

Frank's knee bounced nervously as he sat on the park bench waiting for his date. He hoped Justin would look something like his photo on the AugNET dating app so he could pick him out of the milling crowd. He equally hoped he noticed his tall and thin beanpole-like build in the sea of people out for the afternoon on the Jersey boardwalk. At the very least, he hoped he was actually a person looking for a date and not just a quick hook up with a chaser. Sure, that had been his dream previously, but the casual sex was no longer the relationship Novocain it once was.

It had been more than a year since his long time relationship with his partner Alexis had dissolved. They had tried to stay together, but as she had gotten further along in her transition to female the heat just was not there for either of them. So while it had been a mutual thing, and they were still very much friends, it sucked to lose that connection with someone he had been attached to throughout college.

He had found out about the AugNET app shortly after that, in the first weeks on his graduate studies. While he knew it was a dating app, it was also an easy way to communicate with people in the area to see if they would be willing to be interviewed for his thesis work. It was not until he had been using the app for weeks to line up interviews that someone thought the meeting was a hook up.

Perhaps it was morbid curiosity towards the application of the theory he was learning. Perhaps it was something unresolved with Alexis changing. Whatever it was, he realized his interest in augmented people had become more than just academic.

Whenever he came up for air from his Master's work, he was out with someone. That felt good for a while. Hell, he felt like a real stud getting laid every few days by people experimenting with their bodies. The app had blown up in popularity in the last six months as a recent release from TDBCo. had made a temporary method of transformation publicly available. He kept meaning to try the new release, but always backed out. His partners were generally understanding and dates went on without him being altered.

Really people he met through the app fell into two baskets. There were the more conservative changes, like a little extra bulk or a little more length, and then there were the extreme cases. Early on, during Spring Break, he had been with a guy whose tongue was long and dexterous enough to jerk Frank off. Later, there was huge muscular dude who had bull horns and a rather inhuman cock which felt surprisingly good in his ass.

Though he enjoyed those hook-ups, they were starting to lose their luster and were ultimately just not as satisfying as getting to know someone beyond how they liked their sex and how they had been augmented. It was time to admit he was once again looking for something a bit more long term.

It was twenty minutes past their meeting time when Frank figured he had been blown off. He got up and started to text a friend to ask if they wanted dinner, which is when he saw him. Justin had said that augmentation had been part of his military service and what augmentations indeed.

To say that the man walking towards him was a mountain of muscle might have been overly dramatic, there were not many other ways to easily say it. Towering mass of masculinity perhaps? Whatever the label, his prospective date stood head and shoulders taller than most of the crowd. Under his bright polo and tight jeans, every inch of him seemed to flex with each step, like a walking avalanche. The fact that his short hair and full beard were bright like snow only furthered the comparison to a tall peak.

Looking at him, Frank guessed he could just barely fit the former soldier's broad shoulders in a hug. His core was thick instead of lean, though his posture was of someone used to lifting heavy things and carrying them for some time. His biceps bulged like boulders against the short sleeves. His quads seemed like they would tear through his pants at any moment.

Frank was almost too afraid to wave, sure that he must be hallucinating, but the huge man's face lit up as their eyes met.

“Hi, I’m Justin,” he said briskly as he approached with a meaty hand outstretched. “I’m guessing you’re Frank?”

“You would be right,” he said looking up. He tried to not stare as he realized Justin’s blue eyes were more like a cat’s than a human’s. “You know, normally it’s the other way around when someone’s photo is misleading. You, um, you look even bigger in person.”

“I get that a lot from civvies. I forget that this isn’t normal,” he said pressing his fingers into his taut pectorals. “I spent so many months getting shot at with other guys the same size as me that my concept of what people look like has warped a little.”

“Are you just now back from overseas?”

“Yeah, why don’t we grab some lunch and talk about it? Got anywhere you like to eat?”

“I know a place, follow me.” They headed up the boardwalk to one of Frank’s favorite places. Granted, sure, it was only the beach store of a regional chain, however, they had the best cheesesteaks.

“So anyway, there are a lot of things I can’t tell you but, yes, I was overseas until last month.”

“Was it your first time?” Frank asked, his curiosity piqued by the off-hand confidence in Justin’s voice.

“This was my third tour. I actually could retire in a few months. I’m thinking about staying on though. I know my superiors at Fort Dix would love for me to become an instructor after having so much field experience as an augmented soldier.”

“Were the augmentations part of your enlistment package or...?”

“These eyes were, yeah, but my size is a more complex story.”

Frank’s eyes drifted down Justin’s body. “Complex how? You aren’t going to tell me you got this big eating well and exercising regularly, right?”

“That certainly was how it seemed at first. I grew like crazy in middle school, even light activity piled on the muscle and it felt like I was getting few inches taller each month.”

“That does sounds unusual.” Frank kicked himself first for not bringing a notebook and then for thinking about work. This was his day off, his chance to take a break

“It was. I found out recently my parents had me undergo an experimental procedure before I started school. They said the doctors insisted it was the only way I would ever walk. I know now that procedure was an early augmentation, before they really knew what they were doing. It was just supposed to stimulate my leg muscles to grow correctly. Instead, well, I ended up a beefcake before my junior year of high school.”

“I bet that was positively awful,” Frank said with a laugh, even as his shoulders slumped a little. “As someone who has always been a bit either on the thin or tall side, being a hunk in high school was a dream for me.”

“The thing was, it never really sank in. I was freaking out the whole time. I looked like some kind of superhero, people had expectations of me, I was pulled in every direction.“

“Oh, I...I didn't mean...”

Justin put a hand on his shoulder, the warmth of the soldier's skin through his shirt made him shudder. “It's okay. I'm used to people misunderstanding. This body of mine belongs in myths, not real life.”

Frank thought about how that body also belonged in dreams but the hostess pulled his attention away before he could say anything.

How many? Two? Right this way. She led them to a table next to an open window, the pair settled into the booth and busied themselves with the menus. Frank was once more kicking himself for being

such a dunce. Of course a kid growing into a body that would look more correct as a marble sculpture would be terrified.

“So, uh--was there anything else you wanted to talk about or...?”

“Talking about my past is fine, feels good to talk about it with someone really. Besides, that was just the start. When I enlisted, the Marines took one look at me and did some tests. Once they figured out what was going on with me, they stimulated it somehow. It was like having a second puberty as I went through basic. I could barely keep up with the more normal guys. My body ached and I was eating five portions and still feeling hungry.”

“But you were growing, right?”

“So fast they couldn’t even keep my ass in uniform. There was a particular growth spurt that shredded a shirt while we were running a ten.”

They both laughed at that which was when the waiter arrived and took their drink orders. The young man had a skater aesthetic and he flirted outrageously with Justin the whole time he was at their table. Which only made Frank grind his teeth.

“Sorry about that,” Justin said, his face starting to blush. “Here I am, out with you, and other guys are hitting on me.”

“It’s okay.” He put the menu down.

“No,” Justin said, putting his hand over Frank’s. “I can tell you’re upset.”

Frank raised an eyebrow.

“I am very good at reading people. Have to be.”

“Oh really? Then, if that’s the case, hm, what am I hoping to get out of today?”

“Another date, probably. You’re being casual, you’re asking a lot about me, and you haven’t tried to touch me once.”

“Why would I have tried...?”

Justin made a face and looked uncomfortable as their food arrived with a side of more flirting. Their waiter had even written his number on a napkin in the plastic basket. His hand lingered on the back of the soldier’s chair as he asked if they needed anything. They waved him off after some awkward conversation.

“I suppose that is something you’d have to deal with,” Frank said, comprehension dawning.

They spent the rest of lunch trading small talk as Frank made an effort to open up to Justin. He talked about pursuing his Master’s in bioengineering, something he was going after specifically to enter the field of augmentation. His own childhood seemed boring in comparison, but Justin seemed fascinated by stories from it.

After lunch, they went to play a few boardwalk games on the way back to where they met. First there was the squirt gun dash, a game played by shooting water at a target to make a plastic horse run from one end of the booth to the other. The duo just narrowly lost to a family of four from Long Island.

They walked past a towering strength test game next. Justin grinned and Frank once more raised an eyebrow.

“What do you say? I know you want to see these guns in action.”

“I would be lying if I said I didn’t.”

Rolling up invisible sleeves, Justin strode up and paid the man working the game. He hefted the mallet. It went up over his shoulder. His polo pulled up to show off a glimpse of very muscled torso.

Then the hammer came down and the bell rang. Justin got a prize, but before Frank saw what it was, the attendant had already boxed it up.

After that display of power, Frank felt like he needed to show off in his own way. With only a couple quarters, he won a pile of tickets at skeeball while showing off his signature technique in the process. Justin seemed impressed, especially since every toss of his hit the net at the top of the lane and landed in the gutter.

Unsure if Justin had gotten something for him, Frank traded his tickets for something while his date was distracted by watching two girls play Time Crisis. He had them box it up, just in case.

Churros were the next stop. They leaned against the railing as they ate, watching the waves crash on the shore in the distance.

“You know, I enjoyed today,” Frank said after a moment.

“It was certainly better than what I expected. Actually, do you want this?”

“Oh, um, I have something for you, too.”

When they opened the boxes, it turned they had each unknowingly gotten a bear wearing a Jersey Strong tee-shirt, which resulted in lots of hearty laughter. Justin was the first to recover.

“You doing anything after this?”

Frank looked at him. “No, not really. Why?”

“I don’t need to be back-I mean, that is, do you want to grab dinner later?”

“Yeah. I’d love that.”