

Story begins-6

The nice thing about working on the file Bobby sent Trevor was that it gave him a reason to end his workday, step out of the precinct's lobby and files, and work within his own lobby. The bad thing about it was that it was an unusual behavior it didn't go unnoticed. His brothers contacted him every night for a mix of checking if he was sick and inviting him to a one get together or another since he wasn't working.

His father showed up at his doorstep to check in on him; as if he couldn't access his body's readout. It meant the evening was used up, but it was a good evening. Trevor forgot how fun his dad was in bed. And because if one family member knew he wasn't working they all did, it took no time at all that his uncle, grandfather, granduncles, great grandfather, and great granduncles and each and everyone in his family came by over the weeks to pull him away from his personal project that was Bobby's file.

And it was infuriating.

The file, not his relatives' visits. Each visit was too fun, ultimately, to reach the frustrating level.

Initially, Trevor thought it was an encryption key that rendered the information within the file into garbage code, and he'd been right. There had been an encryption over everything, it took him a little more than a week to crack it, under seven hours of full work. He'd have been done in a day, if not for the interruptive sex.

Not that it helped, even unencrypted, it made no sense. He found slices of code that didn't connect to anything else. Information that looked like nothing Trevor knew, pieces that might be data relating to positioning, but it was incomplete, so it could just be junk data. Had Bobby encrypted and sent him his trash folder by accident? Or on purpose?

And why hadn't Bobby gotten back to him? He realized it had been almost two weeks since he'd left his message. He called him again and still got no reply.

Sitting back in his lobby he wondered why could keep the raccoon so busy he wouldn't bother calling back, or even join the Lands of Farr once. He used his inspector access to look for Bobby Power's movements over the few weeks and he was surprised to find that the last contact with the system Bobby had was after a call from a police department. He couldn't access the call itself, not without a warrant, and while he could explain away tracking Bobby as part of an investigation to match net intrusions with a suspect's location, getting the call itself was beyond his authority as an inspector.

Still, knowing where the call originated meant he could contact the precincts and find the caller.

"WPD, how can I help you?" the woman said as she and her desk appeared in Trevor's lobby.

"Inspector Trevor Pakesh," he replied, dressed casually behind his own desk. He kept a proper version of his lobby on quick access for official calls. "Out of Vegas. I'm looking into someone and they received a call from someone in your precinct. Any chance you can put me in touch with them?"

"There are proper channels to get the information, Inspector," the wombat said.

“I know, but they’re time consuming, and I’m just interested to know what the WPD wanted with the man I’m looking into. I’d rather not have to fill the access reclamation forms only to find out you were just calling about someone finding his lost pet or something. If you guys are running a full investigation into him, I’ll fill everything out and make it official, but if it’s nothing, I have other things to look into.”

The wombat considered it, then shrugged. “When and who was the recipient?”

“Bobby Powers, in Tallahassee, and he was contacted on...” he looked through files so he wouldn’t appear like he had the information ready before giving it to her.

She looked into the distance, not adding anything to her search. She probably interacted with too many callers to bother, Trevor thought. “Inspector Melanson called him. A request from legal about setting up a deposition.” She frowned. “An on-site deposition.”

“Why on-site?” There was no need to have witness travel when a call would do.

“She doesn’t know, the request simply came with a note they needed it to be on site, we did send a hover. Legal paid for it.”

“Who from legal handled it?”

She gave him a look. “How would I know that? Have you dealt with legal? They don’t act like individuals, it’s like they’re some sort of hive mind. Bodies acting with the will of the group. Requests come from legal, not a person.”

Trevor had never dealt with legal. His job consisted of figuring out who and how and what, then sending that up the chain. “Thank you.”

Getting legal to tell him anything proved impossible. He spoke to a dozen clerks, none of which bothered identifying themselves, and told him the same thing in the same tone, with the exact same words. “Without a warrant, legal wasn’t in a position to divulge any information pertaining to any specific case they might, or might not, be prosecuting.”

Everything was so much the same Trevor asked Uncle if legal as some program impersonating clerks. The answer was no, but they did use camouflage programming since if a criminal could arrange the removal of the lawyer handling their case, it would derail the entire process, could even cause the case to be abandoned since most lawyers kept the information private within their implants to avoid a competing lawyer poaching the case from them.

Trevor was happy he stuck to finding the criminals.

He supposed that a deposition could explain the communication silence, but two weeks? What could the owner of an entopic display company have witnessed that took that long? Or was the deposition to hide something else? Could Bobby’s company have been hired to do government work? Military?

Government meant talking with Terry, who wouldn’t tell him anything, regardless of his friendship with Bobby. Tucker on the other hand. He pinged his brother, who called him back before Trevor could bring up a file.

“Trev, I’m at Allegorium,” Tucker said, not appearing in his lobby, “hosting an orgy, you heading this way?”

“No, working on something. How busy are you?”

“I can’t head back to the islands and drag you to bed if that’s what you mean, but I can take a breather.”

“Just breather. I need to know if the military is doing anything covert.”

“We always are.” Tucker materialized, naked as usual. He tilted an ear at Trevor who, he remembered, was clothed.

“I was talking with a colleague,” Trevor said, his clothing turning to dust and falling off him. “Do you guys use entopics?”

Tucker straddled Trevor’s lap and places his arms around his brother’s neck. “Your question is edging into classified territory.”

“Is that where you say “if I tell you I’m going to have to kill you?” because if it is, my lobby really isn’t the place to do that.”

“No, it just means I’d have to incentivize you not to reveal anything I tell you.” He turned under him and moved Trevor’s cock so it was between his cheeks. “Or you know, you could convince me to divulge classified information.”

Trevor ground against his brother’s ass. “You have the weirdest sense of priority of anyone I know. What are you going to do if you’re ever captured by Vanguard?”

“Kick their ass, then fuck them.” Tucker leaned forward. “So? What do you want to know?” he whispered before nibbling on Trevor’s neck.

Trevor moaned, grabbing Tucker’s ass with both hands and spread them, as he tried to find his hole by cock-touch only. “Do you guys use entopics?”

“Sometimes.” Tucker reached behind him and lined up the cock before pressing back against it. Both brothers moaned.

Trevor thrust hard, forgetting his question in the moment. “Do... do you guy contract outside companies for that?”

Tucker nibbled on Trevor’s ears, rolling his hips to match his brother’s motion. “No, we have departments to deal with that.”

Trevor slammed his cock in, making Tucker arch his back and groan. “Would they hire an outside expert?” Trevor said between pants.

Tucker’s ass tightened on Trevor’s cock. “Maybe.” He moaned. “But it’d be for very specialized work.”

Trevor slammed his cock over and over until he let out a yell and came. He slouched back, turning the chair into a bed. He took Tucker’s cock in hand as his brother laid next to him. “You need me to finish you off.”

Tucker chuckled “I don’t quite get the same enjoyment out of sex in here as you do. I’ll head back to the orgy and fuck someone there. What are you looking into? If it’s military, you should let me handle it.”

“Just a friend who dropped out of contact and I’m trying to work out why. Last information on him I tracked is him going in for a deposition, but that was two weeks ago, so I thought maybe he got hired for covert stuff, and that’s you or Terry.”

Tucker snorter. “You say that like I’m in charge of anything. I’m just a special ops soldier.”

“Sure you are, “Mister General Tucker Orr”. I was there at the celebration dad threw for your promotion.”

“I’m a one-star general, it’s not like I’m included in any important meeting unless they need someone to get them off while they plan.”

Trevor eyed his brother. “Not that I doubt it would be one reason they include you, but you’re also one of the more decorated soldiers we have, so if they aren’t asking your opinion while you’re sucking them off, maybe we need to replace them.”

“I couldn’t say anything, anyway. No speaking with our mouth full, remember?” Tucker rolled on his back. “You want me to talk to Terry? I am a general, if the corporate side is doing something that requires your friend, I could find out.”

“Right, like you can get Terry to say anything he doesn’t want to any more than I do. That brother of ours is immune to our cocks. He must have received special training as part of being made head of the corporation.”

“I can try, fucking him is always fun.”

“That’s okay, I’ll search things on my side for a while. If I don’t get anything, I can go to the office and fuck him myself.”

Tucker stared at his brother. “You, get out of your lobby? Spend time in the real world, would out of your house? Are you sure you’re feeling okay?”

Trevor rolled his eyes and shoved his brother off the bed. “Get back to your orgy and drain your balls. I have more venues to look into before I grow desperate enough to brave the real world.”

* * * * *

Melor jumped over the stone dragon, planting his ax in its back. He preemptively called his hawk to do a healing pass as the dragon turned to look at him and blew a cone of poisonous gasses at him. Half his buffs vanished mitigating the damage from the boss dragon, then his health climbed as the healing kicked in. He raised his ax to plant it again as a call notification came.

“It’s my off time,” he said, not bothering trying to sound meek. With a grunt, he planted his ax in the back again.

“I need you in the office, David.”

I’m not David right now, he wanted to yell, as Melor threw himself off the dragon and only caught the edge of the cone. “With all due respect, sir. We have an agreement.” He muted the call to scream the command for his shield.

“There is someone from security here, David, to speak with you. They will not take no for an answer.”

Melor froze. What would security want with him? The shield shattered and the poison breath engulfed him, taking away his remaining health.

“David,” Louis Ruslonav said, his tone severe, “did you hear what I said?”

“I did. Sorry, I just died.”

“You what?” no he sounded concerned. Which was nice to know, even if it was because the ape was worried about losing such a good ass and mouth.

“In the Lands, the dragon blasted me to death.”

“Oh, that game,” he said dismissively, as only someone who’d never set foot in the Lands could.

How long had Melor being adventuring today? He brought up the time. Too long to be presentable. “I’m going to need ten minutes to clean up, sir, and make myself presentable.”

“Don’t take too long, David, security isn’t known for their patience.”

* * * * *

David stepped into his boss’s inner chamber his fur still damp, but in a professional-looking suit. A woman and a man in the black clothing of security stood on each side of Louis, turning to face the bear.

“How can I help security?” David asked. Knowing better than to attempt small talk or to make light of their visits. Patience was not the only thing security was known to be low on.

“During one of the regular communication sweep yesterday an anomaly was noted,” the woman said. “You received a file from the Lands of Farr, a file outside any standard parameter size.”

Davis didn’t show his fear. Louis had trained him to never show how felt. “I’m afraid you’re mistaken, I didn’t play yesterday. Corporate head Ruslonav has strict policies about what I’m allowed to do on workdays.” The file hadn’t been that large, had it? What had he done with it? He’d filed it somewhere. But where?

“This was a historical sweep, you received the file two weeks ago. It came from Orr Corp.” The tone was neutral, but the looks darkened.

David cursed mentally as he found the vault he’d stored it in. It was pretty large. Definitely, something that would attract attention. Why hadn’t he paid attention and realized something this big coming from Orr would cause him problem?

“He’s doing something,” the man said. “Accessing a vault.”

“Cut him off!” she ordered.

“I can’t, it’s within a senior head’s domain.”

“Then cut him off here!”

The gun came up and David tagged it with the person at the top of his guild contact list. And sent it through Louis Ruslonav’s comline before he realized what he’d done, or why he’d bothered. He didn’t need to send it to anyone, he needed to delete it so they couldn’t accuse him to being an Orr spy. He began telling the file to erase itself when the force of the shot sent him back and he hit the closed door, it opened as he slid down and he fell back as consciousness left him.

* * * * *

Trevor tried legal again, to no avail. They wouldn’t even acknowledge they’d contacted the Wichita department. So, without their help, he had to bend the rules to get more information. Since WPD had arranged the transportation, he got the request from infiltrating their systems. All police department security was good, but he had Uncle as an uncle, and after spending years playing around cracking Uncles’ vaults, very few places could keep him out when he set himself to the task of getting it.

He found the depot in Tallahassee that had responded and got its tracking information. It registered as flying over the city. He didn't bother with what it was doing right now. He went back two weeks, found the request, its acknowledgment of it, the flight, the record of the pickup happening, the departure, and then the return to the depot.

That couldn't be right.

Where was the arrival location? The new departure to get to the local depot? Which depot had it returned to? Tallahassee? Why had it returned all the way there and not gone to the Wichita one? This made no sense.

* * * * *

"As you know, the New Angelique isn't just the review that all the young audience are waiting for..."

"Stop." Horrace rubbed his forehead. "Keep everything to right after New Angelique, we need to change the rest," he told his duplicate.

The image shimmered. "Done, do you want me to forget the rest?"

"Not yet. This isn't about just any review, this is New Angelique. The words need to carry the weight that distinguishes it from all the other reviewers out there, even the other Angel betas." He ran a hand over his face again. "Why couldn't Angel pick up a hobby that created its own product, instead of one that depended on what other people created? Or in her case what Casanova specifically did? Doesn't she understand how difficult it is to sell a reviewer, even a one as great as New Angelique, compared to a product?"

His duplicate didn't answer, it didn't do rhetorical questions. If he had a Beta, it would, but then he'd have to deal with another person being around him constantly. He had no idea how agents managed that.

A file notification distracted him, and he almost dismissed it out of hand, but it was addressed to Marc Bonesword. This was a bounce from something sent to the Lands from outside it. A way for players to contact each other even if all they had were their in-game contact. It came from Melor Bareback, which was odd since David had his real-world info.

The file was large; the size put it on par with the one Bobby had sent him. Checking the provenance, he found that it had been sent hours before and had been stuck within the Lands system before being bounced to him. The original sender was Bobby, two weeks ago. Had he sent David a copy of the file too? David hadn't attached a message.

He pinged David, which returned a busy signal. What time was it in Vanguard? "David," he sent, "Horace here, just checking why you sent me Bobby's file? I have it already. In case you didn't know, I think the Lands doesn't like this size of file, it took it a few hours to process and bounce it to me."

He didn't want to get rid of the file, not until he knew why David sent it to him. He accessed his vault and put it in there with the other one, and noticed the sizes were different, the one David sent him was slightly smaller.

He looked at his duplicate. "Store your work and retire." It vanished.

He took both files out of the vault and opened them, keeping their representation accurate, but of a size he could handle. He overlapped them and confirmed they were different. Had the Lands somehow corrupted the file? Had Constantine done something to it? He'd have known it was for him, but would he have bothered even looking? He could step within the Lands and ask him, but Constantine wasn't just a program he could call up. On top of dealing with his flirtatious nature, if he made the Beta feel taken for granted, Marc Bonesword could find himself having a series of bad luck.

Constantine did intervene in the way the Lands worked. It was how he ensured there was no systematic abuse by outside forces. So while he'd never heard of the Beta taking offense to players for minor infractions, Constantine knew Horace wasn't just another player, so he could decide to treat him differently.

He did not want his experience of the Lands to suffer.

He definitely couldn't send this to Anderson without being certain it affected the colonies, which he probably didn't, so what did that leave him? Resolving the mystery himself?

He was not an investigator. But it wasn't like this was a world-shattering mystery. And it could be fun to figure it out. And he needed something to distract himself from the speech he was trying to write. There were days he hated having to convince buyers his clients were the best out there.

And he could get Trevor and Nori involved, the five of them could go on an adventure in the real world, instead of within the lands.

Or maybe not. Were David and Trevor allowed to even meet? He'd wait to contact Trevor until David had gotten back to him.

* * * * *

"Trevor?" a disembodied woman asked. "Real-world to Trevor? You're registering as being in the office you planning on responding?"

"What?" He looked around, he was in his work lobby, his 'office'. "Sorry, I was thinking about something."

"For the last fifteen minutes? The vault you were cracking detected your presence because you just stood in its sensor field and let it see you."

"I what?" Trevor cursed and went back in, but not only was the space that had contained the vault locked tighter, but he could also tell the vault wasn't there anymore. Its owner had moved it. He was going to have to start tracing the transactions from the start again and they were going to be more careful now that they know he was looking.

"You okay, Trevor?" she asked. "This isn't the first trace you've let slip over the last few days. You keep at it and your success record will start looking like the rest of us."

"Sorry, Abie. A friend of mine's gone full stealth, and it's bugging me."

"Gone or caused?"

"That's what's bugging me. I don't know. He's not the kind of person who would have someone else forced stealth him, but the little I've been able to piece together hints that someone might be involved."

“You want the rest of the team to help you?”

“You know how to handle legal?”

“Dear God no.”

Trevor tilted an ear at the disembodied voice. “Are they that bad?”

“They are creepy. So obsessed about their security and safety. Haven’t you looked in their servers?”

“Never had a reason. And thanks for the offer, but I’ll handle it myself. I shouldn’t be taking your guys away from your work.”

“Then you might want to focus on yours a bit more. You might be the star tracker in here, but the boss will notice the drop in your success rate if you keep going.”

“Thanks for the advice, I will keep this worry to off-hours.”

* * * * *

Nori dribbled the ball around his opponent then threw it, only to hit the backboard and have it bounce out of court.

“You still need work, Squirrel.”

“And you need to use my name, Lemur.”

The lemur grinned at him as she picked up the ball. “Oh please. You love it when I call you squirrel. Gets you all hot and bothered.”

Nori sniffed the air. “No, that’s you getting off on it.”

“That’s just sweat from a good game. You have time for another go at it?”

Nori indicated the space before him. “Last day of vacation, I am not going inside a building until the sun’s set.”

The lemur took position, with Nori between her and the basket. “Then let’s raise the stakes a little. Looser bottoms for the other?”

Nori narrowed his eyes. “Is that supposed to make want to win, or is it an incentive to lose?”

“You know what my strap-ons are like,” she replied with a smile, “but your house is closer.”

“Winning it is. Game on.”

* * * * *

“Shut it off,” Carlie mumbled in Nori’s arms.

He’d been trying to ignore the beeping telling him his message buffer was full. His address had to have made its way into some mass advertising system. He had programs to keep that from happening, but they weren’t perfect.

He poked his side. “If you don’t, I’m going home,” she threatened.

He got out of bed and went to the terminal. It wasn’t mass advertising, just two files from Horace. Nori groaned.

“Something wrong baby?”

“Just someone who didn’t get the message.” He moved the first message to a storage vault, then the next one, before recording his response. “Horace, sending me the files isn’t going to make me want to play detective any more than when you asked me yesterday, or is it the day before at this point? It’s the middle of the night for me, okay?”

Even if I was interested in less than ten hours, I'm back to work. I have a hot girl in my bed, so let me enjoy this in peace. I'll see you in the Lands." He sent it and returned to the bed.

"So I'm a hot girl?"

Nori pulled her on top of him. "Did I, or did I not have to lower the temperature in the room by ten degrees to deal with how hot you are?"

"You know Squirrel, when a girl hears herself referred to as hot. She expects it to be a compliment on how she looks, not on her body temperature."

Nori ground against her. "What can I say, you called me squirrel and now the blood is in the other head." He ground against her again.

"Ten hours, right?"

"Nine if you want breakfast and a shower."

"Ten it is." She reached between them to grab Nori's cock and insert it into her.

* * * * *

"Knock, knock," came Tyson's voice.

"Go away," Trevor replied, hitting his head against the virtual wall of not having worked out where Bobby had vanished to.

"Can't do that. I have a hover here and orders from Grandpa to get you out of your house."

"Wait, you're here?" Trevor exited his lobby.

"Didn't you hear me knocking?"

"You said 'knock knock' that isn't the same thing. He stretched and left his bedroom."

"You shut down your audio receptors when you're in your head."

"Then why did you asked if I'd heard you knock?" he pulled the door open and his brother smiled at him, then took a step back.

"Balls, Trevor, when was your last shower?" He sniffed. "Never mind that. When was the last time you fucked anyone? You don't smell of sex at all."

"I had sex in the Lands this morning, before work."

"That's not—" Tyson grabbed Trevor's arm. "That does it. You're joining us at Grandpa for dinner and we are going to wash you and make sure you smell right. We'd forget you're an Orr the way you smell right now."

"I have something to work on, Ty." He tried to get out of his brother's grip.

"It can wait." The hover's door opened.

"No, my friend is still missing and I need to figure out where he is."

Tyson pulled Trevor in the hover. "He's probably home, having dinner with his family or something."

"I should I know, he's stealth, I just don't know why."

"Stealth, that's your word for not answering pings, right?"

"And not showing up on the net anywhere."

"Then he'd probably just home wanting to alone time."

Trevor glared at his brother "Bobby wouldn't just stop going to the Lands, even if

he wanted 'alone time' he loves sex too much.”

“Right like there no one you know that spends all his time at home.”

“I spend it on the net.”

“Maybe he just needs a break. We’re not all as net obsessed as you are.”

“So what? You want me to just wait and hope he pops back up?”

Tyson shrugged and pulled Trevor on his lap. “You could always go knock on his door and see if he’s still alive.”

Trevor stared at his brother. “You want me to leave the island and walk in a city?”

“Hey, you’ve done it before. Remember when we were little and dad took us to Vegas?”

“I was a kid back then.”

“Then maybe it’s time you remembered what being a kid is like.”

Cities, crowds. Trevor shuddered, which turned into a different kind as Tyson inserted his cock in Trevor’s ass.