

Summary:

Another in my sequence of stories from Life Changes, my very first story I ever wrote. Feral is pregnant again and an odd crime wave against a single electronics store make for mystery and terror.

Categories: [Swat Kats](#) Characters: Ensemble

Genres: Slash

Warnings: Adult Situations, AU, Explicit Sexual Situations, Hermaphrodite, m/m, WIP

Challenges: None

Series: None

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Chapter 1: Here We Go Again! by ulyferal

As much as I was happy to be expecting again, I conveniently forgot how much trouble being pregnant was. Hiding it was no longer an option this time around. I'm told this happens with succeeding pregnancies.

I was only three months and my stomach sticks out very plainly. I sigh and try to ignore all the odd looks I'm receiving from my enforcers as I walk briskly to the elevator at the start of yet another work day.

"Good morning, Uncle. How are you feeling today and what did the doctor have to say?" Felina asked me as soon as I stepped from the elevator. I had asked her to come by this morning.

"Everything's going well except for looking bigger so early on," I said mildly irritated.

She smiled and followed me into my office. "Well, it is your second, Uncle. That's to be expected. Anyway, what did you need me for this morning." She said, wisely changing the subject.

I grunted and pawed through the reports on my desk that I had left there the night before. After a moments search, I finally unearthed the file I was looking for.

"I need you to check this out. An electronics store owner has complained of serious pilfering going on. Even though he has state of the art security equipment, someone is taking supplies without being captured on the video. Oddly enough the things stolen are used for building electronic devices. The thief ignores all the expensive high end electronics the store is stuffed with. The owner is just as confused as us that stuff one can buy for very little cost was what was stolen," I tell her, still puzzled by this strange case.

"Sounds weird alright," Felina commented, her brow furrowed as she thought about who could

have done this.

"Yeah, just weird enough to make me suspect an omega might be behind it but it doesn't seem to fit any of them. CSI has been over the scene and found nothing. The employees have all checked out and all have airtight alibis. Check it out and if it isn't an omega turn it over to the burglary squad," I ordered her while handing over the case file to her.

Felina reached for the file and glanced through it. "Okay, Uncle, I'll give it a look see. Sounds like an interesting mystery." She flashed me a brief smile as she turned and left my office.

With that problem being dealt with I dug into the pile of other reports on my desk. By the time I look up again, it's nearly lunch time and I yawn unexpectedly. I hate it when I feel so drained even when I've gotten a good night's sleep. I call in my assistant, Sgt Fallon and have him get me some lunch, meanwhile I think I'll take a short nap.

When I awake more than an hour later, my lunch is sitting on my desk in a foam container keeping it warm. I stretch, get up carefully and make for the restroom. Refreshed and really hungry, I return to my desk and gratefully open the box, the delicious odor making me salivate. I dig in eagerly. Finished, the food and nap having given me a second wind, I set to working again.

I leave by quitting time. I no longer stay over time since I have a youngster waiting for me at home and besides, Chance isn't happy about me over extending myself when I'm pregnant. He's right, of course, because this second time around, I tire more quickly.

I sigh happily as I pull into our garage at our hidden home. Stepping into the house, I'm greeted by our two year old kitten, Kiara..

"Mama!" She shrieks in delight and leaps for me.

I smile with joy and catch her small body in my arms. "How is my little one, hmmm?" I purr lovingly at her. Her nanny bot is standing patiently nearby. I signal it to leave, I'll get its update on how my daughter did later this evening.

"Okay...daddy be home soon?" She asks as she gives me a sloppy, wet kiss.

"Oh, I'm sure he'll be along shortly." I soothe her. I carry her to the bedroom and set her down so she can watch me undress. She chatters brightly about her day while I change to more comfortable attire. I glance at her from the corner of my eye as I dress. I'm always amazed that I produced such a little beauty.

Kiara has black hair from me that right now is soft and thick and reaches her little shoulders, green eyes from her father, and a lighter brown body fur (somewhere between I and Chance's colors) and black stripes on her arms and legs, definitely from her father. She'll be a real heartbreaker when she's in her teens and Chance will be trying to beat off the suitors as the doting father he is then again, it just might be me that does the chasing off as well. I smile inwardly at that thought before turning, fully dressed to my still chattering daughter.

"Sounds like you had a lovely, busy day, sweetie. Want to help me make dinner." I ask her warmly, picking her up and heading for the kitchen.

"Yeth! Can me set table." She asks excitedly, bouncing in my arms so I'm forced to put her down.

"Well, the plates are kinda of heavy, honey..." I hesitate while looking through the fridge and cupboard for something to make for dinner.

"Please, mama...me be careful." She pleaded, hovering near my legs.

I sigh and try to think of a way to answer her that won't make her upset when, to my relief, my

mate enters the kitchen. We had failed to hear him come in.

"Daddy!" Kiara shrieks and practically attacks her father.

Chance chuckles, sets something on the counter and sweeps his daughter up into the air, playing airplane with her. That effectively makes her forget about setting the table.

After swinging our daughter in the air a couple of times, Chance cuddles her in his arms and leans close to give me a kiss.

"How are you doing, love?" He asks in concern.

"Tireder than usual but I did take a nap at work so not so exhausted right now." I tell him honestly. Trying to fib or not tell him anything has never worked because he will nag at me till I capitulate...he's a pest that way. It's just much easier to come clean.

"Well that's good. Don't worry about dinner. I picked up something special before coming home." Chance said blithely.

I could smell the food and it did smell good but..."Chance! What did I tell you about having take out so often? It's just not good for Kiara." I growl at him in annoyance.

"Easy, love. It's not just any take out. There's this new place Jake told me about that serves really healthy meals for the busy family. I just wanted to give it a try to see if it will help give you a break." Chance defended himself.

I sigh. It's pointless to argue since the food is right here and I can see Kiara eyeing it hungrily. "Fine. Let's serve up then."

Chance smiles with a hint of a smirk and puts Kiara in her high chair then ties her bib on.

"Ready to eat, sport?" He asks his daughter as he helps serve up the food.

"Yeth! Hungry!" She shouts banging her spoon on her tray.

With a chuckle, he swoops her special dish to her. She stares at the food for a moment, not recognizing anything. Fortunately, she isn't picky and since it smells good she begins to shovel it in.

Chance and I sit down with our filled plates and glasses of milk. He hands Kiara a sippy cup. She gives him a food laden smile and grabs the cup, drinking nosily.

Giving her a tender look, he turns back to me and we talk about our day.

I told him about the odd robbery case that I'd given Felina. He frowns a bit and I can tell he's running through his mind why the thief could be doing this.

"Sounds weird alright and I can't fathom how he or she is getting away with it every time much less why they chose to go to this one place rather than others." He said shaking his head. "But I do have a suggestion you could try."

"What might that be?"

"Jake could rig up a spy eye the crook wouldn't see."

"Hmm, well it's not my case now. Let's wait a bit and see what Felina finds out. If she's still stumped, you can have Jake talk to her."

Felina had known I was mated to T-Bone but hadn't learned their true identities until she began

going with Razor. After they'd been together some months, she managed to discover their secret and mine. She'd been a little put out that we'd kept her in the dark but has since forgiven us. She's still with Jake and they have taken to living together recently.

"Sure, I'll give Jake a heads up about it, but somehow I think Felina may tell him about it and he'll automatically want to help," Chance said in amusement.

"You're probably right," I'm forced to agree, equally amused.

I glance over at Kiara and sigh. My little angel loves her food so much she ends up wearing a goodly portion of it on her face.

Chance looks over too and grins. "I'll take our little messy kitten for her bath and you can do the dishes."

I smile and nod then say before he lifts Kiara from her seat, "by the way, the food was good but I want to make it plain, I don't want this to become a habit," I tell him sternly.

"I promise, love."

Mollified I watch as he removes Kiara's food laden bib and equally messy tray, leaving it for me to clean up. He's learned not to coddle me just because I'm pregnant so doesn't take the chores away from me. However, my body is far too awkward now for me to take care of Kiara at bed time as is my normal routine. On this I bow to necessity.

I smile in amusement as I observe Chance's method of trying to stay clean by holding his daughter a distance from his chest as he walks her toward her bedroom. Kiara thinks this is hilarious and giggles at him while kicking her feet in mirth.

I listen as he coos to her while he's pulling her clothes off then I hear nothing more as he turns the water on in the bathroom and closes the door. I sigh as I climb to my feet and begin to slowly clean up the kitchen and do the dishes.

I'm done before Chance is so I walk down to our bedroom to change for bed. I hear laughter and smile knowing Kiara has most likely splattered bubbles on the wall and herself. His sudden bellow tells me she's also targeted him. She so loves playing with bubbles.

The door of the bathroom opens just a short while later and steam rolls out as damp Chance steps through the door carrying a dry and giggling Kiara wrapped in a towel. They vanish into her room where I hear him talking to her as he prepares her for bed.

I walk down the hall and step in behind him so I can kiss Kiara good night. I watch as Chance dresses her in a sleeper then tucks her into her crib. He leans down and gives her a kiss then moves back so I can do the same.

She gives a tired 'goodnight' as we leave her to sweet dreams.

Chance wraps an arm around my waist and we walk to our bedroom, pushing our door nearly close. I check the baby monitor then pull down the bedding. I groan with relief when I slip into the bed, my feet are aching.

"Sore love?" He asks as he too climbs into the bed and wraps me in his arms.

"Some. My feet get a bit swollen. At least it wasn't too busy a day," I say giving him a kiss and nuzzle.

"If it gets too bad, I'll get some rubbing cream and take care of your feet before you go to bed. Don't want you to have painful feet and be bed ridden. You'd be impossible to live with," he

murmured, I could just sense the smirk he sported.

I snorted but said mildly, "maybe I'll just let you do that."

"Anything you need, love," he said in a more serious voice.

I smile in the dark, "I know and that's why I love you so."

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Chapter 2: A Dangerous Fool by ulyferal

The next morning, I rose still tired. Sighing, this is the part of pregnancy I really hate. It doesn't help that Kiara has a doctor's appointment this morning that will disrupt my work day. What I didn't know yet was my day was going to get much worse.

Felina told me later what she and Jake had discovered last night that could have prevented the heartache, exhaustion, and fear I was to face over the next twelve hours.

As it was, I went to work blissfully unaware with a bouncy toddler tagging along to the office. Her appointment was within two hours so I figured I'd take her rather than try and go home to retrieve her. The trouble began when, after working diligently for more than an hour, I and Kiara were heading to the parking garage to my vehicle and were accosted by a rather plain looking grey tom with a sad but determined look on his face. Alarms went off in my head but it was too late for us to retreat.

I really wished I'd known what Felina did before this terrible moment.

Night before...

Felina sighed and rubbed her poor abused eyes. It was obvious she wasn't going to get through all the surveillance tapes today but she felt she was on to something and was loathed to stop.

After pouring through the file her uncle had given her, she had decided to check the store out personally but except for the minor pilferage, all she found was a well secured place of business. Frustrated, she decided to review the daily surveillance tapes rather than night security cams to see if their perpetrator might have come in and cased the place before robbing it.

Hours of viewing boring tapes had, so far, produced nothing but eyestrain. She decided to pack it in for now and take them home. Perhaps Jake would spot something she had missed.

Getting home before Jake, she dropped her backpack of work on the coffee table and made for the bedroom. She wanted a hot shower to try and refresh her before figuring out what to make for dinner.

By the time she reentered the living room, heading for the kitchen, the front door of their apartment opened and Jake walked in. He was carrying something in his paw that smelled delicious.

"Hey love," he said warmly, coming close and giving her a firm kiss on the mouth.

"Hmm, hey yourself. Whatcha got in the bag?"

"Food from that new place I was telling you about...the one with the healthy menu. I talked Chance into picking some up for Ulysses as well," Jake grinned, heading for the kitchen with Felina trailing after him.

"Wow, for healthy food, that smells really good," Felina admitted, going to the cabinet for cups, plates, and silverware.

"Yeah, it does and it's making me ravenous."

Several minutes later they were chowing down and talking about their day. Felina brought Jake up to speed on the case she was working on.

"I can do some scanning if you want to rest those peepers, love," he agreed, seeing how tired she looked.

"Thanks, I figure a new set of eyes just might see what I'm missing," she sighed, clearing the table then beginning to wash the dishes.

Jake ambled out into the living room and collected the tapes from Felina's backpack. He took them over to her computer. Warming up the PC, he looked over the dates on the discs and picked out ones that were closer to the reported thefts to look at.

When Felina joined him he'd gone through three tapes and was on the fourth, a frown on his face.

"Find anything?" She asked, standing behind him and staring at the screen.

"Perhaps..." Jake said slowly, "look here..." he pointed at the screen. "See this guy...now watch him closely..."

"What the...is he doing what I think he's doing and how did I miss this?" Felina said in annoyed frustration.

Jake froze the image and stared at the non-descript gray tom. "It's strange but this guy is so plain and quiet seeming that I bet he could just be standing next to us and we wouldn't notice him at all. I think that fact is why he was able to get away with stealing what he wanted with no one being the wiser."

"But I looked at these tapes and still missed this..."

"I know love. Like I said he's just so unassuming you just don't focus on him. I nearly missed him myself except for the fact he kept showing up in the tapes so I slowed them down and re-looked. In every one of the tapes, he stole something. He's your thief and he's doing it in broad daylight," Jake said, shaking his head amazed this guy was able to get away with stealing and no one noticed.

"Well damn! Get up Jake, I want to run him through the data banks at headquarters," she growled, taking the seat as soon as he left it.

She froze the image, blew it up then ran the face through the enforcer data banks. Nothing came up. "He's not there!"

"Guess he's never really gotten in trouble," Jake mused, he froze suddenly, something that had been niggling the back of his mind was now clamoring for attention. He hurriedly went to Felina's pack, pulled out the report then quickly pawed through it.

"What is it? What's wrong?" Felina asked, confused as she watched her lover find what he was looking for and scanning it frantically.

A look of horror spread across Jake's face as he put the pieces together. He turned to Felina and said in a hushed voice, "what this guy stole can be used to make a bomb..."

"What?" Felina shouted, gaping at him in shock. "Jake, we had experts look over all that stuff and they said it could make all manner of electronic doohickeys but none of it dangerous. How the heck do you get a bomb out of this stuff?"

"Trust me, as someone who has to make stuff from salvage and junk, all these components can be used to make a small personal bomb. It's not big enough to bring down a building but it is large enough to commit suicide and/or kill someone else with you," Jake told her grimly. "Honey, you have to find this guy before he finds his target...whoever the unlucky soul is!"

Present time...

Apparently, I was the unlucky soul.

I had just placed Kiara in her carseat and cinched her in then backed out and closed the door, preparing to go to the driver's door, when the odd tom came around the rear and halted me.

"Commander Feral!"

I startled and whirled around, ready to defend myself. But just as I had turned to face him, the tom opened his coat to reveal a bomb tied to his torso. My heart leaped to my throat and I froze.

"What do you want with me?" I asked carefully, keeping my paws away from my body to show I wasn't threatening him.

"I want to be noticed! I'm tired of being ignored even when I'm standing right before a person. I figured if I take someone as important as you, people would finally notice me!" He said calmly but firmly.

I could only gape at him in shock. 'How the heck do I get out of this and insure Kiara's safety?' I thought frantically.

Before I could make a plan of any kind he dashed my most immediate one which was to abandon Kiara and get this guy away from her.

"Give me your keys and get into the passenger side. Don't try anything stupid or we're both dead right here," the tom said in that same calm tone.

Swallowing my fear, I carefully retrieved my keys and handed them to him. He took them and waited until I went to the passenger side and climbed in. It wasn't until I'd put my seatbelt on that he finally climbed in himself. He didn't put a belt on as he started the vehicle and drove slowly out of the garage.

God only knew where he was taking us!

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Chapter 3: The Search is On by ulyferal

Felina's POV...

When Jake said this guy was making a bomb, my heart leaped in fear. We had to find this guy so sleep was out of the question. Jake understood and wished me good luck and a kiss goodbye.

I headed out immediately and made for headquarters. Once there, I went to the duty officer and ordered the search for my suspect to be upgraded to priority one and put the bomb squad on alert. I also had the CSI section lift the pic of the suspect from the security tapes and had flyers made ASAP. All shifts were given the newly printed image and patrols began their search using the store the guy robbed as a starting point, spreading out from there. We hoped someone had seen him around.

I should have contacted my uncle as well, but I'd seen how tired he was earlier that day and could not, in good conscious, bother him when he desperately needed sleep. I would tell him in the morning what I'd found out.

Right now it was more important that we find this guy. I went out with one of the team's and we began our search. I was really glad the omegas were quiet right now. Having a suicidal bomber wandering around was enough for me handle right now.

The evening was still young when we got our first break. One of the patrols got a hit. I raced out to a pharmacy our guy frequented, which, to my surprise, was within a mile of the store he robbed so frequently.

According to the pharmacist, the guy's name was Warren Eymer, he came to get his anti-depressant drugs on the first of the month like clockwork and he lived at 4010 Katz La Reu Place, just four blocks away.

Because of the danger the tom posed, I was able to get a warrant to search his home in under ten minutes then we raced to the suspect's apartment.

Eymer lived in an old five story brick apartment house that had seen better days. When the super opened the door for us, we found a neat and simply decorated space. Eymer didn't own much and apparently liked to read by the number of books in the large bookcase in the living room.

What got my attention was how neat and tidy the place was...a little too neat; the dishes were done, the bed made, trash emptied, clothes washed and hung and not even a note left behind. Something about that bothered me but I couldn't figure out why. I pushed that thought aside and made for a simple PC he had set up in a corner and I sat down to boot it up.

A bit of poking around and I found several bookmarks he'd made on some How-To diagrams for making a bomb. I hissed in anger which brought Det. Rankler over to see what had me upset.

"What's wrong Lieutenant?"

"This is unbelievable! Anyone can check the internet and make this if they have the smarts and our perp obviously does!"

"Yeah, scares the hell out of me about that kind of stuff too. But, hey...what can we do about it? Use of the internet is free to anyone. There's just no way to put a stop to this 'how to' stuff that can teach poor smucks how to do just about anything they want including how to commit suicide to making a bomb," Rankler said, giving a helpless shrug as he agreed with her.

"I know but it's just so frustrating," I sighed, annoyed. "Well, there's nothing more to find here. I'm going to check out the shrink. You guys go and roust Eymer's boss and co-workers, pump them for anything that can tell us where this guy is now. Let CSI go over this...we have a suicide bomber to find," I sighed, getting up from the computer, leaving it on for the lab guys.

"Yes, ma'am. See you back at the office," Rankler said as he signaled the others to follow him out.

I paused and gave the room one more look before turning away to leave, locking the door after me. As I drove uptown, I thought about how clean and tidy the apartment looked. It disturbed me because it clearly looked like Eymer didn't plan on returning...ever. Not good and that's what had bothered me in the first place.

The clock was ticking against us. We had to find him before some innocent became a statistic. I hoped his shrink could shed some light on this guy's personality. Thinking about what little I'd been told about this meek, mouse of a guy, I wondered what life must have been like for someone who was ignored or overlooked all the time? Wouldn't they develop an inferiority complex the size of the enforcer building? It certainly seemed to fit the profile of a recluse who might have snapped at last and was driven to **make** people notice him while he took himself out of the world with a bang.

I'd heard of other people who were unnoticeable but those people made a living doing contract killing and made an art of being invisible. However, I knew this poor sap didn't fit the profile of an assassin

It took me an hour to locate the shrink who was out to dinner at a swank restaurant and wasn't happy to be pulled away from his guests by an enforcer.

"I'm sorry to be ruining your little celebration, doctor, but one of your patients has made himself a walking bomb and I need to find him before he picks a target," I told him point blank. The tom's face went pale at the news.

"Impossible! I don't have any patients that dangerous or suicidal," he objected, his eyes flicking to his guests and back nervously.

"According to the bottle of pills we found, Mr. Warren Eymmer is a patient of yours and we know for a fact he's built a bomb and that he intends to take his life and someone else's to finally make people see him," I said flatly. "So where do you think he is and who do you think might be his target?"

He gaped at me in utter shock. "But...but...that's impossible...Warren is too timid to do something like that..."

"And I'm telling you he has been definitely identified as the one who stole all the parts necessary to build a bomb and there was a diagram on how to do it on his computer. I don't have time for your to keep denying what is fact. I need to know what you know about this guy now!" I growled, getting annoyed by his obstinacy. "And don't pull that patient/doctor privilege on me unless you want to be sued by the survivors he leaves behind when he sets off that bomb."

The doctor's shuddered at that harsh truth and caved. I could see he was still having problems accepting this person could do such a thing but he stopped arguing with me about it.

"God, I just don't see how he would even be capable of something so horrible but since you know for certain it's him, all I can tell you is Warren has a terrible self-esteem problem. He's so painfully shy that he's made himself invisible but despite more than two years of therapy, I haven't been able to convince him, he's the one who must change. He just doesn't believe it will matter."

He sighed and shook his head, "Warren firmly insists the world hates him and ignores his needs and wants deliberately." He paused to think about the last few sessions he'd had with the insecure tom. Frowning, he suddenly remembered something odd Warren had said recently. "There was something...but I didn't pay too much attention as he's said it far too often."

"What did he say," I jumped on that instantly.

"He said, if he did something spectacular and made sure someone important was with him, no one would ever forget or ignore him again. He'd said things like that in one form or another throughout the years I'd seen him. I never dreamed he would actually decide to do it."

"Did he say anyone in particular?"

"I'm sorry, no. Never anyone in particular, just someone important. Will that be enough to help you find him?" the doctor asked, anxiously.

"I don't know. There are a lot of people that qualify as 'important' around Megakat City. It will be hard to determine who he could possibly mean, specifically," I sighed, frustrated. "Thanks for your assistance doctor, I may need to talk to you later. Where can I get a hold of you?"

"Oh, yes, certainly," the doctor pulled out a business card from his wallet, gave me a grave nod. "I truly hope you find him before he harms anyone, Lieutenant." Then he turned to go back to his

guests.

I left to go back to enforcer headquarters. I'd been at this all night long and the sun was already up. I hoped my teams had better luck than I had. Arriving some twenty minutes later, I went down to the CSI labs to see if they'd gotten anything from Eymer's work place or home but I was to be disappointed. They hadn't been able to dig up anything new.

My teams returned empty pawed as well.

"Sorry, Lieutenant. Eymer's boss and co-workers can only tell us the guy worked quietly, caused no problems, came and went, barely noticed by anyone. He hardly spoke to them except on matters concerning the job and never made friends," Det. Rankler said, disgusted.

I stared at my crime board where I'd spent the last hour putting up all the information we'd collected. It was depressingly lean on facts.

The picture that came out was of a person so ordinary people had a hard time remembering much about him and when they did, they all had the same thing to say, Warren Eymer was a shy, boring, retiring individual who rarely spoke to anyone, went to work at the same time everyday, kept to himself, and was totally forgettable.

Shaking my head, I had no idea where to go from here. I hated waiting for him to make his move. Glancing at my watch, I realized my uncle had been at work two hours now so I better bring him up to date. I went up to his office clutching my folder on the case.

However, as I stepped into his huge office, it was empty. His secretary wasn't in so I couldn't ask where he was. I strode up to his desk and checked his calendar. Crud! He had that appointment to take Kiara for her checkup.

I knew I couldn't sit on this any longer or he would be truly angry with me. I tried to reach him on his cell but no answer then tried his radio, still no response. Frowning, I searched his desk for the doctor's phone number...nothing.

Sighing in frustration, I glanced over to be sure I'd closed my uncle's door, it was shut, then dialed a certain number.

"Jake and Chance's Auto Repair and Towing, how may I help you?" Came her lover's voice over the line.

"Jake...Felina...let me speak to Chance."

"Oh sure, hon, just a sec!"

I heard Jake holler for his partner and a moment later the gruff tones of the tabby came through the line.

"Yeah, what's up Felina?"

"Chance, I need the number of Kiara's pediatrician. My uncle's phone is off and so is his radio and it's real important I reach him."

There was a sound of surprise but Chance said nothing as he looked for the number then gave it to me.

"Thanks, speak at you later," I said then hung up and dialed the doctor's office. Fear and worry shot through me when the nurse said my uncle failed to show up for the appointment. He was now more than thirty minutes late.

Fear giving me wings, I raced down the hall, took the elevator to the surveillance center and demanded the tapes of the parking garage be brought up ASAP.

The officer in charge, Lt. Coran eyed me in annoyance but moved it when I said, "I think Commander Feral has been kidnapped. Those tapes may show us his snatcher, now hurry!"

He hurried, doing the work himself. "What period of time are we looking for Lt. Feral," he asked.

"About an hour or so ago. He left for a doctor's appointment but never showed," I told him, staring tensely over his shoulder.

He didn't say anything as he brought up that section of the surveillance video. We watched anxiously as boring images of cars coming in and out went by until...

"Stop there...zoom in!" I barked, but he'd already done so.

The image was increased until we could see the bomb strapped to the gray tom, my uncle's tense stance...arms away from his side... and could just make out little Kiara in her car seat in back.

We watched in fear and anguish as the gray tom apparently asked for the keys which my uncle handed over then he was apparently ordered to get into the passenger seat and got in before the bomber got into the driver's seat. The hummer left the parking garage, turned left and went up Manx Boulevard before they were lost to the camera.

"Put out an APB on the Commander's hummer and on the perp whose name is Warren Eymer," Felina told Lt. Coran. "Warn everyone that this guy is suicidal so that makes him unpredictable. No one is to approach him. Just find him then notify me!"

"Right away and be careful Lieutenant," he said as he got on the radio immediately.

I left him to it and ran back down the hall, took the elevator to my uncle's office again so I could make another special call. My heart was in my throat and I didn't want to make this particular call but he had a right to know.

This time Chance answered the phone.

"Chance, Uncle Ulysses and Kiara have been kidnapped by a suicidal bomber when he was leaving headquarters. We got him on the surveillance tapes taking them hostage in my uncle's hummer. They were last seen heading up Manx Boulevard forty-five minutes ago," I told him in a rush then pulled the phone away from my ear when he roared in fury.

Honestly, I couldn't blame him but there was no time for his anger right now. "Chance, listen to me! The guy is dangerous. The bomb he made is wrapped around his body. You can't just jump him but I thought you guys might be able to join the search for him. Do you have any kind of tracer on my uncle?" I asked. I'd be very much surprised if he didn't. Just finding this guy would win half the battle.

Chance calmed down immediately and went cold and business-like. "There most certainly is. I had Jake put a tracer on Ulysses about a year ago. He'd be pissed if he knew I'd done it but I didn't care. We'll take off now and we'll find him quickly then we'll see how to get him away from that creep!"

"Roger, keep in touch with me. I have patrols searching now to locate the hummer and you might need the bomb squad when you do find the guy. Remember, he's suicidal so there's no telling what he might do when cornered, so please be careful," I warned him.

"Don't worry Felina, we'll be careful," Chance said grimly then cut the connection.

I sighed. They would find him quickly but getting my uncle away from the bomber safely was really the more difficult problem and I had no idea how we would accomplish it.

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Chapter 4: Keeping Alive by ulyferal

Feral's POV...

Damn how unlucky can I get? This guy is so ordinary I never even noticed him. Life must not be fun for him unless he's an assassin but I'd already ruled that out. A hired killer would not be wearing a bomb around his waist even for effect.

So he wants to commit suicide and make sure everyone knows it and I'm just along to ensure people take him seriously. What a mess! Having Kiara here with us only made me mad and scared. I've already tried to talk to the guy but he simply ignores me as he continues to drive, obeying all the traffic rules, not drawing any attention to himself which, to me, was at odds with his stated wishes to get people to notice him.

In her car seat in the rear, Kiara remained quiet though I know if I dared to turn around, I would find her eyes wide with fear and confusion.

For the next three hours, he simply drove around aimlessly. Though Kiara had stayed quiet a long time, no two year old can be still forever. Only being afraid had kept her so but enough was enough and she began to fuss at her continued confinement in her car seat. But our captor ignored her noises. However, less than five minutes later, our unwanted chauffeur turned back to the main part of the city, rolling past Megakat Part, until he reached city hall then pulled into the parking lot across the street from the main entrance, parking and turning off the engine.

What the heck was he up to? I wondered when his voice surprised me from my thoughts, first because it was so unexpected and second, because it was so soft and timid. His whole manner was more like a mouse than the lion his actions portrayed.

"We will wait here. I have no doubt your kidnapping has already been caught on the security tape in the Enforcer parking garage so I'm certain they will find us soon."

"What?" I blurted, shocked. "But why would you want them to find you? You could have just waited at Enforcer Headquarters instead," I asked, totally bewildered.

He shook his head. "No, that wouldn't work. I needed a larger and more public place for my message to be heard."

Oh, that message. I grimaced. His sheer plainness and lack of personality had made him invisible and he hated it. So now he intended on ending his life with a bang big enough to get him noticed and he just had to pick me to get that attention. Wonderful! So how do we get out of this mess?

"Get out please?"

He'd spoken again and I'd missed it. "Excuse me?"

"Please exit the vehicle," he repeated, his voice flat and emotionless but still polite.

"Not without my daughter," I told him firmly.

"Of course."

I blinked at him. He never once showed any sign of anger nor fear and was unfailingly polite. How weird. I could tell already he'd be extremely hard to shake up or get to change his mind. I've

never encountered anyone like him before. He was downright creepy.

Wary, I did as he asked, climbing out my side of the car then opening Kiara's door. I heard the other door open and close then the tom come around the car and stand patiently waiting for me to release Kiara and lift her into my arms. I stepped back and he politely closed both doors for me then gestured toward the front of my vehicle.

Once in front of the bumper, he said, "we'll wait here."

I frowned and looked around me. It was a fairly busy morning, people were entering and exiting city hall across the street where we stood and waited, many entering the parking lot and getting into their cars all without noticing us at all. Unfortunately or fortunately, depending on how you looked at it, no one came near us. I glanced over to the tom to study him.

My first impression of him was unaltered. He was simply a plain looking gray tom with brown eyes. He stood only about five feet eight inches tall, was rather skinny with dull brown hair. He wore a pressed pair of blue slacks and a light blue dress shirt, no tie, and brown loafers. There were no identifying coat markings or scars to make him stand out and his face held no real expression on it.

That actually chilled me the most as no emotions meant a total lack of concern for his situation. He showed no fear, anger, nor impatience as we continued to stand there. He could call the press or my Enforcers to tell them where he was but no, he chose to just wait for them to come to him. Actually, that was rather smart as it would certainly bring the attention he wanted that is, as soon as everyone realized something bad was happening right in front of them.

I felt both disgusted and astounded at how oblivious we are about our surroundings most times. But I was trained to pay attention to such things and yet here I was caught because of a moment of inattentiveness. If I survive this crazy mess, I promised myself that I'd be more aware and to teach others to be so as well. You just can't be too cautious as this incident proved.

But that was later and right now all I felt was helplessness and I hated it. I hugged my daughter even tighter as I tried to think of some way to get us out of this, preferably unexploded.

Kiara must have sensed my fear and where it came from. She was a very bright little kitten and spends a great deal of time around Jake and Professor Hackle. She squirmed in my arms, trying to turn around to face the tom. I really didn't want her doing that but had learned the hard way that thwarting her wishes would risk a tantrum. Of course, that didn't mean I gave in to her whims all the time but a tantrum now would be detrimental to us both so I let her turn around.

Once facing the person, she glared at him and surprised me by saying, "Why you want to hurt my mommy?" she demanded, her little arms crossed in front of her chest, chin jutted out.

The gray tom blinked at her in mild surprise. Frowning, he looked around, apparently looking for a female, I guess because he said, confused, "You are mistaken. There are no females near us."

I could feel Kiara roll her eyes and release a little snort of annoyance. That actually sounded strange coming from such a young kitten. "My mommy is holding me, silly."

The tom was rather taken aback, the first real emotion I'd seen on his face. "He can't be your mommy as he is male," he explained reasonably.

I thought it really strange hearing him argue with a two year old. He didn't act like it was unusual which only confirmed he had very poor social interaction skills and he certainly didn't know when he'd stepped in it as Kiara hissed at him in anger and impatience, speaking as if she was talking to thick witted dummy.

"You stupid! Me should know who my mommy is! This is him!"

Even calling him names didn't elicit anything more than a look of mild puzzlement from the tom. He turned his focus on me, his eyes asking why she was so adamant in her belief.

I saw no harm in enlightening him, it just might help. "Yes, I am her actual, biological mother not her father. I gave birth to her and, apparently, you haven't notice that I'm pregnant again.

A look of shocked horror and amazement flashed across the tom's face as he jerked his eyes toward my protruding belly just below Kiara's hanging feet. "I thought you were just overweight," he murmured in rather dazed fashion.

I felt insulted. "I am not fat!"

His face flushed with embarrassment. "My apologies, Commander. I have never heard of a male being able to do what you've done and are doing again."

I shrugged. "You couldn't have known as I'm rare to begin with."

"Really?" Curious despite himself, he asked, "What are you?"

"A male hermaphrodite."

"A what?" He blinked at me in confusion.

"Means I possess both sexes but what makes me rare is I'm able to breed."

"Oh. How interesting," he muttered more to himself than me.

That was all? His reaction had me wanting to pull my fur out. He treated the information as if it was just an interesting bit of news and nothing more. Except for that brief moment of surprise, his demeanor quickly returned to emotionless disinterest. Geez! No wonder he was so unmemorable. He had as little personality as a brick if a brick had emotions.

Suddenly, a piercing shriek broke the momentary silence. Kiara had had enough. She was tired of being held, tired of all the talking, was probably wet, and most likely extremely hungry as it was well past lunchtime. Our appointment was supposed to have been at 1000 o'clock and he'd driven us around several hours after that before stopping here.

"ME HUNGRY! LET MY MOMMY GO!" She shrieked, deafening me.

The gray tom eyed her in bemusement, his ears flattened from her yelling. I doubt he had considered such a complication in his plans and was unable to figure out how to deal with it.

"She will become even crankier and louder if she's not fed," I told him helpfully.

He stared at me blankly then turned his attention away to look around us. I was very unhappy to notice that except for a few curious glances at the noisy tot, no one was paying us any attention. Kat's Alive! Did his blandness extend to us to make us all invisible? How can everyone just ignore me standing here with a squirming toddler? It just all boggled my mind. I was past being frustrated by not being able to call for help and ending this thing.

Abruptly, a familiar roar of powerful engines filled the air as something huge came rushing toward us then halted just above us. Our heads automatically looked upward and there was the Turbokat. T-Bone had put the jet on VTOL and we could feel the powerful push of its air compression pressing down on us despite it being fairly high up.

"Daddy!" Kiara screamed.

I winced and looked around quickly. No one had come close while we were distracted by the

Turbokat's arrival, which filled me with relief. Kiara had forgotten herself. I don't know if the suspect realized who she was calling to but at least no press or anyone else that mattered had heard her or I would be trying to explain how I came to be so intimately linked to a SWAT Kat.

I turned her quickly around and pressed her face to my chest, hugging her tightly. Her eyes widened as she realized what she'd done. Those eyes so like her father's flashed an apology. I kissed her on the head to say it was alright.

Meanwhile, our suicide bomber had indeed understood what my little darlings sudden cry had meant because he had jerked his attention back to us with a nearly stricken look on his face. Well, finally, something shook his tree at last but would that help us?

To add to the confusion, a well loved voice boomed from above us via the jet's exterior loud speaker. "Release Commander Feral and his kitten now!" T-Bone thundered. I could easily hear his fear and anger in his voice.

The bomber stared back upward, a deep frown on his face. I don't think he was upset by the SWAT Kats appearance, then he must have expected besides my Enforcers. No, I think the situation with my pregnancy, Kiara, and now the realization that the father of the kitten was above him had upset his plans terribly and now he had no idea what to do next.

At least, I was hoping it was those things that had shaken him because I had no idea what was going on in this guy's head. He certainly didn't react with fear or consternation to my mate's demand and he made no move to comply with the order. Mentally, I shook my head. This guy just didn't fit any profile I'd ever dealt with. I hope someone else had an idea because I was at a loss.

Meanwhile, the Turbokat hung unmoving and I could now hear choppers and police cruisers screaming toward us. Well he had the attention he wanted. Staring at him, I was worried that his only expression was thoughtfulness...no look of worry, anger, or fear though there was some kind of unidentifiable expression on his face that I couldn't figure out whenever his gaze passed over Kiara and my belly. And all the while his finger never wavered from its position on the bomb's detonator.

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T-Bone's POV...

I was beside myself with anger and terror as I watched, helplessly as my mate, daughter, and unborn kitten stood next to that weirdo. I could see that Kiara was very tired and frightened. I knew she had to be hungry too and it just made me even more angry. I'd never felt so helpless before.

Razor had used his x-ray device to scan the kidnapper and found the bomb. My blood ran cold when he told me it was wrapped about the guy's body and that he was holding a detonator in his right palm. That meant, no matter what my partner and I did he'd be able to kill my family before I could get close enough to rescue them.

Stalemate!

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Felina's POV...

I slammed my foot on the brakes of my cruiser hard enough to bring it to a screeching halt just inside the parking lot entrance. Flicking off my siren but leaving lights flashing, I climbed out and stood studying the situation. I had opted to drive rather than come by chopper so I would be on the ground facing this problem more closely. Seeing what was before me, it had been a good decision. Around me, my officers were following my orders to keep civilians from the hot zone

and evacuate those that already were inside the area. Traffic was being halted in all directions leading to city hall. The chopper pilots had been instructed to hang high above the Turbokat and wait for my orders. Enforcer cruisers were surrounding the parking lot but only I had gone inside and now stood some twenty feet away from the tableau before me.

From where I stood, I could see Eymer standing quietly, no fear or panic on his face, only an odd, thoughtful look as he stared at my uncle and, surprisingly, not at me or the circle of Enforcers around him. My uncle looked rather stressed and was holding Kiara tightly in his arms. The three of them stood in front of my uncle's hummer.

My little cousin was staring upward at the Turbokat and I suspected she wondered why her father hadn't come to her rescue yet, though I wouldn't put it past the toddler to know even her father couldn't do anything in this situation. She was one smart kitten.

So here I am adding to the terrible scene and all of us were just standing and doing nothing. It made me crazy but I had absolutely no idea how we were going to get this guy to listen to us.

Wait! There was someone who might get through to him...I turned back to my car and got in so I could use my radio and not be overheard.

Calling dispatch, I told them to send someone to pick up Eymer's doctor ASAP and bring him to the scene. I couldn't force him to get into the danger zone but perhaps, using a cell phone, he might be able to get the guy to talk. It seemed our only option.

Once I'd sent that order, I pulled out a small comm unit that my lover had given me and called the jet hanging over the scene.

"Razor!"

"Yes Lieutenant?" My lover sounded angry and stressed. I could well imagine what Chance was feeling.

"Listen, I've sent for this guy's shrink. I'm hoping the doc can talk sense into our bomber. If we can get him talking we might find a way to get him to stand down or at least release his prisoners ... unless you have another idea?" I asked, hopefully but Razor crushed that.

"Wish I did. Your idea is as good as anything I have at the moment. Let you know if that changes and, Lieutenant...be careful."

"That goes for you too... Out!" I cut the connection. All we could do now is wait, something I wasn't usually very good at.

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Chapter 5: Pleading with a Bomber by ulyferal

Feral's POV

I could see Felina watching us. I wondered what plan she had as she seemed to be waiting for something. It was maddening to just stand here with an armful of squirming and angry toddler and not be able to do anything.

The tom who'd kidnapped us still look conflicted, his frown never wavering as he stared around then back at me, at Kiara, the Turbokat, the Enforcers, then me again...round and round.

Kiara wailed in hunger and distraught exhaustion. The tom's ears flattened but he otherwise said nothing. Rolling my eyes in extreme annoyance, I'd finally decided saying something was better than just standing here and listening to my daughter wail.

"Look...I really don't know what you're waiting for but my daughter is starving and I can't take too much more kicking in my belly before my bladder insists I do something about it. Standing this long is also bad for my feet and legs in my condition so please, if nothing else will you let me get her something from her diaper bag or at least let my niece send something over or Kiara will just get louder?" I pleaded, shouting to be heard over my daughter's cries.

The tom startled, stared at my daughter a moment then at me. He chewed his lip a bit then seemed to come to a decision.

"Alright, take care of her needs but do nothing else," he warned.

Relieved to be allowed to do something, I moved slowly toward the side of the hummer where I had her bag, with him shadowing me close enough to nearly walk on my heels as we reached the back door and I opened it. I set Kiara down on the seat which surprised her enough to get her to stop shrieking.

She blinked tears from her eyes and stared at me ... confusion and hope on her face. I grabbed her bag from the floor and searched inside, grabbing the peanut butter and jelly sandwich I'd made if her appointment had gone too long. Seeing it, Kiara whimpered anxiously as I hurriedly unwrapped it and gave it to her. She immediately began stuffing it in her mouth as fast as she could.

"Hey, easy there or you'll choke," I gently warned her as I filled a sippy cup with juice from a thermos. I waited until she'd stopped a moment to chew before handing her the cup. She set the sandwich in her lap and grabbed the cup, drinking nearly half of it down in one gulp. I felt like such a bad mother at that moment even though none of this was my fault. Her poor stomach must have been cramping from hunger and her mouth horribly dry. It was amazing she'd held out as long as she had. I only hope she didn't throw up her food from having to wait so long.

"Mommy hold..." she held out her cup, then, when I'd taken it, went back to devouring her sandwich. In minutes she'd finished it and held out her paw for the cup again. After downing the last of it, she begged for more and I filled it again. She drank nearly half again then refused anymore.

Sighing, I tucked the cup back in the bag then made her lay down so I could change her diaper. That took several minutes and made the tom back up a bit at the smell. I smirked inwardly as I put the wet nappy into a plastic bag I had for such things. Using a wipe, I washed my daughter's face, straightened her clothes, then lifted her into my arms again.

When I straightened up, I groaned involuntarily as my back objected to having stayed in a bent over position for too long. The tom moved closer to close the car door and gestured with the detonator paw to go back to the front of the car again.

I groaned inwardly. Kat's Alive! I was dying to sit down and I needed to pee badly. I was also miserable and hungry.

With Kiara more or less feeling better and beginning to fall asleep on my shoulder, I eyed the tom with a jaundiced eye.

"Well her needs might have been met but in a very short time, I'll be humiliating myself when my bladder says enough. With her and the kitten weighing me down and standing, I don't stand a chance of staying dry long," I said disgusted.

The tom's face flushed with embarrassment. I don't know if it was the sensitive subject or the fact I was so blunt about it. I really didn't care right now. That's when he surprised me by speaking again.

"I'm truly sorry for your discomfort. I'm a bit dismayed by this turn of events. I have gotten the

attention I required but it seems I'm faced with a very serious moral dilemma and I'm uncertain what to do about it without giving up the whole reason I set out to do this."

"What? Commit suicide? Or offing yourself while taking out three other innocent lives with your own?" I said as rudely and bluntly as possible. Perhaps I could shame him into stopping this madness, it couldn't be worse than just standing here waiting.

He winced and blushed even harder. "You are no innocent, Commander," he managed to say rather harshly.

"No, but my unborn kitten and daughter are," I snapped back.

He winced. "Uh, that is certainly true, hence my dilemma," he said and I was glad to see how uncomfortable that made him.

However, before either of us could trade any further words, we were interrupted by a call from a bull horn. We turned and looked in the direction of my niece.

"Walter Eymer! We have your doctor on the phone. He wants to talk to you!" She shouted to us.

Eymer, so that was his name, only stared at my niece in indecision. Finally, he slowly nodded agreement. Not waiting for him to change his mind, Felina sent a cell phone whizzing toward us strapped to a skateboard of all things. Wonder where she'd managed to find that?

The thing managed to get nearly all the way toward us before being stopped by running into a parked car's tire just a few feet away.

"Stay with me," Eymer ordered, forcing me to walk beside him as he retrieved the phone from the board. He flipped it open and said hello. Wish I could hear the other end of the conversation as Eymer wasn't too free with his end of it. All I heard were grunts, yeses, nos, and the occasional uh-huhs. It was frustrating not knowing if the doctor was getting through to the tom or not.

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Felina's POV

Dr. Macnoid was flustered and understandably frightened when he was unceremoniously brought to my Enforcer cordon. He was even more upset when he learned he was to try and talk his patient into letting his prisoners go. But, thankfully, he was made of sterner stuff and didn't try to turn tail and leave or refuse to help. That made my job a little easier.

When I'd been told he had arrived, I walked from my cruiser, down the sidewalk about a block to where the good doctor was being heavily guarded from the press and on lookers. Reaching them, I nodded at the doctor.

"You've been told why you're here?" I ask without preamble.

"Yes..." his eyes flicked toward his patient who stood in plain view. My uncle with my cousin in his arms stood before his hummer, Eymer stood to his left from our viewpoint. We could all just make out that his paw was holding something. The doctor licked his lips. "There's a bomb somewhere..." He asked, his voice trailing off.

"It's wrapped around his waist. What's in his paw is a dead-kat's switch which is why we can't rush him or try and gas him. Our only option is if you can talk him out of his plan or at least let his prisoner's go and just take himself out."

Dr. Macnoid jerked his head around to stare at me in shocked horror.

I shrug. "He's determined to make a statement and you may not be able to talk him out of it. So our only hope is there's some decency left in him that won't take innocents with him."

The doctor swallowed around a lump that must be the size of a walnut and probably hurt by his expression. "...I see your point Lieutenant but I certainly don't like it. I'll do what I can to convince him. He really is a decent sort just tired of being ignored and so stubborn that he won't accept the problem is truly all his own making." He shook his head sadly. "So how do we do this? I have no intention of walking into the danger area."

"And you won't. We'll send him a cell phone linked to our own comm center..." I point to the big van that had pulled up and was parked near us, "...where we can listen and watch him via camera." I held up a paw when I saw he was about to object. "This is no time for doctor/patient privileges. We have to be watching for any word or movement that will let us know what Eymer might do next and there's no time to wait and have *you* tell us."

He sighed and nodded in resignation. I walked him to the van and we climbed in. "Okay, guys, got what I need?" I asked the surveillance team.

"Yeah, here you go Lieutenant," one handed me a cell phone. "As soon as he flips it open we're live with him. Sit here next to me doctor," he gestured at a seat beside him. Dr. Macnoid reluctantly sat down. A mike sat before him on the counter and when he looked up there was a large screen that already showed Eymer and the Commander. They were so close it was as if they were just outside the van.

With the doctor settled, I carried the cell phone out. A trooper hurried up to me with a skateboard. "Here you go Lieutenant. We got it off a kitten nearby," the tom grinned in triumph. It wasn't an easy task to just find a skateboard at a moment's notice so I well understood his pride in managing to find one.

"Great, thanks." I took the board and cell. Using tape I'd gotten from the guys in the van, I wrapped the cell phone to it. Now all I had to do was get Eymer to accept it.

Going back to my rig, I reached in and pulled out my bullhorn. Flicking it on, I called to him and was relieved when he agreed to accept the phone. I put the horn down then went into the parking lot a little ways, eyed the distance to where they were, then launched the board with a good shove, toward them. I sighed in relief when it got within a few feet of it's intended target. I waited until Eymer had the phone in his paw before heading back to the van at a run.

Slipping in, I stayed quiet and listened as Dr. Macnoid spoke soothingly to his patient. Unfortunately, Eymer didn't seem to be interested in the conversation much as he only listened and made only grunted responses. When the doctor would pause to allow Eymer to talk, he would get only a humming sound as if the tom was thinking about what was said but still he didn't talk.

Finally, after more than fifteen minutes of gentle persuasion, and I had to admit the doctor had a very soothing voice that seemed to push a person to open up, Eymer did finally respond, explaining his reasoning for doing this and what he hoped to gain.

I felt rather dirty listening to this sad little tom spill his pain but I had to remind myself this guy was a walking bomb, who fully intended to use it. Here the doctor's persuasiveness failed to work. Eymer seemed dead set on his course. Macnoid seemed to finally realize this and reluctantly suggested what I had told him. His patient was surprised by the idea and paused to think about it.

I hope he made the right decision.

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Feral's POV

After several long minutes of hemming and hawing, Eymer began to say something I could follow along. Kiara was frankly asleep on my shoulder, my feet and ankles were in agony, and I needed to pee really bad but all that faded away, as I listened to the conversation closely, praying the doctor could get this guy to give up his idea.

Despite not being a shrink, even I could see that Eymer wasn't going to change his mind then the doctor made a suggestion that made him unhappy. Eymer's reaction was one of surprise. After thinking for some minutes, he spoke, his manner grave.

"Your idea has some merit but it would not make as strong a statement as I wish so I must decline."

I felt my heart tighten. We're sunk. The doctor obviously wasn't giving up because Eymer continued to listen but after a few minutes more, the tom shook his head emphatically then pulled the phone away from his ear.

I couldn't bear it. I had to know what he'd been asked. I was grasping at straws but I thought if I knew what he'd refused, I might have an idea of my own to end this thing.

"You seem pretty shaken, what did your doctor want you to do?" I asked bluntly.

Eymer frowned at me. "That is personal," he said stiffly.

I raised an eyebrow at him and snorted. "Not in this case. Since it is my life and my kitten's lives on the line here, I think my request is very fair as I should get the chance to convince you this idea of yours is wrong too."

He stared at me in surprise then slowly nodded his head. "You have a point, Commander. Alright, Dr. Macnoid suggested I release you and go ahead with my plans...that no one would stop me if that was my decision."

It was my turn to blink in surprise. Ahh, no wonder he looked unhappy and I suspect the idea didn't come from the doctor but my niece and I thoroughly concurred with her on it. Too bad he refused it.

I bit my lip in vexation, hugged Kiara tighter against me while I tried desperately to think of an argument that would win our freedom. Glancing upward, I could see the Turbokat still hanging there waiting like a big spider but I couldn't expect help from that quarter because no matter how fast Razor was it wouldn't be fast enough to save us. I let my eyes stare around at the skyline, mind racing when I focused on a billboard's message. I stared blindly at it for a long minute before an incredible idea burst into my mind. Maybe this would work. With hope beating in my chest, I turned back to Eymer.

"I think I have an idea that will not only get people to notice you but help others like yourself."

He frowned at me as if I were the one who was mad here.

Once I told him my idea, I hope he wouldn't laugh in my face and push the button. It was my one shot at saving us. With a desperate prayer, I prepared to fight what might be my last battle.

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Chapter 6: Finally Seeing the Light by ulyferal

Feral's POV

I gave Eymer my most sincere look and said, "There has to be more people like you out there that feel as you do...so shy and reserved they are invisible to all and very lonely. I have to say, with

what you've just done, you're no longer shy and you have a stronger will than you gave yourself credit for. I think you can be an advocate, a voice if you will, for all those people out there just like you. You can give them hope...tell them they can make a difference if only they find a way to make themselves step forward and be noticed. See that billboard up there?" I pointed to the right.

He followed my gesture and stared at the sign. Frowning, he read it aloud, "Make something of yourself! Step out of your old rut and be the person you want to be through our program!" Angry he turned back to me. "Those programs don't work! I'm proof of it!"

He didn't get it yet but he would...I hope. "No they didn't. If they had you'd still be shy and no way would you be standing here calm, collected and determined to carry out your plan with all these people staring at you. What's more, you've succeeded in gaining the attention of those same people as you. They are watching to see what you'll do and that will determine what they'll do with their own lives. You're their hope, their beacon that tells them there is a way to break out but they have to do it themselves. Each person is responsible for deciding if they want to remain invisible or be noticed but in less destructive ways than committing suicide," I said with as much passion as I could put into it.

A look of shocked realization flashed into Eymer's eyes. "That's what he's been telling me for years but I just couldn't or wouldn't see it," he breathed more to himself than me.

I didn't know for certain who he meant but hoped it was his doctor. It sounded like something the shrink would say. I stayed silent and hoped this, what seemed to be a major breakthrough, would set us free.

"Then if I die, all those people will finally have that beacon to follow," Eymer said, beaming happily.

My heart sank and I felt sick inside. Eymer had misinterpreted what I said or just hadn't listened well enough. Swallowing bile, I frantically tried again, hoping I was clearer this time. "Well that's certainly true. Martyrs have always managed to make a statement that way but it won't work in your case and it's selfish besides," I said bluntly.

He stared at me in confusion. I had him...I hoped. "Why not and what's selfish about it?"

I shrugged. "You'd have made your point but then you'd be dead leaving all those *shy* people with no one to push them to accept that they must step out of their comfort zones if they want to be like you. You'd be gone and your memory would simply fade because people like you do that. They convince themselves they aren't as brave as you so won't take that step." I held a paw out to him beseechingly.

"Don't you see Eymer? Someone has to be there to push them or they will just retreat into the background once more. You know this to be true. You were one of them. So it would be terribly selfish of you to take yourself out of the picture and leave them to flounder again."

"But what can I do?"

"Stay...live! Make yourself that living beacon they turn to. The lesson you learned here today you can hammer into them. Make them listen. You have a big advantage over the doctors and therapists out there, the other poor souls like you will listen to you because you were one of them but you learned how to step out of the shadows. You'll be their savior guiding them out of their self imposed prisons but not if you die. Think how many invisibles are out there and how you could be the one thing that could change their lives. Don't throw that away!" I felt drained as I stopped talking. If my final plea failed to move him, then I and my loved ones were doomed. I glanced upward again, wishing with all my heart that I could speak to my beloved one last time.

Eymer stood staring at me, apparently dumbfounded. I prayed it meant I had gotten through to him. I waited to see what he'd do next.

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Felina's POV

Dr. Macnoid and I listened to my uncle's plea. The doctor had blanched just as I did when the guy thought being a martyr was a great idea. Then my uncle tried a different tactic and we felt a glimmer of hope.

"Yes, that's good, he's getting Eymer to think. He's had a breakthrough at last, now if only he'll listen to the Commander's argument... damn, I wish I'd thought of that," the doctor muttered, more to himself than me.

We both sat tense and watchful, waiting for Eymer to make the right decision.

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T-Bone's POV

My paws were sweaty on the yoke as I held the jet steady. Razor and I listened in on the desperate conversation going on below us. When the nutcase said how happy it would make him to be a martyr, I groaned in anguish. Noooo...I can't bear to lose my family! Then Uly made a final plea...I grit my teeth tightly together and prayed his last ploy would work.

"That's good...he's making a valid point but will the guy hear it?" I heard Razor mutter behind him.

Yeah, Uly was arguing his heart out but would this idiot really listen? He had to, I refused to believe this would end in horror and pain for all of us.

Suddenly, the guy seemed to relax and his paw with the detonator lowered to his side.

"Razor! Did he do what I think he did?" I asked, anxiously.

"It certainly looks like it but we're too far to see...wait, he's talking..."

We listened hard.

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Feral's POV

I was so tense I nearly missed what Eymer did next. The tom sighed, raised his thumb from the detonator button and let his arm go slack by his side. My whole body went limp with relief.

"You're right, Commander. I would be doing my fellow invisibles a terrible disservice if I left now. They would do exactly what you said and my gesture, though it would give me what I sought, would be an empty one in the end and I wanted it to *mean* something." He looked at me earnestly. "Do you think I really could help them?"

"I don't see why not. I've seen others in similar circumstances change the minds of their fellow sufferers only because they had the same experiences. That's how drug rehab works." I shrug and ceased talking. No point in beating the subject to death when he seemed to finally be getting what I was trying to tell him.

"I feel surprisingly energized. Thank you Commander. You've made a new person of me." A broad smile changed the tom's whole demeanor. Now he wasn't so unmemorable.

I had to swallow and take a deep breath before I could answer. "I'm glad you see that for yourself and that smile has already taken you from being invisible and gave you a personality anyone

could relate to," I said encouragingly. That earned me another, even broader smile. "So, shall we go see the officer waiting over there now?"

He pulled his shoulder back and straightened his spine. "Yes sir, I'm ready."

I had to smile a little. Though he had terrified my family and caused a panic, I could see why he'd done this. I couldn't imagine what it must have been like to be so scared of social interaction that you became invisible. But Eymer had proven to himself there was a way out, now all he had to do is prove it to others like him.

I know my Enforcers will think I've lost my mind especially after being put through such a terrible ordeal, but I think of it as a preventive measure. If I give Eymer the tools he needs to put his message out into the world and convince others like himself that there is hope and give them the skills to do it, then I'll be preventing this from happening again.

So I intend to plead with the judge during Eymer's trial that he be sent to a light security facility and given the tools and assistance he'll need to get his message of hope and help out to ones like himself. I wouldn't be surprised if he ends up making a ministry out of this with him as the head. I have no problem with that. In a way, he'll be paying his debt to society by helping other social misfits find their way in the world. A perfect solution.

While I was thinking about his disposition, Eymer had begun walking toward Felina's cruiser. I moved to follow him and instantly hissed in pain as my calves and feet violently protested. I'd been standing in one place so long, my lower limbs had become very swollen making the act of walking one of torment. It took all my will power not to scream in pain as I hurried to catch up to Eymer then hid just how much agony I was in as we walked side-by-side out of the parking lot.

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Felina's POV

The entire van heaved a sigh of relief when Eymer surrendered. Dr. Macnoid laid his head down on his arms. I could hardly blame him.

"Have the bomb guys hustle up here and send Officers Trent and Bristol to me for escort duty," I ordered as I rose to leave the van.

"Yes ma'am!"

I stepped out and walked back to my cruiser. It took only a few minute for the pair to reach me. I frowned as I noticed the tension around my uncle's mouth and eyes. He was in considerable pain but said nothing as they halted then he spoke, his voice was tight as well.

"Mr. Eymer wishes to turn himself in."

I nodded and, though worried about my uncle, I gave my full attention to the prisoner. "I'm pleased you decided to do this, sir. The bomb squad is coming and will help to remove your vest safely. Please stand with your arms away from your body," I requested, taking formal charge of the prisoner from my uncle.

The tom did as asked and stood quietly, a relaxed and happy expression on his face. The bomb squad hurried up at that moment. They gently opened the tom's jacket, studied the device, asked Eymer some questions which he answered politely (as if we were all just having coffee and not dealing with a deadly device), then carefully removed the jacket first followed by the bomb. They had a bomb disposal container near and efficiently but carefully dropped the vest within then sealed it up and carried it off to their specialized van.

With the danger gone, I formally arrested Eymer, giving him his Miranda rights then telling him

to... "Please turn around and put your paws behind you." I decided being polite and treating him gently would get me a better response and I was right. He turned without a word and placed his paws behind him. I put the pawcuffs on and handed him over to my most level headed and calm pair of Enforcers to take him in and book him.

"Put him in a cell alone," I ordered. I didn't want him hassled as he would have been in general population. The older of the pair nodded at me then gently steered the prisoner toward their vehicle. Finally, I was able to relax and give my full attention to my uncle and exhausted cousin. He promptly surprised me by thrusting Kiara into my arms.

"Excuse me but I've got to pee!" He said tightly then moved off as fast as his poor legs would let him, gritting his teeth.

Kiara was dead weight in my arms. I looked down at her peacefully sleeping face and was relieved she hadn't been awake for most of what went down. I looked back toward city hall and witnessed my uncle stalking in stiff legged fashion up the stairs, his expression causing startled looks before he vanished into the building.

Poor Uncle. He must be in agony. Suddenly, a beeping sound went off in my pocket. Shifting Kiara to my left arm, I fished out my comm while making sure my back was to my Enforcers who were still involved in clearing the crowds away. Flicking it on, an anxious voice abruptly spoke before I could.

"Are they okay? Why did Uly rush off like that?" I resisted looking upward when I answered. "Relax big guy. Kiara is sound asleep but Uncle Ulysses needed to answer the call of nature."

A huge sigh of relief by T-Bone and a burst of laughter from Razor rang out in my ear. I couldn't help smiling too. It was a bit funny.

"Aww, poor Uly. His bladder must be killing him and no doubt his feet and ankles are all swollen," T-Bone tsked worriedly. "Felina have him go home...no arguments. He needs to get off his feet!"

"You know he won't go until he's given his report, T-Bone. But I promise to stay by his side, take care of Kiara, then get him to leave when he's finished. It's the best I can promise," I said, knowing how stubborn my uncle was.

T-Bone's frustrated sigh echoed in my ear ... I feel for him. Being my uncle's mate had to be a trial at times. "Alright, I understand but I don't have to like it and he's going to be a pain tonight when I have to massage his legs because they're cramping on him."

"Better you than me," I quipped. He snorted but was in better humor.

"We'd better scat but thank you for all you've done, Felina. That took years off me, I can tell ya," T-Bone huffed.

"You and me both but you know it was Uncle who did all the work that got them set free. I only helped where I could. Anyway, be off. I have lots to do here," I said gruffly.

"You did much more than that, Felina and I won't forget it but I'll be sure to thank my mate when I see him." He cut the connection and sent the jet into forward motion. Seconds later nothing could be seen of the sleek, black jet.

I tucked the comm back away, settled Kiara more securely in my arms then moved to the back door of my cruiser where I laid her down on the seat so she could continue to sleep undisturbed. I carefully closed the door as quietly as I could then pulled out my radio to deal with the chaos a scene like this caused and answer questions from the press who were champing at the bit to speak with me from their position behind the barriers.

By the time my uncle appeared, the street was mostly back to normal except for the press, of course. Fortunately, Mayor Manx and Ms. Briggs had come outside and were keeping the press engaged, that is, until my uncle opened the doors and they immediately bombarded him with questions.

I sighed and decided I should get his car. I gently picked up my niece from the back seat of my car and walked her to the hummer. Fortunately, I had a key to it since my uncle had the other. I cinched her into her car seat and she never woke up, poor little thing. I got in and drove the car out of the lot and parked it behind the deputy mayor's sedan. I got out without waking her and leaned against the front fender to wait for my uncle to be done. At least Kiara was getting some rest but that meant she would be awake and active when my uncle wanted to drop from exhaustion and pain. T-Bone would have to take up the slack like the good daddy he was. I smirked at that image.

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Feral's POV

I couldn't believe how much my bladder hurt. Holding it that long had made me really ache inside. As I sat on the toilet, I stared at my grossly swollen ankles and knew my feet would look the same because my boots felt incredibly tight. Ohhh...that is going to be such a chore getting them off. I rubbed my calves to try and relieve some of the cramping that was beginning even though bending over only made my gut feel worse.

Face it. I was going to be miserable for the next few hours until I could get away and go home to soak. On second thought, perhaps I better just get my report done and leave the rest. If I try to tough it out longer, I'll be crippled and both my mate and my doctor will be furious with me.

I was done but dreaded the need to stand. This is soo going to hurt. Sucking in a breath, I used the handicapped bars (I happened to pick that stall) to pull myself to a standing position. I barely was able to bite back my whimper of pain. Gritting my teeth, I slowly put my clothes to right then took my first step to leave the stall. A groan of pain escaped me as my feet and legs screamed at me and insisted I sit back down but I persevered and walked out. I washed my paws and was surprised to see tears on my face when I glanced in the mirror. I quickly washed it, tossed the towel, then took a deep cleansing breath and walked out of the bathroom. My head was beginning to pound from my deteriorated condition. Outside the bathroom I stopped to suck down water from the fountain. God's was I ever thirsty.

Now relieved and fortified, I headed outside. As I pushed one of the big glass doors open, I winced briefly at the sight of the press. They started shouting questions at me the moment I appeared. Ms. Briggs left the Mayor's side and came to me, much to my surprise.

"You look awful and you're frowning so hard one would think you'd lost the battle you'd just fought," she said softly for my ears only.

"I'd be lying if I said things were fine. My feet and legs are screaming, so is my gut and my head decided to join in," I muttered miserably.

"Oh dear. That certainly explains the beads of sweat starting to run down your face. Look just answer a few questions. The Mayor and I did what we could as did your niece. I'll intercede and get them off you as quick as I can so you can escape," Callie told me quickly as we walked slowly toward the shouting press.

I blinked at her in mild surprise but managed to give her a wane smile. "Bless you, Callie. I am soo tired."

She gave me a brief smile. "You're welcome. Prepare yourself," she warned as we came abreast

of the press. As promised, she remained glued to my side much to the puzzlement of our oblivious mayor. I gave a statement with as many facts as I was willing to release about my kidnapping while playing Mr. Eymer's actions, beginning the first steps of helping him with his new mission in life. The free publicity should give his plans a good step up and reach out to all those other invisibles out there. The press found the subject intriguing enough to batter me with questions but I held up my paw and told them to speak to Eymer himself and his psychiatrist.

Callie felt that was the perfect time to put an end to the session. "That's enough questioning for the Commander. He's been under a great deal of stress for too many hours and being pregnant, he's exhausted and needs to rest. Please disperse now and thank you." Manx looked surprised and flicked a quick glance at my belly. Shaking his head, he turned without a word and went back inside city hall. After giving me an encouraging smile and a wave, Callie followed him.

The press took pics of me but did not badger me anymore and began dispersing. I turned away and walked with extreme stiffness for my hummer that I was grateful Felina had brought closer. I couldn't have walked the distance to it. As I struggled down the steps, I frowned unhappily about what Callie had done. I had been trying to keep my pregnancy under the radar and didn't really appreciate her giving that information away but, it probably was for the best as I was already showing and tongues would wag anyway. So no real harm done.

As I got up to my driver's side, I could see Kiara in her car seat and still asleep.

"Uncle, I know you need to do your after action report but why don't you just go home and get off your feet. I can clearly see how much pain you're in and that's just not good for you. Your doctor is going to be really vexed with you...your mate already is," she said, firmly as she opened the door for me. "So go home and call me when you're relaxing and dictate your report to me and I'll type it up for you."

I almost automatically began to refuse but slumped in defeat and stepped past her to sit down in the driver's seat. Just the act of sitting down was a great relief for all of two seconds until my right calf muscle cramped hard. A cry of pain escaped me as I tried to reach the leg to rub it out but the steering wheel was in the way. Felina immediately dropped to a squat and began rubbing my leg vigorously. It seemed to take a long time before the muscles finally relaxed. My paws were gripping my steering wheel in a death hold and tears were falling down my cheeks. When the pain finally eased, I gave a shuddering breath of relief.

"I'm not sure you should try to drive, Uncle," Felina said worriedly. "But, I don't want you to get to your feet again. Just rest a moment before attempting to drive."

I didn't argue. I sat for several minutes until I was able to use my leg without it jerking or tightening. Turning the car on, I gave Felina a wane smile. "Thank you and you're right. I can't work like this so I'll go home and I'm sure I'll make it okay. However, I would appreciate it if you would call T-Bone and have him meet me at the car when I get home. I fear I'll need help to stand and get inside," I admitted, reluctantly.

"Of course, Uncle. I'd be happy too," Felina agreed. "Look, you shouldn't come in tomorrow. Your legs will take more time than that to recover and after all the stress you were under all day, you'll need the longer rest as well. It's been quiet for awhile so you shouldn't be needed for at least one day. And don't worry. I was listening in on what you said to Eymer and understand what he wants to do and have a fairly good idea what you want to do to help him. I'll keep a close watch on him and see that he gets a good lawyer and brief the person on what you were trying to do. Now you go on home and not worry," she said firmly to me.

I smiled broadly. "What would I do without you?" I said, relief and pleasure in my voice. "That's exactly what I need done for him. I don't want the guy to think we just blew him off. I happen to believe what he was trying to do is a good idea. Just his execution was flawed."

Felina smiled back. "Yeah, I got that. I find it amazing that people could actually be so bland and shy that they literally vanish into the woodwork. There's no telling how many out there might try something like Eymer did or, worse yet, something even more dangerous than what he tried."

"And that is exactly why his dream of saving them needs to be pushed and exploited as much as being in jail will allow him. Even his court case will spread the word about the plight of people like him," I said, seriously.

Felina nodded. "Eymer did more than anyone realized. What a brave little fellow. Well don't worry Uncle. I'll make sure he stays safe. Now go home!"

"I'm leaving but I want to thank you for taking care of Kiara and handling this case so well."

"Just doing my job, Uncle," she smiled and saluted me. She closed my car door then stepped back, waving me off.

Sighing, I nodded, put the car in gear and pulled out into the light traffic. I could hardly wait to get home and sink into a very hot tub. Just thinking about it made me groan with anticipation and sped a little faster than the speed limit to get home sooner.

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Chapter 7: Unsuccessful Rest by ulyferal

Chance's POV

I closed my comm after receiving a message from Felina. She had told me Uly was on his way home and had very badly swollen legs. She feared I would have difficulty getting his shoes off and I had to admit her worry was a valid one. Good thing he had several pairs as the one he's wearing was going to be cut off.

Sighing, I checked the dinner I'd already begun a half hour ago, then went to the fridge. I pulled from the freezer the packs I'd gotten from the pharmacy meant for swollen feet. I laid them on the table then went to the linen closet to fetch some pillow cases and brought them back to the kitchen.

I was glad Jake and I had a fairly quiet day at the garage before the emergency with Uly so it wasn't hard for me to get away and prepare things for my family, especially after the trying day they'd put in.

I also remembered to call the doctor's office to tell them what happened to Kiara. They were shocked and sorry but glad both she and her mother were alright. I promised to have Uly call and make another appointment soon.

Dinner was nearly done so I turned down the burners. Turning to the freezer packs on the counter, I began to stuff each one into a pillow case then carried them to the bedroom. I laid them on the bed before going to the closet and retrieving the foot wedge. I paused at the bed to think.

Should I open the bed or just let Uly lay on top? I decided to open the bed. I didn't want him on his feet again tonight if it could be helped, so I pulled down the bedding far enough to be able to place the foot wedge. I took a moment to pull the sheets out from the bottom. The bedding would pull down on his feet and that wouldn't be good.

When I had things the way I wanted it and had laid out his night clothes, I hurried back to the kitchen.

By the time dinner was ready, I heard a horn honk from the garage. I hurried out and made for the passenger side. Kiara was just waking up when I reached in to release her from her seat. She shouted for joy and leaped into my arms the moment she was free, hugging me tightly for a long

minute.

I heard my mate chuckle softly. I flashed him a warm smile then pulled my kitten from the car, snagging her diaper bag and pulling it over my shoulder.

"Be back in a jiffy, love. Just let me leave her with the nanny bot. Don't try to get out before I get back," I warned. I didn't miss how bad he look and how pinched his face was indicating the amount of pain he was in.

He nodded his understanding, not arguing with me which was a first and worried me even more. I hurried inside and handed my daughter off to the patiently waiting bot. Kiara wasn't exactly thrilled to be handed off but seemed to sense I was going to help her mother so didn't complain too much.

With her safe, I hurried back out to the garage. Uly had opened his door but sat waiting for me. "Turn so your legs are out here but don't stand."

He sighed in annoyance but complied. It took him a bit of effort to turn around as his belly was large enough to hang up on the steering wheel a bit.

As soon as his legs were before me, I knelt down and began rubbing first the left then the right for several minutes.

Feral's POV

I alternately groaned and hissed as Chance worked to get the circulation to move more in my legs so they wouldn't cramp when I finally stood up. His efforts were successful because, with his help, I was able to get to my feet but I had to lean heavily on him. It just hurt too much to try and stand completely on my own.

"Ahh, love your poor legs and feet. I'll do what I can but you'll still have a rough time until they stop throbbing. The bed and ice packs are ready for you so if you can just manage to get inside, I'll take Kiara back and have the bot carry you to the bedroom. Don't argue! I just don't want to drop you and the bot won't have any such trouble," Chance insisted.

I had been about to object but then thought better of it. Chance was right ... I would need help as there was no way I could go further than into the house. I barely reached the couch before I sank down gratefully.

Chance left me sitting but returned quickly with a pair of metal shears. I grimaced. I knew exactly what he was going to do. Sure enough, he sank down to his knees and picked up my right foot then proceeded to cut the boot off.

I grit my teeth together as the shears were a tight fit between my foot and the boot so it hurt fiercely as he worked. I couldn't hold back the groans and hisses of pain though.

"Sorry, love...I'm hurrying," my mate murmured.

As he cut the boot open, my foot began to throb horribly as it was freed from its prison. When he had the boot off completely after several minutes work, I wanted to scream. He could see I was in agony as he made me swivel and lay my foot on the couch then hurriedly set to work on the second boot. Now both my feet were throbbing hard and the pain was unbelievable. No way could I stop the tears from falling.

"Oh, love...they look awful. We need to get you upstairs quick and get them elevated," Chance said in concern. "Nanny bot!" He called.

Immediately, the little robot appeared with Kiara in it's arms. "Yes sir?"

"Here, give me Kiara and you carry Ulysses to bed. Careful of his feet," Chance ordered.

"Yes sir," the little bot said handing Kiara off. Our daughter watched everything in silence, eyes wide and worried. The little robot came to my side and gently got its metal arms around my chest and under my rear then lifted without any effort. It felt weird being carried by something so small but very strong.

"Ooohh...mommy gets to ride," Kiara said excitedly.

"Yes, mommy rides because her feet are too sore to walk," Chance smiled down at her then followed the robot as it carried me down the hall to the master bedroom, very careful not to bump my feet on the walls or doorway.

With infinite care, the nanny bot placed me on the bed. "Thank you," I told it.

"You're welcome, sir," It said politely then waited to see if it would still be needed.

"Okay, Kiara...daddy has to help mommy, you stand here and be good," Chance said as he put our little darling down so she could stand near the bed and watch. Unlike most two year olds, ours is smart enough to do as she's told and understand most of what is going on as well.

"Now, let's get you undressed, love," he said to me, reaching forward to help me get my clothes off.

Keeping ones feet on the bed and trying to undress is not easy. At one point, when I had to get my pants off, Chance had the nanny bot raise me up. My feet hurt the whole time and I was hard pressed not to cry out and scare my kitten. After my work clothes had been removed, Chance carefully had me put on P.J.'s. Normally, I slept with only my underwear but apparently, Chance was taking precautions against the chance I might need medical treatment sometime tonight.

I hope that doesn't happen. My feet were throbbing masses of pain by the time I was finally laying propped on a pile of pillows and they were raised on the foot wedge with the ice packs wrapped around each one. It hurt enough to make me want to scream. Only when Chance placed the ice packs on them, did I feel any kind of relief. As I rested, he gave me the TV remote so I'd have something else to focus on while I waited for my pain to ease.

"Dinner's ready so let me get that served up for you and Kiara. Be back in a jif. Nanny bot come along," Chance ordered then reached down to pick up Kiara.

"No daddy, I want to stay with mommy. Can I eat here?"

He looked up at me. I shrugged and nodded. I imagine he was thinking as I was, that she needed to stay close to me after what had happen. We'd indulge her this once.

"Sure, if you'd like." He smiled. She grinned back and before he could pick her up, she'd already crawled up onto the bed and took a seat next to me. Shaking his head, Chance just smiled then headed to the kitchen with the nanny bot on his heels.

"Watch cartoons, mommy?" She asked.

"Sure." I tap in the numbers and try to bury my pain in watching some mindless cartoons with her.

Chance's POV

With Uly settled and Kiara keeping him company, I hurried to serve up our food. My stomach was grumbling loudly, reminding me I'd missed lunch too.

I made up a plate for Kiara and filled her sippy cup with milk. Placing it on a wide tray and adding

a bib, I gave it to the nanny bot to carry then I put together another tray for Uly and I. While I carried our tray the nanny bot followed me with Kiara's.

"Yeah" Kiara shouted when she saw the food. Poor thing must be starved by now.

"Okay, sit up straight, honey." She did as I asked, even kept her paws out of the way as I placed the tray in her lap and waited until I had her bib on before digging in, hungrily.

I told the nanny bot it could go then served my mate, his meal. I went to the bathroom to get him a pain pill then returned. Climbing onto my side of the bed, I settled then turned and handed him the pain pill. He smiled, gratefully and downed it quickly. With him taken care of, I reached for my food that I had placed on my night stand.

Though it wasn't my favorite cartoon, I watched it without comment. Uly and I seemed to have come to the same decision on not discussing what had happened today. Surprisingly...or perhaps not...Kiara didn't babble about her day either...normally, she's a chatterbox but she was very subdued right now. I only pray she doesn't have nightmares from her experience.

Feral's POV

I'm hungry but my painful feet make it difficult to eat. After attempting to force myself to eat at least half my meal, I had to give up and set it aside. I drank my meal and looked down to see how Kiara was doing. She was practically stuffing her food into her mouth as fast as she could.

"Slow down, kitten, or you'll choke," I admonish her. She flashes me a messy smile and tries to do what I say but obviously she's just too hungry. So far, though, she hasn't gagged on anything so she must be at least chewing it enough.

I shift my rear a bit as its beginning to get sore from staying in the same position too long but the movement is a big mistake. Such a small shift and my feet are screaming, forcing a pained sound from me.

Chance shoots me a worried look. "You need me to adjust the ice more, honey?" He asks anxiously.

"I don't know if that will help," I'm forced to admit. Kat's Alive! It hurts so much. I set my cup down before I spill it.

"It's too soon for the pain pill to work. Let me take a look at them." Chance sets his tray on his night stand, his meal nearly finished, then climbs off and goes to stand over my feet. Carefully lifting one of the packs, his expression shows he's not happy with what he sees and neither am I.

My feet don't look good at all. They've swollen twice their size, are inflamed, and throb horribly making my head pound. I bite my lip and tears threaten to fall. His look is worried.

"I think we'd better call the doctor and have him see you," he said, finally.

"But that would compromise our security," I remind him through gritted teeth.

He rubs his face in thought. "Yeah, that's true so there's only one other thing we can do," he says more to himself than me. "Try to rest and not move, love. I'll be right back."

He's gone from the room in seconds. What does he plan to do?

I look down at my kitten and see Kiara looking back at me with concern in her lovely eyes.

"Poor Mommy," She said, gently patting my arm.

It's pointless and wrong to lie to her when she can clearly see I am, so I try and play down how bad it is.

"Yes, a bit."

"Can I do something to help?"

"No sweetie, thank you. Just finish your dinner, that will make me happy," I gently reassure her.

She doesn't really believe me as a frown remains on her face but she does as I ask. Fortunately, she seems to be nearly done with her meal.

As she finishes her milk, her father reappears. I blink in unhappy surprise. He's dressed as T-Bone. I have a feeling I'm going to be transported. He confirms this a moment later.

"Razor is on his way with the jet. Nanny bot will carry you to the jet. I'm sorry love but you really need to be seen. I've already contacted Dr. Forster and he's waiting for you at Chandly Maternity Center. All we have to do is get you there." He doesn't allow me to argue as he turns to our daughter.

"Honey, nanny bot will take you to Professor Hackle. I've already let him know you're coming. Now you be good for him and don't worry we'll be back really soon, alright?"

"Yes, daddy."

She didn't look very happy but even as young as she is, she is very aware of how dangerous our lives are. Professor Hackle had told us how one day Kiara had sadly said she wished she didn't have to hide who her father was from her friends but understood why it was necessary. He questioned her about it so he could see if she really did understand and was blown away when she told him she knew the difference between bragging and revealing a secret that could get her parents hurt. That just wasn't something someone so young should know.

Of course, we knew she was above intelligence but she always manages to surprise us regardless. But that brightness insures she doesn't get upset when she's required to be left behind on many occasions. Considering what our lives are like, that is a blessing.

However, to insure she doesn't become too arrogant and lacking in social skills, I opened a day care in my headquarters where, at least twice a week, she could interact with kittens her own age. And she understands why she's here because she deliberately checks her higher intelligence at the door and simply behaves like any other two year.

She told me recently, that playing dumb allows her to mingle more easily and just have fun, using the time to exercise her body rather than her mind. Doing this allows her to enjoy herself and make friends. What a grown up point of view. It takes me aback at times. From what Professor Hackle has told us, her mental level is that of a 12 year old. Good thing she gets the right amount of mental stimulation from the professor when she's not at the daycare.

While I was ruminating, Kiara had finished and was now picking up her tray carefully to move it out of the way so she could get up. Her father came over and took the tray and set it on the dresser. She got to her feet and came to my side so she could give me a farewell hug.

"Be careful mommy and get better. I love you!"

"I love you too honey. Please don't worry. Mommy be back soon."

"I know but will worry anyway."

I could only smile sadly at that adult comment while her father could only gape at her. He's

always taken aback when she says things like that. After another tight hug. She releases me.

"I go get dressed, daddy" she said. Both of us blinked at her in surprise. Seeing this she said impishly, "I know how to put PJ's on. Will save time."

I give a small laugh and T-Bone simply shakes his. "That's very helpful of you, honey and a very good idea," he said.

She flashes us both a smile then slides off the bed and runs out the door to her bedroom at the end of the hall.

"She is so amazing, love," my mate sighs.

"She is indeed."

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