

Draft Pick

In a rundown apartment complex on the literal wrong side of the tracks, a train rumbles past, the metal tracks clattering, an automatic noise catcher net rises up a mile ahead of the train along the affluent side of town, absorbing some of the noise, reflecting the rest toward the other side of town. The golden looking net shimmers in the light like some kind of fancy golden weaved silk, lifted up by a series of drones that rise up and hover in the air.

Axel's feline ears twitch, poking out of his messy shoulder length blond hair. The black furred anthropomorphic feline, dressed in khaki pants, his high collar dark blue, light blue striped jacket, half way zippered up, his white chest fur puffing out and over the V opening it makes, "Train is a bit early today," he grumbles, his blue eyes focused on his curved ultra-thin monitor, hands typing away with break neck speed, reaching over out of view he grabs an empty energy drink, the aroma of alcohol wafting from the can opening, drinking it only to find there is nothing left.

Axel gives it a shake, "Damn it," he grumbles, typing with one hand, placing the can down, then digging into his coat pocket to draw out a pack of cigarettes, flipping the top open with his thumb, he peers inside to find it empty, "Shit, now I need to get this little payday," he mutters, his light blue eyes dance across the screen, moving through the world wide web like a spider, pursuing any vibrations in the threads that connect the world to each other, for any prey that may get entangled for him to feast upon.

He finds several but none that fit his criteria, that is until he comes across one of peculiar interest, "Sheza Soulscar, looks like you made a little mistake there, now didn't you?" Axel mutters, a feline smile creeping across his face, "CEO of S. Tech, big conglomerate you have there, don't you Sheza Soulscar," Axel snatches up the account numbers, wiring countless transactions to different offshore accounts, seeding them from one place to the next before funneling the funds into a "prepaid" card, masking the money as a paycheck.

"Your company has put dozens of construction companies out of business, costing tens of thousands their livelihood with your faceless automaton rubber drones. I'm sure you wouldn't mind if some of your extortion money is given back to those who need it," he says finishing the job in a matter of moments.

Leaning back into the chair, it squeaks loudly, letting out a stretched feline yawn, muttering to himself, "That deserves a bit of a reward. Booze, hookers, and the like for me tonight," he chuckles, sliding his chair back, two empty glass bottles of booze roll across the floor, hitting and knocking over a stack of empty energy drink cans. Axel looks over to the mess and gives it a half-hearted wave, "I'll get it latter, it's time to grab my money so I can celebrate later tonight with the ladies," he says with a smirk looking over to a mirror that is hanging on the wall to the right of him, giving it a wink and a point, "Oh yeah, you'll get them tiger, rawr," he says, heading out of this dingy apartment.

Axel pops his head out of the door, looking up and down the worn and tired carpet, ears twitching focusing in other directions, before slinking out, quietly closing the door behind him,

locking it. With soft stealthy footsteps Axel makes his way to the staircase, the lights flickering above.

A group of human kids are gathered at the base of the stairs, the smell of drugs lingers in the air, one of them looks upon seeing him, “Yo, I got some good stuff in today. Want some?”

Axel shakes his head, “Naw, I am light in the pockets today. Doing my best to avoid the landlord today, last thing I need them on my tail,” he replies, hopping over the railing landing half a floor below with ease, passing the group of kids up.

The one human nods, replying “Yeah, they’re a pain. You think they understand how respectable of a business we are both running her’.”

“Yeah, watcha going to do,” Axel replies, taking a step away before the kid calls out.

“Hey, since ya going out. Mind picking us up a six?”

Axel turns, grinning, “You got it,” replying with a sly wink, fingers pointing out like a set of guns, making a clicking noise.

“Can always count on you man,” he replies, Axel stepping out, spring is in full swing, budding flowers, trees filling out with green leaves, grass and weeds growing through endless cracks of pavement in the parking lots and crumbling sidewalks.

Heading two blocks up the road, away from the tracks, deeper into the poor neighborhood, he reaches a modestly sized convenience store. So many different signs are tapped to the inside of the glass that it's impossible to see what's going in on the inside. Such signs such as, “We accept food stamps! Cash your checks here! 10,000-dollar lotto winner at this location!”

Approaching the entrance, Axel sees a small sign below the door handle that says, “Pull hard”. He grabs the handle and gives a tug the rust stained heavy metal door barely budes as it scraps against the ground, but with a second pull it swings open, the bell inside ringing as Axel he steps through.

“Welcome,” says the middle aged human male store owner, who gives a warm smile but keeps a constant vigilance on the entire store with the help of strategically placed mirrors, two of which are cracked in a few places. A heavy bullet proof window protects the clerk from everyone else.

“Afternoon,” Axel says with a wave, heading straight over to a small corner in the store near the register where the ATM is tightly nestled into an alcove. Axel looks around, noting the faux security camera pointing towards the register from behind the store owner, then to the scratched-out camera on the ATM making it completely useless.

Axel gives the machine a look over checking over the scratched-out screen, the worn buttons, the card reader, making sure nothing is amiss before slipping in his chipped card. Within a minute he drains the machine, taking out max he can withdraw several times, stuffing the cash into a different pocket on his person with each withdrawal.

His ears perk and turn toward the store owner, glancing over their eyes meet, finishing the last of his withdraws, “Going to make any purchases?” he asks.

Axel smirks, "Come on, you know me, I always come in to buy," he replies walking over to the beer and wine section grabbing several bottles, walking them over to the shop owner, "Not done," he replies, heading back to grab more, "Do you happen to have any more of that non-alcoholic beverage that looks and taste like the real stuff? The ones that don't even mention its zero percent alcohol content?"

"Bottom shelf in the refrigerator section," he replies.

"Thank you, I'll also grab six cartons of cigarettes while I'm here," he says, grabbing the last item, returning with his stuff in progress of being rung.

"ID," says the clerk looking over him.

"ID? What? Can't you tell I'm of age, just look at this young but not so young mug of mine."

"ID, it's the law."

"Pff, the law? Who is going to know or care if someone of age purchases a little something to drink?"

"Just show me your ID, it will only take a moment."

Axel ears go flat, "Fine, but no scanning it or whatever stuff like that."

"Fine," he replies, Axel pulling out his ID showing it to the clerk, tightly grabbing onto it with his paws, letting the human see it clearly.

The human looks over the ID then to him, back to the ID, "Axel Neumann?"

"That's me."

"Man? You aren't a man, you're a cat. Shouldn't it be Neucat?"

"Hey, I don't pick the last name," he replies, putting his ID away, paying for his items, slipping the guy an extra hundred, "Why don't you get those mirror's fixed? It'll help."

The clerk looks at Axel, taking the money, a smirk creeps across his face, "I'll do that. Thanks."

Axel nods, opening one of the cartons of cigarettes, popping open the pack, taking one of them out, placing the rest into his inner jacket pocket before heading out, placing the cigarette as he gets outside.

Axel's ears remain alert, looking around, he steps off to the side, placing his bags temporarily on the ground, he lowers his head briefly, pulling out a metal flint and liquid gas lighter, the flint grinds against the metal, sparks flare, the lighter lights. Bringing the flame to the cigarette, protecting it from the wind, the heat of the flame licks his nose, drawing the first buffs of his cigarette, letting it fill his lungs with that hot delightful nicotine laced smoke, his body relaxes, feeling the tension slip away.

Puckering his lips, he takes another long deep drag, letting the smoke fill him completely before releasing it through his nose, lips tightly gripping the cigarette, grabbing his bags, heading back to the apartment, "*The Pussy Willow doesn't open for another five hours. What am I going to do till then?*" he thinks, taking a few drags of his cigarette while walking back, keeping a constant look out for anything suspicious.

“That CEO was loaded, and to think that account was so easy to hack... I bet with what I got from her; I could get into her company no problem. A company that big probably has a lot of nasty secrets. Bribing off public officials to get a better deal on construction projects, suppressed negative media attention. I remember hearing on the news that they were attacked by some terrorist group last year. Perhaps I should look into this. I bet there is something big hiding in there,” Axel thinks, struggling with his double bagged items, the glasses clinking against themselves through their paper bag covering, heading back to his apartment.

The closer he gets the more attentive he becomes, the cigarette burned down to the filter, he rolls it in his mouth, spitting it into an overfilled ashtray, it hits the top, but soon rolls off to the ground. Axel’s ears lower, muttering with a sigh, “Damn,” heading inside, into the stairwell where the kids are still hanging.

They turn to him, their eyes eager and high, watching him approach with arms filled with groceries, “Nice haul. Get anything for us?” the same kid from before asks.

Axel gives a coy smile, “Do you think I’d forget you guys? We’re apartment buddies, we have to look out for each other,” he replies, shifting through the bags, handing them the one filled with two six packs of the non-alcoholic beverages.

The kid grabs the bag, looking at the inside contents, lifting his head with a big grin on his face, “Of course, do you need any help with those bags? You have a lot of them.”

“I got it. I’ll leave you kids to your fun,” he replies, the kids giving him room to slip past them without issue, the kids eyeing him for a moment, before he disappears into the stairs above. Axel makes his way to the third floor, panting heavily, arms aching, ready to feel himself collapse, making his way to his apartment door.

Axel’s ears stand at attention, turning, shifting for any noise while he gently, quietly puts his bags down, sinking his hand into his pocket, sliding his hand past the wad of cash to the very bottom where his keys lay. Slowly he pulls them out, the metal clanking, drawing them into the lock, twisting it with a soft click, “Mr. Neumann, there you are,” states a stern masculine voice, causing Axel to literally jump spin around.

Standing behind Axel, a six-foot-tall anthropomorphic red scaled, black striped male raptor. Dressed in a decent pair of jeans and long sleeve shirt, his yellow eyes give a piercing glare while he looks over Axel. Axel quickly regains his composure fur standing down, hands gently rubbing any imperfections in his fur back into place, “Mr. Ziranth, what a pleasant surprise. You know I was looking for you earlier today, but I just couldn’t find you.”

Ziranth’s nostrils flare, looking down at all the items Axel has at his feet, “Did you get paid Mr. Neumann? You are a month and a half overdue on your rent,” he states, crossing his arms, his black claws tapping against them.

Axel glances at the hundreds of dollars of booze, back up at Ziranth, keeping his stern stare at him, Axel responds with a feline smile, “That is why I wanted to see you Mr. Ziranth. One of my employers just finally paid me after dragging their feet for weeks. You know how some of these employers are, can’t trust them. They want you to do the work right now, but pay you? It’s always later!”

Ziranth leans in closer, hand reaching out, Axel's ears twitch, his fur standing up on edge as the raptor's heavy claws hit the door with a thud, "Yeah, I know that all too well with my tenants, now do you have my money or not?" he asks a faint growl lingering in his voice.

Axel reasserts himself, ears facing forward toward Ziranth, "Mr. Ziranth, what do you take me for? Some kind of deadbeat? No, I would never try to stiff my favorite landlord," Axel says leaning into him, "You still take cash, right?" he asks, softly purring to him.

"I take money, it doesn't matter what form it is in," Ziranth explains, eyes staring into Axel's as he doesn't flinch from the chest touch.

"Of course, just give me one moment to get you, your rent money," he replies, digging his hand into the pocket that has the least amount of money, fumbling with the bills, cutting the stack down before pulling out a wad of cash, which slips into Ziranth's front chest pocket, "Here you go, that should cover me for a little while I hope."

Ziranth pulls his arm away from the door, Axel smiling, turning around to unlock the door when Ziranth says, "Not so fast, let me count this first," he states.

Axel turns back around with his shit eating grin on his face, "Of course Ziranth, I would not ever try to short change you," he replies, watching Ziranth's sharp claws run through the money, counting through each bill, muttering the numbers to himself which are incomprehensible to anyone else.

Ziranth finishes counting, looking back up at Axel, "Hey, this only covers last month's rent and a tenth of this month's," he states.

"My employer only paid me so much, and I need food and drink to live. You wouldn't let me go hungry now, would you?" he asks, giving a cute feline look.

Ziranth unbudgingly responds, "Uh, huh. And all that by your feet?"

"Middleman for a friend who will come later to pick it up. That wasn't my money, but don't you worry, I finished another job not too long ago, and when they pay up, I will be sure to pay you all in full and for the next two no, three months in advance!"

"Sure, I'll believe it when I see it," Ziranth replies, taking a step back, "You know the rules though, two months out of rent, out on the street. No ands, ifs or buts."

"I know, don't get your tail all bent out of shape. Relax, I got you, trust me," he says with a smile and a teasing wink, "I will not do you wrong."

Ziranth lets out a soft sigh, "Alright," turning around, walking away. Axel works to unlock his door, noticing in the corner of his eye Ziranth pulling out his "Rent Wallet" a light blue base rainbow marking pony themed wallet, where he promptly places the money before pocketing it.

Axel chuckles opening the door, thinking, "*He thinks no one knows but everyone here knows,*" stepping inside, grabbing his stuff he quickly clears out his bottle ridden desk, arm shoving the excess into a large garbage bin on the side, placing several bottles nearby, along with a few energy drinks, the rest he places in the refrigerator, but not before dumping dozens of empty bottles and half-drunk cans are quickly chugged down before being tossed into an already full garbage bag.

“There we go, good enough to continue my work,” Axel says, pleased with himself, going back to his computer desk, his large black swivel chair, the loud rumblings of the train cause some glasses to clatter while he boots up his computer, “Hmm, that one is a little late,” he remarks, ears twitching.

Axel stretches, cracking his knuckles before getting to work starting off with the impressive general search about S. Tech, and any news about the company over the last few years that could be noteworthy, “Let’s see here...,” he mumbles to himself, reaching over to crack open an energy drink, taking a big swig of it before popping open a bottle of rum and topping off the energy drink.

“Founded thirty some years ago by Soulscar... so trust fund baby you are Sheza Soulscar,” Axel remarks, “Must be nice riding on the coattails of your parent’s work,” he adds, continuing to read, “Invented the rubber drone worker technology to provide menial repetitive to semi-complex tasks to be done at a fraction of the cost of real living people, who have lives, family, dreams...”

Axel lets out a feline snarl, teeth showing, continuing his basic reading of the company, “That’s the bread and butter of their business... but it looks like fifteen years ago they also went bio-synthetic enhancements, replacing lost limbs of people who lost them... I bet those literally cost an arm and a leg,” he chuckles, taking a moment to soak in the humor.

“I crack myself up some time,” he sips his mixed energy drink, resuming his read, “Eight years ago they started to take government contracts, but it doesn’t say much as to what, but a few years later the value of their company quadrupled. That’s not suspicious at all... being an arm of the government does have its perks,” he mutters taking another sip of his drink.

“Branched out into twenty-eight different countries two years ago, and another twenty-two-last year, with another tripling of the company’s estimated value... I don’t know what they are hiding but they have to be up to something big... Maybe there is more to this terrorist attack,” he says searching for news articles from all kinds of sources.

“Let’s start with this lying shitbag of a news company,” he says reading through the articles. “Random terrorist organization... targeted Sheza Soulscar, who was injured but stabled in the explosions that rocked the building... Sheza refuses to comment why she was targeted, and has avoided the public eye ever since, hmm. No follow up on this terrorist group, no one claiming who did it, not even a bit of news on the trail of those who pulled it off, something smells fishy and it isn’t my neighbor this time.”

“How about my trusty news outlets, what do they have to say about this terrorist attack,” he mutters to himself, reading through the various articles only to find the same repetitive information as the other, but with a bit more of a cautionary statement that no further evidence can be found to completely validate what is being said outside of the clear and obvious damage done to the S. Tech tower in the middle of the city. There are no eye witnesses to the people who committed these acts and no one has come forth claiming the act of terror as their own, “There has to be more than this,” he grumbles searching through more, taking notice that the

police were given limited access a complaint by the police commissioner, who three months later resigned from his post, "Interesting very interesting."

"Clean up was done by the S. Tech drones, so everything there could be swept under the rug. I will need to do a lot more research before I try anything," he mutters, spending the next several hours researching, jumping to various sites, checking message boards that might have any clues of what really happened that night, conspiracy theories that might hold kernels of truth.

As the next train rattles his apartment he looks over to the time and jumps out of his seat, "Damn it! They're already open! Pussy Willow here I come!" he exclaims with delight, rushing to the bathroom to spritz himself up, a dab of ultra-fine three hundred dollar an ounce cologne, calling for a limousine taxi service that he pays with a different prepaid credit card which still has enough money left on it for a night of fun.

Puffing out his chest, adjusting his collar, giving himself a once more look over in his bathroom mirror, licking and checking his teeth clean he gives himself a wink, "I'm going to knock the ladies dead tonight," he says, heading out of his apartment, downstairs where a long black limousine waits with a rather nervous looking limousine driver, who scurries out of his car, the human looking around, saying to him as Axel approaches.

"You're Axel?" he asks.

"Oh yeah, that's my name, thanks for picking me up, I wanted some hot wheels tonight," he says, the limo driver opening the door.

"Yes sir, I'll Take you where you need to go," he replies with a look of uncertainty on his face till Axel slips him several twenties into his front shirt pocket, the limo driver's eyes lighting up.

"That's what I like to hear. You take care of me, and I'll take care of you, got it?" he winks.

The limo driver straightens up, his posture, eyes lighting up, nodding to Axel, "With pleasure sir," he closes the door once Axel is inside. Soft leather seats, a mini bar everything Axel could ever want is inside.

Axel grins feeling the soft leather against his paws, "Perfect."

The driver rushes back into the driver's seat. The inside privacy window rolls down while he drives off, "Where to Sir?"

"Take me to the Pussy Willow and make my entrance extravagant. Stay nearby as I might need you at a moment's notice, if you know what I am saying," he replies with a sly wink.

The driver nods, "I understand Sir," he replies, driving toward their destination, crossing the tracks toward the more affluent side of town, into the heart of the ritzy red-light district, where the Pussy Willow resides.

Flashing lights dazzle across the side of the building, neon lights of female dancers with pussy willow trees blocking out the adult bits from view. Long red velvet ropes herd a long of people, about half human, the other half anthropomorphic people of all sorts of species, are forced to wait in line, while a larger anthropomorphic black furred lion stands as the gatekeeper, checking people's identifications, giving the final say if they are allowed to go in or not.

“Pull right up to the front,” says Axel, sliding over to the other side of the limo, ready to step out.

“Yes sir,” the driver replies, the limo pulling up to the very front of the line, dozens of people looking curiously to who suddenly had the audacity to simply drive up like this while they have all been waiting, while others are curious who could have the affluence to do such a thing, rumors and curses spread through the line.

The black furred lion guard glances over to the limo, watching the driver get out to open the door for Axel, while he checks the next ID card, running it through a scanner on his wrist, as a complex set of algorithms decide if this person is allowed in or not. It beeps red, the lion looks down at the scrawny nervous human, “Get out of here,” the lion states with a light grow, handing back his ID. The human jumps and stutters, “Y-y-yes,” running off, muttering, “Waited in line for an hour and a half for nothing, so stupid!”

Axel tugs on his raised collar of his jacket, the door opens, stepping out he gives a sly smooth grin as those expecting to see someone famous is instead greeted by this random feline, their looks of anticipation melting toward disappointment, while those annoyed grow curious, eager to see how this unfolds, hoping that this entitled feline gets what he deserves.

Axel approaches the lion who says nothing at first, simply staring down the feline. Axel keeps his sly grin, “Hey,” he says smoothly, “I’m going to go in there now, and you, my good fine feline companion are going to let me, as one hard working feline to another,” Axel explains reaching out to shake the lion's hand.

The lion looks over Axel, licking his chops, humming to himself, eyes glancing down to Axel’s paw, a feline shit eating grin crawls upon his face, “Why yes we do work very hard, it’s good to get a little appreciation now and then again,” giving Axel a strong firm handshake, the money slipping between their paws, the guard pocketing it, “Go right in my good feline friend. Forgive me I forgot your name.”

Axel smirks, “It’s Axel,” he replies with a wink, double gun finger point with a click in his mouth, ignoring the people in line complaining about special feline treatment as he waltz inside like he owns the joint.

He bursts through the door, the thumping of music causing his tail to dance to the beats, the small lobby that leads to the main floor, requesting him to pay the entrance fee.

Axel smirks, sliding a few twenties casually across the counter, “Here, keep the change,” he says, lighting a cigarette as he walks toward the club proper.

One of the inside guards approaches him, “You aren’t allowed to smoke in here,” he states giving Axel a hard look.

Axel takes a long puff, “Come on man, it's just one cigarette, how about I pay the fine and you simply let me enjoy this?” he asks, digging his hand into his pocket, pulling out a wad of cash, holding it out to him.

The guard looks at the money, eyes shifting between the money and back to his co-workers who give him a subtle nod, mouthing the words “Just take it.” With a drop in his shoulders he snatches the money from Axel’s paws, “Just the one cigarette.”

Axel grins, "Of course, glad we could come to an understanding," he replies walking past the guard before releasing a puff of smoke into the air, aiming it away from people.

The club is full of patrons, raised dance platforms with golden poles are currently manned by a few humans and a couple of anthros, entertaining those sitting around as they erotically dance for those sitting around them, tossing money at them with much delight. Revealing yet well-dressed waitresses with gently swaying hips, entice the patrons almost as much as the dancers. The waitress brings them their drinks, silky veiled side rooms give a teasing shadow of those getting a private dance, making those on the side envious.

Axel looks around, gauging the mood of the place, he saunters over to the main bar, three sexy bar keepers, two human and one anthropomorphic jackal, leaning on the bar he raises his hand motioning the jackal over to him.

The jackal takes a few moments to finish the orders she is doing, processing a drink before heading over to him, she smiles, ignoring the half smoked cigarette in his mouth, "Hello there sugar, what can I do for you?" she asks in an accented voice.

"There is a lot you can do for me, first of all I like to buy a few people a drink," he asks, looking at her with a feline grin, tail swishing behind him, leaning more over the counter to get closer.

"Sure, can do, which table do you want to buy a round for?" she asks, tapping on the touch screen nearby, preparing to take his order.

Axel digs deep into one of his pockets, grabbing the entire wad of cash, slapping it down in front of her, "Everyone here, for the next hour or until the money runs dry, whichever comes first," he explains, sliding the money over to her.

The jackal's eyes widen, she slides her hands across the giant wad of cash. She looks back up at him, "Are you sure?" she asks looking over him, checking for any signs that he has been having one too many to drink tonight.

"Yeah baby. I find myself to be a bit like Robinhood. Take from the rich and give to the poor. And these poor people here? They are all in need of a good damn drink," he says giving the jackal a playful wink, "And don't forget to give yourself a nice tip while you are at it."

The jackal smiles, processing the transaction, "Not a problem, but people are going to ask just who is the fancy cat that has bought everyone here a drink. What shall we say?"

Axel pulls back, straightening out his jacket, showing off the puff of fur, replying, "Just let them know 'Axel *The* New Cat' is who you need to thank," he gives the gunshot hand motions, winking with a click in his mouth.

The jackal restrains herself from chuckling, looking over him one more time just to be sure she didn't misjudge her first assessment if he has had too much to drink, "So, Axel, what would you like?" she asks as the nearby patrons on the bar who overheard the conversation yell out their appreciation to him as they grab their free drink.

"Give me your favorite drink," Axel suggests, giving the jackal a playful smirk, "I think I trust your judgement," he gives another wink.

The jackal grins, her golden highlights giving her a little bit of an anubian Egyptian style to her, “One Tombstone coming up,” she replies, preparing a mixed drink with a few shots of some of the stronger stuff that she has back there.

Axel watches her prepare the drink with delight, picturing the sweet burning taste of alcohol running across his lips, down his throat. He glances over to the raised dance platforms then back to the jackal, “Hey, is the club’s namesake here tonight?”

“Pussy Willow? Yeah, she’s here. I think she’ll be the main attraction on the center stage in about an hour,” she answers, finishing the drink, placing the tall glass before him.

Axel licks his lips, seeing the finished product, “Purrfect,” he replies, grabbing it, drinking a huge slug of it down, feeling the intoxicating alcohol slide down his throat, “Hmm, this is really good. I might order another one later, keep it cool,” walking away toward the main dance platform where a tanned skinned female human, dressed in only a silky pair of panties that barely cover her privates. She spins around the pole, showing off her flexibility, shaking her butt toward the eager patrons who toss singles at her as they whistle and toss out compliments.

Finding an empty seat nearby, he sits, admiring the human, sipping his drink before taking one of the twenties out of his pocket, playfully folding it, while looking up at the dancer who busily works the pole, giving toying glances to those around her. Axel smirks when their eyes meet, the money paper airplane he’s just constructed completed and with a simple flick of the wrist he launches it over to the platform, the money plan hitting the pole with a light dink that is drowned out by the beating music.

The human dancer notices the bill, reaching down with her dance moves to pick it up, slipping it into her panties, giving Axel a playful wink. Axel gives the gunshot cool guy look before leaning back into his seat, drinking his mixed beverage, ordering another for himself in short order. The other patrons nearby first give a look of annoyance, muttering between themselves, “Who is this cat? Who does he think he is?” as he shows them up, but then as one orders a drink to wash down their anger and judgement, their tunes instantly change.

“Hey, Axel, the new cat guy! Thanks for the drinks! You’re the best!” one exclaims holding up his mug of beer happily.

“That I am,” he replies with a cool slow nod, basking in the praise of those around him. As the hour passes, Axel’s head swims with alcohol, his head bobbing slightly, the buzz strong, but not so strong that he can’t still keep up his cool cat appearance. The music suddenly shifts, the lights dim a little more, the lights along the center stage change, and flash, stepping out from behind stage, a snow-white female anthropomorphic, her curves a mathematician would envy, her steps slow, smooth like silk. Her short fur silky soft looking even at this distance, her red silky panties, just barely hide what’s underneath with a tantalizing teasing bra. Her hips sway slowly, elegantly her tail following the movements like a ship’s wake.

Axel’s eyes light up, giving a playful cat call, he watches the feline steadily approach center stage, wrapping her leg around the pole, giving a playful swing around it, her show starting.

Singles fly in her direction, much of it fall into the money pit below that is cleaned up after every act. Axel takes a moment to bask in the view before him, picking up a series of pre-made money airplanes he flicks them over to her, they slide across the stage near her feet.

Pussy Willow looks to them then back over to Axel who gives a playful wink, pointing to her then to himself, mouthing the words, "Later?" while head motioning the silk covered rooms. With her natural dexterous feline grace, she wraps her legs around the pole, holding herself upside down, arching her back so that her chest juts up, her body extends over the stage, her hands motioning him close.

Axel lets out a soft purr, ears shoot up as he stands, walking over to her, a few twenties in his hands, ready to be tossed her way, "Hey, what do you say?" he asks with a sly smirk.

Pussy Willow gives him a sly feline grin, "After the show Tiger," she replies, undoing her bra and tossing it at him to catch, the soft smooth silk of it, runs across his paw, while his other hand tosses a small stack of twenties at her.

"Alright," he nods approvingly, giving her the finger guns and a mouth click purr before moving back to his seat, holding onto the bra for the remainder of the show. As the music begins to die down with her show, Axel smiles happily, another full drink into his night, he tosses the bra back over to her.

Pussy Willow catches it, grinning she throws it back at him, landing on his head, "Hold onto that Tiger. You'll need that for your entrance fee ticket in about fifteen minutes," she purrs, giving a playful wink before sauntering off.

Axel nods approvingly leaving the bra on his head while finishing off his current drink. Heading over to the back private showing rooms a bouncer stands watching over everything and those who come and go. Axel slightly stumbles his way over to him, bumping into a person along the way, "Sorry, sorry," Axel responds, his cool veneer fading for just a moment before he regains his composure. He looks up to the tall buff guard, saying, "I'm here to see Pussy Willow. She needs this back," he replies showing her bra to him.

The anthropomorphic alligator with his long tooth muzzle looks over Axel with extreme scrutiny, for a moment Axel wonders in the back of his mind if he's made some kind of mistake, his cool slick smile unbudgingly, when the guard says, "She's in room three. Remember the rules, no touching."

An invisible sigh of relief comes over Axel, he leans into the guard, "Thank you good sir, here a little something for your trouble," slipping the guard a few twenties.

The guard pockets the money, "The rules remain in place, no touching."

Axel pulls back with a look of surprise, "What? You thought? No man, I just like to share the wealth when wealth there is to be shared. Catch you later," he replies, slipping past the guard and into the third room. Soft lights illuminate the place, red silky sheets provide the backdrop toward the rest of the club. A big red couch sits in the middle of the room, standing behind it, hands on the back of the couch is Pussy Willow, her golden eyes locking onto Axel's as he walks into the room.

“Hey, I brought your bra, you accidentally left it on stage. I thought I should bring it back to you,” he says with a smirk, moving to the couch, sitting down.

“How kind of you, just leave it on the arm rest, I’ll pick it up in a bit,” Pussy Willow purrs, dancing around the couch, bringing her hips down over Axel, her body swaying over him, his hands moving up to stay just a half an inch from her hips, the heat of her body felt on his fingertips, gently tossing the bra off to the side as he does, “So you are the cat I’ve been hearing all about tonight, Hmm?”

“What? Hearing about me? What can I say? When I arrive in a room, word gets around,” Axel replies with a sly smirk.

“Word has it that you bought everyone in the club a few rounds.”

“I’m in a generous mood. When one has a little extra something, one has to share the wealth.”

Pussy Willow chuckles, “An admiral trait,” her hips sway, getting closer her breasts gently bounce over Axel’s head, his pants tighten, enjoying the view before him.

“I have a lot of traits one could admire.”

“I’m sure you do,” she replies, using her cat reflexes to stretch and move around Axel, her behind grinding against Axel’s pants, teasing him, his hands moving a little closer till Pussy Willow gently taps his hands.

“Remember, look but do not touch.”

“Of course, I would never break the trust of a beautiful woman.”

“I’m sure you wouldn’t,” she replies with a smirk.

Axel purrs constantly, pulling out a few more twenties, tossing them onto the side of the couch. Pussy Willow looks over to the excess cash, her hips rolling along Axel’s body up along his belly and chest, till her legs are on either side of his head, her pantied pussy so close that he could taste it, “Say, perhaps once you are off we can have a bit of fun, just the two of us.”

Pussy Willow gives a curious look, her ears perk, tail whips behind her, “I’m not that kind of girl Axel.”

“What? Do you think that...? I would never ask a lady to shame herself in such a way. I was thinking of a romantic late-night dinner. A ride in my limousine which is waiting for my return. A fun respectable night on the town. What do you say,” Axel replies with a little smirk.

Pussy Willow mulls over the proposition in her mind, her hips swaying like waves of the ocean in front of Axel. Her gaze looks at the bills already tossed onto the couch then back to him, “You think you can wait three more hours?” she asks.

“For you? I’d wait for three eternities,” he replies.

“See you then,” she says with a playful wink, giving him another fifteen minutes for his private dance session before leaving him to continue with her other duties. Axel slips out of the room with a gleeful look on his face, slipping back to the main part of the club, enjoying a few drinks with a steady pace to keep the buzz going but not to the point he would lose himself into the intoxicating delights before him.

Hours later Axel waits near the back of the club, he looks around, his limo waiting a few feet away, ready to pick them up. His tail flicks, looking around, “Something doesn’t feel right...” Axel remarks to himself, his fur standing up on end, “I feel as if...” he trails off looking around, checking for any security cameras, looking to see if the limousine driver is doing anything but waiting for his hand signal to approach, nothing.

“There has to be something around here,” he says looking around again when Pussy Willow steps out of the building.

“What are you doing?” she asks.

Axel stands straight pivoting on his foot, turning around, “Securing this place from any ruffians. I wouldn’t want you to be attacked on our date,” he explains with a smirk, straightening out his jacket, the signal to the limousine driver.

“Right...”

“So Pussy Willow shall we go?” he asks the limousine pulling up, the female feline smiling as it does.

“Well you weren’t kidding about the limo, but Pussy Willow is just my stage name, you may call me Veronica.”

The driver gets out, walking over to the door, opening it, “Your ride sir,” he says in a respectful tone.

“Well Veronica, care to join me?” Axel asks, raising his eyebrows several times in quick succession.

Veronica chuckles, “But of course sir,” she replies as they step inside.

As the door closes behind them Axel thinks, “*It must have just been my imagination,*” the driver driving off, while up above on top of the club, a cybernetically enhanced anthropomorphic Siamese feline watches the car drive off.

The feline’s face is completely encased by a yellow glass dome, hiding its face from the world. Their right arm is nearly completely mechanical with black and grey metal, mimicking their former fur color. A smooth metal chest with a subtle bust, covers their front, the armor runs down their back and sides, their tail covered in armor plates, the tail tip ending with a large auxiliary connection spike. Their chest has a glowing yellow light, humming with energy as two back spires jut out a solid sixteen inches from the vents softly hiss as two thick armor reinforced tubes feed air into the faceless dome.

Along both hands is a metallic exoskeleton that runs along the top of the hand to the fingertips. The cybernetic cat’s right palm has a curricular yellow glowing disk, and along the more synthetically enhanced arm, the drone flexes her arm for just a moment revealing a series of spikes that jut out before they relax back into the arm becoming invisible once more, but not nearly as invisible as the unit itself. Advanced cloaking technology perfectly projects the world behind the unit in front of it, making it completely invisible to those looking at it from the front.

The drone’s HUD highlights the limousine, snapshots of the Axel are taken, as it then reports, “**MQ-41 reporting. I have located the highest probable suspect. Transmitting photographs of the target now,**” she says in a synthetic monotone sounding voice. The

feline's true head breathing in her contained atmosphere as she waits patiently, eagerly for the next command.

The data is received and processed through the network; the information sent up the chain of command till it reaches Sheza Soulsar. She looks over the information, mulling it over, thinking, *"There is no data on this Axel Nuemann except their name. No real record of any work history, a minor conviction several years ago, but nothing outlandish. He was either lucky, not worth our time, or is a hidden gem,"* she runs her hand across a golden pocket watch, placed on her desk, she sends back her decision.

"Observe for the next sixteen hours, do not interact unless action is warranted. You are free to call in MQ-40 to assist if needed. They are probably lucky due to what happened."

"Affirmative, proceeding to observe," MQ-41 responds, leaving to trail Axel on his wild fun night...

Late the following day Axel will awake in his bed, butt naked the bed sheets a complete mess, a throbbing hangover jackhammering in his mind. He stretches, arms run across the empty bed, saying "That was a wild night wasn't it?" he asks looking over to the empty half of the bed before sitting up to look around, finding nothing but a pair of red silky panties still hanging on the bedpost, "Veronica?" he calls out before twitching and reaching for his head, "Ow, too loud, too loud."

Slipping out of the bed his feet press down on his cargo pants, looking down he reaches for them, pulling them into his lap, "Let's see what do we have left?" he mutters, perusing through his dozens of empty pockets finding one by one they are empty except for one hidden on the inside of his inner thigh. Where there is still three quarters of a stack of twenties.

Axel smirks, "I either had a wild night or she ran off with most of my money, either way, worth it," he says with a grin, stumbling over some bottles, catching himself on the bedpost, "Easy, easy," he mutters to himself, groaning as he drags himself over to the kitchen. Opening the refrigerator door, he checks the door for a few random eggs sitting on the bottom of the shelf, grabbing them he gives a quick look over them, sniffing them, "Good enough," he mutters, getting his blender ready.

Cracking the eggs, he drops them into the blender before grabbing some salt, pepper hot sauce, a fifth of a half drunken flat energy drink, tossing in some pickle juices before setting the blender on high speed, mixing it into some kind of unholy concoction. The smell itself is enough to wake anyone from their senses, Axel giving a tentative smell. His head recoils, a light gag reflex in response, "Yeah that will do it," he mutters, holding his nose before jugging the entire drink down, his body visibly convulsing, fur standing on end, tail stiff as a board, ears folded back, eyes scrunched up, forcefully swallowing each drop before tossing the empty jug into the sink with a clank.

"Whew! That's the stuff," Axel exclaims shivering off, a sudden creak in wood causes his ears to shoot up, his attention directed toward the noise like a cat and a red laser dot. Axel slowly steps out of the kitchen, looking around curiously, "Veronica? You still here?" he calls

out, walking out into the main living space of his junk filled apartment. He walks over to the bathroom, seeing nothing he walks over to his apartment door, checking it.

“Closed and locked...” he remarks walking back into the living room, his fur relaxing, ears rising up, “Must have been me,” he replies just as a train comes rumbling through shaking everything a little within the apartment, “Is it that late already?” he grumbles, going back to the kitchen to grab a cheap cup of chicken ramen, microwaving it while he grabs two energy drinks from the refrigerator and snags a half-filled bottle of rum, “I’ll finish you off my sweetie as I work,” he chuckles placing them onto the computer desk just as the microwave beeps.

“Can’t hack on an empty stomach, otherwise I might hack it,” he chuckles, grabbing his food, before jumping into his chair, refreshing his mind on his research of the previous day, “I think finding more about what really happened here will be a good challenge,” he says, stretching, cracking open his energy drink taking a sip before topping it off with his rum before he gets going.

“First let’s get myself all spoofed, I’ll let my hand dandy Mr. Spoofer to do that for me,” he says double clicking a custom made program that automatically sets up his connection under several levels of encryption and protective mis-direction of where his real connection is.

“While that does that... I should really get some pants on,” he chuckles, taking the time, he checks his closet and dresser to find not a single pair of clean clothes, he shrugs and gets dressed in the clothes from yesterday, “Laundry day... eh, I’ll do it tomorrow,” he remarks, getting back to his seat just as the program finishes its job.

“Let’s work our way up on the ladder,” he remarks, double checking some of his research and work he’s done yesterday with one employee who works at the S. Tech tower via from home and according to his social media is currently on vacation. Milling through his public profile he grabs several pictures, audio recordings, and comments he’s made, before setting up his headset, running his voice modulator.

“S. Tech help desk, how may I be of service?”

“Ah... yeah, this is Jeff Grimgo, I uh, was trying to connect to work. You know because I ah, wanted to make sure everything was okay? But I was distracted, had ah well... hmm, I kinda... hmm need to get my password reset?”

“One moment Mr. Grimgo, can you provide me with some of your verification information?”

“Sure, sure, it’s right here...” Axel replies providing the relevant data needed to convince the help center otherwise, having obtained the information in piecemeal from various websites that had less than stellar protection against his shrewd hacking mind. Who the hell names their first pet Spiffy anyway? What kind of name is that?

“Alright, I’ve sent you a link to your email, and that should get you all squared away. Is there anything else I can help you with?”

“No, that will be all thank you,” he replies, ending the call, a sly smirk comes across his face, “Their email was harder to get into than this,” he chuckles, snagging the reset link, granting him the ability to reset the password, “Now that I have the password, time to bypass the two-

factor set up,” he says to himself taking another swig of his drink, running through some backdoor exploits he knows of the phone company that Jeff Grimgo uses, he attempts to virtually log into his phone.

“Let’s hope he left it on while sleeping,” Axel remarks, his heart races, feeling the excitement of the hunt, making connections, then hijacking the phone, a virtual display of the phone appearing on his computer screen, “Yes!” he purrs.

“Now to locate their S. Tech two-factoring authentication app... there it is. Logging into the website, requesting the verification code... GOT IT!” Axel exclaims with glee, logging into the website.

“So far so good. This place was easier to get into than the Toys-4-U website, that place is built stronger than anything I’ve seen... they must really like to protect people’s privacies, who the hell three-factor set up, like what is the point of that? Perhaps being a sex toy company that they respect people’s privacies that much?” he mutters to himself, working through the database, pecking away at the company firewall from within, checking their metadata for any clues of what is not being said, or hidden away.

“Let’s see, if they are hiding it, perhaps trying to find something related to it yet not important to get clues. Security feed of the areas surrounding the areas affected by this so-called terrorist attack could provide the clues I need of where to go after that,” he explains to himself, taking another big swig of his energy drink mix, pouring some more rum into it, before getting back into the thick of it.

“But their security camera are closed internal circuit, there is no way there be any remote access to it... unless,” Axel’s eyes grow wide at the idea, he licks his lips continuing to work away, “Their training documents, must have something in here about that,” he mutters, tapping away at the keyboard, several minutes passing by, his body purring like an idling car, tail rapidly flicking side to side in excitement.

“There it is, now to run this Pandemic Security Protocol training program and use that to push my way into their security system that way... and I’m in!” he claps happily, “Who is the best hacker... this guy,” he points to himself as he gets dozens of security cameras to be streamed straight to his computer.

“Now to select the right date, time, and place...” he says going through various camera feeds, finding the right ones, before running through them at top speed, all of them showing nothing special in particular, that is until one shows a bit of movement.

“What do we have here? What kind of mouse has this cat caught?” he purrs to himself rewinding the camera feed to see smooth faceless drones armed with high powered weapons running down a hallway. Axel’s hair raises up on end, “Armed drones? I’ve never heard of S. Tech drones being armed,” he remarks, “Is that what they are hiding? But then what are they running too...” he remarks, continuing to look through the videos, eventually finding one that gives a kernel of information of what happened that day.

Down a long hallway at the very end he sees two drones, slightly blurred from the distance and quality of the video feed firing down a different hallway, the video for that hallway non-existent in his searches.

He watches them fire several rounds, the gun's muzzle flashes indicating the intensity of the combat when a quick silver and black blur moves across the screen, slicing into the drones, as they collapse to the ground, bleeding some strange rubbery goo.

"What the hell was that?" remarks slowly rewinding the camera, frame by frame till he gets one semi-recognizable blurred image of a blue domed creature. Its arms slicing through one of the drones, its long sleek body with spires jutting out of its back, makes it hard to determine the species of what it is, but clearly with its spiky body parts.

"Is this what they are hiding?" he mutters to himself, the train coming through again rumbling everything in the apartment, the now mostly empty bottle of rum falls off the desk with a clatter, rolling back behind him.

"Damn it all," he grumbles reaching for the bottle as it rolls across the floor. The bottle continues to roll across the floor before suddenly and inexplicably stopping, gently bouncing back a half an inch before rolling forward again, stopping, resting there against nothing.

Axel stops reaching for the bottle, looking up to see nothing there. His fur stands up on end, his heart races, muscles tense, adrenaline courses through him, seemingly to suppress the effects of the alcohol coursing through his veins. He swallows a lump in his throat, pulling back into his seat, turning back around when out of the corner of his eye he sees movement.

Axel turns, looking into the mirror across the way his heart skips a beat. In the mirror standing just half a foot behind him is something, but he can only see the back half of it, with the long-spined back vents. "Hello?" he yells out, turning back behind him, seeing nothing there. No indication of anything."

MQ-41 textual transmits, "Target has broken into S. Tech and found evidence of what happened on the attack on S. Tech tower. Recommendation, immediate capture, and draft into the MQ program. Requesting permission for MQ-orb use for onsite conversion."

Axel takes slow deep breaths, his mind processing what he is seeing, like something out of a movie. In the corner of his eye he sees the creature standing there, but before him, he sees nothing. Slowly he turns back around, "I guess it was nothing," his attention toward the mirror, watching the strange surreal machine behind him, pretending to get back to work.

An internal audio response replies, "You are to proceed with capturing the target. Request for onsite conversion is denied. The company wants to bring him back for conversion for the highest success rate of surviving the conversion process. Use non-lethal force against all witnesses, authorized."

"Acknowledged," MQ-41 responds, moving towards Axel with her cybernetically enhanced right hand, the disk in her palm glowing a soft yellow, a little bit of liquid rubber forming at the center, completely invisible to Axel.

Axel leans forward, keeping a close eye on the reaching machine behind him, continuing to pretend to type, his fur standing up on end, heart racing, thinking, "*Shit, shit, shit, shit. What*

am I going to do? I'm dead, I'm so fucking dead. What is that thing? How did it get in here? How could it get here so fast! FUCK ME DAMN IT!" he exclaims in his mind just as the MQ unit is about to reach for him, the slick rubber from the palm about to start its enveloping process.

Leaning forward, the chair squeaks and leans forward with him, he kicks the chair hard into the MQ unit. With a loud clatter, the MQ unit leans forward spreading its rubber bag process around the chair by accident while Axel with both hands firmly on his computer desk push off, launching him over it.

Axel's limbs flail about like a feral cat tossed up into the air, he looks underneath him as he passes the camouflage barrier, the hidden synthetically enhanced anthropomorphic feline coming into full view like some kind of magic trick. Landing on his feet with a thud, he bolts to the door, looking behind him, the creature's back is completely covered in metallic weave armor, his chair coated in a thick sleek black rubber, his attention being drawn away as he slams face first into the door with a rattling thud, the MQ unit turning to face him.

"Fuck, fuck, fuck," Axel scrambles to unlock the door, the invisible facade disappearing from the creature after him. His hands shake, fingers fumble, looking back the machine is fast approaching when he gets the door open slamming it closed behind him, making it halfway down the hall, the door is busted down, wood shards fly everywhere as the MQ unit stares down Axel.

"Shit!" he exclaims, jumping into the stairwell, Axel's neighbor, an anthropomorphic shark with a beer gut slob face, pokes his head out of the door, grumbling.

"What the fuck is that ra--" he states his words cut off as MQ-41's spiked tail tip jabs itself into his neck like a viper.

"**Sleep,**" she says, giving chase after her target.

"Fuck, fuck, I forgot my phone. Ziranth has one, yeah I'll get to him and hide," he mutters, passing by the group of kids all in the corner, drugged up, knocked out. Their drugs are in a small pile off to the side burning, with a plume of noxious smoke that is wafted away due to an open window.

He kicks himself off the railing out into the main floor of the apartment, heart racing, muscles aching, stumbling from the alcohol in his veins, busting into Ziranth's office, slamming the door behind him with a heavy pant.

"Ziranth, phone. I need a phone," he says looking over his shoulder through a peephole to see MQ-41 walking out into the hallway, slowly looking around searching for him. Axel looks ahead where Ziranth should be but instead finds a rubber bag much like the one that enveloped his chair. The outline of an anthropomorphic raptor clearly visible through the lining of the bag as it shifts and squirms within its bondage.

Axel's eyes go wide, his ears twitch as he hears the tapping of a keyboard, but no one is at the desk, the chair slid halfway across the room. Axel's blood goes cold, the tapping stops, appearing before him is another one of those creatures, a perfect duplicate of the other one.

"Fuck me," he states grabbing the door handle, twisting it hard, turning to run when he slams his body into the warm metal of the other MQ unit.

“Target acquired,” MQ-41 states, the cold monotone synthetic voice has a female tone to it, but nonetheless sends an unnerving chill down his spine.

“Do you need assistance sister?” MQ-40 asks from the computer desk.

“Negative,” she replies, quickly grabbing Axel’s wrist, the tight firm grip feels metallic in nature, as he struggles in vain against her unearthly powerful grip.

“Let me go!” Axel yells out, trying anything to pull himself free, his feet slide against the high traffic carpet, unable to budge this cybernetic cat a single inch, while he feels a warmth spreading around his wrist, the disk in MQ-41’s hand warming up, releasing its slick rubber that climbs and slides down his arm.

“It is surprising the target made it this far, given the inebriated states you reported he was in,” MQ-40 comments while this is happening.

“I let my guard down. It won’t happen again,” MQ-41 replies, the rubber crawls across Axel’s fur, causing him to shiver and struggle harder.

“Help! Help! Someone help me!” Axel yells out till MQ-41 wraps her other hand around his mouth, forcing it closed, as only mumbles can escape from his lips.

“Silence. You are being prepared for transportation,” she explains, the rubber quickly moving around his body, drawing him into the thick elastic rubber.

Helplessly, Axel struggles against her, kicking her in the leg which only results in him hurting himself as he feels he just kicked a solid steel door with his bare foot. He feels himself drawn up into the rubber, sucked into it, while it spreads and pulls him in further till his entire world goes dark, the slick rubber bag feeling hot and muggy as he quickly uses up what little fresh air is within the bag.

“Let me out! Help!” he yells his words muffled through the rubber, while thinking, *“I’m going to die in here. I’m really going to die,”* clawing at the rubber but unable to pierce the elastic rubber.

“What about that one?” MQ-41 asks motioning to Ziranth, lifting up Axel’s bag, putting a specialized air vent into the rubber at the base before slugging the bag between her back spires attaching with stands of rubber, the words equally muffled within the bag.

Axel hears a hiss of air flowing into the bag, a cool air, with desperation he breaths it in, bouncing and moving within the bag, while it tightens around him, limiting his movements down to simple squirms, the rubber pressing up against every inch of his body like a rubber vac-bed.

“I’ll be releasing him. He’s so drugged up he won’t remember today at all,” MQ-40 explains.

“Acknowledge,” she replies, the two MQ units head out of the apartment complex, stealthing their way through the city, taking routes that remove the chance of being spotted, with the help of their built-in stealth capabilities.

“I must find a way to get out. I need to get help,” Axel thinks, each breath he breathes is unbeknownst to him laced with special chemicals, which soothe and calm his mind. His fight or flight responses are steadily suppressed, his body feeling ever more relaxed within his rubbery cradle, feeling the gentle movements of MQ-41 as she moves.

Like being rocked by a ship on an ocean he feels each movement, but they are muffled as his senses are dulled by the air he breathes. But there is something more within the air he breathes. Besides from relaxing him, making his struggling ever harder to do, he himself grows harder within his loins. An unexpected arousal builds within his body and as he is taken away towards the S. Tech research facility clear across the city.

Axel fades in and out of consciousness of what is happening around him, but he never truly falls asleep. Moments blur together and what feels like a few moments to him are really minutes passing, the three-hour stealth trek across the city felt no more than thirty minutes to him.

“Where are they taking me?” Axel wonders, knowing the trouble he is but unable to get himself to be worried about it. He feels he should be panicking, going through all sorts of horrible scenarios in his head of what is going to happen to him. Disappear via the government. Be abducted by aliens who really control everything? To be turned into reprocessed meat. Countless ideas go through his head, but none have the impact that they should.

Suddenly Axel feels a jolt as the bag he is in bounces up and down between the feline’s spires, banging against her back, the two MQ units jumping over the high security fence with ease as they head toward their destination.

Security guards and rubber drones don’t bat an eye as they see the two feline MQ units moving through the base. Doors automatically open for them as they take Axel to a special room, completely devoid of anything except several display screens along the walls. Placing Axel’s bag in the center of the room, a single light lights up over him, while the MQ units disappear into the shadows in the room, their yellow lights dimming so they become invisible.

MQ-41 hears within her mind, *“Release his bag. I wish to speak with him.”*

“Affirmative,” she responds, her lights glow briefly as the rubber bag melts away into nothing leaving only the metallic air vents by Axel’s feet.

Axel gasps for more air, feeling himself freed from his tight bondage, his limbs sore from being held in place for so long. His eyes dart around the room seeing nothing but darkness surrounding him.

“Greetings Axel Neumann,” says a mysterious voice behind him.

Axel jumps to his feet feeling his first shock and surprise since being thrown into the rubber bag. Axel turns to face the voice only to see a shadowy figure on a screen ahead of him, *“Who are you? You can’t do this to people!”* exclaims panting heavily, his body feeling tired, heavy weak, his arousal burning between his legs, his pants pitching a barely noticeable tent.

She chuckles, *“I’m impressed you still have so much energy. Good, very good, and I am sure you know who I am Mr. Neumann.”*

Axel’s eyes focus on the screen, he feels a tingle down his spine, responding, *“Sheza Soulscar.”*

“Yes, that is right. I knew you were a smart one,” she responds, something about her voice felt off to Axel, the shadows, the faint colors behind her outline, but in the moment that sunk into the back of his mind as he wanted answers.

“There is no way you could have found me out so quickly. I was meticulous in covering my tracks. You sent these things out to kidnap me over the money I took?”

Sheza chuckles, “Oh no Mr. Neumann, I wouldn’t be so petty as to have you be tracked simply because you got lucky that someone who shall not be mentioned slipped up and used my account inappropriately. But rest assured they have been promptly and appropriately punished for their transgression.”

“Then why?” Axel asks his mind, beginning to feel a little hazy the longer he looks at the screen, soft swirls steadily forming behind Sheza’s head, drawing him in ever deeper.

“The difficulty to track you down. You gave MQ-40, and MQ-41 some trouble, and for them? To have trouble finding you? That’s something. We didn’t even find you directly through the money you took.”

“H-how?” Axel asks his body feeling ever more relaxed, his arousal aching between his legs, his hands slinking to his sides, eyes beginning to glaze over.

“They managed to follow some money to your little pay-as-you-go credit card, and the notable withdrawal from the ATM but no cameras to know who took the money. So, with some digging they monitored any uptick in spending around the area, and your limo service was just the thing that caught their attention. There was no reason to believe it was you except the fact it was a limo service sent to such a poor part of town and the same day as you took the money? A little too eager to celebrate, weren’t we?”

Axel finds himself nodding, her words beginning to bounce in his head echoing, “Yes... I was. It was a big score.”

“For you, I’m sure. So, I had MQ-41 follow you after they discovered who you were. A nameless hacker? Well you are either new and lucky or really good. And it was the latter. And then you had to go snooping where you didn’t belong.”

“The... the people have... a right...to... know,” Axel replies, his eyes glazing over, the swirls on the screen drawing him in more, his cock twitches, pre-cum soaking into his pants, as he went commando today.

“Yes, people have a right to know, but should they know? There are so many evil things in this world Mr. Neumann, and we here at S. Tech are providing a service to make the world better. From construction projects, providing people who have lost a limb a new chance to regain their freedom, to protecting the freedoms of others by doing what no one else wants or can do. We are helping people Mr. Neumann. Don’t you want to help people?” she asks, her words becoming more forceful as they bore his way into mind.

“Y-yes... I do want to help people,” Axel responds, his voice calming further, his words slipping out of his mouth in a catnap like state, tail swaying slowly behind him, pants still tented.

“That’s good Mr. Neumann. Very good. Now in order for me to help you, help others, you need to do a few simple tasks for me. You think you can do that?” she asks, her words compelling him to listen, as the sensation, the urge to obey fills his subconsciousness, steadily spilling over into his conscious mind.

“Y-yes...” he softly moans out.

“Remove your clothes. You won’t be needing them anymore and keep staring at the screen. Don’t look away Mr. Neumann.”

“Don’t look away, remove clothes. Got it. A simple task for a cool cat like myself,” Axel responds, slipping out of his jacket, letting it fall to the floor before unzipping his pants, wiggling out of them, letting them hit the floor, revealing his throbbing feline cock to the world.

“That’s very good Mr. Neumann, now kick those clothes off to the side. You won’t be needing them anymore,” she replies, nanites floating in the air move and latch onto Axel’s body, each breath fills him with even more, inert unmoving. Two holes in the floor open up, a silver floating sphere the size of an orange comes out of each hole.

“I won’t be needing them anymore,” he replies gently, kicking them to the side, the spheres move closer to him, they shine a blue light, basking Axel in their glow. The nanites further latch onto Axel’s body, his breath stiffens as the spheres begin to guide the nanites through converting Axel into an MQ unit.

“Good Mr. Neumann. Now relax. Look at the screen. Pay attention to nothing else but my voice. It will be good for you. Good for the company. To make the company better, you want to serve the company, don’t you Mr. Neumann?” Sheza asks the swirls growing more intense, the soft white noise filling the room, fogging Axel’s mind, drawing him ever deeper into a lustful placid trance.

“Good for the company. Help the company. Serve the company,” Axel replies, black metal plates begin to form around his chest, his white chest fur melting away. His breaths become deep and labored, growing stiffer as the metal plates form, the black becoming outlined with a light blue metal.

Axel grunts, groans, purring rapidly, sign of distress, his chest feels like it's burning but those pretty colors the sweet voice keeps his attention while his hands twitch, tail swishing quickly behind him, “Keep staring at the screen Mr. Neumann. Don’t look away. You want to serve the company, don’t you Mr. Neumann?”

“S-serve the company,” Axel replies, his breaths heavy, eyes glazed over, his pupils wide to the point it covers his entire eye. The nanites continue to consume parts of his body, converting it into material, the light shining on his chest, the other orb focusing on his back, continuing the growing metal ribcage which spreads into full armor plates. Black metal spires with blue streaks just out from his back, his chest burning far worse than the worst heartburn he’s ever experienced. Layer upon layer of the spires and his changing body is made like a 3D printer.

Axel’s purring ramps up, audible to everyone in the room, his ears perked, raised, ready for a fight as he grunts, the pain rising through his body but the urge to continue to stare at the screen grows even faster. His rib cage completely fuses with the metallic chest, his breathing forced to become steady and artificial, his heart beating faster and faster, struggling to keep up as the changes push through his form, a hexagonal shaped cavity forms in the center of his chest, the last tuft of white fur fading into a black and blue synthetic polymer skin, then suddenly

Axel's heart stops as the sensation of it being literally ripped from his chest and shifted toward the center tears through him.

Axel's eyes for a moment grow cold, his mind stops, the pain of his translocation of his heart is too much for him to fully comprehend, his heart transforming, turning into a glowing golden power core that grows and fits perfectly into the empty slot, like the last piece of a puzzle.

The core gives a golden glow, humming to life, blood, power, and special synthetic plasma blood flow through the core, rebooting Axel, shoving him back to reality. A memory growing up in a poor neighborhood fills his mind. His drunken Father who wouldn't even recognize he existed, probably didn't care when he skipped town on his own sweet sixteen, out to make a new real life for himself, he snaps out of it when he hears Sheza's commanding voice.

"You are doing good Mr. Neumann, don't look away from the screen. You want your recruitment into the company to be a success, don't you Mr. Neumann?"

Axel's ears go flat, a grunt of pain goes through him, his metallic chest rising, falling with each breath, "Success... want to be a success..."

"And you will be Mr. Neumann. All you have to do is simply look into the screen and let us do the rest of the work."

"Rest of the... work..." Axel replies, his body pleading with him that something is seriously wrong. Screaming to his brain that his body is in mortal danger, that it is dying, the metallic spheres focusing down his arms, initiating their change while his brain remains shut off from reality, lost in the pretty swirls.

The armor plates grow, attaching to his shoulders, both arms being transformed into slick black armored metal plates, blue highlights along the sides, long jagged spikes that fade from black to blue then to gold. They jut out along the sides of his upper arm like a porcupine, the base fusing down into the bone which is reinforced with a metallic skeletal coating. The top of his hands get a second black fading to blue exoskeleton that extend out his claws into sharp deadly points. Wires and metal crawl around the sides of his hands, digging into both palms as the same disk in MQ-41's hand that was used to capture him within that rubber sack is built right into the palm, the top of his hand slowly showing the circular connection on the other side.

Axel's hand twitch and convulse as the transformation takes place, his left arm becoming a mirror image of the right, the same jutting spikes, sharp deadly, they lay flat against his arm becoming invisible to all but the most astute observer.

The pain causes Axel to feel as if he is on the brink of losing his sanity, his body on the verge of giving up, collapsing under the assault, the quickness of the transformation process would have killed his organic heart if he still had it. His power core glowing brighter and brighter as the new demands on his systems grow, his mind on the verge of simply snapping out of the hypnotic sexually arousing stupor he finds himself in, till the spheres return to his back, the nanites assaulting his spine, converting the pain signals into pleasure, surging Axel's mind into a blissful state of euphoria, his cock twitching, throbbing, revealing the expression of his delight as his purr of distress shifts to purr of contentment.

Curved six-inch spikes form out of each vertebrae of Axel's back starting just below his back spires all the way down to the base of his tail. Each spike when relaxed lay on top of each other like thin spiked armor plating along his back, black at the base steadily fading to blue then gold, each ending in a deadly sharp point. More of Axel's black fur being lost in the process, only fractions of it remain around along his back, his belly his fur is completely gone replaced by the black and blue synthetic polymer armor plating that wrap around his rear.

The spheres move down to Axel's crotch, his throbbing pink flesh, dribbling pre-cum is now assaulted by the nanites, wires form and coil around his length, vibrating his member, while a tube snakes its way in and down his urethra. Black metal armor forms around his length, as his member is tenderly beginning to be milked and squeezed, gently teased with, increasing Axel's sexual arousal to new heights, while his rear is assaulted by a similar set of wires and tubes. They slip into his rear, spreading his hole, the wires latching onto his prostate as they give slow tender shocks, doubling the pleasure he receives, having it to coincide with the hypnotic beasts, the inflictions of Sheza's words, the thoughts to "*Obey the company,*" seeping into his mind.

Never before has Axel felt such a state of arousal and euphoria. The state of bliss he's in is indescribable as Sheza speaks to him, her words floating into his mind like flowers on the wind, blooming in his brain, taking root, urging him to listen, "Good Mr. Neumann. You are becoming a good company asset. Aren't you Mr. Neumann?" Sheza says, Axel looking toward the screen almost unblinkingly now.

"Good... company, asset," he moans out, the spheres moving to his tail, now that there is nothing left but a smooth synthetic crotch and firm ass, showing off bits of his fur. Every hair on his tail melts away, his tail becoming segmented, black metal, blue in between, all of which fades to gold at the end, the bones and flesh converted and changed as this new extremity is given a new purpose...

"You are making a fine drone Mr. Neumann. I knew I was right to bring you here for recruitment."

Axel lets out a soft mew, the words escaping past his lips, "G-good... d-drone..." The words feel right yet wrong at the same time. A small kernel of what remains of Axel's mental capacities, a part of him trained from years of drinking to handle an altered state of mind, screaming to him that there is something wrong.

Axel blinks several times, feeling himself slowly waking from a deep sleep, pleasure shooting through him tears him between waking up and slipping back into that delightful hypnotic state, the civil war now raging in his mind, gives the spheres time to continue converting Axel's legs, adding thick armor plates along his upper thighs, with supportive exoskeleton along the lower limbs, the soles of his feet gaining a small set of powerful jets as a skeletal enhancement covers the top of his feet, his feline foot claws growing sharper, becoming gold colored metal, barely visible under the metal reinforced feet as they retract back into place.

"Keep looking at the screen Mr. Neumann. You are almost done. It is for your safety that you relax and obey the company."

Axel shakes his head a little, “Obey the...” he grunts stumbling a bit, metallic tapping hits the tiles, drawing over his mind away from the pleased state he finds himself in, “Huh... wha?” he grumbles the spheres rushing up toward his head further jostling him from the last bit of trance left over him, “What’s going on,” he grunts, his lungs burning with blissful pleasure yet his breath feels short, quickly finding himself to take another just to keep pace.

“You are almost complete Mr. Neumann. Relax and become a good drone for the company.”

“Drone for the company? I won’t be any...” Axel’s mind goes blank when he points his hand toward the screen, seeing something entirely not his own, not his. A reforged abomination of what was once his hand now points to the screen, the shock of which stops every thought in his head till the spheres shine the light over his head, the base of the dome starting to form around him.

Thick air tubes connected to the air processing units in his spires run along his back and side of his neck latching onto the forming dome, flooding his face with specialized processed air which enhances Axel’s lust and pleasure tugging his mind back into that lustful state.

Axel shakes his head within the half-formed helmet, “No, you can’t do this to people! This is not right!” he screams, his eyes flinching, a thin silicon layer forming over his eyes as the shining light of the orbs blind him for a second, his eyes now forced to remain open, the desire to blink disappearing within a few seconds, while a thick golden glass dome begins to build around his head.

Sheza chuckles, “But you aren’t a person drone. You are a company asset. You are MQ Unit 209. Welcome to the company.”

The gold glass dome forms over his head, Axel reaches toward the screen stumbling, feeling the new weight of his new body throwing off his sense of balance, the glass dome sealing over his head, tinting his world in a golden hue. Desperately he reaches for his head, his claws dink against the smooth metal, his hands unable to find purchase around it, everything fused perfectly, only his furry feline ears show up on the top of his head.

“Shit, shit, shit,” he says in the dome, completely unaware of the wire connections made directly into his brain as the last bit of the dome forms over his head. He desperately looks around, spinning his body, almost stumbling again, grunting as his body is constantly rocked with unbridled pleasure.

“I have to get out of here. I have to find a way out. Hack my way out of this body that feels so... good... so very good,” he mutters the dome providing a HUD display that forces him to look into the hypnotic patterns. Unable to blink, impossible to look away the patterns form images, images which form words.

“Obey.”

“Serve the company.”

“Good Drone.”

Axel shakes his head, hands trying to claw at his dome head again, making no headway as he sees nothing but the display, each breath calming his body further, finding himself to want

to relax more and more, to receive the pleasure, his body craving it like a deep rooted addiction, far better than any catnip he had growing up.

“Serve the company.”

“Live for the company.”

“Obey the company.”

“You are an MQ unit.”

“You serve the company.”

“It feels good to serve the company.”

Axel grunts and moans, his words shifting from his lips to within his mind, the echoed muffle created by his own voice becoming a bothersome feeling for him, sinking back into that lucid pleasure state, *“It feels so good. So damn good. I need to fight... I need to...”* Axel’s mind struggles with the sensations, more of his mind is changed, corrupted the nanites begin to enhance his brain, connecting processes, improving synapsis, blurring the line between what is machine and what is organic.

Axel hears Sheza speak clear as day under this endless assault on his mind and body, “Good, good. It feels good to relax doesn’t it? Just listen and relax as you get your mandatory company orientation training.”

“Relax... listen, wait I need to... just relax and listen. Company orientation training. Good to obey the company. Feels good to obey,” Axel thinks, his thoughts becoming ever more muddled by the pleasure. Each new connection in his mind, reinforced through the synthetic connection and his own body condition to consider pleasure to be a good thing.

The hypnosis grows stronger now that Axel has his attention solely focused on what’s before him. As his mind becomes further cybernetically enhanced words are mixed with strings of 1’s and 0’s. Computer code slips into his mind, programming the cybernetic enhanced synapses encouraging his changing line of thought.

“It is good to obey the company.”

“You are a company asset.”

“You want to be a good company asset.”

“You are a drone.”

“Your designation is MQ-209,” the words seep into his mind as he grows sharper, faster, smarter, his mind processing data faster than he could ever imagine before, but this amazing feat doesn’t cause a reaction from him, simply the pleasure of obeying. The words become ever truer to him as he listens.

Axel takes slow deep calculated breaths, his back vents hiss as they pump him full of the highly oxygenated air, laced with a specialized aphrodisiac to keep him at a heightened state of arousal, allowing his mind to be further corrupted. Steadily, he thinks, *“I am a good company asset.”*

“I am a drone.”

“My designation is MQ-209.”

“I serve the company.”

“I exist for the company.”

“All actions I take are for the company’s benefit,” over and over he thinks over what he is, what he is becoming. His mind rewarded for the correct thoughts, encouraging him to go further, to commit more to his new state of mind and being.

Suddenly the hypnotic swirls disappear, his HUD displaying nearby two MQ units, MQ-40 and MQ-41. The last bits of current relevant data are uploaded into Axel’s mind as he hears Sheza’s voice, turning toward without a second thought.

“Very good Mr. Neumann. Please state what you are.”

Axel responds in a smooth monotone synthetic voice emanating from his new body, **“I am MQ-209. I’m a medium infiltration digital espionage MQ unit,”** the words flow out of his deepest thoughts, becoming truth, Axel still is Axel, but the meaning of his old name has been lost to him. He knows who he was, but understands now what he is, MQ-209.

“Very good MQ-209. And who do you serve?”

“The company,”

“Good MQ-209. You are to report to the main lab to have diagnostics run before you are to be tested in training area B. Do you understand?”

MQ-209 nods with his smooth faceless glass dome head, his real face lost underneath the reflective hardened glass, **“Affirmative.”**

“Excellent. MQ-40, MQ-41, escort MQ-209 to the lab for diagnostics.”

The two MQ units reply in unison, **“Acknowledged,”** the two Siamese felines guide MQ-209 to their designation.

MQ-209 looks at the two fellow MQ units, seeing a dark blue hue outline around the two units indicating that they are allies, and a very valuable asset to the company, **“I could have escaped if I wanted to,”** he remarks.

The twins look to each other and then at him, **“No, you couldn’t,”** they respond in unison.

“Harsh.”

MQ-40 remarks, **“Your training will be difficult. You have no combat experience to speak of. An MQ unit that cannot defend themselves is not valuable to the company.”**

MQ-209 feels the words cut deep into his mind, the mere mentioning of not being an asset to the company has become the deepest insult he could think of, far above the previous “hairball” insults, **“I will not fail the company,”** he responds, reaching the main lab, the doors automatically swing open for them, basic information about the area fed into his mind.

Primary lab, main research facility for further development of MQ units. Currently 35 units are on site, including himself, capacity of 100 units, 57 units are currently operating from this facility.

A few scientists walk by a few casually take note of them walking down the hallway, stepping off to the side to give them room to walk by. Their outline hues all range to some degree of blue, with basic information about each one.

Reaching a large lab, the MQ-209 sees eight MQ units standing in stalls, idle, barely moving, looking straight ahead as they stand in their slightly raised charge platform. Scientists in white lab coats move through the room, when a female anthropomorphic German shepherd with a notable Irish accent approaches them three.

“MQ-40, MQ-41 you’re back. Good, good,” she says looking over them, then noticing MQ-209, she gives a curious look, “And what’s this? I don’t remember this one,” she remarks.

MQ-209 looks at the blue hue surrounding the German shepherd, the basic information fed into his brain tells him her name is Sophie, high level scientist within the company, valuable asset, high protection status. Furthermore, he notes that obedience priority Beta, Gold grade, deviation allowance of commands set to 10%.

“We found him on the road, he fell off the back of a truck,” MQ-40 explains.

Sophie squirms an eyebrow, “The back of a truck?”

“MQ-209 needs to have a diagnostic check run over him before he is sent off to training,” MQ-41 explains.

“I got it. It’s not the first new MQ unit I’ve looked over. You two head to your stalls and charge up. I’ll take it from here.

The two MQ units nod, **“Acknowledged,”** walking around Sophie as they walk toward a spiral metal staircase, walking up it to more charge stalls on the floor above.

“It’s creepier that they are twins...” she remarks giving a little shudder, “Well they are doing positive work now for the world. And that’s what matters. And so, will you, isn’t that right MQ-209 was it?” she asks, pulling out a clipboard, flipping to a fresh piece of paper, ready to jot down notes.

“I am MQ-209. I am ready to serve the company,” MQ-209 replies, he stands there for Sophie to walk around him, getting a good look at his body.

Sophie twirls a pen in her fingertips tapping it along MQ-209’s body with a soft dink, dink, dink, “What kind of unit are you MQ-209?” she asks.

MQ-209 watches Sophie with as few head movements as possible, responding to her question, **“I’m a medium infiltration digital espionage MQ unit, designation two zero nine.”**

“Another medium. Been a while since we had a medium, come, let’s get you into a stand so I can run some diagnostics over your design,” she says motioning him to follow.

“Affirmative,” he replies, following her down a set of stalls. He passes one unit, a female fox, glowing green gem in the neck, with matching power core, brown and red metal armor covering parts of their body, but a notable less amount of metal plates contains their person. A purple glass dome hides their face from the world, a deep blue hue surrounds them, ranking it above the scientist in terms of asset protection for the company. The designation MQ-78 appears within his information box.

Standing beside her is a blue anthropomorphic male kitsune, another light, model, blue and silver metal compromises their cybernetic enhancements, their blue fox ears gives a clear indication of their species. On the other side of him was a red metal anthropomorphic dragon, designation MQ-9, another medium unit like himself.

The stall beside him though is empty and Sophie simply motions him to step inside. Directions on how to charge fill his mind as he approaches the stall. MQ-209 turns around, back vents toward the back of the stall, he backs up into it, his back vents sliding into the area as thick metal wires come down and latch onto his power core on his chest, and a few other points in his body. Electricity surges through MQ-209's body, a sense of mixed arousal and relaxation come over him, obeying the company orders while simply getting a chance to fill his low power reserves.

The tingle of energy moves also through his feet, making more connections with the stall while Sophie gives a quick look over, "Everything appears to be connecting just fine here, let's see how you turned out. This will reduce the death rate on the creation of MQ units by a whole five percent if you are what you say you are," she says going to a nearby computer console, logging in.

"I have no reason to lie to the company. That would make me a poor company asset," MQ-209 replies.

"Didn't say you were lying, more of... shall we say misinformed. I have to keep the company records straight," she replies, typing through the computer console, a soft tingle runs through MQ-209, his HUD indicating that a diagnostic is currently being run on him.

While Sophie waits for the process to finish, a haggard looking gryphon, his feathers ruffled, eyes a little bloodshot, a mug of coffee in his hands, yawning profusely. Sophie turns to him, saying, "Jonathan, how is it going... never mind I can see it written all over your face."

"You think I have it bad, Edna has it worse with this project Sheza has given us."

"That bad eh?"

"We have to figure out how to do delicate surgery not once but twice with using nothing but power tools on nothing less than MQ-8. She's built more armored than a tank, I'm asking for a sergal biologist to help us out but it's taking some time, and Sheza isn't the most patient of sergals."

"That's certainly true..."

"Yup..." he replies, taking a long sip of his coffee. MQ-209 looks over Jonathan, noticing a higher value status in the company and a step higher in priority over Sophie. Jonathan looks over to MQ-209 noticing him, "Who's the new guy?" he motions to MQ-209.

"MQ-209. The twins brought him in recently. From an on-field assignment based on the file I brought up on him. A high-level hacker responsible for a lot of corporate espionage. Had a eighty-year prison sentence for their impressive list of crimes."

"Huh," he says looking over Sophie's shoulder sipping his coffee some more, "Where do they find people like this? At least now he'll be helping instead of harming others."

"One less criminal in the world," Sophie replies.

"Yup," he says patting her on the shoulder, "Keep up the good work. I need to take a nap while I can."

"How are you managing that?"

"MQ-8 and MQ-156 are training together again while MQ-7 is on a solo mission."

Sophie turns around giving him a concerned look, “Those two are training together? Are you sure that is wise? I’m not sure if the training building could handle them in the same building together.”

Jonathan gives a dead tired stare, “I’m going to take a nap, wake me when they get back,” he says about to walk off when Sophie replies.

“I don’t think you will get too much time for that.”

Jonathan lets out a soft sigh, “And why do you think that?”

“After I am done here with diagnostics, MQ-209 is to report to the training area. That will force the other two units out as new unit training is a top priority.”

Jonathan grumbles “Shit... just wake me when they get back,” walking away.

“Poor Jonathan and Edna, those two get the hardest jobs from Sheza just because they’ve been here the longest,” she replies, going back to what she is doing.

MQ-209 watches the discussion unfold, parts of him want to speak up, to say something, something like “Those with the most experience often get saddled with the most responsibility,” but he was not being spoken to. They did not ask him a question. He wasn’t directed to do anything but to stand there, receive a charge till diagnostics are done then head to the training area for further improvements. The command comes as an extension from Sheza Soulscar’s command, which is an obedience priority Alpha, Platinum grade, deviation allowance of commands set to 0.0005%.

“Obey the company.”

“Serve the company.”

“I am a company asset.”

“Everything I do is for the company benefit,” MQ-209 thinks, idling his time and thoughts while he feels the delightful surge of pleasure and energy that is derived from being a good drone. Each breath is heavily laced with the intoxicating gas that keeps him in a placated and obedient state of mind.

“Finally, it’s done,” Sophie remarks, the diagnostics being completed, “Let’s see what we have here...” she says her eyes racing across the screen reading bits out loud, “75.12% cybernetically enhanced. Yup that puts smack dab in the middle of the medium MQ unit range. What curious abilities did they see fit to install into you... level one or two stealth modes, standard... hidden assassination pistols within your arms, how curious,” she mutters looking through more of the data till she gets to one spot, her eyes go wide. She looks at MQ-209 then back at the diagnostic results.

“What in the world. A prototype brain-hacker built into your extendable tail. This is based on MQ-8’s puppeteer technology,” she says, shivering in response, “I swear we have some mad scientist wannabes that work here. How does someone come up with something like that?” she asks with a shiver, “Well, that’s that. Everything else, looks to be in order. Program is strong, current vitals are doing just fine considering you were recently converted. How about we wait another five or ten minutes before we head to the next area. Give Jonathan a little longer of a nap.”

MQ-209 looks at Sophie, **“Did you say that my diagnostic check is complete?”**

“Why yes, so in a couple of minutes we’ll--” Sophie’s words are cut off by MQ-209.

“Affirmative. I will head to the training area to be improved. I need to become a valuable asset to the company,” he says stepping off the platform, the information needed to get to his newest destination uploaded directly into his brain as he walks off.

“MQ-209, wait!” Sophie exclaims following him.

“Negative. Current command overrides any of yours,” he explains.

“Overrides? Oh... Sheza. If you must go, tell MQ-156 to train you then. She’s one of the best we have, and her experience will be most valuable to you. Tell her it's from me.”

MQ-209 turns his head to Sophie standing in the door frame, replying, **“Anything for a lovely bitch like yourself,”** he replies, giving the finger gun, before slipping out of the room.

Sophie stands there utterly dumbfounded by the display she saw and the words she heard, a few of the other scientists in the room look to her and to the empty door where MQ-209 was standing.

A turtle scientist slowly walks up to Sophie, “Are you okay?”

Without looking at the other scientist she turns around, saying, “I need a donut.”

MQ-209 moves through the hallways outside, heading to the training buildings like he’s made the trip countless times before. The path laid out before him within his mind, his HUD gives him a mini map of his location and the nearby facility, the delightful bliss of following his current command urges him not to deviate from his current orders.

Pleasure surges through him, each breath a bit of bliss, soft floating, his arousal and high growing that much higher, entering the facility, a smooth faceless drone operating the receptionist desk.

The proper procedures fill MQ-209’s mind as he approaches the drone, **“I am here to be trained. Sophie told me that MQ-156 will be my trainer for this session.”**

The drone looks to MQ-209, it responds in a monotone synthetic voice, **“MQ-8 and MQ-156 are currently training. MQ-156 will not be available to train you. Current training room is being occupied and used by MQ-8 and MQ-156. Current scientists observing their training session are...”**

MQ-209 leans into the drone, **“Look, I’m a new MQ unit. My training is of top concern for the company. And what the company wants, the company gets. Sheza Soulscar has commanded me to train. I will train. Sophie has commanded MQ-156 to train me. Do I make myself clear?”**

The drone blankly stares at MQ-209 as it processes the information, **“Affirmative. Please proceed down the hall. The updated information will be sent to the scientists to end MQ-8 and MQ-156’s training session.”**

MQ-209 smile is completely hidden by his smooth golden glass dome that envelopes his head, **“That’s what I am talking about. Good drone,”** MQ-209 says patting the faceless drone on the cheek. The drone itself has no reaction while MQ-209 walks down the hall, reaching a

pair of thick heavy metal doors. Red lights blink above it with the words underneath saying, “Warning. If flashing **TRAINING** is in **PROGRESS**. **DO NOT** enter under risk of **DEATH**.”

MQ-209 looks to the door, shrugs, “**I got this. I have to see how other units train to improve myself,**” he says to himself, attempting to open the door only to find that it is locked. MQ-209 smirks, “**Like a double secure authorization code like is going to stop moi,**” he chuckles, his laugh monotone, synthetic, unnerving to anyone who could hear it.

MQ-209 walks to the security panel, his drone status gives him the ability to unlock the door but he shrugs it off, “*I need to train. Train for the company,*” he thinks a small surge of pleasure rushes through him, taking another deep breath while wires sprint from underneath his reinforced claws.

The wires merge and form the appropriate connections to the slots in the panel, his enhanced mind processing through the system’s security, breaking through the firewall, and encryption keys, till he’s granted access within a single minute.

“**Smooth as the glass dome around my head,**” MQ-209 he says stepping to the center of the doors just as they begin to slide open, moments later there is a small explosion, bits of metal shrapnel slam into his body dinking off his metallic form, one piece cuts into his lower leg, a small bit of blood mixed with silver metallic plasma drip from the cut as he walks into an apocalyptic setting before him.

Within this rather large room there are no less than five separate fires burning, black smoke rising up filling the ceiling, the air vents pumping the smoke out of the room to prevent it from filling the room. A dozen rubber drones lay broken or bagged, bound to the walls of the room, one of which is attached to the doors he just stepped through.

Wreckage from motorcycles litter the floor as MQ-8 and MQ-156 just clashed in midair, their metal armor sparks against one another as they land several yards past each other. MQ-8, a sleek dark blue heavy MQ unit model sergal with soft blue black tipped furred ears. The right ear has a set of triple three ringed golden earrings that jingle as she lands. Long sharp spikes just from her back, her tail tip ends with dozens of sharp blades, and with a single flick two blades are thrown straight at MQ-156 who deflects them, one of the blades whizzes past MQ-209’s head piercing the bag of the bound and bagged rubber drone on the door.

MQ-156 an anthropomorphic shark with silver made body with blood red highlights across her form. Her golden dome has white “Shark teeth” painted along the base, adding a horrifying facade of a face on the otherwise faceless drone. Red spikes just from her back and tail, her fishtail ends in a deadly battle-axe type design.

MQ-156 back flips the fishtail blade slamming down, MQ-8 dodging out of the way as the blade makes a loud dung noise, as it dents the solid metal floor. Her follow up swing, gives MQ-8 little time to react as she deflects the blade using the blue metal right arm.

“That is enough! The command to stop combat training comes from Sheza Soulscar herself!” the scientist says, safe and secure in a heavily reinforced skybox.

MQ-8 and MQ-156 on the verge of striking each other stop dead in their tracks, the two going from fierce combatants to docile drones, the two stand straight and tall, turning toward the

skybox. MQ-8 nods, remaining silent while MQ-156 says in a cold unnerving monotone voice, **“Affirmative.”**

“MQ-8 return to your stall. MQ-156 you are to train our newest unit MQ-209 in basic combat maneuvers,” explains the scientist.

MQ-8 nods and simply walks out of the room, but not before MQ-209 notes that the unit has the highest company valued asset thus far he’s seen, MQ-156 is barely underneath her at a 99.979% MQ-8’s value.

MQ-156 gives MQ-209 a long cold hard stare, a shiver runs down the feline’s spine, the door closing behind him as MQ-8 leaves the room. MQ-209 takes a deep breath and approaches, **“Hey, I’m MQ-209, I guess you’ll be training me to become a better asset for the comp--”** he says holding out his hand, MQ-156 gripping it and flipping MQ-209 onto his back with a hard metallic clang. His back spires press up into his shoulder reverberating the impact into to the rest of his body, the “pain” registered, and recognized, his systems overriding it as it is registered as “minor” **“Ow...”**

MQ-156 tilts her head to the side, leaning in down, stepping onto MQ-209’s chest, pinning him hard to the floor as her unexpectedly heavy weight is pushed into his chest, **“Ow? OW?! You call yourself an MQ unit?! Who are these people that the company is hiring today? Bums off the street who stole gum from a Mom and Pop’s store?”** she states her loud voice, remaining monotone along with her synthetic growl yet MQ-209 faintly hears MQ-156’s true muffled growl from underneath her glass domed head.

“I’m a hacker. I hacked...” MQ-209 says about to state his hacking record that Sophie read off during his diagnostics when MQ-156’s heavy tail blade crashes down right beside MQ-209’s head, the vibration of which causes his head to bounce on the metal.

“I don’t care what you are. What you are supposed to be. You are a god fucking damn MQ unit now. You are a killing machine. You do what the company tells you to do. You serve the company, yes?”

“Serve the company.”

“Obey the company,” the programing whispers into MQ-209’s mind.

“I serve the company.”

“Good. All MQ units are killing machines first and foremost, your specialization is secondary. You can’t hack if you are dead!” she exclaims grabbing MQ-209 by the metal collar bone bound to his chest, lifting him up with one hand and tossing him halfway across the room into a pile of broken and still a little burning pile of wreckage.

Warnings of minor injuries and undesirable levels of heat, poor oxygen levels display across MQ-209’s screen, **“Shit, shit, shit, shit,”** he states rolling off the wreckage, MQ-156 bolting across the room toward him.

“MQ-156, I recommend we clean the room before you start training a new unit,” says the scientist.

“Negative, real training should happen on a real battlefield,” MQ-156 states, MQ-209 jumping to his feet just in time to get roundhouse kicked clear across the room, he flails about like any cat tossed into the air.

“I didn’t land on my feet. I shame my feline ancestors almost as I shame the company for this failure,” he thinks, his new center of gravity, throwing him off as the world slows, adrenaline coursing through his veins, feeling out every inch of his body, each movement he makes, flipping, twisting, turning till he tightens up spinning faster before extending his limbs, slowing the spin as he lands on a patch of clear ground, sliding back as he slows himself to a stop.

MQ-156 chuckles, **“The cat learned to land on his feet. Bravo~”** she says in monotone-sarcasm, clapping a couple of times before sprinting toward him at breakneck speeds.

MQ-209 would flinch if he was still able to, watching the deadly force come barreling toward him, **“Fuck me...”**

“You fuck no one, you are the company’s bitch now!” MQ-156 cackles slamming into MQ-209, his deadly training with MQ-156 is just beginning and would only get more intense as time progresses...

Four Weeks Later

MQ-209 ducks under MQ-156’s battle-axe fish tail, moving in strike at her, his arm spikes extending outward, MQ-156 countering with an elbow to the back of MQ-209’s head, his blades barely missing her sides, hitting the ground hard, head hitting the ground with a loud glass tap with a heavy bounce.

“You’ll have to do better than that!” MQ-156 cackles, moving in to strike at MQ-209 while he is down.

MQ-209 spin side swipe strikes against MQ-156, the cybernetic shark jumps up and back, as the feline barely misses her by a hair’s breadth, before leaping back to his feet only to be side kicked halfway across the room.

MQ-156 sprints after him, closing the distance while he slides up and against the wall hitting it with moderate force. The red lean mean killing machine comes barreling down towards him. Springing up with his hands he hand jumps four feet up into the air, his feet pressing against the wall, activating his jets just long enough to propel him up and over her, but she leaps up with her own jets punching his gut, knocking up and off course and landing halfway across the room almost tumbling back off his feet in the process.

MQ-156 continues her unrelenting attack as he barely dodges out of the way, her jets fire, speeding her up enough to strike and knock MQ-209 back to the ground, her battle-axe tail coming to strike his body, a hard full blow when two echoing gunshots ring out. The bullets pierce into MQ-156’s leg, blood and silver-plasma blood mix and leak out of the flesh wounds, the bullets though fall to the ground with a clatter as they are unable to pierce the reinforced

polymer that's right underneath her skin. MQ-156 stopping her strike just before it truly connects with MQ-209, the tip of the blade scratches his chest armor causing it to spark.

"After all this time you hid those away from me, waiting till I was sure of victory before springing your trap," MQ-156 states offering her hand to him.

MQ-209 looks up at MQ-156, nodding, **"Of course. You told me not to reveal my secrets to my opponent and wait for the perfect time to strike without leaving yourself open to attack,"** he replies reaching for the hand.

"You've learned much," MQ-156 says lifting him up and over her shoulder, slamming him hard into the ground with a hard metallic thud, **"But you still have much more to learn. Don't get cocky."**

"Ow... I won't," he replies with a synthetic sigh, his head leaning back.

"That was for shooting me, wait till you do some real damage," MQ-156 chuckles.

The observing scientist speaks up from his protective skybox, "That's enough training for today. I was just informed that both of you have just been given a mission."

"Affirmative," MQ-156 says walking out of the training room.

MQ-209 jumps to his feet, turning toward the scientist, **"I think I misheard you. Did you say that I had a mission?"** he asks, swallowing a lump in his throat, a mix of nervousness and excitement.

The scientist replies, "Yes. You are to report for transportation immediately. I don't know the details, but it is a solo mission."

MQ-209 nods before asking, **"Am I ready?"**

"The company says you are ready. Do not question the company," he states, a sudden drop in the pleasing gas that floods his personal enclosed atmosphere, his body aching, begging for the gas to return, the stick being utilized against him for his erroneous thought.

"Yes. You are correct. If the company says I am ready. Then I am ready. I serve the company. I do not question it."

The scientist smirks, "Good now report for transportation you leave immediately."

"This unit's power reserve is at 86.3% will that be sufficient?" he asks the valid question and previous response returning his gas to the correct level.

"I don't know, you will do as you are told and as you are briefed you can update them on any problems. Dumb drone can't do simple tasks without being told to... wait is this thing still on? Fu--"

"Affirmative," MQ-209 replies with a nod heading out.

Hours later MQ-209 finds himself whisked away to the far reaches of the world, to the Asianic slums of a major city. The sun has set long ago, the city skyline in the distance lighting up the night sky, drowning out any stars, even this far out from the city's downtown district.

The windowless black van he's in drives him toward the approximate location of his target is no less than a six-block area of this run down part of the city. Anthropomorphic Tanuki move through the side streets, some simply on their way home after a long day of hard work,

others on their way to some night shift, while a few are there to make underhanded illicit deals out in the shadows where no one can see them.

Some humans and other anthropomorphic species make up a sizable minority of those who live here. In the van with MQ-209 is an anthropomorphic tanuki, his brown and black fur and buffed face with soft rounded ears looks to the cybernetic feline with concern and curiosity.

MQ-209 runs through the data of his mission over his HUD, locate, apprehend alive this hacker that has been causing the national government a lot of headache. The unique nature of the slums given the political climate prevents the government from officially doing anything about the hacker as this is a considered safe zone from the government's watchful eye, one of dozens of places across the country created to prevent further public unrest with those who demand security at any cost, and those who think the government already has too much control over their lives, and is far too watchful and knowing of what they do. This particular hacker has been codenamed Slum Dog and has threatened to expose a lot of government secrets, some of which he already has to make promises on his threats.

The tanuki dressed in simple civilian clothes looks over MQ-209, his body tensing at the softly gold glowing unit, the glass dome reflecting his own face, making it impossible for him to see just who is on the other side of the glass, "They just send you?" he asks.

MQ-209 processes the information of his mission, going over it again and again within his mind, his body tensing, the excitement of his first mission running through his organic and synthetic veins, "*Must be a good asset to the company. I serve the company. Must make the company look good. Act cool, you are a powerful company asset,*" thinking then responding, "**They only need to send me. The best.**"

"Okay..." he replies, slinking a little further away from him, disturbed by the cold monotone voice of MQ-209.

"*Alright. That sounded good. Like a real pro,*" he thinks, the car stopping in a back alleyway. The tanuki gets a head nod from the driver, looking to MQ-209.

"Go, we'll be here till just before daybreak, don't be late."

"**I won't need that much time,**" MQ-209 responds the back doors open, stepping out the van shakes side to side, lifting up a solid inch, "*Initiating stealth level one,*" he thinks the soft golden glow of his body fades away, his metallic form becomes harder to see in the darkness as he leaps up grabbing onto an external fire escape, climbing his way up and onto the roof. His back spines lift and rise up, the wifi-networks of the nearby area spring up on his HUD system while two small floating drone cameras pop out of the top of his back vents, they shoot out in opposite directions while he runs ahead, leaping from one building to the next.

MQ-209 cat reflexes and agility coming in handy, despite his heavy body, he lands on each rooftop with barely a shutter, though some of the lesser made buildings the roof drops a thin layer of dust onto those below. A human family about to have a simple dinner sigh deeply as a layer of ceiling dust seasons their meal at the last second. They look to the meal then up at the ceiling, shrugging as they continue on with their meal, trying not to think about what just happened.

“No, no, no. Not this one. None of this would be anything I would use,” MQ-209 thinks, his spy drones extend his network search over the slums as for the next three hours he tries to locate this most elusive target.

With already four possible networks and investigations ending in disappointment, MQ-209 catches one network that would work to his advantage, it’s a network that appears to be coming from outside of the slum area.

“This network is far too strong to be detected this deep into the sluts. That is unless it’s being boosted so the one using it can access it further in,” he thinks, processing the data, following the packets, analyzing what is being said over the network, as every so often he catches data packets that aren’t like the rest, hidden under a mess of others connecting to the network.

MQ-209 grins, *“What do we have here? Has that cat found a mouse?”* he thinks, tracking down the packets to one rundown apartment complex, noting at least eight different users are using this hijacked network for their own purposes.

Leaping onto the roof he lands with a purposeful heavy thud, stomping around up top for a few moments before stealthily walking over to the rooftop door. A few minutes pass, his feline ears catch the noise of keys jingling, his systems enable second level stealth, the front of himself becomes completely invisible, while he stands beside the rooftop box.

The door clicks unlock an middle-aged anthropomorphic tanuki holds out an old flashlight and looks around, *“Get complaints from tenants someone is up here... who could be up here?”* he grumbles looking around, stepping out of the door while like a feline true to his nature sneaks through the door before it closes behind the landlord without him none the wiser.

The signals he is picking up indicate the users in question are at least two to three stories below the top floor. His floating cameras spread out and search down the hallways, running along the ceiling, hiding themselves as he stealthily makes his way to the stairwell that is connected to the rest of the apartment complex.

Disabling his stealth to save on power consumption he keeps a close eye on anything nearby, not wanting to make himself known. Slowly he narrows down his target, to one apartment. One of the numbers is missing, the door is a little warped, and the middle hinge is completely busted.

“Impossible to open the door without being heard, either clever or lucky,” MQ-209 thinks, processing what to do next, *“I have an idea,”* knocking on the door, imitating the landlord’s voice and language, *“Hey! Hey! Causing a ruckus!”* he says, listening for the sudden movement and groaning of the person on the other side.

MQ-209 takes a step back, his level two stealth kicking into high gear, his front becomes invisible as he hears the clicking of door locks, a soft grumbling of *“What does that old man want now? I didn’t do anything,”* the door creaks and groans open, wood rubbing on wood as the tenant has to force pull the door open, the moment it does one of his drones whizzes over his head, scanning around the room.

An anthropomorphic tanuki in his mid-twenties finishes opening the door. His black lower of his face and brown upper, a distinct feature of his species, looks surprised when he sees no one in front of him.

“What in the world, his fur shivers, tail fluffing out, peeking his head out of the door looking up and down the hallway, wondering if it was his neighbor that was being checked upon instead of himself, but he sees nothing.

The sensation of “Something doesn’t feel right” comes over him, but by that time the little camera drone picked up enough of the key pieces that gave MQ-209 enough reason to suspect that this guy is his target. Just as the tanuki is about to close the door, MQ-209 reaches out and grabs his muzzle, holding it tightly shut.

The tanuki’s eyes go wide, he tries to scream but his words are muffled as MQ-209 appears seemingly out of nowhere before his eyes. His hands gripping onto the synthetic arm while he is forced back into the room, the disk in the unit’s palm beginning to warm up, liquid rubber spreads out, wrapping around the tanuki’s head, sliding down his body, the door behind them being closed with a heavy thud as MQ-209 uses his foot to close it. He feels a rush of pleasure from the good job he is doing for the company, the rubber taking the tanuki, he only says two words to his target before the rubber takes him completely, **“Target Acquired.”**