

The locker room at the Olympian City Meta Force police station smelled of heavy sweat, steam and several different deodorants as most of the daytime officers were getting off duty and preparing to head to their homes for the evening. There were several different animals who made up the force: a couple of rats, gorillas, lions, wolves, large dogs, cheetahs, beavers, foxes, a couple of raccoons, various bears, and even one very friendly skunk named Kai. There was one oddball officer in the mix. His name was Flint Lei and he was the result of a genetic experiment to mix the DNA of a raccoon with a panda bear. Flint's ears were round like a panda's but his snout was more pointed and he had very sharp teeth. Where most pandas had patches of white fur, his were colored gray. He had a large puffy tail like a raccoon but it was colored completely black.

One polar bear seemed to stand out compared to the other officers in the group. While everyone else was talking, laughing or shouting, he seemed to be in a world all to himself.

At six feet and ten inches tall, the bear was at least five inches taller than most of the officers on the force. His shoulders were more filled out than most polar bears. Some of this was due to working out at the gym constantly to stay in shape, but genetics also had a hand to play in his size as well. Most of the male bears in his family had broad, thick shoulders and barrel chests. This muscular physique came into stark contrast with one feature which all polar bears had: a large squishy gut. No matter how much he worked out, watched his diet and ran, the gut was always there, jiggling and sloshing about like a water balloon covered in fur. The removable metal strip on the locker in front of the bear had the name 'Bernhardt' stamped onto it.

*Why do I continue to do this job?* Morgan Bernhardt thought to himself as he held the rejection letter in his trembling paws. He had been trying so hard to get the promotion to Detective, most of the animals on the force thought he would get it for sure. He stood there in front of his gray metal locker, still in his uniform, and continued to stare at the letter as his heart sank. *What good am I even doing?*

With a heavy sigh he placed the letter on the top shelf of his locker, and began methodically taking his uniform off. He started by taking the dark blue police hat with the shiny black leather bill off his head and placing it on the top shelf, hoping to conceal the letter from prying eyes. He then unbuckled his thick black leather duty belt and hung it on a hook along the side, various keys jingling as they struck the side of the locker. The belt, and most of the various holders had been oiled and polished to a mirrored shine. Thankfully, his gun had already been secured at the duty station desk along with everyone else's. No one was ever allowed to put their gun in their locker or take it home, more for the officer's sake than anything else. Before the rule was in place, a couple of promising officers decided they couldn't take the pressures of the job anymore and committed suicide. This had happened years before Morgan had joined the force.

He continued undressing by unlacing the thick black leather boots he wore during his shift. Inside his locker, he had a pair of shiny rubber boots which he loved wearing everywhere. He unbuttoned his dark navy blue pants before pulling his fluffy little tail through the tailhole in the back, which was provided for each animal so the officers didn't have to painfully stuff their tails inside the pants during duty, and slipped his tree trunk legs out. After hanging the pants up on another hook, he began to unbutton his powder blue uniform shirt. While he was fiddling with one of the buttons, Kai came strolling over beside him.

Kai was just a few inches shorter than Morgan, but was about as wide as he was tall. Despite looking like he was out of shape, the hefty skunk was one of the few officers who could keep up with the bear when it came to fitness. Despite just getting out of the shower, his black and white striped tail was completely dry already and looked fluffier than ever. There had been a few times when he had wrapped his tail around the polar bear's black snout and offered to give the big bear the night of his life. The bear had refused at the time, mainly due to being uncomfortable with the thought of sleeping with another male.

Kai giggled as he bumped the bear with his large rear. His smile faded as he noticed his friend continued to undress without saying anything playful back like he usually did. "Morgan, is something

eatin' you?"

Morgan heard the question, but chose not to answer. There were too many boot lickers and back stabbers in the room for him to say anything. He finished fumbling with the last button on his work shirt and hung it up on the remaining hook. He knew Kai would want to hear the news, good or bad. He also knew Kai would want to try and either drag him out to a local bar to drown his sorrows or offer to talk with him through the night. If this had been any normal time when he had fallen into a funk he would have welcomed the company of a fellow officer, one of the few he actually trusted and knew was not power hungry or corrupt, but not tonight. He was about to answer the skunk, when a nasally whiny voice sent his fur on edge.

"Yeah. Come on, Snowball. What gives?"

Morgan squeezed his eyes shut, gritted his teeth, and reminded himself to keep his cool. The voice belonged to Axel Devland, a green furred rat with a pointy nose which he loved to stick in other people's business. He was also rumored to be one of the most corrupt cops on the force with lying, cheating, taking bribes and back-stabbing being only a few of the things he was accused of. Morgan wished he could find any evidence to back up the accusations, but sadly nothing turned up. He wanted nothing more than to punch the rat's head into the next district. But he also knew Axel had his head firmly planted up the Duty Sargent's rear so far that he was shocked the rat didn't smell like shit.

Morgan opened his eyes and grabbed his civilian clothes from the locker. "Leave me be, you bastard," he grunted before putting on his gray t-shirt. "Or you'll be sorry."

"Oh please, *Snowball*," Axel replied, "like you're gonna do anything." He spied a corner of the letter, hanging off the edge of the shelf. With lightning fast reflexes, he slithered around the bear and grabbed the paper. "What's dis?"

Morgan normally would have been able to stop the rat from reaching into his personal space, but he was so upset that his reaction time was sloppy. "Give that back!" he roared as he made a grab with both paws for the rodent.

Axel saw the grab coming and slid between the bear's large legs to avoid being trapped. He opened the note and quickly read the paper. "Hey guys, get a load of dis," the rat announced, stopping Morgan before he could turn around.

Everyone stopped what they were doing and looked at the scene playing out on the other side of the locker room.

Axel pointed a gnarled finger at Morgan. "It seems mister perfect bear here, didn't get his dream job as Detective like he wanted. Guess you AREN'T fit for nuthin' other than traffic duty!" He crumpled up the letter, threw it at the bear's back, and began roaring with laughter.

Kai looked at his friend and didn't know which he wanted to do worse: give his friend a big hug or murder the stupid rodent. He waited to see what Morgan would do.

Morgan wanted nothing more than to crawl in a hole. He wasn't sure what to do anymore. He wanted to be a detective more than anything and now his dream had been shattered. All he could do was just stand there as the rat continued to verbally abuse him.

Axel stopped laughing when he noticed Morgan had not responded. Usually the bear had some kind of verbal retaliation to his insults. He sneered at the large bear in front of him. "See! What did I tell you? He's all bluff! Just another spoiled rich baby bear *playing* cop!"

The declaration was the last straw for Kai, who'd had enough of the torment. There was a blood red tint to his normally calm yellow eyes as he placed himself in between the jerk and his friend. "If you don't knock it off RIGHT NOW," the skunk's voice boomed as he puffed up the fur around his cheeks, "I will gas you so hard that you won't be able to lie for a year!"

The blood drained from Axel's face. "You wouldn't *DARE*!?" Everyone in the department knew Kai was a super powered being, whose concentrated gas worked like a perfect truth drug. No one exposed to the gas had ever been able to lie.

Kai got an evil grin on his face. "You willing to take the risk?"

Axel bristled and huffed as he hopped off the bench. He signaled to two of his partners; a gorilla who looked like he had been hit by several branches on his way down the ugly tree, and a small black bear who walked around like he had a tree sized chip on his shoulder. "Let's go. We'll leave these two *butt buddies* alone." All three of them pushed their way out of the locker room.

Kai glared at the rest of the officers. "Any one else want to lip off?"

Everyone else simply stood there in stunned silence. Some were flabbergasted at the fact that Morgan had not been promoted. Even those who didn't normally like working with Morgan, mainly because he was exacting with policy and procedures, thought he would get the Detective position. Most were still in shock that Kai would threaten to use his powers on a fellow officer, even if it was Axel.

After a few minutes, everyone slowly got back to getting ready to go home for the night. Soon, only Kai, Morgan and Flint were left in the eerily quiet locker room. Flint waddled over until he was standing right behind Morgan.

Flint placed a paw in between Morgan's shoulder blades. "That asshole will get his, one of these days. You chose the higher path by not acknowledging him for once." He felt the larger bear sigh under his paw. "I count you as one of my only friends in this crazy world. You don't look at me like a freak, but as a normal creature. I hope I can return your kindness one of these days, and be a good friend for you." He patted the polar bear on the back and wandered out the door.

After a minute or two, Kai reached down and lifted the crumpled paper from the floor. He was about to unfold it, when he heard Morgan speak.

"Please, don't," Morgan pleaded as he sat down hard on the bench. He stared at the floor, not wanting to look his friend in the face.

Kai nodded his head and stared at the ball of paper. *Whatever they had to say must have been wicked for him to take abuse from Axel like that.* He put the ball in Morgan's locker and placed a paw on his friend's shoulder. It felt like he had just touched a furry iron bar. He leaned in close, and whispered: "I don't care what they said, or what that jerk says. You are still one of the best damned officers on this force." He squeezed the bear's shoulder. "If you want to talk later, call me."

Morgan simply grunted in response. He wanted to argue. He wanted to tell his coworker that he was foolish for hanging around someone as stupid as he was. But nothing would come out. For some unknown reason, no words would escape his lips. He simply sat there and continued to stare at the floor. He didn't even acknowledge when Kai told him to have a better weekend. Once he was sure everyone had gone, he finished putting all his clothes on. He grabbed the balled up paper from his locker and began to neatly unfold it. Once he was satisfied that the paper looked good again he folded it and placed it in his pocket before shuffling his way out the door.

The bus ride back to the street near Morgan's apartment usually took around hour or two depending on traffic. Today, no time seemed to pass between when he stepped onto the bus to when he was exiting. Most animals were allowed to drive, but Morgan didn't care to. He liked either walking or riding the bus to work. He absentmindedly stumbled up the stairs to his apartment on the third floor of the ten story apartment complex. He fumbled with his keys until he found the right one and went inside, closing the door behind him.

Morgan dropped his keys onto the small green in table, next to the door. He took a long deep breath and exhaled slowly. *That fucking rat,* he cursed to himself as he kicked his rubber boots off on the small piece of welcome mat. Axel always had a way of bringing up the fact that his parents were rich and throwing it back in his face. He shuffled his way further into the apartment, before removing the letter from his pocket and placing it on the counter in the small kitchen area. The kitchen was just big enough for him to move around in and cook a few things every once and a while. Next to the kitchen counter, he had a small rectangular table which had been painted white. Accenting the table were two padded metal backed dining chairs. The living area was big enough to fit a full sized couch and a bear sized brown leather recliner which he had purchased when he first became a cop. On the

opposite wall, there was a large flat-screen television, which he hardly watched. The brown shag carpet looked like it had been there since the place was first built in the fifties. The walls were a drab beige color. The second bedroom was large enough for him to have a king sized bed for whenever his father came to see him. The master bedroom was slightly larger, but did not have its own bathroom like other apartments in the nicer neighborhoods. The apartment was small for a bear, but it fit what he needed. He could have asked his parents to buy him a house, but he wanted to earn that prize for himself. His father had been extremely supportive of his decision. He knew his son would have to earn his own way if he was going to be responsible with his inheritance money.

Morgan stripped off his shirt as he started towards the master bedroom. Thinking about what Kai had said to him about talking later, he looked over at his phone and noticed he had a message. He wondered if Kai had decided to call him anyways. He closed his eyes and sighed as he pressed the play button. Instead of Kai's deep baritone voice, Morgan heard a very young male voice.

"Morgan, it's Nathan. Can I please come over? I need to see you."

Morgan's heart sank. Nathan was a gray wolf pup with a tuft of blue fur on the top of his head who worked at the local coffee shop near the station. Or at least the bear considered the wolf a pup, since he was twelve years older. Morgan had saved Nathan from a burning car when he first joined the force, and they had become fast friends. There were even times when the pup would have a bad time with his neighbors and come sleep at his apartment. Part of him wanted to ignore the message and continue his pity party alone. He played the message again and heard the pleading, borderline begging tone in the pup's voice.

Morgan berated himself for even thinking of not calling the pup. He wondered what was wrong. After all, the pup had just gotten super powers and had been fully accepted by the heroes league known as the Pantheon. He was rather impressed they would take in someone so young. Then he had to remind himself of two things: first was that the 'pup' was twenty-five years old, and the second was he was just a little jealous. When he was twelve, he saved two cubs from being crushed by a speeding truck. That wouldn't have been unusual, except for the fact that he had used his own body to shield the two. The force of the blow had sent the engine through two reinforced steel plates and broke the front axle on the vehicle. He walked away without even a scratch. Through several tests, it was discovered he had inherited a genetic trait from one of his great grandparents on his father's side. He soon also discovered he had super strength while waiting to be taken to school. He lost his class ring under the family Hummer and went to go find it. It was only when his mother and father both yelled at him that he realized he had lifted the entire vehicle into the air with one paw. After those discoveries, he looked into joining the Pantheon. He wanted to use his powers to help people.

Their response shocked him. Morgan found out the Pantheon had a policy against having supers whose powers were gained through genetics. Genetic heroes were known to be mentally unstable due to the fact that their powers were on all day and night. Plus a 'genetic' super could not simply pass their powers to another willing being or to their offspring. The 'flaw' as they called it could skip multiple generations before it manifested again. After a wicked fight with his father, which left the old bear in intensive care for a month, he decided to learn how to control and hide his powers.

Morgan shook his head back to the present. Pantheon or no Pantheon, the pup needed him. He picked up the phone and dialed the number. It rang several times before someone picked up the receiver.

"H-H-Hello?" a very shaky voice answered. Morgan recognized Nathan's voice right away.

"I got your message, pup. If you still need to, you're welcome to come over." He paused for a moment. "Have you eaten?"

"N-n-n-no."

"I'll order some pizza. Sound good?"

"Yeah," Nathan seemed to perk up with the news. "I'll be over soon."

"See you soon, pup." Morgan hung up the phone and smiled. Maybe some company is exactly

what he needed at the moment. He just wouldn't tell Kai on Monday. He picked up the phone again and called one of the local pizza places. "Yes, I need an extra large meat pizza delivered. Yes, real meat. Yes, I'm sure I want *real* meat. I understand it costs more. The name is Morgan Bernhardt. Yep, that's the one. About forty-five minutes? Outstanding!" He smiled as he hung the phone up. Forty-five minutes would give him enough time to shower and be ready for when the pup showed up. And at least he had remembered to order real meat this time instead of the processed stuff they made in science labs. Since the city was well balanced between herbivores and carnivores, scientists decided to invent a meat like product so certain animals no longer had to be slaughtered. There were still ranches which raised animals that were meant only for slaughter, but the prices were almost triple that of the manufactured stuff. Eating real meat was one of the few luxuries he afforded himself from time to time. He stripped his remaining clothes and headed to the bathroom.

The shower felt so wonderful! The lukewarm water was doing wonders for melting away some of the tension in Morgan's back. About halfway through his shower, his mind wandered to not getting the Detective job at work. He felt like someone had stabbed him in the heart as all his earlier emotions flooded back. He put his head in his paws and began to cry. *I am such a failure! I couldn't even save the two people who had gotten run over by a speeding car earlier today!* All he wanted at that moment was to be held by his mother, but she had been dead for four years now. After a good sob session, the feelings began to fade. He grabbed a blue fluffy towel off the wall and started to dry himself. How long had he been in there? He figured he had better get dressed before the pup showed up. He opened the door to his bathroom and stopped dead in his tracks.

Standing in the kitchen, wearing his normal hand knitted pink sweater, hip hugging jeans, navy blue ski cap and small brown leather back pack, was Nathan. His light blue green eyes scanned up and down every inch of Morgan's naked and wet shape. Both were shocked and embarrassed enough to where neither could speak for a few minutes. Morgan could feel his cheeks flush, and he could see the reddish color appear on Nathan's face.

Nathan slowly removed his ski cap and pointed his thumb at the front door. "Y-y-y-your do-o-or was u-u-unlocked."

Morgan gathered his senses and wrapped the towel quickly around his waist area, covering up his private parts. He pointed at his bedroom door, before side stepping his way over. He disappeared into the room and closed the door behind him.

Nathan, whose mouth was still open, only nodded his head and waited until the bear had gone into the bedroom before turning and closing the front door.

Morgan's heart was pounding. *How could I have been so stupid? Leaving the front door unlocked was a rookie mistake! Besides, that sexy, cute pup didn't need an exhibition.* He continued to berate himself while he finished toweling himself dry. He put on a white tank top and a pair of gray shorts over his white briefs. He stopped himself before reaching the door as another feeling crept into his mind. *Did I just think of the pup as cute and sexy?* His heart skipped a beat as he thought about the image of the pup, standing in his doorway, with his mouth agape and cheeks reddened with embarrassment. He shook his head. *No! I couldn't be turned on by another male!* His father had raised him in a strictly straight household. Every loving relationship was between males and females. Or so he had been told. But yet, he couldn't deny that he had feelings not only for the pup in his living room but he found Kai appealing in a certain way. Thinking back over his life, he had never given any thought to having any kind of meaningful relationship with either sex. He always feared losing his temper and hurting someone with his super-strength. Perhaps, maybe he was gay? Or at least bi-sexual? He pushed those thoughts to the back of his mind. The pup needed someone to talk to. *I have to focus on what he needs, not selfishly thinking about myself.* He put his paw on the door handle, and went into the living area.

Nathan was shuffling nervously in one of the dinner chairs. He looked up as the bear lumbered into the room before glancing at the couch. From the way the pup shifted from his left paw to his right,

the slouching posture which was so slight most individuals would not have noticed, and avoiding eye contact, Morgan, through his police training, could tell there was something seriously bothering his little friend. He was about to ask what was wrong when there was a knock at the front door.

"Pizza delivery for Bernhardt," the pre-pubescent voice behind the door squeaked.

Morgan grabbed some cash from his wallet and opened the front door. The young male delivery tiger holding the pizza looked like he was still too small for his work uniform, which was baggy around the arms and legs. He presented the large pizza box to Morgan. "That will be forty-five Olympians, please."

Morgan managed a kind smile as he took the box and handed the boy his payment. "Fifty. Keep the change."

The tiger got a large grin on his face. "Thank you." He bowed his head and walked back down the hallway.

Morgan waited until he was sure the tiger was gone before closing his front door and locking it. He knew if Nathan wanted to talk, they could gab all night. He held the pizza box up to his sensitive nose and inhaled. The aroma of fresh made pizza sauce, complete with basil, oregano, garlic and thyme, along with pepperoni, sausage, smoked ham and even pieces of bacon overloaded his senses and momentarily made him forget about the horrible note he had received earlier in the day. He sighed and got a large grin on his face as he exhaled. A little drool appeared at one corner of his mouth. He lumbered over to the table and placed the box in the center, before walking into the kitchen to grab a couple of plates. When he turned back around, he saw Nathan had lifted the lid on the pizza and was staring at the feast with his tongue hanging out. A couple drops of drool rolled off his pinkish tongue and landed on the table. His trance was broken as a wet towel, which Morgan had thrown at him, wrapped around his head.

"If you drooled on any pizza, I'll sit on you later." He brought over a couple of glasses which he had filled with milk.

Nathan unwrapped his head and wiped the spots of drool from the table and didn't respond to Morgan's kidding.

Morgan noted this as well. When he normally made a joke, the pup would respond with some kind of retort. *Something must be really bothering him.* He placed a plate in front of the pup. "Dig in. We can talk after."

Nathan looked at the plate sized piece of pizza in front of him, which was piled high with cheese and meats. He inhaled slowly, savoring every seasoning his nose could catch. A smile formed on his snout and his tense shoulders relaxed a little. His eyes sprang open and he cocked his head to the side. "Is this real meat?"

Morgan's icy blue eyes stopped analyzing the pup and changed to a warmer shade as a smile crept across his face. "Yep. Only the best for my friends."

Nathan's lips quivered before lifting to reveal a big toothy grin, which made Morgan chuckle. Morgan's large belly bounced and smacked the bottom of the table, which he deftly caught without spilling their drinks. Nathan ducked his head and chuckled. Morgan looked at the pup's fluffy ears and suddenly wondered what it would be like to suck and nibble on them. His tongue licked the bottom of his upper lip. Time slowed down as he watched as Nathan lifted his head up and looked at him. There was a sparkle in the pup's eyes. He snapped to attention as a reaction to these feelings. He cleared his throat and gestured with his paw to the food. Nathan grinned before turning his attention to the food on his plate. *Could I really have deeper feelings for the pup?* Morgan wondered as he began to eat.

Before long, both animals had eaten their fill. Morgan put the remaining two slices in the refrigerator and placed the dishes in the sink. He strolled into the living room, stretched and turned to face Nathan. He gestured with his paw to the green couch along the way, inviting Nathan to have a more comfortable seat. The pup ducked his head and rubbed his paws together while he stared at the carpet in front of him.

Morgan frowned and nodded his head. Now was the time to find out what was bothering his little friend. He cleared his throat and put his paws on his hips. "So, how's life as a hero treating you?"

Minutes seemed to pass without any movement from either animal. Morgan wondered if Nathan had heard him. Before the bear could repeat his question, the pup bolted from the chair, buried his snout into the bear's large chest and threw his arms around the bear's waist. The pup's body began to shake as he began to sob.

"They hate me!" Nathan cried, in between sobs. "They hate me!"

"Who hates you?"

"The other heroes at the Pantheon! They call me names like 'frosty' and 'ice cube.'" Nathan lifted his head enough to look Morgan in the eyes. Tears were free flowing down his fuzzy gray and white cheeks. "They say the only reason they need me around would be to cool their drinks!" He ducked his head in shame. "I can't master my powers! All I can make are small ice chunks and a little bit of fog!" His body shook even more as his sobs increased. "I wish I had never gotten these stupid, useless powers! I wish I could go back to being normal!"

Time stood still for Morgan as his heart broke for what his little friend was going through. All his emotions about his job and current status swelled up and crashed over his mental defenses like a rogue tidal wave slamming into a coastal town. He wrapped his arms around the pup and hugged him tightly. He leaned his head on top of the pup's head and rubbed the soft fur gently with his cheeks.

"I-I-I-I'm such a f-f-f-failure as a-a-a-a hero!" Nathan sobbed. His paws clenched into fits, pulling some of the bear's fur.

Morgan felt tears well up in his eyes. "You are not a failure," he whispered into the pup's ears.

Nathan shook his head. "Yes I AM! I am a pathetic, worthless failure!" He tried to push away, but the bear's strong grip held him in place.

"No, you're not! You're beautiful, strong, and caring. You're gonna master your powers and show those stuck-up jerks they are dead wrong!" He suppressed the urge to snarl his response. He hated seeing others being teased. He felt a deep desire growing from his bottom of his tail to go and pound those bullies into oblivion. He slowed his breath and pushed those feelings back to the nothingness where they belonged. *Thank the Maker for meditation*, he thought as he continued to hug his sobbing friend. When the pup hadn't responded, he began to worry he wasn't going to be able to comfort his friend like the little pup needed. Something flashed in Morgan's mind as he remembered a thing which his mother had done to calm him when he was having a similar type of day. He hugged the pup tighter and hummed a simple tune.

Nathan's sobbing started to lessen. He felt the vibrations from his friend's humming reverberate through his entire body. It made him feel like he was encased in a soft, warm vibrating blanket. A smile formed on his face as his sobbing stopped and he began to hum along. He relaxed his paws and started nuzzling the bear's chest with his nose, feeling the coarse dense fur rub against his own.

The pup's nuzzling made Morgan pause his humming from the sensation. He looked down at his little friend. "Feeling better?"

Nathan wriggled his snout over the white furry landscape, over the mountains which were the bear's pectoral muscles, until he was staring at the leathery black nose of his friend. Two gigantic blue moons hovered over the top of this majestic landscape. He took a moment to soak in the lovely sight before slowly nodding his head. "Yeah."

Morgan saw the contented smile on the pup's face and relaxed his grip. His muscles ached from holding the pup in place. *He has some strength*, the bear thought to himself as he walked over and set the pup down on the couch. "Good," he said as he stretched his arms and back.

"How was your day?"

Morgan gulped loudly in response to the question. He had been so focused on comforting his friend, that he had forgotten about all that had happened during his job: from an accident he had witnessed near the beginning of his shift to the rejection letter and finally the teasing from Axel. His

lips began to quiver, his arms dropped to his sides and he hunched forward as many thoughts raced through his mind. *How much should I tell him? Would he be able to understand, since he wasn't on the force? What would he think of me?* Seconds seemed to stretch onto infinity as he struggled to find an answer.

"Are you okay?" Nathan asked, shattering the bear's concentration. "What's wrong?"

Morgan saw the concerned look on his friend's face: the slightly open mouth, both ears perked forward at full attention, even the irises in the pup's eyes seemed to quiver. Morgan sighed a couple of times signaling to his friend that he was still breathing. *I have to tell him.* His paws slid across the carpet as he went over to the counter and retrieved his rejection letter. Without looking up, he shuffled back over to the couch and plopped down next to the pup. "I-I got this today," he stammered and handed Nathan his rejection letter.

Nathan slowly read the letter. The letter stated he was denied the position of Detective due to several complaints from his coworkers about some extreme anger issues. They recommended psychiatric counseling to deal with his anger before attempting any further promotional details. They also recommended he be placed on duty as a traffic cop until an inquiry into the complaints could be completed. One reviewer even went so far as to suggest that Morgan be permanently placed on traffic duty with no possibility for advancement. After Nathan was done reading the letter, he gently folded it before handing it back to his friend.

Morgan stared at the folded paper in front of him. "You're not the only one being teased." He placed the paper on the small table by the door and told him about Axel. "Maybe he's right. Maybe they're all right. Maybe I am a foolish rich bear simply *playing* cop."

Nathan placed a paw on the bear's shoulder, which felt like a taut set of iron cables. "No. You're a damned good cop! One of the best, and cleanest on the force!"

Morgan's head dropped until his chin was touching his chest. "And what good does that do me? When I can get beat out for a promotion by a dick-sucking, ass-kissing boot-licker?" he snorted. The officer who beat him out was Ted Walker, a grizzly bear with a reputation among the other officers for taking bribes to let people out of tickets and giving favors to his closest friends. Morgan knew Walker was also one of the laziest cops on the force. Time and time again he filed paperwork about other officers having to cover because Walker was too busy flirting with ladies, and sometimes other men, to do his patrol duty. "Why did I think I could do any good as a cop? With this strength, I should have become a vigilante." He went silent and stared at his shaking paws.

A wet feeling on a small area of Morgan's left cheek, along with a long smooching sound, brought him back to the couch. His eyes darted to his left as he saw Nathan pulling back from kissing him. The bear turned his head and watched as the pup wrapped his arms around his belly, as far as they could reach, and began to rub his cheek against the large barrel chest. He was a bit taken back at the affection his friend was showing, to where he didn't quite know what to say in response.

Nathan continued nuzzling his friend's chest while rubbing his stomach and back in a circular motion. "You're a fantastic cop. Remember the ones you have helped and saved since you started the force. Including me." He stopped nuzzling, looked up at the bear, and slowly kissed his leathery nose.

Morgan's heart skipped a few beats. No one had ever shown him such affection before. *The pup is right*, he thought to himself as he licked the area where he had been kissed, *it has been an eventful five years as a cop.* He had two boxes full of newspaper stories his parents had collected about his accomplishments as a law enforcement officer. And it was true, he had saved Nathan's life.

Morgan was just a month on the force when the call came out about a car wreck near where he was patrolling. He ran over to the site and saw the car was on fire. A bystander pointed to the car and screamed "SOMEONE'S TRAPPED IN THERE!" Morgan looked back and saw the blue and white curly tail through the flames. He radioed for a fire truck and ambulance to respond and was told by dispatch that they would have an eta of ten to fifteen minutes. He looked back at the car and realized they wouldn't get there in time. Without a second thought, he charged towards the burning vehicle.

When he got to the vehicle, he saw the passenger side doors had been dented in and the roof had been smashed down. He could see the eyes of the young wolf on the other side of the door, pleading for help. The wolf choked on the thick smoke, which was filling the car quickly. Morgan suppressed a scream as he gripped the roof with both paws. He could feel the hot metal frame dig deep into his paw pads, burning the flesh away and leaving two permanent scars. His super strength kicked in and he ripped the roof off like it was tinfoil. He saw the fire spread faster, as it began to engulf the remains of the vehicle. He grabbed the young wolf and ran. He was awarded a bravery medal for his service.

Morgan blinked his eyes and stared back at Nathan. Seeing a sparkle in the young pup's eyes made all of Morgan's troubles seem to melt away. There would be other chances for him to be promoted. *I will do everything in my power to prove them wrong*, he vowed as he smiled and gave his friend a gentle kiss on top of his fluffy head.

Nathan's tail wagged as his smile broadened. "Do you want to fool around?" He nudged the bear's side with his plump rear. "I'm not afraid of having sex, big bear."

The question shocked Morgan. He had never considered having sex with another male, let alone someone as young as the pup in front of him. He reminded himself that no one could really hold any kind of age difference against consenting adults. Still, he wasn't quite ready to have sex...yet. He rubbed a paw against the side of his neck. "Could we just cuddle instead?"

Nathan giggled at the flustered look on the bear's face. "Of course. Although I think we should cuddle somewhere a little more private."

Morgan chuckled and nodded his head in agreement as he hugged Nathan close to his body. He stood up and carried the pup with him into the bedroom. After turning the light on, and closing the door, both animals stripped their shirts and bottoms off. Morgan had a good chuckle when he noticed they were both wearing the same style of white boxer shorts. He sat on the edge of the bed and rubbed his toes into the carpet. He was about to ask how they would begin when Nathan, who noticed the hesitation, took the initiative and hugged himself around the bear's chest.

Nathan began nuzzling the side of Morgan's neck slowly. He gently nibbled the bear's fluffy neck, being careful to just brush the surface of the thick black skin with his sharp canine teeth.

The sensation caused Morgan to hum as a smile crept over his face. He saw those wonderful pointed ears and decided to go with his screaming hormones and instincts. He opened his mouth and began to alternate between nibbling and sucking on the tips of the pup's ears. He felt the pup's body shudder on top of him as he laid back on the bed.

Nathan moaned from the intense pleasure he was receiving from having his ears played with. He opened one of his eyes and noticed he was right next to the bear's pectoral muscle, which were large and firm from lots of working out. The stiff pink nipple just within nose range was too tempting for him to pass up. Without pulling his ear away from the bear's mouth, he deftly lowered his snout and began alternating between suckling and nibbling on the nipple. His paws started kneading into the bear's muscular but slightly flabby lower back.

Morgan moaned as pleasure rocketed through his entire body. He never wanted the sensations overtaking his emotions to stop. Nothing seemed to matter anymore. Not the job. Not Axel. Everything but the two of them faded away. He released the pup's ear, which dripped with fresh saliva, and watched as the pup continued to tease his nipple. He kissed the pup on the blue furry part of his head and noticed the other ear was still dry. The ear seemed to call to the bear, daring him to love and suckle it. Licking his hungry lips, the bear began sucking on the other ear. His dinner plate sized paws caressed his partner's neck and back.

The two continued pawing each other for what seemed like an eternity, until Nathan's paw slid down around the bear's plump rear and gave it a playful squeeze. Morgan jumped at the shock of having his rear played with. He looked down at the pup, who had a sly smile on his face.

"Sure you don't wanna go any further?" he asked before giving the bear a playful kiss on the lips. "You're not my first rodeo, and I'm up for a few rides." His tail wagged back and forth rapidly as

he slid his rear up and down the bear's crotch.

*The pup's damned good*, Morgan thought to himself as a small moan escaped his mouth.

"Maybe some other time," he chuckled, still not quite sure he was ready to have sex with another male.

"This feels perfect for right now." His smile went from ear to ear.

Nathan giggled as he wrapped his arms around Morgan's neck and pulled him in for a long passionate kiss, which left the bear breathless. "That's okay," he said, as he playfully bopped the bear's nose with one of his claws, "I have no problem cuddling and playing." He laid his head down on the bear's chest and listened to the thundering sound of his heart.

Morgan looked at the pup on his chest and felt a warmth envelop his entire being. Part of him wondered if he would feel the same way with Kai laying on his chest, with that wonderful puffy tail wrapped around his snout or neck. Maybe he would have to find out. The pup softly moaned on his chest, which brought his thoughts back to the here and now.

The pup kissed the bear's chest. "Hum to me again, please?"

Morgan didn't have to be asked twice. He moved the pup a little higher on his chest, wrapped his arms around him, and began to hum. Soon both of them fell into a deep, happy sleep.