

Slow and Steady

By: RaddaRaem

“Hey hon, could you come over here and check this readout just one last time for me? Pretty please?”

“This is easily the dozenth time you’ve asked me to, Nick. It’s good to go, you’ve gone over the damn thing a hundred times easily now.”

“I know, I know, I know, it’s just... pretty pretty please, Trace?” The bright orange fox pleaded, looking down to his girlfriend while he clasped his brown gloved hands together.

“...You’re lucky I’m such a pushover,” the gray squirrel smirked. She plodded over towards the fox. Resting her elbows on the worn and shoddy table, she methodically scanned the data presented before her. Every so often tapping a finger against the down arrow on Nick’s laptop, Trace remained hushed. Clicking through tab after tab, spreadsheets packed to the brim with raw numbers and formulae washed over her. Nervously pacing behind her, Nick twiddled his fingers. His mind raced, coming up with ever more ideas as to where his calculations have gone wrong. Was in in the planning stages? Were his theories wrong and had he chosen to

make use of the wrong formulae as a result? After nearly half an hour of worrying himself to the point of mental exhaustion, a rather loud ahem from Trace caught his attention.

“So? Anything I overlooked? Any improperly entered formulas or rounding errors or-” his incessant questioning was brought to a halt as the squirrel stood on her tiptoes and placed a furred finger upon his lips.

“It’s fine, Nick. I don’t see what you’re so worried about.” Smiling sweetly, she rubbed his cheek with the palm of her hand. “The professor doesn’t care whether or not you get any significant results, he just wants to see that you actually know how to go through the motions of the scientific method and do a proper research paper.”

Grinning broadly, the fox rested his chin on top of the five foot four squirrel’s head, giving her ear a playful nibble. She fidgeted in place whilst he nibbled, the six foot tall fox using the distraction as a prime opportunity to wrap his arms around her soft and broad frame. “Thanks hon. There was the submission of the topic, the project outline, the literature review, and then finally the write-up itself. Took me freakin’ forever to get a working title that the professor would accept,” the fox grumbled.

“I think that might have had something to do with your rather informal language. There is a certain level of professionalism expected in these things,” she giggled, her long tail swishing back and forth. “I can’t imagine why a title like, ‘The Potential for the Spontaneous Creation and Expansion of Mass: My Personal Fuck You to Antoine Lavoisier’ wouldn’t go over well.”

Rolling his amber eyes, the fox did his best to ignore his girlfriend’s continuing stream of dry humor. Patrolling the lab one last time before getting down to business, he let out a sighed. He couldn’t help but bemoan the pitiable state the college’s chemistry lab was in. The sights and... unique, which was the kindest word he could come up for them, smells that flooded the lab always gave him cause to grind his teeth. It was only moderately infuriating to realize the university had engaged in at a fairly liberal amount of false advertising with regards to how much they had invested in their ‘world class’ chemistry lab. Directly compared to how much they blew on fucking athletics, foaming at the mouth in a feral rage was the typical response. “That’s what I get for blindly accepting the scholarship without even touring the place I suppose...” he grumbled. He looked up to the stained yellow ceiling panels and the dirty and uneven floor tiles, long black scuffs from shoes streaking just about everywhere. Beakers, flasks, clamps, ring stands, rubber stoppers, and tongs cluttered the tables. As did the occasional hot plate that had been left on too long, searing a nice brown rectangular square into the tabletop. It was unbelievable how much equipment just about every other idiot in this program left out.

Grabbing a digital scale that had been carelessly left out in the open, Nick gently hefted it up and plopped it down next to his laptop. Wiping down the top of it the best he could, the fox grunted. The scale continued to register a couple of grams on top of it. Tinkering with the settings, he adjusted it so that 0.02 grams was the default mass weighing down upon it, the readout finally shifting to 0.00 grams.

“Only two decimal places? Uggghh it’ll have to do, I’ll just make a note in the materials and data section of the lab report. Alright, our equipment is ready, the theory appears sound, and our readouts are all green. Would you like to do the honors?” Nick said with a toothy smile, extending a hand out to the squirrel.

“Showoff.” Trace knelt down and unzipped a backpack leaning against the table. Twitching her floofy tail, she very slowly lifted a black box out and gingerly placed it in the fox’s awaiting hand. Setting it down upon the tabletop, he yanked off the lid and pulled out a small contoured titanium cylinder. Easily fitting into the palm of his hand, a green lens was fitted into one end and one of the fox’s brown fingers eagerly hovered over a black switch.

Clearing his voice, Nick twirled about in place and spread his arms out wide before addressing nobody in particular. “Good afternoon ladies and gentleman! Hold onto your asses, because you are about to witness the great and terrible power of SCIENCE! Ever since Antoine

Lavoisier claimed to have discovered the law of the conservation of mass in the 18th century, the beloved field of chemistry has made leaps and bounds as our understanding of the world increased exponentially. Or so we thought. See, the thing with scientific laws is that they are merely based on observations made over the course of thousands upon thousands of experiments. They are not an absolute fact and they always have the potential to be proven wrong. What I intend to do today is to utterly rip the basic assumptions of chemistry a new one!” Raising a hand and holding his index finger high, Nick paced about through an aisle of tables. Trace gently shook her head, giggling at the sight of the fox making an ass out of himself. “The law of conservation of mass succinctly states that matter can neither be created nor destroyed, it can only change forms. Folks, what if I told you that I had stumbled upon a way to prove that assumption wrong? That there are no boundaries placed on the interactions between the elements of our world? Good furs of every color and species, behold as I wield,” holding the titanium cylinder high above his head, “THIS glorious marriage of chemistry, physics, and engineering. Which I could not have built without the assistance of my lovely double majoring girlfriend.” Smirking, he winked at the squirrel. Her lips curled up into a soft smile and she gave him a quick wave. “With which I will quite literally grow before your very eyes,” Nick’s bombastic self-indulgence was abruptly cut off when a tackily colored plastic package was lobbed at him, “...These crappy off brand cookies?”

“They were on sale,” Trace replied with an innocent shrug.

Drooping his shoulders, Nick bit his lip and he raised his brows. Continuing on in a much more subdued tone, "Behold as I cause these... awful tasting snacks to swell in size, their increase in mass coming about spontaneously."

"They aren't that bad." Reaching out for the package he was waving around, Trace gently peeled back the resealable flap and grabbed a handful of cookies. Poking one into the fox's mouth, he squinted his eyes. Groaning, his tongue slid over and around the nasty confection. "Oh don't be like that." Sticking a half-dozen cookies into each of her cheeks she swallowed them with no trouble.

Bobbing his head from side to side as the taste faded, Nick caught his wind once more. Continuing on in a much more confident tone, he straightened his posture and poured on the charm. "Yes good people, I hold within my hand not only what will redefine our understanding of chemistry and science itself but quite possibly the solution to world hunger as well! Just think about it, an awful tasting cookie that is as big as I am, practically materializing out of thin air! The sudden increase in mass shall come not from any other objects nearby or even from any other matter or object in the known universe. If I were to get into the nitty gritty, I'd be more than happy to shock and awe you with how I have stumbled upon how to convert energy itself into matter. Seeing as how this is a dry run and it'll go right over your heads actually I'll leave that part out. Ladies and gentlemen, all you need to know is that I have effectively disproven the law of conservation of mass. Watch and be amazed." Tearing open the resealable flap on

the packet of cookies, Nick plucked out a single cookie and placed it on the digital scale. "As you can see, the cookie currently weighs 12.07 grams. Using this," he waved the titanium cylinder about, "I will increase the cookie's mass by an amount that will result in its weight increasing by six percent. While this may seem a paltry sum, I believe it is best to err on the side of caution. If the experiment is a success, the cookie's weight should increase to approximately 12.79 grams." Flipping open a small port on the underside of the cylinder with a clawed finger, the fox connected it to his laptop via a USB cable. A data table popped up and he quickly typed in the desired parameters, scanning over it a dozen times before closing out and saving the changes. "Now... tremble before the awesome power of science!" He bellowed, ignoring the raucous laughter spilling forth from the squirrel. Chuckling, he held the cylinder before the cookie at point blank range. A thin green laser shot forth from the lens and bathed the treat in a soft glow. After fifteen seconds of continuous firing, Nick flicked the switch off and stood back from the table.

"How long do you think we should let it sit?" Trace came up behind the fox and wrapped her chubby arms around his thin waist.

"Umm... I'm thinking a good six hours should be a safe enough amount of time."

“There goes our Saturday evening,” she groaned, burying her face into his side. The feeling of her nose poking his ribs gave him cause to giggle.

“It’s not all bad, we get to... stare at a digital readout for the rest of the day and hope that it slowly ticks up ...okay yeah this does suck, but the lab portion of chemistry always does.” Pulling up a chair beside the table, Nick fell back onto its flimsy frame. Two of the chair’s legs cracked and creaked loudly as Trace curled onto his lap. Wrapping her long swishing tail around him, the fox in turn wrapped his arms around her, the edges of his lips curling up faintly. Nuzzling her neck, he sighed happily at the feeling of his arms sinking ever so slightly into her. He rested his chin on her shoulder, his eyes becoming glued to the readout.

“Hopefully the thing’s batteries don’t give out anytime soon,” Trace quipped.

“Oh hell that was what I forgot to do.” The couple settled in comfortably onto the structurally unsound piece of furniture.

“So. About that speech you were rambling off?” Trace began to prod. She turned her head and began rubbing her cheek against the side of Nick’s muzzle.

“Oh that was just me practicing for when I give a proper demonstration to the faculty.”

“You might need to rein in some of that informality.”

“Bahh, I can just rewrite those stuffy presentation procedures after I rewrite science,”
he said with a wave of his hand.

“Uh huh. Nick, we’re only freshman. Don’t you think you might be oh... overstating this thing’s importance?” She asked with concern in her voice.

“Hell no, no humility from me. We’re damn good and you know it,” the fox immediately shot back with a fire in his eyes. “Next semester you’ll be plowing through physics at the graduate level for fuck’s sakes, and you’re not even nineteen! Shit, you’re already breezing through senior level magnetism and electrical engineering this semester.” Poking his nose against hers, he carried on, “and don’t forget, I’m tearing apart organic chemistry like it’s nothing. If anyone could pull this off, it’s us. Come on, none of that humble bullshit, walk with some swagger in your step. Throw your weight around.”

Furrowing her brows, “That better not have been-”

“You know you look good with it,” he quickly headed her off, hugging her tight.

Hmmming softly, Trace remained quiet and wrapped a hand around his thin brown wrist.

“You know I couldn’t have done with without you,” Nick whispered, kissing her on the cheek.

“You are such a suck-up,” she taunted, returning the loving gesture.

“I’m serious.” The readout had yet to change.

“I know you are,” she murmured quietly as she grabbed the package of cookies from him and peeled it open. “Want one?”

“I think I’d rather go hungry,” he snorted. He tried to banish its taste from his memory.

“Suit yourself,” she replied with a shrug of her shoulders, another cookie disappearing between her lips. As the hours passed, the little plastic trays within the package quickly emptied, all of its contents having been relocated to the squirrel’s stomach. Struggling to keep his eyes open while the monotony dragged on, Nick let out a great sigh. His eyes glazed over the readout on the digital scale, the numbers remaining steadfast at 12.07. Glistening red and yellow hues of the setting sun spilled forth into the lab around the four hour mark, signaling that now might be a good time to flip on the lights. Scooting ever so gently out from underneath his gal pal so as not to wake her, the fox trudged over towards the entrance to the lab and flipped on the lights, the sickly yellow bulbs buzzing loudly when they flickered to life. Leaning over the table and staring intently at the digital scale, Nick failed to notice Trace leaning back further and further in the chair, her breathing becoming gentle and rhythmic. It was pitch black out by the time the sixth hour had finally come and gone, the vulpine’s stomach grumbling loudly by then, punishing him terribly for his commitment to keeping an eye on the readout. His ears drooped and he sighed in forlorn disappointment. Eyeing the readout, the numbers hadn’t increased in the slightest the entire evening. Pressing a finger down on the scale, he tried his luck, praying that maybe the scale was a faulty one. Its readout immediately shot up to 27.12 as he placed his padded finger down upon it, just as quickly reverting back to 12.07 when it was removed.

“Son of a bitch,” he cursed to himself, shaking his head. Everything looked right this afternoon. Shit, maybe he and Trace had been staring at the data for so long that they couldn’t even see any discrepancies in the patterns anymore. That or he had tried too hard to make the projected data fit the theories. He’d just have to try again tomorrow, at least he’d get props for conducting the experiment more than once for the sake of acquiring consistent results. His eyes scoured about the lab while his brain rattled, trying to think of a good place to store the experimented upon cookie. “...Who am I kidding, I can’t store this thing here. Cleaning crew or some other jerkoff will lose or toss the damn thing away.” Gnashing his teeth, his head whipped back and forth as he searched out a suitable container for it. “Nothing...” Slowly padding towards Trace, he wasn’t exactly thrilled to inform her that their time this afternoon could have been much better spent. His ears perked upon nearly stepping on the empty container from whence the cookie originated. “Not exactly orthodox, but it’ll do.” Sitting on the ground at Trace’s feet, he knelt down and dusted it off. Peeling it open one last time, he gingerly deposited the cookie into one of the empty trays. Setting the package down on the squirrel’s thick lap, Nick set about putting the scale back up, determined to leave this place in a slightly better manner than he found it. As the fox clanged around with the cabinets, Trace was rustled from her slumber and let out an ear splitting yawn as she rubbed the sleep out of her eyes.

“Ung, I miss much?” She drowsily inquired while she shifted in her seat, the sole cookie rattling around in its confines.

Slamming a cabinet door shut, Nick tried to keep a straight face. “No... the experiment was a bust. I’ll try and figure out what went wrong tomorrow and then try again before the project is due. And...TRACE DON’T EAT THAT!” He screeched, what remained of the experiment having disappeared between her lips and down her gullet.

“W-what?!” Panicked, the squirrel shot up from her seat. Her boyfriend cleared the entirety of the lab in seconds, racing to her side.

“Oh fuck me, you just ate the cookie I experimented on!” He screamed, running his fingers through his hair.

“Why was it back in the case?!”

“I didn’t know where else to put it!”

Dropping to her knees, Trace let out a painful moan and held her stomach. “Ooooooog, Nick... I-I feel like awful all of a sudden.”

“Oh shit oh shit oh shit oh shit, Trace please be okay.” Panicking, Nick devolved into hysterics and his eyes began to water.

The pudgy squirrel leaned forward and collapsed onto the ground, the fox immediately at her side, freaking out all the while. “I’m so sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry...” Shaking worriedly, Nick began pulling at his hair. The sound of Trace’s stifled laughter brought his hysterics to an abrupt halt.

“Nah I’m just fucking with you.” Smirking, she rose right back on her feet and began cracking up at the sight of her boyfriend’s stunned face. “Nice to see you care about me more than the experiment.”

“I thought... you were...” he spouted dumbly, words failing him as he looked up at her snarky expression. Clenching his fists, his tune quickly changed. “HATE. ALL OF MY HATE. ALL OF IT.” Nick seethed, rapidly shifting from a state of sorrow and crippling guilt to being furiously pissed off. Laughing hysterically she bounded out of the lab, the vulpine nipping at her heels as he hounded after her.

“Smartass,” he grumbled aloud as Trace rested her head against his chest, the two snuggled up against each other in bed. “Had me fucking worried there.” He softly grunted. Hrrrming, Nick scritchd at the back of her neck and held her close, her warm generousness pressing against his lithe form.

“I said I was sorry,” she mumbled sleepily, straining to keep her eyes open. .

“Yeah, yeah.” He rubbed a hand along the back of her head and tussled her hair. “What the hell could have gone wrong though?” he mouthed to himself. He stared up at the ceiling of their bedroom apartment and sighed, his eyes following the slits of light waving through their bedroom blinds.

Stretching her neck, the gray squirrel pressed her lips against the fox’s. “You’ll think of something Nick, just sleep on it.”

“I suppose,” he moped, cuddling the squirrel close. Taking in a deep breath, his mind played back all the preparations he had made in the lab earlier that day.

Back in the lab bright and early the next morning, Nick looked over his data for the umpteenth time. "Everything should be right, I don't know what went wonky." Scowling in dissatisfaction, the vulpine stormed over to the cabinets and began rifling through them for another digital scale. "Screw that noise, I can do better than this," he growled in annoyance as he tossed aside the scale he had used the day prior. "Oooh... what do we have here?" Reaching towards the back of the cabinet, the fox looked gleefully upon the box he had pulled out. Plastic wrapping still on it, Nick tapped his fingers upon the box as he gazed upon a brand new digital scale, one that read out to six decimal places. "Hell, I might as well just hold onto this for future use. It's not exactly stealing if no one even knew it was here to begin with."

Setting up his laptop and new scale in much the same fashion as he did the day prior, the fox wore a wry grin. Far more excited than he should have been, he unsealed the digital scale. Reaching into his backpack, he pulled out another pack of off brand cookies. Ripping back the resealable flap, he plucked one out and placed one upon the scale. Setting his ray to the exact same parameters, he continued going through the motions, praying that he wasn't insane for expecting something different to happen. "Alright, alright, alright... so this one's starting weight was 11.834600 grams. An increase of six percent would put it at 12.544676 grams. Looming over the digital scale, the fox glowered at the readout. After about seven minutes, his jaw nearly dropped when he saw the weight increase by 0.000010 grams. "Oh fuck, oh fuck, oh fuck, hold on hold on hold on it could just be some dust or something, don't get too excited," he tried to reassure himself before he practically skipped about the lab, giddy with excitement.

Another seven minutes passed by and the weight increased by another 0.000010 grams.

Another fifteen and it increased by 0.000020 grams. After the first hour, the scale read 11.834681 grams weighing down upon it, having increased a whopping total of 0.000081 grams.

“YESSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS!!!!” Nick roared in triumph as he paraded about the lab, flipping beakers and causing a further mess because fuck the custodial crew he just disproved a scientific law. “A hell of a lot slower than I thought but who cares, the theory is sound, it works!” Snapping his fingers, the fox rushed back over to the table. Tearing his backpack open, he tossed out a notebook and a pencil. “Alright think so the ending weight should be 12.544676 grams, after starting off at 11.834600. That’s an increase of 0.710076 grams. In one hour it increased by 0.000081 grams so in a day it would increase by 0.001945 grams. Do some simple division and wait. A year? It’s going to take it an entire year to increase in weight by six percent? That seems a bit... slow. And holy shit yesterday. Yesterday was a success as well, the change was simply too slow and the stupid ass scale just wasn’t sensitive enough to pick up the changes!” Thrusting his arms in the air Nick tossed two proud and erect birds towards the cabinet he had been fumbling around with last night and earlier today. “Ooooooh hold on again. If the cookie from last night was continually increasing in weight and mass... then what’ll happen to Trace?” Breathing shallowly through his teeth, the vulpine tapped his fingers against his furry chin. “S-surely it’ll pass through her harmlessly. Hopefully. Maybe. Oh shit.”

-----Four Years Later-----

“How’d the job interview go hon?” Trace inquired as she came up behind her fiancé and wrapped her thick arms around him, catching the fox by surprise. He quickly dropped the damp silverware he’d been washing and wrapped his wet furry fingers around hers.

“How do you think? They were practically falling over themselves, tossing every benefit and salary figure they could at me just to hold my attention. I played them along just to see how high they’d go.” His ears burnt up at the feeling of her soft belly pressing into his back, his tail flitting about sheepishly in response. “I finished up college and grad school in four years tops. Damn well better toss some nice fucking bones my way.”

“You’re an ass, you know that?” The squirrel playfully chided, pressing her nose against the back of his neck.

“Who me?” The vulpine tried maintaining the most innocent facial expression and tone he could manage.

“Yes you,” she shot right back. The six foot three squirrel rested her chin atop the fox’s head.

“Maybe a little,” he acknowledged, fondly recalling when the roles had been reversed. “I’m not sure I’ll go for it though. The job offered a lot of security but not a lot of room for growth.”

“Oh?” Trace mused, sidling up next to the fox at the sink. She began helping clean up the dishes that had accumulated. “Sounds to me like you’re trying to bite off more than you can chew. You’ve gotten some fantastic offers already, Nick, what more could you be holding out for?”

“Time, I suppose,” he quietly mumbled.

“What?”

“Time, I need more time,” he sighed in exasperation, setting his hands down upon the submerged base of the sink. “...Have you given any thought to your job offers yet? I remember you were telling me Cogsrack Automation was pulling out all the stops.”

“Mmhmm,” Trace hummed, nodding her head before handing off a plate to the vulpine to be dried.

“And?” Nick’s ears drooped while he fumbled about with a roll of paper towels.

“I think I’ll pass. I kept pressing them about the potential for working from home, but they just wouldn’t budge. My nearly foot tall leap in height was tough enough to pass off as a belated growth spurt to the professors and the campus. I figure some suspicions would be aroused if I grew another four or five inches in just my first year on the jobsite.”

“H-how did you,” Nick stammered out. Looking up to Trace, his lips quivered.

“I perused the spreadsheet you made tracking my growth and your estimated projections. It’s a sweet touch that I’m your password, but it’s way too easy to guess. Might want to change that sometime soonish,” she replied nonchalantly, handing off another plate to the fox.

“Dammit...” The fox sighed heavily as his shoulders drooped. “I’m so sorry, Trace. About... everything. I never meant for this to happen to you.” The fox merfed in annoyance when a large and wet hand papped against his head, flattening his ears.

“Don’t even start with that,” the squirrel demanded, shifting her weight and knocking the fox off his feet with a swing of her hips. “I know how terrified you are of others finding out the potential your ray has for enlarging organic matter, much less people. And you have every right to be.”

“That and what it can do to inorganic materials as well. If people simply started enlarging say platinum or gold at will, the markets for those things would go right down the shitter. I’m not exactly keen on playing a hand in collapsing the world markets as people go about making more rare metals out of nothing. I’ll let the politicians and bankers take the blame for that, they’re doing a fine job fucking things up as is.”

Twitching her bushy tail to and fro, Trace scratched at her future husband’s ears. “You’ve been thinking about this a lot, haven’t you?”

“Ever since the excitement from the first successful test wore off,” he confessed. As he stacked up the dried plates and silverware, his tail swished back and forth while Trace’s fingers wore at his sweet spot.

“I always wondered why you lied on your report back in freshman year,” the squirrel murmured before hugging the vulpine tight against her body. “I couldn’t believe why you would go and say it was a failure when the weekend before you had been giving me those silly and bombastic speeches for when you rubbed your professors’ noses in it. Now I can see why.”

“Yeah... I just need more time before I make my research known. I’ve figured out how to address the speed with which an affected object grows, that and the erm long lasting and constant effects,” he blurted out in an apologetic tone. He tilted his head back and stared up at the squirrel’s chin.

“At least it was only six percent a year,” she smiled. Stooping down she kissed him while slapping a wet and heavy hand against his chest.

“Never imagined it would apply to height too,” he snorted as he kissed her back. “Are you sure you feel okay though? Physically speaking if just your weight and height increased

there'd be a mess of health problems to contend with. Your lung capacity, circulatory system, bone density, that's just breaking the tip of the iceberg. Tell me if you're ever not feeling too hot, okay?" He pleaded in a heartfelt tone, his eyes locked with hers.

"You'll be the first to know," she teased, groping at his chest. "To be honest though, while I have been getting steadily taller and... fluffier, I'm surprised at how little I notice it."

"Hell, I noticed how as we started moving out some of the furniture yesterday, you were racing up and down those flights of stairs no problem. Seems like your health has only improved since then, strange as it seems," the fox pondered aloud, his ears twitching as the squirrel's thick fingers rubbed over them. ...Maybe it couldn't hurt to have her get a medical checkup or CAT scan soon. He honestly had no idea what lingering indirect effects his ray had on her. Maybe the six percent growth wasn't uniform throughout her body?

"Hrmmm," Trace stopped to pause, rubbing her chin against the top of her beloved fox's head. "I never really stopped to think about it, but climbing up those stairs to this third floor has gotten easier as I got bigger over the past four years," she thought out loud. "Never dreamed I'd quit complaining or even noticing the lack of an elevator in these campus apartments."

“...Anywho, as soon as I can find a way to restrict its impact on organic material, at least commercially speaking, I still have big plans for that for my own use, I’ll make my work known. I’ll just destroy the old blueprints at that point and make it nigh impossible for anyone to reverse engineer it.”

“And what’ll you do then? Practice for making some more of those outrageous speeches?” Trace giggled, wrapping her tail around him.

“Maybe. Hell and solve the world hunger problem while I’m at it,” he replied only half-joking. He smiled goofily at the pleasant touch of her tail flitting against his cheeks.

“I’m sure that’ll piss off a lot of suits in the food industry.”

“Fuck em.’ As soon as it gets public that I can make nearly unlimited food from nothing, they won’t have a leg to stand on. ...That and I’ll need some way to feed your growing appetite.” He meeped at the sound of her grumbling stomach.

“Let’s eat out, we just finished washing the dishes after all.”

“Try not to eat me out of a house and home this time,” Nick grumbled. Further complaints were stifled as Trace wrapped a thick hand around his wrist and dragged him out the door.

“The lease on this place expires tomorrow, I don’t think that’ll be a problem,” brushing her tail against Nick’s toosh, the squirrel bounded down the stairs with her captive in tow.

“That’s not what I meant,” Nick whined. The mental image of dollars flying out of his wallet gave him reason to moan pitifully.

-----Two years later -----

Hair slicked back, donned in a dapper suit and tie that was throttling him, the fox grunted in annoyance. Pacing about back stage, he slapped his hands against his cheeks and tried his best to steady his nerves while the announcer on the other side of the curtains drolled on with his introduction. “Can’t believe they have a damn dress code,” the fox complained. He loosened his tie, just enough to allow himself to breathe. Honestly, he looked presentable enough. So his typical attire was a little casual, big deaaaammmit. A sudden round of applause

derailed his further attempts to skirt by the dress code. Nick shot up to attention and quickly straightened his tie. "Here goes everything..." Letting out a heavy sigh, the fox tossed aside the heavy curtains, making his entrance with as much flair and bravado as he could manage. Once the applause had died down and he had sufficiently hammed it up with waves and bows to the audience, the orange fox cleared his throat and began speaking.

"Ladies and gentlemen, let me start off this presentation by confessing that I suck something fierce at these. Let's just get that right out of the way. All that you need to know is that I have, in a sense, broken science." Gauging the raised eyebrows and incredulous stares, Nick's face lit up at the sight of a spectator a few rows back trying to sneak a snack.

"You!" Pointing a clawed finger at a sheltie who was slowly pulling an apple out of his coat pocket. "Yeah you, the guy with the fluffy mane chomping down on the apple. Toss it up here."

Stammering, the sheltie shoved the fruit back into his coat pocket, trying his hardest to maintain an air of ignorance.

“You want me to keep picking on you and causing a scene? Yes, no, maybe so? Just toss the damn thing up here,” Nick demanded, the acoustics allowed his berating voice to echo all across the auditorium.

Reluctantly, with ears pressed down flat against his head, the fur pulled his snack out and lobbed it on stage.

“Much obliged,” the vulpine replied in a sincere tone. He knelt down and placed the waxy red fruit upon the stage. “Oh and props for eating healthy. *Ahem* As I’m sure many of you are aware, the law of conservation of mass is one of the most basic tenets that nearly every field of science holds at its core. Biology, chemistry, physics, mechanics, I could go on. What if I were to say that those assumptions that became the scientific law as proposed by Antoine Lavoisier simply are not true? And I’m not talking about the known exceptions with regards to special conditions that occur in the realm of quantum physics and mathematics. I’m talking about on a scale that can easily be observed and understood even by the common layperson. If, for example, I were to approach somebody on the street and tell them I could make this apple suddenly grow in size, they would stare at me like I was completely daffy. You can’t make something from nothing they would say. While those in the scientific community would question that even should the apple swell in size, from where did its additional mass come from? In line with the law of conservation of mass, it had to come from somewhere, its mass couldn’t have just increased spontaneously they would rail. I argue that the opposite is true,

that I can indeed make something as innocuous and small as that apple swell in size, its growth completely spontaneous. I am absolutely adamant in my claims that no additional mass shall be taken or borrowed from any other object or place within this universe or any fathomable other. The growth will truly be spontaneous and self-contained. Please observe.”

Pulling out a much sleeker and refined titanium cylinder from his coat pocket, along with a smart phone, Nick synced the ray up with his phone. Quickly adjusting some parameters on the touch screen, the fox stuffed his phone back into his pocket and waved about the cylinder. “And without further ado,” he smiled gleefully as he pointed the device at the apple. A small teal beam of light shot forth from its single lens and slowly washed over and enveloped the waxy fruit. Brows furrowed and mouths went wide as the fruit slowly swelled in size, the apple’s bottom silently squeaking along the stage as it grew to nearly six feet in height. With a smug grin on his face, Nick slapped hard against the apple, the reverberations echoing for all to hear. “I’m sure many of you, and with good reason, believe this to be nothing more than a rather convincing and well thought out ruse.” Digging his clawed fingers into the apple’s surface, the vulpine ripped out a large juicy chunk. “Here you go, fluffles.” He failed to stifle a smirk as he lobbed the huge chunk of apple back to the sheltie from whom he borrowed it. Yelping in surprise, the sheltie barely caught it, gawking at the chunk that was bigger than the apple he had originally been trying to snarf down.

“Now I’m going to take a guess that some of you have the nagging feeling that I just doomed us all say... due to a gross miscalculation or oversight on my end, this fruit shall continue to grow in size until the planet is crushed beneath it. I may be little crazy, but I’m not stupid. Perpetual and unending growth was one of my biggest concerns going into the creation of this device,” he firmly stated. Shoving his hands into his pockets, he adopted a defensive stance. “That’s not going to be a problem, trust me.” Arching his brows as he hummed, Nick’s eyes settled on the sheltie, the maned fox holding the apple chunk awkwardly and unsure of what to do with it. “You can eat that if you want,” he quipped as the sheltie’s ears shot to attention. “The fear that someone could experience wild and varying amounts of growth by ingesting an altered object was another concern of mine. I took into account every careless, stupid, and irresponsible use of this device that I could. Again, don’t worry, the growth doesn’t spread from one object to another.”

“Well at least not anymore,” he mumbled under his breath. To assuage the sheltie’s worries, Nick ripped another chunk of apple out and bit into it, the juice running down his muzzle and staining his suit. “It doesn’t even taste any different.” With a shrug he finished off the chunk and true to his word, did not suddenly swell in size.

“Hmmm... now what if there was some insect or worm within that apple you say? Did I just potentially create a horrendously large monster that had the potential to reproduce and give rise to a horrifyingly large new pest? Not likely.” The fox marched back and forth across the

well-lit stage with a patronizing air to his step. "As it is currently programmed, this device is very picky and peculiar with regards to what it will and will not grow. Inorganic materials, it doesn't discriminate at all in that sense. I could turn a pebble into a boulder or a speck of gold into a lump the size of my head. Actually, wait, I did hammer into the software to deny any attempts to enlarge any objects or materials made out of gold, silver, platinum, and what have you. Liquids are fair game as well, heck, with this device it is feasible to enlarge a water droplet into a puddle. Moving on, organic matter is where things get much more restricted. With regards to plant life, this ray here can grow most leafy greens, fruits, vegetables, trees, and so on with little to no discrimination. While plants may be alive, they are not in possession of what we would consider a threatening sentience, that and there are limits as to how large the ray will allow something to be made. This apple here is pushing it," Nick remarked, patting his furred hand against its waxy covering. "It could potentially be pushed to grow another one or two feet in height, but that's the largest that the ray will allow it to grow. I've built in limitations on purpose to avoid any unwanted or collateral damage. As for insects, mammals, avians, reptiles, people, you know, what we would easily recognize and consider to be alive? This ray has no effect. Observe."

Pointing the device at himself, a brown furred finger flipped the switch and a soft teal light wrapped around the fox. Ignoring the audible collective gasp from the crowd, Nick began chuckling softly. "Oh hey, would you look at that. Nothing happened, because that's the way I programmed it." True to his word, he failed to burst out of his clothes or inch up minutely. "So

if any of you out there had any brief hopes of giant anythings stomping about, knock that shit off. It isn't going to happen. And before you ask, I'm not interested in releasing this to the public. This is basically me just showing off. I'm sure some idiots out there could find a way to break it or abuse it in a way I couldn't fathom. However, I will donate heavily modified versions to select humanitarian agencies, prominently those who deal with providing food and clean water to those in need. Figure it couldn't hurt to help provide them with nigh unlimited amounts of food and water. If those agencies prove themselves capable and responsible enough with their use, I'll expand distribution and oh say... I don't know... solve world hunger, I guess? And... shit. I always try not to peter out at the end of a presentation and end it on an awkward note but uh. Yeah. So. Any questions?" Claspng his hands together, the vulpine wore a toothy grin as he looked out over the audience. A ten second or so silence followed before people started climbing over their chairs and practically killing one another, each person struggling to be heard. "Wonder if anyone will ask how I got this little marvel to so quickly recognize the difference in the molecular structures of organic and inorganic objects?" he mused. The cacophony of voices swelled in intensity and threatened to drown out his very thoughts. "I thought it was pretty clever," he smiled, his tail swishing to and fro, reveling in the veritable anarchy that had overcome the audience as they all fought to be heard.

His body wearied and exhausted, the fox trudged through the front door to his home. Slamming the door behind him shut, he slid off his suit and tie onto the floor, struggling to keep his eyes open the whole time. "God damn, I knew there would be a lot of questions but holy hell. That freaking Q&A session was more than three hours." Growling, the vulpine felt his phone buzzing in pants pocket. "Thought I turned this thing off," he grumbled, ignoring the thousands of emails and hundreds of missed calls. A loud creaking and the sound of heavy footsteps coming down the stairs managed to bring a smile to his tired face however.

"You could've called to say you were going to be late you know," Trace chided him in a worried tone.

"Sorry hon, I honestly didn't expect there would be that many reporters at an event like that. I assumed the media would just ignore what they passed off as another gathering of eggheads. My mistake,"

Letting out a frustrated sigh, the squirrel wrapped her thick and powerful arms around her husband and held him close, smooshing his muzzle between her generous breasts. "I really would've appreciated a heads up," the seven foot one squirrel whispered as she squeezed him tight. "The landline and my cell were ringing off the hook earlier," Trace noted in an annoyed tone, wrapping her floofy tail around the fox.

“*Sigh* Assholes,” Nick cursed softly. His wife’s warm embrace overwhelmed him. If he didn’t bumble up the stairs shortly, he could easily see himself falling asleep right here and now.

“...We can iron this out tomorrow.” Smiling, Trace effortlessly lifted her vulpine lover and carried him up the stairs into their bedroom. Yanking off his undershirt and slacks, the gray squirrel eased her hubby under the covers before flumping next to him onto the bed, the mattress sagging considerably beneath her weight. Bidding him goodnight with a kiss on the forehead, Trace wrapped her arms around the smaller fox and hugged him tight, melting in pleasure at his familiar presence, smell, and touch. “Night Nick.”

Mumbling incoherently, the orange fox’s eyes cracked open painfully. Sinking deep and deeper into her embrace, he nuzzled her soft and inviting chest. “...Hey Trace.”

“Hmmm?”

“Are you mad at me?” Eyelids growing heavy, Nick’s eyes failed to come into focus.

“About keeping me waiting and worried about where you were? What do you think?”

She replied in a very dry tone.

“N-no I meant... I’m sorry...” Too tired to continue producing rational thought, Nick went quiet and his eyes drifted to the side.

“Get some sleep.” Trace craned her neck down and kissed him on the nose effectively shooshing him. With a frustrated sigh Nick did as he was told. His head laid against a tremendous breast, his breathing becoming quieter and rhythmic. Soon after, he was lulled to sleep by his wife’s soothing heartbeat.

Snoring softly, the squirrel lay splayed out across the bed, her paws just sticking out from the sheets at the opposite end of the bed. Sunlight flickered through the windows and lit up her broad form, but did little to rouse her from her slumber. Nor was the gentle creaking of the stairs or the soft sound of footsteps sufficient to rouse her. Methodically, the fox placed one foot in front of the other as he tiptoed back towards his bed, doing his damndest not to jostle his precious cargo. Grinning excitedly and mouthing a sigh of relief, he set a tray down

next to where the squirrel lie in bed and proceeded to circle around the bed. Setting a brown gloved hand upon her soft shoulder, Nick gently shook her.

“Just a few more minut-” Trace’s half assed plea for more sleep was cut off when she felt a pair of lips press against her own. Eyes still shut, she kissed their owner deeply. “Well isn’t that quite a way to start the day,” she said in a sultry tone. Opening her eyes, she was greeted with the sight of her smirking fox.

“It gets better,” he hinted in a playful manner. Pressing a hand against her cheek he slowly twisted her head. Her eyes lit up as an array of wonderful aromas assaulted her nostrils. Carefully stacked on the tray before her was a carton of orange juice, six fluffy buttermilk pancakes oozing with butter and syrup, and an entire plate covered with scrambled eggs, steaming and drowned in ketchup. “Breakfast in bed? Boy you are really sucking up today, aren’t you?” Pulling herself up into sitting position she leaned back against the bed’s headrest.

“Can’t it just be my way of appreciating you?” Nick teased while wearing a toothy grin.

“Not likely.” Sticking a fork into one of the pancakes, she stuffed the entire thing into her mouth and hummed in delight. She stuffed another into her maw, sloshing them about in her

mouth, her cheeks puffed out noticeably the entire time. "Is this your way of apologizing for leaving me in the dark yesterday?" Pointing a fork at the fox, she raised her eyebrows in incredulity while she awaited his response.

"Sort of," he confessed, his ears flattening against his head. Climbing back into bed, he was careful not to knock over anything on the tray. Nick cuddled up against his wife, resting his chin against her soft belly.

"Sort of?"

"...Yeah. I well, um... *sigh.* Trace... do you hate me for what I've done to you?"

"What?" The squirrel asked in shock, the last of the pancakes hovering in front of her mouth.

"You know what I mean! You've been growing steadily since that fateful day, and show no signs of stopping."

“And what of it?” Squinting her eyes, the squirrel quickly scarfed down the plate of scrambled eggs and began gulping down the carton of orange juice.

“What about kids? What about housing? What about living a normal life? I’ve ruined any chances we had of-” Nick’s woes were bluntly cut off as Trace rolled over onto him and pinned him beneath her massive frame.

“Not this spiel again.” Angrily, she lowered herself down onto the fox and smothered him beneath her. “We both know that was an accident. And even if I still held a grudge about it, do you really think we would be married right now?”

Nick’s eyes shifted uncomfortably while Trace pressed her hands against both his cheeks.

“And as for growing ever bigger and ever larger... I’m feeling all sorts of things about it. Angry at all the unwanted attention I’ll get. Sad about how difficult and even dangerous it’ll become just to kiss and cuddle you and interact with others. Terrified of just how big I’ll get and if it’ll ever stop. So in short, no, I’m not terribly thrilled about my constantly changing stature. But you, the one constant in my life, you’ll help me get through this.” Smiling, Trace nuzzled her

comparatively smaller hubby. “The housing... I’ve been putting a lot of thought into it, don’t worry. You did marry an engineer after all, remember? And kids? Well... I don’t know all the ways in which my size will get in the way and interfere with parenting. But... I wouldn’t mind at least giving it a try,” she softly stated before she kissed him deeply. Rolling onto her back, she squeezed Nick tight against her chest. A stray hand fumbled with his boxers and unceremoniously yanked them off the bashful fox. Any and all fears and worries shoved to the back of their minds, the fox and squirrel melted in pleasure as they tried their damndest to start a family.

-----One year and seven months later-----

Clenching his eyes shut in frustration, Nick tossed his buzzing phone beneath a couch cushion, trying his best to ignore yet another offer to purchase his patents and technology. “Hardly twenty-six years old and I have governments trying to simultaneously bribe and blackmail me into giving up my life’s work. Fuck the lot of em’.” Griping loudly, he flumped back onto the couch.

“Tough day, hon?” Trace innocently inquired. She plodded into the room slowly, her stomach swollen and practically ready to burst. Carrying a sandwich in one hand, she nearly

dropped it when she plunked down on the sofa next to Nick. Letting out a she large oof, she rubbed her distended stomach.

“Same old, same old,” the fox replied shaking his head. “How about you? How are you feeling?” Concern present in his voice, he gently laid a hand upon her heavy belly.

“Tired. Sore. Urp. Ravenous,” she excused herself after letting a rather unladylike burp slip forth. “Eating for two is getting to be a bit much at this size.” Sighing, the eight foot tall squirrel rubbed her belly. “Two dozen cheeseburgers and three gallons of sherbert for lunch alone and I’m still famished!” Trace whined as she slid down onto her side, letting her sandwich sit atop her swollen stomach. “These cravings are getting out of hand.” Resting her head against one of the couch’s arm rests, she stretched out on the sofa, letting her fat, thick, and tired paws plop down in Nick’s lap. Each paw nearly as big as his torso, the vulpine meeped when he felt a soft, warm padded toe press against his chin. “Could you be a sweetie and rub my feet please?” The squirrel pleaded with the most pathetic sounding voice she could muster. Rolling his eyes, Nick wrapped his fingers around his wife’s paws and began kneading her broad soles.

“Even after all of that you’re still hungry?” Astonishment seeped forth from his voice. He tried to mask his surprise while his fingers sank deep into her warm padded soles, massaging and rubbing their worn and tired surface.

“Mmhmmm,” Trace simply responded. She closed her eyes and hrmed in pleasure. “These rubs of yours are absolutely heavenly, Nick,” she moaned happily and wiggled her thick toes in response.

“They’re also turning into a daily occurrence.” Nick was more than happy to wryly note while he began to focus on her individual toes. Furrowing his brows, his gaze settled on the sandwich gently wobbling back and forth on his wife’s tremendous belly. “Care if I try out a new setting on my ray real quick?” He extended a hand out towards the culinary concoction wobbling to and fro atop her stomach. A loud grumbling from her belly gave him reason to pause.

“...Try to be quick about.” Trace moaned and painfully rubbed her belly.

Reaching into his pocket, Nick pulled out a familiar cylinder. “I’ve been giving a lot more thought to the uses of this with regards to food,” he explained as he fumbled about with it. A

faint whine elicited from the squirrel coincided when he ceased tending to her tired paws.

“Initially it was set up to only grow one set object at a time. However, realizing how much crap goes into food nowadays, I began to think about relaxing some of those restrictions, and perhaps growing all the various composite ingredients of a given food. So it’s possible that instead of growing the bread slices and then the chicken breast stuffed between them that compose your sandwich one piece at a time, I could enlarge everything all at once!” Tail swishing about in curiosity, Trace looked on in interest at what her hubby was plotting. Pointing the cylinder at the sandwich, a red beam burst forth and a soft light washed over the sandwich. Nigh instantaneously it swelled in size, surging forth from something that could fit in Nick’s hand, to something as wide and thick as his chest.

Eyebrows raised high in pleasant surprise, Trace grabbed hold of her newly enlarged food with both hands and sank into it. Crumbs accumulated on her stomach as Nick resumed rubbing her paws. “So you won’t grow people or animals, but dead animals are a-ok?” The squirrel poked at the fox in between bites.

“Try not to think about it too hard,” Nick shot back. Tracing his fingers along the fur between her toes, he smiled when he heard her stifle a giggle in between bites. Squeezing her paws tight between his hands, Nick did his best to ease his wife’s wearied paws. “You spoil me,” the squirrel sighed in blissful content as she devoured the last remnants of the sandwich and

patted her finally satisfied belly. Clenching her toes tight, she pressed her large paws into Nick and tapped her furry appendages against his cheek.

“Hey hey hey enough of that,” he barked playfully. Lazily, he tried to beat her advances back.

“Hehe,” her grin stretching from ear to ear, Trace continued to tease the fox. “...Just think, Nick. We’re going to be parents not even two months from now.” A sense of awe was evident in her voice. Giggling, she tried wrapping her arms around her tummy.

Squeezing between her paws, Nick crawled towards her waist and followed her example. Arms wrapped tightly around her belly, his hands locked with hers and he gave it a quick peck. “Took us a while, but it was certainly fun trying.” Smirking, he set his chin upon her belly.

“Say uh... Nick. Depending on how well we adjust to this whole parenting thing... do you maybe want to... start trying for another sooner rather than later?”

“You’re already thinking about having another?” His ears perked up and immediately went stiff.

“Just think about it.” Pulling him up across her stomach and nestling him comfortably amongst breasts that were larger than his head, Trace looked down at her practically shrinking hubby with a sultry smile.

“You are very persuasive, you know that?” A muffled replied rose from Nick as he got lost between her glorious sweater muffins. Bending her head down and giving him a wet kiss, the couple sighed happily. Arms wrapped around him tight, Trace quickly dozed off for the afternoon, Nick hastily following her example. Hours later, Nick’s eyelids fluttered faintly. Easing out of his drowsiness slowly, he gleefully pressed his head against Trace’s chest and drank in her warmth and comfort. His playful nudges were nowhere near enough to disturb her, evident from her continued snoring. Slowly and painstakingly, the fox slipped out from her grasp and off of his expansive wife. Giving his wife’s belly a loving pat and one of her paws a squeeze, he tiptoed out of the living room and slunk through the halls to his study. Closing the door behind him, he gingerly padded over to his desk and flipped on his desktop.

After the seconds long boot up had completed, he brought up his browser and began sifting through the plethora of emails that had flooded his inbox during that short nap. Stifling a

yawn as he glanced over the various humanitarian awards he had received, he rummaged through the various invoices and requests for a modified ray. Typical bullshittery from those hoping to get a sample to reverse engineer, the stray aid organization hoping to ride his coattails to fame before access to plentiful food and clean water was solved once and for all, and... heh, the occasional thank you for everything he'd done. He always loved seeing those. Hovering his mouse over the proposal from a non-profit building project, he tapped a clawed finger against his chin in thoughtful contemplation. "Creating limitless building materials. Wood, cement, insulation, all from scratch... huh." Moving it over to his saved files, he'd sleep on the idea before giving them a response. Wiping out the rest of his inbox with a mass delete, Nick reclined back in his chair and stretched his arms legs, grunting when he felt the muscles in his limbs complain.

Shaking his head, he glued his eyes back onto his computer screen and he fetched out some medical reports tucked deep within a stack of folders. Nearly four years old, Nick bit his lip as he questioned how useful these CAT scans would be. He'd already begun receiving flak from those who had been able to ferret out his wife's unusual size. It would only pour on if she went out to get another scan, a veritable shit storm sure to ensue as people bitched and moaned about her swell in size. The vulpine had managed to do a decent job convincing others his device couldn't be used to create giants. If Trace was thrown into the spotlight, her gradual growth into a ginormousness would be scrutinized for all it was worth and god knows how much more harassment they would receive. "I'll make do." He mouthed a couple of creative

curses under his breath. Way back when, right after they had both torn through college and grad school, Nick had managed to convince the squirrel to get a checkup and a CAT scan. Neither revealed anything wrong with her, and Trace seemed to be in fine health. The fox constantly looked back to the scans though, always terrified of any health problems that might crop up in his wife, convinced that there might be a clue or hint as to what might happen within the results. As he pored over the CAT scan however, Nick had slowly picked up that subtle changes had taken place within his wife's body. Hidden beneath her fluff, a noticeable layer of muscle had begun to form that wasn't there before, especially within her arms, legs, and back. Her blood vessels looked to be wider than what was normal, allowing for much more rapid and efficient distribution of blood. Even her heart and lungs seemed to be slightly larger than what was expected, though not dangerously so, even given her six percent growth. He fretted whether or not if that bode any ill tidings. Rubbing the back of his head, Nick leaned back in his chair and propped his paws on the desk. "If it seems too good to be true it probably is." Shaking his head, the fox tried to remain realistic as he struggled to assess the situation. His wife's body appeared to be slowly building up muscle and changing in unheard of ways to accommodate her increase in size. Gah, it was practically like she was growing healthier and stronger the bigger she became. "No way in hell that can be right," he muttered, his eyes scanning over the results once more.

-----Eighteen years later-----

“All set for your first day of classes?” Trace cooed. She couldn’t help but dote liberally upon her only daughter.

“Mom, this is college we’re talking about, not grade school. I think the past twelve years of schooling have been more than enough to prep me for this,” the muscular and well-built gray fox moaned. Slinging her backpack over her shoulder, she began pushing the front door open before her father interrupted her.

“You did read the syllabi your professors sent out, right?” Nick piped up, the fox leaning against his large and lovely wife.

“Yes, Dad. There weren’t even that many readings, just a few chapters here and there.”

“Oh, and don’t show off too much on the basketball courts,” Trace called out as Lila burst through the doors, desperate to escape her parents’ sphere of influence.

“Mom!” Lila stammered and stomped a foot against the carpeted floor.

“Don’t run circles around them I mean; let them think they actually have some chance of winning.”

“MOM!”

“Don’t hold back in the classroom though, feel free to blow the curves on each and every exam!” Nick chimed in, cupping his hands around his mouth.

“Blarg! You guys are like this every year! Grade school, high school, now even college! Campus is all of fifteen minutes away and I’m still living here at home! Quit being so... doting!” The ripped fox girl fumed in exasperation. Rolling her eyes, she stormed back into the house.

“It’s our jobs as your parents, pumpkin.” The nearly twenty-three foot tall squirrel knelt down and grabbed up her daughter, crushing her against her chest with a motherly hug.

“Yeah, yeah,” Lila grumbled. Setting her back down upon her feet, Trace resumed a standing position, the two story tall squirrel’s head just about brushing against the ceiling of their warehouse like home. Admitting defeat to their parenting prowess, Lila trudged over to Nick and picked him up for a heartfelt hug, the older fox’s head just barely reaching her perky

breasts without her assistance. With ease the eight foot one fox girl hefted up her comparatively diminutive father. "Love you, Dad."

"Love you too, sweetie," he replied as he pecked her on the cheek.

"Alright, alright. Mom, Dad, I'm heading out! FINALLY." Backpack slung over her shoulder, the perky and muscular gray fox girl waved back to her parents before bounding out the front doors and kicking them shut behind her. Both of which were little more than massive makeshift iron slabs stretching from the floor to ceiling. Thinking on it, pretty soon Trace would have to duck to get inside.

As soon as she was out of earshot, Trace let out a chuckle, eyes drifting down towards Nick. Looming over him, she grilled the teensy fox. "Now how come I didn't get a 'love you'?"

Shrugging his shoulders, Nick patted his wife's thick leg, his hand smacking against layers of muscle hidden beneath soft fluff. "What can I say, she's her father's daughter." Smiling, he attempted to wrap his arms around Trace's leg. Tried is the key word, since each of her legs was thicker and wider than he was.

Failing to stifle a snicker, Trace's tail swished back and forth. Nick gave up on trying to hug his growing gal and settled for leaning against her massive form instead. Resting his head against her knee was about all he could manage at this point. "Chasing after a degree in chemistry, just like her old man. She always did dream of following in your footsteps and changing the world," the squirrel mused as she looked towards the door wistfully.

"And I couldn't be happier." Nick's heart swelled with pride at the thought.

"You are absolutely adorable, you know that?" Lifting up a paw that was as wide as he was tall, the squirrel giggled as she pressed her bare sole against him.

"Oh come on, once a day is plenty." He fussed loudly while struggling to push away the paw that was nearly five feet in length.

"Spoilsport," she teased. Sticking her tongue out, she pressed down on him softly. "Morning, noon, and night these poor tired paws of mine need some attention." Grin spreading from ear to ear, she daintily pressed a toe against his face, the soft and warm appendage almost bigger than his head. Ignoring the fox's griping, Trace gleefully clenched her toes together, softly squeezing him between them. "...And don't even pretend you don't like all the

attention.” Blushing fiercely at the mention, Nick hushed up as Trace continued on with her rather lopsided game of footsies. Curling her paw around him, she sighed and looked down to her husband with concern in her eyes. “...Think she’ll be okay?”

“Lila certainly knows how to handle herself but... I hope so. I used up a lot of capital and goodwill to defuse the shitstorm that broiled up when it became public you were becoming a giant. I prayed I wouldn’t have to do the same for our children,” flumping onto the top of his wife’s broad paw, Nick let out a wearied sigh. “Honestly, I had always hoped our kids would be well... ‘normal’ with regards to their stature. Having to construct a furnished warehouse to accommodate our growing family was one thing,” Nick mused as he looked around from his captivity between his wife’s toes. The all-encompassing carpeting hid the hard concrete floor just beneath it, and the massive frames, doorways, and walls gave off the illusion that it was simply a gigantic home. Stare at the ceiling or through a corner however and the ugly walls of the warehouse could be seen, generators littering the sides. Humming noiselessly they provided the various amenities of daily life behind the scenes. Grating his teeth, Nick knew a much larger makeshift home was needed soon, given how quickly Trace was growing.

“Bah, constructing the warehouse wasn’t that tough. It was nice getting hands on with my engineering know how and building us a home. Hmmm but... yeah, neither of us thought this would be passed down genetically.” The floor quaked as she sat down, her massive rump

sending shaking the ground upon impact. "Given how big I was when I got pregnant with Lila and Christoff, sure, I expected them to maybe be a bit bigger than usual but..."

"But we never expected them to continue to grow yearly, at a marginally faster pace than you," clasping his hands to his face, Nick shook his head. With a sad sigh, Trace wrapped her hand around the vulpine's waist and lifted him up, dropping him down atop her imposing belly.

"You said they were shooting up at seven percent a year, right?"

"Mmhmm, that's what the measurements have been showing. Lila will be pushing past ten and a half feet tall by the time she gets out of college at the rate she's growing."

"Oh geeze," she sighed, placing a hand against her forehead. "And Christoff?"

"Ehhh, he looks to be about on par with Lila. Give or take a few inches."

“Thank god for that wondrous little cheat you found for our groceries,” Trace quipped. Pulling her lover into her chest, she smothered him against a breast that was bigger than he was in the process. “He certainly has my appetite that much is certain.”

“That he does,” Nick mumbled into the soft pillowy flesh as his thoughts drifted towards their son, the red squirrel with the voracious appetite. More than once they’d received complaints from his school’s cafeteria about him wolfing down what was supposed to be intended for an entire class. Just a sophomore in high school and already squeaking past seven feet tall, the boy was built like a damn brick house. Arms and legs that bulged and rippled, starkly contrasted with a gigantic and bulging belly. “I’m sure he’s gotten some teases and stares about his gut, not that it matters much with the way he throws his weight around,” Nick complained into his wife’s breast.

“Thank the Lord those chats about ‘don’t abuse your big size’ haven’t been lost of him,” the squirrel murmured upon rubbing her fingers up and down the vulpine’s back. It was a relief to know he was the one who ended fights, not the one who instigated them.

“Same can’t be said about sex ed,” Nick bitterly replied.

"Oh Jesus." Groaning, Trace shook her head from side to side. "Guess Christoff thought it would be fun to surprise us and make us into grandparents while we're in our mid-forties. At least he and Emi make for a cute couple." Trace relented to the situation and shrugged her shoulders. She leaned back against a fake wall, the drywall creaking slightly under her weight.

"...I suppose we'd be hard pressed to find a sweeter daughter-in-law too," Nick chimed in. He thought back on how polite, bright, and cheery the red panda girl was. It was always a treat having her over for dinner, and while he was still immature and rough around the edges, Christoff was shaping up to be a very loving and committed boyfriend. He and Trace always got chuckles out of seeing him just melt when Emi was around, being as lovey dovey as can be and just falling head over heels for her. It was just as cute seeing Emi return his affections, the timid five foot tall girl springing to life whenever he was around. "I'm surprised how well they click together, disparity in sizes and all. Hell, the poor girl's head barely comes up past the boy's stomach! Hehe, and I do have to admit, I love the fact that I have to look down when speaking to her. It's a nice change of pace compared with everyone else in the family," Nick replied contentedly, smirking as he nestled up between his wife's breasts. "...I am worried about how they'll make things work as Christoff grows larger and larger though," Nick mused, a forlorn sadness penetrating his tone.

"Uhhhh about that," Trace nervously stated as she tapped her finger's against Nick's back. "...When was the last time you saw Emi?"

“A month and a half or so ago? Considering how much grief we’ve given him, I’m not terribly surprised Christoff doesn’t bring her home as often.”

“Ehhhh,” rubbing the back of her neck, Trace bit her lip and mulled over how to best break the news to her hubby. “He’s been bringing home Emi plenty often, just... when you’re not around.”

“What? Why?” Nick poked his head up between her mammaries, eyes looking up towards the squirrel’s face.

“Kind of sort of because I gave them your work schedule so they could sneak around when you weren’t here. She may only be five months pregnant, but Emi already has quite the baby belly.”

“She’s not embarrassed or ashamed that I’ll rag on her is she? Emi should know better than that,” Nick asked worriedly.

“No no, she knows we’re very supportive of her carrying the child, it’s just she’s embarrassed for other reasons.” Trace plucked up Nick and plopped him down atop her shoulder, her captivating green eyes focusing intently on him. “For one, oh... how’s the kind way to word this. She’s... she’s... oh hell. Emi has blimped up something fierce,” the squirrel merfed and hugged her bushy tail tight. “Eating for two has really taken its toll on her. Remember when she and Christoff first started dating and she was skinny as a rail? We both joked that he might snap her in half if he hugged her too hard. Now? Emi’s appetite is on par with Christoff’s, as ludicrous as it seems. She’s filled out considerably in the past few months and her self esteem has taken a real dive because of it.”

“How bad are we talking here?” Nick inquired whilst he nuzzled her neck. .

“You’re not quite a foot taller than her and yet she already weighs considerably more than you do.”

“Yikes.”

“Yeah. And four months left to go,” Trace moaned. She let out a loud sigh as she dwelled on the poor red panda girl’s skyrocketing weight.

“How’s our boy been handling it?” Nick dared to inquire. He rubbed a hand along her shoulder blade.

“Admirably to say the least. He’s been as supportive and reassuring as he possibly can, and slowly it’s getting through to Emi that he truly does love her no matter her weight or size. Nice thing about being pregnant is that she can’t get any more pregnant. I know Christoff has been taking advantage of the fact to prove to her how beautiful she will always be in his eyes.”

“If I didn’t know any better, I’d say he has your libido too,” Nick badgered her, a smug grin spread across his visage.

“Anyway,” Trace interrupted him before he could see her cheeks burning up, “at the rate she’s been stuffing her stomach, she’s practically eating her family out of their budget. Thanks to you, food has steadily been plummeting in price, but even still the expenses are racking up for her family. Poor Emi is horribly embarrassed about the fact and nearly bursts into tears every time she empties out their pantry. I may have let slip to Christoff to bring her over here afterschool from now on so she can get a proper meal and not have to worry about the costs incurred.”

Kicking his feet back and forth, Nick let his paws gently bounce against her torso. "I can see why she might be embarrassed about that."

"That's... not all though," Trace mumbled. She hesitated to maintain eye contact with the fox. "Emi's been... slowly inching up as her pregnancy has progressed. I think Christoff stumbled across another way your so called 'giant gene' can be passed along."

"S-she might just be hitting a growth spurt," Nick stammered out, his eyes going wide.

"Two inches in five months is a bit much for a girl her age," Trace sighed. She craned her neck over and gave him a kiss that covered his entire head. "My thoughts are that somehow the growyness can spread from not only mother to child, but child to mother as well. Think about it, Christoff's and Emi's kid is going to just grow and grow like our chunky son will. Poor Emi might pop if she tries carrying it to term and technically speaking the growing gene is in her body now, albeit a somewhat indirect manner. It might not be that huge of a stretch to think she'd grow during her pregnancy to accommodate the child."

“Uggggh,” Nick moaned as he slid down Trace’s chest and flopped on her belly. “Please don’t let it persist after the baby is born. I like having to tilt my head down for a change.” His whining subsided somewhat with the jiggling of his wife’s belly. Chuckling softly, Trace cupped her hands around him while she rose to her feet.

“Come on Nick, let’s try and get your mind off our grandchildren and possibly soon to be gigantic daughter-in-law,” Trace spoke softly, her tail flitting about in delight while she carried him back to their bedroom.

“You are very persuasive, you know that?” He replied sheepishly. Nick gazed up at her broad face, the fox looking forward to getting absolutely nothing done this afternoon.

-----Twenty years later-----

Lazing about on a grassy hillside, the graying orange fox breathed in deeply of the fresh air, the smell of wildflowers and grass drifting about his nostrils. Sighing in contentment, he bathed in the sun’s warm rays. The old fox scratched at his chest in satisfaction, a smug grin spread wide across his muzzle. “Let’s see here... broke and promptly redefined science, solved world hunger, and that was just in my early years. Then in middle-age I created limitless

building and manufacturing supplies, in turn cutting down the costs of housing and consumer goods and as a big plus wiped out damage done to environment in the pursuit of harvesting the materials. Later as I approached my twilight years, I perfected recycling techniques once people started being stupid with limitless resource. And now, just as I hit the age where most folks retire, I'm tackling the prospect of free energy. Heh, I wonder what the hell people are going to choose to remember me for?" Laughing to himself, Nick chuckled as he rattled off his achievements in chronological order.

"Grandpa!" A shrill voice called out from the black fox racing towards him. A loud and somewhat painful oof originating from Nick's ribcage slipped forth as his granddaughter flumped on top of him.

"I think you're getting a little too big for that, kiddo," Nick wheezed. Grunting softly, he patted the back of Daisy's head, rustling her hair and ears.

Giggling, the six foot tall twelve year old nuzzled the elder fox's chest. "So what have you and grandma been up to?" Tail wagging eagerly, Daisy hugged the similarly sized fox tight and stared at him with eyes filled with wonder.

“Ooof well... lately I’ve been working on ways to stick it to the energy industry. I already more or less took down the food, logging, and most of the quarrying industry. Might as well go ruin another one while I’m at it,” he said smirking as he hugged her back. “And your grandma’s been hard at work doing things like engineering new buildings and roads. Ones that’ll be big and tough enough to handle what giant and growing people like her, your mom, auntie, and uncle can toss at them. You know, same old same old, nothing too exciting.”

“Pfff, you’re silly grandpa,” the black fox giggled before rolling off of him.

“I’ve been called worse things,” Nick shot back with a snarky grin. “Where’d your brother run off to?”

“Oh, he’s playing with grandma and uncle Christopher right now.” Daisy stomped about in place, smashing various weeds and dandelions under paw.

“Hmmm,” the orange fox smiled softly as he watched his granddaughter terrorize the various plants. His ears perked up at the gentle rumbling registering in his ears, his daughter’s heavy footsteps causing tremors with every step she took.

“You’re not causing too much trouble for your dear old grandpa, are you Daisy?” Lila’s voice boomed across the hills. Her imposing form followed shortly thereafter.

“No mom,” the black fox replied innocently. She lazily danced circles around her grandfather.

“Uh huh,” Lila replied facetiously, the thirty-one foot tall fox setting her hands upon her hips. “Why don’t you go harass your twin brother for a bit? Give mommy and grandpa some time to chat?”

“Awww but Lucas is boring!” Daisy pouted as she ran at Lila’s legs, her tiny form not even coming up to her mother’s knees.

“Skedaddle sweetie, I’m sure your uncle and auntie are plenty fun enough and would love to see you.” Looking down, Lila’s impressive shadow swallowed her own child and father.

“Finnnnnne,” Daisy said with a huff. The girl raced between her mother’s long and thick legs, Lila’s form bursting with sculpted muscle all over.

Her soft smirk registering loudly in Nick's ears, Lila gently strode towards her father, setting a massive muscled paw next to him while she leaned over. "So. Renting out an entire public park for our family reunion?"

"Yep."

"God you are such a showoff." Brushing back her hair, the Amazon looked down at the orange fox, a warm smile spread wide across her visage. "Good to see you dad," she spoke as quietly as she could manage.

"You too, sweetie." Rising to his feet as quickly as his old body would let him, the fox unsuccessfully tried to wrap his arms around her ankle. Grabbing up her toy sized father with ease, the gray fox pressed him against her chest. Tilting her head down, she gave him a kiss that covered the upper portion of his body.

"Daisy wasn't too rough on you, was she?" Lila asked worriedly, cuddling her father close.

"I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm not made of glass you know." Nick grumbled, waving away her concerns.

"But you are getting up there in years," Lila rumbled as she gingerly poked at him. "You know how worried Mom is about you. She's scared to interact with you much anymore, terrified that she'll crush you or something grisly of the sort."

"So we've had a few close calls with me nearly being flattened. No harm done," Nick replied with a shrug.

"Dad. Her toes are bigger than you are, and she's going to be pushing past one hundred feet tall by your fiftieth anniversary."

"Your point? I love your mother no matter her shape or size. You look at it a liability, I look at it as a blessing. Just think about. There's only been more and more of her to love as our time together has grown." A stern and stubborn pride seeping from his voice, Nick effectively ended the argument then and there.

With a sigh, Lila pressed her ears flat against her head and relented to her tiny father, her imposing physique having no sway with the smaller fur. "You two are so hopelessly in love, you know that?" A wry smile spread across her face.

"Couldn't the same be said for you and Joshua?" Eyebrows raised high, Nick took delicious pleasure in poking at his daughter's buttons. Ears and cheeks burning up a bright red, Lila let a sheepish smile slip forth. "I still love the story of how you two met," the elder fox teased. He tried hugging his Amazonian daughter once more.

Pressing Nick against her chest with one hand, Lila shook her head and tried to stifle a smile. "Ohhhh, senior year of college. Me, the ten foot tall amazon strutting her stuff about on campus. Poor Joshua had just transferred over and was only a sophomore. I'm thundering along on campus as usual, late for class, and notice a cute little black fox turn his head to look back at the huge thooming sound coming up on him. Poor guy just falls to pieces and runs away screaming the first time he sees me."

"That's one way to make a strong first impression," Nick commented snarkily.

“Ignoring a little stalking on my end, where I tried to ferret out the identity of that cutie who ran off in hysterics and, well... one thing led to another.”

“And ended with you sticking around for grad school, the sole intent being to see him more often,” Nick continued on teasing.

“Oh shoosh you,” Lila smirked, placing a finger upon his face and looking back longingly at her tiny husband. Poor Joshua had his hands full with their two children, who would soon loom over him within a year or two. “So fine, love regardless of shape or size. I see your point,” Lila reluctantly admitted, letting out a huff. “Kind of envious of Christoff and Emi though, both of them growing together, they have nothing to worry about with regard to size disparities.”

“Christoff swelling strong at seven percent a year, Emi somehow winding up growing at eight percent a year just like Chang. Considering Chang is where Emi got her growyness from, I can’t say I’m terribly surprised. Shit, both of her and Christoff are pushing past twenty feet in height right now, at least that much I know for certain.”

“Should be fun seeing the surprised reactions on those two when Emi begins creeping up past Christoff in height,” Lila snickered, imagining the look on the red squirrel’s face upon

having to look up to see his wife's face for the first time in his life. "What has Chang been up to anyway?"

"Oh nothing much, just putting that heft of his to use and getting some work done on construction sites. Chang's got his mother's looks but his father's build." Nick replied nonchalantly as he dwelled on his oldest grandson. "He never was a bookish type like his mother. He likes building things and getting his hands dirty."

"That does sound... woop, looks like I've been hogging you long enough." Lila's doting was interrupted by the ground shaking violently beneath her feet. Causing tremors and leaving massive paw shaped craters in her wake, Trace began trudging towards the duo, the seventy-three foot tall squirrel utterly dwarfing everyone and everything there. Paws the size of a large car, legs far thicker than any tree, and tall enough that not even Lila came up to her waist, the gray squirrel carried her massive frame and weight around effortlessly. It was as if age was incapable of slowing her down in the slightest. "I'll leave you two be for now," Lila giggled before setting Nick down on the ground. Giving her mother a wave as she passed by, the gray fox made her way back towards her husband who was in dire need of assistance in parenting.

"As beautiful and majestic as always, hon," Nick commented. Bending his head back, he strained his neck trying to take in his wife, stretching up nearly seven stories high.

“Always the flatterer,” Trace rumbled, her voice shaking him to his core. Wiggling her furry toes, each one a good foot taller than the fox, the gray squirrel came to a stop before her tiny husband. Cupping a hand around him, the giantess brought the vulpine up to her smiling face. The fox was small enough to fit comfortably in the palm of her hand.

“I’m surprised you can still hear me so well from way up here,” Nick remarked, a tone of thanks and appreciation readily evident in his tone. Chuckling, Trace pressed her lips against him, giving him a kiss that covered his entire body. Nick returned the gesture wholeheartedly, smooching the puckered squirrel lips deeply, eliciting a giggle from his tremendous wife.

“What can I say, even now we’re still stumbling upon some rather unexpected but pleasant side effects of my giant stature. Super senses being one of them,” the squirrel replied cheekily before kissing him once more.

“I wouldn’t go that far...” Nick said bashfully, his compliments muffled as his wife pressed him into her bosom.

“Hmm, we’ve really created something beautiful here together, Nick,” Trace said with a sense of awe and wonderment, her gaze settling on their children and grandchildren.

“I’m not sure what I’m prouder of,” he barked quietly as he buried his face in her plush chest. “Our children, or the better world we’ve given to them.”

Nodding in silent agreement, Trace sat down upon the ground, the ground quaking when her rump made contact. “Do you ever wonder how others will think of or remember us?” Pressing a palm gently into his back, the squirrel slowly rubbed her hand up and down across Nick’s body.

“What? You mean as the people who fixed most of the world’s problems? I’m pretty content with that.”

“I was thinking we might be remembered more as the people who sired and brought giants into the world,” Trace said in a sarcastic manner, rolling her eyes for emphasis.

“Well, at least we’ll be remembered for something,” Nick smirked, tilting his head up towards his wife’s gargantuan face. Grinning softly, he prepared himself for another round of affection. The gargantuan squirrel pressed her nose against him and nuzzled his body.

“Love you, my little foxy.”

Resting his chin on top of her nose, he smiled softly and whispered; “Love you too, my silly squirrel.”