

**Story begins-5**

Bobby reached up and grabbed the store's facade, bringing it down to eye level. He unraveled it, studying the image's components, he brought down the hue a few percents, raised the saturation and set it back up to look at it from the distance of people walking by. He doubted anyone would notice the difference, but it was more pleasing and inviting.

He breathed in, then raised the scent of bread until he could just make it out, creating a trail for it leading to the door. Outright hacking of Implants was impossible, but it was always possible to use psychology to influence others. Commercial entopic was mainly the use of the senses to affect decision making, from visual to tactile to olfactory to auditory.

Audio.

They hadn't paid for that, but it wouldn't feel complete without it. He added the sound of people coming from within the store, pleasant, but indistinct conversation, adding to the inviting atmosphere. He adjusted the sound trail to lead to the door, but never increase to where the conversation should be understandable. There was nothing more annoying to a customer than reaching the point where he could make out detail and realized it was fake.

He took a step back and tripped, cursing as he fell on his bed. He needed a larger workspace. One of the many things he needed. Reflexively he ran a hand along the leg brace to ensure it was still in place before standing and pushing the entopic display back to gain the proper perspective. It looked good. He'd make the final adjustment when he installed it.

A beep and visual prompt warned him of an incoming call on his business line. "Power Entopic Design," Bobby answered, packaging the file and breaking it apart for ensured security before storing it within three of his vaults. It wasn't like he expected anyone to want to steal his world-shattering designs, but growing up around his father, safety was something he'd had to learn. Con men didn't go only after the rich folks.

"Mister Bobby Power?" a woman said, "this is Inspector Melanson, out of Wichita."

Bobby launched the corporate map. "What can I do for law enforcement?" Wichita came up as part of the Kansas City Sprawl.

"Are you the son of a Logan Power?" she asked, and Bobby sighed.

"What has my father used me to do this time?" It wasn't enough his father had managed to clone his original DNA ID tag and kept using it in his cons, every so often he found a way to put Bobby directly in it.

"I'm not aware you're involved in this, but your name did come up when I ran his through the system. I need you to make a deposition in regards to the crimes he committed against you before we can bring him up before the judging system."

Bobby needed a few seconds to process what she'd said. "You caught him?" His father had managed to remain ahead of the law through guile and his connection with the criminal world. Logan Power worked mostly alone, but he was smart enough to know

the value of allies and favors or blackmail material.

“He was arrested for violation of consent two days ago, and as we processed him multiple other cases against him came up, so we’re contacting anyone we can reach to build a stronger case and hopefully get him out of circulation for good.”

“Any chance he’s going to end up in one of the work camps? No one should spend money on a personality processing, or even risk it, knowing him he has something in place to make you think it worked, then resurface to go back about his usual business.”

“I’m not in charge of setting his punishment, but shouldn’t you want something less severe for your father?”

Bobby let out a bark of laughter. “Have you looked at what he did to me? I’m a fucking invalid because he wanted access to my ID tag. Do you have any idea what happens to someone when they get their Implants at the age of four? Do you fucking know how screwed up interaction between it and the brain gets because the brain changes too much once the Implant is fully deployed? You want me to send you the studies that have been done on me trying to fix the damage?”

“I’m sorry, I didn’t know.”

“Yeah, well, as far as I’m concerned, I want him shipped to the Kuiper belt to dig out an asteroid by hand in preparation for setting up a new habitat. What do you need me to do?”

“Can you come to the Wichita Precinct for a full debrief?”

Bobby looked at the schedule for public transport. Tallahassee to Wichita was an hour and a half, but if he wanted it to be free, he’d have to wait until twenty people traveled on that hover. The fullest one that matched his needs way only half full.

“I can, but I have no idea when I’ll be there. I can’t afford a private hover and I’m nothing looks like it’s going to be filled any time soon.”

“What if the department paid for it? Your father has a history of slipping through our grasps, my superiors don’t want to delay this any more than we have to, they have authorized me to use department funds to ensure this is processed speedily.”

“In that case, just send one to the roof of my location, I’ll be ready in a minute or two. Oh, any idea how long that’ll take? I have a meeting scheduled for Saturday.”

“Two days will be more than enough to be done,” she answered.

“Then I’ll be waiting for transport.” Bobby terminated the call and switched out of the entopic construction room to the real-life overlay, catching a flicker of his apartment without any overlay, and as in previous times, whatever John was working on through his Implant caused him to be looking in Bobby’s direction. It was creepy at times.

He got dressed and headed to the lift as fast as his brace covered legs let him. He did not want to miss this chance to finally make his father pay for everything he’d put Bobby through.

\* \* \* \* \*

“So, where are we going this time?” Nori asked, rubbing his metal hands together. He’d decided to play Thundor, his brastok wizard. Omar was looking at him in

amusement, even after Nori had assured him he hadn't created Thundor because of him, for one thing, Thundor was designed as a bull, not a tiger, and his color pallet was darker, obsidian black-blue and mahogany browns. He was also specialized as an energy wizard, instead of elemental.

"I picked last week," Omar replied. "Marc, anything from the forums and your research indicating a good dungeon to spend the day?"

"Anything that's going to let us fuck?" Melor asked. "Not having to come back to town to get a room is much better. Get going while still in the heat of the moment." The carapaced bear grabbed his featureless crotch.

"Don't you have enough underling to fuck?" Omar asked. "You act like this is the only place you get off."

"I thought Orrs believed there was no such thing as too much fucking," Melor replied. "Isn't it in your constitution or something? Marc, how come there are no adult-rated dungeons? With sex monsters? You have a direct line to the devs, right? Tell them to add that."

The skeleton fixed his eyeless gaze on the insectoid bear. "Why would you think I have a direct line to the developers?" he asked defensively. "All I did was beta test some of the worlds. Millions of people do that, it doesn't mean any of us talk to them. Every hall of commerce within the Lands has a suggestion file. Put yours there."

"And not everyone who plays is an Orr," Nori said, "or sex-obsessed like you, Melor. It would be a scandal if someone, some kid, managed to make their way into one of them and get traumatized."

"Yeah," Marc said, "you want your very own sex dungeon? find an open world one with a caern and take control of it. As for where we can go. What's the rush? Paul's not here yet."

"Where is the raccoon?" Nori asked. "He's usually here before me and he could have kept Melor satisfied while we decide what we're going to do."

"Yeah," the bear said, "How come you're not offering to pay for a room so we can shake the walls, Omar, you're an Orr too, right?"

The brastok tiger rolled his eyes and kept them rolling. Nori chuckled and wished he knew how to get his brastok to do that.

"Not all Orr citizens are sex-obsessed," Omar said once his eyes settled. "In fact, didn't some research come out fifty years or so showing that because Orr Corp is more sexually permissive, there is actually less sex happening statistically than in places like, oh, Vanguard? Which is all repressive and stuff."

"We aren't repressive. We have just as much sex as your Orrs do."

"More, if that research's right," Nori commented and got a glare from the bear. "But anyone knows what's delaying Longpine? Any of you talked with him this week?"

"This is the only place I talk with him," Omar said.

"Same," Marc added. "I know his real name, since he introduced himself when he joined the guild, but I've never had a reason to find him outside the Lands. If I need to contact him I leave a message on the guild board."

“I’ve had long conversations with him that way,” Melor said, “but like you, I never contacted him outside the Lands. You’re both Orrs, haven’t you hooked up?”

“You do know how large the corporate territory is, right?” Omar replied, “I have plenty of other guys I can fuck that are much closer. I say we give him five minutes then go kill monsters.”

“I’m in,” Nori said, “So, Marc? Where are we going?”

\* \* \* \* \*

Melor Crumpled on top of the brastok tiger, finally tired. For metal creatures, brastok certainly had nice soft holes. He rolled off and hit the wall. “Damn it, Who picked such a small room?”

“You did,” Marc replied, moving languidly on Nori’s brastok bull’s crotch. “Something about ‘if that’s the only room they have we’re taking it because I need to bury my <bleep> into someone’s <bleep>”

Nori chuckled. “A trying to use bad language in a general rated area. The joys.” He groans. “Yeah, just like that, tighten that ass of yours around my thick cock.”

“I did say I wanted to fuck someone at the start of all this,” Melor said. Four orgasms, that would last him until he could play again in a few days. “Now I need to head out. Meetings and such.”

“Is that what they call fucking all your underlings in Vanguard?” Omar asked. “We just call it fucking all my underlings here in Orr Corp.”

“I’d fuck that ass of yours again, just for that, if I had the time,” Melor replied.

“But Seriously, Mel,” Nori said, “you’re the boss, don’t overwork yourself like that.”

Eight years, David thought. He could survive that long and then be the boss. “If I don’t set the example, what am I going to do when my underlings slack off?”

“Fuck them?” Omar offered.

“Punishment is supposed to make them not want to do what they are being punished for, not get them to do it more. I’m posting my schedule for the next thirty days on the board, hopefully, we can fuck together again.” He slapped the metal ass next to him and exited to the game’s lobby, cutting off Omar’s complaint halfway through. No message from Paul Longpine on the board letting them know he’d be late, or couldn’t come, in this case. David wondered what kept him so busy he’d forgotten this basic courtesy.

He posted his schedule, then stepped through the portal, leaving Melor Bareback’s from behind and received a notification as he stepped into his personal lobby.

*File received, “I do not Consent” from Bobby Power.*

David looked back at the portal. Had Bobby joined the game as he left? He brought up the guild’s active player list. Nope, Paul was still inactive. Weird timing then. It looked at if the file had reached him in the instant he’d transitioned out of the Land’s lobby.

He opened the file and looked at gibberish. What was this? Broken code? A corrupted file? Wasn’t it impossible for files to be corrupted during sending anymore?

When had it happened last? A hundred fifty years ago? At least that's what a quick search told him. That was the last reported case.

Of course, David knew that not everything got reported. Corporations controlled the flow of information, no matter what anyone believed, and if they didn't want something known? No one found out about it. Maybe file corruption was still a thing even with all the safeguards.

He set to call Bobby so he could resend the file when someone called him.

"David, I see you're out of your game. How about you joined me? I could use some of your tender care."

With a sigh, David stored the file in his lobby. "I'll be right there," he answered. He'd look at it again later and call Bobby when he had the time.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nori came with a scream, the skeleton's ass massaging his twitching cock, then went limp. "Fuck, how do bones do that?"

"It's a game," Marc said, "the laws of reality are flexible. Bone can be malleable. Metal can be soft."

"Unfortunately, time can't be stretched," Nori said. "I should head home, I might be on vacation still, but I do have a family commitment."

"How long is your vacation still?"

"A month. After three years in space, my dad treats me to a long vacation, which my mom keeps insisting I spend visiting them. I'm not certain my mom understands what a vacation is, but that is where I'm going tonight. So, I'll see you next time." Nori did the double clap that took him to the Lands of Farr lobby and he stretched, enjoying the sound of the gears.

Not for the first time, he wondered if Omar felt the gears move. Nori's immersion suit gave him all sorts of sensory input, but they were all external, touch, scent's tastes. The only reason he could feel a cock moving in his ass when in the game was that the suit came is the right inserted attachment. Anything that took place under the skin wasn't something he felt. Omar's Implant could probably make him feel anything, including indigestion. Nori chuckled at the idea of the brastok tiger getting food poisoning in the game.

Nori took the time to look through his other characters. Who would he play next? More precisely, who could use a touch-up? Kardan, he decided. Next time he'd play his druid and redesign his look. He commanded the termination of his connection to the Lands of Farr and found himself in darkness. A faint beeping told him a file had come in, but it didn't have the urgent code, so he took his time taking off the suit's mask, blinking at the low light in his room.

Looking at the wall display he saw the file was from Bobby, Paul Longpine's player. The name was "I do not Consent."

"Play latest file," he ordered the room's system.

"Unable to comply," was the response, "file is not a recognized format."

What kind of file would his system not recognize? Bobby owned and entopic

design company, could he have sent him that? His house wasn't designed to run those, Fuck he didn't think anything in the city was. No one here had Implants. "Store file to Nori storage, tag it with the date of receipt." He'd take a look at it later, it might be worth getting a projection system to see what Bobby had sent. But that would be after a shower and definitely after dinner with his parents if he didn't want to be shipped to the Oort cloud as punishment.

\* \* \* \* \*

Marc barely stopped his fall forward. "He just couldn't give me the time to get off him, could he?"

"Independents don't really get the consequences of just vanishing," Omar said. "It's not real to them."

"It's not real at all," Marc said, standing. "It's just a game."

The Barstok tiger looked up at him from the floor. "You have time for another fuck?" He stroked his metal shaft.

"I probably have the time, but that just means I'll have to work longer in the night to clear my workload. Don't you have work?"

The tiger let out a clanking laugh. "I wish. My boss has it in his head that I overwork myself, so he enforces my workday and time off. I have another seven hours before I can officially get back to work."

"Can he do that? What about your consent?"

"The law has health-related clauses. Like if you're judged to need some operation to survive, the doctor doesn't need to ask for your consent to operate. They'll do so and you can sue them afterward if you were hoping to die. My boss got a doctor to state that I have unhealthy work habits and therefore mandating my schedule if a health-related situation and I don't have to consent to it, I just have to live with it."

"I wouldn't think an Orr doctor would agree to something like that. Couldn't you plead your case?"

"Waste of time. My dad agrees with my boss, so he signed what was needed without even asking me."

"Your father is the doctor that enforced that time off? That sucks. But I'm still going to leave the game. My clients only have so much patience. I'm sure there's plenty of guys who'd love to feel that pumping in their ass."

Omar chuckled. "If I'm going to fuck strangers, I prefer doing that in the real world. This is to spend time with you guys. Have fun with work. I need to do some management here then I'll leave too."

Marc stepped through the portal into the Land's lobby and Horrace stepped out of it and into his own to the notification he had sixty-seven files waiting for him. He noted the one from Bobby and filed it for later processing. His clients came first.

\* \* \* \* \*

Trevor stared at the file "I do not Consent" It had appeared as soon as he'd stepped out of the Lands of Farr game entirely. A check had shown it had been waiting there for some time. He couldn't find out how long without a warrant, the Lands of Farr

designers were adamant about protecting the game's data. There had been a fear it would become a place from criminal to meet and plan, but as far as the research showed, it wasn't. Stories were floating around in less reputable areas of the network about attempts to use the Lands as secure meeting places, but anytime they tried, system glitches would disconnect them, or dump them into a dungeon or some other random event that made planning a crime impossible.

Without being able to study the game's code, there was no way to know how true the stories were, but Trevor could see the designers acting that way to ensure the police never had a reason to for them to expose their precious code.

He's suggested to Uncle they take a gander through the game's code, but Uncle as just shaken his head and told him he had better things to do than see how a game was coded.

The file Bobby sent him made no sense. It was large. So large he'd expected a fully immersive simulation, Bobby did do entopic design. But it didn't register as such. He tried to step into his work lobby, only to be informed he still had six and a half hours to go before entry was permitted.

He looked for Bobby's contact information. Having to go through multiple databases to find the right Bobby Power, who owned Power Entopic Design, but he wasn't accepting calls, either personal or business-related. Trevor left a message asking him to contact him back when he had the time and tried to set the file aside.