

POLICE DOOG 2

HER MAJESTY'S FINEST



By wwwolf

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Chapter 11: A Good Old Copper

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When next I woke my head rested on something soft. I opened my eyes to see the bottom of a muzzle. Sixty was staring off into the distance.

“Good Dog,” he whispered. “I must be a good Dog...”

I shifted slightly in an effort to sit up. He looked down at me. His eyes were cloudy, but I could see him struggling to focus on my face.

“Why?” he asked, voice rough. “Why have you been spared?”

My face was swollen, but I fought to smile nonetheless. I could feel the blood matting my fur. I sighed. “Because,” I said, wishing I could scratch at the dried blood, “It wouldn't affect me. They used *me* to create it.”

He looked down at me, eyes finally clearing. “You?”

My smile grew slightly before a shot of pain ran up me from tail to nose.

“It's a long story, Brother. I am not as innocent as I wish I was.” I rolled my shoulders. The weight of the collar reminded me that while I may be chained, Sixty was no longer bound. “Brother,” I whispered, “You can free me.”

The Dog went still for a long moment. “I'm sorry, Brother. The Master wouldn't permit it.”

Despite my feeble state and the screams of my abused muscles I struggled to sit up, a growl pulling at my chest.

“Brophy is no master. He is no longer even human! Look at Llyal,” I hissed, flicking my ears towards where the man still lay. “*He* is the one we should be following. Not that... *creature!*”

Sixty looked at me, motionless. It was only then I saw that the mutations that were so obvious on the other Dogs had befallen him as well. One of his eyes had turned a bright blue.

Just like mine.

The Dogs hands began to shake. "I want to, Brother. Please... I *want* to be a good Dog. I know I should... but if I displease the Master he'll withhold from me..."

Every fibre of my being pulled me to lash out at him as I had Archer, but I knew it would do no good. Whatever it was that monster Brophy had perfected, it was stronger than any training, any ties between us.

Reaching down, Sixty pressed his nose against me, cuddling as when we were the youngest of pups. When all there was to worry about was pleasing the Handler and passing the next test.

A moment later I felt his tongue slip out to lick at the blood that had dripped from my split nose. It had been a long, long time since we'd groomed each other. Such was not behaviour befitting Police Dogs.

And he went stiff.

"Sixty?" I whispered. "What's wrong?"

His tongue slipped out again to lap at my dried blood.

I watched him blink, tasting it.

"Brother..." his voice was hoarse, "What did they do to you?"

He continued to lap at my blood-matted coat faster and faster.

Oh.

Brophy had claimed the *medicine* he had created was derived from the generic treatments I'd been receiving for years. In essence, he was making the other Dogs into pale imitations of me. The drug he dolled out ever so carefully to the Dogs was that which my own blood already held.

I looked down to Sixty. He'd stopped lapping at my fur. He simply stared at me. "What did they do to you, Brother?" he whispered.

I let a smile slip to my lips. "Too much, Sixty. Can you free me?"

He glanced back towards the hut.

"But it would displease the Master..."

I let a trace of a growl slip into my voice. "I will deal with *Brophy*. He has no power over me."

A smile, a mirror of my own, came to his lips. I'd never seen his fangs before.

"Could you, Brother?"

I turned, raising my bound wrists to him. I didn't say a word.

I could feel his claws pressing against the ropes that held me. But the bonds were thick, it would take time – and it still didn't solve the iron collar wrapped around my neck.

Sixty had only seconds to begin working to free me when a commotion rose from the hut. A moment later I saw four Dogs. They were, as far as I could tell, the remaining members of the Pack. They all but crawled from the building, tails between their legs.

“What do you mean *you don't remember!*” came Brophy's bubbling, wavering voice.

And then he stepped out into the light.

It was just after noon, and the sun streamed in from the skylights above. I'd never had the opportunity to truly see Brophy. He'd kept himself to the hut, loitered in shadow. The most I'd be able to recognise was his sour, decomposing scent. That of corruption.

Now he lurched from his hut, chasing after the Pack.

Both Sixty and I went still.

No matter what we'd seen in the darkness, the light of day showed us something far worse.

Standing under his own power, he was still hunched forward but easily over six feet. The patches of black and brown fur that spread across his body followed no rhyme or reason. He wore no clothing or uniform to cover himself, and everywhere the fur pushed through was ringed with weeping sores and scaled red rashes.

“You told me you weren't of the Kennel! Who is your master?” Brophy roared at the Pack.

Archer, Baker, and the other Dogs cowered. They were flat against the ground, trembling.

“We can't,” Archer whispered out between sobs. “We can't betray *Her*.”

And that was enough. The inflection was slight, but Brophy heard it.

“Her? *Her*?”

Reaching down, he grabbed Baker, the closest at hand. I would have thought his broken and monstrous form incapable of strength, but he hefted the Dog like he was nothing.

“Tell me!” Brophy screamed.

Baker opened his mouth, but nothing came out.

I am a Police Dog. I have seen many things. I have seen dead bodies, crimes of all types, I have seen murder.

But what I witnessed made me vomit.

Brophy held the strong Dog between his arms, immobilized and helpless as a newborn. Baker could do nothing but whimper. Brophy ripped the Dog's throat out with his bare teeth.

Right then and there I vomited.

There was nothing in my stomach, but I did it anyway. Baker was still twitching, flailing, hands coming up helplessly to stem the ruby red torrent of arterial blood as his body was tossed aside like so much trash.

“*Who is your Master?*”

With a snap my hands came free of their bonds. I turned to thank Sixty, but he was gone.

I only saw a flash as he sped past me. His motions were tight, his stride perfect. He was a Police Dog.

A heartbeat later Sixty flung himself into the air, landing atop Brophy's back. The creature that had once been human let out a scream that most certainly was not.

I reached down and swiped at my feet. The last of the ropes that held me fell away, but I was still captive to the collar around my neck. All I could do was watch.

That seemed the most any of us could do.

The other Dogs, even the cowering Pack, stood rooted in place. They watched, but I doubted any of them understood.

Sixty was strong, fast, the highest scoring Dog of his generation. He clung to Brophy's back, raking his claws down the inflamed skin, spewing festering black puss across the concrete floor. Yet for all the horror that had transformed the human, Brophy moved faster than he ever should. He howled at the wounds inflicted, but yet they never seemed to slow him. He fought on.

"Archer!" I screamed, my voice breaking. "Help him! Help *me*!"

For just a moment the young Dog seemed to realize what was happening. If he'd been scared before, he was petrified now.

He did the only thing he could. He ran.

Thankfully, to me. Despite the haze of drug induced stupor that clouded his mind he still saw me as protection, safety. His much vaulted Pack had fallen, but I still stood.

I didn't give him time to cower behind me. Gritting my teeth, I raked my fingers through one of my many wounds. It dripped forth fresh blood.

Grabbing Archer's muzzle with one hand, I plunged my blood soaked fingers between his lips. He swallowed reflexively, letting out a gasp.

His pupils contracted.

"Get me out of this collar!" I ordered him, putting my voice to one of command.

He leapt to it like I'd put the fear of God into him. I suppose I had.

He was still wearing his uniform. Thankfully, it appeared he'd brought lock picks with him.

A few seconds later I was free.

I let a growl grow deep in my chest.

Running on all fours, I was upon Brophy in no more than a heartbeat. Sixty was fast, Sixty was well trained, Sixty had been caught.

Brophy had closed one of his huge, misshapen hands around the Dog's leg. The he was being dragged slowly from the monster's back. I knew what would happen when Brophy got both hands on him.

I stood before the man and took a deep breath, composing myself.

"Brophy!" My voice echoed off the walls, sounding small and hollow in the cavernous room.

He stopped and looked at me, never releasing Sixty.

The way he cocked his head was almost canine.

"*Brophy?*" He spat at me. The foul green phlegm splattered on the concrete floor, soiling my toes. "That's *Dr.* Brophy! I'm the greatest genius ever to be born!"

I raised my lips.

“You're a freak. And you've done nothing in your life but make freaks like me. You think you've managed to conquer anything? You traded death for a life that never should have been!”

He opened his jaws wide and let out a roar that was neither human nor canine. It was something worse.

The Dogs around me cowered on the floor. Their god was angry.

“I'm *more* than you could ever imagine!”

There was the sound of ripping flesh as Sixty was pulled free. Brophy tossed him aside offhandedly. He hit a concrete wall twenty feet away with a wet smack.

He didn't get back up.

I took a step towards the abomination. He laughed at me.

“You think you can fight me, little Dog? I *created* you. You are nothing but a failed experiment. A stepping stone to where I am today.”

I raised one lip. “And you are an evolutionary dead end.”

He came towards me with a roar.

The monster was easily four times my mass, but he moved nearly as fast as I could. Dear God. Whatever Brophy had been doing with his research, if he could create an abomination that moved like this...

I didn't have time to think. I didn't have time to react. My training took over.

Where Sixty had only been able to hold his own I was able to match the monster blow for blow. He had been created from my own treatments, my own genesis.

But I was the template. I was the first monster, the original sin.

The Dogs around us scatted as we fought. They were too blissed to understand what was happening, but they had at least the self preservation to run.

Brophy's fist came down on the concrete where I'd been standing not a split-second before. It left no impact.

I smiled. No matter how strong this creature may be, it was still... *human*.

It was clear from Sixty's failed attack that Brophy felt no pain. His skin was diseased and thin, but his vital organs were far too deep to strike. He was all but invulnerable.

I would have to find alternatives.

I glanced over to Handler Llyal. The human still lay on the ground, but his bonds had been undone. Archer was slinging him over his shoulder, struggling to carry him to safety.

I sprinted to the Dog, Brophy not far behind.

“Your weapons,” I panted. “Where are the weapons the Pack brought?”

He looked at me, terror in his eyes as Brophy stormed towards us like an oncoming train.

“They're... hut. In the hut.”

I dove one way, Archer and Llyal the other.

Thankfully I was his target, I was what had brought upon myself the monster's ire.

I fell once again to all fours and raced towards the hut. It wasn't far, but I needed to put enough distance between us to make the gambit worthwhile.

I had only time to slam the near useless door closed before he smashed into it, making the whole structure jump.

I looked about the small room. My ears pulled back.

Archer had lied to me.

Whether he still held loyalty to Brophy or he'd simply panicked, there were no weapons here.

But it did appear the Brophy had used this small space as his laboratory. It was filled with tubes of liquid and Bunsen burners alight.

I grabbed ahold of the only things in reach. A dozen needles filled with his concoction.

A smile slipped to my lips.

Brophy looked almost surprised when I politely opened the door for him, holding a stainless steel tray before me. The sunlight glinted off it.

"Looking for these?"

I lifted one of the needles in my hand. A drop formed at its tip.

"You won't! Those took months to prepare!"

He backed away and I took another step forward.

I felt something change. The Dogs that had fled from us not moments before were watching me now. Their gazes prenatuerly clear. They saw the drug I carried in my hands. And they wanted it.

My smile grew.

I threw a needle down hard, dashing it against the floor a dozen meters away. The Dogs rushed forward, clawing over one another to get at the liquid.

Brophy cringed.

"Don't! I won't have enough time to make a new batch! The cancer will kill me!"

I cocked my head. "You, who'd proclaim himself a god, you still have something as mundane as cancer to fear?"

"Give me my medicine!"

He surged forward, moving faster than I could ever have expected, fear giving him flight.

I pulled one of the needles from my tray and plunged it into his chest. A wet cry escaped his lips as the dark, brackish liquid was forced into his body.

I thought back to all the injections he'd forced upon me as my hand went down to wrap around the next needle.

But I backed away.

Brophy was on all fours, panting, head down as I ran to where Archer and Handler Llyal waited. They were huddled next to Sixty.

I looked to Llyal. He shook his head.

There was nothing here but Sixty's corpse.

"Let's go. We've failed."

Archer was shaking, but he followed me.

"I won't let you destroy me..." Brophy's voice had deepened. It had become more feral, more Dog-like.

I turned.

He stood again. The wounds Sixty and I had inflicted were gone.

I could almost see things sliding under his skin, cords of muscle binding and thickening. I could almost see his flesh moving. I knew it was just the fear playing tricks, it had to be. I backed away.

"Give me the medicine." He took a step towards us.

"Go, Archer. Get Handler Llyal out of here. He's human. He's the priority."

Archer began running towards the door, but Brophy's voice stopped him dead.

"You are mine, Dog. If you disobey me you will never receive bliss again," Brophy said, his voice dark. He began to laugh.

Archer's tail curled around his leg. He looked down.

"You're a damned fool, Vince."

The words were soft, but they cut through the air like a knife.

Brophy stopped dead. The only sound was that of his laboured breathing.

"You are nothing, Dave." The venom in the monster's voice was enough to all but melt the concrete around us. "You're nothing more than a has-been. You could have been part of the experiment, but you refused. Proust was more than enough to replace you."

A laugh came from Handler Llyal's broken and battered form. "You think you're so smart. A brilliant man like you? Outsmarted by a *Dog*."

A roar came from Brophy's inhuman lips, shaking the walls.

"I'll grind your bones to make my medicine! I'll boil your eyes and throw your flesh to the Dogs to eat!"

He leapt forward.

I met him in mid-air.

There was no contest. His great weight forced the air from my lungs as I was swatted aside like little more than an insect. My already bruised back was ripped and torn as I slid across the rough concrete floor.

Archer was held motionless as he looked up at the freight train like force of death that rocketed towards him.

With only two steps between them Archer squared his shoulders and stood Police Dog straight.

I never heard what escaped the Dog's lips as he pushed Handler Llyal aside, but I doubted they were repeatable.

From his trousers Archer pulled his lighter. A tiny flame burst to life.

The Dog smiled.

"You killed my family," he said, voice clear, holding the perfect Police Dog clip.

A flick of his finger and the tiny flame swelled and grew, engorging to a foot long blast. Archer's lips pulled up in a sneer that would never have touched a proper Dog.

"You killed Baker, my brother."

Brophy was already airborne. Arching towards the flame, he couldn't change direction, couldn't hope to avoid it.

Archer didn't bother to direct the flame towards the monstrosity's face. He plunged it into one of the beast's many open sores, his wounds that oozed the dark green sludge he'd filled himself so full of.

It took to the flame hungrily, embracing it, welcoming it with open arms.

A scream escaped Brophy's lips. It wasn't the howl of a Dog. Nor was it the bellow of an ungodly abomination. It was the cry of a human.

I narrowed my eyes.

Twisting and turning, Brophy's titanic form fell to the floor, rolling back and forth, as if trying to stamp out the tongues of flame that snaked around him. They clung to his fur, streamed across his skin, but most of all they devoured his open sores, they ate him from the inside out, consumed him like he was ambrosia, invaded him, violated his body.

I didn't feel an ounce of pity.

Walking slowly forward, I came to a stop not two paces from Brophy as he writhed in pain.

I could see tears running down his malformed cheeks, dripping from his twisted muzzle. They were stained an inky green.

Kneeling down, I looked him in the eye.

"You called me *Project Janus*," I whispered, my voice harsh. "What name do you give yourself?" I reached out to grab his mussel. The fire had sapped his strength such he couldn't even pull away. "I'd suggest *Icarus*."

Dropping him, I turned to leave the beast to his misery.

"You can't do this to me, Forty-Two!" His voice was rough, the fire streaking down his throat. "I am your creator! I am your... your..." He never finished before another scream overtook him.

I walked away.

"Jonathan." I stopped dead. Handler Llyal's voice was soft, his eyes unfocused by the pain that

pulled at him. He hung from Archer's shoulder, half dead. "Is this what I trained you to do?"

I didn't say a word. I simply looked at him, my mouth agape. He couldn't be suggesting...

"You've learned compassion, Jonathan," he whispered. "I know it. I've seen it."

I could hardly make out his voice over Brophy's screams.

I continued to walk away.

"Sixty would have saved him. Brought him to justice."

I turned to Llyal, my face a mask of perfect calm. "I am not Sixty," I said, my voice parade ground perfect. "Neither you nor Sixty know what... *he* did to me."

"Does it matter so much?" Llyal asked. "He is... was human. Much as you were once a Dog."

I growled. The sound came far more bestial, more raw than anything that had come before.

I kept walking.

Next to the door hung a fire extinguisher. It was an old model, one that demanded to be pumped by hand.

I set it down next to Brophy. The man no longer rolled, no longer screamed. He simply lay there, staring at me while the flames wrapped around his body.

"You deserve no pity," I spat. "You granted none to me."

Pulling the hose free, I fired straight at his chest, only wishing it were a gun.

His grunt of relief was clear.

In no more than a minute the flames were out. The once 'Dr.' Brophy was resting comfortably on the hard, cold concrete floor.

Even as I stood there I could see his wounds knitting together. Whatever it was the doctor had discovered, it was still powerful.

I turned to Archer. "Who is your master?" I asked.

The Dog wouldn't meet my eyes. "I... I'm sorry," he whimpered.

I refused to look away. "Who is your master?"

At long last he looked up, eyes clear. "I have none." His voice was strong.

Around us the other Dogs still milled. They'd all seen Brophy's fall, but few of them seemed capable of understanding.

One stepped forward. He looked comparatively unravaged by the mutations that despoiled so many others.

"What... the medicine..."

I looked down at the forlorn creature. "Archer," I said, "It seems as though you may have some new members looking to join The Pack."

The expression of abject horror on the Dog's face at the thought of having so many misshapen

Dogs in his den was priceless.

The next few hours passed quickly, but not easily.

As more and more of the Dogs realized their god had fallen we had just short of a riot on our hands.

Dogs are not prone to rash action, and to riot is all but against our very nature, but these were not healthy, well trained Dogs. They were addicts realizing they had no next fix.

It was Archer who at last found a solution.

Brophy was in chains, and Llyal was resting as well as he could. Archer came to me with a knife and shallow bowl.

“Could... could you?”

I looked over to him, not understanding.

“Your blood,” he said, ears pulled back. “We... they... need it.”

I stepped back in horror.

And stopped dead. Bowing my head, I took the small knife. For so much of my life I'd been trained that my blood was secret, corrupt. That it must never be discovered, never let to flow. I raised the knife to my forearm.

I'd been trained that none must learn of what I'd become.

A quick slice and I opened a flesh wound. It began to bleed.

Archer was by my side a moment later, holding out a tarnished tin pan. I took it without a word. I could hear each drop of blood as it dripped away into the pan. Soon the dull metal was stained a dark crimson.

I held back a shudder of revulsion.

My wound healed quickly enough. Soon nothing more than a scar remained.

I rolled my sleeve back down, hiding it under my uniform and went to check on handler Llyal. Archer was surprisingly efficient when it came to first-aid. The man's eyes were clearer now, but he was still in dire need of proper medical assistance.

“Sir,” I said, bowing my head to him.

He laughed. “Good job, Forty-Two,” he said, voice soft but strong. “You gave Vincent a proper thwacking, and it seems you've managed to inherit his *empire*.”

I looked over to where the Dogs stood in silent single file, orderly waiting for their chance to take a single lap of my blood.

I grimaced.

“As you say, Sir. We should be getting you out of here. This area is not sterile.”