Lowell helped me get dressed before we immediately bolted for the seddies’ room. He probably woke up half of the top floor from how he slammed it shut, but neither of us cared. One of the seddies was awake, something we should’ve been overly excited for!

That is, until we heard the muffled screams coming from the room.

Lowell shoved the door open for us to see the tigress—Jeanne, I think was her name—squirming against her bindings on the army cot. Jordan lay atop her, holding her down against the flimsy makeshift bed and jostling a piece of cloth into her maw.

“Jordan!” Lowell barked in alarm, “What the fucking hell’re y—”

She spat the cloth out. “Demons! I’m *surrounded* by *demons!*”

“Abigail, where’s that sedative?!” Jordan practically shouted into a nearby radio. “Abigail, take the stairs!”

“I’m hurrying, doctor!” the rabbit hissed through the frequency.

“Please…” the tigress sobbed loudly, “I need to be asleep! I’m sinning just being awake!”

“Stay quiet, Ms. Holt!” Jordan grunted. “You’re not in any danger!”

“Being awake is a sin! I have to be asleep!”

“Jeanne, please be q—”

“Let me sleep! Please, I beg of you! For the love of God—”

The white ferret immediately grabbed the cloth and stuffed it in her maw again, still earning us some shrieks that seemed louder than they should’ve. The tigress spitting out the cloth again, but Jordan held a paw over her mouth (she started reciting what I assumed were biblical verses through hushed mumbling) while trying to keep himself emotionally composed. I could barely do that myself, standing there in the middle of the room.

“What the fuck is going on, Jordan?” Lowell spoke up finally. “What kind of sick kinky shit are you doing to her?!”

“Shut the fuck up, Lowell! This is not a good time to run your stupid mouth. If she isn’t quiet—”

Before anyone could explain, a sudden knock at the door compelled him to look through the peephole. Soon, the knocks boomed even louder against the wood.

“Shit,” he whispered, craning his neck towards us. “Jordan, Adam, get out of sight.”

The ferret wordlessly pulled me away to the far wall before the door opened.

“Heeeeey sir!” Lowell spoke strangely. “Mfh, a-are we….are we being too loud?”

“I’ll say!” someone spoke through the cracked door, “What in the name of God is going on in there?! It’s half past ten in the evening, and some of us have a job tomorrow!”

The tigress tried saying something through her cloth gag, and I half-panicked the fur at the door would hear and we’d all be reported to the Archangels.

Miraculously though, Lowell called, “Hey, I told you to keep the movie paused!”

“What’s going on?” the voice raised itself.

“Oh, I’m sorry, so sorry about that…ya see,” he hiccupped and giggled, “My b-buddies and I are watchin’ this horror movie, about some liberals that take a town hostage—you know, that one that came out years ago—and we turned the volume up too high.”

“Are you *drunk*, young man?”

“It’s not Sunday is it? At least,” the wolf fake-belched, “not for another hour or two…”

“Listen, dropout,” the voice, obviously male and impatiently tired, replied, “I have a business meeting tomorrow at six, so keep it down or I’m getting the manager!”

Lowell nodded while waving a paw. “Okay, okay, I’m so sorry! We’ll be quiet, I promise, sir.”

“Alright then. Thank you. Have a good night.”

“You too,” the wolf closed the door, then when we heard footsteps receding. “Moron.”

Jeanne continued reciting verses through her gag until a minute later, Abigail arrived discreetly with the sedative. Standing beside the tigress, seeing her tearstained cheeks as her feline eyes darted deliriously around the room. When she saw the syringe, everybody braced themselves the moment she screamed again.

“Shh, don’t worry, sweetie,” Abigail cooed her with an equally frail paw. “You’re safe.”

“Let me sleep! Let me sleep! Let me sleep!” Jeanne repeated in muffled growls, until the sedative started working once more. “Let me sleep! Let…me…sleep…”

The female feline laid her head back until the only sign of life came from her rising and falling chest. Jordan tentatively removed the cloth in her mouth and stuffed it in the trash, his expression grimmer than I’d ever seen him. I couldn’t blame him, to be honest. Neither could Lowell, who started crushing my paw with his.

According to him and Abigail, as they explained, the tigress had been unconscious until thirty minutes ago. Jordan had been doing one more check-up on the three seddies tonight when he initially noticed her eyes open and her jaw trying to open or close. Like me a couple months ago, an eternity rather, her muscles had been severely atrophied and refused to move. However, by some miracle or unfortunate circumstance, she started screaming at the top of her lungs like a possessed banshee.

“Clearly, she’s been brainwashed heavily by the clinic. Adam, before you were put under back in Cicero, did the orderlies tell you this kind of stuff, how being awake itself is a sin?”

“…yeah, they did,” I nodded, trying to choke down the putrid vomit rising in my stomach. “They always did. Every month or so we woke up, they made us…say that stuff.”

Lowell offered me a shocked, sympathetic look, which I gladly returned.

“Her being put under for an extended period of time had probably degraded her mind,” he told us his theory. “Right now, she possesses the mind of a twelve-year-old tigress in a sixteen—no, seventeen-year-old’s physical body. Ms. Holt may require years of therapy, but that’s something we don’t possess or have the ability to properly do.”

“What do you suggest we do then, doctor?” Abigail asked him. “Keep her sedated like they did?”

“That’s a bullshit idea! No offense, Abby.”

The elder fur sighed. “None taken, Lowell. I was being sarcastic.”

“Of course not!” Jordan exhaled, then nodded. “I’ll go talk to Mrs. Cardinal downstairs about the situation and ask what she wants us to do. For now, all of us should go to bed and try to sleep on this debacle.”

“Sure, alright.” Abigail patted me and Lowell’s shoulders, her soft smile clashing against the exhausted sadness in her eyes. “You two get going then…”

Without a word, we left for Lowell’s hotel room, but not before I glanced back to Jeanne Holt and memorize the relaxed agony in her expression as she slept.

“Are you okay, Adam?” Lowell asked after we entered his room. “Adam?”

“I’m…fine.”

“Are you sure…?”

“I don’t…I don’t know.”

“Do you…” he paused, the continued asking, “Do you want to spend the night here?”

Nodding after little thought, my reply was, “…I’d love that.”

“Okay,” the wolf smiled. “We can share the bed then. Trust me when I say that couch by the door is worse to sleep on than it is to sit on.” Struggling to keep ourselves from laughing again, we sat together on the sheets. “Listen, before what happened in…in the seddies’ room, we don’t have to continue—”

“No, no, we can,” I gripped my pants, “not tonight though…”

“Of course, I completely understand, Adam. I’m here with you.”

In any other circumstance, I would’ve most likely been flustered and eager at the prospect of sharing a bed with Lowell, but not tonight. He didn’t even argue when I suggested sleeping on different layers of bed sheets to separate our bodies.

“Hehehehe…” he laughed out of nowhere.

“What’s so funny?” my eyes widened in slight disgust. “Don’t tell me you farted.”

“No, no, it’s just,” Lowell snickered, “you forgot your cane earlier…”

I exhaled at the realization. Along the wall, by the bed, rested that thirty-six-inch long stick that’d been by my side all these weeks.

“Then I’ll be damned…” I laughed shortly. How about that.