

Chapter One

#

#

Niel swiped through the images on his phone. A lot were of him playing football, from throwing a ball with his dad to middle-grade games to high school. Touch football with Roland and father and brother on thanksgiving, something an uncle or two would join in. These were all from after his mother died. The Hertz had rallied around him and his dad then. They'd been friends before, being neighbors, but the support they'd provided had brought the two families closer.

He paused on a picture of him and his dad, him with an arm around Niel's neck and giving him a mock noogie. He didn't remember when the picture had been taken—a thanksgiving—but he remembered feeling so close to him at that moment.

Now it felt like a lie. A man trying to impress himself on an impressionable kid.

He rested his head against the headboard. The panther had left once they were done fucking, and Niel had taken a nap and had considered calling his dad to let him know... something about how things were, or weren't, progressing. He didn't even know that.

And he'd found himself wondering why he even wanted to talk to him. It wasn't like his dad had cared enough to tell him the truth, and because of that, Niel had no idea who his father was. Had his dad felt threatened? Was that why he'd hidden the truth? If not for his condition, would he had ever told Niel the truth?

Maybe letting the panther go had been a mistake. Niel could use someone to distract him from his problems. Maybe he should call Limbani. At least with the monkey, there were no secrets. He was unabashedly open about what mattered to him. If nothing else, for that, Niel was glad the monkey had talked his way onto the trip. He hadn't had time to wallow with him around.

A knock came as Niel pulled the number up. He chuckled. Of course, the monkey would be here before Niel called. He was a precog, after all. He opened the door and his greeting died in his

muzzle as a capybara smiled at him.

He was in his late teens, Niel guessed, dressed in loose cotton pants and shirt a lot of the people on the estate wore. He didn't think he'd seen him before.

"Hi?" Niel said.

"Hello, I am Dario." He straightened. "I am here to see the son of Jarod."

Niel stared at the capybara, wondering how he was supposed to respond to such a statement. "Why?" he blurted out.

The question seemed to confuse Dario. Maybe it was a language issue?

"I want to know who you are, not listen to the stories that are told about you."

Stories? It had been what, a couple of hours since he'd learned his father was important to some people and stories were already circulating? Well, he'd give Dario this, his attention hadn't once dropped to Niel's exposed crotch, so he motioned him in.

"I don't know what they're saying about me, but I'm just this ordinary raccoon. There's nothing special about me."

"You are an Irvine," Dario stated, as if that fact alone was enough to elevate Niel to some special status.

"I'm a Leslie, technically." Was he? With Jarod being his father, maybe he should go by Irvine? No. His driver's license had him as Leslie. And did he want some stranger's name, even if he was his father?

This was why he should have known about him. He should have had time to figure out how he felt, not have that dumped on him because he'd had sex with Olavo.

Dario looked at him expectantly.

"Sorry, got overwhelmed by the situation momentarily. I missed what you said."

"Leslie is your name, but your blood is Irvine."

"Sure, but I'm not the only one. Jarod's got to have had more kids. I mean, my dad's his grandson, so that shows there are more." Dario sat on the bed, and instead of staying by the door, Niel joined him.

"There are many children, that is true. But there is only one Irvine, two now."

"How is that possible? If he's like the rest of you, Jarod's not a monk. So he's had his fair share of sex."

The capybara nodded and looked at Niel's cock. "Yes, we all like sex. But we are not like the Society. We are more Bi than Gay, and our children can be women. The stories say Jarod does not have many lovers who are men. He has some, so he can live, but no more. And the stories say that all of Jarod's children are women."

"Really? How can that be? I mean, just on a statistical level, half his kids should be guys. I mean I am a guy."

"Most definitely, you are." The capybara grinned. "I do not know why it is so. The stories do now say. Maybe He does not want so many men who never die that He made it so Jarod has only women."

What gods did went so over his head, Neil changed the subject in the most drastic way he could think of. "What power do you have?"

"I am a Cuevet."

“I figured that part, but I’m wondering what’s your power. I mean, you are over eighteen, right? You’ve gone through your Ceremony of Dominance.”

“Ah, no, no. That is something the Society does. We do not.” Dario considered something. “Some do, but it is not because He had told us to.” He grinned. “Sex is fun.”

Niel chuckled. “Then how does it work?”

“I am a Cuevet.” He seemed puzzled by Niel’s incomprehension. “For us, all the family is the same. I can not be hurt.”

“So you don’t feel pain? No one in your family does?”

“I do not feel pain, I do not bleed. I do not get hurt.”

Niel put that together. “You’re what, indestructible?” And he realized the capybara might not have meant his family specifically when he said they were the same. “Are you saying I can’t be killed?”

Either the change was too drastic or now there was a language issue. Niel opened his mouth to explain what he meant, but Dario spoke.

“No, I do not explain it well. Jarod does not grow old. You do not either.”

“I’m going to be a teenager my entire life?”

“Yes.”

“Well, that sucks.”

Dario smiled. “I will be honored.”

Niel started to protest, then reconsidered. Why not? He’d already had enough stuff to think about. “Out of those pants. I’m not letting you suck me off without returning the favor.”

Dario was out of them before Niel was stretched on the bed. Then they both had the other’s cock in his mouth. Dario was a little above average but thicker and with large balls. Trying to get both of them in his mouth was a challenge. But by the sounds the capybara made, he enjoyed the attempt.

* * * * *

The door burst open as Niel was groping Dario. After sucking each other off, there had been solid fucking, and then, instead of leaving, the capybara had snuggled and they’d napped. Niel had just woken and had wanted that cock in him again.

“Up!” Limbani ordered. “Up, now!”

The fact the monkey was dressed gave Niel pause, and before he got over that, Limbani was throwing clothing at him. Okay, something had to be wrong with the world if the monkey wanted him dressed.

“Lim.”

“Get dressed. We need to get ready. Being on time is going to take a lot of work.”

“What are you talking about?”

Dario said something in Spanish and pulled the pillow over his head.

“You heard him,” Niel said. “Get out and let us fuck.”

“That isn’t what he said,” Limbani replied.

Why had it never come up he knew Spanish?

“Fine, it’s what I’m saying.”

Limbani stared at him, got that far away look he did when he looked into the future, then looked stunned. “Imagine that. You can actually change the future. Okay, looks like you aren’t at Roland’s post-

ceremony party after all.”

“Fuck that.” Niel was out of bed and dressed before he noticed the smirk on the monkey’s face. “The future didn’t change, did it?”

“Of course not. I see it and it happens. Now come on. There’s a battle ahead of us.”

* * * * *

“You’re going to have to repeat that,” Niel said over the Spanish being screamed by the capybara, who looked like he was ready to strangle the monkey, not that Limbani looked worried.

“Father,” Olavo tried to calm his father down. “Please calm down. He saw me being here now, therefore it is happening.”

“It’s best I wait until Olavo’s done,” Thomas said, while the elder replied in Spanish, “since he needs to hear this too.”

“I know, father, precognition is not infallible, but Limbani still depends on it.” Far too much, Niel thought, based on the amount of complaining he heard anytime the monkey pulled one of his ‘I’ve seen it, so it’s going to happen’ act. The really annoying thing, as far as the raccoon was concerned, was just how often the monkey was ultimately right. It would be nice for someone to manage to bring him down a peg once in a while.

Limbani put his phone in Olavo’s hand, causing both capybaras to stare at it. It rang as they looked to restart their argument.

“It’s for you,” the monkey said. “You really want to take this call,” he added when Olavo tried to hand it back.

He answered.

“Where the fuck are you?” Niel heard someone yell in the distance in his ear.

“Thomas?” Olavo asked.

On the phone, in Niel’s ear, Thomas sighed, and then came a muffled: “I told you I was calling them.”

“I’m not hearing you ask them what’s going on! Felix nearly died because Olavo wasn’t where he was supposed to be,” Firmin answered in the distance, sounding exactly like Thomas.

Olavo looked at Niel, ear tilted.

“I have Thomas,” he replied. “You have Firmin.”

“What happened to Felix?” Olavo demanded.

“Hang up!” his Thomas ordered. “We don’t need you screaming at them!”

Olavo looked at his phone in surprise.

“Put me on speaking, Niel.”

“We kind of have a situation here,” the raccoon replied, looking at the capybara elder. Niel didn’t think there was anything they could say to assuage Olavo’s father. Niel could understand him. Limbani had barged in on the two of them having sex, and within the Society, that was sort of special. Not to say that the last time the two had been together would be before the start of the semester.

Olavo looked at his father and spoke in Spanish. Niel made out Felix’s name, as well as Firmin. That and what he couldn’t understand was enough to placate the elder, although the tone of the reply made it clear they weren’t done. He left, taking the entourage of family members and household staff with him.

Niel put Thomas on speaker when Olavo motioned for him to do so. “What happened?” the

capybara asked.

“Me and Firmin have been collecting the boys for my brother’s ceremony, and when we got to Felix’s, we were jumped by a bunch of Lewistons. We got out, but Felix got hurt.” Thomas chuckled. “The asshole got hurt giving us the opening to teleport, so Firmin took us to the frat so you could heal him. The fact you weren’t there isn’t sitting well with him. You know how close he and Felix have become since Henry.”

Olavo sighed. “I have told you numerous times, Thomas, not to rely on me for healing.”

“I know; you have your life and all that. And I’m not relying on you. This was just... it was bad. Beyond what I had the energy or knowledge to heal. Fortunately, Feng Peng knew a full phrase and Felix is stable.”

“Wasn’t that pickup like at his house?” Niel asked. There had been a quick rundown when the get-together had been planned, mainly for the sake of timing and making sure there would be someone there to recharge Thomas. There had been no mention of Firmin helping during that talk.

“Yeah, and there are very few ways the Lewistons could have put the kind of surveillance in his house they’d need to know I’ve arrived without him knowing about it.”

“It would take someone in his family,” Olavo stated.

“Yeah. He has been ruffling feathers this last year, with his constant bucking the orders he’s given to live the life he wants to, instead of the one the rest of the Chouteau decided for him, so the list of possibilities is long, not that it’s really something to deal with at the moment. Are you okay? Firmin was furious when you didn’t answer your phone, and I was surprised when the elephant, sorry, I don’t remember his name, said you, Limbani, and Niel had flown to Argentina together.”

“Something happened at the last party that required us to come here.”

“Please,” Thomas implored. “Please tell me it wasn’t a repeat of what happened to me.”

“What?” Niel asked. “You don’t want the competition?”

“It happened to you?” Thomas asked after a pause.

“Don’t worry, I can’t teleport. But I will outlive you.”

Olavo raised an eyebrow.

“Dario gave me the rundown. But yes, turns out I am a follower too.”

“We’re ready,” Limbani exclaimed. “I mean, Olavo’s naked, but no one will mind, right?”

“What are you talking about? The ceremony is in two weeks.” Olavo asked.

“Yeah, about that.”

Limbani smirked proudly.

“What’s going on?” Niel asked.

“So, Gil and Lau landed four days ago. They said they wanted time to have an actual rest before the fun started, and Chima asked to be picked up yesterday, something about his fathers being on his case about one thing or another. Yating’s here already. With so many of the guys here, Roland’s jumping at the bit to finally top everyone.”

“He does know it doesn’t have to us who perform his ceremony,” Olavo said.

“Yeah, but he’s dead set on me being His representative, and I’m not going it with a bunch of strangers. Honestly, it took me nearly two years to get comfortable with the idea of me and him having sex. Our first time is going to be with the guys I consider my family.”

“What about Trevor and Madoc?”

“They’ll be there,” Limbani answered, his excitement getting the better of him.

“You heard the monkey,” Thomas said with a chuckle. “I already called Madoc, and he said he can get his boss to give him early time off. I haven’t been able to reach Trevor yet, but if Limbani says he’ll be there, I trust his visions more than my uncertainty. Which basically means me or Firmin are picking the three of you up. I just need the all-clear that there’s someone waiting for me in my room.”

“What room?” Niel asked.

Thomas laughed. “Come on, Niel. Did you think I had to fly when an elder wanted to see me? Ezekiel was the first among the elder to offer me refuge and have a room set aside just for me.”

Olavo smiled. “You know, I think your timing couldn’t be better. My father could use some sex with his favorite teleporter.”

* * *