

Summary:

Feral's known who his mate is but he'll be damned if he'll accept that person but fate has a way of derailing the best laid plans.

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Chapter 1: Cave In by ulyferal  
Author's Notes:

Chapter 1 completely rewritten, 2012

The dark tom groaned and writhed on the king size bed, twisting his bedding tightly around him. Though sleep was what he'd sought when he'd first gone to bed, his heat cycle kept his body from seeking it. His fevered dreams featured a strong, powerfully built, and oh so sexy tom covering his body and driving a steel hard cock into his wet and urgent core, proceeding to drive them both to a fiery and intense climax.

But that was only a dream, the reality was him writhing hopelessly with need and no completion in sight. Gods, how he loathed this biological imperative. Though only appearing twice a year, those times were the worst of his life. That overwhelming, fiery need demanded he mate but he staunchly refused, battling his instincts with grim determination and refusing to allow it to conquer him or force him to capitulate.

And, as always during this miserable time, when he could catch a break from the waves of intense desire and heat, he would call into work and tell his personal assistant, Sgt Fallon, that he would be *indisposed*. That word alone told Fallon what ailed the Commander as the dark tom never called in sick or, at least, very rarely did. On these occasions, Fallon would divert anyone from trying to see or call the tom.

Only an omega alert would force the Commander to his feet, temporarily replacing the mating heat with the urgency to protect his city from its enemies and when duty was done, retreating quickly home again before his rampant hormones took over once more.

As night passed into day, he woke with sweat beading his forehead, his body drained from its fight, and sunrise painting a rosy glow on his bedroom ceiling. Rolling to his side, he glared at the far wall, his thoughts a tangled and anguished mess. Kat's Alive! I want him sooo badly but no way would I be caught dead with that annoying tom, he cursed silently.

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Ever since puberty at age thirteen, he'd had to endure this twice yearly torment. Fortunately, back then, it hadn't been more than a nuisance, requiring him to use a masking spray embarrassingly given to him by his equally mortified mother. It had been a serious shock to his parents to find out their son was dual sexed. It wasn't such happy news for him either once he realized what was

causing him to fixate on males during those times.

Due to that dual sexuality, his mother and father had to teach him the rules for proper behavior for both sexes. His mother instructed him on the use of a masking spray that hid his heat scent and the avoidance of engaging sex at that time. Modern females could use a pill developed for this purpose but herms could not. His father taught him how to behave when he scented a female in heat...ignore it unless the she-kat in question invites one to play and even then, he needed to be certain the female truly wanted it and not because she was too overwhelmed by her condition to give consent. His father strongly warned him that it was Ulysses' responsibility to practice safe sex and he impressed upon his son the serious consequences of giving into temptation. He also reminded the young tom that it was a serious social gaffe to make mention or show interest when a female's heat pheromones filled the air and that behavior was supposed to extend to him too but because he was male, society did not always remember that.

With an unhappy frown Jessup Feral told his son that he had no advice he could give Ulysses if a male took offense at smelling a female and being confronted with a male. He would have to learn what to do on his own. And so, on those rare occasions when his heat cycle broke through the masking spray, he did indeed learn that he would have to fight off angry males and put up with their ridicule. Though the school officials tried to help by educating his classmates on herms, incidents still happened. His parents were anguished over this but besides sending him to self defense courses, all they really could do was provide love and support.

Their support and a change of high schools so he would be with students that didn't know him, helped Feral to make new friends and enjoy his high school years. It helped that he never told anyone at the new school about his difference. It was during this time that he first had sex but only with females. He'd already decided he would never use his female equipment.

When he entered the Enforcer Academy, only his doctors and the head of the school knew what he was and when he graduated and went into the Enforcers, he had already decided he wasn't marrying for some time and concerned himself with moving up the ranks. Squiring the occasional she-kat during that time satisfied him and gained him a reputation as a gentlemen. But when he reached the highest rank possible in the Enforcers, his life grew hectic, dangerous, and exhausting which meant very little time for socializing except when called upon by his position.

Then one day, a few years after he'd become Commander, his whole world turned upside down and was never the same again. On that day, a young, fresh faced new recruit stood at attention with his classmates waiting to receive his wings at the end of his training at the academy and Feral was the one required to pin those wings on.

He nearly stuck himself when his nose caught the sandy colored, tabby's scent. It struck him like a hammer, sending his heart rate jumping and causing both his sexual parts to stand up and take notice. It took all his training at keeping a stone face to not react with joy and sorrow at the sudden realization that this was his soul mate. He was able to show no sign of his internal turmoil as he pinned the silver wings on the proud chest.

After that fateful meeting, his heat cycle ramped up into a fiery demon that demanded it be satisfied. He had known it would be bad as his instincts had geared up for accepting his soul mate and couldn't understand why he wasn't taking care of it. Most Kats found their ideal partners in the usual way (work, mutual friends, childhood companions, etc). The truly lucky found their soul mate and bonded for life. Feral only felt cursed.

He never dreamed he would be fated to have a soul mate, being a very rare occurrence, let alone that it would be male. He always thought if he ever got married it would be to a female but now that option was forever denied him. Ignoring a soul bond is painful but due to their differing stations in life, he couldn't and wouldn't accept this special gift.

Thwarted that instinct to mate made him far harsher when dealing with Chance Furlong while the

tom served under him, but he couldn't help it...he ached emotionally and physically whenever he was around the tabby. Things took a turn for the worse when the tabby committed an error that got him thrown off the force along with his partner. This caused Feral even more intense pain but he didn't show it as he booted the tom out and set his punishment.

That should have been the end of it but fate just wasn't having it. Not more than a few months after the two was relegated to the salvage yard, a pair of hotshot vigilantes appeared on the scene, trading barbs and beating off the omegas with seeming ease. When the self-styled SWAT Kats confronted him face to face on their third encounter, Feral was shocked but not really surprised to learn the arrogant, brawny tom was his soul mate, Chance. Now he had something more to worry about.

Being a SWAT Kat meant Chance being in danger all the time but that wasn't unexpected for someone who had a driving need to protect the weak and defenseless. And it was that side of Chance that made Feral so in love with him. The tabby was brave, sometimes foolhardy, compassionate, an incredible pilot and fighter, protector of the underdog, and possessing a hero streak miles long.

He also was arrogant and a serious pain in the tail, trading nasty jibs and thumbing his nose at Feral's authority every chance he got. This love/hate relationship was emotionally draining for Feral but he steadfastly held to his vow to never take Chance as his mate.

To make matters equally trying, Feral never confided in anyone; not his brother (his parents long since dead) nor his niece, Felina who had joined the Enforcers just a few years ago, that he'd found his soul mate. They would never have let up on him; telling him he was a fool keeping the tom at bay and denying himself something so rare as a soul bond, which was why he didn't tell them. Felina would have positively driven him crazy and, after finding out his mate was none other than T-Bone...a SWAT Kat, for crud sake...would laugh herself sick at the capriciousness of fate.

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A particularly strong clenching of his vagina dragged his mind back to the present. He shuddered and moaned, an image of his mate flashing before his eyes making him groan even more needily. He would not submit to that arrogant tom...hell would freeze over first.

He had been fortunate over the past ten years to have avoided any contact with Chance when he was in heat. Even when his cycle caught him while on duty, he still managed to avoid that tom just by luck and fierce determination. If the tabby had even caught a whiff of his heat cycle it would trigger Chance's own instincts and no way did he want that to happen but fate had other ideas.

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### ***A few months later...***

"We got him finally! That bastard isn't coming back except from the grave!" T-Bone snarled, his arms burning from the scratches he'd received from the creepings and face covered in dust. Dark Kat had met his deserved fate under a ton of rock that had flattened him in his own volcano home.

The omega had burrowed one too many times in this particular mountain and when they battled with him after his brazen attack on city hall, the riddled and weakened walls of the deepest part of the mountain that contained his headquarters and weapons decided to give way just as the omega tried to crispy the SWAT Kats and the Enforcers with a new type of deadly laser.

They and the Enforcers were lucky enough to have escaped into the front section that held the black widow when the roof fell in on Dark Kat.

"Couldn't have happened to a more deserving Kat!" Razor agreed, his g-suit dirty and ripped. He wasn't the least bit remorseful that this particular enemy had met a nasty end considering how many people had lost their lives and the amount of property damage Dark Kat had left behind during this last rampage. They were well rid of this major pest.

Feral couldn't have agreed more though he didn't say that aloud. His attention was on his troops who were finishing the eradication of the few creepings that had managed to escape with them. No way did they want to capture these things as there was no where to keep them, except perhaps the zoo. He certainly didn't want them in his jail.

As the last one died and Feral prepared to order the black widow flown out of there to allow his R&D Section to study it, a deep rumbling sound reached their ears and the ground began to shake hard. Everyone froze! Then rocks began to fall.

"EVERYONE...OUT...NOW!" Feral bellowed over the roar of the mountain beginning to collapse around them.

Felina had been about to enter the cave entrance from outside when she felt the ground shake and heard her uncle's bellowed command. She quickly got out of the way as the Enforcers quickly rushed out, Feral and the SWAT Kats close behind them.

Razor had been ahead of the other two and made it out of the cave but Feral and T-Bone were a bit further behind when the ceiling above them came thundering down, blocking the only way out. They were trapped in a pocket that was seconds away from being filled in by the rest of the ceiling. Looking around rapidly, T-Bone was the first to spot a way to save themselves...a lava tube to their right and a short hop up the wall.

Snatching at Feral's coat collar, he frantically pointed at their escape route. Without wasting words, the two toms threw themselves, one after the other, into the tube and began crawling frantically toward a light at the end.

They'd only gotten halfway through the tube when a roar and a rush of dust came pouring through the tube like a geyser. The two were forced to halt and cover their faces as they choked and gasped from the suddenly unbreathable air. Feral hid his face in his coat and breathed as shallowly as he could while T-Bone held his breath and fumbled hurriedly for his oxygen mask, slapping it in place and taking deep breaths, his eyes closed against the dust.

It seemed to take forever, but it was probably only five minutes when the dust storm finally ceased and they could dare to look again. Feral kept his mouth covered as he stared around the dust filled tube. Thankfully the end of the tube still held that glimmer of light. T-Bone in the lead, quickly began crawling toward it again. It was harder for Feral as he had to keep his mouth covered and his eyes were so grit filled it was hard to see. Finally, they came out into another tube, this one leading straight up to the sky.

It felt good to be able to stand up, but Feral was too miserable and coughing to care. Seeing his companion's distress, T-Bone quickly took a deep breath of air before passing over his oxygen mask to Feral's face. The tom startled then look relieved as he pressed the mask to his face and began taking deep breaths to clear his lungs. By the time T-Bone was looking rather blue, Feral was breathing more easily and hurriedly handed the mask back and covered his mouth with his coat again. At least now he wasn't choking and coughing so much, though his eyes still burned.

T-Bone breathed through the mask as he looked around their new prison. The dust was settling more now as long as they didn't stir it up so he was able to see where the light was coming from. A port hole of a sorts was open at the top of the tube. He could see the sky.

His ears had been stunned by the roar of the collapsing mountain so he hadn't heard his partner's frantic calls over his radio until just now as sound began to return slowly. Reaching up

to tap his helmet, T-Bone answered.

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### ***Minutes before...***

Plumes of dust and debris chased the running and falling Enforcers plus one SWAT Kat down the hill before the shaking stopped. When they could get to their feet again and look back at the mountain, only then did they realize they were missing people.

"Where's T-Bone?" Razor demanded sharply, looking frantically around him.

"My uncle is missing too!" Felina shouted, fear in her voice as she realized where the pair had to be.

"They must have gotten caught in that," the smaller of the two SWAT Kats exclaimed then scrambled back up the hillside while calling over and over again into his helmet radio. "T-Bone do you copy?" There was no response. He immediately began to dig while continuing to call.

Felina used her radio to try and reach the Commander but got only a buzz indicating the other unit was destroyed or lost. Putting it away, she and the Enforcers joined Razor at the cave mouth and began to dig, pulling rocks away as fast as they could while praying the SWAT Kat got an answer.

Finally, to Razor's intense relief, his partner's voice came over the comm, rough and raspy sounding, "I hear you buddy!"

"Are you alright? Is Feral with you?" Razor asked. Though no one stopped digging, all ears were tuned to his conversation.

"Yeah, he's here. We managed to escape into a lava tube that led to a vent hole. We can see sky above. I'm going to see if it's big enough to get through. Talk at you again in a bit," T-Bone told his partner as he studied the small opening over his head.

Razor stopped digging and the rest did too. "They are both alright. T-Bone says they can see the sky. If they can get out, they're probably come out up there somewhere," he gestured to a portion of the mountain still intact. "If they can't, I'm sure he'll shoot a flare to show us where he is so let's wait and see."

"Good idea," Felina said, relieved. The group walked down the hill a ways then all eyes kept watch on the peaks above them for a sign from the pair.

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Feral studied the narrow opening and frowned. "It looks too narrow," he observed, unhappily.

"Yeah it does, but I won't know for certain until I get up there," T-Bone grunted.

He stepped to the center of the tube then fired a grappling line from his glovatrix out the hole. The hook caught and held. He immediately began to climb but as he got less than ten feet of the opening his shoulders began to wedge. No amount of shoving himself upward would break the hard walls of the tube which were like cement. Halting his progress, he hissed in frustration. They weren't getting out this way. Wiggling his shoulders, he worked his way back down.

Releasing the line and dropping to the floor, he gave Feral a grim look as he tapped his helmet and told his partner the bad news. "It's a no go buddy. The opening narrows too much, ten feet before the top and the walls are hard stone."

"Crap! Well that only leaves digging you out which we already started doing. Show us where you are so we can see how far we have to dig," his friend advised.

"Roger!" T-Bone chose something from his weapons on the glovatrix and aimed for the hole again. A flare lit up yellow in the sky.

"We see it. Just a sec..." Razor calculated the distance and moments later said, "okay we've pinpointed your location. It's going to take more than a couple of hours to get you two out. We're going to need heavier equipment and I don't have anything in the jet that wouldn't do further damage or bring more rock down on you."

"Let me speak to Felina." Feral interrupted, suddenly.

T-Bone glanced at him for a second. "Razor, give your helmet to Felina, Feral wants to talk to her." He pulled his helmet off and handed it over to Feral.

It was a tight fit but Feral managed it. "Felina, send for a cave rescue squad. They're better equipped for this kind of rescue. I could use an oxygen bottle and mask as the air is too dirty to breath. T-Bone might need a refill on his. Also, send down food, water, and a radio for me. Over!"

"Roger, Uncle. Please stay safe and we'll get you out of there as soon as we can," Felina said, briskly.

"We're not in any danger as the walls, like T-Bone said, are rock hard," Feral assured her then clicked off, handing the helmet back to other tom.

"Guess all we can do now is wait," T-Bone grunted, putting his helmet back on then looking around the cramped space. Feral didn't respond as he again covered his mouth with his coat.

T-Bone stepped backward until his back touched the wall behind him and remained standing, eyeing the opening as he waited for the oxygen bottles from his partner. It took only a few minutes because Razor used the Turbokat to hover over the hole while Felina winched down the supplies they needed.

It tightened his heart to see the jet take off without him as he handed a bottle and mask to Feral and kept one for himself and gave the tom a radio Felina had sent along as well. Feral sighed in relief as he fitted the mask to his face then took the radio and dropped it into a pocket of his coat. He went to a wall and sat down to rest. T-Bone, being too restless, chose to pace their tiny prison.

Feral peered through partly cracked eyelids at the tom pacing back and forth. His body heated at the sight making him shift around uncomfortably. Shock rippled through him as he realized why he was becoming rather agitated.

Oh, hell no! He thought, his mind rapidly running through some calculations before realizing that, yes, he was due his heat cycle. Crud! What lousy timing!

Gritting his teeth and pulling his arms tighter across his chest, he swallowed his trepidation at being trapped with his mate and going into heat. He prayed they would be rescued really soon before the worst effects of his condition became unbearable and the male before him learned of it from the dark tom's gradually increasing pheromone scent.

T-Bone was oblivious to Feral's sudden crisis. His own thoughts dwelled on the incredibly bad luck that had gotten him trapped with the stubborn and ill tempered tom. At least, the arrogant Enforcer wasn't making snide remarks or giving him a lecture, he thought. He glanced over at Feral occasionally, but the tom just continued to lean against the wall, eyes closed, breathing slowly into his oxygen mask.

The only good thing to come out of this sorry mess was Dark Kat being dead. Now maybe the city could catch a break, though they still had to contend with Dr. Viper and the Pastmaster. Hopefully, with DK dead, those two omegas might take a long hiatus and allow him and Razor a long deserved vacation. They were both mentally and physically exhausted after too many months of combat against their enemies. Being constantly on alert had also meant no time for sex as well.

He was soo uptight and tense at this point he would be perfectly willing to take anyone of either sex to relief his frustrations. Actually a herm might be the best answer to his needs. The last one he'd been with was a stunning she-he and very talented.

Maybe I should look her up, he mused. That is whenever we get out of here. He grimaced at that reminder when his attention was grabbed by the sudden shadow of a chopper overhead. A basket was being lowered.

Feral and he had to quickly turn their heads away as the chopper stirred up the dust and blinded them again. T-Bone felt the basket touch him. Blindly, he fumbled around until he could hold the basket under an arm then detach it from the rope then tugged that to signal the crew they could retract their line.

They waited until the air cleared again before opening their eyes and checking out what had been dropped down to them. The basket contained food and water in sealed containers.

They left them for now in the basket as the air was too clogged with dirt yet. About a half hour later, it was cleared enough to dare taking their masks off and eating a meal. It would have tasted better if the dust didn't get into it and make it taste gritty but neither complained. They ate in silence then put their trash back in the basket.

Feral called Felina on the radio and was informed the rescue crew had arrived and was checking out the area now and would let them know the best way extract them. Feral sighed, acknowledged her information and returned to waiting. A little later, some Kats dressed in rescue gear peered down at them from the hole. They asked some questions then disappeared again. By now, they'd been trapped at least an hour and a half. They could hear sounds of digging, voices shouting, heavy machinery and choppers flying through the blocked tube they'd come through.

Feral's discomfort rose as each passing minute went by. Discomfort was putting it mildly as that stage had since departed and the truly urgent need to mate began making him want to moan loudly. It didn't help having his mate less than four feet from him. The torment was awful. Only the oxygen mask helped him keep in control as it prevented him from scenting the tom but that too wouldn't be enough if he didn't get out of here very soon.

T-Bone had decided pacing was unproductive and boring so had remained seated when they'd eaten their meal. Bone tired, he sat opposite Feral and closed his eyes (though it was hard for Feral to tell through the mask). He stretched his legs out and crossed his arms over his chest and tried to nap but the mask annoyed him so he pushed it down to his neck. The air wasn't too bad. Sighing, he relaxed.

Opening his eyes a moment to rinse them with water, Feral heard the sigh and with his clearer vision, beheld a mouth-watering image. Swallowing hard, he quickly closed his eyes again but that brief look had made every part of him quiver with hot need. Kat's Alive! This is torture! He moaned mentally, clenching his teeth together to prevent any sound from escaping. That would be disastrous.

T-Bone was oblivious to Feral's rising distress. His mind was far away, daydreaming of the female herm he hoped to see when they got out of here. As the dream got more graphic, he could almost swear he smelled her sweet jasmine scent mixed with the faint odor of male musk in his



nose.

But gradually, insidiously, another stronger scent began to impinge on the one he was dreaming about. As the scent grew stronger, male musk mixed with the rich loamy odor of a female in heat, the dream shattered and he woke feeling confused.

Where had that scent come from? It certainly wasn't the one he'd been dreaming of, he wondered. Frowning, he carefully sniffed the air which was a mistake as he took in a clot of dust that made him sneeze violently.

Feral startled, turning to stare at T-Bone in annoyance, his nerves jangling worse than what his heat cycle was doing. Growling at the tom, he turned back away and closed his eyes. Just being here in such close quarters with T-Bone was driving him crazy.

With his sinus' cleared, T-Bone sampled the air again, hunting for that odd scent. It slapped his nose strongly and it came from...Oh hell no! That delectable odor cannot be coming from him! T-Bone objected violently in his mind. But there was no denying the scent was real and there was only one other person in here with him so Feral had to be the origin of that stunning odor.

Totally taken aback, T-Bone carefully inhaled again. Nope, no way to deny that scent! Feral smells like a she-kat. That can't be right! He thought stubbornly. Feral could be wearing some kind of strange perfume that only made him smell like that, he thought, but I have to know for certain or it will drive me crazy

Getting up quietly, his movements covered by the noise the rescuers were making, he crept closer to the dark tom.

No matter how careful he tried to be some inner sense warned Feral who opened his eyes suddenly, saw the tabby creeping up on him and scrambled frantically to his feet, moving away. No way is he getting closer to me! He thought in panic and consternation.

Surprised at Feral's sudden retreat and panicky look, T-Bone halted and eyed the tom warily. "Why do you smell like a she-kat in heat?" He demanded.

Feral felt his face burn with humiliation and anger. "Didn't your mother or father ever teach you it isn't polite to notice that, much less remark on it?" He snapped, infuriated.

The SWAT Kat jerked back, face flaming. Feral's response told the tabby bluntly that yes Feral was a herm and yes he was in heat. Now I feel really stupid! I do know how to act around a female in heat. Just because the female in question is a male herm is no excuse for bad manners. My mother would be soo pissed if she was alive right now, he berated himself.

Swallowing his pride, he choked out an apology. "Of course, they did and I've never made that particular blunder since my teens. I'm very sorry. But in my defense, I was just shocked to learn you were a herm."

Feral stared at him in surprise. He hadn't really expected the arrogant tom to apologize much less be sincere about it. So he does have manners, he thought a bit inanely. "You're forgiven. Happens occasionally," he muttered, not wanting to talk about it further. He sat back down and turned away from the handsome tom, his emotions angry and afraid. Dammit, he's gotten my heat scent. Now he's never going to leave me alone until we mate or remain apart which means misery for us both. What do I do now?

Still a bit embarrassed, T-Bone returned to his part of the tube and sat down again but he couldn't take his eyes off the dark tom. His expression was one of puzzled fascination. Breathing in softly, he inhaled that intoxicating scent again. Oohhh...that smells sooo fine and tasty, he moaned silently then shook his head wild-eyed with shocked dismay.

Oh, hell no! He could not be thinking that! Feral might be a herm but he wasn't that hard up to be wanting to do him. But that tantalizing odor pressed against his nose and filled him with heat and hunger so intense, he was shocked anew. How could he be wanting that stubborn, stiff-necked, very male powerhouse? It wasn't like he hadn't learned how to keep himself in control when around a female in heat so why was Feral's pheromones making his rutting instincts sit up and demand satisfaction?

Totally bewildered by his body's urgent signals to mate, T-Bone eyed the Commander more closely. Licking his dry lips, he watched as Feral's body quivered with need which only made him even more of a temptation. It was obvious to his experienced eye, that Feral was getting desperate and seriously uncomfortable as he hadn't been able to sit still at all over the past thirty minutes.

Unbidden, an image of tasting that most secret place where all that wonderful aroma was coming from, made him nearly pant with need. Already his cock was hard as steel and trying its best to poke its way out of his g-suit. He adjusted himself but it didn't help.

Crud! Razor better hurry and get me out of here before I do something I will regret! He thought in a panic. He tried desperately to block his nose and breathe as shallowly as he could so as to not take in anymore of that delectable scent but it was really becoming difficult in the tight space.

Feral, meanwhile, was overwhelmed with visions of wrapping himself around that hard body and scent marking it all over. The imagery alone was enough to make him want to howl a mating call. He huddled even tighter against the wall, keeping his face buried in his arms.

Listening intently, T-Bone couldn't hear the rescue team getting any closer and being locked in here with Feral was becoming sheer torture. It was all he could do to stamp on his now raging hormones and not do something really stupid. But as time crept by, desire overruled common sense and, without him realizing it, he was slowly edging his way closer to the dark tom whose back was still toward him.

Feral was not oblivious to T-Bone's approach. How could he be when the tom's rutting scent was pounding against his nose with unrelenting force despite the mask. He was panting and holding himself still as the SWAT Kat got closer and closer then he lost control completely and whirled around to pounce on the sneaky tabby. His heavier body slammed the tom to the rock floor, forcing the air from the tabby's lungs. The feel of that hard body beneath Feral drove him wild.

He moaned loudly and rubbed himself frantically against the other male. Though caught off guard, T-Bone was quick to take advantage of the situation by rubbing his cheek against Feral's face and caressing the broad back over him. "Really hot aren't you?" He crooned softly. This close to that incredibly sexy scent made T-Bone want to roll them both over and take the tom. To hell with the consequences.

But Feral came to his senses and wrenched himself violently away, retreating again to his side of their prison and huddling himself into a ball to keep from succumbing again to the lure and scent of his mate.

As for T-Bone, he huffed out a breath of stunned surprise and sat up slowly. He stared at the huddled form as he tried to recover from the heated exchange. His cock was still hard and aching but he made no move toward Feral. He realized what he almost would have done and was stunned.

They didn't move or speak again and he didn't know which of them was more relieved when the rescue squad finally broke through the lava tube and set them free some forty minutes later.

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Chapter 2: Denial by ulyferal

It was a very subdued SWAT Kat that flew the Turbokat home some three hours after being released from the rocky prison he and Feral shared. Razor thought it was due to being trapped with their antagonist but the truth would have blown him away.

They quickly changed clothes without saying much except for comments on being glad Dark Kat was finally out of their fur. Jake respected his friend's desire for not wanting to talk about what had happened, he was just glad Chance was safe and sound. The cave-in had scared him out of one of his nine lives.

He ordered pizza and they watched some TV then showered and went to bed. It didn't take long for Jake to crash, he was exhausted...they both were...but Chance couldn't sleep. His mind kept going back to that moment when he and Feral were pressed together so intimately.

The scent and feel of the dark tom had been shocking and very arousing. For just those few precious seconds, his nose had been filled with a glorious scent that even now he couldn't expel from his memory. Shaking his head violently, he shoved the unwanted thoughts from his mind and tried to get some sleep.

Sleep was the farthest thing from Feral's mind as he lay naked on his bed in his apartment. He'd not said very much except to get a report from Felina on the flight back to headquarters. He wrote up his report on the incident, cleared most of his desk while trying hard to ignore his body's demands for attention. He could only stand a couple of more hours working before finally giving up and going home.

Sgt Fallon and Felina were relieved as their noses had told them Feral shouldn't be here at all. Fallon kept any other males away from the Commander so as to prevent a riot. Even he wasn't immune to the incredible aroma even though he wasn't interested in males. That disturbed him quite a bit so he was very glad when his superior finally went home.

Feral went straight to his apartment, stripped his dirty clothes off, took a shower, cleaned his home and tried to ease his sexual tension with busy work. His appetite was gone, all his body's energies were focused on the need to mate.

Finally, he went to bed and flopped down. Without his bidding, his mind drifted to that one blissful moment when he was pressed against his mate's body, taking that heavenly scent deep into his lungs. It had been so wonderful and bitterly unwanted at the same time. Pushing away had been the hardest thing he'd ever done in his life.

Now here he was again, writhing and moaning with desire for that one tom above all others to come and complete him. And once more, he denied that need with every bone in his body. But his mind refused to be denied so when he finally succumbed to exhausted slumber, his dreams were filled with the sight and feeling of his mate wrapped around him, taking him hard.

The morning light found Chance shouting his release and ejaculating onto his sheets from the incredibly intense dream of him taking a certain powerful he/she to the heights of rapture. He sat up and groaned at the mess. He couldn't believe he had an erotic dream about Feral of all Kats. This was just too weird. He forcibly shoved the unwanted desire away and got cleaned up.

Try as he might, though more than a week had passed since the incident, he could not stop the intense erotic dreams about Feral. It was beginning to affect him enough that his partner noticed.

"Hey, buddy. You look so irritable and tired when you get up lately...what's the deal?" Jake finally asked after having to endure several mornings of nasty temper from his partner.

Chance just glared and tiredly got his breakfast together. He sat down and ate in stony silence.

Normally, Jake would just let him stew and whatever it was troubling his partner would eventually blow over. But something told him this was something more serious.

"Look. I wouldn't be asking if I didn't think it was leading to trouble. We have to work as a team and rely on each other to stay alive. When one of us has a problem that disturbs their sleep and makes them unhappy that transfers into the cockpit and makes for a deadly combination when our lives are on the line so give already!" Jake told his friend firmly.

Chance sighed and shoved his bowl away but couldn't look at his partner. Jake was right but it still didn't make it any easier to discuss something like this.

"Does it have something to do with the incident with you and Feral being trapped together?" Jake asked carefully.

A snort of pained amusement escaped Chance. "Oh, you could say that but you'd never guess what it was in a million years." He said, shaking his head.

"Try me!"

Chance looked at his friend and sighed. "Trust me, even I was shocked and still am."

"Will you just tell me already? The suspense is killing me!" Jake shouted in annoyance.

"Feral is an hermaphrodite!"

Jake's mouth hung open in stunned surprise, whatever he'd expected to hear it certainly hadn't been that. He snapped it shut and stared at his friend in confusion. "Okay, that's news alright but how did you find out and what does that have to do with what happened?"

"He came into heat while we were trapped and I was majorly turned on, of course, so was he!" Chance said, still trying to process that even now.

"Uh...well...uhm...that was unexpected but you both made it out without anything happening...right?" Jake asked hesitantly.

"Well, we didn't do anything about it...sorta..." Chance hedged.

"What do you mean 'sorta'." Jake blurted, looking scandalized.

"Well just before you guys managed to get us free, I was so entranced by his incredibly sexy odor that I was moving closer to him without really realizing what I was doing. Just before I reached him, he pounced on me and slammed me against the wall. His scent filled my nose...Gods, Jake it was so delicious that I was rubbing my face against his...he groaned in my ear and rubbed his body against mine...his body was on fire, I could feel the heat against my face...then suddenly he shoved himself away and went to huddle in a ball against the wall far from me. I just stood there stunned." Chance explained.

"Uh..." Jake was at a loss for words. "Uhm...Chance you've never had a problem ignoring a female in heat before, why was this so hard?" He managed to ask.

"I don't know! Yes, I've been with herms before though never a he/she and I've never had a problem behaving properly. But his scent was like a battering ram and it made me tight and hotter than I've ever experienced before and then there's the damn dreams..." He said irritably, unable to continue.

"You've been having erotic dreams about Feral?" Jake asked incredulously.

Chance's face reddened but he nodded miserably. "Yeah. Really intense ones."

Jake fell silent and stared at his partner in shock. He had a suspicion but he was too stunned to voice it yet. "Umm, Chance? Have you ever..." He couldn't finish.

His partner frowned at him questioningly.

"Anytime you've been around Feral before, have you ever 'felt' anything for him?" Jake asked carefully.

"Definitely not!"

"Okay...but now that you've been near him while he's in heat...things have changed?" Jake pressed.

Chance blinked then nodded slowly, just coming to realize that was true.

"I hate to say this but it sounds like you two are mates." Jake said seriously.

"What?" His partner shouted.

"Easy, buddy. Those are the first signs of a bonding but I could be wrong. Only way to know is if you feel anything for him when he's out of heat now. If you do its mating fever, if you don't it was just a fluke, an attraction because he's so unusual." Jake said, trying to reassure him.

"It has to be that. No way could I be attracted to that pain in the tail." Chance snorted angrily.

"Whatever you say, buddy." Jake said quietly, but he was afraid he was right.

For the rest of the day, Chance tried to ignore what Jake had said. He focused on their work in the garage and tried to put the uncomfortable subject out of his mind.

Feral tried to do the same thing when he finally returned to work a day later. It seemed to work and things around the city went back to normal, or as normal as this city ever gets.

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Chapter 3: The Pastmaster has a plan by ulyferal

The dreams just wouldn't leave him alone. To try and 'change the channel' as it were, Chance went to his she-he friend and spent some time with her. That helped a little, at least he could get some sleep at night...most of the time.

Feral had spent so much of his life denying his attraction to Chance that when his heat cycle was over, he was able to relegate it to the back of his mind once more.

And so it went for weeks then months, each avoiding the other. Mindful of what Jake had told him, Chance waited for the next time he and Feral came into close contact to see what would happen.

Unfortunately, that chance never occurred over that time as the next battles were fought in the air with them trading barbs over their radios. It was really annoying to Chance to not be able to test Jake's suspicion and put this nonsense to rest. All he could do for now, was just ignore it the same way a certain Chief Enforcer was doing.

It wasn't until nearly four months later, they finally had a face to face and things would never be the same again, at least for Chance.

***In past era...***

"I'm tired of being defeated by those irritating SWAT Kats. It's partly my fault though, since I have been far too predictable in my desires and actions. So that means I must do something they would never suspect...but what?" The one known as the Pastmaster muttered to himself as he looked through his books. "Hmm...perhaps..." He trailed off as he left the table strewn with old

books and moved to his pool of time.

Peering into it, he called up the time period he was interested in and over the next few hours watched until he spotted something, quickly freezing the image.

"Yes! He's just what I need to succeed this time along with my new little creatures. This time, I can't lose," he cackled with glee as he opened a portal with his watch, signaled to some small creatures to follow him then stepped through.

### ***Present day...***

"Are you sure they said the Pastmaster?" T-Bone demanded of his partner as they flew rapidly to Pumadyne, all engines flaring.

"Well, someone there said they had seen him!" Razor growled as he monitored the enforcer band for anymore information.

"But what would he want there? It doesn't fit his MO at all!" The tabby pilot huffed, confused.

"Yeah, I know but something obviously is going on by all the radio traffic. Guess we'll find out when we get there."

As they arrived over the sprawling grounds that was the Pumadyne complex, they were presented with an another surprise.

"What the heck? How did Feral get here so quickly? We flew out the instant we received word and he usually takes far longer to respond!" T-Bone blurted in shock as he brought the Turbokat lower to scan the area before making a decision to land.

"Okay, this has gotten far too weird!" Razor hissed, uneasy about what this might mean.

"Ya think!" His partner snorted, unnerved as well. "Should we land?"

"Make a complete pass first!" Razor ordered.

T-Bone acknowledged the order by doing just that. Circling the whole complex only showed them empty enforcer vehicles, circling choppers, Feral's empty chopper on the ground and nothing else.

"Down it is. Apparently the action is inside," Razor decided, unhappily.

"Roger!"

Within minutes they were on the ground, jumping from the cockpit and running headlong for the front doors of the main complex. Once inside, they heard shouts and weapon's fire coming from down a long hallway. They raced toward the sounds and found Feral and a group of enforcers fighting some kind of creatures that were only a couple feet tall, gray in color, resembling stone, with horned heads, ugly features and mouths full of sharp teeth plus being very fast moving.

Wherever the creatures went they caused any type of tech to malfunction. The enforcers weapons were good for only a single shot before contact with one of the creatures made it useless. They were reduced to trying to bludgeon the things with their useless lasers, fists and whatever came to paw. Unfortunately, the creatures were tougher than that so many an enforcer was sent flying.

"Don't let them get close to our glovatrix, T-Bone!" Razor shouted in warning as he shot electrified nets over the things, shocking them senseless before they could get close enough to him to counteract it.

T-Bone heeded the warning and kept his distance as he fired a brace of tarpedoes and managed to splat several of the things to the floor and walls.

Getting a breather from the SWAT Kats interference, the helpless enforcers managed to pull back and allow those with still working weapons, like Feral, to continue mowing the things down.

The battle went on for another ten minutes before every one of the creatures were disabled. Silence fell as the defenders caught their breaths. Feral quickly called for back up to collect the things and take them to a secured facility that hopefully would hold them.

"What the heck are these things?" Felina asked no one in particular as she carefully looked at one as close as she dared.

"I think they are what used to be called a 'gremlin'," Razor commented thoughtfully, studying one closely, fascinated by the things.

"How did you know about the Pastmaster, Feral?" T-Bone asked the Commander, more interested in that than the creatures.

"The Pastmaster? We got a call that Hard Drive was here...where did you hear about the Pastmaster?" Feral asked in surprise, a frown of confusion on his face.

"We heard it over the enforcer band," T-Bone explained getting a bad feeling.

"I never sent any such notice out and heard none!" Feral growled.

"Crap! Hard Drive! He's done this before...you know...altering his voice with the help of that device Dark Kat gave him," the burly tabby exclaimed in sudden insight.

"What? But why would he make us think the Pastmaster was here?" Feral rumbled more to himself than anyone else, his mind racing to find an answer. Something more was going on here.

"We did get a report of Hard Drive and did find his handiwork here, Uncle," Felina reminded him, coming up to them to join in the discussion.

"Well, if Hard Drive is here then where does the Pastmaster come into it?" T-Bone asked aloud trying to get a handle on what the heck was going on.

"Kat's Alive! A diversion! He used Hard Drive to get us away from city hall where I'm certain he is at this very moment!" Feral shouted as the pieces came together in his mind. Yanking his radio up, he shouted for troops to converge on city hall asap.

"Crud! Callie! We've got to scoot! Come on, Razor!" T-Bone barked at his partner, turning to race from the building and across the grounds to the jet, Razor hot on his heels.

Growling angrily as he watched them run off, Feral prepared to leave too but paused to turn to his niece. "Felina! Search for Hard Drive and insure these...things...are secured properly." He didn't wait for her response as he ran out and made for his chopper, taking off and flying as fast as he could to city hall.

Being faster, the Turbokat arrived well ahead of Feral and were soon eyeing the clock tower of city hall in dismay. The tower section and landing pad presently looked like the conical top of a medieval castle, the rest of the building still looked normal. They were apparently just in time.

"Well crud! He's had plenty of time to begin screwing with our world. Got any suggestions, buddy?" T-Bone growled as he circled the altered tower, keeping a careful distance so as not to alert the Pastmaster. The chopper squadron and ground troops already surrounded the building with the jet fleet just arriving to distract the sorcerer. No one was getting too close yet as the

Pastmaster was firing bolts at them occasionally to keep them at bay.

"Until we know what he's done, if anything, to Callie, we'll have to go in and cautiously check things out first," Razor told him.

"Roger! So the street...?" His partner questioned, turning the jet toward the ground.

"No, the park...keep the jet out of sight for now."

T-Bone quickly changed direction and lowered the jet by VTOL in a cleared space in Megakat Park. Just as they were landing, Feral arrived on scene, cursed when he got a look at what the SWAT Kats had seen then noted they weren't taking a direct route so landed next to them. They paused when they saw Feral's chopper come into a landing near them. For once, they decided to wait for the Commander to join them.

"I'm assuming you intend to sneak in and find out what is going on inside?" He asked sarcastically, not really expecting to be answered. In a more professional tone, he continued, "Manx and Briggs are still in there according to the last report I got. Apparently, the Pastmaster didn't care about the rest of the occupants and allowed them to escape."

"Well that's good news, sort of...won't have to worry about innocent bystanders," T-Bone growled in response to that bit of information. "Guess you're going with us, huh?"

"You got it! Now let's go!" Feral grunted, pulling his laser pistol out of his coat and leading the way.

Without making a smart remark, the pair fell in behind the determined Commander, running through the park, pausing behind a line of parked cars before dashing across the street and through the enforcer barricade of tanks heading for the main doors of city hall.

Oddly enough, there were no guards anywhere as they entered the main lobby. As a matter of fact, there was no one in sight and everything was eerily quiet. They opted to use the stairs, running steadily up them. It was a good thing they were all great in shape because it was over fifty floors up. They paused about halfway to catch their breath and to listen for trouble.

The only sound in the stairwell was their own harsh breathing.

"I don't like this!" Razor muttered softly. "Something about this is just not right."

"I know what you mean!" T-Bone huffed, keeping his voice low.

Feral was several steps further up from them when he'd stopped and was presently looking around carefully, ear pricked to try and catch any other sounds. "I would have thought there would be some of those creatures on guard here," He muttered more to himself than the pair with him.

Razor responded anyway. "They should be! I think he planned for that diversion to keep us busier longer. He also doesn't think much of your forces since he's not stopped whatever he's doing," he observed cautiously, his own ears stiff and twitching in alert tension.

"Huh! Nice to know he thinks we're far more of a threat than your entire force, Feral," T-Bone needed the dark tom a little.

Feral just gave him a sour look before saying, "if he has any guards then they'll be surrounding him or just outside wherever he is! We'd better hurry before he finishes that spell!" With that, Feral turned and began running lightly up the stairs again, careful to not make too much noise. For a big Kat, he was light on his feet. The SWAT Kats caught up to him and kept pace.



Working to catch their breath and still remain quiet, the three finally reached the top floor. When his breathing was even again, Feral carefully opened the stair door a tiny crack and peered through.

He jerked his head back and shut the door carefully then signaled the pair behind him to move back down the stairs. Stopping halfway down, only then did Feral speak.

"You were right. The hallway is crowded with those gremlin things." Feral growled, worriedly.

"Crap! How do we take them out then? No matter what we do, it will get Pastie's unwanted attention," T-Bone cursed.

"Well we can try to put them to sleep. I have a fast acting gas that hopefully will knock them out. If it doesn't, I have no other suggestions except to what we did at Pumadyne which, of course, will get the Pastmaster's attention really quick," Razor growled.

They thought about that a moment longer then Feral nodded, "that's as good an idea as any and I can't think of anything else I could do...wait...let's do a diversion of our own. I'll have my jet squadron begin firing close to the tower to shake things up and distract that creep. At least if the gas doesn't work, he won't hear us storming his place," Feral said decisively, grabbing his radio and going a little further down the stairs before calling in his forces.

"Who knew he could come up with such a good idea," T-Bone muttered sarcastically to his partner. Razor just gave him a grunt of annoyance and waited tensely.

Feral finished his hurried radio call then hurried back up to the pair then went past them to head toward the stair door once more. They followed him up then while they waited for Feral diversion to happen, Razor collected all the gas grenades he and T-Bone had and prepared to fire them rapidly when Feral opened the door.

Some ten minutes later, an explosion was heard and the building shook, sending plaster dust raining on them.

"That's our cue!" Razor whispered as he prepared for Feral to open the door which he did seconds later. In quick succession, Razor sent all the grenades flying into the corridor then jerked back while Feral shut the door quickly and all three leaned against it to prevent anyone from trying to escape.

They waited tensely for another ten minutes until Razor felt the gas had time to dissipate then signaled for Feral to open door again.

Peering through the crack, they saw the gas had worked perfectly, much to their relief.

"Bingo!" Razor crowed triumphantly as he pushed the door open completely and hurried down the hallway through the many bodies heading for the Mayor's offices.

T-Bone and Feral followed closely with weapons drawn. Quickly glancing in Callie's office, they saw a mess but no blond she-kat. They moved on to the Mayor's office and found him unconscious under his desk, the gas having reached him.

Sharing a meaningful glance, the three guessed where the Pastmaster was and carefully went back out to the hall then snuck up the altered stairs to the tower. The stairs and the former clock tower now resembled a huge round room of stone and was decorated with all the trappings of the dark ages.

Suspended in the air in the center of the room, her arms held out in front of her stiffly, was Ms. Briggs. She looked furious and scared but was unharmed. Around her neck was a huge amulet that was glowed faintly. Watching her, the three could tell her body was frozen in place. Not far

from her, near a balcony through which they could see Feral's jets buzzing the tower, stood the sorcerer who, at that moment, was staring in angry fury at the jets.

Snarling under his breath, the Pastmaster turned away from the annoying view outside and returned to a pool of water that stood on a pedestal nearby. He began muttering as he pointed his watch at the pool and poured energy into a spell he was obviously conjuring. From Ms. Briggs, the amulet glowed much brighter and the energy from it was adding itself to whatever he was doing.

T-Bone was about to charge forward to stop the ugly creep but was halted by Feral rather forcefully. The dark tom pulled the tabby back and shoved him against the wall of the stairwell.

Feral leaned close so that his breath stirred T-Bone's facial fur causing a ripple of heat to race down the startled tabby's body. He blinked at Feral in anger and stunned surprise. Not able to focus on two disturbing things at once, he ignored the odd sensation in his body and listened to what Feral had to say.

"You don't know what will happen if you disrupt that spell. It could harm Ms. Briggs or blow the whole tower or even leave us like this. Now think! What can we do to stop him, safely?"

Razor had moved closer so he could hear what was being said and had to admit Feral was absolutely right. Turning his mind to find some kind of solution, he had a bad feeling they were fast running out of time.

T-Bone hissed softly as he nodded to indicate Feral had a very valid point.

Certain the tom was heeding him, Feral pulled away from T-Bone even though his body cried out in dismay at being denied yet again. He ruthlessly ignored it.

While they were trying to come up with a solution, they heard the whine of lasers from Feral's fighter squadron hitting the balcony and causing the place to shake again eliciting an angry cry of dismay from the Pastmaster.

"No...they will ruin the spell!" He screamed.

All three peered around the doorway and saw the ugly gnome move away from his pool and go to the balcony again, beginning to fire his watch at the jets.

"Yes!" Razor hissed at the same time Feral barked "Go!"

They charged into the room, Razor firing an octopus missile at the watch while T-Bone fired a torpedo at the sorcerer's body, meanwhile Feral had gone to Ms. Briggs' side and waited to catch her when the spell ended.

The SWAT Kats hit on target at the same time. The Pastmaster screamed in fury as his watch was sent flying from his skeletal paw then screamed again but was cut off when the tar plastered him to the balcony wall. Feral easily caught Ms. Briggs as she went limp and fell from the air.

As he was setting her on her feet but keeping an arm around her waist until she was steady, the room returned to normal around them. He reached into his pocket and dragged his radio out. He called off the attack and silence reigned again.

"Yes! We did it!" Razor said in relief.

"Are you alright Ms. Briggs?" Feral asked, releasing her to stand on her own.

"Yes, thank you all. He'd almost succeeded this time. Where were you all?" She asked, frowning.

"The Pastmaster is getting a bit more creative. He apparently made a deal with Hard Drive who set up a distraction at Pumadyne. We only just learned it was a trick in time to get here." Feral explained.

She shook her head in dismay. "That bastard! Well at least he doesn't have his watch to cause more trouble. By the way...where is it now?"

Frowning, Feral went to the balcony and looked down. Below the ground forces were standing down and awaiting further orders. Pulling his radio out, he called to the squadron leader to search for the pocket watch and to send up a detail to collect the Pastmaster.

The other three came to his side and look down as well, watching as the enforcers, looking like ants, were moving around searching for the watch. Another group was heading inside the lobby.

T-Bone was pressed rather close to Feral's side making the dark tom uncomfortable but he didn't want to call attention to his uneasiness not wanting T-Bone to know he was affecting him but it was very hard to ignore what his body was feeling with his mate so close.

Though his eyes were on the ground like everyone else, T-Bone couldn't ignore how strange it felt to be this close to Feral. Normally, he wouldn't be caught dead in the tom's vicinity much less right against him but as he stood there he was disinclined to move and was rather bewildered by the way his body was responding to the scent and feel of the dark tom...it felt unbelievably hot.

Suddenly, Feral's radio sang out. Relieved, he answered and was told the watch had been found. Using his time on the radio to give him an excellent reason to move away from the SWAT Kat, Feral sighed inwardly as he gave orders on what to do with the watch then the detachment he'd asked for arrived making it even easier to put distance between himself and his mate.

He quickly ordered the Pastmaster be carefully and thoroughly restrained to prevent escape then hauled off to a special cell just for him at Megakat Prison. With the details taken care of he turned to Ms. Briggs.

"The Mayor was knocked out by sleeping gas used to take out the creatures. How long does that work, Razor," he turned his head to ask the smaller SWAT Kat standing nearby.

"He should be waking up now. Those creatures had better have been wrapped up quickly before they wake up too," Razor warned.

Feral hurried down the short flight of stairs from the clock tower to see if his troops had arrived to take care of the creatures and was quickly relieved to see they had, already hogtying the things and removing them. Callie and the SWAT Kats had followed him down and watched as the last of the gremlins were taken away.

Going into the Mayor's office, they found the portly Kat just waking up and holding his head in confusion. Seeing that things were well under control now, Feral followed the detail hauling the Pastmaster off, carefully avoiding getting close to his mate again as they loaded aboard an elevator then closed the door before the SWAT Kats could join them.

Frowning, T-Bone with his partner took another elevator and headed down to the lobby. He felt acutely disappointed, his body bereft and feeling lost. He shook himself mentally, totally disturbed by these strange feelings running through him.

'This just couldn't be happening!' He told himself tightly, shoving the unwanted feelings away as he and his partner headed back to their jet.

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Chapter 4: Confrontation by ulyferal

When Feral had gotten downstairs, he collected the deadly watch from his officer then checked with Felina on the hunt for Hard Drive. The techno thief had managed to slip away. Sighing in frustration, he told her to return to headquarters.

Walking briskly down the city hall steps, he crossed the road and went through the park to where he'd left his chopper. In less than ten minutes, he was soaring over the city toward Enforcer Headquarters. Back at his office, he sat down at his desk and wrote up the report on the incident then proceeded to clear his desk of the other work that had accumulated while he was gone. The whole time, he forcibly kept what had happened between himself and T-Bone far away from his active mind.

Meanwhile, a very disturbed SWAT Kat flew the Turbokat home. They had heard over their radio Felina's report that Hard Drive had not been found.

"Great! That's all we need is that creep on the loose," he growled, irritation darkening his tone.

"Yeah. Though, it might be a while before he shows himself again," Razor sighed in resignation.

T-Bone just grunted in annoyance. He flew the jet into their hangar, shut the engines and waited until they were raised to the main level. Changing clothes, the two of them returned to their garage full of work they'd left when the emergency had sounded.

He didn't tell Jake about what had happened with Feral, not wanting to admit the truth of what he'd discovered. That night they went to bed very tired, still needing a vacation and not seeing any opportunity to escape for one any time soon.

To Chance's annoyance and distress, the erotic dreams returned with a vengeance, wiping out his time with the lovely she-herm. He didn't think another round of time spent with her was going to fix this now. Irritable, he came downstairs the next morning with a scowl on his face.

Jake looked up and stared unhappily at his partner. Trouble was brewing, he could see it all over his partner's face.

"Don't say it!" Chance snapped as he got a glass of milk and a slice of leftover pizza from the fridge then sat down heavily at the table. He concentrated on his food and kept his attention on the surface of the table. When he had washed his meal down with the milk and slammed the glass to the table only then did he look up at his friend.

"You were right!"

Jake frowned at him in confusion. "Right about what?"

Chance scowled and slammed a fist on the table making the glass and Jake's bowl bounce.

"That Feral and I are mates!"

Jake's face fell. 'Oh God!' He thought. 'Now what do we do?' "I...I don't know what to tell you buddy. I know you can ignore the fact and put it out of your mind by being with others but I also know, when you do that, you're usually never very happy. It happened to a cousin of mine." He said helplessly.

"It wouldn't be such a big deal if it weren't Feral!" Chance snarled.

"Yeah, I know." His friend murmured sympathetically.

Chance raised his paws up and put his face in them. "I don't know what to do! The dreams are back and just as intense as before."

"That would have been because Feral had you pressed against the tower wall, wouldn't it?"

"That and when we stood on the balcony."

"Uh...gee...wonder why Feral hasn't shown any sign of being disturbed too?"

"Oh he feels it alright! I could tell! But he's obviously decided to ignore it."

Silence fell as they each thought about the problem.

Jake finally sighed and leaned forward, putting his paws on the table and spreading them out toward his friend.

"I can think of only two solutions here, buddy. One, you break the deadlock and push Feral to acknowledge the fact you're mates and bond or two, you find a way to ignore the feelings and push on without him, finding someone else to take his place."

Chance just looked at his friend in askance. "No matter which I choose, it's a no winner from where I sit. Thanks anyway!" He got up from his seat, put his glass in the sink and vanished back upstairs.

They had no work, at present, in the garage but Jake had wanted to reload the jet. Sighing, he decided on doing it alone and leaving his partner to wrestle with his serious problem. Whatever Chance decided it would have lasting consequences on their partnership. He got up slowly from the table, put his bowl in the sink and went down to the hangar.

Feral wasn't having an easy time of it either. This second close encounter with T-Bone had weakened his resolve to not take a mate. Though he was not in heat, his dreams began to plague him with intense desire. The harder he tried to push it away the more his subconscious refused to give it up.

He grew more annoyed and irritable. It began to reflect on his behavior at work much to Felina's dismay. Even Feral's assistant, Sgt Fallon was at a loss to explain why the Commander was being so touchy. No more enemies crawled from the woodwork for some weeks but still the Chief Enforcer acted as if he had burrs under his fur. It made for a strained workplace for his officers causing them to avoid their superior whenever they could.

Chance had done his best to ignore his problem and be the partner he needed to be for Jake, but his friend could see how much of a toll this was having on the tabby. Something had to give and soon.

To get away from his demons, Chance begun to frequent a rather tough, badass club that catered to clientele that liked their sex rougher than the ordinary Kat enjoyed it. But it was no use. Though it relieved his bodily needs, he still came away feeling incomplete somehow and unsatisfied.

One night as he walked away from the club to catch a bus back to the salvage yard, (he'd hadn't wanted to bring the tow truck in this area) he found himself just walking and brooding. He had no idea how far he'd traveled until he was accosted by some unsavory figures hiding in an alley he was passing.

They thought he was easy pickings and tried to drag him into the alley to rob him. Furious and needing the release a good fight could give him, he threw good sense to the wind, and lit into the poor hoods who had no clue who they had tried to hassle that night. Their struggle carried them further out on the sidewalk.

Feral was tired and it was late. He'd worked at his desk until he'd finally cleared the backlog that seemed to haunt him for weeks. Feeling a sense of accomplishment, he headed home letting his mind go on autopilot.

Despite his seeming inattention, his enforcer instincts were on alert and an altercation on a sidewalk he was just beginning to drive past caught his eye, forcing him to put on the brakes swiftly. Hissing in annoyance, he immediately flipped on his police lights but no siren before putting his rig in park...not caring he was now double parked in the roadway.

He jumped out of his vehicle, pulled out his pistol and moved swiftly toward the melee. On closer inspection, he noted it was a simple brawl involving some punks. Putting away his gun, he reached down and easily pulled one of the thugs off their apparent victim.

He'd done it so smoothly, the punk was completely shocked, allowing Feral to yank the guy's arms back brutally, pawcuffed him then shoved his body to a seated position on the ground.

"Stay put!" He warned the punk who could only gape at the Chief Enforcer in stunned surprise and fear.

Feral ignored him, turning back to the fight and studying it with a critical eye. He couldn't make out who the victim was yet but the male was easily holding his own.

The male landed a solid punch on a thug that was trying to help his buddy the 'victim' had in a head lock. The thug went down like a sack of cement and didn't move. Feral decided to end the conflict by announcing his presence.

"Alright, that's enough! Let him go, the enforcers are here!" He barked sternly.

The victim startled, releasing his prisoner who rolled away quickly. Now Feral could see who the unknown male was, the identity leaving him speechless and stunned. They stared at each other for a moment before he recalled his duty, quickly stretching a long arm out and snatching the punk the victim had released, preventing him from attempting to crawl away.

Blinking away his stunned surprise at Feral's presence, Chance scrambled to his feet and assisted the dark tom in corralling his prisoners.

"What the heck are you doing here?" He demanded in a not too friendly voice.

"I was driving home when I saw the altercation. Of course, I'm going to stop," Feral snapped in annoyance at Chance's tone.

Chance blushed but didn't respond, silently helping Feral guard the thugs until the enforcer could call a patrol to collect them. Less than five minutes later (they must have been nearby), a patrol car arrived to take possession of the two males.

After answering the officers stuffed the two thugs into their car, one of them questioned Feral and Chance, taking their statements for their report then releasing them to go their separate ways while the cruiser took off with their prisoners to book them at headquarters.

The two were left standing alone on the dark empty street.

Feral gave Chance a thorough once over and couldn't help but wince, sighing mentally. The tabby had suffered a bloody lip, a bruise was just beginning on one cheek, scraped knuckles on both paws, and multiple scratches that were bleeding freely from rents in his shirt over his shoulders, across one pectoral and one arm. Thankfully, other than the lip and cheek, his face managed to avoid too much damage.

"Where's your vehicle? You should go home and clean up," he suggested gruffly.

Chance didn't look at the dark tom when he rumbled back in a surly tone, "didn't drive...took the bus...was going home the same way before I was waylaid."

Feral shook his head, growling in frustration at the mulish behavior of his mate. "Looking like that, they won't let you aboard," he said flatly. "Come on!" Turning away from the tabby, he walked back to his vehicle but realized after a moment that Chance wasn't following. The tabby stared at him in wary suspicion.

'Why the heck was Feral trying to be nice to him?'

"Don't be an idiot Chance, get in the damn car and I'll run you home," Feral growled impatiently, already beginning to regret his decision.

But the tabby shook his head. "Why would you do that? I can clean up back at the club then catch the bus home or call Jake," Chance continued belligerently.

Feral hissed in annoyance. "You were always too stubborn for your own good, Furlong!"

"Oh that's rich! Coming from the king of stubbornness!" The tabby snorted.

More annoyed and frustrated than the situation called for, Feral lost his patience, went back to the tabby and got aggressively into the tom's personal space using his chest to shove Chance back against the building.

"Why is it always so hard for you to just do as you're asked without arguing." He snarled, pressing his body tightly against the other male.

Which was an unfortunate mistake. His hormones, already excited by being near his mate, were now jumping for joy, causing his face and other more sensitive areas to rise with heat.

Chance was angry but it turned to something else as Feral's heavier body pressed him hard setting off heat and desire which only made him madder. He didn't want this! This was the reason he was downtown in the first place. He started to push the bigger male off.

That only made it worse for Feral. Now past his comfort zone and into the hot zone that his body demanded he do something about, Feral lost control completely. It was just too much temptation and desire too long denied for him to pull back now.

"Aw fuck, Chance! I can't keep this up any longer! You make it impossible for me to stay away or ignore you!" He groaned helplessly then leaned down and caught Chance's bleeding lip with his own and licked it tenderly.

Chance froze, his whole body shuddering at that one intimate touch. His sudden indrawn breath caught the scent of arousal from the Feral and tore away all his reasons for fighting.

The taste of his mate pushed Feral to stake his claim, no longer desiring to deny his feelings. After licking the blood off, he kissed gently so he wouldn't cause more pain. The tabby's surrender was sweet music to his ear as Chance returned the kiss with heat of his own.

'Oh my God!' Chance panted, 'how could a kiss be so powerful?' He thought deliriously, totally swept away by an intense rush of desire. 'He tastes like heaven!'

They kissed passionately for several long minutes, forgetting they were in the open and Feral's car was blocking traffic. A horn blasted suddenly, startling them both and causing them to jump apart, eyes searching the street wildly for the culprit but whoever had honked was gone in the night.

They stood there panting and shaking from jangled nerves besides being still heated from their more intimate activity.

Turning his attention back to Chance, Feral stood indecisively. Did he want to continue this? It

meant he finally crossed the line he swore he wouldn't but it had felt so good letting go at last, did he really want to continue being unhappy and uncomfortable?

While Feral struggled with his confused feelings, Chance was just as dismayed. 'What now?' He thought in a daze. 'I should leave...not let this go any further.' But he couldn't move.

Feral came to a decision, he grabbed his mate's arm and tugged him toward his car. Chance almost pulled back but seeing the determination on Feral's face and still being conflicted himself, he relented and climbed into the vehicle without further protest.

They drove in silence as Feral headed for his apartment. The silence continued as he pulled into the underground parking lot beneath his apartment and cut the engine. They climbed out and with Chance following closely, Feral led the way to the elevator and pressed the button for his floor. At the top, they decanted and walked down a very nicely appointed hallway until they reached the last door nearest the stairs leading to the roof.

Unlocking his door, Feral gestured for Chance to precede him. The tabby paused, still uncertain if this was the right decision but after staring into the big tom's eyes for a minute, he stepped forward over the threshold and on into the living area.

Feral followed, pulling the door closed behind him then locking it. Standing in the entranceway, he watched Chance look around while he flipped on a small lamp for better light then tugged his coat and holster off, stowing them in the closet nearby. By the time he was done, Chance had finished sizing up the place and was now standing staring at Feral questioningly.

Staring back, Feral thought, 'Okay, here we are at last. So what do I say to him?'

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Chapter 5: Surrender by ulyferal

Taking his tie off as he moved slowly toward the tabby, he still didn't know what to say and thought words were over rated anyway. He leaned close and nuzzled Chance's face without speaking then tugged on the tom's arm to direct him toward the bedroom.

Feral's scent was bewitching, so much so, that Chance was floundering in a sea of desire and not finding any reason to refuse the obvious invitation though at the back of his mind, some part of him was screaming this was wrong and would cause them no end of problems but it was too soft and distant for him to heed through the roar of his hormones.

The Commander dropped his tie on the dresser as he passed and was unbuttoning his shirt with one paw while his other paw still held onto Chance. In the bathroom, he pushed the tom to sit on a chair he had there and looked him over critically.

Taking out a first aid kit he proceeded to clean the wounds he could see then halted to turn on the shower while saying over his shoulder, "Take off your clothes, Chance," in an even tone of voice.

Chance blinked as if in a trance and jolted more aware when Feral spoke in that deep voice of his. He looked around at the nice sized bathroom while slowly stripping his clothes off. He should be running from here as fast as he could but he simply couldn't muster the desire to.

By the time he was fully undressed, Feral had closed the shower door and had pulled his shirt and shoes off, his pants were still on when he turned to finish disinfecting Chance's many cuts and bruises.

A particularly deep one was on his neck. Feral dabbed at it gently. "This one will need some ointment after the shower and maybe a bandage." He muttered softly, setting aside the first aid kit for now. "Get in the shower, Chance."



Still feeling like he was in a surreal dream, Chance stood and stepped into the shower. The hot shower stung his many cuts and he hissed from the pain. But after a few minutes the heat felt good and he stood letting it pour on him with his eyes closed.

It seemed like forever but was probably only a few minutes, when a cool draft hit his rear signaling the shower door had been opened. This was confirmed when a large body spooned him from behind.

Feral sighed and moaned as his naked body finally touched the one he'd been desiring for so very long. He dipped his head and kissed Chance's neck on the side away from the deep scratch.

Chance shivered at the contact but he still didn't give in completely. Something at the back of his mind insisted something about this was wrong. He tried to focus on it but it kept slipping away. Feral's paws began to explore his body with questing fingers that seemed to want to know every part of him.

The dark tom didn't hurry as he pinched a nipple then stroked down the hard chest to the well defined muscles of the tabby's abdomen down to his slowly awakening genitals. As his fingers explored, he memorized each part of his mate's anatomy, wanting to know it intimately after denying himself for far too long.

Chance kept his eyes closed, ignoring what Feral was doing while he tried to figure out what was disturbing him so much about this. He didn't think it was about how it would affect him and Jake, though that certainly was going to be a problem, so...no that wasn't it...so what...shit! It hit him between the eyes.

He whirled around in Feral's embrace, grabbed the tom's arms and slammed the big body against the shower wall. Feral blinked in surprise and looked into Chance's suddenly angry face with confusion.

"I've never been close to you! Why are you coming on to me?" He hissed.

The dark tom stared at him for a long moment then reached out a finger to touch the tom's cheek. "I know who you are, Chance. I've always known!" He murmured quietly.

Chance gaped at him in shock but still didn't give away what he was thinking. "You know what?" He demanded, desperately hoping he was wrong.

"I know you're T-Bone. I've known the first time you and Jake showed up after being kicked out of the enforcers." Feral said gently.

"How?"

"When I caught your scent the first time we argued with each other not too long after you appeared as the SWAT Kats. But I knew you were my mate several years before that, at your enforcer graduation when I pinned your wings on. At that moment, I did the only thing I could do, ignore the most important thing in my life...you!" He explained.

The tabby tom frowned and released Feral, stepping back as far as the shower would let him without getting out. He wrapped his arms around his chest as if trying to ward off what he'd heard as the water ran down his face and body.

He eyed Feral in disbelief. "How could you do that? Why would you?"

"You were young and still fresh from the academy. It wouldn't look right for me to be associated with one of my own troops so I had to let you go, then you went and became a vigilante. We

fought every time we met.. You hated me. I just thought it would be much easier for both of us if I didn't make my claim and let you be." Feral said honestly. "Besides, by then you pissed me off so often I just couldn't see myself with you either." He added with a snort.

Wishing he could just deny it and turn away, Chance was forced to admit Feral's reasons were very sound, but it still sucked. "Alright, so why now? We're still antagonists, nothing about that has changed."

"You miserable? Having really erotic dreams about me lately?" Feral asked, cocking his head and smirking knowingly.

Chance blushed giving away the answer without the need of words.

Feral moved closer to the tabby once more and wrapped his arm around him, pulling the strong body toward him. "Well, guess what you stubborn and annoying tom, so am I." He finished then kissed Chance hard.

'Well crap!' The tabby thought in stunned amazement as he let the kiss overwhelm him with heat and desire. 'Who would have guessed this would happen?'

The pouring water steamed up the bathroom as they kissed and caressed every inch of each others bodies. Time had no meaning but the water eventually grew cold and halted the pleasurable moment. Sighing in annoyance, Feral turned off the water and pulled them both from the shower to the dryer. He nuzzled the tom as their fur dried. He made Chance sit down again so he could treat the worst of his wounds.

"You have any more questions?" He asked as he applied ointment to the deep cut on the tom's shoulder.

"I guess not...probably later when we have to face the fact we are on opposite sides of the law and how to deal with it." Chance snorted.

"Hmm, yes. We will also have to discuss other things, such as pregnancy, cohabitating, and your partner." Feral murmured as he finished his doctoring task.

Chance blinked not sure he'd heard Feral correctly. "Uh, did you say pregnancy?"

"Well, of course. I am a breeding female." Feral snorted in amusement.

"What?" Chance blurted in shock. "I thought most male herms couldn't conceive."

"Hmm, that's true for most, but I'm afraid I'm one of those rare ten percent that can." Feral said dryly.

"Crud!" Was all the tabby could articulate at that moment.

"Yes, well, shall we go to bed?" The dark tom asked, eyeing the tabby with half closed eyes that shone with heat.

"Uh yeah, sure." Chance muttered as he followed Feral's naked back side to the bedroom. He was surprised at how delectable the Commander's supple ass looked and how sexy his thick tail was as it swished teasingly.

Licking his lips he waited till Feral opened the bed, pulled the covers down then climbed in. He eyed the tom invitingly. Chance took the invitation and climbed on to the end of the bed and crawled up the dark tom's body until he lay firmly on top.

Feral sighed and moaned at the feel of the hard body laying on his. Smiling wickedly, the tabby

began to lay butterfly kisses all over the dark tom's face. Feral had started this but he intended to be the aggressor now.

He kissed the strong, rugged face then paused a moment. "Have you ever allowed yourself to be taken or have you been the takee?" He asked.

"What do you think?" Feral replied, his voice husky with need.

Chance rumbled a laugh, Feral could feel through his chest sending a ripple of heat through him. "Never been touched." He breathed out the answer, certain of it. "You'll be touched now and thoroughly by the time I'm through." He promised darkly.

Feral shivered at that certainty, anticipation making him squirm beneath the tom he desired with every fiber of his being. This was it and there was no turning back.

Chance had always considered himself to be a gentle and considerate lover with the fems and a dominant and firm one with the males. He would need to combine those qualities for his new he/she mate.

He slid his body down to the delicious scent that had been haunting his dreams for months. He forced the dark tom to spread his thighs wide then he dipped his head down to the source of the delectable odor. The cock that was so much bigger than his was already hard and leaking with excitement but this wasn't his target for tonight, at least not right now.

He gave it passing attention with his tongue, mouthed the heavy ballsack for a moment then delved into his primary target.

When Chance's tongue caressed his cock and balls, Feral jerked and moaned as shivers of pleasure rippled up his spine but when he licked that most sensitive part of him that had never been touched, he nearly screamed from the sensations he was experiencing.

His claws were out and he was digging them into the bedding fiercely, not wanting to wound his mate by digging them into his head which was all he could reach at the moment. Seconds later his hips bucked into the air when a hot, rough tongue plunged into his female channel. The touch was far too much, too intense and he came with stunning force. He screamed and writhed as his world came apart. When the impossible high eased, he lay shuddering in bewildered surprise.

Never in his life had he experienced anything like this. The damn tabby raised his head, clear fluid painting his chin and whiskers and a look of dark triumph spread across his expressive face.

"You liked that didn't you!" He gloated in amusement. "Just wait it gets better."

Feral felt like whimpering, as it was, all he could do was lay there panting, eyes wide, waiting to see what the tabby intended to do next.

Chance was pleased with the responsiveness of his new mate. This was going to be a night to remember.

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Chapter 6: Bonding by ulyferal

Now that the inevitable was going to happen, Chance wasn't in a hurry. This was far too important to rush. He dipped his face back to his previous task and began again.

Feral gasped and mewed in delirious pleasure. 'Oh yes! This is what I've been missing!' He sang in his mind.

Chance stretched both his paws up as high as he could reach and began a maddening stroking

of the dark body setting off ripples of tingling sensations through his mate's nervous system. He dragged his claws lightly through the thick fur.

Feral writhed wildly as the tabby's tongue delved deep into his channel and his rough tongue set off lightning bursts of sensations he couldn't handle. Add in the stroking motions of those strong paws and he was pushed over the edge. He screamed again, bucking his hips and coming again.

The tabby didn't relent as he continued to drive the tom far past his level of pleasure and into near pain. His fingers managed to reach the fat, slightly larger nipples and twisted them hard. Feral jerked to a near sitting position at that jolt of pain that incredibly, translated into intense pleasure.

Grinning with evil purpose, Chance finally desisted his enjoyment of the delicious honey he'd been imbibing. He crawled upward until he reached Feral's face and kissed the panting tom hard and passionately until his mate was struggling for breath. He released the kiss and moved his body further up the dark tom's chest until his hard, leaking cock waved before Feral's mouth.

He waited patiently until Feral could catch his breath then made it clear what he wanted by slapping his cock against the tom's cheeks.

Smiling widely, Feral opened his mouth. Chance moved a bit closer until Feral could take him and was surprised when the tom inhaled him completely without gagging.

'Oh wow! What a hot mouth and is he ever good with that tongue of his as well as his other sneaky tricks.' Chance thought as he shivered and moaned.

Feral smirked around the cock in his mouth and teased the large mushroom head, pausing to suck hard every now and then. His paws reached up and caressed his mate's back and rear. As he felt Chance begin to swell larger, he did something that drove the tabby out of his mind. He purred and shoved a finger into the tom's furless pucker to touch the hidden gland.

Chance shouted in sharp surprise and came, pouring his seed into his mate's waiting mouth.

The dark tom sucked and licked until he had drained his mate completely. Chance shivered, carefully pulled away then laid down on Feral's broad chest.

"Oh that was really good. Obviously you've had lots of practice doing that." He sighed, feeling light as a feather at the moment.

"Hmm, you could say that." Feral rumbled, caressing Chance's cheek.

They lay that way, comfortable with each other as they recovered. Finally, Chance raised his head and stared into the gold eyes of his soon to be bonded mate.

"Are you sure about this, Ulysses?" He asked, using Feral's first name making the moment very personal and intimate.

"A little late to back out now, Chance." Feral said quietly in response, concerned his mate was having second thoughts.

"No, it's not too late...yet...after the bonding it is far too late." The tabby said seriously. "I'm ready so I'm not having second thoughts, though to be truthful, I really should be as this situation will cause some major repercussions in both our lives as well as my partners. But, you were the one holding back all these years. I don't want to be responsible for you regretting this afterwards."

Feral eyed Chance quietly for some minutes. This tom might have been reckless when he was in the enforcers but being a vigilante these past few years had matured him, much to his pleased

relief.

He shook his head and caressed the sandy tom's cheek tenderly. "No regrets...not any more...this is what I've been longing for. I've been soo very lonely and unfulfilled for too many years. It's my turn to be happy." He said firmly.

"Then happy we will be." Chance said just as firmly then began to make slow love to his mate. They rubbed and caressed each other setting off renewed fires of need.

Feral couldn't begin to describe how it felt to have someone he truly wanted in his arms and being held so lovingly by someone that wanted him as well. The strong body felt so good rubbing against him. Most of his previous sex partners didn't like cuddling, caressing, rolling against each other for the sheer pleasure of feeling each others bodies. They were in too much of a hurry to get to the main event but Chance was not in a hurry and was willing to do whatever felt good to both of them.

Slowly they built the fire between them, wrapping their emotions around each other just as they were wrapping their bodies tightly, nearly trying to get into each other's skin. The kisses became deeper, more intense with the passage of time.

Soon they were panting and desperate for completion.

"You're so hot!" Chance moaned, biting and licking his mate everywhere.

"Oh god, Chance...please...I need you!" Feral pleaded, on fire and wanting his mate to take him now.

"Hmm, not yet, love...soon..." His mate cooed as he stroked Feral's labial lips with his fingers and continued to torment him with kisses and little nips of his fangs.

Feral whined and writhed under his mate in desperation. He reached down and grabbed hold of his mate's hard cock and stroked it firmly.

Gods! He was soo close and he didn't want to come before Chance was within him.

"Chance, I'm soo close..." He wailed, bucking and twisting his hips, bringing his legs up to try and get that hot pole where he needed it.

'Gods, how sweetly he begs...wish I could hold out longer but I'm so hard and so close too.' Chance thought, his body urgent to take its mate.

He positioned his body carefully and guided himself in slowly. Feral groaned and hissed as the large head entered him, opening up his passage that had never been breeched before.

It didn't hurt and he was so restless to have Chance thrust home that he tightened his legs at his mate's back and pressed hard.

Chance gasped and groaned as he was forced all the way in and through the thin barrier of his mate's vaginal barrier. Now they were tightly pressed together, joined for the first time and it felt incredible. For just a moment, Chance held still and leaned forward to kiss Ulysses on the mouth, feeling the completeness of this moment that couldn't be repeated.

Feral groaned into his mate's mouth. 'Oh, how incredible this feels. He fills me so completely.'

They wrapped their limbs around each other tightly without beginning the usual thrusting rhythm most rutting couples would indulge in. Not knowing why, Feral began to rhythmically tighten and release his inner muscles, squeezing Chance hard.

Chance groaned. He wanted to move...needed to move...but Ulysses held him tightly and he couldn't do anything but make very tiny motions in and out. The intensity was greater than anything he'd ever known before and they soared higher and higher. They kissed almost desperately as the tension grew stronger.

Tingles of fire rose higher and higher, the urgency to reach something filled them both. They writhed and moaned desperately trying to get to the glowing feeling they could both see and feel behind their closed eyes.

Lightning flashed behind their eyes as their bodies exploded, orgasming at the same time, the world crashing within them. Their cries loud and intense as their bodies bucked and shook through tremors of wonderful, sweet, pleasure.

Finally, it eased, their bodies going limp. They heaved for air, hearts drumming, bodies covered in sweat, and totally sated.

They lay there stunned for many minutes, bewildered by the strength of the bond they could feel holding them together. Neither could speak as they absorbed the wonder of it all.

"Oh wow! I didn't know it could feel like this." Chance finally said in awe.

"Yeah, I know what you mean." Feral breathed reverently.

Chance was still within his mate's hot channel and he had no desire to remove himself. Ulysses didn't seem to mind as they lay trying to recover from their incredible bonding experience.

Finally able to think again, the first thing Feral noticed was the hard, warm firmness within him. It felt good and he experimentally tightened around it, squeezing it firmly.

Chance blinked in surprise and raised his head from Feral's chest. "Ready to go again?" He said with a smirk.

"Hmm, yes...you?"

"If you keep that up, very soon I will be." Chance chuckled, nuzzling Uly's face then giving him passionate kisses.

Nipping and trading many kisses as well as Chance's erotic sucking on Uly's nipples made the dark tom moan and arch his back. He didn't know which was more tormenting, his mate's mouth on his very sensitive breasts or the feel of him filling him so thoroughly.

Grinning wickedly, Chance raised himself off Feral's chest and drove his hips more firmly in and out of the dark tom's slick channel.

Eyes widening at the wonderful sensations of that action, made Feral raise his hips higher to take more of that pistoning cock within him.

They rushed rapidly toward a wild and wonderful conclusion. Chance rode his mate furiously into the mattress, thrusting faster and faster. Feral reached out and clutched his mate's rear with his claws as the tension rose to a fever pitch and he came with a scream, Chance following with a roar.

After they recovered this time, Chance gently withdrew causing Ulysses to moan at its loss.

"You're going to be sore, love. We should take a nice hot bath and you'll be in less pain later." Chance soothed and warned his mate.

He climbed off the bed after giving the dark tom a lingering kiss then disappeared into the

bathroom. In minutes, he heard the sound of running water.

Feral lay there staring up at the ceiling and feeling utterly amazing and so very sated. 'So this is what it's like to be completely whole?' He thought ruefully, regretting the fact he fought so hard against this.

A few minutes later, Chance padded back into the room and smiled down at him. He held out both paws for Feral to grab. Smiling warmly back, he took those paws and allowed himself to be pulled up and off the bed.

Chance wrapped an arm around his mate's waist and walked him to the bathroom. The tub was filled with bubbles.

Feral blinked in surprise and looked at Chance questioningly. Chance chuckled and shrugged.

"Don't ask me, you had it in the cupboard. I was surprised to see it but glad as well. It's lavender too which is good for you. Someone giving you a hint?"

Feral blushed as he stepped into the foamy water. "Must have been my sister-in-law or Felina. I would never have bought it. Probably a Christmas present I forgot about." He mused in mild embarrassment.

"Well we can be thankful for that then because straight hot water, though okay, isn't as good as a soother to sensitive areas. Hope we can find something for internally as well." Chance said thoughtfully as he climbed in and inserted himself behind his mate and pulled him close to lay against his chest.

"You really think I'm going to need it?" Feral asked, curiously while enjoying the feel of the hot water and the body of his mate behind him.

"Trust me, you will be sore. But that will fade with time and with constant use it will accommodate me without a problem." Chance said warmly, hugging Feral.

"I'll trust your obvious expertise. I have to admit, I've never taken a female's virginity before because I wasn't interested in an inexperienced partner." His mate admitted.

Chance nuzzled Ulysses' neck. "Yeah, I've a lot of experience. Many fems like me as their first time because I'm always considering their needs first. My mother taught me that."

"A wise she-kat." Feral murmured.

"She was. Wish she was alive to see me happy." Chance sighed with regret.

"I'm sorry. Mine is gone as well. I just have my brother and his family." Feral said softly.

"I just have Jake. No other family now."

Feral blinked, he'd somehow forgotten that. It was more important than ever to insure Jake was included in their new family. He was the rock, Chance had leaned on to hold his life together after his many losses. He never realized how important family was until this moment. He was very lucky to have someone of his blood left but now he also had a mate. His life was more complete than he'd ever dreamed possible.

"Then we will have to make sure he stays a part of this family." He said quietly, turning his head and giving Chance a firm kiss.

Chance was surprised and pleased. He hadn't known how his best friend was going to fit into his new life but knowing Ulysses would accept him as part of their new family eased something in

his chest that he'd not noticed was tight with worry.

He hugged Ulysses more tightly and returned the kiss with heartfelt joy.

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Chapter 7: Pillow Talk by ulyferal

They lazed in the bath for a couple of hours, refreshing it when it got cold then, with stomachs growling, they got out and dried, wrapping in warm robes. Heading to the kitchen, Feral rummaged in the fridge while his mate checked the cupboards for something to put together for a meal.

They settled on salad made with left over steak, chicken and fresh tomatoes on top with a side of tomato soup and large glasses of milk. They took them to the living room and sat close together on the couch to watch some late night TV.

Stomachs filled and eyes getting heavy, they took their dishes to the kitchen then made for bed again. The bed was too covered with various fluids to be comfortable so, with mild groans of annoyance, they stripped and remade it.

With twin sighs of relief, they slipped into the clean smelling bed and cuddled together, slipping into sleep quickly.

Dawn slipped its early light through the crack in the curtain across from the bed and shone in Feral's eyes waking him. He yawned then smiled as he felt his mate cuddled against his back. That felt so good he was reluctant to move but his bladder was pressing him.

Sighing, he slid out of the bed and padded to the bathroom. He hissed a bit as he peed, Chance had been right, he was sore this morning but it wasn't so bad he couldn't ignore it. He returned to the bed to find his mate just opening his eyes and searching the part of the bed he'd left with one outstretched arm.

Smiling he slipped back under the covers facing Chance who gave him a lazy and still sleepy smile. "Morning, beautiful." He rumbled warmly, giving his mate a kiss.

"Mmm, morning yourself." Feral said happily.

Their kisses became more intense and demanding. To Chance's surprise, his mate decided to take the dominant position in their lovemaking this morning.

"My turn!" Feral said huskily then proceeded to prepare his mate for his large cock.

Chance was panting and urgent by the time Ulysses had teased and tormented him for over a half hour. His mate sucked and licked the sandy tom's nipples, then his cock and balls, while scissoring his fingers in his channel to widen him. It was maddening. By the time, Ulysses raised Chance's hips up and put the tabby's legs over his shoulders, Chance was beside himself with urgent desire.

Feral took his time, going slow and careful as he filled his mate's channel with his large cock. Every time Chance would wince, Uly would stop and wait until finally, some five minutes later, he was seated all the way, his balls slapping against the tabby's butt.

Chance panted and bucked as the huge pole opened him up thoroughly and set off sparks in his head as it rubbed against his prostate gland forcefully. Feral didn't really have to aim for it since he took up so much space, he couldn't miss it.

Though nearly overwhelmed by the pleasure that was pouring through him, Chance didn't forget his mate. He couldn't reach anything being tipped so far back until Ulysses folded himself



enough to be able to kiss him and Chance used that opportunity to dig claws into his mate's back and use his tail to tickle and tease his mate's pucker and clitoris.

Feral growled and groaned at the feel of that tail setting off sparks in his body that sang along his nerve endings along with the incredible feeling of being squeezed within his mate's hot channel.

He hadn't indulged in any sexual contact for some years and he'd forgotten just how incredible this felt. He was soon thrusting brutally, shoving Chance into the mattress hard.

It wasn't very long before the end came. The tension built rapidly as the air filled with grunts and groans then twin roars burst forth as they climaxed at the same time. Chance sprayed Uly's chest as his dark furred mate poured himself within that welcoming heat.

They lay splayed and panting on the bed, their limbs tangled. When he'd softened enough, Feral gently and slowly removed himself. Chance gave a moan of regret. Feral laid down beside Chance and they nuzzled for a bit.

"Hmm, seems someone hasn't gotten any for a very long time." Chance murmured softly.

Feral sighed and enjoyed just laying there, sated and happy. "I haven't. No time usually and when I did find time, it was always unsatisfying. It didn't matter if it was a male or female so I just stopped bothering to do it at all." He shrugged.

"Well, before you caught my attention, I didn't really have a problem, though surprisingly, I preferred she-males. Never been with a male herm before. Anyway, when you upset my life that day in the volcano, Jake told me I had only two choices, get you to accept me or just ignore you as you were apparently already doing, but he warned me I would never be truly happy if I chose that route." Chance told him.

Feral shook his head. "That Kat is just too smart to have his undeniable talents wasted at the salvage yard. I always regretted that. The things he could have developed for us in R & D..." He trailed off, sighing.

"I doubt you could have gotten him accepted. He was blacklisted by the industry for reasons we've never been able to find out." Chance said unhappily.

"I heard that so I did a more thorough background check on him when he joined. I wasn't happy to find a block on that information by the top secret powers-that-be for research. The more I tried to push for info the more they resisted and told me it wasn't my concern and had no bearing on his being an enforcer. I was forced to drop it." Feral scowled at the memory.

"Huh! Thank you for trying. But like I said, he was never able to ascertain what happened. The only thing he did know was someone took his ideas he developed during college and built them, claiming the credit for themselves. That was Pumadyne." Chance said bitterly.

His mate's face scrunched up in disgust at that information. "If I could, I'd find a way to make them pay for that." He growled at the injustice.

Chance smiled. "Its nice to see you would be willing to back him on that but it's too long ago and water under the bridge now."

Feral grunted that was true and sighed. They were silent for a bit. "You know he could try to sell them as Razor now. The industry has seen what his stuff can do and are desperately trying to mimic his work. He could make millions." He said thoughtfully.

Chance blinked in surprise. "Crud! I wonder why we didn't think of that. I'll have to bring that up to Jake. He could finally be redeemed for the genius he really is."

"Yeah, but I still wish he could do it for us but I can't pay him for it." Feral sighed.

"Humph! You had your chance then we were kicked out of the force." Chance said flatly, not able to let this area of contention between them be forgotten.

Feral eyed Chance heavily. He knew this was going to come up, now if he could handle this just right and heal a long time sore point between them...well all he could do was try.

"Chance. The accident wasn't the sole reason you were put out. You and Jake simply couldn't accept orders. Even if you thought it wasn't right, it wasn't your place to refuse a direct order and that was something you and he did on too frequent a basis." He said quietly. He held up a paw when Chance began to splutter an angry rebuttal.

"Hear me out!" He said simply. Chance subsided and listened. "Look, there is a reason behind military discipline. If everyone were allowed to do what they wanted to during any incident, many Kats could be killed. The reason is they aren't in possession of all the facts, so they go off half cocked and end up making a situation much serious than it might have been. Disregard for the rules leads only to chaos and trouble for all concern. However, you two had strong hero complexes. You wanted so badly to save the world that you couldn't listen to older, wiser heads. You were a serious detriment to the enforcers despite your fantastic pilot and gunner skills. You'd disobeyed so many times, that the destruction of the flight line was the final straw. Truly, I couldn't keep you even if I had wanted too. That would have smacked of favoritism, because whether you believe me or not, I did not want to lose you. You were too valuable but too uncontrollable." He said in resignation. "My own superiors would have had me on the carpet for keeping you, so out you had to go."

Chance sat there and stared at him in shock. It was a blow to his ego to realize he'd been his own worst enemy and that he and Jake had truly been responsible for their own downfall. A memory of that day they had driven into the salvage yard to take up their new duties floated back. Jake had said it really was their own fault as much as Feral's but he hadn't wanted to listen.

His shoulders slumped. Feral didn't like the look of dismay and distress his mate was showing so reached out and pulled him closer to give him comfort.

"Chance, you and Jake redeemed yourself and learned responsibility as the SWAT Kats. Sure, at first, you were still cocksure and destructive but you did manage to keep this city safe." He murmured softly.

His mate pushed against him a bit to look in Uly's face. "Yeah, but you were always yammering at us about property damages as if that was the most important thing in the world rather than saving lives." He said angrily.

Sighing, Feral looked at him seriously. "Chance, I'm not just responsible for the safety of the city, but I'm also a politician no matter how much I loathe that part of my job. I was selected for my position by the council. If I didn't hold down damages I would be replaced and another would be there to do what the council wants which is save money at the expense of the people's safety. They of course don't see it that way. They think they are doing what's best for the city. I have to walk a very fine edge to keep costs down while still trying to do what I need to protect the fools from themselves. It's a thankless job and you two don't make it any easier. The damages you cause comes out of your fellow enforcers lives because we get our budget cut constantly and the Katizens get their taxes raised to pay the damages. We can't compete with what Jake designs thanks to Manx's fiscal stupidity."

Chance sucked in his breath. On some level, he guessed he knew this but to hear it stated so bluntly brought home just how much Feral had to deal with.

"For what its worth, I really didn't know that, though, I guess I kinda knew that's how it worked but I never bothered to pay heed to it. Sorry. You have to admit, though, we've been able to keep the

damages down lately. However, don't forget the omegas do more damage than us." He said carefully.

"Yes, I know that and I have noticed you've gotten better at preventing more damage. You've also matured a lot. The job is harder than you thought it would be when you are your own boss and have to be more careful than you were in the enforcers because you have no one to fall back on if you fail. You've set yourselves up as nearly indispensable and I fear for your lives. The stress must be getting really high by now." Feral said thoughtfully.

Chance grimaced then sighed. "You don't know the half of it. Trying to pay that debt and be the SWAT Kats is becoming a strain. We feel compelled to keep doing it, though with all the attacks by the omegas lately we're a little desperate for a vacation to recharge." He admitted.

"Yeah, I've noticed. However, it's been peaceful for the last few weeks. I think we can handle things if you two take a break." Feral said seriously.

Chance gave a weak chuckle. "I don't think we can now. You and I have kinda muddled that up now. We've got to talk to Jake and figure out what you and I are going to do from now on. Obviously, we can't tell anyone about us and we have to sneak around to be together. Living together is out of the question and slipping into your apartment won't work for very long. I'm good but even I can slip up and be spotted."

Feral sighed and stretched. He leaned over and looked at his clock. It was nearly six a.m. He had to be off to work in another hour. He turned back to his mate.

"Chance, we'll not be able to solve this right now but luckily it's Friday. I'll come to the salvage yard later this evening, say around eight o'clock?" He eyed his mate questioningly.

"Yeah, you're right. Too much to cover all at once. Eight's okay. As long as our enemies stay out of sight, that is." The tabby snorted in amusement.

"So true. Come here love! We have an hour left and I'd rather not spend it on conversation." Feral rumbled softly.

Chance grinned and wrapped himself around his mate while they kissed the hour away in more pleasurable activities.

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Chapter 8: Consequences of Bonding by ulyferal

Sighing reluctantly, Feral gave Chance a final deep kiss then pulled away. "Time to get up love."

"Yeah, I know but somehow I feel we should just call in and stay together." His mate said, stretching and shoving the bedding off.

"Hmm, I sort of feel the same way but it's Friday so we can survive until tonight." Feral soothed as he padded to the bathroom.

Chance followed him but inwardly he still felt wrong about leaving now. He shoved away the feeling not wanting it to ruin his sated and happy feeling.

In the shower, they played a little but nothing heavy as they washed each other, dried and quickly got dressed. Feral pawed through his bureau and pulled out a nice dark green t-shirt.

"Here, your shirt is too bloody and torn to wear."

"Hmm, nice. Thanks." Chance grinned as he took the shirt and pulled it on. Uly's scent lingered on it. "I'll be able to have you close with this on." He said taking a deliberate sniff of the shirt.

Feral snorted, laughing at his mate. "It matches your beautiful eyes as well."

"Are you flirting with me?" Chance purred hotly, nuzzling his mate, hampering him from getting dressed.

"Not right now, you randy thing! Just stating a fact is all." The dark tom chuckled and pushed his mate away reluctantly.

Chance laughed then grimaced at his jeans. "Yuck, oh well, at least there's no blood on them." He sighed as he pulled them on then shoved his feet into his tennis shoes.

Feral was putting his tie on when Chance completed dressing.

"Want me to make us something for breakfast?" He asked.

"If you want to, that would be great." Feral said warmly as he finished dressing.

Chance gave him a hug and then went off to the kitchen. He managed to find the makings for some eggs and bacon sandwiches with a side of milk so that they could eat and leave quickly.

Feral gave his mate a kiss for the excellent meal as they finished up, put their dishes in the sink then hurried out the door.

It was decided, Chance would catch a bus a little ways from Enforcer Headquarters so no one would see them together. About a half mile from the enforcer building, Feral let Chance off. They traded a brief kiss inside the car before the sandy tom jumped out and caught the bus that was just arriving. Feral pulled out into traffic and continued on to work, a small smile of contentment on his face.

When he arrived at work, he was in a great mood and it was noted by all he passed including Sgt Fallon, who sighed mentally in relief.

Feral settled into his seat behind his desk with a fresh cup of coffee and dug into his work with gusto. But sometime after lunch, his elevated mood began to crash. He shocked himself by nearly snapping Fallon's head off then yelling at Felina. After that last incident he quickly took himself in paw and walked down to the flight line and into the brisk air sweeping across the apron.

'What is wrong with me? I should be dancing on a cloud but I feel uneasy...antsy as if there's a threat in the air I can't see.' He berated himself, frowning. As he blindly looked out over the city, he listened to his body and finally came to a startling conclusion. 'Well, crud! It's the bond. I forgot about the fact that one has to stay with ones new mate for several days to prevent separation anxiety. How stupid of me to forget. Well now that I know what's going on, I can monitor my tongue and temper.' He decided firmly. It was a relief to know he wasn't going crazy. He turned about and walked more confidently back to his office.

The rest of the day went better, though Sgt. Fallon and Felina still tread carefully around him. He didn't try to explain to them why he was so touchy since, no way did he want anyone to know he was mated, at least not yet.

He sighed in relief when quitting time came around and the building emptied of its day shift workers. Now he didn't have to try and hide his discomfort and irritability. So he spent the next few hours until he was supposed to meet Chance by clearing out his backlog of reports.

By nearly eight o'clock, he smiled tiredly as he put the last report in his out basket, locked his desk and turned out his desk lamp. Yawning, he stepped down from his pedestal and went to the coat rack. Buttoning his coat as he walked out of his office, pausing long enough to lock the door then made for the elevator.

It was a twenty minute drive to the salvage yard and when he drove through the gate on his arrival, he was dismayed to see a huge pile of salvage in front of the garage and a fight going on.

*Earlier that day...*

The bus trip was about twenty minutes long and during the ride, Chance thought about what he was going to tell his partner. It really shouldn't be too difficult as Jake was the one to tell him to make up his mind. The cinnamon tom had apparently thought about what would happen if his partner accepted being mated to their antagonist...at least he hoped he had.

Well, he'd know soon enough, the bus had arrived at his stop. He hopped off and walked the block to the salvage yard entrance. The gate was open but the garage wasn't. Chance walked to the door and tried it and found it unlocked, so he entered the waiting area then took the stairs up to their apartment.

Passing through the living space, he entered the kitchen and found Jake eating breakfast.

"Well good morning, partner."

Chance just grinned and nodded but kept on going toward his bedroom. He tossed his jacket to the bed, threw his shirt in the laundry basket and changed his pants. He paused a moment, wondering if he should change his borrowed shirt but decided he wanted Ulysses scent close so he left it on and went back downstairs. He went to the fridge to fetch a can of milk then sat before his friend at the table.

Jake was just finishing his food but stayed seated and waited. It was obvious to him that his friend had something important to discuss. He also noted the overlarge green shirt Chance was wearing. Eyeing the shirt, he gave his buddy a questioning look.

"Yeah, I was with someone last night and I have a feeling you've guessed who already." Chance said, chuckling lightly at the look on his friend's face.

"Feral?" Jake asked, hesitantly.

"Yep! We've bonded!"

"You did?" Jake blurted, sitting back in his chair in shock.

"Well, you did say to make up my mind..." Chance said, eyeing his friend, uncertainly, wondering why Jake was this surprised.

"I know what I said but somehow I thought you wouldn't take him up on it. What changed?" Jake asked, still shaken.

Frowning a little with concern, Chance told him what had happened last night.

"It was like nothing I'd ever experienced before, Jake. It was absolutely mind blowing."

Jake shook his head, but he smiled to ease his friend who was becoming worried about what Jake was thinking about this.

"I'm happy for you...no...seriously...I am really happy for you both now maybe he won't be such a hard ass toward us and you look really contented. It's going to be a bit of a problem for all of us but I think we'll manage somehow." Jake told him soothingly.

Chance relaxed. One hurdle down...still more to go. "That's good. He thinks of you as family and has no problem accepting you as a part of his life now. But there's something else I have to tell you." He paused nervously, Jake wasn't going to like this. "He knows who we are..."

"What?" Jake exploded, jumping to his feet in anger, cutting his partner off.

"Easy, buddy. I didn't give it away. Last night when I left the club, I was so bummed about this thing with Feral that I didn't pay attention to where I was and got jump by three punks. Feral came upon us while I was beating the crap out of them. He had them arrested but then he looked at me strangely, he wasn't happy about how beat up I looked. That just confused the hell out of me but not as much as when he said he would give me a ride home rather than have me find another way. I thought he was nuts and refused, he got angry and the next thing I knew he was in my face and we were kissing. Well, I was in so much shock at his behavior and how good the kiss was I didn't argue when he took me to his place. I finally got my head together and demanded why he was being so intimate with me, when I knew it had been my T-Bone persona he'd been taken with, and that's when he dropped the bomb on me. He'd known all along that I was his mate since he pinned my wings on me when I graduated from the Enforcer Academy. He hadn't wanted to risk the problems of a high ranking officer mating with a low ranking officer then we got booted out and when we clashed that first time, he caught my scent. Well now we were on opposite sides so he didn't make his claim, just ignored it." Chance explained hurriedly.

Jake's thunderous look leaked away during his friend's report of last night's shocking revelation. His shoulders slumped and he sank back into his chair. When Chance had finished and looked at him anxiously, the cinnamon tom could only stare at his friend for a long time.

The tabby was getting worried as time passed and still Jake was silent. He was about to say something when Jake finally spoke.

"So how does this effect us now?" He asked quietly.

"Nothing changes but he'll be coming over to talk to us about what we do now that he and I are mated. If he was going to arrest us or do anything else to us he's had ample time to do it. It's because of who I was to him that stayed his paw and I guess because he truly loves me but just refused to admit it to himself. I really don't know but I do know he's been miserable and lonely all this time. But listen, something really good came out of last night. He made an incredible suggestion that I can't believe we didn't think of." Chance said excitedly, hoping this would smooth over the shocking news of their identities being known by Feral.

"Oh! What was that?" Jake asked, still a bit leery.

"He wasn't happy about you being blacklisted and tried to find out why but politics and secrecy shut him out. To protect his position, he had to back off. What he suggests, though, is that you sell your ideas as Razor and not just here in Megakat City but to other countries. He figures you could make millions." Chance said excitedly.

Jake's eyes widened in shock. He was speechless for several minutes before he could finally say anything. "Crud! He's right! I don't know why I never thought of that avenue! What an idiot I am. We'd already be out of debt and away from this crummy business if I had done it in the first place." He berated himself.

"Hey, I didn't think of it either and, besides, it gave us time to learn what we wanted to do and make it happen and you had to make a name for yourself as Razor, first." He soothed his friend. "Now, I know you'd rather be known by your real name but since you can't do that, Razor is your call sign so its still you."

"Yeah, it's a bit of a downer that I can't use my real name especially since I tried so hard to make a name for myself and get the prestige, but you're right, I can still get that with my call sign, writer's do that too. And I don't have to look far for buyers, they've been hounding me already, begging for my designs." Jake agreed, thoughtfully. His mind already working on how to get started.

Chance grinned in delight and finished his milk. He could already see the wheels turning in his friend's brain. His getting mated to Feral was already benefiting them. It seemed his decision to bond had been the best thing he'd done next to becoming a SWAT Kat.

"By the way, Ulysses is coming over at eight o'clock tonight to talk about us and how we'll behave from now on as well as other things." Chance told him.

His friend blinked and refocused his attention. "Oh...okay...hope neither of us have an emergency call because we do need to talk." He agreed. "But that's for later, let's get to work buddy. We've got a lot of cars waiting and personally, I'd rather not work tomorrow."

"Yeah, I agree. I have plans for my mate and they don't include getting greasy in the garage." Chance nodded, grinning, getting up and throwing his can away. "See you downstairs."

Jake nodded, getting up to put his dishes away.

The day was long and busy. But by late afternoon, Chance was feeling antsy and tense. He couldn't figure out why. He tried to shove the growing discomfort away but it kept intruding. As they broke for a very late lunch, he pushed his food around without eating much.

Jake frowned, "Chance, what's wrong buddy?"

"I don't know. I feel uneasy and tense. Its been getting stronger over the past hour or so and I can't shake it." His partner said in annoyance.

"Hmmm. You were happy this morning. I'm not really familiar with bonding so I don't know if this has anything to do with that." Jake said thoughtfully.

"I doubt it." Chance said flatly. "Forget it. It'll just pass or not. Let's get finished." He shoved the rest of his lunch into the fridge and headed back out to the garage, determined to ignore the strange anxious feelings he was having.

Jake eyed his partner in concern but since there was nothing he could do, he joined his friend and they worked hard to finish up. By seven o'clock, the last car was heading out of the yard. Glad to be done, they cleaned up and got ready to close the yard.

To Jake's dismay, Burke and Murray rumbled in with a load of salvage. He knew just what was going to happen next. Chance had been getting more and more irritable as the afternoon wore on and was now really touchy.

The nasty duo didn't have a clue that this was going to be the worst day of their lives. Snickering, Burke pulled the lever and their load tipped up and dumped right in front of the garage. Then the two of them got out and prepared to hassle Chance. Big Mistake!

Chance roared in fury and lit into Burke without warning. The bigger of the pair was taken by surprise and didn't put up a defense until too late. The two went down in a heap, pounding the crap out of each other. Murray stood frozen in shock then tried to help his buddy. Chance wasn't having any of it as he kicked out and sent Murray flying through the air to hit their truck.

Jake tried to pull Chance off but his partner was completely out of control. As he continued to try and yank his friend off his victim, suddenly a large form loomed over them and a huge paw reached down and firmly yanked the furious tom off the huddled garbage kat.

"Enough!" Roared a far too familiar voice. Silence fell immediately.

Feral put his mate back on his feet then glared at the pair of garbage Kats.

"He attacked me for no reason!" Burke bellowed, as he climbed to his feet with the help of his

friend, while trying to stop the bleeding from his nose and mouth.

"Yeah!" Murray said, still a bit shaky from the suddenness of the attack and his collision with the truck.

"Did you dump your load here?" Feral asked, eyes narrowed coldly at the bleeding tom.

"Uh...yeah!" Burke said uneasily, something telling him his complaint wasn't going to get the sympathy he thought it would. The Commander was an intimidating individual but when he was this angry he was terrifying.

Feral's eyes glittered with anger but his voice remained level and cold as ice. "Is this where it is supposed to be deposited?"

"No sir." Burke said in a much smaller voice, fear racing up his spine. Murray shifted his feet nervously, sorta hiding behind his larger companion.

"Though Furlong had no right to attack you, his anger is justified. You will pick this up and deposit it exactly where it belongs and I don't want to hear you've repeated this behavior again or your pay will be docked significantly. Understood!" He growled warningly.

"Y-y-yes sir!" Burke stuttered. Murray muttered the same behind him.

"Get to it!" Feral barked.

The pair scrambled as if their tails were on fire and began reloading the junk back on the truck. Since he couldn't be seen with Chance in any but an official capacity, he turned to the tabby, preparing to 'chew' him out. He winced mentally at his now dirty shirt and the cuts and scratches on Chance on top of the ones from last night. Keeping his face firm and professional he lit into his mate.

"Furlong! Attacking city employees can get you arrested for assault and a night in a cell. As much as I'd be willing to entertain such an action, I need you here more so I'll let this go this time. Got it?" He demanded sharply.

Chance growled and balled his fists, still irritable and upset by the fight, so he didn't have to pretend belligerence and anger. "Yes sir! Loud and clear!" He grit out.

"Good." Feral said gruffly then turned to Jake. "I came by because I'm having problems with the transmission in my rig. When can you deal with it?" He asked Jake.

Jake answered promptly. He knew Feral was using the car repair as a ruse so that no one would know the real reason he was here. "We can get to it tomorrow, sir, if you'd like?" He asked.

"Can you get it back to me that day as well?" Feral asked as he followed Jake back to their office.

Chance stayed outside to watch the pair finish loading then he would lead them to where he wanted it unloaded. His arms were crossed over his chest and his face still held a scowl.

As soon as Jake and Feral disappeared in the office, Feral dropped his pretense and asked in some concern, "What the heck started that? Those two are irritating, certainly, but I wouldn't have thought Chance would lose his cool like that?"

"I don't know. He was in a good mood until late this afternoon then he complained of being antsy and tense but didn't know why. By the time those two arrived, he was like a lit powder keg." Jake explained, shaking his head. He was a bit weirded out that Feral was talking to him so easily as if they were old friends. It was hard to wrap his mind around the fact Feral knew who they were.



"Ahhh, poor Chance. I'm new at this too and I just didn't realize we couldn't really be apart so soon. But it being a work day, there was no way we could just lock ourselves away for the time needed to adjust." Feral sighed in dismay.

"Then it is the bond causing this? I told Chance I thought it might be." Jake said excitedly.

"Humph, Yes, it's at fault because I too was feeling a bit anxious all afternoon and was nasty to my staff. I took a breather and realized what was wrong. It was hard guarding my temper after that so I can sympathize with my mate. Well, we have the whole weekend to ease the separation anxiety before it gets worse and by Monday we should be fine." Feral sighed, shaking his head at the far reaching affects of being newly bonded.

"Well that's a relief! I'd really hate to have to deal with him like that for too much longer." Jake sighed, glad it was something fixable.

Outside the office, they heard the huge truck start up and move off. They went out the door and watched as the truck followed Chance then dumped their load where it was supposed to go. Once done, the pair got out of there as fast as they dared. Soon, only the dust of their passage was left and Chance locked the gate with Feral's military sedan inside the yard.

He came up to his mate still feeling tense and irritable. Feral didn't meet him but stepped back into the office forcing his mate to come all the way inside first. They couldn't risk anyone seeing them together. Jake closed and locked the door behind his partner and watched as Chance stood before his mate and frowned.

Knowing exactly how his mate felt, Feral pulled Chance into his arms and nuzzled him hard, scent marking him which was the first step to regaining their hold on their bond. Chance groaned, wrapped his arms around Feral's waist and did the same scent marking motions. They held each other tightly until the worst of the symptoms eased a bit.

"It's alright love. When you were reluctant to part this morning, you had a reason for it. Bonding requires a few days of being together. Parting like we did caused a nasty case of separation anxiety." Feral murmured softly, caressing the tom's back soothingly.

Chance pulled his head back and blinked at his mate in surprise. "The bond? This was caused by the bond?" He asked in bewilderment. "Then Jake had been right."

"Yes he was, unfortunately. Anyway, staying together from now until Monday will take care of the problem so we don't have to be glued to the hip every moment." Feral snorted in rueful amusement.

"So you were feeling a bit murderous today too, huh?" Chance muttered softly.

"Oh yeah! I nearly snapped Sgt Fallon's head off as well as Felina's but I guessed what it was and pushed it aside, burying myself in my work and guarding my temper."

"Oh that must have been fun." Chance snorted sarcastically in commiseration.

"To think it started off as such a nice day. Let's make it a better night, okay?" Feral murmured seductively.

"Sounds like a great idea." His mate rumbled in agreement.

Before they could get too amorous with him around, Jake cleared his throat to get their attention. "Well let's go upstairs and get comfortable." He suggested as he flipped the security switch for the yard then turned for the stairs.

Pulling Chance along, Feral climbed the stairs to their small living area. He and Chance took the

couch. Jake eyed the pair and was certain talking wasn't going to be done until they took care of their anxiety from being separated. Sighing mentally, he left them alone and went into the kitchen to make dinner. He would turn on a radio so he wouldn't hear them while he worked.

They never noticed when Jake left as Chance sighed and cuddled up against his mate not willing to let go for a while. Feral kissed him tenderly. Soon they were making out rather heavily.

They rolled against each other desperately. Chance wanted to feel his mate's naked body against his and he wanted it now. He quickly stripped Feral who was doing the same for the tabby. In very little time they were naked.

Feral was on his back on the couch with Chance looming over him. Without making much time for foreplay, the tabby positioned himself carefully then thrust forward urgently. Feral groaned as he was penetrated deeply. He raised his legs over his mate's waist and they were soon flying high.

It really didn't take too long before they were roaring their completion. Silence fell soon after as their twin roars faded. They lay panting and waiting for their brains to get back on line again having been short circuited by the intense release.

Recovered, Feral pushed his mate off him gently, retrieved his pants, ignoring his underwear, as he put them on and his t-shirt. Chance gave him a lopsided grin as he too put on pants and t-shirt. He felt much better and completely relaxed. The anxiety was gone.

His nose twitched at the smell of food. "Ummm, smells like Jake is making dinner. Shall we go see?"

"Good idea! I'm starved." Feral rumbled good-naturedly as the two of them got up and wandered into the kitchen.

"Something smells good, buddy!" Chance said, sniffing the air appreciatively.

Jake turned his head from his cooking and smiled warmly at them. "Glad you think so. Why don't you set the table and get us some milk to drink?" He requested.

"Sure, have a seat Uly." He told his mate as he did as Jake had asked.

Soon they were sitting down to a meal of chicken casserole and peas with slices of bread. They ate in silence except for sounds of appreciation of the food.

"Wonderful meal Jake." Feral rumbled, satisfied and full.

"Yeah, I love it when you decide to make this. Take out does get old." Chance chimed in as he finished the last bite on his plate.

Jake grinned with pleasure at the compliments. "Well, its not like we ever get enough time, buddy." He snorted.

"I can cook a mean chili but also don't have much time to cook either." Feral commented, pushing his plate away and finishing his milk.

"You can cook?" Chance asked in surprise.

"My mother made sure I and my brother knew our way around a kitchen and could take care of ourselves." Feral said with a shrug.

"Smart she-kat." His mate said with a smile. "You'll have to whip something up for me sometime."

"Hah! If we ever have time." Feral snorted.

They cleared the table and put the dishes in the sink.

"Leave them. We need to talk." Jake said more solemnly.

"Yes, we do." Feral said quietly as they adjourned back to the living room.

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Chapter 9: Discussions by ulyferal

Chance sat close beside Ulysses on the couch with Jake sitting in the comfy chair opposite them. They sat silent for some minutes. No one seemed to know where to start.

Jake sighed and decided to just plunge in. "Okay, the areas I foresee a problem would be; keeping your relationship secret, finding a way for you to be together, how we handle our encounters when on duty, and...well that's enough to start on."

"There is one more, raising kittens and where." Feral murmured.

Jake blanched and gaped at the dark tom. He finally managed to choke out, "Kittens? You don't mean..."

"Yeah, actually he does. That's about how I reacted to the news to." Chance said in mild amusement at his friend's bug-eyed reaction.

"Uh...well...are you planning on breeding real soon?" Jake asked, blushing at asking about such a sensitive subject.

"I wasn't planning on it. However, my heat cycles are extremely intense and staying apart during that time isn't an option." Feral said unhappily, this being the only thing he was truly concerned about.

Chance patted his mate's leg comfortingly. "Don't worry, Uly. I will have to be the responsible one and do what I need to in preventing conception until we want it to happen. However, I know an accident is bound to happen anyway so we need to be prepared. How often is your cycles and how long are they?" He asked.

"Twice a year, May and November and lasts twenty-four hours. The first twelve, obviously, is the worst." Feral answered.

"Well that's not too bad." Chance said thoughtfully.

"No it isn't but the fact he can get pregnant, is. You guys will have to find new quarters that allow secrecy to be maintained while giving you a home for those kittens." Jake said, shaking his head at this new complication.

"Crud, you're not asking a lot are you?" Chance asked rhetorically.

"He's right though." Feral sighed, leaning back then tilting his head to stare at the ceiling as he thought about this. They let him be for a moment.

"It also means response time to alerts will be longer due to being in separate dwellings." Jake grimaced unhappily.

"Not necessarily, because during the day I'll be here. We don't get a lot of night calls, surprisingly, and with Dark Kat out of the picture, we just might get a decent break for once." Chance said optimistically.

"One could hope. Well..." His friend started to say.

"I think I may have a solution to finding our new home." Feral broke in, his face thoughtful.

"Well let's hear it." Chance snorted, poking him playfully in the side. Feral snorted at him for his impatience.

"I know of a few properties that are in fairly secluded areas and not that far by chopper nor your cyclotron. Regular vehicles, though, would take over an hour to reach them." He said.

"That must mean they are on the outskirts of the city." Chance frowned, not certain he liked that idea.

"Yes, they are but they meet our needs for security and privacy." The dark tom said flatly. "And for your information, I don't like it much either."

"There's an added problem that you're not going to like either." Jake said. "Your choppers have tracking devices on them. You would have to disconnect or jam its signal so you aren't followed to your home and your enforcers might take that the wrong way if you do this."

Feral frowned but said, "They might if I allowed them to. Though I had wanted to keep my being mated a secret and, from the public I still intend to, from the Mayor's office and my enforcers I can't by regulation. So I inform those parties I'm mated and, due to the threats to my life, my home and the name of my mate will be kept secret. This will allow me to jam the signal but I will have to be in radio reach. How will you solve that?"

"That's easy! I modify your radio. However, you can't be losing them as you seemed to do so often." Jake told him.

Feral grimaced. "It isn't usually my fault but I understand and will try to retain the same radio."

"You're going to tell them you're mated but are you going to let them know you're a male herm and that your mate is male too?" Chance asked.

His mate eyed him unhappily. "I hope to keep that secret but if I become pregnant that's going to come back and bite me in the tail."

"Then let it! I don't think anyone has a right to know how different you are until you're forced to inform them. Not knowing your mate is male could be the perfect cover since your enemies won't know who to look for. They may automatically look for a female but they'll be wrong and frustrated for a long time." Chance said firmly. "Even if they should find our home, they'll still be looking for a she-kat and won't believe, to their peril, that you're with a male." He grinned wolfishly.

His mate thought about that for several minutes then nodded. "I think that's an excellent idea and will give us even more privacy from prying eyes as well."

"Well, I can make sure your home is well protected with a few patented security devices of my own design. They won't make the same mistake twice if they are lucky to still be alive after they encounter them." Jake said, a grim smile on his lips.

"I think I might be pitying the criminals if they dared to try your systems." Feral grinned.

"Why, thank you." Jake smirked.

"Alright, that takes care of our co-habitation problem. Let's address how we are to behave when we see each other on duty." Chance said, bringing up their next concern.

"Nothing changes!" Feral said promptly. "Keeping our behavior toward one another the same as

always will ensure no one suspects there's anything going on."

Chance and Jake both nodded. "Yeah, you're right, less likely to make a mistake that way too." Jake said, thoughtfully.

"However, there's just one thing that might..." The tabby said slowly eyeing his mate seriously.

Feral frowned at him questioningly.

"If you're in trouble and come to harm, no way can I stand by and not do anything. Mates wouldn't do that and bonded ones can't." He said firmly.

"Uhhh, we'll that's true and the same goes for you as well." The dark tom rumbled in concern.

"Then we're just going to have to be as circumspect as we can and I'll run interference as much as I'm able to, keeping anyone from seeing anything unusual. But you won't be able to go to the hospital with whomever is hurt the worst. Sneaking is your watchword now and I know that's going to cause a lot of emotional grief." Jake said grimly to both of them.

Feral rubbed his face, Chance not looking any happier about it as he leaned closer to his mate and nuzzled him.

To lighten the suddenly somber mood, Jake changed the subject.

"By the way, Commander, thanks for the suggestion. I'm still annoyed with myself for not having thought of it myself. I should be able to sell some of my plans within days since I have buyers that have been harassing me a bit whenever I'm on line."

"You're on line? With who and where?" Feral asked in concern.

"Don't be concerned. I speak with other inventors and engineers anonymously. They just are always whining about trying to get a hold of Razor to beg for my plans. I don't let them know its me that's listening and participating but I'm sure they know I'm around by some of my comments." Jake assured him.

Feral relaxed and smiled. "Well, that's great to know. I always felt you got a rotten deal and that there's no reason you shouldn't capitalize on your notoriety as a SWAT Kat to get you out of this debt. As I told Chance, I can't cancel the debt since the powers that be think it was a fair punishment."

"I don't disagree." Jake said simply, making Chance's jaw drop in surprise. "What? I told you then, buddy, that we were partly at fault in the first place. I was angry...have no doubt of that...but we didn't play by the rules and we got bit by it."

Chance just shook his head in disbelief. Feral pulled him closer and soothed him by rubbing his back as he looked over at Jake with admiration.

"I've really missed just how intelligent you are Jake. That could have gotten you far in R & D. Losing you cost the enforcers a chance to get ahead of the omegas but at least you still managed to do so even if it's on the other side of the law."

"Well thanks for the off hand compliment." Jake smirked, really pleased inside to be seen as bright by the one he had wanted to impress so very long ago.

"Okay, is there anything else we need to talk about right now?" Chance asked, stretching.

"Nothing I can think of at the moment. We'll just have to handle problems as they come up, is all. I think you and I should go house hunting this weekend. I'll show you the places I was interested

in." Feral answered Jake before turning his attention on his mate.

"Sounds good to me. Jake?" Chance asked.

"Nope, nothing more from me. We're caught up in the garage and I plan on opening a dialog with those that are interested in buying my designs. Really want to get started removing us from the need of running a garage to make money. If we can free ourselves up then we'll have plenty of down time when we need to recharge after fighting criminals. Running the salvage yard doesn't take that much of our time." Jake said confidently.

"Good idea, Jake. Now, shall we retire and just be with each other, my mate?" Feral purred, pulling Chance tightly to him and depositing a passionate kiss on his lips.

"Hmmm, yeah, good idea." Chance said huskily when he could catch his breath again.

Jake chuckled as the pair got off the couch and left for Chance's room. He felt good. He had thought having Feral know who they were was going to be a problem but it turned out, in private, Feral was rather a nice guy.

Humming happily to himself, he decided, since he didn't need much sleep, he'd go on line in the hangar. That way he wouldn't be subjected to his buddy's rather loud enjoyment of his mate.

*Two months later...*

"He said what?" Chance asked, dismay in his voice.

"His honor said, 'It's the duty of all upper level personal to attend charity and other special functions with their significant other or a guest.'" Feral quoted, anger making him growl his words.

"Well crud! We've not been together that long and here's our first problem." Chance growled in annoyance as he paced back and forth in the living room of their new home.

"He didn't care about my reasons even though Ms. Briggs thought there were very valid and supported me." His dark furred mate grumbled.

"Sounds like Callie." Chance said distractedly.

"I have only one solution for you guys." Jake suddenly spoke up. He'd been over for dinner as he did occasionally, when Feral had arrived home slamming the door in his anger.

The two turned to look at him.

"You have to tell the Mayor you're mated to a male and what you are. Though its no ones business that you're a herm, some might find it hard to accept or believe so the Mayor should be disinclined to see you there with a male on your arm that could cause unwanted negative attention." Jake said reasonably. "Of course, you still don't tell him who your mate is."

Both males looked a little annoyed at that observation but Feral sighed and relaxed. "Much as it pains me for Manx to know about me, I believe you have the right idea. The upper crust are a bit sensitive about herms even though we're supposed to be treated exactly like everyone else. That of course, doesn't stop the small minded who wouldn't hesitate to use something like that against me."

"That's bigoted!" Chance snapped.

"Yeah, it is but it's the way things are with our 'oh so perfect' high society types. It's why I hate these formal do's so much." Feral snorted in disgust.

"I'd really like to give a few of those stuck up Kats a piece of my mind and a few other things..." Chance muttered angrily.

Feral smiled warmly, "Thanks love, it's enough to know you would be willing to do that. Makes it easier to give away something so personal to that pompous fool."

"Humph! I'd like to see his eyes bug out if I came in there and declared I was your mate." Chance snorted in amusement.

Jake laughed, "Oh yeah! He'd probably faint dead away."

"Besides love, what would he do to you if you did refuse to take a date or mate?" Chance asked, calming down some and dropping onto the couch.

Feral sighed. "He could dock my pay and take other punitive actions. And if I continue to defy him on this, he could suspend or remove me from my position."

"What?" Chance gaped at him in shock.

"His position is an elected one, buddy, though I doubt very much Manx would try it since he has no takers for the position except for that fool Steele." Jake said.

"You're certainly up on the politics of the city, Jake." Feral said, arching an eyebrow skyward in surprise.

"It pays to know what's going on since it can have a profound impact on our lives especially ours." Jake said sagely.

"Glad to know you do keep up with politics, maybe you can educate my mate. Anyway, Jake's right Chance, I really dare not push Manx's paws on this even though, truthfully, he is too cowardly to try anything and Ms. Briggs wouldn't let him hear the end of it either." Feral gave a grim laugh as he too sat down.

"Humph!" Chance grunted then a wicked smile crossed his face. "Hey, Jake can you whip up something non-lethal but nasty that I could leave as a present for a certain city official?"

"Don't you dare!" Feral growled while trying to keep from laughing at the attempt of innocence on the tabby's face.

"Hey, it was just a thought!" Chance said spreading his paws and smirking.

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Chapter 10: Nothings ever easy by ulyferal

Two months had passed and he was floating on air. Even the prospect of discussing the problems he faced with this ball the Mayor was putting on couldn't crush his good mood. Since it was gloriously sunny out today, he decided to walk to city hall. He needed to see if he could try again to get out of this thing that was planned.

Rather than dwell on the coming confrontation, Feral let his mind drift to a much pleasanter topic, like last night's activities when the two of them were home alone. He and Chance had made love for several of hours starting with a fantastic session in the shower.

His mate was very talented in this arena, beating his partner out in the invention category, at least in the area of making love including driving his lover insane with all his little tricks. He felt himself getting a little hot just remembering last night.

He could royally kick his tail now for depriving himself of this feeling of contentedness. There was

just nothing that compared to having someone holding you and making you feel better after a bad day. The bond made everything even more intense. It was a feeling of someone residing warmly inside your mind and knowing it was the other half of your soul looking back keeping you company. Never alone! Yeah that's exactly what it felt like.

At first, they had to settle for getting together at night in his apartment but, not being satisfied with that after a month together, they went house hunting. It didn't take too long to find a place hidden and safe that they both fell in love with. Buying furniture and other household items felt strange yet fun at the same time. Feral had decided not to keep anything but a few favorite pieces from his former home while Chance didn't own much in the way of furniture in the first place so it was an adventure merging their different styles into a harmonious home they both enjoyed and loved.

Jake felt a little odd being alone when he'd been living with his friend for so long but he was slowly getting used to it, commenting shortly after his friend had moved out that, "...well now I guess I can begin to think about finding myself someone special too." Chance had answered, "...that's the way to think, buddy. You deserve some happiness too."

Feral's new home with his mate completed him like nothing in his life ever had and he couldn't hide how giddy that made him feel.

Smiling to himself, he reached city hall, walked up the steps and pushed the door open to step into the lobby. As he crossed the foyer to the elevator bank, a voice called out to him.

"Commander Feral, wait up!"

He paused and looked over his shoulder. Ms. Briggs was coming from one of the hallways, stacks of paper and reports in her arms, a look of distraction and frazzled irritation on her face. It was obvious she was not in a very good mood today.

"Ms. Briggs?" He said questioningly as he politely held the elevator door open for her then stepped in after her. He pushed the button for the top floor.

"Thanks, just wanted you to hold the door. It's just been a hectic day and its not even lunch time yet." She sighed.

"The price of a politician's lackey," he said facetiously.

She grimaced at that. "Do I seem like a lackey?" She asked in irritation.

"You run around doing his job before you can get to yours, which falls behind so I'd have to say, yes or doormat if you'd prefer a better term for it," Feral commented, shrugging his shoulders.

"My aren't we witty today," Callie muttered acidly.

"Not trying to belittle you at all Ms. Briggs, it's just hard to see you being constantly swamped with that good for nothings work besides your own. You're too talented to be wasted on what amounts to scut work. And, even though others might not be aware of it, I know it's you that actually runs city hall," he murmured urbanely.

"Ah..." Callie blinked at that and didn't know what to say. At first, she really thought the Commander was being snide with her but what he'd just said certainly wasn't what she'd expected. Frowning in puzzlement, she eyed him critically. "Are you alright? You're not one to give compliments even backhanded ones," she asked suspiciously.

He chuckled deep in his chest. "I'm fine, Ms. Briggs, truly. I was just making an accurate observation. I'd much rather it be you in charge, at least things would get done and you can make others to the scut work,," he told her sincerely. "Also, I'm just feeling very good about myself and my new station in life. I was such a stubborn ass for not taking my mate long ago. Now that I



have, I can't imagine ever being alone again." His eyes twinkled with joy.

The doors opened and they stepped out, walking side by side down the hall toward her office.

She eyed him, bemused and a little envious. He did look much happier, more content, and she could have kicked herself for not having noticed his more upbeat demeanor and lack of temper tantrums lately. For a brief moment, she wished for that kind of happiness for herself but dismissed it as she just never had much time to date.

"I'm pleased for you, Commander. You do have the look of someone who is very content and more easy with yourself," she admitted as she laid her armload of work on her desk. "So might I ask what brings you to city hall?" She asked as she began to sort through the pile of reports.

"I need to talk with Manx about the charity affair again." He said, his face taking on a more serious mien.

Surprised, she stopped sorting and looked up at him. "Is something amiss? Please don't say we've got a problem with the venue?" She said, starting to panic a little. Changing the venue for such a large affair at the last minute was a nightmare she didn't want to contemplate.

"Easy Ms. Briggs, there's nothing amiss with the function itself. As far as I know everything is still a go. I've already delegated the security team for it and they've been briefed. Everything on site is as secure as I could make it," he soothed her quickly.

"This is personal and has to do with what we discussed yesterday, the requirement of bringing ones mate or significant other," he explained, hesitantly. He was having second thoughts about speaking to the Mayor directly, perhaps he should bounce this off Ms. Briggs first to see how she would react.

While he dithered a moment, she was still reacting to what he'd said before. "Oh, thank goodness. I was afraid I'd be running around trying to move the venue." She sighed in relief. "Anyway, I'm afraid you can't speak with the Mayor right now. He's having a breakfast meeting with some investors. Anything I can help you with?" She asked.

'And she's given me an opening too...' He thought then decided to go ahead. "Could we talk privately. I don't want to be overheard. It's a very sensitive matter," he requested softly.

Raising her brows in surprise but saying nothing, she gestured toward the Mayor's office. Feral nodded and walked into the office followed by Callie who shut the door behind her.

"Alright, what's the problem?" She asked, keeping her voice low..

He sighed and spread his paws. "How set is he on me bringing my mate to this thing?"

Frowning and wondering why on earth this was such a problem for him, she remembered him objecting earlier when they spoke of the function yesterday.

"Why is it so difficult for your mate to be with you, Commander? Trust me, I do understand your need to protect her but you are in the public eye and as such, you really don't have a private life. Believe me, I commiserate with you and her but in answer to your question...he's adamant. Told me to be sure I had a date instead of him this time. I'm in a bit of a quandary about that right now myself since I don't have anyone I'd be willing to call a 'significant other'." Sighing, she shook her head in resignation. She had no idea how she was going to solve that problem, either.

"Well, it's because my mate is a he not a she, Ms. Briggs," Feral corrected her assumption, softly.

"Huh!...what did you say?" She blurted. 'Surely she hadn't heard that right!' .

Feral looked put upon for a moment. This was harder than he'd thought and it wasn't even that fool Manx he trying to explain it to.

"Callie, I'm an hermaphrodite. My mate is male," he said precisely, wincing inside. He'd never admitted that aloud to anyone but his physician.

She could only stare, her mouth hanging open. She knew it wasn't polite to just gape but to think of this huge tom as possessing both sexes had frozen her tongue with shock. Shaking her head sharply, she took a deep breath and let it out slowly.

"Ookay. So you have a **very** valid reason for not having **him** be there," she said thickly when she was able to finally find her voice. Her mind was still whirling from this new development. 'Oh joy! This is not going to go over well with the Mayor.'

"Oh yeah." Feral sighed in unhappy agreement.

Before either could say anything more, the Mayor unexpectedly burst into his office. He blinked in surprise to see Feral there.

"Feral! Has something happened?" He asked anxiously stopping to stare at him in concern.

"Uh...no Mayor Manx..." Feral began but his tongue froze, unable to repeat what he'd said to Briggs himself.

As for Callie, she'd never thought she ever see that 'deer in the headlights' look on Feral's face in her life, as he glanced over at her desperately asking with his eyes what he should do now. For once she didn't have an answer for him and could only shrug and gesture for him to go ahead and tell the Mayor what he'd told her. Feral looked like he'd rather face Dark Kat at that moment and she really couldn't blame him.

Swallowing in humiliation, not liking to say something so personal yet again to someone else since it certainly wasn't getting any easier the more times he was required to say it, Feral took a steadying breath then said rather bluntly, "I'm afraid I really can't bring my mate to this charity affair, Mayor because it's a male not female so..."

"What?" Manx shouted in shock cutting Feral off. "D-d-d-did you say male?"

"Yes, I did. I'm..." Feral tried again.

"Nooooo. You can't be gay! It won't do at all!" Manx shouted again, going off in a panic, raising his paws and waving them in agitation.

"If you'd just shut up a moment, I'll explain!" Feral roared, getting infuriated by the Mayor's incorrect assumptions and over reactive behavior.

Manx gaped at him and shut up in surprise at Feral daring to order him.

Huffing and trying to rein in his temper, Feral started to explain when a brilliant idea flashed in his mind. His mouth was still open but he was distracted by this idea that might be a perfect solution to his problems.

'He looks like a fish out of water and just as strange,' Callie thought, wondering why he'd paused like that.

Snapping his mouth closed, Feral eyed the Mayor carefully a moment. No he better tell the Mayor first then see what he said before he tried his idea. It might not be needed.

"Mayor Manx, listen closely because I'm not willing to repeat this and, I'm warning you not to

speak of it outside this office unless I say so or I'll find a way to ruin you and you know I can." He said coldly, making it clear he wasn't bluffing.

Manx continued to gape at him. First the tom orders him to shut up then he threatens him. What the hell was going on?

"I'm an hermaphrodite and have a male for a mate. Since most of high society are not so comfortable with my type of sexuality, they would be rather put off by having that shoved in their faces if I was to attend with him so I don't think it's a good idea if I went at all," he said carefully.

Manx stared at Feral in stunned amazement. Being near his desk, he backed up until he was behind it while still staring at the dark tom. His paws searched behind him desperately for his chair then sat heavily into it.

'Well I'll be damned!' He thought. 'Of all the Kats in this city why did the Chief Enforcer have to be one of those.' He closed his eyes and let his mind race over the complications this could present. He was being adamant about dates because this charity affair was about unity and family. It was important that his people show solidarity by having their significant others attend. He couldn't back down on this now. What to do? Really there wasn't any choice!

"Well, that is a complication alright but let me tell you why this affair is so vital. A major part of our future funding is hoped to be gained from this charity function. The theme, which was picked by the city council, not me, is about family unity. Having all attendees come with their significant others is a show of solidarity. Even I must show up with someone and I've not been attached since my wife died. So I can't in good conscious excuse you from attending, especially since all society will be there and are aware you're no longer single," Manx explained slowly in an unusual show of understanding and willingness to explain his decision, which he wasn't well known for with his employees.

"Wait a minute! Only my enforcers and you were supposed to know I was even mated. It wasn't meant for public consumption and I've seen nothing about it on the news," Feral objected angrily.

"That's because we put a news blackout on it but that hardly mattered since it did leak out somehow just not to the public in general. The reality though is not many in our social circle isn't aware of your new status," Manx relayed, surprised Feral hadn't been aware of that already.

The Commander blanched, fear and anger warring inside him.

Callie was as surprised as the Mayor by Feral's reaction. Normally, the dark tom was fully in tune with what high society circles were up to so he could head off any nasty problems that could upset the balance of power throughout the city's upper strata but apparently this had managed to blindside him.

To be fair, he probably failed to see this because, one, it was about him and, two, he was still enjoying the honeymoon phase of his new mating failing to realize that new love was the talk of his social peers behind his back. It was obvious he was truly upset by this news.

"Excuse me! I need to speak with my mate. I'll be back in a few minutes," Feral suddenly blurted out then left Manx's office as if his tail were on fire, leaving Callie and the Mayor confused and surprised by his sudden departure.

He didn't care what they thought, he just knew he needed to call Chance right away. Pausing a moment in the hall in indecision, he looked both ways before coming to a decision that the clock tower would be the most secure place for this call.

Once in the darkened little room that housed the clock mechanism, Feral quickly used his special communicator he was given to contact Chance. It was felt the device would be much more secure than their cell phones.

At the garage, Chance heard his comm go off in his pocket. Wiping his paws off on a rag, he looked around first before pulling it out of his pocket.

"Yeah, what's up?"

"Chance, listen. I'm here at city hall..." Feral began then explained what had happened.

"Crud! The Mayor's saying everyone in the upper strata of this city knows about you being mated?" Chance asked angrily.

"Yes! And because this event I have to attend is about solidarity, everyone attending will be bringing someone close to them. I can't be excused and neither can you. The only thing no one knows about is my mate is male except, of course, Manx and Briggs, now," Feral said bitterly.

"Oh great! What a mess."

"This is just going to get worse no matter what I do. I can adamantly refuse and suffer the consequences which could include a back lash response from those attending this thing or come out completely about myself and present you, which is another problem all by itself."

"What do you mean 'present me'?"

"I mean everyone will know I'm mated to Chance Furlong."

"What?" His mate shouted. "Are you out of your mind?"

Jake had been listening in and now stepped forward to interrupt. "Chance, as much as I don't like this either, Feral's right. The more he tries to hide this the more likely it's going to come back and bite him bad and you by extension. I wish we could stay low like we planned but since the city knows he's mated, not telling them who it is will only fuel speculation and have people in power start poking their noses in Feral's business."

"Trust me! That would be an even worse nightmare because Feral can be accused of deliberately hiding the fact he's with a known trouble maker who'd been kicked from the force and there's the possibility that under such scrutiny someone might learn who we really are. His reputation will be ruined and the SWAT Kats will be no more. However, if you guys simply 'bare it all' now and do damage control, it will blow over quicker and sooner and keep anyone from learning something much more important about us," he said gravely.

Chance felt a thrill of fear race down his spine at the scenario his partner had laid out. Jake was right, that could very well happen. "Did you hear that, Uly?"

"Yes, and as much as I'm hating all this, he's very right. I hadn't even thought about how far the the repercussions could reach out and devastate the city. By destroying our credibility it would leave the city entirely open to the depredations of the omegas," Feral said tightly. "Glad you're on our side Jake. So, Chance, to prevent that from happening, I need you to come to city hall asap. It will be much easier showing rather than just telling Manx."

"Crud, what a mess!" His mate groaned then sighed. "Yeah, Uly, I'll be there as quick as I can."

"Thanks love, see you soon," Feral murmured, relieved, then cut the connection. His feet dragging, he unwillingly returned to the Mayor's office.

Manx was drinking a cup of tea to soothe his frazzled nerves when Feral reentered his office. Eyeing him carefully, Callie made him sit down then handed him a cup of chamomile tea, hoping to soothe him.

"Here Commander, you're obviously very stressed out about this too."

He gave her a wane smile and a murmured thanks. Sipping the tea did make him feel a little better.

"So, is there something more I need to know about your mate that you haven't shared yet?" Manx asked warily.

"Uh yeah, but we need to wait until he gets here. Believe me, who he is will cause a violent stir among the elite as well as my officers. This has the making of a media nightmare," Feral warned the Mayor gravely.

Manx set his cup down sharply. "Who the heck did you mate with...Lenny Ringtail?" He asked facetiously.

Feral just rolled his eyes and didn't respond. Clenching his tea cup tightly and kept a rein on his temper, allowing the tea to calm him but it was no longer helping much now.

They sat there tensely for some fifteen minutes, saying nothing more, the silence stretching out uncomfortably. Suddenly, a certain familiar tom dressed in clean black jeans and a nice forest green polo shirt with tennis shoes entered the office. The shirt brought out the emerald green of his eyes.

"Chance?" Callie blurted in shocked surprise at seeing her handsome mechanic here.

"Hi, Callie," Chance said lightly, giving her a lopsided smile, then walked up to Feral's seated form, leaned over and gave him a kiss on the cheek. "Sorry it took me so long love, but I thought I should clean up first."

Feral inhaled his mate's scent and sighed. "You smell nice," he murmured warmly.

Chance grinned with pleasure and whispered in one of Feral's ears. "Just for you love."

Feral blushed, tilting his head up to give his mate a small smile in return.

"I don't believe this! You threw him and Jake out of the enforcers!" Callie exploded, disbelief at the loving scene before her.

"Who are you?" Manx interrupted irritable at being left out. "Callie! You obviously know who this stranger is, but I don't!"

Annoyed and angry at Manx for putting his mate in this position, Chance glared at the portly Kat and answered the question before Callie could speak. "I'm Chance Furlong, ex-enforcer and one of two city workers who handle your salvage yard." He took a protective stance behind Feral putting a paw on his mate's shoulder to show his support.

Feral reached up and placed his paw on Chance's and squeezed. "Easy, tiger."

Callie could not believe what she was seeing. Chance and Jake had no love for Feral after what had transpired when they'd been kicked off the force. But right before her eyes she could clearly see their feelings had changed dramatically.

The tough, powerfully, built tabby was tender and warm to the big, gruff, and temper-prone dark tom. Said tom returning those warm touches with ones of his own.

"How did this happen? You both hated each other?" She demanded in utter confusion.

Chance just snorted, shoving his mate's shoulder to get Feral to respond, but the dark tom seemed totally reluctant to do so. Sighing in mild annoyance, the tabby looked over at Callie and answered her question.

"This is pretty personal stuff, Callie. All I'll tell you is, Ulysses knew I was his mate when I went through the academy but refused to claim me due to officer fraternization rules but then when I was kicked out, we weren't on speaking terms. Only recently have certain events occurred to break down that barrier and brought us together. What can I say, we're both stubborn but we couldn't fight the intense need to bond and I'm glad we failed because I'm happier than I ever thought I'd be. A soul bond is like nothing in this world," Chance said passionately.

Callie could only shake her head in amazement. "That's just...I don't have any words for it but its obvious you both are very happy."

"That's all well and good but the fact he's an ex-enforcer and Feral is the one who kicked him out is going to cause a scandal," Manx moaned, holding his head in consternation.

"Well now you know why I didn't want to take to the charity ball," Feral said sardonically.

Manx could only roll his eyes in disgust at that statement.

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Chapter 11: The Secret is out by ulyferal

"We have to come up with something!" Manx said, at his wits end. They'd been discussing how they were going to brief the ball attendees on Feral's odd situation but every idea had some problem with it. Now, a couple of hours later, they still sat before the Mayor's desk in tired and irritable silence.

Callie sighed, lifted her glasses so she could rub her nose then shifted them in place once more. She glanced over at Feral and Chance who were sitting very close together. The tabby's paw was holding Feral's and his thumb was making soothing circles over their joint paws.

Feral's eyes were closed, his head resting in his left palm, with the elbow sitting on the chair arm. It was an oddly domestic scene that should have seemed out of place but somehow wasn't, proving how right they were as a couple. She still found it unbelievable that Chance and Feral were mated.

And if she was having trouble getting used to it, just explaining it and having them be together at the ball was going to cause such an uproar of offended dignities, she and the Mayor would be spending all night soothing ruffled fur and outraged sensibilities. The city elites would be buzzing about it for months.

"Look, our original idea of simply releasing this information to the press in a formal press conference seems to be our only choice in delivering such controversial news in a safer and more controlled environment than the open familiarity of the ball itself." She said flatly, tired of the endless discussion that was getting no where.

Feral had opened his eyes and was listening to her. "I have to agree. At least the fervor will have had time to die down somewhat before the function itself. Then when we show up at the ball, we should be able to field the comments we'll still get but at least it won't be as disruptive as dropping it on them that night."

Mayor Manx stared at both of them and thought about it. He closed his eyes a moment and rubbed them. When he opened them again, he sighed and nodded. "Alriiight! There doesn't appear to be any other solution so let's get this thing done immediately."

"I'll get right on it Mayor! How about tomorrow at ten?" She asked, looking at Feral and Chance.

Feral grimaced and Chance definitely didn't look happy but both nodded their reluctant agreement.

"Excellent! Well be off with you. I have my own work to do." Manx said pompously.

Glancing at each other with rolling eyes at that comment, the three stood up and left the Mayor's office. They paused in Callie's office before leaving.

"Chance, though you look really nice, I'm afraid appearances are going to be very important tomorrow. Do you have a business suit?" Callie asked.

The tabby scowled. "On my salary and with my job...yeah...right!" He said sarcastically. "Why would I ever need such a thing?"

"Unfortunately, love, for this occasion you'll need one and a tux for the ball." Feral said to his irate mate then turned back to Callie. "Don't worry Ms. Briggs I'll take care of it. We'll see you tomorrow."

She sighed in relief and waved them off. The pair quickly made for the elevators. They lucked out in getting an empty car.

On their way down, Chance let out his frustration. "Crud! Uly, do I have to wear a suit? I mean that's like a skunk putting on fancy airs."

"Chance, you're not a hick from the country. I know you can look very debonair when you are so inclined or are showing off so this is not that big a deal. The clothes aren't what you're really upset about anyway." Feral said knowingly.

"You're right...I can't believe we're actually going to do this. The ridicule that will be heaped on us will be significant and those oh so uppity society types won't hesitate to find ways to humiliate us with just a few well chosen words. It makes me sick just thinking about it." Chance growled.

They'd reached their floor but Feral hit the door close button and held it while he studied his mate. "I know and I agree with you. Unfortunately, we have no other choice."

Chance's shoulders slumped. "I know...but it still sucks."

Feral grinned ruefully. "That it does." He released the door control and it snapped open. "I walked here." He told his mate.

"I came by tow truck. Want to come back to the garage and tell Jake what we've done?"

"No...but I will anyway." Feral sighed in resignation.

Chance snorted in commiseration and led the way to where he'd parked the tow truck.

Back at the garage, Jake heard the tow truck arrive and stepped out the door. He was surprised to see Feral had come along. He waited as the two climbed out and walked up to him.

"By the look on your faces, things didn't go too well." Jake said shrewdly.

"Well, sorta. Come on, let's get some milk and we'll tell you about it." Chance said gloomily, leading the way back into the garage waiting area. He went to the fridge and grabbed some milk and handed them out. Then took a seat on the ratty couch. Feral sat beside him, stretched his legs out and sighed.

Jake stood and watched them both as he drank his milk. Feral told Jake what had transpired and what they intended to do the next morning.

The cinnamon tom grimaced and finished his milk without a word. Tossing the can in the trash, he rubbed the back of his neck and stared at the pair.

"Well, this is where it's going to be hell around here for awhile." He simply said.

His pronouncement would prove to be the greatest understatement of the year.

Later that evening, he and Ulysses went clothes shopping. Chance grimaced and tried to focus on the task at paw but it was hard when both he and his mate kept getting strange looks and whispers that traveled all around the exclusive male clothing store. He tried to ignore it as he was fitted with a very nice dark brown suit paired with a pale green shirt and a tie that Feral was taken with that had black and emerald green striping.

Next was the fitting for the tux. That went a little faster though the measuring business made him uncomfortable. But he endured it, if only to prolong that look on his mate's face. Uly was practically drooling over how he looked in the tux. He had to admit he did look incredible.

'God's! Chance looks so hot in that.' Feral moaned mentally. 'Those society fems and toms are going to drool over my mate.' He grinned to himself proudly.

When he dropped Chance back off at the yard, he remembered something and went in to speak with Jake.

"Wow! Nice suit, buddy." Jake said admiring the new clothes Chance held up for his review.

"Yeah. Been a long time since I had anything so nice." Chance admitted.

"He was a knockout in the tux too!" Feral rumbled, smiling. "By the way, Jake. Ms. Briggs said she was having trouble thinking of a good date for the ball...think you might be interested?"

Jake's mouth gaped open at the suggestion. He snapped it shut and shook his head. "Why would she want a grease monkey as her date." He said sourly. "She only sees me as Razor."

"Sounds as if you're jealous of your alter ego." Feral observed. "However, I think you're selling yourself short. You really should think about it."

Jake just shrugged his shoulders and blushed.

Chance had been surprised when Uly had suggested Jake hook up with Callie but the more he thought about it the more he realized his mate was right. But knowing his shy friend, he couldn't push Jake into doing it. It would have to be his decision though he wouldn't mind having his friend there for support on what would be a very trying night.

*Next morning...press room at city hall...*

Chance felt like he was being ate alive by vultures. The press was pounding on them with increasingly personal questions and he could easily feel Ulysses barely held restraint on his famous temper. Some of the questions were nasty and vindictive, which made holding his own temper nearly impossible. One very obnoxious reporter was barely lucky neither of them decided to knock his fool head off.

Even Ann Gora was a bit too personal and a little vicious with her questions. "Commander Feral, let me get this straight...you and former Flight Lieutenant Chance Furlong have been able to put your 'significant' differences behind you and are willing to be together despite the fact your mate is still working at the Megakat Salvage Yard. Plus the fact that you are requiring him and his partner, former Flight Lieutenant Jake Clawson, to continue paying their debt for damaging the enforcer flightline that got them kicked off the force in the first place. I find it hard to believe that Furlong and Clawson are okay with this?" Her tone dripped disbelief and sarcasm.

"You are single, correct Ann?" Feral asked, not answering her. Ann startled and looked confused by the question but she answered, if only to find out what he was getting at.



"Yes."

"Then beyond knowing what the textbooks say, you have no idea what it feels like to be bonded." He said with certainty. "Bonding is something you must experience to understand. Since it is very rare, you may never be so blessed. Finding the other half of your soul completes you in ways you can't begin to imagine. The minds link during the first mating, binding the two souls together that only death can destroy." Feral said passionately.

"How does that feel, Commander?" Callie suddenly asked, very curious about this.

"It's really hard to explain but I could come close by saying you are never alone. There is this warmth in your mind that is always there, comforting you, keeping you company...always. It's just..." Feral sighed and spread his paws.

"It really is hard to describe. I can only say, I feel complete, like something had been missing but I never knew it until we bonded and I just felt whole." Chance said quietly.

There was silence for a long moment. Faces held disbelief, awe, envy, blank confusion, and understanding from those extreme few in the crowd that were bonded as well.

"But, if you were mates all along how is it you're only just bonding?" Came a question laced with confusion from the crowd.

"Stubbornness!" Feral said flatly. Chuckles filled the air at that flat statement.

"He's not kidding." Chance snorted, smiling. "We are a pair of very stubborn toms. I wasn't aware of our being mates at first. Usually, the mating instinct is triggered by the heat cycle of the female. But because, Uly is an hermaphrodite and only comes into heat twice a year, he managed to not be around me during those times. He was very sneaky, because he knew as far back as when I was a trainee that we were soul mates. But you already know why he couldn't take me then. And, of course, when I was put out of the enforcers, I hated his guts. It was only chance that brought us together when he was just coming into heat. That's all it took for me to realize we were mates. But even then we resisted the pull. Like I said stubborn."

A sprinkling of laughter burst out at that bit of candor. Others were still not very accepting and found the whole business of 'soul mates' hard to swallow. They knew it existed because scientists had proven it but still it was hard for skeptics to believe.

Ann was still absorbing the unique experience of witnessing Commander Feral being passionate about something so nebulous. He was normally skeptical of things he couldn't pin down and see. It was a clear indication of just how much his bonding had affected him.

She realized she would have to rethink her approach on this subject and some research was definitely indicated. On a personal note, she had to admit Furlong looked really hot dressed in that suit. He looked every inch the hot shot pilot he'd once been in the enforcers. Despite his lower station in life, he still possessed a commanding air about him and it shone clearly on camera.

The rest of the press conference was still a chore to be endured but finally after two hours, it was over and they slipped away by chopper. Feral piloted it and dropped his mate off at the salvage yard after a lingering kiss to relief the stress of the past few hours.

When they pulled away finally, Feral caressed his mate's cheek. "I'll see you after work. We need some together time after that raking over the coals we endured." He said gently. "And by the way, you wowed the fems there. They were practically falling all over themselves even while they were trying to make you look bad."

"Heh heh! Yeah, I noticed. But all that testosterone show was all for you, love." Chance purred, nuzzling Uly one last time before pulling back and allowing his mate to take off.

As predicted, the uproar was loud and vicious. Feral endured glares, looks of shock, disappointment, and disillusionment from his troops. Only a tiny few showed pleasure at his happiness and others, like Steele, snickered and were pleased that he'd done something so bad his reputation was taking a beating.

Through it all he pretended nothing was changed, barked orders, gave punishment when required, and did his work as if nothing had changed. Inside, though, it hurt to be seen in such a poor light. What he didn't know was Felina and Sgt Fallon were quietly circulating the reasons for the mating, playing up the fact bonding was very rare and that their Commander had been blessed with a soulmate even if that person was someone who had been disgraced. Felina was passionate in her defense when she said, a Kat didn't pick their life mate...fate decided it and that's why it was so precious in the first place.

It took a while but finally their perseverance paid off as his troops gradually began to be more accepting of their Commander's bonding and began forcing the unhappy ones to shut up and accept it too or at least appear to accept it. By the time of the ball, most of his troops were once more behind him. The ones that weren't just did their duty and said no more about it not wanting to endure anymore pressure from their fellow enforcers..

As for Chance, being at the salvage yard, he didn't have to come in contact with anyone that objected to his being mated to the Chief Enforcer. So he was spared the backlash. He spent a lot of his time soothing his mate's hurt feelings and anguish at his treatment at the paws of his own enforcers. Chance railed at Jake at how unfair it was and his partner simply nodded quietly and let his partner blow off steam.

There was only one pair of idiots that thought this new situation was perfect for more of their harassment of their favorite junk yard Kats.

Riding in with another load of salvage they smirked as they rolled to a stop at the garage entrance. Though it would give their evil hearts great pleasure to dump their load in front of the garage, they didn't forget Feral's warning nor the attack by the big tabby. Wisely, they stayed in their truck and heckled Chance from the safety of their cab the whole time they were there. The tabby ignored them but Murray just had to get a little too personal.

As they pulled up to the area where the load was to be deposited, Burke halted the truck and Murray leaned his head out and said nastily. "So, do you two take turns being the wife?"

Chance stopped in his tracks and was at the truck door in a blur of motion. Murray never knew what hit him but in the next moment he was flying across the cab and into Burke's lap, out cold.

Burke licked his lips in fear as Furlong came stalking back to his side of the truck. He'd never seen the tabby move. Furlong may not be a pilot any longer but his reflexes were still fast.

"I suggest you teach your 'friend' to learn to keep his big mouth shut." Chance snarled warningly.

Burke just nodded nervously, as he pulled the lever and released his load. As soon as it was done, he was driving out of the yard as fast as he dared, Murray still unconscious in his lap.

Getting through the rest of the month was a strain but by the time the night of the ball arrived, most of the upset had passed and become old news.

Callie sighed and was glad the worst of the nastiness had faded around Feral and Chance. One problem out of the way. Now if only she could solve her other difficulty...namely getting a date for the ball. At this point in time, she had no one she was seeing and of those she'd been with, there was none she was willing to allow as her date for the ball.

As the time marched closer, she began to get a bit panicky. Driving home one night, her car began to make funny noises. 'Damn, I really didn't need this now.' She moaned in frustration. The next day, after she'd cleared her morning's work, she drove to her favorite garage.

"Hi Callie." Chance grinned at her as she got out of her car.

"Hi Chance. My car is making a lot of noise and I thought I'd better bring it in."

"Sure, we'll take a look at it and try to get it back to you today."

"Chance, how are you and Feral holding up now?" She asked as she followed the tabby into the office.

"Oh, I'm doing fine. No one bothers me out here but Uly...well...all I can say is it's gotten a lot better. He was pretty hurt and stressed by his enforcers attitude toward him in the beginning after the news conference but they're coming around at last." He said, shrugging.

Jake came out from the back of the garage when he heard her voice. "Hi, Callie." He said shyly.

"Hello, Jake." .

"Do you need a lift back to city hall."

"Yes, thanks. The Mayor is out with the limo." Pleased he got up the nerve to ask her.

"Let me go get it and we'll be off." Jake told her, grabbing the keys off the desk and heading out back where the tow truck was parked.

"Let me have your keys, Callie." Chance said, holding back the smile at his friend's eagerness to be with the pretty she-kat alone. He hoped Jake would ask Callie about the ball.

"Sure, here you go." She said, handing over her keys. The tow truck roared up in front.

Jake hopped out and helped Callie into the passenger side. She waved at Chance and the pair was soon on their way.

The two talked about his partner's relationship with Feral and how Jake was handling it and how the ball had precipitated them being forced into the open. This presented Jake with the perfect opening he needed to ask about whether Callie had a date or not.

"Callie, speaking of the ball, have you been able to find a date for it?" He asked innocently.

Callie blinked in surprise. 'How had he known about that...oh wait...of course...Feral would have mentioned it so naturally, Jake would heard about hers and the Mayor's problem.

"No, unfortunately I haven't and I'm getting worried since I'm running out of time." She answered honestly. She had a funny feeling in her stomach that she knew what Jake was going to ask and she was surprised to feel hope that he would.

"Well...uh...I...that is...uhm..." Jake hemmed nervously.

"Yes?"

"Uh...well...I would be happy to take you if you wouldn't mind going with a mechanic?" Jake finally got out and groaned mentally at how lame he sounded.

Callie's heart leaped. She studied the tom more closely than she'd ever bothered to before. Though slimmer and shorter than Chance, Jake was no light weight. He was powerfully built as

she could clearly tell by the muscles stretching his shirt. He was a handsome Kat, very smart, and gentle. But underneath that shy exterior she sensed a backbone of steel. He could handle himself if he needed to or he wouldn't have been a weapon's officer.

Smiling in relief that her problem was solved, she didn't hesitate to answer, "I would love to have you as my escort. I couldn't ask for a more handsome companion and you are not just a mechanic."

Jake blushed hotly and smiled at her, pleased and surprised she had accepted so readily. She seemed really happy about it too. That warmed him inside a lot.

They had reached city hall and as they said farewell, Callie asked, "I'd like to see you a few times before the ball if you're willing?" Batting her eyes at him as he helped her from the cab of the truck.

"Uh, sure. I'll give you a call and we'll set a date. Okay?" Jake asked, feeling giddy.

"Sounds perfect. Until later, bye Jake." She said warmly then turned to walk up the city hall steps.

Jake stood there watching her until she disappeared inside then climbed back into the truck and returned to the salvage yard.

Chance could tell something good had happen by the sappy look on his friend's face when he returned to the yard and threw the truck keys on the desk. He eyed Jake questioningly.

His partner grinned broadly and proclaimed, "She said yes! We're going to the ball together. We're also going on a date as soon as we decide when." He added.

"That's wonderful Jake, I'm happy for you." Chance said, clapping his friend on the back.

Chance was pleased and as time went on he could tell Jake and Callie were enjoying each others company. By the time of the ball, they'd been on four dates. With Uly's help, the tabby had taken Jake to the same place he'd gotten his tux and got to see it on his friend. He looked just as debonair as Chance did in his. They were going to be the hottest males there.

When the night of the ball finally arrived, Jake was very nervous when Callie showed up at the yard in the limo she'd commissioned for the night. He climbed in beside her and handed her the orchid corsage he'd gotten her. Smiling in pleasure she let him pin it on her. Grinning shyly, he sat back and enjoyed the ride to the ball.

Meanwhile at their hidden home, Chance got dressed in his new finery while Feral put on his dress uniform.

"You look magnificent, my love!" Feral growled hotly looking his mate over, making sure everything was perfect. He gave Chance a passionate kiss.

"Hmm. If my clothes turn you on that way, I should get me a complete new wardrobe." Chance teased. "And I must say, you looked fantastic yourself." He admired his mate's dress uniform and the way Uly filled it out so nicely. "We are going to knock them dead tonight."

"Every head is going to be looking at you, my handsome tabby. I will be the envy of the ball." Feral purred.

"Flatterer! We'd better skedaddle if we're to get there on time." Chance said warmly as he lead the way out of their home and to the garage where Feral's hummer was parked.

"Wouldn't want that." Feral sighed as he climbed into the driver's seat.

Chance used the controller in the hummer to set the security system on their home then fiddled with the radio and found a great music station to listen to on the long drive into the city.

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Chapter 12: The Disaster Ball by ulyferal

Feral found a parking spot some distance from the entrance of the Megakat Natural History Museum where the ball was being held. He didn't want to be watched like a hawk as they drove up nor have his vehicle vandalized once it was learned which car was his. It also helped to settle their nerves a little by walking the small distance toward the entrance.

A large throng was gathered at the doors. Security was tight so only a few at a time could enter. Lively chatter filled the air as the attendees patiently waited their turn to be security checked then allowed entrance. All the glitz was on display with brilliant and costly gowns and necks draped in expensive jewelry on the fems and elegant tuxes on the males with a sprinkling of dress uniforms, like Feral, scattered about.

They held back at the edge of the crowd, not willing to push closer and have the snide comments begin any sooner than necessary. It took nearly forty minutes for the crowd to finally thin out and allow them to get closer to the doors.

When Feral finally reached the entrance, he spoke with the officer overseeing security. "Any problems?"

"No sir, everything is running smoothly. First pass through was made thirty minutes ago...no problems." The officer said briskly, eyes slipping over to the male standing quietly at Feral's side then quickly returning to the front.

"Excellent. Stay sharp and keep up the good work." Feral rumbled, pleased things were okay so far. With so many wealthy in one place, the temptation for some omega to show up was just too good to miss. He hoped they would have no problems tonight to add to his personal ones.

He and Chance strode past the guards and walked through the large foyer until they came to the huge room the museum was lending them for the ball. It was decorated in warm hues of green and brown, plants were everywhere as were examples of the local kittens art work on the walls in simple but beautiful frames.

A huge banquet table was laid out at the back wall of the room. At one end of the tables was a large ice sculpture carved with the images of two kittens with their parents holding paws. To the left of the entryway were many circles of comfortable leather couches with coffee tables lending a more family flavor to the atmosphere. A large orchestra was to the right of the banquet tables and recessed in the corner. The center of the room was to be used as the dance floor.

"Wow! What a spread." Chance said softly to his mate.

"Yes, they certainly went all out for this." Feral murmured as the two of them moved through the throng and made for the buffet table. They had skipped dinner and he was famished.

As they walked across the huge expanse of floor, they could feel dozens of eyes on them. Feral caught many an admiring look cast on his mate. Chance cut a handsome figure as his powerful form strode easily beside him. Not just fems alone were staring at the tom either he noted with amusement.

Only a small group of attendees were at the table when they reached it and grabbed a plate. Chance stayed close behind Ulysses as he filled his plate. He planned on not opening his mouth too much for fear he would put his foot in it and make things worse. He was tense but was glad it hadn't affected his appetite. He noted however, Ulysses was only putting a few things on his plate. Obviously, his appetite was affected by his level of stress.

Once they had filled their plates, ignoring the looks they were already starting to receive, and got their drinks, they looked for a less crowded place to sit. A couch setting located nearer to the entryway was mostly empty so they made their way through the crowd toward it.

Chance waited until Ulysses was settled before he sat down nearly against his mate, putting his glass on the table. Looking around, he nodded casually at the other two couples sitting across from them. He was given cool nods in response. He didn't let it bother him since he was prepared for the cool reception in the first place.

As he dug into his food, he prayed he'd be able to finish eating before someone started in on them. Glancing to his side, he noted Ulysses was just picking at his food and looking around at the crowd. His mate was on alert for danger, he realized and not the kind they were expecting.

Sighing mentally, he poked his mate in the side, drawing Uly's attention to him. "Look you picked the best of your enforcers for this job. Let them do it. You're here to hobnob and be harassed by the elite, remember?" He murmured in a low voice, injecting some humor to lighten the atmosphere then shoved an hors d'oeuvre in his mate's mouth when Uly tried to respond.

Feral blinked as he had to quickly chew the food that had appeared in his mouth so suddenly. He huffed a little at his mate for the underhanded trick but understood what Chance was trying to tell him, however, no amount of cajoling from his mate could make him relax completely.

One of the couples across from them raised eyebrows at Chance's action which was far too intimate for this setting. Before either of them could point out the tabby's social gaffe, they were prevented by the arrival of the Deputy Mayor and her date.

Vicious gossip was already circulating the room about this second disgraced ex-enforcer attending and, of all things, escorting the Deputy Mayor, no less. 'What was this world coming too?' was the constant refrain heard.

Callie stoutly ignored the shocked and affronted looks she and Jake garnered as she circulated the room, meeting and greeting various wealthy patrons and CEOs, doing her part thumping for the funds they needed.

Feeling a break was required after more than an hour of talking, pleading, cajoling, and fending off nasty comments, Callie gently tugged her date off to the buffet table. Jake was doing far better than she'd hoped in maintaining a bland exterior despite some of the vicious things being said about him. Though, she did see his jaw tighten once or twice. As a reward for his being so gentlemanly, she would spend the next hour focused exclusively on him. She was pleased to see the many admiring looks cast on her date among the hateful ones. Jake cut a handsome silhouette as he escorted her to the buffet table.

Jake found it hard to maintain his facade of indifference to the comments around him when he really wanted to plant a fist in a few of those spiteful faces. He was glad when Callie suggested they get something to eat and sit a bit.

Some of the attention he and Callie were getting had shifted when Feral and Chance entered the room. He felt pain for his buddy. If he thought the comments had been nasty toward him, it didn't compare to what he was now hearing against his best friend. It made him sick to know people could be that vindictive against someone they didn't know at all.

As he filled his plate, out of the corner of his eye, he watched as Feral and Chance began to move through the crowd toward them. Their way was impeded by various groups making a point to snub them and show their disapproval by not moving out of the way.

'Damn this is going to be a long night,' Jake growled mentally as he and Callie grabbed glasses of wine and began to look for a place to sit. Unfortunately, sanctuary would have to wait a little

longer as the Mayor buttonholed Callie, pulling her aside away from the crowd.

He urged her toward a quiet corner. Smiling urbanely, he gave the impression things were fine, but his words to his deputy belied that false facade.

"Callie, the hostility is so thick in here you could cut it with a knife. I thought some of this was supposed to have eased before tonight?" He complained, plaintively.

"I know, Mayor. Unfortunately, there are just too many petty minded people in the upper crust. We can only hope the more liberal minded will force their less than sanguine friends to be more civil. Other than that, there's nothing else we can do but keep smiling and pretend we don't hear them," Callie murmured, more than a little miffed herself.

"If you say so, Callie, although this attitude is not very conducive toward making any money and that **is** the main reason for all this," Manx muttered unhappily before using another false smile and a pat on Callie's shoulder for show to those watching them, then drifting casually away to head for a large group of investors nearby.

Annoyed, Callie clung to her own fake smile as she moved off toward the couches once more, Jake keeping close to her side. He felt a little odd when he noted he was receiving some rather blatant lustful looks from many of the fems as well as a handful of toms as he and Callie crossed the room.

'Weird! Hate me and lust me at the same time. These people are strange,' Jake muttered to himself.

Determined to ignore the odd looks and keeping his attention fixed on his date, Jake's face held a neutral expression as they reached the couch where his partner and Feral were sitting. Sighing mentally, Jake was glad to be away from the nasty crowd, allowing himself to relax a little as he and Callie reached the couches, taking the one beside his friend's. Sitting down close to Callie and nearest to Chance, he began to eat some of the interesting food they were serving here.

"Hi guys, how's the food?" Callie asked brightly, determined to be upbeat.

"Delicious and the place looks fantastic too, Callie. Great job!" Chance said honestly.

"Thanks, Chance. It was a lot of work but I'm pleased at how it all turned out and everyone looks like they are enjoying themselves." She was relieved for that at least as she began to eat her food. She was starving and the food was great.

"Well, some of them are," Feral added in an undertone, his eyes catching yet another hostile glare being hurled in their direction.

Callie, sighed softly in sympathy, giving him a sad and understanding look. "No more than we expected," she murmured, picking up a canape and nibbling it.

Feral gave a small growl at that comment and was about to put his plate down when his mate intervened.

"You're really not eating enough, Uly," Chance scolded the dark tom, shoving some of his food from his plate to Uly's, ignoring his mate's protests then pushing another canape into the tom's mouth.

Managing to finish the last bits of food he'd been force fed, Feral protested, "Humph, Chance, enough, I'm full...really."

His mate gave him a doubtful look. "You hadn't had dinner and now you're just picking at your food. I don't want to listen to your empty and angry stomach growl at me later tonight."

Feral could only sigh and appeased Chance by eating a little more before setting his plate down and picking up his wine glass.

Satisfied, Chance went back to looking around and eating his own food. Callie could only shake her head a bit in amazement at the sight of Feral's capitulation to the tabby's light bullying.

'He really does love the tom madly to put up with being coddled,' she mused thoughtfully. The moment was spoiled by a sudden unexpected verbal assault from close by.

Two older couples had sat down on a couch across from them and the male of one of the pairs frowned unhappily at Feral and gave Chance a nasty look.

"Commander Feral! How could you think so little of your position to do something so scandalous as to take up with this 'tom' you yourself booted from the ranks of your officers? You obviously had a good reason for dismissing him so I'm at a loss to understand how you could take him as a mate!" The male barked haughtily, his voice oozing outrage.

Feral's eyes flashed with anger while his mate almost lunged across to assault the male for his nasty comment, but before the dark tom could formulate a suitably scorching response, Jake suddenly spoke up.

"One doesn't choose one's soul mate. It's chosen by fate," he intoned solemnly. "It doesn't differentiate between good or bad persons, it just is. Commander Feral has been an exceptional military leader for this city and has done his duty without complaint. Now fate has rewarded him with a mate to relieve him of his loneliness he has endured for a very long time. He has a right to proudly proclaim this is his bonded which is what this affair is supposed to represent," he dared to scold the older male.

The male scowled at Jake sourly. "That's just a lot of hokum dreamed up by all those feel good gurus. There is no such thing as 'soul bonded'. What rot!"

"It is a scientific fact, sir, and you insult the lucky ones who have had fate smile on them and grant them such a bonding. It's in poor taste to denigrate someone's beliefs," Jake retorted frostily.

The male's eyes widened at being told his behavior was less than acceptable by someone of lower station than he. Before he could put the young upstart in his place another voice interrupted. A member of the city council was staring down at the male with angry, cold eyes.

"I too am so fortunate to be soul bonded. I find it offensive to hear you treat it like something dirty. I must insist on an apology both for myself and for Commander Feral and his mate!" He demanded sharply. There was a hint of a threat that retribution would be swift if he didn't get what he asked.

The male who had been so disrespectful, colored red with embarrassment and not a little fear as he hastily offered an apology then he and his wife beat an immediate retreat.

"Cretin!" The council member hissed after their departing forms then looked back at Feral and gave him and Chance a warm smile, saluted them with his wine glass before drifting off again.

"Well that was certainly nice of Councilor Primstone to do that," Chance said in surprise. "And thanks Jake. Appreciate the support and knowing the right thing to say. I was about ready to pop that guy in the face."

"So I'd guessed," Jake smirked. "And I was only too happy to intervene. That guy was really disrespectful to both of you." He was pleased by the compliment and the look of approval in Callie's eyes.

"I'm very grateful as well for your quick response, it was far better than what I was struggling to come up with that wouldn't get me into trouble. Thank you for your defense of my character but I



admit I certainly hadn't expected you of all people to defend me like that," Feral added, truly taken aback by Jake's action.

"You didn't deserve such an attack, Commander. It was nasty and extremely insulting." Jake said strongly. Feral nodded his understanding and gave him a warm smile.

Jake had only done what he'd felt was right but was warmed by that look of appreciation and warmth in Feral's eyes for him. He was surprised how much that meant to him after all the years of antagonism the two had shared. His ears pricked up suddenly as he heard the orchestra strike up a dance tune and couples began to take the floor.

"Would you like to dance, Callie?" He turned to her and asked.

"Oh, that would be wonderful."

They put their plates aside and Jake helped Callie to her feet then guided her out to the floor.

"Interested in doing the same, love?" Chance asked, finishing with his food and setting his own plate down.

"Uh, not really..." Feral responded, not big on dancing though he did know how.

"Ohh but I want an excuse to get closer to you," Chance purred seductively in his mate's ear.

Feral blushed at that under current of lust in the tabby's tone. Really, he just couldn't resist doing whatever his handsome mate desired so with only a little reluctance he rose to his feet. It warmed him inside when Chance's face lit up with delight as his mate eagerly escorted him out onto the dance floor.

The dark tom sighed happily as he and Chance held each other close and danced to the strains of a love song. For the first time that evening, he was able to ignore everyone else and just enjoy being with his mate.

Chance smiled as he felt his mate relax in his arms. He stroked a paw daringly down the dark tom's back in a gentle caress but nothing more blatant as he didn't want to incur even more hostility from the stuffier upper crust.

Not far away, Jake and Callie moved around the dance floor with easy grace. Jake was soaring inside at the chance to dance with the lovely she-kat. He was forever grateful his mother had insisted he learn how to dance. That motherly insistence translated into the most wonderful night of his life. Callie felt incredible in his arms, all soft curves and smelling heavenly.

Callie sighed with pleasure, Jake's arms were strong and he moved with easy assurance. He was a very good dancer and she was glad she had decided to take him as her date. Tonight he had shown wonderful tact and more poise than the elite that had been trained proper social behavior from birth.

The two couples managed to dance a couple of enjoyable sets before disaster blew in. Screams filled the air when confronted by the sound of a machine gun firing. No one could flee because the doors were blocked by tough and mean looking mercenary types holding assault weapons. Blocking the main entrance were Mac and Molly Mange dressed in dark suits with fedoras on their metal heads.

"Listen up!" Mac bellowed in his electronic voice. "Everyone sit on the floor or you'll be in the same shape the enforcers are in now and that is mostly dead."

There was a scramble as every guest sat down. Feral, Chance, Jake and Callie were the last to sit, as they didn't like the feeling of being helpless. Inside Feral felt pain and fury at the loss of

more of his officers.

"Now, be good rich kitties and hand over your jewels and money," Mac ordered.

A small group of mercenaries, standing behind the Metallikats, came forward and began to circulate among the attendees with bags in their paws.

Feral was about to lunge to his feet and try to distract the two metal heads from their victims but his mate had grabbed his collar and made him stay put. He turned his head to glare questioningly at Chance.

The tabby's face was grim and his eyes flicked to his partner in silent answer to his mate's question. Feral glanced over then down as he saw Jake in the process of pulling something stealthily from the back of his pants. When it finally appeared, he realized it was one of their glovatrix.

Jake kept it hidden from view as he checked to see where the Metallikats were and how close their minions were from their small group. Chance was removing a similar glovatrix from his pants too. They had been lucky enough to have been near the orchestra when the attack began so it would take the crooks a little more time to reach them.

The Metallikats hadn't seen Feral yet so Chance muttered to his mate to keep his head down to buy them more time. If they saw Feral, the two metal heads would drag him out or kill him whichever mood struck them. They only had a few minutes more to hatch a plan of a attack.

"We have gas grenades on us," Jake muttered very softly, barely moving his lips as he worked at his glovatrix and removed something from it.

Feral could feel his mate moving his paws behind him and had to assume Chance was doing the same thing as Jake.

"That won't take out Mac and Molly," Feral murmured, worriedly.

"No, but it will take out the mercenaries and cause the guests to pass out too. It's quick acting. Here..." Jake pushed something into Feral's paws. "You throw to the left, I'll throw straight ahead and Chance to the right. I have something new that I hope will take out our two headaches. Leave it to me. After you've thrown your capsules, hold your breaths for a count of twenty and pretend to collapse along with the guests. I'll take those two out when they get closer to us," Jake hissed softly. "Now wait for my command then throw!"

All three tensed. The mercenaries weren't close to them yet but it wouldn't be long. The Metallikats were standing in the center of the dance floor watching everyone with their internal scanners. They needed to act soon before their sensors detected the glovatrixes.

"Now!" Jake hissed.

Hurling from their seated positions they lobbed the capsules as far as they could. The mercenaries whirled toward the thrown objects but the capsules vanished among the guests and, once striking the floors, spread the invisible gas rapidly. Being extremely potent, everyone, including the mercenaries, collapsed instantly, leaving only the Metallikats standing.

Infuriated and confused, they focused on the location of the attack but could find no one. Suspicious, the two walked slowing forward searching everyone closely.

"What the heck happened?" Mac demanded angrily.

"How should I know!" Molly snarled as she leaned down and shook one of their mercenaries. "They're out cold. Had to be some kind of gas to take them all out at once," she muttered angrily.

"But by who?" Mac asked rhetorically as he kept trying to find the culprits.

Feral had tucked his head in his arms to hide his identity, letting the rest of his body slump over to his side. His mate was laying over his waist to hide him further. He badly wanted to see what the two were up to but knew he didn't dare move a muscle. It was fortunate the two weren't aware the SWAT Kats were here in their other identities. He prayed Jake's new weapon worked or they were screwed. Not much could take down these two easily.

Jake kept his eyes on the pair. His body lay protectively over Callie but was positioned in such a way that he could shoot in seconds. He watched them from under his arm. His body tensed as Mac and Molly finally came close enough to their position. Firing from his prone position he hit both with strange missiles that stuck to their metallic form and sent a pulse of energy through their bodies. It made their bodies jerk violently, causing them to scream. It took nearly two minutes for the missiles to do their work before the two robots dropped into a heap of lifeless metal on the floor.

They waited for a count of ten before scrambling to their feet and making for the bodies. Feral kicked at Mac's head but got no response while Chance nudged Molly's side with a toe...nothing happened.

"Wow! That was fantastic buddy," Chance said admiringly.

"What did you do?" Feral asked curiously.

"Since electronic scrambler missiles had no effect on them, I modified them to send a pulse of high energy that would disrupt computer disks which is what the Professor stored their memories on. So, instead of trying to defeat their obviously more powerful bodies, I just went for their 'brains'. It should have pretty much destroyed their memory disks...no restoring **them** again...I hope...that is if Hackle hasn't made duplicates of the disks...which I doubt," Jake explained a bit proudly.

"Hmm, not sure it was right to end their lives... but if that's actually happened, I won't complain as they have been a thorn in the city's side for far too long. Guess we won't know for sure until Hackle looks them over." Feral grimaced at that thought. "Let's hope we've seen the last of them."

Jake shrugged. "So do I, but like I said, only Hackle would know for sure. Anyway, their definitely down for the count for now."

Feral nodded then looked around the room at the many silent bodies. "How long does the gas last, Jake?"

Jake looked around as well. "Only about another ten minutes so you better call for backup and wrap these mercenaries up before they are able to get away or cause further trouble."

"Let's just gather bozos up and place them in one area so we have better control over them until help arrives," Chance suggested, reaching down to grab the ankles of two of the crooks and drag them off to a small alcove to the right of the orchestra. Jake followed Chance's example, moving carefully around the innocent party goers to reach the criminals then dragging them off. Meanwhile, Feral pulled his cell phone out of his pocket and called for help before going to aid the other two in hauling bodies.

By the time his enforcers arrived, Feral, Jake and Chance had all the crooks in one area and were holding them with their own guns, while behind them the party goers were just waking up...confused and angry.

It took a couple of hours before things were cleaned up, guests were given their valuables back, anyone needing medical care had been taken away or treated on site, while the rest sat and tried

to recover.

For the ones that had stayed, which were quite a few, surprisingly, Feral briefed them on what had happened. For the first time in his life, he covered for the SWAT Kats by saying they had appeared and saved them before taking off again. Feral finished by saying Chance and Jake along with himself had held their breaths and aided the SWAT Kats in taking down the Metallikats then collecting the mercenaries before they could do anymore harm.

Since they were unconscious during the whole affair, no one could call them liars so they had to accept that the ones they'd been bad mouthing all night had saved their lives.

Though having the Metallikats crash the party had been a disaster, the aftermath actually ended up benefiting the fund raising efforts. By the time the party broke up, a little earlier than planned, the guests were so grateful, they donated enough to help the Mayor exceed their goal for raising enough money for the charities and the treasury. All in all a very good night indeed.

Riding the limo back to the salvage yard, Jake and Callie were indulging in a little kissing action. Callie knew Jake had done his part during the incident though not certain how much and wanted to show her gratitude.

'This is the best part of the evening,' Jake sighed mentally as he returned her passionate kisses.

Feral was happy and relaxed as he drove them home, Chance yawning beside him. He smiled tenderly, another enemy routed and he was beginning to think fate meant for them to finally win the battle against the city's worst enemies and all because he allowed himself to be bonded. On top of that, the incident went a long ways toward them becoming accepted by the social strata of the city. The future now looked much brighter for him and Chance.

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Chapter 13: Hot Night by ulyferal

"Well love, what a night this turned out to be." Chance said hugging Ulysses when they finally got home.

They were standing in their comfortable living room and Chance stopped to hug his mate. Feral sighed and hugged back, not in a hurry to move anywhere yet.

He let his eyes drift over to the big picture window that overlooked the bay through a protective ring of trees that hid their home from prying eyes. The moon was shining over the water giving the night an ethereal look.

Rubbing his cheek against Chance's, he felt nothing but contentment at this moment. Though he was unhappy about losing more officers and he had the sad duty of notifying their next of kin tomorrow morning, right now he would allow his mate's unconditional love to ease his pain.

And their home was a wonderful place to forget the day and nights unpleasantness. It had taken them only a moment to decide, from the few Feral had shown his mate, on this perfect hideaway.

It had a master bedroom with a bath that they worked to convert into a haven by installing a corner double shower unit and a big garden tub for late night love making sessions. There was also a small guest bedroom with its own tiny bathroom. The main living space was an open floor plan with a pass-through kitchen and breakfast bar. An underground garage hid their vehicles, his hummer and Chance's cyclotron. A field just past the trees behind their wood cabin had become a perfect landing area for his chopper and the Turbokat. They kept the surrounding area natural, no lawn or garden to detract from the natural beauty of the place.

Jake had fussed and spent more than a week making their home a fortress of safety with his one of a kind security system.

Gradually over time they bought pieces of furniture that complimented each others tastes resulting in a very comfortable and relaxing retreat. Jake had to admit to feeling very much at home whenever he came over.

But it wasn't the living room he was interested in now, after such a trying night, all he wanted was to spend the rest of it in his mate's arms in their bedroom.

"Hmm, I agree but despite the chaos, it ended with us being accepted a little faster than we ever expected. Tomorrow will be a hard day so let's get to bed, shall we." Feral murmured, pulling his mate toward their bedroom.

"Yeah, I'm sorry about your losses, love." Chance said gently, knowing the deaths of his enforcers was painful to Uly.

"Comfort me with your loving skills, Chance. That will help a lot."

"Your wish is my command." The tabby said smiling gently as he helped Ulysses undress interspersed with many loving kisses.

"Hmmm, now that's more like it." Uly purred, stripping Chance.

They fell to the bed wrapped in each other's arms and kissing passionately. Chance couldn't recall being this swept away by anyone. Bonding had made his life much richer and though, if he'd been asked a year ago that he'd be making love with the Chief Enforcer, he would have laughed at them or punched them in the face depending on his mood.

But here he was laying kisses all over that square-jawed face and being loved back in return with rough caresses and sincere enjoyment of his company. No lies could exist in the bond only honesty and an open heart.

He expressed that joyful feeling by taking his mate on a wild ride, the first of many this night. Chance pushed Uly flat on his back and began a massage of the massive chest down the powerful body, pausing to lavish attention on each fat nipple, sucking and licking each one before moving on to the huge organ pointing skyward.

He sucked down about half of it, licking the tip then nipping gently. Ulysses moaned and gasped at each new touch. It felt so wonderful that he couldn't hold still. He writhed restlessly as Chance massage each of his legs, kneading out tense muscles. Finished turning his mate into jello, he went to Uly's swollen clitoris and licked the hood. Uly bucked his hips and cried out, claws digging into the bedding in urgent desire.

A few more licks and his mate came screaming. Uly trembled and shuddered, his clit throbbing with tiny aftershocks. Before he could catch his breath, Chance reared up, centered himself and plunged into the dripping and throbbing channel.

Uly moaned with renewed passion as Chance rode him hard into the mattress. The tabby leaned down and plunged his tongue in the dark tom's mouth inflaming him even more, if that was possible. Uly wrapped his legs around the strong back, drawing that pistoning cock deeper into him.

Chance groaned at feel of the tight channel gripping him so tightly. It was taking all his effort not to given into to the climax threatening to crash over him. He wanted Uly with him when they plunged over the edge.

He stepped up his pace, thrusting deeper and harder. Uly moaned and growled at the feel of that cock hitting the center of him as well as his own cock being rubbed hard between their sweating bodies.

He could hold out no longer as tingles rushed up from his toes to his head. He cried out wildly and clamped down on his mate, who bucked twice more before roaring and spilling himself. Uly's inner muscles continued to milk Chance's cock until he was completely spent and they had gone limp in sated exhaustion.

Chance lay with his head on Uly's chest, still buried within his mate. Uly sighed and gave his mate a lazy lick on the cheek.

"You do that so well." He purred happily.

"Why thank you." Chance murmured, nuzzling the dark tom's face lazily. It felt good to remain connected this way, with him buried deep and the two of them relaxing.

Ulysses sighed in wonder. He never dreamed he would be this happy and complete. He cared no one whit what anyone else thought, this was his idea of a perfect heaven and he never wanted it to end.

With that in mind, he suddenly rolled over taking his mate with him then moved the both into a seated position. Chance was on the bottom while he sat on the tabby's thighs, his cock still within him. He wrapped his arms around Chance's body as the tabby did the same, a puzzled look on his face.

Ulysses grinned as he began to slowly tighten and release his inner muscles. He wrapped his legs tightly behind Chance's buttocks so that he couldn't move.

"Humph! Uly, I can't move." The tabby complained in confusion.

"Don't worry, love. You don't have to. Wait and see!" His mate promised.

Still puzzled, Chance accepted that and let Uly do what he wanted. The dark tom pulled his mate close for a deep probing kiss while continuing his maddening rhythm.

Chance squirmed at the unusual sensation got stronger and stronger. He was only able to move his hips a little bit unknowingly increasing the tension. After a very long period, Uly began to move more urgently as a hot fire began to rush up his spine.

Pulling his mouth away, he cried out as he came, squeezing Chance hard. His mate cried out as well as an really intense climax was pulled from him.

When they could catch their breath, Chance shook his head. "Where the heck did you learn that trick? That was amazing."

Feral chuckled. "From the Kama Sutra."

"I've heard of that, there's supposed to be all kinds of really fantastic positions in it." Chance said with a wicked look in his eyes.

"Hmmm, there certainly are and we're going to try all of them, too." Feral rumbled a promise, giving his mate a kiss before pulling himself free and letting himself fall to his side on the bed.

"Ohh, sounds like fun." Chance smirked, caressing his mate with a free paw as he lay beside his resting mate.

On the way to the salvage yard, Callie was reluctant to allow this evening to end but wasn't certain this shy tom was ready for the next step.

They had been necking nearly the whole way and were both hot. 'Well she wouldn't know unless she asked.' She thought.

During a brief break between intense bouts of passionate kisses, she reached up and caressed Jake's cheek.

"I'm finding myself reluctant to allow this wonderful evening to end." She said casually.

Jake stared into her lust filled eyes and felt his heart leaped. 'Was she asking...' He licked his lips that still tasted of her, his heart hammering and body aching with need.

"Well it doesn't have to...that is...if you'd like to stay with me for a while..." He asked nervously.

"Hmmm, I'd love to." Callie purred, cheering to herself. 'Yes!'

The limo smoothly drove through the gates to the front of the garage where it halted. The chauffeur opened Jake's door. He paused and looked at her questioningly.

Jake climbed out but reached back to help Callie get out as well. "I won't need you tonight. Thanks." Callie said to the driver.

He nodded, closed the door and climbed back in. Soon he was leaving the pair alone.

Jake grinned at her as he led her to the garage door and unlocked it. He gestured for her to enter when he'd opened the door. She stepped into their office area and waited while he relocked the door then led her upstairs to their apartment.

"Would you like anything to drink first?" Jake asked politely as he turned on a lamp in the living area.

"No, thanks." Callie said, looking around their pad. The two males had kept the place fairly clean despite the old and mismatched furniture. She took her coat off and dropped it on the couch then turned to Jake who had been watching her.

She slowly removed his tie as they kissed, then undid the buttons to his tux and slipped his suit coat off. His eyes stayed focused on her as she worked at taking his clothes off. His own fingers were carefully unzipping her beautiful sheath dress. Smiling she shrugged her shoulder and let the dress slip off and pool at her feet.

Stepping carefully forward holding onto him, she moved from the dress leaving her high heels behind. Wearing only bra, panties and slip, she finished unbuttoning his shirt and pulling it from his pants. He undid his belt then zipper letting his pants fall. He toed his shoes off and was now standing before her in boxers and t-shirt.

They hugged and kissed for a little longer before he pulled her with him toward his bedroom. She saw a small bedroom with a neatly made bed, tech magazines in a stack beside it, tidy dresser and pics of family and one of he and Chance.

He reached down and flipped the covers back on his bed then pulled her down with him. They kissed and explored each other. Callie pushed her paws under his t-shirt and pushed it up and off. His chest was very muscular and well defined to her delight.

Jake blushed with pleasure at the pleased look on the she-kat's face at the sight of his body. He could hardly wait to see all of her so made a bold move to undo her bra to allow her pert breasts to bob in front of him.

He ducked his head and captured the nearest nipple in his mouth and sucked. Callie groaned and ran her fingers through his hair. He pulled his mouth off and blew cool air over the raised nipple. She gasped at the sensation. Grinning, he repeated his attention on the second breast.

Callie could feel his hard cock pressing against her belly inside their boxer covered hideaway.

She wanted to feel that hardness in her palm so grasped his boxers in her fingers and shoved down. He grunted and raised his head.

"In a hurry..." He chuckled as he helped her by wiggling out of the underwear then grabbed her slip and panties and pulling them off in one swift yank. She gasped then grinned at him, quickly wrapping herself around him.

He groaned in pleasure at the feel of her hot channel riding his pole though he wasn't yet inside her. Giving her a wicked look, he allowed his hard cock to rub her sensitive clitoris as he gently thrust between her thighs.

Her eyes widened at the unique sensation but she wanted to feel him inside her but he wouldn't cooperate as he held her hips and continued to tease her for several long minutes.

"Ohhh Jake...please..." She moaned and writhed, trying to get him inside.

"Hmm, soon, love...just a bit longer..." Jake panted, holding out a little longer. He took her mouth in a punishing kiss full of passion and heat.

When they both couldn't take it anymore only then did he rear back far enough to slid home in her hot sheath. She gripped him tightly as he set a fast, hot rhythm. She met each of his thrusts by pulling him tight with her legs wrapped around his waist which shoved him deeper adding to their intense pleasure.

It didn't take long before tingles of fire raced up twin spines and screams of completion filled the air. They shuddered for some moments. Callie's insides throbbed and spasmed, squeezing every drop from Jake until they collapsed in a sated heap.

It took them some minutes before they could utter a sound.

"Hmm, ohh that was fantastic." Callie said lazily, caressing Jake's back as he lay atop her.

"I agree. You're really hot." Jake purred, nuzzling her face and raining butterfly kisses on her face.

Callie sighed happily. 'Now this is the best way to end an evening.'

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Chapter 14: Morning After by ulyferal

Morning peeked through Jake's window striking him in the face. He blinked and noted it was six in the morning. A warm weight lay against him. He glanced to his side and smiled to himself at the sight of Callie's sleeping form. Her blond hair was spilled over his shoulder and the pillow and her face looked so beautiful without her glasses.

Her left arm was draped over his chest and her left leg was between his while her wide fluffy tail was entwined with his own. If it weren't for her very real presence, he would have thought he had been dreaming the night before.

He reached over with his right paw and gently caressed her cheek. Her eyes blinked open moments later and she stared up at him, frowning slightly before her myopic eyes recognized who was watching her.

Smiling warmly, she raised her left paw and touched his face in the same manner he had done.

"Well, good morning handsome." She purred softly.

"Good morning to you too, beautiful." Jake said leaning down to give her a kiss.



"Hmmm, nice...what time is it?" She asked as they parted lips and she looked for her glasses.

"It's going on six-thirty." He told her, handing her the glasses.

"Oh, thank you. That's way too early for me, how about a little more fun time to get our motors running?" She coaxed, wrapping her arms around him. He did feel really good against her body and she was very glad she'd spent the night.

Grinning, Jake nuzzled her and hugged her body tightly against his. 'Hmm, did she ever smell wonderful.' He thought with a sigh. "I think that's an excellent idea." He said aloud and proceeded to kiss her senseless.

Elsewhere among the slowly rising populace a pair of males continued to sleep blissfully in their hidden home.

Feral, being the early riser of the pair, yawned and blinked awake, glancing over at the clock and seeing it was already seven-thirty, he groaned in annoyance, shoved the bedding off and prepared to get up.

An arm snaked out of the bedding and wrapped itself around his waist, halting his forward movement. He turned his head and looked down at the sleepy eyed face of his mate.

"It's too early! Come back here and keep me warm." Chance rumbled, playfully.

"Unfortunately, my lazy mate, it's almost too late. I've got to hurry if I'm to get to work on time." Feral sighed, caressing his mate's face a moment, tenderly, before moving forward again.

Chance sighed and reluctantly released the dark tom. "Aw phooey, you're no fun."

Feral just snorted at that and headed for the shower. Chance listened for a bit until he heard the shower door open and close then he quickly climbed out of bed and snuck to the bathroom.

Through the glass he watched his mate with hungry eyes as Ulysses began to soap himself down. Grinning wickedly, Chance slipped into the shower when his mate's back was turned away.

Feral's mind was on the unhappy duty he had to perform when he got into work this morning. Chance's attention had eased the pain but it still was a bitter pill when he lost good enforcers in the line of duty.

He gasped suddenly as a warm body pressed itself to his back and ran its paws up and down his soapy chest and stomach. It gave his body goose bumps of pleasure.

"Chance, I've got to get to work." He protested only half-heartedly.

"I know...I'm just helping you." The tabby teased as his paws took a more erotic route down the big tom's body to his groin.

Feral's eyes half closed in shivering pleasure. Chance was so good at this erotic stuff and it never failed to get a rise out of him as well as make another part of him swell with heat.

"Ooooo...damn...you're good!" He panted as Chance kept making him hotter and hotter.

Chance chuckled wickedly as he slipped soapy fingers between his mate's thighs and tormented and teased Uly's clitoris and massaged his ball sack.

Feral groaned and writhed. "Gods! Stop teasing already...I can't stand it!" He pleaded.

"Since you asked so nicely..." The tabby growled, lining himself up and plunging deep within his mate's swollen channel.

"Ahhhhh...mmmmm..." Feral moaned deliriously as the blonde tabby began a rapid rhythm guaranteed to bring them both quickly.

A lightning flash of sensation raced from Feral's toes to his head as he came with a wild shout. Squeezed tightly by his mate, Chance roared and came as well, spilling his hot seed inside the dark tom.

Little aftershocks thrummed through his body but his cock was still hard. Grinning to himself, Ulysses carefully pulled himself off his mate's pole then, in a lightning move, went behind Chance and pressed him face first into the wall of the shower and without much preparation except to soap his pole, he thrust home within his mate's hot channel.

Chance's eyes widened in shocked surprise then closed them in mindless pleasure, moaning as the big tom thrust fast and furious within him, hitting the sweet spot accurately every time. The tabby didn't think he could come again this soon but was quickly proven wrong as he danced on his toes and his cock swelled with every hard thrust from his mate.

He cried out in pleasure, his ass muscles tightening around Uly's sizable member and pushing his mate to climax shortly after him.

They stood there splay legged and leaning heavily against the wall as they struggled to catch their breathes once more.

"Wow! Great return there guy!" Chance was finally able to say in admiration.

"You're welcome. Thanks for the nice sendoff. Time to go though." Feral said reluctantly as he slowly withdrew from his mate's body, quickly rinsed off then stepped out of the shower.

Chance just sighed and took a shower himself. By the time he left the bathroom, his mate was slipping his shoes on, already fully dressed.

"I see you later, be safe!" He said warmly, giving his mate a long kiss goodbye.

"You too, love." Feral murmured, giving Chance a final nuzzle before heading out.

*Back at the Salvage Yard...*

"Hmm, these are delicious!" Jake said, smacking his lips in appreciation.

"Thank you. I don't often get a chance to show off my culinary skills very often." Callie said grinning, as she laid another plate filled with pancakes and bacon on the table and sat down to eat.

"Well you get my vote as a great chef." Jake grinned. "I normally only get a bowl of cereal in the morning. Cooking just isn't high on our list."

Callie snorted in agreement. "Unfortunately, that's true for me too. Sometimes I really wished I could slow my life down and take time to enjoy the good things in life. Last night and this morning were great but all too brief in our hurry up lives." She sighed as she took a healthy bite of her breakfast.

"You can say that again." The cinnamon tom sighed. "But then we would get bored rather quickly if things were too quiet too long." He observed. "Seize the day is what we both live by and you know it. Just having these moments of joy, intimacy, a pleasurable moment alone or with someone you care about...is all we ever have time for and we must make the most of them."

She eyed him seriously. "Such a deep thinker you are. Sometimes, I think I don't really know you but I'm beginning to and I like what I'm finding." She said warmly.

Jake could only smile in embarrassment at that assessment. It warmed him deep inside that she thought so highly of him and still wanted to be with him. He hoped it would last.

As they were washing the breakfast dishes, they heard a motorcycle entering the yard. Jake knew it meant Chance had arrived. Callie sighed knowing it was time for her to leave. Drying her paws she left the kitchen for the living area where her purse and coat were.

Jake followed her and helped her on with her coat then stole a kiss. "Do you want a ride to city hall?" He asked, nuzzling her neck.

"That would be nice. Thanks." She said smiling.

They went down the stairs and found Chance opening the garage.

"Hey! Good morning you two." He said cheerily, secretly pleased to see Jake had managed to score with the beautiful she-kat.

"Good morning, Chance. You look chipper and ready to work." Callie said, smirking.

Jake slipped by her to get the truck keys then went out the door to get their tow truck from the rear of the garage.

"Seems I could say the same about you." The tabby said cheekily.

Callie blushed. "Yeah, got my morning work out done and am ready to dig into a pile of paperwork and managing the Mayor." She retorted in amusement.

Chance laughed and gave her a thumbs up just as the truck drove up behind her. Jake jumped out and helped Callie into the passenger side before hustling into the driver's seat once more.

"Hey Jake!" Chance suddenly called out.

"Yeah?"

"Stop by and pick up that alternator."

"Oh, right! Will do. Be back soon." Jake yelled back and soon was driving out the gate and onto the road heading for the city center.

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Chapter 15: Life gets interesting by ulyferal

Several more months passed and during that time the two couples settled into a regular routine.

Chance and Ulysses were more comfortable being seen together though they were careful not to flaunt the relationship. It just wasn't a very good idea for Chance to be in the public eye too much, putting his secret identity at risk and, even though nearly eighty percent of his enforcers were accepting of his new mate, there were still some in a position to cause Feral some grief even months later so for the safety of them both, they kept a very low profile.

As for Callie and Jake, their's was a very discreet relationship. Except for the ball, they were never seen in public together. Surprisingly, it wasn't Callie's choice but Jake's. He didn't tell her the real reason of course, just something that would make sense to her and not have her asking him uncomfortable questions.

"So why don't you want to be seen with me?" She asked as they were relaxing in her apartment some weeks after the ball.

He winced mentally but had an answer already prepared, knowing she was going to ask this eventually. "Because you're under such intense media scrutiny which is what your job entails and I'm uncomfortable with that. Sorry."

Callie sighed but nodded in resignation. "I sort of guessed that. You're a shy sort in the first place so I shouldn't be surprised you'd feel overwhelmed in the spotlight."

"Thanks, glad you understand. Hope that doesn't upset you too much?" He asked cautiously.

"No it doesn't but I won't pretend I'm happy about it. However, I do understand and won't push you on the subject." She said with a sad smile.

He felt guilty not telling her the truth so he made love to her by way of apology. Who he really was wouldn't stand up under such scrutiny for long so it was better to not be there at all. Someone could eventually ferret out the fact that he and Chance were the SWAT Kats, so the risk was just too great for that kind of honesty. Besides the fact, it would place their significant others at even greater risk from their enemies.

But this constant secrecy was becoming a strain for Jake. Whenever Callie was in trouble and he rescued her as Razor, he had to work hard to maintain the friendly but distant behavior he'd always had with her. It made him feel like a split personality and hiding his emotions were taking its toll on him.

There were too many times lately that he had wanted to grab her by the shoulders and shake some sense into her for some dangerous thing she'd done. It was just getting far too difficult to ignore his increasing need to protect her. It wouldn't be long before she sensed the tension in him and get suspicious as to the cause

It was at those times, he envied his partner. Not having to hide from his mate made things a little easier for Chance or so he thought until he brought up his concerns one day after a particularly harrowing rescue of Callie and Feral earlier.

After listening to his partner's complaint, Chance could only shake his head. "Look buddy, it might seem easier that Uly knows who I am but no one else does so I have to pretend just like you. Acting like he and I are still antagonists is damn hard especially with some of the incredibly fool hardy things he does that make me want to pull my fur out. We fight about that at night sometimes and, hell yes, its stressful."

Jake sighed. "You're right. I failed to realize that would be your problem as well. The only thing you have different is you can yell at him later in privacy but I can never tell her I think she's a fool except if I had heard of the incident on the news and even there, I have to be very careful it **had** made the news or give myself away immediately." He said unhappily.

Neither said anything for a long moment.

"You know, Chance, we're going to have king size ulcers before too long but worst of all, we could be setting ourselves up for a mistake that could get us killed because we're soo distracted by the ones we love being in trouble rather than focusing on the danger we're there to handle." Jake said in concern.

"Crud! You may be right about that but I can't see how we can solve it." Chance said in frustration.

"Neither do I." Jake said grimly.

"I think I'm going to talk to Uly about this tonight. We just can't go on like this." Chance sighed heading for his bike for the ride home.

"Good idea. I just might do something similar with Callie." Jake said thoughtfully.

His partner nodded in agreement, put on his helmet, started the bike's engine then raced out of the hangar for home.

When he reached home, his mate wasn't there, which really wasn't a surprise. The incident today meant Ulysses was chained to his desk completing the reports such things generated.

Sighing, he set about making dinner. For occasions like this, he would prepare Uly's plate then set it in the microwave to keep warm.

Meanwhile, Jake was making a solitary dinner of his own. As he waited for the microwave to ding, the events of earlier that day, filled his mind.

*Flashback...*

*"Crud! What are those things?" T-Bone yelled as he tried to avoid a flying whasis.*

*"They are some kind of gargoyle." Razor said distractedly as he aimed for the one carrying the Pastmaster. The ugly little gnome shot his watch at the Turbokat, spoiling his shot.*

*Cursing he tried to set up another when his partner shout in horror.*

*"Nooooo...Ulysses"*

*Razor quickly looked out the cockpit's window and saw Feral being held some fifty feet in the air by one foot, his uniform coat had been sucked downward, trapping the dark tom's arms to his side and covering his head so he couldn't see as he swung in the air from the clawed foot of one of the gargoyles.*

*Ignoring his partner's frantic curses, he focused his attention on his weapon's console.*

*"Bring us about to the four o'clock position now!" He ordered his partner. T-Bone responded quickly despite being distracted by his mate's precarious situation. Razor shot a spider-chain missile just as the gargoyle released Feral to plummet to the ground.*

*"Bingo!" He cried in triumph when he saw his missile deploy and envelope Feral safely in its net. He quickly retracted the line until the Commander was left swinging just below the jet.*

*"T-Bone, hurry...get us over to that roof so I can release Feral." He shouted to his upset partner.*

*"Oh God! Thank you Razor." T-Bone said with heartfelt relief as he flew the jet over the building nearby and gently lowered his mate to the ground.*

*Razor released the cable and as they soared up to engage the Pastmaster, he could see Feral struggle to get loose of the net and his coat. His attention was jerked forward when he felt the jet suddenly accelerate.*

*"T-Bone! What are you doing?" He cried in shocked surprise as he watched in horror as his friend aimed the jet toward the gargoyle the Pastmaster was riding.*

*T-Bone ignored him as he plowed into the creature, destroying it and sending the sorcerer plummeting in the same fashion as his mate had done moments before. Unlike Feral though, the Pastmaster aimed his watch and opened a portal, quickly escaping.*

*As he vanished, there was a look of stunned disbelief on his hideous, one-eyed face as he*

*disappeared into his vortex. Razor had been just as shocked by his partner's behavior. The tabby had become nearly suicidal in his attempt to kill their enemy for daring to harm his mate.*

*When they had returned to the hangar, Razor had a few choice words to say but they lacked conviction. He really couldn't be that mad at T-Bone as he would have more likely acted the same if Callie had been in such danger.*

*As it was, T-Bone was still very upset and wouldn't say anything more but change his clothes and return to the garage to work until it was time to go home.*

The microwave's ding woke Jake from his unhappy reverie. How many times would the scenario that happened today, happen again? Would Chance lose it again? It scared him to think how murderous his partner could be in defense of his wondered if he should drop a word about this concern into the ear of the dark tom? Or would that cause even more problems?

Jake shook his head to clear it of all the questions he simply had no answers for. He was faced with the same problem but he wasn't certain he would lose all control like his partner but then again, he wasn't mated to Callie even though he did care about her a great deal. Was that the magic button? Being mates?

'Crud! I need to get busy fixing the jet. Hitting the Pastmaster's stone beast dented its nosecone but Chance was so upset he never noticed and I didn't have the heart to tell him what he'd done.' Jake sighed to himself, resigned to working late to repair their jet.

Chance had just finished making dinner when his mate surprised him by appearing earlier than expected. Feral was tired and had just dropped his coat and weapon on the couch before Chance came up behind, turned his mate, and hugged him hard.

The dark tom sighed and hugged his mate back. He knew why the tabby was so upset. What happened earlier had scared him too.

Chance finally released him a bit and leaned back so that he could look Ulysses in the face. "Are you alright? I saw that thing holding you by the foot."

"Yeah, bruised but okay. That had been very quick thinking on Jake's part. It took me a bit to get out of that net though. I didn't see what happened to the Pastmaster. Where did he go?"

Chance blushed in embarrassment, not happy about how he'd acted but he had promised himself he would always be honest with his mate so he told him what he'd done.

Ulysses stared at him a long moment. "I guess I can see how you'd feel that way. I would have loved to have seen that crud's expression when he saw the Turbokat bearing down on him though." He grinned.

Chance sighed in relief and grinned back. "Yeah, it was priceless."

Giving Chance a kiss to ease his tension, he pulled back and sniffed the air. "Hmmm, dinner?"

"Yeah, its in the microwave and hasn't been there more than a few minutes. I thought you'd be stuck doing paperwork."

"Well, I should have been but I just couldn't get in the mood to stay and look at that tonight when I have something much better to do at home." Feral purred, nuzzling his mate before letting him go.

"That's nice to hear that I'm more important than reports." Chance mocked him while feeling pleased Ulysses' did feel that way.

"Always, my love and this tastes good." Feral mumbled around his food.

Chance laughed and sat down at the table to eat his own meal and try to put the terrible day behind him.

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Chapter 16: Professor Hackle offers some advice by ulyferal

After that terrifying episode with the Pastmaster, they were hit again and again with a string of omega attacks that pushed the foursomes nerves to the breaking point.

Jake was past the point of being seriously concerned about them all. His stomach was already giving him signals of an impending ulcer as his already high stress levels went through the roof. He was still at a loss as to how to deal with it though so was distracted enough one day when he was working with Professor Hackle on a joint project that the elderly inventor noticed it.

"Razor, what troubles you, lad?"

"Huh?" The cinnamon tom jerked aware again and looked down at the Professor standing below him waiting to hand up another tool. "Oh, uh nothing really, Professor."

"Oh really. Seems that nothing has been distracting you quite a bit lately and since what we're developing here is cutting edge tech, your inattentiveness could have devastating consequences. So, you want to tell me again its nothing?" The Professor asked, arching a concerned eyebrow at the young Kat.

Razor paused and closed his eyes. Hackle was right, he could ill afford to make a mistake on such an important project. He sighed and climbed down from his perch. When he reached the floor he glanced up at the new style chopper they were building.

Hackle had approached him after another tussle with the Metallikats about designing and building some new types of vehicles for the enforcers. The two new vehicles they were working on were designed to give the military an edge in their fight against the omegas and to stop the high death toll of enforcers. These new vehicles would be made of a new form of metal that was laced with Agracite and would have AI memory cores.

The Professor had grown concerned, over time, about the high losses the enforcers were suffering due to Mayor Manx's constant short budgeting of the enforcer's coffers. Lack of more advanced training, equipment and weapons, left the military force ill equipped to deal with criminals who kept designing or stealing newer and newer tech against them.

Pumadyne took far too long to develop what was needed and they charged far too much for Feral's budget to handle. And, if you added in the constant theft of their newest inventions, the enforcers were constantly left holding an empty bag.

Though he was loathe to make things designed for fighting, Hackle realized developing a new ground tank of some kind and aircraft would be saving lives more than taking them in some senseless conflict. It still was a little painful for him to accept this truth since he truly was a Kat of peace but he just couldn't stand by any longer and watch so many brave Kats lose their lives to protect the city he loved.

So he put his robot plans on hold and asked Razor to give him a more in-depth idea of what would be of more use to the enforcers in their fight against the omegas and to assist him in building them. He suggested they make at least five of each vehicle since it would be too expensive to try and mass produce them due to their expensive high tech design and AIs. Hackle was footing the bill for this so it meant they had to be extremely durable and survive the regular encounters with the omegas. Feral would have to man them with only his best officers to ensure maximum benefit and low loss rate.

Razor also suggested a newer weapon that was light weight and had more options than the lasers the enforcers presently used.

After a few months of tossing around ideas, they finally came up with three things that would push the enforcers ahead without breaking their meager budget for maintaining them and maybe help them win the battle against the high powered criminals at last.

When Chance had learned of the Professor's idea, he was ecstatic. Before he'd mated Feral, he would have been pissed his partner wanted to help the enforcers push past even their own tech, but now that his mate was involved, he was all for making sure Uly was given all the protection that they could muster so with that in mind, he willingly shouldered the burden of working the garage alone so that Jake could continue to work uninterrupted.

So now, here Razor was working on building the new chopper and new tank-like vehicle for the enforcers. The design stage had not taken them very long since they both had lots of experience behind them, so it had taken only two months to come up with two workable designs. The weapon would be made later after the two vehicles were completed.

Another month and Razor had the framework of the chopper nearly done and would soon be doing the delicate electronic work within it. Professor Hackle had two robots aiding them in their work, moving the project more rapidly forward but his personal problems had begun to rear their head more and more frequently which brought him to the present and the Professor's obvious concern.

"I'm sorry, Professor. You're right. Certain personal problems have been clogging up my mind lately and distracting me far too much but I'm at a loss as to how to deal with them." He admitted, frustration lacing his voice.

"Here, let's take a break and have lunch. Perhaps, if you explain a little of what's going on I might have a suggestion or two for you." Hackle said gently as he turned to hobble out of the lab and head for his living quarters.

Razor frowned unhappily but followed the elderly Kat out of the room.

Some twenty minutes later, they were sitting down at the Professor's small kitchen table and enjoying sandwiches and milk. They ate in companionable silence until nearly done with their meal before Hackle gently prodded the young Kat for information.

"So, tell me what has you so bound up in knots, my boy."

Razor sighed then popped his last bite of sandwich in his mouth then downing his milk before trying to answer that difficult question.

"That's really difficult to answer Professor without giving away my identity."

"Not if you simply state the problem without embellishing it much. It's obvious to these old eyes that you're just eaten up by this and you need to talk to someone and you both trust me, correct?" Hackle said gently.

Razor didn't see how he could but sighed and nodded. "Of course we do. Alright, I'll try. Well, its that very problem...keeping our identities secret...that's causing me such pain." He said bluntly.

"T-Bone and I fell for two people whose lives are in as much constant danger as ourselves. In T-Bone's case, his lover knows who he is so his difficulty isn't keeping his secret from them but keeping it from everyone else so he must pretend he isn't close to this person which, since the person is always in trouble, causes him constant anxious moments." Razor sighed then went on.



"As for me, I'm in even in worst straits as my lover has no clue who I really am but I'm in the same boat as T-Bone but times two. I have to hide how much I care for this person while protecting them so that they don't discover who I really am. It's really ripping me up. On more than one occasion our loved ones have come close to being killed. For T-Bone this last time caused him to go totally homicidal against the perp that threatened his lover. That scared me. I didn't know he was capable of such violent behavior and neither did the perp." Razor said, shivering as he remembered the Pastmaster incident.

"I haven't allowed myself to become overly vengeful but my relationship is fairly new and T-Bone's is one of a bonded mate. This situation is beginning to give me an ulcer and makes us both unhappy and tense all the time. I just know its only a matter of time before one of us gets seriously injured or killed from being distracted by our efforts to protect our beloveds from themselves." Razor finally finished, unable to look into the Professor's face so stared down at his paws resting on the table in front of him.

Professor Hackle sighed mentally as he eyed the troubled young tom. Well, Razor certainly hadn't been overestimating his and T-Bone's problem. This was very serious indeed. He didn't begrudge them forming intimate ties, Kats in their situation...extreme danger and high stress...needed someone to help them de-stress. Unfortunately, those very same people could also be the death of them. A two-edged sword and one many heroes faced in their chosen career.

However, that didn't mean there wasn't some way to have it all.

"Razor, you and T-Bone have chosen this life and I'm assuming your lovers have also made the choice to be who they are. You two must learn to accept what you cannot change and take all the good your relationships gain you and cherish it. Life is not forever...death does come to all. This does not mean you should push the one's you love away in some misguided idea of trying to protect them. They will resent it. Cease the day! That should be your philosophy in a life filled with danger and adventure. Let your relationships be all they can be." He said sagely.

Razor looked at him with a disgruntled expression. "That's easy to say, Professor but damned hard to actually put into practice." He growled.

"I know my boy, that's why I also suggest you two seek therapy."

"What?"

"Don't look so stunned. It's obvious to me you are unable to deal with this and need guidance to help you learn to change your way of thinking so you aren't so unhappy or stressed. A therapist can do this for you." Hackle said coaxingly.

"How the heck are we going to do that? Our secret identities make it impossible for us to be totally honest with a therapist." Razor snorted.

"You must trust someone, sometime, my young friend. I know your secret is how you keep you and those close to you safe but eventually you do need others in your life. You must find someone you truly trust or you will make a fatal mistake and die and our world will be lost without you." Hackle said gravely.

Razor blinked in surprise at that bit of wisdom. They had taken great care to hide who they were for those exact reasons. Feral had known but that didn't count since he had biology to give him the answer. Were there others they could trust? If he thought about it a bit, he realized there were Kats they could trust their lives with the secret: the Professor, Dr. Sinian, Dr. Conway, Callie...and maybe a couple of family members.

He blew out a puff of air as he realized the Professor was right. They were surrounded by Kats that would keep their secret to the grave if necessary. Perhaps, with some intense searching, he

could find a therapist they could trust. They did need the help and soon.

Razor looked up at the patiently waiting Professor. "I guess you're right. I'll see if I can find a therapist we can trust enough to help us untangle our feelings on this before it can get worse." He promised, giving Hackle a wane smile.

"Good for you. Now, let's return to work." Hackle said warmly, pleased he had been able to help just a little.

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Chapter 17: Surprising revelations by ulyferal

"I'm going to tell her." Jake spoke suddenly as he sat staring blindly at the TV in their waiting area, a few days after his talk with Professor Hackle.

Chance blinked in confusion and turned to stare at his partner questioningly.

The day had been quiet, only one vehicle, quickly repaired and sent on its way. Not even a delivery from those two annoying junk kats to break the quiet. Though, Jake had been working nearly non-stop with Professor Hackle, it seemed he felt the need of a break, for which the tabby was grateful since he thought Jake was getting far too exhausted of late. So a quiet day was just the ticket they needed.

Jake didn't enlighten him on what he meant by that rather bald statement and continued to stare in the distance. Chance frowned a moment in thought before the light went off.

"You want to tell Callie who we are." He finally said with certainty.

"Yes."

"I see...well I have no objections. She would never give us away but she'll be shocked to learn Feral was willing to be bonded to a SWAT Kat." Chance snorted, amused.

Jake turned to look at his partner. "Crud, that's right." He flashed a rueful smile. "Oh well, she'll get over it quickly. I'm just tired of keeping this a secret from her. It feels wrong."

"I understand. If you feel your relationship is truly serious, then I agree, keeping it from her will seem like a betrayal of trust though, I'm sure Callie would be the first to understand why it had been necessary in the first place." Chance said quietly.

Jake relaxed a little. "Yeah, its serious, alright. Thanks." He gave his partner a grateful smile.

"You're welcome." Chance smiled warmly.

They were silent for a little while before Jake spoke again. "Remember when we talked about how stressful it is trying to protect our lovers from getting themselves into situations that could get them killed?" He asked.

"Uhh...yeah, I remember. What about it?" Chance asked, wondering why Jake was bringing it up again.

"Well, it's been bothering me so much that it was affecting the way I work and Professor Hackle noticed. He sorta wheedled the reason out of me. Without telling him who, I gave him a thumbnail idea of what we're up against and how much stress it was causing us." Jake said, plainly. "He surprised me with some really sound advice." He went on to tell his partner about the conversation he'd had with the elderly Kat.

"Therapy?" Chance blurted in surprise. "How the heck can we all see a therapist? That would

endanger our lovers safety more than what they do themselves." He objected.

"Yeah, that was my reaction too, but the professor said we were already endangering them by our overprotective behavior and our constant distraction could get us all killed. He said we would just have to trust someone because our lives have become more complicated." Jake explained.

Chance went silent and thought over this dangerous but possibly necessary step. "I don't like it but you're right. I feel the strain too. I've gotten more sharp with Ulysses and sometimes, with his volatile temper, it turns into a shouting match. Though we have great makeup sex after, I'm really getting tired of the tension between us and the stress of trying to get him to see my side of it." He finally conceded.

"It's worse than I thought, then. I wasn't aware the two of you were fighting." Jake said in concern. "Let me talk with Callie, tell her who we are then ask her if she knows someone that can help us. She has more contacts than us and just might have the right person who can be very discreet and trustworthy." Jake said thoughtfully.

Chance frowned, worried about this next dangerous step they were taking but seeing no other alternative. "Alright, go ahead. It scares me to pieces to allow yet more people to know so much about us but the alternative is not an option."

Jake nodded solemnly. He had to agree with that statement.

Later that night, Chance brought up the earlier discussion with Jake. The two of them had finished dinner, cleaned up and were now sitting on the bed watching TV. Chance was giving his mate a firm brushing of the dark tom's long fur.

Feral sighed, his eyes closed as Chance brushed the fur on his back. He'd never had anyone to do this very intimate act for him since he was a kitten and he was loving it. It felt so wonderful.

"Uly?" Chance murmured as he swept the brush down the middle of his mate's back then took the fluffy tail in his paw and drew long strokes down it to get out any tangles.

Feral gasped at the tingles that swept through from Chance's attention which caused him to miss the tabby's soft inquiry.

"Hmm?"

"Jake brought up some important things today and I need to talk to you about them." Chance said seriously as he finished with the tail and let it go.

Feral turned his head to eye his mate questioningly, the serious tone catching his attention.

"What did he have to say?"

"He's going to tell Callie who he is and I said it was alright with me. He's been with her for some time now and considers their relationship a serious one now. The other thing he mentioned did cause me some concern but after discussing it, felt it was one we couldn't ignore any longer." Chance explained.

Feral frowned as he turned his body completely around so he could face his mate. "Am I going to have to play twenty questions to find out what this other subject might be?" He asked archly.

"No, of course not. It's just..." Chance paused and sighed. "Look, Jake and I have become seriously stressed out trying to keep you and Callie from harm without stepping on your pride in the process. It's making us crazy pretending we don't care whenever we're all in public and the two of you get into a dangerous situation. We both feel the intense need to protect you but we can't and it's making us do things that could get us both killed."

Hearing the strain in his mate's voice caused Feral to reach out and pull Chance into his arms. "Let me tell you something. I feel the same way. I have to pretend we are enemies and not show how much I'm frightened by some of the things you two do. I have no doubt, when Callie knows who you really are, that she's going to feel the same way. She's luckier though. She has already shown how much she cares about both of you and is able to tell you so but I can't so the stress is more intense for me." He said honestly, nuzzling the tabby's face.

"Crud! I feel stupid not realizing it could be the same for you." He shook his head in disgust. "I now realize its also the reason were at each other's throat so much lately too...we are both afraid of losing each other."

"You're not stupid, love. I missed it too." Feral sighed, snorting at his denseness. "So what did Jake say about solving this problem?" He asked, caressing the tabby's tense back.

"All of sees a therapist." Chance said flatly.

"What?" Feral pulled back enough to see his mate's face.

"Yeah, that was my reaction too but Jake told me what Professor Hackle suggested and I had to agree with him." Chance said.

"Hackle? What does he know about this?" Feral asked in confusion and beginning anger.

"Cool yourself." Chance soothed then told his mate about what Jake and Hackle had discussed and the Professor's advice.

Feral blinked in surprise when Chance finished. "I would have never credited that tom to be so insightful. I always thought of him as just an eccentric inventor. It makes sense though, he's able to observe us from the outside and see what we can't." He sighed, shaking his head in dismay. "Well, Jake's got the right idea. Callie does have a lot of contacts. None of mine would give us what we need."

"So you're willing to see a therapist?" Chance asked softly.

Feral sighed and pressed his head against his mate's as he responded, "I hate head doctors but if it will make things easier for us then I'm all for it. So, I guess we wait and see who Callie knows that can help us and I dearly hope we don't pay for this moment of weakness with our lives."

Chance nodded in agreement. He didn't think Ulysses was being over dramatic in his statement since he felt exactly the same way. Seeing a therapist was going to be a great risk to all of them.

Some hours after Chance had left the garage, Jake showered and dressed then headed down to the hangar. Soon he was roaring down the city streets on his cyclotron toward Callie's uptown apartment.

Parking his bike in the alley behind a dumpster then setting its security system, Jake walked to the front of the building and stepped into the lobby. He nodded at the security guard who gave him a nod back as he entered the just arriving elevator. He waited as a couple stepped out then strode forward and punched the button for the top floor.

He was deposited on a quiet, carpeted floor. There were only three apartments here and Callie's was the end one near the stairs. He knocked softly on her door.

It opened to reveal the she-kat wearing a long, dark green lounge dress with some kind of blue tracery flowing down its length. He smiled warmly at her as he stepped in and wrapped his arms around her waist, closing the door with his foot.

After a breath-stealing kiss of welcome, they parted and went to the living room. On the coffee

table, Callie had laid out some cheese and meats with chips on the side and two glasses of wine.

"Hmm, what's the occasion?" Jake asked as he swept her toward the couch and sat them both in its center.

"No occasion. Just felt like making it a little romantic around here. You like?" She said, smirking coyly at him as she picked up her glass and took a sip.

"Oh yeah, I like it a lot." He grinned, picking up his glass as well and a piece of cheese with meat, popping it into his mouth.

They leaned back and cozy upped, kissing and feeding each other. Before it could get too serious, Jake leaned back from her a little.

"Callie, I need to talk to you about something very important." He said quietly.

She eyed him a moment and sighed. "I'm listening."

He took her paw in his and rubbed her knuckles with his fingers. He took a deep breath and let it out slowly before raising his eyes to stare into her's.

"I asked my partner before making this decision and he has agreed that you can be trusted." He said carefully.

Callie suddenly held her breath and felt her heart beat faster. Jake had something momentous to tell her and her mind was flying everywhere to try and guess what it might be. She thought it far too soon for one of those things that came to her mind first. She was startled when he reached into a pocket and pulled out something.

When he slipped it over his face, she nearly fainted dead away, as it was, she could only stare, her mouth gaping.

"Razor?" She finally managed to blurt.

"Yeah, its me." Razor said blushing then pulled the bandanna off again. "I figured it was the right time for you to know."

She threw herself at him, hugging and kissing as tears of joy fell down her face. "Oh, this is soo wonderful. I thought I was being two faced by wanting both of you and now I find you are both one and the same."

Jake sighed in relief. She was overjoyed and not mad at him. He allowed her joy to pour over him as he hugged and kissed her back.

"So I was in competition with myself, huh?" He teased.

She blushed. "I'm sorry, but you both had such wonderful qualities however, after being with you, I found it was you I wanted the most." She admitted shyly.

"I'm glad to hear that. I'd hate to think you were a pushover for a costume." He snickered.

Callie gave him a playful shove which turned into a bout of friendly wrestling then more amorous things. When they rested after a vigorous bout of sex, they fed each more food and relaxed.

"Callie, I needed to ask you something." Jake said as he reached for more cheese and meat.

"Certainly. Ask away." She said taking another sip of her now warm wine.

He thought a moment about how he wanted to discuss this then decided to just launch into the

problem. He told her of their increased stress levels trying to deal with protecting those they loved from the dangers they all faced on a nearly daily basis, then his conversation with both the Professor and Chance on how to solve it.

"So we agreed that seeing a therapist would be a good idea and hoped you knew of someone that could be discreet and that all of us could trust with the secret of our relationships." Jake finished.

Callie lay still, her pretty face frowning unhappily. "I should have realized how much stress you were under even when I didn't know it was you. You and Chance are the type to jump in and protect those you love without a thought for yourselves. But the shoe fits on the other foot for Feral and I, you know. Some of the things you do..." She said shaking her head.

Jake sighed and nodded. "Yeah, that's certainly true and one we failed to bother paying attention to, hence the best reason for seeking therapy."

"I have to admit, I'm really surprised that it was Professor Hackle of all people that would actually suggest that." Callie said, still amazed by the old Kats insight. "As for a therapist, I think I do know someone who'd be right for the job but I need to check her out first." She said thoughtfully.

"Perfect. We'll wait until you've vetted this person then let you set up a discreet appointment for us. Don't know if we should be seen as a group or as individual couples. Guess the therapist will have to tell us." Jake commented. "Anyway, now that's been discussed, how about we engage in something more fun?" Jake purred, beginning to caress her back.

"Hmm, good idea." She purred as well.

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Chapter 18: Convincing the Therapist by ulyferal

On her next day to work, Callie immediately looked up the number of an old friend of hers. She'd actually used this person's services once due to the overwhelming stress of her job. It had helped her adopt a new perspective on managing Mayor Manx, and the constant threats to her life. She used her new confidence and calm to handle most of the stresses of her life and she hoped her friend would be able to do the same for the four of them.

"Laren Jarstone's office," A soft, cheerful voice said.

"Yes, hello Jeanna...Callie Briggs here. Can I get a moment of Laren's time. I need to ask her something important," Callie said easily.

"Oh, Hello Ms. Briggs. Can you hold a moment while I check to see if she's free?" Jeanna asked politely, knowing the Deputy Mayor was a very busy person.

"For once, I do have time, thanks Jeanna," Callie said.

"Good. Be right back," Jeanna said then put the Deputy Mayor on hold.

Callie stared out her window as she waited. Laren wasn't one of those who subscribed to having music play while clients were on hold. She'd told Callie, when she'd asked out of curiosity, music could have adverse effects on some of her clients so she felt silence was a much safer option. It was only three minutes before another voice came on the line.

"Hello, Callie. What can I do for you?" Laren asked in her soothing voice.

"Hi, Laren. I've got an unusual request to make. I have some people I know that require a therapist who can be extremely discreet. It isn't just because they are very well known that secrecy must be maintained, its because their very lives will be endangered if anyone were to

learn about what you'll be privy to. I won't sugar coat this, you too could be in significant danger," Callie said seriously.

There was a moments stunned silence before Jarstone responded in a careful tone. "Wow, this sounds like a mystery novel with all the action and intrigue. So who are these special people you want me to help?"

"I'm sorry, but I can't divulge that over the phone. Would it be possible for you to meet me somewhere safe and discreet...say my apartment around seven tonight?" Callie asked.

"Your home? We really have gone into the cloak and dagger bit, huh? Okay, you have me sufficiently intrigue. I, luckily enough, have nothing going on tonight so I'll be there," Laren said.

"Good, then I'll see you later and thanks, Laren," Callie said in relief as they traded goodbyes and hung up.

Jarstone stared at her phone for a long minute. 'I wonder who the heck is that important and in that much danger?' She thought to herself then sighed. 'Guess I'll have to wait until tonight to find out.'

She reached for her intercom and requested, "Jeanna, would you send in my next patient, please." She was glad to have a full patient load today or the mystery of the patient or patients would drive her buggy.

Now that she'd been able to make an appointment with her friend, Callie dug into her constant desk full of projects and reports.

The day went by swiftly and it wasn't until she'd put the finishing touches on a speech for the Mayor that she even noticed the time. The clock on the wall showed it was swiftly moving toward six p.m.

"Shoot! I've got to hurry if I'm to get home, eat then be ready for Laren," She hissed in annoyance as she quickly grabbed her purse from her desk drawer, locked her desk, got up and put the speech in her secretary's typing basket with an urgent 'do first thing' post-it on it, then turned her lights off, closed her door and hurried down the hall for the elevators.

Callie made it home by fifteen after six. She rushed into her bedroom and turned on the shower. After a quick wash, she put on a comfortable pantsuit then went to the kitchen to fix herself something to eat and make some coffee then set the tea kettle on for her guest, adding a tray with some tasty biscuits and cookies on a fancy serving dish to go with it.

By the time she'd finished her meal and her preparations, there came a knock on her door. 'Made it in time!' She smiled to herself in relief as she carried the tray into the living room and set it on the table before heading to answer the door.

Pulling it open she smiled at the petite she-kat that stood there. Laren Jarstone had a short fall of wavy ash blonde hair, her fur coloring was hues of grey, white and soft orange and had eyes a yellow-green color. Tonight she was wearing a gray pantsuit similar to Callie's with white loafers on her feet.

"Hello Laren, do come in," Callie greeted her guest.

"Good evening, Callie," Laren said, smiling warmly as she did as asked, walking into the nicely appointed apartment.

Callie lead the way to the living room. "Please have a seat. Would you like tea or a cup of coffee?" She asked, always the perfect host.

"Oh, coffee please, cream and sugar," Jaren said as she took a seat.

"Coming right up," Callie responded then disappeared into the kitchen. Minutes later she returned with another tray holding two cups of coffee and fixin's.

"Here you go," she said handing her visitor a filled cup.

"Thank you," Laren said, politely taking the cup from Callie.

Callie sat and picked up the other full cup and sipped it.

"So what is so mysterious about your friends that you couldn't tell me over the phone who they were." Laren said casually, feeling they should get right to the point.

Callie frowned a moment, gathering her thoughts. "It's myself, my boyfriend, Commander Feral and his mate."

Laren raised both her eyebrows in surprise and consternation. "Commander Feral and you? Wow! You're going to have to explain why," she said in confusion.

"How much do you know about Commander Feral's mate?" Callie countered.

"Uh, well only what I heard on the news, that the male was once an enforcer that the Commander kicked out but is now mated to. It caused quite the stir." Laren said, thoughtfully.

"Yes, that's correct. The male's name is Chance Furlong and I'm seeing his partner, Jake Clawson. But they have a secret that could cause a shockwave throughout the population if it were known and enemies that would love to know it as well. So I need to know if you're willing to take us on and help us deal with some serious stress issues," Callie explained without giving away too much more.

Laren frowned. Now how was she supposed to decide when there was obviously something far more about this than Callie was telling her? Needing more information she didn't answer the shekat's question yet.

"I'm sorry, its very hard for me to make a decision when I don't know what kind of danger you're talking about that would affect me?"

"Because of the secret Chance and Jake possess and the fact you would have to know it to be able to help them, puts you in the direct line of fire from their enemies." Callie said more plainly.

Laren blinked in shocked surprise. 'What were these guys...criminals? No... that's not right...Callie would never be involved with that kind of person. Were they spies or undercover officers? No, wait...if she remembered correctly both had been former enforcers but now worked at a salvage yard. Okay, this was just getting bizarre. Maybe I should just bite the bullet and take this job otherwise I'm going to go crazy wondering who these guys really are? As for the danger...well my life's been too tame lately...sooo...' she thought to herself then looked at Callie again coming to a decision.

Callie didn't disturb her friend while she stared off into the distance. What she was asking of her was even more dangerous than her friend could possibly guess at.

When Laren turned her attention back to her patiently waiting friend, Callie felt a sense of relief. She could see acceptance in the shekats eyes but waited for her to speak before she jumped to any wrong conclusions.

"I have a confession to make...my life has been pretty tame despite the celebrity patients I'm fortunate to deal with. So I'm going to stick my neck out and say yes. Besides, I'd go nuts trying to



guess what all the hush-hush is all about anyway. Also, I know you wouldn't ask me something like this if it wasn't truly important and needful, so my answer is yes, I'll help you and your friends," she said readily enough.

Callie had to smile at her friend's confession but her smile faded as she prepared to tell Laren what she'd gotten herself into...but first there was a serious formality to be dealt with. Eyeing her friend gravely, she said, "Thank you, you don't know how grateful I am about your decision. However, there is one more thing I must ask of you before I tell you anything more. Would you be willing to sign a non-disclosure form?"

Laren stared at the blond she-kat seriously. 'Okay, now I'm really in deep.' She thought before taking a breath and saying, "Certainly. I'll sign whatever you require. I'm assuming my own rules of non-disclosure and confidentiality aren't sufficient in this case?"

"You're right. As for your own rules, hold even more firmly to those in this instance. The document is just more insurance for us all," Callie said, smiling to take the sting out of requiring such drastic measures. Laren nodded her understanding.

"Okay, enough suspense...the reason for all the precautions is you're not just treating Chance and Jake but their personas as T-Bone and Razor." Callie said, dropping the bomb.

Laren gasped and sat up in complete shock. All she could do was gape at Callie wondering frantically if all this was some kind of elaborate joke but the she kat's grim expression said otherwise.

"Okay, I can safely say, I never saw that coming," she finally managed to say, shaking her head in amazement.

Callie just nodded her head sympathetically.

"So, let me get just clarify what I've just been told, Commander Feral is mated to a SWAT Kat and you're in a relationship with the other SWAT Kat, correct?" Laren asked.

"You got it. The problem we're having is our understandable concern for each others safety. As much as Feral and I want to stay out of trouble so our lovers don't fear for us, it just isn't going to happen since our very jobs place us in danger nearly all the time. Our two knights in shining armor are under enough stress keeping our city safe without the added frustration of wanting to keep us safe which is impossible. This can only lead to them getting killed from being so distracted. Can you help us learn how to accept what we can't change and to just enjoy our lives, however long they might be?" Callie asked urgently.

Laren nodded in understanding as she listened patiently to Callie's explanation. Now she better understood why she was needed and was relieved it was something she'd extensive experience with treating.

"Yes, I believe I can. I've dealt with similar problems like this from police officers, firekats, and others in such high risk fields plus their loved ones," she assured the Deputy Mayor. "Your problem is very common even with the unusual twist of secret identities involved."

Callie sighed in relief. "Thank you. So now all we have to do is plan a way to see you that doesn't give away our secrets. Of course, we decided the guys would stay in their civilian guises when we're with you to reduce the risk factors but the visits will have to happen away from your office and in some secure place. I know this is an imposition but it's for all our safety."

"I agree. I think I might know of just the right place that wouldn't seem to implausible for all of you to be seen at without causing any undue attention... Megakat Trauma Center! Each of you has, at one time or another, needed to be there in a private or official capacity. No one would really question your presence, especially if you arrive at different times. I'm assuming I'll be seeing you

as separate couples?" Laren asked.

"We thought we'd leave that for you to decide," Callie answered. "I think you're right about the trauma center. All of us have been there for different reasons and it has its own security force. An excellent idea."

"Good. I'll set up a space I can use that's in a little used area of the hospital so our coming and going wouldn't be noticed. I will warn the security force to turn away from that area during the times of your appointments to further insure your anonymity," Laren said, planning as she spoke.

"Uh, just a minute Laren. I think it would be wiser if I speak with the hospital administrator and have him order the security office. It will have more power behind the request and prevent anyone on the security force from making a casual mistake. I will ensure the penalties for invading our privacy are so stiff, no one would dare break it," Callie interrupted.

"Hmm, perhaps you're right. Okay, I'll let you handle it. Just let me find out if the space is available for our use first then I'll call you with the information and a time for your first appointment. Which of you do you think I should see first?" Laren asked.

Callie blushed a moment before she spoke, mildly embarrassed. "Jake and I. He's more sensitive to things than Chance and is more stressed out about this problem."

"Okay, then I'll get back with you as soon as I have my information. By the way, is there any period that's difficult for you?" Laren asked.

For the next few minutes both females checked their schedules and came up with some tentative time periods.

"Okay, now that's settled. I'll take my leave of you. There might come a point where I'll have all four of you attend but for now it will be just couples. We'll see how things go after we get started," Laren told her warmly as she stood up to prepare to leave.

"That's perfect. I'll await your call and thank so much for taking us on," Callie said, smiling wanly as she too rose to her feet and escorted her guest to the door.

"You're welcome, Callie. Speak with you soon," Laren said smiling back then said farewell and went out the door.

Callie sighed as she closed and locked her door. She went about cleaning up and planning what she would tell Jake tomorrow. She was happy they were finally going to get help. Only time would tell if it would ease their stress or not.

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Chapter 19: Therapy session 1 by ulyferal

At the end of a perfectly awful day, Callie threw her purse and briefcase on her coffee table and retreated to her bedroom for a hot shower to relax her. Twenty minutes later she padded out into the living area dressed in a comfortable lingerie pantsuit. Grabbing her briefcase and purse as she passed, she headed for the kitchen.

Laying her things on the breakfast bar, she quickly whipped up something light to eat then sat down with it to work on some reports while she ate. By the time she'd nearly finished her dinner and was halfway through the reports, her doorbell rang.

Smiling to herself, she hurried to the door. As she expected, her lover Jake was standing there with a pawful of red peonies which he handed over to her while stealing a kiss.

"Aw, that's so sweet of you, Jake," she said warmly, closing the door behind the cinnamon tom

and heading back to the kitchen.

Jake trailed after her and noted, as soon as he stepped through the doorway, that he had interrupted Callie. "Sorry for interrupting your work."

"Oh, not a problem. I always work during dinner," she said shaking her head, going to a cupboard and digging out a vase for the flowers. Putting water in the vase, she cut the flower stems then put them in the vase and set it on her kitchen window sill, giving him a pleased smile at how well they looked there. He smile warmly back as he watched her return to the table to sweep her work up, shove it into her briefcase then carry her dishes to the sink before turning back to him.

"You want something to drink before we go in the living room?"

"Nah, I'm good."

Smiling, she reached into the fridge and got herself some iced tea then the two of them walked back into the other room, sitting down on the couch and cozying up to each other.

"So how was your day?" Jake asked, caressing her arm as she lay against his chest.

"Horrible!" She sighed in irritation as she told him about the two speeches she had to write, a financial report she had to do, a boring meeting that she had to attend because the Mayor had gone golfing, and the final straw being his honor leaving early and forgetting to tell her of the special report on a possible garbage strike she needed to handle quickly and diplomatically before finally being able to leave for the day.

Jake grimaced in sympathy. "Too bad you can't get rid of that worthless fool. Our day was much better than yours, for once. It was busy but quiet. We got done in the garage early so I was able to work on a couple of things I needed to fix on the Turbokat."

"You were luckier, alright," Callie snorted. "I do have something else to discuss with you."

"Oh, what about?"

"I spoke to my friend, the therapist, and she has agreed to see all of us. Because I've had her investigated and used her as my own therapist, I know she is completely trustworthy so she now know who you two really are. It was the only way she could treat you."

Jake's eyebrows raised at finding out someone else knew who they were but relaxed at Callie's assurance that the person was completely trustworthy. "I bet that blew her mind."

Callie grinned in amusement. "That it did. She almost didn't accept when she realized I wasn't kidding about the danger in getting involved with us but she's made of sterner stuff and said it would be a learning adventure for her."

"Huh! Hope she doesn't see too much adventure helping us. I wouldn't like to see her come to harm," Jake said in concern.

"So do I. To try and protect both her and us, she thought using an out of the way conference room at Megakat Trauma Center would be good. I agreed and she's checking on it's availability."

Jake shook his head. "No, that's a poor idea. I'm sorry Callie, but even though we all do use the center when needed, a frequent use of it would cause suspicion especially for you. If the press got hold of you going there a lot more than seems usual, you'll hounded by them trying to determine if you have a hidden illness or something."

Callie's face fell. "Oh dear, I hadn't thought of that. The same would be true of Feral as well. He just doesn't have that many reasons to go there even if his troopers do end up there rather

frequently but only after an attack by an omega. It would be hard to explain his going there when things are quiet," she said unhappily. "So where can we meet that won't cause suspicion?"

"Why not here for us and Feral's apartment for them?" Jake said reasonably.

Callie blinked in shocked surprise.

Jake shrugged, "Well, you did say you trust her so her coming to us is a much better idea. Since it would be after hours for her, no one would think it unusual at all for her to visit her 'friends'. A perfect solution...suspicion averted."

Callie shook her head. Sometimes she forgot because of his shyness, just how brilliant this tom was. "You always surprise me! You can see problems from all different angles and provide a solution. You'd make a fantastic problem solver at city hall."

Jake grimaced, "No thanks! Too political for me."

"I didn't seriously mean for you to do it," Callie laughed, giving him a kiss. "Let me give Laren a quick call so that she doesn't waste anymore time trying to make those arrangements."

Jake reluctantly released her and watched as she went back to the kitchen to use her cell phone.

Callie speed dialed her friend. She was lucky, Laren answered after the third ring. "Hi Laren, it's me, Callie. Listen about the arrangements you were making...a friend of mine has made me realize they won't work. A new suggestion of coming to see me at my apartment was made and I have to say is much sounder. How about you stop and see me to make the arrangements...say tomorrow at seven?"

Though caught by surprise, Laren was also relieved by Callie's call. "Actually, Callie, I was going to tell you my original plans fell through so your idea sounds like a better one. Tomorrow at seven will work for me too, so I will see you then."

"Perfect. See you tomorrow evening. Bye!" Callie said in pleased response then hung up. She walked back to the living room with a smile on her face.

"Well, fate seems to be working in your favor as well. It seems Laren's attempt at getting a conference room fell through so she was grateful I had found another option. I'll be seeing her tomorrow night," Callie told him as he retook her position leaning against his chest.

"Fantastic! So, now that's solved, how about we do something else?" He asked, his voice dropping low as he began to nuzzle her neck.

"Sounds like an excellent idea," she murmured huskily.

Next morning, Jake strolled into the garage whistling as he prepared to get to work. T-Bone was just arriving from his home, driving his cyclotron into the hangar then changing his clothes. In a good mood himself, he climbed up the ladder to greet his friend.

"Well, appears you had as good an evening as I did," He said, amused.

Jake turned to grin at his friend. "Yeah, I did. I also have news for you."

"Oh, what about?" Chance asked as he checked the work requests.

"Callie's therapist friend has agreed to treat us."

Chance grimaced then sighed. "Well, that's good, I guess."

His friend snorted, "Gee, not very thrilled are we?"

"I don't like head doctors, you know that but I did agree to see one. So when do we start?" Chance said, less than enthusiastic about the prospect.

"No date yet. Callie meets with her friend tonight. Anyway, we are having our sessions at home. The therapist was going to try to get a space at the trauma center but I nixed that since it would be too suspicious for Feral and Callie to be going there on a frequent basis. So I suggested Callie and I have our session in her apartment and you and Feral would have yours in his apartment. Much safer option." Jake said.

"For you maybe but a pain in the tail for us. Jake, we live in a house outside the city in secret, you know that." Chance groused.

"Yes, I do know, but I also know Feral kept his apartment for convenience sake for those times when he has to stay in the city. It's really the only option buddy," his partner said firmly.

Chance just grumbled unhappily under his breath but said nothing more on the subject as he got to work.

A week later, Jake and Callie had their first session. Laren was already waiting with Callie when Jake arrived.

"Jake, this is Laren Jarstone." Callie introduced them.

"Please to meet you," Jake said politely, shaking the she-kat's paw.

"It's a pleasure to meet you as well. Shall we get comfortable?" Laren suggested.

Jake went to the couch and sat with Callie while Laren sat in a comfortable wing chair.

"Alright, let's begin." Laren said.

She asked a few questions about how they felt about each other and where they thought their relationship was going. Because she already had Callie as a patient, she focused her attention on getting to know a bit more about Jake.

She could hear some residual anger and self recriminations toward himself when he talked about being ousted from the enforcers then his pride in his inventing skills and designing the Turbokat as well as the mission he and Chance had set for themselves. She had no doubt the original idea had come from Jake.

He struck her as possessing a dual personality of a sorts. On one paw...he was a shy tom with a rapier mind and a heart of gold then there was his darker flip side which was his Razor persona. A person with nerves of steel, great courage, and a thread of coldness in his soul that allowed him to handle the harshness of his chosen career path.

Normally, such a person would have many emotional problems with having such diverse personalities warring against each other, but in Jake she saw they worked together in harmony making him a very unusual individual. She supposed this was what made a person a hero.

Now that she had a better picture of who Jake was, she broached the subject that was causing them both the most grief.

"So, let's discuss the reason you sought my help in the first place. You go first Jake," she said.

She listened carefully as first Jake then Callie explained how they felt about the other's safety issues. Jake was rather forceful when he voiced his opinion on Callie's tendency to jump into danger and wishing she would take more care to which she hotly retorted, 'I will if you will'

argument in response.

The argument between the couple quickly began to spiral out of control so Laren had to firmly intervene. "Easy you two. That's an unproductive anger loop you're getting stuck in. So let's take the issues apart and address them individually."

"The first problem, as I see it, is one of the male instinct to protect. There's nothing wrong with that emotion normally, but in this instance, it's a hindrance and making both of you unhappy by its presence. Most of the problem with you, Jake, is you're trying to force Callie into a submission position," Laren explained, once the two had quieted.

"Some females don't mind being submissive to their lovers. Many actually want to be protected but they are not in a position of power as Callie is. She cannot be seen as weak and helpless and that's what you are requiring her to do just to stay safe in your eyes.

"It's really no different than your own overwhelming need to protect this city with your life. It scares her to see you throwing yourself into danger often. You both are strong personalities and have a great deal of courage. You both chose to do what you do for the people of this city. Because of this, you must accept and trust the judgement of your lover that they know what they are doing," Laren explained.

"Callie! Jake has trained well and has a keen analytical mind. His skills and those of his partner are what keeps them alive to fight again. You have to trust those abilities because you are not going to stop him from doing what his heart and soul demands he do," Laren said firmly then turned to the tom.

"Jake! You and I both know Callie is the real force behind the Mayor's office that keeps this city running. She must remain at her post to do her job. Running away is just not an option. I propose that Callie take advanced self defense training, preferably taught by you and give her some of your more discreet weapons that she can learn to use to defend herself with. This would relieve your need to protect her so closely and some of your worry," she strongly suggested.

"Now, here's some homework for you two until our next session. I want you to implement what I've suggested then I want you to practice learning to trust each other. This will be the most difficult thing you will ever have to learn for you two to be happy. Once Callie is trained to your satisfaction, Jake, you must learn to let go and trust that she can take care of herself. That does not mean you can't worry about her but it does mean you can't allow it to dominate your thoughts when you are focused on your duty," Laren said firmly.

"Alright, that's enough for this session. It was longer than normal due to me having to learn a bit about Jake but next time it will only be an hour long. I think our next session should be in another month. What day would work for you both?" She asked taking out her pocket planner.

Callie went to get her own planner while Jake thought over what he had going on that might cause a conflict. A few minutes later, appointment marked, they said good night to their therapist.

After Callie shut the door, Jake let out a sigh and laid his head on the couch so he could stare at the ceiling. Callie came and sat down beside him but didn't disturb his thoughts as she went over the last few hours herself.

"Wow! That was intense!" Jake finally said, sitting up to look at his lover. "What do you think about taking self defense lessons from me?"

Callie blinked and thought about it. "Sounds like a good idea to me if it will help you feel more secure about me being able to take care of myself in most situations. I do like the idea of having a few of your more sneaky protective toys in my possession. I could see how they would get me out of a sticky situation more quickly."

Jake was nodding in agreement. "Yeah, I could kick myself for not thinking of that before."

"Too close to the problem, perhaps?"

Her lover blushed but had to agree she was probably right.

"I hope Chance's and Feral's session goes alright," Callie commented as she laid back into Jake's embrace.

Jake could only shake his head. "I don't think it will be as quiet a session as ours. Remember, those two have hot tempers."

"Poor Laren, her ears are going to be ringing after their session," Callie said in sad amusement.

"Be lucky if she can hear at all when they're done yelling at each other." Jake snorted. "Want some personal attention or should I leave?" He asked, changing the subject.

She thought hard about that. She had gotten used to sleeping next to him and really enjoyed it but...it had been an emotional evening and she felt the need for some alone time to digest it all. "I think I need some me time. You okay with that?" She asked softly.

"Of course. I wouldn't have asked in the first place," he said gently, giving her a kiss then getting up to leave. "Want me here tomorrow or would you like to begin training?"

Callie looked up at him and saw he was serious not joking with her. "Let me see how the day goes and I'll let you know. Thank you for being willing to do this for both our sakes."

"Don't thank me yet. I intend to put you through as grueling a training as Chance and I go through. You may very well hate me when I'm through with you," he said with a smirk. "Just let me know when you want to start. Good night, love," he said warmly, blowing her a kiss before letting himself out.

She shook her head, 'oh joy, he's going to make sure I will be sore for weeks after but at least he is willing to do it. I just hope I don't regret it.'

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Chapter 20: Therapy session 2 by ulyferal

When Chance got home the night Jake had told him the therapist would see them, he was still of mixed feelings about it. He was frowning as he stowed his cyclotron in their hidden garage and went into the house.

He walked through their kitchen and headed for the bedroom. A powerful set of arms suddenly halted his progress before he could reach the small hallway.

"What's got your tail in a knot that you didn't sense me near?" His mate's deep voice murmured near his ear.

Chance turned his head enough to see Uly's concerned expression.

"Sorry, love. I was just obsessing on the news Jake gave me today," he growled irritably.

"Oh, and what might that have been?" Feral rumbled as he turned his mate around to face him.

Chance couldn't hold back the scowl on his face. "Told me Callie had convinced her therapist friend to see us. We'll be hearing from her soon with an appointment. Also, Jake had told her we would meet this person in our own apartments because it would be more secure for her and us."

Feral stared at Chance thoughtfully as he absorbed the news. "Hmmm, I have to say I agree with

Jake. It would prevent suspicion and keep us all safe and though I dislike having to go to the apartment for this, it is the best solution all around."

"I know it's a good solution, I just don't happen to like seeing a therapist nor having to go to the apartment for the sessions," Chance grouched.

Feral could only snort at his mate's contrariness because, after all, they both had agreed that this was necessary. Seemed a bit ridiculous to moan about it now but that was Chance for you. He didn't comment further on the subject and, instead, gave his mate a tight hug and kiss.

Chance knew what Uly was up to but was willing to let go the irritating subject and pursue something much more pleasurable.

Less than a week later, it was their turn to meet the therapist. Callie had gone along to make the introductions easier and to show her where Feral's apartment was.

Chance opened the door at the sound of the bell. The smell of food wafted out into the hallway where the pair was waiting. Working at staying polite, the tabby gestured the she-kats to enter. He closed the door behind them and led the way into a spacious apartment only lightly furnished and decorated. Most of Feral's belongings were now in his secret home. What was here was only for short stays and it had that temporary feeling to it.

'It most definitely didn't feel like a home,' Laren thought. She frowned mentally at that. 'I'm not sure this is very conducive for a therapy session but then we really don't have a choice.' Accepting that this was going to make things a little more difficult with this pair, Laren prepared herself.

Feral appeared from the direction of the kitchen with a tray of drinks and snacks he set on the coffee table. "Welcome to my place," he said politely coming toward the females.

"Commander Feral, Chance...this is Laren Jarstone," Callie introduced them.

"Hello...Commander...Chance..." she said shaking both their paws in turn.

"Well, I'll be taking my leave. See you soon Laren...no it's alright, Commander, I'll let myself out. Good night all," Callie said making a quick exit.

"Please, have a seat Dr. Jarstone," Feral said gesturing toward the meager sitting area.

"Thank you, Commander."

They sat down, Chance and Feral on a love seat while she took a recliner.

"Would you like some tea or coffee?" Chance asked, trying to be a good host.

"Coffee, please with two sugars...no cream," Laren said quietly. "Thank you," accepting the cup from Chance moments later.

Feral took black coffee and Chance went without anything. They sat uncomfortably for a few moments before Laren addressed them. She'd taken the moments of polite service to study the pair before her. They were nervous, she noted, though Feral seemed the more relaxed of the pair. Chance was displaying some resentment about being here as well as some barely restrained annoyance.

"Before we begin, I'd like to use a more informal setting so you may call me Laren and I'd like to call you Ulysses and Chance. Do you have a problem with that?"

Feral shrugged, "No, its fine with me." Chance just shook his head but said nothing.



"You don't want me here do you, Chance?" She asked bluntly.

Chance blinked in embarrassed surprise. "Uh, well...I promised to talk to a therapist but I don't like them...nothing personal," he said uncomfortably.

"That's perfectly understandable, however, I was led to believe it was you that suggested it?"

"Actually, it was Professor Hackle who suggested it," Chance muttered, correcting her.

Laren blinked in surprise. "Who?"

"Professor Hackle is a former weapons designer from Pumadyne. He's a devout pacifist now," Feral told her. "He's also the one trying to develop robots to help kat kind unfortunately one of his attempts back fired on him and that's how we ended up with the Metallikats. But other than that, he's a brilliant inventor and only means the best for katkind.

"Yeah, he's a great guy and he's helped Jake and I out a lot as the SWAT Kats. Recently, Jake has been working with him as Razor to build some special equipment for the enforcer's use. We and the Professor are tired of seeing so many enforcers die due to outdated equipment," Chance explained.

"Anyway, Jake had been so distracted lately that Hackle demanded to know what was wrong. Without telling him who we are nor who our lovers were, Jake managed to convey what our difficulties were. He was the one who told us to learn to accept what we couldn't change, stop being so over protective of our lovers and to seek counseling to help us achieve that," he finished.

"Ah, I see. He sounds like a very wise Kat and a very observant one because he was able to see that you needed help even though he wasn't privy to who you really are. This means your problem is more visible than you imagined and must be addressed, do you agree?" She prodded Chance. She had to convince him that this was in their best interest but he had to accept it for himself for it to be of any benefit to him.

Chance frowned and ran his fingers through his hair to try and dispel his frustration and annoyance at being in this position.

Feral turned and drew his mate into his arms and nuzzled him until the tabby sighed and relaxed. Feeling Chance was much calmer, Feral released him slowly until they were again sitting side by side.

"Yeah, I guess you're right. I'm all wound up with the need to keep Ulysses safe that I can't focus properly," Chance admitted.

"Or you over react," Feral added. Chance looked at him questioningly. "What you did to the Pastmaster wasn't a calm, reasoned act but one of angry revenge for what he'd done to me," he said quietly.

Chance blushed at the reminder. It hadn't been one of his most stellar moments.

Laren listened alertly. Apparently, Chance had done something very reckless and scary in defense of his mate and Feral was reminding him of it. There was a note of concern in the dark tom's tone about the event. She nodded to herself mentally. Chance was the one with the most problem of trusting his mate to take care of himself.

"Well, why don't we address that issue right now, Chance...tell me what you felt and what you did that day," she suggested. Learning about their background would have to wait until another session. This subject needed airing immediately.

Chance glared at her. He really didn't want to talk about that moment where he'd lost control and didn't see why it had to be brought up now.

"Chance, she's only trying to help and she's the professional after all," Feral tried to coax his mate to be more cooperative.

"If you hadn't gotten so close to those gargoyle things you wouldn't have been in danger of nearly dying," Chance hissed angrily.

Feral reared back as if struck, his face darkening with anger. "I was doing my job! It does mean getting in danger at times..." He started to say tightly.

"Your job does not require you to be in the forefront. As the leader, you're supposed to be at the rear so you can see the problem as a whole so you can develop a strategy to solve it, but no...you have to be right there at the front lines!" Chance spit, his temper rising by the minute.

"Now see here, Chance. You take even more risks than I by racing headlong into danger before checking things out first..." Feral hissed, temper flaring more hotly.

"Hold it! Hold it!" Laren barked then gave a sharp high pitched whistle to get their attention.

Startled the pair halted with their mouths still open in mid-rant as they turned their heads to stare at her in surprise.

"Finally, I have your attention. Yelling at each other doesn't solve your problem only intensify it so that you never address it because you're far too angry to hear each other. Please calm yourselves and be silent for a moment until you are calmer," she ordered quietly.

Blinking in embarrassed discomfort, the pair stayed silent, faces turned away from each other and focused on the floor.

After waiting for five minutes, Laren judged the pair to be ready to talk again...she hoped. They were a truly volatile pair that she was amazed fate had decided were perfect mates. Mentally shaking her head at the weirdness of life, she attempted to get them to speak of the incident again.

This time it was Feral who described what had happened to him that had caused Chance's over the top reaction. Chance grudgingly told her what he'd felt and how he'd reacted.

She took a slow breath. What he'd done to revenge his mate's treatment showed a much more intense protective instinct than Jake. But then, Jake hadn't been faced with such a harrowing situation yet. He could very well be just as deadly or more so than his partner if pushed to it. These two were like a powder keg of deadly force that would kill for those they loved.

How was she going to help temper such an instinct with caution when their whole lifestyle was one of violence and quick retaliation. She let the breath she'd been holding, out slowly while she centered herself. She could only do her best. Already, she had found a partial solution to ease Jake's protective instincts so now she had to find what would help Chance ease his.

She realized she would need to know more about each of them to do that. She glanced at the clock on the wall and realized they'd already been at this an hour. Sighing mentally, she resigned herself to yet another long session. Considering who the couples were, it was really no surprise.

Taking it slow, she veered them from the troublesome subject they'd just covered and began to ask questions about their backgrounds, when they'd met, how they came to mate so late, and how they were doing now.

It was during this questioning, Laren learned Feral was an hermaphrodite. She groaned mentally,

'So this is why Chance feels so protective. He's treating his mate as female without realizing it. Time to bring that to his attention. Feral is not going to like this.'

"The reason for the personal questions was to help me figure out how to ease your over protective natures. Being both male, you each have an intense need to protect your mate. Chance, I'm not sure you realize it but you are behaving as if your mate is female. Your behavior proclaims that very loudly." Laren said, dropping the bomb. As she'd surmised, Feral didn't like that at all.

The big tom's eyes flashed with shocked annoyance. He turned to his mate and growled, "I am not female. Just because I'm capable of breeding a kitten does not make me a fragile she-kat," he snapped.

Chance blinked in surprise. "I know you're male. Except for having female organs, I didn't consciously think of you as female. I can't help it if something in me insists that I protect you as if you were," he objected.

"In that you are only half correct, Chance. You can learn to not be so over protective. Your mate is a strong and powerful male in his own right. He is also well trained in how to protect himself from harm. Look how long he has survived in a job that should have killed him many times over. I would say he lives a charmed life but its more likely because he is more alert to danger and can survive it better than most just as you and Jake can," Laren interjected before an argument could start up again.

Silence met that statement as the pair mulled it over. Neither had ever thought of their abilities to avoid being killed as anything really unusual. They were just very well trained and hyper-vigilant. Others perceived them as having charmed lives when it was nothing of the kind. By reminding them of this fact, Laren was getting them to see that they really had no reason to be so over protective of each other.

Laren interrupted their moment of introspection. "It's getting late and I want to end this session with some homework for you both. Trust is an issue you both have problems with..." she started to say.

"Wha...no we don't!" Chance sputtered in indignation.

"Not the trust of fidelity, Chance. The one I mean is the one where you trust your mate to be a skilled enough enforcer to do his job and survive. That goes for you too Ulysses. Chance has trained himself to be the best he can be and you must trust that he can defend himself. Though you aren't able to directly help your mate for fear of revealing your relationship, it doesn't mean you aren't consciously trying to protect him every time you are together in battle. You both do this and that behavior of over vigilance will get you both killed," she cut him off quickly.

"You ask too much! How am I supposed to simply turn off my instincts?" Chance demanded angrily.

Laren sighed. "I didn't say turn off your instincts, Chance, I said trust them more. You know in your heart that Ulysses is very capable of defending himself. You must learn to allow him to do so just as he must with you. That is your homework. Yes, it will be hard but nothing in life worth having is ever easy and you two know this more than anyone in this city," she said firmly.

"We'll try," Feral, who had been quiet all this time, interjected reaching out for his mate and pulling him close. "It will be hard, but we will try."

"That's all I ask. Now, we should schedule your next session in about a month. If you need to speak to me before that, here's my card. It doesn't matter what time it is, I'll be there if you need me," Laren said gently.

They spent the next few minutes figuring out a mutual day and time and marking their calendars. An emotionally exhausted Laren, bid the pair good night and left for home.

Feral and Chance silently cleaned up the apartment then left for their home outside the city. Despite the hour, by mutual agreement, they wanted the peace of their hidden home to ease their jangled nerves. It had been an emotional wringer of an evening.

Not willing to bring up anymore of the subject they turned in without making love as was their usual wont. Instead, Chance insisted in wrapping himself around his large mate and being wrapped in turn, seeking comfort. Feral didn't hesitate to provide it as he nuzzled and licked his tired mate to sleep.

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Chapter 21: Doing their homework by ulyferal

Chance remained rather moody for quite some time after their therapy session. Ulysses left him alone to work through his thoughts. When the tabby finally did take his mate aside to discuss what he was thinking, the dark tom was surprised by what he had to say.

"You want me to do what?" Feral blurted in shock, not certain he had really heard his mate right.

Chance sighed and spread his paws. They were sitting at their kitchen table having just finished breakfast on a quiet and sunny Sunday morning.

"Jake was told to give Callie self defense lessons and to provide her with some of our special weapons, training her on their use. That got me to thinking, I know you've gone through a lot of training over the years but none of it is like what Jake developed for us. Because we fight without any kind of backup but each other, Jake designed a danger room for us to train in that forces us to be much more hyper-alert than a normal enforcer is required to be. The only similarity I can make to this training would be the one taught to Navy Seals. It's not quite as brutal but it is intense," Chance explained carefully.

"What I propose is for you to go through our training and learn how to protect yourself a little better than you do now and I'll also give you some discreet weapons that will give you an edge. It helps that Jake and Professor Hackle are nearly finished making your new tanks and choppers. I'll be even happier when they get the new weapon done as well," he said earnestly.

Feral had been ready to lose his temper but just managed to rein it in and listen. When Chance finished, he blew out a breathe he'd been holding and really thought about what his mate was suggesting.

He was really happy to know the new tanks and choppers were near completion. He was itching to try them out though he was unhappy there would only be five of each but since he wasn't footing the bill he couldn't complain. It would just mean he would have to be very particularly about when they would be used. The weapons on the other paw, now those could really save lives and he was getting really anxious about getting those soon. The omegas, for whatever reason, had picked up their attacks and he was tired of losing his troops senselessly due to out of date weaponry.

But this business about him training with them...that was insulting! However, Chance wasn't saying his training was inadequate, only that it wasn't enough! He crossed his arms and raised his head to stare at the ceiling for a minute.

Well hell, what did he have to lose anyway? And, besides, it might actually help ease his mate's over-protective instincts and perhaps meet the requirement the therapist had set for them as homework...that decided him. If it helped them get past this problem then it was worth doing.

He dropped his head and looked at his mate who was drinking coffee and eyeing him quietly.

"Fine, I'll do it! Understand this...when I finish this program of training you will back off and let me do my job. And, it could even help me with my own protective instincts too by seeing how you train."

Chance blinked at that insight. "I hadn't thought about it like that but...yeah...it might do that and meet Loren's criteria for our homework," he smiled, pleased at his neat solution.

"My thoughts exactly."

### ***Same day...ten o'clock at the salvage yard...***

Jake was walking Callie out to their obstacle course. He'd had her warm up first doing some simple calisthenics and was pleased at how toned she was but the real test of her workouts was doing the obstacle course.

"The rules are simple. The first one to get to the finish line wins," Jake said, standing at a start line and pointing to the distant finish line across the yard.

Callie squinted her eyes and frowned. This was a longer course than ones she'd tried out on before. She looked around at the way the guys had managed to hide an obstacle course in the middle of a salvage yard and no one was the wiser. It was quite clever of them to use the salvage itself as part of the course.

"Got it." She said, preparing herself.

"Good then...on your mark...get set...go!" Jake barked then tore off. He had no intention of being easy on her, it would not benefit her for him to be chivalrous.

Callie took off but was still stunned at how fast Jake could move. She picked up her speed and chased after him through a maze of various stuff including jumping from tire to tire. By the time she managed to catch up to him, she was dripping sweat and her muscles were trembling.

"I'm in better shape than this!" She chastised herself as she pushed past her shaky muscles.

She was on his heels as he began to climb rapidly up a mountain of junk. She scrambled after him. At the top, he grabbed a rope and swung out over a large pool of water then landed neatly beyond it.

Callie swallowed hard, grabbed the rope and swung out. Her lighter weight allowed her to clear the pool easily, letting go was another matter. She failed to release in time and was nearly taken back to the pool's edge before she managed to let go. She landed rather awkwardly at the very edge but kept her balance and began to run again.

By now Jake was within reach of the finish line. Gritting her teeth she raced after him but still failed to pass him, only barely managing to close the gap as she flew past the finish line.

She knew better than to sit down after such exertions, so she walked around with her head down, breathing hard. Jake suddenly appeared by her side, handing her a bottle of water.

"Not too shabby for a first attempt," he said easily, barely breathing hard.

She flashed him a wane smile. Drinking down half the bottle, she used some of it to cool her heated face. "Thanks, but I'm not pleased with that showing. I thought I was pretty fit...obviously I'm not," she said ruefully.

"No, you are fit...more so than the average Kat. You actually kept close to me and finished. Don't sell yourself short, love. It pleases me to see that it won't take you as long as I feared to be in even better shape and be ready for the danger room," Jake said wisely. "So, you ready to do it

again?" Giving her a wicked smile.

She blinked at him in shock, but as he headed for the starting line again, she realized he wasn't kidding. Groaning to herself, she just knew she wouldn't be able to move by the time he was done with her.

He ran her through two more times before calling it a day. Taking her down to their hangar, he showed her the deep whirlpool tub, like those in physical therapy, he'd set up in one of the bathrooms in this huge place below ground.

"What a brilliant idea," she groaned in pleasure as she sank to her neck in the very hot water.

"Yeah, after being way too sore after our missions, I was thrilled when this showed up in the junk. I fixed it up like new and installed it here. It's been a godsend," Jake grinned, pleased she was enjoying it so much.

"What is this place anyway," she asked casually.

"From what I was able to discover, it apparently had been an old Megawar II bunker used by the high brass to run the war from. I haven't explored all of it...never really had the time. It's supposed to house some ten thousand Kats or more."

Callie blinked. That implied a fairly large facility. "Would certainly make a safe haven during a disaster," she mused.

"Well it would be rather rough living, since it's been abandoned some fifty years. It would need a lot of repair just to make it habitable," Jake commented, shrugging his shoulders, "but, yeah, it would be a good sanctuary, if it was ever needed for that. Though, personally, I hope nothing that bad ever happens."

"So do I!" She sighed. "Soooo...why don't you climb in here with me," she murmured, coyly looking at him under her long lashes.

He cocked his head and eyed her plainly. "You sure? I figured you'd be pretty sore."

"Not for that I'm not!"

Grinning wolfishly, he striped his clothes off and climbed carefully in with her. It was not meant for two people but they managed with him sitting and her sliding to straddle his lap, his cock already standing up due to the warm water, began to grow harder as it poked up behind her rear. Her tail floated up behind her while he kept his down near their thighs, caressing her with it. She shivered at the feel of it as he teased her, though wet, it still felt like his paw was caressing her.

She rumbled deep in her throat encouraging him. Jake pressed his face close and nuzzled her neck, occasionally licking and nipping her where her shoulder and neck met while she ran her claws lightly down his back eliciting a pleasurable groan from him.

Though she might not feel it yet, Jake knew she would be very sore in the morning so he didn't plan on doing anything very strenuous. He pulled her head down and gave her deep, hot kisses that made her groan and writhe against him. It was hard for him to hold off but he didn't want to come off too quickly until he was certain she was ready first.

It didn't take very long as she tried to raise up to take him in but he continued to hold her hips to prevent her.

"Jake..." she cried desperately.

His teeth were bared at the sweet sound of her pleas but she proved she was fully aware of what

he was doing even at the height of her own pleasure. Leaning down closer, she began to nibble his shoulders, he flinched and shivered at the feel of her fangs.

While he was distracted, she trailed the fingers of her right paw down his spine and then under his tail, twitching her finger rapidly against his furless pucker. Despite the water he sat in the sensation made his eyes widen and his body shudder with ripples of pleasure.

"Why you sneaky..."he gasped, taking back control by raising her hips and planting her onto his very stiff pole and gently lowering her.

She cried out ecstatically and began to work him thoroughly, bobbing up and down with lots of energy. The long tease did them both in and with just few more thrusts they came...hard, howls filling the chamber.

As they wound down, they sat slumped in each other's arms as they waited for their hearts to slow and their breathing to ease.

"Hmm, now that's the perfect way to end a good workout," Callie purred.

"I'll say!"

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After taking care of some chores around their home, Feral drove them both to the salvage yard. When they pulled into the quiet yard they noticed Callie's sedan parked in the garage. Chance suspected it was parked there to keep it out of sight and not that it needed repair, which meant Jake was putting her through the course today as well. Parking his hummer behind a towering stack of salvage, Feral shut down the engine then climbed out. Chance was already out and waiting for him at the corner of the stacked salvage.

When his mate joined him, Chance led the way further into the yard until they reached the camouflage obstacle course. Looking around, he didn't see Jake or Callie so that meant they were, most likely, already finished. After giving his mate the rules of the course as they stood at the starting line, he counted down and on three they took off.

At first Chance was in the lead being lighter than his mate but that hadn't lasted long as Ulysses caught up and passed him at the trash mountain. Feral scrambled up with his powerful arms and legs helping him until he was at the top and swinging without hesitation out over the water then letting go. His strong swing sent him a good distance past the pond.

He landed easily on his feet in a crouch before springing forward to run again. Scowling, Chance grit his teeth and tried to put on more speed, attempting to close the widening gap between them.

Feral didn't look back as he plowed forward. He was within a body's length from the finish line when he heard heavy and rapid footsteps coming up behind him. Grinning ferociously, he picked up his speed and hit the finish line a good arm's length ahead of Chance. He trotted in a circle, cooling down while giving his mate a smug look.

Chance could only scowl at the big tom's obvious delight at showing just how fit he was as he too circled at a fast walk, but he was barely winded which he noted neither was his mate. So, okay, he was fit so doing anymore of this would not benefit him any.

"Okay, you've convinced me you can do this easily so let's just skip to the danger room instead. It much more intense and will prove if you're really as fast as you seem," he snorted heading away from the course and back to the garage.

"Whatever you say, Chance," Feral said amiably. He really didn't think he'd have problems with the danger room either but he would reserve judgement until he checked it out.

They walked through the garage then climbed down into the hangar. Feral had not been down here before and was impressed by its size. He realized quickly that it was a left over Mega War II hidden base. Jake and Chance had done a great job upgrading the section of it they utilized.

He was willing to bet there was so much more that was blocked off and disused. It would be like Jake to ensure their security wasn't compromised by closing off and blocking the rest of base from this section they used. His security savvyness was beyond reproach and he wished, yet again, that he had that kind of sophistication in his headquarters.

Sighing mentally to himself, he looked around as they passed by the parking area of the Turbokat and headed for a massive door. Before Chance could activate signal it to open, they were hailed from behind.

"Hey guys," Callie called. She was wearing a pair of cutoff blue jeans and a tied at the waist white cotton shirt which showed off all her assets very well, her hair was tied in a pony tail and was wet. Jake wore cutoff jeans as well and a purple wife beater shirt, his fur was freshly dried because it was fluffy.

"Hi, took advantage of our little whirlpool bath, eh?" Chance said with a smirk.

They both blushed a bit. Jake's expression went to a frown as he asked, "Did you guys go through the obstacle course already?"

"Yep! And he beat the pants off me," Chance snorted. "I thought we shouldn't waste anymore time with that and get right to the more difficult training instead."

Jake nodded his understanding. "Huh, kinda thought the course might be too easy for him. Good luck in the danger room. Callie's not quite ready for that yet. About a month on the course and she might be."

Callie could only grimace unhappily about that prediction.

"Don't let it get to you Callie. I work out all the time with my enforcers and do their obstacle course frequently but though I can tell you work out, it's just not the same as a good obstacle course to get really tough and strong," Feral encouraged her.

Sighing she nodded in agreement. "Obviously, that is very true, Ulysses. I made the mistake of believing I was fit but learned really quick that I'm no where in the league you guys are," she admitted.

Jake hugged her close. "You will be, I'll see to it!" He promised her.

"I don't know if that's good news or not," she grimaced and rubbed a particularly sore arm muscle.

Feral, Chance and Jake chuckled at that.

"Well good luck you two! Want us to order dinner in an hour or so?" Jake asked.

"Sure, we'll be starving when we finish! See you in a few hours," Chance said as he turned and signaled the heavy door open.

He gestured for Uly to follow and they walked into a cavernous room as the door behind them rolled shut without a sound.

"Feral's in for a rude surprise," Jake smirked as he guided Callie back to the ladder to go upstairs.

She gave a questioning look.



He smiled back and said, "It's really tough as only my fertile imagination can come up with. Eventually, I want to design a holographic work out room but this will have to do for now."

"Ugh! Sounds like I'll be a lot longer than a month's training before I'm ready for that," Callie said as she climbed up the ladder.

"Nah! I'll have you ready, don't you worry about that."

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Chapter 22: The Danger Room by ulyferal

Feral eyed the inner door curiously. Where they stood was a changing and armament area. Chance went over and pulled out a spare g-suit for his mate.

"Might be a touch short on you but should fit you elsewhere alright and your tennis shoes will be okay unless you would like to do it barefoot as we do...your choice," he grunted, handing the clothes over to his mate.

Feral sighed, changed his clothes without comment. As Chance had guessed, the pant length and arms were more than three inches short on him and the chest was rather tight but not uncomfortable. Since his mate did this barefoot, he decided to do the same.

When he was ready, Chance came up to him with a glovatrix and fitted it on his right arm. For the next ten minutes, he instructed the big tom on its use.

"Okay, for this first run, we'll not worry about time as you need to get used to using the glovatrix," Chance began.

"Wait! I use my laser pistol exclusively. Shouldn't I be training with it rather than something that is quite obviously belonging to the SWAT Kats?"

"You'd be right except, Jake is building you a mini version that looks nothing like ours and fires different ammo as well and that is what is in that glovatrix you're wearing. This first run through will test its capabilities and help you get used to using it as backup to your laser. You'll do a run through with that as well don't worry," Chance told him reassuringly. "So, ready to do this?"

"Ready when you are," Feral grunted ascent.

"Be on your toes, love, and prepare to get beat up," Chance called out challengingly, as he charged ahead the moment the doors opened.

Feral hurried after him and was immediately ducking a flying something that went zinging by and would have knocked him off his feet. Gritting his teeth, he went on hyper-alert and just managed to avoid a blast of flames from his left, a sudden opening of the floor beneath his feet, and pop appearance of a cardboard image of a Kat with a machine gun.

On the last, he fired off a cement shot and took its head off. Ahead of him was his mate who was disappearing through another door that was sliding down rapidly. He sent his body sliding across the floor and just made it under before the heavy metal came down with a loud thud.

Before he could get his bearings, a barrage of weapons fire struck the floor near him. He scrambled away, sending up a shield to protect himself. He was panting and sweating by the time he made it through another batch of fast moving and sudden obstacles as well as more rope escapes from stakes in the floor and huge rolling balls of metal. He was sent ducking, dodging and running from swinging pendulums of sharp metal that could cut him in half, gas attacks, and flaming arrows. The amount of obstacles and items of death thrown at them seemed endless.

When he swam across a pit that had opened up beneath him without warning filled with ice

water, he pulled himself out on a slippery metal surface and struggled to keep his feet under him as he charged wetly through yet another door that was closing sideways and just making it again.

He was startled to realize he had reached the end as Chance stood there at ease eyeing him critically. He blinked in surprise as he shook from the adrenaline rush that still hammered through him despite finally being able to stop.

"Are you alright, love?" Chance asked him, only slightly winded and sweating.

"I...will...be...when...I...can...catch...my...breath..." he huffed out with difficulty. Kat's Alive! That had tested him to the limit and he suspected, if he hadn't been half as fast, he could have been seriously injured and that thought caused him pause and ask, "how do you manage not to get killed in there?"

"Automatic shutoff. If one of those hazards manages to touch us, it cuts out instantly. Jake tests it regularly to insure its safe. But while you're going through it, you don't remember that, so treat it as real which was his intention. But still he's not happy with it." Chance shook his head.

"Jake wants to develop a holodeck program like our strange visitors the Loonatics have for their own training. They gave us the software for it but Jake has to build a bigger computer system to handle it and find a way to give it the power it needs without the electric company realizing we're siphoning as much as it takes to run it. The Loonatics were funded by their government, but as you well know, we aren't. Anyway, what did you think of our present system?"

"Hold it! What's a holodeck program and how is it better than what Jake has done here?" He asked confused.

Chance sighed then patiently spent several minutes explaining what Tech, the coyote, had told Jake and himself about their far more advanced training system.

It took Feral some moments to process what Chance had said when he'd finished his explanation. It just sounded too fantastic to him but he hadn't forgotten how intelligent and advanced those strange creatures were so he guessed it wasn't that far fetched they would create such a system.

It boggled his mind to think what they could do with something like that here. All his enforcers could be trained without using huge expenditures of money and time. The advantage of putting them in any situation would insure his troops were ready for anything and losses would drop dramatically.

He reined in his excitement. Such a setup would take time and funds they just didn't have. But knowing about it meant he could start pushing for the funds to build it. The lives saved would be worth the cost and time of setup. Of course, he would have to find a way to filter funds to Jake too. The SWAT Kats were the ones who obtained this new tech and had the right to use it as well. He would have to think about this and see what he could do.

He blew out a breathe and stretched his body. Those strange visitors had left Jake a lot of incredible tech, not the least was that holodeck software. He was very glad they had been friendly...what they could have done to Megakat City with their special powers and their tech at their command made him shudder.

"Did that shake your tree, Uly? You seemed really lost in thought there." Chance's voice interrupted his thoughts.

"Huh?...ohhh...yeah...I was thinking how great such a system would be in training my enforcers. There would be a huge reduction in loss of life and training could be more intense and completed quicker. Just imagining it had me stunned a moment," he admitted.

Chance's brows raised in surprise. "Huh! I really didn't think of that but you're certainly right, it would benefit the enforcers a lot."

"Yeah, but funding is the sticking point for both of us however, now that Callie is part of our little group perhaps such a thing could be sold to the right backers and become a reality," he mused thoughtfully.

"Now there's a great idea...but what about us? We have the tech and it was meant to help us first," Chance reminded him.

"I hadn't forgotten that. That's why I was hoping Callie and I would be able to funnel some of those hoped for funds toward you two. No way would we want you at a disadvantage...besides Callie and I would want to use it too," he reassured his mate.

"Wow! If you could pull that off, it would be awesome for all concerned. But that's a lot of wishful thinking. I think I'll just wait and see if you can pull it off before getting my hopes up."

"Good idea! But it is something I want to pursue soon so we'll see what happens when I make the proposal."

"I hope you succeed but now its time to get back to work. How did the glovatrix work for you?" Chance asked, getting back to the task at paw.

Feral held it up as he answered, "I have to admit, this is one very versatile weapon and it worked really well."

"Good, I'll let Jake know so he can finish up your personal mini-glovatrix as well as the one he's making for Callie. Alright, ready to go again, this time with your laser?"

"Yeah, better get too it before my muscles seize up from the different style of fighting. I'm going to be sore afterwards, though," Feral said ruefully, accepting his pistol the tabby handed him.

"Don't worry! We'll make use of the whirlpool Jake set up for us," Chance smirked, adding a suggestive leer. He led the way back around to the entry door again then set the instructions in a panel next to the door.

"Ohh, sounds like a great incentive." Feral grinned back.

Taking a deep breath and preparing himself, he immediately ran forward the moment the door began to open but still not as fast as Chance who was already nearly through the door.

Two more runs and Feral felt like he'd been in a sauna and his muscles felt weak as noodles. Okay, he believed his mate now that what the tabby and his partner put themselves through regularly **was** far more intense and dangerous than any form of exercise or obstacle course he'd ever been through before.

"How are you holding up?" Chance asked, dripping with sweat and breathing hard.

"Realizing you are more prepared to fight the enemy than I am," his mate conceded as they walked together out of the danger room and into the hangar proper.

"Don't feel bad, love. Jake just felt we had to be the best we could be if we were to survive being all alone. And, I admit, you did very well for having never done anything like this before. I doubt you'll take longer than a couple of months to be at our level. It'd be sooner, but you just don't have that much free time to get over here.

"That's certainly true," Feral admitted ruefully.

"Here we go!" Chance said leading his mate into the small wash room his partner had set up for them. He turned on the water in the whirlpool bath.

Feral walked stiffly over to the tub and frowned. "Pretty small!"

"Beggars can't be choosers. Believe me, its been a godsend after taking a beating from Dark Kat. Anyway, we can fit, just you wait!"

Feral gave him a doubtful look but said nothing more as he stripped off his clothes. The tub was soon full and he sighed gratefully when he stepped in and sat, the hot water making his muscles loosen, then he blinked in surprise as his mate, grinning wickedly, climbed in and sat in his lap.

"See we fit perfectly," Chance growled, deliberately rubbing his butt across the slowly rising cock beneath.

"Ohhh, so I can see...hmm...now this is nice..." Feral murmured hotly, wrapping his arms around his mate and kissing him passionately.

Chance groaned and dug his fingers into his mate's shoulders, kneading the soreness out of them as he enjoyed the kiss.

They didn't have enough room to do too much except rub themselves against each other but that was enough to send their pulses rises quickly.

Chance wished he could enter his mate but had to satisfy himself with what they were doing for now. It didn't take long before they came together with roars of pleasure.

Going limp after coming down from their high, they sat slumped in each others arms and allowed the frothing hot water to ease their soreness. When they'd been in it long enough to become waterlogged, they finally climbed out and dried under the big blowers Jake had rigged up.

With only a towel on, Feral realized he'd left his clothes in the danger room. He cursed in annoyance but Chance just grinned and waved him to wait. He always had a spare set of clothing in the wash room so he dressed quickly and gave his mate a quieting kiss.

"Hush! I'll go get your clothes then we can get something to eat. I'm starved."

Feral just grumbled but sat on a bench nearby and waited. Chance was back within a few minutes and waited as his mate quickly got redressed then the two of them headed to the ladder.

The garage was closed and the fiery remnants of the sun setting slanted in making the room glow as the two passed through it for the stairs leading up to the apartment. Before they reached the top, delicious smells assaulted their noses.

"Well, its about time you two. We've kept your portions hot in the microwave," Jake said, sitting on the couch with his nearly finished plate and Callie sitting close to him, drinking a glass of wine, her empty plate on the table.

"It took as long as it took. Food smells good!" Chance snorted, heading for the kitchen hurriedly.

Feral took the plate full of ribs, potatoes, salad, and a glass of wine from his mate and headed back to the living room, taking the overstuffed chair. Chance came in and sat in another old chair next to his mate and chowed down hungrily.

The other pair smiled in amusement at the two males obvious hunger but didn't comment as they returned their attention to a show they were watching.

When dinner was over, Callie and Jake insisted on doing the dishes since they hadn't done the

danger room and weren't quite as tired, leaving the couch for the other two to cuddle up on.

However, after only a short time, Feral was beginning to fall asleep. He decided it was time to go home. He glanced down at his mate who had been leaning his head on Feral shoulder and discovered the tabby had fallen asleep. Sighing he removed himself, letting Chance slide to the couch cushions, never waking up at all.

Shaking his head, he went to the kitchen. Jake and Callie were finished with the dishes and were leaning against the sink in each others arms. They looked up when he entered, twin questioning looks on their faces.

"Chance has fallen asleep so I think its well past time we went home. Thanks for the dinner."

"You're welcome," Jake said smiling.

"Ulysses?" Callie asked.

"Hmm?"

"How was the danger room?"

"Tough! I was surprised and forced to realize none of my training could compare to what that put me through," he said honestly.

She sighed. "Obviously, it will be quite some time before I'm ready for that then."

"Oh definitely," Feral gave her a wane smile in agreement then asked, "by the way, Callie, I need to discuss something with you tomorrow. Can you make some time for me?"

"I'll have to check my schedule but I'll let you know as soon as I get in," she promised.

"Thanks. Well, good night!"

"Good night!"

Ulysses went back to the living room then woke his mate. "Come on love, time for home." He smiled tiredly as his mate grumbled a tired complaint as he stumbled to his feet to follow Feral out the door and to their car.

When they heard the sound of Feral's hummer leave the yard, Jake secured the place then he and Callie went to bed but not necessarily to sleep.

Very soon, the silence of the yard was interrupted by twin cries of spent pleasure. Unfortunately, at the Furlong-Feral's home, the two very tired toms barely made it into bed before they were dead asleep.

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Chapter 23: A New Menace by ulyferal

"Uncle! I've just received reports of multiple robberies occurring at the same time, around the city. All patrols have fanned out to try and cover them but these are very organized bands of thieves and they are managing to cause enough havoc to keep our forces busy while they escape," Felina said, breathless from her race to her uncle's office from the comm center. She could have told him by intercom but felt it would be better to do this in person.

"What are they doing that's allowing them to escape?" Feral demanded.

"Setting off smoke grenades, the fire alarms, security systems, sprinkler systems, just to name a few things they've done to panic the civilians that get in the way of the enforcers," Felina said,

disgusted that such tactics were proving so effective.

Feral growled and muttered under his breath as he reached for his radio and began firing off a flurry of orders to his ground and chopper forces. He realized he could not go out into the field as was his wont because there were too many hot zones. He would have to direct the action from here so he decided to go down to the command center located off the comm room to run the op from there.

While still on the radio, he signaled Felina to follow him as he hurried from his office, down the hall to the elevators. Divining where her uncle was going, Felina pushed the button for the floor she'd just left.

Within seconds they were off the elevator and hurrying through the comm unit to the command center. Feral switched from his hand held to the open mic system and ordered the techs to begin giving him reports every ten minutes from each hot spot and start a situation map. Ten minutes later, a pattern began to emerge giving Feral and his staff a good idea where the thieves might be heading next.

As he directed his troops to hustle to new locations in hopes of heading off the thieves, he heard over his radio, a brief bit of chatter from the SWAT Kats. According to the map, they were at the south end where there had been over six robberies. They had managed to apprehend at least six of the culprits but they too were hampered by the scattered nature of the multiple attacks. They could only respond after they heard an alarm call but too often they arrived too late to do anything.

Since they were already in the area, Feral decided he might as well make them part of his strike units. He ordered his comm operator to signal the SWAT Kats. Moments later, a harried voice come over the radio.

"Yeah, what's up, Commander?" Razor snapped.

"This is a large, well organized group that's striking swiftly in multiple sights, causing me to split up my forces. Add to that, they are deliberating setting off alarms, sprinkler systems, and anything else they can do to panic people who further get in our way to capture them. I've set up a monitoring system and we've been able to see a pattern of a sorts. Based on that, I've been trying to anticipate where they might strike. We've beginning to have some success at last."

"Crud! We heard the multiple calls but were too busy to get the whole picture. So what would you like us to do? Obviously, it's no good just hopping all over the place and in many cases, missing the crooks altogether." Razor's voice clearly rang with frustration and a willingness to be a part whatever Feral had in mind.

"Take a holding pattern and I'll direct you to where the main action is. Your mission is to capture as many of these guys as you can. Don't detour as I have my troops spread out doing the same thing. If we stay coordinated, we may succeed in getting a good number of these guys."

"Roger, taking a holding pattern at 10,000 ft," Razor acknowledged then passed the instruction to his partner.

"Well that's certainly a better idea than what we've been trying to do," T-Bone grunted in agreement then switched his mic to speak with his partner privately. "I'm actually glad to see him doing his job the right way for once, even if it was circumstances that forced the issue this time."

Razor snorted. "Face it buddy, you'll never get your mate to stay in his office."

"Yeah, I know but I can dream can't I," the tabby sighed.

"Oh sure and pigs will fly," the smaller tom said facetiously.

Some five minutes later, they were notified of a hit and T-Bone sent the jet at its top speed to get there before the criminals took a powder. They made it and were able to corral the thieves as they were attempting to use some kind of jet pack for their getaway.

This made it easy for Razor to simply shoot a net missile at them and collect them like fish in a barrel.

"Well that went faster than we hoped. Too bad we can't shoot some Glue-Trap at them but you can't be moving to use it," Razor sighed with regret.

The gel, originally called Gluco-Gel 9000 by its inventor Tech, was now being produced by the enforcers R & D section and Razor, privately. It made their job of capturing criminals so much easier but it did have its limitations. Like not being able to shoot it in a crowd.

The last time that happened, Mayor Manx received many outraged calls by innocent Katizens caught within it along with the criminals. So to placate them, he warned Feral to use it strictly on the criminals, effectively tying the Commander's paws in situations like the one they were dealing with now.

Feral had been thoroughly disgusted. None of the Katizens had been harmed and were instantly released with the counter agent. It was another case of the cowardly Mayor bending over backward to please his constituents at the expense of their safety.

The SWAT Kats, though free agents, obeyed the stricture too so as not to cause Feral anymore grief from the idiot Mayor.

The other invention Tech had left them, the nearly impossible jail cells, had worked well for more than a year until Dark Kat had figured out how to escape his special cell. To add insult to injury, he managed to free Viper and the Pastmaster as well, much to Feral and the SWAT Kats disgust.

It had taken Razor more than a month to figure out how to correct the problem. Unfortunately, the omegas made sure they were never caught again, being more canny about their attempts to take the city. For everyone's sake, it was a good thing Dark Kat had finally managed to over reach himself and get killed. Viper wasn't as smart as he thought he was and found himself back in his escape-proof cell with no DK to get him free and the Pastmaster had been scared off, hopefully for good this time.

So the only real threats left were Turmoil, escaped and hiding somewhere out of the area, and the Metallikats, still deactivated at the moment, thankfully. However, that didn't prevent new threats from appearing like whoever was leading this merry band of robbers and, of course, the ever exciting scientific accident and/or alien visitor.

Feral's head was pounding from a growing headache as he directed the SWAT Kats to their next target then his enforcers to one across town. He rubbed his temples as he worried about just how much loot these thieves had manage to take and the cost to the city for all the chaos they caused in their wake.

Many questions floated through his mind; who was behind this? What was their real goal? If it was only loot, perhaps they would lay low for awhile before striking again for more but if it was to raise money for something more dangerous, what could that be and how much trouble was the city in? Lots of questions with no answers...at least not yet.

Sighing, he temporarily shelved his concerns to the back of his mind and focused on ending this strange snatch and grab mission that was going on. When it finally ended and the last of the thieves they'd been able to capture were on their way to jail, Feral had Felina do an inventory on what had been taken, how many thieves had been involved, and any casualties.

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When they received the call that no more thieves could be found and that the apparent siege was over, T-Bone could tell his mate was tired and frustrated when he spoke to them over the radio. He and Uly would have a lot to talk about tonight, he was certain but right this moment, as he and Razor were changing clothes, the only thing on his mind was why.

"Crud! Why the multiple hits? What were these guys trying to accomplish? They stole money, jewels, and other valuable things but I don't get the feeling it was for the thrill of it. Something is up...I just know it."

"I definitely agree with you on that, buddy. I don't like this at all. We barely get rid of one bad omega when we get hit with someone who has plans we have no clue about nor who the heck they are.

"Yeah, and I doubt any of those cruds in jail right now will be telling us anything unless we get very lucky to find a weak link among them, which isn't really likely." Chance sounded both disgusted and worried.

Jake grimaced. "Yeah, that's what I'm thinking too and the way our luck runs, we won't catch a break either. Whatever this person is planning, we'll not know about it until it happens. For now, all we can do is keep our eyes and ears alert for any kind of trouble that might be related to this event." Shaking his head, Jake made a waving off sign. "Enough of this speculating, we've got work to do. Let's get back to the old grind, Chance."

Chance sighed and said nothing in return as he followed his friend up the hatch and into the garage. As they returned to their interrupted work, Chance asked himself, 'why couldn't we catch a break? Is that really too much to ask?' It just didn't seem fair to him that just when the two of them had finally found love, they now had to worry about some new threat.

'Good thing we're training Callie and Uly now because I've got a bad feeling they are going to need to defend themselves soon in whatever is about to happen.' Pushing his concerns aside for now, he set to work again on the truck he'd been installing brakes on.

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Unable to do anything more about the incident until Felina had been able to gather the information he needed, Feral returned to his office and the desk load of work waiting for him.

As he sat down with a fresh cup of coffee and drew the first of many folders to him, his phone rang.

Sighing, he picked it up as he opened the folder to look the contents over. "Feral!" He said distractedly as not all of his attention was on the call.

"Ulysses? We were supposed to have a meeting about thirty minutes ago," Callie's concerned voice came over the line.

Feral blinked then quickly jerked his wrist up to stare at his watch. Cursing softly, he apologized, "I'm sorry, Callie. I'm sure you heard what went on..."

"Yes, we caught the news cast about it on the Mayor's TV but hadn't heard what the status was now. The danger over?"

"For now, I guess. Felina is gathering information on the whole mess which is why I haven't a report to give his honor at the moment."

"Any theories as to why they did this?"



"I only know of two possible reasons for doing what they did; the need for money to fund some nefarious plan or thrill seeking...guess which one I think it is."

"The former...as would I.. Really, Ulysses, you would think we could catch a break..." Callie's voice was both disgusted and wistful.

"You and me both. Anyway, I could come over now before I become buried under my work again...provided you're still free?"

"Yes, I can still see you. The Mayor has gone golfing now that the fervor has died down." She gave a derisive snort to show what she thought of that.

Feral couldn't agree with her more about the idiotic and cowardly mayor but didn't voice his opinion. "Good, I'll be there in about ten minutes."

"See you then."

He hung up his phone and stared at his desk for a moment. Reaching for his intercom, he summoned his assistant who appeared almost immediately.

"Sir?"

"I'm leaving to see the Deputy Mayor. Would you please categorize this mess into two piles; immediate attention required and those that can wait a few days, please?"

"Certainly, sir."

Sighing, Feral left his desk and grabbed his coat, buttoning it on his way out the door heading for the elevators. Within five minutes, he was driving to city hall.

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Chapter 24: Preparing for the Worst by ulyferal

Feral drove to Megakat Park, parked at the main entrance and got out of his hummer. Walking briskly, he made for a less used section of the huge park. At this time of day, there were few people around to see him.

Both he and Callie had agreed to meet outside her office to prevent anyone from overhearing them. The park lay between both their offices so it made sense to meet there.

Though he trusted Jake's security systems, which the tom had thoroughly infused into every cranny of Callie's office, they weren't designed to halt the constant interruptions or stop his honor, the Mayor, from overhearing them so her office was out and so was his for the same reasons.

A few minutes walk brought him to a quiet area thick with azaleas and lilac bushes. Laying within one circle of the bushes was a small, private space that held a pretty gazebo made of wrought iron. Beneath it was a circle of cement and a single decorative stone bench for sitting and enjoying the peace of nature. Once past the bushes, no one could see them easily so they could talk with some expectation of privacy from the curious bystanders and news hounds that would be wondering why the Chief Enforcer and Deputy Mayor were meeting privately like this.

"Glad it's such a nice day," he said, by way of greeting, his voice low as he reached her side and took a seat next to her.

"Yes it is and thank you for getting me out of the office to enjoy it," she said with a smile. "So what did you need to see me about, Ulysses that required such secrecy?"

"Remember those odd visitors we had about two years ago ... called themselves the Loonatics?"

She blinked in surprise at the mention of their alien visitors but nodded her head slowly. "Yes, I remember. Kinda hard to forget them."

Feral rolled his eyes. "They were that. Anyway, when we finished up our training session in Jake's fancy danger room the other day, Chance happened to drop the fact the Loonatics mentioned they had a far superior method of training. Their system, invented by Tech, allows them to actually experience what it's like to fight crime in any kind of situation and conditions but in a totally protected environment," he explained.

She blinked at him in confusion. "What kind of system could possibly do all that? And it starting to sound as if it's cost would be astronomical."

Feral sighed. "Well there's the rub...it will definitely be extremely costly. It's main components are: a mega-sized computer, a football-sized facility to act as the training chamber, which means it will have to be in a heavily fortified building with high tech security, and, finally, a power plant of its own to run it."

Callie gaped at him. "How the heck did they manage to afford something like that?"

Feral snorted. "According to Chance, the Loonatics were completely supported and funded by their own government. That chamber was in the basement of their very own ten story headquarters."

Shaking her head in disbelief, Callie said, "Wow! Lucky them but you know already nothing like that can possibly be set up here on our ridiculously, minuscule budget. And just why would this system need such a huge facility and require so much power?"

"Amazingly enough all that supports an incredibly advanced holographic computer system."

"A what?"

"You do know what holograms are, right?"

"Uhm...yes...I remember the museum having some holographic displays..." she admitted, hesitantly.

"It's the same principle except on a much, much larger scale," Feral told her. "According to Jake, the software is so advanced that anyone within it's field thinks they are in the real world, fighting real enemies."

Looking more animated than she had seen him lately, she had to smile at the image that flashed in her mind of a kitten with a new toy, as he excitedly explained what the new system could do.

"What's really cool about it, is it can be programmed for any situation you can possibly think of, from urban crime to omega battle scenarios. And what makes it perfect is no fatalities. Being able to train under those conditions would give my Enforcers real paws on experience and eliminate most of the errors made in the field that kill so many besides cut training time in half."

"It sounds like pure science fiction," Callie said, her brow furrowed with skepticism.

"Well for us it is but not for the Loonatics who are most definitely far more advanced technologically than us. And we are most fortunate they are also very generous. They graciously left the designs and copy of the software. Apparently, Tech and Jake got on very well as they fixed the Loonatic's space ship so felt confident that Jake would have no problem understanding such a futuristic system and be able to set it up, maintain it and utilize it."

Callie was totally floored. "Wow! We finally get a break and all because of a weird group of friendly aliens."

Feral was grinning from ear to ear. "Yeah, isn't great! Oh, and we also have to fund the building of a second, much smaller facility too, don't forget."

"Ahh, yes, the second one being for our guys, huh?" Callie murmured, not expecting an answer and very elated by this great news. Her mind embracing what all this would mean to the city's defenses. However, there was still one major obstacle which she'd already mentioned...funding.

"So how did you expect us to fund it?" She asked.

"That's what I hoped meeting you would accomplish. I figured we could put our heads and contacts together to come up with a plan. I'd like to get moving on this as fast as possible."

"What's the rush?" She asked, frowning. Something on this scale would take time no matter how fast he wanted it.

"I don't know what's going on with this new wave of crime but I have a bad feeling it could be worse than anything Dark Kat or Viper ever did to us," Feral responded, his expression grim.

"You told me yourself that you had very few facts on this odd crime wave so why are you so certain this is a harbinger of something more threatening to the city?" She was surprised he was this tense about it. After all, it wasn't up to omega level that she could see.

Feral sighed and rubbed his neck, his expression unhappy and uncomfortable. "That's what has me unnerved...I don't have any real hard facts to back my suspicions. All I can tell you for certain is, I've been plagued by an unsettling premonition of danger that's been haunting my sleep for weeks now. You know I don't believe in such things but I simply can't shake it off or ignore it."

Her eyes widened in shocked surprise. She knew very well how he felt about magic, supernatural, and paranormal things, so to hear him confess to having such an unexplainable phenomenon happening to him sent a shiver of fear racing up her spine.

"Uh, for you to say something like that makes me truly uneasy, Ulysses. Perhaps it has something to do with your newly bonded status?"

He grimaced. "Oh please, I'm already feeling weird enough about this new problem without adding that too. However, I concede that, since little is known about soul bonding, you're not right about that. Honestly, I'd prefer not to have such things happen to me. I have enough on my plate without this sort of thing upsetting my equilibrium."

"You shouldn't think of it that way. It only makes you a better Commander as you now have a sort of built-in warning system."

"Oh sure, and what exactly am I preparing for?" He asked, exasperated. She shrugged. "See, that's why I don't like it. A nebulous feeling of danger just leaves me jumpy rather than giving me something solid to focus on."

"But you are doing something with the warning...trying to make your Enforcers better fighters so they can defend themselves and perhaps win against whatever it is you're sensing," she soothed, trying to make it more acceptable for him.

Feral rolled his eyes but had to smile at her logic. "Okay, you got me there and you're right...partly. It wasn't that which made me think of this but Chance's mention of it. I'm not certain if even that will help against whatever it is I'm feeling but at least it's doing something constructive. That's why getting the funding for this project is so important. I need my troops trained and ready for whatever is preparing to hit us next."

Callie smiled and shook her head. His mention of Chance made her realize just how things

between them had changed dramatically since he had become mated and she had become a lover to the SWAT Kats. She would have never dreamed of having this kind of open and honest conversation with the old Feral she'd thought she'd known.

But the evidence was incontrovertible, as here they were bantering like old friends and discussing serious issues without snarling at each other. There was sincere trust between them now that hadn't been there before. What a difference her life had become of late. Sighing mentally, she shoved her musings aside and gave some serious thought to their new problem.

"I understand, Ulysses. You feel an urgency of time passing by so I'll heed your instincts and we'll move on this as fast as possible. And, you know what? I believe I do know someone who might be willing to stick their neck and funds out for something this wild and different, perhaps two someone's."

Feral perked up. "Oh...who are you thinking?"

"Believe it or not, Mr. Young." Feral gaped at her. She smirked and continued her reasoning so he wouldn't think her crazy. "Yes, despite the deals that keep falling through for him here, he hasn't stopped visiting and investing. And the reason I think he's doing that is he's fascinated by all the weirdness of our city. I think he actually gets some kind of vicarious thrill seeing and sometimes being a part of it otherwise, why the heck would he keep coming back? So, my thinking is, this just might be up his alley."

"Isn't that reaching a bit? I will admit that I can't think why he keeps coming back but really...thinking he's some kind of thrill seeker seems far fetched. Anyway, I've only heard of him being wrapped up in building golf courses, or buying buildings. Personally, I thought him stupid." Feral shook his head, skepticism glinting in his eyes.

"No, he's actually a very smart and canny business Kat and his portfolio is filled with his successes making him one of the wealthiest Kats in the world. But it's his hobby that makes me think he'll be interested in funding our project. He loves to invest in quirky ideas and inventions and because of that, he's been responsible for funding many of the incredible new advances that have come on the market of late. The Loonatics system would be right up his alley, I'm certain."

"Wow! Sounds like he's perfect alright." Feral was totally blown away and pleased to have learned of this interesting side to the Siamese investor. Their chances of seeing this project be built had just gone up. "That's one investor, so who's the other one you were thinking of?"

Knowing how the tom would react, Callie couldn't resist smirking in amusement as she announced, "Professor Hackle."

Feral stared blankly at her before exploding in disbelief. "What? That crazy inventor is only interested in his robots and is a pacifist to boot. Why would he even consider helping us?"

"Are you kidding? You knew he worked for Pumadyne as a weapon's designer, right?" Feral nodded. "And you also know why he left."

"Yeah, he hates war and anything to do with it which is why I don't think he'll help here as fighting crime is a war of kind only urban."

"Yes, you're right however, there is a basic difference between the two. The kind of war he was upset about were the senseless ones that killed millions for the sake of power. If we word this right, he'll realize this war is meant to keep people, both criminals and the innocent, safe from each other. The killing and destruction going on now would end. We have to get him to see it that way."

"Good luck with that, then," Feral said, still skeptical. "But why do you feel he'd be a good investor? We are talking a lot of money here."

"Are you kidding? He's worth billions. He might not build weapons now but he does still design and invent. His portfolio shows he's worth over eight billion." Feral's jaw dropped. She smiled and continued. "He's sold many of his more benign inventions all over the world and he's dabbled a bit in the stock market as well as invested in projects he feels has or will further the best interests of Kat kind. That's how he's so wealthy and how he's able to afford that lab complex of his and still indulge in his passion to make robots to help Kat kind."

"I hadn't really thought about how he was able to afford that place of his though I was aware he had to have had some kind of influx of money to be able to build robots and make that new stuff for us. That actually makes me realize it might not be so difficult to convince him after all."

"Why and what stuff is he making for you? This is the first I've heard of it."

"Oh...I thought Jake told you ... Uhm, well, apparently, he approached Jake as Razor and told him he was tired of seeing the constant violence and the loss of so many Enforcers that he decided to build us some new choppers, a few tanks, and some new weapons."

"What? When did he do this?" Callie asked, surprised.

"I only learned about it just before you got us into therapy."

Her eyebrows rose. "That's over three months ago...have you gotten what he built you?"

"Oh yes! We got all of it last month and we've been testing it. Some of it was used today and it did help in today's mess."

Callie shook her head. "I'm not happy to have not known about this." Feral winced and looked uncomfortable. She sighed and shrugged it off. At least she knew this would make her plea for funds easier. Feral was right about that.

"I'm very glad for you but please be sure to send me the report on exactly what he provided you, okay?" Feral nodded, sheepishly. He should have done it in the first place but had forgotten in the thrill of having new equipment at last.

"Okay, so you're right, it might not be that difficult to convince him. So I need to write up a proposal package for both. You want to handle one of them?"

"No thanks! That's your talent, Callie, not mine. But, I'll be happy to do the search for the building we need and find the contractors to do the job the moment you secure the funds. How's that?"

She rolled her eyes in amusement. "Oh sure, I shmooze while you do the easier work." He grinned toothily at her, not insulted at all.

"Excellent division of labor it sounds to me," He said innocently.

She laughed. "Yeah, you're right. So, what I need from you to sell this thing to them is the cost figures, the proposed building site, the location, who has ultimate ownership over this new system, whose responsibility it will be to run and monitor it...etc."

"That last part would be the Enforcer's, of course. You'll have to give me time on the building and contractor while the rest you need belongs to Jake. Since he was given this by an alien, I believe he has free and clear ownership. But you'll probably have to run that by a lawyer. The good news is, Jake will finally be recognized for the brilliant Kat he is. It also helps he's the only one who actually understands the system."

"Huh? I thought everyone knew how smart he was?"

"We knew he was intelligent when he was in the Enforcer but no one was aware that he was a

genius at designing and building weapons. Apparently, before he became an Enforcer, he tried to get into Pumadyne and someone stole his entry inventions then they blackballed him from the industry. I tried to find out what was going on when he joined the Enforcers but was blocked by bureaucratic red tape and politics."

"That's so wrong! Too bad it was too long ago to get such an injustice corrected." Callie was indignant that such a thing had been done to her lover.

"I know, I felt the same way, so to get even, the day after I mated with Chance, I suggested Jake sell his ideas as Razor. He was shocked he hadn't thought of that himself. He told me there was a market for his inventions on line with people begging him to sell his stuff so he doesn't have to look far for buyers. Come to think of it, I hadn't heard what he's done about that since I mentioned it...hmm...guess I need to ask Chance."

"Well I'm certainly going to ask when I see him next. I think it's great you thought of that. He deserves being recognized for what he's worth at last and he'll get it not only with his inventions but this fantastic training system. Wouldn't be surprised if they name it after him...his true name not his call sign... in this case. However, he does need to get it patented under the finder's rule so it will be restricted to him alone," Callie said thoughtfully.

"Knowing him, he's most likely has already done that, but we need to check to be sure. However, knowing how good he's at security, no one will be able to steal that program from him so it will truly be one of a kind and protected." Feral was very certain of that. "So, when you get the information you need for the proposals from your lover, be sure I get a copy of it as well, please."

"Oh, certainly," She said, making a mental note on it. "By the way, if Jake retains ownership of this new training system, won't that compromise things security-wise for you since he's a disgraced Enforcer?"

"You'd be right except I am already working to reinstate them both back into the Enforcers. They will be assigned directly under me and be known as my special ops agents for particularly sensitive problems. This will give them the freedom to do other things, like working on the project. I'm also going to restore Chance's pilot's license as I know Jake will want him to test pilot any new jets he might invent in the future as well as any emergency flying missions I might send him on." Feral smiled broadly, pleased by his solution to get the SWAT Kats working on the right side of the law again.

"However, my older Enforcers, won't be happy to see the two back, so to keep the peace, they will remain running the salvage yard when they are not working on the project or on a mission. This will allow them to have access to their hangar and parts for the Turbokats too."

"I like that idea. They deserve to have their reputations returned to them," Callie said, a pleased smile on her face.

"An added bonus is they will have their salary and rank restored so they can afford to do what they want to again and most likely close the garage giving them more free time. And, I have no doubt, with his increased income from his inventions, Jake will pay their debt off quickly, then chose to find a nicer place to live since Chance already has one himself. After all, I don't require them to live at the salvage yard just work there. "

"That would be nice or he could simply move in with me," she smirked.

"There's that," He grinned back. "Anyway, the main reason I wanted to do this is was since all the big hitters are mostly gone now, they may not be needed as much as the SWAT Kats so I felt they needed something to replace that void in their lives. Being in the Enforcers again will ease them into the mainstream of rank and file and allow their fellow Enforcer to get used to them being there so when they are eventually unmasked, they'll have an easier time being accepted into the fold again. However, I haven't finished my arrangements yet so please say nothing about it."

"I won't give it away, promise," She said, pleased by what he planned to do. "Oh, Ulysses, thank you for doing this. It's a wonderful idea and will do a lot to boost their spirits though I think it could put a bit more strain on having two identities."

"Yeah, there is that but having to run the garage and be vigilantes was already exhausting them. This won't be any different really except they will once more have a support system around them."

"That's certainly true and one of the main reasons I worry about them so much now. So, you plan on making them some kind of secret agents within the Enforcers then?"

"That's the idea. They've technically functioned as such for many years, now they'll just be legit though no one will know that except you and me."

"Actually, I think it will be more dangerous, but like you said, they'll have more of a support system in place than they do now. I know I can't get Jake to quit the hero business any less than you can with Chance so this is better than what they do presently. Alright, enough of that and it's getting late and I have to get back. You have your job and I have mine to do. Now we have to hope we can get this pulled together and accomplished fairly quickly," She said, all business again.

"I have a couple of possibilities to tap, already, so I wish us both luck in this endeavor." Feral rose from his seat, preparing to leave, pleased by the success of the meeting.

"You know, Ulysses, it's a shame we couldn't have collaborated this way years before. It would have saved us so many headaches and tension between us," Callie said wistfully as she rose to.

Feral just shrugged his shoulders. "Then we wouldn't be who we are now, Callie...seasoned by adversity." He smirked, tipped his head at her then left the gazebo ahead of her.

She shook her head and snorted but realized he was right. She waited about ten minutes before leaving herself so no one saw her following the Commander.

As she walked back to her car, her mind was working furiously on everything she needed to do when she got back to her desk. First she had to clear her backlog of usual work then, tonight at home, she would begin work on the funding proposals. At the office there was always the constant interruptions as well as higher risks to security.

Hmm, perhaps I better have Jake put his little toys around my home as well, she mused. She made a note to ask him to do that but right now, she felt her place was fairly secure right now. No one was watching that closely yet. At least, she hoped not.

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Chapter 25: Difficult Decisions by ulyferal  
Author's Notes:

**Major UPDATE, Feb 2012: Major plot errors needed correcting in all the last chapters done ( 24-27). Please reread.**

That evening, Callie wasted no time in getting all the info she needed from her lover who was surprised and pleased by her and Feral's plans.

"Wow! That's awesome. I never knew he was even thinking about doing this ... it's just incredible. I mean getting a chance to build something like that and run it too ... I'm just blown away," Jake exclaimed, shaking his head in wonder.

Callie leaned close and kissed him soundly. "You deserve it love. After what Ulysses told me

about what had happened to you so long ago, it's only fair you get your own back." She'd not told him that Feral had also planned on reinstating both him and Chance in the Enforcers. That was his surprise to spring on them but she was glad to pass on this bit of happiness to Jake at least.

"Yeah, it really kicks ass and I'm already benefitting from his other suggestion about selling my inventions. I've made a tidy sum that allows Chance and I more personal freedom. Oh, and just so you know, we are closing the garage by the end of the week. We don't need to waste time working in it any longer and, in just a few months, I'll have our debt to the Enforcers paid off," He said with pride, pleased at the progress he'd made in making them financially free.

"That's wonderful to hear, love, except for closing the garage. Who will work on my car then?"

He chuckled and gave her a peck on the cheek. "I will, of course. I'll be sure to keep it in tip top condition, promise."

"I'll hold you to it," she laughed back. "By the way, Ulysses also told me that you and Professor Hackle had collaborated on building new equipment and weapons for his Enforcers. I must say, the Professor has certainly unbent from his principles quite a bit of late."

"Not really. He just came to realize that more Kats would die for no good reason and the city would never have peace if the Enforcers weren't strong enough to do the job they were tasked to do. He objected more about his weapons being used for war but this is for crime fighting and killing isn't really supposed to be part of that when it can be helped. That sort of eased his views on violence enough to not feel guilty about helping. And he realized it certainly wasn't the Enforcers fault they've been saddled with outdated equipment. He felt that was unfair and cost too many Enforcer lives for no good reason except for Manx's and the city council's penny pinching. So he contacted me and asked if I'd be willing to help him develop and build what the Enforcers needed," Jake explained.

"Even if Chance hadn't mated with Feral, I still would have done it since I didn't like it when I was in the Enforcers either. Anyway, we came up with AI assisted jet, chopper, and tank. We've handed those over already and a few of the new weapons. I'm working on some other stuff myself that I'll be giving Feral later. I'm really glad Hackle and I got it done when we did when that strange crime wave hit. They helped in a big way since there was no way Chance and I could be everywhere. The new equipment ensured fewer lives were lost and less property damage occurred."

"So I heard and I'm well pleased with the results. And when the new training simulator is up and running, Ulysses' Enforcers should be able to begin to handle this new criminal element with greater effectiveness since it looks like this is only the start of something nasty."

Jake expression took on a look of worry mixed with anger. "Chance and I were just talking about that crime spree. It's really a bitch that we get the omegas under control or gone only to be replaced with the more lower level criminals. We both feel this new crime wave might be connected in some way to one of the three mob bosses but which one it is and what their motive might be, we have no clue."

"I think I might have a possible line on that...I find it a little coincidental the crime spree occurred just when rumors of a dark horse candidate running against Mayor Manx in the next election in October has been whispered about at city hall, don't you?" Callie asked.

"What? This is the first I've heard of something like that," Jake exclaimed.

She sighed, turning her head to look him in the eyes. "My small circle of confidants have told me there's been an unusual amount of back door conversations going on about replacing Mayor Manx with new blood. Also, I've noticed an increased scrutiny of me by spies from a few members of the city council that would be happy to see me replaced."



"Does sound like dirty politics and something a mob boss would be very interested in, if not the actual instigator of it. Does Feral know about this?" Jake asked, seeing the implications of such a scenario on the city's fragile peace.

Looking chagrined, Callie sighed and shook her head. "I forgot to mention it to him during our meeting today in the park. It only just occurs to me that despite his and I's efforts at secrecy, I may be under deeper scrutiny than I first thought. I know you've done a good job securing my office, but it's still not safe to discuss such sensitive subjects there. And I'm not sure my apartment is safe from spying either," She said, worriedly. "From now on Feral and I are going to have to be extremely circumspect about our meetings. Though it's not unusual for him to see me, suspicions would be raised if he came around too often, especially when the city seems more at peace than before."

"Hmm, for longer discussions, I strongly recommend you meet at their home. For shorter meetings during your work day, the park is still a viable place with the hangar at the yard as secondary," Jake said, thoughtfully. "As for your apartment, that will be my number one priority so you can safely work at home. I'll also insure there's layers of firewalls on your personal computer but make sure you don't save your work on there...use a disk instead."

She nodded, agreeing with most of his suggestions. "I don't think the hangar would be possible for either of us as a meeting place but we do need to find a safer one somewhere. I'll bounce it off Feral and see what he might have that will work."

"Good enough. With the garage closed and Chance no longer living there, I may be hunting new quarters for myself. Without having to work on cars, I can spend more time inventing and building in the hangar plus spending more time with you," he said, smirking. She blushed. "Anyway, with us not tied down at the garage, we could do some snooping of our own on the mob bosses to see which one is behind this new crime wave and possible election fixing," He added, in a more serious tone of voice.

Shaking his head, he scowled angrily. "Though these gang attacks aren't as ruinous as Dark Kat, Dr. Viper, or the other omegas would be, their goal to disrupt the election and push their own corrupt selection onto the people will have the same effect."

"And they are only just getting started. By the time the election arrives, we may see a serious assault being launched against the city for the purpose of making Manx and Feral look really bad so that whoever this supposed dark horse is can ride in and take over in the ballot box without half trying," she agreed, a yawn catching her by surprise. "Sorry."

"Don't apologize ... it is kind of late. How about I give you a nice massage to relax you and something more to thank you for helping us out, hmm?" Jake rumbled deep in his chest. He stood up and reached down to pull her to her feet, walking them both toward her bedroom.

"Hmm, I like the sound of that," she purred.

"I thought you would."

Jake's massage was heavenly and so was the short but intense bout of love play. Her SWAT Kat lover was just as inventive in the bedroom as he was on his drawing board.

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The next day, Callie was kept busy taking care of the myriad of projects she was in control of as well as doing the work the lazy mayor was supposed to do.

The secret project she and Feral were working on, she kept strictly locked up at home not daring to bring it to work for any reason. Taking Jake's advice, she had him tell Feral through Chance, that they needed to meet and would do so at their home but only after Feral had gotten the rest of

the information they needed. He was to send word back through Jake when that would occur. She would wait until that meeting was over before setting up ones with Hackle and Young.

Before parting from her lover that morning, Jake had made another good suggestion.

"I think I need to drop by your office, pretending to be a building inspector, so I can tweak my security systems again, scan it for any new bugs and any other new devices that might have been added and deactivate them."

"If you feel the need. Thank you. However, don't take out all the bugs. When you find one, show me how to turn it off and on," Callie said.

"Why?"

"So I can spill some deliberately misleading information to keep my enemies off balance."

"Ah, an excellent idea. You're very devious, you know that?" Jake grinned, giving her a hug. "I think after lunch would be a good time to visit, okay?"

"Perfect."

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It was rather like working in a fish bowl, she mused later that morning as she drank her fourth cup of coffee. She had no idea just how many little spy devices were watching her every conversation. There really shouldn't be any at all with Jake's security system in place but one could never tell in the game of surveillance so she was glad he wanted to recheck his system.

As usual, Manx had done the bare minimum of work before leaving with his golf bag for the links. The fool was completely unworried about the election. Certain his minions would work tirelessly to insure he was reelected and that he still had the support of high society... which he didn't.

The arrogant and overly self-confident tom thought his only contribution to his reelection that was needed was the glad-handing of prospective voters and kissing of kittens as well as attending campaign parties. Rumors of a dark horse he ignored as hopeless wishful thinking by malcontents, not taking it seriously at all.

As she'd told Jake, every election year, someone tried to oust Manx without success but those had been honest candidates. This time around, the fact this new candidate was being kept a closely guarded secret, made alarm bells go off within her. And she couldn't figure out how they intended on getting votes when their candidate remained in the shadows.

Even if they somehow managed to remove Manx before the election, she would be Mayor temporarily until the actual elections. So what were they up to? Or were they going to take her out too? A chill ran up her spine. She might be just being overly paranoid but she couldn't shake the idea she might be right.

If she and Feral managed to uncover the plot they suspected was going on, it would mean the possible collapse of the present city government. It would take months to ferret out all the criminals that might be threaded throughout the system then find honest ones to take their place. What a nightmare.

Being an election year, the chaos would be worse as Manx was thrown out of office for allowing such a corrupting influence to sink their claws into the government in the first place and, if she didn't play her cards right, she'd be sent out with him. No, the only solution here was for her to run for office as well and insure she was shown as the one who cleaned up Megakat City.

She'd never wanted the spotlight, but she couldn't leave the city in the lurch when the fallout

happened.

Her only problem was she had only a small circle of trusted people on her side. She had to drum up a much larger support base and investors quick if she was to win. Her head began to throb from the immensity of the task before her. Those trusted few were already trying hard to keep abreast of all the whisperings going on behind her back and relaying it to her to add to the ammunition she was collecting. She had no doubt many secret meetings were going on and more would happen the closer it got to October.

It was becoming painfully obvious that whoever was masterminding this knew who her spies were and were successfully keeping them in the dark because her people hadn't been able to find out any hard facts about this dark horse.

What was in her favor were two things: one, no one would be prepared for her to throw her hat into the ring, and two, the latest polls had clearly demonstrated how high the number of dissatisfied Katizens there were out there that absolutely loathed Manx's performance as mayor these last four years. They made it clear they were tired of him and felt his performance was lackluster at best of late. If they only knew how little he truly did for them, they'd be furious, she thought.

Well if she was truly serious about running for mayor, her platform was already decided ...Clean Up Megakat City Government.

First, she needed to demonstrate her new working relationship with Feral by announcing their joint efforts at halting the new crime wave with the building and opening of the new training system for the Enforcers with the plus factor of not having to use city funds to do it with. Secondly, cleaning out all the criminals she was almost certain had taken over the government. Third, demonstrating how more efficient and effective the Enforcers were with the new training, new equipment, and new weapons at their disposal. And, fourth, promising Commander Feral would remain as Chief Enforcer which many in the public sector seemed to want.

To make it all work, she needed a strong deputy mayor, campaign manager, and above all, a personal assistant. The last was always denied her by the Mayor and city council who felt they couldn't fund the position. Well phooey on that! If she had to pay an assistant from her own pocket, she'd do it. Enough of this trying to handle it all on her own. She knew her limitations.

Sighing, she made a note to herself to speak with the three males in her life and ask them what they thought of her running. Her thoughts were interrupted by the appearance of her lover. He nodded at her, but didn't approach, putting a finger to his mouth to order her silent as he stood in the doorway and waved a device around the room.

Frowning, he finally stepped into her office, his device pointing to the left corner just inside and up toward the ceiling. He leaped with ease and silence to land on top of a filing cabinet beneath the area he was focused on.

She watched as he reached up and disengaged something she could barely make out.

With it firmly in his fingers, Jake leaped to the floor. Still without speaking, he laid the item in his fingers on top of Callie's desk then went to the window where a huge green plant grew out of a large red pot. Fishing around, he came up with yet another tiny device. He scanned around the office one more time before relaxing. He picked up the other device on the desk and compared it to the one from the plant.

He studied them for a long moment then calmly crushed one of them and did something to the other. Still not saying anything, he went to the door and closed it. The pass through door to the Mayor's office was already shut. He returned to her desk and sighed.

"Okay, only two new ones in here and they've not found mine. Whoever they are, they're not on

my level. They only placed two devices so they must feel confident that you're not important enough to monitor heavily," Jake said soberly.

"So that confirms I'm under surveillance but am not considered a real threat to their plans...yet," she summarized. "That's actually a good thing but we don't know when that could all change." She went and sat, heavily into her chair. She wasn't about to tell Jake yet her plans, wanting to wait until all of them were together.

"Afraid so, love. Look, I'll slip in here tonight and tighten my security. I'll have some that's damn near impossible to find and others that will clearly show you're under surveillance."

She frowned at him in confusion. "Why would you want to do that?"

He grinned wolfishly. "Because it will keep them guessing and wondering who else is trying to muscle in on their action. Keeps them occupied and less attention on you...at least that's my hope."

"Oh, good idea."

"I'll give you a detector that will let you know if you have any new devices around. Let me know and I'll deal with them. Here let me show you how to turn this little one on and off before I put it back in the corner..." He came closer and showed her the tiny switch. She nodded her understanding and he moved away and climbed the file cabinet again to place the bug back in place.

"What about the one you crushed?" She asked, concern.

"I'm hoping they expect someone would find that one easily enough so they won't care...I certainly wouldn't." He jumped down and came back to stand near her desk again. "Anyway, I suggest you get into the habit of using the detector I give you, every single time you leave your office for more than thirty minutes, okay?"

She nodded grimly. "Thank you, love. Makes me glad I've got you on my side. I've been running through my mind who might be the criminal replacements within our staff and other positions of importance and I have a few names for Ulysses to check but I know I've probably not scratched the surface of how many there are so the ones we don't find will continue to do their master's bidding to make sure their dark horse is elected."

Jake eyes went from warm to very cold. She shivered but didn't feel sorry for anyone her lover ran to ground. "We'll just have to weed them out one by one, Callie. Chance and I will do some private digging of our own now that we have time. On my way out, I'll sweep your car for devices but I want you to bring it by the garage so I can put a few security touches of my own on it. Your apartment will get done today as well."

She nodded, rose to her feet and went to him to be hugged and kissed.

"We'll keep you safe, love, promise," He murmured in her ear.

She pushed him back a little so she could look him in the face. "Don't forget, Jake, you've been training me to protect myself. I think it's time I go through the danger room, don't you?"

Jake sighed but agreed, reluctantly. "Yeah, I think you're ready but be prepared to be really tired." He released her after giving her a final kiss then slipped out of her office.

Returning to her desk, she sat down and leaned back, raising her arms over her head to relieve the tension in her back. She winced a bit, her muscles were still a bit sore from her last run through the obstacle course the past weekend. She wasn't certain she was ready for the danger room but time was obviously running out. Ulysses was already proficient at the danger room and

could keep up with his mate easily when they went through it every weekend.

Staring at the ceiling she mused, what a world changing year this has been for us all. Feral mating Chance and I and Jake being lovers ...who would have thought it, not her that's for sure. And Manx totally oblivious to it all especially the new friendly understanding between city hall and the Enforcers and the easing of tensions between them and the SWAT Kats. What an ass!

Lowering her arms, she smiled a little. Hope we can keep this ball of good luck rolling...we soo need it to keep ahead of the storm coming at us.

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Chapter 26: Secret Meetings and Plans by ulyferal

Two weeks passed before Feral contacted her for a meet at his home. She sighed in relief when her lover called her by their comm unit to pass the message. She'd been on pins and needles waiting to talk with them about her intentions to run for Mayor. Continuing to keep it a secret from Jake had been really difficult as she wanted to tell someone but didn't dare. Too much was at stake.

Before getting the call, she continued to work as if everything was normal and didn't let on she knew anything was amiss, playing the semi-dumb blonde some people thought she was. And regularly, without fail, she checked for bugs whenever she left her office for more than fifteen minutes.

It wasn't surprising to her to find at least two to three of the things a day. She destroyed the most obvious ones and left the more hidden ones alone, not bothering to shut them off as she had decided to never deal with sensitive information in her office at all, choosing to go into the mayor's little used conference room instead.

The day to day work must be boring them to tears, she smirked to herself.

Now that things were moving again, she couldn't wait to get leave work. So after tossing the last report needing typing into her secretary's basket, she hurried out and drove home to change. Taking a different car, specifically left for her to use to go to Feral's home and parked only three slots from her own, she was soon on the road.

The traffic was heavy with commuters on this late Friday, trying to get home themselves to get a jump on the weekend, so the trip took longer than she liked, especially since she had to use back roads to hide her destination from watchers. Finally, she arrived at the hidden home of Feral and Furlong. She pulled up beside Feral's hummer and Chance's new half-ton pickup truck in their super size garage, in a space left for her. At the front was parked Jake's cyclotron indicating he was here ahead of her. The door that had silently opened upon her arrival now quietly closed, shutting her in.

She stepped out of the little compact she'd driven and walked toward the door leading inside. It opened before she reached it.

"Hi love," Jake said warmly, wrapping an arm around her waist and taking her briefcase from her as he led her into the house. She hugged him back and smiled.

As always, as she stepped over the threshold, she felt like she'd come home. It just felt so comfy and peaceful here. She'd fallen in love with their home and envied the pair the treasure they'd found. Perhaps she'd be lucky enough to find one similar to this in the same area when she was ready to leave the city behind.

Feral came out of the kitchen carrying a tray with hot sandwiches, Chance following behind carrying another tray with filled glasses of milk.

As Jake escorted her into the warm and inviting living room she stared around at all the lovely touches the two males had brought to the space. The furniture was comfortable and in earth tones, the walls held beautiful framed images of peaceful scenes of nature, large potted plants dotted the area, wrought iron floor lamps gave the space an ambient glow and the finishing touch, was a huge fireplace facing the couch set up with a flat screen TV above the mantle.

That made her smirk in amusement. Typical, she thought. Males and their toys. Walking around the beautiful cherry wood coffee table, she and Jake sat down on the over stuffed love seat.

After setting down their trays next to a bowl of chips and stack of paper plates on the coffee table, Chance and Feral sat across from her on a six foot couch that had thick dark blue throw pillows at each end. The tabby took up a relaxed lounging position, leaning close to his mate so their hips touched.

"I didn't think you'd had time to get a bite so we whipped up this quick supper," Feral explained with a smile then picked up a paper plate and began serving himself. He dipped a paw into the chip bowl to drop some on his plate, grabbed up a glass and sat back.

"For two males, you two are soo domestic," She laughed, serving herself, Jake following suit.

"I consider that a compliment," Chance chuckled, ridiculously pleased with her comment. He dropped two sandwiches on his plate and a pawful of chips, setting it down before grabbing a milk then settled back against the cushions.

"So what do you have for me, Ulysses?" She asked snuggling close to Jake before taking a bite of her chicken sandwich which was delicious. Someone knew how to cook around here and she wasn't so sure it was Chance.

"Good news," Feral said immediately, beaming with pleasure. He set his plate down and picked up a folder that lay on the end of the table. He handed it over to her. She quickly wiped her paws on a napkin then leaned forward and took it, opening it in her lap and reading the contents while he briefed her.

"Looks like our luck is holding. An alumni of the Enforcer Academy staff I met when I attended there, retired a few years ago to make his fortune in real estate. When I put out feelers for property and only said it was for a new training facility, he got wind of it and contacted me immediately. I was floored when he offered one of his properties to the Enforcers. He said he had wanted to give back to the place that had been his career and home for so long and this was the perfect opportunity to do that."

"That is a stroke of luck!" Callie exclaimed, thrilled.

"Oh, definitely, and the best part of it all is he's willing to deed it directly to the Enforcer's Financial Department, free and clear. All we'd have to do is keep up the property taxes and insurance," he added, grinning broadly.

"Oh, Ulysses, that's absolutely wonderful!"

"I'm really psyched about this and am happy to announce the deal should be closed by the end of the week then if we get the funding, we'll be able to construct the danger room or as we're calling it now, **The Enforcer Training Module**, within a couple of months. Our lucky streak continued when I was incredibly successful in attracting one of the best contractor's I know to do the job and he's free to start immediately. Considering how many repair and building projects are being done around the city right now, that's nothing short of a miracle." He had a smug look on his face.

He has a right to be proud and that puts us way ahead of schedule, Callie thought, pleased. "I'll say. That means I can now make appointments with our prospective investors on Monday. Things are moving ahead really well. So, where is this building you've lucked into?"

"That's the even better news! It's less than a block from our headquarters with thick brick walls and a strong, cement walled basement to hold the power plant we need. I went and looked it over but I want Jake to take a look at the electrical system because that is going to be the most difficult part to get upgraded."

"I'd be happy to go over it. Oh, and I went to see Professor Hackle about a self sufficient solar powered generator I thought up that should supply the power necessary to run the mega-computer off the grid so no city power will be necessary. He thought it was doable. So if you agree, we'll set about designing the generator so it can be built and installed during the remod of your new building," Jake said, dropping his good news into the conversation.

Feral's eyes widened in pleased surprise. "Solar, huh? And saving on our electric bill at the same time ... that's great news and one more hurdle accomplished toward getting this off the ground."

"And a big plus in eyes of the public as well. Way to go Jake! Anything that doesn't dig into the taxpayer's pockets is a good thing and will make my bid for mayor that much stronger than my opponents," Callie casually dropped her bomb on them.

"What?" Jake gasped. All three simply gaped at her in shocked surprise, nearly choking on their food.

"Are you serious?" Feral finally managed to say.

"You really want to do this, Callie?" Chance asked, nearly the same time.

"Yes, I am. With Manx's ratings dropping rapidly and no one knowing who the dark horse is, the city has to have an honest person willing to take the reins. And I'm the only one qualified. However, I thought I'd discuss it with you three before throwing my name into the ring," Callie said seriously. "And there's one other reason..." she turned to Feral. "Ulysses, when Jake and I discussed the new training simulator a couple of weeks ago, I told him I suspected the dark horse was connected with the crime wave."

Feral frowned. "What makes you think that?"

She explained all the things that were going on at city hall at the moment and how the timing of this crime wave was too coincidental. "Jake has wired my office thoroughly and I'm careful to check for bugs regularly. We've found some so we know I'm under surveillance and I can now tell you the bugs have multiplied."

Jake gave her a concerned look. "You never told me that."

"You have enough to do, my love, and it wouldn't have mattered if you knew. I left all but a few functioning and did all my sensitive business out of the office. I didn't want you to worry and I was waiting for this meeting to give you what I've found or suspect since then," She soothed him. "All the evidence makes me more than certain that something more than a simple race is going on here. I believe the other candidate is nothing more than a Trojan Horse for some mob boss and the increased surveillance on me seems to support the idea that criminals have definitely infiltrated, rather thoroughly, city hall," she finished then waited for their reaction.

Scowling, Feral growled, "You make a very strong case, Callie. I'll put two of my teams on this, cyber and black ops, immediately and see what we can find out. Going with the premise that the crime wave is a political ploy to gain the Katizen's votes, we'll focus our attentions on the crime bosses to find out which of them might be trying to muscle into the Mayor's seat so they can run their illegal operations with the facade of legitimacy. Of course, if they do manage to get their Trojan Horse elected, you, me, and the city prosecutor will certainly be booted out. Hmm...perhaps we should give our possible replacements a more thorough background check

as well ... they certainly have a lot to gain if we're kicked out," Feral mused, thoughtfully. "Also, I'll have to check and see if security background checks have been done and when the last one was completed."

"Oh, now that's a nasty thought!" Callie grimaced. "I'm afraid we'll find out that criminals have infiltrated every position within our government and if they have, it's our fault. We've been so focused on the omegas we failed to notice the smaller fry sneaking their way into important government seats right under our noses," Callie growled, realizing this could be bigger than she first imagined.

Shaking his head in disgust, Feral growled angrily, "Kat's alive! You're right! Background checks could have been neglected. I'll have to look into it ASAP. If that's where the failure began then your scenario may be all too true and we'll have the devil's own finding and weeding out all the criminals that slipped in."

Callie groaned. "That just made me realize that if our suspicions are right, cleaning house will mean finding good people to replace all those open slots. It will be sheer chaos and in an election year no less. What a nightmare!"

"Now let's not get ahead of ourselves, Callie," Jake cautioned. "Though we have ample reason to believe our fears maybe true, getting upset and worried before it's been verified is wasted energy. Let's see what Ulysses finds out then go from there."

"He's right. I'll go in tomorrow and get the search done. With it being a weekend, computers won't be bogged down and we should get our answers very quickly then make a plan of attack on how we'll deal with it and the fall out," Feral said, more calmly. "I'm annoyed that this may have been overlooked as you say because our attentions were on the omega. It makes sense the mob bosses would see this as golden opportunity," he said sourly. "As a first step, give me a list of those you suspect, Callie and I'll add any others we uncover in our computer search tomorrow."

While he'd been talking, Chance had quietly gotten up from his seat and disappeared a moment, returning with a pad and pen, handing them to his mate then reseating himself.

"Thank you, love." Feral began writing notes furiously then looked to Callie attentively when he'd finished. She rattled off a list of important names within the city council as well as some of their assistants and he added that to what he'd already written.

He closed his notebook and set it on the table, a troubled look on his face. "Well this trumped our good luck," he sighed, unhappily. He glanced over at Jake, "I'm glad you're already doing what you can to make Callie safe, Jake. It was a smart, preemptive step toward giving her extra security when she announces her bid for Mayor. I take it you've already made her car impervious to tampering as well?"

"Oh yeah," Jake said, nodding grimly. "And I finished her apartment this afternoon. I can keep a watch on her at the hangar with ease now."

"This just sucks!" Chance suddenly blurted out, his arms crossed over his chest and his expression sour. "We finally get rid of most of the omegas but while we're congratulating ourselves for a job well done, the normal criminals are thumbing their noses at us for being blind to their sneak attack against the heart of the city. We just can't seem to catch a break."

"Well, you didn't want to be out of work did you, buddy?" Jake snorted. "Don't worry, I've been rather busy building weapons never seen before on our world from the plans Tech left me that will help us and the Enforcers rout these fools rather handily," Jake told them, looking quite smug.

"Really? Wow, that's cool. They had some really kick ass stuff," Chance perked up, looking a bit happier about their prospects.



Feral frowned, confused. "Okay, what weapons are you talking about here? Is this beyond what you and Hackle already did for us?"

"Oh, yeah, definitely. Some of it really out of this world," Jake continued, smiling proudly as he listed his new inventions. "Besides the Glu-Gun you already know about and that I've miniaturized to be the size of your laser pistols, there's also this cool special protective suit called a Nano Bionic Armor. It will provide every one of the Enforcers with something far stronger than their present body armor and is designed to withstand a lot of what they will encounter in the field. What's even better about this armor is it's got built in weaponry straight from the Loonatic's world. All of it designed to disable the bad guys without killing them. Even better news, both items are cheap to make and easy to maintain. Make sure you get the schematics on both from me before we part. And, if you can stand more good news, Hackle helped me (with the aid of his robots) to make enough suits and guns to equip your present force with about a 1000 extra for good measure."

Feral's mouth hung open until his mate reached over and closed it. "You'll catch flies, love," Chance said, amused.

"Kat's alive! You're incredible! I can't thank you enough for this," Feral finally managed to say, grinning from ear to ear.

"You are just full of surprises," Callie chuckled, leaning toward Jake, giving him a kiss on the cheek.

"Ahh, you'll make me blush," Jake laughed, embarrassed but proud. "But there is one more thing they gave me. It's a super sensitive and very tiny microbot hearing device. It can be programmed to go anywhere you want, to infiltrate without being detected. The only reason its not being used for Callie or you, is I was having a few problems with its programming but those are fixed and I'm in the process of making them now. I have only four of them at the moment."

"Wow! Those could revolutionize the way we spy on criminals. The only catch is getting it approved so it will be allowed in court but beyond that it's applications are phenomenal," Feral breathed, amazed and pleased.

"It also will be a nightmare," Callie warned. They stared at her in surprise. "Oh, don't get me wrong, it will save lives, catch criminals and such but it will also create a privacy issue that will have the public up in arms. They won't like knowing they can be spied on so easily. And can you imagine how much the spy business would flourish if that thing ever go into their paws?"

Jake's shoulders slumped in chagrin. "I never really thought that far yet..."

"But I know you would have love, however, I needed to remind everyone of the danger. That doesn't mean I don't advocate their use, just wanted you to realize its possible threat as well and that they don't get into too many paws," Callie soothed him, hating to crush his enthusiasm. It was a great idea but it had far more serious consequences than anything else he had done so far.

"Sigh...she's right. We'll have to keep that particular device secret and on a need to know basis. Perhaps it might be a good idea to keep it among ourselves..." Feral said, thoughtfully.

Jake nodded his head. "You're right. It will be like our weapons that I haven't let anyone copy. Good idea, Ulysses."

"Okay, now that's settled, let's get back to the original subject...about me running for mayor..." Callie said.

"You really are serious about this?" Feral asked.

"I never intended to take center seat but, like I said, there's simply no one else to do it. We will need stability, especially after we're forced to clean house. Depending on how many have infiltrated, our government will be a mess for quite a while."

"I know. By the way, I'm going to need funding for the overtime this is going to require," Feral reminded her. this."

Callie sighed and closed her eyes. "Yes, I'll see what I can do." She gave him a wane smile. "I'm afraid of what you'll find out tomorrow."

"Believe me, so am I," Feral muttered, unhappily. Shaking his head, he sighed as well. "Okay, you have my vote. I'm sure beefing up my Enforcers and showing off what we can do against the new crime wave will help your campaign immensely."

"Yes, that's one of my key campaign points that and the training program and cleaning out city hall of corruption."

"With that kind of show and tell, you should be a shoe-in, Callie," Chance said encouragingly.

"My thoughts exactly and thanks for all your support. It's going to be a really bumpy road once I announce my candidacy so I'm glad to have such high powered support behind me. So all I need to do to get this all rolling is to get our investors on our side and funding the project," Callie summed up.

"But don't announce until that's done and we're well on our way to building it, Callie," Feral warned.

Callie nodded. "I know. I also will need a campaign officer and a personal assistant. So until I get those, the funding for the training system, the report on how bad our infiltration problem is, who the dark horse is, and finally, who is pulling the strings behind the crime wave...mum is the word. But I can't hold off too long or I won't have time to run a decent campaign," she reminded him.

"Don't worry, part of that will begin immediately and as soon as the funding is in place, everything will get started just as quickly," Feral assured her. "I don't know about Mr. Young but I'm fairly certain Professor Hackle will jump on board without too much convincing. If we get everything we plan completed, you could very well win by a landslide."

"I'll be adding to the fund raising efforts with my earnings from the sell of my inventions, which isn't chicken feed," Jake jumped in.

"And I'll do my part to see that you stay safe, Callie," Chance said, getting in his own two cents.

"That's wonderful you two," Callie smiled warmly at them.

Silence fell for some minutes as everyone absorbed all the information just discussed. Callie nibbled at her neglected sandwich while Jake munched on some chips with a far away look in his eyes. Chance sighed and grabbed another sandwich and ate some of it, his eyes staring out at the gathering gloom of evening through their large picture window.

Feral suddenly cleared his throat, getting everyone's attention again. "I think now is the time to inform the two of you of something I just finished the paperwork on today."

Chance and Jake eyed him in confusion.

"As of today, you both are reinstated into the Enforcers, with your original rank and pay." The pair gaped at him as he continued. "However, you will not be returning to your former jobs. You will work directly under me and will still be assigned to the salvage yard...on paper. In reality, you'll function as a covert ops team, assigned jobs that are both sensitive and dangerous. But right now

your first job will be to protect Callie. Though I'll have a black ops team investigating the city government and watching for trouble, your only job will be Callie. You're very good at being where you shouldn't be and not being seen and no one will suspect you're her bodyguards."

"That's...that's incredible! You never let on you were going to do something like that!" Chance finally managed to say.

"Are you sure this is a good idea, Feral?" Jake said, not as happy as his partner.

"Yes. I've thought long and hard about this and feel strongly that your talents are being wasted. Your skills as the SWAT Kats will now come in useful in your new jobs. You can still be the vigilantes if you want to but you will now have the support of the Enforcers behind you when you return to the fold. My officers that remember you won't be happy but they'll have to accept it and you. Gradually, as you prove yourselves worthy in their eyes, they should come around.

"You're going to get a lot of complaints and accusations of favoritism, Ulysses. And it won't be a picnic for us either," Jake warned.

"I know and I'm prepared for it. It will fade eventually, Jake. I just want you to have something to fall back on if or when your secret is exposed. I'm looking at a future with you retiring from the Enforcers after a career well done. Is that too much to ask?" Feral focused his concern on Jake, the one least happy about all this.

Chance was blown away. "Wow, you really have thought this all out and I'm totally psyched about getting back into uniform." Turning to his partner, he asked, "Well, what do you think, Jake?"

The red furred tom rubbed his chin, deep in thought then slowly nodded. "It's a shock to me, I won't deny that and, no, it's not too much to ask, Ulysses. If you'd sprung this on me early in our career I would have told you go to hell, but now older and attached, I can see the benefit of returning to the fold, as it were. Okay, you have a deal. We're Enforcers again."

"I almost can't believe it," Chance said, nearly bouncing on his seat with happiness.

"Believe it!" Feral said, kissing his mate soundly. "Oh, and before I forget, I sent a report to you on the damages and what was stolen by that crime spree, Callie. It was far greater than anyone thought it would be and the amount stolen was higher than hoped. That doesn't make us look good right now."

Callie shook her head. "The first salvo of the war and they've gained the upper paw already but we'll win the next one."

"That's the spirit. I'll keep you apprised on what my teams discover as soon as possible," Feral told her.

"Thanks."

"You two are welcome to stay the night as it's late. We do have a guest room and it is the weekend tomorrow," Feral offered.

Callie glanced at Jake who just grinned at her. She blushed but nodded. "I'd like that, thank you."

"Good! Let's clean up and hit the hay," Chance said, getting up and stretching before beginning to collect their dishes.

Jake and Callie got up as well and pitched into helping the mated pair clean up then Jake led Callie to the guest room he used when he stayed over.

As he prepared for bed, Feral's mind was on the task he set himself for tomorrow. His presence would be unexpected but that was an advantage as it would also evade any watchers he might have on him. Discovering such a hole in his security management of the city made him angry at himself. He should have been keeping better tabs on this area. Though Callie had given him only the names of the ones she suspected of criminal ties, he decided it would be wise to do a background check on *everyone* working at city hall rather than just the newbies.

The probe would have to be done very discretely so as not to warn their prey the Enforcers were on to them until they were ready to close the trap on the guilty. To ensure those arrested didn't slip out of their paws from any technicalities, he would enlist the aid of the city prosecutor. The tom was scrupulously honest and unafraid of a fight but Feral didn't envy the guy this nightmare he was about to dump on him. However, if all went well, the tom would be assured of keeping his position under the new regime.

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"Hmm, good morning handsome...why you awake so early?" Chance murmured sleepily when he felt his mate sit up.

"Want to get into the office to set up the ops for Callie, remember?" Feral reminded him, giving the tabby a quick kiss before shoving the covers off and getting out of bed.

"Hmm, yes I remember. Come back soon and we'll make love in the afternoon," his mate sighed, slipping back to sleep.

"Sounds like a song," Feral chuckled then disappeared into the bathroom.

When he came out, dressed casually, he went to the kitchen to get a bite. The house was quiet. Their guests were taking advantage of the wonderful silence of the forest that surrounded them and getting some much rest from the hectic pace of the city. He could hardly blame them and if it weren't for this important task, he'd still be cuddled next to his mate.

Grabbing some coffee and a pre-made egg sandwich they kept for quick breakfasts, he was soon out the door and heading into the city.

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Arriving at Enforcer Headquarters some thirty minutes later, he opted to park in the general population lot to better hide his presence. He also decided to go in one of the side entrances and take a nearby elevator before anyone saw him. On his floor, all was quiet as it wasn't manned during the off hours except for his third in command, Major Simonton.

The lean tom with broad shoulders and deep red, short fur, was reading the evening blotter at the Commander's desk when he heard the door open. He jumped to his feet when he saw who it was.

"Sir! Is anything wrong?"

"Possibly. I won't know until you've look into it for me first. There's been a suspicion raised that a serious oversight has been made by this office," Feral grumbled.

The major's eyes narrowed in concern. "What oversight, sir?"

"I want you to check and see if background checks have been done, going about five years back, on all newly hired and/or elected governmental workers at city hall and get back to me on the results immediately," Feral ordered, not answering the major's question.

Not liking where the request was going, the Major hurriedly obeyed the order, leaving the office

and commandeering the secretary's computer rather than go all the way to his own office. He chewed on a claw as he impatiently waited for the system to boot up. When it did, his fingers flew across the keyboard, retrieving the information requested.

Some thirty minutes later, he returned, face grim and unhappy, his paw holding a single sheet of paper.

While he had been occupied, the Commander had been on the phone summoning the teams he needed then began writing up the orders. He was just finishing when the major burst in.

"Sir, no background checks were done on the one hundred and sixty-four hires. I can't find any reason for it in the records except for the fact the officer responsible for doing them had been retired a year ago but wasn't replaced...no reason was given nor was it even noticed or reported the position hadn't been filled." He handed over the paper.

Feral wasn't happy to hear that which warned him the breach had extended to his own house as well. Glancing over the names, his brows pulled together in a frown. "Just what I what I feared. I need you to dig deeper without setting off an alert into why this happened, ASAP. Tell no one and don't allow anyone to see what you're doing, understood?"

Major Simonton's face was grim as he accepted the new orders. He was already on the same page as the Commander, their security had been breached. "Understood, sir."

"Use my computer as I won't be here much longer and will be going home once I complete one other task. Use my personal cell only to transmit your findings."

"Yes sir!" The major said, waiting for his superior to leave first before setting to work.

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Taking the elevator, Feral went down to the strategy room located in the sub basement where security was tighter. Once he passed through the outer security door then through the inner security door where his ID was checked by a guard always posted there, he went into the conference room.

A small detachment of grim faced toms sat on one side of the conference table. They were dressed in black camos and were armed. Across from them sat a trio of office clad officers with bright inquisitive eyes that clearly wondered what was so important they would be included in what was looking like a mission. They were not normally involved in such things. Each group had been talking quietly to among themselves but ceased when their leader entered.

He eyed them all before speaking. These were the best he had and the most trusted. If they couldn't find what he was looking for it wasn't there to be found.

"There's been a serious breach of security within our ranks. Major Simonton is already tracking down one part of the problem. What was discovered was the failure of background checks being conducted on newly hired/elected government officials/employees at city hall going back four years. The officer in charge had retired but for reason's unknown, had not been replaced." Looks of dismay crossed the group's faces.

Feral pressed on. "This failure could have allowed the infiltration of criminals into the ranks of city government. It is suspected that one or more of the crime bosses may be planning a coup to take the Mayor's seat and have been salting the infrastructure with their own people for years." More gasps greeted that news.

"Your jobs will be to find out if this is true. First, the ops team will be doing the physical spying on our list of suspects, digging into their lives and seeing if there is any connection with any of the mob bosses. Piggy backing your efforts will be the Cyber Squad. You guys will be using the

internet to do your digging and I want you to track any lead you can find to connect the suspects to someone we can pin as the leader of all this. The watch word is secrecy. No one must know you're investigating them nor can any of your co-workers know what you're doing. Ensure you guard your communications and leave no tracks behind you. What I fear is this could be a very large infiltration and it will take time to ferret out all the bad guys. I know it's a lot to lay on you but any larger a group would have been more difficult to hide and still get what we need."

"Don't worry, sir...we'll make like mice. No one will know we're there, I promise you," The captain of the black ops team assured him.

"You can count on us to be invisible and leave no tracks, Commander," The head of the Cyber Squad said, solemnly.

"I know ... that's why you were chosen. This is a real mess facing us so the sooner we find the culprits and take them out the sooner we get our city back. Also, I've made sure we've gotten funding for the overtime." Pleased and relieved looks greeted that but they would have done it anyway, the money just made it easier to give up a lot of their free time for this.

"I want it clearly understood that secrecy must be maintained. Do not pass the information over the computer, radio or phone. One of you will hand carry it to me and no one else so security can remain airtight. Remember, we may have a mole in our midst so everyone is suspect until they are found. The information you give me will be passed to the prosecutor whom I'll be briefing on this, Monday. When you've identified those you suspect of being involved in this mess, collect every shred of evidence you can find...dig deep. We don't want them managing to slip away due to a legal loophole or lack of proper procedure. We want to build an airtight case," He warned.

"I have other news that will impact upon your work. There are two others in our group who will be acting as bodyguards for Ms. Briggs. The two have been reinstated to the Enforcers with their former ranks and are directly under my command. One is my mate, Chance Furlong and the other, his partner Jake Clawson. I trust them implicitly to keep her safe. The reason they are doing guard duty is Ms. Briggs intends to announce her candidacy for Mayor." Surprise and consternation greeted his news. "No one is to know this information...no one...understand?" Heads nodded gravely at him. "We are on a tight time schedule. I need you to find what we need as fast as possible as Ms. Briggs can't hold off announcing her candidacy too long. Any questions?"

"There will be many who will resent the return of two disgraced Enforcers, sir," The leader of his black ops said, carefully.

Showing no sign of annoyance, Feral passed two sheets of paper toward the tom. "I know that very well, captain, but they have proved themselves to my satisfaction and will to the rest of you if you give them a chance. They will not be resuming their former positions. The pair are still a formidable team that have kept in shape and retained their skill levels. Besides which, Ms. Briggs knows and trusts them. It helps that she happens to be dating Clawson which gives him a plausible reason to be by her side. They have already been informed of their reinstatement and accepted their new duties. Their duties under me besides the bodyguard detail will be handling difficult and sensitive missions where stealth is required. What I've given you is the list of suspects and the other your orders. Any other objections?" Feral asked.

"How much time are we talking about here, sir?" The Cyber leader asked.

"No more than a month though we'll see by the end of that time if we have to extend that. Any other questions?"

Heads shook. Though the team looked rather dubious about accepting two disgraced Enforcers back in the fold, they knew better than to question the Commander further on the subject. Also the time constraint was going to be difficult. As for Ms. Briggs running for mayor ... that had been a

pleasant surprise. Many Enforcers didn't care for her behavior toward the Commander (which admittedly *had* changed since the Commander mated) but they hated the mayor more.

"She'll make a perfect mayor, sir. Better than that pompous ass sitting there now," the captain dared to remark. Surprisingly, many of the others there also nodded their heads in agreement.

"I agree but you didn't hear me say that," Feral said with a tight grin. "One last warning, to protect their anonymity as they won't be wearing uniforms, do not speak to or interact with Furlong, Clawson or even Ms. Briggs."

"Understood, sir," The captain responded briskly. The geeks did the same.

"Good. You're dismissed."

The two teams stood and left the room quickly. Feral followed more slowly, running everything through his mind to insure he hadn't missed anything. By the time he quietly left headquarters the same way he'd come in, he was satisfied that he'd covered all avenues at the moment. Now it was time he went home and spent some quality time with his mate.

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Chapter 27: Meeting Possible Investors by ulyferal

After such a sobering Friday evening, the rest of the weekend had been quiet and enjoyable. Feral had returned to tell them what he'd accomplished and now all they could do was wait for results. Callie prayed it wasn't as bad as she feared.

Returning home Sunday evening, she did some laundry, cleaned her apartment then made for bed, alone. Monday found her energized and ready to get a lot done. The first thing she'd done upon entering her office and sitting down was to make an appointment with Professor Hackle, being successful in getting the elderly tom to see her later today. Now all she had to do was clear her morning's work first.

Just before her after lunch appointment, Manx came into her office with a tale of some company wanting to put up a statue honoring him, obviously to curry favor. Puffed up with pleasure, he wanted her to write a speech for the ceremony. It was very hard for her to not roll her eyes in disgust and exasperation.

Sighing mentally, she took notes about the event and promised she would get it done and to him by tomorrow, latest. Satisfied and smiling, his honor took off for the golf course to waste another day on the taxpayer's dime. As his backside vanished through the door, she quickly glanced at her watch and hissed in annoyance.

She quickly called Professor Hackle to apologize for running late, but he cut her off and said it was alright and to come when she was able. Relieved, she hung up the phone, reached into her desk for her purse then grabbed her briefcase from the floor and headed out the door. Convincing Professor Hackle to aid them shouldn't prove too difficult because he was already leaning more toward taking an active part in helping the city.

Reaching her car, she climbed in, clicked her seatbelt and started the engine only to hear it make an alarming pinging noise as it warmed up. Rolling her eyes in annoyance, she shook her head. Not again! What is it with this car? Guess I'll have to make a stop by the garage again. Oh wait! The guys closed the garage last week! Ah well, I'll just have to ask Jake to take a look at it when I see him tonight. Maybe it's time I just traded the old thing in and possibly I could get Jake to go car shopping with me, after all that's what a lover's for isn't it? She smirked in amusement as she pulled out into traffic and was relieved when the pinging stopped.

The drive to the professor's lab allowed her to go over the prospectus in her mind so she wouldn't have to refer to her notes much. She really didn't think she'd have to sell the idea very hard as it

fell into line with what Hackle was already doing for the Enforcers. Just to be certain, she'd given her request a good hard look through and found nothing that should compromise Hackle's pacifistic stance, something she'd never want to do. Though the training system was to make better military fighters of the Enforcers it still wasn't for the purpose of starting a war of any kind but to keep the defenders of the city from dying so easily and finding more effective ways to protect its Katizens.

Her thoughts were interrupted by the sight of the small metal sign coming up on her left that warned of the turn off she must take. Flicking her turn signal on, she swiftly exited the main highway and ended up on a well paved and tree lined roadway that wended itself through a thickly wooded forest, the highway behind her vanishing the deeper in she drove. Reaching the end of the road, she arrived at a ten foot high black wrought iron fence that protected the professor's lab/home on the landward side. On the bay side, there were a line of buoy's, set some fifty feet from the beach below Hackle's place, that warned everyone away.

Jake had warned her that Hackle had an excellent security system which was why no omega or industrial espionage thief ever attempted to rob him. As she pulled up to the security call box, she noted several surveillance cameras mounted in the trees on either side of the gate. The property was also guarded by some of Hackle's robots that patrolled the fence line at regular intervals. No way could anyone sneak up on the old tom. Rolling her window down, she reached out to push the button to activate the speaker.

"Professor Hackle, this is Deputy Mayor Briggs. We had an appointment?"

It took several minutes but soon a familiar voice answered her through the tiny speaker. "Hello, Ms. Briggs. A moment please..."

There was a soft pinging sound which was followed by the gate beginning to roll open. As soon as it was wide enough, Callie drove her car through, not surprised to see in her rear view mirror, the gate quickly reversing direction and closing behind her.

Only a few minutes later, she drove into a small parking circle before a low style ranch home. Stopping her car before the main door, she turned off the engine which gave a loud ping then went quiet except for the soft ticking of the cooling engine. Shaking her head again at the foibles of her sedan, she grabbed her briefcase and climbed out. Before walking up to the door, she paused to look around first.

The parking circle ran up and around a large flower garden, a lawn ran down from either side of the blank front of the home. Basins of flowers grew in twin, red clay pots on either side of the entrance that gave the place a rather homey appearance. She sniffed appreciatively at the lovely fragrances drifting to her nose from all the flowering plants as she walked toward the entry to the house. Oddly enough, there were no windows facing the drive nor any identifying signs or address numbers. The house was done in a deep forest green lap siding with an dark oak-looking door with no handle.

She stared at it in some confusion. How was one to get in? The question answered itself seconds later when the 'wooden' door suddenly slide sideways into its door frame which explained the reason for no handle. As it retracted, she could see it wasn't made of wood at all but thick metal painted cleverly to appear like wood. Standing in the now open doorway was the professor who was smiling warmly at her.

"Nice security system you have there, Professor Hackle," she said admiringly. "And thank you for seeing me on such short notice," she added, extending her paw.

"It serves its purpose very well, Ms. Briggs and I'm pleased to see you again too. Do come in." He shook her paw then stepped back so she could enter.

The living area was tastefully decorated with a micro suede, deep blue couch and loveseat as



well as matching chairs. A white marble topped coffee table with black legs took center position with a vase of fresh tulips displayed and adding a sweet perfume to the air. A large modern gas fireplace was to the left of the sitting area and the floor was covered in a deep cream colored rug. Potted plants dotted the area and beautiful, framed paintings, displaying scenes of the ocean, were hung on the walls.

It was a warm and inviting place but she sensed it saw very few visitors and a quick glance around showed it was sealed off from the rest of the house ... the only doors were the one she'd come in and one off to the left near the fireplace ... yet another layer of security, obviously, she thought. Guess you can't be too careful when you live alone and have soo many valuable inventions.

Hackle lead the way into the sitting area, taking one of the chairs and gesturing to her to choose a seat of her own. The loveseat was closest to him so she sat there and nearly sank into it and disappeared. "Oh, how wonderfully comfortable this is," she commented, setting her briefcase on the table.

"Glad you find it so. Would you like some refreshments?"

"Coffee would be nice."

Nodding his head, he pressed something on his wrist watch and moments later the sealed door she noted, slid silently open and a stick thin robotic figure appeared. It's head little more than an odd stalk with two eyes and a small mouth.

"Please bring the coffee service," Hackle asked of it quietly. The robot said nothing as it turned about and left through the door again, moving on silent servos to do the Professor's bidding.

"Now what did you need to see me about, Ms. Briggs?" He asked, sitting back in his seat and taking a listening attitude.

Lifting her briefcase, Callie set it on the coffee table and pulled out a folder just as the robot returned with a tray. It set this on the table then waited.

"Thank you, you may leave," Hackle told it. Nodding its odd head, it turned and left them alone.

Callie took out a slim report folder from her briefcase and handed it to the professor then began her briefing. Hackle said nothing as he studied the proposal and listened carefully. When she finished, he asked a few pertinent questions then went silent in thought, studying the plans more thoroughly.

The robot had returned and left a tray with a complete coffee service on it before disappearing again. While she waited, she poured herself some coffee, added cream then picked it up and sipped. She almost made a humming sound of pleasure. It was an excellent brand, full and rich, unlike the tarry substance the secretary pool made.

Hackle made a soft humming noise then closed the folder and nodded at her. "This is an excellent system and I'm surprised someone hadn't come up with it on our world. It has a great deal of potential for other things. I'm excited to be a part of this endeavor and am willing to help fund it. My only regret was not having had a chance at meeting the unusual dimensional visitors who gave this to us. I'm sure I would have learned many more things from this Tech fellow."

Callie smiled. "I have no doubt you could have. It's a shame they had to hide out then leave so quickly but at least they were very generous in leaving so much of their designs with us. I would have loved to have talked to them myself as well as thank them for helping to capture nearly all our omegas and make that nearly escape proof cells for them. Too bad it didn't hold them longer than a year," Callie sighed. "Razor told me they were odd but really nice people."

"No matter how good the effort, those omegas, especially Dark Kat, are too smart to keep locked up for long," Hackle sighed too, shaking his head. "However, apparently persistence can win ... I heard a rumor that we finally have fewer omegas at last. Is it true?"

"Yes it is, thanks to Commander Feral and the SWAT Kat's efforts as well as the criminals doing themselves in. It was a great day when Dark Kat finally managed to off himself, Viper is still in jail when last I checked a week ago, the Pastmaster hasn't shown his face for more than a year now, and Hard Drive's surge coat was destroyed and he's in jail, then there's Turmoil but last I heard, she was somewhere far from here. So that leaves the Metallikats. What is their status since their last appearance?"

A morose expression replaced Hackle's pleased one. "They no longer function as their disks had been permanently disrupted by whatever it was Razor used on them."

Secretly, Callie was elated but diplomatically she said, "I'm sorry, Professor, but they had tried to rob a great many wealthy society types at that fund raiser the Mayor put on and killed a squad of Feral's best officers so, really, Razor had no choice but to use the best weapon he had to take them out quickly."

Grimacing with old anger and sorrow, Hackle said, "I'm not condoning what they did, Ms. Briggs, but it's still wrong to kill them that way without a trial. They may not have been flesh and blood but that was their soul that was killed."

"I know, truly I do. But I was there and he really didn't have a choice. You know very well, as you built their bodies, that none of the Enforcer's weapons could bring that pair down without more people and property being damaged or killed and most of the SWAT Kat's weapons weren't as effective either so he developed something that hopefully would end their reign of terror quickly though even he didn't think it would do more than just shut them down for awhile." Callie could understand the old tom's grief, after all, he was a kind soul and didn't like anything to suffer or die if it could be helped but personally, she was just glad they were gone permanently.

Though Hackle knew she was right, it still rankled the way the pair had to die. He still had hopes of rehabilitating them but now that was gone. He pushed his hurt feelings on the subject away, they had no bearing on what Ms. Brigg's was here for. "Yes, I understand but I still cannot help how I feel about it. But that's in the past, this new system is the future. How soon would you need the funds for its construction to begin?"

Callie willingly left the hurtful subject with relief. "As soon as you're able to do it, Professor Hackle. In your prospectus there is a private site code for your use to transfer funds to the account I set up for it. It's very secure... Razor vetted it himself and he has invested in the project as well."

"Perfect. I will take care of it today. Is there anything else I can help you with?"

"No, that was the only thing I came here for. Thank you so much for your support," Callie said briskly then added. "I'm sure Razor would welcome your assistance on this project. I wouldn't dream of keeping you from it as I'm sure you're dying to be a part of something so exciting," She said coyly. He blushed at her accurate assessment of his interest.

"If he wishes me there, I would be very interested," He said, smiling.

"I'll be sure to let him know when I get back to the city. You should hear from him rather quickly as we're anxious to get the project off the ground within the month," She promised then rose to her feet, preparing to leave.

He walked her to the front door where she watched as he uncovered a special touch pad and tapped in a code that opened the door. Smiling warmly, she bid him farewell and went back to her car.

One down and one more to go, she thought happily as she dropped her briefcase on the seat beside her. Her mind on what she had to do on her desk, she started the car and gasped when it made a loud ripping sound before settling down to normal again. She sat there disconcerted, listening for more trouble but when nothing else happened, she cautiously put the car in gear and drove off. Nothing happened.

Okay, definitely need this looked at soon, she thought, annoyed as she drove back through the opening gate then down the road to the highway.

Reaching the city limits then turning onto the boulevard that led to city hall, something she'd said during the briefing made her realize they had a new problem.

Oh no! How do we explain Jake possessing the patent on the system when the Loonatics gave it to his persona Razor? Add to that, no one knows Jake is an inventor as he has no patents in his name...only as Razor. That would raise red flags with Hackle when he meets and talks with Jake. He's no fool and will easily guess who Jake really is and then the rabbit will truly be out of the hat. The same is true of all the ones who will be working on the project with them though I'm sure we could put out a plausible reason for Jake's presence to the construction crew but definitely not with Hackle or any scientists that he recruits for this.

Her heart fell. She had so hoped to restore Jake's reputation as being a brilliant inventor and it wasn't possible as long as he remained behind a mask. She felt like pounding her head against her steering wheel. Keeping their secret was going to be difficult especially in light of Feral reinstating them back into the Enforcers and their new jobs of shadowing her at work as her bodyguards. Now this complication.

Oh, and it gets better...if Jake has to remain as Razor for the project the Enforcers will not be happy to know a SWAT Kat built their new training system and is responsible for teaching them how to use it as well.

"I think a new powwow is necessary. I swear, solve one problem and hundreds more crop up," she muttered irritably as she pulled up to her spot in front of city hall.

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After parting from Callie, Sunday evening, Jake returned to the salvage yard to get some sleep. In the morning as he made breakfast, he ruminated on all the things he needed to do after the project was fully funded and who he wanted on his team to build it.

Having Professor Hackle at his side was a no brainer but who else would be useful? Perhaps Dr. Greenbox? Yeah, the tom had gone rather daft when his project went berserk but that had been a momentary lapse.

He'd dug into the scientist's background and found a deeply moral person who's only interest was in making life easier for Katkind, much like Professor Hackle. Greenbox's only crime was getting too caught up in his corrupted invention. When he came to his senses, he was horrified and remorseful that it had led to so much chaos and damage. Personally, Jake would really like to see the tom reinvent the device that had led to Zed's creation but with protective measures set into it to prevent it from being corrupted again. It was simply too valuable and useful an idea to toss.

At the present time, Greenbox had served his sentence and was struggling to regain his reputation with the scientific community by working at Pumadyne who were the only ones that were willing to trust him. He didn't like working for them but it was the only way he could pay his bills and living expenses.

Perhaps he should ask Professor's Hackle's opinion on pulling Greenbox into their group. Another possible candidate was Dr. Conway. As a biochemist with a secondary in physiology,

he'd be perfect for understanding the body's reaction to the system. They would also need a psychologist and a military training specialist. Feral could supply the later and perhaps Conway could suggest the former. That should round out the team they'd need.

As he got up to put his dish into the sink, he halted as a shocking realization struck him.

Oh crud! None of these guys will recognize me as a scientist or inventor as I haven't made a name for myself as Jake...only as Razor. There is no way they'd go along with me being in charge of something so important without knowing anything about me especially when they find out I was an Enforcer then a garage mechanic. There's no record of me being an accepted inventor anywhere thanks to my being blackballed. Hell, I wouldn't follow such a person why should I expect them to? And they certainly wouldn't accept Chance helping out either. That means they'll have to know our secret or we have to be the SWAT Kats to build it.

But that presents a new problem. No Enforcer worth their badge would want a SWAT Kat building *their* training system.

He slumped in dismay and stared off blankly for a moment. They knew this day might come but perhaps they didn't have to reveal it to everyone just to the scientists directly involved in the project and have Feral make them swear to keep it secret just as the plans/designs for this system will remain top secret.

It might work and still allow them to remain incognito to the world at large. It was worth a try, he sighed then shelved the problem to be dealt with when next he met the others.

Yet another problem to solve, he grumbled, echoing Callie.

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Despite her new concern, Callie was excited about her secret meeting with Mr. Young. Her current run of luck was still with her when she called him Monday and learned he would be coming to Megakat City on personal business on Wednesday and would be alone. Perfect!

She gave him only enough information to entice him to meet with her and he took the bait, suggesting they meet for a late lunch at his favorite restaurant on the bay.

Her meeting with Hackle had been short and sweet so she had time to return to the office to finish up her work day. Dropping her purse in her lower desk drawer and her briefcase on the floor near her feet, she tapped on her computer and began writing the Mayor's speech. She finished it in time to go to the many meetings she had for the afternoon. At the end of the day, she actually managed to be done to go home on time. She wished she could see Jake but they'd decided keeping apart right now would be a good idea with her under so much surveillance right now.

The next two days passed quietly and she had enough work to keep her from getting antsy about the meeting with Mr. Young. Finally, Wednesday arrived and was a typical busy day. But she managed to keep on top of her work and with only thirty minutes to spare for her lunch appointment, she tossed her completed work in her out basket for her secretary, closed out her computer, then grabbed her purse and briefcase and took off for the bay.

Biting her lip nervously, she started her car and again those suspicious noises occurred, a bit louder than before. As long as it didn't shut down completely, she decided to ignore the noise as she had already done so for the past two days, and headed to the restaurant.

Reaching her destination ten minutes later, she lucked out in finding a parking spot near the door which was usually impossible at the popular eatery.

Stepping inside the busy place, she looked around a moment. Before the hostess could ask her where she'd like to sit, Callie caught sight of the older, Siamese tom sitting, studying a menu in a

quiet corner with an excellent view of the bay. "I see my party, thank you," she said to the hostess, moving away.

"Thank you for making time to see me Mr. Young," she said, coming up beside the tom and taking the seat opposite him.

Young smiled brightly and inclined his head. "It is my pleasure, Ms. Briggs. This is one of my favorite places in your city."

"It's mine too. Shall we order then talk?"

"Excellent idea."

The next few minutes were confined to ordering their food then waiting until the waitress had left with their orders before Callie handed over the prospectus to Young. She sat back, drinking her wine and staring out at the sailboats floating by on the water as she waited.

Their food arrived as he finished and set the folder aside. They spent the next half hour enjoying their food and tacitly saying nothing about their reasons for being here, confining their comments to the quality of their meals and other mundane subjects.

When they were enjoying desert and coffee, Mr. Young picked up the folder and wagged it at her.

"This is extremely intriguing if it's real and not merely fantasy."

"Oh it's real alright. Had you, by chance, heard about the odd dimensional super heroes that visited our city about two and a half years ago? The ones that were instrumental in capturing Dr. Viper, Dark Kat and the Pastmaster plus converting a section of our prison to hold them more securely?"

He frowned in thought a moment. "Oh Yes! But I put no credence in the report...wait..." his eyes widened suddenly then fell on the file folder still in his paw. "This was from them?" He exclaimed.

Callie smiled, grateful he had such a rapier mind. "Yes indeed. They were very generous with their technology."

Young sat back and shook his head. "Just as your city is unlucky enough to be the epi-center of so many odd things, Ms. Briggs, you are also uncannily lucky as well. This..." he opened the folder and studied the contents again. "...this is an ingenious idea that could make it's new owner very wealthy many times over if sold to other military and law enforcement agencies. I can also foresee a greater application of this system in other fields like ..sports training, education, medical ... and other dangerous career fields," he murmured thoughtfully.

Callie blinked in surprise. They'd been so focused on the crime fighting aspect of the system, they'd never considered how many other fields could benefit. She was utterly stunned. The empty coffers would fill quickly from those begging for the system and would definitely make her bid for Mayor even stronger. It was mind boggling. "Oh my, none of us involved in this thought past it's initial application. But you're right, everyone could benefit from this project."

"Oh yes indeed, as would anyone so fortunate to be on the ground floor of its discovery. I would be a fool not to be the first in on such a fantastic technological advancement and I'm no fool. The magnitude of this is staggering, Ms. Briggs. It could very well help Kat kind leap decades into the future," he said in muted excitement, eyes flicking around them to insure no one was close and listening.

"What an amazing thought," Callie breathed then got herself back to the business at paw. "So, just to be certain we're on the same page here, you are willing to fund this project?" She had no doubts he would but needed it to be formally spoken between them.

Young sat forward and extended his paw. Smiling, Callie extended hers and they shook firmly. "It most certainly means we have a deal Ms. Briggs." He released her paw then eyed her shrewdly. "Since it is you that is presenting this to me and Mayor Manx has not once been mentioned, do I ascertain this is a private deal between you and I? That you are not speaking for the city?"

She smiled secretively at him then leaned forward. Intrigued, he did the same. "What I'm about to tell you is known to only a few people so far, but I intend to run for mayor."

His eyebrows raised in delighted surprise. "Why that is wonderful news. If I was a Katizen of your fair city I would be casting my vote in your favor but since I am not, allow me to support you in another way. I'd be more than happy to generously contribute to your campaign."

"Why that would be wonderful of you but I wasn't stumping for funds yet, Mr. Young..."

He held up a paw. "Tut, tut Ms. Briggs. You didn't have to. I've always known who held the true reins here and it will be refreshing to deal directly with you," he said smiling broadly.

"Then thank you for your support but I feel it important to warn you that there is some intrigue going on right now. I and my supporters suspect a mob boss has managed to infiltrate our government in preparation of placing a candidate of their own in office." She felt he should be warned what he was getting himself into.

His face grew serious. "Ahh, I see. Thank you for telling me but that only means the funds I will forward to your campaign will be doubly necessary to ensure you win against this dark horse. Your city has suffered much already. It does not deserve to be beaten down by corruption and depravity if this criminal element is allowed to win. Besides being very bad for business all around the world."

Callie shuddered at that dark prediction. "You see our difficulties with a very clear eye, Mr. Young."

He waved that off. "Any shrewd businessman could see this coming easily." He took her paw once more. "Speak no more of this now. I will take it as a given that communication between us must, of necessity, be kept under the strictest security for both our sakes."

"Thank you for your understanding," Callie said humbly. She'd never expected such high powered support and was grateful for it. "On your prospectus is a coded site where you can deposit your contribution to the project. You may tag the campaign contribution with my initials so that my team will know that it is for a different reason so you won't have to deposit again in a different place."

"Excellent. Then I'll bid you good bye until we see each other again. Be very careful, Ms. Briggs. You face many enemies now."

"I have some very special help to protect me," she admitted quietly.

His eyes lit up. "And they wear colorful costumes to, I think, eh?" he chuckled lightly. She smiled but said nothing. "And how does your Chief Enforcer fit into this new government? Doesn't he lose his position when a new incumbent takes over? Also I seem to recall some kind of scandal concerning him recently..."

"Only high society thought the circumstances were a scandal, Mr. Young. The truth of the matter is Feral was outed as an hermaphrodite and having soul bonded with a male." Young gaped at her. She gave him a small smile and shrug before continuing. "As for his future in the city, he already knows I'll keep him on but we were already getting along better because it happens his mate is the best friend of my new lover so that makes us all good friends. Believe me, it has made taking care of the city so much easier and friendlier."

"What wonderful news! Please convey to the Commander my congratulations and how lucky I consider him to be to have found his soul mate. I envy him. And luck seems to keep following you, my dear, with the finding of new love for yourself. I always felt you were too alone," he said warmly. She blushed at that, totally surprised that he had even noticed that much about her. "Let us toast your good fortune, his happiness, and our new collaboration," he said raising his coffee cup. She did the same and tapped hers against his then drank.

This had been the perfect day and she couldn't wait to tell the others how successful she'd been.

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Chapter 28: Identifying the Enemy by ulyferal

While Callie was busy wheeling and dealing with investors, Feral was working his way steadily through OPR's that had been on the back burner for too long. There were many deserving officers that should have been promoted by now but the reports had to be accomplished first and omega attacks had shoved them aside. With peace achieved (more or less), he needed to get these done as fast as possible.

By late morning, he was a quarter of the way through the stack when Major Simonton came into his office looking tired and wane.

Feral's eyebrows rose in surprise. "Aren't you supposed to be sleeping right now?"

"Would love to be sir, however, that project you gave me has already borne some nasty fruit and I wanted to get it to you, personally, as soon as possible."

"Oh?" Feral asked, giving the tom his full attention.

"It seems sir, that when First Lt. Smithdorn retired, someone unknown made sure the request for a replacement, submitted six months earlier, was deliberately buried within the system. Lt. Smithdorn made several inquiries as to why he wasn't seeing a replacement to train but, from the message traffic, I could see he'd been stonewalled by messages that simply said, "*it's in the works*," and nothing more. He finally gave up and retired. Since it was a one person position due to budget cuts, no one noticed it was never filled, so background checks were either being done by those asking for them or not at all. Naturally, that was exactly what our mole wanted but finding that person has turned into an impossibility. From what I'd been able to find out, the mole never stepped foot inside this building, choosing instead, to slave Lt. Smithdorn's computer to theirs and using some pretty impressive tech to hide any trace of their IP address, were able to keep tabs on requests they didn't want done. I haven't asked for Cyber Squad's assistance as I felt I should go through you first, sir," the major finished, anger and frustration plain on his face.

Feral sighed and rubbed his face. With the cyber world still relatively new and, of course, chronic budget shortages, the Enforcers were, embarrassingly, behind the rest of the city in it's use. It was not surprising to learn their enemies had used this new technology to infiltrate them very neatly while he was preoccupied by the omegas.

"I was afraid that would be the case."

Simonton growled, "It was all because we entered the internet world later than our peers, sir! If we'd only got the funds..."

Feral raised a paw to halt the start of a bitter tirade. "Yes, I know. However, nothing can be done about the past, only the future and plugging up the leaks is how we can ensure this doesn't happen again. As for requesting the Cyber Squad to look into this, I already have them doing something else but will add this as well. Thank you for your diligence."

"You want me to keep probing, sir?"

"No, others are already doing that. There'll be more for you to do soon enough. However, don't reveal the problem to anyone as yet. We don't want to tip off our mole. You get some rest now and keep on top of the regular stuff for me as I will now be preoccupied with this problem. Dismissed."

Not really happy, Simonton nodded, saluted his superior and briskly took his departure.

Sighing, Feral picked up his phone and called Captain Berny Fetlock, head of the Cyber Squad, to come see him.

Frowning, Fetlock, walked into his commander's office some ten minutes later. "You wanted to see me sir?"

"Yes, I've just spoken to Major Simonton. He's discovered the background check officer had retired and no one had replaced him due to a deliberate oversight perpetuated by our hidden enemy."

Fetlock hissed in anger and surprise.

"Apparently, the mole that caused this, never actually came inside Enforcer Headquarters..."

"They slaved their computer to ours or at least the one in that office," Fetlock interrupted, guessing correctly.

Feral just nodded. "That's what Major Simonton surmised as well. So how do we plug the leak without letting the mole know they've been spotted?"

Fetlock shook his head and grimaced. "We're attempting to do that as we speak, sir, but it's really tricky not tipping the mole off. However, I have my best people on it...we'll get it done."

"Fine. Are you able to do background checks at all?"

"Oh, yes sir! And fortunately, I had decided to do it with new software we received which appears to have been a good thing with the mole utilizing the older one. The new system is much faster and more thorough. Our mole won't know we're undermining him until it's far too late. Two can play this game and I intend ours to be the winning side," the captain said with smug satisfaction.

"We deserve a break somewhere," Feral agreed grinning wolfishly. "So, though I know you haven't had much time on it yet, anything you can tell me yet?"

Fetlock's expression fell and he sighed. "Sorry, no sir. We're just getting into it and have barely touched the heart of this mess. Give me a few days more and I should have something concrete for you."

"Fine, do your best but remember, time is already against us," Feral warned.

"Yeah, I know that only too well, sir."

Feral gave a brisk nod and barked. "Dismissed."

The captain saluted then turned on his heel, leaving the office at nearly a run.

Chaffing at the continued delay, Feral was nonetheless relieved he had the best they had on the job. Sighing, he set again to work on the OPR's. He had to get them done today as he had a feeling the undercover investigation would be kicking into high gear very soon.

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It was several days later when he received his first tangible lead.



It was a rainy morning, when Captain Redfur, chief of the black ops team, and Fetlock sent word that they had some preliminary findings. Feral immediately called for a meeting in the strategy conference room an hour later.

After the three arrived, Feral got down to business quickly, "So, do we have mob involvement?"

After glancing at each other, Fetlock was the one to speak. "About 80% certainty of it, sir. Two among the names you gave me turned out to have some suspicious holes in their resumes. It appears both deliberately left off the fact they own companies that do business with ones that have been verified to be run by Mob Boss Tiger Frostburn. Of course, Frostburn has stalking horses running the operations to make them appear legit. The companies in question deal with construction and shipping. So far our preliminary research has found a lot of unusual late night activity going on at both these facilities and an increase of message traffic between the pair of council kats and Frostburn's offices, so I think it's safe to say, there's something less than legal going on."

Redfur cut in, "We confirmed those suspicions, sir, when we encountered RICO agents on a wiretapping recon in a van not far from the construction company named in Fetlock's report. The agent in charge, one Faris Genstooth, wasn't all that happy about talking with us. I didn't give away our mission, sir, but did convey that learning what Frostburn was up to was a high priority item for you. That helped make him more cooperative. He told us they've been monitoring Frostburn for a few years now, for money laundering, espionage, and gun running."

"Really...hmm...I've not seen anything about it cross my desk..." Feral rumbled, his eyes narrowed in annoyance. He hated it when other agencies thought they could run operations without keeping him in the loop. It caused nothing but grief and allowed criminals to escape the law because of inter-agency squabbles and snafus.

Redfur looked just as annoyed. "I'm not surprised sir. Genstooth said, the operation was being limited to just a small group of RICO agents and the director to ensure no leak would occur."

Feral rolled his eyes in disgust. "Too bad we can't tell him that train has already left the station."

The captain snorted. "That's true, sir. Anyway, we do have some cooperation out of them now. Unfortunately, knowing there's something going on with Frostburn's mob isn't enough to get *us* the hard evidence we need to get a warrant to dig deeper because there's nothing illegal about doing business with a company that is putting on a very good cover of being legitimate. So, unfortunately, the only thing we can get the two council kats on is a misdemeanor charge."

"You're right about that. So what have you been able to do to improve our chances?" Feral asked.

"We know they're dirty so we've made arrangements to set up a piggyback surveillance with RICO's in hopes of catching a mistake by the two and Frostburn," Redfur answered, promptly. "However, it's slow going as Frostburn is far cannier than we ever thought. He's managed to set up a very tight security perimeter around his operations and on-line."

"Which means we have to go very slowly to try and find a way to break into his security without him catching on," Fetlock interjected.

Feral sighed and leaned back in his chair to think. A legal surveillance could take months or even years to produce any results and the mob knew that and he had no doubt, was equally aware they were being watched. Of all the mob families, Frostburn was the smartest and most likely boss to set up such a grand scheme as taking over the mayor's position.

"It burns my tail that someone like Frostburn was smart enough to see such an opportunity to expand his empire and have the money and moxie to pull it off," he grumbled more to himself

than his officers. "And now I have to try and dig his ass out."

The two officers definitely agreed with him by their twin expressions of disgust and anger.

"I have one small hope that when Ms. Briggs announces her run for Mayor that Frostburn might be irritated enough to make a mistake, though that's really a long shot as he's had ample time to become thoroughly entrenched, enough that even that won't shake his confidence. He'll most likely just find a way to eliminate her before the election."

"Then her life will be in danger, sir," Redfur warned.

"I'm fully aware of that, which is why I have Furlong and Clawson guarding her. However..." Feral paused as another idea came to him. Only he was aware of the pair's extra abilities and special weapons that made them so effective as Callie's guards and that Callie herself was no easy pushover with her special training.

And it was that information that had given him an excellent idea for getting the goods on Frostburn. Though the pair were already guarding Callie, this new task was right up their alley and more likely to succeed, especially with Jake's new toys from the Loonatics. It was a very timely thing that he'd gotten them reinstated so he could have them do this. Of course, Redfur wouldn't be very happy. Too bad.

Smiling grimly, he continued what he was about to say, "...since a long surveillance is not in our best interest and would keep Ms. Briggs in grave peril for too long, we'll just have to be more 'creative' in gathering the evidence needed. While you continue with your methods of surveillance, I'm going to send two special spies into Frostburn's camp he'll never suspect so when Ms. Briggs makes her announcement, they'll be in the right place to hear anything incriminating the mob boss might say when he reacts to the news."

Redfur eyed his leader in confusion. "Pardon me sir, who are you talking about?"

"Furlong and Clawson."

"What? But how can they do both guard duty and why would you entrust them with something this important?" Redfur objected sharply.

"They'll handle the spying for a bit while you release a couple of your own to guard, Ms. Briggs," Feral ordered frostily.

Redfur snapped his mouth shut. He, like many of the upper rank, hated what the pair had done to earn that disgrace and weren't too happy about them being reinstated. His mouth tightened with disgust at the thought of it. However, if he was being honest with himself, his feelings were tinted by heresy rather than facts. He hadn't been at paw when the incident had happened so wasn't really certain of the true facts.

And after all, Furlong was the Commander's mate and it made no sense that someone as powerful and aboveboard as Feral would accept anyone less like himself for a mate. So despite his, admittedly, prejudiced feelings, he had to accept the Commander was certain Furlong and Clawson could and would do the job well. It just grated on him that his own team couldn't get the information themselves.

"As you wish sir. Do I inform my team of their involvement?" He asked, his voice flat.

"Yes, so if Furlong and Clawson need assistance or a way to hand over evidence, someone is there to do so for them."

"Understood, sir. When do you want me to get meet with them?"

"I'll summon them and have you all meet in your office tomorrow night so they can get on the job as quickly as possible," Feral told him while making a note to contact his mate as soon as he got back to his office.

"Yes, sir," Refur responded, making a note to himself.

"Anything else, you uncovered?" Feral asked them both.

"We've only gotten about a third of the way through the list you gave us, sir. No other hits as yet. My team will be keeping at it around the clock until we've gotten every little thing on each of them we can," Fetlock assured him.

"Good. Now, what are the names of the two you've identified? Were any from Ms. Briggs' list?"

"No sir," Fetlock said promptly. "They have squeaky clean backgrounds even if they are a bit on the quirky side as well as somewhat radical in their ideas. It was the ones she thought were clear that turned out to be the opposite. They've been very canny in hiding their true agenda and allegiance under a charismatic and philanthropic facade. And it doesn't hurt they've curried favor within high society circles as well, which, I suspect, is how they managed to charm their way into their present positions."

"Except for those nebulous points of contact with the underworld you discovered," Feral added, sourly. "So who are they?"

"Council Kats Daniel Longsfur and Casey Murrin," Fetlock said, reading their names off his notes.

Feral grimaced. "Crud! I hate those two and now I know why. They just seemed too smarmy for me but that's what made them perfect politicians," he said shaking his head. "I'll let Ms. Briggs know who to watch out for. Have you gotten wiretaps on them?"

Redfur grinned ferally. "The moment Fetlock told me who was dirty, I wangled a warrant to do just that, sir. The RICO team has already added it to their standing orders for Frostburn. Before I came here, Genstooth called and informed me that the wiretaps were in place on those two and I have tasked two of my best to dog them. We'll see what shakes out, especially after Ms. Briggs' announcement."

"Excellent! Then there's nothing more we can do but hope for a break or make one ourselves when the chance arises. We've got to stop them before they get their dark horse in place and we end up tearing our city apart trying to get rid of them. It would have worse consequences than any attack an omega had done," Feral growled.

"Oh for certain, sir, and we have ourselves to blame for this happening in the first place," Redfur growled, face glum.

"That's unfortunately true. Dismissed!"

Both males rose, saluted and hurried out of the conference room for their respective offices.

Feral sighed, wrote up a few more notes, then rose and left the strategic area for his own office. He bypassed his desk and went to stand before the wall of windows. He stared at the skyline without really seeing it, worry making his face look older.

I've just got to cut the head off this hydra and soon. I won't stand for some damn mob boss taking what we've only just got back from the omegas. After we clean up this mess, I and Callie will set up a better system of checks and balances so this never happens again.

He brooded for awhile longer, worry for his mate rising to add to his other concerns.

Kat's Alive! I hate involving Chance in this mess but he and Jake are the only ones who don't scream "Enforcer" to everyone who meets them so their chances of being able to infiltrate Frostburn's gang is better than anyone else I could send. Still I hate endangering my mate. He sighed and shook his head. No help for it. I'd better set up a meet for us tonight.

With new determination, he turned from the view and returned to his desk. Sitting down, he reached for his phone to make the first of two calls.

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Chapter 29: Yet Another Meeting by ulyferal

At around seven that evening, four people gathered around a coffee table covered in pizza boxes, drink cups and notepads.

"Alright, who wants to go first?" Jake asked, taking a bite of his dinner as he sat next to Callie on the comfortable couch in the Furlong-Feral's home.

"I will," Feral said, ignoring his meal for the moment. Chance sat silently beside him on the love seat, munching on his pizza, ears pricked forward.

"With an 85% certainty, the mob boss behind this attempted coup is Tiger Frostburn. With Council Kats Daniel Longsfur and Casey Murrin in his pocket. I discovered no one had been doing background checks for over the past year which allowed a mole to block any checks from being done so that Frostburn's picks could be salted quietly throughout our government."

Callie sighed and shook her head, making a note to check council meeting minutes to see what else this mob leader might be involved with. "Frostburn! I've heard some rumors floating around about him but those were connected to some construction contracts he's bidding on. Those two are the ones trying to convince the council to consider him over other, more honest, qualified contractors."

"Really? That's the first I've heard of that and something we should look into as well," Feral said, thoughtfully, jotting a note on it himself. "It might lead us to a link between them and Frostburn."

"I hope it does. Anyway, I would have never considered those two. They do an excellent job of portraying themselves as fine upstanding and hard working councilors but I always felt they were trying rather too hard to come off that way, so glad my instincts were right about that. So what are you doing about proving Frostburn is our infiltrator?"

"I have my new Cyber Squad digging into his financials and tracking all his internet traffic. And I have my top black op team working with an on-scene RICO surveillance to get more dirt. However, they've already discovered Frostburn has had plenty of time to build a really tight defensive ring around his doings. Obviously, the legal way will take years to cough up what we need to drag his ass in, but, even more underhanded methods won't garner what we need before the election and could cause harm to your run for office, so, I've decided something a lot sneakier needs to be done that will have a better than average success in bringing down Frostburn."

Callie grimaced, not liking using such methods to get at the truth but pragmatic enough to know there wasn't enough time to be completely aboveboard here. The safety of a whole city was at stake.

"And what would that be?" She asked, resigned.

Feral glanced over at his mate then over to Jake before responding. "I want you two to go undercover and see what you can find out." He raised a paw when he saw them about to object. "Yes, I know I have you on bodyguard duty but this is more important and you're the only ones I can trust will succeed. And don't worry...I have two of my best black ops taking over her

protection while you're busy. Besides, don't forget, you did train her to protect herself," He reminded them.

"Yeah, but with the number of thugs Frostburn can throw at her might overwhelm them," Jake warned, very unhappy about this plan.

Callie gently patted his arm. "I'll be extra cautious and watchful. Besides, don't forget you have me under pretty effective surveillance yourself. And if it does become an issue, I can summon Ulysses for help by the comm you gave me."

Jake's look was still mulish and unhappy. Callie sighed and turned to face him directly. "You trained me for this...unless you're willing to say I'm not good enough..."

"No you're trained to the highest level I could get you," He conceded, irritably.

"That's what I thought, so let me use my training and if I need help Ulysses is the perfect choice. We *need* you to do this. Frostburn must be dealt with, if he's really the culprit that is..." She gave Feral a quick glance to confirm he wasn't that certain of the mob bosses guilt.

"You're right, we're not absolutely certain and that is what you two will have to find out as well," Feral said, reluctantly, though his instincts said they were on the right track.

"Then find out for certain and take him down. You will not blow your cover for me. Understood?" She demanded, sternly, turning to include Chance in her stare.

Chance didn't look any happier than his partner but could see she was adamant and right, damn it. "Fine ... but I don't like it!"

"Neither do I," Jake grumbled but gave in gracelessly.

"Look! I don't like this either but I will protect her, promise," Feral added his assurance, feeling exactly as they did but for their safety as well as hers.

"Good. Now that's settled let's get onto other business..." Callie cut in, determined to move past this and get to the rest of their business, the evening was getting late.

"Fine, then I have a complaint..." Jake growled. "...Doing this job for you is going to put my work on the project behind, Ulysses. You want this new training system up soon and there's no way I can do both."

"You won't have to. The property we're being bequeathed has not yet been transferred to Enforcers paws and won't be for at least another week due to real estate laws. My financial officer is expediting the paperwork as fast as he can but it's still an unavoidable delay. However, the owner has given us permission to clean the place up and that's a huge job that will take more than a month to accomplish. So while that's being done, you'll have plenty of time to focus on your undercover work," Feral told him.

"Oh...okay, no problem then," Jake sighed, subsiding, resigned to having his work put on hold.

"Alright with that out of the way, there's other issues we face here ..." Feral began, ignoring the rolled eyes he was getting from all three. "I need to know when you plan to announce your candidacy, Callie. Though you will have two guards, I need to beef up your security. Also, I concur you should announce development of **The Enforcer Training Module** and the presentation of new military hardware from Professor Hackle and Razor..." The three gave him a shocked look. "...No hear me out...adding Razor will help get my Enforcers to accept the SWAT Kats more. Anyway, both these things plus a promise to clean out the rest of the criminal problems will give your platform a solid foundation against the dark horse. However, don't mention or answer any questions on who is responsible for the module nor who will be in charge

of it for now. Oh, by the way did we actually say *who* is going to be in charge of the project and if we do have funding?"

Though still taken by surprise by Feral's suggestion of mentioning Razor, Callie answered readily enough, "Yes we do. Both Hackle and Young are on board."

"Great work," Feral nodded, pleased.

"And I have to agree with your suggestions. It will definitely get my campaign off to a firm and resounding start, but another problem has cropped up and you mentioning Razor is part of it. Though keeping the identity of the one responsible for the module is a great idea, unfortunately, when we do release his name, it can't be Jake but Razor as it was he who was given it by the Loonatics," Callie said.

"That occurred to me today too," Jake said, sourly. "I had so wanted to get my name restored but that can't happen now. After thinking about it all day, I've come to the realization that even if I and Chance revealed our identities as the SWAT Kats that still wouldn't help matters with the Enforcers who hold our vigilante status against us. Though now with what you said, Ulysses, plus adding the fact the Enforcers are aware of my talents developing new weapons and systems, perhaps it won't be as hard as we originally thought. Another thing you could mention to them is the fact Chance and I didn't break any major laws ..." Jake trailed off, giving Feral a questioning look.

Feral sighed and rubbed his face. "That's what I was hoping for, Jake, and, yes, your talents are known but they still aren't too happy. They still haven't accepted my mating of Chance very well and when they find out he's T-Bone..." He trailed off. Everyone winced at that reminder.

"...However, if you succeed in bringing down Frostburn and they and the city learn just how widespread his plans were, that might go a long way to gaining their respect ... but it will mean giving up your SWAT Kat identities. Only that will convince them how much you contributed to the city's safety and well being and, hopefully, get them to accept you as their teacher when the module is built," He finished then sighed when he saw the looks of anger on their faces. "I'm sorry, I just don't see another way around it."

Chance felt angry and cornered. It wasn't fair! He wasn't ready to give up his secret but glancing over at Jake and the resigned look on the red tom's face, he was forced to accept that things were changing for them all and perhaps it was time to pack in the super hero stuff finally. But still it rankled inside.

"I can see and feel what you're thinking buddy and I agree it sucks," Jake said, perceptively. "But Ulysses is right, there isn't another choice. Of course we could always back away from the whole thing..."

"No!" Chance cut his friend off sharply. "We never back off when things got tough and we won't now. Besides, I can't be selfish about this. You deserve the recognition you've been denied for so long."

"You both deserve recognition for your unfailing protection of the city and devotion to their safety," Feral said, firmly. "But you don't have to give up your secret just yet. I think that will only come into play when Frostburn is brought to justice and no sooner."

Chance gave his mate a wane smile at the big tom's attempt to ease his anger and pain at losing something so important to him. "Thanks, love."

Feral smiled gently and gave his mate a hard hug. "Okay, enough of this sadness. We still have legal issues to be dealt with. Right, Callie?"

"Right." Callie was willing to move away from the painful subject and onto the rest of the business they had to deal with now. She hurt for her lover but Ulysses was right, this was the

best way to solve the problem.

"The first step needing done is Jake gaining legal ownership of the system. I'll have my lawyer draw up that and, sadly, I'll have to tell him eventually what the real name will have to be on the documents. By the way, Mr. Young shrewdly realized how this system could be used for many more fields than just law enforcement ...like medical, fire fighting, dangerous career fields, diplomatic situations, science and technical problem solving, education, nearly any field imaginable..."

The three males gaped at her as the implications sank in.

"Kat's Alive! Selling that system could make Jake millions!" Feral blurted, shocked.

"Wow! Jake that's incredible!" Chance gasped.

"I can't believe I never even considered the other applications possible. You're right Callie, this is way beyond just setting up a training program for the Enforcers," Jake gasped then shook his head. "Crud! All the legal and business crap that will have to be dealt with is enough to give me a headache."

"I know, I feel the same way so you can see why a savvy lawyer is needed to get this all set up before we even announce it's other abilities. That we'll have to keep ruthlessly under wraps so the only thing being announced is how it will train Enforcers to do their job better. No word of its others uses will be mentioned," Callie said, firmly.

"Good idea but it won't stop smart people from realizing it's real worth..." Jake warned.

"True, but we'll not answer any inquires on it from any source until we're ready, understood?" Callie asked, giving each of the males a stern look.

"You won't get any argument from me. That's a very good idea," Feral said gravely. Chance and Jake simply nodded their agreement.

"Fortunately, I have such a lawyer in my employ to handle all the details." She made a lot of notes in the silence that followed as the males thought about the implications of what she'd laid out to them already.

"Crud, the longer we talk about this the more involved it's beginning to get. Soon I won't have any time for doing my own inventions, being a SWAT Kat or an Enforcer!" Jake exclaimed breaking the thoughtful quiet of the room.

"Well yes, eventually you would, my love but not right away and maybe not for a few years at least. This will take a lot of time to set up and run properly so don't get too upset yet. Anyway, no one expects you to handle all that alone," Callie soothed her lover.

"Huh...sounds like it will still keep us too busy," Chance said, skeptically.

"Don't panic guys. Being a canny business Kat and a gracious person to boot, Mr. Young gave me some tips on how to manage this profitable venture. First we need to obtain a patent on the system so that ownership is firmly established. Next, a corporation needs to be set up to manage the proceeds for the system when it goes public." The three males stared at her in consternation but she didn't notice as her eyes remained on her notes.

"Mr. Young and I agree you should remain sole owner of the corp but will have a hand picked president and board of directors to run the day to day operation for you. This way no one can wrest the control of the system from you. So a contract will be drawn up that will stipulate you have controlling ownership of the patent itself and its original purpose. At that time, we'll figure out what percentage of the profits you should receive as well." She flipped the page of her

notebook and continued writing and talking.

"Then there are the contracts that have to be set up between you and the Enforcers for you to run it and train them on it, the funding contract, the building contract, the contract for the company doing the remodel, and finally, at least for right now, the contract between your company, Jake, and the Enforcers for upkeep of the system they are unable to do, repairs and upgrades. There that should do it for now." She finally looked up and smiled broadly as she added, "...and just think, you'll be improving the employment outlook of the city with many new jobs too."

All three could only gape at her for a long moment. Jake was reeling from the realization of how much one little invention from an alien race was going to change all their lives.

"Wow! My buddy the tycoon!" Chance finally blurted out, shaking his head in amazed disbelief. Things were going a bit too fast here for him. He could see just how much their lives were going to change before the year ran out and he wasn't so sure he liked it.

Feral could only shake his head.

"Uh...gee Callie, it seems to be an enormous undertaking and I'm not the business type," Jake managed to finally verbalize past his shock.

"Don't worry love, like I said, you won't be saddled with the day to day running of this at all. Only your name will be on the company. You'll be free to continue inventing and doing what you like to do while making tons of money at the same time," Callie assured him, smiling. "But you needn't worry about that right now. After all, the system has to be up and running first before the rest can happen. I will say, Mr. Young also suggested that the city be represented on your board of directors and that the money the company makes be funneled into investors and, to keep the city happy, into the Disaster Resource Fund which has been seriously depleted by the omegas and Mayor Manx's indiscriminate plundering. Doing this will show how involved your company is in the city's welfare."

"Hey, that's a great idea and it doesn't hurt that it will also ensure your chances of becoming mayor, either," Jake smirked.

Callie blushed. "That too."

"If this system makes as much money as I think it will, Megakat City will be flush for the first time in decades," Jake said, shaking his head in amazement. And, he thought, I could designate some of those monies into worthy charities too.

Callie was glad Jake was such a giving tom. Anyone else would be upset at someone else deciding how his funds should be managed but Jake wasn't moved by having lots of cash. Smiling to herself, she jotted a few more notes, her pad filling up fast. Suddenly she paused, there's still the issue of my campaign. I've just got to find a campaign manager and fast. There's just so much to do and so little time to do them in ... a year was now seeming too short a time to get it all done before the elections.

Staring at all the notes Callie had written compared to his mate's single-page filled notepad, Chance whistled in unhappy concern. "Crud, Callie. There seems to be the lion share of the work being done by you. You sure you have time to help Jake and deal with your campaign?"

"I'll manage. It's nothing I don't do for my job after all, though I will admit an assistant would make it easier," Callie sighed.

Jake looked over her notes and shook his head. "Yeah, hope you find one fast as we seem to be adding to an already heavy workload.

"And what about campaign funding, that has to be done to right?" Chance added.



"Yes, I do have to get started and I'm pleased to tell you that Mr. Young was tickled about my running and has graciously donated a huge sum toward it already."

"You told him?" Feral asked, shocked.

"I had to as he wondered why I was approaching about the project without the Mayor's input. He's a very smart business Kat like I said before and he already knew who was truly running the city. It's nice to know he thinks so highly of me. Also, since he's investing so much into all this, I felt he should be aware of our infiltration problem. He was unhappy but not actually surprised. He warned we need to deal with it quickly as a mob boss running a city this size would ruin business for the world's economy."

Feral's eyebrows rose at that last comment. "Huh, he's turning out to be more than he seems. I never would have credited him as being that perceptive. Since he's so canny, perhaps, Callie, he might know of someone trustworthy and effective to be your assistant and even campaign manager in one. It would be to our benefit to have an outsider who wasn't already in someone's pocket here."

Callie eyed him in surprise. "I never thought of that and I believe you'd be right. I'll give him a call tomorrow and ask. Thank you, Ulysses."

"You're welcome," Feral smiled, pleased he could be of some help. Chance was right, the shekat was taking the lion's share of the workload but he knew she was the only one truly skilled at getting this kind of thing done.

"Hey, let me donate to your campaign fund too. I bet even the professor will do the same," Jake chimed in, giving her a hug and a kiss.

"Wonderful idea, thank you, love," Callie said, pleased and touched at the gesture and promise.

"Oh...I just had another fantastic thought," Jake said, brightly. "Do you think Mr. Young would like to be a member of my board of directors?"

Callie blinked at him in surprise then could have slapped herself for not thinking of it herself. "I think that's a grand idea and I bet he'd be thrilled as he thinks this is going to be the best investment he'd ever made. His experience will be a blessing too. And how about Professor Hackle for that as well?"

"Ooohh...great idea...I'll ask him!" Jake said, excitedly.

"Wow! With all that support, Callie, I don't see why you wouldn't be a shoe in for mayor," Chance said.

"Oh, that reminds me..." Callie turned to Feral, "Uly, your question about when I'm announcing my candidacy ... I think I should get it done by the end of the month but it all depends on a lot of factors. One, I need that assistant/manager; two, we really need to get the bad guys out of the race, and three, I need the funds to get started though that's already got a considerable jump start."

"That will hopefully work for us, but don't forget Frostburn won't wait too much longer to introduce his dark horse and get a jump on the race. I don't know if that will be bad for you or not. However, I was hoping for an earlier announcement as I was going to use it as a prod to shake Frostburn and/or those two councilors into making a mistake when they hear you're running. But it can't be helped. Chance and Jake will just have to do what they can to shake out the info we need," Feral voiced his concern.

Callie groaned. "Damned if I do ... damned if I don't. I just don't have any choice since I don't even

have a campaign team to do anything with yet. No one knows about me running except you and Mr. Young. It doesn't help that even Manx hasn't bothered to prepare and announce either. Seems he thinks he's a shoe in," She snorted, writing another note to herself. "I'll do what I can, that's all I can promise."

"Manx always was delusional," Ulysses said sarcastically. His mate laughed. "Though it doesn't help the guys in their undercover work, it might be a good idea that you wait now that I think of it. It will give you time to get the patent and ownership of the system done before anyone finds out about it. I freely admit, it makes me nervous that the longer it remains in the air the greater its chances of being leaked out despite our care."

"That's a legitimate concern, Uly, even though I'm the only one with it, I can't say 100% that it will remain unknown and safe now that it's out in the open," Jake said gravely. "I hate to say this, love, but that better be your number one priority. And, yes, I know you'll have to tell your lawyer about me but I know you only trust so many and this tom has to be one of them so you have my permission...uh...that is do you have an objection, buddy?" Jake paused to give his partner a questioning look.

Chance grimaced but nodded slowly. "Yes...I suppose so. It does have to be done so I can't truly stand in the way of it."

"Good, then you have *our* permission," Jake said to Callie.

"Thank you. I know how hard it is for you two to allow that. Okay, the patent and ownership first then find a campaign manager, then funds, then announce. I can't wait to throw Manx under the bus by leaking some of his less than savory activities during his tenure."

"Ohh...nasty. Though I like the idea, are you sure you want to be seen as a mudslinger?" Jake asked.

She eyed him thoughtfully then sighed again. "No, I don't. I have to hope my campaign manager can think of something better to counter Manx's smarminess."

"Heh, besides the module and new weapons, you might also mention how the two of us have been working together to rid the city of the omegas and are presently taking out the new crime wave but don't let on we know about Frostburn's invasion. We don't want to tip our paws there yet," Ulysses suggested.

"Which is why you're guarding her so carefully," Jake said, knowingly.

"Exactly. I may not like putting her in such direct danger but it's the only other thing I can think of to try and get those rats to come out of hiding so we can catch them," Feral added.

"I certainly don't relish going through the whole year of my campaign worrying about the criminals trying to weasel their way into the mayor's office so I hope this plan of yours works."

"Don't worry, love," Jake growled. "...Chance and I will have these guys tagged and bagged before you know it."

Callie leaned close and kissed his cheek. "I know you will which is why I'm not that worried."

"Well, then here's hoping you luck out getting an assistant soon so things can get rolling." Feral pulled Jake and Chance's minds off Callie's safety and back on something else. The big tom's stomach growled at that moment and Chance rolled his eyes as he shoved some pizza at his mate. Feral just grinned and picked up a slice and took a big bite. It was cold but he was too hungry to care.

"So have we covered everything?" Jake asked, reaching for another slice of pizza himself.

"I believe so," Callie sighed, closing her notepad and picking up her glass of wine, sipping it and relaxing now that the main business was done.

"Hey, by the way, Uly says you're cleared to handle yourself so how did you do in the danger room final," Chance asked, relaxing back against the loveseat and caressing his mate's back. "I hadn't had a chance to get an update."

"She did very well all four times I put her through it," Jake interjected, before she could respond, smirking with pleasure. "Hey, what can I say, I'm a great teacher!"

Callie shoved him playfully for that remark while secretly pleased he was so proud of her. That warmed her heart.

Personally, she'd thought she'd done badly. It had been as grueling as Ulysses had warned her but she hadn't failed to finish and didn't get tagged or injured. So despite feeling like she'd been run over by a truck and hobbling in pain for a week afterward, she was thrilled she was considered trained enough to protect herself. Now maybe he wouldn't hover over her so much. One could hope.

"That's great news and perfect timing," Chance said.

Knowing she'd be in the crosshairs of Frostburn's thugs, she only hoped their confidence wasn't misplaced as she needed to survive the coming storm.

"Anything else to be discussed?" Feral asked.

"Yeah, I do have one more thing and it's about the project itself. Since it's settled that I'll be in charge, here's some of the people I'd like for my team. Professor Hackle, of course, Dr. Conway, when you can spare him, Uly, as he'll be the best for determining the physiological problems, and then I thought Dr. Greenbox would be perfect...yes I know he caused problems and was jailed but it wasn't his fault and he is an exceptional inventor. There's not many in his category around and I promise he will be watched closely. As for others, I'll leave that to you, Hackle and Greenbox to suggest."

"Hmm...not sure I like having Greenbox but if you feel you really need him, I can perhaps go along with a temporary trial period. However, all your candidates must undergo stringent security screenings. If you can, try not to have more than ten assistants." Jake nodded, Uly's request was certainly reasonable.

"Is that it?" Callie asked, when Jake fell silent and no one said anything more for some minutes.

"Yep, sounds like we've covered all of it and what a lot of work it is for you Callie," Chance said, shaking his head.

"Well, it might not be as dangerous as what you two plan but I'll manage," she assured him, smiling. "Oh, and Jake, before I forget, my car is making loud noises. I think it's time to replace it. However, since Uly says you and Chance are committed tomorrow night, you got anything else I can drive?"

"As a matter of fact, I do. We have one in the yard you can use for right now and it has the added advantage of being something no one will think you'd drive so if anyone's hunting you, they won't know what to look for if you don't park in your spot in front of city hall for awhile," Jake said, relieved this was an easy fix.

"Good idea," Feral said. "Just make sure to tell Captain Redfur what the car looks like so the guards he's putting on Callie will know." That made him feel better about Callie's safety when the pair weren't guarding her.

"Sure," Jake agreed.

Scrunching her nose in distaste, Callie sighed and nodded reluctantly. "Okay, I can see how that would be a good idea overall."

"Don't worry love, it's not that bad a vehicle. I'll go get it tonight and trade your vehicle out," Jake said, kissing her on the cheek.

"Fine."

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Chapter 30: A Quiet Interlude by ulyferal

It was very late when they finally ended the meeting. While Callie helped Ulysses clean up, Jake and Chance doubled on Jake's cyclotron and raced off for the salvage yard to pick up the used car they promised her.

About an hour later, the sound of a car and motorcycle arriving interrupted Callie and Ulysses' quiet conversation over coffee.

"Well it doesn't sound too bad," Callie sighed, setting her cup down and standing up to head for the garage.

"Don't be that way Callie ... they wouldn't give you something that wouldn't run," Ulysses chided her as he followed. She just snorted. Reaching the garage entrance, she opened the door and stepped through.

A rather worse-for-wear looking blue compact with a few dings scattered about its paint job pulled into the garage and parked, Chance smiling at her from behind the wheel as he shut the engine off.

The cyclotron throttled down, its engine making more of a purring sound now as Jake drove it past the car and into the space in front of it. The engine went completely silent as he turned the key then climbed off. He pulled his helmet off and set it on the seat then strode to Callie who was eyeing the car with very little enthusiasm.

Chance, however, had gotten out of the used car before Jake had even dismounted his bike, slamming the door shut and handing Callie the keys with a pleased look.

"Here you go. She may not be much to look at but she drives like a dream and purrs like a kitten," he assured her.

"At least it doesn't look too bad," she sighed. "Thanks guys."

"Aw love, it's only for a little while," Jake said, wrapping an arm around her shoulders and hugging her.

"Who knows...it might grow on you," Chance said, smiling then turned to his mate. Wrapping an arm around the tom's waist, he tugged him back into the house, ignoring Callie's next comment.

"I know. It's just a little demeaning for someone in my position. Image is important too you know," Callie muttered. "But all of you are right. This wouldn't receive a second glance which means I won't be noticed either."

"That's the right attitude to have right now," Jake murmured back, nuzzling her neck. "How about I make you forget about it for a little while. With Chance and I going under cover, this will be our last chance to be together for a while."

Callie blinked and turned to stare at him in dismay. "With everything else, I completely forgot about that side of this," She groaned in dismay.

"I didn't ... so are you too tired..." Jake asked softly, caressing her neck with his fingers, suggestively.

"Even if I was, I wouldn't want to miss any moment with you," She whispered, turning to accept a kiss from him.

They became rather involved for some minutes before coming up for air. "Hmm, nice...perhaps we should get to the guest room now..." Jake purred in her ear.

"Good idea." Keeping her arm around her lover's waist the two of them headed inside.

Jake made sure the garage was locked then the two of them headed to the living area which was dark except for the full moon shining in through the huge picture window. By mutual consent, the pair walked to the window and stared out at Megakat Bay as it lay below the Furlong-Feral's home, the waters shimmering in the moonlight.

"They have such a beautiful home and an excellent view," she sighed, leaning her head on his shoulder.

"Yeah, they sure do. Maybe we should look for something similar in this area..." he suggested softly, letting the idea hang in the air between them.

She turned her head to stare into his eyes. "Maybe...one day...but not until we've climbed this last hurdle to attain peace for the city."

His eyes were serious as he nodded. "I agree. That does take precedent but I reserve the right to bring this up again."

She smiled warmly and leaned her head against his. "Please do. There is no one else I would want to discuss that with."

He smiled in relief, uncertain until that moment, whether she felt the way he did about their relationship. With that promise, he knew it was important he do his best to stay alive so he could marry her when the time was right.

"Shall we go to bed now?"

"Good idea." Keeping his arm around her waist he led the way down the short hall that led to the guest room.

Once behind the bedroom door, he gently began to kiss her senseless and strip her clothes from her.

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"Let's go to bed, love," Chance murmured into his mate's ear. "Since you've assigned Jake and I undercover, you and I will have to resign ourselves to just tonight to satisfy our carnal desires."

Feral sighed and rubbed his cheek against the tabby's. "Yeah, I know and it sucks since I was just getting used to sharing my bed. It will be no fun being alone again even for a short time."

"It's your fault," Chance teased him, as he shut off the living room lights and tugged his mate to their master suite. Feral just snorted. There was no arguing that since it was true.

With the door to their bedroom closed behind them, Chance wasted no time stripping his mate of

his clothes. Feral was just as eager, pulling the tabby's t-shirt over his head.

In little time, their clothing decorated the floor and their bodies were already wrapped around each other on the king sized bed. They rolled around kissing hotly for some time, enjoying the simple feeling of being together.

As usual, Feral heated quickly under his mate's expert touches. He sniffed deeply of Chance's heady scent of motor oil, metal and, buried beneath, that tantalizing odor of cloves and honey mixed with sage...that scent would always mean home to him. And what it did to his libido was nothing short of incredible even after being together for some months now. He hoped when they were old and gray, that factor would never change.

Chance brought Feral's attention back to those amazing lips that always made him hot and ready. Tongues delved deeply and groans of pleasure filled the quiet room. Though it was very late, the tabby was taking his time and making the night something extra special to hold them until they were together again.

After kissing his mate senseless, the tabby let his fingers begin an erotic dance down the thick, dark furred and broad back his paws reached the firm globes of the tom's buttocks.

Feral groaned and panted when those familiar fingers began kneading his rear. He knew what was about to happen next and was holding his breath in anticipation.

Grinning wickedly, Chance continued to knead for a few minutes longer while covering his mate's face with butterfly kisses and tiny nips from his sharp teeth. When he could tell Uly was breathless with nervous excitement, only then did he take one finger and flutter it across the tom's pucker.

Uly bucked and shouted, "Kat's Alive! Chance!" As his body bucked and shuddered from the touch his cock harden and his womb clenched.

"Hmm, I love how I can make you all wet and ready doing that, love," the tabby rumbled darkly, his eyes nearly glowing with the promise of more to come.

Feral could only moan with desire but he wasn't totally lost in a erotic haze, he still had the prescene of mind to attend to his mate's needs as well. Stroking and caressing the broad back, he extended his claws and lightly scored downward without drawing blood.

Chance gasped and his back rippled at the exquisite torture of those sharp points that always sent hot sparks down his spine straight to his cock.

Oh now, we just have to get more serious here, the tabby thought, wickedly then swooped down on one of the fat nipples that were already hard little peaks and proceeded to suck on it like a vacuum, driving Uly wild before switching to the other and giving it the same treatment.

His clitoris was throbbing and dripping with need, however, Ulysses had in mind to take charge of this night's play so he prepared to launch a sneak attack. Using his fingers, he titillated the space beneath the hard cock and the tight ballsack which was just one of the many erogenous zones he'd learned about the tabby. And this particular one drove Chance wild.

As the body above him bucked in reaction, Uly gave his mate a smirk before suddenly flipping their positions. Now on top, he grinned down with wicked anticipation.

"I think I'll take the top spot first this time," He growled hotly.

Chance was surprised only a moment before grinning broadly. "As my mate commands. Do as you will!" He challenged.

"Oh, you'll regret that," Feral promised, his eyes darkening. Chance shivered at that look but was eager as well.

Moving down the tabby's body, Feral attacked the hard cock waving in his face with vicious delight. Allowing his fangs to connect with the flesh just a little, he inhaled it to the root.

Chance howled with delight and a little fear. His hips bucked upward but were restrained by his mate's strong grasp on his thighs. Uly's technique was so good, his mate never stood a chance of trying to hold back, coming like a fire hose moments later and filling Uly's mouth with come.

He swallowed it then rear up and raised the tabby's legs over his shoulders then plunged into the waiting hole in one go. Because they'd been sexually active for some time, prepping wasn't necessary any longer.

The tabby roared again as he was sent flying high once more by the hard pumping action of his bigger mate. Just before Chance was about to come again, Ulysses suddenly stopped and removed himself.

"Hey!" The tabby shouted in dismay.

Feral just smirked and smacked his mate on the butt and said, "Roll over my love!"

His limbs shaking with excitement and his momentary disappointment gone and replaced with eagerness, Chance did as asked, getting to his paws and knees.

With barely any warning, Feral leaned over his mate, grabbed his scruff and slammed home again setting a fierce pace as he pounded the tabby into the bed.

Chance growled and hissed with pleasure, arching his back to allow the dark tom an even deeper penetration. His thin tail was trapped between their bodies as Feral continued to wring every ounce of pleasure out of his mate.

"Go...go...deeper...!" Chance shouted, panting hard. He thought his head would explode as his body sang with tingling desire in every part of it. Because of Uly's size, the ride could never last long as the dark tom hit the sweet spot over and over again.

With a roar, Chance came followed almost immediately by Uly who filled his mate to capacity.

They hung suspended for a moment of bliss before finally collapsing in a heap of sweaty, panting bodies.

After a short nap, Chance woke first. Eyeing his mate speculatively, he thought to begin slowly. So he dragged his claws lightly up and down the tom's chest, belly, then around each nipple and down again to circle the slowly awakening cock.

Feral shivered and moaned at first then opened a sleepy eye to stare at his mate's face hovering close to his.

"Hmm...having fun love?"

"Oh indeed...now it's my turn," Chance said, huskily, eyes gleaming with a dark promise. He leaned close and kissed his mate deeply.

Feral groaned and returned the passionate liplock.

Some lengthy play time followed, each getting the other hot and hard quickly. The tabby was interested in something else besides that wonderful cock. His fingers sought that hidden treasure as his cock and the dark tom's dueled against each others body.

He found it wet, dripping, and swollen from all the erotic play.

He flicked a finger gently against the swollen hood and was prepared when Ulysses bucked upward, eyes widening, and crying out in intense pleasure.

The tabby continued his tormenting touch until the tom came with a roar but not his cock which was still hard against the tabby's belly. Chance smirked at his mate.

"Ready for the good stuff, love?" He asked, hotly.

Grinning with anticipation, Ulysses growled, "Whenever you're ready!" He challenged him.

Without a word, Chance set to work his mate into a frenzy of need. After bringing his mate to near climax three times and stopping just before either could come, Feral's teeth were clenched and his eyes were wild with need.

"Kat's Alive! Get to it already!"

"Now...now...we're building to the climax slowly so that it's more than we've ever experienced to help keep the memory fresh while we're apart. Now one more time...love..."

Feral groaned with frustration. Chance just smirked though he too was almost frantic to finish too. One more time he brought them to near completion before pulling back again.

This time he nearly ruined it by coming himself but he just managed to hold himself back for a count of five before plunging finally into the hot hearth of his mate's female sheath.

As he set a punishing pace, his mate reared up and clutched the tabby to him as the glorious sensations rose higher and higher until he came with a scream and felt the tabby come at the same time, his cock pulsating within Feral's womb and setting off more waves of pleasure...it was unreal.

Finally the wild quivering of his womb slowed and he was left with a marvelous endorphin high. Chance had collapsed atop his broad chest and lay breathing harshly. Their hearts drummed a fast rhythm through their chests.

When he could breath a little easier, Chance discovered he was still little hard so experimentally moved to see how his partner would react.

A jolt of pleasure raced through Feral. His eyes widened with surprise and his breath caught. Grinning wickedly, the tabby began to move his hips again, but more slowly this time, while leaning close so he could give his mate more passionate kisses.

It took a bit longer to reach a climax but, if anything, it was far stronger than the first one had been. They howled their completion then went limp with exhaustion. Feral blearily stared at the clock over Chance's shoulder...it was going on four a.m.

He groaned. "We're going to be tired when we get up but it was soo worth it," he murmured into his tired mate's ear. Chance just smiled, caressed his mate's cheek then slide into exhausted slumber still within his mate's body. Not caring, Feral nuzzled Chance's face and let sleep drag him down, body wrapped in the one he loved.

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Chapter 31: Getting Legal Advice by ulyferal

Monday morning found Callie knee deep in projects, (the city's and her secret ones) and the normal workload of running the city. That was after she'd run a bug check first, got some coffee, then locked her door and warned her secretary she was not to be disturbed.



For the next blissful and busy hours, she managed to finish the normal morning correspondence, did some research on her special projects, and was presently working through the calls she had to make. What made things infinitely easier, was his honor, the mayor, had already left to go golfing by late morning and hadn't brought anything to her. She counted that as a huge blessing.

Just before lunch, a satisfied, Callie hung up the phone on the last call of the morning. Studying her two lists, she quickly recapped what was discussed, adding notes where required, for her records.

The first list was city business and took her only minutes to finish up and place in her suspense file. The second list, however, dealt with her secret projects and had been made on her cell phone for security reasons. This she went over more carefully, checking to see if she missed anything and adding notes for follow ups.

Her first call had been to her personal lawyer. She'd been lucky to catch Bryant Clount between court cases and quickly laid out Jake's project without going into too many specifics nor his identity. Despite the lack of pertinent information, Clount's curiosity was piqued.

"Why won't you tell me who this bright person is? Why all the secrecy?" He asked.

"The person and the project will be big news when it's released to the public and there are other issues as well which I won't discuss on the phone. Sorry for the all the cloak and dagger stuff but when you hear what I have to say you'll understand. My office isn't secure enough for this conversation so why don't you come by my apartment around one today."

"Your home?" He blurted, stunned. Briggs was notorious for protecting her privacy. "And why the urgency?"

"Again, I can't discuss it. Just trust me...can you make it?"

"Just a moment while I check ... I had a few cancellations..." he hummed to himself a moment.

"We're in luck ... I have nothing until very late this afternoon. Give me your address, please..."

She rattled it off. "I'll see you there and will even provide lunch."

"Why thank you. Looking forward to it. Later then..." He disconnected the call.

She smiled in triumph at succeeding in getting him interested enough to put up with her being secretive but, then, that was why he was her lawyer.

Pausing a moment in thought, she frowned as she realized just how much more involved Bryant would have to be once he was briefed on what was required.

Shaking her head and sighing, Callie hated to have to reveal Jake's secret but as they'd discussed on Saturday, there really wasn't any way around it if they wanted all loopholes and problems solved from the beginning.

In her mind, she remembered what Jake had said at the beginning of their relationship and he'd asked advice from Professor Hackle. The inventor's response was a true gem. *"You must trust someone, sometime, my young friend. I know your secret is how you keep you and those close to you safe but eventually you do need others in your life."* The old scientist had been very right.

With most of the city's worst enemies no longer a real problem, Jake and Chance being taken back into the Enforcers with a new mission, the SWAT Kats slowly transitioning back into mainstream society, a new business venture beginning, and her running for mayor, they'd all acquired many new responsibilities. That meant a greater need to add a wider circle of people to help them. This necessitated more people knowing the big secret they were hiding. So how many were too many?

Right now, there was the therapist, Feral, and herself. She'd already been thinking Professor Hackle, Dr. Conway, and Mr. Young should be clued in because of their active involvement in the new project. And because of his vital role in insuring all this got set up legally ... Clount. Additionally, her new assistant and campaign manager (if they weren't the same person) would have to be included.

She sighed and shook her head, already the list longer than she liked but there was absolutely nothing they could do about it.

I guess it's a good thing the two are slowly getting out of the hero business now that they're back in the Enforcers. It's just sad they have to give it up sooner than they had wanted. Oh well, it is what it is, as Jake would say when he is being his most pragmatic.

Thinking about her lover made her smile. Saturday night and Sunday had been glorious. It was a shame Monday had to come and spoil it with reality. Already she missed him and would worry when he and Chance went undercover.

At least she knew she could defend herself while he was occupied. She'd already been assured she was proficient in using a mini-glovetrix and in hand-to-hand combat. Additionally, therapy and defense training had made sure the four of them were ready for anything, both emotionally and physically and turned them into a cohesive fighting team.

When she had finished the grueling training, the praise from her lover had made her warm and happy but it was the unexpected praise from Ulysses that had surprised and pleased her more. He'd told her he felt confident and safe having her watch his back. That was high praise indeed from someone who rarely gave such a thing to anyone.

Succeeding in becoming a team was timed well. When the shit storm hit, after she announced her political intentions, their friendship and love would be all that stood between them and the unrelenting pressure of an already tainted election.

That last fact rankled her. To know Megakat City had been undergoing a systematic invasion right under their very noses! It should have been a simple, straight forward, election, but no...they now had to weed out the spidery organization that had made deep inroads while the defenders attentions had been elsewhere. It was just aggravating.

Okay, enough wool gathering, I have other things that need doing, she chided herself.

Studying her list again, she made a special note next to the item about Frostburn. She had a contact she trusted, within the Council Archives and Files Section. Warning him to secrecy, she asked Joshua to dig out anything, no matter how small, about the Jackal Construction Company (one of Frostburn's shadow companies that had been associated with the two dirty councilors). She stressed the importance that he not be discovered doing this. He'd given her a knowing look and promised to get to it immediately. She suspected he might already be aware of something not quite right going on and that was why he was so willing to keep it secret.

The next thing on her list still rankled her. As she'd told Ulysses, she still couldn't find an assistant. All her personal contacts had come up empty. She hadn't thought it would be easy but a sudden dearth of assistants was totally unexpected and a bit suspicious.

She had a bad feeling her hidden competitor had already grabbed up the best in town or scared them off, leaving behind the barely trained, the slightly tarnished, and the downright incompetent. So she was grateful to Ulysses for the suggestion to ask Mr. Young. Speaking of which, that was her next call. She looked at her watch and saw it was just the start of the day for him in his time zone. Perfect!

Setting her list down, she pulled out her cell and speed dialed Mr. Young's personal number he'd

given her. After four rings, he answered, sounding fresh and alert despite how early it was in his part of the world.

"Hello, Ms. Briggs, what can I do for you?"

"I hope I didn't catch you at a bad time..."

"No, your timing is impeccable as I am between meetings."

"Excellent. I need a personal meet to bring you up to date on the latest developments here and I need your help finding an assistant and someone for that other thing I had mentioned to you or someone who can do both. Seems someone has been grabbing qualified people up rather quickly around here." She was deliberately vague to prevent the wrong people listening in. Even though she'd checked for bugs, there was no reason to be careless now.

Knowing how precarious her position was, Mr. Young had no problem divining what she didn't say and be able to answer her in the same manner.

"Hmm, not a good situation and very suspicious. However, it is not insurmountable. It so happens, I might have the perfect persons. And may I say, fortune smiles on us both as I am scheduled to be in Megakat City on Wednesday this week. I suggest we meet at our favorite spot for lunch," he said warmly. "As for your request, allow me to speak with my prospects first before committing them to anything and if everything works out, I'll bring them to our meeting. Will that do?"

"Oh, definitely. You are wonderful for making the effort on my behalf and I'm very pleased that our schedules are going to work for this," Callie said, relieved and pleased they could meet much sooner than she'd hoped.

"Not at all. But save your thanks for when I am successful, Ms. Briggs and I am always pleased to be of assistance to you at any time. See you later this week," Mr. Young said warmly.

"Then I will wish you a successful hunt and see you then. Farewell." They both hung up. She wrote down the meeting date under the item on her list and sighed.

Since her first meeting with Mr. Young, they'd been working closely for weeks after on the project and campaign, forming a close friendship rather than what they really were ... business partners. He was a good listener, sharp observer, and she dearly loved his dry wit. He also had a core of steel and could be ruthless. She pitied anyone who underestimated him and was very glad he was firmly on her side. She couldn't wait to see him later this week.

Checking the time on her wristwatch, she saw it was time to leave for her meeting with her lawyer. Perfect! She tucked her secret list into her briefcase then gathered her other sensitive papers and shoved them into the case as well, leaving her daily office work on her desk to wait for her return.

Pulling out her purse from the bottom drawer of her desk, she flicked her computer off and stood up, absently tugging her clothing straight before heading out the door.

"Angie, I've got a personal meeting to attend. Be back around two thirty or so," she told her secretary as she passed by.

"Yes ma'am."

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She stopped at her favorite Thai restaurant and picked up the take out she'd ordered while she was driving to their location. Hot food making her borrowed car smell heavenly, she made her

way through midday traffic with practiced ease. She had to admit, the ugly little blue car did drive like a dream but she'd be glad when she was able to get herself one that suited her station.

As she approached her building, she saw her lawyer was leaning against his car and watching the traffic, hoping to spot her. However, since she wasn't in her normal sedan, he never glanced her way as she drove past him into the underground parking garage.

Pulling into her parking spot, she cut the engine. Reaching beside her, she grabbed her case, the take out bags, and pulled her purse strap over her arm then got out, locking the door behind her. Her heels made a loud tack-tack sound on the cement flooring as she walked briskly to the elevator. Stepping into the waiting car she pressed the button for the lobby.

"Hello, Ms. Briggs," the guard said when he saw her step from the elevator.

"Hello Reggie. See the tom standing out there?" She pointed outside the lobby doors. He nodded. "That's my lawyer. Would you escort him in please."

"Certainly ma'am." The powerfully built guard went past her and out the door. He spoke only a moment to Clount then turned and led the tom inside.

"Thank you Reggie," Callie said, warmly. The guard nodded with a smile then returned to his post while she turned and stepped back into the waiting elevator.

"I'm sorry but I didn't see you arrive," her lawyer apologized as he joined her in the car.

"No worries, Bryant. You wouldn't have known but my car is kaput and I'm using a loner." She hit the button for her floor.

"Oh, back in the shop again?" He asked solicitously, aware of her problems with her old sedan.

"No. It's had it and I'm in the market for a new one but haven't the time to hunt right now. Besides, it serves a purpose right now."

He frowned in confusion but when she didn't elaborate he kept silent and changed the subject. "Hmm! Something smells mighty good and spicy if I don't miss my guess," he said, grinning.

"It's Thai! My favorite. So glad you could make the time for me. I know it was a rather sudden request."

"I could hardly refuse when you hand me such an interesting mystery. Can't wait to hear what it is," he said, arching a curious eyebrow at her.

He was a handsome tom of medium built, dressed in a dark blue pinstriped suit paired with a baby blue silk dress shirt. The color matched his silver and black striped fur beautifully. He had a full head of black, slightly wavy hair that he wore to his collar, which gave him a rather rakish air.

She had liked him instantly when she'd been introduced during one of the many fund raisers high society attended. They'd hit it off immediately but it wasn't attraction, much to her relief. They were just very compatible in their thinking which made doing business much easier. It didn't hurt, he was brilliant in his field and scrupulously honest. They'd been associated for more than four years now and she trusted him implicitly.

They reached her apartment without meeting anyone, the richly carpeted hall of burgundy muffled their footsteps so only silence greeted their ears. He graciously took the bags of food so she could fish her keys out of her purse and open the door.

"Just go on through and put it on the dining room table, Bryant. I need to clean up ... will only be a

moment."

"I'd be happy to ... take your time," he said equitably. He walked past the hallway she turned down and went through the beautifully decorated living room and on through an archway that led to a simple but elegant dining room. He could see the kitchen as he placed the bags on the breakfast bar. It was state of the art and had a skylight that made it very bright. She obviously enjoyed plants because there were many dotted around the place giving it a very warm and inviting feeling.

He pulled his suit jacket off and hung it on one of the bar stools then opened the bags and set the food containers on the dining room table. She joined him only moments later, going past him into the kitchen to retrieve some silverware and plates. Returning, she handed them to him to set out at each place setting.

"Would you like a white wine, water, coffee, or milk?" She asked returning to the kitchen to get some glasses.

"Milk please, it'll cut the spice for me."

"Certainly." She poured him a large tumbler full then filled a glass flute with her favorite wine and returned to the table, handing him his glass while putting hers next to her plate.

They both sat then served up the hot food. They kept the conversation on inconsequential things, tacitly agreeing to leave the more serious discussion for afterward. Fifteen minutes later, they finished.

"That was excellent. Here let me help clear the table," he offered, standing and reaching for the plates.

"Thank you."

In minutes they were finished tidying up, placing the dishes in the dishwasher then heading with the refilled glasses for the living room.

Her briefcase was on the coffee table and his was behind the couch. They each retrieved their cases and sat down on the couch to set to work. Callie opened her case, pulled out a folder, and handed it off to Clout.

He accepted it with a nod and pulled out a large tablet and pen from his case then began to read the prospectus for the project. She sipped her wine and let him be.

His expression was amazed and excited when he finished. Tapping the folder he said, "This is utterly amazing and if it wasn't you bringing this to me, I would have said you were crazy but obviously you've done your homework and know this is possible. Sounds fantastic but I can see why Commander Feral would be leaping for joy for something like this. So who is the finder of this unique system?" He asked.

"Razor..."

Bryant's eyes widened in shock. "The SWAT Kat?"

She couldn't help but chuckle a little at his gobsmacked expression. "You heard right! The system and other tech was given to him by the alien visitors we had last year. The ones called The Loonatics."

"I thought that was a hoax of some kind. I mean who would call themselves that?" He shook his head in disbelief.

"I don't blame you, it does sound weird but then they were very weird people. However, they were very nice and extremely intelligent. But what was more wonderful was their willingness and generosity in giving us schematics of their incredibly advanced technology," she said, smiling broadly.

"But there's even more we got that we didn't even realize ... listen as I tell you of what's been going on these past few months and why you're needed."

Over the next thirty minutes, Callie gave her lawyer a thumbnail briefing of her meeting with Mr. Young, what the tom had told her about their system's other possible applications and his willingness to be one of its backers, then went on to explain what this would mean to the Enforcers and covered more about the project itself. However, she kept her plans to run for mayor to herself for a bit. She felt she'd given him enough to think about for the moment.

Clount listened, his expression incredulous, but he didn't interrupt. When she finally stopped talking, he could only shake his head in disbelief.

She reached for her wine and drank some while she waited for him to absorb this fantastic development.

Her lawyer turned his gaze to a lovely painting of a sea scene on the wall behind her as he tried to get a grip on what he'd heard. After a good five minutes of cogitation, he finally turned back to her and smiled broadly.

"If anyone else was telling me this I would have them committed but I know you and I have to say this is the most incredible thing I've ever heard. I want in. I can see the applications that Mr. Young mentioned and this is going to be huge if it tests out like everyone hopes."

Then his face fell into more serious lines as he leaned closer to her and asked, "The declaration of finder and getting the patent for Razor will be fairly straight forward and won't be questioned except for the fact that is not his real name but if he uses his new corporation name instead ... and I would highly recommend he do that ... then there won't be a problem. But what I need to know before we move forward with this is what you've done so far."

Callie smiled in relief. She had harbored a small doubt that he'd been willing to do something this involved but now that he was fully committed to help, the first hurdle had been passed now to dump the rest on him. Pulling out her notes, she went over all the things she'd begun to accomplish so far.

He listened closely and asked lots of questions while taking reams of notes himself.

"You've done a very good job in covering all aspects of what's needed, Callie. Thank you. That makes my job simpler. However, there is one very big snag..."

Callie nodded. Now we get to the shock factor. Hope he doesn't have a heart attack when I drop the bomb.

"Yes, I know, the fact the CEO and head of the project is a SWAT Kat. Even though we can get past that for the patent, I know it won't fly when the board of directors is set up and the project is begun and especially when the Enforcers and city hall become involved."

Clount nodded.

"That actually isn't the real problem," Callie stated bluntly ignoring the surprised look on Bryant's face as she pushed on. "His real name *will* be on all the documents but due to security reasons that fact will have to remain a secret until the project is actually ready to be built. Right now the building isn't even in the Enforcer's paws and won't be for at least another week then clean out will have to be done and that's estimated to take a month."

Bryant's mouth dropped open. "The SWAT Kats are coming out?"

"Yes ... eventually but not right now," she stressed. "For the moment, only a small group of trusted individuals are in the know and we need to keep it that way until I give the go ahead."

"Then I'm not to be included?"

"Oh no, you most definitely are going to be added to our small circle as well as possibly three or four others. We all know how important it is for you to be completely on board and in the know if you're to do what we need you to do. But I can't stress enough how important it is that what I tell you remain a secret until I say otherwise," she said, her expression grim.

Her lawyer eyed her, his own face matching hers but with a touch of trepidation. He felt like he was about to step off a cliff here. Knowing the identities of the SWAT Kats was like a loaded gun and it sent a chill up his spine to be trusted with something so important and deadly.

Clearing his throat, he said with some gravity, "I understand completely. But before you impart something so dire, are you totally certain your apartment is truly secure and not bugged?"

"Believe me, not even the best spy out there could break the security on my apartment because the smartest and brightest techie alive set up my security system and even monitors me 24/7," she told him.

Bryant blinked in surprise but still wasn't assured. "And this person is trustworthy?"

"Oh yes ... definitely because he's Razor ... and my lover.

"You're joking?" Her lawyer blurted then blushed in embarrassment at his reaction. "Of course, you're not. I'm speechless. That is why you know who he is, right?" She nodded.

"Then you also know who his partner is as well?" He asked warily.

"Yes and so do you."

Clount blinked in confusion. She said nothing, taking a sip of her wine and watching him. He thought hard. He had heard she was seeing someone ... wait the ball ... the scandal of who Commander Feral's mate was and that his partner and friend was squiring Callie ... crud!"

His head jerked up and he gaped at her. "OMG! Feral is mated to a SWAT Kat and you're dating one!"

"You got it in one," she said, mildly amused.

"How the hell does he manage to keep that to himself?"

"By not flaunting his mating publically. He and Chance keep a very low profile or hadn't you noticed?"

"Well, now that you've mentioned it, yeah, and so have you come to think of it. If you hadn't reminded me of that high society scandal I wouldn't have connected the two." He shook his head. "He must be walking on egg shells all the time as his Enforcers would crucify him if they found out."

"He is indeed but he's working hard to fix that problem. So, you see why I said it must be kept secret for now?"

"Oh yes, definitely," Bryant said, pulling at his necktie as if it was strangling him then hurriedly went back to the main subject of this discussion as the last few minutes were far too disturbing for

him.

"Okay, I can do this. All I have to do is draw up all the paperwork needed without putting his name on any of it but when we get ready to file it into the public documents, I will have to do some fancy subterfuge to keep the county clerk from not paying too much attention to the names and make sure he files it immediately so it doesn't sit out for unwanted eyes to see and definitely no announcements...that's optional and we'll use that..." he said more to himself than her as he quickly took notes for himself.

"I appreciate that you've already gotten the technical and business side of it plotted out," he continued briskly, more comfortable now that he was on familiar ground. "I'll help you with the contractual documents, business setup, and getting the patent filed and secured. However, what needs to be done right before this system and company are announced is to show the new state of cooperation between the Enforcers and the SWAT Kats. Commander Feral will have to come up with a creative way to allow the pair to be acceptable under the eyes of the law. They are supposed to be on the wrong side...so to speak."

"Don't worry, that's what I meant when I said Commander Feral was already working on that. And I pray the two of them don't get themselves killed while they're doing it for him."

"They're already on a mission? But how will that help them be accepted by the Enforcers?"

"Because it's connected with something else you need to know ... I'm announcing my candidacy for mayor."

Clount gaped at her then shook his head. "Anything else you want to drop on me?" He asked rather wild eyed. This was getting to be quite the bomb-filled meeting.

She sighed, her expression going grim which made him tighten with apprehension. He wasn't sure he could take any more surprises.

In grim tones, Callie bluntly laid out the sordid details on what they suspected Mob Boss Frostburn had done and what, at the present, was being done to deal with it.

"Obviously, I'm under surveillance by both the enemy and the good guys trying to keep me safe."

Clount's expression became as grim as hers by the time she'd finished.

"Frostburn! I've heard rumors about him. What an opportunist bastard. While the omegas were ripping us apart, he was working hard to take this city down from inside."

"My sentiment exactly," Callie said sourly.

"Well, I'm glad you found out in time to do something about it and that you and Feral are on such good working terms now. That can only benefit the city in cleaning house. It's just unfortunate Frostburn managed to get so deeply entrenched that it will take some good hard evidence to dig him out."

"I know and I'm glad to say, Commander Feral is working on that right now. He wants the criminal out before he can do anymore harm or prevent a legitimate election from taking place."

"Good to know." Clount nodded. "You say security around you has been tightened, by who? I didn't see anyone physically guarding you."

She smiled coldly. "Oh, they're there never fear. I can't see them either but Feral has his most elite team of black ops dogging my steps, plus, of course, the security Razor has set up around me here at home, at work, and even in my car. Add to that, I've recently completed a grueling self defense training program and have been declared capable of taking care of my own safety and I



am always armed. So, as you can see, I've done everything I can to protect myself so when I announce my candidacy for mayor, I'll be ready for most anything."

His eyebrows rose to his hairline as she mentioned defense training, being armed, and having her very own black ops team shadowing her.

"Well, I'll admit you're more covered than the United Nation's President. That makes me feel better. So, have you managed to find a campaign manager and maybe an assistant to take the load off you?"

"Not yet but I have someone looking into it for me. I'm hoping he's successful and I'll have someone by this Wednesday."

Clount nodded, looking relieved. "Good! But, if you don't mind, I'll keep my eyes open too, just in case your contact doesn't pan out. As for the rest, you've certainly given me a lot of dangerous stuff to deal with here, Callie."

"I know but I can't think of anyone who can handle adversity like you," she said with a wane smile.

Clount simply rolled his eyes and snorted. "Seems this city just can't catch a break," he mused.

"Those were Chance's exact words when we found out. So Feral is already working to locate all the bodies so they can be yanked out but it will take time and great care so as not to tip them off before he moves in."

"Ahh...so his secret weapons have gone undercover to do this..." Bryant leaped to the right conclusion as to what the former SWAT Kats were doing now to redeem their reputations. "I'm assuming they are now Enforcers once more?"

"Correct."

"So anything else I need to know?" He asked, afraid of the answer.

"No, that's it."

"It's certainly enough. I don't know how you're handling all of this but I can tell you're going to make one kick-ass mayor," he said, smiling wanly.

"Thank you. But first I have to get in the seat."

"Well, I'd be glad to add my contribution to your campaign. Do you have a manager yet?"

"No but Mr. Young is looking into that for me as well as an assistant."

"Excellent. I imagine he has better resources for that too. Is he helping in other ways besides funding the project?"

"Oh yes, he was the first to ask to contribute to my campaign and my lover is going to ask Professor Hackle too but I already know he'll jump on board as he's in my court already. Then there's my lover who'll also be contributing."

"Huh? How's he going to do that when the project is still only on paper?"

"He's an inventor in his own right as Razor. He's been selling his inventions on line for several months now. If he had a portfolio, he'd be in the top 100 Fortune CEO's right now," she said, smirking.

He blinked and shook his head. "Wow, that's amazing and right under everyone's noses too."

Well, you've gotten a great start there, Callie."

He began to tuck his notes and the file copies she'd given him into his briefcase. "You've certainly given me plenty to do, Callie, and I think to do this properly, I'm going to have to close some cases quickly and stop taking any new clients. This calls for my complete attention."

"Oh my! That's a lot of confidence you're placing in me to win, Byrant," Callie said, surprised and pleased at how far he was willing to go.

"Having you mayor will be a great boon to this city, Callie. Then there's how rich I can become being apart of this new project and don't forget how much it will help my reputation. I'd be a fool to pass this up no matter how dangerous it might get. But truthfully, in the end it's the excitement. This will be the most scary fun I've had in ages," He laughed, amazed at himself for doing this.

Callie smiled at him and shook her head. "I hope you don't come to regret that decision but welcome aboard the Callie Express. Fasten your seatbelt! It's going to be a bumpy and dangerous ride."

Bryant raised his glass of wine toward her, she smiled and did the same. They clinked their glasses together.

"To the next mayor of Megakat City!" He said stoutly, downing his drink in one go.

"Thank you, Bryant, cheers!" She did the same. A very successful lunch if I do say myself, she thought, smugly.

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Chapter 32: SWAT Kats Undercover by ulyferal

Leaving their orders from Feral on the desk for Burke and Murray to see, Chance went out the office door and locked it behind him then joined his partner who was waiting in the small, slightly beat up sedan they used for errands.

"Okay, we're set."

"Roger." Jake was the driver and took off through the gate which had to remain open for Burke and Murray to deliver the city's salvage.

"Feels weird doing undercover work and being back in the Enforcers," Chance muttered, staring at the passing scenery.

Jake snorted. "Your real problem with this is not being a pilot. Remember, we did do regular police work on the ground first as rookies before we were promoted to the flight squadrons, buddy."

The tabby rolled his eyes. "Of course I remember and that's not the problem. And besides, I get enough flying time in the Turbokat. No, it's just the thought of trying to work with people who still think we're bad apples even though we never broke the law since we left."

"We were put out for being rebels, Chance, not for breaking the law," Jake reminded him. "That isn't something our peers would forgive or forget."

"And makes them distrustful of us . . . I know buddy. Which is why this mission makes me antsy since I can't be certain our support will be there for us."

"Then we don't rely on them except for those things we have to as part of the mission. We've learned how to be self reliant and if our backups won't do their job because of how they feel about us, then we fall back on ourselves," Jake said, flatly.

"Besides, we're just as good as black ops at sneaking around and digging out information the less than legal way. So this won't be any different except we won't be hiding behind our masks. However, to be on the safe side, we have our secret comm unit with Feral so if the worst happens and our backup fails, we can still get the valuable information to the right paws."

Chance relaxed and nodded. "Yeah, I nearly forgot about that route of communication. I'm glad I gave him one when we mated. He always carries it on him. So the only concern now is getting the dirt on Frostburn and getting it and us out of there with our fur intact."

Jake gave him a grim smile as he turned into the parking garage of Enforcer Headquarters. "You got that right, buddy."

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Two hours later, Chance's jaw was beginning to cramp from how tightly he was keeping it shut so he wouldn't voice his growing ire at the nasty remarks being hurled their way, under many a soft breath because shouting would have been oh-so unprofessional, as they were being prepped for the mission.

As Chance had feared, none of their backup was happy seeing him and Jake nor about them handling such a sensitive op. It was plainly obvious they'd not been forgiven their disgrace and banishment from the Enforcers, nor, he was rather miffed and surprised to learn, about his mating with the Commander.

Crud! You'd think enough time had passed for that not to be an issue any longer, Chance thought, disgusted. But apparently, not by the way he was being given the evil eye.

The cold treatment had begun the moment they'd arrived in the parking garage. Jake had parked in the spot they'd been previously given by Feral. However, before they could exit their vehicle, they were surrounded by the black ops team assigned to this mission.

Signally for Jake to roll down his window, one of the team shoved two black ski masks through as soon as the cinnamon tom complied.

"Put these on then get out," the same tom ordered in a flat tone.

Without commenting, Chance and Jake did as ordered then climbed out of the vehicle and closed the doors. They were immediately surrounded and kept within the center as the group as a whole moved to the nearby elevator. Another member of the team was holding the elevator so no one else would use it or see whom they were escorting. All loaded aboard and one of them press a button for the lower levels of Enforcer Headquarters.

On arrival, the two were kept surrounded and walked down a corridor and stopped at a heavily guarded door. The leader of the group leaned close to say something to one of the guards who nodded and turned to use a special keycard to open the door. As soon as it slid aside the group hustled inside to the large strategy room but kept going until they reached a secured conference room. Once inside, one of them closed and locked the door.

For this mission to work, no one could know the pair had been reinstated so few knew they were here at all except for Feral, this ops team, and the RICO team at the mob boss' house.

The ski masks were yanked off rudely, nearly pulling ears off. They looked around, watching the team settle in chairs or stand against the wall, cold eyes watching their every move. At the far end of the conference table three technicians waited.

"Strip and put those on but leave the shirt off for now," a tom wearing captain's bars, snapped. The rest of the ops team sat in some of the chairs or stood against the wall. All eyes were hostile and cold as they watched the pair.

Without speaking, though they did trade an annoyed glance, Jake and Chance quickly did as ordered, leaving their own clothing on the table. The technicians came up and began fitting them with listening wires.

Chance had a hard time keeping his cool as he held the shirt he'd been given in a tight fist and stared at the far wall as one of the techs worked to make the wire as invisible as he could. All of them were treating him and Jake as if they were criminals and it sucked. Getting into a row might make him feel better but would waste valuable time.

At least, despite their cold manner, the ops team did manage to maintain a professional decorum and did their work briskly and efficiently, though that didn't stop the occasional nasty or snide comment being muttered from the more disgruntled members of the team.

The clothing they now half-wore, were ordinary to the extreme. This was what the thieves wore during the blitz raid some three months ago. The criminals had made themselves appear like the common folk so they blended in. But underneath their attire had been all the high-tech stuff they'd used to cause the ruckus that helped them escape so easily with their loot. Someone had thought out all the details of this caper very carefully. Which meant a really savvy and smart opponent. They would have to be extremely cautious and on their toes all the time to keep from being discovered.

The plan was for them to frequent some of the locations for recruitment they'd managed to squeeze out of only a few of the prisoners. To everyone's surprise, they were the most mundane of places: cafes, restaurants, pool halls that catered to families, pizza parlors . . . which would make infiltrating that much harder.

However, they did get one break. Some of the recruits came from Chance's old neighborhood. This gave him a way in that would seem natural and wouldn't take much time to spread the word about his presence and need for a job. It also was another reason his and Jake's return to the Enforcers had to remain secret as they would present themselves as still very disgruntled with being kicked out.

His mind was brought back to the present by a particularly loud mutter about 'using guys that couldn't follow orders', reaching his ears and making him grit his teeth anew.

We'll show them! He growled to himself. We'll get the job done so well they'll have to believe we're not the same rookies that left disgraced years ago. Especially when the rest of the force learns of what Frostburn's ultimate plan had been for their city. He and Jake would finally redeem themselves in their eyes and, hopefully, they would be better able to deal with the fact we are also the SWAT Kats and not freak out.

Jake wasn't any happier than his partner about their treatment but was better able to ignore all the hurtful remarks and just focus on why he was there.

The two of them were fitted with wires that Jake felt were woefully inadequate but he was smart enough to realize any suggestions on his part would be either ignored or taken as criticism and that he wanted to avoid. When they were out of here, he would quickly upgrade.

"Alright, they're set . . . say something so we can test it . . ." the tech announced.

"Ready to be done with this . . ." Chance growled.

"Testing . . ." Jake said more calmly, giving his partner a warning glance.

Sitting at a mini-command center set up in a corner of this room, another tech gave a nod and fiddled with the dials on his console for a moment before announcing, "We're live, quality's good!"

"Fine. Time for you two to head out then," Captain Refur said coldly.

They pulled on their shirts carefully and this time Chance made the effort to, at least, sound respectful when he responded with a brisk, "Yes, sir!"

The reverse procedure was followed, with their heads again covered with the ski masks, as they were hustled back out to their car. The team melted away quickly leaving the two to leave the garage and head out for the west end of the city. Chance took the wheel this time while Jake fiddled with their wires to improve their reception. Now that their words could be heard, they had to be extremely careful what they said to each other. However, since that could be problematic at times, Jake added a manual cut off switch so they could say something they didn't want any of the Enforcers to hear.

Now their biggest test was getting a job within Frostburn's mob. That was going to take some doing.

Their first stop was Pop's Newsstand. Jake pulled up nearby and waited for Chance to speak to his old friend.

"Hey Pop!"

"Chance . . . Chance Furlong . . . been a long time there, youngster," Pop said in a rather rough voice.

"Not really. Don't you remember, I was by getting my comic just last month," Chance said, smiling warmly at the oldster.

"Ah yeah, you were. But it ain't time for the next edition so what brings you here," Pop asked, sorting some magazines onto his counter as he talked.

"Well, you see, me and Jake need new jobs. We were booted out of the salvage yard and need a new place quick. We heard someone was hiring, some kind of easy work, good money . . . you heard about it?"

Pop stopped what he was doing and eyed the young tom warily and with some distaste. "Don't be looking for easy work . . . that leads to a road full of trouble. You were always a good tom, don't be turning away from that upbringing just cause times are bad for ya!"

Chance put on a fake look of anger and bitterness. "Oh yeah! And what did being good get me? A boot out of the military followed by shit job for something we didn't do. Have you heard about these people or now?" He growled, hating inside to be so nasty to the old tom.

Pop reared his head back and hissed. "If you want to die young than look no further than James Doogan's BBQ place down on 4th!"

Chance nodded his head and turned away.

"Think hard what you're doing Chance! There's no turning back from that bad place!" Pop shouted.

Chance ignored him and climbed into the car. Jake drove off quickly. Neither said anything for some minutes then the tabby muttered, "I hated doing that."

"Yeah, I know, buddy. But think how he'll feel when he learns what we actually did when it all comes out. He'll be grinning from ear to ear and shouting to one and all that he knew the SWAT Kats personally," Jake murmured, comfortingly . . . insuring the wire was off when he said it, first.

"Thanks, buddy."

Jake just smiled then turned the wire back on and continued to drive to their meeting with a possible mob connection.

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