

Small World

Chapter 12: An Un-Conventional Plan

Just outside the Las Vegas Space Con Convention Center...

As he quickly yet carefully weaved his way through the massive crowd of costumed people after Jack, David inquired quietly, "Jack, I know this is your home planet and you probably have a lot more experience in this sort of thing than I do, but could you at least give me a little insight as to what your plans are from time to time?"

"You'll know soon enough. Just trust me," Jack whispered back in reassurance.

Letting out a frustrated grunt, David continued onward after his comrade.

A few moments later, the pair soon exited the crowd, to see before them a large, white painted, boxy vehicle with the words 'LV News' inscribed in large, decorative orange and yellow lettering on the side. After taking a brief glance around to make sure the coast was clear, Jack scurried over towards the open back double doors of the vehicle, and climbed inside.

Seeing this, David darted after him, and demanded in a hushed tone, "Jack, what are you doing?!"

Instead of answering the scientist's question, Jack simply dropped what looked like a large black video camera into David's paws, and instructed, "Here, hold this."

Struggling with the weight of the device, David hissed in protest, "Jack, are you crazy?! We can't steal news equipment! What if we get caught?!"

"Do you want to get back home to your family?" Jack inquired, giving David a stern glare, causing the grey-furred Ferren to fall silent. "Then *trust me*."

Picking up a hand-held microphone, Jack carefully crept back out of the vehicle and scurried back towards the bustling crowd. With a reluctant sigh, David hastily followed after him, awkwardly lugging along the heavy video camera on his shoulder.

As soon as the pair reached the front entrance of the convention center, they were halted by hand held out in front of them. Standing between the two furry creatures and the door was a tall, dark skinned human male wearing black pants and a black short

sleeved top with the word '*SECURITY*' written in bold white lettering across the back. "Tickets please, gentlm-" the security guard began to request, only to pause upon noticing the video recording equipment, "Oh, wait... You're media. My apologies, go right ahead."

Once the two Ferrens were inside the building, David turned to Jack, and asked curiously, "How did we get past that guard? Did you use some sort of special military mind trick technique on him or something?"

"Nah," Jack chuckled lightly, discarding the microphone he was holding onto the floor, "Official news and media crew get into these places for free. And the security at these events is often so sloppy that they don't even bother to check for proper I.D. most of the time."

Gently placing his own piece of recording equipment down on the floor, David inquired, "Okay, so we got inside. What now?"

"Now, we need to find a computer to plug this flash drive into," Jack replied, withdrawing the small black object from within one of his belt pockets to present to David, "I think we should start with the gaming section. Sometimes people leave their laptops unattended on the tables there while they play in the card tournaments. Come on, follow me."

With that, Jack took off into the midst of the crowded convention, with David following close behind.

Meanwhile, back outside...

"I swear it was here a minute ago!" a young light skinned man in exclaimed as he rummaged around inside the back of a large white vehicle.

"Well keep looking!" a pale skinned woman with long blond hair and clad in a salmon-coloured dress suit barked crossly, "We're supposed to be live in less than ten minutes!"

After another brief moment of searching, the young man informed, "It's no good, ma'am. The camera's gone. And one of the microphones seems to be missing, too."

"Damn it!" the woman cursed, "Some stupid kids must have made off with some of our equipment! I *knew* we should've never left the van unattended!" After letting out an exasperated sigh, she decided, "Well, I guess we'll just have to use the backup cam. In

the meantime, get somebody to talk with security and see if they saw anyone carting around our gear."

"Yes, Ma'am!" the young man replied, before running off to carry out his instructions.

Meanwhile, back inside the convention center...

As he continued to dart on after Jack through the dense crowds of people, David suddenly began to hear dozens of young, female voices squealing from all around him.

"Aww! You're so adorable!"

"Did you make those costumes yourselves?"

"What kind of characters are you supposed to be? Are you from an anime or a video game?"

Skidding to a stop to avoid colliding with a pair of tall, makeup-covered legs, David quickly began glancing all around him. The scientist soon saw that he was surrounded by a large group of human females who looked to be in their mid to late teens, all in various costumes and makeup jobs, many of which were holding out plastic wafer-shaped devices towards him which produced blinding white flashes every so often. Noticing something amiss, the grey-furred Ferren called out in concern, "Jack? Where are you? Jack!"

"I'm here..." came the disgruntled, wheezing voice of the ex-commando from somewhere nearby.

Turning towards the source of the voice, David spotted his comrade being tightly squeezed in the arms of a thin, light skinned teenage human female. The girl appeared to be dressed in a yellow hooded sweater with a lightning bolt-shaped tail sewn to the back and a pair of what looked like yellow horn-like ears with black tips sticking out of the top of the hood.

As he frantically squirmed in an attempt to free himself from the embrace of the giddy teenage girl, Jack grunted weakly, "I appreciated the affection, Miss... but... we're on a very tight schedule here... so can I please ask that you put me down...?"

"Oh, I'm sorry!" the girl apologized in a bubbly manner as she gently placed Jack back down on the floor, "It's just that you're so cute that I just wanted to hug you!"

After taking a moment to catch his breath, Jack responded slightly impatiently, "Yes, well, as I said, we have some very important business we'd like to attend to here, so, if

you'll excuse us..." At that moment, the rusty-brown-furred Ferren grabbed hold of David's paw, and tore off through the crowd, dragging his startled comrade along with him.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the city...

The two eruditely dressed operatives from the Area Unknown military base were casually driving in a jet-black car through the city streets of Las Vegas, searching for any signs of the fugitives. Deciding to break the uncomfortable silence, the lieutenant turned to the passenger seat where the corporal sat, and spoke up nonchalantly, "Hey, Calvin, you were positioned in Canada for a while recently, right? What was it like?"

"Well," the corporal, Calvin, began, "there's a lot of trees, a lot of animals, and they have this really popular doughnut shop franchise there that sells really good coffee. They have this special blend of theirs they call a Double-Double. Basically it's just a large coffee with two creams and two sugars in it."

"A Double-Double, huh? I'll have to try that sometime," the lieutenant chuckled. "Didn't I hear somewhere that they call their french-fries chips?"

"No, that's England," the corporal corrected, "But they do have this weird thing where they put gravy and cheese on French-fries. They call it poutine."

"Gravy on fries? Really?! That's sick!" the lieutenant snorted.

"I've tried it. It's actually pretty good," Calvin argued. "They have ketchup flavoured potato chips, too. I can't say I'm very fancy on those, though."

At that moment, the conversation was interrupted by the sound of the dashboard radio transmitter crackling to life. "Lieutenant Heralds, we've just picked up a report of some stolen news equipment just outside the Las Vegas Space Con," a male voice informed from the speaker system, "It may be nothing, but Agent Jefferson wants you to check it out."

"Copy that, we'll take a look," Heralds responded, before deactivating the radio transceiver, and turning to his partner. "Calvin, we're going to Space Con."