

Trembor looked at the display as he buckled up, The way Marlot was driving, and cursing, there was every chance he'd hit something. He activated pursuit mode, to ensure no enforcers stopped them. In the wolf's current state, the officer might not survive the encounter.

He pulled out his pad. "Calm down, we won't get there any faster if you have an accident." The cow living across the hall from Cristan said he spent all his time at the gym.

He had it plot the route, and the superimposed the traffic conditions over it. He didn't want to think of Marlot barreling through a construction zone.

"What are you thinking of for opportunity?" Trembor asked. he hoped that getting the wolf to focus on him, on the conversation would allow him to calm down.

"He owns the gym. No one's going to keep track of his movements. He leaves his ID there so that when the enforcers do the check, he's nowhere near her house. You can bet if we check. He wasn't training anyone during the time frame around her death.

"make the second right, there's an accident ahead. But the check would have brought up his car in the vicinity of her house."

"So he takes someone else's car." The tires screamed as he made the sharp turn. "the people there are going to be busy for hours, and I'm willing to bet he has a master code for the locker's locks." Marlot slammed his hand against the steering wheel, making the car wobble. "What really pisses me off is that I never caught scent he was lying to us."

Trembor grabbed the armrest until the car settled. "You can't beat yourself up because of that. he's a reptile, they don't have much of a scent to catch, and that place was a soup of scents. I don't think you would have been able to pick out a skunk out of them. And even if you had been able to pick up his scent, how do you know reptiles have the same scent code mammals do? Left at the light."

"When this is over I'm taking a course on multi-species body language reading as scent interpretation. No matter what that costs." he made the turn as instructed.

"Motive?"

"Probably revenge. She used him after all."

Trembor nodded and focused on giving direction now that Marlot was driving more sensibly. When they reached the gym, he brought the car to a squealing stop in front, two wheels on the sidewalk.

Trembor had unbuckled ahead of time and was out a moment before Marlot. He burst inside and looked around. The iguana was in the back, and their eyes met. Cristan bolted toward a back door.

"What do you think you're..." A buff gorilla started saying, blocking Trembor's way, but the lion bowled him over, not even looking back to his groaning form on the floor. Marlot jumped over him, following the lion.

The door led to an office with another door on the back wall,

slowly bouncing open. Trembor looked around the room to make sure Cristan wasn't trying to ambush them, then sprinted for the door.

They ran through a corridor crammed with barbells, boxed of food and crates of drinks. halfway down they smelled fresh air. Trembor elbows the door opened and ran outside.

Marlot continued down the corridor to a door visible on the left. It was storage with more boxed and crates. he made sure the iguana wasn't hiding there and backtracked to the outside door.

Marlot looked around as soon as he stepped outside and scented the air. He was in a back alley littered with trash. He couldn't smell the iguana, but Trembor's scent was strong.

He followed it to the end of the alley and saw the wake of the lion in the people he'd pushed aside or to the ground. They were screaming obscenities in the lion's direction, although he was too far to hear them.

Marlot ran and was glared at, and someone yelled at him; "Get off the street. this ain't a place to hunt. it's illegal."

He didn't have the time to correct the screamer. Trembor was walking toward him, smelling the air. Marlot sniffed around and caught the faint scent of someone afraid. They reached the alley at the same time and turned into it, careful not to lose the scent.

The scent led them to the front door of an old boarded-up building. They checked the stairwell beyond the door, then cautiously went up, keeping an eye ahead and up for the iguana.

One floor up the stairs ended at a dimly lit room taking the entire floor. There was barely enough light for them to see it might have been a call center at some point. A few partitions were still standing here and there, four feet in height and providing places for Cristan to hide. The rest of the floor was littered with crumbling desks, worn chairs, and rusted filing cabinets.

They didn't see any other exits, and none of the gaps in the boards covering the windows were large enough for the iguana to fit.

"Cristan." Trembor's voice boomed in the silent space. "You can't run anymore."

Marlot closed his eyes and focused on the sounds, creaking in the walls, wind rattling some boards. he couldn't hear the iguana breathe or move, but if...

"That's what you think," came the harsh response.

The wolf's ears swiveled, and he opened his eyes. There, on the other side of the room, there was a large cabinet. That was where Cristan was.

Marlot looked to Trembor, who nodded and indicated for him to go around toward the right, while he went left.

"Why did you kill her?" Trembor asked, moving quietly.

Marlot mirrored him, staying against the wall and keeping an eye on the cabinet, preparing himself for if Cristan bolted.

"Are you telling me you don't think she deserved it?" the iguana

replied. "I can't be the only result of her twisted desires still alive. How many broken males are out there because of her? How many more was she going to hurt?"

Marlot focused on the voice. He could hear something rustling near Cristan. What was he doing?

"So you're saying you did it for them?" Trembor asked. "Sorry, but that scent went bad a long time ago. You said you didn't hate her, so there's no way you'd kill her for a bunch of people you didn't even know."

The iguana sighed. "Look, I didn't mean to kill her, okay? I just wanted to see her again, show her what I'd made of myself. I don't know, maybe reconnect with her."

"Didn't work, did it?"

Cristan snorted. "She's dead, isn't she?"

"What happened?" Trembor actually sounded concerned.

"I tried to explain things to her. You know, how I'd emulated her, how I was just like her so we were perfect for each other." He paused. "Instead of appreciating what I'd done, she insulted me. She called me..." His voice cracked. In the following silence, Marlot heard a soft click. "I'm not going to repeat what she called me, it hurts too much. I got angry. I wanted her to stop saying those ugly things about me. She fell, and I was on top of her, so I showed her how much of a male I was."

Marlot watched as Trembor stopped moving in the middle of Cristan's explanation. "Just like her?" Marlot heard the growl forming in the lion's throat. "You're the one who rapes all those females."

"Yes, I did." Cristan stood and pointed something at Trembor, using two hands to hold it. There was a flash of light, an explosion, and Trembor staggered back against the window. The boards broke away, and he fell back.

Marlot had a moment to wonder how Cristan had gotten hold of a gun, only the protectors had access to those.

Then he heard Trembor's body hit the ground.

Marlot's eyes narrowed on the iguana. Cristan ceased to be a criminal at that moment. He wasn't prey, or even meat anymore. He was the one who had hurt Trembor, who had hurt Marlot's lion. There was only one thing someone who did that could be. Dead.

Time seemed to slow down for the wolf as he fell deeper into hunter mode than ever before. He ran toward his target. The gun lined up with him, and he jumped behind a desk. He didn't slow as a hole exploded in the column next to him. He was up and running again.

The gun aimed for him again, but this time Marlot didn't go for cover, he was passed caring about what happened to him, he wanted vengeance. The shot went wide, and by the time Cristan aimed at him again, Marlot was close enough to bat the weapon out of his hands.

The iguana's eyes went wide as Marlot's jaws went for his neck. They closed, and the teeth dug deep. Marlot relished the taste of the

iguana's blood.

Cristan tried to force the wolf to release him. He punched him in the chest, the stomach, but it didn't have any effect.

The wolf growled and shook his head hard, making the iguana stagger a few steps back. Horror filled the reptile's eyes as he realized the wolf still had part of his throat in his mouth.

Cristan put his hands over his throat, trying to stop the blood from flowing out. He wheezed and pleaded silently with Marlot. He reached out and gurgled something before falling to his knees.

The wolf watched him fall to his side, still grasping for him with a bloodied hand. Marlot spat the chunk of meat at him and locked eyes with him as the iguana's breathing slowed and then stopped.

He stared as the blood pooled under the body, transfixed by it. A sense of elation overtook him, so strong that he lifted his head and howled. When he looked down at the body again he had a satisfied grin on his muzzle.