eyes widened. "He wants to get rid of you?"

"He doesn't know Dan's your boyfriend, though," Reggie said...then looked up...
...into a very angry fox's face.

"And he's not going to find out, **right?**" the fox growled.

Reggie raised his paws defensively. "No way. Not from me."

"He'd better not," Rob declared.

Dan stood up, resting his paws on the fox's shoulders.

"Are you okay?" he asked.

The fox nodded. "Yeah...I'll just start carrying some mace, that's all." He looked at Reggie. "Thanks for the warning, Reggie...and the compliments."

The tiger rubbed the back of his head, blushing.

"Um...well...you're welcome," he said...then walked to the door...and looked back.

"Damn..." Reggie said, shaking his head...then slid out of the apartment.

...

(Friday night...7 PM)

...

"Well...thanks for this little dinner date, ladies," I said, looking over the menu.

"Our pleasure, Rob," Shari said.

"Yeah...you know how much we enjoy having you around," Theresa added, smiling.

"Mm-hmm..." I said...then folded up the menu. "And...the real reason you asked me along?"

All four women looked at each other...then frowned.

Brenda looked at me.

"Dan...told us about the chat you had with Jordan's friend," the black rabbit said.

"That much I know," I said.

Shari rested a paw on my right paw.

"Rob...guys don't normally handle rejection well," the orange vixen said. "And...
based on what Dan told us..."

"We've decided to be your backup...just in case," Ariel finished.

I smiled slightly.

"Thanks...but I've got things covered...in case he tries something," I said.

"We believe you...but we wanna make sure nothing happens," Shari said.

The waitress came by...took our orders...then left.

"Look, Rob...why not simply go out with the guy on one date?" Theresa asked.

I glared at her. "How could you even **suggest** that?"

"It'd get him off your back," the feline said.

"No, it wouldn't," Brenda stated. "It'd make things even worse."

"It'd at least get him off Rob's back...for a while anyway," Theresa added.

“No.”

All four women looked at me.

“I’m not doing it...and that’s final,” I said. “I’m not going to do that to Dan.”

“Do what?” Brenda asked.

“Cheat on him,” I said.

“Considering the situation, I doubt Dan’d mind,” Ariel said.

I sighed. “Dan might not...but I would.”

I took a sip of water...then looked at them.

“I love Dan far too much to risk what I have on some one-night fling,” I stated.

“If I did what you’re suggesting...it’d be like saying I didn’t love Dan anymore.” I felt the tears start to fall. “I couldn’t live with myself if I did that...”

I took a deep breath...then got up from the table.

“I’m...gonna go freshen up,” I said...then walked away from the table.

...

Jordan smiled as the red vixen headed for the hallway where the bathrooms were.

Perfect...she’s alone.

He got up...and walked to the hall.

...

I took a deep breath...and slowly let it out, dabbing a wad of paper towel around my eyes.

“All right...I think I’m okay now,” I said softly. “I don’t think I’ll be crying any more.”

I fixed my blue shirt and smoothed a wrinkle out of my jeans...took a breath...and left the bathroom.

“Hello, Red,” a male voice said.

My head spun toward the sound...

...and I saw Jordan, standing between me and the restaurant.

“You know...” he began, “I don’t believe you have a boyfriend.”

“Well I do,” I countered...and tried to step around him.

He stepped in front of me...and clamped his paw on my left arm

“I don’t approve of my girl having another boyfriend,” he snarled.

I slapped his arm away...and glared at him.

“I’m not **your girl**,” I snapped, “and I have no desire to **be** your girl, either.”

I shoved him aside...and stormed off.

...

“I can’t believe he got that upset over it,” Theresa said.

“Well, he really loves Dan, I guess,” Ariel commented.

Shari looked up...just as Rob stormed back to the table and grabbed his varsity jacket.

“Rob, what’s...?” she began.

“Get mine to go,” he stated, sliding into his jacket. “I’m leaving.”

“Rob, wait!” Shari yelped as he walked away.

“Go after him, Shari,” Brenda said. “We’ll get the meals boxed up.”

The orange vixen sprang out of her seat, grabbed her jacket...and took off after the red fox.

...

“Rob...what’s wrong?”

I leaned on the railing outside the restaurant.

“Jordan...” I said. “He was there, outside the bathroom.”

I felt Shari slide closer.

“He said...that he didn’t approve of his girl having another boyfriend,” I snapped, digging my paws into the railing. “And he...grabbed me!”

I slammed my paws down onto the railing, a growl escaping my muzzle.

“Maybe he...” Shari began...then fell silent as I walked away.

“Where are you going?” she asked.

“Home,” I stated.

“We’ll drive you there,” she offered.

I stopped...and shook my head.

“I kinda wanna walk off this mad, right now...and I don’t want to accidentally take it out on any of you,” I said...then sighed. “Sorry about dinner.”

I started walking away...head down and paws clenched.

...

Jordan watched as the red vixen walked past the alcove he was in...then smiled...
...and stepped out, about half a block behind her.

...

“Shari, where’s Rob?” Brenda asked.

The orange vixen rubbed her eyes.

“He left,” she replied. “Jordan was outside the restroom...and tried to bully Rob.”

“Shit!” Theresa said. “Let’s go! We need to make sure he’s okay!”

They all piled into the car...and drove off.

...

“Dammit! Where is he?” Ariel asked, scanning the crowd.

“There he is!” Theresa yowled, pointing to the other side of the street.

They all looked...

...right when a large, brown wolf grabbed the red fox and dragged it into an alley.

“Shit! Stop the car, Ariel!” Shari ordered.

“But...?” the grey wolf began.

“Now!” the fox yelled, smacking the hazard light panel.

...

I felt someone grab me...and yank me off the street, spinning me to the ground face first.

“What the hell?” I asked as I rolled onto my back...

...and saw a leering Jordan Tyson standing over me.

“Now...let’s make sure we’re on the same page, here,” the brown wolf declared as he stepped closer.

I slid my left paw along my belt...and palmed my “Jordan deterrent.”

He crouched down over me...and I glanced down...

...and noticed that my left leg was right between his legs.

Perfect...

“Whose girl are you?” he asked.

I looked up at him...and smiled.

“Not yours,” I declared...and snapped my left leg up, catching him square in the groin.

He waddled away, holding his balls...

...and I quickly got up, deterrent at the ready.

“Uhh...you little...” Jordan began as he was turning...

...and I emptied the entire canister of pepper spray all over his face.

It went in his eyes...his nose...even his mouth...

...and he fell over, yowling and clawing at his face.

I stepped around him and started to walk away...

...when a glint of metal caught my eye.

I looked...and saw an old section of metal pipe leaning against the wall.

Then, I looked at Jordan...and back at the pipe...

...and shook my head.

No...he's learned his lesson, I thought as I stepped out onto the street.

...

“There he is!” I heard someone yell.

I looked up...right when Shari and the others ran over to me.

“Rob, are you...?” Shari began.

“I’m fine,” I said. “Jordan’s not, though.”

“What happened?” Brenda asked. “We saw him grab you...”

“He tried to force himself on me...but I used a whole can of pepper spray on him.” I looked up. “Someone call the cops?”

“Right after he grabbed you,” Theresa said. “They should be on their way here.”

I nodded...and sat on a nearby bench.

...

(Ten minutes later)

...

Dan looked up at the sound of police sirens echoing from somewhere close by.

“What’s going on?” he asked out loud as he walked to the corner...

...and stared at the three police cars camped outside an alley across the street.

Hmm...must be big...

Then, his eyes went wide...as he spotted a very familiar red and white fox talking with the police.

Oh, shit! That’s Rob!

He started to cross the street...then stopped...

...as two police officers dragged a brown wolf with scratches all over his face to a car and threw him into the backseat.

That was...

He ran across the street, jiggling between the onlookers.

“Dan!” someone yelled.

He glanced up...and saw an orange vixen waving at him...and ran toward her.

“What happened? Is Rob okay?” Dan asked.

Shari nodded. “He’s okay. Jordan tried to rape him...and got a face full of pepper spray in the process.”

She looked over at the red fox...who was walking away from the cops.

“All set?” Shari asked.

The red fox nodded...
...then got engulfed by a sobbing snow leopard.

...
(Saturday...8 PM)

...
Brr-ing!

Dan reached over...and picked up the receiver. "Hello?"
"Dan?" a female voice asked. "It's Shari. Is Rob there?"
"No...he went out for a walk. Why?"
Shari sighed. "How...how's he been?"
Dan frowned.
"He's been...really quiet, Shari," the snow leopard said. "He just needs more time...I think."

Shari paused...then said, "I hope so. Thanks, Dan."
The line went dead...and Dan put the receiver down, sighing.
"He just needs more time..." he muttered...to an empty room.

...
(Monday...2 PM)

...
"Rob?" a male voice asked.
I looked up...frowned...then kept walking.
"What do you want, Reggie?" I snapped.
The tiger fell into step next to me.
"I...I wanted to see how you're doing," he said.
I glared at him. "Jordan tried to force himself on me, Reggie. How do you think I fucking feel?"
"I know," Reggie replied...then sighed. "I...I saw Jordan...last night."
I slowed down...and looked at him.
"He's lost thirty percent of his vision in both eyes...at least, for now," the tiger said. "The docs say it'll take him a few months to recover..."
I glared at him...then walked away.
"Good," was all I said as I left.

...
(5:30 PM)

...
Dan looked up as the apartment door opened...
...and a familiar red and white furred fox walked in.
"How was practice, Sweetie?" the snow leopard asked as it got up.
The fox slid off its jacket...and set a duffel bag down on the ground.
"All right," it said, calmly.
Dan slowly wrapped his arms around the fox, holding it gently.
"What's wrong?" he asked.
The fox sighed.
"Reggie stopped me on my way to practice," it said.
Dan tensed. *Uh-oh...*

"He said...that Jordan's lost thirty percent of his vision," the fox added. "The doctors say he'll get it back in a few months..."

The fox fell silent...but Dan could feel tension in its arms, almost like its paws were clenched.

"You defended yourself," Dan said softly. "It's **his** fault, not yours."

"I know that, Dan," Rob replied. "It's just..."

Dan rested his muzzle on the fox's left shoulder.

"Just...what?" he asked.

"I wish...I'd had a second can of pepper spray," Rob stated.

Dan pulled away, shocked...and saw the fox's paws, clenched so tight that spots of white were showing under the black fur.

"Rob, you're not serious...are you?" Dan asked.

"You're damned right I'm serious!" Rob declared. "That...that bastard...tried to force himself on me..." He turned and glared at Dan. "He even threatened to hurt you..."

The fox took a deep breath...and let it out, very slowly.

"In my book...he got off **very** easy," Rob stated...then walked to the bathroom.

Dan looked at the fox...in shock.

Oh, God...if he hadn't had that can of pepper spray...

The snow leopard swallowed, his whiskers twitching.

He...he would have killed Jordan...

...

(Tuesday...12:15 PM)

...

"Dan! Over here!" a shrill feminine voice yelled.

The snow leopard looked up...and headed for the table where the cheerleading team sat.

"Ladies," Dan politely said as he set his tray down. "Something I can do for you?"

"If you weren't gay, I'd have some suggestions..." Brenda said, smiling.

"Me, too," Theresa added, purring and smiling.

Dan chuckled...then felt a large paw rest on his left paw.

"Dan?" Ariel asked. "How's Rob holdin' up?"

He sighed...and patted the wolf's paw.

"He's really pissed off," Dan replied.

"Pissed?" Shari asked...then leaned forward. "Dan...what did you do?"

"He's pissed at **Jordan**, Shari," the snow leopard stated. "He..." He hung his head. "I think...part of him wanted to beat the shit out of Jordan."

"I don't blame him," the tortoiseshell feline said. The others nodded.

"I don't either...but I think..." Dan looked up. "I think...he wouldn't have stopped till Jordan was dead."

All of them fell silent...until...

"Maybe...he can kill Jordan," Brenda said.

Dan's eyes widened. "You're not...?"

The black rabbit shook her head. "Theresa and I...kinda have this idea..."

All of them leaned in close...

...

(Thursday...8 PM)

...

"Come on, Rob! Hurry up!"

I glanced at Dan after I slid into a grey t-shirt.

"Why? What's the big..." I began...

...then got hit in the face by a pair of blue shorts.

"Put these on," Dan said, scampering from the room.

"Dan...*ungph*...what's..." I asked, hopping down the hall while trying to get into the shorts. "What's...ow!...what's the hurry?"

"Here...let me," Dan chided...as he threaded my tail through the opening.

"They'll be here any second."

"They?" I asked...suddenly a little nervous.

Bam-bam-bam-bam-bam!

"Ooop...they're here," Dan declared. "Coming!"

He scampered off to the door...and I followed along, a lot slower than normal...

...so I saw Shari and Theresa walk in.

"Hi, girls," I said...then fell silent...

...as Ariel and Brenda slid a large covered object into the center of our living room.

"Um...what the hell is **that?**" I asked...then noticed Dan and Shari sliding everything away from...whatever it was.

"Are we ready?" Shari asked.

"Not quite," Dan said...and slid by me, grabbing my left arm...and guiding me toward it.

"Dan...what's...?" I asked.

"Therapy," he replied...then looked away. "Theresa."

I looked at the object, right when Theresa pulled the cloth away...

...revealing a life-sized replica of Jordan Tyson, leering at me.

...

Dan watched...as the red fox tensed, teeth bared, ears flat and paws very tightly clenched.

Brenda stepped forward...and placed a baseball bat in the fox's right paw.

It looked at it...and seemed confused.

"It's a piñata, Rob," the black rabbit said. "It was Theresa's idea."

She patted the fox's shoulder. "Go to town on him," she said...and backed away.

The fox looked up at the effigy...clenched the bat in both paws...and swung, decapitating the effigy with one stroke.

Then, a feral growl left its body...as it bludgeoned the rest of the piñata into pieces.

Theresa, scared by the ferocity of the fox's rampage, buried her face in Ariel's arm...the grey wolf protectively sliding a paw around her.

Eventually...the fox ran out of steam, slumping to the ground, the bat falling from its paws...

...then, it started crying...

...and they all sank to the floor, holding it tight...

...